



DAVE MUSTAINE
NEW FLYING Vs: INTERVIEW & REVIEW



SHOOT TO THRILL
LEARN TO PLAY THE AC/DC CLASSIC!

TOTAL Guitar

PLAY BETTER NOW!

PLUS!

THE HIVES
COUNTDOWN
TO SHUTDOWN

BILLIE EILISH
TV
(FROM GUITAR
SONGS)



REVIEWED
**GOLD FOIL
TELECASTER**
FENDER'S HOTTEST
SINGLE CUT?

SKINDRED
DANELECTRO
BLACKOUT
'59
CHILIS
TECHNIQUE
LESSON

The 50 GREATEST ACOUSTIC SONGS of all time

ACOUSTIC
GIGGING
TIPS

COOL
CHORDS
FOR YOUR
STEEL
STRING

BEN
HOWARD



INCLUDING
Stairway
To Heaven
Wish You Were Here
Tears In Heaven

26

ACOUSTIC
LESSONS

FEATURING
Fleetwood Mac
The Beatles
Jon Gomm

BORN TO PLAY



Sheeran
BY lowden

sheeranguitars.com

Future Publishing
QUAY HOUSE, THE AMBURY, BATH, BA11 1UA
Tel: 01225 442244 Fax: 01225 822763
Email: totalguitar@futurenet.com
Website: www.totalguitar.co.uk

EDITORIAL

Editor: Chris Bird
Group Art Director: Graham Dalzell
Senior Music Editor: Jason Sidwell
Content Editor: Paul Elliott
Production Editor: Stan Bull
Music Co-ordinators: Zoe Maughan, Natalie Beilby

CONTRIBUTORS

Stuart Williams, Jenna Scaramanga, Amit Sharma, Ellie Rogers, Rob Laing, Charlie Griffiths, Jon Bishop, Alex Lynham, Phil Capone, Dave Burrluck, Jamie Hunt, Jonathan Horsley, Richard Blenkinsop, Tim Tucker
Music Engraver: Simon Troup and Jennie Troup
Photography: Neil Godwin, Olly Curtis, Phil Barker

ADVERTISING

Phone: 01225 442244 **Fax:** 01225 732285
Chief Revenue Officer: Zach Sullivan, zach.sullivan@futurenet.com
UK Commercial Sales Director: Clara Dove, clara.dove@futurenet.com
Advertising Sales Director: Lara Jaggon, lara.jaggon@futurenet.com
Account Sales Director: Guy Meredith, guy.meredith@futurenet.com

MARKETING

Head Of Marketing: Sharon Todd
Subscriptions Marketing Managers: Faith Wardle, Rachel Wallace

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

Production Controller: Frances Twentymen
Head of Production UK & US: Mark Constance
Printed in the UK by: Buxton Press Limited on behalf of Future
Distributed by: Marketforce, 2nd Floor, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf London, E14 5HU
Overseas distribution by: Seymour International
Head of Newstrade: Tim Mathers

CIRCULATION

Trade Marketing Manager: Michelle Brock 0207 429 3683

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

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING

Total Guitar is available for licensing and syndication.
 Contact the Licensing team to discuss partnership opportunities.
Head of Print Licensing: Rachel Shaw, licensing@futurenet.com

MANAGEMENT

Brand Director, Music: Stuart Williams
Head Of Design (Music): Brad Merrett
Content Director: Scott Rowley
Group Art Director: Graham Dalzell

Want to work for Future?
 Visit www.futurenet.com/jobs



FUTURE

**Connectors.
Creators.
Experience
Makers.**

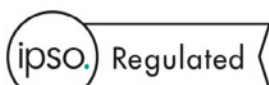
Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR). www.futureplc.com

Chief Executive Officer Jon Steinberg
 Non-Executive Chairman Richard Huntingford
 Chief Financial and Strategy Officer Penny Ladkin-Brand

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

All contents copyright © 2023 Future Publishing Limited or published under license. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be reproduced, stored, transmitted or used in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008895) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price and other details of products or services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any changes or updates to them. If you submit unsolicited material to us, you automatically grant Future a licence to publish your submission in whole or in part in all editions of the magazine, including licensed editions worldwide and in any physical or digital format throughout the world. Any material you submit is sent at your risk and, although every care is taken, neither Future nor its employees, agents or subcontractors shall be liable for loss or damage.

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this magazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards.



Welcome...



I've always found it extremely tough indeed to choose a favourite song "of all time" in any category or genre of music. Personally, my tastes change almost every day. However, when you ask Total Guitar readers and visitors to guitarworld.com for their opinions on music, the results are nearly always clearer than the inner workings of my own fickle mind.

Back in June, we ran a poll on the website to get your opinions on the greatest acoustic guitar song of all time. We created a shortlist of 120 tracks, from early blues and rock 'n' roll classics to modern pop hits, all with acoustic guitar as a significant feature of the original recording.

Well, you voted in your masses! Over 75,000 votes were cast and here in this month's issue we run you down through the top 50. I won't put any spoilers here, suffice to say the top five or so are iconic classics. It seems like these older songs still really resonate with guitarists.

Elsewhere, we interview two-time TG cover star Ben Howard, who says of his latest album: "The guitars are doing weird things." We speak to Korean-American country-bluesman Nat Myers about collaborating with Black Keys great Dan Auerbach. And rising LA guitarist, singer, songwriter, actor and video director, mehro, discusses his artistic influences.

Finally, as ever, there are plenty of lessons to keep you busy. Take your fingerstyle skills to the next level with 15 picking workouts, get gig-ready with our acoustic performance tips, plug in your electric and try our Red Hot Chili Peppers tutorial, plus learn songs by AC/DC, Billie Eilish and The Hives.

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

Chris

Chris Bird Editor

Total Guitar (ISSN 1355504) Summer Issue 374, 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, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3DH, UK

#374

Contents

20
THE 50
GREATEST
ACOUSTIC
GUITAR SONGS
OF ALL TIME





44 BEN HOWARD



86 DAVE MUSTAINE



92 FENDER GOLD FOIL TELE

Audio & Video

Find your audio and video
content online at:

bit.ly/tg374audio

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.

MONITOR

- 06 First Look
- 08 Scene

HOW TO...

- 10 The FX Factor: Wah Wah
- 12 Riff of the Month:
The Hives – *Countdown To Shutdown*
- 14 Five Ways To...
Use the Myxolydian Mode

LESSON

- 16 Evolution of Sound:
Red Hot Chili Peppers

COVER FEATURE

- 18 Perfect Acoustics
- 20 The 50 Greatest Acoustic Guitar
Songs Of All Time
- 44 Ben Howard
- 48 mehro
- 52 Nat Myers
- 54 Acoustic Gig Tips
- 58 12 Cool Chords to Play on
Acoustic Guitar
- 60 Fingerstyle Trainer

LEARN TO PLAY

- 64 Classic Track:
AC/DC – *Shoot To Thrill*
- 74 Open-Mic Songbook:
Billie Eilish – TV

THE GAS STATION

- 76 The Gas Station
- 78 Blackstar Debut 50R
- 82 The TG Test: Dave Mustaine
2023 Flying Vs
- 86 Interview: Dave Mustaine
- 90 Danelectro Blackout '59M NOS+
- 92 Fender Gold Foil Telecaster
- 94 Electro-Harmonix Lizard Queen

SUBSCRIPTIONS

- 96 Subscribe to TG!

SPOTLIGHT

- 98 bdrmm



06

A

ffordable guitars used to mean limited options, but in 2023 that's not the case. Squier's Sonic series delivers a ton of options across classic Strat, Mustang and Telecaster/Esquire shapes, with a choice of single coils, humbuckers, vibratos and hardtails, and more. Here, we've got our

hands on three models: the Squier Sonic Stratocaster HT (hardtail), Sonic Telecaster and Sonic Mustang HH.

Across the range, the Sonic series is equipped with poplar bodies, ceramic pickups offered in various configurations (HSS, HH, SSS and single-pickup H) and – depending on what colour you choose – Indian laurel or maple fingerboards. The Strat and Mustang

are available in three finishes each (Torino Red, Graffiti Yellow, Arctic White or California Blue, Flash Pink and Black, respectively), while the Telecaster comes in the same finishes as the Strat, with Butterscotch Blonde thrown in as a fourth option.

Prices start at just £149 for the Stratocaster HT, topping-out at £169 for the Mustang HH. We'll be taking a closer look next month.

Words Stuart Williams Photography Olly Curtis

SONIC BOOM

Squier's entry-level range offers classic Fender designs on a budget

UP CLOSE



Finishes

The Stratocaster and Mustang are available in three finishes each, while the Tele comes in a choice of four.



Fingerboards

Depending on which finish you go for, you'll get either an Indian Laurel or maple fingerboard.



Configurations

The Squier Sonic series features ceramic pickups throughout, but there are various single coil/humbucker configurations. Likewise, the range features vibrato and hardtail bridges.

SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS

ALBUM

"EVERY ROCK BAND WANTS THEIR OWN SEVEN NATION ARMY RIFF!"

SKINDRED GUITARIST MIKEY DEMUS
ON THE POWER OF SIMPLICITY - AND
HIS "WEIRD" PEDALS

This year, Welsh reggae metallers Skindred have toured with Kiss and played at both Download and Glastonbury. They've also completed their eighth studio album *Smile* – and guitarist Mikey Demus has plenty to smile about...

Which of the new songs are you most proud of?

I really love *Gimme That Boom*. It's a rudimentary idea that came quickly and turned into a banging song. I'd say my favourite Skindred tracks like *Big Tings*, *That's My Jam* and this one all have simple riffs. Anyone could play them without it being a massive stretch. Basically every rock band is trying to write their own *Seven Nation Army* riff that you can sing. That's the dream, anyway! It's nice when you write something

powerful that even a beginner could learn.

It's interesting that you work with a lot of British brands like Manson Guitars, Orange and Rotosound.

I'm happy to be repping these British brands. Talking to people and getting gear in the UK is easier because that's where we are. I always thought Orange amps didn't have enough gain, but when I discovered the Rockerverb, I thought 'Wow, they finally made an amp that works for my sound!' It's the best thing since sliced bread. Then I became friends with Manson, and before I knew it I had my own signature model. We're actually designing a new one right now. And, funnily enough, the first set of strings I ever bought were made by Rotosound!

You use a lot of experimental sounds in Skindred. What are

the main effects you've relied on over the years?

One of the first unusual-sounding pedals I bought was the Line 6 FM4 – that purple filter modeller that made all sorts of weird noises. It was a big corner-turner for me in making my guitar sound squawky and otherworldly. I'd feed it into the DM4 delay to create these dubby repeats. Another favourite is the Electro-Harmonix Micro Synth, which is more gnarly sounding than the POG. I'm a big fan of a rackmount valve distortion unit called the Thermionic Culture Vulture. Those things get wild when you run guitars through them – like when The Beatles used to plug their instruments straight into the desk for this direct sound that hits you in the face.

You also have your own pedal company, Redbeard Effects.

How did that come about?

I launched Redbeard with Adrian Thorpe from Thorpy Effects in 2019. I had no idea where to start and it was Adrian who suggested doing something together... How do you say no to that? The best pedal designer in the country wanted to go into business with me! I didn't understand the engineering too much. I'm not completely ignorant, either. I've been soldering my whole life and my Dad was an electronics engineer, so I've always been tinkering, but I didn't know how to get an idea from my mind onto a circuit board that's inside a pedal and then into a shop. We currently have four products: our Angry Rhubarb Paradyne Overdrive best-seller, the higher gain Red Mist, the Honey Badger Octave Fuzz and the new Hairy Squid, which is a multi-mode analogue fuzz!

Amit Sharma

OUTLAW COUNTRY

Mikey onstage at
Glastonbury festival
back in June



THE **FX** FACTOR

ESSENTIAL EFFECTS FOR YOUR PEDALBOARD

TREADLE

For most wah pedals, the treadle is the only way to make any kind of adjustment, acting both as the wah control (obviously!) and the on/off switch



WAH WAH

Get your guitar talking with this mainstay of classic rock pedalboards the world over

T

he most common wah pedal of all, the Dunlop Cry Baby, is named after the Vox Cry Baby that preceded it. It's hard to overstate just how ubiquitous this wah pedal is. Chances are, if you see a black wah on a pedalboard, it's a Dunlop Cry Baby.

The Cry Baby is built around an active bandpass filter. The centre frequency of the filter is 750Hz, with 18dB of boost, and a range from about 450Hz to 1600Hz. However, this is just the GCB-95 version; there's also a bass model which has a low-pass filter, and various signature versions with adjustable Q and boost. On the original, another key property is that the out-of-band frequencies are attenuated.

Of course, many wahs add additional controls. Just as important is the overall 'voice', a combination of the bandpass filter range and Q, as well as the timbre and mechanics of the boost.



CHANCES ARE, IF YOU SEE A BLACK WAH ON A PEDALBOARD, IT'S A DUNLOP CRY BABY...

MUST TRY...

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



BOSS PW-10 V-WAH £65 (USED)

This now-discontinued modelling wah was under-appreciated in its time. As a result, it's cheap on the used market. It models Vox, Dunlop and Morley wah pedals, has synth wah and Uni-Vibe settings, as well as user presets, and range and drive controls. There's no other mass-produced wah with the same amount of flexibility.



Z.VEX WAH PROBE £250 (USED)

On the Wah Probe, an RF antenna detects the position of your foot, resulting in a contactless wah pedal. Muse's Matt Bellamy even had one built into a guitar, to use with his hand. The Vexter edition has a range, volume and mix control on the top panel, over the original's sole volume control. It's an especially bright, punchy wah in a mix thanks to the use of a Z.Vex SHD as the boost.



VOX V847A WAH £79

To our ears the Vox is a slightly darker, more full-sounding wah pedal than the standard Dunlop. However, it's an admittedly subtle difference. Some players seem to have a preference, though. And though he also used Dunlops, Joe Satriani used one before ultimately releasing his own Vox signature, the Big Bad Wah.

SOUND ADVICE

Follow our bespoke settings to dial in three classic tones

BAD STEVIE

Steve Vai is famous for his Bad Horsie signature wah with Morley. On the track of the same name, Steve accents whammy bar scoops and bends with the wah, which activates automatically when stepped on. This allows him precise control of articulation on notes before dropping back to his normal guitar tone. Elsewhere on *Alien Love Secrets*, frenetic tracks like *Kill The Guy With The Ball* and tender cuts like *The Boy From Seattle* all feature prominent use of the wah.

MONEY FOR NOTHING

The intro to Dire Straits' iconic track is the most famous cocked-wah sound in recorded history. Supposedly, the wah used was a Morley, but a Cry Baby can nail the sound, too. The interaction between wah and the rest of the chain will matter, given the specific frequencies that are being emphasised. Engage the wah, then pull it back toward the heel until you can hear that signature honk.

DEAD WAH

One of our favourite examples of a toe-down wah is the intro to Muse's *Dead Star*. With a fuzz in front, Bellamy plays two repeats of the main riff, before the band kicks in and the filter is disengaged. A similar sound is found in the breakdown of *Slunk* on Smashing Pumpkins' *Vieuphoria* VHS. That sound is the combination of a wah and a Fender Blender fuzz.

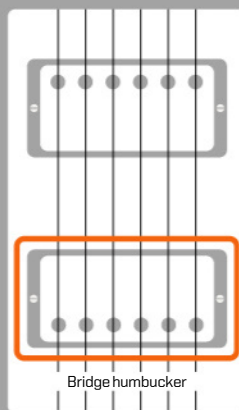
WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- ✓ Powerchords
- ✓ Octave shapes
- ✓ Minor triads



GET THE TONE

CHANNEL OVERDRIVE



The tone of this track is created by a combination of two guitars, one panned left and the other to the right. In the left speaker the guitar is a clean-ish single-coil tone, probably Arson's Telecaster Custom bridge pickup, and he's known for playing Fender amps. The right speaker has a gritty fuzz pedal engaged. Carlstroem has been seen playing his Epiphone Coronet, which is also equipped with a single-coil, but a fatter sounding P90-esque New York unit.

THE HIVES

Countdown To Shutdown

Taken from the forthcoming sixth studio album *The Death Of Randy Fitzsimmons*, the intro to The Hives' *Countdown To Shutdown* features a two-guitar arrangement comprised of pounding fuzz-tone octave shapes by Vigilante Carlstroem, panned to the right side, and a sequence of cleaner minor triads thrashed out by Nicholas Arson and panned to the left.

Play the octaves for the opening four-note chromatic pattern with your first and third fingers; the phrase starts on the 3rd fret and is repeated at the 8th fret. This riff is mirrored by minor triads played from the same root notes. Then, the triad part diverges, moving up to the 13th fret as the octave part returns to the 3rd. For the next section, both guitars play the same part, starting with an A5 powerchord at the 5th fret. Keep your hand fixed in position as you

move around the fretboard, with root notes outlining the A natural minor scale (A B C D E F G). Watch our slowed-down video performance to see how both guitar parts work together.

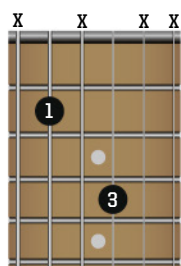
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:00-0:20

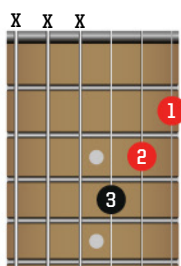
Tempo: 142bpm

Key/scale: Chromatic/A minor

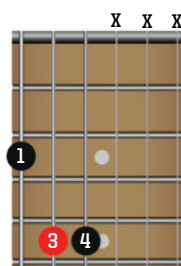
Main techniques: Octave shapes, powerchords



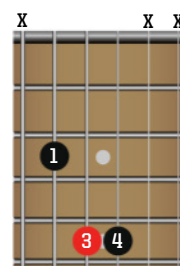
Octave shape



Minor triad shape



G5



C5

There's not room to show everything here. However, the octave shapes are played at every position between the 2nd and 10th frets (except for the 6th). The triads are played with their third-string root

notes at every position between the 4th and 21st frets (except for the 8th and 17th frets). There are two powerchord shapes played variously between the 3rd, 5th, 7th and 8th frets.



140 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

The Professional & Electromatic
140th Double Platinum
Anniversary Collections



GRETSGUITARS.COM

©2023 Fender Musical Instruments Corporation.
All Rights Reserved.





FIVE WAYS TO...

USE THE MIXOLYDIAN MODE

Everything from feelgood rock to funk gets better with Mixolydian

If you've ever found the major scale annoyingly happy but the minor scale too moody, do we ever have something for you this month. Mixolydian is a sound you already know: the intro and verses of *Sweet Child O' Mine*, the outro of *Hey Jude*, and the main sections of Coldplay's *Clocks* all use it. It's got more attitude than the major scale but it's less dark than the minor, in the goldilocks zone for countless memorable songs without too much schmaltz.

Technically, the Mixolydian scale is the same as the major scale, but the 7th note

is lowered by one semitone (one fret). Two great songs for demonstrating the Mixolydian sound are Kool and the Gang's *Celebration*, whose horn riff starts on that minor 7th and works down to the root, and The Cult's *She Sells Sanctuary*, which has a constant drone of the root notes so you can hear how the other notes harmonise against it. The most important notes are the major 3rd and minor 7th. It's that unusual combination which makes the Mixolydian sound so distinctive. Those notes also appear in dominant 7th chords (E7, G7 etc), so Mixolydian works perfectly over them.

In blues-derived music, it's common to play the minor 3rd against major chords, often pulling it slightly sharp with a blues curl. AC/DC often play Mixolydian chord progressions with pentatonic melodies, blurring the lines between major and minor even further. Our examples demonstrate the 'pure' sound of Mixolydian by using only major 3rds throughout, but you can get a raunchier sound by experimenting with minor 3rds. Example 5 uses the dominant pentatonic, which is like the minor pentatonic but with the minor 3rd raised one fret to a major 3rd.

1 GET TO KNOW THE SOUND

bit.ly/tg374audio


♩ = 90

TAB

0 2 4 5 7 9 12

For this example we're playing the D Mixolydian mode over a constant open D root note. This will familiarise your ear with the tonality. The riff in The Cult's *She Sells Sanctuary* is based entirely on this idea.

2 PLAY TWO MAJOR CHORDS TWO FRETS APART

bit.ly/tg374audio



♩=120

D⁷ C

Play 3 times

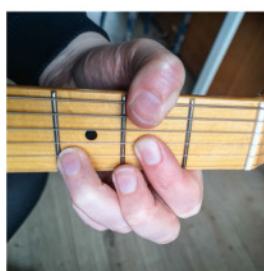
TAB

7 7 7 10 7 7 5 5 5 5 8 5 5

Here's a simple chord sequence (D-C) that brings out the sound of D Mixolydian. You can play it as chords or, as we've done here, an arpeggio lick. You can also use this whole lick over a steady D major chord to emphasise the mode.

3 WRITE UPBEAT ROCK RIFFS

bit.ly/tg374audio



♩=110

D⁵ D/F# G⁵ C⁵ D⁵

Play 4 times

TAB

3 2 0 3 2 0 3 2 0 3 1 0 3 3 2 0

2 2 3 3 3 0 3

Almost every AC/DC hit uses Mixolydian chords, and you'll find this mode wherever a band wants to write feelgood songs that still rock, whether it's Lynyrd Skynyrd, Def Leppard or Green Day. Use your thumb for the 2nd fret E-string in bar 2.

4 PLAY SINGLE-NOTE FUNK RIFFS

bit.ly/tg374audio



♩=100

D⁹

Play 4 times

TAB

7 8 7 x 5 7 4 5 5 4 7 8 7 x 5 7 5 7 7 10 10

Mixolydian is probably the most common scale in funk and disco music, so tons of classic funk riffs are based on it. Use a compressor here if you have one, and focus on getting the staccato notes to bounce.

