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8 Minutes from NYC

Fender

Jazzmaster, 1965, SB, bound neck w/ dots, exc, ohsc.$9350
Strat, 1964, sb, clay dots, green guard, vgc+, ohsc.....$25,000
Strat, 1964, **Fiesta Red,** 5 new frets, exc, ohsc $49,000
Strat '59 Relic, Fiesta Red, 2018, heavy relic, cert,.....$3500
SRV Strat, 2000, sb, Gold hdwr, rwood brd, exc, ohsc.. .....$1750
Telecaster, 1959-60, Blonde, slab board, exc, ohsc ..$37,500
Tele Custom 1968, SB, double bound, exc, ohsc...in transit
Telecaster CS Relic '60, 2021, Blonde Lacquer finish over Ash body, super faded and aged, papers, ohsc.....$3500
Thinline Nocaster, CS 2018, Dirty Blonde Relic, exc.....$3250
Telecaster Custom, 1978, Antigua, Rwood board, vgc+.....$4900
Buck Owens Tele 1998, Ltd /Ed Red/Wht/Blue Spkl.....$3500
Tele, Daphne Blue Relic, 2021, '60 light Relic, ohsc.....$2850
Telecaster, 50's American Orig, 2020, **Lefty,** BlkGrd, nm... $1350
Mustang, 1966, Daphne Blue, vgc+, ohsc $2500
Coronado XII, 1967, Cherry Red, 12 String, vgc+.... ....$2500

Gibson Solid Body

Les Paul/SG style, 1962, Cherry, Sideways Vibrola, 2 PAFs, pro refret, vibrant cherry, no cracks, vgc+, hsc.....$19,500
Les Paul Special, 1959, faded Cherry, double cut, 2 P-90s, no cracks or repairs, vgc, hsc.....$12,900
Les Paul Custom 1977, LE , 2 P-90s, back of neck pro refinish, pro refret, exc-, ohsc.....$3950
Les Paul Standard 1978, sb, pro refret, exc, ohsc.....$3500
Les Paul Duane Allman '59 VOS, 2013, faded burst, 8.42 lbs, tags, cert, and Tee-cloth, ohsc..... ....$8500
LP R8 '58 RI, ca 2014, 9.07 lbs, lemon burst, exc.....$4500
LP Custom '57 Historic, 2004, Faded Cherry, nm..... ....$4250
LP Custom '57 Historic, 2007, Black, 2 hb, exc, ohsc. ..$3750
Firebird V, 1963, sb, maybe factory refin, exc, ohsc $9500
Flying V, 1997, Black, 1 hb, vgc+, ohsc..... .$1650
S-1, 1976, Natural maple body, Maple neck, 3 pu, vgc..... .$850

Gibson, Epiphone & Other Electric Archtops

L-5 Wes Montgomery, 1996, sunburst, humbucker at neck, curly Maple back & sides, vgc+, ohsc $9500
ES-5N Switchmaster 1998, Blonde, 3 P-90s, vgc, ohsc.....$3900
Howard Roberts Fusion, 1998, Cherry, thin hollow..... $1695
ES-347, 1979, Natural, Gold hdwr, ebony brd, pearl block inlays, original coil tap switch, exc, gigbag.....$3700
ES-335, 1991, White, PAF reissue hb exc, hsc. $4250
ES-330TD Special, 1965, sb, 2 P-90, original Vibrola, one owner, looks new, nm,hsc.....$8900
ES-330TD, 1966, sunburst, 2 P-90, no pg, vgc+, hsc $5900
ES-330 Historic, 2016, sb, 2 P-90, Bigsby, exc $3950
ES-225, 1959, sunburst, cutaway, 1 P-90, exc..... ....$2900
ES-175D, ca 1970, sb, rep headstock, 2 "Pat No"pu.....$2950
ES-125 T, 1964, sunburst, non-cut, 1 P-90, exc..... .....$2400
Buscarino Virtuoso, c 2000 18" cut- away, 1 hb,exc-, ohsc$9,500

Gretsch & Rickenbacker

Gretsch 6125 Single Anniv, 1960, 2-tone Green, exc .$1950
WhitePenguin, 2002, Japan, 2 DeArm,Caddy tp, nm, ohsc$2900
Rick 360, 1968, Fireglo, 2 Toaster tops, exc+, ohsc.....$4900
Rlick 660, 2010, MapleGlo, 2 Toaster tops, exc+, ohsc.....$2250
Rick Bantar 6000, '64, fireglo, 5-str elect Banjo, ohsc.....$12,500

Acoustic Archtops

Colletti 17" Tribute Custom 2003, Blonde, exc $2950
D'angelico New Yorker, 1944, Blonde, non-cut, refin by D'angelico in the late '50s, exc, ohsc.....$25,000
Epiphone Zephyr Cutaway, 1951, sb, 17 3/8", NYer pu.....$2900
Gibson Style U Harp Gtr, 1907, Black, 21", exc-, ohsc.....$6900
Gibson L-7C, 1964, sb, Johnny Smith pu, vgc, ohsc.....$4900
Gibson L-3, '20, sb, 13 1/2" wide, 24 1/4" scale, exc,ohsc..$2950
Heritage Sweet 16, 2003, Almond burst, 1 pu, exc- $3750
Maccaferri Plastic guitar, G-40 Archtop, '50s, exc+, ssc $650
Stromberg Master 400, Blonde, 1946, loudest!, ohsc ...$35,000

Other Electrics

D'AQUISTO Custom Electric, c 1978, amberburst, semi-solid w/ curly Maple body, rae, vgc++, hsc..$35,000
Carvin Double neck Model 11, c 1968, sb, Mandolin (1 pu) and Guitar (2 pu) necks, exc, ohsc..... .....$3500
Duesenberg Starplayer TV Goldtop, 2014, Trem, exc ..$2250
Fano Artifact RB6, SB, 2 P-90s, Maple neck, exc $1950
Godin Multiac Nylon Duet Ambiance, vgc++, gigbag..... .$950
Ibanez Custom Agent, model 2405, 1976, sunburst.. .....$1750
Jerry Jones Master Sitar, USA, c2010, w/ symp strings, exc$2100
Kelly Custom, NYC, ca 08, Peach, 3 hb, trem, vgc+, hsc$2650
Nash S-63/MH Strat , 2024, Gold Sparkle, new.....$2850
National Glenwood 95, '63, White, Map guitar, exc, hsc.....$4500
Parker NiteFly, c 1997, USA, White s/s/s & Piezo, trem. $1750
Silvertone 1445, Teisco, c'68, Jap, sb, 3 pu, Sculpted..... .$795
Spalt Player's Choice Tool #2, NEW, 2 pu, natural..... .$3250
Teuffel Bird Fish, recent, 3 pu, leather case, exc $8900
TRUSSART Steelcaster Deluxe, thinline,Bigsby, exc, ohsc $3750
Univox Les Paul, '70s, Japan, black, vgc, ohsc..... ...$750
WANDRE Spazial, c 1963, reddish/grey, beautiful $6950
Watkins Rapier 44, UK, Fiesta red, 4 pu, Trem, exc.... ..... .$1250
Woody Phifer, Signature, ca 2005, exquisite, near mint $5900

Basses

Alembic Scorpion 1984, blistered Maple 32" scale 24 frets $8900
Jazz Bass, 1970, sb, bound R'wood brd, pearl block, .$5900
Fender Jazz Pro II, 2021, Miami Bue, Rwd brd, exc, ... $1450
Gibson EB-2, 1959, refin Blonde, banjo tuners, br ohsc$2950
Modulus Graphite M-92 5 String '90s, CAR, exc $2250

Martins

F-9, 1936, flat top "42" convert by Monteleone,exc..$29,500
D-45, 1941, Adir Spruce top, Brazil b&s Hexagon inlays, restored by John Arnold, the real deal, vgc+, hsc $225K
D-45L, 1940, the only pre-war Lefty D-45 made, exc..... inquire
D-35V, 1984, Anniversary model, Brazilian, vgc+. $6500
D-12-35, 1966, Engleman top , Braz b&s, vgc+, ohsc $5500
D-28, 1942, Herringbone, Adirondack top, Brazilian R'wood b&s, vgc+, hsc $75,000
HD18JB, 1998, Jimmy Buffett, Mahog b&s, exc.....$6950
D-28 Aged Authentic, 2020, Ad top, Mad b&s, mint $6900
000-28EC, 2010 Clapton, rep center seam, vgc..... $2150
D-21 Special, 2017, Spruce top, Rosewood b&s, exc.....$2400
00-21NY, 1963, Brazilian b&s,,exc, hsc $7950
D-18 Authentic 1939, 2023, New 1 11/16" nut, ohsc.. .....$5699
D-18 Retro, 2014, pickup, exc, ohsc..... $1995
000-18, 1943, light weight and beautiful, vgc+, hsc ... $17,500
0-18K, 1928, all Koa wood body, 12 fret, vgc, hsc. $4500
2-17, 1927, all mahogany, vgc, hsc $2950
Custom Shop Size 5, 2018, Spruce top, figured Maple back & sides AND neck, exc, ohsc $3900
C-1 Concert Uke, '50s, 3 tight back cracks rep, vgc+.....$1150

Gibson & Epiphone Flat Tops

Nick Lucas Special, 1929, Spruce top, Mahogany back & sides, old refinish on top, vgc, ohsc. $6950
J-50, 1964, 1 11/16" at nut, great sounding, new pg $3900
J-160E, 1965, sb, lots of checking, vgc, ohsc.....$3950
Country Western, 1965, natural ,1 11/16" nut, exc.....$5500
LG-1, 1952, sb rep peghead, vgc, ssc..... $2100
Epi Eldorado, 1965, Spruce top, Mahogany b&s, exc. $4900

Other Flat Tops & Classicals

Bourgeois Custom Slope D, sb Adi, Mad R'wood nm.....$5500
BOZO, Jumbo, ca 1969, Spruce top, Brazilian b&s, exc $5900
Collings D-1 TS, c 2022, Dreadnought, nm, ohsc.....$4500
Guild D-40, 1968, Cedar top, Mahogany b&s, theBest..$2900
Larrivee C-10 LEFTY 1993, Cutaway, abalone trim, exc....$3500
Lowden L32-12, 1988 Ireland, cutaway 12 String , exc.....$3500
Lyon & Healey Deluxe, X.Style A, ca 1928, exc.....$4950
McAlister OM-28 Vintage 2007, exc, ohsc.....$5200
SCGC Model H, Cutaway, 2001, Spruce top, Rosewood b&s, 2 repaired top cracks, vgc+, hsc $2950
Shelley Park Encore, 2013, oval hole Django, exc.....$3500
Contreras Classical, 1972, Cedar top, R wood b&s,exc $5500

Resonator, Steel & Slide Guitars

National Style 4 Tricone, 1929, Square neck, exc $7500
National Tricone #2, '30, Wild Rose , Sq nk,exc,ohsc..... $4500
National Tricone Style 1, 2000, nickel/silver, nm ohsc.....$3500
National Style 0, 1933, straight neck, vgc, ohsc.....$4500
Deneve Sq.Nk Dobro, birdseye top, fancy and loud..... $2100
Rick Lap Steel, B6, 1948, Bakelite, ohsc $1650

Mandolins & Banjos

F-4, '13, Black top, double Flowerpot, Handels, exc, ...$6500
F-4, 1920, sb, great tone, vgc ohsc.....$4900
Gibson H-1 Mandola, 1928, Black top, exc+, ohsc.....$3500
Bacon Chubby Dragon, ca 1910, neck by Ray Alden.....$3500
Bacon Professional Style 3, 5-string c. 1925, exc.....$2500
B&D Peerless 5 String Banjo, '30s, resonator, ohsc.....$1250
Paramount Aristocrat Tenor c 1926, gold hdwr ohsc..... ..$1295
VEGA Style M Tubaphone Irish Tenor, 1925, exc, ohsc.$895

Amps

DUMBLE Overdrive Special Combo, 1982, Red suede, 60 or 100 watts, Electro-Voice 12" speaker, exc $185K
Ampeg B-12XT, 1966, 2-12 Jensens, 100%, exc $1250
Ampeg SVT Classic Bass Head, 300 watts, exc.... .....$950
Bogner Goldfinger 45 Watt head & 2-12 Bottom, exc..... $2100
Fender Champ, 1959, Tweed, 8" speaker, all original..... $2950
Fender '68 Custom Vibro Champ Reverb-Amp, exc $795
Fender Deluxe Amp, 1952, Tweed, 5B3 circuit, vgc.. .....$4500
Fender Reverb Unit, RI, with a VOX facelift exc.. ....$850
Fender Vibrolux 1961, Tweed, Jensen P-10R ,vgc $5500
Gibson GA-40 Les Paul Amp, ca 1953, 2-tone Brown, '63 Jensen 12" speaker, new output transformer.....$1650
Gibson GA-20T Combo 1957, 2 tone Brown, exc $2250
Guild Thunder I, 1966, Pink, 10" speaker 100%, exc..... ..$850
MESA BOOGIE MK III, 1985,, 60w, 1-12 spker, exc..... $1850
ORANGE OR-120 Head, ca 1972-3, UK, Fan added on back sounds crazy amazing great, vgc.....$3000

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Heavy Melody
On his new, mostly instrumental album, *Drama*, the shred pioneer – who fans know can play fast as the devil – celebrates melody as a tool of expression. His goal this time was to move hearts with emotive lines, riffs, and leads. | ***By Pete Prown***

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While recording *Drama*, Franco Piona guided Marty Friedman through an extensive collection of vintage guitars and amps. We take a behind-the-scenes look at the experience – and his trove of gear. | ***By Pete Prown***

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COVER PHOTOS: Marty Friedman: Takaaki Henmi. Charvel Model 4: Michael Wright. Stay Hungry Ibanez Destroyer: Noel Federizo. DeArmond R5T courtesy of Leon Chalnick. **THIS PAGE:** Charlie Starr: Andy Sapp

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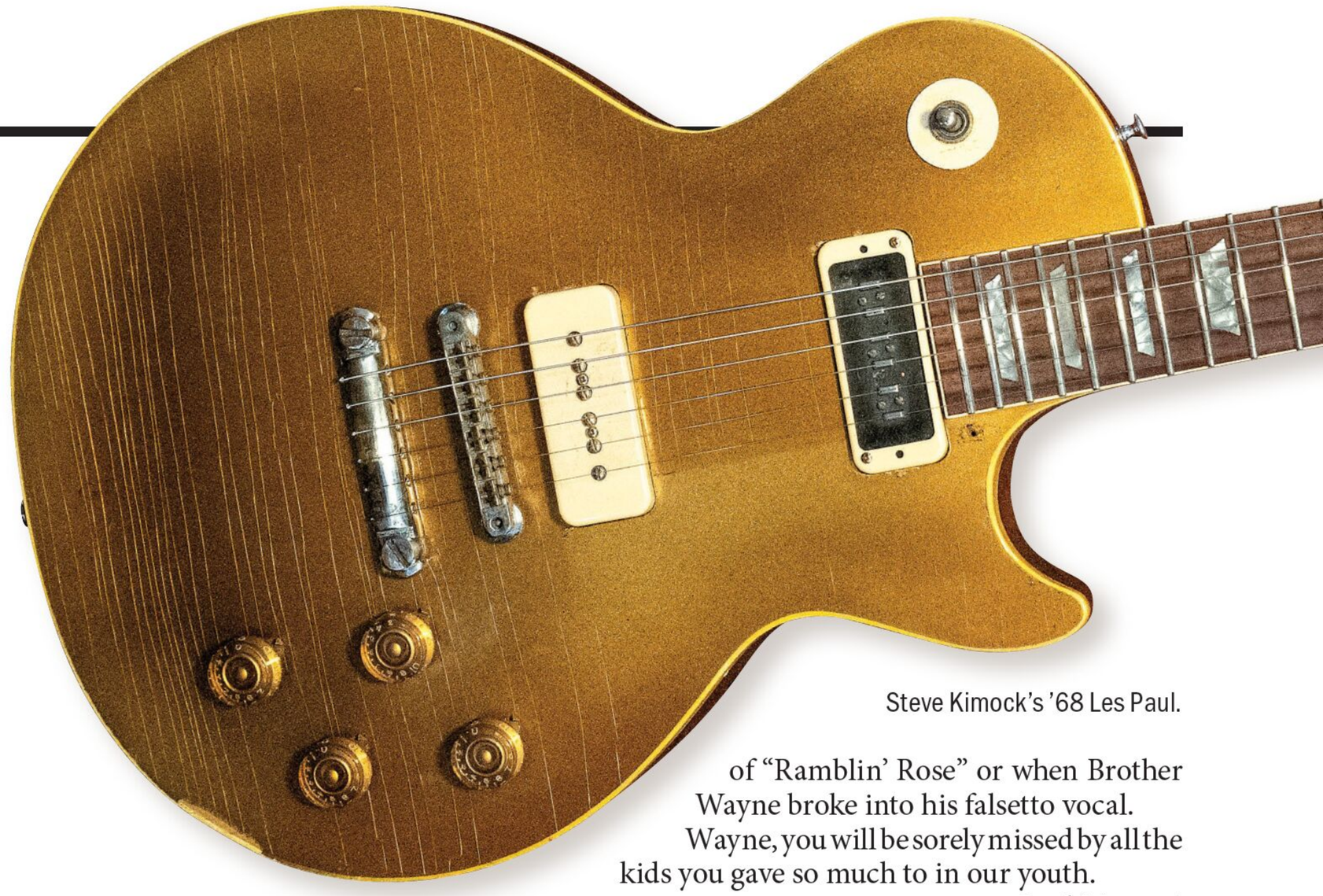

Steve Kimock's '68 Les Paul.

WOLF, UNCAGED

As an old Chicago-born jazz-guitar guy, I was stunned by the historical reach and depth of Wolf Marshall's experience and accomplishments as an educator and top-flight jazzer and in whatever other styles he chooses to play ("Wolf Marshall: Jazz-Lore Generator," April '24).

I normally take a pass on method books because I have plenty to work on, but I considered it an honor and a salute to Wolf to buy his book, both as a resource and a reminder that seasoned pros are obliged and fulfilled in passing along their hard-won knowledge.

I hadn't realized that Wolf not only talks the talk with his insight and music breakdowns every month in "Fretprints," but indeed, he walks the walk.

I am much appreciative of Wolf's work, and to *VG* for making his and others' knowledge available to readers and fans. Your mag is the best. Thanks so very much for all of it.

Jack Schultz
Benton, Kentucky

Thank you for an amazing and insightful look into the work of Wolf Marshall. I was blown away at his focus and dedication to revealing aspects of music that few of us think about, or worse, take for granted. I have a lot more appreciation for someone who transposes (and puts to paper) seemingly impossible lead-guitar work. So, thank you for the interview. It's another example of how *Vintage Guitar* isn't "just" old instruments and the guys who played them.

John Keenan
San Francisco, California

FLORENTINE FEELS

I thoroughly enjoyed Wolf Marshall's feature on Gibson's Florentine cutaways (April '24). As a kid, I was just starting to get serious about playing when I saw one for the first time in a music-store window, sitting on my bicycle with my nose pressed against the glass. It was a double-cut Barney Kessel and looked like there was a light from heaven shining down on it! What made the article more special to me was I got to meet some of the players mentioned – Benson, Burrell and my favorite, Jeff Golub.

Every time I read *VG*, I learn something new – and I'm 70. Thanks so much for the great work!

Patrick Wilberding
Lake Havasu City, Arizona

Having just finished reading Wolf Marshall's "Gibson's Fabulous Florentines: Archtop Elite" in the April issue, I'm curious about Kenny Burrell's Super 400; its upper f-hole binding seems to be painted and the bridge has several pieces of black tape on it. Why did he do those things?

P.D. Thomas
Lambertville, New Jersey

(*Ed. Note: Kenny plays louder than most jazz guitarists, and in an interview for the March '14 issue, he explained why he put foam in the body near that upper sound hole, then plugged it to minimize feedback. Also, he screwed a piece of plastic into the top to hold the bridge in place so he can bend notes and deploy his more-aggressive picking style without fear of having it move. He covers the plastic with a piece of black tape.*)

I quite enjoyed the Florentines feature, and the "deluxe binding" on the pages and cover brought a big smile. Nice touch!

Mark Hammer
Ottawa, Canada

KRAMER COMMEMORATION

My friends and I saw the MC5 a zillion times and always knew we were in for a rock-and-roll extravaganza when Wayne Kramer ("Wayne Kramer 1948-2024," April '24), Rob Tyner, Fred "Sonic" Smith, Dennis Thompson, and Michael Davis were on the bill.

Whether they were opening for Jimi Hendrix, recording *Kick Out the Jams* at the Grande Ballroom, or filming Leni Sinclair's concert movie, the MC5 exuded energy from the first chords of "Ramblin' Rose" or when Brother Wayne broke into his falsetto vocal.

Wayne, you will be sorely missed by all the kids you gave so much to in our youth.

Paul Megyesi
Lincoln Park, Michigan

KIMOCK, CLASSIC

I really dug the "Classics" piece on Steve Kimock's '68 goldtop. What a cool story! I first heard Steve during his 1998 stint with The Other Ones. I had no idea who he was, but he was utterly brilliant, playing melodies and abstract pieces that didn't make sense, but did. The Other Ones had Mark Karan in the early-Garcia/bluesier, more-traditional slot, and later, with Steve, they were spacier, more abstract. When Karan had a health scare in 2007, Steve jumped in to cover lead guitar, and I was lucky enough to see them live in San Diego.

Chuck Allen
Phoenix, Arizona

BECK: THE BEST

Wolf Marshall's dissection of Jeff Beck's epic *Blow by Blow* ("Fretprints," February '24) was beyond extraordinary. As someone who followed Jeff throughout his career and saw him live with the Yardbirds, Rod Stewart, at Windsor Jazz Festival, with Beck, Bogert & Appice, and in subsequent iterations with the many incredible musicians, Wolf's column was an eye-opener even for my Beck-tuned senses. Among the many remarkable guitarists who've graced our world, Beck is the top of the uppermost.

Thank you, Wolf, for digging into his sonic bag of tricks. Jeff's soul remains unknowable – it was a gift. Rave on and up.

John Summer
San Luis Obispo, California

Photos by Brett Armstrong.

SEND LETTERS TO

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Marcus King with a Gibson Murphy Lab '57-reissue SJ-200 at Carter Vintage Guitars on April 4.

CARTER VINTAGE MARKS GRAND OPENING

Management and staff at Carter Vintage Guitars celebrated the grand opening of its new location in the Antiques building at Paseo South Gulch, Nashville, with a party on April 4. Marcus King (VG, October '22) was one of three musical acts that performed during the event, which drew 250 attendees.

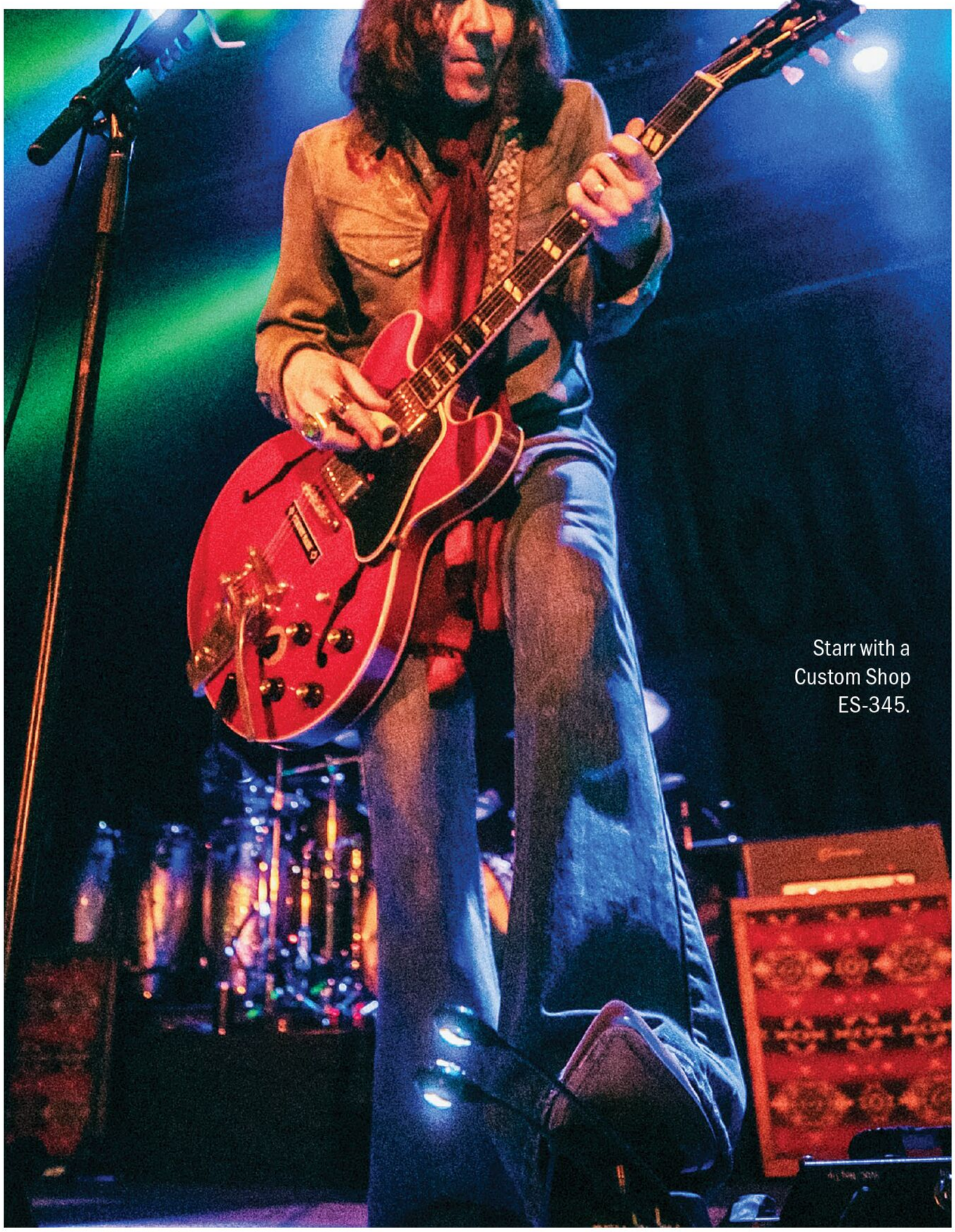
"We celebrated the foundation Walter and Christie built for Carter Vintage Guitars and the exciting future the business has in the new showroom," said Ben Montague, co-founder and CEO of The North American Guitar, which merged with Carter Vintage in 2022. "We're honored that the Carters have passed the baton to our team to carry on the store's legacy in this new location."

CALIFORNIA MUSIC HOF INDUCTS COWSILLS

The Cowsills, a family band formed in 1965 by brothers Bill, Bob, John, and Barry Cowsill in Newport, Rhode Island, then expanded to include sister, Susan, brother Paul, and mother, Barbara, before recording a string of pop hits, was inducted to the California Music Hall of Fame during a ceremony April 14 in Temecula.

Beginning with 1967's "The Rain The Park & Other Things" (#2 on *Billboard*, #1 on *Cash Box* that November), the group recorded a handful of hits including "Indian Lake," "Hair," and "We Can Fly." They are famously cited as the inspiration for the '70s TV sitcom "The Partridge Family."

Now comprised of Susan, Bob, and Paul, their most-recent album, *Rhythm of the World*, was reviewed in *VG*'s February '23 issue. They continue to tour, with nearly 40 dates scheduled through August. They are also members of the Rhode Island Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and the New England Music Hall of Fame.



Starr with a Custom Shop ES-345.

Charlie Starr: Andy Sapp.

CHARLIE STARR

Smoke Signals

There was a time when Blackberry Smoke would have been tagged a Southern-rock band, but today they sit at the crossroads of many styles – fist-pumping rock, country, blues, soul, and all kinds of raw Americana. Their latest, *Be Right Here*, was produced by Grammy winner Dave Cobb (Chris Stapleton, Jason Isbell) and is rife with tasty guitar, memorable lyrics, and anthems about everyday life.

Recorded at Nashville's historic RCA Studio A, as well as Cobb's own Georgia Mae Studio, in Savannah, which guitarist/frontman Charlie Starr describes as "... down in the low country and beautiful," the album features him, Paul Jackson,

and sideman Benji Shanks, the latter dropping slide on the single "Whatcha Know Good."

"This album has a swagger to it, a deep-in-the-pocket kind of feel," Starr says. "The surroundings helped give it that feel."

To learn more, *VG* checked in with Starr about his band's latest piece of wax.

How do you capture Blackberry Smoke's stage energy in the studio?

Dave Cobb is a true analog man – no click, no tuning vocals. He is very passionate and a very fast worker. He also gets in there with us, playing percussion while we're tracking. Recording a seven-piece band live is no easy feat, but Dave makes it look easy.

There's tons of guitar on the album, but the songs and lyrics still come first. How do you find that balance in the studio?

I don't feel it's difficult, because most of my songs are born from guitar riffs. We always track live together, but this time we had all our amps and drums and everything in the room. It's as natural and as real as possible. The last album was very raw, too. With this one, at times I would say, "I think we should redo that," but Dave was like, "No, leave it. That way it's magical."

You cut tracks in RCA Studio A. What makes that room special?

It is a great big space with lots of vibe. This time, we tracked with everything in the big room – drums and all. You definitely hear it.

The studio is also like a museum. Not much has been changed or updated since the reign of Chet Atkins.

"Dig a Hole" has a fat riff in the tradition of Cream, Free, and Lynyrd Skynyrd. What are a few of the touchstone bands that Blackberry Smoke evolved from?

Well, you just named three of the big ones! I think our collective influences are all over the place, but we definitely find common ground in Aerosmith, Skynyrd, Led Zeppelin, The James Gang, Little Feat, and The Rolling Stones.

Who are your guitar influences?

My Dad was my first. He plays traditional bluegrass and gospel – acoustic music. But that gradually grew to include Keith Richards and Mick Taylor, Jimmy Page, Joe Perry, and Brad Whitford, Angus and Malcolm Young, Skynyrd's Rossington, Collins, and King, Duane Allman and Dickey Betts – the list is long.

