

GEORGE BENSON WAYNE KRAMER 1948-2024 UFO'S *LIGHTS OUT!*

Vintage Guitar

magazine

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WOLF MARSHALL

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FLORENTINES
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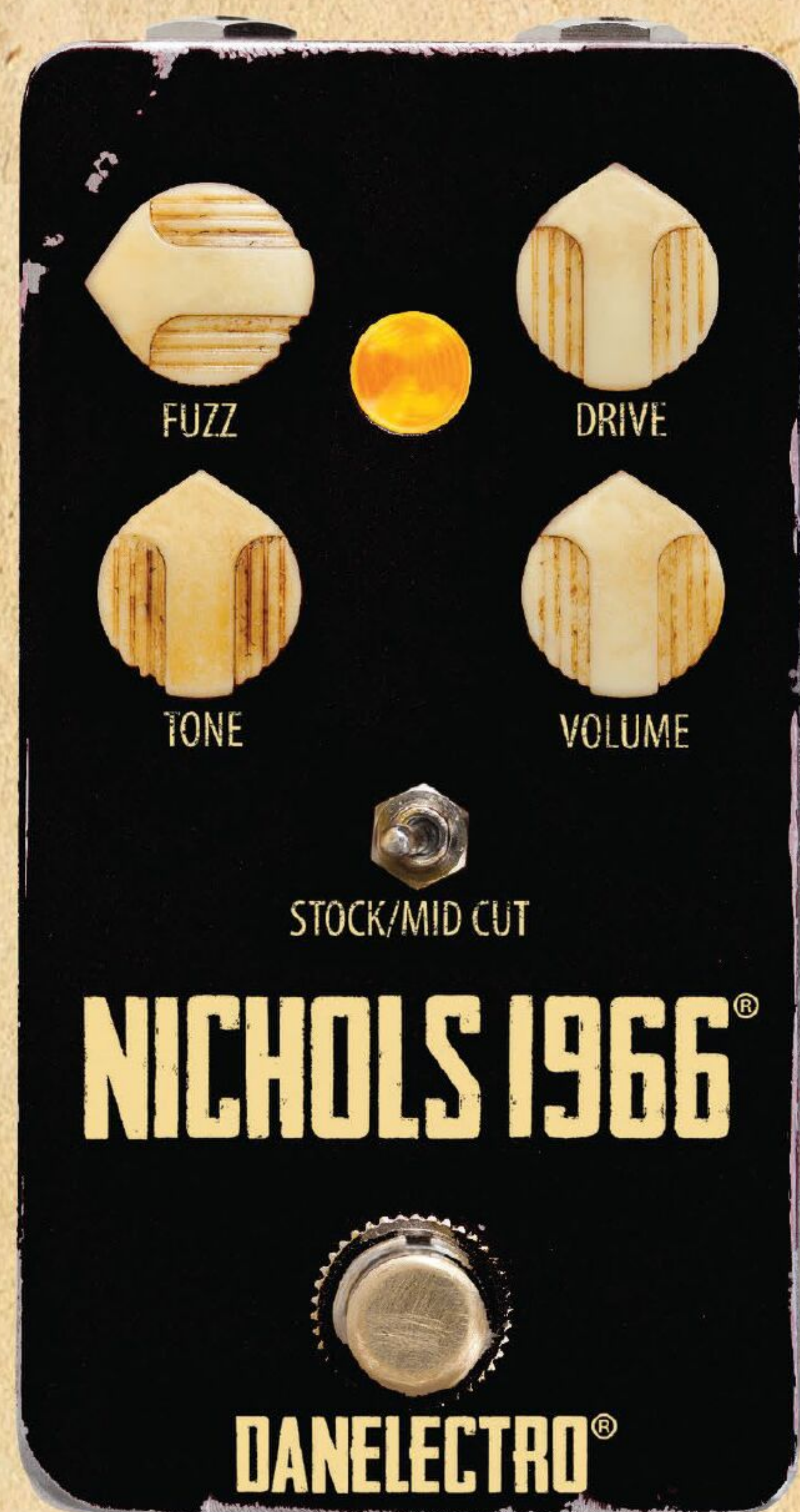
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CONTENTS

APRIL 2024 VOL. 38 NO. 07

FIRST FRET

- 14** **Reader Mail**
16 **News and Notes**
Eric Johnson Inducted to Texas
Songwriters HoF; Gary Moore Statue
for Belfast
16 **Ace Frehley**
Shock Waves
18 **Wayne Kramer**
1948-2024
20 **John Leventhal**
Ready to Rumble
22 **Philip Sayce**
Proactive Perseverance
24 **Bryan Beller**
Bass Aristocracy
26 **Jim Kweskin**
Where Jazz Meets Folk

DEPARTMENTS

- 34** **Vintage Guitar Price Guide**
44 **New Gear Spotlight**
61 **Upcoming Events**
74 **Showcase**
80 **Readers Gallery**

COLUMNS

- 38** **Pop 'N Hiss**
UFO's *Lights Out* | **By Bret Adams**
40 **Fretprints**
George Benson: *Breezin'* to the Top
| **By Wolf Marshall**

REVIEWS

- 66** **The VG Hit List**
Paul McCartney & Wings, Black
Crowes, Tinsley Ellis, Ace Frehley,
John Leventhal, Immediate Family,
Justin Johnson, more!
67 **Check This Action**
Monumental Treasures
| **By Dan Forte**



- 70** **VG Approved Gear**
Carr Bel-Ray, Martin Inception
Maple, Gibson Falcon 5, Boss IR-2
Amp and Cabinet, D'Angelico Excel
SS, Vox Giulietta
71 **Gearin' Up!**
The latest cool new stuff!



John Leventhal

28 BEACH PARTY Epiphone's "Bikini Logo" Amplifiers

Epiphone guitars from the years just after Gibson acquired the brand enjoy status as bona fide collectibles. A bit off the radar, though, are the amps that accompanied them – especially the debutante range of 1959, which wrap the virtues of Gibson circuits in their own beguiling aesthetic. | **By Dave Hunter**

32 **CLASSICS**
Running up the stairs at his grandmother's house, 12-year-old Steve Kimock was anxious to chat with his older cousin, Kenny; he wasn't there, but on bed the was a shiny gold '68 Les Paul, perched in a beam of sunlight. Cue the choir of angels. | **By Ward Meeker**

46 WOLF MARSHALL Jazz-Lore Generator

Napping beneath his mother's piano as she practiced Bach, Chopin, Beethoven, and Debussy, he was absorbing music before he could walk or talk. A stint with Star Licks led to decades as a leading guitar pedagogue that includes 24 years of "Fretprints" columns in VG. His new *Jazz Guitar Course: Mastering the Jazz Language* may be the most-vital to his legacy. | **By Ward Meeker**

54 GIBSON'S FABULOUS FLORENTINES Archtop Elite

Amidst an overriding aspiration for modernism, in 1958, Gibson drastically altered its product line, beginning with the Flying V and Explorer. The tide also affected its high-end jazz boxes; gone was the rounded Venetian cutaway that bespoke traditionalism, superseded by a daring, angular design. | **By Wolf Marshall**

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COVER PHOTOS: Kenny Burrell's '64 Gibson Super 400: Rick Gould. '62 L-5CES: VG Archive. UFO: Simon Robinson/Easy on the Eye/Alamy. **THIS PAGE:** John Leventhal: Wes Bender.

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READER MAIL

FOREMOST IN FEBRUARY

I look forward to *Vintage Guitar* every month, and the February issue was great. Dave Hunter's amp profiles like that on the Marshall/Narb are always informative, and Wolf Marshall's "Fretprints" is the most-enlightening style/theory breakdown column anywhere – profiling Jeff Beck's transcendent *Blow by Blow* was the *crème de la crème* of music journalism!

Brian Eads
Norman, Oklahoma

LYONS AND LEE

I enjoyed the interview with Leo Lyons in the January issue. I was lucky enough to see Ten Years After in 1974, at the Jacksonville Coliseum, in Florida. It was a great rock-and-roll show, and I remember watching Alvin Lee change a string on his guitar while chatting with the audience.

It's cool that Leo mentioned UFO when telling the story about a bass he acquired from Ian Hunter, who I also got to see at that venue that year. He produced UFO's *Phenomenon* album, which absolutely floored me as a young guitarist. I'll have to check out his band, Hundred Seventy Split. Rock on, Mr. Lyons!

Dennis O'Docharty
Houston, Texas

(Ed Note: Dennis, as a UFO fan, you'll dig this month's "Pop 'N Hiss." Don't skip page 44!)

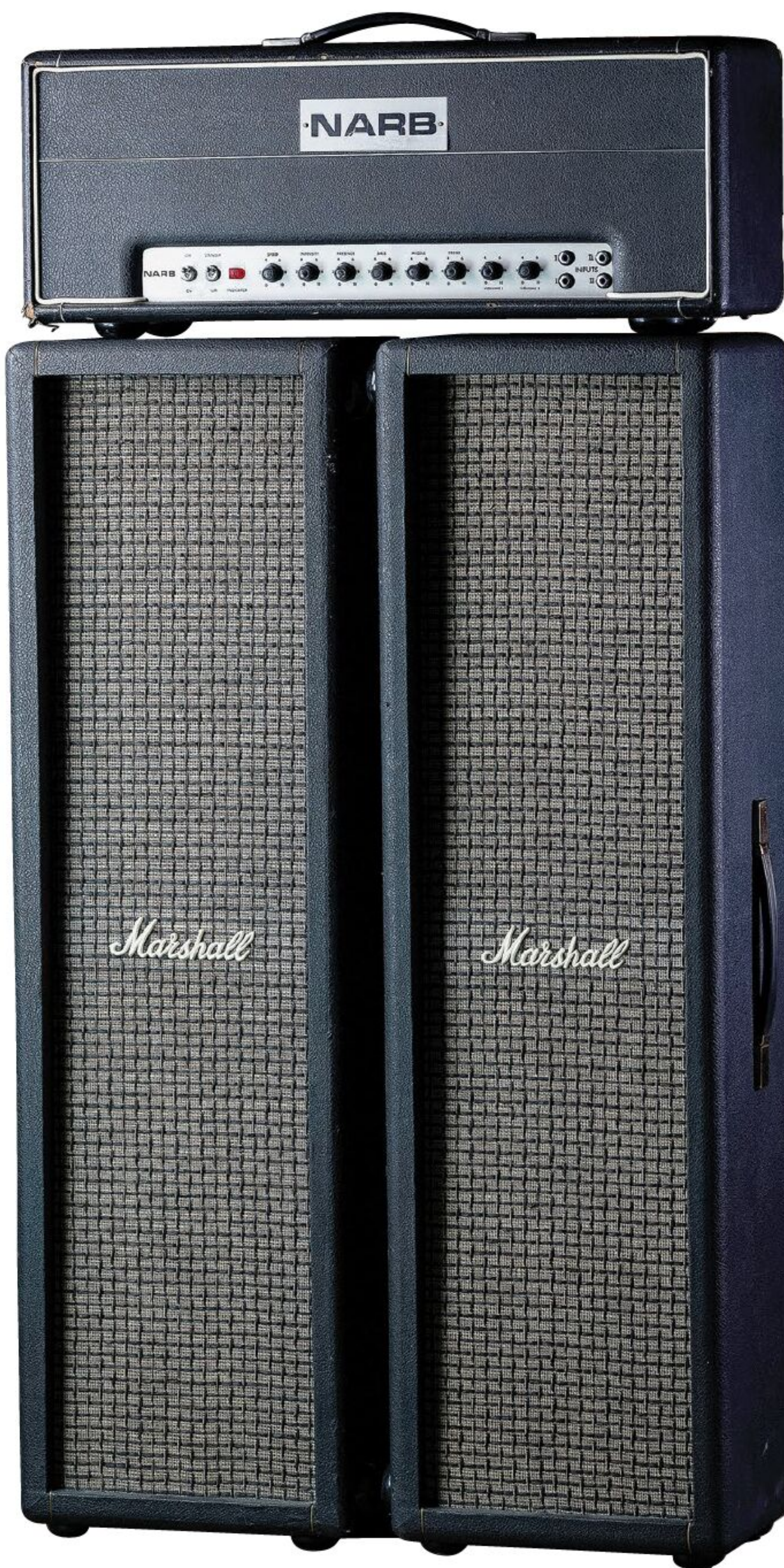
VG = VARIETY

I love it when *VG* exposes me to new artists from different genres. That's what makes for an exciting read for an old dog like me who has probably forgotten more about classic rock than most other people know. In fact, *more* modern music and artists would be nice; just because the cover says "Vintage" doesn't mean it has to be just artists and recordings that are more than 50 years old.

Mel Spinella
Chino Hills, California

I've subscribed to *VG* for 20 years and really enjoy it because it's always well thought-out and mature. I read most of it, but tend to focus on guitarists whose names I know. I also enjoy reading up on new equipment. I'm not in the market for new pedals, so I focus on guitars and amps you review. And *please*, keep producing hard copies!

Joe Bigley
Wilmington North Carolina



'72 Narb Tremolo 100 atop two Marshall PA columns.

Though my influences are rooted in '60s and '70s rock, blues, and jazz, I like how *VG* mixes it up, covering various styles as well as legacy and more-contemporary artists. Your gear reviews, though, seem self-serving, as I never see any real hard cons, as if you don't want to offend the manufacturer.

Lance Nuckolls
Frederick, Maryland

(Ed Note: Thanks, Lance. We absolutely understand your critique of our gear section. A few years ago, we shifted away from referencing our "Approved Gear" section as "reviews"; our approach is to include only gear that we'd truly recommend. We don't blow smoke with copy that reads like an ad or brochure; rather, we key on the elements that matter – build quality, components, specs, and the type of player who will find the piece useful – as well as those who won't.)

I am in my 70s and have subscribed to guitar magazines since the '70s. *Vintage Guitar* is awesome because it blends profiles of time-tested artists with newbies. If I saw some of the new players' names outside the magazine, I probably wouldn't pay attention, but in *VG*, I do – sometimes reluctantly at first, but I always end up glad I did. The questions are always relevant, concise, and they sometimes push the artist into answering something I *really* wanted to know.

The product reviews are also very helpful, and I especially like the reviews that get a little more candid with the item. Likewise the music and media reviews; I really like Pete Prown's very real opinions. The gear reviewers bring a great blend of knowledge and personal experience, and add some humor.

VG has long been the only guitar magazine I subscribe to because it has everything that interests me. Thank you, all!

John R. Wiley
Beaumont, California

VG is always excellent, with a lot of articles on artists I'm not familiar with – and that's my favorite part. I also love Dan Erlewine's repair column, and the record reviews are top-notch. Excellent job.

Ralph Nemec
Kenosh, Wisconsin

"Q&A" Q

Whatever happened to George Gruhn's "Q&A" column on identifying guitars and enlightening us on idiosyncrasies on myriad brands? That was one of the best parts of *VG*. If George isn't available, maybe someone else could do something similar.

Rick Loeffler
San Clemente, California

(Ed Note: Rick, we loved George's column and reluctantly stopped running it only after questions stopped coming. Thanks, internet! Its replacement, "VG Q&A," fields a broader range of questions addressed by several contributors, but it ran only three times in '23 – February, April, and August – due to a similar "lack of input." Anyone with questions on guitar-related subjects ranging from songs, albums, and musicians to the minutiae of instrument builds, manufacturers, and the collectible market is strongly encouraged to send them to ward@vintageguitar.com with "VG Q&A" in the subject line.)

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Eric Johnson

EJ INDUCTED TO TEXAS SONGWRITERS HOF

Austin native Eric Johnson was inducted to the Texas Songwriters Hall of Fame and performed at during an awards show at The Moody Theater on February 24. Calling him, “One of the most outstanding instrumentalists in rock over the past 40 years,” the Hall cited his pioneering mid-’70s fusion work in *Electromagnets* and his career as a solo artist, which truly broke out with the platinum-selling 1990 album *Ah Via Musicom* and its Grammy-winning single, “Cliffs of Dover.”

From April 4-7, Johnson will perform in Dallas, Austin, Houston, and San Antonio as part of his tour supporting *The Book of Making* and *Yesterday Meets Today*, both released in 2023.

GROUP CONTINUES PLANS FOR GARY MOORE STATUE

The Gary Moore Statue for Belfast project recently launched a crowd-sourcing effort as part of their drive to commission and place a statue of the guitarist in his native Belfast.

Moore emerged after moving to Dublin to join the blues-rock band Skid Row in the fall of 1968, which was fronted by vocalist Phil Lynott. Moore left Skid Row in ’71 to start a solo career then joined Lynott in Thin Lizzy in early ’74. He went on to become one of the most-revered blue-rock guitarists in history, his career spanning five decades before he passed in 2011.

The Statue for Belfast project’s efforts also include fund-raising concerts, including March 15 at The Purity Kitchen, Dublin, and April 20 at Oh Yeah Music Centre, Belfast. To learn more and/or contribute, visit www.idonate.ie/crowdfunder/GaryMooreStatue.



ACE FREHLEY

Shock Waves

As an original member of rock titans Kiss, “Space Ace” Frehley inspired countless budding musicians. His new album, *10,000 Volts*, is his first set of original material in six years, following two *Origins* cover albums. Trixter guitarist Steve Brown co-wrote most of *10,000 Volts* with Frehley,

and the partnership will likely continue. With writer Ken Sharp, Frehley is also planning a second memoir and a coffee-table book featuring his guitars.

How did you get together with Steve Brown?
I’ve known Steve for probably 30 years on

Eric Johnson: Max Grace. Ace Frehley: Jayme Thornton.

a very casual, social level. My fiancée was a huge fan of Trixter, and she grew up in New Jersey, where Steve grew up. She kept telling me, “You’ve got to get together with Steve. He’s a really good musician/singer/songwriter.” Finally, I called and asked him to send me some ideas. “Walkin’ on the Moon” grabbed me immediately. That was the first song we collaborated on, and it came out great. When it comes to Steve, it was a marriage made in heaven.

How is that reflected in your new music?

Each song on the album is a little different, and there’s no filler. After a few songs were completed, Steve and I looked at each other and he said, “Ace, this is going to be your best record. Trust me!” Halfway through, we knew we had something special.

How did you decide to cover Nadia’s “Life of a Stranger”?

It’s from the end of the movie *The Transporter*, and I always loved the melody and lyrics, but it was Euro-rock with a drum machine. I played it to Steve and said, “I want to do this heavy.”

“Cosmic Heart” is intense.

I hit bottom with drugs and alcohol 17 years ago, and I’m happy with the emotion I put into that song. It’s personal, about me. And the solo is really cool – it’s one of the few where I used a [DigiTech FreqOut] that sustains forever. I could get that if I stood in front of a Marshall to get feedback, but since I *wasn’t* in front of a Marshall, Steve brought this box.

How about “Blinded”?

For that, I said to Steve, “We’ve got to write a song that doesn’t have to do with chicks!” (laughs) It’s so easy for a rock star to write a song about a girl, and most of these songs *are* about women. I’d just been reading articles about artificial intelligence and the dangers of it. I said, “Let’s write a song about that.”

Most of your albums have at least one instrumental, and “Stratosphere” is your best since “Fractured Mirror” on your 1978 solo album.

My fans expect it, and I enjoy doing instrumentals. You can really play with them and take them in different directions. “Stratosphere” is the shortest instrumental I’ve ever recorded. It leaves you wanting more.

Which electric guitars did you use on the album?

I don’t really remember, but I usually play a couple of my favorite Les Pauls. Sometimes, I double things with a Strat or a Telecaster.

How about acoustics?

I have a favorite Taylor honeyburst, a Guild from the ’80s, a Martin, and an Ovation I purchased at a pawn shop way back when. I’ve got a couple of 12-strings – an Ovation and a Guild.

You’ve always been friends with Peter Criss. Do you understand fans’ fascination with the original Kiss – especially since you two weren’t at the band’s last concert – and the hope you could all be friends?

I’m still friends with Paul (Stanley) and Gene (Simmons). I’m closer to Gene than Paul. I’m a practicing Christian. I go to church, I pray for my enemies, loved ones, and friends. I don’t hold grudges anymore. Even my sponsor in Alcoholics Anonymous said, “Resentments will make you drink.” You’ve got to let all that stuff roll off your back. Me, Paul, Gene, and Peter have spoken multiple times over the years and had nice discussions. It’s just not healthy for me to be around Paul and Gene; I can take them in small doses. We created something fantastic together, but that time has passed.

I understand the fascination with the original four, because we had something special. We were from completely different backgrounds and there were times on the road when we didn’t get along. But for some reason, when we got onstage there was this chemistry among the four of us that I can’t even put into words. It was special, and people picked up on it. – **Bret Adams**



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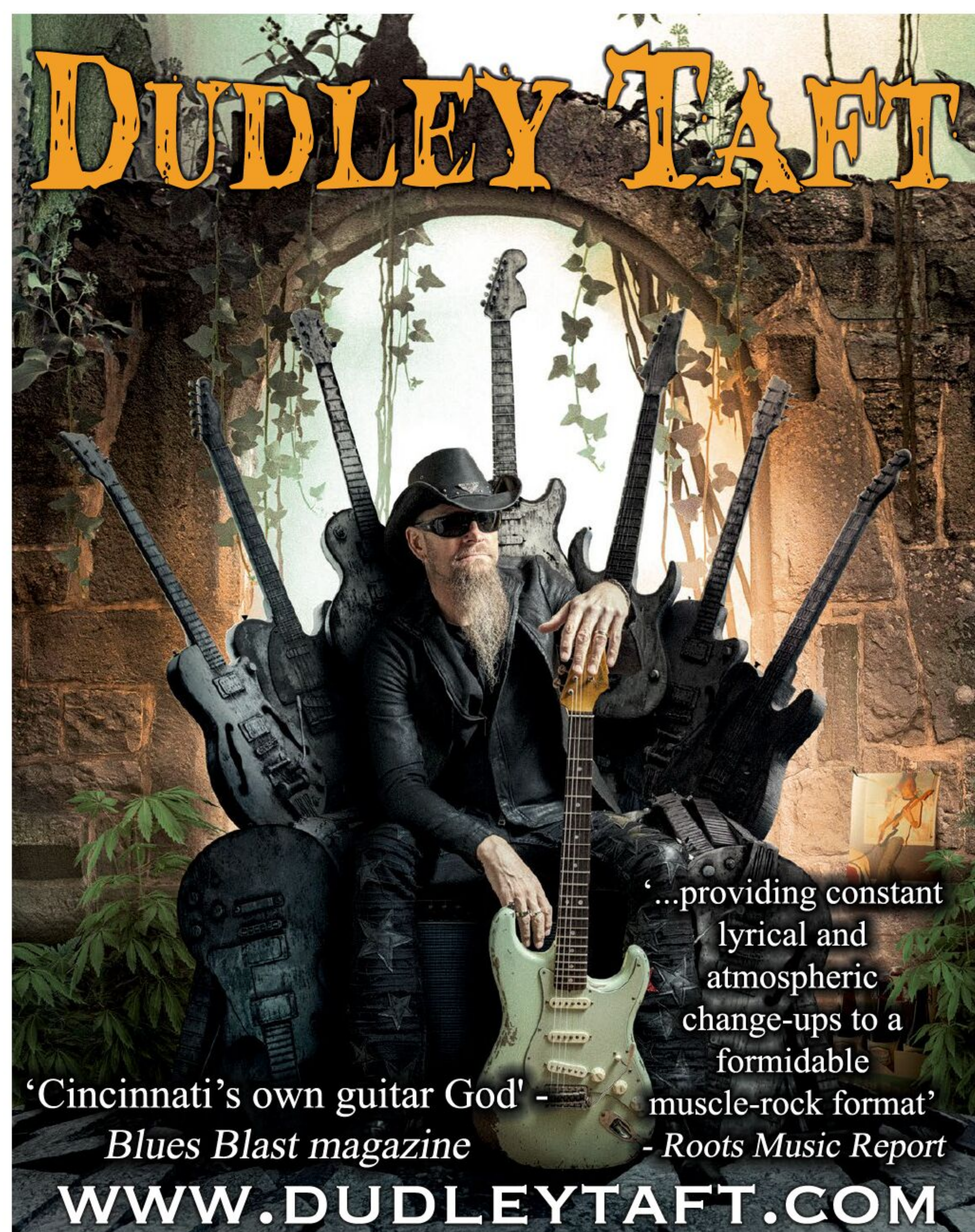
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WAYNE KRAMER

1948-2024

Guitarist and activist Wayne Kramer, best known as a founder of the iconic Detroit hard-rock band MC5, died in a Los Angeles hospital on February 2. He was 75 and battled pancreatic cancer.

A Detroit native, Kramer nurtured his musical aspirations by absorbing influences from Motown and the early days of rock and roll and formed MC5 in 1963 with school friend Fred “Sonic” Smith, bassist Michael Davis, and drummer Dennis Thompson. They created loud, guitar-driven music that became a keystone of the “Detroit rock and roll sound” along with the Amboy Dukes, Grand Funk Railroad, the Rationals, Stooges, SRC, and the Bob Seger System.

“The scene was a firestorm of outrageous, energized bands and music,” said fellow Detroit native Ted Nugent. “Wayne and I both took gui-

tar lessons from Joe Podorsek and our influences were identical from the beginning. He often told me he admired the tightness and the musical integrity of my band, Amboy Dukes. We played on the same bill hundreds of times.”

Carrying “protest music” to an extreme, the MC5 aligned with John Sinclair and his White Panther Party. Their 1969 live debut album, *Kick Out the Jams*, was a milestone since cited as seminal hard rock, heavy metal, and proto-punk (“Pop ’N Hiss,” May ’19).

With MC5, Kramer mostly played a Strat painted in an American-flag motif and modified with a humbucker mounted in its middle position that Kramer used to get his lead tone because it was louder and hotter. He also used plexiglas Ampeg/Dan Armstrong guitars, including a rare black example; 1970 concert footage from Wayne State University shows a quintessential performance of “Rambling Rose,” Kramer strutting and bashing the instrument while singing in a raspy falsetto.

Following MC5’s dissolution, Kramer stayed active in music through the early ’70s. In ’75, a drug conviction sent him to federal prison.

“Prior to his unfortunate incarceration, we staged these

very exciting ‘Guitar Battles’ where we would jam furiously with the incredible Mike Pinera and Frank Marino,” said Nugent. “Though promoted as a battle, we considered it a friendly opportunity to share guitar and musical ideas with a punch of exciting entertainment.”

Following his release in ’79, Kramer continued to perform, touring as a solo artist then as a member of trios, quartets, and larger groups, including a guest appearance on the first album by the Detroit band Was (Not Was).

In 2009, Kramer co-founded Jail Guitar Doors USA, which has donated instruments to inmates at more than 200 jails and prisons. Among the musicians who performed at benefits for the organization were Rage Against the Machine’s Tom Morello and the Cult’s Billy Duffy.

In 2011, Fender introduced the Wayne

Kramer signature model Strat, a hardtail with middle humbucker, flag graphics and a neck plate engraved with “This Tool Kills Hate.”

In ’18, Kramer organized an MC50 world tour to commemorate the half-century anniversary of *Kick Out the Jams*. The other guitarist was Soundgarden’s Kim Thayil, who credited Kramer’s initiative for pulling him out of a funk following the death of vocalist/guitar Chris Cornell. That year also saw the release of Kramer’s autobiography, *The Hard Stuff: Dope, Crime, the MC5 and My Life of Impossibilities*.

“Brother Wayne Kramer was the greatest man I’ve ever known,” Morello said on Instagram. “Whenever any charity or union or human rights activist event was coming up Wayne would always heed the call. ALWAYS. From our ‘Frostbite And Freedom’ performances during the Madison union uprising to Wayne ‘Chain-saw’ Kramer knee deep in fire ants in the 9th Ward in New Orleans post-Katrina reclaiming living spaces for those affected. Helping folks get sober. Helping ex-cons find a job. Helping at-risk youth start careers in music. Wayne was a guardian angel to so many... Whenever and wherever any of us kick out the jams, Brother Wayne will be right there with us.”

In his later years, Kramer attained sobriety and was gratified to have become a husband and father.

“Wayne definitely influenced me with his powerful sound and energetic stage presence,” said Mark Farner, founding guitarist of Grand Funk Railroad. “The MC5 had an unmistakable energy and raw appeal to anyone with an open ear. I absolutely loved their sound and their appeal to our generation.”

Farner and Kramer were in the studio together during the making of Alice Cooper’s 2019 album, *Breadcrumbs*.

“He told me he was proud that I was the head of a band that left the mark of Michigan on the world,” Farner added. “He was a wonderful human being, and I know he’s rockin’ in Heaven right now, enjoying everlasting freedom.”

“Though we all righteously celebrate the musical genius of Wayne Kramer, I would like everyone to know that he was a great man, a great husband, a great father, a great friend, and a great American, rock solid in the asset column of life, with an incredible work ethic and sense of community, kindness, generosity, and honesty,” said Nugent. “He was funny and wonderfully ‘Detroit cocky.’ Even though we strongly disagreed on certain political considerations, we enjoyed many gentlemanly, civil, and respectful conversations without ever raising our voices or descending into negativity or mean-spiritedness. I was very fortunate to have him as a friend.” – **Willie G. Moseley**

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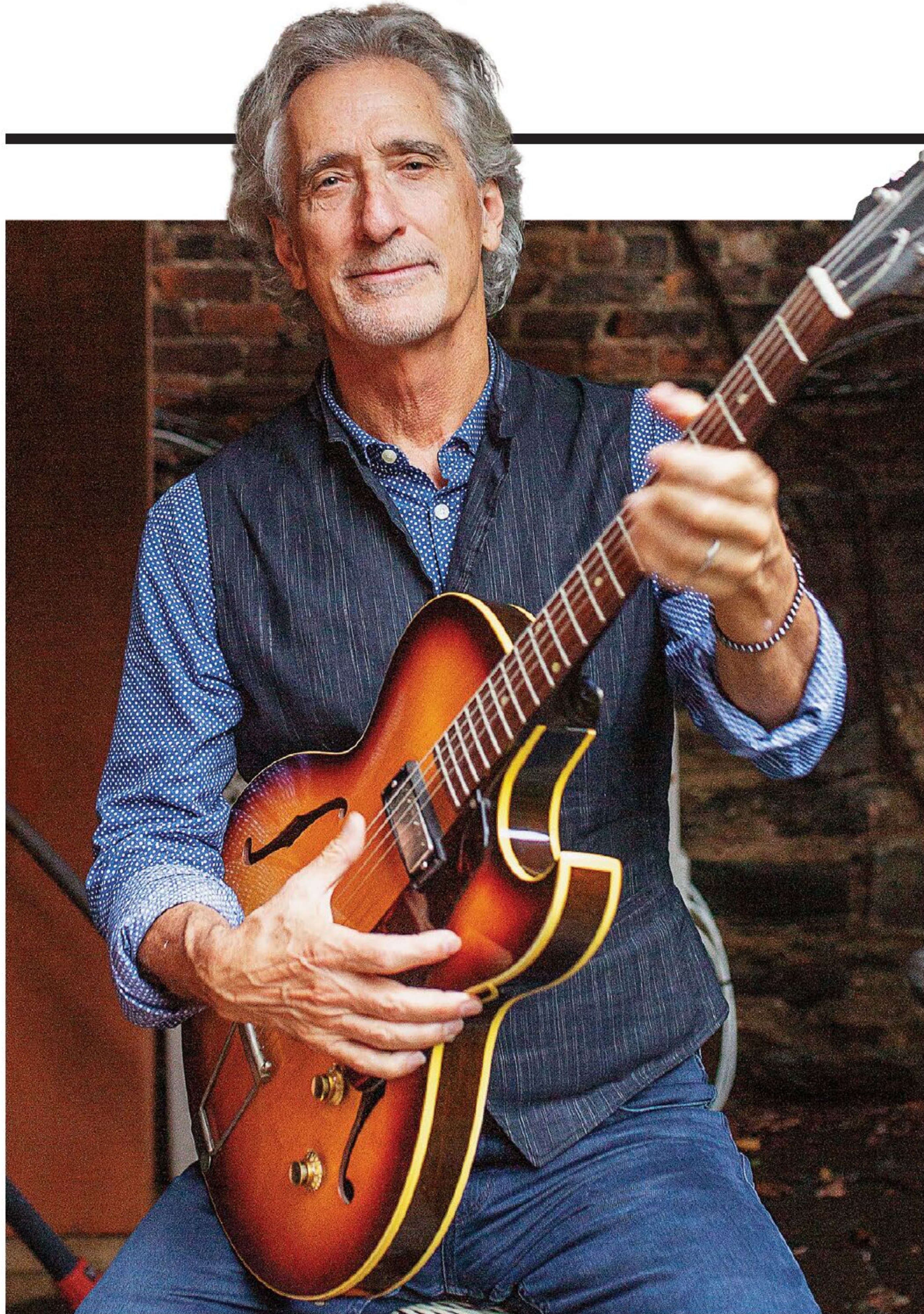
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JOHN LEVENTHAL

Ready to Rumble

“I’ve been lucky enough to make a career co-writing and producing records with great singers and lyricists, John Leventhal explains. “But I’ve always had all this other music in me. I thought, ‘What are you going to do with it?’”

Rumble Strip, his solo debut on the label he owns with wife Rosanne Cash, provides that answer.

Over 45 years, the guitarist/songwriter/producer earned a distinguished reputation (and six Grammys) working with others. Creating a musical statement for himself proved more challenging.

“It’s one thing to make a record, write a song, and play a little guitar, which I’m capable of doing,” he said. “But it’s another thing to make a recording statement that my internal critic wouldn’t cringe at. I wanted to make sure I wasn’t doing it as an empty gesture – that it

had feeling and soulfulness.”

The pandemic became the catalyst. Forced off the road, Leventhal and Cash retreated to their Manhattan home, which contains a studio.

“I started writing, and eventually realized I was making a record.”

He played guitars, keyboard, upright bass, and drums, but not the horn parts. Percussion happened first, for the title track.

“That song came from a rhythmic place more than a guitar place. I put down 8, 16, and 32 bars, then grabbed a [’60s Guild Mark IV] nylon-string and told myself, ‘Respond viscerally, think minimally.’”

“I was trying to get space to mean as much as the notes, hoping it would feel evoca-

tive. The song was recorded late one night; one nylon-string, one acoustic guitar, upright, and drums.”

“Floyd Cramer’s *Dream*,” honoring the revered Nashville A-Team pianist, reflects Leventhal’s admiration for that legendary cadre of session musicians. “I started playing these little notes, and could hear myself twisting Floyd Cramer.”

Leventhal’s reverence for orchestral composers is reflected in “Tullamore Blues,” and he embraces the work of American classical composers Aaron Copland (“Concerto for Clarinet”) and Samuel Barber (“Who’s Afraid of Samuel Barber?”).

“Howlin’ Wolf, Copland, Stravinsky, the Beatles, and Motown all meet somewhere inside of me,” he says.

“Inwood Hill” blends his love of solo guitar and “...really good acoustic playing.” A Chet

Atkins fan, he draws more from the subtler licks than his fingerstyle picking.

“He could sound orchestral while playing a two-note figure.”

The lighthearted “Three Chord Monte” offers a contrast with the more-somber instrumentals. “You need a little bit of light with all the darkness,” Leventhal notes.

“Marion and Sam” drew from a musical cue written by composer Bernard Herrmann for a scene in the 1960 horror film *Psycho*. “He wrote some incredibly beautiful orchestral pieces for those movies. I transposed it for two guitars.”

Calling guitars his one material vice, he notes, “I have a lot, and I *love* old acoustics. I played Telecasters a lot; one has a Bigsby I put together and Wide Range humbuckers from the ’70s. I have a bunch of great Gibson and Martin acoustics from the ’30s, ’40s and ’50s. They all get used.”

After he and Cash toured with Ry Cooder, he was particularly impressed by Cooder’s Univox Premier, which led him to acquire one of his own.

“It was this odd solidbody with a rosewood neck, made in New Jersey in the 1950s, with cool-sounding pickups. It’s a great-looking guitar.

