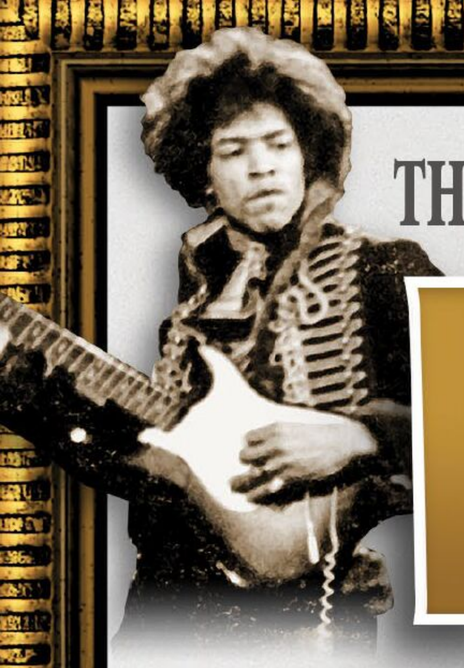

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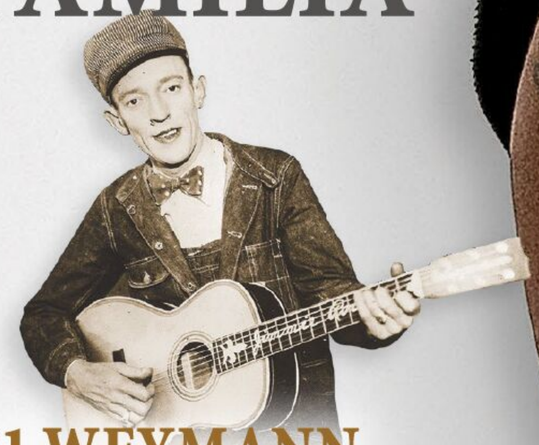

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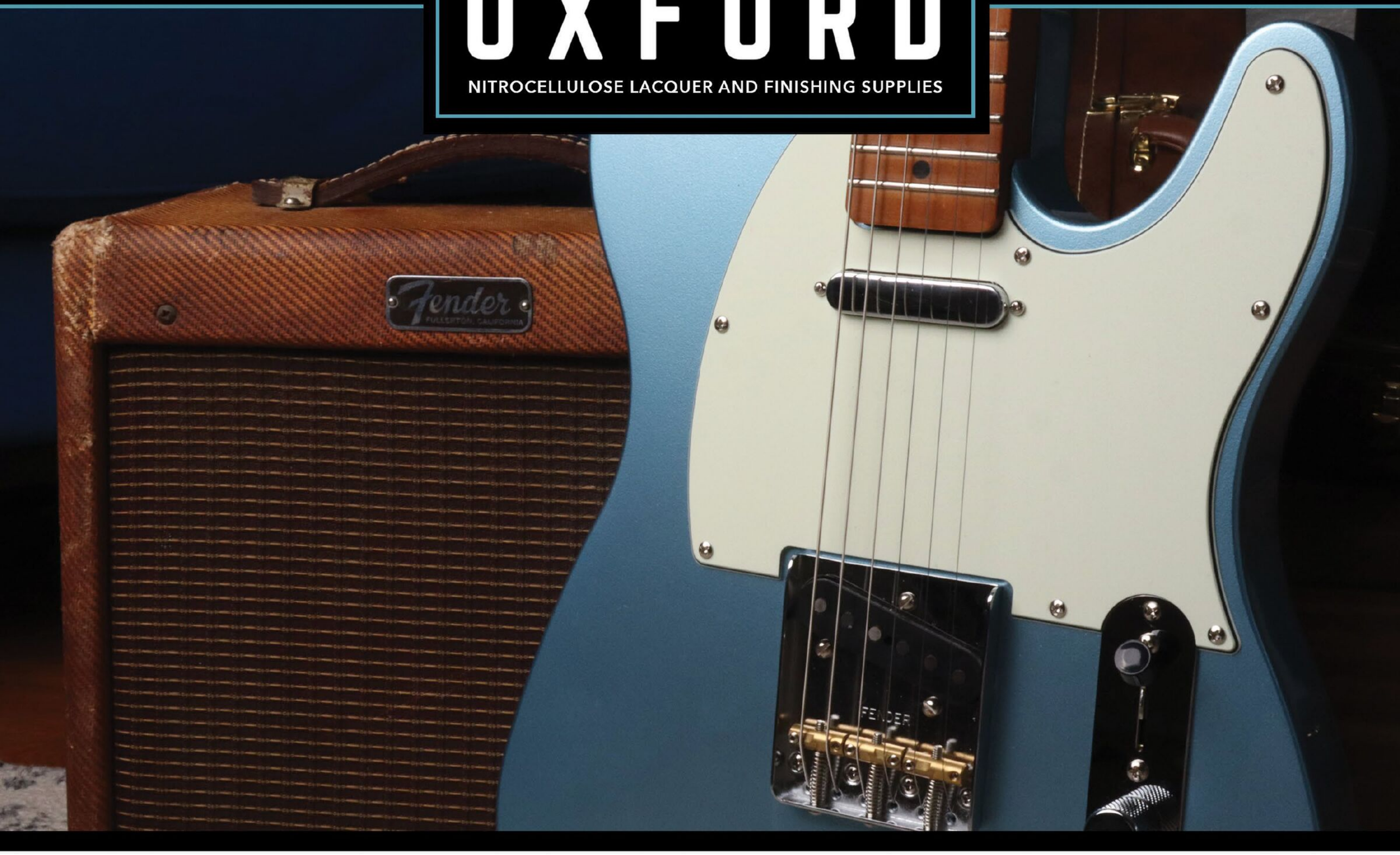

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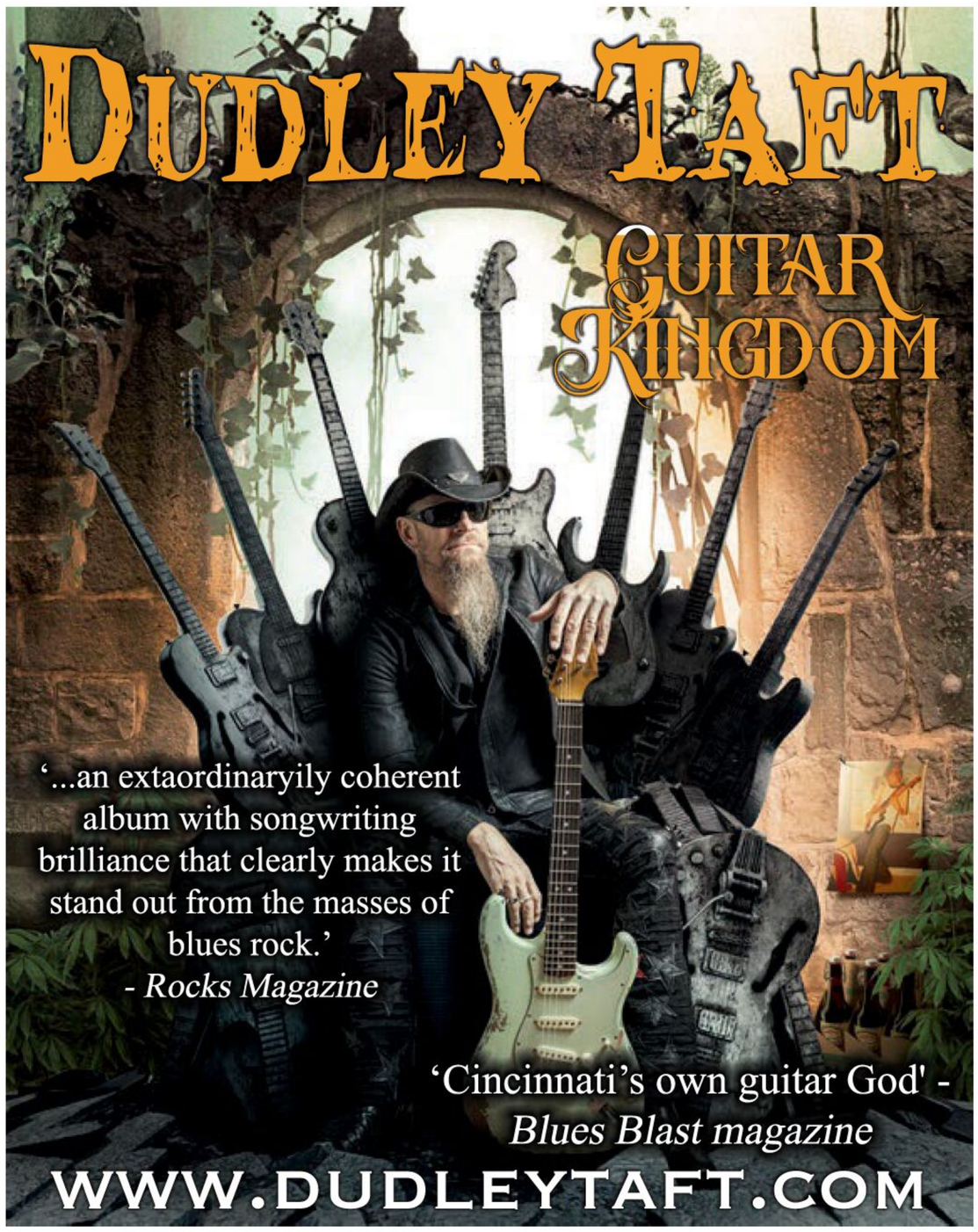

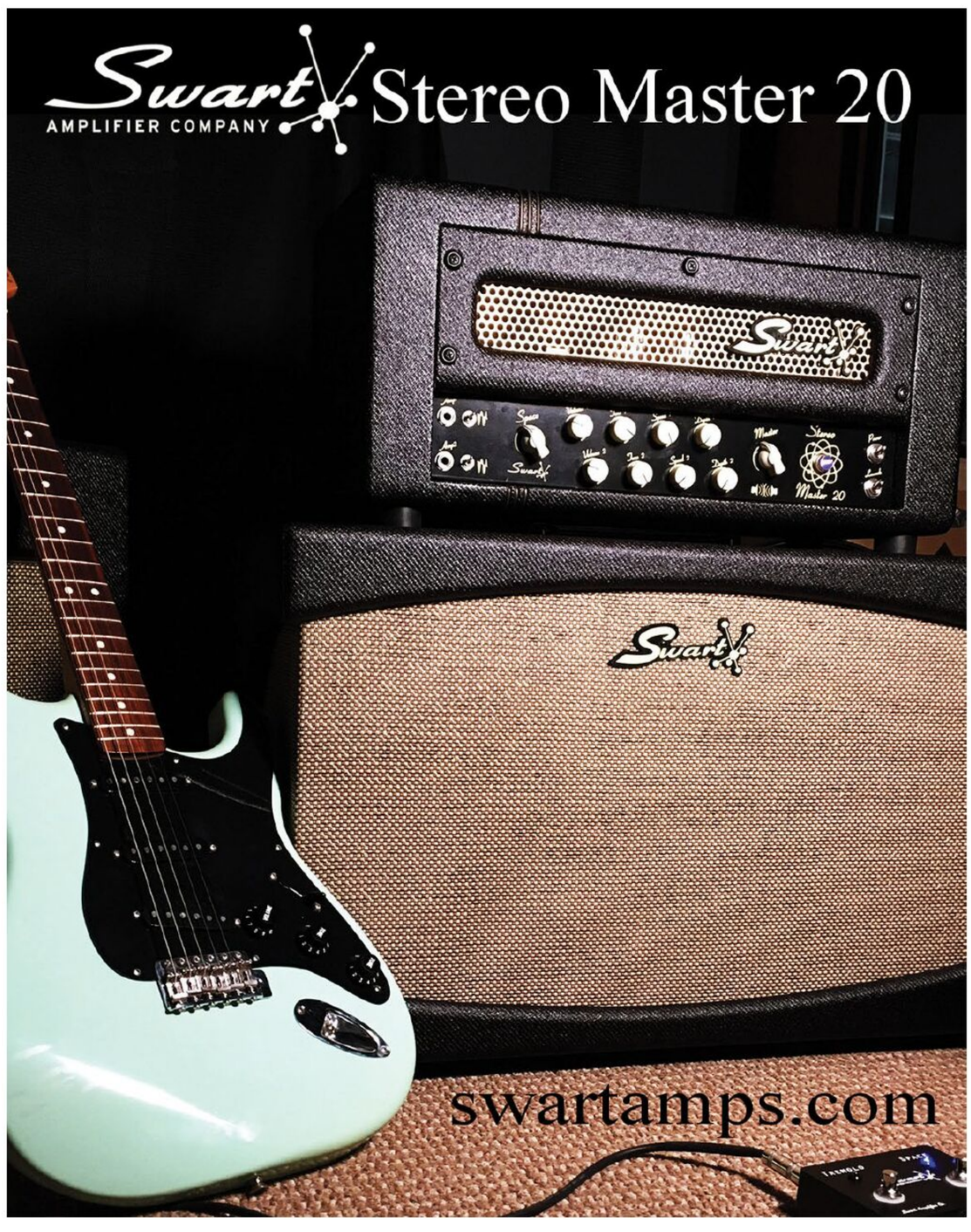

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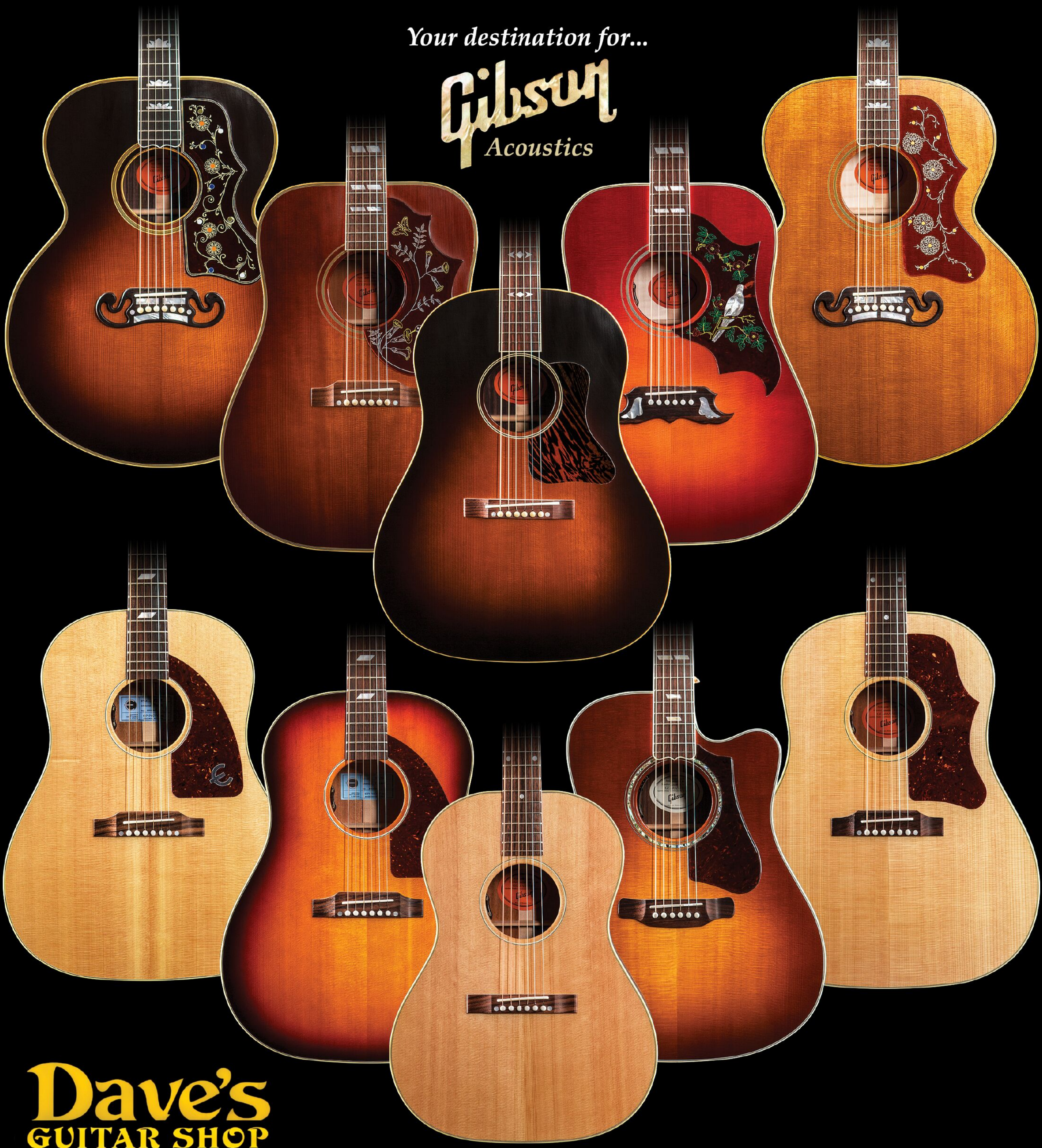

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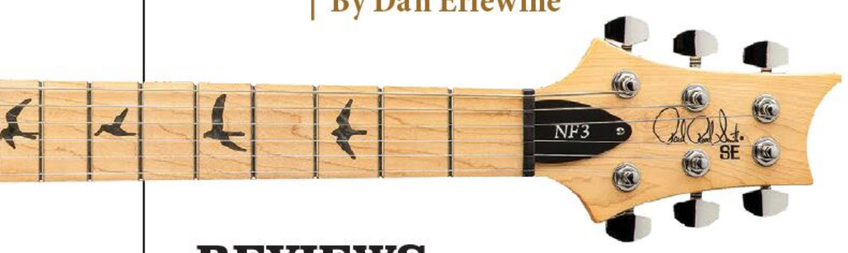

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READER MAIL

DUANE, REMEMBERED

Dan Forte's memorial to Duane Eddy (July '24) was one of the best pieces I've ever read. I must admit, I was not much of a fan because I never took the time to listen to him. But I did take the time to explore almost every track Dan listed in the feature, and I can see how he was so influential to scores of guitar players who followed him.

Out of curiosity, I wonder who that sax player was that is on almost all of his tracks? That guy can really blow a sax!

As always, keep up the great work.

Will DeBouver
New Port Richie, Florida

(*Ed Note: Sax overdubs on Duane's early records were done in Los Angeles by session players Plas Johnson ("Moovin' N' Groovin'" and "Ramrod") and Gil Bernal ("Rebel Rouser"). Steve Douglas joined Duane's touring band in '58 and played most sessions (including "Yep" and "Peter Gunn") until leaving the band to become one of L.A.'s busiest session men. His replacement, Jim Horn, played on "Because They're Young" and other tracks before he, too, enjoyed a prolific studio career.*)

We really enjoyed reading Dan Forte's "Duane Eddy – The Twang Heard 'Round The World" memorial. Dan did a stellar job of covering Duane's life and amazing 60-year career and highlighting all the firsts this pioneer accomplished as rock and roll's first guitar hero. And thank you for sharing the testimonials you received from so many musicians who were influenced by Duane. We'll never know how many people worldwide – professionals and amateurs alike – who were inspired to pick up a guitar after hearing Duane's signature twangy sound from his Gretsch guitar and those talented hands of his.

Dinah and I were privileged to call Duane and his lovely wife, Deed, friends of ours for more than 30 years. Our paths crossed often, and we even traveled together. We first met Duane at an industry guitar trade show in London in the summer of 1991. Dinah and I had become friends with George Harrison through his Traveling Wilburys supergroup, and he surprised us by wanting to see the Gretsch Guitar booth at the trade show. He didn't have credentials, so we had to vouch for him at the door and were we ever delighted that George had brought along two of his friends, Jeff Lynne and Duane Eddy.

That was the start of a long friendship with Duane, and a working relationship, as well, and we teamed up to introduce the first generation of Duane Eddy signature Gretsch 6120 guitars in 1997. Duane even played for us at a Gretsch Summer NAMM Show event in 1997 where we paid tribute to his new signature guitar, and also honored our good friend, Ted McCarty, former president of Gibson Guitars and longtime owner of the Bigsby Vibrato business.

Another special memory is from 2015, when Duane surprised me by attending and performing at my 50th Anniversary in the music business event at the Gretsch Day at Street Sounds in Brooklyn (Duane wasn't a big fan of flying, so he drove all the way from Nashville to Brooklyn to surprise me; now that's a *friend*).

Duane was a true gentleman and one of the kindest, generous, and most humble people we knew, and we will miss him. It was an honor to have Gretsch guitars be associated with such a musical pioneer and influencer for more than 60 years. But it was an even bigger honor to call Duane a dear and longtime friend. In our hearts he will live forever.

Be well, be safe, and be musical always.

Fred W. Gretsch
President, The Gretsch Company

VG: EXAMINATION, INSIGHT, SPOTLIGHT

I enjoy *Vintage Guitar* immensely and read it cover to cover. I always learn a lot from *all* of the features, and the memorials on Duane Eddy and Dickey Betts brought a tear to my eye. Outstanding work. I like reading stuff on Joe Bonamassa, especially when he's making music with others.

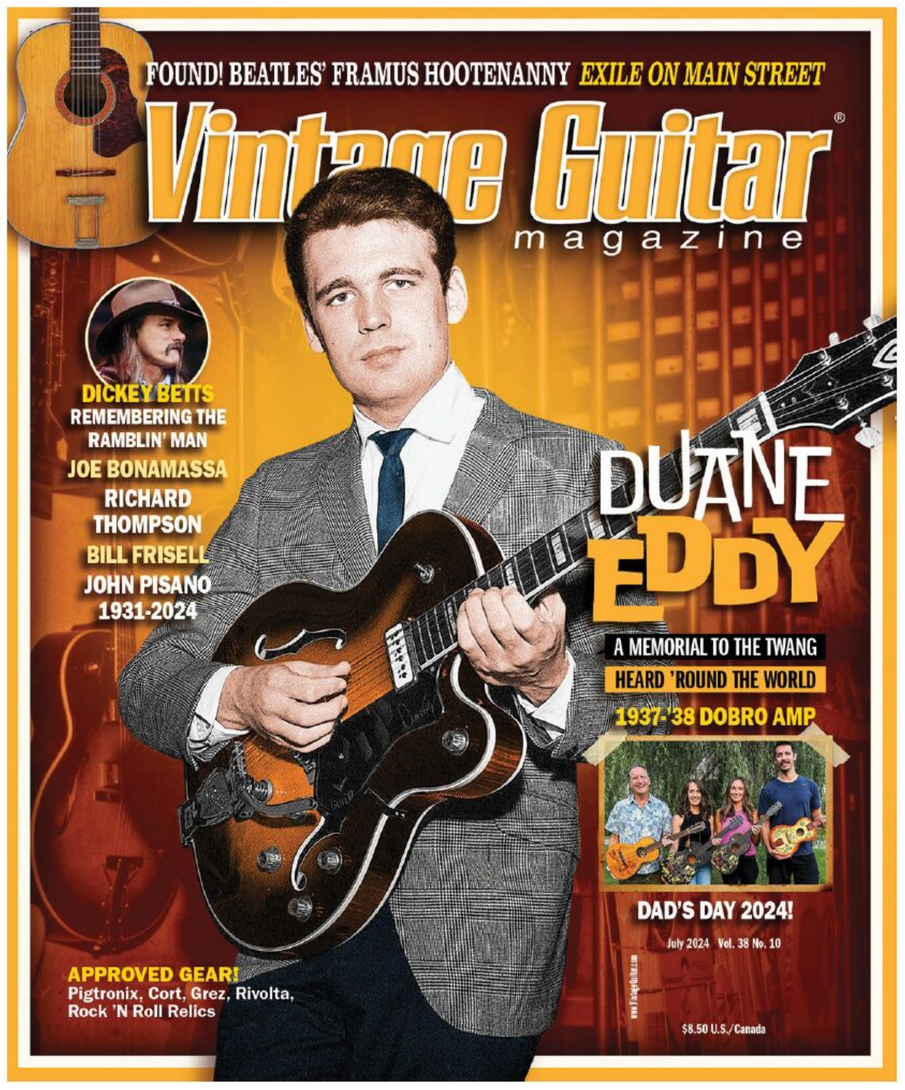
Anyway, your staff is great. There is no other magazine like *VG*. Thanks for what you do.

Eugene Hlynka
Toronto, Ontario

VG is the best guitar magazine in the world, above all because many of the guitarists featured are not always in the spotlight, but are outstanding musicians in the areas of country, jazz, blues, Western swing, rock, bluegrass, and other styles. And the stories about all types of vintage guitars, the "Classics" feature, and much more are unsurpassed.

As a big guitar fan, where else can I get such a range of information? Nowhere. Please keep it up.

Dirk Heimberg
Northeim, Germany



I love how *Vintage Guitar* examines the histories of manufacturers and the evolution of models in guitars, amps, and effects. I'm always discovering new artists through *VG*, and enjoy the insight they share.

Dennis Bator
Nutley, New Jersey

PRAISE FOR THE G-MAN

Gerald Weber ("In Memoriam," July '24) was a giant. In the early '90s, the last of the TV and radio repairmen closed shop and General Electric shut down its U.S. vacuum-tube factories. Guitarists howled "How are we going to get our amps fixed?" I briefly considered transistor amps, but no... they just don't sound right. Then I started reading Gerald's columns in *VG* and thought, "Maybe I could teach myself to do this."

