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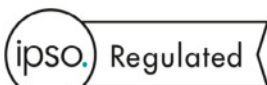
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Welcome...



Welcome to this month's issue of TG, where, as I'm sure you'll have gathered, we're celebrating the Gibson Les Paul. On the cover you'll see legendary Guns N' Roses guitarist Slash, who has launched a new 300-page book, *The Collection: Slash*, in collaboration with Gibson Publishing, documenting his huge guitar collection – and not just the

Gibsons! Anyway, of course, Slash couldn't wait to speak to TG about his new book and how Gibson's singlecut has inspired him throughout his career. Make sure to turn to p51 where you can win a limited-run *Custom* edition of the book, complete with some extra goodies and signed by Slash himself, worth £849!

Keeping on the Les Paul theme, we speak to blues-rock heavyweights Joe Bonamassa and Jared James Nichols, Aerosmith legend Joe Perry, jazz fusion master Al Di Meola, plus rising stars John Notto and Ally Venable, who all wax lyrical on their love of Gibson's iconic instrument. And if you're feeling inspired to get playing, check out our Les Paul Legends lesson where we profile the signature styles of some of the greatest LP players ever.

Finally in our festival of Les Pauls, we'll take you through the 10 best examples available to buy right now. It's worth noting that we've had some amazing Epiphones in for review over the last 18 months or so, so now really is a good time to try one out if you find yourself GAS-ing for a new guitar!

As ever, I hope you enjoy the magazine and I'll see you again next month.

Chris Bird Editor

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MONITOR

PEOPLE ★ NEWS ★ NOISE

06

Words Stuart Williams Photography Phil Barker

IT'S A SIGNATURE, JIM

The Slipknot man's long-awaited
Charvel signature model is here

Last year, Slipknot guitarist Jim Root made the slightly surprising move of releasing a brand new signature model, but this time he's with Charvel, rather than Fender. Now, as you may or may not know, Charvel is part of the

Fender family, so while Root – whose four Fender signatures are still part of the 2023 product line-up – may have strayed from his usual brand, it's still in the same ballpark.

On the face of it, Jim's Pro-Mod San Dimas Style 1 is another Strat. As with his Fender model, it features 22 frets, a pair of humbuckers, three-way

switching and a single volume control. But dig a little deeper and there are a lot of differences, too. First, those humbuckers are Jim's EMG Daemonum signature models rather than stock 81/60s. Next, the Charvel is loaded with a Floyd Rose 1500 vibrato, where his Fenders all feature a hardtail bridge. This being Charvel, it maintains the 12"-16" compound

radius fingerboard, with the same dot markers as Jim's Tele (as well as luminlay side dots), and the neck is reinforced with graphite.

So, what we get is an up-to-date, vibrato-equipped Jim Root model, straight out of the hairier end of Fender's stable. It's available in Satin White and Satin Black, and we'll have a full review next month!

UP CLOSE



EMG Daemonum pickups

These are Jim's signature EMGs, which are based on the 81/60 pairing that he's used for many years.



Floyd Rose

Jim Root's previous signatures have been fitted with a hardtail bridge. Well, prepare to divebomb, as his Charvel has a Floyd Rose 1500 double-locking vibrato.



Features

The switching and controls are typically minimalist, and the Charvel also features the same 12"-16" compound radius fingerboard as his Strat. Truss rod fans will love the graphite, and you can tweak it from a heel-mounted thumbolt.

SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS



TOUR

“IT’S GREAT TO GET BACK TO THE ACOUSTIC”

IRISH BLUES GUITARIST **DOM MARTIN** IS KEEPING IT SIMPLE ON HIS UNPLUGGED TOUR**B**

elfast-born Dom Martin is fast becoming known as the heir to legendary

Irish guitar hero Rory Gallagher. Universal invited Dom to perform an acoustic set to launch the 50th anniversary edition of Rory’s classic album *Deuce* in 2021. Expectations are high for Dom’s UK acoustic tour, which runs from March 14 to April 7.

Are you performing Rory Gallagher songs on this tour?

For as long as I’ve got breath in my body there will always be an element of Rory to the setlist! There used to be a lot more Rory songs in the set but we were a verging on becoming a tribute band. That’s not really what I was going for, because I have a lot of my own songs that have something to say. I just feel like I owe Rory an awful lot. As a kid growing up in Belfast, my dad gave me a tape with two of Rory’s albums on it – *Blueprint* and *Live*

In Europe. That was my whole childhood! I still have it, but it’s sellotaped back together so many times it doesn’t work anymore. Rory was my only constant growing up. Nobody told me that he’d died and I found out when I was about 16. I was devastated!

What were your other influences?

My dad was like a mix of Ralph McTell and Tommy Emmanuel. We didn’t have a lot growing up, and music was our main food source if you will. There was a lot of playing in the house, always a lot of parties. I was listening to all my dad’s old records, Rory Gallagher, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd. You got beat up for playing guitar where I came from, so it was always that very insular thing learning how to play. It’s helped me through so much over the my whole life. I don’t know how people cope without playing an instrument.

What else will be in your acoustic set?

There’s some Ralph McTell, a bit of John Martyn, bit of John Prine – all the Johns! It’s been great to get back to the stuff that me and my dad used to play years ago. The last couple of gigs I’ve done, it’s been great to get back to the acoustic. Instead of just blasting out songs you’re actually getting that feel and that groove again.

How do you prepare for acoustic shows?

I don’t really practise; it’s more an addiction. When I get home from a gig in Ireland, it’s half two in the morning. It’s time to try and switch off and I can’t because I have to play. I’ll be there at five in the morning just playing an electric guitar unplugged. I don’t do this because I want to do it. I do it because I need to.

What’s your live rig?

There’s a Strymon Big Sky for ambience, a tuner and that’d be it for acoustic gigs. There’s no preamp, just whatever’s in the guitar. I just get lucky!
Jenna Scaramanga



AMPLIFIER

FENDER TONE MASTER PRINCETON REVERB

Fender's latest addition to the Tone Master range of digital amps turns its attention to recreating the Princeton Reverb, swapping the original's valves for modelling for an accurate and lighter-

weight version of its classic valve amp. It's loaded with a 50-watt power amp designed to ape the sound of the Princeton's 12-watt performance, onboard tremolo and reverb circuits, plus there's a switchable power

selector taking you from "12 watts" down to 0.3 watts. On the back, there's a line output as well as a two-cab-emulated XLR output, and the whole lot runs through a Jensen C10R speaker. It costs £899, and is available now.



PEDAL

IK MULTIMEDIA TONEX PEDAL

IK Multimedia has launched its TONEX technology into what could be the most versatile format yet – a floor-based pedal. The TONEX Pedal is powered by IK's AI Machine Modelling, offering users the ability to capture gear models from their (or anyone else's) rigs.

With 150 onboard presets, and full integration with IK's Tone Max software, IK says that TONEX can model anything from a single pedal up to a full rig, which can then be stored in the pedal for recall later. It's pretty affordable, too, at €399. We'll have a full review coming soon!

PEDAL

JACKSON AUDIO NEW WAVE

Pedal tinkerer, Jackson Audio has teamed up with Snarky Puppy guitarist, Mark Lettieri to unleash the New Wave (£325) – a pedal that it's calling "the ultimate chorus". The 80s-inspired design is based around analogue bucket brigade chips to bring us lush vibrato and chorus sounds via seven different modes from classic pedal emulations to rack-inspired modulation.



The LFO features five waveshapes, and there's loads of sound-shaping options on board from the tone control, phase/ratio knob, tap tempo and Ramp/Bloom footswitches.



Jackson

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PRO SERIES SIGNATURE SOLOIST™ SL7 ET



WHAT YOU WILL LEARN
 ✓ Vibrato
 ✓ String muting
 ✓ Whammy pedal soloing



RIFF OF THE MONTH

MÅNESKIN

Gossip

Taken from Måneskin's third album *Rush!*, this track features some bouncy A minor riffs from guitarist Thomas Raggi, plus a guest appearance by Rage Against The Machine guitarist Tom Morello, who delivers the trademark Whammy pedal solo that we're looking at here. Keep Tom's single-note melody clean and clear by using

the underside of your fretting finger to silence the treble strings, and the side of your pick hand palm to mute the bass strings. As you pick each note, push forward with your foot on the pedal evenly to bend each pitch an octave higher. Note that each three-note phrase ends with standard *finger vibrato* – it's not executed with the Whammy. Be sure to watch our slowed down video of the riff where we demonstrate

both picking/fretting, plus you can see the pitch shifter pedal operation up close, too.

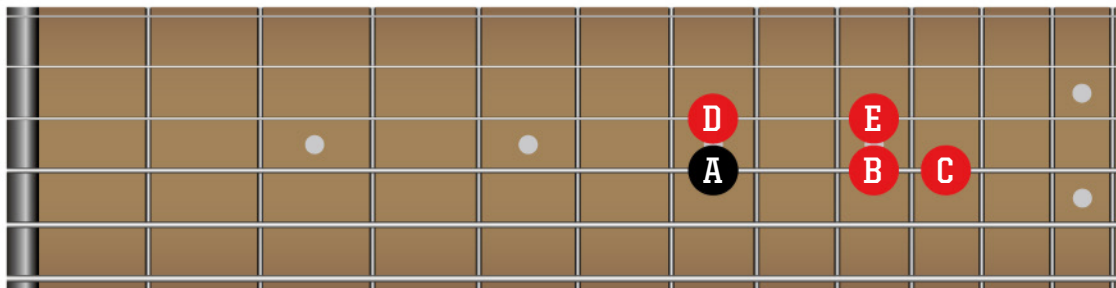
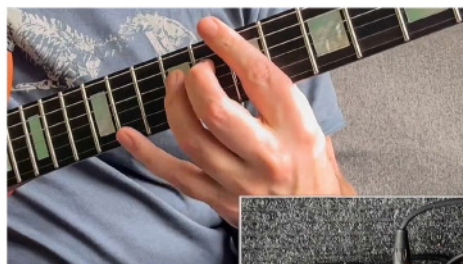
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 1:08–1:22

Tempo: 140bpm

Key/scale: A minor

Main techniques: Vibrato, Whammy pedal, string muting

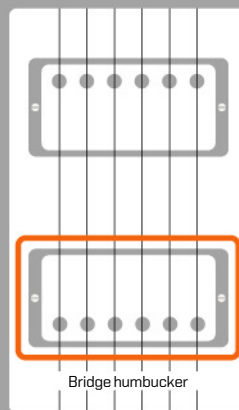


At first glance, this riff hints at the basic A natural minor scale (A B C D E F G). However, the backing riff suggests that the A harmonic minor scale (A B C D E F G[#]) should be used, thanks to the presence of a G[#] note

instead of a G. In fact it's a moot point because, as you can see, no G note of any kind is employed in this melody. Use your first finger to play the 7th fret notes and third and fourth fingers reach the remaining fret positions.

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL **DISTORTION**



Use the bridge pickup on your guitar for a full, clear distorted tone, with plenty of sustain. Set your Whammy pedal or similar pitch shifter (most treadle-equipped multi-fx pedals should have a suitable effect) so its heel-down position is at standard pitch and its toes-down position raises the pitch by two octaves. That's the equivalent of playing an open string followed by the same string at the 24th fret.

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15-20
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TOP 40 AND FUNK with Jason Sidwell



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

JUMP BLUES with Chris Corcoran



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

BLUES SONGS with Neville Marten



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

ACOUSTIC SONGS with Chris Quinn



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

CLASSIC ROCK & INDIE ROCK with Jon Bishop



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

MODERN ROCK with Tolis Zavaliaris



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

JAZZ with Gianluca Corona



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

GYPSY JAZZ with John Wheatcroft



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

CREATIVE ACOUSTIC GUITAR with Chris Woods



This course shows how to turn your acoustic guitar into a full band using advanced techniques such as tapping and slapping.

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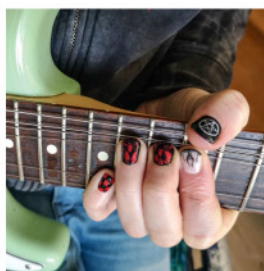
full info and booking: igf.org.uk

Learn to make an entrance with TG's guide

Finally, it can help to learn a repertoire of licks that you know will work if your imagination fails you. Eddie Van Halen opened at least four solos with his favourite Chuck Berry lick, so there's no shame in that!

Words, guitars and backing Jenna Scaramanga Photo Phillip Sowels

2 DOUBLESTOP LICK

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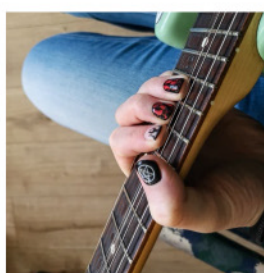
Tablature for the Doublestop Lick:

Staff 1 (Treble Clef): E⁵ (4/4), C⁵/E (4/4)

Staff 2 (TAB): 15 (14 (16)) BU, 15 (14 (16)) BU, 15 (14 (16)) BU, 15 (14 (16)) BU, 12, 14, [14] \

Doublestop licks are almost always exciting entrances, and this one is so versatile that you'll find variations on it in everything from Metallica's *Enter Sandman* to *Purple Rain* (in a major key) by Prince.

3 SCREAMING BENDS

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Tablature for the Screaming Bends:

Staff 1 (Treble Clef): E⁵ (4/4), C⁵/E (4/4)

Staff 2 (TAB): BU 15 (17), 12

You'll never go wrong bending up to the root note, as we've done here – although bending up to the 5th is another classic. The wide vibrato adds excitement, and keeping the notes slow and long leaves space to build speed later.

4 CALL AND RESPONSE

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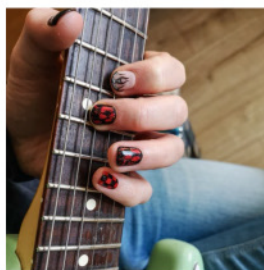
Tablature for the Call and Response:

Staff 1 (Treble Clef): E⁵ (4/4), C⁵/E (4/4)

Staff 2 (TAB): 14, 12, 14, 14, 12, BU 14 (16), 14, 12, 14, 12, 14

These are 'question and answer' phrases. The first moves upwards, copying the rising inflection people use when asking questions. The second lands down on the root note to sound resolved. The first few notes are the same, helping the phrases sound thematically linked.

5 QUOTE A MELODY!

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Tablature for the Quote a Melody:

Staff 1 (Treble Clef): N.C. (12/8), 130 (12/8)

Staff 2 (TAB): 14, 12, 14, 12, 13-12, 14, 11, 12, 14, 12, 11, 14, 12, 15, 12, 15 (17)

If there isn't an obvious melody in the song you can use, steal one from somewhere else! Here we've used *Greensleeves* as an example of how you can transition from the melody into more conventional guitar licks.

Words Jonathan Horsley Photos Getty

Tom Verlaine

1949 - 2023

The cult hero who
reconfigured guitar music
and inspired generations
of alternative rock acts

Tom Verlaine, who died on January 28, 2023, had an approach to playing guitar that was never easy to describe. Post-punk, art rock, art punk, whatever; it was one of Verlaine's great creative achievements that over three studio albums with Television, and a prolific solo career, he was able to unshackle his style from labels. Hard to define, sure, but you know it when you hear it.

The sound he pioneered in Television, along with second guitarist Richard Lloyd, had a propulsive yet cerebral power, grandiose yet melancholy, intense yet epic. Based in New York City, where they regularly performed at legendary club CBGBs, Television had an energy and attitude which suggested punk. What came out the speakers, however, would challenge that conclusion. There was nothing quite like it.

Maybe this is what happens when you approach the guitar from a different perspective. The instrument was not Verlaine's first love. When he was a kid growing up in Delaware, he started out on piano before picking up the saxophone as a young teenager. He liked symphonies. He liked jazz. Speaking to *Guitar Player* in 1993, Verlaine confessed that he hated guitar music for years.

"I played piano because when I was a kid I'd be really transported by symphonies," he said. "My mother would get these supermarket records of overtures. That was music for me. The only thing I liked on radio were flying saucer songs. In the early 60s I hated pop. An older friend of mine had some Coltrane and Ornette Coleman records, and that's the music I liked. I had a brother who bought Motown, and I thought it was totally twee. The first rock record I liked was Yardbirds stuff, because it was really wild."

The Kinks and The Rolling Stones can also claim credit for changing Verlaine's mind about guitar, and doing as they would do many times before and since, changing music history over the course of two frenetic rock songs. *All Day (And All Of The Night)* and *19th Nervous Breakdown* did the damage.

"Those are the records that made me think the guitar could be as good as jazz," Verlaine told *Guitar World* in 1981. "Up until then the electric guitar was a stupid instrument to me. When I heard the solos on those records, the sound, the general sound, that's when it occurred to me that the guitar was a cool instrument."

Having no intrinsic affection for the guitar, Verlaine could easily resist the impulse to covet other players' styles. It is often thus: the best guitar heroes are the ones who never wanted such status. Fortune favours those bold enough to experiment with an instrument. It also favours those who work at it. Television were famously dedicated to rehearsals. Their marathon practice sessions would be masochistic if just in service to a sound wrought on three powerchords and a 4/4 backbeat. Verlaine and Lloyd had designs on Television being something more. Besides, the Ramones would soon claim brevity for their own. Expansiveness was the smart play.

Set loose and turned wild in the febrile thrum of 1970s New York – the milieu of Blondie, Talking Heads *et al* – Verlaine's electric imagination reconfigured guitar music and set the table for a generation of alternative rock acts, many of whom would stake their own claim to greatness. Television's debut album *Marquee Moon*,

with its iconic cover photo by the great Robert Mapplethorpe, remains essential, remains exhilarating, and remains somehow special and alien even though the independent rock cognoscenti has kept it on regular rotation since its hit record stores in '77. It is one of the most influential rock albums of all time. The likes of Sonic Youth, Pavement and Johnny Marr were listening.

"It was more expansive," said Thurston Moore of Sonic Youth, speaking to *ShortList* in 2020. "The guitar interplay between Richard Lloyd and Tom Verlaine was just really informative for me. It was really dry and super poetic whilst still being really unpretentious."

What Television were doing was something new. Just as it worked with Sonic Youth, who came out of a similar cultural environment, weaned on experimental music and art, it did in England. In a 2021 *Guitar World* interview, Johnny Marr said Verlaine and Lloyd were the fresh blood guitar music needed.

"This was at a time when there were a lot of things being done on guitar that I felt were outdated and corny," Marr said. "But there was also a generation of young men in the UK and America who were onto something new – Robert Smith, John McKay, Will Sergeant. A lot of us took note from Richard Lloyd and Tom Verlaine. Those guys were game-changers. I loved all that... and still do."

The long approach towards the release of *Marquee Moon* is the history of a band taking the time to evolve before announcing themselves on wax. Formed in 1973 with Verlaine's old school pal and countercultural Zelig Richard Hell on bass, Billy Ficca on drums and Lloyd on guitar, Television would soon mix things up, swapping out Hell for Fred Smith, then of Blondie. There was a certain amount of ruthlessness in that. When Hell and Verlaine moved to New York, Hell got Verlaine a job at the Strand bookstore. But perfectionism was in Verlaine's blood. It was part of the internal logic of the band.

No one was safe. Brian Eno was brought in to produce the *Marquee Moon* demos and Verlaine was unsparing in his judgement, saying it all sounded like the Ventures, lacking juice. The sounds Television were chasing were a reaction to the rock guitar consensus at the time that favoured Marshall stacks and humbucking pickups. All of that was out. Theirs would be a Fender sound. The angular cut of a single-coil pickup was their thing. The price of the Fender Jazzmaster at the time was also appealing. Verlaine found a '59 Jazzmaster with a bronze pickguard and that made it on their debut. Sonic Youth





“A LOT OF US TOOK NOTE FROM RICHARD LLOYD AND TOM VERLAINE. THOSE GUYS WERE GAME-CHANGERS”

JOHNNY MARR



would explicitly follow Verlaine’s lead a few years later to seek out Fender offsets as the affordable option.

Rare and oddball guitars were always welcome. Verlaine also used a Gretsch G6123 Monkees signature model that he picked up for \$80, a guitar that was only on the market for a couple of years at the height of The Monkees’ popularity. There were Danelectro and Vox guitars, and a see-through Ampeg Dan Armstrong Plexi, presumably for the same reason that everyone else played one; because it looked damn cool. There were Strats and Jaguars, too, and an Epiphone Al Caiola.

In later years, Verlaine would use a modded Strat that was fitted with three lipstick-style pickups and a neck taken from a Jazzmaster. Amplifiers were mostly from Fender, too, with the high-powered Super Deluxe tube combos a cornerstone of their sound. Vox AC30s, Music Man HD-130 4X10 combos and a Dumble Overdrive Special found themselves on Verlaine’s backline over the years. Television’s tech, Robert Darby, built them a Valvotronics amp. Like many players of the era, Echoplex tape echoes were used, even if just for the preamp’s secret sauce.

