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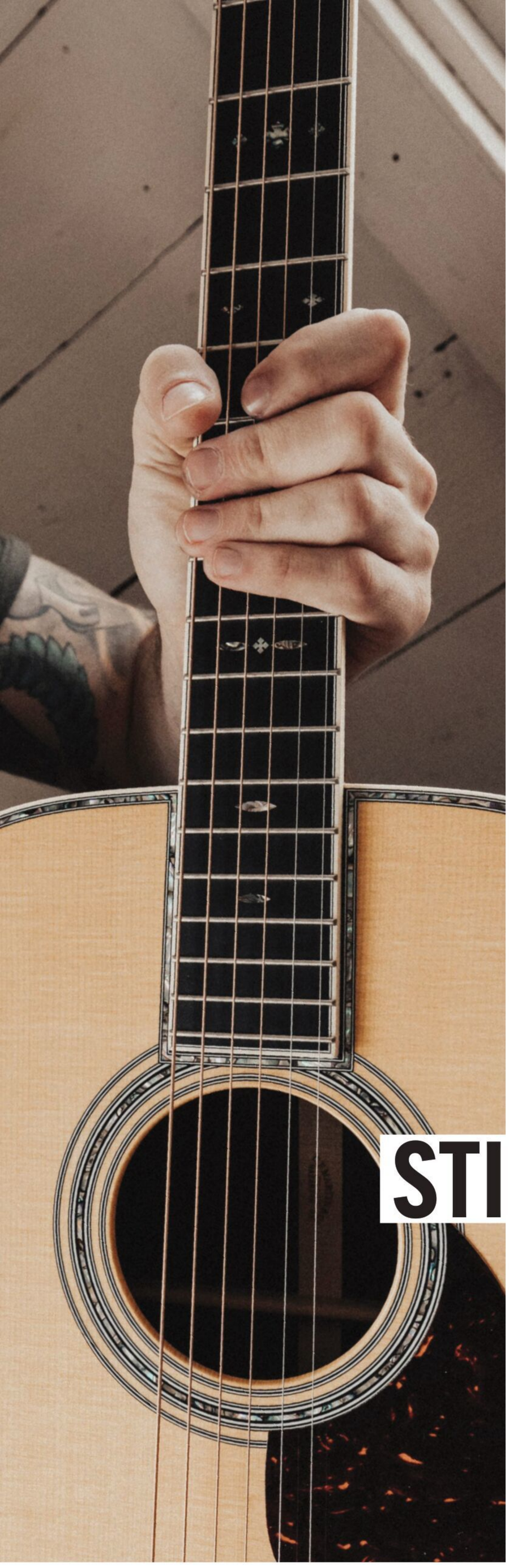
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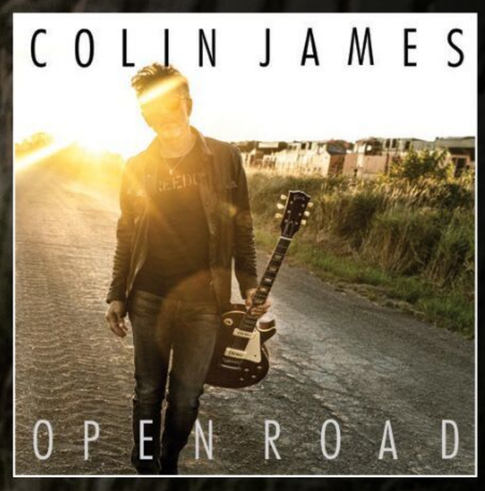
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10 - Evergreen Theatre, Powell River, BC
13 - Cleland Theatre, Penticton, BC
14 - Vernon Performing Arts Centre, Vernon, BC
15 - Key City Theatre, Cranbrook, BC
17 - Festival Place, Sherwood Park, AB
18 - Festival Place, Sherwood Park, AB
20 - Vic Juba Comm. Theatre, Lloydminster, AB
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23 - Blues At The Bow, Bow Island, AB



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22 - Rockefellers Houston, TX
23 - Poor David's Pub Dallas, TX
25 - SPACE Evanston, IL
26 - Shank Hall Milwaukee, WI
28 - Sportsmen's Tavern Buffalo, NY
29 - The Hangar Troy, NY
30 - The Falcon Malboro, NY
31 - The Met Pawtucket, RI

November
1 - City Winery Boston, MA
2 - Cafe Nine New Haven, CT
3 - Iridium New York, NY
5 - The Living Room Philadelphia, PA
6 - Thunderbird Cafe/Music Hall Pittsburgh, PA
7 - Grandview/Natalie's Columbus, OH

December
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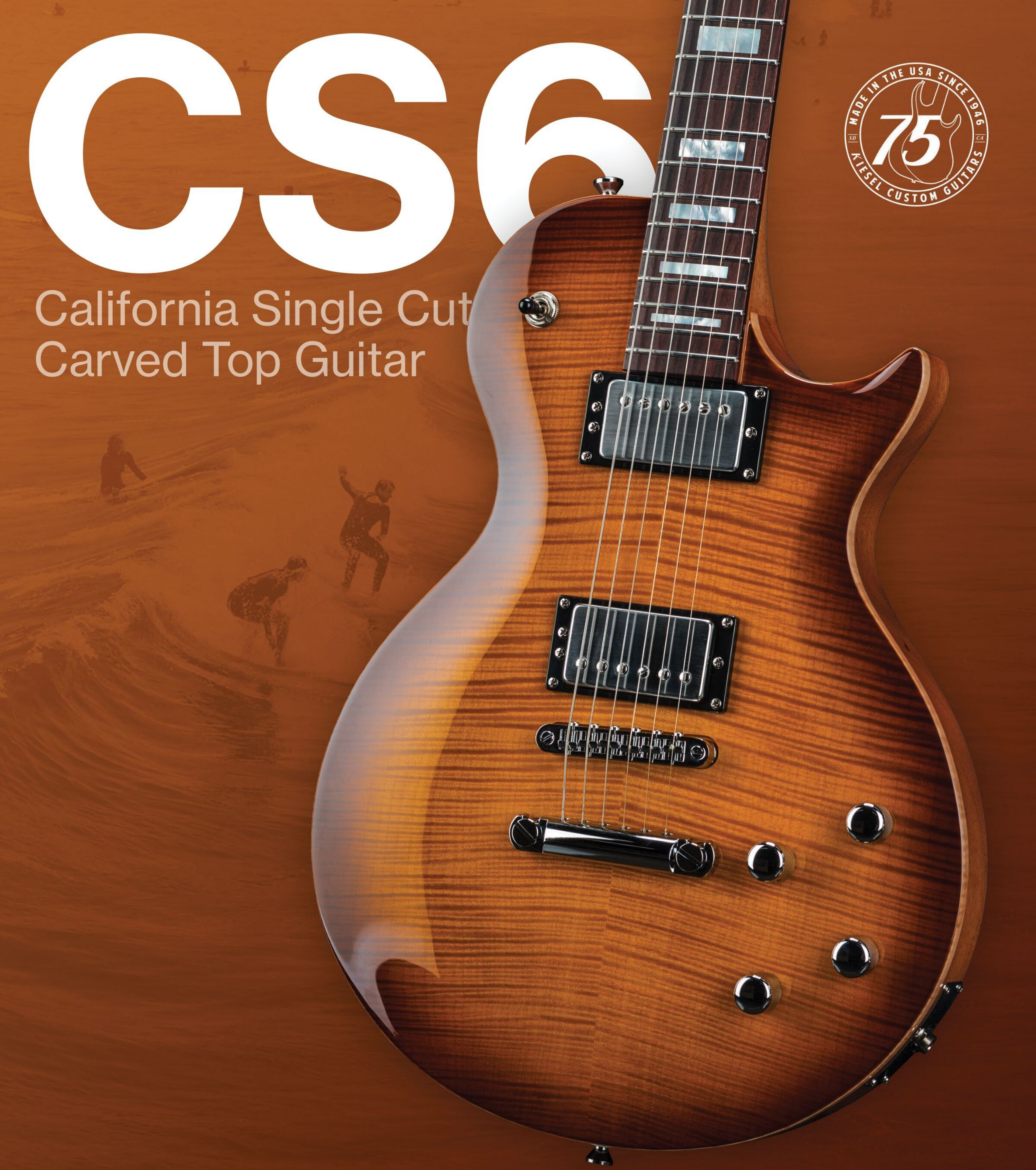
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Brad Gillis is working with Bay Area artist Peter Kellett on a line of aluminum-body guitars like these, backed here by his amp collection.

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In the '50s and '60s, Fender wasn't the only Leo making guitars and amplifiers in SoCal. From his music store in North Hollywood, Leo Krebs devised pieces like this, though not all were quite so bizarre. | ***By Dave Hunter***

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The tale of United Guitar Corporation is a ghost story – little documented and lost in obscurity. From 1939 into the early '70s, it built instruments for others. In '52, it briefly attempted to compete directly in the market, then retreated. | ***By Peter Stuart Kohman***

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Billy Soutar loves his 1969 Les Paul Personal because it's a great player. But mostly, it serves as a reminder of another guitar – and a great friendship. | ***By Ward Meeker***

62 **BRAD GILLIS**
Playin' On
He helped make the Floyd Rose vibrato requisite in '80s rock and wailed memorable leads for megastars Night Ranger. With a new album, the band is back on tour – and Gillis is back to seeking vintage guitars in all corners of the globe. | ***By Ward Meeker***

70 **LITTLE BROTHERS**
Fender's Musicmaster and Duo-Sonic
Often dismissed by snootier collectors, these two beginner models were conceived to capitalize on teens taking up the guitar in droves as "Rock Around the Clock" rode the charts in the summer of '55. | ***By Terry Foster and Tim Pershing***



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Photos: COVER: Brad Gillis: Kevin Baldes. Andy Powell courtesy of A. Powell. Fender Musicmaster/Duo-Sonic courtesy of George Gruhn. **THIS PAGE:** Kellett guitars courtesy of Brad Gillis.

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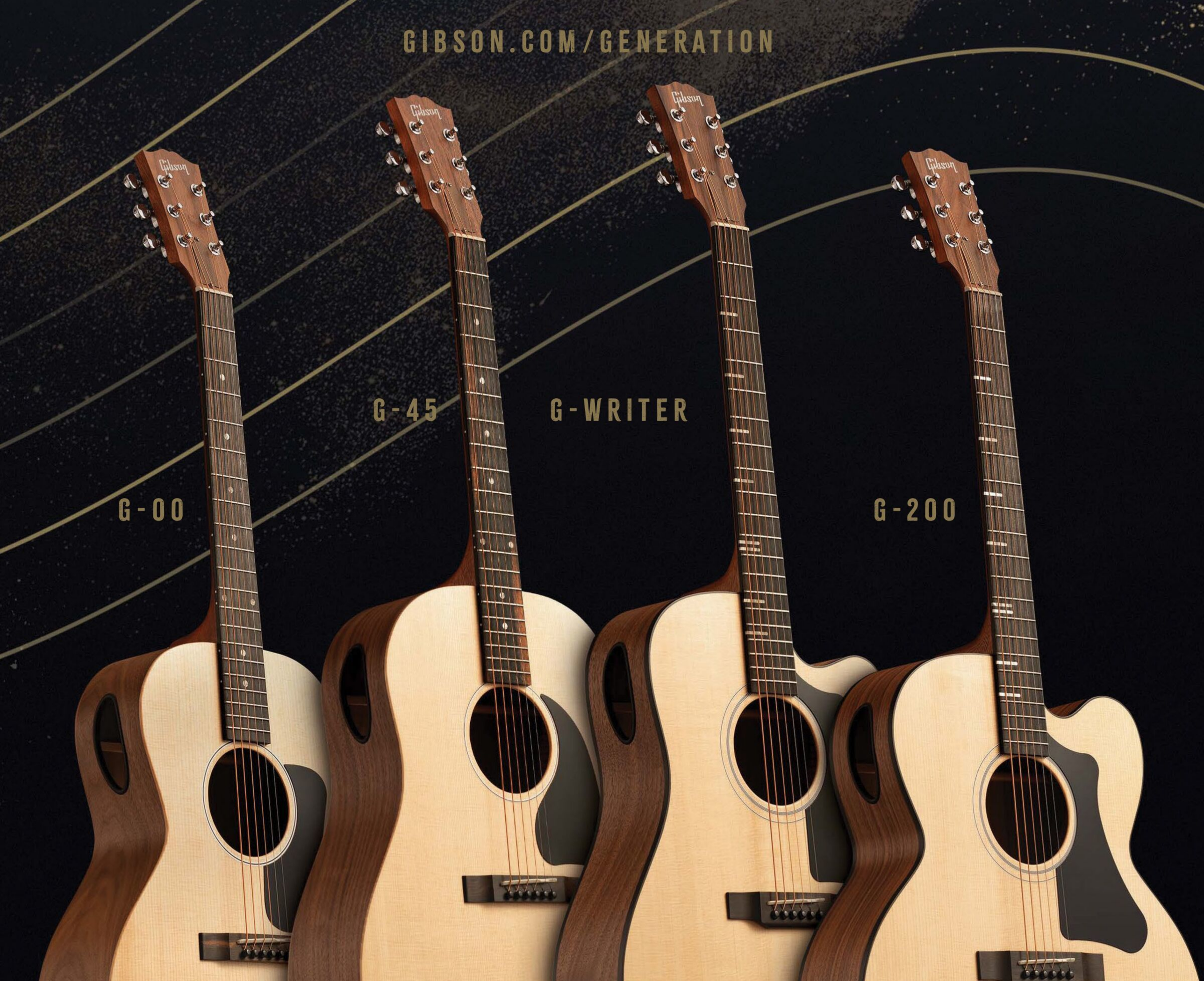
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READER MAIL

SEPTEMBER SUPERLATIVES

I just wanted to drop a line about how much I enjoy your magazine. I've been reading *VG* for decades, since discovering guitar shows in the '80s. They went hand-in-hand back then. I've stopped reading *Guitar Player* and *Guitar World*, but not *VG*. It always has something of interest for me.

"Classics" is a great addition – average guys getting a chance to show off their treasures is quite enjoyable, and September's piece on Fenton Robinson's ES-225 was excellent. Being a strong believer in "puttin' stuff where it belongs," that was a great guitar tale!

Wolf Marshall's "Fretprints" on Walter Becker was also very informative. It was hard to decipher who played what on those great songs, so thank you, Wolf.

"Alligator Greats: Bruce Iglauer Recalls 50 Years of Blues Guitar" was another excellent article. When I read that Bruce passed on Stevie Ray Vaughan because he thought of him as "...the world's loudest Albert King imitator" and couldn't hear what made him special. Geez-o-Pete, I had to read that again! Talk about a foot-in-the-mouth moment. We forgive Bruce, though, because he gave Luther Allison a well-deserved new lease on life, helped Johnny Winter release great music, and provided a home for a bunch of other blues cats who needed a label.

The article on the Modulus Graphite Flight 6 was interesting; I like the sound of properly engineered carbon fiber and it's great in any climate.

Nancy Wilson, Jerry Douglas, the "Pop 'N Hiss" on Uriah Heep's *Demons and Wizards* – all good stuff. Then, reading about how riding his '57 Triumph Tiger inspires Brian Setzer's music was *so* cool. Being an old-Triumph owner and enthusiast for most of my life (even before guitars), I know exactly what he's talking about. A good blast down a lonely, twisty road sure clears the cobwebs. The pic of Brian on his Tiger was icing on the cake.

Thanks to all your staff for such a fine publication. It keeps us old guitar nuts off the streets!

Billy Soutar
Signal, Arizona



DOSE OF DUSTY

I just read Dan Forte's memorial on Dusty Hill ("First Fret," October '21) and thought I'd share a story.

In '70 or '71, the Allman Brothers came to Houston to play a concert. I was hanging out at The Old Quarter, a downtown bar/venue, when their drummer, Jaimo, showed up. I didn't meet him that night, but after the bar gave him my phone number, the next day he called saying he had eyes to play some jazz tunes – he's a fine jazz drummer – and asked if I could round up a bass player.

I called Dusty and apprised him of Jaimo's request, and he agreed to meet at the OQ that night. So, with Dusty on bass and myself on my mid-'60s 335, we played a long set and had a great time.

Jaimo called again when the Brothers returned to Houston once or twice – I think he was hoping to reunite that trio.

Dusty could play anything if he heard it one time through, and he had a nice feel on tunes like "Song For My Father" and "Soft Winds." It was one of those gigs I'll always remember.

Freddy L. McLain
Corpus Christi, Texas

FORGETTING FEMALES?

Vintage Guitar is a great magazine – the only publication I subscribe to and recommend whenever the subject comes up. But please feature more female players; I have three granddaughters who are now playing guitar, and they always ask if there are women in the issue!

James Hohenzy
Wheaton, Illinois

(*Ed. Note: James, thank you very much for passing your love of guitar down to your granddaughters. We pride ourselves in spreading the word about players of all stylistic ilks, regardless of genre or gender. Any time a female releases music that catches the ear of our reviewers and staff, you can bet we'll share the news. Next month, watch for interviews with Samantha Fish and Joanne Shaw Taylor.*)

LACKING LETTERS

Looking at the October issue, I don't see any letters from readers. Readers like to see their comments in print, it gives them a nice rosy glow, especially when it comes to renewing their subscriptions. Just a thought.

Andrew S. Redding
Rotherham, England

(*Ed. Note: We noticed, too! And for the record, we publish virtually every letter we receive, including those that call out grammatical or factual errors and/or omissions. About the only thing we won't publish is the* very *rare letter that overtly and subjectively bashes an artist, i.e. "I can't stand Jimmy Shredder's noodling or his amp tone. They're both terrible."*)

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

Founder/Publisher
Alan Greenwood
Alan@VintageGuitar.com

General Manager
Doug Yellow Bird
Doug@VintageGuitar.com

Advertising
James Jiskra (Director)
James@VintageGuitar.com

Johnny Zapp
Johnny@VintageGuitar.com

Mike Naughton
Mike@VintageGuitar.com

Accounting
Dawn Flanagin
Dawn@VintageGuitar.com

Price Guide Editor
Wanda Huether
Library@VintageGuitar.com

Subscription Manager
Martina Day
VGuitar@VintageGuitar.com
1-800-844-1197

Online Consultant
Joe Greenwood
Joe@VintageGuitar.com

Creative Intern
Alison Krein

Retail Magazine Sales
Alan Greenwood
Alan@VintageGuitar.com

Editorial Assistant
Eden Greenwood

Editor In Chief
Ward Meeker
Ward@VintageGuitar.com

Editor At Large
Dan Forte

Music Editor
Pete Prown
peteprown@icloud.net

Gear Editor
Dennis Pernu
pernu.dennis@gmail.com

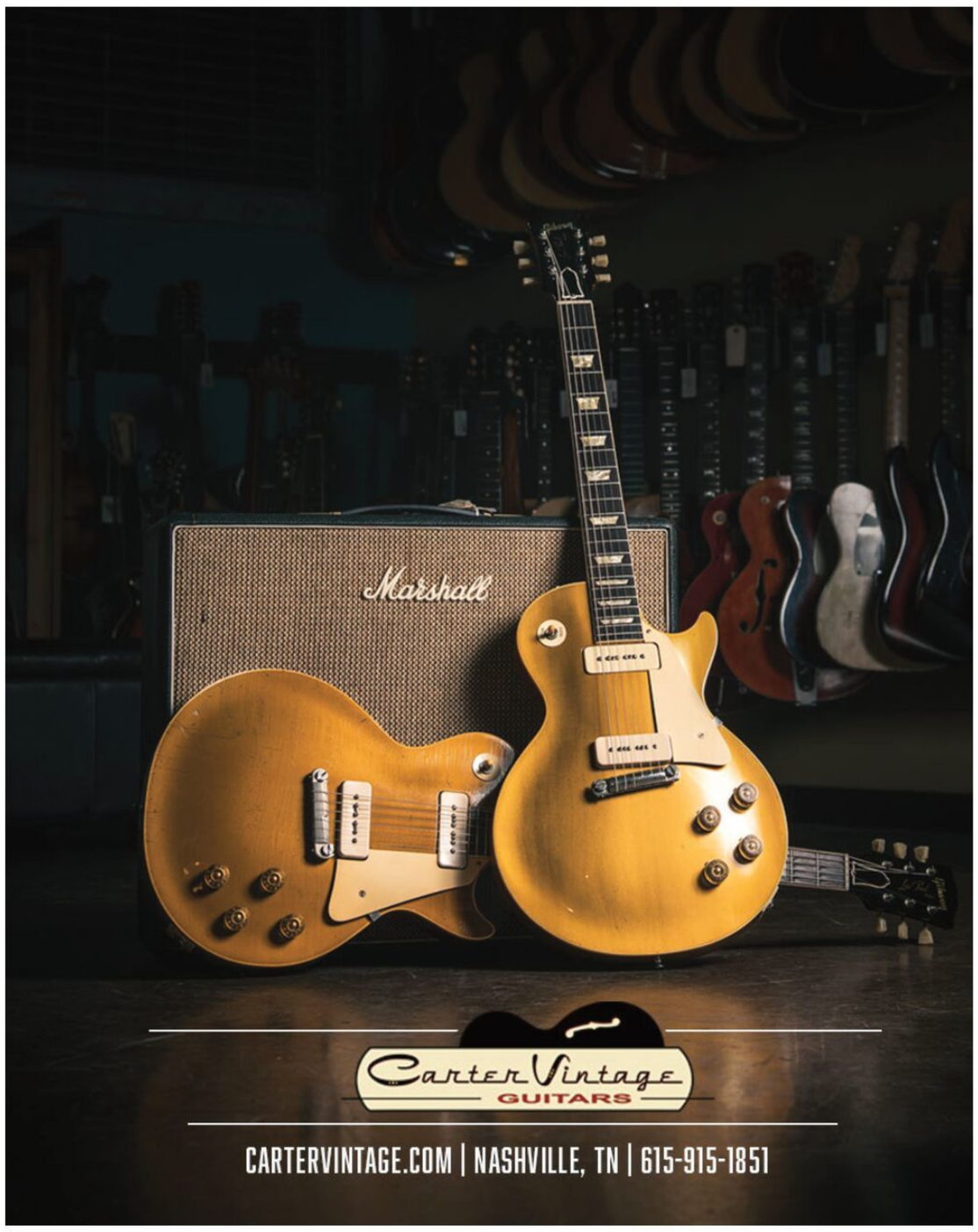
Editorial Consultants
George Gruhn, Seymour Duncan, Walter Carter, Dan Erlewine

Regular Contributors
Willie Moseley, John Heidt, George Gruhn, Dan Erlewine, Michael Wright, Peter Kohman, Michael Dregni, Wolf Marshall, Gil Hembree, Pete Prown, Dave Hunter, Phil Feser, Bob Dragich, Chip Wilson, Rich Kienzle, Jim Carlton, Oscar Jordan, Dennis Pernu, Rich Maloof, Tom Guerra, Bret Adams, Greg Prato, Bob Cianci, Sean McDevitt, Leah Greenwood, Sean Thorenson.

Online Contributors
Greg Martin, Karl Markgraf, Ray Cummins, Andrew Hendryx, James Patrick Regan, Tyler Morris

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Styx teamed with Voodoo Brewing on Oh Mama, a Golden American Lager.

STYX, RUSH KICK OUT THE BREWS

Stalwart rock bands Styx and Rush have each teamed with favored breweries to create signature beers. Styx deepened its connection with Pittsburgh by working with Voodoo Brewing on Oh Mama, a traditional Golden American Lager. The label artwork is inspired by the band's megahit "Renegade," which has been adopted as a theme song by the Pittsburgh Steelers' defense.

Re-joining the mug club is Rush, who in August released Rush Canadian Golden Ale with Henderson Brewing, in Toronto. It's the company's second Rush-related brew after 2016's Put Your Scarf On Geddy Canadian Imperial Stout.

WILLIE'S AMERICAN GUITARS SET TO MOVE

After 33 years in its current suburban St. Paul (Minnesota) home, Willie's American Guitars is moving to new digs in the city's St. Anthony neighborhood.

Spurred by the need for more space, when a suitable building hit the market, owner Nate Westgor jumped. In a heavy dose of irony, there was one other factor that had him looking...

"A School of Rock franchise recently moved in next door, and the noise was actually driving customers away," he chuckled. "But the bigger reason is the new space has easy access to major venues. It used to be a Buddhist temple, plus it's solar-powered. We know zen when we smell it."

They expect to be in the new store by March of '22.



ERIC BIBB

Beyond the Blues
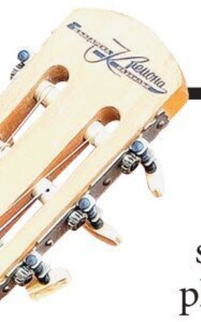
It's almost a curse to categorize a musician a "blues artist," as it implies someone who simply plays standard I-IV-V chord progressions and variations. Eric Bibb is well beyond that. On his new album, *Dear America*, the singer/songwriter and acoustic fingerstyle ace goes beyond the usual forms into songs that are deep, soulful, and yet still quintessentially blues. Bibb knows his musical roots in and out and, throughout this set, has delivered one of the best American guitar albums of 2021.

We talked to him about his unique and expansive approach to that thing we call the blues.

These songs are blues without being locked into standard progressions, like the great 1920s blues artists did. This comes out on "Whole Lotta Lovin'." Is this something you're conscious of?

Yes, it is and it's also something that Glen Scott, my longtime friend and producer, recognizes and enhances with his unique production. My fascination with fingerpick-

Eric Bibb: Michael Wall.



ing has steered me toward the earlier blues forms; my heroes – and *sheroes* – of early blues had varied repertoires, spanning genres. As self-accompanying songsters, they could be as unconventional as they pleased. So yes, this tradition is a huge inspiration to me.

"Dear America" is reminiscent of the rhythmic hill-country blues of John Lee Hooker – the mandolin brings in that country-blues flavor, too. Was that the plan?

Definitely. Christer Lyssarides is a fine player who really knows how to connect the dots. Your question also makes me ponder the term "Americana." Blues is emphatically Americana – musically speaking, we wanted to point out the interrelatedness of all of America's folk music traditions.

The lyrics are so powerful on *Dear America*. What comes first in your writing – words or the chords?

It varies. Sometimes a lyric idea will pop up, possibly inspired by something I'm reading, and the whole narrative will almost write itself before I even pick up a guitar. More often, a series of chords or a funky modal blues riff will give rise to a song. As many of the songs on the album refer directly or indirectly to American history, it was an exciting challenge deciding whose voice would tell the story.

Aside from blues, there are other musical flavors. "Tell Yourself" is a bit like James Taylor's fingerstyle approach. Were players from the singer/songwriter school an influence?

James Taylor is certainly an influence, as were many others who came out of the '60s. Seeing performers like Richie Havens, Joni Mitchell, Tim Hardin, Jerry Jeff Walker, and Kenny Rankin up-close had a powerful impact on me. Mind you, at the same time I heard Son House, Reverend Gary Davis, and Jimi Hendrix – I saw them in concert, as well!

Eric Gales scorches "Whole World's Got the Blues" with his Strat. One can image he didn't need direction and you just pushed the Record button?

You're right! As a guitarist, Eric inspires awe – playing the blues, he's the high priest.

There are stunning guitar tones on the record. Which acoustics did you use, and how did you decide on mics?

The most unusual acoustic I play is from Sofia, Bulgaria. You can see a similar instrument on the cover of an early Ali Farka Touré album. Another unusual guitar – a customized Otwin 12-string with a resonator, created by Peter Wahl in Germany – is what I play on "Born Of A Woman." The electric on that track and "Tell Yourself" is from Staffan Astner, a brilliant player I've worked with for many years.

When you were a kid in New York City, how did Bob Dylan end up in your living room?

At age 11, my parents threw a big party at our home in Queens. My dad, Leon, was a well-known folk singer, and many of the guests were folk celebrities. In 1962, Dylan was invited, and he showed up very late. I walked up to him and said, "Hi, I'm Eric. I play guitar, too!" So, we had a chat in our crowded living room. Bob was twice my age and advised me to "Keep it simple and forget all that fancy stuff."

Being in NYC in the mid '60s, were you in the thick of the Blues Project, Reverend Gary Davis, Dylan, Odetta, etc.?

A resounding *yes* (laughs)!

What was that scene like?

It's impossible to describe the richness, the passionate devotion to the music, the righteousness, the naiveté, and the beauty of that scene. Between my weekly trips to Washington Square Park, my parents' record collection, classical guitar lessons, and access to the fine playing and top-shelf instruments of the guitarists who played with my dad... I was in guitar heaven! **– *Pete Prown***



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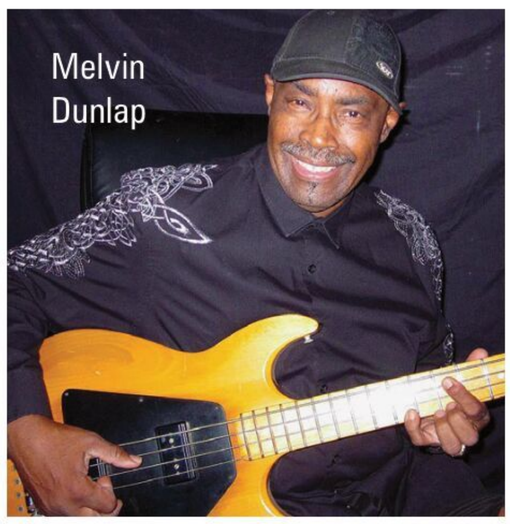
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MELVIN DUNLAP

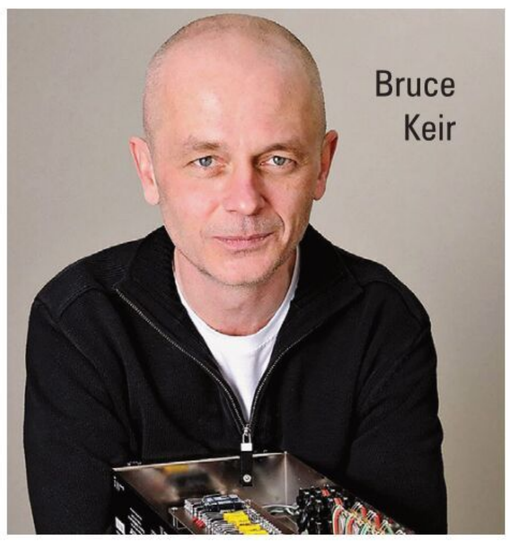
Renowned bassist Melvin Dunlap passed away September 13. He was 76 and died in his sleep.

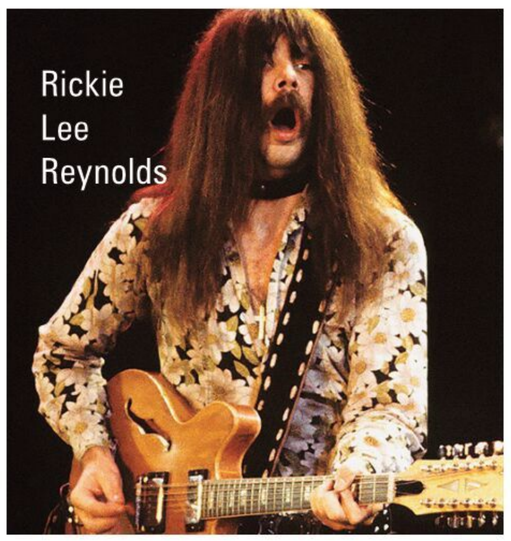
Dunlap grew up in Cleveland and began playing bass as a kid, using an old Fender his parents bought at a pawn shop. He jammed with local bands for a few years before being asked to tour with the O'Jays, which meant relocating to California. There, he met Charles Wright and together they formed The Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band, which scored a hit with "Express Yourself." The song reached #12 on *Billboard*'s Hot 100 and #3 on the U.S. R&B chart, then was nominated for Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group at the 1970 Grammy Awards.

Dunlap played on several Bill Withers R&B and soul hits of the '70s, including "Lean On Me," "Use Me," and "Who Is He (And What Is He to You)." ***– Ward Meeker***


Melvin Dunlap


Ed Klein


Bruce Keir


Rickie Lee Reynolds

ED KLEIN

Guitar builder Edward Klein, Carrollton, Texas, passed away August 30. He was 64.

An attorney for more than 30 years, Klein received his JD from Baylor University and throughout his life carried a passion for music. In the early 2000s he began building guitars as a hobby, and in '07 created EKlein Guitars, which offered an array of customizable models with necks and bodies made from an injection-molded spruce composite. In a 2015 "Builder Profile," Klein told *VG* his biggest challenge in making nontraditional instruments was simply getting them into the hands of more players.

"That's where the real transformation takes place," he said. "Guitarists' brains are wired to believe that a high-quality guitar must have a maple, rosewood, and/or ebony neck or fretboard. Our material... has to be felt and played to be understood and appreciated. I love watching when someone plays one for the first time. There's a look of disbelief in their eyes when they realize how remarkable they are."

In June of 2021, the company launched its Pearl line of guitars.

Klein is survived by his wife, three children, two stepdaughters, and two siblings. ***– Ward Meeker***

BRUCE KEIR

Bruce Keir, co-founder of Blackstar Amplification, passed away September 14. He was 60 and had been diagnosed with a form of early-onset Alzheimer's disease.

Keir was born in Singapore, where his father was a radio engineer for the BBC, which spawned Bruce's childhood interest in electronics. He later repaired and maintained a Marshall amp belonging to his older brother, then did electronic-repair work while studying electronics at Salford University.

After graduating, he became a design engineer at Marshall, was promoted to Chief Engineer, then Design Director, where he worked under founder Jim Marshall while developing some of the company's best-known amps in the '80s and '90s. In 2007, he founded Blackstar with fellow Marshall employees Ian Robinson, Paul Hayhoe, and Richard Frost.

Keir was responsible for Blackstar's original products including the Artisan and Series One amps as well as the HT Pedals. He is survived by a daughter, son, and two siblings. ***– Ward Meeker***

RICKIE LEE REYNOLDS

Rickie Lee Reynolds, co-founder and guitarist in the renowned Southern-rock band Black Oak Arkansas, died September 5 after being hospitalized due to Covid-19 then suffering kidney failure and cardiac arrest. He was 72.

Reynolds was one of six high-school friends in the small Arkansas town of Black Oak who, in 1963, formed a band called The Knowbody Else, playing rock, gospel, country, and blues songs. The band stole a PA system from the local high school and some members were subsequently charged with grand larceny. As a group, they fled to a rural area, where they lived off the land while continuing to refine their music. After the expiration of two-year suspended sentences, they briefly lived in Mississippi before moving to Memphis in 1969, where they signed with Stax subsidiary Hip Records. Though their two albums failed to gain attention, the band's multi-guitar approach to blues-rock soon became one of the era's most popular formats, aided by the infamous strut of front man Jim "Dandy" Mangrum and harmony/duet vocalist Ruby Star.

In 1970, the band adopted the name of its home town then moved to Los Angeles, where they signed with Atco. Through their '70s heyday, Black Oak recorded 12 studio and live albums, five of which reached the *Billboard* Top 100 along with three certified as gold-sellers. Their best-known singles included "Jim Dandy (To the Rescue)," "Up," "Uncle Lijiah," "Lord Have Mercy on My Soul," "Hot Rod," "When Electricity Came to Arkansas," and "Strong Enough to Be Gentle." The band headlined at Arrowhead Stadium, Charlotte Motor Speedway, and Royal Albert Hall. They also appeared before an estimated 300,000 people at the first Cal Jam festival in April of '74.

In 2019, Black Oak released *Underdog Heroes*, its first album of new songs in 30 years, and featuring Reynolds and Mangrum. ***– Ward Meeker***

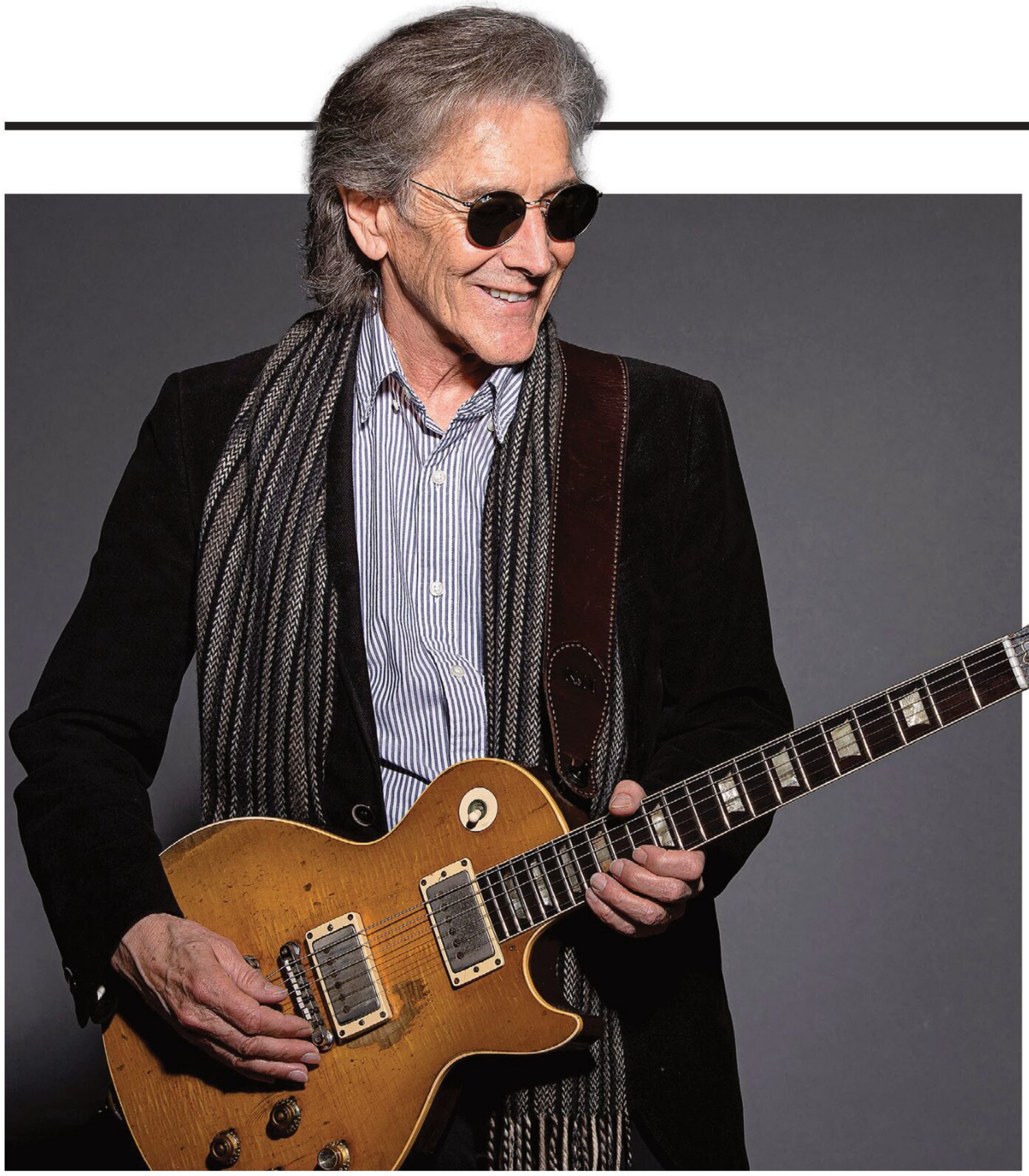


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RICK VITO

Disciples Of Greeny

A Grammy-nominated guitarist with an enviable career, Rick Vito has played with everyone from Bonnie Raitt to John Mayall and appeared on hundreds of recordings. He even did a stint in Fleetwood Mac.

As a proud disciple of Peter Green, in February of 2020, Vito fronted the *Mick Fleetwood & Friends Celebrate the Music of Peter Green And The Early Years of Fleetwood Mac* show in London, which included David Gilmour and Kirk Hammett. It was recorded for a DVD released earlier this year (see our review in the September "Hit List").

Green passed away in, 2020, but his memory lives on in Vito's artistry.

Are you a Peter Green fan, by chance?

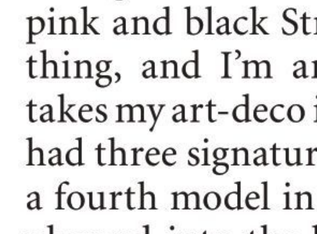
(laughs) I got to see Peter with Fleetwood Mac and Danny Kirwan when they came to America in 1968. I saw them two nights in a row in a very intimate club. The first night was completely different than the second. It left an incredible impression on me. I'd seen everybody at the time – Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck, all the happening guitar players. I loved Jimi, but on a level with him was Peter Green.

What was it about his playing that you admire?

Taste and tone. I got to play his 'Burst, and it's the most unique-sounding guitar in the world. Peter must have had extra mojo in his fingers, because nobody makes it sound like he did. He was an incredible band leader, a great singer, and a great songwriter fusing blues and rock. Songs like "Black Magic Woman" and "Rattlesnake Shake" were great, but it was his restraint that took hold of me. With most guitarists, the emphasis was on speed or volume. He could turn that on if he wanted, but he restrained himself. His tone was impeccable. There was never a note out of place or a bend too far. He was completely appropriate and tasteful for the song. That gave me a sense of direction. I always liked guitarists who were understated. Jesse Ed Davis and B.B. King come to mind. I thought, "That's the kind of player I want to be."

You certainly channeled him on "Love That Burns."

That's my favorite song to play. Like with my version of "Albatross," I applied it to slide guitar, and it worked really well. It was a tribute to Peter, but I put a little bit of myself into it.



The concert is flawless.

The core band and I rehearsed for two weeks in Maui. I sang all the songs except for those Jonny Lang did. When we reconvened in London a week or so later, everyone else came to rehearse. We had three solid weeks of rehearsal, which really paid off. Everybody wanted to be a part of this and pay homage to the early Fleetwood Mac and to Peter. They checked their egos at the door.

I'd been playing that music for 10 years, so I knew the arrangements inside out. There's nobody else who can play the kind of blues Mick Fleetwood plays. He'll kick your ass. There were no slouches in that band. I loved playing with Billy Gibbons on "Dr. Brown." He's such a cool guy (laughs).

You played some really nice guitars.

I used two Reverends, including the first one I designed with them in 1996 – the two-tone pink and black Streamliner. It's an art-deco thing, and I'm an art-deco nut. Reverend takes my art-deco ideas and refines them; I've had three signature models and there will be a fourth model in 2022. For the show, I was plugged into the back line, which included a Fender Blues DeVille. I used a very small pedalboard with a tuner, reverb, and an overdrive. The overdrive was made by Bob Stamps, who created the Stamps Drive-O-Matic. I've A/B'd it next to 20 different pedals over the years and to my ears it sounds the warmest and most natural.

One of the show's highlights is you trading licks with Jonny Lang on "Black Magic Woman."

He was supposed to sing part of that song, but he forgot (laughs). He was fiddling with his amp, and wound up taking over the song.

Are you working on anything new?

