



SLIPKNOT
JIM ROOT'S GEAR ODYSSEY



FONTAINES D.C. - FAVOURITE
PLAY THE RIFF TO THE POST-PUNK STARS' LATEST ANTHEM

TOTAL Guitar

PLAY BETTER NOW!

PLUS!
THE KILLERS
RUNAWAYS
STEVIE RAY
VAUGHAN
PRIDE
AND JOY

EXCLUSIVE!
THE HOTTEST
ACOUSTIC PLAYER
IN THE WORLD
RIGHT NOW

**ACOUSTIC
PLAYING TIPS**
MOLLY TUTTLE
TOMMY EMMANUEL
MORGAN WADE

MARCIN & HIS NEW ACOUSTIC REVOLUTION

**ACOUSTIC
LESSONS**

20+ TECHNIQUE
& GEAR HACKS

THE BEST
ALTERED TUNINGS

ACOUSTIC METAL,
JAZZ & MORE

REVIEWED
TAYLOR AND
MARTIN'S NEW
ACOUSTICS



THE INTERFACE FOR GUITARISTS

POLAR 2
FET INPUT INTERFACE



REACTS & FEELS
LIKE A GUITAR AMP



VINTAGE BRITISH
MIC PREAMPS



NO-CLIP & EASY
INPUT LEVELS

INCLUDED STUDIO SOFTWARE COLLECTION



Everything you need to record guitar and vocals

ST. JAMES PLUGIN SUITE
(worth \$129/£129/€129)

ABLETON LIVE LITE
MELODYNE ESSENTIALS
RELAB LX480 ESSENTIALS REVERB
POLAR CONTROL

Find your nearest dealer at
www.blackstaramps.com

Designed & Engineered
by Blackstar Amplification UK

Blackstar®
AMPLIFICATION
the sound in your head



Future Publishing
QUAY HOUSE, THE AMBURY, BATH, BA11UA
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, Amit Sharma, Charlie Griffiths, Jenna Scaramanga, Andrew Daly, Jonathan Horsley, Dave Burriluck, Matt McCracken, Daryl Robertson, Phil Weller, Jon Bishop, Phil Capone
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: Clare Dove, clare.dove@futurenet.com
Advertising Sales Director: Lara Jaggon, lara.jaggon@futurenet.com
Account Sales Director: Tanya Ely, tanya.ely@futurenet.com

MARKETING

Head Of Marketing: Sharon Todd

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 UK, 121-141 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 6QA
mfccommunications@futurenet.com
Overseas distribution by: Seymour International
Head of Newstrade: Emma Bone

CIRCULATION

Trade Marketing Manager: Michelle Brock 0207 429 3683

SUBSCRIPTIONS

New orders & renewals: www.magazinesdirect.com,
 phone orders: 0330 3331113, email: help@magazinesdirect.com

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.**

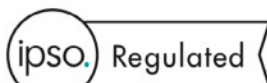
Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)

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

www.futureplc.com Tel: +44 (0)1225 442 244

All contents copyright © 2024 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 20089895) 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...



The acoustic guitar is the ultimate instrument. Stripped back from the bells and whistles (or amps and effects!) that are part and parcel of electric guitar, the humble acoustic represents our instrument in its purest form. If you're writing songs, it's a great place to start. If you're concerned about your technique, a steel-string is revealing of inaccuracies. And, most of all,

I think the acoustic *has to be* the best guitar to play with friends – it's always an acoustic that gets picked up at festival campsites or house parties.

Bearing all this in mind, this month we're on a mission to help you play better and get more from your acoustic. First up we have a lesson on altered tunings. These basics can be applied to electric guitar, of course, but our chords and musical examples are all tailored to the acoustic. We're also aiming to help you become a musical polymath as we look at five different styles of acoustic guitar music. And make sure to check out our '21 Tips' feature which covers everything from technique and tone to set-up and playing plugged in.

Also here to give insight into their playing styles are four great guitarists: Molly Tuttle, Tommy Emmanuel, Morgan Wade and the man you see on the cover, Marcin Patrzalek. Though arguably best known for his appearances on *America's Got Talent*, he's taking percussive guitar in new directions. Don't let the talent show diminish his credentials, I say! Both Steve Vai and Polyphia's Tim Henson have given him their backing.

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

Chris

Chris Bird Editor

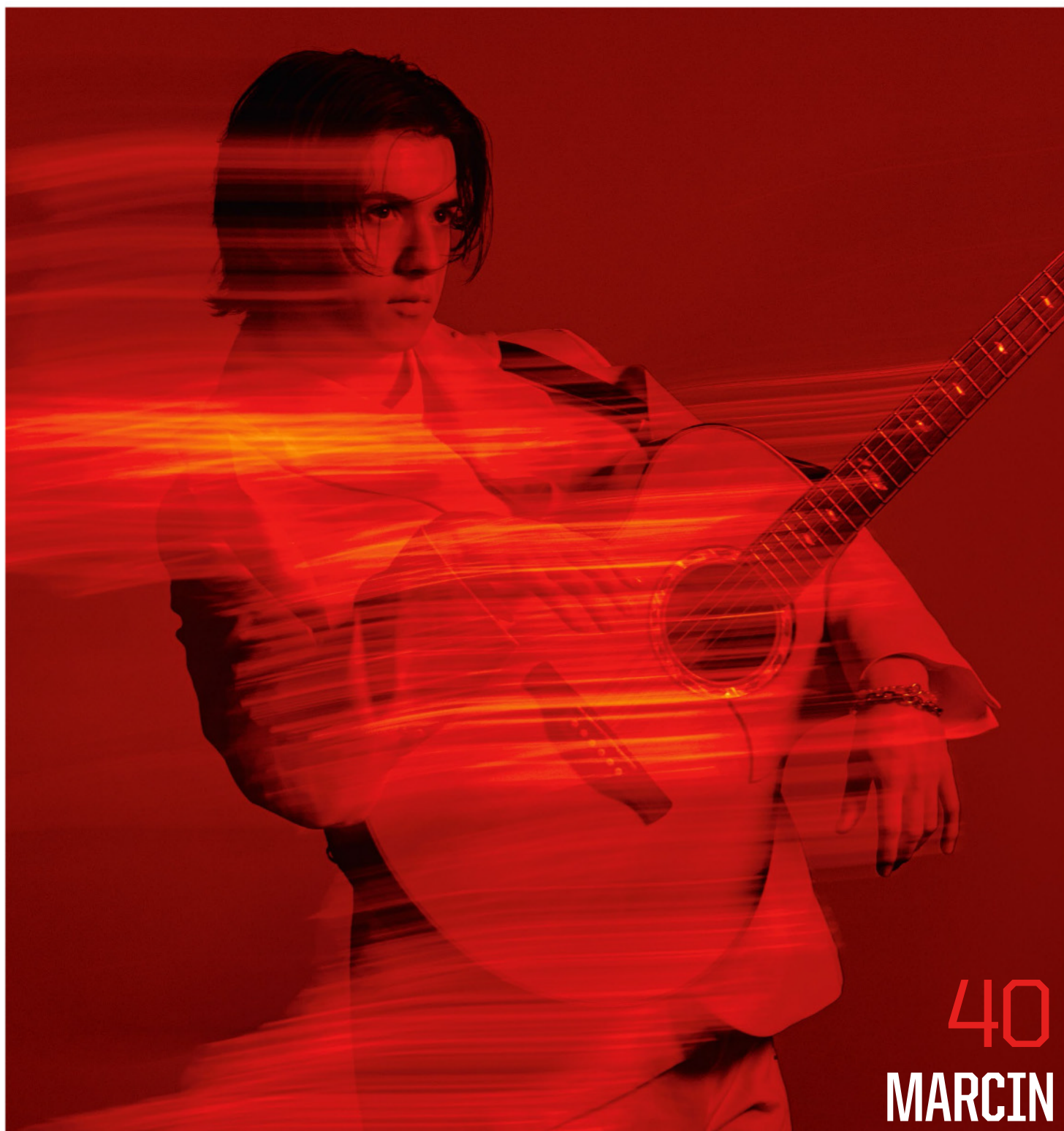
Total Guitar (ISSN 1355504) August Issue 387 is published monthly with an extra issue in July by Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK

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

#387 Contents



40
MARCIN



Audio & Video

Find your audio and video
content online at:

bit.ly/tg387audio

Type this link into a web browser on any computer, smartphone or tablet to be directed to guitarworld.com. Here you'll find the issue's A/V content, available to download or stream. Alternatively, scan the QR code to the right.



MONITOR

- 06 First Look
- 08 Scene

Q&A

- 12 Talking Guitars: Paul Gilbert

HOW TO...

- 16 Pickup Music: Country Guitar
- 20 Riff of the Month:
Fontaines DC - Favourite
- 22 Guitar Tricks: Classic Surf-Rock

FEATURES

- 24 The Mysterines
- 28 Slipknot
- 34 Deep Purple

COVER FEATURE

- 38 Get More From Your Acoustic
- 40 Marcin
- 46 Molly Tuttle
- 50 Tommy Emmanuel
- 54 Morgan Wade
- 58 21 Acoustic Tips
- 62 Essential Altered Tunings
- 66 Become an Acoustic Polymath!

LEARN TO PLAY

- 70 Classic Track:
Stevie Ray Vaughan - *Pride And Joy*
- 80 Open-Mic Songbook:
The Killers - *Runaways*

THE GAS STATION

- 82 Contents / Start Me Up!
- 84 Martin X Series GPC X2E
- 88 PJD Apprentice
- 90 Line 6 Catalyst CX 60
- 92 Epiphone Inspired By Gibson
Custom 1963 Firebird V
- 94 Taylor 50th Anniversary GS
Mini-E Rosewood

SUBSCRIPTIONS

- 96 Subscribe to TG!

SPOTLIGHT

- 98 Enumclaw



06

Words Stuart Williams
Photography Phil Barker

READY PLAYER II

Fender's most affordable guitars are back with an upgrade

F

ender's Mexican-made Standard series represented the first 'real' guitar for thousands of guitarists. In 2018, the Player series replaced the Standard, and now, six years on, Fender has unveiled its new Player II series. All the Fender staples are

here: Stratocaster, Telecaster, Jazzmaster and the short-scale Jaguar and Mustang, and for those of us who like a dark wood fretboard, there's good news: Fender has swapped Pau Ferro back to rosewood for the entire Player II line-up, as well as rolling the fingerboard edges. But it doesn't stop there. Upgraded hardware and traditional pickup

configurations are also back across the board, but they're joined by HSS and HH varieties for the Strat and Tele models, respectively. Perhaps most intriguing, though, is the choice of chambered ash or mahogany bodies alongside traditional full-weight alder for the Stratocaster, Stratocaster HSS, and Telecaster SS models.



UP CLOSE



Shapes

All the regular Fender classics are covered with Strats, Teles, Jazzmaster, Jaguar and Mustang shapes, and Fender has reverted to 'traditional' pickup configurations for the offset models.



Rosewood 'boards

Depending on the finish you choose, you'll get either a rosewood or maple fretboard, and they're rolled for comfort, too.



Chambered

Opt for either Strat model, or the Tele SS, and you can choose between traditional alder or chambered ash or mahogany body options.

SCENE

YOUR NEWS IN GUITARS



ALBUM

“I’M MAKING INTENTIONALLY WEIRD CHOICES!”

SHUBH SARAN IS RECORDING ‘IN THE BOX’ AND THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Shubh Saran was raised in six different countries, and his music embodies that multiculturalism, weaving together jazz fusion and prog rock with flourishes of his Indian heritage. Touring with Plini taught him to be himself as a guitarist, and now he’s reaffirming that sense of self with his new EP, *Being Anybody Else*.

This is the first time you’ve recorded ‘in the box’ and not through amps. What difference did that make?

I’ve been able to be more experimental, make intentionally strange choices and take more risks. I was never happy with my guitar sounds before. Mic’ing an amp sounded very plastic-y and brittle to me. There’s purity to the digital thing, like I’m preserving the bigness of the signal. The EP was driven by the Rabea, Plini and Cory Wong Neural plugins, and I put a bunch of saxophone through them, too. I treated them like lead guitars. If you

really want to get them to scream, you have to go over the top with the distortion.

How does your Indian heritage influence your playing?

It’s in all the hammer-ons, pull-offs and slides around the notes, and oftentimes I’ll slide down to the note. In a western context, grace notes aren’t really part of the grid, but Indian melodies have to be very much in the pocket – it’s something I speak to my saxophone players about a lot. It creates this illusion of speed and intricacy.

Is your John Mayer Strat a mainstay whatever projects you play in?

I’ve gotten to know the Strat so intimately. I love the idea of finding ways to make the same thing work in many different scenarios. I was lacking heaviness with just a single-coil in the bridge, so I’ve put a Seymour Duncan Little ’59 in and it’s completely changed the way I play – where and how hard I’m picking. Palm muting sounds so good, so I’ve been doing way more of it. Funk strumming

on a single-coil sounds dope, but the humbucker doesn’t kill it, so I do a lot less now. My playing is heavier and angrier.

You jammed with Plini every night of your two tours together. How was that?

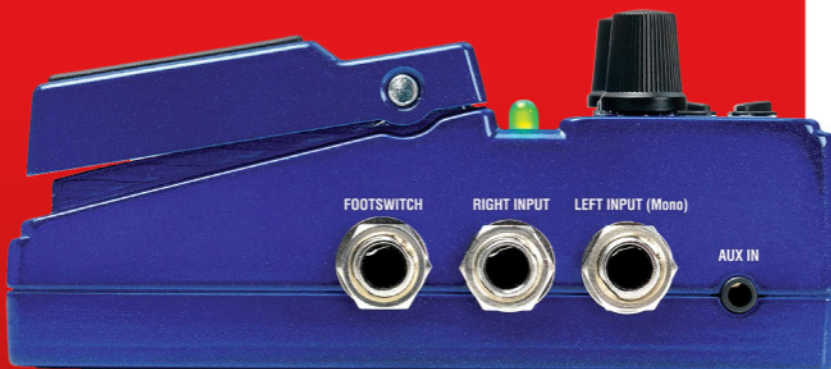
At the time I was so in my head. I’d see the line of guitar players and think ‘what the f*ck am I going to play after every note has been played?’ Then you realise, ‘this is my time to do my thing’. I’d do a lot of rhythmic stuff and try and pull the rhythm section in. I think they liked it because they’d always follow me.

There’s selective picking on the track *To Be*. Is Plini rubbing off on you?

I think so! A lot of my speed comes from Allan Holdsworth-style legato, so it came very naturally to me. There are a lot of notes that are selectively picked, but it’s basically repeated notes between the B and G string articulated slightly differently – you can play it four times in a row and it sounds different each time. It’s so unique.

Phil Weller





PEDAL

DIGITECH JAMMAN SOLO HD

After a period that looked like DigiTech might be gone forever, it's back, and the latest release from the longstanding effects manufacturer is a revamped version of the popular JamMan Looper. The JamMan Solo HD picks up where the XT left off, and still features favourites such as stereo

looping, Auto Record and JamSync (allowing compatible devices to lock together). But now, it also features up to 35 minutes of looping time, expandable to 16 hours thanks to a Micro SD card slot. There's 200 memory slots, and the JamMan's audio conversion has been upgraded to 32-bit. It's out now, priced at £239.

INTERFACE

BLACKSTAR POLAR 2

Blackstar is turning its attention to helping you capture your guitar in the easiest and best way possible with its first ever dedicated audio interface, the Polar 2 (£179). It's equipped with two combi mic/instrument inputs, but perhaps most exciting is the F.E.T.-driven preamp stage, along with the Enhance circuit, which is designed to respond to your

guitar signal with the same dynamic response as a guitar amp. In addition to this, Blackstar says that with the Enhance circuit engaged, you'll never have to worry about your signal clipping. Polar 2 ships with a software bundle including Blackstar's St James Suite, Ableton Live Lite, Melodyne Essential and more.



AMP

FENDER TONE MASTER TWEED

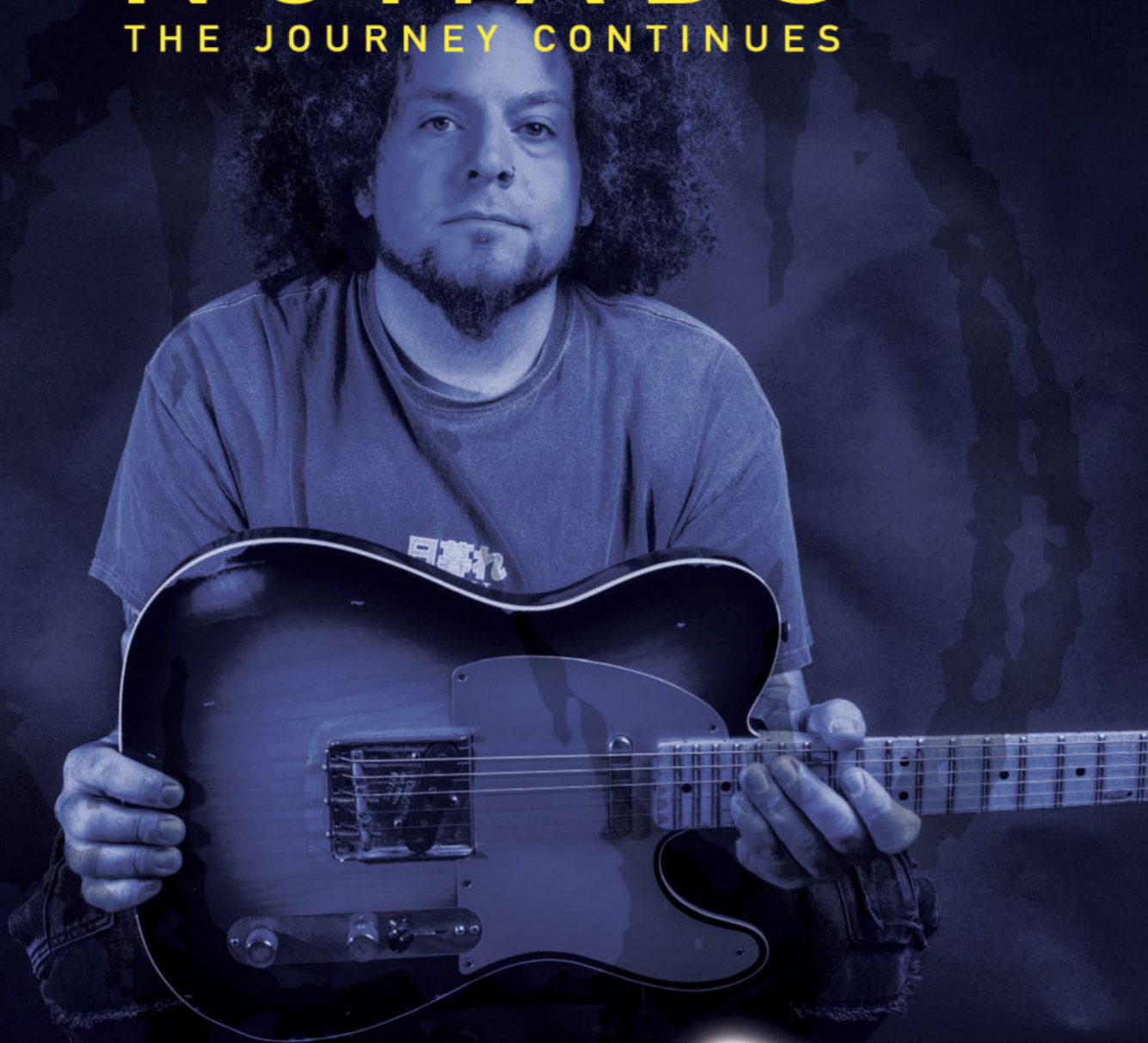
We've been bowled over by Fender's take on the digital amp revolution, offering its traditional visuals combined with stellar tonal recreation in lightweight, versatile and flexible guitar amps. Next up for the digital treatment is the Fender '59 Bassman, and Fender has captured this Tweed 45-watter in what it claims is "virtually indistinguishable" detail. It features four 10" Jensen P-10R speakers, a tight/vintage switch for tailoring the bass response, a post-power amp FX loop, and a digital spring reverb. The six selectable



power modes allow you to alter the amp's output from the full 45 watts down to 0.5 watts, and it's all packaged in a lightweight pine cabinet weighing 14.5kg. It's available now for £1,429.

NOMADS

THE JOURNEY CONTINUES



"I've always loved using Telecaster tones on my recordings. Nomads get super heavy without any unwanted spikiness but also respect the early '50s Tele tones for all the lower gain chime and spank that I love."

RABEA MASSAAD

BEA



Rabea Massaad
signature
Telecaster set

bareknucklepickups.co.uk

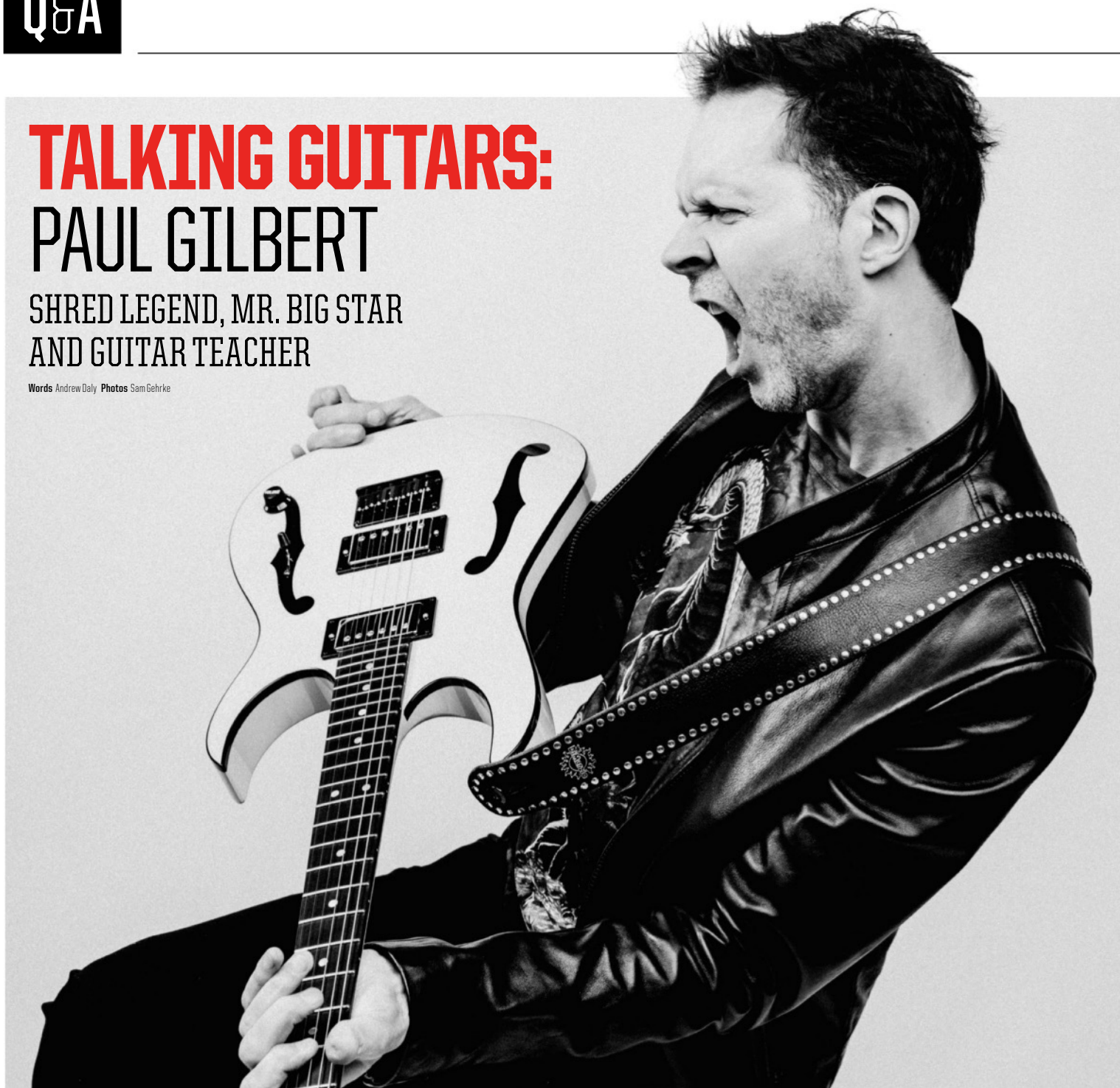
Bare Knuckle

TALKING GUITARS:

PAUL GILBERT

SHRED LEGEND, MR. BIG STAR
AND GUITAR TEACHER

Words Andrew Daly Photos Sam Gehrke



12

Paul Gilbert made his name in the '80s as one of the fastest shredders around. But in his recent solo albums he's focusing on melody. In hard rock group Mr. Big he's still perfecting the art of the quick-action solo. And while he retains a side hustle as a tutor, he's still learning new tricks...