Like most serious Jazzmaster players, Verlaine’s models were upgraded with Mastery bridges. He also favoured heavy strings, 0.014s or 0.015s for the high E, a 0.054 for the low E, and always a wound G. Technique-wise, he would use a pick but play close to the neck pickup.

NEW YORK TIMES

Television at CBGB’s in 1975 (from left: Richard Hell, Tom Verlaine, Richard Lloyd, Billy Ficca).

Inset: the definitive line-up with bassist Fred Smith (right).

Marquee Moon was quite the debut but there was more where that came from. *Adventure* followed in 1978, deepening Lloyd and Verlaine’s understanding of one another’s styles. The energy was different, the songs every bit as strong. Besides, what would it have served Television to have tried to chase the same thrills? If *Marquee Moon* was some after-hours adventure in the city, a transcendent fever of neon, *Adventure* is the morning after. Whether it is on the loose, sun-fried groove of *Glory*, the mid-tempo strut of *Foxhole*, or Verlaine favourite *The Dream’s Dream*, an instrumental that sails off into the ether, closing the album out, the cool precision of Lloyd and Verlaine’s phrasing is present and correct. The treble gives it a wiry clarity that again speaks to the perfectionism; a Super Deluxe is the sort of amplifier that punishes sloppiness. For better or worse, if you play a note on it, you hear it loud. There is no hiding place. Speaking to *Hit Parader* in 1978, Verlaine admitted that theirs was a difficult sound to capture in the studio.

“It’s a bright kind of sound,” he said “It’s not fuzzed up, it’s not like say, a Bad Company sound where you plug a Les Paul into a Marshall – which is the formula for about 80 per cent of rock ‘n’ roll. We’ve got a number of weird little guitars which we use with weird Fender amps, and it produces a very different kind of sound. A lot of engineers don’t know how to translate it so it will work on a record.”



Television would break up just months after the release of *Adventure*. Verlaine endured a year of contract wrangles with Elektra as he gathered material for his self-titled solo debut. Stylistically, the apple did not fall far from the tree. Sure, Lloyd no longer offered Verlaine a foil, but the licks, voice and songwriting mounted a convincing case that the best was yet to come. David Bowie thought so, and recorded a cover of the song *Kingdom Come* on his 1980 album *Scary Monsters (And Super Creeps)*. Although Verlaine was scheduled to play on Bowie's version, it was Robert Fripp who played lead instead. Apparently Verlaine's search for the perfect tone, auditioning amps ad nauseam, was not everyone's idea of fun.

But it worked for him. The tones he found on *Dreamtime* (1981) scratched and shimmered around his vocal. *Postcard From Waterloo*, from 1982's *Words From The Front*, is reference quality surf-rock tone, a splash of vintage Americana that would be reprised in 1992 for the instrumental album *Warm And Cool* – a record found him experimenting with fingerstyle.

Television would reform in 1992, releasing a self-titled album, touring, and then staying officially active until Verlaine's death. Later, Verlaine would guest on records by the Violent Femmes, James Iha and Patti Smith. He would score silent movies for the Douris Corporation with Jimmy Ripp, half composed, half improvised.

THE ADVENTURER
Verlaine playing a Jazzmaster during Television's concert at the Hammersmith Odeon, London on April 16, 1978; with Patti Smith in 2009; and on stage with Billy Ficca in Athens, Georgia on September 10, 2016.

Few understood Verlaine better as a guitar player than Richard Lloyd...

"It's like we become one guitar," said Lloyd, speaking to *Guitar Player*. "I can tell the difference between our parts and our styles when we're playing leads, but even when I listen to stuff that Tom and I do, sometimes I have to pull myself out of it to determine who's where, who's what. I don't think there's another band that has that with two guitars, where one doesn't strum and one doesn't play lead all the time, and they don't switch or play leads at the same time in 3rds – we're not the Allman Brothers, and we're not Status Quo, we're not heavy metal, and we're not a strum band. The parts are very well defined in their interconnectedness. They really make one piece, and I don't know exactly how that happens."

If such magic could be explained, it wouldn't be magic anymore. We should still try. Verlaine's guitar parts are vines to be scaled to see how it looks and sounds from on high, another perspective on the instrument. Verlaine's guitar was pitched at the avant garde but was nonetheless relatable. Like Robby Krieger of the Doors, he mixed alien styles, different modes, a jazz sensibility painting with Mixolydian and blues. If there is a lesson to be taken, it is to never be satisfied.

"When I do hear a guitar in contemporary music, it always has the same sound," Verlaine once complained. "I guess it's a distortion plugin – 'Preset 80' or something. Who cares?"

Words Ellie Rogers

"WE HAVE THREE GUITARISTS BECAUSE WE CAN'T HAVE FOUR!"

Inside the new album from **Periphery**, where progressive metal meets smooth jazz – with wacky tunings, ridiculous solos and more...



P

eriphery's trio of guitarists – Misha Mansoor, Jake Bowen and Mark Holcomb – have been blazing trails and melting faces together since Holcomb joined the band back in 2011. "The big joke back in the day," Misha recalls, "was that the reason we have three guitarists was because we can't have four!"

Over the years, their distinct musical personalities, exemplary technical abilities and unwaveringly high creative standards have propelled the band to progressively

more innovative territories with each album. But following the release of the critically-acclaimed *Periphery IV: Hail Stan* in 2019, the usually prolific outfit hit something of a wall for the first time in their history. They'd teased fans with the promise of fresh material as early as March of 2021 with a (since deleted) Instagram post using the following hashtags: #periphery #djent #newalbum. But, as the months wore on, speculative online excitement teetered towards impatience as progress on *Periphery V* seemed to grind to a halt.

In the meantime, Misha and Mark released new music under their *Haunted Shores* moniker with 2022's *Void LP*, and Misha also

THE OUTSIDERS

Periphery, from left: Mark Holcomb (guitar), Matt Halpern (drums), Spencer Sotelo (vocals), Jake Bowen (guitar), Misha Mansoor (guitar).



unleashed a tsunami of tracks from the Bulb archives, and Jake channelled his creativity into electronic solo effort, *The Daily Sun*.

Concurrently, increased levels of self-criticism, geographical separation, exhaustion, false starts and time constraints all featured on the extensive list of challenges that were to be overcome if ambitions for a new Periphery record were to become reality. As Misha puts it: "We've written a lot of stuff and the bar gets raised. We'd like to elevate that every time. I was very personally proud of *Periphery IV*, so much so that I didn't know how we were going to beat that."

A mantra that "good was not good enough" led to a period of brutal material scrappage,

which Mark describes as "a big setback" and "pretty demoralising from a personal standpoint" during the album's early stages. But, testament to a determined process, as well as a solid-as-a-rock friendship that underpins contemporary guitar music's most revered threesome, the prog-metal titans have emerged with an album that is not only worth the wait, but which doubles as the ultimate put-down to pundits who have never quite "got" the complexity of the band's ambitious sound. Cue *Periphery V: Djent Is Not A Genre*, released this month via the band's own 3DOT Recordings label.

With a wry smile, Misha professes to having had "a very tongue-in-cheek relationship"

with the term that has beleaguered the band since the early days, and which has become something of a catch-all descriptor for 7- or 8-string progressive metal in general. "It's just a way to categorise, but we're going to have some fun, too," he laughs, and anyone who has been following the band for some time may recall that they've been doing just that since 2011's playfully titled *League Of Extraordinary Djentlemen Tour*.

But the new album takes a hammer to more critic-bestowed categorisations than even its titular witticism suggests. "We don't approach things like we're going to write a certain style of music," Jake says. "We'll start with a riff or section and that will inform what happens in



the song, and if we take it to a new territory that's just because that's what the song needs."

As such, the album packs as many twists and turns as a 'choose your own adventure' novel as it blazes through brutal riffage and smooth jazz on *Wildfire* through to the dextrous open-tuned mastery of *Wax Wings* and the eardrum-pummeller that is *Everything Is Fine!* The electro-pop track *Silhouette* serves as a palette cleanser at the album's midway point, before things get loud again with *Zagreus* and the bowel-busting 8-string chug of *Dracul Gras* – AKA "Fat Dracula". The album closes out in suitably epic style with *Thanks Nobuo*, 11 minutes of effects-laden drop-C inventiveness.

The most explicitly experimental excursion – when the tectonic plates of metal and jazz rub together on *Wildfire* – is something that Jake credits to "sleep deprivation on Misha's part". But Misha has a few words in defence of this methodology. "Being up late seems to switch off your prefrontal cortex and just lets the other parts of your brain operate," he explains. "You'll just approach things in a different way when you get loopy and you're overtired. It doesn't always work, but I have found that there have been some very strong post-2AM ideas that have ended up as memorable Periphery sections." He says that initially he had worried the segment would be cut in the cold light of morning. Instead, it became what Mark describes as "the first real complete idea for *Periphery V*," and a "pillar song," that stood strong, while many other

technically impressive ideas ended up on the burn pile.

As Misha says, "Mark wrote some of the most insane riffs I've ever heard and they straight up just got cut. If you heard these in a vacuum, guitarists would be like, 'Why did you cut that? That's incredible!' But, really, it didn't do anything for the song." Far from causing arguments or bruised egos, such seemingly harsh decisions reinforced a shared goal. "We're trying to make the song as awesome as possible, as concisely as possible," Misha adds.

A Holcomb special that did make the cut came in the form of the fleet-fingered *Wax Wings*, which he devised after finding fresh inspiration in the "wacky tuning" of D F# A E A C#. "It sounds like something you'd hear someone like Mike Dawes play," he says. "It's a very pretty tuning and it's also hard to make it not sound pretty. Sometimes the pitfall with these things – and we ran into this with *Scarlet* from *Periphery II* as well – is that it's hard to have a riff have a different sort of vibe and energy, and to have it switch from this pretty, open, flowery riff to building tension."

Testament to the power of their three-brains-are-better-than-one ethos, it was through collaboration that *Wax Wings* became the album highlight that it is. "Jake contributed this awesome ending section that seemed to change the momentum of that song, and Misha added a bunch of really awesome riffs," Mark recalls. "I'm proud of what it symbolises as far as

HIGH BAR

"I pushed these guys and myself to try to get our takes as good as possible," says Misha (top right).

our working culture." Adds Jake: "It is a hallmark of all of us coming together and there's a lot of love from each member in this song." He is also quick to champion the "ridiculous solo" that Mark composed in a tuning that he jokes: "none of us have any business playing in."

"It took me about three days to mock up any semblance of licks that made sense," explains Mark, who had to re-visualise the fretboard after relinquishing all the familiar landmarks of standard tuning – or indeed any other Periphery staples such as drop C (C G C F A D) when using 6-string guitars, or drop A₁ (A₁ E₁ A₁ D₁ G₁ B₁ E₁) when using 7-strings. "Jake was in the room and helped me map out a couple of cool patterns, but it was like learning to play the guitar over again because none of the relationships between strings made any sense anymore. You have to recreate a vocabulary."

The exacting demands of each song, each tuning and each player's individual preferences has long necessitated the need for bespoke gear, and Misha, Mark and Jake have been flying the flags respectively for Jackson, PRS and Ibanez for almost a decade – each with an ever-growing range of signature guitars to their name.

For the album, Jake played his new Ibanez JBM9999, which pays homage to the arched top body style and double-cut aesthetic of the Ibanez RGA, which he says he's "always kind of had a thing for," but with the addition of his all new DiMarzio Mirage pickups. Despite what appears to be an HS configuration, the guitar has a standard-sized ceramic humbucker in the bridge and a single-coil-sized humbucker in the neck, giving Jake a wide range of tones – from warm to full sear. With 27 frets, a set of Gotoh locking tuners, and Luminlay side dots, it's a bright blue shredding machine.

The album writing process also gave Mark the opportunity to workshop his latest PRS SE six-string signature, which was released earlier this year. Simultaneously, he prototyped his new Seymour Duncan Scarlet and Scourge humbuckers, which have now usurped his long-favoured signature Alpha and Omega pair. "The Scourge is a bridge pickup that has Alnico 8 magnets," he explains. "I used to use ceramic for the Omega bridge pickups that I've been using for almost a decade, but I switched to Alnico 8, which I really loved, and we

"WE'RE TRYING TO MAKE THE
SONG AS AWESOME AS POSSIBLE,
AS CONCISELY AS POSSIBLE"
MISHA MANSOOR



revoiced the pickups. It was cool to learn about what I was liking in the new iterations of the gear as the album went on.”

Possibly the owner of the most expansive collection of all, Misha reels off a list of “regular heavy hitters” that lent their tones to the record, including his Daphne Blue Jackson USA Juggernaut HT 7, which he had retrofitted with an EverTune bridge, and his extremely limited edition HT 8 – a guitar he describes as having “so much mojo”, as epitomised by the dark and chewy 8-string tones of *Dracul Gras*. To complete the holy trinity of Misha Mansoor signature Jacksons, he also used his Laguna Burst six-string model, fitted with Bare Knuckle Juggernaut humbuckers. “This is kind of going all out if money were no object how I’d spec a guitar,” he enthuses. “It’s a fantastic instrument.”

In the department of less likely suspects, Misha’s new(ish) signature Jackson MJ Series So-Cal PT also made an appearance. Openly described by its creator as a “sleeper Strat,” it more than pays tribute to the classic Fender aesthetic, swerving legal hot water by virtue of Jackson having been adopted into the Fender family of brands two decades ago. “It looks just like a regular HSS Strat,” he says, “but it sort of plays like my signature guitars because it’s got a roasted maple neck, a 20-inch radius, jumbo stainless steel frets, and Gotoh locking tuners.” Also boasting a “fairly aggressive” Bare Knuckle Ragnarok humbucker and “EQ-appropriate” Bare Knuckle Trilogy Suite single-coils, the versatile guitar is more than capable of unleashing its vicious potential when required. “It doesn’t look the part, and I love how you can get away with that,” he smiles.

Mark’s latest PRS also leans less towards the brutal side of life, and more towards a classic feel that could find applications across a broad cross-section of styles.

“One thing that you can count on with us being old farts, and becoming older farts every year, is that we fall more in love with Strats and Teles,” he laughs.

“It’s funny how we started out with traditional gear,” Misha says, “and then the Axe-FX came out

and revolutionised everything, and then we started to find a love for analogue gear again. I’m using this EP-2 Echoplex from the 60s or 70s on a bunch of recordings, and now we’re sort of in the middle ground where we appreciate the digital, we appreciate the analogue and we use it appropriately.”

They cite *Djent Is Not A Genre* as being “the first Periphery record where there’s a bunch of amps,” with a Peavey Invektive and an Omega Granophyre getting heavy combined usage throughout. Others that made the cut included a Carstens Grace, a Mesa Lone Star for cleans and a lightly modded EVH 5051.

Re-amping DIs also played a huge

PEACE AND LOVE
Mark on stage at the Forum, London.

role in the recording process, with many early demo take DIs making it all the way through to final song iterations. “This is actually something we did with intent,” says Misha, who steered the entire process at his apartment studio. “I pushed these guys and myself to try to get our takes to be as good as possible so we wouldn’t have to go about re-recording them. They’re not perfect, and I think it gives it more character. That just got re-amped to make it sound the way that we wanted.”

Another secret weapon for Periphery’s characteristically destructive tones is the Horizon Devices Precision Drive – a pedal designed by Misha himself after a decade of

experimenting with other overdrive units. “Unless it’s a clean channel that’s pristine clean, that is on all the time,” he stresses. “Just like Meshuggah!”



“WE DON’T APPROACH THINGS LIKE
WE’RE GOING TO WRITE A CERTAIN
STYLE OF MUSIC”
JAKE BOWEN

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Words Jenna Scaramanga

“IT SOUNDS PRETTY INSANE!”

With the new remix album from **Code Orange**, it's hard to tell which noises are guitars. “It's cool to have a little curiosity going on,” says guitarist Reba Meyers



In 2020, Code Orange's fourth album *Underneath* was universally hailed as a metal landmark. Featuring some of the most brutal noises you're likely to hear outside a war zone, it was in turns innovative, catchy and disturbing, with the band expanding beyond their hardcore roots with more industrial and electronic elements than ever before. Frontman Jami Morgan called it "some of the hardest sh*t there is, period." Now they're pushing things a stage further with an album of remixes, titled *What Is Really Underneath?*

On the original album, guitarist Reba Meyers recorded herself making the most out-there noises she could imagine, before chopping them up into samples. Some of them were reversed, glitched, or pitch-shifted

to sound even more messed up. "There's so much to work with guitar wise in the tracks," she says. "The amount of layers was absolutely insane. There's so many cool little things that you wouldn't know were there – sounds you wouldn't know necessarily if they were electronic or guitar."

That huge library meant there was no need to record new guitars for *What Is Really Underneath?*. Instead, Jami Morgan and keyboardist Eric 'Shade' Balderose got creative with those sounds, leaning into the electronic and hip-hop influences that separate Code Orange from traditionalist hardcore. "Shade had been doing a lot of remixes for other artists," Reba explains. "We just wanted to create something that could live in a different world. Him and Jamie got basically obsessed over it and created the most insane remixes."

Reba is right on all counts: listening to *What Is Really Underneath?* is a wholly different experience from its predecessor, and guitarists will frequently be unable to tell which noises are even guitars. "I will let the listener use their imagination," she smiles. "There's a little bit more wonder involved in it. Although I love straight guitar-based music too, it's cool to have a little bit of curiosity going on."

To create those sounds, Reba used a mixture of software plug-ins and pedals. The Soundtoys PhaseMistress, FilterFreak, and Decapitator plug-ins saw heavy action, but as she reveals, a lot of the noises come from the imaginative use of simple gear. "The more crazy synthy stuff usually comes from in the box [plugins]. Just the AMT WH-1 wah in a certain context can sound pretty wild. It's just a super chill little guy but with

➔ different distortion pedals it can sound pretty insane. The ZVex Sonar is a tremolo pedal, but I just dime it and make the speed just basically super close together so it doesn't really sound like a tremolo. It just sounds like weird, broken distortion. The ZVex Box of Metal sounds awesome with it, too. My Bananana Mandala glitch pedal linked with that stuff can sound pretty insane. We do a lot of glitch stuff in the box, too. We went pretty hard on that on *Underneath*.

"The other main one that's insane-sounding is this MoogerFooger Ring Mod pedal," she continues. "I just bounce around with a bunch of different stuff combined. The Ring Mod, especially with the wah, can sound pretty insane when you sweep it with really distorted guitar. It even sounds pretty weird when it's not distorted. But I'm a firm believer that your hands are the most powerful tool. How hard you push and the way you use vibrato matters so much in terms of how pedals respond. One person can play with something and sound completely different, even on the same settings."

Reba is currently deciding what her rig for the upcoming Code Orange tour will look like. "I have all kinds of ideas," she says. "It's definitely a dream of mine to have a multi-amp rig; we never really have the space but hopefully I can figure that out. I would love to use a Roland Jazz Chorus amp on tour for clean stuff." Though she hints at possible signature effects in the works, her current touring 'board has just six pedals. An ISP Decimator noise gate and Ibanez TS-808 are always on. She uses the Boss PS-6 Harmonist's S-Bend mode to perform divebombs with her fixed-bridge ESP. The other pedals are Universal Audio's Astra Modulation Machine, plus the aforementioned MiniFooger MF-1 and AMT WH-1 wah. It all runs into an EVH 5150III EL34 head and EVH cabs, with an Axe-FX III in the loop for digital effects.

Reba's main guitar is still her signature ESP Viper tuned to drop B,



HAIR RAISING
Reba in full flight

but she's already working with the brand on an update. "We're definitely gonna make an upgraded version because I love it so much. I just want to do something wilder. We're working out what's possible. I've also always wanted a Tele-bodied guitar so I might go in that route." Although the signature ESP comes with an EMG 81 pickup, Reba has replaced that with a Railhammer Chisel in her gigging guitar, and what her next signature will contain is up in the air...

"I just like that the Railhammer's a little less crunchy. It has more warmth to it but it still sounds super badass. I know EMG has a ton of different pickups, so they've sent me some stuff and I'm trying it all out. I still use the 81 live sometimes, but the Railhammers definitely have a really special sound. The Chisel and the Anvil are both awesome."

With the 5150 set to crushing amounts of gain, intelligent use of noise gates is crucial to the Code Orange sound, especially given the band's love of sudden silences between sonic blasts. "They're important, but it's also important to know when not to use them," Reba explains. "I'll use it sometimes whenever a song is really

tight. Other times I want that f*cked-up natural feedback. It's cool whenever you're getting a really fat, huge sound and you just don't need it. It's crazy like how much you can do with that one thing."

Their sophisticated use of gates separates the band's current sound from their early efforts. As Reba recalls: "When we were younger, we were wilder in terms of accidental feedback until we learned how to gate. We were probably the last generation of kids who didn't grow up with Google, so learning how to use pedals was just a crap shoot. You'd buy something used for \$30, like a piece of sh*t that might even be broken. There was a lot of learning that wasn't 'proper' because of that."

