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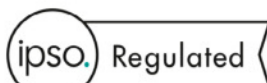
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Welcome...



"The best Metallica album of the century." That's what TG contributor Jenna Scaramanga excitedly announced of the band's latest release *72 Seasons* following her VIP listening session in London in February. Of course, Metallica have a distinct sound thanks to an arsenal of recurring techniques and harmonic approaches that feature throughout their music.

But, despite the existence of a definite Metallica recipe, the band's mixing bowl of creativity is still being stirred, if you see what I mean. Now into their fifth decade, Metallica are not resting on their laurels.

In this month's exclusive interview, lead guitarist Kirk Hammett tells TG of the incredible energy the band felt upon reuniting after the Covid-19 lockdowns. He also speaks about the rhythmic improvisation at the heart of his solos on *72 Seasons*, and how that spontaneity feeds into Metallica's live shows.

We also speak to bassist Robert Trujillo. Together he and Kirk take us on a deep dive through the new album, track by track, revealing the inspiration and musical approaches behind each song. And producer Greg Fidelman outlines the recording process, the gear used and how the band set about capturing a live feel.

It feels like a great time to be a Metallica fan, and this issue is a big celebration of a band we all love here at TG. If, like us, you're feeling inspired to plug in and play, make sure to follow our Metallica technique tutorial on p68 and take a look at our riff lessons on three of the band's greatest songs, too.

As ever, I really hope you enjoy the magazine. It's been a blast putting it together! See you next time.

Chris

Chris Bird Editor

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Type this link into a web browser on any computer, smartphone or tablet and you'll be directed to TG's website at guitarworld.com. Here you'll find all the audio and video for the issue, available to download or stream.

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Words Paul Elliott Photo Barry Brecheisen/Getty

ERIC & JEFF



n memory of the man who was known as ‘the guitarist’s guitarist’, a host of famous players will

perform in two concerts at London’s Royal Albert Hall on May 22 and 23 – billed simply as A Tribute To Jeff Beck. The event was announced by Jeff’s widow Sandra and his great friend Eric Clapton. Among the guitarists scheduled to appear along with Clapton are Billy Gibbons, Gary Clark Jr., John McLaughlin, Susan Tedeschi and Derek Trucks. Also on the bill are singers who performed with Beck across the years, including Rod Stewart, Imelda May and Joss Stone, plus Johnny Depp, who played guitar alongside Beck on his final tour. Pictured here are Eric and Jeff on stage in 2010 at the Crossroads Guitar Festival in Bridgeview, Illinois – one of many times that the two legends played together.



IN THE PICTURE

PEOPLE ★ NEWS ★ NOISE



SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS



ALBUM

"IT'S AN INTERESTING MOMENT FOR THE GUITAR"

JAKUB ŻYTECKI ON NEW INSPIRATIONS AND TWO-MINUTE SOLOS



Polish guitar virtuoso, multi-instrumentalist and producer Jakub Żytecki has solidified his position as a trailblazer in progressive guitar music with a brilliant new album, *Remind Me*. The shred-meets-ambient specialist also teases an eight-string signature and reveals why it's time to rip it up like his teen hero once more.

Tell us about the one guitar you couldn't live without...

It's probably the one that I recorded most of the album with – my Mayones that they built for me. It's an offset model, a bit different from their catalogue. It's inspired by the Fender Jaguar, so it's got this Kurt Cobain-ish shape. I actually received that guitar as an eight-string version recently. I haven't shown anybody, but it's a guitar that we're working on and there's going to be the signature coming this year.

Do your tones come solely from plugins or do you use pedals too?

I got some pedals thinking it was going to change my process, but still I'm ending up recording super dry and changing it in the post process. It was on my first record that I started using Neural DSP stuff because they're awesome, probably the best in the market. I've been using a Valhalla Reverb for years – it's everywhere – and I use EchoBoy when it comes to delays.

How would you describe your approach to the guitar?

It's probably a bit cliché to say, but it's just a tool to tell some kind of story. You're a part of a bigger picture. Obviously there are places to have the guitar in the spotlight

but there are also moments where it's just supporting other things. Usually, it's about recreating a certain feeling. I see music through the general emotional idea that it carries. Let's say I have a chord; I try to think of why I like this chord and what kind of emotion it gives me. The more I understand it, the better I portray the emotion.

You've been quoted in the past as saying that you don't listen to much guitar music. Where does your inspiration come from?

I think that was maybe two years back – maybe from the previous record – and I was feeling like that for many years. The last time I was listening to guitar music was as a teenager obsessed with Dream Theater. Right now, it feels like it came back to me

a little bit. With the thing that Polyphia and Plini are doing, I feel like it's an interesting moment for the guitar and I feel inspired by it again.

Can you single out a performance on the record that you're especially proud of?

This is the first time I actually came back to the classic conception of guitar solos. There are at least two solos that I wouldn't have done three years ago – typical high-gain, two-minute-long solos. There's one in *MOONGHOST alt* which is kind of like a John Petrucci-style solo with a wah pedal at the end. You can't get more classic than that and I like it because I haven't done that in years!

Ellie Rogers





AMPLIFIERS

BLACKSTAR DEBUT 50R

Blackstar has been on a busy run of new gear lately, and the most recent is the Debut 50R. In a world of do-it-all gear, this all-analogue combo is designed as a simple, two-channel,

1x12" pedal platform combo. It has a MOSFET preamp design, which Blackstar says is virtually indistinguishable from valves. There are Clean/Bright voices on the first channel, with overdrive on the second, three-band EQ

and Blackstar's ISF control, switchable plate/hall reverb, FX loop and a power amp section that can go from 50 watts down to 5 watts. The Debut 50R comes in Black or Cream, priced at £209.



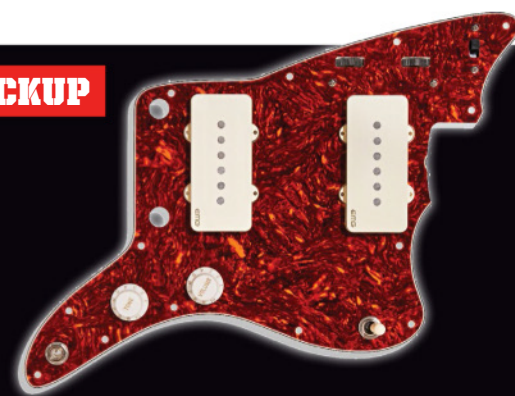
MODELLER

HEADRUSH PRIME

Following on the success of its Pedalboard modeller, Headrush has unveiled the Headrush Prime (£1,099). This feature-packed multi-fx/modeller is based around a 7-inch touchscreen interface with a friendly, colour graphic display. As well as the expected guitar and bass amp and FX models, it's got on-board

Amp Cloning for capturing the sound of outboard gear, plus an IR loader. It's also home to a mic input, complete with vocal processing courtesy of Antares Auto-Tune. There's a lot of connectivity, too, with its own WiFi connection for patch exchange and streaming, Bluetooth, USB audio and more!

PICKUP



EMG JMASTER

Active pickup purveyor EMG has offset players in its sights with its latest Retro Active release – this time a pair of pickups designed specially for Fender Jazzmasters. The JMaster is a noiseless, wide-stacked singlecoil and is available as a set in black, white or ivory. Alternatively, you can

purchase the pickups built into a black, white or red tortoiseshell pickguard. This option also has EMG's SPC and EXG circuits wired-in, offering a mid or full-frequency boost, alongside a bass and treble boost for "liquid tone with full bottom end and enhanced highs". Available priced from \$249.



Jackson

JOSH SMITH

PRO SERIES SIGNATURE SOLOIST™ SL7 ET



Words Stuart Williams Photography Phil Barker

WOOD STOCK

Epiphone's Inspired By Gibson Custom Shop range turns its attention to two of Gibson's rarest guitars: the 1958 Korina Explorer and Flying V

G

ibson couldn't have conceived in 1958 just how chameleonic its 'futuristic'

Explorer and

Flying V shapes would become. Dress them one way and they're the archetype pointy, heavy metal blueprint. Go back to the originals though, and the same shape gives us an entirely different aesthetic, one of blues, psychedelia, classic rock and more.

Now, 65 years after they were first released in hens' teeth numbers, Epiphone is bringing us a mass-market, Gibson Custom version of the iconic designs. First up are the all-important Korina wood bodies and necks, with both models having their neck carves patterned to the vintage versions. Both guitars feature an Indian Laurel fingerboard – 24.75" scale for the Flying V and 24.724" for

the Explorer – with 22 medium jumbo frets.

There's gold hardware abound thanks to the tune-o-matic bridges, V-shaped string plate (Flying V only) and pickup covers. Talking of which, under the covers on both guitars are a pair of Gibson USA Burstbuckers, controlled by two volume pots, a master tone and a three-way switch.

The 1958 Korina Explorer and 1958 Korina Flying V are available with either white or black scratchplates, and all models come in a road-ready hardshell case priced at £1,219.



UP CLOSE



Korina wood

The original korina wood models were made in extremely limited numbers – 81 Flying Vs and fewer than 50 Explorers.



Pickups

Epiphone is pushing the boat out and supplying these guitars with USA Burstbucker pickups.



Inspired by Gibson

We've seen some huge improvements from the Epiphone stable in recent years, these models are part of the Inspired by Gibson range.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ Drop E tuning
- ✓ Alternate strumming
- ✓ Auto wah effect



RIFF OF THE MONTH

SHAME

Six-Pack

Six-Pack features on Shame's third album *Food For Worms* released in February 2023. Guitarists Eddie Green and Sean Coyle-Smith play this post-punk-style riff with high-energy strumming and an auto-wah effect. The riff is played with a fast triplet feel, so keep your strumming hand moving down and up with three strums per beat. You don't

need to strum the strings continuously, but keeping your hand moving will help you lock into the feel with solid, steady timing. Start the riff with a hammer-on from A to B on the sixth string, then strum the three-string D triad, played with the first finger. Next repeat the hammer-on, then strum an E triad with your third finger. Play this C to D section three times, before finishing up by strumming the C chord

in triplets. We've played slowly through the riff in our video so you can study the details.

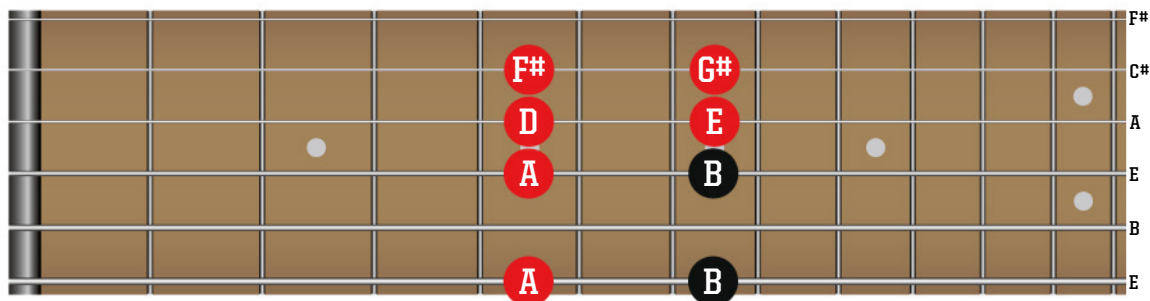
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:00-0:37

Tempo: 145bpm

Key/scale: B Dorian mode

Main techniques: Alternate strumming, string muting, triplet feel

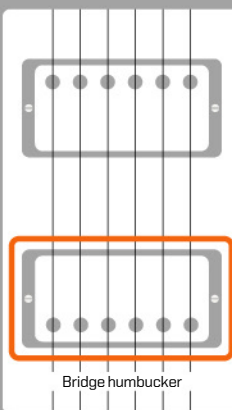
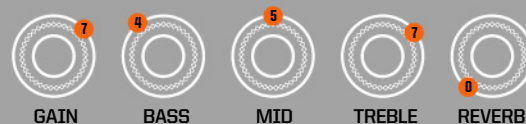


The notes of this riff fit within the B Dorian mode (B C# D E F# G# A), which is a minor scale with a 'happy' sounding major 6th interval (the G# note) brightening things up. The notes on the

sixth string are played as single notes, with a B acting as the root. Play the remaining notes (A D F#) and (B E G#) as D- and E-barre triads using your first and third fingers.

GET THE TONE

CHANNEL OVERDRIVE



Use a bridge pickup into a moderately overdriven amp. We recommend using a humbucker-equipped guitar with plenty of treble and presence dialled in to get close to the Shame duo's 'bucker/single coil lineup. The riff is played using an auto wah effect with the sensitivity set at around 11 o'clock on the dial. Based on live videos the guitars are tuned to drop E (E B E A C# F#), which is the same as drop D but with all six strings tuned a tone higher.



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ERNE
BALL®

SINCE 1962



FIVE WAYS TO... USE DADGAD

Follow TG's guide and get to grips with this versatile tuning

Not just the open tuning that's most fun to say, DADGAD is also one of the most versatile guitar tunings. When you strum the open strings it produces a Dsus4 chord which, being neither major nor minor, has the potential to create a world of different moods. Jimmy Page exploited it in *Kashmir*, *Black Mountain Side* and *White Summer*, inspired by the folk guitarists Davy Graham and Bert Jansch, who popularised the tuning.

Although best known as a folk tuning, DADGAD has a world of applications. It crops

up in All Time Low's 2008 pop-punk classic *Dear Maria, Count Me In*, and 80s rockers Tesla used it for the hard-driving riffs of *Heaven's Trail (No Way Out)*. Slipknot, Ed Sheeran, and Johnny Cash have all used it, and it powers the solo acoustic arrangements of *Smells Like Teen Spirit* by Eric Roche and Gabriella Quevedo.

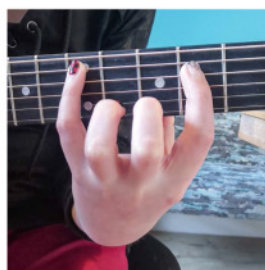
If you explore the tuning, you'll find that powerchords are the same as in drop D, and with the top strings ringing, these can create some beautiful extended chords. You can play a killer version of *Everlong* by the Foo Fighters with this approach. The tuning encourages

you to stick to the key of D, but you can use a capo to reach other keys, as in Del Amitri's *Tell Her This*.

To get the benefits of DADGAD, most of the time you'll want to keep open strings ringing as much as possible. The main technical challenge will be to arch your fingers enough to keep the top strings clear while you fret the lower strings. If you can play open chords, you've already conquered the technique. Remember to keep your thumb centred on the back of the neck and use the tips of your fingers more than the pads for maximum clearance.

1 CASCADING MAJOR SCALE

bit.ly/tg370audio



♩ = 55

let ring throughout

TAB

D
A
D
A
D

0 7 4 0 4 4 0 4 4 0 0 4 7 0

Sustain every note here for as long as possible. The main challenge is from the second to third note: keep your fourth finger down to sustain the second note without choking the fourth string.

Words Paul Elliott Photos Getty

Gary Rossington

1951 – 2023

The guitar hero who wrote *Sweet Home Alabama*
– and led Lynyrd Skynyrd out of the darkness



Of all the guitar heroes that have come and gone, Gary Rossington was among the most heroic.

As a founding member of Lynyrd Skynyrd, the three-guitar band that defined Southern rock in the early 70s, Rossington played with a swagger and a lightness of touch. He liked to play gritty, but also, as he put it, play “pretty”. His instrument of choice was a 1959 Les Paul Standard, which he used on every one of the band’s first five landmark albums. And in those albums were so many great songs that he wrote with singer Ronnie Van Zant – most famous of all, *Sweet Home Alabama*.

But Gary Rossington was more than simply a gifted musician. He was also a man of extraordinary character. In the wake of the worst disaster in the entire history of rock ‘n’ roll – the plane crash during Skynyrd’s 1977’s US tour, which killed Ronnie Van Zant, guitarist Steve Gaines and four others, and left the surviving members of the group and entourage with horrific injuries – Gary Rossington was able to rebuild his life and rediscover his love of playing guitar. And with Johnny Van Zant replacing his late brother as singer, Skynyrd was resurrected in the late 80s with Rossington as de facto leader, a role he retained until failing health forced him to withdraw from touring in 2021.

Throughout the band’s long recording career, Gary Rossington was the sole constant, appearing on every studio album from the 1973 debut (*Pronounced ‘Lëh-’nérd ‘Skin-’nérd*) to 2012’s *Last Of A Dyin’ Breed*, and on every live album. Apart from drummer Artimus Pyle, who left the band in 1991, all the others who played on the band’s 70s albums have now passed away: guitarists Allen Collins and Ed King, bassist Leon Wilson, keyboard player Billy Powell and original drummer Bob Burns. And it was in their memory, and for Ronnie Van Zant and Steve Gaines, that Lynyrd Skynyrd posted a poignant message following the death of Gary Rossington on March 5, 2023: “Gary is now with

his Skynyrd brothers and family in heaven and playing it pretty, like he always does.”

Gary Robert Rossington was born in Jacksonville, Florida on December 4, 1951, and it was there, in 1964, that he that he formed a band with Ronnie Van Zant, Bob Burns, Allen Collins and bassist Larry Junstrom. The band was called The Noble Five, then The One Per Cent, before they decided, with sweet revenge, to use the name of a schoolteacher who had despised them as long-haired wasters. In ‘honour’ of Leonard Skinner, the legend of Lynyrd Skynyrd was born.

As Gary recalled, “Like every kid in America, we wanted to be The Beatles. We learned all

together – me and Ronnie and Allen. I knew a couple of chords, but we didn’t think we could ever write a song in our lives. We thought that took talent! We just had a dream of making it in a band.”

At this early stage, Gary’s primary influences were Eric Clapton, then with Cream, and Paul Kossoff of Free. “Everybody was blues-influenced,” he said, “because rock ‘n’ roll evolved from blues. So I loved Paul Butterfield and John Mayall, Muddy Waters and Son House and Howlin’ Wolf.”

What also developed in the early days of Lynyrd Skynyrd was a competitive streak between the guitar players, encouraged by Ronnie Van Zant. “Me and Al would battle for solos,” Gary said. “We’d learn a song and whoever played lead the best got it. So after a while we’d be fighting each other for it, and Ronnie saw that. He used to tell the other guys, ‘Watch this – Gary, why don’t you play the lead there?’ And Al would be so pissed, he’d come back the next day and play it better than me. And then it turned into real fights! But it was great. I had a girlfriend and every day I would go to her house after we practised for a couple of hours, and Allen didn’t have a girlfriend – he’d go home and play, so for a while he

**"WE'D LEARN A
SONG AND
WHOEVER PLAYED
LEAD THE BEST GOT
IT. SO AFTER A
WHILE WE'D BE
FIGHTING EACH
OTHER FOR IT"**

GARY ROSSINGTON

"RIP, BROTHER GARY. THANK YOU FOR BRINGING ME SO MUCH JOY WITH YOUR GUITAR PLAYING AND SONGWRITING"

JAMES HETFIELD



➔ was learning quicker than me. So I ended up breaking up with this girl so I could play more!"

The band also got tight by rehearsing in a backwoods shack named The Hell House for its superheated atmosphere. "We'd go out there at nine in the morning and stay there all day," Gary recalled, "and it was so hot in Florida! There was no air conditioning, and when the sun hit the tin roof it got even hotter. Then we had amps on high, back in the old days with tubes, they'd get hot – it was like sitting by a heater. It was bad! But it was good in certain ways. We'd play in summertime outdoors a lot, and all these other bands would come off stage and go, 'Man, it's so hot!' And we wouldn't even be sweating, because we were used to it."

The band's debut album opened with one of Gary's songs, *I Ain't The One*, and featured another of his which became a classic, *Simple Man*. The most important song on that album – arguably the most important song of the band's career – was *Free Bird*, the *Stairway To Heaven* of Southern rock. It was written by Allen Collins and Ronnie Van Zant, but Rossington also played a part in its creation. "It started out as a simple love song about leaving a girl and being a free bird," he said. "I came up with the three chords at the end so Allen could play lead, and when we were playing clubs, Ronnie would say, 'Play it a little longer, so I can rest my voice.' So it turned into two minutes, then three minutes, then four. And then Ronnie

FLYING HIGH

Lynyrd Skynyrd on stage at Oakland Coliseum in 1976. From left: Allen Collins, Ronnie Van Zant and Gary Rossington.

said, 'Just go till I tell you to quit.' So it just kind of evolved. The funny thing is, we didn't think it would be a big song."

Sweet Home Alabama was another team effort, built around Rossington's irresistible, swinging riff, and later finessed by Ed King. And throughout those early albums, Gary had a song for every mood. *Cheatin' Woman* is one of the funkier blues numbers ever laid down by a rock group. The title track from *Gimme Back My Bullets* is as mean as they come. And in contrast, *What's Your Name* is pure feel-good rock 'n' roll. The latter song came from *Street Survivors*, the album that was released on October 27, 1977 – just three days before disaster struck.

"We were just starting to make it big and everybody was real happy and we were doing good," Gary recalled. "We were on tour with our own plane and we thought everything was good. And then boom... It was the worst thing that could ever happen to anyone."

He described the aftermath of the crash. "I broke a lot of bones. Both arms, both legs, ribs. I remember screaming. I could see and hear my brothers dying. It was terrible." He also talked candidly about his experience of survivor's guilt. "I questioned it for years: why did I live and other guys didn't? You have to go through all of that, and it's crazy. I think fate has a lot to do with things and that was just what was supposed to be."



