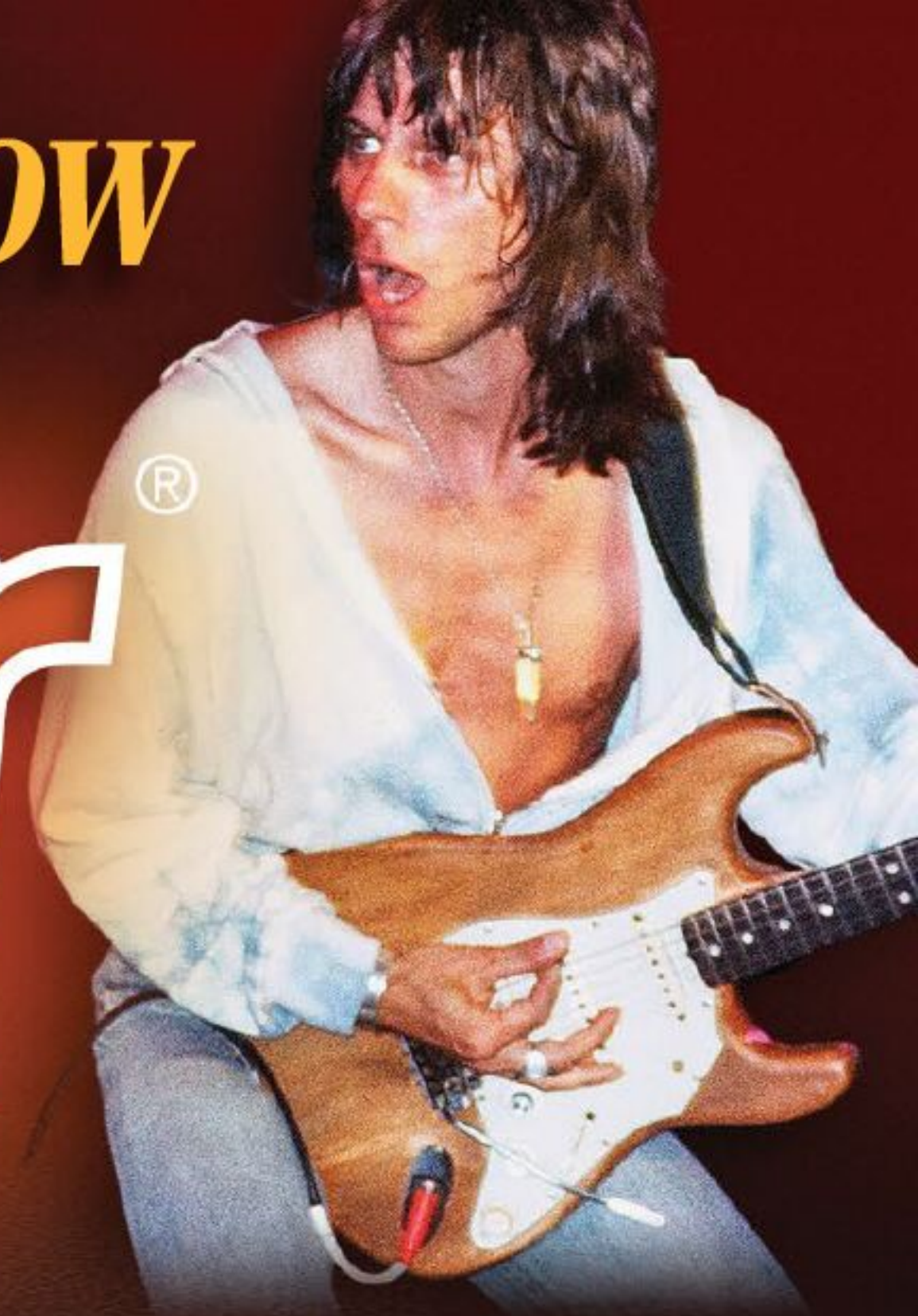


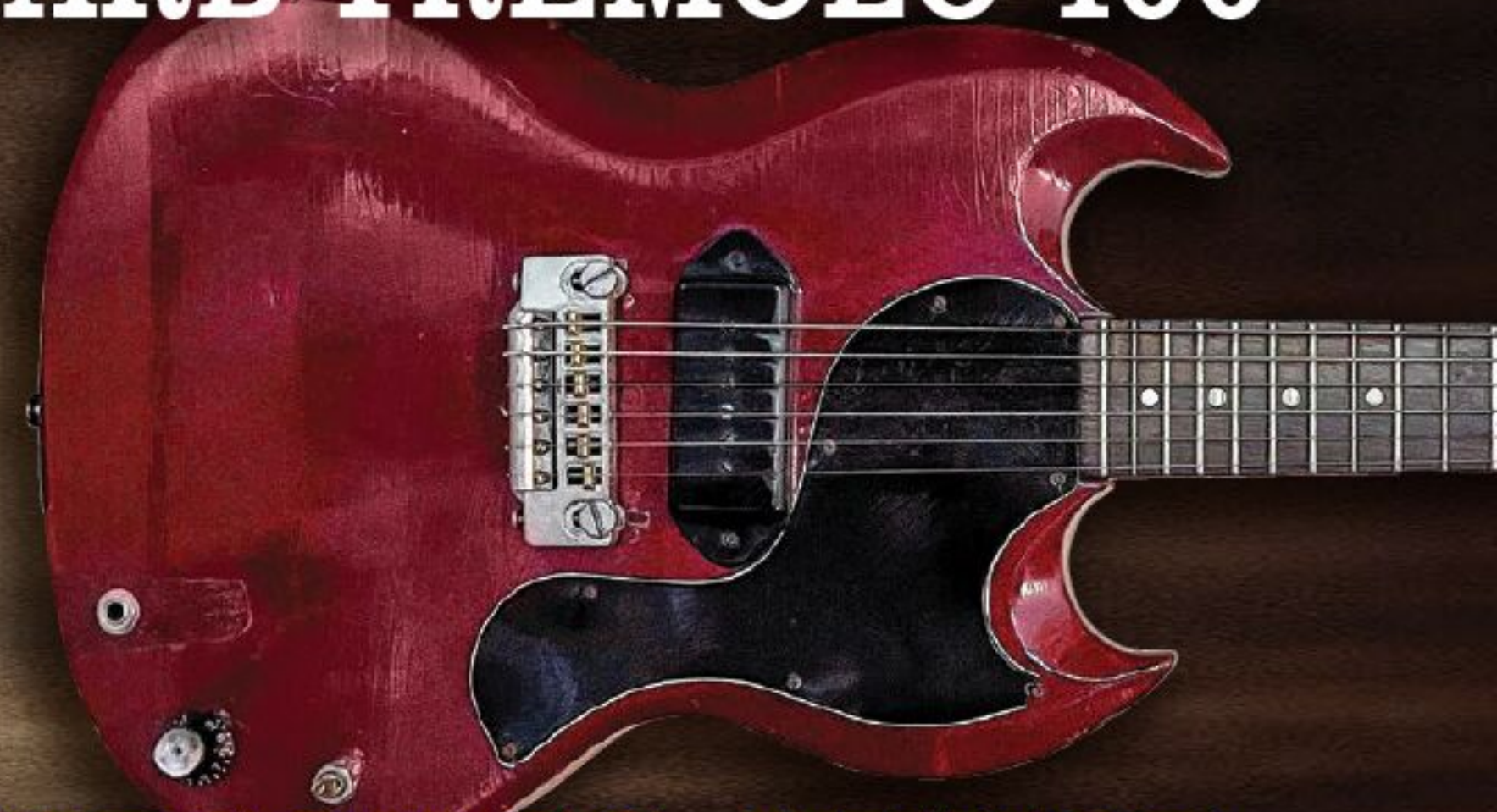
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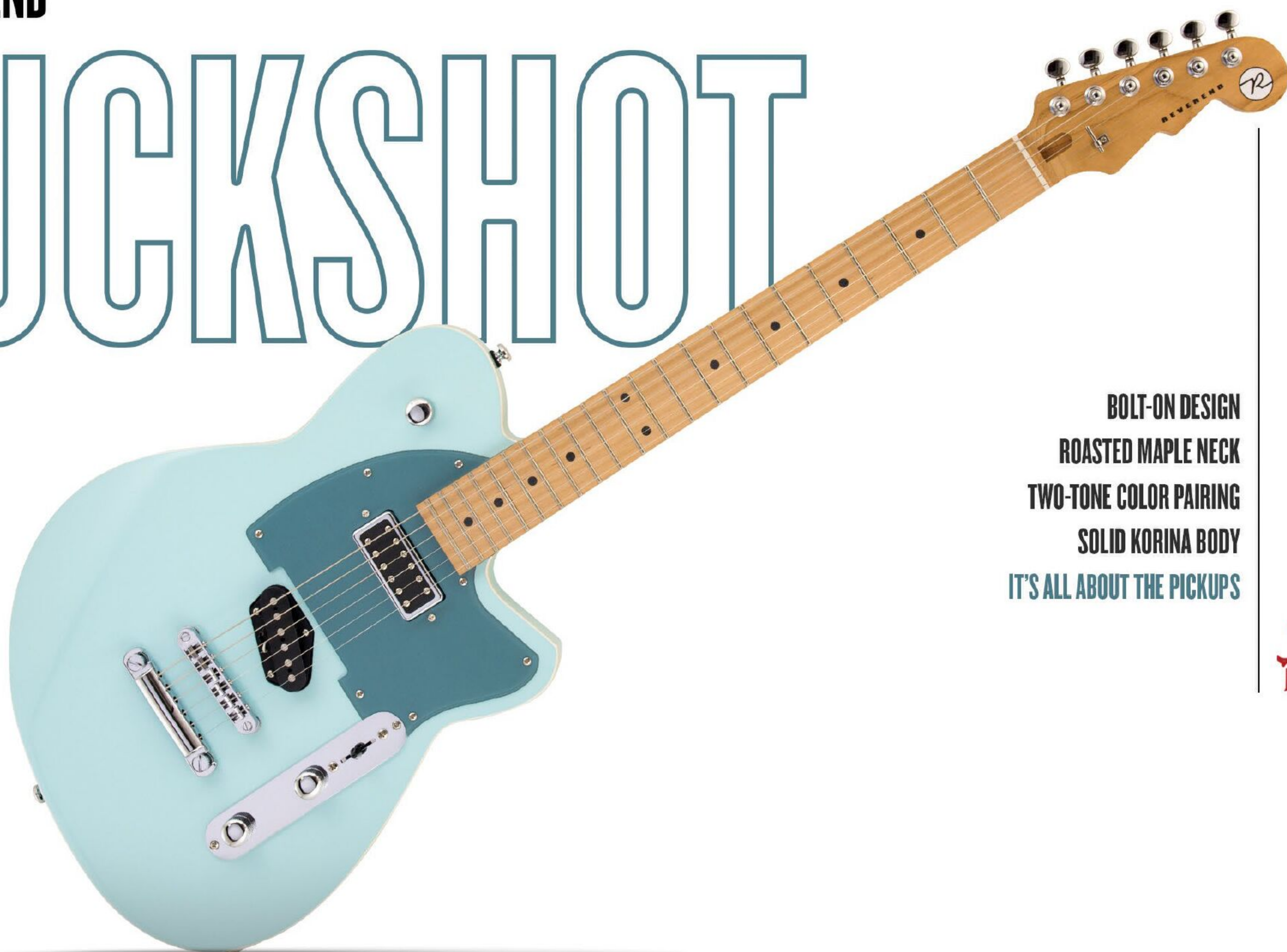
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IN MEMORIAM



DENNY LAINE

Denny Laine, best known for his affiliations with the Moody Blues and Paul McCartney and Wings, died December 5 after an extended battle with interstitial lung disease. He was 79.

Raised in Birmingham, England, Laine was the founding guitarist of the Moody Blues and sang lead on the band's first hit single, "Go Now," which became his signature song. He left the group after its debut album and was a member of Paul McCartney and Wings from 1971 through '81, where he played lead and rhythm guitar, keyboards, bass, and woodwinds while also singing lead and backing vocals. In concert, he often played an Ibanez doubleneck, and when McCartney moved to piano, Laine switched to bass, typically an early Fender Precision or Mustang. With McCartney, he co-wrote and arranged "No Words" for *Band On The Run*, the U.K. hits "Deliver Your Children" and "Mull of Kintyre," and the title track to 1978's *London Town*.

"Denny was Paul's right-hand man," said Laine's friend, Laurence Juber. "When I was a session musician in London, Denny recruited me to replace Jimmy McCulloch as Wings' lead guitarist in 1978. He was a compelling songwriter and performer – a rock authentic, having a deep soulfulness infused with a folk sensibility."

As a solo artist, Laine recorded 10 albums between 1973 and 2008. From '97 through '02, he played in an all-star aggregation called World Classic Rockers.

Laine was interviewed in the March '97 issue of *VG*. He is survived by his wife, Elizabeth. – **Willie G. Moseley**



ROBBEN FORD

Sky Above The Note

The new album from Robben Ford is packed with beautiful music and the indelible ingredients that for decades have made him a force on guitar. *Night In The City* was recorded at City Winery in Nashville in 2021 and pre-dates his big move to London. It's a live snapshot showcasing

Ford's passion for music, his back catalog, and the evolution of an artist in his prime.

Making a live recording can be a nightmare. How did *Night In The City* happen?

I wanted to represent the *Pure* album and inject other things. I was able to put

together a perfect band, but we only had one day of rehearsal and by the end of it, I was exhausted. On the day of the gig, we had to set up and sound check while we were still rehearsing (laughs).

We played two sets that night; the first was difficult because I was nervous; I hadn't played or been on the road because of Covid. I worked on charts to make sure everyone had the right things, but I was exhausted for the first set, so everything on the record was from the second show. By then, everybody understood the material way better. We made corrections between sets, and the second show felt great, which shows on the recording. Thank God we recorded both (laughs).

What exactly didn't you like about the first set?

I only heard the bad things (laughs). Surely, there were some good things, but I only heard the bad. All I could hear was what was wrong (laughs).

What's the effect we hear on the solo to "At The Apollo?"

That's an Electro-Harmonix POG, which gives an octave above, an octave below, and the actual note. It sounds like a steel drum. I love that sound.

What other gear did you use that night?

I had a 1960 Tele, a '54 Les Paul converted to '59 setup, and my PRS Robben Ford model. I also used my Epiphone, but because the album only has half the material we played, it didn't appear.

How about amps?

I was playing through my Little Walter 110-watt head and my Dumble 2x12 cab. I also used the AmbiKab, by Komet Amplification, which is a send for effects, so they're all on one side. Doing that for the first time on a live recording caused me stress, and it sounds and feels different (laughs)! So many things are challenging when doing a live recording.

What kind of gain pedal are you using?

The Zendrive, by Love Pedal. It's the only overdrive pedal I've used for 30 years. I've tried a lot of others and used others for recording, but on a gig I go back to the Zen Drive.

How are you liking your PRS signature model?

Paul Smith and I have continued to work on the guitar, and we've finally come to the place where I love it. I'm a vintage guy, and it's hard to get things to work on a new guitar, but the pickups are what separates the comfort from the discomfort.

What do you look for in a pickup?

Something organic happens to them over time. I like transparency and a singing quality. People talk about headroom in amplifiers, but pickups have headroom, too; a pickup can limit the headroom of an amplifier. I like to have a lot of sky above the note and around the note. I like it to be clear and clean, and I like it to sound like wood and metal; I want to *hear* the wood. Vintage instruments can give you that, but new ones can't because they haven't opened up. That's why vintage is so good. It takes time.

Why two sax players instead of keyboards?

Saxophones give chord color with a windy quality – reedy-sounding and not as percussive as piano or guitar. Jeff Coffin and Jovan Quallo gave me that extra harmonic value. I like playing with another guitar player, but two saxophones and a couple of guys who can really play and improvise on their own – I love that! They played their asses off! For me, keyboards take up too much room in the sonic spectrum.

What's on your schedule for 2024?

I'm putting a band together in London, and I'll be touring with a supergroup in the summer. I don't want to work all the time. I want to enjoy myself, play with great people, make great music, and not work too hard doing it (laughs). – **Oscar Jordan**

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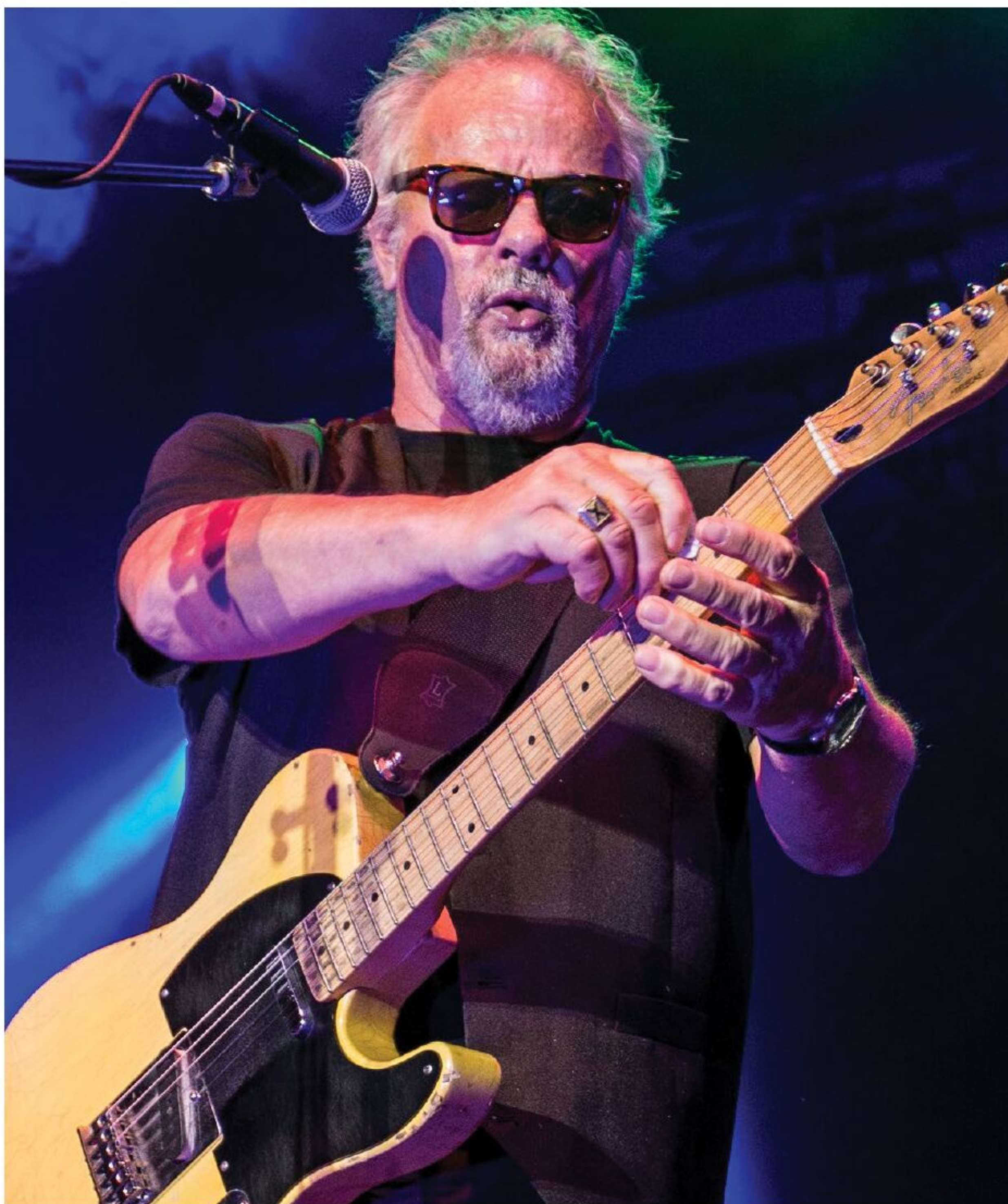
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MYLES GOODWYN

1948-2023

Myles Goodwyn, co-founder, creative force, and guitarist/frontman in April Wine, died December 3. He was 75 and while no cause of death has been reported, for years he lived with Type 2 diabetes.

Goodwyn grew up in Waverly, Nova Scotia, and was influenced by an uncle who was a gigging musician; at age six, his father gifted him a Norma copy of a Gibson Hummingbird that he used to play along to records by country artists, Elvis Presley, and Little Richard.

As a high-schooler, he played in cover bands with bassist/friend Jim Henman

"We played nearly every day after school in a little woodshed at my parents house," Henman recalled. "We started learning songs while my kid brother, Bob, would play drums on our mom's sugar and flower cans."

When friends formed a band to play a school variety show, Henman convinced his father to buy a bass so he and Myles could join, Myles borrowing Jim's Eko electric. The group continued as a dance band doing Top 10 hits, each making \$15 every weekend night. At 16, Goodwyn wrote

his first song, "You Won't Dance With Me," which later became a hit for April Wine.

In 1969, Henman asked his cousins, Ritchie and David Henman, to start a band doing originals and touring Northern Canada. They agreed, but only if Jim could talk Goodwyn into being part of it. That fall, they became April Wine, which recorded two albums of mostly original music.

Jim Henman left the group while rehearsing for the second album, and Myles replaced him with Jimmy Clench. While recording the third album, *Electric Jewels*, Ritchie and David left the band and were replaced by Jerry Mercer (drums), and Gary Moffet (guitar). Supporting the album, they toured Canada coast to coast, building an audience on the strength of their live show.

In his September '20 interview with VG, Goodwyn said the band's next three albums, *Electric Jewels*, *Stand Back*, and *The Whole World's Goin' Crazy* saw them progress as songwriters and musicians; on the latter, Goodwyn assumed

producer duties for what became the first album in Canadian history to have platinum advanced sales orders.

"After *On Record*, I saw what was going on with us compared to how other bands – The Who, early Beatles, and of course Led Zepelin – were making great albums that were not just a collection of singles," he said. "By the time we started making *Electric Jewels*, I was starting to understand that we could do things besides radio singles. After *Stand Back* and *The Whole World's Goin' Crazy*, the band really came together."

In '77, they added third guitarist Brian Greenway and signed to Capitol Records before beginning work on *First Glance*, the album that broadened their U.S. audience with the hit single, "Roller."

Goodwyn first met Greenway in '72, when the latter was in another band that toured parts of Canada with April Wine.

"They were the hot band in Montreal, and I really wanted to join them," Greenway recalled.

It almost happened when Goodwyn hired

Moffett; wanting a bigger live sound for the summer '77 tour, Goodwyn called Greenway again.

"I jumped at the chance, of course, and Myles said if it went well, I'd become a permanent member," he added. "By October, I was full-time and we went to do *First Glance*."

Their follow-up, *The Nature of the Beast*, was co-produced by Mike Stone, who'd worked with Queen. It proved to be band's biggest album in terms of acclaim and sales, reaching double platinum status in Canada, platinum in the U.S. with the hit "Just Between You and Me" reaching #25 in the fall of '81.

In 2002, Goodwyn received the SOCAN National Achievement Award, in '08 he was recognized with the East Coast Music Lifetime Achievement Award, and in '10 was inducted to the Canadian Music Hall of Fame.

In 2016, Goodwyn released *Myles Goodwyn and Friends Of The Blues*, which received a JUNO nomination for Blues Recording of the Year and won an ECMA for Blues Recording of the Year. The follow-up, *Friends Of The Blues 2*, won the same blues category in '20.

Goodwyn's final performance with April Wine happened in March, 2023, in Truro, Nova Scotia. He continued to write, record, and perform in an acoustic quartet with Jim Henman, John Chaisson, and Steve Gaetz.

"Myles inspired future generations of musicians," Henman said of his friend. "His music still gets daily airplay across Canada, and the band he fronted until 2023 continues to do 30-plus shows every year. His fans now span two generations and his contributions are part of the evolution of Canadian music."

"Having played acoustically with Myles this last six years was like going back 60 years. Myles and I co-wrote and recorded some great songs recorded some great songs, like 'Some of These Children' and our first Christmas song, 'Ring The Bells,' and had started a few more I promised him I would finish. We shared a lot of time talking about life, like old friends do. There's a hole in my heart, but it's full of memories."

"Myles wrote classic hits in Canada and the world for almost two decades," said Greenway. "That's something to be proud of, and his legacy will remain every time one of his songs gets airplay. *Everyone* has a memory tied to an April Wine song, including me. I was a fan that got to join his dream band and have a career lasting 50 years plus. We still perform to appreciative audiences in Canada and the U.S. His memory will live on."

In September of '23, April Wine was granted a spot on the Canadian Walk of Fame, and Goodwyn was named to the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame. – **Ward Meeker**

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STEVEN WILSON

Guitar Harmony

Porcupine Tree's Steven Wilson isn't a guitar hero, but his playing fits his compositions perfectly – as exemplified by his latest solo offering, *The Harmony Codex*. Showing once again that Wilson refuses to be confined to a single style, he exhibits elements of prog, electronic, folk, and rock. We talked with him about how he approaches guitar and gear.

How did you decide on guitars for *The Harmony Codex*?

Well, on the half that uses guitar as a major element, the song that springs to mind is the most-traditional – “What Life Brings” – which is very old-school, acoustic, and dream-like; it has a sense of nostalgia. I worked very hard on the acoustic tracks, so there are five

or six channels of guitar – some played on a Nashville-strung, some on regular guitar, there's picked guitar, there's strummed guitar. It's a Phil Spector-esque wall of acoustics on that track, which is the only track where I play the guitar solo.

So, while we've got a bunch of guitar solos on the record, a lot were played by other people including Niko Tsonev and David Kollar.

I have a very rudimentary approach to playing guitar. I'm nowhere near as technically gifted as Niko or David or other players I've had in my band over the years, but I do have a sound and a personality that I think is instantly recognizable. I play very few notes, but I play them as an extension of the main vocal melody because I'm the songwriter. That's something people overlook; when you've written a song

and you step up to play the guitar solo, you're much more in touch with the melodic center of the song than some superstar session player who comes along to blow your mind with their solo. Sometimes, that's what you want.

Years ago, one of the very few times I got hired to be a session guitar player was for Trevor Horn, the famous producer. We got to the point where I knew there was going to be a solo and I said, “What kind of solo do you want?” And he said, “Just play the vocal melody.” I never forgot that, because it's hammering home the hook of the vocal melody. So, although it's not quite that, in my mind it's a natural extension of the vocal melody. I think that's a sensibility unique to the songwriter.

Kurt Cobain was the king of solos based on the vocal melody.

Yes, that's a good example. And also the songwriter and singer – classic.

What is amp rig?

I'm not a purist. I use all three approaches – I'm happy to plug a guitar directly into the computer and try messing about with plug-ins and then re-amp through a real amp and mic the cab. And I'm also very happy to plug into an amp and just mic it up, or I'm happy to use modeling. I used all of them on the record.

I do have a couple of amps in the studio – a Hughes & Kettner TubeMeister 5 that I get a lot of tones out of. Sounds great. And, I've got an old Supro valve amp with a spring reverb which I use for some things.

A lot of the sounds on the album that people might think are keyboards are actually guitars that have been *heavily* processed and mutated through long chains of plug-ins.

What about guitars?

These days, I find myself mostly reaching for my '63 Telecaster Custom, which I bought about five years ago from the Fender Showroom and fell in love with. Now, I'm not really somebody who is a fetishist when it comes to guitars. I've had a lot of them over the years and I've treated most of them like tools for my songwriting and production. But this is the exception. I totally fell in love with this guitar, totally bonded with it. It looks great, it sounds great, it plays great. I would say 75 percent of the guitar parts were played on it. But also, my old Paul Reed Smith goldtop if I want a slightly warmer tone.

Acoustic-wise, I've got the Nashville-strung Ovation I use a lot and has a beautifully crystal-line sound. You can hear that on “Economies of Scale” and “What Life Brings.” And there's a bunch of other acoustics I've collected over the years – Takamine, Paul Reed Smith. There is a *lot* of acoustic on this record. – **Greg Prato**

Steven Wilson: Joe Del Tufo.



NOAH ZACHARIN

Simple Pleasures

While some regard folk guitar as a relatively simple style, Noah Zacharin is a seriously agile fingerpicker. Also a fine singer/songwriter, his album, *Points of Light*, uses his six-string dexterity to serve both solo acoustic numbers and full-band pieces.

We chatted with the guitarist from his house in a forest in Canada – a place he poetically calls The Big Lonely.

Your fingerpicking is quite advanced.

My first big influence was John Fahey, a true visionary and pioneer. I loved his power, dissonance, and hypnotic beauty. Under his sway, I'd turn [tuning] pegs at random until I heard a chord I liked, and then – often lying on my back in the dark – would play an hour or so of pure music. I was also deeply affected by the gentle and deceptively “simple” playing of Mississippi John Hurt and Bert Jansch, who I adored.

On “Ten Tons of Road,” your guitar work actually lifts up the lyrics.

When we went to record that, [producer] Danny Greenspoon suggested I repeat the instrumental part at the end. I was reluctant, not wishing to play what I'd already played, but he insisted, so I added a variant double-stop I'd never thought of before, and a new arrangement was born, some 25 years after writing the song.

Some songs on *Points of Light* are solo guitar, others are with a full band.

Before the sessions, Danny and I discussed production extensively. The virtually unlimited number of tracks and ease that parts can be edited is a seductive siren. Happily, we were in solid agreement that we'd add nothing that might distract from the song or potentially derail its propulsion. That made it possible to keep my arrangements as played in solo performance. It's also a testament to the other musicians' tasteful playing and Danny's mixing.

You're a Collings endorser.

Yes, I am proud and grateful to be one of their artists. I know a number of players in town who

bought OMss simply because of what they heard mine deliver. My first was a 1998 OM2 which quickly acquired a crack on the top – courtesy of a Canadian winter and a Canadian writer's carelessness – that I believed made it sing. It was stolen from my home and replaced by a 2004 OM2H, which has long been my main stage guitar. I also play a '71 J-50, a '75 Tele thinline, a Froggy Bottom, Collings 000, and a gorgeous Lowden O-25. I also purchased a '47 ES-150 and Lowden's The Baritone a little more recently. One can never have too many guitars (laughs)!

“Been A Long Day” was recorded with a 1956 J-45.

That's Danny's guitar. He brought it for me to try, but because the neck is so different from my Collings, I wasn't sure I could play it well. We recorded takes on both and ended up selecting one played on the Gibson. A few months before that, he'd been evaluating two J-45s of similar vintage. I encouraged him to buy one, assuring him I'd take it off his hands if he didn't like it. While on tour in Texas, he texted to say he was going to trade it for the other, a '57, unless I wanted it. Of course I said, “Yes,” and now look forward to finding what songs are inside that senior citizen.