What do you and Paul Jackson play on the album?

I'm not sure how to explain how to tell us apart. I just start the songs (laughs)! The mighty Benji Shanks plays slide on "Like It Was Yesterday."

Is that a real Leslie on "Be So Lucky" or a stompbox? Such a great sound.

Yeah, that's a real Leslie. I overdubbed a clean track through an old Vox Defiant. Both were played on Dave's '64 Rose Morris Rickenbacker 330.

Which other vintage guitars do we hear?

It's a long list: a'64 ES-335, '64 330, '58 Telecaster, '63 Esquire and '62 Esquire Custom, '55 Les Paul Junior, '58 Les Paul Junior, and the '67 Rick. For acoustics, I have a 1950 D-28, '52 D-18, and a '55 J-45.

What about amps and pedals?

I had a '65 Champ, an early-'60s Magnatone Troubadour, a Supro Super, and a late-'60s Vox Defiant, plus the Leslie cab. Pedals were a '90s Menatone Red Snapper, '70s Echoplex EP-3, Analogman King Of Tone overdrive and SunFace fuzz, and a Klon KTR.

Is there a particular guitar you like composing songs on?

I generally have a guitar or two laying around my house to write with – usually an old Gibson acoustic or a Martin.

You have impressive muttonchops. Any grooming tips for readers?

Lose your trimmer! ***– Pete Prown***

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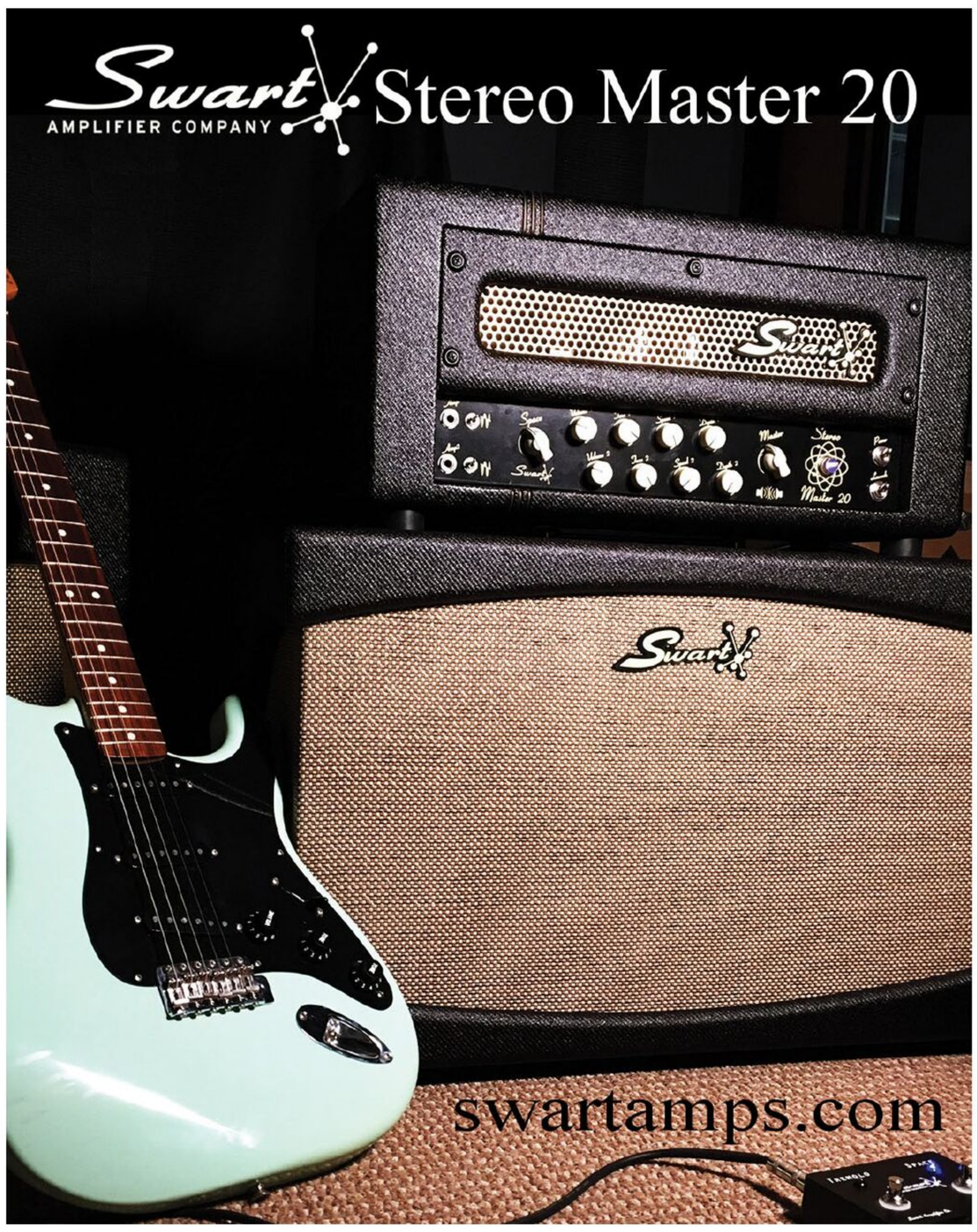

BUCK DHARMA

Tales Lost and Found

It's not often that a band releases a full album recorded 40-plus years earlier. But 11 of the 12 cuts on Blue Öyster Cult's new *Ghost Stories* are studio or rehearsal recordings made from 1978 to '83, and it's being touted as the band's last album. Vocalist/lead guitarist Donald "Buck Dharma" Roeser told *Vintage Guitar* how it came to be.

How did the idea for *Ghost Stories* come about, and why is it the band's final album?

As far as finality, that's the official plan. As far as actuality, never say never. Who knows? There may be more, but certainly after (2020's) *The Symbol Remains*, which we spent a year and a half doing and was our first studio record in almost two decades, we were looking for another thing to satisfy our Frontiers recording agreement. We came up with the idea of going back to these archival recordings featuring the original members including (bassist) Joe Bouchard and (drummer) Albert Bouchard, and, of course, (keyboardist) Allen Lanier, who passed away (in 2013). George Geranios, our live-sound mixer for decades, retrieved some multi-track recordings that were worked up but never released. We went back and, with modern tools, deconstructed the elements; we were able to update the sonics really well.

Are they songs cut from albums back then due to space limitations on vinyl, or were they just not "good" enough?

We *were* constrained to 17 minutes to an LP side, and for whatever conceptual reasons, the songs didn't fit. For *Ghost Stories*, we made a lot of effort to create an album that fit a coherent plan. I didn't hear it until it was basically finished, other than chiming in on the elements. But, to my ear, it sounds like a lost Blue Öyster Cult record, and it's very nostalgic and rewarding to hear the original members playing and singing together.

The reel-to-reel analog tapes were transferred to computer, but hats off to (current BÖC guitarist/keyboardist) Richie Castellano and (manager) Steve Schenck for the job they did remixing and producing, and also to George Geranios because he originally recorded and tracked it. It's all really good-sounding stuff.

Did you remember that these songs existed?

No, I had to dust off some neurons because for me it's out of ear, out of mind.

Was there a desire by the band to have these songs released?

I think for a lot of the bands of our era, fans love to hear anything unrevealed from that time. And again, my overarching takeaway is that it's like a new BÖC record that somehow was undiscovered.

There's a lot to be said about the chemistry and sound of the five original members together, and with drummer Rick Downey, who plays on two songs from the early '80s.

Yeah, it's very much what BÖC was in those years with (vocalist/rhythm guitarist) Eric Bloom and myself and Joe and Albert and Allen. We don't play with Joe and Albert regularly anymore, so to hear us together and put us back into that time, it's a great listen. Rick was important on some of this stuff.

Did you record any new vocals or guitar parts?

I didn't. Everything you hear from me is as it was done then.

Do you remember the guitars you used?

The main guitar was the Giuliano Balestra Vulcan with DiMarzio humbuckers. Its body was a cross between a Flying V and an Explorer – a very odd-looking guitar.

Since this is being promoted as BÖC's final album, is the band considering retiring from touring?

2022 was our 50th anniversary, and we did something like 75 shows. Last year, we did about 30, and this year we're looking at between 20 and 30. We'll see what happens. Offers still keep coming in, but we're not really looking for work at this point. We've all got families and don't want to be on the road constantly. I'd say if you want to see Blue Öyster Cult, you should see 'em now.

– Bret Adams

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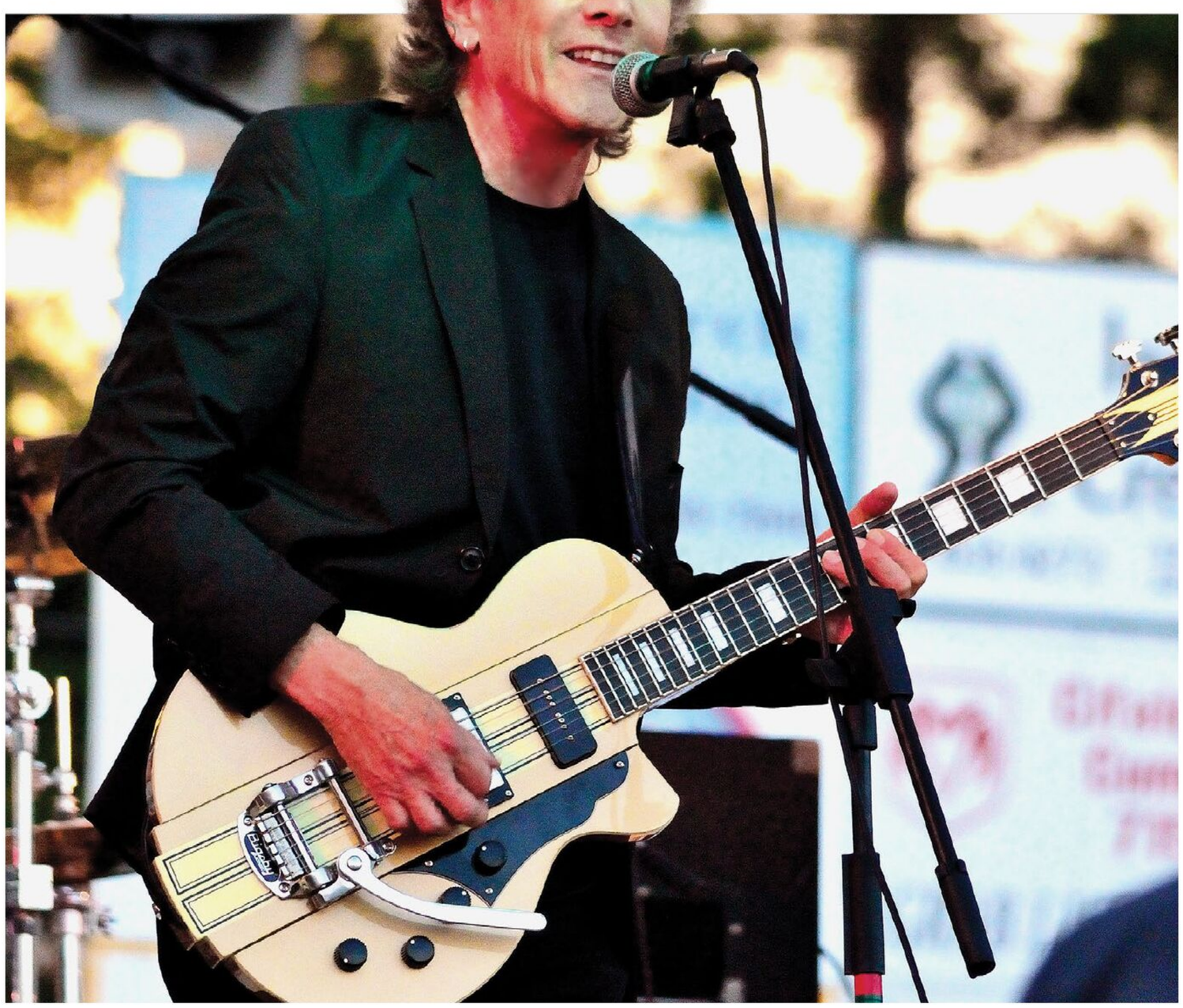

RICK VITO

Cadillac Blues-Rocker

Surveying a small sample of Rick Vito's resumé, versatility is a given. From the early '70s, he has been tapped by John Mayall, Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne, Dolly Parton, Maria Muldaur, Roy Orbison, and Boz Scaggs, and his '80s work with Bob Seger is familiar to television viewers everywhere.

He did four years touring and recording with Fleetwood Mac, and in 2020 was the obvious choice to sing and play guitar at Mick Fleetwood & Friends' tribute to Mac founder Peter Green.

Vito's 10th solo album, *Cadillac Man*, perfectly balances taste and swagger, while demonstrating another impressive tool – his hip songwriting.

When did you take up guitar?

I was seven or eight. My mom had an Oahu acoustic Hawaiian guitar that she'd played as a girl. My first good guitar was a Gibson ES-125 and a little birchwood Alamo amp. From there, I went to a Gretsch Twist model Corvette, and then I got a '63 Tele.

Who were your early influences?

I had Duane Eddy 45s and the Ventures. I tried to learn Chuck Berry, which was hard until I heard Keith Richards playing it. A pet peeve of mine is people playing crappy versions of Chuck Berry – even Jimi Hendrix at Berkeley (*Johnny B. Goode*). They never get the rhythm right – it's always too straight-ahead, not swinging. The early Stones got it better than a lot of bands.

From there, every blues guy – from Magic Sam to Otis Rush, all the Kings.

What prompted your move from Philly to Los Angeles?

In late 1970, I met Delaney & Bonnie & Friends, and they said if I wanted to get into the music business, I needed to move to L.A. So I did the next year, and they hired me to go on the road for a summer. The first record I played on was *Something, Anything* by Todd Rundgren, and I worked with Bobby Whitlock. I networked and made a living.

In '75, Steve Cropper produced a John Prine album I was on, and in '76 I did Roger McGuinn's *Thunderbyrd*. Richard Bowden, who played with Linda Ronstadt, created a palm pedal; I was trying to learn how to play country, and it sort of sounded like Clarence White's StringBender, so it fit with McGuinn. It was definitely outside my blues-rock thing, but it was fun.

Peter Green is an obvious influence. How did you come to join Fleetwood Mac?

I met Mick Fleetwood at a Billy Burnette session, and we talked about Peter, who made a big impression on me. He played so tasty, I thought, "There's something to strive for." I didn't want to be a shredder, I didn't want to play too loud; I wanted to play like that. He epitomized a great guitar personality.

Mick sat in with my band, and weeks later, Lindsey Buckingham left the band. Mick asked if I wanted to learn some songs and play with him. Afterward, he said, "If you want the gig, you're in." So I did that from '87 to '91. In 2005, he wanted to put together a Mick Fleetwood Blues Band to do stuff from the Peter Green era. He's a fun guy to play with and one of *the* best drummers.

Thanks to the commercial for Chevy trucks, everyone is familiar with your slide solo on "Like A Rock" by Bob Seger.

Tracking that song, I told Bob I wanted to put slide on it and he said, "No, I don't hear that. I don't really like slide guitar." I said, "Give me one pass." So I had to do it without really knowing the song. I played my '56 Les Paul TV through a 100-watt Dumble Overdrive Special head that Jackson Browne had given me, and a 2x12 bottom.

The first slide I heard was in "Little Red Rooster" with Brian Jones. Then, Jesse Ed Davis on Taj Mahal records. Around that time, I was getting into every blues record I could afford; Elmore James, Earl Hooker, and Robert Nighthawk were strong influences. I tried to absorb some of what Ry Cooder was doing, and I've always thought Mick Taylor was a great rock-and-roll slide player.

Which guitars are you playing on *Cadillac Man*?

I've had four signature models with Reverend Guitars. On the new album, I'm playing the Soul Agent. Versatility is the key, so I want a Fender-playing neck and pickups that can get a Fender and a Gibson sound. There's a humbucker (bridge) and a P-90 (neck), and you can pull up on the Volume knob to get a single-coil kind of sound, though it's still humbucking. Pull up on the Tone knob in the middle position, and it's out-of-phase. They all have Bigsbys, which I try to use creatively.

Is it more difficult to release albums in this age of streaming?

I don't even think of that. I do it for personal satisfaction, as an artistic statement. I don't expect to make X amount of dollars; that's not what it is anymore. It's for the love of music. If anything happens with it, all the better. ***– Dan Forte***

Rick Vito: T. Daniel.

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KAY-TA MATSUNO

Instrumental Ponderinwgs

Few – if any – other guitarists claim a movie character as their first musical inspiration, as is the case for Kay-Ta Matsuno.

"My Dad was an avid listener of classical music," the Osaka-born jazzer recalled. "He took me to an orchestra concert when I was young, and I took classical piano lessons since I was five years old. There was no guitar or guitar-oriented music around when I was growing up, until I saw *Back to the Future* on VHS. Other guitar players would name Hendrix, Clapton, or Van Halen as their first inspiration, I had to name Marty McFly or Michael J. Fox as my first lightning-shock experience (laughs)!"

Kay-Ta moved to the U.S. in 1996 to study jazz at Berklee College of Music.

"I was doing session work in Japan, but not for major-label artists," he recalled. "I thought studying jazz would be the best way to deeply understand music."

The relocation paid dividends as he was offered numerous recording and backing gigs, and he has since nurtured a career on his own terms.

His third album, *Distance*, was recorded at his home studio in Van Nuys, and he played every instrument except drums on one track; acoustics included a Martin HD-28, Taylor 314, Cordoba 55FCE, and a Manuel Rodriguez. The electrics heard are a Saito S-622, a '68 Telecaster, and a five-string Squire Jazz Bass.

He recorded the new album in a style that differed from his two previous solo works.

"I guess the biggest difference is the concept, which was to use acoustic guitar as a core of the music" he said. "I chose more electronic drum sounds and synth-bass to make the guitar stand out."

While *Distance* is an instrumental album, his mission was to "comment" on recent sociopolitical issues without adding lyrics to his songs.

"Words are powerless and flimsy sometimes, and when you open your mouth, there is always a chance to hurt somebody's feelings," he opined. "I would rather vent out my view through my music, without words."

The first single, "Distance," takes its title from the pandemic, when seven of the album's 10 tracks were written and recorded.

"'Distance' means something completely different since the pandemic. No matter how much you wanted to get close to someone, you had to maintain six feet of distance from each other. You can see them but you can't touch them. This song describes that kind of sentiment."

"Smog Free," another pandemic-inspired composition, might strike listeners as a soundtrack for a movie or television show.

"Once, I was working as an assistant writer for a film composer, and it was a tough job. There was no way that I could maintain my chops live and pursue a composer's way of life at the same time. I am not there yet, but I want to become a musician whom some director would find interesting, and who would want to work with me. I have a huge respect for film composers."

Kay-Ta interpolated some intriguing sonic trickery. For example, what sounds like a buzzing funk bass on the introduction to "Push It Back" is actually his HD-28 doubled with a synth bass.

Asked about personal favorite passages on *Distance*, he cites the main arpeggio phrase in "Smog Free."

"That is deceptively challenging, but it serves as an atmospheric effect rather than a noodle shred, and I enjoy playing it live in concert. If I had to name another passage, I would say my electric-guitar solo on 'Kraken.' That one was one take, with no punch-ins. I did have several attempts, but that particular solo was played from the beginning to the end, with no stop. I think it's one of the best solos I have ever played in terms of tone, phrasing, flow, and ideas."

The guitarist has also started what he calls "an alternative chamber music group" called the Kay-Ta Crypto String Society.

"It's a gateway to my ultimate goal, which is a 50-piece hybrid orchestra. In order to get there, I need to be out there and be known. And I know it won't come overnight, but I am very persistent." ***– Willie G. Moseley***

Kay-Ta Matsuno: Ryoko Inamura.

RICHIE FAULKNER

Indomitable Spirit

Making good music isn't easy, even for bands with a boatload of iconic albums under their studded-leather belts. Judas Priest has weathered many a storm, from pandemics to Parkinson's to band drama, but continues to thrive thanks to the indomitable spirit of guitarist Richie Faulkner His creative energy was pivotal in the creation of the band's latest album, *Invincible Shield*.

Did *Invincible Shield* take a long time to record?

We had some of the songs kicking around in early 2020; we were writing just before the pandemic hit, but couldn't get together to record. Once the lockdown was lifted, we recorded between legs of a tour. We'd play, then have four weeks off, so we'd get guitars and drums done, then go back out. We recorded some of the bass in hotel rooms. There's always a challenge when you're making a record, and it becomes the story of the album. The challenge kind of makes it what it is.

How does writing happen?

Me, Rob Halford, and Glenn Tipton get together for sessions, and songs start as riffs and demos we have individually. I might have a couple, Glenn might have a couple, and if they match, we put them together. We add lyrics and make demos, which is what we had before the pandemic – basic structures of songs that are strong enough for an album. Then I work on guitar parts and solos.

Are your solos improvised?

I usually don't work out solos, but for this one I had time to construct them. Usually, I play three or four takes – little motifs that tend to stick. Subconsciously, they become the solo. I keep those parts and see what else I can come up with, then build the solo from the vibe and energy of the song.

The solo on "Crown of Thorns" is absolutely killin'.

That one is a reference to the intro, but I let it go into its own thing. I like to keep the solo relevant to the song. When you're younger, you think speed is king, but when you grow up, you realize the slower and more-melodic the solo, the more it resonates and connects. Faster might be flashy, but it doesn't speak to people as much. Slow it down, play what's appropriate, and have a good melody and strong emotion rather than a blaze of notes.

In light of Glenn Tipton being diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, how much did he contribute?

It's hard to quantify. We add bits to each other's ideas and if Glenn can play his ideas, he plays them. If he can't, he translates them through me; he has good days and bad days. He brought some songs that were really great – "Sons of Thunder," "Escape From Reality," and "Vicious Circle" are all Glenn's and you can hear his style all over them.

Onstage at the 2021 Louder Than Life Festival in Kentucky, you suffered an acute aortic dissection within an aneurysm – an extremely life-threatening condition that only about 20 percent of people survive. What do you remember about it?

During the solo to "Painkiller," the last song in our set, I felt some pain in my chest. If I had known what it was, I would have rushed offstage straight away, but all I knew in the moment was that I was playing and there's 50,000 people watching. Luckily, medics were backstage and they took me to the hospital, which was three minutes away. My brain shut down, my body shut down, and I went into shock. But I made it through, and we were back onstage five months later.

What's your number one guitar?

I have two number ones – my original black Gibson Flying V, which has the double pickguard and EMG pickups. That's the one my signature guitar is based on. Last year, we released a Custom Shop version, which is blue and has a one-piece body and neck, ebony fretboard, a Floyd Rose, and the Judas Priest emblem on the truss cover – no Tone knob because it has enough tone without it (laughs)! We also did an Epiphone version in 2017.

I love both guitars – they're my babies (laughs). I have different guitars for different jobs, which include a couple of beautiful Les Pauls I take on the road, but mainly, it's the two Flying Vs.

You're set to announced a partnership with EMG, right?

Yes, I have signature pickups coming out, based on their 57/66 set. ***– Oscar Jordan***

Richie Faulkner: James Hodge.

W.C. CLARK

1939-2024

After seeing a member of country band Jimmy Heap and the Melody Makers playing a homemade washtub bass, W.C. Clark recalled, "I made a guitar out of 2x4s and bailing wire. I figured if he could do that with one string, I could do it with six strings."

Wesley Curley "W.C." Clark, fondly dubbed Austin's "Godfather of the Blues," passed away March 2. He was 84. He was loved and respected for his music as well as his mentorship of younger musicians, including some future stars.

At 16, the native Austinite joined T.D. Bell & the Cadillacs, playing bass in "Eastside" black clubs. In the early 1960s, he began a six-year stint with Henry "Blues Boy" Hubbard and the Jets at Charlie's Playhouse, where they were the house band.

"We worked in tuxedos," he told *The Austin Chronicle* in 1998. "I learned meaningful things I still use in my performances today. They made me professional."

There, he met R&B hitmaker Joe Tex, who recruited W.C. to go on the road.

In the early '70s, Clark formed Southern Feeling with singer Angela Strehli and guitarist/pianist Denny Freeman, but when the group dissolved, he quit music to work as an auto mechanic.

In '77, keyboardist Mike Kindred formed Triple Threat Revue with Stevie Ray Vaughan and Lou Ann Barton.

"Stevie and I went over to McMorris Ford, where W.C. was an ace mechanic, and ran our spiel on him," Kindred recounts. "We said, 'Come on, man, let's form the greatest band in town.' I'd written 'Cold Shot' in 1971, with a walking bass line. W.C. started playing a riff, and we all went, 'Whoa!' That's why I cut him in as co-writer. When you hear that bass line, you know what song you're listening to. I told him, 'You just made this tune a hit.'"

The song became a staple in the repertoire of Vaughan's subsequent Double Trouble.

Though a stellar guitarist, Clark explained to *Blues Blast* in 2016, "Stevie needed someone that knew what they were doing on bass, to kick him and not drag him back. I joined him to do just that."

"W.C. was the teacher and mentor and friend to all the white kids, who were in their early 20s and didn't know crap," Kindred added. "He stood out from the rest of the older musicians in his outreach to us and his generosity to teach. Of course, just playing with him was a learning experience in itself."

In '79, the Sexton brothers, Will and Charlie, got some training from Clark – at nine and 11, respectively.

"We were the special guests as an oddity of children in a bar," Will remembers. "W.C. was one of the very first musicians to get me onstage and mentor me. The most valuable thing I learned from him was his core. He would venture out to various styles, yet keeping such a personalized sound."

Clark's guitar playing could be gritty or sophisticated. Despite his blues handle, his soulful vocals were closer to Al Green than Muddy Waters.

In '89, at the urging of Casey Monahan, director of the Texas Music Office, "Austin City Limits" staged a 50th-birthday tribute to Clark, with disciples Stevie Ray, Sexton, and Jimmie Vaughan joining him.

"At that time, it was rare that you were featured on 'ACL' if you didn't have a national release," Monahan points out. "W.C. was a wonderful person who deserved more respect and love. His voice, the tone of his guitar, his smile, his willingness to help other people – he was a heavy soul."

In 1997, Clark was at the wheel when his fiancé and drummer were killed in a car accident. It inspired the moving original "Are You Here, Are You There."

The recipient of three W.C. Handy/Blues Music awards, Clark was inducted to the Texas Heritage Songwriters' Association Hall of Fame in 2023.

"His songs didn't sound generic," said Hammond Scott, who signed Clark to Black Top Records. "He was cutting new ground. His guitar playing always had a coloring or chord voicing or turn of phrase totally unique and recognizable. There were no wasted notes, no accidents; it was perfect economy, strongly melodic, and always building with that beautiful loose and funky picking style."

"I was fortunate to play on and produce four of W.C. Clark's best-known CDs, and it was always magical to work with him," added saxophonist Mark "Kaz" Kazanoff. "A gifted singer, wonderful guitarist, and excellent songwriter, W.C. was so connected with the beautiful world of soul and blues. Every time we got to make music together, he would teach me something. He was a true gentleman with a heart of gold."

Vicky Moerbe, his manager for 35 years, reports that he was gigging and seemed healthy, but on Thursday, February 22, he appeared at a venue he had been booked to play on *Mondays*. "He was acting irrationally, and was taken to the hospital," she said. Diagnosed with cancer, he passed eight days later.

Thanks to his many peers who wrote letters, Clark was buried in the Texas State Cemetery, a true place of honor. ***– Dan Forte***

W.C. Clark: Max Crace.

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RHANDY SIMMONS

Low Tones in the Lone Star State

Bassist Rhandy Simmons' resumé includes regular onstage jams with Stevie Ray Vaughan and membership in Roomful of Blues as well as Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets.

Born in Garland, Texas, Simmons was yet another babyboomer who asked for a guitar after seeing The Beatles on Ed Sullivan. He played in country bands before gravitating to Texas blues.

"I started playing in country bars around 1968, when I was 15," he recalled. "An older guy who needed a bass player masqueraded as my father so I could do the gigs."

His first instruments were a "dolphin-nose" Silvertone 1444, followed by a Fender Precision. He moved to Kansas and went on the road with a band called the Cross Country Express, using a rare four-string.

"I used to collect Ampeg scroll-heads and Baby Basses," he said. "I bought my first in 1970 from Larry Morgan at Arnold and Morgan Music Mart. It had the 'mystery pickup' under the bridge."

In an improbable exchange, in 1985, Preston Hubbard left the Boston jump-blues band Roomful of Blues to join the Fabulous Thunderbirds, and was replaced by Simmons, who had to quickly take up a different instrument.

"I had never played upright until I joined Roomful," he said. "I started on a '52 Kay, but soon switched to my Baby Bass."

After a year on the road with Roomful, he returned to Houston, where he met Alan Haynes and Uncle John Turner.

Simmons and his Robin Medley bass onstage with Stevie Ray Vaughan.

"I did a couple of European tours with them, and along the way met Freddie Cisneros, the manager at the Rockin' Robin music shop. I played bass in Freddie's band, Little Junior One Hand and the Blasting Caps. He was kind enough to give me a part-time sales job, and I worked there between tours until I moved back to Dallas to join Anson and the Rockets, with Sam Myers."

During Simmons' time at Rockin' Robin, the store's Robin guitar brand was thriving, and he recalled offering input on the design of the then-new Medley bass, touted as the first with three pickups – two single-coils and a humbucker.

"I recommended that the single coils be wound in a humbucking configuration, because I really like the thunder of the single-coil pickups on early Precisions and Ampegs," he recalled. "I also thought a humbucker by the bridge would provide the low-mid definition of the early Music Man Sting Ray."

Simmons played a red Medley and used it on numerous studio recordings, including Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets' 1987 album, *Sins*, which won four W.C. Handy blues awards. His primary instrument was still a Baby Bass, but he appeared on the album cover with a doghouse bass.

"That belonged to a buddy, Tony Dukes," he said. "We used it for the photo shoot because it looked the part."

A regular Monday gig with Funderburgh at the Dallas joint Poor David's Pub saw Stevie Ray Vaughan jam with the band more than once.