In those dark days after the crash, Gary believed he would never play guitar again.

"I didn't think I *could* play again," he recalled. "And I didn't want to in the first place." But fate played a hand again, when he was recuperating on vacation in Barbados, and attended a party with members of The Rolling Stones and Alan Price, formerly the keyboard player from The Animals. The various musicians had an impromptu jam, running through a few blues standards, and eventually Gary was persuaded to join in.

"Alan Price said, 'Come up and jam with me.' I said, 'Man, I don't wanna play. I quit.' And he said, 'Your mates would want you to play. Do it for them.' And so I did. I said, 'Gimme that guitar!' We played a blues song and I loved it. I couldn't play very good. I was still hurt and broke up. But that's when I started back. My first wife was there, and she was crying because I'd told her so many times that I'd never play again."

Rossington went on to form a new group with Collins, Wilkeson and Powell. Named the Rossington Collins Band, they made two albums in the early 80s before Lynyrd Skynyrd reunited in 1987, with Johnny Van Zant alongside Rossington, Powell, Wilkeson, Artimus Pyle and Ed King, who had left the band in 1975. Across the years there were numerous line-up changes and further losses, but Gary Rossington never gave up on the band he loved so dearly, in which his second wife, Dale Krantz-Rossington, performed as a backing singer.

SIMPLE MAN

Gary, with his Les Paul, in 1976 and 2019. Right: the Skynyrd line-up before the disaster of 1977.

Gary Rossington was proud of Lynyrd Skynyrd's wonderful music and the influence it had on subsequent generations of rock bands. Guns N' Roses singer Axl Rose said in 1987 that the "heartfelt feeling" in their song *Sweet Child O' Mine* was inspired by Skynyrd. "That was really a great compliment," Gary said. "A lot of those 80s bands listened to us when they were growing up."

The same was true of Metallica, who recorded a version of Skynyrd's classic ballad *Tuesday's Gone*. "I loved that," Gary said. "They put their heart and soul into it. I played that song with Metallica at their 30th anniversary show (in 2011). They're great friends of mine." Metallica's James Hetfield was one of many who paid tribute following the news of Gary Rossington's passing. "RIP, Brother Gary," Hetfield stated on Metallica's Instagram page. "Thank you for bringing me so much joy with your guitar playing and songwriting in one of my all-time favourite bands, Lynyrd Skynyrd."

In 2012, Gary Rossington was asked how he would want to be remembered. His reply said a lot about the kind of man he was – his focus not on himself but on the band he served with such distinction. "It was our dream, back in the day, to become a band that is known all over the world," he said. "We're just a good, hard-working American band that's stuck by our guns and tried to do what's right. I hope that's our legacy."

Words Jenna Scaramanga

"IT'S GUITAR MUSIC, BUT IT'S FOR EVERYONE"

Yvette Young is one of the most original guitarists on the planet – combining innovation with accessibility in a new **Covet** album. But she admits: "I've always felt like an outsider to the guitar world..."

It's a familiar story: the Californian child of immigrant parents turns guitar playing upside down with a radical approach to two-handed tapping. Yvette Young's music is nothing like Edward Van Halen's, but her story is similar. Self-taught on guitar after a background in classical music, they both found their own idiosyncratic approaches by fearlessly chasing the sounds in their heads.

Like Van Halen, Yvette Young's technical wizardry is disguised by an emphasis on memorable songs. For a band sometimes categorised as math rock, Covet are remarkably accessible. "It's guitar music, but it's for everyone," says Young, Covet's leader and mastermind. "I just love catchy music, stuff that makes you want to dance." The new album, *Catharsis*, zips by in under 30 minutes. "I purposely made a lot of these songs really

short," she says. "I'd rather leave people wanting more than overstay my welcome. I prank myself by making the most difficult digestible music, so it's hard for me but fun for everyone else!"

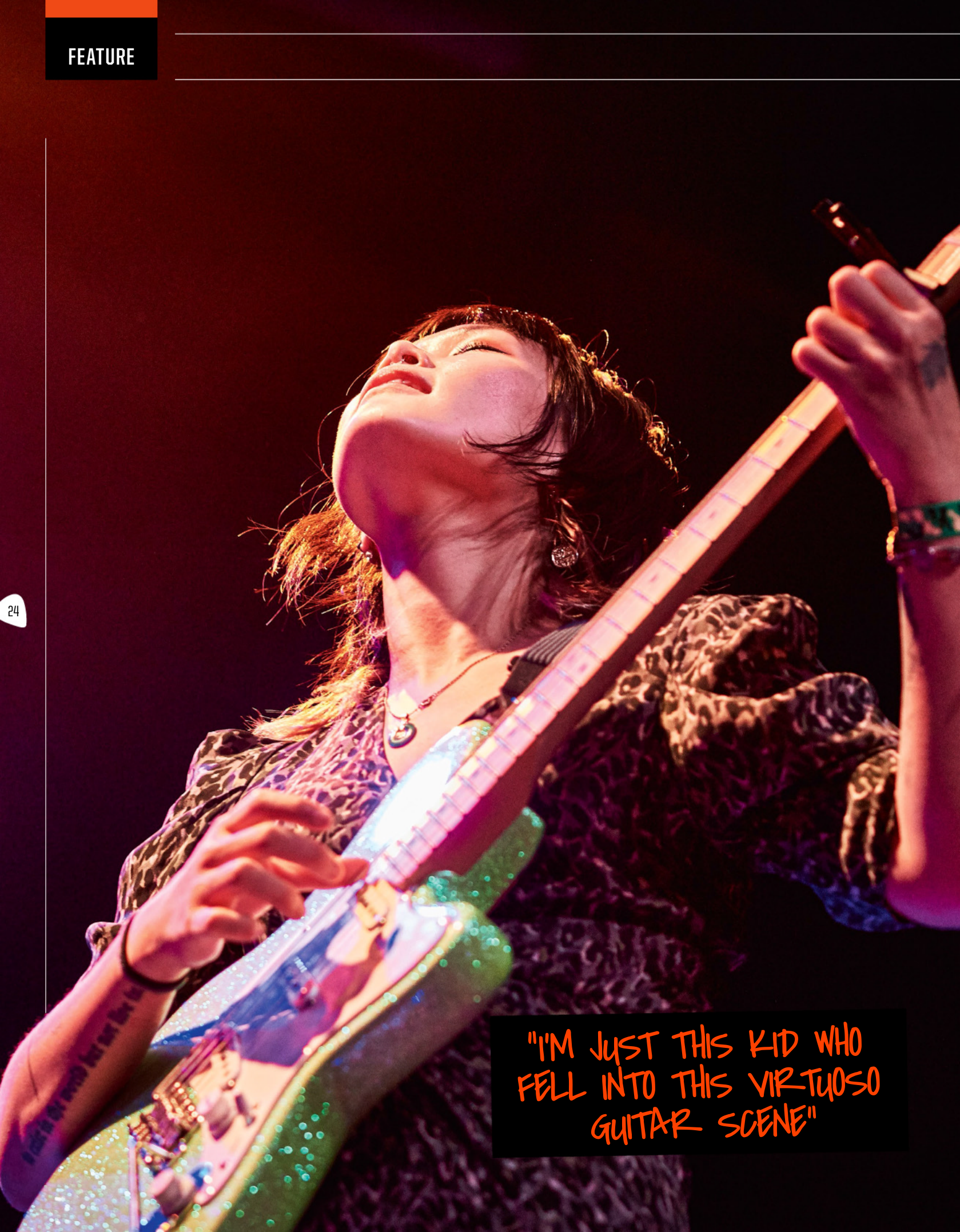
Already known as one of the most cutting-edge guitarists on the scene, Yvette's playing has evolved again since 2020's breakthrough *Technicolor*. "It's crazy," she smiles. "We tracked these songs and then we toured, and something happened to me on tour where my guitar playing changed. I started almost pseudo-picking; instead of fingerpicking I would use the tips of my fingers or my nail to make a pick and get more attack. I started bending more and

using the whammy bar more. My playing totally evolved." Tapping is still a major feature, but it's now one approach among many. "I just expanded my toolkit. When I went back to the studio after the tour I ended up re-tracking a ton of the songs because I play them differently now. The solos have a lot more character and flavour."

Covet get labelled shoegaze for Young's pedal-obsessed musical meditations, but *Catharsis* often sounds more like gazing at an open sky. It's not hard to guess the album was made in California. With dreamy extended chords and vocoder-drenched vocal harmonies, opener *Coronal* comes on like a grunge Beach Boys, while first single *Firebird* consciously evokes driving an open-top muscle car. "A lot of it's joyful, but then there's two songs that are heavier, so I'm excited to showcase that sonic spectrum," Yvette reflects. "I really love exploration of tones and using them like

"I LOVE POST-ROCK, POST-METAL, EDM, AND ROCK, AND I'M TRYING TO CHANNEL THEM ALL"





"I'M JUST THIS KID WHO
FELL INTO THIS VIRTUOSO
GUITAR SCENE"

➔ different colours to help a story come to life. I love post-rock, post-metal, EDM, and rock, and I think I'm trying to channel them all. I'm trying to do a whole love letter to all the sounds and timbres that I enjoy, and I'm proud of how diverse the songs are."

Yvette has a parallel career guitar influencer, and many of the tracks on *Catharsis* began life as pedal demos: *Coronal* originated as a fuzz showcase. "I told my recording engineer: this is a guitar album. It's supposed to be highlighting tones, highlighting melody, highlighting songwriting. The effects are like colours to me, and they can colour the way you play. Fuzz makes me write stuff that sounds a lot gloomier and darker, which I need. When I'm clean I just want to fill up all the space, but fuzz fills in the space for you with interesting texture and I love that. I wrote that song in one sitting, and I added the middle solo later in the studio. All of that was just a stream of consciousness from a really cool fuzz sound turning into a song."

"I actually played with a bunch of fuzzes," she continues. "On my board I use the ZVex Mastotron but I was also using the Collision Devices Black Hole Symmetry and a Moreland Magnetics 707 fuzz. My friend from Dirge Electronics makes this pedal called the Slowly Melting that I was playing with as well." The Slowly Melting's distinctive broken sounds are clearly audible on tracks like *Smolder*.

One of the coolest pedals Yvette has used is the Hologram Microcosm multi-delay, which can pitchshift, modulate, and radically reinterpret the input signal in unpredictable, synth-like ways. It gets an outing on *Vanquish*, but the main song to showcase it was dropped at the last minute: "It's gonna be on the next record," she says. "I just wanted to do it justice because it's such a cool song."

Another Young favourite is Boss's classic DD-3 delay, which she exploits on *Bronco*. "Yeah, the stutter!" she exclaims. "I love the DD-3." Unlike some buffered bypass delays, the DD-3's repeats stop instantly when you turn off the pedal for sudden stop-start effects. Yvette maxes the level and feedback controls for brief bursts of cacophony. "It's just getting the timing right and getting it to sustain. A compressor helps it cut for a long time, too."



Compressors are important for Yvette's clean tapping passages. "I would never practice with one though because it just makes you not play as hard," she warns. "If you can make it sound and sustain without a compressor then when you add one it's smooth sailing. I use the Earthquaker Devices Warden optical compressor. What I like about that one is it almost acts like a preamp, where you can push your amp a little more with it. I find that things break up more if I crank it, so it's really versatile."

Her main amp is still the Vox AC30, but *Catharsis* sees it joined by a Roland JC-40. "The chorus stuff has JC-40 Blended in and everything that's broken up is the AC30," she explains. "The heavier hitters are AC30. Things like *Firebird* and parts of *Love Spell* are JC-40." Between the all-out fuzz of *Coronal* and the jangle of *Firebird* are beautiful, slightly broken-up tones. She pushed the AC30 into overdrive with the Ground Control Audio Amaterasu Bright Preamp. "Live, I do it by pushing my amp with a Electronic Audio Experiments Longsword. It's fun trying to recreate it live, because some of the heavier stuff is stacked with synths."

Although Yvette's guitar style is unique, she doesn't put pressure on herself to be original. "I don't seek out to do anything new," she says. "That's not my intention. If it happens, it happens, but I think it's more a by-product of me really wanting to help the things in my head come to life, and I'll

ALL INCLUSIVE

"I get so excited because at our shows the audience is so eclectic," Yvette says

do whatever I have to do to make that happen. I've always felt like an outsider to the guitar world. If anything I feel like I'm doing catch up work. I'm just this kid who loves guitar, loves music and loves songwriting, who just fell into this virtuoso guitar scene. Because my whole background is in classical music, I am really driven and motivated by chasing the things that I hear in my head."

Recreating the sounds in her head is a constant search, but Yvette is finding it easier these days. "I decided to commit to one tuning!" she admits. "Most of the songs on this record are in F-A-C-G-C-E. I feel more fluent in that and I'm able to come up with melodies much quicker now. That's just the tuning that spoke to me the most and I was the most comfortable with. I wanted this album to be more seamless, and to do that I have to stay in the same tuning."

Yvette's signature Ibanez Talman YY10, an offset body with three single coil pickups and a Wilkinson tremolo, covered all the material on *Catharsis*. The T-style YY20 doesn't make an appearance, but she's saving it for a forthcoming solo record. "I think I'm gonna use the Tele one for my future solo stuff. My solo material is more Midwestern emo singer-songwriter-inspired. Covet's my outlet for anything that's heavy and big and not vocal-centric. My solo music maybe has more mass appeal. I really like bands like Pinegrove, so I'm looking for that Midwest, twangy tone."

➔ With *Covet*, Yvette is more focused on making clever things sound simple. As Yvette puts it, “My whole thing is I like to package up secretly heady things, like prog, in this accessible package that everyone can get something from. I get excited about that, because the more people you can trick into listening to something complicated, you’re helping expand their tastes. You’re also raising the ceiling for a whole genre because more people are going to discover other bands from that genre.”

Yvette is most animated talking about songwriting. “Emotion and just how enjoyable something is comes first,” she says. “I’m not looking for there to be a struggle to access this music. I want to be immediately accessible, and then when you sit back and dissect it, if you put your little music brain hat on, then wow there’s a lot of things going on.”

At the same time, she isn’t afraid to use well-worn ideas as long as she can make them sound fresh. “I view it as a challenge. I’m like ‘OK, this is a chord progression I’ve used before. How can I trick people into thinking they haven’t heard it yet?’ You could do that through phrasing, through transposing it, or using really interesting passing tones. The rhythm section has so much power. You can take a chord progression you’ve played before but what the rhythm section does with it makes it feel like a whole new song. I feel what takes a something from being good to magical is attention to all the little details. That could be your phrasing or automating a delay on this one note. Of course, your average listener isn’t going to say, ‘Wow, I really enjoyed the fact that they maxed out the rate on the delay’, they’re just gonna be like, ‘That felt like a cloud; I don’t know how they did that.’ Attention to detail with the phrasing is like the difference between a person talking versus it sounding like a computer wrote it. I don’t stop working on a riff until I’m personally really excited by it.”

The plan for *Catharsis*, as Yvette told TG back in 2021, was to write more of the material while rehearsing together as a band. In the event, the album had a difficult gestation and *Covet* got a new drummer (Jessica Burdeaux) and bassist (Brandon Dove). “This record process was really painful for me because I had to make a lot of tough calls,” Yvette



"MY PLAYING HAS TOTALLY EVOLVED"

admits. “I’m really proud of these songs. It’s now attached to a lot of really stressful memories but I’m proud to get it out finally.”

Despite these challenges, she is still excited for a more interactive writing process on the next record: “I’m really looking forward to it. I already have four songs. I’m gonna demo them and we’re gonna probably get a shared house and finish the songs as a band. I always write the whole song and then let everyone sit with the music for a while before we come together and try to make the best decisions for the song.”

Wrapping up, Yvette is extremely buoyant. “I’m really optimistic about the future of guitar. I think it’s being

used in a really creative way and people don’t know all the cool sounds you can get from it. I get so excited because at our shows I look at the audience and it’s just so eclectic, people from all backgrounds, all orientations, all ethnicities. It’s hilarious: you get guitar dads and Gen-Z kids and Asian families. I love it. My goal as a player is to just get as many people excited about music as possible, because it’s been therapeutic to me. It’s saved my life. Honestly, it has given me so much confidence and made me feel that I have a voice when I’m not the most outspoken or assertive person.”

She smiles. “I just want a lot of people to have love for the instrument or music, and have the courage to pursue something creative for themselves.”

Covet’s album Catharsis is out April 7.

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Words Amit Sharma Photos Jag Gundu

WHO IS THE HERO HERE? THE GUITAR OR THE BASS?

In prog rock duo **Crown Lands**, multi-instrumentalist Kevin Comeau always has his hands full

The last two decades have witnessed the rise of some impossibly thunderous two-piece bands, from the lo-fi vintage crackle of The White Stripes and The Black Keys to the modern-voiced heaviness of Death From Above 1979 and Royal Blood – all of whom have somehow been able to defy the laws of physics in terms of sheer dimension and spread. You can now add Canadian duo Crown Lands to that list, given how singer/drummer Cody Bowles' melodies and rhythms are elevated far into the cosmic beyond by multi-instrumentalist Kevin Comeau, who – much like a mad professor – beavers away behind a fortress of equipment in order to bring their sci-fi prog orchestrations to life. Instead of signal splitting as per bands of the past, he switches between Rickenbacker guitar/bass double necks, vintage Gibson SGs, inexpensive Strats, 12-string acoustics, Moog Taurus pedals and synths to create a world of sound that truly needs to be seen in order to be believed.

“When we started out, I was really influenced by all those two-piece bands,” Kevin says, speaking from his home in Oshawa, Ontario. “I was doing that dual mono setup where you split your signal, sending your dry to one amp and an octave down to another. But I found it was muddying up what I was doing with the Taurus pedals. A lot of those other bands tend to play just one part and split. My bass pedals have their own lines. I do a lot of counterpoint.

If I’m staying static on my guitar, I’ll play the melody on my Taurus and vice versa. I prefer to let my guitar play a traditional role – it gives me more low-end space for bass pedals.”

Being a progressive rock band from Canada, Crown Lands are following in the footsteps of legendary trio Rush. And for Kevin, having initially fallen in love with punk rock during his early teens, it was the song *Xanadu* – the 11-minute epic from Rush’s 1977 album

A Farewell To Kings – that inspired his own grandiose and elaborate musical experimentations. He says he owes “everything to listening to Rush at the right time in life”, which led to him going back to discover “the older, weirder side of prog like Yes, King Crimson, Genesis, Van Der Graaf Generator and Tangerine Dream instead of Dream Theater and more modern stuff.”

The opening track on Crown Lands’ new album *Fearless* is an 18-minute epic titled *Starlifter: Fearless Pt. II*. As far as opening gambits go, this one takes the listener right into the deep end. “Most of that was written over a couple of weeks,” Kevin says, “except for the end part which was going to be its own 15-minute song about black holes. We found a Ted Talk by Stephen Hawking, so we sampled him into this instrumental ’90s Floyd-esque piece which ended up going nowhere, except for that one section we moved over.”

If this all sounds like the kind of thing Rush would do, well, that’s because it is. When Kevin talks about the first part of

“I LIKE USING TEXTURE AND TIMBRE TO
TELL A STORY AS EFFECTIVELY AS LYRICS”

CROWN LANDS



Starlifter – what he calls “the opening overture”, which he says “represents a fight between good and evil” – he likens it to another classic Rush song from the 70s, *By-Tor And The Snow Dog*. He also acknowledges the influence of Rush in how he mainly works in DADGAD and open C tunings to help emulate keyboard voicings. “I like using texture and timbre to tell a story as effectively as lyrics. It’s all very hopeful with the big suspended chords and then we do this chromatic shift into B flat, which suddenly makes you feel like we’re in D minor. We live in a Mixolydian world of always having that flat seven, and that’s the sound of Rush, to the point where I’d say 90% of Rush’s music is in E Mixolydian. *Xanadu* is a perfect example, though the chorus is probably more like D Mixolydian. While a lot of classical musicians would frown upon that, we love those subtle modulations. *Starlifter* mainly sits in this modal D area which shifts between major and minor. Yeah, it’s a bit of a gauntlet to play through it all!”

If you’ve seen any footage of Crown Lands live, you’ll most likely have already marvelled at the sheer magnitude of Kevin’s rig. He agrees that his somewhat unconventional role does present its fair share of challenges, especially given he has to pay great consideration to the physical limitations of having only one pair of hands and feet for live performances. He also admits his decision to track guitar and bass separately for parts of the new album became “a big point of contention” for the duo, though stands by his decision. “We’d arranged previous recordings on my doubleneck,” he explains. “This time I said ‘F*ck it! I’m tracking bass and guitar separately.’ I wanted the music to sound timeless... It will live longer than we will. I wanted to make sure the recorded version sounded more like how I heard it in my head. Cody was like ‘How are you going to pull that off live?’ I’ve arranged the live versions thinking, ‘Who is the hero here, the guitar or the bass?’ – and that’s how I’ll switch between the two on stage.”

All of the rhythms on the album were recorded with Kevin’s two Gibson SGs

– a 1969 transition model with ’68 pots and a more recent SG Classic fitted with P-90s, although he doesn’t tour with them for fear of neck breakage. “I love those late-60s Gibsons,” he says. “I find the necks are so interesting. You have the skinny nut and the neck is slim but by the seventh fret it becomes a baseball ball C-shape and fills your hand so nicely. The T-Top pickups in that ’68/’69 SG has this clarity and sparkle you don’t get from any other humbucker.”