Returning to the possibility of touring with multiple amps, she adds: "I re-fell in love with this old Fender Bassman. I feel like bringing that on the road is just a disaster waiting to happen but it's freaking awesome when combined with other things. When we were really young we used to tour with the absolute craziest vintage amps. Looking back I'm like, 'Sh*t, that's so cool! Why did we stop?' But in reality that stuff breaks on the road. It's easier to bring more modern amps. The EVH stuff does sound awesome so I'm not complaining at all."

If she wants to tour with a multi-amp rig without taking up extra space, it would seem the solution is already in her rig, in the form of the Fractal Axe-FX III. Reba, though, is not keen to go all-digital. "I'm sure I could have someone else do it for me, but whenever I do it I never think it sounds good. Maybe I'm not dialled in super hard on the settings, but something about it just doesn't inspire me. I really like using it to sound digital and for digital effects. You can make crazy things and I like using it more for that than I do for trying to match something that exists in the real world. I might wake up one day and sit with it for 10 million hours and get something cool and change my mind."

It's a surprisingly old-school take for someone who made an album with chopped-up samples of digitally-manipulated guitar, but Reba still gets misty-eyed talking about valve amps. "I would just love to be ripping a JCM800 at some point in my life. As a kid I never gave a sh*t about them. Everyone and their mother was using them when I was growing up so it was almost a 'F*ck you, I'm gonna use

"SOMETIMES IT'S COOL TO
FIND A TONE AS A
DIFFERENT WAY OF WRITING"

Photos: Jimmy Fontaine / Michael Ollivas



something else' kind of thing. Marshall was like one of the first companies to ever hit us up. They sent us Joe Satriani JVM heads and those amps actually sounded really awesome, too. I like the British sound, so I would love to get that in the mix.

She takes a balanced view on the creative potential of technology. "I've realised that sometimes that the idea is purer whenever you just totally don't f*ck with it, and just sit in a room and literally record the most basic thing, whether it be acoustic guitar and a voice or guitar and a drum machine. I'll just let the idea just come out of me as fast as possible and as far as it wants to go. If I listen back a week or a month later and I'm like 'that was sick!' then I'll fix it. Sometimes it's cool to find a tone as a different way of writing. Then you're inspired by that as opposed to an idea coming out of you from nowhere. The stuff that you're conjuring out of the f*cking ether is sometimes the absolute best stuff."

When it comes to writing, she takes a similar blend of old-school and high-tech approaches, sometimes making demos from scratch on a laptop, and sometimes jamming with the band. "It is really valuable getting people working together. Hearing a drummer in the room or the bass player next to you blasting gives a sense of power and leads you to paying attention more to the rhythm and the power as opposed to the technicality of this and that stuff."

Reba's sound is defiantly original, but she says that a lack of obvious role models led her to finding her own niche. "Growing up, I never listened to guitar players other than myself. I just did my thing and played with my friends and learned people around me. Later in life I was like, 'Oh, holy sh*t - there's so many great guitar players out there!' As a kid I just didn't know, and there were no females at all that I knew. When you're different, you just decided to be internal as opposed to look outward for references. If you don't really have anyone to look up to, you just look around you and naturally soak stuff in."



Words Chris Bird, Rob Laing, Stuart Williams

18 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR TONE

It's the most hotly-debated aspect of guitar playing! Read on as we look at the best ways to optimise your setup and get more *TONE*!



01 Change your pick

Your choice of pick fundamentally affects your tone. Gently-strummed acoustic parts laid back in the mix of a soft rock ballad generally benefit from thin picks with some give, so plastic, tortoiseshell or similar are order of the day here. Alternatively, if you want a Queen- or ZZ Top-style harmonic-rich biting electric sound, the ring of a metal pick on metal strings is best. Experiment with a variety of picks to see what works best for you.



02 Try different string gauges

Some people will insist that heavier strings sound better. They may be right. They may however be wrong. What we know for sure is that you can expect a different tone from two otherwise identical string sets of a different gauge. Stevie Ray Vaughan strung his Strat with fingertip-busting 0.013s. His fellow Texan tonehound Billy Gibbons has used strings as light as 0.007s. So there's really no right or wrong, only what's best for you.

04 Leave bass frequencies to the bass guitar

Sorry to disappoint you, but more bass in your guitar tone doesn't necessarily equate to a fatter live sound. At least not if there's a bass player in your band, stealing most of the low end in the mix. Don't try and compete! Give the bass its space and be happy occupying the midrange. You'll find it easier to mix your band's sound and you'll cut through with ease.

03 String materials/construction

The gauge of string isn't the only deciding factor in its tone. String companies offer strings made of various alloys and with different construction methods too. The size of the core and the shape of the wire wrapped around it all affect feel and tone. It can be a bit of a journey to find what works for you, but keep in mind that flatwound strings are super-smooth, and generally used for jazz. Roundwounds are more general purpose. And, for those who can't make up their minds, there are half-rounds.

05 Cut saturation at high volume

Pedalboard settings carefully crafted at home often don't transfer perfectly to a loud live setting. Once you crank your amp's volume up loud you'll probably need far less distortion than you did at neighbour-friendly levels – especially if you're using a valve amp, where power-amp distortion comes in to play. If you practise in a rehearsal room, spend some time auditioning your tones at stage levels.



06 Use an EQ notch filter to banish feedback

If playing loud or with high gain is part of your act, you've probably encountered the shrill screaming sound of feedback on many occasions. One solution is to keep a multi-band EQ pedal on your 'board. In general, the more bands your pedal has the better – and the Boss EQ-200 is a good option. You want to make a narrow-band EQ cut that matches the frequency of the feedback. Bear in mind that feedback tends to be different in every room so be prepared to tweak every time you play.

07 Top-wrap your tune-o-matic bridge

Insert strings the 'wrong way' into your Les Paul's tailpiece (i.e., so they point away from the headstock) then wrap them over the top, across the bridge and then attach as normal at the machine heads. You'll probably need to screw the tailpiece most, if not all the way down to the body to get optimal string tension over the bridge – but that's the point. Many LP players (Joe Bonamassa, for example) insist you'll increase the resonance of your guitar with this simple setup tweak.

08 Volume control treble bleed mod

Standard guitar volume controls can cause a loss in treble when you turn them down. That's because, as a side effect of altering volume, they act as a low-pass filter. To get round this, you can do a treble-bleed modification. This is either a capacitor, or a resistor and a cap, wired, usually in parallel, to the pot. Popular combinations are a 150k resistor with a 0.001uF cap, or 100k/0.002uF.



09 Give your Strat a bridge tone pot

This one's massive, and won't cost you a bean (assuming you own a soldering iron). Vintage-style Strats use the second tone pot for the middle pickup, but it's the bridge pickup that's often a bit shrill. It's easy to swap the tone control from middle to bridge by locating the wire connecting the second tone pot to the middle pickup on the selector switch. Move it one tag towards the middle of the switch, changing it from the middle to the bridge pickup.

10 Raise your guitar's action

Sure, it's easier to shred like a demon when your string height is low, but if burning up the fretboard isn't your MO you may want to consider asking your local guitar tech to raise your guitar's action a tad. You see, the lower you go, the more you'll encounter the dreaded string buzz. And you really only have to raise it a tiny bit to hear an improvement in your tone.



11 Get your pedals in order

Follow these signal chain golden rules to get great tone without trial and error. Wah pedals come first, before preamps and distortion/drive pedals. Plug these into your amp's input. If your amp has an effects loop, add delays, modulations and reverb pedals in that order here. These effects create copies of the signal hence they usually sound better after gain. Compressors are usually best placed either first in your chain (great for taming spiky funk chops) or last (more akin to studio compression; great for smooth lead tones). Of course, rules are made to be broken, but this is a hassle-free starting point.



12 Adjust pickup height

This is one of the most under-appreciated tips of all. Raising your pickups closer to the strings should, in theory, increase the output level. However, pickups raised too close to the strings can cause "wolf notes", when the magnetic field of the pickup interferes with the natural vibration of the string resulting in unpleasant sounds. Aim for the sweet spot where the balance of output level and tonal purity meet!



13 Use string-mutes for cleaner leads

Ask yourself, how clean is your playing, technically speaking? If the honest answer is that it could be cleaner, well, there is help at hand until you've got those shred skills up to speed. A fretwrap is a soft wraparound length of fabric that you can use either on the fretboard behind your fretting fingers (or even behind the nut) to minimise string noise. For the driest of dry sounds you can place a piece of foam between the bridge and tailpiece of a Les Paul-style tune-o-matic bridge.



14 Get buff

Lengthy cables and long chains of effects pedals can degrade your tone. Solve this by adding a buffer to your 'board. If you own a lot of pedals there's a good chance one of them already has an onboard buffer. If a super-long cable is the offending item (and assuming you can't replace it with a shorter length alternative), placing the buffer at the start of your signal chain will help. And if changing effect order isn't viable, a dedicated buffer pedal is an affordable item.



18 Use the right-sized amp

Valve amps need to be working at their 'sweet spot' to sound best. Weirdly, for most Marshalls and Fenders, that seems to be anywhere from four to eight on the master, in our experience! If you find a valve amp sounds somehow 'cold', 'brittle' or harsh, it might be that it's just not turned up enough to be working at its best. Joe Perry of Aerosmith, for example, uses small amps, suitably mic'd up, even for stadium gigs.



15 Try a clean boost

A secret weapon on any gigging guitarist's pedalboard, a clean boost will increase your signal level – usually by around 15-20dB – but without the extreme sonic colouration of a distortion pedal. If you love your valve amp's tone and don't want to fundamentally change it, a boost pedal is for you. Use one as a temporary boost for soaring solos, or as an 'always-on' brightness/EQ bump.

16 Get your guitar set up

Maybe this is obvious, but keeping your pride and joy ship shape and in tip top condition will help you get the most out of it. We recommend paying your local guitar tech a visit once a year.

17 Identify your tonal "problem" first

Perhaps we should've opened on this slightly philosophical point, but, suffice to say, it's important not to go too far down the rabbit hole of the quest for tonal nirvana. If you liked the sound of your gear when you bought it, ask yourself whether you really, truly need to upgrade it. Sometimes optimising the gear you already own is all you need to do...

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The Les Paul Buyer's Guide

The TG guide to the best Les
Pauls on the market right now!

The *Les Paul* ISSUE

Words Amit Sharma Photography Mitch Conrad, Ross Halfin, Jim Donnelly

“IT SOUNDED PERFECT... LIKE A GIFT FROM ON HIGH!”

At the age of 21, with a 1959 replica Les Paul in his hands, **Slash** lit up Guns N' Roses' classic debut album *Appetite For Destruction*. Now, as a connoisseur with hundreds of guitars in his collection, he picks out the ones he treasures the most – and reveals how his love for Les Pauls has inspired and shaped him as a player...

He begins with an apology, followed by the perfect excuse. “Sorry I’m late,” Slash says as he connects with TG on a video conference call from his home in Los Angeles, 20 minutes after the scheduled start time. “I was actually just practising on one of my Les Pauls,” he laughs, “and I lost track of time.”

The legendary Guns N' Roses guitarist's new book, *The Collection: Slash* – the first release

from Gibson's newly founded publishing arm – explores his museum-like vault of guitars in great detail. The range of instruments is vast, from the 1980 BC Rich Mockingbird seen in GN'R's *You Could Be Mine* video and the Travis Bean TB1000 used for the slide work on tracks like *Bad Obsession*, right through to his Guild doublenecks and mouth-watering acoustics, with even some Strats and Teles thrown in for good measure, including the Fender Bass VI heard on parts of *Welcome To The Jungle* and *Live And Let Die*. But there really is just one guitar we tend to picture in the hands of this particular guitar hero. As the man himself says: “When it comes to looks, tone and feel,

Les Pauls have always been the guitar I’m most comfortable with.”

As he discusses his love affair with Gibson's storied singlecut, there is an amusing moment when his focus turns to what he can see to one side of TG's correspondent – a 1969 Les Paul Custom. “I have to admit I’ve been sat here talking to you while looking at that guitar at the same time,” he smiles. “It looks very cool.”

But he starts by taking us all the way back to the early 70s, when as a young boy he was blown away by Jimmy Page's playing on Led Zeppelin's *Whole Lotta Love*, and got a Les Paul copy as his first electric guitar...



➔ **Do you remember the exact moment you realised these magical Les Pauls would be your instrument of choice?**

They are definitely magical instruments, but that's actually a complicated question. I think all guitar players, or at least most of us, start off by trying to find the instrument we're most comfortable with. We all go through that period of trial and error. I think I ended up with the Les Paul because the first electric guitar I ever got was a Les Paul copy made by a company called Memphis Guitars. So I just naturally gravitated to a Les Paul not knowing that much about guitar sounds at the time. I really didn't have any experience or any real knowledge of what everybody was doing or about equipment in general. But it seemed like I was attracted to what I thought a Les Paul sounded like.

Which players had you seen holding a Les Paul at this early stage in your guitar journey?

There were a few guys who influenced me when it came to playing Les Pauls. I'd seen Eric Clapton holding one, as well as Jimmy Page, Keith Richards, Billy Gibbons... A lot of players who had a great sound using those guitars. I specifically remember hearing *Whole Lotta Love* from *Led Zeppelin II* when I was seven years old. And I attributed that sound – from what I felt was the coolest record I'd ever heard at that point in my life – to the Les Paul. Still, to this day, I'd say it's one of the coolest records ever made. And I knew it was a Les Paul making those guitar tones because I saw pictures of Jimmy Page holding one – so that's what made me associate the Les Paul with that kind of sound. Looking back now, I think that connection was pretty accurate! So I knew I was attracted to the sound of a Les Paul. I had that copy for a while and eventually it broke. I went through a myriad of different guitars to see what



they sounded like, just exploring when it came to my tone. I ended up going back to the Les Paul and I've been with that ever since.

Jeff Beck is another player you've mentioned in the past – and while he was mainly known for playing a Strat, he used that Oxblood Les Paul in The Jeff Beck Group and on his earliest solo albums.

Yeah! Jeff Beck was another big one for me. I remember seeing the cover for [1975 album] *Blow By Blow* and thinking, 'Okay, he uses a Les Paul too!' Even though there's a lot of Strat on that record as well, at the time I didn't know any better!

Then, of course, there's Joe Perry of Aerosmith, and that amazing story about you buying his 1959 Dark Burst Standard for eight grand in Japan, only to return it to him many years later as a birthday present. It had belonged to Duane Allman before

CROWN JEWELS

Above: Jessica, the 1987 Les Paul Standard that's been Slash's main live guitar for over three decades. Right: His most prized instrument of all – a 1959 replica made by Kris Derrig.

Joe, and Eric Johnson even owned it at one point, so you scored quite a deal there.

Yeah, Duane and Eric owned it too, which is crazy! I was in Japan when I got the phone call from the office in LA saying that there was a guy who had a guitar I might be interested in. I was a big fan of Aerosmith and I remember the *Live! Bootleg* record had a couple of pictures of a Les Paul that looked different. It wasn't your typical red sunburst finish. I thought it was just really faded and beaten up, because it had gone brown, but it was what we now call Tobacco Burst or Dark Burst. But anyway, I thought it was the coolest looking Les Paul I'd ever seen. So fast forward to Guns N' Roses' first tour of Japan and I got this phone call saying there's this guitar available and that it was an old '59 which had belonged to Joe Perry. I was like, 'Well, get them to send over pictures' – because I started to get pretty excited. I was wondering: could that possibly be that same guitar I know from the *Bootleg* record? When I got back to LA, in my mailbox was an envelope stuffed full of polaroids and it was that same f*ckin' guitar! So I bought it for eight grand! The guy probably didn't know what he had or just wanted to unload it. I kept that guitar for a long time and used it for various things. I used it in the *November Rain* video and some other stuff, but yeah, like you said, I eventually ended up giving it back to Joe.

So let's talk about what is arguably your most iconic guitar – a 1959 replica built by American luthier Kris Derrig years before Gibson even made 1959 replicas. It had pride of place at the very forefront of Guns N' Roses game-changing debut *Appetite For Destruction*, right next to Axl's vocals.

That Derrig '59 literally came in the eleventh hour when we were doing the

"THE DERRIG 59 HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY MAIN RECORDING GUITAR. ALWAYS THE BEST-SOUNDING LES PAUL IN THE ROOM"





"WHEN I HEARD WHOLE LOTTA LOVE, I KNEW I WAS
ATTRACTED TO THE SOUND OF A LES PAUL"

SOLID GOLD

Slash and his 1956 Goldtop with P-90 pickups, serial number 61299.

Appetite record. We'd just finished the basic tracks and the guitars that I had at that moment in time just didn't sound right. They didn't sound good. I was thinking, 'What the f*ck am I gonna do?' Because I had to go in and do all the guitars in a week, and I had no idea what to use. The Guns N' Roses manager at the time, Alan Niven, brought this Les Paul to the studio for me, just as I was about to do all my guitar overdubs. And it was that Kris Derrig Les Paul. It just sounded f*ckin' perfect, man... like a gift from on high.

And it was that guitar through a rented 100-Watt Marshall half-stack, and occasionally a Dunlop Cry Baby for the leads, which essentially became your tone for that whole record.

Yeah, I had a rented Marshall 100-watt half stack and did the whole record like that. That guitar and amp ended up

becoming my main sound as a guitar player – that was my tone. And I took the Derrig on the road for all of 1987 into 1988 and in that short span of time I beat the sh*t out of that guitar! I thought, 'You know, if I'm gonna continue using this, it really should just be a recording guitar'. So I bought a couple of factory second Les Paul Standards from Gibson. I took those on the road and retired the Derrig from touring. But I always use it – whenever I've gone in to do a record with Guns or Velvet Revolver or The Conspirators or any band I've been in, that's always been my main recording guitar. Why? Because it's always the best-sounding Les Paul in the room.

After *Appetite For Destruction* there were the two Guns N' Roses albums released on the same day in 1991 – *Use Your Illusion I* and *II*. It's not well known which songs from those albums also featured the Derrig. Care to enlighten us?

Oh f*ck! I used it on all kinds of stuff. There are so many songs across those two records. There's one called *Don't*

Damn Me that I know I used the Derrig on. The same goes for *Bad Apples*. I could go on and on, I just can't remember all the names of the songs on those records! But it was definitely most of them. I did start branching out on those albums, using a lot of different stuff. There were so many songs and I wanted to get different guitar sounds. That's actually when I first started collecting guitars, while we were making the *Use Your Illusion* records. I had a sitar, a BC Rich Mockingbird, a couple of Strats... Different things I could apply in different places on the albums.

Another very famous model is the 1987 Les Paul Standard with a three-piece top and cigarette burns, known as 'Jessica' – which was one of the factory seconds you mentioned earlier.

Yeah, that's a guitar I picked up when I finally retired the Derrig. Back then I was pretty much a nobody, so Gibson sold it to me at cost! There were two of them – one I called Jessica, and the other was Stephanie. They are sisters. And I have them both on the road with me today. We have two rigs, so I have a whole bunch of guitars and amps that goes to one part of the planet and then another rig which is more or less identical, in theory, that goes to another part of the world. So I have Jessica in one and Stephanie in the other.

What kind of songs do you like to use them for?

Basically, most of the set will be done with Jessica or Stephanie. I guess they get used for most of the *Appetite For Destruction* stuff. Pretty much all the hard-hitting songs will be played on one of those two guitars, depending on whether I'm in a part of the world that has the A Rig or the B Rig. Stephanie is not actually in the new Gibson book, but Jessica is.

You picked up a 1959 Les Paul Standard back in the early 90s, which is probably the '59 you've used most in the studio – on the *Living The Dream* album with Myles Kennedy And The Conspirators, and on your 2016 cover of Elton John's *Rocket Man*...

That guitar, besides the one I gave back to Joe Perry, was actually the first '59 I purchased. At the time, it was just a '59

Les Paul that was available. But since buying it I've realised it's a guitar that *always* sounds amazing. It's one of those guitars that has that real magic tone to it. I mean, just because a Les Paul was made in 1959 doesn't necessarily mean it has to sound good. I've heard '59s that don't sound good and ones that sound *incredible*. I own a couple that sound really amazing, and this is one of them.

You're mainly known for using PAF-style pickups, but there's a 1956 Goldtop you used on *Living The Dream* with P-90s. What do they bring out in your playing?

In the studio I love P-90s because they're bright and kinda single-coily. I guess the best thing to compare them to is maybe a Strat, because you get this really bitey and thinner sound that's also very aggressive. I love using this one in the studio, and *Living The Dream* was the record I really featured it on, where I actually used it for a couple of different songs. That guitar just sounds great! But the problem with P-90s on the road is that they're really, really noisy, you know? They tend to buzz the entire time you have the volume up. So I don't really take this one out on the road, but I love having it with me in the studio.

Another rare specimen is your 1959 Les Paul Standard in Dark Burst – very similar to the one you gave back to Joe Perry. Very few were made in that finish.