What guitar did you cut your teeth on?

It was a Stella acoustic. I didn't know anything about scalings, but it was a bit of a short scale, which was kind of good because I was about nine! I had big hands for a nine-year-old, but still, small hands in general. So, it was a lucky

accident that I ended up with a student guitar. I didn't even know how to tune it, and I solved that by only using the bottom E string for about two years!

What was the big game changer for you in your early years?

Figuring out how to tune was a big deal! And then I learned how to downstroke because I only played upstrokes for the first two years, so learning about other fingers was great because I'd only been using my middle finger. But the advantage of using such primitive tools, only upstrokes and one string, was I got good at that. As an eleven year-old, I probably had as much authority over those things as I do now,

which made me feel confident when I was learning something new.

Which guitarist is your biggest influence?

I love to listen to other instruments, singers, and piano players, like Oscar Peterson. But I've always liked Eric Johnson and Allan Holdsworth. They're not new players, but they kind of remind me of each other with a similar feel.

In terms of technique, what's the last new trick that you learned?

Oh, just five minutes ago I was figuring out the chords for *Constant Craving* by k.d. lang. She sings the melody, and a moment later there's

a harmony that answers and they don't happen at the same time. It's like a call-and-response thing, and that's been my passion lately. With Mr. Big there's a singer, but with my own stuff I play the vocal melodies on guitar, so I like to find ways to do that. And also slide – which is a very recent development in my playing. It's a new sound that I couldn't do before, but I realised, 'Wow, I can play slide – and it's in tune!' I'm best known for whipping through scale patterns, so to have that new element and a strong melody is thrilling to me because it's opening up a brand-new door in the House of Music for me.

What was the last piece of gear you were excited about?

It's a combination of pedals that sound good and that will fit if the voltage works out. I've brought out my old Fulltone Deja Vibe, which is a great-sounding Univibe copy. And I have a Ross Phaser, a reissue by JHS, and I like the phase-shifter sound better, so I use that one. I seem to have found the magic combination!

What do you still have to work at?

One of the challenges of Mr. Big is the solos are short, and when I'm playing them I'll think, 'I'm not done yet!' But you have to be, because the song says so. I've had to work on wrapping it up in eight bars and make it fiery but not ridiculous, and melodic but not boring.

What's the fastest you've ever played in BPMs?

Oh, I have no idea! And I find whenever a student of mine brings up BPMs, I'm like, 'Oh no!' That mindset is not a musical mindset. Some songs have tempos, and that's where BPM matters. But to me, the practical way of dealing with BPM is to move your body with the groove of the song and be able to keep physical motion while you play. But worrying about BPMs – that's the wrong door to get in the building.

As a player, do you have any bad habits?

Well, the technique is fine. It's more like compositional stuff. For example, I look at some of the stuff I did years ago and say, 'That was an interesting idea', but in reality, when it comes out of the amp, it doesn't come through sonically as strong. Now, I'm more aware of how it sounds, regardless of whether the explanation behind it is cool.

Is there anything that you can't play that you'd like to?

If it's studio tempo, I think I can play anything I played when I was younger. But live, things never get slower, and often, tempos go up, so you have to go for a plan B. I don't care how old I am, if it gets to a certain tempo, it's like,

"WHENEVER A STUDENT OF MINE BRINGS UP BPMs I'M LIKE, 'OH NO!'"



'That's not going to work anymore the way I'm doing it.' I'll sit down and rethink it, and it's funny: we have a song in Mr. Big called *Colorado Bulldog*, and I've got a habit of skipping through this one part because it's too fast – and I've developed a habit from that. And now that we've gone back to the normal tempo, I've had to relearn it because of that old habit.

What technique did you have to work hardest to master?

Anything that involves whatever hand technique that I had to work on, I would get frustrated with quickly. Maybe if I felt progress, I wouldn't. My heroes were technical heroes. I was trying to sound like Eddie Van Halen or Yngwie [Malmsteen]. So, what I work on more is fretboard knowledge. I've been working on vocal melodies, so there's a lot of buzzing up and down a scale using a pattern. Even though I've been playing for decades, I've been concentrating on melodies. It's getting easier, but it's still challenging.

What is one song or performance that you're most proud of?

I know this is a guitar interview, but I really like the harmony vocals in Mr. Big. A lot of times

when I teach, I say, 'I'm not teaching people how to be a guitar player – I'm trying to teach them how to be a musician'. It's about being able to feel groove, hear the melody in your head, and move your body to the tempo, and be able to sing when the harmony comes up. I think some guitar players are reluctant to do those things and think: 'No, I only want to read tablature and play scales', And I'm like, 'Well, it is what it is'.

What do you play when you're just relaxing and playing for the fun of it?

Mostly, I go back in time. Lately, I've been listening to a lot of Oscar Peterson, the jazz piano player. And a lot of his stuff is blues, and it's whipping by at a breakneck pace. To me, that stuff connects to Van Halen. If you listen to *Hot For Teacher*, there's a full-bug blues boogie there, and Oscar Peterson's stuff fits right in there.

And after all the great times you've enjoyed in your career, can you recall a moment when you felt like you'd failed as a player?

Definitely! I've made huge mistakes sometimes. But the one I remember most is when Mr. Big was at the peak of its popularity

in Japan, and we were doing multiple nights at Budokan with all these cameras documenting it for a TV special. So, my wife at the time said, 'Oh, you should learn this famous Japanese melody called *Sakura*', which means Cherry Blossom. She hummed it to me, and I said, 'Yeah, this is perfect'. Well, I opened my guitar solo with it, got it perfect, and then I played my whole solo, and everything went great.

My solo was somewhat improvised, so at the end, I thought, 'I should play *Sakura* one more time at the end, but an octave higher'. And, again, I'm much more fluid now with melody because I've worked on it, but back then I wasn't. I'd worked on it in the lower range for the opening of the solo, but I had not worked on it in the high range, and I messed it up really badly.

If you mess up something that's fast, nobody notices, but if you mess up a melody, it's really obvious. And I remember after that show, which was broadcast across the country on television, I was in a dark place for about a week! Maybe that was the seed of me wanting to get more fluent in playing melodies – just to make up for that horrible mistake!

Mr. Big's new album Ten is out now.

• JULIEN BAKER PLAYING THE 2024 PLAYER II TELECASTER® IN BIRCH GREEN

THE ALL NEW PLAYER II SERIES

Fender®

A NEW KIND OF PLAYER

MODERN "C" NECKS WITH ROLLED EDGES
ROSEWOOD FINGERBOARDS
NEW VINTAGE COLOURS

©2024 FENDER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS CORPORATION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

DANIEL DONATO

Daniel Donato is a rising Nashville artist with over 2,000 shows under his belt who's known for his pioneering cosmic-country style. He's more than just a country shredder, though – Daniel has a knack for teaching. In his lessons, he breaks everything down step-by-step and makes learning country guitar a joy. Whether you're a country music fan or just want to expand your guitar skills, this lesson is packed with all the fundamentals to kickstart your journey to Twang City!



COUNTRY GUITAR

Whether you're a country music fan or not, every guitarist can learn some serious chops from this iconic genre

From harmonious doublestop solos to blisteringly fast chicken pickin', country guitar has so many techniques and tricks that it's a crime to overlook it. If you're already familiar with blues guitar then the transition to country isn't that difficult – it often follows similar chord progressions and scale choices.

Leading this month's guest lesson for Pickup Music is Daniel Donato,

a legit country guitar guru, and he's about to show you some fundamental rhythms, tones, and licks to get you started on your journey to Twang City.

There's lots to learn here. First, a country chord cycle: the standard I-IV-V progression in the key of A, and the classic technique of 'walking up' to the root note of each chord. There's the 'Train Beat': the characteristic country music rhythm/strumming pattern. And we wrap up with a country jam

where you can lock in everything you've learned and play over the backing track. There's a video to accompany this lesson, too, so if you want to watch how it's done and jam along at the end, check that out.

It's no secret that a Telecaster is the definitive country guitar. If you don't have one to hand, or if your guitar has humbuckers, tweak your amp's treble control and pick close to the bridge where the strings are most tense – this is where the twang lives!



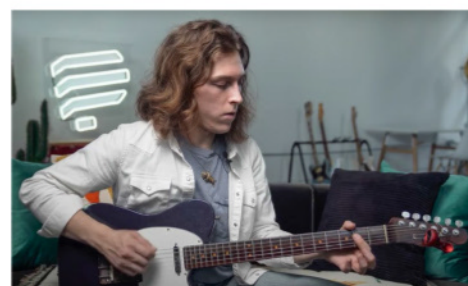
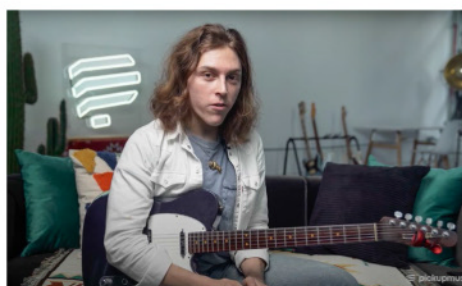
Get access to the world's best online guitar courses and reach your guitar goals with structured lessons and personalised feedback from pro instructors. Pickup Music even offer a 14-day free trial so you can take a look before you buy.

pickupmusic.com

facebook.com/pickupjazz

instagram.com/pickupmusic/

tiktok.com/@pickupguitar





2 LICK #1: WALKING INTO A

bit.ly/tg387audio

Our progression is a standard I-IV-V in the key of A – which means the chords are A (I), D (IV), and E (V). A classic country technique is to 'walk up' to the root note of each chord. Simply pick the open E string, then the 2nd and 4th frets, finally arriving at the open A string. This walk-up approach creates movement between the chords.

2 THE 'TRAIN BEAT'

bit.ly/tg387audio

Every genre has certain characteristic rhythms, and country is no different. The 'Train Beat' is synonymous with country music and, as the name suggests, it mimics an old-time steam train. This drill is for the picking hand. You can either hold a chord or just mute the strings while practising the pattern. Think in groups of four and accent the third beat with a slightly heavier strum.

3 STRUMMING PATTERN

bit.ly/tg387audio

Daniel starts with a simple down-down-up strumming pattern before adding in the extra upstroke (down-up-down-up) as tabbed here. Once you've figured out the rhythm, try to let it flow naturally. Just like when you walk, you're not thinking "left foot, right foot" – it just flows!

4 LICK #2: WALKING INTO D

bit.ly/tg387audio

You've already learned this lick walking up to the A, so let's try it with the D chord. Just shift everything over one string. Easy!

bit.ly/tg387audio

Walking to the V chord (E) is slightly different. It's basically the A lick in reverse. Start on the open A string and then walk down the 4th and 2nd frets of the E string, finishing on the open E.

bit.ly/tg387audio

Let's put everything together: the rhythm, the chords and the licks. This unaccompanied play-through includes the lot, so it may be a challenge to begin with.

bit.ly/tg387audio

[illegible]



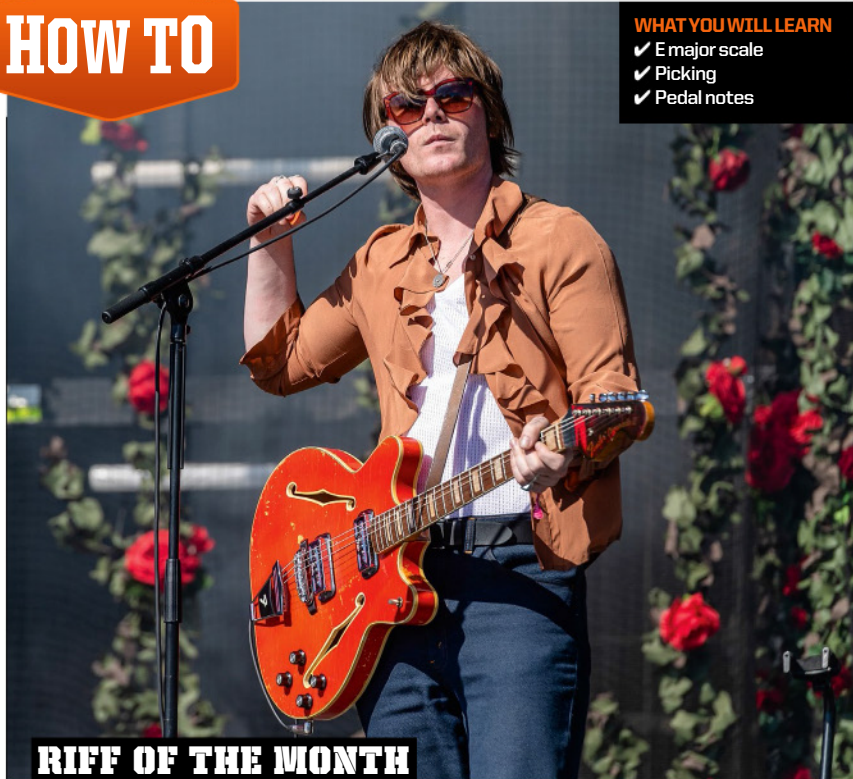
bit.ly/tg387audio

Here, Daniel plays a simpler version of his first play-through, with fewer walk-up licks. Try this one if you're struggling with the first version.

bit.ly/tg387audio

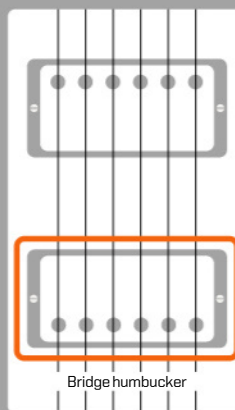
This final play-through represents the version played over the jam track at the end of the video. Feel free to mix and match all three while you're learning.

- ✓ E major scale
- ✓ Picking
- ✓ Pedal notes



GET THE TONE

CHANNEL **CLEAN**



Curley often uses a Johnny Marr signature Fender Jaguar through a Fender Twin amp. The Jag is equipped with bridge and neck single-coils, but no middle pickup, and we suspect Curley is using a blend of both. Ideally, then, use a blend of bridge and neck pickups for an even range of frequencies and add a subtle amount of reverb to help the notes blend together. However, note that the Jag's two-single-coil layout is relatively uncommon, so you may need to experiment. Try a Strat's middle pickup or a coil-split humbucker to get yourself a ballpark tone.

RIFF OF THE MONTH

FONTAINES D.C.

Favourite

Dublin's Fontaines D.C., now based in London, return with their fourth album *Romance* in August. Second single *Favourite* starts with a chiming clean riff played by guitarist Conor Curley.

To play the riff, start by picking C#, B and A on the first string with two downstrokes each, adding an upstroke on the open B string in between each note and letting the strings ring

together. Next, play a 4th fret G# three times in a 'down, down, up' pattern as this will keep your pick hand moving naturally without changing the flow of your alternating motion. Now, play the open E once before playing another E, this time on the 5th fret of the second string. Play the ascending F# and G# notes with a third finger slide, and, after playing the open B, repeat the second-string notes with a slightly different rhythm.

Watch our slowed down play-through video to learn the phrasing of the notes perfectly.

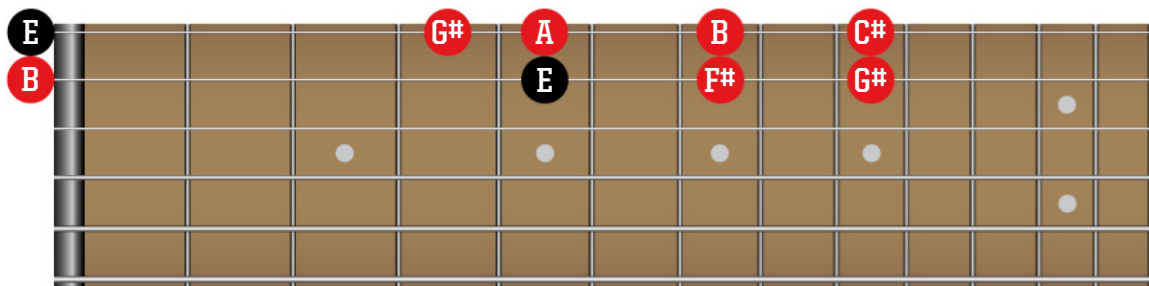
CHEAT SHEET...

Appears at: 0:00-1:03

Tempo: 152bpm

Key/scale: E major

Main techniques: Picking, string-droning, slides



This riff is based in the key of E major (E#F#G#A#B#C#D#) with most of the notes being played between the 5th and 9th frets – handily, mostly at positions marked with

dots on the fretboard, which can help you to visualise the riff. The open B and E strings are also used as pedal notes throughout the riff.



OUR GENERATION

IDLES' Adam Devonshire continues in the footsteps of legendary players, pushing musical boundaries with Rotosound strings

Mike has played and shared the stage with many artists including Mike Keneally, Joe Travers, Bryan Beller, Max Morgan and more. Mike is an expert instructor specialising in a wide variety of styles, including classic rock, heavy metal, grunge, modern rock and pop country. His expertise can be found throughout the Guitar Tricks program.



CLASSIC SURF-ROCK

Get in to some classic surf-rock guitar with this primer from Guitar Tricks



Guitar Tricks' step-by-step lessons will be your guide to learning how to play guitar. With our Core Learning System, video feedback, practice reminders and Custom Lesson Plans you will save tons of time on your guitar learning journey. Guitar Tricks has a 14-day free trial plus a 60-day money-back guarantee so you can purchase with confidence.

guitartricks.com/surfmag
guitartricks.com/surfweb

 [youtube.com/@GuitarTricks](https://www.youtube.com/@GuitarTricks)

 [facebook.com/guitartricks](https://www.facebook.com/guitartricks)

 [instagram.com/guitartricksinc](https://www.instagram.com/guitartricksinc)

Surf guitar is iconic. The moment you hear a tremolo-picking slide you can instantly imagine surfers riding waves and hanging ten. A few simple playing techniques and gear choices are great tools for getting that classic surf rock guitar vibe, so let's dive in!

First, let's talk tone. To get an authentic sound you'll want an electric guitar with single-coil pickups and an amp with clean/light overdrive channels. You'll also want a spring reverb effect. If you go

deeper, it's arguably a Fender slam-dunk: we'd recommend Strats, Jags and Jazzmasters through Twin Reverb or similar amps.

The most iconic Surf guitar technique is the tremolo-picking slide, as heard famously between sections on Dick Dale's *Misirlou* and *Surf Beat*. It's a simple technique, and our first tab example shows you all you need to know.

Another great tip for surf-rock is to play melodies in open position. Combined with the above gear and effects, playing chords, riffs and

licks in open position lets those single-coil pickups twang!

Finally, surf-rock is a style where you can go wild with your guitar's whammy bar! We're looking at three techniques: whammy bar vibrato, down/up dips, and the pre-dip/scoop where you dip the bar before striking the strings.

We've mentioned Dick Dale, but also check out The Surfaris and The Ventures, or for a contemporary take, The Surfragettes.

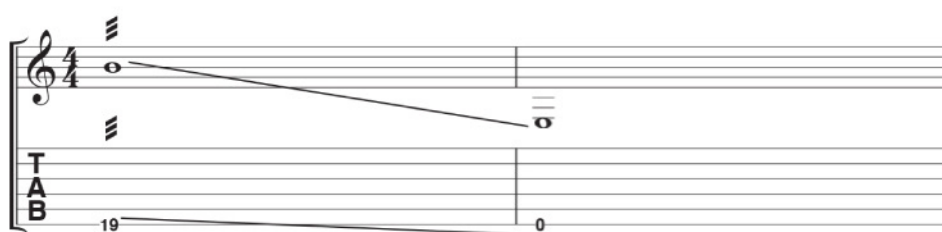
Check out the URLs to head over to the Guitar Tricks video lesson.





1 TREMOLO-PICKING SLIDE

bit.ly/tg387audio



By quickly picking up and down on one string and you'll create a 'tremolo' effect. Simply start on the 19th fret of the low E string (try other fret positions, too) and slide your finger down the fretboard toward the nut, while tremolo picking for the full effect.

2 OPEN-POSITION PLAYING

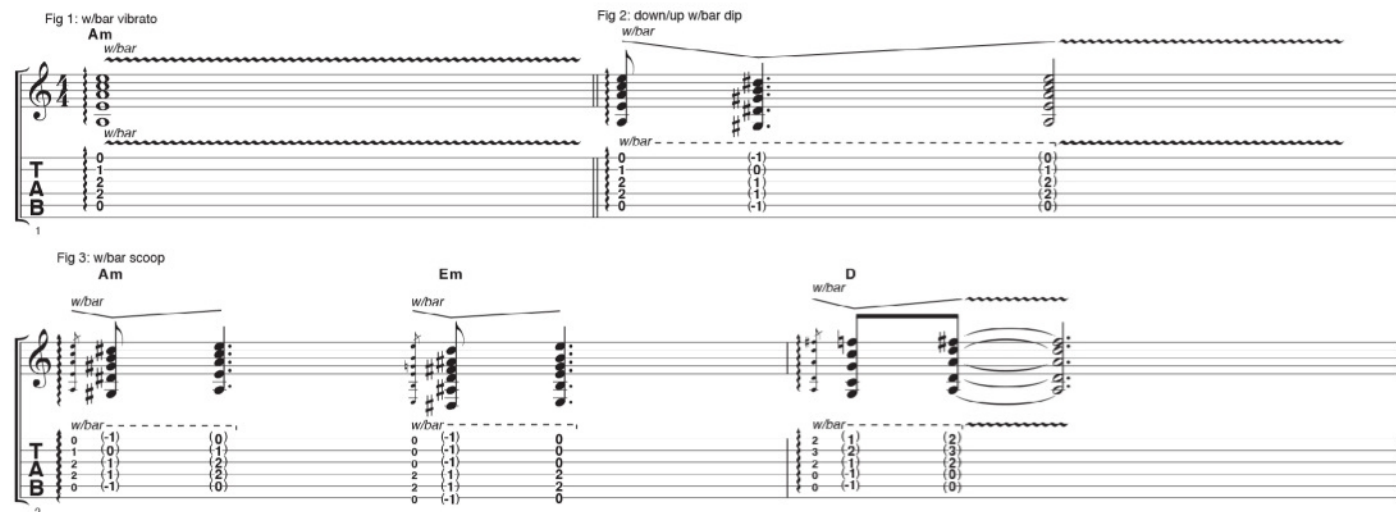
bit.ly/tg387audio



Allow your open strings to ring out and 'twang' as you play through this melody in E minor (though note the brief non-diatonic F natural note on the fourth string!). Mike Olekshy shows how you can use this lick to make up your own simple ideas, too: try some E minor pentatonic scale riffing, which utilises a lot of open strings. This, along with the correct guitar tone (single-coil pickups are great) will give you that classic surf sound.

3 WHAMMY BAR MOVES

bit.ly/tg387audio



Let's start as simply as possible, going in sequence (fingers 1, 2, 3 and 4) using downstrokes. Once you get to 4 on the first string, move across to the second string and start back at 1. Repeat this all the way to the sixth string, then back again, continuing playing the 1-2-3-4 sequence. All the subsequent examples are played down and up across all six strings, but we've only tabbed the first bar of each to save space.



Words Phil Weller Photo Phoebe Fox

“WE’RE DOING WEIRD THINGS THAT AREN’T RIGHT BUT SOUND COOL!”

For a two-guitar band, **The Mysterines** have an unusual approach – creating atmospheric songs with guitar parts that don’t feel like guitars...

When it comes to the difficult second album, most bands look to consolidate everything they’ve learnt up to that point and go one better. But with

Afraid Of Tomorrows, Liverpool-based alt-rock quartet The Mysterines did the opposite: They ripped the carpet from beneath them.

They were still teenagers when their “innocent and naive” debut album *Reeling* was released in 2022. They’ve since toured the States, played stadiums in support of Arctic Monkeys and, as guitarist Callum Thompson says, become different people...

“We’re at different stages of our lives,” he explains. “We wanted to steer the songs in unorthodox ways, and have parts that don’t feel like guitars. This album was more about evoking a certain feeling or atmosphere as opposed to just

playing a blues lick. Atmosphere has always been more interesting to me than who can do the quickest solo; I’d rather make people feel uneasy or happy with the parts I play. The less busy my right hand is, the better.”

Guitarist/vocalist Lia Metcalfe admits the band “threw everything” at *Reeling* as they sought to show the world what they were made of. This time, there is no whiff of ego or flash of performative fireworks. *Afraid Of Tomorrows* was forged in the heat of the moment. They didn’t dilute ideas by overworking them.

Says Callum: “The more you do something, the worse it gets, especially when you’re trying to orchestrate a feeling with your guitar. The part that came to you initially will always sound better than something you’ve been chipping away at over a long period of time.” Lia agrees: “If you think about a part too much, it loses its conviction.”