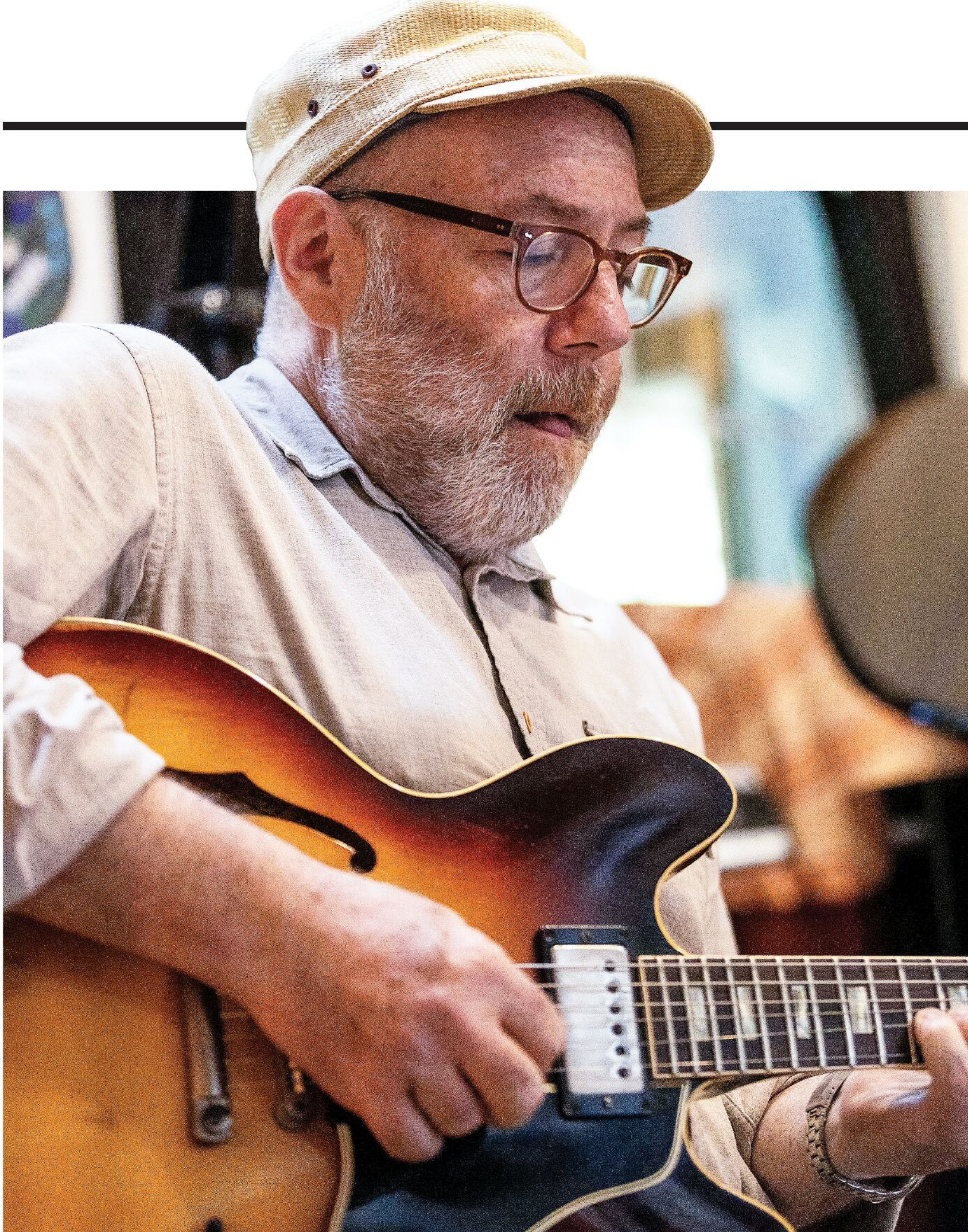
What kind of pickup system do you use onstage?

An L.R. Baggs M1 soundhole pickup into a Baggs Para Acoustic DI EQ. The path from there depends on the venue. For house concerts and smaller venues, I use a Fishman Loudbox Artist amp; for larger ones, I rely on the gear and skills of the sound man.

Canada has such a rich tradition of folk music, from Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, and Leonard Cohen to Gordon Lightfoot, Ian & Sylvia, Jesse Winchester, and Stan Rogers. What is intrinsically Canadian in your music?

As for Jesse Winchester, we Montrealers proudly claim him as one of our own. And Stan Rogers, I got to see him with the trio at The Yellow Door in Montreal – a small coffeehouse and my early training ground. I bought the great *Between the Breaks* LP from him that night.

But I grew up and remain a devotee of the music known as Americana, though I live in a forest midway between Ottawa and Toronto, which seems a quintessential Canadian location. The working title for one of my future projects is “In the Big Lonely.” I can't speak for my fellow Canadians, but would posit that big sky, falling stars, great distances, and long winter's isolation, purity, and power can't help but shape a shared psyche. In the big lonely, we turn to music. In the big lonely, I sing to the coyotes and bluejays. – **Pete Prown**



ADAM LEVY

Staying Spry

As an accomplished sideman, Adam Levy is famous for supplying charismatic guitar sounds for Nora Jones and Tracy Chapman. On his latest solo album, *Spry*, Levy positions his trusty 335 at the forefront, creating evocative jazz-based rainy-day tunes filled with melancholy and depth. *Spry* is saturated with atmosphere and artistic refinement. He recently told VG all about it.

How did you begin writing for a jazz trio?

I was writing a lot of solo guitar things and little etudes for myself, trying to get my solo-guitar thing together. But, two years into the lockdown, all I wanted to do was play with people. I stopped working on solo music and started working on music for *Spry*. There had

to be a bass line, some melody, some harmony, and a pulse to it.

When I told our drummer, Joey Baron, about the project, he said, "I hope there's going to be some blues, because I really love the way you play the blues."

I had not been thinking of this as a blues record; I was inspired more by Julian Lage and his trio, Bill Frisell on his *Valentine* record, and Wolfgang Muthspiel. But, that conversation with Joey pushed me to think about tunes like "Mitchum" and "And They All Sang." I like the blues, but I hadn't thought of it.

There's a beautiful sense of space on *Spry*. You're in no rush.

That's been a part of my style, naturally, for a lot of years. I wanted a lot of space because

I needed to leave room for the other guys to do stuff, not crowd the conversation. I want to leave room for the listener and their ideas and imagination.

Why a 335?

Part of it is all the years I spent with one. I got one when I was 13 and thought they looked cool. I told my guitar teacher I might want to be a studio guitarist, so he recommended a 335. I was in high school in the early '80s, learning from records, and nobody played a 335; I liked Jeff Beck and Tom Petty, so I could never get the sound when I played along. I was trying to learn "Unchained" on a 335 (laughs).

My tastes changed, and by the time I had money to buy another guitar, I'd put so many years into the 335 that I didn't know how to make anything else sound good. I do *now*, but you can plug a 335 into anything and it's all there. A Tele or a Strat takes a different touch and you have to think about the relationship between the guitar and the amp. What you *wouldn't* want with a 335 is a dark-sounding amp. I used a Blues Junior on the album and what I generally do is turn the Bass down.

You play acoustic on "There's Always One."

That's a Collings DS2H, a 12-fret. I made the demos on acoustic, and the day before the session, Joey said, "Oh, you're going to make an acoustic record?" I told him, "Uh, no (laughs)." I hadn't thought of it as an acoustic record, but after he said that I thought there might be a couple tunes that'd be better that way.

Another tune, "Sidewalk Chalk," is acoustic, and I used a combination of the K&K Pure Mini pickup running into a Rupert Neve DI. They also used a stereo pair of Telefunken M60 mics in an XY pattern, so it's a blend of the pickup and the microphone sound. There's a bit of bleed everywhere so it sounds like you're in the room with us. I wanted to invite people in.

Does "Mitchum" have anything to do with Robert Mitchum, and are you using a tremolo pedal?

It definitely has to do with Robert Mitchum (laughs), who I think is cool as f**k! So much charisma. The song is 100 percent Robert Mitchum.

As for the sound, I was getting dirt from a JHS Overdrive Preamp into a Jam pedals Delay Llama and a Harmonious Monk.

Any chance of the trio touring?

That would be a dream come true. Joey lives overseas, I'm in Brooklyn, and the bass player, Larry Grenadier, lives a couple of hours north of me in Kingston, New York. I'm hoping we can do some shows in Europe. I was so focused on the record that I didn't really think through the odds of us playing gigs together, but I really would love to do it. — **Oscar Jordan**



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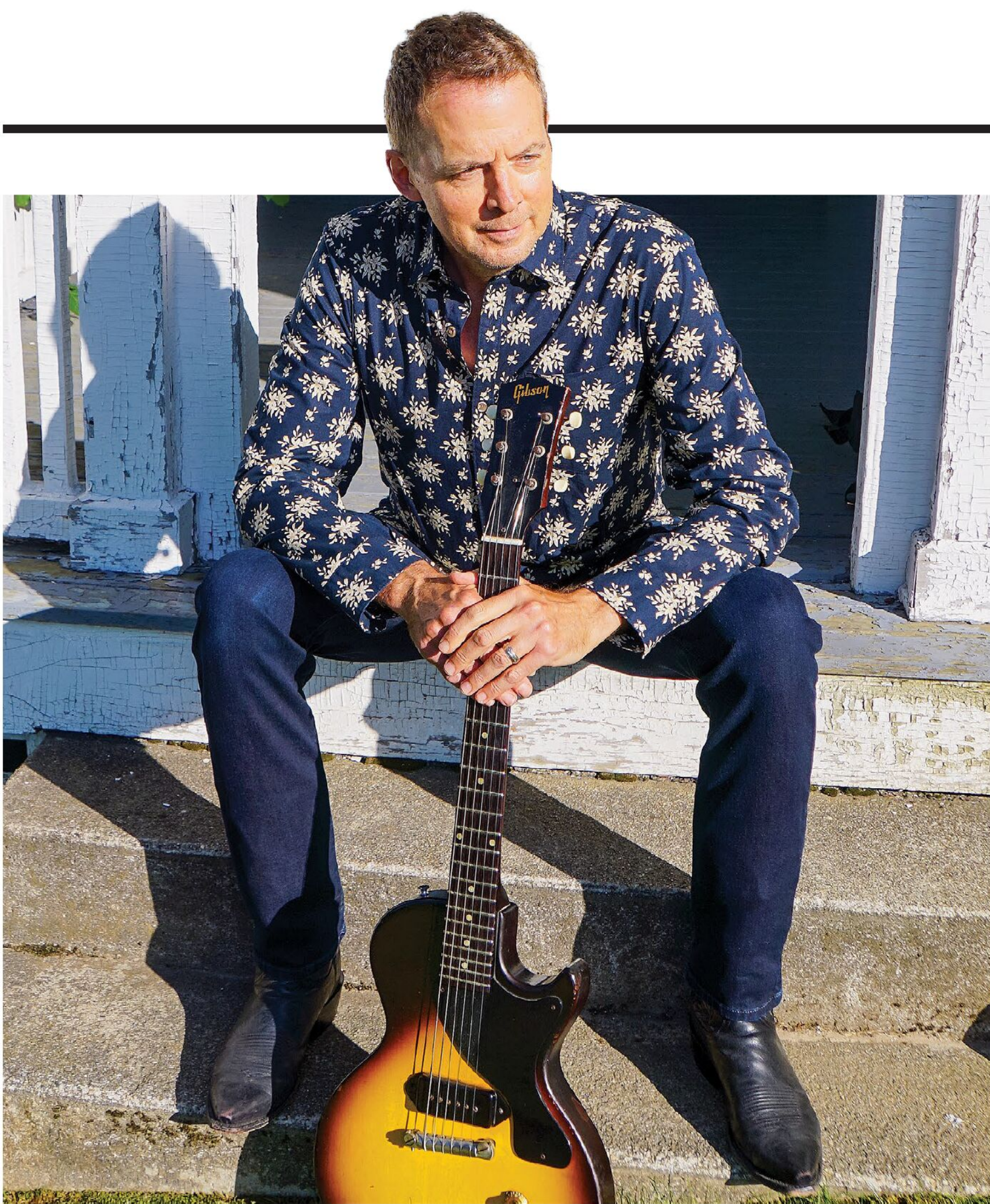
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JULIEN KASPER

Non-Traditional Jazz

Berklee School of Music guitar professor Julien Kasper isn't fond of having his music called "fusion," especially given the connotation it carries.

"I've never liked hearing it used when describing my music," he said. "I understand the designation when listeners connect my roots back to electric Miles Davis, Jeff Beck, Hendrix, Mahavishnu, and John Scofield. But I think of my music as being very personal, soulful, instrumental guitar music that really doesn't sound like anything anybody else is creating."

At Berklee, Kasper developed three performance labs – Creative Applications, Jimi Hendrix lab, and Jeff Beck lab. He's also the instructor for two classes in the Performance division – Harmonic Considerations in Improvisation and Recital Workshop for Performance Majors. His students have included

Andrea Balestra (VG, January '21) and Clay Cook (Zac Brown Band).

"Most-special are the students with whom I establish a lifetime mentoring relationship," he noted. "We stay in touch, become friends, and they send their work to me. It's incredibly rewarding to see and hear them evolve."

Kasper's most-recent album is a self-titled instrumental showcase that utilizes several guitars. Released in November '23, during its recording, he meticulously focused on which guitar was appropriate for each song.

"My most-gigged guitar for the past 13 years has been a D'Pergo Signature Limited Strat copy," he detailed. "For club gigs, I usually bring that and a korina Gibson SG or a Fender Custom Shop Tele. For concerts and recording sessions, I'll bring out the vintage guitars."

The vintage pieces include a few improb-

able models for Kasper's style of complicated, progressive jazz.

"I used my '63 SG Special on 'An Upraised Hand' and 'Chazzskinnabaal,' 'The Wolf,' 'Big Dismal,' and 'King Cake' all feature my Strat, which has a '54 neck on a '57 body. That's my number one guitar. 'Oceanides' has a worn and beautiful-sounding '66 Strat I've owned since I was 18, and I played a Custom Shop Telecaster Custom on 'Upon a Green Hill.' The D'Pergo makes an appearance for the second solo on 'King Cake.'"

As for amplifiers, a '72 Marshall 100-watt Super Lead into two vintage 4x12s are the only rig heard on the first four tracks. On later songs, he used a Marshall 1974X, a '69 50-watt Marshall into a 4x12, and a '64 Vox AC10.

Some of the album's most-intriguing sounds include distorted tremolo on the opener, "The Wolf," and a snarling treble in the left speaker on "King Cake."

"That gets your attention, doesn't it?" he queried. "It's a Way Huge Atreides, which is a crazy pedal that seems like a combination fuzz, octave, ring modulator, and I don't know what. It's a blast to play, as it's very sensitive to picking dynamics and accuracy. It'll blow the wine glasses right off the table at a jazz club."

Much of the album is improvisational.

"Every tune has one or more solo sections during which I – or we – improvise over the form or a set of similar changes written for improvisation. 'Chazzskinnabaal' has the open improvisation at the beginning, which is a duet between me and our drummer, Zac Casher, and there's a group improvisation in the middle followed by another guitar solo with drums. The rubato intro to 'Upon a Green Hill' is a group improvisation."

Opposite from improvisation are note-for-note unison arrangements.

"As much improv as there is on the album, there's also a lot of concerted material," Kasper averred. "Everything is charted and I write out bass lines that are doubled down the octave, in counterpoint, or in harmony with me. Usually, when those lines are played with the bass, and Zac will play them, too. This band has minimal rehearsal time, so committing so many details to memory is challenging. That being said, this trio has played together for a long time, so the level of musical empathy is very high and many rhythmic hits happen spontaneously."

Kasper looks forward to touring to support the album, especially in Europe.

"Even though this isn't jazz in the traditional sense, we are all experienced jazz musicians," he said. "No tune is ever the same from one night to the next." – **Willie G. Moseley VG**

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MIRROR IMAGE

'72 Marshall "NARB" Tremolo 100

BY DAVE HUNTER

When is a Marshall not a Marshall? When it's a Narb, of course. Long a fascinating footnote to the company's history, this alternative brand arose as something of a bet between colleagues.

For all the undeniable classics produced by Jim Marshall and his right-hand men Ken Bran and Dudley Craven, it seems the company's marketing and branding were made up as it went along. Like so many names that became big in the formative years of guitar amplification – Fender among them – Marshall, Bran, and Craven got their start thanks to a heavy dose of the do-it-yourself ethos, building the first amps in the back of Marshall's music shop in the West London suburb of Hanwell. And even after Marshall's 50- and 100-watt stacks had planted their formidable flag in British rock-guitar tone, the team maintained an irreverently DIY approach.

One of the quirkier results of that from-the-hip approach to amp design, manufacture, and marketing was this rare 1972 Narb head, a big 100-watt lead amp with the serial number 14 (from a run of 14).

In the December '23 issue, we discussed Marshall's adoption of the Park name to supply amps to a dealer in the north of England that was otherwise frozen out of

a new distribution deal. It has often been assumed that Narb amps were another bid to circumvent Rose-Morris' grip on the market, but, Tucker Beirne – a Marshall collector and vintage-amp enthusiast – has learned differently.

"I recently spoke with Mitch Colby about the Narb," said Beirne, referring to the noted tech, collector, and amp historian who worked at Marshall's U.S. distributor for 32 years before launching his Colby amp line in the early 2010s. "He told me that Jim Marshall and Ken Bran went to the pub one evening. After having a few beers and chatting about the company, Ken told Jim that he didn't believe amps sold because of the brand name 'Marshall,' but in fact they sold because of the sound. Jim disagreed, and after a few more beers, Ken made a bet that the same amplifier design would sell just as well under another name.

"Shortly thereafter, Marshall produced a line of amps under the Narb name, which is Bran spelled backward, an ode to one of the founding designers at Marshall. This is only a story, though, Mitch admitted, and



1972 MARSHALL "NARB" TREMOLO 100

- Preamp tubes: four ECC83 (aka 12AX7)
- Output tubes: four EL34
- Rectifier: solid state
- Controls: Volume II, Volume I, Treble, Middle, Bass, tremolo Speed and Intensity
- Output: approximately 100 watts RMS

most people are still under the impression it was done to get around Rose-Morris."

This Narb Tremolo 100 is essentially the

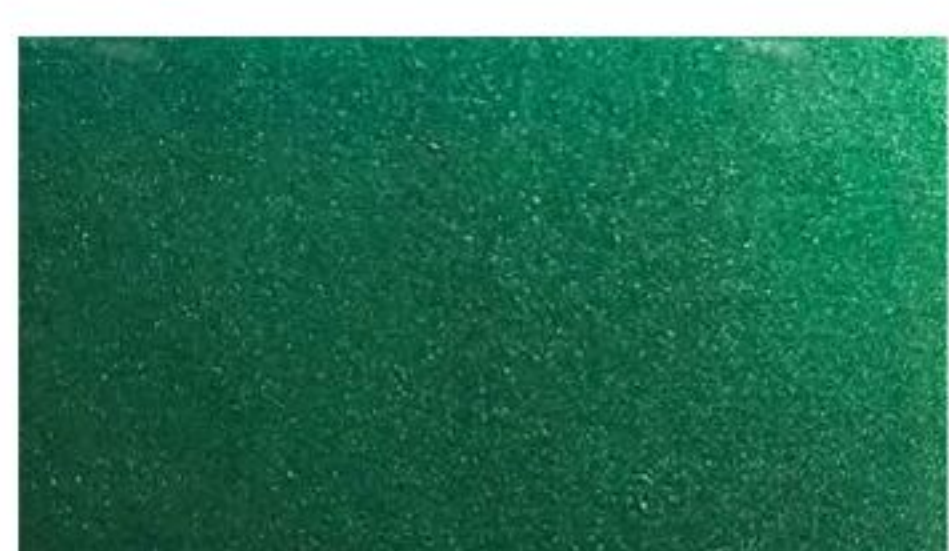
Photos and amp courtesy of Tucker Beirne/Scruff's Vintage Guitars.

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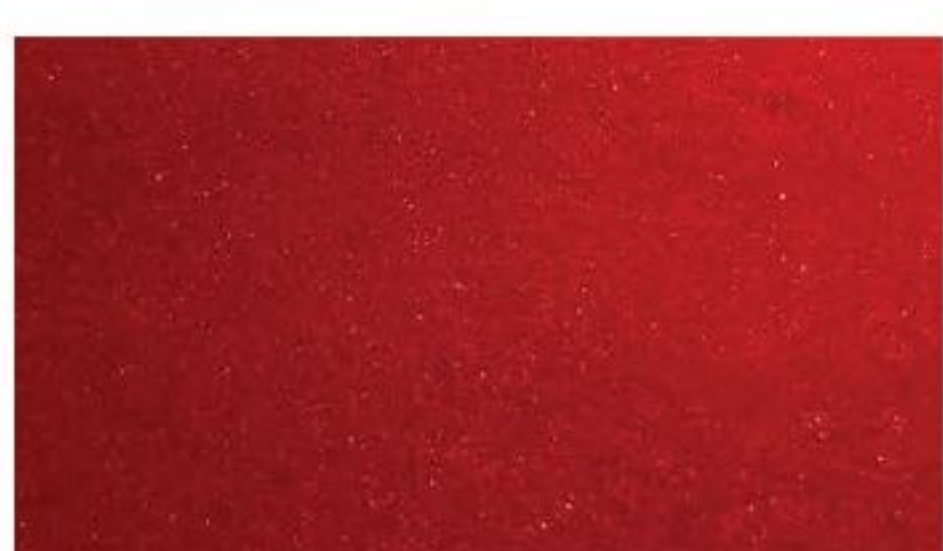
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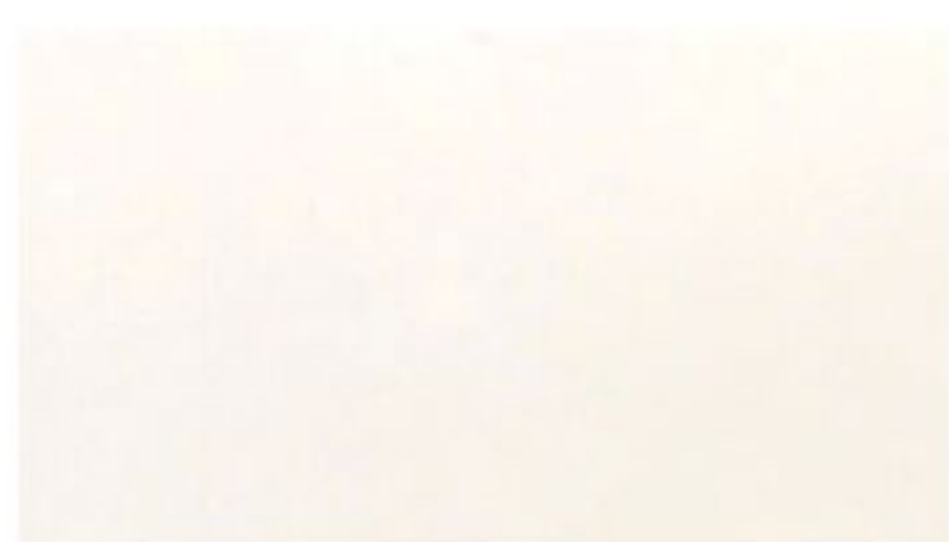
CAPRI ORANGE



DAPHNE BLUE



CHARCOAL FROST



ARCTIC WHITE



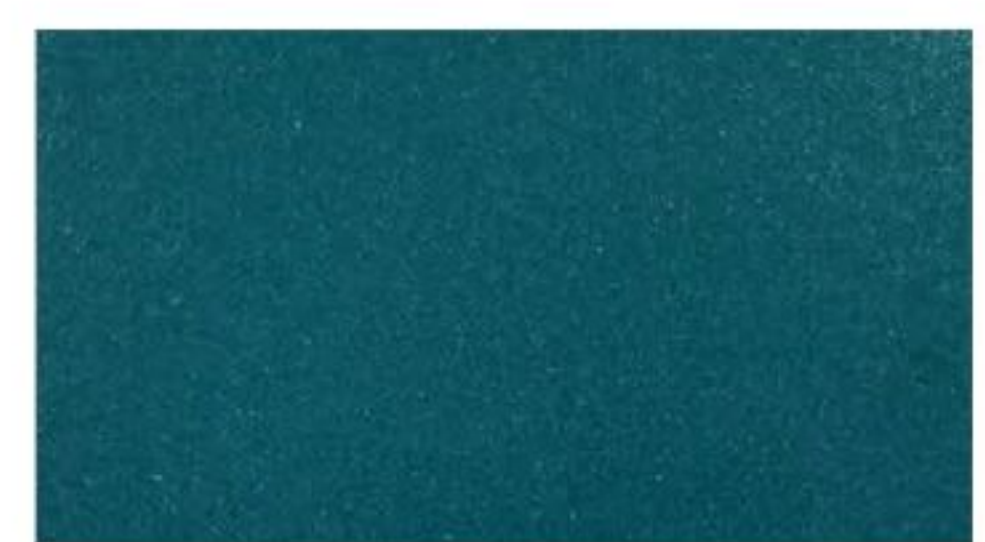
BURGUNDY MIST



BUTTERSCOTCH BLONDE



CANDY COLA



OCEAN TURQUOISE



LAKE PLACID BLUE



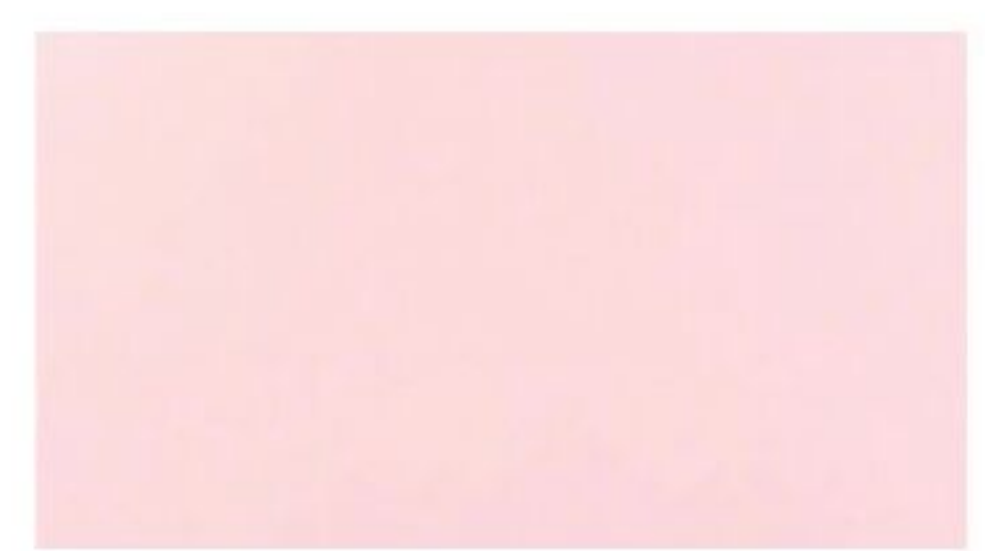
INCA SILVER



SEA FOAM GREEN



SHORELINE GOLD

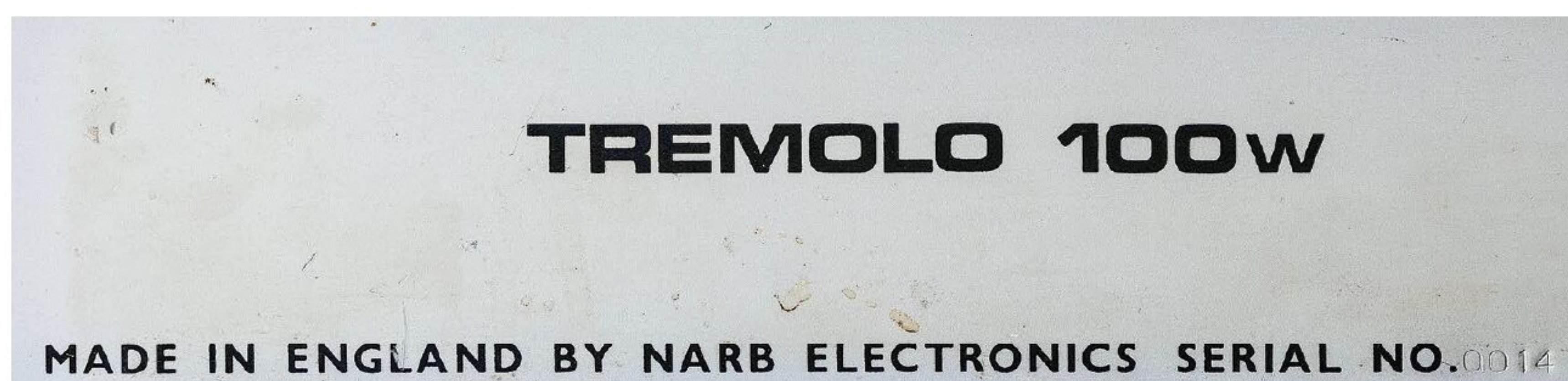


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The last of its line; serial number 0014 is just visible beneath the “Tremolo 100W” model name.

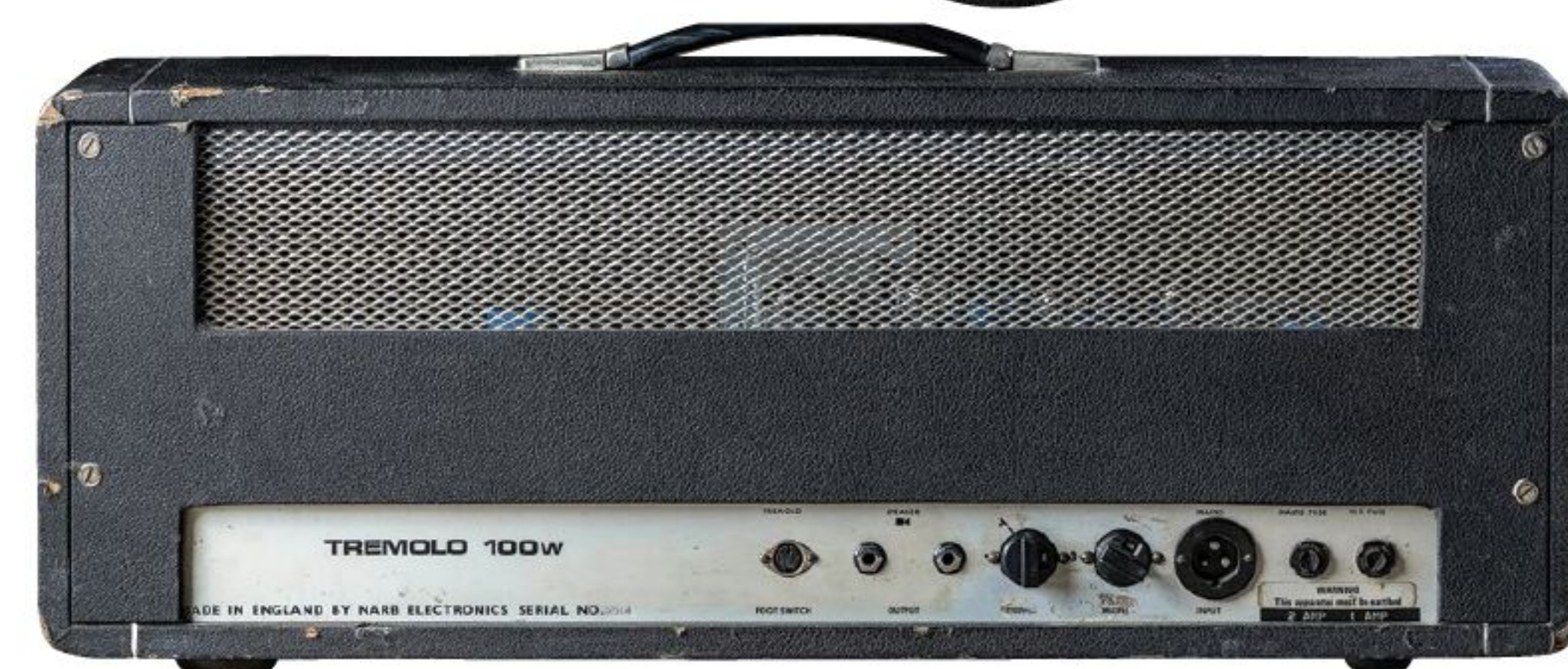
Marshall JMP 1959T Super Tremolo of the same era, a version of the legendary Super Lead. Not only does it carry the requisite four EL34 output tubes for a whopping 100 watts of power, plus a fourth ECC83 preamp tube (rather than the three of most Marshalls) to enable the tremolo effect, but the circuit appears point-for-point the same, too.

The construction exhibits all the late-metal-panel traits that will have a vintage-Marshall fanatic drooling, defined by the post-plexi cosmetics and high-voltage

Other than some replaced electrolytic capacitors, this Narb is impressively clean and original, with all of its desirable pale-yellow Mullard “mustard cap” signal caps.

circuits that retained the desirable hand wiring and Mullard “mustard caps” that have helped to make the late-’60s and early-’70s amps so hotly pursued. Just a year or so after this amp was manufactured, Marshall changed to printed circuit board (PCB) construction, resulting in amps that most acknowledge still sounded great, but which have undeniably been less-collectible over the years.