So I gave Joe his guitar back in 2002 or around then. And I always wanted to find another one because Tobacco Sunburst really is my favourite finish for Les Pauls. So that was always in my mind, trying to source another Tobacco or Dark Burst from 1959. They only made a couple of those that year and obviously Joe now had one of them back with him. I noticed a lot of the Dark Bursts that are out there are actually sunbursts that have just gotten really dark over time. I started looking around to try and find one to replace the one I gave Joe. I finally came across one in mint condition from 1959 that [Gibson Brand President] Cesar Gueikian turned me on to. It was a collector on the East Coast who had it and he sold it to me... which was really nice of him, because he didn't necessarily want to or need to.



➔ **While we're on the subject of rare, you have a Les Paul Custom which interestingly has a rosewood fingerboard instead of ebony – closer to the Standards you're more associated with...**

I actually had the Gibson Custom Shop make that for me. One of the reasons I don't use Customs more is that they tend to be very bright and a lot of that comes down to the ebony fretboard. So I asked Gibson to make me that Custom with a rosewood board and it sounds f*ckin' phenomenal! I got this in 2014 just after *World On Fire* [his second album with Myles Kennedy And The Conspirators] had been recorded, and I've only ever used it out on the road. It's part of my touring rig, though I haven't

used it in the studio yet, but it sounds killer live, so we'll see!

Moving away from Les Pauls for a second, what can you tell us about the 1959 Flying V with which you played the leads on GN'R's version of *Knockin' On Heaven's Door*? What does the korina sound like in your hands compared to the usual mahogany and maple cap?

I have a good friend called Albert Molinaro who is a guitar collector and aficionado, but also somebody who sells and trades instruments. I've known him since the 80s. Him and another guy called Howie Hubberman used to have this guitar store called Guitars R Us on Sunset Boulevard right next to Guitar

Center when it was on the other side of the street. I've known those guys for years and Albert is someone I've kept in constant contact with. He sold me this Flying V when we were doing the *Use Your Illusion* records, as well as two '58 Explorers – all korina guitars, obviously. They just have this certain kind of tonal quality to them that I find to be very unique and attributable to that kind of wood. I used it on the fly, to be honest. I was going somewhere, I dropped by the studio really quick and laid down the guitar solos from *Knockin' On Heavens Door* with that Flying V because I'd just gotten it.

Well, you can't muck about when inspiration strikes!

Honestly, it was one of those one-take solos through the song with that one guitar. It was one of those moments where the guitar in your hands feels totally amazing and like you could do anything on it! I love how those solos ended up sounding. And '59 Flying Vs are hard to come by, because they're very rare and super f*ckin' expensive. As time goes by, they get more and more expensive. I've been holding onto this one for dear life!

Another collector's piece is your 1958 'First Burst' with a two-piece top, which is one of the first two sunburst Les Paul Standards ever made by Gibson in the Kalamazoo factory. It has some serious mojo, from the original frets to the sticker goo on the scratchplate. Some might even call it guitar porn!

Yeah, yeah! Guitar porn is a very good term for it. That's a very sexy guitar. I came across this one around 2011 or something like that. Somebody mentioned that these two guitars were available. I got really excited and sought them out. I bought one and somebody else bought the other. It's another great-sounding guitar and one I'm really proud to own because it's such a historical model in terms of Gibson Les Pauls.

Have you used it in the studio yet, and if so, which albums can we hear it on?

I have used it somewhere, either on *Living The Dream* or *World On Fire*. It's definitely on one of those two records. And it sounds great. Actually, I have



ON THE DOUBLE
The 1966 EDS-1275, as used on Guns N' Roses' version of Bob Dylan's *Knockin' On Heaven's Door*.



HIS DARK MATERIALS

Main and bottom left: The 1959 Standard in Darkburst, serial number 9 2225. Top left: His 'go-to' 1959 Standard, acquired in the early 90s, serial number 9 0844. Middle left: Les Paul Custom with a rosewood fingerboard instead of the classic ebony.

"I ASKED GIBSON TO MAKE ME A CUSTOM WITH A ROSEWOOD BOARD AND IT SOUNDS F*CKIN' PHENOMENAL!"



Do you always keep the original PAFs in with your vintage guitars? How do you decide which guitars end up with your Seymour Duncan Alnico II set?

I don't put Seymours in any of the vintage guitars. Just because if a guitar has original PAFs in it, there's no reason to f*ck with that. And most of the vintage guitars I go for, nine times out of ten I'll be looking for something that's all original... or at least have the original pickups, you know? But in other guitars, yeah. I find that the Seymour Duncan Alnico IIs – that I actually got turned on to by the Derrig guitar because it just *happened* to have those in it – are still the greatest rock 'n' roll pickups you can get. I've been using them for a very long time. So they'll go into anything I buy, new or used, that's *not* vintage. And if there's anything I get new from Gibson, I'll always put those pickups in.

There are quite a few PAF Goldtops in the book. Which one have you used most?

Yeah, there are a couple of '57s in there, but the one I've used the most in the studio is the '57 Darkback, at least as far as Goldtops are concerned.

And your signature Les Paul Victoria model...

We really nailed it with the Victorias. I've got a couple of those on the road and they sound exactly like a vintage '57 would. I'm really happy with how that signature came out.

Similarly, you must be very pleased with this book.

I'm so impressed with it. And it's not even the fact that it's my guitars or anything, just that the book itself is such a gorgeous package. They did a really great job. The funny thing is that I've gotten more guitars since then that I wish were in the book. It stops at a certain place and I've picked up about five or six guitars since the book was done, so now I'm thinking 'Oh sh*t, I wish this was in there!' So we'll probably put out a second book in about five or ten years from now!

been with for such a long time. You know each other inside out!

Let's touch on the 1966 EDS-1275 Doubleneck seen in your hands for *Knockin' On Heaven's Door* on the *Use Your Illusion* tour. It was found by your tech Adam Day in a guitar store somewhere in Indiana back in 1990, and was originally sunburst before being refinished in black.

Yeah, and the colour is one of the reasons why I bought. I really needed a 12-string for application purposes. I wanted to avoid a switching guitars kind of situation if I could, so the 12/6 felt like a great idea. But at the same time, Jimmy Page made that guitar famous and I didn't want to look like I was trying to be him by using the exact same guitar, because it's so recognisable and unique. Adam told me about this doubleneck that was available and it was black, so I looked it up. It had its own kind of character and look to it, so I ended up buying that and have been using it ever since.

RARE BEAUTY
One of the first bursts ever made in 1958, serial number 8 3096.

a session coming up in a couple of weeks I'm thinking about using it on...

Very interesting! Speaking of new music, what can you tell us about the guitars we're hearing on last year's Guns N' Roses tracks, *Hard Skool* and *Absurd*?

I used the Derrig on both of those tracks, which is funny because it ended up sounding completely different to how it normally does. I played through somebody else's Marshall and a small sort of Pro-Tools setup. For some reason, it came out sounding very different to how it would if I was using it through my own rig. But that's the Derrig you're hearing on both tracks.

Which goes to prove it really is your desert island guitar, to be perfectly honest...

It's definitely my main go-to because it's flexible and easy to use in a lot of different applications. And I feel comfortable playing it! There's all that history – it's a bit like a partner you've

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3 JIMMY PAGE: OUT OF PHASE LEAD LICKS

bit.ly/tg369audio

♩=110

D⁵ D/A E⁵ Play 4 times

TAB

Jimmy Page's famous 1959 Les Paul, lovingly named 'Number One', was modified with a push-pull pot on the tone knob, which puts the two humbuckers out of phase with each other. This out of phase sound provides a distinctive 'nasal' lead tone. Our example is inspired by songs like *Whole Lotta Love* and *Communication Breakdown*.

4 JOHNNY MARR: INDIE JANGLE

bit.ly/tg369audio

♩=110

E^{ma}⁹ G^{ma}⁹ C^{ma}⁷ D^{add}¹¹ Play 4 times

TAB

Johnny Marr often used a Les Paul with a Bigsby tremolo unit. Bigsbys don't generally offer as much movement as a "modern" tremolo, so aim to employ only a small amount of pitch change as you tackle our example. Dialing in a lush chorus sound and some delay will help to get that authentic 80s indie jangle.

5 ALEX LIFESON: PIEZO/MAGNETIC PICKUP BLEND

bit.ly/tg369audio

♩=130

G⁵ D⁵ C^{sus}² G⁵ C^{sus}² D⁵ Play 4 times

TAB

Our Alex Lifeson style example is inspired by live renditions of songs like *Presto*. To beef up the sound of Rush's three-piece format, Lifeson's signature LP is fitted with both standard humbuckers plus a piezo pickup to simultaneously provide an acoustic guitar-like effect. Lifeson's Les Paul is also fitted with a Floyd Rose Tremolo, which can provide vibrato to both the acoustic and electric sounds simultaneously.

6 SLASH: WAH WAH SOLOING

bit.ly/tg369audio

♩=110

E⁵ G⁵ A⁵ C^{sus}² Play 4 times

TAB

Slash is a fan of the wah wah pedal, which adds a funky edge to his frenetic lead work. Our example is inspired by tracks like *You Could Be Mine*, so we've combined a fast, repeating phrase with some high-register string bends.

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WIN! THE COLLECTION: SLASH CUSTOM EDITION

Total Guitar has teamed up with Gibson Publishing to offer you the chance to win a copy of *The Collection: Slash Custom Edition*

The *Collection: Slash* is a premium coffee table book that explores in unprecedented detail the instruments Slash has used on countless hit records on stages worldwide, in front of millions of adoring fans. While Slash's association with the Gibson Les Paul is well known, Les Pauls are only part of the story. Over the years, Slash has amassed a staggering collection of about 400 instruments, from holy grail vintage pieces to prototype Gibson signature models to guitars made by B.C. Rich, Guild, boutique acoustic luthiers, and plenty more besides.

The Collection: Slash Custom Edition measures 297mm x 420mm (11.69" x 16.54") and comes in a deluxe clamshell box with premium case candy. The Custom edition includes an Axe Heaven Appetite Les Paul miniature, an exclusive Slash bandana, a guitar pick tin with Dunlop guitar picks, a cover poster, four guitar art prints, and a certificate of authenticity. The Custom Edition is hand-signed by Slash and is limited to 500 copies worldwide.

All you have to do to enter to win a copy is go to the web address across the page, fill in your details and correctly answer the following question...

At the time of publishing, approximately how many guitars are in Slash's collection?

- A) 4
- B) 40
- C) 400
- D) 4000

Enter at bit.ly/tg369comp

Closing date: 05 April 2023.

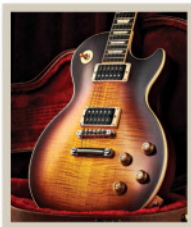
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Words Amit Sharma Portrait David McClister

“I HIT AN E CHORD AND FELT ALL THIS POWER”

For blues-rock star **Jared James Nichols**, it's all about expression – and a Les Paul is “the best tool for the job”



I was actually born in the same city as Les Paul, a place called Waukesha in Wisconsin. There's a massive street there called Les Paul Parkway that was named in tribute to him, which has all these street signs with his signature on them. So even before I knew what it was all about, when I was like five years old or whatever, I remember thinking how cool that was. I probably wanted to steal one!

Later on, when I started out on guitar, I was playing a lot of Strats because of Stevie Ray Vaughan and even Telecasters, because Jimmy Page often recorded with them. And then after a while I ended up trying out a Les Paul Standard with two humbuckers. The first thing I thought was ‘Holy f*ck, this feels like Cadillac!’ I knew what I had in my hands was some seriously fancy sh*t. Then I hit an E chord and felt all this power. It sounded huge, like all the Black Sabbath records I was listening to at the time.

I quickly realised the other instruments I had been playing didn't sound like that. I knew I was holding something truly special. To me, it felt like the guitar was alive. It had this super punch that no other guitar had – and every time I would try out different brands or models, just to see what else was out there and hear how they made me play, I would keep coming back to the Les Paul. Honestly, it just kept calling back to me and I think it was a combination of the weight, the feel and the sound...

People don't talk about this enough, but I really love the layout of Les Pauls. It feels so user-friendly to me – you have a volume and tone as a pair for each pickup – and the pickup selector up high, where it makes sense to have

one. And the more I started using those controls, the more I realised just how expressive a Les Paul can be. Turning those knobs and fiddling around can really change your tone! So that's when I started to dig in and try to figure out what the f*ck my sound was going to be. How would I take this guitar that we all know and love, which we've all heard our heroes play, and find my own voice in it?

Eventually I ended up with Les Pauls fitted with P-90s and realised a guitar with those pickups could cover even more ground. They can sound super aggressive, almost like humbuckers, but they can also be very touch-sensitive. Whenever I would manipulate the volume or tone controls, I could dial in so many different sounds, and I quickly realised that was it for me. This was going to be my sound. A Les Paul with just one P-90, which is what I tend to play, can go from a whisper to a scream. It's funny, most people will look at Les Pauls and think ‘I've seen those things since forever; they're kinda boring!’ But there's something about the construction and design that has allowed players to speak over the years. It's a tried and true instrument that has stood the test of time.

Believe it or not, in 2021 I actually got one of the first Les Pauls ever made – a Goldtop with P-90s from 1952 that got destroyed in a tornado back in 2013. I fully restored it and named it Dorothy! That guitar now sounds so good it can pretty much take on anything and win. It's so expressive and still sounds like a monster. Everyone I know that has tried it gets completely blown away. Richie Faulkner from Judas Priest came round the other day and he started ripping metal on it in ways even I couldn't have imagined. I honestly didn't know it could sound that heavy! Which proves

that a Les Paul with P-90s can be so dynamic – you realise that the more you dig in and tinker with it, the more sounds you will uncover and the more it pays off. Basically, the more of yourself you throw into it, the more you get out! And everyone will have their own sweet spot.

If there's one guitar that got away for me it was Old Glory, which was an original 1968 Les Paul Custom which I removed the neck pickup from. I'm so gutted I sold it. You know how it is when you're a kid – you think it's just another guitar and it's more important that you pay rent. I used it on the first album I ever made, *Old Glory & The Wild Revival* in 2015. I played that guitar just because I loved it and people started to really notice it, asking me ‘What the f*ck is this Les Paul?!’ and it was literally just a Les Paul Custom with one pickup. It had this quirkiness that really intrigued people. And that's what eventually inspired my Epiphone signatures. I'll never forget the day I was hanging out at Gibson and they said, ‘Hey Jared, we want to make you signature Les Paul Custom through Epiphone, so it's affordable for kids!’ They hadn't even finished talking and I was like, ‘Yes, 100 per cent, I'm in!’ There was the Old Glory in black, then we did the Gold Glory in gold and soon there will be a Pelham Blue version coming out.

Honestly, the more I listen the more I appreciate how these blues-rock legends changed the game. Especially with Les Paul players, you can hear exactly what they were trying to say – and some of them were saying things through their guitar that had never been said before! Jeff Beck, Gary Moore, Paul Kossoff, Peter Green... you feel like you know them because you've heard them speak through their guitars on these game-changing records. At the end of the day, it's all about expression and the Les Paul is the always best tool for the job!

"THE MORE OF
YOURSELF YOU
THROW INTO IT,
THE MORE YOU
GET OUT!"

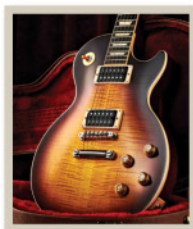




Words Amit Sharma Photo Marco van Rooijen

“WHEN I WANT THAT BIG, HEAVY SOUND, I GRAB A LES PAUL”

Joe Bonamassa has a dazzling array of guitars – but he always goes back to the '59 LP he describes as “perfect” for him...



If you look through Joe Bonamassa's guitar rack at the side of the stage on any given night, chances are you'll find all kinds of vintage instruments – from mouth-watering Fenders like mid-50s

Strats and B-bender Teles to rare Gibson originals including Korina Flying Vs, 70s Firebirds and cherry red semi-hollows. But if there's one guitar he's going to play live or use in the studio more than any other, it's the Gibson Les Paul.

It was a decision made early on in his career which, much like Slash explains in this month's cover story, came down to the design as well as the 60s and 70s masters who took the sound of American blues to new expressive heights...

“I play Les Paul Standards for the simplicity,” Bonamassa tells TG, in between the studio sessions for his next album and preparations ahead of his North American Spring tour. “I also like rosewood fingerboards, so that helps narrow it down. And my heroes played Les Pauls, too. Pretty much all of the English guitar legends of the 1960s – everyone from Eric Clapton to Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page to Peter Green and later influences like Gary Moore – that's what they were holding.”

With so many precious tools at his disposal, arguably standing as one of the finest collections in the world, one can only wonder how he arrives to the final decision of which to employ on any given track. What can a Les Paul say that another guitar might struggle to articulate in the

same manner and why might he use a Les Paul Standard instead of, say, a Junior or Custom? Many of us have wondered what exactly is it that the guitarist hears when he imagines one of his tracks coming to life.

“I find picking up a Les Paul makes it easier to achieve the tone that's stuck in my head,” Joe reveals. “You can achieve your sound with any guitar. For example, I am a proud Les Paul Junior owner. With that said, I rarely play them. There is something about the flatness of the top that I never bonded with... but it's worth bearing in mind that plenty of players have ruled and can rule the world with those things! A Les Paul Standard is definitely the sound I hear in my head. If had to pick a favourite out of the collection, it would be the one I call ‘Principal Skinner’. I've owned it for almost 15 years and it is the perfect guitar for me. It's serial number 9-1951, made in 1959.”

This guitar had been bought by another collector in 2006 from American auction house now known as Bonhams Skinners for the price of \$292,000, which, according to Bonamassa, set the non-celebrity record for an instrument sale. The all-original Standard – originally owned and kept in great condition by a family in Benton, Minnesota – then came into Joe's possession around 2011, before being renamed after one of his favourite *Simpsons* characters

and taken to highly acclaimed Nashville luthier Joe Glaser for refretting. In 2014, Gibson did a small run of 50 ‘Skinner Bursts’ aged by Tom Murphy as well as being signed and played by Bonamassa himself – every piece sold before even going into production. Which goes to show he's one of the world's most respected Les Paul aficionados and, ultimately, someone who is never afraid to share his unique insight and accumulated pearls of wisdom with the rest of the guitar community. If you've ever seen someone top-wrapping their strings over the tailpiece of their Les Paul, for example, that decision will most likely have been inspired by either Billy Gibbons or Joe...

“I like top wrapping because it lessens the break angle over the bridge,” he says. “Two things are achieved: it's easier on a vintage ABR-1 and it makes the guitar feel slinkier. The other tip I like to share is on truss rod tension – I believe it's key to a good, resonant Les Paul, because when it's too tight the guitar gets choked, and too loose, the guitar plays stiff.”

In more recent years, he's been helping players on a budget get a taste of the world-class tones he's associated with, thanks to Epiphone replicas of his 1960 ‘Norm Burst’ and his 1959 ‘Lazarus’. As well as the good karma from making high-end guitars more universally inclusive, it's easy to spec these

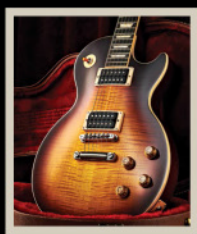
kinds of signatures out, he explains, given that they're based on choice models from his own collection. And as he says in conclusion: “When I want that big heavy sound and that's what the song requires, I just grab a Les Paul Standard...”

“PRETTY MUCH ALL OF THE ENGLISH GUITAR LEGENDS OF THE 60S HAD A LES PAUL”

Words Jenna Scaramanga Photos Kevin Nixon

"IF IT'S THE RIGHT LES PAUL, IT FEELS RIGHT IN EVERY WAY"

Aerosmith legend **Joe Perry** plays vintage classics and his own signature models. As he puts it: "Les Paul and Gibson just hit the nail on the head"



Aerosmith's Joe Perry has a long and close association with Les Pauls. Just as Jeff Beck was the inspiration for Joe to play a Les Paul, so Joe was the inspiration for Slash to play one. And in

partnership with Gibson, Joe now has four signature models to his name.

In Aerosmith's early career, it was the band's other guitarist, Brad Whitford, who mostly recorded with a Les Paul while Joe played a Strat for contrast. As Joe tells TG: "I have a lot of guitars." But wherever he is, he always has a Les Paul close by...

What are some classic Aerosmith songs where you played a Les Paul?

I was just reading a John Lennon interview and he was like, 'I don't know about strings. We just used whatever was on there!' Obviously he was more concerned about the music and writing the songs. In some ways I can identify with that. I was more concerned about writing songs than I was about the particulars of which amp I used or whatever. That said, I would say with a fair amount of confidence I used a Les Paul on *Eat The Rich* [1993], *Toys In The Attic* [1975], *Pandora's Box* [1974] and *Nine Lives* [1997]. I would bet that at least one of my tracks on *Walk This Way* [1975] is a Les Paul, and then everything I did after that was with the Strat. Back then Brad [Whitford] was a hardcore Les Paul player. He doesn't change guitars all that much. Even if we're doing a song in an open tuning, he'll figure it out in standard. I always

felt like having a different voice in there worked really well for different parts, rather than just playing in unison.

