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20 ★★★★★
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THE GUV'NOR IS BACK!
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**SAMANTHA FISH
JUDAS PRIEST
INDIGO DE SOUZA
HMLTD**

AC/DC
ROCK LIKE ANGUS & MALCOLM

BORN PLAY^{TO}



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BY lowden

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Printed in the UK by: William Gibbons & Sons Ltd on behalf of Future
Distributed by: Marketforce, 2nd Floor, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf London, E14 5HU
Overseas distribution by: Seymour International
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SUBSCRIPTIONS

New orders: www.magazinesdirect.com, phone orders: 0330 333 1113, email: help@magazinesdirect.com
Renewals: www.mymagazine.co.uk, customer service: 0330 333 4333, email: help@mymagazine.co.uk

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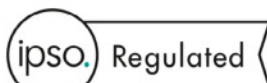
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Welcome...



I became a huge fan of the blues in the 90s due in no small part to the lasting influence of the man you see on the cover this month, Stevie Ray Vaughan. Alongside a handful of other players – Jeff Healey, Gary Moore – who would follow in Stevie's virtuoso blues footsteps, his fiery, aggressive style just seemed so *relevant* to me as an aspiring young guitarist. I was

a Pearl Jam fan, too (I still am!), and I would later learn that Mike McCready was also heavily influenced by the Texan blues ace. You can hear it in his playing, I think.

Of course, 2023 marks 40 years since Stevie Ray's debut album, *Texas Flood*, so what better time to take a look at the musical legacy of this blues guitar icon? Featured in the mag are adapted extracts from Alan Paul and Andy Aledort's book *Texas Flood: The Inside Story Of Stevie Ray Vaughan*, a 1988 *Guitarist Magazine* interview with SRV himself, plus we speak to Eric Gales – a guitarist carrying that virtuoso blues torch today, and a man who can actually claim to have jammed with Stevie.

Elsewhere you'll find our eight-page lesson, 20 Things SRV Taught Us, where TG contributor Jon Bishop breaks down the techniques and musical approaches Stevie employed, and Jon's really done an amazing job – there's loads to learn here! When studying SRV's style you can be sure you'll not only be tearing up the fretboard but also tracing the influence of those early electric blues pioneers who so influenced Stevie.

Anyway, as ever, I really hope you enjoy the mag this month. We've had a great time making it.

Chris

Chris Bird Editor

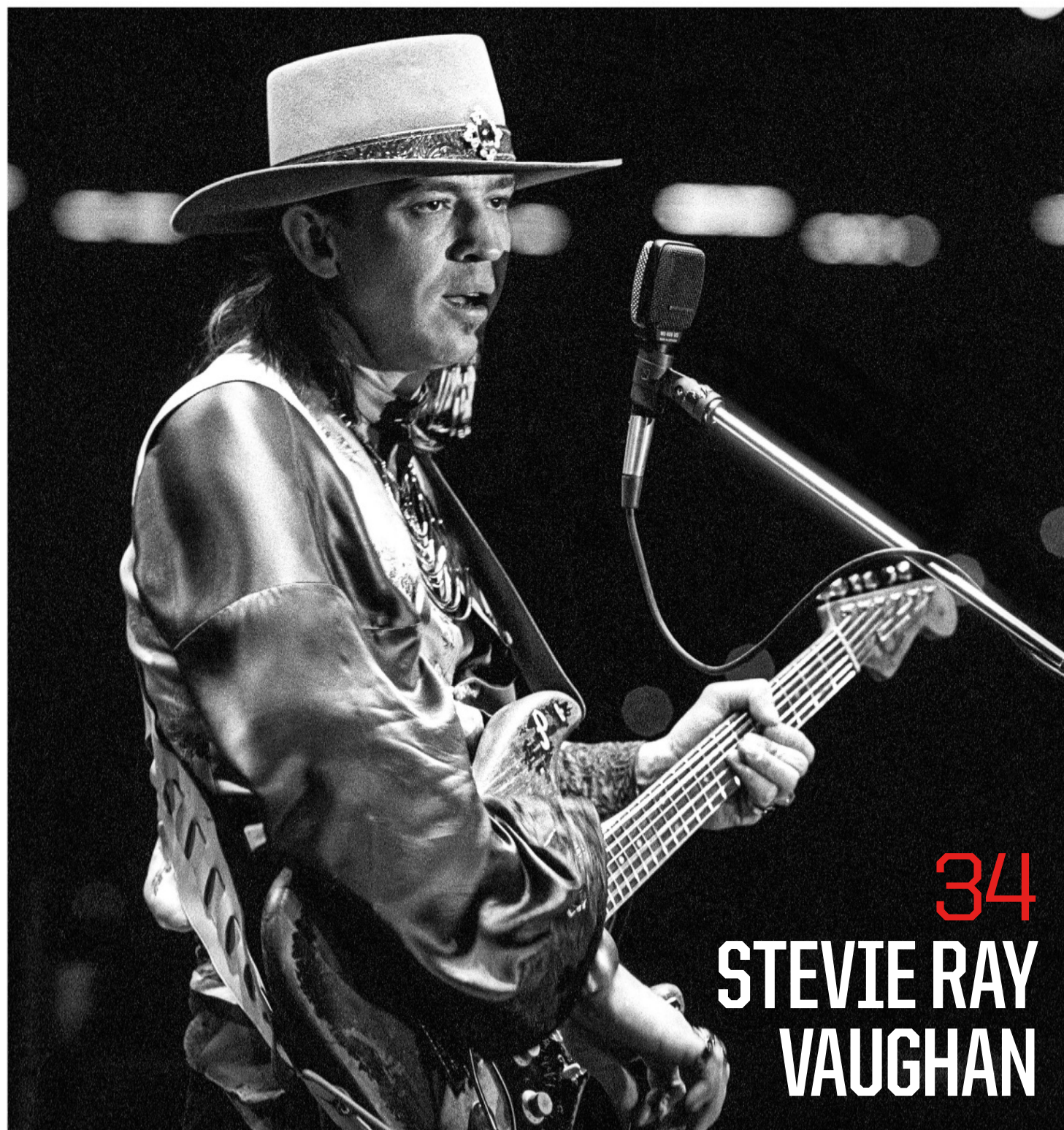
Total Guitar (ISSN 1355504) June Issue 371 is published monthly with an extra issue in July by Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK

The US annual subscription price is \$181.87 Air freight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container Inc, c/o BBT 150-15183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA
 Application to Mail at Periodicals Postage Prices is Pending at Brooklyn NY 11256.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Total Guitar, World Container Inc, c/o BBT 150-15183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA

Subscription records are maintained at Future Publishing, c/o Air Business Subscriptions, Rockwood House, Perryman Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3DH, UK

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Audio & Video

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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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MONITOR

PEOPLE ★ NEWS ★ NOISE



06

Words: Stuart Williams Photography: Ollie Curtis

A CERTAIN SHADE OF GREENY

The most iconic Les Paul of all time? Gibson drops a long-awaited USA production version of Greeny

Greeny is a unique guitar for many reasons. Not only was it born in 1959 and therefore rolled off the production line at the most hallowed of Les Paul times, but Greeny has

been owned by three generations of guitar heroes in Peter Green, Gary Moore and now, Kirk Hammett. That's before we even talk about its one-off tonality!

There is, of course, only one Greeny. But now, thanks to Gibson we all have the chance of bagging a slice of rock history with the Gibson USA Kirk Hammett Greeny 1959

Les Paul Standard. Before we get too excited, we should note that it's £3,000. That's a lot of money, but it's also a snip of the £20,000 asking price for Gibson's Custom Shop Collector's Edition.

The USA model features some simplified production tweaks – the top is a mere AAA, pristine maple version, the neck profile is a regular 50s carve rather than a bespoke recreation, and the pickups are Gibson Greeny Buckers – magnetically out-of-phase just like the original – instead of Custom Shop Greeny Bucker pickups. We'll have a review coming shortly!

UP CLOSE



Greeny

It's based on what is probably the most famous Les Paul of all time, named after some bloke called Peter Green...



Pickups

Key to Greeny's coveted tone is the neck pickup, which is magnetically out-of-phase with the bridge. When the two are combined, Greeny creates a middle-position tone of its own.

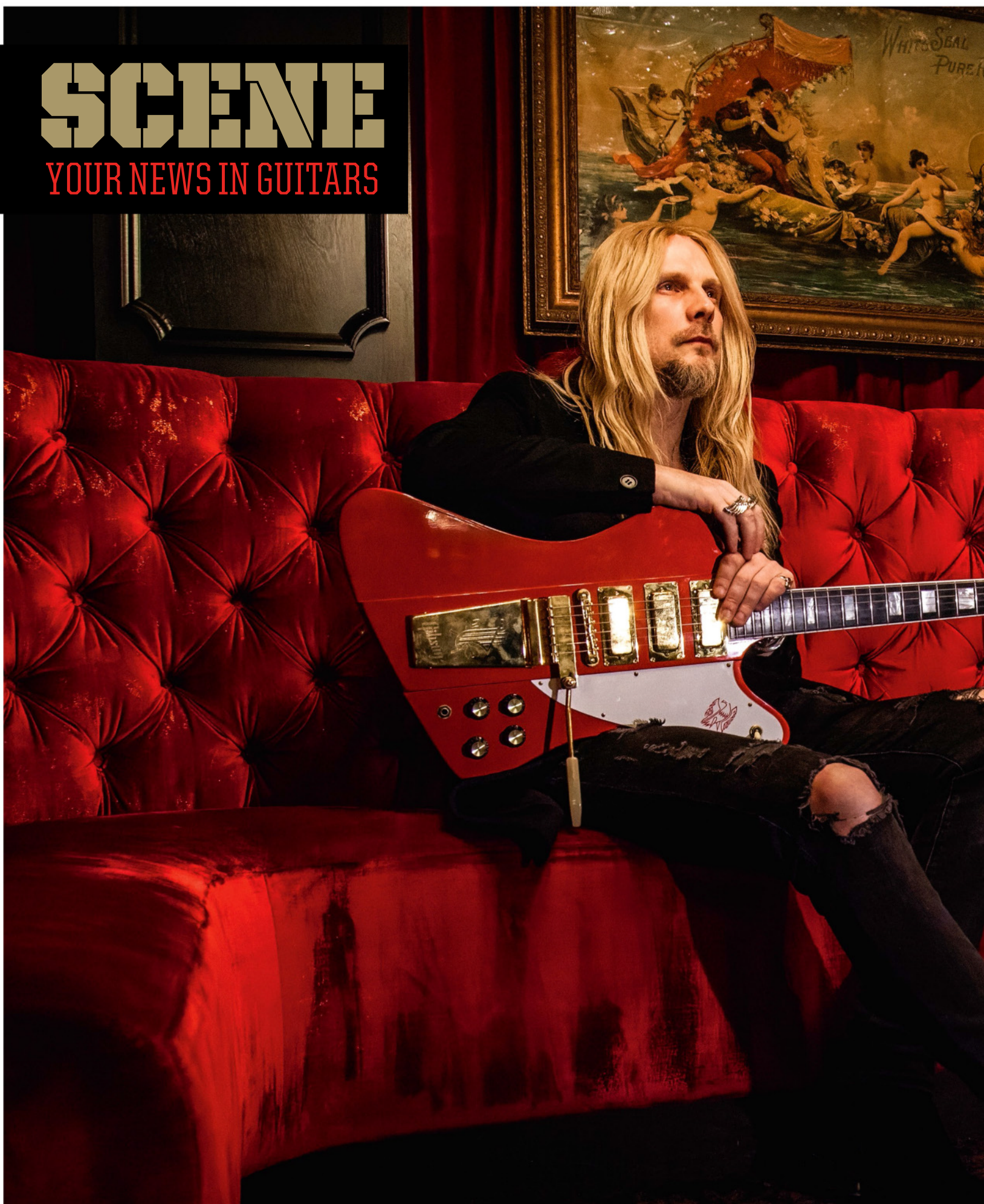


Build

Make no mistake, this might not be a to-the-dot recreation, but it's still a replica of a 1959 Les Paul Standard, and at this price our expectations are high!

SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS



08

ALBUM

"IT'S JUST THE GUITAR AND THE AMP"

FOR A CLASSIC HEAVY METAL SOUND, JUDAS PRIEST'S **RICHIE FAULKNER** KEEPS IT SIMPLE



fter suffering an aortic aneurysm while performing with heavy metal legends

Judas Priest in 2021, Richie Faulkner has more than bounced back with his all-new supergroup Elegant Weapons – the name inspired by the Gibson Flying Vs he's always loved.

The debut album *Horns For A Halo* was recorded with drummer Scott Travis, also of Judas Priest, plus Pantera bassist Rex Brown and latter-day Rainbow singer Ronnie Romero. Due to other commitments, Travis and Brown are unavailable for upcoming live dates with Elegant Weapons, so filling in are Uriah Heep bassist Davey Rimmer and Accept drummer Christopher Williams.

Here, Richie explains why one "classic" amp and a guitar that can "cover all the bases" is all he needs...

Who are the biggest influences that have seeped into your playing with Elegant Weapons?

Seeped in? They've poured in! I wear my influences on my sleeve and I always have done. It's Zakk Wylde, Michael Schenker, Dave Murray and Adrian Smith from Iron Maiden, and obviously Glenn Tipton and K.K. Downing [who formed Judas Priest's classic-era two-guitar attack]. You can't be in a band for 13 years and not be influenced by that sort of stuff.

Which of your Flying Vs do we hear on the album?

There's just one on everything. I don't know if it was my intention, but it ended up being that way. It's a signature Flying V that I'm working on with Gibson. It's one of the prototypes and it's got signature EMG pickups in it. It just seemed to cover all the bases! There's no acoustics on the album. There's one semi-ballad, but no

acoustic – just a cleaner sound. It's the same channel, just with the volume pot rolled off so the gain comes down. I used a Marshall Plexi and the Flying V – so a pretty simple approach.

Is it liberating to enter a studio with one amp and one guitar and know all your needs are covered?

It really is. There's a lot to be said for that simplicity. I think you have to go the whole journey with it. I started off with that kind of approach, but then you get into effects and rack units and you're searching for that sound, which ends up being what you had initially. You strip all that stuff down and it's just the guitar and the amplifier. It really gave it that identity I was looking for.

Do you use any pedals at all?

My pedalboard has gone back to what it was when I was playing in pubs! It's a chorus pedal, a wah pedal and a tuner. I might put a Uni-Vibe on there for colour, but that's pretty much it.



You drop-tuned a whole step for this album. What was the thinking behind that?

The drop tuning was as a juxtaposition to the Plexi, which was a 35th Anniversary model from the mid-90s. It's not a new one, but it's not an old one and it's based on the Plexi that we all know and love. It's a classic sound and the drop tuning was a bit more of a modern approach. Drop tuning makes it feel like you've got a bit more gain because of the way it sounds heavier.

Ellie Rogers



AMPLIFIERS

SQUIER SONIC SERIES

Fender has announced the successor to its hugely popular Squier Bullet series with the new Squier Sonic. Comprising four Stratocaster models, a pair of Mustangs, a Telecaster, Esquire and Bronco, these

affordable versions of classic Fender designs start at just £169! All models come with poplar bodies, maple necks and maple or Indian laurel fretboards (depending on the model and finish you go for). The Strat line-up includes SSS (with

either a vibrato or hardtail), HSS and a single-pickup humbucker model. Meanwhile the Esquire is a one-humbucker-loaded design, while the Telecaster features a traditional Tele configuration. They're available now!



AMP PEDAL

BLACKSTAR AMPED 3

Blackstar's latest iteration of its pedalboard-based amp solutions is the Amped 3, which the UK brand says is one of the highest-gain circuits it's ever produced. Continuing with the Amped chassis design, the Amped 3 includes the same DI/cab-emulated outputs and Architect editing software

as the other models in the range, but Amped 3 (aimed at heavier players) swaps the tuner, modulation and delay effects for a three-channel design with pre/post switchable boost. There's a 100-watt power amp on-board too, meaning that you can use it via a passive cab, or direct to a powered cab/PA system or recording interface.

SWITCH



SEYMOUR DUNCAN HYPERSWITCH

If you've ever fancied experimenting with your S-type guitar's wiring but don't fancy burning your fingers, HyperSwitch is your solution. This five-way, 9v battery-powered smart switch is wired into your guitar once, replacing your original pickup switch, then connects to a mobile app via

Bluetooth where you can endlessly reconfigure and recall wiring presets. With options for coil-splitting, reverse polarity and more, it can also change the taper of your guitar's tone controls. The HyperSwitch works with most passive guitar pickups, costing £209, and should be shipping by the time you read this.



Jackson

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DIGITAL DELAY

Pristine sounds and clean repeats... repeats... repeats

Broadly speaking, there are three delay types to consider for any pedalboard: analogue, tape emulation, and, as we're looking at here, digital, where pristine, hi-fi sounds and long runs of clean repeats are the order of the day.

One of the best known examples is the Boss DD-3. Its genesis was in the SDE-3000 rack delay used by Steve Vai and Eddie Van Halen. Roland engineers worked out that the bespoke IC that used in the rack unit might fit in the same enclosure size as the DM-2, resulting in the DD-2. Supposedly, this component dropped suddenly in price, so, in order to avoid a perception of declining quality, the DD-2 was re-badged as the DD-3, and the price was reduced. There have been many changes to the circuit since, but the DD-3 remains the gold standard for digital delays.

The DD-3's simple control layout is typical of countless delay pedals. Get to grips with this classic pedal to get an understanding of essential digital delay basics.

THE DD-3 REMAINS THE GOLD STANDARD FOR DIGITAL DELAYS

MUST TRY... Build your 'board with these 'best in class' alternatives, available now

MUST TRY... Build your 'board with these 'best in class' alternatives, available now



BOSS DD-8

£171

The latest and greatest of the DD series packs in more features than ever. There's the reverse mode of the DD-6, but also new features like shimmer, delay and reverb, warm, and glitch modes, each with a footswitchable twist or oscillate function.



BOSS DD-500

£426

It's probably easier to list the features that the DD-500 hasn't got! It can model pretty much every Boss and Roland delay ever made, including classics like the SDE-3000 and DD series. Firmware updates introduced new effects like ping-pong, parallel and the ability to have three delays on a single patch.



BOSS DD-5

£65-£85 (USED)

Now discontinued, the DD-5 expanded the feature set of the DD-3 while keeping its distinctive sound. Like the DD-3, it has a rounded chime that isn't too clinical, despite using a different chip. New features included tap tempo via external switch, plus a reverse mode.

SOUND ADVICE

Follow our bespoke settings to dial in three classic tones



MODE MEDIUM OR LONG

ALT-ROCK CHIME

Radiohead's first three albums have the distinctive sound of the DD series all over them. With three guitars in the band, they pay careful attention to the feedback control, as guitar parts can get washy fast. In certain live performances, you can still see Ed O'Brien bending down to change feedback or delay time. Note that, depending on song tempo, you may need to use Long mode.



MODE MEDIUM

POST-ROCK CRESCENDOCORE

No post-rock tune would be complete without either clean or distorted tremolo-picked lead parts. For these, you want a wash of repeats, so turn the feedback control past its midway point until you can't distinguish individual notes. Unlike an analogue delay, the DD-3 won't run away into oscillation. Delay time should be short to medium, depending on the tempo of the song.



MODE SHORT

MATH-ROCK STUTTER

Self-oscillation tends to be associated with analogue delays. While it's true that runaway, tunable oscillation has been reported on some DD-3 units, we've never heard it. However, what you can do is nearly as fun. Punctuate your riffs with machine-gun bursts of stuttered repeats as the unit repeats what was just played as quickly as it can.