5 USE THE DOMINANT PENTATONIC

bit.ly/tg374audio



♩=80

D⁵

Play 4 times

TAB

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

BU BDBU BU BD BU BD

It's like the minor pentatonic, but every time you would play a minor 3rd, shift it up one fret. Eric Johnson and Joe Bonamassa love this sound. You can easily combine it with the minor pentatonic too for a southern rock vibe, too.

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS

EVOLUTION OF SOUND

TG traces the **RHCP** guitar sound with a look at the styles of five key players

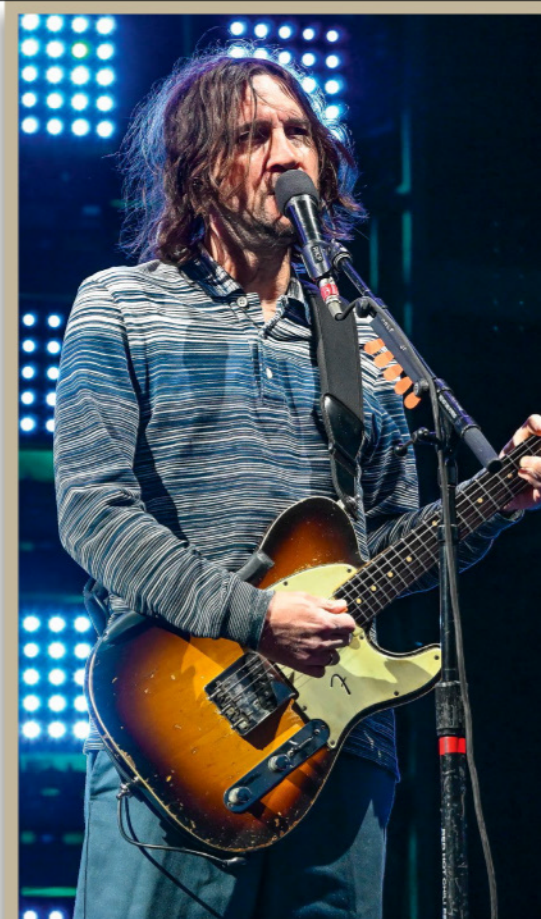
Lineup changes can signal life or death for a band, but over their four-decade career, the Chilis have bounced back from personnel shifts on a few occasions. Numerous guitarists have stepped in throughout the years to tour and record with the band, but what stands out is how each player encompasses the style of their predecessors while introducing elements relevant to current musical trends.

In the '80s, Jack Sherman and Hillel Slovak established the band's signature funk-rock

styling while reflecting elements of pop. In the '90s, John Frusciante maintained the 'funky punk' vibe while acknowledging grunge, while Dave Navarro forged a straight-ahead rock sound identifying with alt-rock.

Josh Klinghoffer took the reins as a full-time member from 2009 to 2019, maintaining the wide pallet of sounds established by his predecessors. Today, the band tour the world with Frusciante once again back in the fold.

Check out our tab examples and backing tracks for an insight into how each of these players has developed the Chili Peppers' sound.



01 JACK SHERMAN

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩ = 130

Gm

1. B^b C 2. B^b

1/4

1/4

1 3 5 3 5 3 X 3 5 3 5 1 3 5 3 X 3 5 1

cont. sim.

One of Jack Sherman's approaches was to double the bass groove. This adds depth by thickening the arrangement and presents the riff in different registers. Take care with timing by listening to the placement of the bass notes and drum hits that coincide with the guitar phrase.

02 HILLEL SLOVAK

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩ = 105

D⁷

1. D⁷ 2. D⁷ sus⁴

2/4

1 3 5 3 5 3 X 3 5 3 5 1 3 5 3 X 3 5 1

8 10 8 10 12 8 15 15 15 15 15 15 15 15

13 13 13 13 13 13 13 13

14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14

1 3 5 3 5 3 X 3 5 3 5 1 3 5 3 X 3 5 1

cont. sim.

Slovak often presented elements of commercial '80s pop songs through the use of effects on his guitar sounds. Use heavy compression and reverb to recreate the vibe. Make sure you maintain the tempo after the rests - it's all too easy to rush into the 16th note sequences.

03 JOHN FRUSCIANTE (EARLY ERA)

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=120

Em D Play 3 times C D

During the '90s, Frusciante introduced a grungy edge by adding intensity to the strumming patterns, often using more drive in the guitar tone and letting some open strings ring against chord changes. Use a decent amount of pick attack and wide strums to emulate the sound.

04 DAVE NAVARRO (LEAD)

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=70

D F G7 1. 2. 3. RP - BU

This example highlights how Navarro would bring his alternative rock flavours to the guitar melodies. This lick uses sliding octaves to imitate Dave's vocal-like phrasing, establishing a bright sound with a major 3rd (F#) before switching to a minor 3rd (F), which adds a darker and more sinister edge.

05 JOHN FRUSCIANTE (SECOND STINT)

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=80

Dm7 Bbmaj7#11 1. 2. Gm7 Am7

This sparse rhythm part demonstrates how the band's songwriting focus took a more commercial direction, often within a melancholy ballad feel. Get the chords to build by letting the notes ring over each other, particularly while the Hendrix-style triplet embellishments take place.

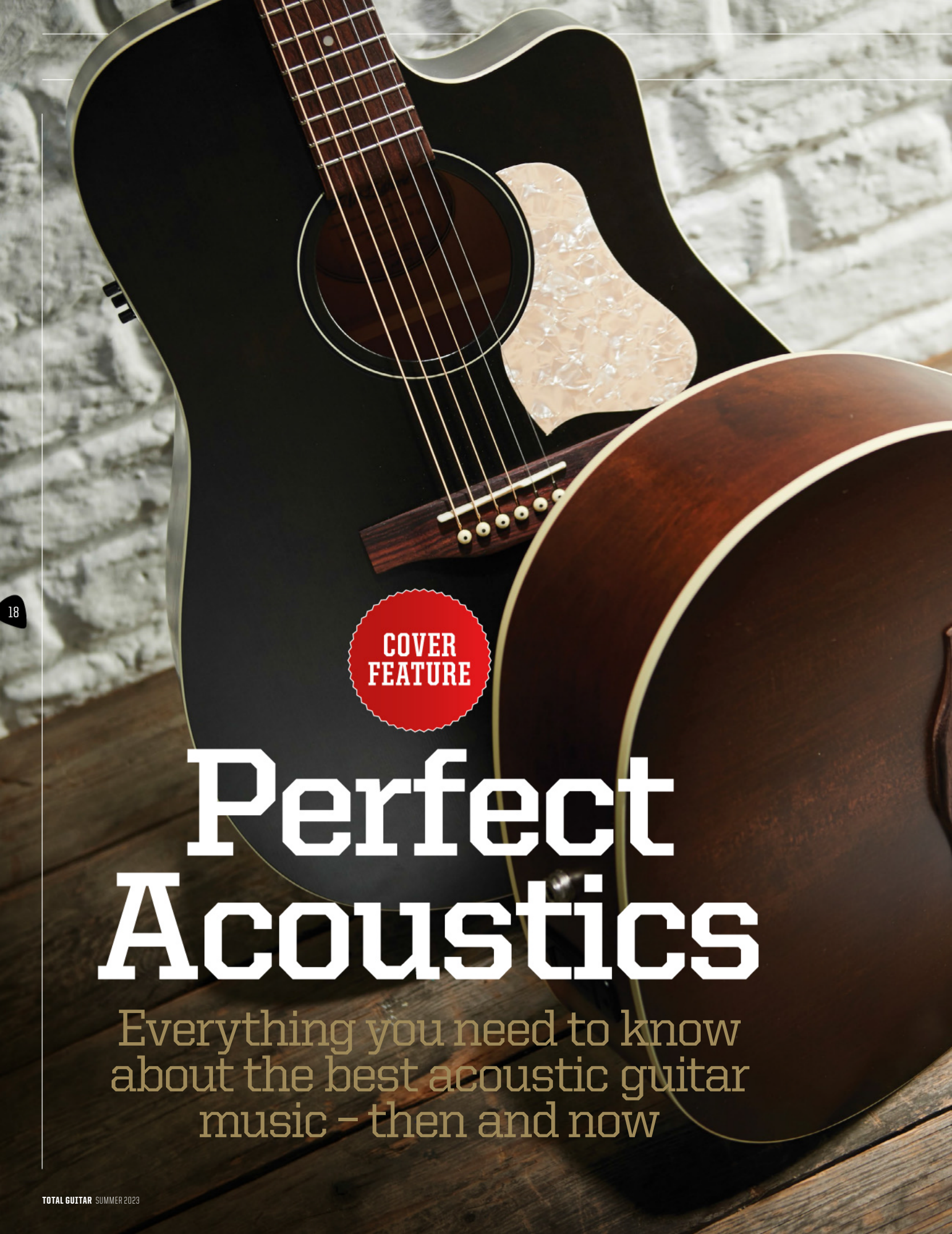
06 JOSH KLINGHOFFER (RHYTHM)

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=100

Am7 Am13 A7sus4 Am7

An approach that Klinghoffer uses is to create internal melodies around a single chord. In this example, the phrase is based around an Am7, and the chord extension notes around the shape are used to build the melody. Focus on keeping all notes ringing while you manipulate the shape.



COVER
FEATURE

Perfect Acoustics

Everything you need to know
about the best acoustic guitar
music – then and now



Contents

20

The 50 Greatest Acoustic Guitar Songs Of All Time

As voted by TG's readers. Featuring everything from The Beatles to Oasis, Bob Dylan to Bob Marley, and Tracy Chapman to Led Zeppelin...

44

Interview: Ben Howard

"The guitars are doing weird things..."

48

Interview: mehro

"It's music that I hope makes the listener love themselves more"

52

Interview: Nat Myers

"My big mistake was not learning guitar right-handed"

54

Acoustic Gig Tips

Get gig-ready with TG's guide to creating the perfect onstage acoustic guitar set-up

58

12 Cool Chords For Acoustic Guitar

Have a go at 12 open-string chords that we think will fire up your creativity!

60

Fingerstyle Trainer

Take your fingerpicking skills to the next level with TG's straightforward drills and workouts

Words Jonathan Horsley, Ellie Rogers, Amit Sharma and Tim Tucker

The 50 Greatest Acoustic Guitar Songs Of All Time

AS VOTED BY TOTAL GUITAR READERS

Back in June, TG posted a poll on guitarworld.com to find out your views on the greatest acoustic guitar songs of all time. There are, of course, so many to choose from, and our shortlist of 120 landmark tracks covered early blues, folk and rock 'n' roll classics to modern pop hits and rock epics. There was just one simple rule for inclusion: in every song, the acoustic guitar should be a significant feature. With a massive 75,000+ public votes cast, here we present

a rundown of the Top 50 Acoustic Guitar Songs as chosen by you. We start by listing the tracks from number 50 to 21, before going into more depth with the songs that received more votes. As we get into the top 10, we provide lessons on the key techniques employed by those icons of guitar – and hopefully you'll be feeling inspired to try out a few ideas for yourself.



- 
- 50 The Entertainer** – Chet Atkins
49 Shape Of My Heart – Sting
48 Somebody That I Used To Know – Mike Dawes
47 The River – Bruce Springsteen
46 Cross Road Blues – Robert Johnson
45 1952 Vincent Black Lightning – Richard Thompson
44 Spanish Fly – Van Halen
43 Just Breathe – Pearl Jam
42 Mediterranean Sundance – Al Di Meola
41 Big Yellow Taxi – Joni Mitchell
40 Iris – Goo Goo Dolls
39 Drifting – Andy McKee
38 Classical Gas – Mason Williams
37 The Clap – Yes
36 Good Riddance (Time Of Your Life) – Green Day
35 Angelina – Tommy Emmanuel
34 Wonderwall – Oasis
33 Crazy Little Thing Called Love – Queen
32 Jolene – Dolly Parton
31 Wanted Dead Or Alive – Bon Jovi
30 Redemption Song – Bob Marley And The Wailers
29 Life By The Drop – Stevie Ray Vaughan
28 Romeo And Juliet – Dire Straits
27 Nutshell – Alice In Chains
26 Carry On – Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young
25 I Walk The Line – Johnny Cash
24 Maggie May – Rod Stewart
23 More Than Words – Extreme
22 Crazy On You – Heart
21 (Sittin' On) The Dock Of The Bay – Otis Redding

38 Classical Gas

MASON WILLIAMS
(1968)

Why's this song in a boxout? Well, truth be told, and we hold our hands up here – we forgot about it! But this much loved nylon-string classic still received enough public votes, unprompted by us, to catapult it into our Top 50. A Mason Williams signature tune on which he delivers pure fire on a Cordova classical guitar, *Classical Gas* is a seminal guitar piece that was released just as the tastes of popular music were being shaped by the holy trinity of 60s free love, LSD and – what else? – Baroque chamber pieces! It has been re-recorded, reworked, covered by everyone, most notably the great Tommy Emmanuel. Even so, the original still sounds fresh, transcendent, a time-capsule. That owes something to its structure, the tricks Williams plays with meter, and the exemplary production/arrangement from Mike Post. It's effectively a sonata, with the intro establishing a melody that's developed later. A true masterpiece!



**KILL 'EM
ALL SOFTLY**
James Hetfield in
reflective mood



20 Tangled Up In Blue

BOB DYLAN
(1975)

The opening track from Dylan's classic album *Blood On The Tracks* was famously powered by two highly-collectable acoustic guitars – the 1950s Martin 00-21 in Dylan's hands and the 1969 Martin D-28 played by guest guitarist Kevin Odegard. The opening idea sees them strumming between A and Asus4, then moving between A, G and D during the verses and eventually introducing E and F#m shapes for the chorus sections. It's the kind of song even beginners wouldn't take long to feel at ease with – though, as per many of Dylan's genre-defining masterpieces, it's simple stuff done very, very well.

19 Patience

GUNS N' ROSES
(1988)

From a six-string perspective, *Patience* could be the easiest Guns N' Roses song of them all. Built

around the simple cowboy chords that almost every player starts out with, it's not so much the shapes that present a challenge as much as it is Izzy Stradlin's picking pattern. And though he tends to live in the minor world, on this track Slash's solo is composed out of the major pentatonic scale, with some additional notes from the major scale for extra colour, which is what gives it that uplifting, breezy feel.

18 Nothing Else Matters

METALLICA
(1991)

While E minor arpeggios can be found all over the neck, there can be no doubt that the easiest way of playing one would be using the open strings in the same way James Hetfield did for the intro and outro of *Nothing Else Matters*. The idea then builds using notes on the 7th, 8th, 5th and 3rd frets of the high E string to spell out the E natural minor scale, moving into arpeggios for chords from the same key like Am6, C and D, before closing the opening segment with some natural harmonics found at the 12th fret. It's a masterclass in how to captivate your audience from the get-go through a fog of brooding atmospheric sadness.

17 Fast Car

TRACY CHAPMAN
(1988)

Chapman's folk-rock ballad is the song that launched Chapman's career when it was released as the lead single for her debut album. With just four chords – C, G, Em and D – she enchants the listener with her tale of a working woman's attempts to escape poverty. She recorded the song on her Martin D-18E with DeArmond pickups, using a capo on the 2nd fret. The deceptively simple arrangement gets much of its character from the upper register voicings of the Em and D chords, using artful melodic embellishments to add colour. Countless artists have covered the song, assuring the song its enduring legacy

16 The Needle And The Damage Done

NEIL YOUNG
(1972)

**AFTER THE
GOLD RUSH**
Neil Young cracks
a smile



➔ Neil Young's instincts to use a live performance in a studio record were sound. Tracked on 30 January 1971 at UCLA's Royce Hall, in Los Angeles, this ode to heroin and its gruesome, deleterious effect on its users is best shared in concert. The message's poignancy demands an audience. Young's former Crazy Horse guitarist/vocalist Danny Whitten was one of the song's inspirations. He lost his life to heroin in 1972. Performed on a Martin D-45, it is a simple arrangement, based around D major and some slash chords that if strummed in another context could be a happy song. It isn't.

15 Angie

THE ROLLING STONES (1973)

Keith Richards hits a picked harmonic on the 12th fret of the A string on his Gibson Hummingbird, followed by a simple open Am chord, to introduce one of The Rolling Stones' greatest acoustic ballads. Richards and bandmate Mick Taylor both play acoustic guitars on the song, weaving together intimately by alternating strumming passages, bluesy licks and non-scalar passing notes. Augmented by session pianist Nicky Hopkins

and a string arrangement courtesy of Nicky Harrison, this is one of the Stones' most romantic songs. It gave them a deserving worldwide hit on its release in 1973.

14 Free Fallin'

TOM PETTY (1989)

Some of the greatest songs ever recorded started out almost by accident and all of a sudden present themselves to the artist. *Free Fallin'* is one such song. Petty and Jeff Lynne were in the room together. Lynne, who co-wrote most of Tom Petty's debut solo album, *Full Moon Fever*, and co-produced it, suggested the lyric to the chorus, and Petty had all these ideas coming. When Lynne started laughing, Petty knew he was onto something. He kept working and finished the song and by the time Lynne got back it was done. The very next day they hit Mike Campbell's studio and recorded a track that would stitch itself into the fabric of the great American songbook with the spritzzy jangle of Petty's 12-string acoustic guitar layered up with Lynne's acoustic with some electric 12-string for contrast arriving with Mike Campbell's solo.

13 Can't Find My Way Home

BLIND FAITH (1969)

Rising from the psychedelic ashes of Cream and Traffic – both recently defunct at the time – Blind Faith was a short lived supergroup consisting of Steve Winwood, Eric Clapton, Ginger Baker and Ric Grech. Written by Winwood, *Can't Find My Way Home* is the jewel in their 1969 self-titled LP, which they released shortly before imploding later that year. The intricate ode to being “wasted” and lost – physically, spiritually or otherwise – features three separate nylon-string guitar parts that weave in and out of each other to create a magical entanglement of sound. With his guitar tuned to drop D for mysterious Celtic folk overtones, Winwood fingerpicked the left- and right-panned guitar parts that run throughout, while Clapton demonstrated a new, buttery soft side to his lead playing personality with melodic improvisations in the intro and after each refrain. The version we know is said to have been the 21st take captured during the band's session at London's Morgan Studios.

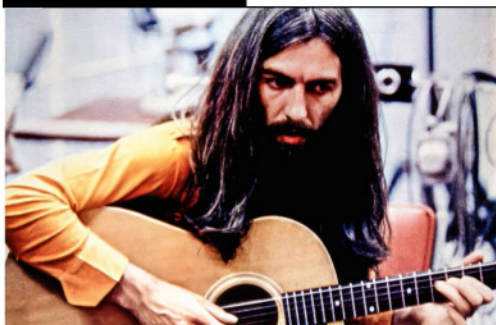
STONE ALONE
Keith Richards,
at rest and play



THE GREATEST ACOUSTIC SONGS

FREE SPIRIT
Tom Petty, an
American original





PLAYING WITH FIRE

James Taylor in the 70s



12

My Sweet Lord

GEORGE HARRISON

(1970)

Here is a track borne of George Harrison's cresting spiritual awakening and a genius for guitar that had been germinating in the fertile soil of the world's greatest rock band for seven exceptional years. *My Sweet Lord* is a non-denominational prayer that performs a number of musical miracles. Phil Spector applied the 'Wall of Sound' production. There were tracks upon tracks of guitar. It cast Harrison as fisher of men; Badfinger's Peter Frampton, Pete Ham and Joey Molland played on it, Eric Clapton, too. Greatest acoustic tracks? You could also place this on the pantheon for slide guitar, too. A copyright claim that cited similarities to Ronnie Mack's *He's So Fine*, a girl-group hit for The Chiffons, suggests Spector was sleeping at the wheel. But maybe everyone was in a state of rapture. Harrison, for his part, cited *Oh Happy Day* as the influence. Harrison's post-Beatles resurrection couldn't have started better.

11

Fire And Rain

JAMES TAYLOR

(1971)

Taylor's second album, *Sweet Baby James*, saw him emerge as a major singer-songwriter of his era. One of the standout tracks is this exquisitely melancholy ballad that draws on the pain of his personal struggles, including the death of a close friend by suicide, his own experience of depression, and his battles with drug addiction. Taylor plays the song mostly fingerstyle on his Gibson J-50, with a capo at the 3rd fret. He uses unorthodox A and D chord shapes, augmented by hammer-ons and pull-offs, adding colour with major 7ths, 9ths and suspended chords. The sensitive accompaniment is provided by Carole King on piano, Russ Kunkel playing brushes on drums, and Bobby West's bowed double bass. The song inspired Carole King to respond with another classic, *You've Got A Friend*, which Taylor himself covered on a later album.



Marshall

STUDIO JTM
20W ALL-VALVE AMP
MADE IN THE UK



ERA-DEFINING SOUND

THE AMP THAT STARTED IT ALL IS BACK.

MARSHALL.COM



10 Landslide

FLEETWOOD MAC

(1975)

When Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks joined Fleetwood Mac in 1974, the British blues outfit morphed into a much more versatile beast capable of conquering multiple genres and moods. Appearing on their 1975 self-titled LP, *Landslide* is one of their most enduring folk-hued hits – and it's one of their simplest. Densely layered acoustic guitars doused in reverb give a chorus-like feel, and – aside from a gentle electric guitar solo at the midway point – no further instrumentation features. Buckingham is known for his aversion to picks, and many of his guitar parts are based on Travis picking. *Landslide* is no exception, but the adept fingerstylist put a subtle twist on the basics by employing an “inside-out” picking pattern in the verses and by playing reverse banjo-style rolls with three fingers in the chorus. Buckingham got his first Martin D-18 at the age of 19 and has loved them ever since, so it's likely he used one to cut this iconic track.