I have three albums in the can and I'm hoping to have one released early next year. Mick has another experimental project I might be a part of, so we'll see. ***– Oscar Jordan***

Rick Vito: Tom Daniel.

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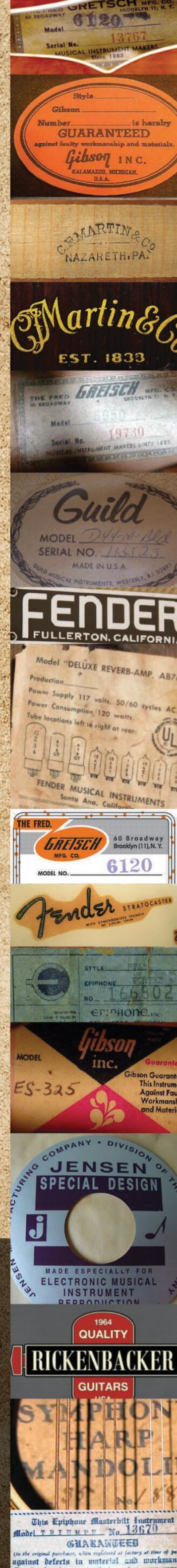
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K.K. DOWNING

Preaching Metal

Classic heavy metal will never fade as long as K.K. Downing remains one of its torchbearers. *Sermons of the Sinner*, the debut album by his new band, KK's Priest, is everything a metal disciple would want and expect.

Downing shocked metal fans when he left Judas Priest in 2011, after more than 40 years with the legendary band he co-founded. His 2018 autobiography was incredibly candid in regard to his creative frustrations, but *Sermons of the Sinner* blasts away those obstructions, joined by former JP vocalist Tim "Ripper" Owens, guitarist A.J. Mills, bassist Tony Newton, and drummer Sean Elg.

A series of events led to forming KK's Priest. Downing stayed involved in music, including producing two albums by Mills' band, Hostile. In August of '19 he performed at a festival, and that November did a U.K. show featuring Owens, Mills, and others. The gigs got his creative juices boiling, and he jumped head-first into writing fresh music for a new band. He also salvaged a few ideas from the '80s.

"I was totally on my own," he said. "I had a lot to get off my chest, really, and didn't find it difficult at all. For years, I'd been used to writing in a trio (with Judas Priest singer Rob Halford and co-guitarist Glenn Tipton). It was a collaboration, and a lot of times it was a compromise. So, I enjoyed the freedom to express myself, musically and lyrically, through this record.

"It was very important to make the record the way I wanted. I knew how I wanted it to sound – I wanted drums to be live and organic, and guitars in that happy medium between saturation and distortion. That worked fantastically well. With the bass, I said to Tony, 'I want to hear every note you play.' I encouraged him to play more, do a lot more fills. Sometimes, when I work with people, they seem a bit shy. I just said, 'You can't do too much. Trust me.' I like bass, and I like to listen to bass fills. They add so much to an album."

Sermons of the Sinner blends elements of the Judas Priest style. One hears the darker moments from 1976's *Sad Wings of Destiny* and the speed and power of 1990's *Painkiller* and Owens' debut, 1997's *Jugulator*.

"I proudly say that I don't want to start again," Downing said. "I don't want the band to have a brand-new name, I don't want a brand-new sound, new technique, or new way to record. I can't just dispense with who I am and how I sound and how I play. I want to use the attributes I've nurtured all those decades. I've worked hard!

"I wanted to take things from the past forward with me, and that's what I did. Taking some of the [Judas Priest] name is important to me because that's who I am. When people hear the record, they'll go, 'That sounds familiar.' I get to do more guitar-solo work, as well, which is good. That was lacking, really. I should've been allowed to do more on latter (Judas Priest) records."

Having always cited Jimi Hendrix as his biggest influence, Downing was taken aback when asked why he didn't form a new band with himself as the sole guitarist.

"You're only the second person that's brought that to my attention," he said. "I could've. With Judas Priest in the late '60s and early '70s, I *was* the only guitar player. It never once entered my head, and I don't know why. It would've been an option."

Perhaps he didn't consider it because fans will expect KK's Priest to perform JP songs on tour?

"Consciously or subconsciously, maybe that's what I was thinking. But I'm super happy the way things have turned out," said Downing, who played a KxK custom, a Strat, and a Hamer Mini V along with early-'80s Alvarez flamenco and steel-string guitars on *Sermons*.

"The band is great. We're going to be very good value live, I promise you that! Single-guitar bands can be an ego thing, but multiple-guitar bands have things to bounce off each other and can play harmonies. There's a lot of harmony work on this record – more than any Priest record, I think." ***– Bret Adams***

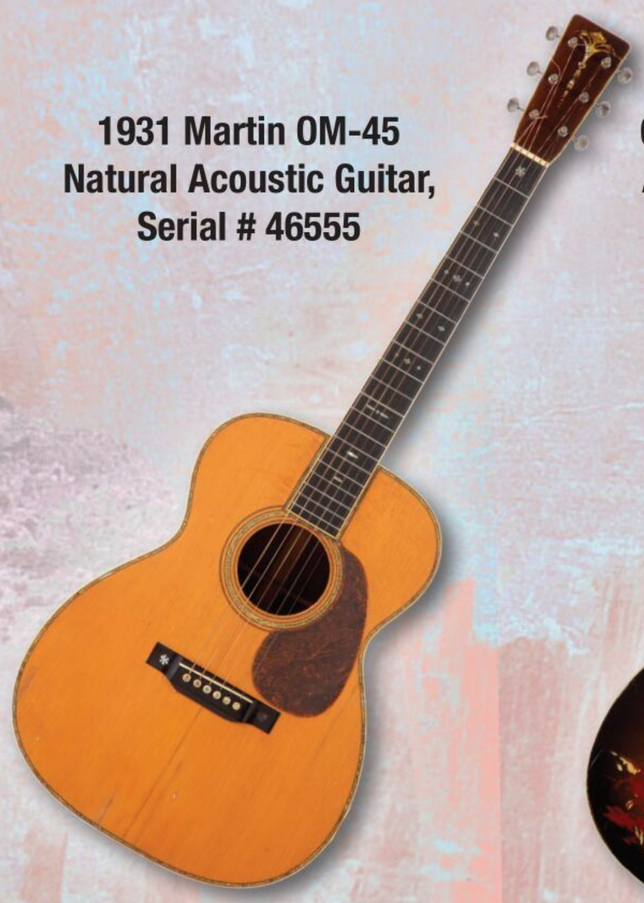


K.K. Downing photo courtesy of Explorer1 Music Group.

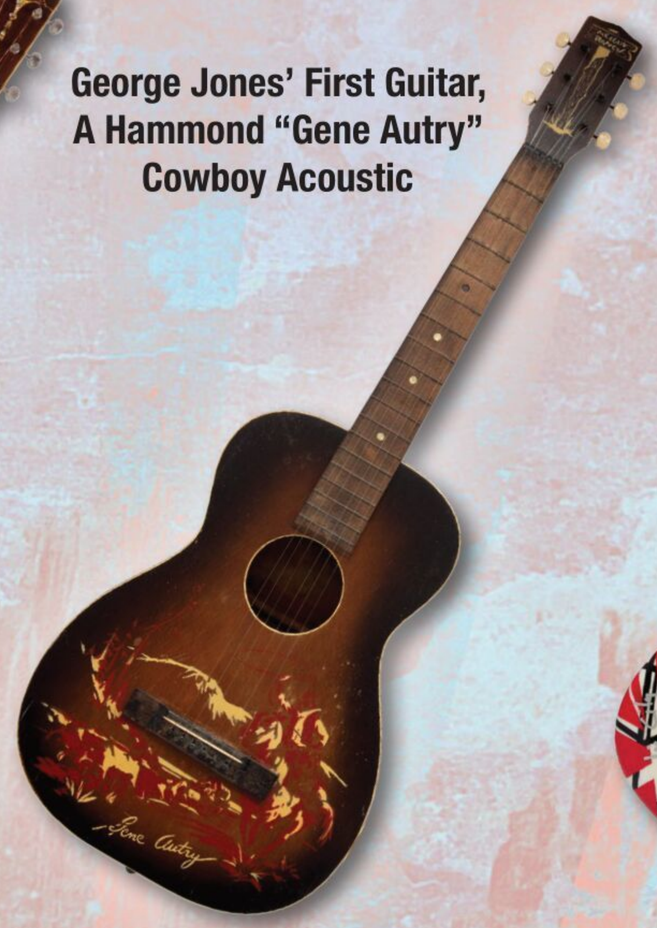
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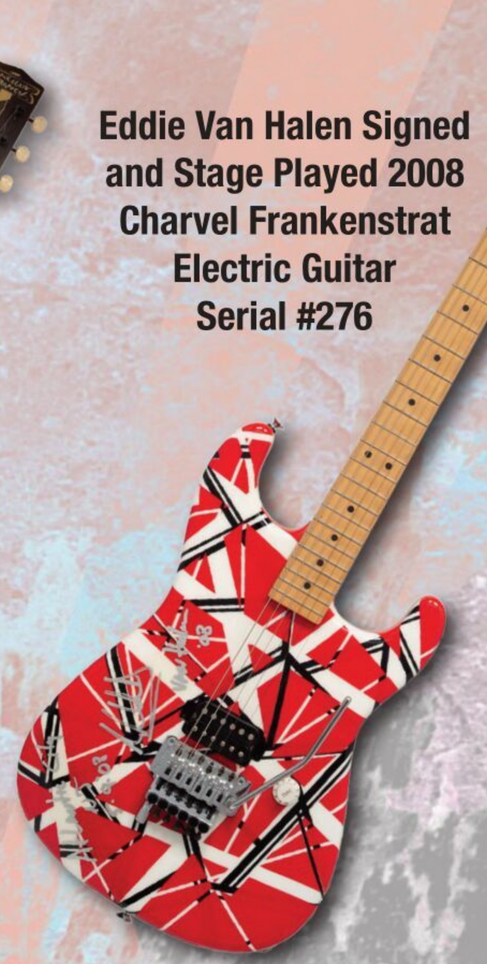
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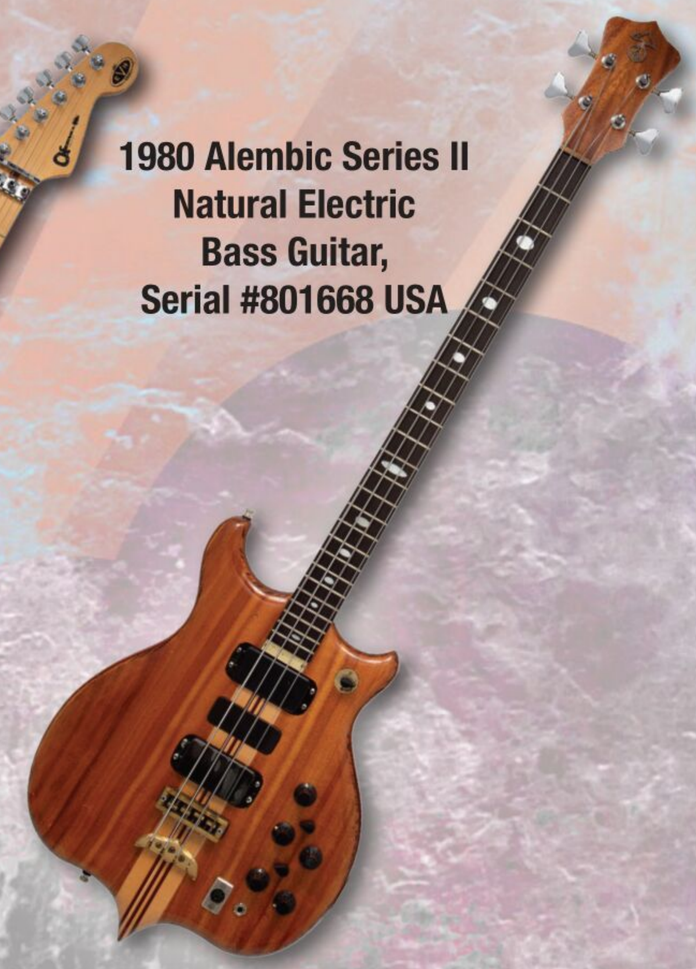
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BOBBY ELI

Philly-Soul Pioneer

With this year marking the 50th anniversary of Philadelphia International Records, the spotlight is on the songwriting team of Kenneth Gamble and Leon Huff.

Founded in 1971, PIR was the epicenter for the Philly sound. An integral part was the guitar playing of Bobby Eli, who can be heard on hundreds of recordings during the height of the Philadelphia-soul era and beyond. Today, he continues to work as a music producer.

As a guitarist for the in-house groups Mother Father Sister Brother (MFSB) and The Sound of Philadelphia (TSOP) at Sigma Sound Studios, Eli shared duties with Norman Harris and Roland Chambers. Eli can be heard with The O'Jays, Billy Paul, Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes, The Whispers, The Stylistics, and The Delfonics. His funky wah work can also be heard on the theme song to the long-running dance show "Soul Train" and the timeless slow jam "Be Thankful for What You've Got" by William DeVaughn.

Eli's songwriting credits include million-selling singles such as "Love Won't Let Me Wait" by Major Harris, "Side Show" by Blue Magic, and "Just Don't Want To Be Lonely" by The Main Ingredient. He wrote and co-wrote many hits, but it was his tech-savvy curiosity that brought the sounds of rock and psychedelia to Philly soul.

Fuzz, sitar, and wah were rare in late '60s R&B, but likely came from Eli, whose early use of effects can be heard on "Engine #9" by Wilson Picket, from 1970. The extended outro solo is a gnarly, fuzz-laden statement that heralded a new era of soul music. Check out Eli's hip Coral electric sitar solo on "Trying To Make A Fool Out of Me" by The Delfonics from the same year.

Eli was forward-thinking, with his hands on the pulse of technology; his electric sitar could also be heard on "You Are Everything" and "You Make Me Feel Brand New" by The Stylistics.

"I liked the early Sly & The Family Stone records and Led Zeppelin," he said. "I listened to a lot of records that featured distortion, wah, and started bringing in stuff here and there – first a wah pedal then a fuzztone. I wasn't sure they'd like all that stuff, but eventually, it all crept in."

Eli's rig in those days consisted of a Les Paul Custom, Fender Twin, Vox wah, and the Coral. Asked if there was resistance to bringing pedals for the sessions, he recalled experiencing none.

"I used to go to Electro-Harmonix, in New York, and see all the Electric Mistresses and pedals with weird names," he said. "They started calling me Electronic Eli. I used Echoplexes, Coral Electric Sitars, and all that stuff. It was cool because it was an experiment. There were so many pedals and cables on the floor that the engineers would trip over them."

"For the Love of Money" by The O'Jays was a massive hit in '74 and featured some of Eli's funkiest wah work. He has fond memories of those sessions, and working with Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes.

"I didn't play anything phenomenal, but I played on that track with bassists Anthony Jackson and Ronnie Baker; there are two bass tracks on that song. I did the wah part, then doubled Ronnie's part with an Octave Divider. Norman Harris also played guitar. Those O'Jays sessions had a lot of energy in the room. Another was 'Bad Luck' and 'The Love I Lost' with Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes. All those Teddy Pendergrass and Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes records had a lot of energy in the studio."

There was, of course, more to Eli than being the effects guy. His musical journey began on the competitive Philadelphia R&B club circuit, where he was immersed in the language of jazz and African-American music. His love of jazz, and in particular the work of Wes Montgomery, was the basis for the inventive octave intro to 1972's "I'll Be Around" by The Spinners. His playing also helped drive the rhythm section on the '79 hit "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now" by McFadden & Whitehead.

"The Bobby Eli sound is comprised of less is more," he said about his approach to creating guitar parts. "A lot of musicians want to show their chops. I'm an 'unchopped' person. I'm not the most-schooled, but I was good at coming up with simple guitar figures. They were spontaneous, picking up from the vibe in the room. It was just us grooving." ***– Oscar Jordan***

To learn more about the Philadelphia sound, check out *A House On Fire: The Rise And Fall of Philadelphia Soul* by John A. Jackson.

Photo courtesy of B. Eli.

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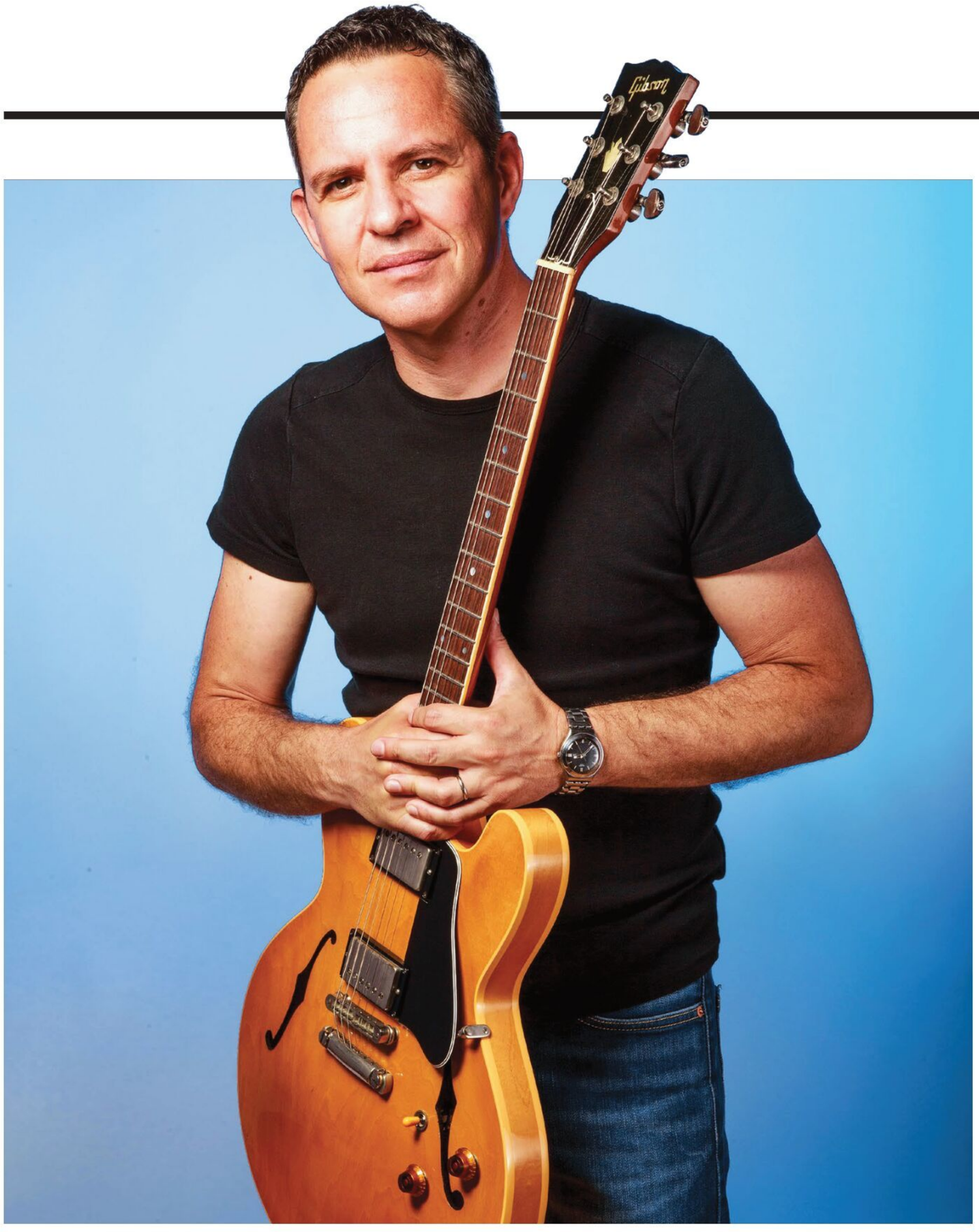
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GUY KING

Finding Joy

Israeli-born guitarist/singer Guy King has become a triple-threat musician since moving to Chicago. The playing, singing, and songwriting on his latest, *Joy Is Coming*, showcase his skills and versatility.

How did the new album develop amidst such strange days for musicians?

It was written before the pandemic – and mostly recorded before – but we got caught up in the pandemic while were mixing and mastering at Josh Smith's studio, in Los Angeles. Everything got shut down. I got a call to come back to Chicago and we finished the mixing that night.

The album is pretty much my life story, or a big part of it. I feel like I'm letting people know a lot more about myself, lyrically and musically.

There's an eclectic mix of styles throughout the record.

I've always listened to a lot of music, so the different styles don't seem that diverse to me. I just remember music as songs I like or didn't like growing up. I don't like putting music into different corners. I just wanted to play what I felt, and I'm proud of the way it turned out.

What did you work on in the year-plus of the pandemic?

When we finished the mixing, I thought I'd release the record right away. But then I thought "Release it for what?" People were dying and everyone was staying in. So, with my new child, I became dad; I focused on being at home and the joy of spending time with my wife and daughter. I did all the shopping, and we were very careful. The music and guitar almost weren't relevant. But after awhile, my fingers started itching and people started contacting me on social media. I've never taught guitar, but people started asking and I did an online class. I loved it. I never really thought I could help people, but I did a few classes, and it helped myself, my family, and I think it helped the people I taught.

I also put together some equipment at home and started writing and recording stuff for release in the future. I decided to release *Joy Is Coming* at that point. It took longer because it also came out on vinyl, and the pressing took some time.

Your choice of guitars has changed since you first started playing.

I was always a guy who played a Telecaster exclusively. But, a few years ago I heard a different sound in my head. I walked into Norman's Rare Guitars and switched to a Les Paul because I thought it would have a wider, smoother sound. Norm and I met for the first time, and I didn't buy anything. I went back to Chicago, where a few people said I should try an ES-335. I took my time, and was still stuck on a Les Paul. I tried an '83 335 and it really got me. I wondered why I had never tried one – I think it was because I didn't want to sound like other players who used that sort of guitar. But after I played the 335, I fell in love with it and knew it could do everything I wanted. It fit the timbre of my voice.

The natural-finish 335 on the cover of the album has been my number one guitar. About a year after I got it, I was fortunate to find a sunburst 335 from the same year, only a few serial numbers away. I record with the natural one and took the sunburst on the road. I'm pretty exclusive now with those two. They're a joy for me to pick up and look at.

Which amps did you use?

On the record, I used my '68 blackface Fender Pro Reverb, with the "drip edge." I use it live, too, and it sounds *really* good with the 335s. A few months ago, I got a '66 two-watt Silvertone that I can pick up with my pinky! It's great for the house.

Right before the pandemic, I met Eli Lester from Two Rock Amplification. I told him what I had in mind and he thought their Studio Signature would be great for me. They made one and sent it to me, and the last few things I've done was a 335 through that. It's a Studio Signature head with a 1x12 cabinet. It sounds gorgeous – clean when I want and breaks up when I need it to. ***– John Heidt***

Guy King: Ted Beranis.

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PASQUALE GRASSO

One-Man Duo

In the 1940s, jazz pianist Art Tatum wowed audiences with a virtuoso technique that sounded like *two* players. Today, Pasquale Grasso is similarly approaching the archtop six-string, harmonizing runs and melodies in a way that sounds like a guitar duo, not just one man.

Raised in Italy and based in New York City, Grasso earned the admiration of fusion hero Pat Metheny, who once told *VG*'s Dan Forte, "The best guitar player I've heard in perhaps my entire life is Pasquale Grasso... He has somehow captured the essence of that language from piano onto guitar in a way that almost nobody has ever addressed."

With his new album, *Solo Ballads*, young Grasso continues to blow minds.

Your harmony approach is so unusual, often sounding like two players, as on "Body and Soul."

That's a great compliment and I'm not sure how to respond other than to say that I practice every day until the sound in my head comes out of the instrument. All of the musicians I love are inspirations for new ideas that form my style, because it's still growing. And it's gonna be growing until the day I die.

You deploy a lot of transitional runs, like whole-tone scales from one chord to the next, like pianists Art Tatum and Bud Powell.

Well, Tatum is my inspiration for playing solo guitar, so I learned it from him. When I first listened to him, I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I'd play Tatum's records all day and couldn't understand anything he was doing – it seemed like there were two pianos. But I was always attracted to the pianists of the '40s and '50s like Tatum, Bud Powell, Thelonius Monk, Teddy Wilson, and Billy Kyle. On guitar, Charlie Christian, Tiny Grimes, and Oscar Moore were my favorites. These days, I just play what I hear in my heart and mind.

How did you get that silky vintage tone on *Solo Ballads*? It's like a recording from the '50s.

I've always loved that guitar sound from the '40s and '50s, as well as the sound of classical guitar. I still try to have as much of the acoustic sound as possible when I play with an amp. I used a '53 Gibson GA-50 in the studio and love the balance of the sound those old amps have. I wish there was a new one that's comparable, but I haven't found one.

How did you choose which standards to interpret?

I chose songs I've performed for my whole life – favorite ballads that remind me of my childhood. I've always been a romantic – I'm a Southern Italian – and I grew up watching my parents, who have been in love for more than 40 years. I tried to add more classical guitar to the melody. As one example, "When I Fall In Love" is beautiful, and reminds me of what it means to be in love. I always want people to just enjoy what I'm doing. Put *Solo Ballads* on and drink a glass of wine. It might be relaxing or help you concentrate; I just hope you forget about the world for a minute and enjoy yourself.

How do you describe your picking technique?

It's a hybrid between jazz picking from the modern plectrum school of [George Shearing guitarist] Chuck Wayne and the classical-guitar technique. My technique changes month to month, and I still have a lot of work to do to be able to play what I want.

Which archtop guitar do you use?

My guitar was made by the great Bryant Trenier. It's one of the finest instruments I've ever played in my life. Bryant and I have known each other for a long time and he knows what I look for in a guitar.

What are your strings?

I use La Bella roundwounds, .014 to .056.

Pat Metheny is obviously a big fan of yours.

Pat is one of the nicest and most-talented people I've ever met. He's a true artist, a guy who knew what he wanted to do with music from the beginning. It's always inspiring to see how he's able to come up with different ways of seeing the instrument. No matter which guitar or style he's playing, I love Pat's approach.

How did a young musician like you discover old forms such as swing, bebop, and cool jazz?

My parents, Rocco and Anna, are big jazz fans, and I grew up listening to old recordings. Instead of watching TV at night, my dad would put on a Chet Baker record and we'd listen. Something about the feeling that the swing and bebop musicians had has captured my attention since I was a little kid. ***– Pete Prown***

Pasquale Grasso: Deneka Peniston.

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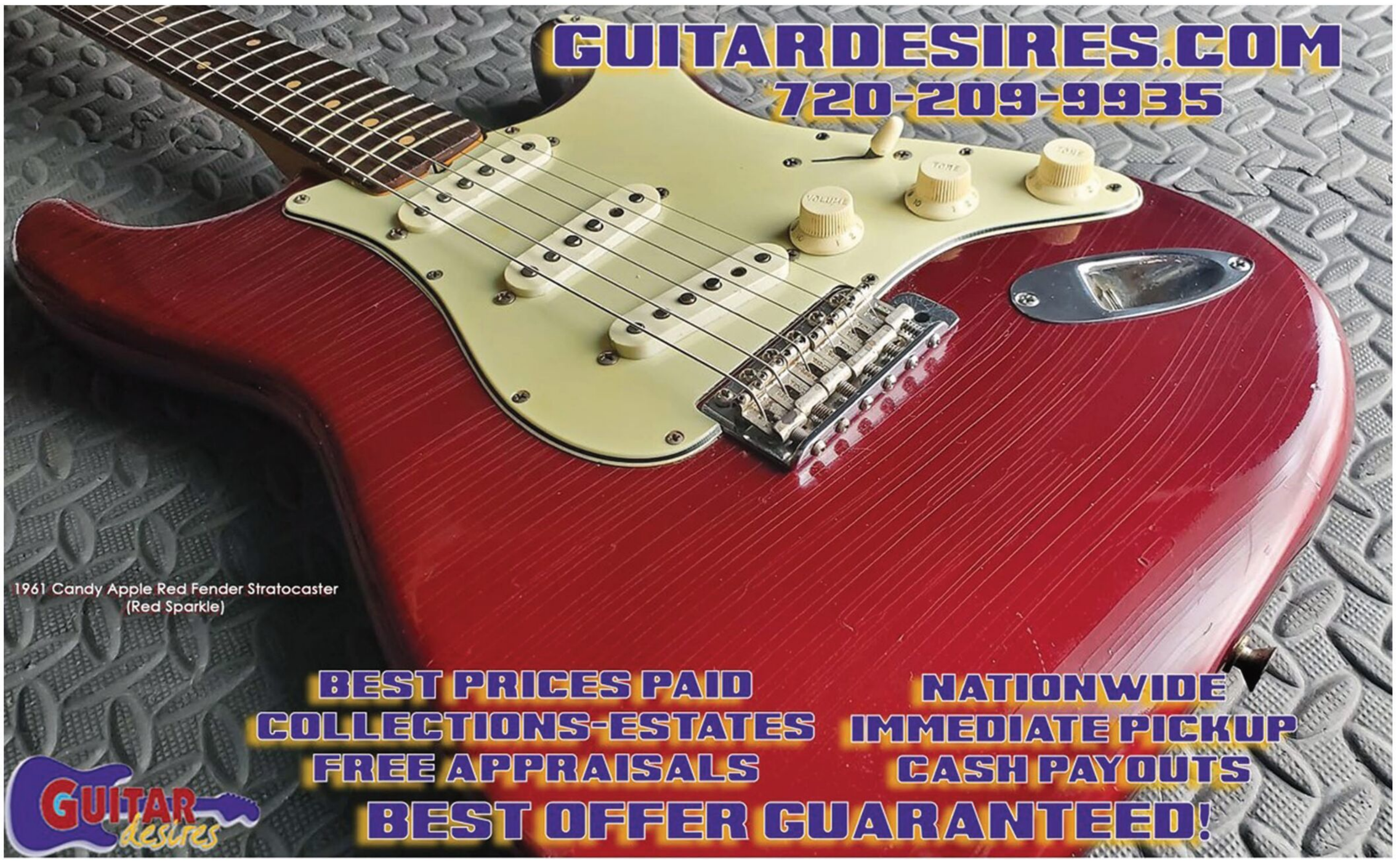


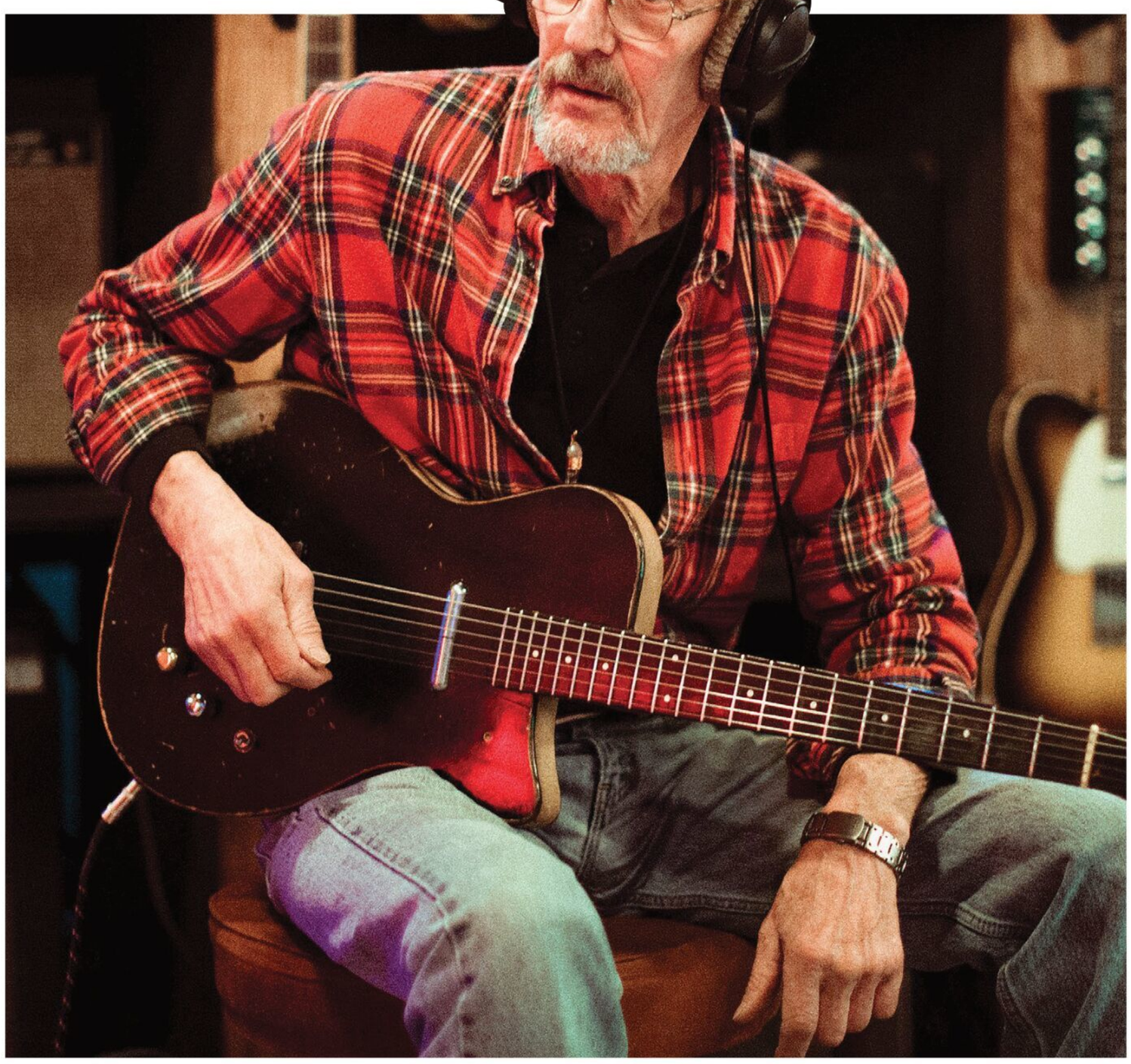
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KENNY BROWN

Mississippi Slide

The Black Keys' latest album, *Delta Kream*, is a collection of blues standards from the Mississippi Hill Country. Drummer Patrick Carney and guitarist Dan Auerbach expanded their duo with a team of Hill Country specialists including virtuoso slide guitarist Kenny Brown. As the guitarist for R.L. Burnside and many other Northern Mississippi blues artists, Brown brings authenticity to the music while imbuing the songs with hypnotic slide work.

Is Northern Mississippi slide guitar different from other styles?

I don't know if it's different. The first time I ever heard slide was when I was 14. Mississippi Joe Callico, who lived next door, was teaching me. He pulled out a pocket knife, took his archtop guitar, and laid it in his lap. He had it tuned to what they call "Spanish tuning," which is open G. Later, another guy showed me how to put a slide on my finger. He tuned to D, E, and G. I've been doing that ever since I was a kid.

If there was something specific to North Mississippi, I would have to think about it. There was Mississippi Fred McDowell and Jessie Mae Hemphill. There was a guy named Stonewall Mays and Rainie Burnette. I listened to a lot of people, including Elmore James and Robert Johnson. I listened to everyone I could learn from, including the Allman Brothers. The Northern Mississippi feel is tied into the groove more than the chord changes. It comes from the fife and drum bands and being around that a lot of years ago.

How did you meet The Black Keys?

Years ago, they were on Fat Possum Records. I was with R.L. Burnside and the first time I met them was on a bus headed to the airport from a festival in Norway. We briefly met, but everybody was worn out from the night before. I put on the North Mississippi Hill Country Picnic, which is a blues festival here. They both came down for that, and later I got the call to play on a Robert Finley record. They did, too, and we were hired for three or four days. We recorded six songs in about five hours then did overdubs the next day. Four of those songs made it to the record, which was a great record to play on. I'm glad they called.

Did you have any influence over how the songs were chosen?

We sat down thinking about songs to do, and I made some suggestions. Guitarist Eric Deaton was there, too. Dan and Patrick made some suggestions, and we put our heads together. We pretty much sat in a circle and played (laughs). There was some isolation with the drums, but other than that, the mics were close on the amps.

Which guitars did you use?

On most of it, I used an old Silvertone and a '58 Danelectro, except for one or two others where I used a Mexican Strat from 1989. We did the record in 10 hours – five the first day, then finished the next with a couple overdubs.

Do you set guitars with a higher action for slide?

I keep mine set up where I can play slide or without, so I can swap back and forth. It's a little higher than most for people who don't play slide. I used to have an old Casino that I miss really bad and don't know why I sold it. It had real low action, but I played slide on it. Back in those times, I think I used .011 to .060 strings.

Which finger do you use for slide?

My ring finger. I *have* used my little finger; I left my slide at home once and had to use a lipstick case, but it would only fit on my little finger (laughs).

Your work on *Delta Kream* is going to attract students.

I have lessons online, which is something I do to keep the money coming in. Some of my students are pretty good. I did an apprenticeship thing with a girl here in Mississippi. When Corona hit, I taught her a lot of stuff. You always learn from teaching, so it really helps me.

Any new projects?

I'm digging out songs. I have some sessions with Dan, and I have some country tunes I did with Bruce Watson, from Fat Possum Records. I'm thinking of doing more of that, and I'm writing stuff for another record. We did the festival again this year, and other gigs are picking up.

Will you join The Black Keys on tour?

There are some plans for us doing a few shows. They're a lot of fun to play with. – ***Oscar Jordan***

Kenny Brown: Alysse Gafkjen.



BRYAN BASSETT

Foghat's Slide Secret

A half-century after its inception, Foghat has just one original member – drummer Roger Earl – yet the quartet is cranking out British blooze better than ever. Part of this enduring success comes from Bryan Bassett, the ferocious slide guitarist who torches everything from "Slow Ride" to "Stone Blue." Forty-five years ago, Bassett was also guitarist in Wild Cherry, which scored the iconic dance hit "Play That Funky Music."

We talked with him about his long career and Foghat's smokin' new live album, *8 Days on the Road*.

You played with legendary Foghat frontman Dave Peverett in the '90s. What was he like?

Certain people change the trajectory of your life. Dave was that person for me. I had a blues quartet in Orlando and our song list was full of obscure swamp blues by folks like Lazy Lester, Lonesome Sundown, and Lightnin' Slim. One night, Pat Travers brought Dave to our gig and he knew every one of the songs; we jammed and hit it off as friends. In person, he was a quiet man, but when he hit the stage, Dave was a ball of authentic rock-and-roll energy. For gear, if you look back at old concert photos, you'll mostly see Dave playing a cherry double-cut Les Paul Junior with a PAF or, earlier, his tobacco single-cut Junior. He loved that straight guitar-to-amp sound – I never saw Dave use a pedal.

The band's late lead man, Rod Price, doesn't get his due as a slide player.

I had the pleasure of playing with Rod when we did a Foghat tour of Europe as a five-piece, which was a master class in slide technique. Seeing him play up-close every night was something I won't ever forget. His wide vibrato and finger muting, to control sounds coming out of a loud, overdriven amp, was something I watched closely. These are lessons I still use today.

What gear did you use on the new live album?

For years now, I've used two Marshall JCM 900s in stereo, and a TC Electronic G Major in the effects loop for a bit of delay and chorus. On the floor I have a Boss compressor for sustain on slide solos, a Crybaby wah, and Boss tuner. I use natural amp distortion, so amp biasing and good tubes are essential to my sustain.

What is your favorite Foghat song to play live?

My current favorite is "It Hurts Me Too," a blues classic that our singer/guitarist Charlie Huhn just kills.

Foghat covers Wild Cherry's "Play That Funky Music" on the live album. It must have been wild to play on a monster record when you were 22 years old.

It truly was amazing as a young guy to have such a big hit. Wild Cherry went from playing clubs to arenas in about a month, and toured with some of the greatest R&B acts of the day at the peak of their powers – Earth, Wind & Fire, The Jackson 5, Average White Band, the Commodores, Isley Brothers, and many more. Pretty mindblowing for a young musician.

Do you remember the "Funky Music" session?

I remember it well. We recorded at the Cleveland recording studio run by Ken Hammond, who recorded the James Gang, Grand Funk Railroad, and others. My part was played using my early-'70s blond Strat with a black pickguard through a Music Man 4x10. The tone was very dry, as you can tell by my intro lick. It was the first or second take, as we'd been playing the song in clubs for some time. Later, we added horns, and Ken mixed it. I still own a '70s tobaccoburst Les Paul I used during the Wild Cherry days.

If you could go back 45 years, what would you tell young Bryan about surviving in the music business?

I would tell young Bryan to learn as much as you can about the different styles of music, because younger musicians are like sponges – the more you learn, the more you can incorporate into your style. As far as surviving the music business, I would tell any young musician to participate in composition and establish a publishing company. You don't only have to be a good player, but strive to be a good writer, as well.

Foghat has been around for 50 years. Are new fans discovering the music?

Absolutely. Fifty years is a lifetime of music and it's really the legacy of drummer Roger Earl. He has been continuously bringing music to the world since the late '60s, and his energy and inspiration keeps Foghat relevant to us as players and to our fans. There's nothing like live rock and roll to excite a live audience, and we're proud to still be able to do it at this juncture in our career. We can't wait to get back out on the road and continue to rock. – ***Pete Prown*** VG

Bryan Bassett: Steve Sirois.

18+

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TWENTY-THREE AND THEE

The Leo Krebs Tape Echo Amplifier

BY DAVE HUNTER

If you have no recollection of the revolutionary amplifier with 19 knobs, 23 tubes, and built-in tape echo created by Leo in California, chances are you're thinking of the wrong amp guru.

Leo Krebs ran a music store in North Hollywood where, in the late '50s/early '60s, he built several innovative guitars and amplifiers – groundbreaking creations, if only a handful of people have heard them.

Little is known or written of Leo, other than word-of-mouth from L.A. musicians who frequented Leo's Music on Lankershim Boulevard in North Hollywood. Krebs worked as an engineer at Ampex for some years, but any quest for further information mostly turns up reports of the famous 2006/'07 auction of what remained of Krebs' inventory, sold when he passed away more than 30 years after closing his doors and moving to Oregon. Attending that auction,

KREBS AMPLIFIER WITH TAPE ECHO

- Preamp tubes: five 12AU7s, seven 12AX7s, two 12AY7s, one 5879
- Output tubes: two EL84
- Rectifier: unknown
- Controls: V. Inst. 1.2., V. Mic. 1.2., V. Ph, V. L.1., L. 1, V. H.L.Z. Mic. Guit., Gui.2., 1.3., Gui.4., M. Vol., unnamed, Bass (two), Treble (two), Vib, V. Rate, Pres., Freq., V. Spkr.
- Speaker: two 10" Jensen P10R
- Output: approximately 15 watts RMS +/–

Amp and photos courtesy of John Nottage.