RIFF OF THE MONTH

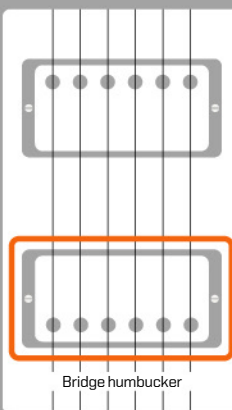
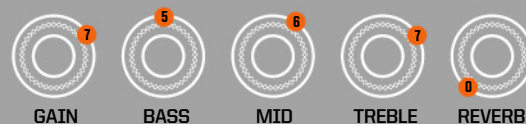
WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ Powerchords
- ✓ Alternate strumming
- ✓ String muting

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GET THE TONE

CHANNEL **OVERDRIVE**



Wolfgang uses his semi-hollow EVH SA-126 guitar into an EVH 5150 amp to produce a thick, saturated tone that gives plenty of oomph for the powerchords. You should be able to create a suitable tone with most gear. Simply use a bridge humbucker, plug in to your amp and turn up the gain!

MAMMOTH WVH

Another Celebration At The End Of The World

Another Celebration At The End Of The World is taken from the forthcoming album *Mammoth II* and features this rocking Wolfgang riff which uses the open sixth string and shifting powerchords. Most of the powerchords are played with a fifth-string root note, so you can keep your first finger on this string throughout, except

on the final G5 chord which is played over a fourth-string root. The other odd chord here is a Csus2, played with three fingers at the 3rd, 5th and 7th frets – a bit of a stretch, but worth persevering with for its clearer, punchier sound than its open-chord alternative, which would include a ‘looser’ sounding open string. To keep everything sounding clean, use the underside of your first finger to lightly touch the

idle higher strings to keep them muted. This way you can strum with full commitment and not have to worry if you hit the wrong string.

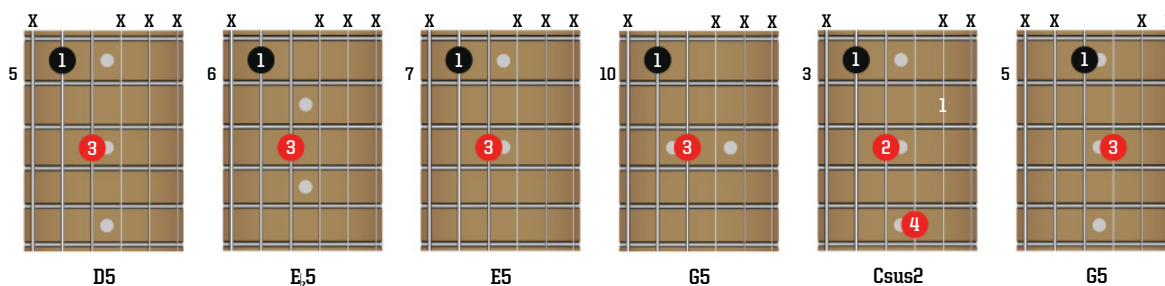
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:24–0:35

Tempo: 192bpm

Key/scale: E natural minor

Main techniques: Powerchords, position shifts



This riff is based in the key of E minor (E F# G A B C D), with an added E,5 passing chord. It's primarily played with one

powerchord shape, so practise the position shifts first, then focus on landing on the tricky Csus2 chord.



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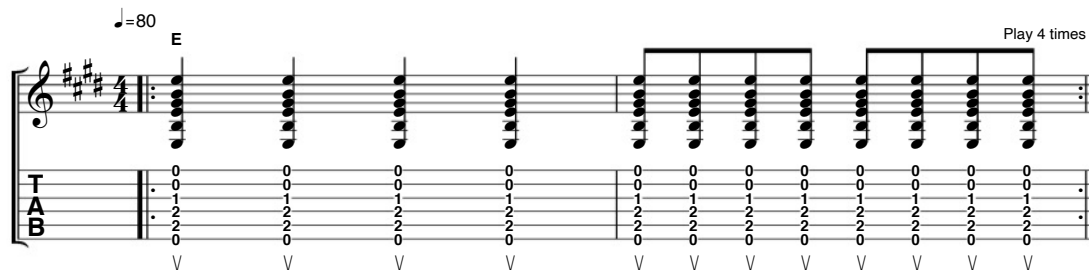
IMPROVE YOUR STRUMMING

Strumming is probably the most essential guitar technique in existence. The word itself is a synonym for playing guitar, and your non-musician friends might ask you to strum a few chords for them at a party. It's taken for granted that any guitarist in any style should be able to do it, but the technique is actually surprisingly involved. You can spend a lifetime learning to make a simple chord progression sound good, but you'll likely be offered a lot more gigs than someone who only practises shredding licks.

Playing in time is another lifetime quest. The more you play with great musicians (on a record if you don't know any in real life!) and a metronome, the more your ear will

You've heard people say 'tone is in the hands', and how you strum is a major part of this. The angle of your pick, how much of the pick crosses the strings, and how hard you strum all change the tone. If you sound scratchy or thin, keep trying different angles and motions. Look for approaches that feel easy: when it feels good, it will usually sound good, too.

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TOTAL GUITAR JUNE 2023

**"THE WHOLE POINT IS TO
DO SOMETHING UNIQUE,
IN THE MOMENT, WITH
SOMEBODY ELSE"
SAMANTHA FISH**

Words Ellie Rogers Photos Kaelan Barowsky

“IT’S A GIRL AND A GUY BOTH RIPPING ON GUITARS!”

How **Samantha Fish** and **Jesse Dayton** got together to create a new blues explosion

Samantha Fish and Jesse Dayton’s new *Death Wish Blues* album is a fun-filled alt-blues exploration that has been, as Samantha puts it, “swirling” in the realms of possibility for quite some time. They first met a decade ago, when Samantha was an up and coming blues star in the Kansas City music scene, and Jesse, the Texas-bred outlaw country badass, was headlining shows there. They took note of one another’s skills, but it took years – and a proposition from Samantha – for their creative stars to align as they have now so spectacularly.

As she recalls with a laugh: “I’d been talking to management about a collaborative record that I wanted to do with another artist, but it was like, ‘Who could that be?’” After seeing Jesse perform in New Orleans at the beginning of 2022, she knew he was just the man for the job. “It all just clicked”, she says. “He’s such a special artist – very diverse and very talented. I’m grateful he wanted to try it.”

Jesse had also clocked Samantha’s incendiary capabilities years earlier, when she once lit up the stage as a local opener for him at Kansas City’s Knuckleheads Saloon. “I remember being in the backstage area and asking somebody who it was playing guitar down there,” he reminisces. “They said, ‘Oh, this girl’s playing’. I walked down to watch and was like, ‘Wow, something’s going to happen for her!’”

Their undeniable chemistry first shone on their 2022 EP *The Stardust Sessions*, where they twisted up classic tunes by the likes of Townes Van Zandt and Magic Sam. But for *Death Wish Blues*, the pair penned 12 original tunes and cut them live to tape, utilising literally dozens of amp tones at Woodstock’s Applehead Recording facility – a space that Jesse describes as resembling “some kind of 60s music store” with its sprawling collection of vintage treasures. The producer of the album is none other than Jon Spencer, the guitarist/vocalist who mixed blues and garage rock to stunning effect in his band The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion.

On a three-way call with TG, blues music’s most dynamic new duo reveal how they created this album together, and look ahead to bringing it alive on stage...

➔ **Did this collaboration bring about any surprise revelations that you didn't already know about yourselves as players?**

Jesse: I discovered a lot of things about Sam. In order to do this, and the reason that people don't do it, is you have to get out of your comfort zone. You have to be vulnerable and you have to send lyrical and guitar melody ideas and not be worried about being judged. It's the beauty of co-writing. If you're open to each other's ideas, you really don't have any control over where it's going – it's just revealing itself the whole time.

Can that feel risky at times?

Samantha: It can, but not if you have good chemistry, and there's respect. We both walked into this project knowing what we wanted, so we had this 'North Star' the entire time we were working together. I think when you're collaborating, it takes a little pressure off. When I'm writing for myself, I'm like, 'Does this fit in exactly with who I want to be as an artist?' Collaborating is different. I care about this deeply, but the whole point is to do something unique, in the moment with somebody else.

This album mixes blues with lots of other genres – from funk and soul to punk and rock 'n' roll. Given that it's essentially the root of all popular music, do you feel blues lends itself well to experimentation?

Jesse: We could've done something super derivative to please the blues fans, but Jon Spencer did some really interesting stuff with the instrumentation. He produced the record with this wild blues-punk hybrid sound on some of it. Then, on other things, it's like we're playing Freddie King and Albert King guitar solos, or Sam's doing her North Mississippi influences over a rock riff. We're not reinventing the wheel but we are trying to do something fresh – not just the same sonic nineties blues thing that we're both, frankly, kind of sick of!

Did you find yourselves channelling any players in particular?

Samantha: I can't think of anybody. I think we were just trying to create something unique. Between me, Jesse, Jon and the musicians we had in there, we had so much personality on our hands that it'd be hard to channel anything or anybody else!

Jesse: Sam's right, there's no single artist that you can point to, but there's a whole bunch of influences. The beginning of *You Know My Heart* sounds like *Angie* by The Rolling Stones, and you can hear these kinds of shuffles – whether it's Townes Van Zandt, The Clash or R.L. Burnside. It's kind of all over.

What guitars did each of you bring to the session?

Samantha: I was limited to what I could bring on a plane, so I brought my Gibson SG and my cigar box. Jon brought in a couple of old acoustic guitars, and then Jesse brought in... what's the make of your guitar?

Jesse: It's the King guitar that my friend from London built. It's the prototype – a hollowbody with TV Jones pickups and a Bigsby. I used it in this Rob Zombie movie. There was an old Jerry Jones baritone guitar, and Sam actually played Jon's Silvertone on a couple of things.

Tell us about how the studio itself influenced the record...

Samantha: Jon wanted to record in New York and I'd never been to Woodstock, so it was really exciting for me. Rick Danko [bassist and vocalist in The Band] used to live in a house right on the back of the property, so that was cool, and we woke up in that environment every day. Besides The Band, there's so much important music that's taken place and been written in Woodstock. You can feel it! It was inspiring. We were recording to tape and we just had so many cool amps to choose from – it was a guitar nerd's dream.

"A LOT OF IT IS JUST GUITAR, GUITAR CORD, GUITAR AMP – AND WED CRANK IT!"
JESSE DAYTON



CALIFORNIA LOVE
Samantha and Jesse before a show at legendary LA club the Whisky.

Do you recall all the amps you used?

Samantha: We played through different vintage Tweed Fender Deluxes, we had a Kay amplifier, a Kustom 200 head, a Magnatone M15 that they'd just brought in when we got there, so that had all the cool tremolo stuff. We played an Airline and I played a lot of my rhythm parts through this repurposed, deconstructed PA system that they used for Woodstock Elementary School. It was literally just a speaker on the floor. I also love those little tiny Supros for studio sounds because – honestly – the more f*cked up they are, the better! I'm constantly chasing down the broken-amp-in-the-studio sound for my live show.

There are some great raunchy tones on the record, like on the title track, *Deathwish*. Could you talk us through anything else involved in achieving these sounds?



Jesse: I think we did *Deathwish* and a lot of stuff straight into the amp. We had our pedalboards there, but we were just really using them to tune! Every once in a while, we'd throw on a 70s flange or maybe some kind of analogue delay. But, a lot of it is just guitar, guitar cord, guitar amp – and we'd crank it! Jon was very instrumental in keeping us changing amps and breaking up the tones so everything didn't sound the same.

What are your favourite moments of tone on the record?

Samantha: I really like my solo on *Trauma*, because it's so outside of what I'd normally choose for myself. I really like tube amps, but that was the Kustom 200 and I'd never used one of those before. I wasn't so certain about it in the moment when I was doing the solo, but when I went back into the booth to hear it, it quickly became one of

my favourites.

Jesse: I really like some of the psychedelic abstract stuff we did, like the time signature changes on *Flooded Love*. There's some tasty stuff that Sam did. If you listen to the end of *Deathwish*, she's doing these little Hendrix trills. It was really open season for whatever we wanted to do. If we were playing a straighter blues lead, it's over some crazy chord progression. Or, if we'd have a straighter chord progression, it'd be some totally outside-the-box lead.

Will anything be challenging to recreate when you tour the album?

Jesse: I feel like we're going to be able to create pretty much anything live. There's nothing really out there that's like this. There's not a girl and a guy both ripping on guitars. If they are, they're usually just sitting in for each other, or one's the dominant player.

With us, this is a duet thing. We're just back and forth the whole night. It makes for a really exciting show, and neither one of us has to totally carry it, which is super fun.

Which tracks are you most excited to perform together?

Samantha: *Supadupabad* is going to be so much fun because there's so much going on, and also *Dangerous People* because I don't know what the hell that's going to sound like!

Jesse: I'm excited about slowing it down and playing *You Know My Heart*, because people don't go out and sing duets like that anymore. *Flooded Love* is just as wild and dangerous as it sounds. When we were recording it, we were pushing ourselves to make it crazier on each take. All this stuff is going to make for a real high-energy show!

***Death Wish Blues* is released on May 19.**

Words Jenna Scaramanga Portrait Charlie Boss

"GUITAR IS REALLY EMOTIONAL FOR ME"

Indigo De Souza is Gen-Z alt-pop's rising star – aided by guitar-playing best friend Dexter Webb

It's not often we end up discussing existential questions in TG interviews, but raw honesty is essential to the music of Indigo De Souza. "Being vulnerable has never felt like a task for me," she says. "Knowing that I'm gonna die one day has never felt scary. It doesn't feel like my experience is actually special enough for me to feel very protective about it."

That blunt acceptance of the human condition fills *All Of This Will End*, her third album. North Carolina-born Indigo was just 21 when she self-

released 2018's *I Love My Mom*. The buzz from her garage pop debut grew until Saddle Creek records picked it up for re-release in 2021, followed rapidly by her sophomore effort *Any Shape You Take*.

All Of This Will End continues that indie journey. "You're bad/You suck/You f*cked me up," she sings on the opening track *Time Back*. It's arresting to hear such unvarnished expression of feeling. Indigo tells you what she means, undefended and uncryptically. Although there's a radical acceptance of her own mortality, *All Of This Will End* is an optimistic album, embracing the

opportunity to be alive. While the lyrics are at times shockingly straightforward, the arrangements are unexpectedly complex. It's a striking contrast. "It feels important for the arrangements to be as flailing and wild and complicated as they are at times because that's how it feels inside my brain," she reveals.

Joining her on guitar is Dexter Webb, her longtime best friend. "Dexter's guitar playing is a big part of the album," she says. "A song like *Always* has layers and layers of him playing guitar. It's interesting because the last two records were totally different bands. Dexter played guitar on the last album as well, but he was replicating parts other people wrote. It felt really good on this album for him to speak in his own language through the songs. Dexter speaks through his guitar in a way that I've never seen and that I really connect to, so working with him to create arrangements that feel like a representation of our emotional landscape just happens naturally."

Whatever electric guitars you might imagine make these lo-fi soundscapes, you are almost certainly wrong. Indigo's electric guitar is a 1989 Gibson SG-90, a short-lived SG variant with 24 frets and a single-coil neck pickup. It has a graphite-reinforced neck, through-body stringing rather than a stop tailpiece and, in Indigo's case, a lightning bolt on the body. Dexter, meanwhile, plays his 12-string Ovation Deacon, a space-age looking electric produced from 1973 to 1982. "I think the depth to the guitar sound and the heaviness comes from me playing an electric 12-string," he reveals. What sounds like chorus on some songs is actually the Deacon: "For the song *Wasting Your Time* I slightly detuned the unison strings to play the lead, to give depth and thickness to it."

Dexter gets his distorted sounds from an Orange Rockerverb, while Indigo uses an AC15 run on the verge of breakup. Most of the reverbs were captured the old fashioned way during sessions at Drop Of Sun studios in Indigo's home state. "The place has this tall beautiful room, and we had a set of condenser mics up on this upper terrace level," Dexter explains. "We also sent sounds into their bathroom and down the hallway of the studio to get reverbs."

Neither of the guitarists has a big pedalboard. "A lot of the guitars we recorded dry," Dexter confesses.





"SOMETIMES THE GUITAR ENDS UP IN THE BED WITH ME BECAUSE I FALL ASLEEP PLAYING IT" INDIGO DE SOUZA



“I don’t want to say that we avoid a lot of effects but outside of amp reverb we’re not throwing a ton extra on top of it. We do like a lot of slapback delays, especially on guitar leads. When it comes to Indigo’s guitar and any kind of rhythm guitar, there’s so much going on that we don’t want to take up any extra space. The longer we’ve been playing, the more we appreciate dry guitar and how in-your-forehead it can feel. I almost think of a bone dry tone to be a beautiful effect in itself.”

For Indigo, the songs take priority over equipment. “I don’t pay enough attention to gear. It’s the songwriting and the emotion that comes naturally,” she admits. “I started playing guitar when I was nine. I remember that the focus for me wasn’t actually as much that I wanted to play guitar, it was that I wanted to write songs. As soon as I was able to strum three chords on a guitar I was writing songs.”

“Guitar has always been really emotional for me in the way,” she continues. “It’s always been like my secret best friend. I was bullied a lot in school and just had a really hard time. I hated it so much and didn’t have a lot of friends. I felt very exiled and guitar ended up being like a space of safety for me. I would just lean over my guitar and put my ear

on the wood, and I would listen to the way it hummed and I would hum with it. I wrote songs with it and it felt like I had a really intimate relationship with my guitar.”

That intimate relationship continues on *All Of This Will End*, which was written almost entirely on one guitar. “I love playing this electric guitar live, but when I’m home I still am the same way that I was when I was a child: I still have a really special acoustic guitar that is my best friend, that I spent most of my time with,” Indigo says. “It’s a really beautiful sounding Takamine nylon string that was given to me by this really sweet person named Kenny at Road Dog Guitars. He basically finds people the special guitar that they’re looking for. He’ll stop at nothing to find them the exact thing that they need. He gave it to me because he knew that my connection with it was really special and that I wouldn’t want to spend all the money on it. I’ve been writing all my songs on that.

TWO-PLAYER GAMES

“Dexter speaks through his guitar in a way that I really connect to,” Indigo says.

Sometimes it ends up just sleeping in the bed with me because I fall asleep playing it.”

That Takamine doesn’t feature much on the album though; the main acoustic is a mid-60s Gibson LG-o. It’s joined by a selection of 60s Gibsons from Drop Of Sun Studios.

The musical chemistry between Dexter and Indigo is crucial to the album, and Dexter insists he isn’t consciously taking cues from any other guitarists. “I know I’m pulling deep from somebody somewhere, but I haven’t really had a player or anything that I want to replicate,” he says. “I really didn’t start understanding and establishing my own voice with the guitar until I stopped obsessing over guitarists and started to develop my own relationship with it. Indigo’s lyrics and her vocal dynamics are absolutely the biggest inspiration to what I play. We just so deeply want to protect what Indigo is saying because that is the core of what we need to communicate. I’m

just trying to be as present in the moment as possible and really just reacting. I think to bring the spirit of someone else’s playing into it almost disrespects what we’re trying to create.”

All Of This Will End is out now.

“I ALMOST THINK OF A BONE DRY TONE TO BE A BEAUTIFUL EFFECT IN ITSELF” DEXTER WEBB

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"We use the guitar like a sound generator"

Words Ellie Rogers Portrait Erika Kenis-Febles

With a bizarre new concept album, **HMLTD** are defying the expectations of guitar-based music. "We get excited by very stupid ideas!" says guitarist Duc Peterman

When their debut album *West Of Eden* landed in 2020, London-based art-punk collective HMLTD established themselves as one of the most ambitious outfits to emerge from the UK music scene in recent years. With flamboyance and wit, they took aim at toxic masculinity and the patriarchal-capitalist society of the West. With gleeful abandon they cut and spliced elements of glam rock, punk, EDM, and 80s synth-pop together like an iPod Shuffle possessed. With custom-built sets, extravagant outfits and experiments into multi-sensory stimuli (such as the smell of burning human hair), they transcended the notion of 'the rock show' to immerse their audiences in full-blown works of surrealist avant-rock theatre.