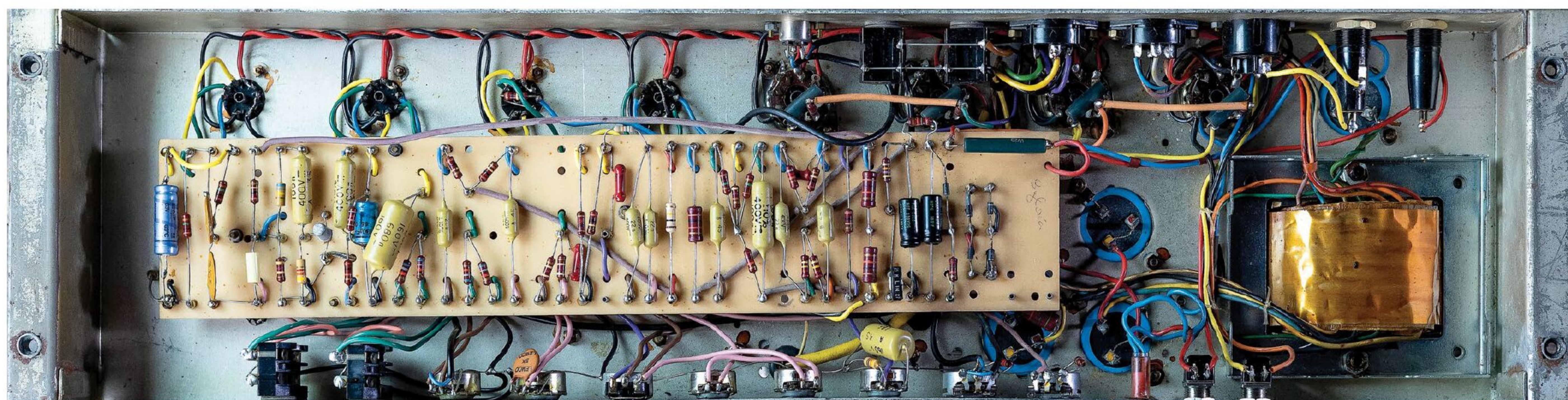
Given the scarcity of this Narb Tremolo 100, however, its collectibility could never be in doubt. A longtime fanatic of vintage Marshalls in general, Beirne tells VG he’d sought one out for many years before locating this example in England and purchasing it from its original owner.

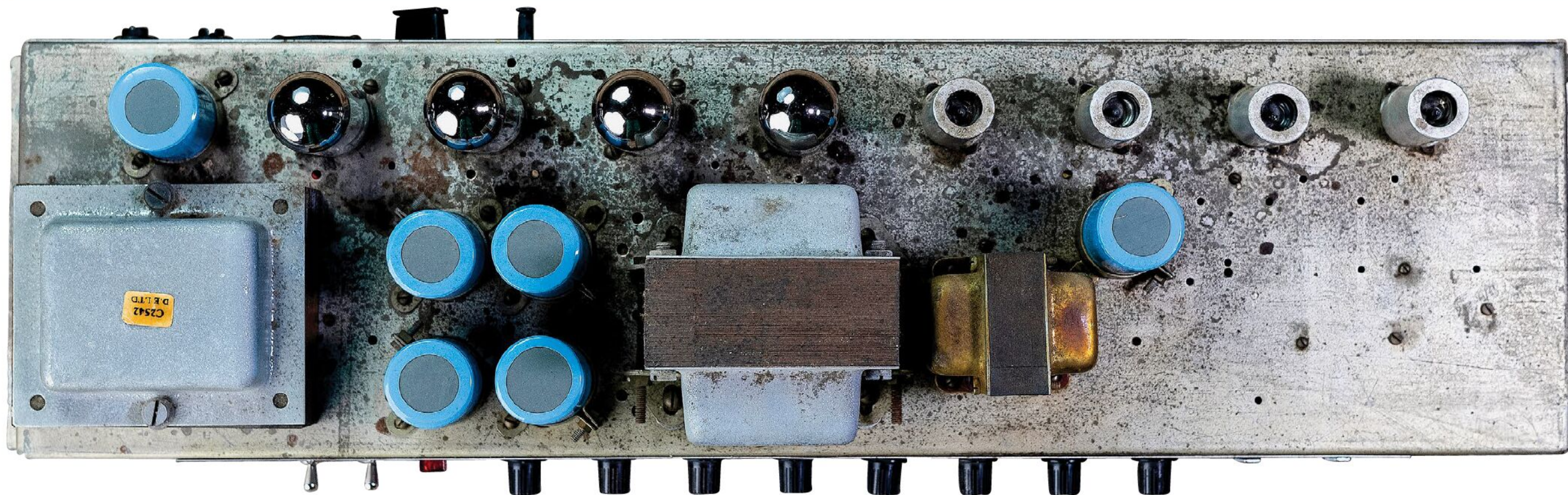


A quartet of big EL34 tubes generates the Narb’s 100-watt output, while four ECC83 (a.k.a.) 12AX7 preamp tubes cover gain, tremolo, and phase-inverter duties.

“The parts used in these amps are left over from the Marshall production line,” he said. “The knobs were also used on very early JTM45s.

“Marshall’s 1959T Super Tremolo and this Narb Tremolo 100 are exactly the same, but don’t sound the same!” Beirne adds, though he also concedes that no two vintage Marshalls ever sound quite the same. “The tone is amazing – this amp is loud, with a booming bottom-end and tight, crisp high-end. It’s extremely responsive and fun to play. Dynamics are a breeze, and the amp responds relatively well to effects





pedals but becomes a little muddy when you add gain. It's teetering on the edge of unstable... and in my opinion those amps are the most musical."

As the photos reveal, it has had several electrolytic capacitors (a.k.a. filter capacitors) replaced to keep it functional, but is otherwise clean and impressively original—evidence of a relatively stress-free life. The cabinet is the same as that which housed the 1959T Super Tremolo of the time and is covered in the same black bronco vinyl,

but rather than the Marshall's brushed-gold aluminum control panel, the Narb's is one of simple silver metal with black screened legends. A similar piece of thin silver metal printed in block capitals forms the amp's logo plate, in place of the graceful white "Marshall" script. Silver and white cabinet string and piping also replace the Marshall's gold.

For all that, though, as Ken Bran posited, it's how an amp sounds that matters most, and Beirne says this one sounds fantastic.

Other than cosmetic elements and the name, from chassis to transformers to filter capacitors, this Narb Tremolo 100 is identical to Marshall's 1972 JMP 1959T Super Tremolo head.

Then again, when players in 1972 went looking for "the Marshall sound," not many were talked into buying a Bran. Which is to say, it looks like Ken lost the bet, and Bran amps never came close to outselling Marshalls, though it was hardly a level playing field given that so few were produced. **VG**

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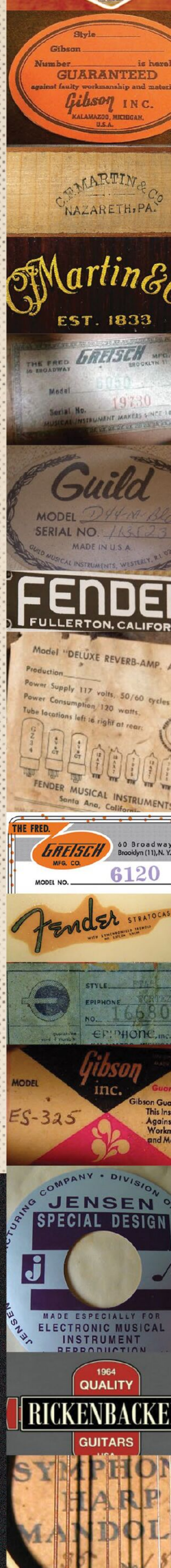
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They might not seem to have a ton in common aside from first names. J Mascis, Dinosaur Jr.'s co-founder and guitarist developed a style equal parts guitar heroics and left-side-of-the-dial insouciance. In Uncle Tupelo, Jay Farrar helped popularize the alt-country movement by merging influences from Doug Sahm to The Stooges.

But that might be where the divergence ends and the convergence begins, as both are behind some of the most-influential indie albums of the late 20th century. Both also continue to tour and release music (Farrar

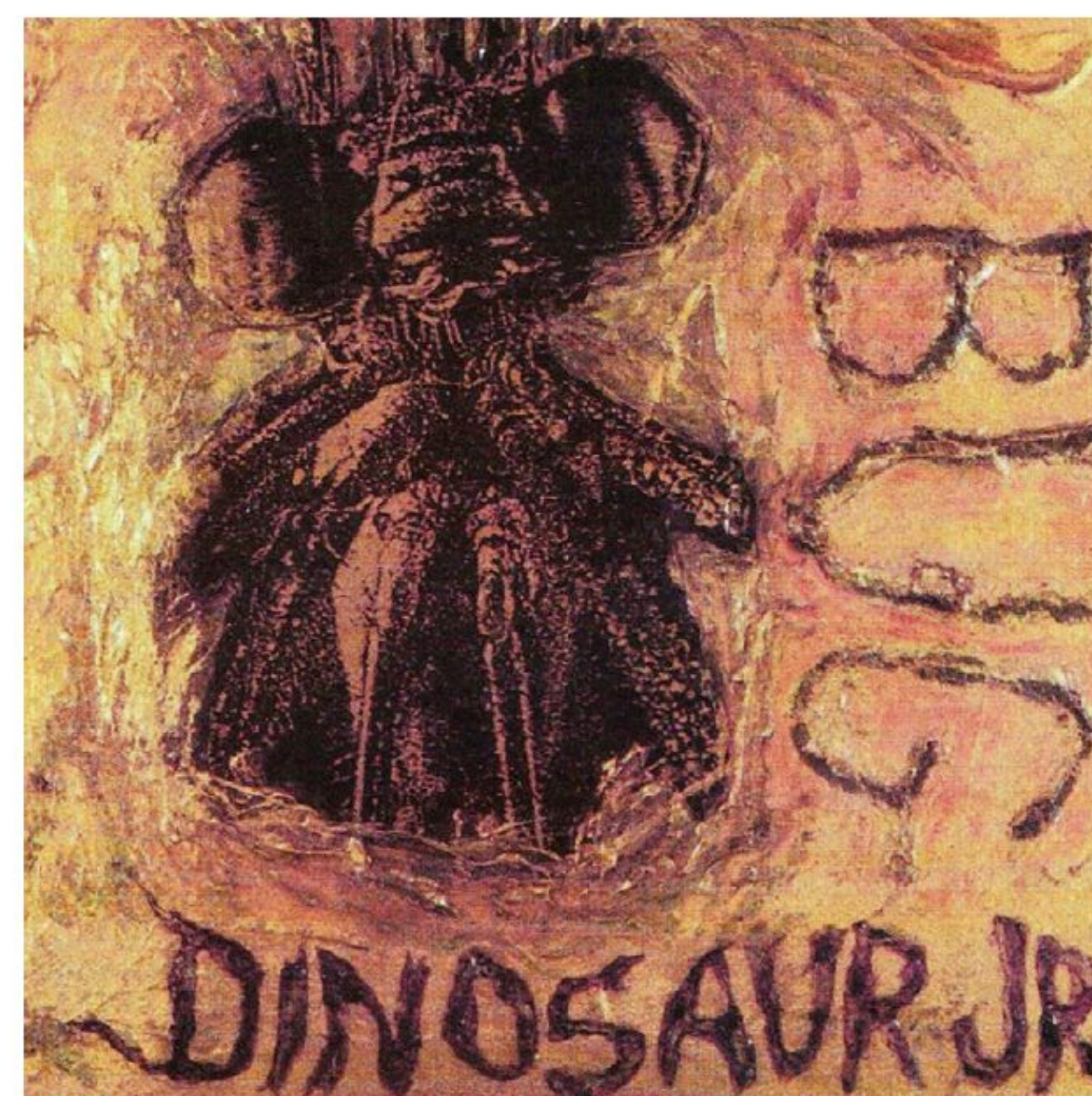
with Son Volt). The two even shared producers back in the day.

That's where Sean Slade and a certain SG Junior offer another common thread.

Now an associate professor at Berklee Col-

UNCLE TUPELO

NO DEPRESSION



Uncle Tupelo's *No Depression* and Dinosaur Jr.'s *Bug* are both indie-rock classics. For a time, the former (borrowed from the title of a Carter Family tune) was used to label the subgenre today more widely known as "alt country" or "Americana."

lege of Music, Slade and business partner Paul Kolderie were proprietors of Boston's Fort Apache studio. Their credits included records by The Pixies, Radiohead, Hole, and Warren Zevon, among many others. Slade and Kolderie were also in the control room when Dinosaur Jr. and Uncle Tupelo laid down *Bug* (1988) and *No Depression* (1990), respectively. Today, those albums are pillars of indie rock – and Slade's SG Junior featured on both.

Mascis encountered the guitar when Dinosaur Jr. entered Fort Apache to record *Bug* in '88.

"I'm pretty sure it was sitting on a stand," Slade recalls. "The other one I owned at that time was a '56 TV model with a single cutaway. [Mascis] gravitated toward the SG Junior. He plugged it in and started to play, and that's where the name came from, because he turned around and he handed it back to me and goes, 'That guitar plays instant rock.'"

Thus dubbed by the notoriously taciturn Mascis, the guitar appeared on *Bug*, though its role has been overstated.

"It was only for a song or two," Slade says, noting that Mascis still favored his iconic Jazzmasters. "So, all that has been somewhat

inflated or exaggerated over the years. He might have used it as an overdub guitar in 'Freak Scene,' but it's not the main guitar."

Equally apocryphal are certain accounts of how Uncle Tupelo came to work with Slade and Kolderie – and with Instant Rock. Slade pushes back on the notion that Uncle Tupelo (which sometimes covered "Freak Scene" in its live sets) journeyed to the mean streets of Boston from their home in southern Illinois because they were so taken with *Bug*.

"I know that they were interested in working with us because of the Dinosaur Jr. thing, but it never was explicit," Slade begins before addressing the role of Instant Rock. "We had this guitar and we knew it sounded great. And the idea was 'Oh, this would sound really good for the loud guitar parts.'"

Not to say Farrar didn't find an affinity for Instant Rock. Quoted in Greg Kot's 2004 biography of Wilco (the post-Uncle Tupelo band formed by Farrar's former bandmate, Jeff Tweedy), *Wilco: Learning How to Die*, Slade said when Farrar "...had that guitar in his hands, there was a recklessness

and looseness there that you never could have imagined."

As for how Slade came to own the instrument, it was a photo of his guitar hero, Chris Spedding, with an SG Junior that convinced him it was the axe for him.

"I bought it at Cambridge Music," he remembers. "It was on display in back of the counter, and I stood there for five minutes, being completely ignored by the clerks. I looked uncool or something."

Eventually, Slade convinced staff to take his \$325

Instant Rock's case is festooned with stickers from Dinosaur Jr., Buffalo Tom, Radiohead, and Slade's old Stones-influenced bar band, The Roys. But his favorite, which he feels best sums up the guitar, is the "Rocky!" sticker from Nelson Rockefeller's 1968 Presidential campaign.

and the Junior went on to serve in his band, The Sex Execs, before semi-retirement at Fort Apache. As a gigging instrument, the Junior suffered the indignity of having a chunk of its mahogany body broken off around the output jack. Jim Mouradian, a guitar tech working out of Cambridge Music, came to the rescue.

"He took a piece of wood and very artfully placed it in there and then replicated the color as best he could," Slade explains.

Mouradian also replaced the stock stop-tail with an adjustable bridge. Aside from solving the guitar's intonation problems, Slade is convinced the brass saddles contribute to its tone. Other than that, the Junior is the same as when Slade bought it, down to the original tuners and P-90, whose overtones Slade describes as "magical."

Noting, too, the guitar's long-missing Volume knob, he distills Instant Rock's magic: "It hasn't been there for years, but there's no reason to have it because all you got to do is turn it up all the way anyway." – **Dennis Pernu**



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Price Guide

By Alan Greenwood & Ram W. Tuli



1961 Fender Precision Bass

YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND.	
			LOW	HIGH
1970s	Conrad White Styrene (1280)	Solidbody	\$450	\$600
1966	EKO Barracuda VI	335 style	\$675	\$900
1965	Epiphone Coronet (Solidbody)	Custom color	\$6,000	\$8,000
1965	Epiphone FT 110 Frontier		\$5,125	\$6,625
1998	Epiphone Riviera			
	12-String Reissue (Korea)	Mini-Hums	\$550	\$700
2008	ESP LTD EC-GTA Guitarsonist	100 made	\$1,500	\$2,000
2010	Fender 50th Anniversary			
	Jazz Limited Edition		\$2,000	\$3,000
2009	Fender Blues Junior			
	Amp (III)(IV)/LE	Green	\$500	\$650
2003	Fender '59 Esquire	Relic	\$3,000	\$4,000
1960	Fender Esquire Custom	Custom Color	\$55,000	\$75,000
1961	Fender Precision Bass	Sunburst	\$13,000	\$18,000
2009	Fender Road Worn '60s Stratocaster	Aged finish	\$600	\$800
2003	Fender Stratocaster XII		\$1,000	\$1,375
2013	Fender Total Tone			
	'65 Stratocaster Relic		\$3,000	\$4,000
1969	Fender Telecaster	Pink Paisley	\$16,000	\$19,000
2006	Fender James Burton Telecaster	Paisley flames	\$1,250	\$1,625
1965	Gibson C-1 S Petite Classical		\$700	\$950
1941	Gibson ES-300N	Natural, 1 pickup	\$4,500	\$6,000
1963	Gibson Firebird III	Pastel Colors	\$50,000	\$75,000
2000	Gibson Les Paul Custom Historic '68	Black	\$3,500	\$4,500
2007	Gibson Les Paul Money	Figured top	\$1,500	\$2,200
2010	Gibson Randy Scruggs			
	Advanced Jumbo Limited Edition		\$3,000	\$4,000
1964	Guild Duane Eddy Standard DE-400	Sunburst	\$4,750	\$6,125
1980s	Guild Model Five	10 watts, ss	\$175	\$275
1974	Hamer Standard	Pre-production, 20 made	\$15,000	\$20,000
1970s	John Hornby Skewes			
	& Co. Phaser PZ111		\$200	\$400
1960s	Kay K503, K504, K505	Small tube amps	\$475	\$750
2020	Kramer Pacer (Original Collection)		\$550	\$750
1961	Maestro GA-1 RT Reverb-Echo	8 watts, 1x8	\$625	\$900
1984	Marshall Model 1960A/			
	1960B 4x12 Speaker Cabinet	Rare color	\$850	\$1,300
1934	Martelle De Luxe		\$9,000	\$11,500
2009	Martin D-1E		\$850	\$1,125
1940	Martin F-5		\$5,500	\$7,000
2011	Martin OMCPA4 Sapele		\$1,375	\$1,750
1980	MXR Six Band EQ		\$175	\$200
1994	Ovation Custom Elite			
	Guitar Center 30th Anniversary	50 made	\$1,500	\$2,000
1992	Peavey Bluesman		\$250	\$350
1998	Peavey Ultra 112	60 watts	\$250	\$350
2015	PRS Custom 22 30th Anniversary Vine		\$2,000	\$2,500
1980s	Rocktron XDC		\$100	\$150
1933	Selmer Concert	gut strings	\$16,500	\$22,000
2013	Strymon Big Sky		\$350	\$450
1997	Taylor 422-R	Rosewood	\$1,500	\$2,000
1970s	Univox Effector	Solid Body Electric	\$650	\$850
1980s	Washburn Phaser PX:8		\$40	\$45
1976	Yamaha SG-500		\$750	\$975

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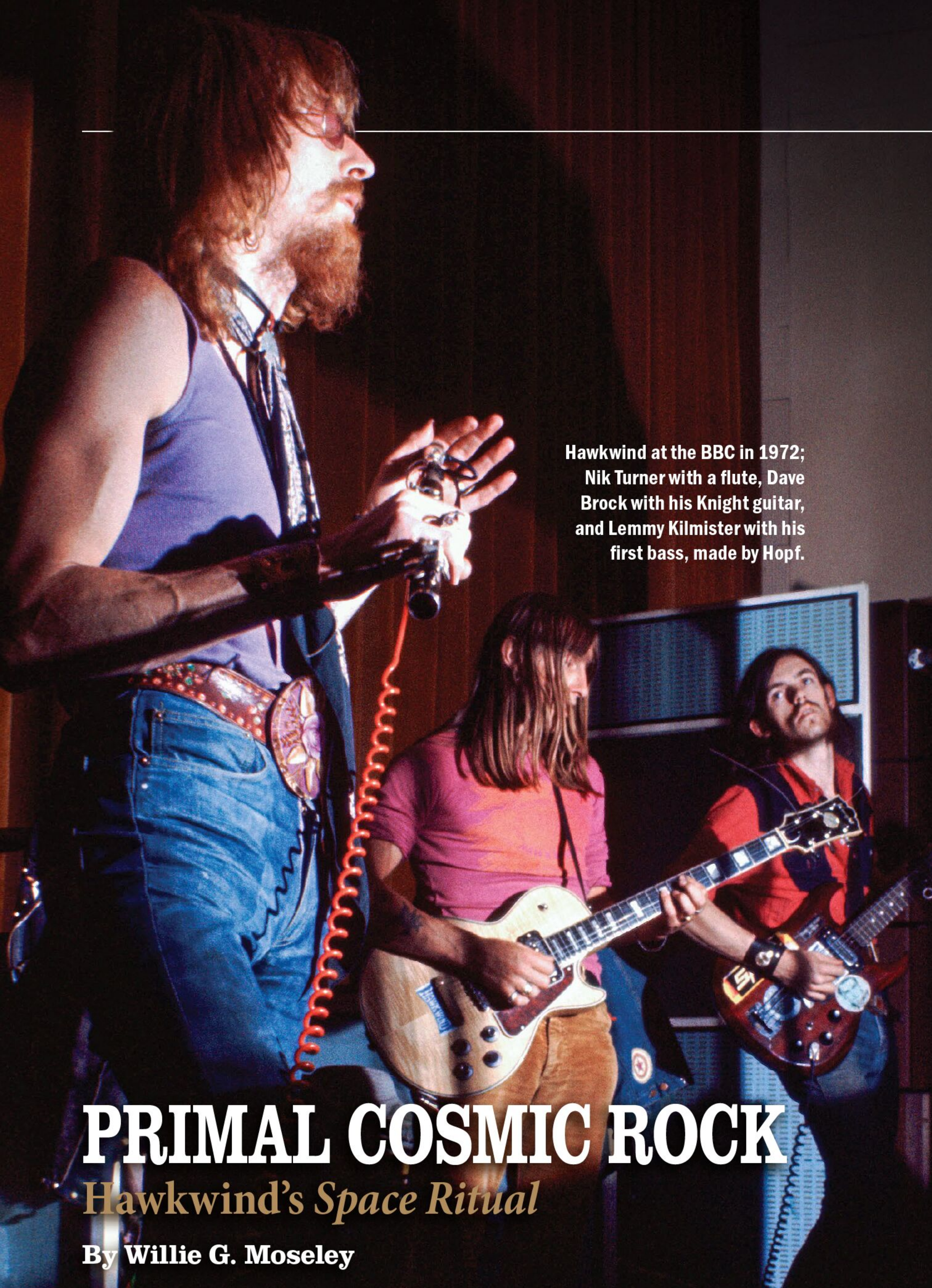
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Hawkwind at the BBC in 1972; Nik Turner with a flute, Dave Brock with his Knight guitar, and Lemmy Kilmister with his first bass, made by Hopf.

PRIMAL COSMIC ROCK

Hawkwind's *Space Ritual*

By Willie G. Moseley

Among the evolutionary tangents of London's pop-music scene in the late '60s were the original stylings of progressive rock, psychedelia, and what came to be known as "space rock." Bands such as Pink Floyd, the Beatles, and even the Rolling Stones dabbled in "spacey" sounds—think "2000 Light Years from Home" and "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds." Hawkwind, though, carried the banner loud and proud—and still does.

In the early 1960s, guitarist Dave Brock was known around London as a busker who briefly played in a duo with Eric Clapton before forming Hawkwind in '69. A product of its time, the band was part of the city's trendy psychedelic

scene (along with Floyd, T.Rex, Gong, and a few others), playing long jams alluding to science fiction and outer space, performed live as dynamic sensory experiences with light shows and costumed dancers.

Wishbone Ash guitarist Andy Powell recalls being part of the scene in the early '70s, though his band had virtually nothing in common, stylistically.

"Hawkwind and other bands were inspired by the San Francisco psychedelic movement," he said. "In the U.K., the performance-art movement started in '67 with the Crazy World of Arthur Brown—that 'god of hellfire' thing where he'd set his head on fire.

"We lived behind a venue called the Roundhouse," Powell said. "Hawkwind played there on occasion, and so did we. We also played one or two festivals with them."

With 1972's *Doremi Fasol Latido*, Hawkwind's classic lineup was in place—Brock on guitar and vocals, songwriter/singer Robert Calvert, Ian "Lemmy" Kilmister (bass and vocals), Nik Turner (sax, flute, and vocals), Dik Mik (audio generator and electronics), Del Dettmar (synthesizer) and Simon King (drums).

For the subsequent tour, Calvert collaborated with graphic artist Colin "Barney Bubbles" Fulcher to design an audio-visual production depicting the desolate nature of space travel. Brock's primary guitar was a modded Les Paul copy made by the British builder, Knight.

The Space Ritual Alive in Liverpool and London (a.k.a. *Space Ritual*) was culled from performances in Liverpool on December 22 and London eight nights later. Each was contiguous, with electronic sound effects, reverb-drenched bleeps, and behind-the-bridge guitar noodling from Brock providing innovative sonic segues.

Calvert injected several passages with dramatic spoken-word interludes and poetry recitations, accompanied by ambient noise and other effects, adding to the spacey authenticity of the performance; in the first line from the first soliloquy, he says, "I would rather the firestorms of atmospheres than this cruel descent from a thousand years of dreams into the starkness of the capsule."

Science-fiction writer Michael Moorcock was a fan of Hawkwind, and would occasionally join them onstage; Calvert pays homage to him on *Space Ritual* with potent readings of "Black Corridor" and the ominous "Sonic Attack," a broadcast of emergency instructions accompanied by a chattering synthesizer hovering in the background.

Brock's performance on *Space Ritual* is one of his best, roaring through the band's pile-driver presentation using punchy downstroke power chords that evoke a proto-punk sound. He also made liberal use of wah.

Hawkwind was the first band in which Lemmy played bass, starting with a German-made Hopf, then his first Rickenbacker. On occasion he'd use a Gibson Thunderbird, but preferred the Ricks.

"They're very good instruments for a guitar player turned bass player," he said of them in a 1994 interview with *VG*. "They've got very fast and skinny necks, which I like. Also, they've got a weird shape. I buy guitars as much for the look of 'em as for the playing."

Lemmy's melodic bass workout on "Lord of Light" and the quasi-boogie of "Orgone Accumulator" affirm that he didn't stray far

from his guitar stylings.

"I was used to playing chords," said the legendary bassist, who died in 2015. "I've got a very good sense of timing. When I went to bass, I didn't play 'strict' bass; I played a lot of open strings, a lot of chords. I do a lot of things you shouldn't do, which is great fun."

Space Ritual was released in May of 1973 and reached #9 in England, but barely dented the *Billboard* 200 in America, peaking at #179.

Lemmy was fired from Hawkwind in '75, after being busted for drugs at the Canadian border. Though he was on five albums, he wisecracked about never becoming an official member.

"I was still auditioning when I was fired, actually," he said. "They never told me I was in the band, and I played with Hawkwind for four and a half years!"

He then founded Motörhead and became known as the godfather of heavy metal. Today, Brock still fronts Hawkwind at age 82; for decades, he has been the sole original member, overseeing the band's 35 studio and 13 live albums.

Hawkwind music has always been an acquired taste, but *Space Ritual* stands as an innovative, powerful live concept album, despite its lyrical themes. With all due respect to the title of a Be Bop Deluxe song, this ain't no honeymoon on Mars. **VG**



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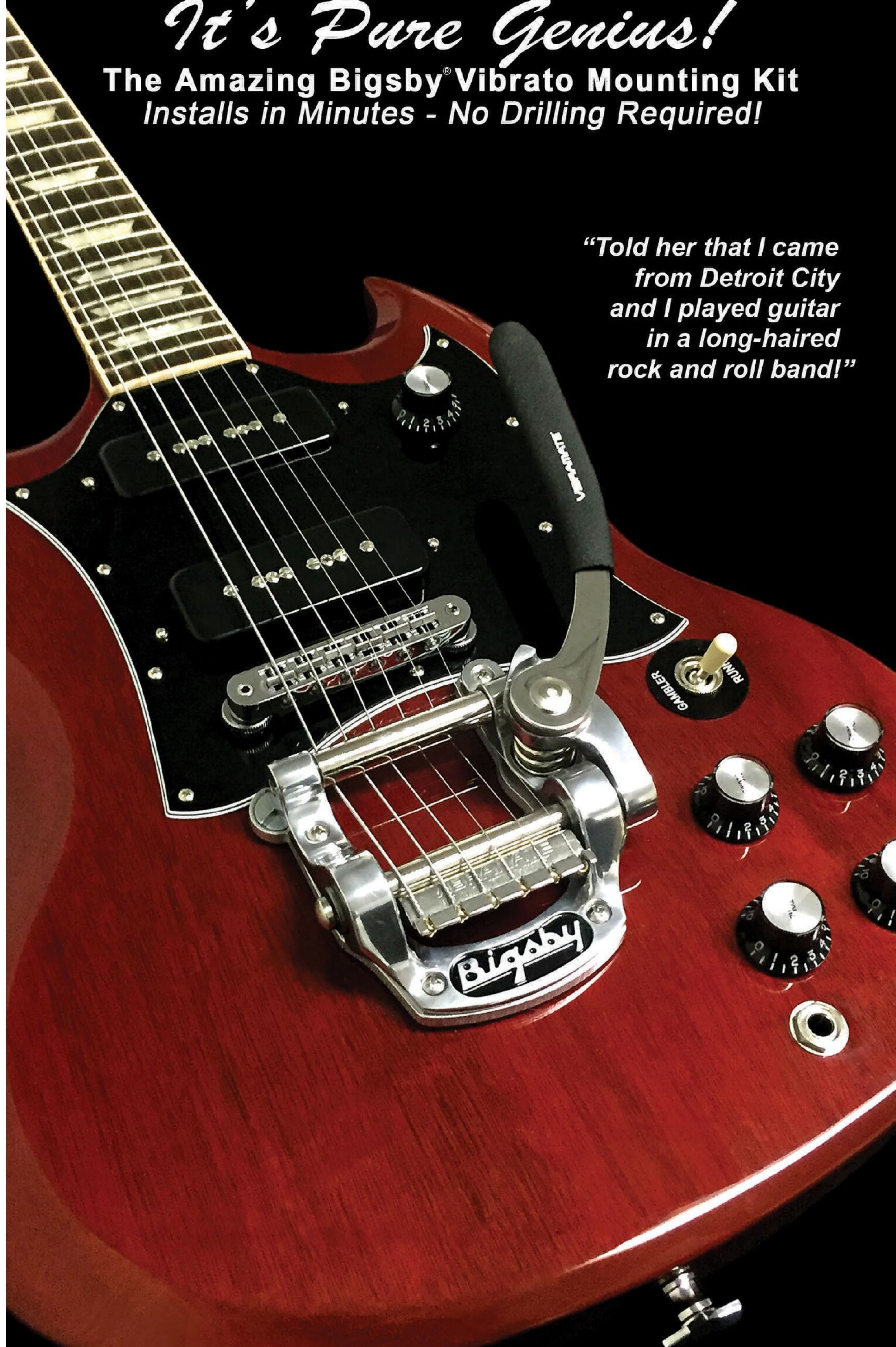
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Beck in 1976 with his modded '54 Strat.