Callum continues: “I’ve spent most of my life playing and learning about the guitar. I’m not saying I’m Guthrie Govan, but I do know what



I'm doing. It's become about unlearning everything I know and trying to do things wrong, but in a way that it sounds better than doing them right. If we all did everything out of the book, everyone would sound the same. I'm more interested in doing weird things that aren't right but sound cool. I wanted to reclaim that naivety."

Lia guides her songs with a dark vocal performance, and doesn't see herself as a guitarist, which is something Callum adores. "That's the magic," he says. "There's a different feel when Lia plays. There are all these blemishes which aren't perfect but make it great."

The band spent a month tracking the new record in LA with Grammy-winning producer John Congleton (Phoebe Bridgers, Explosions in the Sky, St. Vincent). They knew there would be a war chest of guitars to experiment with there, and so they took just one guitar each. Lia grabbed her road-

beaten American-made Telecaster. It's a guitar that can take a beating, and looking at its chipped paintwork, it's taken plenty. For Callum, it was always going to be his 1963 reissue Gibson SG.

He was first drawn to the SG after seeing one played by Thom Yorke during a performance of the Radiohead song *Bodysnatchers*. "It's not as big, bulky or rich as a Les Paul," he says. "It still has the Gibson sound but it's not as powerful. I like to keep the guitar on the edge as possible and then push it with pedals. If you put a fuzz on a Les Paul it eats up all the space, but an SG has a lot more clarity in the tone, it clips in the perfect places."

During the recording process, they knew the familiarity they have with their instruments would go a long way. "It was important," Callum says, "to take the guitars that have been all over the world with us. The ones that we're comfortable with."

GEARED UP

Callum with a few of his "million" pedals; Lia with her road-beaten Tele

A number of Congleton's semi-hollow-bodied guitars were consequently plucked off the studio walls, including an Epiphone Casino and a feast of Gibson ES-335s. "John's got amazing guitars," Callum beams. "There were loads of nice paint brushes to use."

There was also a guitar which the band can't remember the details of, but it played an oddly charming role on the sleazy, snarling *Junkyard Angel*. "There was this blue guitar; all I remember is that it was Japanese and John said he'd never seen anything like it," Lia recalls. "It sounded really tinny and the strings felt like they hadn't been changed in years, but it was amazing."

In contrast to their appetite for exploring Congleton's guitar collection, simplicity was the mantra when it came to amps. Lia predominantly used a Fender Reverb Deluxe, while Callum jumped between a Marshall Plexi similar to the one in his live rig, and "a 1950s 5 or 10 watt Fender tube that broke up really nicely."

The emphasis was not so much on the gear involved, but the execution of the player. "With the guitar and amp side of things, we didn't want to go too crazy,"

"WE WANTED TO SHOCK OURSELVES.
THAT WAS FUN" LIA METCALFE



Callum says. “It was more about attacking the parts in different ways.”

With the amp arsenal streamlined, the pair could spend more time experimenting with pedals. And lots of them. Callum would have “a million different pedals all over the floor,” at any given time, with a few cutting above the rest. “I had an idea for a solo for ages but I couldn’t get it out of my head,” he says. “It was kind of a Johnny Greenwood stuttering thing and when I spoke to John he pulled out a TKOG Mini Glitch. It was exactly what I was after. They’re a bit of a lottery, you literally don’t know what you’re going to get every time you press it. I soon realised that putting it on only for little bits was a lot better than having it on all the time, to stop it going too mad.

“One pedal that changed everything was an ’80s Boss DD-2 digital delay,” he adds. “There’s just something about the repeats when you use it as a slapback that you just can’t beat. I loved digging in with it, and I liked it so much I’ve got a second one now, a DD-3 which I use for a stuttering delay. They changed the game for me. I’d only used delay pedals for floaty, reverby type things before, but with these two, I was changing my

tone. And when you set it quick, it’s got a really pokey high-mid that makes it sound like a computer, which I like.”

As Lia remembers it: “John didn’t want to tell us how pedals worked. He left us to mess with them and figure out our own way.”

Experimentation extended beyond pedals, too. “We used a lot of Ebow,” Lia says, “and Cal used a violin bow a lot to create a lot of interesting noises and atmospheres. It gave the songs a really nice dissonance. John really liked it when it wasn’t clear what key the song is in or where it’s going to go, so they were tools to achieve that.”

Every step of the way, the guitarists refused to settle for the obvious answer. “Everything that we knew would work, every instinct we had, we’d do the opposite to challenge ourselves,” Lia says. “We wanted to shock ourselves. If we’d normally play with loads of reverb, we’d take it off and have the signal as dry as possible, and that was a really fun part of making the record.”

Their time in Congleton’s studio has naturally left a mark on their live pedalboards, although there was an eagerness not to go too crazy. “I’ve been using the Banana Mandala for the glitch

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

“Every instinct we had, we’d do the opposite to challenge ourselves,” Lia says

effects live,” Callum says. “I’d have been there for weeks if I wanted exactly the same sound as I have on the record, but this does something similar.” His amp-pushers come via two Electro-Harmonix pedals, Soul Food and Russian Fuzz, with a third in the form of a Memory Man adding to the delay offerings of his DD-2 and DD-3 pedals. TC Electronic’s Hall of Fame is his reverb of choice.

That pedal also sits on Lia’s ‘board, alongside a Full tone OCD overdrive, a modern Boss DD-7 delay and a Boss tuner, with no new additions coming off the back of their experiences in the studio. Instead, they’re rediscovering what they already have, “using them in different way and seeing where that takes you,” as they continue to push against the tides of comfort and safety.

Afraid Of Tomorrows shows a maturing band, but one with a drastically overhauled sound. But they aren’t getting comfortable. “Why wouldn’t you want to keep evolving?” Lia asks. “I don’t think it’s within us to make the same record twice. We’re constantly being inspired by new things. We can’t stay in the same place.”

Afraid Of Tomorrows is out now.



"I'M ALWAYS LOOKING FOR THINGS TO P*SS OFF METALHEADS!"

Words Andrew Daly Portrait Jonathan Weiner

As **Slipknot** celebrate the 25th anniversary of their debut album, guitarist Jim Root looks back on his epic gear journey and the unusual choices he's made in pursuit of ultimate heaviness

He was the last man in. When guitarist Jim Root joined Slipknot in the first months of 1999, the band were in the final stages of recording the debut album that would define them as the dominant new force in metal.

Root's arrival came so late in the day that he played on just one track, *Purity*. The rest of the *Slipknot* album had been recorded with guitarists Mick Thomson and Josh Brainard prior the latter's departure from the band.

But with Root in the fold, adopting his predecessor's number 4, the puzzle

was complete. This version of the nine-man band turned out to be the definitive Slipknot line-up, featuring on three more albums – 2001's *Iowa*, 2004's *Vol. 3: (The Subliminal Verses)* and 2008's *All Hope Is Gone* – that established the 'Knot as a global superpower. And while there have been various personnel changes since then, the two-guitar axis of Thomson and Root has remained at the core of the band's skull-throbbing sound.

Throughout all these years, Jim has kept on mixing it up guitar-wise – brandishing anything from Jackson Dinkys, Charvels and, of course, his signature Fender Teles, Strats and Jazzmasters en route to creating a crushing tone. But now, as he prepares for a tour celebrating the 25th anniversary of that legendary debut album, he's been

digging out some of the discount shred guitars he hasn't played since way back in the day.

As he tells TG: "I've been playing around with some oddball guitars that I don't normally play, like DKs and Charvels. I brought some old guitars out that are like 16 or 17 years old, and I've loaded them with my pickups, and set them up for how I like them. There's two PRS guitars I want to bring out for this tour, and two old Jacksons from the early 2000s..."

As he discusses all the ins and outs of his gear journey with Slipknot, Jim also considers where he's headed in the future. But he begins by taking us all the way back to those heady days of 1999, when the tools at his disposal were basic to say the least...

"IT'S A SLAB OF WOOD WITH PICKUPS AND STRINGS. WHO GIVES A SH*T ABOUT THE SHAPE OF THE GUITAR?"

➤ What did your rig look like when you joined Slipknot?

When I first joined Slipknot, I think all I had was a Mesa Boogie .50 Caliber [Plus 2-Channel], which I still have. I had that with a road-ready cabinet, and then I had a '93 Strat with a Lace Sensor Gold pickup in it because I was really trying to go back to a humbucker, metal kind of guitar. And I think I got an Ibanez five-something series, and the neck kept moving on it... I hated all the gear I had then!

Did you know what you were looking for as you began to sculpt your tone?

In the early days, I was just trying to figure things out. I had never used EMGs before. I'd always used whatever pickups the guitar came with because I couldn't really afford to swap them out, and I didn't work at a guitar shop or anything. But when I joined Slipknot, it was like, 'Hold on... I'm in this band that's a little bit heavier on the guitar side. I need something a little bit hotter'.

Did Mick give you any advice to guide your hand?

I needed something that would cut through because there were way more members in the band, and they tuned lower, a few steps down from what I was used to, and then they were dropping

that tuning on top of that. So I was getting tips from Mick. I was like, 'What gauges of strings do you use?' I was copying his string gauges. We'd be getting from the shop at the same time.

When did the EMGs officially come into play for you?

I got a set of EMGs put in a Jackson Dinky DK that I had with a green flametop, satin hardware, and a reverse headstock. I put an 81 and an 85 in that guitar, and that was really what I was using. And once we started touring more and gaining more notoriety, I was able to play with the gauges and come up with what I preferred for that low tuning. And depending on what guitar I was using, it evolved from there.

Specifically, what did that evolution look like in terms of guitars?

On the guitar side, I was trying to find consistent guitars that were built well enough that I wouldn't be adjusting them every time I took them out of the case in a different city. I needed guitars built well enough that the frets wouldn't start popping out since we were throwing them in the case and putting them in a big trailer pulled by a bus!

And how about your amps?

After I recorded what I did for the first

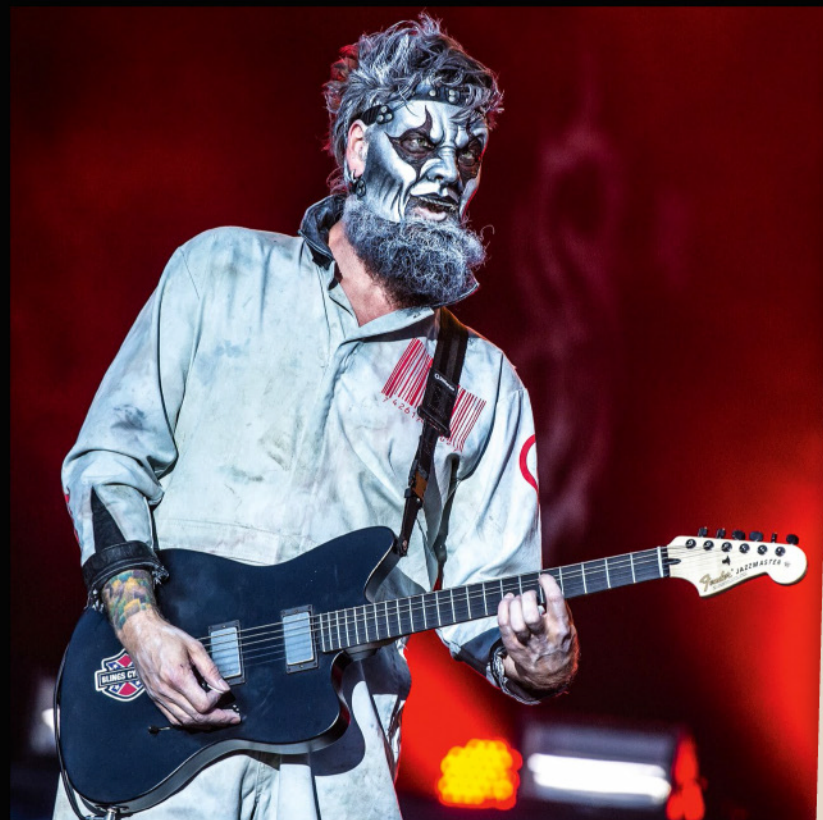
record and then the *Iowa* record, I borrowed a Laney Pro Tube Lead Series, which was modded. I really liked the sound of that. It blended and mixed really well, so I chased that tone down for a little bit, trying to find amps that basically had the same characteristics. But I was so used to my .50 Caliber Boogie, and Mesa Boogie were cool enough to send a couple of DC-10s that they were discontinuing.

But you didn't settle on those for long.

I used those DC-10s for a while and tried using them in the studio, but they just weren't cutting it. That's when I really dived into trying out as many different amp companies as I could. I was like, 'I'm just going to revolve these and find the one that not only works best in the studio but holds up live and is roadworthy.' There's a balance of what you like personally, the tone that works best for the band, and what doesn't need to be taken apart and re-tubed every week.

You eventually settled on Orange. What moved the needle there?

I went to a NAMM show, and they had the Rockerverb series. I went to the Orange booth and just picked up the guitar they had there – which had single-coils. I plugged it into this amp, and it had gain for days. It sounded really snarly and had this mid-range grunt. It





had all the characteristics that I thought were awesome and would cut through, and I really dug the way the speaker sounded with the wicker in the front. Orange is really known for a stoner rock, doom, Black Sabbath vibe, but I said, 'I'm gonna make this work because there's a real mid-range Marshall vibe that I like'.

As you alluded to earlier, a big part of your tone came down to string gauges, which you copied from Mick. You also mentioned you began to play around with that more as you went on. That's a tough one because each guitar has a different feel. With low tunings it can't be slinky, but I feel like my [Dunlop] Drop B set is really slinky in comparison to what some people use when they tune that low. My lowest string is only a .56, but there are dudes out there that are using .60s. I wanted to keep it as tight as I could with the tension of the strings, but also be slinky enough to be doing bends and running scales and sh*t.

Through all that, what did the evolution of your 'board look like?

In the beginning, I was basically only using a wah just to give certain parts a bit of colour. There are certain parts of songs where it's nice to put a little something on there. I'd even use a phaser just to give some wetness or something a little different. And I was using a Univibe for a while for some weird, almost crazy, filtered, wobbly noises. But honestly, there's two pedals on my 'board that I've had forever: the Jimi Hendrix Octavio [JH-OC1], which is friggin' awesome for octave fuzz kinds of things. And then I always have a [MXR] Carbon Copy Delay, too. It has a nice warmth to it, and you can also play with the speed where you hit a note, then you can adjust the warble around and make it repeat itself like a synthesizer.

You were mainly using Jackson and even some PRS guitars early on, so what led you astray?

That was kind of unusual because Fender was giving me a Flat Head [Telecaster], so I was kind of endorsed by the Custom Shop, and I had two or three Flat Head Teles, and I love those guitars, they were very roadworthy. And then Fender acquired Charvel, and they made me a couple of prototypes because I was talking about going to Charvel for a bit and doing a signature model with them.

"I'VE BEEN PLAYING AROUND WITH SOME ODDBALL GUITARS THAT I DON'T NORMALLY PLAY"



"WHEN YOU FIRST PICK UP A TELE OR A JAZZMASTER, YOU'RE NOT THINKING ABOUT DOING NEOCLASSICAL SCALES OR SHREDDING"

Is that what led to your signature Telecaster?

The Charvels weren't quite what I wanted, even though I loved the way they play. Since then, the quality has come a long way. Now, they're really well-done guitars. But anyway, my guy at Fender was like, 'Yeah, you can come back. Though we're going to do a Tele'. And I was like, 'I'm into it. I'm down for that'. So, that's when we started working on the specs for the original Jim Root Tele all those years ago.

And then came your signature Jazzmaster, a guitar that most people don't associate with heavy music.

You know, I'm always looking for things to p*ss off metalheads! And apparently, also p*ss off Jazzmaster and Tele players! But, I mean, it's a slab of wood with pickups and strings, you know? Who gives a sh*t about the shape of the guitar? Fender sent me a Jazzmaster years before we talked about doing a signature model, and I really didn't play it that often. I thought it was kind of awkward looking.

What changed your mind?

I played it sitting down a few times, and it played really well. And it sounded really good, but I didn't think about it much. And then we were doing pre-production on something and I put one of my straps on it so I could stand up and play, and I was like, 'Holy sh*t! This guitar is just so well-balanced.' It felt so comfortable and easy to play because it was right in the pocket. So I hit Fender back up and was like, 'I know you sent me this Jazzmaster a while ago, and I haven't given you any input or talked about it, but I'm using it at rehearsal, and I'm loving it. It's kind of awesome'. Hey said, 'Cool. Do you want to do a signature model?' And I was like, 'Yes!'

Since you started using proper shred guitars, have Teles and Jazzmasters changed how you play?

No. Well, maybe a little bit. When you first pick up a Tele or a Jazzmaster, you're not sitting there thinking about doing neoclassical scales or shredding per se. But the more you play them, the more you start doing that kind of stuff. And then if you play the songs that are in your set that do have solos, it's like, 'Wow! They kind of rip!' Even a Gretsch Count Gentleman, the neck profiles on those things are nice and thin, and it's the same with Jazzmasters. I've seen

videos of [country music star] Roy Clark from back in the '60s with a Jazzmaster, and he's tearing it up!

But now, with Slipknot celebrating the 25th anniversary of that mighty debut album, you're pulling your old Jackson and PRS guitars out of mothballs.

I tell my tech, 'Just surprise me with what you're gonna give me tonight – I don't care what guitar it is, let's mix it up a little bit and just play around'.

Has it been fun to have those guitars on stage again?

He'll hand me a guitar, and sometimes, I'm like, 'Whoa, I forgot about this guitar! Cool!' So it's kind of fun to do. I have these guitars that I used back around the time we were playing on and touring the first album. I still have a few lying around that I haven't gotten rid of. It's fun to do since we're kind of doing this throwback thing, so I said, 'I might bring some of these guitars with me'.

And the word is you've finally given amp modeling a go.

Yeah, I kind of took the plunge against my own better judgment and have been using the Quad Cortex for some shows, which, you know, is somewhat sacrilegious. I know I've told people I would never do that, but here I am, doing that! It's been working really well, but I feel like something's missing, so no matter how advanced the technology gets with digital, it's still fatiguing to the ears because we're analogue beings.

Given that you're a tube amp purist, was it just curiosity that pushed you in this direction?

I've been using the [Neural DSP] Quad Cortex just for its effects along with my heads for a few tours, but we're talking about doing smaller, secret shows, and the thing with doing that is we've got to downsize. So, part of it came out of the necessity of trying to figure that out without losing the effects we use in the studio and making things translate live, which is hugely important.

Is a signature Jim Root Quad Cortex or modeling unit in the cards?

I don't think so. I don't think I'd go that far. I'd like to work on it a little bit more and see what we can come up with for a rack system with a rack-mounted preamp. And I love my Oranges. I still have all my touring racks and my Orange heads. So, I'm still a tube purist. I still



4 IS THE MAGIC NUMBER

Left: Jim with Mick Thomson
Above: Wielding a Jazzmaster at the UK's Sonisphere festival in 2011

believe that's the best way. It's just a matter of making it work when we consider the smaller venues, even if it means taking a half-stack. They take up a lot of stage, you know? It's a battle.

You were singing the praises of a recently purchased hardtail Strat on Instagram. Is that a precursor to your next signature guitar with Fender?

I would love to. If Fender were down for a version two of my Strat, I would be all about that. But I think I'm maybe a little oversaturated with the signature models now. I have a custom Jackson built that's kind of based on the Virtuoso series, too. But I would love to do another version of my Strat. If I did, I would probably do it with a Floyd [Rose], like the guitars I've been playing lately.

You've come a long way on your gear journey, so what's your best piece of advice for those who are starting out?

That's a tough one because you can go down rabbit holes with this stuff, and you can end up spending thousands of dollars. Reverb is my enemy! It's hard when you're sitting around bored at night. That's how I ended up with this DK Jackson. I'd say to maybe get some sort of modeling app to see what type of effects you'd use the most. And then, if you want to become a purist, base your amps and pedalboard off what you are using on one of those modeling things. Maybe you'll end up spending less in the long run, but I don't know... It's always cool getting new sh*t, especially new sh*t that blows your mind, or when you're using things in a way that's maybe not how they're intended to be used can be fun sometimes, or it can just be really f*cking noisy!

Slipknot bring their 25th anniversary tour to the UK in December.

“AS A PLAYER, I DO MY OWN THING”

It's not easy being the guitarist in **Deep Purple**, following in the footsteps of legendary virtuosos. But self-confessed guitar nerd **Simon McBride** has the chops for it – and the balls to change the solo in *Smoke On The Water*...

Words Andrew Daly

Simon McBride is living the dream. “When I was growing up,” he says, “there were three giants – Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and Deep Purple. If you'd said to a 13-year-old version of me that one day I'd be in Deep Purple, I'd have laughed.” But 30 years later, that's exactly where the Irish guitarist has ended up.

“I'm honoured and privileged,” he smiles, “because every guitarist under the sun has a dream goal to be in a legendary rock band, and here I am doing it. I'm loving every minute of it.

And to have my name attached to such a legacy is amazing.”

For sure, Simon had big shoes to fill when he joined Purple in 2022. He was replacing Steve Morse, an iconic shredder and Purple's longest-tenured guitarist. And when it came to playing live with the band, he faced an even more daunting task – performing those classic Purple songs from the '70s, including *Highway Star*, *Black Night* and, of course, *Smoke On The Water* – all of which bore the indelible stamp of one of the most revered guitarists of all time, Ritchie Blackmore.

But Simon had years of experience behind him, including stints working with two of the guys in Purple, singer

Ian Gillan and keyboard player Don Airey. With his trusty PRS in hand, he was up for the challenge. And now, two years on, comes the release of his first album with the band.

Titled *≠1*, it's the 23rd studio album of Purple's long career, and its creation was a remarkably stress-free experience for the new guy in the band. “I didn't really need to prepare myself for it,” he says. “I always knew there was a record to be done, and it was very exciting – the prospect of doing a record with Deep Purple! But there was no pressure as far as what the other guys felt it should be. We just got in a room together. From my perspective, it was very easy. I just jumped in there and went for it.”

"THERE'S NO POINT TRYING TO
COMPETE WITH STEVE MORSE
OR RITCHIE BLACKMORE"

➔ When you're in a role previously held by Messrs Blackmore and Morse, how much does that play on your mind?

You just have to be yourself, you know? If you try to think about what was before – and this applies to any situation – you'll get a bit strangled musically. There's no point trying to compete with Steve Morse or Ritchie Blackmore. I mean, nobody can do it better than them. Certainly not me! So my attitude is not to try to be like them. One of the things that the guys in the band like about me as a player is I do my own thing. I'm very respectful of the old songs because some of those parts that Ritchie and Steve played are huge parts of the songs, and there's no way to change them. But for the writing sessions, it's a combination of different influences from every member of the band. That's what I've always loved about Deep Purple. There's no rules when it comes to the songs.

Did the album come together easily?

Writing a song is just as hard as learning to play the guitar, but the more things you can learn from other people, the better. Listening to the early Ritchie stuff had me thinking, 'Wow, I never would have thought of that or did that', but now I would. Some of the stuff Steve did, he was a bit more progressive, which is really not my bag, but I learned from it. I said, 'Okay, I get what he's doing here'. He's going from this skill or this mode, and I learned from that, and I use it. I'm like a sponge. I soak it all up, take a dip from everyone, and use it in my own way.

What sorts of tones were rattling around in your brain?

I use the same rig as my live rig, so it's Engl amps and stuff. I grew up with classic and hard rock, so that sound is always going to be in my brain no matter what rig I plug into. If I plug into a Fender, I still try to get a Marshall sound, and it's the same with a Vox.

Is your 'board the same in the studio?

I sometimes use a DigiTech Whammy for various things, but in the studio, it's mostly just my Engl amps, a Vox AC30 for some overdubs, and PRS guitars, which I use all the time. I have two signature ones [the 408] that PRS made for me – single-cuts, and they're very versatile. I also use a Quad Cortex, which is great when you're recording digitally because it gets things done quickly.

What was your approach for solos?

Solos can go one of two ways, right? I'd say about 50% of the record had the solos done in the first take. I'd just go in and play, and then it's done. The producer, Bob Ezrin, likes to do two or three different versions of the solo, so he can pick and choose. But I remember saying, 'No, I ain't gonna do any better than that!' So there are solos that are very natural and improvised, but also other ones, like on the song *Pictures Of You*, where there's a little bit more going on. It's like a harmony guitar thing, and there's more melody.

And riffs?

With riffs, it's a weird thing. I find it hard to sit down and say, 'I'm going to write a guitar riff, and it's going to sound like this'. It never happens. I'll sit there for hours, just noodling, and nothing comes but pure crap! It's always when I just plug in, don't think and start playing that I'll play the coolest riffs.

Through the process of recording this album, did you ever get stuck?

Oh, yeah. I've been stuck in a rut many times. How I get out of it is trying something different. I also started learning different skills, like modes. I know a lot of theory, but there's an endless amount of it, so trying different things always helps. Even if it's different positions on the fretboard or looking at an octave up or down, you know? You have to start trying to think outside of the box and find other ways to do it. It may sound terrible until you come up with something else, but that's all part of the process.

