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THIN LIZZY
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...and what
you can learn
from them!

INTERVIEWS

JIMMY PAGE ON LED ZEPPELIN IV
JOE SATRIANI ON VAN HALEN'S 1984

LESSONS

PLAY LIKE JIMI HENDRIX, METALLICA,
MARK TREMONTI & MORE!

ANGEL VIVALDI

ARTIST SIGNATURE



**SAVAGE
ELEGANCE**
PRO-MOD
DK24-6 NOVA



charvel.com

Photo: Andrew Minarik

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Welcome...



One of the joys of working on *Total Guitar* is that we reach so many people who share a passion for our instrument. And, though the print magazine is primarily sold in English-speaking territories, this month we've engaged with guitar fans around the globe with a series of polls conducted on GuitarWorld.com.

With the aim of deciding the greatest guitar album of all time, we created polls decade by decade from the 1960s all the way through to the 2010s and 2020s. Just over 150,000 votes were cast - a staggering number which truly blows my mind! So, my thanks go out to everyone who voted. Our huge 50+ page cover feature profiles the top 10 albums in each decade, with every number one getting an in-depth examination, either from the guitarist who made the record or a player notably influenced by it. You'll find some guitar lessons along the way, too.

It's been interesting to see some of the musical tastes of our international voters. 90s metal seemed to strike a chord in Australia, with Metallica, Pantera and Megadeth all receiving a big chunk of votes. Pink Floyd are massive in Brazil. As are Dire Straits in Canada. Not many votes were cast from the Czech Republic in our 00s poll, but Alter Bridge took nearly half of 'em. I could go on! The huge worldwide vote has also resulted in some big UK names not really figuring as high as we'd expected. I was betting on Oasis and Radiohead featuring highly in the 90s poll, but both were edged out of the top 10.

Anyway, I really hope you enjoy this special issue of TG. It's been a blast putting it together. See you next month!

Chris

Chris Bird Editor

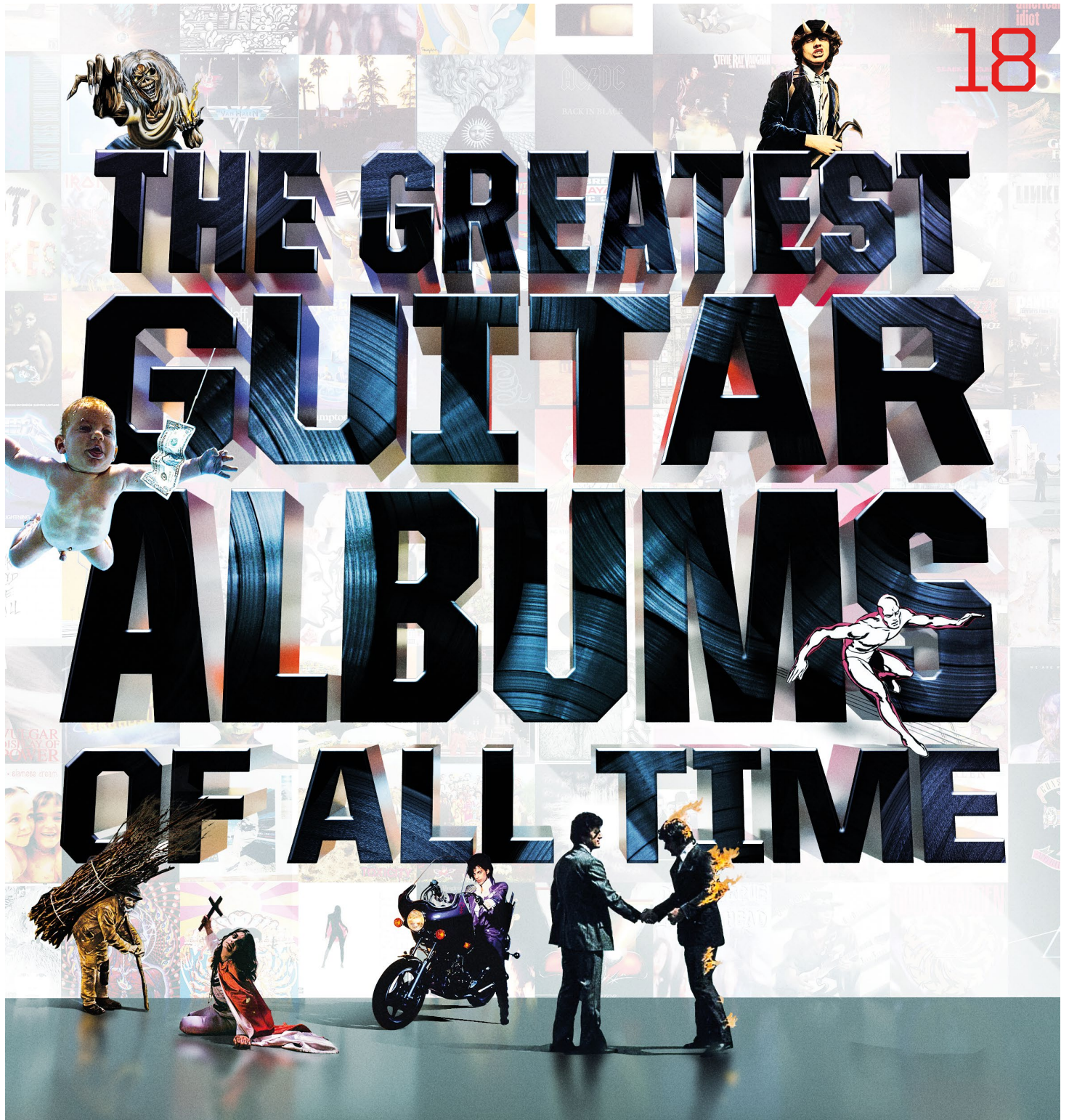
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audio and video for the issue, available
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Words Stan Bull Photo Dave J Hogan/Getty

POP LIFE

W

hile many former rock stars have crossed over into more straightforward pop territory over the years, it's altogether less common for pop artists to become bonafide rock stars,

not least those originally making a name for themselves in talent show boybands. But Harry Styles isn't your typical 2010s popstar. The former One Direction member – a self-proclaimed lifelong fan of Pink Floyd and Wings – has previously shown his appreciation for 70s rock on his 2017 self-titled debut album and its 2019 follow-up *Fine Line*, with *Kiwi* featuring hard-rock riffing throughout, while *She* boasts a lengthy, improvised guitar solo in the outro.

Taking to the stage on May 29th for Radio 1's Big Weekend, Styles performed songs from his new album *Harry's House*, wielding a vintage Gibson ES-350T from his ever-growing collection, seen here. The album, whose title is inspired by Japanese electronic folk artist Haruomi Hosono's 1973 LP *Hosono House*, debuted at number 1 in both the UK and US, and topped the charts in some 25 other countries – a rare feat for any guitar-focused album in the modern age.

While *Harry's House* is an altogether more synth-pop influenced body of work, Style's love of the guitar is still heavily present. Long-time collaborator Kid Harpoon shows off his chops in the folky *Matilda*, while multi-instrumentalist Ben Harper lends his delicate fingerpicking to the sensitive *Boyfriends*. And on the pop-funk of *Cinema* and *Daydreaming*, electric guitar is provided by none other than modern blues heartthrob and 80s soft rock enthusiast John Mayer – a match made in pop heaven.

Styles' love for the guitar shines through his work more than any young pop star working today. If he can inspire a new generation of youngsters to pick up a guitar and noodle dad-rock style, he's alright by us...



SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS

GUITAR

"IT WAS A HAPPY ACCIDENT"

BILLY HOWERDEL ON HIS 'FRANKENSTEINED' GUITAR AND HIS DEBUT SOLO ALBUM

Billy Howerdel found mainstream success as guitarist in A Perfect Circle

alongside Tool singer Maynard James Keenan, after serving as guitar tech for Tool, Nine Inch Nails, Guns N' Roses and more. Billy's debut solo album *What Normal Was* features the same guitar he's used throughout his career – a 1991 Gibson Les Paul Custom Classic in Cinnamon Burst, gifted to him by one-time employer Trent Reznor...

Your main guitar was the first instrument you worked on for Nine Inch Nails, which you accidentally burned...

Yeah, I dropped a soldering iron right on the guitar fresh out of the case. It was a very expensive, brand new and beautiful guitar. It's not like me to do that, but I burned some of the finish off right by the volume pot. And it was like, 'Don't worry, wait until you see what they do with these guitars at the end of the night!' I was the least of that guitar's

problems! And sure enough, it got hurled thirty feet in the air. The headstock broke off and got lost in the crowd, but I found another guitar with a similar colour and frankensteined the headstock back on. It's actually at the wrong angle, but it sounds great so it was a happy accident.

Well, you've certainly gotten a lot of mileage out of it.

It's pretty much all I've ever used. I changed the pickups early on to some Tom Anderson ones. I always like the sound of them. I worked for Fishbone early on and their guitarist used Tom Anderson guitars. I love how precise they sound... it's very hi-fi. I mean, I like Jimmy Page's sound and PAFs in general because they're so soft and broken, but these pickups feel more versatile. That set in this guitar has served me well for thirty-plus years, I can make it sound like all sorts of things.

What kind of pedals did you end up using on the new album?

I love Electro-Harmonix. I'm always blown away by what they're doing.

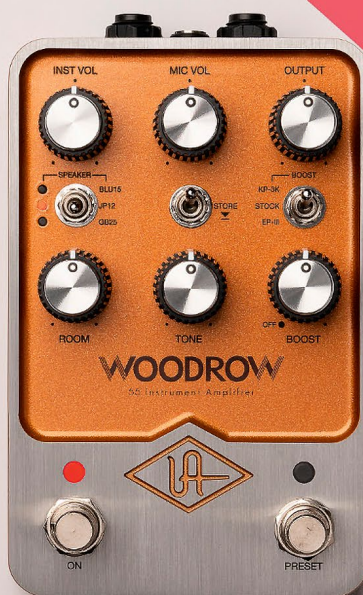
The pitch tracking is incredible, so I used their synth [Synth9] and mellotron [Mel9] pedals on the record. You have to use things like that sparingly. I don't use a ton of pedals, to be honest. I can get a lot out of the Fractal. I haven't used it for preamp tones, except for cleans – in A Perfect Circle I'll use the Fender Twin simulator built inside. I tend to prefer sticking with a handful of things and bending them to my will."

The intro to *Poison Flowers* has a really unusual tone. What are we hearing?

That's not an effect, funnily enough. I've done this a couple of times with my Les Paul, where we mic the body because it sounds sort of wrong and almost hollow. When you're frequency stacking a bunch of instruments, the guitar doesn't need to live in every frequency. Sometimes something as simple as that, taking an SM57 to mic the wood of a Les Paul, can stop you from sounding too full-bodied... it's almost more of an acoustic sound.

Amit Sharma





AMP EMULATORS

UNIVERSAL AUDIO PEDALS

UA UNVEIL A TRIO OF AMP-REPLACEMENT PEDALS

The amplifier industry is on a mission, and it's one that involves you not using an amp at all. Just recently, we've seen pedal-based amp replacements ready to take you direct into a cab or PA system from Blackstar, Hughes & Kettner, Victory, IK Multimedia, Boss and many more. The latest brand to join the pedal amp party is analogue modelling/studio legends Universal Audio with its trio of UAFX pedals.

Now, we say pedal amp, but that's something of a misnomer, as these (along with most of the other pedals in this category) are essentially preamps with cab emulation – they don't contain power stages so you'll still need some way of actually amplifying your sound. But, what we have here are three pedals based on classic valve amps. UA doesn't mention any names, but their titles do the suggesting for us, with the Dream '65 Reverb (Black-face Fender

Twin), Ruby '63 Top Boost (Vox AC30) and Woodrow '55 (Fender Tweed Deluxe). Each pedal features six rotary controls, three three-position toggle switches and a pair of footswitches, with the functionality varying between each pedal.

On the Dream '65, the controls are used for volume, output, bass, treble and boost plus a master output control. The first toggle switch remains the same on each pedal, offering a choice of speaker emulations while the middle toggle features positions for bringing in the pedal's vibrato circuit controls, 'live' control mode, or storing a preset. Finally, the third toggle is home to three variations on modded versions of the amp – in this case a Dumble-style OD Special mod, preamp boost or SRV mod.

The Ruby '63 follows a similar story with faithful volume, cut (high frequency cut), bass/treble/boost and output controls, with the treble, bass and boost controls doubling as knobs for reverb and vibrato. The mods on the Ruby include an EPIII-boosted brilliant

channel, treble-boosted normal channel and a vibrato channel.

Finally, there's the Woodrow '55 which has the original's instrument and mic channels running in tandem, with separate gain controls for both. The Woodrow operates slightly differently to the other two due to the lack of 'alt' controls, so it's arguably going to be the simplest to operate. There's the two gain controls, a boost level, tone, room (ambience) and master output, and you still get the triple-speaker modelling plus three amp modifications to dial in (an 80s rack delay preamp boost, stock clean boost and EPIII boost).

All three pedals can hook up to UA's UAFX mobile app for deeper editing and downloading presets, and each pedal can also run in stereo, supporting the four-cable method for hooking up more flexibly. They're £345, and will be shipping shortly.

Stuart Williams



GUITAR

GIBSON EXPLORERBIRD

Lizzy Hale has been a fan of the Explorer for her entire career. Since the success of her Epiphone Explorer and becoming Gibson's first ever female brand ambassador, it was only a matter of time before the Halestorm frontwoman put her name on a Gibson proper. That guitar has

now been realised as the Explorerbird – a part Explorer/part Firebird mashup. It's 95% in favour of the Explorer, with a mahogany body, mahogany SlimTaper neck, dual 70s Tribute humbuckers. The Firebird part comes from the iconic non-reverse headstock and is met by a whole lot of gold. There's gold frets,

gold acrylic dot inlays, gold Grover Mini-Rotomatic tuners and yep, a gold Tune-O-Matic bridge and stoptail.

The Gibson Lizzy Hale Explorerbird comes in Cardinal Red with a Modern Series hardshell case, and is hitting shelves at around £2,499.

GUITAR

MANSON META MB-2

When we think of great-value guitars from the last few years, the Manson Meta MBM-1 springs to mind. Now, the Devon-based brand is delivering on its plans to bring the Matt Bellamy models closer to the Muse man's stage guitars with the release of the MB-2 series. There are three new developments: first is that lefties can now get in on the action with the MBM-2 left-handed model. It includes the same dual-humbucker, kill switch, soft V neck profile of the MBM-1, but features the MBM-2's new body contouring.

Next up are the MBM-2 right-handed models which offer Matt's *Origin Of Symmetry*-style tones with either a P90/humbucker configuration (£569) or Sustainiac/humbucker combo, pictured here in the new Meta Blue gloss finish (£949).



GUITAR

GUILD SURFLINER

Trust Guild to bring us one of the most interesting line of guitars at this year's NAMM Show. The Surfliner range (£395) capitalises on Guild's knack for alternative guitars with an offset doublecut body, HSS pickup configuration with retro-style curves and lines. It's got a poplar body, maple neck and fingerboard (25.5" scale), and fixed bridge with thru-body stringing. The pickups give us an interesting combination of Guild's LB-1 ('Little Bucker') in the bridge, with some historic pedigree from a pair of DeArmond Aerosonic singlecoils. The three rocker/toggles give us a total of 7 pickup voicings, and it's available in three trans finishes: Sunset Orange, White Sage and Catalina Blue.



Words Stuart Williams Photography Phil Barker

GO AHEAD, PUNK!

Harley Benton's new MR series revives a garage rock icon on a budget

F

rom The Ventures to the Ramones, MC5 to Nirvana, The Stooges to My Bloody Valentine, it's fair to say that Mosrite guitars have had a huge impact on alt-rock, and one that

sometimes goes slightly overlooked.

But Harley Benton's latest line of MR electrics aims to put the Mosrite style back in the hands of garage-dwelling noise-merchants on a budget. Available in four flavours, there's the MR Classic, Modern and baritone versions of each.

All four guitars feature that iconic reverse-body design, with A-grade Canadian maple satin C-shape necks, Wilkinson tuners, 22 Blacksmith stainless steel frets and vol/tone/3-way controls, but there are some differences. The Classic (£211) is made from basswood, with roasted jatoba fingerboards. The pickups are a pair of Artec P-90 Alnico Vs, and it's equipped with a fixed bridge. The baritone version offers a similar construction and design, but swaps the 648mm (25.5") scale length for a 685.8 (27") baritone scale for the same price.

The MR Modern (£299) models feature an alder body, Macassar ebony fingerboards and a Wilkinson VS-50II vibrato. As well as this, the pickups are swapped for Artec Soapbar Alnico V Humbuckers with a push/pull coil tap. Likewise, there's a Modern baritone with a 27" scale (£299). Both the standard Classic and Modern are available in Sunburst, Black, Pearl White, Candy Apple Red and Metallic Blue, with the baritone versions available in Sunburst. What's more, the Modern, Classic and Classic baritone models are available as lefties (Sunburst only) at no extra cost!



UP CLOSE



Classic vs Modern

The big difference is the change of pickups and hardware between the P-90-equipped, fixed-bridge Classic and humbucker-loaded/vibrato of the Modern.



Construction

The Classic features a basswood body, while the Modern is made of alder. We also get roasted jatoba fingerboards on the Classic models, while the Modern has Macassar ebony.



Leftfield

As well as the standard-scale options, there are baritone versions of both guitars, and lefties will be glad to hear that Harley Benton hasn't forgotten them either.



WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

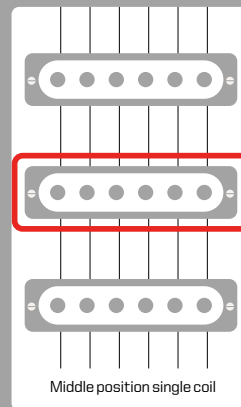
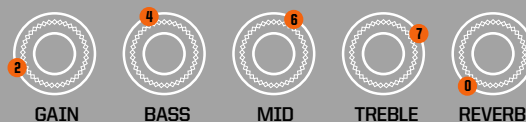
- ✓ Funky 16th-note strumming
- ✓ Easy partial chord shapes
- ✓ Fret-hand muting



RIFF OF THE MONTH

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL **CLEAN**



The official video sees Yannis Philippakis and Jimmy Smith doubling up on the riff, playing a humbucker-equipped Travis Bean TB1000A and a Fender Mustang (with single coils) respectively. So, although almost any pickup configuration will do the job, we recommend using a single coil equipped guitar, ideally with a compressor pedal to even out the strumming dynamics. If your guitar has humbuckers select the middle pickup position for an even spread of frequencies. For a single coil guitar we recommend using a neck- or middle-position pickup.

FOALS

Wake Me Up

Okay, we admit it, this riff isn't really 'of the month' – it came out in November last year. But, with the new Foals album *Life Is Yours* recently landing, we're fired up and ready to rock out with Yannis Philippakis' and Jimmy Smith's cool, funky rhythm part.

At its core is a strummed rhythm played with a mixture of partial chords and muted

strings. The initial part alternates between 10th- and 12th-fret F and G chords played with the first and third fingers. Next up are three more chords at the 12th fret: a Gsus4, a G5 and a G7. Technically, all five shapes are inversions, i.e., the root note isn't the lowest one – but this is usually the way in funk so don't worry about the chord names.

To really nail the part, keep your strumming hand moving constantly in a 16th-note rhythm

– that's four strums (down up down up) for every beat. Watch our slowed down play-through to get the finer details.

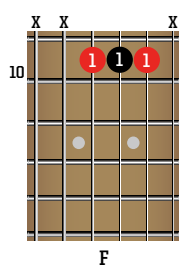
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:00–0:18

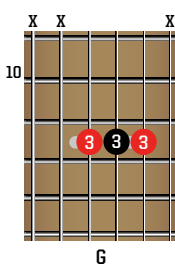
Tempo: 120bpm

Key/scale: D Dorian

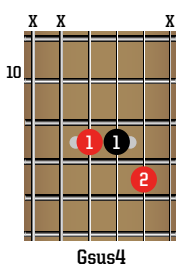
Main techniques: 16th-note strumming, partial chords, string muting



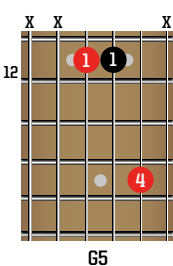
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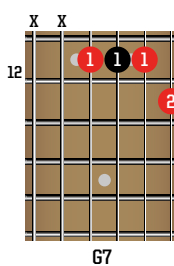
G



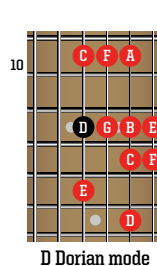
Gsus4



G5



G7



D Dorian mode

All of the notes in this riff are found in the D Dorian mode (D E F G A B C). And, although the riff is played with chord shapes, it's useful to identify the chords in the context of the scale. Try playing the notes of D Dorian individually and see if you can memorise the

note names. Next, barre across the 10th fret to play an F triad and once again try to memorise the notes of the chord. Do this for each chord shape to gain a deeper understanding of both the riff and the fretboard.



Squier
BY FENDER

THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

GOLD EDITION

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FIRST STEPS IN GUITAR...

FUNK SCRATCHING

Jenna uses Paul's obsession with funk music to improve his strumming technique

Strumming is probably the most useful technique you'll ever learn. About 90% of what an ordinary listener considers 'guitar playing' involves it, and once you can do it, you're off and running. 'Scratching' – strumming while

choking the strings with your fretting hand – is a good way to start. Your fretting hand doesn't have to do much, so you can concentrate on pick technique. You can hear it in Isaac Hayes' *Theme From Shaft*, Blur's *Song 2* and Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit*.



TEACHER

JENNA SCARAMANGA
Jenna has taught guitar for 15 years at music colleges, schools, and IGF summer camps. She studied with Guthrie Govan at BIMM, and was classic rock columnist for TG's sister magazine *Guitar Techniques*.



STUDENT

PAUL ELLIOTT
Paul has written about music since 1985 for various titles including *Sounds*, *Kerrang!*, *Q*, *MOJO* and *Classic Rock*. Among the many guitarists he has interviewed are Slash, Angus Young, Keith Richards and Jimmy Page.

JENNA SAYS...

Paul loves funk, so I wanted to use scratching to improve his strumming. It's great when students listen a lot to a certain style, because they can hear when it sounds right. Paul immediately worked out that you need a light, relaxed touch. The challenge in strumming is getting the upstrokes to feel good. If you feel like

the pick is fighting to get over the strings, you probably won't sound good. You can reduce resistance by trying a thinner pick, and stopping the pick extending too far between the strings. Imagine it gliding over the top instead. You can create 'accents' (emphasis) by strumming a little harder or by hitting more strings on the

beat than you do off the beat. That will groove better and help you to feel the pulse. Strumming is not very similar to many everyday movements, so it's challenging to help students figure out how it should feel. You can get closer by thinking of shaking water off your fingers, or the African finger snap.

TECHNIQUE CHECK...

Get your fingers in the right place and those funky string scratches will groove!



1 FRETTING HAND

Rest your fingers lightly across the strings anywhere on the neck. Don't press the strings onto a fret.



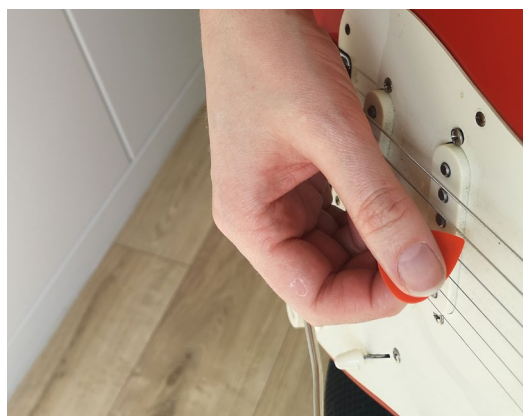
2 PICK

A thinner pick (0.73 mm or thinner) produces less resistance for strumming or scratching. Softer materials like nylon can also help.



3 PICK ANGLE

On your upstrokes, letting the tip of the pick point to the floor can help it glide over the strings.



4 PICKING HAND WRIST

Your wrist should feel loose. A slight bend helps to stop it locking.

STRUMMING TECHNIQUE

BIT.LV/TG360AUDIO

♩ = 50/100

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

1. Simply strum four evenly-timed downstrokes here. 2. Fig 2 shows down-up style strumming. Keep the downstrokes from Fig 1 going and add upstrokes in between. 3. All downstrokes here, but the main idea is to hit more strings on the beat than you do off the beat. 4. Fig 4 has the same movement, but you hit strings on upstrokes, too.

PAUL SAYS...

As Jenna instructed, a loose wrist and a light touch are essential to getting the right strumming action. The key for me was to keep my picking hand relaxed in order to move smoothly between upstrokes and downstrokes. It was also helpful to do these exercises to a straight

beat drum track set at 60 BPM. After a few minutes of this I felt a real improvement – and the less I thought about it, the smoother the strumming. I feel that this is a really solid base for my playing moving forward. And above all else it just feels good to play funk.

I had a conversation about this many years ago with a master of the art, Nile Rodgers. We talked about all the great music he made in the late 70s with Chic and Sister Sledge. And he said there was one funk band that was feared by all – The Commodores.



THE GREATEST GUITAR ALBUMS OF ALL TIME



...as chosen by you!

Illustration Magic Torch

Back in May, TG conducted a **series of polls on GuitarWorld.com**. A staggering number votes were cast – **just over 150,000, in fact** – and now the results can be revealed. Here, in this 50+ page TG special, we present The Greatest Guitar Albums Of All Time.