JEFF BECK

Blow By Blow

By Wolf Marshall

What is jazz? What is rock? These questions perpetually confound and divide music experts and listeners. Similar spirited debates have raged over “jazz-rock fusion.” While there is no definition, Jeff Beck fans know the answer is *Blow by Blow*.

The groundwork for jazz-rock was laid by Miles Davis, whose *In a Silent Way* (1969) and *Bitches Brew* ('70) fused jazz harmony and melody with electronic instruments and rock's rhythms, attitude, and tone. By the early '70s, a genre was born and had spread globally, along the way birthing a dozen offspring. After Davis, fusion remained insular jazz-rock—intellectual insider's music—until Beck entered the picture to reinterpret its rich harmony with rock melody and rhythms, favoring feel over histrionics and pyrotechnics. Long an unbridled innovator, he ventured into territory beyond Davis' descendants Return To Forever and Mahavishnu Orchestra. Where those exponents prized post-bop sophistication that elevated technical standards, Beck created something new and accessible by marrying his gritty blues-rock aesthetic,

soulfulness, and imagination to irresistible dance grooves, lush melodious balladry, and cinematic soundscapes.

The steps leading to *Blow by Blow* were circuitous yet inevitable. As a Yardbird, Beck was one of the earliest British Invasion guitar heroes, his virtuosity undeniable on “Jeff's Boogie” ('66), an original mash of Cliff Gallup, Les Paul, Lonnie Mack, and his own eccentricities. He furthered heavy electric blues, proto-metal, raga-rock and psychedelia while flirting with world music on “Beck's Bolero,” a seminal fusion instrumental with a soaring modal melody, heavy bridge riff, and Spanish Bolero rhythms. In the first Jeff Beck Group, he presaged heavy metal, introduced the world to Rod Stewart, and (for the first time) tackled large-scale instrumental works with “Rice Pudding” (*Beck-Ola*, '69). His blend of hard rock, blues, funk, and jazz made Jeff Beck Group 2 a unique outfit. In '73, he stretched the limits of the supergroup power trio with Beck, Bogert & Appice, then considered joining the Rolling Stones when Mick Taylor departed. A progres-

sion that would be schizophrenic for anyone but him, Beck proved precedent-setting in his mid-'70s pursuit of fusion.

Beck's innovations, diverse tangents, and upward trajectory reached an apex with *Blow by Blow*, his first solo album. Impressed with George Martin's work on Mahavishnu's *Apocalypse*, he enlisted the former Beatles' producer and began recording at his AIR London studios in October '74 with keyboardist Max Middleton—a cohort/collaborator since JBG2 on Fender/Rhodes electric piano, Moog synthesizer, and clavinet, along with bassist Phil Chen and drummer Richard Bailey. Stevie Wonder contributed “Thelonius” and “Cause We've Ended as Lovers” and anonymously played clavinet on the former. Martin provided colorful string charts and orchestral flourishes to “Scatterbrain” and “Diamond Dust” while Middleton's deeper jazz harmonies informed the compositions, arrangements, and backdrops behind Beck's evocative guitar. His influence is explicit in “You Know What I Mean,” “Scatterbrain” and his original composition, “Freeway Jam.”

Beck's take on fusion was singular. At the outset, he was “determined not to bore anybody with any jazz.” He proceeded to emphasize melody over “abstract flurries of noise” and favored “nice chords” to attract the listener's ear. Like Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters*, he chose to put the funk into fusion, stressing grooves that elaborated on his earlier R&B background. This flavor was reconciled with art-rock, jazz, blues, and cinematic tangents. Consider the scratchy James Brown-inspired guitar figure introducing “You Know What I Mean,” the album's opening track. It launches the tune's catchy theme melody and remains an underlying presence, animating grooves behind solos throughout the album. Overt R&B elements are offset by a cross-fade transition into “She's a Woman,” the Beatles-era Lennon-McCartney cover given a Jamaican-island feel, with re-harmonizations of its basic blues changes and pop progressions enhanced by Beck's talk-box sounds and multifaceted melodic blues-based soloing. This cut conveys a slightly commercial jazz-rock impression foreshadowing the West-Coast fusion of Lee Ritenour, Larry Carlton, and Robben Ford later in the decade. Jeff's original, “Constipated Duck,” follows in a suite-like manner and restores the funk with his Motown-inspired octaves figure, tight ensemble grooves, and another memorable theme—a rhythmically-charged double-stop theme, which is finger plucked, signaling Beck's growing tenden-

G7

w/fingers

15 13 12 10 8 6 5 3

15 14 12 10 9 7 5 3

semi-harm

1 2 3 4 5 3 5 3 5 3 5 3 5 3 5 3

A7

semi-harm

1/2 3/4 full 1/2 1/2 full full full full full full full full

5 6 7 7 7 7 5 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7 7

full 1/2

7 7 5 7 7 5 6 5 5 10 8 10 10 8 10 8 10

Beck's solo in "You Know What I Mean" sums up his take on fusion. The characteristic phrases from 1:18 to 1:38 are cases in point. The opening passage in measure 1 over G7 has country/rockabilly flavor with broken-6th intervals played fingerstyle and percussive for a chicken-picked effect. This is answered by solid blues-rock lines with pre-bent notes and semi-harmonics. Check

out Jeff's brief use of F major-blues cliché over G7, a slick substitution that plays off an F triad in G11. His transition to A7 in 5 is marked by a held-and-attacked string bend and heavy finger vibrato alluding to the Chicago blues influence in his style. He mixes C and C# in these lines, and freely combines A minor pentatonic and A dominant-7th note choices.

cies toward fingerstyle playing that would be the norm by 1980. "Air Blower" (a quartet collaboration) is a larger sectional piece with a vaguely Asian pentatonic/hexatonic theme melody posed over a looping funk groove. Here, Jeff applies whammy-bar vibrato to key phrases, complementing the pitch-wheel effects of Middleton's Moog, and employs an octave-divider in the opening solo section for growling low-register sounds. The second section (3:27)

is a slow $\frac{9}{8}$ soundscape that provides Beck with space for unpredictable melody passages and wah rhythm-guitar effects in the background. Jazz-rock is notorious for its use of odd and mixed time signatures. "You Know What I Mean" contains a subtle toggling between $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{4}$, but a more overt and uncommon example is found in "Scatterbrain," where Beck employs $\frac{9}{8}$ meter but twists the subdivisions of three eighth-note triplets per bar into an asymmetric combination

of $\frac{4}{8}$ and $\frac{5}{8}$ in 16th notes. He builds a theme riff (from a chromatic pattern that began as a finger exercise) from this unique permutation of $\frac{9}{8}$. Moreover, he uses the same melody and pattern over B $\flat$ m7 and B7 $\flat$ 5 chords, exploiting his application of the common-tone/polytonal procedure typically found in post-bop and fusion music, and re-states it practically verbatim over D/C, E/D and Gmaj7 changes. He further plays with the time by alternating between short instrumental interludes in $\frac{6}{8}$ and longer solo sections in $\frac{4}{4}$. Where these intricacies that would intimidate lesser players, Beck draws inspiration from the atypical rhythms, and reconciles them with a bluesman's ease.

"Thelonius" was Stevie Wonder's gift to Beck. They'd worked together on *Talking Book* and Beck had reputedly recorded the tune with BB&A for their second (unreleased) album. Here he delivers it as a heavy funk-rock groove piece with a bluesy melody doctored with octave-divider and talk-box backed by wah rhythm. "Freeway Jam" became Beck's signature piece and remains a jam-band standard – arguably the most-representative rock piece on the record, with its singing modal theme melody, high-energy shuffle groove and blues allusions contrasted by a chorus of powerful rhythmic ensemble hits and jazzy segues into unrelated harmonic areas. Beck responded with a heavier distorted tone, harnessing his Strat for typical mannerisms in the form of extreme vibrato, dips, dives and pitch bends.

The sessions produced Beck's unforgettable reading of "Cause We've Ended as Lovers," a masterpiece of reinterpretation dedicated to Roy Buchanan and appropriately rendered on his Tele-Gib (Telecaster/Gibson). Jeff delivers the melody with great nuance and fashions dramatic improvisations akin to a jazz saxophonist's storytelling. Check out his keen attention to dynamics and phrasing, shadings of tone color, contrasts of legato and staccato articulation, and wide range of expression. We know Wonder wrote "Superstition" for Beck, but the way Beck handles this one leaves the impression it, too, was crafted for him. The brooding minor-mode tune with its slippery harmonic surprises suits his equally slippery melodic tendencies, exemplified by the intro's sobbing volume-swell phrases and the solo's melody-conscious improvisations mixed with blues-rock aggression and florid technical moments. The unfolding arrangement allows for a compelling progression from simple poignant melody statements to bluesy detours and complex double-timed lines at the climax.

The closer, "Diamond Dust," written by guitarist Bernie Holland (of Hummingbird, which evolved from the remnants of JBG2), is a

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magnum opus (8:26). Its atmospheric sound is emphasized by an uncommon $10/8$ time signature and distinguished by Martin's lush orchestration, Middleton's processed Rhodes, and Beck's emotional, vocal-esque guitar. Beck navigates its challenging harmonic pathways and beautifully elusive melody with the comfort of a veteran jazz player. He described his approach to this type of material, saying, "I went from heavy riff tunes to things that were a bit classier. Max was hitting me with nice chords. I'd be a twerp for about two hours while I fumbled around with them... just opened myself up and said, 'I can't play guitar, but I'll have a go.' Being honest, open, and willing to start from square one."

Beck's combination of Gibson and Fender tones on *Blow By Blow* resulted in a unique sonic tapestry, weaving layered guitars of differing timbres spanned across the mix, a practice begun on *Truth* ('68). He relied on his white '70s Stratocaster with rosewood fretboard and the familiar stripped-to-natural '54 Strat with maple '70s board (seen with JBG2) for crisp funk rhythm chording and alternate brighter melody sounds while favoring Gibson timbres for darker lead/melody tones. Showcased on "Diamond Dust" and featured extensively on the album was the modified '54 Les Paul goldtop refinished in brown pictured on the cover. Purchased from the Memphis shop Strings & Things in January '73, it was refitted with PAFs and became his primary instrument with BB&A. Also significant was the "Tele-Gib" (Telecaster body-Gibson pickups) gifted by Seymour Duncan in '73. Originally a battered '59 slab-neck Tele, it was customized with rewind PAFs from one of Lonnie Mack's '59 Flying Vs, Tune-O-Matic bridge, stop tailpiece, and an early-'60s Fender neck with Gibson frets. In this period, Beck experimented with various amps – Marshall Super Leads, Univox, Sound City, an Ampeg VT-40, Vox and Fender combos. His effects included a Colorsound Overdriver fuzzbox for distortion (to fatten the Strat's midrange tone), Octave Divider, Crybaby wah, Maestro ring modulator (for subtle idiosyncratic processing) and a Kustom "The Bag" talk box.

Blow By Blow established Beck as a solo artist beyond the confines of a rock band. Released March 29, 1975, it reached #4 on U.S. charts and became the new face of fusion to countless listeners and musicians while attaining platinum certification. It was followed by two worthy successors, *Wired* and *There and Back*, and precipitated the age of the instrumental-rock virtuoso, underscored by a tour with John McLaughlin.

Blow By Blow remains essential, having opened the door for Morse, Vai, Malmsteen, the Shrapnel school, Satriani, Johnson, et al.

Slow Ballad
Cm7

Abmaj7 Fm7

Gmaj7 Cm7

Abmaj7

Fm7

Gmaj7

"'Cause We've Ended As Lovers" was a signature piece that embodied the melodic side of fusion and is one of the most-compelling rock-ballad performances in history. This excerpt from the solo captures the intensity of his improvisations into the climax. At 3:50 he subjects Cm7 to blues-based pentatonic riffing (a Beck staple) and treats Abmaj7 to a simple but rhythmically powerful ostinato. In

measure 3 (3:59), he tamps the energy momentarily to allow the solo to breathe during Fm7-Gmaj7 – a surprise resolution. Note the wide string bends, pinch harmonic, legato phrasing (Gmaj7), and pentatonic bursts in 3-6. The dramatic final burst comes as a series of quick, descending chromatic trills in 7 (4:15) joining a singable melodic line in 8 (4:19), made more interesting with interval leaps.

In 1990, Beck professed he shouldn't have made the album and dismissed the music as "fuzak," an easy-listening form of jazz-rock that wasn't equivalent to the high-art rock of Mahavishnu. By '99, he re-evaluated his take:

"*Blow By Blow* marked an important change in my life. I was exploring an entirely different direction... it came together almost by accident. I always fed off singers or guitar riffs before, but Max kept throwing these beautiful chords

Moderate Funk

A D13 D9 D7#9 D9 D13 D9 C#9 D9 C#9 D9

B

full full full full

3
rake-----|

The image shows musical notation for a piece titled 'Moderate Funk'. It includes a guitar staff and a bass staff. The guitar staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The first section, labeled 'A', consists of four measures of chords: D13, D9, D7#9, D9, D13, D9, C#9, D9, C#9, D9. The second section, labeled 'B', consists of four measures of a melodic line. The bass staff provides fingerings for the guitar staff. The first section has fingerings: 7 5 5 5 X, 6 6 5 X, 7 5 5 5 X, 4 5 4 5. The second section has fingerings: 14 12 13 15 14, 12 12 (12) (12) (12), 14 12 13 15 12, 15 13 12. The third section has fingerings: 15 13 12 13 14, 14 13 12, 15 14 14 17, 15 14 15.

at me and Stevie came up with some beautiful melodies, so I had no choice but to follow them. It was like starting all over again, like I never played guitar before.”

Vacillations, speculations, and reappraisals aside, *Blow By Blow* is a milestone recording – one of the most important and enduring in the genre.

Beck’s best-selling album, it proved once and for all that jazz-rock needn’t be a purist’s music.

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 new book, *Jazz Guitar Course: Mastering the Jazz Language*, will be released this winter. Others 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.

“You Know What I Mean” began *Blow By Blow* on a decisive note. Beck kicks off with an emblematic chord riff [A], and it doesn’t get any funkier than the scratchy figure with 16th-note strums and muted strings reminiscent of Jimmy Nolen backing James Brown. Note the simple-but-effective jazz chords (extended and altered types), arranged as partial forms, and push chords in measure two – C#9 to D9. This is both a musical statement and call to action, calibrating the record’s vibe in just two bars. The theme melody [B] played by guitar and synth has modal-jazz implications (A minor Dorian played over D7) while Beck’s fills, such as bent double-stops, provide the requisite rock feeling.

Swart Stereo Master 20
AMPLIFIER COMPANY

The image shows a Swart Stereo Master 20 amplifier. It is a black, rectangular amplifier with a silver grille. A light blue electric guitar is leaning against it. The Swart logo is visible on the grille and the bottom of the amplifier. The website swartamps.com is printed at the bottom.

The image shows a Railhammer guitar pickup. It is a silver, rectangular pickup with four screws. Above it is a rocket ship launching, with the text 'MORE LOW-END LIFTOFF.' below it. The Railhammer logo is visible on the pickup.

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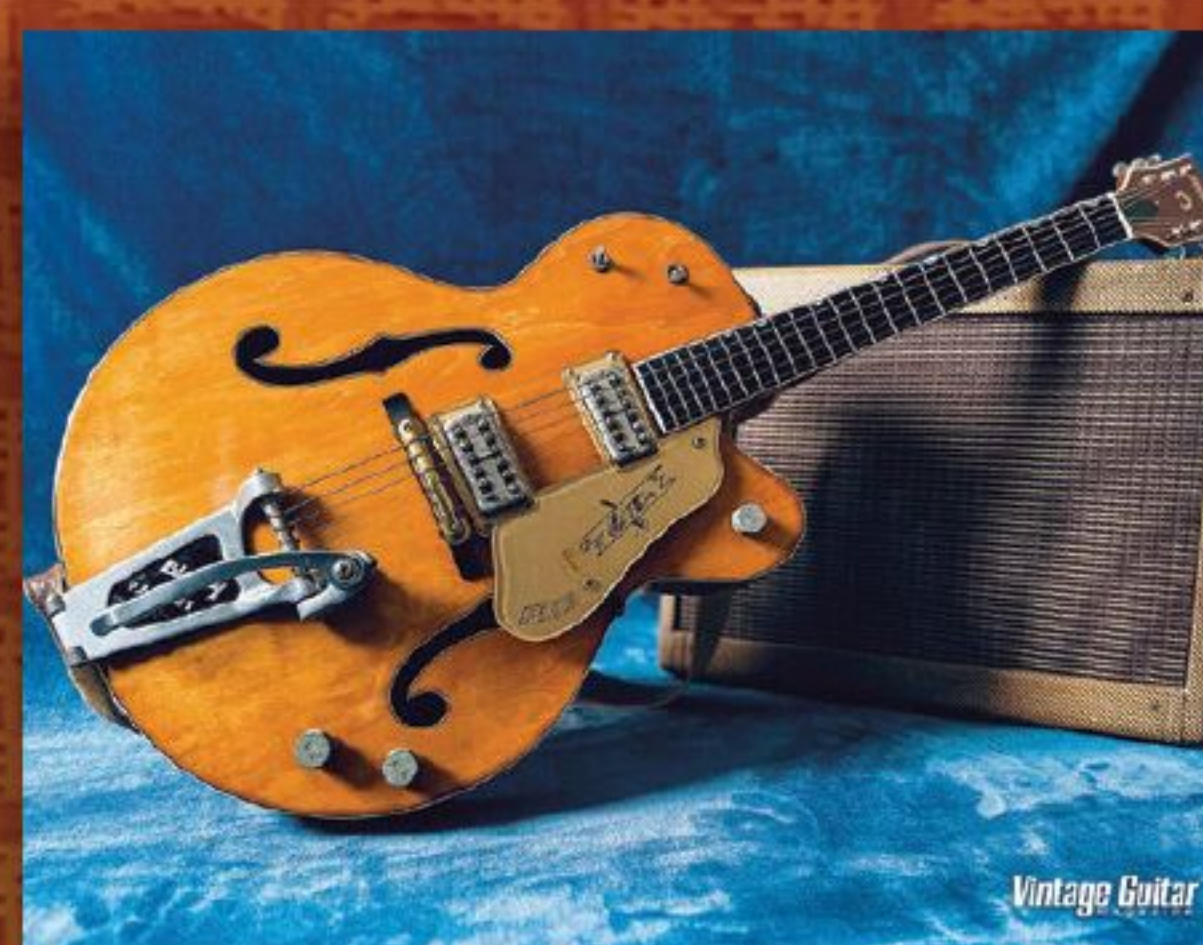
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Make every day of 2024 brighter with a glance at the VG calendar, because no matter if the instruments shown are beautifully plain,

fancy, rare, or colorful, they're all great! This year features contributions from readers as well as famous players and renowned dealers. Plus, every day you'll know if one of your heroes is celebrating or being honored on their birthday.



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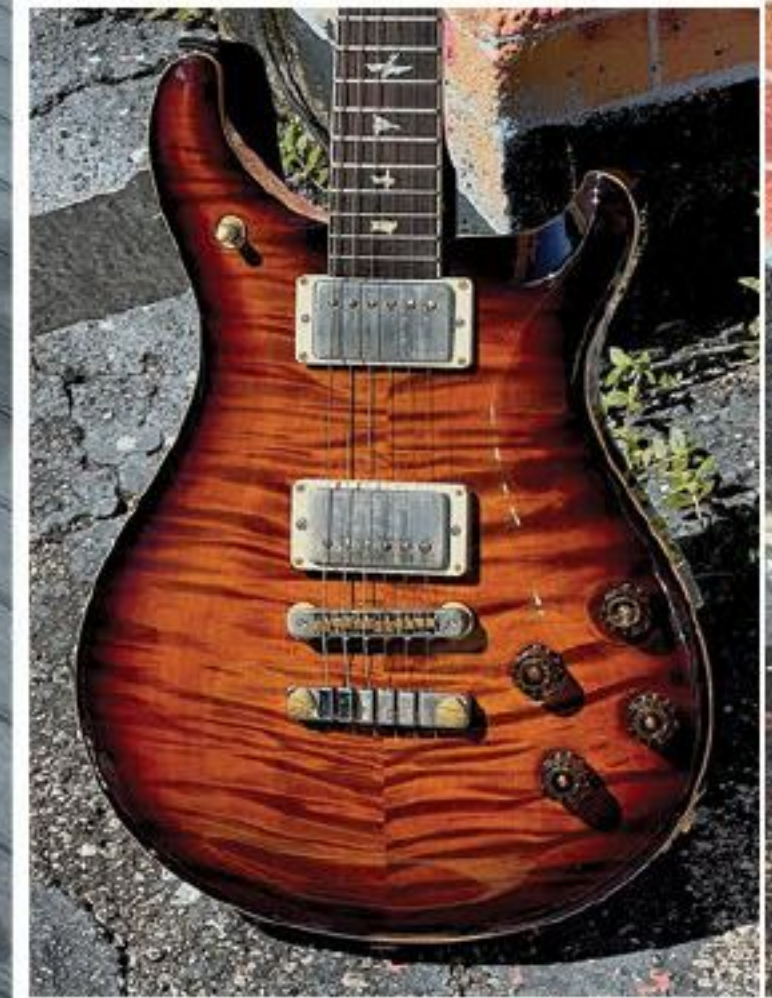
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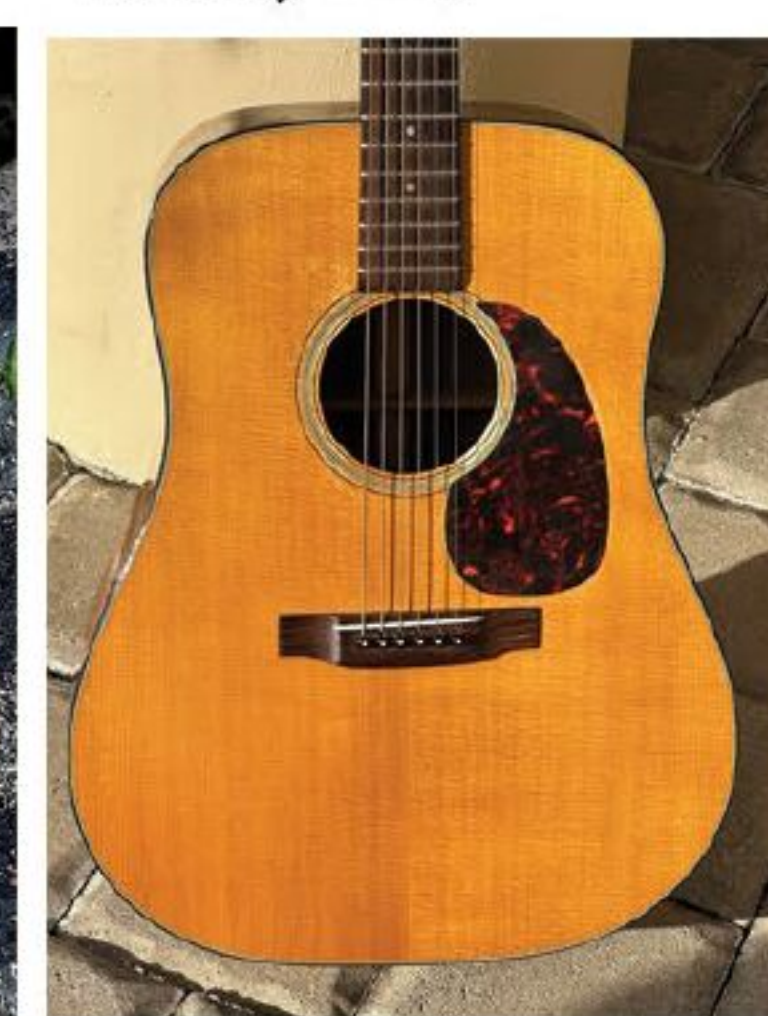
1956 Guyatone LG-50 "Feather"

1981 Hamer Special "Checkerboard"

1979 Hamer Standard Factory Lefty # 0120

2019 PRS McCarty 594 10Top simply stunning

2010 PRS Modern Eagle 10Top Special



1929 Stella "Jumbo" 12-String Conversion

1917 Gibson Style O earliest type by Orville

1932 Gibson L-50 Rare Sweet & Neat !

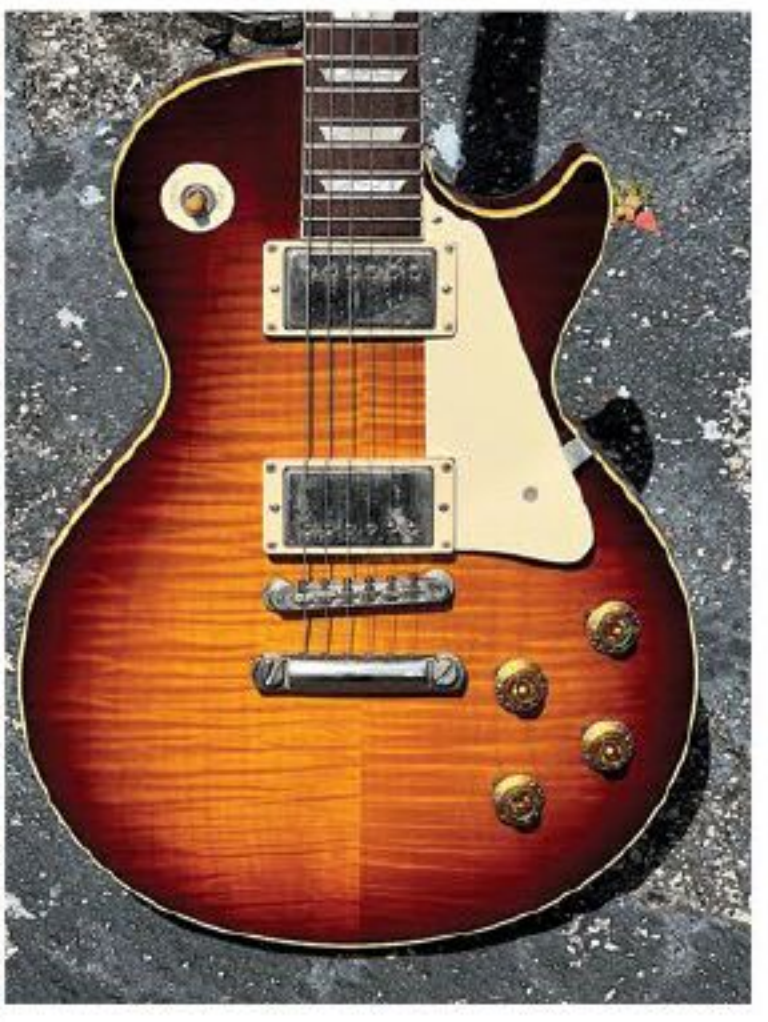
1946 Gibson J-45 Huge fat neck too

1940 Martin D-18 Tortoise Headstock

1965 Martin D-21 very Figured Brazilian.

1965 Martin D-28 Brazilian & Tortoise !

1988 Martin MC-45L Factory Left Handed



1952 Gibson Les Paul Std. All Gold Fact.Lefty

1972 Gibson Firebird V the final example of 367.

1974 Gibson Les Paul Deluxe w/fact.HB'ers

1981 Gibson Explorer the 1st Korina Reissue.

1982 Gibson Les Paul Std. 30th Anniversary

2007 Gibson Les Paul Joe Perry "Prototype"

1998 Gibson Les Paul Ace Frehley Signature

2003 Gibson Les Paul '59 "Brazilian" Reissue



1962 Fender Jazzmaster Slab Rosewood neck

1965 Fender Strat "Eric Clapton Group"

1975 Fender Strat factory Lucite Bodied NAMM show

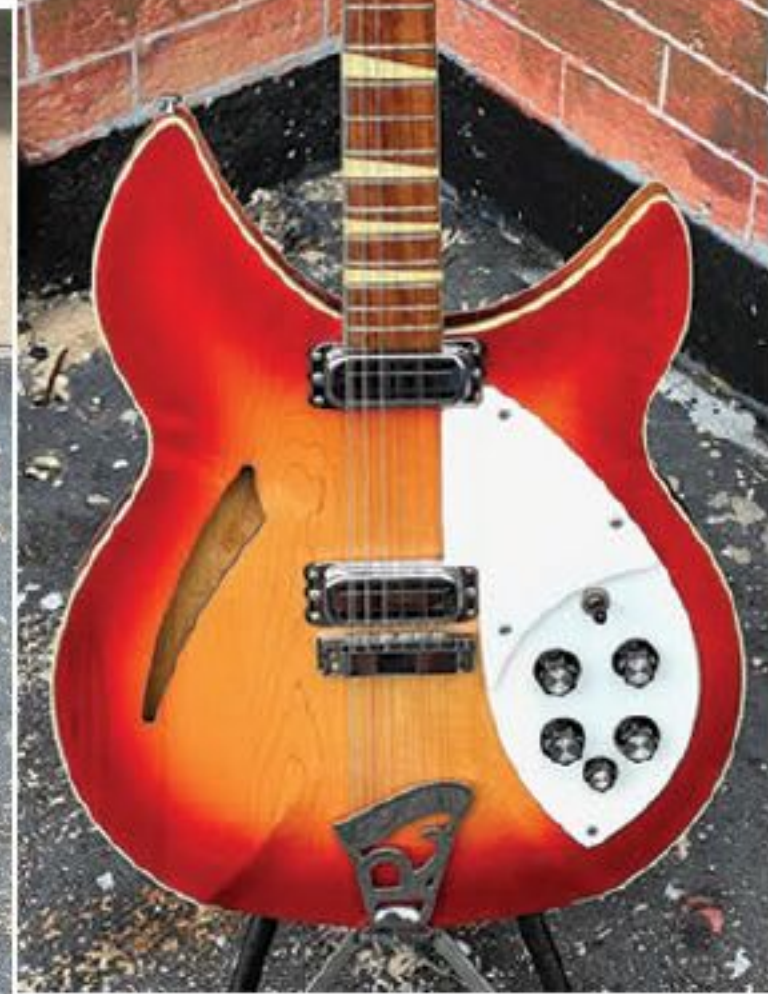
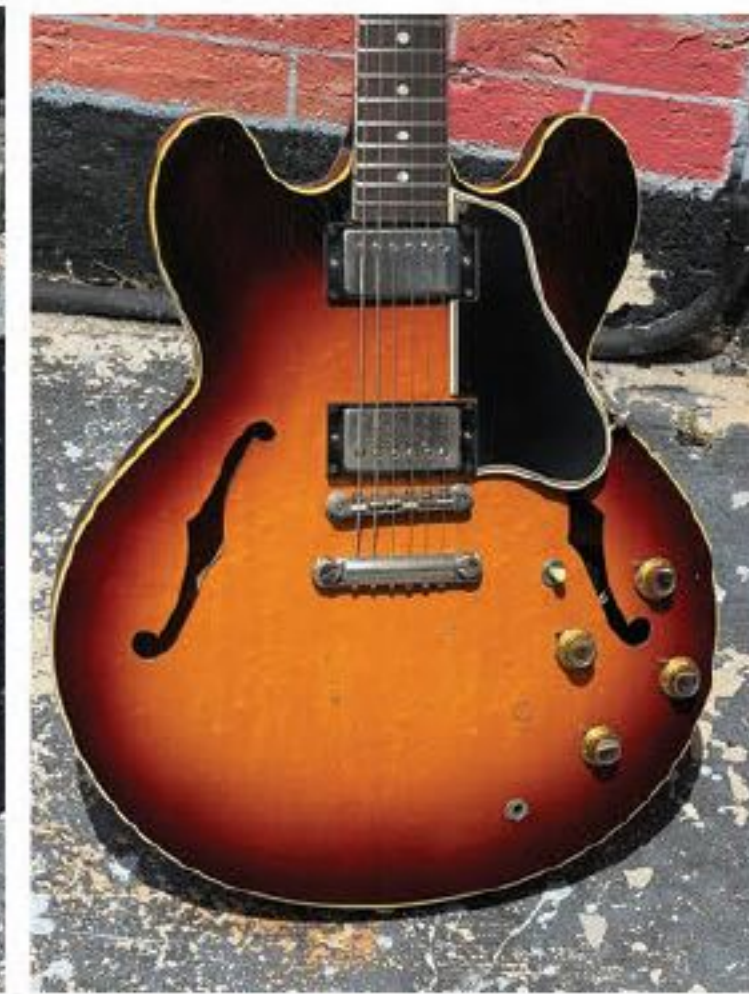
1978 Fender Strat HT Antigua Sunburst

1993 Fender Jaguar Fred Stuart personal axe

1996 Fender Nocaster '50 Relic #R0033

1997 Fender Strat 1 Of 4 Custom Shop

2013 Fender Rosewood Tele "Master Built"



1956 Gibson ES-140 3/4TN

1956 Hofner Club 50 like Lennon's 1st axe !

1959 Gibson ES-125TCD "Prototype" Bound Neck

1960 Gibson ES-335TD an affordable "Dot Neck"

1963 Gibson ES-345TDSV Stop Bar

1967 Rickenbacker 360/12 OS "Harrison"

1968 Rickenbacker 366/12 Converter

2003 Rickenbacker 330 Metallic Blue



1967 Rickenbacker 4005WB Bass 1-off

1971 Rickenbacker 4001 Bass Fireglo

1991 Zemaitis Metal Top Bass "Engraved"

1969 Fender Jazz Bass Factory Black H'stock

1980 Fender Jazz Bass 1-off Maui Blue

1978 Music Man Stingray Bass

1964 Gibson Thunderbird II Bass "Polaris White"

1999 Gibson Flying V Bass 1-off Custom Shop



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The Aries series is notorious among modern players as their go-to instrument; however, the model line is universal in its uses and stylistic appeal. The line, exclusively bolt-on upon release, has expanded to include a neck-through version that allows for the resonance, stability, and seamless upper fret access that the construction is known for. www.kieselguitars.com

3) Reverend

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Steve Cardenas

Jim Campilongo

JIM CAMPILONGO & STEVE CARDENAS

MUTUAL MUSICAL IDIOSYNCRASIES

Steve Cardenas and Jim Campilongo have been playing guitar together for a long time, though the constellations only recently aligned so they could record.