Have you adapted your style since joining Deep Purple?

Technique-wise, no. There's not really much to it when it comes to technique, so that wasn't really a challenge. But the Steve Morse stuff is very different to the early Ritchie Blackmore stuff. Steve had a bit of an injury to his wrist, so he doesn't play the way he did in Dixie Dregs. If I had to play what he did there, I would give up! And with Ritchie's style, for example, there's a solo like *Highway Star* that I can't change. When you've got 65,000 people all singing the solo back at you note-for-note, it's like, 'Okay, I am so glad I did not change this at all!' But there are other solos, like the one in *Smoke On The Water*, where I changed it around and put my own flavour on it.



"I'M A GUITAR NERD, AND WE ALL LOVE PEDALS!"

What's kept you with PRS for so long?

They're just so good. That's the problem – a lot of other guitars don't inspire me like they do. I'm still a fan of other guitars, like ES-335s and Telecasters, but I'm so used to the PRS, they kind of feel like home. They do exactly what I want them to do, and I'm not fighting with them. They never break down, and I've never had an issue with any of them.

Have you had any exciting pedal discoveries recently?

On stage, I'm tap dancing a lot because I've got so many different pedals. Probably the most obscure one is a Boss pedal called the Slicer [SL-2], which is absolute mayhem and chaos. Some people find it unusable, but I use it for some real freakout stuff in *Black Night*, and it's just pure noise and a battle with my modulation.

Steve Morse often ran a wet/dry system on tour. Is that something you're doing, too?

Yeah; so the main difference now is I am running a wet/dry system. I always used to run a stereo system, but the wet/dry gives more options. I also use some JAM pedals, like their chorus, the Analog WaterFall, and I've got an old [MXR] Phase 90 and an [MXR] Octavia. My pedalboard is huge, and people say, 'Do you use all those?' My answer is: 'Yes!'

You've got a lot of tones to cover!

I use every single pedal on the 'board. It may only be for one or two bars, but it adds a bit of colour. It keeps it fresh and more interesting for people. Plus, I'm a guitar nerd, and we all love pedals!

Deep Purple's =1 is out now.



Guitars and backing Charlie Griffiths

SHADES OF PURPLE

Get inside the style of Deep Purple's latest axe wielder, plus the band's two most long-standing players...

There can be no doubt that Deep Purple's most significant influence came in the early '70s with founding six-string slinger Ritchie Blackmore at the helm of the band's mkII line-up. Classic albums *Deep Purple In Rock*, *Fireball* and *Machine Head* were massively significant in the development of rock. Here, we look at the band's two most

long-standing players, Blackmore and Steve Morse, before we move on to Simon McBride who's been with the band since 2022. For the sake of space, we're omitting that other great who played briefly with the band in 1975-76, Tommy Bolin. His was an example of a bright flame burning quickly – and perhaps we'll look at a broader lesson on his style in future. For now, let's get plugged in and look at three shades of purple.

1 RITCHIE BLACKMORE STYLE

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩ = 180

A⁵ G⁵ A⁵ D⁵ G⁵ Play 4 times

TAB: BU 5 8 5 8 5 BU 5 8 5 8 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 6 5 6 5 3

This lick is typical of Blackmore's bluesy side – the kind of phrasing you can hear in places in *Smoke On The Water* and *Highway Star*. We're using shape 1 of the A blues scale (A C D E_b E G) here. Fret in a one-finger-per-fret arrangement – so that's your first finger at the 5th fret and your subsequent fingers at the 6th, 7th and 8th frets.

2 STEVE MORSE STYLE

bit.ly/tg387audio

Am⁷ ♩ = 120

PM BU 6 7 8 5 8 (10) 7 8 9 5 8 5 8 7 5 7 8 5 7 8 7 5 8 7 6 5 7 7 6 5 6 7 5

PM BU 6 7 8 5 8 (10) 7 8 9 5 8 5 8 7 5 7 8 5 7 8 7 5 8 7 6 5 7 7 6 5 6 7 5

This lick, inspired by Steve Morse's playing on *Vavoom: Ted The Mechanic*, has a swung 16th note feel. The lick uses a mix of A blues scale and A Mixolydian which combine to allow Morse's trademark chromatic runs. As you switch between sextuplets and 16th notes, keep your hands synchronised, landing each downbeat on a downstroke.

3 SIMON MCBRIDE STYLE

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩ = 120

Am⁷ 8nd RP let ring

TAB: 5 5 8 (10) 8 (10) (8) 5 8 5 8 10 12 15 15 (17) (17) (15) 12 15 (17) 15 15 17 15 12 15 17 15 13 14 17 14 12 14 12 14 12 15 12 10

Simon McBride brings traditional hard rock sensibilities to the band, and here we look at a classic 12/8 time riff inspired by recent single *Portable Door*. Simon creatively makes use of the whole fretboard in his solos, so, after opening with an A blues scale line, in bar 2 we ascend in sliding octaves and finish with a run of bends and pull-offs.



GET MORE FROM YOUR
ACOUSTIC
Contents

40

Marcin

"The classical-flamenco percussive way of playing is a level-up of the guitar world."

46

Molly Tuttle

"Bluegrass is friendly competition - who can play the fastest, who can play the hottest licks..."

50

Tommy Emmanuel

"You've got to learn how songs are constructed, how to count the beat, and when to change. You know, the basics!"

54

Morgan Wade

"I overthink absolutely everything, but with songwriting, I've learned not to."

58

21 Acoustic Tips

21 ways to get more from your acoustic guitar

62

Essential Altered Tunings

Learn how retuning your guitar can fuel your creativity

66

Become an Acoustic Polymath!

TG's lesson runs the gamut from folk to metal in 10 riffs and licks



“This is my vision of what modern percussive guitar can be”

As one of the most gifted players in the world right now, **Marcin** has the vision and the talent to shape the future of acoustic guitar music.

He also has the backing of Tim Henson and Steve Vai. And with a brilliant debut album about to be released, he tells TG: “This classical-flamenco percussive way of playing is a level-up of the guitar world...”

Flamenco-classical sensation Marcin Patrzalek is in the enviable position of releasing his debut album with millions of fans already in awe of his talents. Now he wants to steal some limelight off the “electric guitar big boys” and showcase the future of the acoustic guitar.

At 24 years-old, Polish-born Marcin has the world at his feet. Despite his

youthfulness, he’s already being wowing audiences with his explosive approach to acoustic guitar for nearly ten years. His debut album *Dragon In Harmony* arrives amid wild hubbub for his genre-fusing virtuosity, which sees a classically-trained left hand and flamenco-driven strumming punctuated by dextrous percussive techniques.

Having emerged victorious from TV talent shows in Poland and Italy before his 17th birthday, Marcin reached an even bigger audience during a run to the

Words Phil Weller Photos Nick Fancher

semi-finals of *America’s Got Talent* in 2019. Through a host of viral successes, he’s amassed 1.62 million YouTube subscribers. His takes on the DADGAD stomp of Led Zeppelin’s *Kashmir*, the romantic melodies of Beethoven’s *Moonlight Sonata* and the metallic fury of System Of A Down’s *Toxicity* have over 20 million views, while his original music has captured imaginations, too. He sees what the “electric guitar big boys” of the modern scene – such as



Tim Henson and Ichika Nito – are doing, and he wants to redefine people's perceptions of the instrument and prove acoustic guitar can be just as cool. Those guitarists, as well as fan-turned-mentor Steve Vai, Tom Morello and Jack Black have all been left flabbergasted – as have *Guitar World*, who hailed him as “one of the most talented guitarists of his generation” in 2022. And so, he's painfully aware that most artists don't release their debut album under such circumstances.

“It's a pretty unique position to be in as a percussive player,” he says. “To have a big label [Sony Music] and millions of people who know my name online already. So I want to show the whole spectrum of what I do. This is album is a true expression of where I am at this moment with the vision of what modern percussive guitar can be.”

Marcin's background, he says, is “purely classical,” having started his studies at 10 years old. “My first teacher was a huge and eccentric character,” he remembers. “He was very direct and very supportive. There is no space in my brain to play any differently with my left hand because he gave me a complete vision.”

At 13, he was singled out for one-to-one tuition by a flamenco teacher and university professor in Valencia, “the Mecca of flamenco”. “I was at a workshop, he looked at me and said, ‘I want to teach you on Skype, little boy.’ That was a big deal for me.” He tucked under his tutor's wing for five years, those experiences transforming his right hand and uniting two traditional styles in the process.

But he isn't concerned with traditionalism. Discovering Tommy

ODD ONE OUT
“I wanted to be an outsider”

Emmanuel introduced him to the world of percussive playing. It would prove the final piece of his artistic puzzle, designed to inject contemporary energy into the acoustic without discrediting hundreds of years of history.

“They showed me that there were people in the world that didn't take traditional routes with the acoustic guitar,” he says. “It was so niche. I wanted to be an outsider...”

What are the first steps for learning percussive-style acoustic playing?

The first thing, which is pretty accessible for any guitarist, is to learn tapping with your left hand so that you're able to produce melodies and basslines very clearly, without weird overtones. It frees up your right hand to do a bunch of fun stuff. You can play the bassline of *Asturias* [by Isaac Albéniz]



with your left hand, and then it's within the imagination of the player how you use your right hand. You could just do a little slap on the bass string and let it ring out, that's already very much a fully harmonic, different thing that you're doing. For my right hand, I first looked at easy songs to play, understanding why they work the way they work, and playing it slowly with a metronome. People forget about the metronome when they are practicing, then question why it isn't working for them when the answer is so obvious. My flamenco teacher told me to take the metronome to the bathroom with me!

Do you have to be good at multi-tasking to nail this style?

I honestly don't believe humans can multi-task. I do not think that's how our brains work. You can't consciously perform two things at once. If I played guitar and spoke to you, it will be me doing the muscle memory that I've worked out over many years, and I'd just be focusing on what I'm saying. Usually, there's not a little synapse in my brain that's thinking about what my left hand is doing. What I am thinking about is the right hand, because it's doing more complex and exciting rhythmic stuff. Or if my right hand is just playing a kick

FLEX-ABLE FRIEND

"Steve Vai has been very encouraging - very directly and exhaustively!"

drum part, I'll focus on my left hand. It's about freeing up space in your brain, not trying to split it. The music is one whole, not a bunch of separate layers.

How do you make different sounds from the body of the guitar?

Many people approach it like a drum kit, but what matters is which part of your right hand you use. If you hit the body with your wrist, it produces a very low sound, wherever you hit it. That can be your kick drum. If I smack the body with my index finger and my thumb in an L-shape, that's like a whipping sort of motion and you get a snappy, tight snare thing, even if I hit the same spot on the body as for the kick. If I strum the strings past the nut, it can be a nice chimney cymbal, or you can scratch the body of your guitar with nails. The big difference is the sides of the guitar. The most common way here is to graze the rim, going towards the sound hole. That's extremely snappy and very loud. When you're writing, you'll see little gaps [in the music] which you can fill with those techniques.

So how closely do you follow the drum kit analogy?

When I begin arranging, I don't actually think about a drum kit. Why would I? Clearly it's not a drum kit, it's an instrument in its own right, but it's a nice graphic way to think about it. That's why I play with a drummer live, and on my album I use a lot of layering with the Cajon and different samples. It would be arrogant to substitute everything with guitar parts. You can do both. Nobody's stopping you from playing percussive-style acoustic with a drummer.

You're seen using a *rasgueado* technique on the body of the guitar sometimes, too.

That's a direct result of flamenco, and I've seen a lot of parodies of myself online because I do it so much! The pattern of motion will be ring finger, index, thumb, or ring, middle, index, and it's like doing a flam on the body like you would on a snare. I like to bring my right hand strumming techniques into the percussive side of my playing.

"I'VE BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH SEMI-OPEN TUNINGS WHICH I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYBODY DO BEFORE"

➤ **What is your approach to playing covers in your style?**

For any person who wants to start arranging songs for solo guitar, at the beginning you should try to mirror the original song. You can hear what the different parts and instruments are doing. It will be a pretty direct translation, but then you'll be forced to make some sacrifices because of course you can't do everything on your own. That's where the fun and beauty kind of comes in – you need to find cool ways to overcome the limits of solo guitar. But I found covering songs like that to be very un-artistic after a while. I was kind of a living CD player. Eventually, I stopped attempting to recreate songs like that and tried to breathe new life into the music – to see it as a new thing. Now, when I decide I'm going to rearrange something, I don't listen to it too much, especially if I already know it well. I don't think you're forced to respect any original when you're covering it. It's about originality. It's a different brain and heart playing the same music. So with my *Cry Me A River* cover, there's a whole Brazilian bossa nova section in there. There's no connection to the original until I bring the melody over the top. You're free to experiment.

You often strum over the fretboard, is that for tone or practicality?

It's more practical. My right hand especially is very mobile. I like to say that I travel in circular motions to keep it fluid and so my hand always returns home naturally. So if I'm tapping with both hands, it's practical to be there and also the scratchpad starts around the 17th fret.

Are open tunings better for this style?

That's personal preference. I definitely love open tunings, but I've been experimenting with semi-open tunings which I've never seen anybody do before. It's a tuning I used in *Classical Dragon* and *I Don't Write About Girls*, I call it B5 standard. The low three strings are a B5 chord (B F# B) and then the top strings are in standard (G B E). You can improvise and play freely on the top strings as it's familiar, but then the low strings are beefy as hell and you can make Animals As Leaders bass sounds.

Speaking of *Classical Dragon*, how did Polyphia's Tim Henson end up featuring on that track?

Classical Dragon is actually a very old

"I'M ABSOLUTELY
IN AWE WITH
WHAT TIM HENSON
IS DOING"

song. I started writing it around 2020. My goal at that time was to get out of the fingerstyle box and try to join forces with the big boy electric players without just copying them. No one was trying that sort of thing from my lane. Tim started following me on Instagram and I was like, 'Okay, how can I entice him to join me on a song?' So I definitely wrote it with him in mind. It's Polyphia-esque, I'm not afraid to admit that. It had a lot of 808s and trap-y hi-hats. I sent Tim a cold message asking him about the song – back then I was a fraction of who I am now. He got back to me pretty quickly, like, 'This is sick, we should do something on it together!' The part he sent over was amazing. It's totally different to anything he's ever done, I think, and that inspired me to change up the song to make it more Marcin. I spent a lot of time reworking it afterwards. I'm absolutely in awe with what he's doing, so having him on the song was an unbelievable experience.

There's a lot of tapping in that song. What's your approach to those parts?
It's a complex approach that I've grown into, and it's not a few like tidbits. Classical pieces especially can be quite meaty in terms of harmony, but usually my tapping outlines a chord rather than arpeggios in a typical sense. I usually don't go up and down in steps. I use a lot of open strings, too. If I'm tapping with my left hand and maybe using one or two fingers on my right hand, I can use the remaining fingers to play open strings. Suddenly, you can make these harp-like structures with a lot of notes ringing out. You can see that on my take of Paganini's *Caprice no. 24*, [around the 1:27 mark] there's a slower, more open variation of the piece. Basically, I tried to play these descending scales, but do it in a way where as many notes ring out as possible. It's a nice, legato flurry-type thing. I love doing it.

Does the type of guitar matter for percussive playing?
Some are better than others, but you can play percussively on any acoustic. If you couldn't it would be a gimmick, needing some extra attachments. A good percussive player could play the same stuff on Taylor Swift's guitar and on mine. The things you can change with DIY are more for comfort. I find low action absolutely key for tapping, especially ghost taps, which I do a lot as it makes the sound a lot bigger. The low

action gives you less ring out, so it's easier to play cleanly. The scratchpad is the most visual addition and on my [signature Ibanez] MRC 10 it's a very special one [made from oil-finished, solid Sitka spruce], but you can just wing it. You can scratch your nails on the body; especially if it doesn't have polish.

With you hitting the guitar so much during your live shows, do your hands hurt afterwards?

No. If something hits and remains there, there's a prolonged impact. But if it's a little slap and you move your hand away, you'll produce vibrations and you're not going to damage yourself or your guitar. Buildings vibrate all the time, that's how Japan survives earthquakes. The only issue you can have is when you play a kick drum with your wrist, as you do leave it on the body guitar a little longer because you don't want the vibrations the same. That can damage the guitar, but you can add a plate to reinforce the bracing. I don't think it matters what it's made of, but with the MRC 10 I used solid Sitka spruce because I wanted the material to be as natural as possible and match the guitar.

BOY WONDER
"I believe I'm 13 in this photo," Marcin says. "That is my teacher Jerzy Pikor next to me. We're in his classroom..."

Steve Vai has been mentoring you, too.
He's the beam of light in the world of guitar. He's been encouraging – very directly and exhaustively, I would say. He's very articulate and in-depth with his opinions and advice. He came by my LA show recently and we had an hour-long conversation backstage. He wants you to succeed and be the best version of yourself.

You've said previously that you want the percussive acoustic to be the next big thing. Are you seeing more players embracing this approach to the instrument?

What I've seen over the past two or three years is that the level of the covers and arrangements of people doing this flamenco percussive thing has gone through the roof. After *Classical Dragon* came out, there were covers online in three days. So I think, now, it's less of one person carrying the torch for this style. There's a collective understanding that this classical-flamenco percussive way of playing exists. It's not a gimmick – it's a pure level-up of the guitar world.

Dragon In Harmony is released on September 13.



"MY FLAMENCO TEACHER TOLD ME TO TAKE THE METRONOME TO THE BATHROOM WITH ME!"

“It’s highly technical music. You have to work *really* hard!”

Words Jenna Scaramanga
Photos Olly Curtis

Bluegrass virtuoso **Molly Tuttle** on the art of super-fast flatpicking. “Eventually,” she says, “my brain would catch up with my fingers!”

With strong songs, engaging storytelling and phenomenal technique, Molly Tuttle has established herself as bluegrass’s premier young talent. Her last two albums – 2022’s *Crooked Tree* and 2023’s *City Of Gold* – both won Grammys and she has twice been Bluegrass Guitarist of the Year, the first woman to win the title.

Tell us about the EP you have coming later this year...

It’s called *Into The Wild*. I’ve been working on writing a whole new batch of songs, but *Into The Wild* felt more like a continuation of the last record. It has two new original songs on it with my bandmates in Golden Highway. There’s also a stripped down version of *Stranger Things*, a reworked song from our last record, *City Of Gold*. Then we have a new cover of *Here In California* from Kate Wolf, one of my favourite California songwriters. That’s a tribute to my musical upbringing. My dad sings on it, and also my friend AJ Lee, who used to sing with me when we were growing up. Then there are covers from the last couple years that haven’t officially been on any release yet: Jefferson Airplane’s *White Rabbit* and Olivia Rodriguez’s *Good For You*.

In rock and metal, shredding can be divisive. Virtuoso bluegrass players

don’t seem to get the same negative reactions. Why do you think that is?

When I hear a heavy metal guitar player there is that raw emotion that can maybe sound a little angry, whereas I feel like bluegrass is more friendly competition – who can play the fastest, who can play the hottest licks or whatever. It’s on acoustic instruments and it is very happy sounding music, even if a lot of the songs have sad lyrics. It’s like folk music in that you can be a complete beginner and enter a jam circle, and as long as you know a handful of songs you’re okay. It is kind of an accessible music in that way. But then to get to playing on stage or being one of the prominent people in the genre you do have to work really hard because there’s that speed element and it’s a highly technical type of music.

Even the fastest bluegrass lines are very melodic. How do you do that?

You definitely do play to the chords

a little bit more than other styles. Like when I went to Berklee, I couldn’t play very well over, like, jazz changes. But then I would meet jazz guitar players who are like, ‘Whoa, that’s so crazy! Every note you’re playing is in the chord, and you’re incorporating melody while playing fast!’ It seems a lot more simple to me to just play over three major chords, but for people who are more used to playing modes over jazz changes, that was weird to them.

How much of what you do is improvised?

It depends if I’m playing my own set. When I’m playing a show, I have so much to think about. I tell stories between the songs. I want to make it an entertaining show, and I’m singing. So I do fall into similar solos, or at least I know I can fall back on a lick that I know will work, just because there’s so many other variables when I’m carrying the show. But there are always songs in the set where I’m totally improvising. If we throw in a new song that we haven’t done before, then that’s completely improvised. Usually, if I’m playing with other people or sitting in, that’s all improvised. I used





to work stuff out for my albums, but recently I've started either totally improvising it using the take that I played in the studio, or if I wasn't happy with it, improvising takes until I get one I really like. Sometimes I'll work it out in the studio. I'll play a take and if I like part of it, I'll try to play it again, and maybe save the good part from the take before, and flesh it out that way.

Did it take a lot of trial and error to develop your technique?

My dad was my first guitar teacher. I settled on my technique pretty early on because if I was holding the pick weirdly or doing it in a way that would mess things up for me later down the road, he would be like, 'Here's a better way'. I didn't spend a lot of time on it after those first couple years.

Is there one accepted technique for bluegrass, or is there a lot of variety?

There's quite a bit. A lot of people are self-taught or learn from watching different guitar players and who all do it differently. Someone might study Tony Rice's technique, or David Greer or Clarence White. Brian Sutton is someone who teaches a lot, and he holds the pick in a totally different way than I do. That works for him and will probably work for all his students, too. My technique is not exactly the same as my dad's but pretty similar. There are a lot of people you'll see anchor their ring finger and pinky finger on the guitar body. My fingers are more curled in and my wrist is resting on the guitar a little bit more.

Did you struggle to develop your speed at all?

IT MIGHT GET LOUD...

"The fast songs are when you need to play your loudest," Molly says

Speed for me came more easily. I would practice with a metronome and just play faster and faster each day, try to push my speed to where sometimes I would play faster than I could really play it cleanly. After doing that, for a couple days, eventually my brain would kind of catch up with my fingers, and I would get faster. The thing I plateaued on was learning about the fingerboard, improvising, being able to play new ideas. Sometimes I'd get stuck playing the same things over and over again. I still feel like that sometimes, but now I just see it more as my style, like I have a sound that is my own. It's okay if I play some of the same licks or play things that I gravitate towards, because that's what I like. I didn't know any music theory growing up. When I went to Berklee I finally learned the notes on the fingerboard and different scales, and worked on incorporating that. I was just playing by ear before that.

"THE ONLY WAY
TO PRACTICE
SOMETHING FAST
IS TO PRACTICE IT
WHERE YOU CAN'T
ACTUALLY PLAY
IT VERY WELL"



"BLUEGRASS IS FRIENDLY COMPETITION—WHO CAN PLAY THE FASTEST, WHO CAN PLAY THE HOTTEST LICKS"

That's really interesting, because it's the opposite of what many of us were taught.

My dad would say, 'You have to play a little faster than you can actually play if you ever want to get faster'. He had so many students who would hit that plateau of like, 'Oh, I'm afraid to play any faster than this', and they would just never gain any speed. I think in a way he was experimenting with me and my brothers, like, 'What if I have them play these pieces extremely fast – to where they sound super messy at first?' It did work. We would practice something super, super fast to a metronome, and push it past our abilities. That really helped us gain speed over time. I guess he had the idea of, 'Well, if you are always practicing slow, then you're not going to ever practice things fast'. The only way to practice something fast is to practice it where you can't actually play it very well. But it's great to practice things slow, too. If there's one little three- or four-note section that you can't do up to speed, then play that tiny little section slowly, figure out what's going on, and troubleshoot it, instead of just practicing the entire thing. It's important to be super effective with figuring out what what's actually holding you back.

Are there any secrets to playing fast?

I've arranged whole guitar pieces that took me a long time to get up to speed or, but I realised that with a lot of my favourite guitar players, their playing isn't really like that. They find things that sound complicated, but they're actually easy to play. I think that's really an art in itself to find things that are secretly simple, but sound like, 'Wow! How do they do that?' Like David Greer's solos – they're hot. They are hard to play. But I'm always surprised at how much easier it is to actually play them than it sounds. He's so good at finding things that you can play really fluidly.

Most players get lighter as they get faster. How do you maintain the power?

That's one of the big struggles of

acoustic guitar flatpicking. I feel like the fast songs are when you need to play your loudest. When you play a fast bluegrass song, everyone's playing as loud and as hard as they can, and the guitar's the quietest instrument. You have to bring up the volume, which makes it harder to play clean and fast. I use an incredibly heavy pick. Even other guitarists I talk to who play similar styles are like, 'Whoa, I couldn't ever play with that!' I use these Dunlop 208 Jazztone picks.

Your clawhammer technique uses aggressive downstrokes with the backs of your fingernails. Do you have to do anything to protect them?