Now, because we wanted to **represent every era**, from **early classics** to **contemporary guitar heroes**, we divided up our polls decade by decade from the **1960s all the way through to the 2010s and 2020s**. Read on as we profile the top 10 albums from each decade, with every number one getting an **in-depth examination**, either from the guitarist who made the record or a player notably influenced by it. And if you're feeling inspired to plug in and rock out, **we've provided some lessons** to help you play like the winners, too!

Finally, we wrap up our feature with a handful of **great guitar albums** which **we believe are potential future classics**.

Turn the page, and let's get started!

The 60s

Words Tim Tucker

Beatlemania inspired millions of kids to pick up guitars. And with the dawn of the rock era and the elevation of the album as an art form, a golden generation of guitar heroes emerged – Clapton, Beck, Page, Santana and Hendrix...



10 REVOLVER THE BEATLES (1966)

With the burden of Beatlemania weighing heavily on their shoulders, the Fab Four channelled their energies into expanding the possibilities of studio recording on *Revolver*. As well as incorporating elaborate orchestrations, tape loops, sound effects and exotic

instruments, the band updated their guitars from the early Rickenbacker-dominated sound. Harrison, Lennon and McCartney introduced the Gibson SG, Epiphone Casino, and Gretsch Chet Atkins 6120 into their arsenal, beefing up their tone in line with the more rock-orientated sounds brought to the fore by the

likes of Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck in 1966. The experimentation yielded stunning results, like the raucous psychedelia of *She Said She Said* and the harmonised twin lead guitar lines of *And Your Bird Can Sing*, courtesy of Harrison and McCartney. George Harrison was starting to experiment with Indian music, and his sitar

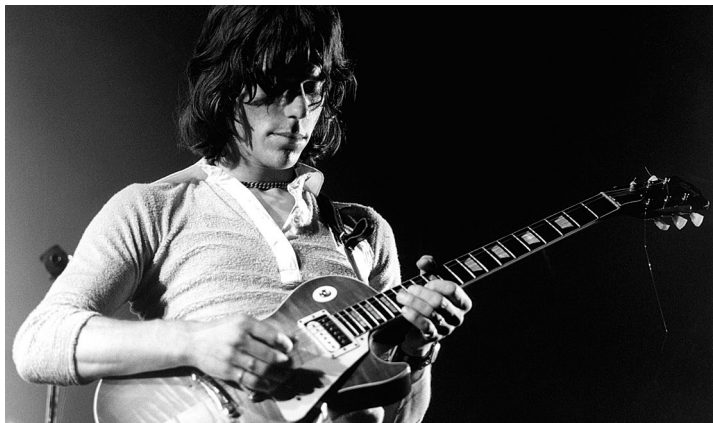
playing on *Love You To* brought something new to rock music, but it's McCartney's electrifying solo on *Taxman* that provides the album's greatest guitar moment. The result was one of the highlights of The Beatles' career. After *Revolver*, guitar music would never be the same again.



09 WHEELS OF FIRE CREAM (1968)

Cream's third LP was released at the apex of their short career, showcasing everything that made them special. It became the world's first platinum-selling double vinyl album, consisting of two sides of new studio recordings and two sides of live recordings. The opening track

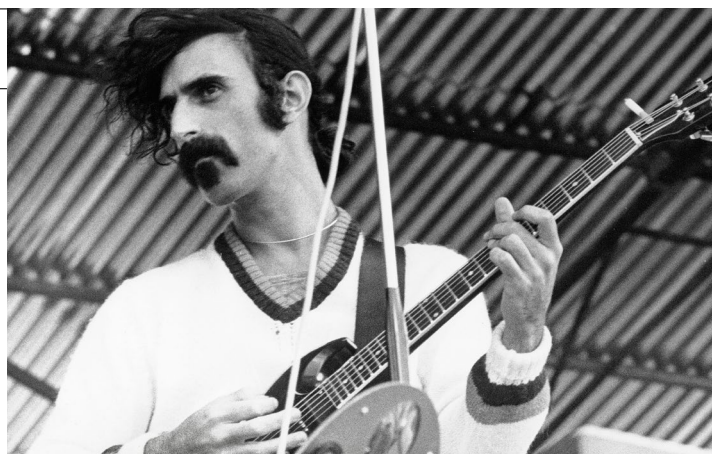
and hit single *White Room* is the quintessential Cream power rock sound, with Eric Clapton's wah solo a highlight of the album. *Born Under A Bad Sign* and *Sitting On Top Of The World* present British Blues at its finest, and the live rendition of Robert Johnson's *Crossroads* features arguably Clapton's greatest guitar solo.



08 TRUTH JEFF BECK (1968)

Beck's first solo album is a cornerstone of the heavy rock sound of the late 60s, pre-empting Led Zeppelin's debut by a few months. Indeed, the cover of Muddy Waters' *You Shook Me* bears remarkable similarities to Zeppelin's version of the same song. Two of Zeppelin's lineup even appeared on *Truth*, with Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones joining Beck, The Who's Keith Moon on drums and Nicky Hopkins on piano for the fearsome Page-penned

instrumental *Beck's Bolero*. The album opens with a slowed-down, rockier version of his former band's *Shapes Of Things*, featuring some virtuosic lead guitar work to kick things off. Elsewhere, *Morning Dew* and *I Ain't Superstitious* showcase his dexterity with a wah-wah pedal, *Blues Deluxe* and *Rock My Plimsoul* has him mastering the blues rock sound of the future, and an acoustic rendition of the classical *Greensleeves* demonstrates his astonishing breadth of styles.



HOT RATS FRANK ZAPPA (1969)

When Zappa split with the Mothers of Invention he embarked on his first solo album proper, a seminal jazz/rock set that helped kick off the fusion movement. The complex and richly layered tracks are largely instrumental, many featuring extended improvisations by Zappa and his chief collaborator, multi-

instrumentalist Ian Underwood. Radio-friendly arrangements like *Peaches En Regalia* and *Little Umbrellas* gave it a wide appeal and provided Zappa with his only top 10 album in the UK. But for guitar highlights, check out the distorted wah-wah solos on *Son Of Mr Green Genes* and *Willie The Pimp* (featuring Captain Beefheart's astonishing vocals).



1960s Gear Through The Years...

Rickenbacker 360/12 (1963)

You could make a case for the 1961 launch of the Gibson Les Paul SG as the decade's biggest guitar story, but the 12-string Rickys popularised by George Harrison and later used by The Byrds' Roger McGuinn gave popular music some of its trippiest and biggest sounds. The 12-string's jangle never sounded so vital as in the 60s.

Maestro FZ-1 Fuzz-Tone (1962)

The first commercially produced fuzz box gave guitar a new sound to play with when Keith Richards stepped on it for the *[I Can't Get No] Satisfaction* riff.

Sola Sound Tone Bender Professional MkII

(1966)
Another fuzz, but how could we leave this out? The MkII (technically a third version) helped Jimmy Page find a sound on *Led Zeppelin* (1969) that would change rock for decades to come.

Vox V846 wah pedal (1967)

Using a treadle to manually move a frequency filter's resonance peak up and down, the wah pedal could make the guitar talk, and when it found itself in the possession of Jimi Hendrix, he created a whole new vocabulary for electric guitar, establishing the wah as one of guitar's most-expressive effects.



07 SANTANA SANTANA (1969)

Mexican-born Carlos Santana enchanted the rock world in the late-60s with his unique fusion of latin rhythms,

blues sensibilities, psychedelic sonics and all-out rock guitar. On this debut album the music is largely jam-orientated, perfectly capturing the improvisatory

nature of Santana's talent, as he weaves his sweetly singing lines around frantic percussion and funky organ to stunning effect. His guitar tone is unique, combining

sharp dynamics with a powerful sustain. Listen to the aptly-named *Treat* or the lengthy finale *Soul Sacrifice* for perfect examples of his power as a soloist.



06 AXIS: BOLD AS LOVE THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE (1967)

Hendrix mixes blues, rock and jazz with a broad sonic palate of psychedelia to stunning effect on his second album with the Experience. His songwriting had developed in the few months since the band's debut, and he pushes his guitar into new territories with unique

combinations of fuzz, Uni-Vibe, wah-wah, backwards guitar and flamboyant use of his Strat's whammy bar. The chugging rhythms of *Spanish Castle Magic*, the spaced out psychedelia of *If 6 Was 9*, and the funky rhythms of *Bold As Love* and *Castles Made Of Sand* and the sublime *Little Wing* showcase Hendrix at his peak.



05 DISRAELI GEARS CREAM (1967)

Disraeli Gears, Cream's second album, was the highpoint of their career. Incorporating the prevailing psychedelic sound of 1967, and taking the baton from The Jimi Hendrix Experience's *Are You Experienced* and the Beatles' *Sgt Peppers...*, they forged a template for the hard rock of the future. *Strange Brew*, *Tales Of Brave Ulysses* and *SWLABR* fused blues with acid rock,

while *Sunshine Of Your Love* foreshadowed the riff-based hard rock soon to be adopted by the likes of Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and Deep Purple. The album is also a perfect showcase for Eric Clapton's so-called 'woman tone', a warm, mellow sound he achieved using his 1964 'Fool' Gibson SG and his late-50s black Gibson Les Paul Custom, through mid-60s Fender Twin Reverb and Marshall amps.



04 LED ZEPPELIN

(1969)

Forged by Jimmy Page from the ashes of The Yardbirds, Led Zeppelin recorded their first album shortly after the group was formed. The songs were honed during a short tour in Scandinavia prior to the recording sessions, and it's an explosive debut, packed with stomping riffs, thundering rock grooves, violin-bowed psychedelia and the pioneering

sound of British hard rock guitar. For most of the album, Page used the 1959 Fender Telecaster that Jeff Beck gave to him in 1966, known as the Dragon Tele due to the design Page painted on it. Other than that, he tried out a Gibson Flying V on *You Shook Me*, a Fender 800 pedal steel on *Your Time Is Gonna Come*, and borrowed a Gibson J-200 for the album's acoustic parts.



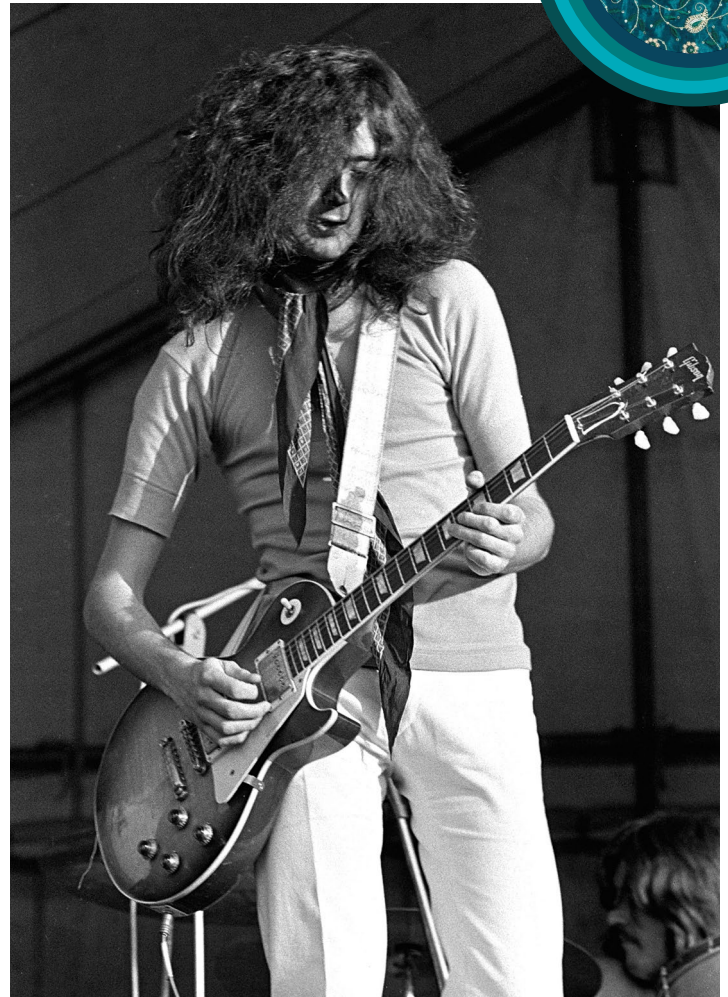
03 ELECTRIC LADYLAND

THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

(1968)

This sprawling double vinyl album, Hendrix's third and final studio LP, marked the point at which he took full control of his own production. It's a compelling mixture of chaos and precision, with his insistence on recording multiple takes resulting in some of his most accomplished cuts. The music spans the whole spectrum

of guitar music, from the funky blues jamming of *Voodoo Chile*, the jazz shuffle of *Rainy Day, Dream Away*, through the driving rock of *Crosstown Traffic* to the wah-wah-infused psychedelic pop of *Burning Of The Midnight Lamp*. At this point, Hendrix was speaking a new language on guitar, one that would influence generations to come.



02 LED ZEPPELIN II

LED ZEPPELIN

(1969)

Zeppelein were in the middle of a brutal touring schedule when their record company pressed them to record the follow up to their debut. April to August 1969 was one of the busiest periods of their career, and sessions for *Led Zeppelin II* took place in thirteen different studios, fitting in around hotel rooms, gigs, rehearsals and the debauchery that accompanied their hectic touring schedule. According to producer Eddie Kramer, Jimmy Page even recorded some of his guitar solos in hallways. This no doubt accounts for *Led Zeppelin II*'s charged mixture of flamboyant virtuosity and raw sexual power, ushering in the hard rock boom

of the 1970s. Page showcases all aspects of his virtuosity, from the legendary rock riffage of *Whole Lotta Love*, *Heartbreaker* and *Living Loving Maid (She's Just A Woman)*, through the sensitive bottleneck blues soloing of *What Is And What Should Never Be* to the folk-rock jangle of *Thank You and Ramble On*. Page's instruments of choice were his Dragon Telecaster, a 1959 Gibson Les Paul Sunburst he bought from Joe Walsh (later of the Eagles) and a 1967 Vox Phantom XII 12-string, with a mixture of Tone Bender fuzz, Vox Grey Wah and VOX CO2 Deluxe Echo effects. For the acoustic work, he used his E-ROS Model 606 Dakota.



Words Jenna Scaramanga

“IT’S MIND-BOGGLING!

Samantha Fish hails Hendrix’s
inspirational debut

24

01 ARE YOU EXPERIENCED

THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

(1967)



SAMANTHA FISH

The debut album by The Jimi Hendrix Experience is many things. As modern blues star Samantha Fish says: “*Are You Experienced* is historically important, innovative, and such a creative album. He took us to places that I don’t think music had been [before].”

But if anything, she slightly understates it. Beginning with this album, Hendrix reinvented guitar. It’s easy to miss the extent of his genius because many of his innovations are now taken-for-granted guitar techniques, but guitar playing pre-Hendrix was a markedly less interesting world. And no one could sound like him.

We don’t just mean this in the boring sense that every player is unique. Literally no one could sound like Jimi, because Hendrix’s playing required impractical volume levels. In 1967, that type of amp distortion and feedback couldn’t happen any other way. The Jimi Hendrix Experience were kicked out of recording sessions because of noise complaints, or else producers didn’t know how to record such intense sound pressure levels. An engineer for John Mayall’s Blues Breakers had described Eric Clapton as “unrecordable”, and that was only a 30 watt combo. Hendrix used a 100 watt stack. It was only when they moved to Olympic Studios that they found Eddie Kramer, a collaborator with the talent to capture Jimi’s full sonic fury.

“I can’t make a Strat sound like Jimi Hendrix,” Samantha Fish admits. “When I think of Stratocasters in general I think of Stevie Ray Vaughan, and that’s the kind of twang that I get out of it

when I when I pick it up. Jimi’s tone was so aggressive. It screams in a way that I can’t make a Stratocaster scream, and I think a lot of guitar players might agree with me.”

There were precursors to Hendrix. Buddy Guy had been performing live with distortion and feedback for years, but his label boss Leonard Chess refused to record that way. Hendrix, a veteran of ‘chitlin circuit’ blues clubs, would have seen the likes of Guy at their unfiltered best. In his session days, Jimi worked as a sideman to Curtis Mayfield, who particularly influenced Jimi with his clean playing and his signature take on chord-melody playing. But none of this detracts from Jimi’s status as a visionary.

Growing up in Kansas City, Samantha Fish was a fan of

Hendrix’s songs before she even knew who he was. “Like most kids in the 90s, I heard Jimi Hendrix on the radio,” she recalls. “We didn’t really have a big record collection, but I had heard all the hits. As I got older I realised ‘holy hell, all these songs are from the same album!’ I can’t imagine being 25 and putting out something so prolific. I just think about myself at 25 and the tone he has, the presence he has, the command he has over the guitar – the songs are just so well thought out.”

Samantha’s career began at blues jams, and when she performed *Red House*, a cornerstone track from *Are You Experienced*, audiences groaned because there song had been covered so often. “I would hope that he’d be tickled by that,” she laughs. Like Hendrix, Fish is

rooted in the blues but crosses genres. “I just write songs and the blues the blues part of it comes through my playing and singing,” she says. “It comes from my foundation and how I learned how to play guitar. If I write a progression that’s kind of poppy I’m going to try and bring this other element to make it something else. I can only imagine Jimi was just writing good songs and putting them out there.”

As to whether *Are You Experienced* is a blues album, she states: “It’s blues and beyond. Jimi was paving his own way and creating his own sound. I don’t think genre can really confine him or describe him. He has some blues licks, some blues phrasing and feeling the way he sings, but he was writing the book on rock’n’roll. There have been so many prolific guitar players in the blues historically and I think I think he fits into that too just by way of being so damn beastly on the guitar.”

Are You Experienced was notable for the number of new sounds Hendrix pulled from his guitar. The title track has a noise that sounds like record scratching,





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FOR EVERY STAGE

The 70s

Words Jenna Scaramanga

Punk was a revolution, disco a global phenomenon. But the guitar music of the 70s was dominated by the giants of rock – Pink Floyd, Deep Purple, Black Sabbath and mightiest of all, Led Zeppelin...



10 PARANOID BLACK SABBATH (1970)

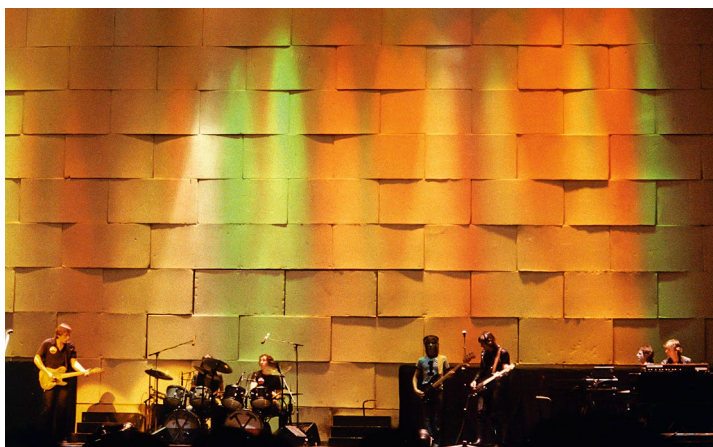
The definitive choice for guitarists who recognise that rhythm parts are more important than solos, Sabbath's second album *Paranoid* saw riff lord Tony Iommi laying down the metal blueprint. *Iron Man*, *War Pigs* and the title track are the foundation of heavy metal, with Iommi sounding

crushing even before the band discovered downtuning. The solos are fluid and exciting, usually improvised as part of live takes with the band; Iommi would add rhythm parts underneath later. But the riffs are the real story. Pete Townshend was known for power chords, but his sledgehammer strumming

did sometimes include the major third. It was Iommi who really codified the root and fifth power chord we all play today.

Iommi liked the amps he got free from local manufacturers Laney, but he was always pushing for more gain. On *Paranoid* he was using a modified Rangemaster treble booster to overload the

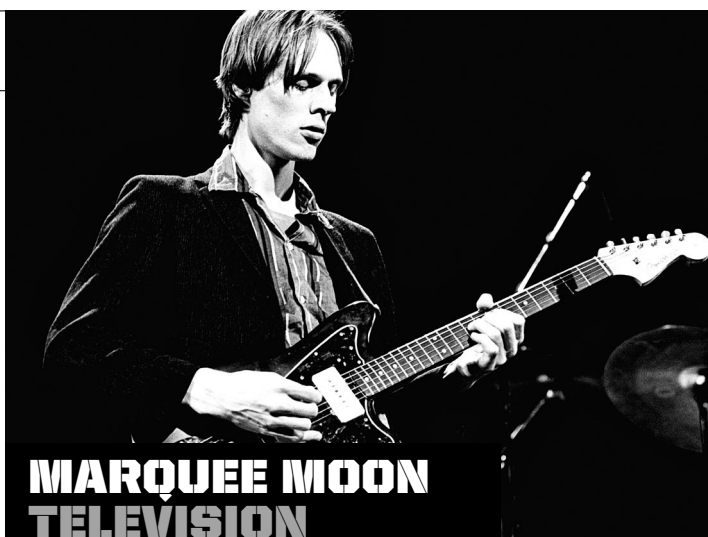
amp input. To keep the low frequencies tight, Iommi ran the amp's bass control on 0 while maxing every other control. His Gibson SG's humbuckers helped too, with more push than the Strat he'd had in Sabbath's early days. The title track, though, was played on a Les Paul, the only time Iommi recorded with one.



09 THE WALL PINK FLOYD (1979)

By the time Floyd recorded this sprawling double album, David Gilmour's Black Strat had a Charvel maple neck and a high output DiMarzio FS-1 bridge pickup, although other guitars delivered some of *The Wall*'s most famous moments. The Nile Rodgers-ish main riff on *Another Brick In The Wall (Part 2)* was played on a 1954 Stratocaster,

serial no 0001, and the solo came from a 1955 Les Paul Goldtop with P90 pickups and a wraparound tailpiece. But the Black Strat delivered the *Comfortably Numb* solo, through the Big Muff Pi pedal Gilmour first used on 1977 album *Animals*. Gilmour's enormous live tone came from splitting his pedalboard signal and feeding each output through a separate Boss CE-2 chorus.



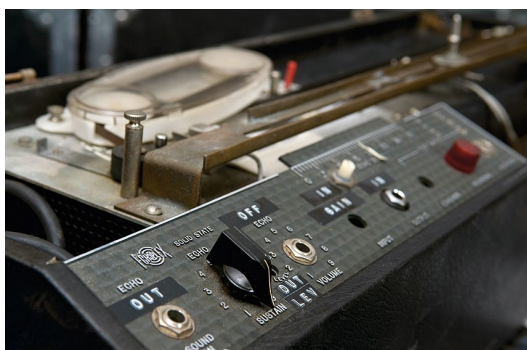
MARQUEE MOON TELEVISION (1977)

For those alienated by prog rock pretension or metal's macho strutting, *Marquee Moon* is the 70s record of choice. It's often called post-punk, which is impressive considering punk had barely started. Guitarists Tom Verlaine and Richard Lloyd had more chops than most punks but a similar intolerance for self-indulgence. Television eschewed reams of

powerchords in favour of melody and counter-melody on the guitars. There's not a pedal in sight: just Verlaine's Jazzmaster and Lloyd's Strat into Fender Super Reverbs; any chorusing comes from Lloyd double tracking particular parts. Thanks to post-punk experimentalists such as Black Midi, *Marquee Moon* sounds more relevant today than ever.



1970s Gear Through The Years...



Maestro Echoplex EP-3 (1970)

The tape echo machine was nothing new, but when the new solid-state EP-3 debuted at the start of the decade its tone-gussying preamp blew players' minds even before they got to the echo. Eddie Van Halen, Brian May and countless others benefitted from its non-linear phase response.



Telecaster Deluxe (1973)

Rock was getting louder and heavier, and single-coil specialists Fender needed a humbucker-equipped model to compete. Enter the Telecaster Deluxe...

MXR Phase 90 (1974)

The little orange box with one knob and a hard-to-read script logo didn't look like much but when it came to chewy electric guitar tone it is unsurpassed, making its way onto Eddie Van Halen's 'board.



Lawsuit-era guitars
Ibanez, Greco and Tokai enter the scene...
The 70s were not the finest years for Fender and Gibson.

QC was ropery. But in Japan, operating under a number of brand names, knock-offs of the most-popular US models were offering players affordable alternatives with a charm of their own. Having ridden out a lawsuit, Hoshino Gakki's Ibanez brand focused on their own designs. The rest is history.

Roland JC-120 Jazz Chorus (1975)

The best clean amp in the world, ever! Though released in 1975, this classic 2x12 came of age in the 80s when it could be found in the rigs of The Police, Billy Duffy, Johnny Marr, Robert Smith. Even Metallica have employed it for its trademark clean tones.



08 BOSTON

(1976)

Spearheaded by the classic hit single *More Than a Feeling*, Boston's debut would go on to sell 17 million copies in the US alone. While Van Halen's debut set the standard for guitar playing in the 80s, Boston's heavily multi-tracked, chorused guitars and glossy production were just as influential on the overall sound of the coming decade.

Bandleader Tom Scholz, an MIT graduate, was equal parts mad scientist and guitarist. Building a studio in his spare time, the perfectionist designed new equipment to produce the sounds in his head. When Boston's debut hit big, Scholz commercially released his inventions the Rockman Headphone Preamp

and the Power Soak, a pioneering attenuator for valve amps. The Rockman appeared on albums by Def Leppard, Joe Satriani, and David Gilmour.

