

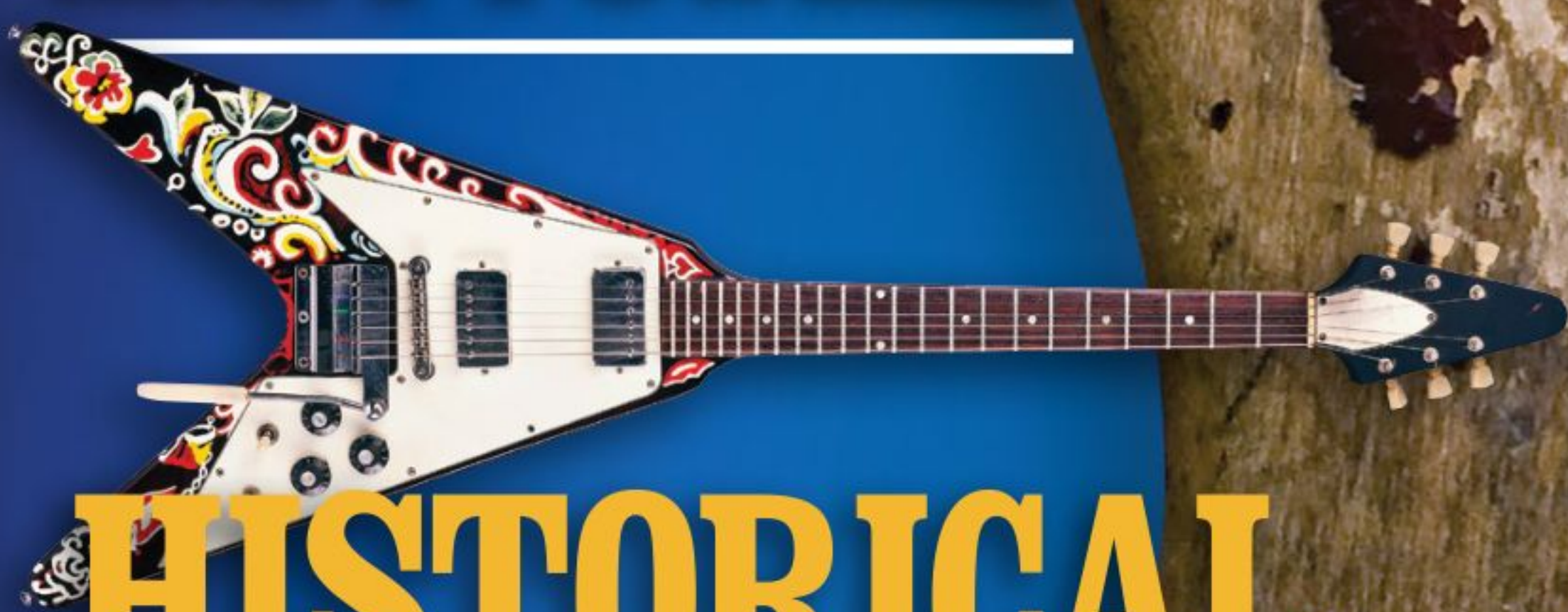
COOL NEW AMPS! BRAD WHITFORD AL DI MEOLA TINSLEY ELLIS

Vintage Guitar

magazine

STONE
TEMPLE
PILOTS

RICHIE KOTZEN
ANDY POWELL



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GUITARS AT ROCK
HALL OF FAME

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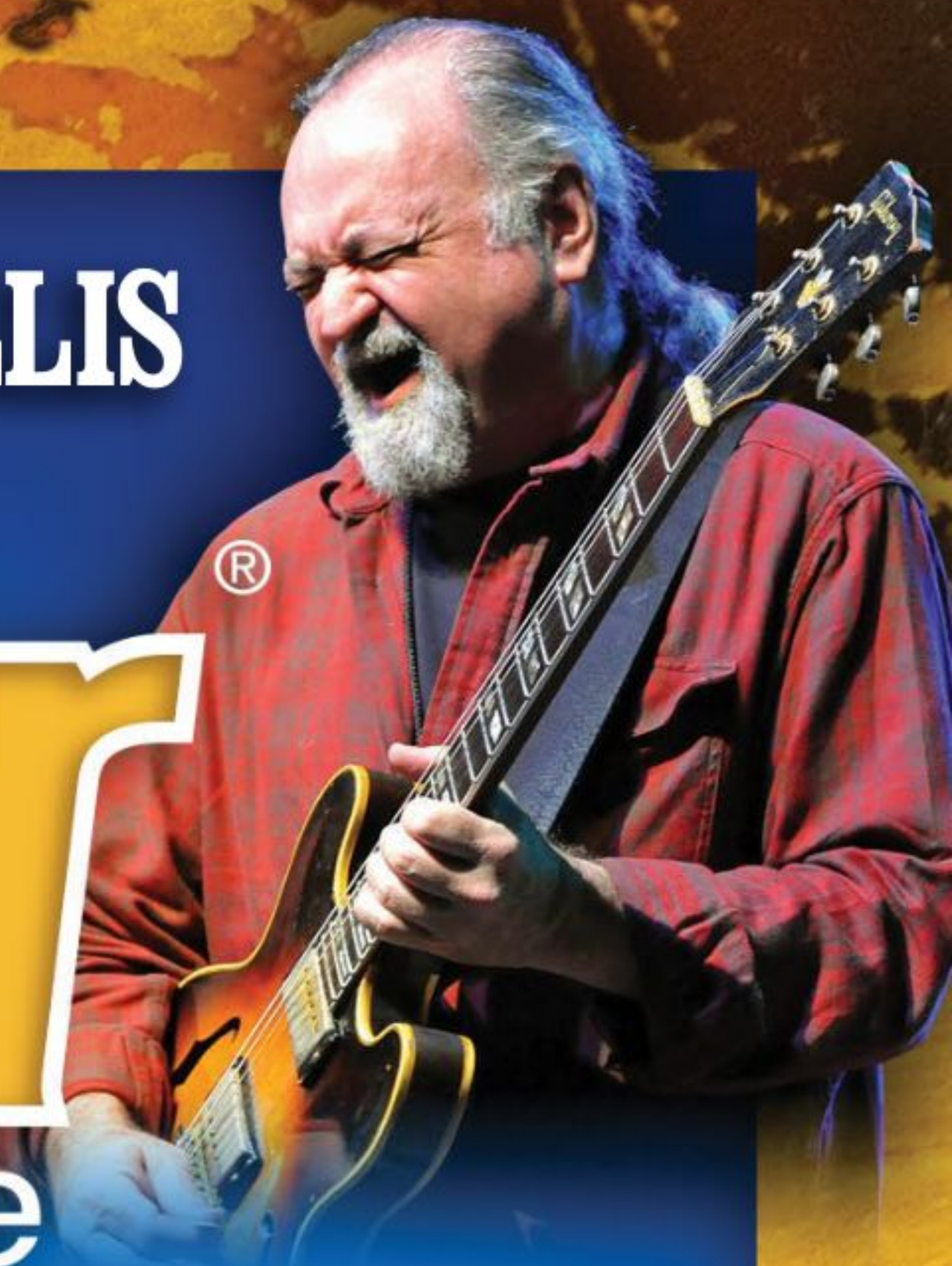
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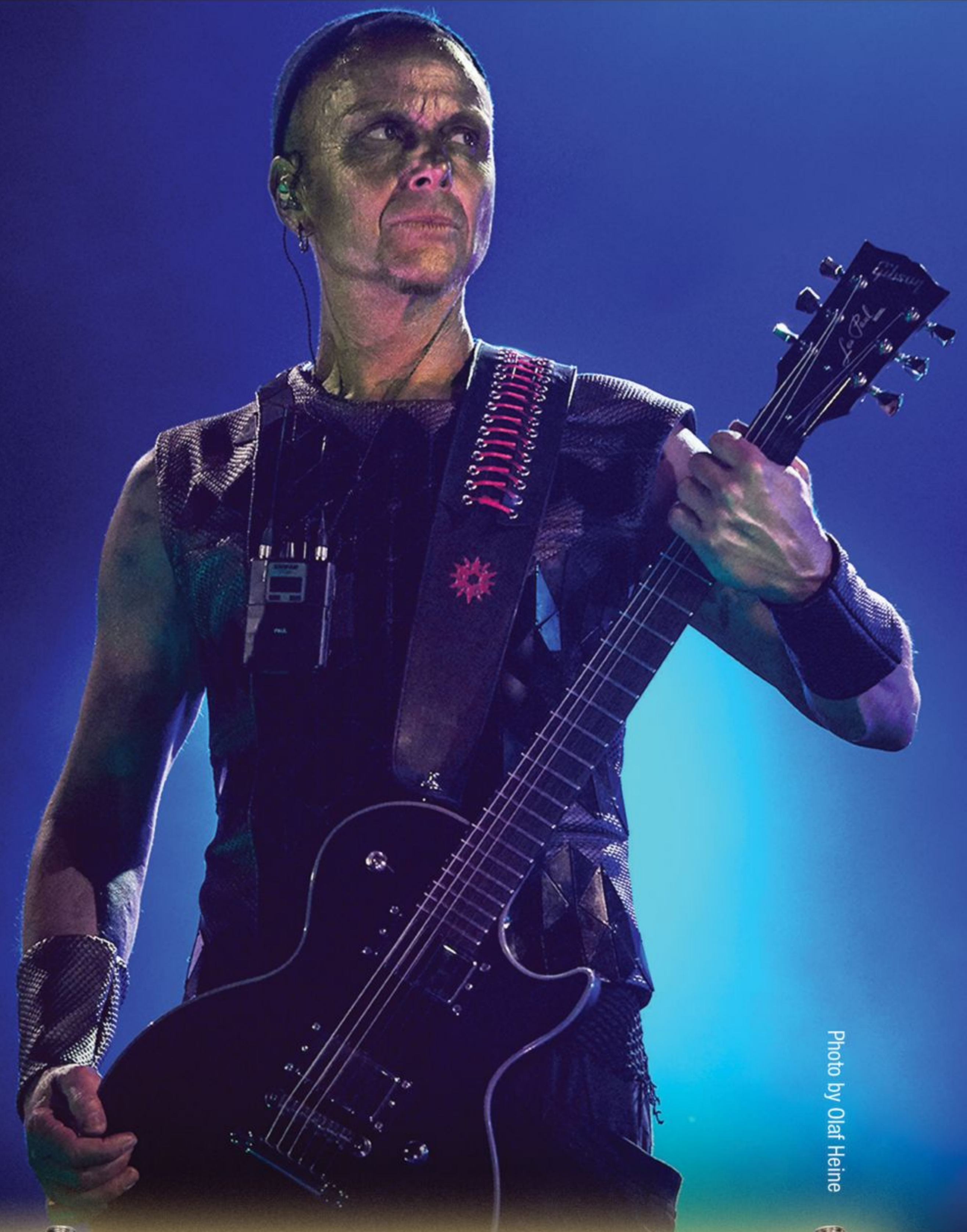


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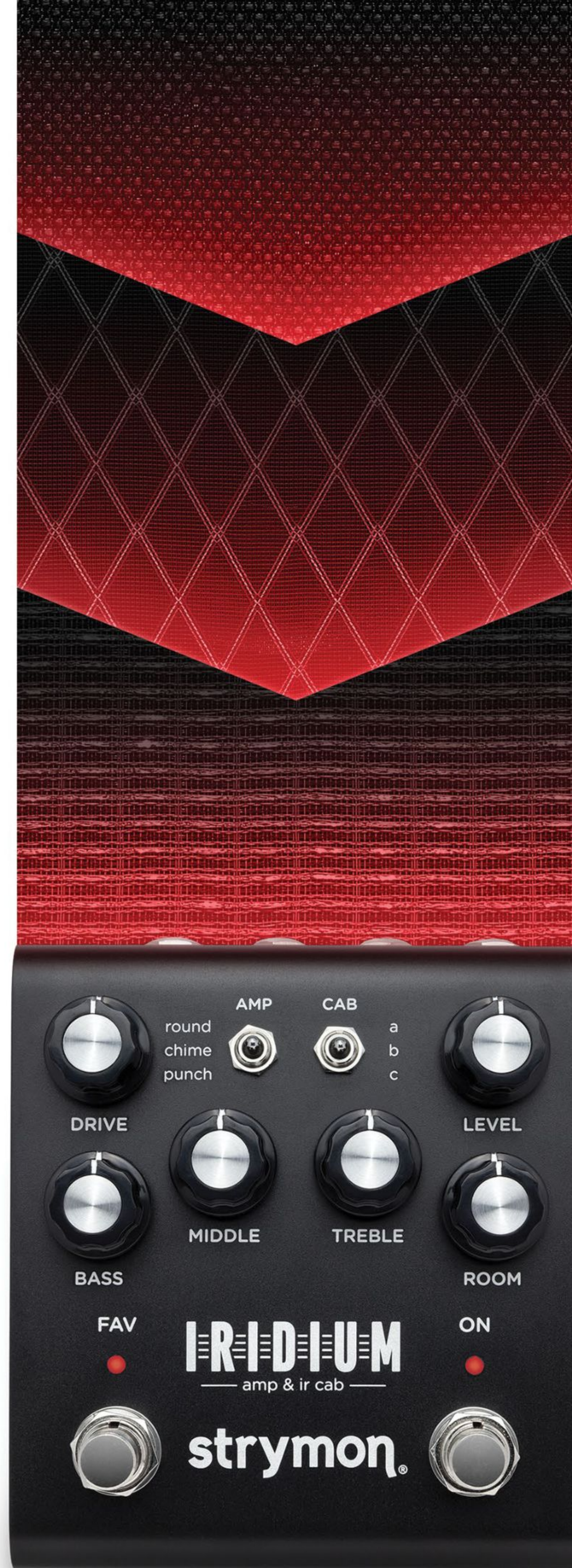


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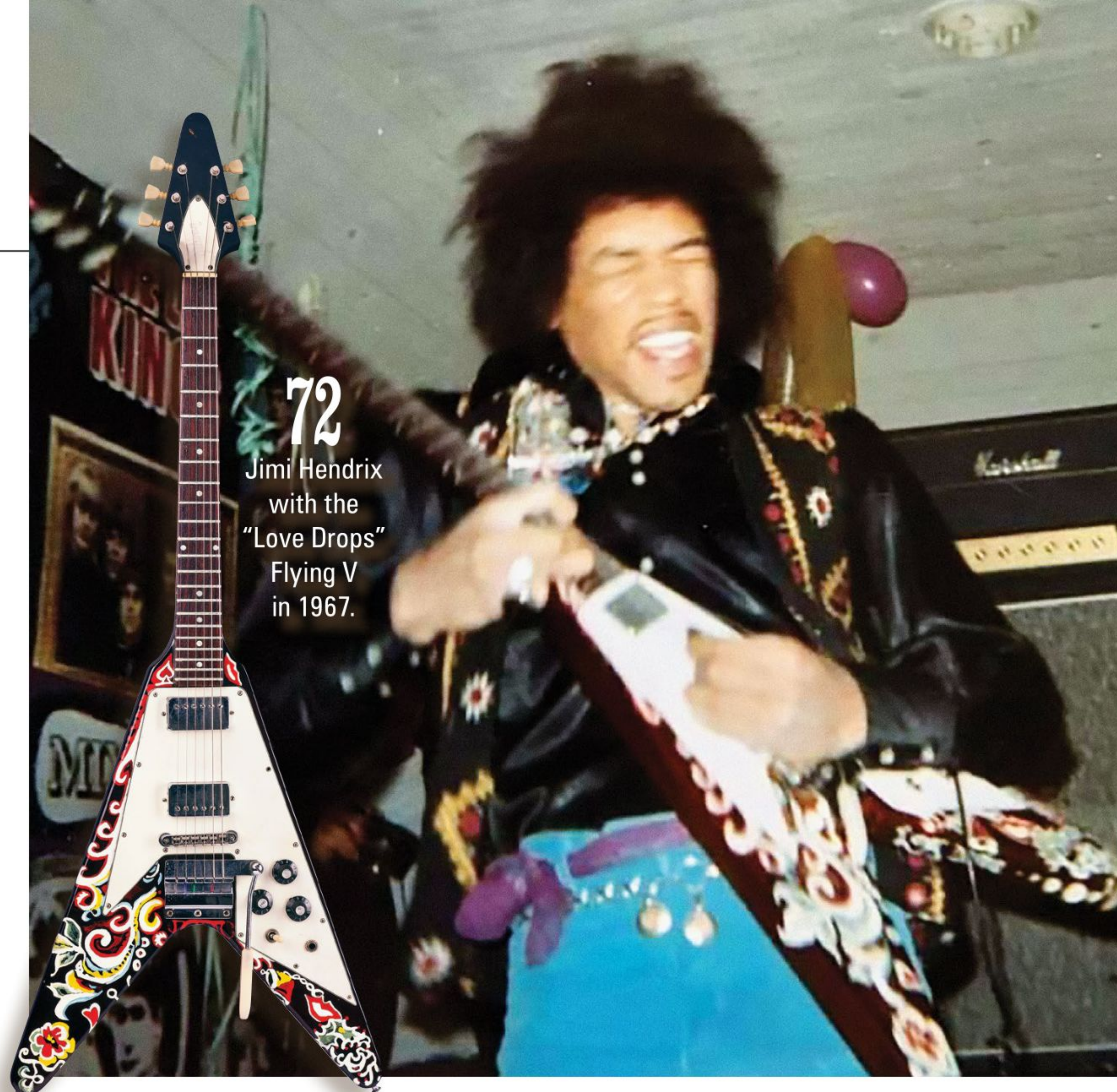
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Jimi Hendrix
with the
"Love Drops"
Flying V
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BEFORE THE NEXT TEARDROP FALLS

The JMI/Vox Mark Series

Vox guitars have an obscure history. But when Brian Jones appeared with a white Teardrop in the concert film *T.A.M.I. Show*, he spurred what would become an iconoclastic, fretted world view in a generation of teens.

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THIS LITTLE PIGGY

The Vox AC10 Super Reverb

Used together, "Vox" and "Super Reverb" may look like branding shenanigans. But it's a real thing – a rare early-'60s head-and-cab rendition of the famed AC10. | **By Dave Hunter**

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STONE TEMPLE PILOTS

Acoustic-Type Thing

The hard-rocking Stone Temple Pilots have always had an acoustic side; some of their best tunes were partially or fully unplugged. But, with a variety of instruments – common

and uncommon, new and vintage – they've now fully explored the approach for an entire album.

| **By Greg Prato**

72

HISTORICAL ROAR

Rock Hall of Fame Hosts "Play It Loud"

Standing inches from Chuck Berry's Gibson ES-350T, Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Number One," or David Gilmour's black Strat would leave any guitar fanatic awestruck. Now, you can get that close to them as well as Jimi Hendrix's "Love Drops" Flying V and Rory Gallagher's '61 Strat in the "Play It Loud" exhibit at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. We examine the latter two in this exclusive look, and visit with producer Daniel Gallagher (Rory's nephew) about the guitars and amps you'll hear on the new live album, *Check Shirt Wizard Live in '77*.

| **By Bret Adams**

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PHOTOS: COVER: Rory Gallagher Strat: Eleanor Jane. Hendrix "Love Drops" Flying V: Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Tinsley Ellis: Regan Kelly. THIS PAGE: Hendrix "Love Drops" Flying V: Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

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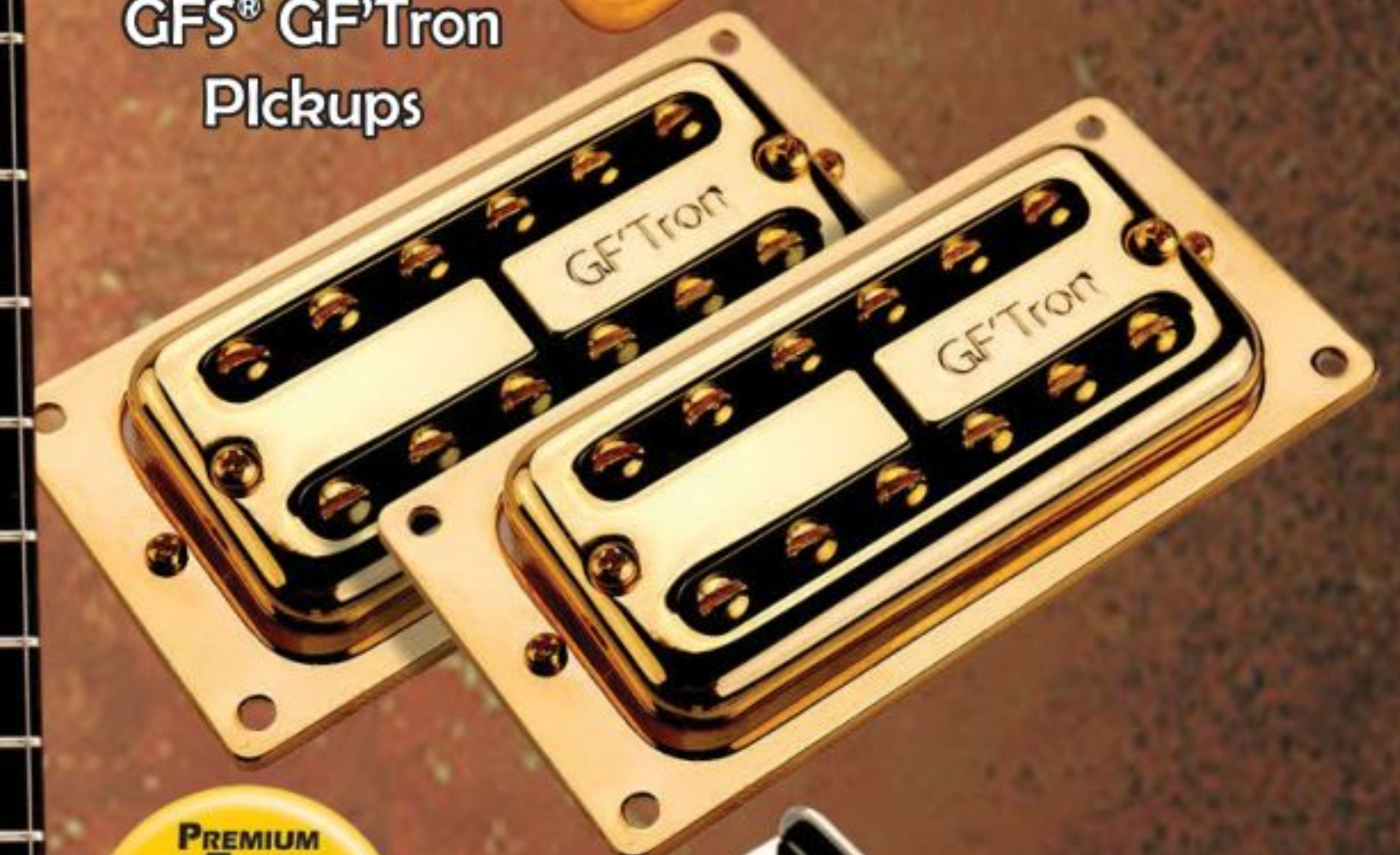
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FROM THE PUBLISHER

As this issue was going to print in late March, we were gaining a better understanding of how Covid 19 would affect us, as a nation.

Our advertisers were, understandably, adapting to a rapidly evolving situation, and as a result, this issue has the fewest number of pages we've published since the early '90s. While you won't see all the usual cool guitar ads, we did not reduce the amount of editorial content.

You, dear reader, are the reason we continue to create *Vintage Guitar*. But, the price of your subscription essentially covers only the cost to print and mail the magazine to you; advertising makes it possible for us to pay staff, writers, and our overhead expenses each month. So, we ask that you please support our advertisers during this time by checking-in via social media and their websites. You'll likely find some great deals!

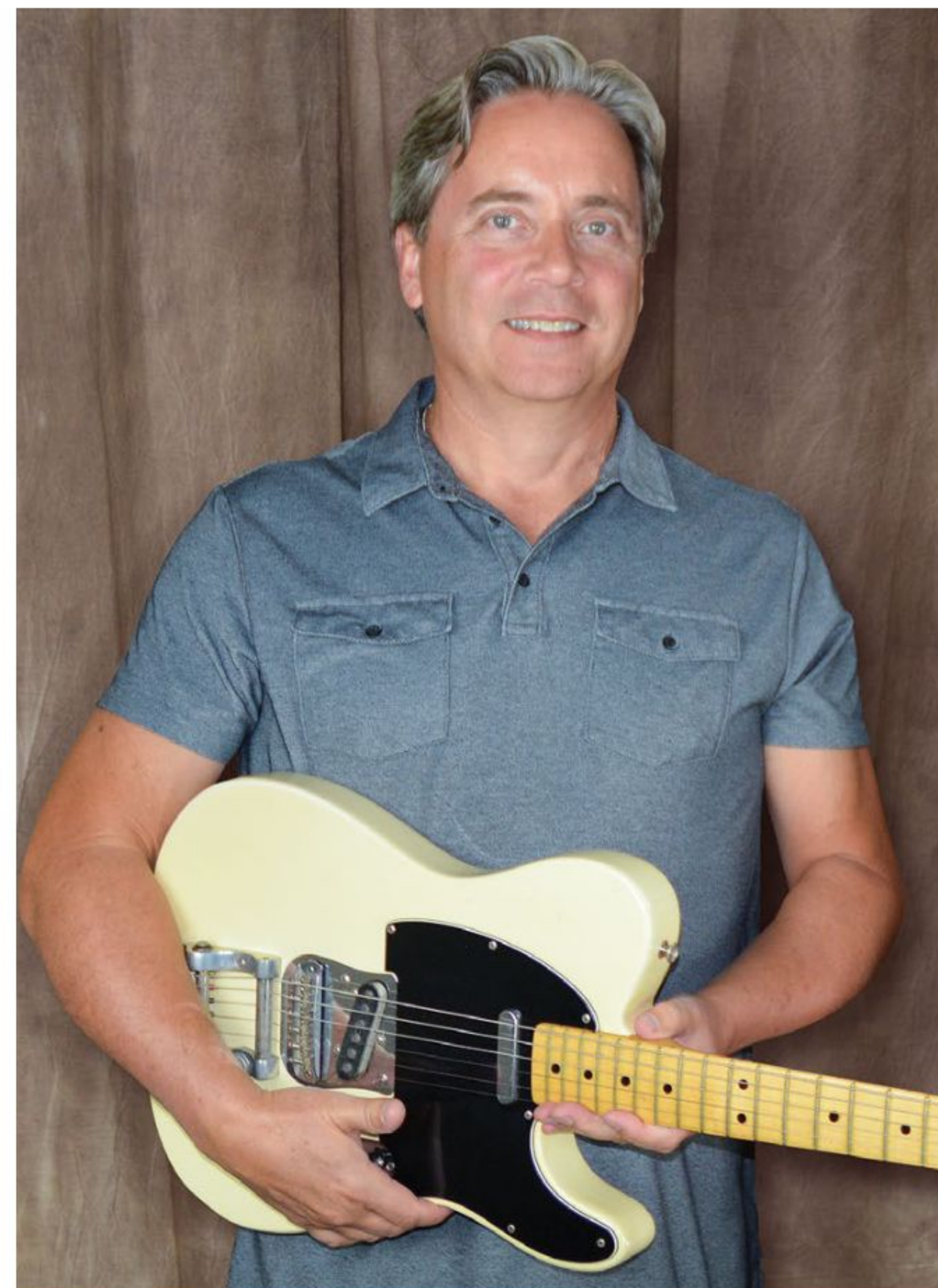
Also, please support your favorite musicians, locally and nationally. The virus hit at an especially bad time for bands gearing up for

spring and summer tours. Visit their websites, buy their music and merch, or simply lend your moral support. *And most importantly*, tell them you'll be there to see them play when this blows over.

Meanwhile, please also visit VintageGuitar.com and our Youtube, Facebook, and Instagram pages, which will always promote your favorite guitarists. Subscribers have free access to an amazing online archive of more than 80 issues going back to 2013 (click "Archives" at the top of each page on our website). While you're there, check under Media Family to find hundreds of feature stories, gear reviews, and music reviews going back even further, lessons to hone your chops, our *New Gear Yearbook*, and VG's new artist-interview podcast, "Have Guitar Will Travel."

Our thoughts are with you, and we are grateful for your continued support.

Stay safe,
Alan Greenwood
Founder/Publisher



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Vintage Guitar[®] magazine

Vintage Guitar, Inc., PO Box 7301, Bismarck, ND 58507,
Phone (701) 255-1197
www.VintageGuitar.com

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Sheryl Crow and Brandi Carlile at To Nashville, With Love.

TO NASHVILLE, WITH LOVE, GIBSON HELP AFTER TORNADOES

A benefit concert hosted by Marathon Music Works on March 9 raised an estimated \$500,000 for organizations helping with disaster relief and the mental health of residents in the aftermath of tornadoes that touched down in West and Middle Tennessee on March 2-3; one struck downtown Nashville. All told, 25 people were killed, more than 300 injured, and at least 70,000 lost power.

To Nashville, With Love featured performances by Brothers Osborne, Dan Auerbach, Sadler Vaden (with Jason Isbell), Sheryl Crow, Brandi Carlile, and others.

Via the Gibson Gives arm of its foundation, Gibson Guitars initiated a Guitar Recovery Plan, which offered guitars to musicians whose instruments were damaged or destroyed in the storm. Nearly 500 were delivered.

BENSON HONORED BY NOBELITY PROJECT

Guitarist Ray Benson, co-founder of Asleep at the Wheel, was named recipient of The Nobility Project's Feed The Peace Award during the organization's 10th annual fund-raising dinner, February 23 in Austin.

The non-profit Nobility Project was founded by Turk and Christy Pipkin in 2006 to better the lives of children, and has been active in its Austin base as well as in Kenya, Honduras, Mexico and elsewhere. Other FTP Award recipients include Kris Kristofferson, Little Steven Van Zandt, Ben Harper, Dan Rather, Delbert McClinton, and Jerry Jeff Walker. Benson and his bandmates in Asleep at the Wheel are marking 50 years as a group.

HONOR THY FATHER

VG will once again honor fathers with the "Dad's Day" photo gallery in the August issue, distributed just prior to Father's Day. If you would like to be included, send a photo of you and/or your dad with your favorite guitars (shot or scanned 4" x 6" at 300 dpi and saved as a .jpg) along with a caption by May 15 to ward@vintageguitar.com, with "Dad's Day" in the subject line. If you submit a short video of you and/or your dad playing, it may appear on social media.

FTP



RICHIE KOTZEN

Milestones

Seems like only yesterday that Richie Kotzen was the latest guitar hero rising from the Shrapnel Records camp. But that was 1989. Since then, he has enjoyed a varied career playing everything from fusion to hair metal.

Kotzen's main thing now is blue-eyed soul and wicked guitar, and his 50 new songs prove it. *50 for 50* not only is an observance of his 50th birthday, it's a gift to fans from their favorite triple-threat guitarist.

Crow/Carlile: Erika Goldring.
Richie Kotzen: Larry DiMarzio.

How did you celebrate turning 50?

My wife planned a wonderful surprise birthday party for me in Las Vegas. A friend rented a ridiculous suite at the Hard Rock Café – Greg Howe, Adrian Smith from Iron Maiden, Nuno Bettencourt, Howie Simon, and Rafael Moreira were there. Mike Varney and Larry DiMarzio, too. A lot of players, and everybody was jamming at the end. When I walked in, everybody had these white masks on, like in the movie *Eyes Wide Shut*. I thought, “You motherf***ers!” Then as the masks came off, I saw people I grew up with. It was great.

What was the plan behind 50 for 50?

I already had what would have been a normal record – 12 songs in the can, ready to go. But then I went on tour, doing festivals in Europe, and I had a hard drive with me that mirrors my home studio; I started listening to songs I’d never finished and others were nothing more than a bass and a click track. I thought, “I’d love to finish this stuff because it’s been in my head for a long time.” I started taking notes and writing lyrics. I told my tour manager, “I got 12 songs done and another four that are great but were never released. I have all these other songs, too. What if I put out a 50-song album for my birthday?” He said, “That would be pretty cool.”

I started working through some of the stuff, and as I was finishing, I started coming up with *new* songs; once, I strummed some weird chord while watching TV, then ran down to the studio. That became “Innocuous.” I kept messing around and came up with the idea for “Living the Dream.” Another time, I was sitting behind the drums and “Black Mark” came to my head. I recorded the drum track to a click, pretending I was rocking out with the band behind me. I had three versions of “Mad Bazaar.” Some songs were further than others, but I ended up getting to 50 much quicker than I expected. At that point, I said, “I think I can do this. I have 50 songs I like and they’re worth sharing.”

You’re one of the few guitarists who can play every instrument and sound like a real band.

I think it’s the way I hear things. When I hear music, everything revolves around the vocal and the lyrics. I gotta have a lyric and a melody, but I hear the drumbeat instantly. Sometimes it’s easier and more efficient to develop ideas if I can hop behind the drums and take a couple shots at it, then work off that. At that point, I know I can build a track. If I’m playing drums and hear something I can’t execute, I call someone in. Once I started getting serious about doing original music, I was pretty isolated, but I *had* to be able to do things on my own. Otherwise, it wouldn’t get done. It’s the way I’m built. So much of the power is in your hands. If you want to be a musician, write a song. If you don’t know how, figure it out. Keep doing it. Eventually, you’ll write something that connects with you and other people.

Any new technology you’re in love with?

I use my Tech 21 Richie Kotzen Fly Rig for a lot of things. The latest one has a bunch of new features like a Leslie, a fuzz option, and a boost that can be converted to a compressor. I use to have a Boss OC-2 octave that I love a lot, but I can’t find it (laughs). In the studio, I have a 2x12 cabinet connected to my 100-watt signature head from Victory Amps. I also have an old Marshall 18-watt. Some of the older recordings on the album were done on a Fender Vibro-King and a Bassman. There’s more to it than just the guitar and the amp. A lot of things happen inside Pro Tools.

What does turning 50 mean to you?

Oddly enough, it doesn’t mean anything. I was just so obsessed with getting this music done. The fact that I love the songs gives me a tranquility and feeling of calmness. – **Oscar Jordan**



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IN MEMORIAM



CHARLIE BATY

Charles “Little Charlie” Baty, co-founder of the renowned Bay Area blues band Little Charlie & The Nightcats, died March 6 after suffering a heart attack. He was 66.

Baty was born in Alabama and his family moved to San Francisco when he was eight years old. As a child, he became fascinated with blues music and was playing harmonica by age 12. As a teen, in the mid ’60s he began gigging on harmonica and vocals before taking up guitar after seeing Buddy Guy perform at the Fillmore in the early ’70s; other inspirations included Charlie Christian, Django Reinhardt, Kenny Burrell, Duke Robillard, and Charlie Parker.

He earned a degree in mathematics at UC Berkeley in 1975, then met harmonica player/vocalist Rick Estrin the following year and the two formed Little Charlie & The Nightcats. Led by Estrin’s frontman swagger and storytelling augmented with Baty’s deeply informed licks rendered on Gibson hollowbodies through a Fender Super Reverb, the band spent a decade playing bars on the West Coast, building a reputation playing electric urban blues colored by Western swing, jump, and rock and roll. In ’87, they were offered a contract on Alligator Records, forcing Baty to choose between becoming a full-time musician or keeping his job at the UC Davis Laboratory for Energy-Related Health Research. The band won out, went on to release 10 albums, and played with Muddy Waters, Gregg Allman, Robert Cray, Albert Collins, Los Lobos, and others before Baty retired

from touring in 2008. He continued to play in a local trio called Little Charlie and Organ Grinder Swing, while Estrin continued to front The Nightcats with Christopher “Kid” Andersen on guitar.

In the later stages of his career, Baty used a ’65 Strat on the Nightcats’ rock-oriented songs but also used a Gibson ES-150, a reissue ES-295, and an L-5 in the studio.

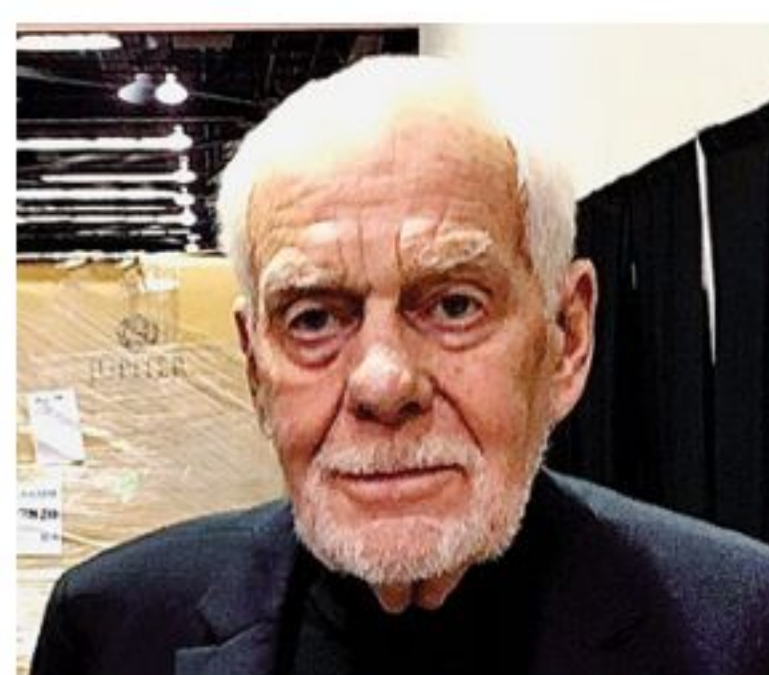
“Charlie was one of a kind, and I our relationship was one of a kind,” said Andersen, who previously played with Charlie Musselwhite and Terry Hanck, and now owns Greaseland Studios, in San Jose. “Because I took his place in the Nightcats, many assumed we were rivals or that there was animosity, but such speculations were very wrong. The Charlie I got to know was a very warm, inclusive, and playful man. At first, he was my idol, but then he was my friend; I came to truly love him, and greeting him with a big hug every time I saw him always filled me with a happiness you only get from family. There will never be anyone equal to Charlie; his respect was hard-earned, but he treated me like an equal. I hope I made him proud. I sure as hell am proud to have known him.”

“Charlie and I crisscrossed the country in the ’80s, played a lot of the same clubs and festivals, and shared the stage on occasion,” recalled Anson Funderburgh. “In 2012, I joined Mark Hummel’s Golden State Lone Star Revue, where I worked side-by-side with Charlie for almost four years. He became a close friend and musical accomplice; our styles and approaches were different – mine is simple, his was risky and more-complicated. I held down the bottom and Charlie filled in the colors. We made a great team.”

“Charlie was extremely smart, quick, kind and very

funny. I’ve never met another musician who cared more about his craft or about the guitar than Charlie. His desire to better himself never waned and he never stopped learning, improving, exploring and digging into obscure styles and genres. Our connection started through music and grew into an important lifelong friendship. I love him and I will miss him.”

Baty is survived by two sisters and was preceded in death by a sister and his wife, Sylvia. – **Ward Meeker**



DAVID MAGAGNA

David Magagna, a respected figure in the guitar industry, died March 10. He was 85 and had recently suffered a stroke.