LANDSLIDE-STYLE PICKING

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩ = 80

G⁵ D/F# Play 4 times

let ring throughout

TAB

3 0 3 0 3 2 3 2 3

3 0 0 0 2 0 2

p i p m p i p m cont sim

Buckingham's picking pattern is easy to play, but it sounds complex because the bass note alternates between the root and the 5th interval – as demonstrated here. We recommend holding down the G5 chord and practising the picking pattern slowly. When this feels comfortable make the move to the D/F# chord.

09 The Boxer

SIMON & GARFUNKEL

(1969)

The exquisite acoustic interplay on *The Boxer*, released in 1969, is the product of a collaboration between Paul Simon and Nashville session guitarist Fred Carter Jr. Carter used a baby Martin 000-18 guitar in open B tuning (B C# F# B D# F#). He recalled the details in an interview with *Fretboard Journal*, including how he created the beautiful introductory lick: “Paul Simon was playing his Martin, I think it's a D-18, and he was tuned regular. I think he was fingerpicking in an open C. I tried two or three things... did some counter fingerpicking with him, just did a little backward roll, and lucked into a lick. And that turned into that little roll, and we cut it, just Paul and I, two guitars.” Paul Simon provided the rhythmic backbone, with a thumb and index fingerpicking style. His guitar was tuned down a half step to allow Art Garfunkel to sing in the key of B. The finished item is perfection, the result of over 100 hours of recording, and stands as a testament to the duo's craft.

THE BOXER-STYLE CASCADING LICK

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩ = 70

Em^{7b5} Play 4 times

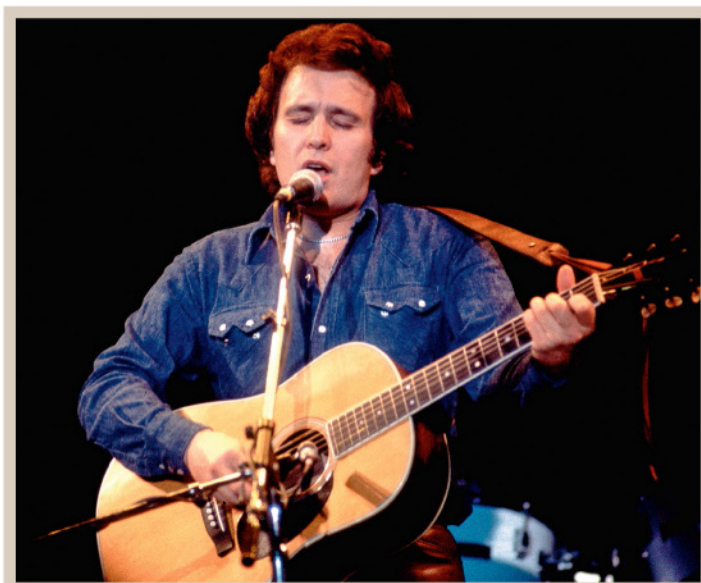
let ring throughout

TAB

3 0 3 0 3 3 3 3 3 3 0 3 3 3

a m a m i m i p i m i a m i m

The Boxer's intro features a catchy cascading fingerstyle pattern, and we're demonstrating the techniques here. Our example uses a pull off onto the open first string. If all the strings are allowed to ring, a cool shimmering dissonance is created.



08 American Pie

DON MCLEAN

[1971]

Don McLean's most famous song is an elegy to the end of rock 'n' roll's innocence, epitomized by the tragic plane crash of 1959 that killed Buddy Holly, The Big Bopper and Ritchie Valens – “the day the music died”. McLean drives the song on his Martin D-28, renowned for its rich tone and resonance, complemented by Paul Griffin's relentless piano. It was an extraordinarily long single for its time, at eight minutes 42 seconds, and had to be split in half to fit across both sides of a 45RPM single. As straightforward as it might seem, executing the song correctly presents quite a challenge. “If you sit down with it, you'll see that there's a chord change about every second,” McLean told *Guitar World*. It took around twenty takes of the backing track, recorded 'live' as a band performance, to get the finished take, with vocals added later. The result is one of the greatest songs in the history of popular music.

07 Dust In The Wind

KANSAS

[1977]

Legend has it that this wistful prog-folk gem developed from a fingerpicking exercise that guitarist Kerry Livgren was practising at home. Overheard by his wife, who encouraged him to turn the simple progression into a song, Livgren later brought a rough reel-to-reel recording of *Dust In The Wind* to the band's *Point Of Know Return* album sessions, and a classic was born. Although the rich chimey guitar sound resembles that of a 12-string, it's actually a perfect unison performance from Livgren and bandmate Rich Williams both playing six-string Martin Dreadnought acoustics – one in standard tuning and the other in Nashville tuning, where the E, A, D and G strings are tuned up a full octave. Marking a departure from their rocky sound, it was one of Kansas's very first acoustic guitar songs and peaked at #6 in the Billboard Hot 100 chart in 1978, making it their first and only top ten hit.

SMOOTH BASSLINES

bit.ly/tq374audio

[illegible]

Don McLean's sing-along favourite is an acoustic strumming masterclass. To create the smooth sounding, descending basslines, chord inversions are used. Our example highlights the classic trick of moving from G to Em using a D/F# chord to bridge the gap, creating a descending bassline of G to F# to E.

PICKING WITH MELODY NOTES

bit.ly/tq374audio

♩ = 60

G⁵ G Gsus⁴ G Play 4 times

let ring throughout

T A B

3 0 3 0 0 1 0 1 0 0

3 0 3 0 3 3

m i p a cont sim

Listen to *DITW* and you'll hear Williams and Livgren's fingerstyle melody, with each high note played simultaneously over a bass note. To do this, the thumb and third finger of the picking hand pinch the notes at the same time. The melody note can be moved anywhere on the second string.



06 Passionflower

JON GOMM

(2013)

Here, Jon Gomm was changing how we think of acoustic guitar. How fitting then that this track should take its title from the impossible – a moment of horticultural happenstance when he scattered some passionfruit seeds in his garden in Leeds and against all meteorological odds they bloomed into a flowering plant. One miracle deserves another, and so Gomm commemorated this plant in a bewildering Lydian arrangement and a performance that demonstrates that what is possible on acoustic is at the outer limits of our imagination. Gomm sees the instrument as percussion and strings, using his phenomenal legato skills to leave his picking hand free to tap the soundboard and create the rhythm. As technique goes, it's audacious, the fret hand owing as much to Joe Satriani as Andrés Segovia. He manipulates the tuners mid-song like a whammy bar, a trick pioneered by Earl Scruggs on the banjo that Gomm learned from watching Billy Connolly.

BENDING ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩ = 60

A D/A

Play 4 times

AH 18 – – – AH 16 AH 13 – – – AH 16

TAB

BU BD BU BD

0 6 (7) (6) 4 1 (2) (1) 4

Gomm uses advanced techniques including two-handed tapping, legato, percussive slaps and artificial harmonics. Here, we're emulating his tuner adjustments with string bends. The artificial harmonics are created by fretting a note then targeting a harmonic with your pick hand farther up the neck.



05 Blackbird

THE BEATLES

(1968)

Blackbird is a Paul McCartney tune from the White Album that drew inspiration from the civil rights movement in the US, and in that sense you could say it is a product of its time. But musically it goes way back to the early 18th century; it has Johan Sebastian Bach's fingerprints all over it. McCartney toyed around with Bach's Bourrée in E minor – one of the great touchstones of classical guitar – in the relative major key of G. Playing it on a steel-string Martin D-28 gave it a pastoral quality of a piece with folk contemporaries. Field recordings of an actual blackbird are a little on the nose, but why not? There's something of a John Lee Hooker quality to the recording, with McCartney's foot-tapping mic'd up in the studio. Its click is the only rhythm section in a track where the acoustic and vocal is doing all the work.

10TH INTERVALS

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩ = 90

G G/F#

Play 4 times

TAB

12 0 12 0 10 0 10 0

10 10 9 9

m p i p m i m p i p m i

Macca's guitar part in *Blackbird* creates an emotive backdrop for the vocals, and its trademark 10th interval has been used for many other classic songs. Our example uses an easy picking pattern, which places the bass note on the downbeat. Having a consistent quarter-note bass note drives the part along.



04 Tears In Heaven

ERIC CLAPTON
(1992)

There can be no doubt that Eric Clapton is one of the most influential electric guitarists of all time, with a discography bursting at the seams with groundbreaking riffs and leads that changed the course of rock music. But many would say it's *Tears In Heaven*, his triple Grammy-winning nylon-string acoustic piece for

the soundtrack of 1991 film *Rush*, that captured him at his most emotionally commanding. Written about the accidental death of his four year-old son Conor, it's a heartfelt ballad in the key of A major that pairs bass notes on the fifth and sixth strings with diads on the higher strings, with a sense of melodic and harmonic sophistication that nods to The Beatles.

Clapton later reflected on how it was his guitar that was there for him during his greatest time of need. "I almost subconsciously used music for myself as a healing agent, and lo and behold, it worked," he said, admitting how, despite going through one of the most painful episodes of his life, he'd received "a great deal of happiness and a great deal of healing from music".

DOUBLESTOPS AND DRONES

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=77

A D/A E⁷_{sus}⁴ E⁷ Play 4 times

let ring throughout

3

5 7 5 6

3 3 3 3

2 2 1 1

0 0 0 0

TAB

For this example we're using the fifth string as a drone and playing various diad shapes against it - as heard in Clapton's nylon-string classic. It's an idea that can work both ascending and descending, so do experiment. The characteristic trill on the second string is played with a fast hammer-on and pull-off.



03 Hotel California

EAGLES

There are many reasons why *Hotel California* is one of the most covered songs of all time, from its infectious vocal hooks to Don Felder and Glen Frey's shimmering 12-string acoustics, plus the duelling electrics (courtesy of Joe Walsh and Frey again) which harmonise during the song's climactic ending. Its main chord sequence is in B minor, though not all of the chords are found

in that key. F#7, for example, is borrowed from B major. The E9/G# in bar 4 is also non-diatonic, coming from A major. These are the two crucial chords that make the piece so pleasing to the ear. They're also the reason lead guitarists Don Felder and Joe Walsh incorporate notes from the exotic sounding B harmonic minor scale and the sweeter B Dorian mode into their exquisite pentatonic framework in that timeless outro

solo: the chords and scales share the 'outside of the key' notes, and so harmonise together. Clever stuff! And while you might find easier ways to play the verses with a capo on the 2nd fret, if you want to nail the sound of the studio version as closely as possible, you'll need to place your capo at the 7th position, which will emphasise the higher frequencies, sounding akin to a mandolin.

HIGH-POSITION CAPO

bit.ly/tg374audio

[illegible]

Place a capo high up the neck on an acoustic guitar is a shortcut to a sweet tone. It also helps to lower your guitar's action and makes playing intricate parts a breeze. The Eagles' 7th-fret capo'd strumming technique is on show here in our example, with the all-important melodic hook like in the middle joining it all together.



WELCOME TO THE SLINKY FAMILY



ERNE
BALL®

SINCE 1962





02 Wish You Were Here PINK FLOYD (1975)

From a band that defined progressive rock – with all its musical indulgence and complex song structures – the title track from Pink Floyd's eighth studio album is a model of simplicity and minimalism. It begins with David Gilmour switching between an open Em7 shape and a G chord on his Martin D12-28 12-string acoustic, processed to sound like it was being played through the same AM radio heard during the song's intro.

It all happened by serendipitous chance – the guitarist had bought the 12-string from a friend the year prior and was strumming along in Studio Three at Abbey Road just to test how it sounded in the room. It quickly dawned on Gilmour and bassist Roger Waters that this new spontaneous idea could be worth its weight in gold, so naturally the pair started building it from the ground up, with Gilmour handling lead vocals as well as guitars. The 12-string was also heavily featured on *Welcome To The Machine* from the same album, juxtaposing against the dramatic keyboards and futuristic synths, as well as many a Pink Floyd album to come.

In *Wish You Were Here*, after those opening chords, Gilmour introduces some fuller-bodied leads on his 1969 Martin D-35 six-string acoustic, mixed in to give the impression of a guitarist listening and jamming along to the airwaves. The storied instrument was acquired through a chance encounter outside legendary New York store Manny's in 1971, when a seller approached Gilmour as he was making his way in. After falling in love with the acoustic right there on the spot, Gilmour realised it was the exact kind of guitar he'd been looking for and had no choice but to bring it home with him.

He later revealed it was this instrument that had the most value to him as a songwriter. "To me it's not a luxury, it's an essential... life is impossible without a guitar," he explained on BBC Radio 4 show *Desert Island Discs*. In 2019, the guitar was sold through Christie's Auction House for \$1.1 million – setting a new record for a Martin acoustic, eclipsing the Eric Clapton 1939 000-42 which sold for just under \$800k in 2004. The proceeds from the sale went to ClientEarth, a charitable foundation dedicated to fighting climate change.



SINGING IN UNISON

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩ = 77

C G

Play 4 times

BU RP BD

TAB

9 8 8 10 (12) 10 8 9 8 10 10 (12) 10 (12) (10) 8

Wish You Were Here features some great acoustic lead guitar work and to embellish this David Gilmour sings along in unison. This is a lot of fun to do and not as hard as you may think – it's generally easier to sing in unison than parts that are in contrast to what you're playing. We have kept the phrases here in our example nice and simple, so why not give it a whirl?



36

"STAIRWAY IS A MILESTONE FOR LED ZEPPELIN"
JIMMY PAGE



01

Stairway To Heaven

LED ZEPPELIN

(1971)

Jimmy Page's legacy as one of the most influential players ever to wield an electric guitar has been well-documented over the years and undoubtedly seats him in a class of his own. But Page was equally as magnificent with an acoustic in his hands – as illustrated throughout his career with Led Zeppelin in songs such as *Black Mountain Side*, *Bron-Yr-Aur*, *Black Country Woman*, *Babe I'm Gonna Leave You*, *The Rain Song*, *Poor Tom*, *Going To California*, *Thank You* and, of course, the epic piece that has now been voted the greatest acoustic guitar song of them all – *Stairway To Heaven*.

It all begins with an arpeggiated idea around the 5th and 7th frets which gradually moves down into open position as the bass note descends one fret at a time, performed on Page's storied Sovereign H1260 (serial number

9631111260). This guitar had proven to be a fundamental writing tool from Led Zeppelin's early days and onwards, inspiring some of their best-known works, including songs that Page would later choose to record with an electric in the studio.

The idea itself is in various shades of A minor – thanks to the chromatically descending bass note which walks through scales such as harmonic minor, Dorian and natural minor one bar at a time. There's also a second half to the motif that picks through simple chords for C, D, Fmaj7 and Am, before returning back to the beginning as Robert Plant sings that unforgettable opening line: "There's a lady who's sure all that glitters is gold." The only notable deviation comes at the end of this section, where Page picks his way through the same shapes in double time to tee up the next section of the song, which arrives roughly one quarter of the way in.

In a 2014 interview with BBC News, Page explained how he wanted the song to build in ways that would thrill listeners through its sense of meticulous ambition, taking them on a cinematic journey that would evolve in the most inventive and profound ways one step at a time. "I wanted to try to put something together which started with quite a fragile, exposed acoustic guitar playing in the style of a poor man's *Bourrée* by Bach," he noted. "The idea was to have a piece of music, a composition, whereby it would just keep on unfolding into more layers, more moods. The subtlety of the intensity and the overlay of the composition would actually accelerate as it went through on every level, every emotional level, every musical level, so it just keeps opening up as it continues through its passage."

As well as reflecting on how "all of this stuff was planned, it wasn't just an accident or everyone chipping in, it really was a sort of design", he also explained how broadening the band's musical horizons involved breaking a few rules and thinking outside of the box, almost more like an orchestrator than a rock guitarist. It's this kind of stylistic open-mindedness that made him one of the most admired players of all-time, virtually peerless in terms of how he innovated with the instrument in his hands, someone whose influence would

THE GREATEST ACOUSTIC SONGS

end up stretching far beyond that of your typical rock 'n' roll player.

"One of the cardinal rules when I was a session musician was that you didn't speed up, and I was keen to do something which had an acceleration to it," Page said. "Not only from the musical point of view, but for the lyricist, so the whole thing would gain momentum as it went through, and it wasn't just a monotone piece. And by that I actually mean it would subtly speed up, breaking that number one cardinal rule."

The next section is where his 1965 Fender XII and Vox Phantom XII electric 12-strings get introduced, panned left and right to add more depth and shimmer to the same chords being performed on the Sovereign acoustic – including some interesting voicings for Em/D, D and C/D thanks to that open fourth string. This is also the point of the song where Page would switch from the regular neck to the 12-string on the Gibson EDS-1275 he used for its live performances – reverting back just before the end for its legendary long-form guitar solo.

"When I recorded the song I wasn't thinking about how I was going to do it

live," he told TG back in 2020. "With the sort of fragile guitar of the opening style and the more racy sort of pickups for the solo – the doubleneck is the only way I'm going to do it. So, in actual fact, the song demanded the guitar. There was no other way to replicate it, apart from jumping from one guitar to another on stage! That was about as good as it was going to get, really."

The signature anthem's final section is made up of three simple chords: Am, Am/G and Fmaj7, which outline the A natural minor scale and gives the song its melancholic feel. As a soloist, Page occasionally targets this mode – the relative minor to C major – by using intervals like the second and minor 6th (which in the key of A minor are the notes B and F), though the vast majority of the fretwork was composed using minor pentatonic ideas for more of a bluesy feel, played on the 1959 Telecaster given to him by fellow Yardbird Jeff Beck. "I basically got my Telecaster out to do that solo," Page told Classic Rock in 2021. "Even though I'd been playing Les Pauls, I wanted to get that bite of the Telecaster on it. It was the same Telecaster that I'd played on the first

THE TUNE WILL COME TO YOU AT LAST...

"I wanted to try to put something together which started with quite a fragile, exposed acoustic guitar," Page said.

album, the one Jeff Beck had given me that I'd used in The Yardbirds. A bit of a magical guitar, really."

And as for the rhythms underneath all those bends and trills, it's what Page plays in between the chords – those all-important dead 16th notes where everything is muted and nothing is fretted – that gives the closing segment its sense of motion and swagger. Though these rhythmic figures aren't contributing anything melodically, the song wouldn't sound quite the same without them. Similar things could be said of the "fanfare" that introduces the solo, Page letting the listener know something special is about to happen by the inclusion of some exaggerated strums going from Dsus2 to D and Dsus4. "It's a definite transition, with a fanfare to introduce the solo which will then soar right through," he said in that BBC interview, while also reflecting on what an inspiration time it was for the four musicians. "We were living in Headley Grange as a residence – eating, sleeping, making music. *Stairway To Heaven* is a by-product of all that and obviously quite substantial as a milestone for Led Zeppelin."

STAIRWAY-STYLE STRUMMING

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=80

Am Am(maj⁹) Am⁷ D Dsus⁴ D Dsus² D Play 4 times

One of the main harmonic features in *Stairway* is the contrapuntal movement of the descending bass notes with the ascending melody. We've used this idea for inspiration to create a strummed example. Using a 12-string guitar is the icing on the cake, but don't worry if you don't have one to hand. This part will work just as well on any type of acoustic guitar.

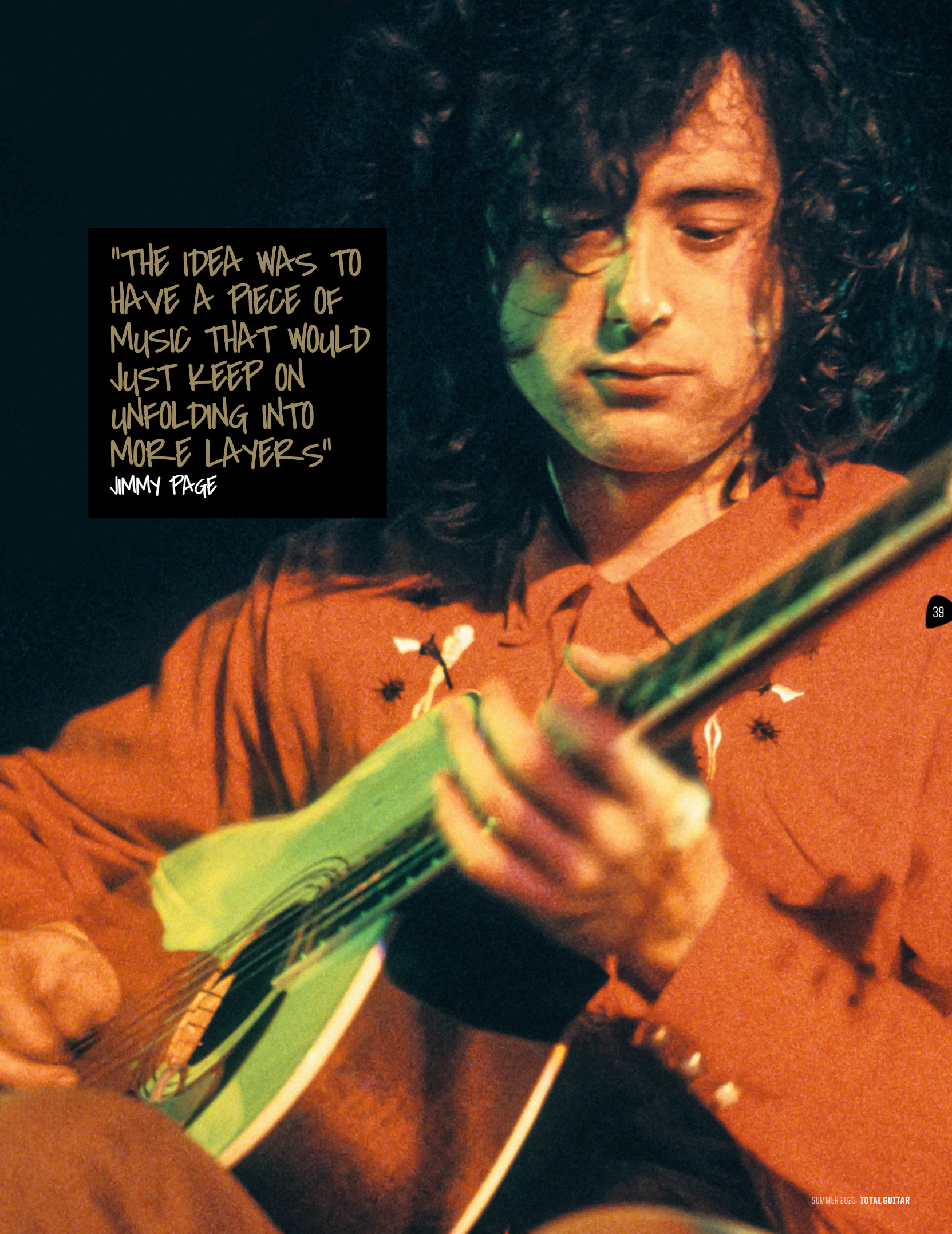
EMBELLISHING ARPEGGIOS

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=77

Am D Play 4 times

Another key feature is the way Jimmy embellishes the arpeggios. For our example we've added a D note into the Am⁷ arpeggio as a passing note. For the D chord we've included the open first string (E) which creates a Dsus². *Stairway* also uses Dsus⁴ to great effect.