"When he wasn't touring, Stevie would sit in from time to time. The moment he walked through the door, everyone knew they were about to be rocketed to another dimension. He'd show up with no guitar, no amp... he'd grab Anson's '59 Strat."

Simmons' career lasted for many years and aw him back guitar luminaries including Albert Collins and Johnny Copeland. He eventually opened Siesta Ranch Studios, in Gilmer, where numerous musicians have recorded, including Kacey Musgraves (Simmons co-produced her first album), Mike Morgan (*Ain't Worried No More*), and country band Perfect Stanger.

These days, Simmons is retired from music and serves as a fishing guide on Lake Fork.

"Every once in a while, I get together with some friends to do some porch picking," he said. "The idea of crawling on a tour bus doesn't excite me much anymore. I had my day and they tell me I had a good time! I'm one of the luckiest men on Earth for having been able to spend time playing with some of the greatest musicians in the world." **– *Willie G. Moseley* VG**

Photos courtesy of Rhandy Simmons.

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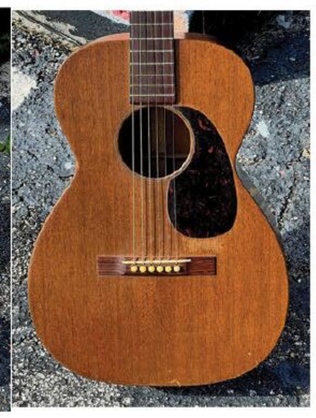
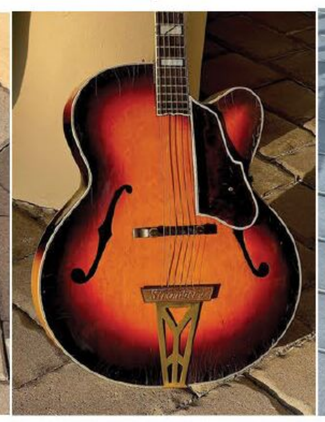

1941 Martin 0-15
Tortoise Headstock

1947 Martin 000-21
rare Tapered Braces !

1965 Martin D-28
"Brazilian Rosewood"

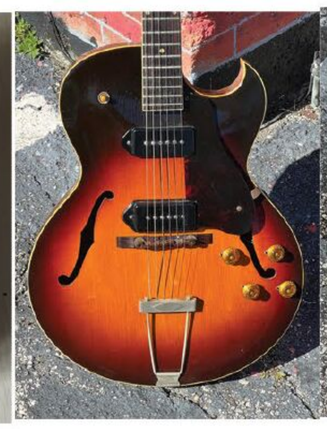
1968 Martin D-28
"Brazilian Rosewood"

1935 Vivi-Tone Acoustic
Very Rare early issue


1950 Stromberg
G-3 Cutaway 1 of 6

1957 Gibson L-5C
Factory Acoustic

1958 Kay Barney Kessel
Pro "In The Wrapper"


1959 Gibson Prototype
ES-125TCD 1st one !

1967 Gibson ES-125TDC
1 owner from new

1968 Epiphone Howard
· Roberts all original

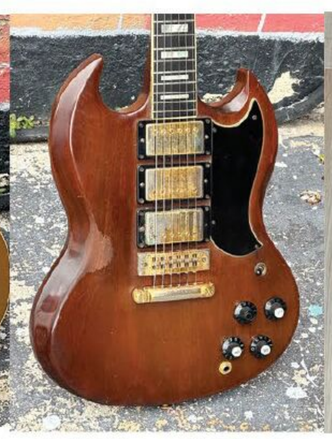
1968 Gibson L-7CES
1-off Sharp Cutaway

1959 Gibson Les Paul
Junior tons of tone !

1966 Gibson SG Custom
fabulous "Polaris White"

1967 Gibson Flying V
RARE w/orig.case

1970 Gibson Les Paul
Deluxe the 1st issue

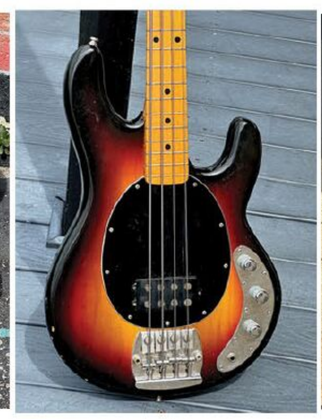

1974 Gibson SG Custom
a beat sweet rare axe !

1978 Gibson Les Paul
Custom Silver'burst

2008 Gibson LP Std.
R8 Murphy-aged 50th

2008 Gibson Les Paul
SG'61 VOS Reissue

1961 Hofner 191 4/6
String Doubleneck


1978 Music Man
Stingray Bass String-Thru

2004 Music Man
Bongo HH-4 Bass

1964 Gibson Thunderbird
II Bass "Polaris White"

1964 Gibson EB-2D
rare "Argentine Gray"

1999 Gibson Flying V
Bass Reissue 1 of 1

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4000 Bass 1 of 50 ever

1967 Rickenbacker
4000 Bass Fireglo

1967 Rickenbacker
4000 Bass Mapleglo

1971 Rickenbacker
4001 Bass Fireglo

1972 Rickenbacker
4000/4001S Bass

1976 Rickenbacker
4001 "Fretless"

1977 Rickenbacker
4001 Fatcory "Lefty"

1986 Rickenbacker
4003 "Fretless"

1958 Fender Precision
Bass nice Gold Refin

1960 Fender Precision
Bass 1 owner Slab Neck

1960 Fender Precision
Bass nice LPB Refin

1961 Fender Jazz Bass
See-Thru Blonde "Stack"

1966 Fender Jazz Bass
Perfect "Fiesta Red"

1969 Fender Jazz Bass
Rare Factory Black

2003 Fender Jazz Bass
5 Marcus Miller USA

2020 Fender Precision
Tony Franklin Fretless

A first-year (1986) Charvel Model 4.

THE CHARVEL MODEL 4

BY MICHAEL WRIGHT
THE DIFFERENT STRUMMER

Certain guitar brands develop a mystique among aficionados – sometimes it's even deserved! Somewhere on this continuum lie Charvel USA guitars made in the early '80s in San Dimas, California. Curiously, that "San Dimas guitar" mystique didn't rub off to its foreign cousins like the Model 4 – the fine Japanese-made Charvels produced beginning in 1986.

Japanese Charvels were the result of a collision between the dominance of '80s heavy metal, the maturation of Asian guitarmaking, and the realities of economics. American-made Charvels were the namesake of Wayne Richard Charvel, who began making guitars as a teenager in the 1960s. In the early '70s, Charvel worked as a refinisher for Fender. In '74, he opened a repair shop in Azusa, California, which in '76 became Charvel Manufacturing, offering a variety of parts so you could "build your own." Charvel had an assistant named Grover Jackson. In '77, Charvel Manufacturing ran into financial problems, and in '78, Jackson bought the company from his boss, becoming Jackson/Charvel.

That same year, Edward Van Halen brought attention to the name when he appeared playing a Charvel "parts" guitar. After supplying guitars to B.C. Rich and basses to Music Man, in 1980 the Charvel line of bolt-neck solidbody electric guitars and basses appeared, basically variations on Fender models. Even though Van Halen soon jumped ship and hooked up with Floyd Rose and Kramer guitars, Charvels found a steady clientele, and the brand prospered. In 1983, Charvels with the more-familiar pointy/droopy headstock appeared. When American manufacturing ceased in '86, Charvel had produced nearly 6,000 guitars.

Meanwhile, the Japanese juggernaut of the '70s continued into the '80s, though while Japanese quality continued to excel, unfavorable exchange rates made it increasingly difficult to import them. Rewind. Two enterprising Americans named Jerry Freed and Tommy Moore started the International Music Corporation (IMC) in Fort Worth, Texas. In 1969, they traveled to Korea and, transferring Japanese technology and techniques, established the budget Hondo brand. Cheaper Hondos were made in Korea, but its better models were produced in Japan. The Hondo brand thrived into the '80s.

Desiring to garner some of the hard-rock-player market, in 1985, IMC entered a licensing agreement with Jackson/Charvel to produce Charvel guitars in Japan. Chu Shin Gakki, in Matsumoto City, was awarded the business and samples were sent. It was this contract that ended the early phase of Robin guitar imports and thrust that brand into U.S. manufacturing. In 1986, IMC purchased the Jackson/Charvel company and that year, the first Japanese-made Charvels appeared in the U.S. Jackson-brand guitars continued to

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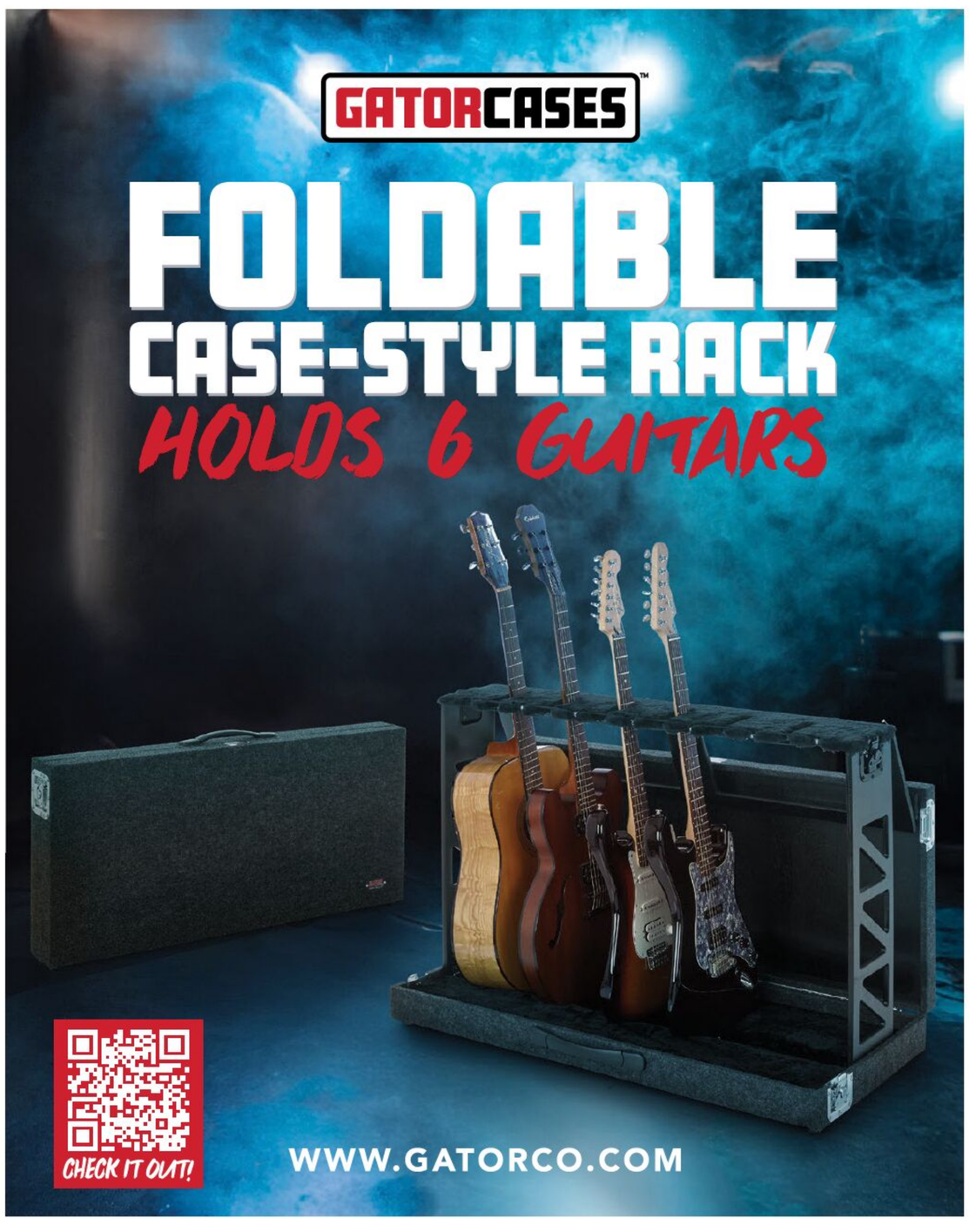

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be produced in the U.S., though Asian-made Jacksons soon appeared.

Basically, there were six models of Chu Shin Charvels in ’86. At the top of the line were the Models 6 and 5, with a two-octave neck-through down-sized bodies called Dinky. Both had American-made Jackson active electronics. The Model 6 had a bound fingerboard with the ubiquitous “shark’s teeth” inlays, the Model 5 was unbound with dots. Models 4 and lower had bolt-on necks with regulation Strat-style bodies, all unbound dot-necks. Models 3 and lower had passive Jackson pickups; Model 3 (humbucker/single/single, locking vibrato), 3A (two humbuckers), Model 2 (single humbucker, locking vibrato), Model 1 (one humbucker, maple fretboard, traditional vibrato), and Model 1A (pickguard, three single-coils, traditional vibrato). A number of examples were “off-catalog.”

The Model 4 was at the top of the bolt-neck line, with the same hardware and active electronics as the 6. Its thin, quartersawn rock maple neck has a satin finish and a wide, flat fingerboard. The body is basswood – medium weight, but solid. The single-coils are Jackson J200s; the humbucker a J50BC with “accentuated high frequency.” Like most good active pickup systems, it has a clean, wide frequency response with no noise. The toggles are on/off for each pickup, the vibrato is a Kahler Standard, and controls are one Volume, one Tone, and a pre-amp midrange boost/cut. The nut is phenolic.

The Chu Shin Model 4 proved highly successful for IMC – so much so that in 1987 they upgraded it with a bound fingerboard and shark’s teeth inlays. This example carries serial number 227735 – lacking any apparent date encoding.

Under the IMC/Jackson hegemony, the Charvel line continued to expand, and some fine and innovative guitars were produced. In ’89, the Charvette, made in Korea, was introduced. In the early/mid ’90s, IMC was hit by bad economic news, and parts of the company were sold. Charvel electrics disappeared. In ’97, IMC’s assets were sold to Akai Electric Company, leaving only the Jackson brand. In 2002, the entire kit and caboodle were sold to Fender, which to this day produces some very beautiful guitars and basses made in Asia. Wayne Charvel and his son, Michael, make and sell guitars remarkably similar to the original Charvel USAs under the Wayne brand name.

Charvel guitars conjure a fascinating time in American guitar history when shred was the name of the game. American production lasted less than six years. Japanese production lasted about the same. Korean production probably didn’t last as long. Quite a few were sold, but no real information on production totals is available, so we have no idea how rare this guitar is (or isn’t). These Japanese Charvels may not have the caché of the American models, but if you play electric guitar and this was your only option, you would be happy with a guitar this nice!

This feature originally appeared in the August ’13 issue.

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The DeArmond R5T

BY DAVE HUNTER

When talk amongst vintage-amp aficionados turns to "best-sounding small combos," bids for the early Fender Princeton or Deluxe, Vox AC15, or Marshall 18-watter are often trumped by the relatively few who have experienced the glories of a DeArmond. But those who know are passionate about the sound of those diminutive creations from northern Ohio.

1961 DEARMOND R5T COMBO

- Preamp tubes: two 12AX7
- Output tubes: one 6V6GT
- Rectifier: 6X4
- Controls: Volume, Tone, tremolo Depth and Rate
- Speakers: 10" Jensen Alnico P10R in original production models
- Output: approximately 5 watts RMS

DeArmond is best known for its pickups of the 1950s and '60s; the Rhythm Chief 1000 helped amplify many jazz greats of the era, the Model 2000 single-coils (a.k.a. "Dynasonic") populated Gretsch guitars of the '50s along with some Guild and Martin electrics, and the "gold foil" pickups supplied to numerous catalog-guitar makers have earned a reputation often well above that of the guitars themselves.

DeArmond's guitar amps, on the other hand, are far less known, yet guitarists who

Amp and photos courtesy of Leon Chalnick.

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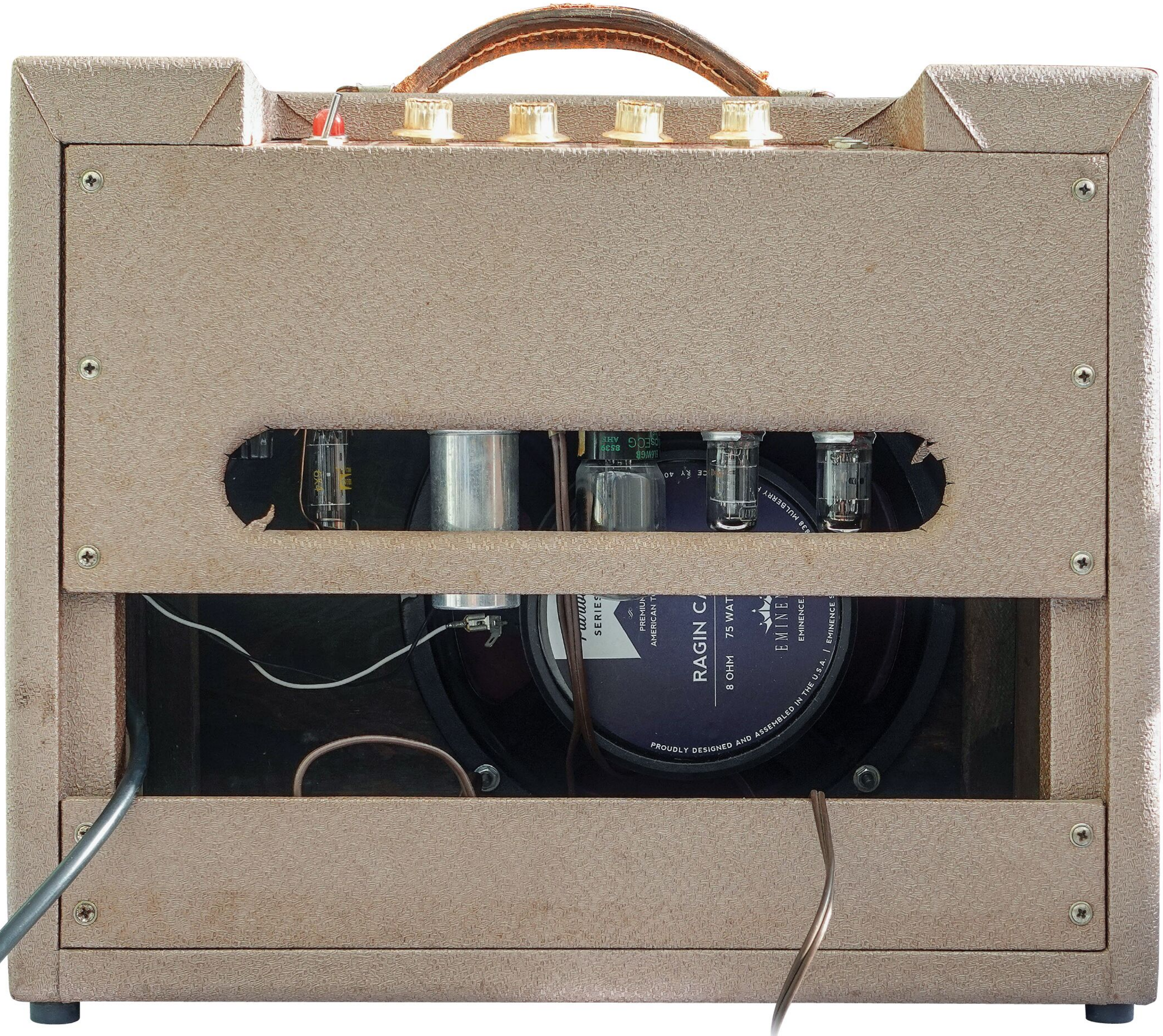


This R5T's underpowered original 10" Jensen Alnico speaker has been replaced with a modern Eminence Ragin Cajun.

have spent quality time with them often concede that they're the finest gear ever produced by the company.

In May of 2014, we profiled the '61 Martin 112T – a re-badged DeArmond R15T which, behind either brand name, is acclaimed by many as the best-sounding small combo ever made. And the perplexing thing is that it ousted late-'50s Fenders from the top slot even while sporting a circuit and overall design that looks very much like it; a few different signal capacitors, larger transformers, and a hotter preamp tube in the first position all add up to a better-sounding 15-watt 1x12" (the R15T's tremolo is a bonus, but the same applies to the tremolo-less R15). All of this made a DeArmond R15T/Martin 112T a great find on the vintage market before the word was out, and either rendition will now likely cost you as much or more than its erstwhile (and formerly more-collectible) Fender rival.

Enter the R15T's smaller brother, the R5T. A few years ago, vintage-amp enthusiast Leon Chalnick was yet another guitarist in search of the amp everyone suddenly wanted, when a respected authority on vintage guitar tone steered him in an alternative direction.

"I'm not normally into single-ended amps, so the R5T was not an amp that I thought I'd be interested in," Chalnick says. "I was, however, interested in its well-known and highly respected big brothers, the R15 and R15T. I'd been inquiring about these amps and got into a discussion with renowned guitarist Steve Kimock (see "Classics" in the May '24 issue), who shared his thoughts and experiences with DeArmond amps, and told me that in his opinion, while the R15s were great-sounding, the little single-ended R5T had the real magic. So, I set about looking for one."

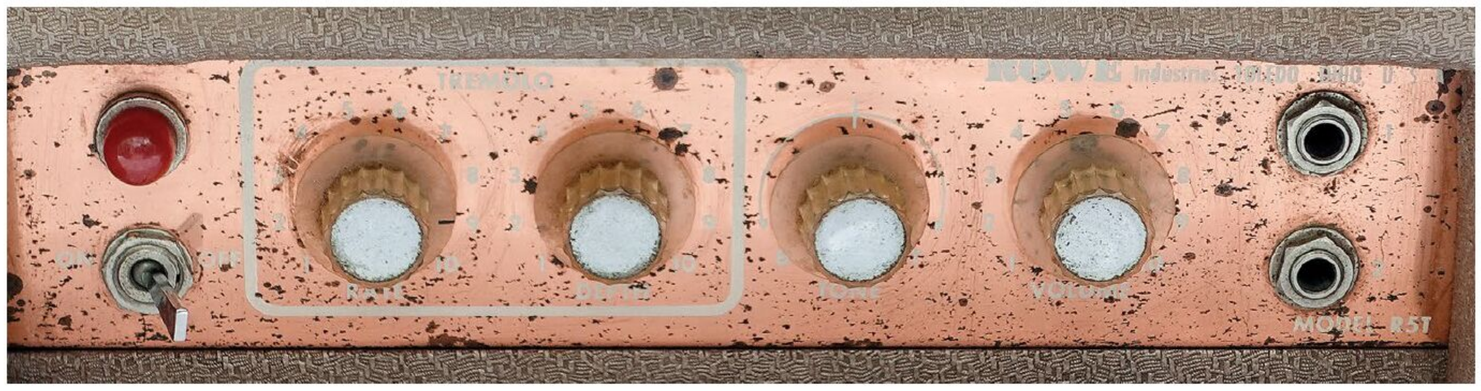
DeArmond pickups, amplifiers, effects, and accessories were made by Rowe Industries, in Toledo, with the peak of the collaboration stretching from around 1940 to the late '60s. Harry DeArmond and Bud Rowe were both born in 1906, 550 miles apart in Clinton, Kentucky, and Toledo, respectively. DeArmond's proficiency on guitar, banjo, and piano took him north, where he played in several bands, while his design and electronics prowess caught the attention of the young entrepreneur Rowe,

who was trained in the broader applications of consumer electronics. DeArmond signed on as a consultant with Rowe Industries in the mid '30s, and in 1941 the pair put their names on what is widely recognized as the first stand-alone effects unit for guitar and other amplified instruments, the Tremolo Control.

For all the great products designed by DeArmond and manufactured by Rowe in the decades that followed, the amplifiers are among some of the best-sounding, thanks to Harry DeArmond's finely-tuned ears. And as touched upon above, there's minor enigma attached to this consensus since the R15T and R5T are perhaps 90 percent similar to their Fender counterparts in design and features. Yet, as any clued-in tonesmith will acknowledge, everything makes a difference, and often it's the handful of minor alterations that really push a design over the top.

Chalnick, who has worked on his own vintage amps for many years, has his own thoughts on what makes the R5T special.

"The R5T design is simple enough," he said. "The one unusual thing about the circuit is the 650k Tone pot, which is damn near impossible to find nowadays! I'm not sure how much of an impact it really has. And, not only is the 6X4 an unusual rectifier tube, but the design employs a 500-Ohm, five-watt resistor before the first filter cap, which is also unusual. It also has a little bit more robust filtering than a Champ, starting out with a 40-uF electrolytic filter cap. Those design elements *do* contribute to the very robust sound of this amp.



Despite the pitting and aging, the R5T's pink-chrome control panel presents a stylish piece of mid-century "diner" aesthetic, right down to the clear knobs with silver inserts.

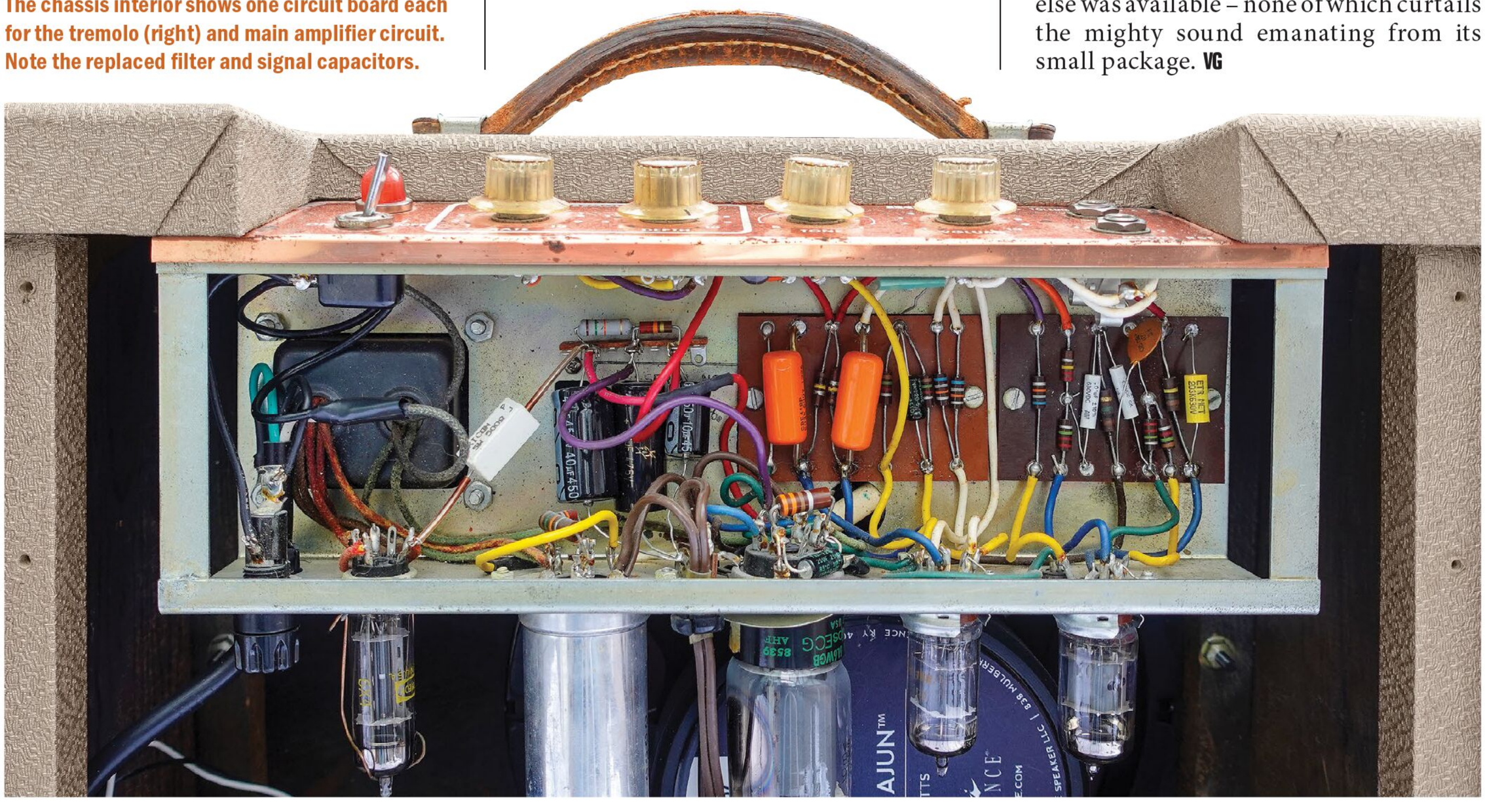
"Then there are two special things about the way the amp was designed and built. First, the power and output transformers are substantial for such a small amp. Second, by building a larger cab and putting a 10" speaker in it rather than an 8", like a Champ, you wind up with a much bigger, much more natural guitar sound, with much better low-end."

As required to keep most older tube amps functional, Chalnick replaced some filter and signal capacitors in the R5T, and replaced the unidentifiable (and under-powered) original speaker with a suitable modern 10". In addition, he likes to run the amp with a 6L6 output tube rather than the single 6V6 it was designed for.

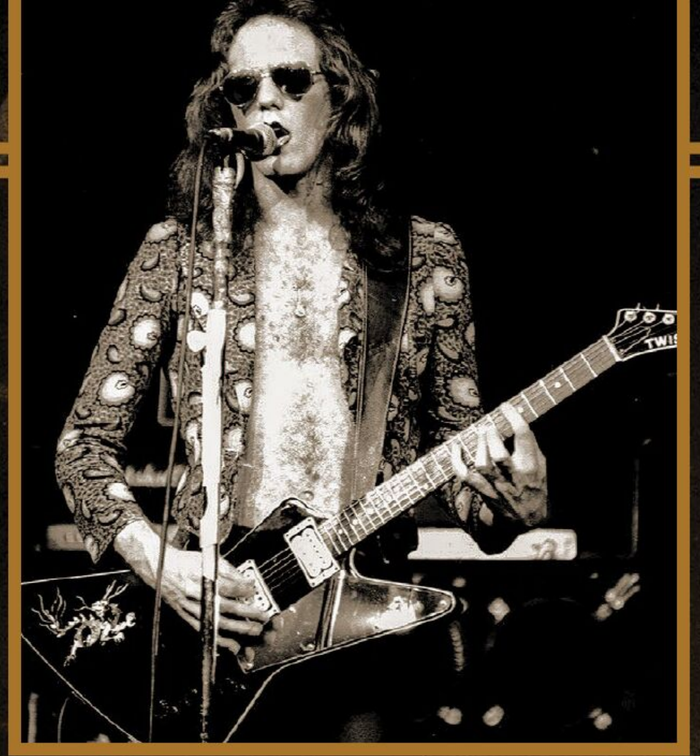
"There may be a primary-impedance mismatch, but it's not vast, and the amp really sounds great with it," he noted. "I've had three other R5Ts come across my bench, and all sounded better with 6V6s. So, who knows?"