While serving in the Air Force, Magagna studied foreign languages at Yale and Georgetown before being honorably discharged in 1958. In ’62, he went to work at C.F. Martin & Company, becoming the company’s first full-time employee in its just-established sales department. Hiring on as the folk boom entered full swing, he worked with some of the era’s best-known artists including Peter, Paul & Mary, Joan Baez, and Judy Collins. He was later named Martin’s first vice president of sales and exports.

From 1987 to ’89, Magagna was president of Guild Guitars, then in ’92 became the first director of international sales at Taylor, where he remained until 2001. After the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, he spent five months as a volunteer at ground zero.

In 2002, Magagna went to work for PRS Guitars, where he became Director of International Sales and

helped establish a network of distributorships in 74 countries throughout Asia, Europe, and Africa. He held the position at the time of his retirement in February of 2014.

“David was a remarkable human being,” said PRS founder Paul Smith. “His contributions to our industry and many of its leading companies are well-known, including his efforts increasing PRS’ international sales. After 9/11, he believed it was important to contribute his care and management skills to a world need, and I can’t remember a time where he did not treat me or anybody around him without decency and respect.”

Magagna is survived by a brother, four children, and extended family. – **Ward Meeker**



BRUCE THORPE

“Blonde” Bruce Thorpe, mainstay guitarist on the San Diego blues scene, died February 25. He was 66 and battled renal carcinoma.

Thorpe moved from Phoenix to San Diego in the early ’80s, joining The Hurricanes before forming The Blonde Bruce Band in 1985, with bassist (and future “Beavis and Butthead”/“King Of The Hill” creator) Mike Judge. Thorpe’s personal fashion sense centered on vintage clothing he collected via garage sales and swap meets, and his taste in instruments carried over – his favorite guitar was a ’69 Gibson ES-330 he called Red Boy, which he modified with humbuckers and played through a ’49 Fender Super amp. A beloved showman known for his charm, his blues-tinged voice helped make him a perennial crowd favorite.

Thorpe is survived by his wife, Shannon.

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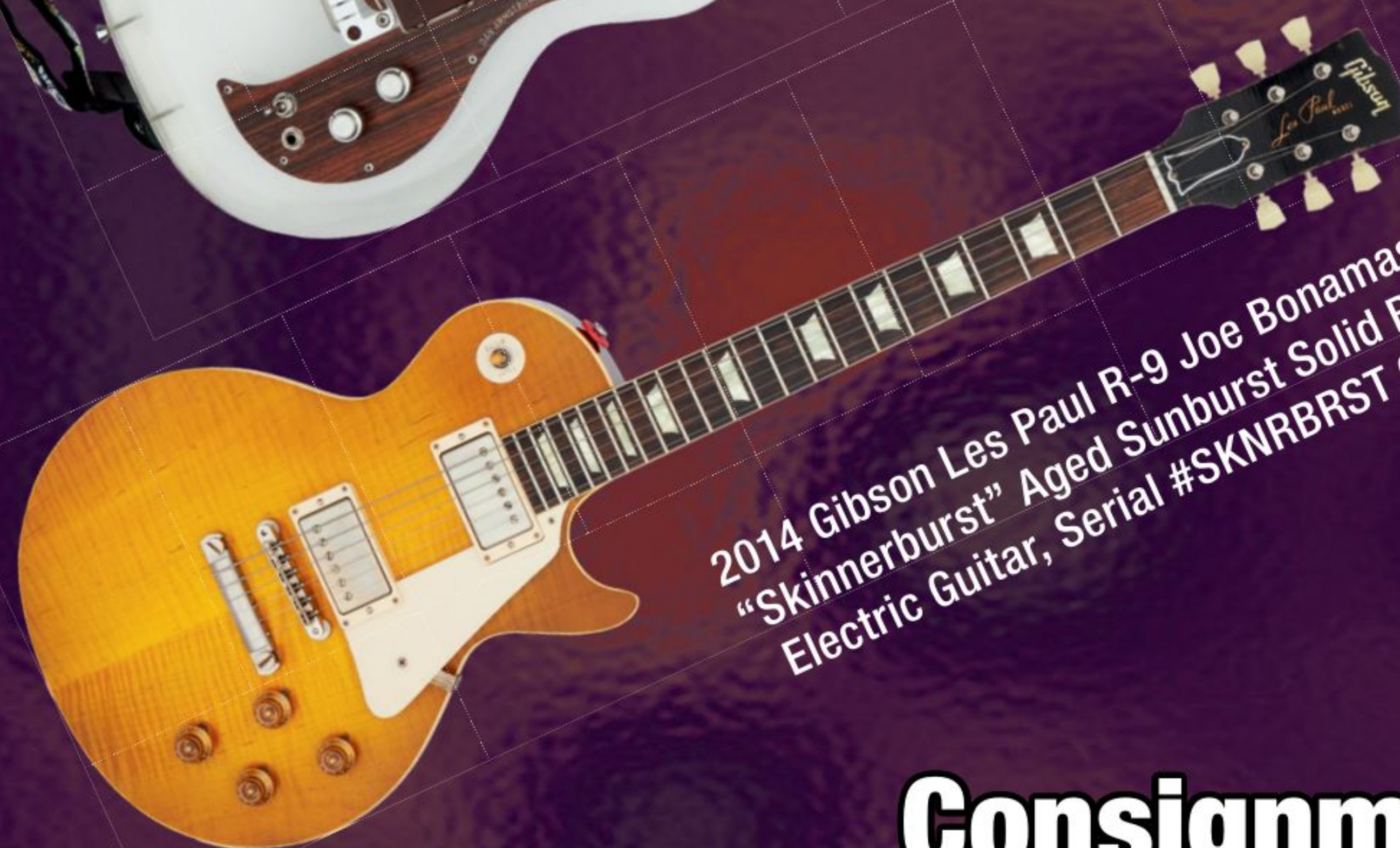
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ANDY POWELL

Peace, Love, and Guitar Harmony

When the origins of two-guitar harmonies in rock are discussed, the two bands that seem to get the most love are the Allman Brothers and Thin Lizzy. But there's another early trailblazer – Wishbone Ash. And from the British band's inception in 1969 up through to the present day, there has been one member present through it all – the seemingly-always Flying V-playing Andy Powell. The singer/guitarist spoke to *Vintage Guitar* shortly before the release of the band's 23rd studio effort, *Coat of Arms*.

Which guitars, amps, and effects did you use on *Coat of Arms*?

There are three aspects to the band. When I'm [practicing], I'm using small Fender amps – my favorite is the Prosonic. While writing,

we used analog amps in the rehearsal room – Vox and Fender – and my trusty Flying V (a copy made by Kevin Chilcott). In the studio, I used my Kemper Profiler; I'm an old-school amp guy, so I'm using old-school amp profiles I love. Then, on the road we've gone back to the original amps that made us famous by hooking up with the Orange company again. But, we also managed to retrieve a lot of amps that were stolen from us in the '70s; Chris Husband has helped me retrieve and collect vintage amps. One by one, we've been getting them renovated by Ed Johnson, in Dallas. So, that's what we're using on the road.

In the studio, *Coat of Arms* was straight Kemper. In the effects chain, I'm using Analogman King of Tone for overdrive in some cases,

and lots of different profiles. So, we're into that world now.

What attracted you to the Flying V?

Originally, there were two main guitars in rock – the Strat and the Les Paul. The Flying V had been around since the late '50s. I had this collection in the '70s where I owned so many guitars – I had '58 and '59 Vs from that era, which I used to use onstage, which is unheard of now. I'd see pictures of Albert King using them, but people thought it was too radical, even for rock. So, when I was buying that original Orange gear in London, I went into a store on Denmark Street to test out the equipment, and they had a couple of late-'60s Flying Vs on the wall, and I tried them through the amp rig, and before I plugged in, I realized the guitar had a really nice, resonant tone. I was used to Les Pauls or SGs, but this thing, maybe because of the wings or fins, was kind of twangy and resonant for a Gibson. And I really liked the vibrato, as well, because I'd always been a big Hank Marvin fan and always used a vibrato.

So, I bought the V at the same time – it was £300, brand new, still in a packing case. And it became *my* guitar. Curiously, all the rock photographers loved seeing it, and I'd get in music press because it was an arresting shape.

What made you decide to pursue guitar harmonies in Wishbone Ash?

Like all things, styles and influences come from different angles. I had played in soul bands all through the '60s – Sam & Dave, Otis Redding, Stax, Motown. And I was really a rhythm guitar player, standing in the background. But, I'd work closely with the horn section, and we'd work out parts by ear. So, I honed my musical ear *and* my ability to figure out harmonies for the horns. I think that played into it. Then, I saw a band in England in the mid '60s, called Blossom Toes, and they featured a bit of twin lead. But really, it was Fleetwood Mac with Peter Green and Danny Kirwan who started to dabble with twin leads. I hadn't heard of the Allman Brothers at that point. So, all of that played into it.

When we formed the band in '69, there was confusion about whether we were going to have a guitar player and a keyboard, or two guitar players. We narrowed it down to two guitar players for the auditions – myself and Ted Turner. We got together in a rehearsal room, and the first tune we knocked out was "Blind Eye," which has what sounds like a horn riff. We used that song to open our sets. I remember coming to America to play the Fillmore West. All these hippies were lying on the ground, stoned, and we'd come out and *pow*, we'd go into this riff. We realized that we had hit on a sound. – **Greg Prato**

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WILL SEXTON

Home in Memphis

"I never force my music on people," says guitarist/songwriter Will Sexton. "It just has to happen." *Don't Walk The Darkness* is his first solo effort since 2010's *Move The Balance*. "Bruce Watson (head of Fat Possum Records) suggested I do a record, and he made one for me, so I really appreciate him for that."

The younger brother of Charlie Sexton, Memphis became his home when he and his wife, singer Amy LaVere, relocated from Austin in 2013. He has been involved in session work and various performing and recording collaborations—with LaVere, with Luther Dickinson, and as part of the band Motel Mirrors with LaVere and guitarist John Paul Keith.

He recorded *Don't Walk The Darkness* at Watson's Delta-Sonic Studios with a band he'd long admired—the New-Orleans-based Iguanas.

"I wanted to have a band backing me so I could just do the songs and not have to produce anything," he said. "Between Bruce and the Iguanas, all I had to do is write the songs and sing them, play some guitar. It was natural and easy."

"We were able to play something pretty confident and easy, laid back, live and natural. We were havin' a great time in the studio—played some songs a bit longer than we needed to. We edited or faded them. We might still be playing them, far as I know," he laughs.

To project immediacy, they recorded basic tracks "...very live. We recorded 19 songs in two five-hour sessions. Some of the material wasn't completely finished, so I worked on lyrics. We got the spirit of the record and tightened it up with some overdubs."

The album's 10 originals vary. On the title song, he explored "...those rhythmic cycles that just live in one chord." John Lee Hooker rhythms permeate "What My Baby Don't Know." Two compositions were older—"Only Forever" and "Don't Take It from Me." Sexton co-wrote the latter with country legend Waylon Jennings a year before his death in 2002.

When a 2010 stroke forced Sexton to re-master his verbal skills, he also rebooted his approach to the guitar.

"I was able to really follow harmonics and melodies, where before I would think

of every executed moment," he recalls. "Most of my favorite players have been capable of disastrous moments. But the danger that would control the atmosphere was a creative shift—very exciting for me. I always loved guitar players that, in an unorthodox sense, have just gone out there. The script wasn't written."

While recording *Don't Walk*, he used the Strats and the de Lisle amps at Delta-Sonic. Otherwise, "I primarily play archtops—an old Hoyer my brother just gave me and a couple that have old P-90s; I have a Silvertone with a P-90 and one I love, a Harmony Patrician, has a single-coil Kent (pickup).

"The best guitar I have was given to me by one of my favorite players, Evan Johns, from the H-Bombs. He had a Tele with a '68 neck and a '70s body. The neck pickup died, so I put a DeArmond Filter-Tron in and put a Bigsby on it. It does about everything you want it to.

"I also collect DeArmond guitars. They're inexpensive and basically like Starfires or Duo-Jets. My normal thing is archtops with .013-gauge strings," he noted, adding that he doesn't use a pick. "I like heavy strings and havin' the battle with the instrument. I let 'em wear in so they're not too bright—I don't like new strings. I like high action, and that tone just seems to work better with my fingers."

His personal collection of Gibson amps includes Falcon and Explorer models.

"My favorite is the '50s Falcon, but I have a '60s Falcon and three Explorers—a '50s

one, early-'60s and a late-'60s that actually has tremolo and reverb. The others just have vibrato."

Onstage, he uses a Budda 2x12 and just one pedal—an Austin-made Durham QuatroPlex that combines four Durham pedals, including reverb. And while he's clearly satisfied in Memphis, Sexton fondly recalls the Austin where he and Charlie got their starts.

"In the '70s, it was all musicians. Everyone hung out together," he said. "Memphis is so much older in its musical integrity. Its tendrils have been going on for such a long time."

He expresses contentment with *Don't Walk*, calling it "...so much fun to play, just a great live collection of songs. It's been wonderful for me to go in and have something that feels perfectly in the right pocket." —**Rich Kienzie**



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PAUL RODGERS

Good For Bad Co.

Bad Company epitomizes “classic rock.” This is abundantly clear on the new two-CD, 40th anniversary edition of *Desolation Angels*. The band’s greatness was preserved on 2019’s *The Swan Song Years 1974-1982*, box set, which collected remastered versions of all six of the original band’s albums – *Bad Company*, *Straight Shooter*, *Run With the Pack*, *Burnin’ Sky*, *Desolation Angels*, and *Rough Diamonds*.

Vocalist Paul Rodgers, guitarist Mick Ralphs, bassist Boz Burrell, and drummer Simon Kirke enjoyed instant success and soared to #1 with their self-titled debut album. A wild eight-year ride ensued.

Rodgers recently looked back on Bad Company’s career, and started by giving a big thumbs-up to sound of the box set.

“I love the crystal-clear clarity as soon as I hear that count-off for ‘Can’t Get Enough.’ I’m back in that old mansion, Headley Grange, in the U.K. (where *Bad Company* was recorded). Happy days!” he said.

While most of the songwriting was credited to individual members, Rodgers says there was no formula.

“Mick and I did most of the writing, though Boz and Simon *did* write a few themselves. Mick and I wrote some songs together, and some separate, but it was all with the band’s sound in mind. Sometimes, I’d go to Mick with a song, but felt it needed a little something and he would add a guitar riff. For example, I’d started writing ‘Feel Like Makin’ Love’ when I was 19 – long before I met Mick. When I played it for him, he added the guitar line – *bah da bah, bah da bah* – and *then* I felt the song was finished. Songwriting is a very curious, magical adventure, and never the same.”

Bad Company self-produced all six albums.

“Mick and I wanted us to sound like *us* – raw and real, without too much production,” said Rodgers. “We wanted to walk onstage and sound just like the album.”

The success of *Bad Company* put many expectations on the band.

“Hitting #1 was impressive with our debut album, for sure. We accepted it all and tried to take it in our stride, but we felt the pressure to repeat,” Rodgers said. “Sometimes, pressure can be positive, and in our case I believe it was.”

Rodgers played guitar with Bad Company more than people realize, including guitar-synth on the band’s biggest hit, “Rock ‘n’ Roll Fantasy,” from *Desolation Angels*.

“I like playing guitar and piano, and even bass,” he said. “In fact, when we recorded ‘Seagull,’ I played *all* of the instruments,” he said. “I *do* prefer my hands to be free when singing because I can better concentrate and focus on vocals – and the fans.”

Burrell, who died in 2006, studied jazz and his regular use of a fretless bass gave him a unique style.

“Boz’s playing was crucial to the band’s sound,” Rodgers noted. “He had a unique understanding of the two-fold job of a bass player in a four-piece band – to keep the bottom-end tight to the drums and add some melodic lines. He was a master at this. I especially like his playing on ‘Bad Company.’”

Rodgers agrees that there is a timeless purity to the band’s music. Quite simply, the songs endure. And he has a theory as to why.

“As a unit, we’ve always liked to keep our music simple, yet powerful. I’m grateful that so many of the songs have stood the test of time,” he said. “Radio and the fans have kept Bad Company music alive, and the response when we play live is so warm I *know* the music runs deep in people’s lives. Why, I don’t know, but it is deep.”

Ralphs has suffered from ill health in recent years and former Heart guitarist Howard Leese and former Black Crowes guitarist Rich Robinson have substituted for him live. Rodgers is hoping for his bandmate’s speedy recovery.

“He could be better. He’s in the hands of family right now and we can only wish him the best and give every support we can. Since we’re not family, sadly, we have no say in his care. But Mick knows he always has a place in the band, should he ever be able to return.”

Rodgers is protective of Bad Company’s legacy. The boxed set is part of that goal.

“I think we established a certain way of doing things, which was music first, then fame, image, and money – all by-products – somewhere behind that. I’d like to keep the focus on the music,” he said. “Overseeing all releases that have Bad Company’s name attached need to be quality-controlled, which is why I get involved. *Swan Song Years* is band-approved, and I think the fans will find it interesting.” – **Bret Adams**

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"I've known Tyler Morris for several years, and watching him develop into such a fine guitarist has been a pleasure for me. He is wise beyond his years, is very serious about mastering guitar and has excellent taste in mentors! Give Ty a listen – you won't be disappointed!"
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"I have been following Tyler's career for years now. With this new album, *Living In The Shadows*, Tyler proves he is ready to step into the spotlight as one of the great blues guitarists of his generation." – **Mark Agnesi (Gibson Guitars, Norman's Rare Guitars)**

"Tyler Morris is a very serious contender in the new world domination of blues-rock guitar players. He is *fired up and fierce* for a young man. His depth of musical knowledge knows no bounds and he is just coming into his own voice. Tyler will help bring the glory of electric guitar back to the masses." – **Mike Zito (Mike Zito Band, Royal Southern Brotherhood)**

"Tyler brings youthful enthusiasm and energy tempered with the passion and taste of a much older soul. To say the future looks bright for the guitar in the hands of another young gun might be overused, but in this case it *rings honest and true*." – **Joanna Connor**



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FRANK HANNON

Acoustical Man

Though they began as a hard-rockin' band, Tesla's big break came with their *Billboard* Top 10 cover of "Signs," from the 1990 live album, *Five Man Acoustical Jam*. Their unplugged side remains an integral part of Tesla, and is highlighted once again on their latest, *Five Man London Jam*. To learn the details, we spoke to Frank Hannon, elder statesman of Tesla's guitar duo.

How did *Five Man London Jam* come about?

Well, this year marks the 30th anniversary of *Five Man Acoustical Jam*, and "Signs" was such a big hit. It started from us mixing acoustic guitars into our set and playing one-offs acoustically. We've *always* had that element, but we recorded a gig 30 years ago and it was one of our biggest albums. So, we wanted to re-light that for the anniversary.

Which guitars did you use?

We were doing festivals in Europe at the time,

and I flew to London with my one acoustic guitar – the first prototype of the Gibson Love Dove, my new signature acoustic. Gibson hadn't made a Dove in a while until they reissued one modeled after the '70s version I used back in the day; if people watch "What You Give" or the *Time's Makin' Changes* video where I do "Love Song," I'm using a '76 Dove. Gibson made a reissue prototype for me, and I'm mostly using that on the *Five Man London Jam* session we did at Abbey Road. We went to Gibson's showroom in London – we weren't really prepared to do an acoustic show because we were there to play Download Festival. So, the *Five Man London Jam* show was put together very quickly, and Gibson loaned us a J-200 and the J-45 I used a lot.

Do you agree Tesla helped popularize the "unplugged" phenomenon in the early '90s?

I *do* agree with that, just because we had a hit with it. I *don't* think that we invented it, by any means. Peter Frampton on *Frampton Comes*

Alive was doing an acoustic set, Led Zeppelin, the Rolling Stones, the Allman Brothers all did acoustic sets. But we definitely brought it back to life in the early '90s.

Talk a bit about the electric guitars in your collection.

The most-vintage guitar I have is my EDS-1275, which I got in 1988 at Gibson while we were on tour with Def Leppard; Steve Clark and I went to the factory, in Nashville. Once in a while, I'll use a Telecaster, because a Tele's got the twang, so I'll use one to add country licks to a song. On "What You Give," I'll use my pinky and bend it to make sound like a B-Bender.

You're also pretty straightforward with effects, right?

Yeah, I don't use any racks – I still just use a straight pedalboard with a Tube Screamer, Phase 90, and a Morley Bad Horsie Wah. I've been using a Mad Professor Deep Blue Delay.

What's your preferred amp?

I use the Marshall JCM900 head because they're pretty much available everywhere. Marshalls seem to have the right voice for Tesla music. But at home, when I do my blues jams, I'll use a Fender Hot Rod Deville.

Most rock guitarists in the '80s played superstrats with Floyd Rose vibratos, but you're one of the guys who stood out because you stayed with the classics.

Well, my roots are in '60 and '70s music, and I like the warmth and the tone of a Gibson. Back in the early days, our original co-guitarist Tommy Skeoch (who was replaced by Dave Rude in '06) and myself really tried to keep our styles separate. He favored more of the whammy-bar stuff, and I was more into the classic mixing of acoustic on top of electric, and blending them.

On Tesla's newest studio album, *Shock*, you worked with Def Leppard's Phil Collen as producer. How did that go?

It was definitely a learning experience. Phil was very motivated as a producer and as a coach. He taught us that we can definitely work on the road and record outside of a studio. The whole record was made on the road – hotel rooms, dressing rooms, on the bus. We'd always had the mindset that we could only write and record when we're home. Which we found out to not be true.

You also have your own podcast.

Yes, it's called "Far Out!" I did one episode with Cesar Gueikian, the chairman of Gibson, where we discussed the rebirth of the brand. I also did an interview with Greg Golden, who owns Bizarre Guitar and has one of the most-extensive vintage-guitar collections in the world. – **Greg Prato**

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TINSLEY ELLIS

Prolificity and Diversity

Prodigious guitarist/songwriter Tinsley Ellis recently released his 18th solo album, the wryly-titled *Ice Cream in Hell*. His second disc since returning to the redoubtable Alligator label, the Atlanta-based blues man recently bantered with VG while on tour.

Chock full of powerful guitar licks and confident vocals, Ellis' new effort consists of 11 original songs. It continues his philosophy of finding an appropriate sound for each tune, and other instruments happened to come up early in our conversation.

"Even though I truly believe that guitar is king – I didn't make that rule, I just enforce it – I do love the sound of amplified keyboards, particularly Hammond organ and Wurlitzer electric piano," he said. "So I always have them on my albums."

There's also a trumpet and sax on "Last One To Know," as well as the sorrowful "Hole

In My Heart," all reminiscent of a Memphis Horns arrangement.

"Those two songs really called out for horns," Ellis explained. "They're a great substitute for guitar power chords. They both sustain and provide a fat bed for a song to lay in."

Still, selecting the right guitar for the right song is paramount in his recording regimen. He experimented in the demo stage, but "... when I write a song, the main decision is whether to solo on a Gibson or a Fender."

"No Stroll In The Park" was the hardest to compose," he added. "I went through many lyrical re-writes and effects choices for the rhythm-guitar part, eventually settling on auto-wah. I played my '59 Strat on that song."

On the aforementioned "Last One To Know," Ellis played his 2000 Les Paul Standard, and the song also showcases his use of effects; he ran guitar through a BBE Soul Vibe set fast

for the main lick. The same guitar was played through a Real McCoy Picture Wah for the outro lead.

Slide guitar appears on "Sit Tight Mama," which is also notable for instruments it *doesn't* have.

"This song is a tribute to the late, great Hound Dog Taylor," Ellis enthused. "I used my '82 Gibson Moderne tuned to an open D for slide. Co-producer and keyboardist Kevin McKendree played the second guitar part in a drop D. There's no bass or keys on that song."

"Evil Till Sunrise" is driven by an up-front cowbell that would do Christopher Walken proud, backed by a maple-neck '84 Custom Shop Strat through a Deluxe Reverb '65 reissue.

"The amp was barely turned up, which gave it a very clean, glassy sound," Ellis detailed. "The outro was, once again, my Real McCoy Picture Wah, with the amp turned up slightly."

Ellis had written the rhumba-style "Everything and Everyone" with an icon in mind, but critics have cited another famous player regarding that tune.

"This song started out as a Peter-Green-inspired instrumental, but I added words to it. Reviewers have said that it reminds them of Carlos Santana, which I take as very high praise!"

The final track was Ellis' most satisfactory presentation, in spite of its blunt title and plaintive presentation.

"Your Love's Like Heroin" flowed right out of me," he recounted. "That's always a good thing in making a blues record. Son Seals had a song called 'Your Love Is Like A Cancer,' which also expresses how outstandingly *bad* love can be. His title inspired me to write this song."

Although "Your Love's Like Heroin" is a reflective slow-burner, his tone makes it obvious he's picking hard.

"It's my new Freddie King ES-345 reissue – best guitar I've ever owned. I played it through the Deluxe Reverb reissue. No effects. For the intro, I used the guitar's Varitone in the fourth setting."

Ellis plans to continue touring in support of *Ice Cream in Hell*, and is already thinking to future recordings.

"I haven't decided on the direction for my next album, as I'm so busy on the road right now," he said. "Ideas might include another instrumental, an acoustic album, or one where I do some old songs that inspired me when I was starting out."

And no matter what he decides moving forward, he's proud of what he accomplished on *Ice Cream in Hell*.

"I'm generally in a good headspace now," he said. "I'm enjoying touring and songwriting more than ever." – **Willie G. Moseley**

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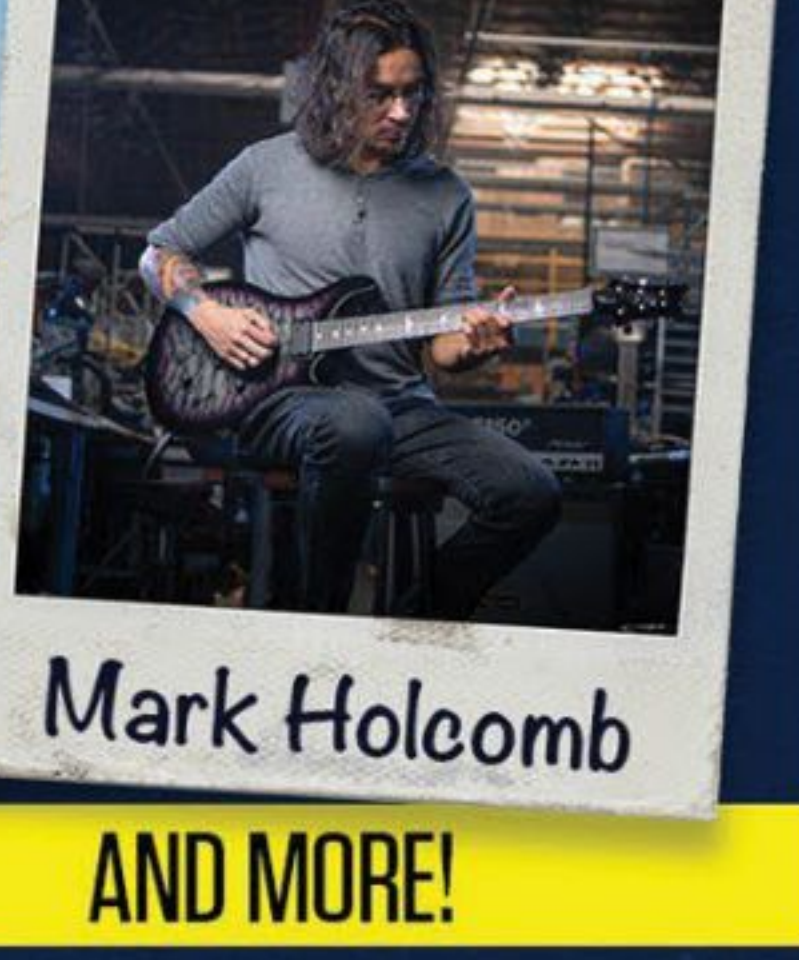
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JOHN MORELAND

Oklahoma Americana

John Moreland's new album, *LP5*, treats listeners to another offering of reflective tunes in the rootsy realm. The Oklahoman's music focuses on his songwriting and vocal delivery (shredders will have to look elsewhere), but his early roots were in punk and hardcore. However, by the time he launched a solo career in 2008, he had experienced a full stylistic makeover, subsequently alternating between roots-rock and acoustic sounds/approaches. If it's genuine acoustic music you're after, Moreland is your man.

Who are your guitar influences?

With my fingerpicking, I really try to copy Steve Earle. And I know that his picking style was influenced by Townes Van Zandt, so I guess those are my guitar influences for that kind of stuff. Growing up and learning how to play, it was punk stuff; I really liked Tim Armstrong from Rancid, and Stephen Egerton from the Descendents. Those kind of dudes.

Do you have a preference for playing acoustic or electric?

I think I enjoy acoustic more. There's something about how dynamic you're able to be on an acoustic instrument. I really enjoy that. Anytime you amplify something, you're squashing things a bit and losing dynamics. It's harder for me to be as expressive on electric guitar. Normally, when I play electric, I want to play big power chords and rock out. But that's not necessarily the most satisfying thing, musically, for me.

Which guitars and amps did you use for *LP5*?

Not a lot. I had three acoustics; one is a [Martin] D-28 – I think it's a 2014 – and a '51 00-18 my dad has had since the '60s. I've played that, I think, on all of my records. It's the guitar I learned to play on and it's pretty special to me. There was also a nylon-string, but I don't remember much about it. The electrics were a Guild Starfire and there was a Jazzmaster in the studio that we used a little bit.

Does your setup differ when you play live?

Live, I'm using just the D-28 and the Fishman Aura DI. My sideman, John Calvin, has more going on with gear when we play live. We do a duo thing, so I'm playing acoustic and he's playing a couple of Nash Telecasters and my silverface Princeton he uses live. He also plays a 000-18.

From a guitar perspective, which new tracks are you most proud of?

I really like "Harder Dreams." I played a lot in open D on this album, which I had never really done before. So, a lot of the open-D stuff was really satisfying. I started messing around with it because I was in a songwriting rut, and it opened things up.

Do you think you may experiment with different tunings in the future?

Yeah, probably so. I wish I could play more instruments and write on different instruments, but I'm primarily a guitar player, so that's kind of my thing. I'm sure I'll switch because whenever you hit those little walls, all you can do is just change something up and see if it sparks anything.

Are there any songs that are difficult to sing and play live?

The most difficult one is from one of my older records. It's called "3:59 AM." Most of my songs are three or four chords, first position. But that one, I'm going up and down the neck a lot more. That's the only one where I have to kind of pay attention.

What's in the works beyond *LP5*?

Nothing is planned right now, but I'm always writing. I'm looking to make another album pretty soon. I waited three years before this one, and I don't want to wait that long again.

Are there any musicians you'd like to work with but haven't?

Yeah, a lot of my friends in other bands I tour with, or just other bands I admire. I'd really like to collaborate with MC Taylor, from Hiss Golden Messenger; that's the first one that comes to mind. Lilly Hiatt... just friends I admire who maybe I've toured with, but we haven't made any music together.

Do you prefer playing vintage guitars or newer guitars?

I definitely prefer playing the 00-18. I just don't want to bring it on the road because it's the guitar my dad learned to play on, and the one I learned to play on. So, there's a lot of sentimental value. Other than that, the oldest guitar I have is from the '80s, and it's one of my favorite guitars, for sure. The 00-18, though... I definitely notice a huge difference playing it versus a new guitar. I'm just a little nervous bringing it on the road, so I just stick to new guitars, live. – **Greg Prato VG**

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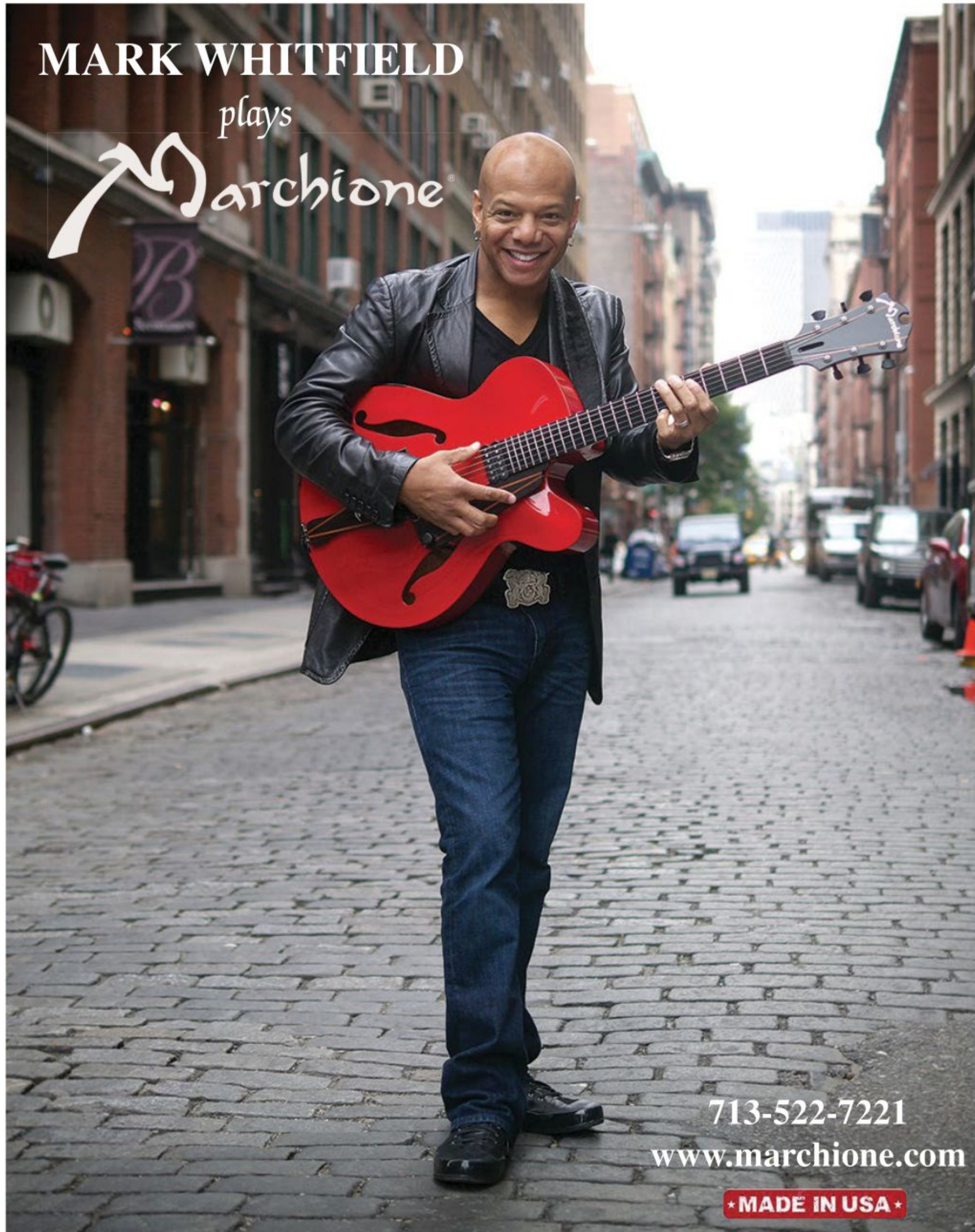
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This '65 Vox Mark VI has a ghost image of the logo decal on the headstock and logo engraved on the pickguard.

BEFORE THE NEXT TEARDROP CALLS

The JMI/Vox Mark Series

— BY PETER STUART KOHMAN —

It was Brian Jones and the 1964 concert film *T.A.M.I. Show* – the first extensive U.S. showcase for the Rolling Stones – that helped spur the guitar fascination in a generation of teens. Jones working the crowd with his white Vox Teardrop created an iconoclastic, fretted world view.

The history of Vox guitars is relatively obscure. Jennings Musical Industries (JMI), the company behind the brand, was primarily an amplifier maker that built guitars on the cheap, using components sourced from subcontractors. However, in 1962/'63, it shifted to more-respectable offerings.

JMI engineers held an ace in the fact it distributed Fenders in England. The opportunity to dissect Leo's designs was reflected in models introduced in 1963/'64

with higher-grade necks and bodies and new "V-2" pickups that were *very* close copies of Strat units. These are unfamiliar to Americans because most Vox guitars distributed by Thomas Organ Company in the U.S. were built by Eko in Italy, not JMI in England. They *look* like their English ancestors, but do not sound like them.

The Vox guitars most remember are the trapezoidal Phantom and teardrop-bodied Mark VI. These visually striking instruments achieved high-profile visibility with



Teardrop designer Mick Bennett, routing a body.

the Stones, Hollies, and others from '64 through '66. Embodying futuristic form-over-function design, they were devoid of Fender's cutaway horns, for pure visual impact. They both used a bolt-on neck with Vox "spearhead" headstock and fittings that included top-mounted Bigsby-like vibrato, three V-2 pickups, and a three-knob/one-switch wiring also lifted from the Strat.

The Phantom was developed beginning in '62; a Mark II model with an alternate pickup switching system was tried and

Guitar photos by Amy Mills.



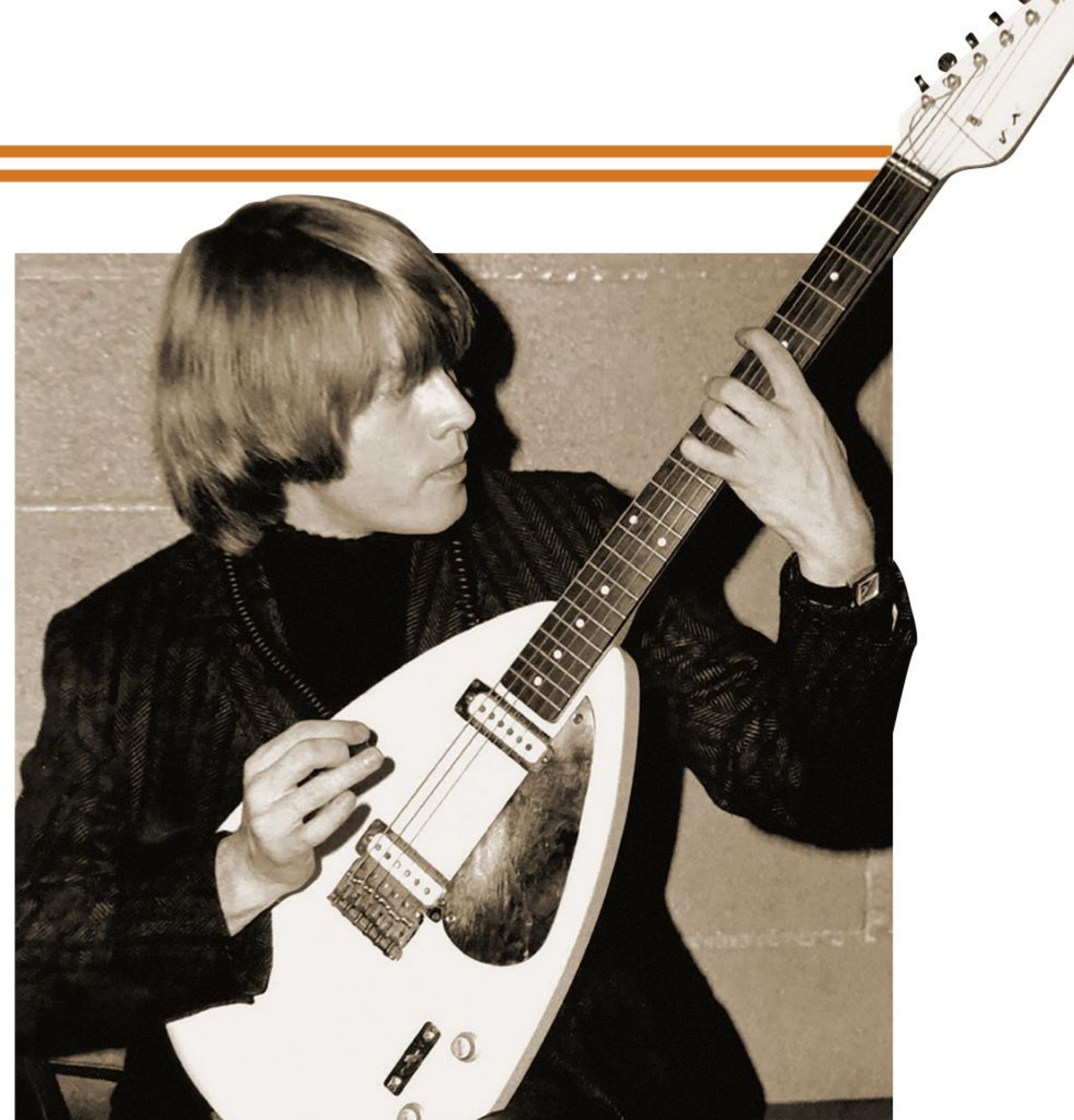
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quickly abandoned. The Phantom Mark III introduced the distinctive teardrop body shape reportedly suggested by Tom Jennings himself. Its lute-inspired curves created a visual effect unmistakable even on a blurry TV screen. Mark III prototypes were worked up at the turn of '63/'64 using the Phantom neck, two V2 pickups, a Tele-style lever switch, and a flashy chrome-plated metal pickguard.