“I have a bunch of amps, but my main recording amp is a Deluxe Reverb from the mid ’60s. I’ve had it for 40 years or more and it sounds great. I use it 85 or 90 percent of the time because it works for everything.”

The stately “Hymn # 2” features a late-’40s Gibson J-50 that works especially well for recording.

“It’s very light and has a raw, fundamental tone.”

He attached a DeArmond pickup and used the Deluxe Reverb “to give it a little texture.”

“It’s recorded traditionally with a couple mics, and I sent a signal to another room to the Deluxe Reverb and miked that.”

“Soul Op,” inspired by a 2016 album he produced for Memphis R&B singer William Bell, used an identical setup. The Delta-flavored “Meteor” “...twisted Howlin’ Wolf in the same way I twisted Floyd Cramer. I played a Harmony Meteor,” and used a Gibson GA-20-T.

Leventhal is realistic about the album’s potential.

“I have no idea if anyone’s gonna care,” he said. “I have a sense some musicians and record-maker types who have an appreciation for what I do (will). But I’m under the radar, and I like being able to make my own records. It’s fun, it’s challenging, and I’ll see if there’s any traction.”

If so, he’ll go again.

“It has sparked ideas, and they’re *completely* different.” – **Rich Kienzie**

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PHILIP SAYCE

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Philip Sayce is a living, breathing, god-monster beast on the Stratocaster. But his chops, tone, feel, and great songs don't come out of thin air. The man works hard. His latest record, *The Wolves Are Coming*, is a meditation on self-love, personal growth, and wicked women, dressed in blues, rock, funk, psychedelia, and superb vocals.

What was going on in your life that set *The Wolves Are Coming* in motion?

The last album I put out was *Spirit Rising*, during the pandemic. So there was no opportunity to promote it, which was a frustrating experience. I found myself for more than a year with no gigs, thinking, "What am I gonna do? I can either put my head in the sand, or I can use this as an extended off-season for training like an athlete."

I put together a schedule, and every morning I'd put in three hours of practice on guitar, then for an hour I'd work on vocal exercises.

And for three hours after that, I'd be writing. From that came the songs for *The Wolves Are Coming*. I didn't know where it was going, but it was what I was feeling in the moment.

What was your guitar regimen during the pandemic?

I'd tell myself, "Anything I'm playing right now, I can play better." I tried to get deeper, and kept refining, revising, and learning. I'm a student of music and I want to play better, so I kept pushing myself. I worked on patterns, runs, vibrato, string bending, and technique. I threw myself into it similar to when I first picked up the instrument – with a sense of awe and wonder. I wanted to explore and expand, knocking the dust off some things or developing new techniques from the ground up.

Did any new songs come out of your practice regimen?

I'm always open to exploring uncharted territories and new possibilities. A lot of these songs were conceived during that period and

started coming into focus. "Backstabber" and "Oh! That Bitches Brew" were brand new during that time and reflected the texture of how I was feeling. There were some dark days and some good days, but I was really trying to channel the uncertainty of the times in those new songs.

"Blackbirds Fly Alone" is such a great tune.

I wrote that with Marti Frederiksen, who is an amazing, super-successful songwriter. We've written a bunch of songs together, and that one kept coming back to me, so it was important to include it on this album. It's about honoring certain experiences in a relationship that are not in alignment; if something doesn't feel quite right, you have to trust your intuition and believe in yourself even if the world is upside-down. It's one of my favorite songs I've ever written.

You've mastered the fine art of mixing wah and Leslie sounds, as on "Your Love." What's going on there?

There are two guitar parts. For one, I used one of the first Clyde McCoy picture wahs, which is unlike any other wah I've ever owned. It's got a perfect squawk and a very liquid sound. On one side you'll hear that wah, and on the other side is a Leslie guitar sound definitely inspired by Jimmie Vaughan. I was trying to get a funky Vibratone sound and that really chunky vintage wah. We blended them, and it sounds like the whole thing is going through a Leslie, but it's not... though it might as well have been (laughs).

What was your setup for "Oh! That Bitches Brew?"

I used a '68 Super Reverb and a Cesar Diaz amp in stereo along with assorted fuzz pedals like the Diaz Texas Ranger, a few old Fuzzfaces, and my all-original '63 Stratocaster. I also used a mid-'60s SG Junior. There's a bit of Octavia to make it sound really scary (laughs).

Is your main guitar still the '63?

I'm grateful to own two '63 Strats. One is named Mother, the other is Big Daddy. They're both my number one guitars. They have different sounds, but they're both wonderful.

I started playing Paul Reed Smith guitars last year, and we're about to announce some things we're doing together. I'm astounded by the quality of the instruments Paul is making, in particular the Silver Sky. I had no idea they were so good; they complement the old Strats nicely. The Strats are like vintage muscle cars – they have this vibe and magic. The Silver Sky reminds me of a Tesla with power windows and air conditioning that stays in tune (laughs).

What next on your schedule?

I'm going back to Europe for dates starting in May. I just keep working and putting one foot in front of the other. – **Oscar Jordan**

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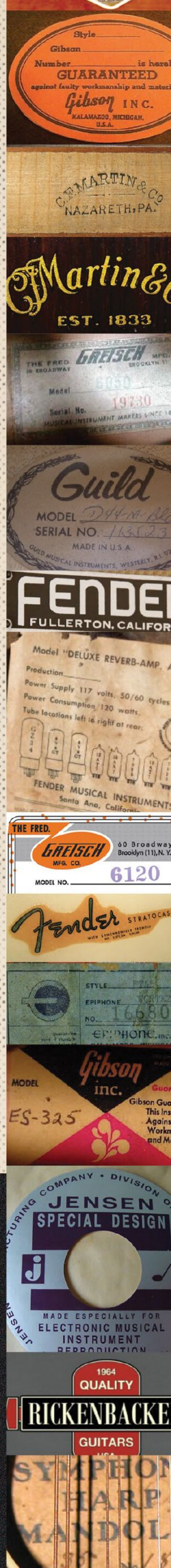
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BRYAN BELLER

Bass Aristocracy

If you love daredevil musicians, you'll dig The Aristocrats. A contemporary-fusion trio, the band includes guitar monster Guthrie Govan (VG, September '21), drummer Marco Minnemann, and Bryan Beller, a wizard on four- and five-string basses. We talked with Beller about the group's latest effort, *Duck*, which finds them tackling ever more-challenging instrumentals, yet never losing sight of the song or the music.

What was the original plan for The Aristocrats?

There actually wasn't any plan; we formed as a result of an unexpectedly successful one-off gig at NAMM. We're just three Gen X dudes who happen to like odd instrumentally-minded stuff and wanted to have fun with it. A Frank Zappa reference is very useful because it's shorthand for "Yeah, we're doing complicated stuff, but trying not to take it too seriously." Which is really what we're after.

Who are some of your key bass heroes?

John Paul Jones, first and foremost. He defined what a rock bassist should and could do – heavy Motown! Chris Squire was big for

me in terms of melodic runs and reharmonization, plus that edgy tone! Tim Commerford of Rage Against the Machine was huge in terms of getting an aggressive overdrive tone, but played fingerstyle. Flea is how I learned to employ slapping and popping, more for rock aggression than the smoother Marcus Miller way. I did go through a Jaco and John Patitucci period, while Scott Thunes, the longtime bassist for Zappa, impacted me in how he approached songs mentally and harmonically. Active, aggressive, and smart, but also raw.

You and Marco are not a traditional rhythm section. Are there great bassist/drummer teams that inspire you both?

Again, Led Zeppelin is a touchstone. We both know the catalog inside and out, and love what Jones and John Bonham created. We both listened to Rush when we were younger, and a lot of fusion stuff. I think we're both still aware that the key function is to provide groove and structure to the rhythmic element of the song. In the Aristocrats, we both know that we not just have room to explore, but actually a responsibility to explore. We need to keep

things interesting and musical since we're just a three-piece.

What gear did you use on the album?

Setting up for the sessions at Carbonite Sound, I wanted it to feel a bit like we were playing live, like I was in front of my live rig. Live, I use a Gallien-Krueger (GK) MB Fusion as a preamp going into a GK 2001RB amp and four GK CX410 cabinets, all with a big pedalboard in front. The feeling of air moving quickly on the fingerstrike response – which GK does better than anything else out there – creates a headroom perception that allows for very light playing and total dynamic control with my right hand.

Aside from four- and five-string versions, what are the sonic flavors you're looking for in a bass?

I look for three kinds. The first is a bright, edgy tone for both chimy clean and sizzling drive, which is something my Mike Lull Modern five-string with swamp ash body and maple neck does exceedingly well.

The second flavor is what I call a "modern" tone – a bit smoother on the upper mids, but still with glassy super-highs, a very focused midrange body, and warm low-end. That's a fancy way of saying "a Spector with EMG electronics" – I love Spectors, the Alex Webster signature, in particular. My hands don't always love the Spector formula, physically, especially live, so the Spectors I own have become primarily studio instruments.

The third flavor would be a dark, warm, and smooth vintage tone. I achieve that with a Lull P/J passive five-string. It's also a great foundation for certain fuzzy and synthy effects, which is how it ended up on the bass-synth for "Dance Of The Aristocrats" and the vintage fuzz of "Smuggler's Corridor."

For a bassist, you have a mondo pedalboard.

The key effects are the Boss OC-2 "brown box" octave, Xotic Bass BB Preamp for my main drive, the Digitech Bass Driver, and a Darkglass Vintage Microtubes for secondary drives. There's also an MXR six-band EQ, Electro-Harmonix MicroPog, Dunlop Bass Wah, a very old Boss CE-2B Bass Chorus, a TC Electronic Hall Of Fame reverb, Digitech DD-3 Digital Delay, a Demeter Opto Compulator for light compression, and an Xotic Effects EP Booster for instrument leveling.

That's a whole lotta pedals.

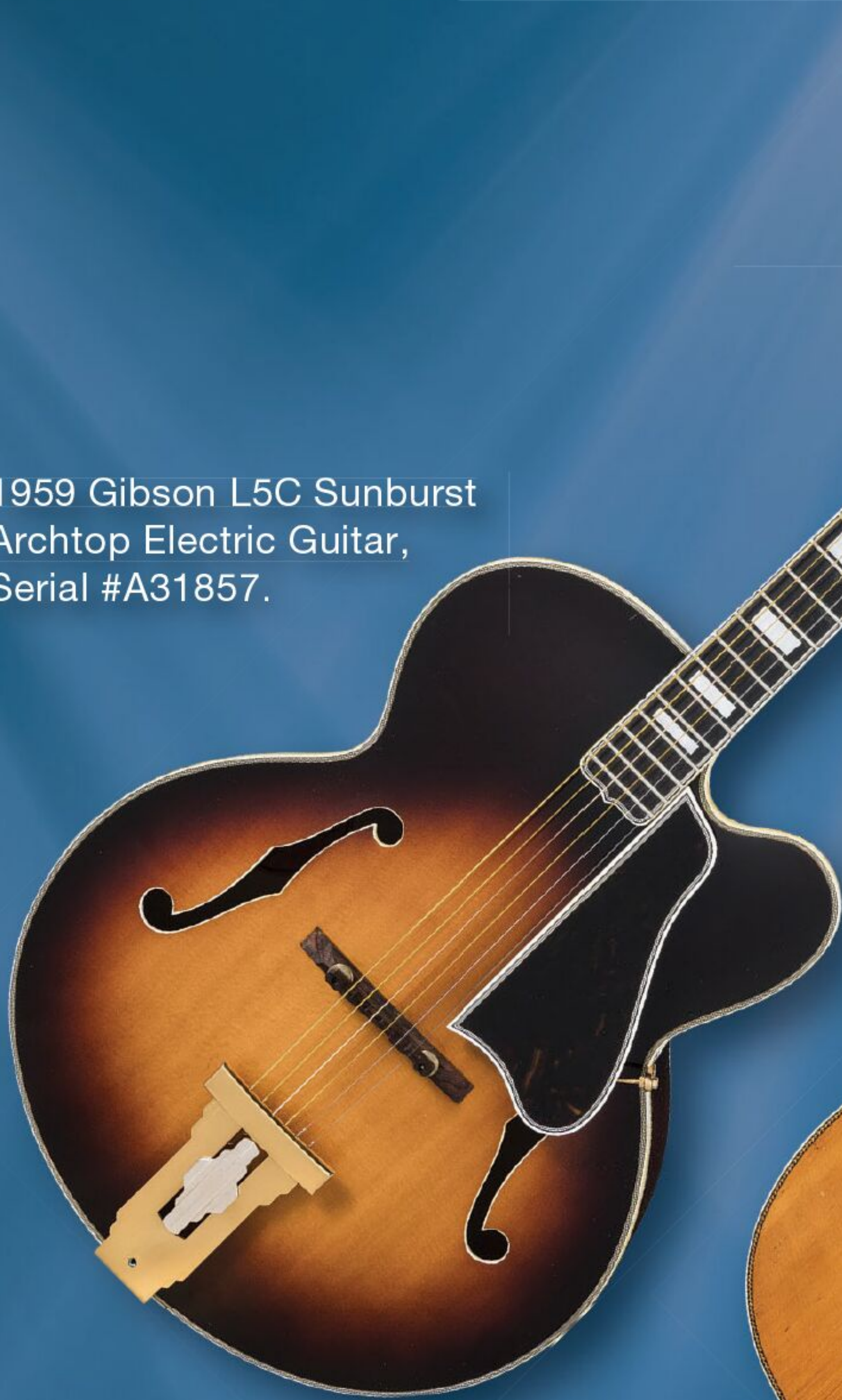
I remember 20 years ago, when it was cutting-edge for a bassist to have a big pedalboard. Now I'm between "old-school" and "dinosaur" for not running some Fractal or Quad Cortex all-in-one whizbanger. I am super-persnickety about how effects move air and affect the fundamental note, and I still think old analog effects are the way to go. – Pete Prown

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JIM KWESKIN

Where Jazz Meets Folk

Jim Kweskin grew up in Stamford, Connecticut, and in 1958 entered Boston University, placing him near coffee houses at the height of the Folk Boom. Mixing early jazz with folk, blues, ragtime, and country, he formed Jim Kweskin and the Jug Band, breathing life into music previously relegated to dusty 78s and influencing groups from the Lovin' Spoonful to Grateful Dead.

Culling his eclectic tastes and pre-1950 repertoire, *Never Too Late* finds the 83-year-old dueting with a host of females including Jug Band alum Maria Muldaur and granddaughter Fiona Kweskin. In the company of Cindy Cashdollar's slide and Suzy Thompson's fiddle, Kweskin's acoustic fingerpicking shines bright as ever.

What music first attracted you?

I started listening to my father's 78 records when I was six or seven years old. They were mostly early jazz, traditional stuff like Sidney Bechet, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven, and Bessie Smith. And he had a couple of Leadbelly records; I loved that.

When did you take up guitar?

I went to summer camp when I was 13 or 14, and one of the counselors sang folk songs. That's when I got in proximity of somebody playing guitar, and I loved it. Then, Pete Seeger gave a concert there. That's the period when he was blacklisted. There weren't too many places he could play, but he came and played for us.

I took guitar lessons, but the teacher was a jazz guy, and I wanted to do folk songs like the Weavers. When I got to college and started going to clubs, I ran into people who could really play. My passion just blossomed, and the next couple of years was when my playing really happened. Our bible was the Harry Smith Archives' *Anthology of American Folk Music*, which was three double-albums. Then I saw Eric Von Schmidt at Club 47 in Cambridge, playing guitar and singing "Buddy Bolden's Blues," which I knew as a Jelly Roll Morton tune. A light went off. All these jazz songs I loved, you could sing and play on guitar like a folk song! Which is what jug band music is – early jazz played on folk instruments. Instead of trombones, trumpets, and clarinets, it's kazoos, washboards, jugs, fiddles, banjos, and guitars.

Did you perform as a solo act?

I hardly ever played alone. I might have five or six guys onstage with me. Fritz Richmond played washtub bass. Whoever I could get who was a good musician, we'd just be jamming onstage. One night, I didn't know that the owner of Vanguard Records was in the audience, and when the show was over he said, "How'd you like to make a record with that band?" I said, "Well, that's not a band, but I'd like to make a record. Give me three months, and I'll put a real band together."

I started playing old jazzy or jug-band tunes early on. That was the music I was attracted to – the Memphis Jug Band and Dixieland Jug Blowers out of Louisville. The Mississippi Sheiks were blues, and blues is part of folk music, but they're a great string band. Cannon's Jug Stompers' "Feather Bed" – just amazing. But I also played Appalachian ballads, like "The Cuckoo."

Guitar in jug bands was just rhythm, not picking like you do.

That's right. I listened to all the great pickers, like Mississippi John Hurt, Reverend Gary Davis, Blind Blake, Pink Anderson. I absolutely worshipped a whole slew of them. I learned patterns and how to three-finger pick – thumb, index, and middle – from Rolf Cahn. But I don't think about patterns when I'm playing now. The patterns just taught my fingers how to play.

I got to meet Mississippi John Hurt, Reverend Gary Davis, Son House, Skip James. I thought they were really old, but they were younger than I am now. I mostly sat around and listened to them play and sing, and I'd watch their fingers and learn songs. I wasn't too interested in their history when I was 19 or 20 years old; I'm more interested in that now.

What's your main guitar?

In 1959, I got a Martin D-18 at Wurlitzer Music, in Boston. I wanted a D-28, but I didn't have \$300. I only had \$200, which is what a brand-new D-18 cost then, with the case. It turned out that the D-18 was perfect for me. I've played one all my professional life. I also got a D-18S 12-fret from Elderly Instruments. It sounds rich and beautiful, but I need a 14-fret guitar to perform with.

You influenced and inspired people like the Lovin' Spoonful and Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks.

The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, even the Grateful Dead, all those bands started out as jug bands. They were a few years younger than us, and they listened to our records. I listened to the people before me, and they listened to the people before them. I just happened to be a band that came up before them. – **Dan Forte VG**

Jim Kweskin: Don West.

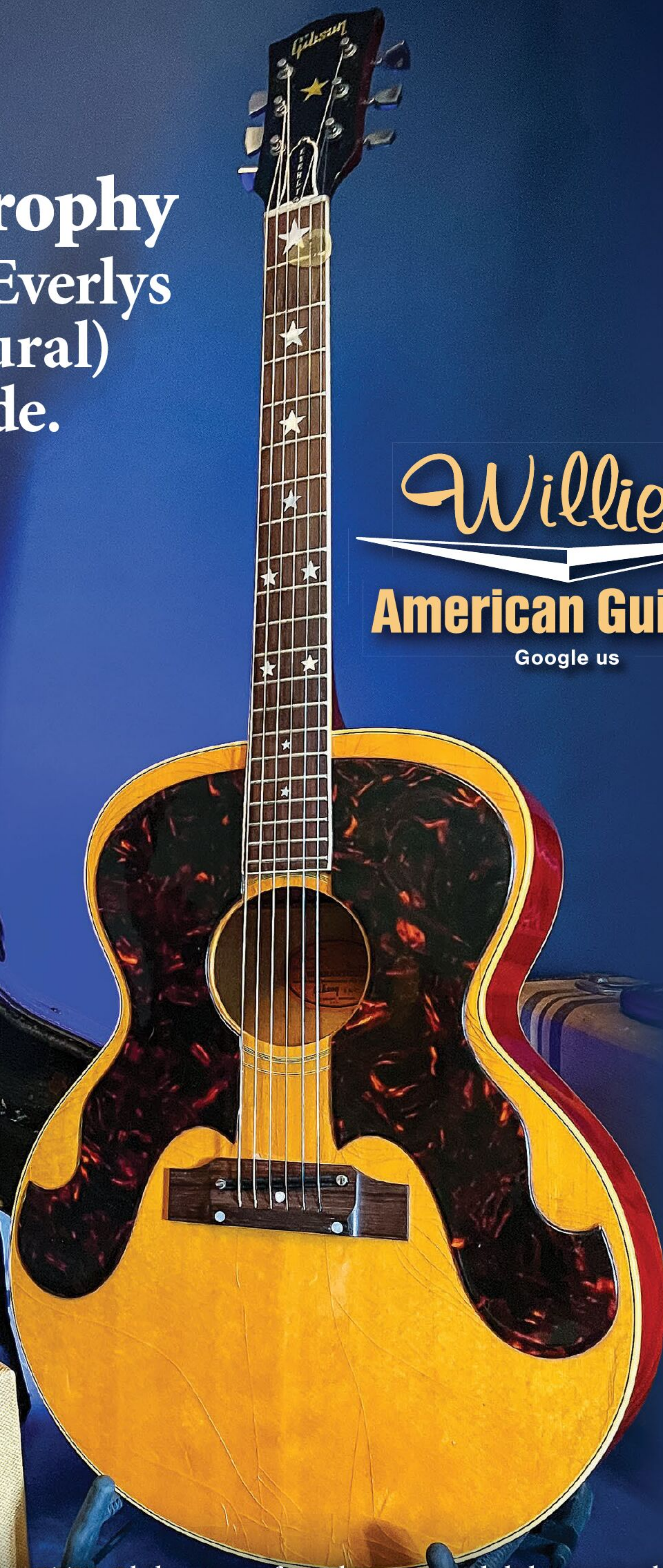
An Everly Brothers Trophy '60s case carried by both Everlys with a rare (1 of 46 natural) '63 Gibson EB-N inside.

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BTW: Phil was a soft spoken guy and did not smash it into a million pieces, but the top did break.

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BEACH PARTY

Epiphone's "Bikini Logo" Amplifiers

BY DAVE HUNTER

Collectors know well the desirability of Epiphone guitars from the years after Gibson acquired the brand. Further off the radar, however, are the amplifiers that accompanied them – especially the debutante range of 1959, which wrap the virtues of Gibson circuits in their own beguiling aesthetic.

Wander back to the 1930s and we find an Epiphone company rivaling Gibson for the title of leading manufacturer of archtop jazz guitars. However, the war years that followed, and deaths within the Stathopoulos family (which founded the company in Manhattan around the turn of the century), imposed hardships from which the storied maker could not recover. In 1957, Gibson president Ted McCarty struck a deal to purchase Epiphone for \$20,000.

After moving Epiphone from New



The origin of the "bikini" nickname given to the triangular badge requires no explanation.

York to its headquarters in Kalamazoo, Michigan, new Epiphone guitars began emerging in '58, using many Epi parts. These were followed in '59 by a line of amps. While Epi guitars broadly resembled some of their Gibson counterparts, the amplifiers were part-for-part identical – inside, at least. On the outside, they were dressed in unique cabinets and coverings, presenting what some collectors consider superior

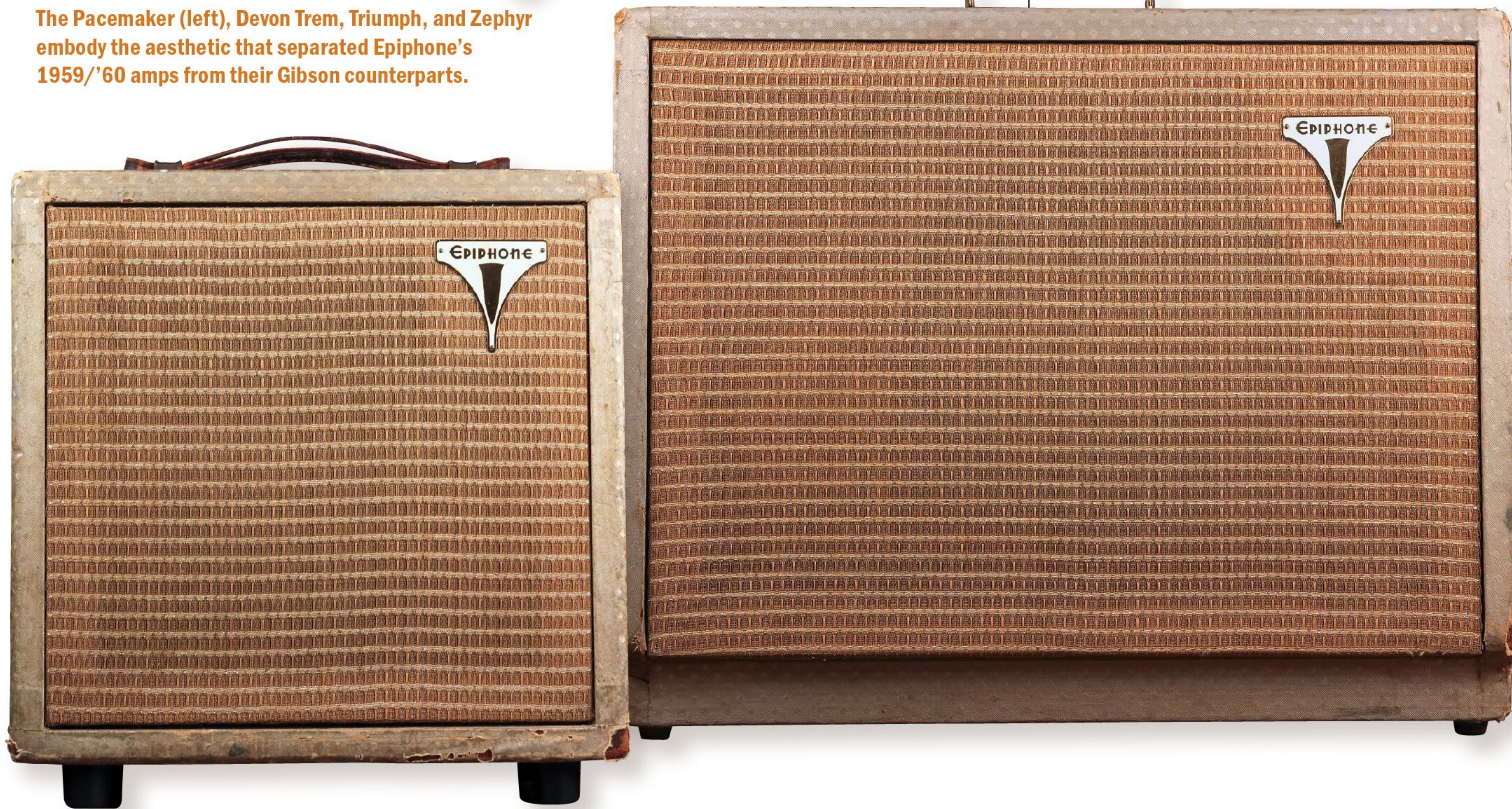
styling compared to the parent company's amps. Sometimes dubbed "bikini logo" for the shape of their triangular logo badges, early Epiphone amps are a near-obsession for Boston resident Dan King and his brother, Jesse, of Scarborough, Maine. Their collection stands at 13 amps from '59 and early 1960, representing a sizeable proportion of the total stock considering the small number of these that were made.

"Gibson made them like this for a very short period of time, and shipping totals are very low in comparison to Gibson amps," Dan King tells us. "Once we recognized this, we knew it would be a challenge to find them. That's part of the appeal, to some degree – the thrill of the hunt. You have to develop unconventional methods of searching these out."

"It has taken us nearly eight years of intense searching and two have eluded us thus far – the EA-5 Emperor and EA-10 Deluxe," he added. "There were around 50 Emperors shipped, and just over 20 Deluxes, so we've got our work cut out for us. I know of one Emperor in the midwest, but years of investigation have left us with absolutely nothing on the Deluxe. It's possible there are no surviving examples."

Their collection includes the EA-50 Pacemaker, EA-35 Devon (version 1, version 2, and an EA-35T/tremolo), EA-30 Triumph, EA-25T Century,

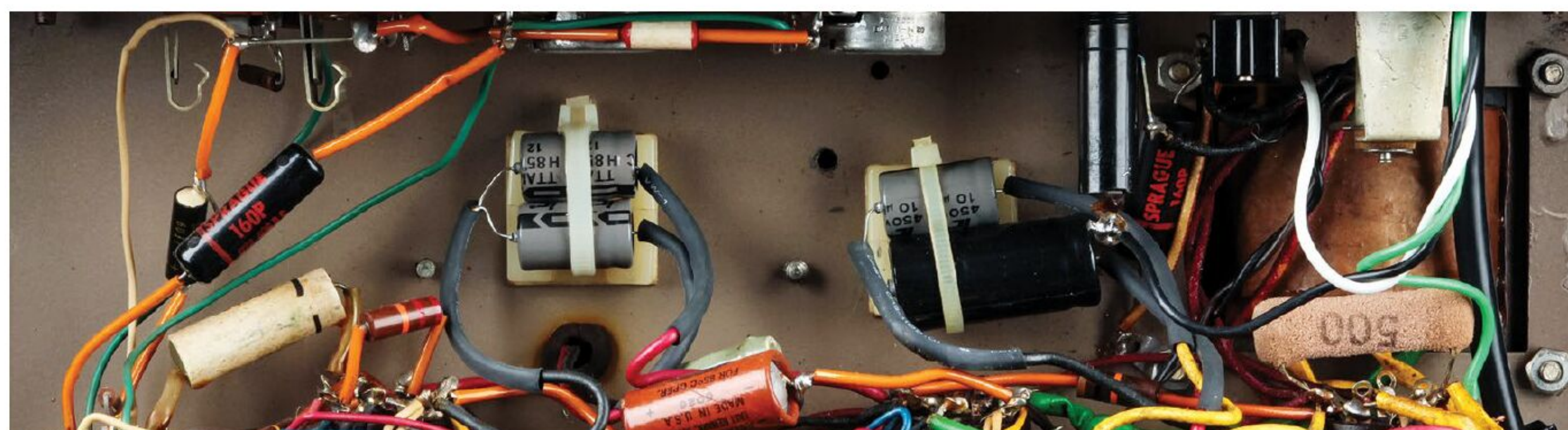
The Pacemaker (left), Devon Trem, Triumph, and Zephyr embody the aesthetic that separated Epiphone's 1959/'60 amps from their Gibson counterparts.



Amplifiers and photos courtesy of Dan and Jesse King.



The Epiphone Zephyr displays a more-complex circuit (above) for the era, this one identical to that of the Gibson GA-40. Within the Devon's chassis we find a genuine point-to-point circuit (right) of the type more often used for small "student" amps of the day. With Volume controls for two channels, a shared Tone, and controls for tremolo Depth and Speed, the Century's panel parallels that of the Gibson GA-20T.



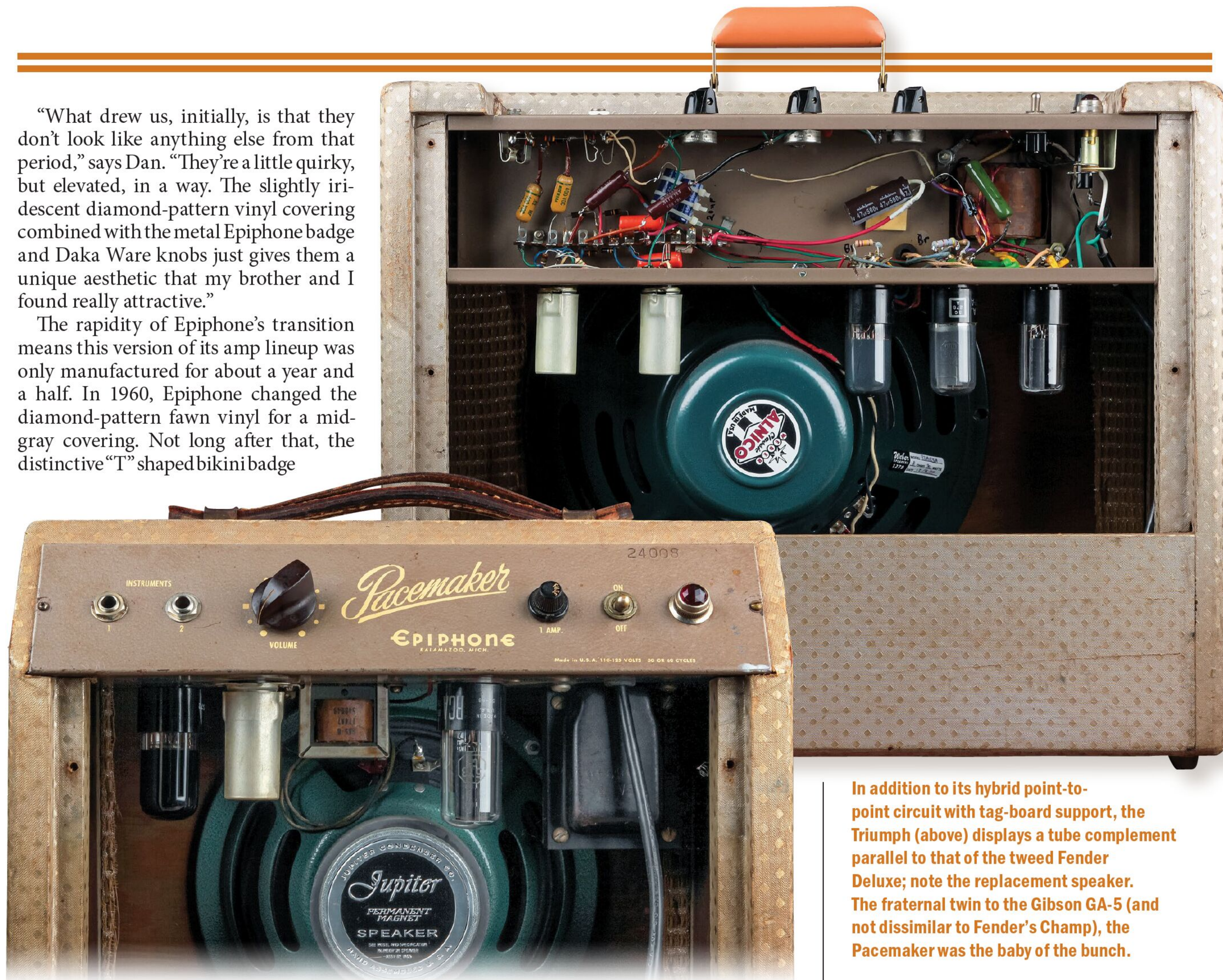
and EA-15 Zephyr. The Pacemaker mirrors the Gibson GA-5, the Century Gibson's GA-20T, and the Zephyr the GA-40 Les Paul amp, one of the more-desirable of the era. The latter two use the fat-sounding 5879 pentode preamp tubes that enhance the appeal of these circuits. Given their relative scarcity, however, they no longer provide the affordable alternative they represented before the bikini was out of the bag.

For the King brothers, the appeal of early Epiphones is equal parts sound and style.



“What drew us, initially, is that they don’t look like anything else from that period,” says Dan. “They’re a little quirky, but elevated, in a way. The slightly iridescent diamond-pattern vinyl covering combined with the metal Epiphone badge and Daka Ware knobs just gives them a unique aesthetic that my brother and I found really attractive.”

The rapidity of Epiphone’s transition means this version of its amp lineup was only manufactured for about a year and a half. In 1960, Epiphone changed the diamond-pattern fawn vinyl for a mid-gray covering. Not long after that, the distinctive “T” shaped bikini badge



In addition to its hybrid point-to-point circuit with tag-board support, the Triumph (above) displays a tube complement parallel to that of the tweed Fender Deluxe; note the replacement speaker. The fraternal twin to the Gibson GA-5 (and not dissimilar to Fender’s Champ), the Pacemaker was the baby of the bunch.

vacated the upper-right corner of the grille, replaced by the mundane script “Epiphone” badge. Fans of Gibson’s amps of the era will find familiarity in such a speedy evolution. Rarely did the maker’s style sit still for more than a year or two, as update followed update in a race that some historians believe was inspired by the massive competition presented by Fender’s very successful amp line.

Much like the Gibsons that they parallel electronically, the Epiphone range runs the gamut from extremely simple point-to-point creations to more-complex circuits. The EA-50 Pacemaker (a Champ-like student amp akin to the GA-5) and EA-35 Devon (originally a one-knob amp, it gained a Tone control to match its sibling GA-8 Gibsonette later in ’59) are wired not unlike the earliest of guitar amps, with direct connections between components and no circuit board. The EA-15 Zephyr, EA-25T Century, and EA-35T Devon Tremolo, on the other hand,

are more-advanced creations with neatly wired circuit boards.