Now, they return with *The Worm* – a nine-track allegorical concept album that sets to music an absurdist horror story in which a giant parasitic worm swallows England. The story was created

by the band's vocalist and abstract thinker-in-chief Henry Spsychalski. The next stage of development was for guitarist and producer Duc Peterman and keyboardist Seth Evans to take charge of imagining a musical universe wild and wriggly enough to represent Spsychalski's titular invertebrate.

As Duc recalls: "Henry came to mine one day and he told me that he'd had this crazy dream in which he was a child soldier during the Vietnam war. He was hit by a bullet and was bleeding to death. Then, suddenly a crowd of children assembled around him and ripped his belly open. His belly is full of worms and worms start gushing out. He said that he really would like to make the album about this vivid dream, and I thought it was the best idea he'd come up with."

The album was created over the course of two years with a cast of 47 musicians, including a gospel choir and 16 string players from the Greek National Orchestra whom Peterman conducted. He describes the sonic mission thus: "We wanted the music to reflect the narrative that Henry put forward with the guitars and the orchestra and everything that we had at our disposal."

"There are moments where there's five or six guitar parts at the same time"



THE CRAZY GANG
Duc Peterman (left)
with HMLTD



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“I don’t have much of a connection with the more macho side of guitar playing...”



➔ At his direct disposal, Peterman had a vintage Gibson ES-335, which he describes as his “most prized guitar” for its dashing good looks and its “sweet and dark tone” that, in his opinion, is unmatched by all the other guitars he’s ever played. He also worked with a vintage American Strat that he’d picked up at a local pawn shop – somewhat miraculously – for forty quid, an acoustic twelve-string that naturally evokes Jimmy Page circa *Led Zeppelin III* and *Houses Of The Holy*, and lastly, a bouzouki – as suggested by their Greek drummer, Achilleas Sarantaris.

Duc’s personal assortment and the wider instrumentation of the record was deployed with one overarching aim: to serve the idea. “I have a lot of recordings on my phone of the keyboardist and I trying to talk about musical motifs, musical sound and how we could represent the feeling of a worm,” explains the Parisian guitarist, who possesses a jazz school education and an in-built aversion to musical mediocrity. “For example, at the end of *The Worm* there’s this slow-moving orchestral, nausea-inducing thing. We actually had written at the end of the score: ‘play with the sensation of the worm’. I have this great memory of conducting the orchestra with kind of a worm movement and trying to imitate that.”

Likewise, Duc’s guitar contributions are frequently designed to convey feelings and images as much as they are to provide rhythmic and melodic outlines for the songs. “I think the mark of a great guitarist is more than just putting in a great riff” he says. “It’s really seeing how your guitar playing can be beneficial to the song. We like to use the guitar as more than just its traditional band settings – almost like a sound generator.”

Take, for example, the very first instance of guitar on the record, when a chaotic crescendo segues between the tracks *Worm’s Dream* and *Wyrmlands*. Here, Duc delivers what he describes as “this really obnoxious white noise” with the aid of an Eventide Space pedal and a homemade expression switch which, he says, creates a “whooshing sound, with the space of the reverb suddenly changing.” He adds: “Unlike an expression pedal, which usually has some kind of gradient, this one just goes from zero to 100, and I use it to control the pitch and the size of the reverb.”

Elsewhere, there are evocative experiments in tonal dissonance,

and adventures in layering, inspired by having scored the orchestra, that give a cinematic grandeur to his guitars. “There’s actually moments where there’s five or six guitar parts at the same time,” he explains, pointing to the dense climaxes of *Saddest Worm Ever* and *The End Is Now*. “We tried to conceive the guitar the same way you would conceive different instruments in an orchestra. You’d have violin one, violin two, viola, cello et cetera, and we tried to recreate the same thing by layering guitars on top of one another.” He smiles. “I don’t think it sounds too crowded. It still feels quite emotional, which I’m happy about – and not too gratuitous!”

Gratuitousness, in the sense exhibited by archetypal male guitar hero figures, is also something that Duc naturally avoids, and there are very few examples of ‘traditional’ guitar solos on the album, save for a gloriously seventies-inspired Mu-Tron Phasor-soaked fuzz fest at the conclusion of *The End Is Now*. Asked if such omissions are in any way related to the band’s strong stance against toxic masculinity in all its forms, he pauses for thought and a puff on a hand-rolled cigarette. He hasn’t thought about this before, but he’s chewing it over with great interest as we speak. “I don’t really consider myself as someone who enjoys showing off and I prefer to take more of a back seat when it comes to the gigs,” he ponders. “I don’t have much of a connection with the more macho side of guitar playing.”

The pride themselves on creating what they call “a safe space for people to come and enjoy the music and be able to express their gender, personality and sexuality any way they want.” With that in mind, Duc says, with a hint of concern, “I hope that people don’t see a toxic male guitar player when they see me on stage!”

Quite the opposite. This inventive player seems to re-contextualise the instrument as a tool for busting boundaries and defying the expectations of guitar-based music. On *The Worm*, he and the band remain as defiantly genre-agnostic as ever, writhing through free jazz riffing (*Wyrmlands*), a vintage soul, folk and psych-rock fusion (*The End Is Now*), and a Queen/Brian May-influenced rock opera of truly epic proportions (*The Worm*). As Duc puts it: “With HMLTD – even though I still consider it to be a punk band – we try to explore a lot of different genres. We get

FREE THINKING

“Even though I still consider it to be a punk band, we try to explore a lot of different genres,” Duc says.

excited by very stupid ideas, so we really don’t impose any kind of preconceived notion of how the song should sound.”

But the genre-hopping capabilities of HMLTD also speak to the listening habits of a generation whose attention spans have been shortened by social media scrolling and the infinite choices presented by streaming platforms. By keeping things unpredictable, the band lessens the temptation for listeners to flit between songs, or – worse – move on to listening to other artists. Duc reveals the secret to their style-smashing success. “It’s a process of trial and error for everything you hear on the record.” Noting that the band’s typical working practice involves demoing tracks five or six times before committing to anything, he adds with a laugh: “There’s a lot of very mediocre guitar parts that didn’t make it!”

But he works hard to bring interest and cohesion through his contributions, even keeping a folder of pre-recorded ideas and textures – such as the previously mentioned white noise that closes *Worm’s Dream* – on his computer, ready to drop in and out of songs during the mixing process to see what sticks. “Because I also do all the production in the band, I’ve seen all of the guitar playing as an extension of the production,” he says. “So I also see it in terms of how we can fit it in the mix from a sonic perspective.”

Out of his twin interests in playing and producing has also grown a burgeoning passion for amateur effects building. “I’ve got a friend who builds a lot for me,” he says. “And before the album, I was like, ‘I really want to build my own guitar pedals,’” To feed his fascination, he recalls receiving from her a “massive PDF on electrical engineering” that he’s still digesting, as well as plenty of hands-on direction. “She teaches me about how to look at electrical current and understand the topography of fuzz et cetera. She shows me how to solder. Then, I solder my own. Most of the time I end up not doing a very good job, but there’s a few that I’ve managed. I have my own fuzz that I built, that I use quite a lot.”

Fittingly, the tones that emanate from this Fuzz Factory-inspired self-build crawl out in great big fat hairy caterpillar-shaped waveforms, and – if you think about it – what other effect could embody the album’s theme better than that?

The Worm is out now.

Guitars and backing Jon Bishop

POWER UP!

Phrasing, vibrato and rock solid timing. Inside the essential elements of the **AC/DC** guitarists' styles

The sound and playing style of AC/DC's Angus and Malcolm Young is legendary and constantly emulated. The core elements, though rarely complex, are harder to master than you might imagine, however. Malcolm's open shapes and powerchords are delivered with unrelenting, rock solid groove. And Angus's leads? Well, his phrasing and vibrato are instantly recognisable – which, while making him the icon he is, does mean you'll be aping

quite an individualistic style. Tonally, the AC/DC sound epitomises the idea that less is more. A Marshall amp is a core ingredient, as is the combination of Gretsch G6131 Jet and Gibson SG guitars with bridge pickups selected. Assuming you're not in a position to crank your amp to stadium-ready volume levels, Young brothers style, we recommend keeping the gain low for the rhythm parts and using a Tube Screamer-style overdrive pedal for a mid boost on lead parts. Now, let there be rock!



1 MALCOLM-STYLE OPEN POWERCHORDS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=120

E⁵

A⁵

E⁵

D⁵

E⁵

G⁵

A⁵

E⁵ Play 4 times

TAB

1 2 0 1/4 2 0 2 0 3 0 2 0 3 2 0

The driving force of the AC/DC rhythm section, Malcolm Young predominantly favoured open chords and powerchords, where open strings would maximise resonance and sustain. Coupled with the lightest of drive tones this gives loads of dynamic range and bucketloads more power than you'd expect. Here in our *Dirty Deeds*-style riff, the minor 3rd G note can be bent slightly sharp for a bluesy flavour.

2 MALCOLM-STYLE SPARSE RIFFS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=125

B⁵ B⁵/A B⁵

B⁵/A B⁵ B⁵/A G⁵ D⁵

Play 4 times

Space and raw simplicity are key to Malcolm's vibe - he'd *never* overplay! His parts let the drums and bass breath and never get in the way of Angus' lead parts. Inspired by tracks like *Rock 'N' Roll Train* and *Highway To Hell*, our example here is best delivered with downpicking for a consistent attack.

3 ANGUS-STYLE DOUBLESTOP LICK

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=140

E⁵ G⁵ A⁶ G⁵ A⁵

BU BD

BU BD

Play 4 times

Angus' lead style is a blend of rock 'n' roll and blues, and this doublestop (two notes together) idea demonstrates his Chuck Berry influences. We've taken our inspiration from *Hells Bells* here with a lick that's based in the minor pentatonic scale - but listen out for the 14th-fret note on the second string, which comes from the Dorian mode.



4 ANGUS-STYLE BENDS & VIBRATO

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=125

B⁵ B⁵/A B⁵ B⁵/A G⁵ ^{1/4}

let ring

Play 4 times

TAB

1 7 9 7 7 [7] 9 9 7 9

3

Many would say Angus' frenetic vibrato is instantly recognisable. Break the vibrato in our example riff into two elements by copying first the speed and timing, then analysing how much pitch bend to apply.

5 ANGUS-STYLE PENTATONICS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=130

A⁵ G⁵ D/F# ^{8va}

let ring

BU RP BD BU

12 (14) 12 (14) (12) 10 13 (15) 13 10 11 10 20 (22)

1

A⁵ (8va) G⁵ D/F#

Play 4 times

TAB

3 [22] 17 20 17 BU 17 17 19 (21) 17 17 17 19 [19]

3

One trick that Angus uses is to mix up the major and minor pentatonic scales. Our example is inspired by *You Shook Me All Night Long* and starts out with the bright-sounding A major pentatonic scale (A B C# E F#) before moving to the darker A minor pentatonic scale (A C D E G). Try to exploit this mood change in your own licks.

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 and light striped short-sleeved shirt over a white t-shirt, grey trousers, and brown boots. He has a red guitar strap and a tattoo on his left arm. 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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“HE MADE THE MOST INCREDIBLE SOUNDS”



1983 was the year in which **Stevie Ray Vaughan** made his name as a guitar hero. **Texas Flood**, his debut album with **Double Trouble**, set off a revolution in blues music.

And it was SRV's brilliance that lit up the biggest hit of **David Bowie**'s career.

Now, 40 years on, TG **celebrates** one of the **greatest** and most **influential** players of all time...

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Get inside the Texas blues icon's incendiary playing style



“He is going to shake the world!”

Words Amit Sharma Photography Getty

In the early 80s, when Eric Clapton first heard **Stevie Ray Vaughan** play, it took his breath away. What David Bowie heard was the most exciting guitarist since Jeff Beck...

W

hen the legendary Jeff Beck passed away in January, he was remembered as a player who epitomised ‘feel’ in just about every conceivable way. Summarising the profound sense of loss for the guitar community, TG noted how Beck was truly in a class of his own. The same is true of another player we lost more than 30 years ago: Stevie Ray Vaughan.

SRV had that same magic touch that all guitarists strive for, never running out of ideas that could amaze the listener at every turn. As with Beck, you got the sense that this was a musician speaking through their instrument, conveying deep emotions and

telling stories via the means with which they were most at ease – a rare gift in being able to effortlessly move audiences through honesty, passion and charisma.

Many guitar players will remember hearing the song *Lenny* for the first time and feeling like their eyes had just been opened – Stevie Ray Vaughan using sophisticated sixth voicings, Hendrixian doublestops and mouth-watering pentatonics to pay tribute to his wife Lenora Bailey, who bought him the 1965 Strat also named after her. Then there are tracks like *Scuttle Buttin’* which saw him defining what would become known as the Texan sound, ripping through open position blues runs at speeds few had ever dared.

From early fan favourites like *Pride And Joy*, *Texas Flood* and *Cold Shot* to latter works like *Crossfire*, *Tightrope* and the jazz-influenced masterpiece *Riviera Paradise*, SRV was in many ways the Jimi Hendrix of the 1980s, paying tribute through renditions of Hendrix classics *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)* and *Little Wing*, and also by tuning half a step down. “I loved Jimi a lot,” Stevie told *Guitar World* in 1984, noting how Hendrix “could do anything” and “was so much more than just a blues guitarist”, while also adding

how he’d been learning various parts and “trying to expand on it – not that I can expand on it a whole bunch – but I try”.

Like his biggest hero and influence, SRV was a daredevil who would throw himself into the eye of the storm in order to conjure up magic, taking risks as an improviser and somehow managing to never set a foot wrong or run out of gas. Comparisons can also be made to the late great Eddie Van Halen, and the sheer sense of technicality that they both brought to their respective genres – SRV taking the innovations of Albert King, B.B. King and Freddie King to new virtuosic heights, more aggressive than any blues artist before him and leading the charge for a whole new wave of harder-hitting players. His range of dynamics was as wide as it gets, going from furious tremolo picking and wailing bends to breath-taking moments that were as quiet as a whisper, making the listener lean in and almost strain to hear the ghost notes he may or may not have been playing.







As Eric Clapton once said of SRV: "I don't think anyone has commanded my respect more." On that fateful night in 1990 when Stevie died in a helicopter crash, he and Clapton had performed together on stage mere hours earlier. In a heartfelt tribute, Clapton recalled: "The first time I heard Stevie Ray, I thought, 'Whoever this is, he is going to shake the world'. I was in my car and I remember thinking, I have to find out, before the day is over, who that guitar player is. That doesn't happen to me very often. I remember being fascinated by the fact that he never, ever seemed to be lost in any way... It was as though he never took a breather or took a pause to think where he was gonna go next, it just flowed out of him. It's going to be a long time before anyone that brilliant will come along again."

But it wasn't just SRV's playing that took the world by storm – it was also his tone, a glassy edge-of-breakup kind of sound that almost every blues player on earth will have ended up chasing at some point in their life. And, all in all, his was a fairly simple rig: positions four and five on his Strats were often his favourites, usually fed through an Ibanez Tube Screamer (he used TS808s, TS9s and TS10s at various points of his career), along with a Vox V846 wah that once belonged to Jimi Hendrix and a couple of high-powered Fender amps. And let's not forget the man's dress sense – given his love for black hats, flamboyant shirts, cowboy boots, conchos and ponchos, he was someone who looked every bit the guitar legend.

He was born Stephen Ray Vaughan on October 3 1954 in Dallas, Texas, and as a young boy he was guided towards music by his older brother Jimmie, who went on to become famous in his own right as guitarist of The Fabulous Thunderbirds.

For his seventh birthday, Stevie was given a toy guitar from Sears, and a couple of years later he was donated a Gibson ES-125T



from his brother, which he'd use to mimic the immortal lines he'd heard played by Albert King and Muddy Waters. "Jimmie would leave his guitars around the house and tell me not to touch 'em," Stevie once revealed.

"And that's basically how I got started. I actually wanted to be a drummer, but I didn't have any drums. So I just go into what was available to me at the time."

Through his early teens he performed with a number of bands – The Chantones, The Brooklyn Underground, Southern Distributor and Liberation, the latter supporting ZZ Top at Dallas' Adolphus Hotel and even jamming on stage with them. By this point, Stevie had lost interest at school and had ultimately decided what he was going

BLUES POWER
Stevie inspired a new wave of harder-hitting blues players.

to do with the rest of his life. He joined Cast Of Thousands, with whom he made his very first studio recordings, and then formed his own group, Blackbird, followed by stints in Krackerjack and then The Nightcrawlers.

But it was The Cobras that helped him cast his name as a Texan blues legend, and it was during these years that he wound up guesting with heroes like Buddy Guy, Hubert Sumlin, Lightnin' Hopkins and Albert King at famous Austin blues nightclub Antone's. After some personnel changes the band was renamed Double Trouble, eventually settling with Chris Layton on drums and Tommy Shannon as the bass player.

In 1982 the trio got their big break after being invited to perform at the prestigious Montreux Jazz Festival in Switzerland, but the set wasn't particularly well received thanks to the amount of sheer volume coming from the stage. As Stevie would recall of the booing they received, "It wasn't the whole crowd. It was just a few people

"I LOVED JIMI. HE COULD DO ANYTHING"
STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN



sitting right up front. The room there was built for acoustic jazz. When five or six people boo, wow, it sounds like the whole world hates you! They thought we were too loud, but shoot, I had four army blankets folded over my amp, and the volume level was on two. I'm used to playin' on 10!"

Some good came out of it, however. One of the people watching happened to be one of the most famous musicians in the world, David Bowie, who later said of SRV's playing: "It completely floored me." Bowie was reminded of witnessing Jeff Beck play live in the 60s in one of his early groups. "I hadn't been so gung-ho about a guitar player since seeing Jeff Beck with The Tridents," he raved.

And that wasn't the only music contact that the band acquired during their first overseas visit. The night after the festival, the trio performed at Montreux Casino where singer-

songwriter Jackson Browne was in attendance. Browne was so impressed he offered them free use of his Los Angeles recording studio, and it was during these sessions, for what would become debut album *Texas Flood*, that Bowie called to invite Stevie to play on his album *Let's Dance* – produced by legendary guitarist Nile Rodgers of Chic.

SRV played lead on six of the eight tracks on *Let's Dance*, a major contribution comparable to those of other great guitarist who had worked with Bowie in the past, including Mick Ronson, Robert Fripp and Carlos Alomar. The album's title track and lead single was more of a funk-pop number than the 12-bar turnarounds SRV had cut his teeth playing, which is perhaps what made his contributions so striking – taking the influence of blues to new places and winning himself new fans in the process, while also landing a deal with Epic for his solo releases.

The collaboration with Bowie came to an abrupt end, however. After he had

RULE OF THREE
Stevie with Double Trouble drummer Chris Layton and bassist Tommy Shannon.

been picked to play in Bowie's backing group for a world tour on which he and Double Trouble were lined up as the opening act on selected dates, the offer was retracted, leaving Stevie with no choice but to throw himself into his own music. So that's precisely what he did.

Texas Flood signalled the arrival of a new kind of blues that was less loose and free, and instead more focused, sharp and energetic. The album's opening track *Love Struck Baby* sounded like *Johnny B. Goode* on steroids, while *Pride And Joy* and *Testify* had an irresistible swing to them thanks to SRV's right hand strum. Elsewhere, a stylish cover of Buddy Guy's *Mary Had A Little Lamb* demonstrated a mid-tempo slickness to show how Stevie was much more than a one-trick pony, with the beautiful *Lenny* ended the album on an apex of vast emotional intelligence, pulling at the heartstrings like few guitarists had done before him. Stevie Ray Vaughan had arrived. Guitar music was never to be the same again...