One other interesting anomaly regarding this R5T is that it appears to have been built some years after the original run. Most records indicate Rowe manufactured them in 1960-'61 (which is why we have dated this as such elsewhere), but this one carries a power transformer dated '64, along with some oddities in the layout of the chassis holes and a few other non-standard details, yet all apparently factory original. Given the rough-and-ready "homebrew" nature of some Rowe/DeArmond creations, it's not inconceivable that this amp was cobbled from leftover components and whatever else was available – none of which curtails the mighty sound emanating from its small package. **VG**

The chassis interior shows one circuit board each for the tremolo (right) and main amplifier circuit. Note the replaced filter and signal capacitors.



Jay Jay French and Eddie Ojeda in ’76 with their Ibanez Destroyers, and French (inset) with his after Steve Carr’s handiwork.



French/Ojeda 1976: Michael Kagan, courtesy of Jay Jay French. Jay Jay French with Ibanez Destroyer: John Peden.

Classics

Bar-band grinders with nearly 3,000 gigs in their back pockets, when Twisted Sister began recording its major-label debut 40 years ago, they were already on shaky ground.

Signed by Atlantic Records A&R guy Jason Flom, TS faced pushback from label president Doug Morris, who wasn’t shy about his distaste for the group and its “car wash in a whore-house” costumes and makeup (per fashion critic Richard Blackwell in one of his “Worst Dressed” lists). Nonetheless, with producer Tom Werman, in early January of 1984 they entered the Record Plant in New York City with 10 songs written by frontman Dee Snider. A few didn’t make the grade with Werman, so he had them consider a handful of Saxon demos.

Tensions rose. Further complicating things, Werman wasn't feeling the vibe at Record Plant, and after a couple of weeks moved the band to Los Angeles so they could work at his home turf, Cherokee Studios. There, engineer Jeff Workman tracked most of the vocals with Snider.

Guitarists Jay Jay French and Eddie Ojeda hauled their favorite axes to L.A. – Ojeda an early Charvel superstrat made by Grover Jackson, French an Ibanez Destroyer and '78 Les Paul Standard, both of which had been customized by Steve Carr (d. 2006), who apprenticed with Jimmy D'Aquisto before building Gene Simmons' first axe-shaped bass as well as Les Paul copies with smoke bombs and rocket launchers for Ace Frehley.

French's Destroyer matched one bought by Ojeda the same day in 1976, when Ibanez was doing its best to re-create korina-bodied Gibsons. But, as Twisted Sister's sound came together and their stage personas became increasingly brash, the Destroyers' tone and plain-jane looks weren't working. Ojeda eventually set his aside, while French took another route...

"We were playing through 100-watt Marshalls at that point, going for a crunchy metal sound, and the original pickups sounded way too thin, so I put a set of DiMarzio Super Distortions in mine. Then, a year or so after we bought them, I decided it needed to be more ostentatious – something that would fit onstage with a bunch of cross-dressers," he laughed.

"So, I went to Steve's house and asked, 'What could we do with this?' And he goes, 'Well.... what if we put a pearl dragon on the fin and inlay "Twisted Sister" on the headstock?' I went, 'That sounds *cool*.' He goes, 'How about binding on the body?' I think he charged me $250.

"After seeing the Destroyer, Dee suggested I have Steve paint my Les Paul pink to match his mic stand and our stage backup with the band's logo. I liked the idea, even though my stage colors were black and yellow (laughs). So, I took it Steve, and while we were at it had him put my name on the headstock and install a set of DiMarzio X2Ns.

Carr came up with the "pinkburst" and... "It looked amazing," French said.

Both necks also fit his taste, the Destroyer's being thin (like a late-'50s Gibson), the pinkburst's being "pretty slim for a Paul."

Ojeda first caught wind of the Charvel brand in early 1983, during a stop at Gracin's Music, on Long Island.

Following a prompt from a salesman, he placed an order.

"I asked for something with pink and black circles," he said in a 2014 interview with *VG*. "I wasn't expecting a bullseye – and I wasn't sure how much I liked the way it looked – but I loved the way it played and sounded, and it became part of who I am."

He used the guitar on the road for a decade before wear and tear forced its retirement, after which he sold it. In 1993, Wayne Charvel made a replica he has used since.

Anyway... Back at Cherokee, Werman rented Marshall heads from Andy Brauer at Studio Rentals, Inc. (SRI), but, "We had a hard time with them," French told *VG* in '14. "So, Tom asked Andy to help us get a better guitar tone, and he brought in these Dumble amps – Andy raved about how good they were. Well... *not* for a metal band, sorry! So, we insisted that our 50-watt Marshalls be flown to L.A."

As had been custom, solos on *Stay Hungry* were split depending on the song.

"I'm not territorial about guitar parts," said French. "If you feel something and can write it so it makes sense, by all means, play it. Eddie has a style and I have a style, and we knew who played what more naturally. He is a much more schooled player, more precise, and can replicate his parts perfectly every day. I'm more of a jazz guy, sort of reinterpreting depending on my mood. We'd talk about who felt what for each solo."

Most of the rhythm tracks were doubled, with French often

Citing their desire to look more ostentatious, Jay Jay French had his Ibanez Destroyer dressed up by Steve Carr. The guitar appears in the band's very-British 1982 video for "You Can't Stop Rock and Roll."

Dee Snider suggested that Jay Jay French's '78 Les Paul Standard would better look the part of a Twisted Sister axe if it was pink. French agreed.

Jay Jay French Ibanez Destroyer and Les Paul: Noel Federizo.

switching between the Les Paul and Destroyer. They each played a solo on "Burn In Hell" and "Horror-Teria." That's French on the title track, while Ojeda played the lead on French's favorite track, "Don't Let Me Down." "We're Not Gonna Take It" is Ojeda with an overdubbed harmony on the second half. "I Wanna Rock" is also Ojeda.

Sessions wrapped in late March and post-production moved quickly; the album and its first single, "We're Not Gonna Take It" (its melody borrowed from "O Come All Ye Faithful" and drum intro not far removed from Quiet Riot's 1983 hit "Cum on Feel the Noize") were released May 10; MTV played the accompanying video nearly every hour throughout that summer; by the time it was filmed, French had become a Guild endorser and was using a custom-finished Skyhawk X-79.

Stay Hungry climbed to #15 on *Billboard*'s Top 200 (prompting Doug Morris to change his attitude toward the band and its music) and has sold more than seven million copies worldwide. All told, Twisted Sister has sold 25 million albums while "We're Not Gonna Take It" and "I Wanna Rock," French says, have been used in more soundtracks, TV shows, movies, video games, and commercials than any other metal songs from the '80s. **– *Ward Meeker***

Eddie Ojeda's second bullseye superstrat was made by Wayne Charvel in 1993.

Ojeda Bullseye Charvel: Noel Federizo

VG's 2014 interview with French and Ojeda can be read at www.vintageguitar.com/20735/jay-jay-french-and-eddie-ojeda. French's Pinkburst Project, which has helped raise awareness of the inflammatory eye disease uveitis, was profiled in the April '11 issue. Learn more at www.pinkburstproject.org.

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

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'54 Sunburst "Hardtail" 100% original, Clean!!
'56 Sunburst Alder body 100% original in Mint condition
'58 Sunburst Mint Condition, Perfect collector's piece.
'58 Blond 100% original in Near Mint condition.
'59 Red/Slab Rose neck Original custom color, 100% original.
'59 Sunburst/Slab Rose neck Beat-Up condition, Refret, changed nut
'60 Sunburst/Slab Rose neck Original custom color, 100% original.
'61 Olympic White/Slab Rose neck 100% original in Mint condition
'61 Dakota Red/Slab Rose neck 100% original. Nerar Mint condition.
'62 Blond/Rose neck Beat-Up condition. Refretr changed nut, 100% original parts.
'64 Burgundy Mist Metallic 100% original, Spaghetti logo '63 Spec, Near Mint condition
'65 Sunburst 100% original, Near Mint condition, Mint-Green pickguard
'65 Sunburst 100% original, EX+ condition, White pickguard
'65 Candy Apple Red 100% original, Excellent condition, Mint-Green pickguard
'65 Olympic White 100% original
'65 Olympic White "Tortoiseshell Pickguard" Gold Hardware 100% original
'65 Olympic White "Tortoiseshell Pickguard" 100% original
'66 Sunburst We have 3 in stock, Super clean!!
'67 Charcoal Frost Metallic 100% original in near-mint condition
'69 Blond/Rose neck 100% original, Amazing tone!!
'70 Sunburst/Rose neck 100%original in Near Mint condition
'71 Lake Placid Blue/4 Bolt Rose neck 100% original!!
'71 Olympic White/4 Bolt Rose neck only refrets changed nut, Super clean!!
'72 Natural 1Strings tree Maple neck 100% original in Mint condition, Super rare!!
'74 Blond Rose neck Gold Hardware 100% original in Mint condition, Super rare!!
'74 Olympic White "Lefty" Rose neck 100% original in Mint condition, Super rare!!
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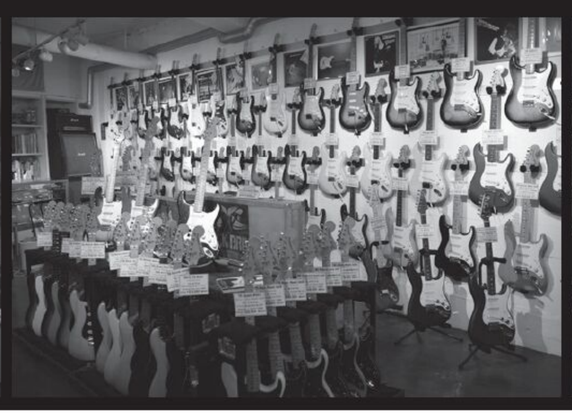

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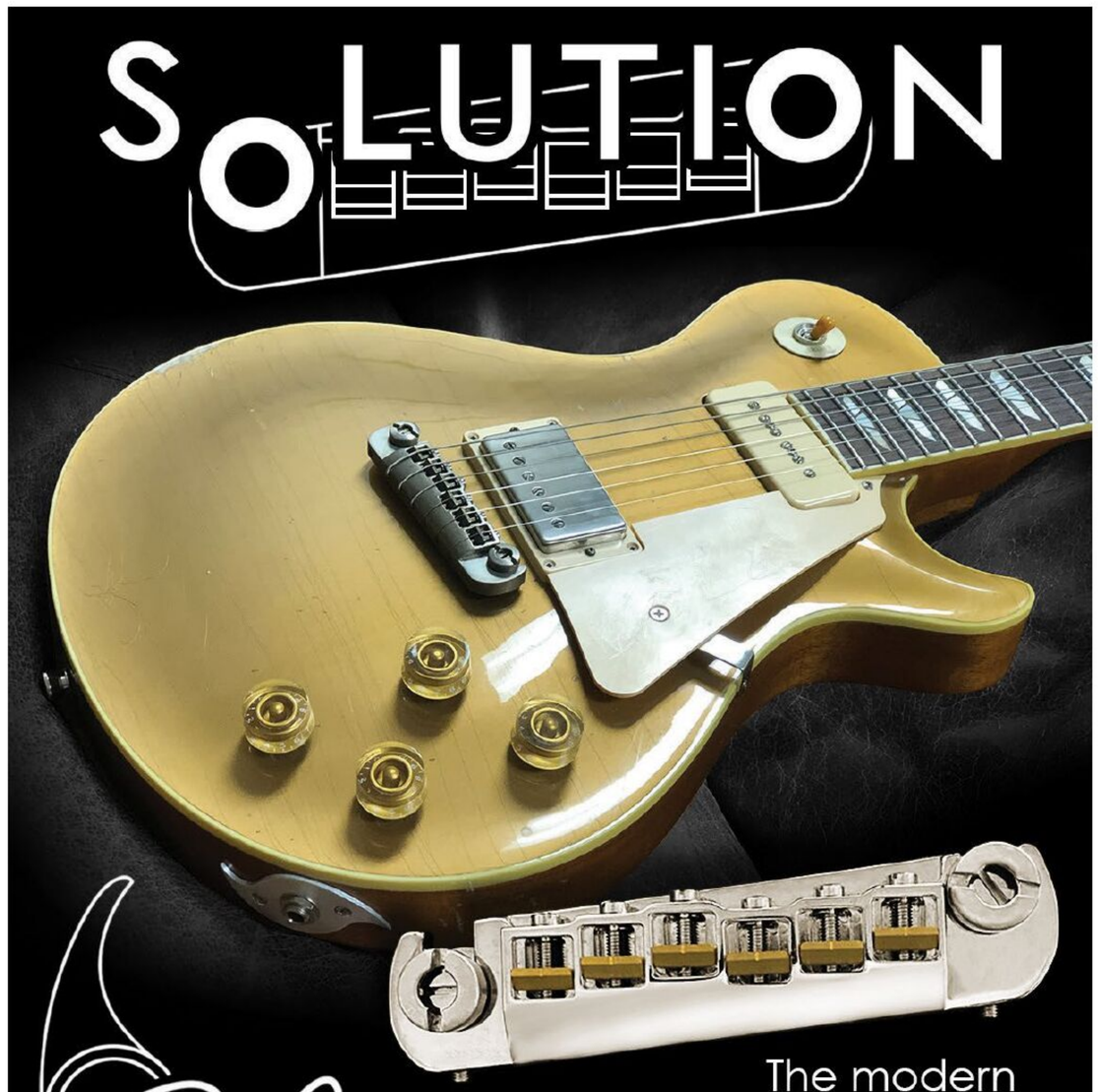
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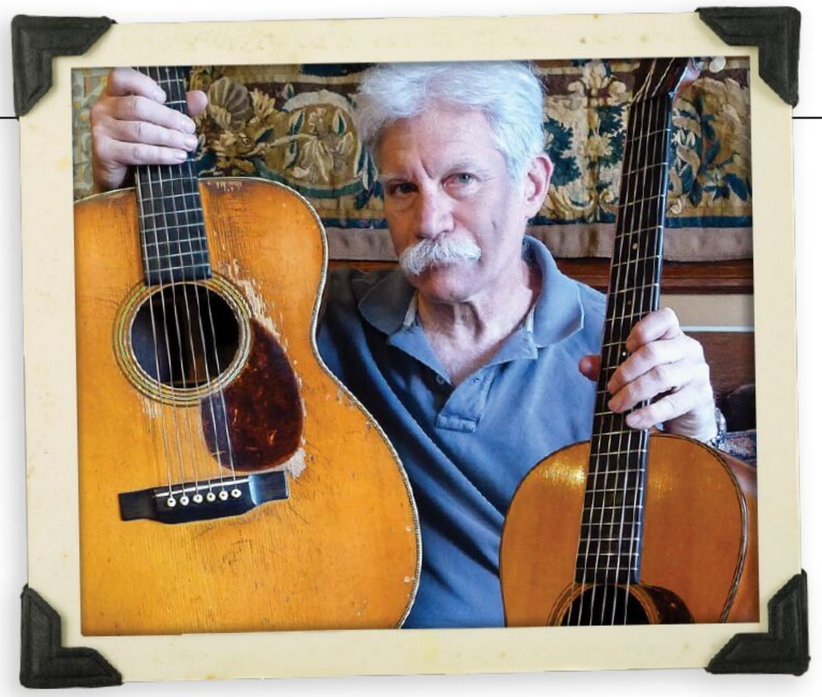
Price Guide

By Alan Greenwood & Ram W. Tuli

1941 Martin D-28.

YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND. LOW	EXC. COND. HIGH
1987	ADA MP-1	No foot controller	$375	$650
1969	Ampeg Dan Armstrong Lucite	Smoke	$3,000	$5,000
1967	Angelica Electric Solidbody	Various models	$275	$650
1975	B.C. Rich Seagull II/Seagull Jr.		$2,500	$3,300
1994	Blade California Deluxe/Deluxe	maple over mahg	$650	$850
1960s	Bradford Electric Solidbody	1 or 2 pickups	$225	$300
1986	Charvel Model 1/1A/1C		$900	$1,250
1970s	Colorsound Flanger		$300	$400
1966	Dallas/Dallas Arbiter	Rangemaster		
		Fuzzbug	$2,000	$2,500
1932	D'Angelico D'Angelico (L-5 Snakehead)		$11,000	$14,500
2015	Death By Audio Interstellar Overdriver		$110	$150
1982	DOD Bi-FET Preamp FX10		$100	$150
2007	EarthQuaker Devices Pulse Machine Tremolo		$60	$110
1980	Electro-Harmonix Deluxe Electric Mistress Flanger		$200	$400
1958	Epiphone Broadway (Electric)	Sunburst	$2,625	$3,500
2004	Epiphone Jim Croce L-00		$1,125	$1,500
1963	Epiphone Olympic (3/4 Scale Solidbody)		$1,650	$2,250
1953	Epiphone Zephyr	1x15	$825	$1,250
2000	Fender Bassman 400	Combo	$300	$425
1967	Fender Coronado II	Antiqua	$2,000	$2,500
1962	Fender Esquire	Blond, slab	$18,000	$24,000
1996	Fender Hot Rod Deluxe/Deluxe III/Deluxe IV	Various colors	$550	$715
1965	Fender Pro Reverb	Blackface	$2,550	$3,900
1996	Fender Squier Standard Fat Strat	Hum-single-single, China	$130	$175
1968	Fender Stratocaster	Common		
		color, nitro	$27,000	$35,000
2017	Fender '55 Stratocaster Journeyman Relic	Custom Shop	$3,000	$4,000
2017	Fender American Professional Stratocaster	Low-end features	$1,000	$1,375
1995	Fender Orange Krush Limited Edition Stratocaster	25 made, COA	$3,000	$4,000
2020	Fender Jimi Hendrix Voodoo Child Stratocaster			
	Journeyman Relic		$4,000	$5,000
1961	Fender Telecaster	Common Color	$33,000	$43,000
1972	Fender Telecaster Thinline	Color option	$8,000	$10,000
2015	Fender '69 Tele/ Telecaster Thinline	Mexico	$675	$900
2013	Fishman Loudbox 100	100 watts	$275	$425
1983	G&L El Toro		$1,300	$1,700



Featured Survey Participant
Fred Oster with a pair of 1931 Martin 28s, an OM and a 00.

YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND. LOW	HIGH
1961	Gibson Barney			
	Kessel Regular	PAFs	$8,000	$10,000
1964	Gibson EB-0	Cherry, raised truss rod	$3,000	$4,500
1952	Gibson ES-175 D			
	or ES-175N D	Sunburst, P-90s	$5,000	$6,500
1968	Gibson ES-335 TD			
	or ES-335N TD	Sprarkling Burgundy	$10,000	$13,000
1978	Gibson Explorer II (E/2)	Various colors	$3,500	$4,500
1998	Gibson Flying V Gothic/'98 Gothic		$1,250	$1,625
1949	Gibson GA-CB Custom-Built	25-30 watts,		
		1x15 , top-of-line	$2,100	$3,250
1955	Gibson J-45	Big 'guard	$7,000	$9,000
1924	Gibson L-5/L-5N	'24 ship date,		
		Loar era	$55,000	$72,000
1996	Gibson '59 Les Paul Flametop/Reissue/Standard	Figured top	$6,000	$7,750
2017	Gibson Les Paul			
	Collector's Choice Series	All models	$5,500	$13,000
2013	Gibson Les Paul Joe Perry 1959		$13,500	$17,500
2010	Gibson Les Paul			
	Standard F		$3,250	$4,250
2013	Gibson Midtown Kalamazoo	Humbuckers	$1,500	$2,000
2003	Gibson SG			
	Music Machine Stinger	SG Custom	$3,000	$4,000
2018	Gibson SJ-200 Vine		$6,750	$8,750
1965	Gibson Thunderbird IV	Cardinal Red,		
		non-reverse	$11,500	$22,500
2015	Gretsch Black Falcon (6136BK/TBK/DSBK)	Thicker body	$2,750	$3,500
2005	Gretsch Electromatic			
	(5700/5715) Lap Steel		$125	$175
1950	Gretsch Synchromatic 100 (6014/6015)	Natural	$950	$1,250
1983	Guild D-15			
	Mahongany Rush	All mahogany, satin	$675	$900
1974	Guild JS I	Carved	$1,500	$2,000
1976	Guild Starfire VI		$2,500	$3,250
1987	Hamer Californian	USA, various features	$2,500	$3,500
1956	Harmony H65 Modern Trend	Short scale,		
		1 pickup	$1,000	$1,500
1959	Hofner Club Model 60	Highest-club	$1,875	$2,500
1960	Hoyer Soloist Electric	Acoustic-electric	$650	$850

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YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND. LOW	EXC. COND. HIGH
1996	Ibanez John Petrucci JPM100 P2		$2,250	$3,000
1976	Ibanez Renometer		$150	$200
2007	JAM Pedals Retro Vibe		$230	$275
1964	Kay K5970 Jazz Special		$2,500	$3,200
1990	Kramer Baretta	With graphics	$1,000	$1,500
1971	Kustom K50-2 SC	Color option, 1x12	$425	$650
1970s	Leslie Model 16		$650	$900
1962	Magnatone Model 200	2 pickups	$400	$550
1991	Marshall Model 1933 Cabinet		$300	$400
1986	Marshall Model 5205 Reverb 12	12 watts, 1x10, solidstate	$200	$275
1996	Martin 000-16R		$1,125	$1,500
1970	Martin 000-45		$8,500	$11,000
1880s	Martin 00-28	Gut	$12,000	$15,000
1941	Martin 0-28T		$4,750	$6,250
1979	Martin D-18		$3,000	$4,000
1941	Martin D-28	Herringbone	$95,000	$125,000
1975	Martin D-35 Bicentennial	Eagle on headstock	$3,750	$5,000
1996	Martin DM-12		$600	$800
2000	Martin J12-16GT		$1,000	$1,375
1930	Martin OM-45	Banjo pegs	$400,000	$550,000
1999	Matchless ES/EB Cabinet	2x10	$575	$750
1998	Mesa-Boogie Rect-O-Verb I Head		$975	$1,500
1959	Mosrite Custom-Built	Rare, high-end	$13,000	$18,000
1981	MXR Commande Effects	Sustain	$100	$150
1963	National Newport 82	Pepper Red	$2,500	$3,500
1993	Orville by Gibson Firebird VII		$1,500	$2,000
1983	Pearl Analog Delay AD-08		$100	$175
1980s	Peavey Renown 400		$200	$300
1980s	Pro-Sound Super Overdrive SD-1		$30	$40
1990	PRS Standard	Last Brazilian board	$3,000	$4,000
1955	Rickenbacker Console 518 Triple Neck Steel		$1,250	$1,750
1958	Rickenbacker Model 370	Capri, thick body	$10,000	$13,000
2019	Rivera Quiana Combo	1x12	$825	$1,100
1990s	Santa Cruz H91	Flamed koa	$4,500	$6,000
1958	Silvertone Model 1392	10 watts, 1x12	$550	$750
1990	Steinberger Q-4		$2,000	$2,500
1961	Supro Coronado 1690T	Narrow panel	$1,150	$1,600
1998	Taylor 310		$775	$1,000
2013	Taylor 918e		$3,000	$4,000
1960s	Teisco Checkmate CM-60		$280	$400
2000s	Tycobrahe Octavia	Octavia & Octavian reissue	$300	$500
1965	Vox AC100 Super De Luxe / MK II		$2,550	$3,900
1969	Vox Tone Bender V-828 Mark II	Black case	$1,000	$1,500
1992	Yamaha G100-112		$175	$250

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SIDE-HUSTLE SHRED

HSAS' *Through the Fire*

By Oscar Jordan

In the early 1980s, rock-guitar fans were becoming obsessed with superstrats and Van Halen-esque fretboard hijinks. It was a time of "more is more" and pressure to be the next big thing. Riding high with the radio-hit-making Journey, Neal Schon was the poster child for melodic restraint. But, he had an itch to express himself in other ways.

Looking to step up his guitar work after the release of Journey's 1983 album, *Frontiers*, Schon, started jamming with Sammy Hagar (who was riding high on the success of *Three Lock Box)*, drummer Denny Carmassi, and Cheap Trick bassist Tom Petersson. They got together a handful of times over a couple weeks, laying down a different style of rock that indulged Schon's desire to shred. That March, though, Schon had to join Journey for a tour, and by the time he returned in September, Carmassi had been asked to join Heart and Petersson had bowed out. Schon then approached bassist Kenny Aaronson (Rick Derringer) and drummer Michael Shrieve, his bandmate in the "classic" Santana lineup.

"Kenny had opened for Journey, playing with Billy Squier," Schon told *VG*. "He was a strong player with a cool vibe. And I suggested Michael Shrieve because I wanted it to be more-progressive and not so straight-ahead."

Compiling their surname initials, they dubbed the band HSAS and went to work in Journey's rehearsal space in Oakland. Hagar and Schon wrote songs with the idea of recording them in front of an audience, then booked Westwood One's Concertmaster mobile studio and two nights at the Warfield Theatre in November.

"We wrote it in a week, rehearsed for a week, then played it," Schon recalled. "We had two shows to get it right. Some of it we got, some of it got *close*. But we thought that would be the quickest way. We said, 'It's a live progressive-rock record; what we get is what we get. Throw it out there and see what happens.' Then, Sammy

Neal Schon onstage with his Roland G-505 in 1983.

Neal Schon 1983: Paul Natkin.

left me in the studio to mix everything (laughs). We added some overdubs [at Fantasy Studios], but it was pretty much live."

Schon's main guitar was the Roland G-505 controller paired with the GR-300 Analog Guitar Synthesizer. The performance (which can be seen on Youtube) displays Schon riffing like a beast, using the Duet Mode of the GR-300.

Flawed but powerful, *Through The Fire* is what happens when inspiration and virtuosity meet chemistry, and captures the essence of a "put up or shut up" performance. Schon's playing is mesmerizing, intense, and brutal; "Animation," "Valley Of The Kings," and "Giza" display the prog-meets-hard-rock style Schon was aiming for, while "Top Of The Rock" and "Missing You" preview Hagar's later work with Van Halen. And unlike "live" albums with replacement tracks and overdubs, it doesn't pretend to be live. In fact, Schon deleted the crowd noise from all but the last two tracks, "He Will Understand" and "My Home Town."

In his 2011 autobiography, *Red: My Uncensored Life In Rock*, Hagar admitted to not fully understanding Schon's concept.

"Shrieve [is] a great, rhythmical guy, [but] wasn't a rock drummer at all – we were a rock band," Hagar wrote. "But he made the band kind of cool and fusion-y."

"I usually don't play that kind of harder rock," Shrieve recently told *VG*. "It's not like heavy metal or anything. I had a big laugh when I read Sam's book, and he said, 'Yeah, we had Michael Shrieve playing drums – I don't know why (laughs).' I think Neal wanted the respect of rock players because they were always out there with Van Halen, but Journey hits were very pop. Neal was always looking for situations to bring out another side of himself. We had a different kind of singer, and the music was heavier all around."

Aaronson's thunderous bass and Shrieve's polydexterous drumming helped make *Through the Fire* a master class in interaction.

"We did some pretty experimental things," recalled Schon. "It was out there. The stuff we *didn't* put on the record was even more out there. We wrote about 20 songs, and those that didn't make the record were a lot more intricate than the things that did; they didn't make it because everyone screwed them up (laughs)." Tracks that didn't make the album but were included in the professionally produced live video (and can be seen on Youtube) include "Movin' In for the Kill," "Tough Enough," "Through the Eyes of Love," "Hope and Fear," "What Will Never Be," and "Since You Came."

Among those that did make it, their cover of Procol Harum's "A Whiter Shade of Pale" went to #94 on *Billboard*'s Hot 100, while "Top of the Rock" peaked at #15. The third single, "Missing You," hit #37 on Top Rock Tracks. All told, they were enough to garner a decent following.

"We did 12 shows... around the Bay Area," Hagar wrote in 2011. "We sold out all the shows and gave the money to music programs in public schools. The album never sold more than 150,000 copies, even though I was selling more than a million as a solo artist, and Journey was selling more than a million. It never caught on. 'A Whiter Shade of Pale' didn't really work – it never hit. We played an MTV show called 'The Concert.' Neal and I went to New York and did press for days... It might have been better if we'd gone in the studio, made the record, and then done the shows, but the way we did it was unique."

One of those shows aired on Westwood One radio.