ALWAYS IN THE POCKET



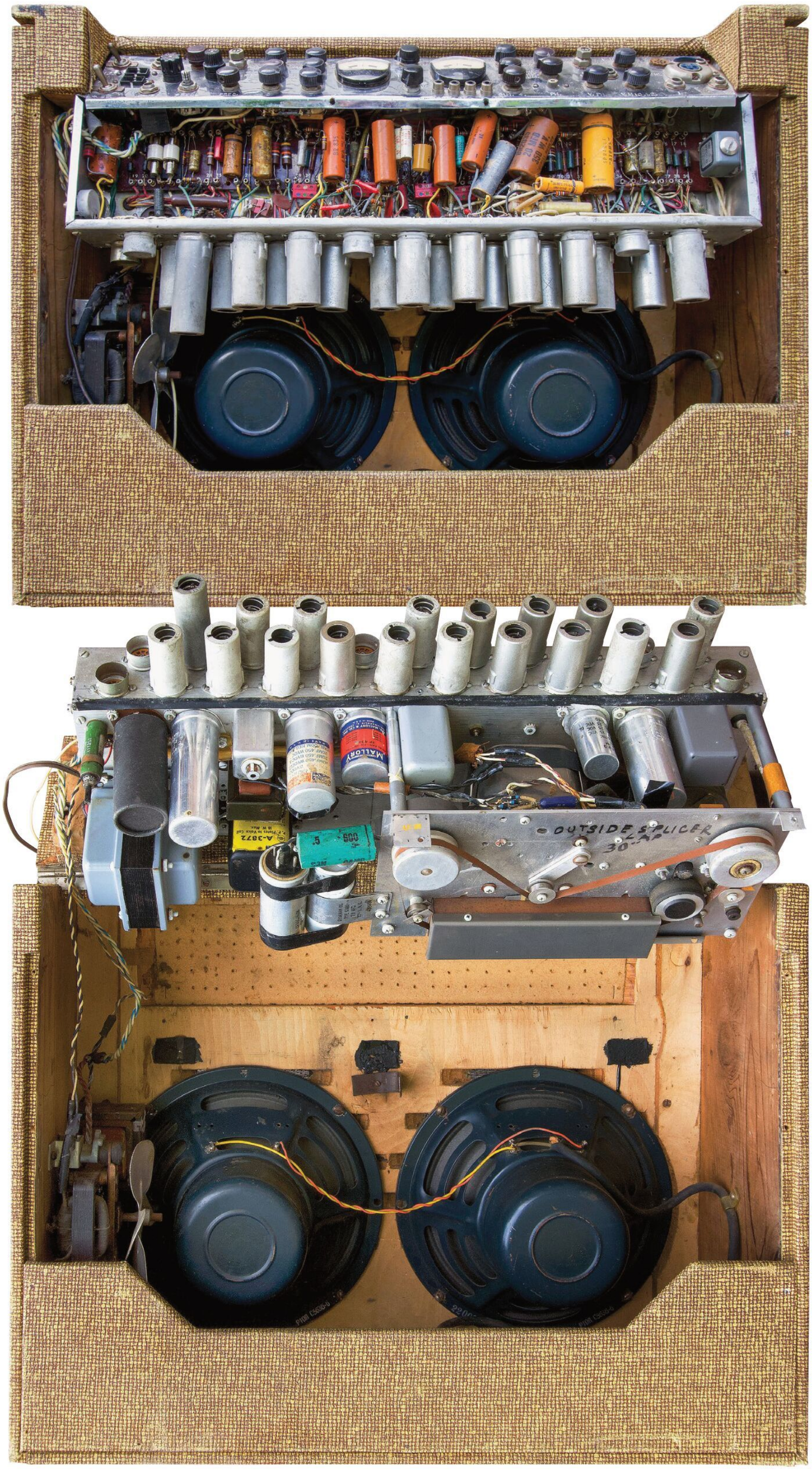
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A plethora of knobs and tubes, two Jensen Alnico speakers), and a built-in cooling fan number among the Krebs' notable features. In the folded-up position (below), the chassis reveals the built-in echo unit with its 30" loop of recording tape.

however, was one John Nottage, guitarist, vintage-gear fan, and *VG* reader.

"I heard about an auction in Rice Hill, Oregon – inventory from a music store in California that closed in the early '70s," Nottage tells *VG*. "Apparently, the owner brought everything in a semi-trailer and parked it next to his house until years later, when his son moved him to assisted living."

Accounts of what happened leading up to the auction are a little foggy, though it appears many of the name-brand vintage instruments from Krebs' inventory – a '50s Gretsch Country Club, a '30s Rickenbacker lap-steel, several new-old-stock Fender and Gibson electrics from the '60s, a 1950 Broadcaster, and more – were sent to Subway Guitars, in Berkeley, to be sold on consignment. Many other pieces of gear, including several Krebs-built items, were sold at the auction.

"Rice Hill is a tiny community, so I was surprised to see a large turnout," Nottage recalls of the auction. "I knew two other people there – Gary Hunt, and Bob November, of McKenzie River Music. Bob introduced me to three other music-store owners, one from Seattle, one from Portland, and the other from the Bay Area. The four of them bought most of the good stuff at prices I couldn't justify, while the rest of us snagged whatever we could.

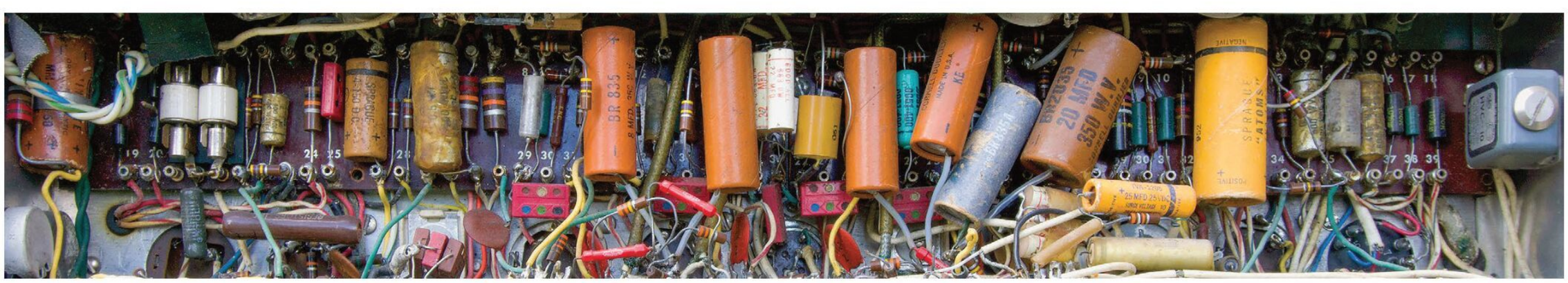
"There were good deals to be had if you paid attention, and there wasn't much interest in the Krebs amp," he added. "I got it for less than the speakers are worth. I'd never heard of Krebs, but there were the two amps I bought and another small, Champ-ish Krebs someone else got. There was also a Krebs pedal-steel."

Hunt, an instrument broker, said the number of items cleared from the estate was breathtaking – everything from horns to paper products, instruments and amplifiers including Fenders, along with parts for everything you could imagine.

"The auction company put a dumpster out front and was throwing away a lot of stuff," he said. He was told someone pulled Bakelite Telecaster pickguards from it.

"I still have several Krebs logos and a lot of the parts – prototype pickups, some Lucite guitar necks, and other things that aren't worth much."





Long before multi-channel footswitching amps, the Krebs had one of the most-complex control panels in guitardom. Wiring the amp required painstaking effort.

Krebs' great-nephew, Aaron Curtis, noted the story of those Lucite necks started when Krebs poured the first Lucite guitar during his time at Ampex.

"A friend in California sent photos from the Krebs shop that show Leo and his wife, Hilda, playing a Lucite guitar and bass," he said.

Krebs also built his own rendition of the Fuzz Tone, which was used by Steve Lukather among others. So, clearly, there were other innovations that never took off. In addition, the existence of several badges labeled "Fife and Nichols by Krebs Enterprises" with blank serial-number slots indicates Leo was manufacturing – or intending to manufacture – equipment for one of Hollywood's most important music stores of the day. But it's the amp we're here for – and what an amp it is!

To be precise, Nottage's acquisition involved amps – *plural* – the main combo and a satellite power amp/speaker rig. The latter is an interesting concept occasionally used by other makers, but it's the former that pushes the "What can we cram in here?" factor right off the charts. Again, this thing carries a ridiculous number of controls on its angled control panel, and an even more unconscionable number of tubes – features that together make it difficult to conceive not only of who would design such a thing, but who would then be bold enough to wire it!

The tubes are five 12AU7s, seven 12AX7s, two 12AY7s, one 5879, and two EL84s for an output of 15 to 20 watts, but there are also five empty tube sockets with no labels – one reason the amp remains unplayed. Lift the hinged panel to which the chassis is attached and roll it forward, however, and the underside reveals a plethora of additional components.



Leo Krebs and his wife, Hilda, with their self-made Lucite guitars plugged into what is likely this amp and its matching cab.

Leo and Hilda Krebs photo courtesy of Aaron Curtis and Dennis Krebs.

The built-in tape echo is constructed on a sort of plinth, enabling it to hover above the capacitor cans, transformers, and other parts. It uses a 30" loop of recording tape with six heads to record and play back the echo. The cab carries a pair of 10" Jensen P10R Alnico speakers, and mounted alongside them, "There's a built-in fan so you can heat your house with the 23 tubes," Nottage laughs.

The control panel, replete with stamp-punched lettering, carries knobs for Vib (depth) and V. Rate, so some of those tubes were for a vibrato circuit. Further to the amp's do-it-all aspirations are two pairs of instrument inputs (guitar or otherwise), an XLR jack for "L.Z. Mic" (low-impedence microphone), a 1/4" input for a high-impedence mic, and an RCA jack for phonograph input, all with individual Volume controls. In addition, the center of the panel displays "M. Vol"; Master Volume that was rare in the day. Without getting the amp up and running, it's impossible to tell quite what the dual VU meters are measuring, but they're a nifty visual.

Whatever the truth of the matter, we prefer to imagine that this Krebs combo sounded utterly glorious when fired up and running, its evocative vibrato and rich tape echo generating untold depths of atmospheric tone. In fact, let's assume its considerable weight and the immense hassle of repairs are the only things that kept it from becoming the best-seller Leo Krebs must have dreamed it might one day be. **VG**



A typical Orpheum electric archtop (left) and the glittering face of a 1960 Bantam Deluxe, with Gibson bridge. Premier's 1960 catalog (below) spotlights the Bantam Deluxe.

UNITED THEY STOOD, PART 2

Ghosts of Jersey City

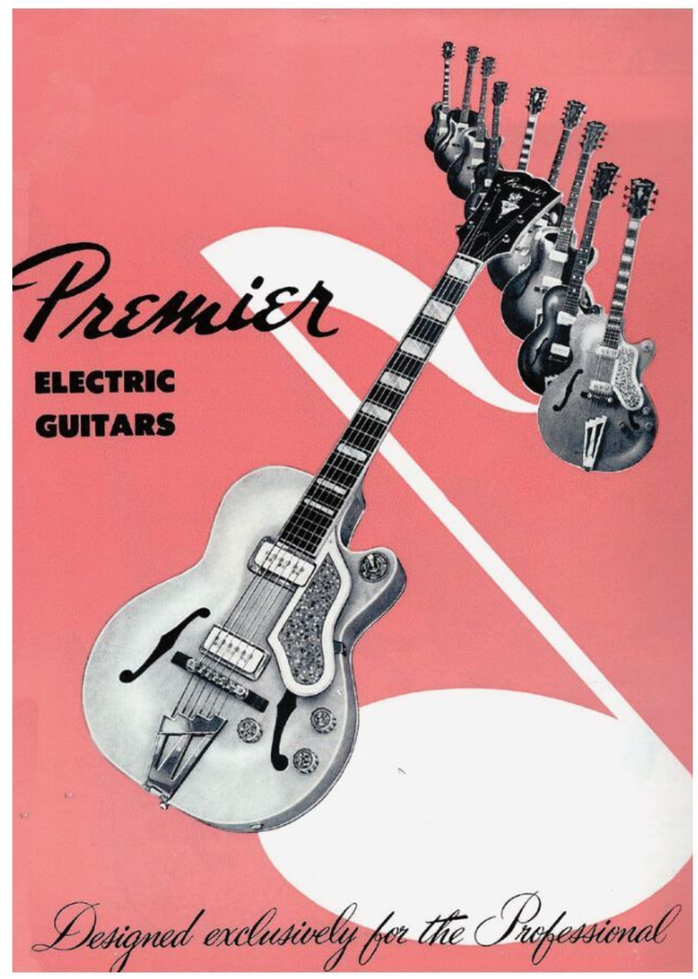
BY PETER STUART KOHMAN

In the history of guitars, the tale of United Guitar Corporation is a ghost story – little documented and lost in partially self-imposed obscurity.

Operating from 1939 into the late '60s/early '70s, United was a wholesale firm that built instruments exclusively for others to sell. In '52, it made one brief attempt to compete in the market, but quickly retreated to its original business plan.

In retrospect, it seems a limited strategy, building only for re-sellers, though it's common in other industries. Kay and Harmony did it, but they also mass-marketed their own products, sometimes competing with themselves. Compared to larger firms, United lost some economy of scale, but ran a more-economical operation, concentrating on production with no sales department and the accompanying marketing and distribution headaches.

In the 1950s and '60s the ever-growing guitar market meant United had enough business to support this plan. Gibson, Martin, and Fender sold only through franchised dealers, while Harmony, Kay, and Danelectro were "open" lines, meaning anyone could sell them. The catch was that small stores couldn't buy direct from a manufacturer; instead, they had to go through a wholesale "jobber." Many came to realize they all sold mostly the same products, and eventually some wanted their own line to offer as an exclusive. Mail-order marketers like Sears and Montgomery Ward did the same, and the "custom brand" began to flourish.



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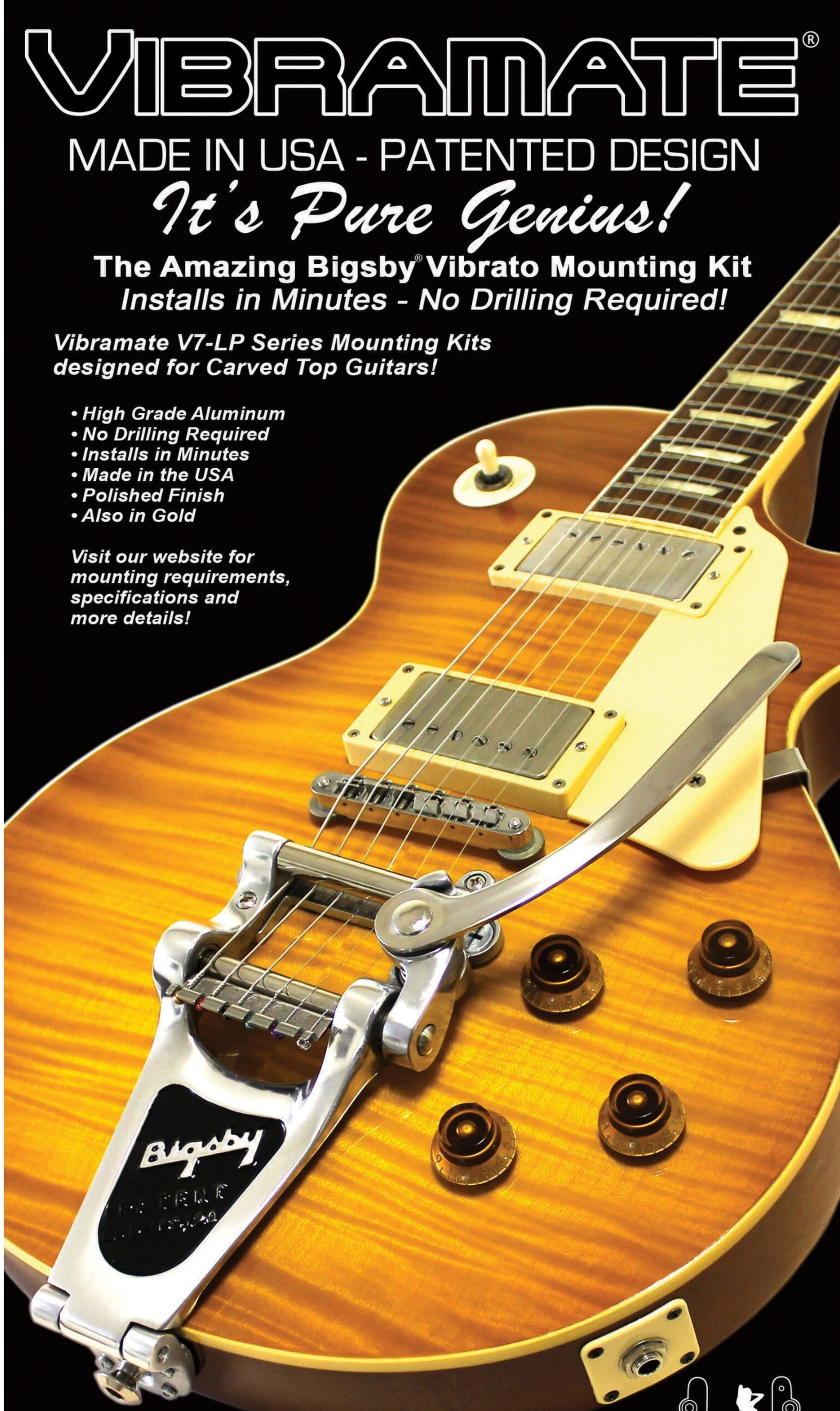
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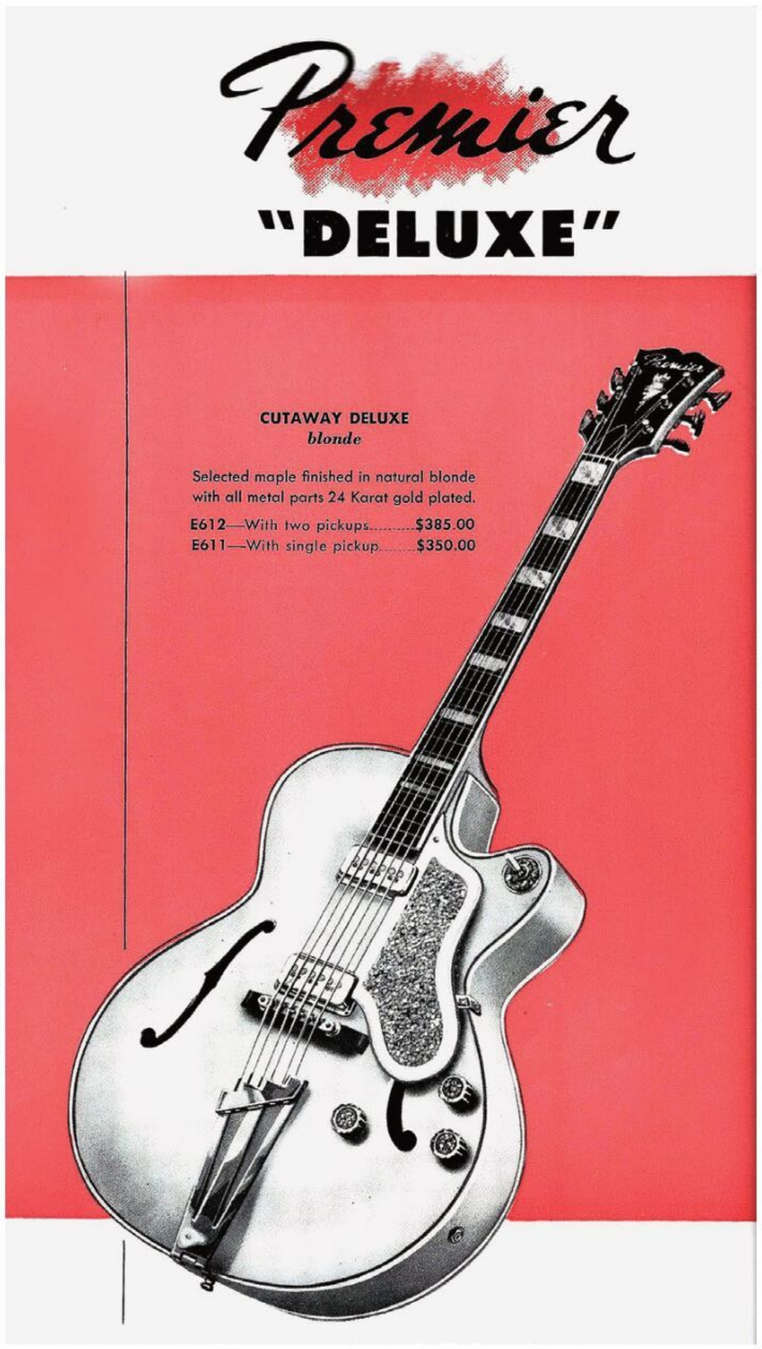
United, based in Jersey City, appears to have done nearly all of its trade with jobbers in the New York area. They likely didn't cater to mail-order firms, as identifiable United instruments seldom appear in direct-market catalogs. Harmony and Kay serviced many such clients, and Sears additionally relied on Danelectro. United's management may have been content operating at a certain level with mostly long-term familiar clients, especially since the 1950s/'60s guitar boom provided years of solid growth.

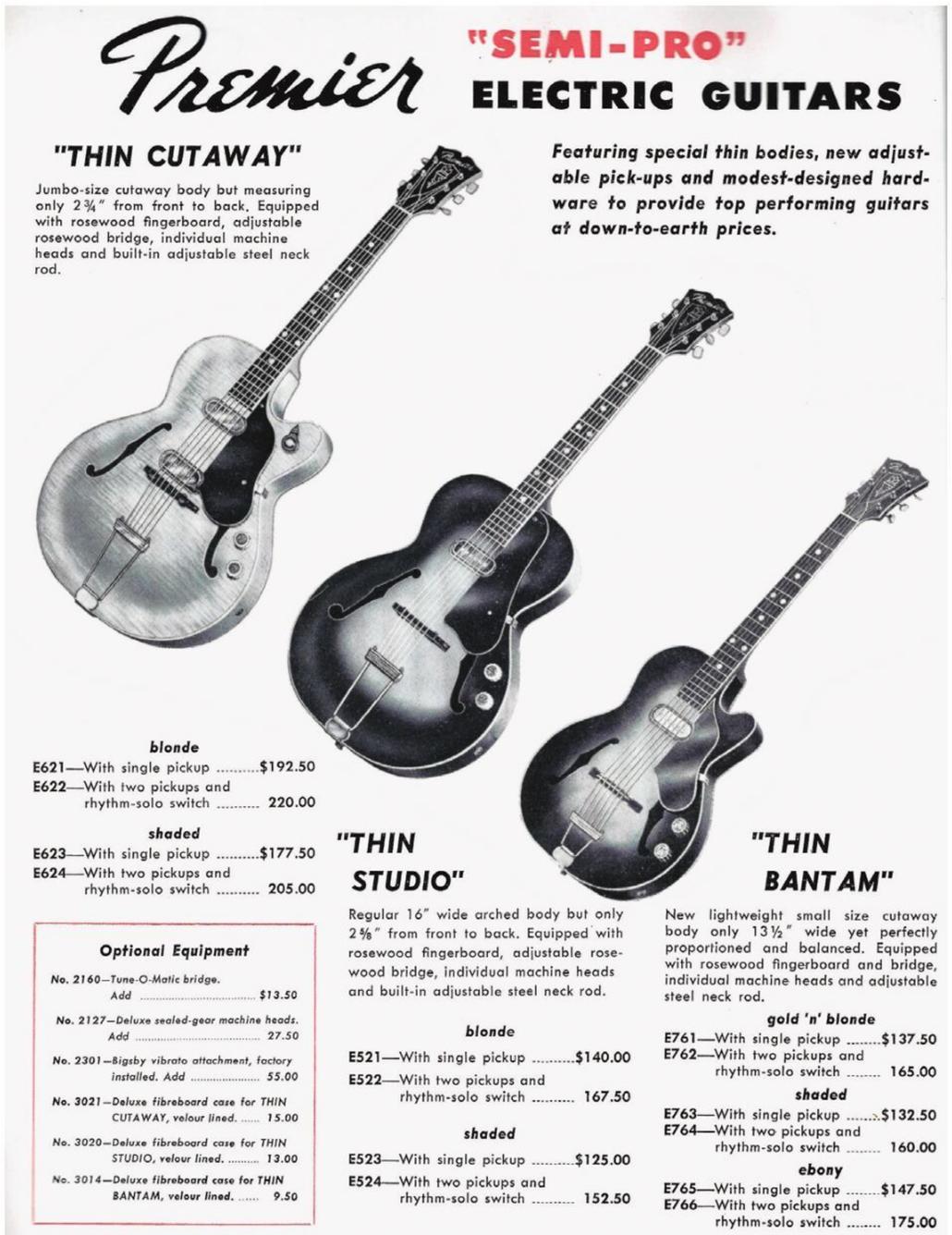
Positively identifying United Guitars product is an inexact art; they built thousands of low-grade guitars, mandolins, and ukes very similar to Kay and Harmony, and few have cared to parse the distinction. United's better products were provided mostly to specific re-sellers; even if unbranded, they can be recognized by nuances such as top curve, sound hole and cutaway shape, and neck joint/heel profile. They also use a more Gibson-like truss than their Chicago competitors. As a rule of thumb, after the early '50s, a re/unbranded guitar is almost certainly no longer from Gretsch or Regal, and if Kay and Harmony can be eliminated, it's likely built by United.

Knowing the brand names used by New York jobbers is key, and, with a little experience, their better instruments are easy to spot.

By the '60s, United had a local doppelganger (or possibly spin-off) – Codé guitars, pronounced "co-day," according to their limited advertising – a small ad appeared in *The Music Trades*, reading almost line for line like United's pitch. The address given was 1016 Clinton Street, Hoboken, a building that like most of Hoboken's industrial areas stands today as modernized residences.

The relationship between United and Codé is unknown, though they're often linked as a single entity; it's unlikely two such similar firms would spring up independently so close together, so there's probably a connection. Codé business listings appear after 1956 and disappear by the '70s, its output a mystery.

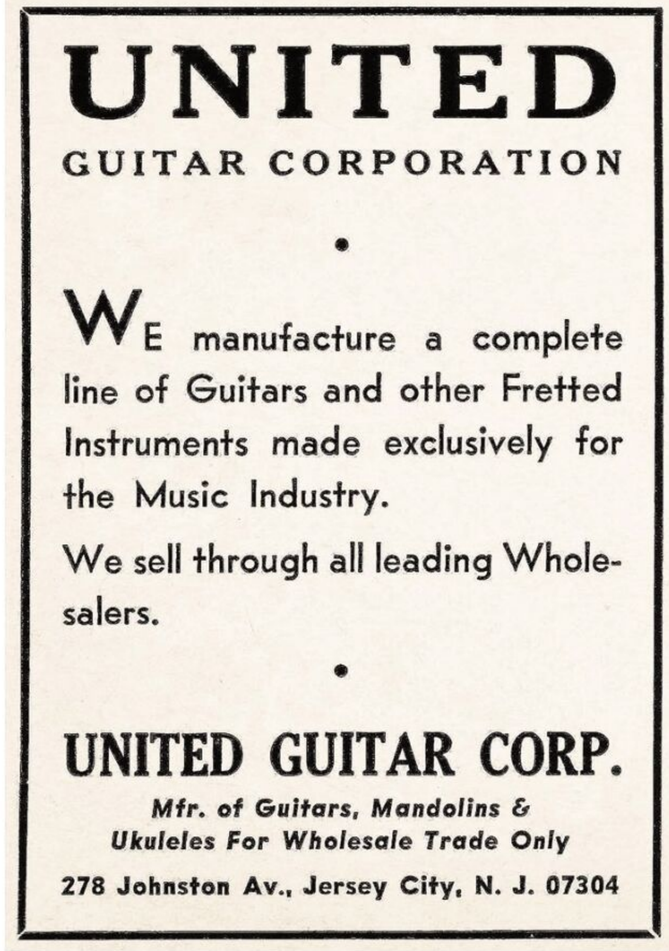




The 1960 catalog's Premier Deluxe (left) – top of the line. The glitter-free Premiers of 1960. United and Codé's similar 1962 business listings (below).

United's most-prominent client was the Sorkin Music Company, 559 Sixth Avenue, Manhattan, whose distinctive top-line instruments were sold under the Premier brand from the '40s through the late '60s. Premier guitars are most notable for their eye-dazzling look – Sorkin bought basic hollowbody instruments from United then glammed them out with glitter plastic and gold trim. Premier guitars were cataloged with multiple finish and hardware options.

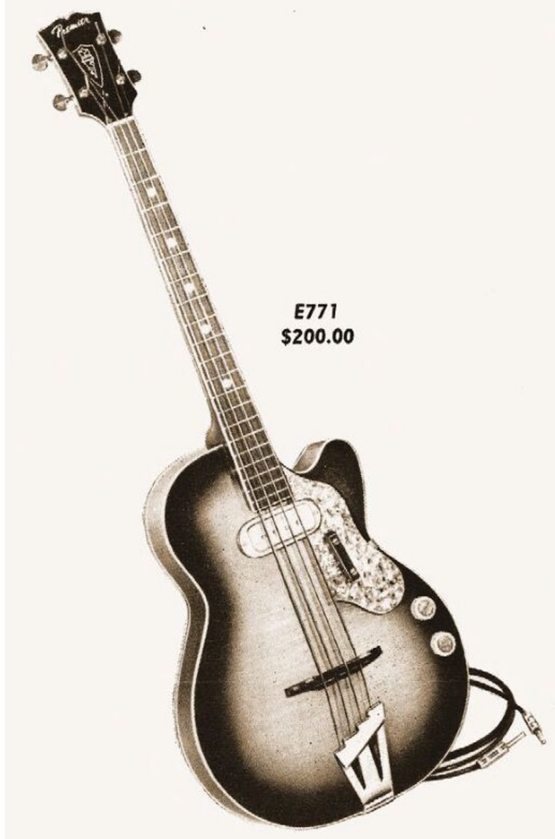
The Premier name first appeared after World War II, when the music industry expected a huge upswing in accordion popularity, mated to electronics – Premier's first heavily promoted products were accordion pickups. But then, modern jazz, country, and rock and roll popularized the "Spanish" electric guitar and made it so you're not reading *Vintage Accordion*. The first Premier-branded





PURCHASER'S GUIDE ISSUE 1962





PREMIER "BANTAM" BASS

New acoustic body electric instrument amazingly easy to handle that will thrill guitarists and bass players alike.

True bass viol quality but in compact 13½" cutaway size . . . 5½ lbs. complete . . . and played with the ease and speed of your favorite guitar. Made of select hardwoods and equipped with slim Premier neck (embodying adjustable steel truss rod), multi-adjustable magnetic pickup with 10 foot detachable cable, and both tone and volume controls.

E770—*Finished in natural blonde* **$210.00**

E771—*Shaded model* **200.00**

C700—Shaped, deluxe covered wood case . . . **$52.50**

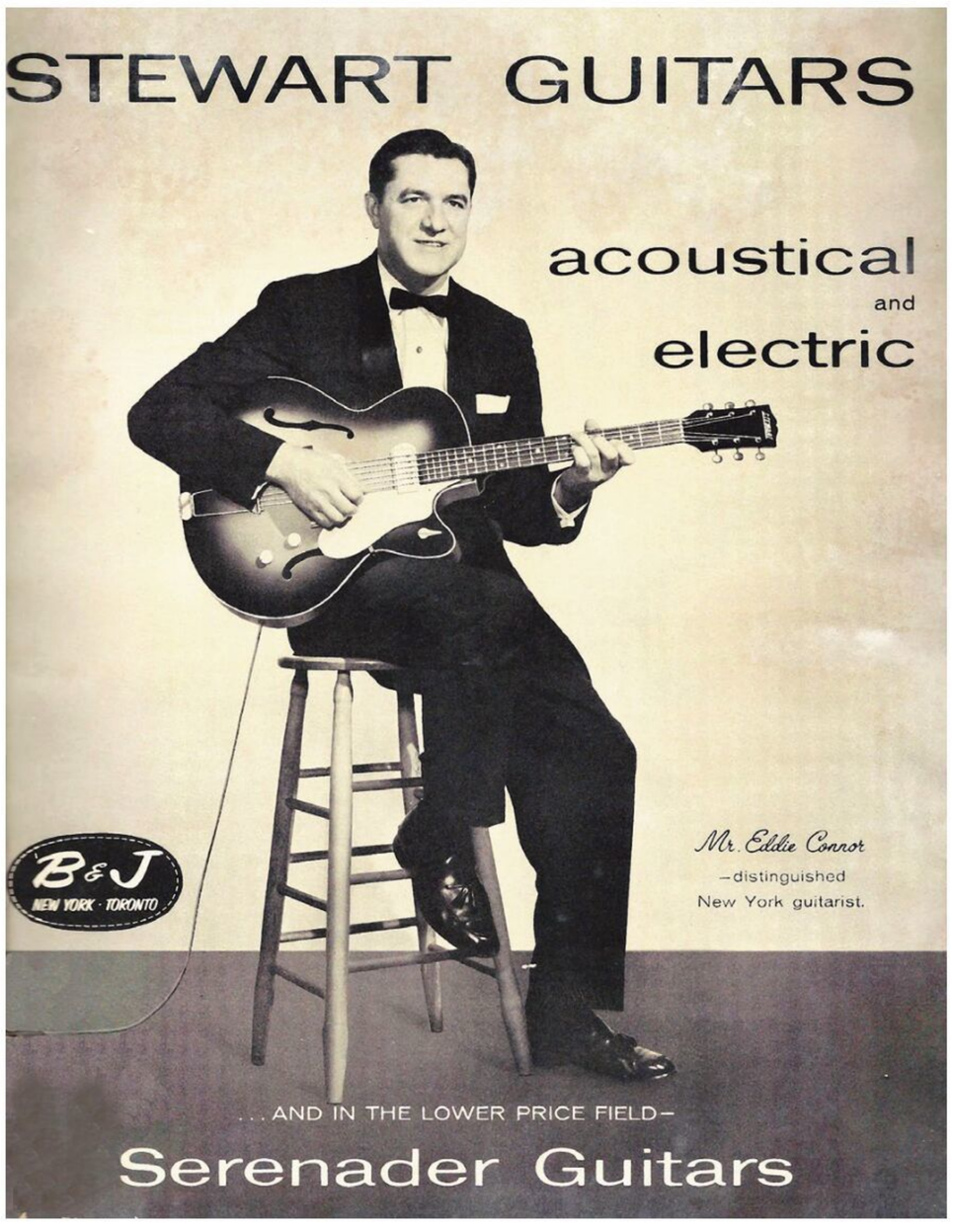
3024—Semi-hard case; fibre sides, veneer top and bottom, plush lined **$30.00**

The 1965 Bantams (left), with Japanese pickups. The extremely rare Bantam Bass, from '64. B&J Stewart promo featuring Eddie Connor (below).

guitars appeared around '54 – the earliest likely subcontracted from Kay, not United.

Within a year or so, United was Sorkin's primary supplier. Though usually classed as "cheapies," '50s hollowbody Premiers were not that cheap, priced from $125 for a single-pickup archtop up to $385 for the fully dressed 17" Deluxe. They offered flashy cosmetics, quality construction and sometimes high-grade hardware. Basic models could be ordered with different finishes and a range of upgraded fittings including DeArmond pickups, Grover tuners, Bigsby vibratos, and even actual Gibson Tune-O-Matic bridges. The Deluxe had gold-plated hardware and a stepped tailpiece (slightly) like a D'Angelico. Keeping up with the field, Premier even offered stereo wiring in 1960, though it fell as flat there as everywhere. The electronics were sourced locally from Franch Electronics, in Woodside, which also supplied Guild. Its designs resembled Gibson's P-90, usually wound less-hot.

Marketed as "Designed Exclusively For the Professional," the '50s Premier line included a range of 16" and 17" pressed-wood archtops. The most popular were smaller hollowbody electrics called Bantams – handy little versions of United's 13.5" laminated-wood archtop electric. The design is most similar to Guild's M-75, but with a deeper body and an arched back. Unlike variations sold by other jobbers, the Premier Bantams usually have soundholes. There was even an extremely rare bass version, initially called the TV Bass and offered as early as 1954, presaging the Guild M-85 by 14 years!



The Bantams were sold in Standard and Deluxe models priced from $179.50 (plain trim, single pickup) to $335 (two pickups, gold-plated hardware) with the same hardware as their large-bodied siblings. Three finishes were available – black, sunburst, and a unique natural top with a gold body, sort of a reverse Les Paul. The headstock was faced in black plastic engraved with a script Premier logo and torch emblem; some Deluxes have the design inlaid in pearl. Most Premiers had a generic rosewood or ebony bridge, but the Tune-O-Matic was available for an extra $13.50.

Premiers are the only known United-made guitars to carry serial numbers, though there's no guide to decoding them. They appear to be a single (probably sequential) series of four digits hand-stamped on small brass plates reading "Multivox Corporation of America, New York NY. Made in USA." They run at least into the 4000 range but may have started at 1000. Bantams were easily the most popular.



Premier headstocks, fancy and plain, and the rare Premier A-300 dreadnought (right).

United also built the dreadnought flat-top Western Special sold under the Premier brand (including one with a built-in pickup) but apparently had nothing to do with the scroll-body Premier solidbody that appeared in '58. The New York story is those were built in the Strad-O-Lin workshop in Manhattan. United also supplied Sorkin with lower-grade hollowbody and flat-top guitars sold under the Royce, Beltone, Leo Master, and Marvel brands along with a line of Bobby Henshaw signature ukes with "choice woods and exclusive internal construction." In the early '60s, this must have added up to hundreds, if not a few thousand instruments per year for this one account.

The '60s brought changes at Sorkin usually related to cutting costs that gradually cheapened the line. Tuners went from Waverlys and Grovers to Japanese-made open-backs – some of the first on American-made guitars. By '64, the large-body single-cut instruments were discontinued in favor of a thinline double-cut design so rare today it suggests minimal sales. By that time, Premier was also using Japanese pickups and the guitars developed an almost desultory feel, as Sorkin began concentrating on a lucky windfall. Sometime prior to the Beatles' arrival, they became the sole U.S. distributor for Höfner. Imagine the orders for a certain bass that flooded their offices after February of '64!

Premier amps were then offered alongside Höfner instruments, and the house line guitars were de-emphasized.

That year, one of United's smaller accounts closed after the passing of John D'Angelico. One of the company's principals, Frank Forcillo, had longstanding ties to the master of Kenmare Street. When a D'Angelico customer ordered a guitar with built-in pickups, John would not hand-carve a body. Rather, he used a laminated United chassis with his own neck, finish, and hardware. These are superlative guitars in their own right, though not acoustically comparable to a real D'A.



Another name found on United products is Orpheum. In the '30s, this venerable brand (borrowed from Rettberg & Lange's 1910s banjo line) was passed to jobber Maurice Lipsky, in Manhattan. Subcontract suppliers included Kay and Gretsch; only some Orpheum-branded guitars were built by United. There are even a couple with D'Angelico provenance – an experiment of the early '40s.

The 1962 United/Lipsky catalog models are pretty generic, with typical construction and fittings. These appeared opposite an Orpheum line of Wandré guitars from Italy – a short-lived connection. Wandrés were, at the time, cheaper than the New Jersey models! United also supplied some of Lipsky's cheaper Stadium line and at least an occasional Paramount electric.

Nearly identical instruments were available, labeled Serenader by Bugeleisen & Jacobsen, another jobber operating around the corner at 5 Union Square. B&J's Stewart and Stewart Orifonic brands appeared on United-made guitars in the '50s, primarily midline elec-

eastmanguitars.com

EASTMAN

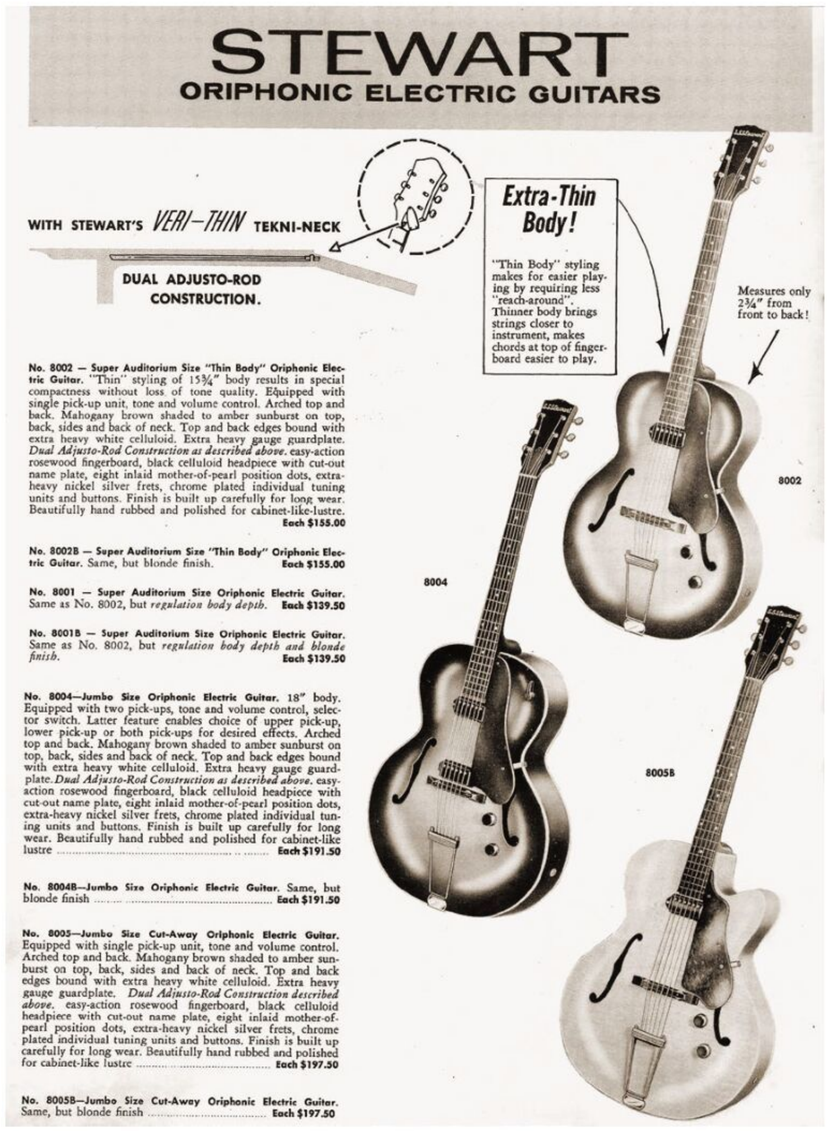
AC SERIES REFINED

MODERN AND PROGRESSIVE IN ALL THE RIGHT WAYS.