Words Alan Paul and Andy Aledort Photography Getty

“He was playing crazy loud, but beautifully – and with the best tone”

How **SRV** emerged as a guitar hero – with a debut album recorded in just three days, and a starring role with **David Bowie**

In 1982, Stevie Ray Vaughan completed the two recording sessions that would make him a star. The first sessions yielded *Texas Flood*, his debut album with Double Trouble. The second had him playing lead for David Bowie’s album *Let’s Dance*. In this adapted extract from *Texas Flood: The Inside Story Of Stevie Ray Vaughan* by Alan Paul and Andy Aledort, key figures and collaborators reveal how SRV worked his magic on two fronts – lighting up Bowie’s hit record and creating the album that reignited blues music in the early 80s.

On November 22, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble arrived in Los Angeles to work at Downtown Studio. The facility was owned by famed singer-songwriter Jackson Browne, who gave Stevie and the boys three days of studio time – free of charge – during a break from recording his own album *Lawyers In Love*.

By chance, Richard Mullen, a Texas musician and friend of the band, was also in LA, recording with singer Christopher Cross. Mullen took charge of the Downtown sessions and would finish the job as producer of *Texas Flood*. Mullen tuned the drums and dialed up the sounds he wanted to hear on Vaughan

and Shannon’s amps. He also employed some sound baffles between the players to decrease leakage and allow cleaner tracks of each instrument without forcing the band to physically separate and lose the ‘live’ vibe.

Chris Layton (Double Trouble drummer): We were just making tape, hoping that maybe it would result in a demo a real record company might actually listen to. We rolled into Downtown Studio and we were like, ‘Hey, you guys got any tape?’ We actually recorded over some of Jackson’s demos for *Lawyers In Love*.

Tommy Shannon (Double Trouble bassist): We only had time to cut two songs the first day. The

second was the only one we used – and it was *Texas Flood*.

Chris Layton: The studio was a big warehouse, about 20,000 square feet, and we set up in the middle like a gig, in close proximity, facing each other in a little triangle. Stevie and Tommy were only about six or seven feet away from me and we just played, with bleed [microphone leakage between the instruments] all over the place

Richard Mullen: I wanted the band’s reality to be as close as possible to what they were used to playing live, so I didn’t let them use headphones. I wanted them to play like it was a gig, with the same sense of abandon. If you give a musician the chance to think about what they are doing in the studio, they’ll often mess up. I looked at their set list and said, ‘Let’s go through the tunes just like a show.’

After nailing the album’s title track on day one, the band cut *Tell Me* and *I’m Cryin’* on day two, and *Love Struck Baby*, *Pride And Joy*, *Testify*, *Rude Mood*, *Mary Had A Little*

Lamb, *Dirty Pool* and *Lenny* on day three – November 24, 1982.

Tommy Shannon: On our second full day, we knew we had to get it on. During *Testify*, Stevie broke a string half-way through. So we cued up the spot and punched in the whole band; I defy anyone to hear that punch-in.

Richard Mullen: We were using one 24-track machine, but I was really interested in doing it in a 16-track/two-inch format. This way, I could play the tape on my 16-track back home [at Riverside Sound] to record the vocals, which is what we ended up doing. Stevie’s set-up was so simple, so we only used 14 tracks.

Chris Layton: Countless people have told me how much they loved Stevie’s guitar tone on *Texas Flood*. There was literally nothing between the guitar and the amp. It was just his ‘Number One’ Strat plugged into a Dumble amp called Mother Dumble, which was owned by Jackson Browne. The real tone just came from Stevie, and that whole recording was so pure; the whole experience couldn’t have been more innocent or naive.







➔ If we had known what was going to happen with it all, we might have screwed up. We just played. The magic was there and it came through on the tape. The great opportunity was that we didn't have a pot to p*ss in and we got to record for free. We didn't sense we had just gotten our big break.

During this brief time in Los Angeles, there was a late night phone call to the band's shared apartment. SRV received an offer he couldn't refuse...

Chris Layton: The phone rang at three in the morning, and this quiet English voice said, 'Is Stevie Vaughan there?' I said, 'Damn, who is this?' 'This is David Bowie.' I'm thinking, 'You mean, the Thin White Duke? Ziggy Stardust?' 'That David Bowie?' I paused and said, 'Oh, just one minute.' I ran into Stevie's room, shook him awake and yelled. 'Get up, get up. David Bowie's on the phone!' They talked for a while, and then Stevie said that Bowie asked him if he wanted to cut some tracks in New York for his new record and maybe join his band for a world tour.

Tommy Shannon: Stevie was really excited about being asked to play on Bowie's next record. At that point, he also thought we were going to open the shows, because of what Bowie told him.

From LA, the trio returned home to Austin, Texas. As Stevie made plans to go to New York and record with Bowie, the band and Richard Mullen worked on the Downtown tapes at Riverside Sound, where Stevie recut most of the album's vocals.

Richard Mullen: I gave Stevie two tracks to work with, and he would

cut the vocal part for each song twice. We would use either the best of the two tracks or do a quick comp ['Comping' tracks means to edit parts together from different takes]. Overall, there was no finagling of anything on *Texas Flood*; it was about as live and true to a performance as it could possibly be.

Stevie flew to New York in early January 1983 to join Bowie and producer Nile Rodgers at the Power Station studio. Most of the recording for what would become *Let's Dance* was already complete.

Nile Rodgers: Almost all the musicians and engineers on *Let's Dance* were mine. Bowie told me about this amazing new guitarist that he had

heard in Montreux that he thought would be great for the album's solos. The first time I heard Stevie play was when he played my gold-plated hardware Fender Stratocaster, about 20 minutes before he heard *Let's Dance* in the Power Station Studio C control room.

Carmine Rojas (Bassist): There was talk about getting Albert King to play on *Let's Dance*, because David was a genius at putting opposite forces at work and understanding what would work brilliantly. He heard that style of guitar on some of these songs from the start.

Nile Rodgers: Carmine is getting the story a little mixed up. He's remembering me saying after hearing Stevie's first sparsely noted solo, 'Why didn't we just get Albert King?' That was my

first thought, but I regretted saying that almost instantly after realising how carefully Stevie was listening and respecting the space. It didn't take me long to realise Stevie was something pretty special.

Bob Clearmountain (Engineer and mixer on *Let's Dance*): We did Stevie's guitar solos and a lot of David's final vocals after the band tracks were done. Stevie just had his Strat, a cord and a Super Reverb amp, which stood out because so many guitar players at the time would bring in multiple racks and huge pedal boards. He made the most incredible sounds and was the sweetest guy.

Carmine Rojas: As they were recording Stevie Ray's guitar parts, I was astounded. He was set up playing crazy loud, but beautifully and with the best tone, and he was fully enveloped inside the music. He was amazing to watch.

Nile Rodgers: Stevie was not one bit intimidated. Working with him was a breeze. He did all his solos in a day or two. He

loved what he'd heard and knew it was important. He just listened down a few times and tore into each song.

Bob Clearmountain: He worked incredibly fast, immediately cutting three solos on three songs and what we used were mostly first takes. He listened once and then started playing. It was pretty incredible to witness.

Carmine Rojas: He played the outro to *Let's Dance* and he just kept playing better and better. I used to go see Albert King and Hendrix at the Fillmore East, and Stevie was dishing out the same kind of soul, touch

and heart I heard from those guys. I was amazed that someone else had nailed something that seemed to be in the past, that I thought I'd never experience again.

Bob Clearmountain: I think Stevie had only heard *China Girl* once before he started wailing away perfectly. At the end of the section, there's a chord change and he lands on the wrong note, so it sounded a little dissonant. We played it in the control room, looked at each other and winced and I said, 'Let's fix that.' But David said, 'No. It's perfect.' He liked dissonance and he loved first takes.

While Stevie was in New York with Bowie, the Downtown tapes were in the hands of several record label A&R executives. The first to express interest in the band was John Hammond, the 72-year-old Columbia Records executive who had signed Billie Holiday, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen and other icons.

Richard Mullen: Stevie had been kicking around Texas for a long time and that tape sounded like him live, so people there may have shrugged. But people elsewhere heard a super-talented guy playing with aggression and soul and it didn't matter if the form was familiar. We felt we'd done a good job on the mixes, but it was viewed as a demo that would be used to try to get a deal. John Hammond heard it and said, 'This is great; let's just release this.'

Chris Layton: Signing Stevie made sense, because he was on Bowie's next record, which they figured would blow-up huge, and he was going to tour all over the world with him; there was our marketing right there. It was the



"IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO REALISE STEVIE WAS SOMETHING PRETTY SPECIAL" NILE RODGERS

perfect time to sign him, even for a modest advance and investment.

Stevie Ray Vaughan signed with Epic Records, a sister label to Columbia, on March 15, 1983. They sent Jackson Browne a horse as a thank you. Stevie also elected to make Chris Layton and Tommy Shannon equal partners in this deal, against the advice of those who considered the drummer and bassist as mere sidemen who might easily be replaced.

Steve Jordan (Drummer for Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, John Mayer, and now The Rolling Stones): I wasn't a huge Double Trouble fan. I didn't think they

were heavily ensconced in the groove. But I've since come to appreciate the importance of chemistry and a family feeling in a band. Stevie and Eddie Van Halen are very similar. They both carry the rhythm, melody and lead and drive the band with the way they play the guitar.

Chris Layton: Stevie was better than anyone anyhow, so he might as well play with guys who loved him. We were like a family. And family doesn't just happen because you're paying someone. Stevie was an absolute virtuoso so it's easy to think everyone in the band should be the same. Tommy and I usually played pretty simple things because Stevie was doing so much, and that's what worked best.

The title track from *Let's Dance* was released in March 1983, the album a month later. *Texas Flood* followed on June 13, 1983. *Let's Dance* became the biggest hit single of Bowie's entire career, and in a review of the album in *NME*, critic Charles Shaar Murray hailed SRV's contribution: "Bowie's primary instrumental foil is lead guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan, a young Texan who apparently believes that Albert King is God. He has mastered King's way of laying a sweet sharp note down on the beat so that it sounds just like a blessing."

The early reviews of *Texas Flood* were not so kind, with Kurt Loder writing in *Rolling Stone*: "The Good

News: Stevie Ray Vaughan plays true Texas-style blues guitar all over this debut album. The Bad News: Stevie Ray can't write – and we all know how boring white blues can become without some semblance of a tune..." But over time, *Texas Flood* would be recognised as a landmark in blues music. As ZZ Top guitarist/vocalist Billy Gibbons said: "The proficiency Stevie developed required very little in taking the style elsewhere. It simply got a little louder, a little faster, all with spot-on satisfaction. The exacting delivery that appeared to be so effortless raised the bar and established the value of true dedication. The importance Stevie carved for so many other aspiring guitarists is immeasurable."

SMOKIN'!

"We were like a family," says Chris Layton, pictured right with SRV and Tommy Shannon.





Interview Amit Sharma Photography Getty

“STEVIE JUST PLUGGED IN AND PLAYED!”

How SRV made *Texas Flood* – by Double Trouble drummer **Chris Layton**

GEAR

Stevie brought two guitars with him – he brought his ‘Number One’ Strat, that everyone always saw him playing, and he brought the old brown Strat he called ‘Lenny’. That was it for the sessions. He had a Fender Super Reverb and a Vibroverb, but when we got to Jackson Browne’s studio, Jackson said he had this combo that he really loved. He said, ‘Try it out, you might like it!’ And it was one of the early Dumbles. It was this combo with a tie-dye grill cloth. Jackson said, ‘A friend of mine started making these recently and ended up making me one!’ And he persuaded Stevie to plug into it.

STRINGS

Stevie’s hands were unbelievably strong! If you saw him without a shirt on, he’d be this thin, little-bodied guy, but his hands looked like they could crush concrete! I used to call him Popeye! With those thicker strings he used, it was like he was in a battle with them, almost fighting them with his fingers. Why didn’t he lighten up on the strings? I guess the gauge of those big strings would determine the tone, no matter who the player is, and give you a sound that thin strings just can’t get. There’s no way a 37 low-E can sound like a 48 or whatever, and there’s no way an 8 high-E can sound like Stevie’s 13. They just won’t ring in the same way. That was the method to his madness, being able to manipulate those strings.

TONE

Stevie was always be messing around, sometimes even playing just a simple single note over and over again. He’d tell me he was ‘searching for a better tone’. He’d say, ‘Without tone, there really isn’t anything!’ I remember him saying, ‘All the people considered to be great players would start off with a really good tone before they had any licks or songs!’ It has to sound good first. And that’s what he was searching for. It’s almost like the notes and the songs came secondary!

RECORDING

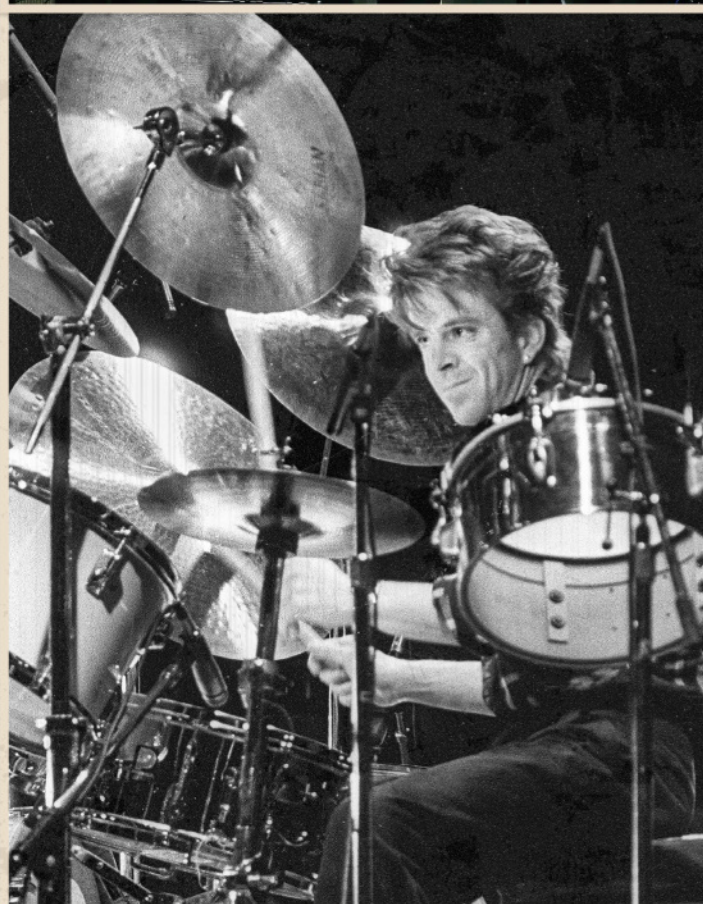
To be honest, we didn’t really know what we were doing. We almost treated it like a show, as if we were on stage. If the take sounded good, we’d move on to the next one. What we did in that studio is what we played hours later across the road in a club. Stevie just plugged in and played. With the song *Lenny*, I remember he started fiddling around with the idea and then played it to me in its entirety. Where I come in on the song, I just naturally fell in there. He was shaking his head smiling and going ‘Yeah, that’s it!’ That’s how we made music, mostly. We didn’t write it out and talk about it. It wasn’t like *Sgt. Pepper*. We just played through all the songs two times, some of them maybe three, and then it was done. It was as honest as music can get.

“HIS HANDS WERE UNBELIEVABLY STRONG!”



TROUBLEMAKERS

Jimmie Vaughan, Tommy Shannon, Reese Wynans and Chris Layton perform songs by Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble onstage in Cleveland, Ohio in 2015.



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"Playing guitar was his life"

Words Amit Sharma | Photography Getty

As an artist, Stevie Ray Vaughan never stood still. A man who had a rare gift, he was always strumming that guitar...

M

any artists would have struggled to follow a debut album as game-changing as *Texas Flood*. Not SRV, however, who showed no signs of second album syndrome on 1984's *Couldn't Stand The Weather*.

Its opening track, the fiery instrumental he named *Scuttle Buttin'*, is arguably the most technically demanding piece of music he ever put his name to. An up-tempo 12-bar shuffle delivered in fast and furious style in under two minutes, in which he ripped through the open position of the E₇ blues scale at 162bpm, demonstrating his ferocious alternate-picking

skills with flickers of legato and glissando to round it all off. But it was far greater than an exercise in clinical repetition, instead typifying a gift most natural indeed – the kind very few are born with.

The title track from *Couldn't Stand The Weather* was issued as a single with a video that received regular rotation on MTV. In this, Stevie can be seen playing his Hamilton Strat copy built by New York luthier James Hamilton. It had been commissioned by ZZ Top legend Billy Gibbons, and was presented to SRV as a gift on April 29, 1984. Though it was similar in shape, the guitar carried a few notable differences to the real deal Strats the guitarist was usually seen with, such as the neck-through-body design instead of the standard Fender bolt-on, and a two-piece

maple body as opposed to his favoured alder. In place of the usual rosewood, the fretboard was made out of ebony featured an abalone inlay emblazoned with the guitarist's name. Somewhat ironically, during the video shoot the guitar itself couldn't stand the weather, with the EMG pickups damaged by the 'rain' falling on the musicians and their instruments. Stevie replaced them with stock Fender singlecoils.

Other highlights from the album included slow blues *Tin Pan Alley*, jazz closer *Stang's Swang* and W.C. Clark/Mike Kindred cover *Cold Shot* – which,

"HE HAD IDEAS
POURING OUT OF HIM"
CHRIS LAYTON







like title track, made use of the Fender Vibratone cabinet manufactured by the American guitar company during the late-60s and early-70s. A modulation effect would be produced by its 10-inch speaker and cylinder being mechanically rotated by a motor with a rubber belt, taking advantage of the Doppler effect – which is the apparent change in frequency of a wave to the listener as a result of motion.

Soul To Soul, the third album by Stevie Ray Vaughan And Double Trouble, arrived in 1985, and again yielded some staggeringly thrilling and ambitious moments as the band dared to tread new ground with keyboardist Reese Wynans, who now plays with Joe Bonamassa. *Look At Little Sister*, for example, drifted away from their roots as a power trio and incorporated some honky-tonk piano as well as a saxophone solo, whereas *Change It* felt like a heavier and more modern take on the traditional blues format pursued on their earlier recordings. And on the closing ballad *Life Without You* he sang as beautifully as he played – a masterclass in sonic perfection.

As drummer Chris Layton recalls: “I guess to some extent we all had that perfectionist ideal, always wanting to get a little better, but Stevie was a really easy-going guy. He was a very forgiving person, and generous. The one thing he was demanding of – without ever saying it – was trying our hardest and being the best we could be. It was never like, ‘Uh oh, you made a mistake!’ In fact, he’d often say a mistake might even be something new – let’s go with it and see where it takes us instead of stopping and starting again because it was played wrong.

“That was a beautiful thing about him. We never really analysed what we were doing. We just had to put our hearts and souls into what we were playing. There were no qualifications, rules or regulations, which was cool but also kinda daunting – especially when you’re on stage in front of 20,000 people and he starts playing something new! You have to jump in and not question whether it will work or not. We just had to take off and try our best!”

It was in this period that Stevie’s alcohol and cocaine addictions began

SPARKS FLY

SRV onstage with the legendary Jeff Beck

to spiral out of control, almost killing him from dehydration in Germany and famously leading to a blackout on stage in London. As he later revealed: “I would wake up and guzzle something just to get rid of the pain I was feeling. It was like... solid doom.” After doctors warned him that he was just months away from death, Stevie entered rehab in 1986 and continued his recovery after relocating back to the house he grew up in. Although he was nervous about performing sober, he returned to the stage on November 23 of that year at Maryland’s Towson State University.

Sadly, as fate would have it, the 1989 album *In Step* – its title openly referring to his recent experience of rehabilitation – would end up being the final release from Stevie Ray Vaughan And Double Trouble. It remains a favourite among fans for many reasons, with the quartet broadening their horizons and penning tracks that felt slicker and ultimately bigger than their earlier work, with additional horns, saxophones and trumpets for good measure.