I bought Gerald's books and worked through them chapter by chapter. At first, figuring out what tools I would need to repair my amps was daunting, but I persevered, and when stumped, Gerald took my calls. Before I knew it, I was off and running, blackfacing silverface amps and diagnosing cold solder joints. Other fine amp-repair writers came on the scene in that decade, but Gerald was the first who really reached the vintage-amp audience. It's hard to remember today, when such knowledge is so widespread on the internet, but without him, I don't know what we would've done. Here's to Gerald, and condolences to his family.

Ray Fuerschbach
Town, New Hampshire

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

Founder/Publisher
Alan Greenwood

General Manager
Doug Yellow Bird

Editor In Chief/ Gear Editor
Ward Meeker
Ward@VintageGuitar.com

Editor At Large
Dan Forte

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

Music Editor
Pete Prown
peteprown@icloud.com

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

Advertising
James Jiskra (Director)
James@VintageGuitar.com

Johnny Zapp
Johnny@VintageGuitar.com

Mike Naughton
Mike@VintageGuitar.com

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

Assistant Publisher
Dawn Flanagin

Editorial Assistant
Eden Greenwood

Online Consultant
Joe Greenwood

Online Coordinator
Cherry Carpio

Price Guide/Online
Wanda Huether, Ram Tuli, Greg Martin, Ray Cummins, Andrew Hendryx, James Patrick Regan, Tyler Morris, Karl Markgraf

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FIRST FRET

"LES PAUL THRU THE LENS" AT ROCK HALL OF FAME

The Les Paul Foundation's "Les Paul Thru the Lens," photo exhibit, highlighting the life and career of Les Paul, is at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame through September 15. It features black-and-white photos chronicling Paul's life with photos of family, Paul behind the scenes, and with fellow musicians. It also includes three original portraits by impressionist Leroy Neiman. Located in the Hall's Roots Gallery, access is included in regular admission. For more, visit rockhall.com and www.les-paul.com.

GRACE BOWERS PERFORMANCES BENEFIT TWO GROUPS

Blues guitarist/bandleader Grace Bowers raised $30,000 for Music Cares and Voices for a Safer Tennessee at her second Grace Bowers & Friends concert, held June 10 at Nashville's Brooklyn Bowl. The event included performances by John Oates, John Osborne, Butch Walker, Jared James Nichols, Tommy Prine, and others.

A Bay Area native who now lives in Nashville, Bowers is a Gibson endorsee who, at 16, organized her first Friend's concert in July of 2023 in response to the Covenant School shooting in Nashville that March.

She is now on tour, with dates that include supporting spots for Slash, Brothers Osborne, and The Red Clay Strays. Watch for an interview with her in the October '24 issue.

For more, visit musicares.org and safertn.org.

GRACE POTTER HELPS VERMONT FLOOD VICTIMS

Vermont native Grace Potter (*VG*, April '13), is donating proceeds from her performances at this year's Grand Point North Concert Series to benefit flood victims in her home state. The music and culture festival was held July 25-28 at Burlington's Waterfront Park and included The Flaming Lips, The Head and The Heart, Michael Marcagi, and Anderson East. A silent auction raised additional funds.

Potter's non-profit Grand Point Foundation supports community organizations focused on arts education and cultural programs. To learn more and/or donate, visit www.grandpointfoundation.org.

Paul Gilbert: Sam Gehrke.

PAUL GILBERT

Farewell, Mr. Big

Formed in 1988, Mr. Big was an all-star effort made up of bassist Billy Sheehan, drummer Pat Torpey, vocalist Eric Martin, and guitarist Paul Gilbert. With more chops than a butcher shop, the band used its superpowers to write crowd-pleasing rock anthems and #1 hits.

With help from drummer/friend Nick D'Virgilio stepping in for Torpey (who died in 2018 after dealing with Parkinson's for four years), they're closing the book on a treamendous ride with their final studio album, *Ten*, a tour to support it, and in September they'll offer fans *The Big Finish Live* album and an accompanying concert film. Mr. Gilbert agreed to tell all.

When Mr. Big has reunited every so often, is it like riding a bike?

Overall, things fall into place. The chal-

lenge this time was we had the idea of playing the entire *Lean Into It* album, which was our biggest record. Several of those songs we'd never played live. In the studio you can punch in a line, but when you play it live it's almost impossible to sing. We had to figure out lower keys, which is great for lead vocals and harmonies, but "Never Say Never" has an open-string guitar riff in E. Move that down a fourth, and I have to fret the low note and all the chords are in a different place.

A third of the songs are like that. One of the hardest to play is "Road To Ruin." I wrote it with a Robin Trower/Jimi Hendrix thing in mind. It's a standard guitar move, but because we tuned down a whole step, I had to do Drop-D tuning (laughs). It's a brain melter.

How did you approach writing for *Ten*?

Because this was our farewell tour, I figured we wouldn't play the songs live. If I do a triple guitar harmony, I don't have to reproduce it live. That freed me up in terms of overdubs and tuning. I could do any tuning I wanted and as many overdubs as I wanted and serve the song without worrying about live repercussions. I wrote about half the record myself. I spent a lot of time playing drums on the demos and I wanted to keep the guitars I recorded, and I had to use Pro Tools' Beat Detective to get it right. So I learned how to use Beat Detective, and was really happy with it. Our new drummer, Nick D'Virgilio, upgraded it at the end. So, I demoed all the guitars, basses, and drums. Then everybody came in and put the Mr. Big fingerprint on it.

There's a lot of slide on the album, like "Right Outta Here."

It's become more comfortable. I feel like I'm in control of it. The song is blues-rock, but I wanted it to have some contrast to let it breathe. I came up with this Arabian melody played through a Pignose Amp to give it sonic contrast.

Is that a Univibe on "Who We Are?"

I love Univibe, from Hendrix and Trower to Frank Marino and Pat Travers. I've always loved that modulated sound. I used a big ol' Fulltone DejaVibe. I remember asking Mike Fuller, "Why does the big one sound better than the mini ones?" He said, "They're exactly the same (laughs)." I think there's something about the big ones that has a special tone.

Which amps did you use on tour?

I used the most-common, easy-to-find amps that backline companies carry and sounds good – a Marshall 1959 SLP and a Fender Twin. I needed loud, clean, and reliable. I put the Fender Twin in front of me like a wedge. The sound man is always happy because if I need more of me, I just crank up that wedge and it stays the same out front. Then, I can get what I need so I can feel it, get feedback, and resonance.

On "Just Take My Heart," I need a 100-percent clean sound. The typical thing is to have a distorted amp and turn down the guitar, but it's not the Trevor Rabin "Owner of a Lonely Heart" middle-part sound. I turned on a Boss Compressor, an MXR Stereo Chorus, and got a great clean sound. It's three percent of the show, but an *important* three percent.

The rest of my pedalboard is a combination of distortions. The two always on are the Xotic AC Booster and a BBE Boosta Grande. It's a clean boost that hits the front of the AC Booster. The Boosta Grande turns it up to 11. If I need more distortion, I have a JHS Overdrive Preamp and a Mojo Hand Colossus Mother of Fuzz.

Is this really the end of Mr. Big?

Whatever the four of us do after this will be good. It feels like good timing putting all this energy into it for one last time. Right now, I'm learning the vocal part on "Black Water" by The Doobie Brothers. ***– Oscar Jordan***

IN MEMORIAM

"SPIDER" JOHN KOERNER

Minneapolis folk-blues pioneer "Spider" John Koerner, one-third of the celebrated '60s blues-folk trio Koerner, Ray and Glover, died May 18. He was 86 and battled cancer.

A native of Rochester, New York, Koerner arrived at the University of Minnesota in 1956 to study engineering, when folk music caught his attention. He became part of the local acoustic scene and performed briefly with a young Bob Dylan, who warmly recalled Koerner in his memoir "Chronicles."

Onstage, Koerner and his partners, singer/guitarist Dave "Snaker" Ray and harmonica virtuoso Tony Glover, performed as a group, solo, and in duos. Koerner's aggressive fingerpicking and boisterous vocals complemented Ray's smoldering blues style and Glover's harp.

In 1963, Elektra Records re-released their regionally-recorded LP *Blues, Rags and Hollers* nationally. Two more KRG albums, Ray and Koerner solo albums, and Newport Folk Festival appearances followed. Their fans included David Bowie, the Beatles (particularly John Lennon), the Doors, and Bonnie Raitt, who considered Koerner a friend and mentor.

An inveterate tinkerer, Koerner, inspired by bluesman Big Joe Williams, added a high-G string to his Gibson Army-Navy Special. He also played a '40s Gretsch Synchromatic 75 that had been converted to a 12-string and a similarly modified Epiphone.

Koerner briefly teamed with Minneapolis pianist Willie Murphy before leaving music in 1972. He lived four years in Europe before returning to Minneapolis. Occasional '90s KRG reunions took place before Ray's death in 2002, leading to an '05 documentary. Koerner also performed solo and with Glover before his death in 2019.

His later solo albums included *Raised by Humans* (1992) and 2013's *What's Left of Spider John*, mixing traditional and original material. As his health failed, he gave his Gretsch to Minnesota protégé Charlie Parr. Koerner's 12-string Epiphone is enshrined at Palmer's, the Minneapolis bar where he frequently performed. **– *Rich Kienzle***

"Spider" John Koerner photo courtesy Red House Records.

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JOANNE SHAW TAYLOR

The Adele Effect

Joanne Shaw Taylor's *Heavy Soul* mixes epic tales of turbulent love affairs with bodacious guitar playing. With Anton Fig on drums and producer extraordinaire Kevin Shirley behind the glass, the result is a mix of soul, pop, and R&B with the emotional ecstasy of the blues.

***Heavy Soul* has a wonderful synergy between your vocals, writing, and guitar playing.**

I love writing songs. It's very therapeutic for me and I love playing guitar. My job at the end of the day is to play obnoxiously loud guitar and scream into a microphone about things that bother me. I'm very lucky. It's free therapy (laughs).

It's like scream therapy.

Oh, 100 percent! I call it the "Adele effect." People think I break up with someone every time I write an album. I want to write about things close to me because, at the end of the day, my job is to make people feel something. If *I* don't feel it, I'm not going to make someone else feel it. Secondly, it's why I do this. It's why all artists do what they do – to express themselves. It might be something I've been going through recently or someone I haven't thought about in 10 years, and I might feel a different way than I did 10 years ago. Age and experience is a beautiful thing.

You've recorded a lot of albums. That's a lot of breakups (laughs).

I keep writing about the same guy who's getting more and more pissed off at me (laughs). It's all relative. "A Good Goodbye" was about the benefits of knowing when it's time to move on. Just because a relationship ends doesn't mean it's a failure. That's not always the case. That song came from a conversation with a dear friend. It wasn't that I was leaving a relationship. You can build in life experience without actually having to piss off someone in a relationship (laughs).

Your music now has plenty of soul, R&B, and pop.

That wasn't intentional. When I did *White Sugar*, I was 22. I was listening to blues guitarists, but my career would have taken a different route if I'd been born a man. The guitar is a gender-neutral instrument. I can try to make it sound like Stevie Ray Vaughan or Albert Collins. If I fail, it's because I'm not very good, not because of my gender. I was never going to sing like Luther Allison, so I had to find female artists to learn how to sing from. Most of them tended to be in soul and pop, which tended to be Tina Turner or Stevie Nicks. So, it was a necessity to branch out into other areas. I love a catchy chorus and yes, I am a Swiftie (laughs). Life is too short not to be true to yourself. I want to write the best songs I can.

If you're a dude, there are a million role models out there. You can say, "Hey, I want to be like Dave Grohl or Eric Clapton." There wasn't a single woman who did everything I wanted to do. There's Bonnie Raitt, but she plays slide. There's Jennifer Batten, but she doesn't sing. There's Sheryl Crow, but that's not a blues thing. We look for ourselves in our idols. Then there's Samantha Fish, who I hope a hundred girls see and say, "I wanna do that!" which will spawn a thousand other girls.

Your guitar playing on the album is very powerful.

It's not hard to play a great guitar solo when you've got Anton Fig on drums and you're feeding off him. Most of the setup for the recording was my '66 Esquire and a '63 Bassman. In terms of tone, it was plug in and go. I also played a 2008 Custom Shop Les Paul. I'm boring when it comes to pedals. I don't want to carry them around. I'd rather spend my money on shoes (laughs).

Not a big fan of effects?

When you're onstage trying to entertain people, playing rhythm guitar while singing and driving the band, you don't want to do the tap dance switching pedals. How much harder do I want to make this just to add a bit of flange? Live, I use an Electro-Harmonix Holy Grail Nano Reverb and an Ibanez TS08 to add a little boost.

The tones on "Wild Love" and "The Devil In Me" are fierce.

That was my main objective. I may never win "Greatest Guitar Player In The World," but I hope you can tell it's me, which is what I love about the great guitar players.

Who would win in a guitar duel between you and Orianthi?

She would kill me (laughs)! We have the same friends but we've never met. I hear she's an absolute sweetheart, so I look forward to meeting her one day. ***– Oscar Jordan***

Joanne Taylor Shaw: Stacie Huckeba.

SIMON McBRIDE

Purple's Picker

Though he replaced Steve Morse two years ago, Belfast native Simon McBride is still Deep Purple's "new" guitarist. The band's latest album, *=1*, is his first with the hard-rock legends.

Did songwriting for *=1* work differently when you joined?

The format was pretty much the same as when they worked with Steve. We had three writing sessions – first in Hamburg, then one in Nashville, and the last in Toronto with (producer) Bob Ezrin, which was more of a sit-down to see what he thought. We'd play stuff and he'd make a few suggestions for arrangements and whatnot, then we'd go into the studio and start playing.

I think it's different for those guys, working with me. Obviously, I play and think differently, so that was new for everybody. I've written with [keyboardist] Don Airey before, so I know how he works. But it was really just five guys in a room playing and jamming. There was no pressure to write anything. A lot of the stuff came out of that first writing session in Hamburg.

I think the key with writing is not to stress much about it. It was all very relaxed. That's the best way to do any sort of songwriting. If you don't, it sounds stressed and forced.

The ideas kept flowing.

It was different for them, as they told me, because Steve works in a different way. He probably thinks more like a guitarist and plays more what a guitarist thinks, but because I've done songwriting and producing for other people for such a long time, I think like a songwriter or producer. I don't think like a guitarist. I think about guitar solo afterward. My thing is always about getting the song, and they weren't used to that, but everybody has their own way of doing things. They still got great results with Steve and (original guitarist) Ritchie (Blackmore). With me, again, it's just different personalities.

Did you adapt your style to Deep Purple, or was it already a good fit?

I think part of the beauty of Deep Purple over the years is they never really had a fixed "sign." They have that ability to adapt. It was, "Let's just play and see what happens." I had ideas, which I pre-constructed in my studio; we *all* are always writing stuff. There's a track called "Sharp Shooter," which is from a riff I had. I thought, "That's too heavy, they're never going to use it." But here we are. They're using it! There are no rules.

The songs on *=1* came together very quickly. Would you call them improvisational for starters, but fine-tuned?

Every song that you do or any idea that you have, it's all improv, really. When I pick up a guitar and play, it's improv. I have no clue what I'm going to play. It's just the way it naturally happens. We come up with an idea and maybe we'll say, "Let's tighten this up. Let's play it with a little bit of fire and see how it's starting to feel." There's always a bit of a process in that regard. The key thing is to get the basic structure of the song and all the parts there.

***=1* was recorded primarily live in the studio, correct?**

It's tight, but it has that live thing. Bob's very good at capturing that in the studio, even though there's overdubs and stuff like that. I did re-play a lot of guitars, but I'm a perfectionist. I did quite a lot of overdubs here in my own studio and re-played a lot of guitars, just because I wasn't happy with certain things. A lot of stuff was left live; I'd say 50 percent of the solos were one take in the studio, but the other 50 percent, I wasn't that lucky.

Which guitars did you use on *=1*?

It was mostly my Paul Reed Smith Private Stock signature guitar that Paul made for me. It's a single-cut semi-hollow with a 408 vibe. I used that for most of the record. I also used a custom-made Smitty guitar on some stuff. The acoustic was Bob's, and I'm pretty sure it was a Martin.

How about amps?

I use Engl heads, their Artist series, and I got them to custom-tweak it for me. ***– Bret Adams***

Simon McBride: Mark Hyland.

ROCKY ATHAS

Tornado Warning

Known for decades as The Texas Tornado and The Malice from Dallas, Rocky Athas is still kickin' blues-rock ass on *Livin' My Best Life*, his first album since 2017. A veteran of John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Athas is a Les Paul bruiser who delivers fierce riffs and potent tributes to Peter Green and Jeff Beck throughout the platter.

There's a lot of blues emotion on *Livin' My Best Life*, but also hard-rock riffs. Is there a tipping point between the two?

It's all about the feel. If a song leans to the blues, I feel it that way; if it rocks, I flow in that direction. But even if it rocks hard, I never forget my blues influence in my lead work and want the melody to sing, like on "Dark Days."

Your guitar tone smacks the listener in the face, especially on the title cut.

Thanks. That means my mission is accomplished. I'm miking my Lab Series L5, which has been my personal favorite forever. I recorded the tracks using a mic about a quarter-inch away from the front and center of the speaker. Then, I use another mic on the back of the amp, recording tracks dry – no reverb, delay, or anything – to capture the punch of the speaker and amp. I'll add reverb, delay and, whatever else during final mix. You know what they say: "Garbage in, garbage out." I like it clean to make my statement.

Sounds like plenty of Les Paul tones throughout this record.

Choosing the Paul is a no-brainer for exactly that reason; it delivers the goods almost effortlessly every time. I love all my guitars, whether the Strats or Teles, ES-330s or ES-335s, but I always come back to my Pauls because for some reason they feel like home. You know what I mean? For most of the album, you're listening to my '52 and I chose it because it's such a punchy guitar and has an aggressive tone that fits the songs very well.

What other gear did you use on *Livin' My Best Life*?

You also hear my 1959 Historic Les Paul, a '72 Telecaster for the lead work on "Sad Affairs" and "Grey Mare." The Tele was also my weapon of choice for rhythm work. The L5 and Twin amps are a must-have in the studio, with my vintage Ibanez Tube Screamer TS-10 and 1969 Vox wah. I've tried loads of new gear and will continue to trying it, but vintage amps and pedals still just sound better to me.

Why did Phil Lynott of Thin Lizzy write the 1976 song "Rocky" in your honor?

Honestly, Phil never told me; I heard it on the radio like everyone else and was quite surprised. I read an interview with [Thin Lizzy guitarist] Scott Gorham where he talked about Phil's fascination with cowboys and Texas, and how they planned to spend a lot of time in Dallas. While rehearsing there, they frequently came to the Mother Blues club, where my band, Lightning, played. In "Rocky," when Phil sings, "...and all he needs is his old guitar," he's talking about my '58 cherryburst or '53 Les Paul. Those were my go-to axes at that time.

You were pals with Stevie Ray Vaughan. What was he like?

Steve Vaughan and I met in elementary school and became very good childhood friends, all because of the fifth-grade talent show. I played "House of the Rising Sun," "Secret Agent Man," and "I'm Not Your Steppin' Stone" on my ES-330; afterward, Steve walked up and said, "I play guitar, too," and our friendship began. Both of us had older brothers who were about the same age, we were heavily influenced by their choices. In junior high, we ate lunch together and talked about the newest guitar players and what kind of guitars and amps they were using. Later, whenever we ran into each other, he was always just the same old Steve, friendly as ever and funny.

John Mayall's harp sounds great on "Long Grey Mare." Working in the Bluesbreakers, did John give you any lasting lessons for your music or career?

I learned my best lesson from John when I went to California to meet him and record *Tough*. I asked him how he wanted me to play, and I'll never forget what he said. John told me he listened to my CDs from A-Z and knew what I could do. He said, "Just be yourself. That's why I hired you – I want you to be you." That gave me the confidence to bring my attitude to the project; I take that with me. I am who I am and I do not make apologies for it or change my style for anyone. Being authentically yourself is always the way to go, and I learned that from John Mayall himself. ***– Pete Prown***

Rocky Athas: Bjorn Olsson.

LEE RITENOUR

Roots Of Rhythm

Lee Ritenour's latest album, Brasil, finds the jazz icon traveling to São Paulo with co-producer Dave Grusin to immerse themselves in the nation's rich musical heritage. Performed and composed by some of São Paulo's top musicians, the album is 10 songs showcasing Rit's passion for the guitar. The result is pure syncopated ecstasy.

How far do you and Dave Grusin go back?

He goes back to the very beginning for me. I've known Dave since I was 18, but I knew *about* him before that because he was the most popular and respected TV and film scorer in Los Angeles when I was in my late teens and early 20s. I watched shows like "I Spy" and "The Name of the Game," and loved Howard Roberts' playing. He was a great jazz guitarist and studio musician with a phenomenal sound. There would be a chase scene with five minutes of music and this guitar player blowing over the top of these chase scenes – that was Howard Roberts!

I asked my dad, "Who is this composer with this guitar player blowing all over the top of this music?" It was Dave. Later, I got a gig with Sergio Mendez and Brazil '66. Dave was the force behind those early hits, so the connection happened through Sergio. Later, I was playing at the Baked Potato with drummer Harvey Mason. Harvey said, "Let's call Dave." I said, "Dave isn't going to play with us..." But sure enough, he started coming every Tuesday night. After that, I started doing all of Dave's film and TV work and working with pop artists. He's been on just about all of my records. Dave loves guitar and always features guitarists on his projects because it's such an emotive instrument.

What gave you and Grusin the idea to produce *Brasil*?

I thought it would be a good time to revisit Brazilian music. I thought, "Maybe there's a way to record with the guys down there." We could have done the project in L.A. and got the best players, but to go down there and put ourselves in their environment was a whole different thing.

I kept hearing about new talent there, so I started picking songs based on those artists. The top studio musicians in Brazil are just as good as the top guys in L.A., New York, and Nashville. They're the crème de la crème – great players who can bend and go with you. They add the flavor of where they're from, which is Brazil. We worked with an incredible drummer, Edu Ribeiro, guitarists Chico Pinheiro and Celso Fonseca, and a great singer, Tatiana Parra. It was a first-class project.

You and Chico play so well together on "Stone Flower."

I first recorded that song on *A Twist of Jobim* in 1997. Chico is such a great jazz player and singer. I thought it would be fun to do that tune with him and feature both of us.

How do Brazilian rhythms influence your jazz playing?

The key word is rhythm. Ever since I was a kid, I've loved the rhythmic aspect of the guitar. I grew up while Motown was happening, and I was getting called as a session musician for lots of R&B work. Working with Quincy Jones, where rhythm was the most important thing, fell over into Brazilian music's influence on me. I learned to play Bossa Nova songs as a teenager and I've always been fascinated with the rhythmic aspect of Brazilian music.

Talk about your Sadowsky LS-13.

For years, I was a Gibson guy – I still am. I had a Custom Shop Lee Ritenour L-5 that got cracked on a flight. After that, I was leery about bringing it on the road. Roger Sadowsky said, "Why don't you try one of mine?" He provided me with an LS-13 and a couple of his jazz guitars. I put flatwound strings on the LS-13, which was the perfect choice for the road and recording. On *Brasil*, the electric stuff you hear is the LS-13, and it travels with me all over the world.

It's very airy and vivid sounding. Is it completely solid?

There's a hollow part right down the center, which gives it a little bit of a chamber. But for the most part it's 90 percent solid. I didn't even think about what guitar I would use on the album. Between the LS-13 and my Yamaha Classical NCX2000, I knew I would be covered.

The Yamaha was a good match with the other acoustic performers.

When I wasn't playing the Yamaha, Chico ended up using it on the first track. Celso Fonseca ended up using that guitar on his tune, "Meu Samba Torto." On "Stone Flower," I'm playing the LS-13. Chico is using the Yamaha. I remember calling up Yamaha and telling them, "Your Yamaha is all over the record in several ways (laughs)." ***– Oscar Jordan***

Lee Ritenour: Gladstone Campos.

DENNIS JONES

Beyond Boundaries

On *About Time*, Dennis Jones gets real with blues-rock that comprises one part drama, one part top-tier production, and guitar tones that melt faces. With BusBoys keyboardist Brian O'Neal behind the glass, Jones has created a crop of compelling songs tailor-made for blues festivals all over the world.

Songs like "Always The Same" are blues-based but really hit home.

"Always The Same" is an old song I'd redone. It's probably 30 years old. I re-wrote it, and I think if I can relate to it, other people can relate to it. "Too High To Fly" and stuff like that are about waiting for things to happen. That never works. You have to get off your butt and do it. "Just Like You" is about traveling the world and seeing how much we all have in common – respecting other cultures and not being the ugly American.

It's life experience. All my songs come from observing people, my life, and where I am. It's what I see in the world and what I see in myself. When I go around the world to play, I see the happiness I bring. That's the reward. Everything is about time and timing, so the album title was appropriate.