Vox had an active artist relations department, and it wasn't long before the new model was shown to top bands. But, contrary to legend, Brian Jones was *not* the model's first high-profile endorser; The Dave Clark Five (much bigger stars at the time) showcased Teardrop guitar and bass prototypes on "Top Of the Pops" in February '64. These first Phantom Mark IIIs were finished in black, which obscured the shape on TV against the highly fashionable dark suits worn by the DC5. The group remained Vox endorsers, but did not persist with Teardrops. In '67/'68, sax player Denis Payton was seen with a white Mark XII when not blowing sax or harp.

Regardless, the Vox Teardrop will always be associated with Jones; by mid '64, the Stones were the "it" group in London, and Jones (as much as Jagger) was the face of the group. On June 26, the Stones mimed "It's all Over Now" on "Ready Steady Go!"; during the shoot, Jones and Keith Richards tried a white two-pickup Teardrop

Phantom Mark III 12-string. Jones played it with the band while Keith was photographed during a break, laughing heartily with it in his lap. While this guitar did not appear subsequently with the Stones,

The Dave Clark 5 (left) with prototype Teardrops in early '64. Brian Jones and his eternal Teardrop.

this is possibly where Jones was shown the concept. Oddly, the set was decorated with custom-color Stratocasters hanging off amps behind the band. It's tempting to think Jones, looking over the 12-string prototype, asked JMI for a six-string, but with a bridge "more like that." Because that's exactly what he got...

The head of JMI's guitar operation was 27-year-old Mick Bennett, and in mid July, he presented a hand-made instrument to Jones with features different from subsequent models; the body has a slightly longer silhouette and unique hardtail setup – a Strat bridge with the vibrato tang milled off and the block hammered into the body! Whether this was Jones' request is unknown, but it demonstrates JMI's "adaptation" of Fender hardware. All other known Teardrops carry a top-mounted vibrato and separate bridge.

Jones' guitar has a slimmer headstock with a white-painted face and Vox logo. It has two pickups, three-way switch and two knobs. Only a few other early Phantom Mark IIIs were built this way; 1965 production models had a three-pickup layout with three knobs wired like a Strat. On the whole, the Jones guitar looks to have been more player-friendly than production examples (some would argue it's



shapes and sounds

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The Teardrop was introduced with the September '64 "Shapes and Sounds" ad.

unfortunate that Bennett's prototype wasn't followed more closely).

Jones immediately put his Vox to use, and anyone who experienced the Rolling Stones' in '64 saw the unmistakable guitar. Despite a number of claims over the years, there's no evidence indicating Jones owned other Teardrops. His is accounted for in the collection of the Hard Rock Cafe, where it has been since 1984 (VG, July '15).

A JMI ad touting the Phantom Mark III appeared in late summer 1964, headlined Shapes and Sounds. Alongside the trapezoidal Phantom and Strat-clone Soundcaster, it showed a black-finished two-pickup Mark III with the Phantom's early "Hank Marvin" trem. The text notes a "...special damper fitted to the neck to cut down harmonic overtones." The DC5's guitar and the 12-string shown to the Stones have a round adjuster on the back of the headstock that activates a cam above the nut and tied to some sort of strip across the fretboard between the nut and first fret. Exactly what this did is unclear, but it died a quick death, *not* installed on Jones' guitar. In a January '65 TV performance of "Please Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood," Hilton Valentine of the Animals plays a while two-pickup Teardrop 12-string, also without the damper.

JMI had six- and 12-string Teardrop guitars in production by early '65 at the latest, cataloged as "Phantom Mk III." By that summer, they were renamed the Mark series, probably due to confusion over

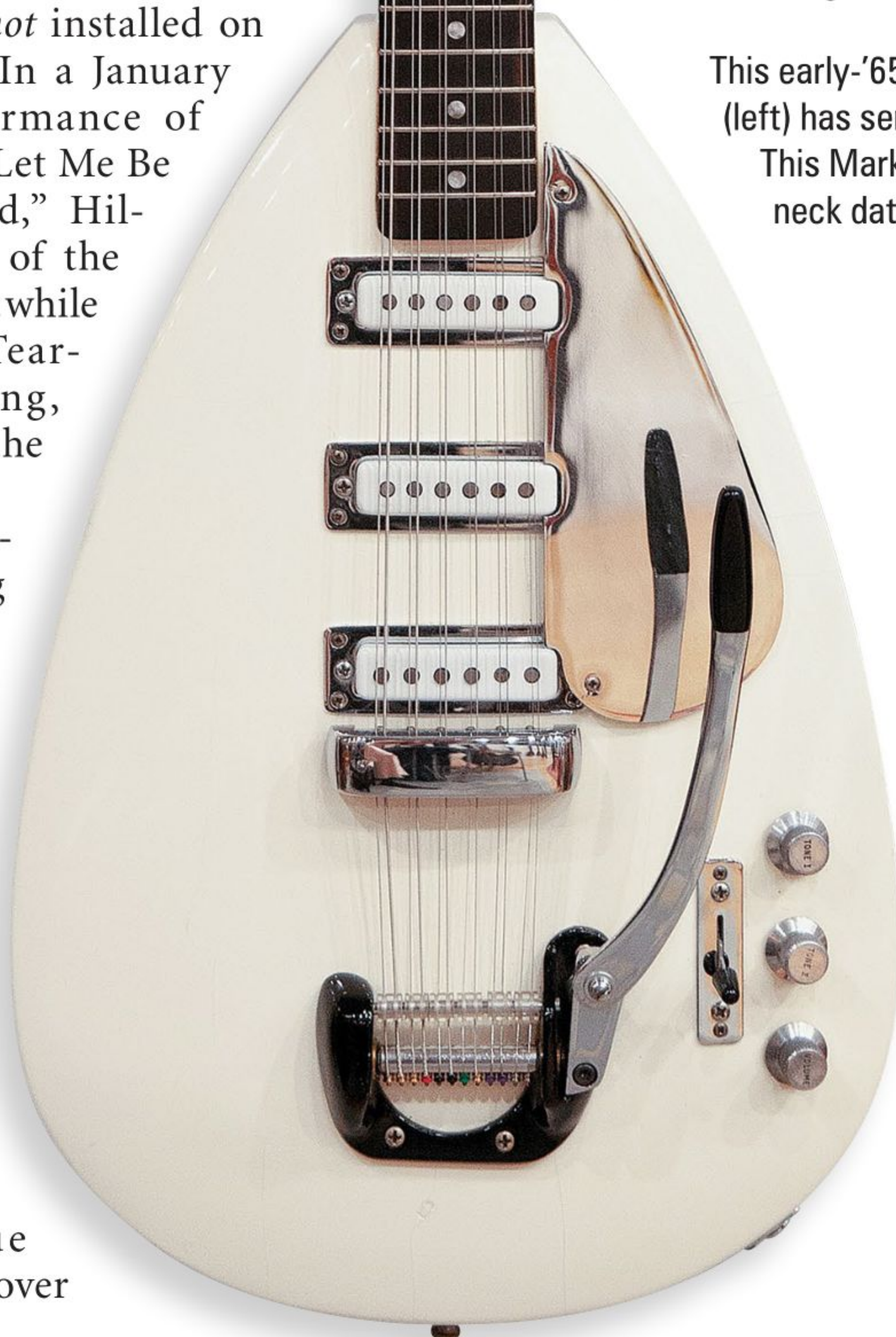


A Mark XII being assembled, summer '65.

having different models called Phantom. The Mark VI guitar listed at £89, the Mark IV bass at £94, and the Mark XII 12-string at £115 – the most expensive guitar offered (not counting the Organ-guitar hybrid).

This early-'65 Phantom Mk III 12 (left) has serial number 66097.

This Mark VI has a G-plan neck dated October '65.



The U.K. magazine *Beat Instrumental* ran a piece detailing JMI's process for assembling a Phantom Mark III at Dartford, and noting that the guitars were built, finished, and assembled in-house.

Bodies were cut from Agba, an African mahogany also used by Burns at the time. Comparatively soft, it was easy on tooling but rendered the guitars less-substantial, sometimes prone to screws pulling out, necks shifting, and creating problems with the polyester finish (a good knock could cause major cracking). The piece glossed over the origin of the necks.

The most-consistent thing about U.K.-made Teardrops is their inconsistency. The necks (and some bodies) were, in fact, outsourced from different firms. A primary supplier was furniture maker G-Plan – modern offshoot of E. Gromme Ltd., of High Wycombe. An ink-stamped "G" alongside the date on many 1964/'65 necks and bodies identifies these. The necks are very Fender like, with a flat-cut headstock and truss adjustment at the heel (JMI likely sent them a Strat neck to copy). A second supplier made necks with an angled headstock, zero fret, and the truss adjusted at the headstock end, covered by a small metal plate. These are consistent with necks on some '60s Watkins/WEM guitars, and are probably from the same source.

Consider that a dealer could order several of these guitars and they'd arrive with such variable necks. Both have 21 frets, but a "G" neck has space for 22 and they are *not* strictly interchangeable. A body with bridge posts pre-



drilled for one neck will not properly intonate if fitted with the other. The difference is about $\frac{3}{8}$ " and easily noticeable, though apparently not always to JMI's inspectors, since there are Mark VI's that will not play in tune without surgery!

Serial numbers are stamped by hand in one of several places – back of the headstock, truss plate, or neck plate. They run in a vaguely chronological series, scattershot like Fenders. Teardrops were most often finished in white, but black, blue, and red were available. And even the colors were inconsistent; earlier whites tend to a more-pure hue, later have a creamier patina. Most carry a Gretsch-like snap-on pad on the back. Knobs and switch tips change in random variations.

The white Phantom Mk III 12-string you see here has a G-plan neck and body dated February '65. Oddly, there's no Vox logo on the guitar. Another quirk is the vibrato base, enameled black for no apparent reason. This is specific to this batch; in '65, Tony Valentino, of the Standells, had an identical Mk XII numbered very closely. Some early U.K. instruments sent

PHANTOM MK. III

This new styled model features special damper fitted into neck to cut down harmonic overtones when required. The back of the body has a special padded cushion fitted for comfort and protection. Ebony fretboard with top quality American-made Machine Heads. Fitted with three single-pole type magnetic pick-ups.



to the U.S. by Thomas Organ in '64/'65 wound up on TV and movie screens with new Vox endorsers.

By mid '65, a "Mark VI" was appearing on headstocks. The earlier Phantom applique and that decal are often flaked off by now, making the transition more confusing. Above the headline here is a '65 Mark VI with a ghost image of that decal on the headstock and black Vox logo engraved into the pickguard. It was sold in the U.S. in '65 and played in a teen garage band in Pennsylvania. Unfor-



Mark 12

Exciting streamlined "tear-drop" design with a continental flair. Special padded cushion on the back of the body for added comfort. Three 6-pole wide range, high output pick-ups. 12 covered gear heads. Six on each side. Adjustable polished reinforced neck. Ebony fingerboard. Flip-action tone change switch. Master bridge adjustable to height with six individual bridges. Easily accessible adjustable truss rod. Multi-coated polyester finish in red, white, blue or sunburst.



Mark 9

The latest model in the streamlined "tear-drop" guitar series with a continental flair. This beautiful instrument has all the features of the popular Mark 12, including the special padded cushion on the back of the body for added comfort. Three 6-pole high output pickups, tone change switch, adjustable bridge, and adjustable truss rod, available in red, white, blue or sunburst.



Mark 6

Exciting streamlined "tear-drop" style. An added continental flair is provided by the special padded cushion in the back of the body fitted for comfort and protection. Three six-pole wide range, high output pick-ups. New VOX easy action tremolo. Adjustable reinforced polished neck, ebony fingerboard. Purfling neck with fret markings. Adjustable bridge. New accurate fret scale stays in tune thru high notes. Easily accessible adjustable truss rod. Contoured body for added comfort and ease of playing. Multi-coated polyester finish in red, white, blue or sunburst.

VOX MARK SERIES GUITARS

The Standells and The Kingsmen (with Annette Funicello) in 1965, both equipped by Thomas Organ-Vox; note the Kingsmen bassist miming with a Mark VI! An already outdated Phantom model in the 1964/'65 Vox catalog. Thomas Organ's '65 Vox catalog, with a mix of Teardrops.

Unfortunately, its combination of a G-plan body and Watkins neck means it never played in tune, but perhaps the Beatles, Rascals, and Animals songs the group played (the lyrics are still in the case) didn't suffer too much!



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nut, 100% original parts
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original, near mint
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Rose neck
'62 Olympic White/Slab Rose neck 100%
original, Wild Flame neck

'62 Sunburst/Slab Rose neck 2 in stock
'62 Sunburst/Round Rose neck 100% original clean
'63 Black super rare!! 100% original
'63 Dakota Red super rare!! 100% original
'64 Candy Apple Red 100% original,
spaghetti logo, Black bobbin pickups
'64 Shoreline Gold ('63 Spec), perfect
collector's piece!!
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'64 Sunburst spaghetti logo, perfect
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'64 Olympic White Transition logo,
Mint-Green Pickguard
'65 Dakota Red Transition logo 100%
original, near mint!!
'65 Sunburst Clean!! 100% original clean!
'65 Blond Super rare Maple body, 100%
original
'65 Fiesta Red 100% original, near mint!!

'66 Sunburst, 4 in stock
'67 Charcoal Frost Metallic 100% original
'67 Sonic Blue 100% original
'67 Blond 100% original, well played but cool!
'67 Candy Apple Red, only refret and
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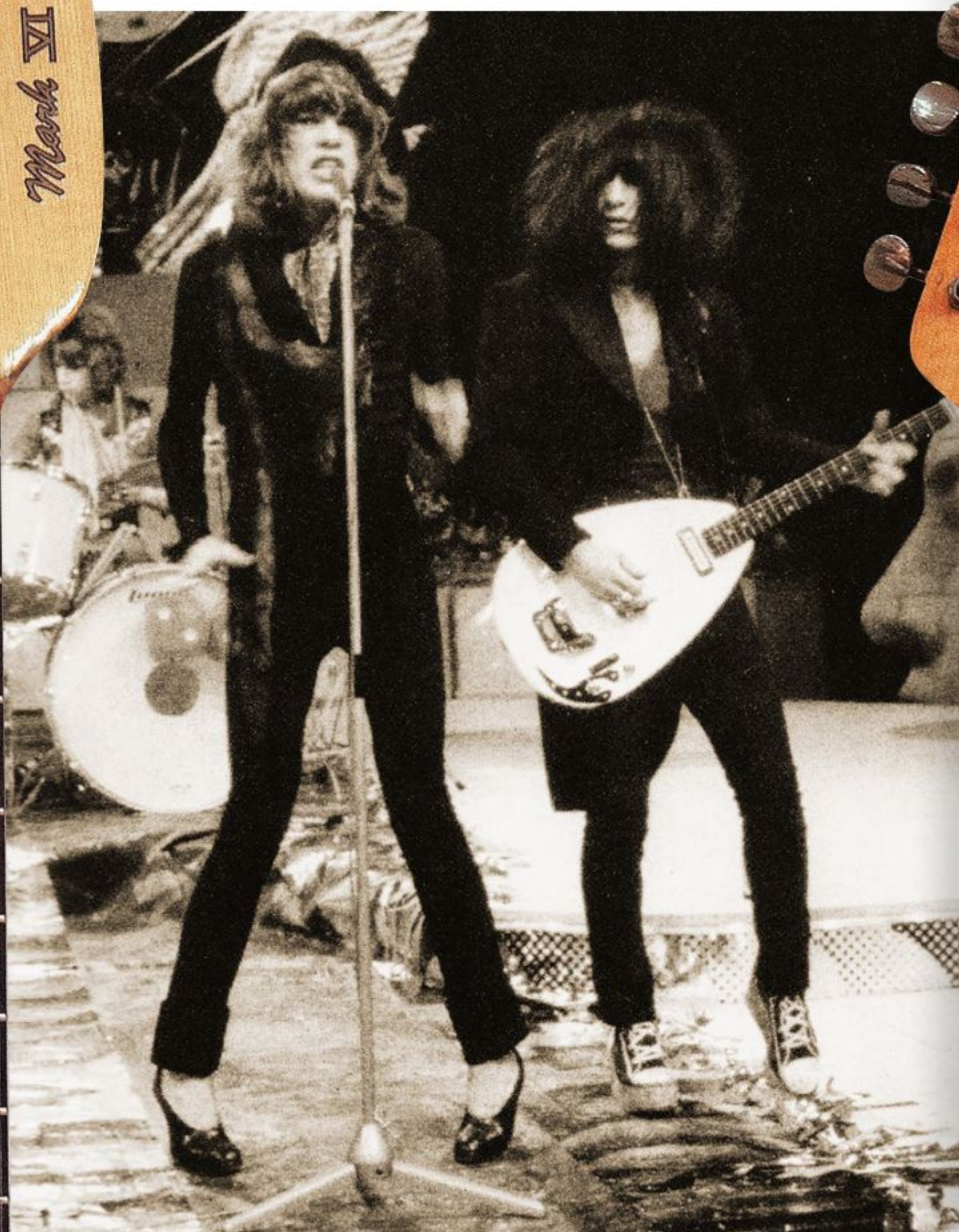
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Other changes followed. In '66, the chrome pickguards and pickup rings became a single piece, which made assembly faster. The vibrato was moved up and gained a fourth mounting screw.

A truly odd variation is some G-plan necks that appear to have been made left-handed, then repurposed for right-handed use. The headstocks were cut and spliced for re-shaping right handed, then painted over. One giveaway is the position markers remaining on the now-underside of the fretboard! These may have been leftovers used as JMI closed its guitarmaking operation.

The next development was the hollowbody Spitfire in six and 12-string versions. A sibling of the Wyman Bass introduced at the British Music Trade Fair in August of '65, they had thin, hollow plywood bodies with a single slash soundhole and bound, block inlaid Watkins necks. There's a rare Mark VI Special with onboard effects; these are almost never seen in the U.S.

Though U.K.-made Teardrops were shipped to the U.S. as part of Thomas Organ's initial orders, when the Eko factory in Recanati, Italy, came fully online, most American-market production was sourced there. Thomas' Vox catalogs list the Mark VI, XII, and IV and an unusual nine-string Mk IX that does not appear in England. A U.S. design patent for the Teardrop was filed in June '66, credited to Tom Jennings but assigned to Warwick Electronics. It was awarded in October '67; whether enforced against



Johnny Thunders keeps the flame, 1973.

copyists like the American-made Kapa Minstrel is unknown.

Mark Series instruments made by Eko were produced in much larger numbers and with more-consistent features. Production totals are unknown but

This '66 Mk VI (left) shows later features like a Watkins neck, bridge mounted closer to the vibrato, and no date stamp. A hollowbody Teardrop Spitfire from '66.

U.K. versions constitute a fraction of extant examples. Most Eko-made Marks have mahogany bodies finished in a drab sunburst, not visually as effective as the solid colors that were still offered by Thomas, but are rarely seen.

They can be identified by their white plastic pickguard, Vox logo on the headstock face (rare on U.K. guitars) and "Made in Italy by Vox" on the reverse.

How do they sound? For JMI versions, the answer is "Strat-y," with a nice range. The three-way switch can be coaxed to act as a five-way with interesting in-between tones. To most ears, the U.K.-made pickups sound vastly superior to the Italian versions. On the other hand, the Eko fretwork and truss rods are usually more functional. All Mark VI's are candidates for "least comfortable couch guitar," outpacing the Vox Phantom and Gibson Flying V for awkwardness in a seated position.

Still, for some, they hold an undeniable appeal. In 1973, New York Doll Arthur Kane bought a very early two-pickup Phantom Mk III for £20 in a Leeds pawnshop during the band's first U.K. sojourn. Johnny Thunders used it on "Old Grey Whistle Test" that November, and the guitar surfaced in the mid '80s with New York garage revivalists The Tryfles. Since 2003, it has belonged to Dolls superfan Morrissey. Tom Petty long remained a fan, and the design has been revived several times. Phantom Guitar Works has been building excellent replicas for years, but to the true devotee, the JMI versions will always be the ones to have.

Thanks to Martin Kelly, Andy Babiuk, and Chris Cush.



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THIS LITTLE PIGGY

The Vox AC10 Super Reverb

BY DAVE HUNTER

If “Vox” and “Super Reverb” look like some juxtaposed amp-branding shenanigans from opposite sides of the pond, please stifle your preconceptions a moment while we explore this diminutive cutie. One of the rarer of the early-’60s Vox models, this head-and-cab rendition of the AC10 did indeed have reverb, and was undoubtedly rather super, to boot.

The original manufacturer of Vox amplifiers, Jennings Musical Instruments (JMI), often used the appendage “Super” to designate models introduced as combos after they’d been released as piggyback head-and-cab sets. Thus, the oxymoronic name alongside an amp that only put out about 12 watts – but what a sweet 12 watts it is! The addition of reverb not only makes it one of a very limited number of AC10 mini stacks manufactured in 1963/’64 (the only time they were made in this configuration), but a desirable collector’s item at that. While the reverb is a nifty addition, for the player it’s often considered unnecessary next to that juicy, harmonically rich, nominally Class-A tone that this beastie is capable of grinding out.

JMI’s approach to its Vox amps was different from other makers. While Fender and Marshall often created medium to high-output models by using similar preamp channels across their lineups, bundling them with output stages of different sizes and capabilities, Vox models through the glory years of circa 1960 through ’67 were all entirely different. Guitarists often talk of the most-popular models as sharing that great, chimey British sound (though at different volume levels) and the AC10, AC15, AC30, and AC50 certainly all *looked* like

scaled versions of the same thing. But each had entirely different preamp topologies, used different tube types in key positions, and had individualized features.

Other than the earliest models, the AC30 had ECC83-driven (a.k.a. 12AX7) gain stages in its preamps, the hallowed

1964 VOX AC10 SUPER REVERB

- Preamp tubes: one EF86, one ECF82, three ECC83 (12AX7); reverb: two ECC83s
- Output tubes: two EL84s in class A, cathode-bias.
- Rectifier: EZ81
- Controls: vibrato amplitude, vibrato speed, vibrato Volume, normal Volume, Tone
- Speakers: two Alnico 10" Elac 10N/85
- Output: 12 watts RMS

Amp and photos courtesy of James Hoare.



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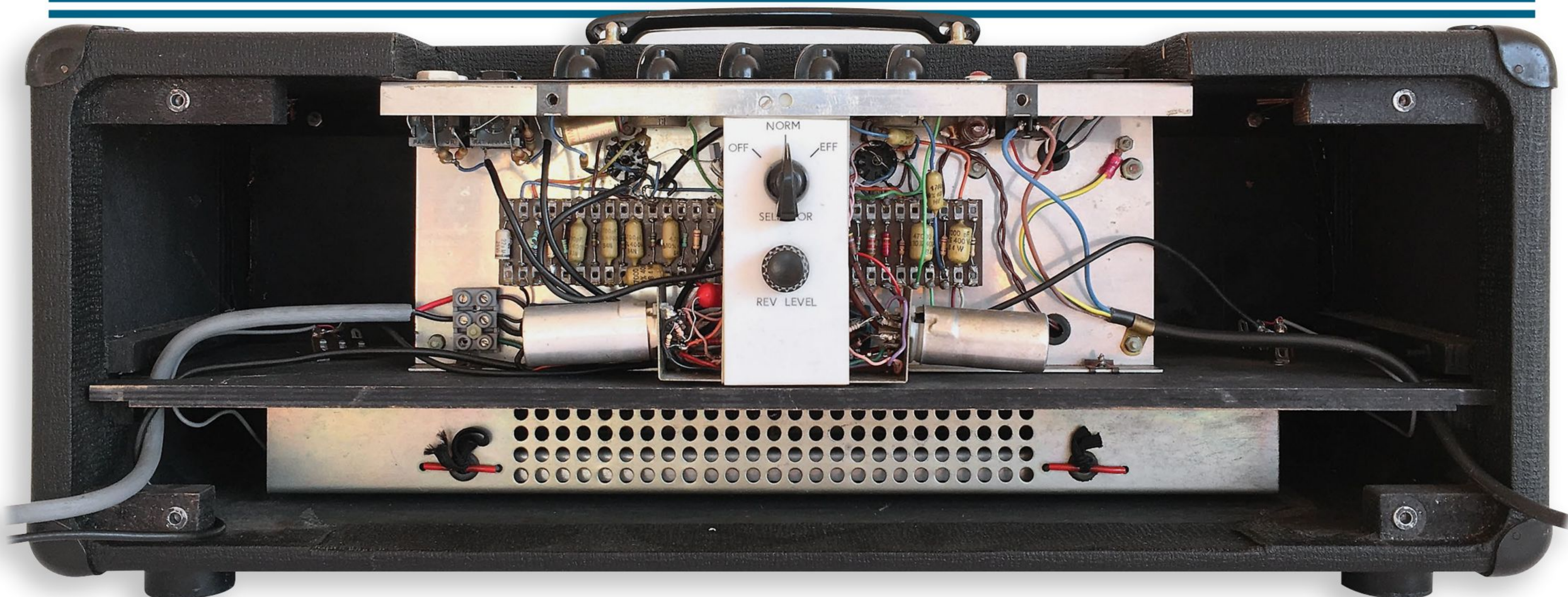
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Top Boost EQ stage included, while the contemporary AC15 had an ECC83 in its relatively mild-mannered Vibrato channel (with a 12AU7 for vibrato/tremolo function), but a beefy EF86 pentode preamp tube in its (often preferred) Normal channel. The AC10, conversely, had its hot EF86 in the Tremolo channel. The vibrato/tremolo effect itself was powered by half of an odd ECF82 preamp tube that contained two stages in one glass envelope—a sharp-cutoff pentode for the tremolo and a medium-mu triode, which applied its gain at a level roughly equivalent to a 12AT7 or 12AY7 to the relatively enfeebled Normal channel. Similar to the AC15 and some non-Top-Boost renditions of the AC30, the shared Tone control is really a high-cut that dials out highs in the output stage... sorta like the reverse of a traditional Presence control.

The reverb is added with an extension panel at the back of the chassis, much like the Top Boost stages some owners acquired by sending their AC30s to the factory for retro-fitting. A true factory-original circuit, it uses two ECC83 preamp tubes with a spring pan mounted on the underside of the plywood panel that supports the chassis itself. A three-way switch on the rear panel provides Off-Norm-

Eff, and is partnered by a traditional Reverb Level control.

Like all early Vox classics, the AC10 was designed by Dick Denney, an engineer often credited with having some of the best ears in the business... or, *one* of the best ears, given he was deaf in the other after suffering a perforated ear drum in his early years. Either way, Denney's knack for eliciting sweet, musical, harmonically enriched tones from tube circuits has long been celebrated, and the AC10 is another feather in the cap of a legendary designer who knew how to make an electric guitar sound great. There's some indication, too, that the AC10 was Denney's personal favorite of the bunch.

It's also the smallest of his truly iconic designs, the last step on the ladder before the single-ended "practice amps" like the AC4, which are quite different by nature. Like the AC15 and AC30, the AC10 uses a pair of EL84 output tubes in cathode-bias with no negative-feedback loop. All are crucial elements of what we have colloquially come

The AC10's chassis exhibits the squeeze required to add the reverb.

to call the Class A sound. Lower operating voltages from its EZ81 tube rectifier, however, and a smaller output transformer colluded to bring the AC10's output capabilities down from the AC15's 18 watts to a more-sedate 12 or so.

Not so long ago, a 12-watt AC10 would have seemed underpowered for most players' needs. But, not so long after that, when so many players were discovering that the AC15s they'd downsized to from AC30s were often *still* too loud to crank up in small clubs and studios, the diminutive AC10 sidled right into the sweet spot.

Downscaling one's volume, though, doesn't mean they should downscale tone along with it...

Looking every bit like a junior-sized AC30 Super Twin, this compact stack of a rig delivers a rich, thick sonic punch from the head's output courtesy of two 10" Elac

The transformers-and-tubes side of the chassis shows the reverb spring pan mounted behind (beneath when its mounted) the supporting plywood.



10N/85 speakers with Alnico magnets, in a pressure-sealed (a.k.a. closed-back) cabinet. Primed for early crunch and saturated vintage tones, they are fairly inefficient speakers at the best of times, further reigning in the amp's aural assault (when such is desired). Or, to hear the AC10 head in its unfettered glory, a 2x12" extension cab with more-efficient speakers (the 100-dB Celestion Alnico Blues make a good choice) will deliver a ferocious roar that belies its modest 12 watts.

This amp's owner, James Hoare, is a professional musician and studio owner who has played in the British bands Ultimate

Vox's "minimalist" labeling meant consulting the manual to know the controls are (from left) vibrato amplitude, vibrato speed, vibrato Volume, normal-channel Volume, and Tone.

The three-way reverb switch and Level control rest alongside the serial-number plate on the back panel.

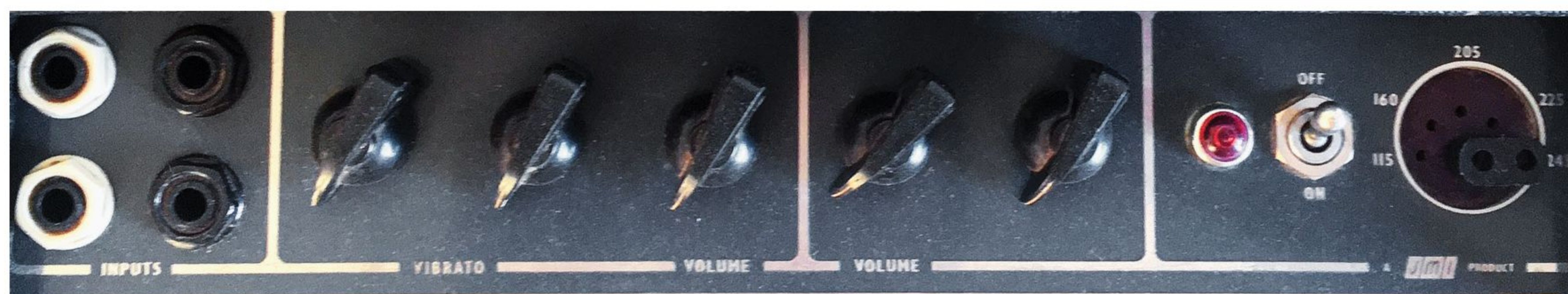
Painting and Proper Ornaments (as well as others), and has long been enthusiastic about the AC10's modest strengths.

"It's my preferred recording amplifier," he said. "I have four of them, all different models – a single-speaker 1960 combo, a twin '63 combo, a twin '65, and this Super Reverb. The AC10 is the best for studio work because it breaks up so well. I always use the tremolo channel, regardless of actually using the tremolo, because it's the better-sounding circuit. They really are amazing amplifiers."



So, next time you're thinking only an AC30 will do, but realistically considering you might need to make do with an AC15,

take a look at the smallest little big amp in the vintage Vox lineup. Used right, this little sweetie promises big tones indeed, however constrained their decibels. **VG**



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ALLEN AMPLIFICATION

New! Allen Brown Jug amp based on the Fender 6G-11 brown Vibrolux made famous by Mark Knopfler of The Dire Straits. A rare pairing of 6L6 power tubes and a single 12" speaker by Leo. It features a warm complex clean tone with exceptional tremolo and beautiful overdriven tones. Only 40 pounds. Check it out at www.allenamps.com.



ZT AMPS

Designed with one of rock's true innovators, the Lee Ranaldo Club from ZT Amplifiers' Custom Shop is based on the Sonic Youth guitarist's original ZT 12" Club combo. The striking visual and sonic statement of the 220-watt powerhouse comes directly from Lee himself. Each is signed by Lee and built in California with American-made parts. Hear it and believe it. www.ztamplifiers.com.



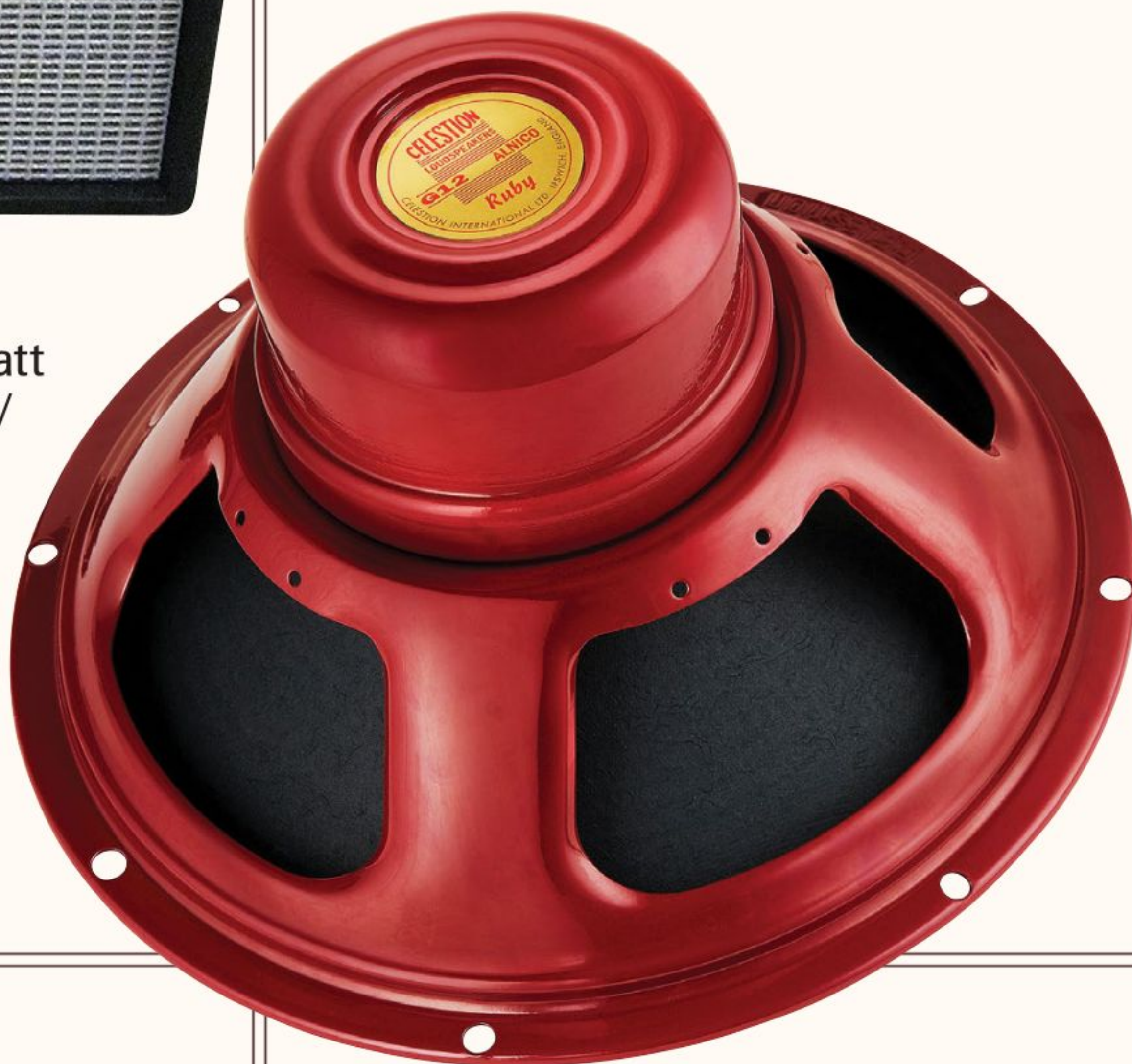
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The Ruby is an alnico-magnet guitar speaker that's purpose-built to create vintage tones, and at 35-watts power handling, it's ideal for use with mid-powered amps and combos. Bringing the instantly familiar Celestion alnico vibe with its glorious, dampened attack; the Ruby oozes a richly musical vintage warmth, with mellow highs and a smooth, sophisticated midrange. Street: \$289. www.celestion.com.