Initially confusing, too, Epiphone model numbers run downward from least powerful (EA-50) to most (EA-15), unlike their Gibson compatriots which run upward according to output. But for the buyer of 1959, there was little to differentiate them, other than looks.

“If you looked at the circuit in one of these amps and had the same-year Gibson next to it, they’d be virtually indistinguishable,” King tells us. “Gibson was very clever about how they managed the Epiphone line early on. They essentially manufactured the same exact Gibson models and dressed them in a different suit. This allowed them to sell Epiphone amps in music shops in close proximity to Gibson dealers without cannibalizing Gibson sales.”

As for sounds, players familiar with Gibson amps of the late ’50s will know what to expect.

“Their tone leans more into the sound Fender was known for during this period,” King related. “But most of them break up a little earlier than comparable Fenders, in part due to the smaller transformers and less-efficient Jensen speakers. They have a particularly satisfying grind when pushed, a little more aggressive than a Fender. They’re excellent for raunchy slide tone!”

“The Century and Zephyr are unique in what they offer, tonally. The 5879 preamps are thicker-sounding, with a fatter overdriven tone that sounds really big when you get the amp going. They’re both two-channel amps, as well, sporting a Tremolo channel that is heavenly sounding.”

Ultimately, like their Gibson counterparts, Epiphone amps of 1959 and early ’60 offer their own twist on the early archetype, rather than providing a “poor man’s” anything. Given their scarcity, they also guarantee a significant hunting trip if you hope to find one. **VG**

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It was a moment when the angels did sing. Wanting to chat with his de facto big brother, one fateful day in the summer of 1969, 12-year-old Stevie Kimock walked into to his grandmother's house in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to see his first-cousin, Kenny Siftar, who was visiting from Tulsa.

Making his way upstairs, Stevie peeked into the bedroom where Kenny was staying, but he wasn't there. On the bed, though, was a *shiny* gold guitar... Cue the choir and mystical beam of light.

"It's one of my most-vivid memories," Kimock says. "It was the first guitar I'd ever seen in person, and I was *transfixed*. I had never seen anything so beautiful – the shape of it, the color, and a shaft of light coming through the window on that metallic gold top."

Of course he couldn't resist picking it up... "And immediately, a string broke."

To this day, he swears he didn't touch a tuning key or pluck a note on that '68 Les Paul, but in the moment, all he could do was sit in shame, awaiting admonishment. When Kenny returned, though, he noticed the boy's sheepishness.

"He goes, 'I think I broke your guitar,'" Siftar remembers. "But all he did was break the high-E string (laughs). And back then, Ernie Ball put two of them in every set."



Recalling more of his earliest music-related memories, Kimock flashes back to several years before that day.

"My aunt, Dotty Siftar, was a folk singer in the '60s," he said. "She was a big part of the Philly folk scene and ran the Eastern Cooperative Recreational School, where they did arts and crafts, folk dancing, and music. She sang with Pete Seeger."

"I remember her long, black hair and nylon-string guitar with the rope strap, and her playing work songs from the 1890s on an autoharp."

Though integral to Kimock's musical foundation, Dottie wasn't responsible for putting an instrument in his hands.

"One day when I was junior-high age, my mother, realizing I was headed toward juvenile delinquency, said, 'Would you like

to play an instrument?' I thought about it and decided the coolest would be a violin.

"In our neighborhood was a family that had one, and I went to check it out. As I walked up to their screen door, I saw their boy, phone to his ear, cord stretched. He was holding an electric violin plugged into an amp – I remember seeing the big chrome dust cap on its speaker. I heard him tell the person on the other end, 'Hey, listen to this!' as he hit a note. It was *loud*, unpleasant, and scared *the hell* out of me. I ran, screaming (laughs). After that, I did *not* want a violin."

Enter Plan B – a trip to Sears, where his mother bought a Silvertone acoustic guitar for the boy.

"I learned a D chord, but that was about it," Kimock laughed.

Fortunately, Kenny had decided to stay in town to play in a band that covered songs by Jeff Beck, Led Zeppelin, and Fleetwood Mac. He'd often sit with the boy and their guitars, the elder demonstrating how to find notes to songs on the radio.

"Watching him move his hands, playing double-stops like Keith Richards or Chuck Berry, I thought, 'Wow!' and I realized it was possible to play those songs," Kimock said.

**Steve Kimock's
1968 Les Paul.**

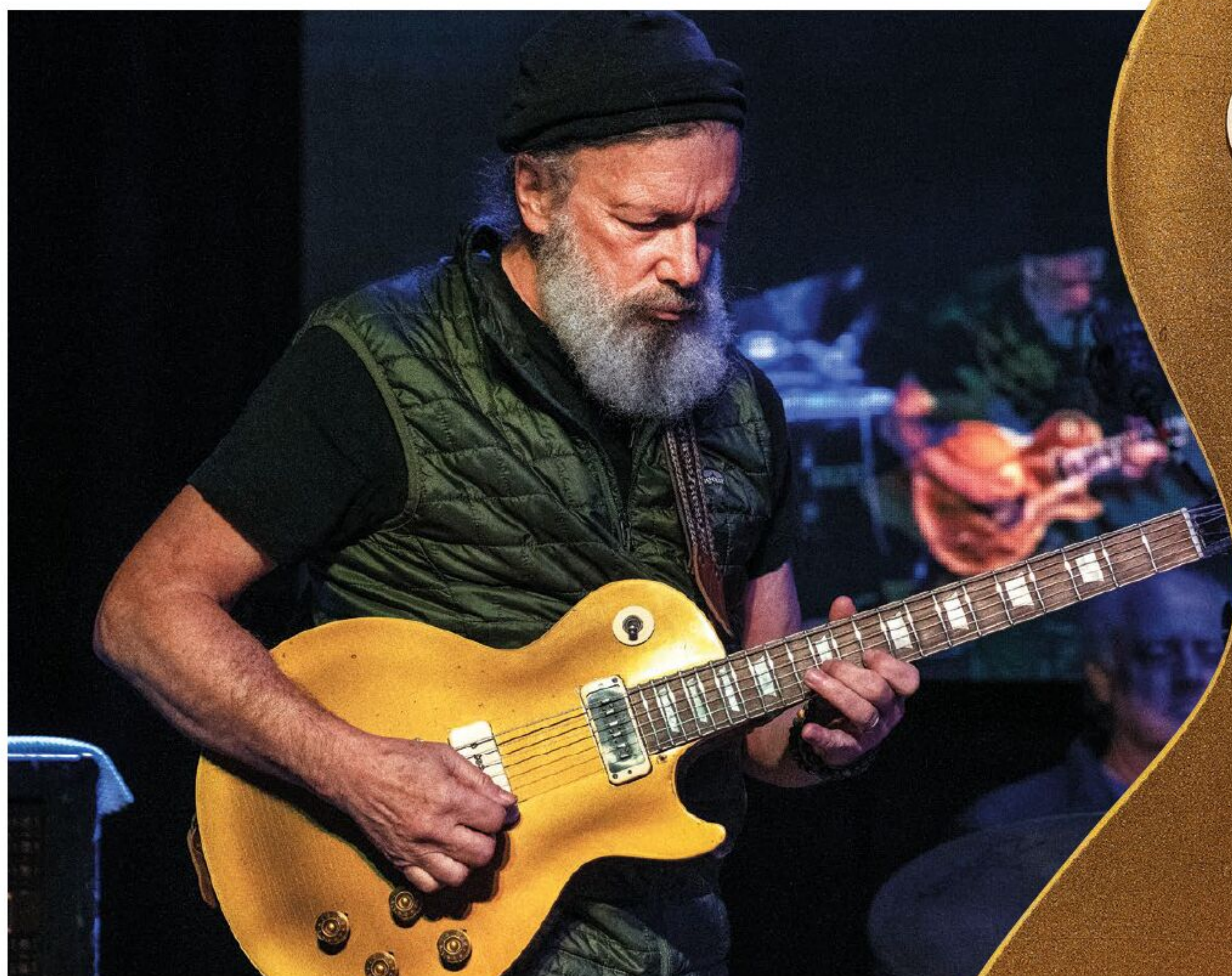
Interest became infatuation, and Kimock began to sit with his Silvertone for hours every day. When "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" aired on Sunday nights, he'd watch intently as Tommy picked his Guild D-55.

"I noticed the way he used the inside four strings to play chord voicings up the neck," he recalled. "When Joan Baez was on, they did a close-up of her right hand and I remember pressing my nose to the screen, wondering, 'How is she doing that?'"



Kenny Siftar and Steve Kimock with the goldtop in February, 2024.





Kimock onstage with the goldtop in 2023.

Bolstering his education was the entertainment section of each Sunday's *Bethlehem Globe Times*, which printed lyrics and chord charts for popular songs.

"I'd sit with the guitar, strumming one chord for 10 minutes (laughs), then figuring out the next one to play 'The Yellow Rose of Texas' or 'Nowhere Man'."

After getting an import electric with "three pickups and seven switches," he learned "Mr. Tambourine Man" and the lick from "Satisfaction." By 16, he had a Fender Jaguar and was playing in bands that covered the Allman Brothers' "Whipping Post" and tunes by Johnny Winter, Eric Clapton, Roy Buchanan, Mike Bloomfield, and Peter Green.

In 1970, Siftar's band folded. Without a gig but still needing to pay rent, he sold the '68 goldtop and his '69 Twin, the former to an acquaintance, making it clear that if he ever decided to sell it, Siftar would get a call. Then, he was off to the Army.

Fast-forward to 2012. Set to retire from his day job, Siftar took a call one day from his friends at Guitar Villa, saying his old goldtop was for sale online. Though his days of buying guitars had passed, he called.

"The guy was asking a lot more than the \$300 I'd sold it to him for," he laughed. "Still, I figured Steve would be interested."

He was right.

"I called him right away and said, 'Take it down. I'm coming with whatever you need,'" said Kimock.

Today, the goldtop is Kimock's "emotional #1" guitar though it splits time at gigs with his 1960 Strat. Others require his mid-'60s L-5, '47 L-7, a mid-'60s SG, a '60s Supro lapsteel, or his '46 ES-300.

"The goldtop is such an expressive guitar," Kimock says. "If I need something that's got to feel like me, I'll reach for it. There's a deep emotional attachment; it's even better than 12-year-old me could have imagined!"

While it left Kalamazoo with P-90 pickups, Kimock has tried several types including mini humbuckers from '68. Today, it has a coverless Alnico "staple" pickup at its neck and a P-90 in the bridge, both from '55.

"It's perfect!" he says. "Both pickups sound like a million bucks."

When the guitar was still new-ish, Siftar replaced its bridge with a "no-wire" Tune-O-Matic from a '50s ES-335 he found at a guitar shop in Tulsa. Ditto the gold "speed knobs," which are also older than the guitar.

The '68 goldtop's bridge and gold "speed knobs" are older than the guitar.

Besides touring and recording for more than 40 years with Zero and the Steve Kimock Band, the Pennsylvania native was a fixture on the Bay Area scene, playing in Kingfish, Bob Weir's RatDog, The Other Ones, Phil Lesh & Friends, and the Rhythm Devils. He has shared stages with a litany of luminaries including Taj Mahal, David Lindley, Jorma Kaukonen, Bonnie Raitt, Allman Brothers, Derek Trucks, Elvin Bishop, Little Feat, Peter Frampton, and many others. This year, he's touring with Jazz is Dead and Oteil Burbridge.

Siftar, meanwhile, backs a singer/songwriter in Bethlehem using goldtops from '73 and '80 and other Les Pauls from '81 and the late '90s.

To see Steve Kimock playing the goldtop, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9CzE0fawpE

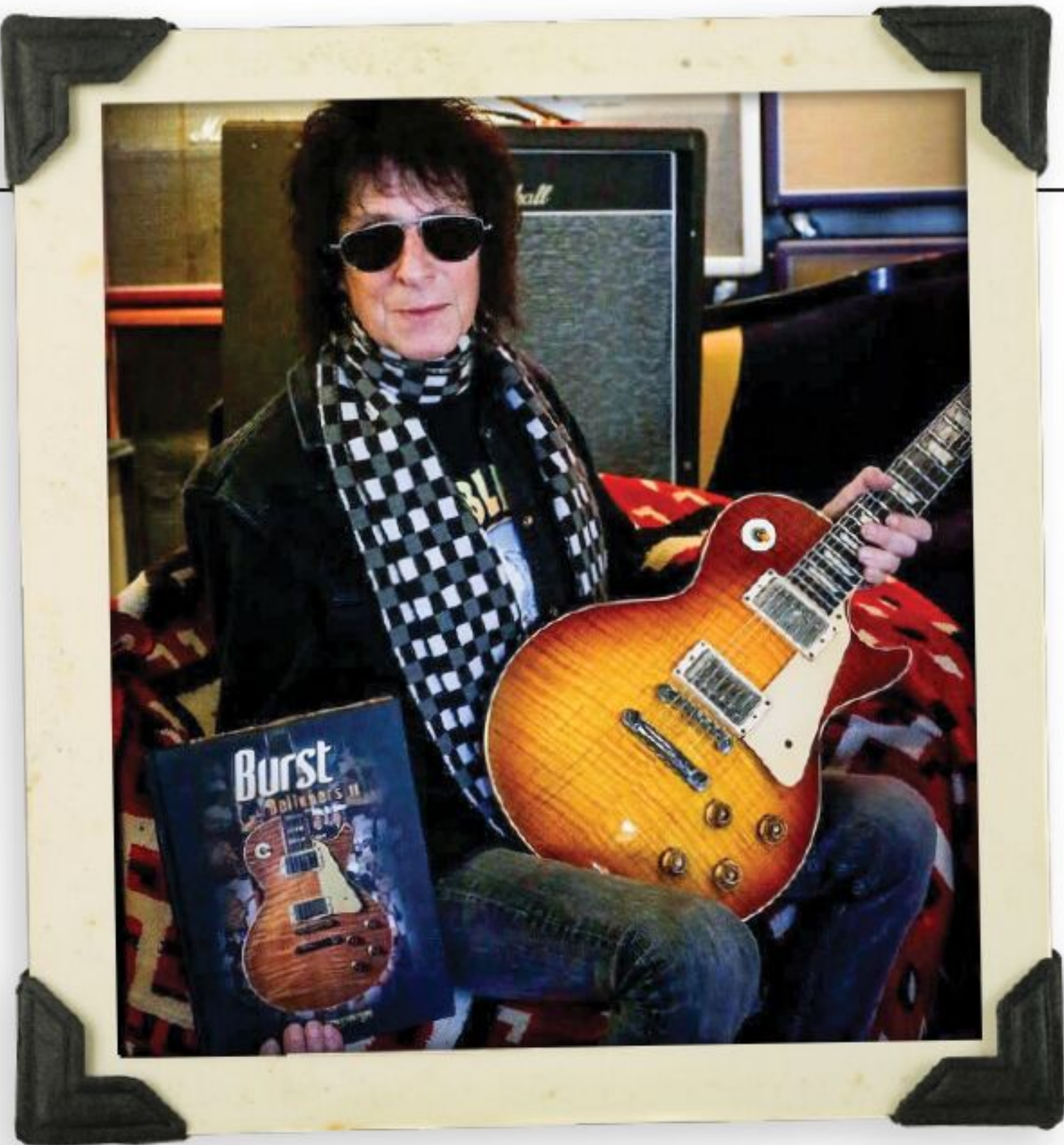
Price Guide

By Alan Greenwood & Ram W. Tuli



1955 Gretsch
Chet Atkins
Hollowbody 6120.

YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND.	
			LOW	HIGH
1977	Acoustic 125	100 watts, 2x15	\$275	\$425
1970	Ampeg AC-12	20 watts, 1x12 tube, accordion	\$400	\$550
1976	BC Rich Seagull II		\$2,650	\$3,500
1984	Boss Super Distortion & Feedbacker DF-2		\$150	\$250
2000s	Catalinbread Perseus		\$100	\$130
1990	Collings D3	Brazilian	\$8,500	\$11,000
1935	Cromwell GT-2 Tenor		\$1,000	\$1,500
1932	Dobro Model 27 Cyclops	Round neck	\$1,750	\$2,250
1970s	Earth Sound Original			
	2000 Model 340	400 watts, 2x15, matching	\$550	\$750
1964	Epiphone EA-28 RVT Pathfinder	1x12, r, t	\$475	\$700
2001	Epiphone Les Paul Ace Frehley	3 pickups	\$900	\$1,125
1941	Epiphone Triumph	Natural	\$2,500	\$3,250
2000	Fender '64 Jazz (Custom Shop)	Closet Classic option	\$3,000	\$4,000
1966	Fender Bass VI	Sunburst	\$6,000	\$7,800
2014	Fender Champion 20	s.s., 20 watts, 1x8	\$70	\$95
1994	Fender Duo-Sonic Reissue	Mexico	\$325	\$450
2005	Fender G-Dec	Small cab	\$80	\$100
1965	Fender Jazzmaster	Common Color	\$10,500	\$13,500
1964	Fender Musicmaster	Nitro, red, white, blue	\$1,750	\$2,250
1991	Fender Precision U.S. Deluxe/Plus Deluxe	Rare color	\$1,100	\$1,400
2006	Fender Super-Sonic/60	1x12, blonde/oxblood	\$850	\$1,100
1966	Fender Telecaster Custom	Custom color	\$22,000	\$30,000
2002	Fender Victor Bailey Jazz		\$1,450	\$1,900
1997	G&L ASAT Classic B-Bender	12 made	\$1,250	\$1,625
1970s	Gallagher G-50		\$2,000	\$2,500
1957	Gibson ES-125 D		\$2,875	\$3,750
2013	Gibson ES-335 Studio	Memphis	\$1,250	\$1,625
1979	Gibson ES-Artist		\$3,125	\$4,000
1966	Gibson Firebird VII	Sunburst, non-reverse	\$7,500	\$9,750
1965	Gibson GA-55 RVT Ranger	4x10	\$675	\$1,000
1991	Gibson Les Paul 40th Anniversary		\$2,750	\$3,500
2011	Gibson Les Paul Eric Clapton 1960	Aged, unsigned	\$9,250	\$12,000
1976	Gibson Les Paul Standard	Sunburst, 4-piece pancake body	\$4,500	\$6,000
2013	Gibson Sheryl Crow Southern Jumbo Special Edition		\$3,250	\$4,250
1993	Gibson Tal Farlow	Various colors	\$3,750	\$5,000
1960s	Goya Electric Solidbody	Various models	\$550	\$800
1955	Gretsch Chet Atkins Hollowbody 6120	G brand, Western inlay	\$12,000	\$18,000
1958	Gretsch Double Anniversary Mono (6117/6118)	Sunburst	\$2,750	\$3,500



Featured Survey Participant
Eliot Michael with a pair
of '58s - An Explorer
and a 'Burst.

YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND.	
			LOW	HIGH
1954	Gretsch Round-Up (6130)	Mahogany (few made)	\$15,000	\$18,000
1965	Harmony H1270 Flat-Top 12-String		\$550	\$750
1965	Hilgen Basso			
	Profondo B-2502	Combo 1x15	\$525	\$700
1974	Ibanez Model 700 Series	Various models	\$775	\$900
1987	Jackson Randy Rhoads			
	U.S.A./RR Series	Early Ontario-built	\$2,500	\$3,500
1953	Kay K11/K8911 Rhythm Special	Blond	\$1,000	\$1,500
1987	KMD (Kaman) Effects Pedal	Flanger	\$80	\$120
1969	Marshall Model 1992 Super Bass 100-Watt Head	Black, aluminum	\$3,050	\$4,600
1937	Martin 5-18		\$4,375	\$5,625
1961	Martin 0-18G		\$2,000	\$2,500
1997	Martin D-15/D-15M		\$1,000	\$1,375
2015	Martin D-28 Louvin Brothers		\$2,500	\$3,500
2005	Martin DC-16RGTE Aura		\$1,125	\$1,500
1988	Martin Stinger FX-1R	mini-stack, 2x10,15 watts	\$175	\$250
1983	Mesa-Boogie Mark II C/ Mark II C + Combo	60 watts, 1x15	\$4,250	\$6,500
1979	Morley Electro- Pik-a-Wah PKW		\$40	\$80
1950s	Old Kraftsman			
	Electric Solidbody	Various models	\$400	\$550
1961	Panaramic Acoustic- Electric Archtop	Full body cutaway	\$1,125	\$1,500
1980s	Peavey KB-100		\$150	\$250
1950	Premier Bantam		\$800	\$1,500
2008	PRS Mira Maple Top (MT)	Maple over mahogany	\$1,000	\$1,500
2001	Rickenbacker Model 4001C64S		\$2,900	\$3,800
1994	Rickenbacker Model 350V63 Liverpool		\$2,750	\$3,500
1987	Signature Guitar Company Oracle		\$2,000	\$2,500
1990s	Sovtek Big Muff		\$300	\$400
2003	Taylor 714ce-L1	Red cedar, walnut	\$2,125	\$2,750
2002	Taylor NS54ce		\$1,250	\$1,625
1975	Travis Bean TB-500		\$7,000	\$9,000
2006	Xotic Effects			
	Bass BB Preamp		\$130	\$160
2011	ZVex Effects Basstortion		\$95	\$130

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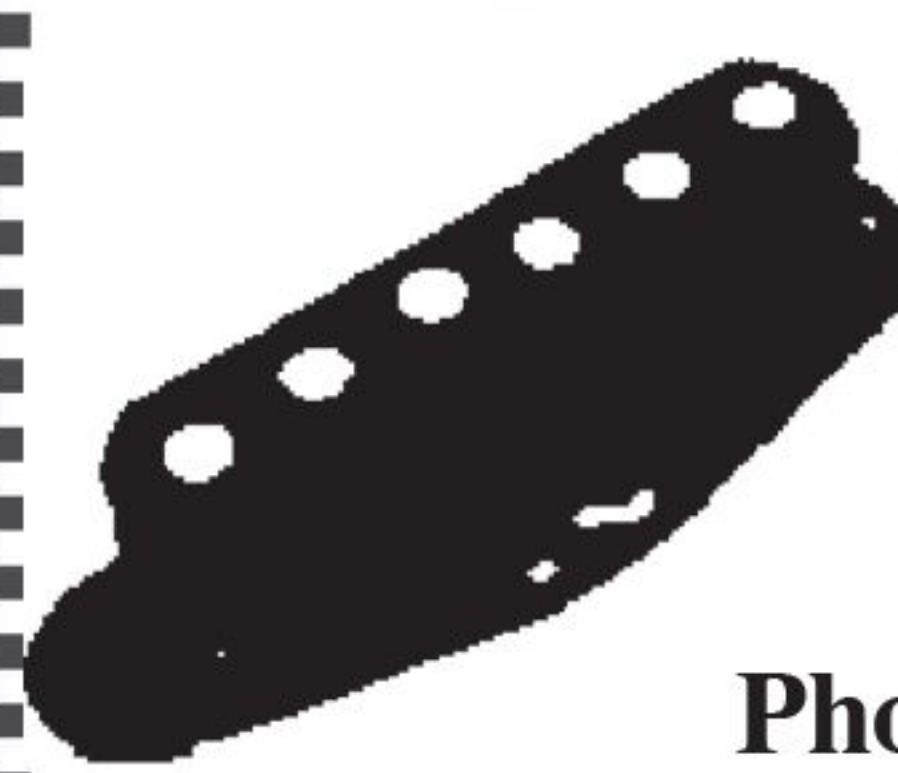
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SHINING BRIGHT

UFO's *Lights Out*

By Bret Adams

Most critics and fans agree that the finest studio album by British hard-rockers UFO was 1977's *Lights Out*.

The group's sixth studio effort is renowned as a cohesive yet varied set highlighted by the full-out strut of the title track along with catchy mid-tempo rockers like "Too Hot to Handle" and "Gettin' Ready" perched alongside the nascent power ballad "Try Me," which closes with a tremendous guitar solo by Michael Schenker.

Brought by the definitive lineup of vocalist Phil Mogg, Schenker on lead guitar, keyboardist/rhythm guitarist Paul Raymond, bass guitarist Pete Way, and drummer Andy Parker, there are no throw-away tracks. Schenker is especially revered as a hugely influential guitarist, and his overall performance on this album, especially his solos on the furiously explosive title track, is often cited as a career highlight.

Nudged by its label, Chrysalis, the band was pushing itself to greater heights in '76/'77. Ten Years After bassist Leo Lyons had produced its previous three albums, but for *Lights Out* they hired Ron Nevison, who was highly regarded for his engineering and mixing with Led Zepelin, Bad Company, the Rolling Stones, the Who, Thin Lizzy, and others. Also, Raymond having replaced keyboardist Danny Peyronel

was important because he also brought rhythm-guitar capabilities.

"By the time we got to *Lights Out*, we had reached a stumbling block, because we thought the material on *No Heavy Petting* was up to scratch," said Mogg. "But we needed a change in terms of recording, and most of it came about whilst we were banging around in the rehearsal room, writing new material.

"Paul had joined and he was most-adept at switching between guitar and keyboards – he saved us a fortune from getting another player in! He also added a different coloring with a couple of songs, 'Gettin' Ready' and 'Just Another Suicide.'"

Nevison suggested fleshing-out their sound by adding strings to some songs. Some members were reluctant, but arranger Alan McMillan handled the task. While a risky proposition for a hard-rock band, McMillan's application of them as accents worked well.

Nevison and Mogg butted heads over the lyrics; the producer was stressed by what he believed was the vocalist's tendency to write at the last minute.

"Our Ron. What can we say?" Mogg recalled with a chuckle. "It was one of the most-creative, funny times I'll ever have. Oh, the joy of record-

ing under the whip! Admittedly, there *were* some last-minute lyric changes, but that bleeding singer thought he could get it better, poor boy!"

Personal tensions among the band and Schenker are well-known. He left for a short time during the *Lights Out* tour but returned.

"There was always a little tension, but nothing out of the ordinary," Mogg said. "I thought Michael's work was outstanding on all the UFO albums. The material was absolutely right in his pocket to excel, and he did by jingo."

In all, *Lights Out* began what is widely considered the band's finest era. Several tracks are highlights, including the surprise cover of Love's 1967 release "Alone Again Or."

Phil Mogg and Michael Schenker onstage in '78.

"I believe we were all on the same page and very focused... in a hazy sort of way. 'Too Hot to Handle' was Pete and I having a dance and a sing-song after hours, and we actually *believed* we were the second coming! (laughs) 'Lights Out' was a crunch-up jam ses-

sion – a jolly jam after visiting the pub. 'Alone Again Or' was an outsider which we changed, and Michael's guitar solo took over for (Love's) trumpet solo. Lovely. It was a fit for the album."

The majestic closer, "Love to Love," is a masterful performance. Cited by Iron Maiden bassist/founder Steve Harris as his all-time favorite song, it includes a haunting keyboard line, powerful electric-guitar chording, flowing acoustic runs, thumping bass, skittering hi-hat amidst rugged drums, and soaring vocal stopped off with strings.

"'Love to Love' is a bit of a mystery," Mogg said. "It started as one of Michael's solos on a

cassette, and had a lovely melody. So we found a vocal for that part, but when we rehearsed, it took a different turn and became something else."

Lights Out reached #23 on *Billboard* and was just remastered and expanded for CD and vinyl that includes a remixed 1977 concert at the Roundhouse, in London – the first show of that tour.

"It's a reminder of what we were about in that particular place in time, and I must say it was a jolly good period," said Mogg. "Apart from the old Marquee Club in Wardour Street, the Roundhouse was one of our favorite gigs, where you could see the Faces with young Steve

of the *Lights Out* lineup reuniting became impossible when Raymond died in 2019, followed by Way in '20. The band's farewell tour in '22 had to be canceled early due to Mogg suffering a heart attack.

The singer, who has a new solo album called *Mogg's Motel*, doesn't feel bad about the commercial success *UFO* reached or believe the common notion that the band was underrated.

"There's never been any bittersweet feelings because things pan out how they do, and we don't think we've ever been underrated because we never doubted ourselves," he said. "We came, we saw, and we had a wonderful time!" **VG**



Marriott, the Who, Pink Floyd, the New Yardbirds, and others. It was great to play there."

UFO was a massive influence on many artists including Iron Maiden, Metallica, Guns 'N Roses, Def Leppard, Pearl Jam, and others.

Sadly, any chance



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GEORGE BENSON

Breezin' to the Top

By Wolf Marshall

At the height of the disco era, 1976 marked a transition as funk went pop and became the prevalent dance form in clubs and on record. It was also the year *Breezin'* made jazz guitarist George Benson an international sensation.

Born in Pittsburgh, Benson grew up on the mean streets, finding salvation in music. He picked up the ukulele at age seven, was playing guitar in clubs at eight, and became a professional at 10, when he recorded the R&B single "She Makes Me Mad" as "Little

Georgie" Benson for RCA subsidiary Groove Records. At 19, he followed the tenures of Grant Green, Kenny Burrell, and Eddie Diehl in B-3 dynamo Jack McDuff's band, mastering bebop and soul-jazz on the job. With McDuff from 1963 to '65, he played on eight albums.

As a band leader, his early years saw him recording for major jazz labels. His '64 debut was *The New Boss Guitar* (Prestige) at 21. In '66, he was "rediscovered" by producer John Hammond (Charlie Christian, Bob Dylan, Aretha Franklin), signed to Columbia, and recorded two organ-quartet albums. He moved to Verve in '68 to wax *Giblet Gravy* and *Goodies*, signaling a foray into pop/R&B with "Along Comes Mary," "Walk On By," "Sunny," "A Natural Woman," "Windmills of Your Mind," and "People Get Ready." He signed with A&M in '68 and recorded *Shape of Things to Come*, *Tell It Like It Is*, and *The Other Side of Abbey Road*, his first album devoted to a specific pop act, the Beatles. The format was repeated with tributes to Nat Cole (2013), Chuck Berry, and Fats Domino ('19). These emphasized a diversity uncommon to mainstream jazz artists.

Benson's CTI recordings ('71-'75) continued the trajectory, explored a wider musical spectrum, and were his first to garner industry attention. Repertoire included reimagined jazz ("So What," "Take Five"), fusion ("Somewhere in the East," "Full Compass"), Latin ("El Mar"), instrumental R&B ("All Clear," "Body Talk," "Dance," "Em"), pop covers ("California Dreamin'," "White Rabbit," "Shell of a Man," "Hold On! I'm Comin'") and world music ("Little Train," based on Villa-Lobos' "Brachianas Basileiras No.2"), and set the stage for his breakthrough. "No Sooner Said Than Done" and "Good King Bad" foreshadowed the music and acclaim to come; the latter won a Grammy for Best R&B Instrumental Performance. Through his early years, GB's ensembles varied from small jazz combos to larger groups with horns and string-orchestra backing. He was primed for the next step and his new contract with Warner Bros in '76.

Breezin' set a high bar for all musicians and codified a different form of fusion – instrumental R&B approached from a jazz perspective with extensive virtuosic improvisation. In later years, a diluted form played by successors devolved into easy-listening "smooth jazz" and became an industry and subgenre. The arrangements presented an empathetic work-

Moderate Rock (R&B Half-time feel)

Dmaj9 G/A

Dmaj9 G/A

Dmaj9

G/A Dmaj9

w/fingers

Benson's solo in "Breezin'" is definitive, exemplifying his mix of traditional jazz and modern funk over a simple vamp in a pop setting. This excerpt (3:58) depicts his multifarious playing at the solo's climax. Note his blues-based riff in measures 1-2 answered by fast, precise bop-informed flurries in 3-6,

personifying his concept of floating jazz sounds into the music when it grooves. They're followed by pronounced major-blues lines in 7-11 replete with string bends and slurs that might be found in a B.B. King solo. The signature triple stops in 12-13 are plucked fingerstyle and telegraph his return to the theme.

ingband with Phil Upchurch (rhythm guitar), Jorge Dalto (piano/clavinet), Ronnie Foster (synthesizer/keyboards), Stanley Banks (bass), Ralph MacDonald (percussion) and Harvey Mason (drums) – a lineup he maintained into the '80s, augmented by Claus Ogerman's orchestrations. An exemplary accompanist possessing tasteful ultra-funky traits, Upchurch was a valued studio player, master of guitar processors, collaborator on *Bad Benson*, and the ideal foil for GB's adventurous guitar work.

Dalto and Foster pursued complimentary colors on acoustic and electric piano, synth, harpsichord and clavinet, while the rhythm section of Mason, Banks and MacDonald maintained the quintessential groove.

Produced by Tommy LiPuma, who boasted credentials in jazz, rock, pop, and R&B and gave GB's band considerable latitude, *Breezin'* was his first multi-Platinum success and earned multiple Grammy nominations and awards.

"A lot of my old jazz fans were miffed when I achieved pop success," said Benson, reflecting on *Breezin'*'s effect on purists. "They want to be catered to. I've tried that approach and it doesn't work for me. You hear, you change, the door opens and you walk through. People forget I was a pop artist when I was a kid, and an entertainer before being a jazz musician. The easiest way to involve people is by getting them to tap their feet; that's when I can float any kind of jazz line into the music."

In so doing, *Breezin'* restored jazz as a popular foot-tapping dance medium, something that had disappeared with the swing era.

Breezin''s title track is a Bobby Womack composition first heard on Gábor Szabó's *High Contrast*. GB's rendering of theme riffs and the band's irresistible vamp groove guaranteed its status as an instrumental hit, and future as a standard and frequently sampled piece (at least 42 times by the DJ Jazzy Jeff, Mastaplan, The Dogg Pound, et al). LiPuma had produced the original Szabó/Womack version, on which Upchurch played bass, and Benson's version received a similar treatment (including the input of Womack) with more-prominent orchestration. Notable is GB's signature use of triple stops – octaves with inner notes – an idiom he invented and popularized. Heard throughout his CTI output, these forms yield a three-note chord that is also a viable solo-

ing shape, akin to Wes Montgomery's octaves as textural melody options. They are heard in the theme (2:05), recap (4:16) and outro (4:57-5:35). In "Breezin'," he played them fingerstyle, which facilitated alternating thumb and finger strokes for broken octaves and fast tremolo, but sometimes with hybrid picking, or strummed. Triple-stops also feature prominently in "Six to Four," "Affirmation," and "So This is Love?" GB's improvisations underscore the tune's hypnotic vamp with blues-based licks,

modal melodies, and rhythmic phrases with only occasional double-timed flurries in the climax (4:01).

“This Masquerade” showcased Benson’s vocals. Written by keyboardist Leon Russell, it was the Top 10 hit that cemented his relationship with pop audiences. He began as a vocalist and sang on his Columbia albums and *Other Side of Abbey Road*, but, on Verve and CTI recordings, his singing was downplayed in favor of his instrumental attributes, except for “Hold On! I’m Comin’” (*Good King Bad*). “Masquerade” also introduced his inimitable guitar/scat technique, which became a fixture of his style, exploited in his next hit, “On Broadway,” accompanied at the intro by Dalto’s rubato piano backing. GB assumes a terse, rhythmically-based attitude in his single-note improvisations, favoring bluesy pentatonic lines with string bends and repeated notes over the simple Fm7-Bb7 vamp.

Upchurch's fusion tune "Six to Four," with its namesake shifting $\frac{6}{8}$ and $\frac{4}{8}$ meters, was ideally suited to GB's most-engaging jazz. After a statement of the riff-based theme, Foster's Moog solo and recap, he enters at 2:32 and tears it up in a modal/bop/funk vein over the $\frac{6}{8}$ rock-beat and vamp of Am7-Bm7. These lines and similar moments in "Affirmation" and "So This is Love?" epitomize the balance of jazz sophistication, technical brilliance, and R&B earthiness that is his unique province.