"Six Feet Off The Ground" is a great song that another blues artist might leave off because it's so heavy.

That's the great thing about owning a record label (laughs). I record a lot of songs, and I pick the best ones. It's a great song, and I thought it would be an excellent closer. It's also very positive. I've been an eclectic from my very first record, and I've never stayed in blues mode. Blues is one of the most-original forms of American music; everything I do comes from that root. But I want to do me. I sleep good at night because of that. My fans keep coming out, so I must be doing something right.

***About Time* sounds like the synergy between road chops and excellent production.**

I brought in Brian O'Neal to help me produce. I used to play with The BusBoys back in the day. He produced my first record and the vocals and basic tracks on this record. Then I went into another studio and produced everything else myself – guitar, keyboards, sax, and backing vocals. Paulie Cerra came in and played sax.

How did Brian's input affect the album?

Brian is an amazing producer and a great guy. He took my vocals to another place. A lot of the stuff he made me sing, I didn't like. I was like, "No! That's not me!" I listened to it two weeks later and was like, "Oh, wow!" (laughs) To trust your producer is really what it's all about. Get out of your zone and push yourself. I needed that kick in the ass.

Which pedals did you run?

I plugged straight into the amp except for an Xotic XW-1 wah. I have a couple of high-end wahs, but for some reason, that one cut through really well.

There's a chorus effect on "You're Killing Me." That's an old Leslie. We plugged it into the board. Brian was turning the knobs and sped it up for certain parts. I'd never played through a Leslie, and it was really cool.

I also used a DSL Effects Ultra Chorus II. All my pedals are dual pedals; I love stuff that has more than one function. I call them crayons. They're colors. I play in a power trio and I like different shades.

I didn't use any dirt pedals. Usually, I sneak in a Tube Screamer, but this time I took my Bogner Shiva out of storage, brought in a Deluxe Reverb, and used a '60s Marshall that was in the studio. When I did the solos, I went through my Shiva and my Vibro-King. All the heavy guitar was the Bogner. It's a monster. I also used an old Vox that had a completely unique sound. It was great to plug straight into an amp without pedals, and I think it captured the sound.

Talk about your guitars.

I build my own. I used my #1 that I built in 2014 and the goldtop Les Paul I've had for 20 years. I've really dug into the Les Paul. I remember the early Aerosmith albums when Joe Perry used Strats, Teles, and Les Pauls in different combinations to get certain sounds. I'm an old-school guy. I'm not interested in new guitars. I've tried them, and they don't make you play better. I build mine at home, the way I like, buy the necks, and put in the electronics. I'm a geek when it comes to that.

What's next for you?

We're going to hit the road, have some fun, and continue making good music. – ***Oscar Jordan*** VG

Dennis Jones: Shawna Sarnowski.

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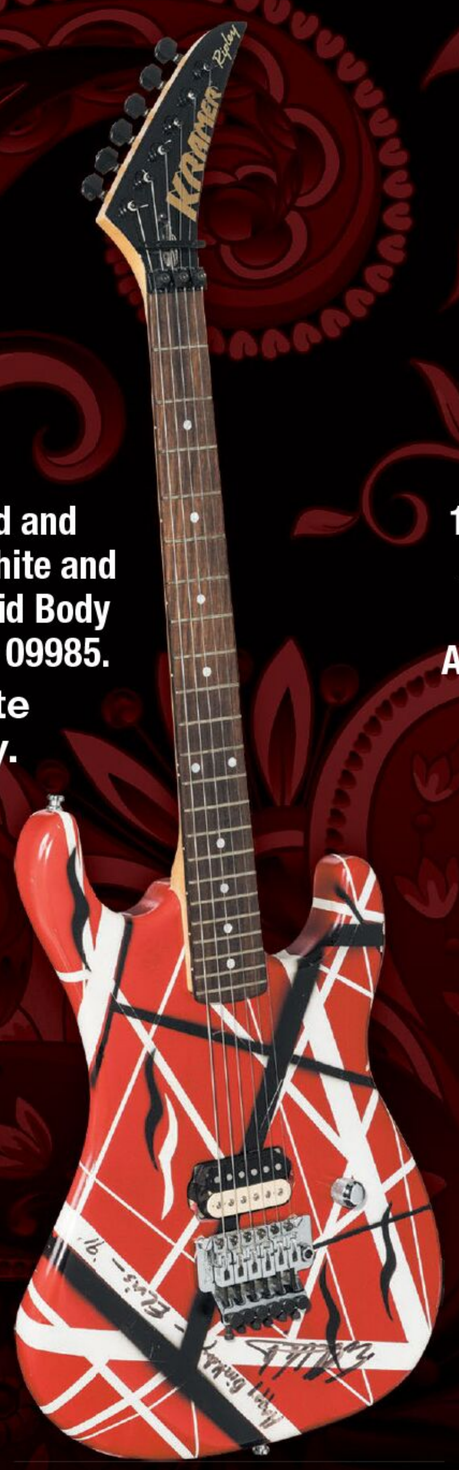

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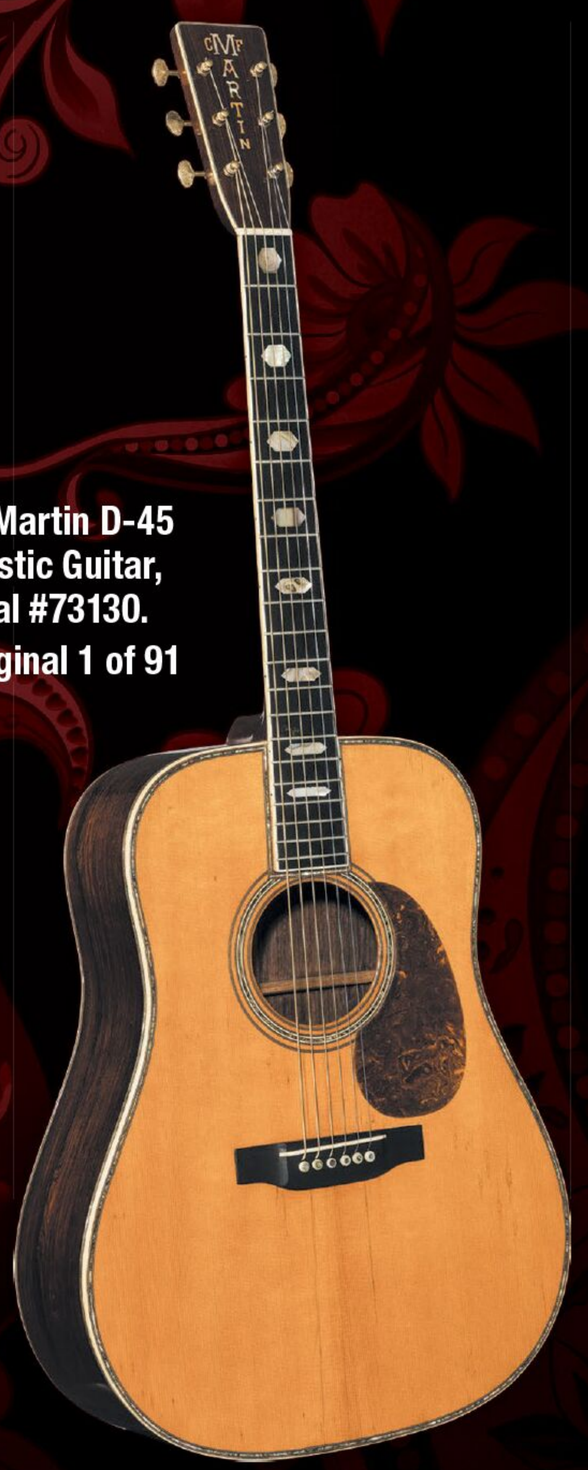

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The Weymann Model 890 Jimmie Rodgers Special

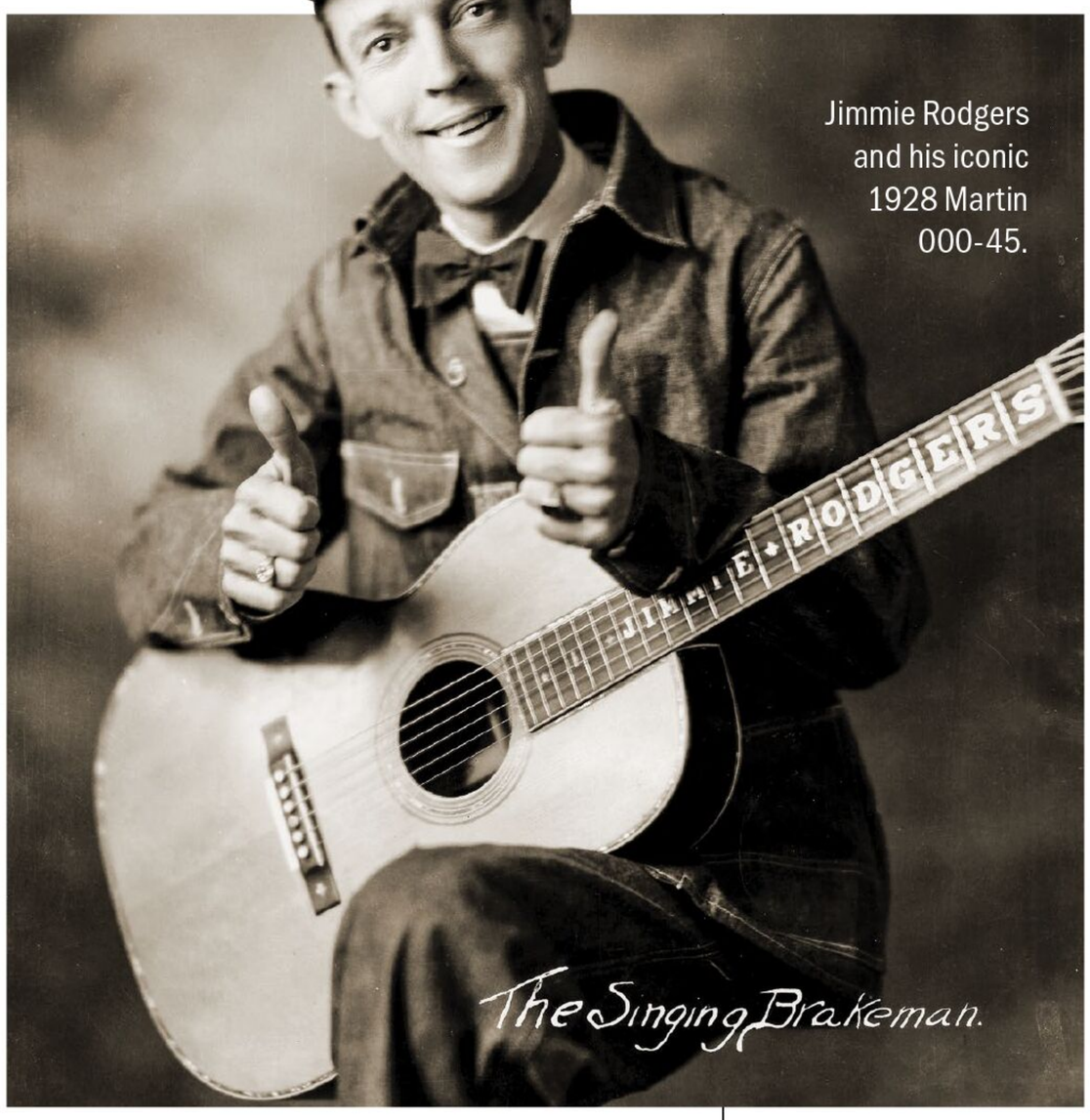
BY PETER STUART KOHMAN

Jimmie Rodgers has been called many things; while active from 1927-’33 he was billed as “the Singing Brakeman” and ”America’s Blue Yodeler” but, in the decades since, the “Father of Country Music” has become most apt. Rodgers’ popularity on record was practically unmatched during his sadly brief career, and a great majority of country artists well into the ’60s cite him as a primary influence. That this slight, gregarious (but often sickly) man, scrawny and prematurely balding, was an idol to generations of fans and performers may seem quixotic in our visually enhanced age, but he was the single most important figure in early country music.

Jimmie Rodgers has been called many things; while active from 1927-’33 he was billed as “the Singing Brakeman” and ”America’s Blue Yodeler” but, in the decades since, the “Father of Country Music” has become most apt. Rodgers’ popularity on record was practically unmatched during his sadly brief career, and a great majority of country artists well into the ’60s cite him as a primary influence. That this slight, gregarious (but often sickly) man, scrawny and prematurely balding, was an idol to generations of fans and performers may seem quixotic in our visually enhanced age, but he was the single most important figure in early country music.

In the nearly 100 years since Rodgers’ recording debut, country music has moved far afield, sonically, but the paradigm of “singer with guitar” he exemplified is still at its core. Earlier “hillbilly” recordings featured fiddles, banjos, and string bands; Rodgers (and the Carter Family, first recorded at the same 1927 Bristol session) put the commercial focus on guitar and vocal. The current quest to rediscover country’s black roots is nothing new where Jimmie is concerned; his sound was as steeped in blues as traditional balladry, and he recorded with black musicians including The Louisville Jug Stompers, Clifford Gibson, and even Louis Armstrong.

If Rodgers was never shy about promoting himself, he had a good reason not to waste time. His amiable persona covered



Jimmie Rodgers and his iconic 1928 Martin 000-45.

Rodgers in a formal pose with his Weymann.

a tragic story, having been stricken with tuberculosis before beginning his recording career. Not long after his initial Victor Records session in August of '27, Rodgers emerged as one of the company's most-prolific and successful artists. Even after 1930, as the Depression crippled the recording industry, Jimmie's discs were among the few that could be counted on to sell at all. His death in 1933 was another tragedy to many Americans already reeling from economic disaster.

Rodgers' stylistic repertoire was as wide-ranging as any American artist; he recorded any song he could get hold of or cobble together – solo, duo, in small combos, with orchestras, Hawaiian and jazz players. In any context, his clear voice and trademark yodel were unmistakable, and the guitar remained at the heart of his music. Many of his best records feature just voice and six-string, and more than anyone, Rodgers made the flat-top guitar central to country music.

Never one to miss a marketing opportunity, Rodgers was, unsurprisingly, the first "hillbilly" artist to endorse a signature instrument. A couple of years after crooner Nick Lucas and vaudeville "Wizard of the Stings" Roy Smeck lent their names to guitars (by Gibson and Harmony, respectively), Weymann introduced the Jimmie Rodgers Special Style

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The 1931 Weymann catalog page for Model 890.

890 flat-top. It's possible (even likely) he first approached C. F. Martin & Company with this idea, but since that company did not indulge such endorsements, Weymann was the next best thing. By the summer of '28, Rodgers had procured lavish custom guitars from both Martin and the H.A. Weymann company with the then-novel feature of his name inlaid in pearl along the fretboard, which soon became a country music tradition.

Jimmie preferred Martin guitars, starting early in the '20s with a bottom-line 2-17, likely all he could afford. He upgraded to a 00-18, then once "Mr. Victor" (his record company) started paying real money, Jimmie ordered a customized top-of-the-line 000-45 in 1928. This was delivered to him that June by C. F. Martin III, indicating the company saw a promotional opportunity with Rodgers. Nonetheless, Jimmie paid $168.75 for the guitar; Martin never gave away anything! Still, the company appreciated his patronage; on the inside back is a note: "To Jimmie Rodgers, America's Blue Yodeler, with all good wishes C. Fredrick Martin III, July 27, 1928."

In '28, a 000-45 was the biggest and best guitar Martin offered, made of the finest rosewood, spruce, and mahogany and adorned with their fanciest pearl trim. In addition to his name on the fretboard, the headstock was inlaid "Blue Yodel." Legend has it this was intended to read "Yodeler," but Martin ran out of space! It also had "Thanks" painted in large block letters on the back, which Jimmie would flash at the audience in appreciation.

No matter how much Martin appreciated

Rogers, the company had no interest in endorsements or marketing artist-logo instruments; anyone who wanted a Martin, even a custom one, had to order it through a dealer and pay for it. In the '20s, Martin strongly maintained this policy despite pleas from performers like Roy Smeck; letters proposing such endorsements still rest in their archive. Of course, later in the 20th century Martin obviously re-thought this stance!

In his sole filmed performance (a November '29 short called "The Singing Brakeman") Jimmie casually asks for "that old guitar" and gets handed his shiny new Martin and delivers a devastatingly casual performance that encapsulates the essence of his art. After Rodgers died in 1933, the 000-45 was loaned for decades to acolyte Ernest Tubb. It is now preserved in the Jimmy Rodgers Museum in his hometown of Meridian, Mississippi.

While Rogers is most associated with the 000-45, the guitars built for him by the Weymann company also saw extensive use. According to Nolan Porterfield's definitive Rodgers biography, Jimmie was using one in performance by August 1928 at the latest. Based on photographic evidence, Rodgers received two custom-made Weymann guitars – one with a slotted headstock, another with the solid variety. Both had Rodgers' name on the fretboard and the Weymann logo on the headstock inlaid in pearl script, more elegant and complicated than Martin's block letters, but harder to read from the audience! While marginally less flashy than the 000-45, these Weymanns are nonetheless beautiful and striking.

As part of this arrangement, the Philadelphia company acquired the rights to use Rodgers' name on a production model. It is not known if he was promised a royalty or if it was a quid pro quo for a free instrument!

The only mention of the artist on the '31 – the interior label reading, "Jimmie Rodgers Special Model – Victor Recording and National Radio Artist."

Whatever the terms, it was apparently not exclusive (if so, Rodgers ignored it!) as he played and posed with his Martin and Weymann guitars interchangeably.

H.A. Weymann & Son was nearly as venerated as Martin, and also founded by a German immigrant, Henry Arnold Weymann (in 1852). They were originally a retail operation trading in goods like jewelry and watches, mostly imported from Germany. After Henry died in 1892, son Harry William steered the business into musical goods, which they began to build and import.

Weymann prospered in the 1910s and '20s with high-grade banjos, their unique Mando-Lute, and flat-top guitars. The retail store sometimes sold Martin guitars, so they were familiar with their Pennsylvania neighbor's designs. In 1922, Weymann bought almost 1,300 ukuleles for resale from Martin, but quickly came out with their own very similar models. In terms of build quality, Weymanns of the period were about as close to Martins as anyone ever got.

Rodgers' slothead Weymann is preserved in the Country Music Hall Of Fame – well-used and much repaired. The top has no pearl trim, but instead, elaborate/multi-layered wood marquetry

This '31 Weymann Jimmie Rodgers Model 890 is serial number 45673.

Top of the Weymann line, the Jimmie Rodgers carried, a list price of $90 including a hardshell case – double the price of Martin's mahogany 00-18 and $5 more than a rosewood 000-28.

around the border and soundhole. An unusual feature is extended ribs along the mahogany sides, rather like a violin – a construction quirk Weymann used on Mando-Lutes and a few other guitars. The instrument was examined in the early '90s by Nashville luthier John Arnold, who then created several replicas. The first was for presentation to Doc Watson, who had been allowed to play the original.

Porterfield quotes Billy Burkes, one of Rodgers' most-faithful accompanists, regarding the 1929 Victor session for "Hobo Bill's Last Ride." Burkes recalled, "I played Jimmie's Weymann guitar on this particular tune and you can notice the difference in tone; the way it recorded. My, that was a beautiful instrument."

After studying the original guitar, Arnold described the tone as "More of a Larson Brothers-type sound… punchier and more projection than a Martin."

He asserts that if one listens carefully to Rodgers' guitar-and-vocal recordings, tonal differences between the guitars are audible.

Though Rodgrers had his Weymann in 1928, it apparently took some time before Weymann had its Jimmie Rodgers Special Model 890 ready for sale. It appeared in the company's 1930-'31 catalog billed as "An instrument for the Artist." While not an exact replica of Rodgers' custom Weymanns, it's still a high-grade flattop. Weymann's top-of-the-line guitar, with a list price of $90 including a hardshell case, it was fairly expensive – double the cost of Martin's mahogany 00-18 and $5 more than a rosewood 000-28. Beyond that, the timing couldn't have been worse, as The Depression was really kicking in. Banjo and ukulele sales had pretty much collapsed, so, like other makers, Weymann was desperately trying to shift to guitars. The Model 890 was their new flagship, but few of Jimmie's acolytes could afford a $90 guitar. At the same time, Martin had just launched its 14-fret OM models, which soon eclipsed the old 12-fret design in the public imagination.

Jimmie promotes "In The Jailhouse Now" with the Weymann.

The result of all this is an extremely rare instrument. Most fall into a tight serial-number range, suggesting a short production run. Some show variations in features, indicating they were individually finished-out. Weymann's earlier guitars and banjos carried the Keystone State brand, while the Rodgers models have a plain Weymann gold decal on the headstock rear. The style and serial number are die-stamped into the headstock's top edge.

The first Weymann Jimmie Rodgers Model 890 shown here is an early example, made in 1931 and with serial number 45673. It matches the catalog illustration with the headstock and fretboard covered in flashy pearloid. The 12-fret body is $14\frac{5}{8}$" wide (between a 00 and 000 size) made of high-grade mahogany with elaborate colored-wood marquetry around the bound edge of the spruce top and herringbone soundhole trim. These did not have the elaborate raised rims around the sides. The top is delicately X-braced and intended for steel strings; the catalog mentioned that gut stringing was available as an option.

The one-piece mahogany neck has a medium-V profile with a long $25\frac{1}{2}$" scale and $1\frac{3}{4}$" wide nut. The flashy full length pearloid fingerboard is devoid of position marks, but there are three side dots on the white celluloid

This late-run (1932-'33) Jimmie Rodgers 890 bears serial number 47172.

binding. The solid pearloid-faced headstock has a slightly crested profile and a diagonal multicolored "Weymann" logo decal. Oddly enough, the only mention of Rodgers is a small strip paper label under the soundhole that reads, "Jimmie Rodgers Special Model – Victor Recording and National Radio Artist." Rodgers' image was featured on the catalog page, but not prominently; really, they were underselling the endorsement premise!

The other featured Model 890 (serial number 47172) represents one of the last made, possibly finished in 1932-'33, shortly before the company ceased manufacturing. The guitar is similar but with a standard rosewood fretboard in place of the pearloid, which may have been an economy measure or simply using up available parts. The solid headstock remains pearloid-faced, with the diagonal Weymann decal.

An interesting (if impractical) feature of both is Weymann's centered-gear banjo tuners instead of guitar machines. In the late '20s, there was a brief fad for fitting banjo tuners to guitars, both Martin and Gibson giving it a try. Weymann's proprietary banjo pegs were unique – light, handy, and inconspicuous, mounted discreetly and countersunk into the back of the headstock. They worked well enough on banjos, but their tiny gears – delicate enough to be part of a pocket watch – often proved overmatched by the tension of guitar strings.

Weymann's banjo pegs were countersunk into the back of the headstock.

Both guitars are well-preserved and original for their age, 90-plus years along. The thin lacquer finish on the later one shows typical pick wear to the top often seen on well-strummed flat-tops. The only notable alteration is the tuners, which are modern high-grade banjo units replacing the original Weymann banjo tuners.

There aren't many larger-body/non-Martin/non-Larson steel-string flat-tops of this era that match the Weymanns' build and sound quality. If not as truly unique as Jimmie's original custom guitars, a Model 890 remains a delight to play. The sound is powerful and rich, with a bit more top-end sing than many similar Martins, but never lacking depth. One hopes Jimmie would have been pleased with them, at least; they certainly sound great for his bass note-and-strum style.

Weymann ceased instrument manufacture in 1933, a casualty of The Depression. The company sold its factory in December '33, then sold re-branded Chicago catalog guitars. The Jimmie Rodgers Special is their glorious six-string swan song, a really fine instrument even if not a success at the time. While not as well-remembered as its namesake (or even his custom Martin), the Jimmie Rodgers Special is a fitting memorial to the man who, long before Elvis or the Beatles, made the guitar the central object of desire for countless young picking-and-strumming dreamers. **VG**

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TV STAR

The JMI Vox AC15 "Two-Tone" 1x12"

BY DAVE HUNTER

The permutations of early Vox models remain endlessly fascinating to vintage-amp enthusiasts, and few get us as worked up as a rare transitional version of the hallowed AC15.

The "TV-front" designation is more often applied to tweed Fender combos of the late '40s and early '50s, but when we hear it in connection with a JMI-era Vox AC15 of a decade later, we know we're onto something special. Add "two-tone" to the descriptor and… well, we're almost too excited to think of an adjective.

The AC30 is often seen as Vox's flagship amp, and it had the extra power many professional groups were demanding by the early '60s. But, plenty of Vox fanatics regard the smaller AC15 as the company's best-sounding amp, and designer Dick Denney's greatest

Amp and photos courtesy of Yuuki McClure.