Ultimately, Schon's schedule with Journey put the kibosh on a more-robust album and/or tour, but his visceral, full-throttle playing still resonates 41 years later. **VG**

JEFF WATSON

Night Ranger, The Classic Years

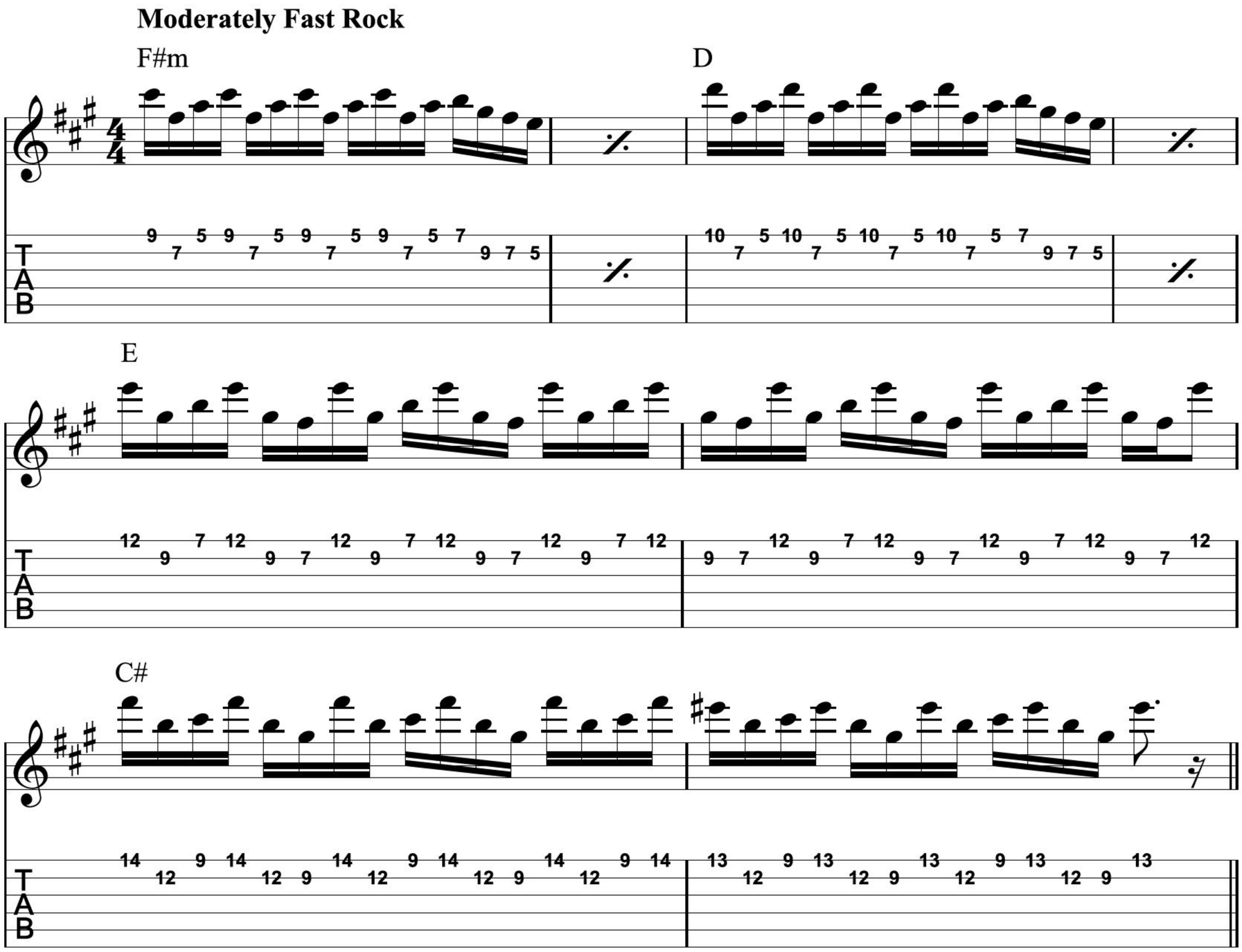
By Wolf Marshall

Rock and roll in the 1980s saw styles collide after two decades of unbridled innovation. Night Ranger's melodic-metal arena rock epitomized the period, but never fit a stereotype. With catchy commercial songs and power ballads, guitar antics and heavy power chords made it a great guitar-rock band that incorporated keyboards, tight arrangements, and hooks aided by their image, charisma, and sound.

Night Ranger emerged from the San Francisco Bay area in 1979, when funk-rockers Rubicon ditched the horns and became a trio – bassist/vocalist Jack Blades, drummer/vocalist Kelly Keaggy, and guitarist Brad Gillis – then renamed themselves Stereo. The following year, they recruited keyboardist Alan "Fitz" Fitzgerald (Montrose, Sammy Hagar) and Jeff Watson and adopted a new musical style. At Fitz's urging, they changed the name again to become Ranger. While recording their debut, *Dawn Patrol*, in November of '82, they became Night Ranger (to avoid trademark infringement) and their first single "Don't Tell Me You Love Me" became a favorite on the incipient MTV while reaching #40 on *Billboard* (#4 Mainstream Rock). Their second album, *Midnight Madness*, established their unique two-prong guitar attack with "Rock in America" and power-pop sensibilities with "Sister Christian," which reached #5 in June of '84. More hit singles followed over five albums that sold more than 17 million units.

Watson's early music experiences differed from a typical rocker. Raised in a folk background, as a toddler, he was exposed to the genre through his banjo-playing father. Also, his parents ran the Folk Music Society of Sacramento, which included singers, banjoists, guitarists, pianists, and many players' wives sang harmony. Jeff became interested in playing at age five and joined communal singalongs; at eight, he was playing in string bands with his kid-sized

Jeff Watson: Paul Natkin.



"Don't Tell Me You Love Me" showcased Watson's fiery, precise fast-picking style. Following Gillis' whammy-bar flutters in the first half of the solo, he flew out of the gate with a dizzying barrage of notes; his immaculate execution, effortless wide stretches, and rhythmic energy transformed a sequential series of tricky arpeggio-based shapes into rock virtuosity comparable to Yngwie and the Shrapnel school. Note his relentless 16th-note motor drive and the rhythmically displaced three-against-four grouping of the patterns while outlining the F#m-D-E-C# progression.

Stella, and later was given a Yamaha 12-string from a pawn shop. The instrument, set up with very heavy strings and high action, was indispensable in developing his strong hands and backward (but effective) plectrum technique. He taught himself notes and flat-picking patterns by ear.

"I'm not a schooled musician," he said in an interview for this column. "I liked the sound of arpeggiating chords, like in the Night Ranger songs 'Goodbye' and 'Let Him Run.' Those were exercises I created, and the picking patterns became songs."

Watson's ascent as a rock soloist started when he picked up the electric guitar in his final year of high school. Beginning on a flat-top Gibson with a P-90, he learned songs in his comfort zone before trading the guitar to a local guitar teacher for a single-pickup Gibson ES-330, after which he upgraded to a '60 single-pickup Cherry Red Les Paul SG with wraparound tail, followed by a '70s brown dual-humbucker SG.

He learned lead-guitar fundamentals from a school friend and his neighbor, Stef Burns, then gravitated to blues-based rock and taught himself tunes by Shuggie Otis, Spooky Tooth, the Rolling Stones, and Allman Brothers. Johnny Winter's "Rock and Roll Hoochie Koo" was an important influence, as was David Sancious' *Forest of Feelings* and Ritchie Blackmore's work on *Machine Head*. Adapting his picking technique to suit, he started the Jeff Watson Band to play original music only. He briefly studied music in college before humbly beginning his professional career as a singing busboy/waiter at the Great Northern Food & Beverage Company. He also started recording his songs at a local 8-track studio, and his work attracted attention from local pros. After hiring on at Sunrise Music in Citrus Heights, he advanced from organizing cases and instruments to become assistant manager, where he pushed the store to carry Marshall, Peavey, and Ampeg amps and Gibson gear.

"I was gaining recognition as a guitarist," he said. "And one day when Sammy Hagar was in the store, I got cocky; I asked about playing in his band, but he just asked for a deal on keyboard gear for Fitz!"

Undaunted, he pursued the position for weeks before Hagar finally agreed to an informal audition where the two ran through songs with Jeff on his Guild 12-string. That led to Watson playing with Hagar's band (Chuck Ruff, Bill Church, and Fitz) at their rehearsal hall. He didn't get the gig, and today admits he wasn't ready for that level of professionalism.

He then focused on writing music, running his own band, recording (with Fitz producing), and continued to get considerable airplay on local radio. When Fitz resumed his busy touring schedule with Hagar, he put Jeff in the hands of Ronnie Montrose, who also acknowledged his potential. Through Montrose, he snagged a spot opening for Ted Nugent at Sacramento's Memorial Hall, which led to better gigs and greater recognition. He struck a deal to open for Hagar and Heart at Day on the Green, and garnered interest from Peter Frampton's management when he received a call from Fitz, who was leaving Hagar's group and wanted to form a new band with him, Blades, Keaggy, and Gillis.

Called Ranger, it brought a two-guitar format bolstered by camaraderie and synergy despite quite different musical personalities.

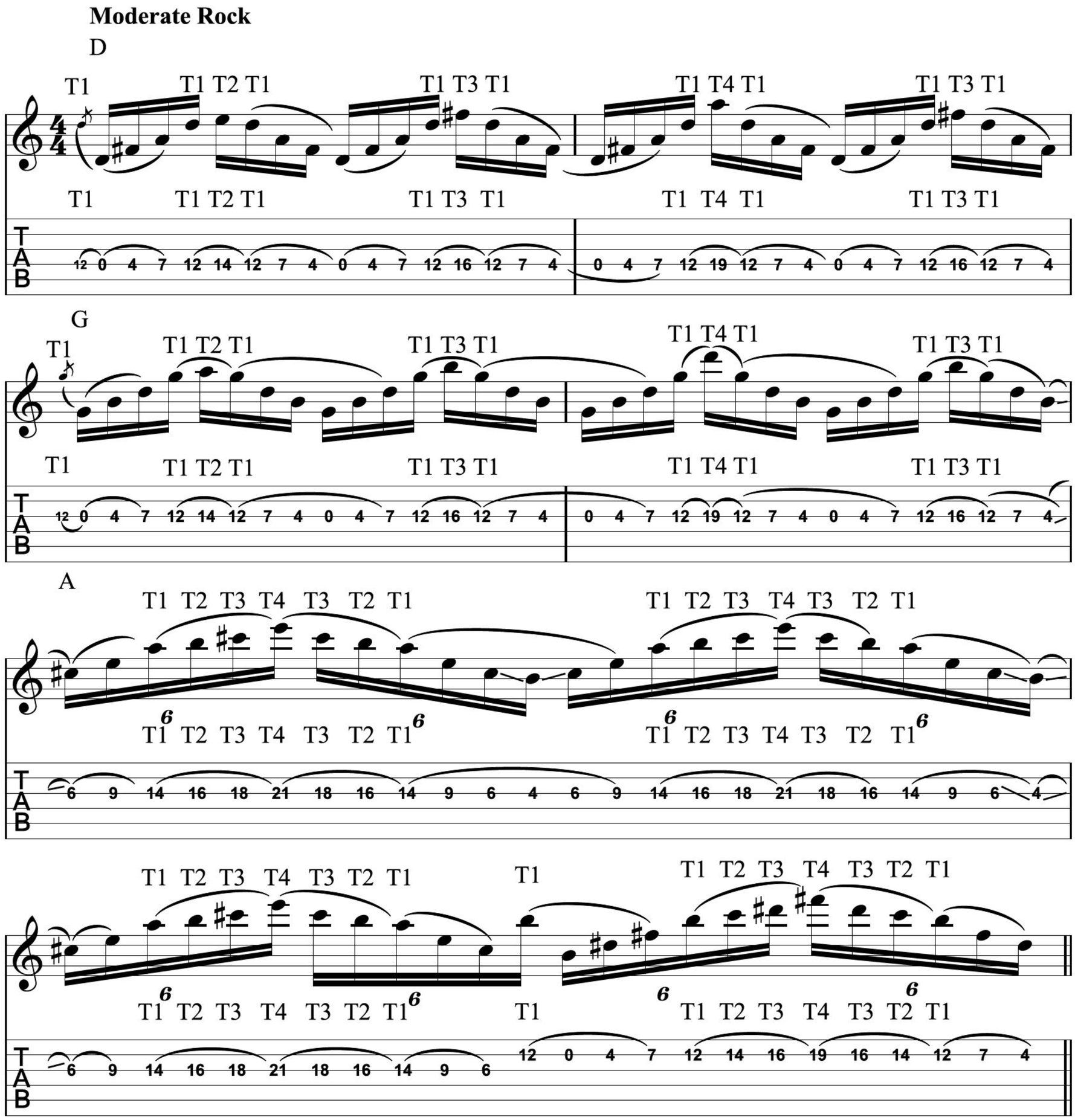
Coming from a two-guitar band in which he was the dominant soloist, Watson assumed he would handle the solos.

"Brad had a rhythmic funk background and wasn't an actionable soloist in the beginning," he said. "His rhythm playing was *really* strong, plus he had way more knowledge of standard chord changes. In Ranger, I showed him

some lead technique; he advanced very quickly and made the vibrato part of his personality, which worked out well. We chose solos not on complexity, but based on chord changes and the song. If it was moody, melodic, and favored whammy bar, it was Brad. If it was a ripping shredding thing, it was me. He uses harmonics and works the bar musically, while I like to play everything with just my hands.

"Doing harmony parts, we composed and played them together in the studio – they were the melodic glue that held the solos together. Occasionally, when we were slammed for time, I tracked some of the speedy harmonies that had odd intervals or technical stuff, like 'Eddie's Comin' Out Tonight.' I'd use Brad's guitar or make my rig sound more like his."

Watson's picking is legendary in rock circles. The result of years practicing difficult plectrum exercises on 12-string, his attack and precision became identifiers of his tone and technique, and aspects of his persona in Night Ranger, beginning with their first single "Don't Tell Me You Love Me," which featured solos by both guys. To up the ante, he preferred heavy celluloid, plastic, and metal picks to articulate his aggressive-but-accurate lines. Being self-taught, he holds the pick with the front tip facing up, which he later learned evens the vibrations from pick attack.



"(You Can Still) Rock in America" (from *Midnight Madness*) turned the heads of guitarists already reeling from the onslaught of Van Halen, Rhoads, and Malmsteen. Part of that attention-grabbing were Watson's eight-finger tapping solo phrases. Following a formula similar to "Don't Tell Me...," the solo is divided between Gillis (first half) and Watson (second half, at 2:22). Jeff begins his solo with melodic rock phrases and faster picking, then pulls out all the stops. What follows (2:34) is a cascade of slippery legato runs (eight notes per string) that reconcile the sounds of Van Halen, Holdsworth, and classical piano/violin etudes. The complex lines pushed the envelope of tapping technique.

For years, he started phrases with an up stroke, as heard in 'Don't Tell Me You Love Me,' then later practiced with a metronome on mechanical alternate-picking patterns. He used long, heavy Howard Roberts picks, then discovered metal picks and the precision they offered; for grip, he punched holes in them with a screwdriver. He later switched to large ultra-heavy triangular Dunlops with beveled edges, and uses medium-gauge for acoustic six-string, thin for 12-string.

Watson's eight-finger technique, first heard on "Rock in America," was unprecedented. Unlike many colleagues, he had not previously played hammer-ons, and his was *not* an outgrowth of existing bi-dextral style, extension of the Van Halen approach, or a sound effect. Rather, it was more an emulation of keyboard passages that evolved to complement the song.

"When we were working on those parts, I heard these notes over a section but I couldn't play them with my normal picking, and my left hand couldn't reach them. I started fool-

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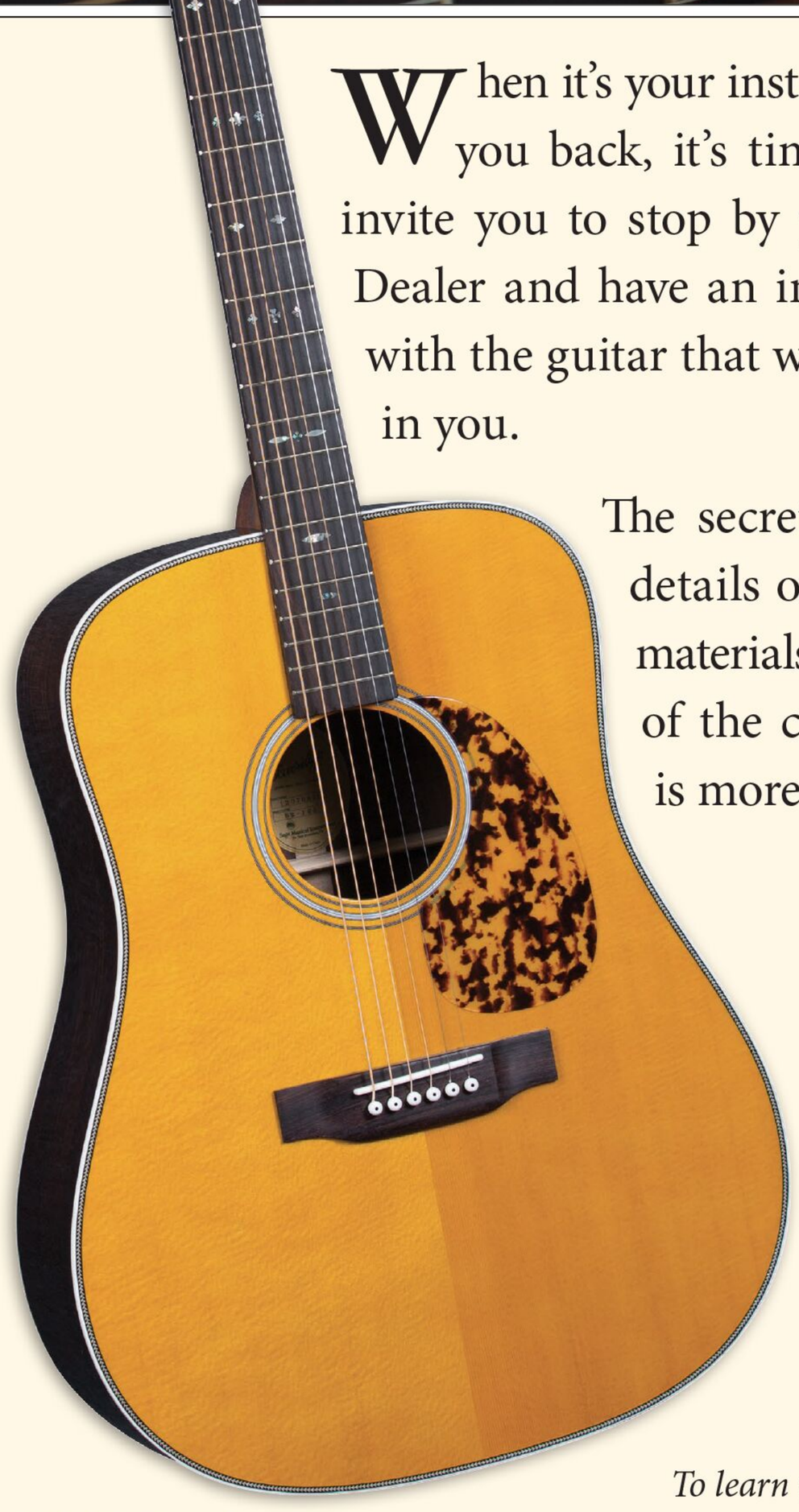

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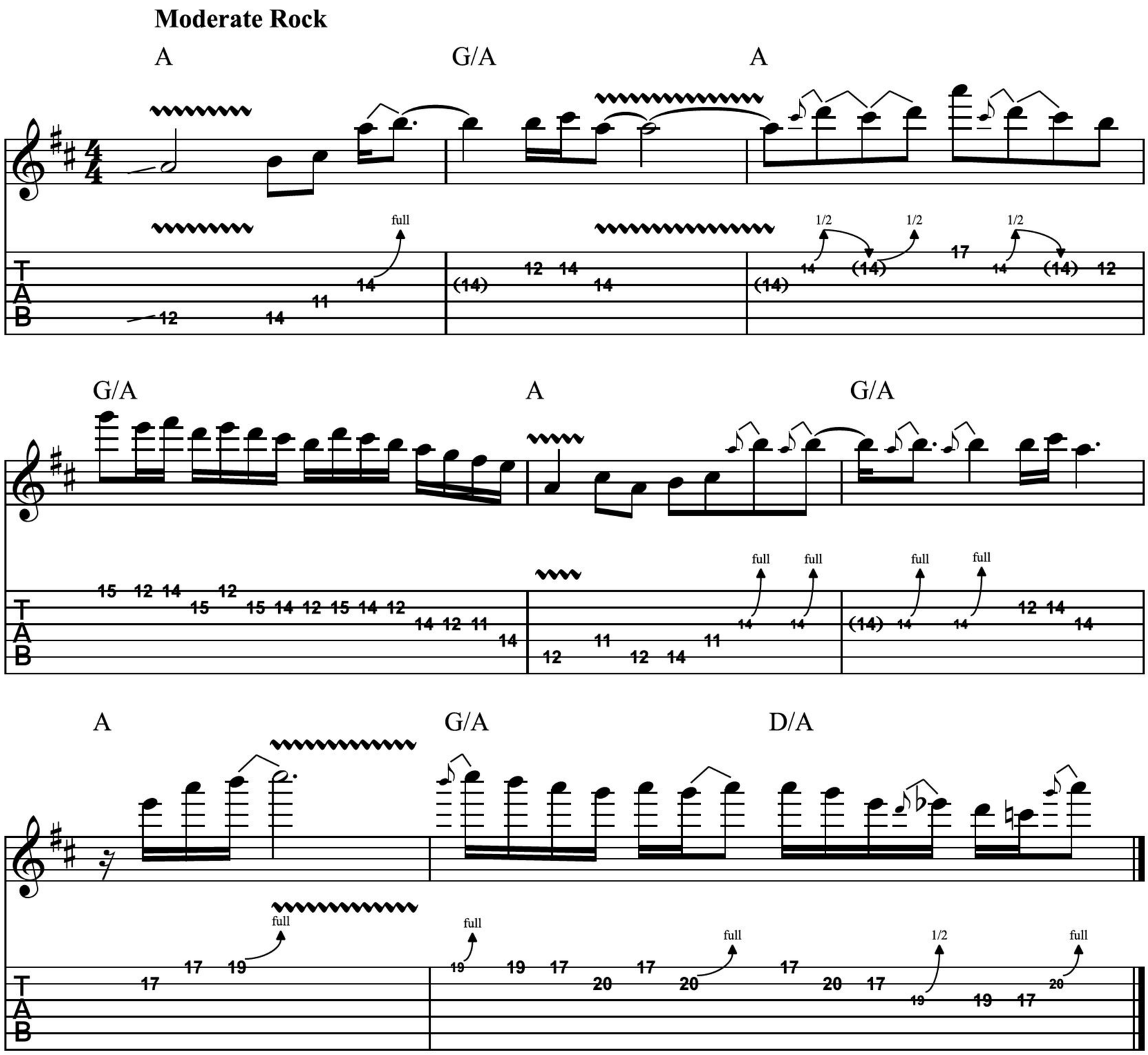
ing with it in front of Fitz, and he suggested notes that seemed impossible over the changes. But, I woodshedded until I got it. Pat Thrall was in the studio when we were recording, and he convinced our producer, Pat Glasser, to put it on the song."

Watson was one of the most-visible Les Paul players in an age of superstrats, and his '56 goldtop became iconic after being heard on virtually every solo he played. He got it from the original owner, who brought it to consign at Sunrise Music. Montrose routed the body to install humbuckers and it became Watsons' main guitar; by '84, it had been fitted with Duncan Jeff Beck pickups, Dunlop jumbo frets, and Schaller tuners. Since retiring it from the road, he has used a '69 goldtop and a reissue '57 built by Tom Murphy. His other main Night Ranger guitar is a '68 Guild F412 that also walked into Sunrise. Other guitars at the time included an early-'60s Les Paul Custom. His rack also housed a signature model Hamer Vector.

For amplification, he favored Hi-Watts and Mesa-Boogies for solos, and often used Glasser's Marshall 100-watt for rhythm parts. Live, he relied on mid-'80s Boogie Mark II heads driving four 2x12 cabinets with Celestion and EV 12-M speakers.



"Sing Me Away" (Night Ranger's second single, April '83) proved that Watson was more than an accomplished technician and two-trick pony. His solo in the pop-rock song is profoundly melodic and space-conscious, leaving room for expressiveness that reveals his tuneful side, akin to Schenker, Lukather, or Schon. He favors the warmer tone of the neck pickup and saves his faster passages for flurries between melody phrases. The more-prominent thematic lines find him milking soulful string bends and sustaining notes with singing vibrato and cultivating sweeter diatonic melody. The final passage is contrastingly blues-based, interjecting blues-scale melody and idiomatic string bending into the diatonic proceedings.

His effects rig was designed to replicate his studio sound onstage. His main units were a Rocktron Hush IIC noise gate, Lexicon PCM60 digital reverb, ADA stereo-tap analog delay, and Korg nine-channel digital delay, all accessed by an EMB switching system with presets for effects selection and channel switching.

Following the departure of Fitz in early '88, Night Ranger disbanded in '89 as less-polished alternative, thrash, classic rock, Nu Metal, and grunge styles became predominant. Blades joined Damn Yankees (with Tommy Shaw and Ted Nugent), while Watson pursued a solo career and in '92 released *Lone Ranger* with guests Gillis, Hagar, Steve Morse, Allan Holdsworth, Carmine Appice, and Steve Smith. He follows it with *Around the Sun*, which featured Kansas vocalist Steve Walsh and bassist Bob Daisley. He has performed on D-Metal Stars ("I See the Light") and Disney's *Enchanted*, appeared on recordings led by Tony Macalpine, Morse, Chris Isaak, Michael Schenker, and Eric Martin. In the '90s, he recorded three albums with the supergroup Mother's Army, featuring Daisley, Appice, and Joe Lynn Turner. He rejoined Night Ranger for *Neverland* ('97), *Seven* ('98), and *Hole in the Sun* (2007).

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 latest 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*. A list credits can be found at wolfmarshall.com.

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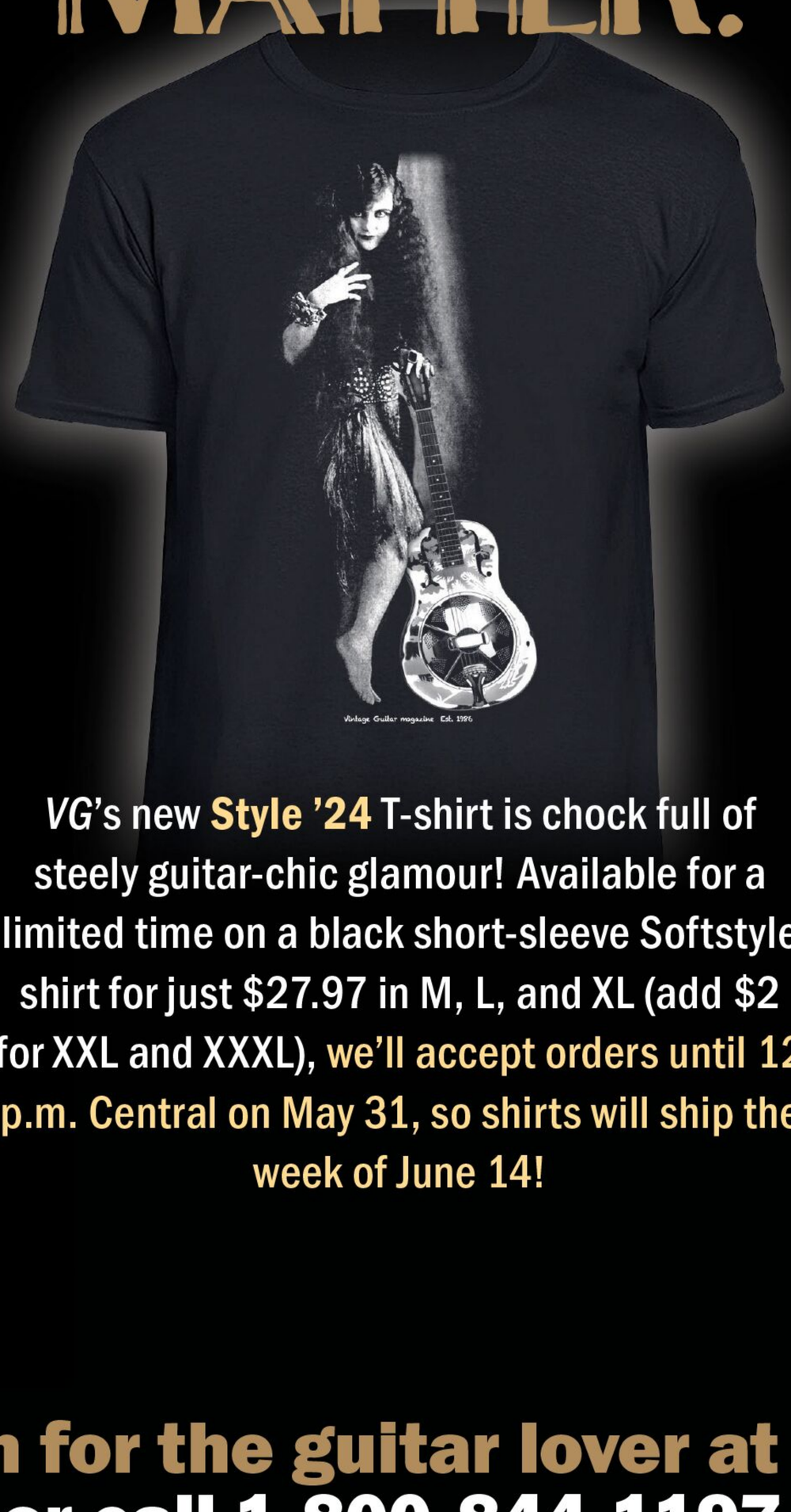

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INPUT... INPUT

And George's Rosewood Tele

Why did Fender build amps with dual sets of inputs, as on the Princeton Reverb, Deluxe Reverb, and Vibroverb reissue? The Deluxe has Normal and Vibrato; was Normal intended to plug in a microphone and have guitar in the Vibrato side, like a small PA? Also, can they be patched to create an overdriven sound, or would that negatively affect the amp/circuit? *– Peter Kinzler*

Most Fender amps had dual inputs in two senses; the Princeton Reverb had only one channel, but two inputs – labeled "1" and "2" – while the others you mention have two channels, each of which also has two inputs. On any of these, the second input is lower-gain, for use with higher-output guitars that might sound dirty too quickly on the 1 input. Players today often ignore the second input, but it's a great way to clean up a guitar with humbuckers.

As you surmise, the other models with two channels originated in an era when Fender expected many musicians to plug two instruments into one amp (or an instrument and a microphone). Putting tremolo and reverb on both channels might have cluttered the design, so they often designated them Normal and Vibrato, usually with the guitar in the latter (which also had reverb on models so equipped).