Boston's heavily compressed clean tones and harmonised distorted guitars immediately defined the sound of AOR radio, and still sound amazing today. The guitar parts are complex interweaved layers of rhythm and lead lines with different tones, making Boston a stepping stone between Queen albums and the even more complex productions that producers like Trevor Horn and Mutt Lange would create in the 80s. Scholz's Les Paul produced a high gain tone that didn't offend anyone, making it the ideal power ballad sound.



07 HIGHWAY TO HELL

(1979)

Producer Mutt Lange polished the sound enough to push AC/DC in to the big league with *Highway To Hell*, while leaving enough rough edges that no diehard fans were alienated. Rhythm guitarist Malcolm Young stuck with his modified Marshall Superbass, while lead guitarist Angus Young - according to Solodallas founder and AC/DC

obsessive Filippo Olivieri - used a Marshall 2203. Lange tamed Angus's shredding, producing his most melodic and considered solos to date. And on an unparalleled set of riffs, Malcolm's almost-clean Gretsch and Angus's slightly dirtier SG remains the best sounding guitar pairing in history. Their telepathic timing and epic open powerchords are the definition of rock guitar.



06 WISH YOU WERE HERE

(1975)

David Gilmour's titanic playing on *Shine On You Crazy Diamond* has some of the most imitated feel and tone in history. Gilmour pays tribute to blues pioneers, particularly BB King, with his controlled feel and sublime behind-the-beat timing. The Black Strat was still largely stock in 1975, and throughout

this album his Colorsound Powerboost is featured - largely into his Hiwatt DR103. A silicon Fuzz Face lifts his slide parts, and an MXR Phase 90 appears for the first time. Back in the real world, you can get close to Gilmour's sustaining, cleanish tone with a compressor and a low-gain overdrive like a Boss Blues Driver.



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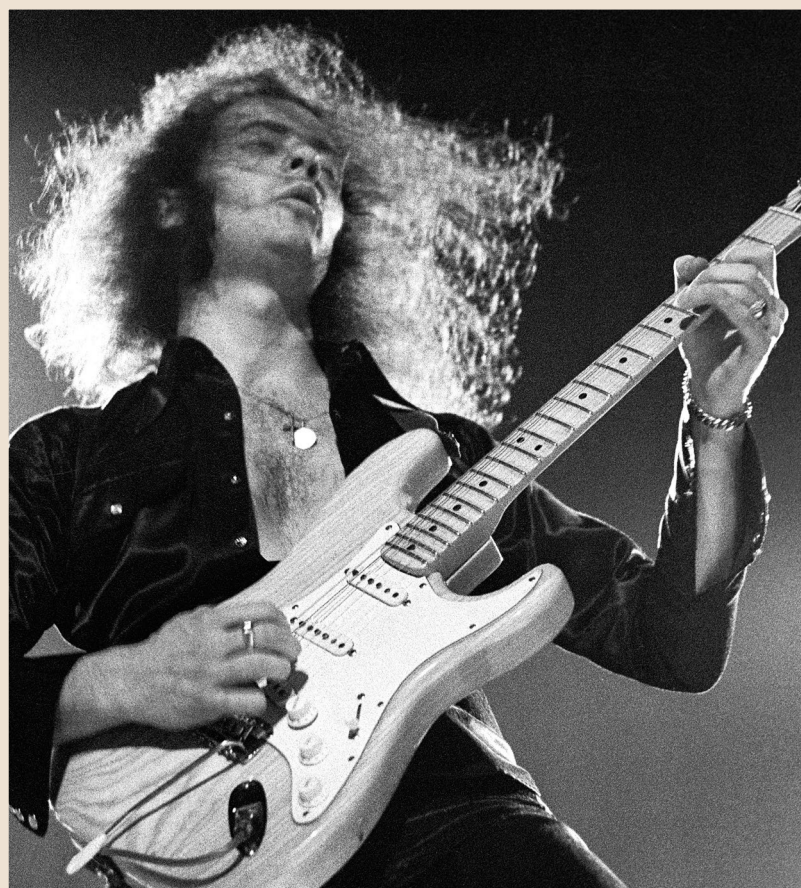
05 MACHINE HEAD DEEP PURPLE

1972

Deep Purple's sixth studio album is, of course, much more than just *that* riff, but Machine Head deserves to be in this list for *Smoke On The Water* alone. Guitarist Ritchie Blackmore said simplicity was the key to the song's success, but playing it like him is surprisingly tricky. Blackmore originally used pick and fingers to play both notes in each double stop at the same time.

Hendrix had exploited the potential of a Strat and a Marshall on 10, but Blackmore found a whole different set of sounds in that combination. There was no

trace of icepick treble in his gutsy tone. His unforgettable riffs and fluid soloing drew on both classical and blues influences to broaden the vocabulary of rock guitar. Even the self-critical Blackmore had to admit there were good bits on *Machine Head*. *Highway Star* was his homage to Bach, and his alternate picking was cutting edge for the time. He insisted it was the only solo he wrote before recording. Elsewhere, his off-the-cuff soloing exhibited feel, control, and his unmistakable approach to the tremolo arm. The solos in *Lazy* and *Pictures Of Home* raised the bar for technique and expression.

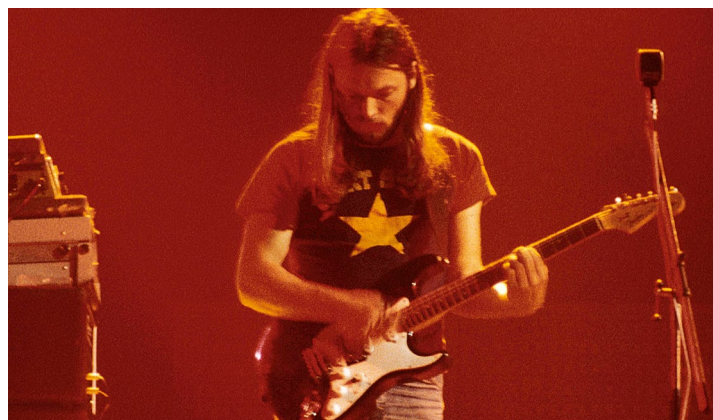


04 PHYSICAL GRAFFITI LED ZEPPELIN

(1975)

After the polished *Houses Of The Holy*, Zeppelin threw everything at *Physical Graffiti*, their philosophy of 'tight but loose' at the fore. *Kashmir* and *Ten Years Gone* have their sharpest arrangements, while *In My Time Of Dying* was essentially a jam. The song lasted over 11 minutes

partly because they hadn't rehearsed a proper ending. The double album format let Zeppelin demonstrate everything they could do, from thundering hard rock to acoustic folk. Jimmy Page's Danelectro emerged for *Kashmir*, while his Martin D-28 never sounded better than in *Bron-Yr-Aur*.



03 THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON PINK FLOYD

(1973)

Floyd's most famous album was also The Black Strat's finest hour, as David Gilmour laid down some of the tastiest solos of the decade. While Ritchie Blackmore set new standards for flash, Gilmour's tasteful phrasing and sublime behind-the-beat feel showed the power of a few well-placed notes. The Black Strat was still in

close-to-stock form at this point, with its original pickups and white pickguard. His glorious fuzz tone, a silicon Fuzz Face boosted by a Coloursound Powerboost overdrive, is one of the most sought-after sounds in rock. His custom Bill Lewis axe also crops up; Gilmour makes use of its full 24-fret range towards the end of *Money*.



02 VAN HALEN VAN HALEN (1978)

The date on the sleeve says 1978, but a cursory listen to Van Halen's debut tells you that it is, by some distance, the greatest guitar album of the 1980s. Van Halen didn't have much in common with The Clash or the Sex Pistols, but the Californians' brand of 'Atomic Punk' had the same urgency as the London punks. None of *Van Halen's* 11 tracks gets near the four minute mark, the perfect antidote to sprawling 70s excess. MTV was three years away, but Van Halen had already invented MTV rock. "We're playing the 80s," grinned effervescent frontman David Lee Roth. "Other bands are still playing the 70s."

The songs zipped by so quickly partly because Eddie could play his borrowed Clapton licks at four times their original speed. But describing EVH's guitar playing as "fast" undervalues it, like describing the Great Pyramid of Giza as "large". Not just the best soloist on the planet, Eddie was possibly even better at rhythm –

effortlessly grooving, extremely dynamic, and with the best swing in the game. Debates about whether he invented tapping (answer: no) are beside the point. Eddie Van Halen also did not invent harmonics, divebombs, palm muting, legato, or high gain tones, but no one had combined them seamlessly into one coherent guitar style, let alone perfected it on their debut album. Many of the final tracks are first takes, and it never sounds like Eddie might screw up. Where he hits a wrong note, he styles it out and keeps on wailing. Like the gymnast Simone Biles, no matter what acrobatics happen in the air, he always sticks the landing.

Besides his cutting edge technique, Eddie was best known for his infectious grin. Asked about Van Halen in 1986, Jimmy Page remarked, "It's an incredible technique for what he does. I can't do it. I can't smile like him either." Eddie's smile reflects the sheer exuberance bursting from the grooves on the first Van Halen

album. Listening to it is a joyful experience, and that love of music gave meaning to every note they played. Eddie's licks had soul, even when he was showing off.

Then there was the tone. It's doubtful the electric guitar has ever sounded better. Guitarists have devoted their lives to trying to discover how it was done. John Suhr worked on Eddie's Marshall Plexi in 1991 and swears blind there was nothing unusual about it. He posted on *The Gear Page* forum in 2010, "When Ed played through this amp in my shop, it sounded every bit like Ed and the first album. When I played through it, it sounded every bit like me. Ed would make any decent amp sound like Ed."

The 23-year-old Eddie didn't just invent 80s rock guitar; he did it in a way that no one would ever surpass. A generation of shredders took his technique to new heights, but no one had the tone or the vibe, and no one else looked like they were having nearly as much fun.



Words Jenna Scaramanga

“WE WERE FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS!”

Jimmy Page reveals how he created the
masterpiece that topped our 70s poll

Photo Getty

01 LED ZEPPELIN IV

LED ZEPPELIN

(1971)

Led Zeppelin III was hardly a flop, but Jimmy Page took criticism of it personally. The guitarist refused interviews for the next 18 months and resolved to let the music do the talking in the most dramatic way possible. The next album would have no accompanying words – not even the band's name on the cover. The resulting untitled effort, known universally as *Led Zeppelin IV*, is the most devastating answer a band has ever given their critics.

"It was a really good and serious summing up of where we were," said Jimmy Page of the album. "Each song has its own character. It gives all the different colours and textures of the band. We were moving the acoustic aspect of what we'd done on the third album into these more intimate areas with *Going To California* and *The Battle Of Evermore*. The music kept expanding."

It was in 1970 that Page, singer Robert Plant, drummer John Bonham and bassist John Paul Jones began the first recording sessions for the album at Island Studios in London, but the magic was not happening. According to Page, an early version of a key track, *When The Levee Breaks*, sounded "laboured". The guitarist decided a new working environment was required.

He wanted somewhere the band could live, write, and record, so Led Zeppelin retreated to Headley Grange, a disused workhouse for the poor in Hampshire. Renting the Rolling Stones Mobile Studio to capture the results, the band dug in. "I liked the idea of everybody being in the same house and really working with the whole band," Page recalled. "It was an old Victorian house, very imposing. It was in the countryside, so you weren't going to have neighbours complaining. If it didn't work we'd go into a studio, but in actual

fact it was great. It was like everybody's creative energies all joined. That's what the whole magic of the environment was like."

The band used cupboards and stairwells around the house as isolation booths for amps, setting up temporary studios ad hoc. They were constantly setting up in different locations, lending each track its own ambience. As Page said, "We used the acoustics of the house. We were playing in this drawing room to begin with, and then John Bonham has another drum kit turn up, and it's in the hall, with this really high ceiling. When he started playing it was like, 'right, we'll have to do something in here now,' with the drum sound like that, because it was just huge. You've heard it – on *When The Levee Breaks*."

Levee was Zeppelin's thunderous reimagining of a 1929 Memphis Minnie tune. Although the melody does draw on the original, it's unlikely anyone would have recognised the song if Plant had bothered to change the lyrics. Memphis Minnie's tune was an up-tempo blues with a bright fingerpicking part. The original follows standard 12-bar chord changes, but Page's ominous, droning riff never modulates, designed to invoke a trance. He played it on his Fender Electric XII in Open G tuning, but it sounds like Open F because Page slowed the track with varispeed. "If you slow things down, it makes everything sound so much thicker," he told author Brad Tolinski. "The only problem is, you have to be very tight with your playing because it magnifies any inconsistencies."

Working quickly, Zeppelin captured ideas while they still sounded spontaneous. "We didn't over-rehearse things," Page emphasised. "We just had them so that they were just right, so that there was this tension – maybe there might be a mistake. But

there won't be, because this is how we're all going to do it and it's gonna work!"

The record sounds fresh because it is. If a song didn't come together quickly, they simply moved on. As Page recalled: "We'd get it up to a serious speed, so it's really firing on all cylinders, and then you'd start recording. With the red light on there's even more urgency to it. We'd arrive at those takes in a pretty short time – just a handful of takes, maybe. If a song started to labour, and it just wasn't working, there's no point in just recording it. We'd just stop it and do something else, and then return to it later."

Guitar solos were always the last thing recorded. "I wanted it to be totally in character of what's going on with the lyrics and a summing up of my guitar playing for that particular song," Page explained. "What I'd do is just limber up and then, okay, put the red light on. And again, those solos weren't done over hours and hours. They were pretty much improvised. They weren't worked out note for note. Never. The solos were always: take a deep breath and go for it! For the spontaneity. I might have worked out how I might start it off. But that's it."

With a combination of inspiration and ruthless efficiency, Zeppelin's fourth was essentially complete by the end of their month-long residency at Headley Grange. Three tracks remained unfinished: *Four Sticks* (a rhythmic number on which Bonham on played with, yes, four drum sticks); *Black Dog*, the heavy hitter that would serve as the album's opening salvo; and lastly, the song that many consider the greatest of all time.

"I had the sections for it. It was a question of piecing them together," said Page of writing *Stairway To Heaven*. "By nature of the fact that it had acceleration through it, it needed some work on it. Definitely it was the sort of thing where you wanted to be all around each other. Because of the amount of overdubs that were going to go on it, it needed to be done in a studio." Returning to London, Page picked Island Studio

1 for its ambience and clarity.

The rich arrangement for *Stairway to Heaven* includes all of Page's main guitars. The intro was his beloved Harmony Sovereign H-1260, a budget acoustic used to write the first four albums, while the lush electric rhythms came from two different 12-strings, DI'd and panned left and right. His Fender Electric XII was joined by the Vox Phantom he'd used on *Led Zeppelin II* and earlier, in his previous band The Yardbirds, for the song *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor*. They were recorded straight into the desk and compressed. Outro riffs came from his Les Paul, while the solo was played on the legendary Dragon Telecaster, a gift from Jeff Beck he'd used to record all of Led Zeppelin's debut. The Gibson ES-1275 double neck didn't arrive until after the song was recorded, when Page needed one guitar that could reproduce all the parts live.

The solo used the same approach as the others, Page preparing the opening lick and a few link phrases before improvising the rest. He says the solo came together easily, in about three takes. Producer Andy Johns, however, remembered things differently in a 2009 interview with *Rhythm*. "There was a bit of a struggle on the solo. He was playing for half an hour and did seven or eight takes. He hadn't quite got it sussed. I was starting to get a bit paranoid and he said, 'No, no you're making me paranoid.' Then right after that he played a really great solo."

Page is notoriously reticent to give details of the amps used on specific tracks, sometimes complaining that after he mentions using a particular amp with Led Zeppelin they become impossible to buy. He has variously claimed the *Stairway* amp was a Marshall or a Supro. We do know that his Number 1 Les Paul Standard and Marshall 1959 Superlead head remained his main rig for the Headley Grange sessions. That tone didn't work for *Black Dog*, however, and Page



For the solos in *Black Dog*, Page took a more orthodox approach. As he told *Guitar World* in 1993. "I wanted something that would cut through the direct guitars – I wanted a totally different tone colour. So I ran my guitar through a Leslie

overdubs also required the clarity of a recording studio. Along with *Stairway*, Page felt *Four Sticks* came the closest to fulfilling his artistic vision. He told Steve Rosen in 1977: "My vocation is more in composition, really, than anything else. Building up

I thought that *Levee Breaks* just had to finish the overall picture of what we'd done – the sonic

Led Zeppelin IV is not just the greatest guitar album of the 70s, but the benchmark for every guitar band ever since.

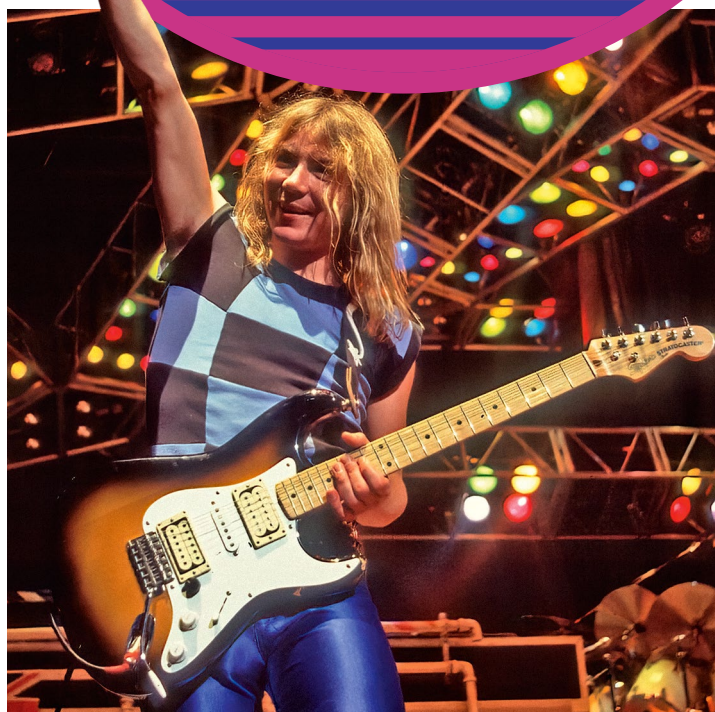
Recording complete, Page mixed the album at Island with Johns after a disastrous ten days at LA's

37

The 80s

Words Jenna Scaramanga

Stevie Ray Vaughan reignited the blues. AC/DC delivered the biggest selling rock album of all time. New guitar heroes rose up – Slash and Joe Satriani among them. But if one guitarist owned the 80s, it was Eddie Van Halen...



10 THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST IRON MAIDEN (1982)

Some critics and industry bods genuinely thought metal was over by the early 80s, and guitars were outdated. *The Number Of The Beast* definitively proved it was only just getting started. The giants of the 70s were one-guitar bands, but in Maiden, Adrian Smith and Dave Murray's Thin Lizzy-inspired

harmonies made it compulsory for metallers to have two guitarists. Their tone, powered by DiMarzio Super Distortion pickups into Marshalls boosted with overdrive pedals, was the metal recipe for most of the decade. Murray and Smith's fluid soloing kept one foot in the blues but nodded to Ritchie Blackmore, upping the tempo for the new decade.



09 PURPLE RAIN PRINCE (1984)

Steve Vai once said Prince had no right to play guitar so well on top of his other talents. *Purple Rain* distilled that genius. On opener *Let's Go Crazy*, a better rock/RnB crossover than *Beat It* (yeah, we said it), Prince riffs with the best, lays down soaring bends, and closes with an

outrageous burst of wah-soaked shred worthy of an Ozzy album. An octaver-aided shred frenzy opens *When Doves Cry*, and *Darling Nikki's* guitars and lyrics are almost equally filthy. The matchless title track unites Wendy Melvoin's gorgeous but finger-breaking add9 chords with Prince's rapturous final solo.



08 BROTHERS IN ARMS DIRE STRAITS (1985)

Mark Knopfler's guitar sound on *Money For Nothing* was actually an accident. Having set up the session the night before, producer Neil Dorfsman found an SM57 mic pointing at the floor when he arrived. Before he could fix it, Knopfler's tech Ron Eve came on the talk back mic insisting they left it because the tone was amazing. Despite drawing detailed diagrams, Dorfsman could never repeat the effect.

Dorfsman says *Money For Nothing* used a Morley wah, Laney 2x12 combo, and a Les Paul Jr. The rest of the album was largely made with Knopfler's Schecters and his 80s Les Paul Standard. Although Knopfler was an early adopter of the Soldano SLO100, it's likely his main amp for

Brothers was still his Marshall JTM45. The title track tone comes from a cranked amp, with the Les Paul's volume and tone backed off to create the dark, touch sensitive sound on the album. *Walk Of Life* is a distinctively Telecaster approach, while Strat-style guitars dominate elsewhere. The National resonator on the album's cover only sees service on *The Man's Too Strong*.

Knopfler was keen to try new technology, with *Brothers In Arms* being an early all-digital production. He used a Pensu-Suhr R Custom synth guitar controller to trigger sounds on a Synclavier synth - as seen in the video for *So Far Away*. Knopfler's steadfast refusal to buy a pick, though, means clichés about tone being in the hands are even more true than usual.



VIVID LIVING COLOUR (1988)

Funk rock was set to explode in 1988, with the Chilis, Extreme, Jane's Addiction and Faith No More all threatening the mainstream. No one looked more like a sure bet than Living Colour. Mick Jagger was so excited about them he insisted on producing their demos. And when Vernon

Reid added guitar to Janet Jackson's *Black Cat*, there were obvious comparisons to her brother's collaboration with Eddie Van Halen. *Cult Of Personality* was an irresistible hit single punctuated by Reid's explosion of a solo, and *Open Letter (To A Landlord)* had the best clean guitar opening since *Purple Rain*.



1980s Gear Through The Years...

The 'Superstrat'

When the 80s dawned we were all in Eddie Van Halen's slipstream. The Strat had been Frankensteined. The likes of Jackson, Charvel, Kramer and Ibanez augmented the bolt-on double-cut archetype with humbuckers. Frets got fatter, necks got thinner, and the double-locking vibrato became essential...

Floyd Rose double-locking vibrato (1976)

Though the original system was developed in the 70s, this miracle of engineering was refined and popularised in the 80s. It offered the potential for wild harmonic divebombs and whammy-bar anarchy with tuning stability.

Ibanez Tube Screamer TS9 (1981)

Whether you are 'Team TS808' or 'TS9 4 EVA!' there is no debating that this little green box is the most successful overdrive pedal of all time.

Rockman X100, and the birth of DI box (1984)

Invented by Boston guitarist and MIT grad Tom Scholz, what started out as a headphones amp - like the Sony Walkman for guitar - ushered in a new era of direct-recorded guitar sounds, as used by Def Leppard on *Hysteria* and Joe Satriani. In 1989, the DI dream was fully realised with Andrew Barta's all-analogue amp modelling unit, the SansAmp.



07

BLIZZARD OF OZZ

OZZY OSBOURNE

(1980)

On the 1978 *Never Say Die* tour, openers Van Halen made the tired and increasingly dysfunctional Black Sabbath look like dinosaurs. When singer Ozzy Osbourne was fired by Sabbath the following year, he assembled a line-up that would never be embarrassed like that. Crucially, he found the one guitarist in LA who could rival EVH – Randy Rhoads.

Although frequently compared, Rhoads' and Van Halen's guitar styles are not very similar beyond the fact they both tapped and played fast. Ironically, the

Dutch-born Van Halen sounded much more American, while the Floridian Rhoads' classical influences had more in common with European guitarists. The Van Halen brothers had tons of swing, but Rhoads played much straighter. This was perfect for Ozzy's solo debut, *Blizzard Of Ozz*, which came on like a jet-fuelled Black Sabbath.

For the recording of this album, Rhoads had not yet received the white modified Marshall he is known for, and instead used a rented Marshall JMP 1959 head. The amp was run relatively clean, with most of the crunch coming from his MXR Distortion+, enhanced by an MXR 10-band EQ with a strong mid boost centred at 500hz. Most guitarists would

struggle through such an unforgiving setup, and it's wild that Rhoads delivered those pinched harmonics and punishing legato lines so confidently.

The 80s dawned with great guitarists in abundance, but Randy was clearly top of the pile. As neo-classical guitar got huge, *Blizzard Of Ozz* stood out for its melody, finesse, and great songs.



Photos: Getty

06

SURFING WITH THE ALIEN

JOE SATRIANI

(1987)

You can't go platinum playing guitar instrumentals – it's just not done. But Satriani did it with *Surfing With The Alien*, charting two rock radio singles along the way with the title track and Satch Boogie. Joe's virtuosity put him on guitar magazine covers immediately, and his warp-speed legato was the latest evolution of shred. But it was really his sense of melody that drew audiences. There were far more technical guitarists releasing albums in the aftermath, but none of them had a song as good as *Always With Me, Always With You*.

The guitars were recorded direct with a Rockman Headphone Preamp, and every song except *Satch Boogie* features a drum machine. It's remarkable how much groove Satch extracted

from those unpromising beginnings. Incredibly, all the solos except *Crushing Day* are improvised, showing Joe could think melodically even on the fly. His tapping approach on *Midnight* was clearly Van Halen-inspired while doing something original with the technique. On the title track, Joe tapped with a pick, allowing faster taps than are otherwise possible, an approach that influenced his former student Kirk Hammett.

Surfing With The Alien stays interesting because Joe uses a range of modes and harmony to evoke different moods. The major climax of *Always With Me* is all the more joyous for the contrasting harmonic minor section that precedes it. The album remains the benchmark for instrumental rock 35 years later.