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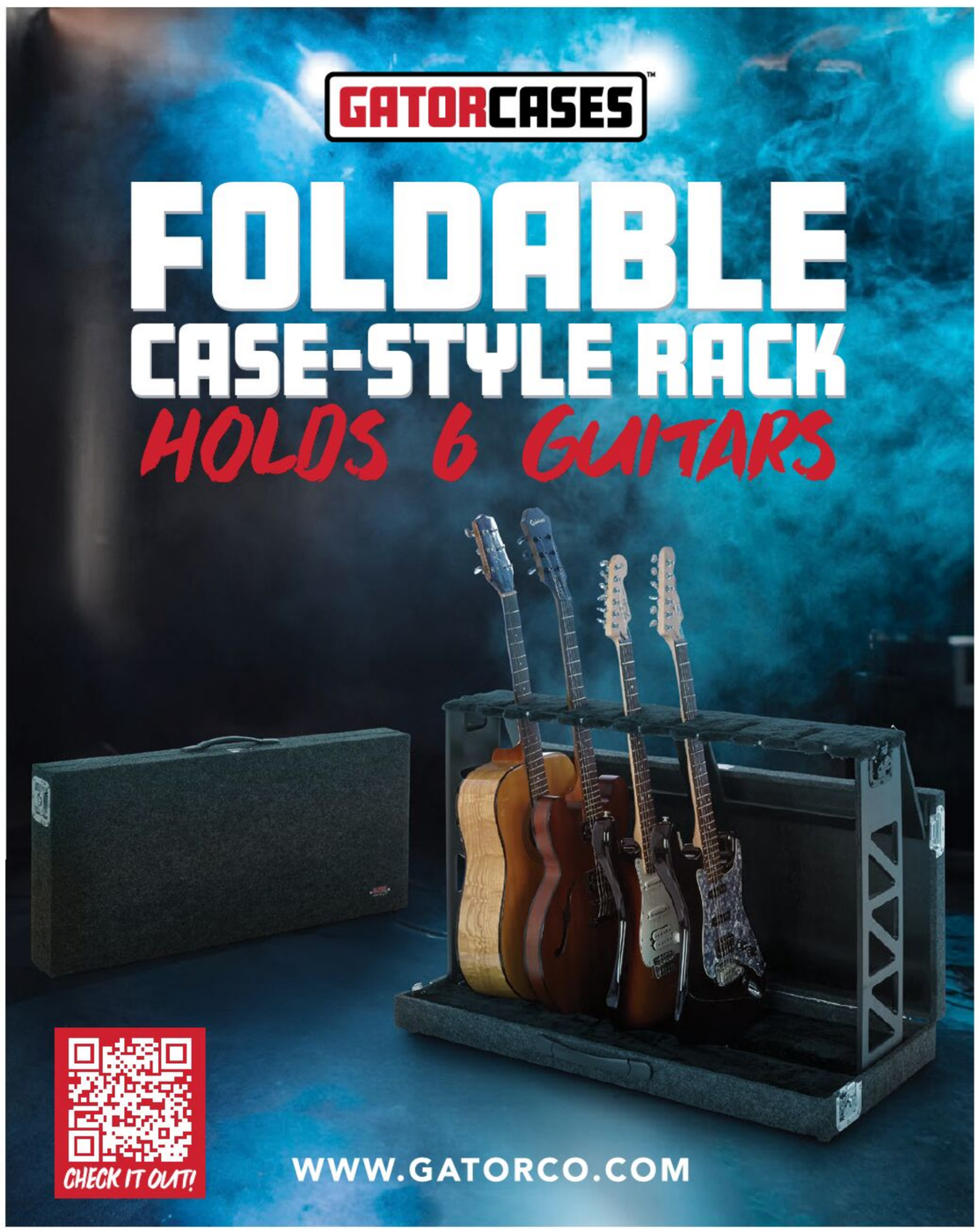

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Though not original, it's hard to think of a better replacement speaker than the 1961 Celestion G12 "Alnico Blue" that resides in the combo.

1960 JMI VOX AC15 1X12" COMBO

- Preamp tubes: three ECC83 (12AX7), one EF86 (6267), one ECC82 (12AU7)
- Output tubes: two EL84
- Rectifier: EZ81
- Controls: Ch1: Volume, Brilliance; Ch2: Volume, Top Cut; tremolo Speed and Vib-Trem switch
- Speakers: one 12" 1961 Celestion G12 "Alnico Blue" (originally Goodmans Audiom 60)
- Output: approximately 18 watts RMS

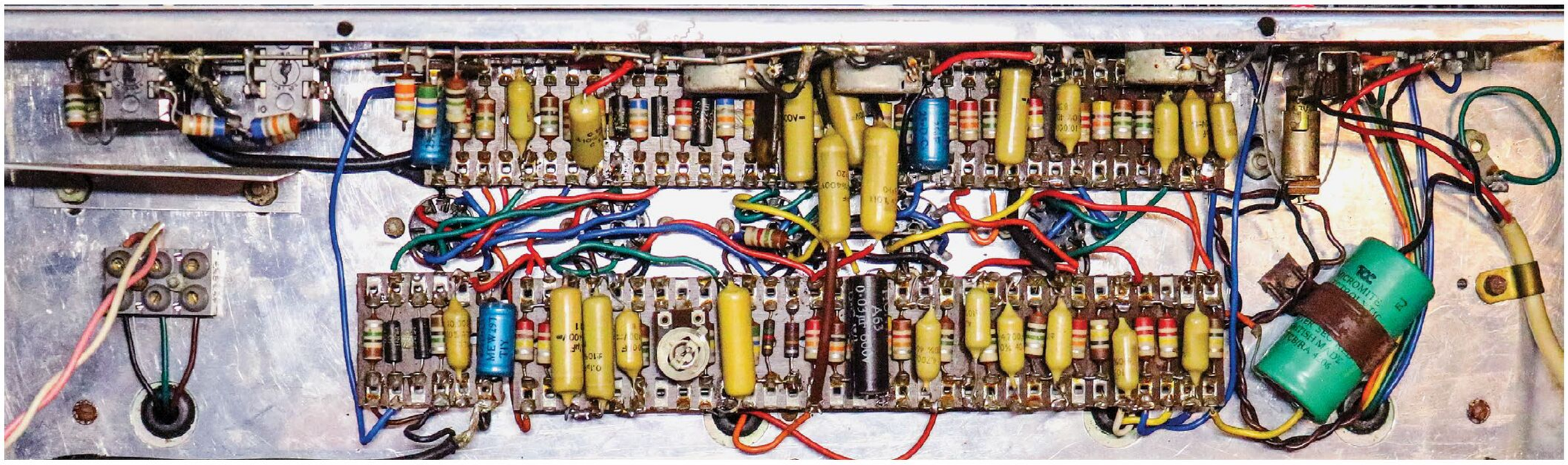
contribution to guitar tone. Producing around 18 watts from a pair of EL84 output tubes, it's also a lot easier to handle when a 2x12" AC30 pushing upward of 36 watts can be too much for many venues and studios.

The roots of Tom Jennings' JMI (Jennings Musical Instruments) are found in the repair shop he opened in Dartford, Kent, in 1946, followed by the larger retail outlet at 55 Charing Cross Road in central London, where he added manufacturing to his quiver a short time later. A big part of the early focus was on the accordion – Jennings' own instrument – and then the electric organ, but as the skiffle boom morphed toward rock and roll and it was clear the guitar was here to stay, JMI leaned heavily into catering to that market, too.

Like many such fledgling companies of the day, JMI initially retailed general-purpose amplifiers made from generic circuits (often manufactured by Henry Weil & Company, later of Fenton-Weil fame). But just as Jennings was seeking a boost in quality and an edge on the competition, the work of a young engineer named Dick Denney was brought to his attention. Denny went to work for Jennings in the fall of '57, and in converting his own amplifier design for larger production at JMI, he created what many consider the first purpose-designed guitar amplifier on the British market.

The first iteration of the AC15 (labeled AC1/15) was released in '58 and quickly made a splash, though it initially had a circuit quite different from the archetype of the model. In basic looks, it resembled the early-'50s, TV-front Fender Deluxes, but with top-rear-mounted control panels with individual Tone controls for each of two channels. Preamp duties were covered by ECC83s (12AX7s in the U.S.), with a 5Z4 for rectification. A short-lived Vibravox rendition, the first Vox guitar amp with vibrato, added an ECC82 (12AU7).

Toward the end of '59 and through the following year, however, the design evolved into the AC15 circuit as we know it; Denney redesigned his preamp around an EF86 pentode tube in Channel II, which had a thicker and more-powerful voice, while changing the rectifier to an EZ81 (he briefly adopted an ECF82 for the vibrato and the mellower Channel 1 preamp gain stage, but midway through '60 dropped this for a return to an ECC82 for vibrato modulation). In this circuit evolution, the AC15 also transmuted through cosmetics, arriving in this appealing combination of the TV-front cabinet in two-tone blue-gray Rexine as a brief stop between the earlier TV-front cab in cream Rexine and the more-familiar Vox cab with upper fascia in fawn and then black vinyl. As such, this amp – owned by London-based guitarist and guitar restorer Yuuki McClure – carries the



Tubes, transformers, and controls, laid bare in the classic L-shaped Vox chassis; the AC15's control complement delivers all the tone-crafting most guitarists will ever need (top). The circuit that Dick Denny and Vox landed on in this iteration of the AC15 part way through 1960 is arguably the most-revered of the model's history.

AC15's most desirable circuit iteration, and an unusually lively cab-and-color scheme that wasn't with us for very long.

Asked to provide *VG* with a thought or two on this example, Vox expert Jim Elyea, author of *Vox Amplifiers: The JMI Years,* said, "My favorite AC15 is the single-speaker, two-tone, TV-front. Later amps like this, with the second version EF86 circuit, sound great and were the height of 1960 cool. Just ask Hank Marvin! Originally, this would have had the Vox logo in the upper-right corner of the grill and a "Fifteen" badge in the lower left. Cheaper than a Celestion, a Goodmans Audiom 60 would have originally filled this cabinet."

Elyea's "Hank Marvin" comment refers to the fact that this iteration of the AC15 was played by the guitar star for a time. One appears in The Shadows' iconic video for their 1960 hit single "Apache," which the guitarist is sitting upon, and apparently playing through. Though indeed the speaker isn't original, the Celestion is likely preferable to many players; McClure tells us its date code pegs it to July '61, "...apparently making it the earliest appearance of an Alnico Blue, as later examples of the next-iteration thin-lip AC15 have the silver Hammerite Celestion speaker."

Living out a scenario from many an amp aficionado's dreams, McClure recently secured this 1960 AC15 in the U.K.

"It came from the estate of the founding member of U.K. band The Allisons, who came second in the '61 Eurovision Song Contest and subsequently went on to knock Elvis off the #1 slot in the U.K. charts, as well as gain platinum status," he tells VG. "The amp was listed on Facebook Marketplace with a large pile of low-tier Carlsbro PA gear – which I still have in the workshop, as it's unsalable – but tucked away in there was this amp, of the like I'd never seen. We had to drive three hours one way to collect it in person, cash in hand."

According to the happy new owner, however, "Overall, it's startlingly crisp, rich and harmonically detailed at cleanish volumes. You immediately recognize the 'Vox thing' aped by so many modern boutique builders, but it has a profoundly vintage, organic liveliness and sparkle I recognize from larger '50s Fender tweeds, perhaps with the Celestion Alnico Blue adding some magic.

"The driven sounds are just remarkable! It's not a Fender thing, nor a Marshall thing, but just as aggressive and raunchy with a familiar tweed roar, but denser and punchier. The EF86 and EL84 combo is unique, and I should think blokes twanging on a maple-board Strat in '61 would be intimidated by the aggression and break-up so readily on tap."

With few such finds likely remaining in the wild this deep into the 21st century, it's up to the individual reader to determine whether they're happy for McClure, or seething with envy. Either way, it's good to know that a 64-year-old Vox AC15 can still live up to its reputation as one of the sweetest and most ferocious tone machines ever created. **VG**

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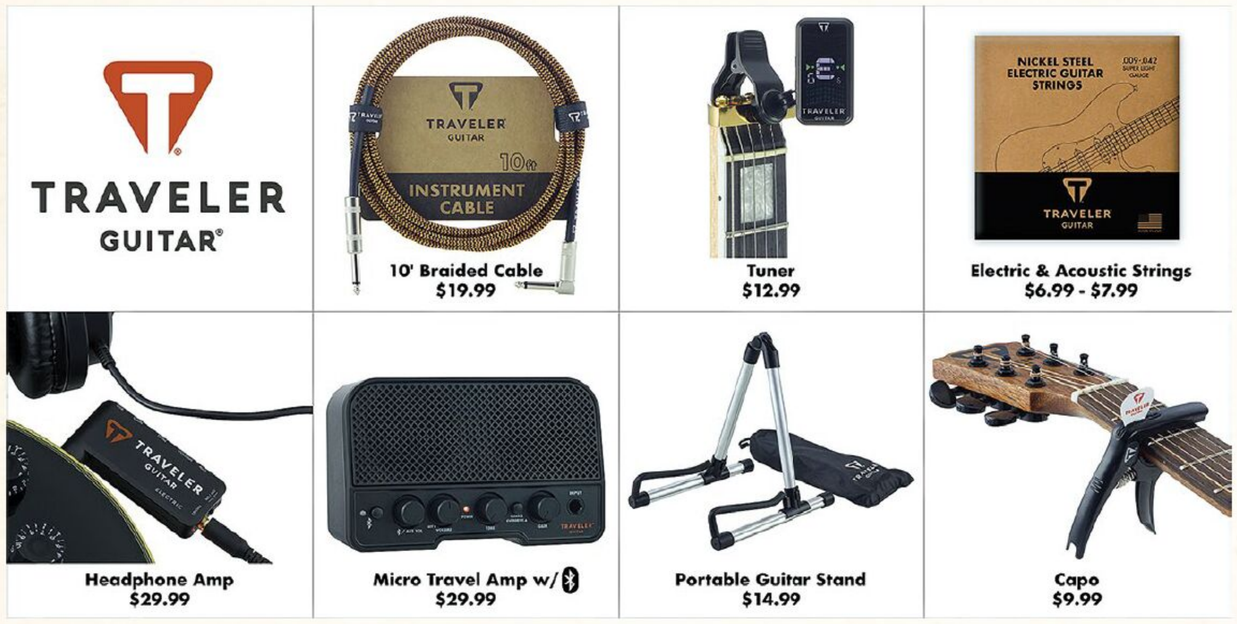

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'59 Red/Slab Rose neck Original custom color, 100% original.
'59 Sunburst/Slab Rose neck Beat-Up condition, Refret, changed nut
'60 Sunburst/Slab Rose neck Original custom color, 100% original.
'61 Olympic White/Slab Rose neck 100% original in Mint 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
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'69 Blond/Rose neck 100% original, Amazing tone!!
'70 Sunburst/Rose neck 100%original in Near Mint condition
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'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!!
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Price Guide

By Alan Greenwood & Ram W. Tuli

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	R Rocket Bass (Reissue)		$250	$400
1964	Ampeg Thinline (By Burns)		$650	$850
1989	B.C. Rich Ironbird	Class Axe era	$1,000	$1,500
1980	BC Rico Eagle		$2,800	$3,700
1997	Boss Tremolo TR-2	Analogman modded	$200	$240
1954	Danelectro Model 98 Twin 12	2x12, vib	$950	$1,425
1998	Epiphone 1958			
	Korina Flying V	Veneer	$550	$725
1991	Epiphone EB-0/EB-1/ EB-3/EBM-4	Various models	$200	$600
1999	Epiphone Les Paul			
	ES Limited Edition	Standard	$675	$875
2007	Epiphone USA Map			
	Guitar Limited Edition	Import	$600	$800
2013	Fender Bass VI Pawn Shop		$575	$750
1962	Fender Jazzmaster	Rare Color	$23,000	$45,000
1966	Fender Mustang	Red, white or blue	$2,500	$4,000
1964	Fender Princeton	Black, AA964, no grille logo	$3,000	$4,500
2005	Fender So-Cal			
	Speed Shop Stratocaster	L.E. Musician's Friend	$600	$800
1960	Fender Stratocaster	Sunburst	$35,000	$50,000
1992	Fender American			
	Classic Stratocaster	Various options	$3,000	$4,000
1997	Fender '50s Relic/ '51 NoCaster Custom Shop	Cunetto era Closet Classic	$3,000	$4,000
2009	Fender '64 Telecaster			
	Limited Relic		$3,000	$4,000
1997	G&L ASAT Classic Semi-Hollow		$1,250	$1,625
1971	Gibson B-20	Sitka top, mahogany	$1,250	$1,625
1960	Gibson ES-125 TC		$2,500	$3,250
1958	Gibson ES-335N TD	Natural, bound neck	$100,000	$120,000
1960	Gibson ETG-150		$1,750	$2,250
1958	Gibson Flying V		$365,000	$475,000
1999	Gibson GA-60 RV Goldtone	60 watts, 2x12, round baffle holes	$1,150	$1,500
2002	Gibson J-200			
	Elvis Presley Signature		$5,000	$6,500
1927	Gibson L-3 (Archtop)	Oval hole	$2,500	$3,250
1973	Gibson Les Paul Deluxe	Blue sparkle	$6,000	$8,000
2009	Gibson Les Paul 50th Anniversary Les Paul Standard (Sweetwater)		$5,250	$6,750
2002	Gibson Les Paul			
	Gary Rossington Signature		$9,250	$12,000
1978	Gibson Les Paul Standard	Natural	$3,500	$5,000
1942	Gibson SJ (Southern Jumbo)	Banner, mahogany	$14,000	$18,000
1965	Gibson TG-25/TG -25 N		$900	$1,125
1961	Gretsch Double			
	Anniversary Stereo (6111/6112)	Green	$3,000	$4,000
1958	Gretsch Sal Salvador (6199)		$2,500	$3,250
1960	Guild CA-100 Capri	acoustic archtop	$2,125	$3,750

Featured Survey Participant: Daniel Escauriza with a '52 Gibson Les Paul modeified somewhere along the line with a ground down harmonica bridge and tailpiece.

YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND. LOW	EXC. COND. HIGH
1987	Guild GF-50	Rosewood	$1,500	$2,000
1965	Guild Slim Jim T-100 D		$2,250	$3,000
1980s	HiWatt Bulldog SA112	50 watts, 1x12 combo	$1,550	$2,050
1994	Ibanez Iceman IC500		$1,000	$1,375
1984	Jackson Soloist	Custom order, Floyd Rose	$4,000	$6,000
1957	Kay K1700			
	Barney Kessel Pro	2 pickups	$2,000	$2,500
1920s	Kona Style 4	Hawaiian	$3,750	$5,000
1990s	Larrivee OM-10 Deluxe		$2,375	$3,000
1989	Marshall JTM 50 Model 1962 Bluesbreaker Reissue	50 watts, 2x12	$1,275	$2,000
2008	Marshall Model 1992LEM			
	Lemmy Signature Super Bass	Full stack	$3,350	$4,500
1954	Martin 5-18T		$1,500	$2,000
1990	Martin 000-28SO			
	Sing Out! 40th Anniversary	40 made	$2,500	$3,500
1984	Martin 00-18V	9 made	$2,500	$3,500
1980	Martin 0-18T		$1,250	$1,625
2003	Martin D-28DM Del McCourey Signature	115 made	$3,500	$4,500
1998	Martin DC-15E		$775	$1,000
1987	Martin HD-28P		$2,125	$2,750
1930	Martin OM-28	Late '30, banjo tuners, small 'guard, belly bridge	$85,000	$110,000
2001	Martin SWOMGT		$1,250	$1,625
1990	Mesa-Boogie			
	Mark III Head	Graphic EQ	$3,050	$4,700
1971	Morley Rotating Sound Power Wah Model RWV		$400	$500
2009	Music Man Silhouette			
	6/12 Double Neck		$2,000	$2,500
1947	National N-66 Jumbo		$2,750	$3,500
1960s	Oliver Sam Ash Oliver Head	30 watts	$425	$650
1960s	Premier Model 100R	1x12, reverb, trem	$1,150	$1,750
1964	Rickenbacker Model 360/12	OS Fireglo, pointed horns, Harrison	$50,000	$65,000
1938	Rickenbacker Professional Model 200-A	15 watts	$650	$850
1956	Silvertone			
	Black Beauty 1384L	Black	$1,250	$1,750
1964	Standel A-30 B Artist 30 Bass	ss, 80 watts, 2x15	$425	$600
1961	Supro 600 Reverb Power Unit		$350	$700
2008	Taylor Solidbody Custom		$1,500	$2,000
1973	Traynor YRM1 Reverb			
	Master Head	50 watts	$575	$850
1994	Victoria Model 45410-T	45 watts, 4x10	$1,425	$1,950

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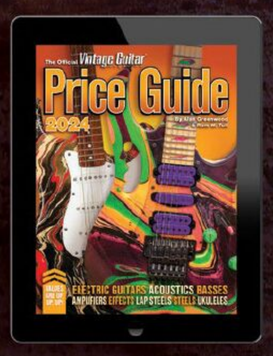

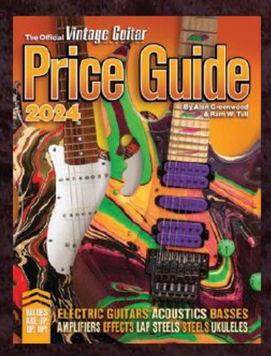

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The Jimi Hendrix Experience at the Marquee Club, London, in March of '67.

JIMI HENDRIX

The Creation of *Are You Experienced?*

By Wolf Marshall

It was a bio-pic fantasy. The scene: Outside a London venue where Jimi Hendrix is performing for the first time. Leaving the club, Pete Townshend encounters Jeff Beck, just arriving. Beck asks, "Is he that bad?" Townshend replies, "No, he's that good!"

Springing from America's R&B landscape, Jimi Hendrix was indeed that good; the real thing – something studious Brits only imagined and glimpsed in smatterings from records and rare visits by Muddy Waters and Big Bill Broonzy. Brought to England by manager/producer Chas Chandler (and former Animals bassist) on September 24, 1966, he assembled The Jimi Hendrix Experience with bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell, and immediately established his preeminence and sphere of influence. After he opened for Cream on October 1 at London Polytechnic, Clapton's reaction was akin to his colleagues, saying, "He walked off and my life was never the same again."

Shortly afterward, the world reached a similar consensus.

Are You Experienced? marked the sound of music changing. Its impact is still reverberating; rock guitar is perceived as pre- or post-Hendrix, begun with *Experienced?*. Recorded between October '66 and April '67 at London's DeLane Lea (DLL, a facility for dubbing movie and television scores), CBS, and Olympic studios on four-track tape machines, it's the debut of a sweepingly influential artist, a masterpiece commensurate with the Beatles' *Revolver*, and an album for the ages. Released in Britain on May 12 on The Who's Track label, it boasted a divergent program blending psychedelic, blues, R&B/funk, ballads, pop/rock, avant-garde, prototypical metal, and world music. An immediate critical and commercial success, it remains a milestone opus. Like early Beatles and Stones albums, U.K and U.S. versions differed with singles typically omitted in England.

In America, it was released August 23. The stunning opener, "Purple Haze" was Jimi's second original composition and second U.K. hit single, where it was released in March '67, backed with "51st Anniversary." Begun at DLL in mid January, it was the first to feature Hendrix using the Octavia and heavy fuzz, necessitating specific mastering directions: "Deliberate distortion. Do not correct." The tune is distinguished by a menacing tritone guitar-bass intro, fuzzed funk comping that exploited a jazz-inspired E7#9 altered chord (subsequently entered into the vernacular as the "Hendrix chord"), the solo's Asian melodic references (reputedly played on a borrowed Telecaster), and psychedelic overtones in sonics and lyrics. During the first session with Eddie Kramer at Olympic, they adopted an unorthodox procedure for basic tracks – recording stereo drums with bass and rhythm guitar on remaining tracks, then mixing down and reducing to two. This left room for vocal and guitar overdubs, satisfying Chandler's need for more tracks, fewer takes, and Jimi's perfectionism. Guitar

Jimi Hendrix Experience: Pictorial Press/ Alamy.

Before Hendrix touched it, "Hey Joe" had been recorded by numerous L.A. rock bands including the Leaves, Standells, Surfaris, Music Machine, Byrds and Love, as well as folkie Tim Rose, and even Cher. But Hendrix didn't just cover "Hey Joe" – he *owned* it, and it remains a telling example of his eclectic style. Sporting a slower tempo reminiscent of Rose's version, its moody feel was conducive to his colorful lead/rhythm approach, epitomized in the intro phrase [A]. Note his blues allusions and mix of open sonorities and chord-melody fills. His solo [B] is singable and succinct; posing simple E-minor pentatonic/blues melody over the cycle-of-fifths progression: C-G-D-A-E.

and vocals were tracked and printed with effects (fuzz, reverb, echo, etc) facilitating easier mixing. Kramer used close and distant miking for amps and (along with conventional microphones) experimented with Beyerdynamic M160 ribbon mics, typically avoided at high volume levels. Jimi re-recorded vocals and lead guitar and they added Redding's background vocals, sped-up/panned Octavia licks in the coda, and ambient sounds including phrases played back through headphones, then miked.