He describes the tone as “slightly scooped”, especially when compared to the Classic, which carries more mid-range grunt and sustain. Those guitars were doubled and panned hard left and right, with his Rickenbacker 12-string tracked dead centre to help thicken out various parts. “I love that kind of sound,” he continues. “*Siamese Dream* by The Smashing Pumpkins is a huge benchmark for me in terms of guitar tone. I love how Billy Corgan layered dirty guitars with clean guitars to create a guitar orchestra.”

Then there’s the black Mexican Strat he used for a lot of the leads, which he “bought for \$200, retuned to CGCGCE and never looked back”. Unlike Alnico single-coils, he explains, the ceramics in that guitar have a darker thump that sits closer to humbuckers. Its white pickguard was eventually swapped out for a black one in tribute to David Gilmour (“it had to be done!” He grins). Another instrument of note is the vintage K. Yairi-made Alvarez acoustic heard on *Penny*. “The brass nut and bridge buzzes in a certain way while the mahogany back and sides make it sound very dark and folky,” he says. And then, of course, there’s the Alvarez doubleneck given to the band by none other than Rush guitarist Alex Lifeson...

“We did a charity gig with Alex a few years ago, he was the nicest guy,” Kevin recalls. “We played Led Zeppelin’s *The Battle Of Evermore* and then went into *Stairway To Heaven*. Alex lent me his white Gibson EDS-1275 to do the 12-string part while he ripped the solo. I had the guitar for a bit then he asked for it back when he did that charity auction. He felt bad, so ended up giving me this old Alvarez doubleneck he

wasn’t playing much. I used it for most of the acoustic parts on the record.”

The rest of Kevin’s tone comes from combining Hiwatt with Fender amps, a blend which the guitarist attests to being “the main secret of my sound”. There’s something magical that happens when you marry the mid-presence from the EL34s in a British-style amp with the scooped punch you get from American-voiced 6L6s, he says – demystifying how one person alone can cover so much ground in a power duo. “I ended up getting a deal with Hiwatt because all my favourite guitarists sounded their best when they used those amps. It’s that hi-fi sound which shows every mistake, making you a better player in the long run! Alex Lifeson used them from *Hemispheres* in 1978 through to *Moving Pictures* in 1981, my favourite era of his tone. Pete Townshend had them for The Who’s *Live At Leeds*. Another favourite is Adam Granduciel from The War On Drugs – their *Live Drugs* record is the pinnacle of tone. It captures the raw ferocity of Neil Young with the phrasing and magic of David Gilmour, who typically used single-coil guitars through a sh*t ton of clean boosts, a couple of Hiwatts and a Leslie.”

Speaking of pedals, there’s no shortage of shimmering modulations heard on the latest recordings, mainly courtesy of the Boss CE-1 chorus that Kevin describes as his “favourite stompbox ever”, thanks to its triangle wave LFO instead of the sine wave usually found on other units. There’s an unevenness to it, he explains, that adds even greater dimension to the layers of noise. “I used my Eventide TimeFactor and MXR Micro Flanger a lot, too,” he adds. “I also love my Diamond Compressor when using singlecoils. I don’t squish too much, but I like the extra push. And I love my Xotic EP Booster, it’s a classic for a reason. Everyone says when you get that pedal, you’ll never turn it off and that’s so true... it’s the ultimate ‘always-on!’”

Crown Lands’ album *Fearless* is out now.

THREE’S A CROWD

Crown Lands’ multi-taskers Cody Bowles (left) and Kevin Comeau



“I WANT THE MUSIC TO SOUND TIMELESS.
IT WILL LIVE LONGER THAN WE WILL”



Words Jenna Scaramanga Portrait Lewis Evans

"OUR MUSIC CAN BE EXPERIMENTAL."

Rodrigo y Gabriela are breaking new ground - but for one half of the duo, going electric means less shredding...

Two decades ago, Rodrigo y Gabriela made a name for themselves as innovators of the nuevo Spanish guitar sound. Coming from a shared background in heavy metal, they could thrash as hard as Hetfield, shred as fast as Vai, and yet – somehow – they could take these ferocious chops and meld them with the traditional rhythms and flavours of the folk music they grew up hearing in and around their native Mexico City to create something beautiful, progressive and unique. They brought their instrumental fury to vast festival stages. They made nylon-string guitars cool.

Now, 17 years, six studio albums and one Grammy later, their impulse to break new sonic ground remains as strong as ever – as illustrated in their new album *In Between Thoughts... A New World*. Gabriela Quintero's turbo-charged percussive techniques still provide the backbone of the duo's signature sound, but this

time around, Rodrigo Sánchez has downed his custom Yamaha NTX Series and gone electric.

Speaking from their studio in Ixtapa, Mexico, Rodrigo describes the new album as “a natural progression” from 2019's *Mettavolution*.

“I wanted to play electric guitar,” he says, “and I'd been doing that on the little part of the *Mettavolution* tour that we got to do before it was shut down, because some of the songs on the album were recorded with a Jaguar. But, for this sound, when Gab and I were just sitting and suddenly writing a song, it was because I had my electric with me.”

The word “suddenly” here is an important one, because another key point of departure from their typical process was that they approached the entire project with a spirit of spontaneity, conjuring the guitar parts for each of the album's nine tracks through improvisation, before hitting the record button just moments later. The longstanding connection that has made Rodrigo y Gabriela one of the most captivating guitar partnerships

of their generation has always been equally to do with their solid intuition for knowing how best to interact musically, and something intrinsically deeper than that. They've both always, as Rodrigo puts it, been “spiritual seekers.”

Consequently, their desire to explore spontaneous composition came not from wanting to jam or noodle in the sense that many guitarists understand improvisation, but from wanting to allow a heightened sense of spiritual awareness – inspired by the slightly slippery philosophical concept of nondualism – to seep into their creative process and flow back out in song form. Rodrigo opened his mind to the nondualist way of thinking in 2020, and as he explains: “It's basically an interconnection between the mind and this kind of matrix where all the information of whatever we perceive is. It kind of shifted my perception of reality. When you leave all the expectations behind, and you just allow this awareness to be more present in every



action, that's pretty much what art is all about."

In fact, when Rodrigo y Gabriela first started experimenting, they had no expectation that a release would ensue. As Rodrigo recalls: "When we recorded, we were not thinking that this was going to be the next Rod & Gab album, and that gave us this limitless space to work and add different things that we probably wouldn't have, had we known that it was going to be."

As well as diverging into electric tones, the album also features the subtle use of analogue synths, Mellotron and even the entire Bulgarian Symphony Orchestra to further accentuate its dynamic drama with strings and percussion. "We decided that we should add the orchestra," he says, "because it's cinematic and it is, in a way, the soundtrack to a story we wrote based on the nondualist philosophy."

While these new elements might seem like a wild leap from the twin nylon string sound we know and love, Rodrigo is quick to remind us that the fundamentals of their craft remain unchanged. "Our music can be experimental," he notes, "but at the same time, the metal world we grew up in and all the rock we

used to listen to when we were kids is really straightforward. We don't come from a jazz background where we want to overcomplicate things. The songs are actually songs. The melodies and the structures are very clear. Even when we were working with the orchestra and the arrangements, we were trying to be minimal, and let the Rod & Gab sound still be there."

While revered for his intricate lead work, Rodrigo also refrained from using the electric landscape as an excuse for gratuitously flexing his speed chops, revealing that – actually – that was never his style, even as a young metalhead. "It wasn't until I got the acoustic that I started to shred more," he says. "Maybe I was influenced by The Guitar Trio with John McLaughlin, Al Di Meola and all those guys. I felt like I could play faster here. But with the electric, I wasn't really attracted to it."

His electric of choice is a Fender Jaguar, but he stresses that he "didn't use it to shred in any way," and – as a nod to his maturing sensibilities – he emphasises: "With every song I play, I try to do less notes. Even on acoustic, my time of playing fast is gone."

One of the greatest revelations of the record is that when Rodrigo shifts his

NEW BALANCE

"We're excited to do things differently," Rodrigo says

usual playing style directly onto the Jag, it becomes seriously funky. Tracks like *True Nature* and *Egoland* pack so much Nile Rodgers-esque syncopated goodness that involuntary grooving is an inevitability of listening. "I kind of discovered that myself in *Mettavolution*," he smiles. "I started to include these funky guitars, but it's not new. When I was playing acoustic guitars, I'd been doing those rhythms for many, many years. But, sonically, it's not the same. I really love the feel, and I love playing those rhythms with that sound. I don't think I do the typical patterns of funky guitar because I don't even know how to play them. But, I think they give a good reference."

Similarly, there's a subconscious channelling of Ennio Morricone's desert guitars on the evocative *Descending To Nowhere*, and on heavier tracks like *Broken Rage*, clean tones give way to levels of distortion and feedback squawkery that we've never heard from the duo before. Naturally, by moving into the electric realm, Rodrigo was afforded a whole new palette of effects with which to paint the sonic story.

But rather than going wild in the pedal shop, he used his long-favoured Fractal systems and a variety of self-designed plugins to hone the exact sounds he was after for each track. For example, for the squidgy, quacky groove at the beginning of *Egoland*, he reveals that it's "not an auto-wah for real," but rather something he engineered at the desk when no pedal in his collection would suffice. "I do use one live but it didn't sound good, it sounded too obvious," he says.

Looking ahead to how they'll perform the album during their extensive world tour, which runs from April through to November, Rodrigo y Gabriela are aiming to deliver the kind of awe-inspiring duo shows for which they are famed without compromising on the record's ambitious sonic scope. "We are going to – for the first time – use backing tracks," he says. "The sound is pretty big and full, so the whole production is changed and we have visuals that are synced to all the songs to portray the concept of the album."

The open-minded spirit that birthed the record will be carried through to its on-stage incarnation. As Rodrigo concludes with a smile: "We're excited to do things differently."

In Between Thoughts... A New World is released on April 21.

"WITH EVERY SONG I PLAY,
I TRY TO DO LESS NOTES"
RODRIGO SÁNCHEZ

A full-page photograph of Tom Ford, a man with curly brown hair and a beard, playing a dark-colored electric guitar. He is wearing a dark short-sleeved shirt with white vertical stripes on the sleeves, a white t-shirt underneath, and grey trousers. He has a red guitar strap and a tattoo on his left forearm. The guitar has a sticker that says "Monty". He is standing in front of a blue brick wall. The lighting is warm, suggesting late afternoon or early morning.

OUR GENERATION

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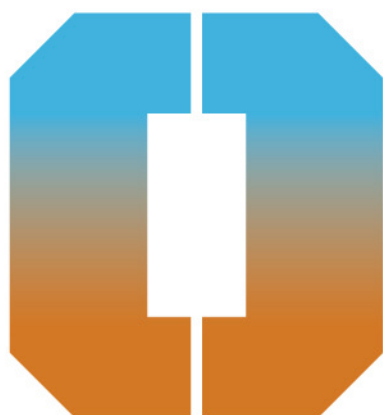


@rotosound_uk



Words Ellie Rogers

I GOT USED TO PLAYING ONE RIFF AND THEN NOTHING FOR TWO MINUTES!"



The genre-smashing sound of **Enter Shikari** requires a guitarist who always thinks outside the box

n June 19, 2021, Enter Shikari headlined the Saturday night of Download's 10,000-capacity Pilot Festival at Donington Park. After an excruciating 20-month battle with writer's block, it was the catalytic event that reignited frontman and principal songwriter Rou Reynolds' creative impulses, and which set the electro-rock four-piece barrelling forth on a trajectory towards their ecstatic new album *A Kiss For The Whole Word*.

"The thrill of suddenly being able to write music again, which is something that's been such a staple for me, made the music come out in quite an excited fashion," says Rou, who seems perceptibly relieved and reinvigorated by having 12 new tracks to demonstrate his return to form. "It is all quite energised, a lot of it's up-tempo and there's a lot of positivity on this record because that's naturally what I felt."

Fittingly, the album's title track opens with a literal fanfare of horns to herald the band's triumph over creative adversity, before a deliciously

overdriven guitar hook cuts in to really heat things up in typical Enter Shikari style. "The guitars are always quite central in developing a song and making it feel like it's within the Shikari universe, because, obviously, the palette that we write with is rather broad," explains Rou, who doesn't typically play guitars in the band, but who does handle their production. Guitarist Rory Clewlow puts it this way: "With our electronics, we can go into so many different genres and so many different directions – but the guitar is the one sound that stays solid throughout."

As the pair talk together about the making of their seventh studio record, as well as the genre-smashing magic that has defined the band since their 2007 debut *Take To The Skies*, Rory recalls where the original inspiration for their trademark rock-meets-electronic sound. "In the really early days when The Prodigy first came onto our radar, that was very influential," he says. "They had a lot of those very cool rock guitar sounds with dance music."

But now, with the benefit of so much time spent making the "organic edge" of his guitar playing coexist with the band's unholy synth sounds and beats pillaged from the world of EDM, he shrugs, "We know what works together and what doesn't. I mean, we've been doing it for 15 years!"

"It's just a sense of knowing your place," adds Rou, before quickly clarifying to his bandmate that he doesn't mean that "in a demeaning way." Rather, he explains, it's to do with cultivating a sense for how to pen guitar parts and dial in tones that interact with the electronic instrumentation in a way that's sonically harmonious. "Guitar, for instance, traditionally takes up the same sort of frequency range as a lot of synths," he notes. "And if you're in a band that's using other instrumentation or electronics, the traditional, 'I'm the guitarist! I'm gonna rip out a guitar solo and everyone's gonna f*cking listen to me!' approach doesn't really work. It's more of a collaborative or orchestral thing. You have to think of yourself as being part of this sound that's way bigger than you could make by yourself, or even than you could make within a traditional rock set-up."

Nodding in agreement, Rory can attest to having long since tamed a natural urge that exists in pretty much every young player who's ever rocked up to a rehearsal room with other musicians, plugged in and turned up. "There's a lot of temptation to fill everything and put a guitar in every section of the song," he explains. "But I have definitely had to get used to being



"I MISS MY PEDALS - BUT
THE KEMPER DOES SO MUCH"
RORY CLEWLOW

➔ like, 'No. We don't need a guitar in this section. We need to hold back a guitar to make this section better or more dynamic.'" He laughs: "I've got used to playing songs where I play one riff and then nothing for two minutes!"

Even so, on *A Kiss For The Whole World*, Rory's creativity shines as a kaleidoscopic celebration of the diverse array of sounds that can be extracted from the humble electric guitar, if you're willing to get a little experimental in the process. "Tom Morello has always been a big influence," he says. "The way he plays is amazing and everything, but it's the attitude towards playing the guitar. I remember seeing a video years ago where he's like, 'Look, it's just a bit of wood with some strings and some electronics. You can do whatever you want with it. You don't have to play it in a certain way and it doesn't have to make a guitar-y sound.'"

Rory recalls the time around the band's 2009 album *Common Dreads*, when he took a "deep dive" into Morello's work with Rage Against the Machine, and experimented with stacks of "weird pedals" – including one with a theremin-style proximity plate – to get the most out of the noise making capabilities of his instrument. Now, the same spirit of sonic invention remains, but Rory has forsaken his effects toy box in favour of a one-stop shop that caters for all his sonic needs. "I've got rid of all my pedals," he reveals, "and on this album – although I did a lot of experimenting with different sounds – it was all within my Kemper."

In particular, he notes "playing around with all the different wah settings," and – perhaps – "having a bit too much fun," in the process. "There's about eight different wah pedals," he enthuses. "Some of them are like Bitcrushers, some of them can make vocal-like changes of timbre and there's a Formant Shift, which is one that I used loads for this album."

On new tracks such as *Goldfish* or *Jailbreak*, this tone-altering effect is deployed to spectacular ends. "I miss my pedals because they are literally just little toys," he says wistfully. "But sometimes I like having some parameters to play within, and pedals can go on forever if you just keep buying them. The Kemper does so much, and honestly, stacking up different wah effects can give you some unique sounds that I've not heard from any pedal."

There are also plenty of occasions on *A Kiss For The Whole World* where Rory devised an array of synth-like guitar tones to help him blend – like a sonic chameleon – with the electronic landscape around him, while still maintaining the "natural human element" that a guitar can have, but a synth can't. "It's got sort of a more organic edge, which I always like," he says.

But, even for those with a keen ear, there are moments where it's hard to differentiate between the two. Take, for example, (*Pls*) *Set Me On Fire*, where the main powerchord guitar riff is layered with a synth part playing the same notes in a very similar tonal space. "They melt together and you don't perceive them as two different things," says Rou. "I love that kind of stuff! In a band like this, the most important thing is fitting in – and how you work, collaborate and meld with the other instrumentation." He adds that when the guitars and synths collide, "You get really interesting tones, and together they sound like something that you're not really sure what it is."

Interestingly, amid all their open-armed embraces of market-leading guitar technology, the band opted not to track the record in a purpose-built or even adequately equipped studio, and instead headed off-grid to a picturesque, solar-powered and slightly derelict farmhouse near the South coast that they'd found on Airbnb. "It was a really wholesome experience," says Rory, who, with his three bandmates and an engineer, descended on the property for five whole weeks.

Here, the band set up a drum room in a crumbling barn, and made a live room, vocal booth and control room in the open-plan living space. They travelled light, taking only Rory's Kemper and a Diezel VH4 for as far as amps were concerned – and the latter of which only got turned on once during the whole process. "We also used a lot of the Neural DSP Archetype: Nolly because it just sounds amazing," adds Rory, before Rou – who handled the album's production duties – expands upon on the recording set-up. "Pretty much everything we tracked was DI, Nolly and Kemper. So, we could always make the decision after, if we wanted to use one, none or manipulate the DI. There was a lot of freedom."

Prior to heading to their countryside retreat, the pair had demoed guitar

parts at Rou's home, using anything and everything from Gibson SGs to Fender's new Acoustasonic models – and a handful of these early takes actually found their way into the final mixes.

"We just use whatever's around," Rou says. "We're not massively precious about anything. When you have an idea, you want to get it down immediately, so you just grab whatever's there. That's the kind of purity that we aim for, instead of the more anally retentive approach of being like, 'Oh, we need these pickups, or this type of guitar.'"

Speaking of which, for the actual recording session, Rory brought with him a dependable old favourite. "I used a Tele for literally about 90 per cent of it, and it was the same Tele that I use live" – namely an American Ultra model with Ultra Noiseless pickups, which he's also had retrofitted with an EverTune bridge.

For the remaining ten percent of the record, he used a Fender Stratocaster, and that was it. "It's not very exciting," he apologises. But, on the contrary, what is exciting, is the degree to which these de facto kings of the Fender catalogue have had their usually recognisable tones tweaked, twisted and Shikari-fied beyond recognition. As Rou says: "You can, to a certain extent, get any sound from anything, especially once you get into the world of processing and post-production. I find that stuff super-exhilarating. Anything that's slightly different or surprising, I find thrilling. So, when Rory's cutting these strange sounds, I go into a fit of inspiration."

Again, all tonal roads lead back to the multitudinous possibilities of the Kemper, which Rory also uses live on stage, with the sizable benefit of being able to dial in those precisely calculated studio tones with total accuracy night after night. Rou distils their appeal: "It's the avoidance of faff!"

For Rory, there is no going back to the fiddly old way of doing things. "I remember watching a Biffy Clyro Rig Rundown thing," he smiles. "The guitar tech had built the most amazing series of amps and pedals. It was a work of art, or a work of engineering genius in the way it was all interconnected and you could control it. But at the very end, he was like, 'And in case none of this works, we've got a Kemper!'"

Rory adds with a laugh: "We've just cut out the middle man, really!"

***A Kiss For The Whole Word* is released on April 21.**

Words Ellie Rogers

"PROG IS PERFECT FOR EUROVISION!"

Can Aussie rockers **Voyager** win Europe's favourite song contest like Lordi and Måneskin before them? "It's a dream," says guitarist Simone Dow



Historically, the Eurovision Song Contest might not always have made for essential viewing for those of a guitary persuasion. But this year, it'll be worth tuning into the grand finale on

May 13, if only to catch Simone Dow, of prog-metal quintet Voyager, tearing it up for Australia on what is surely the first 7-string guitar to have ever graced the competition.

Honorary Europeans for the occasion, Voyager will be bringing the fretboard heat to the Liverpool event with their genre-busting track *Promise*. Stuffed with chewy dual-guitar riffs,

"Who doesn't want to play on what's quite possibly the greatest stage and greatest music experience in the world?" Simone smiles. "I'm just thrilled and we all are. You dream of playing on a massive stage where you can actually go all out and have all the bells and whistles at your disposal."

As she says, Voyager are more accustomed to "playing at these small pubs," but during the contest, they will be beamed directly into the homes of around 160 million viewers worldwide. The big question is: will the voting public be ready for a progressive pop metal odyssey, or will it be "nul points" for the Aussie hopefuls?

"IN A POP SONG, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BE PLAYING A ONE-MINUTE SHRED GUITAR SOLO"

eighties pop synths, earwormy hooks, melodic soloing and – last but not least – a keytar, the adventurous tune packs everything you could possibly hope for into three minutes of pure Eurovision excess. "We just can't wait to showcase what Voyager is all about in a very large, flamboyant and over-the-top fashion," Simone says from her home in Perth.