Opening track *The House Is Rockin’* includes some phenomenal interplay between SRV and Wynans, and a new sense of musical focus is evident

There’s the band boogie of *Crossfire*, and the funky shuffle of *Tightrope* features another example of Stevie’s dynamic phrasing during the solo section, where he leaves long gaps in between his musical sentences to let the conversation flow naturally. And, just like everything they’d recorded thus far, there were many different shades of blue to be found in between its energetic opener, the slower 1–4–5 of *Leave My Girl Alone* and grand finale *Riviera Paradise*.

Says Chris Layton: “All the stuff we recorded together, from *Tightrope*, *Lookin’ Out The Window* and *Leave My Girl Alone* to *Crossfire* to *Riviera Paradise* and *Stang’s Swang*, these were all incredible songs and all very different. It wasn’t just the blues format dragging on and on.”

To promote *In Step*, the band joined forces on a tour with Jeff Beck and his group, who had recently released the highly acclaimed *Jeff Beck’s Guitar Shop* album. Anyone who was lucky enough to catch any of the 29 dates on The Fire Meets The Fury Tour will have seen two of greatest guitar players of all-time going head-to-head on latter-day releases that proved they still had

plenty to say. But, of course, in SRV's case, it was just not meant to be.

During one month in 1990 he had teamed up with big brother Jimmie to record the album *Family Style*, credited to The Vaughan Brothers. The album was produced by Nile Rodgers, and for a lot of those recordings Stevie ended up using the Chic guitarist's black Strat with gold hardware. "He loved the way it sounded," Rodgers told TG. "A few months before doing that Vaughan Brothers record, I went out and bought that guitar from Manny's in New York. I might actually send that to Fender and have them come up with the story of how it was made and why it was made that year... because it was not a normal kind of Strat."

On August 27 of that year, Stevie Ray Vaughan And Double Trouble played as support act to Eric Clapton at the Alpine Valley Music Theater in Wisconsin. The show climaxed with an all-star jam. Shortly after, Stevie joined three members of Clapton's entourage in a helicopter bound for Chicago. In foggy conditions, the helicopter crashed half a mile from its take-off point, killing all on board.

As Chris Layton solemnly recalls, "The night he died, we spoke for an hour about what was next. Stevie said that he and Jimmie were going to do some stuff to promote the *Family Style* record, and then he said, 'I'm really excited because once we're done with that, I've got a bunch of ideas that, I hope I don't freak you out - but I'm hearing strings and brass and a whole different bunch of sh*t compared to what we've done in the past!' He was really jazzed about it and wanted us to be, too. These were just ideas pouring out of him and I couldn't wait to hear them. Then he got on that helicopter and took off. I think that's the best insight of knowing where he was going... and the future that never happened."

Chris has so many great memories from the years he spent with Stevie. What he remembers most of all is a man who lived for playing guitar. "Stevie had a guitar in his hand most of the time," he says. "He'd always be sat there playing away, but not rehearsing or anything. He was just always strumming that guitar. That's what was amazingly pure about him. Playing guitar was his life."

"THESE INCREDIBLE SONGS WERE ALL VERY DIFFERENT. IT WASN'T JUST THE BLUES DRAGGING ON"

CHRIS LAYTON





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"IF YOU STOP GROWING, WHAT GOOD IS IT MUSICALLY?"



Interview Tom Nolan Photography Getty

“By playing, you can make yourself feel better”

In a 1988 interview, Stevie Ray Vaughan talked in depth about his life, his music and his guitars. “It’s about the excitement of playing,” he said. “Trying new things...”

In 1988, Stevie Ray Vaughan gave an interview to *Guitarist* magazine as he prepared to record the album *In Step*. At this time he was in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction, and with sobriety came a new sense of focus and positivity.

In a wide-ranging conversation, Stevie spoke of his early years learning to play guitar in the shadow of his big brother Jimmie, his admiration for Hendrix and Clapton, his most treasured guitars and amps, and his hopes for the future.

Sadly, *In Step* proved to be the last album released in his lifetime. But back in 1988, Stevie saw this album as a new beginning...

How long does it take you to record an album?

Well they’ve all taken different lengths of time. The first one took two days; basically, we had 28 years to get our first record together! The second one, six months. The third, six months. And the live album [*Live Alive*]... actually, I had wanted to bring a crowd to the studio but it made more sense to bring the studio to the crowd, and because of that we ended up doing a lot of the songs off the other records. Since then there have been a lot of changes going on; changes in my life as well as other people in the band, and we’re trying to take things at a more sensible pace. You know, this record will be the first one I’ve done sober, completely sober, so things are a lot different now and there’s a lot more to see and look at and be thankful for.

Can you tell me how those changes happened?

Yeah, it would help me to talk about it anyway. I’m an alcoholic. I didn’t know that for a long time; I had a suspicion for a few years but I didn’t realise that that’s really what it was down to. I started drinking when I was six and through the years it ended up where I started using drink and other drugs to keep me going. Part of it had to do with the better bands

that I got into. It seemed as if they had been subject to the same kind of myths that I had; that to play that kind of music and be successful at it, or to be creative or hip, you had to be high. The truth is that’s bullshit. I finally hit bottom when I collapsed in about September 1986, over in Europe. It came to a head. I got to a point where I was completely wrecked in my thinking, in my heart and physically. Most of my values were gone. I finally gave up fighting this whole deal and then it dawned on me that now I can get some help. The treatment centre gave me the tools to live without using these things, and also to have more inspiration, more faith in life and in myself.

I’d like to talk about the Texas blues scene and how it developed for you as a youngster. Your brother Jimmie was a couple of years older...

“Yeah, three-and-a-half years older – he started playing when he was in junior high, when I couldn’t have been more than eight. A friend of my father’s brought over a guitar and handed it to him and said, ‘Hey play this, it won’t hurt you!’ That’s what he said, and Jimmie started playing right away. It was amazing to watch him do it. He had three strings on the guitar

and I went to school and came home and he'd made up three songs. I'm serious! And that's the way his playing has been all along. With that kind of influence as a big brother it's real easy to get into playing. I saw how much fun he was having with it, how dedicated he was to it, and it gave me a lot of inspiration. Eventually he got an electric guitar and I got the one that he'd had. Then he got another electric guitar and I got his hand-me-down, and soon after I was playing gigs. He started playing and within a few months he was in a band with all the hot guys around, and a few months later he was in the hottest band in Texas; I mean, *boom, boom, boom!* By the time he was 15, he was the hottest guitar player in Texas. From then on, everybody was trying to figure out how Jimmie Vaughan would do it – me too. The first week that I had an actual club gig, we played an eight-day week. That's when I met [Double Trouble bassist] Tommy Shannon... At 14 we were playing from 10 at night until six in the morning – we were also trying to go to school and that doesn't work real well.

Were you playing blues music at that stage?

Blues music and rock music. Rock 'n' roll, rock... but all blues-influenced, some of it by the original blues guys, some of it the English blues. Some of it was influenced by Hendrix – he also took everything he heard, that excited him, and put it into his music.

Do you practise specific licks and runs or do you simply play a lot?

I just play a lot, but lately not as much as I would like to. The way you have to travel now, the way that regulations have changed on planes – certainly in the States – they wouldn't let you on with something that was longer than a certain length, so we had to take the neck off the guitar. So when we'd get to the next town, I'd have to give it back to Rene [Martinez, Stevie's guitar tech] and he'd put it back together. And now that we're doing so many gigs and



everything there just isn't time. I really have been wanting to sit down in my room and play, because that's what started it, that's like going back to square one. And it's fun, it's fun to sit around, even if it gets frustrating. I'm starting to remember that some of the biggest doors that have been opened in my life have sometimes been the hardest things to do.

How did you get around those difficult things?

I kept listening, kept sitting in with people, kept listening to records. If I wanted to learn somebody's stuff, like with Clapton, when I wanted to learn how he was getting some of his sounds – which were real neat – I learned how to make the sounds with my mouth and then copied that with my guitar. I'd get it to where I could sing it and then do it on the guitar at the same time, and if it didn't sound like it should to me, then I'd do it again. It was kind of like scat singing or something. With Hendrix's music I kept listening and kept trying and kept trying, and some of the things I just stumbled onto when I'd been playing and things would kind of come to me. How to describe it I don't know... It had to do with confidence levels and the excitement of playing, trying new things and originality.

TEXAS STRAT

"A Stratocaster is the most versatile. I can pretty much get any sound out of it"

Did you ever get to see Hendrix live?

Not live. My brother opened up for him and they'd go around together, trading ideas... and wah-wah pedals! But I just kept trying it. That's one thing that I don't understand. I get asked a lot of times by people, how do I have enough gall to do *Voodoo Chile*, and my answer to that is that it seems to me all this pressure about whether it's sacrilegious to do Hendrix's music or not comes from other people, not him. I think he would probably hope that other people would take his music further.

How about your guitars – are you still playing your 'First Wife'?

"Yeah, my First Wife is a '59 Stratocaster, although now I have a different neck on it because every time I re-fretted it I'd have to fill in the holes.

Is it a custom-made neck?

No, it's the neck off another Stratocaster, but it's the same size neck. I use the big necks, the 'V' necks, and I use bass frets, jumbo bass frets. In some ways I have a little bit of a problem with that, because I don't know why but it seems to cause a bit more of a rattle. Of course part of that could be from tuning down to E_b as well – my action is pretty high, too. Anyway, I used mainly Stratocasters. I like a lot of different kinds of guitar, but for what I do it seems that a Stratocaster is the most versatile. I can pretty much get any sound out of it, and I use stock pickups.

You don't use any special wirings?

Not really. There's something I've been trying for a while, I call it Something Extra, and I've got it in my First Wife. What it does is, if there's a problem with lights and buzz I turn it on, and sometimes it causes the buzz to go away. It's on a push-pull switch and it changes the tone very barely, but I've learned to work with that tone. I can't say what it is because we're trying to see what we can do with it. It's a very simple idea, too.

Do you have any unusual guitars in your collection?

Well there's one that I'm carrying with me that is made by Charlie Wirz, the E_b model, which is basically a Stratocaster with Danelectro lipstick pickups in it.

"CLAPTON'S SOUNDS WERE REAL NEAT"
STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN



Whether he changed the wires in those pickups I'm not sure, he never told anyone. I love that guitar, it sounds like a Stratocaster but it's just a little bit different. Those pickups seem to work real well in a Stratocaster body – I like it a whole lot. I've also got a guitar that Billy Gibbons had made for me, that's a Hamiltone model.

Do you have any acoustics?

I've got a Gibson 335 that's a semi-acoustic, but I don't really do too much acoustic stuff. I've got a '28 dobro and I sometimes play some slide, but not very often. I go through phases where I feel comfortable about it. It's funny, I'll get into doing it again and get real confident with it, and then something happens...

How about your amps? You used to use two Vibroverbs.

Yeah, I used to use two Fender Vibroverbs, two Super Reverbs and a Dumble [Howard Dumble amps, made in Texas]. I had used Marshall amps years ago and I had a real clean one. It was a first or second series head – I'm not sure. I liked the Dumble a whole lot when I first got it, but the first one I had built, which is the best sounding one, is messed up right now – that's the one that's out on stage right now. But every one I've had since then have all sounded worse in different ways – I don't know what it is. My favourite rig lately has been an old Marshall Major, the PA top with four inputs. I was looking for one, I found the head, plugged it in, turned it up and it sounded... right. I use that head with the Dumble cabinet with four EV speakers in it. Then I use my older Dumble heads with another cabinet, and run a Leslie cabinet with that, and it sounds strong and clear. If you bear down on the strings and hit hard it will bark at you like it's supposed to, but it doesn't break up. The problem with taking the amps to a shop is sometimes they come back sounding like another amp. So right now, my favourite thing is to use the old Marshall Major head and my best Dumble, with two 4x12 cabinets and a Leslie – if I can keep [the] speakers in the Leslie. A Leslie has one 10-inch or 12-inch [speaker] depending on which model it is, and running it with a 200-watt head, it's screaming for help!

Your band has been together a good few years now...

Yeah, Tommy and I have been together off and on since 1969, although he's only been with this band since a couple of years before *Texas Flood*, and Chris [Layton, drums] and I have been together going on 13 years. We've gone through a lot together and nowadays we are coming out of it. We're learning more between each other, it's as if we're about to wake up again.

What are your goals both in the short term and long term?

I've put my life back together but it's all a growing process and that's neat, too, because if you stop growing, what good is it musically? So that is what I'm looking forward to – growing. In some ways I have been in a bit of a stagnant place for a while for whatever reason. I felt stagnant in my life and it showed. It's strange how it came about... It took my sobering up to see it. That's one of the things musicians who are going through this same thing have to look forward to. It's a challenge, it's kind of like starting over in a way; I've got a bit of a boost because I learned quite a bit before having to start over.

Do you still love playing? When you hold your guitar do you still feel good?

Yes. There were times when this was more apparent in the way it sounds up front, but this has always been the way. I figure there is no sense in going out there and not giving it what you've got, and I've had to do that when literally I did not feel up to par. It's funny because sometimes that's when you can heal yourself, by playing you can make yourself feel better. That has happened many times.

Well, they say music is a type of therapy...

Yes, well, I'm sure glad about that.





Words Amit Sharma Photography Olly Curtis/Getty

"I'D STUDIED THE DUDE NOTE-FOR-NOTE!"

Blues master **Eric Gales** remembers his jam with SRV

Stevie Ray Vaughan's spirit lives on through the power of his music, and even outside of the blues genre, it doesn't require much effort to find musicians who will name-check SRV as a primary influence. If you've ever listened to any recordings by John Mayer, Joe Bonamassa, Josh Smith, Dan Patlansky or Philip Sayce, you will have definitely heard a line or two, or perhaps even 100, copped straight out of the SRV lick book. It's something any of those players would happily admit to and have done time and time again.

But if there's one musician who seems to capture the great man's essence and courageous flair for gutsy improvisation, as well as continually delivering the kind of impeccable tones that leave other players red-faced in envy, it's Magneto Guitars and DV Mark endorsee Eric Gales.

As it turns out, Eric had crossed paths with SRV early on in his career while working on demos for his debut album with The Eric Gales Band, having just inked a deal with Warner subsidiary Elektra Records after being touted as the next big thing in blues...

"I was lucky enough to meet Stevie back when I was recording demos for my first record," Eric tells TG. "I remember he was clean at the time. I told him my name was Eric Gales and he said, 'I'm very aware of who you are because the industry has been buzzing about you!' So we sat down and jammed, and he said to me, 'Dude, you are an awesome guitar player!' I was only 15 years

old at the time. It was really intense, man! There were two acoustic guitars and we just had fun playing *Riviera Paradise* together."

It was a life-changing moment for Eric, but as he remembers it, he never asked Stevie for any advice in terms of technique or theory. Even as a teenager, Eric had already done his homework and become a force to be reckoned with in his own right...

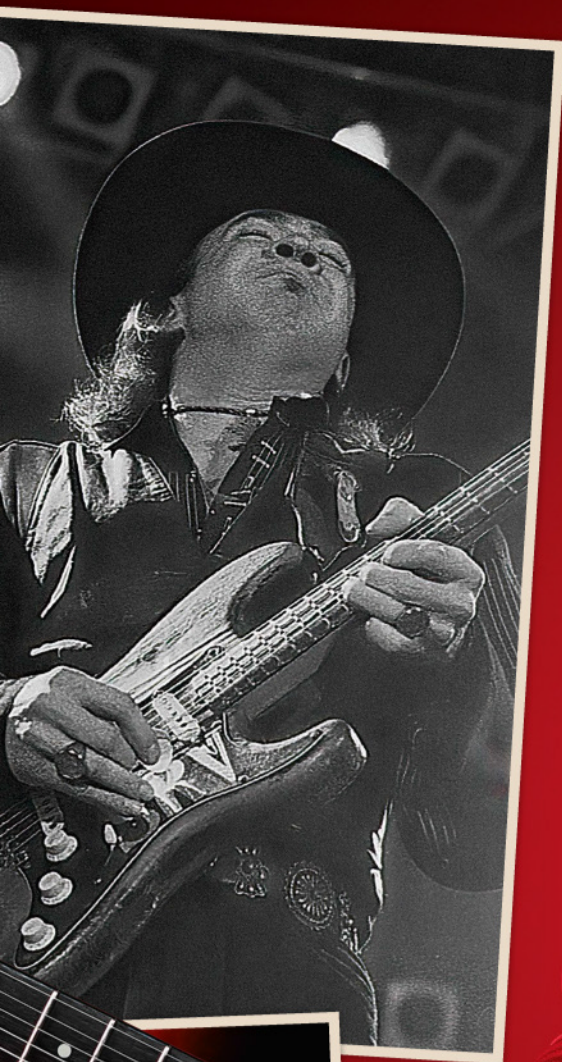
"Honestly, I had been studying the dude note-for-note way before that meeting," he explains. "So it all came full-circle that day. It wasn't about asking a whole lot of questions. I was just in awe of one of my heroes as we played together and he was nice enough to say 'Man, you got it!' when we finished."

Back in the days before camera phones, when young musicians met their heroes it would be only natural for them to ask for an autograph to commemorate the experience. What Eric wasn't expecting, however, was for SRV to ask for one in return...

As Eric now recalls with a smile and an expression of disbelief: "Right at the end I asked him to sign an autograph for me and he said 'Only if you sign one for me first!' Through the years, I lost it. And though I don't know where that piece of paper is, I will never ever forget it. That was such an intense meeting. I've always counted him, Robin Trower and Eric Johnson as my biggest influences. So whenever I've run across these people, it's always blown my mind. And I have to say, all three of those players are known for their killer tones, but Stevie's could be the greatest of all time. I will never forget that day we met!"

"I WAS JUST IN AWE OF ONE OF MY HEROES"







Words Jonathan Horsley

NAIL STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN'S TONE ON A BUDGET

Stevie Ray Vaughan has reference-quality blues god tone, but don't let that stop you from trying to recreate it at home. Huge

heart and a ferocious picking hand are essential. So too a Stratocaster. This was the foundation. Famously preferring heavy strings – as heavy as the fingers will allow – his playing was physical. His amps were bruisers, too. Vintage Fender for dynamics and

headroom, then later Dumbles, such as the 150-watt Steel String Singer. He near single-handedly popularised the Tube Screamer, owned Hendrix's Vox wah, used various fuzzes, but here we're thinking budget so let's look at some essentials to get started.



THE 'YOU CAN'T SPELL SUPER SAVER WITHOUT SRV' RIG

SQUIER AFFINITY STRATOCASTER £219

Get the 3-Color Sunburst, Surf Green or Honey Burst and you'll have the Indian laurel fingerboard. Not rosewood but not bad and it nails the look. The three single-coils will give you the spank, and the fingerboard's 9.5" radius and medium jumbo frets, allied to a crowd-pleasing C profile neck, makes this an excellent guitar for workshoping blues chops.

MOER GREEN MILE OVERDRIVE PEDAL £49, STREET

A super-compact TS-style overdrive with Warm and Hot modes, Level, Tone and Overdrive controls, and a price tag that won't give the bank manager the blues.

HARLEY BENTON TUBE5 CELESTION £133

This is as cheap as valve amps get. It is low-powered enough to sound good at domestic volumes, and its power output is switchable between five watts and one. Use it on 5W for extra headroom. Sure, we would all love Stevie's amp collection but who needs a Dumble Steel Stringer when playing at home?



THE 'MARY HAD A LITTLE CASH' RIG

SQUIER FSR CLASSIC VIBE 60S STRATOCASTER £419, STREET

Now we're talkin'! Look at this thing. An FSR (Fender Special Run) Strat, so get it quick before it's gone, this gets the vibe of Vaughan's number one Strat right on, with gold hardware, 3-Tone Sunburst and a vintage-tint gloss neck. The Fender-designed pickups are more like it, too.