"Manic Depression," recorded March 29 at DLL then re-mixed at Olympic, found JHE transforming a lilting waltz into driving rock laced with feedback, a vital color in Jimi's palette. Propelled by Mitchell's jazz-inspired drumming, they developed powerful forward motion through driving parallel guitar/bass riffs. The solo, begun with vocal/guitar duetting, is one of Jimi's most-aggressive and expressive blues-rock statements.

"Hey Joe" was the Experience's maiden voyage. Billy Roberts' reinterpreted folk number became a rock standard, and their leader's signature song. It exemplified his chordal style and cleaner Strat timbres through Marshall stacks – played so loud only distant miking (approximately 12 feet) was considered viable by DLL engineers. It featured his soulful melodic blues solo and backing vocals by an English female vocal trio, the Breakaways. Henceforth, Chandler insisted Hendrix write original music, and he delivered "Stone Free." Based on "Mr. Bad Luck," from his Jimmy James period, the groove piece with minimal overdubs blended R&B/rock with counterculture themes. It's Jeff Beck's favorite Hendrix composition for its amalgam of Buddy Guy and Les Paul – a combination only Jimi could muster. The first single "Hey Joe"/"Stone Free," released December 16 on Polydor, reached #6 in England in early '67.

"Love or Confusion," a paean to psychedelic delirium, began with basic tracks at CBS on December 13 and reduced at Olympic on April 4, where Jimi overdubbed vocals and lead guitar. The latter included numerous counter-line fills, droning modality (Mixolydian G-F chords), a wealth of groundbreaking Hendrix ingredients – toggle-switch flicking, fuzzed octaves, feedback, whammy-bar flourishes – and a vaguely Asian/blues-inflected solo that is a mini-composition.

"May This Be Love" was recorded during a productive eight-hour session on April 3 (at Olympic) that also saw "Highway Chile." Jimi's gentle love ballad, with its major-mode sweetness, complemented the bluesy hard rock, funk grooves, and psychedelia on *Experienced?*. It featured rare slide-guitar effects (drenched in echo) and smooth rolling Steve Cropper-inspired accompaniment evoking "waterfall" imagery, contrasted by heavier funk rhythms in the bridge. Jimi's lyrical solo, heavily panned for a quasi backward

effect with subtle embellishments and pastoral feel acts as an instrumental extension of the innocent, almost sentimental, story line and is one of his most-memorable melodic moments.

"I Don't Live Today" was psychedelic hard rock dedicated to Native Americans and other oppressed groups. Scheduling forced JHE to return to DLL for basics on February 20, though the vocal was recorded later at Olympic. Known for its darker libretto suggesting a Goth precursor, it was animated by a tribal rhythm groove with ubiquitous feedback, sported a sitar-like solo with vibrato decorations (backed by fuzzed octaves), and utilized a manual wah effect pre-dating the pedal (which he acquired after July '67). Noteworthy is Jimi's deceptive two-bar funk intro that immediately veers into heavy guitar-bass verse riffs.

"The Wind Cries Mary," another ballad standing in stark contrast to Jimi's progressive experimentation and aggression, merged Curtis Mayfield R&B chording and Bob Dylan poetic influences. The basic track was recorded in one take (without rehearsals) to which Hendrix added guitar overdubs, all accomplished in 20 minutes at DLL. On the recommendation of Brian Jones and Bill Wyman, Chandler took JHE to Olympic, where Polydor established credit for future dates. There, in post-production in early February, "Mary" became the first to feature Hendrix's thoughtful overdubbing to create an intricate five-guitar composite. Released in May 'of 67, it was his third single, backed by "Highway Chile" in the U.K.), "Purple Haze" in the U.S.

Capturing the basic track to "Fire" required seven takes at DLL; modern funk/rock infused with sexual innuendo, it was a concert favorite, drawing on Jimi's chitlin-circuit background; advancing the genre from James Brown roots to anticipate the post-'60s R&B of Sly Stone, Parliament, and Prince. JHE re-worked "Fire" at Olympic in early February, re-recorded drum and guitar parts, and doubling Redding's bass for heavier low-end. The piece featured parallel guitar-bass riffs and Mitchell's hyperkinetic drumming. Jimi's structured solos were doubled (one with Octavia), functioning more as thematic instrumental interludes than free improvisation.

"Third Stone From the Sun" embodied Jimi's large-scale classical ambitions, sci-fi interests and remains his greatest instrumental. It began as a demo and was reattempted at DLL on January 11 then assembled with new material at Olympic. Influenced by George Stewart's novel *Earth Abides*, it presents a sprawling, complicated mix evoking an apocalyptic storyline (extraterrestrials obliterating humankind and its surf music) in a lengthy (nearly seven minutes) sectional piece filled with extravagantly diverse sonic tangents. Notable are the main theme's Wes Montgomery octaves, hints of flamenco, Coltrane-inspired modality, free-jazz atonality in the "freak-out" section (3:06)

Jimi turned the rock world on its collective ear with his powerful lead-guitar improvisations on *Are You Experienced?*. Case in point is the powerful flight on "Manic Depression." Played in 3/4 meter, his lines blend the bent-note ferocity of Buddy Guy with modal/pentatonic flurries and double-timing of sax players like John Coltrane, rendered with the saturated fuzz tone of psychedelia – a heavy lift for anyone other than Hendrix.

The promise made by "Purple Haze" was fulfilled with "Foxey Lady," JHE's third U.S. single. Appropriately, Hendrix seasons a thematic F♯m7 main riff with occasional ad-lib inclusion of the closely-related "Hendrix chord," F♯7♯9. His blues-based solo, rich in distortion, string bends and ostinato figures, reflects the minor tonality with its emphasis on F♯m pentatonic melody. He enlarges the sound with the modal addition of G♯ in measures 3 and 6, momentarily generating an F♯m hexatonic scale – an ear-catching aspect of his improvisation.

and otherworldly sound effects (musique concrete, speed-altered processed dialog conjuring alien dialog) highlighted in the chaotic development by feedback phrases with whammy-bar manipulations emulating sirens, shrieks, explosions, revving motors, and industrial factory sounds. These are preceded by a tranquil intro, theme statements, and a brief episode of blues-guitar improvisation over a rock groove (1:26). Frank Zappa maintained Hendrix should collaborate with a musically literate partner capable of writing and preserving his ideas in notation; guaranteeing they would have permanence at conception and could be rendered by instruments other than electric guitar. Jimi never chose that route, relying instead on intuition and Chandler and Kramer to realize his ends. Nevertheless, this magnum opus and similar JHE innovations subsequently inspired progressive and jazz-rock musicians; engendering elaborations by Miles Davis, Tony Williams, Gil Evans, and Jaco Pastorius as well as blues/rock descendants Robin Trower and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

"Foxey Lady" reflected Chas' displeasure with the sound at DLL. He opted for CBS' acoustics to record "Foxey Lady" and backing tracks for "Love or Confusion" and "Can You See Me" on December 13. "Foxey" is an early example of distant-miking loud guitar amps (with a Neumann U-67 condenser mic). On December 15 JHE completed the tracks and recorded "Red House." Financial disagreements forced JHE's return to DLL on December 21, where they recorded alternate "Red House" takes and crafted "Remember," a hybrid soul/rock song; both were later reworked at Olympic, where, on February 8, Jimi and Mitchell added overdubs to "Foxey Lady" and Redding's new doubled bass line, an attempt to strengthen low-end. The track is remembered for Jimi's unusual intro of volume-swelled string noise and mounting feedback, and his punchy theme riff that intermingles F♯m7 and F♯7♯9 sonorities. His solo has strong blues-rock implications and illustrates use of modally-tinged pentatonic melody.

"Are You Experienced?" explored the fantasy land of tape manipulation. Basics were recorded April 3 at Olympic, some sections played backward and reduced the next day, making way for Jimi's vocals, piano notes, and backward/forward guitar overdubs. Jimi became adept at backwards recording. He practiced at home with his own tape recorder and "played in" his parts in real time, anticipating the timing and phraseology of reversed attack/decay envelopes in his licks, instead of exploiting tape loops as originally planned. The practice was taken further than *Revolver* in these dramatic soundscapes, the rock equivalent of impressionism – music so uncategorizable it could only be described in countercultural terms as psychedelic; in the truest sense, mind-altering. Drones and pedal-point ostinatos suggested Indian music in an unprecedented synthesis of world, electronic, and rock sounds while Jimi's muted string scrapes as deliberate percussion figures presaged Van Halen's metallic "neat noises" ("Atomic Punk").

Are You Experienced? offered an array of novel sounds produced by Jimi's hands, amps, and processors, and reintroduced

the Fender Stratocaster into modern rock implementation. After Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, the Ventures, and Dick Dale, interest in Fenders declined during the British Invasion, superseded by Gretsch, Rickenbacker, Gibson, and Epiphone guitars. Though the Beatles used Strats in '65 (Harrison's solo in "You're Gonna Lose That Girl"), they were unseen studio instruments. Like Clapton resurrecting the Les Paul on *Bluesbreakers*, Hendrix reimagined the Strat's potential; initially resetting its relevance on pre-CBS rosewood-board models. These righties were flipped (vibrato bar and controls on the opposite side) and restrung left-handed with Fender 10-38 sets. He played various incarnations and colors but expressed an early preference for white finishes during his stint with the Isley Brothers (March '64). Presaging metal and hard-rock predilections, Jimi played very loud using Marshall stacks, with controls maxed, in the studio, and became the company's greatest ambassador, showcased on Marshall's '67 catalog. His first order, delivered October 11 of '66, included three 100-watt Super Lead heads and four 4x12 cabinets. He also used Fender Twin-Reverb amps for recording. Jimi's effects included a Dallas-Arbiter Fuzz Face and Roger Mayer Octavia (acquired December '66). He later added King Vox-Wah and Uni-Vibe pedals.

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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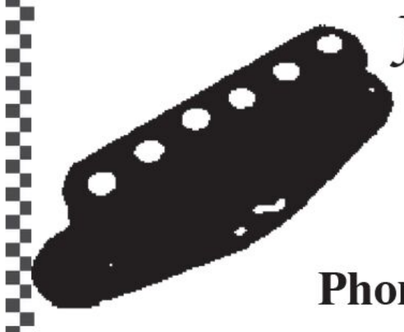

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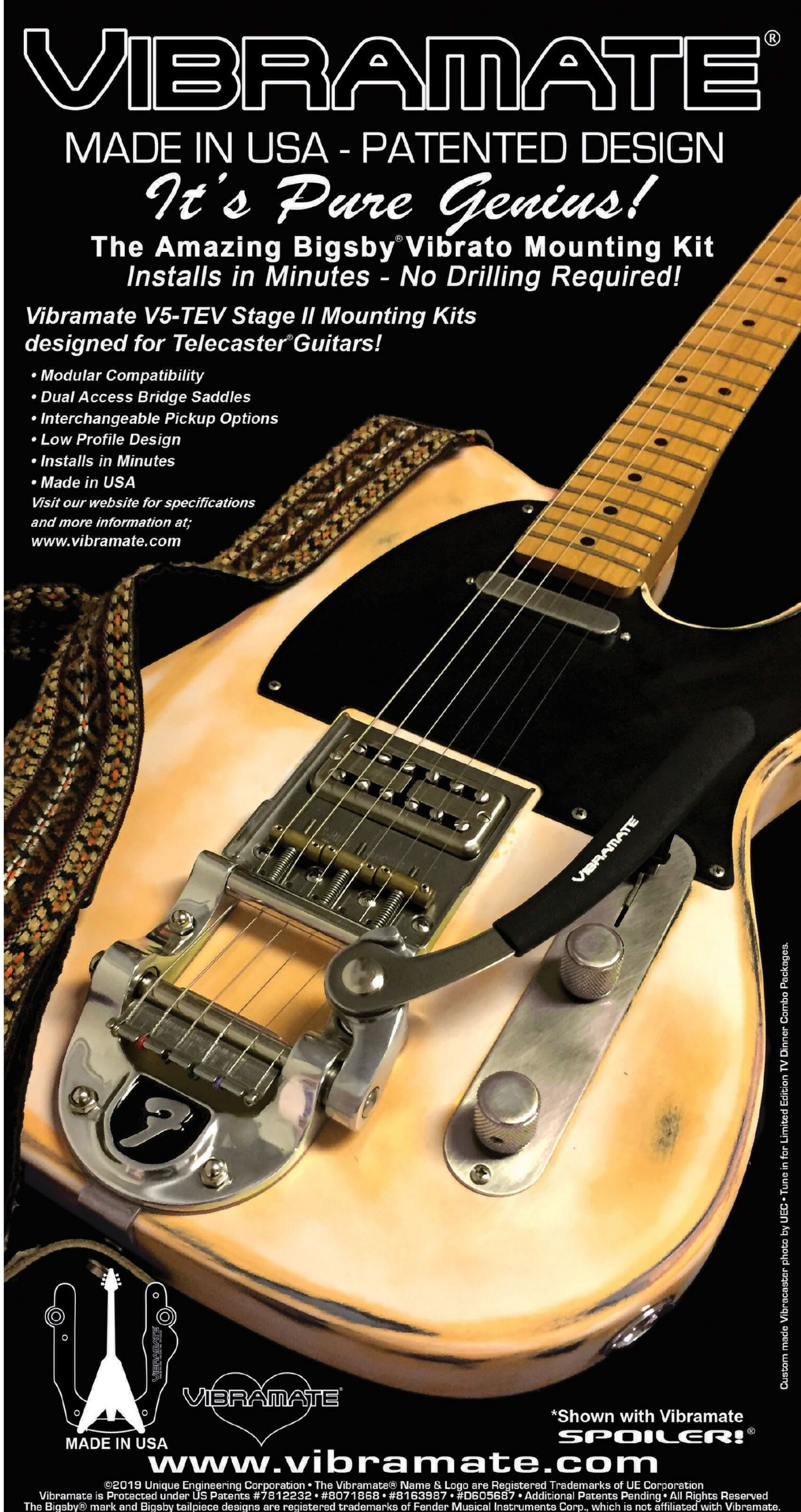

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ROUND-UP RANGE

Rolling on a Post-Pandemic Project

By Dan Erlewine

Five years ago, I started making a Tele-style guitar inspired by the Gretsch Roundup. When Covid hit, I was up to my ears in repair work *and* lost my shop help, so I was forced to put the project aside. But the time is now right to complete the build.

1) My creation has a pine body and old-growth Honduras mahogany neck. It's routed and drilled for a Joe Glaser string bender.

2) The body is bound with herringbone and tortoiseshell on top. And while herringbone looks great with a black pickguard, I'll keep this build more "Gretschy" by making a thin leather pickguard with stitched edges.

3) I decided to install banjo-style tuners because I love their look and function. However, they wouldn't fit in the standard six-in-line holes I'd drilled in the peghead, so I used mahogany to plug the holes.

4) To hide the plugs, I wanted to veneer the front and back with matching mahogany. Because veneer adds thickness, I used a rotary Safe-T-Planer to remove 1/16" of wood from the front and back. I was sure to avoid planing into the upward curve toward the nut (my stopping point is the gray line).

5) I completed leveling into the curve by clamping the neck into a mill and using a drum sander. Because I couldn't see what I was cutting, I checked often to be sure I didn't go too far.

6) The front after leveling...

7) ... and the back.

8) Using mahogany sanded to 1/16" thick, I sawed two overlays to finalize the shape of the headstock. After cutting the pieces, I wetted and bent them into a curve on a hard-maple dowel.

9) Here's the overlay ready to be glued onto the face....

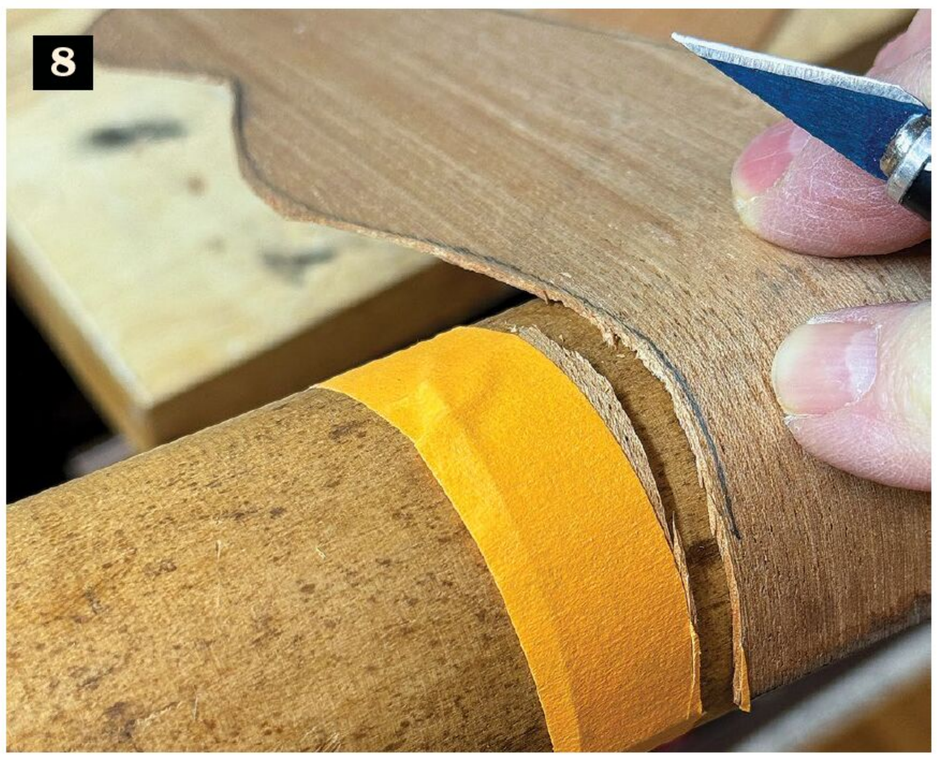
10) TiteBond glue and plenty of clamp pressure kept it right while it dried.

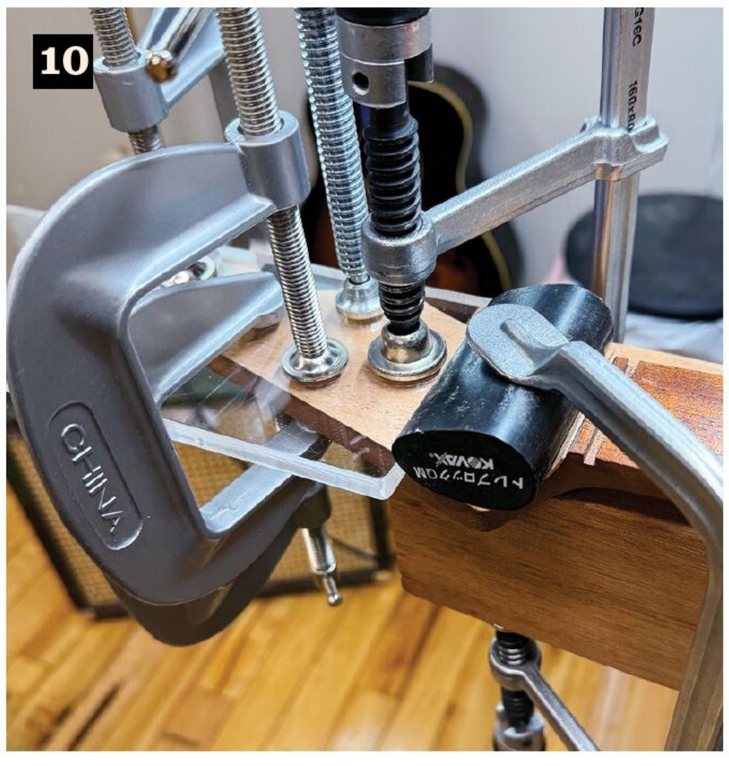
11) Once both sides were veneered, I drilled and installed the new tuners.

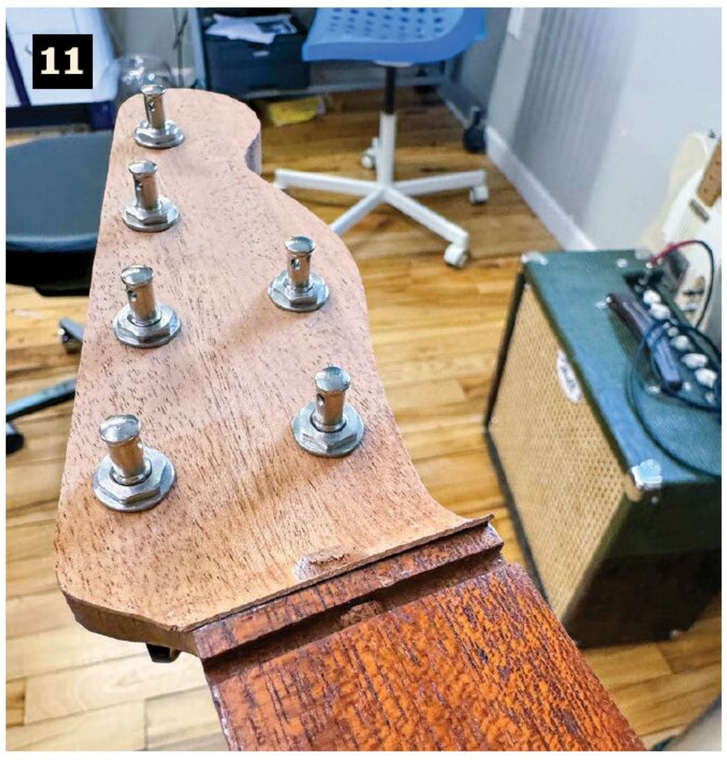
12) I've mentioned Rickard Cyclone tuners a couple times before; they're simply the best I've ever used.

After I was ready to final-shape and sand the peghead, I turned my attention to the body. My shopmate, Elliot John Conry, made a branding iron with my initials, which I'll use to mark the body (like Gretsch). To decide location, I drew the brand on a piece of mylar (top), and in the November issue, you'll see where it lands. I'll also spray the body Amber Sunset orange, assemble the guitar, and install the Glaser string bender.

Dan Erlewine has been repairing guitars for more than 50 years. The author of three books and dozens of magazine articles, he has also produced instructional videotapes and DVDs on guitar repair. From 1986 through his retirement in late 2019, Erlewine was part of the R&D team and company liaison for Stewart-MacDonald's Guitar Shop Supply. Today, he operates a repair shop in Athens, Ohio, where he builds replicas of the guitars he made for Albert King and Jerry Garcia in 1972. This column has appeared in *VG* since March, 2004. You can contact him at danerlewine@gmail.com.







Henry Garza

FOREVER FAMILIA

BY WARD MEEKER

Henry Garza photos by Barbara FG.

The music created by Los Lonely Boys – brothers Henry, Jojo, and Ringo Garza – is an amalgam resulting from a deeply musical upbringing fostered by boundless influences. Combining elements of rock, Texas blues, brown-eyed soul, country, and tejano, they call it "Texican rock and roll," its sound the product of three lifetimes spent playing together and developing a language that uses no words but is, as Jojo says, "...built through vibrations and sound."

"We can look at each other and not say anything, because we instinctively know where we're going," adds Ringo. "It's hard to explain. Real blood is thicker than music."

Raised in San Angelo, Texas, their father, Ringo Garza, Sr., also grew up in a sibling band, the Falcones, playing conjunto music all over Texas in the '70s and '80s. After they split, he went solo, backed by his three sons, none of whom had yet reached their teens. In the '90s, they moved to Nashville, where the sons eventually stepped out on their own; their first album was recorded at Willie Nelson's Pedernales Studio, in Austin.

In 2024, the band is simultaneously marking the 20th anniversary of that debut (which reached double-platinum status and yielded the Grammy-winning hit single "Heaven") while also celebrating a new album, *Resurrection*, its title symbolic in more ways than one.

"That's what we feel has happened, that we've been resurrected as a unit, as brothers, as a family doing music and hoping to continue the legacy," said Henry Garza of its timing. "I think everything is written in the stars and the heavens above. We never expected any of the success we've experienced – we had *zero* expectations – so when it happened, it was pretty overwhelming. The music business can drain you."

The Garzas have paid the toll brought about by creating, recording, and touring; in 2010, doctors discovered lesions on Jojo's vocal cords, causing the band to cancel concerts in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Then, after a show in February of 2013, Henry was on his way to shake hands with fans when he fell 12 feet from the dark front edge of a stage into the orchestra pit, suffering a fractured neck along with herniated discs. In 2019, they collectively stepped away from music. Then came the pandemic. They returned in May of '22, prompted by an invitation to open shows for The Who.

We caught up to Henry Garza after he'd returned home from Austin, where their father was beginning recovery after simultaneously suffering a stroke and heart attack. They were on a tour stop in Cleveland when

The Garzas as youngsters in a very early appearance onstage. Henry's semi-hollow is likely a Harmony.

he was stricken, and dropped everything to be with him, which meant cancelling a handful of East Coast dates.

Inspired by his "teachers" – SRV, B.B. King, Clapton, Cesar Rosas, David Hidalgo, Chuck Berry – the 41-year-old describes his own playing style in lyrical terms rather than comparing tones or licks. Primarily a Strat guy (strung .013 to .054 with an unwound G), he'll also grab a 335 or anything else that quells his curiosity. Through the years, his road rig has consisted of blackface Twin Reverb reissues and a Marshall JCM2000, running through reissue Ibanez TS-9s and a Vox wah, with a Leslie speaker or Echoplex sometimes adding spice.