The band has been vying for the opportunity to represent their country since Australia was first invited to take part in Eurovision in 2015, and now that their time has finally come, spirits in the Voyager camp are understandably sky high.

"I think prog is actually perfect for playing at Eurovision," she argues. "The whole point of it and the whole purpose is not just the music; they really want you to demonstrate the theatrical side of it as well. It's the visuals, how it looks and how you tell that story on stage, as much as the music. Prog is usually five-minute epics where you're telling a thousand stories, so why not?"

Voyager will no doubt stand out against the competition, but it's not as if Eurovision hasn't seen its share of guitar-driven acts before. Most memorably, Finnish monster rockers Lordi got their scaly talons on the trophy back in 2006 after



→ storming to victory with their thrashable, chantable anthem *Hard Rock Hallelujah* – proving for once and for all that riffs and distortion have a place at the otherwise squeaky clean, pop-tastic affair.

“We actually went to see Lordi in concert,” recalls Simone, who, along with frontman/keytarist Danny Estrin, has long since been bitten by the Eurovision bug. “It was incredible. It was a full stage show they put on with props, not just wearing the outfits. It was kind of Alice Cooper-esque. I guess that was the first time I thought, ‘Wow, okay – I guess metal does perform at Eurovision!’”

More recently in Eurovision guitar history, we’ve seen the swaggering sexually-charged bombast of Måneskin take the title for Italy in 2021, and, of course, our own Sam Ryder so nearly clinched it for the UK last year with *Spaceman* – complete with its Brian May-inspired Strat solo. The crowning glory of *Promise* is Simone’s own powerhouse solo, which burns for four short but perfectly formed bars before melting seamlessly into a fiery keytar throwdown from Estrin – after which she and rhythm guitarist Scott Kay resume a powerful palm-muted chug that powers the song to its close.

She says: “With that solo – and you’re going to laugh when I say this – I was basically thinking that I wanted it to sound kind of Per Nilsson-ish from Scar Symmetry, but simpler. Obviously, he’s just a phenomenal guitar player and can play six billion notes. I can’t play like that, but I wanted it to still sound interesting without it being overly complex. Because it is a pop song, you’re not going to be playing a one-minute shred guitar solo. It’s just something that follows the melody of what’s going on and is still a little bit playful.”

Simone cites progressive titans such as Guthrie Govan, Plini and David Maxim Micic as having influenced her technical yet accessible approach to soloing. “I just really like their note choices,” she explains. “To my ears, it just sounds really playful and they



know how to not overplay. They know the point to go hell for leather and play lots of notes, but then they know how to pull it back and play these really tasty runs as well.”

Looking ahead to her own moment in the spotlight, she laughs: “It’s probably not the hardest solo I’ve ever had to play on stage, but that’s probably a good thing, what with the nerves!”

Guitar-wise, Simone’s main weapon of choice is her Barolo finish Ernie Ball Music Man JPX 7-string. She’s had an endorsement with the brand for several years, having initially been swayed away from playing Ibanez guitars by a desire to “move onto a guitar that had higher grade tone woods.” Built from a combination of mahogany, maple, and alder, the JPX fits the bill nicely, and although the model itself was released to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Dream Theater guitarist John Petrucci’s

AUSSIE RULES

Simone has a surprise in store for Eurovision. “Keep your eyes peeled!” she says.

signature line with Music Man, it suits Simone as if it had been designed especially for her.

“Honestly, if I was to make a guitar for me – a signature guitar – those would be the specs that I would go for,” she says. “It’s just been an absolutely awesome tool. It’s the only guitar I take on the road with me. It takes a real bashing and it takes it well!”

Although the JPX’s Barolo finish offers a subtle sparkle, changing from black to purple in different lights, the pomp of Eurovision naturally calls for something a little showier. Cagey on sharing the exact details until the big night, Simone does concede with a smile that she may possibly have something surprising happening for Eurovision. “I’m not going to reveal it yet,” she teases. “But there may be a new guitar getting used – maybe a new Music Man getting debuted – something a little bit more glamorous than what I usually play. So keep your eyes peeled!”

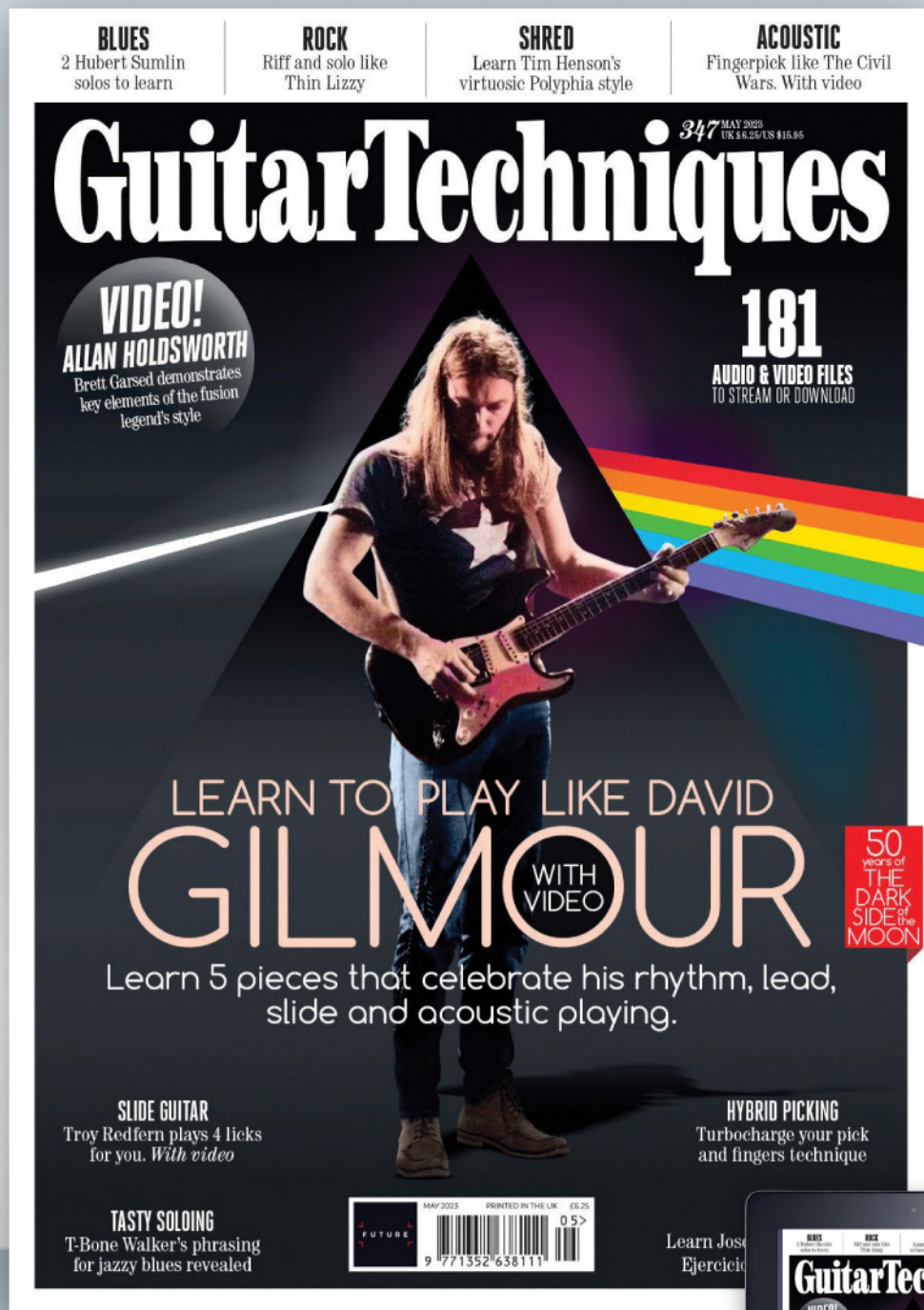
For tone, she relies on a Line 6 Helix HX Stomp to give her everything she needs, having recently “downgraded” – for reasons relating to touring cost and convenience – from a Mesa Boogie full stack amp rig. Weighing less than a kilo and small enough to pack as carry on luggage, the amp modeller and multi effects processor has revolutionised the game for her. “They are incredible,” she enthuses. “Myself and Scott have barely even scratched the surface with them. We basically just programmed in the basics that we need which are: a clean with some nice delays and reverb, a main rhythm which is similar to a Mesa tone, a slightly boosted distortion with a delay for lead licks that need to poke out a little bit more, and then we’ve got the full on-a-mountain-top solo patch!”

Post-Eurovision, Voyager will be hitting the road to tour in Australia, putting the finishing touches to their eighth studio album, which is tipped for release later this year, and setting their sights on a return to European soil for a winter tour.

Voyager rock the The Eurovision Song Contest on May 13.

“WE CAN’T WAIT TO SHOWCASE WHAT VOYAGER IS ALL ABOUT – IN A VERY FLAMBOYANT FASHION”

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3 NWOBHM: PHRYGIAN MODE

bit.ly/tg370audio

Inspired by the heavy metal of the late 70s/early 80s, this Phrygian line uses a touch of finger vibrato and palm-muting to embellish what is actually quite a simple line. It's easy to play this kind of line faster, or add more notes, but does it add intensity? You decide...

4 POWER-METAL BALLAD: SLOW TAPPING

bit.ly/tq370audio

Two systems of guitar notation for the song "Half Time Feel" by The Police. Each system consists of a standard musical staff and a corresponding guitar tablature staff.

System 1:

- Staff 1 (Musical):** Key of D major (F#), 4/4 time. The melody starts with a double bar line and a repeat sign. It features eighth and quarter notes, with some notes beamed together. Chords E5 and F5 are indicated above the staff.
- Staff 2 (TAB):** Corresponds to the musical staff. It shows fret numbers (9, 10, 12, 13) and includes a circled '13' indicating a barre.

System 2:

- Staff 1 (Musical):** Continues the melody. It includes a triplet of eighth notes and a pedal point (PM) marking at the end.
- Staff 2 (TAB):** Continues the fret sequence, including a circled '13' and a '9' indicating a barre.

It's easy for a lead line to sound small against the backdrop of huge drums and rhythm guitars, but a little more midrange and a few more notes help this lick stand out. Bars 2 and 4 feature tapping in a relatively slow, controlled way. Once you've mastered this, it's a breeze to speed things up for most impressive results.

5 AMERICANA: 6TH INTERVALS

bit.ly/tg370audio

[illegible]

This clean-tone lick mixes simultaneous and staggered 6th intervals to create a melody that suits the Americana-styled backing track better than more conventional rock or blues soloing. Try different pickup selections and a splash of reverb and you're ready to go. Bernie Leadon of the Eagles had a nice touch with this kind of soloing.



6 ACOUSTIC ROCK: MIXOLYDIAN OVER A V-IV-I PROGRESSION

bit.ly/tg370audio

♩=101

D Cadd⁹ G/B D Cadd⁹ G/B D Cadd⁹ G/B D Cadd⁹ G/B

This line shows just how good the Mixolydian mode can sound over a basic V-IV-I chord progression (D-C-G here). The major scale sometimes sounds too bright, too happy and just not moody enough. The recurring C note lends a note of tension, acting as a $\flat 7$ over the D major root chord and as an 11th over the G.

7 MELODIC ROCK: ARPEGGIO/SCALE MIXTURE

bit.ly/tg370audio

♩=105

Em⁷ Cadd⁹ G D Em⁷ Cadd⁹ G D

Here, we use a G major arpeggio (G-B-D) to ascend, before fleshing it out into a scale run (again, G major: G A B C D E F#) on the descent. This highlights the 'chord within a scale' principle, whereby you pick out the notes of a chord from a parent scale. Note how the simple rhythm contrasts with the more complex stop/start of the backing track.

8 ROCK BALLAD: ONE-STRING LICK

bit.ly/tg370audio

♩=80

E $\flat$ sus² F

Using only the third string, this one-finger idea strips away all the habitual scale shapes that can actually stand between us and melodic invention. You may find you want to cross to other strings and blend in a little traditional 'position' playing. Try the G minor pentatonic scale (G Bb C D F) in 3rd position for this.

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**“YOU’RE GETTING
PULVERISED!”**





Metallica are back in business with a crushing new album. Lead guitarist **Kirk Hammett**, bassist **Robert Trujillo** and producer **Greg Fidelman** tell the story of its creation. **PLUS:** 3 Metallica riffs to learn, including new banger *If Darkness Had A Son*

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Kirk Hammett and Robert Trujillo on the making of *72 Seasons*

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Creeping Death,
Seek & Destroy,
If Darkness Had A Son





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Words Jenna Scaramanga Photos Tim Saccenti

"THE GROOVE IS EVERYTHING!"

The biggest guitar album of the year has arrived: Metallica's *72 Seasons*. Lead guitarist **Kirk Hammett** and bassist **Robert Trujillo** tell TG how this legendary band finds new inspiration in the pursuit of heaviness...



K

irk Hammett has a confession to make. Metallica's lead guitarist is talking about the band's new album

72 Seasons, and how the energy within it comes from a spontaneous approach to writing and recording...

"First and foremost I'm an improvisational musician," he says. "I've realised that everything you do is pretty much improvisation. Any songwriting is improv. Writing melodies is improv. Improvisation is playing guitar."

And as he muses on this subject, he admits to a longstanding 'fixation' with one of hard rock's greatest lead players, AC/DC's Angus Young. "One of the things I love about Angus is how he never plays the same solo twice," Kirk says, before adding in a conspiratorial tone: "I have to confess that this is the album that got my Angus fixation out of my system finally."

"I've been obsessed with AC/DC most of my life – Angus and Malcolm's guitar tones, just their whole approach. I don't speak too much about it because it's a real common thing. Everyone's blown away by AC/DC."

"But I've always marvelled at Angus's guitar style because it's the perfect combination of blues, hard rock and boogie. He has a lot of

humour in his playing, and yet it's just so intense. You can't f*cking beat it! Coming from Angus it's just so organic. You know he's not thinking about what all the guitar magazines are gonna say. He just goes up and f*cking does it. And I love that."

A similar ethos is at the heart of *72 Seasons*, which finds Metallica doing exactly what they did in the 80s. Not always *sounding* like they did in the 80s, but determinedly being themselves without giving a single sh*t what other people think.

The weight of history can be a heavy burden. Metallica's key albums – such as *Master Of Puppets* from 1986, and their self-titled multi-million-seller from 1991, forever known as 'The Black Album' – are landmarks in metal,

which now come with more than 30 years of attached memories and myths. Other legendary bands have been intimidated into mediocrity by that kind of pressure, but *72 Seasons* has Metallica operating at full power, drawing on everything from their thrash metal roots to the heavy grooves of their classic early 90s songs *Enter Sandman* and *Sad But True*. Some of *72 Seasons* will remind you of old Metallica because this is Metallica. But all of it sounds reinvigorated.

Aside from 2011's *Lulu*, the band's one-off collaboration with Lou Reed, *72 Seasons* is Metallica's third studio album since bassist Robert Trujillo joined the ranks alongside Kirk and the two founding members, guitarist/vocalist James Hetfield and drummer Lars Ulrich. And with Hetfield currently unavailable for interviews, it's Kirk and Robert who speak to TG about how this album came together.

For Kirk, the years between this album and its predecessor, 2016's *Hardwired... To Self-Destruct*, saw him rediscovering his earliest influences. "I started a deep dive into all the guitar players that really influenced me when I was a kid," he says. "Hardwired was me listening to a lot of

Michael Schenker and that generation of guitarists. On this [album], I went back even further.

I realised that there's a generation of British guitar players that I love. I even like the obscure ones, like Kim Simmonds of Savoy Brown. So I started relearning all this stuff, and that British guitar player influence really rubbed off on me

when we started doing this album."

Incredibly, 'new' bassist Robert Trujillo has now been in Metallica longer than Cliff Burton and Jason Newsted combined. While Kirk revisited British blues-rock, Trujillo took cues from his predecessors in the band. "Cliff and Jason were so different in the way they play, and in their approach to the instrument," he explains. "It's very exciting for me because I understand what they did best. I have what I can offer to the song, but I can also pull from that existing bag of possibilities from Cliff or Jason. I love Cliff's melodic approach. If you take a song like *For Whom The Bell Tolls*, it's melodic yet edgy, and has that anthemic quality. He was so great at that, and also changing the sound of the instrument and

bringing it into an arrangement. That idea wasn't really prevalent in metal. Jason was just really solid. The Black Album has very well-produced bass parts."

Tonally, both Kirk and Robert's choice of sound is influenced by James Hetfield's gargantuan rhythm tone. "One of the important things about being a bass player in Metallica is to find the sound that sits well between James's and Kirk's guitars," Robert says. "Fortunately, our producer Greg Fidelman is really aware of that. On the record you can hear every note of the bass. The way the parts are slotted together, everything works so it becomes a team effort. There's a lot of energy in the songs, so the sound is important, the attack of each note."

Kirk's British blues-rock kick also influenced his choice of gear. His main axe is Greeny, the 1959 Les Paul formerly owned by Fleetwood Mac's Peter Green and then by Gary Moore, which Kirk acquired in 2014 for an undisclosed price reportedly "less than \$2 million". His amp choices also reflect the tones of that era. When TG suggests it sounds like Metallica have been using Marshalls, Kirk replies "We always use Marshalls." But while Marshall amps are almost always part of Metallica's tonal equation, they have rarely been this prominent.

"I was so much more into Greeny's sound, and that classic British thing of plugging a Gibson Les Paul into a 50-watt Marshall," Kirk says. "I really fell back in love with that whole sound. I have a special Marshall that I use in the studio, a hot rodded 80s Marshall. It never really leaves the studio, and whenever we record it always works its way into my setup."

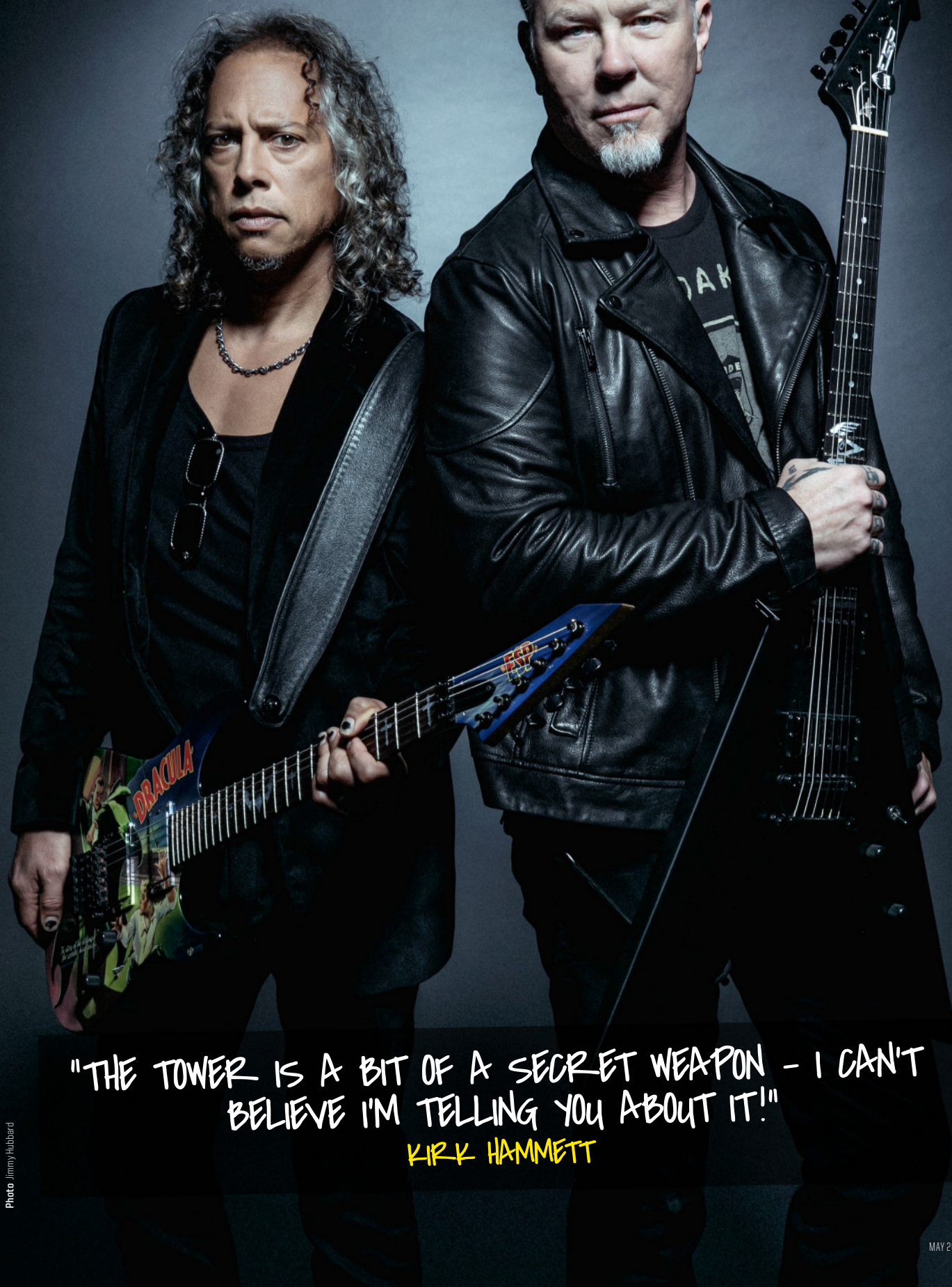
The secret sauce on his tone is the Solodallas Schaffer Replica EX Tower, a replica of the tone circuitry from the Schaffer Vega Diversity wireless system most famously used by AC/DC. "It's a type of preamp compression unit," he explains. "People like Angus Young, David Gilmour and Eddie Van Halen were able to boost the output on that transmitter, hence Angus's amazing guitar sound. So the Tower is a bit of a secret weapon – I can't believe I'm telling you about it! It's a large part of how I got that super dynamic lead sound. It's really full sounding, there's a lot of mid, but it doesn't sound harsh or too bold or solid. The harmonic distortion is amazing. I hit a note on Greeny and it literally will never quit."