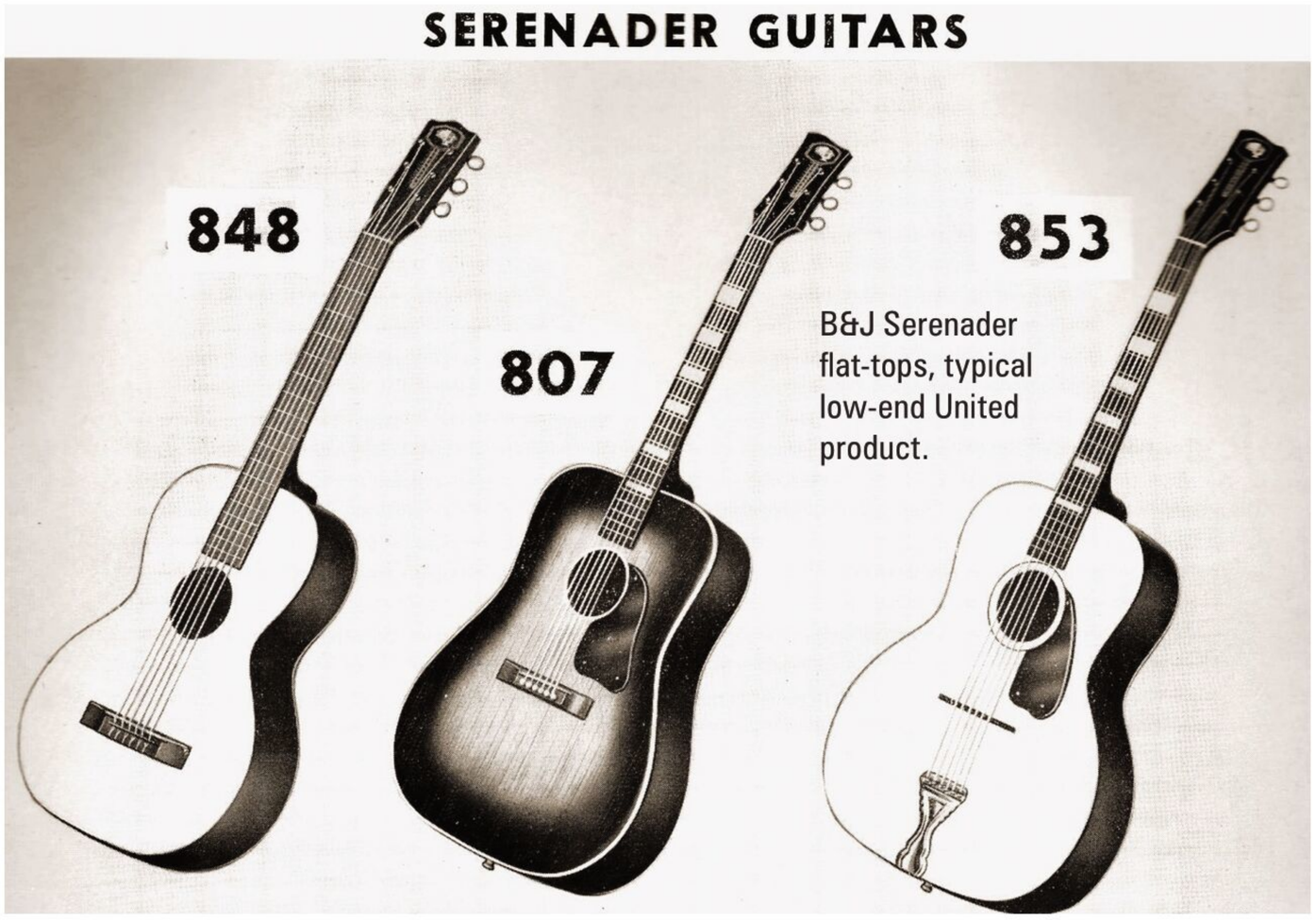
trics with Fransch pickups and plain trim. These are both full-sized cutaway acoustics and small-body electrics, in this case called Midgets, with a solid top devoid of sound holes. B&J's early-'60s budget Serenader electrics appear to be low-end United archtops with their Japanese-made Kent pickups.

Except for the lowest-grade Serenaders, United guitars disappear from B&J catalogs in the early '60s. By '63, the Stewart name was applied only to amplifiers, and B&J was carrying an Espãna line of flat-tops (primarily classicals) made by Levin, in Sweden – the European sourcing undercut American makers on wholesale price.

However, much worse news was in the offing.









The full range of 1960 Stewart electrics.

While United Guitars products were mostly cheap to make, they could not compete with factories tooling up in Japan. An ominous note bound into the 1963 B&J catalog cheerfully states, "Lower Tariffs mean *Lower Prices*... Effective September 1st 1963, the U.S. government has reduced the tariff applicable to Kent electric guitars."

This would sound the death knell for the U.S. firms that supplied the bottom of the market; not only United, but Kay, Valco, and even Harmony would eventually succumb to the tide from the East.

Some very cheap unbranded flat-tops with basic accoutrements including painted-on binding, pickguards, and fretboard markers that are often referenced as Harmonys are actually United product. Many from the '60s have a large "Made in USA" black-ink stamp on the inside back, where Harmony generally used a smaller green stamp. United also built bottom-line mandolins, ukes, and baritone ukes under many brands, and often not branded at all.

Another factor that has lessened the appeal of United's legacy is that their celluloid plastic came from the same local suppliers as Guild, Gretsch, and D'Angelico, and they've very often suffered binding deterioration, relegating them to dusty back rooms as not worth fixing. Otherwise splendid Premier guitars have suffered this sad fate, helping push them to the sidelines of history.

While glittery Premiers are the most memorable, the better guitars United provided to its New York clients are all worthy of belated respect.

Part one of this feature appeared in May '21 issue.8

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Classics

Billy Soutar loves the vibe of his 1969 Les Paul Personal and matching LP-12 amp. While the guitar's mahogany body, Les Paul Custom touches, three-piece quartersawn neck, and Fretless Wonder frets make it a great player, it mostly serves as a reminder of another guitar – and a great friendship.

"In 1991, I saw a newspaper ad for Les Paul's Monday-night gigs at the Fat Tuesday's Jazz Club, in Manhattan," Soutar said. "I'd been a fan since I was a kid, so my friend, Steve, and I were soon off to New York City, hoping to get Les to autograph my '52 goldtop and Steve's '79 Les Paul 25/50 Anniversary."

Driving from Chicago, they arrived in time to enjoy a meal in Fat Tuesday's dining room, then ambled downstairs early enough to find an empty venue.

"Out of nowhere, Les walks up behind us and says, 'Watcha' got in them cases, boys?' And before we could open them, he stopped us and said, 'Let's chat after the first set.' Then he vanished into the green room.

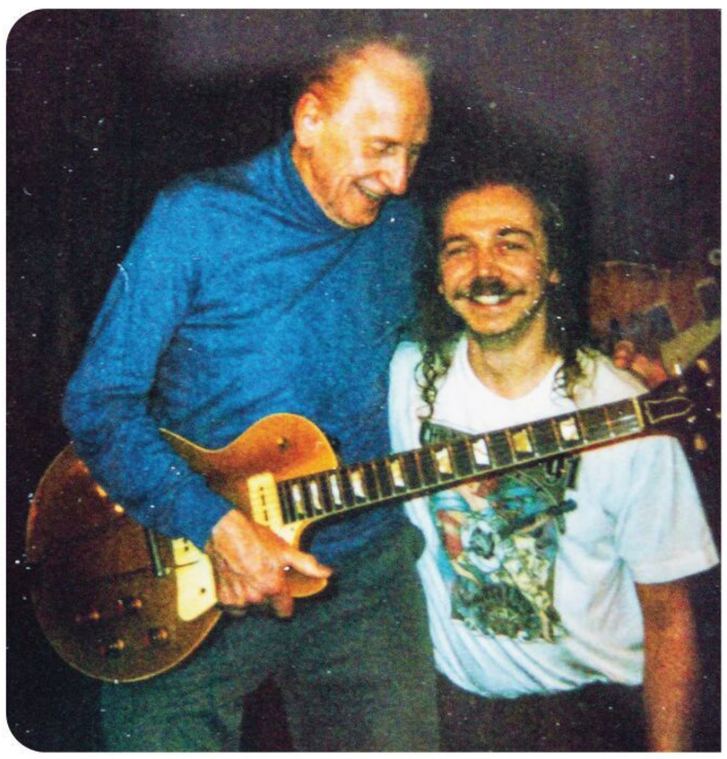
"Being the first ones there, we grabbed the best table, of course. The club filled around us, and Les' trio played an incredible set just a few feet away. The energy radiating from him filled the room."

After the set, Les signed autographs and posed for pictures. Once everyone had their turn, he approached Soutar's table.

"He signed Steve's guitar with 'Keep Pickin',' but instead of signing mine, he grabbed it and started talking about it as if it were his first offspring," Soutar laughed. "I tried to hand him the black marker, but he kept changing the subject, then said we would chat more after the second set."

They later talked until the club closed, then moved the discussion to the sidewalk, where Soutar fielded Les' increasing offers to buy the '52. Very attached to the guitar, he kept deferring – until an idea hit.

"I told him I'd feel better trading for one of his guitars, maybe the one he played that night," Soutar said.





Les Paul and Billy Soutar during their 1991 meeting, with Soutar's '52 goldtop. Paul in his kitchen with his and Soutar's LP Personals.



Among Billy Soutar's Les Paul memorabilia is an autographed invitation to Les' 1997 birthday party and picks made (and used) by Les.

Les declined, but countered...

"He told me the guitar he had that night was one of two Heritage 80 Les Paul Custom Recording models that had been hand-made by Chuck Burge at Gibson, and that he would trade the other one. I agreed, and handed over the '52."

Paul wrote his phone number on a piece of paper, then climbed into the passenger seat of an old GMC Jimmy driven by his son, Rusty, and they were off.

The evening was the start of a friendship. In the years that followed, Soutar returned to Les' gigs several times, bringing friends and family. In '97, he paid his first visit to Les' home, where he broached the subject of the trade. Again, though, Les deferred, offering guitars other than the Heritage 80 Custom.

"It turns out the two Burge guitars were insured for a million dollars apiece, and Les had been advised to hold on to them," Soutar said. "So, he returned the '52."

Soutar visited Les and his family several more times before the legend's passing in 2009, including once to have Rusty install a transformer in the guitar you see here, which Soutar found in an ad in *Vintage Guitar*. Made for Gibson's "75 Years of Excellence" Diamond Jubilee Celebration, it's one of the first Les Paul Personals ever made – one of two in '69 – and has features of the era like a holly headstock veneer and pearl logo without the dot on the lower-case letter I.

Getting the full "Hi-Fi" sound Les intended with the Personal model required either plugging straight into a recording console or getting Gibson's LP-12 amp like the one Soutar bought in 2015. Its cab has a solid state 190-watt amp running two 12" speakers and two treble horns. The head could power up to 10 of the cabinets, delivering nearly 2,000 watts of the clean power.

"Thanks to a setup done by Rusty to Les' liking, this guitar plays precisely and sounds incredible," Soutar said. "It can mimic many sounds at the flip of a switch and does Les' 1940s 'New Sounds' beautifully. I am really lucky! It reminds me of him and Rusty." ***– Ward Meeker***

Do you have a classic/collectible/vintage guitar with an interesting personal story that might be a good fit for "Classics?" If so, send an e-mail to ward@vintageguitar.com for details on how it could be featured.



LES PAUL PREAMPLIFIER

LP-1 SPECIFICATIONS

Width	21"
Depth	15"
Height	6½"
Weight	28 lbs.
Power consumption	35 watts
Color	Black Vinyl

INCLUDED WITH PREAMP—Attractive black vinyl padded protective carrying case with storage pocket for foot switch and cables. Interconnecting audio cable (shielded). Foot switch—dual type, Vibrato, Tremolo, Vibrola, and Reverb with attached cord and plug.

LP-2 SPECIFICATIONS

GENERAL FEATURES

A.C. convenience outlet.
On/Off power switch.
Circuit breaker (4 Amp).
Silent rubber casters.
Carrying handles (four).
Signal jacks (three) input from Preamp unit. (These jacks also allow multiple connection of up to ten (10) units).

SPEAKERS

Four (4) heavy duty 12" speakers.
Two (2) heavy duty treble horns.

LP-2 (Continued)

SPECIFICATIONS

Height	45¼"
Width	28"
Depth	16¼"
Weight	83 lbs.
Power Consumption	300 watts
Power Output	190 watts R.M.S.
Color	Black vinyl with metallic blue grill cloth

INCLUDED WITH AMP

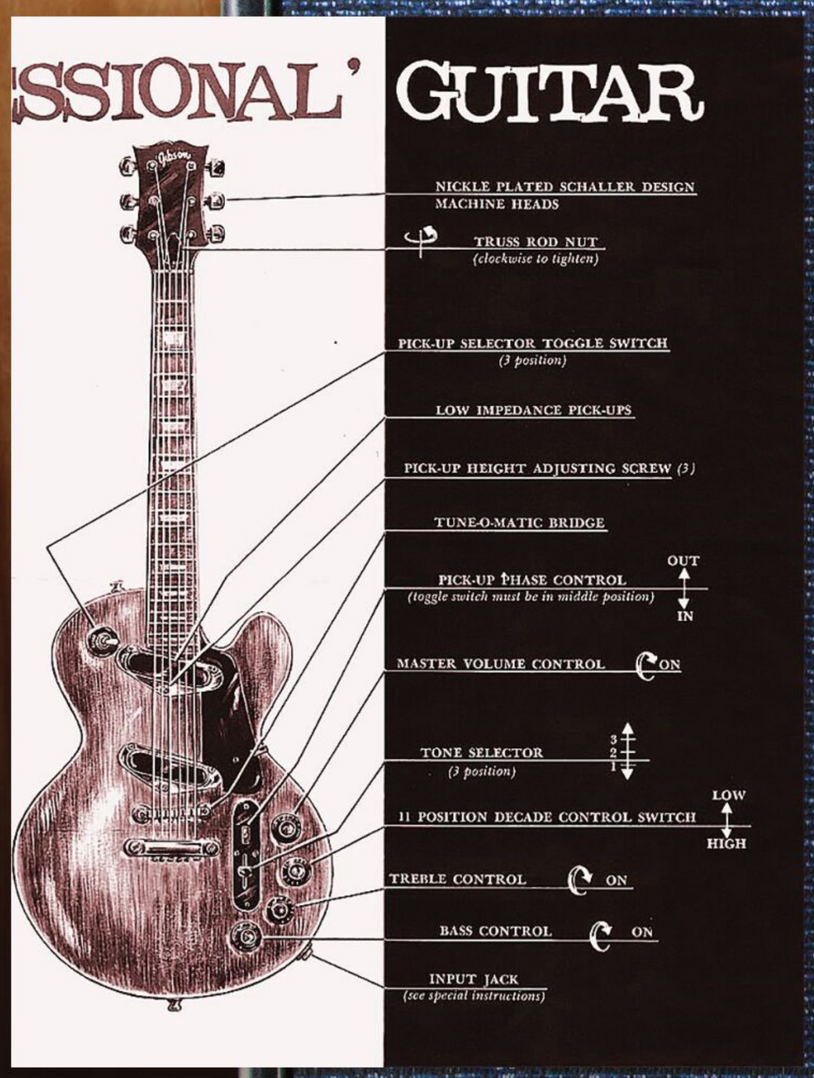
Attractive black vinyl cover.



LOW IMPEDANCE TRANSFORMER CORD

When a low impedance instrument is not being used with the LP-12 amplifier, you must use a Gibson low-to-high impedance transformer cord with your conventional high impedance amplifier. If you do not use the cord, your instrument will not function properly.

The LP-12 head in Gibson's 1970 catalog.



The Les Paul Personal/Professional in the '69 catalog.

Price Guide

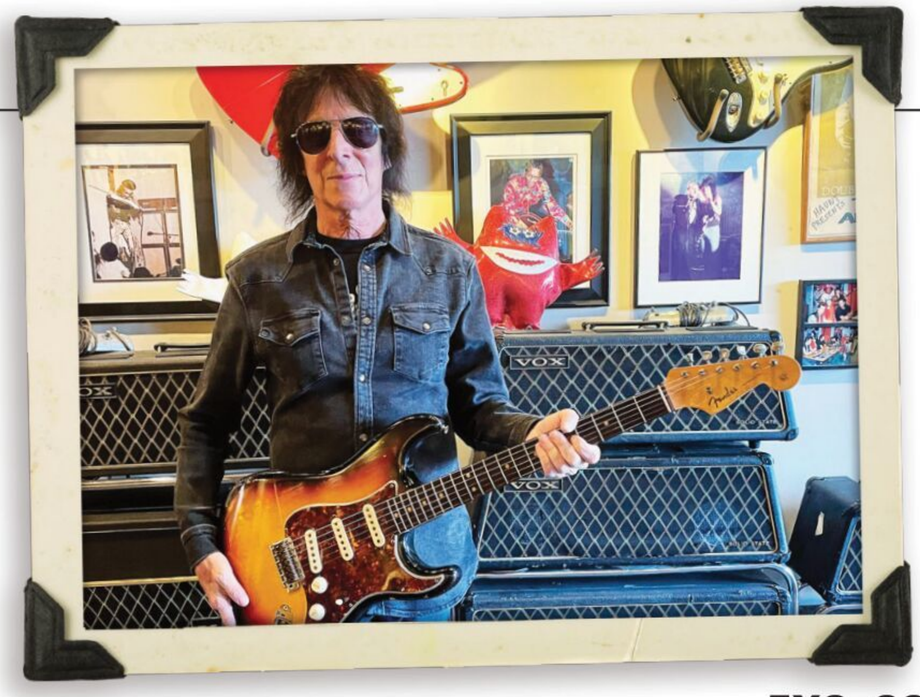
By Alan Greenwood & Gil Hembree



1973 Ampeg Heavy Stud.

NEW & UPDATED LISTINGS

YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND. LOW	EXC. COND. HIGH
1965	Airline Electric Res-O-Glas	Jack White's Red style	$1,700	$2,175
1964	Airline Rocket 6-String Steel		$350	$450
1973	Ampeg Heavy Stud		$350	$450
1925	Bacon & Day Silver Bell Style 1 Guitar Banjo	F-hole flange	$2,800	$3,600
1967	Baldwin Model 706 V	Vibrato	$725	$950
1993	Bourgeois JOM	Brazilian rosewood	$4,500	$5,800
1972	Chapman Stick	12-string	$1,700	$2,200
1992	Charvel Surfcaster	2 singles, vibrato	$1,125	$1,475
2015	Collings 0001 Mh	Mahogany	$2,800	$3,700
2009	Collings 01G		$2,900	$3,850
1959	D'Angelico Excel/ Excel (Cutaway)	Natural, orig. binding	$31,000	$40,000
1950	D'Angelico New Yorker Deluxe (Cutaway)	Sunburst	$36,000	$48,000
1969	D'Aquisto Excel (Cutaway)	Blond	$31,000	$40,000
1935	Dobro Angelus	Round neck	$1,150	$1,500
1977	Dobro Model 63		$975	$1,275
1965	EKO Baritone Mandolin		$375	$500
2001	Emmons Lashley LeGrande III Steel	25th Anniversary, dle nk	$2,850	$3,700
1960	Epiphone Rivoli Bass (1 pickup)	Banjo tuners, sb	$4,700	$6,100
1959	Epiphone Triumph Regent (Cutaway)	Sunburst	$1,675	$2,150
1962	Epiphone Wilshire	Symmetrical, mini-hums	$2,500	$3,300
1987	ESP Eclipse Custom/Custom T	Bolt, dots	$650	$850
1986	ESP Metal III	Reverse offset	$400	$525
1979	Fender Deluxe 6/ Stringmaster Single Steel	Black or white	$850	$1,100
1964	Fender Jazzmaster	Sunburst	$4,900	$6,300
1952	Fender Precision Bass	Blond, slab body	$15,000	$20,000
1964	Fender Princeton Reverb Amp	Blackface	$2,100	$2,750
1965	Fender Pro Reverb	Blackface, 2x12	$1,900	$2,500
1955	Fender Stratocaster	Sunburst, ash body	$41,000	$53,000
1966	Fender Stratocaster	Candy Apple Red	$17,300	$22,400
1985	Fender Stratocaster '50s/ Classic Series '50s		$675	$875
1953	Fender Telecaster	Blond black 'guard	$34,000	$44,000
1972	Fender Telecaster	Sunburst	$2,900	$3,800
2020	Fender Telecaster American Professional II	SS	$900	$1,150
2019	G & L ASAT Classic Blues Boy Semi-Hollow		$1,000	$1,300
2020	G & L Comanche	Premium finish flametop	$975	$1,275
2005	G & L Legacy HG	HSS	$825	$1,075
1995	GFI Ultra 10-string pedal steel		$2,100	$2,700
2020	Gibson 1960 Les Paul Standard Heavy Aged	Murphy Lab	$5,000	$6,500
1955	Gibson Console Grand Steel CG-520	Humbuckers	$1,525	$2,000
1958	Gibson EB-2 Bass	Sunburst, banjo tuners	$4,050	$5,350



Eliot Michael with a 1964 Fender Stratocaster.

YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND. LOW	EXC. COND. HIGH
1958	Gibson ES-335TD	Sunburst bound neck	$29,000	$38,000
1927	Gibson F-5 Mandolin	Fern, Master Model	$40,000	$56,000
2002	Gibson Firebird V			
	1965 Reissue (Custom Shop)	Maestro	$2,400	$3,100
1950	Gibson J-200N	Natural	$10,500	$13,500
1982	Gibson Les Paul Leo's Reissue	Highly flamed	$4,800	$6,300
2008	Gibson Les Paul LP295 Goldtop		$2,000	$2,600
1955	Gibson Les Paul Model	Tune-o-matic		
		tailpiece, late 1955	$36,000	$47,000
2005	Gibson Les Paul			
	Neal Schon Signature	80 made	$8,300	$10,800
1986	Gibson Q-80 Bass	2 pickups	$775	$1,025
1967	Gibson RB-250 5-String Banjo	Flat head tone ring	$1,850	$2,400
2001	Gilchrist Model 5 Mandolin	Sunburst	$17,000	$22,000
2003	Godin Flat Five X		$700	$900
1959	Gower G-55 2 Flat Top		$950	$1,250
2018	Gretsch Malcom Young			
	Signature G6131 Jet		$1,700	$2,200
1955	Gretsch Rancher	G brand	$4,100	$5,400
1957	Gretsch Round-Up (6130)	Orange	$9,200	$12,000
1998	Gretsch Silver Falcon			
	G6136SL (1955)		$1,700	$2,200
1973	Guild Mark I		$300	$400
1965	Guild Nararre F-50 R/F-50 R	Brazilian rosewood	$5,000	$6,500
1980	Guild S-70AD	Ash with inlay	$975	$1,250
1963	Guild Slim Jim T-100		$1,500	$2,000
1964	Harmony Meteor H70	Sunburst	$1,125	$1,450
1965	Harmony Sovereign			
	Jumbo Deluxe H1266		$350	$450
1976	Harmony Bicentennial			
	5-String Banjo	Red, white and blue	$525	$675
1966	Hofner Beatle Elec.			
	Model 459VTZ	Blond option	$1,300	$1,625
1959	Hofner Golden Hofner		$4,900	$6,500
1956	Hofner Model 500/1 Beatle Bass	LH or RH	$5,300	$6,900
1980	Humphrey, Thomas Classical		$4,800	$6,200
1981	Ibanez IC400 Iceman		$900	$1,200
1979	Ibanez MC Musician			
	Series Bass	Various	$800	$1,400
1992	Jackson Randy Rhoads			
	Limited Edition	200 built	$4,500	$6,000
1946	Kalamazoo Lap Steels		$425	$550
1955	Kay C-1 Concert String Bass		$1,600	$2,100
1950	Kay K44	Non-cut archtop	$450	$600
1952	Kay Lap Steels		$270	$350
1981	Kramer Pioneer Family Bass	Various models	$350	$750
1968	Kustom Elec. Hollowbody Bass		$950	$1,300

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

Brian Goff
Bizarre Guitars

Garrett Tung
Boingosaurus Music

Dave Belzer
Burst Brothers

Walter Carter
Carter Vintage

Daniel Escauriza
Chicago Music Exchange

John Majdalani
Cream City Music

Dave Rogers
Dave's Guitar Shop

Drew Berlin
Drew Berlin's Vintage Guitars

Stan Werbin & S.J. "Frog" Forgey
Elderly Instruments

Dewey Bowen
Freedom Guitar

Rick Hogue
Garrett Park Guitars

Gary Dick
Gary's Classic Guitars

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Gruhn Guitars

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Gryphon Strings

Kennard Machol & Leonard Coulson
Intermountain Guitar & Banjo

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Jim's Guitars

Kevin Borden
Kebo's BassWorks

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Killer Vintage

Timm Kummer
Kummer's Vintage Instruments

Buzzy Levine
Lark Street Music

Larry Wexer
Laurence Wexer, Ltd.

Artie Leider
McKenzie River Music

Neal Shelton
Neals Music (California)

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Players Vintage Instruments

Howie Statland
Rivington Guitars

Eliot Michael
Rumble Seat Music

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Sam Ash Music Stores

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Schoenberg Guitars

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Union Grove Music

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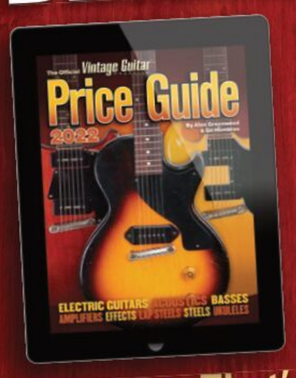
Nate Westgor
Willie's American Guitars

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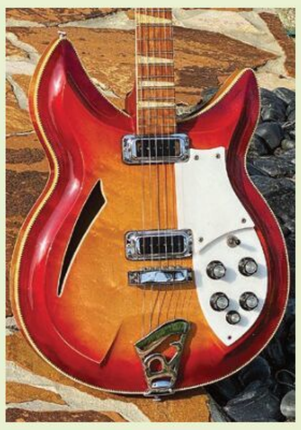
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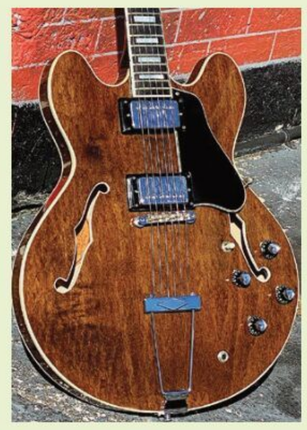
YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND. LOW	EXC. COND. HIGH
1917	Lakeside (L & H) Harp Guitar		$1,700	$2,300
1995	Lakland 4-63 Deluxe Bass		$2,100	$2,700
2003	Larrivee OMV-09		$1,225	$1,600
1930	Ludwig Big			
	Chief Plectrum Banjo		$5,000	$6,500
1970	Marshall Model 1987			
	50-Watt Amp Head	Black, aluminum	$2,100	$2,800
1972	Marshall Model 2061			
	20-Watt Lead/Bass Head	Black, aluminum	$1,600	$2,100
1859	Martin 1-42		$7,500	$9,700
1935	Martin 000-18	14-fret (not long scale)	$13,200	$17,100
1968	Martin 000-18	351 made	$2,900	$3,750
1996	Martin 000-28EC	Sitka, rosewood, natural	$2,200	$2,900
2003	Martin 000-28H Custom	CS, double bound	$2,000	$2,600
1934	Martin 000-42	1 made	$61,000	$79,000
2003	Martin 000-JBP			
	Jimmy Buffet Pollywog	305 made	$2,700	$3,500
1998	Martin 00-16DBR	Rosewood	$1,200	$1,575
1929	Martin 00-18		$5,000	$6,450
1927	Martin 00-21	Steel bracing, 12-fret	$10,100	$13,100
1951	Martin 0-15	All mahogany, 575 made	$2,475	$3,225
1932	Martin 0-17T Tenor Guitar		$1,125	$1,450
1941	Martin 0-21	19 made	$6,900	$8,900
1917	Martin 0-28K	Steel string, 6 made	$6,600	$8,600
1931	Martin C-2	Round-hole, 104 made	$3,100	$4,000
1935	Martin D-18	133 made	$46,000	$60,000
1998	Mesa-Boogie DC-10 Amp	Combo 2x12, 100 watts	$675	$900
1998	Mesa-Boogie DC-5 Amp	Combo 1x12, 50 watts	$600	$800
1980	Moonstone Eclipse Standard		$1,350	$1,750
1982	Moonstone Explorer Bass		$1,350	$1,750
1966	Murph Electric XII		$925	$1,200
1985	Nady Lightning/Lightening I	Fernandes neck-thru	$290	$385
1955	National Model 1103 Del-Mar		$1,150	$1,500
1959	National Model 1155E			
	Jumbo/Model		$1,500	$2,700
1930	National Style O Tenor		$850	$1,100
1963	National Val-Pro 88	Black, 2 pickup	$2,100	$2,700
1923	Orpheum Model #1 Tenor Banjo		$500	$650
1935	Paramount Style L	Spanish, Brazilian	$5,100	$6,625
2013	Parker Maxx Fly PDF30		$275	$350
1959	Premier Special Archtop		$725	$950
1936	Rickenbacker Electric Upright Bass.		$3,400	$4,400
1990	Rickenbacker Model 360VB	Vibrato	$1,425	$1,900
1991	Rickenbacker			
	Model 4001 CS Bass	With certificate	$2,800	$3,600
2010	Rickenbacker Model 4003 Bass		$1,400	$1,800
1925	Superb Tenor Banjo		$365	$475
2020	Taylor 714ce V-class		$1,600	$2,100
2020	Taylor 362ce V-Class		$1,200	$1,600
2020	Taylor 562ce		$1,400	$1,800
1948	Vega C-56 Archtop		$1,275	$1,650
2020	Vox AC10C1 Amp	10w 1x10 tubes	$325	$425
1963	Vox Mark IV Bass	England, White	$2,150	$2,850
1966	Vox Meteor/Super Meteor	Meteor, no vibrato	$400	$525
1966	Vox Meteor/Super Meteor	Super Meteor, vibrato	$450	$575
1994	Wal Customn (VI)			
	(Mark III) Bass		$8,000	$10,500
1926	Weissenborn Style #1 Hawaiian		$2,700	$3,500
1925	Weymann Mandolin Banjo	Various	$200	$375

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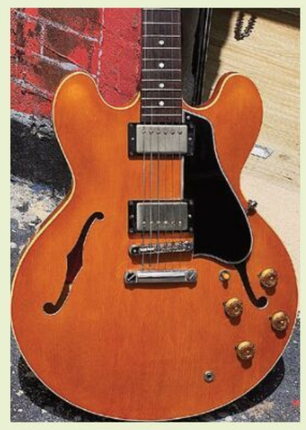
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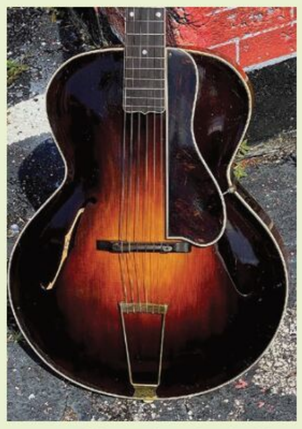

1969 Rickenbacker 381 "Prototype" w/a Deeper Body.


1967 Gibson ES-345TDCSV we have 2 clean examples.

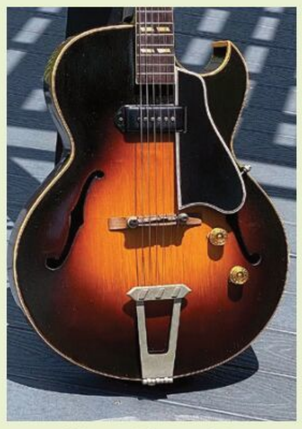

1970 Gibson ES-335/ 355TDW Special Ordered.


1970 Gibson ES-335TD gorgeous Honey'burst!

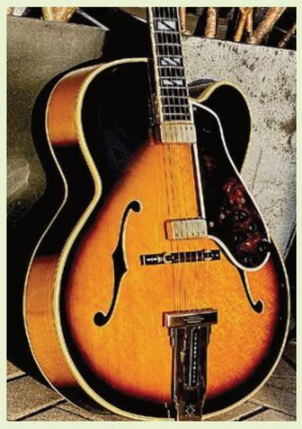

2016 Gibson ES-335TDN C.Shop '58 Reissue.


1929 Gibson L-5 desirable 1st type Museum Quality.


1940 Gibson Super 400N documented 1-off Special.


1953 Gibson ES-175 Museum Quality Joe Pass model.


1968 Gibson ES-175 crazy rare fact. Black 1 pickup.

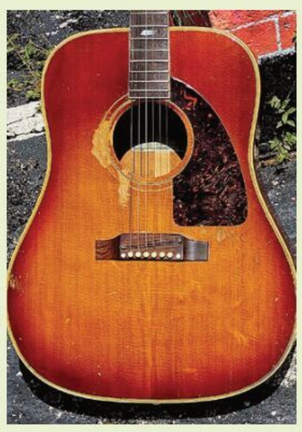

1974 Gibson Johnny Smith 2 pickup model

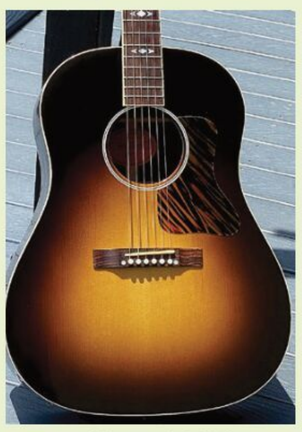

1969 Gibson L-5CES fact. See-Thru Cherry Special.


2000 Bozo 17" Fancy Arch Top Left-handed.

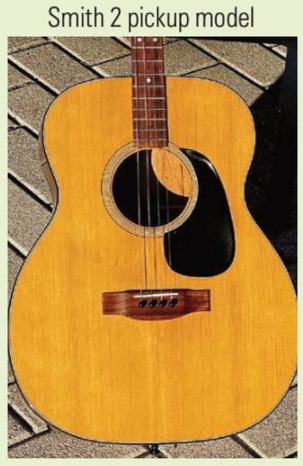

1991 Gudelsky Custom Thin Body Arch Top.

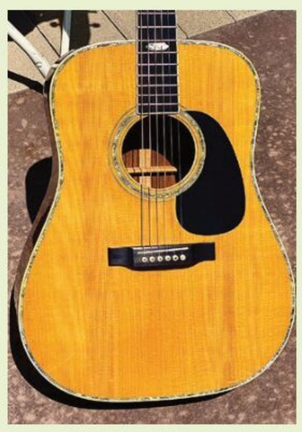

1925 Stromberg Voisinet very fancy w/celluloid fingerboard.

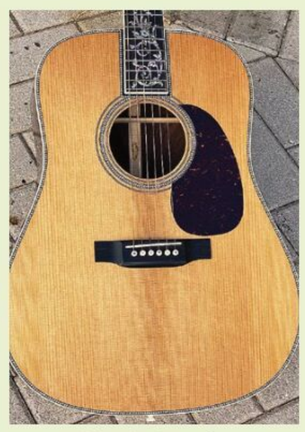

1967 Epiphone FT-90 El Dorado killer player.

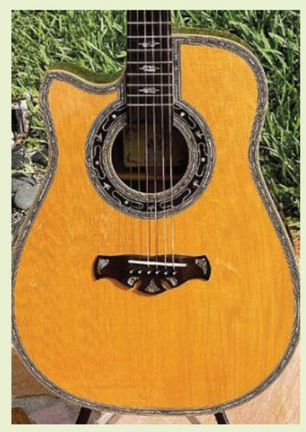

2015 Gibson AJ Fuller 1 of 10 Adirondack Top.


1988 Guild JF-55E-SB Top of the Line Jumbo.

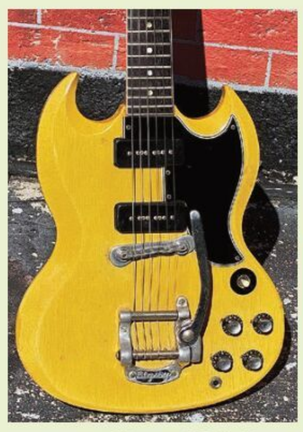

1971 Martin 0-18T Tenor Guitar a rare model.

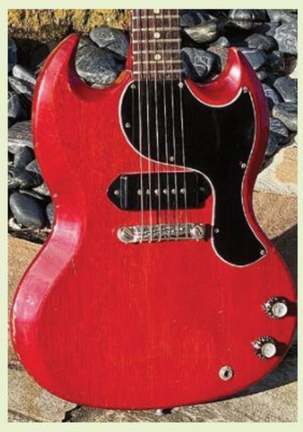

1971 Martin D-41 an aged 50 year old Gem!

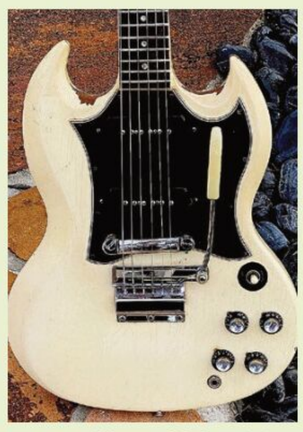

2016 Martin D-28 Custom Shop its Insane!


2000 Bozo Bell Western Flat Tp Left-handed.

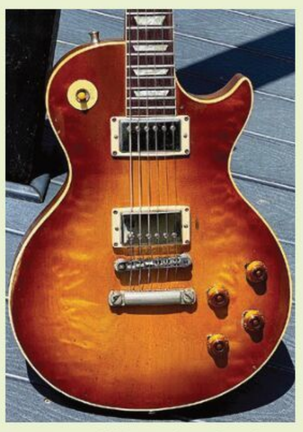

1962 Epiphone SB-432 Wilshire near mint Museum Quality.


1961 Gibson SG "TV finish" Special ultra rare.


1964 Gibson SG Jr. the ultimate slide guitar.


1967 Gibson SG Special rare Polaris White

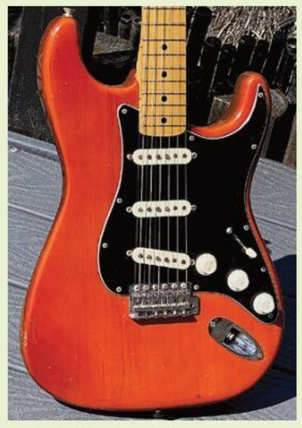

1970 Gibson Les Paul Deluxe 1 of 2 available.


1981 Gibson Les Paul Std.80 Heritage Reissue.

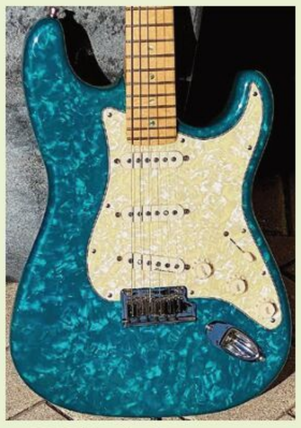

1971 Gibson Les Paul Custom 1-off Factory w/3-pickups


1973 Gibson L-5S solid body w/Quilty Maple.

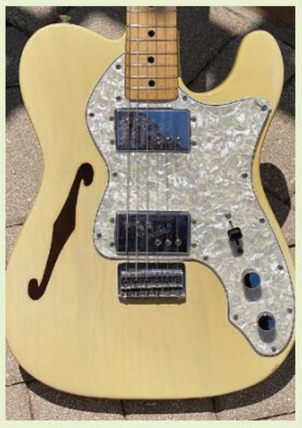

1956 Fender Stratocaster V neck & Bakelite

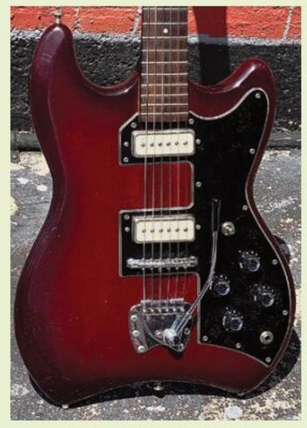

1973 Fender Stratocaster staggered pole p'ups.

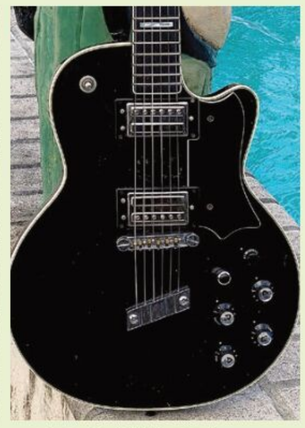

1980 Fender The Strat Lake Placid Blue Minty


2000 Fender Stratocaster Blue Moto # 36 of 60

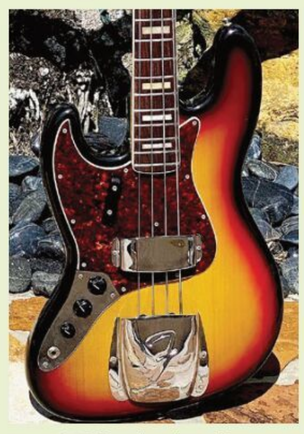

1971 Fender Telecaster Custom exceptional


1972 Fender Telecaster Thinline rare See-Thru Blonde Minty!


1963 Guild S-100 Polara 1st year w/Kickstand.


1974 Guild M-75 factory Black very lightweight.


1969 Fender Precision Bass 1 owner exceptionally clean.


1970 Fender Jazz Bass "Lefty" original & Mint!


1973 Fender Jazz Bass a minty lightweight w/orig. bill of sale.


1977 Fender Jazz Bass just like Geddy Lee.


1977 Rickenbacker 4001 Minty Mapleglo finish.


2001 Larrivee B-02E Acoustic Electric Bass


2011 Pete Hilton 36" Bass like Carl Thompson.


2012 Roscoe Custom SKB 35" 6-string Bass.

Wishbone Ash onstage in the early '70s; Andy Powell (left), Ted Turner, Martin Turner, and Steve Upton.

TWIN-LEAD LOADSTONE

Wishbone Ash's Argus

By Willie G. Moseley

Founded in 1969, Wishbone Ash attained fast fame in the U.K. with its meshing of intricate twin-lead-guitar passages and harmony vocals. With their third album, *Argus*, Andy Powell and Ted Turner (guitars), Martin Turner (bass) and Steve Upton (drums) created an enduring favorite.

Unlike its self-titled debut album and the 1971 follow-up, *Pilgrimage*, the band approached *Argus* with a plan.

"Breaking into the American market was very much in the mind of our manager, Miles Copeland," Powell said. "Being an American living in London, he was fully aware that America was the biggest market at that time, and there was a ceiling to success for a U.K. band in its own country – or even Europe. And we were starving musicians with a hunger to make it."

Those factors spurred them to create *Argus*.

"We'd learned that we needed to play simpler themes and be more powerful, allowing space in our compositions and the music itself," he added. "We needed more-grandiose themes in the lyrics, too, so they became more adventurous."

Argus was also sonically brighter and punchier than its predecessors.

"The equipment was getting better, and we moved from eight tracks to 16," Powell explained. "So, what did we do with all those extra tracks? Double everything! In many cases, it was 'What can we fill them with?' That's what gives the album that extra ooomph."