Our conversation started at his beginnings.

When did you start playing an instrument?

I picked up guitar and wrote my first song when I was four years old. It was called, "She Left Me" (laughs). It was about a girl, even though I'd had nothing to do with girls (laughs). That was the sheer influence of our father. I was wanting to be like him, and every song he showed us, from "La Bamba" to the Beatles, was about a girl. I played it with this little bitty classical guitar dad had gotten me, with colored dots on the fretboard and numbers under the frets. I remember it well.

We tell people all the time about how, as kids, we thought Dad wrote all the songs that he was showing us – "She Loves You, "Help!" "Long Tall Texan," "Johnny B. Goode," "Kansas City." We'd hear them on the radio and we tell him, "Hey, they're playing your song, Daddy!" And he wouldn't deny it (laughs).

But yeah, music was very normal and natural in our family, and everybody picked up a guitar, accordion, bajo sexto, or drums, and they sang. And that was on both sides – mom's *and* dad's. As soon as Jojo was old enough to pick up a guitar, he started playing. He's left-handed but learned to play righty.

How about Ringo?

Ringo was destined from birth, man (laughs) – he was going to be a drummer! Had no choice. As a kid, he was a hyper little dude – the one who jumped on the trampoline and did flips. When we started to play with Dad, he sat Ringo at the drums and he took to it like a duck to water. Dad was doing rhythm guitar and I was doing leads, so Jojo said, "Well, I guess I'm playing bass," and he became a *monster* at it. He's a great guitarist as well. He can jam.

How old were you when you started backing your dad?

I think Ringo was seven, so Jojo was nine and I was 10.

What sort of gigs did you play?

We were doing gigs around San Angelo, playing all the little bars we could and passing the hat, tip jar, and guitar case (laughs).

Do you remember some of the songs you were playing?

Oh yeah! We played everything from Willie and Waylon to The Beatles, Fats Domino to Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley tunes, every Top 40 country tune you could think of, and Mexican music. We were a little Mexican-American family jukebox.

What was your guitar back then?

I had a Kalamazoo, a Harmony, an Applause acoustic that I played that like a

lead guitar, plugged into Boss pedals (laughs).

I was playing whatever my dad could pick up at a pawn shop or borrow from a friend. It was always a cheap guitar. The first electric I considered mine was a Silvertone amp-in-case.

Did it play pretty well? Was it comfortable?

It was like the perfect size for me – had a short-scale neck and the white tape around the body, the lipstick pickup. I played the crap out of that guitar and learned a lot of things on it.

How long did you guys back your dad?

We played with Dad 'til I was 18, Jojo was 17, and Ringo was 15. We started doing our own thing because Dad always taught us to believe that the sky's the limit.

What do you recall about your first gig?

The first show we did was in a place in Atlanta called Jocks and Jills, and we were *terrified*. Dad was the front guy who always spoke on the mic and was really good at it. But we never spoke, so we were crapping our pants onstage, trying to figure out what to say and what to play (laughs). We just kind of winged it. I remember being super-nervous.

That was right after my first son passed away from SIDS. I had just turned 18, and Dad always told me, "Son, make that guitar *cry*!" I was always *trying* to do that, but it wasn't until I went through that that I really had a *real* reason to make that thing cry. That guitar became the outlet for my emotional pain. It really saved me. Of course it was family first, man, but the guitar... she means a lot to me because she saved me from a lot of bad, ugly, dark things. From that point on, I put everything I had of my soul and my life force into the guitar.

Were you writing songs at the time?

Yeah, it was always a natural thing. Sometimes I would write a whole one, and sometimes me and Jojo would get together and write one, or it could be me, Jojo, and Ringo. Dad and Mom would even get involved. It was something we did as a family.

Did you have a full set of original music, or were you mixing in covers?

We were mixing in stuff that we knew growing up – "Johnny B. Goode" "La Bamba," "Voodoo Chile," "Pride and Joy" and any blues we could do.

We eventually got the itch to present our own take on our influences and write songs that injected our culture. With my guitar playing, I always try to incorporate my heritage and culture. There's a lot of bajo sexto chords and timing things we've always done naturally. We had to make a point with our music and do something that was from *us* but at the same time paid homage to our teachers – Stevie to Ritchie to Stevie Wonder, along with Ronnie Milsap, Mel Tillis, Willie Nelson. We're just students of the trade, trying to pass it on. Really, we were just trying to be like Dad. It was *his* dream to do what we're doing. He fell in love with country music and Elvis Presley, and started playing guitar when he was eight years old. He wanted to be those guys, and we wanted to be like him and make him proud. That's where it all comes from, and that's what we were trying to be as we found ourselves and our sound.

There's a bittersweet story behind your first hit.

Yeah, "Heaven" wasn't intended to be a song. A year or so after I'd lost my son, I was still going through a tough time. I remember being on my knees, praying, and it was like a bolt of lightning hit me. The man upstairs told me, "Write this down!" So I did. Of course I didn't know it was going to become what it did. To me, it's one of the world's loudest prayers, and it still gets played quite a bit.

I can't take credit for anything that has happened in our lives. To me, it feels like a movie. It's *unreal*, being Mexican-American, coming from a very poor lifestyle to experience any form of success. The tragedies and trials we've been through as a family and as individuals... it has just been crazy.

Musicians who play with family know about "blood harmony" and how siblings communicate differently than most other musicians, especially onstage.

I believe in that, but also there's something in the water and the air and the dirt in the great state of Texas. From Buddy

Henry Garza photos by Barbara FG.

Henry (with his number one Strat, Tejana) and Jojo on a Gibson-made Tobias six-string bass.

"We credit each other even if one of us only adds one word to a lyric, because we do it collectively out of our love and respect for each other." – *Henry Garza*

Holly to Stevie Ray to Willie Nelson, a lot of cats have this instinct for music.

What does your guitar style draw from your teachers?

I tried to learn *everything* growing up, so when I'm up there playing, without thinking about it, I'm trying my best to mimic Eric Clapton, Stevie Ray, Chuck Berry, and a lot of country guitarists I didn't even know the names of when I started. I'm trying to sound like Carlos Santana when I'm going in that direction. When you practice so much, it starts to become what Bruce Lee called "unnatural naturalness," which is a mix of instinct and control working in harmony. Things hit all by themselves. And I think that's what all musicians and all artists do. Music is *definitely* like that, and I give all credit to all my teachers, and pay homage to them. I hope people hear that in my playing.

Are you a Strat guy because of any certain player?

Yeah, the first person that I saw playing a Strat was Ritchie Valens, and I felt a *connection* with that cat growing up because he was Mexican-American and played rock and roll in Spanish. I remember Lou Diamond Phillips in *La Bamba*, with the sunburst Strat. I wanted one *so bad*. But of course there was no way I could afford a Strat.

I believe every guitar has its place, and now I play anything from a Gretsch to a Gibson 335 to a Tele to Strat. I've always loved the versatility in a Strat; you can't make all the other guitars sound like a Strat, but a Strat can sound like all the other guitars. That's what I love about it.

When did you get your first Strat?

Let me see... it was my fourteenth or fifteenth birthday. We were living in Lubbock at that time and I remember coming home from school and finding one laying on my bed. I walked in and, man, I was just in *tears*. She was Candy Apple Red, so I thought, "Oh, her name was Candy!" I always name my guitars. But I think it was just a Mexico Strat; all my Strats seemed to be Mexico Strats. And I do what all Mexi-

Henry and Jojo Garze live: Fred Jimenez.

Los Lonely Boys
RESURRECTION

After an 11-year hiatus, the Grammy-winning Texican trio returns with a new album and a renewed sense of purpose. *Resurrection* finds the brothers Garza again leaning into Tejano-infused soul, blues, rock, and uplifting pop. Drummer Ringo, bassist Jojo, and Henry on guitar and lead vocals, have matured and evolved, creating a sound that is familiar and fresh. Ear-friendly snatches of SRV, Santana, and The Beatles can be heard throughout, but the trio's homegrown family style yields excellent songs.

Tantalizing grooves, catchy hooks, and badass blues licks permeate – add to this resonant lyrics that inspire and uplift. "See Your Face" is about remembering those who have moved on spiritually or geographically. The groove is funky and hypnotic as the rhythm section digs deep against bodacious Strat tones and Texas attitude. "I Let You Think That You Do" is guaranteed to be a festival favorite with its blues-rock snarl and relentless Southwest shuffle. Henry is unchained with excellent slide playing. On "Dance With Me," the stylistic diversity continues with this romantic dance cut and Santana-style guitar phrasing by way of San Angelo, Texas. Henry plays for the song with a less-is-more approach that favors satisfying taste and guitar tones over fretboard excess. "Wish You Would" is an on-the-nose positive-message ditty. The sentiment is, "Be careful what you wish for. There could be a false light, and we don't want you to get hurt." With contemporary pop radio airplay in mind, it features an upper-atmospheric vocal line, sugary-sweet vocal harmonies, and a slide guitar solo that hits all the right spots.

Resurrection marks a strong return for the band. In a world of airtight musical branding, Los Lonely Boys' sincere blend of blues, pop, soul, and Latino roots music is a welcome return to the music world. – ***Oscar Jordan***

cans do with our cars – we customize 'em a little bit, put some hydraulics on it, paint job, different guts and everything (laughs).

What do you normally do to dress them up?

Well, I used to change the necks; I'd put jumbo frets on them, some heavy pickups – I like good, thick-sounding pickups; I'm a big Texas Special guy. But yeah, I'd pull things apart and put 'em back together, even though I didn't know what the hell I was doing (laughs), and I'd have to take them to Ish Flores, who's been my guitar doctor for 20-plus years.

What's your preferred neck shape?

Oh, I love a big fat neck from the late-'60s – '67, '68. Round and fat is my go-to and there was a time when I always tried to get a specific thing, but I've learned to appreciate all of 'em.

Ringo, Jojo, and Henry Garza.

"We've been resurrected as a unit, as brothers, as a family doing music and hoping to continue the legacy." – *Henry Garza*

What inspires the names of your guitars?

The guitar itself, and I usually name a guitar right away when I first see it. My number one is Tejana, which means "Texas woman." I also have Pink, one called Blue Haven, one called Marilyn that's a white Strat with lipstick pickups. I have Candy, and I have one named after my wife, Roxy. Amber has a tiger-stripe flamed top with a beautiful amber finish.

Why did you all decide to step away from the business in 2019?

It's crazy, from the time I was 18 all the way up until then, we hadn't had a break our whole lives. It was pedal to the metal, giving it all we got in the music business. Covid was spooky, and what was mostly a curse was also, for us, a blessing because we'd never had time like that – *ever* – to just sit and reflect.

I think back about how we'd been playing and playing and playing and playing, not really knowing what was going on. It was like we were zombies. I jammed with Carlos Santana? No way, man. I jammed with Dickey Betts? No way. I jammed with Willie Nelson? No way, man. But we did all these things with our heroes. It was a crazy, *crazy* ride.

Let's dig into the new album, *Resurrection*.

I *love* the record and really enjoyed doing it, getting to express myself and the influences I love.

How did the songs come together?

For us, each song is like a baby being born. I'll start one then Jojo and I will sit down and finish something. Some of the songs on *Resurrection* were in the vault for years; "Natural Thing" has been around at least 20 years and we brought it to life with Ringo singing. Some of the songs I'd started and showed Jojo and he was like, "Yeah, this will work great," and he'd throw some changes in it. Our process is just a bouncing-off-each-other kind of thing.

Everybody does everything.

Yeah, and we credit each other even if one of us only adds one word to a lyric, because we do it *collectively* out of our love and respect for each other. Yes, sometimes I'll write a song and my brothers will come over and want to change the hell out of it (laughs), but sometimes Jojo will write a song and *I'll* want to change the hell out of it. Sometimes we'll just put the music to it and it just *works*.

You mentioned that is the first time you used your own studio...

Through Covid, we were able to put one together and get a little tech savvy. We have 16 channels of Rupert Neve preamps, Pro Tools, of course. There's so much at your fingertips now versus tape, man.

Are there a few songs that you listen to more often because you especially dig the guitar parts – solos, or melodies?

"Can't Get No Love" is a cool one because my playing mixes things I learned from Vince Gill, Mark Knopfler, Stevie, and Chet Atkins. I like the solo.

I've listened to "Natural Thing" over and over because it came to fruition after so long. It's a beautiful song and I love hearing Ringo sing it. My oldest son, who is also a guitar player, watched me doing the solo. I was tearing up, crying, and I looked at him and *he* was tearing up. Every time I hear that song, I get this mental picture of him looking at me with tears in his eyes, telling me "That's the one, Daddy."

There are other songs on the record that do that for me. And *all* the solos have special meaning; I know where I was, what was going on in the studio with my brothers. It hits, and there's a real emotional connection.

I don't read music or really *write* things. I sit and hit "Go" and then try to find something. Sometimes it'll take *forever* and I'll have to take a break then come back and give it another go. Everything is based on feel and hearing a moment in time. That's one thing I hate about recording – trying

Ringo, Jojo, and Henry Garza: Matt Lankes.

to capture a spontaneous moment, and it's hard to catch or put it on right, you know? It's hard to just capture it. "That's the take." Sometimes it'll happen. On our first record we did the instrumental in one take.

But when you have the access to your own studio, you don't feel so much pressure over paying thousands of dollars for every hour. So there's a lot of comfort.

Talk about "I Let You Think That You Do," which is one of the harder-rocking songs, with that shuffle and some kick-ass slide playing.

That came from just sitting around, jamming. I was actually working a different song when that one was born. I was like, "This sounds cool! I've just got to think of something cool to say."

I've always wanted to experiment more with slide, and having our studio let me do that. The slide is a bit back in the mix, but it's got all the influence of Johnny Winter and Stevie Ray in there. I'm a big George Harrison slide fan, man; I *love* his slide playing, and I incorporated a lot of that on this record.

I believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and while writing it, I thought about Jesus singing: "Hey, I let you think that you do. Ain't no refusing me." That's where it was going, but it could also be about speaking to a woman, saying, "You ain't fooling me. You try, but you lose." So I thought it was cool. The song has a great bluesy feel and I *loved* when Jojo put bass to it. The part where it goes to the solo has this Hendrix vibe that reminds me of "Highway Chile." Writing it, I had that in mind. It's just a fun song and adds what we call "Texican rock and roll."

How did the groove come together for "See Your Face"?

That's a story and a half. I remember sitting in my bedroom; I had the window open and I was thinking of my son who passed away. He lived for five months, so I have a pretty good memory of his face and his smile. I was thinking about him, but also thinking about Mom (*Ed note: their mother passed away in 2017*). I wanted to say something about how you don't want to forget someone. You know how when you miss somebody for so long you sometimes forget what they look like? But then a memory can pop up and you get to see 'em again... but you're not in control of the memory, and something else comes in and you kind of hate that. We wish we could keep it there forever or have control of it

With the riff, I was going from a Spanishy/Mexican kind of feel, and I started playing the opening on an acoustic.

This silverburst Strat is new addition to Garza's rack. The Blues Junior III is heard throughout Los Lonely Boys' new album, *Resurrection*.

That's one of the songs where Jojo showed up and was like, "Man, let's finish that sucker!" And he added all the "Take me, take me back home." Because that's what memories do – they take us to a place that we remember and love and wish we were still there. That's the cool thing about memories – you're going down memory lane and you don't want to get off.

How about "Dance With Me"? That lead break has a different sound and feel.

That's Jojo letting loose on that solo! We let him take a bit of the guitar work on that song so people could hear his style. And I *love* it. He did a great job and I can only take credit for hopefully being somewhat of an inspiration. He tells me, "I was trying to play what you play, bro!"

I love for people to know that my brothers can be versatile, so nobody can say, "He's just a bass player" or "He's just the drummer," which is why we gave Ringo a lead vocal. "Natural Thing" is him singing his heart out. It's fun, and it feels good.

Which guitars did you use on the album?

I used my main Strat, my blue Gretsch, my 335, and a Tele. I was digging the different pickups.

Are there any vintage instruments in your studio?

The only thing that I do have that's vintage is one my brother gave me – a Silvertone 1448 amp in case, because I lost my first one years ago. I have a '77 Telecaster and a '78 Telecaster that were given to me.

I've never had enough money to spend on a vintage guitar versus spending it on diapers (laughs). Maybe in the near future one will fall in my lap somehow, but I'm happy with what I have.

Which amplifiers do we hear most on the record?

It's a Fender Blues Junior III with just a 10" speaker. And man, like I said, I was able to have my hands on our own studio and I experimented with microphones and placement. On some tracks, I used four mics – two boom mics, a Shure SM7 right above it, and of course I had the classic SM57 right on the cone of the speaker.

Through the years, I'd usually go big in the studio. I've used my Marshall cabinet with four 12s and my two Fender Twins, but for this record I was able to work with just this little tube amp and make it sound like 10 billion bucks. I had fun trying to

Garza's new tobaccoburst Strat is his first with a maple fretboard – an homage to Ritchie Valens. His Strats are all made in Mexico – a preference for the quality and weight of their wood. Guitar tech Ish Flores gives them new pickups – Fender Texas Specials, Duncans, or Lollars – along with steel saddles, a bone nut, pots, caps, and resistors (including a treble bleed). He also installs full shielding and grounds everything. When screening pickups, he uses a multimeter to ensure they'll sound clean and bright; he looks for a bridge pickup to measure about 6.3 ohms, the neck-position (which Garza plays most) 7.8 or 7.9. The band's new album has added a twist for Flores with Garza playing slide, which requires a pickup that isn't too bright or too muddy. He's working with Lollar and Duncan on custom winds.

achieve that. Basically, you're hearing just that.

It sounds very cool.

Yeah, I had fun doing it. When you start learning the recording process, you see that it's not so much about having your full rig, it's about microphones and mic placement. That's what you've got to play around with when it comes to recording. I didn't know that growing up. I was always trying to set up a wall of amps like Carlos Santana and Stevie Ray. I was like, "I got to have this, I got to have that." But with today's technology and mics, I can make a Pignose sound like it'll fill Wrigley Field (laughs), which is really fun to do. It's really neat to share with the world.

Are you getting set to go back on the road?

Yeah, we're doing a Brotherhood tour with Los Lobos again, starting on the West Coast. We're going to keep playing and letting people know that Los Lonely Boys are still around. The name of the record is *Resurrection*. That's what we feel has happened – that we've been resurrected as a unit, as brothers, as a family doing music and hoping to continue the legacy. **VG**

Garza tobaccoburst Strat: Ish Flores.

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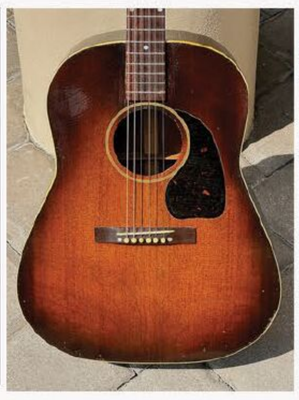
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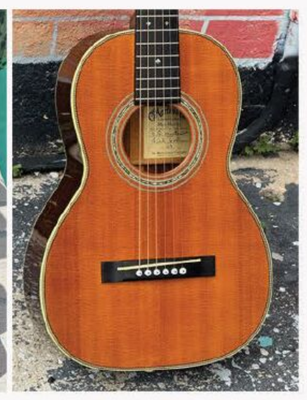
rare Mahogany Top

1947 Martin 000-21
rare Tapered Braces

1967 Grammer G-58
Wild Birdseye Maple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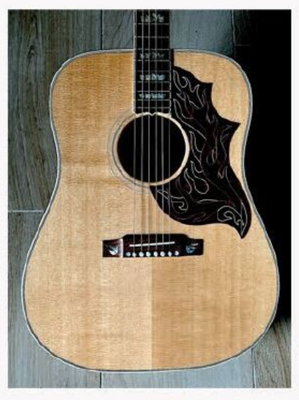
2015 Gibson Firebird
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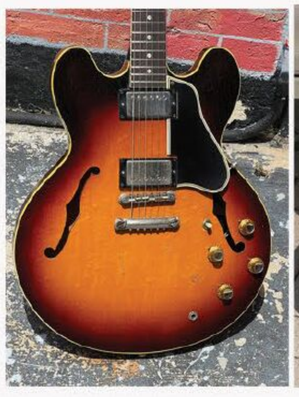
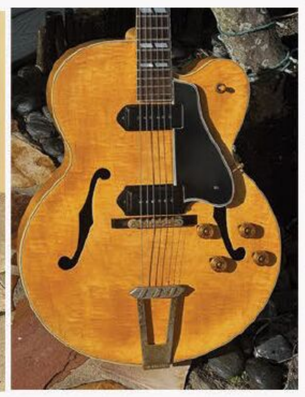
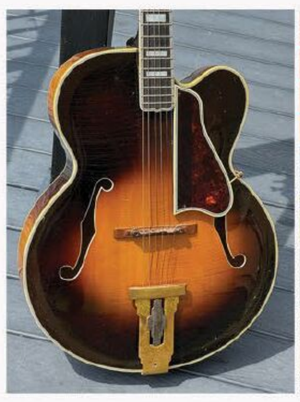
1960 Gibson
ES-330TD Dot Neck


1961 Gibson ES-335
Dot Neck On Sale !

1981 Gibson ES-335
Moog Prototype

1982 Benedetto 16"
"Oval Hole" Custom


1952 Gibson ES-350N
big Blonde 2 P-90's

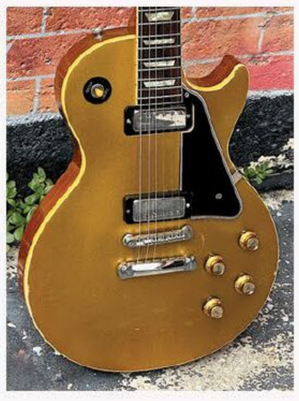

1957 Gibson L-5C
stunning example

1970 Gibson L-5CES
Flamey & Wide Nut

2001 Gibson L-5
Signature 16" Special

1968 Rickenbacker
366/12 6-12-string

1971 Rickenbacker
331LS Light Show


1970 Gibson Les Paul
Deluxe early 1st issue

1978 Gibson Les Paul
Custom Silver'burst

1981 Gibson Les Paul
Std. '57 Re.30th Anniv.

1984 Gibson Les Paul
"Jimmy Wallace"'59 Re.

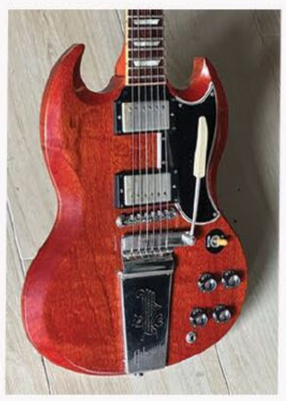
1984 Gibson Les Paul
Custom Fact. Kahler

2008 Gibson Les Paul R8
'58 50th Ann.Tom Murphy

1964 Gibson SG Junior
fabulous "Wide Neck"

1974 Gibson SG Custom
a beat sweet rare axe !

1979 Gibson SG
Exclusive Tap Knob

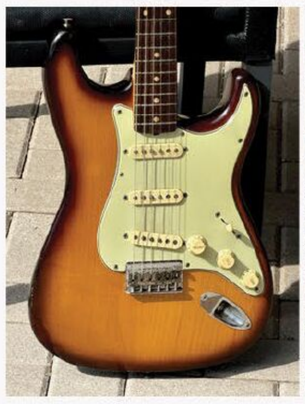

2008 Gibson Les Paul
SG '61 VOS Reissue

1967 Gibson Flying V
RARE w/orig.case

1976 Gibson Firebird
Bi-Centennial Mint !

1978 Hamer Standard
Factory Lefty # 0120

1981 Gibson Explorer
the1st Korina Reissue


1959 Fender Strat
H/T rare 8 screw'gard

1960 Fender Strat Rare
Fiesta Red Slab Neck

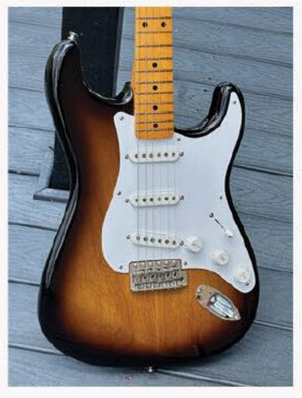
1964 Fender Esquire
C.A.R. "C" width neck

1966 Fender Custom
aka "Maverick" Minty

1973 Fender Telecaster
see-thru Ash Body

1994 Fender Strat Custom
Shop Factory Set-Neck

1996 Fender Strat
'57 Cunetto Relic


2024 Fender '54 Strat
70th Anniversary

1961 Fender Precision
Bass nice Slab Neck.

1961 Fender Jazz Bass
Blonde Stack Knob

1965 Fender Jazz Bass
rare Firemist Gold

1965 Fender Jazz Bass
Sonic Blue Bad Boy

1974 Fender Bass VI
very rare & minty !

1964 Gibson Thunderbird
II Bass rare "Polaris White"

1965 Gibson EB-2 Bass
ultra rare "Argentine Gray"

1965 Gibson Thunderbird
IV rare "Pelham Blue"

Upcoming Events

KEEP UPDATED AT WWW.VINTAGEGUITAR.COM

Denotes a new or updated listing.