05 STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN AND DOUBLE TROUBLE

TEXAS FLOOD

(1983)

Stevie's guitar sounded so good on *Texas Flood* that he single-handedly changed the conventional wisdom about guitar strings. Despite most of the other records on this list being recorded with strings so thin you could barely see them, SRV convinced a generation to string their axes with suspension bridge cables in a quest for tone.

It was the ferocity of Vaughan's attack and his unbelievable swing that mattered, though. The heavy strings were just there to take the punishment from his picking hand. In a regular blues shuffle, the second eighth note comes slightly late, perhaps 60 per cent of the way through the beat, creating the bounce. Stevie, though, would hit it

70 per cent of the way through the beat, for a driving hard swing that few guitarists can replicate. Combined with his ability to rake through every note of a riff, it was an extremely aggressive take on the Texas shuffle that immediately converted rock fans.

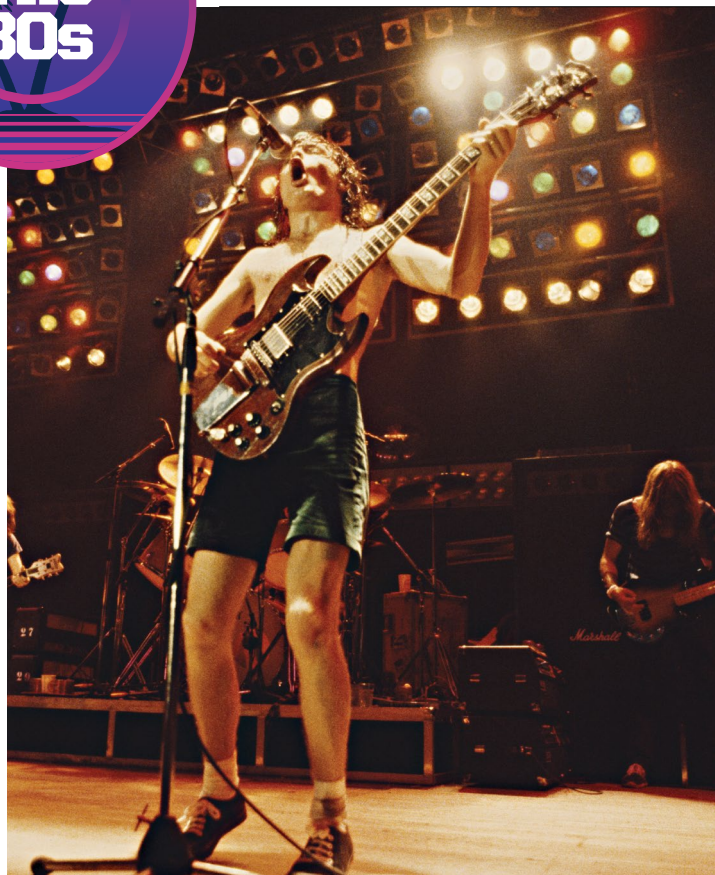
Guitarists sometimes imagine that the hallowed SRV tone is in the gear. It doesn't help that one of the amps was an unobtainable Dumbleland Special (if you can find one for sale, expect a £50k price tag). The Stevie connection also saw the prices of 1980s Ibanez Tube Screamers skyrocket, prompting Ibanez to reissue them. As with all these sounds, it's much more about how you play. Who do you imagine would sound more like SRV – you playing through his rig, or him playing through a cheap amp?

Extreme volume definitely helps though, and Stevie's Strat was able to sustain so much because of the coupling of the amp and pickups at intense levels. Although his amps' tones were quite clean, his Fender Vibroverb amps were adding some breakup and a lot of valve compression. Conventional wisdom is that Stevie used the Tube Screamer as a clean boost, with the drive at or close to zero and the level cranked. That does sound great, but it's not the only way he used them: he often had two running at once, which would inevitably add dirt, and with high-headroom amps he would sometimes increase the drive on one or both of them.

Stevie's influences were not hard to spot – Hendrix, Albert King and Lonnie Mack chief among

them. Such was the fire, passion, and sheer quality of Vaughan's delivery, though, that no one could dismiss him as a mere imitator. *Testify*, an Isley Brothers song that Hendrix had played during his stint with the group, became an earth-shaking instrumental in Stevie's hands. Buddy Guy's *Mary Had A Little Lamb* was similarly beefed up, and the fact the young Vaughan's playing easily stood comparison to those giants showed how special he was.

At the close came *Lenny*, an instrumental for his wife that was as delicate and subtle as *Rude Mood* was raw and aggressive. That Vaughan was capable of such contrast signalled his depth. Here was a new talent with the range, skill, and excitement to bring blues to an entirely new audience.



04 BACK IN BLACK AC/DC

(1980)

Writing about how *Back In Black* sounds seems almost

inappropriate. The raw, visceral energy coming from every riff connects to a primal instinct deeper than language. This is gut-level music, not *brain* music.

That's not to say there are no subtleties. The title track has a straight groove, but Angus Young swings the descending lead lick in the riff, a nuance almost everyone misses. By running their amps just past the point of breakup, Angus and brother Malcolm achieved sensitive guitar tones that magnify all the details in their playing. The breakdown before the last chorus of *Shoot To Thrill* sees Angus brushing his strings as lightly as possible, and

you can hear the difference in how hard he plucks each one. The tone is clear enough to hear every note in chords, and the arpeggiated choruses of *You Shook Me All Night Long* are positively jangly. Yet the intro chords of the title track crunch like a dinosaur eating cars. This range of tones comes almost entirely from Malcolm and Angus' picking dynamics.

Thanks to Filippo Olivieri's forensic studies, we know that a contributor to Angus' tone was the Schaffer-Vega wireless he used even when recording. The receiver included a preamp which restored frequencies lost in transmission but also boosted the signal in unique ways. But what you really need is a picking hand spiritually synced to the groove. We can't explain it. Just turn it up.

03 MASTER OF PUPPETS METALLICA

(1986)

Most bands are lucky to have one great guitarist, but Kirk and James both star on the greatest thrash album of all time. Hetfield's right hand is like Cristiano Ronaldo's right foot, a marvel at the pinnacle of achievement in its field. If the timing is at all off when double tracking, the attack of each note gets 'smeared', losing the crunch. Hetfield triple-tracked his guitars with laser-guided precision, some of the tightest and most brutal rhythm playing ever laid down. It helped that the band had riffs to burn, churning through an album's worth in the title track alone.

One consistently underrated aspect of Kirk Hammett's playing is his ability to create melodies over clean breakdown sections. The harmonised lines over



Hetfield's arpeggios in the title track are a moment of beauty amidst brutality, and it makes everything sound more crushing when the band starts breathing fire again. Kirk's whammy bar action is also top notch, in a decade of tremolo shenanigans.

The *Puppets* guitar tone was transitional between their early, nasal, Marshall-and-Tubescreamer tone and their later scooped Boogie sound. Kirk and James slaved the preamp from Mesa/Boogie Mark IIC+ heads into the power amp of a Marshall 2203.

James had not yet discovered EMG pickups, and was using a Jackson King V equipped with Seymour Duncan Invaders. Kirk mainly used a Jackson Randy Rhoads with EMGs, but his stock Gibson Flying V appears on some solos.

02 APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION

GUNS N' ROSES

(1987)

Mid-80s Los Angeles had two kinds of guitarist: shredders with amazing technique but no feel, and posers with none of either. Into this void came Slash, reinventing classic rock guitar on Guns N' Roses' debut record *Appetite For Destruction*.

Other bands talked tough, but singer Axl Rose actually sounded ready to jump off the stage and mess you up, and Slash's solos had the attitude to back it up. After Axl yells "why don't you just... f**k off?" in *It's So Easy*, Slash's grinding two-string bend repeats the invitation. When Axl threatens "I wanna watch you bleed!" in *Welcome To The Jungle*, Slash delivers double stops tough enough to make it happen.

Equally important was rhythm guitarist Izzy Stradlin. He and Slash proved themselves easily the best riff writers since AC/DC, and the interplay between their parts was essential to *Appetite*'s magic. Judas Priest bashed out identical riffs in unison, and Def Leppard orchestrated unique parts for each guitarist. Slash and Izzy found another way, each of them often playing his own interpretation of the same riff. This created a dynamic push and pull between the parts. 80s records could sound mechanical, but *Appetite* was deeply human, as the accelerating outro to *Paradise City* showed.

Appetite also sounded honest. Some 80s ballads sounded like the result of a board meeting to produce a hit single, whereas *Sweet Child O' Mine* was naturally melodic. Slash's ear for melody

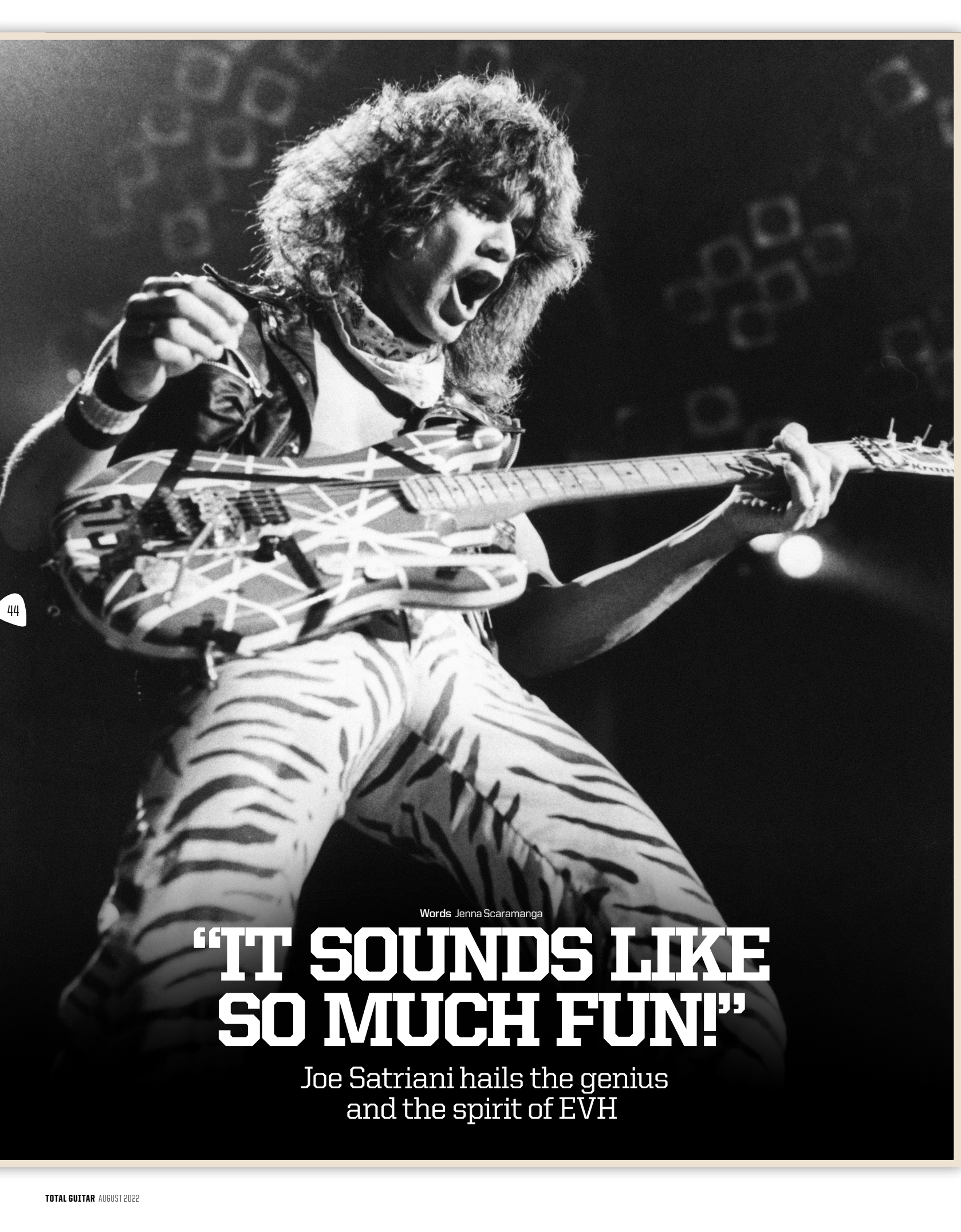
produced hooks you could whistle, giving *Paradise City*, *Sweet Child O' Mine* and *Welcome To The Jungle* some of the decade's most memorable single-note riffs.

Slash's solos showed the influence of Michael Schenker, Angus Young and Jimmy Page, but he had the speed to impress in the decade of Vai and Yngwie. He never sounded like a shredder, though. He had controlled sloppiness like Keith Richards and Joe Perry that just sounded cool. He was also more rhythmically interesting than the shredders delivering hails of unbroken 16th notes or sextuplets. Even Slash's breakneck licks in *Nightrain* and *Paradise City* use a variety of note lengths and articulations.

As with Van Halen's first album, *Appetite*'s guitar tone is shrouded in myth and legend because the rented modified Marshall Slash

used was later stolen. But the important thing was that it sounded like a *guitar amp*, rather than a signal that had been fed through so many digital processors it barely resembled the original source. Mix engineers Steve Thompson and Michael Barbiero wisely left the guitars raw, and this helped *Appetite* to stay relevant even through the 90s, when most 80s records sounded painfully dated.

In hindsight, *Appetite* started paving the way for the 90s even as it embodied 80s excess. It spearheaded a return to live sounds and Les Pauls and away from day-glo pointy headstocks. Guns N' Roses represented authenticity, a love of music, and real emotion at a time of cynicism, and their debut is a testament to the life-affirming powers of rock'n'roll.



Words Jenna Scaramanga

“IT SOUNDS LIKE SO MUCH FUN!”

Joe Satriani hails the genius
and the spirit of EVH

01 1984 VAN HALEN

(1984)

Wan Halen's sixth album, 1984, was the climax of a battle for creative control between Eddie

Van Halen and the band's producer Ted Templeman. After 1981's *Fair Warning* – Van Halen's heaviest album – produced no hit singles, Templeman pushed for covers on 1982 follow-up *Diver Down*. It yielded hits, but Eddie was unhappy.

"I would rather bomb with my own music than make it with other people's music," Eddie told *Guitar World* in 2014. "Ted felt that if you redo a proven hit, you're already halfway there." To wrest control from Templeman, Eddie and engineer Don Landee converted a racquetball court at Van Halen's house into a studio. They named it 5150, and the 1984 album was its first project. Ironically, the album made entirely on Eddie's terms became Van Halen's most commercially successful effort. Templeman resisted recording at 5150, but relented after he heard the song *Jump*. "He didn't care much about the rest of the record," said Eddie. "He just wanted that one hit."

With Eddie, a classically trained pianist, playing the main riff on synthesizer, *Jump* put a new twist on Van Halen's sound. As Joe Satriani says now: "*Jump* sounded really fresh. The simple major chords that we've heard a million times just for some reason sound new. I would say that's like Mozart. There's a history of amazing classical music before him, so what did he do? He used the same chords as everybody else, but the way he did it made you go 'Oh! I like the way he goes I-IV-V.' *Jump* has that same thing. It's just I-IV-V, but it sounds great."

With Templeman pacified, Van Halen got serious. Limited space at 5150 made for an unusual working

environment. The Marshall Plexi sat in one corner behind isolation panels, and Eddie sat on a stool in front of brother Alex's drumkit and did not even wear headphones. There wasn't space for cymbals, which were overdubbed later. Only the snare was live; Alex used electronic Simmons drums for everything else. "Can you imagine what it sounded like in the room?" laughs Satriani. "This is insane. He'd do a drum fill and where there should be a crash at the end, there's nothing. How did they work that out? Just the monitoring, so that they could do something like *Hot For Teacher* and make it sound so perfect?"

The visual connection between the Van Halen brothers was essential. As Eddie recalled of *Hot For Teacher*: "I distinctly remember sitting in front of Al on a wooden stool and playing that part during my solo where it climbs. Well, I can't count, so Al needs to follow me. I'd sit right in



JOE SATRIANI

front of him, and then he'd look at me like, 'Now!'" Satriani is thrilled by this story. "No wonder it sounds like so much fun!" he enthuses. "They were sort of autonomous and yet they were totally linked together."

As Satriani sees it, the sound of the brothers playing live was essential to the Van Halen sound. "That sound of Alex's snare drum, I just hear that as something that pulls the whole album together. There are a couple of drummers out there that do that. Watching the *Get Back* documentary [2021], I realised The Beatles were not The Beatles until Ringo started playing. When he was off having a cup of tea, it just sounded like John, Paul, and George as individuals. It didn't sound like The Beatles. Ringo starts to play and it's this gigantic thing. Van Halen is the same way. We've all heard Eddie jamming with other people and it's nowhere

near the same."

Joe discussed the recording of 1984 with Van Halen bassist Michael Anthony when they worked together in the supergroup Chickenfoot. Since 5150's live room only had space for Eddie and Alex, Anthony overdubbed his bass later. "Mike told me every song you'd have to find out where Eddie was tuned, because you never knew what take they used and whether anything was tuned at the time," Joe says. "What makes this album so interesting is the fact that there are guitars that are not totally in tune – but good luck trying to get as good a take as that!"

Eddie's 1984 tone is distinct from his early sound, but it used largely the same gear. The Frankenstrat was largely retired for this album in favour of the banana-headstocked Kramer 5150, but the magic Marshall Plexi was still his only amp. Eddie did use his Eventide harmoniser on every song, but it was not as prominent as it would become on later albums. "I used it mostly to split my guitar signal so it came out of both sides," he commented.





The 80s

The guitars are still single-tracked with few overdubs, making it unique among rock albums of the time. As Joe comments: "There's not like rhythm guitar left and right. I'm always adding a Tele and a Strat and a Les Paul, but because David Lee Roth's voice was so charismatic, they didn't have to. They left space for each other."

Templeman's lack of concern for album tracks left Eddie and Alex free to stretch themselves creatively. As Joe says: "When you make albums, there are songs that the band likes but from the production point of view it doesn't have commercial potential, suddenly people start to work on it differently. Everyone plays differently. They say, 'Well, it's not gonna be a single so we can

do this instead of having to edit that part.' I love *House Of Pain* so much. It's not as complete as *Jump* or *Panama*, where you can tell they worked on it because it had single potential. The verses are so out there. When I try to imagine one of the four parts not being there, it doesn't work. I remember just listening to that over and over again, thinking 'This is a moment.'

all playing the same thing, the drums and bass are doing the same thing. It's a different kind of music altogether. It's both whimsical and deadly serious, and you just have to be so good to pull that off."

Joe still recalls Van Halen's seismic impact on America's guitarists. "When Eddie came on the scene it scared the sh*t out of

play that good.' I always thought Eddie is going to be great for guitar. I was keen not to copy something that Eddie had done. Like, 'I'm not going to get in his territory. What's my contribution?' When I wrote the two-handed piece *Midnight for Surfing With The Alien* I was thinking, 'Guys like Eddie and other two-handed players – what did they *not* do?'"

For Joe Satriani, 1984 exemplifies great music. "The music we listen to decade after decade is the stuff with character and love in it. You can't get that just by sitting

"GUITARS ARE NOT TOTALLY IN TUNE - BUT GOOD LUCK TRYING TO GET AS GOOD A TAKE AS THAT!"

"What I really like about that first the first version of Van Halen was that they all seem to be playing separate parts with separate accents, yet they came together so well. Eddie never really went for that triple-tracked,

so many guitar players," he says. "I saw it as a total vindication of what I liked to play and what I liked to listen to, whereas people in other styles were feeling, 'This is bad competition. I don't want to have to deal with someone who can

down with the metronome and trying to get one click faster. The thing we should be practising is just playing music. Eddie and Alex jammed for hours until they hit upon something so unique that is so perfectly natural. It jumps out of the album."

1984 PANAMA-STYLE CHORDS

BIT.LV/TG360AUDIO

♩=135

B/E E Esus⁴ E B/E E C⁵ D⁵ Play 4 times

PM PM PM PM PM PM NH

TAB: 7 8 9 10 9 7 9 5 5 5 7 5 7 7 7 5 5 0

Though this is ostensibly a study of Eddie's rhythm part in *Panama*, it's worth noting that he uses the chord/bass-note method (bars 1 and 2) on other VH classics, too. Check out *Girl Gone Bad* (on 1984) and *Running With The Devil* (from 1978's self-titled debut). Use downstrokes for a solid, chugging sound with the chords and bass notes. The harmonics in bar 4 need a deft touch, but it's pure EVH.

1984 JUMP IN THE DEEP END

BIT.LV/TG360AUDIO

♩=135

E⁵ G⁵ A⁵ Play 4 times

Scoop Scoop Scoop Scoop

BU BU BU

w/bar w/bar

TAB: 10(12) 10-8-10-8-10-10 [10]-8 (12)-10-8 (14)-10-8 (15)-10-8 (14)-10-8 (15)-10-8 (17) (19)-10-8 (15)(17)-10-8

A bit like the solo in *Jump*, this is a tough example but it does cover a lot of Eddie's style, so practise each bar on its own to get a feel for each technique. The opening whammy bar dive is simple but the scoops in bar 2 need careful timing to fit in with the fretted notes. Bar 3 is a great example of Eddie's signature tapping style, culminating in a couple of tapped string bends.

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Words Jenna Scaramanga

Throughout the 90s, heavy music was redefined by Rage Against The Machine, Pantera, Soundgarden and more. But incredibly, four of the decade's greatest guitar albums were released within a six-week period in 1991.



10 BLOOD SUGAR SEX MAGIK RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS (1991)

Leaning harder into the funk of funk-rock than any of their peers, the Chilis' defining moment finds John Frusciante drawing as much on Parliament-Funkadelic and Sly Stone as Hendrix. It turned out that playing James Brown riffs with a grittier tone and a drummer who wanted to be John Bonham

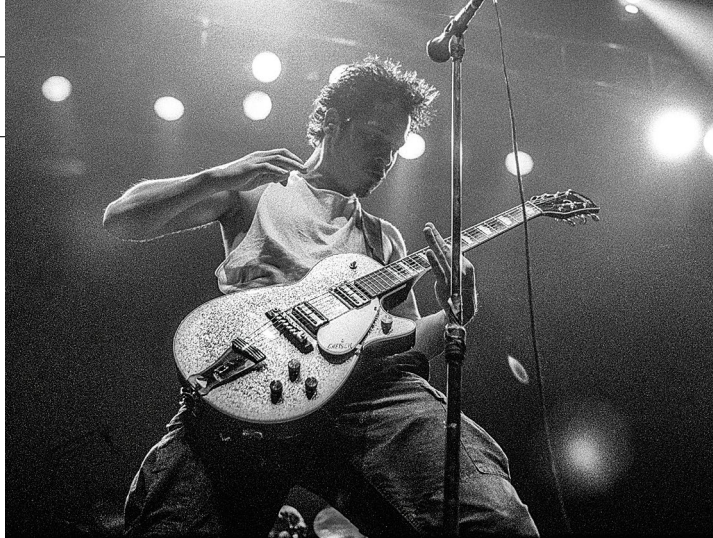
was a winner. Frusciante's angular soloing on *Suck My Kiss* and the graunching string bends of *Give It Away* explored how percussive lead guitar can get, while *Under The Bridge* is the best anyone has appropriated Hendrix's combined lead-rhythm style. Amps? You don't need one - John did most of this straight into the desk.



09 ÆNIMA TOOL (1996)

Unlike his former bandmate Tom Morello, there's no single aspect of Tool guitarist Adam Jones' playing that is identifiably unique. Somehow, though, the overall effect sounds quite unlike anyone else. The majority of riffs are in 4/4, but the band's knack for placing accents in different places

for each instrument makes *Ænima* constantly rhythmically engaging. Jones' Les Paul tone is gigantic yet clear, coming from an early blueface Diezel VH4. His use of flangers gave the tone movement, and he's one of the few guitarists to exploit his guitar's tone control. The grooves in *Ænima* are so hypnotic that epic tunes flash by.



08 SUPERUNKNOWN SOUNDGARDEN (1994)

For all the success of *Superunknown*, a number one in the US, Soundgarden's fourth album saw fearless experimentation with time signatures. *Spoonman* is in 7/4, *My Wave* in 5/4, and *Limo Wreck* in a head-spinning 15/8 (five 'triplet' beats per bar). Their wild tunings included Open C (C-G-C-G-E),

and Open E5 (E-E-B-B-B). Nevertheless, MTV found *Black Hole Sun* irresistible. Chris Cornell and Kim Thayil somehow retained clarity amid such sludgy riffing, thanks in no small part to Cornell's choice of a Gretsch Duo Jet and Silver Jet and a Fender Jazzmaster to record all the rhythms, split through a Mesa Dual Rectifier and a 50-watt Marshall JMP.



07 VULGAR DISPLAY OF POWER PANTERA (1992)

Dimebag Darrell was one of metal's great characters – Zakk Wylde and EVH mashed into one fret-melting force of nature. On paper, Pantera should have been too heavy to get as big as they did, but Dime's riffs had such an irresistible groove that everyone got on board. His vibrato

was wider than the Grand Canyon, and his chromatic licks were vicious. The 12/8 rhythm of *Walk* defines groove metal, and its hand-crossing tapping lick is just plain fun. Dime proved you didn't need valve amps for brutality, either. His preferred Randall solid-state heads grind with an unceasing fury here.