The introductory "Time

Andy Powell with his iconic Flying V in the early '70s.

Photos courtesy of Andy Powell.

Was" has two parts; the ethereal first movement features Ted Turner on a '50s Gibson J-200 with Powell adding forboding volume swells in the background with a recently acquired '67 Flying V.

"Ted wrote the wistful intro and the rest of us wrote the faster rock section with me contributing to the rhythm structure and twin lead parts, as well as the solos," Powell detailed. "We'd been on tour with The Who and you can plainly hear my love of Townsend's style coming out in the song."

The Flying V was used on every song on *Argus*, according to Powell, while Turner relied primarily on Stratocasters. Martin Turner played a '63 Precision Bass in the studio but his performance basses were usually Gibson Thunderbirds.

The album also featured harmony vocals, including quasi-scat singing on "Sometime World." The lilting "Blowin' Free" would become Powell's favorite track for its arrangement and sound.

"'Blowin' Free' was the most radio-friendly cut on the album and was released as a single," he detailed. "It was very satisfying to complete because we'd been searching quite a while for ways to nail the song. The harmonized vocal approach was influenced by Steve Miller's recordings. We loved his clean recording style and had played on shows with him several times. It also kind of sums up the '70s for me – full of hope and optimism, an open road with the wind in your hair, young love, and thrilling guitars."

While *Argus* wasn't a concept album, many of its songs hinted at a medieval theme, particularly on side two.

"It became a concept album by default and I'm happy about that," Powell said. "But I wouldn't root it into being solely 'medieval.' It did have historical references that seemed to span many centuries – all Brits or Europeans



grow up with a sense of history and old stones surround you in every building. Thousand-year-old Norman churches are in every Btitish village, and castles and cathedrals abound elsewhere. You can never escape the past, and the lyrics were inspired by the Bible, Greek mythology, and themes of endless wars; they speak to the exhaustion of all that."

Argus was released April 28, 1972. Part of its marketing in the American market was an ad in *Rolling Stone* that displayed concert images of Powell and Ted Turner, the headline unabashedly hyping Wishbone Ash as the world's greatest twin-lead-guitar band.

"That was one of Miles' entrepreneurial moves," said Powell. "It wasn't where we were coming from at all. I cringed when I saw that ad, but it probably was responsible for people taking notice. It wasn't our style, but Miles was aware of what it could do for us from a business standpoint."

Powell is particularly fond of *Argus* because it was a dynamic and crucial effort.

"We could see that it was exactly what we needed to take us to our next phase – playing bigger venues, going against bigger acts and winning over their audiences. We were on track to play many places around the world. We knew we had a winner, firing on all cylinders."

In ensuing decades, Wishbone Ash fan polls consistently ranked *Argus* at #1, usually by a wide margin. The album will be 50 years old in 2022.

Powell believes it still resonates "…because it was a definitive statement of a band that knew exactly where it was going and was carving a niche for itself in several ways – twin leads, harmonized vocals, great guitar soloing, melodic songs. But most importantly, it seemed to capture the zeitgeist for rock fans at the time. It sums up that early-'70s musical moment in an almost spiritual way." **VG**







YNGWIE MALMSTEEN

Alcatrazz and the Birth of Bach and Roll

By Wolf Marshall

Los Angeles, 1983. The rock community was a land devastated by the bombast of L.A. metal – Eddie Van Halen, Randy Rhoads, Mötley Crue, Ratt, and their minions. Nothing, however, could prepare its jaded cognoscenti for the appearance of an unlikely Swedish emigre, 19-year-old Yngwie Malmsteen.

Born Lars Johan Yngve Lannerbäck in Stockholm on June 30, 1963, he was the third child in a musical family. Inspired by Jimi Hendrix's showmanship, he was drawn to the "coolness" of the electric guitar. He converted a budget acoustic guitar into an electric with a mail-order pickup, plugged into a tube radio, and began teaching himself at age 7. At 10, he formed his first group, Track on Earth, with a classmate drummer. At 12, he adopted his mother's maiden name, Malmsten (modified to Malmsteen) and took the re-spelled Yngwie (Swedish for "young warrior chief") as his first name. As a teen, he was influenced by classical music, particularly Niccolò Paganini, Antonio Vivaldi, and J.S. Bach, as well as rock guitarist Ritchie Blackmore, developed his formidable technique in lengthy daily playing sessions, and assembled several progressive bands including an early lineup of Rising Force. The band's challenging sounds didn't entice Swedish record executives, but in '82 a demo he recorded four years earlier, "Powerhouse," caught the ear of Shrapnel Records' Mike Varney. Malmsteen came to America in February of '83, Varney securing his work visa and introducing him to Steeler, an undistinguished hard-rock outfit. The routine metal fare of its debut album was elevated by Yngwie's conspicuous musicianship, and continues to impress 40 years later. "Hot on Your Heels" flaunted a fully formed Malmsteen in its instrumental opening – a mini-opus expounding on pyrotechnics pioneered by Van Halen and Rhoads. He cut a bold figure onstage during his Steeler tenure of only four months and nine shows, astonishing resident guitar slingers and raising performance standards overnight in L.A. hot spots like the Country Club, Roxy, and Perkins Palace. After this brief stint, rumors circulated about Malmsteen joining bands fronted by Ronnie Dio, Ozzy Osbourne, and Phil Mogg. Instead, he became a member of Alcatrazz, a hard-rock quintet led by ex-Rainbow/MSG vocalist Graham Bonnet.

No Parole From Rock 'N Roll (1983) marked Malmsteen's first break and record deal, and an auspicious intro to international audiences. Alcatrazz delivered a driving-but-sophisticated assault hoisted by Yngwie's virtuosic, uncompromising presence. Unlike *Steeler*, whose material was written before he was recruited, *No Parole* benefitted from his compositional style. While the first single, "Island in the Sun," bears a pop-metal synth hook a la "Jump," it also boasts a well-conceived solo combining classical melodicism, rock energy, technical flourishes, and a sense of time that trains his virtuosity unerringly at the song.

Every Alcatrazz solo follows similar tenets; Yngwie's harmonic acumen, melodic preferences, and technical prowess dominate the album, even on commercial outings "Jet to Jet" and "Starcarr Lane" but particularly on "Hiroshima, Mon Amour," "Kree Nakoorie," "Big Foot" and "Suffer Me." These pieces embodied minor modality and classical allusions, reflecting the lyrics' serious often darker subjects, that would recur in his future output. Along similar lines is "Incubus," an original instrumental that reconciled occult mythology and medieval/Baroque tendencies. Playing off of light-and-shade timbres, its terraced dynamics with quasi-lute acoustic timbres were contrasted by rock-army orchestration and singing harmony guitars. The album spent seven weeks on the *Billboard* 200, peaked at 128, and remains Alcatrazz's finest moment.

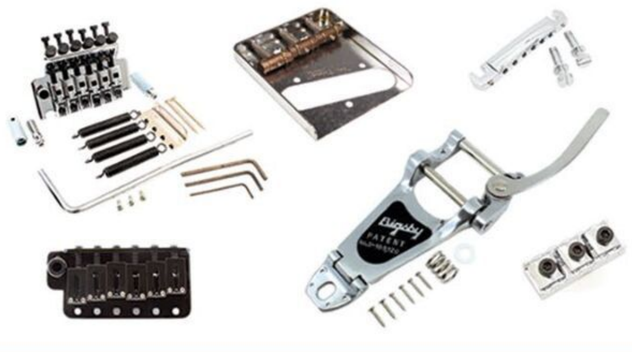
Live Sentence, recorded at Nakano Sun Plaza, Tokyo, on January 28, 1984, was released that July, five months after *Rising Force,* Yngwie's debut as band leader. The album documented the intensity of his performance while a corresponding video captured his hyperkinetic stage antics and unapologetic virtuosity, underscoring his credo that more is more. The setlist gathered songs from *No Parole*, covers of Bonnet's Rainbow and MSG tunes, the Malmsteen instrumentals "Evil Eye," "Guitar Crash" and "Kojo No Tsuki," along with "Something Else," an Eddie Cochran rock-and-roll oldie given a Eurometal treatment.

Live Sentence proved Alcatrazz couldn't confine the restless, volatile Yngwie. In short order, he escaped to become one of the most important instrumentalist/composer/bandleaders (and one of the most influential guitarists) of the era. He achieved his long held goal – to establish the Yngwie brand, in Alcatrazz and, accordingly, wrote the next chapter of the '80s shred saga

Yngwie Malmsteen: Concert Photos/Alamy.

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on solo albums like *Rising Force* and *Trilogy*.
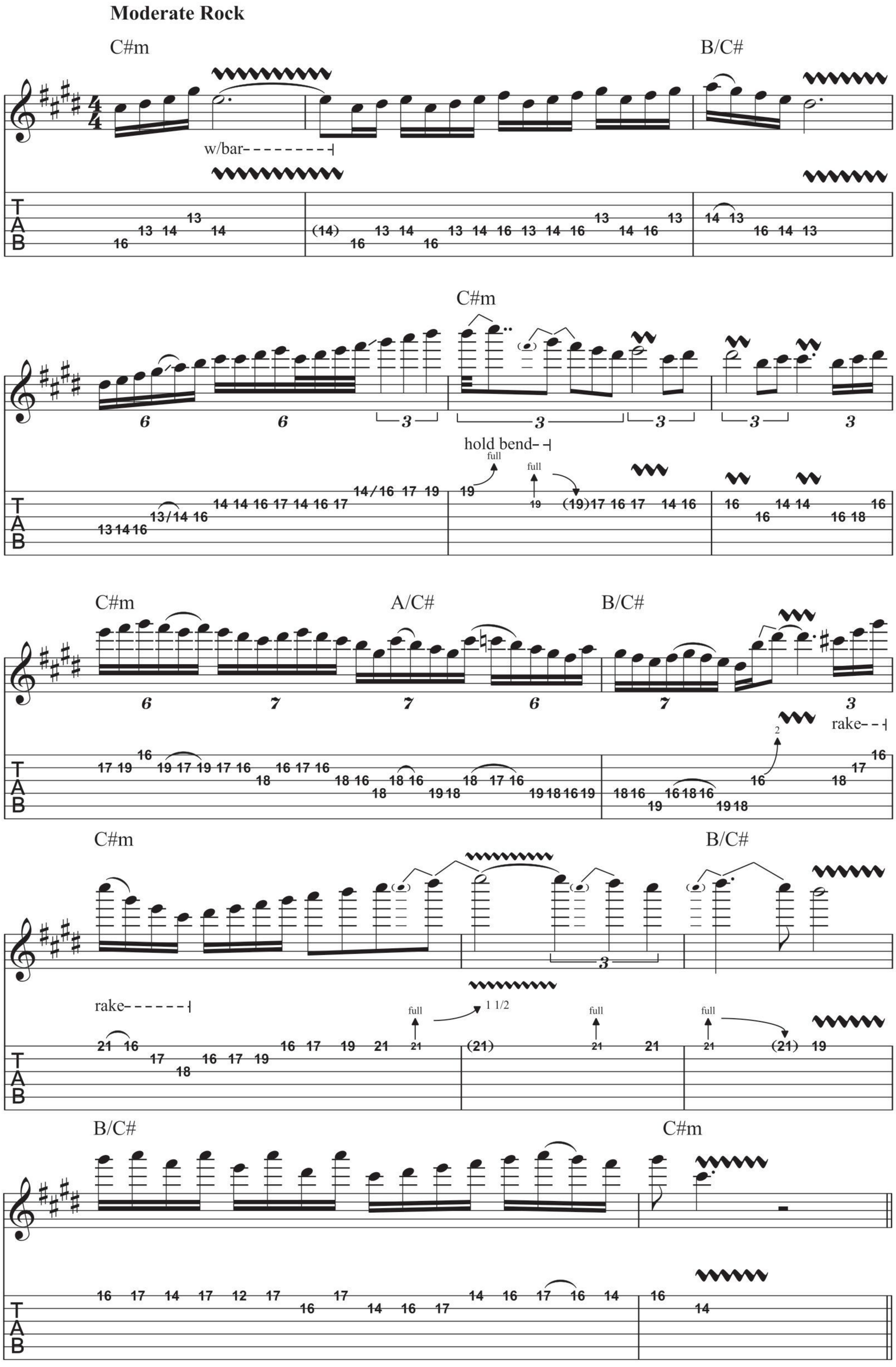
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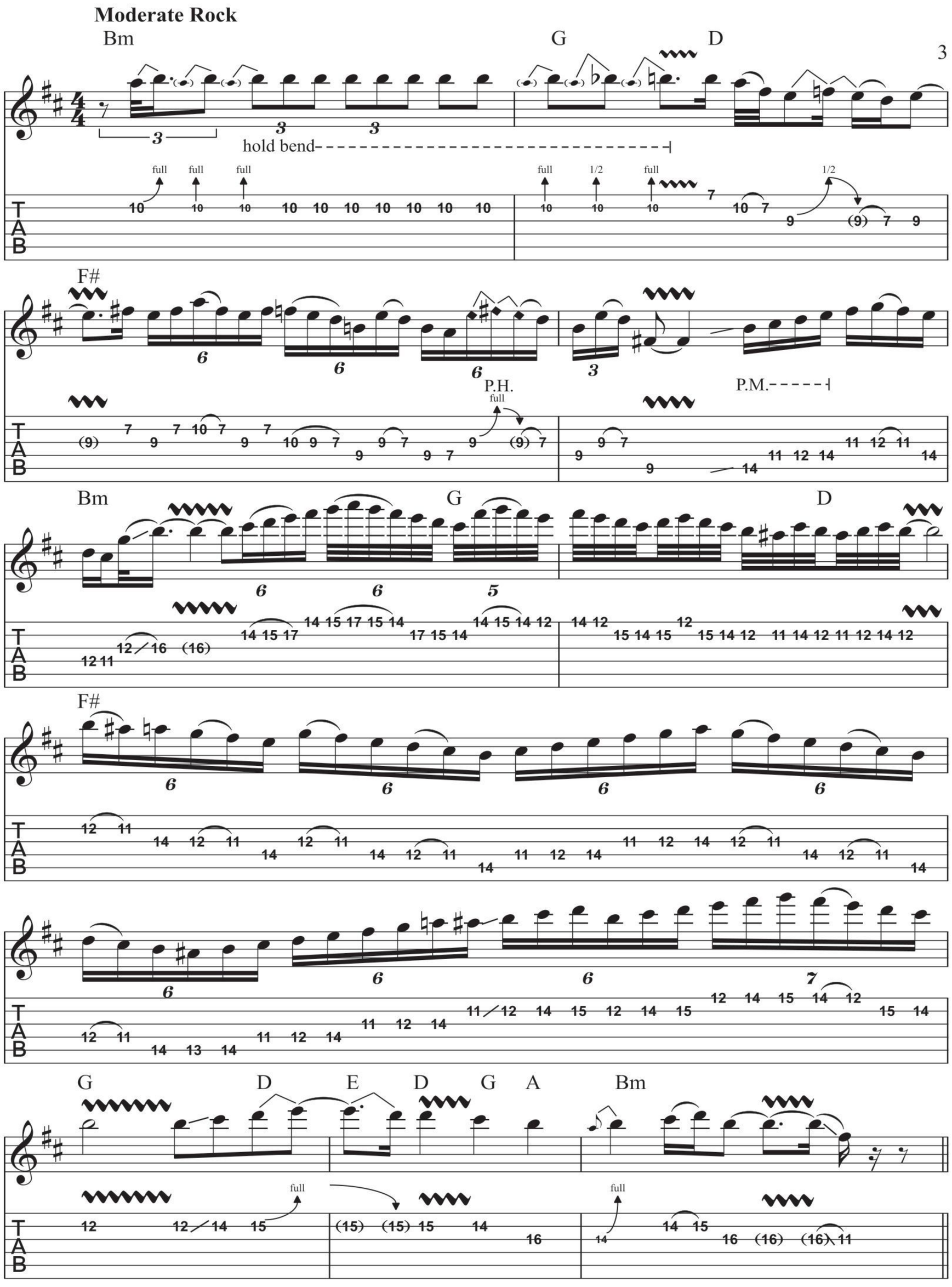
Blackmore and Hendrix are primary guitar influences, however Jimi's stamp is felt more in Yngwie's stagecraft in Alcatrazz and later in "Spasebo Blues" and "Spanish Castle Magic" on *Live in Leningrad* ('89). He also listened to progressive rock bands like Genesis, Jethro Tull, ELP, Alan Parsons, and Kansas. The effect of J.S. Bach is evident in "Coming Bach," which reworks "Bourrée in E Minor," and the underlying baroque impressions in his music. Also noteworthy is his violin-inspired passage work reminiscent of Paganini and Vivaldi. Take a listen to Paganini's "24th Caprice" and Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons: Summer."

STYLE

Dubbed "neoclassical rock" or "Bach and roll," Yngwie's

"Island in the Sun" was Alcatrazz's first single. While the eighth-note-driven power-pop groove was typical of mid-'80s commercial metal, Yngwie's solo at 2:04 was anything but; his lead style – logical, melodious, and mindful of the harmony – was replete with dazzling classical-inspired runs. Check out his rising sequential line in measures 2-3 followed by the blistering step-wise run in 4 and a slower sequence melody in 5-6. The long, complex phrase in 7-8 is characteristic of his improvisations and a distinctive sweep-picked arpeggio occurs in 8-9. The singing high-register string bends in 9-10 are noteworthy as are the snagged string bend (a la Jimi) in 5 and very baroque pedal-point motive, a staple of his style, in 11-12. Bach rock, indeed.



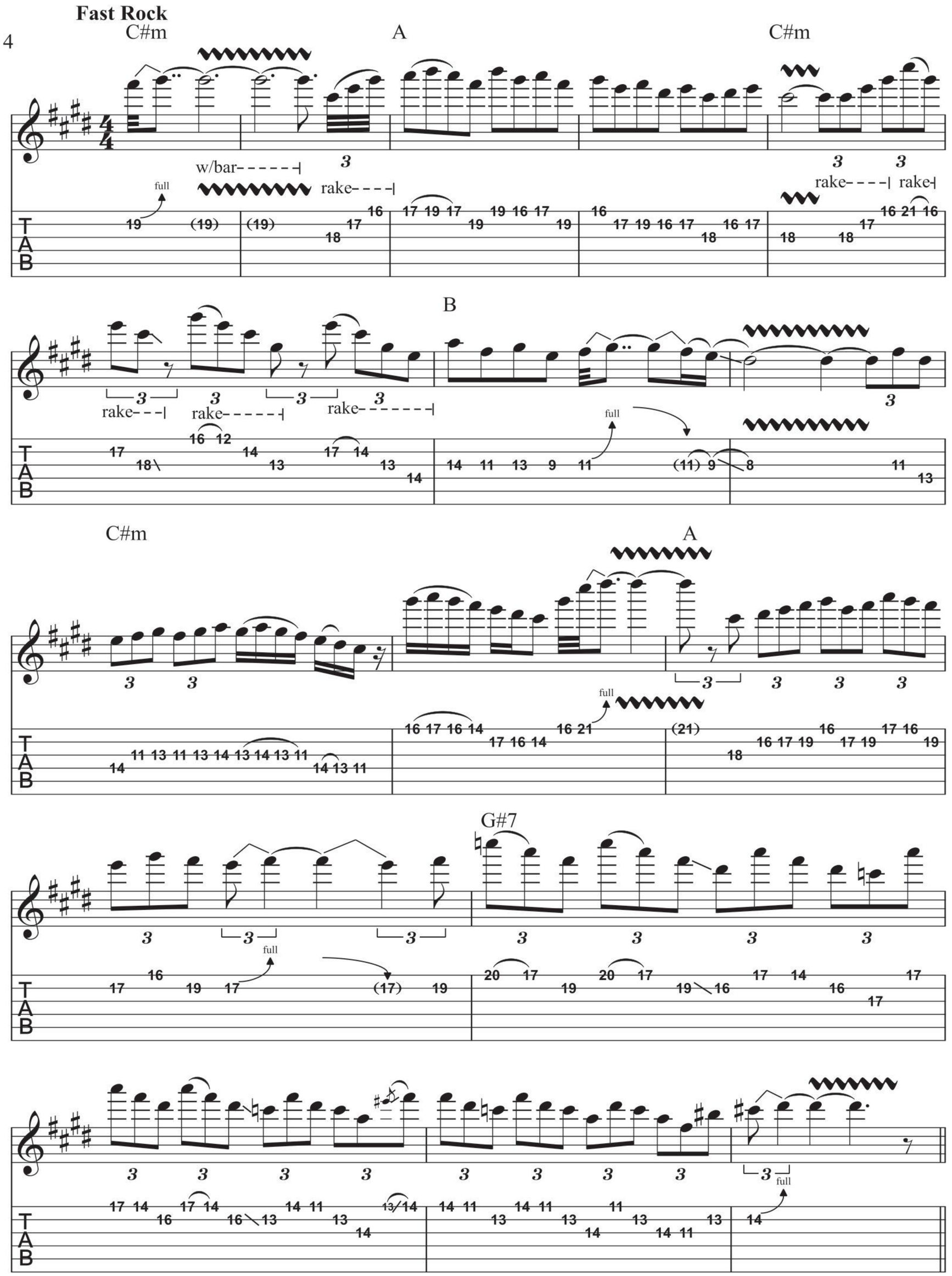


approach owes as much to classical music as metal. Distinctly classical interludes abound in Alcatrazz's "Jet to Jet," "Big Foot," "Too Young to Die, Too Drunk to Live," "Evil Eye," and throughout "Incubus." His solos are improvised but thematic, harnessing phrases based on the lexicon of baroque and classical music taken to a level of velocity and fluidity paralleled only by violin virtuosos and guided by the genre's melody and logic. That separated his brand of shredding from the gymnastics of contemporaries at the outset. "Shredding," previously an amorphous term, took on concise meaning after Yngwie's arrival in '83. He personified shred in myriad forms, taking equal liberties with rock predecessors Blackmore, Van Halen, Rhoads, Uli Roth, and Michael Schenker as well as Bach, Vivaldi and Paganini, and fusioneer Al DiMeola. His single-note soloing is strikingly linear, using the entire fretboard – the command of which seems effortless. Fast, precise alternate-picking technique is a stylistic identifier, but so are his takes on legato phrasing, whammy-bar pitch bends, dives and vibrato, sweep-picked arpeggios and broken chords, bi-dextral tapping and fretting, pinch harmonics, and blues-rock string bends. Few filled as much space in fills and solos, none with such aplomb. Consider an emblematic phrase in "Hiroshima" from 2:26 to 2:42. The percussively-attacked bent-and-held notes that start his solo are reminiscent of Blackmore's aggressive style. They're answered by a double-timed barrage of blues licks that suggest a Van Halen reference, and culminate in his inimitable shredding minor-mode runs. While numerous rock guitarists

"Hiroshima, Mon Amour" was an Alcatrazz favorite, bolstered by an evocative video that highlighted the serious subject matter. Yngwie's solo was integral to the piece with its moody minor-mode lines and thoughtful departures, balancing technique, feel, and timing. This example (2:26) reveals a variety of approaches in his first phrase, from a measured staccato held bend in measures 1-2 and barrage of aggressive blues licks in 3-4 to complex neoclassic lines in 5-6. The mixed-mode phrase in 7-8, freely combining A♯ and A natural in B minor over F♯7 (Phrygian dominant), is emblematic of his blend of harmonic minor and Aeolian elements: "Harmolian" mode, anyone? Exhibiting contrast and cohesion, Malmsteen momentarily puts shredding on hold and paraphrases the song's chorus melody in 9-11.

applied the former and some attempted the latter, none combined them as freely and passionately as Yngwie – or made them rock as hard.

Yngwie's improvisations exude exoticism via uncommon scales like the Harmonic Minor, with its Phrygian Dominant and related modes, diminished arpeggios, pedal-point patterns, and diatonic and chromatic motives, often moved sequentially as melodic groups, characteristic of classical music. These elements are conveyed with high-decibel power ("Play Loud" was his manifesto) and married to the aggression of hard rock, nudging Euro-metal into its next evolutionary phase. Yngwie's finger vibrato is distinct and personal as a fingerprint. He favors a wide and expressive vibrato, which is measured and precise in intonation while frequently exceeding the normal range of blues-rock bending, facilitated by scalloped fingerboards and light strings. A rarely cited trait underscoring his melodic sensibilities is the penchant to segue into slower lofty melodic lines after long, intricate cascades of notes – in essence returning to a theme, a form of recap and contrast within improvisations, heard tellingly in "Hiroshima." The future exhibited on *Rising Force* was glimpsed with "Evil Eye," which repurposed Bach counterpoint of two-part inventions, boasted a thundering harmonic-minor riff punctuated with dramatic fills or pregnant pauses (0:31), exploited zigzagging arpeggio sequences reminiscent of Paganini (0:59), and showcased spectacular improvisations in two solo spots over contrasting grooves at 2:00 and 2:42.



"Jet to Jet" presents a telling sample of Malmsteen's violin-influenced lead style. The fast hard-rock groove and an intricate harmony-guitar interlude leads to his centerpiece solo at 2:14. Note the familiar skipping-thirds sequence in measures 2-4 redolent of classical music, followed by an arpeggio-dominated "broken chord" pattern articulated with emblematic sweep picking in 5-6. His classical ethos is further reinforced by an imitated motive played in two octaves in 9-10, but particularly in the winding arpeggio figures of 13-15. The latter pose sequenced C diminished arpeggios over G♯7 in a manner suggesting a virtuoso violin cadenza. Paganini-isms like this effectively moved metal guitar into new sonic territory.

Yngwie is an accomplished composer and arranger. Augmenting his neoclassical metal inclinations in Alcatrazz are thoughtful touches like harmony-guitar interludes in "Starcarr Lane," "Suffer Me" and "Jet to Jet," strong counter lines that suggest an orchestral conception rather than straight rock-rhythm guitar, and very heavy riffs. The latter are represented by classically-laced metal figures propelling "Hiroshima," "Too Young to Die," "Kree Nakoorie," and "Big Foot," while his Blackmore-inspired dyad/pedal-point patterns dominate "Too Young to Die" and "Jet to Jet."

ESSENTIAL LISTENING

No Parole From Rock 'N Roll and *Live Sentence* are essential. Current editions offer instrumental bonus tracks on the former and additional concert performances on the latter.

ESSENTIAL VIEWING

The entire *Live Sentence* concert is viewable online – an illustrative and humbling must-see.

SOUND

Devoted to Stratocasters since the mid '70s, Malmsteen collected several by '84, largely models made from 1968 to '72 with maple fretboards bearing personal modifications; inspired by Blackmore and a 17th-century lute, he scalloped his boards, having mastered the procedure at age 15 while working in an instrument-repair shop. He re-fretted his Strats with Dunlop Super Jumbos and preferred the sound of only the bridge and neck pickups, which he replaced with DiMarzio FS-1s and later HS-3. He lowered the inoperative middle units into the pickguard and hard-wired the Tone pot in the 10 position. In performance, he switched between the two pickups to accentuate the timbre of a particular phrase.

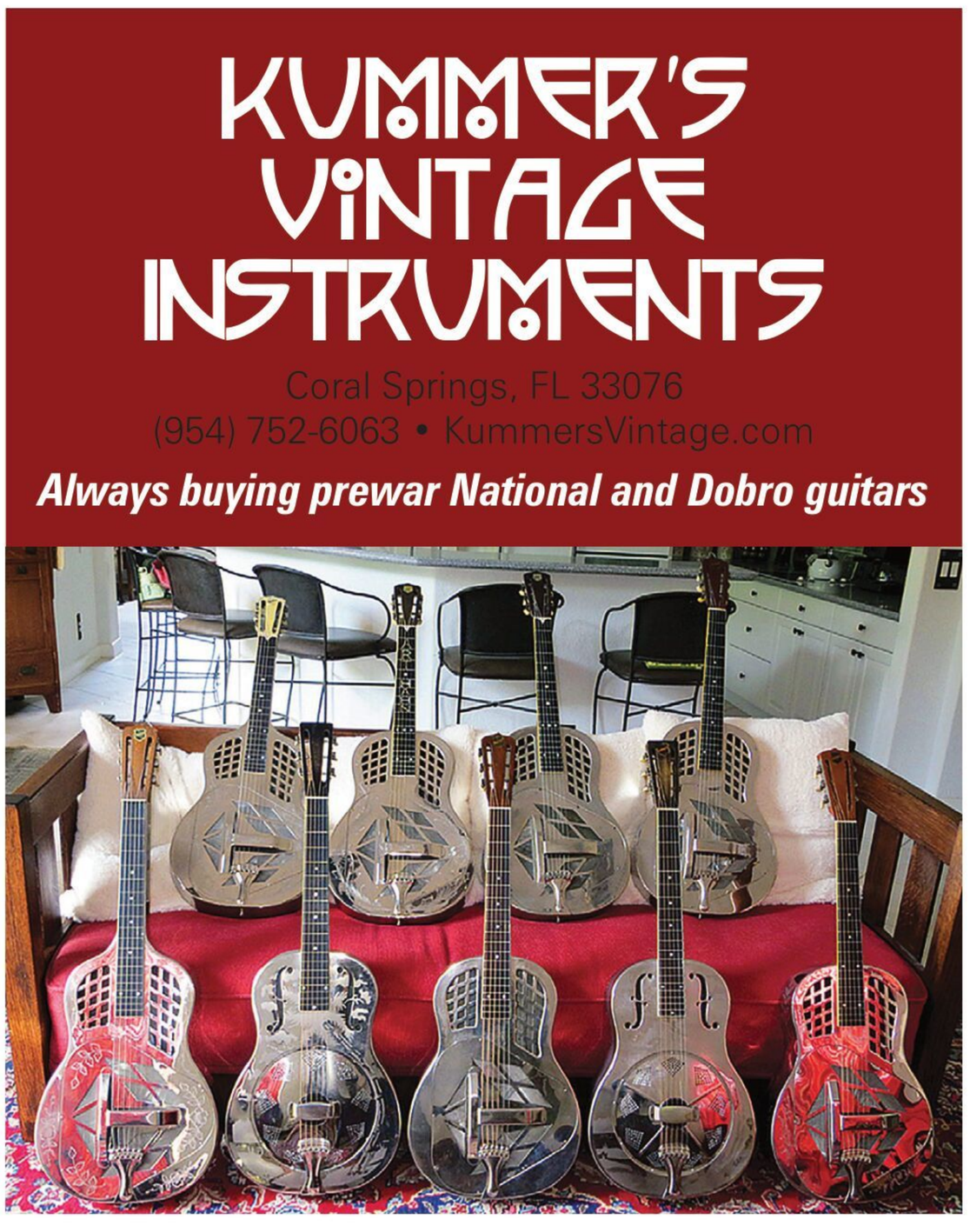
Yngwie favored stock Fender vibrato bridges with four springs and heavier bars. His favorite Alcatrazz Strat was a cream '69 model named "Duck." He also played black right- and left-handed versions made from '69 to '72 models, other cream-colored examples from the same era, a cream '61, sunburst '68, an Aria Flying V with replaced single-coil pickups, and an Aria Les Paul with a locking Kahler vibrato. The V was employed prominently in "Since You've Been Gone." He created a light top/heavy bottom string arrangement from D'Angelico or Ernie Ball sets using .008/.011/.014/.026/.036/ and .046, and favored Fender, D'Angelico, or Dunlop 1.5mm extra-heavy picks. Though he tuned his Strat down a half-step on *Rising Force*, he played in concert tuning with Alcatrazz.

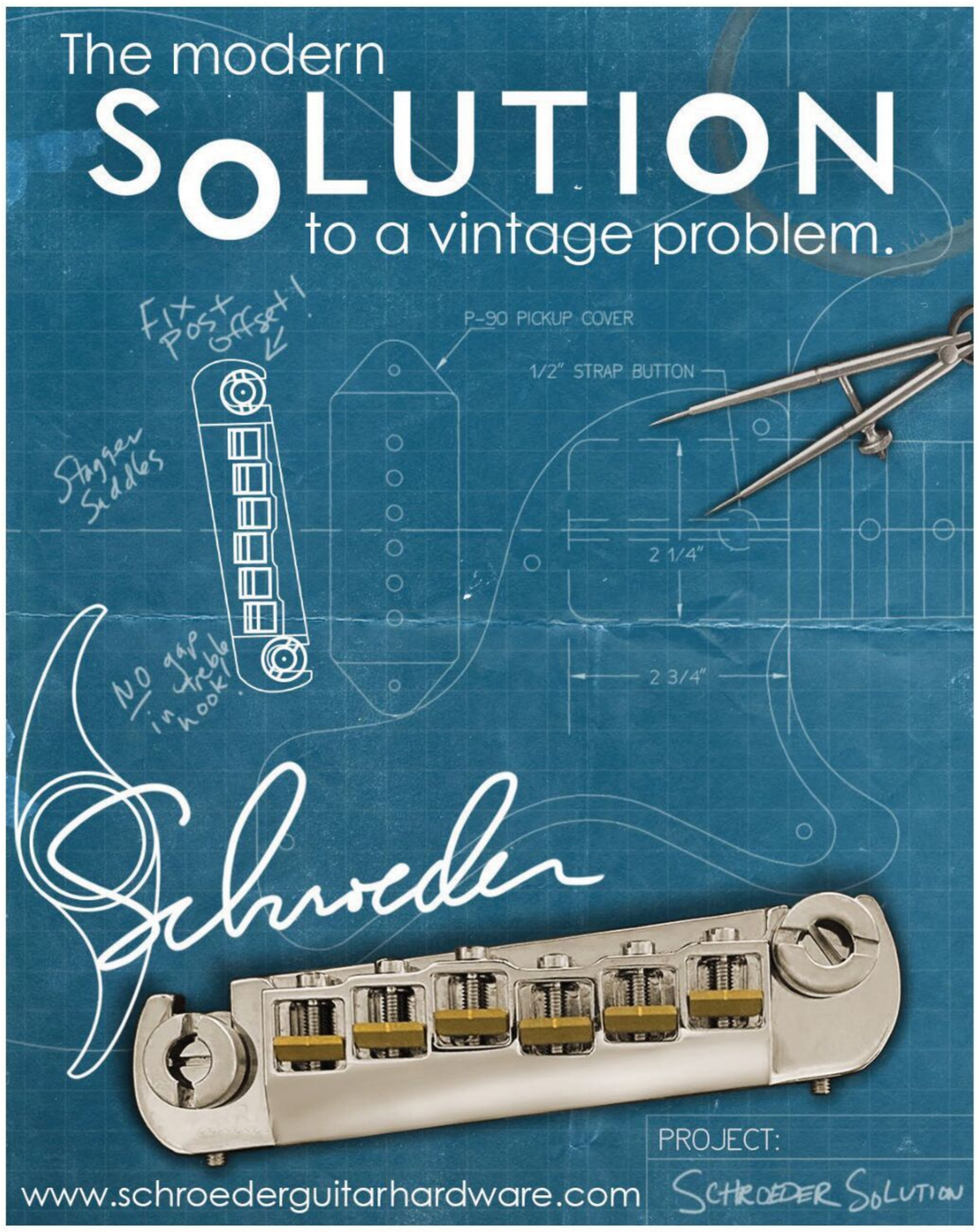
Onstage, Malmsteen roared through three Marshall stacks, preferring 50-watt Mark II non-Master heads from '71/'72 with KT77 power tubes, and six 4x12 cabinets sporting 60-watt Celestion speakers, fed with a signal-splitter box. Legend has it he recorded *No Parole* with a Scholz Rockman then overdubbed his Marshalls. The album's bonus tracks corroborate this – check out the intro of "Starcarr Lane."

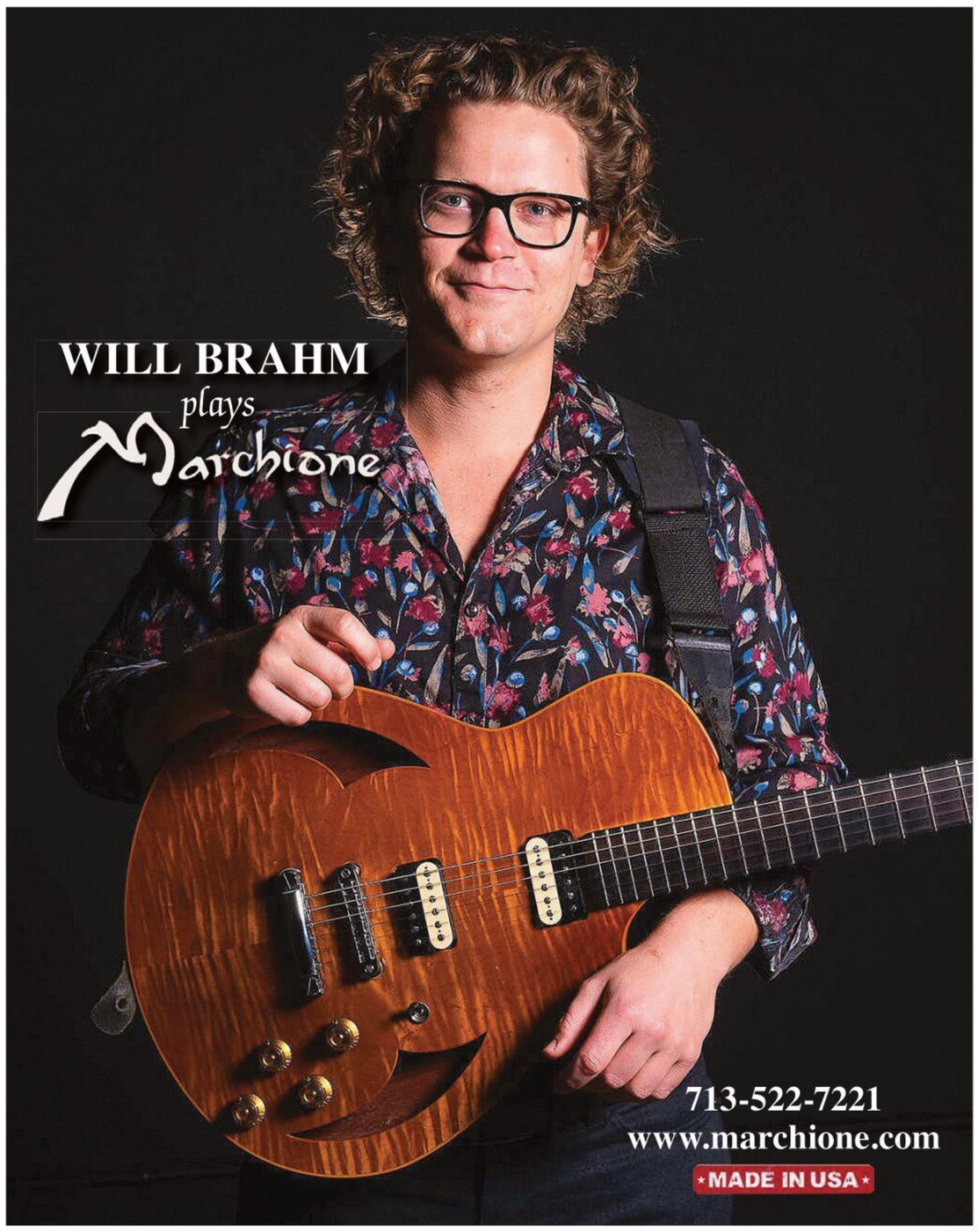
He used effects sparingly; in concert, he relied on a '70s DOD Overdrive Preamp/250, Boss CE-1 chorus, MXR Phase 100, Crybaby wah, Boss Octaver, a Roland DC-10 analog echo, and a Moog Taurus bass pedal. The 250 and CE-1 contributed to his boosted/overdriven (but never fuzzy) live sound.

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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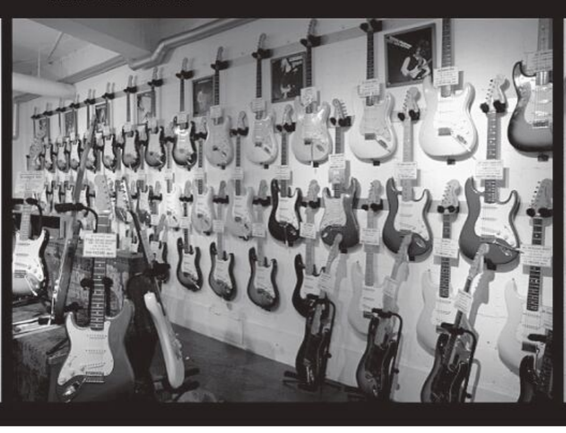
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BRAD GILLIS

PLAYIN' ON

BY WARD MEEKER

A member of the cutting-edge vanguard that made the Floyd Rose locking vibrato a huge part of '80s rock guitar, Brad Gillis famously gashed two classics – a '62 Strat and a '71 Les Paul Custom – with early versions of the device. Guitarheads now might cringe at the thought, but the move cemented his place in the pantheon of axe gods.

Gillis' band, Night Ranger, was a generational highlight of the genre, surging to prominence with a huge video on MTV followed by a full album's worth of megahits. Its new disc, *And The Band Played On* (*ATBPO* for the sake of album art), brings all the hard-rock energy fans expect, with top-shelf melodies, intricate guitar jams, and lyrics worth memorizing.

The band is now in full touring mode, making up for lost time in the wake of cancelled tours in 2020. Our talk with Gillis was wedged between interviewers from Germany, Sweden, and Italy.

The band started writing songs for *ATBPO* right around the time the pandemic was gaining steam. Safe to say you couldn't get together and record?

Right, but Jack (Blades, singer/bassist), Kelly (Keagy, drums), and I had plenty of ideas. After a few Zoom calls, we had the foundation for a new record. We came up with 16 or 17 songs, narrowed it down to a dozen, and started working on arrangements. Everybody has a home studio, so we passed files around and got to work.

It took a little longer than normal, but after five months we finished recording and started mixing with our producer buddy Anthony Focx. He went on to master the record, too.

Would you normally be in a room with Jack and Keri Kelli, hashing-out parts?

Yes, we did the last few records at Jack's house. He had a great studio with all the outboard gear and everything you could imagine

Brad Gillis: Kevin Baldes.



1) This '57 Stratocaster is heard on several tracks from the new Night Ranger album, *ATBPO*. **2)** Gillis found this '59 Strat while playing a gig near his home after an audience member tipped him off to it. **3)** A longtime stage guitar, Gillis' Olympic White '79 Strat has a first-gen Floyd Rose and wireless built into its body. **4)** Gillis is working with Bay Area artist Peter Kellett on a line of aluminum-body guitars like this double-cut.

for amplifiers and guitars. But of course we'd bring our favorite equipment, as well.

Quite a change from the '80s?

For sure. Back then, you'd push hard because of studio-time expense. Jeff Watson and I would sit in our hotel room and try to come up with a great harmonies and solos, then rush in and out of the studio. You didn't get a second chance.

That said, I *did* have fun experimenting on the first three records, especially on the "Sister Christian" solo. I wanted to build my solo using long, sustained notes. I played in the control room with my amplifier in the big room, cranking it loud enough to get a great, natural sustained loop through the system.