Captured on three nights in September of 2022, *New Year* showcases harmonic personalities merging through atmosphere, reverb, and ancient acoustic guitars. It's also a meditation on the beauty and strength of restraint. Minus a rhythm section, the two virtuosos used shared musical idiosyncrasies to embellish time-honored classics and originals.

What were the mechanics behind how *New Year* came about?

Steve Cardenas: I called and told Jim, "I think we gotta do it now, or it's not going to happen ever!" (laughs)

Jim Campilongo: I was stressed from moving 3,000 miles when Steve called to ask. At the time, I had boxes up to the ceiling and felt like I didn't even play guitar anymore. But, once we got in the groove, it felt good. Steve and I have always had a thing, and it returned instantly.

SC: There's never been any resistance from either of us. It's more that I do way more sideman stuff than Jim does; he does mostly leader gigs. I'm in several bands I love. Our engineer, Matt Martinelli, lives downstairs, so it was easy to get going.

You guys have been playing together for a while.

BY OSCAR JORDAN

SC: Since 2005...

JC: But very sporadically. We'd do a couple of gigs then not play. We went on a roll for a while and actually recorded an album, but it didn't see the light of day due to disagreements with the producer who financed it. It haunted us because we loved it, and because it never got released, Steve came up with this plan that we should try to better it, which was a load off my mind even though I was thinking, "I'm rusty."

SC: We went in with no intention. We thought, "We'll do this, and if we don't feel good about it, that's fine. We can say we tried." Next thing you know, we were in the middle of it, thinking, "This is cool" (laughs).

JC: The other good thing was the original

Steve Cardenas: Steve Cardenas/Kasia Idzkowska. Jim Campilongo: Arthi Krishnaswami.



was just acoustic; I played steel-string, Steve played nylon-string. The first time we played electric, we didn't like it, but then we did it again, and it was fun. It sounded like us, and in a lot of ways that contributed to the last tune we recorded – the Duke Ellington song “Fleurette Africaine.” I think the album has a nice mix of acoustic and electric.

How did you choose songs?

SC: “Cherokee,” “What’ll I Do,” “Caravan,” “Because You Like Trombone,” and “Home On The Range” all go back to when we started. In the past, we modeled “Caravan” after the *Chester & Lester* version, but in the studio we decided to do something different.

JC: “Fleurette Africaine” was the first tune Steve sent me to do specifically for this record. “Because You Like Trombone” was a song I did on *Orange* and wanted to do again; I’ve always felt it was underrated. I learned it again and saw new crevices. We

always liked doing “Home On The Range” and “What’ll I Do.”

“New Year,” which I wrote, was new, “Blue Language” was a tune we did once before, and Steve wrote “Campin’ In” for the album. “Miss Venezuela” was a tune I thought we could do very well. Nothing was vetoed.

How did you decide who played what?

JC: It happened naturally. Generally, if it was my song, I’d play the head, but I was conscious enough to ask Steve, “Do you want to take the B section or the second melody?” Steve is a great artist, but I didn’t want to give him more homework. On “Cherokee,” we play the melody in unison. I told Steve to play the bridge and he said, “I like the way *you* play the bridge.” So I said, “Okay, I’ll take it.” There was a part where I suggested, “Why don’t I play the melody and you do a chord solo.” It was almost like we’d produce each other.

SC: On the Duke Ellington tune, I told

1) Jim Campilongo’s ’59 Tele. **2)** Steve Cardenas’ Valle guitar has a chambered alder body and Gibson pickups from a 335. **3)** Campilongo’s ’58 00-15 can be heard on several of his albums. **4)** Steve Cardenas’ ’59 000-28 was purchased by his partner’s family in 1960.

Jim, “I’ll play the ostinato through the C section, then hand it off to you, and we’ll play the form backward – C, B, A.” It worked great. That was a first take.

“Cherokee” was Jim’s idea. Everybody always plays it with the macho jazz thing at breakneck tempos, but his idea was to play it with a chunk, chunk, but double-up the chords so it still moves. It sounded cool but still references that *Chester & Lester* vibe. Jim came up with us doing the melody together. When we hit the bridge, he’d play the melody and I would start chunking chords. The arrangement that happened



quickly and worked well. We've always done it like that.

On "What'll I Do," we trade sections. Jim plays the first melody, I play the second, he plays the bridge melody, and I play the last thing. Then, we each take an A section and take it out to the bridge. We keep it short.

You guys instinctively play to your strengths.

JC: Steve wrote the transcriptions for the *Thelonious Monk Fake Book*, yet he wants to play "Home On The Range" with me (laughs). He's an amazing guy and the opposite of a jazz snob. I wouldn't call what he does jazz. It's like saying Bill Frisell is jazz. He's kinda not because he's just so musical (laughs).

SC: Jim and I both approach the music like that. Yeah, I'm going to play some solos, but I want you to dig the song. I want you to dig the whole package. "Venezuela" is one we decided to do on acoustic, and we get a lot of comments on it. It's got a thing.

"Caravan" became this avant-garde funky thing with a heavy, blues-laced element (laughs), and "Because You Like Trombone" is Jim's tune that we played a long time ago. I came up with a part behind it that he liked – we'd never improvised on it before. We had played it acoustically and just played the head.

There are three tunes where we're just playing the song and not improvising. Even "Home On The Range" is very short. We improvise on the verse and come together on the chorus to take it out. "Campin' In" is one of the tunes I wrote that I thought was very Jim-like in some respects. I also had "Blue Language," which I thought Jim would eat up – and he did. We decided to solo together instead of separate, which worked out great. We don't talk that much about what we do; we start playing and then do a little nip and tuck.

JC: Normally, I will over-prepare, but a lot of this album was conceived in the studio,

and once I heard it, I thought we had a really good vibe, very real.

Most guitar-duo records are about blowing hard. New Year is more about atmosphere and restraint.

JC: That's what I was hoping for. Sometimes, Steve would say, "Campy, take another one!" That tickled me because we both don't want to do that. We don't want to forget the song. I'm glad it's a musical record. Some guitar duo records are pretty dense, like Chet Atkins and Lenny Breau. Steve and I have an intensity that I'm proud of.

SC: It's not about how virtuosic we are, because we know we would fail (laughs). More to the point is we wanted to make music that would bring people in and wrap around them, not make it a display of guitar playing.

What was your gear?

JC: I played my '59 Telecaster through a '70s Princeton with a Celestion G10. My acoustic is a '58 00-15 I've used on numerous records. It really cuts through and has a personality. I have a D-35 and it's a lot more neutral. The 00-15 is sassy, and I like that it has a small body. I like to dominate my guitars, so if I have to put my arm up super high on a big body, I feel like it's a mismatch.

SC: My guitar was made by Pablo Valle, who used to work for Roger Sadowsky, doing repairs and helping build instruments. He can play well, and most of the jazz guitarists in New York took guitars to him because he instinctively knew how we wanted them set up. He did a re-fret on my 335 that was just amazing. Then he asked, "Do you want me to build you a Tele?" I told him, "I'm not a Teleplayer. I love them, but I'm *such* a Gibson guy." He said, "I'll make it with a mahogany neck, rosewood fingerboard, and an alder body because it'll be a little lighter. I'll put a chamber underneath the top. You'll get a little semi-hollow body vibe." I had these old Tim Shaw pickups from an old 335. He did

Jim Campilongo's silverface Princeton lends sonic contrast to Steve Cardenas' '60s Magnatone-made Panaramic amp.

an amazing job, and it plays great. As I get older, I like a lighter load. It sounds really good, and I'm comfortable on it. Those are the two things you want. I used it because I thought the 335 would be too dark and thick. Even though the Valle is like a Gibson in Fender clothing, it's a little thinner-sounding because of the bolt-on neck, which gives it a cool quality.

How did you mic the amps?

SC: Matt recorded us with a mic on each amp, but he also had room mics. He said, "Any editing that involves a punch, you both have to play and the other guy has to transcribe what they did (laughs)." We only did that one or two times. We said, "This is all so in the moment. Jazz records have mistakes, and they're often cooler than the normal s**t (laughs)."

JC: We recorded with total leakage; we faced each other and our amps faced each other. I know there was a close mic and a room mic, but I wasn't paying attention (laughs). I just thought it sounded like our guitars. It wasn't a gigantic room by any means – very vibey. We created the most comfortable environment possible.

SC: Jim has always been able to dial in his thing. He uses quite a bit of reverb. When you listen to all his influences, they did too. And he uses it in that beautiful way that they all did.

Steve, what's the deal with your amp?

SC: Panaramic was a subsidiary of Magnatone in the '60s and I think it was for accordions because the A channel says "Accordion." It's says "Voice" on the other channel. I got it from a friend and don't use it for everything, but it's funky and I thought

it would be cool for this because Jim is playing a Tele through a Princeton. My guitar is shaped like a Tele but screams Gibson, so I needed an amp that's not Fendery but still has a beautiful sound. The Panaramic was perfect. It doesn't have reverb, so I used a Zoom MS-50G MultiStomp and Matt picked a reverb that worked. Jim uses amp reverb. Matt ran it all by us, and there was never any question. It was, "That sounds amazing. Let's keep doing that." A lot of it was a devil-may-care attitude – let's have fun and not project that this is going to be anything other than what we're doing *right now*.

Matt helped with my sound because when we started, he said, "You're a little dark. Do you mind if I brighten you up a little?" I said, "Go ahead. I want us to blend." It was cool because I might not go that bright on my own, but it's a nice blend between us.

Steve, what about your acoustic?

SC: It's a '59 000-28 that plays great, sounds beautiful, and fits our theme. It's my partner's family guitar – her mom bought it used in 1960 and played it through the '60s before it ended up in a closet. It had been left so long that it had a bow in the neck. Her brother had somebody in Seattle re-set the neck and replace the pickguard, which had deteriorated. It's balanced and sounds amazing. It's a special instrument.

What's next?

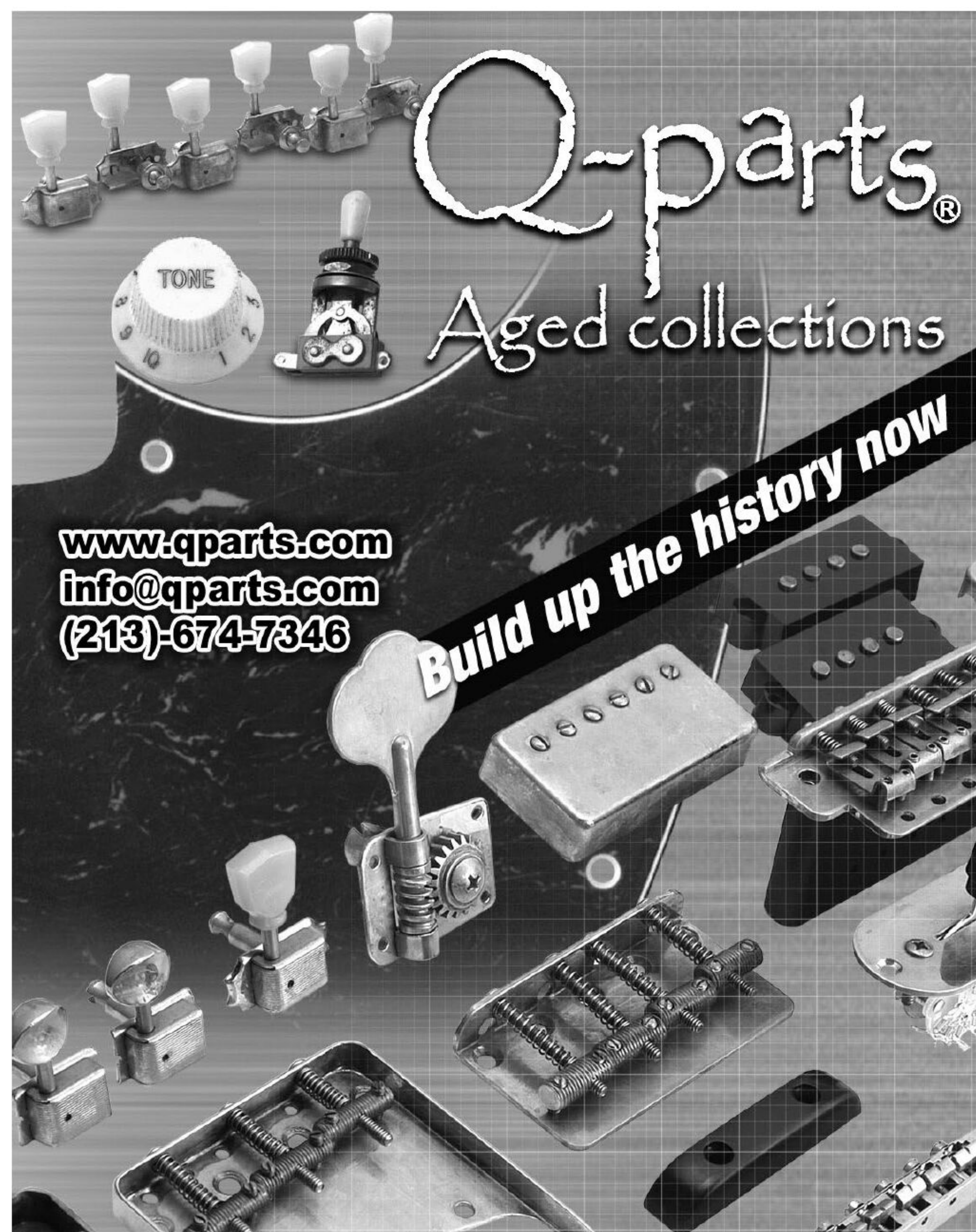
JC: I'm thinking about a record with my quartet, a West Coast tour, and I'm going to Argentina.

SC: I've demoed a bunch of stuff and thinking of doing a solo record. I've played it for a few friends, and the feedback is, "This is just fine the way it is." There's no agenda in mind.

Any chance of a tour together?

JC: If history proves anything, it's that Steve and I will play again.

SC: It would be easy. We're both so happy we finally did an album. **VG**



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JOHN OSBORNE

BY WARD
MEEKER

FEELIN' FEARLESS

Brothers Osborne play a distinctive version of 21-century country music. Rising above trendy themes and sounds like tailgate anthems and hip-hop beats, their path mixes traditional and new sounds with modern rock and pop leanings carried by T.J.'s superb baritone voice and John's guitar sharing center stage.

The brothers forged an audience thanks in part to the 2015 hit single "Stay a Little Longer," which barely hinted at their versatility. Stylistically, they can't be cornered, but they bring to mind classic pairings like Buck Owens and Don Rich, Dwight Yoakam and Pete Anderson, and Gregg and Duane Allman.

In his April '19 interview with VG, John Osborne discussed the 15-year Nashville grind he and T.J. endured in the run-up to their 2016 debut album, *Pawn Shop*, and the layered inspiration behind his guitar sounds on *Port Saint Joe*. Their self-titled fourth album (see our review in the November '23 "Hit List") followed a heap of recognition including nine Grammy Award nominations (with a win for Best Country Duo/Group Performance for 2020's "All Night,"), seven Academy of Country Music (ACM) Awards, and six Country Music Association (CMA) Awards. In October, they were presented the Randy Owen Angels Among Us Award at the 34th annual Country Cares for St. Jude Kids Seminar.

Boasting consistently strong songwriting, Brothers Osborne veers unabashedly in ways their previous albums didn't; along with the country that fans crave are the soul-adjacent "Goodbye's Kickin' In" and the near-disco of "Ain't Nobody Got Time For That," all inspired by seismic shifts in their lives.

The day after tour dates were announced for a 35-date spring

run through the U.S., we talked with John about how the new music came together.

What guided your stylistic choices on the new album?

It's funny you ask. The term "country" is a sliding scale these days. If you listen to radio, some hits have 808 samples and tracks galore, some is straight pop, and neither is good nor bad, it's just a taste thing. What we're doing is still very much us, still very much country songwriting and a country prose, but a different aesthetic.

On our past records, it was very much organic – a live band playing in the studio. This one is still a live band, but with a different producer and we really took our time trying to find the best tones and different sounds; we used a lot of different amps and guitars and outboard effects – way more than we've done in the past.

How did you sort through guitars and amps for the sessions?

Most of the stuff that I used was at [producer] Mike Elizondo's incredible studio in Gallatin, Tennessee. He is as much a guitar and gear collector as anyone I've ever met, and it came down to him and I geeking out over sounds and throwing things up in the air, trying stuff. We both have a lot of vintage gear, but he has some guitars I'd never tried, like a Valley Arts from the '80s that I ended up using a lot because it worked so well, especially through a Roland RE-501 Chorus Echo.

Which model is it?

It's a Strat copy with a really hot bridge pickup and a Floyd Rose. It looked like something you'd never in million years see me play – blue curly-maple top, the whole works (laughs).

Did you stay off that Floyd Rose?

I actually did use it at one point (laughs). I mean, giving a guitar player a Floyd Rose is like

giving a cat nip; you'll sit there and mess with it over and over. It was something I never played growing up; I was never around those and that wasn't the music I listened to. But the second I started playing it, I couldn't stop dive-bombing (laughs). If you listen to "Might As Well Be Me," we built a section right before the guitar solo with dive bombs through a Marshall. It was so much fun. Again – things we'd never done.

Another example is the strong R&B vibe of "Goodbye's Kickin' In."

Yeah, on that you'll hear an early-'70s Tele Deluxe with a Bigsby through a bone-stock '65 Princeton Reverb, no effects. That's one of my favorite sounds on the record – very much guitar and amp, nothing else.

What are some other examples of sounds you hadn't tried before?

Another thing I hadn't played

Osborne's "Frankenstein" Tele has a '68 neck, aftermarket body, and pickguard made by Chris Plank. His '65 ES-335 is now a studio/home darling, having been retired from the road.

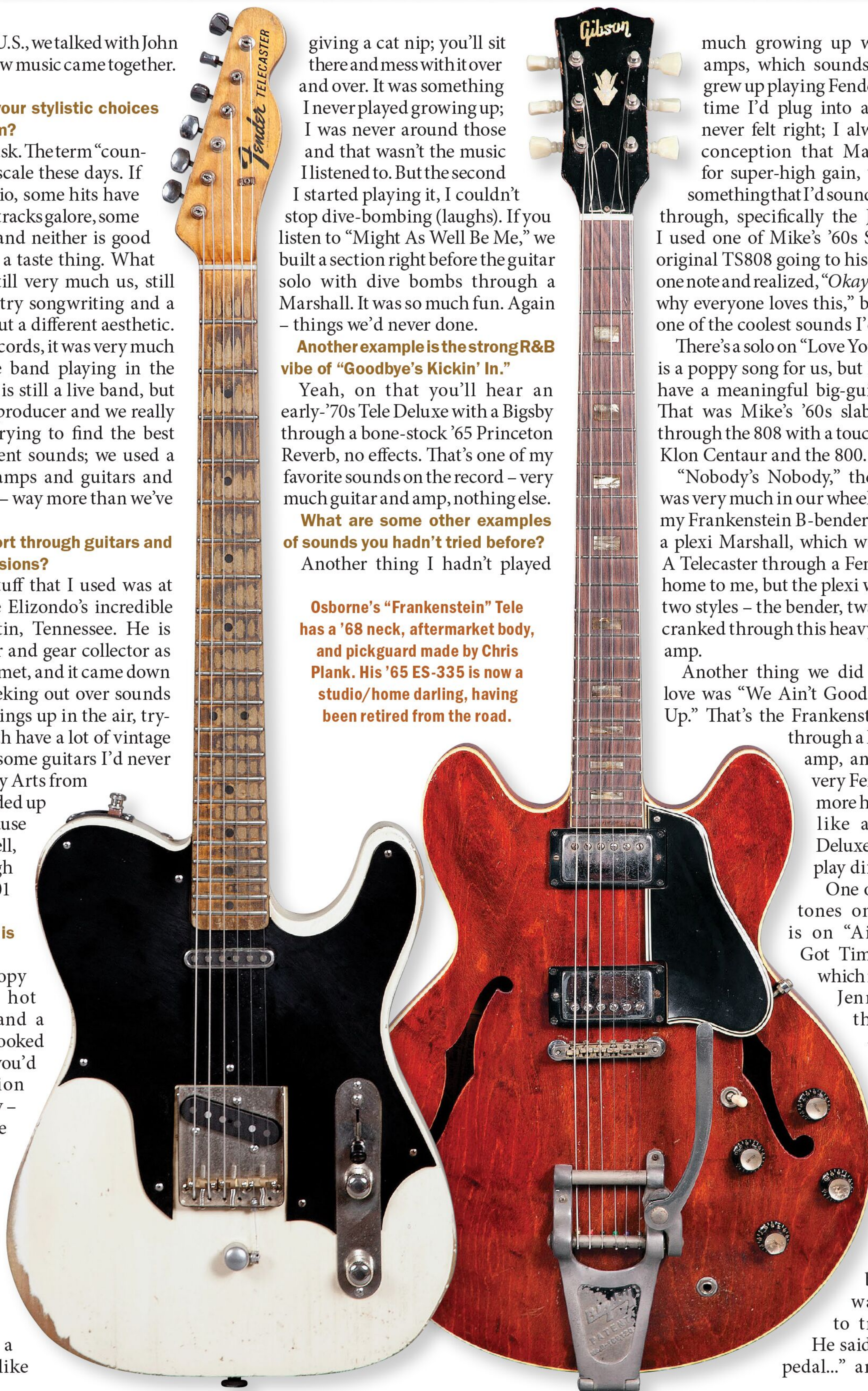
much growing up was Marshall amps, which sounds crazy, but I grew up playing Fenders, and every time I'd plug into a Marshall, it never felt right; I always had this conception that Marshalls were for super-high gain, which wasn't something that I'd sound right playing through, specifically the JCM800. But I used one of Mike's '60s Strats and an original TS808 going to his 800; I played one note and realized, "Okay, I understand why everyone loves this," because it was one of the coolest sounds I'd ever made.

There's a solo on "Love You Too," which is a poppy song for us, but I wanted it to have a meaningful big-guitar moment. That was Mike's '60s slab-board Strat through the 808 with a touch of a vintage Klon Centaur and the 800.

"Nobody's Nobody," the first single, was very much in our wheelhouse. That's my Frankenstein B-bender Tele through a plexi Marshall, which was really fun. A Telecaster through a Fender feels like home to me, but the plexi was marrying two styles – the bender, twangy country cranked through this heavy, mid-driven amp.

Another thing we did that I really love was "We Ain't Good At Breaking Up." That's the Frankenstein Tele, but through a Divided by 13 amp, and it sounded very Fender-like, but more hi-fi and open, like a hotrodded Deluxe. It made me play differently.

One of my favorite tones on the album is on "Ain't Nobody Got Time For That," which is like Waylon Jennings meets the Bee Gees – a crazy disco country song. We were messing with tones for the solo and couldn't land on something, but Mike wasn't afraid to try anything. He said, "I have this pedal..." and he brings



in an Electro-Harmonix Bass Micro Synthesizer. He goes, "Guitars sound amazing through it."

I was using Mike's Strat again, and I'd never heard a guitar in my hands sound like that – like it was about to jump out of the speakers.

Every time we'd find those moments, I felt like a kid again (laughs). That's what you're searching for – that moment where you feel inspired. And I am *not* a Strat guy; live, I suck on Stratocasters. But in the studio, you can take your time and get into how it feels. In a live setting, I play really hard and I'm used to the way a Tele or Les Paul responds to my fingers. But in the studio, playing the Strat worked because I could adjust.

How did you decide to work with Mike?

We had written songs with him years ago, and we loved him as a person. He's a creative force and one of the nicest, most-humble people you'll ever meet. But he is absolutely fierce when it comes to making music. For years, we had worked with Jay Joyce, who we love; I've learned more from Jay than I could have ever learned from anybody – he helped hone our sound. We owe a lot to Jay. But there comes a time when you want to try new things.

If you listen to the albums my brother and I make, they all sound different. As a creator, you should be pushing your own envelope, and we thought, "What's the biggest thing we could change?" It was a bit of a gamble, but we went in with Mike and did one song to make sure we'd work well together, and it went great. So we gave Mike the keys, and the first thing he told us was he wanted to play bass and get Abe Laboriel, Jr. to play drums. I've seen Abe play with Paul McCartney several times and I'm a huge fan. He's one of the most-amazing drummers you'll ever see.

Mike also wanted to grab a couple other people he'd worked with in Nashville, and we went with it. The result is very different, but through a Brothers Osborne lens – our DNA with a different theme.

Mike is a highly touted bass player

Yeah, he's very, very, *very* good. We weren't going to say "No!"

Have you sorted through your rig and guitars for the upcoming tour?

I haven't yet, but I'll try to keep it simple because we don't like long breaks between songs, so if I can play several songs on the same guitar, I'll do it.

One of my favorite additions recently are

Eli Lester's Two-Rock amplifiers, which to me feel like vintage but are more-reliable, and in some ways sound better. Eli's version of a Deluxe is my favorite new amp. Between our other guitar player, Jason Graumlich, myself, and T.J., there will be five Two-Rocks on-stage.

How about your speaker cabs?

The cab I've been using is an '80s Marshall 2x12 I found at a pawn shop. I go to pawn shops all the time – thrift stores, antique stores – the works. Anyway, I saw a chainsaw sitting on top of what looked like a cab facing backward,

and I was like, "What's going on *here*?" I moved the chainsaw, turned it around, and there it was. Of course I bought it, and it's badass. I love the way it sounds. Best \$100 I ever spent (laughs).

Are you taking any vintage instruments out with you?

I hate taking vintage stuff on the road. For a long time I was taking my '65 335 out, but it was getting its ass kicked from sitting in hot trailers then going into venues; the temperature variations really mess with those things. I won't take my '60 'Burst out unless I can keep it on the bus.

So what do you use on tour?

I play my R9 Les Paul, and my '68 Tele stays out. It has taken a beating, but you could use a Fender as a boat oar, pull it out of the water, and play. That guitar doesn't have many issues on the road.

The 'Burst is new to you since we talked in 2019.

Yeah, it's called Le Freak and it's in one of the *Burst Believers* books. I didn't name it that, by the way (laughs).

Where did you get it?

From my friend Trevor Boone, who owns Emerald City Guitars, in Seattle, with his dad, Jay. It and Carter Vintage are my two favorite stores, and Trevor is a dear friend.

I waited years to pull the trigger on a 'Burst, and this one has had a bunch of stuff done to it – a Bigsby had been drilled into it, so it has the plugs, and it's been refinished. Its neck feels more like a '59. Trevor brought it to a show in Washington so I could play it live. He put .011s on it for me, and since it had been re-fretted, it was ready to go; I had my tech, Zach Rickard, adjust a few things.

From the first note, it blew my mind. I mean, I was absolutely *hooked*. I've had a few PAF guitars, and there really is something magical about those pickups. These [in the 'Burst] are a little hotter than some, but they're still very *musical* and so harmonic and beautiful. And it's *so much* fun to play – a great guitar.

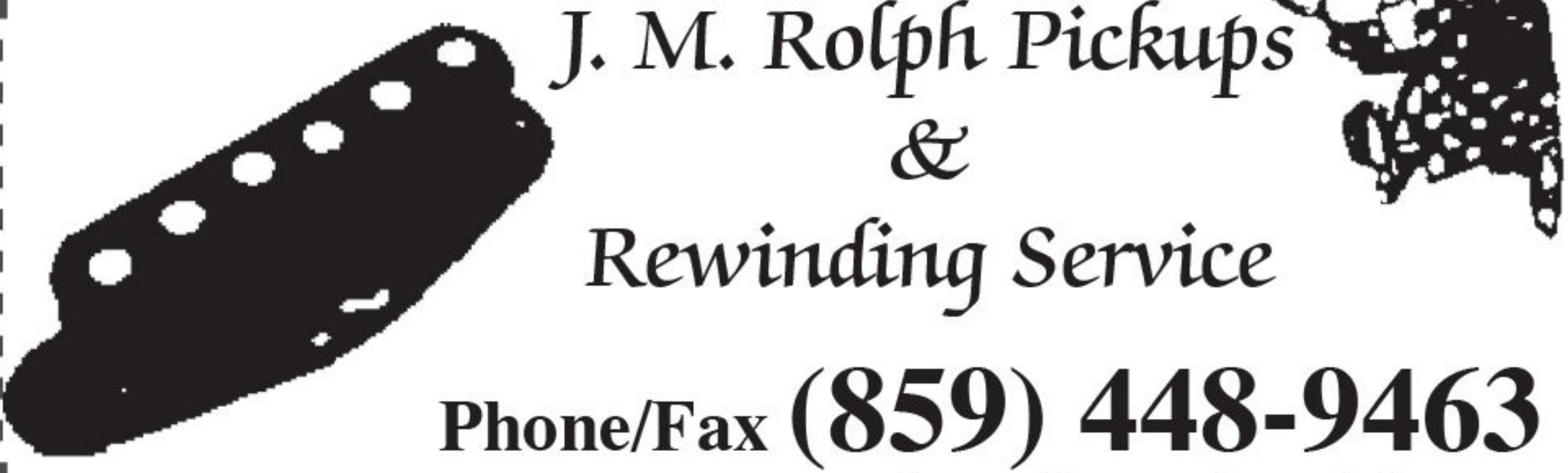
The call to my business manager the next day was not the easiest (laughs). I had to explain why she needed to trust me and I that knew what I was talking about. I wish 'Bursts weren't so great (laughs), but unfortunately for our pocketbooks, they are.

You are the only person credited with playing guitar on the new album.

Yeah, now that I think about it, it was all me. There *is* a part on "Sun Ain't Even Gone Down Yet" where there are two guitars – one panned left, one right, and that's T.J. and I playing off of each other, which is a really cool, fun moment. He's a great player and his guitar is part of our sound. Playing together

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Which guitars is T.J. going to have on the road?