"Affirmation," a José Feliciano composition, received an attractive treatment that played off its inherent Latin rock groove and again transformed a cover into a jazz standard. GB's chord-melody obligato introduces the piece, ushering the rhythm section for a theme statement, distinguished by band accompaniment reconciling Latin and funk elements enlivened with wah rhythm guitar, clavinet, and string parts. The solo remains a

Moderate Latin Rock (Funk feel)

Bm7 (E7alt) Am7 D7 Gmaj7

rake- -|

E7

Em7/A

rake- - - - -| rake-| rake-|

rake- - -| rake- - - -| rake- - - -|

“Affirmation” contains a landmark Benson solo, demonstrating his bop-inspired style in a funky Latin jazz context. The opening harmonic moves in measures 1-7 are unmistakable jazz idioms. Note the altered-chord sounds in 1-2 on Bm7 (E7#9#5 into Am7) and Eb minor substitution over D7(#5#9) to cadence on Gmaj7. He uses the E7 bebop scale in 5 as well as an Fm

superimposition in 6 and a full F melodic minor line as a backcycling “outside” gesture over Em7 in 7. A notable virtuosic flourish is heard in measure 8; where GB plays a blistering cascade of notes over Em7/A. This unique uncategorizable run distinguished by chromatic tones and interval jumps is articulated with his slippery legato technique and lightning-quick picking.

highlight of the album, combining bop chord outlining, modal lines, virtuosic runs, funky double- and triple-stops, and bluesy phrasing.

The Benson original “So This is Love?” sounds like a more-accessible version of his CTI modal/jazz/pop. It sports his elegant guitar theme, doubled initially by Moog synth, supported by string pads and Upchurch’s

atmospheric volume swells and comping. GB's solo (1:35) is a nearly-four-minute tour de force that grows from groove-conscious triple stops (1:35-3:01) to taut blues-oriented licks reaching greater intensity with fast pattern-dominated runs, bop/modal melodies and double-time chromatic lines before dissipating the energy and reverting to simpler

Moderate Rock (Duple feel)

Am7 Bm7

Am7 Bm7

Am7 Bm7

Am7

Benson's improvisations in "Six to Four" find him navigating modal changes, a two-chord vamp of Am7-Bm7, with a wealth of ideas and are a highlight of the sessions. This example (2:55) is a case in point. He begins measures 1-6 with solid jazz lines in the spirit of Wes Montgomery and Hank Garland, mixing elements of hexatonic and bebop

scales decorated with abundant chromatic passing tones. Check out the distinct arpeggio outlining, Em7 and D7, over Am7 in 3-4 and D major-blues sounds in 5-6. He develops short rhythmic motifs in 7-10 before launching a signature crammed-but-fluid chromatic passage to complete the phrase in 11-13.

melodies and light triple-stops seguing into Foster's piano solo (5:09).

The album closes with Foster's R&B ballad "Lady." Its arrangement steadily gathers momentum from a free-time orchestral intro and GB's theme statement with light backing to a heavier band groove (1:25) and a rhythmically charged variation of the theme melody. GB's solo (3:20) occurs over a change

to a samba groove animated by a rock/disco beat. His improvisations combine related riff-based lines and blues licks with string bends, funky rhythmic phrases with ostinatos and drum-like patterns that only occasionally exhibit jazz complexity (4:18). The final bars return to a slow rubato feel with sustaining string pads and Upchurch's swirling phaser colorations, and end on a cadenza (5:40) of GB's

bop-informed passage and a low-register trill – a fitting conclusion for an album that spanned a variety of sounds yet retained a unity of musical purpose.

Breezin' remains the best-selling jazz album in history, certified three times Platinum. It also reached #1 on the pop and R&B charts in '76, a feat unequalled before or since; the accomplishment more profound when considering it took four days and just \$45,000 to record, including the cost of London and Munich Symphony Orchestras. Boasting two hit singles, a Grammy win for Record of the Year, it elevated jazz with the public, changed jazz guitar, and established one of the genre's most-important innovators. In the wake of *Breezin'*, GB toured with Minnie Riperton, guested on Stevie Wonder's *Songs in the Key of Life* ("Another Star"), recorded "The Greatest Love of All" for Muhammad Ali's biopic, *The Greatest*, and became an icon of the art form.

"*Breezin'*... was the first time I recorded with a Polytone amp as well as my new Johnny Smith guitar," Benson recalled in 2000. "It was the only guitar for that project. I was taking a chance, but the results are now history."

In '77, he developed the Ibanez GB-10, adapting the floating mini-humbucker configuration of the Smith guitar on a smaller 14.5" body. It was the company's longest-running model, and was followed by Thomastik GB string sets and, in the new millennium, Fender Hot Rod Deluxe and Twin amps bearing his name.

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 is *Jazz Guitar Course: Mastering the Jazz Language*. 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.

VG'S NEW GEAR GUIDE 2024



1

2



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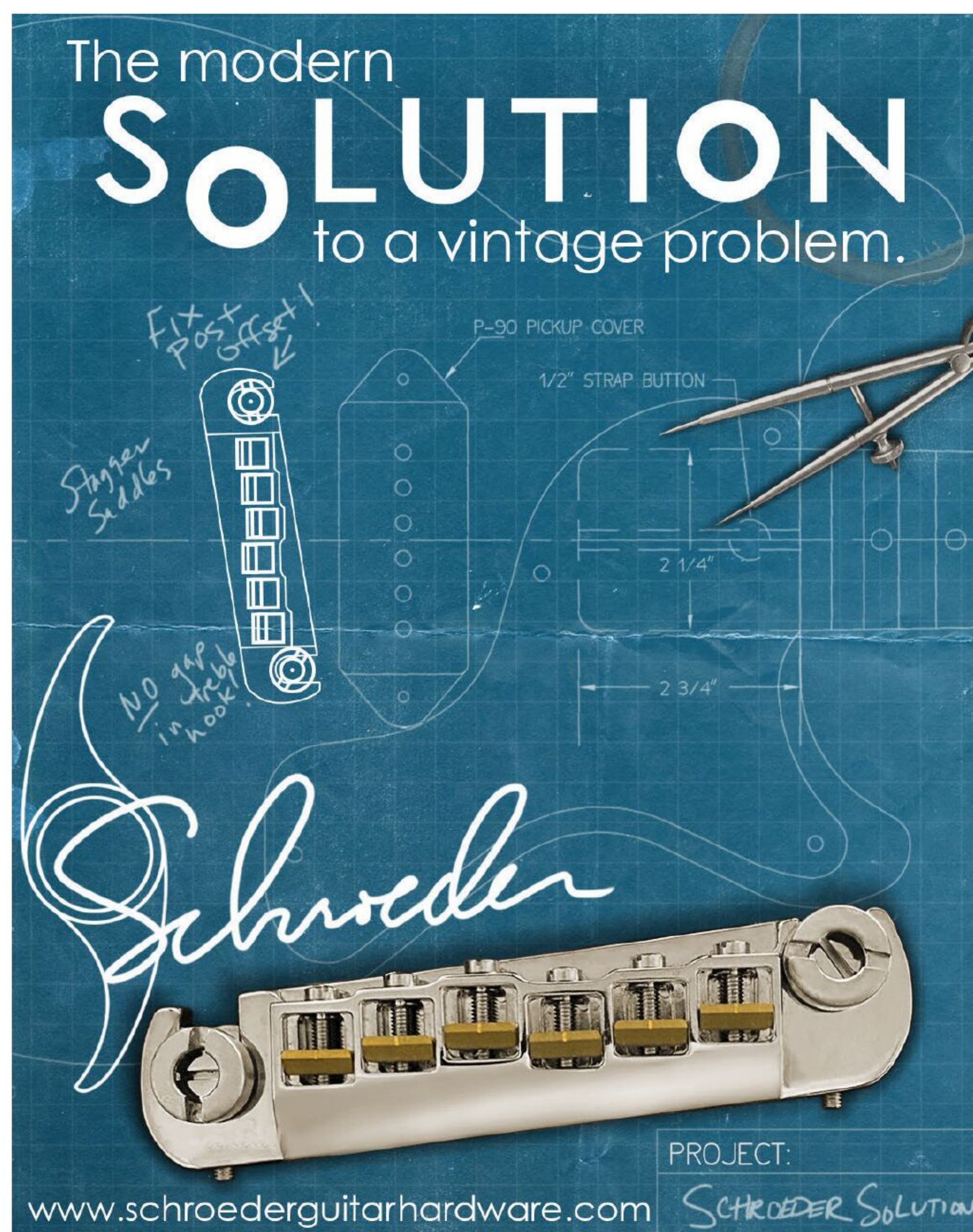
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A portrait of Wolf Marshall, a man with light brown hair, smiling and holding a sunburst Gibson L-5 electric guitar. He is wearing a maroon velvet jacket over a patterned shirt. The background is a textured purple and blue.

Marshall with his current #1 guitar, a '64 Gibson L-5.

WOLF MARSHALL

Jazz-Lore Generator

BY WARD MEEKER

Wolf Marshall was absorbing music before he could walk or talk. Born to a mother who was a concert pianist, he napped beneath the instrument as she practiced pieces by Bach, Chopin, Beethoven, and Debussy. Those hours shaped his mind – and life.

“I was hearing intricate music, and if she flubbed a note, she corrected on the fly,” he said. “When you hear that over and over, your brain makes conclusions: ‘That’s the right note, that’s the wrong note.’ It’s hard-wiring.”

By age seven, he was learning violin, followed by piano five years later, then cello. When he was 15, his parents rented a Les Paul Junior and a Deluxe Reverb that he took to wholeheartedly, copping licks from Dick Dale and Beach Boys records.

A decade later, he became a key piece in the evolution of guitar pedagogy, helping produce tapes and videos as musical director for the nascent Star Licks. Developing programs with



Steve Lukather, Larry Carlton, Ray Flacke, Brad Gillis, Jeff Watson, and others helped make him well-known to anyone who read music magazines, player or not. Through the years, his reach expanded with nearly 100 lesson books and videos.

For the past 23 years, his monthly “Fret-prints” column has been one of the most popular elements of *Vintage Guitar*, detailing the biographical and professional histories of great players along with a few signature licks.

This year brings *Wolf Marshall's Jazz Guitar Course: Mastering the Jazz Language*, which is closest to his heart and may be the

Marshall's Foam Green Strat is much like a Beck model but has a thinner neck and different pickups. A Hendrix '68 Voodoo Strat. This PRS 22 prototype was made in 2008 with thin nitro-lacquer finish, maple top, and mahogany body, PRS vibrato, custom-wound PAF-style pickups with coil tap, and locking tuners. From Gibson's Montana Custom Shop, a John Lennon J-160E.

most vital to his legacy. We spoke with him to look back on his life and discuss his vision for the new book.

What do you most recall about taking violin lessons as a boy?

How I liked the feel of the strings and the vibrations in my face. It was very immediate.

Why did you move away from it?

At nine or 10, I needed a bigger violin, and my parents decided that rather than buy one, I'd take piano lessons from Mom, which led to my having no discipline whatsoever (laughs). They then put me in cello lessons for a year, and that didn't take, either.

What was so disagreeable about it?

Sitting down! It just felt so different. Looking back, I appreciate that it was an at-

tempt to recapture the appeal I had for a stringed instrument along with Mom's love of classical music. But by then I was interested in R&B and rock and roll.

The guitar first caught you ear through surf music.

Absolutely – Dick Dale, the Surfaris, the Beach Boys' early albums, and most importantly, Link Wray's "Rumble," the first guitar song I learned by ear. I joined a record club at 12 and my first big purchase was *Dick Dale King of the Surf Guitar, Surfin' Safari*, and a strange album of surf music with studio musicians backing movie star Aki Aleong.

You were 14 when you got your first good guitar, a '56 Les Paul Junior and a Silvertone amp.

Yes, I had a Kay guitar for one month, then my folks got the Les Paul from Betnun's Music, which was an instrument store in a nearby home. I learned a lot on that guitar.

There was a store in someone's house?

Yeah, it was an odd situation, but my school friend, Mel, was the son of the owner and he wanted to be a bass player, so he'd invite me and my brother to their place, and we'd play. They had used Jaguars, Jazzmasters, Precision Basses, and a '63 or '64 Strat that I used to play surf songs through a Dual Showman. I later bought a '64 Strat because I loved that

'64 Telecaster

When you were 16, you started hearing Yardbirds, Blues Breakers, and Cream.

Oh, yeah! I went through a Beatles phase, of course, and a Byrds phase; the Rolling Stones' first three albums were huge for me. And that led to the Yardbirds, Cream, and Blues-breakers. That's the stuff I played when I started gigging on the Sunset Strip.

From hearing those bands, you backtracked to the blues?

Yeah, after Clapton and Jeff Beck – the Yardbirds "Heart Full of

Soul," *Over Under Sideways Down* and particularly "Jeff's Boogie." After that, my uncle took me to Southern California Music, where the third story had combo instruments – drum sets, guitars, Hammonds – and I got a new '65 Tele for my birthday.

How did growing up in L.A. shape your musical life? At the time, hanging out at music stores and venues could lead to meeting big-name players.

There was a series of events. Our band played the Sunset Strip and interacted with a lot of influential musicians, like the guys from Buffalo Springfield. I once sat in with a group opening for the Yardbirds with Beck, and that was a thrill; I saw his Tele and I thought, "Wow, *that's* the guitar." His sound blew my mind.

I spent time with Moby Grape on their first trip to L.A.; Skip Spence helped me pick a '57 Les Paul TV at Wallich's Music City, on Hollywood and Vine. Most significantly, I got valuable advice from Mick Abrahams, guitarist on Jethro Tull's first album. I'd loved his playing since I was 17; to my ears it was like Cream-era Clapton meets progressive and modal jazz. We had a deep conversation when his then-new band, Blodwyn Pig, was performing at the Whiskey. I asked "What was the magic ticket?" and he said, "Get yourself a Kenny Burrell album." The next morning, I bought *Blues: The Common Ground* at Wallich's. It set a course in my life.

What was your band situation at the time?

I had joined The Palace Guard, house band at The Hullabaloo, a big club near Sunset and Vine in the days when playing pop music while wearing uniforms was a thing for rock-and-roll bands. The vestiges of that band became Sweet Wine, which rotated between clubs – Gazzarri's, the Galaxy, the Red Velvet, and the Hullabaloo. Jim Morrison sometimes came to watch us at Gazzarri's; he was a big fan of blues and we were the only band on the Sunset Strip playing Otis Rush or

Freddie King songs. Everyone else was doing British Invasion stuff. We recorded six tracks for an album before our deal fell through.

Did that experience spark your appreciation for studio work?

Well, I was excited. I used to watch sessions at Gold Star, which was the main studio in that part of Hollywood. I think Phil Spector did stuff there, as did Ike and Tina, and Brian Wilson with the Beach Boys. I was invited by a producer, who wanted us to be one of his "kid bands," and I saw members of the Wrecking Crew playing behind a singer – I think it was Joanna Moore, doing a country pop album. But guitarist Mike Deasy made strong impression on me because he commanded the session and played a Strat on the date.

After Sweet Wine broke up, I kicked around Hollywood for about a year, then moved to Frankfurt, Germany. My father was there, working for the Army as an engineer, and I wanted to become a more-educated musician. Every weekend, we'd go on trips – France, Switzerland, wherever – and I experienced a lot of cultures. He'd drop me off, say in downtown Dusseldorf, and say, "I'll pick you up at five," and I'd walk around, go to clubs. I met a lot of musicians. It was very broadening.

Were you focused on playing jazz at the time?

It was aspirational. I was listening to Kenny Burrell, Les Paul, Howard Roberts, Wes Montgomery, Joe Pass, Johnny Smith, Barney Kessel, and trying to make sense of what I was hearing.

After a year, you moved back to L.A.?

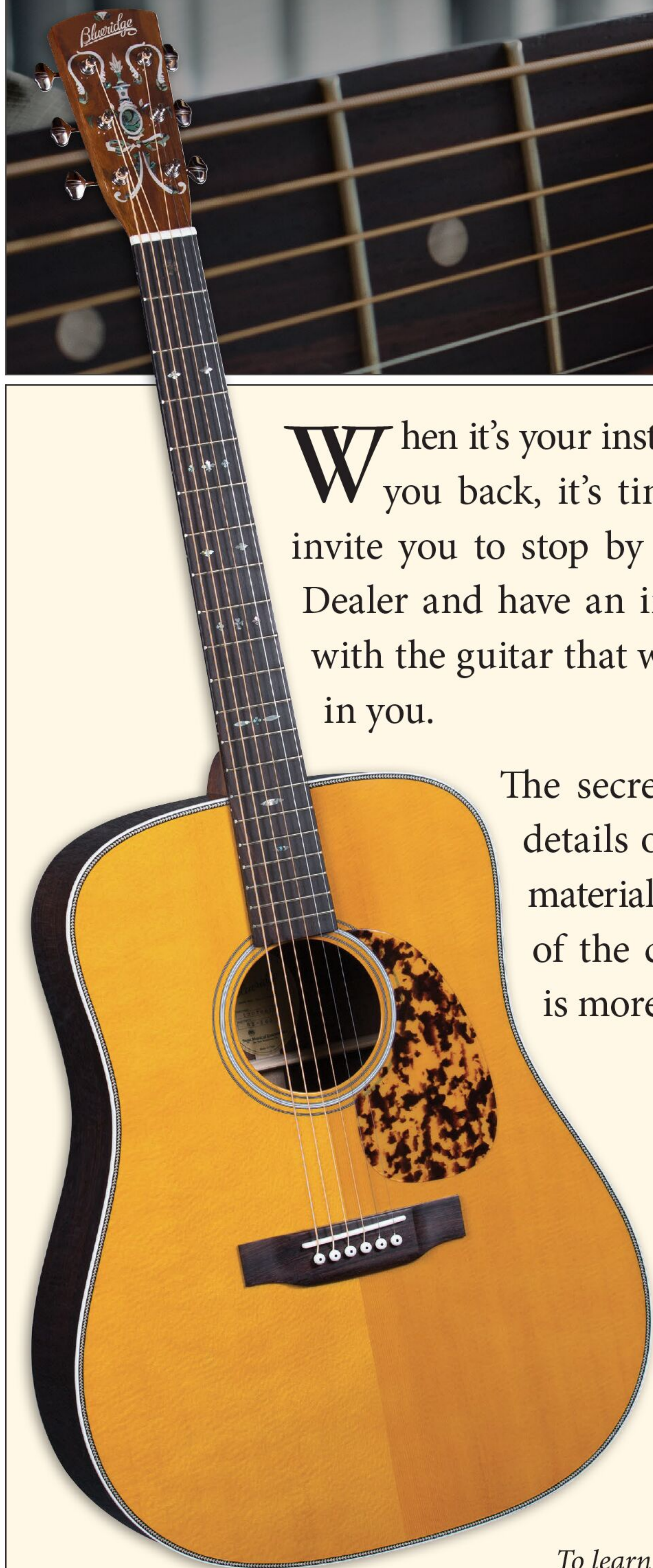
Yeah, I enrolled at L.A. City College, which had a strong jazz program where I learned to read charts in a band setting. From playing piano and violin, I knew how to read music, but didn't know how to read it *on guitar*.

Besides going to school, I attended a week-long seminar in Colorado taught by Johnny Smith. His course had just dropped and Chet Atkins came in as a guest performer. It was exciting – and eye-opening! In L.A., Howard Roberts suggested I study with George Van Eps, which I did for two years. I'd go to George's house every two weeks; he always had new music for me to learn – exercises and concepts he'd put on paper. He'd demonstrate and we'd play them, back and forth. And he specified, "This is what this means, this is how I do it." A lot of that I wrote down, retained, and now have in the jazz course.

George was very systematic. With him, I learned to be very organized. I then studied with Joe Pass, who was the opposite; you were just hanging, playing things together. Sometimes he'd take a phone call and leave me sitting for 20 minutes. But the upside was the lesson was hours long.



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How long did you study with each of them?

With George, it was on and off every couple of weeks for two years. With Joe, I had only four or five lessons but they were monumental, lasting all day. He wasn't big on theory or technicalities; he brought out the intuitive side of guitar musicianship.

What was your next step?

I started going to jazz clubs more. I met Pat Martino at The Lighthouse in '76, when he was touring behind *Starbright*. That was fascinating. At the time, I was doing a lot of transcribing; I taught myself by ear because Joe never showed me music as written charts. By contrast, George's stuff was so structured that I didn't know how to play it within a piece of music – a lot of concepts that didn't have context. Transcribing Pat's solos and writing them in notation was like having a lesson with him and placing ideas in context. He also encouraged me to transcribe and notate, as we shared a love of calligraphy.

Howard Roberts became very important to your playing. Where did you meet him?

Yes, he was one of my earliest jazz-guitar heroes and his method books were the first that made sense to me. I met him at Donte's, in North Hollywood, when he was conducting a workshop that eventually became Guitar Institute of Technology (GIT). These were classes for future professionals and other students included Lee Ritenour, Mitch Holder, and Tim May.

In December of 1991, Howard proposed an idea for a music school using computers connected from all over the world, and asked me to help create the curriculum. He was talking about the internet before it was a common reality. After he passed in June of '92, I received his pre-war Gibson ES-150 – the famous Black Guitar (VG, August 2000) – and he continues to inspire me through recordings and that unique instrument.

You spent two years at LACC then finished your degree at UCLA. What was your plan from that point?

I wanted to enter the studios and play jazz. I got a gig with an R&B group called Hot, and we toured a lot behind their #1 hit "Angel in Your Arms." There were jazz players in the touring band, and it led to some L.A. studio work at places like Davlen, Cherokee, Sunset Sound, and other studios in Hollywood and the Valley, mostly doing rock and pop sessions.

Which guitars were you using at the time?

I had a '65 ES-175, a '78 335, '77 L-5S, an Ibanez copy of a Howard Roberts, and

a couple of acoustics.

What were the rock sessions like?

It was like what Larry Carlton was doing – pop songs with a rock solo through chord changes. During that time, I started writing charts for a music publishing company, V&M Music. I'd hire a bass player, keyboardist, and drummer, then conduct the session. I worked with them for about a year, doing pop songs, film scores, and theme songs. That led to my first Star Licks session imitating Eddie Van Halen; I answered their ad in *The Music Connection* for a studio guitarist who could copy famous players.

How did Star Licks start?

Well, the guys who started it, Mark Freed, Andrew Cross, and Robert Decker, saw a market for that type of education, which had a growing audience thanks to guitar magazines, which had started publishing tab and lessons focused on specific players' techniques. They had the idea of cassette tapes with licks in the style of Black Sabbath, George Benson, Eric

From 1986 through '90, Fender made these Strat Deluxe models (in Sea Foam Green, Burgundy Mist Metallic, and Shell Pink) to Marshall's custom specs. Two have Lace Sensors, the other, EMGs and a Roland synth pickup.

Clapton, Eddie Van Halen, Carlos Santana, etc. I'd transcribe the licks, change 'em a bit for the sake of copyright, play them in the studio, do the notation, and they'd print them in a booklet to go with the tape.

What sort of changes would you make?

Simple things, really. I'd create variations without losing the spirit – try different-but-similar

melodies from the artist's general vocabulary and re-work familiar phrases, adding combinations from various solos.

How many Star Licks packages did you do?

More than 40 in every style, but mostly hard rock and metal because that was so popular in the early '80s. We had some in genre styles – a "hard rock" tape, a "blues" tape, a "country" tape, one that was "progressive rock" with Steve Howe or Allan Holdsworth licks. When home video became common, Star Licks kept pace; the first video we did was with Brian May, then Tony Iommi, Albert Lee, and Al McKay from Earth Wind and Fire. My own video, *Beginning Lead*



Guitar Power Builder, was the sixth, and it became very popular as a starting point for rock players.

Were you mostly focused on studio work by then?

Well, I was doing studio and a bit of road work. My ear was always to the ground, looking for the next studio gig, publishing demos. Sometimes there would be nothing for weeks, so I'd do other stuff; if somebody told me about a band that needed a guitarist who could sound like Eddie Van Halen, I'd look into it.

What led to writing your first book of transcriptions?

I have to credit Pat Martino. He loved the way my transcriptions looked, and encouraged me to do more. Within a couple years, I had 250 pages of his music. When he did *Joyous Lake*, he asked me to do lead sheets for copyrighting.

As the scene changed in the late '70s, I started doing more-advanced rock stuff. I had students who wanted to learn Van Halen, Robben Ford, or maybe the Larry Carlton solo in "Kid Charlemagne." So I wrote that out. I did a lot from *Inside Story*, Yellowjackets, *Room 335*, a Jay Graydon solo, some Lee Ritenour and Carlos Rios. Eventually, I hooked up with Cherry Lane, which had rights to publish Randy Rhoads/Ozzy Osbourne music for print. They asked me to transcribe a few things because their transcriptionists were piano guys who didn't know how to notate Randy's techniques – the bends, vibrato, tapping. We invented new symbols to address it.

What else do you recall about doing the Rhoads Star Licks book?

It was a challenge deciding what *not* to cover. Twenty licks by Randy... Should I use "SATO" or "Believer"? "Over the Mountain" has good stuff. *Everything* off the first album? Cherry Lane had the entire catalog, so we did three books. I also did a book with audio for Music Sales called *Original Randy Rhoads*.

Do you remember what you were doing when you heard that he died?

Yes. I was at the airport and somebody waiting for a flight said to me, "You look like somebody who might be interested in this..." and mentioned hearing a local TV-news report about a guitarist who died.

What was the local chatter in the days that followed?

A lot of people knew Randy as a great person and great soul, so there was deep sadness in town. We immediately realized that his legacy would be important. There's a lot of Randy's influence in '80s music, even in earlier metal bands like Judas Priest and Iron Maiden. *Powerslave* and *Stranger in Time* are so different from what they did in the '70s. They were less-bluesy and there's



Marshall with Burt Bacharach, rehearsing for their 2012 performances in Balboa Park.

classical consciousness in how the guitar leads correspond to chord changes – that's the Rhoads effect. The harmonic-minor sounds Randy played were not common before. Eddie Van Halen was doing neoclassical arpeggios and such, like on "Eruption," but he wasn't sneaking in harmonic-minor stuff all that much. Randy and Yngwie were. I was teaching four days a week and *all* my students were influenced by Randy.

How did you get into magazine work?

At the 1982 NAMM show, I met John Stix, who'd just started *Guitar for the Practicing Musician*, and he asked to see some of my work. I worked with them until 1990, doing a monthly column and interviews with people like Stevie Ray Vaughan, B.B. King, Allan Holdsworth, Larry Carlton, and John Sykes.

What was the impetus for your *Wolf Marshall Guitar Method*?

In 1990, I signed with Hal Leonard specifically to create that course, and we spent a year developing it. It was based on rock and blues principles and techniques, and had matching transcription songbooks with audio CDs [*Power Studies*] in a variety of rock music, from Carl Perkins and the Beatles to Jimi Hendrix and Bluesbreakers, from Van Halen and Randy Rhoads to Stevie Ray Vaughan and Guns 'N Roses, to validate the tutorial material. The original plan was to do three volumes, but it expanded to eight and has since been translated into German, Dutch, Italian, and Japanese. As part of that relationship, I worked as columnist and interviewer with *Guitar World* and *Guitar School* for more than three years.

You were also key to starting *Guitar One* magazine...

Guitar One was part of an arrangement I had with Cherry Lane when it was being acquired by Hal Leonard, and I was the founder and original Editor in Chief. It was reciprocal; I had three years left on my contract, so I worked for Hal Leonard and *GPM* for a couple years to get back in their fold.

Was the magazine your concept?

Yes, from '95 to '98 it was called *Wolf Marshall's Guitar One*. It emphasized education and tab, referencing my method and how it applied to rock songs. Each issue had transcriptions for 12 songs. The first cover was Hendrix.

Did you interview players?

We had two or three interviews and three or four educational articles – something on power chords, riffs, or an album. I interviewed Steve Vai, Alex Lifeson, Chet Atkins, Ritchie Blackmore, the Scorpions, and many others.

Did those discussions key on technical elements of playing?

It dealt more with music specifics than did other magazines. With Alex Lifeson, we talked about the chords at the beginning of "Limelight." There wasn't a lot of that in other magazines I'd been writing for.

Was there talk of taking the magazine beyond the length of your contract?

Yes, it continued without me for a few years. I'd gotten an offer to work with Riff Interactive and Microsoft, and really wanted to be part of the new online media. We did sessions with Hank Garland answering

questions on a livestream, with chat, audio, and visual content. Same with Steve Lukather, Albert Lee, and others. We were breaking new ground. That's how I ended up doing interactive chats in the late '90s for the Experience Music Project and developing content for Line 6's GuitarPort online lessons.

When did *Vintage Guitar* ping your radar?

In 1998 or '99. After my experiences with the other magazines, I got the sense that VG had different motives and had the most-honest presentation. It was on newsprint when I first saw it. It didn't feel corporate; it felt like an underdog with a different perspective. That was appealing. I felt a natural connection.

You experienced one of your personal and career highlights in 2012, when you connected with Burt Bacharach.

Yeah, one of my good friends, jazz guitarist Henry Johnson, encouraged me to start playing live again, so I started playing jazz in local places with a network of players. One night, I sat in with pianist and arranger Larry White, who later suggested that Burt Bacharach call me for a gig. Burt was assembling a band to do new music and working with a lyricist. It was thrill to get a call from him.

Where and when did you play?

We did shows twice a day at the Old Globe Theater in Balboa Park from November of 2012 through January '13. It was exciting. I got to sit with the arrangers and work on guitar parts. Burt was there and involved during rehearsals, playing piano; afterward, he and I worked on parts together, which was one of the high points of my life because he was an idol. As a kid, I knew all of his hit songs.

How many pieces were in the band?

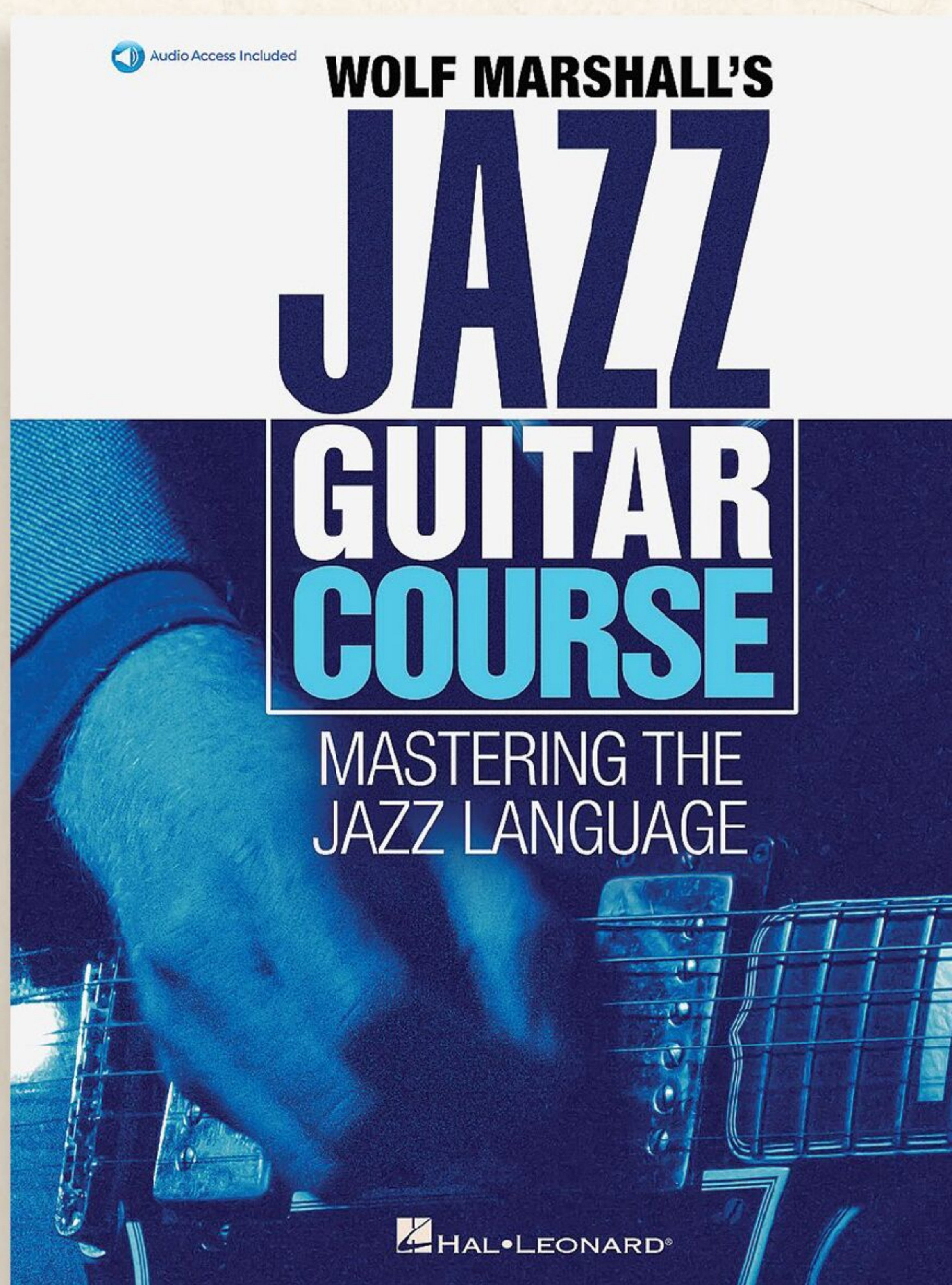
He had a full rhythm section – bass, guitar, drums, piano, synthesizer, horns, vocalists. It was like a Broadway show, and the band was below the stage, so I never actually saw it (laughs).

Which guitar and amp did you use?

I'd recently found a 2000 Surf Green Jeff Beck Strat. I'd always wanted one. I had a '92 in purple – that was my #1 Strat, so when I saw the green one at Lark Street Music, I jumped at it. For mellow things that needed a contemporary jazz humbucker sound, I used a Sadowsky semi-hollow, like a small single-cut 335. Burt also wanted acoustic guitar – steel- and nylon-string – so I asked Taylor to endorse me for the show, and they gave me two.

What did you run the Strat and Sadowsky through?

My Cyber Twin SE, which went direct in stereo to the house console.



Marshall's new *Jazz Guitar Course* includes testimonials by Kenny Burrell and Pat Martino.

Over the last 20 years, what has influenced your guitar choices?

Most have been jazz guitars – the '64 L-5 I play a lot, and I have a '63 for a spare. I also have a 1960 dot-neck 335 with the transitional long pickguard.

What's the story behind how you got the first L-5?

That starts when I built a custom Strat while doing a Star Licks Yngwie Malmsteen video. I was heavily into Yngwie's playing, so I had it made with a '76 neck that I'd rescued. One of my students loved the way that guitar looked – white, H/S/S pickups, scalloped fretboard, flame-maple neck. It was before there was an official Yngwie model. Anyway, after the video, I never played it much, and my student loved playing it when he'd visit. He'd say, "I really like that guitar," and I really liked his L-5 (laughs), which he wasn't playing. So we made a mutually beneficial trade.

Some of your other guitars have interesting histories.

Yes, and while nothing tops the Black Guitar, which was Howard Roberts' main instrument in the '60s, I also have the '66 Super 400 that belonged to Wayne Carson, a singer/songwriter who wrote "The Letter" and the Elvis song "You Were Always on My Mind." Shortly after getting that, in 2017 or

'18 I found a '69 Super 400, the first year with the restored Venetian cutaway.

Was that influenced by your appreciation for Kenny Burrell?

Yeah, Kenny was one of my favorites from the early days. After we performed together in 2006, he hired me to teach with him in the music department at UCLA. That's a career highlight.

What did you teach?

Jazz Guitar Improvisation and repertoire, intermediate and advanced. I taught my students on one long day, because from 2013 to '18 I had demanding weekly jazz gigs in San Diego. I did Wednesday solo, Saturday and Friday with my trio, and then eventually solo on other days at the Aviara Park Hyatt resort. For five years I was their in-house guy for events that needed jazz. I also played every Thursday night at the Twenty20 club at the Sheraton. It was a very busy time.