In the '80s, we spent a lot of money making records and shooting videos. We can achieve the same results today with home studios, and video costs are lower.

How did songs come together this time?

I brought in a lot of riffs and chord arrangements, and Keri did the same. Jack took a foothold on the lyrics with Kelly, and we'd pass files around, adding individual parts.

The album is full of the high-energy rockers fans expect from Night Ranger, along with a couple mellower turns.

Definitely. The first single, "Breakout," is pure Night Ranger, with slamming guitar harmonies and Jack singing his butt off. Frontiers, our record company, felt that it had the signature Night Ranger sound.

You have to be pleased with the reception it's getting.





B. Gillis with Ozzy Osbourne courtesy of B. Gillis.

After the Beatles appeared on Ed Sullivan, Gillis' parents gave him a Kay Vanguard II as a gift on his eighth birthday. A few years later, he sold it for $25 at a flea market. Fast-forward to 2016. While attending the Marin Guitar Show, he spied one just like it in Gary Wineroth's Guitar Showcase booth. "I asked my sister to text me the family photo of me playing the Kay as a kid. Sure enough, the wear on the knobs and ding on the side was an exact match. Gary had it stowed away for 40-some years. I found my original Kay – and happily purchased it for $300!" Gillis with Ozzy Osbourne (right) in 1982.

It's been exciting to get such great recognition and reviews. We had a lot fun playing "Bring It All Home To Me" live for the first time in Vegas. We'd already done "Breakout" several times live, which comes across very well.

We've enjoyed watching our record moving up the charts worldwide – especially in Europe & Japan.

How did you choose guitars for the album?

I had such a blast with this record because I had the luxury of time; I could record a solo and sleep on it. The next morning, if there was something I wanted to change, I'd go in and change it. Being a vintage-guitar collector able to record at home, I could choose which guitar fit best on a particular song. I had just bought a '52 goldtop and decided to play it on a couple rhythm parts, just to get a different sound. Of course, I used my red '62 Strat on several songs, along with my '71 Les Paul Custom. On one of my favorite songs, "Can't Afford a Hero," I used a '57 Strat running through a '65 Deluxe Reverb to get that classic sound.



Gillis added an original Floyd Rose vibrato to this '85 D'Mini Explorer, perched here atop a '65 Vibro Champ.

Where did you find that guitar?

We were doing a show in Anchorage four or five years ago, and the promoter turned me on to a mom-and-pop guitar store that was closing. I called, and the owner said, "I have a '57 Strat in the rafters here. Do you want to come check it out?" And I said, "*Yeaasss I do* (laughs). What type of condition is it in?" He said, "It's a six or seven, but all-original." And I said, "I'll be over tomorrow."

So I went, and there it was in it original tweed case. It was full of sweat and muck on the body and strings, but it was a diamond in the rough. I knew that once it was polished up it would be gorgeous. And it's *not* a six or seven, it's a 9.8! I set it up and floated the vibrato to move up and down.

I've been lucky to tour the country and connect with people like him in different areas to find vintage guitars. On the road, I go on Craigslist to see if anybody in that town is selling worthwhile vintage pieces. If I find one, I invite them to the show and have them bring the guitar, which I often end up taking home. I got a '59 reissue Les Paul and very cool Gibson Flying V2 that way.

Does it have V-shaped pickups?

It does – the first-version pickups. It's absolutely mint. Sounds great and plays well.

How did you choose amps?

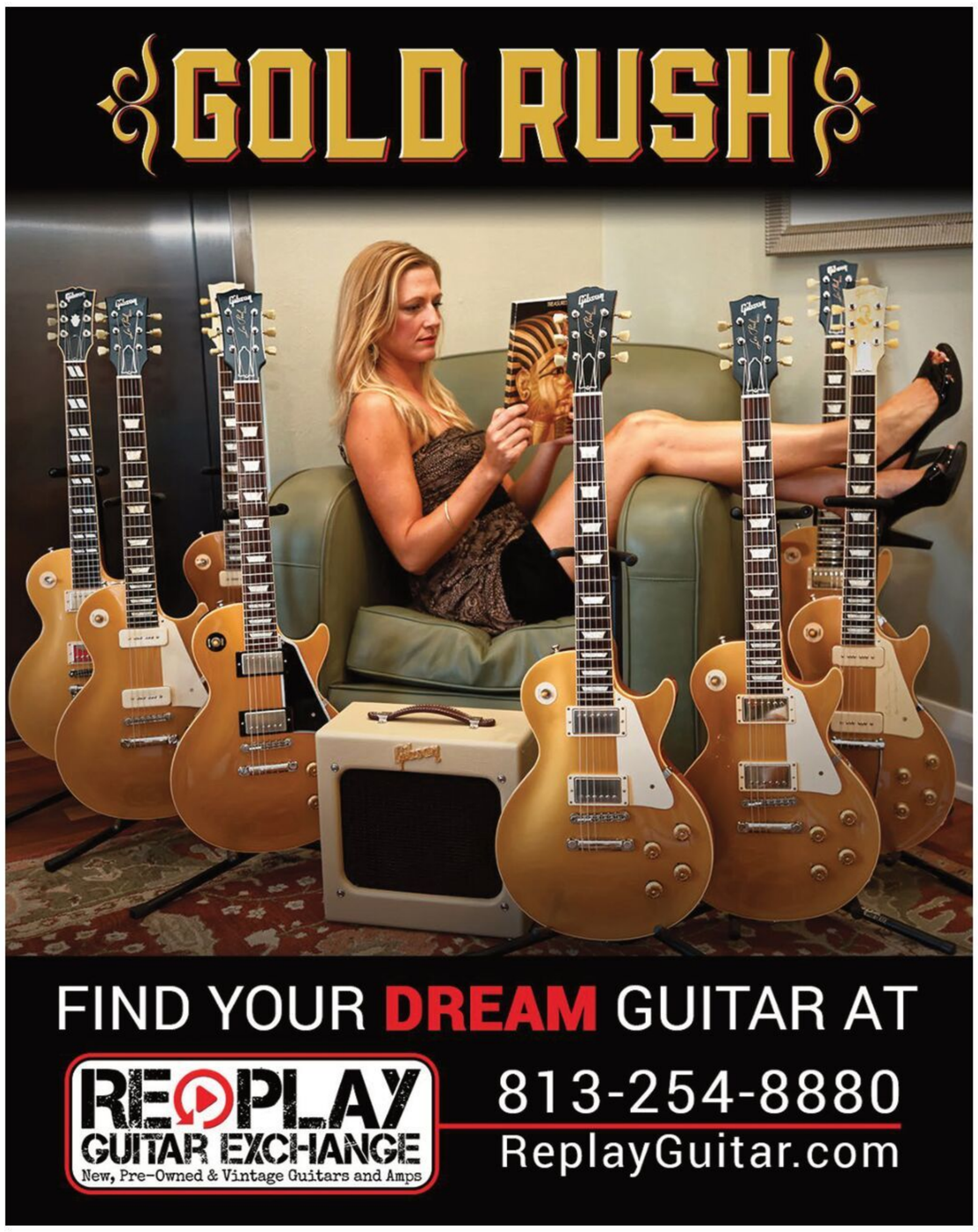
I tried a few – Boogies and Marshalls, blackface Fenders, and I used plug-ins through the computer. I mixed guitar sounds with a Radial Injector rackmount unit with one input and six outputs. I might send one output to an amplifier and speaker cab, another direct, and another through my Boss GS-10, which has great sounds.

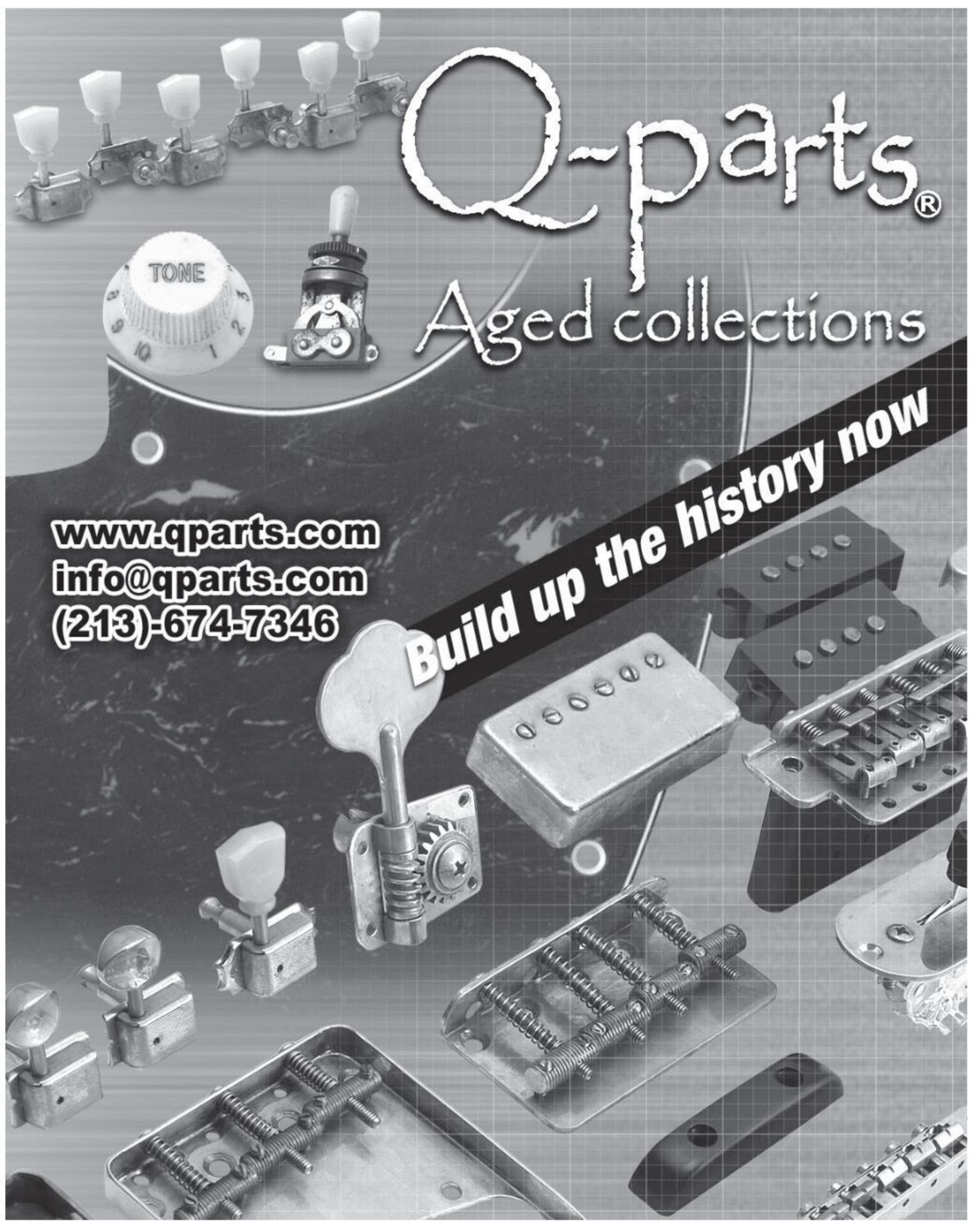
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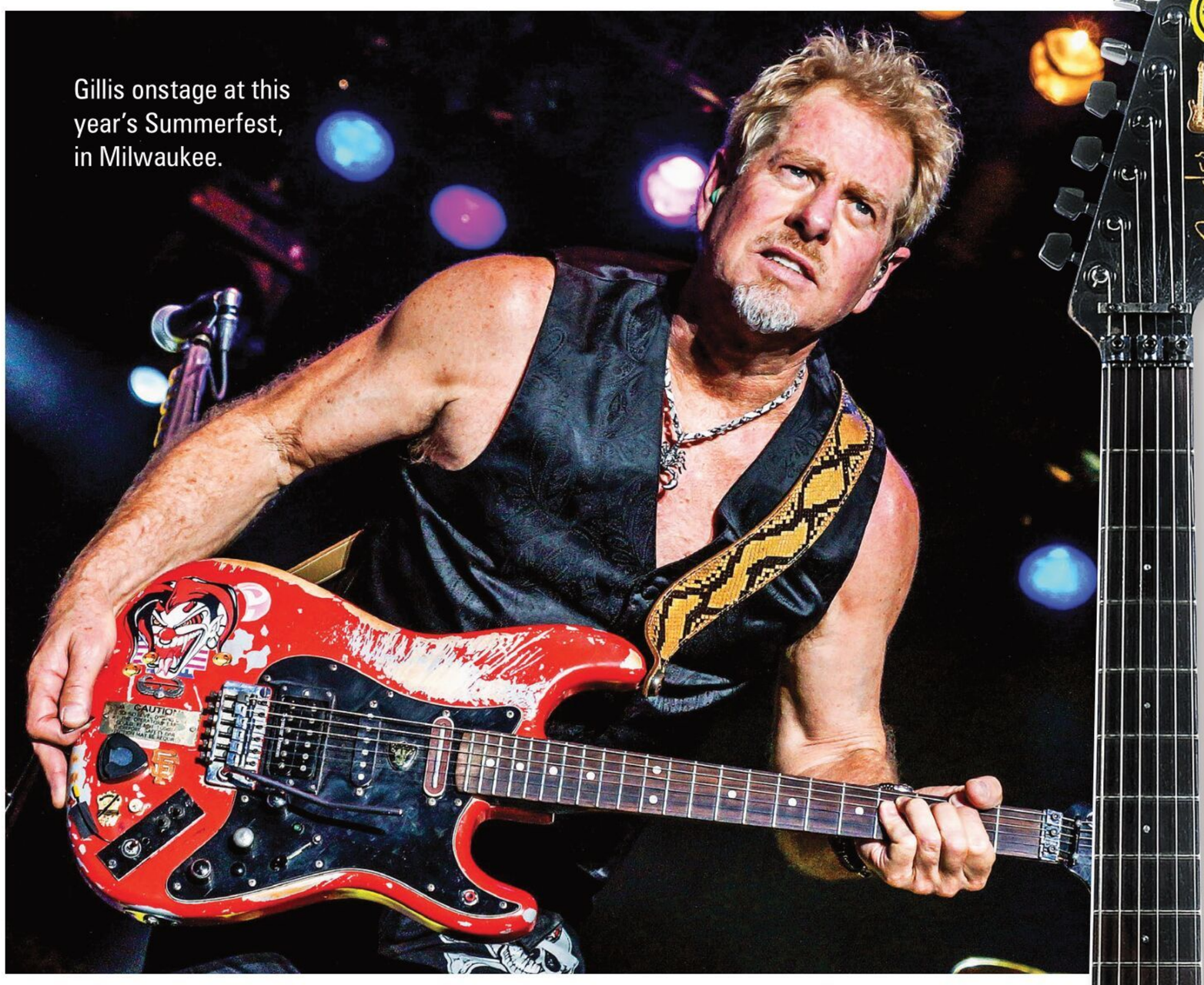
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Gillis onstage at this year's Summerfest, in Milwaukee.

get the lead-guitar harmony sound at the front of "Breakout," I ran a Boogie head through a Marshall cab with my Les Paul Custom. Every song was unique, and again, I had the luxury of time to fiddle around and get the sounds I wanted.

Did you talk with Keri about the guitars and amps he was using, and tweak your setup accordingly?

Most the time, for harmonies I'd use my Strat and he'd use his goldtop. Keri is such a great player and he came up with amazing solos, which was a kick in the butt. A little competition puts a fire under your ass.

How did you connect with him?

We brought Keri to fill in on a few shows years back, when Joel Hoekstra was off doing Trans Siberian Orchestra. He did such a great job that when Joel left to join Whitesnake, he was a natural for Night Ranger.

When Keri first started, he played every solo perfectly... *but* he wasn't doing Jeff Watson's eight-finger tapping technique for the lead solo in "(You Can Still) Rock in America." We were getting ready to take a two-week break from the road one day and I asked him, "How cool would it be if you were to learn the eight-finger technique?" He looked at me and smiled, and said, "Yeah, okay." Two weeks later at sound check, he came up to me smiling and said, "Hey, let's do 'Rock In America.'" Sure enough, we got to the solo and he turns toward me, playing the eight-finger bit. I was *blown away.* Thanks, Keri!

What will guitar-heads see, comparing and contrasting you and Keri?

Two different styles, much like Joel and me, or Jeff and me. Those guys play with a more-intricate speed feel, and I play with more of a tasty blues feel with the whammy bar. The contrasts works well with Night Ranger. We bring it together in songs like "Don't Tell Me You Love Me," "Eddie's Comin' Out Tonight," and "Touch of Madness."

Do you have a few personal favorites from the band's catalog?

BRAD GILLIS' '62 STRAT

Seen far and wide on tour with Ozzy Osbourne in the early '80s and on most Night Ranger albums, videos, and tours until its retirement in the late '90s, Brad Gillis' '62 Stratocaster is one of the highest-profile axes in hard rock. Here are its most notable elements.

- The third Floyd Rose vibrato unit, made in Rose's garage.
- Notched on/off switch activates Shure wireless transmitter mounted in the control cavity.
- Toggle switches; one once activated a Sustainiac that was built into the guitar.
- Pushbutton for wireless effects switching. "My brother designed a transmitter where I was able to switch effects through my guitar. I could be at the opposite side of the stage, hit the button, and turn on my lead channel or activate a chorus or delay."
- The third button has been converted to a light, and the wireless switching removed. "The transmitter was too close to the pickup and if I wasn't playing, it would make a bunch of noise when pushed."
- The neck was painted black in 1981 with an original Fender logo and a 22nd fret was added.
- Custom Gotoh tuners
- Recessed Jim Dunlop strap locks
- Miscellaneous stickers and (in Gillis' words) "dumb stuff."
- Gillis' playing style and use of Dunlop stainless steel picks helped create noticeable marks near the neck/body joint.
- Buckle wear on the back is drastic. In one section is a groove carved 1/4" deep.



B. Gillis Summerfest: Eddy Schneider.



5) Gillis upped the playability on this '52 goldtop by installing a MojoAxe bridge. **6)** Gillis loves the sustain he gets from this '78 Gibson ES-350. "Cranked up, it reminds me of Ted Nugent's Byrdland when he gets that big, woody sound." **7)** Gillis has had this '62 J-45 Adjustable for nearly a decade. **8)** This '96 Gibson Custom Shop Elvis Presley signature J-200 is one of 250 made.

I still really enjoy playing "Touch of Madness," "Rumors in the Air," and "Eddie's Comin' Out Tonight." We have the benefit of choosing songs from a 40-year career, and always play the big hits fans love to hear. But we also trade-out some songs to keep it exciting and the audience engaged. When you play a town twice in a year, you don't want to repeat the same set.

You've expanded your guitar collection quite a bit since we talked more than 10 years ago. What are some of the highlight pieces in your collection now?

Well, that '52 goldtop might be the best, but others include a Fender Custom Shop Marilyn Monroe Playboy Strat and a '62 sunburst Strat. I bought all three at Guitar Showcase, in San Jose. Fender made 175 Playboy Strats; my buddy, Peter Kellett, has one of the prototypes that I borrowed and played for a while. When I found one for sale, I jumped on it. I like unusual and cool guitars, and mostly buy them only if they're close to mint condition.

You're working on new guitars with Peter, who's known in the vintage-guitar community for making anodized-aluminum Tele and Strat bodies in the '90s.

Yes, Peter has sold Fender hundreds of anodized pickguards. He also helped create their Harley-Davidson guitar. In 1994, Peter developed his own line of custom anodized aluminum artwork for guitars. Today, we're reviving the Kellett line for market. The collection includes Strats with f holes, Les Pauls, and Tele bodies. We filled a few of the hollowbody models with spray-foam insulation to solidify the sound. At Peter's house, we plugged in a dozen of these guitars to see how they fared. We ran them through Marshalls at high volume and discovered some had their own unique sound.

Peter got his start anodizing parts for the Patriot missile, and has an anodized American flag and NASA logo on the Mars Rover.



Gillis has a handful of Fenders in Antigua finish. This '79 Jazz Bass is the most-recent addition.

So not only is he nationwide, he's *intergalactic* (laughs).

We're going to start marketing them soon.

You've recently acquired three vintage sunburst Strats – two two-tones and one three-tone.

I've got three years covered; the '57 and '58 are two-tone with maple necks, the '59 is a three-tone with a rosewood board and is absolutely mint.

What's the story with the Elvis Presley Gibson Jumbo?

That's a re-creation Gibson made in tribute to a guitar Elvis used back in the day. They made 250 of them. I got it years back from a buddy who would find guitars and call when he got something rare and eclectic. When that came out, I jumped on it right away. It's absolutely mint and sounds great. It's one of the staples in my collection.

What's the story with the Olympic White Strat with the Oakland Raiders sticker?

That's a '79 I did a number on (laughs). I added an original Floyd Rose, a built-in wireless, and a 22nd fret. It's a great player with a fat neck; great as a live guitar when I play locally. I don't take it on the road.

Which guitars *do* go on the road with you?

My road guitars are the replicas of my red '62 Strat and a couple signature copies that Fernandes built in the '80s.

All of my live guitars have built-in wireless transmitters, which I've been using for decades. I never liked having a cord coming out of my guitar or wearing a transmitter on my strap. Early on in Night Ranger, I'd have my brother, an electronics whiz, rout the guitar bodies and put in Nady transmitters. We're doing the same with Shure wireless units now and they sound a lot more true.

Which acoustic did you use on the album?

I used a Taylor 816ce. I have quite a few custom Taylors that sound amazing whether I mic it up or use their internal pickup. Mixing them together gives a *fantastic* sound.

What are some of your favorite amps?

I have an old red 800 Marshall that has that "brown sound" – smooth and fat and hairy. I've had that amp for decades. My collection of Fender amps has grown, too. My favorite is a '59 Bassman that has a natural compression that sounds awesome. I found that one locally in the Bay Area quite a few years back.

You have a couple records in the works outside of Night Ranger.

I just finished my solo record with Gary Moon singing on most of it and Derek Sherinian on keyboards. I concentrated on strong songs and lyrics with Gary's vocals.

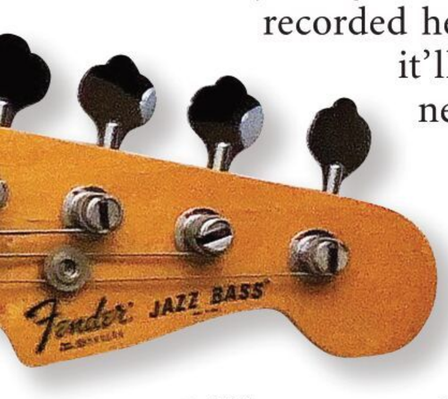
Gary jumped into Night Ranger in the early '90s, when Jack joined The Damn Yankees with Tommy Shaw and Ted Nugent. We recorded *Feeding Off the Mojo* in '95 that featured Gary's fantastic, original-sounding voice.

I hit him up a few years back for my solo project. We'd work intently in my home studio to get the best out of his vocals. He kicks ass; when he sings low, he's got girth, and when he screams, you can't



Gillis in his home studio with his '62 Strat and early-'70s Les Paul Custom, both of which have been integral to his stage and studio work since before he rose to fame with Ozzy Osbourne and Night Ranger. Both are embedded with wireless transmitters. The red JCM 800, tweed Bassman, and blackface Vibrolux are among his current favorite amps.

compare him to anyone. He's one of those voices that stands alone. Almost everything, including drums, was recorded here in my house and it'll be released in the next few months.



I also did an album for Frontier Records with Alessandro Del Vecchio producing and playing keyboards, Billy Sheehan playing bass, Renan Zonta on lead vocals, and David Huff on drums. It's pretty heavy in a few sections, but very melodic.

For more than 20 years, you've been creating music for video games and TV sports programming.

Yes, I'm still busy with TV music on the side. I've done more than 400 tracks for ESPN and Fox Sports. I also did a flamenco track for "The Price is Right." TV has been a fun and lucrative side gig. Lately, though, the focus is Night Ranger. I've also been remodeling my house. I'm building a soundproof studio that's almost ready to paint, then carpet. That's been a major project the last few months. **VG**

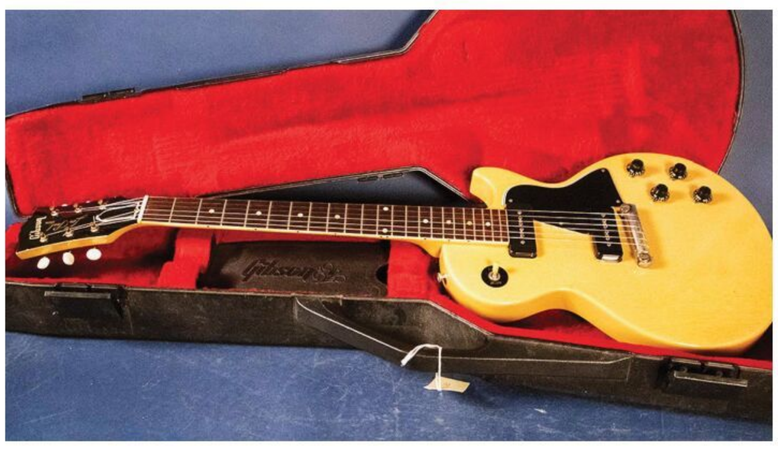




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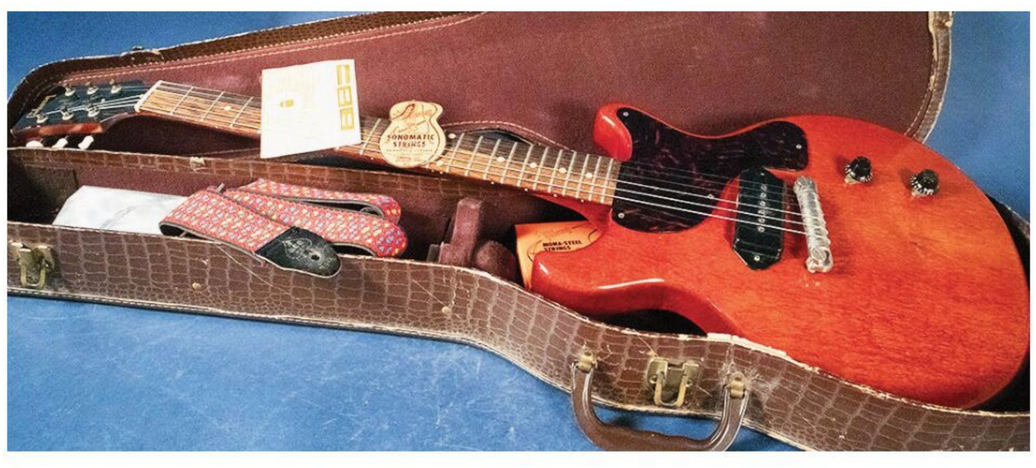
Epic Guitar Romances

1956 Gibson Les Paul Special
Fussy customers rejoice! This one has, sadly, seen no gigs. Your eagle eye will trigger a smile upon inspection. First spotted by us years ago. If you ever wanna sell it we'd pay top dollar. Turns out he had a '50s Cadillac to restore. So it goes. Matching TV Model amp included. **$18,500**

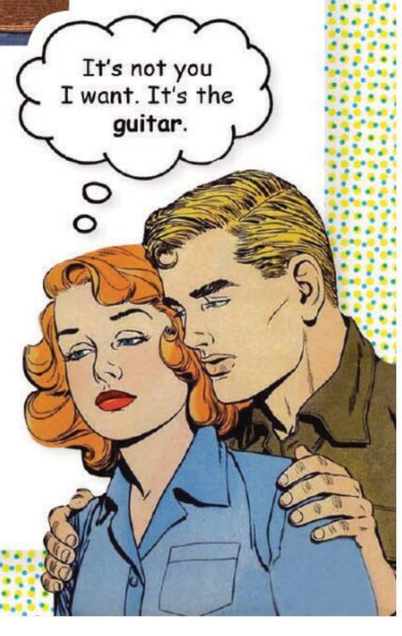




1957 Gibson Les Paul TV Junior
Now, this one did see gigs but the bridge is straight, no cracks, fresh frets (you're welcome). A monster player with original case and strap. Seller needed a pickup truck. **$16,000**



1959 Gibson Les Paul Junior
Hang tags and matching Gibson amp with cover. Not mint but...hang tags! Do you sense a pattern here? Seller needed a garage. **Just in, call for price.**



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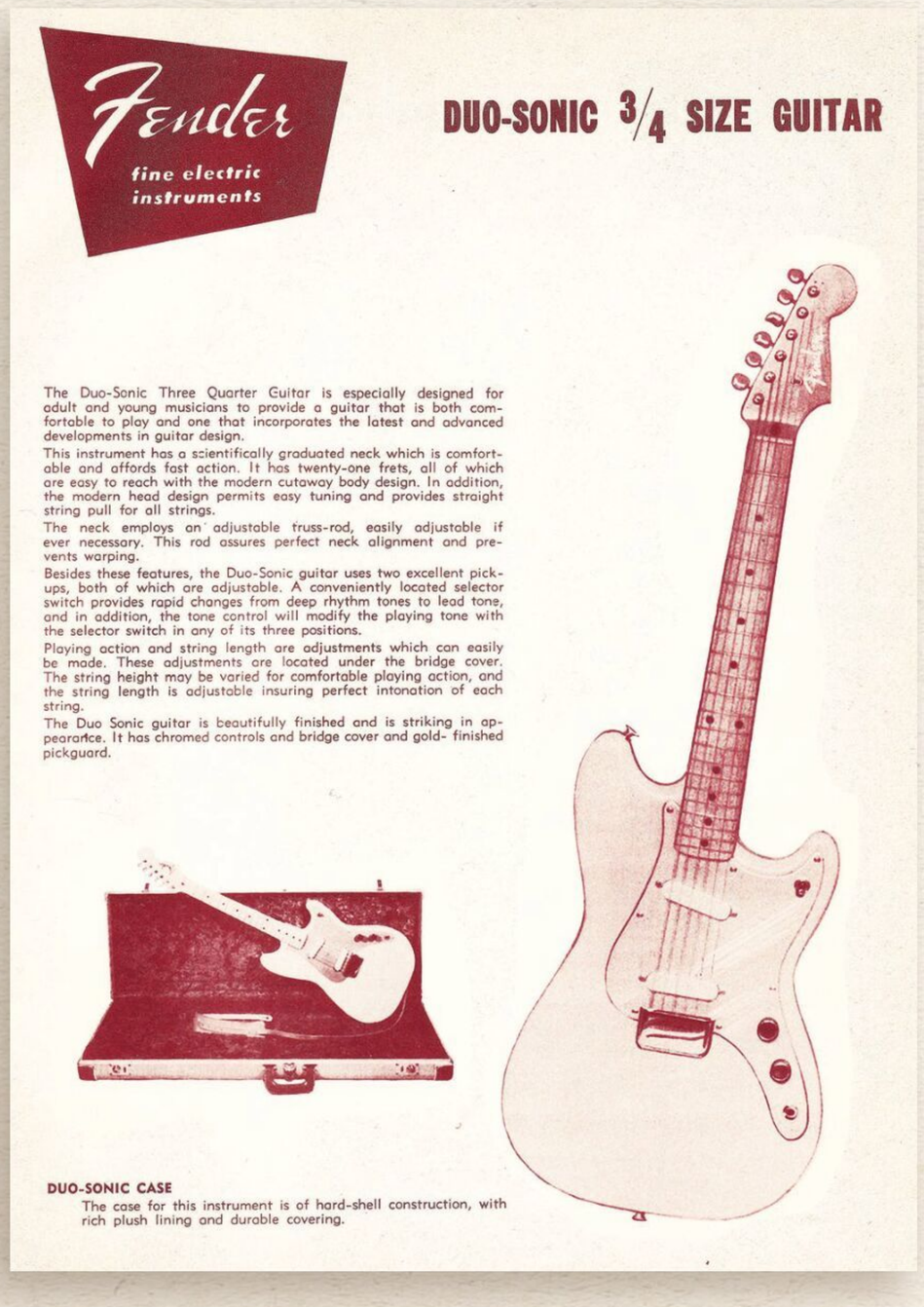
Fender's Musicmaster and Duo-Sonic

BY TERRY FOSTER AND TIM PERSHING



Often forgotten amongst Fender's many classics, the Musicmaster and Duo-Sonic were conceived to capitalize on teenagers taking up the guitar in droves as Bill Haley and the Comets' "Rock Around the Clock" rode the Billboard charts for 10 weeks in the summer of 1955.

Fender's Sales division was acutely aware that nobody would be using a Ch ampion lap steel to emulate Danny Cedrone's guitar solo, so it asked president Leo Fender – known for his ability to devise a new product in as little as three months – to round out their Spanish-guitar offering with two beginner models. Leo responded, and the first run of single-pickup Musicmasters was ready in early May of 1956.



Dubbed "¾ instruments," Musicmasters had much shorter scales and other features to attract a younger, more-frugal student player. Today, collectors are intrigued by these little guitars because they were made with the same care as their siblings even if, compared to the Stratocaster, they were an evolutionary step backward. Here's a year-by-year look at their history.

1956

Production began in April on the single-pickup Musicmaster. Sales manager Don Randall chose the name because he thought it "sounded kind of cute" and fit with the Stringmaster and Bandmaster monikers. Early examples differed in several ways, including having slightly thicker bodies made of ash, and some have areas that were hand-chiseled to fix mistakes in the initial tooling. Pickguards were aluminum, which may have been chosen for its durability, but ironically, the black paint Fender applied did not wear well. So after the initial run, guards were made of plastic.

To compensate for the first-run missteps, by May, the guitars were being made with the more-familiar '50s appointments—one-piece, 21-fret, bolt-on maple neck with 22½" scale and a nut width of 1⅝". Like other Fender necks of the era, the truss rod was installed through a rout in the back of the neck, and a walnut "skunk stripe" filled the channel. And, Fender's ¾ neck profiles mirrored the chunky V shapes of the Telecaster, Esquire, and Strat of the era, as well as the standard narrow fret wire.

The ¾ guitars also had the exact headstock dimensions of the Strat, with a single butterfly



1958 Duo-Sonic with anodized aluminum pickguard.

Close on the heels of the Musicmaster, the Duo-Sonic first appeared in the 1956 dealer spec sheet.

string retainer and six-on-a-side "single-line" Kluson Deluxe tuning gears with white plastic buttons. The earliest examples (March through June of '56) were fitted with the "no-line" Kluson machine heads. A silver "spaghetti" logo decal was affixed to the headstock of the Musicmaster, while the later Duo-Sonic would get a gold logo. The model name appeared under the logo, slightly to the right, in small upper-case letters framed in quotation marks.

Bodies were solid poplar or similar wood, usually in two or more laminated pieces, always routed for two pickups (regardless of final configuration). These were finished in the beige Desert Sand, as used on many Fender steel guitars. And because they were not sealed with a clear coat of lacquer, they were less prone to yellowing compared to other Fenders of the era.

Each Musicmaster had a small, rectangular, chrome-plated metal bridge. Strings were installed from the top, and rested on three adjustable steel saddles (same found on Teles and Esquires) and topped by a removable chrome-plated bridge cover. A gold-anodized aluminum pickguard/control plate replaced the black-painted guards; this harnessed the Volume and Tone potentiometers, the 1/4" jack, and the angled neck pickup (on the Duo-Sonic, this plate also housed a bridge pickup and three-way toggle on the upper treble bout). The pickups (also used on the Champ steel) were black-bobbin single-coils with polepieces milled flat. The control panel was finished with chrome barrel knobs, as seen on all Fender guitars except the Champ and Strat.

The first known production run of Duo-Sonics began in June.

1958

Throughout '58, Musicmaster and Duo-Sonic necks gradually became narrower at the nut until they reached the "A width" of 1 1/2". The saddles became threaded, a clear lacquer made the anodized finish more durable on the pickguard, and Fender offered a "utility case" for $10 less than the standard hardshell.

1959

In the late spring, maple necks on all Fender guitars were fitted with a slab (milled flat on the bottom) rosewood fretboard and clay-dot position markers. The truss could be installed through the top of the neck prior to gluing the fretboard, making it unnecessary to route the back.

At the same time, the standard color was changed from Desert Sand to a darker tan with a pinkish hue, the name of which was never heavily promoted by Fender. Also, the body routing was altered slightly (a hump appeared in the control cavity) and four more screws were added to secure the pickguard. The metal guard was replaced with cream-colored single-ply plastic with beveled edges with a thin aluminum shield on its bottom to guard the pickup assembly against electronic interference and simplify grounding. The white plastic pickup covers were changed to a dark brown, a color used exclusively on Musicmasters and Duo-Sonics.





1957 Musicmaster with special-order black finish and a '58 with anodized pickguard.

Guitar images courtesy of George Gruhn. Catalog images courtesy of Terry Foster.

1961

A letter sent to dealers in July announced that Musicmasters and Duo-Sonics would be finished in sunburst only. This apparently was a request from dealers, who perhaps believed it'd be easier to up-sell or transition a customer to a Jazzmaster or Stratocaster if their little brothers looked a little more like them. However, sunburst on the 3/4 guitars was different in that it was yellow in the middle and transitioned to red, then maroon with no black on the outer edge. And it was fairly opaque compared to the standard Fender sunburst of the time. Most (if not all) of the early sunburst 3/4 guitars were sprayed over a tan finish, suggesting leftover paint was used as an undercoat. These were fitted with a white one-piece plastic pickguard with beveled edges, and the same brown pickup covers.

1962

In mid '62, the slab rosewood fretboard was replaced by a curved, veneer rosewood that became thinner as the year passed.

1963

In '63, Fender began making four variants of 3/4 guitar. Sunburst was dropped mid-year in favor of white and "Red-Mahogany" – likely a

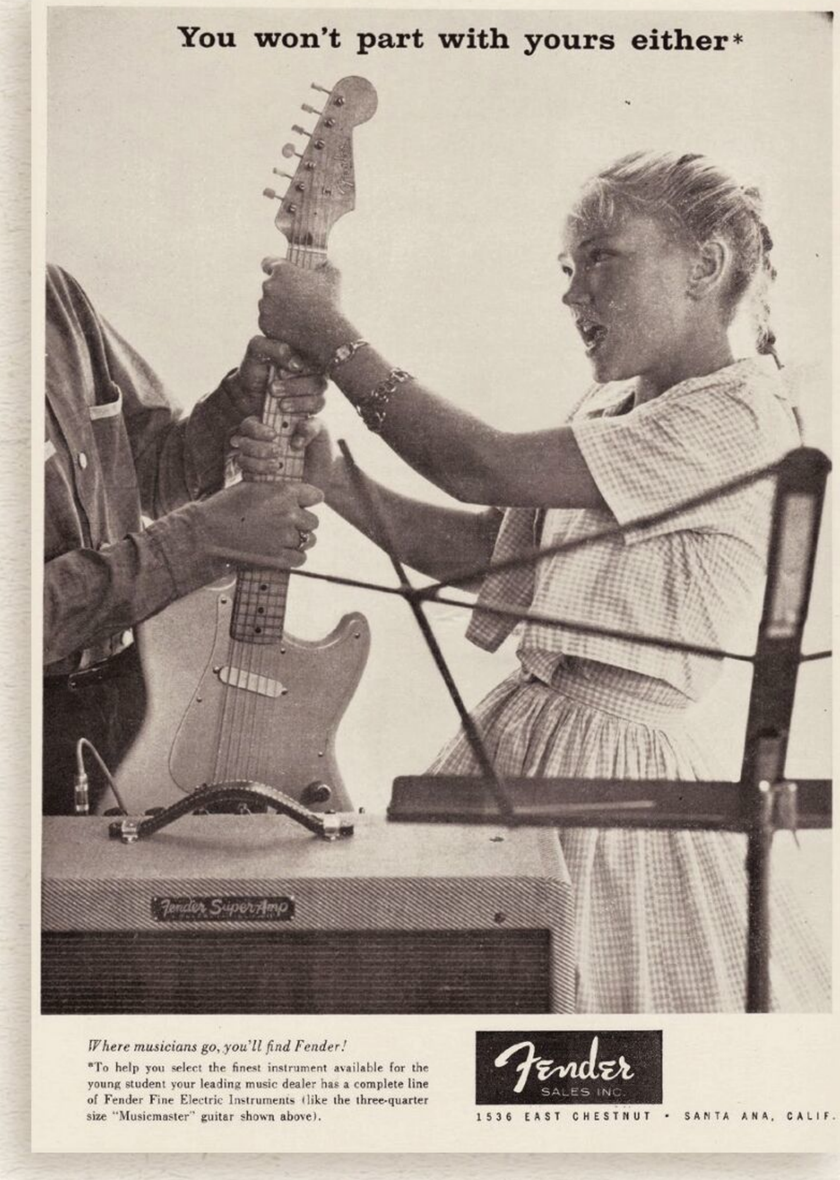
cost-cutting measure (spraying one color takes less time) as even these colors would have looked pretty dull compared to something like a Gretsch Princess or a TV-finished Gibson SG Junior.

White Musicmasters and Duo-Sonics were fitted with a nitrocellulose tortoiseshell pickguard and white pickup covers. Another variant was produced in the autumn with a single-ply dark brown pickguard. Today these are scarce, as they were produced for only a month or two.

Red-Mahogany was probably Fender's answer to Gibson's Cherry Red. This translucent finish appeared sporadically in '63 and '64, and was initially offered on mahogany-bodied guitars, but by '64 was also applied to the regular woods like poplar. These were normally fitted with white guards and black pickup covers.

Mahogany as a body wood was uncommon at Fender, but examples have turned up on most models from this era, perhaps an attempt at going head-to-head with Gibson's SG Junior and Special. Red-Mahogany ¾ guitars were not produced in large quantities, and the properties of the paint made it more susceptible to checking and cracking, so it's difficult to find a guitar today with the finish intact.





A June '56 ad for the Musicmaster (left). From the classic series of ads developed by photographer Bob Perrine, this one from '57 shows a girl ready to throw down to keep her Musicmaster.

1964

In the spring of '64, a major re-working of the "student guitar" was afoot, and August saw the debut of the Mustang – essentially a Duo-Sonic with a vibrato bridge. The Musicmaster and Duo-Sonic received an extensive face lift to make them match the Mustang cosmetically, and all three were offered in "full-scale" (24") and short-scale (22½") versions. These "II series" had a body with a slightly offset waist and a headstock with a new size and shape unique to the ¾ guitars.

The bridge plate was noticeably enlarged and modified such that it could no longer hold a chrome cover. It remained top-loading, though, with the same three-saddle arrangement. The redesigned bridge accommodated intonation for short- or long-scale necks.

Body routings were changed to accept the redesigned pickup and control layout (and the Mustang's vibrato), and a total of 15 screws now held the pickguard/control plates in place. The thin metal shielding was discarded in favor of four metal ground plates inserted at the bottom of the body routings.