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of Jimmy Page. He has long, dark, curly hair and is looking down with a focused expression at his guitar. He is wearing a dark, textured jacket. The guitar is a light-colored electric guitar, possibly a Gibson Les Paul, with a visible pickguard. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on his face and the guitar, and deep shadows elsewhere.

"THE IDEA WAS TO
HAVE A PIECE OF
MUSIC THAT WOULD
JUST KEEP ON
UNFOLDING INTO
MORE LAYERS"
JIMMY PAGE



Words Jonathan Horsley

The Iconoclast

How **Jimmy Page** redefined the role of acoustic guitar in rock

The images emblazoned in pop-culture's memory of Jimmy Page in his pomp are electric. The dragon-embroidered bell-bottoms and 1959 Gibson Les Paul Standard. The double-necked EDS-1275. The Telecaster and the violin bow. But just as Page changed electric guitar, he changed the acoustic, redefining its place in rock, using it to traffic in melodies inspired by Indian and Arabic music, to blur the line between folk and rock. To think that folkies were outraged at the electric Bob Dylan while Page was being similarly iconoclastic, re-contextualising folk through rock epics.

From the beginning, the signs were there that Page had big plans for the acoustic. Page had long been a fan of *Babe I'm Going To Leave You*, the Anne Bredon folk song popularised by Joan Baez in 1962, and on Led Zeppelin's 1969 debut he transformed it into a melancholy folk-rock-blues epic, demonstrating just how wide the band would stretch rock's dynamics.

All those studio sessions before finding a regular gig in The Yardbirds had expanded Page's musical vocabulary. There was *White Summer*, a 1967 Page instrumental that was released with the Yardbirds on the album *Little Games* that foreshadowed *Black Mountain Side*. One of the headiest tracks on Zeppelin's debut, *Black Mountain Side* was adapted from Bert Jansch's version of the Irish folk standard *Down By The Waterside*. You know the saying; talent borrows, genius steals. There was no

disputing Page's genius. Performed on a Gibson J-200 jumbo, *Black Mountain Side* was an early showcase for Page's acoustic orchestration and the freedom he found in open tunings, DADGAD on this occasion.

That first album had more great acoustic moments. The hot summer ennui of *Your Time Is Gonna Come* transitions to pure Americana once John Paul Jones' organ opens the floor to Page's fingerstyle acoustic. Page's acoustic often did its best work when seeking out pockets of frequencies in busy mixes, adding texture and changing the feel of the composition. Page and Jones repeated the trick on *Led Zeppelin II* with *Thank You*, the ne plus ultra of gourmet 70s rock arrangements. The three-dimensionality of Page's production feels like a VR headset would be more appropriate than headphones. Either way, *Thank You* is one trippy

"LED ZEPPELIN AT THEIR MOST AMBITIOUS ALWAYS HAD AN ACOUSTIC IN THE MIX"



THE CALM AMID THE STORM

Jimmy Page performing with Led Zeppelin at Earls Court, London on May 1, 1975

→ journey. As is *Ramble On*, a Tolkien-inspired track given forward motion by acoustics strummed hard. On treble clef, it almost looks like an electric arrangement.

Led Zeppelin III fried the hive-mind of critical opinion, opening the album with the proto-metal thunder of *Immigrant Song* only for Page to pull the plug, tune his acoustic to open C6 (low to high: C-A-C-G-C-E), and present us with the neo-folk of *Friends*, referencing eastern tonalities, and seesawing between pastoral bliss and the coming of darkness. Led Zeppelin had exploded in 1969, completing a triumphant tour of the US. Some breathing space was needed, and Page and Led Zeppelin frontman Robert Plant decamped to Bron-Yr-Aur, an 18th-century cottage in rural Wales. It was as though Page and Plant were sheltering from electricity itself. Speaking to *Total Guitar* in 2020, Page said it gave them the space to explore the acoustic side of the band.

"People were saying, 'Oh, Led Zeppelin's gone acoustic'. Well, what happened to your ears on the first

album and the second album?" he said. "It's just variations on a theme, really. There were so many ideas put into the first album, but they were able to grow and be developed."

One of those tracks was *Gallows Pole*, a foot-stomping folk tune that was centuries in the making, evolving out of an olde English standard, *The Maid Freed From The Gallows*, that had been reworked by the likes of Bob Dylan and Lead Belly. It was Fred Gerlach's version that caught Page's ear. Again, Page would take a traditional piece and make it his own: "I thought it was quite curious the way that song had started off in England and gone all the way around the States and come back, so then we were going to do it and send it back to the States again as a folk song."

Led Zeppelin III signed off with a country-folk supernova of strumming

and another nod to Jansch, *Bron-Y-Aur Stomp*, but not all of its acoustic arrangements were folk. *Tangerine* is a classic minor-to-major key ballad, featuring both six- and 12-string acoustics. Live and on record, Page would use his 1970 Giannini Craviola 12-string for *Tangerine*. A spruce-topped acoustic, rosewood back and sides, the Craviola has a shape that resembles a lute crossed with a dreadnought, and a tone that was positively celestial.

Then came the officially untitled album commonly known as *Led Zeppelin IV*. *Stairway To Heaven* gets all the attention – those intro arpeggios now a guitarist's rite of passage – but the pitter-patter of mandolin and big open acoustic chords of *The Battle Of Evermore* are so comprehensive that drummer John Bonham could sit this

"IT'S JUST VARIATIONS ON A THEME"
JIMMY PAGE

one out. And the hypnotic *Going To California*, with Page tuned to double drop D tuning (low to high: D-A-D-G-B-D), performs a miracle, switching the mood from Middle-earth to West Coast Pacific, setting up the album's swampy denouement, *When The Levee Breaks*.

Over *The Hills And Far Away*, from 1973 album *Houses Of The Holy*, was another song to come out of the cottage with the naturally chorused jangle of 12-string chords dancing atop a crisp six-string. By that time, no one reached for the pearls when Page grabbed his Harmony Sovereign H1260 jumbo or Martin D-28 dreadnought – he had by now changed expectations. Dreamy and ethereal, *The Rain Song* defied categorisation with another box-office production and arrangement that had an acoustic in open tuning (Gus4, low to high D-G-C-G-C-D) at its heart. But Led Zeppelin at their most ambitious always had an acoustic in the mix.

It was fundamental to their sound just as it has been rock's, first giving voice to the blues, taking it through the Delta, through skiffle and folk, country, all of the sounds and moods that percolated in Page's mind and kept him at the frontier, pushing on whether the electricity was on or not.



IN THE LIGHT
Jimmy and Led
Zeppelin drummer
John Bonham

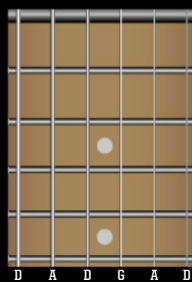
Page Tuner

JIMMY PAGE'S ALTERED TUNINGS EXPLAINED

Your guitar probably spends 99 per cent of its time in standard tuning, and if you're anything like us, the other one per cent is spent generally out of

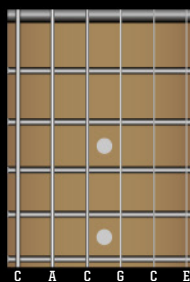
tune! Of course, Jimmy Page took a different approach, employing altered tunings in many of Led Zeppelin's most famous songs. Here we explain four of his favourites. We'll assume

you're starting in standard tuning (EADGBE), so where you see the instruction to tune 'down two semitones' we mean two semitones below standard. Easy!



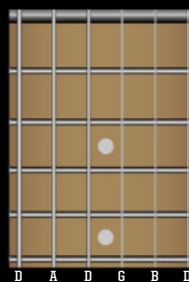
01 DADGAD

Sixth string: Down two semitones (E-D)
Second string: Down two semitones (B-A)
First string: Down two semitones (E-D)



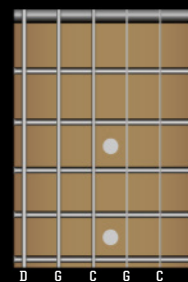
02 OPEN C6

Sixth string: Down four semitones (E-C)
Fourth string: Down two semitones (D-C)
Second string: Up one semitone (B-C)



03 DOUBLE DROP D

Sixth string: Down two semitones (E-D)
First string: Down two semitones (E-D)



04 OPEN GSUS4

Sixth string: Down two semitones (E-D)
Fifth string: Down two semitones (A-G)
Fourth string: Down two semitones (D-C)
Second string: Up one semitone (B-C)
First string: Down two semitones (E-D)

Words Ellie Rogers Photos Tyler Zwiep

"THE INABILITY TO PLAY MUSIC WAS QUITE FRIGHTENING"

BEN HOWARD feared the worst after suffering two mini-strokes. Now he returns with his most adventurous album to date. "The guitars," he says, "are doing weird things..."



When singer-songwriter Ben Howard appeared on the scene a little over a decade ago, scoring a top 10 hit with his debut album *Every Kingdom*, his music felt special because it had an uncanny ability to transport those who listened directly back to the greatest summer they'd ever had. His idiosyncratic "pick and go" acoustic style and percussive lap tapping techniques intrigued general listeners and guitarists alike, and set him apart from the main crop of sing-along strummers.

Two Brit Award wins in 2012 made him a household name, and his homespun brand of beachy fireside folk pulled whopping festival crowds around the globe. But, never entirely at ease with his burgeoning pop star status – let alone the prospect of being forever typecast as Devon's answer to Jack Johnson – pandering to popular demand and making another *Every Kingdom* has never been on Ben's agenda. A boundless musical curiosity, "enticed and excited by little audio moments", has led him into fresh sonic territories with every subsequent release.

2014's *I Forget Where We Were* saw the first introduction of electric guitars. 2018's *Noonday Dream* embraced more ambient textures and experimental sounds, and Ben first began "sticking guitars through Moogs" during the recording of 2021's *Collections From The Whiteout*.

"I'm very instinctive and impulsive when I play and not necessarily as

traditional as people think I am," he says, speaking from the comfort of his sofa where he keeps a somewhat approximately tuned Martin Dreadnought Junior within reach for casual noodling purposes. The guitar is one of only a handful of acoustics to actually make it onto his latest studio effort, a beautifully splintered folktronica masterpiece titled *Is It?*.

"I usually play in open C, and this had just sort of slowly dropped through the years that it'd been sat on the sofa," he demonstrates. "It had never been tuned – just to itself – and it had been slowly falling through the bottom parameters of what an acoustic should do. It ended up making a feature on the record, just because it had this real scooped sound with a really bright top end, not much in the mid-range and then really low bottom strings."

"I'M VERY
INSTINCTIVE
AND IMPULSIVE
WHEN I PLAY"

Happening upon "titbits" of sonic interest such as this is what kick-starts Ben's creative process, and although other acoustic elements do feature on *Is It?*, they do so in what he describes as a "textural" way, rather than as a fundamental means of self-accompaniment.

"You can't beat 12-string overdubs and the tactility of frets on acoustics," he maintains "I love that kind of stuff and they really fill a space." Then there's what he calls "the John Martyn steer" – AKA running an acoustic guitar through a Big Muff and into a vintage Echoplex EP-1 in order to transfigure its natural woodiness almost beyond recognition. But the wider landscape of *Is It?* is one of dreamy delay-drenched electrics and spliced up guitar rhythms, generated by feeding single notes and chords through a Boss SL-2 Slicer Audio Pattern Processor and into a Moog synthesiser.

"The guitar has always been an instrument that is my access to melodies," explains Ben. "Then, the technology that goes with guitars is my access to random generated melodies and random generated audio that then triggers my brain into thinking there might be a song in there."

This latest ten-song collection is also packed with electronic elements, heavily manipulated vocal samples, programmed beats, synths and strings. But Ben maintains, with a slight smile, that "it is very much fundamentally a guitar record... it's just that the guitars are doing weird things."

For example, the intriguingly warped rhythm track that runs throughout *Life In Time* was created by playing his trusty '60s Fender Jazzmaster through "a kind of glitch modulation, with a Slicer playing a rhythmic guitar pattern, and then pushing the mix up so actually a lot of the guitar is submerged."

He explains: "I'd say I'm a rhythm guitarist in the strictest sense in that I'm just trying to find rhythmic patterns and things that propel a song." But he adds that "anything that can make the guitar more active and me do less" is always a bonus.

Elsewhere on the album, he reached for a right-handed Silvertone, despite





being a left-handed player, because he's "always excited by how a fingerpick comes back when you play it upside down," and also took a dive into the discombobulating world of reverse delays, as you'll hear on tripped out track *Richmond Avenue*.

"My guitar playing has always been a kind of car crash of whatever suits me and whatever use I can get out of it," he says. "I'm not a great romantic in that traditional sense. It's about what noises these things can make, what purpose they can serve and what they can do for the imagination."

For what is undoubtedly his most imaginative offering to date, Ben also enlisted the expertise of indie/electronic producer and DJ Nathan Jenkins, AKA Bullion, to help fulfil his vision of making *Is It?* completely distinct from his previous efforts. More experimental for sure, but also "jovial, light, melodically fresh and not tied down in the murky depths of too many guitars."

But a darker and altogether more disconcerting set of circumstances in the months leading up to the recording session at Le Manoir de Léon in south-west France also profoundly affected the way the record took shape. In March 2022, while lazing in his garden, Ben suddenly found himself

unable to think clearly, form sentences or speak for almost an hour. A month later, the same thing happened again and he later found out that he'd suffered two Transient Ischemic Attacks, otherwise known as mini-strokes.

As someone whose livelihood depends on the artistic arrangement of chords, words and melodies, the idea that a tiny blood clot could cause him to lose all powers of articulation represented a very real and very surreal threat. "Obviously, the inability to play music or access words was quite frightening, but it was interesting at the same time," admits Ben, with an air of morbid fascination. "It shook me to the point of really making me dig at why you make music, what we are when we lose all faculties and lose these layers of ourselves. It became a real sticking point in the writing process and a focal point to write around."

The stuttering, vocal sample-heavy *Total Eclipse* is perhaps the most overt reference to what happened that spring. But, focusing lyrically on the "definitely troubling" time also had the slightly perverse effect

GROOVE MASTER
"I'm just trying to find rhythmic patterns and things that propel a song," Ben says

of helping to ensure *that Is It?* emerged sounding like the "happier, more fluid and brighter record" Ben had always intended to make.

"If I have heavier subject content, then I like to make a dreamier song, and if I have lighter content, I like to make it kind of a dirge," he laughs. "It's almost like a panic button. If the song's too happy, then I need to produce it melancholy, and vice versa." The paradoxically upbeat *Couldn't Make It Up* is a shining example of just that.

Now, with months of touring stretching out ahead of him, Ben's focus turns to "trying to figure out how rhythmic guitar tracks and drums can coexist" live on stage. "Sometimes that's the great tragedy of the guitar parts playing a lot of the rhythm tracks and delays," he says. "They do tie you to some sort of tempo quite strictly. Often, the push and pull of the delay, or how you play into the delay is the drama in the song. It's the fun of delays, but in a band setting, it can be agony

for everyone else when they're trying to listen to what you're doing!"

Is It? is out now

"THIS IS FUNDAMENTALLY A GUITAR RECORD"

TAKE FLIGHT

PHOENIX-1000 EVERTUNE
Silver Sunburst Satin

PHOENIX-1000
Vintage White

PHOENIX-1004
Tobacco Sunburst Satin

PHOENIX-1000
See Thru Black Sunburst

LTD

PHOENIX SERIES GUITARS AND BASSES

With the LTD Phoenix, nothing will stop you from launching into your finest performance. Their neck-thru-body construction, stainless steel frets, and top-tier components allow you to soar through fluid lead lines, powerful riffs and tight rhythms. Plus, the Phoenix will let you stand out from the crowd with its aerodynamic curves and with 13 different guitars and basses to choose from, there's an LTD Phoenix for every player in every genre of music.

Get all the info on the LTD Phoenix Series guitars and basses at espguitars.com.

ESP[®]

ESPGUITARS.COM
SOUND-SERVICE.EU



Words Chris Bird Photos Russel Tandy/Mallory Turner

"THE FIRST STEP FOR ME IS FINDING THE GUITAR TONE THAT SPEAKS"

For rising star **MEHRO**, every song begins with an acoustic. His method, "Being open, being in tune and channeling the inspiration"

Building a substantial following online since the tender age of 20, LA-based singer-songwriter mehro (styled with a lowercase 'm', as he prefers to be "unassuming") has quickly made a name for himself with a blend of intricate fingerstyle guitar work and dreamy falsetto vocals. This year he released his sophomore album, *Dark Corners And Alchemy* – the rich, multi-layered music tackling what he describes as "the duality of the human experience", juxtaposing themes of despair and self-destruction (the 'Dark Corners' side) with hope and healing (Alchemy).

If that sounds deep, well, it is – mehro is a self-professed "scholar of the human condition", and he's an artist of great depth and empathy. His lyrics are introspective but worldly. His videos – which he acts in and either directs or co-directs – are, most often, storyboarded allegories dealing with emotionally charged life experiences and issues of personal identity.

Employing a select choice of Martin, Taylor and Gibson acoustics, and a Fender Road Worn Strat, mehro insists he is no gear nerd, claiming, perhaps like most of us, "it's purely about what the feeling of the sound gives me." But it was an unlikely early influence who first inspired the then teenage mehro to pick up the guitar, and reassured him of the validity of his own musical identity...

Who did you listen to growing up and when you started making music?

The person that inspired me to make music was Johnny Cash. I saw *Walk The Line*, the [2005] movie, by accident. I didn't expect it to do anything for me but I watched it and it changed my life. I started playing guitar that night and I started writing songs shortly after that. Johnny wasn't somebody who wowed you with technical ability. He wasn't somebody with a voice like Aretha Franklin or Marvin Gaye and he couldn't play guitar like Jimi Hendrix or Eddie Van Halen, but he was loved regardless.

He was enough just the way that he was. And for me, it made me realise that I am worthy of my dreams. I can be enough just by being myself.

Who did you get into after discovering Johnny Cash?

I was recommended to listen to *Astral Weeks* [by Van Morrison] and *Tea For The Tillerman* [Cat Stevens]. Those albums were very influential [on me]. The Velvet Underground's debut album had a huge impact on my life. I really got into Led

Zeppelin, too. Frank Ocean's *Blonde* – that album is just spectacular. Joni Mitchell, *Blue*. So many albums that I'm missing, but those are the ones that are coming to my mind.

How do you describe your music?

I'm assuming you couldn't put this in a magazine, but I think the music is like a loving 'f*ck you,' in a way. You know, it's saying 'I love you but I'm going to do what I'm going to do. And I love you just the way that you are and I hope that you love this, just the way that I am.' It's music that I hope makes the listener love themselves more.

Love Kills is a really evocative song, yet beautifully simple with its ostinato two-bar guitar part. How did you piece it together?

Like a lot of these songs, it just sort of happened by being open and being in tune and channeling the inspiration and the influence. It was originally written for a movie, [but] the production company passed on the song. I thought it spoke a lot about how something beautiful can also hurt you and how things that hurt you can also make you the best version of yourself that you can be. It's a cyclical experience. It was lucky that the song just happened. It just sort of came and the guitar part sort of just came, and, just the way that it flowed, I felt it didn't get tiring. It didn't feel forced. It felt very effortless.

Tell us about the guitars you use in live shows.

The acoustic that I use live is a Martin Triple-O. It's mahogany wood and I absolutely love it. I have an L.R. Baggs Anthem pickup in there. What I've come to realise is that your pickup is so important because that's the thing that people are going to be hearing through the speakers. My experience with the L.R. Baggs is incredible. And I was gifted a guitar from Tim Godwin at Taylor, so you see me playing it sometimes. I've

"NO AMPLIFICATION.
WE HAVE NO AMPS!"



written some songs that I really love on that Taylor. The Martin is the one that I've used live for pretty much my entire career so far.

Let's talk about effects. What's on your pedalboard?

So, as of now, it's a very unsexy setup because we're looking for just convenience at this point. We're looking for as low stage volume as possible because I'm a very quiet singer. So I use a Line 6 HX Stomp to create the sounds, which is incredibly convenient and reliable. For the stage that I'm at right now, it's awesome. And as far as I can tell, the people in the crowd enjoy it.

In live shows are you going direct into the PA with the HX Stomp, or do you have any amplification?

No amplification. We have no amps. We do on the records because I'm lucky enough to have amps to work with [in

the studio]. So that's how we're able to get the sound of those. All the [live] guitar stuff is going through the Stomp because with my acoustics it's just a clean tone and I'm able to do a couple of effects on there. And for the electric, there's different patches that you can switch between for each song.