FENDER PRO JUNIOR IV £609

Classic Fender valve amp tones and very affordable, the Pro Junior makes for an excellent platform for SRV blues adventures. It has been revoiced for a tighter bass response and drives its 10" Jensen speaker with 15 watts.

IBANEZ TUBE SCREAMER MINI £55

It has everything that its larger sibling has except the size. Okay, those dials are a little small, but once you dial it in, that's you set.

VOX V845 WAH PEDAL £58

We would be tempted to pony up for the V847 but at this price, no one is complaining. Heck, you could buy two of 'em to replicate *Say What!*. The circuit is based on the original vintage Vox wahs of the 60s.



SOME EXTRAS AND A TEXAS WILDCARD

FENDER 351 MEDIUM GAUGE PICKS £4.99 PER DOZEN

All this talk of gear doesn't mean anything without the feel – and that means string contact. It might not work or everyone, but he used these 351 profile picks, often picking with the fat end, not the pointy bit. Give it a try.

GHS NICKEL ROCKERS 11-58 LOW TUNE £12.99

If the Cult of Stevie requires your Strat to be dressed in the heaviest strings possible, yet your finger dexterity is not quite there yet, try this hybrid set. Yeah, 11s are still heavy by our money, but not yet masochistic. And the heavy bottom strings will give you that solid foundation.

VERTEX EFFECTS STEEL STRING SUPREME SR MINI OVERDRIVE PEDAL £199

No one can afford a Dumble, and no company can really put that sound in a pedal, but as D-style drives go, this can give any clean amp more of that SRV snappiness and attack. Not cheap but could be a key ingredient with a Strat, Tube Screamer and... well, some talent.

Guitars and backing Jon Bishop Photography Oilly Curtis

20 THINGS SRV TAUGHT US!

Get inside the Texas blues icon's style with
TG's lesson on his incendiary playing

40 years on from his incredible debut release, *Texas Flood*, Stevie Ray Vaughan's jaw-dropping

recorded works and high-octane live shows continue to inspire guitarists to play blues. Four decades may have passed, but he

can still be considered the archetypal 'modern' blues player. Rock 'n' roll attitude and wicked tone are part and parcel of blues in the 2020s – qualities Stevie had in spades, and at a time when blues had fallen out of fashion. Some call him a pioneer. The bottom line is if you play electric blues today you'll likely be tracing some of SRV's line of influence.

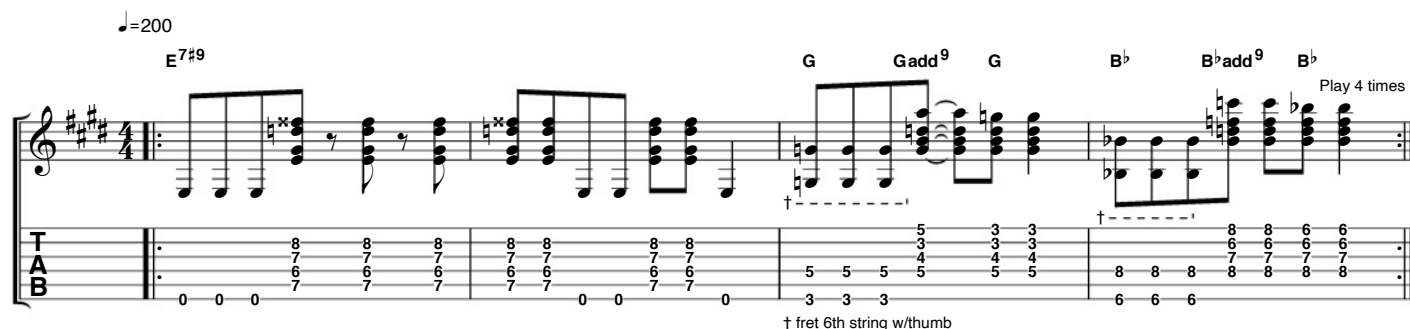
Here, we're looking at 20 ways Stevie played the blues, including a breakdown of some of the techniques he used. Though not essential, you'll get the most out of our lessons if you use a guitar equipped with a neck single-coil pickup through a lightly overdriven amp. Keep a Tube Screamer-type drive pedal on hand for a biting lead tone. Right, let's get this house rocking!

1 THE 7#9 CHORD

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩ = 200

E7#9 G Gadd9 G Bb Bbadd9 Bb Play 4 times



† fret 6th string w/thumb

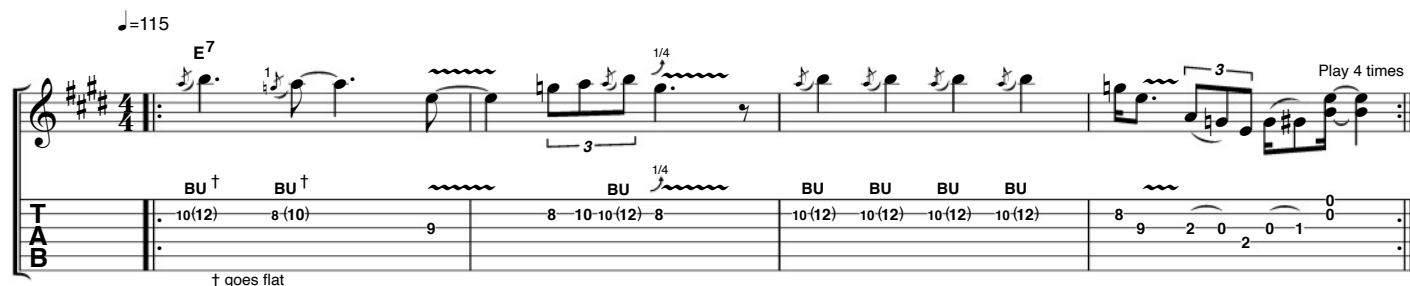
Our opening example cashes in on the classic Hendrix 7#9 chord. Hear SRV perform his take on it in songs such as *Testify* and *Scuttle Buttin'*.

2 FIRST-FINGER BENDS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩ = 115

E7 BU† BU† BU BU BU BU BU Play 4 times



† goes flat

Albert King was a huge influence on Stevie, with the Chicago blues icon's string bending techniques providing a wealth of expressive phrasing to draw on. Here, we're using the first finger to bend the first string. It may feel hard to achieve, but that's sort of the point – you get a certain loose frailty to the slightly shakily performed bend.

3 BLUES TURNAROUND LEADS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩ = 125

B⁷ A⁷ E⁷

Play 4 times

TAB

BU 7 7 10 7 9 8 7 10 7 9 7 9 7 (9) 5 5 7 6 5 8 5 7 2 0 2 0 1 0 14 14 12 14

Here we're looking at how SRV navigated blues turnarounds in songs like *Texas Flood* and *Pride And Joy*. Here we move with the chords, employing shape one of the B minor pentatonic scale over the B7 before shifting the shape down two frets for A7. For E7 we've used the notes of the chord [E-G#-B], plus a blues hint at the Dorian mode with the two-note shape at the 14th fret.

4 USE A TRADITIONAL PICKING TECHNIQUE

SRV employed a standard pick grip between the thumb and first finger, with a little angle applied as needed. His fingers would be relaxed and fanned out for both strumming and picking and this also put his fingers in the perfect spot for pick-and-fingers style 'hybrid' picking. A relaxed grip it may be, but be sure to really dig in and mean every note you play!



5 HENDRIX-STYLE EMBELLISHMENTS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩ = 60

E

NH

Play 4 times

TAB

0 7/9 7 9/11 9 9 11 9 9 11 9 11 9 9 11 9 7 9 7 9/11

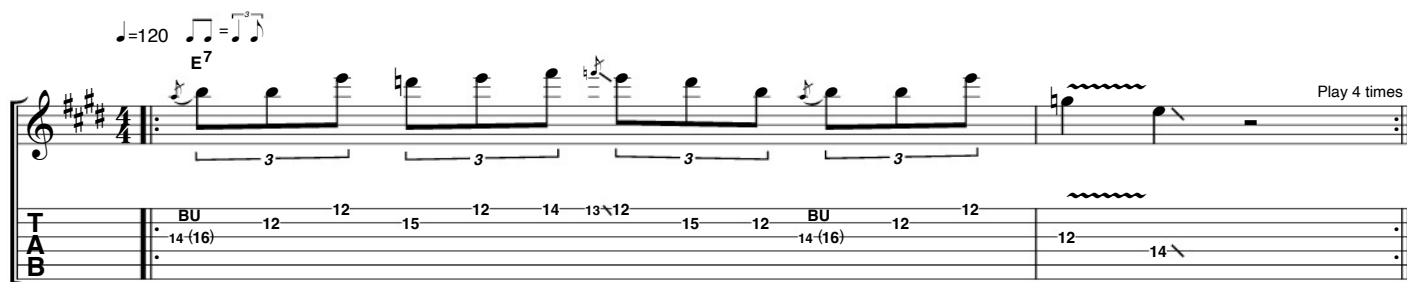
By adding hammer-ons to doublestops it's possible to create Hendrix-style chord fills – a typical SRV trick. Our example starts with natural harmonics at the 12th fret and is inspired by tracks like *Lenny* and, of course, *Little Wing*.



6 MINOR 2ND BLUES LICKS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=120 ♩ = ♩♩
E7



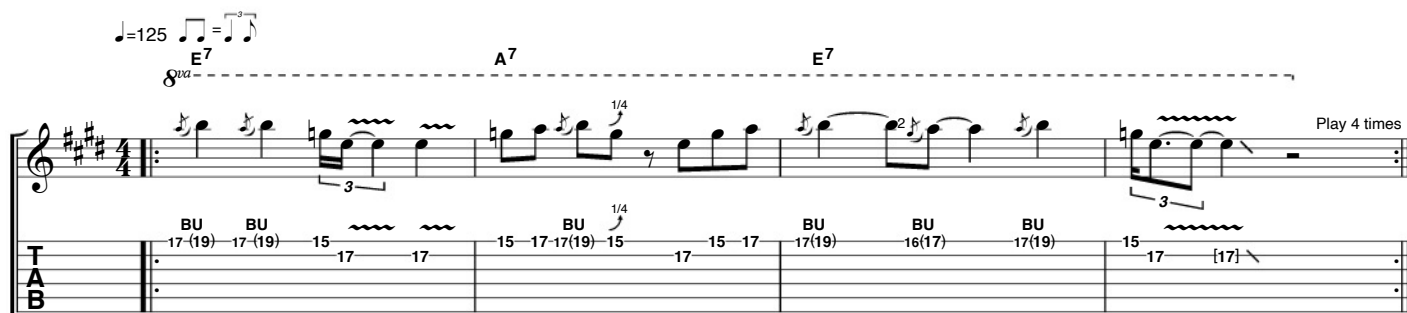
Play 4 times

The minor 2nd interval doesn't appear in the major scale, the natural minor scale or the minor pentatonic scale. So what? Well, it's a dissonant clashing sound against the root note - hence it's a staple in metal, but used sparingly elsewhere. Stevie would often use this colourful tone to add tension to familiar-sounding pentatonics, for example in *Mary Had A Little Lamb*. Try adding in your own licks!

7 ALBERT KING-STYLE STRING BENDS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=125 ♩ = ♩♩
E7 A7 E7



Play 4 times

This one is inspired by SRV's lead work on his cover of the classic Albert King track *The Sky Is Crying*. The main aspect here is to concentrate on keeping the string bends in tune with a vocal-like delivery. All the phrases are played in the classic Albert King string bending position.



8 FRET-HAND SHOWBOATING

Fair and fire are at the core of Stevie's legacy - and a generation of blues-rockers arguably owe their careers to his lasting influence. Ape the excitement of SRV's aggressive blues with this cool trick. Just flip your fret hand over the top of the neck and barre across a few strings or play a two-note pull-off to an open string.

9 BLUE-NOTE DIADS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=70

Em G A

Play 4 times

Bar 1 demonstrates Stevie's beautiful use of the 'blue note' (AKA the $\flat 5$ interval) in diad phrases, for example, around 1:28 in *Riviera Paradise*. The all-important $\flat 5$ in our example is the 15th-fret B $\flat$ note. Take note of the structure of these diad shapes and how the $\flat 5$ is enclosed within.

10 ROCK 'N' ROLL STYLE DOUBLESTOPS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=135

B 7 A 7 E 7

Play 4 times

For this example we are using classic rock 'n' roll doublestops to beef up the sound. This sounds particularly effective in a power trio lineup, and Stevie used it on many tracks, including *Love Struck Baby* and *Empty Arms*.

11 SCALE PLAYING

Pentatonics are at the core of Stevie's scale-based playing.

In general, his thumb would be rested on the top of the neck, providing an anchor point for string bends and finger vibrato. His first, second and third fingers are employed most, but the key element is to keep your hand relaxed, ready to deliver those scorching Texas blues licks.



12 TEXAS SHUFFLE REPEATING LICKS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩ = 115

E7

Play 4 times

BU 12 15 (17) 12 12 15 (17) 12 12 15 (17) 12 12 15 (17) 12 12 15 (17) 12 15

TAB

This three-note lick fits nicely into the triplet feel of the shuffle groove. Repetition might sound like a byword for boring, but it's a strong improvisational tool, allowing you to hook your listener's ear before developing the theme or finishing with a flourish. It's a feature of songs like *I'm Cryin'*.



13 FOURTH FINGER

SRV copyists should major on their first, second and third fretting fingers – they’re the strongest digits, perfect for blues phrasing and that trademark vibrato and bending. Still, don’t neglect your fourth finger. Be ready to place it on the first string, particularly while bending the second or third. Known as an ‘oblique’ bend, you can hear it at 2:25 in Stevie’s version of *Little Wing*.

14 FUNKY 16TH-NOTE STRUMMING

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=120
E7#9

Play 4 times

TAB

15-15-15-15-15-15
12 12 12 12 12 12

BU BD

14-12 12 12 14-12 10

15-15-15-15-15-15
12 12 12 12 12 12

BU BD

14-12 12 12 14-12 10

SRV was a fan of adding in funky strumming to his rhythm parts, and this is key feature of songs like *Telephone Song* and *Couldn't Stand The Weather*. The main aspect to concentrate on is maintaining accuracy when delivering the 16th-note strumming patterns.



FLAIR AND FIRE ARE AT
THE CORE OF STEVIE'S LEGACY



15 SHUFFLE RIFF MUTES

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=105 $\text{♩} = \text{♩} = \text{♩}$

E7

Play 4 times

Stevie's shuffle riffs in *Pride And Joy* and *Cold Shot* are the stuff of legend, and these parts both feature one of the Texan ace's trademark techniques: the pick rake. The idea is to rake across muted strings as you target each single note. Each note is played on the downbeat, with muted strokes on the offbeat.

16 OPEN STRINGS IN FAST RUNS

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=165 $\text{♩} = \text{♩} = \text{♩}$

E7

Including fast flourishes of notes is ear-grabbing, and SRV did this to great effect on tracks like *Scuttle Buttin'*. Using the open strings makes the fast pull-offs slightly easier to articulate.

17 THUMBED BASS NOTES

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=200

B Badd⁹ B A Aadd⁹ A E7⁹

Play 4 times

Again, the Jimi Hendrix influence shines through as here we're looking at how Stevie would use his thumb to fret bass notes in barre chords. Simply reach over the top of the neck to fret the notes on the sixth string.

18 FINGER VIBRATO

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩=115 $\text{♩} = \text{♩} = \text{♩}$

E7 G A E7 G A

Play 4 times

Here we showcase different ways SRV would employ vibrato. He'd often go for an aggressive touch, so it's worth really getting to grips with this and digging in with your fretting fingers. Use your first finger on the 12th fret and your third finger for the 15th-fret bend in bar 3.

19 MUTED SLIDES

A simple finger slide down the bass strings, this idea is more commonly seen in hard rock, where high-gain tones accentuate the 'scratchy' sound of the wound strings. For our purposes, it's an extension of SRV's high-position sliding technique, but also part and parcel of groove and punctuation of his shuffle riff mutes. Playing a shuffle riff? Start with one of these!

20 HIGH-POSITION SLIDES

bit.ly/tg371audio

$\text{♩} = 115$ $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$
E⁷

8va

BU BD G A

3

TAB

19 19 19 19 14 (15) (14) 12 14 12 14 19 19 19 19

SRV used this simple idea to add a punctuation point to lead into a more complex lick. Just barre across the top three strings, strum, then slide down. Maintain the pressure as you slide to maintain the ear-grabbing effect.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN

TIGHTROPE

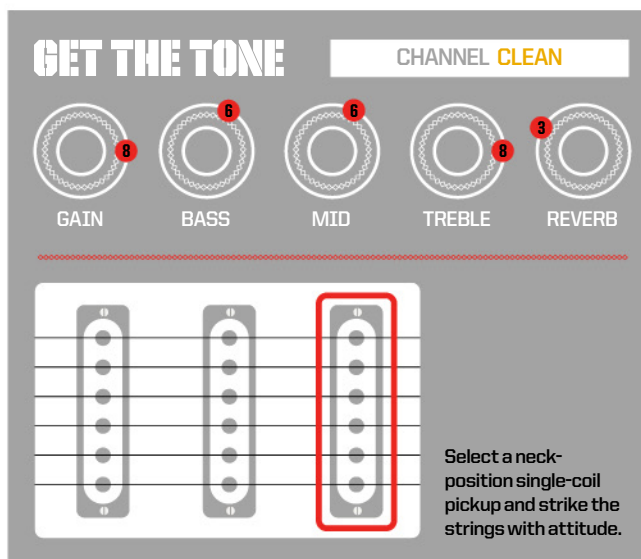
With a heavy-strung Strat, Hendrix-esque phrasing and tone to die for, *Tightrope* is a must-learn SRV tune!

This classic tune from 1989's *In Step* is a great rundown of the Texan guitar hero's trademark take on blues-rock boogie riffs and pentatonic soloing. It's a straight-ahead major key track in 4/4 time and will give you oodles of scope for improvising.

SRV's legendary tone is the product of a few key elements. First, are the high output single-coil pickups (with famously heavy strings) which help to drive the amp's front end into a singing overdrive. Higher, fatter frets on his guitar necks would aid with bending and vibrato. Finally is his use of Fender, Dumble and Marshall valve amps cranked loud with Ibanez Tube Screamer pedals used for extra drive. Our recording is in standard tuning, whereas SRV tuned a semitone down.

SOUND ADVICE

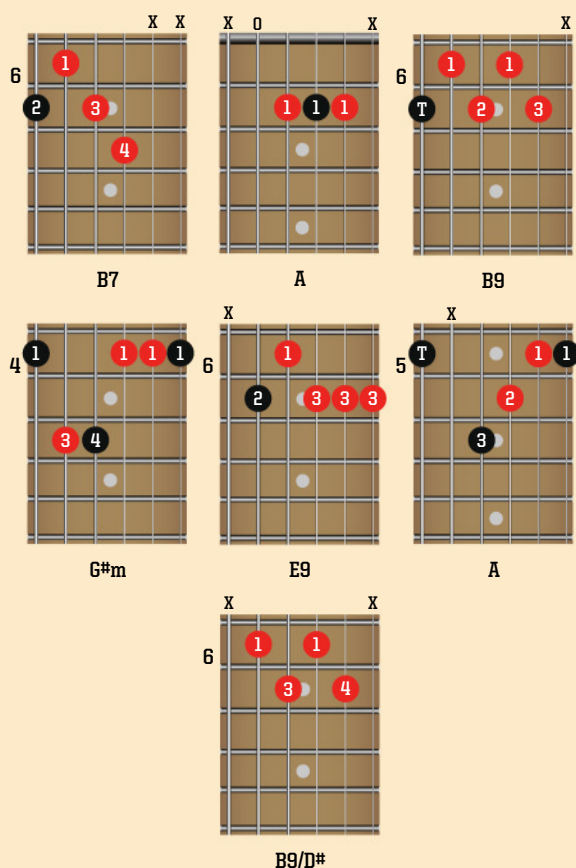
Everything you need to know before playing *Tightrope*



Set your amp to give a light overdrive tone, ideally loud enough for the power stage to start breaking up, but without an excess of preamp gain. Depending on your amp, this can be achieved with lots of gain on a clean channel, or going easier on a drive channel. A fast chorus effect can do the job for the signature warble of the intro riff but a Leslie speaker emulator is the order of the day if you have access to one. Kick in an overdrive pedal for the solos. An Ibanez Tube Screamer is the one to go for when stealing SRV's sound.