The bridge pickup was slanted to align the polepieces with the strings, and the neck pickup was moved slightly toward the neck; this may have been another concession for the long scale. The pickguard was separated from the control plate, and it received an outward-rounding curve on the low-E side.

The two-pickup ¾ instruments received a pair of slider switches in the low-E side of the pickguard. Controlling each pickup separately, they turned the pickup off in the middle position, and changed the phase of the pickups. Several combinations of pickups and phasing were possible.



A 1966 promo postcard featured Fender's electric student line including the Champ and Princeton amps.

The separate control plate was chrome and housed the Volume and Tone pots, as well as the input jack. The knobs were changed to a skirted/seven-sided hard-black-plastic type already on the Jazz Bass, Jazzmaster, and Jaguar. And at some point in '64, the Musicmaster and Duo-Sonic were shipped with a thicker gold "transition" Fender logo, with model name in slightly bolder print.

All redesigned Duo-Sonics and Musicmasters were part of the II series, regardless of scale length. It's a common mistake to refer to only long-scale examples as II series, but Fender never made that distinction.

White guitars still came with tortoise pickguards, but pickup covers were initially changed to off-white, slightly translucent plastic. Fender also introduced red and blue as color options with the II series; these instruments were equipped with "crushed pearl" (white/black/pearloid) guards and black-plastic pickup covers.

In late '64, the clay-dot position markers were replaced with pearloid dots; overlaps occur where pearl top and clay side markers appear. Pearl dots were slightly larger than the clay, but the spacing of the double dots at the 12th fret remained the same. Double-line Kluson Deluxe tuners with white-plastic buttons appeared at the end of '64. Finally, the nitrate pickguard, which had proven prone to shrinkage, warping, wrinkling, and discoloration disappeared at year's end, replaced by plastic.

The versatility of optional scale lengths, a





While the original Duo-Sonic and Musicmaster manual (left) showed both on its cover, by the late '60s, Fender's artwork was going for colorful, lively... and broad.

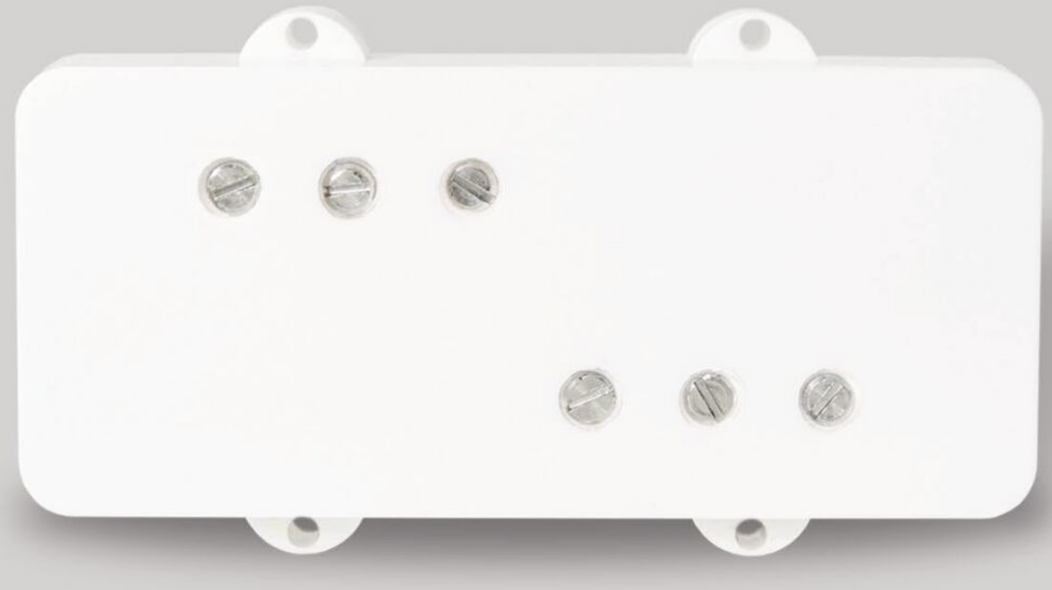
design feature of the II series, ultimately doomed the ¾ scale neck, as players expressed a strong preference for the 24" scale length, which Fender offered at no additional cost.

The Mustang, meanwhile, proved an instant hit, and ironically, its popularity suddenly made the Duo-Sonic an odd fit in the lineup. It was discontinued in '69. The Musicmaster lasted until 1980.

Plenty of guitarists and collectors have turned to the Musicmaster and Duo-Sonic as an affordable connection to Fender's golden era. For the purist, they offer a lot of history and plenty of vintage feel, tone, and vibe.

Terry Foster and Tim Pershing are avid collectors of all things Fender. Foster is a noted authority on the Musicmaster, Duo-Sonic, and Mustang. This feature originally appeared in the July '06 issue.

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Upcoming Events

Denotes a new or updated listing.

Lake County Musician's Swap Meet, September 12, November 14, February 13, 202, May 8, 2022, at 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

OCTOBER

Guitar Show,October 2 at the Lenawee County Fairgrounds, Adrian, MI. 11am -6pm. $5 admission. Contact dougonvacation@yahoo.com

Northeast Guitar Expo, October 3 at the Hartford/Windsor Marriott Hotel & Convention Center, 28 Dayhill Road, Windsor, CT. Hours 11-4. For more info call Peter Occhineri (860) 983-6774, email – NortheastGuitarExpo@gmail.com website–www.NortheastGuitarExpo.com

The Indiana Guitar Show, October 10 – one day only, at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds, 1900 E Main St, Danville, Indiana. For more info visit www.theindianaguitarshow.com

Guitarlington 2021, October 16 & 17 at the Arlington Convention Center, 1200 Ballpark Way, Arlington TX. For more info contact Ruth Brinkmann (817) 312-7659 ruthmbrinkmann@gmail.com, Larry Briggs (918) 288-2222 larryb@stringswest.com, Dave Crocker (417) 850-4751 davelcrocker@gmail.com, Fax (817) 473-1089 www.texasguitarshows.com. Co-sponsored by Vintage Guitar

Greater Pittsburgh Guitar Show, October 24, Printscape Arena, 114 Southpointe Blvd., Canonsburg, PA. For more info contact Scott at (412) 716-8411, scotpro@comcast.net or visit www.guitarshowusa.com.





NOVEMBER

Rockford Guitar & Drum Show, November 6, 2021. 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 74.)**

Great American Guitar Show (Fall Philly), November 6 & 7 at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, Rt. 422, Exit at Oaks, 100 Station Ave., Oaks, PA 19456. For more info, contact Bee 3 Vintage at 828-298-2197 or www.bee3vintage.com **(See Advertisement on page 5.)**

Ann Arbor Music Instrument Swap, Sunday, November 7th at Weber's Inn, 3050 Jackson Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48103 from 10am - 4pm. For more information contact Shawn VanSteeland at 517-410-6409 or info@musicinstrumentswap.com

Calgary Guitar Show, Sunday, November 7 at the Red & White Lounge McMahon Stadium, 1833 Crowchild Tr. NW, Calgary AB T2M 4S7. For more information contact Scott Harwood at canadianguitarshows@amplifycorp.com or www.edmontongutiarshow.ca

Edmonton Guitar Show, Sunday, November 14 at the Italian Cultural Centre 14230 133 Ave NW, Edmonton AB Canada T5L 4W4. For more information contact Scott Harwood at canadianguitarshows@amplifycorp.com or www.edmontongutiarshow.ca

Rose Quarter Guitar Festival, Sunday November 21 at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum Portland, OR. For more info Bruce@AdolphAgency.com, 253-445-1973 or visit www.rosequarterguitarfestival.com **(See Advertisement on page 74.)**

Northeast Ohio Guitar Show, Sunday November 21 at the Quality Inn, 4742 Brecksville Rd, Richfield, OH 44286. For more information contact Lawrence Puljic at 440-865-4301 or LP@ncwcom.com. www.lpsound.com

DECEMBER

CANCELED - Atlanta Guitar Show at the Infinite Energy Forum, 6400 Sugarloaf Pkwy, Duluth, GA 30097. Hours Saturday 10-5 Sunday 10-4. Contact Ray at 404-895-3459 or Ray@grinningelk.com

2022

JANUARY

2022 Winter Ohio Guitar Show, January 9, 2022, at the Makoy Center, 5462 Center St, Hillard, OH 43026. Hours 11:30am – 5pm. For more information call Marc at 740-797-3351 or visit www.ohioguitarshow.com

Orlando International Guitar & Music Expo, January 28-30, 2022 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) 962-4434, guitarexpo22@yahoo.com or visit www.guitarexpo.net

FEBRUARY

Greater Pittsburgh Guitar Show, February 27, 2022 Printscape Arena, 114 Southpointe Blvd., Canonsburg, PA. For more info contact Scott at (412) 716-

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MARCH

Carolina Guitar Show – Asheville, March 12-13, 2022 at the WNC Ag Center I-26, Exit 40, 1301 Fanning Bridge Rd., Fletcher/Asheville, NC 28732. For more info, call Bee 3 Vintage at 828-298-2197 or visit www.bee3vintage.com

The Lansing Music Instrument Swap, Sunday, March 20th at the Causeway Bay Convention Center, 6820 S Cedar St., Lansing, MI 48911 from 10am - 4pm. For more information contact Shawn VanSteeland at 517-410-6409 or at info@musicinstrumentswap.com

The Indiana Guitar Show, March 26-27, 2022 at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds, 1900 E Main St, Danville, Indiana. For more info visit www.theindianaguitarshow.com

APRIL

Northeast Guitar Expo, April 3, 2022 at The Verve Hotel & Convention Center, 1360 Worcester St., Natick, MA. Hours 11-4. For more info call Peter Occhineri (860) 983-6774, email – NortheastGuitarExpo@gmail.com, website–www.NortheastGuitarExpo.com

The Kalamazoo Music Instrument Swap, Sunday April 24 at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center, 2900 Lake St., Kalamazoo, MI 49048 from 10am - 4pm. For more information contact Shawn VanSteeland at 517-410-6409 or at info@musicinstrumentswap.com

Dallas International Guitar Festival, April 29 through May 1, at the Dallas Market Hall, 2200 N Stemmons Fwy, Dallas, TX, For more info visit www.guitarshow.com.

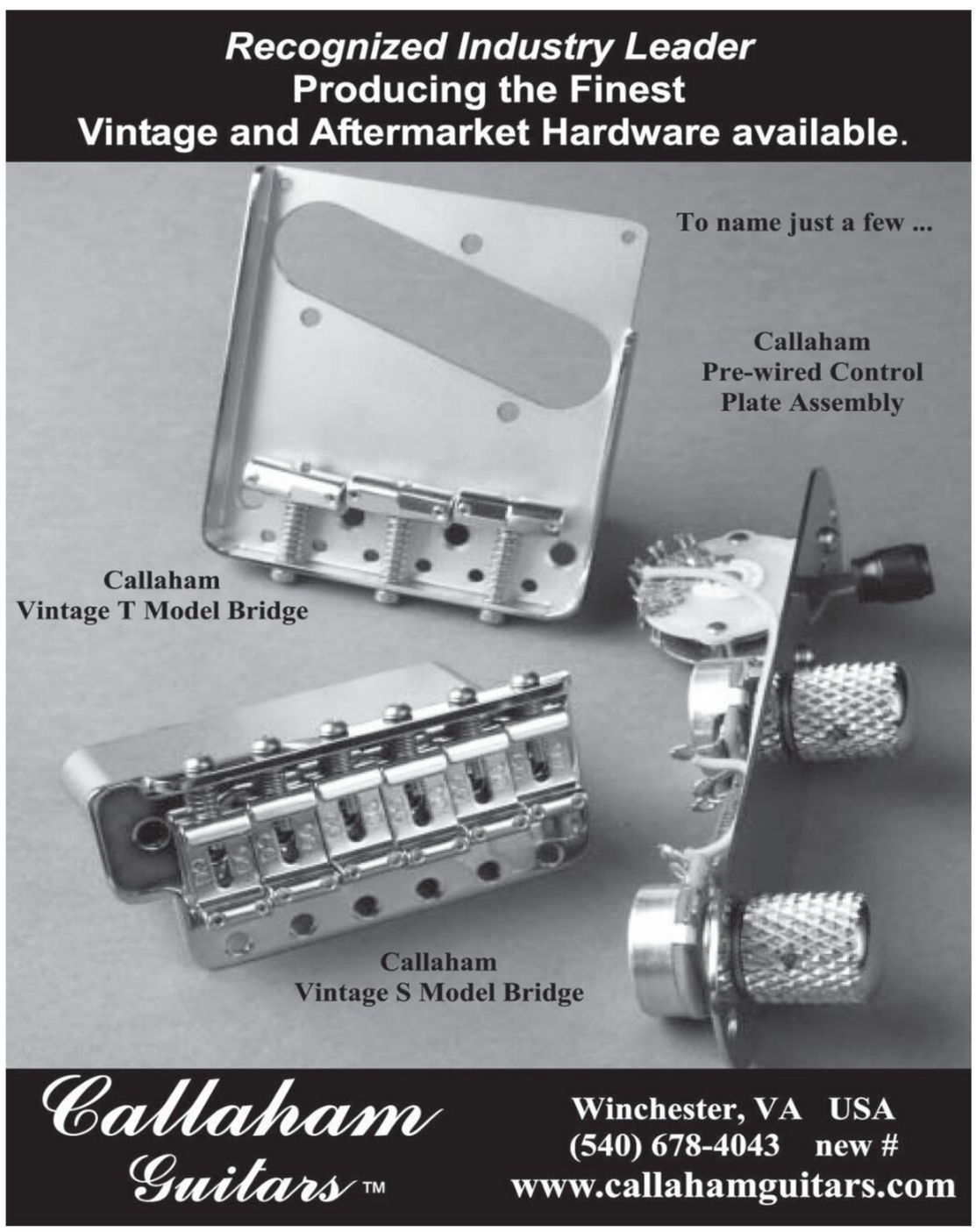
If you have information regarding upcoming guitar shows or events, visit http://www.vintageguitar.com/guitar-show-submission or e-mail james@vintageguitar.com. All submissions must be received by the 10th of each month, or they will appear in the next available issue. This listing is done as a service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

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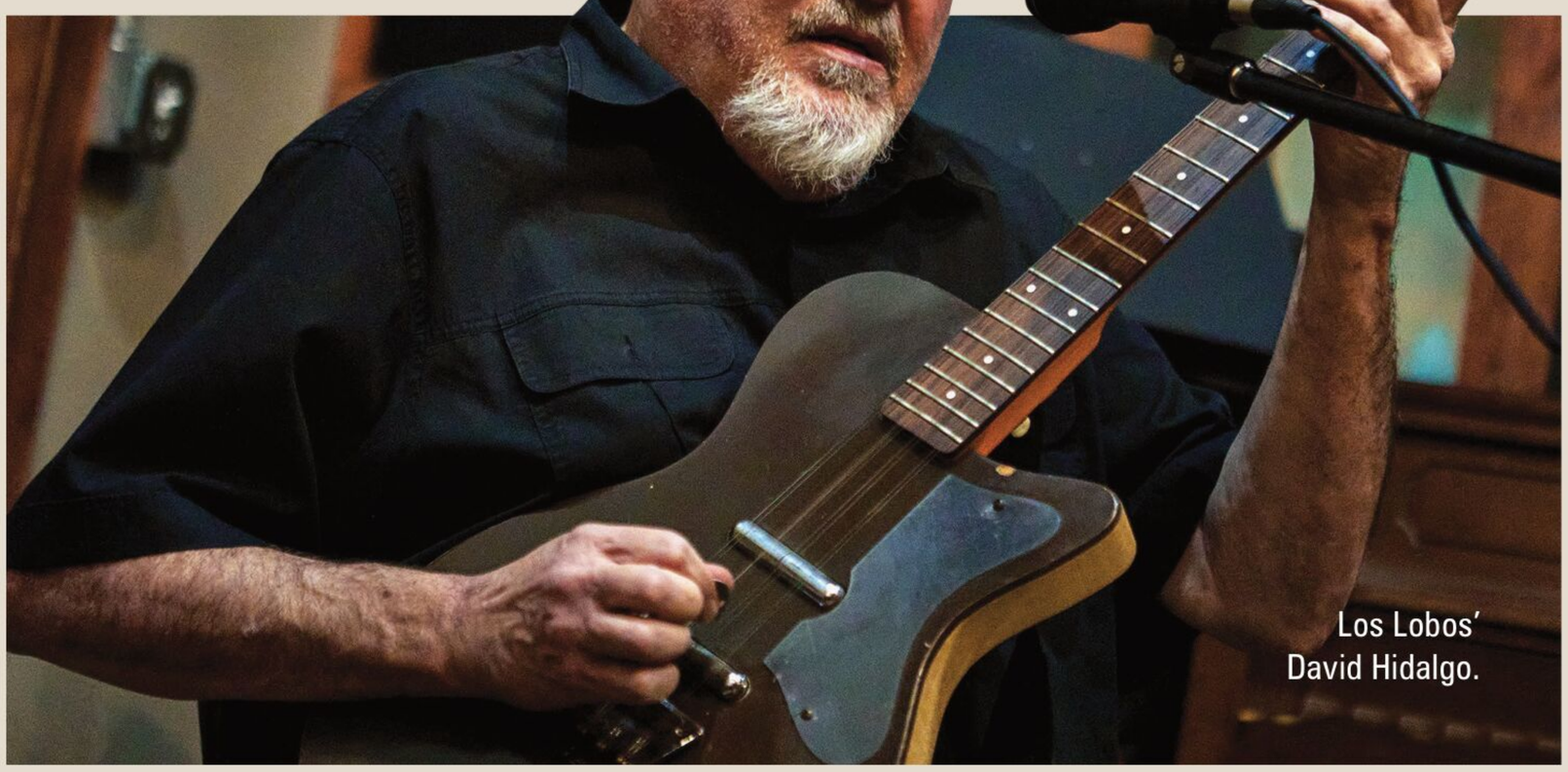
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Los Lobos' David Hidalgo.

HOMETOWN HOMAGE



Los Lobos
Native Sons

The venerable Los Angeles band (guitarists Cesar Rosas, David Hidalgo and Louie Pérez, Jr., bassist Conrad Lozano and sax man Steve Berlin) pays homage to its musical roots and hometown, delving into a diverse sampling of popular and highly obscure material recorded from the late '40s to the '80s. Among the regional obscurities is "Love Special Delivery," a 1966 single by the little-known Chicano band Thee Midniters.

Acknowledging their longtime buds in the Blasters, they revive Dave Alvin's 1980 rocker "Flat Top Joint," adding sharp solos and punchy rhythm licks. Hidalgo's guitar work on the Buffalo Springfield medley of "Bluebird" and "For What It's Worth" was specifically conceived to honor the licks of Stephen Stills and Neil Young. The oldest tune, Lalo Guerrero's obscure "Los Chucos Suaves," feels '40s retro – until updated by a powerful, hypnotic guitar interlude.

Los Lobos offer an elegant, nuanced interpretation of Afro-Cuban jazzman Willie Bobo's "Dichoso" and re-create War's 1972 hit "The World is a Ghetto," down to the wah riffs. The guitarists, however, get the final word, with the shimmering slow-dance instrumental "Where Lovers Go." Originally recorded by the East-L.A. band the Jaguars, it showcases the distinctive stylings of Hidalgo and Rosas. – ***Rich Kienzle***



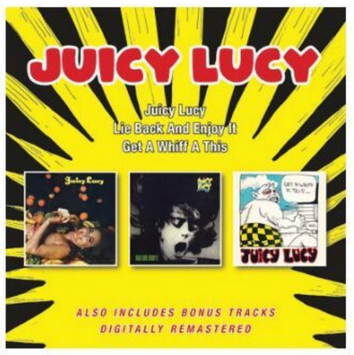


Queensrÿche
Operation: Mindcrime and Empire Deluxe Editions

Queensrÿche crafted groundbreaking progressive-metal on 1988's *Operation: Mindcrime* and 1990's *Empire*. These new box sets contain remastered studio albums, live tracks, rare B-sides, and DVDs. Also look for performance footage and music videos from previous home videos, all featuring axe aces Chris DeGarmo and Michael Wilton.

The concept album *Mindcrime* was the Seattle quintet's breakthrough, and many of its lyrical themes – demagoguery and corruption – remain eerily prescient. The taut, precise guitars of DeGarmo and Wilton blend well, and Geoff Tate's soaring voice heightens the drama. "Revolution Calling," "I Don't Believe in Love," and "Eyes of a Stranger" – crucial to the story arc – rock hard and resonate emotionally. *Empire* displays more creative maturity via the hit ballad "Silent Lucidity," which solidified Queensrÿche's frontrunner status. Bonus track highlights are live versions of "Spreading the Disease" and "The Needle Lies," an adventurous cover of Simon & Garfunkel's "Scarborough Fair," and an acoustic-based version of "I Dream in Infrared."

Like Rush's best work, these albums elevated guitar-heavy prog into something sophisticated and influential, though sadly, the Queensrÿche saga devolved into a nasty legal soap opera. Fortunately, these expanded albums remind us of their bold progressive achievements from 30 years ago. – ***Bret Adams***



Juicy Lucy
Juicy Lucy/Lie Back and Enjoy It/Get A Whiff A This

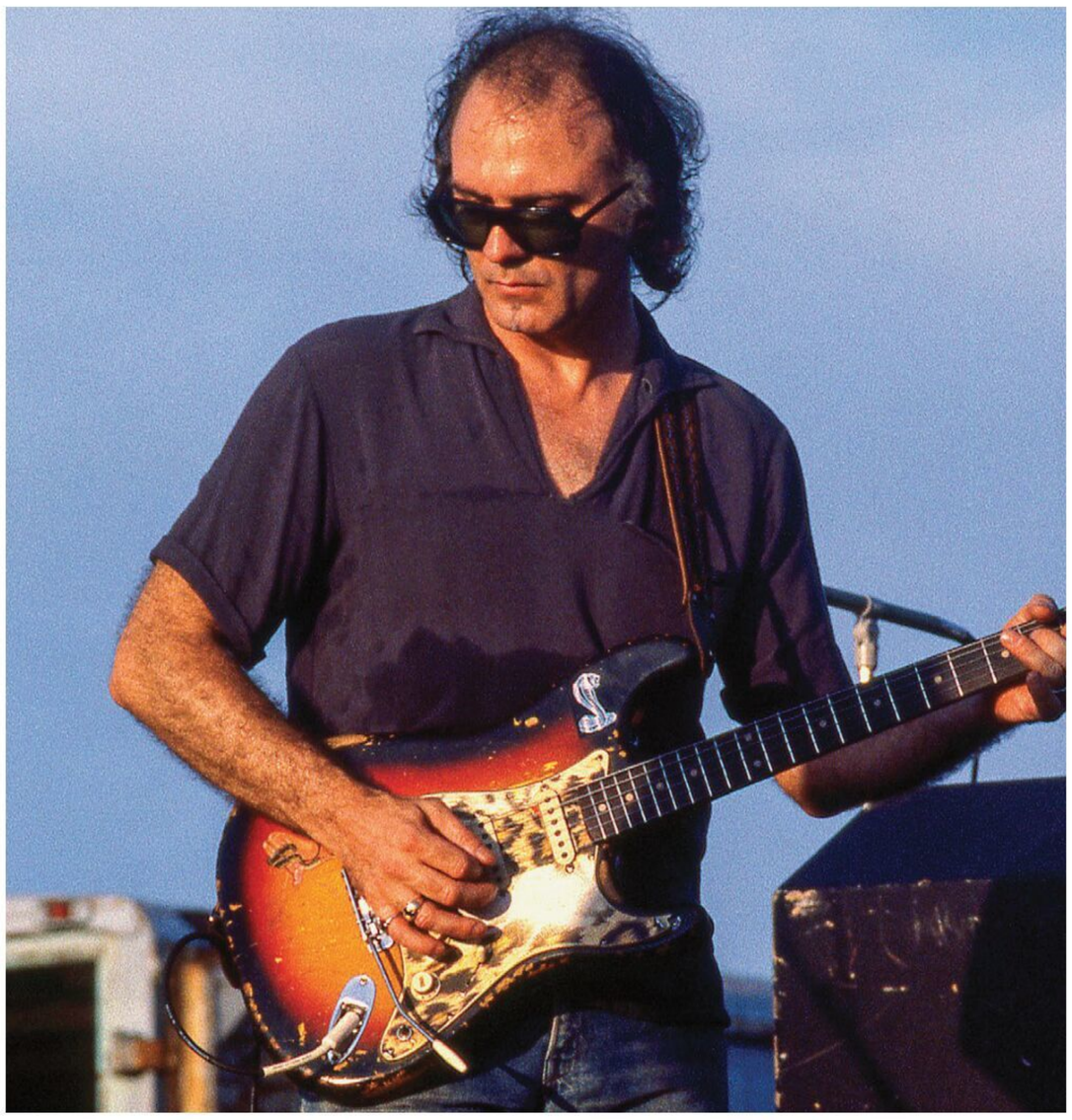
Any discussion of unsung guitar greats needs to include Glenn Ross Campbell. Thankfully, his work with Juicy Lucy is documented on this two-CD three-fer.

Between Freddie Roulette playing Chicago blues on lap steel and David Lindley making the instrument synonymous with '70s L.A. rock, Campbell explored the lap's possibilities with Rod Piazza's Dirty Blues Band and the Misunderstood. The latter moved from SoCal to England, morphing into Juicy Lucy.

The late-'60s/early-'70s order of the day was eclecticism, and Campbell pushed his blues-based slide into Middle Eastern and psychedelic realms. On the self-titled debut (1969), rootsy originals wrap around

David Hidalgo: Piero F. Giunti.

CHECK THIS ACTION



Denny Freeman: Bruce Sheehan.

REMEMBERING DENNY FREEMAN

By Dan Forte

As music-conscious as Austin is, not every musician who dies elicits the outpouring given to Denny Freeman. The Paramount Theater quickly changed its marquee to read, "Farewell Denny Freeman: Elegant Wildman and Founder of the Twang Bang Sound."

Twang Bang was the title of Freeman's 2006 solo album; the rest is a reference to a quote from a 1986 interview I did with Jimmie Vaughan, who called his sometime bandmate "an elegant wildman stylist."

Freeman died April 25 at the age of 76, after a mercifully short battle with cancer. It's safe to say the footprint he left on Austin, blues music, and the guitar is deep and will not be dusted over anytime soon.

"He sounded like nobody else," Vaughan recently told me. "His playing was very emotional. Denny could play any style – blues, jazz, R&B, soul – but he had a totally original sound."

I first interviewed Freeman in '86, for *Guitar Player*. "When I was a youngblood, Dallas radio was real cool," he said. "I'd go to sleep at night listening to 'Kat's Karavan' on WRR – Lightnin' Hopkins, Lonnie Johnson, and the Excello, Chess, and VeeJay records. In Dallas in the mid '60s, even the squares and the straights had *Two Steps From The Blues* by Bobby 'Blue' Bland and stuff by Jimmy Reed and B.B. King. In all the high school and college bands I was in, we would never think of it as a 'blues band.' That was just the material; it was all rock-and-roll to us. We did about five songs off *The Best Of Little Walter*, some Muddy Waters, Buddy Holly, Fats Domino, Little Walter, Jimmy Reed."

He listed his formative influences as King, Chuck Berry, Scotty Moore, Bo Diddley, and Hubert Sumlin "before I knew his name" from Howlin' Wolf albums. "The Jimmy Smith/Kenny Burrell combination *Organ Grinder Swing* is one of my favorites," he added. "I think if I had to pick a favorite guitarist, it might be Wes Montgomery."

In '68, Freeman and Vaughan moved from Dallas, where there were only cover-band gigs, to Austin, where he formed Storm with drummer Doyle Bramhall, bassist Paul Ray, and (later) harpist Lewis Cowdrey.

"Storm was the most-solid blues band I ever played in," he told me. "It was great for me because I was thinking, 'Well, I dig it, myself; I just can't believe that somebody really wants to do this' – especially this 18-year-old kid. Jimmie was real serious about it being a *blues* band."

By the time I moved to Austin, he'd already had stints with Southern Feeling, featuring W.C. Clark and Angela Strehli, and the Cobras, sharing guitar chores with Stevie Ray Vaughan, and appeared on Big Guitars From Texas' instrumental *Trash, Twang and Thunder*, which earned a Grammy nomination. But I saw Denny backing a who's who of blues legends that visited Antone's Home of the Blues; pulling double duty on guitar and organ when Jimmie Vaughan went solo; ripping through rockers like the Stones' "Bitch" with Bevis Griffin's Chill Factor; and playing country on lap-steel, which he took up at 70.

I admired Freeman for venturing outside Austin's comfort zone, moving to L.A. (where he played lead in Taj Mahal's Phantom Blues Band), showing his versatility during his stint with Bob Dylan, shining on *Modern Times*, and for releasing a half-dozen great instrumental albums.

Kathy Valentine of the Go-Go's wrote an especially eloquent tribute to Freeman; on Facebook, she called him "DenDen."

"You don't need to know a lot to play really cool stuff," it read in part. "Hell, you can even play just one note, and if you do it with authority, that's all you need. One day he sat down and said, 'Accompany me' – and I did. He soloed for about five minutes, then stopped and said, 'That was all three notes.' Three notes arranged, phrased, put together in a multitude of ways. It was a lesson I've never forgotten."

Just prior to Denny's passing, the Cobras' 1981 album, *Captured Live At The Continental Club*, was reissued, giving credence to the wildman tag – as vicious and dead-on as blues guitar gets.

My favorite quote from Denny came during a casual conversation in the '90s. He was talking about a Muddy Waters show at Mother Blues in Dallas in the late '60s, when Muddy still had a killer band. Denny regretted that he missed the gig, explaining that he had to study for a Latin final. It struck me because, in the context of the blues-nazi ilk of white players affecting a "black" stance, how many of them would be studying Latin, let alone admit it?

But Denny didn't need to adopt some *image* of being a blues musician; a few notes proved he was one.

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Joni Mitchell

impressive covers of "Who Do You Love" and "Nadine," featuring Ray Owens' gravelly vocals.

Campbell's stratospheric lap-steel could be mistaken for bottleneck, but it's a revelation to hear it as the main lead instrument. How crucial he was is proven by the fact that, on their controversially titled follow-up – 1970's *Lie Back and Enjoy It* – the band added singer Paul Williams (Allan Holdsworth) and guitarist Mick Moody (Whitesnake), and soldiered on. Campbell delivered an aggressive tour-de-force on "Willie the Pimp."

Get A Whiff A This suffers from weak material, but by then Campbell's position in guitar annals should have been solidified. ***– DF***



Joni Mitchell
Archives – Vol. 2: The Reprise Years (1968-1971)

A year ago, Mitchell unearthed a batch of rare '60s recordings called *Archives – Vol. 1* and, boxed separately, remasters of her early studio albums. Now we have *Vol. 2*, a mammoth set with 128 live tracks, alternate takes, radio tapes, and demos.

Beyond the songcraft, you witness the radical guitar tunings Joni learned (to make it easier to grab chords) after suffering polio as a child. A 1969 show at Carnegie Hall gives us "The Circle Game," Mitchell accompanying herself on spartan acoustic. From a '70 concert in London, Joni duets with rising singer/songwriter James Taylor, including the timeless "A Case of You" and "For Free."

A '68 coffee-house gig (recorded by Jimi Hendrix) is a fine study of Mitchell's six-string style. Listening to her strum "Night in the City," you may be reminded of Led Zeppelin, notably "That's the Way." To be fair, Page and Plant never hid their Joni obsession.

Vol. 2 is a serious motherlode, but well worth the journey. If you just want to enjoy her classic albums, get the box of remasters. If you want your perspectives stretched and imploded by genius, get this stellar set. ***– Pete Prown***



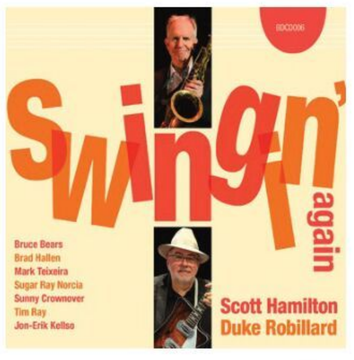
Muddy Waters
The Montreux Years

Muddy Waters' extraordinary career was in its twilight during the '70s, but the iconic bluesman was hardly limping to the finish line. In fact, the decade only cemented his hard-earned standing as a titan of American roots music, someone whose international profile had been on the rise since his first appearance in Europe in 1963.

It's against this backdrop that Waters, on three occasions, took to the stage of the Montreux Jazz Festival, with highlights of each set captured on *The Montreux Years*, a 16-track compilation that features three distinct lineups, each with different accompanying guitarists – Louis Myers (1972); Buddy Guy and Terry Taylor (19'74); and Luther "Guitar Junior" Johnson and Bob Margolin ('77).

Many of Waters' Chicago blues chestnuts ("Mannish Boy," "Rollin' and Tumblin'") are presented here, and they're complemented by the artist's slow, evocative slide lines on tunes like "County Jail," "Rosalie," a take on Willie Dixon's "Same Thing," and the album-closing "Electric Man" (the latter two feature Junior Wells on harp).

There's no shortage of '70s Waters live recordings, but the varying lineups, quality sound, and the historic nature of Montreux makes this a welcome addition. ***– Sean McDevitt***



Duke Robillard and Scott Hamilton
Swingin' Again

The association of blues guitar great Robillard and jazz sax champ Hamilton goes back to '69, before Duke formed the horn-led Roomful Of Blues and Scott was hailed as a swing-jazz savior. Years after their last studio collaboration, the mutual respect and familiarity is palpable on this set of standards, obscurities, and originals.

A better argument for the fact that "old music" need not be mere nostalgia, the pair's playing is vital and in-the-moment. The easy lilt of "I'm Putting All My Eggs In One Basket" finds the Rhode Island icon delivering a textbook in economy and

Joni Mitchell: Wikimedia Commons.

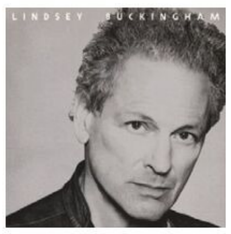
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DURAND JONES & THE INDICATIONS

Private Space

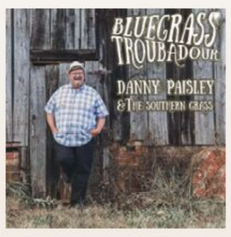
Rich falsettos, hip arrangements, and inspiration from '70s soul create a vacation for the mind. Blake Rhein takes the less-is-more approach with sweet octave lines, watery wahs, and dreamy arpeggiation. The guitarist seriously funks out on the pelvis-pumping "The Way That I Do." In all, a welcome return to soulful sophistication. – ***OJ***



LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM

Lindsey Buckingham

Following his Fleetwood Mac firing, heart surgery (and temporary vocal-cord damage from the procedure), and subsequent divorce comes this consciously pop album. His fingerpicked, bell-like guitar mesmerizes throughout; chiming guitar lines elevate "I Don't Mind." Yet, Buckingham's sunny music often shows a dark lyrical underbelly. It's an entertaining listen, but there are hidden depths of joy ("Scream") and sorrow ("Dancing"). – ***BA***



DANNY PAISLEY & THE SOUTHERN GRASS

Bluegrass Troubadour

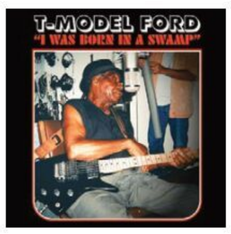
Paisley, an acclaimed singer/guitarist, draws deeply from bluegrass' beginnings, his unswerving rhythm, and Lester-Flatt-style bass runs melding flawlessly into the quintet's austere, traditional sound. Their repertoire encompasses the classic country ballad "Long Black Limousine," bracing original instrumental "Fancy Gap Runaway," and ancient standards such as "Eat at the Welcome Table" and "May I Sleep in Your Barn Tonight Mister." – ***RK***



SETH LEE JONES

Flathead

Like Austin and Nashville, Tulsa, Oklahoma, is full of superior musicians – and Jones is one of 'em. With a smoky voice and *huge* Tele tone, Seth brings slide screams and moans to "I Can't Be Satisfied." "Driving Wheel" is a mid-tempo burner with swampy riffs and big-amp attitude. Keep an eye on this rising blues-rocker. – ***PP***



T-MODEL FORD

I Was Born In A Swamp

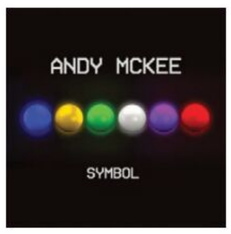
Interspersed with entertaining interview clips, this is more "produced," if you can call it that (reverby vocals, rockin' piano and electric slide accompaniment), than 1997's classic *Pee-Wee Get My Gun*. But the late Mississippi bluesman resists polish at every turn. The purity of the acoustic "Chicken Head Man" ("I love chicken heads") is pure, unadulterated T-Model. – ***DF***



KK'S PRIEST

Sermons of the Sinner

Ex-Judas Priest ace K.K. Downing returns on this unapologetic, full-throttle metal adventure – his new band featuring guitarist A.J. Mills and former Priest vocalist Tim "Ripper" Owens. Downing is unleashed on "Hellfire Thunderbolt," while "Sacerdote Y Diablo" ominously pairs dirge riffs and long solos. The molten metal throughout *Sermons* is rock-solid and playing is stellar. It's a fact: K.K. is back. – ***BA***



ANDY MCKEE

Symbol

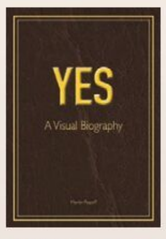
McKee's new EP features six tracks of upper-echelon acoustic and harp-guitar acumen, paying tribute to artists that inspired him – even video-game music. Polyphony, counterpoint, slapping, and dexterous harmonic work add new life to "Ragamuffin" by Michael Hedges, Preston Reed's "Chattanooga," and Prince's "Purple Rain." Guests include keyboardist/composer Vince DiCola on "*Rocky IV* Medley." McKee's playing remains incandescent, skillful, and passionately imaginative. – ***OJ***



ERIC BIBB

Dear America

Poignant and relevant, Eric Bibb holds a mirror to society in the blues-folk tradition. Wielding electrics, acoustics, and creative use of samples and production, Bibb explores the state of the world. Superb vocals and deft fingerpicking permeate backing by his guests – bassist Ron Carter, harpman Billy Branch, and Eric Gales, who adds electric swagger to "Whole World's Got The Blues." – ***OJ***



MARTIN POPOFF

Yes: A Visual Biography

There are many Yes bios, but this one has an *avalanche* of color photos and memorabilia from 1967-'81. Readers will find lavish concert shots and studio close-ups of Steve Howe's Gibson, Martin, and Fender arsenal, plus Chris Squire's Ricky basses and weirdo tripleneck. There are insightful interviews and backstories, stacked in chronological order. Put this on your holiday prog list. – ***PP***



FOGHAT

8 Days on the Road

Founding drummer Roger Earl, with vocalist/guitarist Charlie Huhn, slide wizard Bryan Bassett, and bassist Rodney O'Quinn, kick out the jams on these 2019 live cuts. "Drivin' Wheel" is a blast-furnace opener, while Bassett and Huhn trade furious licks on "Road Fever" and "It Hurts Me Too." Radio classics "Fool for the City" and "Slow Ride" uncork timeless '70s boogie. – ***BA***



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Little Black Flies

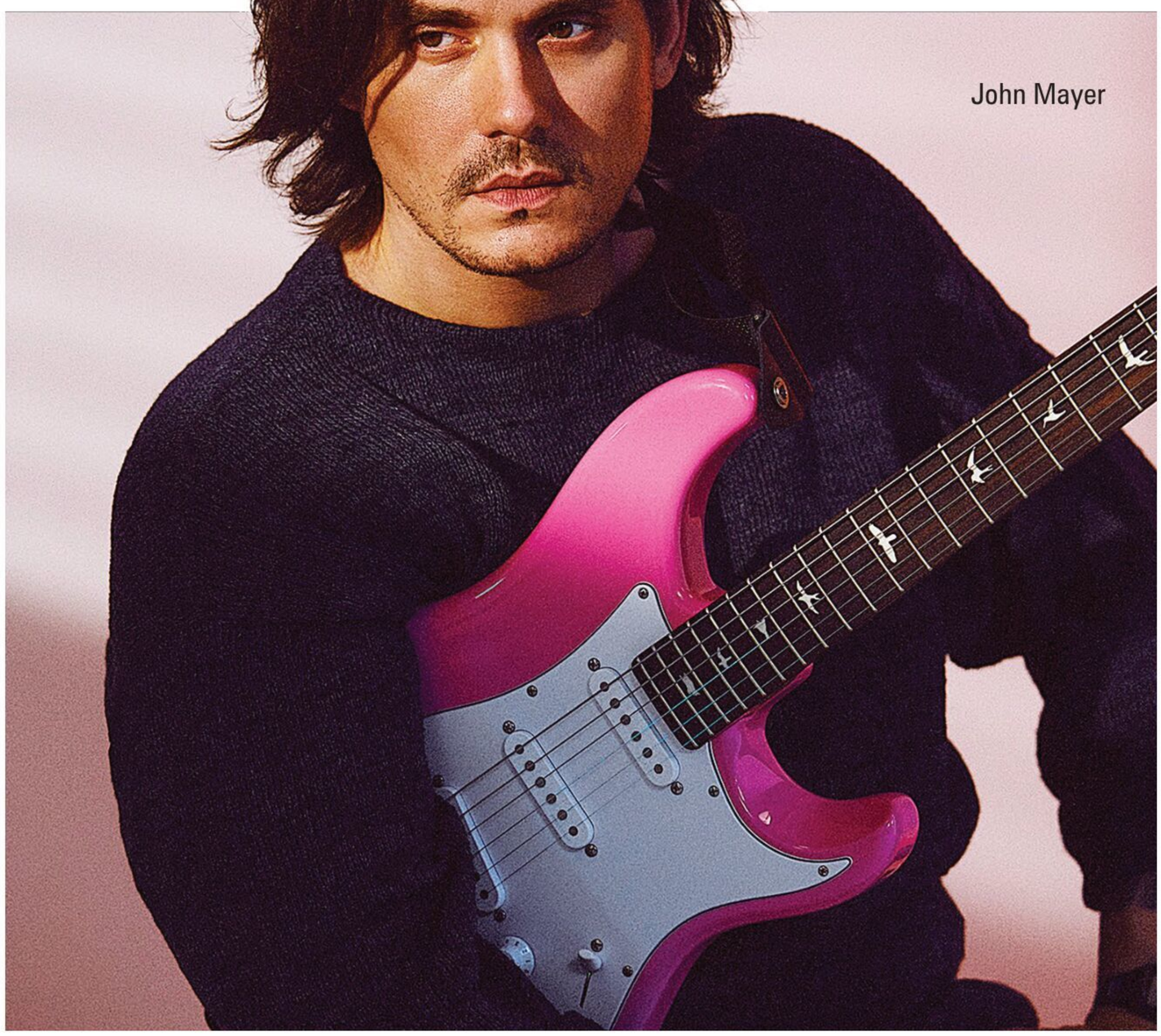
The alter ego of Brooks Mason, this Atlanta singer/guitarist deftly tightropes between stone blues and '60s soul. Think of the six-string sting of Freddie King or Otis Rush, and the slide rasp of J.B. Hutto with Delbert McClinton on vocals. This sweaty, spirited throwdown is all the more promising considering that Eddie is just 24 years old. Damn! – ***DF***



COLOSSEUM II

Electric Savage/Wardance

This two-CD set captures Gary Moore's jazz-rock adventures from 1976-'77. Witness the blistering runs of "Put It This Way," while "War Dance" is heavy, with intense scalar assaults. "The Inquisition" roils at a furious tempo, Gary dropping in faux-flamenco licks on acoustic and electric. Years before Yngwie, Vai, and Satch, the Irishman was full-on *shredding* with these wild fusioneers. – ***PP***



John Mayer

taste, complementing Sugar Ray Norcia's excellent vocal.