What made you start playing Les Pauls?

After seeing that Jeff Beck played a Les Paul, I determined to sell the Guild Starfire I had. I traded it in '68. They had just reissued the Les Paul gold top and so I bought a new one. I could have picked up a '59 for pretty close to what I paid for a new one off the wall, but I just went into the music store and there it was. I played Les Pauls pretty much throughout the 70s, but I recorded most of my stuff with Strats. I always loved having the vibrato arm, and it seemed easier to get different tones out of a Strat. The tone you could get out of a Les Paul was heavier and it was easier to get to get distortion with less noise. I think a lot of the reason that guitar plays so well in general is because it has its roots in Spanish guitar. The first version, with the trapeze tailpiece and the strings going under the bridge, is almost impossible to play the way we play guitar now, but after the first couple of years they really nailed it.

What made your tobacco burst '59 so special?

I'll play all night and but when I pick up the '59... Some of the reissues really have that feel but it's hard to replicate 50 or 60 years of playing. The wood they used was more than likely old growth trees. It's a combination of so many things and they just got it right. I have a lot of different guitars obviously, but if I'm going to be in one place for a long time I have

a very short list of what I've got to have. Obviously there's a Les Paul. I have Les Pauls from all the different eras. When I pick up a Les Paul, it just feels right in every way, if it's the right Les Paul. I mean, when I go to pick up the '59 - I've played two or three of the reissues and if I'd never had the chance to play a '59, whatever else would work. In my house I have, like, six guitars in a row. When I pick up that Les Paul, the neck is just right, the radius across the fretboard. It's just an amazing thing they stumbled on. Some people probably don't like that really thick neck in the early ones. I preferred that. Over the years, my hands have started to show the wear. Now I have to go with a little bit thinner neck, but certainly not like a 1960. I always liked that heavier neck compared to a Strat. Les Paul and Gibson just hit the nail on the head.

Do you modify your Les Pauls?

Back in the 70s when I was looking for higher output guitars I'd change the pickups. I wasn't the only one, that's for sure. Not that they're bad - Bill Lawrence and Barcus Berry made some really good pickups. But now so many of us are opening cases of guitars from that era, and you just close your eyes and hope that the old pickups are in there. There are a bunch where I've opened that little compartment and there was nothing in there but moths and air. You wonder where those pickups went! At least I never did it with PAFs.

Do you think vintage Les Pauls are the best?

I've played some '59 Les Pauls that frankly didn't feel that good or sound that good.





"I THINK EVERY GUITAR HAS A VOICE
IN IT - ASK JACK WHITE!"



LET THE MUSIC DO THE TALKING

Left: Joe and Steven Tyler rocking the Grammy Awards in 2020

Right: Joe during Aerosmith's headlining performance at Download Festival in 2010

Your next signature was the Boneyard, with the tiger stripe flame.

I wanted to do something a little different, something that you really hadn't seen. I was trying to describe what I wanted, and my wife Billie, said "Why don't you do this contrasting stripe?" They said 'We don't think that'll work.' She's an artist and painter, so she actually went in and took a blank piece of maple that had a really nice grain, she painted it like she would do on a canvas. She made it work, and it the grain just jumped out. So she came up with that finish. There are so many different iterations of Les Pauls. That one just had what I what I really liked about them: the neck, the pickups not being extremely high output, all that. They even did an Epiphone version, which was really nice.

You've got a Goldtop Les Paul with one pickup and a Wilkinson tremolo. What's the story there?

After I quit Aerosmith for a while, in 1979, and then Brad left in 1981, he came down to the studio when we were working on the last Joe Perry Project record. He brought a Les Paul with them that he'd played in Aerosmith when they wanted him to play a Stratocaster. He took one of the pickups out and he contoured the body. I don't know if he'd put a whammy bar on it or not, but I played the guitar and it really felt good. It had been well played, had a lot of a lot of miles on it and it really had a really nice feel to it. I said, 'Maybe they can make me something like that.' Eventually [in 2019] we did a run called the Gold Rush. It's a little bit narrower body. It's got the contour on the back, and it's a single pickup and a Strat-type bridge. They did a gold and a black one for me and I really like both of them. I think we did one without a tone control, and one with the tonex in it – like I said, I had a couple left. It wasn't unique, you know, there were a lot of people who've done you know single pickup Les Paul kind of things. But that is one I play a lot on stage.

As an investment they're always going up, but I've had the chance to play two or three side by side and some of them don't sound the same as the others. I won't say they sound bad because I don't think there is a bad-sounding guitar. I think every guitar has a voice in it, has a place that somebody can use it – ask Jack White! That's why I keep up to date with the new stuff. There's a song in every guitar. But to just sit down and play for your own fun, there's something about a Les Paul that just feels right.

Your first signature Les Paul was the blackburst you played in the film *Wayne's World 2*. What features did you want that guitar to have?

I've done four guitars with Gibson. We had the blackburst, the Boneyard tiger stripe,

the replica of the '59 Tobacco Burst, and the Gold Rush. The first signature model was a blackburst, a black sunburst. It's got the tonex in it, a push-pull pot which is the wah part of a wah-wah pedal. When you pop that out you can set it at a cool spot and it'll cut through whatever for a solo. I was working with Chandler Guitars and they had this aftermarket tone pot that I wanted to put in the signature model. I don't know if they're on the market anymore. I still have a few in the box that I was able to snag. I wouldn't be surprised if a lot of people that have those guitars don't know it. I've talked to people and they said, 'Really, it's got that?' That was a great thing for soloing. You can hold a note and get some sustain, or change the tone in the middle of a solo.

"THE TONE YOU COULD GET OUT OF A LES PAUL WAS HEAVIER - AND IT WAS EASIER TO GET TO GET DISTORTION WITH LESS NOISE"



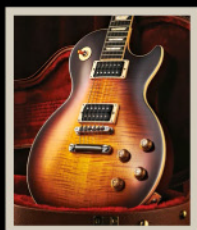


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Words Amit Sharma Photos Getty

"IT'S OBSCENELY HEAVY AND GROWLS LIKE NOTHING ELSE!"

Al Di Meola discusses his famous Les Paul – and his friendship with the man himself



When it comes to jazz-rock, few Les Pauls are as storied as Al Di Meola's 1971 Les Paul Custom – famously held on the cover of his groundbreaking 1977 album *Elegant Gypsy*. By that point of his career, Al was already well-known for his breathtaking virtuosity. At the tender age of 19 he had been recruited by Chick Corea in fusion supergroup Return To Forever, with whom he'd go on to record three Top 40 Billboard albums in the mid-70s. As a solo artist he fused elements of progressive rock and flamenco into some of the most stunning guitar recordings ever committed to tape, taking those Mediterranean influences to even greater heights alongside John McLaughlin and Paco de Lucía on seminal early 80s live album *Friday Night In San Francisco*. Widely considered one of the world's finest alternate pickers, Al tells TG of his love for Les Pauls – and his connection with the main man...

"I started using Les Pauls early on, probably because I'd seen Jeff Beck using one around the beginning of his career. There were some heavy metal acts too. The *Led Zeppelin II* album was pretty much a Les Paul all the way and it just had this massive sound. I'd seen shots of John McLaughlin using one in the early version of Mahavishnu Orchestra, as well as that double-

neck SG. Another big name was actually Les Paul himself. He became a friend of mine. I'd go round to his house and studio quite often, and he'd come to mine. He'd get on his knees to get a very up-close look at my hands and he'd keep saying, 'Do that again, it's mind-boggling, I don't understand how you just played that!' I'd be sitting there playing and thinking: 'This guy is the legend of all legends and he seems blown away by what I'm doing!' It was almost like a dream. I wish I had a picture of it...

"One of my most famous guitars is my 1971 Les Paul Custom. I ordered it from Manny's Music store in New York when I was in my last year of high school. That place was like a mecca for gear, it was the place to get your equipment. It's where Hendrix got all his stuff, The Who... Everybody in the music business went there. Any day of the week you'd go in and see somebody famous.

"I originally ordered the guitar with a Bigsby tremolo arm and a Varitone switch. After years of playing it, I wanted the Bigsby taken off. There was a guy called Tom Doyle who was a very good friend of Les Paul's that did a lot of guitar work in the New Jersey area, he repainted it after taking those items off. The whole guitar looked cracked and had all these crazy marks over it. Everyone thought it looked so cool. I ended up adding DiMarzio pickups and a coil tap. I used it on most of my early records. On my biggest-selling album, *Elegant Gypsy*, that's the

guitar you're hearing and the one you can see on the cover. I also used it on *Land Of The Midnight Sun*, all the Return To Forever stuff and a few other things. The sound of that guitar going into my 50-watt Marshall is one of the punchiest tones I've ever heard.

"Funnily enough, I hadn't played the guitar since the end of the 70s, but I picked it up a few years ago and was blown away, so it ended up on my Beatles tribute album, *Across The Universe*, which came out in 2020. As for other Les Pauls, I'm using a reissue 1959 Standard quite a lot right now. I have a real '59 as well, but I don't like taking it out. The reissue sounds great, though! It's pretty light and the sound is sweet. The 1971 Custom, however, is obscenely heavy and growls like nothing else.

"I've always felt the most popular instrument in the world is the human voice. But second is the guitar, and then the third is way down from there! We have the ability to phrase in so many different ways and also play chords, while brass instruments can only do single lines. Another reason why I think guitars are so popular is because the people watching get to see the guitarist create with the flesh of their fingers. You don't get that with piano. They hit something and there's a long rod that goes underneath and there's a pad that hits this wire. We're actually touching the substance that makes the sound. There's a physical element to it, perhaps even more so with Les Pauls..."

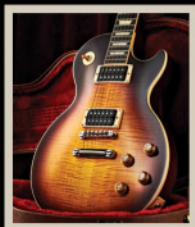
"THE SOUND OF THAT GUITAR GOING INTO MY 50-WATT MARSHALL IS ONE OF THE PUNCHIEST TONES I'VE EVER HEARD"



Words Jenna Scaramanga Photo Will Ireland

"I CAN'T IMAGINE USING ANY OTHER GUITAR LIVE"

John Notto of **Dirty Honey** chose a Les Paul to rock like his heroes Page and Slash



a Marshall at antisocial volume, only a Les Paul will do...

How did you get into playing Les Pauls?

By discovering Led Zeppelin, and watching [Zep's concert movie] *The Song Remains The Same*. Jimmy Page's moves, the way he played the guitar, the sound and the look of it just immediately made the Les Paul iconic for me. And then Slash, who obviously follows in that line of artistry. The two of them are my shining lights in Les Paul-dom!

When did you get your first Les Paul?

I got it about 10 years ago. I'd just moved to LA and I bought it on Sunset Strip, a '58 reissue in cherry sunburst from 2003. Like most people I thought thin necks are easier to play, but the tone of that guitar was just so much more woody, I just learned to play the thick neck because I liked the sound. It was a learning curve but once I got used to it I couldn't go back.

What guitars do you record with?

I look at the studio as a place to pull out the Swiss army knife and use whatever's right for the mix, so the secret of our sound is it's not always straight up Les Paul. We've used a '65 ES-335, 50s Les Paul Jr's, early-60s SGs, and a '50s Tele. On our album, the big moments for the Les Paul are *Gypsy* and *Another Last Time*. For *California Dreaming*, the biggest song off the album, I think I used the Les Paul for the solo.

I'm not as loyal to one guitar when I get in the studio, but live I can't imagine using any of those other guitars.

Is there anything else you love about them?

It's funny – no there isn't! I would say that there's such a great sound and great look that you put up with their charmingly difficult attributes. Anyone who tells you they stay in tune easily is lying; especially the G string. You put up with it because it's worth it. It just has so much sustain from the thickness of the body, and so much bottom end. I also have a treble bleed on my neck pickup, so I can turn it down a little and still have a usable, un-distorted tone without having to step on anything. I can be anywhere on stage and do that. That's handy, but I think most of it is that when I have that guitar in my hand, it just reminds me of my heroes, so I feel like I know what I'm doing.

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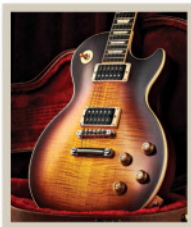


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Words Amit Sharma Photos Tino Sieland / Getty

"I PLAY MORE AGGRESSIVELY ON A LES PAUL"

Ally Venable delivers "modern blues that has a bite to it" – with a guitar she calls the 'Wounded Warrior'



23 year-old Texan guitarist/vocalist Ally Venable is a rising star of contemporary blues music. Her new album features guest appearances from blues heroes Buddy Guy and

Joe Bonamassa. She is also a fan of Les Paul legends Slash and Billy Gibbons...

"I think different guitars require a different approach to playing," Ally says. "A Les Paul will make me do different things to the other guitars I started out with. When I graduated from high school my dad bought me a Limited Colours Edition Standard from 1990, which is the Magenta model I've been mainly using for the last four or five years. I love a good humbucker sound and you can hear how that guitar coming into life actually changed the music I've been making. For some reason, the wiring is the wrong way round, so I'm actually on the bridge pickup with the selector up! I've gotten used to it now."

"I know some people find Les Pauls quite heavy, but mine is pretty light – I'd say around eight or so pounds, which means I can tour with it easily, especially when using a thicker strap. I call that guitar my 'Wounded Warrior' because I've dropped it so many times. The neck has been broken three different times – it's never come clean off, thank god – but it's needed a lot of repairs over the years. I know people always say once the neck has been broken they don't want to play that Les Paul anymore, but

I love mine... I'm gonna keep playing it until it's completely destroyed. I guess I'm just super destructive!

"I tend to play more aggressively on a Les Paul, but it still sounds expressive. I love how it feels in my hands, it's almost like I can do anything. It's a very unique feel compared to all the other guitars. They definitely seem to inspire heavier riffs and more guitar-based songwriting, at least for me. But they're not just one-trick ponies, if you experiment with the controls, you can get a lot of different tones out of them, even funky ones if you're in the middle position. I actually tend to leave my guitar on the bridge pickup all the time. It's my favourite sound because it always cuts through so well and the midrange sustain is always immaculate."

"For modern blues that has a bite to it, and even heavier rock, that's what I tend to go for."

I pair my Les Paul with an Analog Man King Of Tone, so I always know I'm in good hands with those two. Then I go into a boutique amp made by Category 5 who are based in Dallas. I ran into the owner at a guitar festival because he'd supplied the backline and was blown away. They make great 6L6-style amps.

"When it comes to Les Paul influences, Joe Bonamassa is a big inspiration to me. I'm grateful to now call him my friend – he's been very supportive of me and my music, and our entire blues community as a whole. He's a big hero of mine and I actually have a new album coming out called *Real Gone* where he guested on one of the tracks, *Broken And Blue*. I wasn't actually in the studio with him when he did it, but we sent the track over and he sent his parts right back. It sounded so good!

Slash is another big hero of mine, he's like the staple! Whenever I think of a guitar player holding a Les Paul, I think of Slash. I met him very briefly at a Gibson event at one of the NAMM shows. There were only a few dressing rooms backstage, so they kinda piled all of the artists in them. He was in the same one as me for a while, so I got to say hi. He was really tall, I did not expect that, but he is huge! I also met Billy Gibbons there, too. I was playing *Sunshine Of Your Love* up high on my Les Paul. He asked if he could see my guitar and then told me I should play it slower and in the lower register using barre chords. I was playing it an octave up and too fast. Then he told me about using low-gauge strings, gave me some of his hot sauce and left!"



"I'M GONNA KEEP PLAYING
THAT GUITAR UNTIL IT'S
COMPLETELY DESTROYED!"

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Epiphone Joe Bonamassa "Lazarus" 1959 Les Paul Standard

A HOLY GRAIL FOR BUDDING BLUES-ROCK SUPERSTARS EVERYWHERE

JoBo's long-standing collaboration with Epiphone has given us many a keenly priced gem, but they don't get much better than this Chinese-made repro of his legendary 'Lazarus' '59 LP. Shipping in an Aged Lemon Burst and equipped with Gibson USA humbuckers, CTS pots and 50s-style firing under the hood, it's a stage-ready electric that challenges the notion that an entry-level Gibson would be better. When we talk about Epiphone's top models closing that gap between their higher-priced siblings, it's guitars like this we're talking about.



£249

Epiphone Power Players Les Paul

A BACK TO BASICS MODEL
THAT IS IDEAL FOR BEGINNERS

Everyone has to start somewhere, and as beginner guitars go, the Power Players Les Paul is a superb option, with the option to upgrade for an all-in-one starter pack featuring a strap, picks, gig-bag and 35-watt practice amp. Unlike the others in this list, it has a bolt-on neck, but don't let that put you off. The recipe is familiar enough to give players an idea of what a solid mahogany singlecut with dual humbuckers sounds like, and it's ideal for budding blues, rock and punk players. The shorter 24" scale will suit younger players with some growing to do.



£749

Epiphone Les Paul Prophecy

THE BEST LES PAUL FOR METAL

Epiphone's Prophecy series beefs up the Flying V, Explorer and Les Paul for metal, equipping them with Fishman Fluence multi-voice humbuckers, Grover locking tuners, speedy neck profiles and – look closely – a very un-Gibson 24-fret format. This is not your granddaddy's Les Paul. There are jumbo frets and a sculpted heel to usher the shredder's hand upwards. The sounds available can take you from super-tight chug through more vintage PAF-style tones that you would associate with a 50s model, and an overwound single-coil sound all available via a push/pull pot that makes the Prophecy Les Paul a powerful and versatile instrument.



£1099

Gibson Les Paul Tribute

A STRIPPED-DOWN US-BUILT GIBSON THAT OFFERS ALL THE SOUND AT HALF THE PRICE OF A STANDARD

There is no getting around the fact that Gibson USA is an aspirational brand and you'll need some green in the current account to get one, but for the money the Tribute Les Pauls are a seriously tempting proposition. This is the Gibson Les Paul as a workhorse, the matt satin finish making it tactile, giving it a lived-in look. Ultra Modern weight relief makes this easy on the back as well as your bank balance. The sound and feel are reassuringly familiar. Here we have hot ceramic 490 humbuckers at the neck and bridge positions, a rounded maple neck, and a lot of vibe.



£469

Epiphone Les Paul Junior

THE SINGLE-PICKUP ROCK 'N' ROLL MACHINE FOR MINIMALISTS AND ASPIRANT PUNK ROCKERS

Who needs two pickups when you have one P-90? It never bothered Leslie West none that he only had one P-90 to work with, nor Jared James Nichols. Because the thing is, you just plug this into an amplifier and crank it, then use the volume and tone pots to find a sound. Roll back the tone pot and you'll get that early Cream/Clapton sound, a nasally classic rock honk that invites pentatonic mischief. Keep everything on 10 and it's strident and powerful. The Junior's simplicity is its charm. It's a slab of mahogany. The rest is up to you.



£549

Epiphone Les Paul Modern

FRESH FINISHES, VERSATILE SOUNDS AND LIGHTWEIGHT BODIES FOR TODAY'S PLAYER

The Les Paul's storied history is a double-edged sword. It is the classic, the acme of guitar design, and yet that can stymie the instrument's evolution. Guitars such as the Modern challenge this orthodoxy. This has Ultra Modern weight relief and an asymmetrical neck to update the feel. Finish options are similarly radical, similarly uninterested in symmetry, with Caribbean Blue and Magma Orange Fade finishes a bold new look. Meanwhile the ProBucker pickup pairing has coil-splits, ideal for when you need some sharper sounds.



£599

Epiphone Les Paul Custom

A CHAMPAGNE SOLID-BODY
AT BEER MONEY PRICE

The Les Paul is plenty handsome enough but it never hurts to dress it up in a tux now and then, and has there been a better upscale variant on a classic than the Custom? The split diamond inlay on the headstock, the binding, the ebony 'board and the gold hardware suggest you're rolling in some high-flown company. Strap this on, fret an open chord, and before the epically sustaining notes decay someone will have handed you a blini with caviar and sour cream. Maybe not, but c'mon, this is a cool guitar, with ProBuckers, Grover tuners, CTS pots, mojo...



£1549

Gibson Les Paul Special

WHY TWO P-90S CAN BE
BETTER THAN ONE

Okay, we're stretching the budget here but whether in TV Yellow or Vintage Cherry, these US Gibson Specials are awesome from nose to tail. The recipe is much like the Junior, dot inlays on a rosewood fingerboard, the chunky neck and mahogany slab body, but with a P-90 at the neck to double up on your options. There is a limited Epiphone Special available right now that retails for £199 street, which is worth considering too. But for a US Gibson, this is competitively priced and almost impossible to put down. The nitro finish will just look better with age.