WELCOME TO SKY VALLEY KYUSS (1994)

Stoner rock demigods Kyuss formed in the California desert, and their music sounds

like those sandy wastelands. Future Queens Of The Stone Age leader Josh Homme's throbbing, nasty fuzz tone allegedly came from two cabinets set up to face each other, creating phase cancellations that removed

certain frequencies. His Ovation Ultra GP was permanently set to its DiMarzio Super 2 neck pickup, and by tuning to Drop

C he anticipated metal's descent into ever lower and heavier sounds. Stoners and doom metallers alike owe Kyuss a huge debt, and Dave Grohl called them "the future of grunge music", before later collaborating with Homme.



1990s Gear Through The Years...

DigiTech Whammy (1989)

Effects pedals had settled into a pattern by the dawn of the 90s until the Whammy came along, offering treadle-controlled pitch-shifting that the likes of Tom Morello and Dimebag Darrell would use with spectacular results.

Ibanez Universe (1990)

Designed with Steve Vai, the Universe was the first mass-produced seven-string guitar. The extended-range format confused some – then Korn came along and everybody wanted one.

Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifier (1991)

If previous decades had belonged

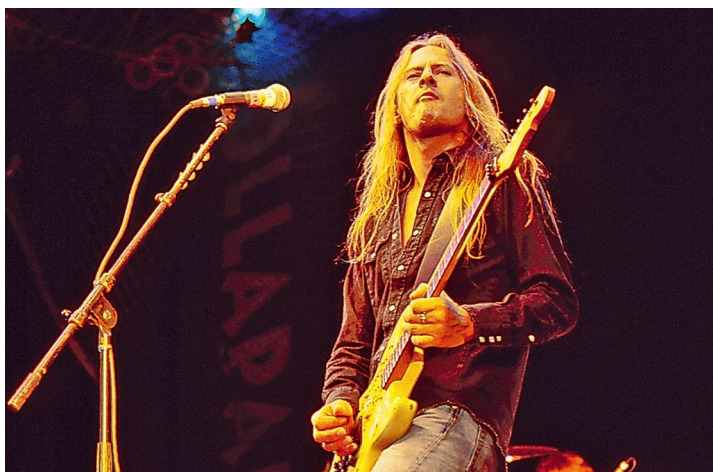
to Marshall when it came to rock and metal amplification, the Dual Rectifier offered a fire-breathing high-gain sound that was all super-tight, weaponised chug.

Klon Centaur (1994)

Bill Finnegan's overdrive kick-started the boutique pedal consumerist/tone-chasing frenzy, launching a million imitators and supplying crunches in rare NOS germanium diodes.

Line 6 POD (1997)

Line 6's game-changer made digital amp modelling mainstream in 1997, offering 16 amp models from an impossibly compact kidney bean-shaped unit. Amps would never be the same again.



06 DIRT ALICE IN CHAINS (1992)

Riffing harder than any of their Seattle contemporaries, Alice In Chains brought metal and grunge fans together. *Them Bones* successfully turned a piledriving riff in 7/8 into a hit single without sounding remotely prog, and Cantrell's drop D grinding and layered parts earned him the

admiration of Dimebag Darrell and Eddie Van Halen. Producer Dave Jerden recorded a separate amp for each EQ band. A Rockman supplied the treble, and a Bogner Ecstasy brought the mids. Bass was either a prototype Dual Rectifier or a Bogner Fish preamp, depending who you ask, but either way the resulting tone is colossal.

04 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE (1992)

There's a lot to say about Rage Against the Machine's musical innovation, but ultimately every landmark album needs great songs, and Rage had 'em. Their debut had the best set of Jimmy Page-inspired blues riffs since *Led Zeppelin II*, and frontman Zach de la Rocha created slamming hooks without the need for singing. Drummer Brad Wilk had a Bonhamesque ability to hit each snare slightly late and guitarist Tom Morello also sat behind the beat, sounding like a T-Rex stomping through New York. Morello's preference for neck pickup tones on rhythms made him stand out. He used his Arm the Homeless guitar for standard tuning and American Standard

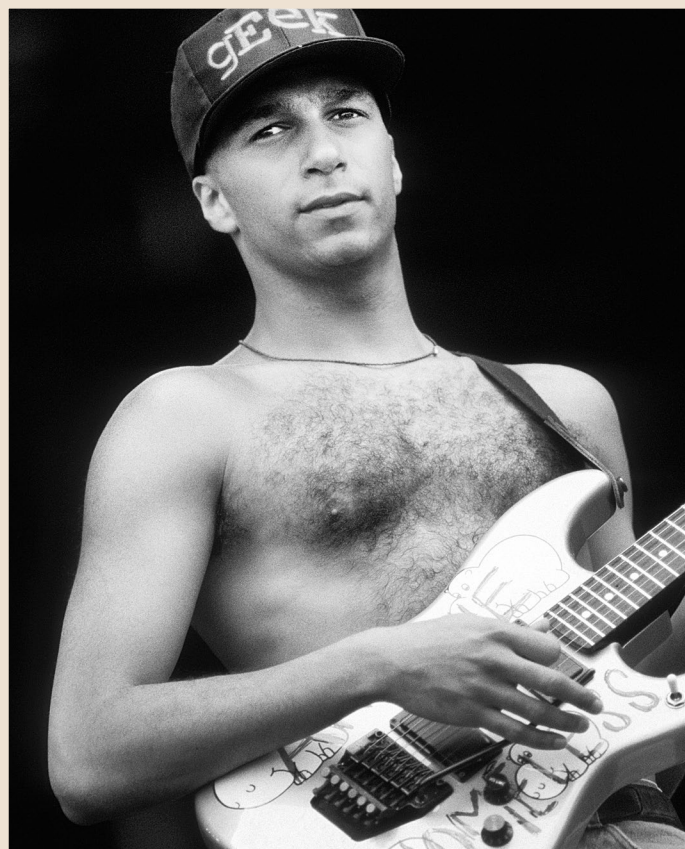
Telecaster for everything in Drop D, with overdubs from a Les Paul. Sick of tone chasing, Morello picked one amp setting in rehearsal and has stuck with it ever since. Luckily, his Marshall 2205 sounded awesome. Innovation is part luck, and Morello happened to be the first breakthrough guitarist with a DigiTech Whammy. But he also had an astonishingly creative mind and a refusal to be limited by conventional approaches. His DJ scratching, created with a killswitch and a wide open wah pedal, was brand new. At times he'd unplug the guitar and exploit the noises made by a live cable. Somehow, Tom made it all work in context without sounding weird for the sake of it.

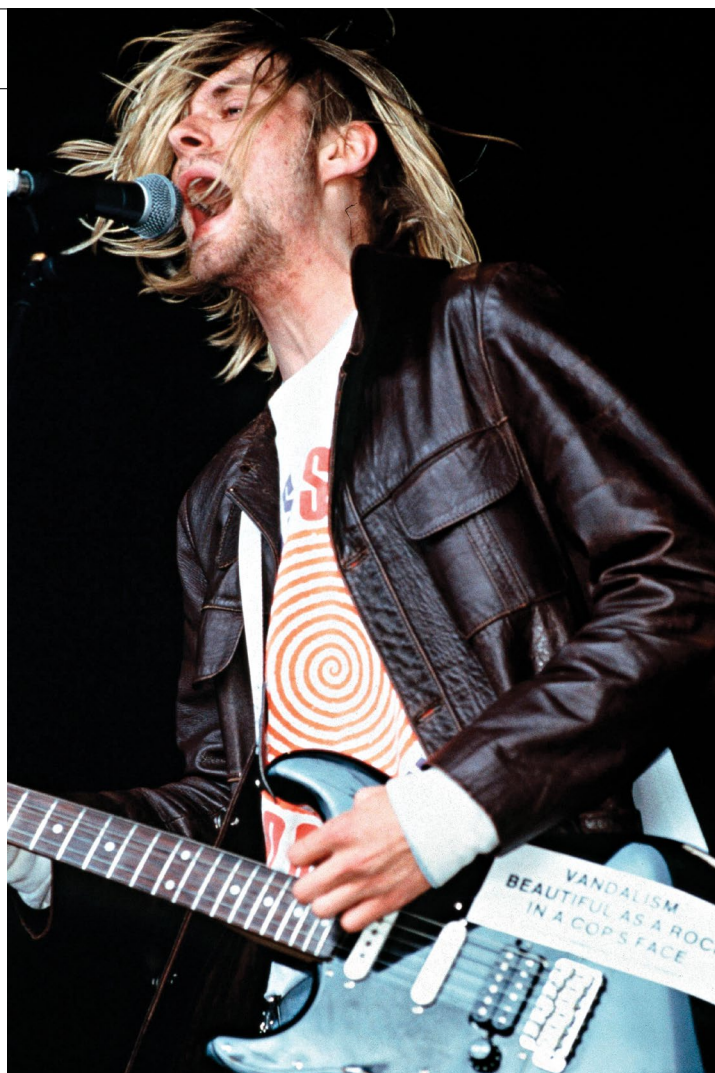


05 RUST IN PEACE MEGADETH (1990)

Marty Friedman's choice soloing made Megadeth the guitar connoisseur's favourite thrashers, and he was never in better form than on *Rust In Peace*. With exotic pentatonic scales and artfully chosen wrong notes, he never sounded predictable but he kept enough blues influence to be accessible.

Standouts like *Tornado Of Souls* show a vibrato Kirk Hammett could only dream of and a perfect balance of technique and melody. Dave Mustaine isn't outclassed either – his 'machine gun' alternate picking is blistering. He delivered his best riffs and songs to date, and went toe-to-toe with Friedman for *Hangar 18*'s duelling solos





03 NEVERMIND NIRVANA (1991)

The 90s didn't really begin until *Nevermind* came out. There had long existed a punk scene for people who felt alienated by bands like Mötley Crüe. By 1991, that was the majority, and a generation embraced Nirvana for rejecting what had gone before.

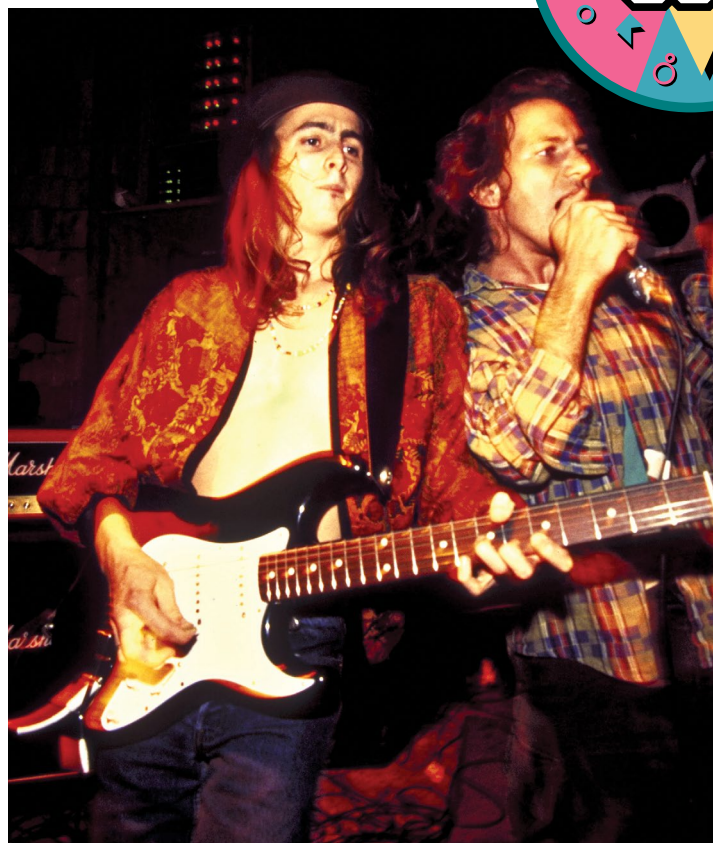
Kurt Cobain had bought his Fender Jaguar because it was the only decent lefty he could find, but it helped that it looked unlike anything on MTV. Where 80s chorus had been digitally pristine, Kurt chose an analogue MXR Small Clone. Where their distortion had come from giant amps, Kurt had a \$40 Boss DS-1. And where they had shredded, Kurt played the vocal melody.

Ironically, producer Butch Vig didn't let Nirvana sound the way they wanted. *Nevermind*'s sonics reflect the tension between Kurt's

urge for rawness and Vig's radio-friendly instincts. Audiences connected to Cobain's raw emotion, but they might not have done so in such numbers had Vig not persuaded him to multitrack a slick wall of guitars.

Beyond the sonics were Kurt's immaculately crafted songs. The soft-loud dynamics were undeniably effective, and he had a Beatles-like knack for unexpected but satisfying chord changes. *Lithium* dances between D major and D minor for its verse and changes key for the chorus, while *In Bloom* somehow weaves a beautiful melody around the most jarring set of chords.

It's hard to think about *Nevermind* without thinking of the overall tragedy of Kurt's life, but it's a monumental testament to the power of music – and guitars – to communicate feeling.



02 TEN PEARL JAM (1991)

Stone Gossard and Mike McCready's smart approach to having two guitars gave Pearl Jam's debut its expansive sound. Generally McCready plays a Strat while Gossard plays a Les Paul, and one plays high while the other plays low. The distinct tones and frequencies from each guitarist give everything clarity and fill the entire audio spectrum with sonic excitement. Pearl Jam have been called Seattle's Rolling Stones to Nirvana's Beatles. Like the Stones they have the knack of "weaving sonic tapestries", as Keith Richards put it. Their thoughtful part writing also left space for Jeff Ament's enormous 8- and 12-string basslines.

Mike McCready's undisguised Stevie Ray Vaughan passion saw him bring Strats back into vogue. After a decade of

compressed humbucker tones, McCready's dynamic single coils underlined that this was a new generation. He described his playing on *Black* and *Even Flow* as an SRV "rip off", while he saw the epic outro solo in *Alive* as a copy of Ace Frehley's solo in *She* by Kiss, which in turn was taken from Robby Krieger's *Five To One* with The Doors.

Both guitarists used JCM800s for dirty tones and Fenders for clean parts. The guitarists happily shared the spotlight, with Gossard often playing main riffs on songs where McCready took solos. Kurt Cobain may have sneered that *Ten* had too many solos for an alternative band, but Pearl Jam were reconnecting rock with more organic tones and blues-rock roots, more Hendrix than hair metal. *Ten* was a classic rock masterpiece disguised as a grunge album.



Words Jenna Scaramanga

“IT’S A PHENOMENON!”

Bullet For My Valentine’s Matt
Tuck salutes The Black Album



01 METALLICA

METALLICA

(1991)

The standout guitar album of the 90s. The best-selling heavy metal album of all time. A sonic and creative benchmark for the genre. Metallica's self-titled fifth album, forever known as *The Black Album*, is also the inspiration for countless young guitarists, with lead single *Enter Sandman* an essential riff for every new player. And for Matt Tuck, leader of British metal stars Bullet For My Valentine, the influence of this album is profound.

"They were a big band before that anyways," Matt says, "but as soon as they released *The Black Album* it went stratospheric. They've been untouchable ever since, as far as getting an album to connect with as many people as they did. The amount of sales, how relevant it is 30 years later – it's just a phenomenon!"

Tuck tells a story millions of metal fans can relate to: "I was fourteen years old. We had just got Sky installed so we had MTV. We put it on and there was this music video on of a truck smashing

through a man's bed, with all these crazy low-end toms raging. It was *Enter Sandman*. The moment I heard it I was like 'What the f*ck is this?' I was hooked from that moment. Within a couple of weeks I went out and bought my first ever album, Metallica's *Black Album*."

In that moment, Matt Tuck's future was set. "I started to learn to play guitar by myself that year, off the back of that album," he continues. "I learned some basic chords, then put on that album and started to work it all out. I wanted to be James Hetfield!"

In the early 80s, Metallica had risen to cult status as pioneers of thrash metal, a super-fast, super-heavy hybrid of metal and punk. After a doggedly anti-commercial start to their career, they had made their first MTV video, for the song *One*, in 1988. The following album would be a risky move into the mainstream. For this they enlisted producer Bob Rock, best known for working with Mötley Crüe and Bon Jovi. James Hetfield's touring guitar had long been emblazoned with a "Kill Bon Jovi" sticker, and some Metallica fans were nervous.



BFMV'S MATT TUCK

Rock was famously demanding in the studio. Tensions between band and producer are visible in the *Year In The Life Of Metallica* documentary, and there were times during the making of the album when band and producer were barely on speaking terms.

Matt Tuck compares the process to working with producer Don Gilmore (Linkin Park) on Bullet's 2010 album *Fever*. "We've never had that kind of ascendancy," he says, "but *Fever* felt like a big stepping stone for us. That took us from Brixton Academy to Wembley. Up until that point, nobody questioned the songwriting. Don Gilmore was the only guy that really challenged me as a writer and I didn't like it! He's trying to get us to take out double kick patterns and not dumb it down, but just try and make it a little bit more *Black Album*."

Matt can understand Metallica's difficulties with Rock. "It's such an intimate long-term personal process. The first time you work with these guys you don't know them, there's no relationship,

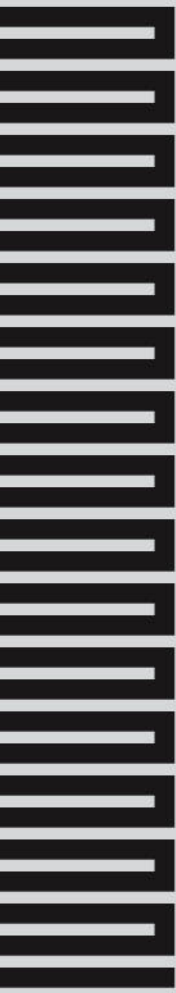
there's no trust. It's only really when the dust settles and you can look back on it a couple of years later that you actually appreciate the process."

The *Black Album*'s monochrome cover both earned its nickname and invited comparisons to AC/DC's *Back In Black*. The albums have more in common than just their ultra-noir sleeves. Both were made at the turn of a decade by bands in mourning (AC/DC for singer Bon Scott, Metallica for bassist Cliff Burton). Both bands had begun with cult followings and made steps towards the mainstream with *Highway To Hell* (1979) and ... *And Justice For All* (1988) respectively. For both bands, though, black albums marked the leap to global stardom, securing their places in the rock pantheon – even if diehard fans still prefer their earlier work.

The AC/DC connection was conscious. Drummer Lars Ulrich told *Uncut* magazine's John Robinson in 2020 that they listened to the Australians when writing *The Black Album*: "We thought about the art of simplifying and writing shorter songs... A little more bounce, to make the music more physical than cerebral." Where Metallica's trademark in the 80s had been fast







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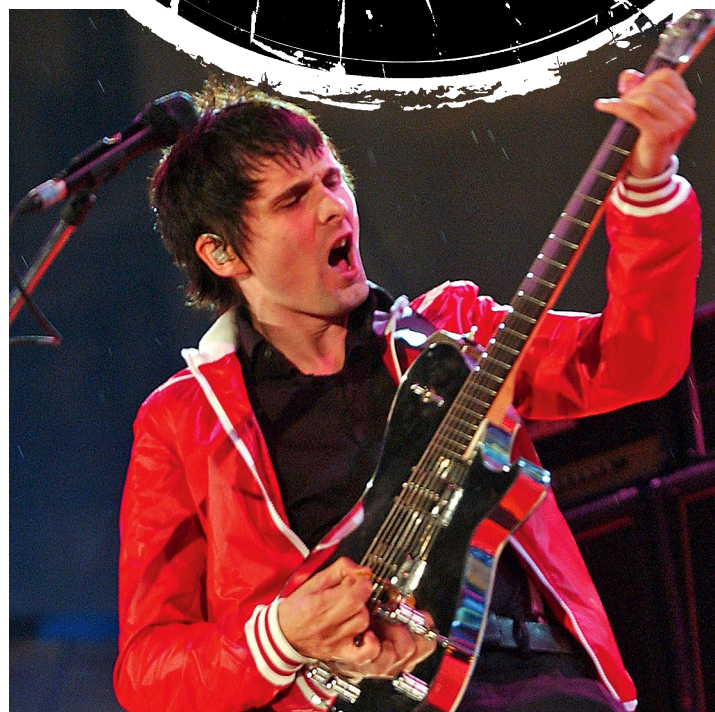


ADAM AUDIO



Words Amit Sharma

Blues music had a new star in John Mayer. Fingerstyle was taken to a new level by Andy McKee. And heavy guitar sounds were everywhere – from Tool, Muse, Queens Of The Stone Age, Alter Bridge and more...



10 BLACK HOLES AND REVELATIONS MUSE (2006)

More eclectic than any Muse album before it, especially in terms of themes, instrumentation and layers, *Black Holes And Revelations* is a potently cohesive twist of rock and electronic music that in truth no other band could deliver with such fierce bravado. Matt Bellamy was using Manson

guitars through Marshall, Vox and Diezel amps, along with an array of pedals including his ZVEX Fuzz Factory, DigiTech Whammy, Keeley Compressor and Boss OC-2. Bellamy's tones feel gargantuan throughout – especially on the album's lead single *Supermassive Black Hole* and on the epic closing track *Knights Of Cydonia*.



09 CITY OF EVIL AVENGED SEVENFOLD (2005)

The new wave of American heavy metal bands that flourished at the turn of the millennium featured some truly exceptional guitarists. Avenged Sevenfold's Synyster Gates remains, however, in a class of his own – serving up rhythmic crunch to match any of his contemporaries, but with

the added firepower of jaw-dropping shredder acrobatics. The finger-twisting solos on *City Of Evil* are among his finest and, according to the man himself, his trickiest. He recently confessed that re-learning the track *M.I.A.* was proving to be "really tough", adding: "I don't know what the f*ck I was thinking there!"



08 SONGS FOR THE DEAF QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE (2002)

2000 album Rated R gave QOTSA their commercial breakthrough, but *Songs For The Deaf*, with Dave Grohl on drums, turned them into major stars. Josh Homme has remained tight-lipped about his studio tools, but Eric Valentine, this album's co-producer, revealed:

"There was a huge amount of midrange at every stage – whether it's a setting on the amp, pedal or console." He also confirmed a lot of the tones came from Homme's Ovation electric, a Foxx Octave Fuzz belonging to Alain Johannes, and mixing Peavey solid-states with an Ampeg VT40 and the Tube Works head he used in Kyuss.

07 TOXICITY SYSTEM OF A DOWN (2001)

Mixing metallic dirge with bombastic energy, System Of A Down's self-titled debut album made them cult heroes, but it was second album *Toxicity* that moved them up into the big league, hitting number one in the US, powered by the anthemic single *Chop Suey!* – written by guitarist Daron

Malakian as he jammed in the back of an RV motorhome as the band traveled between gigs. Other key tracks such as *Needle*, *Deer Dance* and *Shimmy* would define Malakian's style at its most bludgeoning, using the minor second (first fret) and tritone (sixth fret) intervals against his open drop C for maximum dissonance.

06 STADIUM ARCADIVM RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS (2006)

On this expansive double album, guitarist John Frusciante was reinventing himself. Having generally stuck with a more minimalist approach after 1989's *Mother's Milk*, Frusciante spread his wings on *Stadium Arcadium* – cranking up the fuzz in the right places for thicker chords and

tastefully improvised leads. And his funk chops certainly hadn't diminished, either. As Cory Wong tells TG: "There's a song called *Hump De Bump* that's seriously underrated. It has such a sick pocket, feel and groove. I love the way John uses all aspects of [his] Strat and all the pickup positions to get such a variety of tones."



EROTIC CAKES GUTHRIE GOVAN (2006)

Widely regarded as the most important instrumental

guitar record since Steve Vai's *Passion And Warfare* – or at the very least among the few that could exist comfortably in the same sentence as such a game-changing masterpiece – Guthrie Govan's solo debut is as dazzling as it

gets. On tracks such as *Waves*, *Sevens* and *Wonderful Slippery Thing*, he slides and snakes his way through all kinds of exotic

scales with mesmerising musicality and finesse, with not a single chink in the armour when it comes to technique. Guthrie's genre-crossing exploits in instrumental super-trio

The Aristocrats remain equally as thrilling.



2000s Gear Through The Years...

Line 6 DL4 Delay (1999)

Another paradigm shift in guitar tech from Line 6 – one of the most important delay units ever. From experimental alt-rock bedroom artists to stadium-shakers, everyone used one.

IK Multimedia AmpliTube (2002)

When amp and effects modelling arrived for our home computers via the AmpliTube plugins suit, it democratised the recording process, placing an abundance of rigs at your fingertips.

Boss RC-20XL Loop Station (2004)

Loopers come in all shapes and

sizes nowadays, but much of their popularity arrived on the back of Boss's RC-20XL, which changed everything for solo performers.

Electro-Harmonix POG (2005)

The polyphonic octave generator is one of those effects that arrives each decade to remind us that there are still cool, weird and ultimately musical sounds waiting to be discovered.

Ibanez RG2228 (2007)

Eight-string guitars were extremely niche products until Ibanez began this run of mass-produced models. Opt for a budget brand and today you can buy an eight-string for under £250!



05 AUDIOSLAVE AUDIOSLAVE (2002)

Supergroups rarely add up to the sum of their parts, but Audioslave did. And what an equation it was, with the musicians from Rage Against The Machine providing the perfect bedrock for Chris Cornell's vocal power. While debut track *Cochise*

felt typically explosive for guitarist Tom Morello, songs such as *Show Me How To Live* brought more melodic ideas to fore via his new weapon of choice – a modded black Strat with 'Soul Power' written across its top. "I was looking for a new sound for a new phase in my career," he said.