He has a '68 Tele Custom with a rosewood fretboard that I found but reluctantly told him about because he had been looking for one for a long time (laughs). His favorite is a '56 Les Paul Junior, which is what you'll see him play most of the time. It has one of the most-amazing sounds.

Gibson recently gave him a J-45 with the top in the same gold they use on Les Pauls. It's so f***ing cool.

You've also had a couple sunburst Juniors.

Yeah, I had a '56, and I bought a '59 about a year and a half ago. When I started thinking about selling the '56, I was telling myself, "I love that guitar. It's great. I played it all over [2020's] *Skeletons*..." So, instead of selling or trading it, I decided to give it to Zach as a thank-you gift for being so great. I can't do a gig without him. I'm the guy who wonders why my guitar isn't working because I didn't plug it in (laughs), but Zach is so on top of things. Plus, he's so kind and gracious. One day, I put a note in the case and told him the Junior needed work. When he opened it, there was the note, saying, "Congratulations, here's your first vintage Gibson. Enjoy!"

I wanted the guitar to go to someone who would really appreciate it. *And*, it stayed in the family.

Why didn't you put a title on the new album?

That was a philosophical move, to be honest. Over the last couple of years, between *Skeletons* and this album, my brother and I have been very up-front and public about a lot of personal things – we exposed a lot about ourselves that we'd kept private for a longtime, and doing so felt like lifting chains, like we could truly be ourselves. So, we felt fearless making this record, which is why it sounds the way it does. We had a lot more courage, and it felt appropriate to self-title it because that's who we are now.

One thing you've discussed that's especially relatable to guitarists is having to deal with tinnitus.

Yeah, a lot of musicians get it. I know it's been said a million times and people just roll their eyes, but I say it all the time – "*Protect your ears.*" Because once tinnitus starts, it doesn't stop, and it's very, very hard to get used to. Over time, you *can* habituate, which is your brain's way of tuning out information it deems unnecessary. But it takes time. I've done a lot of work to help mine – meditation, anti-anxiety medication, massage to my neck and jaw to ease tension. But I had six months of trial and error and a lot of pain and sorrow. **VG**



“We felt fearless making this record, which is why it sounds the way it does.”

Upcoming Events

KEEP UPDATED AT WWW.VINTAGEGUITAR.COM

Denotes a new or updated listing.

Big Al's Lake County Musician's Swap Meet, 2024 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.lc-msm.com. January 14, March 10, May 12, 2024.

2024

JANUARY

Winter Ohio Guitar Show, Sunday, January 7, 2024 at the Makoy Center 5462 Center St, Hilliard, OH 43026 Show hours 11:30-5:00. For more info, contact Marc at (740) 797-3351. guitardigest@frontier.com, www.ohioguitarshows.com.

Amigo Bay Area World Guitar Show, January 13-14, 2024, Marin Center Exhibit Hall, 10 Avenue of the Flags, San Rafael, CA. For more info call Larry Briggs, 918-288-2222, amigoshow@stringswest.com, www.amigoguitarshows.com.

Amigo SoCal World Guitar Show, January 27-28, 2024, OC Fair & Event Center, Arlington & Fairview St., Costa Mesa, CA. For more info call Larry at (918) 288-2222, amigoshow@stringswest.com, www.amigoguitarshows.com.

FEBRUARY

Orlando International Guitar & Music Expo, February 2-4, 2024 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 (See Advertisement on page 63.)

MARCH

Chicago Vintage Guitar Expo, Sunday March 3rd 2024, Holiday Inn, 1000 Busse Rd, Elk Grove Village, Illinois. 9am to 3PM. For more information contact Beverly Bakes, R&B Productions, 847-931-0707 or Bakesguitar@aol.com.

Sarasota Guitar and Amp Show, March 8th - 12pm -5pm (dealer day), March 9th and 10th - 9am - 6pm at the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34236. Contact: Kevin Wood at 941-993-3098 or visit Sarasotaguitarshow.com

Carolina Guitar Show - Asheville, March 9-10, 2024 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

Cincinnati Guitar Show, March 9-10 10am - 4pm - Our 30th Anniversary Show - Sharonville Conv. Cntr, 11355 Chester Rd, Sharonville Oh 45246. Contact Denny 513-503-1072 - more info at cincyguitarshow.com & FB.

Illinois Guitar & Gear Expo, Sunday March 10, 2024 at the Kankakee County Fairgrounds 213W 4000S

Rd. Kankakee, IL 60901, 10am - 3pm For more info, visit: <https://www.illinoisguitarexpo.com/>

Amigo Nashville Guitar Show 2024, March 23, 10-5 and March 24, 10-4. Williamson County Ag EXPO Park, 4215 Long Lane, Franklin, TN. For more info contact Ruth Brinkmann (817) 312-7659 ruthmbrinkmann@gmail.com, Larry Briggs (918) 288-2222, shows@amigoguitarshows.com, Dave Crocker, davelcrocker@gmail.com (417) 850-4751. www.amigoguitarshows.com.

Lansing Music Instrument Swap, Sunday March 24, 2024 from 10am -4pm at the Causeway Bay Convention Center, 6820 S Cedar St., Lansing MI 48911. Contact Shawn VanSteeland at 517-410-6409 or visit www.musicinstrumentswap.com (See Advertisement on page 64.)

APRIL

West Coast Guitar Show - NorthWest, Saturday, April 6th, 2024 from 10am - 3:30pm at the Renton Community Center - Renton, WA. For more info contact Bruce Adolph 253-445-1973 bruceadolph@mac.com

The Greater Pittsburgh Guitar Show, Sunday, April 7, 2024. Printscape Arena, 114 Southpointe Blvd., Canonsburg, PA. Show hours 11-4. For more info contact Scott Talarico at (412) 716-8411, scotpro@comcast.net or visit www.guitarshowusa.com.

The Indiana Guitar Show, April 13-14, 2024, at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds 1900 E. Main St. Danville, IN. For more information contact Eddie at (317) 272-5222 or visit www.theindianaguitarshow.com

Central Coast Guitar Show, Saturday, April 20, 2024 at the Veterans Memorial Building, 801 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401 from 10am-4pm. For more info, contact: Ed Miller, (805)431-3067

Elmira Vintage Guitar Show, Sunday, April 21, 2024, +-11am-4pm at the Woolwich Memorial Centre, Elmira, Ontario, Canada. Go to www.elmiravintageguitarshow.ca for more information

MAY

Dallas International Guitar Festival, May 5-7, 2023 at the Dallas Market Hall, 2200 N Stemmons Fwy, Dallas, TX. For more info visit www.guitarshow.com.

Jake's Guitar Show & Music Swap Meet, May 4-5, at the Indoor Treasure Barn, 1380 Rt 100, Barto, Pa. Hours 8-1. For more information contact Justin at (484)256-6515 or info@jakesfleamarket.com

JUNE

Guitarfest Guitar Show, June 9th at the Summit County Fairgrounds Arena, 229 E Howe Rd. Tallmadge, OH 44278. Hrs 10am -6pm. For more info visit www.guitarfestguitarshow.com

Amigo SoCal World Guitar Show, June 15-16, 2024, OC Fair & Event Center, Arlington & Fairview St., Costa Mesa, CA. For more info call Larry at (918) 288-2222, amigoshow@stringswest.com, www.amigoguitarshows.com.

Summer Ohio Guitar Show, Sunday, June 23, 2024 at the Makoy Center 5462 Center St, Hilliard, OH 43026 Show hours 11:30-5:00. For more info, contact Marc at (740) 797-3351. guitardigest@frontier.com, www.ohioguitarshows.com.

SEPTEMBER

Kalamazoo Music Instrument Swap. Sunday September 24, 2024 from 10am-4pm at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center, 2900 Lake St. Kalamazoo, MI 49048. Contact Shawn VanSteeland at 517-410-6409 or visit www.musicinstrumentswap.com (See Advertisement on page 64.)

Jake's Guitar Show & Music Swap Meet, September 21-22, at the Indoor Treasure Barn, 1380 Rt 100, Barto, Pa. Hours 8-1. For more information contact Justin at (484)256-6515 or info@jakesfleamarket.com

OCTOBER

Mesquite 2024 - formerly Guitarlington, October 19-20 at the Mesquite Convention Center, 1700 Rodeo Dr, Mesquite, 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 817-592-3381 www.amigoguitarshows.com (See Advertisement on page 65.)

Ferris State University Music Instrument Swap, Sunday October 20, 2024 from 10am-4pm at the Interdisciplinary Resource Center (IRC), 1301 S State St. Big Rapids, MI 49307. Contact Shawn VanSteeland at 517-410-6409 or visit www.musicinstrumentswap.com (See Advertisement on page 64.)

NOVEMBER

Ann Arbor Music Instrument Swap, Sunday November 3, 2024 from 10am -4pm at the Eastern Michigan University Student Center, 900 Oakland St., Ypsilanti, MI 48197. Contact Shawn VanSteeland at 517-410-6409 or visit www.musicinstrumentswap.com (See Advertisement on page 64.)

2025

MARCH

Illinois Guitar & Gear Expo, Sunday March 9, 2025 at the Kankakee County Fairgrounds 213W 4000S Rd. Kankakee, IL 60901, 10am - 3pm For more info, visit: <https://www.illinoisguitarexpo.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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Robben Ford

PRIME ARTISTRY

A live recording can be a snapshot in time or the accumulated powers of an artist's lifelong passion.

Robben Ford applies both with his latest, which showcased his catalog live at City Winery, Nashville, in 2021.

Having performed with everyone from Charlie Musselwhite to Miles Davis, at his core, Ford is an upper-echelon blues guitarist who never disappoints. This rendition of "Blues For Lonnie Johnson" is world-class, full of passion, artistry, and loaded with song-serving virtuosity. The lineup includes drummer Nate Smith, bassist Anton Nesbit, and saxophonists Jeff Coffin and Jovan Quallo. All are killers.

Instrumentals like "Balafon" and "Anto'Nate'n'Tate" display how the rustic timbre of blues guitar can exquisitely be applied to the sophisticated chord changes of jazz. Ford is a man of many



Robben Ford Night In The City

inversions, plays clean, sits in the pocket, and fattens his solos only to achieve radiant Dumble-amplified nirvana. Exhibit A is the lead break on "Pure," which seamlessly transitions into "White Rock Beer... 8 Cents."

From ghostly fusion to a Texas shuffle, *Night In The City* represents the sensitivity and articulate musical evolution of an artist in his prime. — **Oscar Jordan**



Lost Planet Airmen Back from the Ozone

Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen were true country-rock and Americana pioneers.

Their unique, uncompromising brew of rockabilly, R&B, honky-tonk, Western swing, and Bakersfield twang set them apart and even yielded a 1972 hit cover of the '50s country-rapper "Hot Rod Lincoln." After disbanding in 1976, pianist-rapper Cody (George Frayne), Dieselbilly king Bill Kirchen, and steel guitarist Bobby Black kept that spirit alive in their solo careers.

Back from the Ozone reunites original members Kirchen, Black, fiddler-saxophonist Andy Stein, rhythm guitarist/singer John Tichy, and rock-solid bassist Buffalo Bruce Barlow; Frayne died in 2021. Filling in are steel guitarist Peter Siegel, pianist/singer (and longtime Kirchen associate) Austin de Lone, and drummer Paul Revelli, all familiar with the legacy.

With half the songs Cody/Airmen favorites, Kirchen handles most vocals and unleashes his Tele in the right spots; particularly his ripping break on "Olivette," 89-year-old Black's steel remains polished and masterful. On the newer ballad "I Can't Get High," Tichy humorously addresses the newly legal world of pot. The Western-swing anthem "My Window Faces the South," an Airman staple, showcases Kirchen, Stein, de Lone, and Black swinging with authority.

The early Airmen were audacious. They're veterans now, yet that old attitude remains. — **Rich Kienzie**



Sue Foley Live in Austin Vol. 1

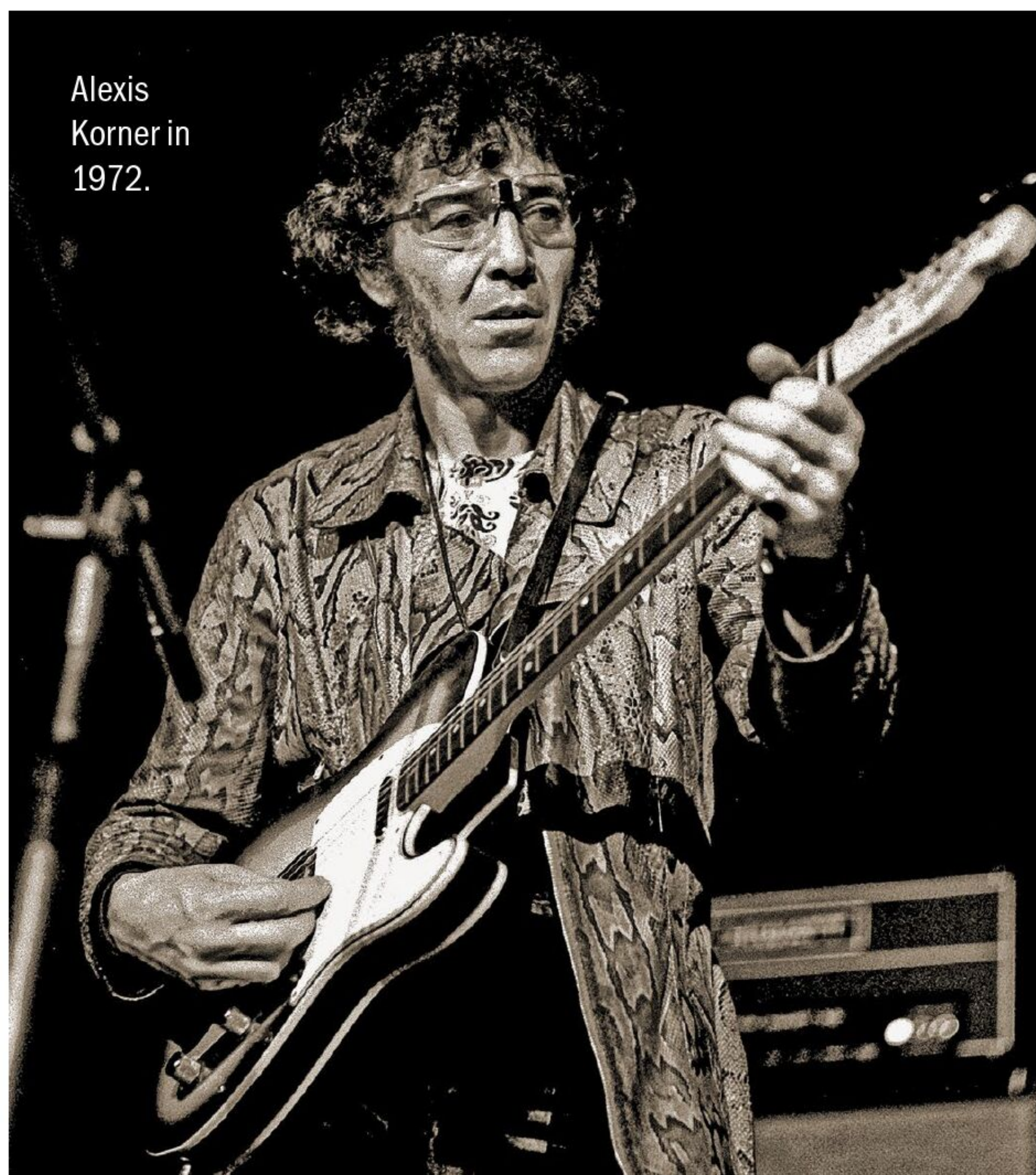
Foley is an award-winning blues veteran, yet this is her

first electric live album. It includes 11 songs primarily from the Canadian-born/longtime Texan's 14 studio albums. Of course, no live album (this one recorded at the famed Continental Club) would be complete without some covers, and Foley delivers those, too.

Snapping off crisp, clean, thumbpicked and fingerpicked lines and chords on her famed Telecaster, "Pinky," Foley's singing equally helps her convey the songs' messages. Her rhythm section features bassist Jon Penner and drummer Corey Keller, while guest guitarist Derek O'Brien sits in occasionally to trade dueling licks with Foley.

"New Used Car" opens with a smooth beat, but Foley quickly loosens rockin' riffin' magnified by that sweet Fender tone. "Walkin' Home" grooves to a Bo Diddley-like shuffle beat and country influences creep in on "Highwayside." Howlin' Wolf's "Howlin' for My Darlin'" features Foley and O'Brien cuttin' heads. Slip-sliding riffs and vibrato touches highlight the terrific Jody Williams instrumental "Hooked on Love (a.k.a. Lucky Lou)." The saucy "Better" percolates before

CHECK THIS ACTION



Alexis
Korner in
1972.

THE SALAD DAYS OF BRITISH BLUES

By Dan Forte

What springs to mind when you hear the term “British blues movement”? Is it covers of Slim Harpo, Muddy Waters, and John Lee Hooker songs by the early Rolling Stones, Manfred Mann, Yardbirds, and others? Or is it the blues-rock Big Bang of Eric Clapton’s work on John Mayall’s *Blues Breakers*, a.k.a. “Beano,” album?

Of course, there’s a lot more to it, which perhaps only Brits of a certain age were exposed to. With 73 cuts across three CDs and a 30-page booklet, *Shake That Thing! The Blues In Britain, 1963-1973* offers an overview that’ll enlighten even hardcore bluesniks.

As with wider exposure afforded rural and urban blues artists in America, the British blues movement grew out of folk and jazz circles. This collection kicks off with Cyril Davies (accompanied by his Rhythm and Blues All Stars) blowing harmonica on “Country Line Special” à la Sonny Terry. When Muddy Waters did a short U.K. tour in ’58, two years before he would play the

Newport Jazz Festival back home, he was atypically backed by “trad” (Dixieland jazz) trombonist Chris Barber, but also jammed with Davies and guitarist Alexis Korner. Years before John Mayall was dubbed the “Godfather of British Blues,” Korner was called the same, and for good reason, considering Charlie Watts, Jack Bruce, Graham Bond, Ginger Baker, and Dick Heckstall-Smith served time in his Blues Incorporated, and he and Davies opened the London Blues and Barrelhouse Club.

The program jumps to Long John Baldry dueting with American gospel singer Sister Rosetta Tharpe, an early Rod Stewart single featuring session guitarist Jimmy Page, and acoustic innovator Davy Graham doing “Goin’ Down Slow.” Page and John Renbourn team to back

Beverly Martyn’s rendition of Bessie Smith’s “Me & My Gin.”

Because the format is chronological rather than ganged stylistically, the Panama Limited Jug Band commingles with the Animals’ hit version of “See See Rider,” featuring Hilton Valentine’s gnarly bending of a note 20 times in a row. Animals singer Eric Burdon was always naturally soulful and authentic, but others’ delivery can be quite affected – none more than Alex Harvey’s over-the-top vocal on “Honey Bee,” unintentionally resembling a parody.

One of the most-original cuts is Korner laying slide on an instrumental arrangement of Robert Johnson’s “Preachin’ Blues,” backed by droning horns and tom-toms. Johnson gets another nod via Clapton’s understated “Ramblin’ On My Mind,” from the aforementioned “Beano.” Rather than simply cover an old blues tune, Fleetwood Mac’s self-titled debut featured Peter Green

solo on “The World Keep On Turning,” sounding uncannily like a long lost Hooker tune.

The Kellys – Dave and sister Jo-Ann – are especially strong, vocally and on guitar, covering Fred McDowell and Charley Patton, respectively. Dave was a member of the John Dummer Blues Band and later worked with Manfred Mann’s Paul Jones, both as a duo and in the Blues Band, which called it quits in 2022, after two dozen sterling albums. Jo-Ann was courted by Canned Heat and released an album on Epic. She possessed a deep, convincing voice, and her guitar work was equally impressive. Brother and sister were members of the ad hoc all-star Tramp (Danny Kirwan, Mick Fleetwood, Bob Hall, Bob Brunning), also featured here. She passed away from a brain tumor in 1990, just 46 years old.

Additional slide comes courtesy of Pete Haycock of the Climax Chicago Blues Band, as Climax was known in ’70. Haycock was a bit of a wunderkind, forming the predecessor to the band at 16. Sam Mitchell’s sparse “Leaf Without A Tree” is the most haunting track in the box. *Aqualung* fans might be surprised to discover that Jethro Tull was originally a blues band, and a good one, while Ralph McTell, famous for the folk-pop hit “Streets Of London,” struts some intricate Piedmont ragtime picking.

The heaviest rock interpretation of the blues is Humble Pie’s 1971 version of Muddy’s “Rollin’ Stone,” spotlighting the dual guitars of Steve Marriott and Peter Frampton. Irish blues-rocker Rory Gallagher’s command is featured twice, with Taste and under his own name, but both are solo pieces.

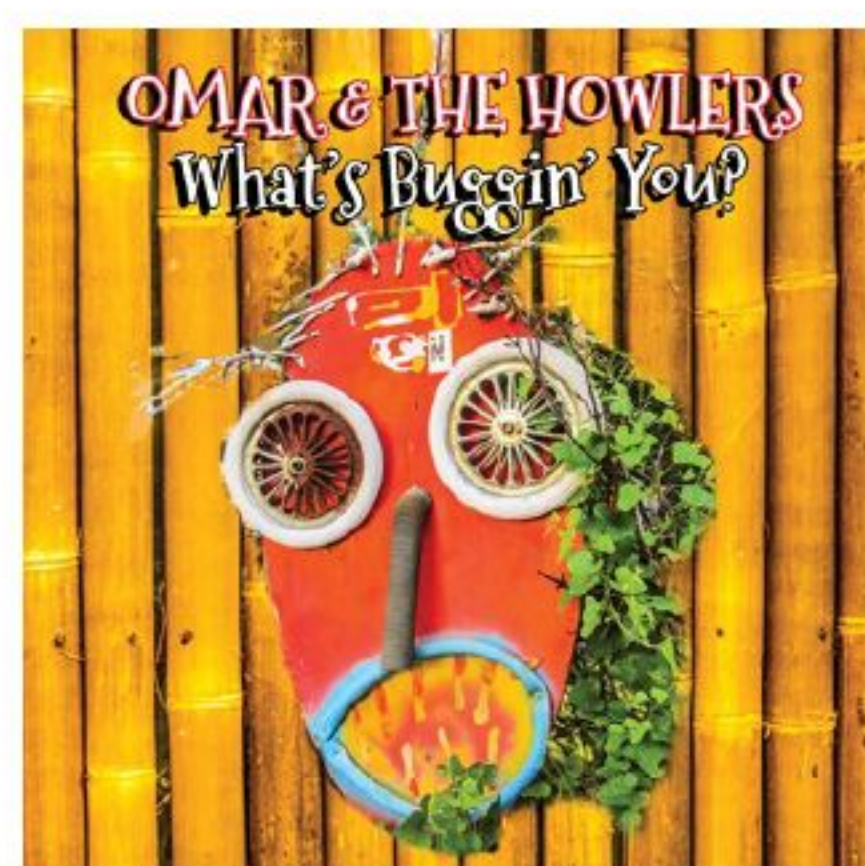
There are a lot of gems here, but in this case the whole truly is greater than the sum of its parts. Hopefully, it will entice listeners to dig deeper into what was a fruitful scene. My only complaint is about the booklet and its teensy typeface; it’s a shame the label didn’t make it 60 pages with legible lettering. The set’s closer is “Last Of The Good Time Guys” by Dave Peabody, an accomplished journalist, photographer, and (as demonstrated here) fingerpicker – also represented with his band Tight Like That. I had the good fortune to hook up with Dave in London in ’89, and he took it upon himself to be my one-man blues chamber of commerce. Next month, I’ll share an interview with Dave, a true renaissance man of the blues.

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Susan Tedeschi

the guitar gets aggressive. Two compelling, but odd covers (for a blues record, anyway) are Bob Dylan's "Positively 4th Street" and Cheap Trick's "High Roller." Bluesboosters, step right up! – **Bret Adams**



Omar & the Howlers What's Buggin' You?

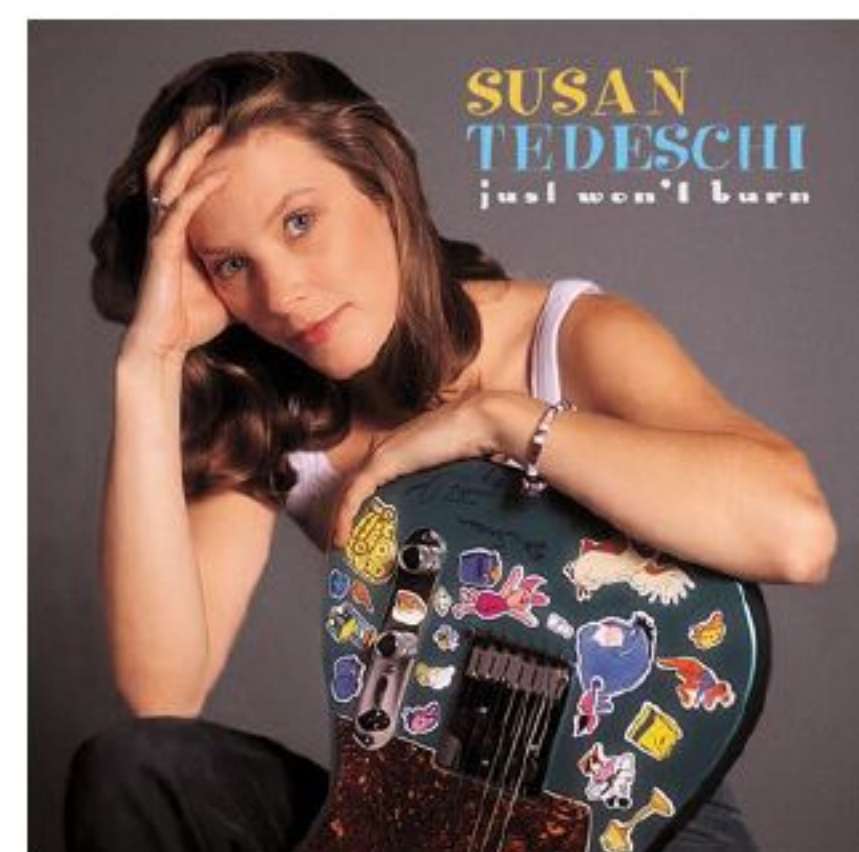
Omar Dykes is back! In 2017, the Austin blues-rocker was stricken with a mysterious flesh-eating rash that rendered his massive arms puny. It was doubtful he'd ever play guitar again, let alone punish a Strat. At last, he has returned in fine form.

Superb backing comes from drummer Mike Buck (LeRoi Brothers, Fabulous Thunderbirds), bassist Jason Crisp, and guitarist Eve Monsees (a member of the Bluebonnets who also leads her own group).

Ten great originals are joined appropriately by "Crackin' Up," from Bo Diddley – like Omar, a native of McComb, Mississippi. "Gator Man" sounds like a Creedence song if John Fogerty had been reared in the Delta, and Monsees' baritone growl on "Bad Monkey" matches Dykes' natural gruff.

"Thousand Pound Gorilla" mines a one-chord riff in the manner of Muddy, Wolf, and Hooker. "Clarksdale, Mississippi" name-checks bluesmen Son House, Charley

Patton, Robert Johnson, and others, as Crisp handles electric guitar, with Monsees on acoustic slide and Dykes blowing harp. More than just another entry in the Howlers' two dozen-plus catalog, this is a most-welcome return for one of Austin's true treasures. – **Dan Forte**



Susan Tedeschi Just Won't Burn

Fantasy Records is celebrating Susan Tedeschi by reissuing the album that introduced her to lovers of soulful music the world over.

The 25th anniversary edition of 1998's *Just Won't Burn* features all the tracks from the original Tone Cool recording plus five bonus tracks. The album was Grammy-nominated for Best New Artist, went gold, and propelled Tedeschi to greater glory. The original 11 tracks include covers like "Little By Little" by Junior Wells and "Angel From Montgomery" by John Prine.

This younger, more fiery, less-seasoned Tedeschi shows her swinging for the fences as she belts every note like a house on fire. The opener, "Rock Me Right," is full of badass intensity, growl, and excellent nastiness during her guitar solos. Not only is her singing amazing, she displays blues-approved moxie like on "Little By Little" with aggressive open-string pull-offs.

She tears listeners apart on Tom Hambridge's "It Hurt So Bad," and the extended solo on the title track is top-tier electric-blues ecstasy. Bonus tracks include live versions of "Looking For Answers" and the title track with the Tedeschi Trucks Band, as well as outtakes of "Voodoo Woman" and "Waste Of Time." Tedeschi is a triple-threat! – **OJ**



The Aristocrats Duck

Featuring Guthrie Govan on guitar and Bryan Beller on bass plus überdrummer Marco Minnemann, this terrifying trio blows minds every other bar.

Like a modern-day Dixie Dregs or fusiony Satch/Vai project, they attack "Hey, Where's My Drink Package?" with gleeful savagery; Govan whacks an off-beat funk chord, but also explores atmospheric pitch-shifting sounds. On "Aristoclub," the threesome toys with time signatures, tossing virtuoso runs back and forth. Surrounded by two note-y aces, Beller somehow keeps it all together with his groovin', fuzz-addled bass. Importantly, each member is a primary instrumentalist – there are no backup musicians here.

Armed with his signature Charvel, Govan can pick as fast as any human, but also drop blinding legato and tapping patterns, as on "Sgt. Rockhopper," where he uses thick, saturated gain to employ rock and fusion runs, but also jazz-syncoated phrasing to mix things up rhythmically and harmonically. The comically titled "Sittin' On a Duck on the Bay" dials down the heat for low-volume funk and jazz, evidence of his supreme chops; Govan's bebop envelope-filter runs are simply spellbinding.

Somehow it all makes sense – and reminds us that The Aristocrats are brilliantly talented daredevil musicians. *Duck* is shred for smart people. – **Pete Prown**



Carolyn Sills Combo On the Draw

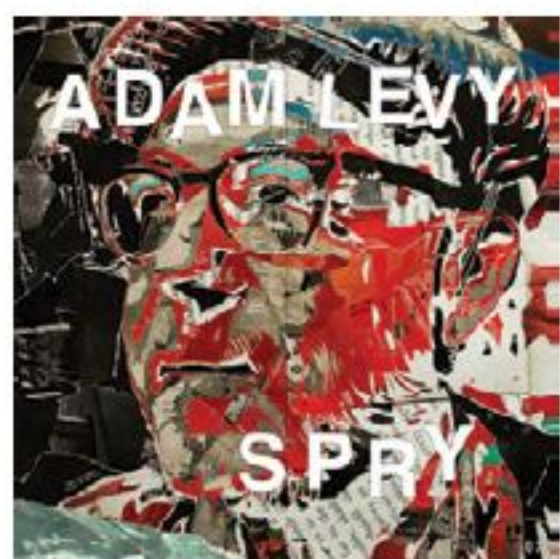
Listening to the Carolyn Sills Combo, you might do a double-take: Is this newly fashioned country music, or a long-lost 1950s or '60s band coming out of the ether?