It wears them down a bit, but I don't really do anything because I'm not sitting around playing that way for hours a day. Usually in the show we'll do one or two songs. Sometimes we work up a new clawhammer song and I might be playing that a few times throughout the day, but usually when I'm warming up I'm flatpicking. I just feel like the clawhammer style for me is ingrained. I don't need to sit around practicing it all day. If that were my main style I would probably have to do something about my nails. One or two times I've had a tear in a cuticle or a little cut on my finger, but it wasn't a disaster.

Tell us about the dreadnought you play.

Yeah, that's my main guitar on the cover of *City Of Gold*. It's from Pre-War Guitars Company, made in North Carolina. They take these old 1930s Martins and Gibsons and model their guitars after them. They make them like the old guitars with just a few changes, like mine has a truss rod so I can adjust it on the road. That's the perfect balance for me. It sounds a little bit like an older guitar, but it's a lot more road-friendly. I just started using it on my records, too, because I really liked how it sounds and it's the guitar I'm the most used to playing. It's the one I played on most of *City Of Gold* and the new tracks.

Is a dreadnought the bluegrass standard would you say?

Yeah, basically everyone plays one.

Occasionally, you'll see people pull out a 000. I guess 90 or 95% of bluegrass guitar players are playing a dreadnought. It really cuts through the band, and it's pretty resonant and takes up a lot of space, which is good when you're playing with four instruments that are a little louder than you.

Do you use lighter strings or a low action to help with playing fast?

I use medium [13 gauge] strings, but I do keep my action pretty low. I've experimented with light strings, but I find that when I'm playing hard it just gets too buzzy and thin. The struggle for me is I really like when my action's low, but if it gets too low, then I get the same buzzy-ness. I have to keep it somewhere in the middle. By bluegrass standards, I keep mine pretty low because there's this macho thing like, 'We got to have high action and we have to use these heavy strings!'

How do you get a good amplified acoustic tone?

I go through so many different things to try to get the tone I want. Pretty much the one thing I've used for the past few years is my Grace Audio Felix preamp. It doesn't add a whole lot of tone, but there's a lot of different options with it and it has two channels that worked when I was using two different pickups. Now I have the LR Baggs HiFi pick up and they've now installed a little mic in it. It's still going through one line, but inside the guitar I can adjust how much mic I want to use. I struggle with the internal mic. It sounds good but since it's inside the guitar, me moving the guitar at all on my shirt is really loud. So we've turned down the mic and we just use a little bit of it. I'm running it through a Fishman Aura. Fishman modelled my guitar through all these mics, and it's supposed to take my pickup and model it after my guitar being played through mic. It's not perfect. I hear back sometimes and I'm like, 'That sounds like a pickup.' But it's better than nothing.

Molly's *Into The Wild* EP is scheduled for release in October.



Photo: Per Ole Hagen/Getty

“I’M ALWAYS LOOKING TO DO SOMETHING MUSICALLY DIFFERENT AND UNEXPECTED”

Words Andrew Daly

Tommy Emmanuel is arguably the most revered acoustic guitarist of them all. Here, he presents his guide to playing harmonics, alternating basslines and more

There’s no denying that when it comes to acoustic guitar, Tommy Emmanuel is a master. And yet, at its core, his approach is simple. “I never think about technology,” he says. “All I’m looking for is good sound. Just give me one great sound, and I’m off. That’s all I’m looking for.”

Tommy has learned a thing or three after nearly 30 solo albums, tons of guest spots and more accolades than you can shake a stick at. He’s a virtuoso of the highest order, but the beautiful thing is that he’s never stopped learning. What’s more, he revels in teaching.

“If you’re just picking up the guitar,” he says, “you better learn some chords, song structure, and as many songs as possible. You’ve got to learn how songs are constructed, how to count the beat, and when to change. Learn how to get that all together. People approach me and say, ‘I want to play *Lady Madonna* like you. How?’ I say, ‘How long have you been playing?’ They say, ‘Two years.’ And I’ll say, ‘Forget it!’”

Tommy reiterates that if you want to be the best, first, you’ve got to get down to basics – and never forget them. “It’s another world doing all the harder stuff,” he says. “So you’ve got to learn to do it all properly. Learn why the melody works against chords. Figure out how to make that feel like a singer. But all that comes with experience and time. I encourage young people to use tabs as a roadmap, but it all comes down to learning song structures, chords, and, most importantly, things you can work on with other people!”

So, what’s the first step to getting it right – specifically, your style of cascading harmonies?

If you want to get it right, you’ve got to break everything down into its slowest and easiest way and then work it up. There’s a lot of variations of how to use harmonics in music, but I’d say the best songs to showcase my Chet Atkins style of cascading harmonics would be songs like *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*,

Michelle, or *Secret Love* – songs that I’ve specifically arranged so they can be all around that technique.

Break down that technique.

I play the harmonic with my thumb, while my index finger is just barely touching the string up the octave. So I’m getting the harmonics up the octave and using my thumb to pluck the string. And then, if you look at my right hand, my middle finger is my balancing point. It’s like the central point of my hand, and I use that as my balance point.

And then there’s the open notes you often have going on...

Right. So then, with my third finger, I play the open notes. I make the harmonic and the open note kind of melt together. When you do it right, the ear can’t really tell which one is which until you hear the sound of the harmonic being picked. So I can get all kinds of sounds using that particular technique.



So that all comes from things you picked up from Chet Atkins and Lenny Breau and then made your own? That's important, as a lot of people are nervous about copying their influences, but sometimes, it's not copying but a starting point. But you use other types of harmonics, like juxtaposing chiming chords.

It comes directly from Chet Atkins and Lenny Breau. And then, there's other kinds of harmonics, where I might play a passage, or just hit a chord in the middle of a passage with the palm of my hand. I'll barely touch the string with my palm and hold the chord so the chord chimes up the octave.

It's reminiscent of certain lap steel techniques.

It actually comes from the Hawaiian technique of playing lap steel! When I was a kid, I learned all that because my mother played Hawaiian steel, and my sister played and she would play the melody. Then she would take a break, like the second time around, and quote the melody up the octave, using her palm to strike the harmonics.

This is important for young players to know because it shows that there's not just one way to approach harmonics.

Exactly. So, that's the couple of techniques that I use, and, of course, there are harmonics all over the guitar. Open harmonics, anyway. You've got to spend time looking for them and remembering exactly where they are so you can hit it dead in the middle of the passage.

Another integral part of what you do is your use of alternating basslines. What's your crash course as far as that goes?

The best thing to get you going on that is finding the song that needs a moving bass part. I remember when I first heard Chet Atkins playing *A Taste of Honey*, which is a song that The Beatles recorded. You know what? I'm going to put you on speaker and play it for you. Are you ready?

Oh, absolutely. Let's hear it!

Here's how the song goes [Tommy picks up his acoustic guitar and demonstrates how to play it]. In order to make that melody and make the bass move, Chet created this thing, and it's kind of what a bass player would play.

So, how did you learn to make the moving bassline and that melody work together? It's almost like two people are playing, but it's just you.

In order for me to work out how to play that moving bassline and have the melody, I had to learn everything at once. The best part about moving bass parts is they just keep the song moving along. So it's not necessarily about the technique, but finding the right songs that really suit that and need it.

This is a good example of how sometimes the best technique applied to guitar has nothing to do with technique but incredible love and desire for the instrument. With that in mind, what's your best advice for those who are at the point of arranging songs?

I'm a producer and arranger. I've always got those hats on. I'm not just a player, I'm everything, and I'm looking at it from every angle. Everything must satisfy me. When I find a song that needs the right kind of approach, I make sure that everything is covered and that the melody has a life of its own.

Many people find it challenging to shift gears, step outside the music

"LEARNING HARMONICS IS SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO DO REALLY SLOWLY - BECAUSE WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IS CLARITY"

they've written, and look at it objectively. Do you find that to be the case?

There's a lot of things that a producer will do. He'll take a song, listen to the song, and say, 'Okay, instead of that chord, let's make it more interesting. Let's surprise the listener. When we hit that note, let's make it an unresolved chord and resolve it in the next bar'.

So it's about creating interest through the unexpected.

Right, it's unexpected. And then, there's little things that I've learned along the way a long time ago. I'm always looking for the element of surprise and the chance to do something musically different and unexpected. There are enough people out there just playing overs, trying to play it exactly like the record. I tend to do the opposite.

That's another important point. Many players are fearful of altering something established or beloved. But sometimes, that's necessary.

I tend to take a song, even if it's iconic, like a Beatles song, and I'm always true to the melody but I try to do something unique with it. That makes it sound like me, even if it's a Paul McCartney or John Lennon song. I always have a deep respect for the song, but sometimes, like John Lennon's *Imagine*, I try to interpret the song in the best way I can. But there are little musical bits along the way that are part of that arranger and producer's skillset I have.

Getting stuck is another big part of playing guitar that isn't mentioned enough. No matter how long you play, it's inevitable.

Oh, I'm always stuck! Just this morning, I was playing my very latest composition, and part of me wants to change it already, and I only wrote it a couple days ago! So I started messing with it, but I'm always waiting for inspiration. I'm always waiting for something to happen that will cause me to compose and have great ideas that I'm excited about.

Do you have any tried-and-true tricks for getting out of a rut when you do get stuck?

You know, it's not something you clock on and off. Sometimes I get the best ideas at the weirdest times, and I don't always have a guitar close by. So it's not something you can manufacture. I'm always looking for something to give me an idea. Just give me one idea – I'll run with it, you know?

And sometimes those ideas come from unexpected places.

Sometimes I get them from watching a movie or meeting somebody. Or maybe I'll get some idea one day, and it turns into a song, like a song of mine called *Drivetime*. I wrote that song a long time ago, and I had been seeing Stevie Wonder live, and when I got home, I got my guitar and started playing this little phrase. It's C# minor, and I just walked around the house playing that for hours. I really, really loved it, and then, I thought, 'Well, okay, that's the foundation. Now, I've got to tell a story. Where am I gonna go?'

That piggybacks onto what you were saying before about embracing the unexpected.

Right. So, from that one idea, came this song, some of the first bridge, and then, the second goes around again, and when you least expect it, it goes into a second bridge, which is different. I put that all together from just one good idea. But then, my arranging and producing skills take over, making the whole thing interesting and going somewhere unpredictable.

You mentioned earlier that you've got a new composition and are already tweaking it. For many guitarists, overthinking is a problem, but finding a balance between the blueprint and the unpredictable is significant.

A good example of that is my song *Angelina*. The harmonic ending of that song – when I first wrote the song, that was the introduction. But when I got to the studio to record, it all my instincts told me, 'Don't give away the harmonic ending at the start'. So, I came up with the introduction that we know to *Angelina* right there on the spot.

Should players learn to trust their instincts?

I think so. In that instance, it seemed to work. I recorded it, and everybody loved it. I brought the harmonic ending in at the beginning instead of giving it away too early. If you're an enthusiastic and excited composer, you'll know when you're onto something good. But eventually, when you record that's when you have to say, 'Okay, now we get serious about every little millisecond of this song'.

As far as gear goes, there's so much of it out there. It's hard to know what's worth one's time. How do you navigate that?

When I play a show, I have one pedal on stage. It's a tuner. That's it! I have no loopers, no

chorus, no delays – all that is done for me by the sound person. The most important thing for me is good sound, and that's it. But when I go into the studio, I'm in heaven, and I'll tell you why – I wear headphones! I sit in front of microphones and play acoustically, and I can get the engineer to give me whatever I need into the headphones.

So it's less about new gear and tech and more about pure sound?

Right. We'll keep working on it until we get the mix and we monitor it. The sound in the headphones causes me to go deeper into my abilities and creative ideas. But when I'm on stage, it's a completely different beast – I'm out there to totally knock people's socks off. I'm there to give them the best time of their lives and to play the best I can. But when I'm in the studio, it's about getting the feeling right, diving into the song, and capturing a performance. My best advice is that if you can't get it in one or two takes, there's something wrong.

And in terms of live performance, what's the best advice you can give?

You have to have the right songs. It has to be something good. You want to play something with feeling that I can pour myself into, have fun with, and surprise an audience with. And you have to have a repertoire of different feelings, sounds and styles. You might come out guns blazing, and you're taking the audience with you, and when you finish that, you might go into something more traditional. It's about putting a smile on their faces and making them forget about everything. It's all about the songs. If you have the songs, then your instrument can help you be the painter.

"WHEN I'M ON STAGE, I'M OUT THERE TO TOTALLY KNOCK PEOPLE'S SOCKS OFF!"



Once described in the country press as ‘a hardened Sheryl Crow’, young American singer-songwriter Morgan Wade certainly has a knack for finding the right chords to get to the truth. The Gibson endorsee’s approach is one that’s deeply rooted in the music that soundtracked her childhood, but she’s also been able to add in her own contemporary twists, stretching out further into realms of pop, folk, rock and beyond.

“It’s hard for me to commit to just one genre,” she says, “but anyone who listens to my music will be easily able to tell I grew up on country.”

Ahead of the release of her fourth album *Obsessed*, she shares some of the lessons she’s learned along the way...

Where did it all start for you in terms of picking up the acoustic?

Growing up, all I wanted was a Gibson guitar. I’d be looking at magazines, seeing photos of SJ-200s thinking to myself, ‘I’ve got to get one of those some day!’ I ended up with my first guitar around the age of ten, and it was made by a brand called Johnson. I guess it was a cheaper version of a Martin-style acoustic. But I held out and kept my eye on those Gibson. In my freshman year of college, I went and bought a small L-00 Gibson. I remember it was just about the cheapest one they made. I paid 40 bucks for it up front and then put the rest on a payment plan because I was just a college kid. It’s cool now, because I probably own around fifteen Gibson acoustics. I can even call them up and get them to make me some custom models. It’s a full-circle moment for me, because all I wanted as a kid was a Gibson guitar and now they’re exclusively all I play.

So which were the Gibson players you looked up to early on?

I was a huge Elvis fan. When I was seven years old I was obsessed with him, and of course he had that Super Jumbo, and he also played the Dove. All these years later, Gibson still make Elvis signature models. But back when I first saw clips of him, I remember seeing his name on the fretboard and thinking that was the coolest thing!

As for other players, who ended up affecting your sound the most?

Words Amit Sharma

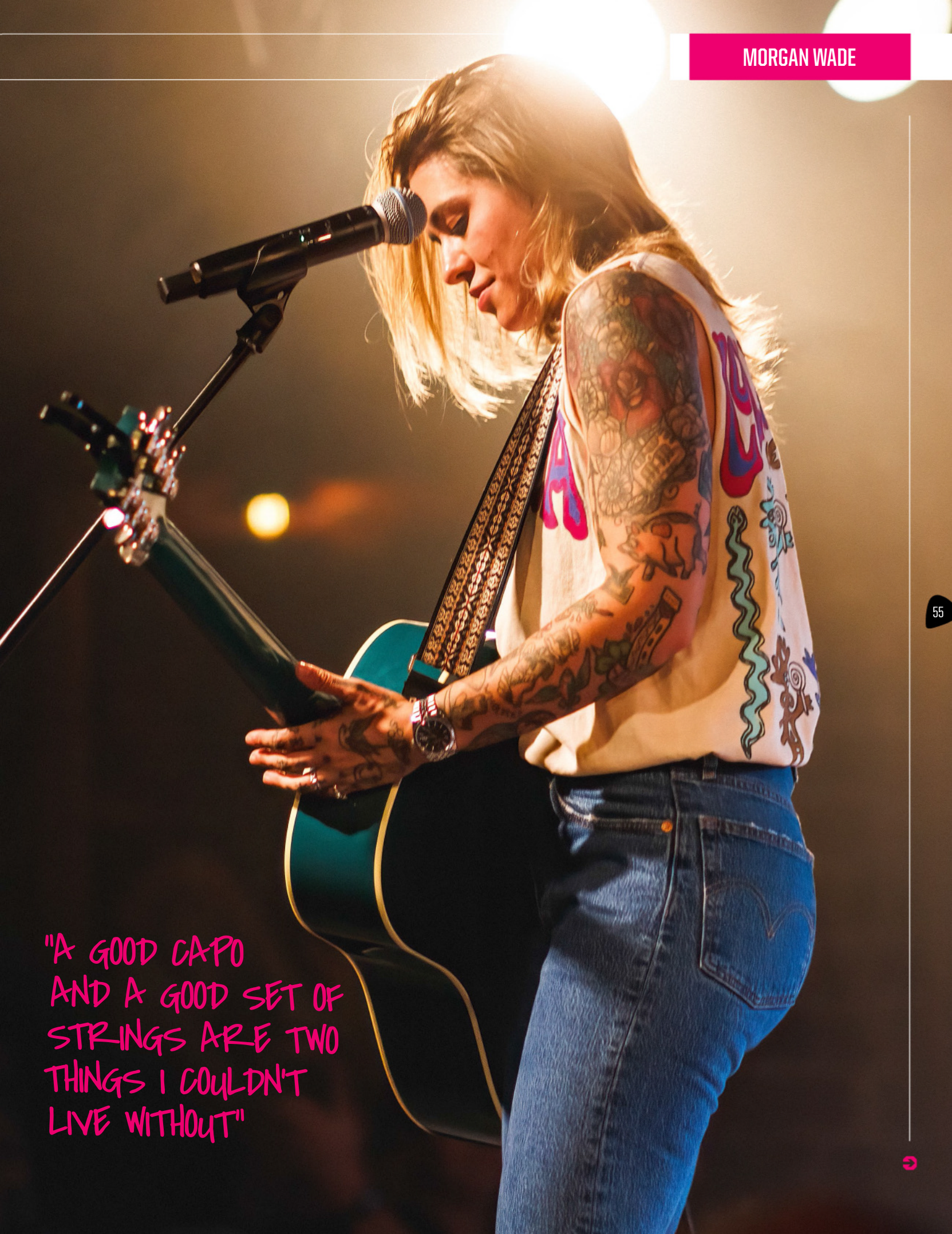
“Country music is just four chords and *the truth!*”

Singer-songwriter **Morgan Wade** likes to keep things simple in the classic country tradition. As she puts it: “I just want to play those chords and write those songs...”

I grew up listening to a lot of Loretta Lynn and Johnny Cash. I grew up with my grandparents, so that’s how I listened to the older generation’s music. I remember seeing Loretta Lynn and thinking, ‘That’s one small woman holding this huge guitar!’ I was listening to her songs a lot and learned a lot from playing those songs. I look up to her as a songwriter and guitar player. I never wanted to be someone who can shred on the guitar. That will never be my strong suit. I just want to play those chords and write those songs. That’s what I look to the guitar for. I’m happy with my C and A-minor shapes. I guess I’m more of a simple player. I have really small hands, so I’m not a huge barre-chord person.

And, like Loretta, you still love your oversized acoustics!

People often laugh, telling me I’ve chosen to play the biggest guitars possible, but I like them because of the louder tone. They tend to be pretty powerful. And even when I play live, my tech guy prefers the sound of me using Super Jumbos. For some reason, they always sound the best. For backup, I have three custom J-45s that also sound really good. They’re not quite as loud or bright as the Super Jumbos, but they’re still nice and clear. In the studio, it’s usually all about the Super Jumbos.



"A GOOD CAPO
AND A GOOD SET OF
STRINGS ARE TWO
THINGS I COULDN'T
LIVE WITHOUT"



I have a pre-war J-200 that I've used for recording. It's one of the best-sounding acoustics in my collection. It's loud but also very smooth when you need it to be. It's funny, I've seen people much taller than me with smaller guitars but I'm only five foot two and happy playing the biggest ones Gibson make.

What would you say are the defining characteristics of acoustic country?

My first introduction to live music was bluegrass. Where I grew up, in Virginia, it was all heavily bluegrass. My grandfather loved it and we'd be listening to those bands every Friday. One thing I noticed about all of those writers is that it always felt like they were telling a story. The chords would often be very simple, it was more about the storytelling behind it all. That stuff is more powerful than just the chords. Country is just four chords and the truth. The same goes for most kinds of Americana, it's all about the storytelling and honesty, whatever that may be. And there's a lot of sad stuff in there, even when you don't expect it. A lot of bluegrass music would have all these happy banjos but the words would be about really dark stuff. I love that, and it ended up influencing how I write now.

Is there one guitar that you always use to write with?

For writing, it used to be my J-45 in Black. I used that for a really long time, but in 2014, Gibson put out a Cherry Red Everly Brothers J-180 and I wanted that guitar so bad. They didn't make that many but it's all I wanted. I also had zero dollars in my bank account, so I couldn't get that guitar. I'd been searching for years hoping to find it but struggled. I tried all the guitar shops and asked around. And then six months ago, there was this new vintage store in Nashville who had that guitar. I had about one hour free before I needed to be somewhere else, so I hopped in my car and got it. That's now my favourite guitar to write with. It's so good that I've already started writing a bunch of songs for my next album after *Obsessed*. That J-180 is now my go-to guitar. I'm not touring with it because I don't want anything to happen to it. What I use live is an Everly Brothers Black SJ-200 with the double white pickguard. I've got a thing for those double pickguards!

Are those the guitars we're hearing on the new album, then?

Actually, the main guitar for this one was Miranda Lambert's signature Gibson Bluebird. It's another one I haven't toured with, but man, it sounds great. That got used and then we added in the Black SJ-200, which also had a great tone for the record. I feel like everything has gone more simple, even in terms of electric stuff. My guitar player, Clint Wells – who funnily enough runs a Metallica podcast called *Metal Up Your Podcast* – used an ES-335 a lot and some good Fender amps. You can't go wrong with a Blues Junior.

Everything felt more simple with this record. It's a very acoustic-led singer-songwriter record, but we stuck a lot of pedal steel on there as well. I bring my live band in for the records. When I'm on tour, I'll play electric for a couple of songs, there's an ES-335 that I love. I'll throw a little overdrive on there for a couple of songs, but the rest of the time is me with my acoustic and the other guys handling the tearing it up.

Which of the new songs are you most excited about?

The title track is very acoustic-driven, with a lot of fingerpicking. I really like that one because it's so much fun to play. The same goes for *Moth To A Flame*, which also has some great-sounding pedal steel on it. Those are the most fun ones to play. I don't usually do a lot of fingerpicking, but this album has a lot of stuff that was written and recorded that way.

What other gear could you not live without? You're clearly no stranger to a capo...

I've tried a bunch of different capos, but to be honest I always come back to my Kyser one. I've spent a lot of money trying out the more expensive ones, but for some reason, the Kyser is like the gold standard for me. I've had other brands hit me up to send over free ones but by this stage, I just don't need them, and I know what works best for me. I use D'Addario strings, they've always been the best and we go through a lot of those! I'm a pretty simple player, I like to keep things low-key. But a good capo and a good set of strings are two things I couldn't live without.

As for picks, I like the real heavy ones. I cannot stand a thin pick! So I tend to stick with the Fender Heavy ones, they always sound really good. I've actually been using them since I started playing guitar. They're all I've ever wanted to

"I'VE CHOSEN TO PLAY THE BIGGEST GUITARS POSSIBLE. I LIKE THEM BECAUSE OF THE LOUDER TONE"

use, though we also have some Dunlop custom picks which have my name on them.

Is there a riff you use to test out acoustics in the shops?

I have these strange noodle-y things that I like to do. I might do these little walk-downs and stuff like that. Weirdly enough, I always like to play the Bobbie Gentry song *Ode To Billie Joe*, but I don't know why. It's a strange little hooky and repetitive thing but I always play it when trying out acoustics.

Speaking of writing, how exactly do you go about finding the right hooks and rhythms for each song?

One of the biggest things I've learned is to not overthink. When I write a song that I know I will be using – like *Met You* and *Take Me Away* from my *Reckless* album, or the title track from *Psychopath* – they seem to come in one take. For some reason those are my most popular songs! I will just sit down, pick up my guitar and feel inspired in that moment. I can't be one of those people who sits down and forces myself to write a song. I could do it, but I don't think it would create anything that ends up on a record. I need to feel inspired first.

I could go a month without coming up with anything and then suddenly sit down and write three or four songs. I overthink absolutely everything, but with songwriting I've learned not to. You just write what you're feeling. It doesn't matter if you don't end up using it. Just get it out there. I don't pressure myself. In the world today, I feel like we all crave real stuff. Everything is so fake, you look on the Internet and it's just the best parts of everybody's life. But when I tend to write these songs, I'm not really writing about the best parts of my life, I'm writing about the stuff I'm going through and all the tough sh*t.

What would you say are the greatest acoustic tones you've ever heard?

I've really gravitated towards Jason Isbell's Southeastern record. That dude is just a maniac on guitar, songs like *Cover Me Up*, *Elephant* and *Live Oak* are amazing. Obviously he's an incredible songwriter, but he's also a brilliant guitar player. I guess I tend to think more about the acoustic-driven songs. That record was my favourite album for a long time and it's what got me into his music. Another album I love the sound of is the first record by The Lumineers. It's simple guitar stuff, but I love how it feels raw and real, instead of sounding crazy polished.

You've achieved great things since making your recording debut six years ago. What has felt like the biggest moment so far?