Which guitars did you use for those gigs?

My Super 400 on the solo gigs and my L-5 with the trio. The gigging was great for learning how to get the optimal sounds from them; the jazz-archtop sound is basically an amplified acoustic

guitar that requires making allowances with your guitar Volume, amp settings, and fingering techniques.

What were your amps of choice?

For my trio, I used a Twin Reverb with the B-3, and for smaller places, a Fender Jazzmaster Ultralight head with two 1x12 cabs. I used a Fishman Performer or SA PA with the Platinum Pro EQ/preamp for solo gigs. For jazz-rock fusion, I was using two very nice PRS amps that Paul Smith graciously made for me after I helped him perfect his first build with Doug Sewell in 2009. They're now invaluable studio rigs that provide something very different from my customary Marshall, Soldano, and Boogie voices.

How long did you keep the teaching gig?

For 16 years, until I got too busy to commute. I needed to focus and finish *Jazz Guitar Course*. When everyone was hunkered down during the pandemic, I wrote every day to finish the book and record the tracks. I also created and developed video for my TrueFire projects. That's in the works with my upcoming TrueFire channel.

In August of '18, you played one of John Pisano's "Guitar Night" gigs at Viva Cantina in Burbank.

I did, and that was very meaningful. I'd always dreamt of playing "Fleur D'Ennui" with John, and he let me "be" Joe for an evening.

Which amps are you playing most now?

In the studio, my '66 Super Reverb, '61

Bandmaster, and a reissue blackface Twin Reverb. I also have a Benson HR from the mid '60s.

My newest acquisition is a Schertler Charlie, which is dedicated jazz-guitar amp. I also have a couple of Henriksens; they're workhorse jazz amps, very consistent and reliable. On gigs, I also still use my Twin and Jazz Master.

Which guitars have you recently favored for regular use?

The vintage L-5s and Super 400s, a '60 335, and a Riversong custom-made to my specs based on my L-5. There's also a '72 Tele reissue I used for a British documentary on Keith Richards that was part of a series called *Under Review*.

Your collection has its share of signature models.

Yes, I've got a Heritage Kenny Burrell Super KB, a Gibson Pat Martino Custom, B.B. King Lucille, John Lennon J-160E, two Jeff Beck Strats, a Hendrix '68 Voodoo Strat, Stevie Ray Strat, a Fender Robben Ford, Sadowsky Jimmy Bruno, two John Jorgensen Gypsy-jazz guitars, an Eric Clapton 000-28EC, and an Eddie Van Halen Music Man.

What draws you to them?

In duplicating the work of many guitarists, you have to have something close to their rig.

It also stirs my passion for specific voices. It goes back to my studio days, when I had to copy unique sounds.

Jazz Guitar Course has just been released. What is its premise?

Every genre has a language, and the course is simply the *language* of jazz spoken on guitar. It covers the essentials – chords, chord-melody, typical scale sounds of jazz, characteristic melodies and patterns, and improvisation in context over standard tunes using transcriptions, examples, and demos presented in a linguistic way, to foster hearing, intuition, assimilation, and innovation.

It also includes wisdom I gleaned from Martino, Burrell, Van Eps, Pass, Roberts, and Smith. That knowledge shouldn't end with me; it *must* be part of jazz lore.

How would you describe it as a lesson series?

It's very flexible and user-

friendly. It can be linear, played chronologically, or modular, where a player can delve into a specific subject. If you want to learn about blues in jazz, go to chapter three and find essential blues chords and progressions. There's also a chapter on blues melody, demonstrating classic licks and how those melodies are used in improvising against chord changes.

Those sections address many of the questions my students coming from rock and Chicago blues have asked as they get interested in jazz. Everything is explained in the manner those legendary players explained it to me. **VG**

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... GIBSON'S FABULOUS... FLORENTINES ARCHTOP ELITE

BY WOLF MARSHALL

The image of Elvis Presley on his 1968 NBC “comeback special” was, in a word, *badass*. Dressed in black leather and striking rock-and-roll poses, the King epitomized attitude while brandishing an eye-catching electric guitar.

Part of the show’s cachet was the slightly dangerous look of his Gibson Super

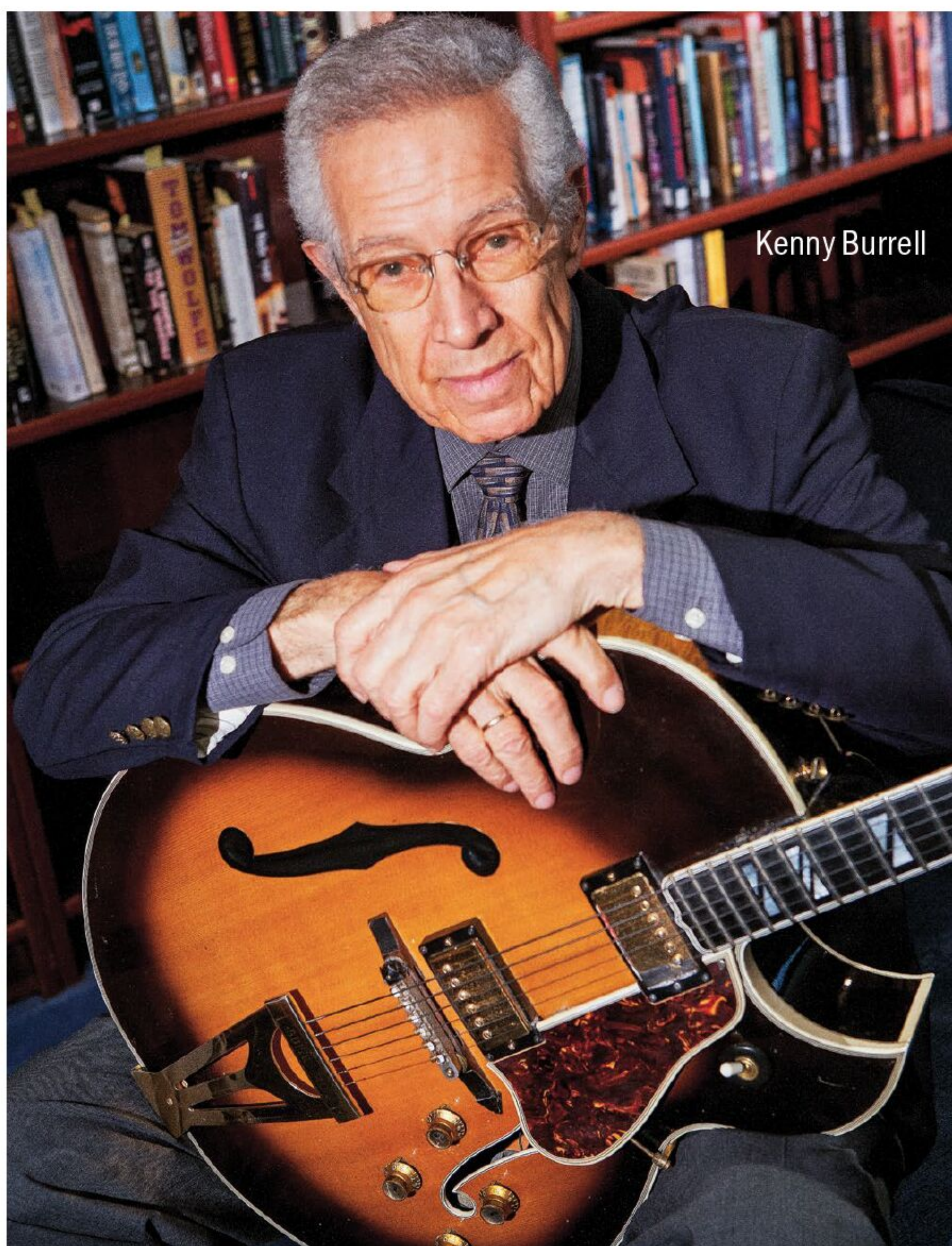
400CES. Borrowed from Scotty Moore, the instrument was never as iconic as when Elvis used it to create an important moment in the history of rock and roll.

With the Space Age looming amidst an

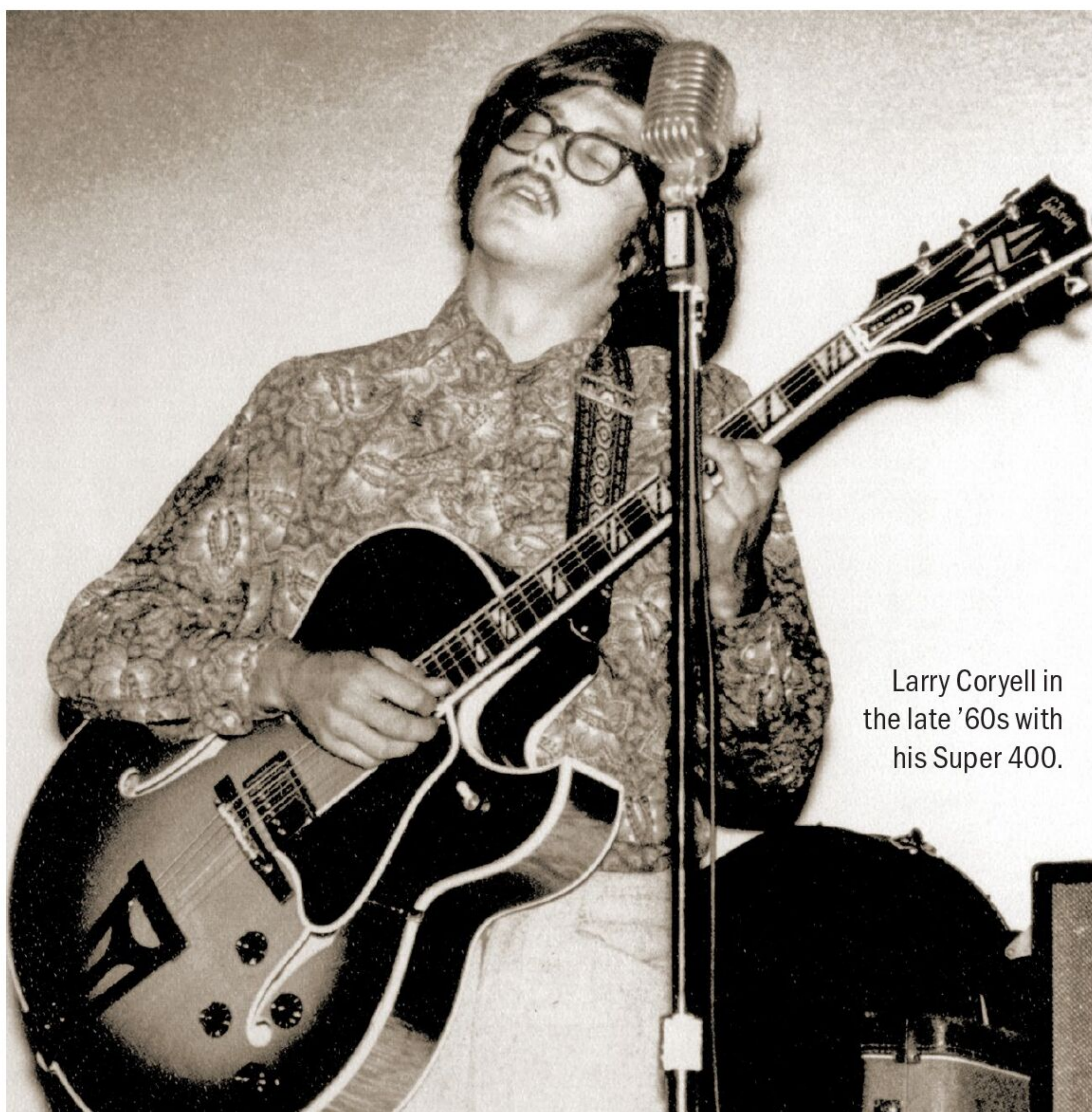
Wayne Carson’s ’66 Super 400 (left), a ’64 L-5 with ebony bridge with pearloid inlays, and a ’63 L-5 owned by Wolf Marshall.

overriding aspiration for modernism, in 1958, Gibson responded to the challenge proffered by Fender’s Telecaster and Stratocaster by making major changes to its product line, beginning with the Flying V and Explorer – their names alluding to space flight and exploration. Traditional Les Pauls were phased out in ’60, replaced

’63 Gibson L-5/’66 Super 400/’63 L-5: Robb Lawrence.



Kenny Burrell



Larry Coryell in the late '60s with his Super 400.

by lighter, slimmer SGs, the Melody Maker, and a little later the modernized EDS-1275, EMS-1235, and EBSF-1250 doublenecks.

The turning tide eventually affected Gibson's elite high-end Cutaway Electric Spanish (CES) jazz boxes. Gone was the rounded Venetian cutaway that bespoke traditionalism, superseded by a sharp, deeper cutaway with a daring, angular design named the Florentine.

The first production Gibson with a Florentine cutaway was the 1949 ES-175, followed by the ES-295, ES-125TC, ES-140T, ES-225, CF-100E, and L-4C. The 175 became the workhorse jazz box favored by Herb Ellis, Howard Roberts, Jim Hall, and Kenny Burrell. In '58, Burrell proposed the Florentine L-5 electric archtop, and Gibson obliged with a blond custom model for him with an ES-150 "Charlie Christian" pickup at the neck, PAF bridge pickup, and finger tailpiece. Burrell immediately used it with Benny Goodman's band at the Newport Jazz Festival, and in the studio on several Prestige dates.

Gibson's Ted McCarty dubbed Burrell "the main influencer" of the Florentine cutaway (even though his prototype was heavy due to an excessively reinforced neck joint to support the cutaway, and he reverted to his Venetian-cut L-5). The idea went dormant until 1960, when Florentine archtops became the standard and Gibson applied the design to its flagship L-5CES,

Super 400CES, and ES-5 Switchmaster, as well as the thinline Byrdland and ES-350T.

Florentine archtops dominated the '60s thanks to their sleek new look and design – a full-body electric with greater access to the upper register. Initially, they retained the dimensions, materials, and appointments of earlier models; the L-5 was a $3\frac{3}{8}$ " deep/17"-wide hollowbody with carved spruce top, solid maple sides, and solid two-piece figured-maple back. Gibson experimented with pressed-wood backs as early as '63, and by mid-decade was using laminated backs on Florentine guitars – the L-5, Super 400, and Byrdland typically received large one-piece laminated curly maple with more-pronounced arching. By '68, Florentines with solid two-piece backs were briefly reinstated and paved the way for Venetian-cutaway models returning in '69.

The Florentine design differed in construction. At the cutaway rim, a small, arched piece of maple was bent and attached to the treble bout, then joined to the maple rim; for a Venetian cutaway, it was done by bending a single rim. The juncture was bound at the pointed edge with a piece of plastic. Florentines also had a longer neck block, to accommodate the deeper cutaway and (like earlier electric archtops) used two parallel internal braces running a longer distance. Moreover, the pickguard was shortened, giving the appearance it

had moved. And finally, it was screwed directly into the top rather than fastened with a metal pin into a hole in the side of the neck. On the Super 400, the pickguard evolved from the '50s-style "marble" plastic with mottled overlay (as seen on Scotty Moore's) to celluloid tortoiseshell by '62. Another refinement was the smaller, simpler engraving on the tailpiece.

Concurrent with Gibson's modernization was the late-'61 advent of five-piece necks on high-end archtops. These consisted of three sections of figured-maple separated by two strips of mahogany, supplanting two maple pieces with a mahogany center strip. Gibson's "A" numbering system was replaced with a five-digit designation (six digits by '63) on the label and pressed into the back of the headstock. The necks on Florentines underwent other changes. Initially wider and flatter than late-'50s counterparts, after '62 they steadily became thinner and rounder (in cross-section) than the earliest Florentines. In '65, headstock pitch was changed from 17 to 14 degrees and necks were narrowed at the nut from $1\frac{11}{16}$ " to $1\frac{9}{16}$ ". This displeased many players but prevailed through '69. Some Florentines from this period, like Wayne Carson's '66 custom-order Super 400 (serial number 407757), had a slightly wider nut, closer to $1\frac{10}{16}$ ". Like earlier electric and acoustic versions, Florentines were offered in Sunburst and Natural (blond) finishes. However,

sunburst varied from a reddish golden-brown shading to a darker brown “tobacco burst” or a lighter-orange iced-tea.

As on '40s and '50s counterparts, the back of the headstock was painted black and transitioned into a sunburst or blond on the neck. On sunburst models, the paint covered the graceful black point.

Controls and electronics retained the familiar configuration (two pickups, two Volume knobs, two Tone knobs), however the new design was complemented by a rubber grommet on the pickup selector (to facilitate silent switching) and gold “reflector” knobs with numbers on the skirts and the words Tone and Volume on the fronts. These prevailed until '67, when black, serrated-edge “witch hat” knobs replaced them. The earliest models were fitted with PAFs until patent-number pickups replaced them around '63. Florentines from '65 or later have been found with one or two PAFs, including Tim Dowty's sunburst '65 L-5CES (SN 346382).

Are two Florentine cutaways better than one? The design was taken to extremes with Gibson's Barney Kessel Custom and

Regular ('61-'72) as well as the Trini Lopez Deluxe ('65-'70). To accentuate their modernity, they flaunted the sharp cuts with a flashy Cherry Sunburst finish. Kessel didn't embrace the modernized version bearing his name, and continued to perform on his modified ES-350P. Kessel models nonetheless appeared in the hands of rock guitarists Gene Cornish (Young Rascals) and Robby Krieger, blues legend T-Bone Walker, and, more recently, jazz guitarist Ed Cherry. The Lopez Deluxe, introduced in '65, expanded on double-Florentine modernism with diamond-shaped sound holes, two switches (pickup selector and standby) and a bound, asymmetric/reversed Firebird-like headstock. Despite being linked with the pop star, it apparently had little appeal and was discontinued in '69.

The Florentine cutaway also affected Gibson's custom orders. Several thin-body L-5CES examples with 25½" scale and dual pickups were made in the early '60s. Moreover, a half dozen thin-body L-5CT guitars (dubbed “Crest” but never listed in catalogs) were produced in '61 with Super 400 headstocks, fretboards

Marshall's '63 L-5 has a Tune-O-Matic bridge, five-piece neck, and two-piece back.

with split-block inlays, and two humbucking pickups. Also notable is an ultra-rare double-cutaway '67 Byrdland (SN 849728).

Meanwhile, acoustic archtops were marketed in a separate catalog as Fine Guitars, retaining the Venetian cut, traditional appointments, and conservative aura. Custom-order hybrid acoustics have surfaced, such as the '62 L-5C (SN 50043) with a Florentine cut and a floating Johnny Smith pickup.

In early '69, Florentines were phased out with Gibson's return to the Venetian style. They coexisted for a time, but after mid '69, most high-end electric archtops sported the wider 1⅞" nut, solid two-piece maple back, and gentle, non-threatening curve of the Venetian cutaway.

FLORENTINE PLAYERS

After playing a Venetian Super 400C, in '76, Kenny Burrell made the Florentine Super 400 his mainstay, favoring a sunburst '68 for years before acquiring the iconic '64. The latter has PAFs, laminated back, and was factory refinished in atypical teardrop-shaped black/yellow-sunburst. Pictured on *Special Requests*, it served as the archetype for his signature Heritage Super KB.

On June 25, 1962, Wes Montgomery (1923-1968) took the

stage at Berkeley's Tsubo nightclub with the sunburst L-5 seen on the back cover of *Full House*. In that land-



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1910 Gibson Style U Harp Guitar Black !
1940 Martin D-18 Tortoise Headstock
1941 Martin 0-15 Tortoise Headstock
1947 Martin 000-21 rare Tapered Braces !
1958 Martin 00-18 1 of the best ones !
1965 Martin D-21 1st Martin made in '65
1965 Martin D-28 Brazilian & Tortoise !
1972 B.C. Rich B-28-8 12-string "Brazilian"



1959 Gibson Les Paul Junior tons of tone !
1966 Gibson SG Custom fabulous "Polaris White"
1970 Gibson Les Paul Deluxe very original
1974 Gibson SG Custom a beat sweet rare axe !
1978 Gibson Les Paul Custom Silver'burst
2008 Gibson Les Paul SG '61 VOS Reissue
2008 Gibson LP Std. 50th "Murphy-aged"
2010 Gibson Les Paul R7 Blue Sparkle CS



1956 Fender Tweed Twin Amp Low Watt
1957 Fender Tweed Tremolux quite rare !
1959 Fender Tweed Vibrolux very desirable.
1962 Fender Princeton Brown Tolex its Minty
1965 Fender Super Reverb 4x10" Magic !
1969 Fender Twin Reverb factory JBL's !
1990's Trace Elliot's 50 available Call !
1979 Mesa Boogies 10 available Call !



1940 Gibson Super 400N 1-Off Spec. Order
1950 Stromberg G-3 Cutaway 1 of 6
1958 Kay Barney Kessel Pro "In The Wrapper"
1956 Gibson ES-140TN 3/4 Mint w/orig.case
1959 Gibson Prototype ES-125TCD 1st one!
1961 Gibson ES-175D exceptional example
1968 Gibson L-7CES 1-off never produced
1968 Guild M-75 Bluesbird fact. Black



1960 Fender Precision Bass 1 owner Slab Neck
1964 Fender Jazz Bass Factory "Fiesta Red"
1966 Fender Precision Bass Perfect "Ice Blue"
1969/71 Fender Jazz Bass factory Black
1964 Gibson Thunderbird II Bass "Polaris White"
1978 Music Man Stingray Bass String Thru
1980 Music Man Stingray Bass Fretless
1991 T.Zemaitis Metal Top Bass the real deal

mark live session, his signature tone was delivered through a white-Tolex Fender Bandmaster, the L-5 and his incredible thumb technique defining his sound of the early '60s. His Florentine was also heard on *Fusion!*, *Boss Guitar*, *Guitar on the Go*, and *Portrait of Wes*, and graced the covers of *Movin' Wes*, *Easy Groove*, and *Verve Silver Collection* compilations. George Benson confirmed it was also played on "Windy" and "Going Out of My Head" (*Just Jazz Guitar*, November 2000). Given to Jerry Bird and subsequently owned for years by Benson, the legendary guitar now resides in Pat Metheny's collection.

Benson was just 21 when he debuted as leader, flaunting a sunburst Florentine Super 400 on *The New Boss Guitar of George Benson* in '64. The guitar was featured again on his early Columbia recordings, *It's Uptown* and *The George Benson Cookbook*, and is likely heard on Miles Davis' 1968 post-bop track "Paraphernalia," from *Miles in the Sky*. In later years, he became the ultimate crossover jazz artist with a string of groundbreaking jazz albums, instrumental and vocal pop hits, Grammy-winning R&B recordings, and tributes to the Beatles and Nat King Cole.

Virtuoso of modern bop, Pat Martino (1944-2021) relied on a sunburst Florentine L-5 in the late '60s. Inspired by Wes, he replaced his Gibson Johnny Smith after 1967's *El Hombre* to alleviate feedback problems. He

played the L-5 on *Strings!*, *East, Baiyina* (pictured on the cover), *Young Guns*, and a succession of side dates with Sonny Stitt, Don Patterson, Eric Kloss, Jack McDuff, Charles McPherson, and Groove Holmes. He paired the guitar with a Twin-Reverb to achieve his thick, dynamic tone.

Larry Coryell (1943-2017), the "godfather of fusion," ignited the modern-jazz world of the late '60s and early '70s with his sunburst '67 Super 400. Beginning with his tenure in Gary Burton's band, he became the face of post-bop guitar, mixing jazz, rock, blues, pop, country, world music, and avant-garde sounds.

He played a variety of instruments in his lengthy career, but his favorite remained the Florentine Super 400 pictured on *Barefoot Boy* and *Offering*, usually through an old Twin.

Grant Geissman favored

Grant Geissman with an L-5 in 1970.



an L-5 with Chuck Mangione on the 1978 international hit "Feels So Good." A hardcore Beatles fan, he gravitated to jazz at 15 and graduated from an Epiphone Casino to a '68 L-5 purchased at Moyer Brothers Music in his native San Jose. With Mangione, he explored a spectrum

Wayne Carson's '66 Super 400; Robb Lawrence.

Wayne Carson's '66 Super 400 is from late in the Florentine run, with figured laminate-maple back and five-piece neck.





Jerry Miller



Ted Nugent in the '70s.

Ted Nugent: Carl Lender/Wikimedia Commons.

of archtop tones from warm, clean jazz to contemporary timbres doctored with phaser, wah, chorus, and volume-pedal effects. Onstage, he plugged into a MusicMan HD-212, but the solos on the Mangione song were played direct to the board and heavily EQ'd, setting a precedent for the

“smooth jazz” sound. Geissman owns three Florentine L-5s – the '68, a blond '68, and a '64 sunburst.

Other notable Florentine users include free-jazzer James “Blood” Ulmer (blond Byrdland), Jack Wilkins (1944-2023, blond L-5), Ted Dunbar (1937-'98, sunburst L-5) and Steve Khan (sunburst Super 400). But Florentine electrics were not just for jazz pickers.

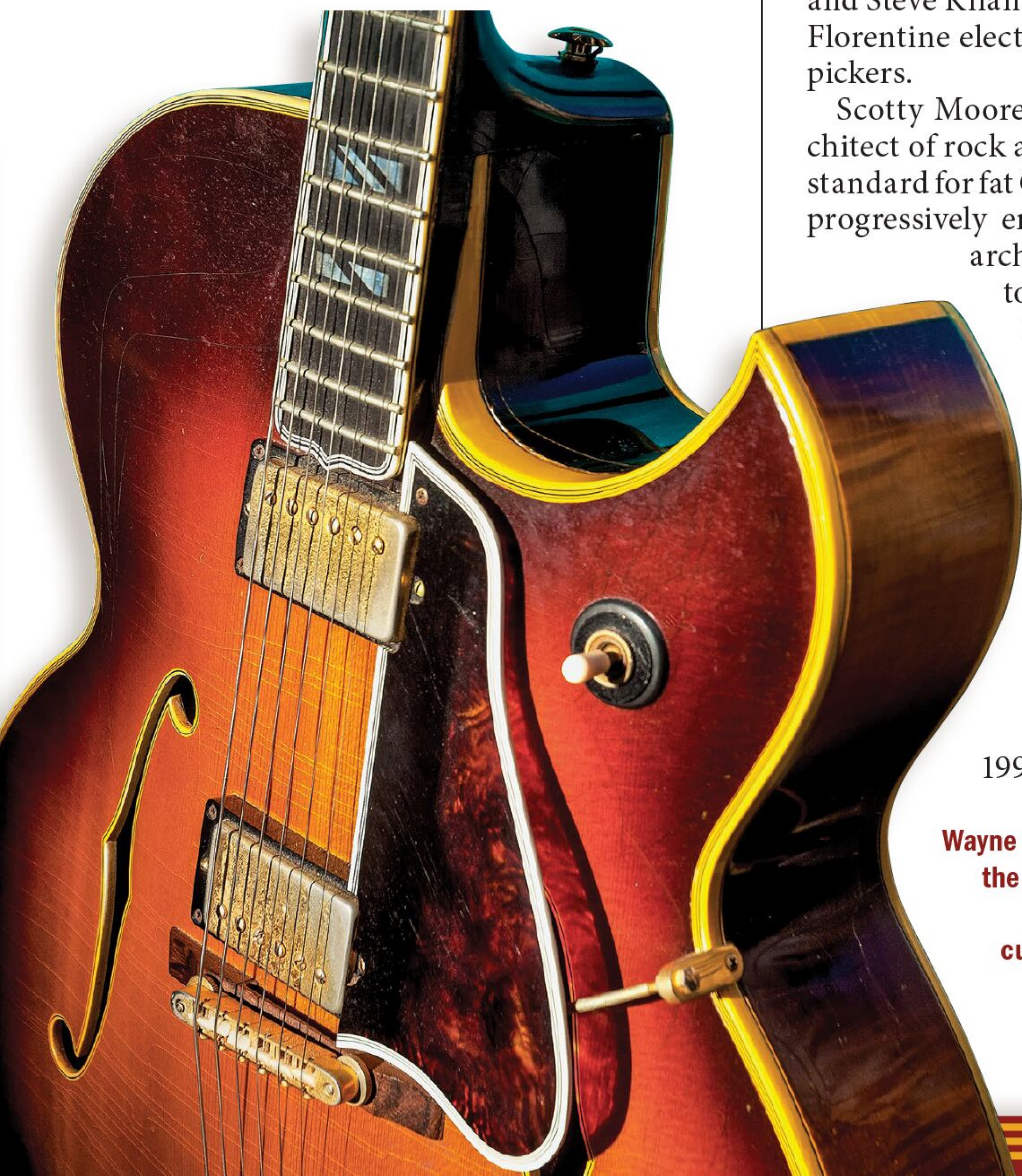
Scotty Moore (1931-2016), primary architect of rock and roll with Elvis, set the standard for fat Gibson tones in rock while progressively embracing a succession of archtops from a gold ES-295 to P-90-equipped L-5 and Super 400 before settling on a '63 Super 400. While the King was filming a cavalcade of teen movies, Scotty moved on to the sunburst Super 400 seen on NBC's “Singer Presents... Elvis,” a.k.a. “the '68 comeback special,” upping rock's ante yet another notch.

Robert White (1936-1994), whose influences in-

clude Wes Montgomery, was a key member of Motown's hitmaking Funk Brothers, and brought his Florentine L-5 into R&B circles. His chord work was the glue in their three-prong guitar attack, binding Joe Messina's Tele backbeat chinks and Eddie Willis' bluesy fills. White's rhythm-guitar magic graced Marvin Gaye's “What's Going On,” Stevie Wonder's “My Cherie Amour,” and The Supremes' “You Keep Me Hangin' On.” He was often tagged for lines that required his distinctive tone and is best remembered for playing the hook on The Temptations' 1964 #1 pop/R&B hit, “My Girl.”

Jerry Miller, lead guitarist for Moby Grape, was one of the greatest players to emerge from the '60s San Francisco scene, distinguished from contemporaries with his blues/jazz/country/rock pedigree and a '62 sunburst L-5 nicknamed “Beulah.” He plugged into a tweed 4x10 Bassman for overdriven blues-rock aggression on “Hey Grandma,” “Indifference,” “Omaha,” and “Miller's Blues” as well as gentle melodic phrases in “Someday,” “Sitting by the Window” and “8:05” on *Moby Grape*, *Grape Jam*, and *Moby Grape* '69. While many key players moved on to other guitars, Beulah remains Miller's primary instrument.

In the early '70s, fusioner Robben Ford expounded on the possibilities of an archtop jazz box when he appeared with bluesman Jimmy Witherspoon. An admirer of Wes and Burrell, Ford combined jazz, blues, and rock with inimitable flair, and stole the show at the 1973 Guitar Explosion

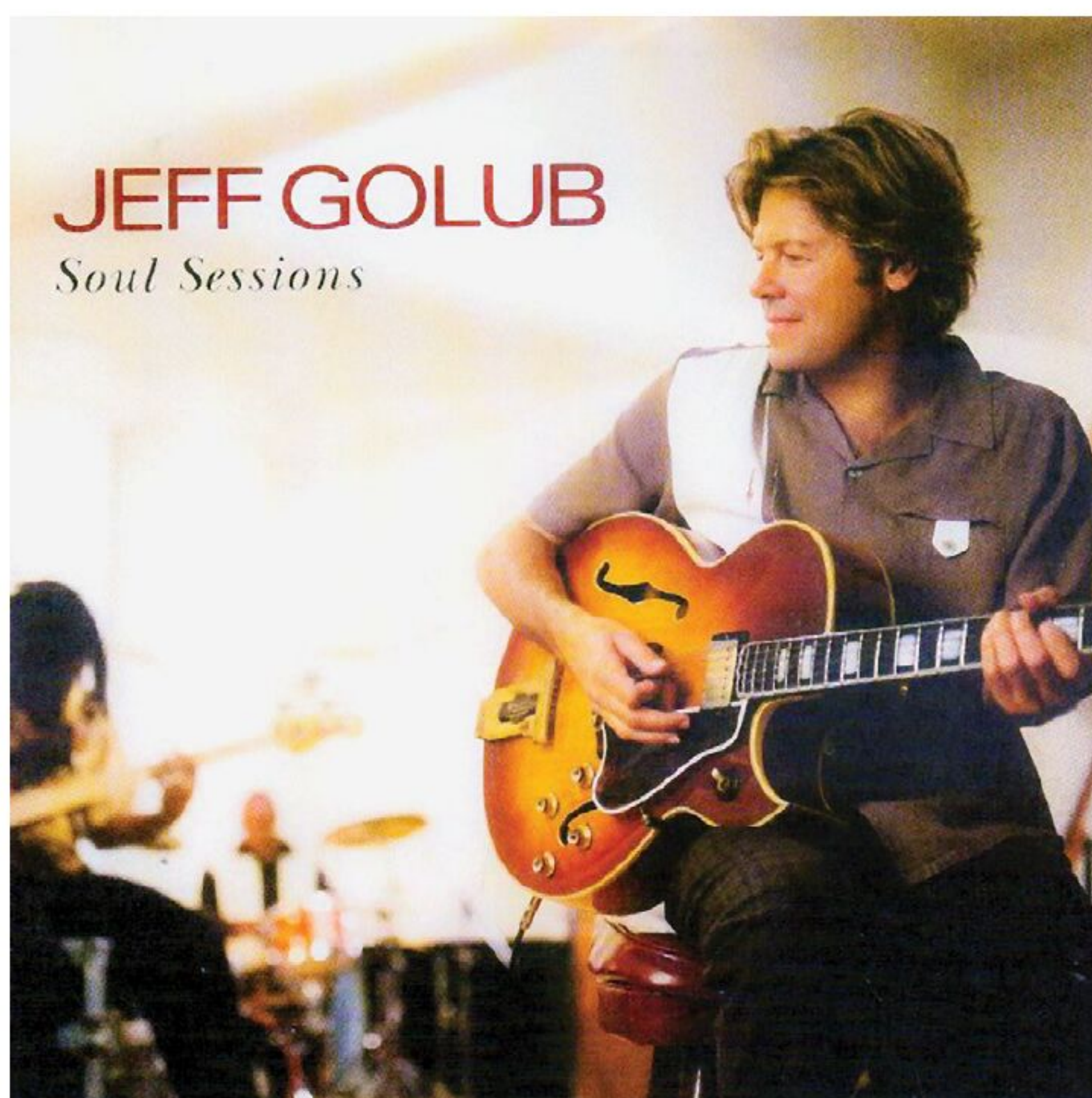


Wayne Carson's Super 400 illustrates the plastic that binds the juncture at the pointed edge of the cutaway. Also note its shortened pickguard, made of celluloid to look like tortoiseshell.

festival in the Hollywood Bowl, billed alongside T-Bone Walker, Shuggie Otis, Joe Pass, Burrell, Jim Hall, and others. His axe of choice was a '67 sunburst Super 400 mated to a blackface 4x10 Super Reverb.