He continues: "The tone on *72 Seasons* is based on my live sound, which is a Fractal Axe-FX modelled on a blend of my Fortin Meathead amp and my Dual Rectifier. We took that lead sound and tweaked a little EQ, added the Tower and we're good to go. Maybe there's a Tube Screamer in there also, because I just love that sound."





BACK IN BLACK
Kirk and James



"THE TOWER IS A BIT OF A SECRET WEAPON - I CAN'T
BELIEVE I'M TELLING YOU ABOUT IT!"
KIRK HAMMETT

THE FIRM

Metallica (from left):
Robert Trujillo, Lars Ulrich,
James Hetfield, Kirk Hammett.



"WHEN YOU HAVE A GREAT RIFF, YOU CAN PLAY
WITH IT SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS"

ROBERT TRUJILLO



For parts requiring a Floyd Rose, Kirk used an old favourite. “Guitar-wise, I just went back and forth from Greeny to my Mummy guitar. Why bother with anything else? The Mummy is my best-sounding ESP, and Greeny... everyone knows how that sounds! There was no need for a really crystalline clean tone. There’s not even a ballad on this album.”

That lack of ballads reflects the incredible energy Metallica felt when they first reunited after Covid lockdowns. Instead of mellow tracks, Trujillo says there was one key ingredient: big riffs. “You always go to that, go back to your anchor. A great riff makes songwriting a lot easier. When you have that you can play with it so many different ways. That’s where we incorporate accented rakes, muting, and all that kind of stuff.”

One great riff is on *Screaming Suicide*, which found Kirk paying homage to another early hero. “That is a complete tribute to Ritchie Blackmore. The melody is very reminiscent of what he plays in [classic Deep Purple song] *Black Night*. A large part of my guitar style and attitude comes from him. He had such a vision and he wrote great songs. I just feel indebted to him for his music and his spirit.”

In the first track released from the album, *Lux Æterna*, Kirk’s frenzied whammy solo drew a lot of criticism, of which he is well aware. “That solo seemed to get people talking on the Internet to the point where people were doing their own version,” he says. “I was just laughing the whole time. Yeah, anyone could do a technically better solo than anyone else on any song, but what’s the point? My f*cking friends down the street could probably play a better solo than *Lux Æterna*, but the solo that’s on there is part of the experience. For me, what’s appropriate is playing for the song and playing in the moment.”

He speaks again about the value of spontaneity. “I’m constantly working on my improvisation,” he says. “Constantly finding more ways to get within the groove. The groove is everything. If you’re in the groove it really doesn’t matter what you’re playing. You can even play outside notes, but if the groove is there you’re golden. You get a bad note? Play the next note and it’s good. After playing guitar for 40 years, I’ve come to this conclusion. I wish I knew back in the 70s and 80s, but that’s just not how it was meant to be for me.”

This renewed enthusiasm for improvisation comes from another of Kirk’s recent discoveries. “I’m really into prog and jazz fusion these days. A lot of those bands embrace everything that I was just saying. I missed out on prog while it was happening because I was into Tygers Of Pan Tang and Angel Witch. But I’ve discovered a whole world of music I love.”

He says that this desire for spontaneity extends to the entire songwriting process. “If we get to the point where we’re agonising over something, that means we need to move on to something else fresh. The last thing I want to be is stuck on any music, like I don’t have any more ideas and I’m too locked into this feeling. We never agonise over anything, and if anything’s too complicated to play, that means it probably shouldn’t be on the album.”

Spontaneous or not, the songs on *72 Seasons* are all meticulously arranged, and the intros are a particular highlight, as Robert points out: “Pretty much every song builds into something. It doesn’t start out as the thing it’s ultimately gonna be,” he says. Similar care was placed in selecting the tracks for the album. “It’s like you’re looking at works of art in an exhibition and each song has its place in there,” he continues. “You take songs like *You Must Burn* or *Chasing Light*, and then you take a song like *Room Of Mirrors* and it helps complete the overall picture.”

Kirk’s contributions, meanwhile, are focused on melody and hooks. In many songs he memorably doubles Hetfield’s riffs in a higher octave. “Sometimes not playing a harmony but playing an octave is just as effective,” he reflects. “We tried harmonising a lot of the stuff, and sometimes harmonies just make something sound a bit more pretty than the intention. If you play an octave, it kind of underlines the statement. If I could sum up my playing on this album, my solos are mostly rhythmic. That’s just how I feel like playing these days. I really wanted to sit in the rhythm, lock in with the groove and play for the song.”

For Kirk, playing for the song means more melody and less shred. “I don’t try to reach outside the boundaries of the song,” he says. “I don’t think that’s appropriate. I could string together six or seven three-octave arpeggios, sit there every day and practise it and go, ‘Hey, look what I can do!’ But where am I gonna put it? Arpeggios mapped out like a lot of people do, four or five chords with a different arpeggio over each one? Come on, it sounds like an exercise. I don’t want to listen to exercises and warm-ups. The only guys who I think play arpeggios as a means of expression are Joe Satriani, Yngwie Malmsteen and Paul Gilbert.”

Warming to his theme, Kirk argues that melodic playing is both more meaningful and, counterintuitively, more difficult than shredding. “I could fill up these songs with a bunch of really fast modal playing,” he says. “I know my modes, Hungarian scales, symmetrical scales, whole tone scales, I know all that sh*t. Is it appropriate? Diminished runs – is that appropriate? Maybe earlier in our time, but not now. What’s more appropriate is coming up with melodies that are more like vocal melodies. And guess what? The best scale for mimicking vocal melodies is the pentatonic. There’s a reason why the blues is so expressive, and it’s because of pentatonics. I prefer pentatonics because they’re more expressive. It’s actually harder to say stuff with pentatonics because you don’t have that many notes. It’s easier to play modal, because you’ve got so many notes. Okay, some of them are repeated in different octaves, but I will challenge anyone on that. One, two, three, five notes – what’s

more difficult? You tell me.”

What Kirk says in conclusion is that this passion for improvisation will be carried forward into Metallica’s live show, which UK fans will witness over two nights at the Download festival in June. “I have every intention on playing every solo from this album differently when we play live,” he says. “If you

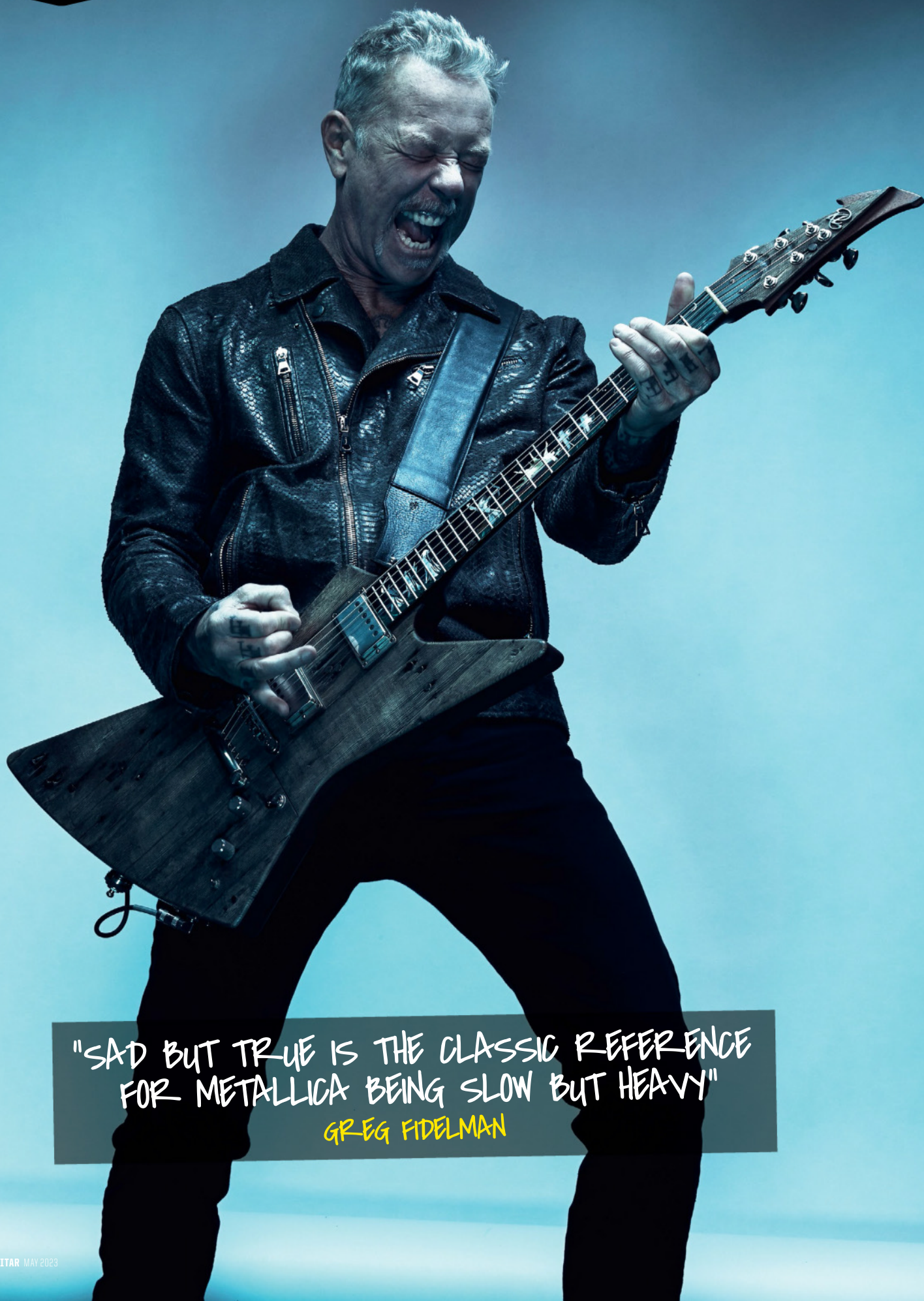
watch old videos of Ritchie Blackmore, Jeff Beck, or even Michael Schenker, they’re not playing the solos on the album – they’re playing whatever the f*ck they wanna play. I love that because it’s a moment of real honesty.

“With this album I went in intentionally to improvise 20, 30 solos, give them all to Lars and Greg, and go ‘You guys edit them!’ I know I’m gonna play something completely different live, so I can offer something different every time you see Metallica. When you buy a ticket to a Metallica show, you’re not gonna hear carbon copy versions of the album.

“At a time when it’s just so accessible to see videos of your favourite band, there needs to be some sort of impetus for people to go out and see live shows that are actually somewhat spontaneous.” He laughs. “That’s my thing these days – and if people don’t like it, that’s just tough!”

72 Seasons is released on April 14.





"SAD BUT TRUE IS THE CLASSIC REFERENCE
FOR METALLICA BEING SLOW BUT HEAVY"

GREG FIDELMAN

Words Jenna Scaramanga Photos Tim Saccenti

“WHEN JAMES PUTS THAT GUITAR IN HIS HANDS HE IMMEDIATELY WANTS TO PLAY FAST RIFFS!”

Metallica's co-producer **Greg Fidelman** reveals how the new album was made – with Hetfield and Hammett using battle-hardened gear, and the whole band focused on capturing a ‘live’ feel



Greg Fidelman first worked with Metallica as engineer on the 2008 album *Death Magnetic* – a result of his long association with that album's

producer Rick Rubin. Since the late 90s, Greg has served as engineer on numerous albums produced by Rubin, including System Of A Down's self-tilted debut, the Red Hot Chili Peppers' *Californication*, the posthumous Johnny Cash release *American V: A Hundred Highways* and Black Sabbath's final album *13*.

It was on the 2011 album *Lulu*, Metallica's collaboration with Lou Reed, that Greg took on the role of co-producer alongside guitarist James Hetfield and drummer Lars Ulrich. He has continued in this capacity on 2016's *Hardwired... To Self-Destruct*, 2020's live album *S&M2* and now, this year's *72 Seasons*.

“It's not your traditional hard rock record,” Greg says as he gives TG the inside story of its creation...

When you started making *72 Seasons*, what conversations did you have about how you wanted it to sound?

Initially everyone was isolated. We started trying to write songs remotely. So some of the usual chats you would have before walking into a project didn't happen. It was more, ‘Do you think we could try to cobble together some riffs and some song ideas while we're waiting this thing out?’ Then we got together for a Helping Hands benefit broadcast from Metallica HQ. We thought, ‘Let's show up a week early and stay a week after, and in person work on these songs that we had.’ Everyone was so excited to get started, and so excited to be playing together. We never really looked back.

Was there a specific aim within the band of what direction this album would take?

No one felt there was a reason to stray very far away from what we had done on the previous record, *Hardwired... To Self-Destruct*. We definitely talked about more of trying to capture a live feel, because everybody was so energized by being in the same room and playing the stuff together. It's not your traditional



INSIDE MAN
Metallica's trusted co-producer, Greg Fidelman.

hard rock record where there's a drum tracking session and then everything else is an overdub. Big parts of it are from the live take with all four of them playing at the same time. When it happened it was still like, ‘Oh my God, that feels great. We'll never beat that!’ Maybe there's a vocal overdub because at that time he hadn't written all the lyrics, but trying to keep the live feel; that was in our playbook from the start.

There's more midrange and less gain on the guitars than some past Metallica albums. Were you using more British-style amps?

James has always had one of the legendary José Arredondo-modded Marshalls, a late-60s/early-70s Superlead head. When we did *Hardwired*... it wasn't working very well. When we started this album I had a re-invigorated interest in this head. I was talking with Dave Friedman, who is very familiar with those old José mods, and he fixed it. When I got it back, I told James I thought it sounded insane, and he got really excited about it. It ended up on every song. I think that's what you're hearing.

What other amps were in the mix?

James has combinations of multiple amps and the balance between them changes from song to song. There's always a Mesa Boogie Mark IIC++ that he's had forever, and then this José Marshall – at least a combination of those two. There's also usually a Wizard 100-watt head that's usually got a Klon Centaur pedal on it. He also has a Diezel head. When we need to find a bigger bottom end, especially on the slower songs, we can bring that in. It has huge low end that the other amps don't have.

And Kirk?

For Kirk it's different for solos and for rhythm [guitars]. For rhythms, Kirk had a couple of different Friedmans. Sometimes it was the HBE Deluxe and sometimes it was some early HBE head that Dave Friedman modded. We had a Marshall a 50-watt master volume JMP, I think a '79, that just sounds amazing. For solos we had a 100-watt master volume JMP that's a little more gritty and scoopy, and we would combine that with a Mesa Boogie Dual Rectifier. Kirk also had an old Kirk Hammett signature Randall head that has a really clear, defined midrange. That was always nice to add to the mix so it could be super overdriven but not blurry and fizzy – you can still hear the notes. We've got hundreds of cabinets over there but James almost always ends up on similar – the Mesa Boogie and Marshalls go into old Marshall cabinets, and the Diezel I think goes through Mesa cabinets. Similar stuff for Kirk: a mixture of older Marshall cabinets with either 30- or 25-watt Celestions. For solos usually we've got a cabinet or two with 75-watt Celestions, and there's a Mesa cabinet labelled Black Shadow. I think they might be Eminence speakers, probably from the mid 80s, but those also sound really good.

Ed's note: Kirk remembered using some other amp setups – see his interview on p50 for more detail.

What guitars were they using?

Kirk used Greeny and his original Mummy guitar. He's got a hundred ESPs that look like the Mummy. I don't know what it is about that one in particular, but it noticeably sounds a little different than all the other ones, and it's just great. James has his Flying V that he

had from *Kill 'Em All*. It's a Gibson copy, but that thing sounds incredible. When he puts that guitar in his hands he immediately wants to play fast riffs. So if it's a fast song, for sure it's got that on it. He double-tracked all of [his] stuff; sometimes triple-tracks. We usually double with the ESP Explorer with the middle-finger inlays. I think it's the first ESP that he got – that guitar sounds incredible. Then he's got one of his signature model Snakebytes that is a strange copper colour. We've tried 15 or 20 different Snakebyte guitars, and this one just was a little bit nicer for whatever reason. The majority is the V or the Snakebyte combined with the ESP Explorer on the double track. On a couple of the mid-tempo to more slow songs he used a Les Paul.

A few songs have kind of a 'Black Album' vibe. Was that a conscious decision?

I don't think it was, but when we were putting songs together, it's almost subconscious to want all these different styles. You want to have some fast-ripping, thrashy songs, and some mid-tempo *Creeping Death* thing that's not super fast but it's not slow grooving 'Black Album' either. Then you want to have a *Sad But True* – that's the classic reference in from my head anyways for Metallica being slow but heavy. We didn't write songs to fit any of those categories as much as we had a bunch of ideas, like, 'We've got four or five big, heavy, slow riffs, and there's one no one's that excited about but everyone loves these others. Maybe we should work on these.'

Do you use classic Metallica tracks as references for writing or arrangements?

I guess for arrangements. On the song *Too Far Gone*, there was a section that when we first started working on it we would call the 'Leper' section because something about it reminded James of *Leper Messiah* [from *Master Of Puppets*]. We have those kinds of references, a language instead of calling everything 'verse', 'chorus' or 'bridge'. It's not just Metallica references, either. There are definitely songs with 'the Sabbath riff'. It's not a Sabbath riff, but when they're playing it, this is like what I remember Black Sabbath being like when I was 13.

THE H-TEAM

Right: Messrs Hetfield and Hammett.

Parts of *Inamorata* have a real Sabbath vibe.

Yeah, I think *Inamorata* is in C# or some very bizarre key. It was a riff from the tuning room when they were warming up before a show. I don't know why James was in C# when he was coming up with it. When we started working on it we said: 'This is a weird key. Maybe should try this in A or in E?' But for some reason that's just not as cool. You'd think, 'Let's put it lower, it'll sound even heavier.' But it was the opposite. When we tried it in more common keys, everyone was like, 'Now I don't like it so much!' So we embraced that challenge of writing a heavy song in C#. You don't really have a lot of open strings as an option in that key, so it was to come up with some ideas that we may not have otherwise come up with.

What direction did you give Kirk on his soloing?

I think it's well-known that Lars likes to be involved in solos, and they work together in a unique way. I'm sort of a third partner in that. Kirk comes in improvising most of the stuff, but when we're recording or rehearsing the songs, every now and then something that would go by that someone would say, 'Hey, could you mark that for later?' So when it came time to actually record solos we always had that stuff ready to go. A lot of the songs had a bunch of things that we thought were cool as a springboard, although they were improvised initially. We would listen back to all these and start being like, 'Oh that that's a cool place to go there, that's a good entrance, that's a great ending.' So he improvised to get the feel and ideas, but then we would have a plan.

This feels like the most cohesive Metallica album for a long time. How did you achieve that?

We talked about making it a collaborative effort, more than the last couple of records. [We wanted] all four guys to be more involved, to act together at the same time as opposed to working on it separately. That's a goal we set and one I feel confident we hit. We had the guys in the same room as much as possible when we were writing and tracking this record, and everyone's getting their two cents in. It's a better record because of it.



"WE HAD THE GUYS IN THE
SAME ROOM WHEN WE WERE
WRITING AND TRACKING"
GREG FIDELMAN

Words Jenna Scaramanga Photo Tim Saccenti

“IT JUST PUNCHES YOU IN THE FACE!”

A deep dive into Metallica's *72 Seasons* with **Kirk Hammett** and **Robert Trujillo**. Fast stuff, bouncy stuff, thrashing riffs, evil tones, power grooves and 'total noise' solos included!





01 72 SEASONS

Blasting out of the gate, the album's title track is a statement of intent, proving that Metallica are still capable of impressive ferocity. The double-time blasts feel like 320bpm, and Kirk cleverly highlights accents from the main riff with a lead line packed with doublestops. The wah-drenched solo is packed with Hammett trademarks and comes out into a melodic lead guitar hook.

Kirk Hammett: It has all the elements – fast stuff, bouncy stuff, [a] super strong melody. It's designed to just suck you into the album. We all agree that the middle part of *72 Seasons* is one of the most difficult Metallica riffs we have ever played. It's not the choice of notes or how the notes are played; it's all in the timing and the phrasing. You have to use your head; you can't just punt it. It shifts and it has weird counts.

Robert Trujillo: *72 Seasons* has all the perfect ingredients of an opening track on a Metallica album. I love when it gets chuggy and falls into half-time. It strips down to just the guitar and the hi-hat, but the energy is still pulsing through with the guitar double-picking. Then we all come back in and it blasts into the lead section, like 'Hey Kirk, come on in – let's party!'