On the subject of recording, describe a typical day in the studio for you.

The first step for me is finding the guitar tone that speaks to the record. It's two acoustics that are always in contention. I've got a Martin D-2R and a Gibson Southern Jumbo – which is just a beautiful instrument. A lot of the recordings are either those guitars or a blend of them. The process for most of the songs started with an acoustic.

We hear a lot of experimentation with the acoustic guitar tones on both albums, with EQ'd and light

DEEP IMPACT
mehro on stage in
Los Angeles in
April 2023

overdrive sounds alongside traditional cleans...

Of course. And it's just laying down a performance that you're proud of and then dressing it up and putting something on it to change the way that it makes you feel. And doubling and layering and adding extra parts onto that. I love playing with octaves in the recording process, so you'll hear that in some songs on *Sky On Fire* and on *Dark Corners And Alchemy*. Just bringing it an octave lower or higher completely changes the way that the sound makes you feel. So for *Like You're God*, for example, the opening riff of that is an acoustic guitar an octave lower. It creates a different feeling.

What can we expect in the future?

We're waiting to find out about some interesting tour opportunities. I can't say anything yet. We'll wait and see how this album reacts with people. See how people enjoy it. I've got a lot of songs that I've written and I have an idea for what I believe is going to be the next work. My mind is already working that way.

***Dark Corners And Alchemy* is out now**



LOUDPEDAL

60-Watt amplifier



ACTUAL SIZE*

WWW.LANEYAMPS.COM

*PRINTING TOLERANCES COULD MARGINALLY DISTORT IMAGE, PLEASE SEE WEBSITE FOR PRECISE DIMENSIONS

Laney



FIND OUT MORE

Words Ellie Rogers Photo Tyler Zwiep

"I'M AS SELF-TAUGHT AS YOU CAN BE IN THE 21ST CENTURY"

How **NAT MYERS** made a beautiful old-school blues album – with help from Dan Auerbach, and just one acoustic guitar

When Nat Myers received an email out of the blue from a man claiming to be the studio manager for Dan Auerbach's Easy Eye Sound record label, he assumed it was spam and almost deleted it. It's a good thing his curiosity got the better of him, because the offer contained in that email – to come to Nashville and "lay a record down that you can be proud of" – turned out to be entirely legit, and resulted in the making of Nat's impressive country blues debut, *Yellow Peril*.

"It was very serendipitous," recalls the Korean-American bluesman, whose musical career up to that point had largely consisted of busking on the streets of New York, playing "for tips gigs" at the Jalopy Theater and sharing homemade recordings of his songs online. "I had heard of Easy Eye Sound before," he says, "because I've listened to a lot of *Sharecropper's Son* by Robert Finley and I really like that record." But he wasn't even looking for a record deal at the time, let alone a deal with one of the most respected guitarists-come-producers working in roots-based music today.

"It was very trippy, kind of like a David Lynchian daydream," he says, reflecting on the surreal experience of entering Auerbach's studio for the first time, where he would later return to collaborate with the Black Keys star himself, plus Nashville songwriting supremo Pat McLaughlin and country blues torchbearer Alvin Youngblood Hart. "It's like a Black Lodge, but [with] good vibes," Nat laughs. "They've got a little round table out the back and we just shot the sh*t, talking about the blues. That's how it got going."

Like Auerbach, Myers is a repository of knowledge when it comes to

traditional styles, and studying the likes of Robert Petway, Elizabeth Cotten, Tommy McClennan and Memphis Minnie has profoundly shaped his authentic brand of pickin' and storytellin'. His specialism is the Piedmont style, where the thumb holds down an alternating bass pattern on the lower strings and the index and middle fingers pluck syncopated melody lines on top. To this, he adds frenetic slide playing à la Charley Patton and allows himself to drag on the beat just enough to evoke the spirit of the Mississippi Hill Country masters – altogether successfully swerving "the hokeyness that's associated with preservation" – as he terms it. "When it comes to how I've learned, it's a lot of watching and a lot of closing my eyes after and really meditating on those songs," explains the highly skilled self-accompanist, who considers himself "self-taught to the extent you can be in the 21st century."

At just 32 years old, his life experiences are, of course, worlds apart from the musicians he looks to for inspiration. But, if it weren't for the lyrical content, which anchors *Yellow Peril* squarely in modern times – its title track referring to the appalling rise in Asian hate that occurred during the

Coronavirus pandemic – you could be forgiven for thinking Myers' debut was a remastered field recording from a bygone time. This is partly because, when the time came to record, the whole crew decamped from Easy Eye HQ and set up a makeshift studio at Auerbach's century-old Nashville home, capturing ambient background noise and Myers' foot stomp on the hardwood floor as well as his guitar and vocal parts.

Recorded direct-to-tape, he cut all ten tracks in three days, using only one guitar: a steel tricone resonator made by Matt Eich of Mule Resophonic. Auerbach contributed slide to Undertaker Blues using a 1935–1940 brass-bodied Dobro, which Nat describes as having had "the most peculiar sound" – one that he likens to the trumpet playing of W.C. Handy.

Reaching for the instrument we hear the most on *Yellow Peril*, he tells TG: "I got this guitar through really deep friendships I've forged and I thought it was only right that I cut my first record on it." Being a left-handed player, Myers also finds the vintage reso market "very limited," so having access to a masterfully built modern instrument with an old time feel seems like an apt solution for the kind of artist he is.

"People often tell me that my big mistake was not learning guitar right-handed," he smiles. "But I counter them and say, 'No, my big mistake was not learning guitar upside down!'"

***Yellow Peril* is out now**



"PEOPLE TELL ME THAT
MY BIG MISTAKE WAS
NOT LEARNING GUITAR
RIGHT-HANDED"



Words Chris Bird, Richard Blenkinsop Photography Kevin Nixon/Will Ireland

Acoustic Gig Tips

Get gig-ready with TG's guide to creating the perfect onstage acoustic guitar set-up



Whether you're busking solo or you play in a band, making sure your acoustic rig is set up just right is key to delivering a great performance. There are countless potential pitfalls but we're here to steer you in the right direction and ensure your gigs go to plan. We're well into making our gig-lives easier here at TG Towers! Broadly, we'd say the following tips fall into the following categories: sonic improvements, tonal troubleshooting and set-up advice, essential gear purchases, and backups/preparation for those unforeseen gear failures. Read on as we help you get your acoustic rig gig-ready.

01 TRAVEL LIGHT WITH YOUR GUITAR

We could fill the mag with acoustic guitar recommendations, but if portability is a concern then a travel-size guitar is a must. These tend to be short-scale and smaller-bodied, yet bigger and more 'grown up' than a 3/4-size guitar. Sheeran by Lowden's range includes the W and S series, both available at various prices, with and without pickups. Taylor's GS Mini and Martin's Little Martin ranges have been popular high-quality choices for a few years now. And Guild's M-240E Westerly Concert Electro is another great option that we've used ourselves here at TG.

02 AMPLIFY...

When it comes to acoustic amplification, you have two primary concerns: how loud do you need to go, and do you need mains or battery power? If the answer to the first question is ear-splittingly loud, you'll likely be plugging into a PA system – and you may or may not need an amp to hear yourself on stage, depending on the stage monitoring. At moderate levels you'll need to consider a mains-powered amp such as Marshall's AS500 or Fender's flagship

Acoustic SFX II – the latter being the higher-powered option at 2x100 watts.

If you're playing outdoors then battery power is best. For many, Roland are a go-to option for battery-powered amps with their AC-33 and Boss CUBE Street II. Fishman's Loudbox Mini Charge is an excellent-sounding amp and, with 60 watts, it's powerful enough for a busy street gig. All these amps include an XLR mic input plus some effects too.

03 USE A PREAMP TO IMPROVE YOUR TONE

Any acoustic amplifier is at the mercy of your guitar – it'll only sound as good as your instrument. Now, that's just dandy if your pride and joy comes equipped with a sophisticated (and usually expensive) blended under-saddle piezo pickup and in-body mic system with onboard preamp and EQ. However, if your steel-string's tone needs a little polish, or if you're DI-ing into a PA then a dedicated preamp pedal must be on your shopping list.

Fishman's impressive

Platinum Pro provides exceptional preamp sounds plus on-board compression, boost, feedback control and built-in tuner, though it comes with a premium price tag too. For a wallet-friendlier tone enhancer, check out

ANY ACOUSTIC AMP IS AT THE MERCY OF YOUR GUITAR...





MUMFORD & HUMS
Marcus Mumford has experienced his fair share of acoustic feedback, probably

➔ Fender's Acoustic Preverb pedal. Or if simplicity is your main consideration, TC Electronic's Bodyrez or XVive's Mike both feature just one knob.

04 ELIMINATE FEEDBACK

Feedback isn't only a problem with cranked high-gain electric guitar tones. Those big echoey bodies make acoustic guitars ultra-resonant and highly prone to nasty squeals once you get past polite volume levels. It can be a problem at any gig.

A soundhole cover such as D'addario's Screeching Halt can help. It's exactly what it sounds like – a round rubber cover that sits in your guitar's soundhole attenuating the flow of air from the body cavity and, hopefully, sapping feedback.

Also try an EQ notch filter – that's a narrowband EQ cut, ideally around the feedback frequency. Some acoustic preamps include a switch for this, but you can also target problem frequencies with a graphic EQ pedal if you have one. A phase reverse switch can cure problem feedback, or it might introduce more, but it's a useful tool to have in your arsenal.

05 LIVE OR DI

DI (which stands for Direct Injection or Direct Input) boxes are used to overcome impedance mismatches and incompatibilities. Pickup-equipped acoustics, produce high-impedance signals, while mixing desks are designed to receive low-impedance line input signals.

In simple terms, a high-impedance signal is very weak but you're plugging it into kit that's expecting something with a lot more oomph. This can throw up several problems, including loss of volume, loss of high-end frequencies and loss of clarity.

A DI box remedies this by taking the high-impedance signal from your acoustic, via a standard 1/4" input, and converting it to the kind of low-impedance signal that the mixer is expecting. Output from the DI to the mixer will be over balanced XLR cables and volume and tone are restored.

A DI box is a nifty piece of kit but we recommend buying one combined with a preamp for the ultimate tone-shaping, noise-reducing and feedback-eliminating device.

06 THE SHOW MUST GO ON!

If the worst happens and a crucial piece of equipment fails, well, you're going to need a backup! Budget cables can break so we'd always advise investing in heavy duty ones. You don't necessarily need to break the bank. Mid-priced options from specialist cable brands such as Planet Waves and Monster will outlast any budget lead.

It goes almost without saying that you should keep a box of spares for every gig: we're talking about strings, picks, batteries & power supplies, guitar straps, cables (including patch leads) and so on.

It's worth considering backups for bigger items too. It's not always practical to bring two amps, but once again, here's a reason to invest in a preamp – it gives you the option to plug direct into a PA system whilst preserving your acoustic guitar's tone.

07 EQ SETUP

Reverb may sound lush on acoustic guitar, but don't overdo it. Too much 'verb married to a heavy treble cut means your sound may get lost! When experimenting with EQ, always start with the dials in their middle positions – then cut or boost as needed.



Jackson

SCOTT IAN

X SERIES SIGNATURE KING V™ KVX



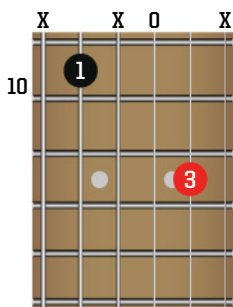
Words Chris Bird / Jenna Scaramanga

12 COOL CHORDS TO PLAY ON ACOUSTIC GUITAR

Have a go at 12 open-string chords that we think will fire up your creativity!

Let's be clear! There's no such thing as an 'acoustic guitar chord'. If a guitar has a standard fretboard, then, acoustic or electric, all chord shapes are fair game. However, some chords do sound *great* when played on acoustic – and we're looking at some of our favourites here.

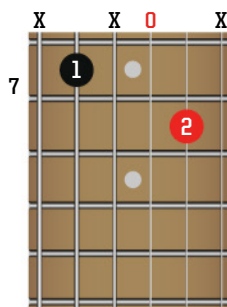
We're looking at a particular category of guitar chords: open-string shapes. These are chords that include open strings, but aren't necessarily played in the open position. The lush, ringing open strings give a richness to these shapes that really fire up any acoustic arrangement, solo or in a band. Right, let's get strumming!



G

01 THE BIRD IS THE WORD

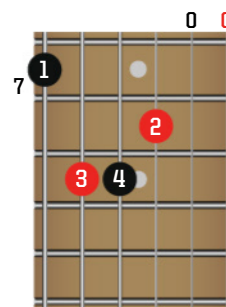
Played famously by Paul McCartney on The Fab Four's *Blackbird*, this sweet shape can easily be moved around the fretboard – the open third string comes in and out of tune when you move the shape, creating harmony and dissonance. Try experimenting with it.



Em

02 STILL FLYING HIGH

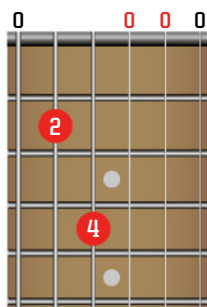
Another shape from *Blackbird*, this time played as a minor chord. Contemporary pop rocker James Bay has also taken these shapes to heart. *Hold Back The River* uses both of McCartney's shapes, so make sure to try them both out.



Badd11

03 UNCHAINED

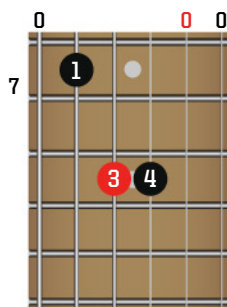
Whenever we hear this chord we think of *No Excuses* by Alice In Chains. Just slide in from two frets below to outline the intro. This is a versatile shape that you can move all around the fretboard. For instance, in 2nd position it's the opening chord in Rush's *Hemispheres*.



Emadd9

04 FEELING MOODY

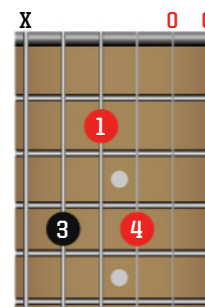
If you need a moody sound beyond the more basic Em chord, try out this minor add9 shape. We're in the open position here in E minor, but it is possible to play it as a barre chord – it'll be a stretch at the lower frets, though, so perhaps try it higher up the fretboard first.



Em

05 JUMBO POWERCHORD

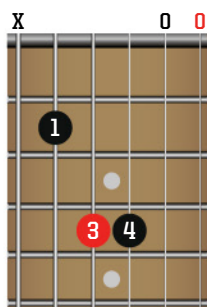
The guitar is never more glorious than when blasting out a powerchord, and here is the most powerful of them all: an enormous E5. Making use of open strings for maximum ring, the top two strings double notes from lower in the chord, creating a pseudo-12 string effect.



C#m7

06 THE BEST OF FOO

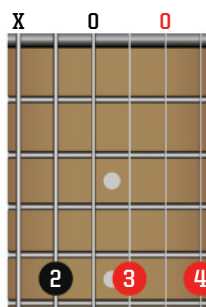
Dave Grohl is a master of using open strings in unusual voicings for a combination of jangle and crunch – and it sounds great on acoustic, too! This one opens *Best Of You*. It's arguably easier than many more common minor 7 shapes thanks to the lack of a barre.



Bsus4

07 UNBEARABLE SUSPENSE

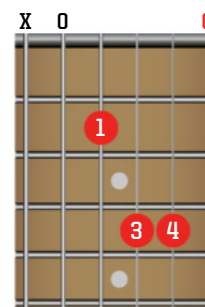
A logical way to follow the Grohl C#m7, this Bsus4 retains the same open strings for a sense of continuity. It has a stronger ring than entirely fretted versions of the chord and if your hand starts to cramp from barring it's a handy escape route.



D13

08 HAPPIER TIMES

Yet another Dave Grohl open-string special here, and this immediately recognisable shape kicks off *Times Like These*. Though the original part was played on electric guitar, its open strings make it sound utterly majestic on steel-string acoustic.



Asus2#4

09 LYDIAN DREAM

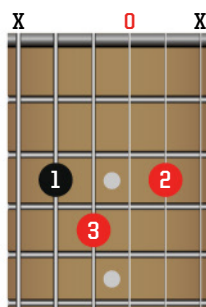
This uplifting chord's characteristic #4th interval (D#) makes it a great way to explore the Lydian mode. Or use it as a substitute for A major when you're playing in the key of E major and want more sophisticated chords. Prince used it, so you know it's good.



Fsus2

10 THUMBS UP

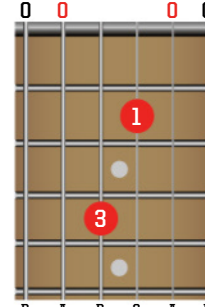
Some guitarists live with their thumbs placed over the neck, and others hate the position. There are a range of chords that aren't possible without using the thumb to fret bass notes, though. This tasty Fsus2 should be enough to persuade you it's worth the effort – and that ringing open G string is lush!



Csus2#4

11 THE SOUND OF YEARNING

Employed by super producer Butch Walker (Green Day, Fall Out Boy) on his first solo album, this chord sounds sad and hopeful at the same time, which makes it ideal for plaintive ballads. It's a tense collection of notes, so it tends to work best when arpeggiated or gently fingerpicked.



D

12 DADGAD D MAJOR

DADGAD is a great place to start with altered tunings on the acoustic guitar because it has such a rich chord vocabulary available. Here's a straightforward D major chord, but immediately it has more depth and colour than you get from the same chord played in standard tuning.

Words, guitars and backing Chris Bird

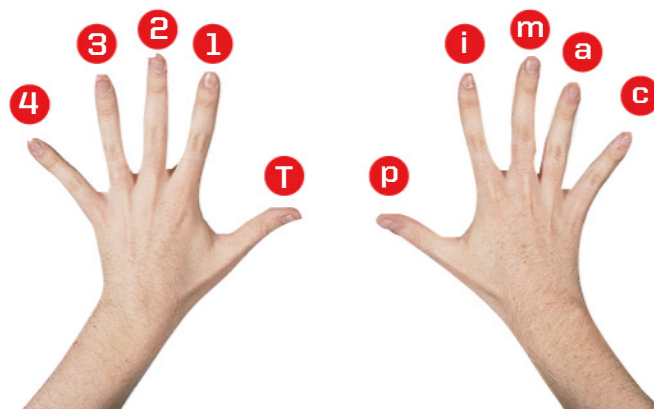
FINGERSTYLE TRAINER

Take your fingerpicking skills to the next level with TG's straightforward drills and workouts

Fingerstyle. It's one of those techniques most of us would probably say we wish we were a bit better at. Let's face it, it's easy to blast out a few chords from *Wonderwall*, *Wish You Were Here* or a simple strum-along of choice. And those intricate fingerpicked lines we promised ourselves we'd practise? Well, they can start to feel like a bit of a labour of love – and difficult!

Well, that's where TG comes in. Here we break down some of the

core techniques of fingerstyle acoustic guitar playing with 15 tab/audio examples for you to work on. In places we've taken inspiration from acoustic guitarists of note, but our main focus is on pure technique. Some of our exercises are multi-dimensional, too, so you can easily reinvent them to suit your own purposes. You could try an alternative fingerpicking pattern, change how you apply musical accents, or just play the same exercise on a different chord. Right, let's get picky with it!



LIFE OF PIMAC...

Fingerstyle notation explained

In fingerstyle notation, the letters p, i, m, a and c refer to the thumb and fingers in your picking hand. That's not just TG, by the way. It's a longstanding tradition of classical music. And the fretting fingers? They're numbered 1 to 4, with a 'T' to indicate the thumb. You'll need to know what it all means to get the most out of our tab lessons and just for a life of fingerstyle fun!

01 ACCENTING EXERCISE 1

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=110 C⁵ Play 4 times

let ring throughout

TAB: 5 5 5 5 3 3 3 3

p m i m p m i

Perhaps the de facto standard in 4/4 time is that every 'on-beat' note is played with some emphasis – i.e., a little louder than the offbeat notes around them. Try playing our example, inspired by Led Zeppelin's *Going To California*, with emphasis where you see the musical 'accent' mark (>).

02 ACCENTING EXERCISE 2

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=110 C⁵ Play 4 times

let ring throughout

TAB: 5 5 5 5 3 3 3 3

p m i m p m i

You might think we've repeated the tab from the previous example here, but no, look carefully! Though the notes are the same, there are three accents here, not four – and one is on an offbeat. Listen to our audio and you'll sense a totally different feel. As an exercise, simply swap between these two examples.

03 TIME SIGNATURES: 6/8

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=60 Em Play 4 times

let ring throughout

TAB: 0 0 0 0 0 0

p i m a m i

Classic 6/8-time ballads like Metallica's *Nothing Else Matters* and REM's *Everybody Hurts* feature this kind of arpeggio with an accent on the first and fourth eighth notes of the bar. Hone your skills first by picking these two notes a little louder, then try playing every note at the same level.

04 TIME SIGNATURES: 3/4

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=90 Em Play 4 times

let ring throughout

TAB: 0 0 0

p i m a m i

3/4 time is often confused with 6/8 time – both time signatures feature six eighth notes in each bar after all. The difference is in the accenting. Here in our 3/4 time example you can see there are accents on the first, third and fifth eighth notes of the bar. Try swapping between our two examples in 6/8 and 3/4.

05 GROOVE WITH MUTED STRIKES

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=90

G

Play 4 times

Here we're striking the strings with the picking hand on beats 2 and 4 for a percussive groove. There are drums on our backing track, but the technique is arguably most useful when you're playing unaccompanied. Extreme's *More Than Words* is probably the best known example.

06 GROOVE WITH ACCENTED CHORDS

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=105

Am G

Play 4 times

Taking inspiration from Jack Johnson's *Banana Pancakes* here we're keeping the groove with a downward strum from the picking fingers. The challenge is switching between fingerpicking the first two notes before switching to a finger-strum on beat 2.