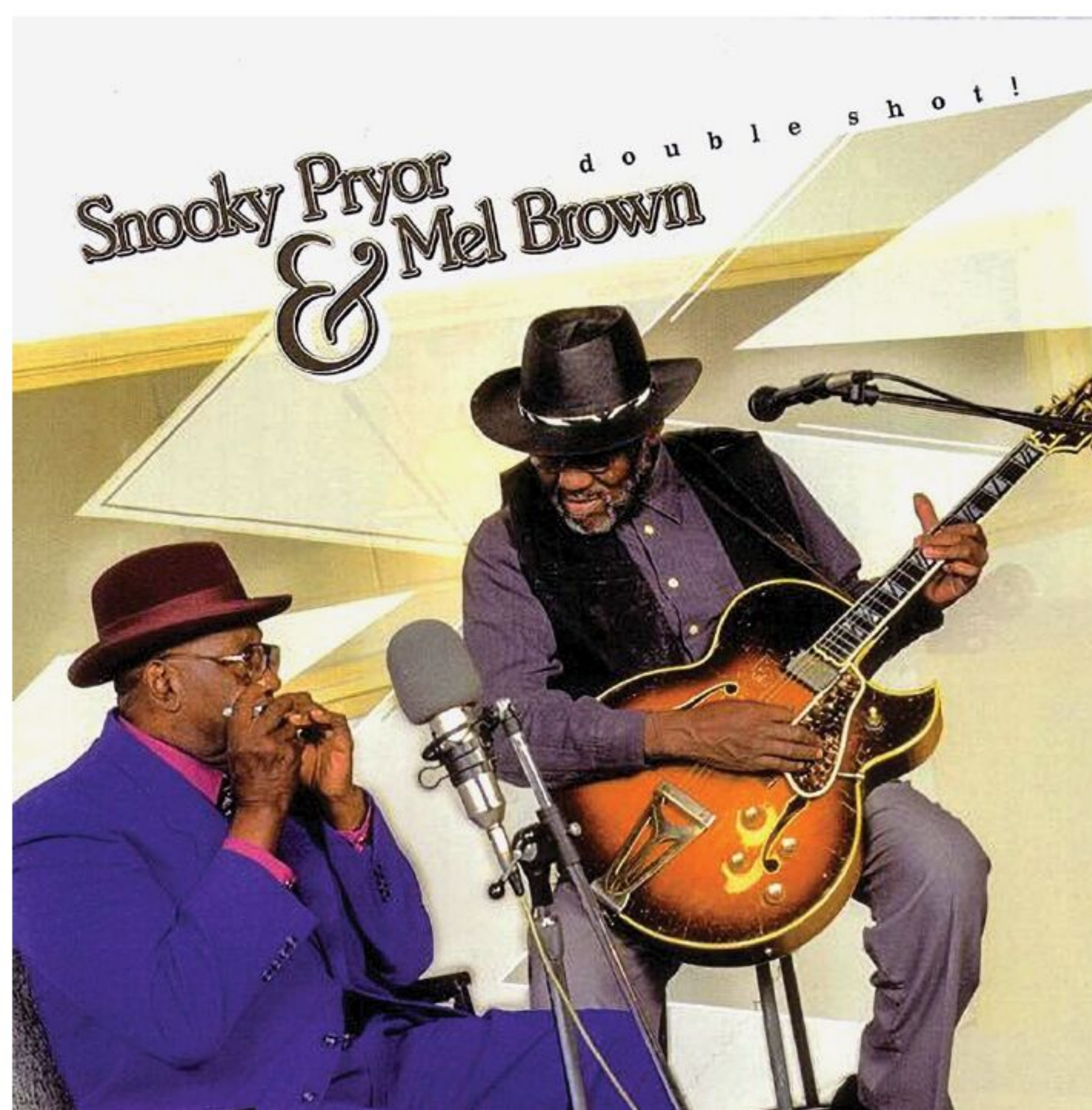
Mel Brown (1939-2009) was a respected blues artist whose sideman credentials read like a who's-

who in blues: T-Bone Walker, B.B. King, Etta James, Sonny Boy Williamson, Bobby Bland, Albert Collins, James Cotton, Lightnin' Hopkins, John Lee Hooker, Jimmy McGriff, Earl Hooker, Charles Brown, Clifford Coulter, Doug Sahm, and others. His blues was conveyed on a Florentine Super 400, pictured on *Double Shot!* with Snooky Pryor.



JEFF GOLUB
Soul Sessions

Ted Nugent personified '70s hard-rock flamboyance. A fan of Lonnie Mack, Beck, Hendrix, and Cream-era Clapton, the Motor City Madman gravitated to Florentine Byrdlands inspired by Jim McCarty's sound and acquired his first in '64. By the mid '70s, he had more than 20, including a rare black version. Nugent used controlled feedback from the hollow body and



Snooky Pryor & Mel Brown
double shot!

Berklee grad inspired by Clapton, Beck, and Hendrix as well as Wes, he planted feet on both sides of pop-rock and jazz/R&B. In '94, he formed Avenue Blue, and as solo artist was a leading "smooth jazz" player. His '64 L-5 graced the covers of *Nightlife*, *Dangerous Curves*, and *Soul Session*, bearing testimony to the continuing relevance of the Florentine. **VG**

employed vibrato by pushing down on the tailpiece while blasting through stacks of Fender Super Twins.

Jeff Golub (1955-2015) came to prominence with rocker Billy Squier in '82 and became a sought-after session player with Rod Stewart, Tina Turner, Peter Wolf, and many others. A

A photograph of a Swart Stereo Master 20 amplifier and a light blue electric guitar. The amplifier is black with a silver grille and has the Swart logo on it. The guitar is light blue with a black pickguard and has the Swart logo on the headstock. The website swartamps.com is visible at the bottom.

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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.lcmsm.com. March 10, May 12, 2024.

2024

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.

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.

Mid Atlantic Guitar Show & Swap Meet, March 22-23, Rehoboth Beach Convention Center, 229

Rehoboth Ave. Rehoboth Beach, DE 19968. Presented by Frantic Music Project a 501c3 charitable organization. More info: 302-402-3055, contact@franticmusic.org, www.midatlanticguitarshow.com (See Advertisement on page 62.)

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. (See Advertisement on page 63.)

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

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. (See Advertisement on page 61.)

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 3-5, 2024 at the Dallas Market Hall, 2200 N Stemmons Fwy, Dallas, TX. For more info visit www.guitarshow.com. (See Advertisement on page 64.)

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

Sarasota Guitar and Amp Show, May 24-26, 12pm - 5pm (dealer day) May 24, 9am - 6pm May 25-26 at the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium, 801 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34236. Contact: Kevin Wood at 941-993-3098 or visit Sarasotaguitarshow.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@stringwest.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 8, 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

Illinois Guitar & Gear Expo, Sunday September 22, 2024 at the Kankakee County Fairgrounds 213W 4000S Rd. Kankakee, IL 60901, 10am - 3pm For more info, visit: <https://www.illinoisguitarexpo.com/>

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 Guitarlinton, October 19-20 at the Mesquite Convention Center, 1700 **continued on page 65...**

**Sunday April 7th.
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Upcoming Events

...continued from page 61.

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

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 VanSteele at 517-410-6409 or visit www.musicinstrumentswap.com

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 VanSteele at 517-410-6409 or visit www.musicinstrumentswap.com

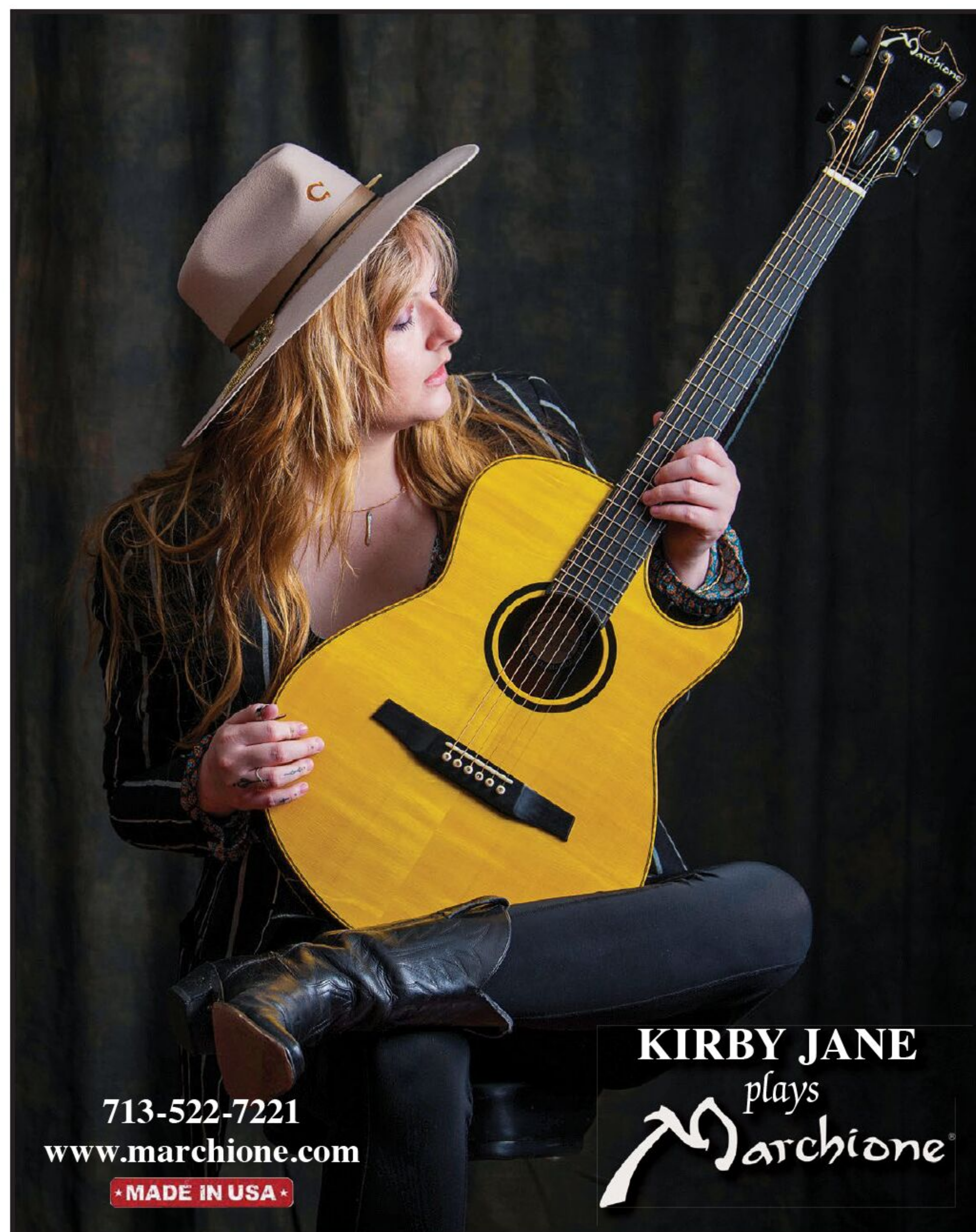
Midwest Music Gear Swap presents its Fall Swap meet, Sunday November 17 at Emidio's Event Center, 48 E Bath Rd, Cuyahoga Falls, OH from 10am to 4pm. Contact Corey at midwestmusicgearswap@yahoo.com or 330-753-5050

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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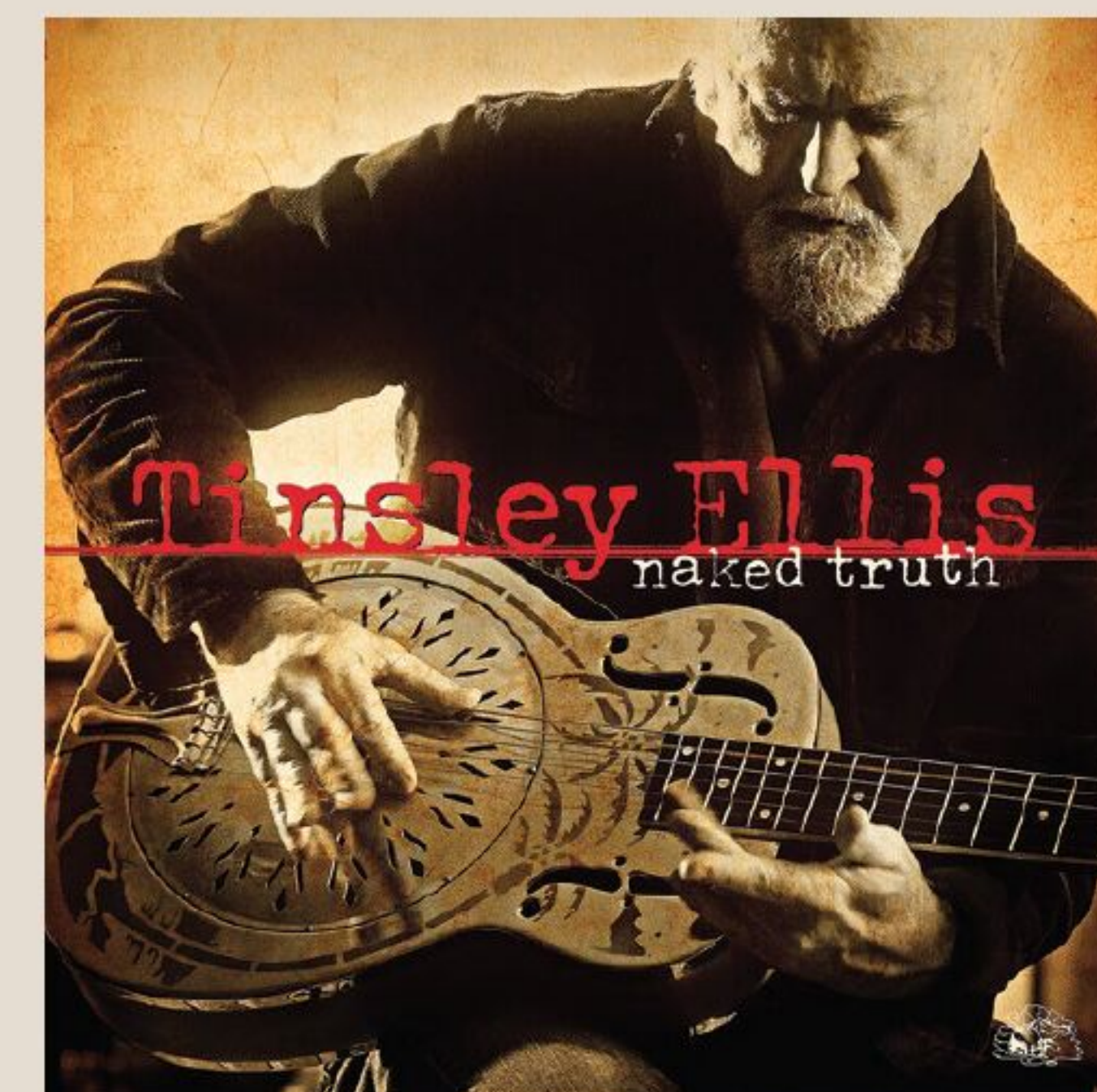
Tinsley Ellis

NEW DIMENSION

It's hard to believe that Tinsley Ellis, one of contemporary blues' most-prominent artists since the late '80s, is only now releasing an acoustic album – especially considering that he has long incorporated acoustic sets in his live shows. And, less often being more, the Georgia native keeps it simple – two guitars, played entirely live, no overdubs.

Five of the tunes, including the opening “Devil in the Room” (which pays homage to the Hill Country blues) finds Ellis coaxing a slide across the strings of a '37 National Style O. He also employs the resonator on a gritty reading of Son House’s “Death Letter Blues” and shifts gears on a faithful cover of the Leo Kottke instrumental “A Soldier’s Grave on the Prairie.”

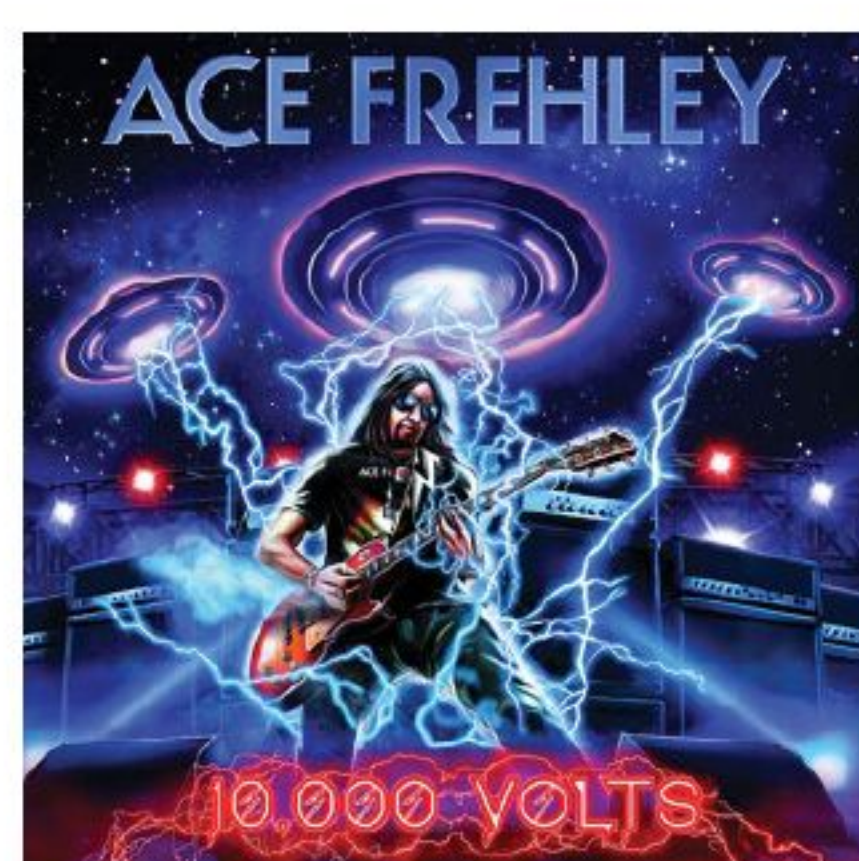
A '69 Martin D-35 (with Brazilian rosewood) is a six-string co-headliner. Ellis uses it on fingerpicking numbers like the Skip



Tinsley Ellis
Naked Truth

James-inspired “Windowpane,” humorous “Grown Ass Man,” and textured instrumentals like “Silver Mountain,” the driving, ringing “Alcove Breakdown,” and the gentle closer, “Easter Song.”

The album presents the new dimension of a celebrated electric bluesman, and was a long time coming. It is undeniably worth the wait. – **Sean McDevitt**



Ace Frehley
10,000 Volts

Kiss' original guitarist didn't appear at the band's final concert, crushing the rock-and-roll dreams of diehard fans. But, his latest album will have them once again pumping their fists.

After releasing two *Origins* cover albums in 2016 and '20, here, Frehley returns to originals, co-writing most songs with Trixter guitarist Steve Brown, who also plays on every track. Other guests include Trixter bassist P.J. Farley and drummer Anton Fig, the Spaceman's frequent collaborator going back to 1978's platinum *Ace Frehley*.

The title track brings all the Frehley trademarks – no-nonsense riffs, punchy solos, and catchy choruses. The distorted-then-thumping chords that open “Cosmic Heart” lead to droning vocals, and the solo starts spacey before it gets to ripping. “Cherry Medicine” is jubilant glam rock with bluesy

touches, while “Back Into My Arms Again” is the biggest surprise with its '60s/'70s power-pop splash built on jangly acoustic guitar with distorted electric underneath.

Two songs best representing Frehley's soloing style (and trademark finger vibrato) are “Fightin' for Life” and “Up in the Sky.” The outstanding, carefully arranged instrumental “Stratosphere” assembles clean and distorted electric runs and vital acoustic parts. This is the charge Ace's fans have eagerly awaited.

– **Bret Adams**



Mr. Sun
Plays Duke
Ellington's
Nutcracker
Suite

In 1960, Duke Ellington's orchestra recorded his reimagining of Tchaikovsky's “Nutcracker Suite.” He

and arranger Billy Strayhorn took ample liberties with the ballet's familiar movements, like “Dance Of The Sugar-Plum Fairies,” even giving them new titles, like “Sugar Rum Cherry.” The result swung like mad.

To reinterpret the Ellington version for four strings is ambitious, to say the least, but Mr. Sun proves up to the task. Violinist Darol Anger (a founding member of the David Grisman Quintet and Turtle Island String Quartet), mandolinist Joe K. Walsh, bassist Aidan O'Donnell, and acoustic guitarist Grant Gordy (alumnus of a later DGQ edition) wed classical and bluegrass to Ellington's jazz, and take ownership. Each is a first-rate improviser, but some parts by Ellington soloists, like saxophonist Johnny Hodges, were transcribed. For Lawrence Brown's trombone in “(Don't) Walk On The Flowers,” Dobroist Jerry Douglas was enlisted.

Tchaikovsky's “March” is now a “Pea Shooter Parade” blowing session. The members are both free as soloists and tight as a unit, with Gordy and Anger sometimes

CHECK THIS ACTION



Rev. Louis Overstreet

MONUMENTAL TREASURES

By Dan Forte

One of my favorite gospel albums has the mouthful title *An Evening With Rev. Louis Overstreet, His Guitar, His Four Sons, and The Congregation of St. Luke Powerhouse Church of God In Christ*. Released in 1963, it's a live (and most lively) recording of one night's church service in Phoenix. Its cover shows a robed, Stratocaster-toting Rev. Overstreet and his adolescent sons set up on a sidewalk, the kids clapping, and playing tambourine and washboard. How could I possibly resist checking out what was in the grooves?

The man who recorded the event, took the cover photograph, and released it on

his Arhoolie Records label was the late **Chris Strachwitz**. The back cover of the just-published book, *Down Home Music: The Stories and Photographs of Chris Strachwitz*, has testimonials from Bonnie Raitt, Billy Gibbons, Ry Cooder, and Steve Miller. But it's Taj Mahal who crystalizes Strachwitz's importance most eloquently: "Without the aid of Chris' humanity, foresight, dedication, and love in recording these artists on wax, films, and photographs, this whole genre might have suffered and sustained massive dis-inclusion, lost forever, slipping away without a trace of existing." He also refers to the tome's contents as "monumental treasures."

I would only clarify that Arhoolie encompasses genres, plural. There's blues, Cajun, zydeco, conjunto, mariachi, Dixieland, bluegrass, boogie-woogie, folk, modern jazz, sacred steel, hillbilly, ragtime, Western swing, polka, klezmer, and musics from Mexico, Laos, Poland, Cuba, the Balkans, and more – dictated solely by Strachwitz's eclectic tastes. There's even an album of *Greek-Oriental Rebetica Songs & Dances*.

Esoteric? In some cases, for sure. As music journalist Joel Selvin told me, "One can only imagine what the sales figures are like for *Austrian Folk Music, Vol. 2*. I well remember when 3,000 copies of his album (*Takin' My Time*, 1971) made Charlie Musselwhite the label's best-selling artist – by a wide margin."

But numbers weren't the objective of his one-man operation. Not to sound overly academic, but the goal was preservation. In the process,

Strachwitz changed the lives of many artists. Lightnin' Hopkins and Clifton Chenier had recorded previously, but Mance Lipscomb, a 65-year-old sharecropper virtually unknown outside Navasota, Texas, had never recorded prior to the label's first release, *Texas Songster*. Along with several more albums, it gave him a career and worldwide acclaim.

In '74, Musselwhite invited me to a session for his Arhoolie follow-up, *Goin' Back Down South*, for which Chris entrusted me with writing my first liner notes. In the film *This Ain't No Mouse Music* (the German-

born Strachwitz's term for inconsequential, commercial pop), the self-described song catcher said, "My stuff isn't produced; I just catch it as it is." The nonintrusive M.O. that I witnessed was to let musicians be themselves and get a good performance.

Photographing musicians, Strachwitz's attitude was much the same as recording them. The 182 pages of black-and-white photographs capture the musicians in their environment: at home, with friends and family, playing a juke joint or backyard party. In terms of guitar, it's a treasure trove – with John Jackson, Robert Pete Williams, Ann Savoy, Frankie Lee Sims, Lil' Son Jackson, Johnny Young, Lowell Fulson, Big Joe Williams, Houston Stackhouse, Earl Hooker, Del McCoury, Lydia Mendoza playing bajo sexto, Black Ace playing his steel-bodied National on his lap, and B.B. King jamming with cousin Bukka White.

The famous outdoor picture of Sonny Boy Williamson and his band was taken in 1965, after the harmonica icon had done his King Biscuit radio show in Helena, Arkansas. One of the most-striking photos is of Lipscomb, shot from behind, in front of thousands of fans at the Greek Theater in Berkeley in '63.

In '95, the nonprofit Arhoolie Foundation was launched to preserve the Strachwitz Frontera Collection, the largest-known archive of historic Mexican and Mexican-American recorded music. In 2016, the Smithsonian Institution acquired Arhoolie's catalog for its Folkways label.

Accompanying Strachwitz's first-person captions are 50 pages of illuminating text by co-author Selvin, who told me, "Chris did more than 400 albums on the Arhoolie label. There were new recordings during the CD era and tons of reissues, with BeauSoleil probably the biggest seller. But he made Smithsonian agree to always keep everything in print, like he did." The indefatigable Strachwitz also championed and advocated for his artists. So when the Rolling Stones' *Sticky Fingers* included a cover of "You Gotta Move," he wrote to them to ensure that royalties were paid to Mississippi Fred McDowell, whose version he'd recorded six years prior. "I was able to give Fred the biggest check he'd ever seen in his life," Strachwitz later said.

On May 5, 2023, Strachwitz passed away at age 91, leaving a legacy precious few have approached in the record business.

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Mustangs of the West: Aubrey Richmond (left), Sherry Rayn Barnett, Suzanna Spring, and Holly Montgomery, Suzanne Morissette.

recalling Reinhardt and Grappelli. “Sugar Rum? Spare Me” shows off Gordy’s spontaneity matched with technique, melodic even at his most angular. It’s simultaneously serious and playful – as was Duke. – **Dan Forte**

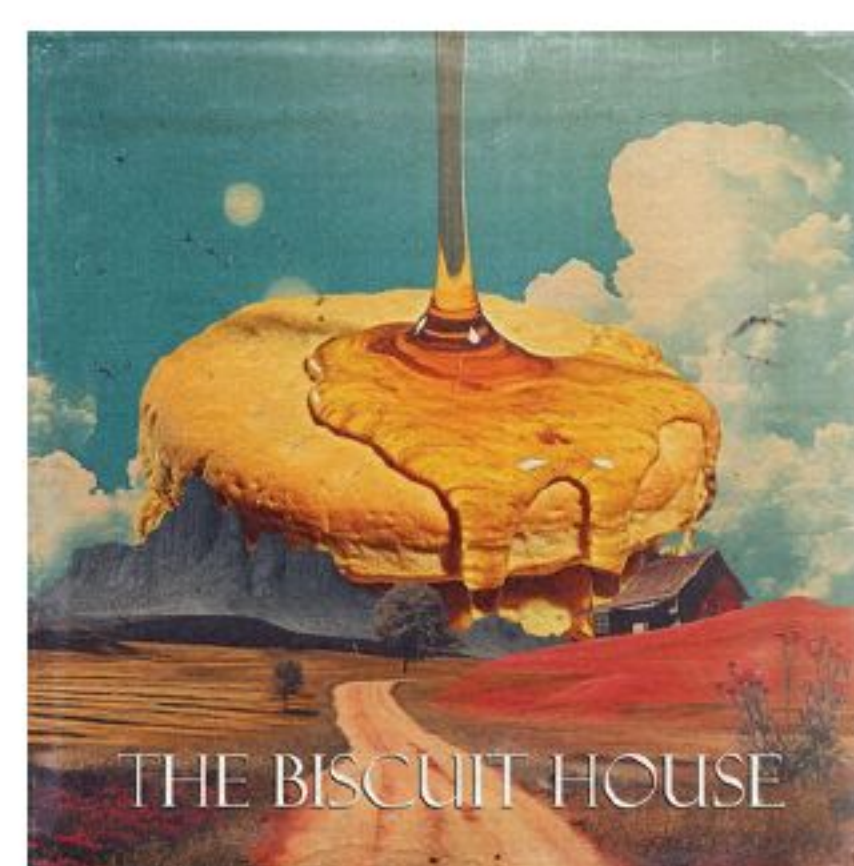


Bob Dylan The Complete Budokan 1978

The original double-live album culled from Bob Dylan’s 1978 Tokyo shows was a Japan-only release until Dylan-mania demanded a global offering the next year; reviews were lukewarm. After the fiercely inspired *Rolling Thunder Revue*, the debut of *Street-Legal* and subsequent world tour were sculpted and polished. This four-CD or eight-LP collection of all 58 tunes from two performances (or a 16-song, two LP highlight offering) seeks to right all that.

The shows featured a relatively safe greatest-hits setlist largely copied from the ’74 tour with The Band, but sadly sans the fire of those shows or the Desire revues. And there were scant few songs from the underappreciated *Street-Legal*. The band was even bigger than in 1975-’76, at least in sound, with horns and woodwinds, backing vocals, and solo guitar work from Billy Cross and David Mansfield.

Does this complete collection change those old perceptions? Yes and no. There are some fine, previously unreleased live shots that were absent on the original – including the soul/R&B reworking of “Maggie’s Farm” and a scorching “All Along The Watchtower” with love-it-or-hate-it flute. Still, Dylan completists will be thrilled. – **Michael Dregni**



Justin Johnson The Biscuit House

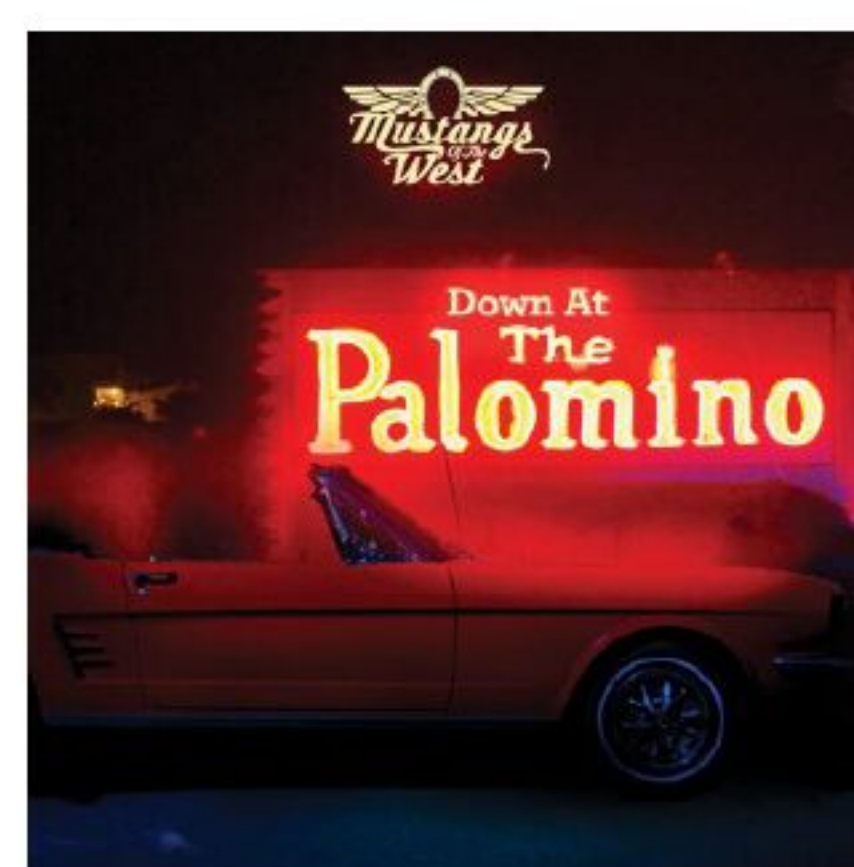
His online videos are hard to cruise past. There’s his wide stylistic range, but also the guitars he built out of cigar boxes, whiskey barrels, and shovels. It amounts to a cottage industry of CDs, guitars, accessories, and instructional material.

Beginning in 2014, the versatile Johnson – who has played on a Bootsy Collins CD and collaborated with John Carter Cash – released five albums prior to six “Bootleg” volumes of impromptu recordings taken from his videos. This studio outing finds him backed by Poco drummer Rick Lonow, Nashville session keyboardist Mike Webb, and famed bassist Will Lee.

“Six Of One” rides an infectious funk rhythm with a slide/wah frenzy, while “Blacktop Horizon” mines a John Lee Hooker boogie groove. “Part 1” of “Before You Go” is meditative, almost dirge-like, while “Part 2” is a swirl of pounding tom-toms and multi-delayed slide layers.

His main electrics were a Wild Customs modular Gyrock with a rotating pickup system, and a PRS S2 Standard 24. Of the latter, he says, “It’s so versatile and nails those vintage tones better than most of my vintage guitars.”

Most important, Johnson’s originals are so strong you scarcely notice there are no vocals. – **DF**



Mustangs of the West Down at the Palomino

Los Angeles’ all-female country quintet has a new re-

cord featuring 12 super-cool songs. Produced by Kirk Pasich and Colin Devlin, the album features Suzanna Spring on guitar and vocals, Sherry Rayn Barnett on lead guitar and vocals, Holly Montgomery on bass and vocals, Aubrey Richmond on violin and vocals, and Suzanne Morissette Cruz on drums.

These talented ladies lean hard into that chasm between classic country music of the early ’70s and California country rock, à la The Eagles, Emmylou Harris, and Poco. They inject fresh melodicism, but stop short of contemporary pop country. The quintet is soulful, musically adept, and harmonically rich; their cover of REO Speedwagon’s “Time For Me To Fly” receives the Mustang treatment with rich acoustic layers and a gorgeous violin solo by Richmond.

Moody ballads like “On The Other Side Of This Love” echo Roy Orbison with lush electric/acoustic textures. The album runs the gamut with waltz time, ’60s-style ballads like “Evangeline,” the rockin’ “Bad For Each Other,” and covers like “I Am The Highway” by Audioslave. The interplay between Barnett’s lead lines and Richmond’s fat-free violin is inspiring. Remember great songs? This is a reminder.

– **Oscar Jordan**



John Leventhal Rumble Strip

After 45 years as a roots music sideman and record producer, winning six Grammys, Le-

venthal’s first solo effort is an expansive 16-track collection. Released on the label he owns with wife and frequent collaborator Rosanne Cash, he explores a variety of moods, his atmospheric visions ranging from reverent to contemplative, and occasionally, raw. Sparse accompaniment keeps his work out front.



Linda and Paul McCartney.

"JL's Hymn No. 2" is a stately, fingerpicked acoustic instrumental with parts blending simplicity and complexity. On "Tullamore Blues, No. 2," he lays down multiple parts giving the performance a flawless, near-symphonic feel. The thoughtful guitar-piano duet "Floyd Cramer's Dream" honors the renowned Nashville A-Team session pianist and solo artist. The easygoing "Three-Chord Monte" lightens the mood, contrasting with the minor-key "The Only Ghost," again mixing acoustic and amplified backing.

Leventhal creates a clean instrumental framework around his duet with Cash on "That's All I Know About Arkansas." On their second duet, "If You Only Knew" he adds an impressive (if low-key) break. It's not that he can't get down and greasy. He does precisely that on the modal, Delta-flavored "Meteor," with its sharp, blues-heavy lines. Leventhal may have taken his time before stepping out, but the wait was worth it. – **Rich Kienzle**



Paul McCartney & Wings Band on the Run 50th Anniversary

McCartney's 1973 classic is a post-Beatles favorite for its title cut (a #1 U.S. single) and rockin' singles "Jet" and "Helen Wheels." The new mixes are a departure from that condensed

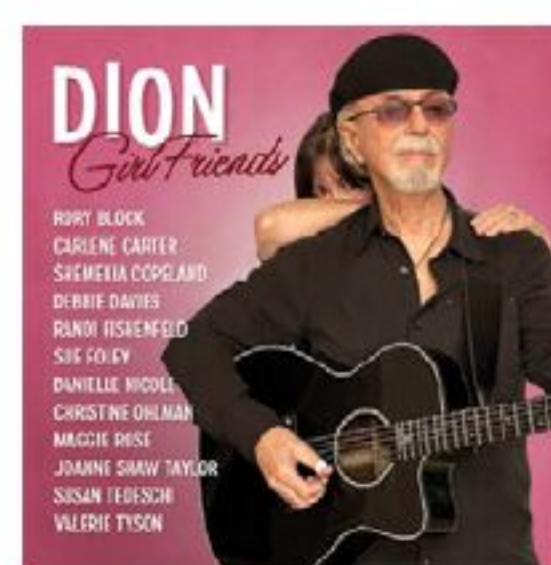
analog sound of the '70s, where pop, rock, and soul would blast from AM radio as a single sheet of sound.