£595

Epiphone Slash Les Paul Standard

BEST FOR WELCOMING YOUR
GUESTS TO THE JUNGLE

No list of best Les Pauls can be complete without a Slash signature model. As with Bonamassa, Slash's collaboration with Epiphone is a chance for the brand to once more try and steal some of Gibson's thunder with a top-quality build and a spec that belies the price. Here we've got a full carved maple top with a AAA flame maple veneer, vintage-voiced Custom ProBuckers, CTS pots and all the good stuff. The finish options mirror the Gibson USA Slash models, with Appetite Burst, Vermillion Burst, November Burst, Anaconda Burst and the Victoria Goldtop that'd pair nicely with a top hat.

ARCTIC MONKEYS

R U MINE?

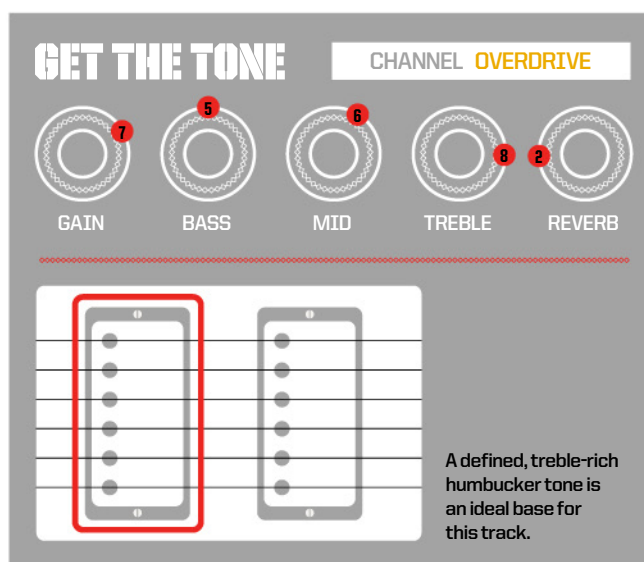
Rock out with the retro tones of one of Arctic Monkeys' most popular tracks

This month we're looking at *R U Mine?*, the epic riff monster and lead single from Arctic Monkeys' fifth studio album *AM*. The main riff is a catchy single-note line played on the guitar's lower strings. It's easy enough for most players to attempt and can easily be transferred to a one-string arrangement if you prefer. Just watch out for the variations on the basic theme; you'll find fills dotted throughout the verses and choruses, plus an odd dropout here and there.

Our transcription covers all of Alex Turner's parts plus a few fills played by Jamie Cook, which, though mirroring Alex's line for the most part, does differ at crucial moments. Read on and all will be revealed!

SOUND ADVICE

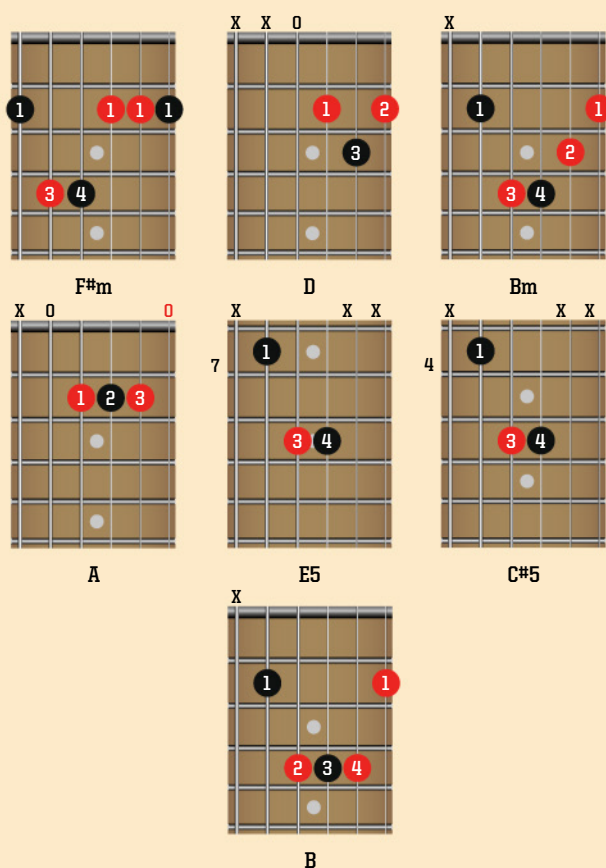
Everything you need to know before playing *R U Mine?*



Alex Turner is regularly seen wielding a Gretsch 6128T Duo Jet for live performances of this track. During the *AM* recording sessions, he used a Coopersonic Dual Valve Distortion pedal with Selmer and Magnatone combo amps, sometimes mic'd together. Factoring in Jamie Cook's accompanying guitar part, it'll be hard to recreate the exact blend of sounds, so we recommend starting with a basic clean tone such as a Fender Twin (another of Alex's favourites) and experiment with the fuzz pedals and amps in your collection/digital modeller to get closer.

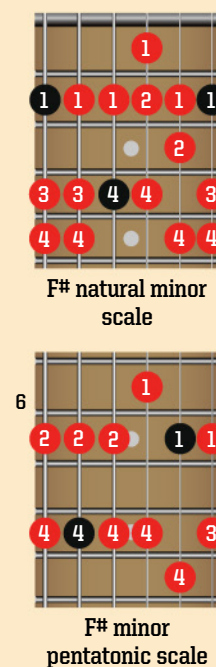
CHORDS

This song is created entirely using single-note riffs. However we've put together a few simple chord fingerings to outline the harmony implied by the riffs. You can experiment with strumming these chords should you wish to play an acoustic version.



SCALES

The riffs here are created using the F# natural minor scale (F# G# A B C# D E). We've written out an easy fingering for this scale that can be played starting at the 2nd or 14th fret. In addition, we've included a fingering for the F# minor pentatonic scale (F# A B C# E) as used in the guitar solo. If you want to improvise you can solo freely over any section of the song with either of these scales.



ARCTIC MONKEYS

ARE U MINE

FULL
TAB

R U MINE?
Words by Alex Turner
Music by Arctic Monkeys
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ARCTIC MONKEYS R U MINE? Intro & Verse 1

bit.ly/tg369audio

♩ = 96

w/bar

F#m D Bm

TAB

10 2 2 2 2 7 9 7 9 5 5 5 4 2 2 14

1

F#m

1. D Bm 2. D Bm

TAB

5 2 2 2 2 7 9 7 9 5 5 5 4 2 2 14 5 5 5 4 2 2 2 0

5

The song opens on Jamie Cook's single G note, vigorously wobbled with the whammy bar before leading into Alex Turner's main riff. Alex begins on the sixth string before shifting onto the fifth, though you could play it all on the bottom string if you prefer.

ARCTIC MONKEYS R U MINE? Verse 2

bit.ly/tg369audio

0:23

F#m D Bm F#m

TAB

1 2 2 2 2 7 9 7 9 7 9 7 5 5 5 4 2 2 2 0 2 2 2 2 7 9 7 9 7 9 7 2 2 2 2 7 9 7 9 7 5 5 5 4 2 2 2 0

1

D Bm F#m D Bm

TAB

4 5 5 5 4 2 2 2 0 2 2 2 2 7 9 7 9 7 9 7 5 5 5 4 2 2 2 0

4

Here, in verse 2, 7th position pentatonic flourishes are added to the basic riff. You'll find these towards the end of bars 1, 3 and 5. The first and last of these are played with simple hammer-ons, while the second is a hammer-on/pull-off phrase designed to help you manage the speed of the triplet rhythm.



Full track + backing (bit.ly/tg369audio)
This song comes with a full demo track and backing track.
Enter the above link into your web browser of choice;
press play and jam along, guitar-aoke style!

ARCTIC MONKEYS / R U MINE?

ARCTIC MONKEYS R U MINE? Chorus 2

bit.ly/tg369audio

0:43

F#m D Bm F#m w/bar

TAB

1 2 2 2 2 12 12 12 11 9 9 9 7 2 2 2 2 2

4 10 10 10 9 7 7 7 5 2 2 2 2 7 9 7 9 7 9 7 9 12 12 12 11 9 7 10 10 10 9 7 5

For the chorus the riff is stripped back and the octave interval is used to beef up the descending phrase. The last note is a reprise of Jamie's intro note, complete with the whammy bar wobble, but played on F# instead of G this time.

ARCTIC MONKEYS R U MINE? Verse 3

bit.ly/tg369audio

1:03

F#m 6 D Bm

TAB

1 2 2 2 2 5 5 5 4 2 2 2 0

In verse 3, the guitar drops out for six bars, letting the bass guitar do the work. Don't stop listening, though! It's vital to come back in bang on time in the final bar.

ARCTIC MONKEYS R U MINE? Verse 4

bit.ly/tg369audio

1:23

F#m D Bm F#m 3

TAB

1 2 2 2 2 7 9 7 9 7 9 7 5 5 5 4 2 2 2 0 2 2 2 2 7 9 7 9 7 9 7 2 2 2 2 7 9 7 9 7 9 7 5 5 5 4 2 2 2 0

4

Verse 4 is essentially a repeat of verse 2, so the same rules apply.

ARCTIC MONKEYS R U MINE? Chorus 2

bit.ly/tg369audio

1:42

TAB

12 12 12 11 9 9 9 7 10 10 10 9 7 7 7 5 2 2 2 2 12 12 12 11 9 9 9 7 10 10 10 9 7 7 7 5 2 2 2 2

6

12 12 12 11 9 9 9 7 10 10 10 9 7 7 7 5 2 2 2 2 7 9 7 9 7 9 7 9 12 12 12 11 14 11 10 10 10 9 12 9

Chorus 2 has the same outline as chorus 1, but with a few changes. It begins with a bar's rest, the whammy barred opening note is *not* reprised, and the two final stabs change to E and C# this time (as opposed to B and A before).

ARCTIC MONKEYS R U MINE? Bridge

bit.ly/tg369audio

2:02

TAB

7 7 7 7 7 7 9 10 10 10 10 10 10 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 5 5 5 5 5 5 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 9 10 9 9 7 7 5 5 5

4

The bridge uses a galloping rhythm and single notes played on the sixth string. Where there has been staccato phrasing in earlier sections, here the notes all ring out for their full duration.

bit.ly/tg369audio

The guitar solo is set up in bar 1 with a run through shape 3 of the F# minor pentatonic scale. The trill on the fifth string in bar 3 is played by rapidly hammering on and pulling off. The riff in bar 4 is played in response by Jamie Cook and is followed by a further 'answer' phrase on the bass before all three instruments play the riff in bar 5 together.

bit.ly/tg369audio

Chorus 3 follows a similar outline to the previous choruses, but this time with some extra fills in bars 3 and 4. This is a cool element of the band's songcraft, using new variations to help build the song up to its climax.

The first system of the musical score for 'The Sound of Silence' features a treble clef and a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The music is in 4/4 time. The first measure contains a quarter note F#4, an eighth note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure contains a quarter note C5, an eighth note D5, a quarter note E5, and a quarter note F#5. The third measure contains a quarter note G5, an eighth note A5, a quarter note B5, and a quarter note C6. The fourth measure contains a quarter note D6, an eighth note E6, a quarter note F#6, and a quarter note G6. The fifth measure contains a quarter note A6, an eighth note B6, a quarter note C7, and a quarter note D7. The sixth measure contains a quarter note E7, an eighth note F#7, a quarter note G7, and a quarter note A7. The seventh measure contains a quarter note B7, an eighth note C8, a quarter note D8, and a quarter note E8. The eighth measure contains a quarter note F#8, an eighth note G8, a quarter note A8, and a quarter note B8. The ninth measure contains a quarter note C9, an eighth note D9, a quarter note E9, and a quarter note F#9. The tenth measure contains a quarter note G9, an eighth note A9, a quarter note B9, and a quarter note C10. The eleventh measure contains a quarter note D10, an eighth note E10, a quarter note F#10, and a quarter note G10. The twelfth measure contains a quarter note A10, an eighth note B10, a quarter note C11, and a quarter note D11. The thirteenth measure contains a quarter note E11, an eighth note F#11, a quarter note G11, and a quarter note A11. The fourteenth measure contains a quarter note B11, an eighth note C12, a quarter note D12, and a quarter note E12. The fifteenth measure contains a quarter note F#12, an eighth note G12, a quarter note A12, and a quarter note B12. The sixteenth measure contains a quarter note C13, an eighth note D13, a quarter note E13, and a quarter note F#13. The seventeenth measure contains a quarter note G13, an eighth note A13, a quarter note B13, and a quarter note C14. The eighteenth measure contains a quarter note D14, an eighth note E14, a quarter note F#14, and a quarter note G14. The nineteenth measure contains a quarter note A14, an eighth note B14, a quarter note C15, and a quarter note D15. The twentieth measure contains a quarter note E15, an eighth note F#15, a quarter note G15, and a quarter note A15. The twenty-first measure contains a quarter note B15, an eighth note C16, a quarter note D16, and a quarter note E16. The twenty-second measure contains a quarter note F#16, an eighth note G16, a quarter note A16, and a quarter note B16. The twenty-third measure contains a quarter note C17, an eighth note D17, a quarter note E17, and a quarter note F#17. The twenty-fourth measure contains a quarter note G17, an eighth note A17, a quarter note B17, and a quarter note C18. The twenty-fifth measure contains a quarter note D18, an eighth note E18, a quarter note F#18, and a quarter note G18. The twenty-sixth measure contains a quarter note A18, an eighth note B18, a quarter note C19, and a quarter note D19. The twenty-seventh measure contains a quarter note E19, an eighth note F#19, a quarter note G19, and a quarter note A19. The twenty-eighth measure contains a quarter note B19, an eighth note C20, a quarter note D20, and a quarter note E20. The twenty-ninth measure contains a quarter note F#20, an eighth note G20, a quarter note A20, and a quarter note B20. The thirtieth measure contains a quarter note C21, an eighth note D21, a quarter note E21, and a quarter note F#21. The thirty-first measure contains a quarter note G21, an eighth note A21, a quarter note B21, and a quarter note C22. The thirty-second measure contains a quarter note D22, an eighth note E22, a quarter note F#22, and a quarter note G22. The thirty-third measure contains a quarter note A22, an eighth note B22, a quarter note C23, and a quarter note D23. The thirty-fourth measure contains a quarter note E23, an eighth note F#23, a quarter note G23, and a quarter note A23. The thirty-fifth measure contains a quarter note B23, an eighth note C24, a quarter note D24, and a quarter note E24. The thirty-sixth measure contains a quarter note F#24, an eighth note G24, a quarter note A24, and a quarter note B24. The thirty-seventh measure contains a quarter note C25, an eighth note D25, a quarter note E25, and a quarter note F#25. The thirty-eighth measure contains a quarter note G25, an eighth note A25, a quarter note B25, and a quarter note C26. The thirty-ninth measure contains a quarter note D26, an eighth note E26, a quarter note F#26, and a quarter note G26. The fortieth measure contains a quarter note A26, an eighth note B26, a quarter note C27, and a quarter note D27. The forty-first measure contains a quarter note E27, an eighth note F#27, a quarter note G27, and a quarter note A27. The forty-second measure contains a quarter note B27, an eighth note C28, a quarter note D28, and a quarter note E28. The forty-third measure contains a quarter note F#28, an eighth note G28, a quarter note A28, and a quarter note B28. The forty-fourth measure contains a quarter note C29, an eighth note D29, a quarter note E29, and a quarter note F#29. The forty-fifth measure contains a quarter note G29, an eighth note A29, a quarter note B29, and a quarter note C30. The forty-sixth measure contains a quarter note D30, an eighth note E30, a quarter note F#30, and a quarter note G30. The forty-seventh measure contains a quarter note A30, an eighth note B30, a quarter note C31, and a quarter note D31. The forty-eighth measure contains a quarter note E31, an eighth note F#31, a quarter note G31, and a quarter note A31. The forty-ninth measure contains a quarter note B31, an eighth note C32, a quarter note D32, and a quarter note E32. The fiftieth measure contains a quarter note F#32, an eighth note G32, a quarter note A32, and a quarter note B32. The fifty-first measure contains a quarter note C33, an eighth note D33, a quarter note E33, and a quarter note F#33. The fifty-second measure contains a quarter note G33, an eighth note A33, a quarter note B33, and a quarter note C34. The fifty-third measure contains a quarter note D34, an eighth note E34, a quarter note F#34, and a quarter note G34. The fifty-fourth measure contains a quarter note A34, an eighth note B34, a quarter note C35, and a quarter note D35. The fifty-fifth measure contains a quarter note E35, an eighth note F#35, a quarter note G35, and a quarter note A35. The fifty-sixth measure contains a quarter note B35, an eighth note C36, a quarter note D36, and a quarter note E36. The fifty-seventh measure contains a quarter note F#36, an eighth note G36, a quarter note A36, and a quarter note B36. The fifty-eighth measure contains a quarter note C37, an eighth note D37, a quarter note E37, and a quarter note F#37. The fifty-ninth measure contains a quarter note G37, an eighth note A37, a quarter note B37, and a quarter note C38. The sixtieth measure contains a quarter note D38, an eighth note E38, a quarter note F#38, and a quarter note G38. The sixty-first measure contains a quarter note A38, an eighth note B38, a quarter note C39, and a quarter note D39. The sixty-second measure contains a quarter note E39, an eighth note F#39, a quarter note G39, and a quarter note A39. The sixty-third measure contains a quarter note B39, an eighth note C40, a quarter note D40, and a quarter note E40. The sixty-fourth measure contains a quarter note F#40, an eighth note G40, a quarter note A40, and a quarter note B40. The sixty-fifth measure contains a quarter note C41, an eighth note D41, a quarter note E41, and a quarter note F#41. The sixty-sixth measure contains a quarter note G41, an eighth note A41, a quarter note B41, and a quarter note C42. The sixty-seventh measure contains a quarter note D42, an eighth note E42, a quarter note F#42, and a quarter note G42. The sixty-eighth measure contains a quarter note A42, an eighth note B42, a quarter note C43, and a quarter note D43. The sixty-ninth measure contains a quarter note E43, an eighth note F#43, a quarter note G43, and a quarter note A43. The seventieth measure contains a quarter note B43, an eighth note C44, a quarter note D44, and a quarter note E44. The seventy-first measure contains a quarter note F#44, an eighth note G44, a quarter note A44, and a quarter note B44. The seventy-second measure contains a quarter note C45, an eighth note D45, a quarter note E45, and a quarter note F#45. The seventy-third measure contains a quarter note G45, an eighth note A45, a quarter note B45, and a quarter note C46. The seventy-fourth measure contains a quarter note D46, an eighth note E46, a quarter note F#46, and a quarter note G46. The seventy-fifth measure contains a quarter note A46, an eighth note B46, a quarter note C47, and a quarter note D47. The seventy-sixth measure contains a quarter note E47, an eighth note F#47, a quarter note G47, and a quarter note A47. The seventy-seventh measure contains a quarter note B47, an eighth note C48, a quarter note D48, and a quarter note E48. The seventy-eighth measure contains a quarter note F#48, an eighth note G48, a quarter note A48, and a quarter note B48. The seventy-ninth measure contains a quarter note C49, an eighth note D49, a quarter note E49, and a quarter note F#49. The eightieth measure contains a quarter note G49, an eighth note A49, a quarter note B49, and a quarter note C50. The eighty-first measure contains a quarter note D50, an eighth note E50, a quarter note F#50, and a quarter note G50. The eighty-second measure contains a quarter note A50, an eighth note B50, a quarter note C51, and a quarter note D51. The eighty-third measure contains a quarter note E51, an eighth note F#51, a quarter note G51, and a quarter note A51. The eighty-fourth measure contains a quarter note B51, an eighth note C52, a quarter note D52, and a quarter note E52. The eighty-fifth measure contains a quarter note F#52, an eighth note G52, a quarter note A52, and a quarter note B52. The eighty-sixth measure contains a quarter note C53, an eighth note D53, a quarter note E53, and a quarter note F#53. The eighty-seventh measure contains a quarter note G53, an eighth note A53, a quarter note B53, and a quarter note C54. The eighty-eighth measure contains a quarter note D54, an eighth note E54, a quarter note F#54, and a quarter note G54. The eighty-ninth measure contains a quarter note A54, an eighth note B54, a quarter note C55, and a quarter note D55. The ninetieth measure contains a quarter note E55, an eighth note F#55, a quarter note G55, and a quarter note A55. The hundredth measure contains a quarter note B55, an eighth note C56, a quarter note D56, and a quarter note E56. The hundred-first measure contains a quarter note F#56, an eighth note G56, a quarter note A56, and a quarter note B56. The hundred-second measure contains a quarter note C57, an eighth note D57, a quarter note E57, and a quarter note F#57. The hundred-third measure contains a quarter note G57, an eighth note A57, a quarter note B57, and a quarter note C58. The hundred-fourth measure contains a quarter note D58, an eighth note E58, a quarter note F#58, and a quarter note G58. The hundred-fifth measure contains a quarter note A58, an eighth note B58, a quarter note C59, and a quarter note D59. The hundred-sixth measure contains a quarter note E59, an eighth note F#59, a quarter note G59, and a quarter note A59. The hundred-seventh measure contains a quarter note B59, an eighth note C60, a quarter note D60, and a quarter note E60. The hundred-eighth measure contains a quarter note F#60, an eighth note G60, a quarter note A60, and a quarter note B60. The hundred-ninth measure contains a quarter note C61, an eighth note D61, a quarter note E61, and a quarter note F#61. The hundred-tieth measure contains a quarter note G61, an eighth note A61, a quarter note B61, and a quarter note C62. The hundred-first measure contains a quarter note D62, an eighth note E62, a quarter note F#62, and a quarter note G62. The hundred-second measure contains a quarter note A62, an eighth note B62, a quarter note C63, and a quarter note D63. The hundred-third measure contains a quarter note E63, an eighth note F#63, a quarter note G63, and a quarter note A63. The hundred-fourth measure contains a quarter note B63, an eighth note C64, a quarter note D64, and a quarter note E64. The hundred-fifth measure contains a quarter note F#64, an eighth note G64, a quarter note A64, and a quarter note B64. The hundred-sixth measure contains a quarter note C65, an eighth note D65, a quarter note E65, and a quarter note F#65. The hundred-seventh measure contains a quarter note G65, an eighth note A65, a quarter note B65, and a quarter note C66. The hundred-eighth measure contains a quarter note D66, an eighth note E66, a quarter note F#66, and a quarter note G66. The hundred-ninth measure contains a quarter note A66, an eighth note B66, a quarter note C67, and a quarter note D67. The hundred-tieth measure contains a quarter note E67, an eighth note F#67, a quarter note G67, and a quarter note A67. The hundred-first measure contains a quarter note B67, an eighth note C68, a quarter note D68, and a quarter note E68. The hundred-second measure contains a quarter note F#68, an eighth note G68, a quarter note A68, and a quarter note B68. The hundred-third measure contains a quarter note C69, an eighth note D69, a quarter note E69, and a quarter note F#69. The hundred-fourth measure contains a quarter note G69, an eighth note A69, a quarter note B69, and a quarter note C70. The hundred-fifth measure contains a quarter note D70, an eighth note E70, a quarter note F#70, and a quarter note G70.