Circuit variations in the two channels on these Fender amps from the early '60s onward mean you usually can't patch the two channels with good results because they're out of phase with each other. That technique *is* popular with their tweed predecessors, which had two channels in-phase with each other. ***– Dave Hunter***

I have a 1976 Flying V that I'm told was one of just 23 given tobacco sunburst finish that year. Its serial number stamp says "Limited Edition" at the top, followed by "Made in the USA" and a serial number that starts with 00 as a prefix. It plays well but has only about 30 hours on it, so it's very clean. Can you give me an idea of its value? *– J.R. Hefner*

According to Jeff Lisec, who has been collecting Flying Vs for decades, your guitar is from the era when Gibson transitioned from a six-digit serial number to (in late 1975) using an oval decal with three lines; on some Flying Vs, the first line said "Limited Edition" (though records don't indicate what that means) followed by a six-digit serial number (99-xxxxxx). Others have just the six digits in the oval, with no prefix. The '76 version was identical except the prefix became "00" and at some point, the decals were replaced by an oval impression. In early '77, serial numbers were given an "06" prefix before Gibson introduced its eight-digit serial number that year.

Flying Vs from that era typically sell for $6,500 to $8,500, though given its condition and the less-common tobacco burst finish, yours could go higher – perhaps to $10,000. ***– Ram Tuli, co-author, The Official Vintage Guitar Price Guide***

George Harrison's rosewood "rooftop" Telecaster was built in 1968, so wasn't subject to CITES laws prohibiting the importation of Brazilian rosewood, which took affect at the end of '69. So, was George's guitar, along with that early run of rosewood Teles, made with Brazilian or Indian rosewood? *– Bill Jacobs*

No records from Fender have surfaced indicating what kind of rosewood was used for Harrison's Telecaster or, for that matter, the fretboards on various Fenders in the late '60s. I've seen a fair number of what appear to be Indian rosewood fretboards, suggesting Fender (and Gibson) foresaw problems with the supply of Brazilian as early as '64, when a military coup occurred in Brazil.

J.R. Hefner's '76 "Limited Edition" Flying V.

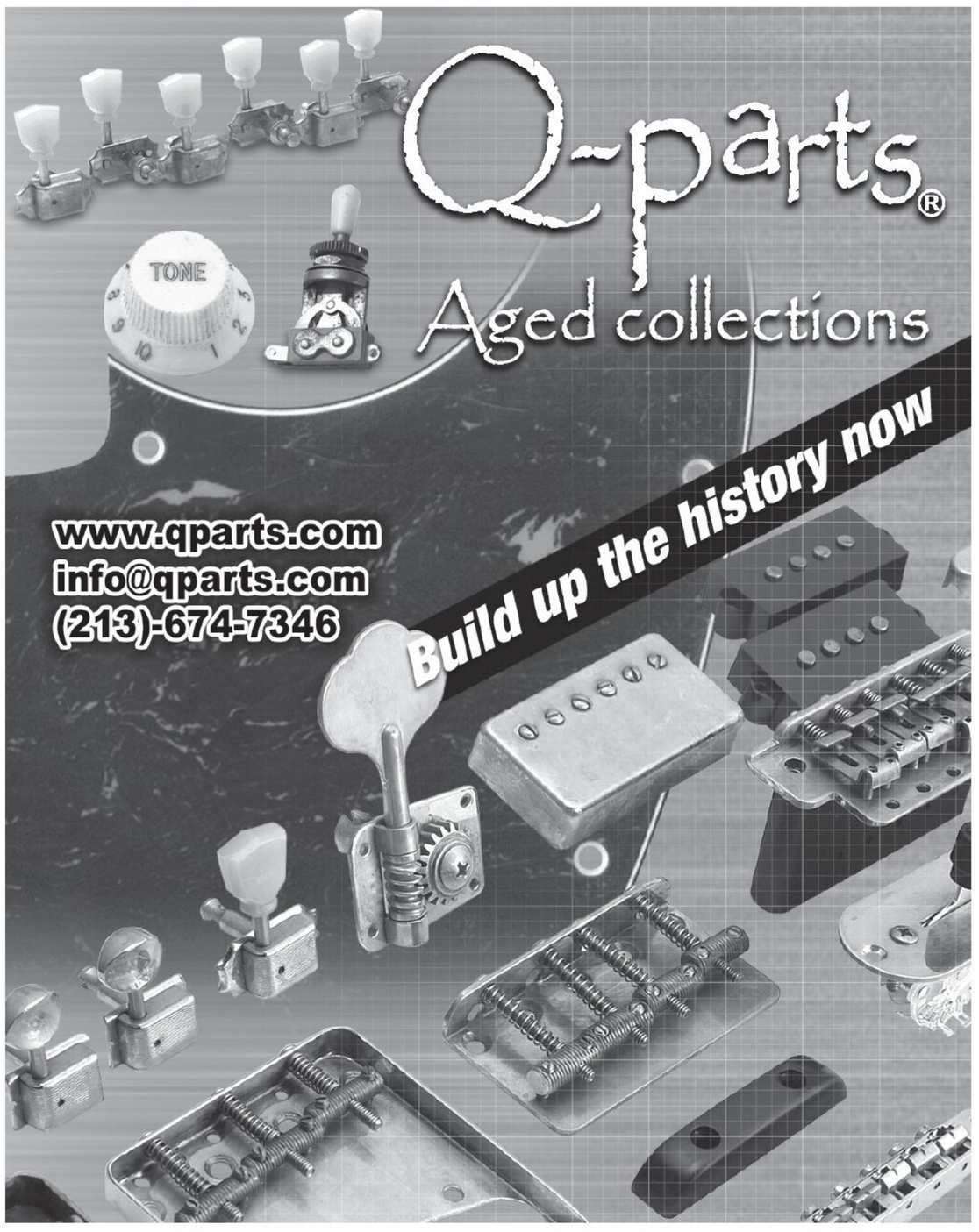
Christopher Cassels' American Designer Jazz Bass, decked out in Silver Sparkle.

Visually, Harrison's Tele shows no sign of the dark figuration most makers would feature if they were using Brazilian. The grain on the bass side of its top looks more like the wide, rough pattern of an ash-body Tele than any species of rosewood, so it may have been retrieved from scrap/less-desirable pieces of rosewood. The treble-side grain is straight, which would be more typical of (but not definitively) Indian rosewood. There's no way to know for certain, but it's reasonable to assume Fender was using Indian when Harrison's guitar was made. ***– Walter Carter***

I have a 2001 Fender American Series Jazz Bass in Silver Sparkle, and the back of the headstock is marked "American Designer Edition." I'm told it was a limited run for Guitar Center with a modified body shape and rolled-edge fretboard. There isn't a reference to it in *The Official Vintage Guitar Price Guide*, so I'm curious about its value. – *Christopher Cassels*

The American Designer Edition Jazz was indeed a run of 125 built for Guitar Center in 2001. As with any instrument offered in many variants (Fender currently makes 26 Jazz Bass models), it would not be possible to track sales data for every one, especially going back to 1960. *The Guide* keys on models that appear most often in the market, and limited runs like yours surface so seldom that there isn't sufficient data to determine a price range. They do, however, trend much like the American Deluxe from the early 2000s, which sell between $1,500 and $2,000. ***– Ram Tuli***

This column addresses questions about guitar-related subjects, ranging from songs, albums, and musicians to the minutiae of instrument builds, manufacturers, and the collectible market. Questions can be sent to ward@vintageguitar.com with "VG Q&A" in the subject line. **VG**



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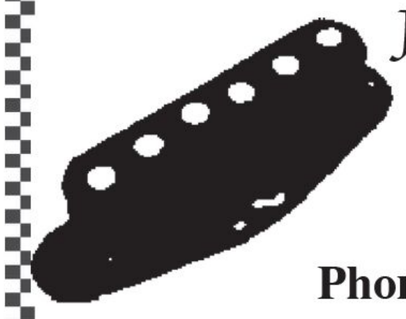

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MARTY FRIEDMAN

HEAVY MELODY

Friedman with some of guitar/amp tech Franco Piona's pieces used in the making of his new album, *Drama*. Alongside a Diezel VH4 (top left), the amps include a, homemade 30-watt, Bogner Shiva, and Steavens Poundcake MkI. The others are a Splawn Quickrod, Soldano SLO100, Mesa Dual Rectifier, and a late-'60s Laney Supergroup.

Marty Friedman: Takaaki Henmi.

While Marty Friedman was first known as a shred pioneer in Cacophony (with co-guitarist Jason Becker) and '90s metal master with Megadeth, his latest solo set, *Drama*, shows another side of the axe hero.

BY PETE PROWN

The album has Friedman celebrating-melody as a tool of expression, creating grand, sweeping pieces that evoke a film score. Fans already know Marty can play fast as the devil, but his goal this time is to move hearts with emotive lines, riffs, and leads.

A key part the project was a collection of vintage guitars and amps owned by his gear tech, Franco Piona. While still a devout Jackson endorser with a longstanding signature model, Friedman was happy to discuss the thinking behind his latest sonic adventure – and conversion to one of the vintage faithful.

Like much of *Drama*, "Illumination" serves as a reminder that melody and feel – not speed – drive your guitar playing.

Melody is all that matters. The way a melody is arranged, interpreted, and presented is the most important thing to me. There are so many wonderful melodies in the world, but had they not been presented to us in the particular context that we discovered them; we might have never heard them. Context is king.

You live in Japan, but recorded part of the album in Italy. Was there a specific studio or group of players you wanted to work with?

My dear friend and world-class guitar/amp technician, Franco Piona, lives in Italy and has the most-elaborate and well-maintained collection of vintage guitars and amps I have ever seen. He was kind enough to tech the album and allow me to use his precious and historic instruments

"Acapella" has bell-like tones? Which guitar is that and what was your approach to the composition?

That's a '57 Strat, and the first time I played it was in Franco's house through an old Fender Twin, gently playing the melody of "For A Friend"; I noticed a tear come from my wife's eye. Franco's living room sounded like a cathedral; it was such a powerful moment that I *knew* I wanted that guitar on my album. "Acapella" is what you might hear if I pick up a guitar unplugged sitting around at my house; something I might play while watching my wife out of the corner of my eye, preparing something in the kitchen. I have never before documented that type of playing – it's very personal. No big theme, melody, or thought-out construction. It's a peek into the everyday life of my home.

Along with the melodic emphasis, there's a feeling of film music on *Drama*. "Triumph" has acoustic, electric, and layered guitars, bringing to mind a rock version of an Ennio Morricone soundtrack.

I love soundtrack music, but it's a little unfair to compare it to what I do. Soundtracks have the benefit of a story and visuals to add significant weight to the music and, most importantly, 90 minutes or so of time to groom the listener with different interpretations of the same theme. In the climactic scenes, the theme you're familiar with comes back and knocks you out. I love that about movie music, and I try to do that in little five minute mini-symphonies, so to speak.

Which classical and film composers inspire you?

Chopin, Rachmaninoff, and Dvorak are wonderful, and my favorite film/musical of all time is *West Side Story* – the most beautiful "cacophony" imaginable.

"Thrill City" is the main representative of modern gear on the album. I wasn't going to put any metal songs on the album – just keep it all ballads. But I found that by putting one heavy, uptempo track in the middle of all the romantic music, it made the other songs have even more impact, if only by contrast. "Thrill City" is the first time in my career that all the members of my live band have played on a studio track of mine. I used my Jackson MF-1 Signature model with EMG pickups and my Engl Signature Inferno amp for much of this, but also some funky vintage guitars for hidden textures.

Overdubbing harmonies often makes guitars sound smaller. How did you keep tones fat when you overdub, as on the ending of "Dead of Winter"?

A great singer doesn't need to have a direct harmony on his voice that much. Same goes with an expressive guitar line. I use harmonies sometimes, but when I do, you can bet there is a reason for it. At the end of the "Dead of Winter" solo, which is almost a minute long, I only harmonize five notes. It puts an exclamation mark on the climax of the solo, allowing the post-solo phrase – which is a softly played ending tag – to sound incredibly delicate. The harmony only has five short notes, yet you noticed

it and even thought it sounded fat. I believe the "fat" impact here was less a product of gear choice, and more a result of careful and intentional solo arranging.

What are the lower-sounding guitars on "Mirage"

I use an Ibanez baritone or seven-string any time I need to go deeper than normal, which is quite often on my bed tracks.

"Tearful Confession" is full of classical bombast.

The idea for that was to start with something desperate, bleak and hopeless, yet somehow bring it to a satisfying, uplifting, and a hopeful crescendo and peak. Easier said than done, but I wanted to do something that would make the listener feel that way. It was a huge challenge. My favorite thing about music is that sometimes when you listen, you wind up feeling better about the situation you are in than you did before. That's magic, and I try hard to tap into that, even though most truly magical musical moments are unintentional.

"Icicles" feels like the final scene in a movie – something introspective. How did you convey that with your guitar?

I am *blown away* that you got that from listening to it, as that's exactly what I was shooting for. As with most of these songs, it is the unique way of arranging the song that allows me great freedom in interpreting each note. With each and every note, I am asking myself, "Is this really what I want to say?" It's kind of an annoying and time-consuming chore, but once you get used to it, you just do it as part of the process. It's like choosing your words in an important conversation with a loved one or an important work relation. When creating music, you have much more time to pore over each nuance, than in conversation. The sum of all the tiny decisions makes the whole piece of music exactly what I intend it to be, usually.

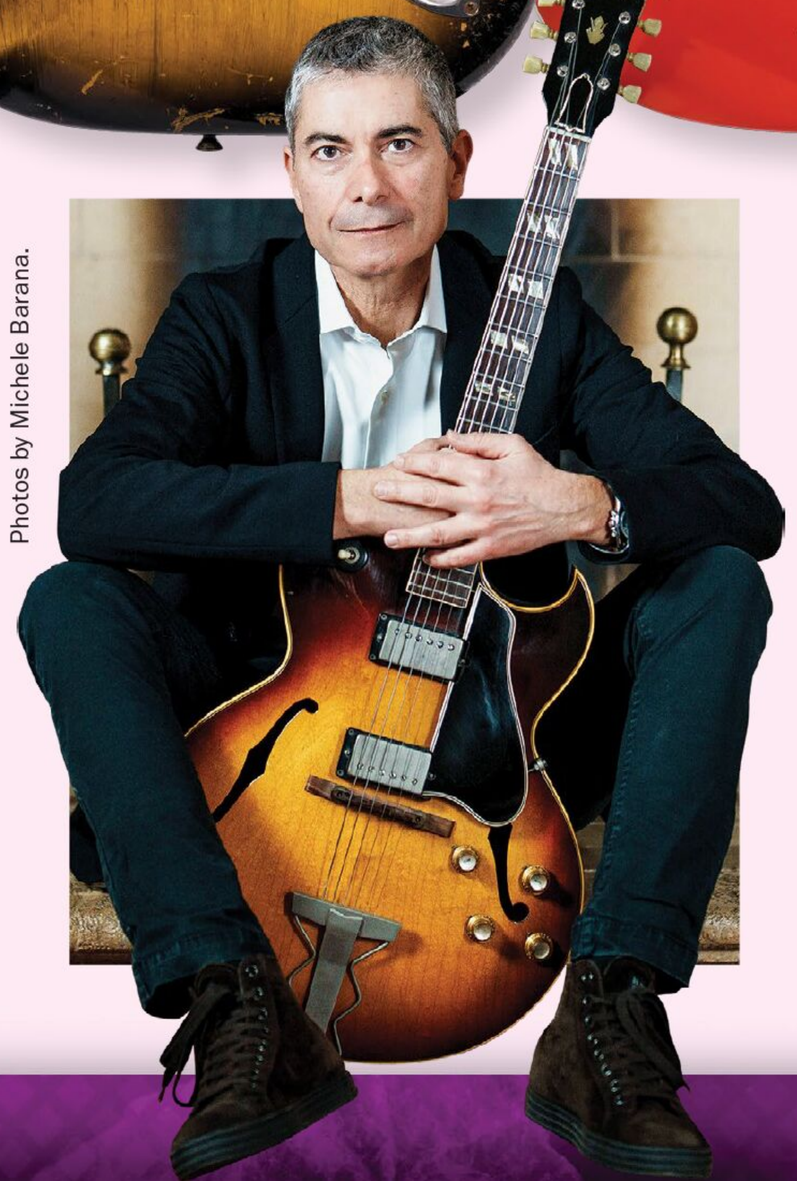
Friedman used his Jackson MF-1 signature model and Engl Inferno amp on "Thrill City," saying its heavy, uptempo sound and feel lent impact to the rest of the album. It also marks the first time his entire live band played on a studio track.

Friedman gravitated to this '87 Valley Arts Custom Pro when tracking a solo that required sustain and a "big sound."

Tell us about the guitars, amps, and pedals used on the album. What drew you to vintage gear?

I have a new love and appreciation for vintage gear. Honestly, I was never interested in anything vintage. Worse yet, nearly all my interactions with vintage gear left me unimpressed, at best. I did a TV show in Japan where they had me play all these

Marty Friedman: Takaaki Henmi. '87 Valley Arts Custom Pro: Michele Barana.



Photos by Michele Barana.

This ’58 is Franco Piona’s favorite Strat. Many of the lead clean tones on Marty Friedman’s new album, *Drama*, were done with this guitar. Piona says his ’61 Strat has “a decidedly more-’60s vibe and a very soft sound.” A ’56 Telecaster. Piona calls the sound of his ’66 Fender XII “sweet and enveloping.” “As soon as you try it, you understand why Jimmy Page recorded ‘Stairway to Heaven’ with one.” Franco Piona (left) with a ’64 ES-175.

TECH’S TREATS

Marty Friedman’s guitar tech for Drama, the talented Franco Piona helped guide the guitarist’s selections from his extensive collection of vintage guitars and amps. Here, Piona provides a behind-the-scenes look at the experience – and his trove of groovy gear.

expensive vintage guitars. They all stunk. One made noise, another buzzed, one would *not* stay in tune. I was told, "But this guitar is worth $40,000 and was owned by Eric Clapton." It was all I could do to keep from firing back with, "No wonder Eric didn't want it." It seemed every time someone showed me some rare, expensive guitar, to me it was just a beat-up old guitar. Nice to display, maybe, but completely useless in any professional situation.

What changed your perspective on vintage?

My guitars are work tools and need to consistently sound phenomenal, with a great variety of sounds and uses. They also have to withstand the extremes of touring, crazy weather changes, and sweat and blood getting in the pickups. I figured vintage gear was for doctors, lawyers, and people who enjoy and appreciate the history of the instruments, but definitely *not* for people who are out there making music in the real world. Enter Franco Piona. He's a top-tier tech and builder; like Carnac the Magnificent, he's the all-knowing, all-seeing sage of anything related to guitars and amps. He also has the most-extensive and beautiful collection of guitars and amps I have ever seen. He knows them inside and out, and maintains them like an artisan. Franco's guitars and amps are main characters on *Drama*.

What was the process for choosing which instrument to use on a given track?

On every part I played, Franco "auditioned" each guitar and amp combination separately, making important adjustments along the way. As a result, I played everything a million times, but on everything I played – from main solos to barely noticeable supporting parts – we didn't move on until we got the magical combination. Now I can never go back to the old style of recording! Well-maintained vintage guitars are a gift from the heavens, with so much new music left in them... as I learned.

Looking back, your career launched with the collaboration with Jason Becker and your own *Dragon's Kiss* album. Was there a specific moment when you broke through to the guitar masses?

One thing I remember was that Jason and I wanted nothing more than a Soundpage (a thin plastic record) in *Guitar Player* magazine. That was our gauge of "making it" at the time. We were naïve to what went on behind the scenes that gets artists a Soundpage. We just knew it was awesome. When we finally got one, we thought we had arrived somewhere, at least in the world of guitars.

Jason talks about a magical moment when you both had a breakthrough in regard to sweep picking. Do you have any memories of that era?

Both of us just did whatever it took to be able to play the music we wanted to play. Established techniques with names and common music-theory lessons were not of much interest to us. What we liked was analyzing weird things that turned us on, like Philip Glass' "Mishima" and Stravinsky's "The Rite of Spring" and using what we learned to develop our abilities and write music. Slonimsky's book *Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns for Guitar* was big for us, too, but good luck trying to wedge that stuff in any kind of mainstream music.

Japan has deep passion for western music, from The Ventures to Mr. Big. Do you have a large fanbase there? Most people here don't know the extent of your musical output in Japan.

In the mid 2000s, a few lucky breaks found me doing television there, so much to the point where I have since done at least 800 TV shows of every possible variety. As many people know me from TV, commercials, or being a government-appointed Ambassador of Japan Heritage as they do from my music. It's an insane story that's part of an autobiography I've been working on for two years, hopefully coming out by the end of this year.

Can you tell us a bit about making *Drama* ?

Working in the studio with Marty was a fascinating and amazing experience for me. It was the first time I found myself taking an active part in the selection of the equipment for a recording project. Being an electronic engineer, my previous experiences were mostly related to the construction of guitar amplifiers for Italian artists and, more recently, guitar tech for live situations. But the studio is a completely different environment – we need to make what the artist imagined become reality and the equipment and sounds are the means. Plus, I've always followed Marty since Cacophony and Megadeth, so it was nice to explore new sonic territories with him.

Marty told *VG* he wasn't really interested in vintage guitars until he tried your collection. Describe his evolution to vintage, and your role.

Heard on several *Drama* backing tracks, Piona says this '56 Les Paul Custom sounds good with both clean and crunch. This '69 Gibson Les Paul Custom can be heard in Friedman's solo guitar piece "Acapella." "The pickups of this '61 SG Les Paul Standard are magical," says Piona. "If you want a rhythm guitar with a sound that breathes, this is the choice." "The '68 SG Standard was used for many crunch rhythms, often dubbed with the '56 Telecaster (page 57), and also appears in some solos," notes Piona. This '59 Gretsch 6120 was Friedman and Piona's choice for certain crunch sounds.

Marty and I met through a mutual friend who stopped by my place for lunch. The guitars and amplifiers were in the living room, where I usually record and play and I made him try some guitars with different amplifiers to make him understand how using different instruments gives different timbres and can also influence the way of playing because they make you feel the music from another angle.

How did you approach the sessions?

We wanted a space where, in addition to the amplifiers and guitars, different cabinets with different [speakers] could be placed. All this allowed us to modify the guitar/pedals/amplifier/speaker/microphone chain to obtain the desired sound without having to heavily apply EQ or filter at a later time. In other words, we tried to have a beautiful and balanced sound from the beginning.

Were there pieces he instantly connected to?

One of the first guitars he tried was the '56 Telecaster through the blackface Fender Twin, which had a beautiful and very soft sound. Then he tried the '58 Stratocaster and the '69 Les Paul with a Fender Super Reverb. Little by little, we found

Friedman and Piona agreed on this '67 Twin Reverb (top) being the best choice for clean sounds, and usually paired it with this '66 Deluxe Reverb. Piona modified his '75 Marshall Super Bass by adding a preamp tube to give it another gain stage. It's heard in solos and in most of the heavier rhythms on *Drama*. Piona says his '72 Super Lead is "...completely original, and we used it for crunch sounds and not-so-clean cleans."

ourselves trying various combinations that generated sounds with great personality. Tones are like a painter's color palette, so that's how we approached it.

Marty also said you auditioned each piece of gear to help him find the right piece for each track.

I'm not a collector; I'm a guitarist lucky enough to have some good guitars. Generally, if I buy an instrument it's because after trying it, I just can't leave it there. I know all the equipment I have and there are not only good tools, there are synergies and good combinations. Marty sent me the demos and I did a bit of pre-selection, picking instruments that would give maximum flexibility in the studio. Once recording began, we chose the instruments that were best suited to the direction we wanted to take.

Did he have to adjust his playing style?

Obviously, some vintage guitars are not as easy to play as some modern guitars, but not for Marty! I think the encounter with vintage generated in him the desire to bring to tape the sounds he had heard in my room. My role was to understand by listening to the demos and the explanations that Marty gave, which were the right tools. Sometimes we got it right the first time, sometimes it took a bit of experimentation. **– *Pete Prown* VG**

Upcoming Events

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Denotes a new or updated listing.

2024

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.

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

The Great Guitar, Musical Instruments and Audio Show, Saturday May 4, 2024.10AM to 4PM. Freeport Recreation Center, Freeport NY. (New Promoters...same Venue as in the past) Buy-Sell-Trade. Contact Rich Branciforte 516-233-9916 or GTMag@Optonline.net

Big Als' Lake County Musician's Swap Meet, Sunday May 12, 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

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

GuitarfestGuitarShow, June 9th at the Summit CountyFairgrounds Arena, 229 E Howe Rd. Tallmadge, OH 44278. Hrs 10am -6pm. For moreinfo 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, amigoshows@stringswest.com, www.amigoguitarshows.com. **(See Advertisement on page 62.)**

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. **(See Advertisement on page 61.)**

Saratoga Springs GuitarShow, Sunday June 30, 2024 from noon to 4pm at the Saratoga Springs City Center, 522 Broadway, Saratoga Springs NY. For more info call Peter Occhineri (860) 983-6774, email – NortheastGuitarExpo@gmail.com, website – www.NortheastGuitarExpo.com

JULY

***The OC V!BE Guitar Festival**, Saturday July, 20th, 2024 10am -5:00pm Honda Center, Anaheim, CA.For more info: bruceadolph@mac.com, www.WestCoastGuitarShows.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

The Seattle-Tacoma Guitar Show, Sunday September 15th 9:30am-3:30pm Kent Commons, Kent, WA. For more info: bruceadolph@mac.com, www.WestCoastGuitarShows.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 Guitarlington, October 19-20 at the Mesquite Convention Center, 1700 Rodeo Dr, Mesquite, TX. For more info contact Ruth Brinkmann (817) 312-7659 ruthmbrinkmann@gmail.com, Larry Briggs (918) 288-2222 larryb@stringswest.com, Dave Crocker (417) 850-4751 davelcrocker@gmail.com, Fax 817-592-3381 www.amigoguitarshows.com

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

NOVEMBER

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

Midwest Music Gear Swap presentsits 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

JANUARY

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Orlando International Guitar & Music Expo, January 31, February 1-2, 2025 at the Central Florida Fairgrounds, 4603 West Colonial Drive, Orlando, FL. Public hours Sat.10-5, Sun. 10-4. For more info contact Britt Keen at 850-294-5537, orlandoguitarexpo@outlook.com Morty Beckman www.guitarexpo.net

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/

JUNE

2025 Summer Ohio Guitar Show, Sunday, June 8, 2025 at the Makoy Center 5462 Center St, Hilliard, OH43026. Show hours 11:30-5:00. For more info, contact Marc at (740)797-3351 or guitardigest@frontier.com, www.ohioguitarshows.com. Ohio Guitar Show on Facebook and Instagram

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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REVIEWS

Charlie Starr with a '65 Esquire.

ROCKIN' KINGS

Blackberry Smoke
Be Right Here

True sons of Georgia, Blackberry Smoke is back with its eighth album, a collection of three-chord stompers that's hard to deny. Frontman Charlie Starr has a real knack for penning economical material – you only need to hear a track once or twice to know its hook, chorus, and guitar riff. No wonder Blackberry Smoke has such a rabid following.

With Starr, Paul Jackson, and sideman Benji Shanks on six-string, there's also plenty of fine pickin'. On "Whatcha Know Good," Shanks lends a bottleneck drawl to convey a melancholy mood. "Dig a Hole" has a heavy riff reminiscent of Cream's "Politician"; somehow, the band turns it into a crowd-pleasing anthem. "Hammer and the Nail" kicks off with a funky acoustic lick and wry lyrics before evolving into a raucous Lynyrd Skynyrd-tipped jam. "Like It Was Yesterday" finds an uncanny niche between the Replacements and Badfinger.

Everyone loves a swirling Leslie speaker, and that's the signature guitar effect on "Be So Lucky."

Packed with earworms, *Be Right Here* is easy to like; the writing and arranging are crisp, and the band plays loose, guitar-fueled songs with weapons-grade efficiency. These Georgia boys are rock-and-roll kings. ***– Pete Prown***

Scott H. Biram
The One And Only Scott H. Biram

Over 24 years, Scott H. Biram has released 13 albums; even a near-fatal wreck with a semi in 2003 didn't slow him down. The self-described "Dirty Old One-Man Band" shifts gears from sensitive ballads to his low-fi amalgam of raw blues, real-deal country, and folk, peppered with metal and punk influences – in other words, rock and roll.

The native Texan's growling vocals are often pumped through the type of "telephone" mic favored by harmonica players, as on "No Man's Land." Nine eclectic originals sit with covers of Leadbelly's "Easy Rider" and Gary Davis' "Death Don't Have No Mercy" that do their sources proud.

"Dig A Hole-Big Liar" tips its boogie hat to John Lee Hooker, with a keening ZZ-infused lead. Vinyl scratching and electronica define "InterTransmissions," the kind of hard left fans have come to expect, followed by a downright country classic, "Inside A Bar," its solo mimicking pedal steel.

Biram might offer up novelty (the country caricature "High & Dry"), and then launch into a fire-and-brimstone sermon ("Sinner's Dinner"), inspired by January 6 Capitol rioting. Not safe enough for so-called Americana, this is as American as a Bud and a truck-stop Slim Jim. ***– Dan Forte***

Blue Öyster Cult
Ghost Stories

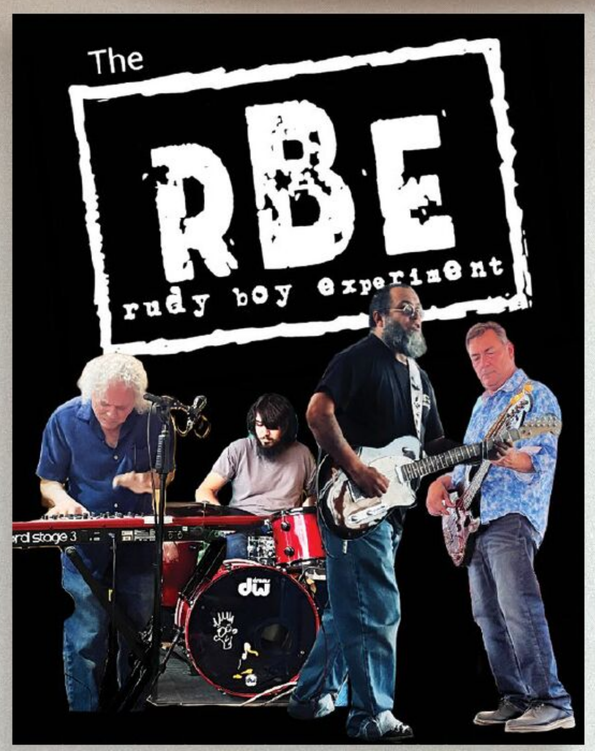
Two facets make this album from the "thinking man's hard-rock band" newsworthy. First, all but one of its dozen songs are from studio and rehearsal tapes recorded between 1978 and '83, nine featuring the original lineup of vocalist/lead guitarist Donald "Buck Dharma" Roeser, vocalist/rhythm guitarist/keyboardist Eric Bloom, late keyboardist/guitarist Allen Lanier, bassist Joe Bouchard, and drummer Albert Bouchard (current guitarist/keyboardist Richie Castellano added studio overdubs). Second, *Ghost Stories* has been announced as BOC's *final* studio release.