These versions cleanly delineate each instrument, making for a more-spacious audio experience; not necessarily *better*, but certainly unique. On "Band on the Run," you can hear the minute details from the electrics and acoustics of McCartney and the late Denny Laine. The fierce rhythm guitar and faux-reggae chops of "Jet," no surprise, are the stuff of legend – it's arguably the greatest Wings single of all time.

This remaster further entices us via "underdubbed" mixes, without the studio orchestral elements; they're less ornate and drier than the album versions. Yet dig Paul's punchy bass on the mostly instrumental – and perhaps superior – version of "Nineteen Hundred and Eighty Five." Its feisty guitar solo now takes on a starring role amidst fat synthesizer thumps.

As a reissue, this 50th-anniversary set isn't essential, but clearly worthy for the remixes. Fifty years on, Wings remains a brief, wondrous concoction of '70s pop rock. – **Pete Prown VG**

extra. EXTRA



DION Girlfriends

Dion's latest set of collaborations pairs the '60s teen idol and veteran bluesman with heavy-hitting female players and vocalists including Sue Foley, Rory Block, Susan Tedeschi, and Carlene Carter. Tedeschi generates instrumental sparks on "Soul Force," Foley adds a tremolo-drenched break to "Hey Suzy," and Debbie Davies uncorks riveting licks in "Do Ladies Get the Blues." – **RK**



BLACK CROWES Southern Harmony and Musical Companion

The Black Crowes' second album gets the boxset treatment with unreleased studio recordings, rare B-sides, and a blistering '93 Houston Coliseum show featuring Rich Robinson and lead guitarist Marc Ford. Add a cover of the Memphis soul classic "99 Pounds" and an unreleased take on "Miserable," and you have the raw and mighty Crowes at the top of their game. – **OJ**



KEVIN BURT & BIG MEDICINE Thank You Brother Bill: A Tribute to Bill Withers

This terrific homage to the late soul titan features Burt's powerful voice, tasty harmonica, and his guitar blended with that of Ken Valdez. Many interpretations include clever arrangements; "Who Is He (and What Is He to You)?" is funky blues. The guitars on "World Keeps Going Round and Round" are hypnotic; they leap out front on "I'm Her Daddy" and "Ain't No Sunshine." – **BA**



JON DEE GRAHAM Only Dead For A Little While

Graham's residency at Austin's Continental Club is going on 27 years, even after he died in 2018 – for five minutes. He addresses the event in "See You By the Fire" and Rev. Gary Davis' "Death Ain't Got No Mercy." Co-producer Michael Hardwick provides guitar, as do Jon Dee and son William Harries Graham, now tag-teaming his dad's Wednesday nights. Come early, stay late. – **DF**



THE IMMEDIATE FAMILY Skin In The Game

On their sophomore effort, hit-making veterans Danny Kortchmar, Waddy Wachtel, Steve Postell, Russ Kunkel, and Leland Sklar unleash 14 well-manicured ditties reflecting life and wisdom in the third act. All of their '70s California musical earmarks are there, along with crunchy guitars, straight-ahead grooves, and poignant lyrics. Highlights include "Fragile Heart," "Toughest Girl In Town," and the title track. – **OJ**



BILL NELSON All the Fun of the Fair

The Be Bop Deluxe legend is back with an album of ace guitarman-ship, electronic beats, and melodies galore. He layers electric guitars and Bowie-esque vocals with a lushness that makes for a rich audio experience, as on "Roundabouts and Swings." His crisp chops are on display in "Man of Dreams." Now 75, Nelson remains an underrated hero of British art-rock. – **PP**

BOLD BEGINNING

Martin's GPCE Inception Maple

Almost 100 years ago, Martin reinvented the flat-top box when it began delivering X-braced, square-shouldered, and oversized dreadnoughts. Now, the company is again reinventing the acoustic guitar to keep up with the realities of the 21st century. The new GPCE Inception Maple looks and sounds like a Martin, but there's plenty going on under the hood that distinguishes it from the august flat-tops of prior decades.

Martin mentions sustainability early and often in promotional material coinciding with the Inception. Clearly, it is searching for ways to maximize the performance of a guitar while utilizing the resources that are most reliably available – now and in the future. As such, a rather traditional European spruce top is married to a box with maple sides and a three-piece maple/black walnut/maple back.

Intent on making the guitar lighter, Martin has equipped the Inception with new “skeletonized” bracing that it claims goes a step beyond traditional scalloping with “sonic channels” in the top and back braces that the company claims increase sustain and amplitude while optimizing airflow and reducing the guitar's overall mass.

The Inception *is* surprisingly light and resonant for a new maple-back guitar, and its projection is noticeably robust for its grand-performance size. When getting a boost from its LR Baggs Anthem electronics, it's well-balanced, warm, and very representative of its acoustic self. Our tester was set up medium-low, and played exceptionally fast up and down the neck. Martin describes the neck shape as “...modified low oval with a high-performance taper.”

Appointments on the Inception are impressive and understated. Finished in Satin Amber Fade, with walnut binding on the top and back, its maple arrow fretboard inlays are attractive, and the gold open-gear tuners round out an aesthetically modern package.

The biggest potential sticking point with the Inception is cost – most Martin rosewood boxes carry a smaller tag. Nonetheless, the technology is sound and the end product remarkable, so Martin will likely find a way to incorporate some of its features in other models. – **Michael Shirek**

Price: \$3,999
www.martinguitar.com



Price: \$199.99
www.boss.info

SIM PLUS

The Boss IR-2 Amp & Cabinet

With the rise of home recording, videos, and gigging without amps, Boss has introduced its IR-2 Amp & Cabinet, a small box with a range of amp and cabinet sounds called impulse response (IR) captures.

In a nutshell, impulse responses are not just a simulation, but add the ambience of a room, speaker size, microphone type/distance, etc. Instead of a basic “amp sim,” an IR is a more-accurate representation of guitar tone. You can plug it directly into a PA, recording interface, or powered cabinet and play a gig, with 11 amp choices at your disposal. No traditional amp required.

Working in mono or stereo, the IR-2 possesses two channels as well as bypass (off). The main bank of concentric knobs offers three-band EQ along with Ambience, Level, and Gain. On the back is a USB-C jack to access Boss' IR Loader software, so you can edit or download favorites. The IR-2 can even function as a stand-alone digital interface for recording guitar or bass.

Tested through a Mac recording system and Fishman Loudbox amp, the IR-2 delivered powerful, full-range tones, strongest toward the crunchy end of the spectrum (think Marshall to Mesa-Boogie). While the direct-guitar-box category is getting crowded, for price and functionality, Boss' Amp & Cabinet is seriously worth anyone's attention. – **Pete Prown**



BRIT-BASED INVASION

The Carr Bel-Ray 1x12

Carr Amplifiers are renowned for their build quality and vintage-inspired tones. Not one to rest on his laurels, founder Steve Carr continually pushes the envelope with designs that capture the essence of his favorite vintage amps. His latest is the Bel-Ray.

Available as a stand-alone head or 16-watt 1x12 combo, its three-way toggle switch accesses three classic British voicings; labeled V66, the first is designed to bring the chime of a vintage Vox “Top Boost” while H73 offers the crunch of a Hiwatt DR103, and M68 the punch of a ’68 Marshall plexi.

Under the hood you’ll find a pair of EL84s, two 12AX7s and an EF86 in the preamp, along with an EZ81 rectifier. The top-mounted panel hosts knobs for Top, Mid, and Bass, a tremolo input with adjustable Speed and Depth, and a knob that controls an attenuator that switches out of full power and limits output along a range from zero to two watts. The cab houses a punchy Fane F25 speaker.

With a Tele plugged in, V66 mode brought the signature chime and jangle made famous by Vox amps, but offering a smoother tone with more muscle and richer harmonics. The Beatles and the Yardbirds would be proud. Switch on the bias-modulated tremolo and the

Bel-Ray oozes amazing depth, pulling notes into a rich, pulsating swampiness.

The M68 voice with a Les Paul yielded thick, aggressive tones with enhanced low-end punch and midrange growl. With the Level knob (output) turned up all the way, it presents crunchy tones worthy of favorite classic-rock anthems.

H73 sat in the middle, with a tight, bright, punchy sound that cut like a knife. Power chords rang open and clear with excellent string-to-string definition and clarity. All three modes were incredibly responsive, with a tactile feel and excellent sustain, even with clean tones.

Regardless of where its controls are set, the Bel-Ray has a lively “pushed” feel that increases with note bloom, sustain, and dynamics as Level is turned up. Carr’s clever High/Low switch lets you choose between an immediate volume blast in the High position or a smoother taper with more-precise control when set to Low. The attenuator’s highest setting, of course, isn’t as punchy or dynamic as full power, but nonetheless produces inspiring tones at whisper volume.

The Carr Bel-Ray is a soulful tribute to sounds that shaped rock-and-roll history, delivered with authenticity. — **Charlie Wilkins**

Price: \$3,240
www.carramps.com

GEARIN’ UP



GIBSON J-45 CUSTOM

The Gibson J-45 Custom has a Sitka spruce top, mahogany back and sides, and a mahogany SlimTaper neck. Its

Les Paul Custom-inspired cosmetics include ebony nitro-lacquer finish, multi-ply binding on the top and back, headstock with split-diamond inlay, bound ebony fretboard with block inlays, and Grover Rotomatic tuners. It is equipped with a L.R. Baggs Session VTC.



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WALRUS AUDIO SILT

Walrus Audio’s Silt uses an analog circuit with a 12AU7 tube. Its Harmonic switch activates a frequency doubler before the drive section of the pedal, while Contour toggles between high-pass, flat, and low-pass curves in the pre-tube EQ stage. It runs on a 9-volt battery or 12-volt DC adapter.

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TIMELESS

The Gibson Falcon 5

Drawing inspiration from its classic Skylark amplifiers of the 1950s and '60s, Gibson is revisiting those beloved tones with the Falcon 5. Designed by Randall Smith and his Mesa/Boogie team (which became part of Gibson in 2021), the Falcon 5 pays homage to vintage tube amp tones while bringing modern features and craftsmanship.

The Falcon 5 has a timeless look, with cream tolex and an oxblood grille. Polished-steel accents on the handle and control panel add modern flair, while smooth, round vintage-style knobs complete the retro package. Running on just one 6V6 power tube, the single-channel amp has a Class A power section with output selectable between three and seven watts. With high/low inputs and controls for just Volume, Tone, Reverb, dialing-in a usable sound is easy and intuitive. Modern touches include an all-tube analog reverb and a Monitor out.

With a Les Paul and Telecaster going to

Input 1 and the Volume and Tone knobs at noon, retro edge-of-breakup tones blared from the 10" Jensen Blackbird 40 Alnico speaker. Add a touch of reverb

and the tone becomes unmistakable, straight from the sock hop and jukebox era of rock and roll. Let the Chuck Berry licks begin!

With Volume below noon, tone cleans up but stays bright and snappy. Volume past noon delivers gritty power-tube breakup. Input 2 yields a smoother, warmer, lower-gain tone that stays cleaner. For a brighter, percussive attack, twist the Tone knob past noon.

At seven watts, the Falcon delivers a surprising volume, but thanks to the useful Low/Full power switch, it can be turned up to unleash power-amp overdrive at bedroom-friendly volumes.

The Falcon 5 is about pure, unadulterated tone. Its blend of vintage character and modern features make it a strong contender in the low-watt arena – **Charlie Wilkins**

Price: \$1,499
www.gibson.com



Price: 1,999.99
www.dangelicoguitars.com

CLASSIC VERSATILITY

The D'Angelico Excel SS

The modern D'Angelico company specializes in hip semi-hollow guitars with a nod toward their namesake, legendary luthier John D'Angelico. Case in point is the updated version of its Excel SS, which now is dressed with an ebony fretboard and gloss finish options.

The Excel SS, touted as the company's flagship semi-hollow, has maple back, sides, and neck, a spruce top, two Seymour Duncan '59 humbuckers with coil taps (on both Tone pots) providing eight useful options, a slim C neck, 25" scale, and 16" neck radius. Grover Imperial tuners are standard, along with gold hardware, 22 medium/jumbo Jescar frets, 500K pots, and a Tusq nut. A tastefully cool black stinger adorns the back of the headstock. Fit and finish on our test guitar were flawless, including the lovely Trans Cherry finish.

Weighing in very close to 7.5 pounds, the Excel SS's single-cut body was extremely comfortable to play sitting or standing, with excellent balance and no neck dive. Its Art Deco styling is reminiscent of the brand's original glory.

A joy to play, the Excel SS may be a jazz guitar at heart, with a warm, woody vibe and tonal response catering to traditional players who revere classic D'As of decades past. But don't be fooled; add a touch of gain and those Duncan '59s transform the guitar into a capable rock, blues, Americana, and rockabilly machine that will deliver the goods and withstand the rigors of bar gigs or concert and festival stages with aplomb. Remember what Ted Nugent did with his Byrlands?

With its versatility, knockout looks, tonal options, and playability, D'Angelico's Excel SS will satisfy jazzheads as well as guitarists playing many other styles. – **Bob Cianci**

UNCONVENTIONAL ARCHTOP

The Vox Giulietta VGA-3D

It may look like a conventional archtop, but Vox's latest box offers something truly different. Within the Giulietta VGA-3D is a modeling engine that can conjure tones from humbucker and single-coil to acoustic, banjo, sitar, and guitar synthesizer.

The Giulietta is a small, deep archtop that fits comfortably on the lap. Its hollow body has a laminate-maple top, back and sides, with a set nyatoh neck topped with a 12.6"-radius jatoba fretboard dressed with 22 frets, dot markers, and a bone nut. The neck has a C-shaped carve.

In addition to the XLM humbucker in the neck slot, there's a piezo under the tune-o-matic bridge, which explains the need for a three-way toggle selector. On the top

edge you'll find the control module for the AREOS-D System, which gives the Giulietta its modeling prowess.

The Giulietta's control module has a tuner along with buttons for power and access to user-saved sounds and effects/drive. The main knob controls models, which are used in tandem with the toggle, allowing three varia-

tions for each of the six instrument sounds – 18 in all, plus two banks for six custom settings. There's even a headphone jack.

The Giulietta will work well in a home studio or certain situations onstage. Its AREOS-D System offers a bevy of tones; the single-coil sounds aren't going to replace your favorite Strat or Tele, but in a pinch, should do the job. Same for the acoustic and banjo

Price: \$1,099
www.voxamps.com



sound, while the sitar will deliver the right accent for "Norwegian Wood" or "Do It Again." And, its guitar-synth and sustain sounds are piezo-based, so there are no tracking issues.

The Giulietta is a compelling performer with a likable neck and plenty of cool sounds.

– Pete Prown VG



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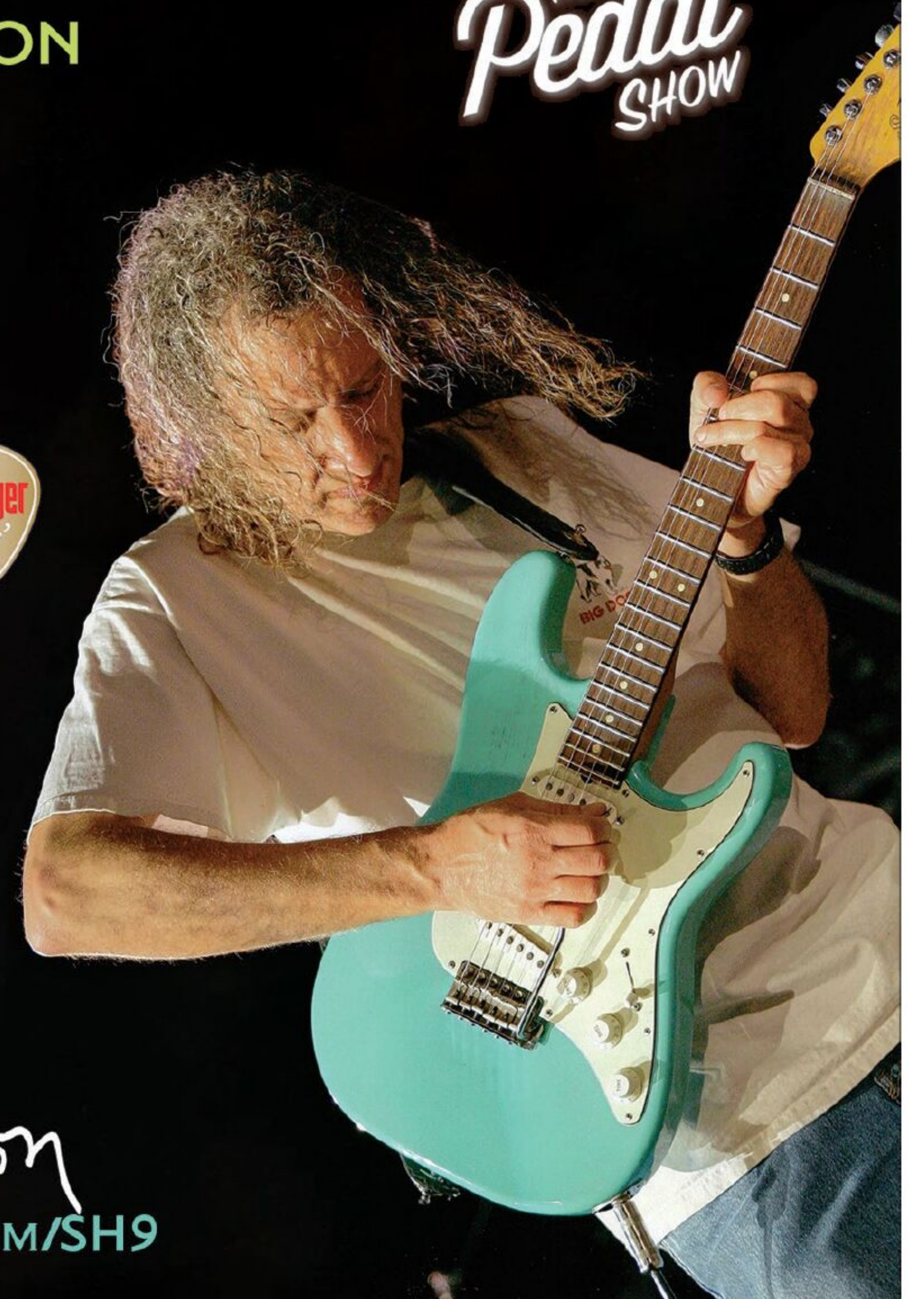
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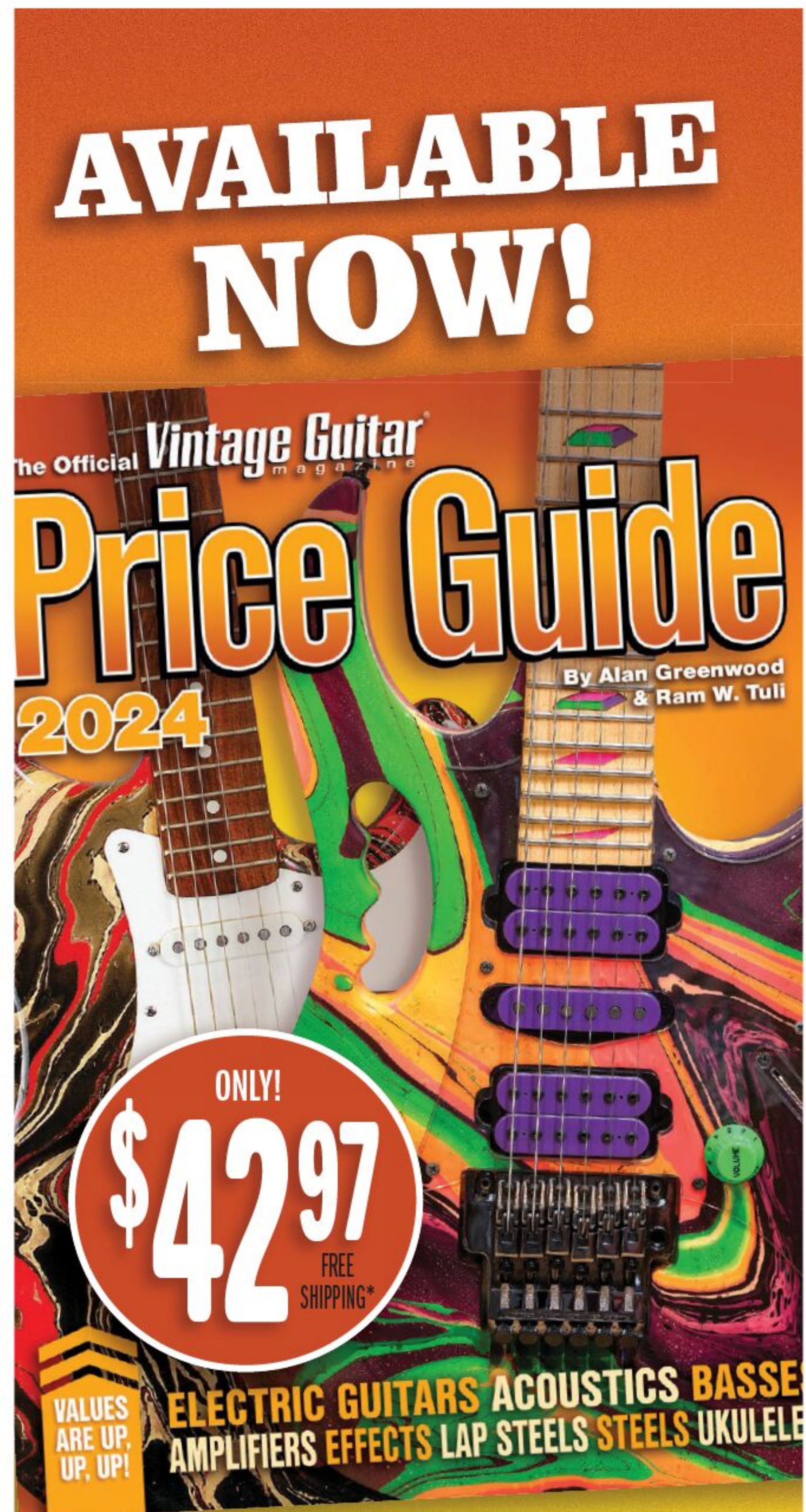
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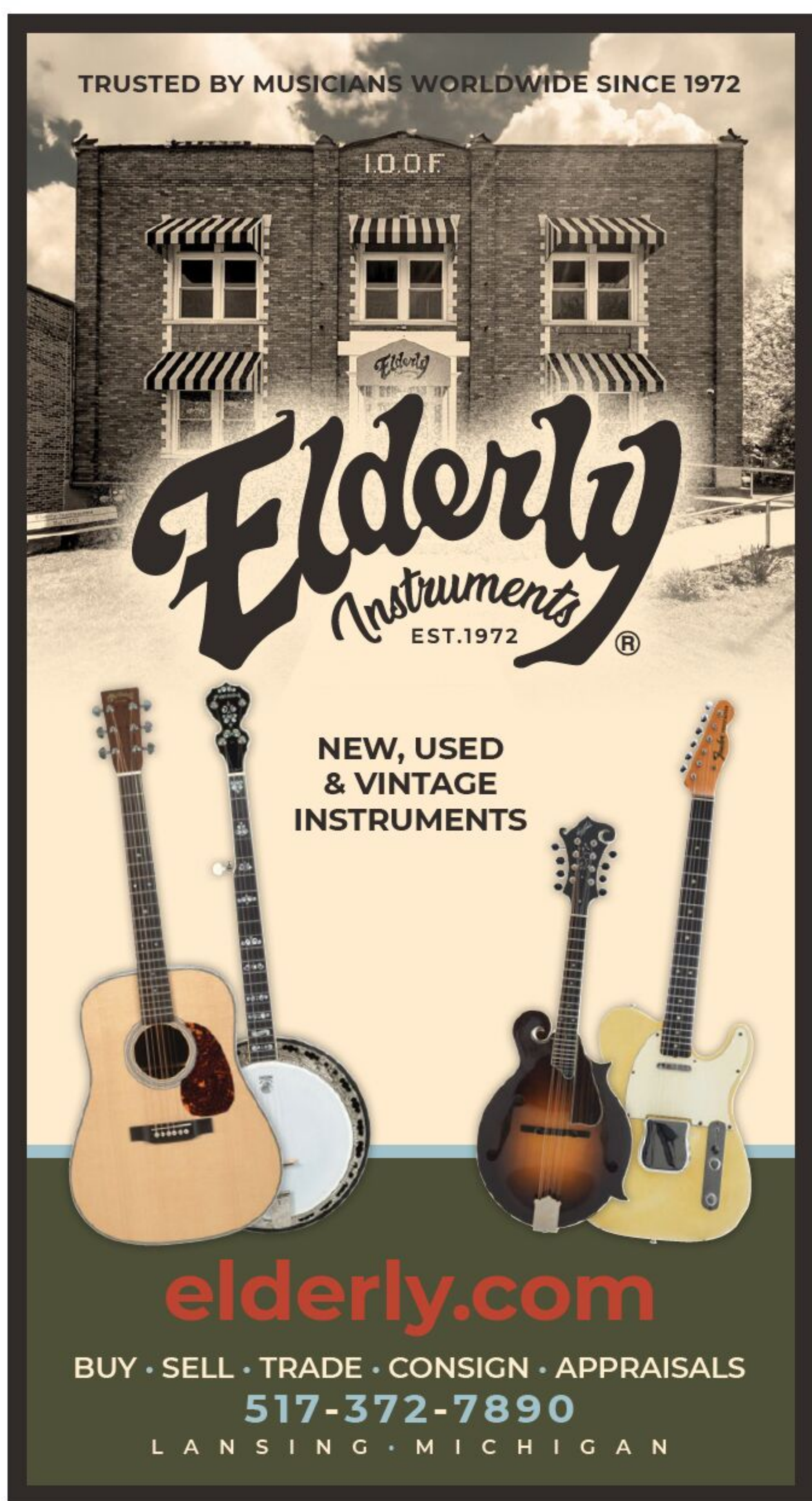
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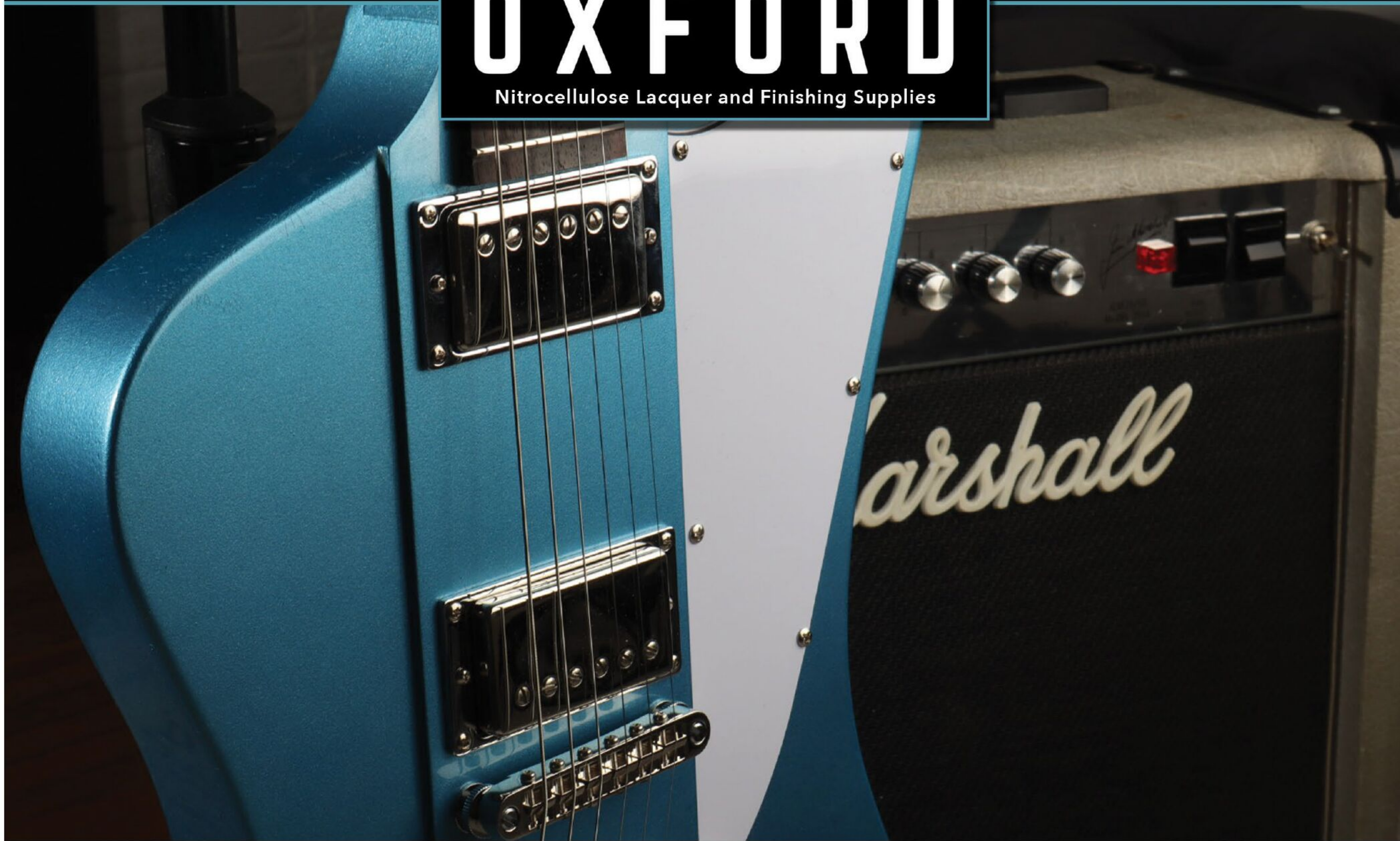
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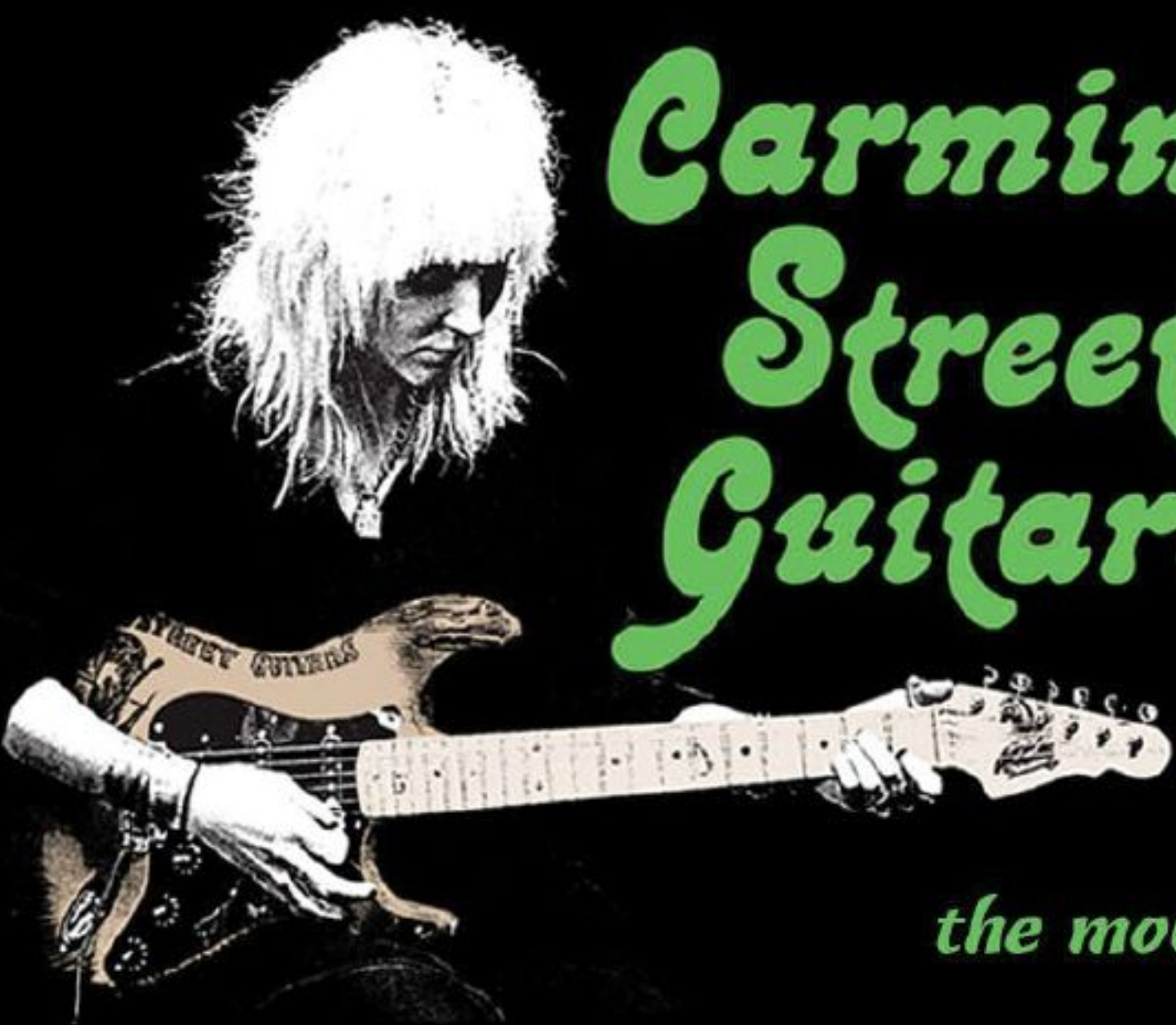
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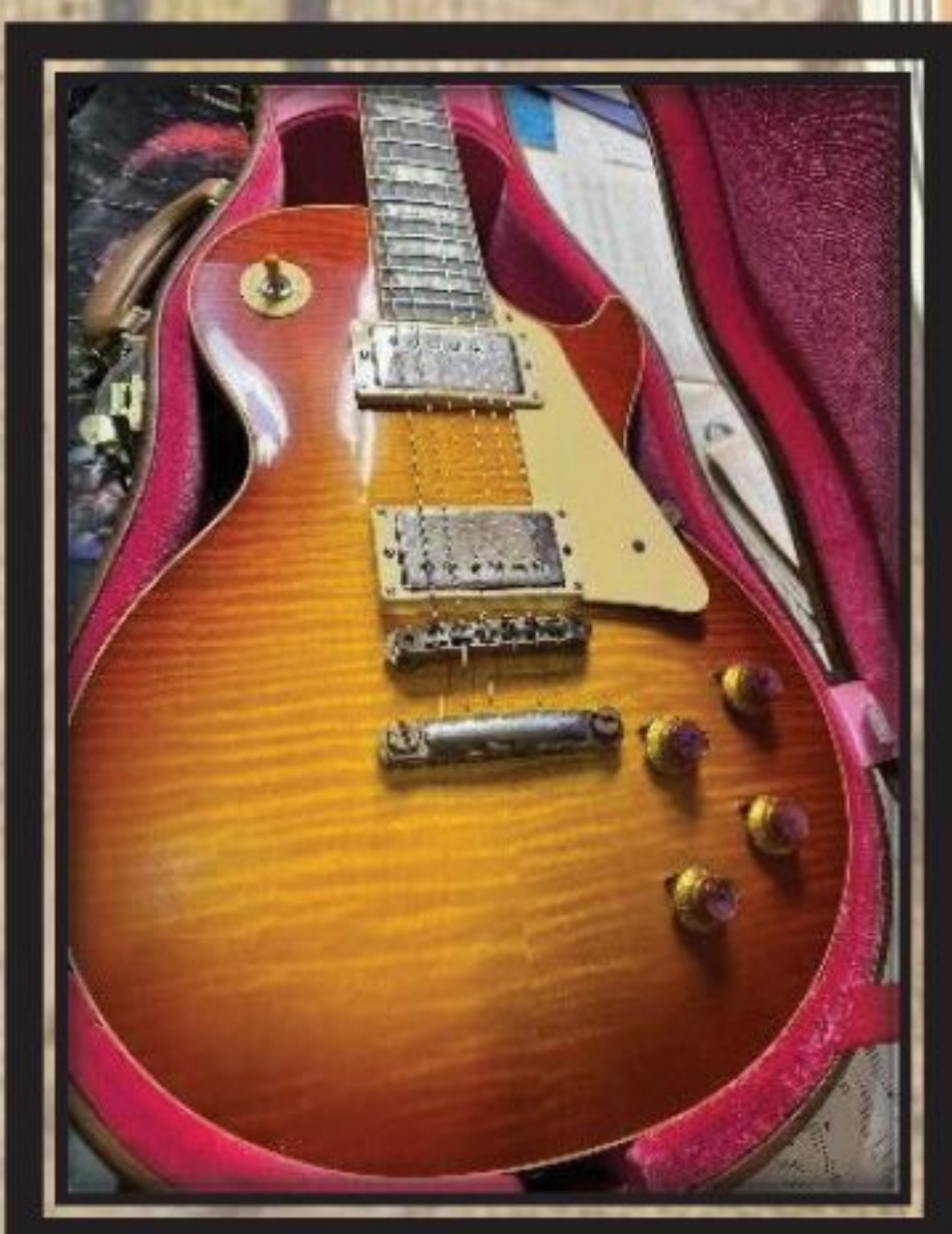