GRAM PARSONS & THE FALLEN ANGELS

The Last Roundup

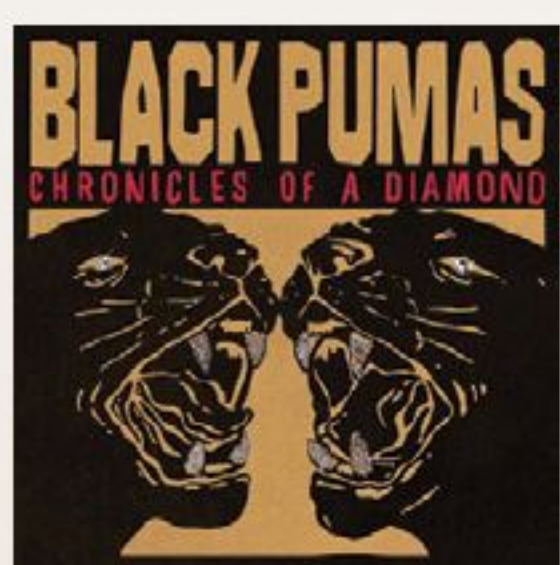
This unreleased 1973 live recording from Philadelphia's Bijou Cafe unveils Parsons' Fallen Angels in all their ragged glory. Parsons sounds a bit weary, but Neil Flanz on pedal steel and lead guitarist Jock Bartley (later of Firefall) unreel a wealth of gorgeous countrified licks to bring the show alive. Still, it's Emmylou Harris' vocals that make the music truly shine. – **MD**



ADAM LEVY

Spry

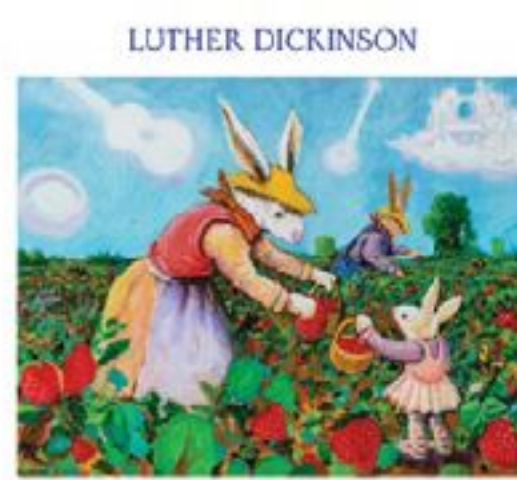
Consummate sideman Adam Levy's latest displays refinement, feeling, beautiful ES-335 tones, and acoustic textures. Under the jazz umbrella, Levy is assisted by bassist Larry Grenadier and drummer Joey Baron for 10 rainy day tunes filled with wistful melancholy. "Sidewalk Chalk" and "King Pleasure" generate pleasurable atmospheres, while "There's Always One" is a master-class in effortless voice leading and acoustic elegance. – **OJ**



BLACK PUMAS

Chronicles of a Diamond

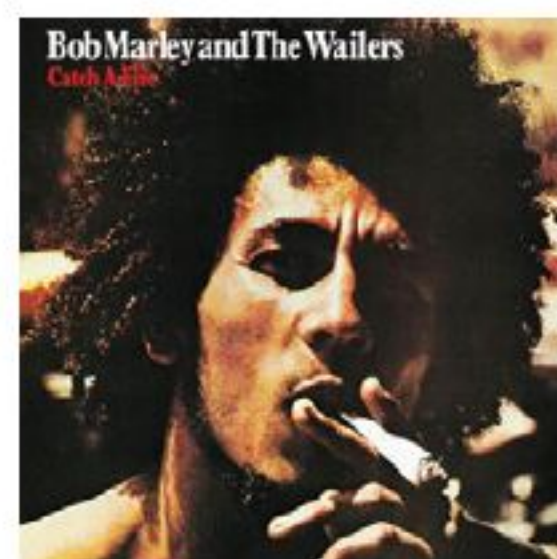
After opening for the Rolling Stones' last tour and winning seven Grammy nominations, Pumas masterminds Eric Burton and guitarist Adrian Quesada recorded their sophomore album in their hometown of Austin, as well as Amsterdam, Mexico City, and San Francisco. Aswirl with rhythms, moods, and sizzling guitar work from all these locales and more, the songs are even weirder and wilder than their celebrated debut. – **MD**



LUTHER DICKINSON

Magic Music for Family Folk

It's a fact that Luther Dickinson, heading the North Mississippi All Stars, works with raw music. As a father, however, he endeavored to make an album for his daughters true to his rootsy vision, with a softer, innocent feel. He achieves that with endearing sing-alongs like "Crawdad," Mississippi John Hurt's "Beulah Land" and even John Lee Hooker's "Boom Boom." – **RK**



BOB MARLEY

Catch a Fire 50th Anniversary

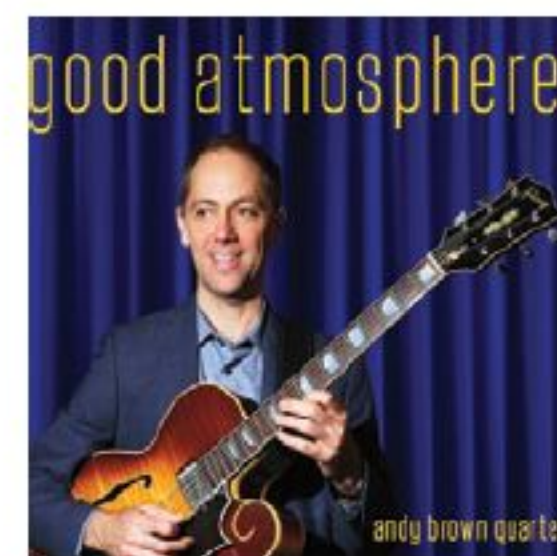
The iconic reggae album returns with a remaster, expanded sessions, and two 1973 concerts. Marley and Peter Tosh weave incredibly delicate vamps, while guest soloist Wayne Perkins (The Rolling Stones' *Black & Blue*) delivers on "Concrete Jungle" and beloved "Stir It Up." The live "Get Up, Stand Up" is a master-class in building complex grooves with two rhythm guitars. – **PP**



THE SEXTONES

Love Can't Be Borrowed

The Sextones are carrying the torch for classic soul/funk. Listening to this terrific album, you might often think it's a Motown, Atlantic, or Philadelphia International record from the '60s or '70s. The playing of vocalist/guitarist Mark Sexton and bassist Alexander Korostinsky suits the groovin' arrangements. The best booty-shakers are "Without You," "Beck & Call," and "The Other Side." – **BA**



ANDY BROWN

Good Atmosphere

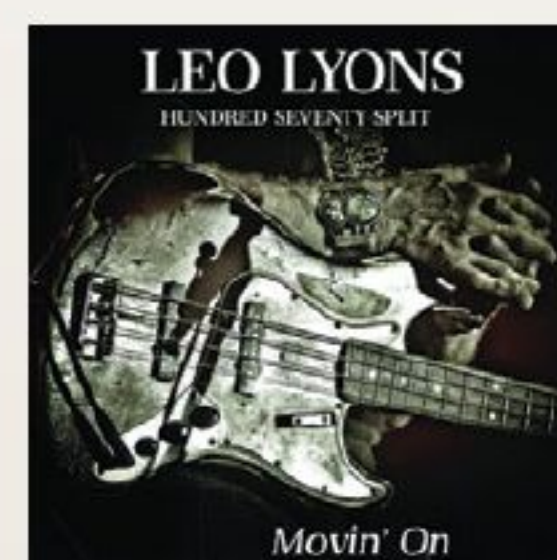
Chicagoan Brown leads his quartet in a set of jazz and Latin standards from Billy Strayhorn to Luiz Bonfá and Wes Montgomery. "Douce Ambiance," the Django Reinhardt composition, translates to the album's title. Like every cut, it highlights Brown's round tone and innate swing. Book a trip to the Windy City and catch them weekly at Andy's Jazz Club. – **DF**



CORB LUND

El Viejo

Canadian roots-rocker Lund and his Hurtin' Albertans unplug for this loose set of tunes recorded in the singer's living room. Lund's energetic vocals remain a constant, and guitarist Grant Siemens, moving between various acoustics, banjo, and mandolin, slides in superb licks behind Corb, particularly the guitar on "The Cardplayers" and fluid banjo on "Redneck Rehab." – **RK**



LEO LYONS / HUNDRED

Movin' On

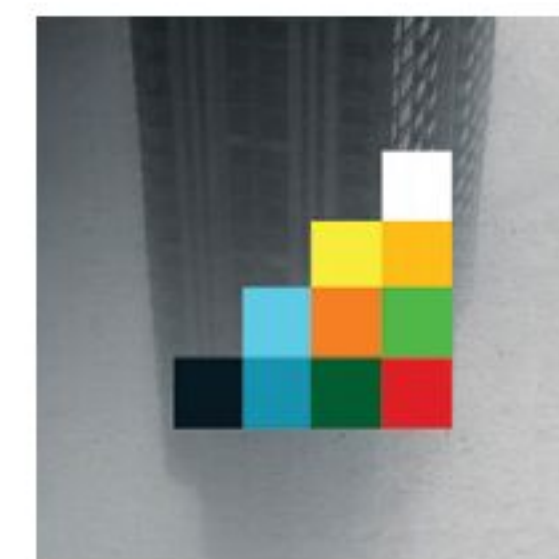
Now 80, the Ten Years After bassist's blues-rock trio lays down no-nonsense tunes. Vocalist/guitar hotshot Joe Gooch stretches out with extended solos while Lyons and drummer Damon Sawyer provide sturdy support. "It's So Easy to Slide" bops with a jazzy feel. "Mad, Bad and Dangerous" is an exciting rocker. Acoustic riffing highlights the easy-going "Meet Me at the Bottom." – **BA**



GYPSY

In the Garden

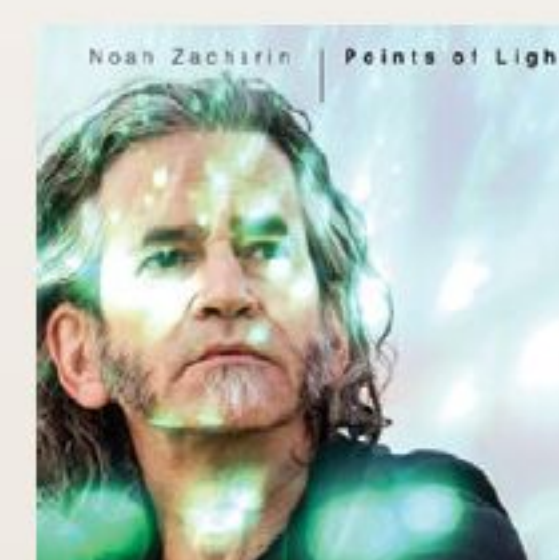
This Minnesota band's 1971 impressive sophomore effort carried the tail end of psychedelia into the early days of prog. Lush harmonies and swelling organ dominate, but the fiery lead guitar of James C. Johnson, who later recorded with Ray Charles, deserves a closer look. Bassist Willie Weeks assumedly fit in sessions during his legendary tenure with soul singer Donny Hathaway. – **DF**



STEVEN WILSON

The Harmony Codex

On his seventh album, Porcupine Tree's Steven Wilson sends listeners on a genre-spanning excursion through moody vistas, robust acoustic playing, and sheets of angular electric guitar. Triple-thick vocal harmonies, spacious melodies, and ambient pianos create a sonic wonderland. The chugging riffs on "Impossible Tightrope" are offset by symphonic feedback and flatpicking – a love letter to audiophiles and prog lovers. – **OJ**



NOAH ZACHARIN

Points of Light

Most folkies are solid strummers, but this Canadian is an advanced fingerpicker. Zacharin's spry steel-string on "10 Tons of Road" is a wondrous surprise. "17 Minutes" veers towards country-rock, combining steel guitar and organ (à la *Blood on the Tracks*) with a pulsing acoustic groove. "So Much Work to Be Done" has flashy fingerstyle, but never sacrifices the song. – **PP**

HIT LIST

The combo is indeed that good. Guitarist Gerard Egan channels Grady Martin or Chet Atkins – or better yet, himself. Charlie Joe Wallace’s steel guitar and Dobro are period perfect. And riding atop, Sills’ voice sounds effortlessly – and wondrously – like Kitty Wells or Patsy Cline winging over the airwaves from a vintage Grand Ole Opry show.

The combo has been playing its signature blend of country, hillbilly, and rockabilly on an array of discs very much worth checking out. Sills sometimes calls their sound “spaghetti-western swing,” and swing it does.

This is truly a combo, too – tight and focused, with clever, layered arrangements. Jimmy Norris’ drumming and Sunshine Jackson’s vocals tie a song up with a pretty bow. Egan and Wallace’s string work support Sills’ singing with period-perfect fills. And when they let loose, solos range from sultry to twangy, sweet to red hot. – **Michael Dregni**



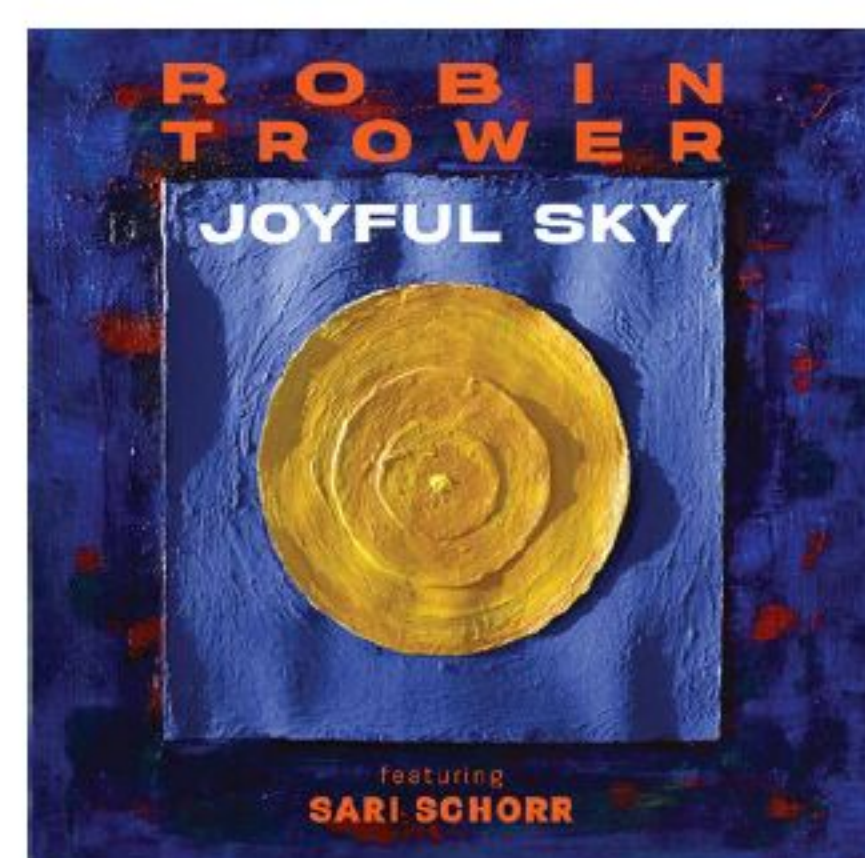
Jim Lauderdale & The Po' Ramblin' Boys The Long and Lonesome Letting Go

Bluegrass became part of Lauderdale’s oeuvre decades ago through his collaborations with Ralph Stanley and Roland White. East Tennessee’s Grammy-nominated Po’ Ramblin’ Boys, admired for their fresh, energetic, and tradition-based sound, prove to be perfect partners. While Lauderdale co-wrote all 12 songs, Ramblin’ Boys guitarist Josh Rinkel co-wrote six, all outstanding.

The Po’ Ramblin’ Boys fit Lauderdale well for one reason: this is a band. Their strengths are tight, tasteful ensemble work, not endless hot-licks excursions. They’re even restrained on Rinkel’s hell-for-leather “Drop The Hammer Down.” Fiddler Laura Orshaw, mandolinist C.J. Lewandowski, banjo player Jereme Brown, and bassist Jasper Lorentzen are A-list players. Like his bandmates, Rinkel doesn’t indiscrimi-

nately fire off solos; his breaks reflect taste, passion, and polish as they tell a story and finish smoothly.

Lauderdale is at his unvarnished, no-frills best. On the title track, he swaps verses with Del McCoury (his first duet with the bluegrass icon). At ease with the songs, he delivers everything with his masterful, earthy flair. His ability to choose optimal collaborators (including non-bluegrassers like Buddy Miller and Robert Hunter) has produced superb results in the past. Reflecting that same consistency, the Po’ Ramblin’ Boys rightly share Lauderdale’s triumph. – **RK**



Robin Trower featuring Sari Schorr Joyful Sky

Trower, a legendary guitarist who has occasionally sung lead on his own albums, has more often worked with stellar vocalists to bring extra power to his combustible blues-rock.

Collaborators have included the late, great James Dewar, Davey Pattison, and Richard Watts. Now, add Sari Schorr to that list.



Sari Schorr and Robin Trower

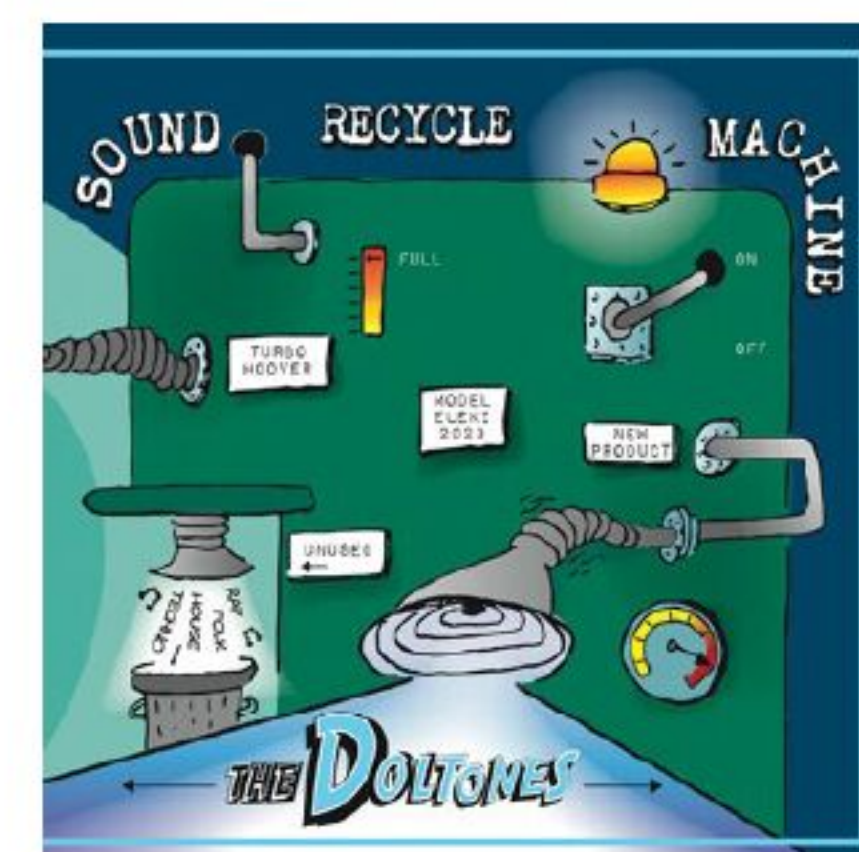
Trower exhibits palpable excitement at having the husky-voiced Schorr belt out this set of tunes, and he wrote these songs in different keys then arranged them specifically for her. The

result is music with an R&B flavor mixed with elements of his ’70s material.

Trower wrings an expanded set of distinctive tones from his Stratocaster, as well. “Burn” sizzles with a slow riff, smoky vocals, backed by both shimmering and liquid guitar parts oozing exquisite tone. The guitar sound on “The Distance” also jumps – resonant and honey-dipped. The tranquil “Peace of Mind” gives Robin’s distorted guitar and Schorr’s throaty singing space to breathe. The title track is a little lighter, with smoother vocals and supple, creamy solos. Funky jamming is unleashed on “The Circle is Complete”

with soulful vocals and clean guitar solos over watery Uni-Vibe chords.

Fans will embrace every element of *Joyful Sky*. – **BA**



The Doltones Sound Recycle Machine

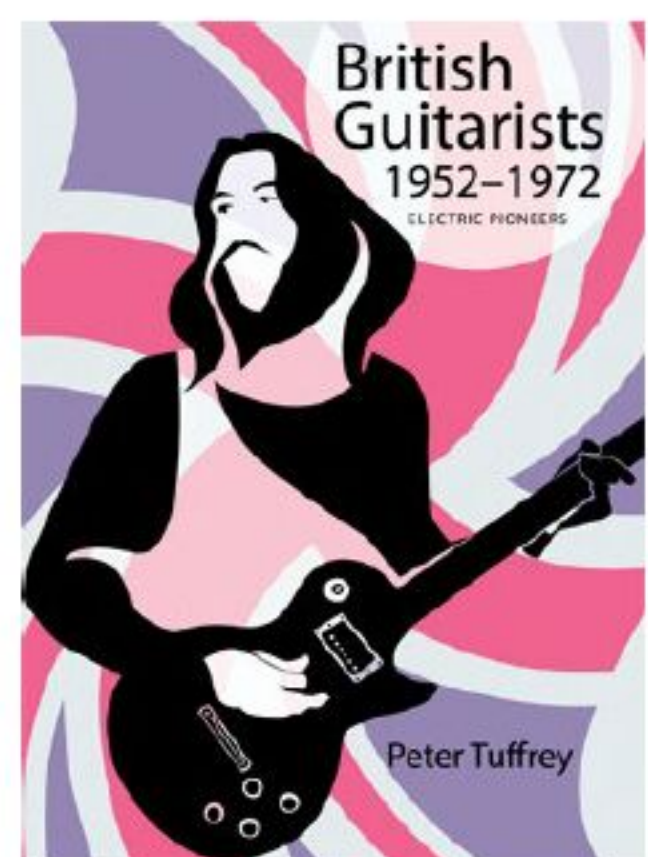
There must be something in those icy fjords. What else can explain the great surf music that has come out of Finland?

In recent years, instrumental bands like the Regents, Beatmakers, and especially Laika & the Cosmonauts have rejuvenated the once-dormant genre. Before packing in a two-decade run in 2008, the latter was the world’s best quasi-surf band of the past 40 years. Now, Helsinki’s Doltones are ensuring their place among Scandinavian bands with a third release since the 2017 debut *Dance Or Die*.

They and the other Finns’ style melds American surf with “rautalanka,” referring to a style of instrumental rock popular in the early ’60s. It basically sounds like the Ventures and even moreso like the Shadows, whose influence is still strong globally. The Doltones’

instrumentation is the same, with lead guitarist Hannu Kononen spearheading a quartet with drums, bass, and rhythm backing.

Kononen is also responsible for the set of originals that, like the Cosmonauts', focuses on melody and composition, not just "surfy" riffs – though "Stiffy Stuff" mines the latter winningly. He relies on a clean tone without excessive reverb or delay, as on the lovely "Indico Sky," while "Deeper Swell" is majestic, baritone-driven spaghetti Western. – **DF**



Peter Tuffrey **British Guitarists 1952-1972: Electric Pioneers**

Peter Tuffrey is an author of general-interest books (several about English trains) who is adroit at compiling information. This one keys on 40 British guitarists – from the obvious (Clapton, Beck, Page) to the relatively obscure (Bert Weedon, the Searchers' Mike Pender, and the Groundhogs' Tony McPhee) – without trying to be all-inclusive. It's a group of pickers, set

within an arbitrary time span, that appeals to the author.

Turn to any chapter of this book – be it Ronnie Wood, Martin Barre, George Harrison, or Tony Hicks – and you'll find extensive biographical information, as well as boxcars full of guitar, amp, and pedal info. There are also interesting photos like Keith Richards with a '50s Flying V or Marc Bolan of T. Rex with a wedge-shaped Burns Flyte.

As a reference book, *British Guitarists* is a pretty dry read. There are a few quotes to liven things up, but it's otherwise a standard encyclopedia. One can also question omissions like electric heroes Vic Flick (the great *James Bond* guitarist) or studio ace Big Jim Sullivan. But in all, it's a sturdy, focused reference. – **PP**



Thin Lizzy **Vagabonds of the Western World** **50th Anniversary**

Long before "The Boys Are Back in Town," Thin Lizzy

was a pugnacious Dublin trio with bassist Phil Lynott and guitarist Eric Bell. *Vagabonds* was their third album and there's nothing else like it, mixing psychedelia, blues, pop ballads, hard rock, glam, and Irish folk. This deluxe package includes rarities, radio sessions, and a 1973 BBC concert.

Lizzy's most underrated guitarist, Bell, was a child of his times – inspired by Clapton, Beck, Hendrix, Peter Green, and Rory Gallagher – there's even a Django-styled acoustic solo on "Randolph's Tango." The single "Whiskey In the Jar" is the best-known track, an 18th-century folk song updated with melodic guitar, while "The Rocker" is a firecracker lit by Bell's smokin' Stratocaster. The cartoonish "Hero and the Madman" has a ferocious solo at the end.

Of the bonus tracks, "1969 Rock Suicide" is an Echoplex extravaganza with whammy dives and power chords. In a '73 John Peel radio session, Lynott's mega-fat bass kicks off "Gonna Creep Up on You," while the BBC tape includes the Irish-themed "Things Ain't Workin' Out Down at the Farm" with a thrilling Bell lead. This ain't *Jailbreak* or *Black Rose*, but it is a glimpse of Thin Lizzy's uncanny first chapter. – **PP VG**



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1973 Fender Stratocaster Sunburst, Tremolo, Maple Neck, All Original, No Modifications, Plays Great, Frets Great, \$5,298 pkus \$148 insured shipping, or best offer. Call text or email Charlie 248-345-5886 chuhn1951@gmail.com

Gibson Herb Ellis ES-165, Light Burst with deluxe adjustable bridge, Serial Number 01745722. Contact Wyllis H. Ament wament37@gmail.com 254-290-4726

1956 Danelectro U-1. Original except one cupcake knob. Pretty cool. Black w/ single lipstick tube p/up. Played & shows typical wear. No case. \$700 + shipping; 1959 Harmony "Mars" H45 Stratotone. Tobacco burst w/a DeArmond silver foil "soap bar" p/up. Very good cond. Original except replacement pots. Includes case and old pots. \$600 + shipping. For pics/questions inquire to sinnfein.rgo@hotmail.com

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Warren Appleby's 15th album, Blood Amber, is out now! Rush & Rainbow without the vocals! Killer guitar riffs & tones in abundance! No Computers! Search for Warren's music on Spotify & iTunes. Go to applebyrocks.com for free music.

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FEELIN' BROWN

The Bray Coco 50

Eddie Van Halen's "brown sound" is, for many players, the Holy Grail of guitar tone. Featured on his band's 1978, debut album, it continues to captivate listeners and amp builders, many of whom have taken on the challenge of re-creating it. The latest to try is SoCal's own David Bray, with his Coco 50.

Bray's 50-watt head is powered by a pair of EL34s in a circuit based on a '68 Marshall Model 1959 Super Lead "plexi." On the front panel are controls for Volume 1 (bright) and Volume 2 (dark) that blend like a classic plexi and work together to set overall gain, along with Hi and Lo inputs, Output (which acts as a master Volume), knobs for Bass, Middle, Treble, a Tight switch to tweak low-end, and a Presence control.

With a Les Paul plugged into Hi, Volume 1 cranked, Volume 2 at 10 o'clock, and all three EQ knobs at 2 o'clock, the Coco 50 nailed recognizable sounds from '80s hard rock and metal records, with more gain on tap than a stock plexi. Tone was rich, thick, and articulate, even at the highest gain settings. Dripping with harmonic overtones and a vocal quality, it offered fat, juicy mids and exceptional responsiveness that made every note sing.

The Lo input yielded lower gain but was still fat, warm, and very capable of dialing-in classic-rock, blues, and clean tones that retained the bouncy feel of the Hi input.

Experimenting with the Volume controls unlocked an even wider variety of tones; plugged into Hi and cranking Volume 2 past noon while keeping Volume 1 at 10 o'clock

puts you in early Santana territory with a fat low-end, round highs, and just enough gain and bite to make notes soar. The increased bottom also enhances the bouncy feel when playing leads.

The Bray's footswitchable Gangster feature provides instant volume/gain boost to 10 no matter where Volume 1 is set, effectively mimicking a dual-channel amp. The Quieter knob controls volume jump.

The Coco 50 isn't just a plexi replica, it's a reimagined, finely tuned amp that captures the soul of the Model 1959 Super Lead and spirit of EVH's legendary tone, but brings modern functionality in a hand-wired package with high-end components. Whether it gets you into "brown sound" territory depends on you and your fingers, but no matter what, the Coco 50 will not disappoint. — **Charlie Wilkins**

Price: \$2,800
www.davidbrayamps.com



Price: \$129
www.earthquakerdevices.com

FUZZ FURY

The EarthQuaker Devices Zoar

An all-analog, transistor-based fuzzbox, EarthQuaker's new Zoar is billed as a "Dynamic Audio Grinder Distortion Pedal." In plain English, it delivers square-wave sorcery for guitar or bass rigs that's great for psychedelic sounds, '60s garage fuzz, or even stoner metal.

The Zoar's layout couldn't be simpler. There's three-band EQ, but the starring knob is the Weight control, which adds an extra blast of bass frequencies that can radically alter the way Bass, Middle, and Treble interact. A wildly dynamic unit when Gain is dialed below 2 o'clock (think of the snarly tone in the Smithereens' "A Girl Like You"), turn up the Gain, scoop the Middle, and the Zoar will punch hard in your favorite drop tunings. It isn't your typical tube-amp replica; instead, it covers everything from subtle overdrive to aggressive fuzz. The EQ knobs are particularly sensitive and practical for tone sculpture. Another hip feature: it runs on the standard 9 volts, but with 18 volts brings more sonic detail and headroom.

If you want a set-it-and-forget-it dirt pedal, grab the standard green OD. But if you want devilish sounds as your fuzz-addled creative partner, the EarthQuaker Zoar is the real deal. — **Pete Prown**

12-STRING TECH

Taylor's T5z-12 Classic DLX

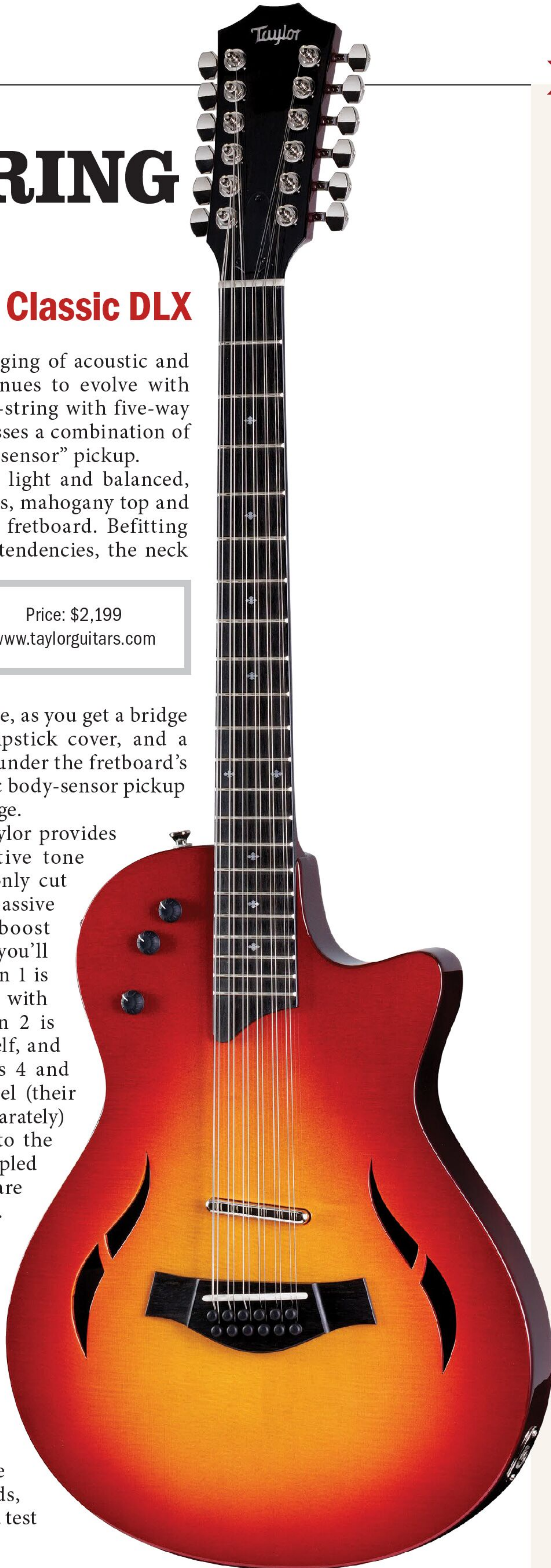
Taylor's acclaimed merging of acoustic and electric guitars continues to evolve with the T5z-12, a thinline 12-string with five-way pickup selector that accesses a combination of humbuckers and a "body sensor" pickup.