"Late Night Street Fight" swings on loose bass and guitar riffs along with a catchy melody – one of BOC's underrated strengths. "Cherry" is quirky, jittery fun that's within spittin' distance of new-wave. The mysterious vibe undercutting "So Supernatural" is trademark sonic territory, with a flowing guitar riff and heavier guitar supplying the smackdown.

The organ-heavy ballad "The Only Thing" uses Buck's fluid solo to enhance its emotion, while chunky riffs and chords drive "Gun." Cultists will relish studio versions of live staples like the Animals' "We Gotta Get Out of This Place" and MC5's "Kick Out the Jams," the latter with a smokin' Buck solo.

Charlie Starr: Andy Sapp.

INDEPENDENT ARTISTS



The Rudy Boy Experiment

The Rudy Boy Experiment is a Southwest Blues and Rock Band From Albuquerque New Mexico. Rudy Boy Jaramillo started this band in the early 2000's and has been going strong ever since, picking up endorsements with Reverend Guitars, and Jet City Amps. With over 10 albums of music available on Spotify, iHeart, YouTube music, Apple music, Pandora, and many more.

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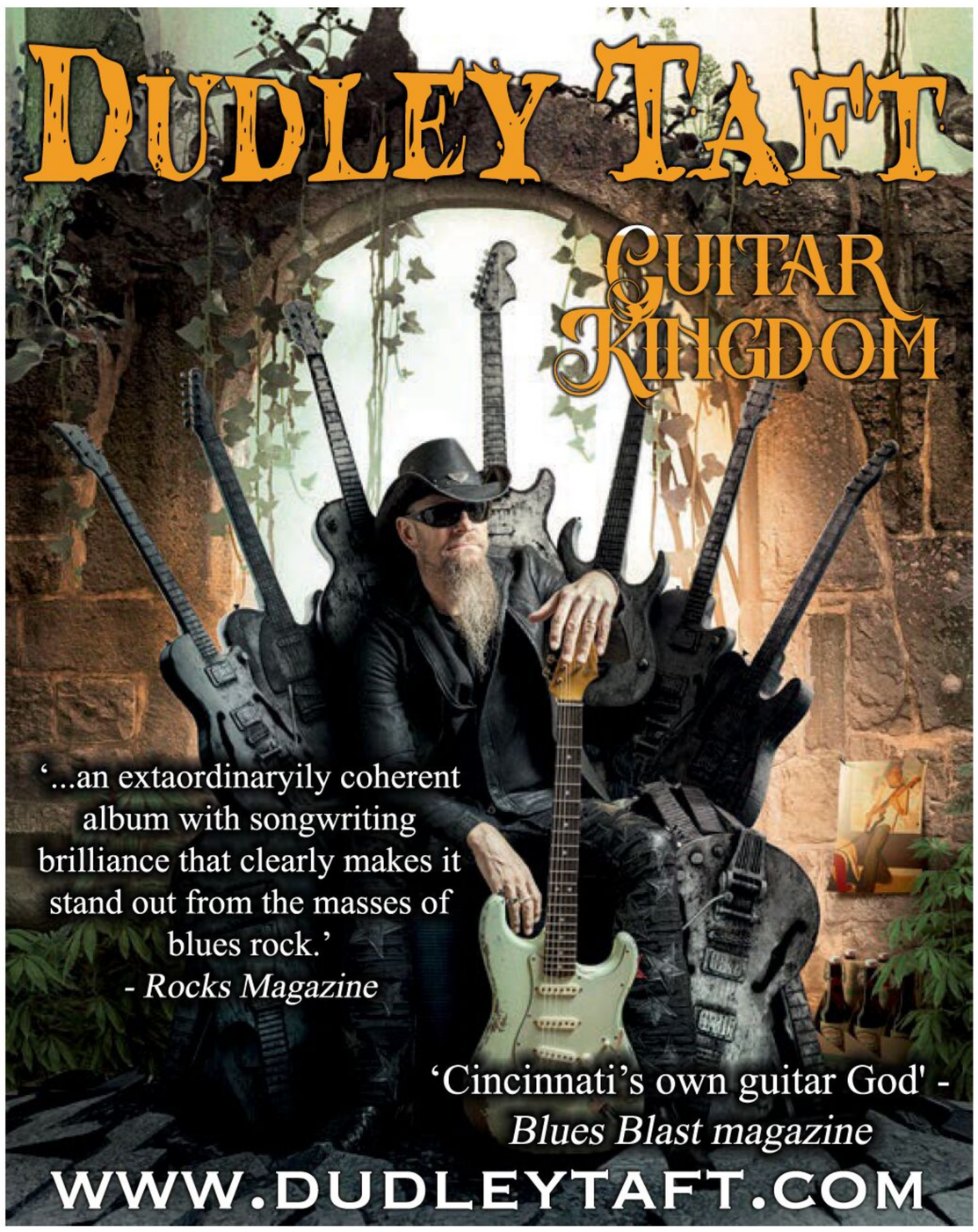
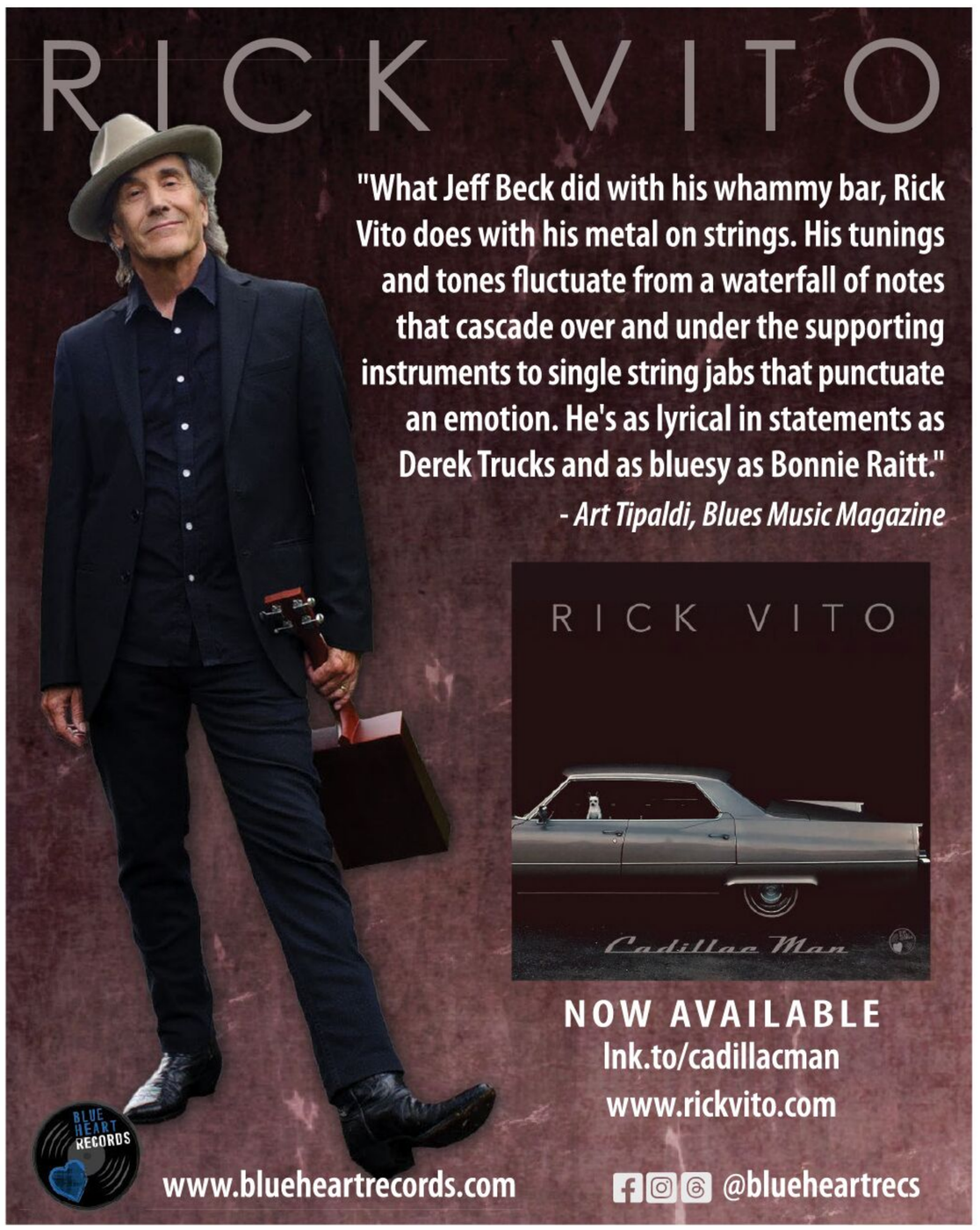
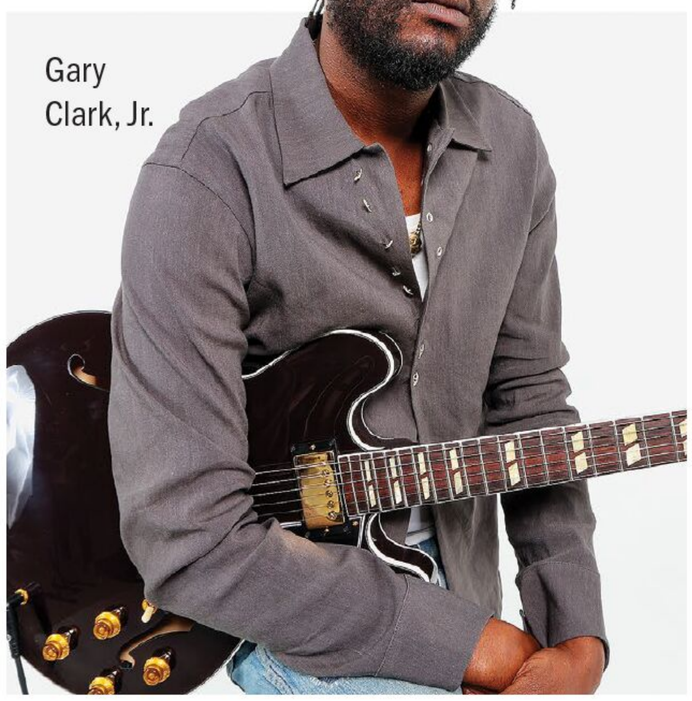





Gary Clark, Jr.

Jesse Dayton

Slash

While *Ghost Stories* isn't essential BOC, it's a capstone on a career that has rocked for more than a half century. **– *Bret Adams***

Gary Clark, Jr.
JPEG RAW

In an ongoing mission to extricate himself from the labels that confine artistic freedom, Gary Clark, Jr.'s latest showcases the reality of his surroundings. Clark has produced an album that embraces the stuff he likes – blues, funk, jazz, psychedelia, soul, hip-hop, rock, and Octavia – squeezed through his adept guitar playing and falsetto vocals. It's an album of sweet eclecticism, displaying a range of contemporary African-American influences.

With appearances by George Clinton and Stevie Wonder, along with samples from Sonny Boy Williamson, jazz pianist Thelonious Monk, and The Jackson 5, *JPEG RAW* is a buffet of Black music that holds together. "Maktub" and the title track mix rap, hip-hop grooves, fuzz, and clean hollowbody tones, while the alt-blues of "Don't Start" threaten voluntary manslaughter with severe riffage and facile soloing.

Clark gets vocal assistance from George Clinton on the heavenly "Funk Witch U," and the lead break and Hendrix-style whammy abuse on "This Is Who We Are" is tip-top. "Alone Together" features trumpeter Keyon Harrold and displays Clark's smooth R&B side. He is joined by Stevie Wonder on clavinet, harp, and vocals on the super funky "What About The Children," so *yeah*, this album is a big deal. **– *Oscar Jordan***

Rick Vito
Cadillac Man

Best known for his "Like A Rock" slide work behind Bob Seger and 1987-'91 stint with Fleetwood Mac, Vito's lengthy resume also includes John Mayall, Bonnie Raitt, Roger McGuinn, John Prine, and Dolly Parton. Along the way, he has released a dozen solo albums across 30 years.

His expressive singing and hip song-writing impress on *Cadillac Man*, not surprisingly peppered with plenty of hot guitar. "Gone Like A Cool Breeze" pierces jump-blues with keening slide, while the instrumental "Bo In Paradise" is a moody tribute to Mr. Diddley. He offers his take on his tune "It's Two AM," which won a Blues Music Award when covered by Shemekia Copeland in 2001.

On the title track and the reverb-drenched "Crying At Might," reminiscent of Peter Green, he gets a slicing out-of-phase tone from the Soul Agent model he designed for Reverend Guitars. The lone cover is an eery slide instrumental treatment of "Just Another Day," sourced from the '50s Soul Stirrers featuring Sam Cooke. Vito has been in-demand by numerous major acts. This solo effort should be equally in-demand by guitar fans everywhere. **– *DF***

Jesse Dayton
The Hard Way Blues

Wielding maximum-strength blues and heaping helpings of rockabilly swagger, Jesse Dayton's latest comes with guns blazing, saturated in piss 'n vinegar. Coming hot on the heels of an album and tour with Samantha Fish, Dayton pours his post-Freddie King hollowbody licks into hard-luck stories about broken lives, bad relationships, and sleeplessness.

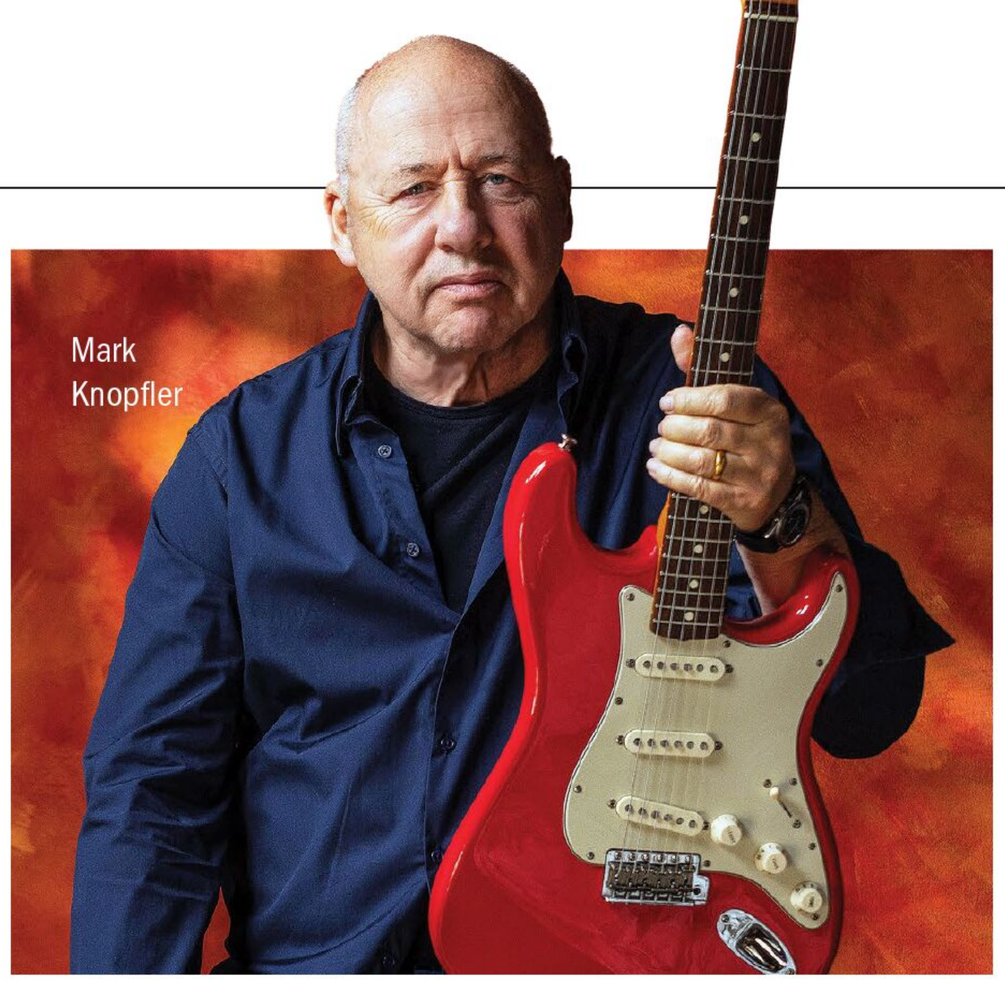
Produced by Shooter Jennings, *The Hard Way Blues* marinates in a grimy Texas hot sauce with echoes of early Tom Waits. The album's first single, "Night Brain," is Dayton's alt-blues ode to insomnia. Morphing from a back-porch 1930s acoustic blues intro to intense modern psychedelic electric burn and twang, Dayton unleashes pentatonic napalm with joie de vivre. The intro to "Navasota" is Chuck Berry on crack, as Dayton settles into a hypnotic ZZ Top-style blues stomp. Gut-level slide playing abounds. More acoustic blues continues by way of Jimmy Page on "Baby's Long Gone," with high-protein salvos of savage rhythm playing and the kind of chicken pickin' that would earn a salute from Steve Morse.

"Huntsville Prison Rodeo" is full-blown honky-tonk with too much earth for pop-country radio. Ditties like "God Ain't Makin' No More Of It" could save music, but there's no accounting for great talent. **– *OJ***

Slash
Orgy of the Damned

Though promoted as a straight blues album (it definitely *isn't*), this set more resembles '70s hard rock with a bluesy edge. Yet, *Orgy* is a lively outing with guests like Steven Tyler, Gary Clark, Jr., Beth Hart – even pop diva Demi Lovato. Billy Gibbons sings lead on a leaden "Hoochie Coochie Man," trading saturated solos with the Guns 'N Roses hero. A cover

Gary Clark, Jr: Mike Miller. Jesse Dayton: Ray Redding. Slash: Gene Kirkland.


Mark Knopfler

of Fleetwood Mac's "Oh Well" is closer to the mark with Chris Stapleton on vocals and Tash Neal (of London Souls) adding rhythm guitar.

"Key to the Highway" evokes Southern rock, with Slash delivering hot double-stops and string-pushing screams. Backed by acoustic guitar, Lightnin' Hopkins' "Awful Dream" gets an offbeat, yet valid, interpretation from punk godfather Iggy Pop. Paul Rodgers serves up his BadCo growl on "Born Under a Bad Sign," deploying an arrangement more Cream than Albert King.

Among best picks, AC/DC's Brian Johnson sings in a surprising low range on "Killing Floor" with lickety-split guitar runs. Another winner is Stevie Wonder's "Living for the City" with Neal's powerhouse vocals and scorchin' leads from Slash. Again, *Orgy* isn't a true blues album – still, it's solid, greasy fun. **– PP**

Mark Knopfler
One Deep River

Nearly 30 years ago, Mark Knopfler dissolved Dire Straits to launch a fruitful, substantive solo career centered on original tunes, his dusky voice, and stellar, melodic guitar. In a long career, he has also written film soundtracks, recorded with longtime hero Chet Atkins (and Emmylou Harris), and produced a notable Bob Dylan album (*Infidels*). He's back with another strong solo set, backed by exceptional sidemen including master Nashville session bassist Glenn Worf, guitarist Richard Bennett (*VG*, September '20), and pedal-steeler Greg Leisz.

Knopfler's original tunes are intimate, often centering on quirky, backstreet characters. He leans into each vocal, his guitar always crisp and focused. The witty "Smart Money" features a flawless break, the song further enhanced by Leisz's rich twang. He spins similar elegant breaks on the plaintive "Janine," and "Before My Train Comes."

Knopfler is no less eloquent on the powerful, gospel-flavored title track; arranged strings mesh perfectly with guitar on the ballad "Black Tie Jobs," just as amplified chords and screaming riffs enhance the dark themes of "Scavengers Yard." Simple, insistent riffs drive "Ahead of the Game," a tale of itinerant musicians. Ultimately, *One Deep River* affirms the full range of Knopfler's virtuosity – a flawless convergence of vocalist, composer, and guitarist. **– Rich Kienzle VG**

Mark Knopfler: Murdo McLeod.

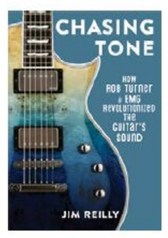
extra EXTRA

MARTY FRIEDMAN
Drama

Lush and symphonic, *Drama* is more about the melodic grandeur of soundtrack music than any kind of shred or metal. "Illumination" is a guitar power ballad with touches of Queen, while Friedman's solos on "Triumph" soar like a vocalist. "Thrill City" begins with saturated riffing before jumping into catchy pop-rock. "Acapella" will remind listeners of Marty's classical Bach-and-roll roots. **– PP**

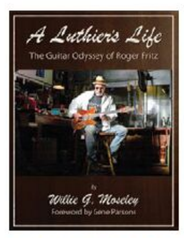
WILD RABBIT SALAD
Postcard From Houston

The Roebuck duo from Houston offers a delightfully eclectic mix of originals touching on pure country, Southern rock, and Americana. Marietta's vocals soar while partner Bucky's guitar and low singing help spell classic, with backing from the Lucky Run Band. "Politician" is underpinned with tremolo bass-stringing, while "Love Child" features 12-string jangle. This is uncategorizable in the best sense. **– DF**



JIM REILLY
Chasing Tone: How Rob Turner & EMG Revolutionized The Guitar's Sound

The author tells the story of Rob Turner's odyssey with EMG, reimagining the guitar pickup and interacting with icons of the music industry, notably Metallica. World-class players discuss their tone, evolution, creative process, and how each artist collaborated with Turner to personalize the active EMG sound. A compelling dive into gear innovation and history of guitar-pickup tone. **– OJ**



WILLIE G. MOSELEY
A Luthier's Life: The Guitar Odyssey of Roger Fritz

The latest book from *VG* contributor Moseley traces guitar builder Roger Fritz's fascinating journey. Inspired early on by music and guitars, Fritz gradually honed his craft. His breakthrough – designing a Telecaster-style guitar for Roy Buchanan called the Bluesmaster – is covered in-depth. Roger's brother, John, joined him for a time to found Fritz Brothers Guitars. Stuffed with technical information and terrific photos. **– BA**

TONY TRISCHKA
Earl Jam: A Tribute to Earl Scruggs

Trischka, acknowledged master of five-string banjo, pays homage to bluegrass banjo icon Scruggs, who would have turned 100 in 2024. He tackles 15 country-bluegrass favorites accompanied by combinations of veteran and modern bluegrass A-listers: guitarists are Billy Strings, who sings and plays on "Brown's Ferry Blues," while "Dooley" features Molly Tuttle, and Vince Gill appears on "Bury Me beneath the Willow." **– RK**

KAY-TA MATSUNO
Distance

Kay-Ta Matsuno is a nylon-string guitarist who works in the smooth-jazz camp, but is also a first-call session man in R&B and contemporary jazz. *Distance* is a one-man production, but Kay-Ta's guitar work triumphs. "Hope Within" has deft fingerstyle, while "Smog Free" is a virtuoso combination of classical and electric axes. The programmed drums detract, but Matsuno's guitarmanship is sparkling. **– PP**

VG APPROVED GEAR

STILL THE ONE

Fender's 70th Anniversary American Professional II Stratocaster

At 70 years old, the Fender Strat is the same age as the transistor radio, the Miss America Pageant, and Elvis Presley's debut single. Dare we say, it has aged better than any of them. Rather than building to original 1954 specs, Fender is offering the 70th Anniversary Strat as a special edition from the American Pro II line – pairing time-honored Stratocaster design elements with updates drawn from seven decades of mechanical improvements and evolving player preferences.

Price: $1,999.99
www.fender.com

Unlocking the hardshell case, one is struck like the guys in *Pulp Fiction* opening the briefcase. Online images don't do justice to the flame-maple top with Comet Burst finish burning softly from hot orange to burgundy to milk chocolate. Off-white controls and pickup covers play to the well-aged aesthetic and contrast nicely with the tortoiseshell pickguard. Hardware highlights include a commemorative 70th Anniversary neckplate, locking tuners (with short posts for a sharper break angle from the nut), and of course a vibrato bridge – one of Leo Fender's proudest designs.

The secret strength of this guitar, though, is its neck; the deep-C profile, 9.5" fretboard radius, and 1.685" nut width – all considerably different from 1954's model – contribute to its being one of the most-effortless necks you'll find. Rounded edges on the fretboard add to its feeling especially ergonomic, and there's notable resonance between the maple neck and alder body (another difference from the original ash).

Fender's V-Mod (vintage-modern) pickups are familiar to American Pro owners, with opinions being a bit divided. We did not detect the brittle or harsh characteristics that some reported about the original V-Mods. To the contrary, these 70th Anniversary V-Mod IIs sound warm, balanced, and capable of classic Strat tones while plumping up the narrowness that puts some players off single-coils altogether. A new push-on control on the second Tone knob adds the neck pickup to the bridge in positions 1 and 2 – another experiment on the ever-evolving Fender Strat. ***– Rich Maloof***

Price: $199
www.danelectro.com

WAY-BACK MACHINE

Danelectro's Nichols 1966

In 1966, 14-year-old Steve Ridinger created his first effects pedal. Designed through trial and error (with no schematics) in his parents' garage in the Hollywood Hills of Nichols Canyon Place, he created a circuit not based on any previous design. Back then, he called it the Liverpool Fuzz Tone, and it was a precursor to his Foxx Tone Machine Fuzz.

Now the owner of Danelectro, Ridinger recently designed the Nichols 1966 – a '60s-sounding cross between distortion and fuzz.

Offering interactive controls that yield a dynamic fuzz sound without diode clipping, the pedal allows users to turn down the guitar's Volume for clean rhythm work. A three-transistor circuit provides versatility, while the Fuzz, Drive, Tone, and Volume knobs work with the two-position Stock/Mid Cut switch for added EQ and tonal colors.

Plugged into a superstrat and a Deluxe Reverb, the Nichols supplied smooth overdrive, belligerent fuzz, plus a range of medium-rude rockin' tones with sensitive pick attack. The guitar's Volume control was the secret to real-world stage work, from crusty Stock voicings to super articulation and raspy highs and lows with the Mid Cut. It's wired true-bypass, powers up with a 9-volt adapter, and is the perfect size and architecture for a crowded pedalboard – original, smooth, yet oh so gnarly. ***– Oscar Jordan***

CLIFF NOTES

Morley's Cliff Burton Signature Power Wah Fuzz

Known for its hefty chrome-plated construction, Morley raised the bar among professional guitar effects in the '70s with its flagship Power Wah Fuzz. The latest rendition was developed in honor of late Metallica bassist Cliff Burton, who used one on several occasions – most notably in the breakneck solo track "(Anesthesia) Pulling Teeth" – and it purports to capture the tone of the original while enhancing function and performance.

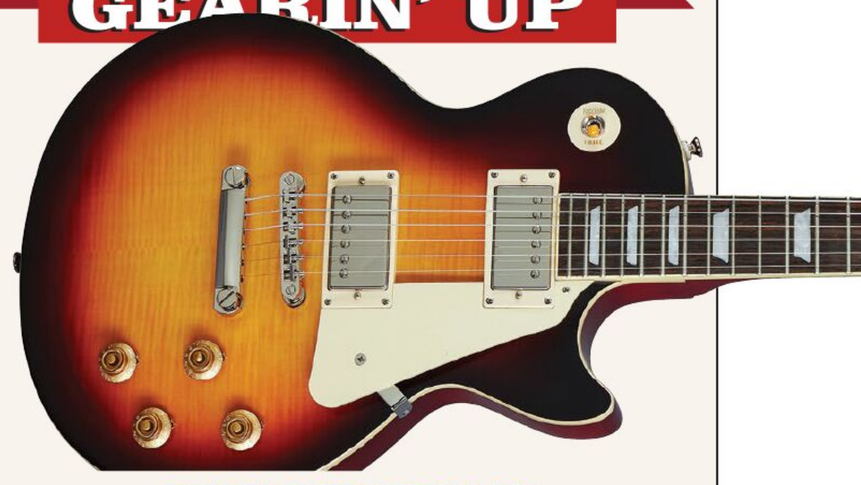
Price: $229
www.morleyproducts.com

The design retains Morley's signature electro-optical control of the wah, meaning there's no potentiometer to wear out, while adding nifty features like step-on/step-off engagement and glow-in-the-dark treadle rubber. Its wah effect includes a Level control with up to 15 dB of boost, while Fuzz sports Intensity, Level, and its own footswitch. Power enters a center-negative connection from external 9-volt DC source (not supplied).

Though devised in honor of a bassist, it's likely to be more widely used for guitar, and the Burton ramped up a mighty wall of psychedelic noise indeed with a Stratocaster into a mid-'60s Bassman head and 2x12" cab. Fuzz and wah are a classic pairing, and the renditions coupled here played beautifully together; "all on" delivered chewy, screaming, vocal-like tones with very inspiring girth and depth.