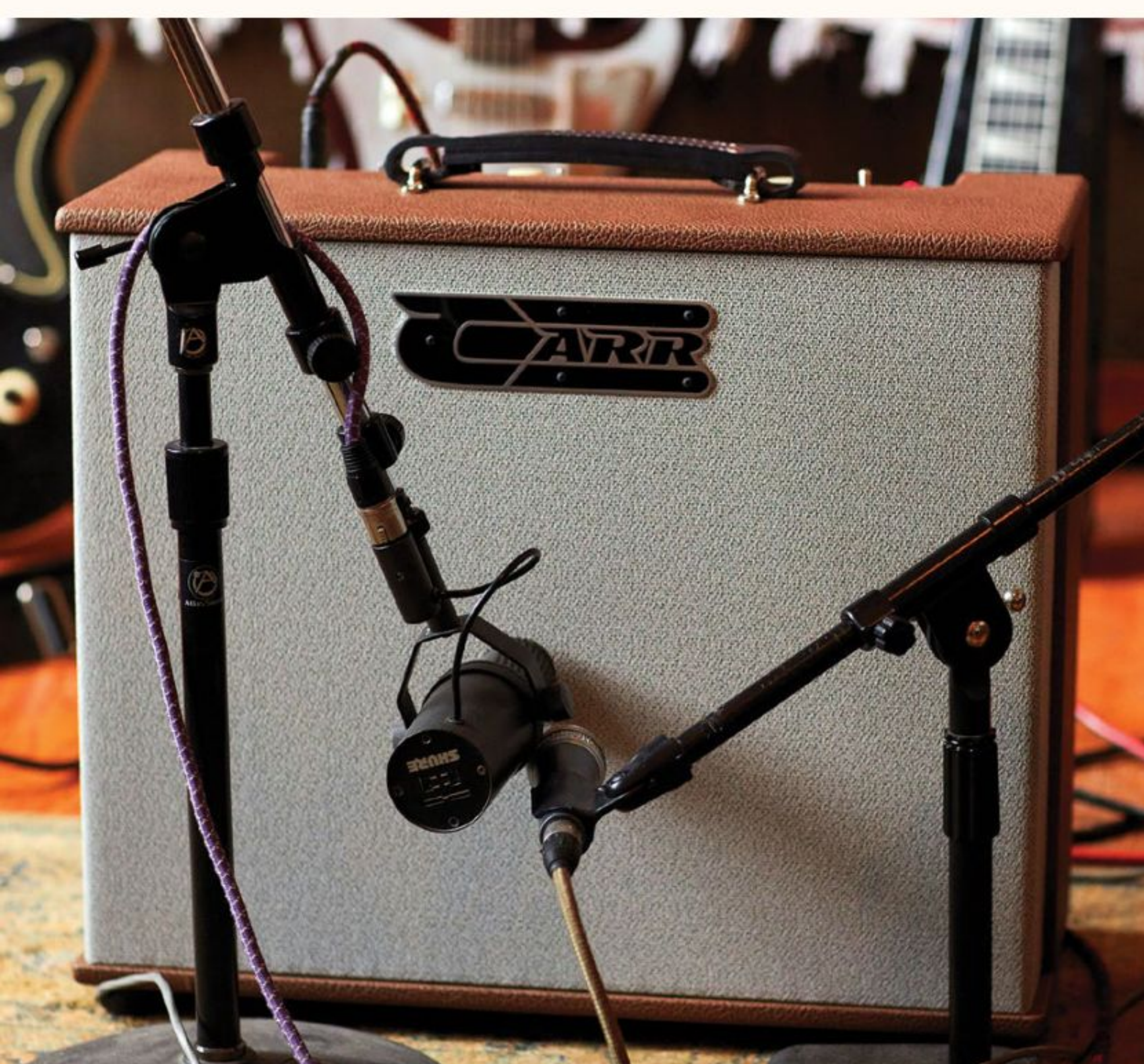


PRS SONZERA 20

The Sonzera 20 is a two-channel amplifier with full, 3D tones reminiscent of American '60s and '70s amplifiers. Both channels maximize note clarity and definition, and thanks to its circuit design, the lead channel can be set to act as either a boosted clean channel or be manipulated to go from very slight to very heavy distortion via the volume and master controls. Gig-ready and studio-sound, the Sonzera 20 offers steadfast reliability, versatility, and controllability. www.prsguitars.com.

CARR TELSTAR

The Telstar blends the sinewy harmonic assertion of EL84s with the deep full control of 6L6s in a new and unique push pull recipe. Our Lean/Lush switch tailors the body of the tone while the 53/58 switch changes the overall gain structure and the frequencies the Tone control emphasizes. Sonically treading the years from early Fullerton '50s roundness thru late '50s proto British bite. www.carramps.com



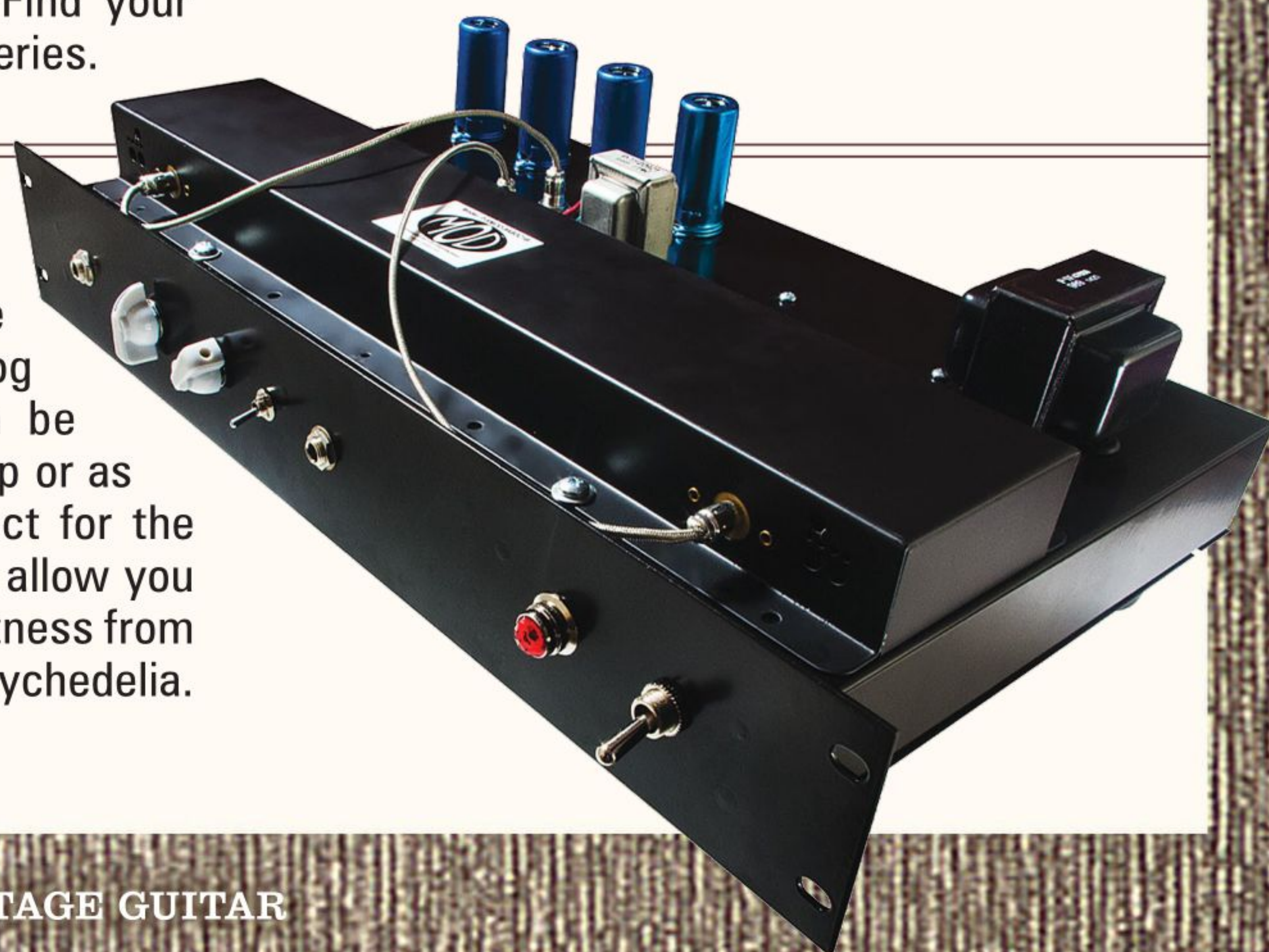
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MOD KITS DIY

The MOD Kits Wave is a versatile stand-alone, tube-driven analog spring-reverb-unit kit. It can be used in front of your guitar amp or as a line-level analog reverb effect for the recording studio. Two controls allow you to serve up a wide range of wetness from just a touch to over the top psychedelia. www.modkitsdiy.com. VG



Price Guide

By Alan Greenwood & Gil Hembree

NEW & UPDATED LISTINGS

YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND.	
			LOW	HIGH
1900	Brandt Mandola		\$600	\$1,200
1995	Campellone Special		\$4,300	\$5,700
1907	Cole (W.A.) Imperial G			
	Bowl Back Mandolin	27 ribs	\$700	\$1,000
2019	Collings CJ35		\$3,000	\$3,900
2019	Collings Clarence White	Adirondack &		
		Indian rosewood	\$3,400	\$4,400
2015	Collings D-2H		\$2,450	\$3,150
1995	Collings D-2HB	Brazilian, Adirondack	\$6,200	\$8,000
1968	Danelectro Bellzouki	1 pickup, teardrop body	\$750	\$975
1960	Danelectro Deluxe Triple Pickup	3 pickups	\$1,150	\$1,500
1965	Danelectro Standard Double Pickup	Bronze	\$775	\$1,025
2004	Deering Saratoga Star 5-string Banjo		\$3,300	\$4,200
2010	Duff F-5 (Loar) Mandolin	Adirondack	\$5,500	\$7,100
1920	Dyer Harp Guitar	Style 4, no binding	\$3,000	\$3,900
1940	Epiphone Broadway Tenor Guitar		\$1,025	\$1,350
1952	Epiphone Devon	Sunburst	\$1,350	\$1,750
2006	Epiphone EJ-160E			
	John Lennon Limited		\$325	\$425
1950	Epiphone Emperor Regent	Natural	\$7,200	\$9,400
1968	Epiphone Sorrento (1 pickup)	Cutaway thinline	\$1,300	\$1,700
1970	Espana Classical (nylon strings)		\$155	\$200
2000	Fender Deluxe 90 Amp	Solid state, 90 watts, 1x12	\$150	\$200
1981	Fender Deluxe Reverb Amp	Blackface	\$1,000	\$1,300
2012	Fender '52 Esquire (CS)	NOS	\$1,750	\$2,300
1997	Fender Jag-Stang		\$675	\$900
1962	Fender Jaguar	Sunburst	\$3,700	\$4,900
2012	Fender 50th Anniversary Jaguar	USA	\$1,050	\$1,375
2009	Fender Jaguar Classic			
	Players Special	Single-coils	\$500	\$650
2015	Fender Jaguar			
	Johnny Marr Signature		\$975	\$1,275
2011	Fender Kurt Cobain Signature Jaguar		\$1,000	\$1,300
1981	Fender Jazz Bass	International Colors	\$1,900	\$2,450
2002	Fender American Series Jazz Bass IV		\$750	\$975
2005	Fender Marcus Miller			
	Signature Jazz Bass	Custom Shop	\$1,300	\$1,700
1997	Fender Noel Redding			
	Signature Jazz Bass		\$925	\$1,200
1994	Fender Jazzmaster '62	Import	\$800	\$1,075
2015	Fender Jazzmaster '65	USA	\$1,350	\$1,800
1965	Fender Mandolin (electric)	Sunburst	\$1,825	\$2,375
1963	Fender Precision Bass	Sunburst	\$6,000	\$8,000
1961	Fender Tremolux Amp	Rough white and		
		oxblood, 1x10	\$2,200	\$2,900
1989	Fender Twin The Twin			
	Evil Twin Amp	2x12 tube amp	\$600	\$800
1966	Fender Wildwood	Various (unfaded)	\$1,600	\$2,200
1963	Framus Sorella Model 5/59		\$550	\$700
1986	G & L ASAT		\$900	\$1,200
2000	G & L ASAT 20th Anniversary	50 made	\$1,100	\$1,450

1979 Gibson
Flying V
(Mahogany)
Silverburst

FEATURED SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Timm Kummer with a '70s Carlo Greco, joined by John Sazy, and Larry Wexler, who's holding a '54 ES-5.



YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND.	
			LOW	HIGH
2002	G & L ASAT Custom			
	Classic Semi-Hollow		\$875	\$1,150
1985	G & L Broadcaster	Signed by Leo, ebony board	\$1,600	\$2,100
2013	G & L Fallout	Hum, P-90	\$725	\$950
1996	G & L Legacy	3-bolt neck, Alnicos	\$675	\$900
1969	Garcia Classical (nylon strings)	Rosewood	\$300	\$400
1964	Gibson Atlas IV Amp	25 watts, 1x15 piggy, brown	\$475	\$600
1948	Gibson BR-9 Amp	1x8, streamlined look	\$385	\$500
1991	Gibson EDS-1275 Double 12 (Historic Collection)		\$2,500	\$3,200
1961	Gibson ES-5 Switchmaster	Pointed cutaway, HBs	\$9,100	\$11,800
1955	Gibson ES-5N Switchmaster	Natural, P-90s	\$7,900	\$10,300
1939	Gibson ES-100	1 pickup, archtop	\$1,400	\$1,800
1943	Gibson ES-125	Blade pickup	\$1,900	\$2,500
2001	Gibson ES-135 (Thinline)	Trapeze	\$1,000	\$1,300
2003	Gibson ES-137 Classic	Trapezoid markers	\$1,300	\$1,675
1961	Gibson ES-140 3/4 T	Sunburst	\$1,650	\$2,150
1959	Gibson ESM-1235 Double Mandolin		\$27,000	\$35,000
1979	Gibson Flying V (Mahogany)	Silverburst	\$3,600	\$4,700
1955	Gibson GA-7 Les Paul TV Model Amp	4.5 wats, 1x10	\$385	\$500
1973	Gibson G-50/G-50 A Amp	Solid state, 40/50 watts, 1x12	\$225	\$295
1963	Gibson GA-17 RVT Scout Amp	1x10, smooth brown	\$425	\$550
1997	Gilchrist Acoustic Arch Top (guitar)		\$17,500	\$22,500
2006	Gold Star GF-100FE 5-String Banjo		\$1,150	\$1,475
1984	Gold Star JD Crowe 5-String Banjo		\$3,700	\$4,750
1966	Grammer G-20	Grammer era	\$1,250	\$1,650
1959	Gretsch Anniversary 6124	Green 2-tone Filter-tron	\$2,250	\$2,900
1959	Gretsch Anniversary 6125	Sunburst Filter-tron	\$1,550	\$2,000
1975	Gretsch Broadcaster 7604 (Hollowbody)	Bigsby, sunburst	\$725	\$950
1979	Gretsch BST 5000 Beast	Neck-thru	\$650	\$850
1969	Gretsch Chet Atkin Nashville 6120		\$1,875	\$2,450
1961	Gretsch Country Club	Sunburst	\$2,400	\$3,100
1957	Gretsch Duo-Jet (6128)	Black, humptop	\$5,500	\$7,100
2014	Gretsch Duo-Jet (G6128TXG)		\$1,500	\$1,975
1968	Gretsch Eldorado (6040 / 6041)		\$1,150	\$1,500
1958	Gretsch Silver Jet (6129)	Singlecut	\$5,000	\$6,475
1995	Grosh Classical Electric	Single cut, nylon strings	\$1,200	\$1,550
1964	Guild Cordoba T-50 Slim		\$950	\$1,225
1975	Guild Custom F-512 12-String	Indian rw	\$1,525	\$1,975

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Brian Goff Bizarre Guitars	Jim Singleton Jim's Guitars
Les Haynie Blue Moon Music	Kevin Borden Kebo's BassWorks
Garrett Tung Boingosaurus Music	Dave Hinson Killer Vintage
Dave Belzer Burst Brothers	Timm Kummer Kummer's Vintage Instruments
Walter Carter Carter Vintage	Buzzy Levine Lark Street Music
Daniel Escauriza Chicago Music Exchange	Larry Wexer Laurence Wexer, Ltd.
John Majdalani Cream City Music	Artie Leider McKenzie River Music
Dave Rogers Dave's Guitar Shop	Neal Shelton Neals Music (California)
Drew Berlin Drew Berlin's Vintage Guitars	Lowell Levinger Players Vintage Instruments
Stan Werbin & S.J. "Frog" Forgey Elderly Instruments	Howie Statland Rivington Guitars
Dewey Bowen Freedom Guitar	Mike Reeder Mike's Music
Rick Hogue Garrett Park Guitars	Eliot Michael Rumble Seat Music
Gary Dick Gary's Classic Guitars	Sammy Ash Sam Ash Music Stores
Alex Gray Goat Peak Strings	Eric Schoenberg Schoenberg Guitars
Eric Newell Gruhn Guitars	Richard Gellis Union Grove Music
Richard Johnston Gryphon Strings	Fred Oster Vintage Instruments
Kennard Machol & Leonard Coulson Intermountain Guitar & Banjo	Richard Friedman We Buy Guitars
	Nate Westgor Willie's American Guitars

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YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND.	
			LOW	HIGH
2003	Guild D-55 50th Anniv. (Brazilian)	1953-2003 logo	\$3,600	\$4,800
1965	Guild Economy M-20	All mahogany	\$1,350	\$1,750
1975	Guild F-212 12-String		\$1,100	\$1,425
2008	Guild GAD-30E (mahogany)		\$350	\$465
1975	Guild S-50, humbucker		\$850	\$1,100
1972	Guild S-50, single-coil		\$850	\$1,100
1980	Guild S-70D S-70AD	S-70D, 3 single coils	\$875	\$1,125
1979	Guild Starfire IV		\$1,500	\$2,000
1978	Gurian S-2-M	Mahogany sides & back	\$1,450	\$1,900
1972	Hagstrom D'Aquisto Jimmy	1st design	\$1,000	\$1,300
1992	Hamer Californian	USA, various features	\$1,600	\$2,100
2001	Heritage Eagle		\$1,700	\$2,200
2019	Heritage H-137 Standard	TV Yellow	\$1,050	\$1,350
2018	Heritage H-150 C/H-150 CM	Flamed	\$1,400	\$1,800
2015	Heritage H-516 Thin		\$1,500	\$1,950
2019	Heritage H-535		\$1,550	\$2,000
1999	Jackson Phil Collen PC1 (USA)	Upgraded top	\$1,300	\$1,700
1983	Jackson Randy Rhoads (USA)	Early serial		
		#1-#10, no trem	\$3,500	\$5,000
2000	Jerry Jones Longhorn Guitarlin		\$1,000	\$1,300
1940	Kalamazoo KG-21	Archtop L-30	\$775	\$1,025
2019	Kentucky KM-606 Mandolin		\$400	\$525
1979	Kramer 350-G Standard		\$750	\$1,000
1989	Kramer ProAxe Standard (USA)		\$650	\$850
1893	Libby Bros. Open			
	Back 5-String Banjo	Fancy position markers	\$1,000	\$1,325
1973	Loprinzi Classical (nylon strings)	Solid Brazilian rosewood	\$1,550	\$2,000
1932	Ludwig Ambassador Tenor Banjo		\$750	\$1,000
1912	Lyon & Healy Style A Mandocello		\$4,900	\$6,400
1956	Magnatone Model 109			
	Melodier Deluxe Amp		\$600	\$775
1989	Marshall Model			
	1960A/1960B 4x12 Cabinet	Custom color	\$475	\$625
2010	Marshall Model			
	1960AC Classic Cabinet	4x12	\$575	\$750
1999	Marshall Model 1962			
	(Bluesbreaker Combo) Amp		\$975	\$1,300
1968	Marshall Model			
	1987 50-Watt Amp Head	Black, plexi	\$3,100	\$4,100
1926	Martin 000-18	12-fret, steel, 224 made	\$9,600	\$12,500
1969	Martin 000-18	327 made	\$2,850	\$3,700
2005	Martin 000-28EC	Sitka, rosewood, natural	\$1,925	\$2,500
2004	Martin 00-16DBM	All mahogany	\$1,150	\$1,500
1956	Martin 00-17		\$2,350	\$3,050
1933	Martin 00-18	14 fret, bar fret	\$6,900	\$9,000
1956	Martin 00-18G		\$1,425	\$1,850
1899	Martin 00-21		\$4,800	\$6,200
1956	Martin 00-28G	Brazilian	\$2,900	\$3,800
2000	Martin 00C-15AE	129 made	\$750	\$1,000
1929	Martin 0-21	Steel, 12-fret	\$6,500	\$8,500
1920	Martin 0-45	Gut strings, 13 made	\$25,000	\$32,000
2009	Martin D-35		\$1,650	\$2,150
2015	Martin D-35JC Johnny Cash	Black	\$2,700	\$3,500
1998	Mid-Missouri M-2 Mandolin		\$325	\$425
1973	OME Model XX Tenor Banjo		\$950	\$1,250
1940	Rickenbacker			
	Silver Hawaiian Lap Steel		\$1,125	\$1,450
1964	Supro Jet Airliner Steel	Six string or eight string	\$425	\$550
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MUSICAL CHAIRS

Lucinda Williams' *Car Wheels on a Gravel Road*

By Michael Dregni

In 1998, Lucinda Williams was at a crossroads. She'd released two stellar albums – her 1988 eponymous tour de force and '92's *Sweet Old World*; "Passionate Kisses" scored two Grammys and "Changed The Locks" remains one of her most powerful

songs. Though a critic's darling, Williams was not widely known among the record-buying public. She hoped to change that with her next album, and that's when things became difficult.

Sessions for what became *Car Wheels on*

a *Gravel Road* began in Austin in '95 with the usual suspects – Williams' road band, including drummer Donald Lindley, bassist John Ciambotti, and Gurf Morlix, the guitarist and producer credited with creating the guitar sound on Williams' records.

"Lucinda would write the song, and then play it for me," Morlix recalled of their effort to make the album a standout with a different, fresh sound. "I'd usually listen once, then play along the second time. More often than not, riffs would come to me the first time through; I might offer arrangement advice, but it usually came to me in pretty good shape. The riffs might later be finessed a bit, but they'd usually become part of the song. No songwriting credit for that, of course, but I am happy the guitar parts became essential.

"I tend to compose solos," he added. "The first time through is just hunting for something that works, but after 10 times or so, it would come into focus. A well-composed solo can be an integral part of the song."

After weeks of recording, Williams felt the tracks sounded "...flat, lifeless, not up to par," as she told *The New York Times* in '97.

"She wasn't very happy," Morlix remembers. "She decided the whole thing had to be redone, so we started over."

In '96, they began again, moving the sessions to Nashville with Steve Earle as producer, along with his engineer and co-producer, Ray Kennedy. With Buddy Miller now on guitar, they worked with '50s recording gear including a Urei/Universal Audio 1176 compressor/limiter, to get the old-time sound Lucinda loved. Halfway through the sessions in Nashville, Morlix gave up.

"I had to hit the eject button," he said.

His moving on to pursue a solo career caused a rift with Williams that has never quite mended.

Soon, the sessions as a whole fell apart. Earle was fresh out of prison for cocaine and weapons possession, and he and Williams weren't getting what she wanted.

Next, she next took her tapes and decamped to L.A., signing on with producer Rick Rubin's American Recordings label. She hired producer Roy Bittan, longtime keyboardist for Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band, and things resumed.

Ciambotti recruited guitarist Johnny Lee Schell from Bonnie Raitt's band, then Greg

Lucinda Williams: Ebet Roberts.

Leisz joined the proceedings. Finally, Charlie Sexton flew in from Austin to do overdubs between stops on a Bob Dylan tour.

But even at American's studio, things were not going smoothly.

"Everybody thinks I'm such a perfectionist," Lucinda complained to the *Times* reporter during the sessions. "That's what's so frustrating. A million people could tell me this album's great, and it won't matter if I don't feel that way in my gut. It's the whole art thing."

Sexton remembered the gestation of one song, "Lake Charles." Behind Lucinda's aching vocals, he originally played his ESP Strat copy with lipstick pickups, adding soul-style licks such as Steve Cropper might have dropped in behind Otis Redding. But Lucinda found it too folksy. And too pretty.

"I [then] played my '30s Regal wood-body resonator to add dirt," he said. "I didn't know many traditional Dobro-type licks, so to speak, so I was playing in an unorthodox way, and I got lucky."

Still, in Sexton's mind, there's one player on the disc who set the bar.

"That album was full of great players, but it started with the best guitar player on the record producing – which is the deep well that is Gurf Morlix," he said. "In my mind, he plays all the unique hooks and memorable guitar parts on the record."

"Every part I played up until my decision to bail made it into the album," Morlix remembers. "Of course, I had played those songs a lot more than anyone who was brought in after I left. I'd honed the parts, and was at home in the songs."

Leisz also calls out the album's engineer, Jim Scott, as "the unsung hero" of *Car Wheels*.

"The decisions he made during the mixing had a lot to do with the final result," Leisz said.

Scott, who missed out on all the drama, the three producers, and many guitarists, fondly recalls his time mixing the album. He was simply given the tapes from all three sessions and told by Rubin to make an album out of it.

"My job was just mixing," he said. "The album stopped and started for different reasons, people fell out and people fell in, and other people did overdubs, and one guy would say, 'Let's replace all these guitars,' and someone would say, 'Let's put some keyboards on there,' and someone else would say 'Let's put a different harmony on there.' So a lot of people had their fingers on it."

"Ultimately, Rick told me, 'If there's three sets of guitars on one song, just pick the best,

LUCINDA WILLIAMS CAR WHEELS ON A GRAVEL ROAD



and I don't care who played them, I don't care who's mad at who, I don't care who fired who, I don't care if it's one guitar from that guitarist and one guitar from two years later – just go through it, pick the coolest stuff, and play it for me."

"This was very common with Rick. He didn't sit in the studio and work on the snare sound; he just wanted to hear the mix. If it hit him right, you were done. If it hit him wrong, he gave you a list of notes and you went back to the studio and kept on working it. He just wanted the coolest record because there was no one cooler than Lucinda Williams."

Scott made the picks, intermixing sessions as they caught his ear.

"It was just a matter of listening," he recalled. "I didn't have any loyalty to anybody; I was supposed to just make it sound super cool."

Amazingly, while the guitar slot became a game of musical chairs, the original Austin bottom line of drummer Lindley and bassist Ciambotti survived all the cuts.

The LP was all-analog, and Scott focused on one mix at a time. He had two machines going with 24-track tape, and it took him about two days to mix each song. He'd send the songs to Rick, who'd messenger backnotes.

"The sound was dry, punchy, in your face, and fo-

cused on the song and vocal and drums," Scott says. "Not a lot of effects or reverb; just simple and loud and clear."

"When we were done, Rick sent the record to Lu, and she sent back a list of typewritten notes with her opinions on how loud the guitar was or the hi-hat or the bass. But I can tell you I didn't go back and change anything; the record was done when Rick said it was done. That was that."

Car Wheels was finally released by Mercury Records on June 30, 1988. It scored a Grammy for Best Contemporary Folk Album, but more importantly, it won legions of fans for Williams, especially among guitarists.

Sexton remains proud of his contribution on what has become a classic.

"The genius of the record was, in my humble view, the brilliant songwriting of Lu and her soulful vocals. Number two was Gurf's perfect, melodic guitar parts. It was a long and searching trip she made with the help of some giant talents. And the songs deserved the distance."

For her part, reflecting on the album two decades later, Lucinda tells VG that her favorite guitar riffs and solos remain Morlix's originals on "Metal Firecracker" and "Right In Time."

"The lead-guitar parts define those songs and make them memorable," she says. Her favorite song is "Joy," which featured Earle on resonator and Morlix, Schell, and Bo Ramsey on electrics.

"It opened the door to more blues-rock songs with driving beats and edgy guitar sounds – stuff I'd always had hidden in me," she said. "Steve Earle saw that and brought it out."

Was she ultimately happy with the album as released?

"If I were recording these songs now, I would be more confident in my abilities and I'd be playing guitar on more of the tracks." **VG**

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BRAD WHITFORD

Team Aerosmith

By Wolf Marshall

Much has been written about Aerosmith's most-visible fret man, Joe Perry, while co-lead guitarist/composer Brad Whitford is accorded little attention despite the contribution of his equally important work.

In truth, there have always been two lead

guitarists in Aerosmith. Part of the band's mojo lies in the intertwining, often overlapping/contrapuntal guitar; the Perry/Whitford team has always contributed enormously to its chemistry and sonic presentation.

Rock has no shortage of significant guitar

teams. Consider the varied roles in the Beatles' work, the interaction of Keith Richards with Brian Jones, Mick Taylor and Ron Wood in the Stones, the deliberate twin harmony of Wishbone Ash, the acoustic blend of Eric Clapton and Andy Fairweather Low during *Unplugged* sessions, the heavy attack of Metallica and Megadeth, and the guitar layering of Southern-rock bands like the Allmans, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Outlaws, 38 Special, and Molly Hatchet – not to mention Black Crowes, Pearl Jam, and Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers, who in varying degrees tapped into a two-guitar ethos. In Aerosmith, that ethos and sound have been central since its earliest days.

Aerosmith was already rolling when Brad Whitford jumped aboard. The original lineup consisted of vocalist Steve Tyler, guitarists Joe Perry and Ray Tabano, bassist Tom Hamilton, and drummer Joey Kramer. Whitford replaced Tabano in August, 1971 as the quintet developed a following in Boston. Aerosmith scored a record deal with Columbia in '72, and through the '70s released a string of hit albums and singles. In the early '80s, the band suffered artistic differences and personnel changes; the worst blow was the departure of Perry and Whitford, who moved along to form the Joe Perry Project and Whitford/St. Holmes, respectively. The group reconciled and reunited in '84, reinvented itself in the ensuing years, and has since become one of rock's most-resilient and iconic acts.

Bradley Ernest Whitford was born in Winchester, Massachusetts, on February 23, 1952. Musically inclined at an early age, he dabbled with piano and trumpet before picking up acoustic guitar at 14. Soon after, he acquired a budget electric and began teaching himself pop and rock music. He played with several local bands – Symbols of Resistance, Teapot Dome, and Earth. After graduating high school in 1970, he briefly attended Berklee College of Music (a jazz-oriented institution) while performing locally with Stray Cat. He left school to gig in the Nantucket area with Justin Thyme, a band in which he honed his rhythm-guitar chops. Perry and Hamilton were regular attendees at their shows, and when the time came to solidify the personnel, Brad received the call. The rest is history that has seen not only the rise, fall and comeback of a beloved hard-rock band, but the legacy



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of Whitford as an influential rock guitarist. As Slash put it, “I identified with Joe Perry’s image both sound-wise and visually, but I was totally into Brad Whitford’s solos and he has a more-direct influence on the way I play...”

INFLUENCES

Whitford’s early influences include the Beatles, Kingsmen, and Booker T. & the MGs. He was later enamored of Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, and Jeff Beck; citing Beck’s *Truth* and *Beck-O-La* as significant style guides.

STYLE

In Aerosmith, Whitford and Perry divide guitar duties diplomatically and intuitively, as befits the music. Though Brad often provides a foundational rhythm-guitar part or counterpoint behind Joe’s riffs and solos (think “Toys in the Attic” intro), there is a balance to their synergy from which he emerges the MVP. For example, in the choruses of “Walk This Way” he plays a driving rhythm-guitar comping pattern under Joe’s double-stop rockabilly string-bend lick, and songs like “Sweet Emotion,” revel in the Perry-Whitford guitar chemistry with chorused/unison chord riffs. As a rhythm guitarist and “utility” player, Brad excels in devising complimentary power-chord figures (throughout the Aerosmith repertoire), decorative arpeggiation parts (as in “Last Child” and “Kings & Queens”), single-note and dyad riffs (often interweaved, as in the overlapping guitar textures in verses of “Walk This Way” and the loose-yet-tight interaction in “Mama Kin”), and accompanimental fills. His R&B influences surface on tracks like “Last Child”

with tight-but-funky rhythm-guitar “chinks” and dance-oriented main riff, while “Kings & Queens” (on which he is co-composer) conveys a spacious quasi-classical impression with

Tune down 1/2 step

Moderately Slow Rock

E

“Last Child” was a high point of Aerosmith’s *Rocks* album and remains a favorite in their live show. Brad’s solo is a centerpiece in the tune. Played over a funk groove established in the verses, it brims with signature moments. Note the deft scale combining in

E, where Brad mixes elements from the Mixolydian mode, Dorian, and the Blues Scale. Points of interest include the aggressive riff-based opening lick in measures 1-2, the wide interval leaps in 5-6, and a rhythmically displaced (harmonized) ostinato line in 7.

multi-layered orchestration under his droning arpeggio patterns.

Whitford has stepped out on many tunes to play prominent second lead/co-lead or

main solos; examples include “Dream On,” “Mama Kin,” “One Way Street,” “Lord of the Thighs,” “Round and Round,” “You See Me Crying,” “Back in the Saddle,” “Last Child,”

Slow Rock

Fm Dbmaj7

Bb

C Fm

"Kings & Queens" is an enduring piece from *Draw the Line*. Brad's presence on the track reveals much about his musical MO. He supplied semi-classical arpeggiation in the verses and heavy power chording throughout, which suits the music's mythological epic mood. His solo was cited by Perry as signature Whitford. A closer look reveals some of the attributes that define his distinctive style. He delivers a terse, emotional statement over the song's rock-ballad

groove – not unlike Michael Schenker, Gary Moore, or Ritchie Blackmore. The melodic application of blues-rock ideas in a minor key is a common thread in the genre. Notice his use of the minor-pentatonic scale and blues scale and his blues-inflected mannerisms against what is essentially a diatonic progression in the minor mode. Also notable is the double-timed phrase in measure 3, which pushes toward a strong climax and lends a compositional touch.

"Sick As a Dog," "Nobody's Fault," "Home Tonight," "Kings and Queens," "The Hand That Feeds," and "Milk Cow Blues." After the band's '80s reunion, his lead playing was featured in "The Hop," "Sheila," "Permanent Vacation," "Love in an Elevator," "Hoodoo/Voodoo Medicine Man," "Fever," "Gotta Love It," "Flesh," "Nine Lives," "Stop

Messin' Around," "Beautiful," "Can't Stop Lovin' You," and others. Moreover, he often extended the band's arrangements in concert with new co-lead parts in "Same Old Song and Dance," "Train Kept A-Rollin'," "Walk on Down," and "Jaded."

As a lead player, Whitford employs the requisite rock/blues vocabulary of his he-

roes like Clapton, Beck, and Hendrix, yet adds numerous novel twists. Elements like chromaticism, sophisticated scale combinations, and a melody-centric conception underscore the notion of his being a "schooled" or "refined" musician. Nonetheless, his leads are hardly cerebral, but rich in genre-correct pentatonic and blues-scale material, soulful string bending, power-dyad fills, and stylistic vibrato.

An unapologetic "feel" player, he prizes spontaneity and improvisation, and in the studio generally restricts overdubbing solos to three or four passes. And while he favors the no-nonsense sound and feel of a traditional stop-tailpiece Les Paul, he is comfortable and fluent on a whammy-bar-equipped Strat, as on "Nine Lives" – note its dips, bends, and wide vibrato. He generally plays in standard tuning but has occasionally used dropped tunings including drop D, double drop D, and DADGAD for tracks like "Come Together," "Back in the Saddle," "Last Child" and "Livin' On the Edge."

ESSENTIAL LISTENING

Whitford is well-represented on all classic Aerosmith albums. Highlights include his lead/co-lead work on "Dream On," "Mama Kin," "Lord of the Thighs," "Back in the Saddle," "Last Child," "Kings & Queens," "Milk Cow Blues," "Nine Lives," and "Street Jesus."

ESSENTIAL VIEWING

Live Texxas Jam (1978), *Rock for the Rising Sun* (2011), and *Rocks Donington* ('14) are telling documents. Performances abound online; recommended are a full-length 2014 Detroit concert, *Rock in Rio* and informal clips from their *Deuces are Wild* Las Vegas show. Also suggested is Brad's pre-show live solo from the Staples Center (on Strat) and

a live extended intro to “Last Child.”

SOUND

Inspired by Jimmy Page, as a teen, Whitford ditched his Fender Jaguar for a Les Paul. He has since favored vintage and modern Pauls for much of his career. His first, heard on *Aerosmith*, was paired with a 100-watt Marshall. By the second album, he had a different Les Paul and a red '60 double-cutaway Junior. In this period, he switched to Ampeg V-4 amps. As Aerosmith rose in prominence, Brad acquired several vintage Pauls, including a '57 goldtop with Bigsby, '52 and '55 Standards, two '58 Standards (goldtop and 'burst), and a '60 'burst. In the late '70s, he also used a new Les Paul Custom with Bill Lawrence L-90 XL pickups, a vintage Fender Broadcaster, various Strats, and B.C. Rich Eagle and Rich Bich models. He switched amps again, this time to modified Music Man heads through custom-made 4x12 cabs with JBL speakers. In the studio, he sometimes played through a '54 Fender Champ.

His strings were Bill Lawrence .010 or .009 sets, and he employed a Mel Bay light pick. Brad used an array of pedals onstage, including MXR 10-band EQ, flanger, phaser, compressor, and DDL, and an AKG reverb.

Today, he is still seen with Les Pauls, vintage or a Historic '59, new '58 VOS (chambered), a goldtop '58 reissue, or one of several Tom

Moderately Fast Rock

G#m

Brad's solo in "Nine Lives" marks an important moment at the height of Aerosmith's comeback. His succinct-but-aggressive solo fits the quasi-ethnic mood of the music nicely and provides a glimpse of his whammy-bar antics. Brad's improvisations occur over G#m. Note his use of chromatic passing tones added to the standard G# minor-pentatonic scale in the first measure as well as his tonality-stretching

string bend into the major third, C (B#). In measure 3, he plays an ear-catching figure made of pull-offs and pedal tones (the open B string). This pattern implies the G# Dorian mode, further evidence of his scale-combining strategies. Sweep-picked muted rakes and whammy-bar bends and vibrato are elements heard in measures 4-5. His closing thoughts exploit thematic climbing unison bends to set up the final phrase.

Murphy custom reissues. He also plays Fenders – notably, a '67 XII, a '62 Relic Strat, Mary Kaye reissue, Eric Johnson Strat, and a new Telecaster. He prefers noiseless DiMarzio pickups on most Fenders. His alternate guitars include a Music Man "Game Changer" Reflex, Echopark Down Towner, and Epiphone Casino reissues. He currently favors Ernie

Ball strings, using .010 and .011 sets.

Whitford is a co-founder of 3 Monkeys amps and has used them prominently since 2006. They're heard live, including on the *Reunited* album. Live, he plugs into a Grease Monkey (AC30 type with

four EL84s), along with BW119 heads (119 watts with four 6L6s). These are run into 3 Monkey cabs with 4x12 cabs or 10" speaker cabs. He also uses a PRS prototype with EL34s (like a "dream Marshall"), a 2012 PRS covered with paisley, and Fender Twin-Reverb Custom with a 15" speaker.

He uses numerous effects housed in a custom pedalboard. His pedals are controlled by Voodoo Labs MIDI switching system. Stompboxes include a Reason or Klon distortion, Pigtronix Disortion, Butler Tube Driver, Fat drive, Xotic EP booster, Fulltone Supa-Trem and wah, Eventide Time Factor unit, and various TC Electronic pedals – clean boost, chorus, flanger, reverb and Flashback echo.

Wolf Marshall is the founder and original editor-in-chief of *GuitarOne* magazine. A respected author and columnist, he has been influential in contemporary music education since the early 1980s. His books include *101 Must-Know Rock Licks*, *B.B. King: the Definitive Collection*, and *Best of Jazz Guitar*, and a list credits can be found at wolfmarshall.com.