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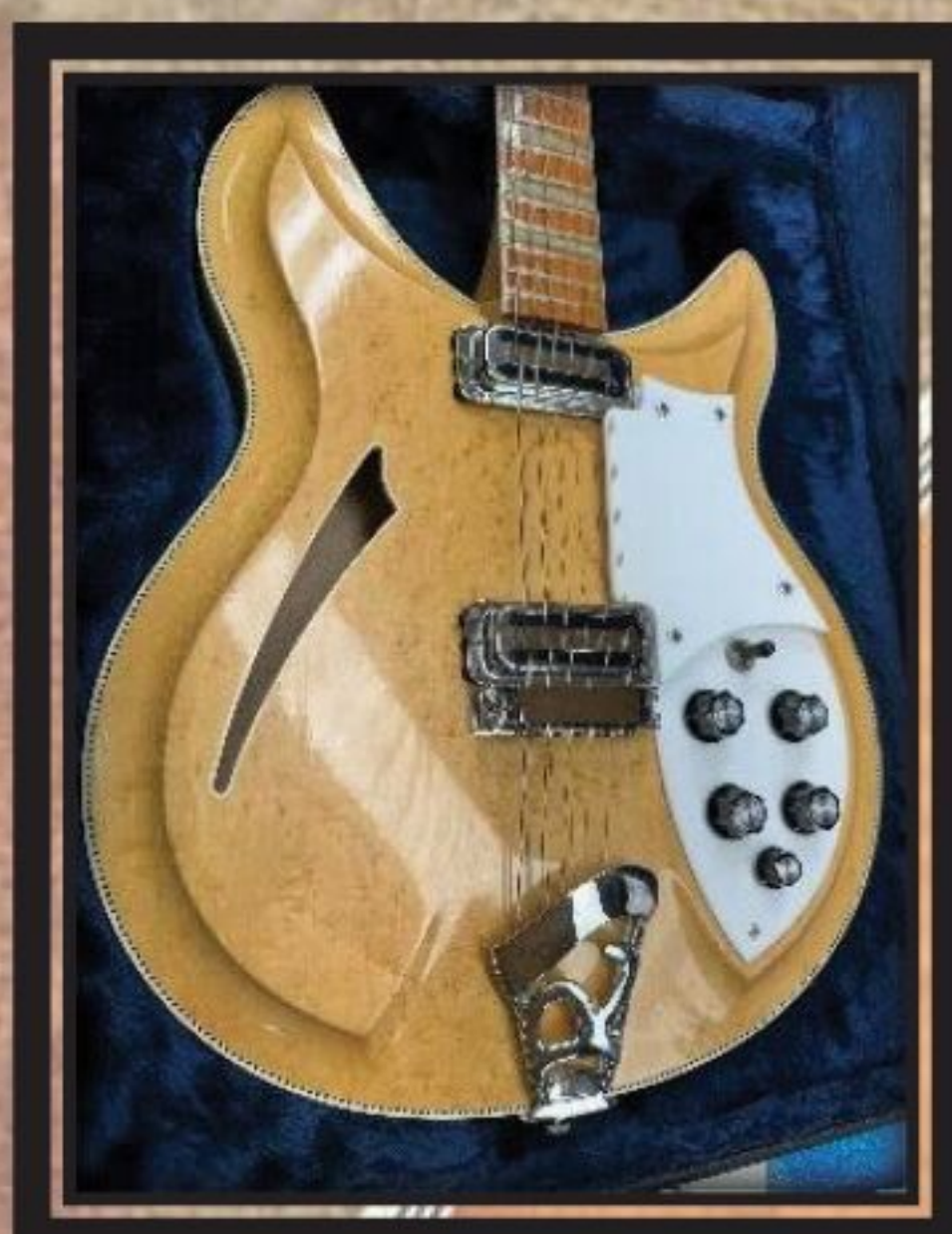
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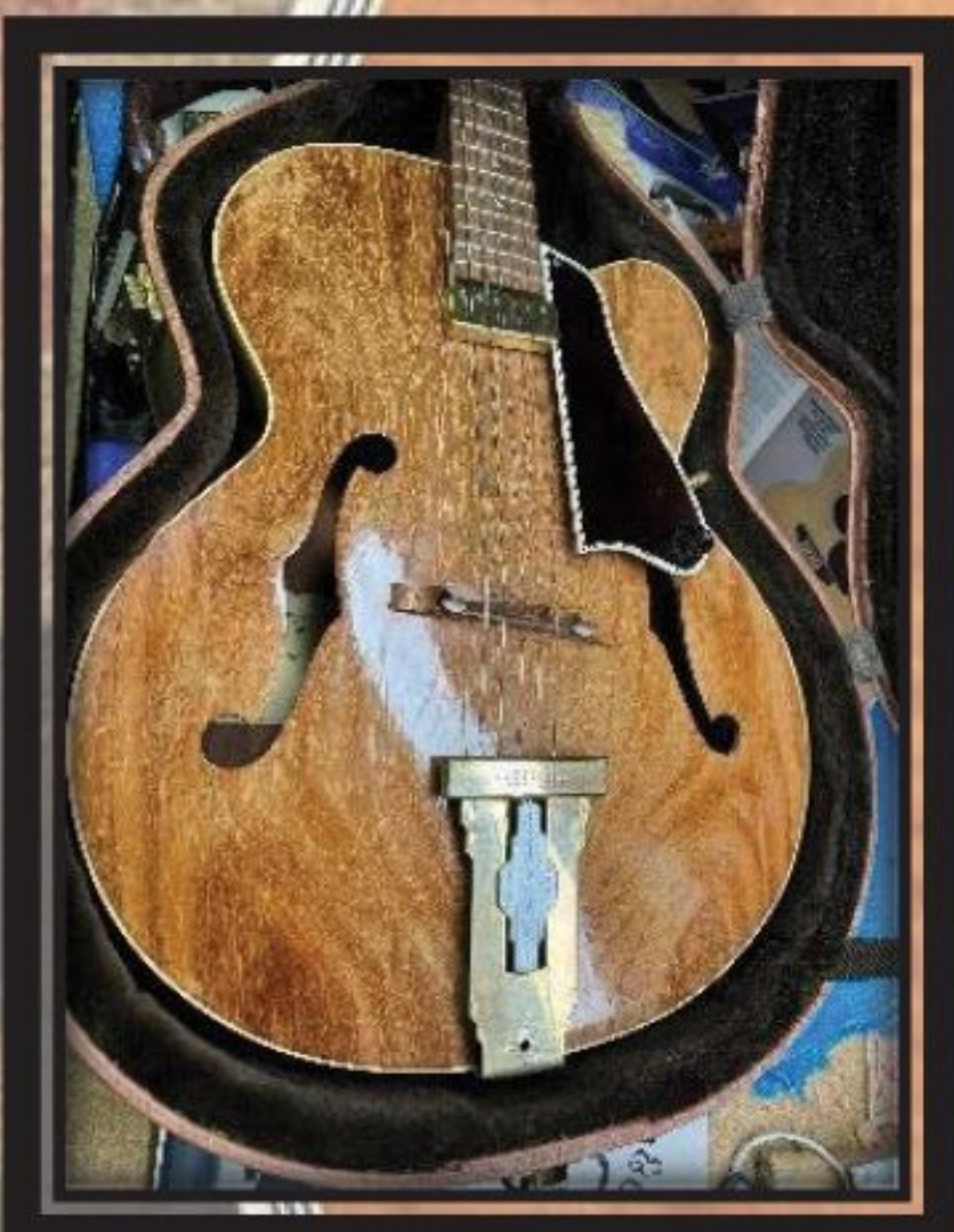
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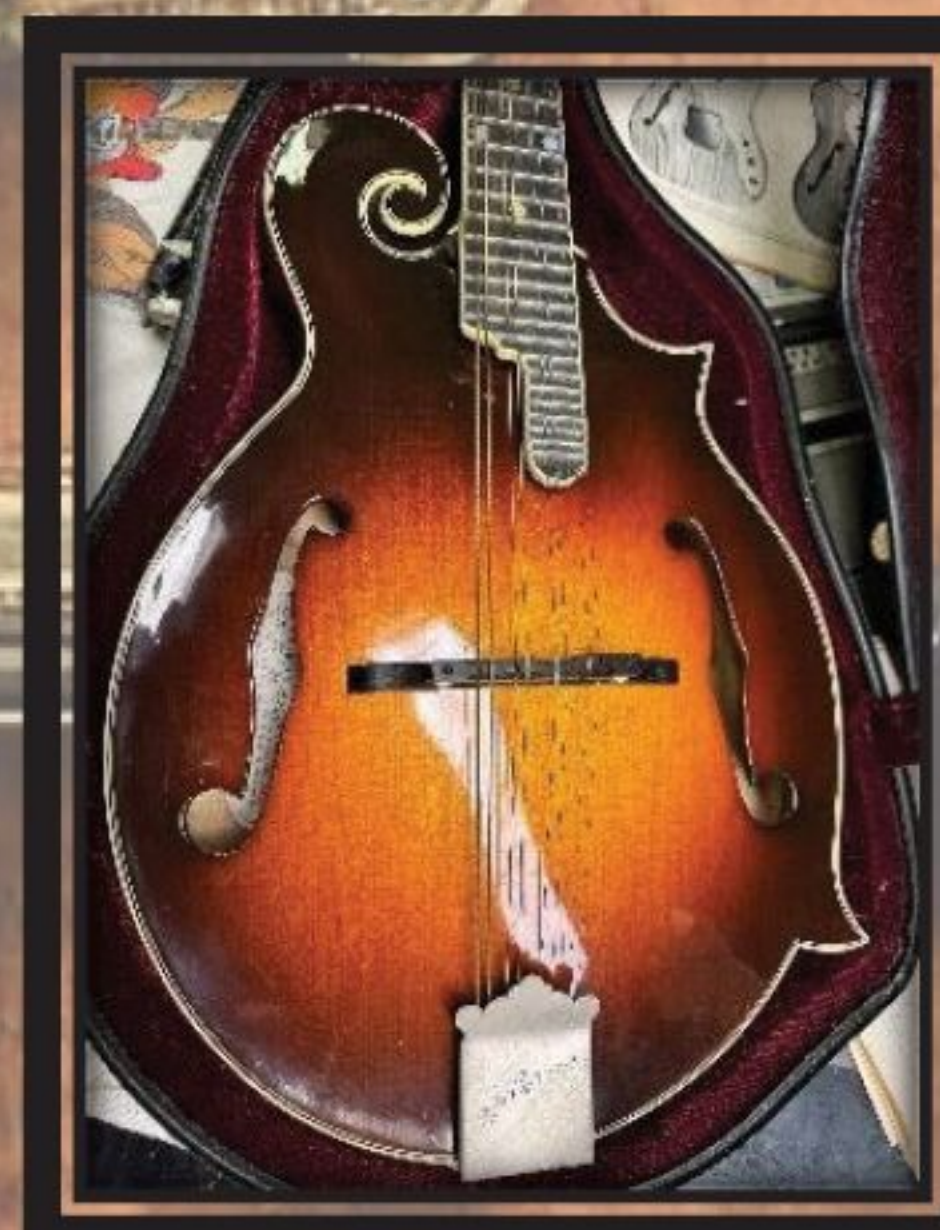
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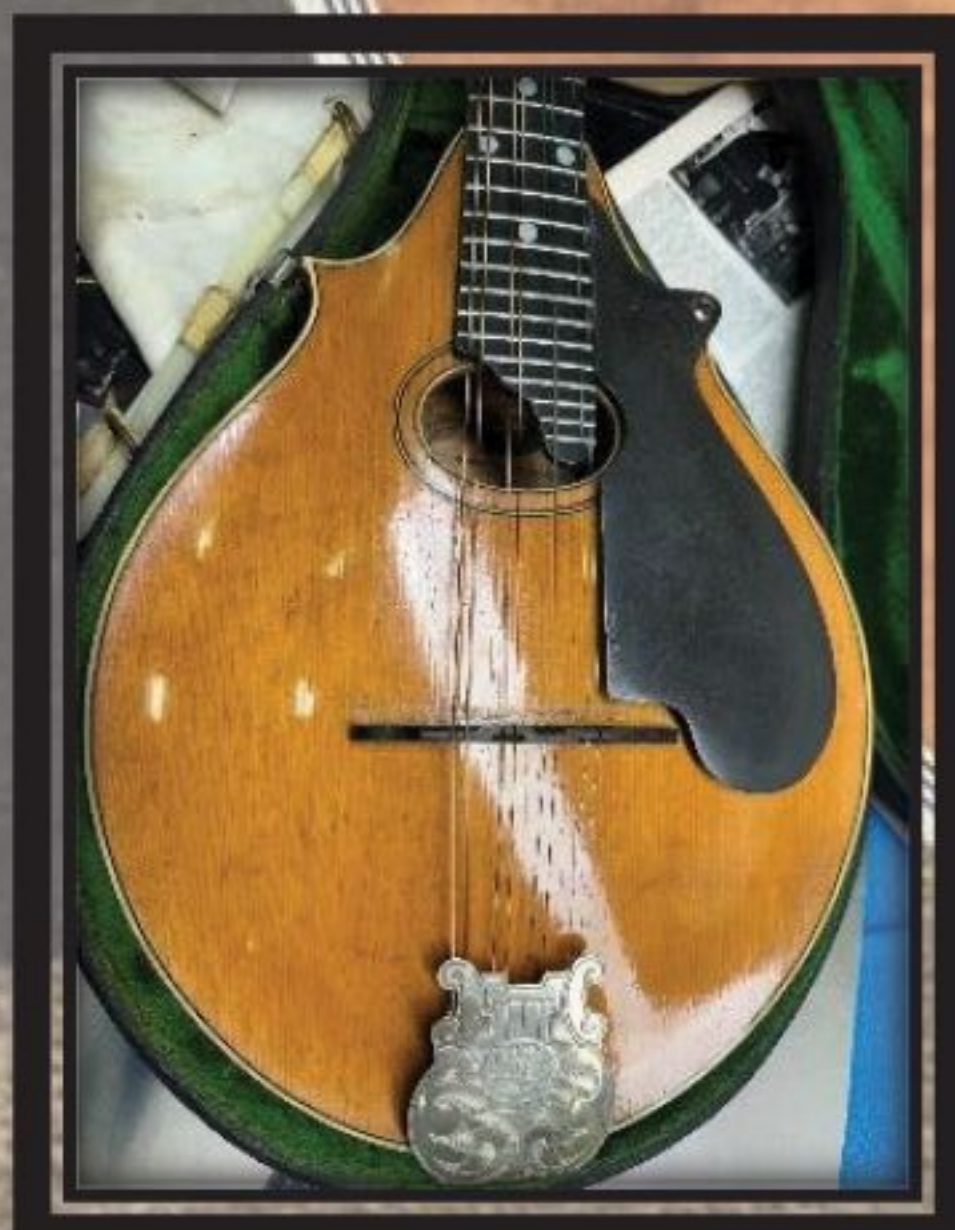
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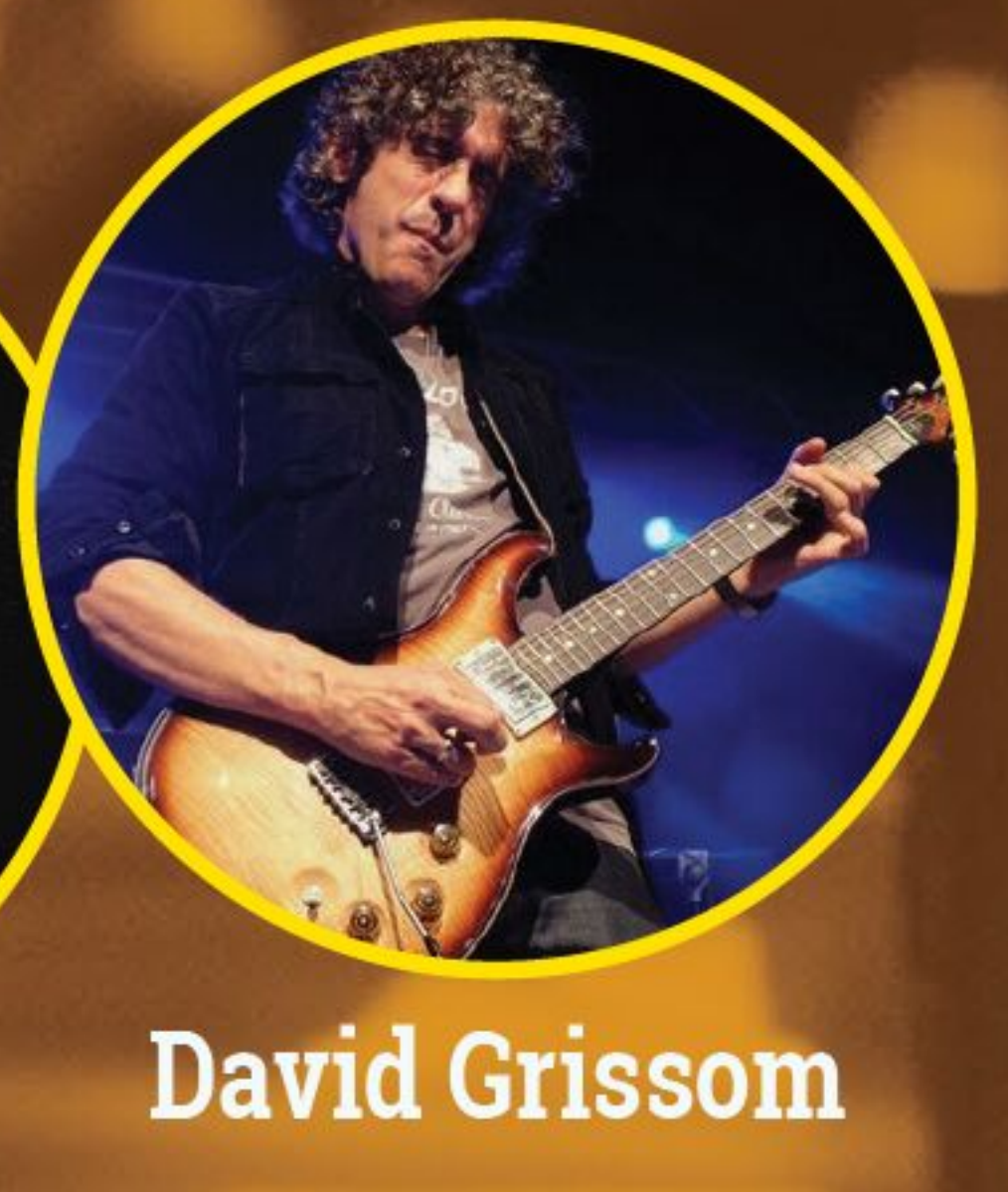
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01 Kris Blakely's world-class collection includes (from left) a '59 Flying V that was once saved from a landfill near Lynchburg, Virginia, '59 "Gabriel Burst," the famous '59 'Burst played by Paul Kossoff in Free, '57 "Bishop Burst," and a '58 Flying V that once belonged to Kirk Hammett.

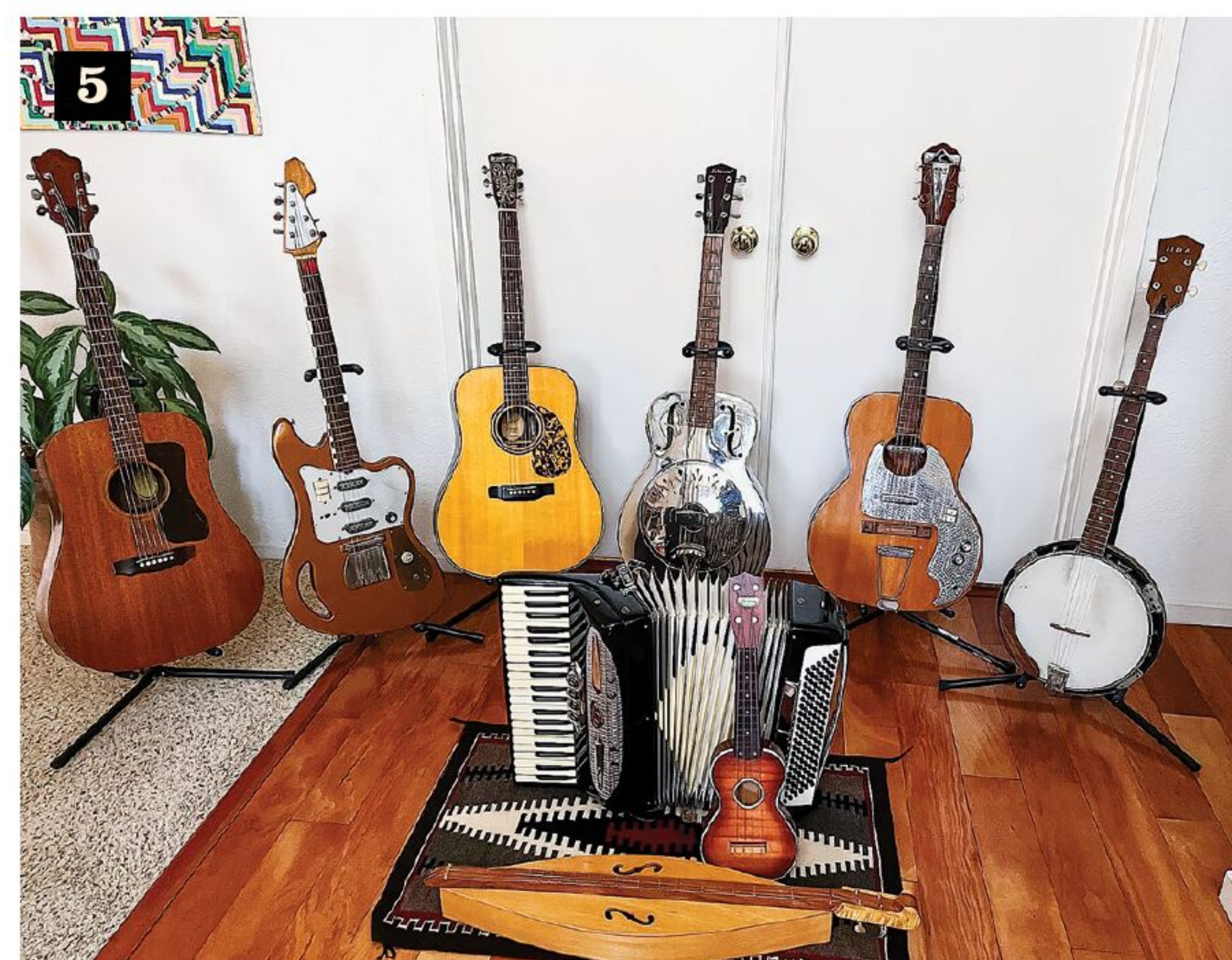
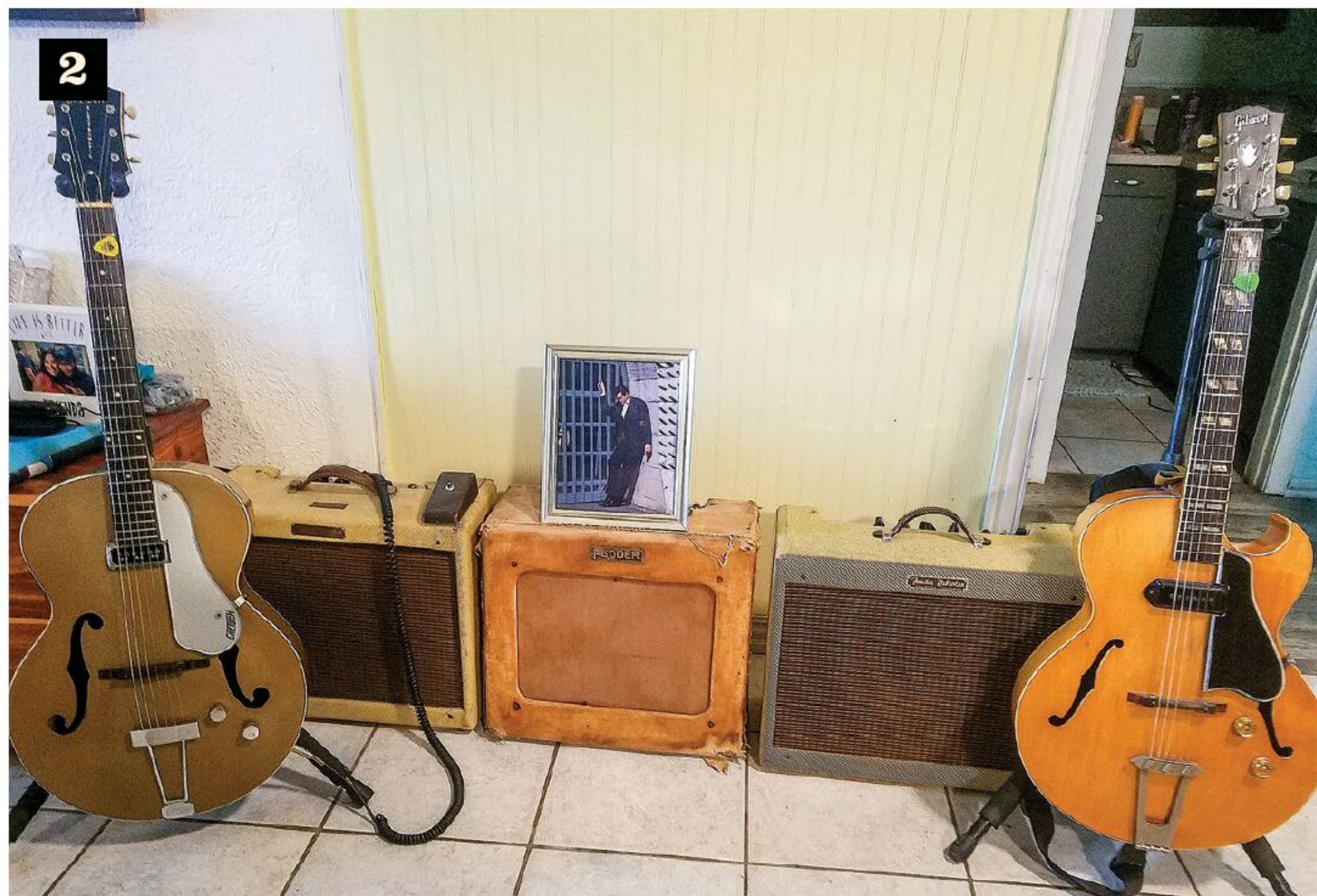
02 Larry Carter's collection brings a vibe, doesn't it? That's his '56 Gretsch Electromatic, '59 Fender Vibrolux, '51 Deluxe, '59 Vibrolux and '49 ES-175.

03 This crazy guitar was inspired by a friend's 3-D printer, and Paul Sciaba put it together using the neck and pickups from a MIM Strat. "It weighs seven pounds and sounds pretty good," he says. "I might beef it up with some Lindy Fralin pickups."

04 Representing lefties (well, *left-handed* players) are Paul Swanson's Epi-phones – an '04 Les Paul Standard, '02 Sheraton, '14 Casino, and '23 Broadway.

05 "This is the recipe for a good party!" says Jodi Johnson of his '68 Guild D25, '62 Teisco, Blueridge BR-160, Johnson resonator, Kay acoustic/electric, '62 lida banjo, '50s Corona accordion, Harmony uke, and dulcimer.

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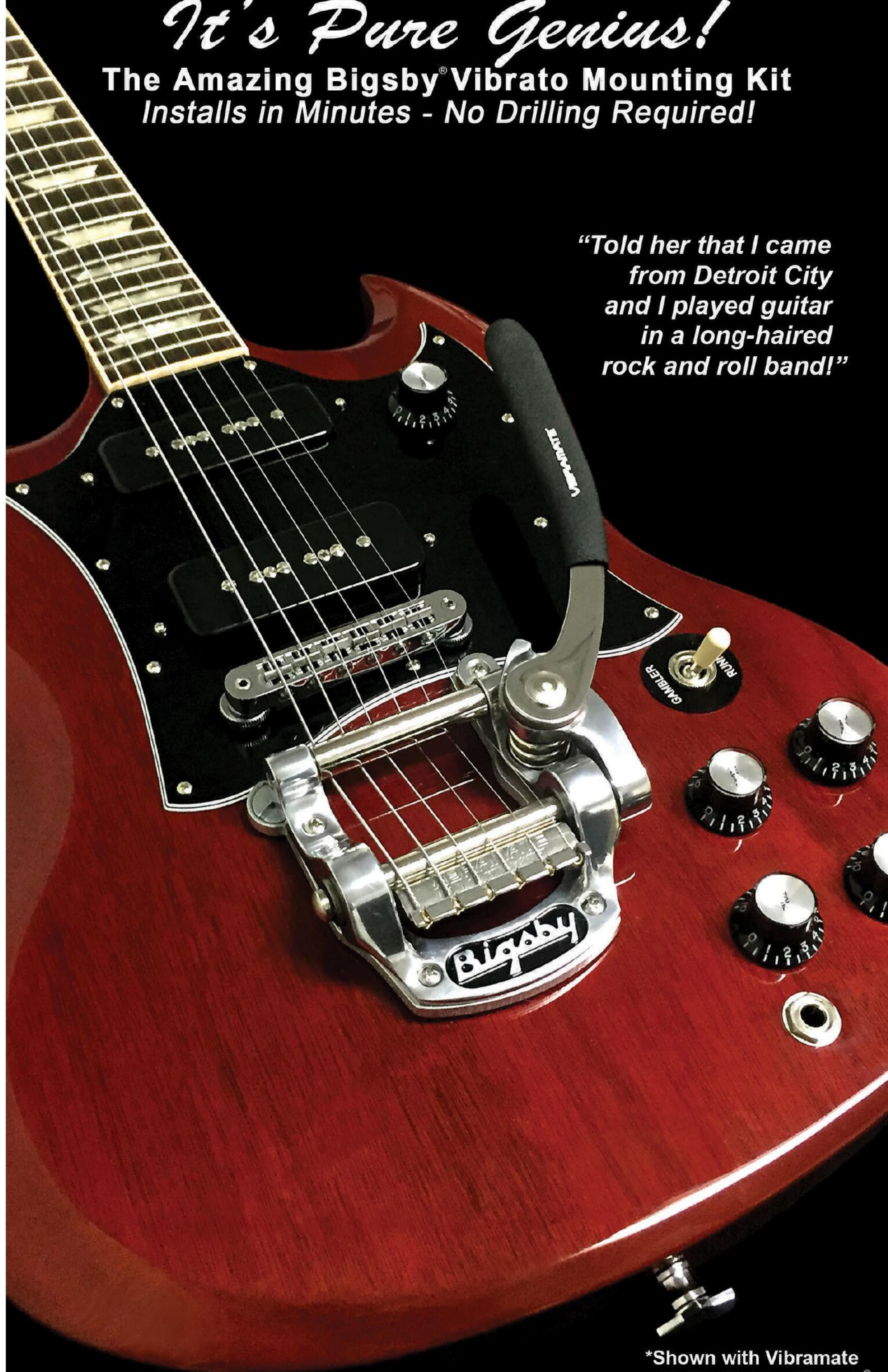
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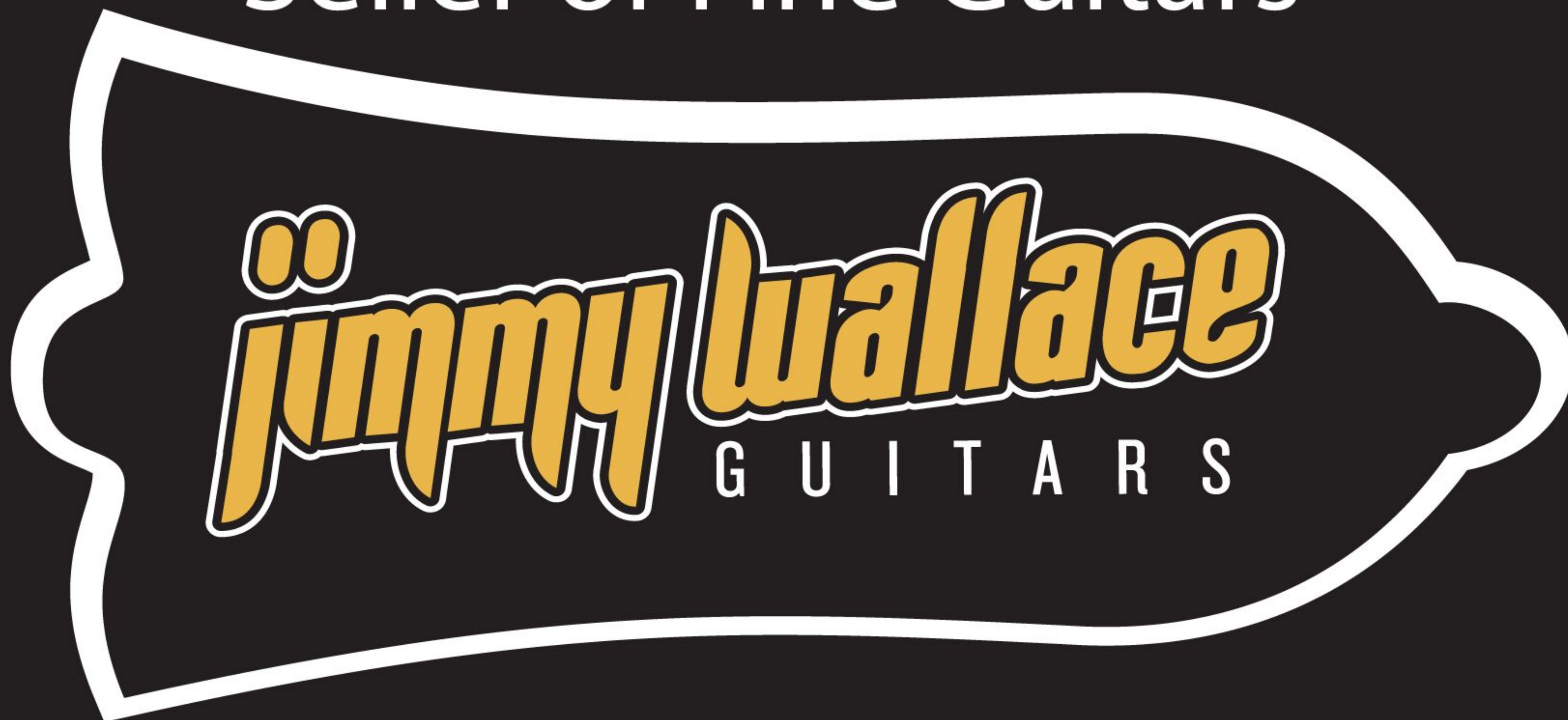


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A close-up photograph of a man with a beard, wearing a plaid shirt, playing an acoustic guitar. The focus is on his hands and the guitar's neck and headstock. The background is blurred.

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