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BON JOVI

YOU GIVE LOVE A BAD NAME

Explore an arrangement of Bon Jovi's lead cut from 1986 LP *Slippery When Wet*

Following the intro solo, the first thing that'll strike you is the agile fingering required for the distinctive C minor pentatonic riff in bars 9 to 10 and 25 to 26. It may be useful to use your third and fourth fingers for the first two notes, or you might prefer to 'roll' your third finger across the two strings. Some sections include a 'PM' indication (palm mute): to achieve this you should lower the side of your picking hand to lightly touch the strings near the bridge

whilst playing the notes indicated. It's best to bring the picking hand as close to the bridge as possible, otherwise these muted notes will become inaudible. Notice how the palm-muted sections are shown on certain passages with a bracket, often ending before the close of the passage. This means you need to lift the palm-muting hand away from the strings, 'opening out' the sound to give contrast with the palm-muted notes that come before.





Rockschool GUITAR

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BON JOVI YOU GIVE LOVE A BAD NAME

bit.ly/tg369audio

♩=120

C⁵ A^{b5} B^{b5} C⁵ A^{b5} B^{b5} E^{b5} C⁵

PM - - -

TAB

BU 10 (12) 10 8 BU BD 10 (12) (10) 8 10 8 10 BU 10 (12) 10 8 BU BD 10 (12) (10) 8 10

1

A^{b5} B^{b5} C⁵ A^{b5} B^{b5}

PM - - -

TAB

BU 10 (12) 10 8 BU BD 10 (12) (10) 8 10 8 10 BU 10 (12) 10

5

bit.ly/tg369audio

[illegible]

79

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

STEPHEN SANCHEZ UNTIL I FOUND YOU

Wrap your fingers round this retro 50s throwback ballad from the young star of social media

W maybe it's part and parcel of the post-pandemic world that we're seeing more and more artists who first made their names on social media during lockdowns 'getting big'. American singer/songwriter/guitarist Stephen Sanchez is one such example, initially showcasing his music on TikTok in 2020, before eventually releasing this month's hit in 2021. Sanchez' guitar sound is key to the song's retro vibe,

with lashings of reverb and a thick, creamy vibrato reminiscent of Fender amps from the 1950s.

You'll need a capo way up at the 10th fret to play the song. Accurate capo placement is critical this high up the neck, so make sure to double check your tuning once it's in position. When Sanchez performs the song solo he often plays it lower down in the key of G, with his capo on the 6th fret, so don't be afraid to experiment with a pitch to suit your own vocal range.

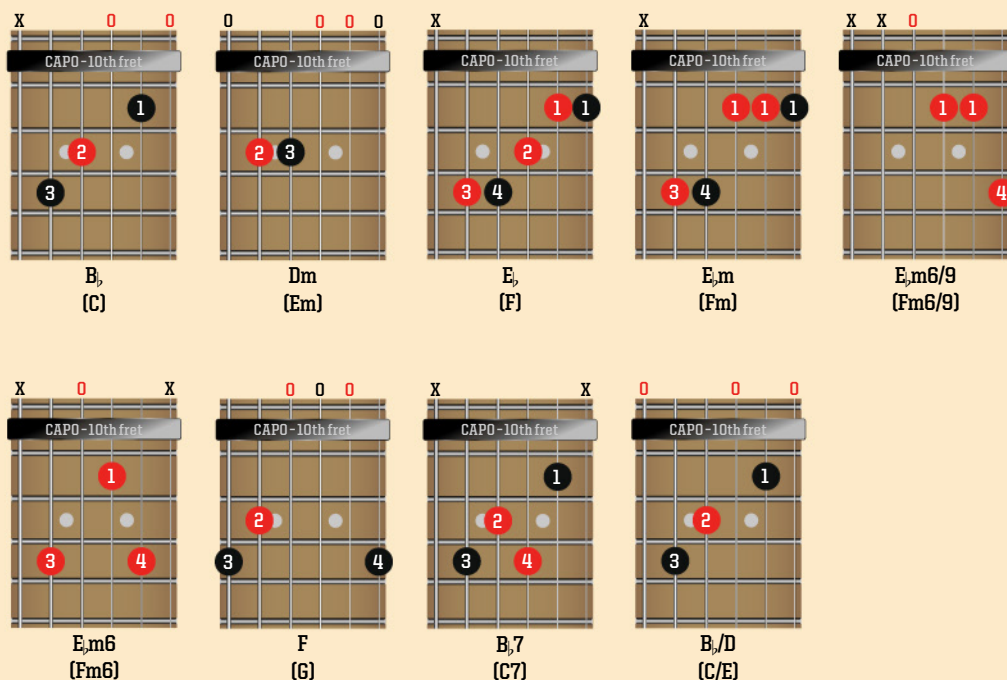


CHORDS

Five main chord shapes form the backbone of the song: B_b, Dm, E_b, E_bm and F. E_bm6/9 and E_bm6 occur in the intro and at the end of each chorus, while the B_b7 appears only in the chorus. The B_b/D chord features only once – right at the end to round off the track. If you find the quick change from E_bm6/9 to E_bm6 tricky try omitting the third finger from E_bm6 (i.e., just play the top four strings). Alternatively, you could just play E_bm for the whole bar.

UNTIL I FOUND YOU

Words and Music by Emily Beihold and Stephen Sanchez
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Backing track (bit.ly/tg369audio)
This song comes with a full backing track. Enter the above link into your web browser of choice; press play and jam along, guitar-aoke style!

SONGSHEET

Until I Found You

Intro

B $\flat$ / Dm / E $\flat$ /

E $\flat$ m / E $\flat$ m6/9 E $\flat$ m6

Verse 1

B $\flat$ Dm

Georgia

E $\flat$ E $\flat$ m

Wrap me up in all your

B $\flat$ Dm

I want you

E $\flat$ E $\flat$ m

In my arms, oh, let me

B $\flat$ Dm

Hold ya

E $\flat$ E $\flat$ m

I'll never let you go

B $\flat$

Again, like I did

F

Oh, I used to say

Chorus

E $\flat$ F

I would never fall in love again

B $\flat$ Dm

Until I found her

E $\flat$ F

I said I would never fall

B $\flat$ B $\flat$ 7

Unless it's you I fall into

E $\flat$ F

I was lost within the darkness

B $\flat$ Dm

But then I found her

E $\flat$ E $\flat$ m E $\flat$ m6/9 E $\flat$ m6

I found you-ou

E $\flat$ E $\flat$ m
Once again you fell

B $\flat$ Dm

I caught ya

E $\flat$ E $\flat$ m

I'll never let you go

B $\flat$

Again, like I did

F

Oh, I used to say

Repeat chorus

Guitar solo

B $\flat$ / / / Dm / / /

E $\flat$ / / / E $\flat$ m / E $\flat$ m6/9 E $\flat$ m6

Repeat chorus

Outro chord

B $\flat$ / D

STEPHEN SANCHEZ UNTIL I FOUND YOU Intro

bit.ly/tg369audio

♩ = 68
Capo 10th fret

B $\flat$ (C) Dm (Em) E $\flat$ (F) E $\flat$ m (Fm) E $\flat$ m6/9 (Fm6/9) E $\flat$ m6 (Fm6) B $\flat$ (C)

let ring throughout

Verse 1 cont. sim.

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

This song is played in 12/8 time where each beat is subdivided into three. To achieve the best delivery, use downpicking throughout and try tapping your foot on every beat (i.e., 12 beats per bar) to help keep time.

STEPHEN SANCHEZ UNTIL I FOUND YOU Solo

bit.ly/tg369audio

B $\flat$ (C) Dm (Em) E $\flat$ (F) E $\flat$ m (Fm) E $\flat$ m6/9 (Fm6/9) E $\flat$ m6 (Fm6)

Capo 10th fret

2:03

By mixing single string slides with full chords Sanchez creates a simple but effective instrumental break, no shredding here! The slides on the second string in bar 1 can be played with your first finger, but you'll need first and third fingers in bar 2.

TAB GUIDE

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

What is tab?

This is where the key signature and time signatures are shown

$\text{♩} = 72$ — This is the beats per minute (BPM)

0:51

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

1 2 3 4 5 6

E B G D A E

TAB

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

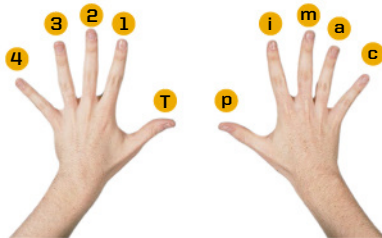
Tab is short for tablature, a notational system used to give detailed information as to where notes should be played on the fretboard. Tab appears underneath conventional music notation as six horizontal lines that represent the strings of the

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

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

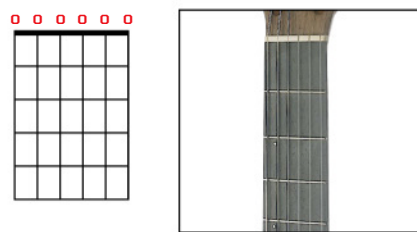
FRET BOXES: CHORDS, SCALES AND CAPO NOTATION

HAND LABELLING



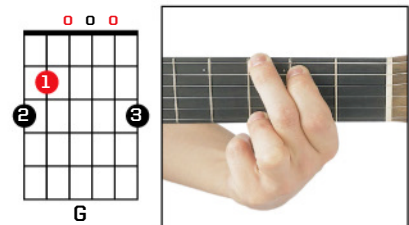
Here are the abbreviations used for each finger. Fretting hand: 1, 2, 3, 4, [T] Picking hand: p [thumb], i [index], m [middle], a [annular], c [little finger]

NUT AND FRETBOARD



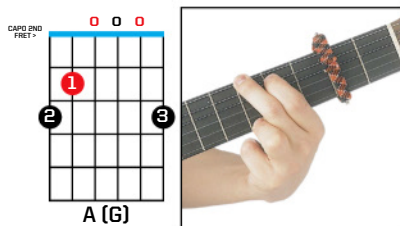
This fretbox diagram represents the guitar's fretboard exactly, as seen in the photo. This design is used for ease of visualising a fretboard scale or chord quickly.

CHORD EXAMPLE



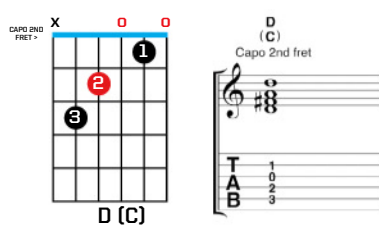
This diagram represents a G chord. The '0's are open strings, and a circled number is a fretting hand finger. A black '0' or circled number is the root note (here, G).

CAPO EXAMPLE



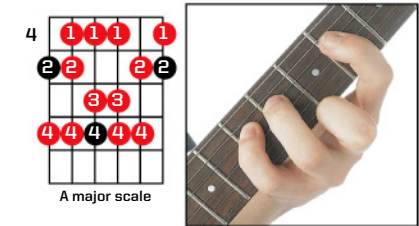
The blue line in the diagram represents a capo - for this A chord, place it at the 2nd fret. Capos change the fret number ordering. Here, the original 5th fret now becomes the 3rd fret, 7th fret now 5th fret, etc.

CAPO NOTATION



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

SCALE EXAMPLE



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

GUITAR TECHNIQUES: PICKING

DOWN AND UP-PICKING



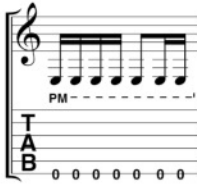
The symbols under the tab tell you the first note is to be down-picked and the second note is to be up-picked.

TREMOLO PICKING



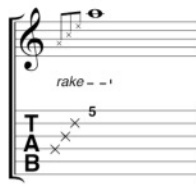
Each of the four notes are to be alternate-picked (down and up-picked) very rapidly and continuously.

PALM MUTING



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

PICK RAKE



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

APPREGGIATED CHORD



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

FRETTING HAND

HAMMER-ON & PULL-OFF



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

NOTE TRILLS



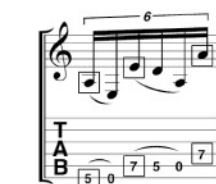
After picking the first note, rapidly alternate between the two notes shown in brackets using hammer-ons and pull-offs.

SLIDES (GLISSANDO)



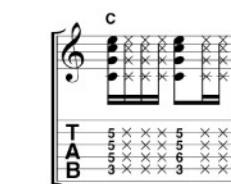
Pick the first note and then slide to the next. For the last two notes pick the first, slide to the next and then re-pick it (RP).

FRET-HAND TAPPING



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

FRET-HAND MUTING



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

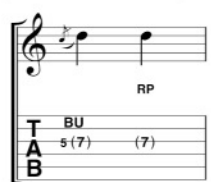
BENDING AND VIBRATO

BEND AND RELEASE



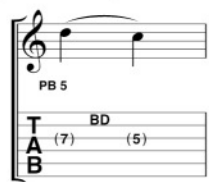
Fret the first note (here, the 5th fret) and bend up to the pitch of the bracketed note, before releasing again.

RE-PICKED BEND



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

PRE-BEND



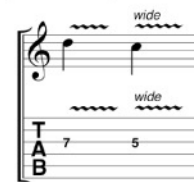
Silently bend the string up from the 5th fret (PB5) to the pitch of the 7th fret note, pick it and release to the 5th fret note.

QUARTER-TONE BEND



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

VIBRATO



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

HARMONICS

NATURAL HARMONICS



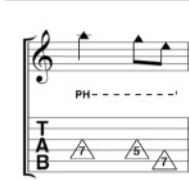
Pick the note while lightly touching the string directly over the fret indicated. A chiming harmonic results.

ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS



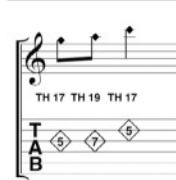
Fret the note as shown, then lightly place your index finger directly over 'x' fret (AH'x') and pick (with a pick, p or a).

PINCHED HARMONICS



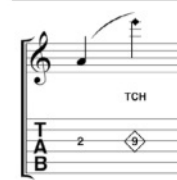
After fretting the note in the triangle, dig into the string with the side of your thumb as you sound it with the pick.

TAPPED HARMONICS



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

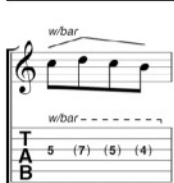
TOUCHED HARMONICS



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

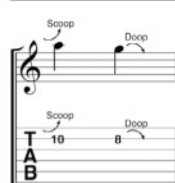
VIBRATO BAR / WHAMMY BAR

WHAMMY BAR BENDS



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

SCOOP AND DOOP



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

SUSTAINED NOTE AND DIVEBOMB



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

GARGLE



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

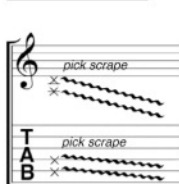
WHAMMY BAR VIBRATO



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

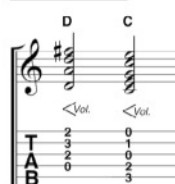
OTHERS

PICK SCRAPE



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

VIOLINING



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

FINGER NUMBERING



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

PIMA DIRECTIONS



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

PICK HAND TAPPING



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

THE GAS STATION

REAL WORLD REVIEWS OF THE BEST NEW GEAR

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

HOW WE TEST

CURATION

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

FACE-VALUE REVIEWS

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

*WHAT IS GAS?

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

NO SNAKE OIL

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

WE CAN'T BE BOUGHT

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

REAL WORLD REVIEWS

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

BEST BUY AWARD

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



PLATINUM AWARD

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



86

92

85 START ME UP

Five new products you need to check out

86 EPIPHONE ADAM JONES SILVERBURST LES PAUL CUSTOM

The latest signature for the Tool guitarist sees sights and sounds collide

90 FENDER MUSTANG LT40S

Tabletop tones...

92 MARTIN SHAWN MENDES 000JR-10E

A sustainable signature model

94 WARM AUDIO CENTAVO PROFESSIONAL OVERDRIVE

The klone ranger

★★★★★
SUPERB, A BEST BUY

★★★★☆
EXCELLENT

★★★☆☆
ABOVE AVERAGE KIT

★★★☆☆
SOME ISSUES

★★☆☆☆
POOR



START ME UP!

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

FENDER CUNIFE STRATOCASTER PICKUP SET

1 Cunife pickups... on a Strat?! Why should the Wide Range humbucker Tele gang have all the fun? Fender is bringing Cunife magnet pickups back in a big way in 2023 with a Jazzmaster set too; and no modifications required. These Strat single-coils should tickle your tonebuds with "deep piano-like lows, present and pleasing midrange, and sweet and sparkling highs." Who doesn't want all that? The chrome ringed covers also help to reduce hum. **£319 a set**
www.fender.com

HARLEY BENTON G-PLUS GUITAR CABS

2 There's something for everyone here with HB's new guitar cabs featuring Celestion G12M Greenback, V30, G12M Creamback-loaded (and unloaded) options in horizontal and vertical formats. The cabs come in four main variants; G112Plus, G112Plus Thiele and the larger G212Plus and G412Plus. "The G112Plus series feature a semi-open back design, for an airy, warm sound," states Harley Benton, while the Thiele offers a "more focussed and direct response". **From £88**
www.harleybenton.com

DOD OVERDRIVE PREAMP 250

3 The reissue of this 70s classic is also the first release from DOD since Cor-Tek's 2022 acquisition of the brand alongside DigiTech. It's the first step in a new era that will feature several key DigiTech and DOD engineers working from the US headquarters in Utah. As before, the Overdrive Preamp 250 will push your amp or happily serve as a standalone distortion unit. Those two controls are deceptive; it's versatile! **£99**
www.digitech.com

FENDER WORK MAT AND CUSTOM SHOP TOOL KIT BY GROOVETECH

4 If you're going to work on a guitar, it might as well look good. Fender's new Work Mat is available in tweed or amp grill cloth with a neoprene pad and textured anti-slip bottom grip. It also includes a neck cradle for elevating your guitar. But all that's not much use without some tools; this kit contains the essentials for maintenance work including a five-in-one screwdriver with truss rod hex adapter, feeler gauges and diagonal cutter. **£66.99 (Work Mat), £69 (Tool Kit)**
www.fender.com

POSITIVE GRID SPARK MINI O'DOOM

5 Proof of how mighty the 2x210W Spark Mini can be; even Zakk Wyldewas wowed by its "loud as hell" output. This is a limited edition of 100 Minis with the BLS skull logo on the grill, and signed by the Wyldeman himself on the top, but you can get a plain ol' (but still awesome) version in Black or Pearl direct from Positive Grid or from GuitarGuitar and Amazon in the UK. **\$299 (£229 for standard edition).**
www.positivegrid.com



EPIPHONE ADAM JONES SILVERBURST LES PAUL CUSTOM

£1149

The latest signature for the Tool guitarist sees sights and sounds collide

Given his background in visual arts, with credits for the makeup and special effects on blockbuster films like *Jurassic Park*, *Batman Returns* and *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* long before guitar stardom beckoned in Tool, the recent batch of Adam Jones signatures under a new partnership with Gibson were never going to be run-of-the-mill. In 2020, the American brand unveiled its top-end Custom Shop recreation of his prized 1979 Les Paul Custom, which came with a headstock mirror and personalised graphic – 79 of which were aged by the Murphy Lab before being signed and numbered

artist in 1968 for the cover of paperback novel *Conan The Conqueror* and Jones is one of many high-profile fans – the original painting currently owned by none other than Metallica guitarist Kirk Hammett. There's also additional artwork by artist Korin Fought on the back of the headstock, PosiLock strap buttons as per Customs of this era and a Protector hardshell case that harks back to the Gibson chainsaws of yesteryear.