I would say right now! We're currently on tour with Alanis Morissette and Joan Jett. On the first show, I saw both of them watching me from the side of the stage. You can't really beat that! Those are two badass women who have been such a huge part of music and paved the way for more female artists. Then I woke up to Alanis texting me, being really kind and saying she thought my show was amazing. I couldn't believe it... how did my life end up here, chatting to Alanis and seeing Joan Jett watching my whole set? That's crazy!

***Obsessed* is released on August 16.**



21

WAYS TO GET MORE FROM YOUR ACOUSTIC GUITAR

Acoustic guitars are arguably simpler than electrics, but there's still a wealth of details involved in playing like a pro...

Words Jenna Scaramanga

1. KNOW YOUR BODY TYPES

If you're shopping for an acoustic, realise that the different shapes and sizes of body are not only about what's most comfortable, but also what style of music they most suit. Dreadnoughts are the go-to for big strumming and bluegrass picking, while smaller bodies are often better for bringing out delicate fingerstyle parts. That said, if you love a particular guitar, don't be put off if it isn't the standard choice for your genre. Just be aware of the different sounds each shape can produce.

3. EXPERIMENT WITH PICK MATERIAL

Delrin (as used in Dunlop 500) is smooth and warm. Celluloid (used by Fender and many other brands) is bright with a lot of click in the attack. Nylon has a gentle tone with probably the least pick click. Ultex, meanwhile, has both brightness and warmth for a very balanced sound. Which is right for you will depend on the song, the way you pick and your guitar's natural tone.

**6. VARY YOUR PICKING MOTION**

Guitar teachers sometimes insist that picking motions must come from the wrist, but if you watch the pros carefully, you'll see it's more complex than that. Strumming can come from the wrist or rotating forearm. Even the elbow, which some teachers say should never be used, can work effectively as long as you're not holding unnecessary tension. It's rare to see an acoustic strummer with a completely still elbow. Try different things until you get comfortable.

2. CHANGE YOUR PICK GAUGE

Changing your pick is the most direct way to change your tone. The thickness and the shape of the tip both impact the sound. Generally, thinner picks have more attack and less of the fundamental note, although very thick picks produce more upper harmonic 'chirp' as they contact the string. If you want a new tone, buy a variety pack of picks and try them out side by side.

4. TRY DIFFERENT STRINGS

The most common strings are 80/20 bronze (brighter) and phosphor bronze (warmer). Many acoustic guitarists believe it's worth using heavy strings to get the wood to vibrate, but lighter strings allow a higher proportion of harmonic overtones relative to the fundamental with less low end. Another theory is that larger body styles benefit more from bigger strings. It's always worth experimenting to find what you like.

5. USE VARIOUS PICKING GRIPS

Changing the way you hold your pick will not only change the feel, but also the angle your pick approaches the strings at, and therefore the tone. If you want more attack and harmonics, angling the pick at 45 degrees to the string could help, while having the pick parallel to the strings gives a bolder, rounder tone. Holding the pick on the side or the pad of your index finger, with thumb and middle (a la noted acoustic player Eddie Van Halen!) or with all three will give different feels and sounds.

7. DON'T DIG TOO DEEP!

Your strumming should sound effortless, even when it's loud and intense. If it feels like you're having to fight to get over each string, the tone and timing will suffer. The most likely cause is burying the pick too far below the strings. Think of the pick as brushing over the top of the strings rather than colliding with each one.

8. BUY A BRIDGE PIN PULLER

If you've ever yanked at a bridge pin for minutes, only to have it explode out of the guitar and vanish under a sofa, you probably won't need much persuasion here. Pulling bridge pins without losing or damaging them is an annoying job, and a dedicated pin puller can save you frustration every time. Most string winders have a small indent to make the job a little easier, but dedicated tools like those by Martin, Music Nomad, or Allparts can make it a breeze.

9. GET YOUR STRING HEIGHT RIGHT

String height is always a compromise. Lower is almost always easier to play, but will buzz if it gets too low, while higher often sounds better. Because most acoustics don't have adjustable saddles, lowering the action yourself is not a great idea for the inexperienced. Raising it is less problematic though. Remove the white saddle from the bridge (it should lift out without a fight), drop in a thin strip of card or hardwood maple, then place the saddle back in. It's easily reversible if you don't like it.

10. BUY A GOOD CAPO

If you think capos are just for people who can't play barre chords, you're missing out. A capo will allow you to play things that are physically impossible even for Tommy Emmanuel. A good quality one will also give a tone similar to that of open strings, so you can get the great tone of open chords regardless of what key you're playing in.

**11. CHANGE WHERE YOU STRUM**

Changing where you strum on the strings makes a big difference to acoustic tone. It's easy just to let your picking hand land wherever feels natural and never examine it. Try instead to be intentional about where you're picking. Moving from the bridge to the fingerboard is as dramatic as switching pickup positions on an electric. Try accenting a change with a purposeful raked downstroke beside the bridge.

12. TRY FINGERSTYLE

Fingerstyle playing on acoustic guitar is older than flatpicking, so, if you're only ever using a plectrum, you're missing out on your guitar's potential. You can use flesh or fingernails, although steel strings can be tough on nails, so many advanced fingerpickers use false nails. Use your thumb to pluck the low E, A, and D strings. You may want to use just one finger at first, and you can achieve a lot of beautiful parts without getting more complicated than that.

13. TRY A THUMB PICK

If you like fingerstyle parts but miss the attack of a plectrum, a thumbpick is a great tool. Because you no longer need to grip the pick, your index finger gets freed up for plucking. Travis picking works especially well with a thumbpick. Check out Chet Atkins to see its potential.

14. CHECK OUT HYBRID PICKING - THE BEST OF BOTH

Hybrid picking is the art of combining regular flatpicking with fingerstyle, by using your middle, ring, and occasionally pinky fingers to pluck notes the plectrum can't reach. You'll probably have to slightly change your pick angle to get the other fingers comfortably in position, but switching between this and regular picking technique will be a breeze. Tommy Emmanuel, Mike Daves and Richard Thompson have all used this approach.

15. GET A QUALITY DI

When plugging in your piezo-equipped acoustic, the difference a good DI (direct injection, meaning plugging straight into a PA or mixer) box can make is enormous. The LR Baggs Para Acoustic DI also includes a preamp and EQ, and is a classic. The Fishman Platinum Para DI has bags of flexibility, although it's not cheap. Caline, Behringer, and Harley Benton, meanwhile, have budget-friendly options that will make you sound better without causing unpleasant alerts from your mobile banking app.

17. SLIDE

Setting up an electric guitar with the high action and heavy strings needed for slide is an off-putting barrier of entry. Happily, most acoustic guitars already have a setup that will work for slide. Glass and brass slides have a mellow tone that sounds great on acoustic, the ideal place for your first slide excursions. And if your acoustic's action is on the low side, simply opt for a lightweight slide such as Taylor's Ebony Slide or the MagSlide MS-2, which are sure to put less downward pressure on those strings.

19. RELAX YOUR FINGERS

Chances are, when you first tried playing chords on a steel string acoustic, you had to push with all your might just to get a clear note without buzz. Many players never get out of this habit, and you could be wearing yourself (and your frets!) out unnecessarily by over-squeezing. Try fingering a chord and applying as little pressure as possible with each finger while still getting a clear tone. If you notice this feels more relaxed, practise this regularly until you form a new habit. This goes double for barre chords!

20. TRY GETTING YOUR THUMB OVER THE NECK

The wide fingerboard on classical guitars makes thumb-over hand positions impractical, but you can happily fret notes on the low E string with your thumb on most other guitars. Try adding your thumb to the 2nd fret while playing an open D major chord for a big D/F#, or fretting the lowest note in E shape barre chords with your thumb like Hendrix. It's a great alternative if you get fatigued playing barre chords.

16. FIT A SECOND STRAP BUTTON

Many acoustics only come with one strap button at the base of the body, leaving you tie the strap to the headstock if you want to stand up. Many players find that quite ungainly, and if you're one of them, adding a strap button where the neck joins the body will improve things no end. If you're confident drilling a small pilot hole it's a quick DIY job, but look at some other guitars first for the best position.

**18. DESTROY FEEDBACK**

If you're playing live, you'll find that acoustic guitars just love to break into uncontrollable feedback. Covering the soundhole is a cheap and easy solution. For the cheapest fix, you can just use duct tape, but if you'd rather preserve your instrument's finish and have a reusable option, feedback busters can be bought from under £10.

21. EXPERIMENT WITH IMPULSE RESPONSES

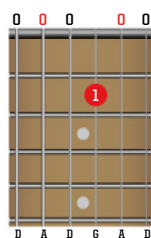
If you use a piezo pickup, you've doubtless struggled to get a natural plugged-in tone. Impulse responses (IRs) have changed the game for speaker cabinet simulation and they're doing a similar thing for amplified acoustic guitar. You can add them to your recorded tone with a plugin, or the Fishman Aura Spectrum, NUX Optima Air, and LR Baggs Voiceprint DI are all dedicated pedals for the purpose.

ESSENTIAL ALTERED TUNINGS

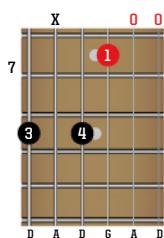
Learn how retuning your guitar can fuel your creativity with our pick of the most useful altered tunings

DADGAD

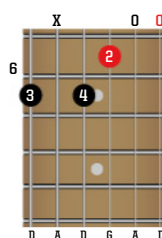
First up is the ever popular DADGAD tuning. It's harmonically somewhat 'ambiguous' because it contains stable-sounding perfect 4ths (G), perfect 5ths (A) and the root note (D) – but no 3rds to make it major or minor. Strummed all at once, the open strings are a big, bold Dsus4 chord. It's a de facto standard alternative to traditional E standard (EADGBE) tuning amongst fingerpickers and percussive players alike.



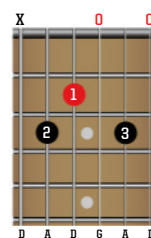
D5
This chord only requires one finger, but creates a huge-sounding D5 powerchord.



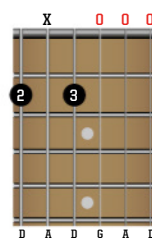
Bm7
This fingering sounds great as it uses the first and second strings as a drone.



Aadd11
This shape also uses a drone. Try swapping between the previous shape and this one.



Cadd9
This one can be heard in action by Jimmy Page in his fingerstyle classic, *Black Mountain Side*.



Em11
This final chord provides a huge, resonant Em11 sound thanks to those ringing open strings.

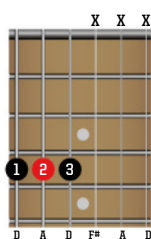
FOUR-BAR DADGAD EXAMPLE

bit.ly/tg387audio

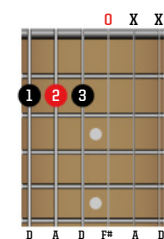
Our DADGAD example creates a part out of some of the chords we looked at. The fifth string is dampened when necessary by laying the second finger of the fretting hand lightly on top.

Open D (D A D F# A D)

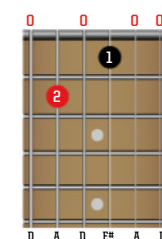
Our next tuning is open D (aka D A D F# A D). As with DADGAD, drop the sixth string down a tone to D, then drop the first and second strings down a tone to D and A, respectively. The final step is to drop the G string down a semitone to F#. The open D tuning is great for blues and fingerstyle acoustic pieces.



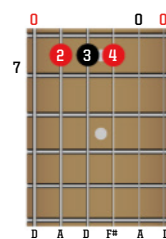
F#5
This powerchord shape features in Mumford And Sons' *The Cave*, transposed to various fret positions.



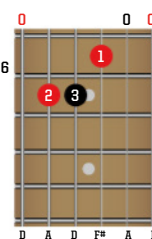
Esus2
If we move the F#5 fingering down two frets and leave the third string ringing, this Esus2 is created.



Gadd9/D
This one is nice and easy, and sounds great when followed by a D chord played on the open strings.



Aadd11/D
This fingering uses the open strings as drones. Simply move the shape around the fretboard to find different sounds.



Amadd11/D
This final chord fingering is the minor version of the previous chord – it only differs by one note.

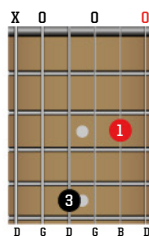
FOUR-BAR DADGAD EXAMPLE

bit.ly/tg387audio

The simple shapes and easy strumming pattern should allow you to get to grips with open D tuning quickly. As you gain confidence with the part, try out some arpeggios, either picked or played fingerstyle.

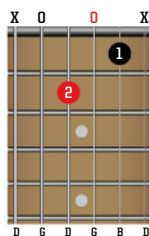
Open G (DGDGBD)

To retune into open G from standard tuning, drop the sixth, fifth and first strings down a tone. The open strings form a G chord, but, where open D tuning has its root note in the bass, here in open G, the low string is a D. It's still a note in the G chord (G-B-D), but it means you'll often find chords and riffs phrased around an open fifth-string root. The tuning is common in many styles including Hawaiian 'slack key' and bottleneck blues.



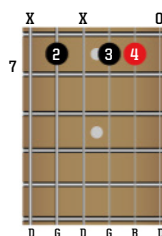
G5

With its G-G-G-D-D arrangement of notes, this first chord is near impossible to play in standard tuning.



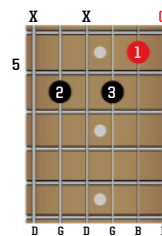
C/G

This chord offers a way to create boogie riffs by moving between an open-string G chord and this C/G fingering.



D

It's well worth having a fingering for the V chord (D) of the key of G up your sleeve.



C#madd,9

This minor version the major shape includes a lush sounding 9th interval.



Aaddl

This chord sounds great and the dissonance between the major 3rd (C#) and 11th (D) adds colour.

OPEN G EXAMPLE

bit.ly/tq387audio

♩ = 100

D C#m add^b9 Bm Aadd¹¹

let ring throughout

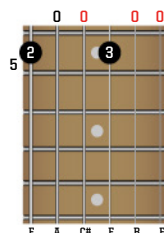
TAB

For this example, we're linking a few of the chords together using a simple fingerstyle pattern. If you're new to fingerstyle then concentrate on practising the first bar until you have the pattern locked in before moving on to the rest.

Open Aadd9 (E A C# E B E)

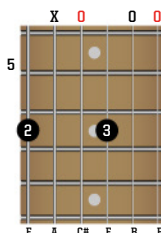
This next tuning is a bit more of a rarity, and is the main tuning used by Australian virtuoso Alan Gogoll.

The tuning has a wide open sound all of its own, with the brightness of a major 3rd interval (C#) and the richness of a 9th (B) giving the signature sound. It won't disrupt your neck/string tension much, either – simply drop the fourth string by a semitone and the third string by three semitones.



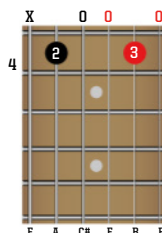
Addr

Use your second and third fingers to fret the notes on the sixth and third strings. Strum all six strings and let it ring!



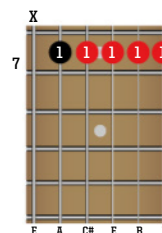
Rsus2

This chord is created by moving the previous shape up by two frets. Try other fret positions, too.



C#ma

This time, instead of changing fret position, we're moving the shape on the fifth and second strings.



Eadd9

If we barre across the top five strings at the 7th fret, a large Eadd9 chord is created.



Aadd9

This shape has a jazzier character to the opening Aadd9 thanks to a wider pitch range and fewer ringing open strings.

FOUR-BAR DADGAD EXAMPLE

bit.ly/tq387audio

♩=110

Aadd9 B sus 2/4 C#m7 C#m9

NH

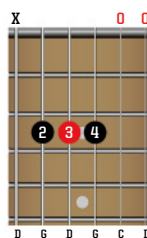
TAB

E	B	C#	A	F#
0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0
5	5	5	5	5
0	0	0	0	0
5	5	5	5	5
7	7	7	7	7
0	0	0	0	0
9	9	9	9	9
0	0	0	0	0
11	11	11	11	11
0	0	0	0	0
12	12	12	12	12

Here, we're taking the same shape and moving it up the fretboard in two-fret intervals. The drone strings remain the same and provide some cool dissonances and resolutions as the chords change. The harmonic is played by lightly touching the strings above the 12th fret.

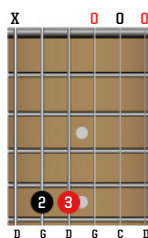
Open Gsus4 (DGDGCD)

Our next tuning is a popular tuning for clawhammer guitar. It is essentially the same as open G tuning, but with the second string raised by a semitone. So to tune from standard tuning drop the first, second and sixth strings down a tone and then raise the second string by a semitone. Molly Tuttle uses this tuning for her track *Take The Journey*.



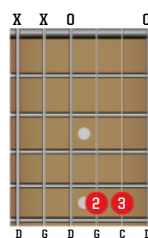
B,add9

It's a little awkward to fit all three fingers in place here, but the results are worth it.



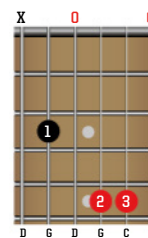
Csus2

This chord sounds great following on from the previous shape, and this forms the basis of our recorded example below.



Dm7

This fingering here is easy. Simply place your second and third fingers on the second and third strings at the 5th fret.



B,add9

This chord uses the same fingering as the previous Dm7 chord, but places a B₁ note in the bass.



Amadd11

The final fingering is easy to play and gives a moody minor tonality to experiment with.

BBADD9

bit.ly/tg387audio

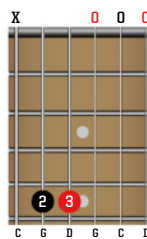
♩=65

B^badd⁹ Csus²

Our example here is inspired by Molly Tuttle's *Sit Back And Watch It Roll*. Simply linking two-chord fingerings sounds great – that's the beauty of using open tunings. Use our example as a springboard for your own ideas – for example, by moving the shapes to other fret positions.

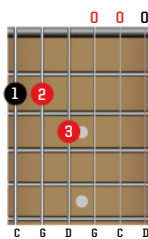
Open Csus2 (CGDGCD)

This next tuning is a cracker and is actually very similar to the previous Gsus4 example. The only difference is that for this tuning we'll drop the sixth string another tone down to C. It's quite remarkable how two tunings that share the same notes can be applied in different ways. Just think how different drop D feels compared to standard tuning on electric guitar and you'll see what we mean!



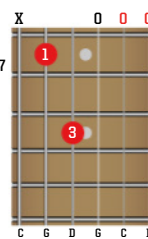
Csus2

The low C is deep and full here, and it sounds especially good in when played on a dreadnought or jumbo.



Dm11

This chord is created by simply moving the last shape up two frets. Try other fret positions, too.



Gadd11/D

This shape resembles a standard-tuned powerchord but it's a much richer sounding Gadd11/D chord.



Am11

This chord is easy and sounds great. Keeping the sixth string muted gives a more focused bottom end.



G7sus4

Sus chords sound great on acoustic – just look at how many tunings are based on them! This 7sus4 shape is no different!

FOUR-BAR DADGAD EXAMPLE

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=75

Am¹¹ Gadd¹¹/D Csus²

This example links together three of our open Csus2 tuning chords to create a flowing progression. We're introducing a 16th-note strumming rhythm into the mix which is really simple, so feel free to add your own rhythmic ideas and try our other shapes, too.

Open C (CGCGCE)

Another 'C' tuning here, but this is different to our previous example because the strings are tuned to a major chord, not a suspended sound – and that changes the character. To get into open C from standard tuning, adjust the fifth and fourth strings down a tone, tune the sixth string down two tones, and raise the second string up a semitone. Check out *Come To Me* by Goo Goo Dolls and *As I Was* by Hozier for songs in this tuning.



This first chord is an easy fingering for Am, with the open strings giving it a nice, rich sound.



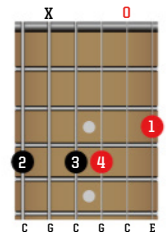
This G chord has a sweet sound thanks to the wide intervals between the three lowest notes. G fingering. Try it also with a barre.



You've gone to the trouble of tuning to a major chord. Well, that means any barre across the strings like this is a major chord, too!



This Dm7 chord fingering has an open, ringing sound to it.



The Em,6 chord in standard tuning it doesn't always sound the best. Open C tuning gives us this more musical fingering.

OPEN C EXAMPLE

bit.ly/tg387audio

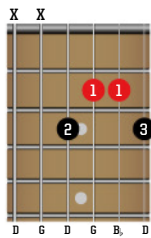
This example creates a fingerstyle version of the chord progression we used in our Csus2 tuned example, albeit with some slightly different chord extensions. Get creative and see how the fingering patterns for both examples sound when played in each tuning.

Open G minor (DGDGB, D)

For our final, tuning we are going to take open G and turn it into a G minor version. To do this tune into open G as we did before but drop the second string down a semitone to a B_b – that's the all-important minor 3rd in the key of G. Though not as commonplace as its major counterpart, G minor tuning is used in many songs including John Renbourn's *The Mist Covered Mountains Of Home*.



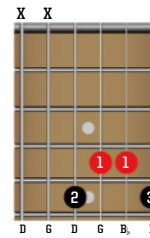
This first chord is a nice, easy fingering for C/G. Do your best not to accidentally mute the open third string.



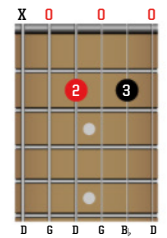
The F chord is the fourth chord in the key of C, so this will go well in a progression with our C/G



Play a first-finger barre, then use a spare finger to raise the minor 3rd to make a major chord in this minor tuning.



The G chord is the fifth chord of G major and completes our three-chord trick of C/G-F-G.



To finish off, it's another great fingering. The Cadd9/G chord only requires two fingers and sounds ace.

FOUR BAR OPEN G MINOR EXAMPLE

bit.ly/tg387audio

This final example provides another opportunity to practise a bit of simple fingerstyle picking. There's a lot of space here in our simple part – and that can expose inaccuracies. Try to be deliberate with every note and aim for clarity and good timing.

BECOME AN ACOUSTIC POLYMATH!

Acoustic guitar is one of the world's most versatile instruments. This TG lesson runs the gamut from folk to metal in ten riffs and licks

Whatever style of guitar you most want to play, it's worth dipping a toe into as many genres as you can. Most genres have a handful of defining signature sounds. By getting those signatures under your fingers, you can seem like an acoustic Jedi, capable of anything. Or you can transport those sounds back into your usual genre to create new ideas.

Don't be intimidated by styles that are unfamiliar to you. Everything on the guitar seems impossible the first time you try it and easy once you master it. Chords with long

names are not necessarily harder, and fingerstyle patterns are often less complex than they sound. To get the most out of this lesson, look for ways to adapt these ideas. You can use the fingerpicking patterns in the acoustic folk examples with other chords, play the blues examples in other keys, try more chords against the ringing open E string in the prog slash chord riff, or throw one of those jazz chords into an unsuspecting pop song.

Words: Jon Bishop & Jenna Scaramanga

ACOUSTIC FOLK

1 INCORPORATING BASSLINES WITH FINGERPICKING

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=75

Your thumb plays the E, A, and D strings, with a steady eighth note rhythm. Once that's solid, add the other plucked notes with your first finger, or with your middle finger for the B string. Noah Kahan uses this type of idea to great effect on his song *You're Gonna Go Far*.

2 COMBINING FINGERPICKING AND HAMMER-ONS

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=80

This picking pattern is more irregular, but still use your thumb for the lowest three strings and fingers for the rest. The hammer-ons add rhythmic interest. Check out *Not Strong Enough* by Boygenius to hear how this type of playing can work in a song.

ACOUSTIC PROG

1 OPEN-STRING DRONES

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=70

This hypnotic groove comes from a repeating 16th-note pattern with changing chords. You can try sliding around almost any shape that mixes open and fretted notes and find interesting harmonies. You can think of this one as moving around an open C major chord shape, although you avoid the D string.

2 USING SLASH CHORDS

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=140

A slash chord is any chord where the bass note is not the root note of the chord. If you play a D major chord while letting the low E string ring out, that's D/E. Changing chords over one sustaining drone creates really interesting harmonies. Prog legends Genesis were big fans of this technique.

ACOUSTIC BLUES

1 FINGERSTYLE GROOVE

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=140 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}^{\text{♯}}$
E⁷

The TG audio for this example is played on a resonator, but you can use any guitar. The groove is the main thing here: get your thumb solidly on the beat, and then place the plucked notes so that they swing nicely. Listen to Justin Johnson to hear this style done right.

2 DELTA BLUES-STYLE TURNAROUND

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=140 $\text{♩} = \text{♩}^{\text{♯}}$
A⁷ E⁷

You never truly perfect this type of lick – there's always more to learn about getting the sickest swing and the greasiest quarter-tone bends. You can give yourself a head start by listening to Robert Johnson or Jontavious Willis and absorbing the feel. Make crucial notes 'snap' by getting your plucking finger underneath the string.