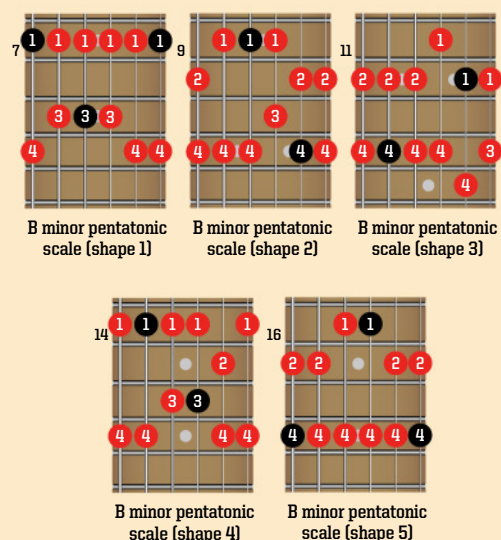
CHORDS

You only need to know these seven chords to play through our transcription. Watch out for the E9 which first appears in verse 1. With its third-finger barre it's a tricky shape to master. Also keep an eye out for the A in the chorus where you should aim to keep the fifth string silent as you fret the root with your thumb.



SCALES

Stevie kicks his first solo off alternating between shapes one and two of the B minor pentatonic scale before venturing farther up the fretboard. There's a great lesson to learn here: try to see how the five pentatonic shapes link together. If you can traverse all five shapes when you're improvising then you're doing well! Work through the solos and try to identify where Stevie steps outside of this minor pentatonic core into some chromatic notes. This is where his magic lies!



STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN

TIGHTROPE



TIGHTROPE

Written by Stevie Ray Vaughan and Doyle Bramhall
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STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN TIGHTROPE Intro

bit.ly/tg371audio

♩ = 97

E D B⁷ A G E

T
B

7 6 9 5 4 2 8 8 8 7 7 7 6 6 6 2 2 2 0 0 BU BD 2(4) (2) 0 2 0

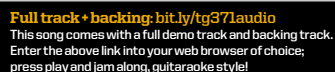
The opening riff is played with conviction, and the position shifts are a little more awkward than you might imagine. Try to land on the 7th-fret B note in bar 1 with your second finger. It'll put you in perfect position to play the following B7 chord with your other fingers.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN TIGHTROPE Verse 1

bit.ly/tg371audio

10

The B9 chord is played with a thumb-fretted bass note – a Hendrix trademark that SRV copied. The funky 16th-note rhythm sounds best played with a consistent down- and up-stroke strumming motion, so keep your strumming arm moving throughout. The G#m and E9 chords provide a link back to a reprise of the intro riff.



STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN TIGHTROPE Verse 2

[illegible]

The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. It includes a guitar part and a bass part. The guitar part is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The bass part is written in bass clef. The guitar part features a melodic line with chords G#m, E9, E, D, B7, E, D, and B7. The bass part provides a harmonic foundation with a 7/4 time signature and includes fret numbers and chord symbols. The score is presented in a clean, professional layout with a white background and black text.

69

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN TIGHTROPE Chorus 1

[illegible]

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. It includes a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar staff has a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 2/4 time signature. The bass staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Chords are indicated by letters above the guitar staff: A, E9, B9/D#, and N.C. (No Chord). The bass staff includes a tablature section with numbers 1-9 and a wavy line indicating a slide. The guitar staff also includes a wavy line indicating a slide. The score is for a guitar and bass duo.

JUNE 2023 **TOTAL GUITAR**

1:20

B⁹

1/4

TAB

BU BD 9(11) (9) 7

BU 7 BU BD 9(11) 9(11)(9) 7 9 7

9 7 9 7 9 7

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

E⁹

1/4

TAB

7 9

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

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

† catch B string

B⁹

1/4

TAB

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

BU 9(11) 7

F^{#9}

E⁹

3

TAB

7 7 10 7 10 9 7 9 7 9 7 7 9 7 9

BU 10 BU 10 BU 10 BU 10 BU 10 9(11) 9(11) 9(11) 9(11) 9(11)

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN TIGHTROPE Solo 1 (cont'd)

bit.ly/tg371audio

B⁹

TAB

11

TAB

13

E⁹

TAB

16

B⁹

TAB

19

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN TIGHTROPE Solo 1 (cont'd)

bit.ly/tg371audio

The solo is played over a 12-bar blues form in B (B9, E9 and F#9 chords). The first 12-bar section features some fully committed blues-rock soloing using shapes one and two of the B minor pentatonic scale. There are some real SRV trademark licks in here, so it's worth spending some time on this part. Bars 10, 11 and 12 contain a doublestop string-bending phrase that may take a few tries to get right. The real key is making sure your third-finger bend is bang on pitch.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN TIGHTROPE Link

bit.ly/tg371audio

This is a straight reprise of the intro riff with an early ending and an extra bar's rest to navigate you back into a repeat of the verse.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN TIGHTROPE Solo 2

bit.ly/tg371audio

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN TIGHTROPE Solo 2 (cont'd) bit.ly/tg371audio

bit.ly/tg371audio

7

11

E⁹ B⁹

TAB

7 9 7 9 9 7 9 7 7 7 10(12) 7 7 10(12) 7 7 10(12) 7 7 10(12) 7 7 10(12) 7

BU 9(11)

13

E⁹ B⁹

TAB

7 10(12) 7 7 10(12) 7 7 10(12) 7 7 10(12) 7 7 10(12) 7 10(12) 7 7 10(12) 7 7 10(12) 7 10(12)

BU

15

E⁹ B⁹

TAB

10(12) [0] 10(12) [0] 10(12) [0] 11(13) 12(14) [0] 12(14) [0] 12(14) [0] 12(14) [0] 12(14) [0]

BU

† catch B string

17

E⁹ B⁹

TAB

12(14) [0] 12(14) [0] 12(14) [0] 12(14) [0] 12 10 12 10 12 10 7 10 7 9(11) 7 9 7 9 7 9 7

BU

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN TIGHTROPE Solo 2 (cont'd)

bit.ly/tg371audio

19

21

For the doublestop bend that begins in bar 4 bend the second and third strings by a semitone and a tone, respectively. This can be achieved by pushing the second string up and grabbing the third on the way. With practice the intonation can be mastered and plenty of finger vibrato will complete the effect. It's worth spending some time on developing the repeating phrase that starts in bar 12. It's classic SRV, but could be applied in almost any blues or blues-rock lead guitar scenario.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN TIGHTROPE Ending

bit.ly/tg371audio

1

4

The original studio recording fades out, so we decided to take this rather cool ending from the *Stevie Ray Vaughan: Live In Dallas* version. It's simply a repeat of the intro riff but finishing with 12th-fret natural harmonics on the first, second and sixth strings. Very Stone Free!

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

THE CLASH

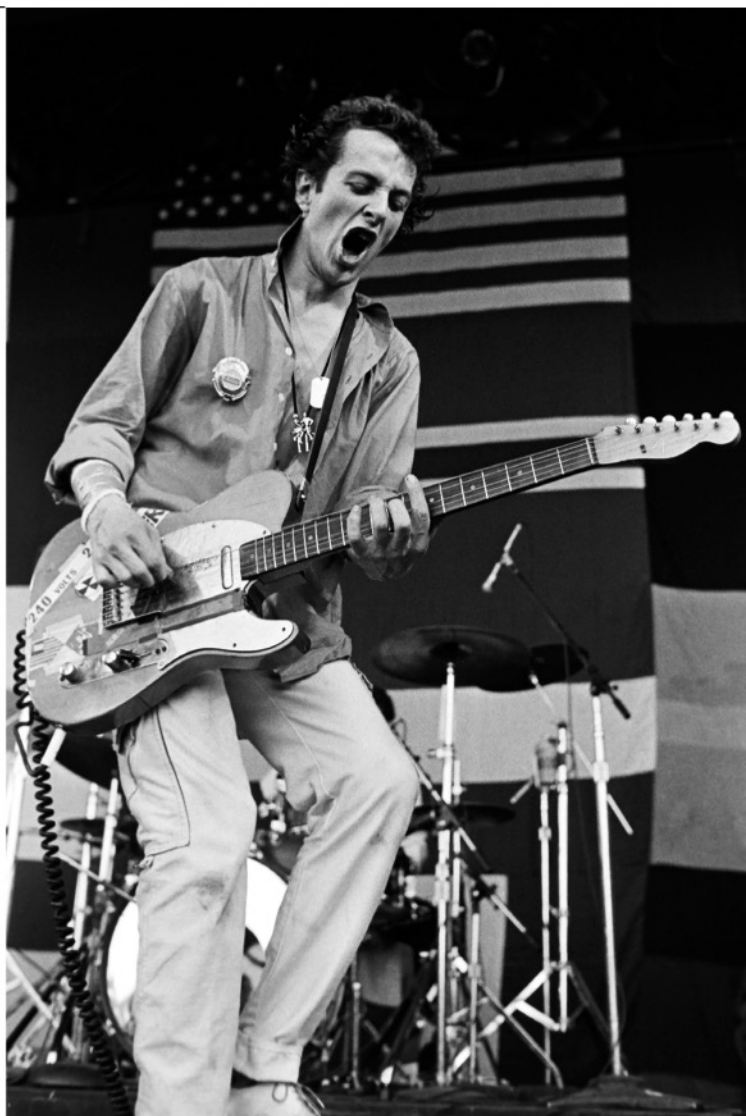
LONDON CALLING

TG takes on an all-time classic and discovers there's more to punk than three chords and an attitude

Though the Sex Pistols blazed the trail for late-'70s British punk-rock, The Clash came to represent a more musically and lyrically adventurous style. 1979's *London Calling* album marked a change in musical direction for the band, featuring a broader palette of styles, including reggae, ska, jazz and hard rock – more post-punk than punk, then. And, in keeping with the more experimental vibe, the title track that we're looking at here features a lot more than mere thrashed out powerchords – in

particular, its unconventional Phrygian modal tonality.

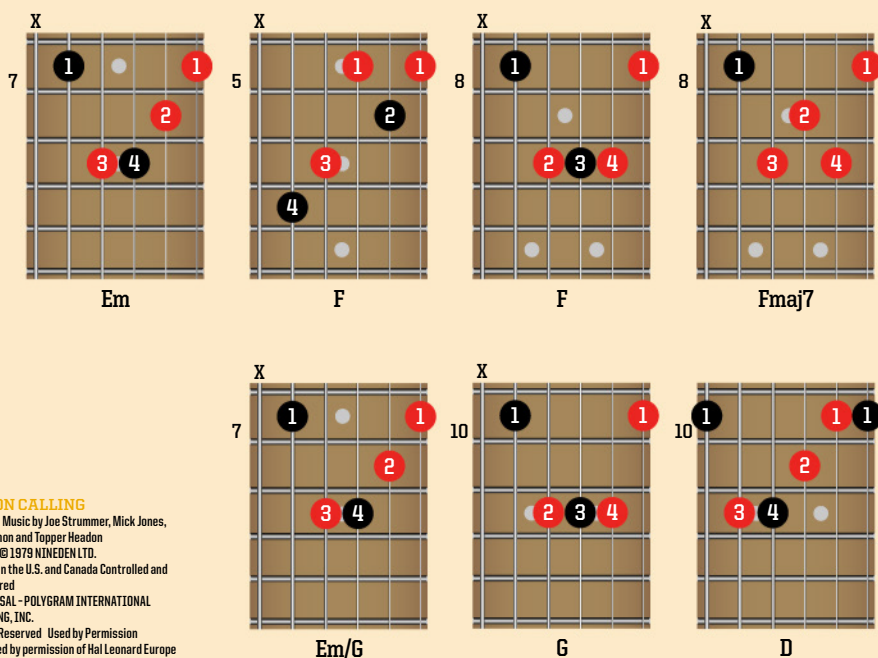
This is demonstrated during the intro, where Em and F chords (which are a semitone apart, remember) are played at the same time, creating a tense, 'outside' feel, yet somehow without seeming to, er, clash! It's masterful arranging – and tough to recreate without sounding like a garbled mess. If you're playing solo, try an Fmaj7 instead of the F. This brings the E root note into your F chord and gives a taste of the two-chord approach without the hassle.



CHORDS

The five main chords in *London Calling* are Em, F, Em/G, G and D. There are two voicings of F, with one shape occurring in the intro and the other during the rest of the track. We've shown 'full' shapes complete with root notes for guidance but the chords on the original recording are mostly confined to three or four treble strings. Note that a low G isn't played in the Em/G but, seeing as it's played over the bass guitar's G note each time, we've labelled it as a slash chord – just play Em again where you see Em/G. Finally, we've shown an Fmaj7 which you can try out instead of the F chords in the verses.

LONDON CALLING
Words and Music by Joe Strummer, Mick Jones,
Paul Simonon and Topper Headon
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THE GAS STATION

REAL WORLD REVIEWS OF THE
BEST NEW GEAR

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

HOW WE TEST

CURATION

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

FACE-VALUE REVIEWS

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

*WHAT IS GAS?

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

NO SNAKE OIL

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

WE CAN'T BE BOUGHT

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

REAL WORLD REVIEWS

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

BEST BUY AWARD

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



PLATINUM AWARD

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



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



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Epiphone and the Gibson Custom Shop recreate the brand's rarest guitar of all time

94 CRAZY TUBE CIRCUITS UNOBTANIUM

Dumble and Klon sounds in a single pedal



START ME UP!

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

J ROCKETT ARCHER SELECT

1 The Archer was one of the original clones that aimed to deliver Centaurian thrills. So now what? Well, how about seven voicings and a speaker emulated DI out. Tonehounds can sniff through different NOS germanium clipping diodes to find the sonic truffle that makes them... how? With so much speculation on the actual ingredients in the original Klon's circuitry (it's covered so you can't see inside), the idea is that the player makes up their own mind here. **£349**
www.rockettpedals.com

FENDER AUDIO RIFF

2 The desktop practice modelling amp/Bluetooth speaker market went up a few gears with Positive Grid's Spark models, and now Fender is throwing its own contribution into the arena. This 60-watter features six custom-tuned drivers behind the grille cloth and the promise that RIFF will auto-EQ itself to your playing environment via the smartphone app it's paired with. Oh, it has a maple top too that you swipe to adjust volume and EQ. **£429**
www.fender.com

ELECTRO-HARMONIX LIZARD QUEEN

3 This octave fuzz pedal didn't begin at EHX, it was actually from the design minds of JHS Pedals' Josh Scott and graphic illustrator Daniel Danger imagining what a lost stomptbox from the company's 70s era would look and sound like. A year later we can all find out as it's now available in nano form with Octave blend control for you to dial in, plus Balance. **£99**
www.electro-harmonix.com

HARLEY BENTON 25TH ANNIVERSARY MODELS

4 Eight special Firemist (gold) models and each one under £409? It could only be Harley Benton! We'd have a hard time picking between these guitar and bass beauties but we know how good the Fusion-T and II models can be so we'll probably make a beeline for them with their roasted maple necks and Blacksmith stainless steel frets. There's even an included 25th Anniversary deluxe gigbag to further sweeten these golden deals. **From £239**
www.thomann.com

PETERSON STROBOSTOMP MINI

5 What's better than the 0.1 cent accuracy of the Peterson Strobostomp pedal? A mini version, of course! With top-mounted jacks for even more space-saving goodness on your crammed pedalboard? Oh yes! The side-positioned power input undermines that space-saving design a bit but feature-wise this is packing a lot in with 80 of Peterson's Sweetened and Guided Tunings to get the best from your specific setup and +5 to -6 transposition. You'd better tell your bassist to get one, too! **£125**
www.petersontuners.com



CHARVEL JIM ROOT SIGNATURE PRO-MOD SAN DIMAS STYLE 1

£1549

The Slipknot riffer returns to the original hotrod shop

You need a specialised instrument when you are in Jim Root's line of work. Slipknot demands a certain kind of sound.

But just because Root needs extremity in his electric guitar tone, doesn't mean he wants to go extreme with the aesthetic. His latest of many signature guitars, the San Dimas Style 1, reflects his tastes of classic designs rendered monochromatically.

The Stratocaster headstock here is on license from Fender, who own the Charvel brand. The doublecut body shape is instantly recognisable, and with that bolt-on maple neck, it's clear the apple hasn't fallen far from

contouring of the lower cutaway performs a similar function.

There are a pair of Root's active EMG Daemonum signature humbuckers at the bridge and neck positions, and a top-quality Floyd Rose 1500 Series double-locking vibrato for dive-bombing and, y'know, showing off. The Mexican-built Pro-Mod series is aimed at serious amateurs, jobbing pros, and a metal superstar in Root, and it is a lot of guitar for the money (don't be fooled by the msrp; street prices are *much* lower!). The rubbed fingerboard edges add a touch of luxury. The glow-in-the-dark Luminlay side markings are now essential for serious metal guitars.

ADEQUATELY POWERED FOR THE NOBLE ART OF METAL CHUG

the tree. The differences are largely practical. Root is more conservative than many when it comes to his guitar's aesthetic, with this being offered in Satin Black with a maple fingerboard, and Satin White with an ebony fingerboard, as reviewed. There is no pickguard. There is no tone knob. Anything inessential is gone. Some of the most unorthodox appointments are out of sight; the solid mahogany body switching up the recipe, a neck profile that's skinnier than your average Strat and finished in satin urethane for speediness. It is surprising that the heel isn't sculpted to enhance upper-fret access, but then you don't see Root up there that often, and Charvel's

It arrives in a hardshell gig-bag that's sturdy enough for most commutes. If you're touring, you would want to upgrade. But then there's something so solid about this that you'd suspect it'd survive anything. For starters, the factory setup and firm performance of the Floyd Rose 1500 might convince those who have hitherto preferred a hardtail for playing heavy metal rhythm guitar. Mr Root is not known for tickling the wound strings. You are invited to similarly dig in.

The 12"-16" fingerboard radius is Charvel standard these days and arguably the platonic ideal for a high-performance guitar. Transitions from powerchords to lead breaks are rapid, with

1 PICKUPS

Jim Root's signature EMG Daemonum set are fire-breathers all right, but there's a little more dynamic pizzazz to them that jive nicely with his taste for the classics.

2 BODY

There's no pickguard here, so that satin, almost eggshell finish might wear in with time, which could look cool. Your other finish option is Satin Black with a maple fingerboard.

3 TRUSS ROD WHEEL

As with all contemporary Charvels, Root's San Dimas Style 1 positions a spoke wheel at the top of the fingerboard, making truss rod adjustments that little bit easier. It's a small thing, but so practical.

AT A GLANCE

ORIGIN: Mexico
TYPE: Solid-body electric guitar
BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Maple, bolt-on
SCALE: 25.5"
FINGERBOARD: Ebony, 12"-16" compound radius with rolled edges
FRETS: 22, Jumbo
ELECTRICS: 2x EMG Daemonum active humbuckers
CONTROLS: Volume, three-way blade pickup selector switch
HARDWARE: Floyd Rose 1500 Series double-locking vibrato, Charvel-branded sealed die-cast tuners, black
FINISH: Satin Black [as reviewed], Satin White
CONTACT: Charvel, www.charvel.com

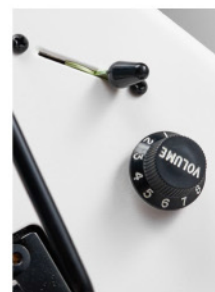




Root notes

The evolution of the Slipknot guitarist's signature models

Ask Jim Root about his taste in guitars and he'll start talking about how much he loves Levi's and Persol sunglasses, and it sounds like he is answering a different question, but his point is this: he likes classic designs. His spec choices for his signature models have always been classic verging on the austere. The first was the Jim Root Telecaster, and it set the template; mahogany body, active EMG 81/60 pickups, and minimalist aesthetic that offered the guitar in Black with a maple fingerboard, and White with ebony. A Stratocaster followed, then a succession of Jazzmasters. His Charvel continues with that tradition, but it's distinguished by that Floyd Rose vibrato unit that extends its appeal to a wider cohort of high-gain players.



the 22 jumbo frets feeling very 21st century. Playability, of course, was one of the chief benefits the Superstrat platform presented. The other was tones with brawn and muscle, and versatility, too.