2024

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

Big Als' Lake County Musician's Swap Meet, Sunday, September 8, 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

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 **(See Advertisement on page 60.)**

Bradenton Guitar Show, September 20-22 from 9am-5pm at the Bradenton Area Convention Center, 1 Haben Blvd., Palmetto, FL 34221. Visit www.BradentonGuitarShow.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 **(See Advertisement on page 61.)**

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

The Indiana Guitar Show, September 28-29, at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds 1900 E. Main St. Danville, IN. For more information contact Eddie at (317) 272-5222 or visit www.theindianaguitarshow.com **(See Advertisement on page 60.)**

The Mega Monster Guitar Show, Sunday, September 29, 2024 at the St. George Fellowship Center, 3204 Ridgewood Rd. Fairlawn, OH 44333. Hours 10am - 4 pm. For more information contact Jerry Mullins at jmullins@rcrg.net or 330-354-7627. www.monsterguitarshow.com

OCTOBER

LA Guitar - Amp- Pedal Show and Swap 2024, October 5-6, 2024. For more info contact Loni at lonster@earthlink.net

Chicago Vintage Guitar Expo, Sunday October 6, 2024, Holiday Inn, 1000 Busse Rd, Elk Grove Village, Illinois. 9am to 3PM. For More information Contact Beverly Bakes, R&B Productions 847-931-0707, Bakesguitar@aol.com or, Chicagovintageguitarexpo.com

Best Guitar Show, Sunday, October 13 from 10am to 4pm at the Quality Inn, 300 Tarentum Bridge Rd, New Kensington PA 15068. Contact Allen Jones 814-215-4087 or adjinv@outlook.com

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.amigoguitar-shows.com **(See Advertisement on page 62.)**

Ferris State University Music Instrument Swap, Sunday October 20, 2024 from 10am-4pm at

Bradenton Guitar Show

SEPTEMBER 21st & 22nd

SATURDAY 10AM—5PM & SUNDAY 10AM—4PM

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2024

SATURDAY OCTOBER 19
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SUNDAY OCTOBER 20
10 am - 4 pm

MESQUITE CONVENTION CENTER
1700 Rodeo Drive Mesquite, TX

Co-sponsored by Vintage Guitar magazine

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davelcrocker@gmail.com

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amigoshows@stringswest.com

Facebook @ Amigo Guitar Shows amigoguitarshows.com

Upcoming Events

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

Sonic Sound Guitar and Records Expo, October 26-27 from 10am – 5pm at the Greenville Shrine Club 119 Beverly Road, Greenville, SC 29609. For more information contact Chris Hall at somicsoundexpo.official@gmail.com or visit www.SonicSoundExpo.com

Everything Rock & Roll Guitar Show, Sunday October 27, 2024 from 11:30am-4pm at the CFS Bank Event Center, 111 Gallitin Rd., Belle Vernon PA 15012. For more information contact Scott Talarico at 412-716-8411 or guitarshowusa.com

NOVEMBER

Great American Guitar Show(Fall Philly), November 2-3, 2024 at the Greater Philadelphia Expo Center - Hall A, 100 Station Ave., Oaks, PA. For more info contact Bee 3 Vintage at (828)298-2197 or visit www.bee3vintage.com.

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

Big Als' Lake County Musician's Swap Meet, Sunday, November 10, 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

Chicagoland Guitar Show, Sunday, November 10th. 9am to 4pm at Atlantis Banquets 1273 N Rand Rd., Arlington Heights, IL 60004. Sponsored by Midwest Buy & Sell and Rock & Roll Vintage. Booths $100. $5 admission. For information contact mwbuynsell@sbcglobal.net or 773-545-2020.

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

2025 Winter Ohio Guitar Show, Sunday, January 12, 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 go to guitardigest@frontier.com, www.ohioguitarshows.com. Ohio Guitar Show on Facebook and Instagram

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

Carolina Guitar Show – Asheville, March 8-9, 2025 at the WNC Ag Center I-26, Exit 40,1301 Fanning Bridge Rd., Fletcher/Asheville, NC 28732. For more info, call Bee3 Vintage at 828-298-2197 or visit www.bee3vintage.com

Illinois Guitar & Gear Expo, Sunday March 9, 2025 at the Kankakee County Fairgrounds 213W 4000S Rd. Kankakee,IL 60901, 10am –3 pm Formore info, visit: https://www.illinoisguitarexpo.com

Cincinnati Guitar Show, Sunday, March 16, 2025 from 10am - 4pm at the Sharonville Conv. Cntr, 11355 Chester Rd, Sharonville Oh 45246. Contact Denny 513-503-1072 - more info at cincyguitarshow.com & FB.

MAY

Jake's Guitar Show & Music Swap Meet, May 3-4 at the Indoor Treasure Barn, 1380 Rt 100, Barto, Pa. Hours 8-1. For more information contact Justin at (484)256-6515 or info@jakesfleamarket.com

Sarasota Guitar and Amp Show, May 16th - 12pm -5pm (dealer day),May 17-18, 9am - 6pm at the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium 801 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34236. Contact: Kevin Wood at 941-993-3098 or visit Sarasotaguitarshow.com

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

SEPTEMBER

Jake's Guitar Show & Music Swap Meet, September 20-21, 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

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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HIT LIST REVIEWS

LEAN, HARD-ROCKIN'

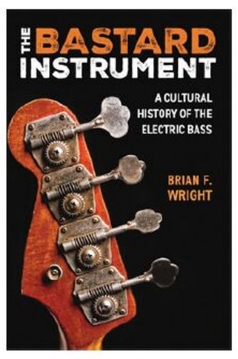
Deep Purple
=1

Fifty-seven years after its debut, Deep Purple keeps on rollin'. The hard-rock pioneers' 23rd studio album, *=1*, is the first with new guitarist Simon McBride, who replaced Steve Morse. To hone their chops, vocalist Ian Gillan, bassist Roger Glover, drummer Ian Paice, and keyboardist Don Airey toured with McBride before recording, and it was time well-spent.

Sonically, the material is lean, hard-rockin' Purple; McBride and Airey skillfully trade licks and runs, expanding upon the band's stormtrooper thud. McBride gets a variety of fat tones, primarily from his Paul Reed Smith planks, while Airey (Rainbow, Ozzy Osbourne) fills the very big shoes of the late Jon Lord with organ and synth tones.

The single "Portable Door" swings with a chugging riff, propulsive organ, and rumbling bass and drums. McBride's precise solo has a beefy-yet-biting humbucker tone and "Old-Fangled Thing" includes some of the best McBride/Airey trade-offs. "Pictures of You" features a distinctly double-tracked melodic guitar solo and a hypnotically arranged band finale that ends abruptly – just as things were getting interesting!

=1 startles with its "let's get down to business" approach. If you yearn for the crunch of vintage Purple, this one's for you. ***– Bret Adams***



Brian F. Wright
The Bastard Instrument: A Cultural History of the Electric Bass

There isn't enough serious literature about the electric bass, but this book is a worthy contribution. The author takes us from the moment Leo Fender created the mass-produced Precision Bass in 1951, but also touches on earlier on-offs going back to the '30s. Wisely, the narrative doesn't aspire to be an all-encompassing history, instead covering sounds, styles, and technology through the early '70s.

The pages are rife with hip trivia. For example, in '51, Fender sold a mere 83 Precisions. An R&B group known as The Treniers had a P-Bass player named Shifty Henry, and the ensemble's performance in the 1956 movie *The Girl Can't Help It* provided many viewers with a first gander at an electric bass – in color. Also, read about the *two* bassists on Jimmy Gilmer and the Fireballs' 1963 "Sugar Shack," with Stan Lark on a Rickenbacker 4001 and George Tomsco plucking a Dano six-string bass.

While the dawn of plugged-in bass is often forgotten next to its flashy guitar brethren, *The Bastard Instrument* reminds us there was more to the solidbody revolution than Strats, Teles, and Les Pauls. The arrival of electric bass guitar was an earthquake that's still shaping music today. ***– Pete Prown***

Hilary Gardner
On The Trail with The Lonesome Pines

Vocalist Gardner explores the association between jazz and country, the Great American Songbook, and cowboy movie stars. Similar territory was mined by Asleep At The Wheel and Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks, but it goes back decades earlier.

"Cow Cow Boogie" dates to the 1942 recording by pianist Freddie Slack with singer Ella Mae Morse – its composers having their hands in jazz and rhythm-and-blues tunes, including "I'll Remember April" and "House Of Blue Lights."

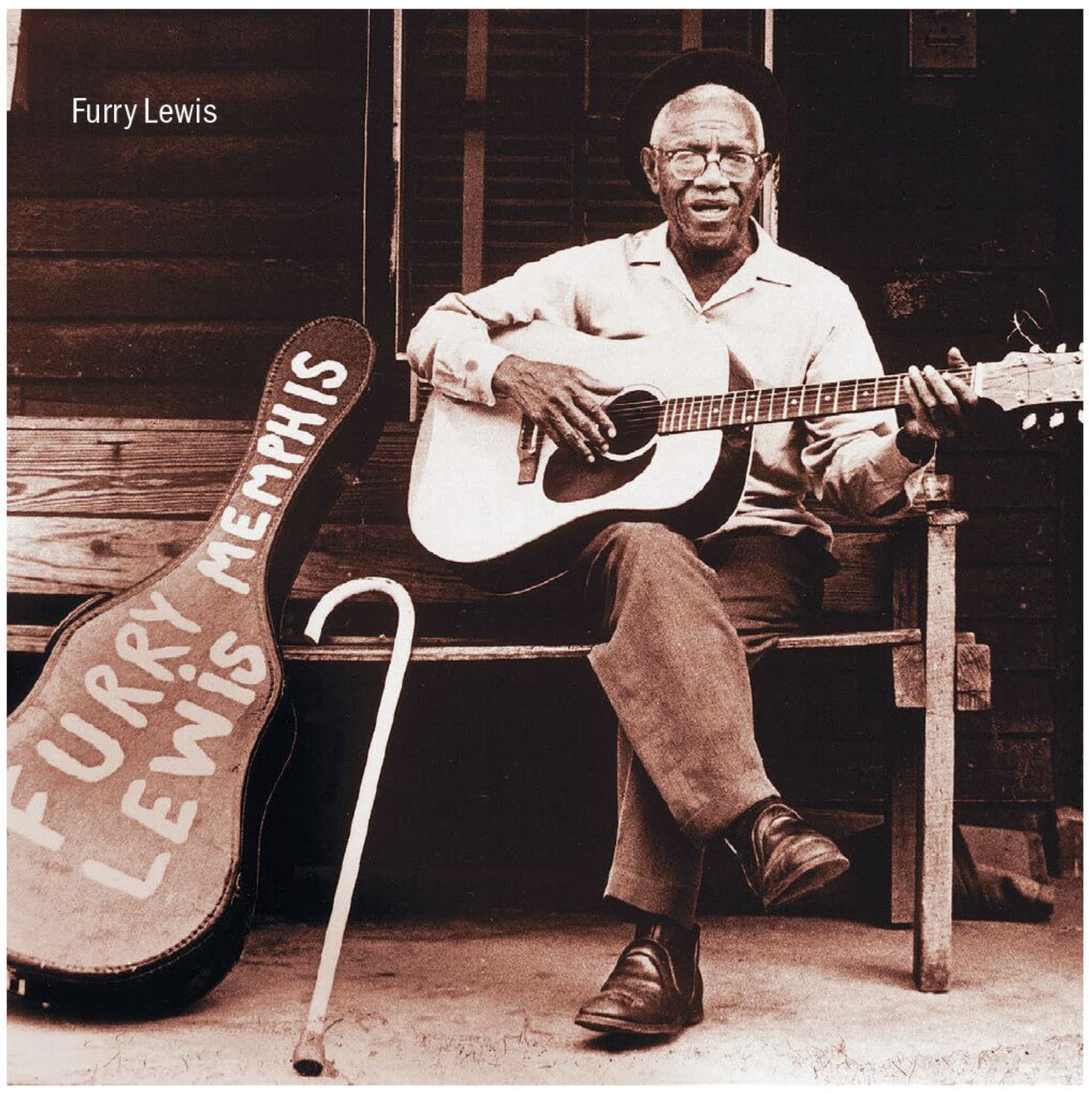
"Call Of The Canyon," from the Tommy Dorsey/Frank Sinatra repertoire, features a lovely, spare acoustic solo by Justin Poindexter, who overdubs electric guitar and lap steel on "Along The Navajo Trail." "Silver On The Sage" finds him adding mandolin. "I'm An Old Cowhand (From The Rio Grande)" was originally a swinging Bing Crosby vehicle, but Gardner got it from her parents' Hicks album, and stays close to Lickette Maryann Price's well-known reading.

Produced by Eli Wolf, known for his work with singer Norah Jones and keyboard icon Herbie Hancock, the program benefits from the intimate small-group setting – just guitar, bass, and drums – never truer than on "Twilight On The Trail," which has previously been recorded by Dean Martin, Sam Cooke, and others. Here and throughout,

Simon McBride: Stefan Brending/Wikimedia Commons.

CHECK THIS ACTION

Hear all the artists in this issue on our FREE playlist on Spotify. Scan »»»



Furry Lewis: Bear Family Records.

WALKING IN MEMPHIS

By Dan Forte

I first visited Memphis in 1990, and it struck me that radio stations played loads of music from the area. Soul, rockabilly, blues, gospel, country, and jazz – if there was a Memphis kinship, it was in heavy rotation.

Granted, I haven't been everywhere, but the only other place I've had a similar experience is New Orleans. As in the Crescent City, Memphians take pride in their musical melting pot, and its blues strain is documented in *The Memphis Blues Box*, an exhaustive set subtitled *Original Recordings First Released on 78s and 45s, 1914–1969*. At 20 CDs with 534 tracks and a 360-page hardcover 12x12 book (weighing eight pounds), Germany's Bear Family label may have outdone itself.

The package kicks off with an interview with trumpeter/bandleader W.C. Handy, whose 1912 track "Memphis Blues" was the first blues tune ever published. Next, the popular Memphis Jug Band's 1927 tracks feature multi-instrumentalist Will Shade. The band crops up again three years later (on Disc 8), intermingling with tracks by Jimmie Lunceford's swing band and Memphis Minnie, the "Queen of the Blues," who "played guitar like a man."

For context, it's worth pointing out that cuts like Blind Mamie Forehand's haunting "Wouldn't Mind Dying If Dying Was All" (1927), accompanied only by husband A.C. Forehand's bottleneck guitar, pre-dated Robert Johnson's recordings by 10 years.

This is not a guitar compilation, but blues and guitar go hand in hand, so there are ample six-string highlights; early cuts by then-disc-jockey B.B. King date back to '39, and his slide-playing cousin, Bukka White, is featured on "Parchman Farm Blues."

One of the earliest songs considered rock and roll, 1951's "Rocket 88" by Jackie Brenston, features Ike Turner on piano and Willie Kizart on overdriven guitar. One-man-band Joe Hill Louis sings "Hydramatic Woman" and plays lead on Rufus Thomas' "Bear Cat," in response to Big Mama Thornton's hit "Hound Dog." Future Muddy Waters sidemen James Cotton and Pat Hare, on harmonica and gnarly guitar, respectively, team on "Cotton Crop Blues."

Little Junior Parker's original version of "Mystery Train" features Floyd Murphy, brother of Matt "Guitar" Murphy, and Elvis Presley's 1955 cover of the song is also included, as is his first release, "That's All Right," with guitarist Scotty Moore on both. The line between blues and rockabilly is further blurred with Carl Perkins' "Matchbox" and "Boppin' The Blues."

Modern soul-blues instrumentals round out the excursion, with Albert King's "Overall Junction" and Booker T. & the MGs' smash "Green Onions," featuring Steve Cropper's stinging solo. Hours of indigenous cuts, culminating with Ike and Tina Turner, end up with an odd-but-fitting entry in the Stax catalog – "Walk Right In" from 80-year-old jug-band banjoist Gus Cannon's "comeback" album.

The aforementioned Will Shade, an important figure and sometime bandmate of Cannon's, died in '66 without latching onto the folk and blues revival or getting the recognition he deserved. On the other hand, Furry Lewis did get exposure to rock audiences after his recordings in the '20s and '30s, but not before a dry spell and some hard times. In 1916, Lewis lost a leg trying to jump a freight train. From 1922 to his retirement in '66, he worked as a street sweeper in Memphis. But he eventually recorded again, appeared at folk festivals, toured with Leon Russell, and even opened for the Rolling Stones. Lavishly illustrated, expertly chronicled, with personnel credits and session details, this is as impressive as any anthology I've seen.

I need to acknowledge the passing of an important figure in blues, folk, and rock, albeit largely behind the scenes. Eugene Denson (who went by "ED" in writing – pronounced "Ed," not E.D.), a label head, record producer, and manager, died April 12 at the age of 84. Born in Washington, D.C., he went to University of Maryland, where he became involved with blues and folk music. He was road manager for the Blues Project and later managed Country Joe & the Fish.

Co-founding Takoma Records with John Fahey in '59, the pair produced Bukka White's first record in 23 years and also introduced Leo Kottke and Robbie Basho. In '72, Denson co-founded Kicking Mule with Stefan Grossman; its roster included Grossman, Reverend Gary Davis, Happy Traum, John Renbourn, Duck Baker, and Mike Bloomfield.

"He was one of the good guys – always fair and honest," says Fish guitarist/keyboardist David Bennett Cohen. "You have to realize that during the '60s, we were all learning our crafts, making it up as we went along. Managers were the same. We just got lucky. When I later did my instructional guitar albums for Kicking Mule, ED was always there, encouraging me and pretty much letting me do what I wanted. I have to say that ED trusted us, which was worth its weight."

In 1980, Denson moved to Humboldt County, California, where he worked as a civil liberties lawyer, often defending clients busted on marijuana charges. One called him "our gentle warrior."

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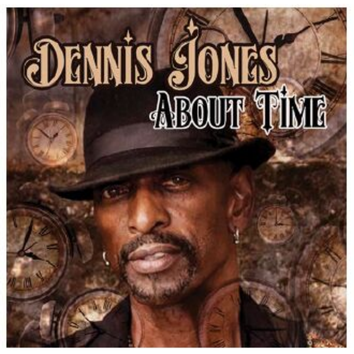
Gardner's performances are wonderfully restrained and melodic. ***– Dan Forte***

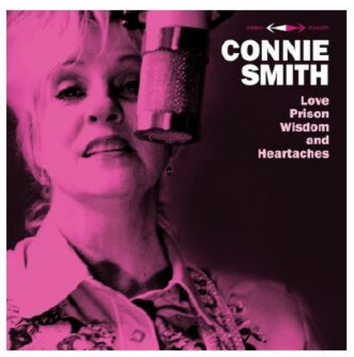


Dennis Jones
About Time

On *About Time*, bluesman Dennis Jones turns up the heat with blistering guitar, impassioned vocals, and epic tales of 21st-century woe and triumphant comeuppance. Produced by Jones and Brian O'Neal of The BusBoys, the album pairs clear but sinewy production and musicality with real-life themes, in the best tradition of contemporary American blues-rock.

Drawing from the six-string legacies of Stevie Ray Vaughan, Jimi Hendrix, Robin Trower, and Pat Travers, Jones brings a modern, black urban sensibility to the proceedings, creating a distinctive POV. "Too High To Fly," "Just Like You," and "Always The Same" are power-packed compositions, Jones emphasizing harder melodic-rock tones steeped in traditional blues, offset by clean, funky, and precise rhythm work coupled with beautifully chorused arpeggiation.

On "You're Killin' Me," Jones juxtaposes filthy rhythm parts with liquid lines straddling the textures of Eric Clapton and Peter Green, while "Six Feet Off The Ground" dips into his metal influences, illustrating his rise above toxic relationships. This is Dennis Jones' best record to date. ***– Oscar Jordan***



Connie Smith
Love, Prison, Wisdom and Heartaches

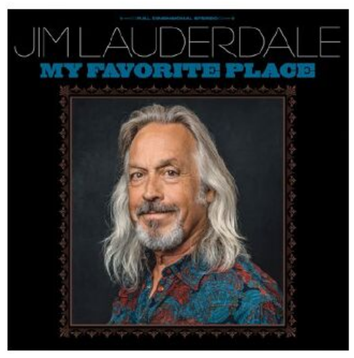
Connie Smith's career began with her ebullient 1964 hit "Once a Day," now part of the Library of Congress' prestigious National Recording Registry.

Marty Stuart, Smith's husband and producer since '97, shaped her four previous albums to celebrate traditional sounds and present them to new audiences. This time, the focus is different. Smith selected venerable country and pop songs, not all hits, written or sung by friends.

Backed by Stuart's band and numerous guest players, she wraps her still-formidable voice around Loretta Lynn's "World of Forgotten People," enhanced by Gary Carter's empathetic pedal steel. Shimmering electric guitar and steel liven up George Jones' "Beneath Still Waters" and "If You Won't Tell on Me." Carter's steel and subtle rhythm guitars enhance her spins on Roy Acuff's "Once More" and Jim & Jesse's bluegrass ballad "Drifting and Dreaming of You."

Gentle acoustic guitars frame "The Fugitive," penned by Liz Anderson and immortalized by Merle Haggard. Stuart skillfully re-creates the smooth, orchestrated '60s countrypolitan sound on her revivals of Gogi Grant's '50s pop hit "The Wayward Wind," Skeeter Davis' '62 country-pop hit "The End of The World," and "Seattle," an obscure pop tune Smith first recorded in '68. ***– Rich Kienzle***

Dennis Jones

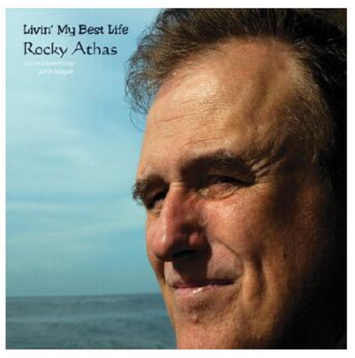


Jim Lauderdale
My Favorite Place

Since his 1991 debut, *Planet of Love*, Jim Lauderdale has produced a body of award-winning work few modern country or Americana acts can match. His albums reflect a level of consistency in creating material that reflects an engaging blend of excellence, substance, and integrity. As usual, his 36th album is music he wrote or co-wrote, backed by his band and selected guests.

The ballad "Mrs. Green" examines a complex romantic situation, enhanced by Steve Hinson's pedal steel. Guitarist Craig Smith weaves acoustic and electric textures and adds an eloquent solo that complements Lauderdale's somber vocal on "You'll be Gone by Then." Smith's acoustic picking also brilliantly frames the mysterious story-song "The Lightning Tree," co-written by Lauderdale and the late, iconoclastic Nashville songwriter Cowboy Jack Clement. Folksy philosophizing marks "What's Important After All," with Chris Scruggs playing electric.