ACOUSTIC METAL

1 NYLON STRING FINGERPICKING

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=70
A^m C Dadd⁹add¹¹

Metallica's James Hetfield uses a nylon-string acoustic in songs like *The Unforgiven* and *Battery*. Don't worry about the chord name in bar 2 – you just slide the open C major shape up two frets. If you're comfortable with fingerpicking, you might try using your annular (ring) finger for the high E string.



2 TOP STRING TRILLS

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=85

Em

TAB

Hammer-on and pull-off fills like this are trademarks of bands like Death and Metallica. Once you have the co-ordination together, you can play all kinds of notes with these, so don't restrict yourself to the tab. Your pull-offs will be louder if you pull slightly downwards towards the floor, 'plucking' the string as you release it.

ACOUSTIC JAZZ

1 JAZZ-STYLE CHORD GROOVE

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=140

Em⁷

A¹³

A^{7#5}

D⁹

D¹³

G¹³

B^{7#5}

TAB

Think of jazz chords as adaptations of simpler shapes. These 13 and 7#5 chords are just E-shape barres with your third finger removed from the A string and deployed somewhere on the B string. Advanced jazzers play these with a thumb over the top of the neck fretting the root note.

2 JAZZ-STYLE LEAD LICK

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=140

Em⁷

A¹³

A^{7#5}

D⁹

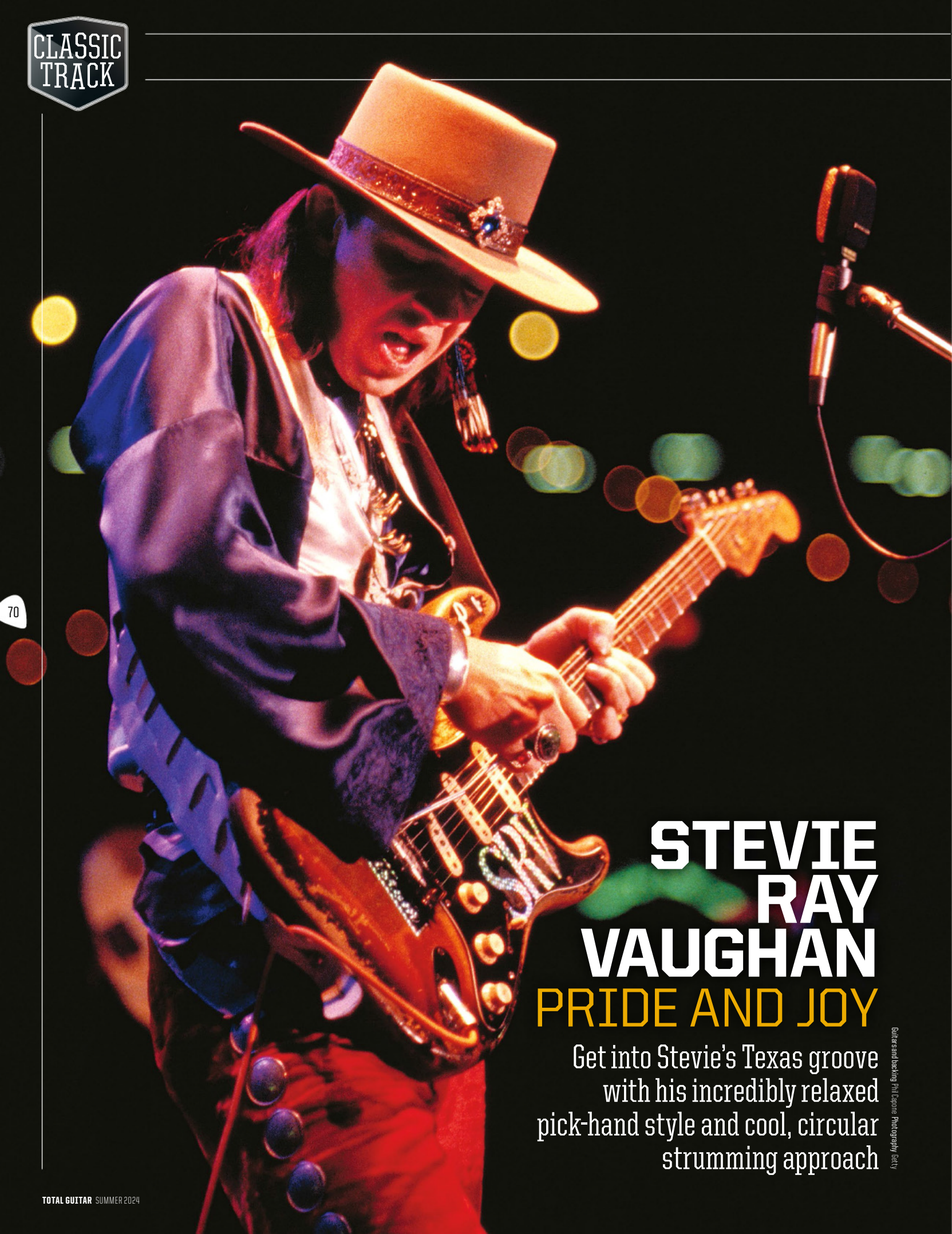
D¹³

G¹³

B^{7#5}

TAB

This Julian Lage-style lick fits over the previous chord progression. Lines like these work by targeting key notes from within the underlying chords. The first note in bar 2 is C#, the major third of A13. The lick ends on D#, the major 3rd of B13.



STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN

PRIDE AND JOY

Get into Stevie's Texas groove with his incredibly relaxed pick-hand style and cool, circular strumming approach

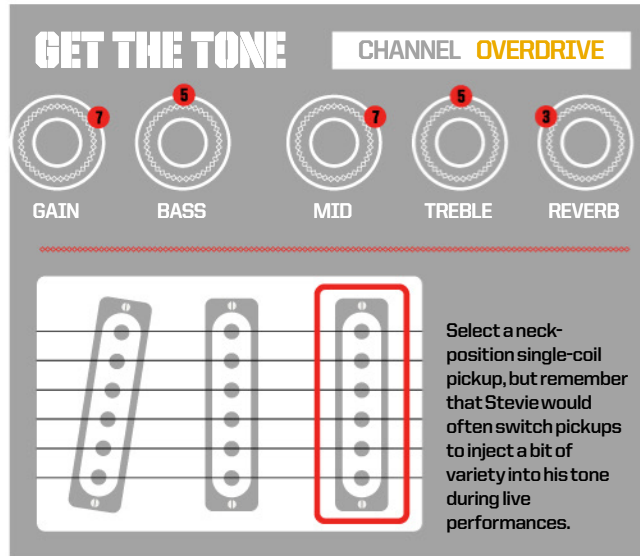
Guitars and backing Phil Dapone Photography Getty

Stevie Ray Vaughan played the killer riff in *Pride And Joy* that kicks in with the bass and drums in the intro with a 'circular' strumming motion. This means he played his downstrokes slightly closer to the neck while his upstrokes were nearer the bridge. By subtly changing the position of each pick stroke he'd generate a cutting tone for the string mutes and a warmer sound for the regular notes. More importantly, he'd create a longer rake across the strings on the mutes.

Despite his often-aggressive sound, Stevie had a fluent and relaxed picking style. The circular strumming motion allowed Stevie's riff in *Pride And Joy* to groove, so don't overdo the movement – it should look like you're tracing a small circle across the strings. The original version of this track was recorded in SRV's preferred E_b standard tuning (each string is tuned a semitone lower than standard: E_b, A_b, D_b, G_b, B_b, E_b), but we've recorded our version in standard tuning (EADGBE) to save you retuning.

SOUND ADVICE

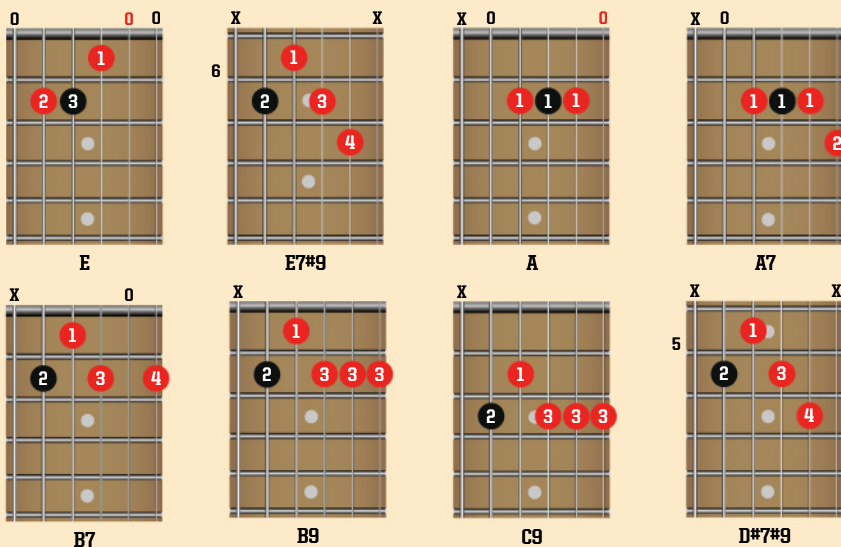
Everything you need to know before playing *Pride And Joy*



Stevie Ray and his battered Strat are totally synonymous, so select a neck-position single-coil pickup and dial in a medium overdrive tone on your amp. Amps were key to Stevie's raunchy roadhouse tone, with a pair of blackface Fender Super Reverbs typically blended with a Marshall Major and 4x12 Dumble cabs. If you're using a modeling amp, opt for a Fender example.

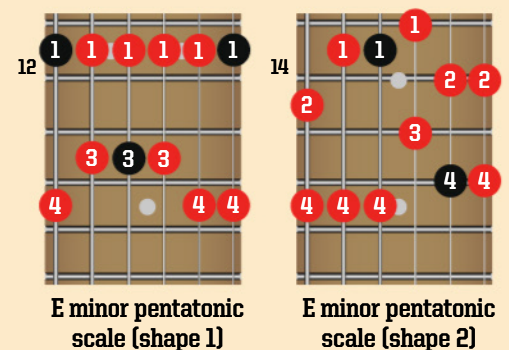
CHORDS

Stevie doesn't stay on any chord for long, preferring to riff his way through most of *Pride And Joy*. When he does play chords, it's usually only two or three notes at a time. Still, take a look at these shapes and compare it to the tab to see how he uses chords to form the riffs. Note that the E7, A7 and B7 chord names above the tab outline the overall harmony of the I-IV-V progression and don't necessarily refer to the exact shape being played at the time.



SCALES

Both solos are based mainly around the well-known E minor pentatonic scale known as 'shape 1', with occasional shifts into 'shape 2'. Stevie plays these above the 12th fret as well as down in the open position, so make sure to practise the scales in both positions.



STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN

PRIDE AND JOY

FULL
TAB

PRIDE AND JOY
©1986

Written by Stevie Ray Vaughan (ASCAP)
Published by Ray Vaughan Music (ASCAP), administered by
Wixen Music UK LTD o/b/o Wixen Music Publishing, Inc.
All Rights Reserved, Used by Permission



STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN PRIDE AND JOY Intro

bit.ly/tg387audio

♩=125 ♩ = ♩

N.C.

TAB

E⁷

TAB

A

E⁷

TAB

B⁷

A⁷

TAB



bit.ly/tg387audio

Fret the riff that kicks in at bar 5 with your first and third fingers. Keep your first finger flat across the higher strings to keep them muted. Don't use your pick hand - this hand needs to be free for the strumming. Use your third finger to slide into the second bass note on beat 2.

bit.ly/tg387audio

It's important to keep that circular picking motion going until you hit the lick that starts in bar 11. This will ensure that you maintain a constant, driving groove as you switch between the offbeat muted notes and the remaining licks.

0:54

E⁷

A⁷ 1/4 E⁷

B⁷ A⁷ E⁷ B⁷

TAB

1 3 4

5

9

Only the top note (the first string) of the A⁷ chord should be bent in bar 5. This quarter-tone bend is indicated in the tab by an arrow and a 1/4 sign. Fret the chord by barring across the 2nd fret with your first finger, then add the high G with your second or third finger.

1:17

E N.C. E N.C. E

A⁷

TAB

1 4

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN PRIDE AND JOY Verse 3 (cont'd)

bit.ly/tg387audio

7

10

Hold down the open B7 shape in bar 9 (the fingering is shown beside the noteheads) and simply pick out the notes as shown in the tab/notation. The open strings at the end of the bar allowed Stevie time to reposition his hand for the minor pentatonic lick that follows in bar 10.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN PRIDE AND JOY Solo

bit.ly/tg387audio

1:40

3

6

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN PRIDE AND JOY Solo (cont'd)

bit.ly/tg387audio

20

22

This solo opens with a succession of triplet rhythm chords and doublestops. You can play these with alternate picking or with downstrokes. The latter approach requires much faster picking (and is how Stevie would play the section) but achieves a more urgent, consistent sound.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN PRIDE AND JOY Verse 4

bit.ly/tg387audio

2:25

1

5

8

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN PRIDE AND JOY Verse 4 (cont'd)

bit.ly/tg387audio

Just as in verse 3, you need to hold down the open B7 chord throughout bar 9 here. Notice that this time the sixth string F# note is added on beat 4 – you need to move your second finger onto the sixth string at this point.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN PRIDE AND JOY Verse 5

bit.ly/tg387audio

The rhythmic chordal riff in bars 7 and 8 is played on the upper strings, so take care to pick only the first to the fourth strings. Barre across the 2nd fret with your third finger and play the partial E chord on beat 3 using your first and second fingers.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN PRIDE AND JOY **Outro**

bit.ly/tg387audio

The bulk of this solo is played with the E minor pentatonic scale at the 12th fret. The open sixth-string E note at the start of bar 11 allows time for a quick position shift for the closing lick. There is a tempo drop in the last bar, so listen carefully to the bass and drums to stay in time.

OPEN-MIC SONGBOOK

THE KILLERS
RUNAWAYS

Master the chords and complex structure of this killer hit from 2012

For many, *Runaways* represented a comeback for The Killers back in 2012. Not because they'd been away especially long, but because the song saw the band veering away from the dancier territory of their previous album and back to the uplifting, Springsteen-esque songcraft that they'd built their fanbase on. And, with the band recently completing a string of UK dates, what better time to look at this staple track in their set.

With a couple of barre chords and a slightly twisty D/F# shape being

the only real challenges amongst the easier open and powerchords, it's not too difficult to play, as such. However, the song structure is complex, with verse, bridge, pre-chorus, chorus and middle sections to learn, and, take note that verse 2 opens with different chords to the other verses.

There's not really an easy way to learn songs like this other than identifying the sections that *do* follow the same chords, then making a mental note or code that helps you memorise the structure.



CHORDS

We've transcribed *Runaways* for guitar in standard tuning (EADGBE) rather than the original E_b tuning (E_b, A_b, D_b, G_b, B_b, E_b), so you won't need to retune. The majority of the song is played with open chord shapes, in this case D, Em7, G and A. Keep your fingers arched so that the open strings ring out clearly. Equally, be sure to avoid hitting the strings that are marked with an 'X'; these should be silent.

Bm and F#m are the only barre chords in the song. Keep your first finger as close to the fret as possible, and apply equal pressure to all six of the strings. The pre-chorus contains five powerchords, all played with the same fingering. Finally, arrange your fingers in a one-finger-per-fret position for the D/F# chord.



D



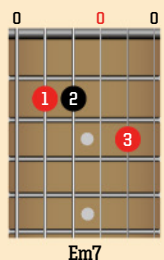
A



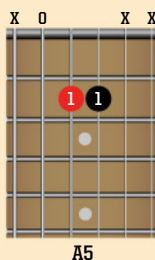
G



Bm



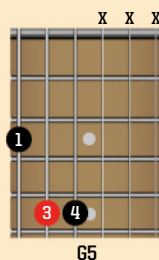
Em7



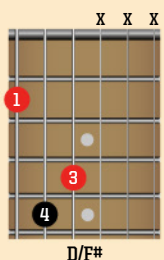
A5



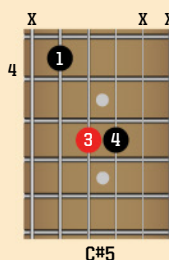
B5



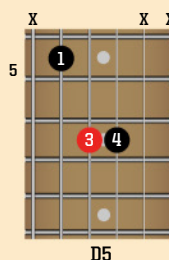
G5



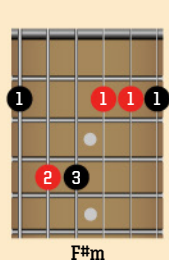
D/F#



C#5



D5



F#m

RUNAWAYS

Words by Brandon Flowers
Music by The Killers
Copyright © 2012 UNIVERSAL
MUSIC PUBLISHING LTD.
All Rights in the U.S. and Canada
Controlled and Administered by
UNIVERSAL - POLYGRAM
INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING-
INC.
All Rights Reserved. Used by
Permission
Reproduced by permission of
Hal Leonard Europe



SONG SHEET

Runaways

Intro

D / A / G / / / G / D / A / / / x2

Verse 1

Blonde hair blowing in the summer wind
A blue-eyed girl playing in the sand
I'd been on her trail for a little while
But that was the night that she broke down
And held my hand

Bridge

Teenage rush, she said
Ain't we all just runaways?
We got time, but that ain't much
We can't wa-ait 'til tomorrow

Pre-chorus

You gotta know that this is real baby
Why you wanna fight it?
It's the one thing you can't choose
Oh!

Verse 2

We got engaged on a Friday night
I swore on the head of our unborn child
That I could take care of the three of us
I got the tendency to slip when the nights get wild

Bridge

It's in my blood
She said she might just run away
Somewhere else, some place good
We can't wa-ait 'til tomorrow

Pre-chorus

You gotta know that this is real baby
Why you wanna fight it?
It's the one thing you can't choose
Let's take a chance baby we can't lose

Chorus

Ain't we all just runaways?
I knew it when I met you, I'm not gonna let you
Ru-un awa-a-ay
I knew it when I held you, I wasn't letting go

Middle

We used to look at the stars
And confess our dreams
Hold each other 'til the morning light
We used to laugh now we only fight
Baby, are you lonesome now?

Verse 3

That night I come home after they go to sleep
Like a stumbling ghost I haunt these halls
There's a picture of us on our wedding day
I recognise the girl but I can't settle in these walls
We can't wa-ait 'til tomorrow

Pre-chorus

No we're caught up in the appeal baby
Why you wanna hide it?
It's the last thing on my mind
I turn the engine over and my body just comes alive

Chorus

Ain't we all just runaways?
I knew it when I met you, I'm not gonna let you
Ru-un awa-a-ay
I knew it when I held you, I wasn't letting go
Oh oh oh (Ain't we all just runaways?)
Ye-ea-ea-ea-ah
Ru-unawa-a-ays (Ain't we all just runaways?)
Ye-ea-ea-ea-ah

Outro

A / Bm / G / / /

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.



83 START ME UP

Five new products you need to check out

84 MARTIN X SERIES GPC X2E

A cutaway above the rest? This 'Remastered' crowd-pleaser presents high-end finesse at high street prices

88 PJD APPRENTICE

A quality-led, UK-made offset at an affordable price

90 LINE 6 CATALYST CX 60

Get serious tonal DNA and features from this Helix-powered combo

92 EPIPHONE INSPIRED BY GIBSON CUSTOM 1963 FIREBIRD V

Epiphone is spreading its wings and soaring dangerously close to Gibson

94 TAYLOR 50TH ANNIVERSARY GS MINI-E ROSEWOOD

The all-conquering travel acoustic gets the gold anniversary treatment



SUPERB, A BEST BUY



EXCELLENT



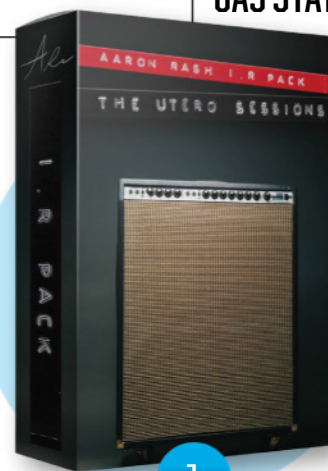
ABOVE AVERAGE KIT



SOME ISSUES



POOR



1



3



5



4



2

START ME UP!

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

AARON RASH: THE IN UTERO SESSIONS IR PACK

1 YouTuber Aaron Rash has spent the last couple of years on a mission – aided by the late Steve Albini – to recreate Kurt Cobain's guitar tone from 1993's *In Utero*. Now, you can reap the rewards of his research with the In Utero IR Pack, which delivers the elusive Fender Quad Reverb speaker cab, captured with the same signal chain used on the *In Utero* sessions.

\$49
aaronrash.com

ERNIE BALL SURF SERIES POLYPRO STRAPS

2 A glance outside your window might not confirm it, but Summer is upon us! Ernie Ball is here with a reminder courtesy of its Surf Series PolyPro straps. Each one is made of stretch-proof, two-inch-wide polypropylene webbing with machined-leather end tabs. They extend from 41-72", and are available in four surf-inspired colours (Tidal Green, Pink Sunrise, Breaker Blue and Purple Sunset).

£9.99
ernieball.co.uk

OLD BLOOD NOISE ENDEAVOURS EXPRESSION RAMPER

3 OBNE has revamped its Utility Series pedals, which includes the Expression Ramper. This little box connects to your expression pedal input to offer hands-free expression movement, and as well as a visual overhaul, there are three new waveshapes, plus a tap-tempo switch to dial-in your sweeps accurately.

£69
oldbloodnoise.com

JHS HARD DRIVE

4 Revered pedal brand, JHS has issued its first original distortion design with the Hard Drive – a '90s/'00s-inspired gain provider that was late Head Engineer Cliff Smith's final design (Smith passed away in 2021). Its cascading gain stages are fed through a Class AB amp section, featuring sweepable midrange and Baxandall bass/treble controls to deliver crunchy valve amp to post-grunge heavy guitar tones. It comes in Black or Tan.

£157
jhs pedals.info

FENDER TELEPATH

5 Fender wants to make ditching your cable easier with its new Telepath Wireless System. It operates at 5.8GHz (out of the way of other wireless gear), and has a 70-foot range with a low latency of 4ms. The internal rechargeable battery takes two hours to charge, and can operate for a total of eight hours, plus the articulating jack plug means you can use it with most popular guitar designs.

£169
fender.com



MARTIN X SERIES GPC X2E

£799

A cutaway above the rest? This 'Remastered' crowd-pleaser presents high-end finesse at high street prices

Everyone from Joni Mitchell and Eric Clapton to Wild 'DADGAD' Bill from your local open-mic night loves Martin guitars. For many, it is the ultimate acoustic guitar brand. It's the tone, that squared-off headstock, the history. Not all can afford a D-45 from its storied Nazareth, PA, facility, but the entry-level X Series, built in its Navojoa, Mexico plant, gives more players a chance to buy in to the brand.

Martin has "remastered" the X Series for 2024, ushering in a raft of changes to the spec. Fingerboards are thinner, with edges rolled, making them feel more premium. There's

and it is the latter – resplendent on a Grand Pacific Cutaway – that we have here. The GPC-X2E top of the line for the X Series and has a Grand Pacific body shape that is all about pleasing the masses, smaller than a dreadnought but larger than a 000, giving you the best of both worlds. Think balanced tone with extra low-end force.

There is chamfering across the top of the body that contributes to the comfort. The Performing Artist neck profile's easy C shape, allied to a tip-top setup, feels like it was inspired by electric guitar playability. The GPC-X2E should suit flatpicker and fingerpicker alike, and it's more than game if all you want to do is throw some open chords around. This is one

THIS STAGE-READY ELECTRO IS HARD TO PUT DOWN

a contoured bridge profile – similar to that of its SC models – to enhance picking-hand comfort. Necks, fretboards and bridges of the more expensive X2 models are "select hardwood" – you'll find Richlite 'boards and birch ply necks on the cheaper X1 models. The Fishman MX electronics have been swapped out for Martin's proprietary E-1 system. The tuners are sealed satin chrome. Everything is satin.

The string spacing has been narrowed from 56mm to 54.8mm at the bridge as Martin seeks out fine margins for refinement. There are new Brazilian rosewood, ziricote and cocobolo HPL patterns for the back and sides,

guitar you don't have to fight.

Now, the cocobolo HPL is decorative. It surely doesn't add anything to the sound but it does look nice and is tough as old boots. What does contribute to the sound is that solid spruce top and the scalloped X pattern bracing, and that body shape that is true to Martin's notes. There is undeniably a balance that reveals itself in a sweet treble and upper-midrange that adds detail to fingerpicked chords, while an open E chord struck with venom has volume and oomph, leaving a little honeyed treble in the air as the notes decay.