02 SHADOWS FOLLOW

There's a distinctly old-school Metallica vibe in *Shadows Follow*, with a riff that emphasises that most metal of intervals, the diminished 5th. Kirk's doublestop licks in the solo speak of the Angus Young influence he tells us about, and he also performs some classic pull-offs onto open strings, another early AC/DC favourite. There is also an echo of *Battery*, the opening song from Metallica's classic 1986 album *Master Of Puppets*.

Kirk: *Shadows Follow* falls in line with the second Metallica song on every album: usually mid-paced, super rhythmic and has a real driving quality to it. Someone said, 'Hey, why don't we come up with a *Battery* type of rhythm solo?' So that's what you hear right before the solo...

Robert: This does speak evil! This song has a lot of everything, but it definitely registers on the 'evil tone', the 5th. It just has a lot of personality in that evil range. The accents play a role in that, and there are a lot of variations, too. I like how there's a descending sequence.

03 SCREAMING SUICIDE

Metallica slow things down in the intro of this 200bpm, half-time shot of adrenalin. The riff is in parallel 4ths, which makes it come on like a turbocharged Deep Purple. This is the first of many tracks to feature a memorable octave unison line between the guitars towards the end.

Kirk: I just love this song, because right off the top I can just vomit out wacky wah pedal melodies. That wah pedal jumps and grabs you by the throat! The song really is a tribute to the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal that we still bow to even to this day. We use the parallel 4ths a lot because it's a dark sound without being too minor.

Robert: This track has an evil slide in it. I love those rakes and accents. It's that classic Hetfield thrashing of the strings, and it's something that you feel. James and I will double up on those so we're both hitting the strings as hard as we can but muting it so it becomes a percussive effect. It's just energy.

04 SLEEPWALK MY LIFE AWAY

This is the first of a few songs that remind us of the band's self-titled album from 1991 – known to all as 'The Black Album'. The four-on-the-floor intro and Trujillo's bass riff, together with some excellent pickslides, build excitement for another riff that leans hard on the 5th. The wah-fuelled solo sees Kirk creating hooks with repeated rhythmic ideas, and the band sounds thunderous as they exit the solo into a half-time section.

Robert: I could see the comparison with *Enter Sandman*. It's got that swagger and it's not too fast. There's a feeling of simplicity but the pulse takes you in a certain direction. It's a power groove. Before you even get to the riff you've got that scratch on the bass that sends this thing off. It's kinda simple but I'm proud of it.

Kirk: There's a lumbering feel to it. Rob and I love this riff. It sounds like Cheech and Chong in the lowrider cruising down Hollywood Boulevard, smoking joints!

Robert: In the descending part of the intro, James is covering that and I'm just on root notes and stabs on the descend. Then all of a sudden it just punches you in the face with that riff.

05 YOU MUST BURN

This is a standout track. A slow, stomping beast that reminds us of *Sad But True* and the heavy parts of *The Unforgiven*. Heavy, heavy stuff.

Kirk: My favourite song on the whole album – and I didn't write any of it! That Sabbath-y middle riff that James wrote is epic. And I love the guitar solo. I can't remember playing any of these guitar solos to be honest, so it's amusing to hear them again! I get to get pick and choose what parts I want to play live and what parts I want to change, and that's beautiful.

Robert: I have so much love for this song. It resonates with me almost like an old horror movie, like *Nosferatu*. It's really got swagger, like Clint Eastwood or something. The mid section, James and I came up with this on the road and there was originally a bass break. I was straight out pulling from some of the classic Ozzy songs like *Believer* [from Osbourne's 1981 album *Diary Of A Madman*]. And there are backing vocals by Trujillo on this one!

06 LUX AETERNA

You've heard this already, but it sounds even more frenetic coming after the plodding *You Must Burn*. Kirk's whammy bar abuse riled his haters, but we're with him – the noise solo works!

Robert: I love the intro. I love that the snare is in sync with our descending guitars. It's like a beatdown. You're getting pulverised, and there's no time for a buildup – it's just in! For me this one's an arm burner. Although I'm just pulsing on the A note, it's a challenge, man. You start to run out of gas. When we first rehearsed it, I didn't get a chance to warm up, so I tried to sneak a pick in there, thinking that our producer Greg Fidelman wouldn't notice. He immediately gets on the mic, 'Robert! Are you playing this song with a pick?!'

Kirk: When I step up to solo, I'll listen to the song and say, 'This one needs a total noise solo', or 'This needs a really melodic solo'. *Lux Aeterna* was f*cking pedal to the metal, total adrenaline! Trying to play a tricky melody when the band's going all out – is that really appropriate? If I play a total noise solo, that's gonna fit beautifully over what's happening because what's happening is already chaotic. So I just went in there and did my Judas Priest and KK Downing imitation. I love the chromatic thing that goes completely down because no one does that!

A full-page photograph of Kirk Hammett, the lead guitarist of Metallica. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a black leather jacket with a white fur collar and a black t-shirt. He has long, wavy, greyish-brown hair and is making a pained or intense facial expression, with his teeth bared. He is holding a black electric guitar with a white pickguard. The guitar has two humbucker pickups, both with "KHA" and "EMG" logos. The headstock of the guitar is visible at the top right, with "ESP" and "KHA" logos. The background is a solid light blue.

"THE MIDDLE PART OF
72 SEASONS IS ONE OF THE
MOST DIFFICULT METALLICA
RIFFS WE'VE EVER PLAYED"

KIRK HAMMETT



"SCREAMING SUICIDE HAS
THAT CLASSIC HETFIELD
THRASHING OF THE STRINGS"

ROBERT TRUJILLO



07 CROWN OF BARBED WIRE

The opening powerchords have the 5th in the bass, what Trujillo calls the “tension chords”, for an extra sinister crunch. A groovy, single-note riff is, as Kirk says, unusual for Metallica, but sounds closer to their 90s output than anything before or since. Kirk’s solo incorporates a Chuck Berry/Angus Young rock ‘n’ roll repeating lick, and after the solo he doubles the main riff in a higher octave.

Kirk: We haven’t really ever had a riff or part that has ever sounded like this. It was on a tape that I made and like Lars just loved it. I was like, ‘Really?’ James said, ‘I would have never thought of using that.’ But Lars just went with it and said, ‘This riff has something you guys aren’t hearing.’ Then we came up with this song and, you know, he was right. I think that song will become a deep cut that eventually people will start asking us to play live.

Robert: The tension chords that James plays are kind of the setup to this. I’m playing a repetitive hammer-on riff, and the tension chords are the strength in that issue. Then all of a sudden it’s just a pulse. The bass is carrying it through with a nice power groove.

08 CHASING LIGHT

One of many songs to switch intelligently between half-time and double-time, this opens at 90bpm but soon shifts to feeling like 180. Kirk plays a lick in the solo that is not unlike Jimmy Page’s repeating lick midway through his solo in *Stairway To Heaven*. The rhythm is not the same as Page’s, but it displaces on each repeat. A similar idea shows up in *Too Far Gone*.

Kirk: That main riff is super cool. It’s a different kind of riff for us in terms of hand-positioning. James and I were looking at it one day and he said, ‘It’s weird, it’s like one riff fits inside the other riff.’ It’s like a two-tier riff. Tons of energy. It has these rhythmic shifts that I just love doing, lots of stop-starts and rhythms that make us who we are, basically. That song is just filled with them.

Robert: The thing with this song to me is the groove. It’s pretty much a song centred around the feel. James’s vocal approach is really cool. There’s a soulfulness to it, almost.

09 IF DARKNESS HAD A SON

This has an insistent and menacing reverse-gallop groove. Kirk’s solo draws on his Ritchie Blackmore influence. There’s a string bend that he repicks while gradually releasing the bend, and some pull-offs to the open string in a slightly neo-classical style.

Kirk: I gotta say, man, that riff is so weird to me. It’s a riff that sounds like a guitar solo lick, but when you play it lower, all of a sudden it goes from a guitar lick to a really cool riff. This song also has a technique that we’ve been doing for the last few albums, which is taking melodies and turning them into chord progressions. When James sings the title, the riff is really a melody, with those slides, but we’re playing it on chords. We started doing it on [2008 album] *Death Magnetic* and it’s really cool. James likes it because he can do counter-melodies and they just make the song melodically hookier.

Robert: You can sing the riff in that Cheech and Chong style! It has a certain nastiness to it. I really believe that if we play it live, you’re gonna get the crowd singing the riff – that happens sometimes, especially in South America.

10 TOO FAR GONE

With a classic metal chord progression moving from E5 to C5 and a melodic chorus, this reminded us of early-80s metal. The rhythm guitar parts make heavy use of triplets, which at this high tempo is a different feel from any of the other tracks.

Robert: This riff has been around for a while and I'm so happy to see it made its way onto this record. It has a New Wave Of British Heavy Metal personality. It's just a driving tune: old-school feel, banging guitar solo, banging riff. I like when a song takes you on a ride. It's got that forward momentum.

Kirk: We all love playing this song. It has all the elements that make a really pleasurable song: the guitar parts are really fun, the arrangement's really great, and it's really straightforward. This is another song where we turned melodies into chord progressions. There's a harmony solo that James and I do.

11 ROOM OF MIRRORS

Some of the outro harmony guitars remind us of the approach Metallica took on their cover of *Whiskey In The Jar*, the traditional Irish folk song popularised by Thin Lizzy. As the melody repeats, the interval of the harmony changes for some nice development.

Robert: There's a bit of that punk feel. There's a couple things here that are challenging, at least for bass, because you're going from straight pump-pump style and all of a sudden you're doubling it. It's a challenge for a finger player. It's definitely a song that moves, but some of the melodic and the guitar layers have that classic Metallica statement. Hopefully we'll play this one live.

Kirk: Again, that song is New Wave of British Heavy Metal to the max. For the repeating lick

in the solo, I showed up at the studio one day, and Greg said, 'You played this lick the other day. Let's build a solo off that.' So that's what happened! It was a kind of Ritchie Blackmore approach, where he takes a melody and just expands on it.

12 INAMORATA

Metallica's longest-ever song is likened by Kirk to *Orion* from *Master Of Puppets* and *To Live Is To Die* from 1988 album *...And Justice For All*. There is an undeniable Black Sabbath feel to *Inamorata*, although the harmonised guitars are a nod to Iron Maiden and Thin Lizzy. Hetfield's epic melody is rhythmically intricate and makes for a strong finish. Best Metallica album this century? We think so.

Robert: The ultimate closing statement to an album. I call it the shortest 11-minute song! It feels like it's at least half that time because it takes you on a journey. It's sludgy, but I feel like I'm in a convertible car driving up the coast. It strips down to this minimal moment where it's just the bass, and I'm pulling from Geezer Butler. James had a vision for really stripping it down to rawness. Every note I played on this, especially in the breakdown, I was closing my eyes and just feeling it. I almost felt like I was floating in the bending of the notes, and then all of a sudden it just releases itself into these beautiful layers of guitar for this melodic statement that takes you on the journey out. You can feel the interplay when we start coming out of the bass break. There's this moment where we're almost dancing together between the instruments.

Kirk: One day James said, 'You know, this song needs an extended harmony solo', and he literally sat down and came up with the entire solo one afternoon. I went in and learned the harmony to it and that was it. It is a little bit of a tribute to songs like *Orion* and *To Live Is To Die*. When we were coming up with this song I thought, 'Is this one even gonna make it on the album?' But it became a f*cking mammoth!

"TRYING TO PLAY A TRICKY MELODY WHEN THE BAND'S GOING ALL OUT-IS THAT REALLY APPROPRIATE?"
KIRK HAMMETT



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Guitars & backing Charlie Griffiths Photo Tim Saccenti

JUST RIFFS FOR ALL!

Dial in the distortion and warm up your strumming arm for the onslaught of our Metallica-style lessons



James Hetfield and Kirk Hammett have been kicking heavy metal ass for 40 years. In 1983 it was the band's mission statement, with their debut album originally planned to be titled *Metal Up Your Ass* until *Kill 'Em All* eventually stuck. And if their debut set the scene for the burgeoning thrash metal genre, their next three albums defined it until 1991, when their

self-titled 'Black Album' sent the band to the stratosphere, hitting number 1 worldwide.

Like most guitar bands who reach their fifth decade, Metallica's back catalogue offers a wealth of riches for any six-string slinger on a mission to play better. The Phrygian and Aeolian modes are core harmonic essentials, with powerchords and downpicking techniques appearing in almost every song the band have ever recorded. But emulating their style is far

from simple. Dual-harmony guitar lines are often more complex than mere 3rd- and 4th-interval affairs, and syncopated riffs at fearsome tempos provide serious technical workouts.

For now, plug in, crank up the gain and let's look at Hetfield and Hammett's most important techniques, as employed from their '83 debut right up to this year's *72 Seasons*. Wah is optional. Downpicking is essential!

1 POWERCHORDS AND GALLOPS

bit.ly/tg370audio

♩ = 160

N.C. A⁵ G⁵ A⁵ B^{b5} A⁵ G⁵ N.C. G⁵ N.C. F^{#5} N.C. A⁵ G⁵ A⁵ B^{b5} A⁵ G⁵ N.C. E⁵ Play 4 times

TAB: 0-0-0-0 7-5 7-5 8-6 7-5 3-0 0-0-0-0 5-0-0-0 0-0-0-0 2-0-0-0 0-0-0-0 7-5 7-5 8-6 7-5 3-0 0-0-0-0 0-0-0-0 0-0-0-0 9-7

We're taking inspiration from 1984's *Fight Fire With Fire* and the title track from the band's latest release *72 Seasons* here. Use alternate picking and palm-muting to play the open sixth string, but lift your palm away from the strings for the powerchords. Strum these with downstrokes and use slides to shift between them where indicated.

2 SLOW STOMPING SYNCOPATION

bit.ly/tg370audio

♩ = 85

N.C. E⁵ N.C. E⁵ Play 4 times

TAB: 5-0 7-0 6-0 2-0 2-0 x x x 3-0 2-0 2-0 2-0 2-0

Here we're showcasing the pull-off technique of *Sad But True* and the stomping syncopation of this year's *You Must Burn*. In bar 1, your aim is to sound only one note at a time, so make sure to mute each open string after you've played it. For bar 2, it's all about space. The syncopation comes from hitting those powerchords on the offbeat while staying dead silent in the gaps.

3 HIT THE POWERCHORDS

bit.ly/tg370audio

♩ = 200

E⁵/B F[♯]/C[♯] N.C. B⁵/F[♯] C[♯]/G B⁵/F[♯] A⁵/E B⁵/F[♯] E⁵/B F[♯]/C[♯] N.C. A⁵/E B⁵/F[♯] A⁵/E F[♯]/C[♯] E⁵/B

Play 4 times

PM - - - - ! PM - - - - !

TAB

2 4 2 4 4 (5) (4) 2 4 4 2 4 2 4 2 4 2

This riff demonstrates the kind of two-note powerchord shapes on display in tracks such as *Hit The Lights*, albeit in F# minor here. Play the doublestop shapes with a first finger barre followed by your third and fourth fingers together. Turn your hand from the wrist for the semitone bend and release.

4 BATTERY STYLE GALLOP

bit.ly/tg370audio

Use tight palm-muted picking to play the *Battery*-style galloping rhythm on the sixth string here. This is played with a combination of downpicking for the eighth notes and alternate picking for the faster 16ths. Use the tip of the pick to glide across the string for a consistent tone, and don't pick too hard.

5 JUSTICE STYLE BLUES SCALE SOLOING

bit.ly/tg370audio

♩ = 170

Em

Play 4 times

TAB

3 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 5 6 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 6 0 0 0 5 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 3 0 0 0 5 0 0 0 6 0 0 0 10 7 10 7 10 7 10 7 10

cont. sim.

Kirk is a fan of soloing with the blues scale - and we're channelling ...*And Justice For All* along with new track *Shadows Follow* here in a scalic line played along the first string. For our repeating four-note phrase, use a downstroke followed by a pull-off, then pick 'down-up'. Pull off with your first finger as you move up and down the neck.

6 CLASSIC HAMMETT REPEATING LICK

bit.ly/tg370audio

[illegible]

This repeating lick is a staple Hammett phrasing idea, appearing in one form in *Enter Sandman* and being reinvented recently in *Too Far Gone*. Play the repeating lick with a third-finger bend/release, pull off to your first finger, then finish with your third finger on the fourth string. This repeat is three beats long, but when played against the 4/4 drumbeat an interesting displacement happens.

bit.ly/tq370audio

Harmony guitar parts have featured heavily in Metallica's recorded output, from 1984's *Fade To Black*, to 2016's *Atlas Rise* and new album track *Inamorata*. Our lick here is the higher part of a two-guitar harmony in E minor (E# F# G A B C D). Listen to the guitar on the backing track to match the timing and intensity so the guitars blend as one.

bit.ly/tg370audio

Recent single *If Darkness Had A Son* is our inspiration here as we home in on some repeating three-note phrases in bar 3. Use your third, second and first fingers respectively, picking each 15th fret G note before pulling off to the 14th (F#) and 12th frets (E). Take care with the rhythm. Unusually, nine notes cover half a bar here.

bit.ly/tg370audio

This riff is based on Hefffield's legendary downpicking technique which he uses in eighth-note riffs around the 200bpm mark in *Master Of Puppets* and *Blackened*. Use your wrist to bounce the pick off of the string and keep your arm relaxed so as to maintain the movement for long periods. Your arm may feel more relaxed when straighter, so try playing in a standing position with your guitar slung low.

bit.ly/tg370audio

Kirk's soloing style draws heavily on pentatonics – and our lick here is the kind you'll hear in everything from *Hit The Lights* to *Room Of Mirrors*. It's a simple pull-off idea played on the two highest strings. Try adapting our lick through any two-note-per-string E minor pentatonic scale shape.

RIFF LESSONS

BECOME A MASTER OF PICKING WITH TG'S VIDEO LESSONS ON THREE AWESOME METALLICA RIFFS

CREEPING DEATH



This song is a prime example of the down-picking prowess on show in Metallica's back catalogue. The section we are focusing on outlines an E5 powerchord by alternating between the open sixth-string root note and the 5th/octave of the root on the fourth and fifth strings. To get the rhythmic definition and shape you'll need to palm-mute the notes on the sixth string and leave the notes on the fourth and fifth strings unmuted. Each phrase concludes with a single-note figure with picked notes played on the 2nd and 3rd frets of the fifth string. This is concluded by another picked note at the 2nd fret, a fast hammer-on to the 3rd fret, and pull-offs to the 2nd fret and open fifth string. Try to use minimal finger pressure as you move through the hammer-on/pull-off sequence, as this will help you to maintain the required pace. After eight cycles of the riff, the phrase changes to two palm-muted open sixth strings, followed by an unmuted G5 powerchord. This sequence is played twice before playing two more palm-muted open sixth strings and six palm-muted F# notes on the 2nd fret of the sixth string. To get the sound, use a decent amount of gain, a bridge position humbucker, and play every picked note with a downstroke.

Appears at: 0:19-0:56

Tempo: 200bpm

Key/scale: E minor

Main techniques: Down-picking, hammer-ons, pull-offs, powerchords, palm-muting

TG Tip: To get sufficient speed with your down-picking, angle your pick by bending the joint in the middle of your thumb, so it points upwards, allowing it to glide through the strings with less resistance.

SEEK AND DESTROY



Another Metallica classic here, and a song that'll see you shifting between an A minor and E minor tonal centre. The intro is based around A minor but leans on the ♭5th (E_b) and ♭2nd (B_b) for extra tension. The riff begins with two palm-muted A notes on the open 5th string. From here, you need to place your first finger on the 7th fret of the third string, strike the note then immediately hammer on the 8th fret with your second finger. This creates a grace note, from the D, before hearing the main E_b note at the 8th fret. To complete the phrase, re-pick the D note, at the 7th fret and let it sustain. Next, the sequence is repeated with a single palm-muted A note on the open fifth string, and the grace note, hammer-on, picked note figure moved down to the 7th and 8th frets of the fourth string. The riff concludes with a palm-muted A note on the open fifth string, followed by ascending two-note sequences on the 8th and 7th frets of the fifth string, 5th fret of the fourth string to the 7th fret of the fifth string, and 5th fret of the third string to the 7th fret of the fourth string. The riff repeats eight times before a run descending down an E blues scale. Dial in a moderate amount of gain, select your bridge pickup, and use downstrokes for every picked note.

Appears at: 0:00-0:29

Tempo: 140bpm

Key/scale: A minor/E minor

Main techniques: Grace notes, hammer-ons, down picking, selective palm muting

TG Tip: Palm-mute every note that lands on the fifth string but leave the other strings unmuted.

IF DARKNESS HAD A SON



One of Hetfield and co's most recent tracks, *Darkness...* is centred around the E Phrygian mode but leans on other modes for further mood changes. The riff we're focussing on uses the ♭5th (B_b), rather than the natural 5th (B), bringing the intensity and drama of the Locrian mode. The opening notes move between the 12th and 13th fret of the fifth string, by means of a downstroke and hammer-on. Next, you'll move over to the 12th fret of the fourth string, followed by a string hop over to the 13th fret of the sixth string. Here, you'll need to keep the idle strings from ringing, by connecting the under side and tip of your first finger (fretting hand) against the neighbouring strings. The phrase finishes with E notes on the 12th fret of the sixth string, followed by a palm-muted, chugging sequence on the open sixth string. To contrast the melodic quality of the fretted notes, the open sixth-string notes are palm muted and introduce a 16th-note down-up-down picking sequence. This phrase reinforces the tonal centre of the riff and makes for some heavy, mid-tempo, aggression.