07 PALM MUTING

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=72

C Am⁷ C Em

PM

Play 4 times

Palm muting – that's a rock technique, right? Well, yes it is, but it has a place in acoustic music, too – and if you're a fingerstylist aiming to emphasise a melody over a bassline you'll understand. Here in our example inspired by Ed Sheeran's *Bloodstream*, the fourth-, fifth- and sixth-string notes are muted while the third string rings out. Take the idea further by introducing more melody notes, replacing bass notes where needed.

08 HARMONICS PRIMER

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=95

Em⁷

NH

let ring throughout

Play 4 times

12th-fret harmonics are a relatively easy technique. Just touch the string over the fretwire without pressing down, then pick. Simple. Our example presents the challenge of picking single notes and a two-note shape, which requires accurate picking, especially if you want to hit the final single note cleanly.

09 POSITION-SHIFT HARMONICS

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=95

Em⁷

NH

let ring throughout

Play 4 times

Here's a real challenge! Shifting between 7th- and 12th-fret harmonics can be tough – and it might throw your timing out. Try practising the fingerpicking *all* in the 12th position first, only then introducing the position shift once you're confident your fingerpicking is accurate.

10 PIMA VARIATIONS 1

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=132

C

let ring throughout

Play 4 times

This simple drill will help you hone your fingerstyle technique. We're playing four notes from an open C chord but instead of simply ascending we're mixing things up with this picking pattern: p-m-i-a. Try alternating four bars of this pattern then switching to 'straight' p-i-m-a.

11 PIMA VARIATIONS 2

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=132

A⁷

let ring throughout

Play 4 times

This is the same exercise as you've just done, but this time with a p-a-i-m pattern. We're also playing A⁷ – but only for the sake of variety. For a full fingerstyle workout come up with as many variations on the picking pattern as you can and with as many chords as possible.

13 PIMA VARIATIONS 3

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=132

D Dsus⁴ D Dsus² Play 4 times

let ring throughout

a m i p

In general, fingerstyle feels easiest when you start on a thumb-picked note – it's your strongest digit after all. This example is a challenge because it follows an a-m-i-p pattern. So not only is the thumb the last digit you come to, it's playing on the offbeat, too. Remember, offbeats are most commonly de-emphasised, so you'll need to take care here not to strike the string too hard with your thumb. Practise without playing the chord changes while you get used to the picking part.

13 STRING SLIDES

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=60

E D/E E B/E Emaj⁷ sus⁴ Play 4 times

let ring throughout

m i o p p i m a m i p

This is a fretting technique, but when played fingerstyle the phrasing sounds pretty sweet on acoustic guitar. We're taking inspiration from Ben Howard's early-career classic, *Old Pine*, here, though staying in standard tuning for convenience. The trick in bar 1 is to ensure you keep the first- and second-string notes fretted for as long as possible, including during the slides down the string.

14 HOT COUNTRY PULL-OFFS

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=90

E⁷ A⁷ D⁷ G⁷ Play 4 times

let ring –

p m i p m i p m i m i m

Another fretting technique here in this well-worn country lick, but there are fingerpicking considerations too. The i-m-picked diads in bar 1 should seem like an obvious choice by now, as should the thumb-picked note that precedes each one. However, the second half of bar 2 and into bar 3 is more like 'lead guitar'. It's a single-note lick that could be picked a few different ways, and we've shown our preferred option. It'll also sound great played at double speed with a Telecaster bridge single-coil!

15 THE PINCH

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=72

C G/B Am G/B Play 4 times

let ring throughout

a m p i m a m p i m m i p i m p m p a

If fingerpicking isn't your area of expertise, we recommend breaking this example down into phrases of two beats duration each. That means you can turn the first half of bar 1 into its own exercise, focusing only on the C chord. Obviously that gives you three more sections to work on through the rest of the bar and into bar 2. The 'pinch' is a technique where you pick two notes simultaneously: downwards with your thumb and up with a finger – so, loosely, that's a pinch! Pull your hand fractionally away from the strings after each one so you don't collide with adjacent strings.



OUR GENERATION

Tom Ford plays **Top Tape** flatwound electric guitar strings:
in production and used on era-defining records since 1961



@rotosound_uk

AC/DC SHOOT TO THRILL

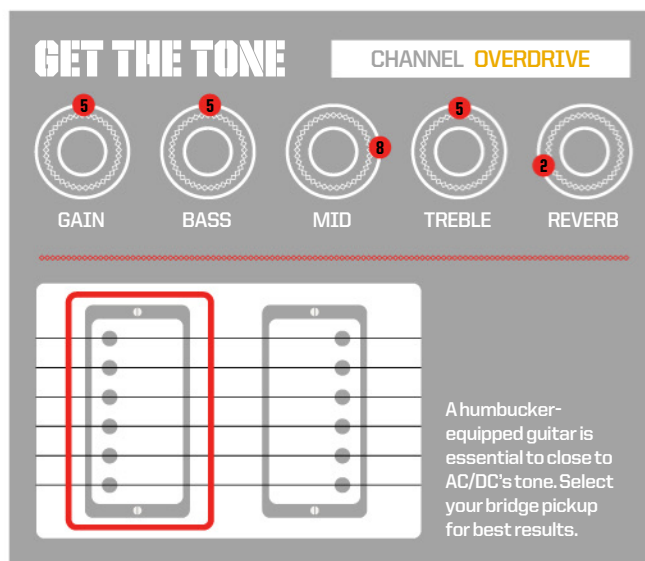
Discover the secrets of
AC/DC's tone and technique with
TG's tab of one of the band's best-
loved tracks

Shoot To Thrill features on AC/DC's global smash comeback album, *Back In Black*. The backbone of the band's sound comes from the dual guitars of sibling pair Angus and Malcolm Young. Their powerhouse rhythm parts are the perfect example of how twin guitar parts should lock and groove, with Angus' solos providing the icing on the cake – hard-hitting blues-influenced licks delivered with killer tone and perfect time.

The rhythm parts are based around open-position powerchords. G5 is the same as open G, but the fifth string is nearly always muted. D5 is based on that easy open D shape, but frequently played over a low A. Angus' lead parts are largely pentatonic, but *STT*'s solos are much more than mere one-shape wonders, so be sure to read the scales info below.

SOUND ADVICE

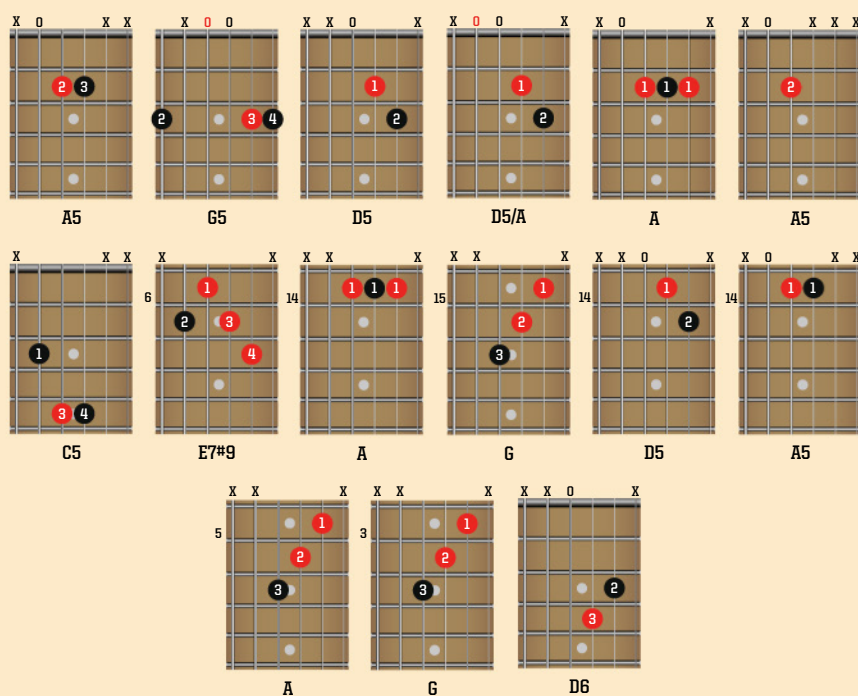
Everything you need to know before playing 'Shoot To Thrill'



Angus Young achieved his trademark tone by playing his cherry red Gibson SG through Marshall stacks. Malcolm Young also favoured Marshall amps but playing his 1963 Gretsch G6131 Jet Firebird, AKA 'the Beast'. Malcolm's tone is slightly more spiky and less overdriven than Angus', and it's the combination of these two tones that creates the AC/DC signature sound. If playing alone, it's worth having two tones set up – a Malcolm-esque light drive plus an overdrive/boost (a Tube Screamer type is a decent option) to get closer to the sound of Angus' Marshalls, which he cranks to the max, of course.

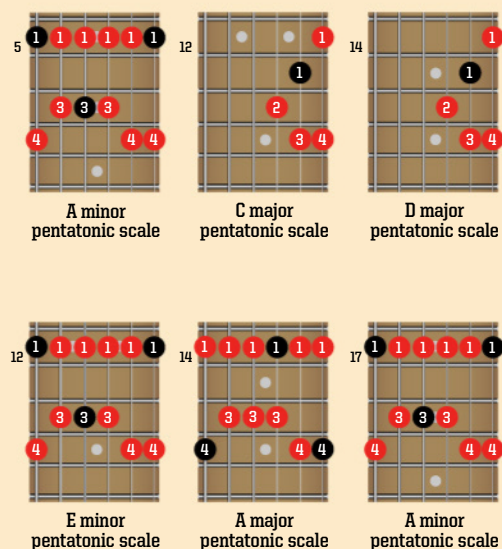
CHORDS

Although this looks like a lot of chords, the majority are easy open shapes. It's important to keep open strings marked 'X' carefully muted throughout – these are a major feature of this track and, indeed, of Malcolm's rhythm playing in general. In each case, try to rest a fretting finger against the idle strings as you play and, where possible, double up with palm-muting, too. A selection of the shapes shown here are to be found in the outro chorus where they're played fingerstyle.



SCALES

You'll need both low and high versions of the A minor pentatonic scale to play Angus' solos. In the first, the major pentatonic scale is used to follow the chord changes, shifting up a tone to follow the change from C to D. The E minor pentatonic scale is used at the end of the first solo over the E7#9 chord, which it fits perfectly. In the outro solo, the A major pentatonic scale is used at the 14th fret before shifting up to the high position of the A minor pentatonic. The song wraps up back down in the 5th position A minor pentatonic scale.



AC/DC

SHOOT TO THRILL

FULL
TAB

SHOOT TO THRILL
Words and Music by Angus Young, Malcolm Young and Brian Johnson
Copyright © 1980 Australian Music Corporation Pty Ltd.
All Rights Administered by Sony Music Publishing (US) LLC,
424 Church Street, Suite 1200, Nashville, TN 37219
International Copyright Secured All Rights Reserved
Reproduced by Permission of Hal Leonard Europe

AC/DC SHOOT TO THRILL Intro (guitar 1)

bit.ly/tg374audio

♩=142

A⁵

Play 3 times

This riff starts on a pickup bar (i.e., an incomplete measure), so be aware that you need to start on the third click of the second bar of the count-in. Start with your hand in 1st position, fretting the C and C# notes with your second and third fingers, which leaves your first finger free to form the A5 powerchord by barring across the 2nd fret. Make sure to simultaneously mute out the first and second strings with your barring finger.



Full track + backing (bit.ly/tg374audio)
This song comes with a full demo track and backing track.
Enter the above link into your web browser of choice;
press play and jam along, guitar-aoke style!

AD/DC / SHOOT TO THRILL

AC/DC SHOOT TO THRILL Intro/verse (guitar 2)

bit.ly/tg374audio

0:08

This is Malcolm's riff that you'll hear propelling the intro and verses. Keep your third finger in position on the 3rd fret of the second string until the A5 at the end of bar 2. You'll then need to use your fourth finger to play the low C# on the fifth string. Use your picking hand to mute out the strings between chords.

AC/DC SHOOT TO THRILL Verse (guitar 1)

bit.ly/tg374audio

0:35

Angus uses partial shapes to keep his overdriven sound in balance with Malcom's bigger chords and cleaner tone. A tight delivery relies on a double whammy of techniques with both hands. Picking-wise, use palm-muting on the bass strings and try to strike only the strings indicated in the tab. Use your fret hand to mute out the idle strings.

AC/DC SHOOT TO THRILL Bridge

bit.ly/tg374audio

0:49

Both guitars play the same part here in a mix of open and moveable powerchord shapes. Once again, it's vital to keep idle strings silent with picking accuracy and fret-hand muting. For example, use the tip of your first finger to keep the sixth string silent as you play C5. Listen carefully to our recording to check the rhythm of the E7#9, where the low notes are played mostly on the offbeat.

AC/DC SHOOT TO THRILL Pre-solo (guitar 2)

bit.ly/tg374audio

E7#9 Play 4 times

2:16

TAB

† no tie on last rpt.

This part is essentially the same as the riff in bars 7 and 8 of the bridge, just extended and played four times. The rhythm crosses the beat so it's a good idea to practise along with the full mix before going solo with our guitar-less backing. Angus precedes his solo with pick scrapes down the strings here – but you don't need tab for that!

AC/DC SHOOT TO THRILL Solo (guitar 1)

bit.ly/tg374audio

1

2:30

Play 4 times

3

5

8

Use the fingering provided in the notation for best results. Numbers next to the noteheads refer to your first, second, third and fourth fingers. Where two notes are played at the same fret, simply barre across both strings with the finger indicated. Notice how the solo follows the chord changes rather than simply blasting the A minor pentatonic scale throughout: the opening diads outline the chords, then in bars 3 and 7 the licks are in harmony with the C5 and D5 chords. Sweet!

3:17

A⁵ G⁵ D⁵

TAB

1

A G D⁵

TAB

5 m i p

A⁵ G D⁵ Play 3 times

TAB

9 m i p

A G D⁵ D⁶ Play 4 times

TAB

13 m i p

This example starts with the last four bars of the third chorus. The notes in the triads that follow should be played fingerstyle by using your picking hand thumb (p), first (i) and second finger (m) as indicated in the notation. Alternatively you could also use hybrid picking using your pick combined with the second and third fingers. Pick softly to clean up your overdriven tone.

3:36

N.C. A⁵ G⁵ D⁵/A 1. A⁵ 2. N.C. A⁵

TAB

AC/DC SHOOT TO THRILL Outro chorus (guitar 2, cont'd)

bit.ly/tg374audio

6

This part enters on the eighth bar of guitar 1's outro chorus sequence. Play fairly softly at first, then increase in volume when the bass enters and through to the end of the section. Don't play too hard, though. Keep some attack back for ramping up the dynamics in the outro solo.

AC/DC SHOOT TO THRILL Outro solo (guitar 1)

bit.ly/tg374audio

4:18

1

5

9

11

A⁵ (8^{1/2}) G⁵ D⁵ G⁵

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

RP

BU

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. It includes a guitar part and a corresponding guitar tab. The guitar part is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked "Moderato". The guitar part features a melodic line with a dotted quarter note, an eighth note, and a quarter note, followed by a series of eighth notes and a quarter note. The tab below the staff shows the fretting for the guitar part, with a "BU" (bend) instruction and a "20 (22)" fretting instruction. The score is divided into measures, with a double bar line indicating the end of a section. The guitar part is labeled "D5" and "G5" at the top, indicating the pitch of the notes. The tab is labeled "T" and "B" on the left side, indicating the fretting and bending instructions. The score is numbered "21" at the bottom left.

24

Take care to bend in tune on the opening unison bends and the minor 3rd bends in bar 8. In bars 11 to 14 you'll need to fret the top two strings simultaneously while bending the third string; not an impossible task, but worth practising – it's easy to accidentally fluff the bend or pull the other fretted notes sharp.

AC/DC SHOOT TO THRILL Outro solo (guitar 2)

bit.ly/tg374audio

[illegible]

AC/DC SHOOT TO THRILL Outro solo (guitar 2, cont'd)

bit.ly/tg374audio

5

G⁵ D⁵/A

PM - - - -

TAB

8

N.C. A⁵ G⁵ D⁵/A

V

TAB

11

A⁵ G⁵

TAB

15

D⁵/A G⁵ D⁵ G⁵

TAB

19

D⁵/A G⁵ A⁵

TAB

This section uses the same chord sequence as the choruses but with a slightly different rhythm pattern. Use downpicking for the first section, with the low notes palm-muted between chords, then switch to alternate picking as indicated under the tab. This will help you to build the dynamics while maintaining a steady groove. Listen out for the gradual slow down at the end, and take your timing cues from the drums and bass to lock in.

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

BILLIE EILISH

TV

Five easy chords with a gently-strummed acoustic guitar are at the heart of Billie Eilish and Finneas' ballad

Multi-Grammy winner, Bond-theme co-writer and global superstar Billie Eilish has always collaborated with her brother Finneas O'Connell, who produces and co-writes the music – as well as taking guitar duties in live shows. This month's track from Billie's second EP release *Guitar Songs* is a laidback acoustic ballad with biting lyrics that tackle weighty issues like mental health, abandonment, broken relationships and abortion rights.

It's a beautiful song to play and relatively easy, too. If you're playing unaccompanied, it's an opportunity to work on getting your strumming in the pocket, timing-wise – and keep in mind that the slow tempo and sparse arrangement leaves the guitar somewhat exposed, so timing and feel really are key here.

Alternatively, play along with our backing track. We've recorded it in full and kept the guitar in the mix wherever the band drops out to help keep you in place.

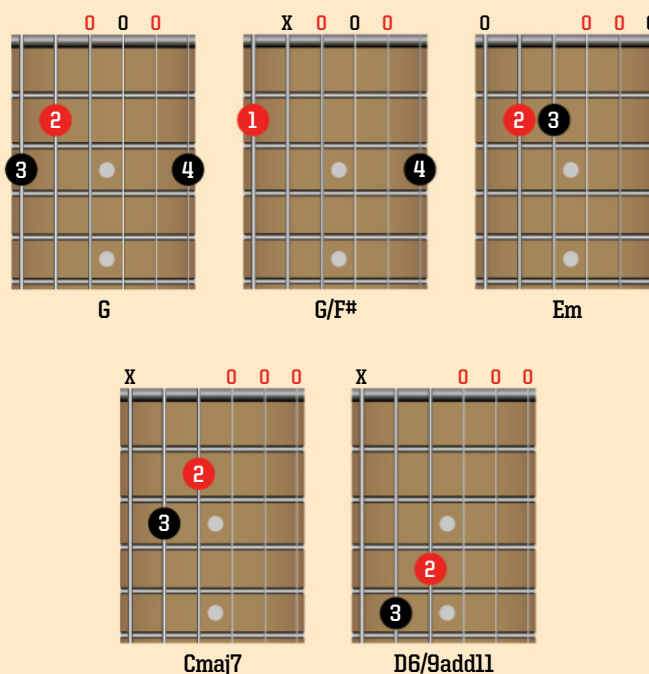


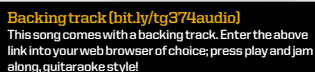
CHORDS

The G and Em chords may be fretted differently to what you're used to, so check the chord box here carefully to ensure you're using the best fingering. Keep the sixth string muted with a free finger when playing the Cmaj7 and D6/9add11 chords. Notice that the exotic sounding D6/9add11 is achieved by simply shifting the Cmaj7 shape two frets higher and playing it against the same open strings. Easy! Note, however, that for ease of reading we've shown it simply as 'D6/9' in our song sheet, but it's the 6/9add11 chord every time.

TV

Words and Music by Billie Eilish O'Connell and Finneas O'Connell
Copyright © 2022 UNIVERSAL MUSIC CORP., DRUP and LAST FRONTIER
All Rights for DRUP Administered by UNIVERSAL MUSIC CORP.
All Rights for LAST FRONTIER Administered Worldwide by KOBALT SONGS MUSIC PUBLISHING
All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission
Reproduced by Permission of Hal Leonard Europe





TV

G / / / G/F# / / / Em / / / / / / /
Cmaj7 / / / D6/9 / / / Em / / / / / / /

G G/F# Em
I don't wanna talk right now
Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
I just wanna watch TV
G G/F# Em
I'll stay in the pool and drown
Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
So I don't have to watch you leave
G G/F# Em
I put on Survivor just to watch somebody suffer
Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
Maybe I should get some sleep
G G/F# Em
Sinking in the sofa while they all betray each other
Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
What's the point of any - thing?

Cmaj7 D6/9 G G/F# Em
All of my friends are missing again
Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
That's what happens when you fall in love
Cmaj7 D6/9 G G/F# Em
You don't have the time, you leave them all behind
Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
You tell yourself it's fine, you're just in love

G/F# Em
Don't know where you are right now
Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
Did you see me on TV?
G G/F# Em
I'll try not to starve myself
Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
Just because you're mad at me
G G/F# Em
And I'll be in denial for at least a little while
Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
What about the plans we made?
G G/F# Em
The internet's gone wild watching movie stars on trial
Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
While they're overturning Roe v. Wade

Cmaj7 D6/9 G G/F# Em
 Now all of my friends are missing again
 Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
 'Cause that's what happens when you fall in love
 Cmaj7 D6/9 G G/F# Em
 You don't have the time, you leave them all behind
 Cmaj7 D6/9 Em
 And you tell yourself it's fine, you're just in love
 Cmaj7 D6/9 G G/F# Em
 And I don't get along with a - ny - one

Cmaj7	D6/9	Em
Maybe I, maybe I, maybe I'm the problem		
Cmaj7	D6/9	Em
Maybe I, maybe I, maybe I'm the problem		
Cmaj7	D6/9	Em
Maybe I, maybe I, maybe I'm the problem		
Cmaj7	D6/9	Em
Maybe I, maybe I, maybe I'm the problem		
Cmaj7	D6/9	Em
Maybe I, maybe I, maybe I'm the problem		
Cmaj7	D6/9	Em
Baby I, baby I, baby I'm the problem		
Cmaj7	D6/9	Em
Baby I, baby I, baby I'm the problem		
Cmaj7	D6/9	Em
Baby I, baby I, baby I'm the problem		
Cmaj7	D6/9	Em
Baby I, baby I, baby I'm the problem		
N.C.		
Baby I, baby I, baby I'm the problem		

[illegible]

For best results, use the picking pattern indicated here on the tab. Achieve this by keeping your strumming hand moving down and up throughout, but 'ghosting' above the strings on longer notes where you don't strike the string.