The tone Duke pulls from his J.W. Murphy archtops (one an 18" cedar-top with Kent Armstrong humbucker, the other a 17" spruce-top with vintage DeArmond pick-ups) beautifully colors "All I Do Is Dream of You" – fat, but with plenty of definition. Like Junior Watson and the late Charlie Baty, Providence's finest demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between blues and jazz guitar as few ever have; just check out Count Basie's evergreen "One O'Clock Jump."

Swingin', indeed. ***– Dan Forte***



John Mayer
Sob Rock

John Mayer's latest is a somber ode to the soft-rockin' '80s – think Henley and Hornsby. But don't start eye-rolling just yet.

Produced by Don Was, Mayer delivers the most polished guitar playing of his career. *Sob Rock* is a concept album about lost love, relationships gone astray, and romantic yearning. While almost an "SNL" parody, Mayer leans into it with masterful playing and conviction.

Slick yet heartfelt, songs like "Wild Blue" yield a Mark Knopfler aftertaste, with a smidgen of Clapton's *Behind The Sun* smoothness. Lush keyboard pads work as a bed for Mayer to apply guitar-magazine-approved blues bends that scream adult maturity and succinct tastefulness. "Last Train Home" is an '80s Clapton/Phil Collins mash-up with a perfectly executed PRS Silver Sky solo that fades out, faithful to the genre. His fingerpicked electric solo on "I Guess I Just Feel Like" is sublime, while the tear-inducing "Why You No Love Me" does the acoustic/electric thing to perfection.

Remember "Miami Vice," when Crockett would wistfully stare out into the Miami sunset, leaning against his Ferrari? *Sob Rock* is like that. It's a melancholy record draped in Armani suits, Jovan Musk, and high-priced guitar gear. ***– Oscar Jordan***



Brian Setzer
Gotta Have the Rumble

Setzer's first solo album in seven years straddles the line between what you *want* and what you *expect*. You get both Stray-Cats-flavored rockabilly ravers and the big-band beats of the Brian Setzer Orchestra, but more of the former. The title refers to the physical feel Brian gets playing hollowbody boxes – particularly his Gretsches – with a big amp. His battle with tinnitus is also a factor, along with his love of motorcycles and hot rods.

The cocky swagger of "Checkered Flag" (co-penned with Stray Cats drummer Slim Jim Phantom) sports Setzer's amp-tremolo twang, along with clever lyrics and a catchy vocal hook. "Smash Up on Highway One" evokes Dick-Dale-esque Middle Eastern and surf tones. As expected, a heavy '50s vibe is present throughout, especially on the Elvis-channeling "Stack My Money" and laid-back "Drip Drop."

"The Cat with 9 Wives" is a loose rocker with an uncharacteristically long guitar solo; the song combines the best of the Stray Cats' rockabilly bluster and mischievous lyrics with the BSO's energetic swing. As advertised, the boisterous "Rockabilly Banjo" crackles with Setzer's jumpin' banjo chops.

Gotta Have the Rumble doesn't break new ground, but it's a revved-up listen for hep-cats, hotrodders, and twangers alike. ***– BA***



Iron Maiden
Senjutsu

Now in their mid 60s, the lads of Iron Maiden are still plenty heavy, *but* don't always revert to patented galloping rhythms, C-D-Em progressions, and piercing vocals. Over 40 years on, this venerable metal institution is, surprisingly, evolving.

The eight-minute "Senjutsu" has a slow, progressive mood, setting up slide growls, modulated solos, and big riffs from Dave Murray, Adrian Smith, Janick Gers, and bassist Steve Harris.

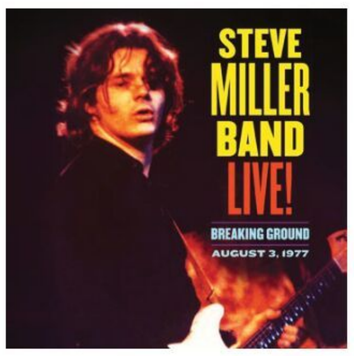
"The Writing On the Wall" is epic metal with an Irish/Celtic vibe and scorching leads. You'll detect Foo Fighters' "Everlong" riff within the vamp to "Days of Future Past" – but it totally works.

If you want triumphant tones, fire up "Stratego," which deploys more organic tube-amp flavors than that mountain of '80s distortion. Conversely, the acoustic piezo-pickup tones in "Lost in a Lost World" are unfortunate. It's incredulous that top studio engineers won't mic a flat-top for superior tone – it's not that difficult. Fortunately,

John Mayer: Carlos Serrao.

"The Parchment" is redemptive, a piece of 100 percent British guitar crunch.

In all, *Senjutsu* is the sound of an older, wiser Iron Maiden. Grab the CD and leave it in your car for hellacious highway head-banging. **– *PP***



Steve Miller Band

Live! Breaking Ground: August 3, 1977

Riding high on the smash *Book Of Dreams* album, this '77 concert presents the Steve Miller Band at their absolute peak. Captured at the Capital Center in Landover, Maryland, Miller was ruling the FM landscape of the day; this gig includes impeccable versions of hits, plus deeper cuts like Robert Johnson's "Come On In My Kitchen," "Wild Mountain Honey," and "Mercury Blues." Sixteen songs tell the tale of an artist who walked the line between pop, rock and roll, blues, and psychedelia.

This peak SMB lineup featured Miller on guitar and vocals, as well as Lonnie Turner on bass and David Denny and Greg Douglass on guitar. Robust riffage from Steve's Ibanez Iceman is unleashed with extra crunch, heard in the intros to "Rock'n Me" and "Fly Like An Eagle." Douglass torches a slide solo on "Jet Airliner," while trippy delay effects imbue "Space Intro." Listen to "Take The Money and Run" for dueling guitars and outlaw tales.

Live! is a love letter to high-school students of the '70s, and reminds us of Miller's skills as a guitarist, tunesmith, and pop-rock icon with a bluesman's soul. It's also the next best thing to time travel. **– *OJ***



The Darkness

Motorheart

Once you get past Justin Hawkins' love it-or-hate it falsetto, The Darkness is a fierce, rockin' band that wears its influences proudly. Case in point: "Welcome to Tae Glasgae" finds Justin and his brother, Dan, spewing riffs and solos over incendiary anthems, à la Queen, AC/DC, Meatloaf, and the Sex Pistols. And they do it incredibly well.

Part of an overall concept about a sex robot (a perfectly campy Darkness topic), "It's Love, Jim" cooks, thanks to chords draped with 4x12 crunch. "Motorheart" borrows the guitar theme from Queen's "Stone Cold Crazy," pumping it up with chunky slide. Nor do The Darkness fear a pop melody, as in "Jussy's Girl" – imagine here if Rick Springfield joined Def Leppard.

"Sticky Situations" launches with humongous axe tones, mixed with acoustic guitars and Queen-infused harmonies; you'd be hard-pressed to find better-recorded power chords. For lead thrills, "Nobody Can See Me Cry" has a fretburning solo that doesn't hide its Brian May pedigree.

Again, take Justin's *Rocky Horror Picture Show* vocals with a grain of salt; they're part of the act. Guitar-wise, the Hawkins brothers rock as hard as anyone, and there are a million killer riffs on *Motorheart*. **– *PP***



Jim Lauderdale

Hope

Inspired by the pandemic, veteran singer/songwriter Lauderdale stresses resiliency and renewal on these 13 originals, enhanced along the way by several of Nashville's finest guitarists.

Chris Scruggs stands out on several tracks; his raw, insistent lead guitar kicks along the aggressive "The Opportunity to Help Somebody Through It," and the R&B-driven "Here's To Hoping" benefits from his guitar and mandolin. The '60s flavor of "Mushrooms Are Growing After the Rain" is enhanced by Scruggs' guitar, mandolin, and lap-steel, along with Will Van Horn's pedal-steel.

The ballad "Sister Horizon" deploys *five* guitarists – Scruggs, Kenny Vaughan, and Van Horn handle the amplified end, while Frank Rische interjects a limber acoustic solo as Wes L'Anglois handles rhythm. On "It's Almost More Than All the Joy," Scruggs, Van Horn, and L'Anglois spin a bright, ethereal framework around Lauderdale's voice.

Russ Pahl adds pedal-steel, electric, and acoustic guitar to the stately "Memory," Lauderdale's final collaboration with veteran Grateful Dead lyricist Robert Hunter, who died in 2019. Craig Smith adds multiple guitar parts including a punchy solo on "Brave One" and a magnificent amplified break on the intimate, jazz-tinged "When Searching for Answers." The collective result is a bracing convergence of stellar songs, powerful vocals, and skillful accompaniment. **– *RK* VG**



Jim Lauderdale

Jim Lauderdale: Scott Simontacchi.

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INSTRUMENTS FOR SALE

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1982 Fender Stratocaster. Beautiful grain natural finish. All stock except same period & spec replacement neck pickup and refret. Includes non-original HSC. Distinctive "Smith Strat" with large 70s logo on small headstock, 4-bolt neck. Very Good condition. Plays and sounds great. $1,800. john@hedbor.org

Vintage '51 Blond Epiphone Deluxe Regent 17 inch cutaway, Gold hardware, 2p-ups, Replaced P-gd. Clever non-weld Tailpiece repair (no extra hole). Good overall, typical finish wear, some binding patches. NICE NECK! $4,000/BO, cash/certified check. Pickup N.DE welcome. randyscb@aol.com Pics can be sent.

Kalamazoo Senior 1932, Adirondac top, mahogany back and sides. Recent neck reset, new frets, and saddle. This guitar plays and sounds fantastic. $1700 buyer pays shipping. Pictures available. danfulkerson@yahoo.com

1949 Martin D-18. Just had neck reset & set up plays beautifully. Repaired amateur & no riginal bridge work with slightly oversize true Martin bridge. A couple small cracks cleated and perfectly fine. No breaks or other repairs, a few scratches and it has been played for sure and sounds like a Martin from this era should! Wonderful sounding and light as a feather at just under 4 pounds. rich@thefishingline.com

Mel-O-Bar '67-'97 commemorative signature series Walter Smith-Semie Moseley one of fourteen finale release. Six string in blue with case $1,300. ruddog@cox.net

Gibson HG-22 1932 with a FON of 206, places this guitar as one of the first 14 fret flat tops Gibson made. This is the oldest registered HG as listed in Spann's guide. This HG-22 was the featured "Classic" in July issue of VG. Tuners, truss rod cover, and nut/saddle changed. Repaired top, side, seam cracks, Recently set-up by a luthier. Comes w/ vintage alligator case. $3,900. wgarstecki@wi.rr.com

Rivington GUITARS
www.RivingtonGuitars.com

1981 Fender Stratocaster: $2k. Very clean, 2 owner guitar-late example of 70s era Fender in desirable Oly White faded to pale yellow. November 1981 stickler, 79' serial number. Was originally turned lefty by original owner so a strap button hole on the bottom horn. 2nd owner turned things right. Comes in original hard-shell case. rich@thefishingline.com

1965 Gretsch Double Anniversary sunburst. NM condition. 1963 Mosrite Ventures guitar signed by Ventures. With cases. Call 312-550-7632. Email: dowsley2@juno.com

2006 Gibson Custom Shop Stars & Stripes: Pretty much MINT! Never Played…put away brand new with ALL case candy except the COA, otherwise everything is here. Just had pro set up with .10's, plays great and sounds killer. Nothing else to say. rich@thefishingline.com

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VINTAGE Gibson ,Martin, Guild acoustic and electric instruments ,and National guitars wanted. in good+ or better condition .1920 -2001; not a dealer. also wanted:1960s Ampeg Golden-Glo Reverborocket amplifier, in good working order = all tube/25 watt, copper top, w/lucite panel (lights up), that Is the one! contact Willis at Delta Prince Music AZ. deltaprince@cox.net

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MISC WANTED

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VG APPROVED GEAR

SONGS NOT INCLUDED

Fender's Jason Isbell Custom Telecaster



Fender can't guarantee its Jason Isbell Custom Tele will instill every player with Isbell's talent for songcraft, but it sure does put his range of tasteful Tele tones within reach.

Built in the style of a '59 Custom, the body is an eye-catcher from the start with its warm Chocolate Sunburst lacquer finish, black pickguard, and white binding.

The single-coil pickups, custom-voiced by Fender's Tim Shaw, do a really nice job picking up nuances and maintaining presence at lower volumes while holding plenty of drive in reserve. A fingerpicked or strummed part, for example, will sit well in a live mix while a harmonically rich lead tone stands by, waiting for you to sweep the Volume. The bridge pickup carries that classic Tele snap, with a subtly softened edge, while the neck pickup is similar to a Strat's.

Price: $1,549
www.fender.com

The neck is arguably the MVP – the mid-'60s C shape fills the palm very comfortably and the entire chunk of maple resonates to add fullness and harmonic complexity to the guitar's tone. A 7.25" radius and tall fretwire make it additionally inviting to play, as does the worn feel on the back of the neck, which is consistent with the body's distressed aesthetic ("Road Worn," in Fender parlance).

Other distinctive features on this Mexican-made model include vintage-style brass barrel saddles and modern truss access behind the nut. When asked why they put the truss insert at the headstock rather than the heel, Isbell tweeted, "Because I love my guitar tech and want him to be happy."

You don't have to know Isbell's catalog of Americana tunes to enjoy his Custom Tele, but those familiar with his potent, versatile playing will appreciate knowing what it's like to make music with his guitar in hand. ***– Rich Maloof***



Price: $59.99
www.boss.info

BLACK MAGIC

Boss' SD-1-4A Super Overdrive

Boss' SD-1 has 40 candles on its cake and the company is celebrating with the SD-1-4A, a new Super Overdrive has a swank finish plus those three knobs you've come to love.

There aren't many features, but that's the beauty – it's all about tone. Aside from Level, Drive, and Tone, the box offers buffered bypass (for longer cable runs), 9-volt adapter jack, and a battery compartment.

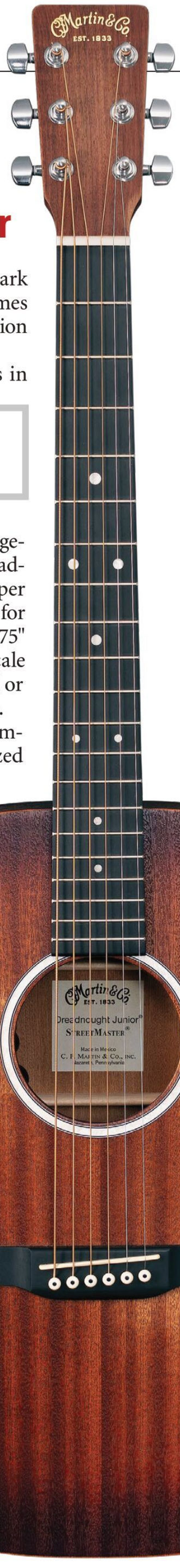
The SD-1-4A's mission is to achieve a realistic tube tone, which Boss says is the result of unique asymmetrical clipping in the circuit, something it patented in 1977. The sound is warm and midrange-focused, with rich harmonics, sag, and ghostly overtones. Naturally, putting this box before the preamp of a tube amp yields the best results. Using a 15-watt Vox clone and semi-hollowbody, the Super Overdrive delivered sweet gain, from just-breaking-up (think Rolling Stones) to thick plexi honk (a la Aerosmith).

You can use the SD-1-4A to improve the overdrive of a solid-state or modeling amp, or pair it with other distortions, fuzzes, and overdrives to develop your own crunch. Many deploy it as a booster for solos.

Ultimately, this pedal does what it's supposed to do – give a more tube-like attack, no matter the amp. Better yet, the SD-1-4A Super Overdrive is super-affordable. And that's all the dirt you need. ***– Pete Prown***

DREAD, NOT

Martin's DJr-10E StreetMaster



The big, booming dreadnought has been a Martin hallmark since its debut in the 1930s. From that tradition comes Martin's Dreadnought Junior, a smaller, more playable version of the signature shape.

The DJr-10E StreetMaster is the one of the latest entries in Martin's Junior lineup, with solid construction and gig-ready electronics. It's not a full-sized cannon, but it can still boom – and it won't lower the boom on a budget-conscious player.

Price: $699
www.martinguitar.com

Perfect for smaller pickers and those looking for a more manageable size, the Junior body is 1.4" narrower than a standard dreadnought and has the depth of a 000. The high-performance-taper neck has a 24" scale – great for smaller hands but long enough for the average player accustomed to standard scale lengths. The 1.75" nut width lends credence to the fact this is not a typical short-scale guitar. The Dreadnought Junior body balances nicely seated or standing with a strap, and feels substantial and comfortable.

Sonically, the DJr-10E strikes a fine balance between a booming dreadnought and the midrange punch of auditorium-sized guitars. The back, top, and sides are sapele, lending to a favorable comparison to Martin's mahogany offerings. The DJr-10E projects a warm, balanced, and compact sound. Strumming hard doesn't produce an overwhelming bass response, and the guitar is still loud enough to hold its own acoustically with full-sized models. The top is X-braced with scalloped braces of Sitka spruce. Martin equips this model with Fishman Sonitone electronics for a robust and dependable electric experience, with simple soundhole control of amplified sound. A gig bag is also included.

The distressed finish on StreetMaster instruments makes an impression; the DJr-10E has a warm mahogany-colored finish with simulated wear on its top, back, and sides. A mother-of-pearl pattern rosette is a nice complement to the dark top. The bridge and fretboard are FCS-certified Richlite, the fretboard sporting 28-style mother of pearl inlays. The Dreadnought Junior very much looks like its big brother in proportion.

With the DJr-10E StreetMaster, Martin adds another option to its budget-friendly line of guitars weighing in at less than $1,000. Whether it's a first guitar, a step up, or a dependable acoustic/electric to stage, it delivers a big experience in a slightly smaller package. – ***Michael Shirek***



GEAR-IN-UP



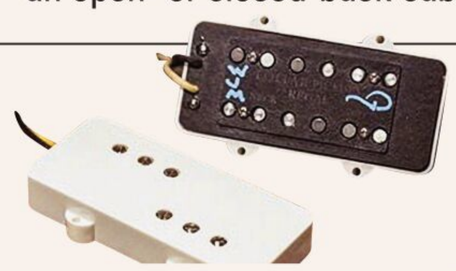
GUILD MARLEY A-20

Guild's Marley A-20 was inspired by the guitar used by Bob Marley. It has a solid spruce top, mahogany back and sides, C-shaped neck with 24¾" scale, vintage-correct headstock with script logo, pau ferro fretboard and bridge, bone nut and saddle, custom signature pickguard, and script inlay on the 12th fret.



ORANGE SUPER CRUSH 100

Orange Amplification's Super Crush 100 head and combo have a two-channel JFET preamp, class A/B power amp, and 24-bit digital reverb. The combo uses a Celestion G12H-150 speaker. Other features include buffered effects loop, XLR out with CabSim speaker emulation, and Cab Back switch to simulate an open- or closed-back cab.



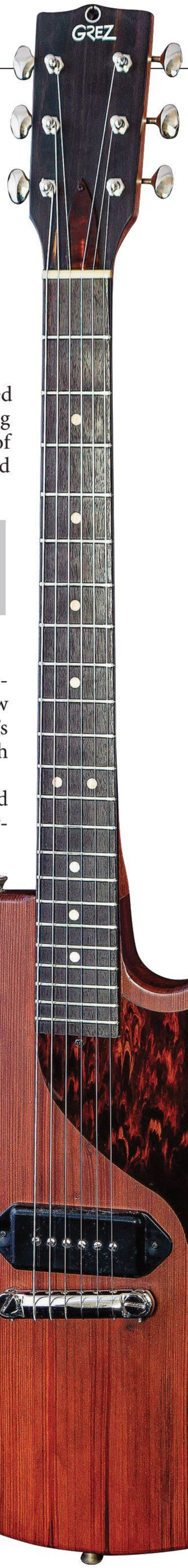
LOLLAR REGAL FOR JAZZMASTER

Lollar Guitars' Regal for Jazzmaster pickup is based on Fender's Wide Range humbucker, but designed as a drop-in replacement for Jazzmaster-style pickup. It's available for placement at the bridge or neck (both 10.7K) with a low-wind neck option (8.9K). Cover colors are black, white, parchment, or cream.

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

NEW OLD-SOUL

The Grez Mendocino Junior



Luthier Barry Grzebik was a Jersey boy who moved to NorCal in his teens. When he began building guitars, he was inspired by the sonic possibilities of redwood. Those possibilities perhaps seem fully realized in his Grez Mendocino Junior.

Price: $2,700
www.grezguitars.com

Grez's flagship Mendocino is a crazy-cool chambered semi-hollow packing a duet of Lollar goldfoils, and the line recently expanded with a baritone version plus this Junior.

Hoist the Mendocino Junior and you'll think something's wrong, or at least missing. This little fellow weighs just 5.5 pounds. The body is to thank – it's fashioned from a single piece of reclaimed first-growth redwood.

As Grzebik explains, vintage Les Paul Juniors sound $10,000 worth of wonderful due largely to their 70-year-old wood. Grez's redwood is roughly a century old and well-seasoned. Plus, it's drop-dead gorgeous, casting the Mendocino Junior as a supermodel among same-olds.

The body is mated to a one-piece Honduran mahogany neck with Macassar ebony fretboard that's 24.75" long with 22 nickel-silver-gold jumbo frets. There are just two glue joints in the whole body, adding to resonance. Together, the body-neck balance is superb, which can't be said for all Les Pauls.

Pickups are Wolfetone MeanerP90s, which live up to their name; they are indeed meaner, raunchier, dirtier than many. These Alnico II pickups measure around 9k – hotter than most vintage units. Controlling that bark are Emerson 500k Volume and 250k Tone pots.

The Grez shifts effortlessly from sweet and smooth to malevolent and growling. Many vintage Juniors rock with authority but lack that sweeter disposition. And the Grez is wonderfully touch-sensitive... play it soft, and it sings; dig in, and it bites. Simply, wow! ***– Michael Dregni***



Price: $169
www.orangeamps.com

JUICE TO SPARE

The Orange Acoustic Pedal

Since the dawn of amplification, engineers have sought a better mousetrap – a more-transparent signal chain that preserves signal and adds less noise. With its new Acoustic Pedal, Orange takes inspiration from its past advances and packages them neatly in a preamp that gets the most out of an acoustic/electric guitar's signal.

The Orange Acoustic Pedal looks exactly as an acoustic preamp should, with controls for Bass, Middle, Treble, and Volume along with a balanced XLR out. It also has a buffered effects loop to manage outboard effects. The Middle control offers two additional measures; Notch selects the knob's center frequency (68 Hz to 1.2 KHz), while Q Factor selects its width of the frequency range. The intuitive interface allows easy control of a guitar's tone.

Inside its rugged metal chassis, the Orange Acoustic Pedal really flexes. The single-ended JFET circuit makes the pedal whisper quiet when dialing up the treble frequencies. The pedal also operates at 18 volts, providing ample headroom for faithful amplification of an acoustic/electric signal – whether from active or passive electronics. The balanced XLR eliminates the need for a separate direct box, and both the XLR and 1/4" outputs can run simultaneously.

A better mousetrap is here. Orange's Acoustic Pedal is an effective, affordable way to get the most out of an acoustic/electric. ***– Michael Shirek***



JIMI JAM

The PRS HX 50 and HX 2x12 Cabinet

Paul Reed Smith has earned a reputation building guitars of the highest quality. It wasn't until just over a decade ago he tried his hand at building amps, pairing with Texas amp guru Doug Sewell.

Smith and Sewell more recently traveled to Seattle to blueprint one of Jimi Hendrix's Marshall 100-watt heads, purportedly an amp used at Woodstock. Following the analysis, they designed two models – the HX 100 and the 50-watt HX 50, which retained many of the tonal attributes of the Hendrix amp while using modern components.

Price: $2,900 head/$899 cabinet
www.prsguitars.com

The head's internally bridged channels with individual Volume controls allow players to dial in their preferred distortion level and tone by blending Lead Volume and Bass Volume. To retain the vintage vibe, PRS skipped a Master Volume control (so consider grabbing an attenuator on your way to the jam or club gig). In some ways, the HX 50's headroom and tonal range makes it respond more like a 100-watt amp

To test the HX 50 and its matching closed-back cabinet (with a pair of Celestion G12H-75 Creambacks), we plugged in three guitars – a '63 Strat, a Les Paul with P-90s, and a '59 reissue Les Paul with humbuckers.

The Strat produced the widest variety of tones, from sparkly clean but not harsh (think "Castles Made Of Sand") to grimy and bluesy (think "Machine Gun"), all through the adjustment of the amp's Volume and EQ controls and switches. Our favorite sound came with all controls set at 2 o'clock, with the guitar's Volume knob rolled back to about 7. Dialing up the amp's Bass Volume blended in more low-end dirt, giving the Strat more oomph.

The HX 50 responded in a similar fashion to the P-90s, though they produced slightly more distortion, which should accommodate all but the heaviest of rock soloing. Most notable with both single-coil guitars was the absence of background noise and 60-cycle hum.

The rig took to the Les Paul beautifully, with the amp's controls interacting to generate tones from glassy clean to smooth and sweet, perfect for soloing, pinch harmonics, and long, sustained notes. And though the amp proved very responsive to pedals – we ran all three through a vintage overdrive – the most dynamic tones happened with no effects. ***– Tom Guerra***

G[illegible]R[illegible]' UP



CORT ARTISAN ELEMENT BASS

Cort's Artisan four-/five-string Element basses have mahogany bodies with figured-ash tops, bolt-on five-ply panga panga/walnut necks, and 24-fret maple fretboards with 15.75" radius. Other features include active Bartolini MK-1 pickups, Cort's high-mass MetalCraft M bridge, Hipshot Ultralite tuners, and Open Pore finish in three color choices.



LAKA BAMBOO UKES

Laka Bamboo ukuleles are available in Soprano, Tenor, and Concert models with bamboo top, back, sides, neck, headstock, fretboard, and bridge. They have black binding on the body and fretboard, black position markers, ABS nut, and open-geared chrome machine heads with black buttons.



USEFUL ARTS SWARM

Useful Arts' Swarm is a rackmount DI with four channels. It has discrete-gain topology, high-pass filter, 22dB pad, phase control, custom input transformer, and a JFET DI. Its Color control is designed to enhance tone without compression or EQ.

EURO FLASH

The Rivolta Combinata Bass VII



Rivolta's Combinata VII bass takes ideas from Rickenbacker, Höfner, and various European builders lost to history and wraps them into a four-string with a chambered mahogany body.

Working in collaboration with Eastwood Guitars, designer Dennis Fano (of Novo Guitars) dressed the Combinata with an attention-grabbing carved maple or mahogany top and scads of off-white binding. It also sports a set maple neck with 20 large frets, ebony fretboard, and aged pearloid blocks. Look for a thick gold pickguard that resembles the glass panel of a plexi amp and three Ricky-style control knobs.

Price: $1,299
www.rivoltaguitars.com

The Combinata has a 32" neck scale, offering a medium-scale feel both bassists and guitarists will enjoy. And it's fast, with a 12" fretboard radius, easily adaptable to finger, thumb, and pick-style approaches. Electronics include two Rivolta custom pickups, master Tone and Volume, and a Blend knob to pinpoint the mix of pickups. Keep in mind they're single-coils, so when the blend is rolled entirely in each direction, you'll get some 60-cycle hum. For quieter operation, leave it somewhere in the middle.

In hand, the medium C neck is swift and fun, though you may want to remove the bridge cover if palm-muting is in your repertoire. While you can derive basic Fender P-bass sounds with the tone rolled off, the Combinata VII offers plenty of midrange growl in its engine room, bringing to mind that Jazz Bass snarl (a la Geddy Lee) or snap of a Rick 4001.

With killer retro looks, a speedy neck, and tone to burn, the Rivolta Combinata VII brings a serious retro vibe – think early-'60s Euro cool with tone and attitude.

– Pete Prown

Price: $399
www.walrusaudio.com

SIMPLE SIMULATION

The Walrus Audio ACS1

From worship services and home-recording where volume is an issue to fly-in shows where a full rig is impossible, amp modeling has many applications. While a lot of amp/cab simulators offer virtual buffets of options, Walrus Audio's ACS1 keeps it simple with three amp models, six toggle-switched cabinet "impulse responses" (IRs), Gain, Volume, and Room (reverb) controls, and a three-band tone stack.

The Fullerton (Fender Deluxe Reverb), London (Marshall 1962 Bluesbreaker), and Dartford (1960s Vox AC30) are accompanied by stereo 1/4" in/out, MIDI in and through, USB jack for uploading additional IRs, headphone jack, and nine-volt power jack. Bypass and Boost footswitches toggle through three customizable pre-sets (128 customizable pre-sets are available with MIDI) when hit simultaneously.

For testing, we connected the ACS1's outputs to a powered PA speaker, two studio reference monitors, and headphones. All three amp models offered accurate simulations and were touch-sensitive and loaded with natural overtones and personality. Plus, the controls reacted like they would on the actual amps. None offer distortion or high-gain overdrive – happily, the ACS1 proved pedal-friendly; comps, ODs, and high-gain distortion all excelled in front of it.

With spot-on simulations of three classics and a simple control layout, the quality-over-quantity Walrus might be a perfect solution to most guitarists' modeling needs. ***– Phil Feser*** VG

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"I hate searching for wall outlets and extension cords."

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"So many cables under and around my board is messy!"



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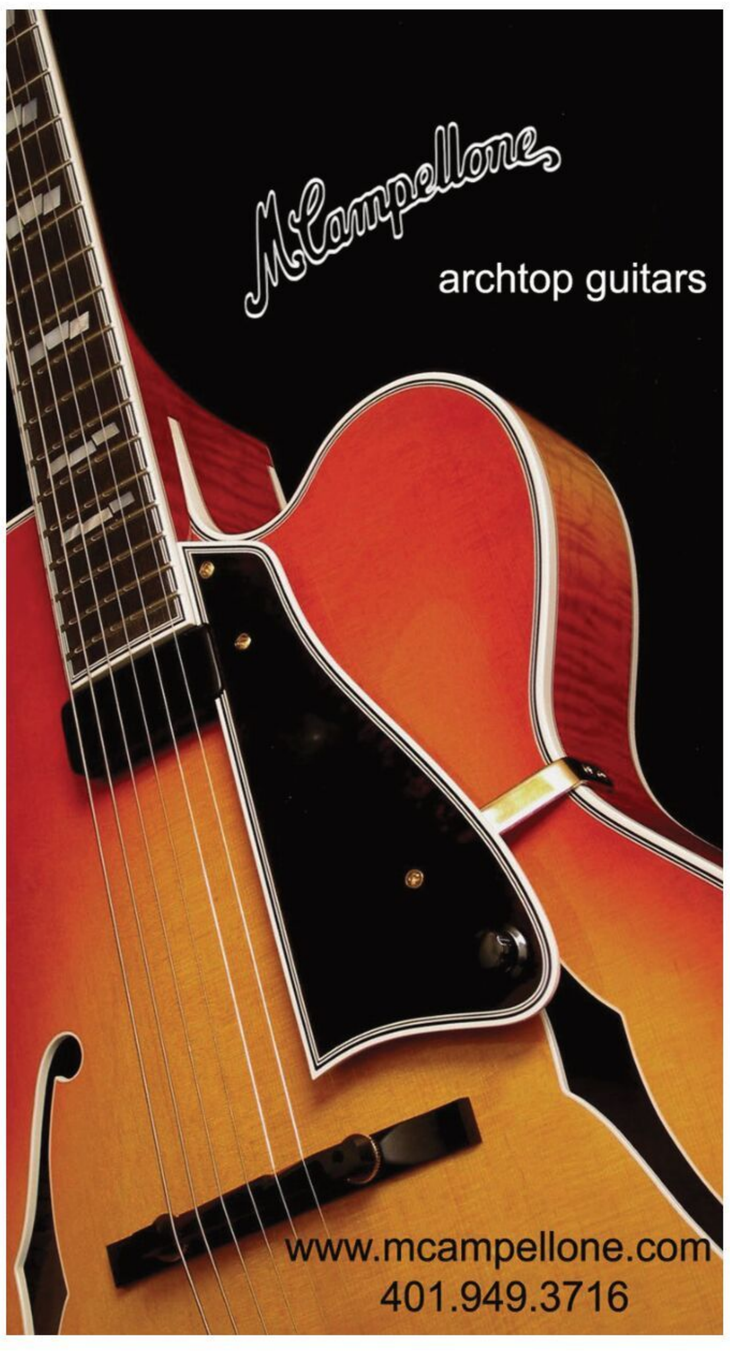
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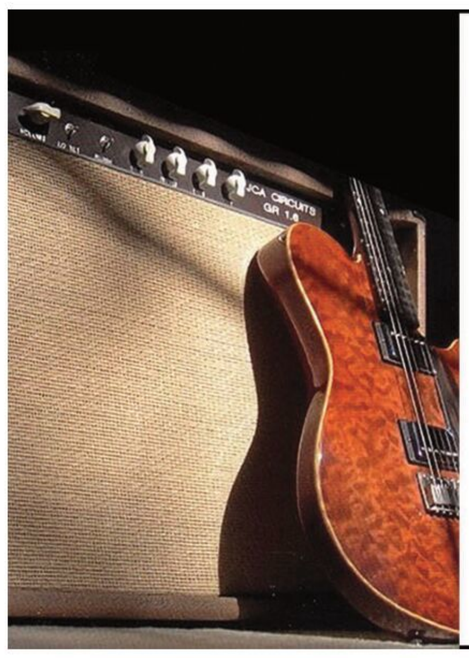
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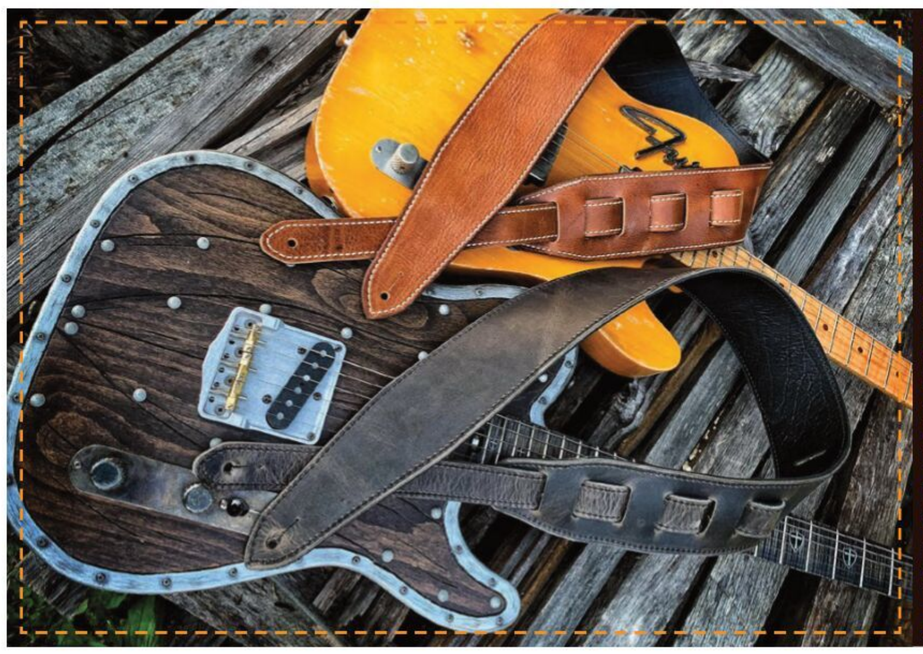
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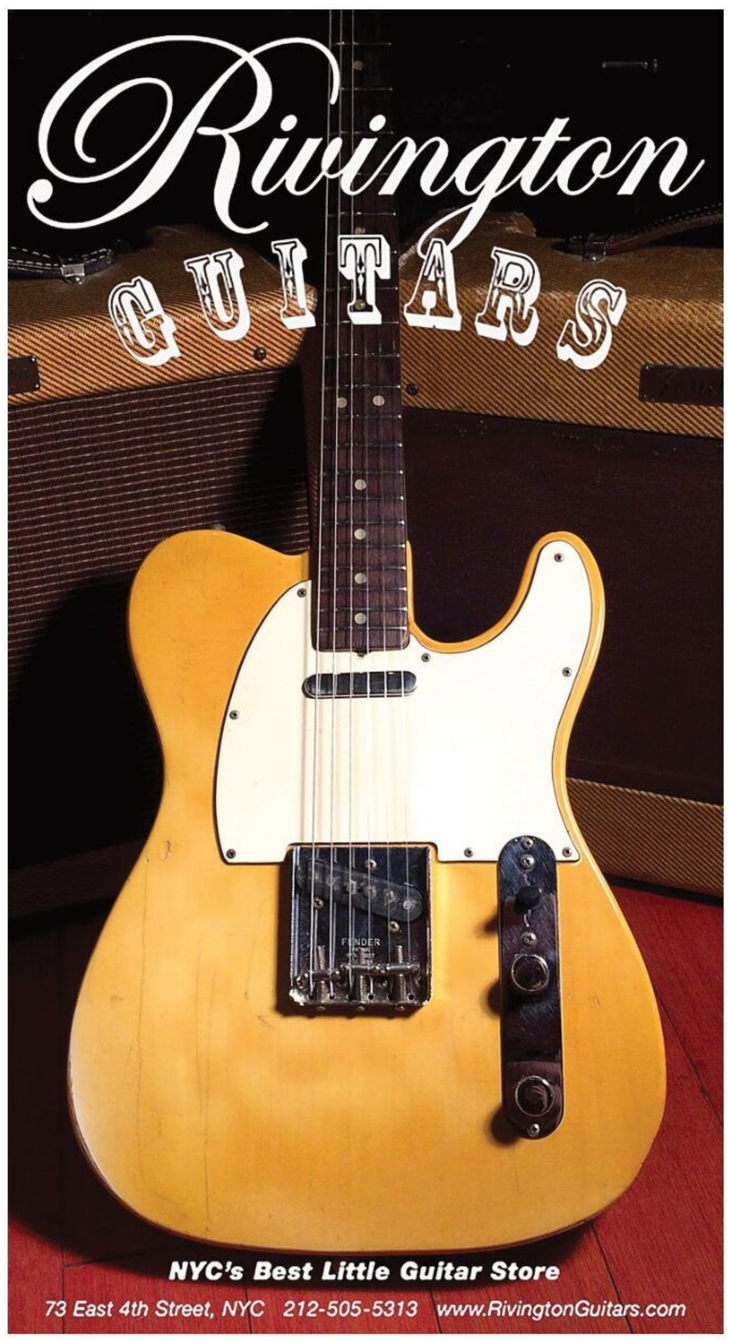
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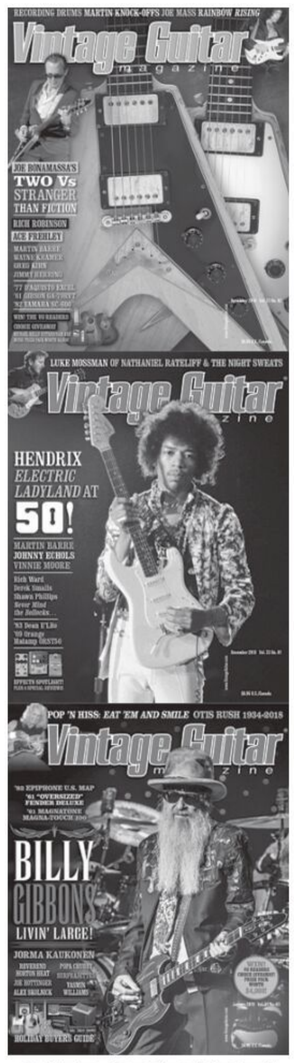


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1) Jim Armstrong's collection includes this gorgeous set of Martins. From left they are a 1995 HD-28, a 2003 HD Limited Edition OM "Negative," an '06 D-41 Porter Wagoner Wagonmaster Custom Edition, and a '76 D-35 in sunburst.
2) Alan Howe piled up all three of his '64 Fender Bandmasters for this shot. On top is one built in January, just before the middle one (which was painted black in an ill-advised spruce-up), and on the bottom is one from later in the year, after Fender's shift to black tolex.
3) Ready to lay down the low-end, Kris Nocula's collection of Fender basses includes an '05 Jaguar (top left), a fretless '93 Jazz, and a '99 American Professional Jazz. In the middle are a '93 Jazz, '84 Precision, '75 Precision, and fretless '77 Precision. At the bottom is an '87 Jazz Special fretless.
4) James Dove says his 2020 Mule steel tricone is, "A great player and tone machine."
5) Dennis Valentine gets work done with this collection, which includes a Cordoba Orchestra Pro CE (left), a Fender Squire Tele with Seymour Duncan pickups, a Steve Skye Custom Ash Strat with Bareknuckle pickups and solid-maple neck, an Eastman AC 420, Höfner Dobro, and a Martin GPC Aura GT.

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NOT NEW!









SansAmp GT2 (1993)

Affectionately referred to as the "desert island" pedal, the SansAmp GT2 is unchanged (except for the DC input very early on). Consistently in production since introduced, it enables you to "architecturally" create your own rig in seconds.

SansAmp Classic (1989)

B. Andrew Barta's unique invention was the catalyst for the whole "going direct" movement over 30 years ago. Since then, SansAmp has evolved into an extensive line of pedals and racks, as well as being the heart of our Fly Rig® Series. Of the pedal formats, the SansAmp Classic is the most sophisticated.

EXCITEMENT NEVER GETS OLD



SansAmp Bass Driver DI (1994)

Often unseen, it's hardly a secret that the SansAmp Bass Driver is the secret weapon behind mammoth rigs on arena stages around the globe. It is also widely recognized as a studio staple for virtually every genre, and will make any FOH engineer smile.

DOES SOMETHING HAVE TO BE "NEW" TO BE EXCITING?

In a world of planned obsolescence and constant upgrades, it's rare an electronic music-related product can survive a lengthy lifespan. Yet these 3, in particular, have done just that. (We have more, such as the MIDI Mouse since 1995, but let's stay focused on SansAmp.)

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