Appears at: 0:40-0:55

Tempo: 124bpm

Key/scale: E Phrygian/E Locrian

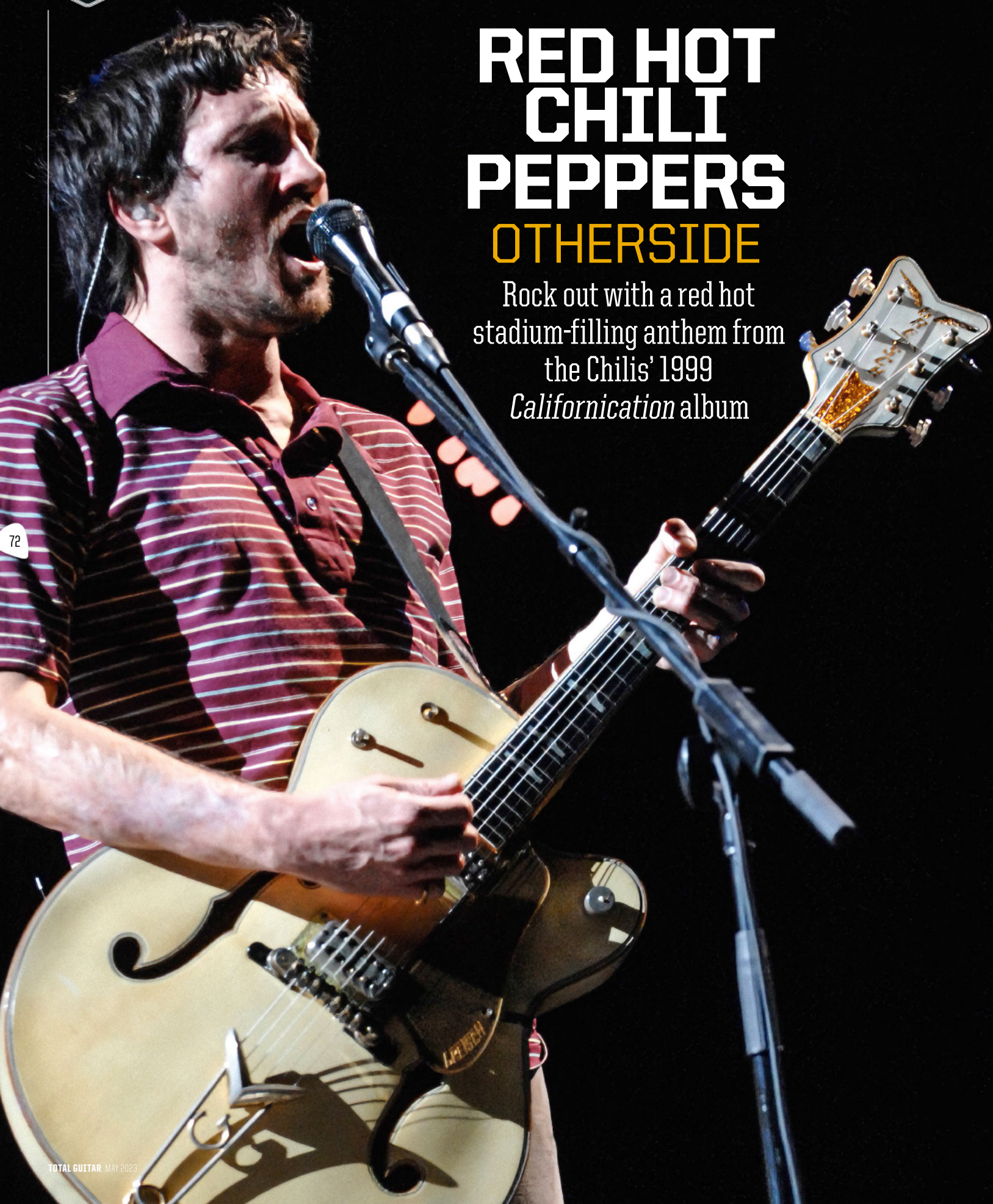
Main techniques: Hammer-ons, down-picking, palm muted 16th-note chugging

TG Tip: When playing the 16th-note chugging sequence, accent the downstrokes that land on the beat to add power while creating sonic landmarks that lock in with the groove.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

OTHERSIDE

Rock out with a red hot
stadium-filling anthem from
the Chilis' 1999
Californication album

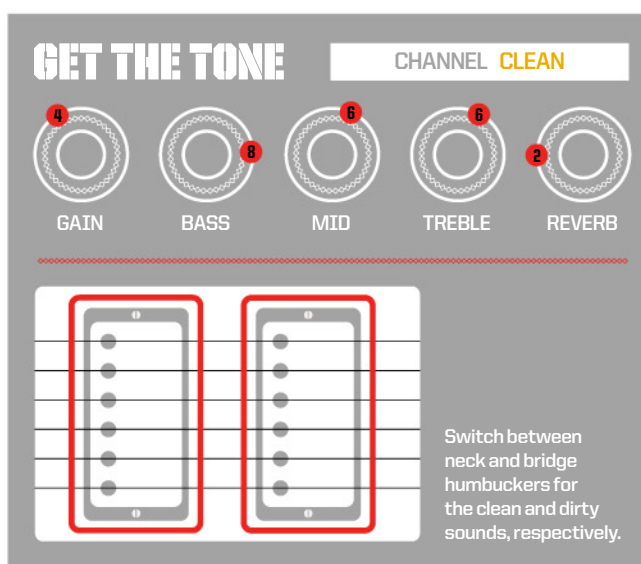


This month we're looking at the RHCP anthem *Otherside*, one of the band's most successful singles. The track was recorded live in the studio with no click track so the original tempo ranges from 123 to 127bpm. However, to keep things even we've chosen a steady 124bpm for our audio jam track.

In terms of harmony, *Otherside* is in the key of A minor, with the main guitar riffs being built out of the notes of this scale. Only two actual chords are played – G and A – with the latter marking a brief foray into A major and brightening up the end of the verses. Still, Frusciante's guitar lines harmonise with Flea's bassline, implying chords as the song progresses. We've shown chord names over the tab to help you navigate our full transcription.

SOUND ADVICE

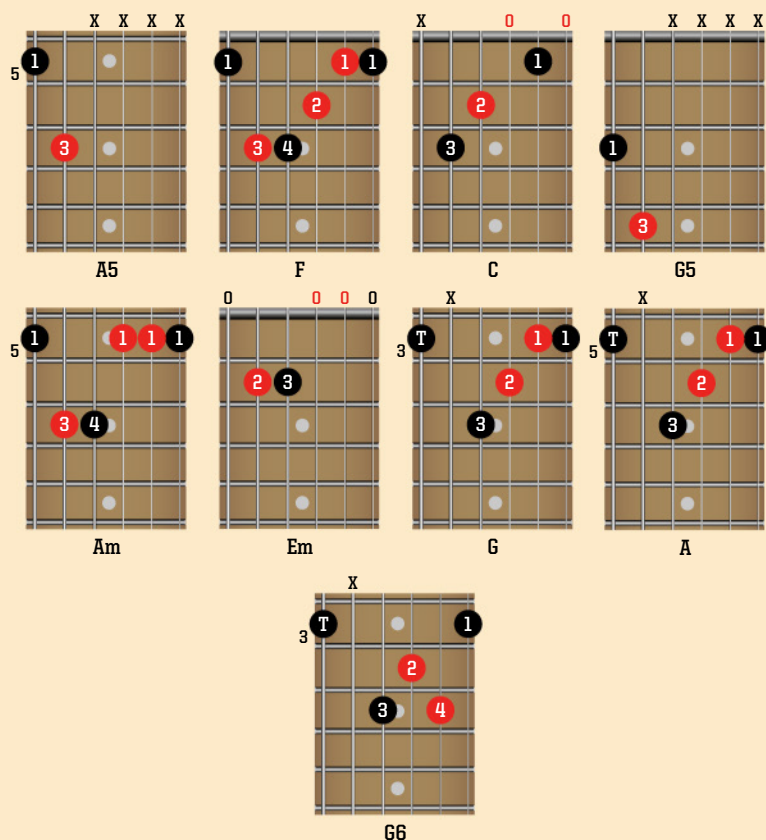
Everything you need to know before playing 'Otherside'



To play *Otherside* you'll need two sounds ready to go. The first is a punchy clean tone with a neck humbucker selected. John often turns to his hollowbody Gretsch White Falcon in live performances, employing minimal effects and using the old school approach of plugging straight into a cranked amp. If you're playing at neighbour-friendly levels, a little compression can help spiky clean tones sustain. The second tone you'll need is a higher gain sound for the lead parts – and this will sound most authentic with a bridge pickup selected and some fuzz distortion added.

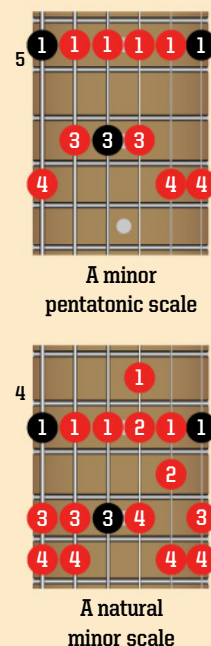
CHORDS

All of the chords in *Otherside* are from the key of A minor. In the guitar part, the only *actual* chords played are the G and A chords at the end of the verses. However, the rest of the chords are implied by the way the guitar riff harmonises with the bassline. We've provided some tried and tested chord boxes here should you wish to jam along with a strummed part.



SCALES

You can solo over any section of the song fairly safely using the A minor pentatonic scale should you wish. The main vocal melody uses notes from the A natural minor scale (A B C D E F G), so for an extra challenge you could try playing a version of the vocal melody on the guitar by ear using this scale. The end lead guitar sections use ringing first and second strings (E and B) and this provides a bit of extra body to the sound.



RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

OTHERSIDE



OTHERSIDE
Words and Music by Anthony Kiedis, Flea,
John Frusciante and Chad Smith
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RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Intro

bit.ly/tg370audio

♩=124

A⁵ F C G⁵

TAB 7 7 7 7 9 7 10 7 5 5 5

The intro features Frusciante's single-note riff. It's deceptively tricky to play with a consistent feel, so it's well worth practising slowly to get all the transitions dialed in. To help you lock in with the bass guitar at the start we've included a hi-hat rhythm.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Chorus 1

bit.ly/tg370audio

A⁵ F C G⁵

0:08

TAB 7 7 7 7 9 7 10 7 7 7 7 5 5 5

1 5

A⁵ F C G

TAB 7 7 7 7 12 12 12 14 14 14 14 14 14

9

Chorus 1 follows the same riff as the intro, but watch out in bar 10 where you'll encounter a shift up to 12th position. If you can land on the 12th fret with your first finger you'll be in prime position to play the 14th-fret notes with your third finger.



FULL TRACK + BACKING (bit.ly/tg370audio)
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!

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS / OTHERSIDE

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Verse 1

bit.ly/tg370audio

Am Em Am Em

0:33

8 12 15 8 12 15

5 5 5 5 5 12 12 12 5 5 5 5 12 12 12

Am Em G A

8 12 15 3 3 3 3 5 5 6 7 5

5 5 5 5 5 12 12 12 3 5 5 6 7 5

This section is tricky to play consistently due to the skips between the first and sixth strings. You'll need to pick accurately, of course, but make sure also to aim or clean fretting so that the right notes ring out over each other.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Verse 2

bit.ly/tg370audio

Am Em Am

0:51

8 12 15 8

5 5 5 5 5 12 12 12 5 5 5 5 5

Em Am Em

12 15 8 12 15

12 12 12 5 5 5 5 5 12 12 12

G A G A

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

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

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Verse 2 (cont'd)

bit.ly/tg370audio

You'll be starting out the same way as you did in verse 1, but note the extended ending on the G and A barre chords here. Frusciante favours the Jimi Hendrix fingering, with the fretting hand thumb curled over the top of the neck to fret the sixth string.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Chorus 2

bit.ly/tg370audio

Though the main pattern of the riffs from chorus 1 is repeated, Frusciante adds in some variations here. The main melody is embellished and the last two bars feature an ascending part that helps transition nicely into verse 3.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Verse 3

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RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Verse 3 (cont'd)

bit.ly/tg370audio

Verse 3 (cont'd) musical notation and guitar tabs. The notation shows a guitar melody in treble clef with chords Em, Am, and Em. The guitar tabs are provided below the melody, showing fret numbers (12, 15, 8, 12, 15) and a bass line in bass clef with chords G and A, and a corresponding guitar tablature (3, 3, 4, 5, 7, 3, 5, 5, 6, 7, 5, 5).

Verse 3 is much the same as previous verses. However, there is an extra bar of drums added to the end, plus a couple of 16th notes that act as a flourish into verse 4.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Verse 4

bit.ly/tg370audio

Verse 4 musical notation and guitar tabs. The notation shows a guitar melody in treble clef with chords Am, Em, and Am. The guitar tabs are provided below the melody, showing fret numbers (8, 12, 15, 8) and a bass line in bass clef with chords Em, Am, and Em, and a corresponding guitar tablature (12, 15, 8, 12, 15). The third system shows a bass line in bass clef with chords G and A, and a corresponding guitar tablature (3, 3, 4, 5, 7, 3, 5, 5, 6, 7, 5, 5).

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Verse 4 (cont'd)

bit.ly/tg370audio

11

If you've mastered verses 1 to 3, this section should be easy as there are no surprises. Ready yourself for the change that follows in chorus 3.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Chorus 3

bit.ly/tg370audio

2:28

1

5

9

Here, the melody from chorus 2 is played in octaves, beefing up the sound as the song progresses. To keep the delivery clean, make sure your fret-hand muting is sound. This can be achieved by lightly resting your fingers on the strings behind where the fretting is occurring.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Bridge

bit.ly/tg370audio

2:51

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Bridge (cont'd)

bit.ly/tg370audio

5

9

13

For the funky breakdown section, switch over to a bridge pickup and kick in some overdrive. The part here is relatively easy to play, but the ringing open strings are crucial. Simple downstrokes will provide the most consistency.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Solo

bit.ly/tg370audio

3:21

Here the first string is left to ring out while various notes from the A natural minor scale (A B C D E F G) are played on the second string. This is a top trick for filling out the sound when there is only and drums and bass guitar backing.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS OTHERSIDE Chorus 4

bit.ly/tg370audio

1

4

G⁶ A⁵ F

TAB

7

C G⁶ A⁵

TAB

10

F C G⁶ A⁵

TAB

14

F C G⁶ Am

TAB

18

Fmaj⁷ C G A⁵

TAB

The theme of the solo continues here with an open first string ringing out against the fretted second string. There's room for improvisation here as the song builds to its conclusion. Just be ready for a slight slow down in the last two bars.

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OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

PIXIES

WHERE IS MY MIND?

Learn the 80s alt-rock anthem that influenced a new generation of world-famous rock acts

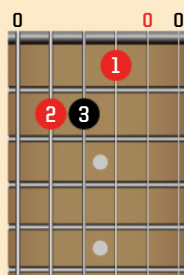
The Pixies never had a Top 10 single or a No 1 album, but the cult Boston four-piece came to define the sound of alternative rock in the late 80s and beyond. They caught the ear of some of rock's most established figures and galvanised the next generation's leading acts such as Nirvana. More importantly, their debut full-length LP *Surfer Rosa* included the angular, catchy number we're looking at here, *Where Is My Mind?*. Recorded in 1987 at Q Division Studios in Boston, Black Francis left

his trusty Japanese Fender Telecaster in its case, opting to go acoustic. The electric comes from the Pixies' avant-garde guitarist Joey Santiago, who played his trademark 70s re-issue Les Paul Goldtop. For strummers, it's largely a barre chord-based affair, so, though it's a relatively straightforward tune, your fret hand does get a bit of a workout. Of course, if you struggle with the constant barring you could play the A and Am chords in open position to give your hand a brief rest.

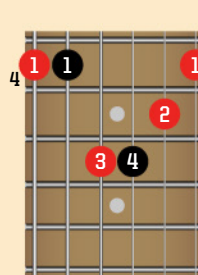


CHORDS

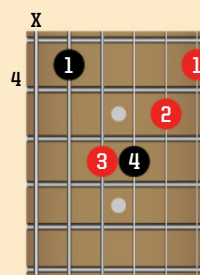
The chords shown here are those played by Black Francis on his acoustic, though Santiago uses the same voicings in the choruses. With the exception of the open E, the remaining shapes are barre chords. Francis plays a C#m/G# (a C#m chord with an added G# note below the C# root), but you may prefer to play a more straightforward C#m. We've shown both shapes here and notated C#m in our song sheet for simplicity.



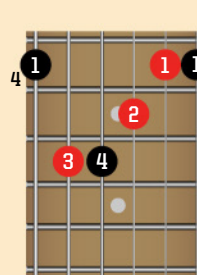
E



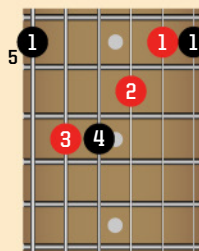
C#m/G#



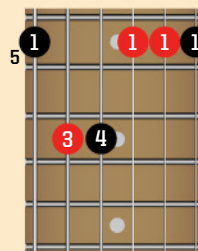
C#m



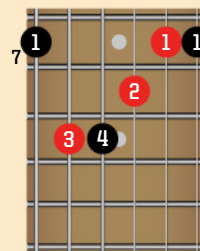
G#



A



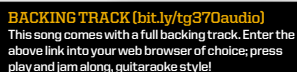
Am



B

WHERE IS MY MIND?

Words and Music by Frank Black
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Where Is My Mind?

E / C#m / G# / A x4

E
With your feet on the air
C#m G# A

E C#m G# A

Try this trick and spin it, yeah

E C#m
Your head will collapse

But there's nothing in it

And you'll ask yourself

E C#m
Where is my mind?
G# A
Where is my mind?
E C#m G# A
Where is my mind?

E C#m G# A

E G# A
Wa-ay out in the water

See it swimming

E
I was swimming
C#m G# A
In the Caribbean
E C#m G#
Animals were hiding behind the rock
E C#m
Except the little fish
G#

Bump into me

Swear he's tryin' a talk to me

Repeat chorus

B / / / x3

Repeat chorus

E / C#m / G# / A

With your feet on the air

And your head on the ground

Try this trick and spin it, yeah

E / C#m / G# / A x3

E / C#m / G#

bit.ly/tq370audio

[illegible]

Use an upstroke for the opening offbeat chord in the pick-up bar, then employ a relaxed 16th-note alternate strumming motion throughout the section. Using your second, third and fourth fingers to fret the E chord enables you to maintain the same shape for the subsequent barre chords.

bit.ly/tg370audio

0:15 let ring throughout

E C#m/G# G# A Am A

TAB

5 4 5 4 5 4 5 4 4 4 4 4 5 0 5 4 5 0 5 0

Use alternate picking throughout this part. In bar 1, use your first finger to barre the first and second strings at the 4th fret and use your second finger for the 5th-fret E note. Simply lift your second finger off the neck to play the 4th fret D# in bar 2.

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!

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86



92



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Blackstar's amazing pedalboard amp gets expanded

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Jazz oddity

94 HARLEY BENTON TWOFACE

A no-nonsense, one-stop blues box



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SOME ISSUES



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START ME UP!

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

BEETRONICS SEABEE HARMOCHORUS

1 It's undoubtedly one of the most expensive modulation pedals we'll see this year, but it's also one of the most intriguing, introducing the concept of harmochorus pitch-shifting modulation. The Seabee has three modes dedicated to this, plus another three to the chorus. With 16 onboard presets and digital control over delay time, there's plenty to explore here and get warbly with. And it looks fantastic, too!

£409
www.beetronicsfx.com

FENDER X WRANGLER DENIM CASE

2 There is a place beyond triple denim that few dare to go; but here is your chance, and you can take your Tele or Strat with you. Fender's second collaborative collection with Wrangler also includes guitar straps, picks, and clothing, but this is undoubtedly the statement piece. Available in indigo or black, there's even a pocket for your plectrums on the outside and a pink paisley-lined accessories compartment inside.

£229
www.fender.com

POSITIVE GRID SPARK GO

3 Somehow PG has shrunk a fully-featured modelling amp with an eight-hour rechargeable battery down to the size of a compact pedal. And this five-watt wonder sounds much bigger than you'd expect; with four onboard presets and all the app and tone features of its bigger siblings. You can even stream music to listen and jam along to. Place it on its back for a more expansive omnidirectional sound, or upright for a direct response.

\$109 (special preorder price, \$149 full MSRP)
www.positivegrid.com

MOOSER CANDY FOOTSWITCH TOPPER

4 In the heat of the moment, little things can matter. And that's especially true when you're glancing down to switch on a pedal mid-song. Mooser's toppers fit over your switches and the assorted colours can give you a quick reference point, as well as often making your pedals easier to switch with your feet. But beware, it could lead you down a rabbit hole of coordinating your pedals to topper colours. Then you'll be doing it with patch cables...
£6.99 (for assorted colours 10-pack)
www.mooseraudio.com

CHIBSON CEASE & DESIST TOGGLE RING

5 Chibson's take on a 'poker chip' that pokes fun at guitar brand trademark battles is inspired here. "Show your friends and family that you are no longer ashamed of your less-than-authentic instrument! Feeling wild?," say the cheeky scoundrels. Turn your vintage instrument into an illegal copycat with the all-new Chibson Cease and Desist toggle ring. You might want to pick up an Insane Klon Posse t-shirt while you're there, too.