04 LATERALUS TOOL (2001)

The four members of Tool may look back on the recording process for their third album as a turbulent time for the band, as famously referenced by singer Maynard James Keenan in the lyrics to lead single *Schism*. But what they managed to piece together was an unimpeachable masterpiece. *Lateralus* is a magnum opus of seemingly infinite

layers, in which the band fused their alternative rock roots with more metallic and progressive influences and shifting time signatures – all of this in ways that no one had ever done before. Guitarist Adam Jones dialed in those monstrous tones by feeding his Les Paul Custom Silverburst through his Blueface Diezel VH4, 1976 Marshall Super Bass and Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifier heads.

03 ART OF MOTION ANDY MCKEE (2005)

One of the most influential modern fingerstyle players, American acoustic wizard Andy McKee built his name by turning one unaccompanied instrument into something hypnotically profound, exploring a rich timbre of tones and techniques to cover a vast amount of sonic ground at any given moment. This third solo album saw him going viral at a time when such

terms were still relatively new, which is why the live performances of key tracks *Drifting* and *Rylynn* have now clocked over 60 million and 34 million YouTube views respectively. In 2012, an amazing opportunity arrived when McKee joined Prince's band on the Welcome 2 Australia tour. As McKee later recalled: "We even talked about doing an instrumental album after that tour, which never happened, sadly."

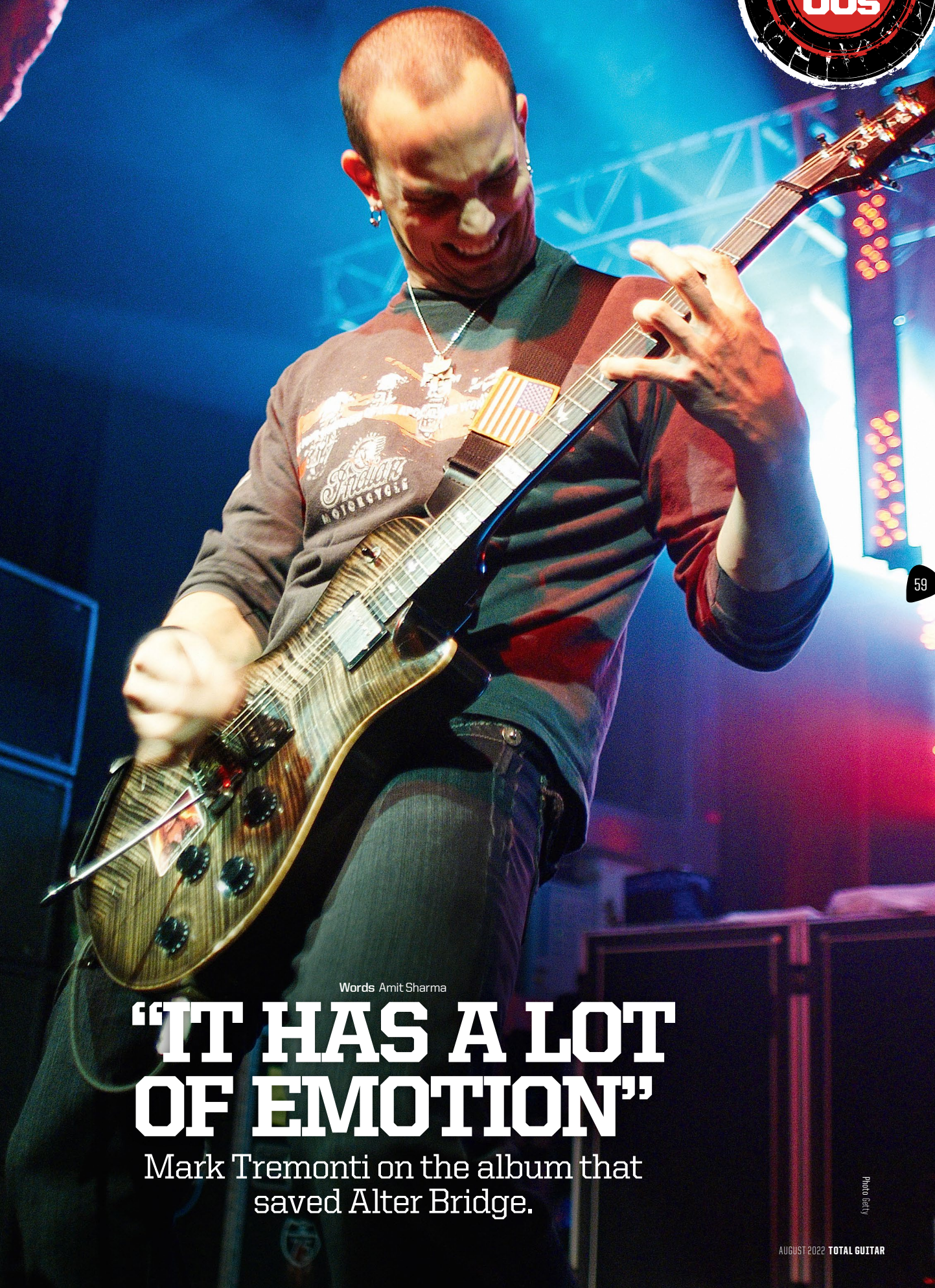


02 CONTINUUM JOHN MAYER (2006)

He may have started out as more of an acoustic player on 2001 debut *Room For Squares*, but on *Continuum*, his third album, John Mayer redefined himself as the electric champion we know today, now standing as one of the most respected blues players on the planet. More simplified and soulful than anything he'd released before, with glassy single-coil leads that were every bit as lyrical as his voice, *Continuum* attracted a new audience outside of the mainstream charts, now arguably his core fanbase. Although it wasn't chosen as one of the singles, *Slow Dancing In A Burning Room* quickly became one of Mayer's signature anthems, with countless covers and backing tracks surfacing online. The

song also played a big part in inspiring the neo-soul movement thriving today.

Mayer famously switched to PRS guitars in 2014, but the main guitars on *Continuum* included his then-recently acquired 1964 sunburst Strat, the 2004 Black One Strat made by Custom Shop master-builder John Cruz (heard on third single *Gravity*) and his Gold Leaf Strat for the track *Vultures*. "The Gold Leaf is what I wrote the song on," he explained to TG at the time. "It's got that incredible second position – what do they call it, the quack? That's the quackiest Strat of all time! *Vultures* does not work on another guitar. That weird, hollowed-out, out-of-phasey-type sound. I've never taken that gold Strat and played any other tune on it than *Vultures*."



59

Words Amit Sharma

“IT HAS A LOT OF EMOTION”

Mark Tremonti on the album that saved Alter Bridge.

Photo: Getty

It was the album that paved the way for Alter Bridge to become the arena-conquering giants we know today. But when guitarist Mark Tremonti recalls the making of *Blackbird*, he refers to this period as the group's "darkest moment", and perhaps the only time it felt like their future was truly in question.

"We honestly didn't know if we'd survive as a band back then," he says. "We fought with our initial label and had to argue to get out of the deal when we felt we weren't getting the support we needed. We were without management or a label, so it was a very in-between phase, just four guys trying to hang on to their career. We were desperate to continue, and luckily we had all the time in the world to write and prepare."

For this, the band's second album, they chose to partner up with producer Michael 'Elvis' Baskette for the very first time. The creative chemistry was so strong that he would go on to produce every Alter Bridge album thereafter, as well as all of the solo releases from both Tremonti and AB frontman Myles Kennedy.

Recalling the *Blackbird* sessions, Mark describes the producer as something of a mad scientist, working from within a jungle of chaos, surrounded by towers of pedals and amp heads in the control room, with no shortage of equipment to help bring their ideas to life. "When we had something like a whammy bar dive," Mark says, "he'd find the coolest tones by mixing all these crazy pedals to make it roar".

After tracking drums at Blackbird Studios in Nashville, the group ended up recording the bulk of the album at a house on Virginia Beach – a good 40-minute drive away from the distractions of local bars and restaurants. The isolation did them wonders...

01 BLACKBIRD ALTER BRIDGE (2007)

"The control room was the family room and I was in the bedroom right next to it," Mark recalls. "I remember writing some of the solos as the bass was getting tracked. It felt a very real moment – we were all together, locked away and fighting for survival. Looking back now, it's one of the best records I've ever been part of. The fingerpicked verse in the title track is probably my favourite guitar moment on the record. When I pick up a guitar to test my clean tone, nine times out of ten I'll be playing that. It just sounds and feels good. I had that part

lying around for a few years and wanted to use it in a song... I finally got my chance!

"I grew up listening to Metallica and learning stuff like *The Call Of Ktulu*, so that's where it all came from. And I didn't know it at the time but Myles pointed this out, Frank Hannon from (Californian band) Tesla ended up being a huge factor in that stuff, too. Those influences are where a lot of those fingerstyle intros came from."

The solo section from the title track is also one of Tremonti's proudest achievements. The leads start with Kennedy before

Tremonti takes over for the second half, both of them sticking with tasteful bluesy lines from the F# minor pentatonic scale. The song is one of the band's most enduring anthems, and it's the duality between the two very different players that exemplifies the power of their partnership.

"The *Blackbird* solo was the last one I wrote right as the album was being made, so the pressure was on!" Mark laughs. "I knew it needed an extra good lead and I think what I played really ended up serving its purpose. I didn't want to fail that song because I always knew it was going to be important. *Brand New Start* is another one I love. I'm really into leads that start half clean with a slightly overdriven sound that gets boosted as the solo goes. It

tells a story rather than just blasting you from beginning to end, it's more of a journey. And actually the song track as a whole is one of my favourite Alter Bridge songs in general.

"*Wayward One* is also a favourite. The guitar solo has a lot of emotion. I remember doing a play-through of it on Instagram, and a lot of people said it was their favourite solo from that record."

In the studio, Tremonti's main axe of choice was his signature PRS in Charcoal Burst, which, unlike most Les Paul-inspired singlecuts, also featured a tremolo bridge. As the group started tuning lower on later albums, it eventually got phased out of rotation.

"We were mainly playing half a step down on *Blackbird*," Mark says. "Either in standard or dropped D, with only a couple of songs in drop B – and what I mean by that is only the sixth string tuned down, the rest are still just a semitone below concert pitch. That Charcoal Burst





was good for that record, but on other records we started tuning even lower and the floating bridge didn't work too well."

The Charcoal Burst PRS was fed into an open-back Fender Twin for the clean sounds, a Bogner Uberschall and Mesa/Boogie Dual Rectifier for the rhythms and a Bogner Ecstasy for the leads. If the tones sound expensive, that's because they were.

"Though I still have it, the Ecstasy doesn't really suit my playing these days," admits Tremonti, who released his own signature, the MT-15, through PRS in 2018. "I prefer a bit more of a modern palm-mute chug sound. It's a great amp for what it is, but I need an amp that sounds like it's a bully, something that just ruins all the other amplifiers!

The Ecstasy is more of an elegant thing.

"As for the rhythm tracks, my Uberschall got mixed with my 'Rev G' Dual Rectifier – which is one of the most common from the 90s era ones. It's what I played back in the Creed days. I don't think I'd found my 'Rev F' yet,

reissue for the cleans, which has always been my favourite clean tone since I was young. It's very hard to replicate the sort of sound you get from an open-back twin but I think we got there on the new MT-100s which will be coming out soon. I'd go as far as saying it has the best

and Kennedy's guitars and Brian Marshall's bass. It remains in their sonic arsenal to this day.

"My guitar tech Ernie [Hudson] got hold of that pink Kramer bass," Mark explains. "We put it through all kinds of fuzz and octave pedals after tracking twice with me and twice again with Myles. We'd do single line runs underneath our guitars to make the riffs sound even bigger.

I remember after making the record, the person who owned the bass wanted it back but we managed to talk him out of it. And just recently while we were making our new record *Pawns & Kings*, it was still there in the studio... we had to hang on to that thing!"

"THE FINGER PICKED VERSE IN THE TITLE TRACK IS MY FAVOURITE GUITAR MOMENT ON THE RECORD"

I got one of those later and they're like the holy grail of Dual Rectifiers. I've watched them go from \$1800 to \$4000 to whatever anyone wants to ask these days. If you find a decent-priced one, grab it! Those things are awesome. And then it was a '65 Fender Twin

clean channel I've ever heard on a higher gain head."

The *Blackbird* album was also notable for the group finding their "secret weapon" for the studio in the form of a pink Kramer bass with active pickups, which was used to mirror the riffs somewhere in between Tremonti

ALTER BRIDGE RIFFING

BIT.LV/TG360AUDIO

♩=90 Bm G⁵ A⁵ Play 4 times

PH 1/4 PM 1/4

0 0 0 12 10 12 0 0 0 3 0 5 0 0 0 0 12 10 12 0 0 0 3 0 5 0 0 0 0 12 10 12 0 0 0 3 0 5 0 3 5 7 7 1/4 3 5 0 0 0 3

To create the Alter Bridge signature brand of heavy riffs, guitarist Mark Tremonti has used pretty much every tuning in the book, and we're using B E A D F# B here – which is standard tuning five semitones lower, aka standard baritone tuning. Other tunings that feature on the album are B, A, D, G, B, E, (*Come To Life*), DGCFA D (*Ties That Bind*) and C# G# C# F# A# D# (*Buried Alive*).

ALTER BRIDGE LEAD

BIT.LV/TG360AUDIO

♩=90 Bm G⁵ A⁵ Play 4 times

BU 7 BU 7 BU 7 7 9 10 7 9 10 12 10 9 10 12 14 12 10 9 12 10 9 7 BU BD 9 7 9 7 9 7 5

10 10 10 9 11 9 11 9 11 9 7 9 10 12 10 9 10 12 14 12 10 9 12 10 9 7 BU BD 9 7 9 7 9 7 5

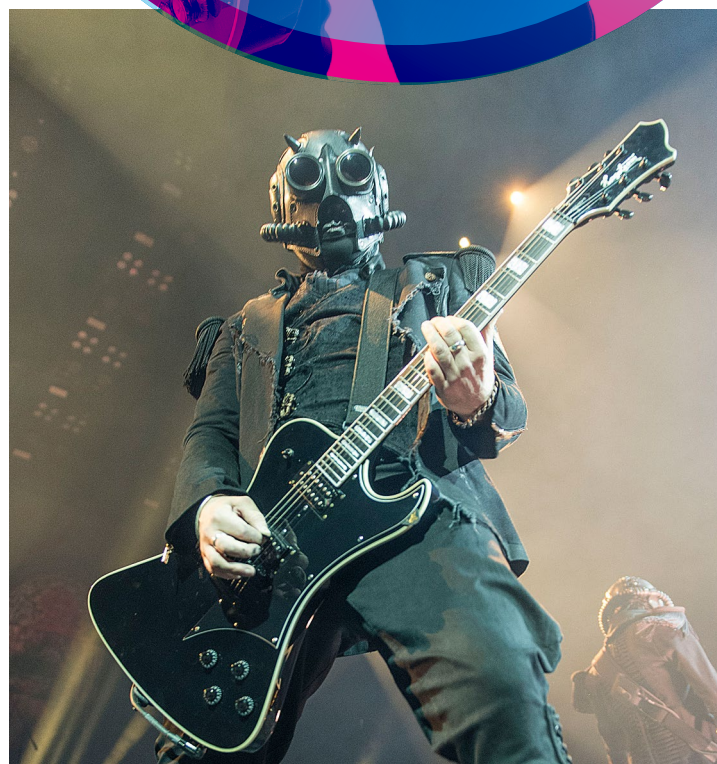
W V V V V V V etc.

Mark Tremonti often brings his solos to life with the wah-wah pedal. Here, we're back in standard tuning and we throw in some faster lines to increase the excitement. The run in bar 3 is tough, so make sure to slow it down and practise in bite-sized phrases.



Words Ellie Rogers

In the last decade, modern classics were created by some of rock's biggest names – Metallica, The Black Keys, Foo Fighters, Slash – and by new heroes including Ghost, Gojira and a young American band with a sound straight out of the early 70s...



10 MELIORA GHOST (2015)

The title of Ghost's third album roughly translates from Latin as "something better" – fitting for what band leader Tobias Forge conceived as a more guitar-driven opus. Anonymity has always been at the core of Ghost's self-made mythology, and while Forge has withheld the true

identities of the 'Nameless Ghouls' who've handled guitar duties over the years, it is known that two Gibson SGs, a 1962 Les Paul and a Fender Telecaster were used in the making of *Meliora*. Each guitar was fed through three different amps to create the album's rich and impenetrably fortified wall of sound.



09 EL CAMINO THE BLACK KEYS (2011)

Dan Auerbach packed more catchy, feel-good riffs into *El Camino* than many bands can muster in an entire career. The Black Keys' seventh album saw the duo of guitarist Auerbach and drummer Patrick Carney taking more cues from 50s rock 'n' roll than from the North Mississippi

bluesmen that had inspired their earliest albums. Well known for using a pick and mix assortment of quirky guitars, Auerbach opted for a 1953 Les Paul for much of *El Camino* and employed some fun toys for the record's stand-out guitar moments, including a pitch shifter on *Lonely Boy* and a talk box for the solo on *Money Maker*.



08 DISTANCE OVER TIME DREAM THEATER (2019)

From a band of virtuosos, Dream Theater's 14th album has all the chops that fans have come to expect: guitarist John Petrucci's trademark displays of warp-speed technical ability and some head-scratchingly complicated time signatures. But in *Distance Over Time* there is heart as well

as flash. As Petrucci says: "You need to be able to play emotively, soulfully and beautifully just as well as you can play fast and technical." For the majority of the record, Petrucci used his DiMarzio pickup-equipped Ernie Ball Music Man Majesty, and coaxed from it both crystalline lead tones and snarling low-end filth.

07 EMPEROR OF SAND MASTODON (2017)

Nobody does monolithic metal quite like Atlanta-based foursome Mastodon. Written in response to the real-life agony of multiple cancer diagnoses among the band's nearest and dearest, *Emperor Of Sand* doubled down on despair, with the inevitability of death as its stark, central theme. Forming one of modern metal's greatest

musical brotherhoods, guitarists Brent Hinds and Bill Kelliher's labyrinthine rhythmic interplay is at its exemplary best across the entire collection of 11 conceptually connected tracks. Testament to its masterful composition, the album was nominated for Best Rock Album at the Grammys and its lead single, *Sultan's Curse* scooped the trophy for Best Metal Performance.

06 FERAL ROOTS RIVAL SONS (2019)

As its title suggests, *Feral Roots* was a primal, back-to-basics offering from American rockers Rival Sons. Written in a swamp shack in Tennessee after the band had returned from a supporting role on Black Sabbath's farewell tour, the album was the band's sixth – and their first for

major label Atlantic, home to rock giants such as Led Zeppelin and AC/DC. Although it's peppered with acoustic moments, classic rock tones proliferate on *Feral Roots*, and Scott Holiday used a 50-watt Supro Statesman valve amp to carry the fuzz-filled riffs of cornerstone tracks like *Do Your Worst* and *Back In The Woods*.



NEW LEVELS NEW DEVILS POLYPHIA (2018)

While many were alerted to the existence of these

Texas-based, avant-garde shredders by the "boomer bends" controversy of 2021, those in the know had already been losing their minds over Polyphia's boundary-pushing guitar antics for years. *New Levels* *New Devils*, the band's third

album, saw guitarists Tim Henson and Scott LePage delivering all the two-handed wizardry of prog-metal, mixed with slap grooves borrowed from funk and lots of smooth RnB tones. It was an album that set a new high watermark for what can be achieved by a rock group with two guitars and unlimited imagination



2010s Gear Through The Years...

Kemper Profiler (2011)

Digitally capture any amp sound and then recall it on demand? What was this voodoo? The Kemper Profiling tech was one rabbit-hole the serious digital rig enthusiast gladly fell into and along with Fractal's Axe-Fx, it has revolutionised the touring pro's rig.

Yamaha THR Series (2011)

The THR series inaugurated the concept of the 'third amp', that is to say the guitar amplifier with a home hi-fi aesthetic and portable, compact form, plus a suite of amps and effects to boot. One of the great post-millennial breakthroughs for guitar.

Strymon BigSky (2013)

Not just another reverb pedal. Harnessing the full power of digital and the multi-fx idiom of heaps of sounds, heaps of functions, the BigSky was the studio-quality reverb pedal the pros, the serious amateurs, everyone needed... Still is.

Fender Acoustasonic Telecaster (2019)

There is an inherent conservatism to guitar design but every now and then, a guitar like Fender's Acoustasonic Telecaster arrives and radically accelerates six-string evolution. Yes, it's radical, but practical too, with electric playability, multiple voices, and great sounds.



05 MAGMA GOJIRA (2016)

The sixth album from the French prog-metal pioneers marked something of a stylistic shift for Gojira. The band held back on some of the technical extravagances for which they'd become known in the past, including the normally ubiquitous 'Gojira pick scrape'. The result was a more broadly accessible,

emotionally exposed and sonically streamlined record. And even with differently nuanced sides of Joe Duplantier and Christian Andreu's playing on display in atmospheric numbers like *Low Lands* and the acoustic closer *Liberation*, staples of the Gojira sound still abound, with plenty of tricky time signatures and earth-shaking riffs throughout.

04 HARDWIRED... TO SELF-DESTRUCT METALLICA (2016)

If Metallica's 2008 album *Death Magnetic* was a somewhat laboured attempt at getting back to their thrash metal roots, *Hardwired... To Self-Destruct*, the long-awaited follow-up, was the record Metallica fans needed. While its title evoked the internal tensions that had once threatened to end the band, the aggression in this album was directed outwards with high-

octane thrashers like *Spit Out The Bone* and *Atlas Rise!* James Hetfield took charge of songwriting duties, while Kirk Hammett provided some of the wildest improvised solos he's ever committed to record. Sticking to favourite Gibson and ESP axes, the pair proved they didn't need 7-strings or low tunings to deliver an output as heavy or as relevant as any modern metal outfit.

03 WASTING LIGHT FOO FIGHTERS (2011)

With the aim of swerving the clinical sound of modern studio recordings, Foo Fighters' seventh album served as a love letter to their alt-punk roots. *Wasting Light* was recorded in Dave Grohl's garage, using only analogue equipment. Produced by Butch Vig, the record packed all the rock 'n' roll rawness and melodic highs

that had first catapulted the Foos onto the airwaves in the 1990s. As well as Grohl's ballsy rhythms (which he performed using his Gibson Trini Lopez guitars) and Chris Shiflett's hooky leads, *Wasting Light* ushered in the return of Pat Smear as an official band member. To give listeners a full earful of frequencies, Smear contributed lots of baritone guitar grit.



02 SLASH SLASH (2010)

In the 80s he made his name as a new guitar hero with Guns N' Roses. In the 90s he became leader of his own band, Slash's Snakepit. In the 2000s he was part of the supergroup Velvet Revolver. And in 2010 he delivered his first solo album - titled simply *Slash*. But while this remains the only record he has made under his own name alone, plenty of his famous friends were featured across its 14 tracks.

He called upon legendary rock vocalists including Lemmy, Ozzy Osbourne, Iggy Pop and Chris Cornell. There were some slightly eyebrow-raising collabs with pop stars, The Black Eyed Peas' Fergie and Maroon 5's Adam Levine. Most significantly, there were two songs featuring Alter Bridge singer Myles

Kennedy, with whom Slash would form a long-standing relationship alongside backing band The Conspirators. And to top it all off, the album also featured everyone but Axl Rose from the classic Guns N' Roses line-up. And yet, far from being outshone by this star-studded cast, Slash delivered on everything fans have come to know and love about his guitar playing, with chunky groove-laden riffs and epic wailing solos in abundance.

Gear-wise, he didn't indulge in much experimentation, but really - why would he mess with such a classic sound? Rich Les Paul and Marshall JCM800 tones run throughout, with smatterings of wah here and there, and a few clean tones and acoustic guitars for contrast.



The
10s



Words Ellie Rogers

“WE WERE EXPLODING WITH CREATIVITY!”

Jake Kiszka on creating classic
rock for a new generation.

01 ANTHEM OF THE PEACEFUL ARMY

GRETA VAN FLEET

(2018)

By the time the Michigan-based band of (mostly) brothers were preparing to make their first full length studio album, Greta Van Fleet already had two celebrated EPs under their belt, and their singles *Highway Tune* and *Safari Song* had both perched atop Billboard's Mainstream Rock charts in the USA.

Their rise had been meteoric, but had also attracted more than its fair share of burdensome remarks. One side of the music press hailed Greta Van Fleet as the next great saviours of rock'n'roll, while claims that the band were little more than a Led Zeppelin rip-off act bounced around like heckles hurled from the darkest corners of a crowded concert hall.

When *Anthem Of The Peaceful Army* dropped in October 2018, it sold over 80,000 copies in the first week and debuted at number 3 on the US Billboard 200. Its collection of rambunctious rockers and pastoral acoustic numbers demonstrated the band's ability to rise above the chatter and simply do what they do best: make great rock music.

Guitarist Jake Kiszka reflects: "The objectives really were to create something raw and organic. There was nothing else out there quite like it at the time. Even now, it stands independently from that decade – specifically as very guitar-driven rock'n'roll music."

The record's widespread, intergenerational appeal perhaps boils down to the fact that *Anthem Of The Peaceful Army* captured a sound that feels simultaneously

refreshing and revivalist. It's a sound no doubt informed by the classic rock titans of yesteryear, but powered by the animate force of the band's youth. "I suppose it was a collection of many of the things that we'd created musically at the time," Jake says. "We'd been a group for a while, and we'd been building a sonic direction and a spectrum of sound. It all came to one point on *Anthem Of The Peaceful Army*."