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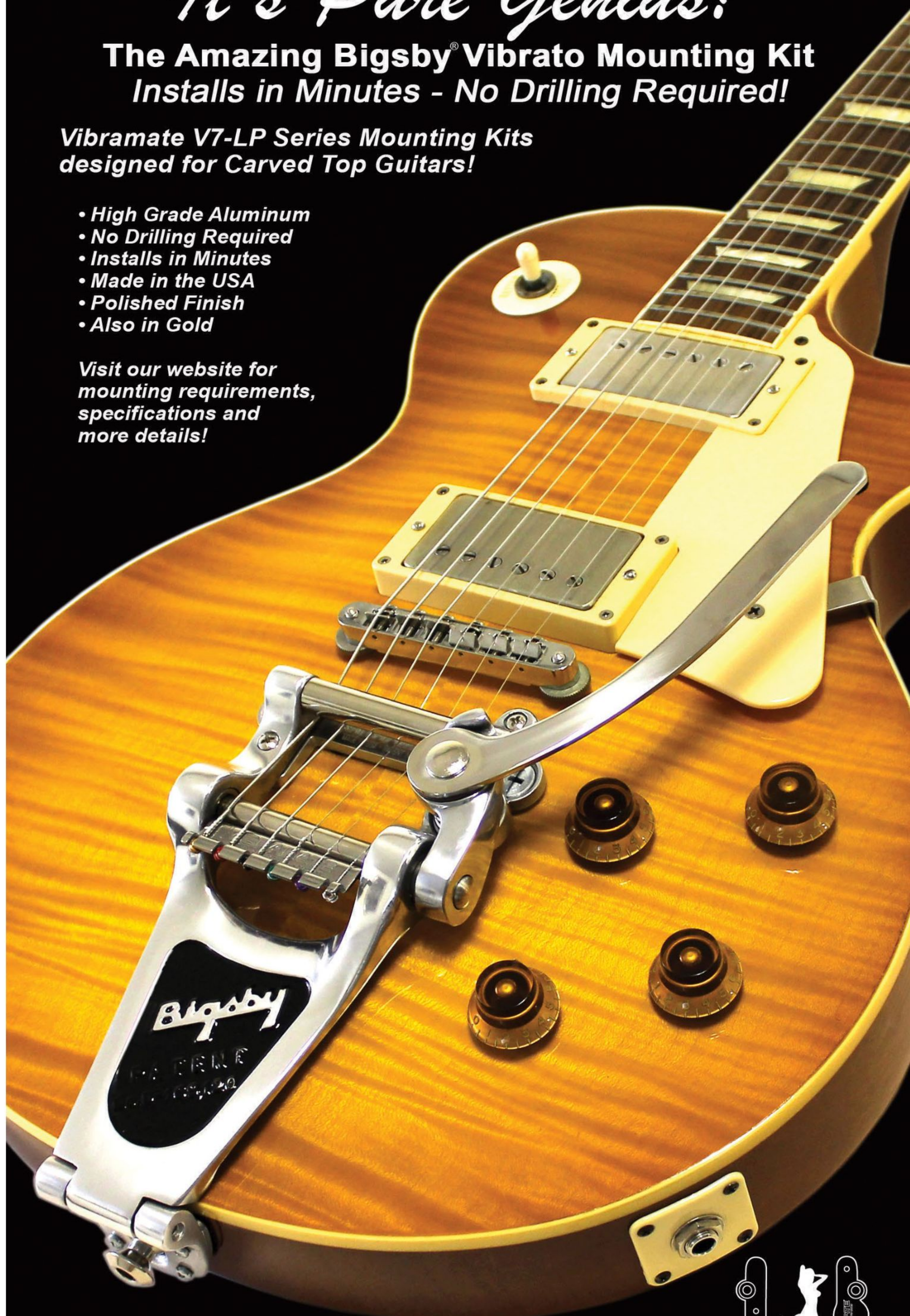
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STORY OF THE MOSTORTION

Plus, Replacing F-Stamped Tuners on a Vintage Strat

By Zac Childs

I have an old Ibanez Mostortion pedal and am wondering what the back-story is on this sleeper of a pedal.

– Tim Farner

I reached out to John Lomas, who designed the Mostortion while working for Ibanez/Hoshino from 1983 through the early 2000s. Here's what he told me.

"I developed the Mostortion in 1990 because I was trying to keep my job. The yen was really strong against the dollar and hair bands were on the way out, so our guitar sales were hurting. I'd seen Marshall and others do good things with Mosfets, and I thought, 'Why not put it in a pedal?' The exchange rate is also the reason Ibanez had shifted to cheaper construction of the 10-series pedals and the all-plastic Soundtanks.

"I started by taking the CA3260E mosfet and sticking it in a Tube Screamer circuit. It sounded pretty good, with nice headroom and responsiveness. Then I decided to add the tone stack from our test amp – a 15-watt solidstate Peavey with a three-band tone stack.

"The Mostortion was never designed to be a distortion – it's an overdrive – and I did not name it; we were talking about calling it a Mos-Drive at one point."

I asked John about the pedal's short life, as it was made from 1990 until only '92.

"It didn't sell well... in fact, we couldn't give them away," he said. Years later, though, high-end Nashville players such as Lee Roy Parnell, Bob Britt, Derek Wells, Rob McNelley, and Jeff Senn popularized the pedal and drove prices up on the original units. Later, Lomas was the driving force behind the reissue of the TS-9, which reportedly sold 5,000 units in the weeks just after its release in '92.

I have a '69 Stratocaster and the button has broken off of its low-E tuner. I bought a set of Fender reissue tuners, but they're



An early-'90s Ibanez MT10 Mostortion pedal.

very different than the original and too big for the original holes. Where can I find a replacement? – Dave Wheeler

There are three versions of F-stamped tuners, and none are truly interchangeable. The original was first used on Strats in mid '67 and is similar to the earlier Kluson-made tuners, using the same hole size and grommet

but with offset screw mounts. Version 2 was made for Fender by Schaller and first used in the mid '70s; it's heavier, has a collar around the shaft, and does not allow access to the gear, essentially making it sealed. Installing it would mean removing wood from the back of your headstock (to make room for the collar). That version of the tuner was used until the early '80s.

The modern version is similar to V2, with the collar, but the spacing is different enough to make it difficult to use as a replacement for the Schaller.

If you want to avoid modifying your vintage Strat, you'll have to find a tuner/set on the used market. Make sure it does *not* have the collar on the housing around the tuner shaft. While you're at it, I'd highly recommend thoroughly cleaning the original tuners. Leave the grommets, but remove the tuners. Use naphtha and a toothbrush to clean out the gunk, then after drying the parts, apply white lithium grease to the gears, then reassemble and re-install. They'll be good to go for many years.

My Gibson A-50 mandolin (with the cool original faux-alligator case) was given to me by an uncle years ago. I love the sound of it, but if I play for a half hour, it hurts my fretting hand. I can play guitars for hours, but not this mando. What can I do? – Jim Cranston

Vintage mandolins – especially student models – have narrow necks and flat fretboards (with zero radius). Plus, they tend to have very small frets. Those three factors can add up to pain.

There is no way to address this with your A-50 – you can't add wood to the neck, and likely there isn't enough rosewood on the fretboard to add radius. You *could* install bigger frets, but it likely wouldn't be enough.

I recommend keeping the mandolin as-is, and finding a newer one to play. Modern mandos tend to have bigger, wider necks, larger frets, and a radiused fretboard, making them much more comfortable to play, especially for guitarists. These features are available on instruments in all price ranges, so there are tons of options.

Zac Childs is a guitar tech in Nashville. If you have a question about guitars – anything from nuts and bolts to historical or celebrity-related inquiries – drop a line to him at zac@askzac.com or visit facebook.com/askzac.

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PIN YOUR SWEETHEART

Securing the Bridge on an Archtop

By Will Kelly

A amateur guitarists are often intimidated by archtops, not only because they're hollow, but they also have dramatically different tailpieces and bridges.

The floating bridge is an especially scary

piece because intonation and action are so vital to a guitar's playability, and bridge position is critical; if it's not properly mated to the curve and angle of a top, it won't make proper contact. So, heavy/hard playing can

create issues, and string changes can be nerve-wracking.

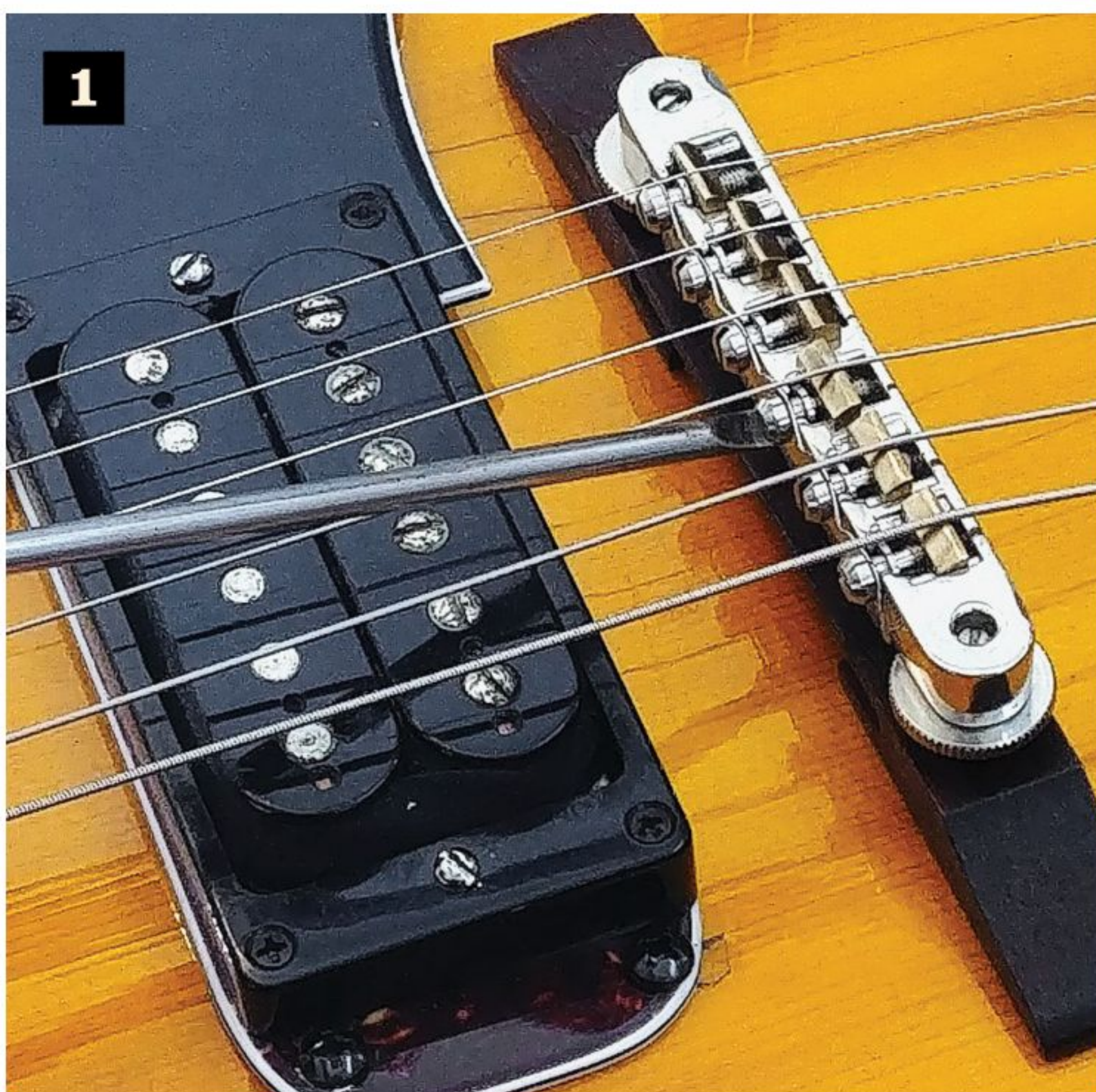
Still, playing an archtop can add flavor to your sound. And, fortunately, there's a work-around for the bridge. This month, I'll show you how I "pinned" the bridge on an archtop to improve sustain and tone while adding stability.

1) Before starting, I had to make sure the bridge base and guitar's top were properly mated. These wooden bases are usually flat, while archtops are curvy, so there's a small contact area between the two under normal string pressure. So, it was critical that I locate and mark exact placement of the bridge base. That meant doing a proper setup, paying special attention to intonation and string spacing along the edges of the fretboard.

2) I used masking tape to mark the position of the bridge base, then trimmed a piece of 120-grit sandpaper slightly longer and about three times the width. I taped this to the guitar's top using the tape as a placement guide. I prefer to keep loosened strings on the instrument because even slight down-pressure helps hold the bridge in place while I sand. I moved the base on the sandpaper until its marks were as wide as the base, then slid the base lightly back and forth along the string path, constantly checking the underside until the surfaces were lightly sanded.

3) After removing the sandpaper, I repositioned the bridge assembly according to the taped marks, then tuned the instrument and checked for gaps in the base's fit, making sure there was no wobbling or rocking. I then re-checked tuning, intonation, and string-to-edge spacing.

4) With the bridge in position, it was time to install the pins. For this, I used small,



1/2"-long brad nails to secure the bridge base. Using a side cutter, I cut the head off of one nail, then put it in the drill chuck.

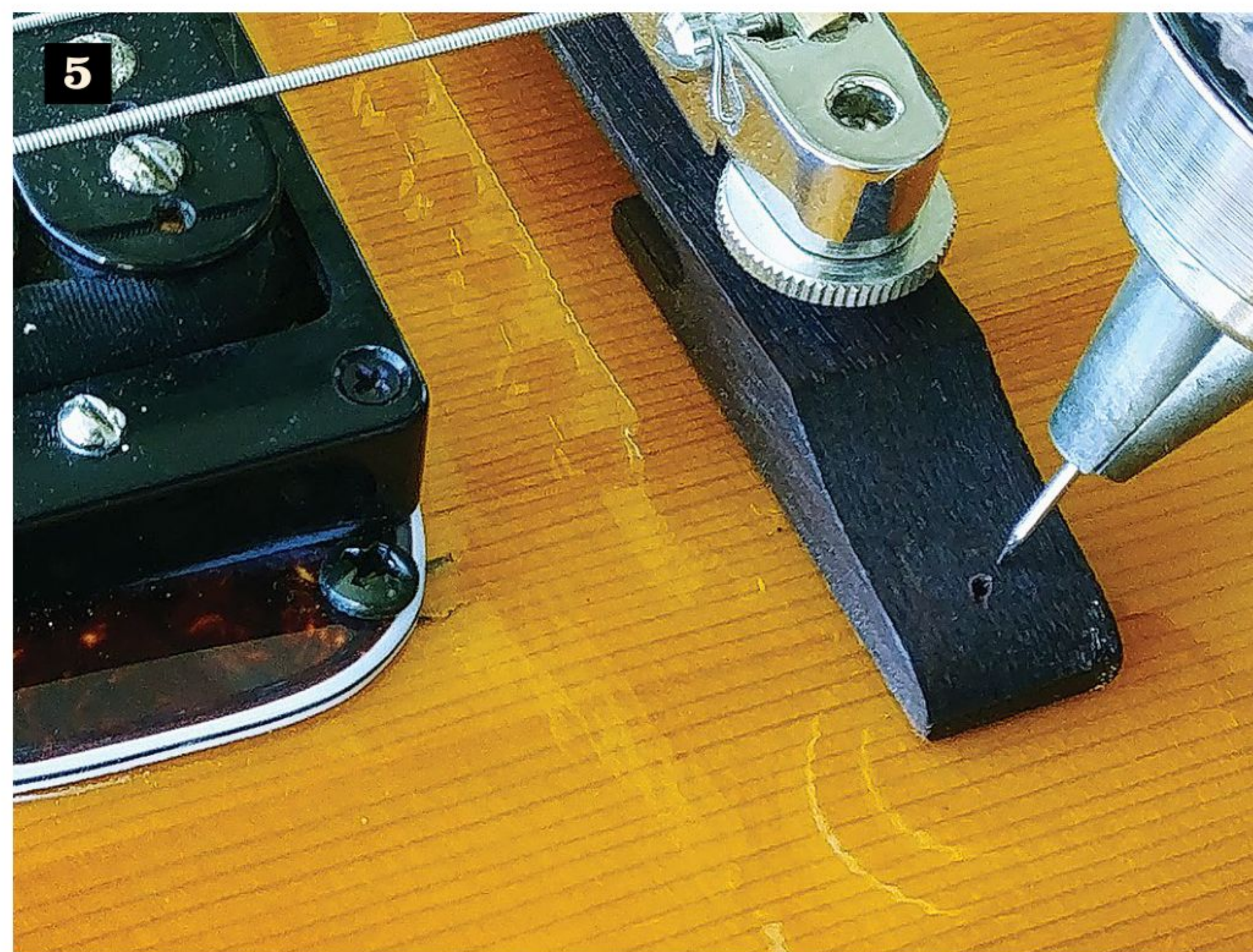
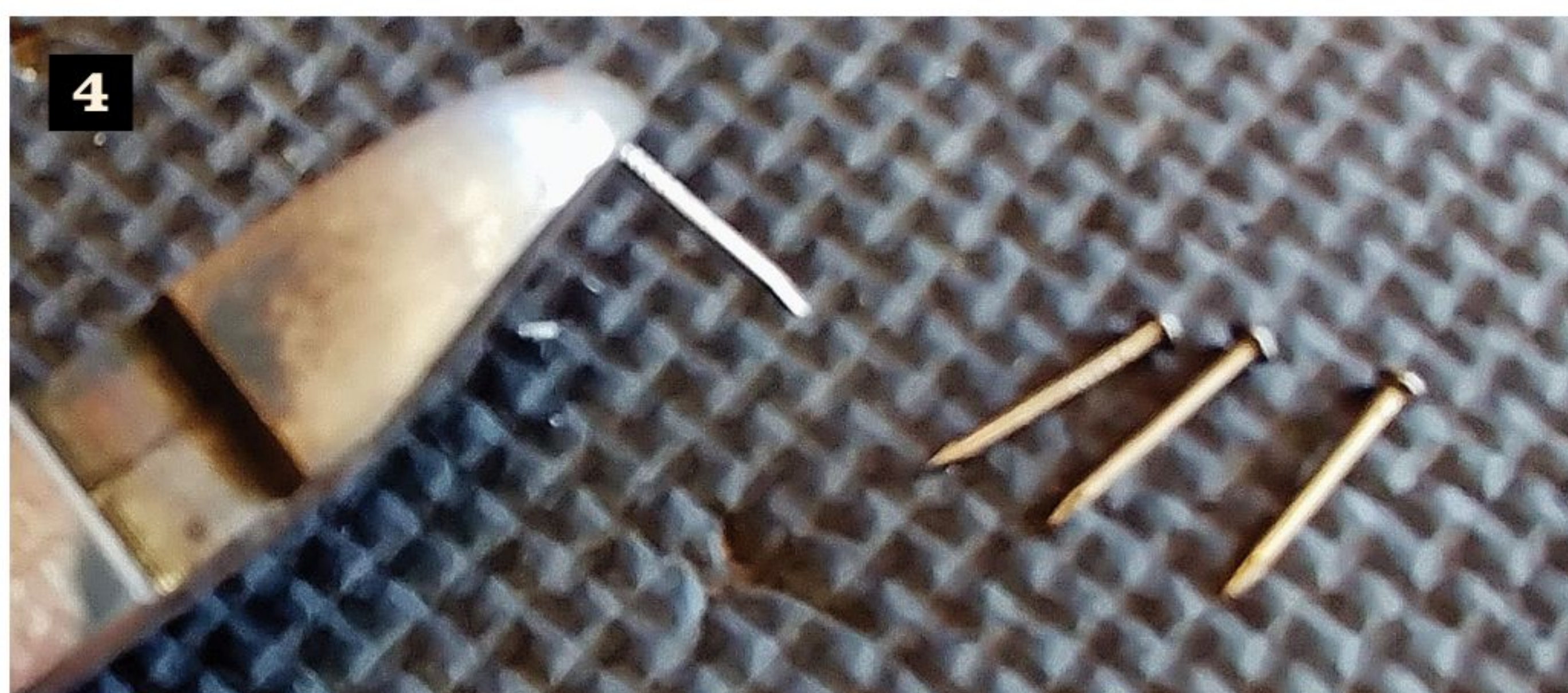
5) I lightly drilled through the base and into the top, using the brad nail as a bit (the base must not move during this step). After drilling one side of the base, I inserted a nail through the top to hold it in position as the second hole is drilled. The procedure was then repeated for the other hole.

6) For final install, I used two more brad nails with a small drop of medium cyanoacrylate (CA) glue placed on the tip before insertion. I used a small tack hammer to tap-in the brad nail. Again, I repeated this on the other side.

7) After removing the tape markers, I was done! There are pin options other than brad nails, including wooden dowels. It's just a matter of preference, but brad nails allow for lifting the bridge if needed.

With the assembly fitted to the guitar, the tone has markedly changed—louder and more strident, with more sustain. And, the base stays in place even when playing with a heavy hand. Plus, string changes are a breeze! If I was going to do this on a vintage archtop, I'd modify a replacement bridge base rather than drilling in one that's decades-old. And because it involved making two small holes in the top (even if they're hidden by the bridge when installed), it isn't a modification to take lightly. But, if you can live with two tiny holes, you'll get a lot more tone and sustain in exchange!

Will Kelly is a guitarist, repairman, and the author of *How to Build Electric Guitars*. He operates Hard Knocks Guitars in Apex, North Carolina, where he has played host to countless artists, instruments, and amplifiers. You can contact him at WillKelly@nc.rr.com.



T

here has always been an acoustic side to the hard-rocking Stone Temple Pilots. Heck, some of their best tunes were partially or fully unplugged – “Creep,” “Pretty Penny,”

“Big Empty,” “Sour Girl,” “Hello It’s Late.”

But they’ve never fully explored the approach for an entire album... until now, with *Perdida*.

BY GREG PRATO

Dean DeLeo

STONE TEMPLE PILOTS

ACOUSTIC-TYPE THING

The second album to feature vocalist Jeff Gutt, *Perdida* (a Spanish word that translates to “loss” or “lost”) rounds a lineup of brothers Dean (guitar) and Robert DeLeo (bass), along with drummer Eric Kretz. For it, electrics were mostly replaced by a variety of acoustic instruments, common and uncommon, new and vintage—as the DeLeo brothers recently explained to *Vintage Guitar*.

Why an all-acoustic album now?

Robert DeLeo: I’ve been wanting to let it all hang out for a while now. I think just things happening in life, it was a good moment to step off that train and just reflect on life. And what better way to do it than portray it in music. I

think being a musician is a wonderful gift – to be able to get out what you had inside and heal... or get it out of your soul or spirit.

Dean DeLeo: It was definitely something we wanted to do for a while, but it pretty naturally came together. It wasn’t something that we toiled over a cauldron about. We had a lot of songs and did writing on the road.

There are quite a few extra players on the album.

RD: There are; friends who are really proficient in what they do – a flautist, a sax player, strings. We incorporated that into the landscape of the songs and what we were hearing. It was really nice to have them play on the record.

What are some of your favorite tracks, from a guitar perspective?

DD: I like what *everybody* did – the personality of everything. I loved the way the hand drums sound on “Three Wishes,” the resonance of them. It’s not just guitar for me, it’s kind of what everybody brings in.

RD: They all have a really deep meaning. I guess I’d say the title track. I’ve played some guitar on STP records – not a lot. Dean’s such a great player, and he knows what I’m hearing. When he plays it, it’s exactly what I wanted to hear. Maybe that’s the benefit of being brothers. But I really felt like I needed to play these songs, because of where they came from. On the title track, I got to play some nylon-string, which I was really excited about.

Which guitars did you use for recording?

DD: I used a lot. A Gibson J-50 built in 1950. I also have a ’53 Martin – a little 0-18 that I used a fair amount. And my dear

Dean DeLeo: Emily Paine.

friend, Bruce Nelson, at Nelson Guitarworks, built me some really wonderful guitars, and I used a guitar that's very close to a Stratocaster.

RD: Dean and I have been collecting vintage stuff for three decades now, and I think when something like this comes about, it's really exciting. One of the most exciting things about doing a record like this is pulling all your vintage acoustic gear together.

It's always exciting to have an array of stuff to choose from – with what best represents the song. We [also] used a '55 J-45, a '61 Martin nylon-string. We used my '59 P-Bass, a '74 Fender Tele bass, and I like this instrument that I always try and fit in, called a Marxophone. It's like an autoharp and a hammer dulcimer put together, and you can either hammer it like a dulcimer or pluck it. It's a very interesting instrument that I really enjoy using.

We made a special trip out to Ben Harper's grandfather's store, the Folk Music Center, in Claremont. It was started in 1961, and there's an array of world instruments from ages ago. Anyway, I don't play upright bass, but I was hearing an acoustic bass on some of these songs. I was thinking maybe a guitarrón, like the Mariachis use for bass. It's got a big back, eight strings, and it's fretless. I wouldn't really know how to play it, so I asked if they had any guitarróns, and they happened to pull one out. A real old, beautiful guitar that was fretted and converted into four strings. It was perfect. The sound and tone of it is similar to an upright. It's just a beautiful piece of craftsmanship – it's like a folk-art piece. And I used that on "Perdida," "She's My Queen," and "Miles Away."

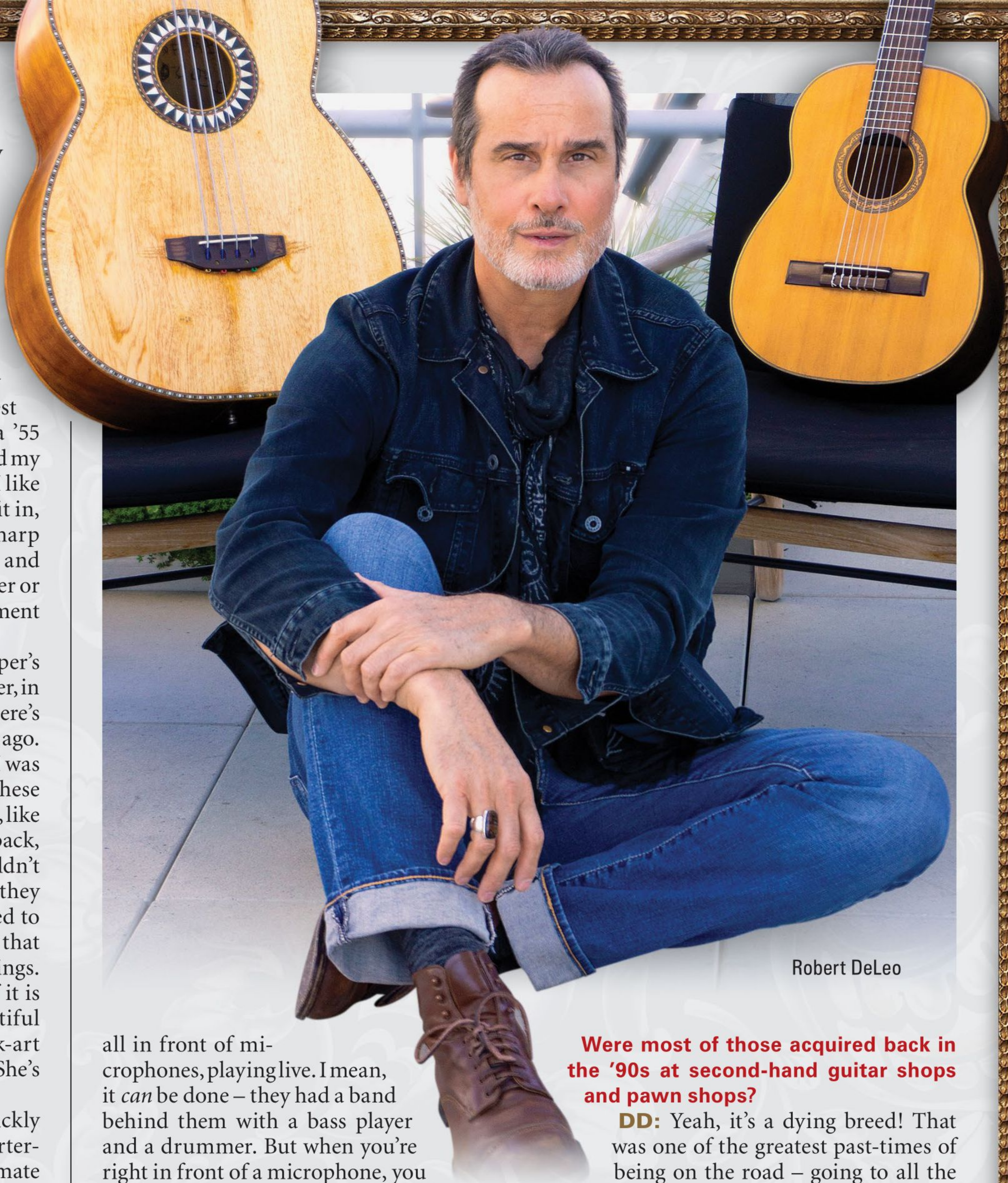
I also found a guitar that has quickly become my best friend – a three-quarter-scale '50s Spanish guitar. It's the ultimate "couch guitar." I can't find the name on it, but it's the nylon-string I used on "Years."

Did you use any effects?

DD: No, it was pretty clean. The only effects we used were delays for an atmospheric vibe.

What do you focus on to get a good, natural acoustic sound, both for recording and playing live?

DD: That's a tough world to split, right there. Recording, it depends on the microphone, and ribbon mics usually sound really nice, warm, and beautiful with an acoustic. But the trick is to get that sound in a live scenario. We've been using LR Baggs pickups and run through a Demeter direct box to warm it up a little more. We've had some pretty good luck with that. I was just watching this America video last night, and they were doing "Ventura Highway" back in the day. The three of them are standing,



Robert DeLeo

all in front of microphones, playing live. I mean, it *can* be done – they had a band behind them with a bass player and a drummer. But when you're right in front of a microphone, you can't move around much. So, we've never really tried miking anything in a live situation – it's always been a pickup in the bridge.

Let's discuss some of the vintage guitars that you have in your collection.

DD: I've got a few, and I love quirkiness; I have all that great late-'50s/early '60s Kay Kelvinator stuff. I just *love* it. I have a lot of Kay pedals, too – wahs and volume. And Kay amps. I find that stuff kinda cool, especially when everyone was taking things in a different direction. The stuff Barney Kessel was playing in the early '60s. That intrigues me.

Any uncommon guitars?

DD: Yeah. We love using uncommon stuff that sounds like it's broken. We dig that stuff that doesn't sound like it should. I have one of those Maccaferri plastic guitars. I actually have a National resonator mandolin.

Were most of those acquired back in the '90s at second-hand guitar shops and pawn shops?

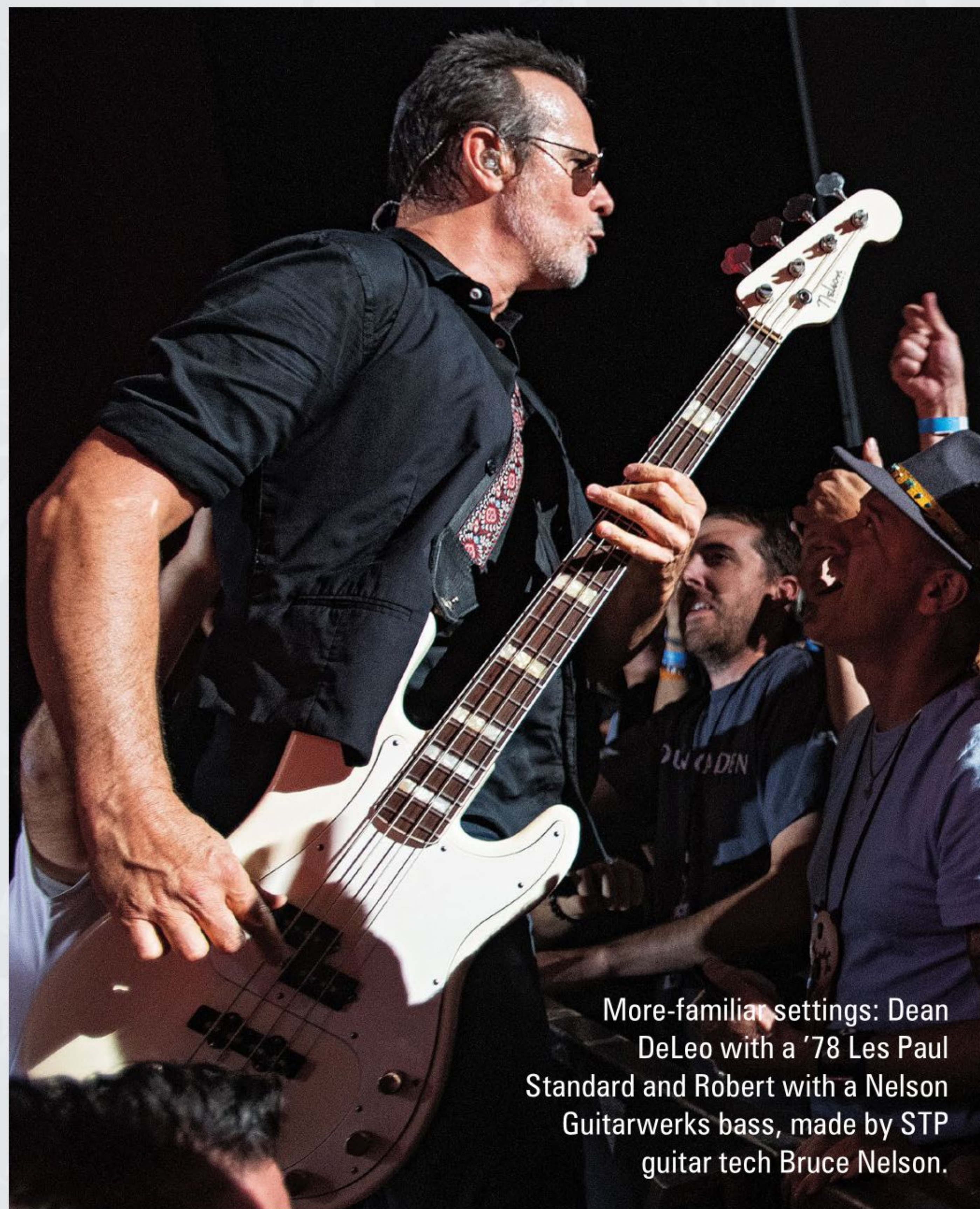
DD: Yeah, it's a dying breed! That was one of the greatest past-times of being on the road – going to all the great guitar shops that were around the country. Sadly, they've gone away. It's moved to the internet.

Robert, before Stone Temple Pilots, you worked in a guitar store, right?

RD: I did! I could have written a book. Let's see... I got held up and my hands tied behind my back in the back of a store. Gun in my back. Then, the owner opened a store on Sunset Boulevard, across the street from Guitar Center... that was interesting. Chock full of homeless and prostitutes. This was the late '80s/early '90s, so the hair-metal thing was still in. It was like joining the circus, but I worked with great people who are still great friends.

Why, do you think, the early/mid '90s generated so much classic rock music?

DD: It's been a long time, so we can attach the word "classic" to it (laughs). But



More-familiar settings: Dean DeLeo with a '78 Les Paul Standard and Robert with a Nelson Guitarwerks bass, made by STP guitar tech Bruce Nelson.

when we were doing it, it sure wasn't classic, y'know? I think it's just time. Whatever it may be – an automobile or a painting, over time that word gets thrown at it. We've got to attribute a lot of that to the technique of recording, and where recording has gone. With technology, you can literally take someone with zero talent and [make a] record – nobody even has to play an instrument. Through auto tune and technology, anything can sound great. I was thinking the other day, we're in a world now where music is so manufactured. I have a young daughter and we listen to a lot of music. A lot of the new pop... it's really cool. The sounds they're getting and the guys mixing it and producing it are extraordinary. But it's very synthetic. And in a world where music has become so synthetic, we couldn't have made a record farther from that! It's a very organic, acoustic record, where it's just some cats in a room, trying to land a performance, ya' know? It's not a sign of the times by any means.

RD: I think there was something in the air. There were people willing to contribute music in a different way. To me, music is music; things come around, they go out of fashion, and they come back. That was a time when people were trying to figure things out

in life, and maybe had a different approach to expressing it. I know we did. We were in our 20s and trying to figure life out. Luckily, we had music to do it.

What was the inspiration behind the title of STP's 1996 album, *Tiny Music... Songs from the Vatican Gift Shop*?

RD: It was one of those things we had on the refrigerator, where there were a bunch of magnetic words, and you could put words together. And Dean, I think, put the words "tiny" and "music" together.

How would you compare and contrast Jeff Gutt as a vocalist with the late Scott Weiland?

DD: Jeff shares Scott's tremendous knack for melody. What can I say about Scott? He was extraordinary. For me as a songwriter, he was brilliant in every sense of the word – lyrically, melodically, his choice of notes. No one better, in my opinion. And Jeff takes it to a place where he has a much broader range than Scott even did. Jeff can get in that lounge world, and up in that tenor world. It's pretty amazing, as well.

RD: When I write a song, it usually has a melody. And at that point, no matter who the singer is, they have a choice; if they want to use my melody, it's what'll fit best. Nine out of 10 times, when I'm writing a piece, I'll

have a melody. That was the case with these songs, and like with Dean's playing, I think Jeff can – and Scott did – hear a melody that fits the song, whether it's mine or theirs. I think Jeff did an amazing presentation of his vocals on this record, and nailed exactly what I was hearing in the melodies.

If Scott hadn't passed away back in 2015, do you think you would have worked together again at some point?

RD: I don't know if that was an option at that point.

Looking back, are there specific STP albums you're most proud of, from the perspective of sonics and songwriting?

RD: I think all of them have things I'm proud of. It was really an honor to work with [producer] Brendan O'Brien and start our career with someone that great at what he does. I learned a lot from him and carried that through our records.

What I'm really excited about is making records *now*. Our friend and engineer, Ryan Williams, started out as Brendan's engineer on *Tiny Music*. So, Ryan and STP go back to '96, and it feels like home. He engineered and mixed *Perdida*, so we have that expertise, among others. We're really happy with him.

How did the songs come together for *Perdida*?



Among the guitars heard on STP's *Perdida* are the 1950 Gibson J-50, '30s National tricone, and '60s Kay mandolin in this group.