Cmaj⁷ D^{6/9}add¹¹ G G/F# Em Cmaj⁷ D^{6/9}add¹¹ Em

1:09 let ring throughout

TAB

The chorus reorders the chord sequence, starting with those lush-sounding Cmaj7 and D6/9 chords that are initially sustained for effect. Add a similar rhythm to that shown in bar 2 on the repeat here. Notice how you only need to play the open sixth string when shifting to Em in bars 2 and 4. This gives you plenty of time to change chords.

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.



78 BLACKSTAR DEBUT 50R

An amp for any situation that won't break the bank

82 THE TG TEST: DAVE MUSTAINE 2023 FLYING Vs

The Megadeth man's mouth-watering new signature models undergo the TG test treatment

86 INTERVIEW: DAVE MUSTAINE

The Megadeth mastermind talks us through his new collaboration with Gibson

90 DANELECTRO BLACKOUT '59M NOS+

A moody version of the lil' guitar with a huge sound

92 FENDER GOLD FOIL TELECASTER

Fender leaps on the Gold Foil bandwagon

94 ELECTRO-HARMONIX LIZARD QUEEN

Queen of the tone age?



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



SOME ISSUES



POOR



START ME UP!

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

WARM AUDIO ODD BOX AND MUTATION PHASOR II

1 If these two look familiar then it's by design; Warm Audio's *modus operandi* is contemporary recreations of classic gear. Here the inspiration is the Fulldrive OCD and Mu-Tron Phasor II. The former is a "hard-clipping overdrive inspired by a modern pedalboard staple known for cranked-amp tone", while the Phasor is all about swirly '70s tonesomeness that works well for keys and bass, too. We'd advise guitarists keep the goodness for themselves, though. **Phasor II £159, ODD Box £111, www.warmaudio.com**

PRS HOOTENANNY STRAP

2 The PRS Europe shop doesn't sell guitars or amps but it does sell everything else you might want from them; pedals, pickups, parts, straps, clothing and strings. We've been doing some bird-watching over at the store and honed in on this Jacquard Hootenanny strap amongst the t-shirts, caps, picks and even a rechargeable headstock tuner adorned with the winged PRS calling cards **£29, www.prsguitars.eu**

MARR'S GUITARS BOOK

3 Coming in October, this promises to be a stunning photographic showcase of former Smiths guitarist and indie legend Johnny Marr's key guitars, with insights from the great man to accompany Pat Graham's pictures. The book will also cover the guitars Marr gave away (Noel Gallagher and Ed O'Brien now own two of his old Les Pauls) and those he has acquired, including a Nile Rodgers Strat and Bert Jansch's Yamaha acoustic. **£45, www.thamesandhudson.com**

HARLEY BENTON SPACESHIP POWER SERIES PEDALBOARD

4 You might have 99 pedalboard problems, but an integrated rechargeable power supply ain't one thanks to Harley Benton. The Spaceship Power series comprises six different boards made from lightweight powder-coated aluminium frames, all with gigbags. The integrated lithium-ion battery can be charged or run from the mains power adaptor. The Power Bars are also available to buy separately in three sizes. **From £120, Power Bars from £102,**

STRANDBERG SÄLEN NX 6 TREMOLO PLINI EDITION

5 Strandberg Guitars and Plini make for a forward-thinking pairing and this latest signature model combines a Sälen chambered mahogany body shape and a maple top. The neck is mahogany, reinforced with carbon fibre, and carved into the brand's patented EndurNeck profile. The model is offered with a Suhr Classic T Telecaster-style single-coil at the neck position, and the choice of a Suhr SSH+ or Strandberg signature Plini humbucker at the bridge for twang and chug aplenty. **£2,080, www.strandbergguitars.com**

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal,
providing you various content:
brand new books, trending movies,
fresh magazines, hot games,
recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price

Cheap constant access to piping hot media

Protect your downloadings from Big brother

Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages

Brand new content

One site



AVXLIVE & ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

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



BLACKSTAR DEBUT 50R

A simple amp for any situation that won't bust the bank

£209

The amp market is awash with different ways of letting us hear our guitars, and it can sometimes be a little overwhelming. Blackstar's Debut 50R series strips things back to a time when our only real choices were valve or solid-state, head and cab or all-in-one combo. Except it goes a step further, as the Debut 50R – which joins the previously-released Debut 10 and Debut 15 – is only available as a self-contained, 1x12" 50-watt combo.

That might seem a little strange in 2023, where nearly every amp-based product we come across in these pages packs dozens of models, a fleet of effects, a USB interface and a software counterpart, but that's not the Debut's purpose. What we have here, is an affordable, meat and potatoes combo amp with two

or PA system. Oh, and it comes in a choice of either Cream/Oxblood (pictured) or Black/Basketweave stylings.

Essentially, it's designed to be an all-rounder, and Blackstar has its sights set on the Debut being the first 'big amp' for a lot of players who want a single, straightforward multi-purpose amp for practice, recording and live gigs.

Taking it out of the box, the lightweight and fairly compact design is immediately apparent, prompting us to wonder if this thing is really going to be able to deliver band-level volume. That fear is allayed by plugging in and switching on in our living room, where we're reminded exactly how loud 50 watts can be. The Debut immediately scores points with the five-watt switch, which in the absence of a master volume



“THE 50R IS VERY HARD TO FAULT AT JUST OVER £200”

foot-switchable (sold separately) channels, reverb, and an effects loop. It's lightweight at just under 11KG, and perhaps most importantly as we stare down some more austere times, it's got a price tag that's so low, we thought it was a typo.

But that's not to say that the Debut 50 is a totally bare-bones amp, either. The clean channel has a Bright switch for adding more cut to your clean sound, and the Debut is also fitted with Blackstar's patented ISF control for further tone shaping. You can drop the entire output power from 50 watts down to five, and on the back panel you'll find an aux input, plus an emulated output for sending your sound to an interface

control gives an instantly useful drop in power.

The clean channel is as straightforward as they come – essentially a one-knob control for your level, allowing you to balance it against the OD channel. This is where the first limitation of the Debut comes in though, as the EQ and ISF control are shared between the channels so you'll apply the same shaping to both of your sounds. It's less of a problem if you're staying on one channel most of the time, or using external pedals, but it's also where the clean Bright switch can come on handy. It's preset, but does give an extra tonal option if you're going direct to the amp, and depending on your guitar you might find it to

1 SIMPLICITY
Option paralysis getting to you? The Debut 50R makes life easy with two channels, reverb, and an effects loop.

2 LIGHTWEIGHT
It weighs 10.7KG, meaning your back will thank you. But with 50 watts on offer, you won't have to compromise on volume.

3 ADJUSTABLE OUTPUT
The full/five-watt switch makes the Debut 50R adaptable for home use at sensible volumes, or loud enough on stage.



AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Solid state combo

POWER: 50 watts / five watts

CHANNELS: Two

CONTROLS: Clean volume, bright switch, Overdrive gain & volume, three-band EQ, ISF, reverb type switch & level, five/50w switch

SOCKETS: Input, line out/phones, line in, footswitch, effects loop

SPEAKER: Blackstar, 12"

OPTIONS: Black/Basketweave or Cream/Oxblood [pictured], footswitch

CONTACT: Blackstar, blackstaramps.com

Atlantic Highway

How Blackstar switch between classic UK and US tones

Blackstar's patented ISF control has been a staple on nearly all of its products since the company's birth, but what does it do? Well, it stands for Infinite Shape Feature, and works alongside the EQ to offer an extra tweak option. To the left, it voices the tone to resemble typical 'US' amp tone, tighter with a slight mid scoop. Turn it to the right and you're back on British soil with a richer mid-range that sounds more open. But the best thing is that you can park it mid-Atlantic for your own, anywhere in-between shaping.

be your preferred option in general. Both clean voices are very useable though, with plenty of headroom and a surprising amount of volume, even in five-watt mode.

With the digital reverb dialled-in you get a choice of plate and hall, plus a level control for the amount of reverb added to your signal. We loved it on the clean channel and it helped to bring some additional dimension to strummed chords, and a soulful slap in plate mode for more choppy playing.

Switching to the overdrive channel and there's even more to get excited about. With the gain set low we're in classic crunch territory, and if the words 'solid-state' have you worried, you

needn't. Blackstar has designed the overdrive channel to be valve-like in its tone and response, and while this is a near-universal claim, we think it's actually worked well here. It might not replace your love of valves, but it does a very good job with none of the brittle fizz that you often get from this type of amp. Instead it's full, thick overdrive.

The gain levels aren't really in metal territory, nor do they claim to be, but there's still a lot to hand. We plugged in some additional 'drives (including Blackstar's own valve-driven Dept 10 Distortion) and our Line 6 HX Stomp, and the Debut responded very well as a psuedo powered cab.

Overall, the Debut 50 offers excellent value for money with great sounds, cool styling and flexible application, all while remaining simple to use and at an affordable price. You'll want to factor in the footswitch if you're using it live, and an EQ pedal could be a useful tool if you want more tonal flexibility between the channels. But for just over £200, it's very hard to fault.

Stuart Williams

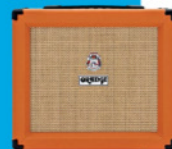
SUMMARY	FEATURES	★	★	★	★	★
	SOUND QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	VALUE FOR MONEY	★	★	★	★	★
	BUILD QUALITY	★	★	★	★	★
	USABILITY	★	★	★	★	★
	OVERALL RATING	★	★	★	★	★



ALSO TRY...

ORANGE CRUSH 35RT £199

It's a similarly priced, simple amp from another big-name Brit amp maker. With 35 watts and a 10-inch speaker, it's less suited to louder gigs, but also has a tuner and Orange's CabSim feature if you need to go direct.



BOSS KATANA 50 MKII £235

The Debut 50R is all about simplicity, but if you do want more bells and whistles, check out the Boss Katana 50 MKII which includes modelling, digital FX, presets and more at an affordable price.



LINE 6 CATALYST 60 £285

Similar to the Katana, the Catalyst adds modelling and Helix-derived FX into a lightweight, affordable combo amp that'll fit the bill for practice, recording and gigging.



Manson

GUITAR WORKS

MA EVO
ZVEX
FUZZ FACTORY



MA EVO
FLOYD ROSE
SUSTAINIAC &
ZVEX FUZZ FACTORY



FUZZ FACTORY

Find out more at mansonguitarworks.com





As one of the godfathers of thrash, Dave Mustaine knows a thing or two about high-performance metal machines. His guitar playing took what was then underground music to newer and heavier extremes, driven by his thirst for unrelenting noise just as much as his desire to eclipse the band that famously ousted him on April 11, 1983. He became an architect of anger, channelling all of his frustrations with the world around him into the finger-twisting riffs and neck-thickening brutality heard on songs like *Peace Sells*, *In My Darkest Hour*, *Hangar 18* and *Symphony Of Destruction* – all of which have stood the test of time and remained relevant to new generations of metal fans year after year. Of course he's had some phenomenal lead guitarists in the band over the course of his career, most notably Marty Friedman during what's often regarded as the band's classic period over

the early 90s, but Mustaine always has been and always will be the beating heart of Megadeth. It would be fair to say modern metal simply wouldn't be the same today without him.

Which is precisely why his latest signature models through Epiphone and Kramer have been greeted by much excitement across the world. As to be expected, the Gibson models thus far have priced out those on tighter budgets. And while these latest releases aren't exactly entry-level in terms of cost, Mustaine has ensured they are as close to the instrument he's seen with on stage as humanly possible at a much more affordable price point. For example, 24-fret Flying Vs – at least for these brands – haven't been produced with much regularity over the years, so this new line will give players a chance to own an instrument with extra range. Even if you're not a Megadeth fan, there may very well be some strong appeal there. The pickups have also been chosen to cater for thrash metal aficionados, though you may notice from the spec sheet that the two Epiphone models have their differences. So without further ado, let's dive in and see what all the fuss is about...

Words Amit Sharma Photography Olly Curtis

DAVE MUSTAINE

2023 FLYING Vs

The Megadeth man's mouth-watering new signature models from Epiphone and Kramer undergo the TG test treatment



£1399



EPIPHONE DAVE MUSTAINE FLYING V CUSTOM

From the new range, it's this model that looks closest to last year's limited run of 75 Gibson Custom Shop guitars in Ebony VOS. Those instruments, however, were four times as expensive, and naturally there are some differences to be found on closer inspection. For example, the scale-length on the Epiphone is what you'd expect from Gibson-style guitars, while the 2022 collector's pieces had a longer, Fender-style scale as well as a maple cap on top of the mahogany body. Other cost-saving factors include swapping the Mother of Pearl Mustaine inlays for basic dots and Knurled Black Metal knobs in place of the Black Witch Hats, though – build quality and tonewood aside – that's really about it. Both models sport the Megadeth frontman's Seymour Duncan Thrash Factor set (covered on the Customs, uncovered on the Epiphones), some lavish tuxedo-style binding and a 'hockey stick' headstock more akin to the original Explorers than typical Flying V arrowheads. And some might even say the Epiphone has a bit more to it in terms of finish, with metallic sparkles dotted within its visual darkness instead of flat black throughout. But is it capable of administering the punishment due? We're happy to report that it passes the test with effortless ease, with a bright and loud acoustic snap that gets articulated very well indeed by said signature Seymours, which pack a direct current resistance of 7.6k in the neck and a whopping 16.4k in the bridge. As for playability – provided you have a strap – this is a guitar that virtually plays itself.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany
SCALE: 628mm (24.75")
PICKUPS: Seymour Duncan Dave Mustaine Signature Thrash Factor Set
HARDWARE: LockTone Tune-O-Matic bridge, String-Thru Flying V tailpiece, Grover Mini Rotomatic tuners, Graph Tech nut
FINISH: Black Metallic



£1599

EPIPHONE DAVE MUSTAINE FLYING V PROPHECY

Epiphone launched the Prophecy Series back in 2008 in a bid to reimagine some of the best-selling Gibson designs for the new millennium with modern appointments such as higher-output pickups and added tonal options. In that regard, this latest addition delivers on its promise. The most noticeable upgrades are the AAA Flame Maple Veneer glued on top of its mahogany body, locking tuners and the inclusion of two Fishman Fluence humbuckers in place of the passive Seymour Duncans. The active pickups were custom-voiced, boasting three modes: a warm PAF-style humbucker, a more scooped modern option and a shimmering single-coil sound, as well as coil splits – making this the most versatile Dave Mustaine signature ever made by quite some margin. Aged Dark Red Burst is also a new finish designed just for the metal legend, so there's a lot to like here. Interestingly, this model features no string-through tailpiece, instead it's fitted with the same kind of bridge and stopbar setup found on Les Pauls and SGs. There are benefits to both – some say there's increased opportunity for the strings to 'excite' the wood and therefore sustain when resonating from within, while others might argue a stopbar allows for more control over tension and tone. And speaking of tone, you're almost spoiled for choice with all the voicing and splitting options – which are every bit as impressive as the Fluence units we've tested in the past. All in all, the Prophecy is a versatile beast that can handle just about any musical situation.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany with a AAA Flame Maple Veneer
SCALE: 628mm (24.75")
PICKUPS: Custom-voiced Fishman Fluence
HARDWARE: LockTone Tune-O-Matic bridge and stopbar, Grover Locking Mini Rotomatic tuners, Graph Tech nut
FINISH: Aged Dark Red Burst



KRAMER DAVE MUSTAINE VANGUARD

While the Prophecy is undoubtedly the most sonically updated in this issue's round-up, it still has more of a vintage aesthetic in line with the rounded edges of the original Flying Vs of the late 50s. The Kramer Vanguard, on the other hand, is less retro and more futuristic thanks to its sharper contours and knifelike edges. In that regard, it bears kinship with the Megadeth founder's previous signatures through ESP and Dean – pointy metal machines that wouldn't look out of place in an executioner's hands. Spec-wise, this signature is almost identical to the Epiphone Custom, with a pair of Thrash Factor humbuckers on an all-mahogany body and neck, as well as the ebony fingerboard and string-through tailpiece. The only discernible difference is the longer scale length that's typical of most Strats and Superstrats, Kramer included. At just over seven pounds, with the others sitting in the upper sixes, it's also marginally heavier – though the differences are negligible. There are also more options in terms of colour scheme, with finishes in Ebony and Silver Metallic, as well as a limited edition *Rust In Peace* model in Alien Tech Green. It's another thing to be aware of if you're the kind of player that needs to try before you buy. Plugged into a high-gain amp, our review model sounds just as menacing as it looks, churning out the classic riffs and leads to *Tornado Of Souls* with little need for tweaking. If shredding is your business... then business is good.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany
SCALE: 648mm (25.5")
PICKUPS: Seymour Duncan Dave Mustaine Signature Thrash Factor Set
HARDWARE: LockTone Tune-O-Matic bridge, String-Thru Flying V tailpiece, Grover Mini Rotomatic tuners, Graph Tech nut
FINISH: Ebony, Silver Metallic or Alien Tech Green

HERE COMES THE RECKONING DAY...

Which of these Vs is the pick of the bunch?

While all of these Flying Vs are impressive in their own right, it's the Custom that plays, looks and sounds closest to what Mustaine will be using on stage night after night. It's the most acoustically resonant of the three guitars by quite some distance and therefore feels closest to its Gibson counterpart in terms of quality. The signature Thrash Factor pickups are surprisingly versatile, thanks to the pairing of a medium output Alnico V humbucker in the neck and a much hotter option in the bridge. The Prophecy can certainly cover

a lot more tonal ground, but it's also close enough in price to a Gibson USA Flying V for players to spend a little more and upgrade the pickups themselves – which, provided the original humbuckers are kept, will hold its value better from an investment perspective. That said, it's the only guitar you'll ever find in Aged Dark Red Burst. The Vanguard is arguably the most visually striking, though despite sharing the same pickups and neck-through design doesn't quite keep up with the Custom in terms of brightness, sustain and playability – which, as you might have guessed, is our favourite model in this month's TG Test.



EPIPHONE FLYING V CUSTOM

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



EPIPHONE FLYING V PROPHECY

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

KRAMER VANGUARD

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



Words: Amit Sharma

“FLYING Vs ARE AS METAL AS IT GETS!”

You’ve read the review! Now **MEGADETH** main man Dave Mustaine talks us through the design and specs for his latest signature Flying Vs

Rumours of Dave Mustaine ending his partnership with Dean Guitars were confirmed in February 2021 when a video of Megadeth mascot Vic Rattlehead brandishing a sword carved with the words ‘Rust In Peace’ was uploaded onto Gibson’s social media channels. So far there have been a handful of Gibson Flying V EXP signature electrics, as well as a Songwriter acoustic, and this year sees the introduction of new models to the American company’s other brands. Here, the Megadeth man explains all...

Tell us about your relationship with Epiphone and Kramer prior to this...

I can’t say I knew much about Kramer or Epiphone before this new relationship with Gibson. But I always felt Kramers had to be great if people like Eddie Van Halen were using them! And there were some other players I really respected and admired who were playing them too, like Warren DeMartini – who was a guitarist I always looked up to, regardless of what people say about hair metal bands! A lot of people in LA were playing Kramers. And of course Epiphone have been around for a bazillion years. So when I went over and started working with Gibson, I actually started getting a bunch of flack from people who were saying ‘Oh yeah, Gibson isn’t a metal company!’ And I said, ‘Well, it is now!’ As well as being world class instruments, these Flying Vs are as metal as it gets.

What is it that drew you to less conventional body shapes like Explorers and Flying Vs?

My very first guitar when I was little was an SG that my mum bought for 80 bucks. My next guitar was a Les Paul

copy I got from my friend’s neighbour. When I did my first live shows, I was playing on a friend’s Ibanez Destroyer, which has an Explorer-style body. That was the first guitar I really liked. Then I figured I’d go and check out these new guitars made by a company called B.C. Rich. That’s probably when I got into less conventional and more futuristic-looking shapes that were aimed at players who do both rhythms and leads.

The Epiphone Custom and Kramer Vanguard models come with your signature Thrash Factor pickups. What makes them different to other Seymour Duncans?

It’s an ancient secret [laughs]! You want me to really tell you? When I first started playing metal guitar, I didn’t really know who the great brands were. There was a little music store where I lived in Huntington Beach and they had DiMarzios. So I originally thought they were the best pickups on the market – they had a cool name, cool logo etc. I got them but I have to say my whole world changed when I got my first set of Seymours. It was a huge paradigm shift. I had the JB

humbuckers and I thought ‘these are almost exactly what I need!’ Obviously it’s also dependent on what amps and gear you use. Later on, once I had an endorsement, I realised I wasn’t quite doing myself justice. So we went back and changed the winding a little bit, which is what you hear on albums like *Rust In Peace*. I wanted more of a brighter sound with more gain, which makes things sound more metal. Because Jeff Beck, who famously used the JB’s, was more of a soloist – so those pickups were great for that, but there were some deficits for rhythm playing... and rhythm is such a crucial part of Megadeth and metal music in general.

Interestingly, the Prophecy models come with a custom-voiced Fishman Fluence set.