The boys cut the record at Blackbird Studios in Nashville in what would turn out to be a particularly prolific session. "We were exploding with creativity," Jake recalls. "It was interesting because we did bring a handful of material and had everything mapped out, but it turned out that being in a certain environment catered to the essence of off-the-cuff creativity."

for *Anthem*, but they took home the seeds that would germinate into their next great record.

"Through the course of jamming and all the time that we had in the studio, there were tons of extra musical bits," Jake says. "We left with a lot of material that didn't even make the record that was revisited and given a different life when we developed *The Battle Garden's Gate*."

Jake brought longtime staple of his live and recording rigs into the studio – his trusty 1961 Gibson Les Paul SG. To clarify a little, the guitar has the SG shape, but still sports the 'Les Paul' name because it was made during the time when Gibson hadn't quite ironed-out the finer details of its nomenclature after introducing the SG as the double-cut successor to the Les Paul. Still equipped with its original stock PAF humbuckers, it's Jake's

For one of the record's stand-out tracks, *Watching Over*, he did just that, and grabbed a nearby Coral Electric Sitar to try out on the song's intricate, mystically tinged solo. Not one to overthink a good thing, he laughs: "It was really cool, so I just kept it." Of course, the resulting sound has those late-60s bohemian associations, but as Jake postulates, "The coolest part of picking up a guitar that I'm maybe unfamiliar with is that it sort of guides my hand and forces me to play in an alternative way."

The sitar wasn't the only example of this. "There's a Telecaster on that record as well, which I've never talked about much," he reveals with the sort of glee you might expect from a magician upon giving up his secrets. Tonally, it's a very different beast to his usual weapon of choice, and he explains how the switch from Gibson to Fender – and from humbuckers to single coils – wasn't quite as radical a leap from his normal palette of influences as it might at first seem. "Some of the sonic associations with it were the

British Invasion.

You know, really early stuff like Jeff Beck and Page. Even Clapton. Those were some of the reference points for me."

Fittingly, for a rock album recorded in the world capital of

"IT STANDS INDEPENDENTLY FROM THAT DECADE – AS VERY GUITAR DRIVEN ROCK'N'ROLL MUSIC"

With previously penned tracks out the window and fresh ideas whirling around the studio, the band began tracking what Jake describes as "a seemingly limitless list of songs and musical concepts" the good old fashioned way – with everyone in one room, all playing together. "I think a lot of that live energy translates," he says with satisfaction.

Testament to the abundantly creative headspace the band found themselves in, not only were they able to produce 10 killer tracks – plus a bonus, extended version of *Lover, Leaver (Taker, Believer)* –

number one for a breadth of different tones and tasks. "It's sort of a default for me," he explains. "If I'm working with a bunch of different guitars not getting what I want, I can go there and know that I can achieve what I'm hearing in my head."

This being said, Jake's mind was open to exploration. He recalls: "The beautiful thing about getting in the studio for me is that I'm not using anything that I'm particularly familiar with, which sort of gives me a wider range of creative elaboration. I get to pick up a guitar I've never picked up before and see what happens."

country music, and at a studio that's seen the likes of Dolly Parton, Tim McGraw and Sheryl Crow pass through, he adds, "There's also this early American country music association as well, so it was somewhere in between."

Similarly, there were also British and American forces at work in the amp department, and Jake used a 1960s Vox AC30 as well as a selection of Marshall and Fender amps that the studio's owner, John McBride, had to hand. With little else in the way of pedals and effects, the timeless sound of gutsy riffs and lofty solos played through cranked valve amplifiers



is what characterises much of the album. Simply, “the goal was to make it very stripped and very naked, in that sense.”

The spirit of simplicity was by no means extended to the actual playing, however. Jake shows off his considerable slide chops on *Mountain Of The Sun*, performs the catchy yet complex riff of *When The Curtain Falls* with precision and grit in equal measure, and his incendiary solo on *Lover, Leaver* is again reminiscent of Jimmy Page at his eyes-shut, spontaneous best.

As for the performance he’s personally most proud of, Jake singles out the epic *Brave New World*. “It’s one of my favourites because of the type of guitar playing. It’s very interesting and very avant-garde. I was sort of going out of my way to do something that no other guitar player would do – just making it strange intentionally.”

ANTHEM OF THE PEACEFUL ARMY CLASSIC ROCK-INFLUENCED RIFFING

BIT.LV/TG360AUDIO

♩=90

A⁵ 1/4 D⁵ C^{sus2}

TAB: 1/4 0 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 0 1/4 0 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 0 3 0 0 3

This is tried and tested phrasing dating back to the classic rock heyday of bands like Led Zeppelin and AC/DC – and you can hear echoes on GVF tracks such as *The Cold Wind* and *Lover, Leaver*. The G and C notes can be bent slightly sharp to add an authentic blues/rock flavour.

ANTHEM OF THE PEACEFUL ARMY BLUESY LEAD STYLE

BIT.LV/TG360AUDIO

♩=90

A⁵ D⁵ C^{sus2}

TAB: BU 5 8 BU 5 8 BU 5 8 8(10) 8 8(10) 8 8(10) 8 8(10) 12 10 13 13(15) 13

Using a repeating lick is a great way to build the excitement in a solo. Here we start with a classic blues-rock style repeating phrase that uses string bending on the third string. Adding finger vibrato to string bends helps the notes to sing out and adds a more vocal aspect to the delivery.

UNLIMITED LOVE

Nova Twins' Amy Love
rocking her P90-loaded
Fender Mustang





Future Classics

Words Jonathan Horsley / Jenna Scaramanga

The best of the new decade:
five albums that are
shaping the sound of
modern guitar music.

SUPERNOVA NOVA TWINS (2022)

With their fusion of rap, punk and metal it's tempting to compare Nova Twins to Rage Against The Machine, helped by Tom Morello tweeting that they are "an incredible band who deserve to be huge." It's not that Amy Love (guitars) and Georgia South (bass) sound like Rage. It's that they have the same kind of passion, energy, and originality that made Rage's debut so exhilarating. But Nova Twins could never be from LA; they are from southeast London and sound like it. There are nods to grime and UK drill in the sound, and

some of the fattest, filthiest basslines anywhere. There are also irresistible melodies sitting alongside enormous fuzz riffs. Their collaboration *1x1* with Bring Me The Horizon put them on the map and if *Supernova* doesn't make them huge there is little hope for humanity. The exact contents of their enormous pedalboards are a closely-guarded secret but everything, even the analogue synth noises all over *Cleopatra*, is made by live guitar and bass. If the lyrics to single *KMB* (*Kill My Boyfriend*) don't put the fear of god into mediocre rock bands, the fact Nova Twins blow them all out of the water should.

NOVA TWINS BLOW MEDIOCRE ROCK
BANDS OUT OF THE WATER...



CAVALCADE BLACK MIDI

(2021)

Guitar-based but not guitar-dominated, Black Midi are the band to hear if you ever feared there was no genuinely surprising guitar music left. They've covered Hendrix and namechecked AC/DC, so there's a firm foundation with rock guitar greats, but their freewheeling experimentation has the boundless possibilities of prog and jazz. On *Cavalcade*, opening track *John L* hits you with syncopated chord stabs before a swirling chromatic riff. Geordie Greep's speak-singing sometimes recalls Talking Heads' David Byrne, while the band is as adventurous as the

best krautrock. On the single *Chondromalacia Patella*, Greep comes on like Hendrix playing funk, moving through a jazzy, melodic verse and building to howling, fuzz-drenched feedback. *Slow* has an angular, unpredictable guitar solo from Greep that has speed and drama with no trace of conventional blues licks, while there's a cartoonish humour to the way the music moves between chaos and melody in *Hogwash And Balderdash*, exemplified by its many left turns. It's brilliant and genuinely original, and if you like this, there's a wave of equally imaginative post-punks in their wake.

TECHNICOLOR COVET

(2020)

Guitar music has evolved to the point where elite-level technicality has spilled out of shred and into all-new contests where the virtuosity can augment every root and branch of the song. Of this new generation, Yvette Young is a guitar player nonpareil. What Covet play is sometimes described as math-rock, but – even if mathematics is one of the few paragons of truth in the universe – that terms seems a little reductive, ignoring or downplaying the soul behind Young's note choices. Yvette jokes that she plays “detail rock” and there are lot of details. What she does with

her citrus-coloured signature Ibanez Talman does need to be witnessed in person or on video, if only to be believed. Her two-handed tapping and fingerstyle wrings all the juice from the instrument, tracks such as *Parrot* serving fresh sounds never heard before. Cutting her teeth on violin and piano, she is another example, if needed, that playing another instrument besides guitar can only make you a better player. *Technicolor* is hypnotic, bewildering and life-affirming, with Young's melodic sensibility laid over alien-jazz rhythms creating a conversation that you can't help but eardrum on. There are no vocals but... It kinda feels like there are, right?

AFRIQUE VICTIME MDOU MOCTAR

(2021)

Of all today's guitar superheroes, Mdou Moctar has the best origin story, having grown up in rural Niger, building his own guitar out of sardine cans, bike cables and spare wood, and learning in secret so as not to offend his parents' sensibilities. That determination and ingenuity would be put to good use once he started using a proper guitar, settling on a Fender Stratocaster through a Roland Jazz Chorus, some judiciously chosen stomptboxes to make his Tuareg guitar sound really pop. But what is that

sound? Moctar has a restless ear for composition. On *Afrique Victime*, his wiry electric guitar coils around the beat, dancing out of the way of his vocal. It is a beguiling phantasm of a sound, summoning the spirit of the desert, giving his songs an electric presence that reinterprets traditional Tuareg styles as something unorthodox, psychedelic and timeless. Recorded on the road, *Afrique Victime* sounds alive and vital. Moctar's quicksilver phrasing speaks to the eternal possibilities of the electric guitar.



OMNIUM GATHERUM KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD

(2022)

The Australian psych-rock collective are such a welter of creativity that pressing play on any of their 20 studio albums is to submit to the overwhelming, to embrace chaos. It will still be there when the record finishes. *Omniun Gatherum* is a remarkable album, not least because it reportedly sprouted from off-cuts, and of course, the jam. *The Dripping Tap* opens the album with an 18-minute jam that somehow remembers to incorporate an

audacious hook amid the fevered rush of instrumentation, climaxing with a supernova of ascending lead guitar squall. On occasion, synths pull focus with a spaced-out groove, or they'll park themselves in a lounge-room Prince RnB vibe, but then they'll burl round 180 and a record a metal song like *Gaia*. Prog, soul, RnB, metal, psych – anything goes when musical freedom abounds. In another timeline, maybe Frank Zappa would have had them open for him...

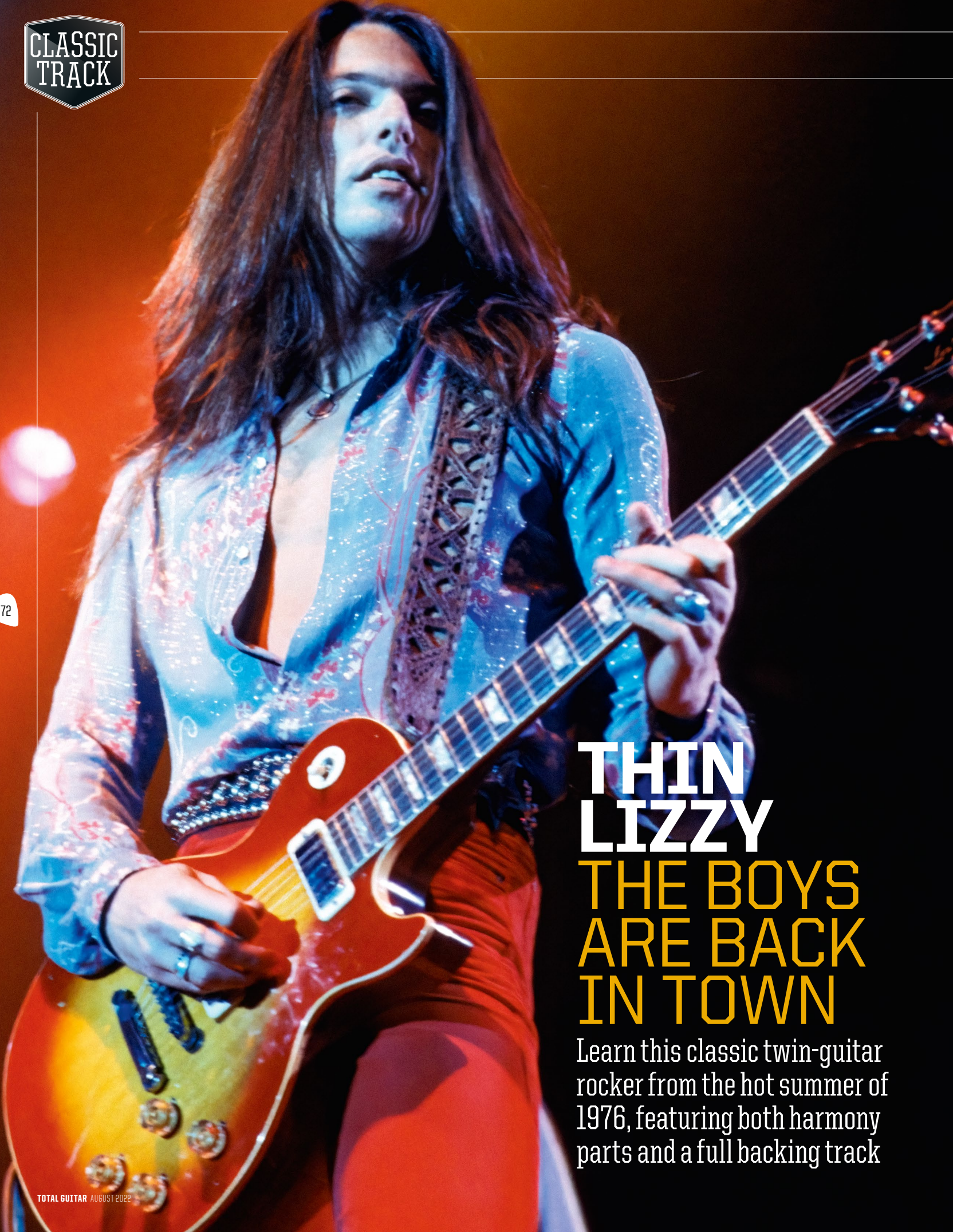


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THIN LIZZY

THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN

Learn this classic twin-guitar rocker from the hot summer of 1976, featuring both harmony parts and a full backing track

Thin Lizzy formed in Dublin in 1969. Though they had scored a hit with *Whiskey In The Jar* in 1973 and were a popular live act, mainstream success had remained elusive.

A significant lineup change came in mid '74 with the addition of Scotsman Brian Robertson and Californian Scott Gorham on twin-lead guitars, who together would create the band's trademark layered harmony sound – as heard on this track from the band's 1976 album *Jailbreak*.

Those iconic dual-guitar lines first appear after the chorus. Take a close listen and you'll hear that Robertson and Gorham sync together tightly on both vibrato and the precise length of each note – essential tricks of the twin-lead trade. The slick harmonies come about thanks to both guitars using the same scale (the major scale), harmonised mainly in 3rds and 4ths.

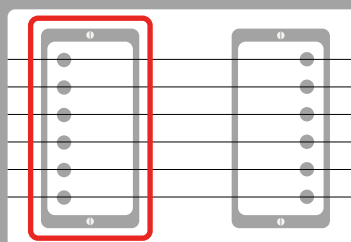
Finally, note that on the original track the guitars were tuned down a semitone to E_b (E, A, D, G, B, E_b) but we've opted for standard tuning here for the sake of convenience.

GET THE SOUND

Everything you need to know before playing 'The Boys are Back in Town'

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL OVERDRIVE

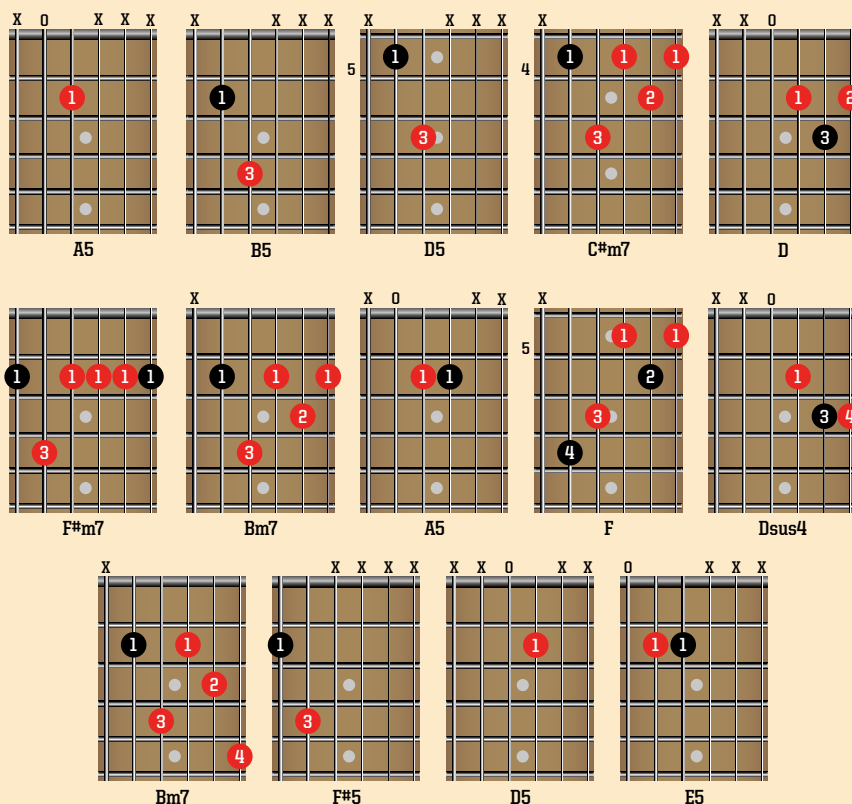


Both guitarists used Gibson Les Pauls – Robertson a 1960 Custom and Gorham a 1973 Deluxe equipped with sweet, treble-rich mini 'buckers. Still, a standard bridge position humbucker is probably the best place to start.

Both Brian and Scott plugged into Marshall amps with 4x12 speaker cabs, getting their tones by turning up loud. Luckily, we have many less tinnitus-inducing methods today! Most amp simulators have a classic plexi sound. This is the one to go for, using a bridge position pickup. Keep the gain fairly low, hitting the strings harder for extra impact rather than adding distortion. Brian's guitar is panned slightly left, with Scott's to the right. Note that Scott's guitar has a slow, subtle phaser effect throughout but it's by no means essential.

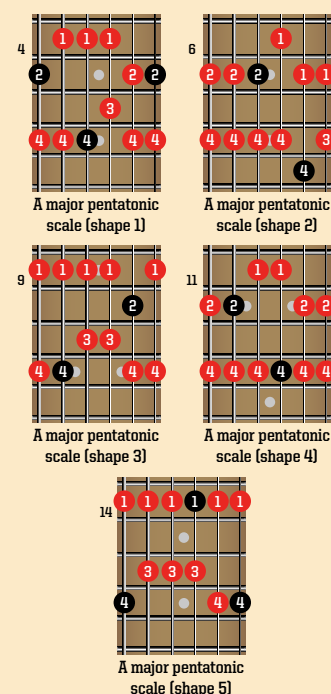
CHORDS

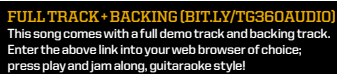
Alongside the powerchords (A5, B5 and so on) you would expect to find in a rock song like this, there are three minor 7 shapes. If you look at the tab you'll see that Brian and Scott rarely play every note of the chords, particularly where the chords are pushed (played before the beat) or played with upstrokes. We've given you the full chord shapes here to make things clearer.



SCALES

It's best to think in terms of the A major pentatonic scale (A B C# E F#) as it's an easy framework for the licks you'll be playing. Sure, there's an occasional note from the A major scale but learning the major scale across the fretboard takes time. Trust us – think pentatonic and learn these five shapes. The main guitar fill is based in shape 2. The other shapes are used in the outro.





75

BIT.LY/TG360AUDIO

13

BIT.LY/TG360AUDIO

† tacet final time

BIT.LY/TG360AUDIO

3

AUGUST 2022 **TOTAL GUITAR**

THIN LIZZY THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN Middle 8

BIT.LY/T6360AUDIO

The Middle 8 section of 'The Boys Are Back in Town' by Thin Lizzy. The score is in 4/4 time and features a guitar line with triplets and chords (Dsus4, D, C#m7, F#m7, Bm7, F#5, Bm7/E) and a corresponding guitar tablature with fret numbers and strumming patterns.

This middle 8 section features some rapidly-strummed chords and a snippet of riff, along with some similar ideas to the verse. With three strums per beat the triplet rhythms in bar 1 are fairly simple. The triplet at the end of bar 2 is tougher; the idea here is to spread three strums of equal length across two beats.

THIN LIZZY THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN Breakdown Chorus

BIT.LY/T6360AUDIO

The Breakdown Chorus section of 'The Boys Are Back in Town' by Thin Lizzy. The score is in 4/4 time and features a guitar line with chords (A5, B5, D5) and a corresponding guitar tablature with fret numbers and strumming patterns.

This third chorus breaks down into this line, and, once again, our tab is an amalgamation of the two guitar parts. Although still tracking the chorus chords there are fills in bars 2, 4 and 6. Bar 2 and bar 6 both have a dry palm-muted sound, whereas you can open up a little for the line in bar 4.

THIN LIZZY THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN Bridge (harmony guitars)

BIT.LY/TG360AUDIO

Brian

3:23

Scott

1

D⁵ E⁵

5

After the quieter chorus this harmony line kicks things up a gear. Again, we've tabbed both parts but kept Scott's part on the backing track for you to jam to. Pay close attention to details like timing and vibrato, and don't worry if you occasionally find yourself sliding between some of the notes. This happened on the original, too!

THIN LIZZY THE BOYS ARE BACK IN TOWN Outro

BIT.LY/TG360AUDIO

Brian

3:45

Play 4 times

Scott

V V 1 V cont. sim.

First system of guitar notation. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The staff contains a melody line with eighth notes and triplets, and a corresponding TAB line below it. The TAB line shows fret numbers: 9, 11, 11, 11, 12, 9, 9, 11, 11, 11, 12, 9, 10, 11, 11, 11, 12, 9, 9/11, 11, 11, 11, 9, 12.

Second system of guitar notation. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a melody line with eighth notes and triplets, and a corresponding TAB line below it. The TAB line shows fret numbers: 6, 7, 7, 7, 9, 6, 6, 7, 7, 7, 9, 6, 9, 7, 7, 7, 9, 6, 7, 7, 7, 7, 6, 9.

Third system of guitar notation. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a melody line with eighth notes and triplets, and a corresponding TAB line below it. The TAB line shows fret numbers: 10, 9, 9, 9, 11, 10, 10, 9, 9, 9, 11, 10, 9, 9, 9, 9, 11, 10, 12, 12, 12, 12, 10, 11.

Fourth system of guitar notation. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a melody line with eighth notes and triplets, and a corresponding TAB line below it. The TAB line shows fret numbers: 9, 11, 11, 11, 12, 9, 9, 11, 11, 11, 12, 9, 10, 11, 11, 11, 12, 9, 9/11, 11, 11, 11, 9, 12.

Fifth system of guitar notation. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a melody line with eighth notes and triplets, and a corresponding TAB line below it. The TAB line shows fret numbers: 14, 14, 14, 14, 16, 14, 14, 14, 14, 16, 14, 17, 14, 14, 14, 16, 14, 15, 15, 15, 15, 14, 16.

Sixth system of guitar notation. Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. The staff contains a melody line with eighth notes and triplets, and a corresponding TAB line below it. The TAB line shows fret numbers: 10, 9, 9, 9, 11, 10, 10, 9, 9, 9, 11, 10, 9, 9, 9, 9, 11, 10, 12, 12, 12, 12, 10, 11.

8va

17 14 14 14 15 17 17 14 14 14 15 17 17 14 14 14 15 17 17 (19) 17 (19) 17 (19) 17 (19) 17 15

14 14 14 14 16 14 14 14 14 16 14 17 14 14 14 16 14 14 (15) 14 (15) 14 (15) 14 (15) 14 (15) 14 12

17

8va

BU BU BU BU BU BU BU BU 17 15 17 15 2 2 0

14 (15) 14 (15) 14 (15) 14 (15) 14 12 14 (15) 14 (15) 14 (15) 14 (15) 14 12 2 0

21

Here, the guitars begin to play ascending harmonies based around the original guitar fill. The original recording fades out but our tab represents the band's preferred live ending. As the section builds to a climax there's a smoother feel, so let notes run into each other, rather than taking the choppy staccato vibe from earlier on.

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

POST MALONE

CIRCLES

This modern-day pop hit is an essential strum-along, featuring some easy open chords and the 'emotional IV minor' chord

Rapper, singer and guitarist Post Malone released this single as part of his third studio album *Hollywood's Bleeding* to widespread chart success in 2019. The recording features Malone on acoustic guitar – though he rarely plays when performing the track live, preferring to leave six-string duties to his bandmates. The chord progression features some typical chords from the key of C major (C, Fmaj7, G/B), but

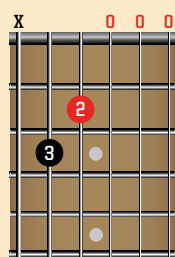
the standout chord throughout the track is F minor. This songwriting trick is often known as the 'emotional IV minor' as it turns the key's IV chord (F major) into a minor chord (Fm) before going back to the I chord (C). It's a brief step outside of the key signature and it creates an interesting melancholy flavour that can work well in any major key. As in this track, the idea should be used sparingly for greatest effect.