RD: We were on a tour in Canada, and when you're sitting in a windowless skating rink day after day, it was a really good time to pick up a guitar and express how I was feeling, being away. It gave me a chance to put these ideas down, and I

pretty much had the songs done, chordally and melodically. A lot of times, Jeff and I would do a little recording on my phone; I'd pass it to him and he'd mold the lyrics around the melodies I had. That was really important, to have that time and be

in that environment. Some people like to go to a tropical island to make music. But sometimes, a windowless cement skating rink does the trick, too. And I think under the circumstances, with what was expressed on this record, it *worked*. **VG**

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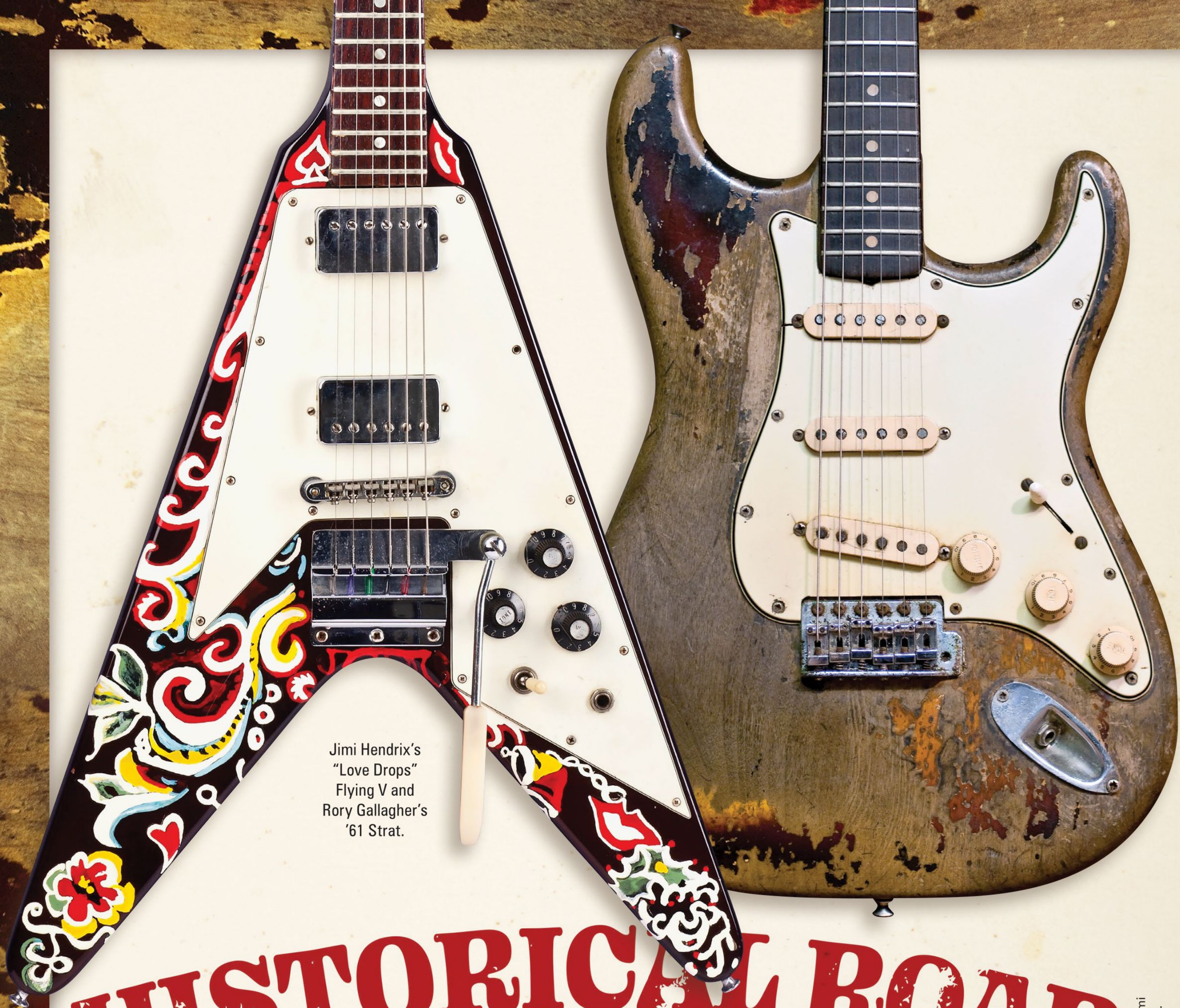
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HISTORICAL ROAR

ROCK HALL OF FAME HOSTS "PLAY IT LOUD"

BY BRET ADAMS

Any guitar fanatic would be awestruck, standing just inches from the Gibson ES-350T that Chuck Berry used to generate the godfather of rock-and-roll licks from "Johnny B. Goode." ■ Now through September 13 at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, in Cleveland, Berry's guitar, David Gilmour's black Strat, Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Number One," and others are making guitarheads gaga as part of the "Play It Loud: Instruments of Rock & Roll" exhibit.

Organized by the Rock HoF in conjunction with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, "Play It Loud" originated last year at the Met, and this updated version includes exclusive pieces. One of those is Rory Gallagher's iconic Strat.

Famously falling short of well-deserved commercial superstardom, the Irish guitarist/vocalist was a respected blues-rock

Rory Gallagher 1961 Fender Stratocaster: Eleanor Jane. Jimi Hendrix "Love Drops" Flying V: Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

troubadour in his home country thanks to his early band, Taste, which gained recognition and opened (along with Yes) Cream's farewell concert at the Royal Albert Hall on November 26, 1968.

Gallagher earned broader recognition during his solo career, which from '72 through '79 saw the release of nine albums that charted on *Billboard's* Top 200, the highest being 1972's *Live! In Europe* at #101. *Calling Card* is widely regarded as his best studio recording.

For most of his career, Gallagher's main instrument was a '61 Stratocaster. Perhaps the first Strat shipped to Ireland, he bought it used in '63 at a music store in Cork for £100—a fortune for a young musician in those days. Getting it meant extending credit his mom had first used to buy his Rosetti Solid 7. But, the lad reasoned, that Strat would enable him to play rhythm and lead parts, which meant his band could skip hiring a second guitarist!

The Strat and a borrowed Tele were stolen one night about two years later, after Gallagher played the Five Club, in Dublin. While most would simply have to deal and move on, Gallagher's status earned recognition from Ireland's RTÉ television network, which did a segment on him and the theft for their program, "Garda Patrol." Two weeks later, both guitars were found; the desperate thief, knowing he'd never be able to sell the high-profile Strat, had simply chucked them behind a garden wall. That time outdoors likely contributed to its rough appearance, but Gallagher's sweat also accelerated the finish wear.

Rory's brother, Dónal, now owns the Strat and about 100 other instruments he cares for with help from his son, Daniel, a musician and record producer (see sidebar).

"It's like a piece of driftwood that's just... like the ocean molded it," Daniel said of the Strat. "It's a feather to hold. The neck is worn so beautifully smooth. It's lovely to the touch, which makes playing really a breeze."

And while the middle pickup is "...starting to go a bit," Daniel said the neck and bridge pickups still sound amazing.

"I've plugged it into many different amps, and when it's in Rory's '54 Bassman, which he used for his 1977 tour of Ireland, you get that sound that's unmistakably Rory."

"It's beautiful to



see these instruments were so loved," added Karen L. Herman, Rock Hall VP and Chief Curator, when asked about the Strat's worn finish. "You can tell they were part of the artist. You can see it."

Herman added that Rory fans in the U.S. played a key role in getting the guitar into "Play It Loud."

"Last summer, we started getting calls and e-mails asking whether Rory's guitar was going to be in the show," she said. "His fans really came to the forefront. We weren't sure how they were getting the information, but with their help, we brought it over. They were really excited!"

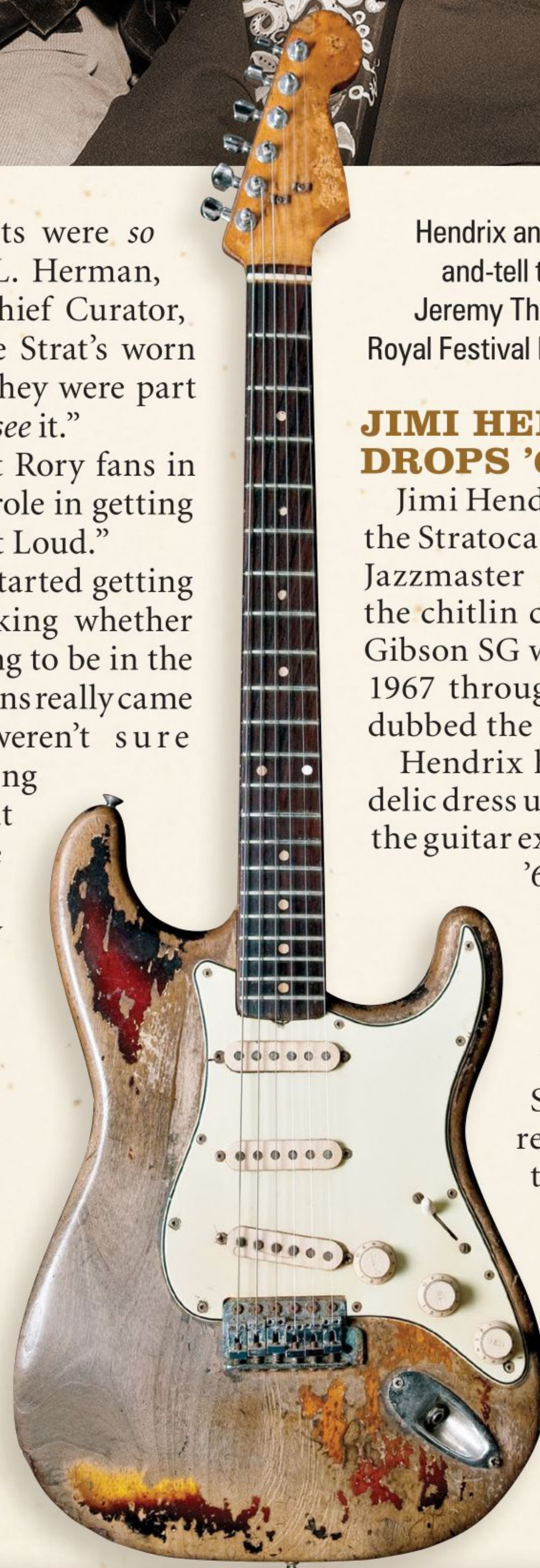
Hendrix and drummer Mitch Mitchell show-and-tell the Love Drops guitar to politician Jeremy Thorpe after an Experience show at Royal Festival Hall, London, in September of '67.

JIMI HENDRIX'S LOVE DROPS '67 FLYING V

Jimi Hendrix is most associated with the Stratocaster, but he played a Fender Jazzmaster during his early days on the chitlin circuit, and later grabbed a Gibson SG with Band of Gypsys. From 1967 through '69, he used a Flying V dubbed the "Love Drops" guitar.

Hendrix himself applied its psychedelic dress using nail polish, and played the guitar extensively from '67 through '69, likely on the Experience appearance on the BBC "Radio 1" sessions in '67 and then the next year, on sessions for the masterpiece *Electric Ladyland*. Some speculate he used it to record the solo in "All Along the Watchtower," but there's no doubt it's the guitar seen in his fiercely farcical mime to "Hey Joe" for the French television show "Dim Dam Dom" in October of '67 (check it out on Youtube).

In '69, Hendrix gave the guitar to Mick Cox, of



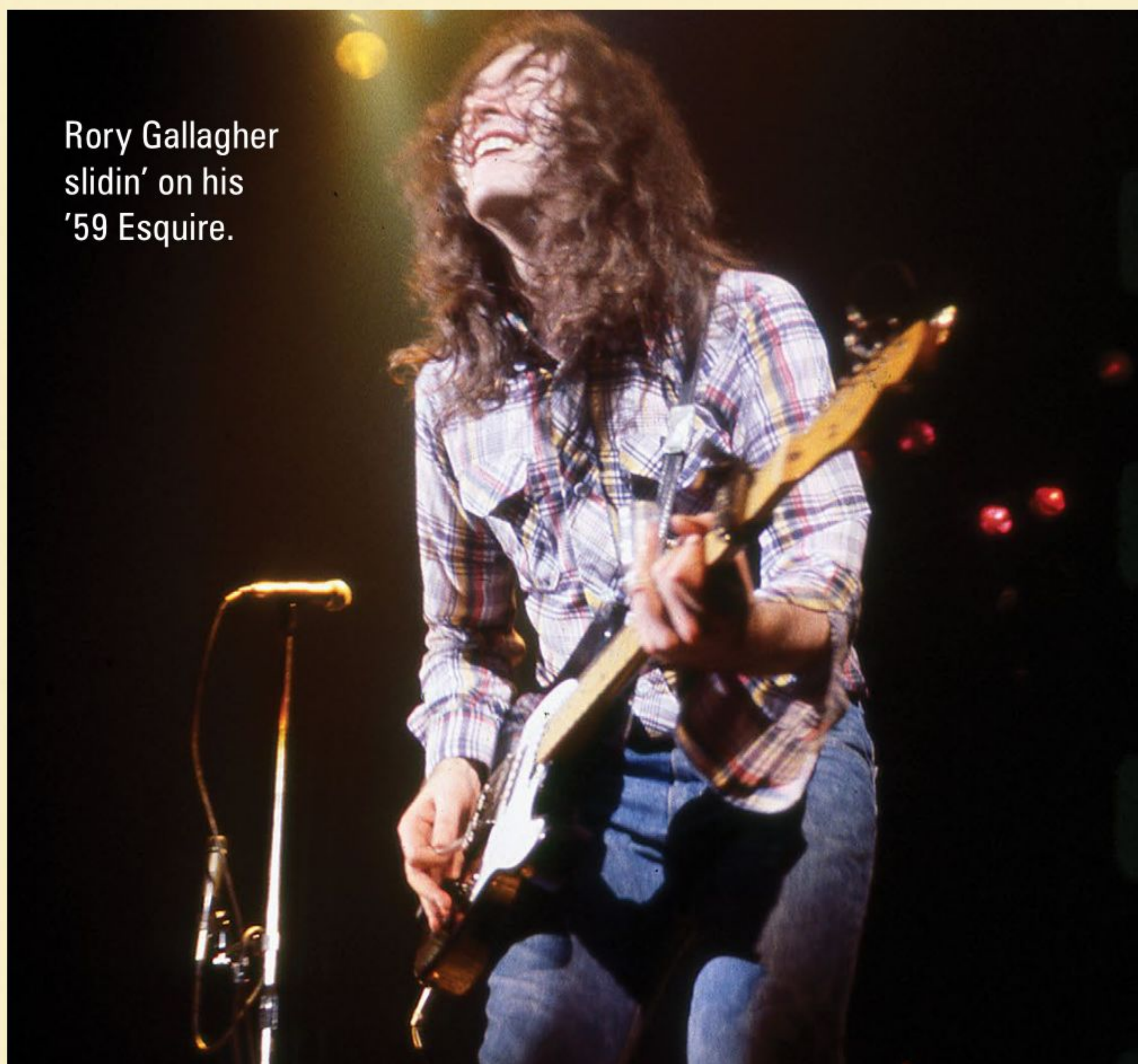
the Irish band Eire Apparent, who ultimately sold it after removing Hendrix's designs and painting it black; one theory is that he didn't want people to know he was selling a guitar that had once belonged to the legend.

In 1995, session musician David Brewis, who worked with Prefab Sprout, bought the V from a pawn shop in England. Using various photographs, it was authenticated as having been owned by Hendrix, and Brewis commissioned an artist to restore Hendrix's designs. The guitar is now part of a collection

belonging to William C. Butler. At the Rock Hall, it's shown in a stand-alone case offering a 360-degree view, floating left-handed as if the ghost of Jimi was playing it.

Four years in the making, "Play It Loud" has generated stark emotional reactions.

"I've seen people cry in front of some of the pieces," said Herman. "Occasionally, we rub lip prints off the display cases where people kiss them."



Rory Gallagher
slidin' on his
'59 Esquire.

RIPPIN' RORY

GALLAGHER'S '61 STRAT STARS ON NEW LIVE SET

Daniel Gallagher is a musician and record producer with a surname that sits amongst guitar royalty.

Nephew of the late Rory Gallagher, since 2005 he has been mining a stash of live tapes and sinking hundreds of hours into mixing and mastering them for release by Chess/UMe. Their latest offering, *Check Shirt Wizard Live In '77*, is a two-CD/three-LP vinyl set comprised of tracks from Gallagher's tour of the U.K. following the release of *Calling Card*; its 20 songs were from that album, '75's *Against The Grain*, and others.

Gallagher's penchant for regularly releasing live discs meant he recorded nearly every 1977 show using state-of-the-art equipment housed in mobile studios borrowed from the Rolling Stones and Jethro Tull. While sorting through the massive trove of unreleased material today, Daniel focuses on examples that offer top-notch sonic quality, and where the band – Gerry McAvoy on bass, drummer Rod de'Ath, and keyboardist Lou Martin – was at its peak. The batch for *Check Shirt Wizard* were, he believes, intended for a live album that never came to be.

"Rory became distracted by

further touring and making an album in San Francisco, so he never got around to creating it," said Daniel, who's continually impressed by what he hears on the old tapes. This set, he noted, has its share of truly special moments.

"'Out On The Western Plain,' the opening track of the second CD, was the start of a little acoustic set," he noted. "Rory is underrated for his acoustic playing, which is phenomenal – how he takes this Lead Belly song, plays it in DADGAD tuning, and adds this Irish jig at the end. It's one of those songs where you could've heard a pin drop because the crowd is just so in awe of what he's playing. There was a feeling in the room and it's a lovely, lovely song."

"'Edged in Blue' was a fan favorite, and reportedly, Chrysalis Records said if they took off the intro solo they could've put it out as a single and made sure he got a #1 in the States. But, Rory refused to release singles and was furious they would even consider cutting a solo from a song (laughs). He very rarely played that song live, so it's excellent to have such a great live version."

While "Tattoo'd Lady" was a live staple that also appeared on *Irish Tour '74*, Daniel had good reason to include this take, recorded at The Brighton Dome on January 21, 1977.

"The second solo has some *really* wonderful moments," he said. "There's volume-bowing that's just ridiculous. He didn't play the same solo every time, and that one is really something."

Other standouts include "Do You Read Me?" and "Walk On Hot Coals."

"There's just some really phenomenal playing in those tracks," Daniel noted. "I could go on and on... 'I Take What I Want' is a song written by Isaac Hayes, David Porter, and Mabon Hodges, and Aretha Franklin did the most-famous version, but Rory and the band play it at 250 beats per minute. It's ridiculous how fast they play – *frighteningly* fast, and it's a really fun recording."

Gallagher's famed '61 Stratocaster, now on display at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, is the most-heard axe on *Check Shirt Wizard*, but there were other notables.

"He played slide parts on his '59 Esquire, so that's what you hear on 'Bullfrog Blues,' 'Souped-Up Ford,' and 'Country Mile.' At the time, it was set up with three single-coils – he kept tinkering (laughs)."

Throughout the '77 tour, Gallagher was playing through two Fender amps – a '54 Bassman linked with a circa-'60 Concert. But he also unplugged for a few songs each night.

"For 'Out On The Western Plain,' he had his Martin D-35, and he used a Martin mandolin for 'Going To My Hometown.' Another cool guitar is the 1932 National Triolian he used for 'Barley and Grape Rag.'"

Check Shirt Wizard was released March 6; Bret Adams will review it in the July issue of *VG*. Rory Gallagher was just 47 when he died in 1995, after suffering cirrhosis. – **Ward Meeker VG**

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Upcoming Events

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Denotes a new or updated listing.

Lake County Musician's Swap Meet, second Sunday of each month at the Renninger's Florida Twin Markets, 20651 Hwy 441, Mt. Dora, FL. Hours 8-3. For more info contact Allen at info@lcmsm.com, (352) 735-0025 or visit www.lcmsm.com.

Tampa Bay Area Musicians Swap Meet, first Sunday each of each month, at the Big Top Flea Market, 9250 E Fowler Ave., Tampa, FL. For more info call Dave at (813) 324-6083 or visit www.tampamusicswap.com.

APRIL

Central Coast Guitar Show, April 4, **Cancelled**. For more info contact Ed Miller at (805) 431-3067, centralcoastguitarshow@charter.net or visit www.centralcoastguitarshow.com

The Indiana Guitar Show, **Postponed to May 30-31**.

Colorado Guitar Show & Custom Luthier Expo, April 19, **Postponed to August 2**. For more info contact Duane at (720) 432-1363 or guitarshow@excite.com.

Cincinnati Guitar Show, April 19, **Postponed**. For more info Denny at (513) 503-1072 or visit www.cincyguitarshow.com.

Capital Region Guitar Show, April 24 & 25, **Postponed**. For more info please call Matt at 518-581-1603 or visit <http://saratogaguitar.com/guitarshow/>.

Tacoma Guitar & Drum Festival, April 25 & 26, **Postponed to August 15-16**. For more info contact Bruce at (253) 445-1973, bruce@adolphagency.com or visit www.tacomaguitarfestival.com.

Eastern Kentucky Guitar Show, May 3, **Postponed**. Contact Jeff Preston at prestonffh@aol.com or text 606-923-4130.

Oregon Guitar & Musical Instrument EXPO, May 3, **Cancelled**. For more info go to www.oregonguitarexpo.com or contact John Keaton at skyjohnk@gmail.com or 503-706-6821

Amigo Chicago Guitar Show, May 16-17, **Cancelled**. For more Dave at (417) 850-4751, davelcrocker@gmail.com, Ruth at (817) 312-7659, ruthmbrinkmann@gmail.com, Rob at (417) 869-3325 or visit www.amigoguitarshows.com.

Mountain Acoustics Luthier Invitational, May 23 & 24 at the Town Center, 6 South Main St., Burnsville, NC. For more info contact Chee at (706) 424-2700, info@mountainacoustics.com or www.mountainacoustics.com.

The Indiana Guitar Show, May 30-31, at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds, 1900 E Main St, Danville, Indiana. For more info visit <https://minorprophetstudio.com/the-indiana-guitar-show>. (See **Advertisement on page 76**.)

JUNE

Central Arkansas Guitar Show, June 6, at the Benton Event Center, 17322 I-30, Benton, AR. Hours 10-5. For more info www.arkansasguitarshow.com.

Grinning Elk Guitar Show, June 12-14, **Postponed to December 5-6**. For more info contact Lee at (678)-557-5641, lee@grinningelk.com or visit www.grinningelkguitarshow.com.

Summer Ohio Guitar Show, June 14, Ma-koy Center, 5462 Center St., Hilliard, OH. Show hours 11:30-5. For more info, contact Marc at (740) 797-3351, alexmack@ohio.net, www.ohioguitarshows.com.

Amigo Arlington Guitar Show Reunion, June 20-21 at the Arlington Convention Center (Now called Esports Stadium Arlington & Expo Center), 1200 Ballpark Way, Arlington, TX 76011. For more Dave at (417) 850-4751, davelcrocker@gmail.com, Ruth at (817) 312-7659, ruthmbrinkmann@gmail.com, Rob at (417) 869-3325 or visit www.amigoguitarshows.com. (See **Advertisement on page 78**.)

Rockford Guitar & Drum Show

For more information and to reserve a vendor table visit: www.rockfordguitarshow.com or contact Chip Messiner at 815.877.9678

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Elmira Vintage Guitar Show, April 26, at the Woolwich Memorial Centre, 24 Snyder Ave S., Elmira, ON, Canada. For more info visit www.elmiravintageguitarshow.ca.

Guitar Fest Ohio, April 26, **Postponed**. For more info visit www.guitarfestohio.com.

MAY

Dallas Guitar Show, May 1-3, **Postponed to July 31, August 1-2**. For more info visit www.guitarshow.com.

Northeast Guitar Expo, May 3, **Postponed**. For more info contact NortheastGuitarExpo@gmail.com.

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Upcoming Events

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JULY

Great American Guitar Show (Summer Philly), July 18 & 19, at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, 100 Station Ave., Oaks, PA. For more info contact Bee 3 Vintage at (828) 298-2197 or visit www.bee3vintage.com.

Dallas Guitar Show, July 31, August 1-2, at the Dallas Market Hall, 2200 N Stemmons Fwy, Dallas, TX. For more info visit www.guitarshow.com. (See Advertisement on page 77.)

AUGUST

Colorado Guitar Show & Custom Luthier Expo, August 2, at The Denver Mart, 451 East 58th Ave., Denver, CO. Hours 10-4. For more info contact Duane at (720) 432-1363 or guitarshow@excite.com.

Tacoma Guitar & Drum Festival, August 15-16, at 2727 E D St, Tacoma, WA. For more info contact Bruce at (253) 445-1973, bruce@adolphagency.com or visit www.tacomaguitarfestival.com.

Amigo, SoCAL Guitar Show, August 22-23, OC Fair & Event Center, Costa Mesa, CA. For more info Larry at (918) 288-2222, amigoshow@stringswest.com or visit www.amigoguitarshows.com.

September
Jakes Guitar Show & Music Swap Meet, September 19 & 20, at the Indoor Treasure Barn, 1380 Rt 100, Barto, PA. Hours 8-1. For more info contact Justin at (484) 256-6515 or info@jakesfleamarket.com.

3rd Annual Shreveport/Bossier City Vintage Guitar, Musical Gear Show and Battle of the Bands, September 19-20 at Harrah's Louisiana Downs Casino & Racetrack, 8000 East Texas St, Bossier City, LA 71111. Contact John at 318-507-5096 or email jandwmusic-company@gmail.com.

OCTOBER

Fourth Annual Alchemy Audio Gear Swap, October 3, at the Plumber's Union Hall, 1340 W Washington St., Chicago, IL 60607. Hours 10-6. For more info visit <https://recordfair.chirpradio.org/details> or contact Johnny at 872-395-3899 or johnny@alchemy-audio.com.

Amigo International Guitar Show, October 3-4, Will Rogers Memorial Center,

Ft. Worth, TX. For more info Ruth at (817) 312-7659, ruthmbrinkmann@gmail.com, Larry at (918) 288-2222, amigoshow@stringswest.com, Dave at (417) 850-4751, davelcrocker@gmail.com or visit www.amigoguitarshows.com.

West Michigan Musician's Swap Meet, October 10 at the 4 Mile Showplace, 1025 4 Mile Rd NW, Grand Rapids MI. Hours 10-3. For more info contact Stan at 616-432-0719 or gr7ksilver@gmail.com.

Rockford Guitar & Drum Show, October 31, 2020 at the Tabala Event Center 7910 Newburg Rd Rockford IL 61108. Hours 10am-3pm. \$5 at the door. Contact Chip Messiner at 815-877-9678 or www.rockfordguitarshow.com. (See Advertisement on page 76.)

NOVEMBER

Ann Arbor Music Instrument Swap, November 1, at the Webers Inn, 3050 Jackson Ave, Ann Arbor, MI. Hours 10-4. For more info contact Shawn at (517) 410-6409, shawn@audiologicidj.com or visit www.musicinstrumentswap.com.

Great American Guitar Show (Fall Philly), November 7-8, Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, Rt 422 Exit at Oaks, 100 Station Ave., Oaks PA 19456. For more info call 828-298-2197 or visit www.Bee3Vintage.com.

DECEMBER

Grinning Elk Guitar Show, December 5-6, at the Infinite Energy Forum, 6400 Sugarloaf Pkwy, Duluth, GA. For more info contact Lee at (678)-557-

5641, lee@grinningelk@gmail.com or visit www.grinningelkguitarshow.com.

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JANUARY

Orlando International Guitar & Music Expo, January 29-31 at the Central Florida Fairgrounds, 4603 West Colonial Drive, Orlando, FL. Public hours Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4. For more info contact Morty Beckman at (850) 716-8411, guitarexpo22@yahoo.com or visit www.guitarexpo.net.

If you have information regarding upcoming guitar shows or events, visit <http://www.vintageguitar.com/guitar-show-submission> or e-mail joant@vintageguitar.com. All submissions must be received by the 10th of each month, or they will appear in the next available issue. This listing is done as a service to our readers and we reserve final determination as to its contents.

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Al Di Meola
Across the Universe

work, while “Yesterday” is beautifully rendered on nylon-string. Even offbeat choices like “Your Mother Should Know” work as fusion instrumentals.

One reason why *Across the Universe* is successful is that Lennon, McCartney, and Harrison knew the basics of jazz harmony, littering their compositions with 7th chords, II-V-I progressions, and the rich harmony that makes Beatles music so conducive to jazz interpretation. Di Meola does it with his own Latin-fired style, including Paul’s “Here, There and Everywhere,” which is as much as a jazz standard as a pop song. In Al’s hands, it’s just *fab*. – **Pete Prown**

MAGICAL MYSTERY AL

While the fusion icon has interpreted the Beatles before, this set continues the magical mystery tour with unbridled creativity. “Here Comes the Sun” is reimagined with intense percussion and thick layers of

acoustic and electric work. His take on the “Golden Slumbers Medley” is graceful and full of precise guitarman’ship, as Di Meola somehow dovetails George Harrison runs with his own fiery style. He absolutely pulls it off.

“Norwegian Wood” and “Mother Nature’s Son” are custom-made for Di Meola’s acoustic arpeggios and speedy alt-picking chops. “Strawberry Fields Forever” gets the full Di Meola treatment with Latin grooves and hot electric lead

Stephen Malkmus Traditional Techniques



Stephen Malkmus and Pavement were poster children for ’90s slacker lo-fi, merging spacey jangle, sunny melodies, cheeky lyrics, and bursts of fuzzed bliss.

In a way, Malkmus’ third solo release, sans his outfit the Jicks, follows suit, the twist being promises of rababs, udus, and kavals. While this might portend “world music” is in the offing, the exotica mostly add texture to familiar structures and arrangements. And it’s not a bad thing.

Album bookends, “ACC Kirtan” and

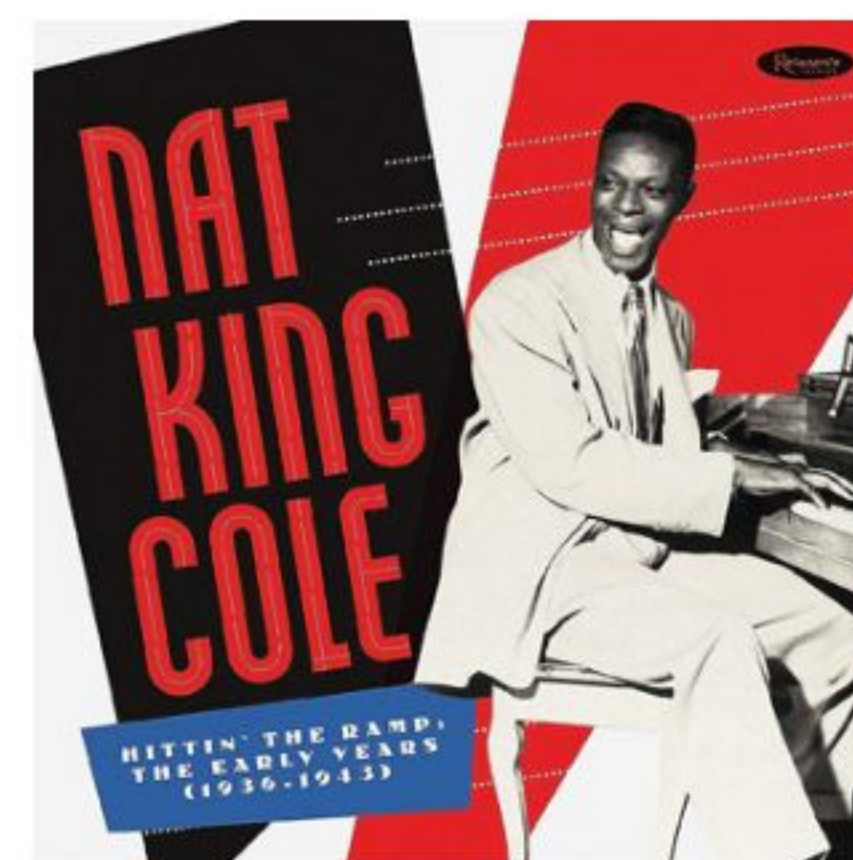
“Amberjack,” with their drones and Eastern scales, are obviously influenced by the new toys at hand. Otherwise, the novel instrumentation serves rather than stars.

“What Kind Of Person,” with its kaval and rabab flourishes atop a bed of acoustic guitars, could soundtrack a gauzy park scene in swingin’ London, while “Xian Man” suggests Monkees-meet-“Black Mountain Side.”

Elsewhere (and in more familiar veins), “Cash Up” and “The Greatest Own In Legal History” benefit from fine Weissenborn and pedal steel, respectively (both courtesy of producer Chris Funk), while Spooner Oldham appears behind the Wurlitzer on the languid “Brainwashed” – before it dissolves in a wash of fuzz.

Malkmus’ support roster includes Funk

(The Decemberists) and ubiquitous sessioneer Matt Sweeney. The results transcend indulgent exercise. – **Dennis Pernu**



Nat King Cole
Hittin’ The Ramp:
The Early Years
(1936-1943)

It’s been referenced many times that Nat “King” Cole’s singing overshadowed the fact that he was an amazing jazz pianist. Still, many will be stunned to hear the Nat Cole of this release. This is not the Cole of “Unforgettable” or “Ramblin’ Rose”; it’s the King Cole Trio of “Hit That Jive, Jack” and “Straighten Up And Fly Right.”

Cole led a drummer-less trio of piano, bass, and guitar, in which his percussive, articulate pianistics were perfectly complemented by Oscar Moore's guitar. The mystery of why Moore is rarely recognized as one of the greats on the instrument – though he won *Downbeat* magazine polls four years running, from 1945 to '48 – is understandable due to him retiring from music in '57, only 40 years old.

This seven-CD box set boasts many unreleased tunes and exceptional fidelity. Whether a ballad (Cole singing "Sweet Lorraine") or a jivey novelty ("Mutiny In The Nursery," with the trio shouting in unison), Moore raises the stakes. Comping, he pairs a walking bass with chord punches. Soloing, he recalls Eddie Lang early on; later, dual influences of Charlie Christian and Django Reinhardt.

The 55-page booklet includes a welcome appreciation of Moore by jazz guitarist Nick Rossi. – **Dan Forte**



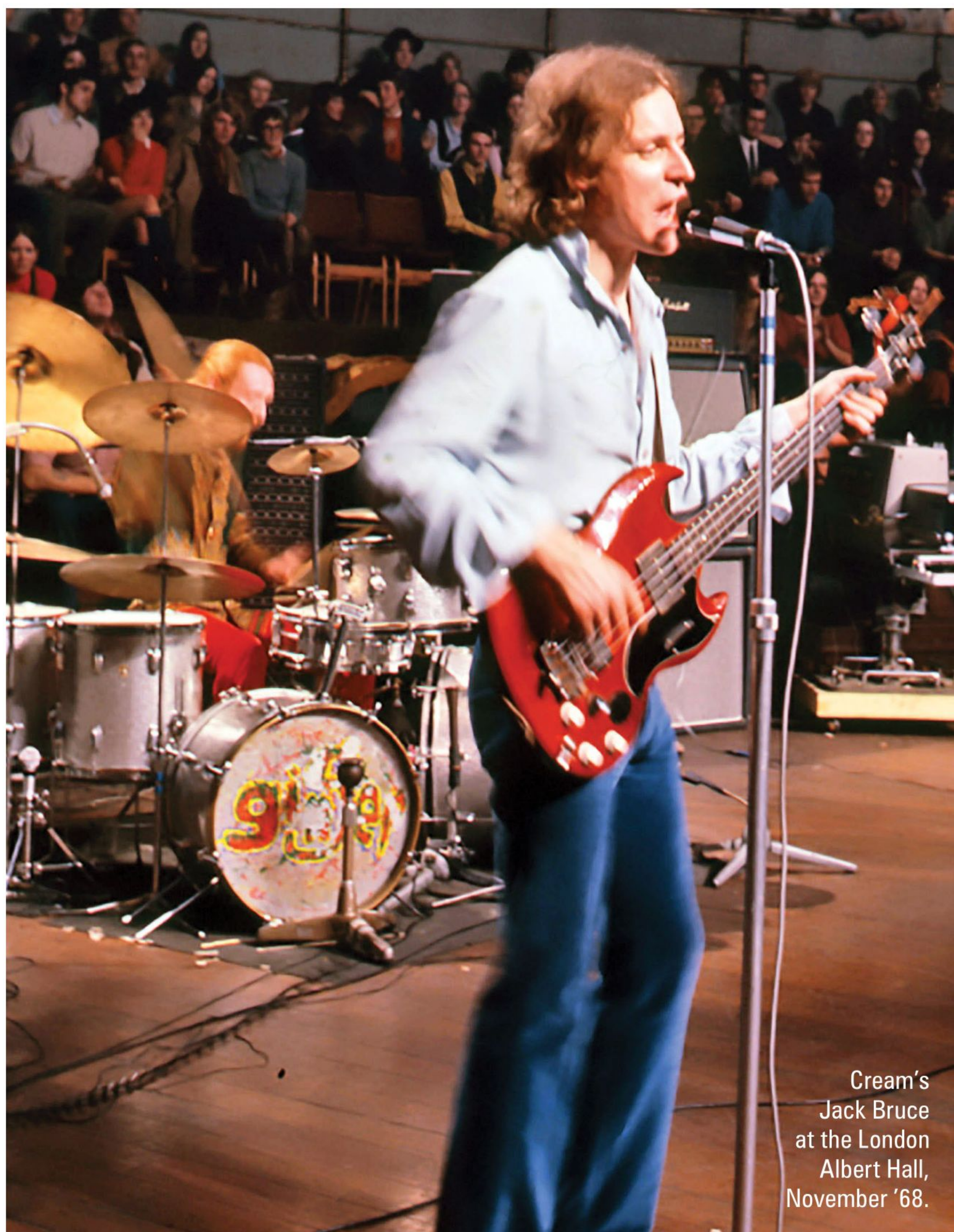
Cream Goodbye Tour – Live 1968

This four-CD history lesson collects full concerts from Cream's 1968

farewell tour – Oakland, Los Angeles, San Diego, and their final show in London. Though the most famed show of the bunch, the London gig (making its CD debut) is subpar in comparison, and its audio quality surprisingly rough.

The liner notes say the psychedelic revolution in San Francisco demanded longer sets, which bassist Jack Bruce credits for Cream's groundbreaking improvisations, all featuring blazing solos by Eric Clapton. The set lists are comparable and running order varies with exceptions including the Oakland performances of "Deserted Cities of the Heart" (with Clapton's roaring solo and Bruce's frantic licks), and the hazily kaleidoscopic "Passing the Time" with Eric's fluttering lines. The Oakland version of "Crossroads" is slower and funkier than the others, which resemble the powerhouse *Wheels of Fire* performance. "Politician," from Los Angeles, includes Clapton's restrained, blues-inflected solo.

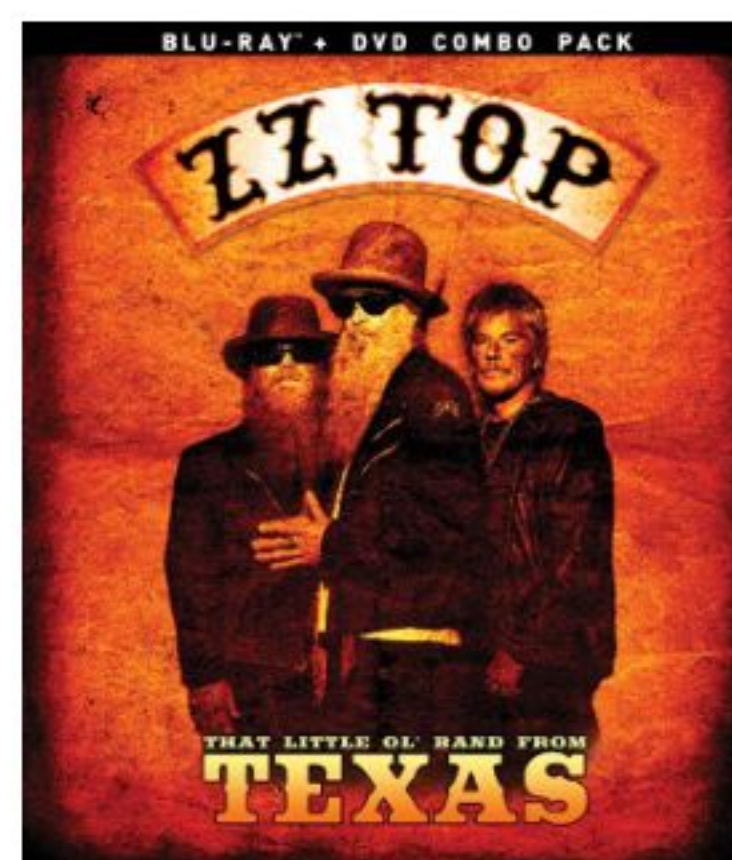
The punchiest versions of "Sunshine of Your Love" are from Oakland and London. Simultaneously free-form and cohesive, Clapton and Bruce's complementary parts resonate on "Spoonful" from Oakland and "I'm So Glad" from Los Angeles. The



Cream's
Jack Bruce
at the London
Albert Hall,
November '68.