The E-1 pickup and preamp feels like business as usual, and

1 BODY

The cocobolo-patterned HPL owes more to engineering than Mother Nature, but it complements the aesthetic of this satin spruce top and abalone rosette.

2 NECK

With a hand-rubbed satin finish and its very progressive C shape "PA Profile", the GPC-X2E's is an inviting proposition for players of all styles.

3 ELECTRONICS

Martin swaps the Fishman MX for its own-branded E-1 system but it's business as usual with discretely mounted controls for volume, tone, phase and tuner.

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Grand Pacific cutaway electro-acoustic steel string

TOP: Solid spruce

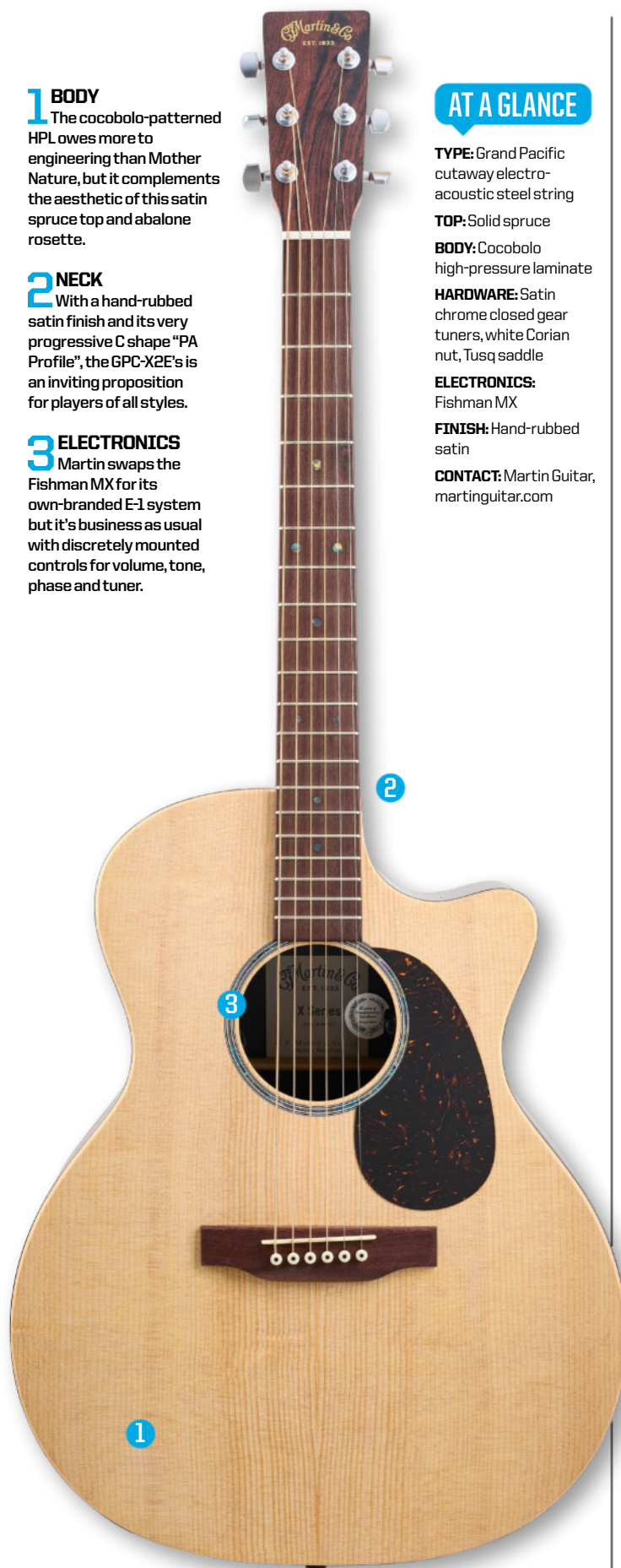
BODY: Cocobolo high-pressure laminate

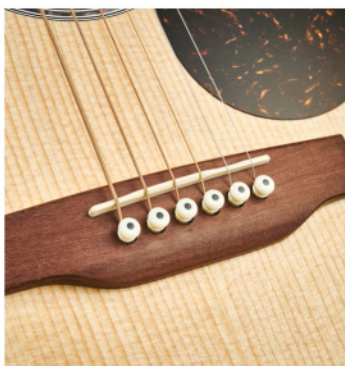
HARDWARE: Satin chrome closed gear tuners, white Corian nut, Tusq saddle

ELECTRONICS: Fishman MX

FINISH: Hand-rubbed satin

CONTACT: Martin Guitar, martinguitar.com





Knock on wood

Martin's "select hardwood" and HPL explained...

Martin loves a little tonewood intrigue, and so you might read the spec for the GPC-X2E and wonder what "select hardwood" means – and what, pray tell, is high-pressure laminate (HPL)? Simply, select hardwood allows Martin to switch up the spec depending on which tonewoods are available. Here, it looks like walnut for uniform milk chocolate coloured fingerboard and bridge. But you might find one with a cedar, mahogany, or sapele neck. Point being, these are all solid hardwoods, not like the laminate Stratabond necks you'll find on, say, the Little Martins. As for HPL, it is material engineered from cellulose fibres and resins, incredibly tough and scratch resistant, and here it allows Martin to offer high-end aesthetic at this price.

that's no bad thing. Amplified, it is naturalistic, and that's what you want. We like that the tuner can be activated at all times, and it has a simple layout with volume, tone and phase button.

At this price, the competition is steep. Not many brands can compete with the name on the headstock but they can on spec. Still, even if it is difficult to shake the suspicion that you pay a premium for that headstock, it doesn't change the facts on the ground, namely that this super-



playable, stage-ready electro is hard to put down, there's a quality gigbag/soft-shell case to sweeten the deal, and yeah, that headstock looks really cool.

Jonathan Horsley

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

ALSO TRY...

TAYLOR 114CE

The GPC X2E's most natural competitor is a serious, super-playable cutaway electro equipped with Taylor's exemplary ES-2 electronics. It's got a solid Sitka spruce top, layered sapele back and sides.

£749



CORT CORE-OC SERIES

Cort makes exceptionally well put-together guitars at very agreeable price points, and this OM represents incredible value. Choose from spruce, mahogany and blackwood models. All have solid-wood builds.

£499



YAMAHA AIR MKII

£694

This cutaway dreadnought has a solid Sitka spruce top, layered rosewood back and sides. The neck shape and rolled fingerboard edges scream playability. An excellent option for more low-end boom.



Find Your Perfect Tone

Every issue, *Guitarist* brings you the best gear, features, lessons and interviews to fuel your passion for guitar



ON
SALE
NOW



Available to order online at www.magazinesdirect.com/guitarist-magazine

Guitarist magazine is also available on iOS & Android



PJD APPRENTICE £899

A quality-led, UK-made offset at an affordable price

The UK has always been home to some fabulous guitar makers, but in recent years we've seen the rise of a new breed that look to production-led, rather than more bespoke custom, designs. We recently caught up with Manson's Junior models, for example: single pickup, lightweight and vibey, at £1,399.

York-based maker PJD have a similarly small team that produces their new dual-pickup Standard range (£1,200, or with vibrato at £1,499) in a choice of four main body shapes. Now they've announced a direct order-only Apprentice level that centres on their best-selling St John offset outline (as reviewed) with the more LP-shaped Carey to follow later in the year. So what? Well, the new Apprentice will cost you just £899 including a good gigbag.

We're calling it 'new' because, a couple of years back, PJD released their first single soapbar-equipped Apprentice models with a cracked nitro finish and aged Gotoh hardware, but with a price that nearly touched £2k. This new version retains the aged hardware but strips everything back to its bare essentials.

The slightly down-sized, offset-shaped body (with forearm chamfer only) and Fender-scale neck, however, have barely changed: lightweight obeche for the former and slab-sawn maple for the latter, bolted to the body with proper bolts, not screws. The body finish is a thin open-pore satin nitro (the neck is a lightly-tinted clear satin), and different colours will be offered as the year progresses based on vintage Porsche hues: ours is Nato Olive.

The centre-point of the design is this special version of PJD's Alnico V Wadfather humbucker with its partial cover and that tortoiseshell-like insert. There are no tricks with the circuit either, it's just a CTS pot that acts as a master volume (although the copper foil-lined rear cavity will fit a tone control if you fancy a bit of modding).

But if you get the whole Junior-style single pickup thing, you might have found a new beau. We certainly have. Along with the lightweight (6.15lb), resonant feel, the guitar is beautifully set up, the neck feels very mainstream with a lovely relaxed 'C' profile and the pokey hot-vintage Wadfather makes a glorious classic-to-modern rock, grungy and punky racket at full tilt with impressive strident jangle with the volume pulled back. Think Foo Fighters and you get the idea. To be fair, we might have preferred a tone control, but in today's pedalboard world, are we just being old-fashioned?

And we're not saying that £899 is pocket change, either, but with quality at this level – in terms of the build, feel, playability and sound – this new Apprentice seems dangerously close to an impulse buy.

Best you get in the queue after us: these are limited production models that surely can't stay at this price for long.

Dave Burluck

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

1 PICKUP

The in-house made PJD humbucker uses a partial cover, dual screw coils and a tortoiseshell-looking insert made from Italian celluloid acetate. It's hot-vintage in style.

2 NECK AND FINGERBOARD

PJD is one of the few UK makers to employ the advanced Plek set-up system to ensure perfect frets and playability. They never had a problem before the Plek was installed: now they're even better!

3 HARDWARE

It may be bargain in price, but the top-quality Gotoh hardtail thru-strung bridge and vintage-style split-post tuners are the same as used on PJD's more expensive Standard models upwards. Oh, the parts are lightly aged, too.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Obeche
NECK: Maple, bolt-on
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood, 10" radius
FRETS: 22
PICKUPS: Direct-mount PJD Wadfather humbucker w/ open cover
CONTROLS: Master volume
HARDWARE: Gotoh string-thru six-block saddle bridge, Gotoh vintage-style SD91 split-post tuners – light-aged nickel-plated
FINISH: Nato Olive (as reviewed), other colours available
CASE: Gigbag
CONTACT: PJD Guitars, pjdguitars.com







1 CHANNEL SELECT

Line 6 organises its amp sounds across two channels, to which you can assign up to six presets. Manual mode offers WYSIWYG operation.

2 TAP/TEMPO BUTTON

This operates a tuner and a tap tempo for time-based effects, useful for making quick edits without resorting to the app.

3 USB INPUT

This is your gateway to deep edits via the app, and for sending your signal direct to your DAW when recording or reamping guitar.



LINE 6 CATALYST CX 60 £293

Get serious tonal DNA and features from this Helix-powered combo

To call the Line 6 Catalyst CX 60 a guitar amp feels insufficient, a bit like referring to the latest iPhone as just a plain old telephone. Sure, Line 6 has done its best to make this Catalyst series combo look and feel like a regular amp; the chickenhead dials on the control panel, the familiar three-band EQ, presence, a master volume, buttons for changing between two channels. It is a good looking amp, tidily assembled.

But this is very much a 2024 amplifier, digital, lightweight, packing a dozen amp voicings and 24 effects from Line 6's industry-standard Helix modelling tech, a single 12" 60-watt driver in an open-back cabinet, and functionality out of the wazoo. Each of the amps has its own boost. There's a noise gate, onboard tuner, an effects loop that allows you to bypass the preamp and run your pedalboard/preamp pedals through the power amp. There's MIDI connectivity via USB,

deep editing for all your sounds and presets via the user-friendly Catalyst Edit app, and you can use it as an audio interface, too.

All of this is great. But amps live and die by their tones. Each of the six amp categories – Clean, Boutique, Chime, Crunch, Dynamic and Hi Gain – has two voicings and they cover all the main food groups of electric guitar tone, from spanky Fender-style cleans, sauced with a splash of spring reverb, through AC/DC crunch, '80s hard rock and über metal. Such are the array of sounds, the more adventurous player will have much room to explore – sonic extremists should find the octave-down synth a particular highlight.

It is more expensive than, say, the Boss Katana-50 MkII, which retails at £199 street, and you make the case that price determines which is the better deal as a practice runabout. But there are Line 6 acolytes who will tell you the sounds don't get better

than this, that this Catalyst combo is more than a practice amp. It's hard to argue with them. The sounds are stellar. This is a convincing amp, and with its onboard attenuator, it is ideal for practice, too. There are so many options. So many that we can't help feel that a display screen would make it easier to use, but if you get your deep edits done on the Catalyst Edit app, then save them to your presets, you should have everything you need at the touch of a button – or via the optional LFS2 footswitch (£44, sold separately).

We have entered a new era for guitar in which top-quality tones are cheaper than ever before thanks to modelling tech, and once more Line 6 Helix positions it at the vanguard of the revolution.

Jonathan Horsley

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

AT A GLANCE

TYPE: Digital modelling combo
SPEAKER: 1x12" Catalyst HC60 60-watt
CONTROLS: Channel Bank Select Buttons, Selector, Boost/Gate, Gain, Bass, Mid, Treble, Presence, Channel Volume, Effect 1, Effect 2, Master Volume, Tap Tempo/Tuner, 4-way attenuator [on rear] for full, half 1-watt and mute
CONNECTIVITY: XLR line output w/ground lift, MIDI, USB, 1/4" headphones out, aux in, effects loop w/ switch for power amp input
WEIGHT: 18.9kg
DIMENSIONS: 488 x 694 x 262 mm
CONTACT: Line 6, line6.com



EPIPHONE INSPIRED BY GIBSON CUSTOM 1963 FIREBIRD V

£1,699

Epiphone is spreading its wings and soaring dangerously close to Gibson

Stylish, daring, and a little misunderstood, Gibson's Firebird was the beacon of hope that would help the company rise from the ashes and give them a fighting chance against Fender's new-fangled offsets. Developed by car icon Ray Dietrich in 1963, this new model was a symphony of flowing lines and chrome, with a unique construction that set it apart from everything in the Gibson catalogue at the time.

Fast forward to 2024, and the Firebird, dressed in its original '63 get-up, is ready to take flight again, but this time under the 'Inspired By Gibson Custom' banner. This collaboration sees both iconic branches of Gibson working together, pouring their heart and soul into recreating the magic of the Firebird in all its vintage glory. From the sandwich of walnut and mahogany of the body to a chunky period-correct neck profile, Kluson planetary geared banjo tuners, striking Maestro Vibrola and a duo of Alnico 5 Gibson USA Firebird pickups, Epiphone is leaving no stone unturned to make this as faithful a recreation as possible.

Lifting the lid on the retro case, we find the Firebird in fine feather nestled inside. The Ember Red finish glows against the opulent gold of the interior, showcasing how gorgeous this design is. Thankfully, there are no blemishes to distract from its handsome good looks. Removing it from the case, we are immediately struck by its weight. This is a substantial guitar and not for the faint of heart.

This heftiness extends to the neck, which is fat, rounded, and suitably vintage and despite its chunky feel, is a joy to play.

Of course, the Firebird is a large guitar and can often appear unbalanced. Mercifully, this particular example doesn't suffer from the dreaded neck dive and sits perfectly upright on a strap. It even comes with three strap buttons like the original, so you can choose which works best for you – colour us impressed, Epiphone.

Now, it isn't just a radical new look and construction that sets the Firebird apart. The pickups, despite their mini-humbucker appearance, are a departure from tradition. Their unique makeup results in a distinctive tone. Utilizing Alnico 5 magnets, the Gibson USA pickups perfectly encapsulate what we love about 'birds. Raw, bright, and characterful, the bridge pickup brings our Vox AC30 to life. Switch to the neck position and the guitar mellows, becoming more vocal.

Soaring in at £1,699, it could be argued that this 'bird is flying a little too close to Gibson territory. However, it can't be denied that you get a lot for your cash. This guitar is excellently crafted and beautifully thought out and offers outstanding playability and tone.

Daryl Robertson

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

1 PICKUPS

This guitar is fitted with a set of Gibson USA Firebird humbuckers, which practically breathe fire when you crank the gain.

2 FINISH

While Epiphone may not be using nitrocellulose like a true vintage Firebird, the illuminating Ember Red finish looks fantastic and feels perfectly hardwearing.

3 MAESTRO VIBROLA

A Vibrola is a sure-fire way to class up any guitar, and thankfully this unit didn't suffer from the infamous tuning stability of some retro examples.

AT A GLANCE

BODY:

Mahogany/Walnut

NECK:

Mahogany/Walnut

FINGERBOARD: Indian

laurel w/ trapezoid

Mother-of-Pearl inlays

FRETS: 22, medium

jumbo

HARDWARE: Chrome,

Kluson 'Banjo-style'

Planetary tuners,

Maestro Vibrola bridge

PICKUPS: Gibson USA

Firebird Mini Humbucker

FINISHES: Ember Red,

Frost Blue, Cherry,

Vintage Sunburst

CONTACT: Epiphone,

epiphone.com





TAYLOR 50TH ANNIVERSARY GS MINI-E ROSEWOOD

£1,079

The all-conquering travel acoustic gets the gold anniversary treatment

Taylor's GS Mini is one of few guitars that can stake a claim as a modern classic. As of its 10th anniversary in 2020, it had sold over 350,000 units and has undoubtedly added significantly to that tally since then. With Taylor celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, it was a no-brainer that the GS Mini would get the gold treatment.

The GS Mini came about as an evolution of the Baby Taylor, which proved popular with guitar players thanks to its small size. Bob Taylor recognized the need for small but full-sounding acoustics, so Taylor opted to shrink down their ultra-popular Grand Symphony format, whilst aiming to retain its tonality. The size and scale length were made smaller, but the body depth stayed similar, and Taylor's neck design and full-sized neck heel remained.

Pulling the 50th Anniversary GS Mini out of the box, we were immediately struck by the Vintage Sunburst finish. It's very matte, and there's an almost purple/pink hue to the colour gradient. It's not what we were expecting, and although admittedly unsure at first, it ended up growing on us.

There are several 50th Anniversary-specific appointments, too, the most stunning of which is the 'firestripe' fretboard marked with diamond inlays. Gold tuning machines and ebony bridge pins with gold dots complete the rest of the GS Mini's makeover.

Sitting down to play with it gives us an instant reminder of why this

guitar is so popular. It sounds exquisite, and the balance across the tonal spectrum is superb. Whether striking chords or picking arpeggios, every note rings out true with no single string dominating the sound. That balance will make it a brilliant recording guitar, and from the softest pluck to the hardest strum, the GS Mini never loses its cool.

Out of the box, the setup is fantastic as you'd expect from Taylor, but it is a rather cramped feeling on the fretboard. We'd consider ourselves to have average-sized hands but still found certain chord shapes higher up the neck a touch difficult, requiring an adjustment from our usual playing style. The 23.5" scale length is certainly comfortable for bigger stretches, but if you're the sort with spades for hands, you're going to find it tough in places.

Showing they know how to celebrate in style, the 50th Anniversary GS Mini is Taylor's party piece. A ravishing instrument, it's an all-round honouring of the GS Mini from the unique visual touches to the core of this guitar's ultimate appeal in its super-balanced sound. We can see little reason the GS Mini won't be around to add to the next 50 years of Taylor's history.

Matt McCracken

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

1 SPRUCE TOP

A torrefied spruce top gives it a 'played-in' sound, helping deliver a lovely warm acoustic voice that's ultra-balanced across the spectrum.

2 ELECTRONICS

The three-control Taylor ES2 Expression System requires some tweaking, but works great in parallel with an acoustic guitar mic for recorded tones.

3 FINGERBOARD

A stunning 'firestripe' West African Crelicam Ebony fretboard allows for super-smooth playability with chords and licks, as well as being a beautiful aesthetic touch.

AT A GLANCE

BODY: Layered Indian rosewood back and sides, torrefied Spruce top
NECK: Neo-tropical mahogany
SCALE LENGTH: 23.5"
NECK SHAPE: Taylor Standard Carve
NUT WIDTH: 1.6875"
FINGERBOARD: West African Crelicam ebony, 50th Anniversary diamond inlays, 15" radius
FRETS: 20
BRIDGE: West African Crelicam ebony
TUNING MACHINES: Taylor Standard
ELECTRONICS: Taylor ES-2
FINISH: Vintage Sunburst, Matte
CONTACT: Taylor, taylorguitars.com



SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND SAVE 50%*

+
**NEW
DIGITAL
ACCESS**





GREAT REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE

6 TOTAL GUITAR print issues delivered to your door for only £21.12!

NEW! digital access to 130+ issues when you subscribe to print!**

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

CHOOSE YOUR PACKAGE



PRINT MAGAZINE + DIGITAL ACCESS

ONLY £21.12
SAVE on shop price
FREE DELIVERY
direct to your door



DIGITAL ACCESS ONLY

ONLY £16.90
SAVE on shop price
INSTANT ACCESS
anytime, anywhere

FIND YOUR TOTAL GUITAR SUBSCRIPTION
www.magazinesdirect.com/TGR/D35R
OR CALL 0330 333 1113 AND QUOTE 'D35R'

*TERMS AND CONDITIONS Offer closes 27th August 2024. Price is guaranteed for the first 6 months, please allow up to 6 weeks for the delivery of your first subscription issue (up to 8 weeks overseas) the subscription rate includes postage and packaging. *Savings are based on the cover price. Payment is non-refundable after the 14-day cancellation period. **Access to the digital library will end with your subscription. For full terms and conditions, visit www.magazinesdirect.com/terms. For enquiries and overseas rates 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 Amit Sharma

ENUMCLAW

On second album *Home In Another Life*, American alt-rock quartet Enumclaw are dissecting life through a cornucopia of molten fuzz and squealing feedback, blending elements of dream pop and grunge into their own heady formula. For singer/guitarist Aramis Johnson and co-guitarist Nathan Cornell, it's a case of cranking their amps and letting the pedals guide them through the noise, through all kinds of washy modulations and ambient echoes into full-blown chaos.

"I guess the main secret behind those classic grunge sounds is that they were loud," says Nathan. "You need a high-volume amp that has the room to let something like a Big Muff do its thing

without disappearing. Dinosaur Jr. have a tone that felt like it was going off the rails. J Mascis is the king of fuzz! We love that era of music, from Stone Gossard's rhythms in Pearl Jam to the groove in Kim Thayil's parts for Soundgarden."

For the latest recordings, the group's fuzz pedal of choice was the Electro-Harmonix Op Amp Big Muff PI – a reissue of the legendary stompbox used by Billy Corgan and James Iha on The Smashing Pumpkins' 1993 masterpiece *Siamese Dream*. If you listen to the results, particularly tracks like *I'm Scared I'll End Up All Alone*, *Spots* and *Change*, you will probably realise that this was no accident. "We're heavily influenced by the Pumpkins, they're pretty much Aramis' favourite band," continues Nathan.

"We also had a JHS 3 Series Distortion, which is kinda like a modded Rat, a Boss CE-2 for chorus and an Electro-Harmonix Nano Deluxe Memory Man, though our engineer used a real tape delay on a couple of things. I've actually stopped using Big Muffs live after swapping in a Boss Power Driver. A lot of people don't seem to like them, but I love mine. It's like a Big Muff with more midrange to help you cut through at louder volumes."

Interestingly, the group chose to stick with instruments that were lying around in the studio rather than any guitars belonging to them. Instead of his usual Epiphones, Nathan ended up using a Fano Starcaster-style semi-hollow ("a really cool-sounding guitar with nice Filter'Tron pickups and a vibrato arm on it") as well as a Telecaster. And despite the unfamiliarity of it all, both guitarists ended up feeling the latest tones are the best they've dialled in to date. "I love how *Spots* came out," adds Nathan. "There's a big difference between the verses and heavy choruses, and we messed with the tape echo to create all this crazy warbly Sonic Youth-type stuff."



Jackson®

PRO PLUS SERIES

UPGRADED. ELEVATED. UNRIVALLED.

Introducing the all-new Pro Plus series: With premium features catering to highly-technical playing, multi-dimensional tone and ergonomic design.

Learn more about the Jackson Pro Plus Series at JacksonGuitars.com

©2024 Jackson/Charvel Manufacturing, Inc. All rights reserved.





AMP UP YOUR TONE

BUY AN AMP, GET A PEDAL

JULY 1, 2024 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2024



At PRS Guitars Europe, customer satisfaction is our top priority. The free pedal offer is available between 01/07/24 and 30/09/24 with purchase of qualifying amps at participating retailers; submit request with receipt online by 31/10/24. While supplies last; no rainchecks. Includes shipping and handling. Sponsor reserves the right to verify eligibility. Limit one (1) free pedal (ARV £229 - £379) per purchaser. The dealer receipt for your amplifier must be attached to your submission. The dealer must be on our participating dealer list shown below, for your submission to be eligible to receive your free pedal. To learn more about eligibility and how to complete your submission, visit https://prsguitars.com/amp_up_your_tone

PRS PAUL REED SMITH
GUITARS®