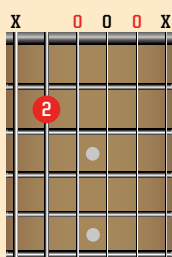
CHORDS

Circles is a relatively simple strum-along, but be sure to keep the idle open strings (such as the low E in the C and F chords) muted out, as they

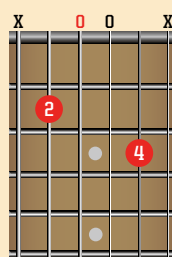
can clash. The 'stubby' trick tends to work best for this, where a free fretting finger comes into contact with the adjacent string to naturally mute it.



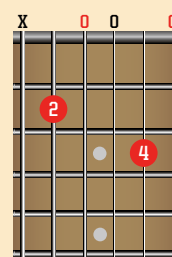
Cmaj7



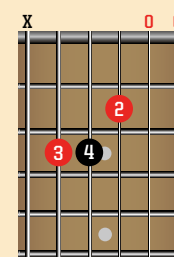
G/B



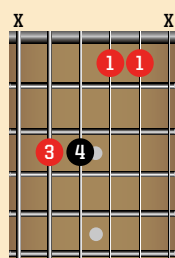
G/B



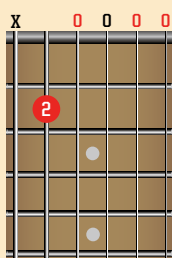
G6/B



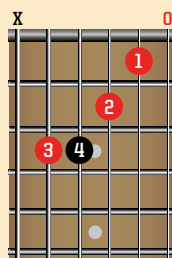
Fmaj7#11



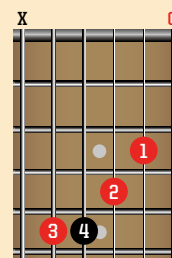
Fm



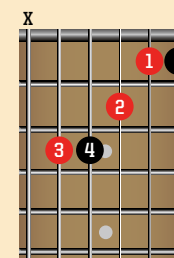
G6/B



Fmaj7



G6



F

CIRCLES

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Circles

Cmaj7 / / / G/B / / /
Fmaj7#11 / / / Fm / / /
Cmaj7 / / / G/B / / /
Fmaj7 / / / / / G6 / x2

C G/B F
We couldn't turn around
Fm C
'til we were upside down
G/B F
I'll be the bad guy now
G6 Cmaj7
But no, I ain't too proud
G/B Fmaj7
I couldn't be there
Fm Cmaj7
Even when I try
G/B Fmaj7
You don't believe i-i-it
N.C.
We do this every time

Cmaj7 **G/B**
Seasons change and our love went cold

Fmaj7
Feed the flame 'cause we can't let it go

Cmaj7 **G/B**
Run away, but we're running in circles

Fmaj7 G6
Run away, run away, I dare you to
Cmaj7 G/B
Do something, I'm waiting on
Fmaj7
You again, so I don't take the blame
Cmaj7 G/B
Run away, but we're running in circles
Fmaj7 G6
Run away, run away, run away

N.C.
Let go, I got a feeling that it's time to let go
C G/B
I say so, I knew that this was doomed
F
From the get-go
Cmaj7 G/B
You thought that it was special, special
Fmaj7
But it was just the sex though
Fm
The sex though
Cmaj7 G/B
And I still hear the echoes, the echo
F
I got a feeling that it's time to let it go
N.C.
Let it go

Repeat chorus

Cmaj7 **G/B**
Maybe you don't understand

What I'm going through
Fmaj7 Fm
It's only me, what you got to lose?
Cmaj7
Make up your mind, tell me
G/B
What are you gonna do?
F N.C.
It's only me, let it go

Cmaj7 G/B
Seasons change and our love went cold

Fmaj7
Feed the flame 'cause we can't let it go

Cmaj7 G/B
Run away, but we're running in circles

Fmaj7 G6
Run away, run away, I dare you to

Cmaj7 G/B
Do something, I'm waiting on

Fmaj7 Fm
You a-gain, so I don't take the blame

Cmaj7 G/B
Run away, but we're running in circles

Fmaj7
Run away, run away, run away

POST MALONE CIRCLES Intro

BIT.LY/TG360AUDIO

♩=120

Cmaj7 G/B G⁶/B Fmaj7^{#11} Fm

TAB

1

Cmaj7 G/B G⁶/B Fmaj7 G⁶

TAB

5

Keep your pick hand moving in constant eighth-note motion for these strummed chords in order to maintain a steady, accurate rhythm. There's some accenting of various strings within each chord, so try not to blanket strum over all notes throughout.

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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94 TC ELECTRONIC SCF GOLD

TC's triple threat returns



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



SOME ISSUES



POOR



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START ME UP!

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

WALRUS AUDIO LORE

1 Walrus is inviting you to have fun with delay and reverb with this Reverse Soundscape Generator pedal. There are five algorithm modes, ranging from combinations of reverse delay with reverse reverb to duelling pitch delays. The pedal features a pair of DSP chips running in series, each with analogue signal paths and individually adjustable gain, to give players even more control over how delay and reverb interact. You can also add modulation to both.

£285

www.walrusaudio.com

FENDER ZION STRAPS

2 We're liking the western blanket vibes here – or more specifically the influence of the Zion National Park at the edge of the Colorado Plateau area of the US that inspired the name here. Hopefully you can find a colour scheme that complements your guitar finish in the selection of Purple, Grey, Copper, Black and Red options here. They're all 2-inch width and USA made from thick double-sided polyester cotton weave with leather ends.

£42.99

www.fender.com

JACKSON X SERIES SOLOIST SLX DX

3 A Tiger Jungle Camo guitar is not for everyone, but we love this! Part of Jackson's X Series refresh, this through-body construction shred soldier is ready to report for duty with a graphite reinforced neck for extra stability, 12"–16" compound radius bound laurel fingerboard and 24 jumbo frets. Pickups here are active high output Jackson humbuckers with a three-way selector. A Floyd Rose Special double-locking tremolo will enable devastating divebombs behind enemy lines.

£859

www.jackson

SUNBEAR SUNBIRD PICKUPS

4 The Gibson Firebird can be a large, unwieldy guitar for some players, but its mini-sized humbuckers are a huge draw with a mix of rich and articulate character with single-coil chime thanks to their unusual construction. Now Stuart Robson of the UK's Sunbear Pickups is bringing one of the most underrated sounds around to more players with soapbar and standard humbucker-size options of his SunBird pickups.

'SoapBird' P-90, £135

Humbuckers, £120

www.sunbearpickups.com

TWO NOTES REVOLT GUITAR PREAMP

5 The market for pedal amps continues to grow and now Two Notes have entered the arena with a strong-looking contender offering three channels inspired by classic amps; Fender Bassman 100, Marshall JMP Superlead and a Soldano SLO 100, plus an OD-Boost circuit is primed to deliver on all counts. The all-analogue signal path is then combined with Two Notes' cab simulation to allow players to go direct to PA or an FRFR active cab.

£349

www.two-notes.com





POSITIVE SPARK MINI

Less in more?



£182

Guitarists are now quite spoiled for choice when it comes to high quality practice amps. The dank and limited days of the Gorilla combo are long gone, replaced with a feast of amp and effects choices in ever more compact dimensions. However, Positive Grid's proposition of features for the Spark Mini stands out: a very small 10-watt modelling amp running on an internal 3,000 mAh rechargeable lithium battery. The

sibling, or if the overall Spark experience is compromised.

Like Neural DSP after it, Positive Grid's expansion from a software into a hardware company has been impressive. The first 40-watt Spark showcased PG's consideration of how a practice amp could become a hub for tones and practice, while still impressing as a plug-in-and-play experience. But can the Mini punch above its weight?

In terms of look, the Mini continues the Tolex and gold

four preset buttons. The Bluetooth pairing button on the rear also doubles as the activation for a tuner. While this all might seem jarringly minimal at first, the idea is for you to tweak tones via the Spark app, then save to your presets slots as required.

Using the factory presets, one thing becomes immediately apparent: this little amp is surprisingly loud. Delivering 90 dB SPL at one metre away, it sounds bigger than we imagined it would, and with some impressive bottom end too. It really projects. And it's got a hidden weapon to help...

The Spark Mini has 2 x 2" custom designed speakers for stereo sound, but underneath there's a passive radiator too. Positive Grid has even designed the shape of the rubber feet to make the most of this feature and squeeze as much low end response as it can. This also makes it an excellent mobile speaker for music streaming but the result for guitars is a punchy, bright response – noticeably so when A/B comparisons are made with the same models on a Spark 40. When reverb and delay come into the mix we honestly wonder how such a small amp sounds so wide.

ENCOURAGES YOU TO PLAY MORE AND STAY INSPIRED

company's original Spark 40 was its first combo amp and made an almighty splash when it hit the market as a 'smart amp'; taking the idea of an amp/app package to a new level. Not only did it sound great, but it could help you become a better player through a host of features in its Spark App. This Mini is less than a third of the size, and while we're not expecting a 'less is more' scenario we do wonder if this might suit some players better than its larger

piping look of its big bro. It's available in black or pearl (white) Tolex options, with a detachable handle that you'll definitely want to use. It's the kind of amp you take with you, rather than feel like you need to go to it – potentially encouraging you to play more, without as many limitations.

Compared to the mains-powered Spark 40, the onboard controls are massively streamlined here. Gone is everything but guitar and streamed audio volumes, plus

1 INTERNAL BATTERY

The internal 3000 mAh rechargeable lithium battery offers up to eight hours battery life (providing you don't crank it and have it streaming audio as well as the guitar signal a lot) and takes three hours to charge via USB C.

2 PRESETS

You'll probably want to swap and change your onboard presets a lot, but favourites are inevitable and the lack of an onboard gain dial encouraged us to control this setting with our guitar's volume control.

3 GRILLE

Positive Grid has already made a crimson front grille available to replace the stock gold, and we'd expect more to follow.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Digital modelling combo with internal rechargeable battery for guitar, bass and acoustic with BIAS Tone Engine and app integration

OUTPUT: 10 watts

SPEAKERS: 2x2" active stereo with passive radiator

TOP CONTROLS: Guitar level, Music level, Preset selection

ONBOARD EFFECTS: 33 Amp Models (additional available to purchase via Jimi Hendrix add-on), 48 Effects

SOCKETS: 1/4" guitar input, 1/8" aux input, 1/8" headphone out, Bluetooth audio, USB-C connectivity for recording

DIMENSIONS: 135mm [w] x 162mm [height including feet] 125mm [d]

WEIGHT: 1.36 kg

CONTACT: www.positivegrid.com



Appy Days

What does the Spark App offer?

As far as the app is concerned, the Spark Mini has everything the Spark 40 boasts. As well as being able to access and change amp and effects type and parameters to build signal chain combos you can save to one of the Spark Mini's four presets. The app gives you access to the ToneCloud where PG and other Spark users upload presets they've created. It's easy to audition each one, save to favourites or download onto the amp's memory. Elsewhere, Smart Jam generates drum and bass backing tracks based on a riff or chord progression you play, learning your style and feel in real time as you play. Search for any song and the app will find it on YouTube if it's there, then transcribe the chords for you to play along to. You won't get bored!

And there's plenty of reverb, delay and more to choose from with Noise Gate, Compressor, Distortion, Modulation/EQ, Delay and Reverb models. Because PG has refined these in its BIAS tone engine processing before launching the Spark line, players can now reap the benefits of lush and detailed tones. But the amp selection is even more impressive. Positive Grid has spent years honing its modelling technology and the results are a varied selection of classic clean, crunch and crushing high gain.

If you don't mind the idea of using the Spark App to fine-tune



your settings, a drawback we want to note is the headphone experience. Despite PG suggesting to us that the relatively quiet output through headphones would be addressed in a firmware update, we've downloaded the first one that's been available and it hasn't improved. So this remains an issue for some users. The headphone volume with the Spark Mini is usable but currently not really loud enough. The better news is that output was more than sufficient at 50% while sitting in front of the Spark Mini.

While the asking price may initially seem on the higher side for

such a diddy amp, the Spark Mini is so big on features it is ahead of the competition when factoring in the quality, portability and value you get – plus the potential to record with this via USB. We think it would prove money well spent because it encourages you to play more and makes it easier to stay inspired when playing alone.

Rob Laing

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

ALSO TRY...

FENDER MUSTANG MICRO

A headphones-only ultra-portable experience; this is packing 12 amps, 12 effects, four hours playtime and Bluetooth streaming. It's a breeze to use.

£109



BOSS KATANA-AIR

A step up in output (30-watts on mains and 20 on batteries) with a wireless transmitter for full cable-less playing. Six onboard presets allow you to save amp and effect model combinations with five amps and over 50 effects.

£339



YAMAHA THR5 V2

The THR series set a benchmark for desktop amps and while this 10-watt combo is large, it keeps all its features controllable on the hardware with five amps, four modulation effects and four reverb/delay algorithms.

£208



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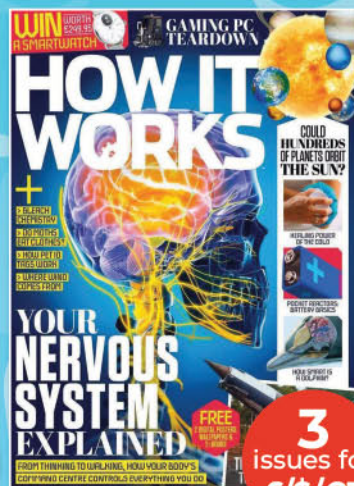
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Words Rob Laing Photography Phil Barker

EPIPHONE JERRY CANTRELL 'WINO' LES PAUL CUSTOM AND CUSTOM PROPHECY

Epiphone unveil their affordable version of the Alice In Chains guitarist's 'Wino' Custom, as well as a signature Custom Prophecy in Bone White. We take both instruments for a test drive...

As the founding guitarist and singer in Alice In Chains, Jerry Cantrell knows a thing or two about dialling in massive rock tones. His riffs were arguably the heaviest from the 90s Seattle scene, the group sharing nearly as much kinship with the likes of Metallica and Pantera as they did with the alternative peers from their hometown. But there was always a more delicate side to the music, as evidenced on tracks like *Down In A Hole*, *Nutshell* and *Brother* – which, thanks to a profound sense of emotional sincerity, turned Jerry into one of the most deeply admired songwriters of his generation. In January 2020, he made headlines by announcing he was teaming up with Gibson to release a whole line of acoustic and electric signatures. Here's a closer look at the two latest Epiphone models for this year...

When Jerry Cantrell last spoke to *Total Guitar*, he told us how Gibson guitars had “been right there in the development of my sound from the beginning” and teased the acoustic signatures that were to follow on from the 100 signed and Murphy-Lab aged Wine Red Customs released in 2021. The debut models were based on one of the four Les Pauls he acquired in the early 90s and stuck with him through his career. The collaborative partnership continues this year with two new entries under the Chinese-made Epiphone banner, sitting at a much more affordable price point than anything we've seen thus far. The new 'Wino' comes in a slightly darker variant of Wine Red, with Epiphone parts offering a more cost-effective take on those found on its American Custom Shop sibling. The most notable difference is the lack of a Fishman piezo pickup-equipped bridge – a fair compromise given that this instrument retails for over ten times less, and ultimately a concession few would be surprised by. Less predictable,



however, is the arrival of its companion 24-fret Custom Prophecy fitted with Fishman Fluence pickups, given that the Alice In Chains guitarist isn't known for using Fishmans and has generally stuck with 22-fret instruments through his career, including the G&L Rampages he's used extensively alongside his Les Pauls. However, with two voicings for each humbucker as well as split coil modes, it's clearly going to be able to cover a lot of tonal ground, as well as two whole octaves across the neck.

DOWN IN A WHOLE / RED GIANT

Straight out of the (man in the) box, the new Wino model looks and feels like the closest the budget brand have come to a 'real' Les Paul Custom in quite some time. The neck profile is slightly thicker than your typical Epiphone, though it's still very user-friendly and every bit a 'fretless wonder', as these guitars were lovingly nicknamed early on. Going head-to-head with our own 2004 Gibson Custom, there's very little difference tonally (as much as it pains us to admit, barely any, in fact!). The Dark Wine Red finish and gold hardware marry gracefully, with Cantrell's name along the truss rod cover and his JJ logo, which some may recognise from his signature Friedman heads, on the back of the headstock. When plugged into our British valve amp's clean channel, the neck Alnico Classic PRO humbucker sounds rich and full-bodied, with bell-like chimes that can be accentuated further by flicking onto the middle position of the pickup selector. On the distorted channel,



the 98T PRO bridge humbucker sounds cutting and articulate, packing a little extra snarl thanks to its exposed coils. Arriving already tuned half a step down, it's a guitar that comfortably nails the tones all the way from Alice In Chains' 1990 *Facelift* debut right through to latest release *Rainier Fog*, as well as any of Cantrell's solo endeavours. Drop-D (or in this case Drop-C#) riffs like *We Die Young*, *Dam That River* and *Stone* feel particularly responsive here too, striking a perfect balance between low-end punch and searing high-end attack, with notes that well and truly pop out when switching over to leads. Turn down the volume controls and you'll easily find some tasty blues

tones too, and there's plenty of fun to be had using the neck pickup with the tone completely off, as you'd expect from traditional singlecuts of this ilk. In that regard, it's every bit as classic as it looks.

SLUDGE FACTORY / FACELIFT

The Custom Prophecy is a considerably lighter instrument, with an ultra modern weight relief in place of the Wino's nine-hole drilling. Other interesting features include the all-new Circle In Diamond custom inlays, which add to its aesthetic allure, as well as two extra frets and the inclusion of Fishman Fluence pickups. Which, by the way, react faster with more compression and snap than the medium-output humbuckers found on its companion, as to be expected from an active set. There are three voicings per pickup—hot, vintage and single-coil—making this one of the most sonically diverse Les Pauls ever to go into production, and while the single-coil tones can't quite compare to, say, plugging in an old Strat, they certainly carry enough bite to get you close enough for live performances. With the right kind of compression and EQ treatment, these tones could also work as a faux piezo through a clean channel, which is handy if you're combining electric and acoustic layers like Cantrell and his cohorts have done over the years. It would be fair to say the bridge pickup on the hot voicing might be a little scooped and overkill for some of the tones Cantrell is known for and it's the vintage mode that gets us closer to the sounds on the records, but that's precisely what makes this signature such a good all-rounder. It covers a lot of bases well, especially for those in need of a singlecut that's deceptively lightweight and comfortable. These bells and whistles do come at a price, however, this signature retailing for £300 more than its companion. It's not exactly the same kind of guitar you see Cantrell playing himself, but then again it doesn't necessarily need to be. If anything, that's what makes it such an intriguing proposition...

THE NEW 'WINO' MODEL LOOKS AND FEELS LIKE THE CLOSEST EPIPHONE HAVE COME TO A 'REAL' LES PAUL CUSTOM IN YEARS...

FINAL VERDICT

Which of our Les Pauls is best for you?

As we suspected, these are two very different instruments that cater for different needs. Purists and retro-lovers will undoubtedly feel more at home with the Wino, which convincingly harks back to Les Pauls of old. Modern-style and heavy metal players, however, may very well

appreciate the Custom Prophecy for its extra power, versatility and range. It doesn't cover vintage tones quite as well as its claret-hued counterpart – active pickups are typically less smooth and less dynamic than passives – and players who dabble in blues or jazz may find that a bit of a turn-off. Those dialling in higher gain sounds all the

way from Rammstein and Slipknot through to Code Orange and Periphery, however, will arguably feel more at home on the Prophecy. All in all, we're looking at two very attractive offerings from Epiphone, even more so when you factor in the hard cases included. For our money, the Wino has the edge, but you may well disagree!

JERRY CANTRELL 'WINO' LES PAUL CUSTOM

£749

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany with plain maple cap
NECK: Mahogany
SCALE: 24.75"
FINGERBOARD: Ebony
FRETS: 22

ELECTRONICS: Alnico Classic Pro (neck), 98T PRO (bridge)
CONTROLS: 2x volume, 2x tone, three-way toggle
HARDWARE: Gold

LEFT-HANDED: No
FINISH: Dark wine red
CONTACT: Gibson, www.epiphone.com

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



JERRY CANTRELL LES PAUL CUSTOM PROPHECY

£1049

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany with maple cap
NECK: Mahogany
SCALE: 24.75"
FINGERBOARD: Ebony
FRETS: 24

ELECTRONICS: 2x Fishman Fluence
CONTROLS: 2x volume with push/pull coil splitting, 2x tone with push/pull voice switching, three-way toggle

HARDWARE: Brushed nickel
LEFT-HANDED: No
FINISH: Bone White
CONTACT: Gibson, www.epiphone.com

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





BOSS RE-2 £199

The long-rumoured compact Space Echo arrives!

There's been speculation about a compact Space Echo emulation for years, ever since a photoshop mockup went viral on pedal forums. Boss, with their ear to the ground, couldn't have failed to notice. A couple of years later and here we are with the RE-2 in hand. So how does it stack up?

The first thing you notice is how sharp the design is. The front panel takes visual cues from the

action rotary pots here take only a second to work out. The mode control is the only exception, and it takes a few tries of rotating it to get a handle for what's going on: tape head combinations, as it turns out. On some modes, the reverb is off – perplexing, since it has its own pot, so having it off in some modes seems redundant. The tape repeats are convincing, and the separate tone control is a nice touch for controlling the 'tape

The RE-2 responds well to distortions in front, or indeed after it, and it's less jumpy than the vintage originals, lacking a controllable preamp. Sound-wise our only complaint is that the reverb, like on the original RE-201, is a bit hard to dial in. Also, on the control front, it would have been nice to have some kind of heuristic to remember the modes by. It feels like the numbers are used for design reasons rather than to aid the player in a hurry.

On almost every front, the RE-2 has knocked it out of the park. It sounds good, it looks good, and it's fun to use. It's a pedal with serious amounts of vibe. And though it's edging towards the price of larger units like the Strymon El Capistan and the Boss DD-500, both of which boast larger feature sets, that vibe may tempt you to find space on your 'board for the RE-2.

Alex Lynham

ON ALMOST EVERY FRONT, THE RE-2 HAS KNOCKED IT OUT OF THE PARK...

original Space Echo, while the pedal enclosure itself sticks to the now-classic Boss pedal aesthetic. It's a fine line to tread the two design styles, but this is one cool-looking pedal. Sound-wise, it takes seconds to dial in a great tape echo sound and get going. The enduring popularity of the Boss compact line is their simplicity as much as their sounds. Even the three double-

age', or darkness of the repeats. Like the original units, there aren't long delay times available, but they're long enough for most applications. One of the best things about tape echoes is creating a reverb-like 'smear' of shorter echoes which blend together due to their dark timbre. Especially by inching up the Wow & Flutter control, dialling in these kind of washy sounds is very easy.

1 DESIGN

Care has been taken to blend the Boss compact pedal and Space Echo aesthetics. The result is industrial design perfection.

2 INPUTS

There's full stereo in and out, as well as expression input.

3 MODES

Unlike many Boss delays, the modes aren't named, so you'll have to check the manual for these.

AT A GLANCE

POWER: 9V battery or DC Centre-negative power supply

INPUTS: Stereo In, Stereo Out, Ctl/Exp In

CONTROLS: Echo/Reverb, Intensity/Tone, Repeat Rate/Wow & Flutter, Mode

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



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

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Words Ellie Rogers Photo Paige Wilson

MADISON CUNNINGHAM

As Madison Cunningham prepares for the September release of her second full length album *Revealer*, it seems as though the Southern Californian virtuoso has located a whole extra chapter in the instructional manual for singer-songwriters. Devoid of rudimentary strumming, and rich in intricate rhythms and ingenious lead playing, her brand of guitar-driven songcraft has always been appealingly tricky to define. For *Revealer*, she admits, “The complexity knob was turned up a little bit.”

She’s previously been nominated for Grammys in the Best Folk and Best Americana

categories, but the new album’s two teaser singles, *Anywhere* and *Hospital*, swerve such classifications by a country mile with their respective breezy calypso-esque and mean indie grooves. A boundlessly inventive spirit pushes her sound forward. “When you have an ideal goal of what you would like to sound like,” she explains, “that’s when the journey gets quite frustrating, and I think that should happen every couple of months or more for guitar players. Every week, we should be challenging ourselves and hurting our brains a little bit.”

It’s an admirably industrious approach, but unlike a lot of “clever” music, Cunningham’s

passes none of the brain-ache on to the listener. Uncommon time signatures and alternate tunings are camouflaged beneath catchy melodies, and she laughs: “I do love the idea of making people forget that you’re playing in seven, and making a song that feels effortless.”

When it comes to guitars, she has a modest collection that she describes as “incredibly cheap, miscellaneous and so fun to play.” It includes her number one Fender Jazzmaster, a Mexican Telecaster, and a Harmony Juno. “You can’t ever quantify what will inspire you, or what will be the instrument to bring the song out,” she says. Another favourite

comes in the form of a 1960s parlour guitar with a rubber bridge that lends its “muted and woody” tones to the acoustic portion of *Revealer*.

Live, she uses a pedalboard that was put together for her by JHS, containing their delay, distortion and boost pedals, as well a DigiTech Whammy. The new star of her ‘board, however, is a soon to be released signature pedal that she developed with the same Kansas-based effects company. Christened “the Artificial Blonde,” her first foray into gear innovation promises to deliver a “slow, 3D sounding vibrato,” designed to emulate the classic dual-speaker sound of vintage Magnatone amps.

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