San Diego version of "White Room" is the best, with Bruce relentlessly riffing under Clapton's wah solo. In all, *Goodbye Tour – Live 1968* is nothing short of essential.

– **Bret Adams**

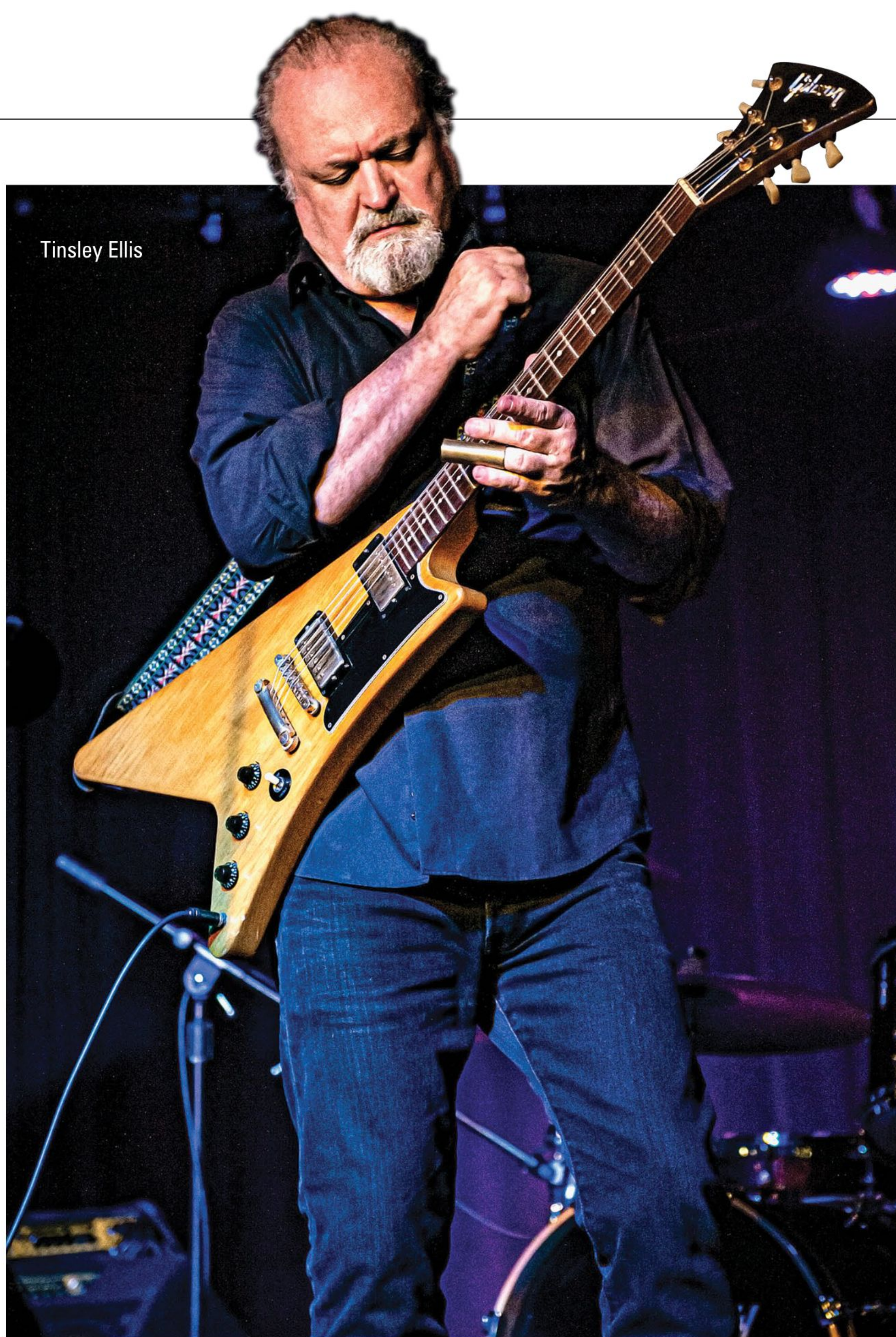


ZZ Top That Little Ol' Band From Texas

Bad, bold, gritty, and forward-thinking, *That Little Ol' Band From Texas* is the story of ZZ Top. Frank Beard, Dusty Hill, and Billy F. Gibbons share personal stories in this 90-minute DVD/Blu-ray, with fresh camera work, editing, and special guests.

Blues is the centerpiece of an incredible career as the documentary discusses the band's history. Magnatone stacks, vintage Les Pauls, and cool MTV-era custom guitars are the backdrop for Texas tones and candid interviews. Cameos by Dan Auerbach, Josh Homme, Billy Bob Thornton, and even Jimi Hendrix add context.

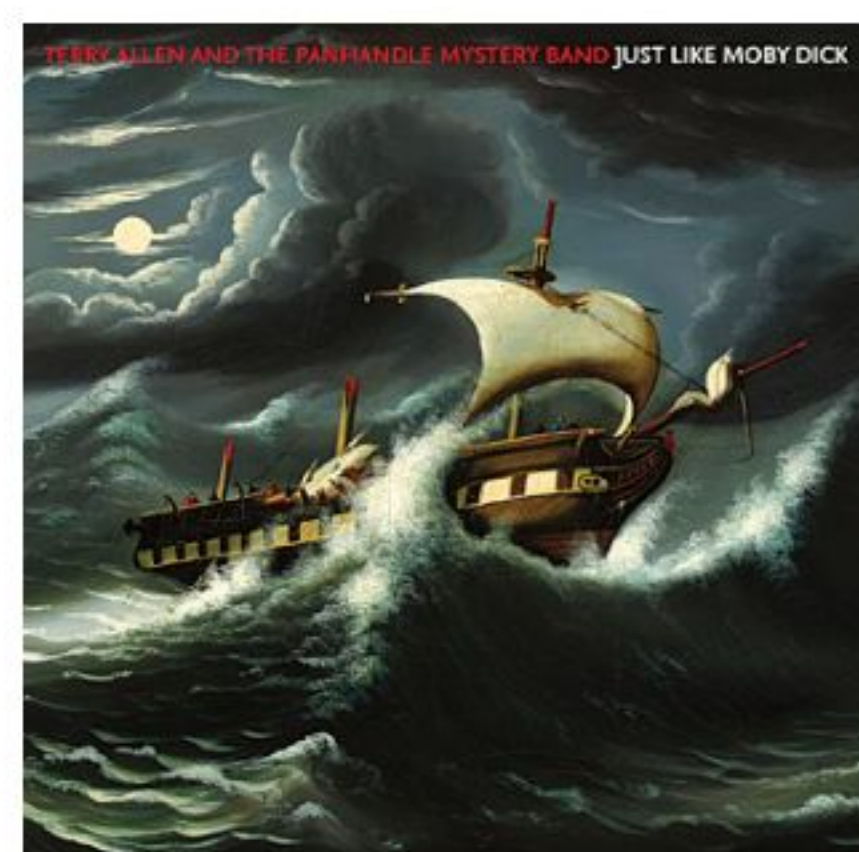
Classic footage, interviews, and live performances make this documentary a love letter to blues, rock, and hardcore ZZ Top fans. Studio tuning secrets and stories from Robin Brian of Robin Hood Studios give insight into the band's first album. The documentary also features humorous road stories, intimate performances at Gruene Hall, and concerts



Tinsley Ellis

from 1976 and '81. "We never said we were a blues band. We are interpreters of the blues," states Frank Beard.

That Little Ol' Band From Texas is a fascinating look at an iconic group with a career that spans 50 years. – **Oscar Jordan**



Terry Allen Just Like Moby Dick

Since his 1975 debut album, Texas singer-songwriter and artist-sculptor

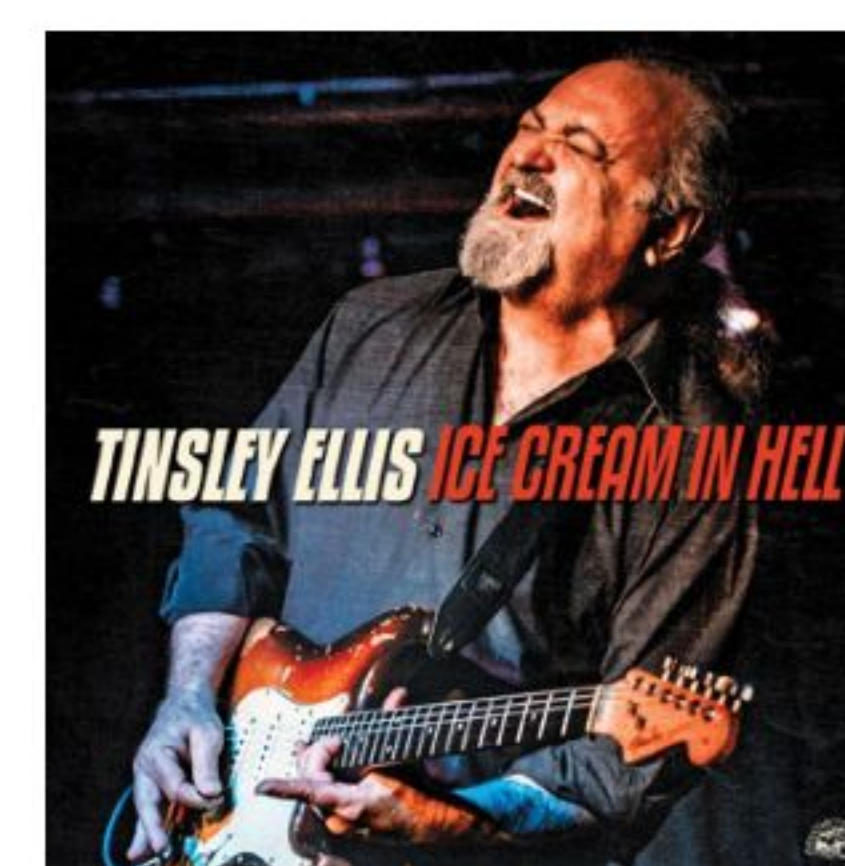
Terry Allen, a Lubbock native, gained fame for his art and literate original music

reflecting his idiosyncratic world view, permeated with powerful, dark imagery.

Accompanying himself on keyboard, Allen presents complex tunes referencing Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* and magician Harry Houdini, as well as recent Middle East wars. He's equally profound creating haunting miniature tragedies, most notably "The Death of the Last Stripper," a vivid, moving tale he co-wrote with Dave Alvin. Allen demonstrates his gift for philosophizing on "Sailin' on Through" and the world-weary "All That's Left Is Fare-Thee-Well."

Among the backup group (dubbed "The Panhandle Mystery Band") are two Lone Star guitar icons. One is album co-

producer Charlie Sexton, the other Lubbock legend Lloyd Maines who plays dobro and slide. Through the album, they deftly embellish Allen's iconoclastic originals, among them "Houdini Didn't Like the Spiritualists" and "Abandonitis," a study of loneliness. While keeping Allen's voice and songs at the forefront, both create some impressive moments. "Pirate Jenny" begins with a bit of amplified feedback, followed by Sexton's delicate, acoustic picking and Maines' fluid, well-articulated embellishments. Sexton is appropriately aggressive on the three-part, antiwar-themed "American Childhood." – **RK**



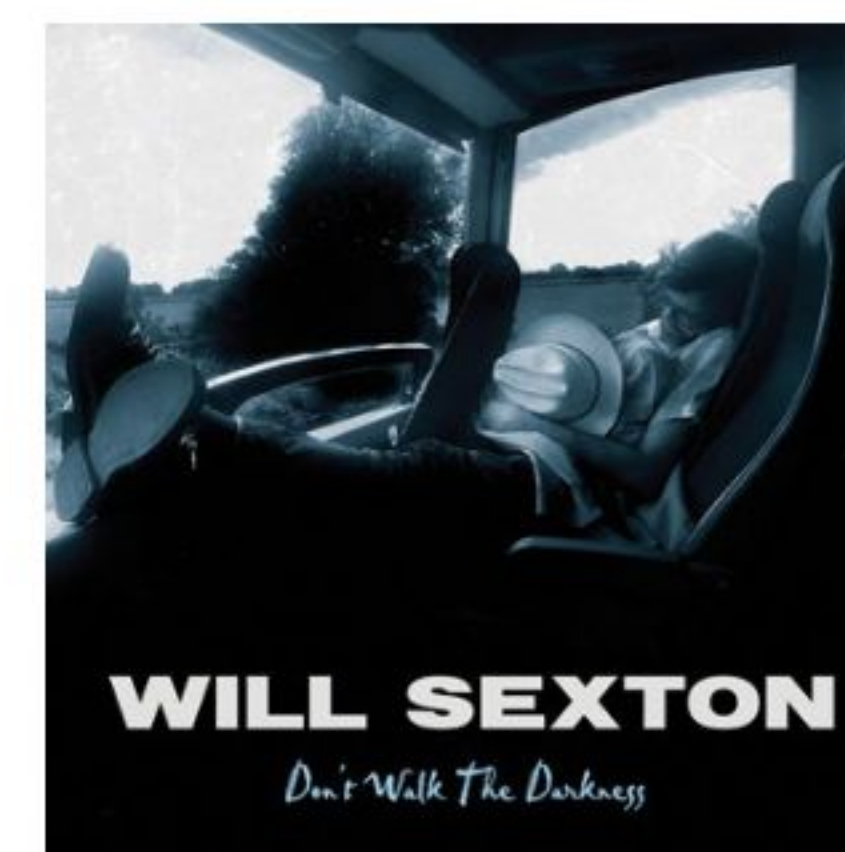
Tinsley Ellis Ice Cream in Hell

With *Ice Cream in Hell*, Tinsley Ellis slaps a great big cherry atop a mountain of blues-rock deliciousness.

Ellis is fluent in an array of Southern musical styles and clearly reveals that here. "Sit Tight Mama," a tribute to Hound Dog Taylor, finds Ellis playing slide on his '82 Gibson Moderne, and the result would have cut right through the thick air of a smoky West Side beer joint in the '60s.

The album's Stax-like opener, "Last One to Know," has an unmistakable Albert King vibe with horns, and Ellis cutting loose on a Freddie King ES-345 reissue. On a pair of slow blues – "Hole In My Heart" and "Your Love's Like Heroin," both clocking in at close to seven minutes – Ellis methodically turns small flames into bonfires, his solos ultimately exploding with intensity.

Ellis has logged enough miles "...to get to the moon and back six times." That may be true, but what's beyond question is his standing as one of modern blues' greatest guitarists and most venerable performers. As he approaches his 63rd birthday, Ellis is still playing like he's got something to prove. – **Sean McDevitt**



Will Sexton Don't Walk The Darkness

Will Sexton's first solo effort in a decade reflects changes. Long based in Austin, the Texas native has been in Memphis since 2013. He recorded this

extra. EXTRA



GARY MOORE *Live From London*

Recorded in '09, this set sees Moore creating mesmerizing tones with his Les Paul, occasionally employing the hard-rock attack of his early years. "Down the Line" is a country-blues rocket ride, while "Have You Heard" is a slow-burn inferno. A smoky pop melody underlies "Still Got the Blues." "Parisienne Walkways" is a triumphant showcase of Moore's nakedly emotional playing. — **BA**



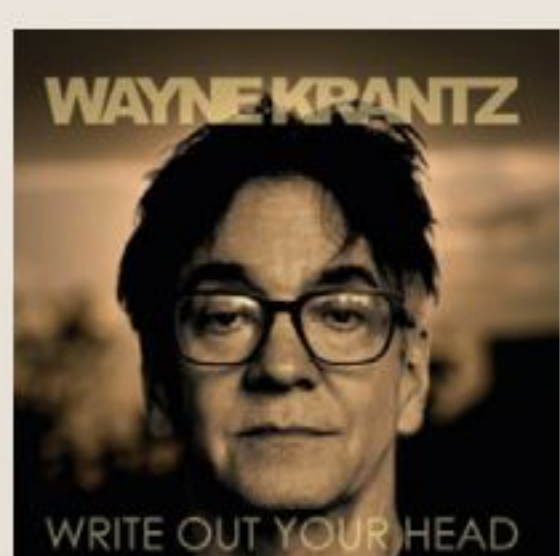
SHAWN JONES TRIO *Pain Passed Down*

Jones gets low down with gritty blues-rock and country twang for spice — choice riffs, a tight band, and emotive vocals conspire to create an American patchwork about love, loss, and tales of the working man. The centerpiece is Jones' volatile slide playing. Highlights include "Livin' on Judgment Day" and "Man on a Mission." — **OJ**



KHRUANGBIN & LEON BRIDGES *Texas Sun*

Khruangbin's exotic instrumental music (think Thai rock as well as Middle Eastern and Spanish spice) melds perfectly — if surprisingly — with modern-day R&B hotshot Bridges. Mark Speer's guitar work stands out with trippy effects, flamenco-fashioned licks, and far-out funk. Cool, fascinating, unique music. — **MD**



WAYNE KRANTZ *Write Out Your Head*

This is dense funk-fusion that bal-

ances clusters of jazz harmony with super-fat grooves. Eschewing many solos, Krantz's guitar supports the larger ensemble, featuring sax wizard Chris Potter and bassists Pino Palladino, Will Lee, and Tim Lefebvre. Wayne finally rips an improv on "Xandea," a feedback-laden mass of whammy-bar frenzies. Otherwise, Krantz is happy to let his killer band steal the show. — **PP**



DAVE SIMONETT *Red Tail*

The Trampled By Turtles frontman steps out, leaning mostly toward meditative roots rock rather than the semi-trad bluegrass of TBT. Eight songs evoke *Wildflowers*-era Tom Petty, Jonathan Wilson, and Welch/Rawlings more than Big Mon. "It Comes And Goes" even finds the songwriter stepping into an impressive lead-guitar role not afforded in TBT. — **DP**



SWEET LIZZY PROJECT *Technicolor*

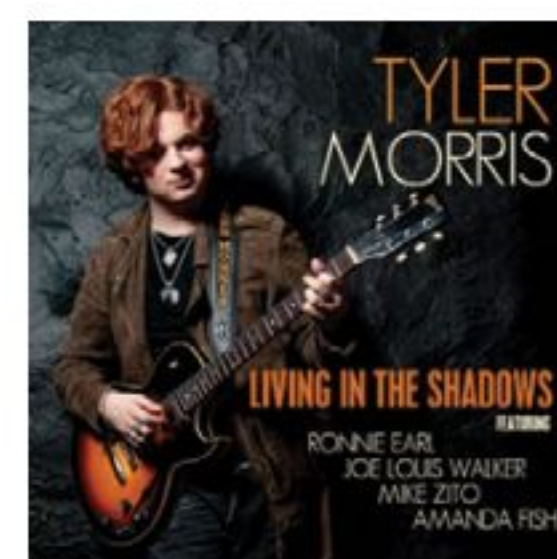
The Peter-Max-esque artwork is misleading, as this is wholly contemporary rock, as ambitious as it is original. The quintet emigrated from Cuba to Nashville with the help of Raul Malo; the Maverick duets with Lisset Diaz, who sings in English and Spanish. Co-writer Miguel Comas' lead guitar is low on pyrotechnics, high on substance. Check this out. — **DF**



PHIL COX *Betty: They Say I'm Different*

Betty Davis was, of course, a singer — and arguably the *funkiest* of

funk singers, as well being Miles Davis' wife and Jimi's sweetie. But she also had some of the hippest guitar playing behind her before she went MIA. This documentary tells her tale, and while it misses the guitar angle, you won't want to miss Betty's story. — **MD**



TYLER MORRIS *Living In The Shadows*

Morris' latest is a blues-rock lick fest with special guests Joe Louis Walker, Ronnie Earl, and Amanda Fish. He rocks on Gary Moore's "Moving On" and plays low-down slide on "Taken From Me." His playing is affecting on the ballad "Temptation," while he rips on "Young Man's Blues" and "I'm On To You." — **OJ**



DIRTY SHIRLEY *Dirty Shirley*

Armed with the savage power of George Lynch and vocalist Dino Jelusic belting in the Dio mold, Dirty Shirley pulls Lynch back to his sleazy hard-rock base. Lynch continues to reign supreme as the baddest in the land with mammoth riffs and note selection from hell. Highlights include "Dirty Blues" and "Here Comes The King." — **OJ**



THE DAVE CLARK 5 *All The Hits*

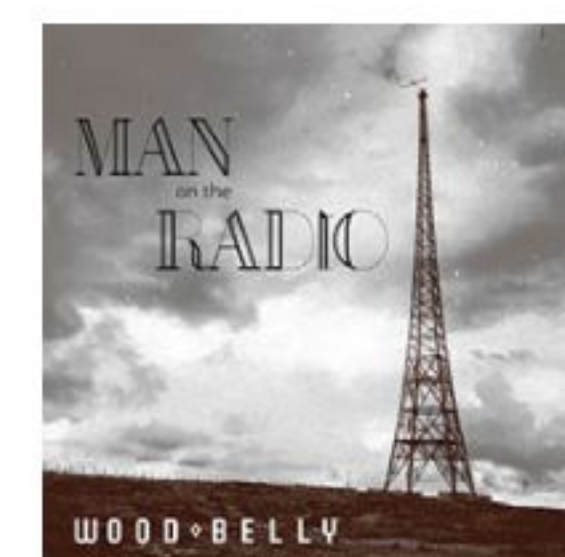
During the British Invasion, the DC5 was nearly as popular as the Beatles, delivering raw Anglo-R&B for frenzied teens. The band was driven by vocals, drums, and sax, but guitarist Lenny Davidson added plenty of clean jangle on "Glad All Over," "Do You Love Me," and "Bits and Pieces." Lenny also

wrote the 1965 hit "Catch Us If You Can" and his riffing on "Any Way You Want It" was so hot the tune was later covered by Kiss, the Ramones, and Tom Petty. — **PP**



THE AMPLIFIER HEADS *Loudah*

The Boston-based Amplifier Heads give voice to catchy, hooky, rockin' pop. Think the Faces and the Replacements, but the sound's still all their own. And yes, guitarist Sal Baglio has his amps turned up loud and proud for an array of suitable vintage planks, including a '57 Esquire, '65 Gibson SG Junior, and a '60 double-cut Junior. — **MD**



WOOD BELLY *Man on the Radio*

This Colorado-based bluegrass unit's second album straddles traditional and modern. Using guitar, dobro, banjo, bass, and mandolin, their sound is solid and consistent, though their songwriting is evolving. Guitarist Craig Patterson, dobroist Chris Zink, banjoist Aaron McCloskey, and mandolinist Chris Weist get ample space to stretch on the album's 13 numbers including the free-flowing instrumental "Blue Merle." — **RK**



EBIN-ROSE TRIO *Wytch Season*

With Brian Wolfe on vintage Martin, Gibson, Guild, and Epiphone acoustics, and wife Rose's poignant vocals, the Ebin-Rose Trio evokes English folk-rock of 50 years past. They cover Nick Drake's "Fly" with gentle beauty, and conjure a heart-rending version of the classic "Give Us a Ring." Their take on the Sandy Denny masterpiece "Who Knows Where the Time Goes" is just about perfect. — **PP**



Nick Moss and Dennis Gruenling

collection of newer originals (along with two older ones) there with a band he has long admired – the Iguanas, from New Orleans. Guitarist/accordionist Rod Hodges and bassist René Coman are particularly effective, while the saxes of Joe Cabral and Memphis sideman Art Edmaiston add overtones of San Antonio’s famous West Side R&B scene, which nurtured both Will and his brother, Charlie.

Sexton frames his relaxed vocals with spare, ethereal accompaniment, punctuated by economic, well-focused solos. His intro and outro on the title song and Hodges’ brief solo on “Temptation’s Call” are models of nuance and understatement. He’s no less graceful on the mellow, Caribbean-flavored “Witness” and demonstrates his flair for delicate comping on the ballad “Oh The Night (Night Owls Call).”

By contrast, he rips through the powerful, Hooker-inspired boogie “What My Baby Don’t Know.” Though eight songs are recent, he added two never-recorded originals created years ago – “Only Forever” and the genial “Don’t Take It From Me.” Sexton co-wrote the latter with Waylon Jennings in 2001, a year before his death. – **Rich Kienzle**



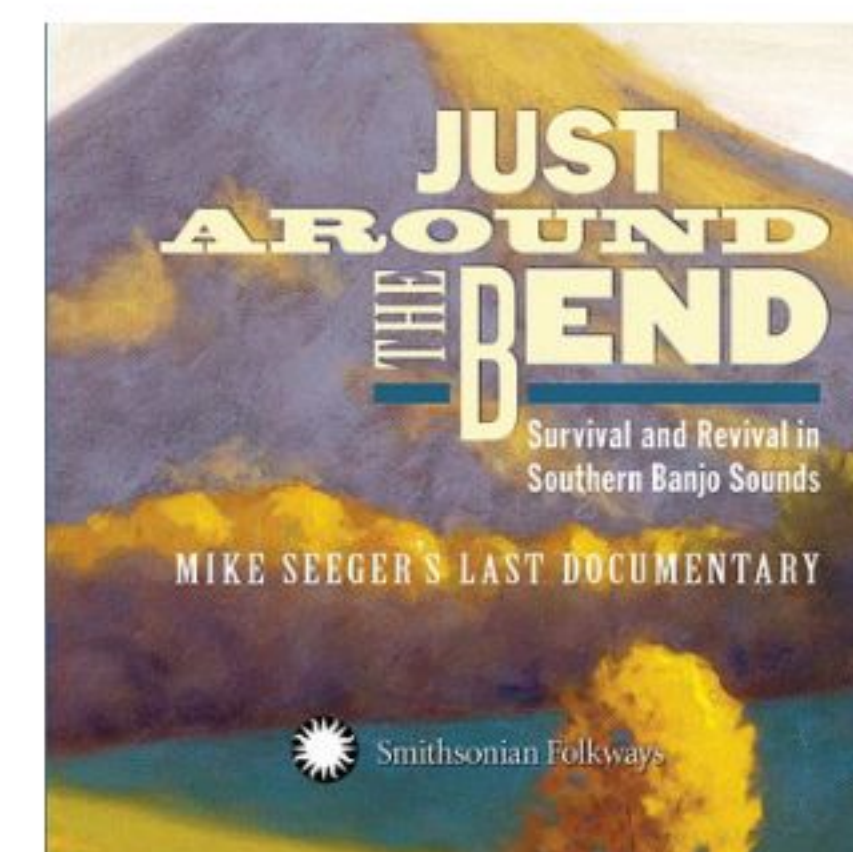
The Nick Moss Band Lucky Guy!

Chicago’s own 2019 Blues Music Award winners Nick Moss and Dennis Gruenling are at it again. On *Lucky Guy!*, Gruenling’s harp, along with the Midwestern intensity of Moss’ blues guitar, is pure ecstasy. Produced by Kid Andersen and Moss, the album embraces traditional Chicago blues and severe West Coast jump. The shuffle “312 Blood” launches the album with killer harp and guitar solos without a smidgen of blues-rock.

A real bang-for-your-buck recording, it also features killer rhythm guitar courtesy of Kid Andersen on the title track and “Me And My Friends.” He solos like a boss on the swinging “Movin’ On My Way.” Guitarist “Monster” Mike Welch is featured on the captivating Mike Ledbetter tribute “The Comet.” Moss’ hollowbody stings like a bee on the minor-key march of “Sanctified, Holy And Hateful,” while the rhythm section swings with the fire of a bygone era.

The love song “Ugly Woman” was

initially recorded by Johnny O’Neal, but the band adds its own sauce with accented upbeats. In all, Moss is an expressive guitar strangler of the highest order and *Lucky Guy!* percolates from start to finish. – **OJ**



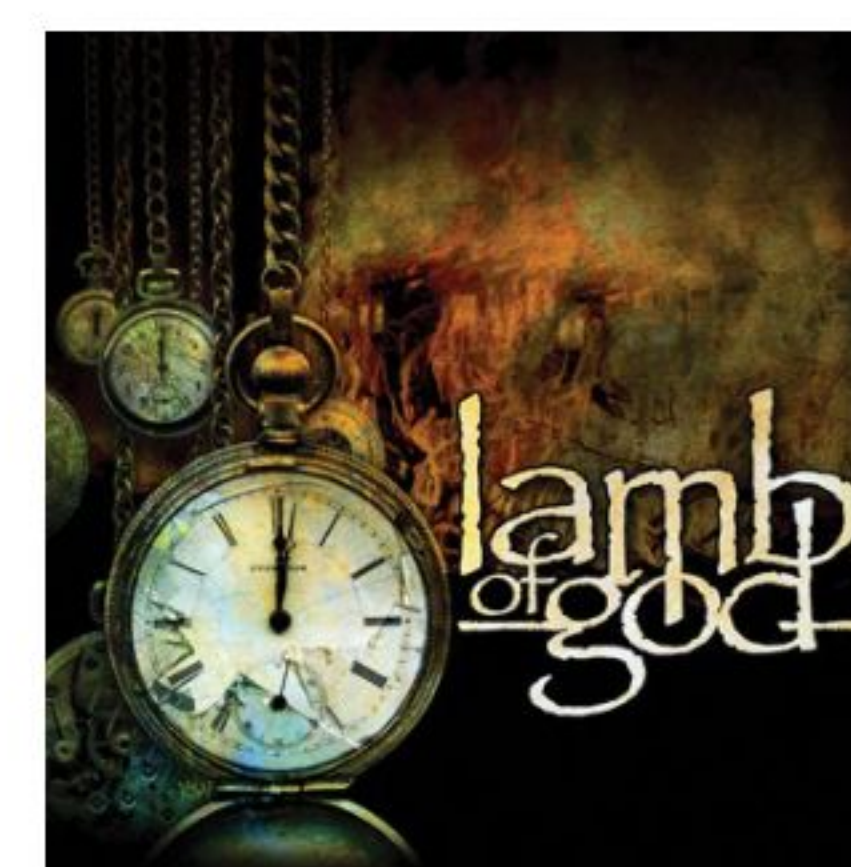
Mike Seeger Just Around The Bend

Besides being a founding member of the New Lost City Ramblers in the late ’50s and early-’60s Folk Boom, multi-instrumentalist Mike Seeger recorded and filmed many regional old-time musicians during his 50-year career. His last such project, in 2009 (before his death later that year), documented the “survival and revival of Southern banjo sounds.”

This is more than a treasure trove, it’s several. The package includes a DVD of Seeger interviewing and capturing songs by two dozen banjo players, two CDs’ worth of performances by some of them, and a 78-page booklet with players’ bios, tunings, and descriptions of the songs.

The musicians range from the late Frank George to young torchbearers Tina Steffey and Rhiannon Giddens, formerly of the Carolina Chocolate Drops. Styles encompassed include the driving clawhammer of Rhoda Kemp to a Sam McGee rag played by Robert Montgomery to Leroy Troy’s Dave Macon-inspired showmanship – flipping the banjo this way and that while still carrying a tune.

Seeger is seen playing a bit of “(Give The) Fiddler A Dram” while trying an instrument, but his role is as preservationist – something he did wonderfully from the New Lost City Ramblers onward. – **DF**



Lamb of God Lamb of God

The secret of good metal, as its practitioners will tell you, is *not* merely playing

heavy, loud, or fast – it’s about delivering monster grooves that will not be denied. While LoG’s first album in five years isn’t a departure from their molten sound, it reinforces the idea that few bands deliver groove-crunch better than these road warriors.

Opener “Memento Mori” find guitarists Mark Morton and Willie Alder doing what they do best, slamming down heavy beats with sickly saturated guitars. Morton’s neck-pickup shred kicks off “Checkmate” over one of Adler’s riffs, with John Campbell’s bass holding down the bottom. “Reality Bath” mixes a menacing, lightly distorted riff against heavier textures for contrast. And if you’re waiting for a brooding ballad, that ain’t gonna happen – LoG burns at jackhammer tempos throughout every track.

Overall, there are few guitar solos on the album, and they’re not missed. On “New Colossal Hate,” the band emphasizes riffs and double-bass-drum pummeling over self-gratuitous shredding, though Morton can blaze when he feels like it, as on “Poison Dream.” When he steps out for serious fret-dancing on “Routes,” it’s thrilling to hear him rip. – **PP**



The Hi-Jivers Play Their Favorites

Nashville is supposed to be all about country music, but the Hi-Jivers shatter that mold with their hot mix of retro blues, R&B, and rockabilly. Their latest EP proves the point; high-octane guitar and powerhouse vocals backed by a rock-solid rhythm section.

Guitar man Austin John is all over the sound, reeling out tough rhythm riffs highlighted by inventive solos that pay homage to greats from Elmore James to Hubert Sumlin. Yet his playing remains all his own.

Coupled with John is singer Dawna Zahn’s killer vocals; think Big Maybelle, Willie Mae Thornton, or even Janis Joplin. Upright bass from Hank Miles and drummer Jason Smay fill out the band with suitable vintage tone and style.

The six tracks here range from classic blues to early R&B. On “Just One More Time,” John’s guitar is lowdown and gritty, with tough riffs that swing the blues. Zahn’s singing is throaty with a sting in the tail. And the string bass provides the perfect fill and foil.

“I Smell a Rat” swells with sweet reverb and a suitably funky rhythm beat, giving the original a run for the money. Howlin’ Wolf would be proud. – **Michael Dregni VG**



The Hi-Jivers’ Hank Miles, Dawna Zahn, and Austin John.

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STOLEN INSTRUMENTS

Reward for return of stolen '57 Sunburst reissue Stratocaster. Stolen 6/4/94 out of my red Blazer in Denver, CO. Serial is V010258 and have police report. Looking for 26 years now. Kevin (303) 946-2458

✓ VG APPROVED GEAR

MR. MO' JANGLE

The Reverend Airwave 12

The electric 12-string is a true marvel of guitardom... when it stays in tune. A good one can deliver a heavenly shimmer unmatched by any six-string, but if it's fussy and temperamental, the magic is lost. The Reverend Airwave 12 seeks to remedy this with a semi-hollow body and special bridge designed to keep it tuned and ready to jangle at a moment's notice.

Like many Reverends, the Airwave uses korina, here paired with a spruce top for the body, and walnut in the neck. The semi-hollow design makes it light in hand and nicely balances the long headstock. The axe has a 24.75" scale, giving the strings more flex, while the neck has a dual-action truss, Boneite nut, and locking tuners for added stability. Importantly, the bridge individually intonates each string.

In hand, the Airwave 12 is comfortable. With its medium-oval neck profile, it's full but not fat. With a perfect setup, the neck is fast and sleek. Chords, Byrds-ready arpeggios, and single-note runs are easy, popping with commendable clarity. Credit an electronics package that includes two proprietary P-90s with master Volume and Tone controls. The Bass Contour knob is a passive roll-off that re-voices the

Price: \$1,199
www.reverendguitars.com

pickups in real time, reducing the bass for more single-coil chime, or adding it back for church-organ bass blasts. There's also a "treble bleed" circuit on the Volume control, so you don't lose high-end as you reduce the volume.

The Airwave 12's electronics genuinely help shape the tone of any amp (or room). Naturally, at least one run through "Stairway to Heaven" is obligatory, and the Airwave 12 delivers mightily – as it does plenty of Roger McGuinn-worthy jangle. Reverend has spared no chime. – **Pete Prown**



Price: \$220
www.godsmom.com

HEAVENLY BOOST

The Heather Brown Blessed Mother v2

Heather Brown paid her dues in the overdrive world, working under the tutelage of pedal giants Robert Keeley at Keeley Electronics and Mike Matthews of Electro-Harmonix. After her ear-friendly designs caught the interest of friends, word spread through the pedal community.

Updated with a handful of useful new features, the second version of her Blessed Mother offers increased headroom, output, and a wider range of tonal control thanks to its ability to operate on 18 volts (nine volts remains an option). Clean boost settings produce increased harmonic saturation and dynamics. Silicon and germanium diodes unleash an organic, gritty, and musical sound that's perfect for pop, rock, blues, and roots.

In addition to controls for Volume, Drive, Treble, and Bass, the Blessed Mother's Immaculator knob adjusts the transparency of the amp's original signal. It works in conjunction with an amp to yield a range of smooth, raw, and rich multi-textural tones with clarity.

With its LED halo and true-bypass switching, the Blessed Mother is a special sweetener, adding copious crunch or clean boost. With Drive maxed, upscale classic overdrive is unleashed, complete with vibrant overtones, complex articulation, and no fizz. The BMO makes an awesome substitute for clean boosts lacking personality, but the bonus is sparkle, earthiness, and succulent gain. – **Oscar Jordan**



LEGEND MARKER

PRS Guitars' 35th Anniversary Custom 24

PRS has been around for many moons, but 1985 is the year they opened their original factory in Annapolis and officially began production. Thus, 2020 is the right time for the 35th Anniversary Custom 24.

A prime example of what makes PRS instruments unique in the guitar universe, the Custom 24 has many of the specs you expect – mahogany body with highly figured carved-maple top, maple neck with a rosewood fingerboard, and those classic bird inlays. Another PRS trademark is that 25" scale, parked between Fender and Gibson and helping achieve that signature tone. The fretboard, per the guitar's name, has 24 frets and sits atop a neck profile that's either Pattern Regular or Pattern Thin. Hardware includes gold finish, Phase III locking tuners, PRS Tremolo, and a Gen III vibrato bridge.

For electronics, the Anniversary has PRS 85/15 humbuckers,

Price: \$3,950
www.prguitars.com

which Paul Smith voiced to deliver better-defined body tone (more on this later). Each has a coil-tap in addition to the master Volume and Tone. As on many (not all)

PRS guitars, the Volume knob on the 35th Anniversary is beautifully located for swells – SG owners should be rightfully jealous. Also look for the natural “drop top” binding and cutaway contour, as well as the comfortable PRS neck heel that makes it a breeze to grab all 24 frets (the guitar is also available in PRS' 10 Top and Artist Package).

Amped up, the Custom 24 unveils its unique personality. Some folks see humbuckers on a mahogany body with set neck and assume it'll have a Gibson-esque tone, but that's not the case here. The 85/15s push bigger treble and bass dimensions, and are not overpowered, letting that tonewood shine through like a nice Strat or Tele. The Custom 24 has a natural snap, spank, and vibe that must be heard to be believed. It's that strange, magical thing that Smith figured out 35 years ago – how to make a solid body that combines the best of Fender and Gibson in one guitar. The coil taps and whammy bar only add to the twangy fun.