\$11
www.chibson.com



PRS SE DGT £979

Long-running PRS signature artist David Grissom finally gets his own SE guitar

David Grissom might not quite be a household name like John Mayer or Carlos Santana but he's very much a guitarist's guitarist. David has been a big part of the PRS family since, well, since the start of the company in 1985 when, as a hot-shot Austin, Texas-based guitarist, he traded in a 1959 Fender Esquire for a new-fangled PRS Standard in sea foam green. His hot blues-based style was soon informing Clash-favourite Joe Ely, then he became a part of John Mellencamp's band and toured and recorded with many, many artists from the Dixie Chicks to the Allman Brothers.

Along the way he 'invented' the first vintage-aimed PRS guitar, the McCarty Model, which, after he'd

McCarty Tobacco Burst, with a figured maple veneer over a solid maple cap and, yup, bird inlays.

So what's the deal? Originally the DGT was going to be called the McCarty II and it built on that model in numerous ways, not least the Grissom-recipe humbuckers, individual pickup volume controls, a unique neck shape, bigger jumbo frets and a vibrato. Today's SE chases down those specs, but, of course, it's not made in Maryland but in Indonesia by Cor-Tek. The thing is David Grissom is notoriously picky and told us "I said [to PRS] so long as I can pull the plug on it at any point if it's not up to snuff then I'm cool with giving it a shot."

While the basis of the SE DGT will be pretty familiar to PRS fans with its all-mahogany

“ CLOSE TO THE USA MODEL BUT A QUARTER OF THE PRICE ”

gigged it for some 15 years evolved into the DGT (David Grissom Tremolo) in 2007. He also applied his tone-tinkering knowhow to the PRS DG Custom 30 amplifier. Finally, after all these years, he gets his own signature SE model.

The SE DGT might not have broken the internet as the launch of John Mayer's Silver Sky did but PRS certainly believes it's an important guitar, releasing a trio of mini-docs outlining its development before its early-January launch. There are two versions: the Gold Top with moon inlays (this SE and the USA DGT are the only models in the entire line that can be ordered with these more demure inlays as opposed to the ever present bird) or in

construction and maple cap, there's a less dished 'shallow violin' carve to the SE's top compared to the USA model and the overall body depth measures 45.25mm, quite a bit less than the USA DGT's 52.2mm dimension. Of the two samples we hand our hands on, the Gold Top has a beautiful light weight of 7.72lbs, with the Burst version only slightly heavier at just over 8lbs.

The neck shape has its roots in PRS's early 'regular' profile; there's less taper so in higher positions the neck is slightly narrower than other current PRS shapes; the fretwire is the biggest PRS uses and the SE wire is marginally wider and fractionally lower than the USA guitar.

1 NECK, FINGERBOARD AND FRETTS

Replicating the USA DGT's neck profile proved quite a challenge for the SE team. David spec'd the SE shape from his own favourite 2010 DGT. Aside from the slightly narrower neck in higher positions, the jumbo frets mimic those used on the USA model which were originally Dunlop's 6100 gauge.

2 PICKUPS

Before the launch of the USA DGT in 2007, David spent over a year evaluating prototype pickups from Paul Reed Smith and other aftermarket brands before he found the recipe. The DGT 'S' pickups were designed in the US but made in Indonesia.

3 VIBRATO SYSTEM

The PRS unit used on the SE models is cast from steel whereas the USA version is machined from brass. This same SE vibrato is also used on the USA-made S2 and CE PRS guitars.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany back with maple top

NECK: Mahogany, glued-in

SCALE: 25" (635mm)

FINGERBOARD: Rosewood/10" radius

FRETS: 22, jumbo

PICKUPS: 2x PRS DGT 'S' humbuckers

CONTROLS: Bridge and neck pickup volumes, master tone (w/ coil-split pull switch), 3-way toggle pickup selector switch

HARDWARE: PRS-designed cast steel vibrato, PRS designed enclosed tuners - nickel-plated

FINISH: Gold Top w/ moons (as reviewed), McCarty Tobacco Burst w/ birds

CONTACT: PRS Europe, www.prsguitars.com





McCarty Man

David Grissom was also involved in creating another PRS guitar: the McCarty Model

After playing PRS guitars since 1985, in the early 90s David Grissom custom-ordered a guitar that was quite different from anything PRS were making at the time. It included a 22-fret neck, a thicker mahogany back and PRS's then brand-new Stop-Tail wrapover bridge. "When they bought it to the Winter NAMM show in 1992, I think there were a lot of people who really dug it. That guitar became the McCarty Model," says David, which launched in 1994. "It was the first PRS guitar that had an 1/8th inch more mahogany on the back; I think it's the first PRS that has covers on the pickups and the first with Klusons. I think we used two neck pickups just to try to get that clarity. This was the sort of beginning for me of getting away from the more midrange-y Treble and Bass [early PRS pickups] and getting it a little more full-range: a purer clearer tone. The pre-McCarty McCarty."

There's a subtle V'ing to the neck in the lower position too and comparing the SE neck to the USA DGT, it's pretty darn close.

Pickups too are unique to the DGT and the SE DGT 'S' humbuckers chase the 'hot vintage' voicing of the USA pickups closely. David, like Paul Reed Smith himself, is no fan of ice-picky high end and as with the USA model there's a resistor across each volume control to 'tune' the value of each volume to below 500k



ohms. Similar tricks are applied to the single coil voices which are accessed simultaneously via a pull-switch on the tone control. These 'partial' coil splits voice primarily the inner slug single coils with a little of the screw coils left in circuit.

It's a very well-voiced guitar: the humbuckers provide a big single-cut sound with, by design, a slightly rounded high-end response that retains clarity into a cranked Marshall voice while rounding that sometimes annoying high-end 'fizz'. The two volume controls – the bridge pickup's volume is the first control – mean that Les Paul-style blends of both pickups add to the subtly.

To be fair, if you just use those selections you might be more

than happy not least with the very in-tune vibrato and the slightly longer-than-Gibson scale length giving a little more vibrancy to what we hear. But the partial coil splits are key, a little lower in volume with added sparkle on top, they almost hint at Gretsch and give a very musical jangle to the beef of the full humbuckers. What we hear is very close to the USA model, too – no mean feat when it's a quarter of the price!

Dave Burriluck

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

ALSO TRY...

PRS SE CUSTOM 22 SEMI-HOLLOW

£979

Like the SE DGT, this semi uses the original PRS scale length of 25" and has the SE vibrato and two 85/15 'S' humbuckers that are a little more modern sounding than the DGT 'S' humbuckers.



PRS SE MCCARTY 594

£1049

Another new-for-2023 model, the SE McCarty 594 uses a shorter scale length of 24.594", with a 22-fret neck and 58/15 LT 'S' humbuckers, plus PRS-designed two-piece zinc bridge and tailpiece.



EPHPHONE 1959 LES PAUL STANDARD

£769

Part of the SE DGT's aim is to offer the sounds of a Les Paul. Here's one of the best for the money, which includes Gibson USA BurstBucker pickups and a '59 hand-rolled neck profile.





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BLACKSTAR DEPT 10 AMPED 2

£539



Blackstar's amazing pedalboard amp gets expanded

Blackstar seems to have a never-ending conveyor belt of new and exciting products to tempt us with, many of which like the award-winning St James amplifiers, fall into the 'why didn't we think of that?' category. Blackstar's Amped 1 was a perfect addition for pedalboard users, putting real amp tones into a compact and powerful package. Now, the Amped 1 concept has been taken to its logical

positively filthy and a 100-watt class D power stage, with three valve emulations and switchable power levels. The effects are subdivided into modulation, delay and reverb, all independently footswitchable along with the drive pedal. There are four modulation types, three delays including an exclusive 'shimmer' effect, and three reverbs, with a tap tempo switch. Under the hood, Blackstar's superb Cab Rig speaker emulation and a few extra

same display doubles as an onboard tuner, activated by pressing down on the delay and reverb switches simultaneously. Amped 2's core tones are very useable, with high-headroom cleans, touch-sensitive crunch tones and huge leads. The onboard effects are superb, with responsive dynamics from the integrated overdrives, lush warm choruses and smooth reverbs. The fuzz drive is brilliant, as are all the delays, with various tempo sync options to expand your creative options, as well as making it easy to emulate the signature sounds of artists like The Edge and Hank Marvin.

While Amped 1 is ideal for players with fully-loaded pedalboards, Amped 2 is the perfect all-in-one choice, combining quality effects with convincing valve-like tones, and the price is amazing when you look at what's on offer.

Nick Guppy

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

COMBINES QUALITY EFFECTS WITH VALVE-LIKE TONES

conclusion, with the addition of high-quality built-in effects.

Amped 2 keeps the same good looks as its predecessor, with a candy-apple red anodised fascia and typical Blackstar clean looks and graphics, underneath which there's a tough steel chassis enclosing seriously high quality circuit boards. The list of features keeps coming: an integrated front-end drive pedal with three distinct overdrives including a fuzz, a preamp with three different voices that goes from clean to

hidden features are accessible with Blackstar's Architect app, which connects via USB 'C'. The same USB socket also allows direct recording into a PC or DAW, with other output options including mono balanced XLR, stereo headphones/line out and an effects loop. Amped 2 also benefits from MIDI, with practically every parameter accessible from a compatible MIDI controller like Blackstar's own Live Logic, with a small but visible OLED display for control status messages. The

1 DISPLAY Amped 2's clean design looks great, while the 'what you see is what you get' controls are easy to navigate, with feedback from the OLED display.

2 REAR PANEL I/O Comprehensive In and Out options cover every need and let you hook Amped 2 up to amplifiers, consoles and computers, as well as speaker cabinets.

3 SPEAKER OUTS Amped 2 has a pair of speaker outputs and delivers a full 100 watts of class D power into any suitable 8-ohm or 16-ohm cabinet.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Analog/digital preamp, Class D power amp

OUTPUT: 100 watts RMS into 16 ohms or 8 ohms, switchable to 20 watts or 1 watt

DIMENSIONS: 288mm (w) x 149mm (d) x 81mm (h)

CHANNELS: Two, with footswitchable drive and three selectable voices

CONTROLS: Gain, bass, middle, treble, master volume. Drive gain, tone, level, three-way drive select switch. Modulation time, depth, level, three-way modulation select switch. Delay time, feedback level, three-way delay select switch. Reverb time, level, three-way reverb select switch. Three-way power amp response type switch and three-way output power select switch. Loop return level switch, Cab Rig select switch and output level control

FOOTSWITCH: Five integral switches for drive and effects on/off, plus tap tempo

CONTACT: Blackstar, blackstaramps.com



FENDER ACOUSTASONIC PLAYER JAZZMASTER

£969

Jazz oddity

Four years into Fender's Acoustasonic project, it still seems to be a misunderstood guitar series in some quarters. It's not a best of both worlds acoustic/electric guitar; such a proposition would only disappoint. Instead we see it as an electro-acoustic guitar with enhanced flexibility and playability. The American Jazzmaster model was the most successful example of that to date – so how does its Mexican brethren fare?

There's no body sensor pickup here like on the US model, bringing the pickup sources down from three to two: an undersaddle piezo and a noiseless magnetic. Here the latter is a Shawbucker rather than the Tele's single-coil. There are four less 'voices' available via the blade selector as a result; six here, grouped into pairs and selectable with the Blend knob to move between the paired voices. What's a clear upgrade for us is the 9-volt battery power source here instead of the non-removable rechargeable source of the US guitar. It's much more practical for faster changes in a gig situation.

Though the Jazzmaster Acoustasonic is often hailed as the loudest model unplugged due to its larger body size, we didn't find ours significantly so in direct comparison with a Player Tele model. Don't expect it to rival even a parlor acoustic's projection but it's great for unplugged practice; responsive while quiet enough not to get too many complaints from unappreciative family members.

The body and neck relationship specific to the Jazzmaster brings

the upper frets further towards the player when sitting down, making it feel even more accessible in a way most acoustic guitars can't be. And it really is a fantastic neck – once you tweak the action using the Micro-Tilt system (see top of page). So it's a great house guitar, albeit an expensive one. It's in live use that the Acoustasonic begins to justify investment, but there are some caveats.

The switch between position one's electric pickup and position three's Fishman-designed acoustic imaging (a kind of IR of a mic'd acoustic mixed with the piezo signal) is the most usable here; well balanced and great for looping layers, or switching in for a lead line. These acoustic voices are not the kind of warm, broad acoustic sound some "proper" systems offer on traditional flattops (and the US model's body sensor helped with). More a good mix between that and piezo, plus a little edge for holding ground in a band mix with some compression and reverb on hand. We know because we took it to our covers band rehearsal! And we actually found it worked well through a clean Fender Deluxe Reverb, in addition to a PA. But position 2's piezo clean and driven tones seem almost superfluous in comparison – the kind of standard electro acoustic sound some players may be trying to get away from.

Rob Laing

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

1 SIRS

You may call it a soundhole, but Fender calls its 'waterfall' design the Stringed Instrument Resonance System and it's definitely evident in the sustain on the higher strings, providing more than you'd expect from such a thin acoustic guitar body.

2 MICRO-TILT

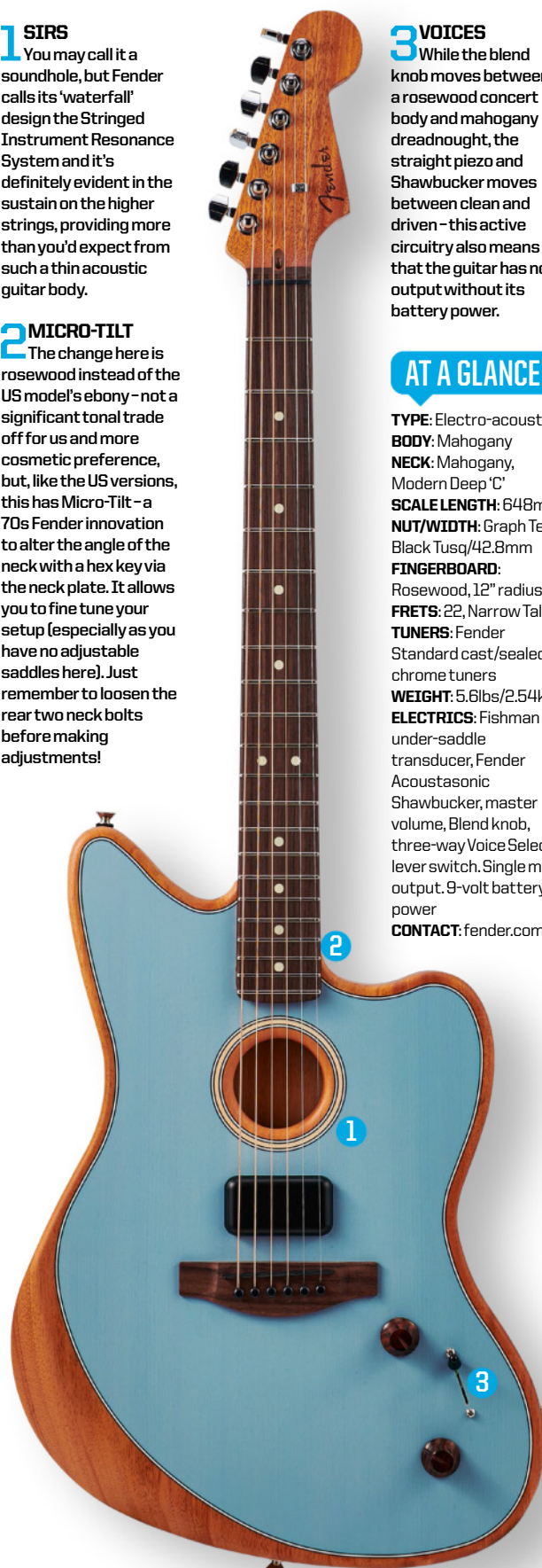
The change here is rosewood instead of the US model's ebony – not a significant tonal trade off for us and more cosmetic preference, but, like the US versions, this has Micro-Tilt – a 70s Fender innovation to alter the angle of the neck with a hex key via the neck plate. It allows you to fine tune your setup (especially as you have no adjustable saddles here). Just remember to loosen the rear two neck bolts before making adjustments!

3 VOICES

While the blend knob moves between a rosewood concert body and mahogany dreadnought, the straight piezo and Shawbucker moves between clean and driven – this active circuitry also means that the guitar has no output without its battery power.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Electro-acoustic
BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Mahogany, Modern Deep 'C'
SCALE LENGTH: 648mm
NUT/WIDTH: Graph Tech Black Tusq/42.8mm
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood, 12" radius
FRETS: 22, Narrow Tall
TUNERS: Fender Standard cast/sealed chrome tuners
WEIGHT: 5.6lbs/2.54kg
ELECTRICS: Fishman under-saddle transducer, Fender Acoustasonic Shawbucker, master volume, Blend knob, three-way Voice Selector lever switch. Single mono output. 9-volt battery power
CONTACT: fender.com





HARLEY BENTON TWOFACE

£70

A no-nonsense, one-stop blues box

The Twoface is a combined Tube Screamer-style overdrive and tremolo pedal from Thomann's in-house brand. What it perhaps lacks in style it makes up for in efficiency. It's housed in a compact enclosure, with a footswitch for each circuit as well as an order-switching toggle.

There are two levels of clipping available on the overdrive side, courtesy of the warm/hot switch. Elsewhere everything functions as expected. Into a decent low-wattage tube amp, the 'level up, gain down' strategy yields tasty saturation and compression for punchy blues licks. Pushing into modern rock is easy. Switching from a Fender neck single coil to a Gibson bridge humbucker, and toggling to the 'hot' setting

results in punchy chords and even the ability to chug out some palm muting. Depending on the amp, some attention to level and gain is needed to avoid fizz.

However, that style of playing isn't really what the Twoface is designed for. It's more aimed at the blues player with a small tube amp that doesn't sport a tremolo. Thus, setting up the overdrive side as a boost before exploring the tremolo options yields the best results. It's an optical tremolo, resulting in a choppy effect with the depth all the way up. A more subtle approach is possible, though. Pulling back the depth and setting the speed at something slower, but not lethargic, gives extra interest to chords and riffs. The bias control changes the colour by making the waveform

non-symmetrical. This more swampy sound really opens up the pedal at hotter gain settings and interacts nicely with a tube amp being pushed at the end of the chain.

There's little to fault the Twoface on. The bottom line is that it's well-implemented, straightforward and sounds good. Then again, it should. The Tube Screamer circuit is over 40 years old, and a simple tremolo is a weekend project for a DIY pedal builder. It's not revolutionary. However, if you're looking for a drive and tremolo to pair with a tube amp for blues and rock, it's a compact, great sounding pedal that won't break the bank.

Alex Lynham

AT A GLANCE

SOCKETS: In/Out

POWER: 9VDC centre-negative

CONTROLS: Depth, Bias, Speed, Level, Tone, Drive, Hot/Warm, Effect order

BYPASS: True bypass

CONTACT: harleybenton.com

A COMPACT PEDAL THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK

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

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Words Ellie Rogers

TÉA CAMPBELL

MEET ME @ THE ALTAR

In a genre that has historically been dominated by straight white males, *Meet Me @ The Altar* has a simple yet sizable mission: to dismantle rock's stereotypes riff by riff. Their debut album *Past // Present // Future* is the very tool with which they intend to do so – and for guitarist Téa Campbell, a Reverend Billy Corgan Z-One signature model will also come in handy for the fight. Kitted out with Corgan's star-etched Railhammer Humcutters, it boasts what she describes as “that perfect balance in tonality where you can hear all the notes, but it's still really heavy” – essential qualities for a guitarist who juggles rhythm and lead roles.

Like many her age, Téa's interest in the guitar was sparked by the pop-punk boom

of the early-to-mid noughties, and its influence is splashed across her playing as brightly as the ubiquitous skatepark graffiti that featured in every music video from the days when teen defiance and powerchords ruled MTV. But, as the album title suggests, *Meet Me @ The Altar* seeks to redefine the present sound of the genre and pave its future direction as much as honour its past.

“We live different lives than most people who are pioneering this genre,” says Téa, who advocates for “unapologetically making the music we love,” and “literally just taking up space” as the means for inspiring young players who are yet to see themselves sufficiently represented onstage.

Musically, the album is an all-killer-no-filler explosion, with just two tracks breaking

the three-minute mark. Yet Téa manages to pack memorable hooks, ear-catching textures and satisfying dynamic shifts into its 30-minute runtime. As she puts it:

“We wanted it to be really focused on variety and not just writing the same song over and over.” She cites Paramore, The Script, Kings Of Leon and even Hannah Montana as inspirations, but says: “You can really hear that I'm learning how to blend all of my different influences into a sound that is us.”

For the bulk of the record, she professes to having “used Dave Grohl's Kemper tone” as a shortcut to those archetypally chunky sounds. But, just as it should, *Meet Me @ The Altar*'s debut also captures the excitement of a guitarist embracing the studio environment and experimenting with new tonal possibilities for the first time. There's a deliciously 2000s-esque phaser wash on *Kool* to listen out for, layers of Big Muff-enshrouded rhythms that hit hard in all the right places, and an ingeniously deployed octave pedal that turns an already killer solo on *Same Language* into a joyfully stratospheric one.

***Past // Present // Future* is out now.**





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