Wah alone worked great for funky, spanky rhythm lines, though Morleys have their own characteristic sweep and feel, which might take some acclimation for players more familiar with the Vox/Crybaby formats (it'll be second nature by the second or third pass of "Theme From Shaft"). The fuzz on its own is a juicy, thick version that should be broadly appealing, yet with plenty of razory edge with the Intensity maxed out. The step-on/off engagement can turn the wah on and off unintentionally during wah'ing action, but in all, the Burton's build and tone make it well worth checking out. Oh... and it sounds great with bass, too! ***– Dave Hunter***

GEARIN' UP



EPIPHONE 1959 LES PAUL STANDARD

Epiphone's 1959 Les Paul Standard has a mahogany body, figured-maple top, hand-rolled neck with long tenon, aged finish, Gibson USA BurstBucker 2 and 3 pickups, Switchcraft selector switch and output jack, CTS pots, Mallory capacitors, and a non-beveled pickguard.

WAMPLER MOFETTA

Wampler Pedals' Mofetta overdrive/distortion is the company's tribute to the '90s Ibanez MT10 Mostortion. Built in the U.S., it has three-band EQ (Bass, Mids, Treble), Level and Gain controls, and a Texture switch that activates cascaded MOSFET gain stages. Other features include top-mounted input and output jacks and ability to run on battery or AC power.

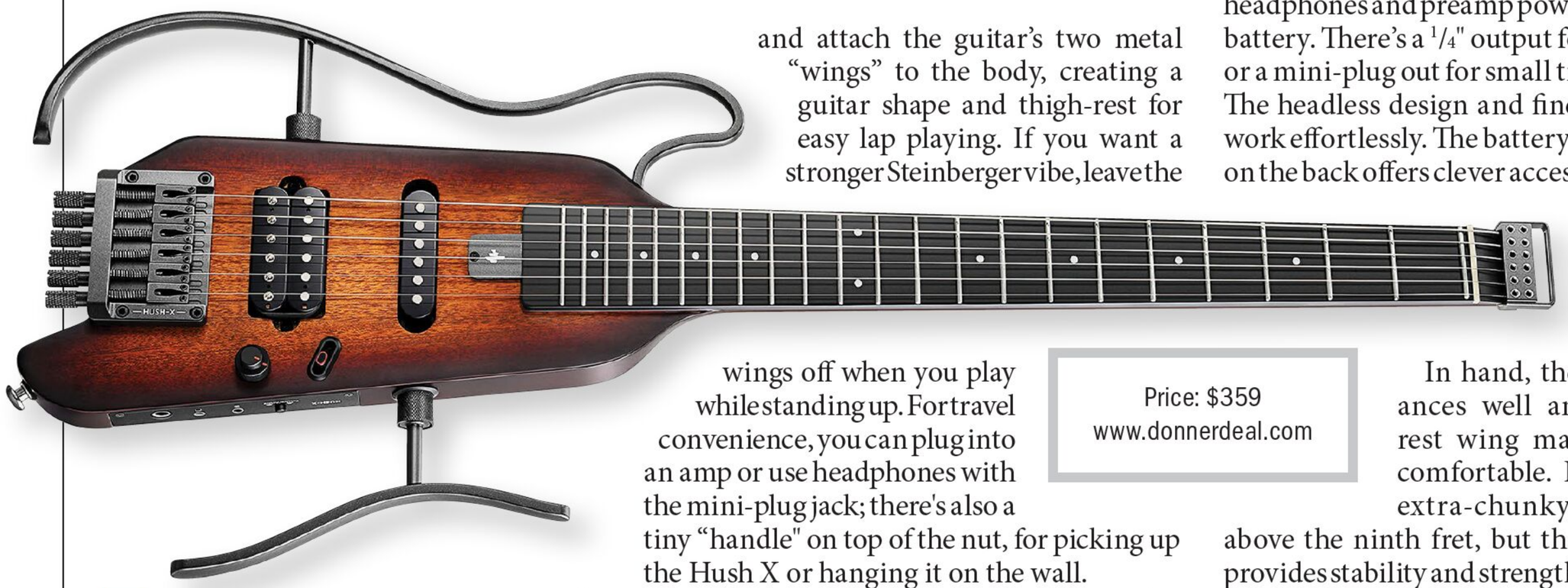
DUNCAN VINTAGE QUARTER POUND PLUS TELE LEAD

Seymour Duncan's Custom Shop Vintage Quarter Pound Plus Tele Lead pickup has large-diameter/hand-polished Alnico V rod magnets with Forbon flatwork, wound to 11.34k ohms. Its copper-plated-steel bottom plate is designed to focus magnetism to enhance attack, punch, and dynamics. It is wax-potted.

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

TRAVEL TWANG

The Donner Hush X



The travel-guitar concept is well-established, but Donner is attempting to one-up the field with its new headless Hush X.

Something of a modular axe, the Hush X arrives in a diminutive case; just open and attach the guitar's two metal "wings" to the body, creating a guitar shape and thigh-rest for easy lap playing. If you want a stronger Steinberger vibe, leave the wings off when you play while standing up. For travel convenience, you can plug into an amp or use headphones with the mini-plug jack; there's also a tiny "handle" on top of the nut, for picking up the Hush X or hanging it on the wall.

Price: $359
www.donnerdeal.com

The Hush X has a mahogany body with a neck-through design and smooth, matte-oil finish, so you can feel the wood grain. The neck sports 22 frets, a 403 mm (approximately 15.8") radius, and a 25.5" scale. Also look for a zero fret.

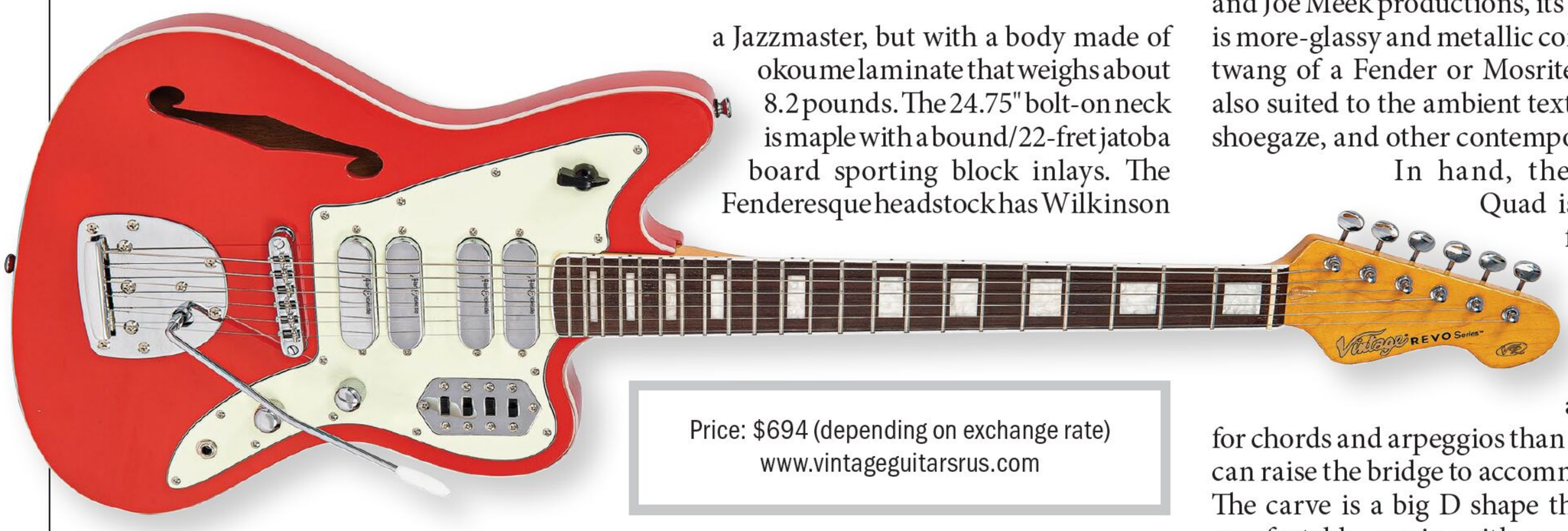
For electronics, there's an Alnico-style single-coil pickup at the neck and a humbucker at the bridge. Interestingly, you can run the Hush X as a normal passive guitar, but switch to active electronics to run the headphones and preamp powered by a 9-volt battery. There's a 1/4" output for guitar amps or a mini-plug out for small travel speakers. The headless design and fine-tuner bridge work effortlessly. The battery compartment on the back offers clever access to the underside of the bridge, to assist when changing strings.

In hand, the Hush X balances well and the thigh-rest wing makes the body comfortable. Its neck is the extra-chunky, particularly above the ninth fret, but that presumably provides stability and strength during actual travel. Our tester arrived with very high action, which made fretting a challenge, so a setup was in order.

The Hush X offers solid construction, priced affordably, and sounds like a solid-body should. **– *Pete Prown***

FOUR YOUR LOVE

The Vintage Revo Surfmaster Quad



A swank retro plank with four pickups? Heck, yeah! The Vintage Revo Surfmaster Quad is a semi-hollow with a quartet of pickups from noted U.K. winder Alan Entwistle, along with his ATN Variator knob serving up 75 tonal possibilities.

The Quad has an offset shape vaguely like a Jazzmaster, but with a body made of okoume laminate that weighs about 8.2 pounds. The 24.75" bolt-on neck is maple with a bound/22-fret jatoba board sporting block inlays. The Fenderesque headstock has Wilkinson E-Z-Lok tuners and variable-height string shafts for intonation, while the roller bridge and vibrato help create a shallow retro twang. Finish colors include Boulevard Black, Firenza Red, and Metallic White.

Price: $694 (depending on exchange rate)
www.vintageguitarsrus.com

Most folks, however, will be more interested in the Quad's passive Entwistle ETS3 Astro-sonic pickups, which have individual on/off switches instead of a selector, and the ready-for-exploration ATN5 Variator. Since the aim of the Quad is to evoke the early-'60s British sounds of the Shadows, Jet Harris, Vic Flick, and Joe Meek productions, its overall sound is more-glassy and metallic compared to the twang of a Fender or Mosrite. Tonally, it's also suited to the ambient textures of indie, shoegaze, and other contemporary styles.

In hand, the Surfmaster Quad is a solid performer. The neck on our tester arrived with super-low action, better for chords and arpeggios than leads, but you can raise the bridge to accommodate bends. The carve is a big D shape that's relatively comfortable, again with an emphasis on rhythm textures. Build quality is satisfactory for a mid-price performer.

With its four pickups, the Surfmaster Quad stands out for being quite different from the norm. It's fun, functional, and funky – and with its chrome-laden finish, it'll certainly jump out onstage. **– *Pete Prown* VG**

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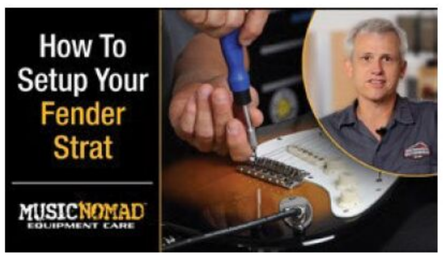

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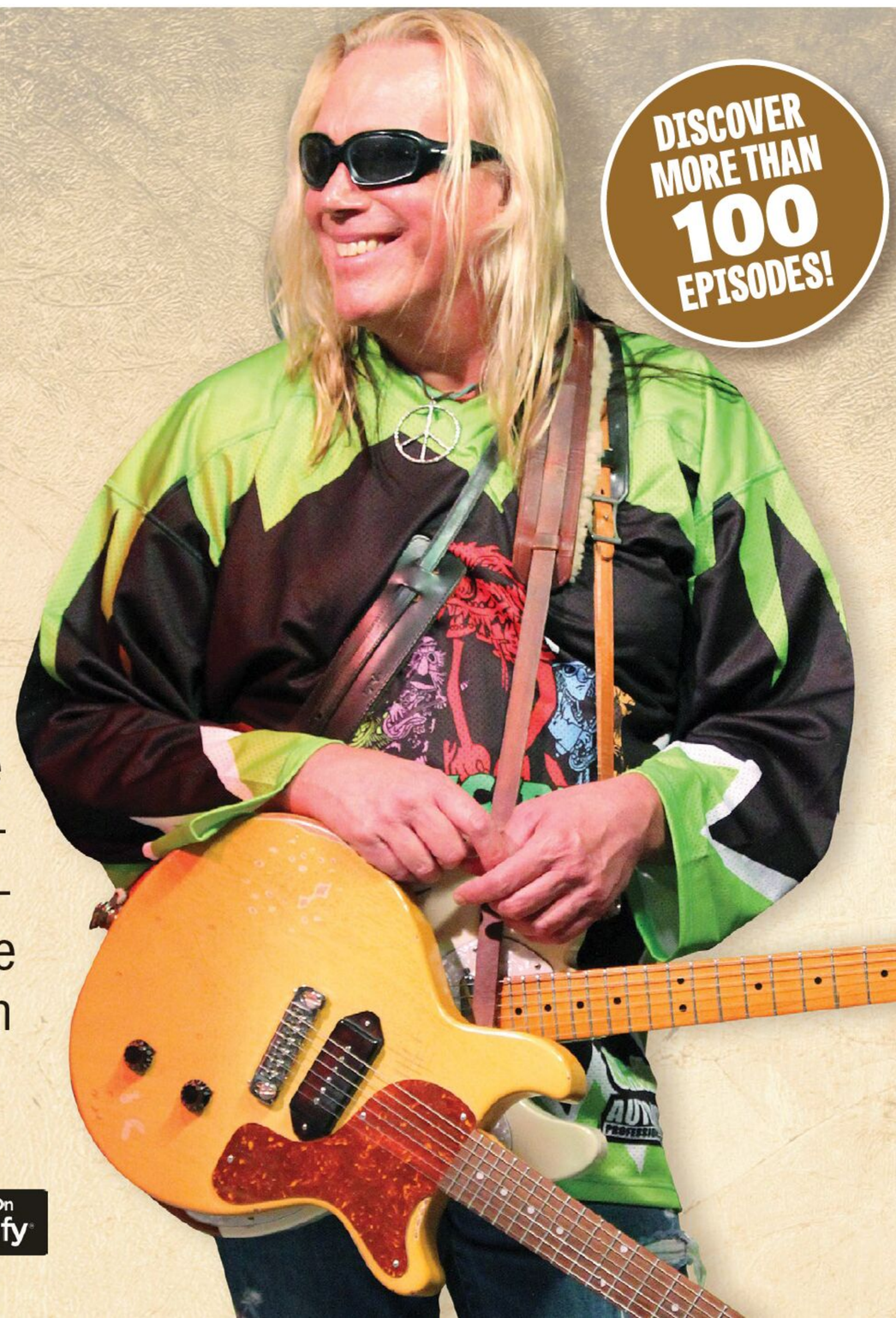

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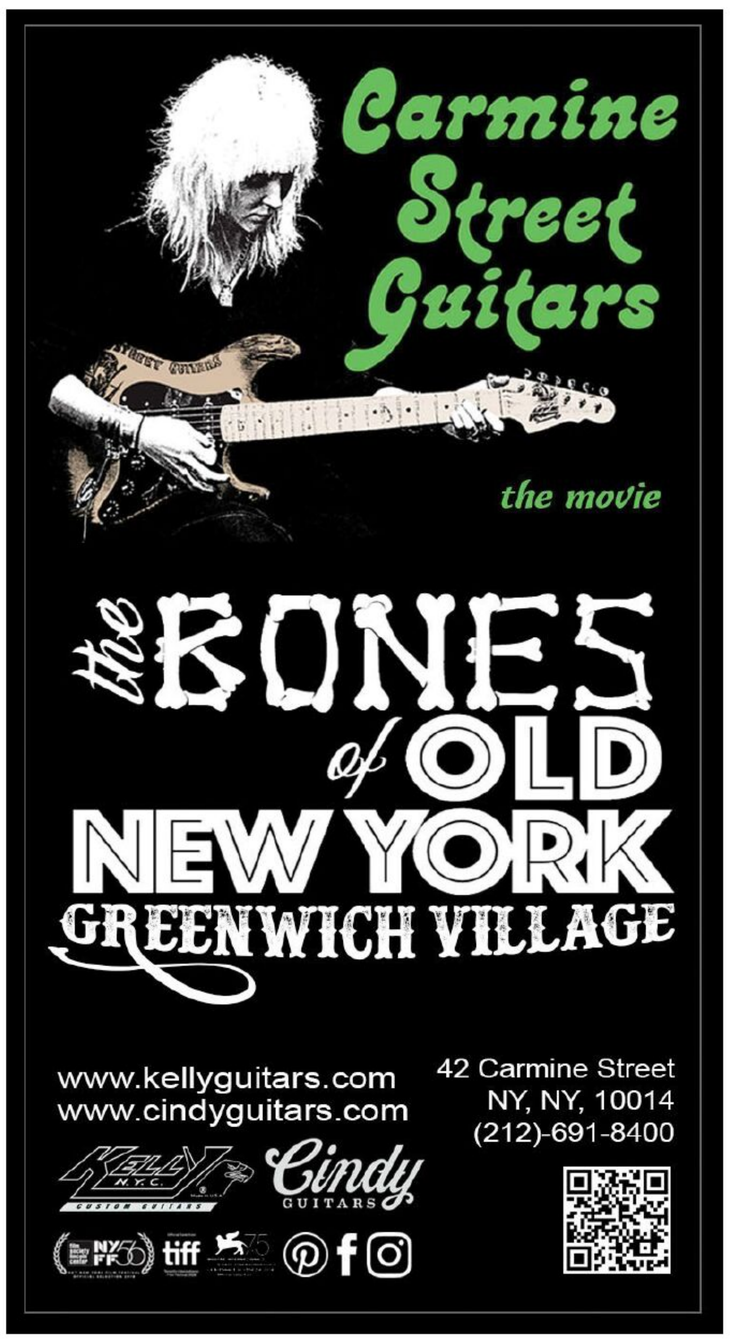

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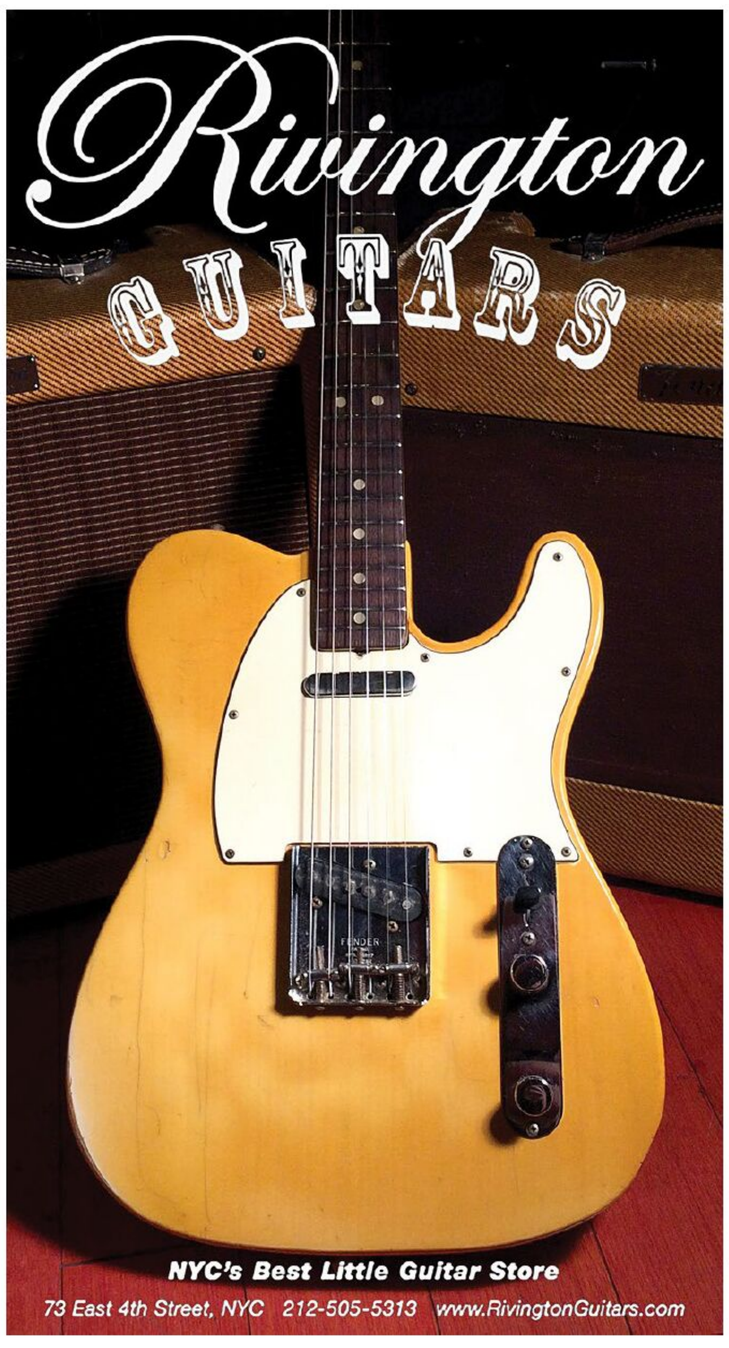

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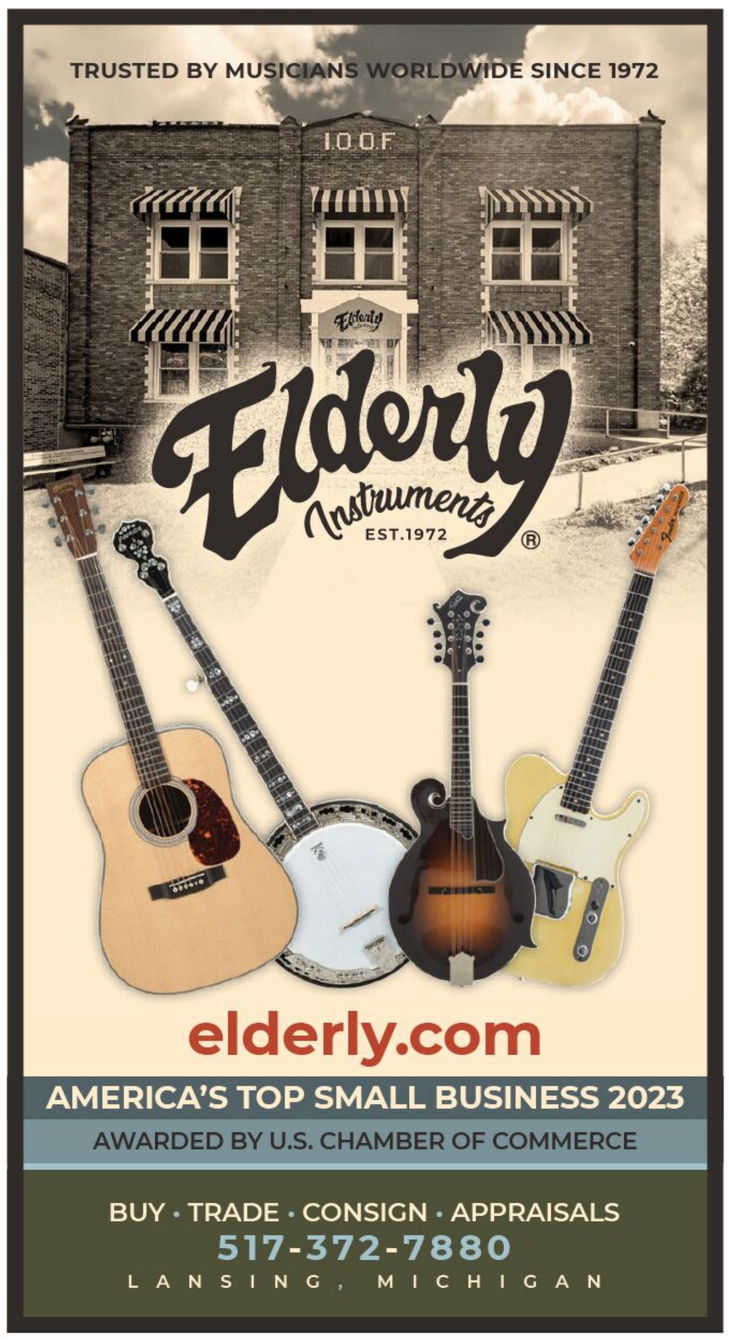
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01 Enjoy a peek at Bob Stein's collection of all-original bits. From left on top are a '54 Guild Aristocrat, '60 Les Paul Special, '74 Strat, '74 Tele, and a '66 Rickenbacker 335. Along the bottom are a '63 Guild Starfire, '57 Gretsch 6120, '58 Country Club, '61 Epi Casino, and a '63 ES-330.

02 Steve Reichling's '38 National Collegian was dressed in non-original blue paint before he got it many years ago, while his '28 Triolian retains its original (if bizarre) gold/yellow tint.

03 Tyler Willison is the second owner of his '59 TV Special, which keeps company with his refinished '59 Junior.

04 Sebastian Gruenberg grabbed this snapshot at a recent reunion of his Fender family. From left, it's a '52 Tele, '52 Champion lap steel, '57 Esquire, "...plus some old tweed and faux alligator skin."

05 Longtime subscriber Sonny Sinclair and his good friend Frank VanBruinessen love classic things, especially stuff from 1957, like Sonny's TV Junior and Frank's Chevy Nomad wagon.

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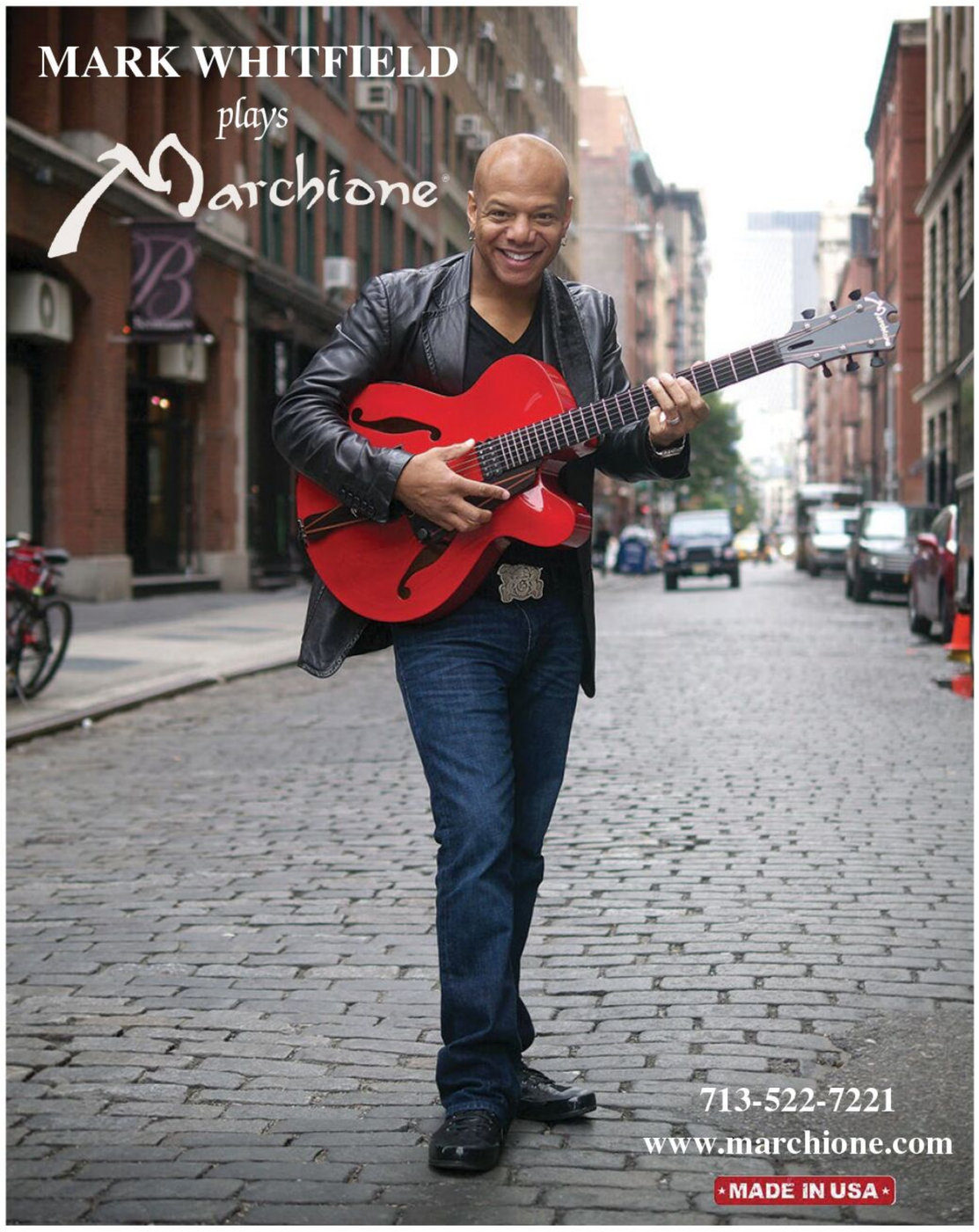
9

06 Michel van Loon is into vintage Levin guitars made in Sweden, across the North Sea from his home in the Netherlands. From left they are a 1960 320 M2 , ’68 320 M2, and a ’64 315. Ready to do its part is his ’62 Tremolux.

07 Todd Shuffler has been playing since 1971 and his current band jams on rock from that era. He relies on short-scale basses like his (top left) Squier Jaguar, ’66 Gibson EB-O, and ’69 EB-3. Perched along the bottom are a Squier Bass VI, reissue Framus Star, Dan Dishaw TS EB Custom, and a ’67 EB-2.

08 Marty Tippens is a longtime reader and fan of The Ventures. His themed collection includes (top, from left) a ’66 Mosrite Ventures XII, a ’61-reissue AVII Strat, 60th Anniversary Jazzmaster, ’59 AVI Strat, an Aria Ventures model played by Don Wilson on his final tour of Japan in 2015 (the tour book lies next to it), and a ’66 Mosrite Ventures Bass. On the floor (from left) are two Wilson Brothers VM 110 models, a Nokie Edwards Tele, a Japan-made Ventures Model in Coral Blue, and a Japan-made Mosrite Ventures ’63 Royal.

09 Tom Pfeifer’s Airline collection includes two 1965 amps with reverb and tremolo – a Model 62-9025A 1x10 and Model 62-9024 2x10 – as well as Town and Country guitars from 1958, ’59, and ’60, and a 7214 Amp-in-Case from ’63.



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