In hand, the T5z-12 is light and balanced, with sapele back and sides, mahogany top and neck, and a 24⁷/₈" ebony fretboard. Befitting its acoustic and electric tendencies, the neck has a comfy carve for both pickin' and strummin' as well as rock, blues, jazz, and country work. The electronics take a starring role, as you get a bridge humbucker under the lipstick cover, and a neck humbucker hidden under the fretboard's upper frets. The magnetic body-sensor pickup completes the tone package.

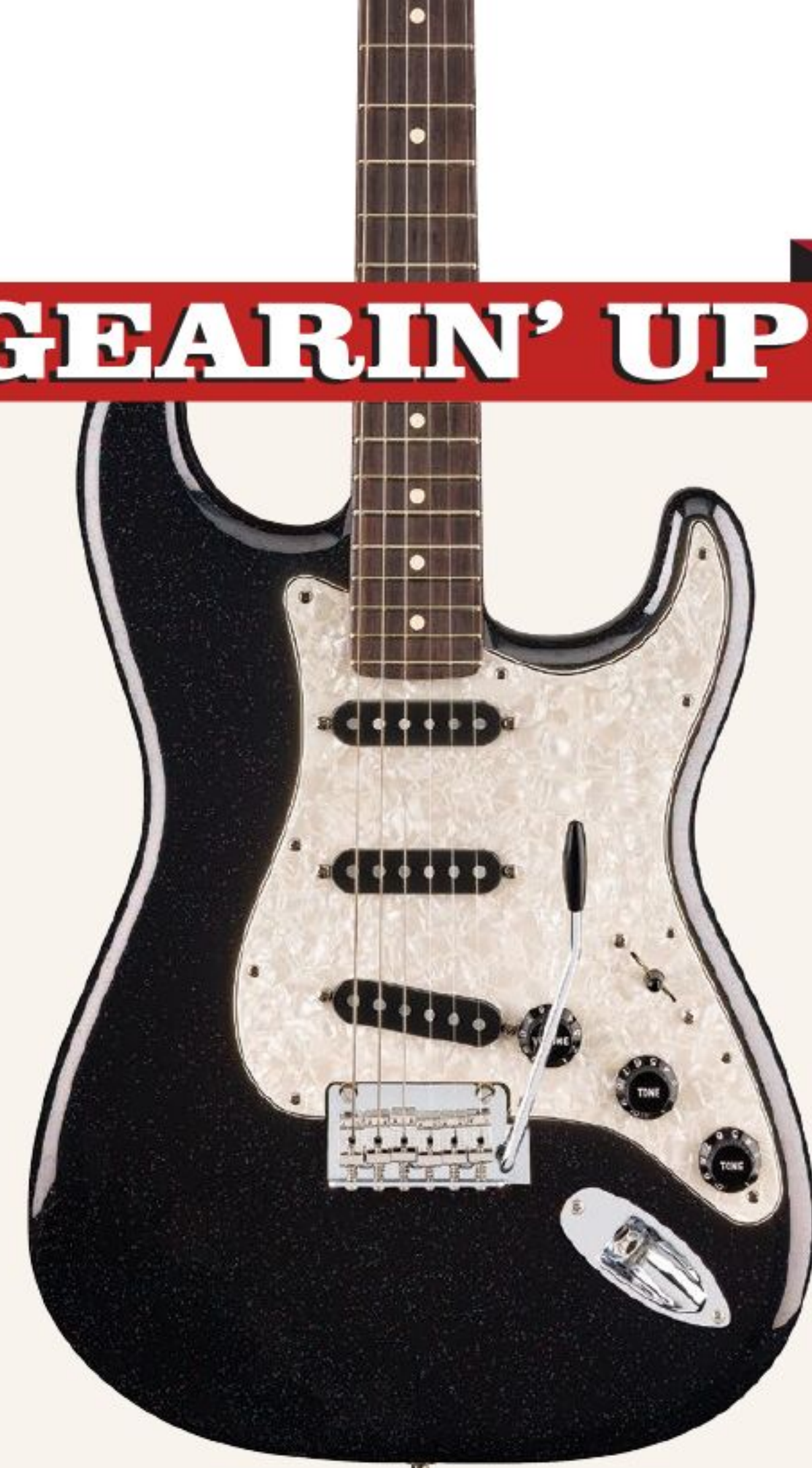
On the upper bout, Taylor provides master Volume and active tone knobs, so you can not only cut Treble and Bass (as with passive pickups), but actually boost them. On the top side you'll find the five-way; Position 1 is the hidden neck pickup with the body sensor, Position 2 is the hidden pickup by itself, and 3 is the bridge. Positions 4 and 5 activate both in parallel (their signals go to the output separately) or series (neck signal into the bridge before output). Coupled with the active EQ, there are *a lot* of sounds to explore.

For practical uses, the T5z-12 is great for all manner of Byrds, Beatles, folk-rock, and fingerpicking, but just as importantly, its humbucker can seriously rock through a regular guitar amp. Again, Taylor is seriously pushing the envelope with these six- and 12-string hybrids, making them well worth a test drive. — **Pete Prown**

Price: \$2,199
www.taylorguitars.com



GEARIN' UP



FENDER 70TH ANNIVERSARY PLAYER STRATOCASTER

Fender's 70th Anniversary Player Stratocaster has an alder body, maple neck with a Modern C shape, rosewood fretboard, and 22 medium jumbo frets, Pure Vintage '59 Single-Coil Strat pickups, skirt knobs, and Nebula Noir finish.



SOLDANO ASTRO-20

Soldano's Astro-20 is a 20-watt/three-channel/four-galaxy U.S.-made amp with two 6V6 power tubes and four 12AX7s. Its four-button MIDI footswitch saves and accesses combinations of channels, Galaxies, and onboard IRs.



VOLA ZVA-4P-MF

Vola Guitars' ZVA-4P-MF bass has an Alder body, bolt-on maple neck with Modern C shape, maple fretboard with 9.5" radius, 21 frets, 34" scale, Vola pickups with master Volume, Balance, active three-band EQ, and a switch for passive/active modes. Its bridge is a Gotoh string-through-body.



HIP SOUNDS

Supercool's "800," The Thneed, and '77 Fuzz Blender

Supercool Pedals is a Canadian company that makes stompboxes that sound hip and look seriously groovy.

Among its offerings is the "800" Preamp/Distortion, which harkens back to '70s mid-overdrive designs like the DOD 250 and MXR Distortion+. What's noteworthy is that the "800" has two *distinct* clipping voices, dubbed 0.01% and 8.0% on the toggle.

Without getting too techy, 0.01% triggers an LED diode that delivers a punchy, midrange-heavy overdrive, heard on a million rock records. The 8.0% setting jumps to a silicon diode and is more-scooped and aggressive. Internally, DIP switches activate the output-treble filter. In all, the "800" recalls the simplicity of a '70s pedalboard, back when you might drive a non-Master-Volume head with your preamp

knobs for Level, plus Tar (gain) and Smoke (mid sweep), as well as a novel Blend wet/dry knob. Flavor gives scooped or boosted mid, which you enhance by adjusting Smoke. The Clipping Mode Selector toggles between symmetrical and asymmetrical voices. There are tons of tones in here, from thick Hendrixian haze to brash thrash riffing. This is a killer stompbox for vintage dirt-a-holics. – **Pete Prown**

Price (approximate dependent on exchange rate): \$114 ("800" Preamp/Distortion); \$160 ('77 Fuzz Blender); \$170 (The Thneed)
www.supercoolpedals.com

MODERN SPIN

Strymon's Ultraviolet Vintage Vibe

Pioneered by Jimi Hendrix, the Uni-Vibe became synonymous with psychedelic rock sounds in the 1960s. Strymon's modern interpretation is the Ultraviolet Vintage Vibe.

The Ultraviolet offers a variety of tone-shaping controls. Its Mode toggle provides three mix configurations; Chorus delivers the classic Uni-Vibe by creating a 50/50-mix of dry/wet signal, Blend reduces intensity by changing the ratio to 70/30, and Vibrato removes dry signal completely for a super-wet psychedelic effect.

The Bias switch works in tandem with the Intensity knob in three modes – Low, Mid, and High. These define range or sweep of Intensity. Speed and Intensity

work together to fine-tune rate and depth, while Volume adjusts final output. Overall sound quality is rich, thick, and smooth with exceptional depth and feel.

In Vibrato mode and with Intensity set to zero, the Ultraviolet can function as a clean boost.

Other features include true/buffered bypass, stereo connectivity, USB-C for MIDI (that can access 300 presets and other things), and an expression-pedal jack.

With its intuitive controls, superb sound and ability to create a range of mind-bending effects, the Ultraviolet is a great choice for adding psychedelic modulation vibes to your sound. – **Charlie Wilkins VG**

Price: \$259
www.strymon.net



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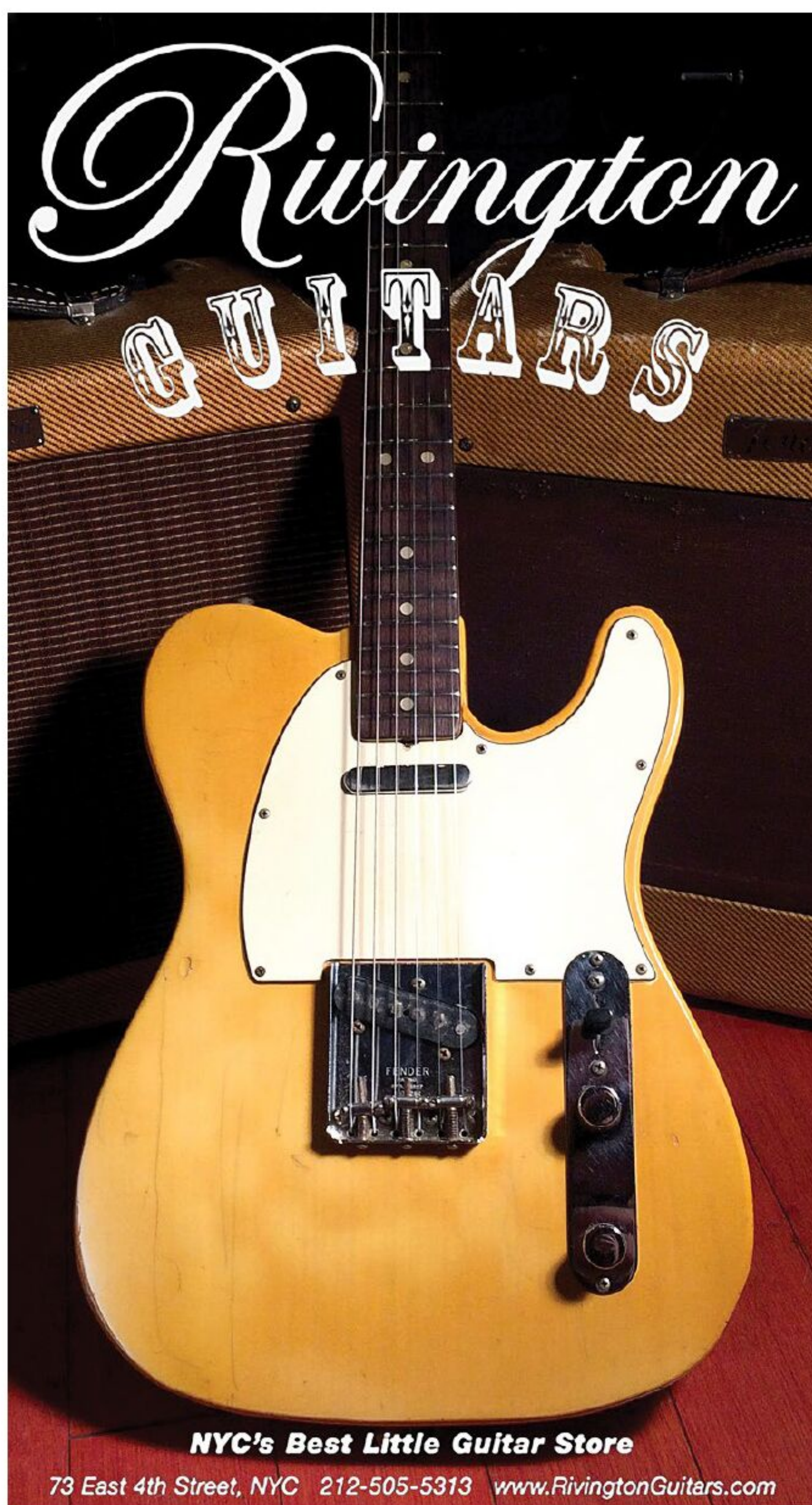


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Check out the Jet Black among other new products and previews of what is to come at the 2023 NAMM Show.

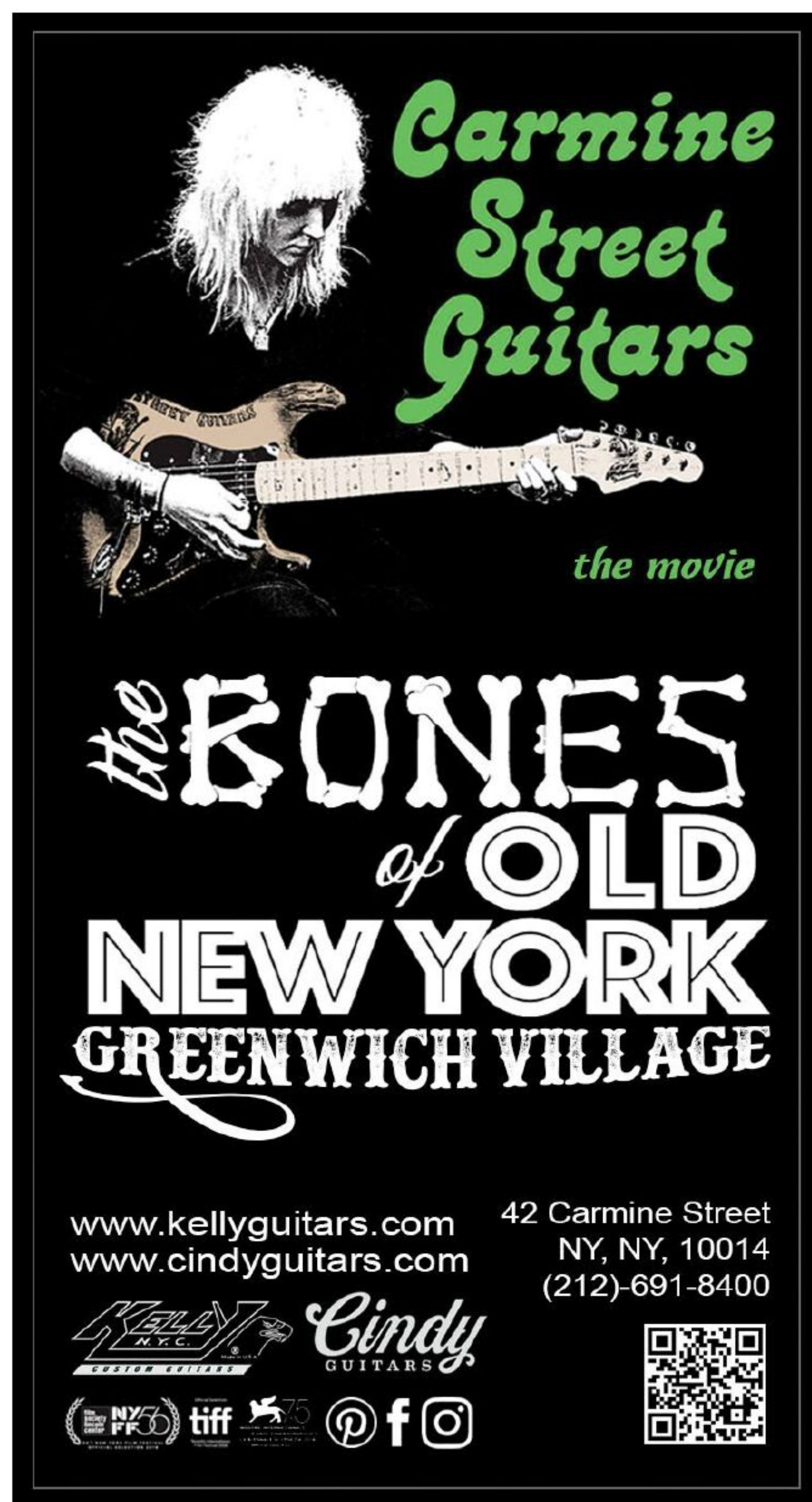
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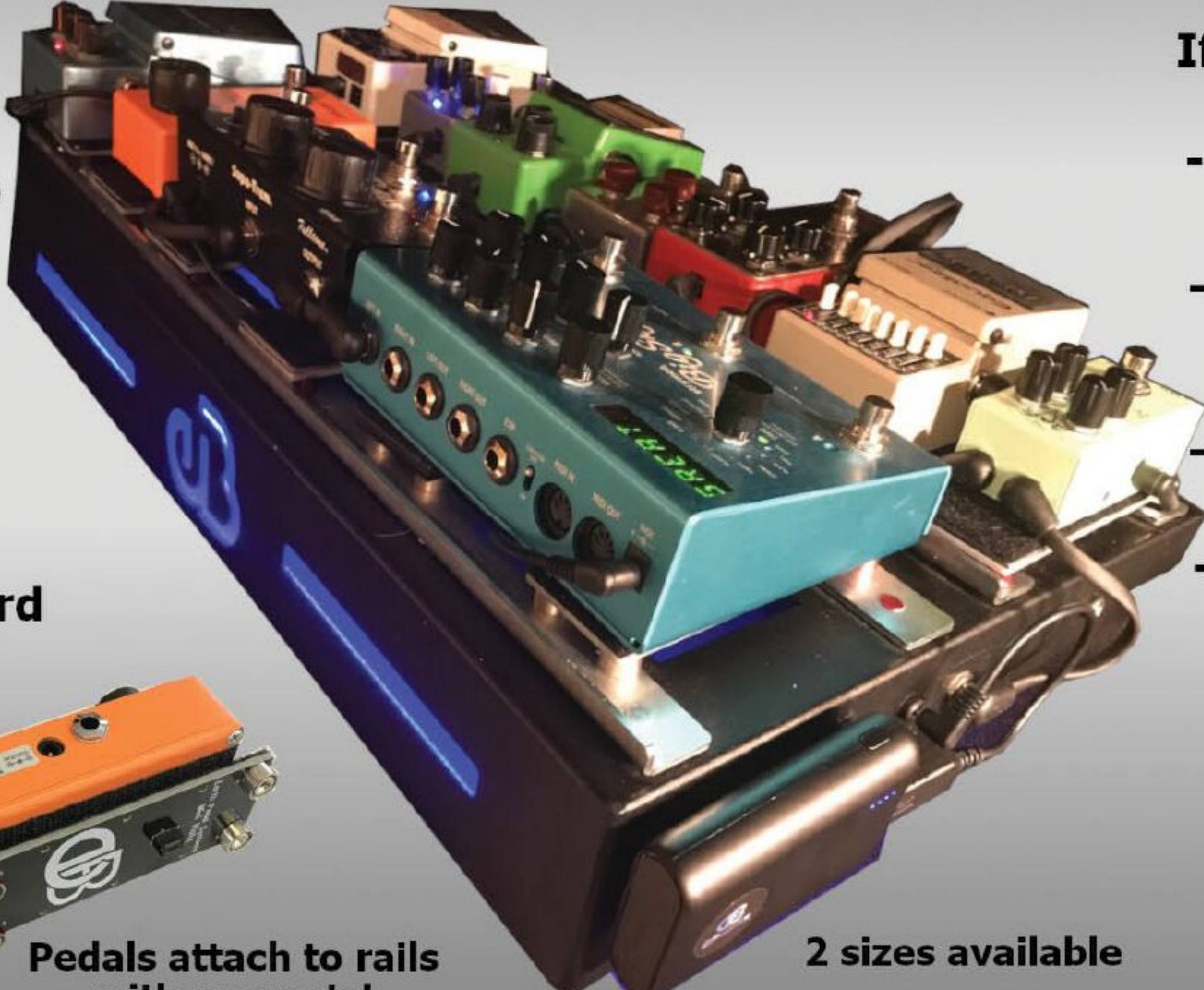
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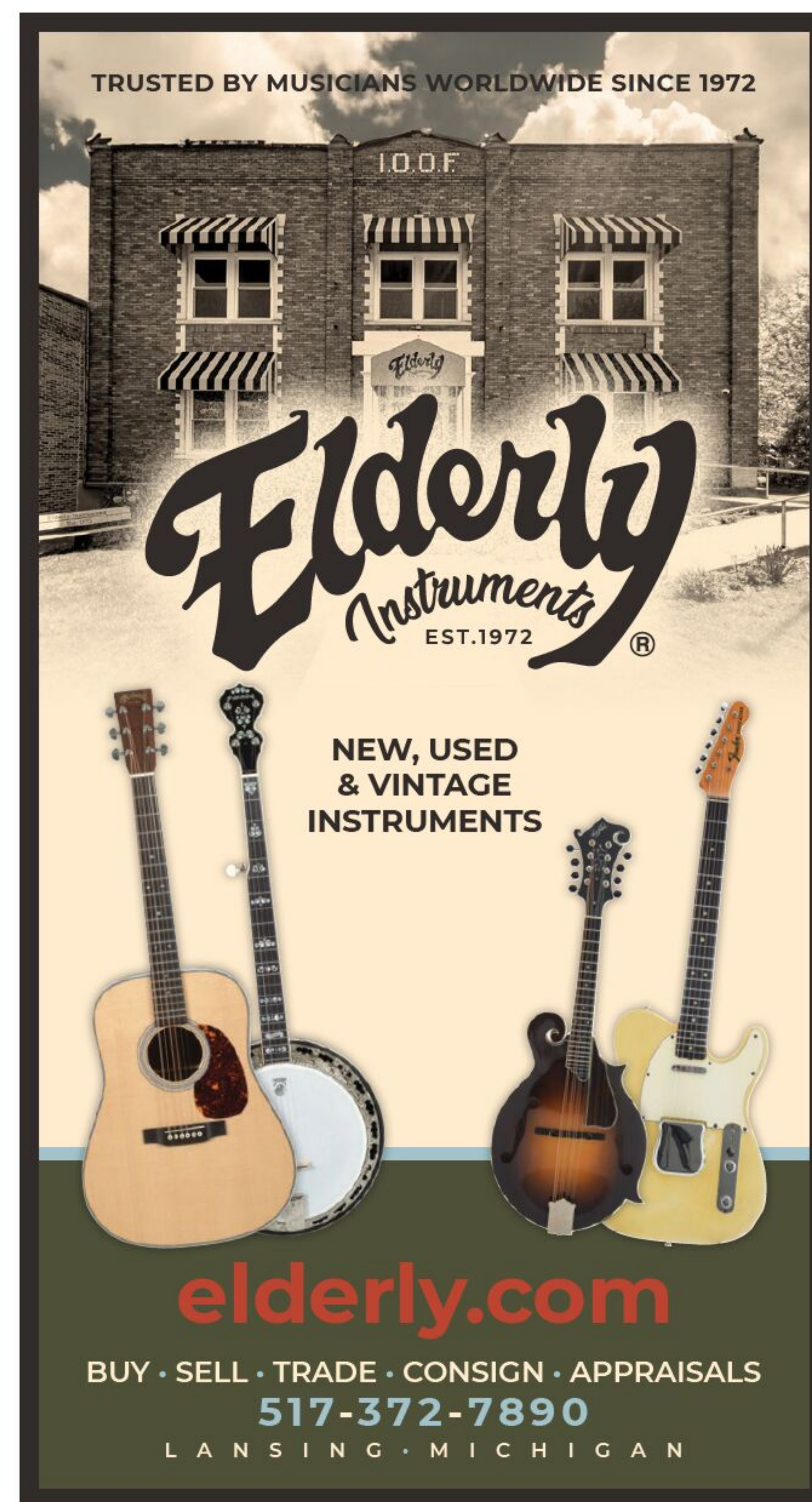
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01 “These are my favorite guitars – three modified ’59 Esquires and an all-original ’66,” says Cohn Rude. “Life is always better when you have a Tele.”

02 When it’s time to get after it, James Groves plugs his Kay Swingmaster into a classic Montgomery Ward amp.

03 Paul Johnson is a (self-proclaimed) sucker for sunbursts! Here are his – an ’84 Gibson ES-175D, Heritage 575, Heritage 535, ’68 Lyle, ’67 Harmony tenor with its six-string sibling, and a Taylor T3B.

04 Steve Reichling sent this look at two of his pre-war jumbo 12-strings – a 1904 Holzapfel (left) and 1914 Oscar Schmidt.

05 Eric Self gathered these prime pieces for his collection – a ’65 Melody Maker, ’59 Les Paul Junior, and Epiphone’s reissue 1939 Century amp.

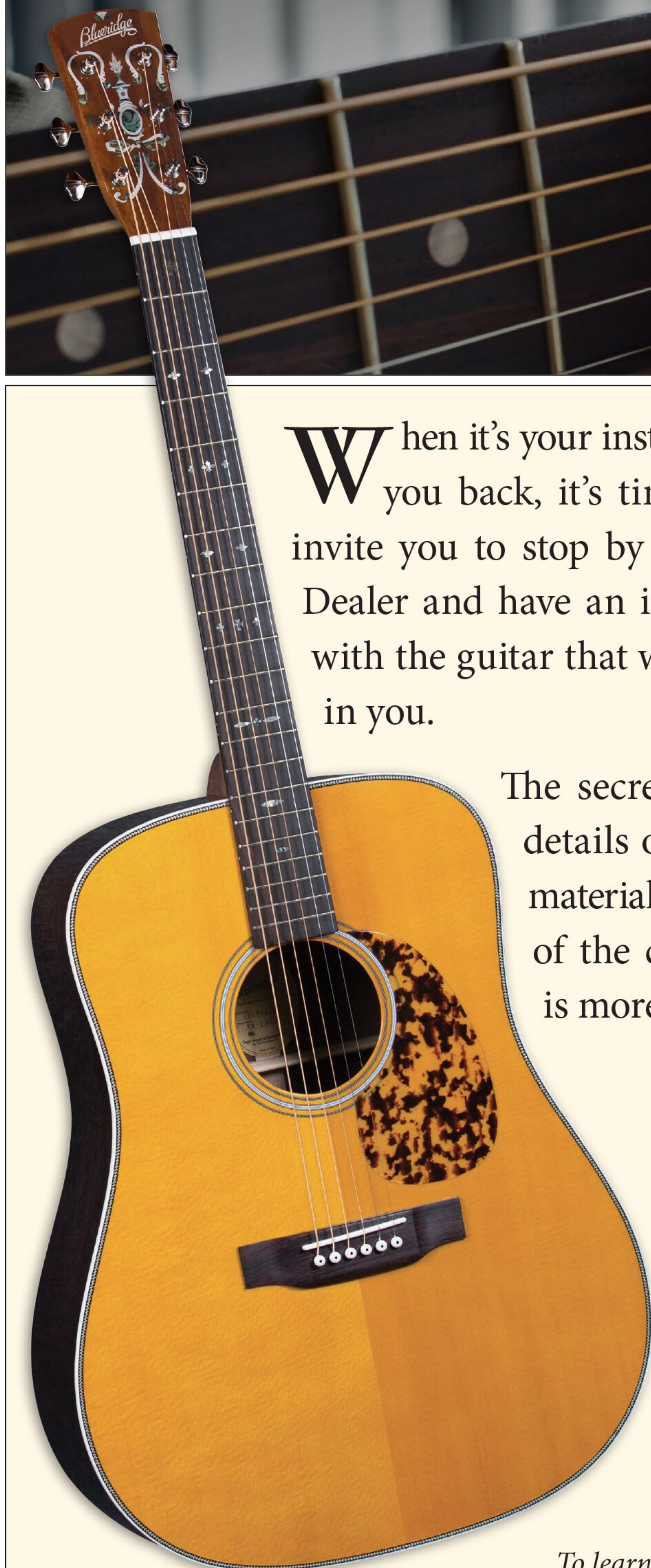
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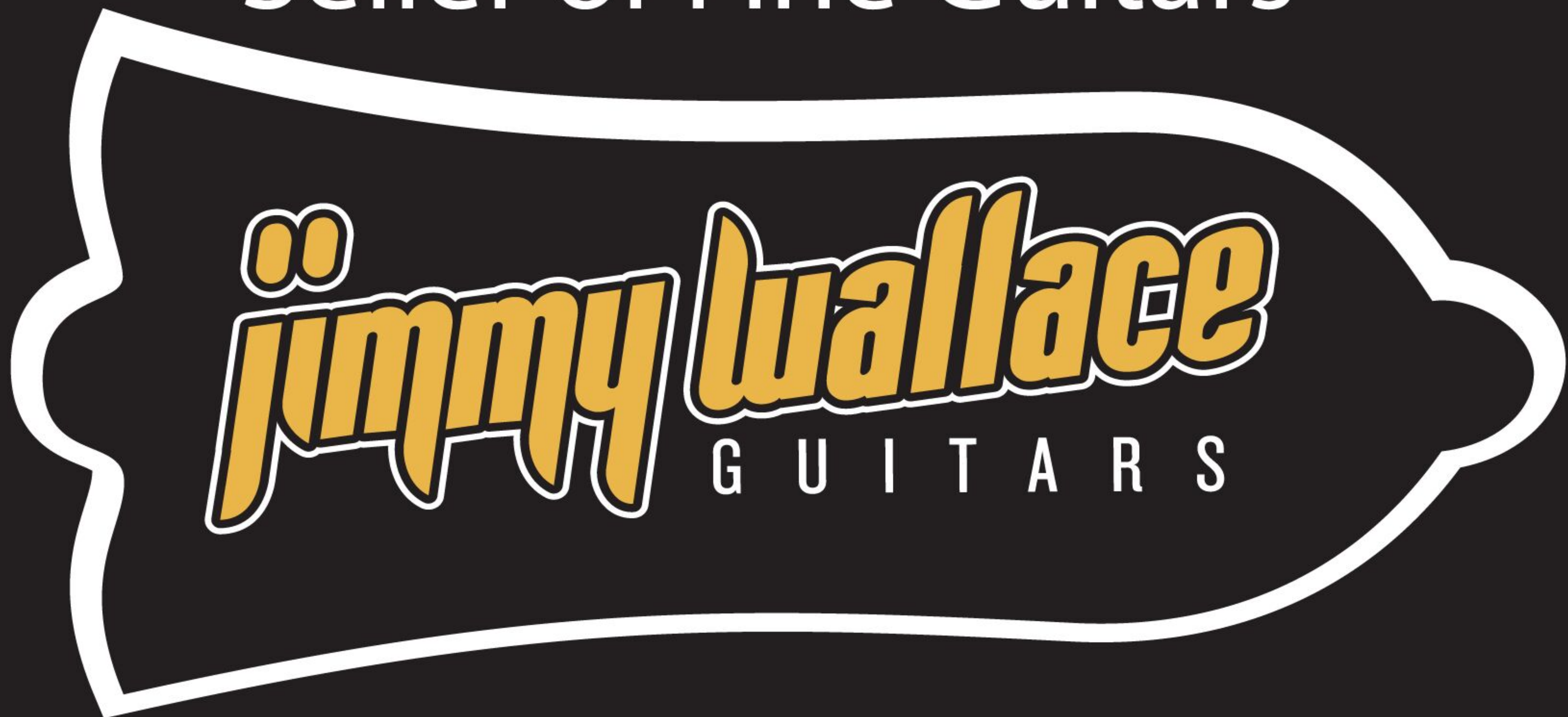
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