There are many reasons players choose PRS for live work, including their ability to cover A-to-Z in tone while enjoying killer playability, looks, and electronics. The 35th Anniversary Custom 24 only confirms the legend. – **Pete Prown**

GEARIN' UP



DEAN EXILE SELECT

Dean Guitars' Exile Select models have an alder body with optional burled or quilted tops, bolt-on slim-D-shaped maple neck, ebony fretboard with 16" radius, 25½" scale, pearloid inlays, dual-action truss, and five-ply binding. They use EMG 57TW/66TW pickups with push/pull Volume and Tone pots and a five-way selector.



D'ADDARIO CASEIN PICKS

D'Addario Casein picks are available in Standard 351 shape and a Chris Thile signature mandolin version. The point on the 351 has a right-handed bevel. The Thile signature pick has a wide triangular shape and three points for playing, each with a bevel. They are both 1.4mm gauge.



DR. Z Z WRECK JR.

The Dr. Z Amplification Z Wreck Jr. uses a post-phase-inverter Master Volume circuit with 6N14N (mil-spec EL84) power tubes, a 5Y3 rectifier tube, and a hand-wired turret board with components by Heyboer, Triad, and Mallory powering a Celestion Greenback. It's available as a 1x12 combo or head/cab.

Got something new and cool? Let us know at www.VintageGuitar.com/Gearin-Up-Submission

VG APPROVED GEAR

BLUE MOOD

The Guild X-175 Manhattan Special

Dressed with DeArmond's new Dynasonic single-coils and a striking Malibu Blue finish, Guild's X-175 Manhattan Special is *not* your father's archtop hollowbody. Not by a long shot.

In-hand, it feels substantial and well-crafted; fit and finish are excellent, fretwork is flawless, and the satin blue offers a refreshing detour. Its spruce top with maple back and sides, three-piece neck, and bound headstock bow to tradition, as do the set neck with slim U shape, ebony fretboard with 9.5" radius, medium-jumbo frets, and 1¹¹/₁₆" nut. Switching involves Volume and Tone controls for each pickup, along with a three-way toggle. The Guild-stamped Bigsby vibrato is standard, and tuning machines are Grover Sta-Tite 97s with an 18:1 ratio. Would it hold tuning better with a roller bridge in place of the tune-o-matic? Perhaps.

Plugged into a '65 Ampeg Reverberocket, the guitar sounded as good as it looks; the DeArmonds stayed faithful to their vintage predecessors, with chords and blues riffs full and juicy at lower volume, evoking the tone of blues great T-Bone Walker. Add a bit of reverb and tremolo to create funky Bo Diddley sounds, especially in the middle position.

The bridge pickup is extremely

Price: \$1,499 (street)
www.guildguitars.com

articulate and cutting, and as volume increases, the natural overdrive is more pronounced (with slap-echo added, think Paul Burlison and Scotty Moore). Inside the Manhattan beats a rock-and-roll heart keeping with its flashy exterior, but it will also excel at blues, jazz, Americana, and country.

It may be a trendy-hip hollowbody, but the Manhattan Special is a viable choice that just might entice you to brush up on your rockabilly licks. — **Bob Cianci**



Price: \$249
www.robertkeeley.com

EXPERT ECHO

The Keeley ECCOS Delay/Looper

There are plenty of '70s tape-style delays and digital loopers around, but the Keeley ECCOS does both jobs with highly unique twists.

A deep, musical box with stereo ins/outs, 24-bit processing, expression-pedal input, and remote-switching capabilities, the ECCOS's special modulation circuit – which displays *flanged* trails and tails – makes it stand out from the pack. The heart of the beast is “tape-flanged modulation,” which yields rich, reel-to-reel tape effects as delay notes trail off. Dual stomp switches in Delay mode offer true-bypass and tap-tempo; in Looper mode, they allow recording and playing loops, as well as hearing them in reverse or half-speed. A unique “tap” Feedback button accesses a secondary control menu where you can change modulation time, control the delay repeat tones, control flanger-feedback level, and select time subdivisions (quarter, dotted eighth, eighth, triplet).

This is *before* getting into the Looper section, which lets you record and layer loops endlessly, undo/redo, and add effects. You can even jump between the delay and looper sections on the fly using the Mode toggle or by double-tapping the Feedback knob. Did we mention there's room for three saved presets?

If all you need is garden-variety echo for your heavy solos, this isn't the pedal for you. But if you seek vintage, drippy echo, looping, and *Avengers*-strength processing, the ECCOS brings it all, in a conventional footprint. — **Pete Prown**

UPSET THE OFFSET

The Novo Guitars Serus T

Dennis Fano's fondness for offset guitars goes back to the '66 Jazz Bass he bought at age 15. All but a handful of the guitars he has ever built were offsets like those he now designs and builds for his new company, Novo Guitars.

When Fano left the company that still bears his name and moved to Nashville in 2015, he wanted to "chart a new course" to move away from the retro designs that dominated that earlier work. The Serus models – the T, J, and S – were among his first.

The Serus T's body and neck are tempered in a process that Fano says allows the wood to breathe and resonate. Strummed before even being plugged in, it chimes like a bell. And though the shape seems familiar, it's an original design reminiscent of Leo's Tele blended with a touch of Rickenbacker. The marriage is striking, and the distressed finish came to him as a response to customers who'd say they hated to scratch their Fanos. Well-executed, it brings just-right wear and tear along with convincing finish checking. It looks well-played, hard-gigged, and like it has been loved for decades.

The 9.5"-radius neck has a rosewood fretboard, 21 Jescar 6125 frets, and a 25.5" scale. Chrome hardware, a Gotoh T-style bridge, and retro Kluson tuners are standard, as are Lindy Fralin Tele and P-45 pickups. A classy gig bag completes the package.

Price: \$2,799.99
www.novoguitars.com

Plugged into a '66 Ampeg Reverberocket, the Serus T did not disappoint. The bridge pickup offered classic twang without those pesky "ice pick" tones. Played clean, it sounds gorgeous, but when hit hard with overdrive turns into a snarling rock machine, fully capable of cutting through a mix with impressive results. The neck pickup is capable of jazz-like sounds when properly EQ'd on a quality tube amp.

Though the Serus T's body is large, it balances perfectly and feels comfortable sitting or standing. As the old saying goes, it's hard to put down. –

Bob Cianci



FENDER ACOUSTASONIC STRATOCASTER

Fender's Acoustasonic Stratocaster has a fully hollow body, mahogany neck with an ebony fretboard, and the company's Acoustasonic Noiseless magnetic pickup that works with its Stringed Instrument Resonance System (SIRS).



EARTHQUAKER AFTERNEATH V3

EarthQuaker Devices Afterneath V3 reverb offers sounds ranging from scattered individual delays to a wash of atmospheric reverb. It uses relay-based switching, has an EXP input for expression pedals, and operates in nine modes.



RADIAL ENGINEERING PZ-PRO

The Radial Engineering PZ-Pro is a two-channel instrument preamp, DI, and switcher. Each channel has separate equalizer with a filter section; the second channel adds microphone input. Three footswitches toggle between channels, activate boost, and engage the effects loop.

TOO COOL FOR SCHOOL

The Singleton Cool Bop Archtop

Guitarist and designer Mark “Touch” Singleton credits luthier John Carruthers for his success as a repairman and builder. Influenced by “The old, the new, and the futuristic,” Singleton creates designs that offer superb playability, flamboyant individuality, and badass tone.

The Cool Bop Archtop advances the specs of Singleton’s Norman Brown signature model. Its figured myrtle and red cedar are hand-carved and graced with a finish called Burnt Honey Drop. The guitar has what Singleton calls his “reverse Florentine cutaway” along with a C-shaped mahogany neck, leopard-wood fretboard, 25" scale length, 12" radius, and 22 hand-polished nickel Jescar frets.

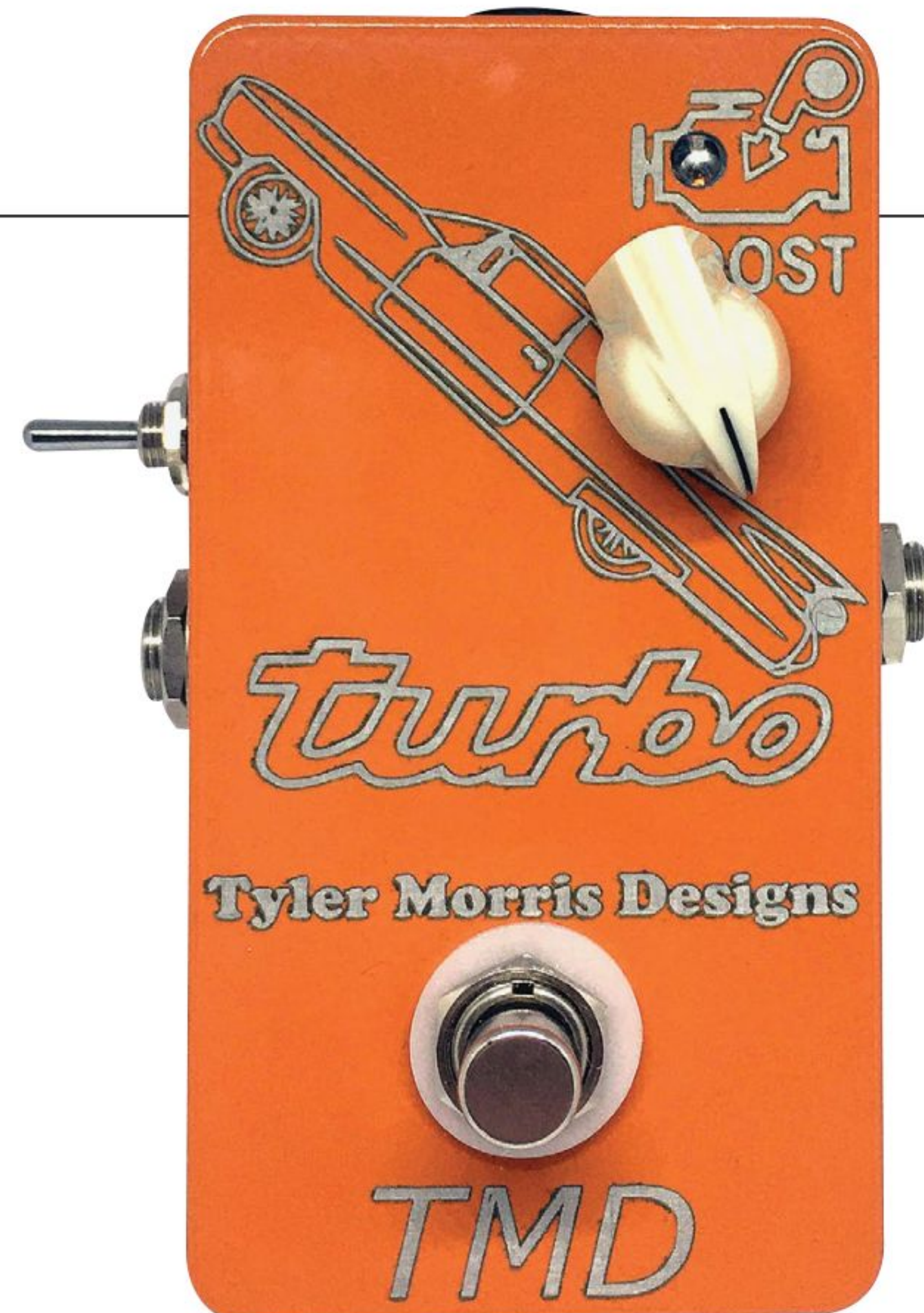
Engineered to swing hard, the Cool Bop uses a master Volume, master Tone push/pull for series or parallel, and a custom neck pickup for those who can appreciate the playing of Norman Brown and similar artists. Copper/brass side dots, ultralight Sperzel tuners, a Schaller Signum bridge, and strap locks complete the appointments.

An elegant archtop sans soundholes,

Price: \$4,200
www.singletonguitars.com

the Cool Bop nevertheless sounds fantastic acoustically. Plugging in creates the potential for loudness, yet it offers zero feedback. The girthy-but-comfy neck makes everything from complex chord movements to fast octave runs effortless. And that body thickness – just 2.75" – explains why the guitar is so comfortable to play seated and inspire the phrasings of Wes Montgomery, George Benson, and Pat Martino. Best of all, it inspires melodic individuality and freedom.

Despite its pretty-boy looks, the Cool Bop is gutsy and phat. The push/pull control is a sweet touch, offering additional sounds within the range of jazz and its derivatives. It’s a killer jazz box that demands attention. – **Oscar Jordan**



Price: \$149.99
www.tylermorrisdesign.com

STEP UP

The Tyler Morris Designs Turbo Booster

Tylor Morris is more than a rock guitarist with chops galore – he also has a pedal company that designs effects for top-tier guitarists.

The line includes the Jimmy Vivino Signature Turbo Booster as well as his own version, the TMD. Intended for the effects-challenged player, the latter is designed to be a constant in the signal chain; left “on,” it takes a player closer to the tonal characteristics in high-end amplifiers at low Volume settings.

With a single chickenhead knob for Boost (volume) and a toggle with three modes, the unit packs a handful of cool sounds in one minuscule package: Mode 1 emulates the sound of late-’60s/early-’70s Carlos Santana, Mode 2 mimics the treble-booster era of Clapton/Blackmore, and Mode 3 goes for Brian May via a Vox AC30 and a high-cut input filter.

Though the tones of the masters are subjective, the TMD Turbo Booster offers three usable presets to push an amplifier into a favorable sonic dimension. Modes 1 and 2 are similar, adding pronounced volume and midrange throatiness (a dirty amp will get the most from them), while Mode 3 yields a bass-y “woman tone” for those special occasions.

The Turbo Booster is a great concept and an easy fix for the low-maintenance tone artist. – **Oscar Jordan VG**



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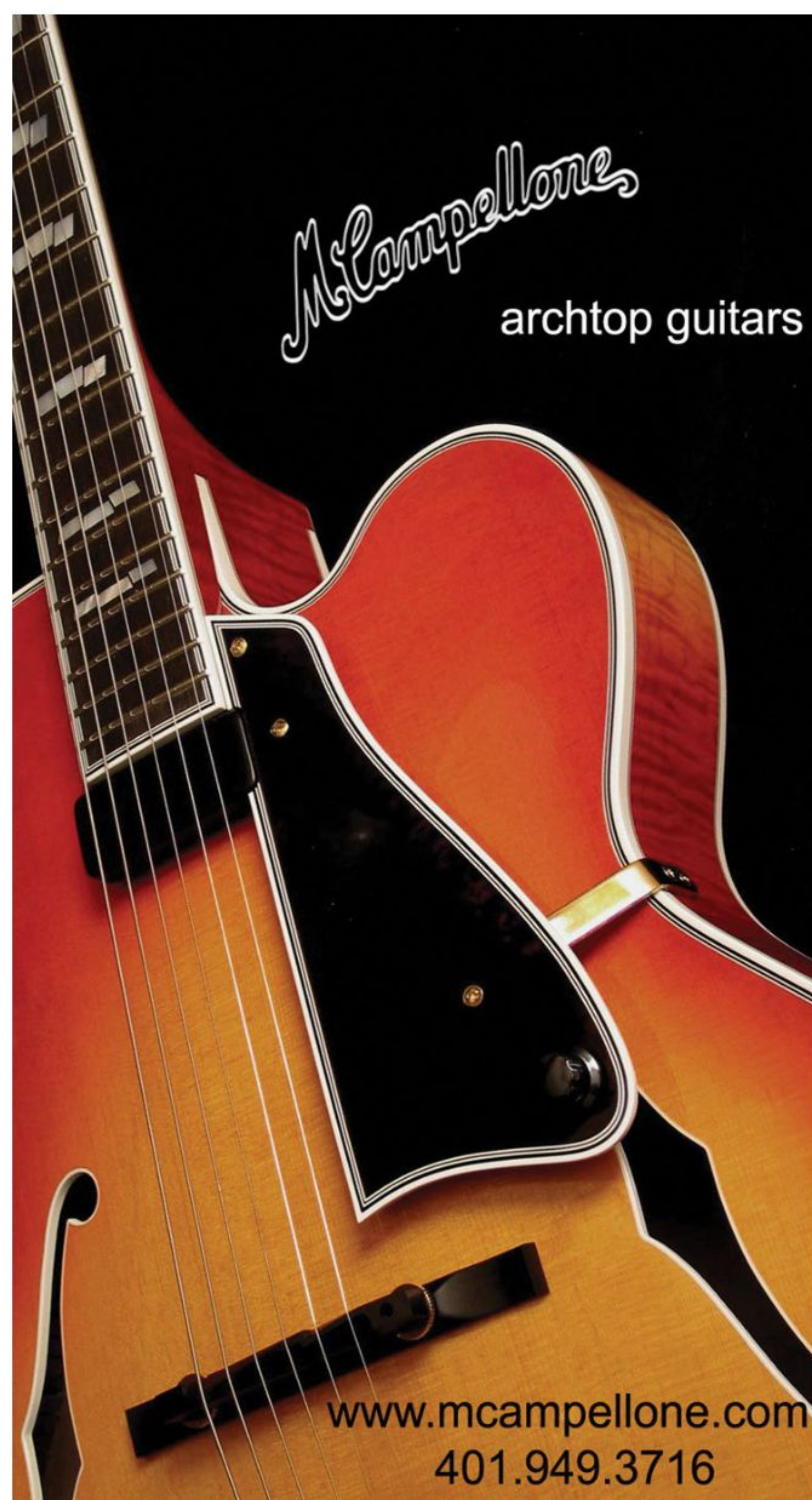


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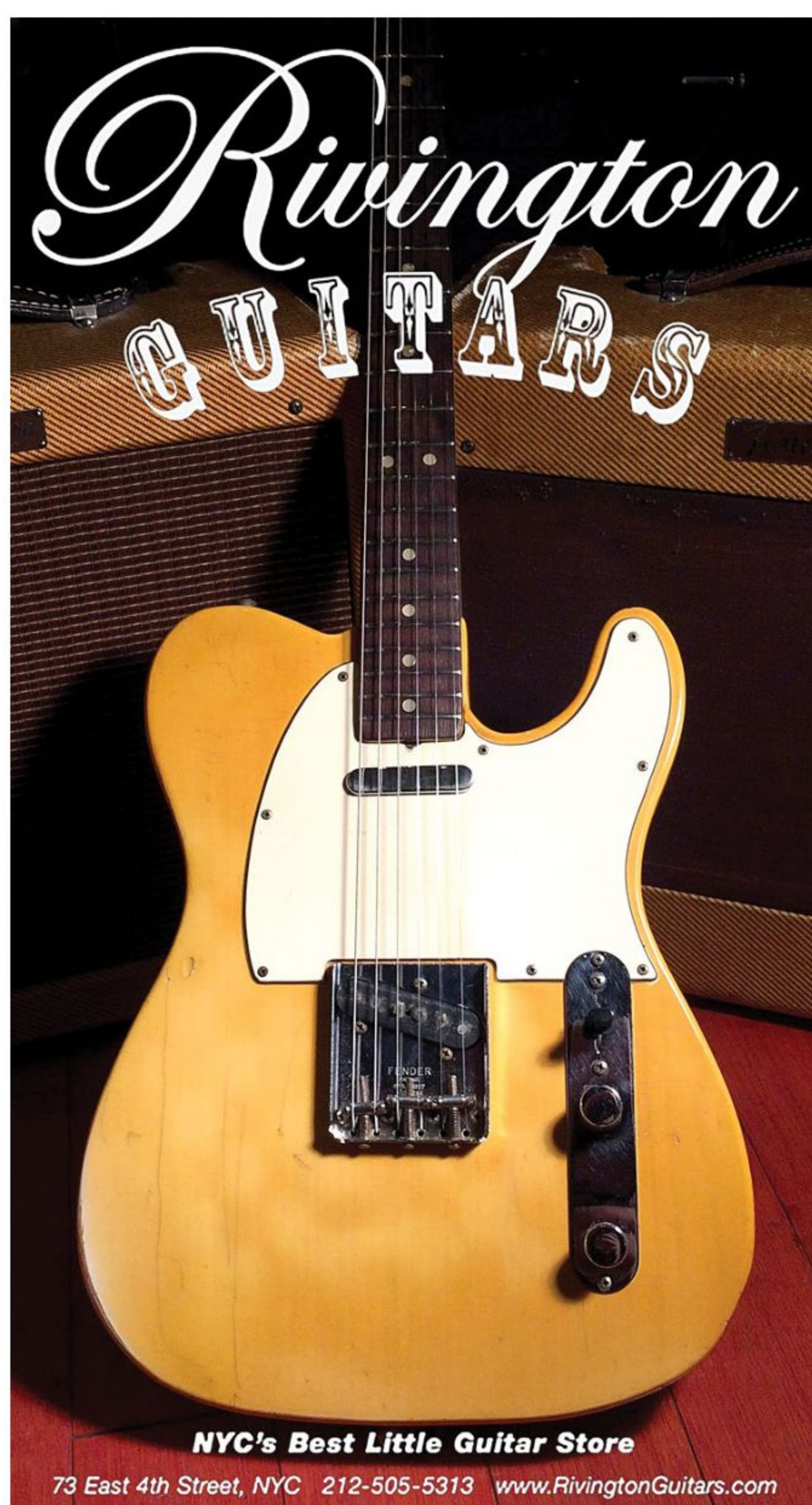
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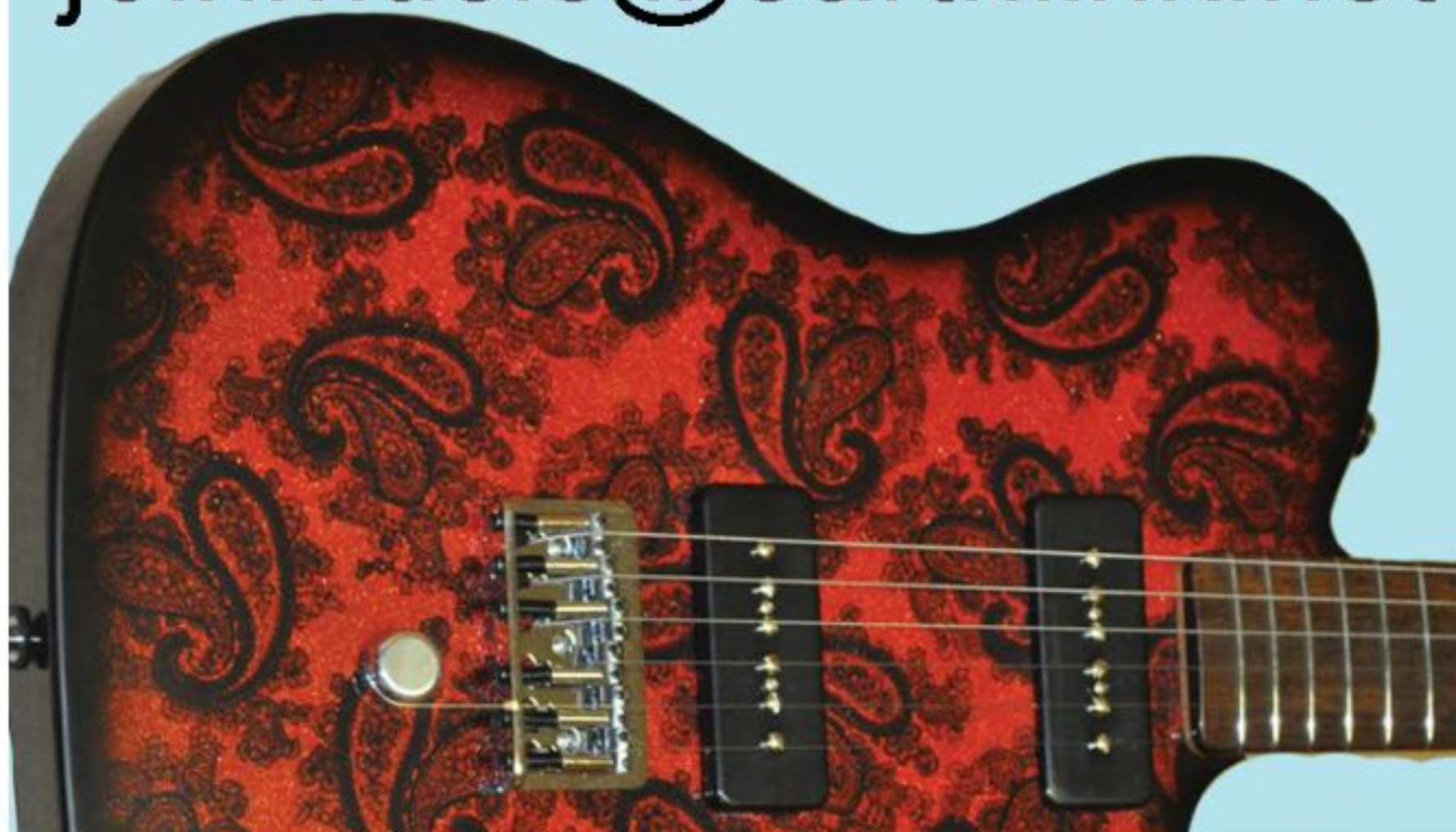
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2007 Rickenbacker 360AFG

Color of the year. Is that finish kinda yellow? No. No. Not so. But doesn't it seem to glow? Or is it my glass of Bordeaux. Did it undergo a tobacco rodeo? Oh, no. This guitar was finished in Amber Fireglo in facteau. Send \$2,500 of dough to where cool guys go. Willie's Guitar Chateau. Rhyming dictionary not included.

1975 Rickenbacker 4001

Fireglo, quite clean, nice and light, all-original including pickups, bridge pickup cover (not currently installed), white pickguard, truss rod cover, even the silver tolex hard case. Structurally and electronically sound, plays and sounds great. Ah, I remember 1975...I guess it was as good a time as any to be 7 years old. \$2,499

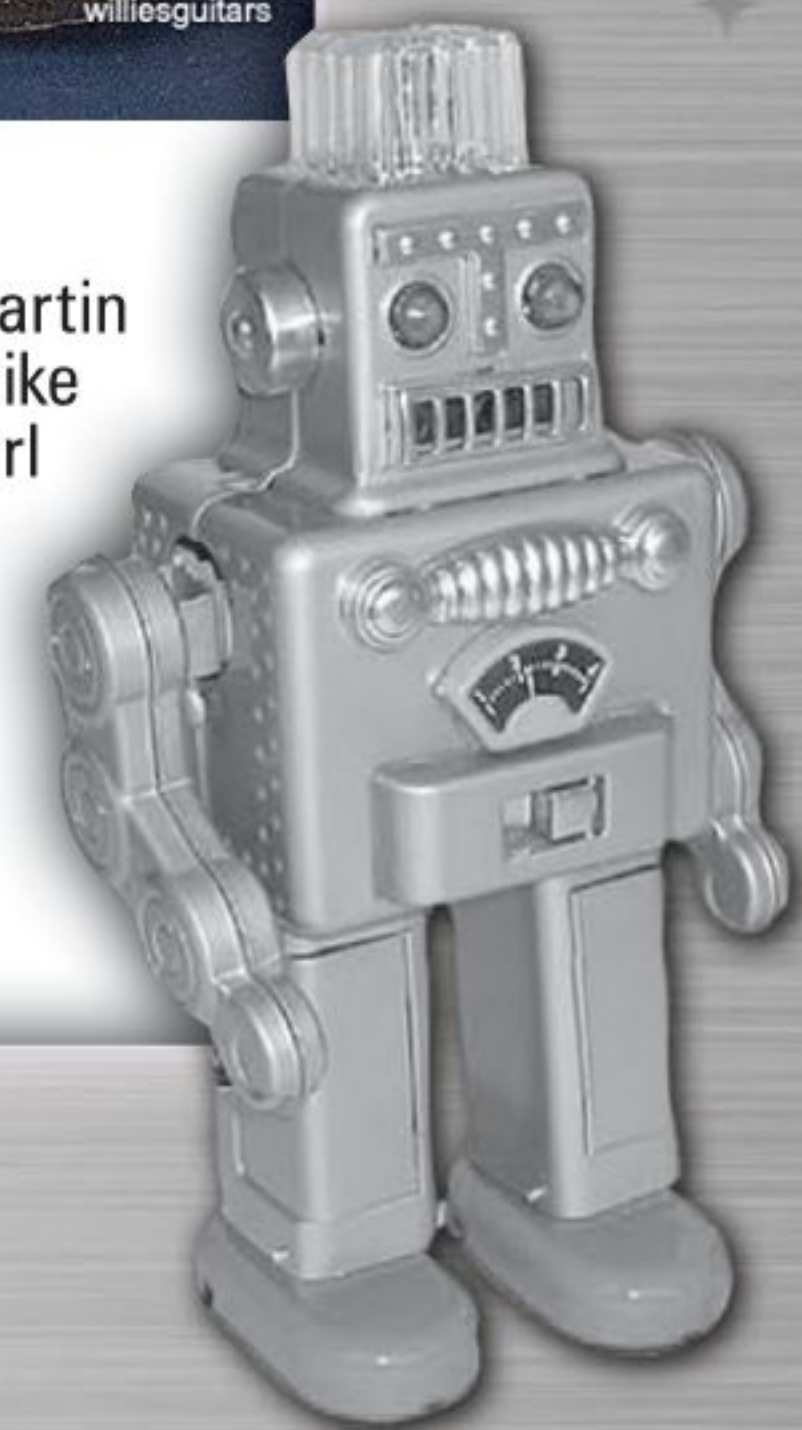
1965 Fender Vibrolux Reverb-Amp

Early '65 "Fender Electric" panel, 40 watts, all-original including tolex, grille, transformers, 2x10" Oxfords, even the footswitch. Plenty of (but not too much) headroom, classic Fender tube-driven spring reverb and tremolo, solid pine cabinet, reliable, versatile, and portable. Made in California, home of the 405. \$2,795

1904 Martin I-45

From the collection of the C.F. Martin Guitar Company's official historian, Mike Longworth, who also did the pearl inlay work when Martin revived the D-45 in 1968. Brazilian rosewood, stunning pearl trim, and one of only five made. When this guitar was built, The Food of the Gods was the new H.G. Wells novel. \$24,000

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1) Dan Fontana's Stratocaster gathering includes (from left) a Clapton Crash, Custom Shop '57 Heavy Relic, a '75 in aged Olympic White, Custom Shop '65 reissue in Candy Apple, Custom Shop Relic in Sonic Blue, Custom Shop Relic in Tangerine, a '61 sunburst, '88 Clapton in Candy (a.k.a. "7Up") Green, and a '65 sunburst.

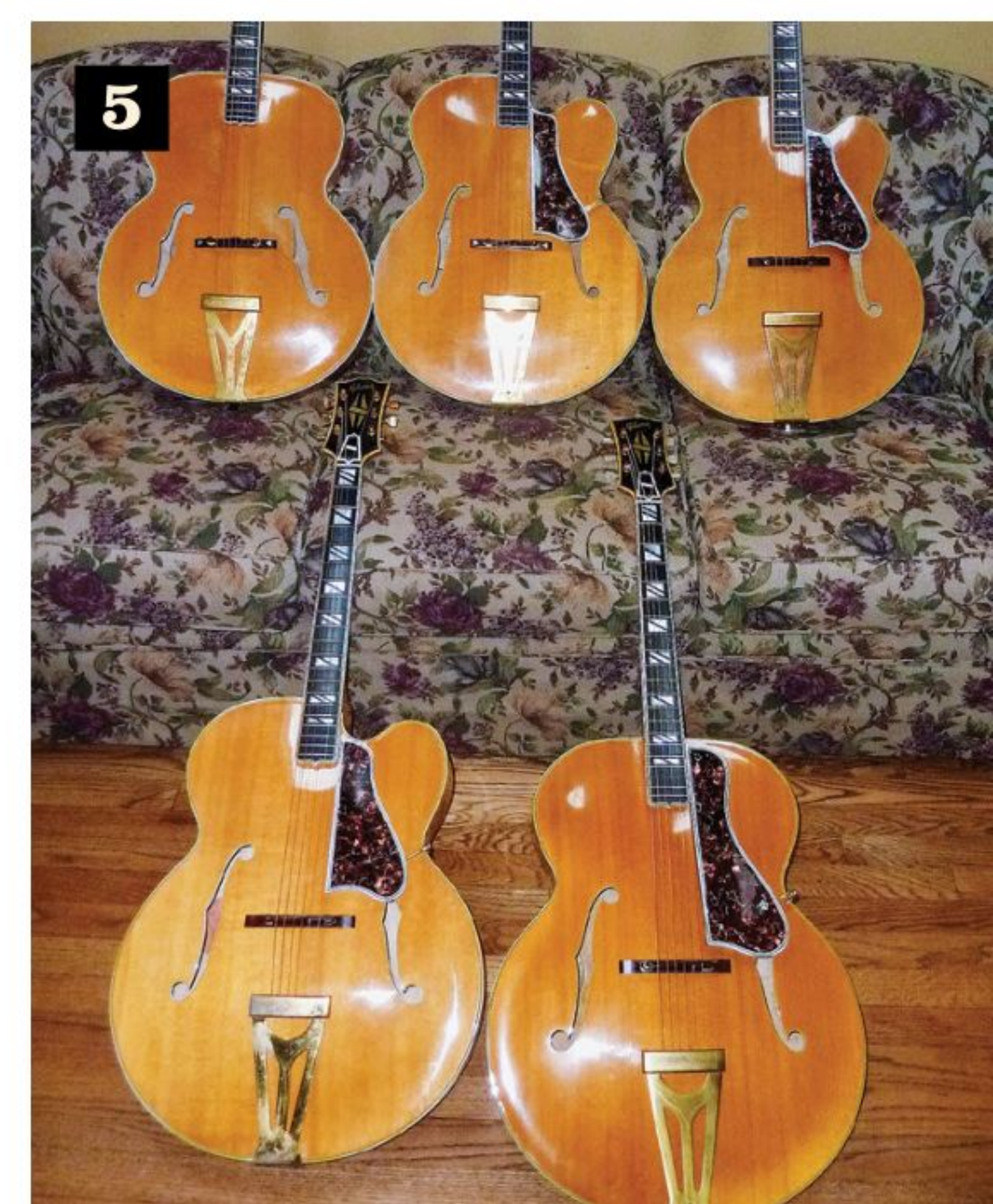
2) Joe Nuccio has been playing guitar for 35 years and reading VG for 15! Trading and upgrading landed this collection. From left are an '05 Les Paul Standard, Flying V '67 Relic, a Nash Strat copy, Fender Custom Shop '56 Strat Relic, '90 Gibson ES-335, a Nash Tele, a Nik Huber Krautster, Charvel Guthrie Govan, Tom Anderson Cobra and Drop Top Classic, an EVH, a Martin Custom Shop CEO-7, and a Martin 000 MMV.

3) Will DeBouver has been playing and collecting Heritage guitars since 2000. So far, more than 20 have come his way and his group currently includes (from left) an H-555, H-150 Goldtop, H-574, three H-150s, an H-137, H-550, H-155 Millennium DC, two H-535s, and another H-555.

4) J.P. Realic loves 12-strings – and the old-school blues guys who've made them so cool. From left are his '64 Harmony Sovereign, a sketch of Willie McTell, a circa-1905 Oscar Schmidt Grand Concert, a sketch of Lead Belly, and a custom Fraulini Francesca made by Todd Cambio.

5) Last year, we featured Kevin Rush's Fenders in the "Gallery." Proving he's a man of many tastes, here are his vintage Gibson Super 400s. From left in back are two fine examples from 1939 and one from '51. Those in front are from '57 and '52.

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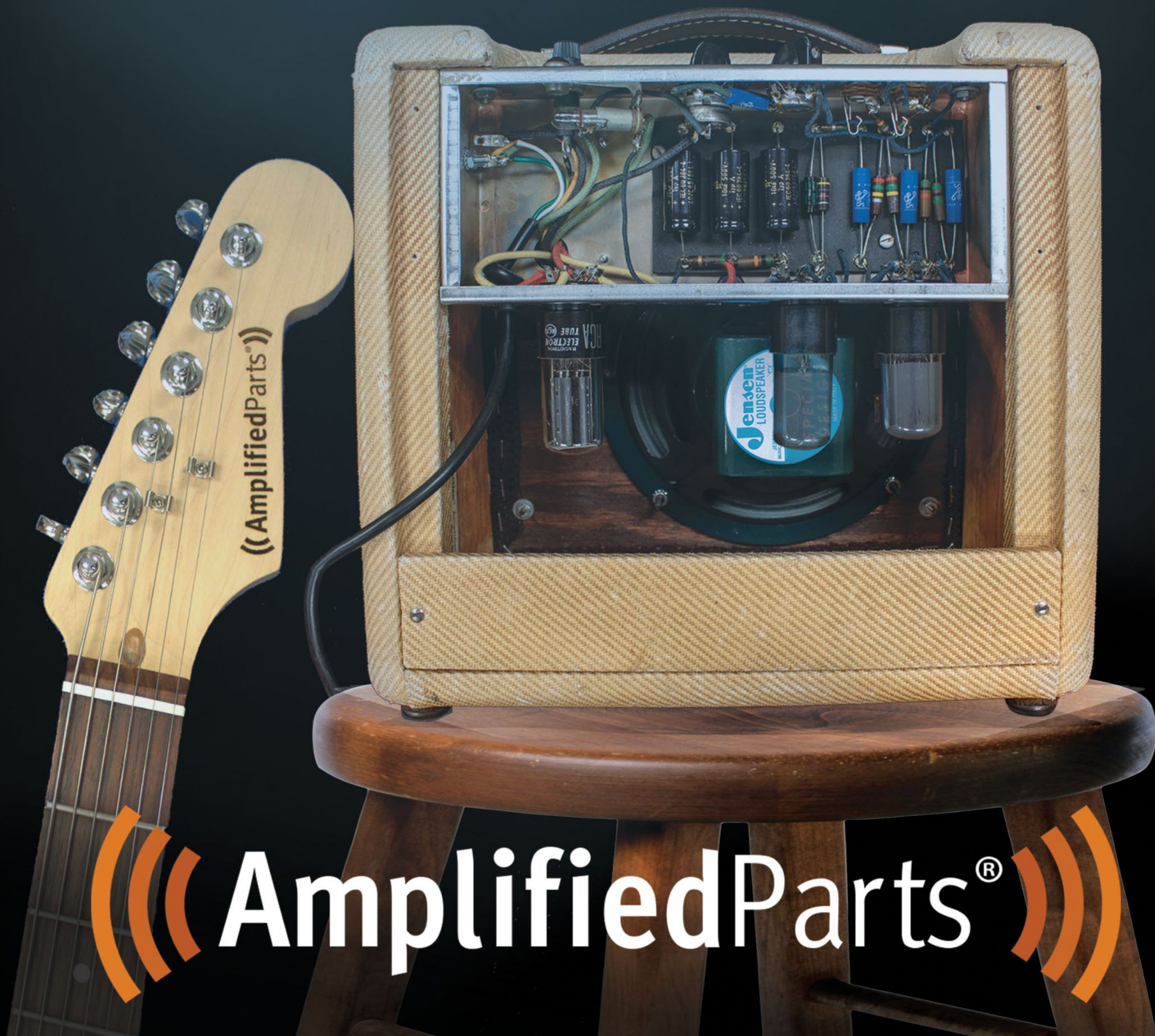
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LOWEST
PRICE
GUARANTEE

SPECIAL
FINANCING
AVAILABLE