We have songs that were recorded with acoustics, whether nylon or steel string. We’ve used Godins, Yamahas, every kind of acoustic you can imagine. But on stage everything was difficult. It would always be lacking. That’s part of the reason why I ended up designing my own Songwriter acoustic with Gibson. But on stage it’s difficult to get an acoustic on there and then switch back to electric. You have a bit of time loss and I firmly believe that dead air is bad air. If you’re on stage and there’s no sound or talking, it’s not good at all. Switching back and forth between acoustic and electric, I eventually thought I don’t want to do this anymore. We started working on getting



more colourful sounds out of our pickups which led us to Fishman. We wanted pickups that could handle all of our guitar sounds, with options for single-coil. The Fluences sound great and cover all bases.

The Kramer Vanguard is a more pointy and sharp take on the Flying V – it's almost a weapon, in that regard!

Well, we play heavy metal... You've got to be able to poke people's eyes out! It's a great design. The most important thing about all of this was to respect the brands as well as my vision. I wanted to make something like what they'd already made but better. A lot of other people go to prestigious guitar companies and endorse anything just to get free shit. The company will take the marketing and name, but they won't change their designs for someone just to sell a couple of extra models. I've sold thousands of models already with

Gibson. I may not be your favourite guitar player in the world, but I sure play your favourite guitars!

Like the Custom, it's a string-through – which is always good for a bit of extra resonance!

Exactly. There's got to be more resonance, when you think about the concept of a string vibrating through the wood in the body. If you have two posts, you will have the vibrations coming on the right and the left. A string-through design, however, will have vibrations coming through all of the strings into various sweet spots in the centre of the guitar. It's a bit like a baseball bat. There's a portion at the end that's bigger for a reason and we call it the sweet spot. And even if you don't get it right, no matter how hard you swing, your attempts will be semi-successful if you hit the ball with the sweet spot. The bottom line with this whole thing is I'm

not doing this to make money. I'm doing it to put smiles on people's faces that they just can't get rid of. I'm not really looking for profit or using cheap components that will do the trick but aren't good enough for me to use. I want to put a guitar in your hands that's so good, you don't even have to be a fan... You could tape over my name and carry on using it. These guitars had to play great and sound great. That's all I cared about.

And 24-fret Flying Vs, at least from the Gibson brands, haven't been widely available until recently.

You won't have seen many 24-fret Gibson Flying Vs before I came along! I helped create that. People are going crazy because everyone loves the Gibson brand and the quality of the products, but these guitars offer even more than what was available previously. Like I said, Gibson is a metal brand now! We're working on a lot of stuff. Obviously it's a very large company and they can't stop everything just to take care of little old Dave, but we're doing some exciting things. By the way, have you guys heard about my new Les Paul? Yeah... just you wait!

"I MAY NOT BE YOUR FAVOURITE GUITARIST, BUT I PLAY YOUR FAVOURITE GUITARS!"

Summer Savings

SIZZLING HOT SUBSCRIPTIONS



OVERSEAS
OFFERS
ALSO
AVAILABLE

PLUS OFFERS ON BINDERS, GUIDES & SPECIALS



See the entire range online at

www.magazinesdirect.com/summer23

or phone 0330 333 1113

Offer closes 30th September 2023. Offer open to new subscribers only. Direct Debit offer is available to UK subscribers only. This price is guaranteed for the first 12 months and we will notify you in advance of any price changes. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue (up to eight weeks overseas). The full subscription rate is for 12 months and includes postage and packaging. If the magazine ordered changes frequency per annum, we will honour the number of issues paid for, not the term of the subscription. For full terms and conditions, visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. For enquiries please call: +44 (0) 330 333 1113. Lines are open Monday-Friday 8.30 - 7pm and Saturday 10am-3pm UK Time or e-mail: help@magazinesdirect.com. Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone provider's call bundle.



DANELECTRO BLACKOUT '59M NOS+

A moody version of the lil' guitar with a huge sound **£619**

Danelectro might well have started building guitars back in the 1950s, but most of us will have experienced the Korean-made reissues that first surfaced back in the late 90s. The archetypal mail-order instruments, Danos were cheap 'n' cheerful with a unique construction: a pine or softwood frame and centre-block faced, top and back, with Masonite (which we'd call hardboard) body material. They were pretty funky with, of course, their fabled 'lipstick tube' single coils, 'coke bottle' headstocks and aluminium top nuts. But they make superb slide guitars in particular, and are perfect for 60s stylists who love their jangle tones. On top of that, via a unique control circuit, those two single coils when selected together are in series, not the usual parallel, which for many is the trump card – Jimmy Page included! These cheapo planks can sound *huge*.

Today's Danos, like our 2023 release here, are made in a much more detailed fashion than those originals. The '59M NOS+ is the Page-style with its modded Badass-style recessed bridge and the so-called 'short-horn' body style with its large 'seal' shaped scratchplate. These Blackout versions come in a trio of Metalflake colours, the vinyl tape around the sides is black, not the usual off-white.

The construction retains the softwood (pine) frame, but now uses top and back plates that are a pressed-wood material, like MDF. This semi-solid construction means the guitars are lightweight: ours is just 2.89kg (6.36lb). The 25"

scale length is the same halfway house between Fender and Gibson that's used by PRS, and there's quite a Fender-y feel to the neck in terms of width and depth although the fingerboard radius is relatively flat at 14". And while many of the earlier reissue Danos went for a slightly flat-backed 'U' shaped profile, ours is a more mainstream 'C'. Thanks to the six adjustable bridge saddles intonation and setup are very good as is the detailed finishing and fretting.

But it's the pickups here that seal the deal. The bridge is thin and bright, the almost mid-placed 'neck' pickup is a little fuller: think bright and wire-y Telecaster. But the combined series selection – which virtually doubles the output – gives us a much thicker, but still grainy hot and wide single coil-meets-humbucker voice. It's seriously useful, not least if you want to add some character to anything from classic rock to Americana. It's great, too, if you're tracking guitars on a recording: instant character.

Yes, there are still some quirks: the strap button on the long heel means top fret access isn't great, and those concentric volume/tone controls feel a little cheap and don't exactly move independently. Far from a function band guitar, though, this Dano retains an addictive time-warp vibe. Don't blame us if you get hooked!

Dave Burrluck

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

1 BRIDGE

Original Danos used a very basic bridge with a single rosewood saddle that couldn't be accurately intonated. Jimmy Page modded his Dano with this Badass wrapover bridge that was popular during the 70s with its tune-o-matic-style adjustable saddles.

2 PICKUPS

The NOS+ lipstick tube pickups are "based on a pickup we designed in 1998," says Danelectro. "In 2009 we discovered a bunch of these pickups in a warehouse in Korea. We then engineered a new pickup and named it the NOS+."

3 CONTROLS

The controls have unusual values: 100k ohms for the volume and 1M ohms for the tone. The pickups have low direct current resistance too: 3.73k ohms (bridge), 3.79k (neck) and both-on, in series, 7.53k. But don't sweat the details, plug in and enjoy!

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Pine core with MDF top and back plates
NECK: Maple, 'C' profile, bolt-on
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood
FRETS: 21, medium
PICKUPS: 2x Danelectro NOS+ single coils
CONTROLS: 3-way toggle pickup selector, stacked volume/tone controls for each pickup
HARDWARE: Adjustable wrapover bridge (recessed into the body), Kluson-style tuners
FINISH: Purple Metalflake (as reviewed), Black Metalflake and Green Envy
CONTACT: JHS, www.jhs.co.uk





FENDER GOLD FOIL TELECASTER

£1119

Fender leaps on the Gold Foil bandwagon with this stunning pawnshop prize

Fender is a master of reinvention, and this new Tele – one of three Mexican-made Gold Foil models – is one of an increasing number of their classics that mixes up the influences. Historically, Teles never employed so-called Gold Foil pickups, but plenty of brands from the 50s and 60s did – like Teisco, Guyatone, Harmony and Kay – and in recent years, the Gold Foil has gained quite a following. There's no one single recipe, though. Many originals were fairly basic single coils often with a rubberised magnet and sometimes with adjustable pole pieces that were for looks, not function.

The pickups here, however, are mini-humbuckers, not single-coils, and Fender aims to “deliver iconic visual flair and distinctive midrange bite inspired by the dazzling aesthetics of those cult-classic pickups treasured by blues, rock and indie musicians alike.”

It's not only the pickups that differ. There's that 'cut-off' bridge, for starters, while the body, instead of being alder, switches to mahogany with some stripy grain that you can just see under the slightly translucent White Blonde gloss finish. While the bolt-on maple neck goes for a pretty standard 60s 'C' profile, the fingerboard switches to ebony – pretty unusual in Teleworld – with a flatter 12-inch fingerboard radius, too. Another detail is the white buttons on the split-post vintage style tuners which add to the pawn-shop, or should we say, 'cult-classic' style.

At 7.94lbs it's not the lightest Tele we've ever strapped on, but

the business-like feel is perfectly manageable. That maple neck has a strong tint to the satin back and headstock but actually thanks to the fingerboard, with its nicely rolled edges and wide-'n'-low frets on that flatter radius, it comes across as if it were a Fender for a Gibson player.

That vibe is backed up by what we hear, certainly at the neck, which sounds smoother and fuller than our 1969 Tele reference. The bridge, however, has plenty of bright Telecaster bite which does need a little taming from the tone, but the parallel mix of the two has depth, sparkle and typical bounce in abundance. Of course, as these are humbuckers, there's no hum or noise, very handy when you unleash some gainier or nasty fuzz-tone voices. It's where the guitar excels, to be honest: rootsy and vibey Americana and alt-rock.

As ever, it's a shame Fender doesn't bury those sharp-edged adjustment screws deeper into the uncompensated brass saddles (although it's possible to do so with the aid of a neck shim), but otherwise, not only is the setup good, it's also a Tele that you could retro-fit with the numerous aftermarket mini-humbuckers out there. To be honest, it's got the sort of spec and vibe you might expect from a boutique maker or Fender's Custom Shop but without a £3k-plus price. An underground classic in the making.

Dave Burruck

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

1 PICKUPS

Unlike most original Gold Foil-style pickups, these are mini-humbuckers. They appear very similar to those made by Roswell, and Fender tells us they are Alnico V bar magnets; the bridge is about 9k ohms and the neck is about 8.6k.

2 BRIDGE

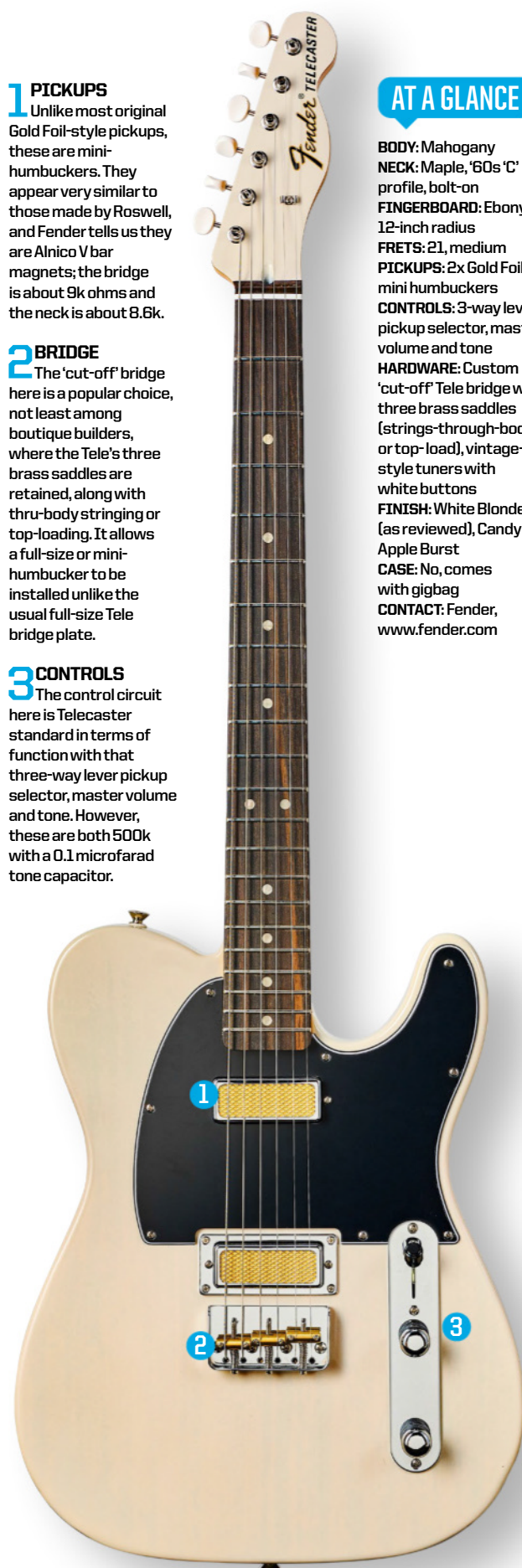
The 'cut-off' bridge here is a popular choice, not least among boutique builders, where the Tele's three brass saddles are retained, along with thru-body stringing or top-loading. It allows a full-size or mini-humbucker to be installed unlike the usual full-size Tele bridge plate.

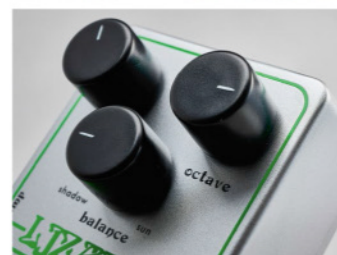
3 CONTROLS

The control circuit here is Telecaster standard in terms of function with that three-way lever pickup selector, master volume and tone. However, these are both 500k with a 0.1 microfarad tone capacitor.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Mahogany
NECK: Maple, '60s 'C' profile, bolt-on
FINGERBOARD: Ebony, 12-inch radius
FRETS: 21, medium
PICKUPS: 2x Gold Foil mini humbuckers
CONTROLS: 3-way lever pickup selector, master volume and tone
HARDWARE: Custom 'cut-off' Tele bridge with three brass saddles (strings-through-body or top-load), vintage-style tuners with white buttons
FINISH: White Blonde (as reviewed), Candy Apple Burst
CASE: No, comes with gigbag
CONTACT: Fender, www.fender.com





ELECTRO-HARMONIX LIZARD QUEEN

Queen of the tone age?



£99

The Lizard Queen might look like a reissue of a long-forgotten Electro-Harmonix pedal, but it is, in fact, a brand new design. The result of a collaboration between JHS pedals and EHX, the Lizard Queen was born when JHS' Josh Scott and pedal-obsessed designer Daniel Danger set themselves the challenge of creating a fuzz pedal in the mould of EHX's 70s designs. What we get is a nano-sized, fixed-gain fuzz complete with an octave-up circuit.

There are just three controls: volume, octave and balance. The first gives more output, the second dials in the octave amount and the balance takes us between the pedal's two fuzz voicings: the

darker, smoother Shadow to the left and brighter, biting Sun to the right.

With the settings set to 12 o'clock on each dial, we immediately get a fat fuzz tone that's like Sabbath, but with more meat. It's a snarling, aggressive clipping that only slightly smooths out to the left, and bares its teeth even more in the Sun position. The octave effect tracks well and will have you leaning towards psychedelic, Jimi-style bursts of lead between your chords or venturing higher up the neck for single-note riffs. With it dialled in all the way we get a fully compressed, ripping-Velcro tone.

With the gain levels preset straight out of the box, it means that should you want less gain

you'll need to use the volume control on your guitar to limit the amount of clipping. This works well, although we'd say that rolling back our single coils with the octave blended in did cause a reduction in note clarity.

Fuzz can be a divisive effect, but the Lizard Queen does a great job at delivering a contemporary fuzz pedal with just enough retro vibe. It works nicely stacked with some overdrive and maintained its punch at lower tunings, too. If modern fuzz merchants like Josh Homme, Matt Bellamy, Jack White or Dan Auerbach are your kind of players, you'll get a lot of mileage out of this one.

Stuart Williams

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Fuzz pedal with octave-up circuit

SOCKETS: Input/output/power

CONTROLS: Volume, octave, balance

POWER: 9v battery, psu (not included)

CONTACT: Electro-Harmonix, www.ehx.com

“ DELIVERS CONTEMPORARY FUZZ WITH ENOUGH RETRO VIBE ”

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

Advertisement

Car, home and travel insurance plus broadband,
breakdown cover and more. Get more info or
compare quotes, for over 40 products, at [go.compare](https://www.go.compare)



**WE'VE GOT
THE OPTIONS.
YOU MAKE THE
CHOICE.**

GO.
COMPARE



Subscribe to Total Guitar and get a free **G7th PERFORMANCE 3 CAPO⁺**

**FREE
GIFT**
WORTH
£40!



Fitted with Adaptive Radius Technology, the Performance 3 will actively adapt to match the curvature over the strings in EVERY position, on ANY guitar neck.

Pressure is ALWAYS evenly distributed over the fingerboard, giving unrivalled tuning stability.

The Unique Tension Control system gives near-infinite adjustment AND an easy, one-handed action.

Inert silicone wrap around rubber eliminates deadening of tone and avoids dangerous metal to wood contact on your guitar neck

CHOOSE YOUR PACKAGE

PRINT SUBSCRIPTION ACCESS + FREE GIFT

ONLY £29.50 every 6 months by Direct Debit*
EXCLUSIVE subscriber covers

UNLIMITED PRINT + DIGITAL ACCESS + FREE GIFT

ONLY £37 every 6 months by Direct Debit
INSTANT ACCESS anytime, anywhere



BENEFITS OF SUBSCRIBING

FREE delivery direct to your door
SAVE money on the shop price
NEVER miss another issue

YOU'RE IN CONTROL Manage your subscription online via our dedicated self-service site
EXCLUSIVE subscriber covers

ORDERING IS EASY. GO ONLINE AT
www.magazinesdirect.com/C23Y
FOR CALLS (0330 3331113) QUOTE 'C23Y'

*TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Offer closes 22 SEPTEMBER 2023. Direct Debit Offer open to new subscribers only. Offer is available to UK subscribers only. *£29.50 (print) and £37.00 (print and digital) payable by 6-monthly Direct Debit/credit card. This price is guaranteed for the first 12 months and we will notify you in advance of any price changes. Please allow up to six weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue (up to eight weeks overseas). The full subscription rate is for 12 months (13 issues) and includes postage and packaging. Please allow up to 6 weeks for delivery. *Your gift will be delivered separately within 60 days after your first payment has cleared. Gifts only available to subscribers on the UK mainland. Gifts not available with a digital subscription. In the unlikely event that we run out of this gift, we promise to offer you an alternative gift of the same value. Payment is non-refundable after the 14-day cancellation period, unless exceptional circumstances apply. For full terms and conditions, visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. For enquiries, please call +44 (0) 330 333 1113. Lines are open Monday-Friday 8:30am-7pm, Saturday 10am-3pm UK Time (excluding Bank Holidays), or email help@magazinesdirect.com. Calls to 0330 numbers will be charged at no more than a national landline call, and may be included in your phone provider's call bundle.



Words Ellie Rogers

BDRMM

When their self-titled debut landed in 2020, Hull-based quartet bdrmm quickly established themselves as one of the most relevant shoegaze outfits in the UK. At the dreamy end of the spectrum, singles like *Happy* and *Gush* earned semi-mainstream radio play and comparisons to Slowdive, while the untamed racket of deeper album tracks channelled the visionary noise-making spirit of My Bloody Valentine – just with a Yorkshire twist. As guitarist Joe Vickers (above left) puts it, “The first record was built on guitars.”

Three years later, and after a formative stint supporting experimental post-rock pioneers Mogwai – which also led to the band signing to their Rock Action label – bdrmm’s sophomore offering, *I Don’t Know*, pushes a subtler and more ambient six-string agenda. “They’re still an integral part, but we chose to use guitars in a less

conventional way,” explains frontman and fellow guitarist Ryan Smith (above right), who, alongside producer Alex Greaves, encouraged a process of building up the new material from a base of synths or drum loops and adding layers of guitar as and when required. “We were seeing what we could do with the guitar that wasn’t just clicking [on] a distortion pedal, a chorus pedal and a reverb and letting that speak for us,” he notes. “We were trying to create a sound.”

For Jonny Greenwood-inspired wonkiness, pitch-shifting, live reverse and tape-stop effects, Ryan deployed a Red Panda Tensor alongside a Roland Space Echo, which he describes as “an absolute weapon” for perfectly imperfect delays and reverbs. Joe, who tends to provide “a lot of the textures underneath,” relied on a Roland Jazz Chorus amp for his cleans, a Fulltone OCD as his overdrive of choice and an EHX Oceans 11 for a comprehensive array of reverb sounds.

“Because of the music we make, pedals are such an integral part – potentially more than the guitar,” explains Ryan, who likens his ‘board to “a jigsaw where you can constantly change the pieces.” He smiles: “Sometimes the pieces don’t fit. But at least it’s interesting.”

Unlike the combos at their feet, the pair’s guitar choices remain constant, with both residing firmly in camp Fender. Taking his cue from Greenwood and Blur’s Graham Coxon, Joe is very much a Telecaster man, while Ryan opts for a Surf Green Noventa Jazzmaster equipped with three P90-style pickups, or a Squier Stratocaster that he’s owned since he began playing the guitar. “There’s something really special about them,” he says in defence of his “beginner” guitar’s merits in professional music making. “I’d say I even prefer it to the Jazz, but because of how beefy the Jazzmaster’s sound is, it did complement the record.”

Fender

THE PLAYER SERIES



ICONIC SOUND. TIMELESS STYLE. NEW COLOURS.

OUT NOW

©2023 FENDER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS CORPORATION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

TRIPTYCH

THE POWER OF THREE

Pushing the boundaries of vintage Strat tones into uncharted territories of super heavy fuzz-drenched riffing



"For me, the perfect Strat tone has been an ongoing journey for the last few years, and I'm happy to say that the journey has ended with the Triptych single coils"

RABEA MASSAAD

BEA



bareknucklepickups.co.uk

Bare Knuckle