Perhaps it's the pickups that are the biggest talking point here: a reverse-mounted humbucker in the neck just like the guitarist's 1979 original, a move which Jones revealed had been inspired by

THE FINEST LES PAUL EVER PRODUCED BY EPIPHONE..?

by the guitarist himself. Last year's Standard model featured a similar graphic and personalised truss rod cover, though interestingly it's the more affordable interpretations under Epiphone that seem to house more in terms of features – with a choice of seven curated artworks across the back of the body, each variation limited to 800 units worldwide.

This second instalment in the Adam Jones Art Collection details Frank Frazetta painting *The Berserker* in all its glory and stands as one of the most unbelievably eye-popping designs ever to be manufactured by the Gibson budget brand. The piece had been created by the American fantasy

Melvins frontman Buzz Osborne “for a different polarity and sound”, and a passive ceramic-powered Seymour Duncan Distortion in the bridge which packs a whopping 16.6k DC resistance. Given that the Gibson Standard version retails for over twice as much and doesn't come with his bridge pickup of choice, its inclusion on the Epiphone model is certainly a big talking point. The excitement doesn't end there either, much like the guitar that has almost singlehandedly soundtracked Jones' career, these reissues feature a three-piece maple neck with a Norlin-era volute. At 9.9lbs this review model isn't exactly lightweight, though it rightfully sits closer to the

1 FINISH

The Antique Silverburst finish has a gold-ish hue as per the late 70s/early 80s Gibson originals which mysteriously oxidised over time.

2 PICKUPS

The reverse-mounted Probucket Custom and Seymour Duncan Distortion can cover an array of vintage and modern tones with relative ease.

3 STRAP BUTTONS

The diamond-shaped PosiLock strap buttons are period-correct for a late-70s Norlin-era Les Paul Custom and feel more safe/secure.

AT A GLANCE

ORIGIN: China

BODY: Mahogany with a maple top

NECK: Three-piece bound maple with volute

SCALE: 628mm (24.75")

FINGERBOARD: Ebony

FRETS: 22

PICKUPS: Reverse-mounted Epiphone Probucket Custom (neck) and Seymour Duncan Distortion (bridge)

CONTROLS: Individual pickup volume and tone controls, 3-way toggle pickup selector switch, CTS Potentiometers, Orange Drop Capacitors

HARDWARE: Epiphone LockTone Tune-O-Matic bridge, Vintage-style Chrome tuners, PosiLock strap buttons

FINISH: Antique Silverburst

CONTACT: Epiphone, www.epiphone.com



WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal,
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fresh magazines, hot games,
recent software, latest music releases.

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Cheap constant access to piping hot media

Protect your downloadings from Big brother

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18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages

Brand new content

One site



AVXLIVE ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open <https://avxlive.icu>



The Legend of the Silverburst

A quick look into the mystery surrounding these obscure guitars from the late 70s...

If you have a look online, you'll find all sorts of hypotheses as to why vintage Silverbursts look and sound the way they do. A lot of the speculation comes down to the metallic flake used for the guitars – said to make the guitars weigh more, sound different and age in unexpected ways, often going from silver to gold or an almost green. Adam Jones, who revealed he owned six Silverburst originals in our last interview with him back in 2019, is of the opinion that there's something in the finish that oxidises and makes these guitars react in unexpected ways. "I have a true love for that colour," he told TG, adding "I believe the metallic paint does something to the tone or the resonance or the polarity", while also noting how it would "yellow over time and give the guitar kind of a green-ish hue" in another interview.

notoriously heavy 200 or so limited-run Silverbursts produced between 1978 and 1982.

Of course, none of this means anything if the guitar doesn't feel, play or respond particularly well and in this case we have to say we're huge fans of what the headline-stealing collaboration has yielded. Even before being plugged in, our sample rings



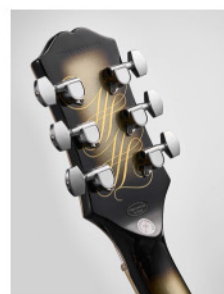
loud and proud, with brightness and definition in abundance from the pairing of a maple neck with an ebony fingerboard. Once amped up, these vibrations are articulated very well indeed, with the neck pickup's warmth providing a well-matched contrast to the high power snarl of the Duncan Distortion in the bridge – which, by the way, replicates the brain-simmering sounds of *Ticks & Leeches*, *Jambi* and *Pneuma* to a tee, as well as handling the less metallic tones from the quartet's early years. And that's not all – though it undoubtedly lives up to its *Berserker* graphic in terms of firepower, this is a guitar that can cover a lot of ground well, from punchy cleans that could work in just about any jazz or pop context to earthy blues and beyond. Bearing in mind that Tool use clean sounds from time to time, perhaps most notably on tracks like *Lateralus*, *Culling Voices* and

Right In Two, it makes perfect sense that these kinds of areas haven't been overlooked.

As for playability, the custom Rounded C neck profile sits on the thicker side but still feels easy to get to grips with whether you're playing riffs down below or leads up top – and in any case, makes you feel like you're holding a real deal vintage Silverburst. When compared to our late-60s Gibson Les Paul Custom, there's an unmistakable snappiness to this Jones signature, most likely from maple being used for the neck instead of mahogany and the boosted treble frequencies courtesy of the bridge pickup.

All in all, to say we're impressed would be an understatement. Aesthetically and tonally, this could easily be the finest Les Paul ever produced by Epiphone.

Amit Sharma



ALSO TRY...

EPIPHONE JERRY CANTRELL 'WINO' LES PAUL CUSTOM

£769

One of our favourite releases of last year was Epiphone's signature for Alice In Chains's Jerry Cantrell. If you're on the hunt for a more wallet-friendly Custom, this could be just the ticket.

PRS SE MCCARTY 594 SINGLECUT STANDARD

£899

PRS SE's newest singlecuts look set to continue their own tradition of balancing craftsmanship with affordability.

SIRE LARRY CARLTON L7

£529

This Les Paul-inspired model from jazz-fusion icon Larry Carlton's Indonesian-made signature range with Sire is one of the most impressive guitars at this price point.

EVEN BEFORE PLUGGING IN IT RINGS LOUD AND PROUD

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



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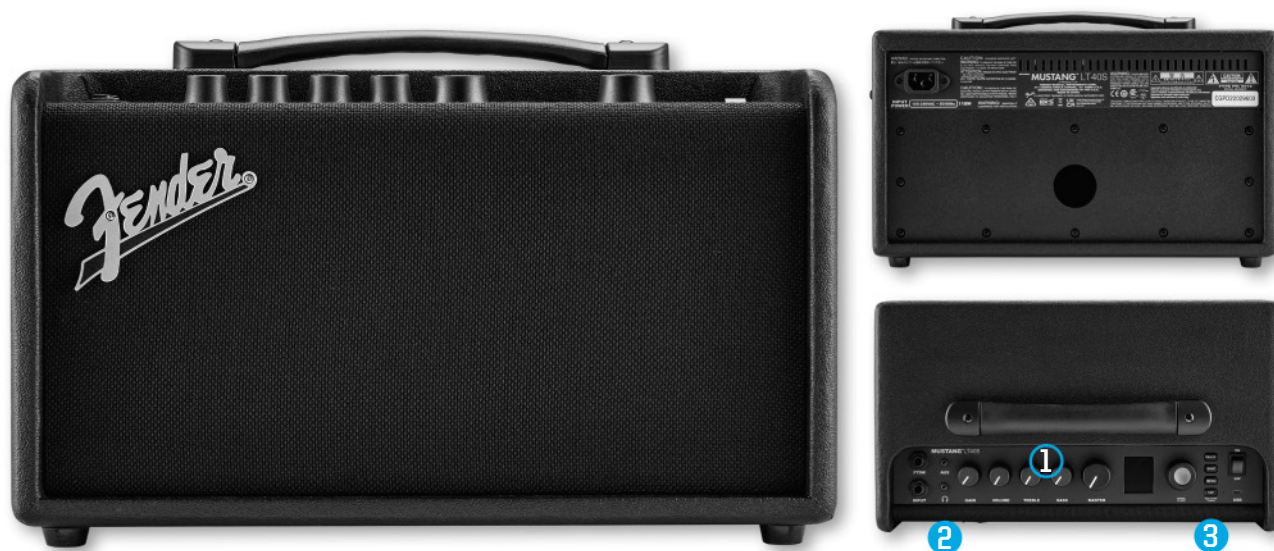
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FENDER MUSTANG LT40S

£199

Tabletop tones...

Pedal, profiling and desktop amps – three parts of the market that weren't really significant or existent until recent years, yet they illustrate just how fast things are changing; not always with modelling technology, but the flexibility guitar players are now embracing. And it's the desktop practice amp side of things that has the widest appeal and advantages, because they all acknowledge a simple fact; most

layout (with the power button position on the top for practical purposes) with a chassis that feels rugged and sturdy. But we're a bit miffed at the provision of only a European mains plug.

While some other desktop amps embrace app integration, the LT40S is more self-contained with a 1.8" colour screen but with the option to upload via a desktop app on the assumption your computer will be close at hand. There's no Bluetooth here either for

tones, and they're well voiced.

The ace card here for us is also a Mustang series calling card; the models of classic Fender amps. For us, the foundation of a great clean tone with plenty of headroom for your drive pedals or virtual ones is hard to beat. The Deluxe, Twin (50s and '65), Champ, Bassman, Princeton and spiky Excelsior make for a great selection and a rich one, too. The higher gain fare is good too, though not at the level of some of the competition's more metallic department for us. The names like 70s Rock also make it less clear what the inspiration is (it's a Marshall Super Lead Plexi), but some digging in (or cheating with the online manual) will reveal tones inspired by the JCM 800, Vox AC30, Dual Rectifier, 5150 and OR120.

All in all, there's plenty to enjoy here at a fair price for a compact 40-watt stereo amp that will keep you inspired.

Rob Laing

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

1 EQ CONTROLS

While Bass and Treble have physical controls, users can only adjust mids via the digital menu parameters for each amp, which isn't ideal and loses it some credit on our usability score.

2 SILENT PRACTICE

There's a 3.5mm headphone input as well as an aux one for playing music through the LT40S – provided your smartphone still has a headphone port.

3 TUNER

The inbuilt screen also enables a visual for the handy built-in chromatic tuner – activated by holding down the tap tempo button.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Modelling combo amp

OUTPUT: 2 x 20W stereo

CONTROLS: Gain, Volume, Treble, Bass, Master, Encoder button for menu navigation, Utility buttons; Back, Save, Menu and Tap

FEATURES: Dual 4" full range Fender Special Design speakers, 1.8" colour LCD display, 60 presets (30 pre-loaded), 20 amp models, 25 effects, chromatic tuner, firmware and presets download via Fender Tone desktop app

CONNECTIONS: Input, footswitch input (Fender Single-Button Economy recommended), headphone in, aux in, mini USB

POWER: 230V EU

DIMENSIONS: 365mm (W) x 204mm (H) x 210mm (D)

WEIGHT: 12.25lbs (5.56kg)

CONTACT: Fender, www.fender.com

A 40-WATT STEREO AMP THAT WILL KEEP YOU INSPIRED

guitarists are playing at home.

Compact and packing self-contained virtual rigs inside, we're spoilt for choice with the likes of Boss, Yamaha and Positive Grid raising the standards. Now Fender is bringing this refreshed successor for the GT40 to the table/desk. And you'll need a fairly large one; it's slightly bigger, taller and deeper than Positive Grid's Spark 40 combo but the squat dimensions certainly lend themselves to be elevated. We like the mix of clean modern control

streaming audio to the amp, which is a shame but is reflected in the price.

The screen might be small, but the menu system to select presets, amp and effects models is a breeze to use and we prefer it to using a separate app. Alongside a range of drives with familiar names hinting at inspirations including a Klon, Blues Driver and Tube Screamer, there's reverb, modulations and delays. Though its 25 effects in all are not as many as some, it's still everything you'd need for classic



MARTIN SHAWN MENDES 000JR-10E

£869

A sustainable signature model

Signature models are a funny business – for every fan you can attract with an artist model, there are more that could also be turned off. Shawn Mendes is a suitably massive pop star to justify the bold step of... wait for it... an inlay signature here. Yep, we told you it was bold.

The swallows (inspired by the musician's hand tattoo) on the 000JR-10E's bridge have positively universal appeal by comparison, and the laser etched lyrics inside the body are subtly and randomly selected for each guitar. So subtle in fact that we couldn't even find it inside our review model! But

down auditorium) adds appeal for younger players, and those who want a middle ground between Little Martin 23-inch and full size. It certainly worked for Martin's Dreadnought Jr, but the smaller body here goes further with that concept. Tonally, its sense of balance and projection is impressive next to our solid wood mahogany Sigma dreadnought and Taylor GS Mini. Rather than a boxy compressed mid-heavy projection, it's softer – especially in the high end. The low end is surprising for the size, too.

Martin, like a few other brands, is clearly intent on sticking with Fishman's Sonitone preamp and

1 INLAYS
Though Shawn's signature at the third fret may turn off some players, surely we can all get onboard with the snowflake inlays?

2 BODY SHAPE
The scaled-down auditorium shape and 24" scale make this an ideal alternative to a dreadnought for younger players.

3 SUSTAINABILITY
The 100% FSC-certified tonewoods here also applies to the ebony bridge and fretboard.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Electro acoustic short-scale 000-size
BODY: Solid Sitka spruce top, solid sapele back and sides, X bracing (scalloped)
NECK: FSC Certified Sipo
SCALE LENGTH: 24"/609mm
NUT WIDTH: 44.4mm
FINGERBOARD: Ovangkol
FRETS: 20 (14th fret neck join)
TUNERS: Chrome enclosed gear
BRIDGE: FSC® Certified Ebony
ELECTRICS: Fishman Sonitone undersaddle piezo with active preamp with Tone and Volume controls, powered by 9V battery
FINISHES: Satin natural
CASE: Gig bag
CONTACT: Martin, www.martinguitar.com

MORE THAN JUST COSMETICS

there's more to this Custom Artist Edition than cosmetics.

We're impressed to find that this guitar is sustainably built from 100% FSC-certified tonewoods, at the request of Mendes, and its navy blue gigbag is 100% recycled post-consumer polyester. His other stipulation was that it would be affordable to fans. For comparison, the street prices we're seeing of around £749 are about £100 more than those of the cutaway non-signature 000CJR-10E – that has a select hardwood neck rather than the sipo here (it's similar to sapele). But if you prefer the traditional non-cutaway look, this is the only option for a Martin 000 Junior.

Like that guitar, the build here is solid sapele back and sides with a Sitka spruce top. A hand rubbed satin finish gets no complaints from us either, while the 24-inch scale and 000 Junior size (a scaled-

Sonicore pickup. It's a minimum frills piezo offering only Volume and Tone controls inside the soundhole. Like most piezo systems it needs some kind of preamp EQ'ing to make the best of it, but even without blending in the imaging (a kind of mic'd acoustic IR) on our Fishman Aura pedal into a FRFR cab, it offered a bold and usable tone.

Another solid performer then for this end of the Martin line alongside the Dreadnought Jr, but the appeal beyond Shawn Mendes fans may well rest on how you feel about that signature inlay and the premium to be paid for the sustainability.

Rob Laing

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





WARM AUDIO CENTAVO PROFESSIONAL OVERDRIVE

£199

The klon ranger

Klon clones come in all shapes and sizes, but few are as exacting in their tribute to Bill Finnegan's Holy Grail overdrive pedal than Warm Audio's Centavo. Like the out-of-production original, the Centavo Professional Overdrive is a big ol' unit, resplendent in its custom-cast 'Champagne' enclosure, with a trio of oxblood coloured knobs to get any pedalboard cork sniffer's mojo rising. There is even a centaur on the enclosure, only this one's got a bow and arrow, not a sword. With a little bit of wear and tear, no one is going to be able to tell this is a 'klone'.

Maybe you won't either but we'll get to that. Perhaps the

only person who will know the difference is your bank manager, because this retails at £199 street as opposed to a vintage Klon Centaur that will set you back circa-£6,800... Yes, really, for a drive pedal! Furthermore, this one is described as "transparent". This is a word that has lost all meaning in recent times but perhaps it describes how the Klon, and ergo the Centavo – for this replicates the circuit right down to the TL072 Op Amps and internal charge pump – enhances your rig, without colouring your sound.

With dials for Gain, Treble and Output, and a Mod switch on the back for extending its low-end response, the Centavo is a drive that'll flatter your setup. It's superb as a clean boost. There's

a serious amount of clean power to help you push through, to heat things up. You've really got to push the gain past noon to get the grit going. Leave the Mod switch off, turn the Treble past noon, and you'll easily cut through a mix. That's before we start pushing it as a drive pedal, all midrange muscle and oomph and sparkle, with the Mod switch and a wide sweeping Tone control making it a cinch to pair with any electric guitar. It can be quite unforgiving. What you play is what you hear.

But then, maybe transparency is a double-edged sword. Or a four-legged man with hooves and a bow and arrow.

Jonathan Horsley

AT A GLANCE

ORIGIN: USA

TYPE: Overdrive pedal

CONTROLS: Gain, Tone, Output, Mod switch

FEATURES: TL072 Op Amps, vintage-style diodes, internal charge pump

BYPASS: Buffered

POWER: 9V DC power supply or 9V battery

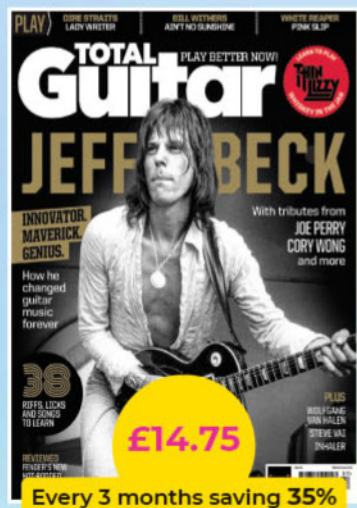
CONTACT: Warm Audio, warmaudio.com

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

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Words Ellie Rogers Photo LeTurk

LAURA COX

15 years ago, Anglo-French guitarist Laura Cox unknowingly set out on the path to stardom when she began posting note-perfect classic rock covers on YouTube with, she says, “nothing in mind other than to get some feedback.” Fast-forward to today and, unlike thousands of content creators, the still young player has forged a career that extends far beyond the online realm. With her third album *Head Above Water* out now and a season of touring unfolding before her, Laura measures her success not in video views, but in tangible artistic growth. “Transitioning wasn’t easy,” she reflects. “But I’m really proud I’ve managed because there aren’t a lot of people doing this. I’m not even sure they want to – I think most YouTubers want to stay on that platform.”

Her new album also sees a broadening of her sonic palette, with accomplished banjo and lap steel playing alongside her signature six-string chops. “I really tried to be more myself and listen less to the people in my team who wanted it to be really hard rock,” she says. “I think these country and bluegrass influences, mixed with a base of rock, is me finally finding my sound.”

The balladic *Old Soul* sees the virtuosa stretching out on

all three instruments, while *Swing It Out* – which evolved from an “Aerosmith-meets-AC/DC instrumental” – offers more of a direct link back to her rocking roots. At the other end of the spectrum, delicate album closer *Glassy Day* soars with spectacular lap steel and – gasp! – no guitar at all.

On the album cover, she clutches her current favourite live guitar: a Tobacco Burst Les Paul Junior, equipped with a single P-90. But, because the instrument was “a bit sick” during recording, it only imparted its characteristic bark to a handful of licks. Instead, we hear the warmer humbucker hues of Cox’s Gibson Les Paul Classic, which she flipped to the neck pickup when delivering her solos. She then ran everything through an Orange Rockerverb 100 MKIII and vintage cabs, coupled with a 1980s Marshall JMP 50 watt combo for a rich, robust sound.

Quite the purist when it comes to tone, Laura describes the whole session as having been “really plug in and play,” with little else to bolster – or mask – her sound. “With some pedals, you turn them on and you can’t recognise your tone,” she warns.

“I barely used any, except for the lead parts where I boosted my tone with a J Rockett Archer or a SoloDallas Storm pedal. I really love these because they keep your tone, but boost it and make it alive.”





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