No one can accuse this of lacking power. Root's Daemonum pickups are based on the time-honoured EMG 81/60 pickup combo that had become the industry standard for weaponising metal riffs, and they feature a similar construction. But through EMG's Retro Active preamp, these open-coil humbuckers offer a more dynamic performance. At full bore, they're still breathtakingly unsubtle. Hit a downtuned open chord and they are all string detail and venom,

utterly bruising when palm-muted, with a lead sound that is capable of drawing blood. Pull back on the volume control and they calm down. The cleans are precise and bright, brilliant with chorus to widen them further.

Altogether, they're hardly PAF-alike but we'd argue they're a little less compressed than the unstinting message discipline of the 81/60s that you'd find on Root's signature Fender Stratocaster. In feel and tone, these guitars are not a million miles away from one another. The Strat has a six-saddle string-through-body hard-tail bridge. The Floyd Rose makes this a more attractive proposition for flamboyant lead

players and it is a superb feat of engineering. The firm vibrato setup is very pleasing. You can go nuts on the whammy bar for your designated eight bars of gonzo lead and it'll return to pitch perfectly.

Charvel has some real doozies in the Pro-Mod catalogue. Root's San Dimas Style 1 is right up there. It's not quite as versatile as some of the HSS models, and its minimalist aesthetic might be too utilitarian for some, but it's a fun ride, and adequately powered for the noble art of pummelling metal chug.

Jonathan Horsley

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

ALSO TRY...

JACKSON PRO SERIES SOLOIST SL2A MAH

£1079

A more aggressive style with a neck-through build and a pair of passive Seymour Duncan Distortion humbuckers, this Soloist offers a more classic sounding alternative to Root's signature model.



FENDER MIJ BOXER SERIES HH STRATOCASTER

£999

There's no Floyd, but with its top-quality Japanese build and 80s vibe, this dual-humbucker-equipped Strat is super unorthodox, and super cool, too.



ESP/LTD MIRAGE DELUXE '87

£1099

The '87 range is all about celebrating the golden age of hotrodded electrics and this S-style Horizon is as cool as they come. Its Thin U profile neck is super-playable, too.



IT INVITES YOU TO DIG IN...

REAL PLUGIN



LA-STUDIO

REAL TUBE HEAD | **Two notes** AUDIO ENGINEERING | SUPERGROUP DESIGN



BLACK COUNTRY CUSTOMS
HANDCRAFTED IN THE UK

Two notes
AUDIO ENGINEERING

Words Alex Lynham Photography Phil Barker

MARSHALL REISSUE PEDALS

The doorstops are back!
Be the master of your gain
with these mighty reissues...

The reissue of Marshall's black-box distortion line isn't something that you would have bet on a few years ago, but it's very welcome. These lesser-known stompboxes are legendary in certain circles, and having them more widely available is great.

First came the Guv'nor, introduced in 1988. This was produced for four years as Marshall's first 'amp in a box' distortion. Taking what they knew about high-gain amps, from gain-staging to EQ, Marshall were able to create one of the first pedals that legitimately deserved the name. The core distortion tone of the Guv'nor is excellent, but it's the EQ section that pushes it into preamp territory. Indeed, elements of the design would go on to inspire later Marshall solid-state amps. The Guv'nor was reissued in a pill-shaped silver version many years later. This however failed to capture the imagination of players like the original.

After the Guv'nor, Marshall decided to expand the range with three further models. Each was envisaged to emulate an amp in the Marshall range and appeal to a different contingent of players. The Blues Breaker was the low-gain, stripped-back entry. The Drive Master was the jack-of-all-trades successor to the Guv'nor, and the Shred Master catered for metal players. These pedals had an outsize



influence versus more household names like the Tube Screamer and Big Muff. Like many pedals, they became more sought-after after being discontinued due to famous players using them. On the builder side, pedals like the King of Tone taking design cues from the Blues Breaker increased interest in it. The pedals also became more scarce due to their notoriously weak jacks and non-true bypass footswitch, which often failed.

Another reason why working units dwindled over the intervening years was the heavy use of proprietary parts, from non-standard enclosures to pots. This is good and bad. Replacements are harder to source, but the action of the pots is better than many competing pedals of the era. Moreover, the pedals' distinctive look has been part of their enduring appeal. They're not efficient in terms of pedalboard space, but the shape and embossed logo is undeniably cool.





THE GUV'NOR £169

The original. Still the best?

The Guv'nor was the original pedal in the line, and, for many players, is still the best. Unlike many distortion pedals, it uses LEDs for clipping, a strategy also taken by the ProCo Turbo RAT. Later, Marshall would take to using LEDs for clipping in their MG series of solid-state amps.

These LEDs have quite a different clipping behaviour to either germanium or silicon diodes, and a different compression type. To the ear, this is expressed as additional headroom and volume, even at more extreme distortion settings. The EQ is amp-like by design, the main strength of the pedal. In lieu of a presence control, the treble can get quite brittle at higher settings, but this is easy to tame and fit into your amp and guitar setup.

The dominant feeling when playing the Guv'nor is one of openness. It's a very uncompressed pedal, which is surprising given that the LEDs are set up to hard-clip. However, compare it to a DS-1, or a RAT and you'll sense there's a more dynamic reaction to your playing. That's not to say that at higher settings it isn't compressed and heavy. It certainly can be that, but it never gets overbearing, and the gain control is usable for the whole of its range.

In fact, the gain really is so flexible that Marshall's Guv'nor can deliver exceptional low-gain and blues tones in the first half of its rotation. In addition, the level control can easily push the front end of a valve amp, resulting in a very musical mix of pedal clipping and amp compression. The only real drawbacks to consider are the pedal's ever so slightly weak bass response and unergonomic Y-cable requirement for the effects loop. These are mere quibbles though.

AT A GLANCE

SOCKETS: Input, Output, Power, FX loop

CONTROLS: Gain, Bass, Treble, Middle, Level

POWER: 9VDC Centre-negative or 9V Battery



BLUES BREAKER £169

The forgotten transparent overdrive

Unlike the other pedals in the range, which have gain and volume controls as well as a three-band EQ, the Blues Breaker is heavily streamlined. It has only three controls, gain, volume and tone. The core sound of the Blues Breaker is solid, as you'd expect from a pedal of its status. The soft clipping adds low gain saturation to the guitar and there's enough volume gain from the level control to push whatever amp follows it. Like the Guv'nor that preceded it, it's an open-sounding and uncompressed pedal. This is what led many players to seek it out over the Ibanez Tube Screamer.

Unlike the other pedals in the range, it's not an 'amp-in-a-box' design, but more of a standalone boost or drive. The stock EQ profile is pretty flat, and the tone control on the pedal is merely to colour the effected tone rather than do any major tone-shaping. Though the level control adds the versatility of pushing saturation from a tube amp, the range of gain in the pedal is quite small. Compared to the Tube Screamer, there's a lot less clipping, even when used with higher output humbuckers. Incidentally, this lack of range is one of the principal things that Analog Man founder Mike Piera calls out as a failing of the Blues Breaker. Besides part changes and circuit modifications, it's one of the first things they looked to rectify from the pedals they de-constructed while designing the original King of Tone. Due to its uncompressed voicing, the Blues Breaker could be called a transparent overdrive. Indeed, the best comparison is an uncompressed, soft-clipping design like the Paul Cochrane Timmy. In that company, the Blues Breaker deserves its sleeper classic status.

AT A GLANCE

SOCKETS: Input, Output, Power

CONTROLS: Gain, Tone, Volume

POWER: 9VDC Centre-negative or 9V Battery



SHRED MASTER

Don't believe the hype

£169

There are few pedals with quite the outsize reputation-to-utility as the Shred Master. Ironically, it's most famous thanks to high-profile users from outside the metal genre. Johnny Greenwood, Thom Yorke and Kevin Shields' use of the pedal meant that it became incredibly sought after when it was discontinued. However, it's not the easiest pedal to dial in, and it's not very versatile. What it does well is punching through a studio mix when there are a lot of elements present. In a band like Radiohead, it's easy to see why this might be desirable. Particularly for the kind of angular lead parts that Johnny Greenwood was writing, such a mid-heavy pedal makes a lot of sense.

Its EQ is geared towards thrash metal, which means the contour control is the most important part of the EQ. In practice, this means unusably scooped at one end, and very mid-forward at the other. Somewhere between the two, there's a compressed, midrange-heavy honk that will be familiar to listeners of the first two Radiohead records. To our ear it plays better with humbuckers than with single coils. Perhaps we're trying to find a single coil sound from the Shred Master that doesn't exist. Of course, with more gain on offer than the other pedals in the range, it excels at both alternative rock and metal leads. Not only that, but it stacks well with other pedals if set up carefully.

However, as a rhythm guitar tool, it can be a little limited due to its compressed nature. It may not have much dynamic potential, but there's a reasonable amount of volume gain on offer. This means that like the other pedals in the range, it can be used to push an amp into characterful power tube saturation.

AT A GLANCE

SOCKETS: Input, Output, Power

CONTROLS: Gain, Bass, Contour, Treble, Volume

POWER: 9VDC Centre-negative or 9V Battery



DRIVE MASTER

Obey your (Drive) Master!

£169

Intended as the workhorse in the new range, Marshall used the 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' rule of thumb, and based the design on the Guv'nor. Like the Guv'nor, the Drive Master uses LEDs for clipping. Similarly, the clipping is a hard clip, followed by the same three-control amp-like EQ as the earlier pedal. Much of the difference in tone between the Drive Master and the Guv'nor is in the LED use. On the original models this was supposedly one red and one green, versus the two red on the Guv'nor. Besides that, there's little difference other than the new enclosure and removal of the effects loop.

In exchange for the removal of the loop, you get a couple of component changes. The end effect of these is a slightly more compressed drive sound than the Guv'nor, with a hair less treble and a tad more push in the bass and low mids. However, this has to be taken with a pinch of salt. So small are the changes that these could easily be down to one's own individual perception, or due to different tolerances in the range and position of the pots.

As many of the changes are cosmetic, it's worth mentioning that the knob covers as well as overall enclosure of the Drive Master are superior in terms of feel. Looks are subjective, so commenting on that is perhaps redundant. However, to our mind the aesthetic and ergonomics are notably better, even if the sound quality improvements are only slight.

AT A GLANCE

SOCKETS: Input, Output, Power

CONTROLS: Gain, Bass, Treble, Middle, Volume

POWER: 9VDC Centre-negative or 9V Battery



GUV'NOR

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



BLUES BREAKER

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

DEAL BREAKER

Three out of four ain't bad - but the Shred Master isn't for everybody. If in doubt, trust the Guv'nor!

Though there are ostensibly four pedals in this reissue series, it's best to consider the three second-issue pedals as a group. As reissues, they're true to the originals to the point of having the same idiosyncrasies and even frustrations. While they sound very good, it's also the case that some basic shortcomings could have been addressed, like true bypass. Given that Marshall apparently opted for different pots and jacks on the reissues, it doesn't seem like that much of a stretch to change the bypass pattern. Tone purists might argue that some element of the

original design would be lost by doing so, but this isn't a Klon with a legendary buffer scheme. For players looking for a Tube Screamer or Timmy alternative, the Blues Breaker is now more accessible than ever. The Drive Master would win over a new generation of fans, except that players who like the aesthetic of the Guv'nor will likely find it the superior pedal. Despite being the most well-known of the pedals, the net effect of the Shred Master being more widely available is likely to be a lot of them on the secondary market, since it's a pedal that won't work for everyone.



SHRED MASTER

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



DRIVE MASTER

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



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1 DECAY CONTROL
The decay control not only controls the decay of the reverb but also the simulated space.

2 TONE CONTROL
The tone control changes the timbre of the reverb, and also controls the presence of the Ensemble effect.

3 EXPRESSION INPUT
As well as supporting a standard expression pedal, the Cloudburst can also be set up in Favourite, Freeze, Infinite and MIDI modes.

STRYMON CLOUDBURST £270

Strymon try something new - a premium, single-algorithm reverb

The Cloudburst is a single-preset digital reverb based on the Cloud machine model from Strymon's Big Sky.

With tightened player budgets, this streamlining is now a popular formula. Eventide recently released the Blackhole, based on the algorithm of the same name from their flagship Space reverb.

The controls are as you'd expect, and it's a matter of a few seconds

pedal shines when used for space-cadet pads. For reacting to more intricate riffs and arpeggios, the pre-delay allows you to change when the reverb triggers after input. With the tone control backed off, lower pre-delay settings work well. However, brighter reverb tones benefit from space to breathe after the input signal. This is particularly evident since the tone knob also affects the ensemble presence. The only

On the negative side, stereo operation via TRS means that it's a feature that few players will use. Space is limited on the Cloudburst, but it still would have been nice to have had a normal two-jack stereo out.

The greatest strength of the Cloudburst is also its greatest weakness. For the price tag, and especially when you consider the used market, it's an expensive pedal. Yet, it's streamlined and intuitive, and sounds fantastic. The ease with which you can dial in a great sound and get playing is nearly unmatched. Moreover, the form factor means it will fit even on a nano-sized set of pedalboard rails.

The question remains whether it will be a victim of its own success. Using the Cloudburst may leave owners forever wondering about an upgrade to the Big Sky...

Alex Lynham

STREAMLINED AND INTUITIVE, IT SOUNDS FANTASTIC

to nail the sound in our head. Added to the Cloud machine for the Cloudburst is a polyphonic Ensemble control, somewhere between a synthesized string section and a shimmer reverb. A maximalist approach favours using the forte mode. For a more subtle set of additional harmonics, the mp setting also yields incredible results. The range on the decay control offers a similar choice. Though there are smaller spaces and subtle reverbs available, the reality is that the

control that perhaps isn't pulling its weight is the mod knob. Call us old fashioned, but we want fine-grained control over both depth and speed of modulation. Here, up to 12 o'clock affects the depth, while after 12 o'clock affects the speed. It's a compact, if somewhat un-intuitive solution, even if it's easy enough to find a good setting by ear.

On the rear panel there's good and bad. On the plus side, it's good to see a more robust USB-C connector for updates and MIDI.

AT A GLANCE

CONTROLS: Decay, Ensemble, Mix, Pre-delay, Tone, Mod

JACKS: In, Out (Stereo via TRS), Exp/MIDI, USB, Power

POWER: 9VDC Centre-negative

CURRENT DRAW: 250mA

A/D/A: 24-bit 96kHz A/D/A

Contact: Strymon, www.strymon.net

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





CRAZY TUBE CIRCUITS UNOBTANIUM

Dumble and Klon sounds in a single pedal



£249

Greek pedal company Crazy Tube Circuits has figured out that the majority of us will never own a Dumble amp or an original Klon Centaur but would still like to have similar sonic flavours in our rig. Consequently they've put both into the Unobtanium, a twin footswitch drive pedal that aims to give you D sounds on its left hand side and K sounds to the right.

In normal use, the K side is first in the chain which reflects the real world scenario of a drive pedal into an amp, but you can shake things up by using the pedal's send and return loop for other options like inserting other pedals between them or running them totally independently from a switcher. The K side of the pedal, which features

Germanium diodes and is claimed to be an accurate recreation of the original circuitry, delivers a great rendition of that pedal's trademark transparent boost and drive that works so well in front of your amp to take things up a notch. While it does pretty much what other clones on the market do, it does have extra features; there's the choice of running it with true or buffered bypass, plus there's a toggle-switched alternative sonic option that offers more output and less compression. The D side of the pedal likewise has a toggle-switched option, (also enabled by adding an external footswitch), providing a choice of emulations of two particular Dumble models – the Overdrive Special and the cleaner-sounding Steel String Singer. Both

exhibit the singing top end and other tonal elements of Alexander Dumble's creations and offer plenty that will enhance your tone whether you are dialling in a clean sound or some richly expressive drive tones, all delivered with great touch response.

A Klon or a decent kclone is a desirable asset for any pedalboard, and that's exactly what you get here. Combining that with the characteristic flavouring of one of the most eulogised amp brands in existence, plus flexible routing options, makes the Unobtanium one potent and versatile dual-drive pedal for a wealth of new tonal options.

Trevor Curwen

AT A GLANCE

ORIGIN: Greece

TYPE: Drive pedal

FEATURES: True or buffered bypass

CONTROLS: D Volume, D Gain, D Tone, D Emphasis, internal EQ and Volume Boost trimmers, ODS/SSS switch, D Bypass footswitch, V Volume, V Gain, V Treble, Buffer/True switch, Stock/Mod switch, V Bypass footswitch

CONNECTIONS: Standard input, standard output, standard send, standard return, standard footswitch jack

POWER: 9V DC adaptor (not supplied)

DIMENSIONS: 122 (w) x 95 (d) x 53 mm (h)

A POTENT AND VERSATILE DUAL-DRIVE PEDAL

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

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Words Ellie Rogers

SCOTT REYNOLDS

(CLT DRP)

CLT DRP – pronounced ‘Clit Drip’ for anyone too abashed to ask – are a trio of electro-punk feminists from Brighton. Since the release of their 2020 debut *Without The Eyes*, they’ve been turning heads and battering lugholes with their unruly blend of abrasive riffs and tonally daring ring modulation effects cooked up by Scott Reynolds.

“What we do nods to electronic sounds, but it’s got a punk attitude,” explains the guitarist, who was brought up on a melange of music drip fed down by his older brother. Everything from Metallica and Guns N’ Roses to EDM seeped into his musical psyche. “When I was really young, I just thought playing guitar was the coolest thing in the world, which it is,” he says. “But, when

I was 10, The Prodigy came out with *The Fat Of The Land*, and that completely blew my mind!”

From that moment, Scott has been mastering the art of making his trusty Epiphone Les Paul sound anything but traditional – forcing it to spew “wonky sounds” with the help of a stacked pedalboard that weighs over 40 kilos. Here, you’ll find Boss’s FZ-3 Fuzz and DD-7 Digital Delay pedals, as well as a Wampler Ego Compressor, Electro-Harmonix Micro POG and a well-used Morley expression pedal. But the two mainstays most essential to his signature broken-robots-at-an-industrial-rave sound are the Boss SL-20 Slicer and the Strymon Mobius Multi-modulation. He commonly frets single notes while using

the Mobius’s Quadrature setting and the SL-20’s Slice patterns to open up a warped new world of synth-like textures, rhythmic pulsations and detuned wackiness.

The key to making it all sound musical, he suggests, is lots of practice and a mantra of embracing the unexpected when it comes to pitch. “Logic goes out the window when you put a ring mod on,” he smiles. “You can be fretting notes past the twelfth fret and there’s shuddering low end, then go down to where a low note should be, and there’s no bass.”

Crucially, because the trio’s sound comes solely from guitar, drums and vocals, the entire melodic space is Scott’s to play with. “That setup really helps because I haven’t got to worry about fitting in with a bass player or a synth player,” he adds.

To complete his colossal sound, he uses Laney guitar amps and/or a Hartke bass amp, reasoning that the latter “seems to hack the pedals really well.”

Having recently signed to Venn Records, the band’s “much dancier and maybe slightly less heavy” sophomore record is tipped for release later this year.





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