Smith and Scruggs fire off hot licks as Lauderdale rocks out on "You've Got a Shine." On "Sweethearts Remember," he dives into Western swing, enhanced by Smith's fluid, jazzy electric lines. Smith twangs his way through the explosive country-rockabilly stomper "Don't You Treat 'em that Way," adding an ensemble passage with Smith's steel. As always, quality songs, vocals and flawless musicianship reaffirm Lauderdale's continuing tradition of Americana excellence. ***– RK***

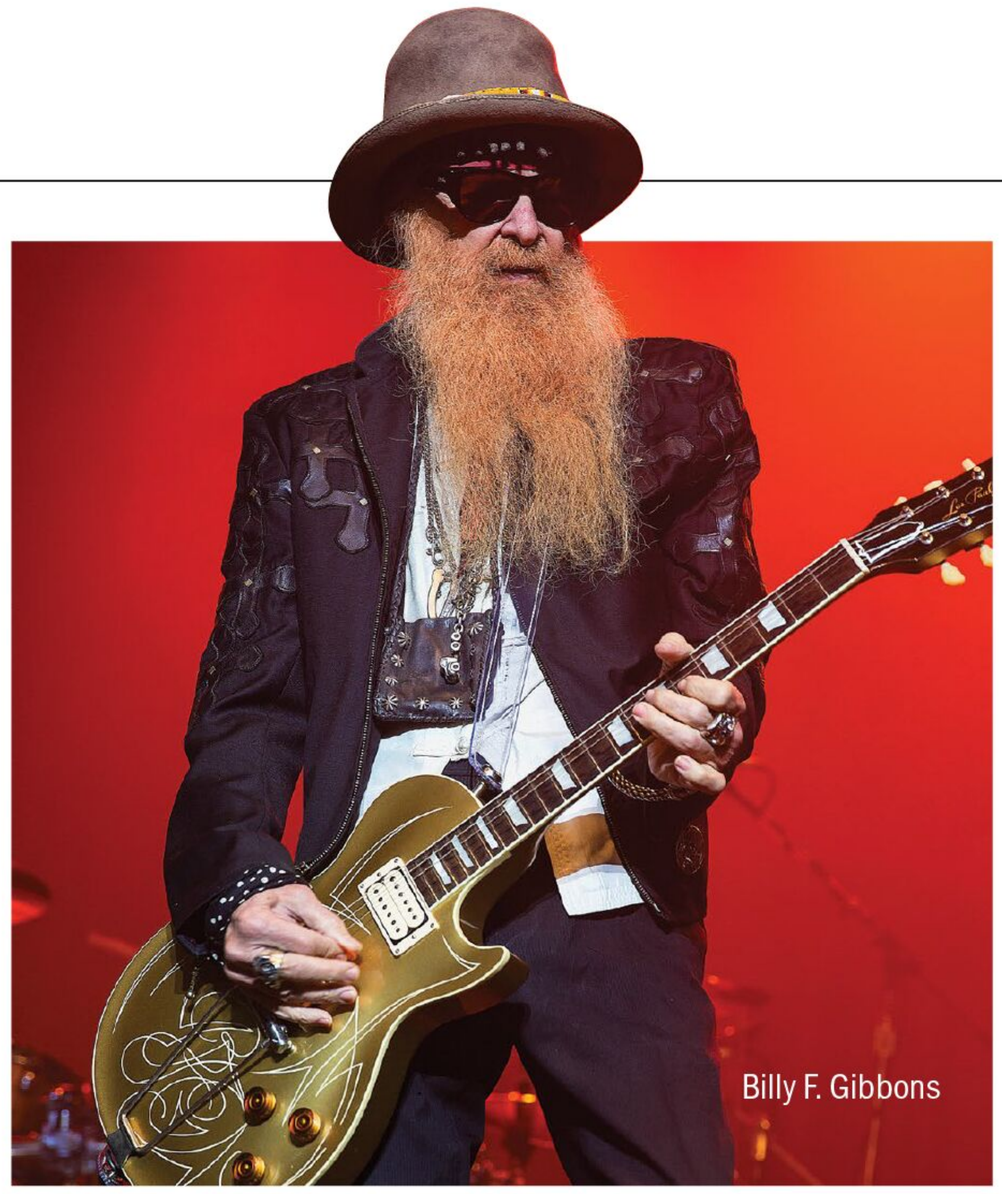


Rocky Athas
Livin' My Best Life

Hailing from the Dallas neighborhood of Oak Cliff, home of T-Bone Walker and the Vaughan brothers, Athas falls closest to Stevie Ray's maximalist attitude. However, the title track on his new album aims farther south, namely Houston and sharp-dressed Billy Gibbons territory, in terms of groove and fat tone.

After a stint playing and writing with Jim Dandy and Black Oak Arkansas, and performances with Glenn Hughes, Athas toured with John Mayall for eight years. "Long Grey Mare" pays tribute to Peter Green's early Fleetwood Mac days, with Mayall's harmonica solo paying respect to both Athas and Green's respective tenures in the Bluesbreakers. Other covers include "Palace of the King," a nod to fellow Texan Freddie King, and Dylan's "Watching The

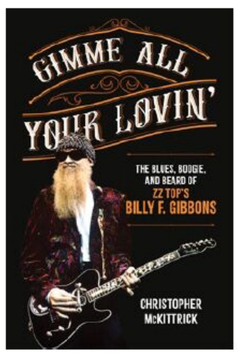
Dennis Jones: Shawna Sarnowski.



Billy F. Gibbons

River Flow," featuring blues-shuffle rhythm guitar over a marching-band drum beat.

Elsewhere, Athas' songwriting is showcased, with "Dark Days" perhaps the most impressive vehicle for his no-holds-barred blues-rock playing. "Sad Affairs" offers a nice bridge between old-school/'50s feel and Clapton-tinged tone. More tributes include the wah-heavy "Walk In My Shadow" for Free and Don Nix's "Black Cat Moan" for Jeff Beck. Throughout, drummer Walter Watson's lead vocals soar. **– *DF***



Christopher McKittrick

Gimme All Your Lovin': The Blues, Boogie, and Beard of ZZ Top's Billy F. Gibbons

In his prologue, author Christopher McKittrick acknowledges the difficulty of condensing Gibbons' six-decade career into one book, partially due to the enigmatic vocalist/guitarist's own "admitted tall tales." In short, Gibbons is both an incredible musician *and* accomplished bullsh***er. Per engineer and longtime Gibbons collaborator Joe Hardy: "He will approve if I say this: [Billy] will lie about anything. Our saying is that he would rather climb a tree to tell a lie than stand on the ground and tell the truth."

Nonetheless, Gibbons decides ZZ Top's musical direction. Vocalist/bassist Dusty Hill (d. 2021) and – most notoriously – drummer Frank Beard, didn't even play on some/all of the synthesized songs on '80s mega-albums *Eliminator* and *Afterburner*. Gibbons defended the band's pop-music evolution by pointing out that Muddy Waters and Bob Dylan transitioned from acoustic to electric guitars and Jimi Hendrix increasingly incorporated sonic experimentation.

Plentiful guitar morsels abound in the book, discussing Gibbons' tones, his first guitar/amp combo (a sunburst '62 Melody Maker through a vintage Champ), and the spinning Dean solidbody in the "Legs" video. And of course, his '59 Les Paul 'Burst, Pearly Gates, for which he claims once being offered $5 million. **– *BA VG***

Billy Gibbons: Ralph Arvesen/Wikimedia Commons.

extra EXTRA

JOANNE TAYLOR SHAW

Heavy Soul

Shaw's latest spreads powerful guitar work and husky vocals across eight heartfelt songs combining blues, contemporary soul-pop, and roots music. Americana meets country on "All The Way From America" featuring acoustic guitars and twang. While "Drowning in a Sea of Love" hits hard, the title track and "Wild Love" showcase smokin' modded-Esquire tones and Joanne's visceral playing. **– *OJ***

TORONZO CANNON

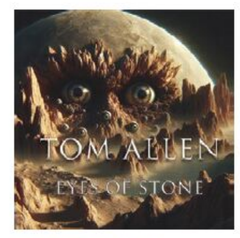
Shut Up & Play!

The City of Big Shoulders' outspoken bluesman unleashes his most-intense record yet. Filled with the blunt-force trauma that made Chicago famous, Toronzo Cannon tells heavy stories with passion, pain, wild vibrato, and fat-free blues guitar. Brusque ditties like "Can't Fix The World" show the guitarist at the top of his game. Cannon is *the sound* of contemporary Chicago blues. **– *OJ***

DAVE ALVIN & JIMMIE DALE GILMORE

TexiCali

This duo offers originals and covers drenched in stunning guitar from Alvin and Chris Miller. The originals are flawless, from Dave's airy "Southwest Chief" to Gilmore's "Trying to be Free." They create a rockabilly reinvention of Stonewall Jackson's country hit "Why I'm Walkin'." The duo's powerful interpretation of Blind Willie McTell's "Broke Down Engine" is a true force of nature. **– *RK***



TOM ALLEN

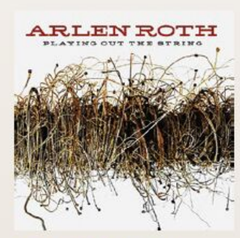
Eyes of Stone

Allen's latest leans on prog-tinged metal and straight-up rock, allowing his diverse playing to rip. The title track (with Styx drummer Todd Sucherman) and "I'm Watching the Swallows Fly" are dramatic adventures with Starship bassist/backing vocalist Jeff Adams on operatic lead vocals. "Alaska" is an ethereal standout. Allen and guest Pat Travers let their guitars run wild on "Bucket List." **– *BA***

CRIS JACOBS

One Of These Days

Wasting no time to make a statement, things blast off with Infamous Stringdusters' Andy Falco peppering "Heavy Water" with fleet bluegrass flatpicking. Producer Jerry Douglas lends Dobro here and there, along with a cameo from acoustic-guitar star Billy Strings and a couple from mandolinist Sam Bush. Add Jacobs' stellar singing and captivating writing, and you've got a winner on your hands. **– *DF***



ARLEN ROTH

Playing Out the String

The veteran ace delivers an album of solo acoustic, leaning on finger-style country-blues, multi-tracked guitars, and soft-spoken vocals. Opening with a gorgeous version of "Blue Bayou," Roth's slide work is sweet and mesmerizing. "Church Street Blues" is a jaunty joy, while "Diddy Wha Diddy" will make you dance around the living room. Roth is an American-roots master. **– *PP***

EXPANDED OPTIONS

The PRS SE NF3

The latest result of PRS Guitars "reverse-engineering"/reconsidering its own instruments, the SE NF3 is the first PRS to be given Narrowfield DD (Deep Dish) S pickups.

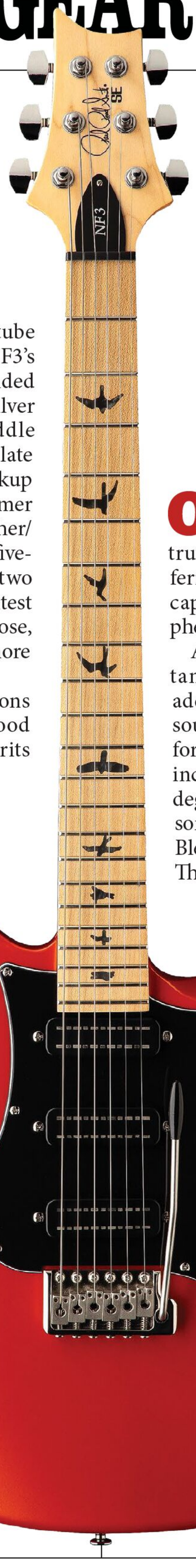
A spin on the company's most-popular model, the SE Silver Sky, the SE NF3 also has a poly-finished poplar body with bolt-on maple neck and rosewood or maple fretboard. The tuners are PRS' Schaller-style that have a more-modern look compared to the Silver Sky, and its vibrato is a blend of old and new, with a six-screw base plate that has modern saddles. Scale length is 25", which varies from the Silver Sky's Strat-like 25.5", and it brings PRS' favored 10" fretboard radius.

The biggest derivation with the NF3 is in the pickups; the new Narrowfield DD S is made with taller bobbins (that fit more winds) and build tweaks designed to create a more-focused single-coil tone while still being humbucking.

Played through a small tube amp with ECC82 tubes, the NF3's neck pickup has a more-rounded tone that sheds a bit of the Silver Sky's brightness, the middle brings a smoother, less-articulate midrange, and the bridge pickup matches the Silver Sky's shimmer and chime but is also smoother/less-bright overall. With the five-way blade switch in positions two and four, the cluck-off contest between the two was very close, but the NF3 renders slightly more lower-midrange.

Offered in four finish options and with maple or rosewood fretboard, the SE NF3 merits a listen for any player looking to expand their tonal options. – ***Bob Dragich***

Price: $799
www.prsguitars.com



Price: $199
www.pigtronix.com

SEE THE LIGHT

The Pigtronix Philosopher's Tone 2

Optical compressors are known for making guitars sound smooth and musical – a truth well-captured in the latest Pigtronix offering, which adds greater sound-sculpting capabilities to their groundbreaking Philosopher's Tone pedal.

A compressor is useful for everything from taming aggressive volume fluctuations to adding sustain or a professional sheen to one's sounds. The Philosopher's Tone 2 is a straightforward design that gives essential functions including Volume, Sustain (the threshold, or degree of compression), Treble (to brighten the sometimes-dulling effect of compression), and Blend between colored and uncolored tones. The new Grit control lets you dial in anything from light overdrive to distorted tones, which can be further colored with the Voice switch, which adds a silicon or germanium texture to the sound.

The Philosopher's Tone 2 works as advertised, serving as a useful part of any toolbox. Turn Sustain up for twangy funk and country textures, or back it off under noon to let your tone breathe. Grit is cool if you want to rock-up your instrument without deploying a full-on overdrive or distortion pedal. Blend allows the player to precisely set the mix of compressed and natural flavors. Add true-bypass and 18 volts of clean headroom, and it might just save your next gig or session. – ***Pete Prown***

HUMBLE, CAPITAL D

The Louis Electric 6L6-183 Cobra

One glance at the control panel and cabinet styling of the Louis Electric 6L6-183 Cobra is all most will need to know what this amp is about – and builder Lou Rosano isn't shy about flagging it as his take on the coveted Dumble Overdrive Special.

Price: $4,495
www. louiselectricamps.com

Rosano's first Cobra 183 hit the streets in 2020 with a set of EL34 output tubes. An acclaimed version of the Dumble Overdrive Special (which is saying something), it was a transitional iteration between early and later Dumble ODS circuits, employing a unique combination of stages that produce magic when firing together. His 6L6/KT66 version joined the herd this year, capable of carrying a quartet of the American-flavored bottles also occasionally used by Howard Alexander Dumble.

The 6L6-183's front panel has two inputs – one passive ("Nor"), the other FET-boosted/buffered, along with controls for input Volume, Treble, Middle, Bass, Overdrive Gain and Level, global controls for Master (volume), Presence, and Feedback, plus switches for Bright, Mid, and Rock/Jazz to further sculpt the EQ. Back-panel features include dual speaker outs with 4-/8-/16-ohm switch, passive effects loop, bias adjustment point, a jack for the included two-button footswitch (to access Overdrive and EQ Bypass/Boost), and a 50-/100-watt output switch. Inside, it is meticulously hand-wired on a series of wooden circuit boards, as Dumble himself sometimes used, with many of the essential components hidden under "goop," much as within the original 183.

Tested with a Telecaster and an ES-355 into an open-back 2x12" cab with Celestion G12-65 speakers (the same spec'd for Louis Electric's matching Cobra 2x12" cab, sold separately at $900), the 6L6-183 opened a wide world of juicy, dynamic, multi-dimensional tone that instantly reminded us why the hallowed Dumble ODS circuit has become so… well, hallowed. Plummy, rich, thick, it's a voice that can surprise you by feeling more like a reed instrument than an overdriven guitar amp, but which proves extremely expressive once you learn to work with it.

Lest we forget them entirely, the amp's clean tones – often overlooked in this archetype – are extremely good, too. All of which is to conclude, if you know the ODS sound, Mr. Rosano does it very, very well. ***– Dave Hunter***

GEARIN' UP

EHX LPB-3 LINEAR POWER BOOSTER/EQ

The Electro-Harmonix LPB-3 has active EQ and up to 33dB of clean gain. Controls include Treble and Bass plus parametric Mids with Mid Freq and Q, Boost to adjust overall output, and a Max switch to toggle between 20dB and 33dB of boost. Pre-Gain fine-tunes gain and volume. Other features include buffered/true-bypass switching and extended 300-volt power rails.

VINTAGE REVO ELEKTRA

Vintage's Revo Elektra electric/acoustic guitars have bound-acacia bodies, spruce tops, bolt-on maple necks, bound-rosewood fretboards with pearloid block inlay position markers, Wilkinson WJ01 machine heads, rosewood bridges, bone saddles and soundhole rosettes, and Entwistle XS75-ND-HG-N pickups.

SPECTOR EURO LX BASS

Spector's Euro LX bass has an alder body, figured-maple top, and a three-piece maple neck with rosewood fretboard. Available with neck-through or bolt-neck construction, they have an aluminum bridge and active EMG pickups with the company's new Legacy preamp and are offered in Transparent Black, Natural Sunburst, Haunted Moss, and Nightshade, all with matte finish.

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

MYSTIQUE MAKER

The Friedman Plex

Price: $2,799.99
www.friedmanamplification.com

Dave Friedman built his brand (and reputation) by making supercharged Marshall-inspired amps, and his latest hones in on one of his personal favorites – a beloved '68 JMP Superlead – with a handful of player-friendly tweaks.

Friedman Amplification's 50-watt Plex head is propelled by two EL34s pushed by a trio of 12AX7s, and sports a familiar aesthetic including a control panel with High and Low inputs that feed into two channels with internal jumpers, replicating the blending technique used on vintage Marshalls. Both have independent Volume controls and Bright switches along with a shared Master Volume and EQ section. Channel 1 mirrors a Lead-spec Marshall, Channel 2 a Normal-spec.

With a Les Paul plugged into the Low input, Master dimed, and both Volume controls at 9 o'clock, the Plex delivered sparkling cleans. Push the Volume controls further and sound breaks up with warmth and just the right amount of crunch for classic rock. Experiment with blending Volumes to find a sweet spot.

The High input kicks things into overdrive with more gain, sustain, crunch, and harmonics. Dime both channels, and the Plex delivers a wall of in-your-face British crunch and low-end thump. With exceptional pick attack and tactile feel, leads, and bends sing with effortless sustain and harmonics.

The Plex reacts extremely well to picking dynamics. A light touch yields articulate cleans, while heavier attack unleashes an explosion of throaty overdrive. The onboard Variac (controlled by the H.V./L.V. toggle) lets you run the Plex at a lower voltage yielding a saggier, bouncy feel. The increased responsiveness makes hammer-ons and pull-offs a breeze, and three-way Bright switches add further sculpting for warm, round tones to bright and crunchy.

The post-phase-inverter M.V.C. control works incredibly well, allowing the player to push channel Volumes for full-blown power-tube drive while keeping overall volume manageable for thick, saturated tones at any level.

The Friedman Plex captures the raw, unfiltered punch and crunch that created the mystique of vintage Marshalls. Packed with clever, user-friendly features and soaring British tones, it'll likely satisfy even the most-discerning Marshall enthusiast. **– *Charlie Wilkins***

REPLICA TREADLES

Vox's Real McCoy Chrome Wah Ltd and V846 Vintage Wah

Price: $299.99 (Real McCoy Wah Chrome; $279.99 (V846 Vintage Wah)
www.voxamps.com

Thanks to notable users ranging from Del Casher and Frank Zappa to Jimi Hendrix and Kirk Hammett, the "wah wah" is perhaps history's most-recognized guitar effect.

Vox, which marketed the first modern wah, has two new re-creations of pedals released in 1967 – the Real McCoy Chrome Wah Limited Edition and V846 Vintage Wah.

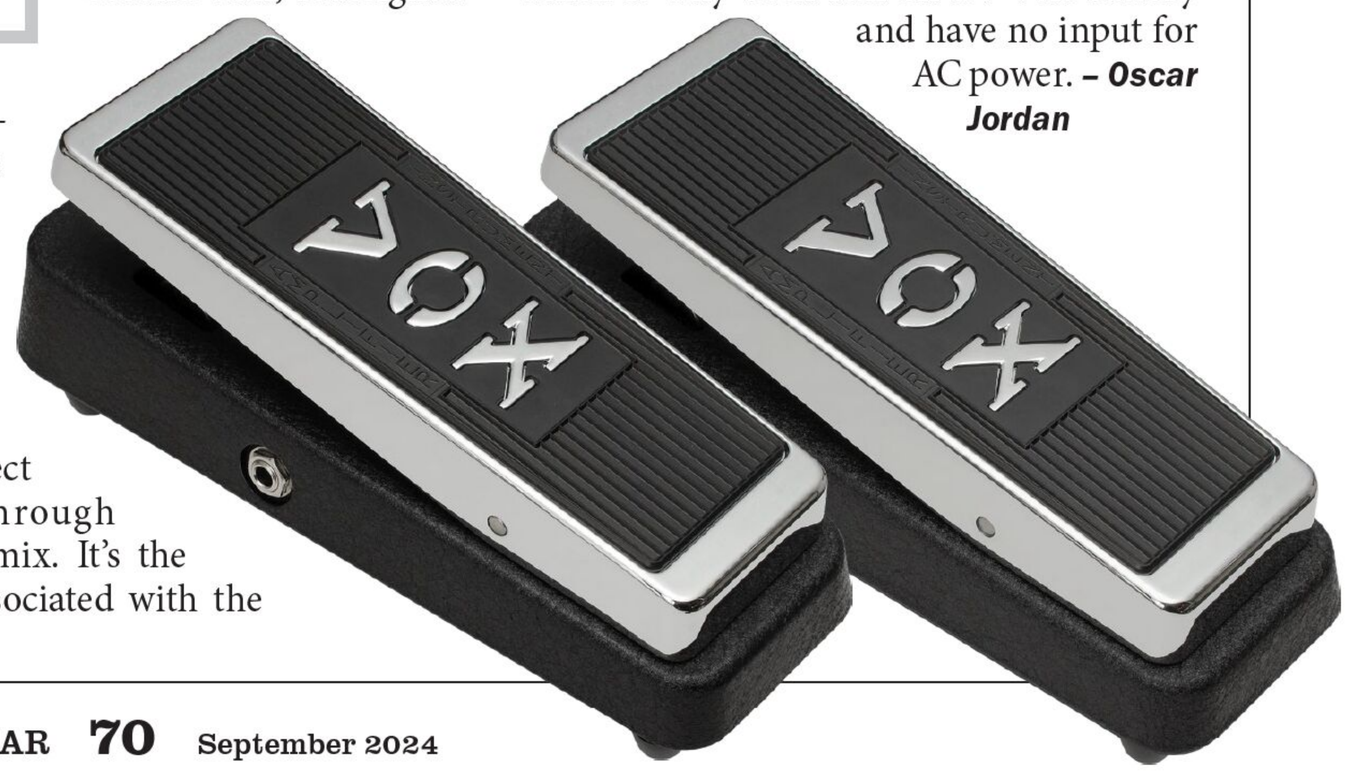
The Real McCoy Wah is designed as a throwback to the earliest iteration of the wah sound, with a warmer vocal character. More-nasal in tone, it accentuates midrange for a more-musical flavor, accentuating articulate single-note definition. It's the secret sauce for funk rhythm styles that require cleaner amp tones.

Running between a superstrat and a Marshall combo, it offered mellower, richer sounds. Switching between overdrive and fuzz, it was earthy and organic, trading oomph for sweetness and reflecting a more-accurate representation of the amp and pickups.

The V846 was Vox's second wah, redesigned for rock guitarists of the late '60s to deliver brighter, more-aggressive sounds that pushed the front end of an amp – perfect for cutting through a dense stage mix. It's the sound most-associated with the psychedelic era and performs well with dirty amps, overdrive, and (especially) fuzz pedals.

The new V846 brought a ballsier sound that pushed, punched, and projected with rock-and-roll fire. Both pedals produce a wide range of tasty, notched sounds with wonderfully wide sweep, replicating the tonal ring, a la UFO-era Michael Schenker – or a lustrous rainbow of top-end treble frequencies.

The Real McCoy Chrome and V846 Vintage Wah are faithful re-creations, right down to enclosures that boast top-notch craftsmanship that feels rock-solid. Vox designed new inductors, transistors, potentiometers, resistors, and capacitors to match vintage specs, which is why both run on a 9-volt battery and have no input for AC power. **– *Oscar Jordan***



Price: $36.98
www.rockymountainslides.com

SLICK SLIDE

Rocky Mountain Slides Company's new "Firecracker Aluminum Slides" may look like other guitar slides but it is internally flared in two inner diameter combinations allowing the player to comfortably use it on different fingers just by flipping over. They're available in two sizes; 17-19mm and 19-23mm. The former, for instance, would work great for pinky players but when flipped, also fits nicely on the ring finger. The playing area is glassy smooth offering very little resistance, and the tone is rich in the upper midrange area – great for solo work. Available in red, gold and blue fired finishes. **– JB**

www. oxfordguitarsupply.com

FINE FINISH

One factor keeping many people from working on their guitars is the availability of tools and materials to make those repairs. For refinishers, it meant owning a spray booth and buying quantities of paint and clear-coat intended for refinishing cars. Oxford Guitar Supply now offers these products in manageable sizes such as their Clear Gloss Vintage Formula Nitrocellulose Lacquer which reacts to temperature changes and humidity just like the finishes of yesteryear. Well cared for, it will retain its high-glossyness but can weather-check if that's the desired effect. It will also amber slightly over time making perfect for repairs to vintage instruments. Available in aerosol or quarts. **– JB**

Price: $49.95
www.tunerette.net

SMOKIN' TUNER

The guitar world has many options to stay in tune but none as cool-looking as the Tunerette. Don't let the cigarette shape fool you – the Tunerette is a real, professional-grade clip-on guitar tuner with a bright LED screen and a tip that glows red when there's 20 minutes of life left of its 6-hour charge capacity, giving you time to plug it in via the included USB-C cable (there are no batteries to change). Tested against a legacy-brand standalone tuner, it was not only accurate (+/- .01 cents) but quick to lock in on each string. A nod to the guitar heroes of Rock 'n' Roll that won't burn the headstock! **– JB**

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www.rocknstompn.com

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Price: $59.99
www.musicnomadcare.com/Products/Setup-Gauge-Set-6-pc

THE SET UP

There's nothing like playing a properly set-up guitar, but taking it to a repair shop can be expensive – especially if you regularly play more than one instrument. With proper instruction and the right tools, it's possible to learn to keep your instruments in tip-top shape. Enter Music Nomad and their "Precision Setup Gauge Set" with premium-quality gauges to set string height (nut height and string action gauges) and neck curve (truss rod gauge) along with a well thought out instruction book developed by Master Guitar Tech Geoff Luttrell and links to helpful how-to videos. For the price of one set-up, you can save on years of adjustments. **– Julian Burtell**

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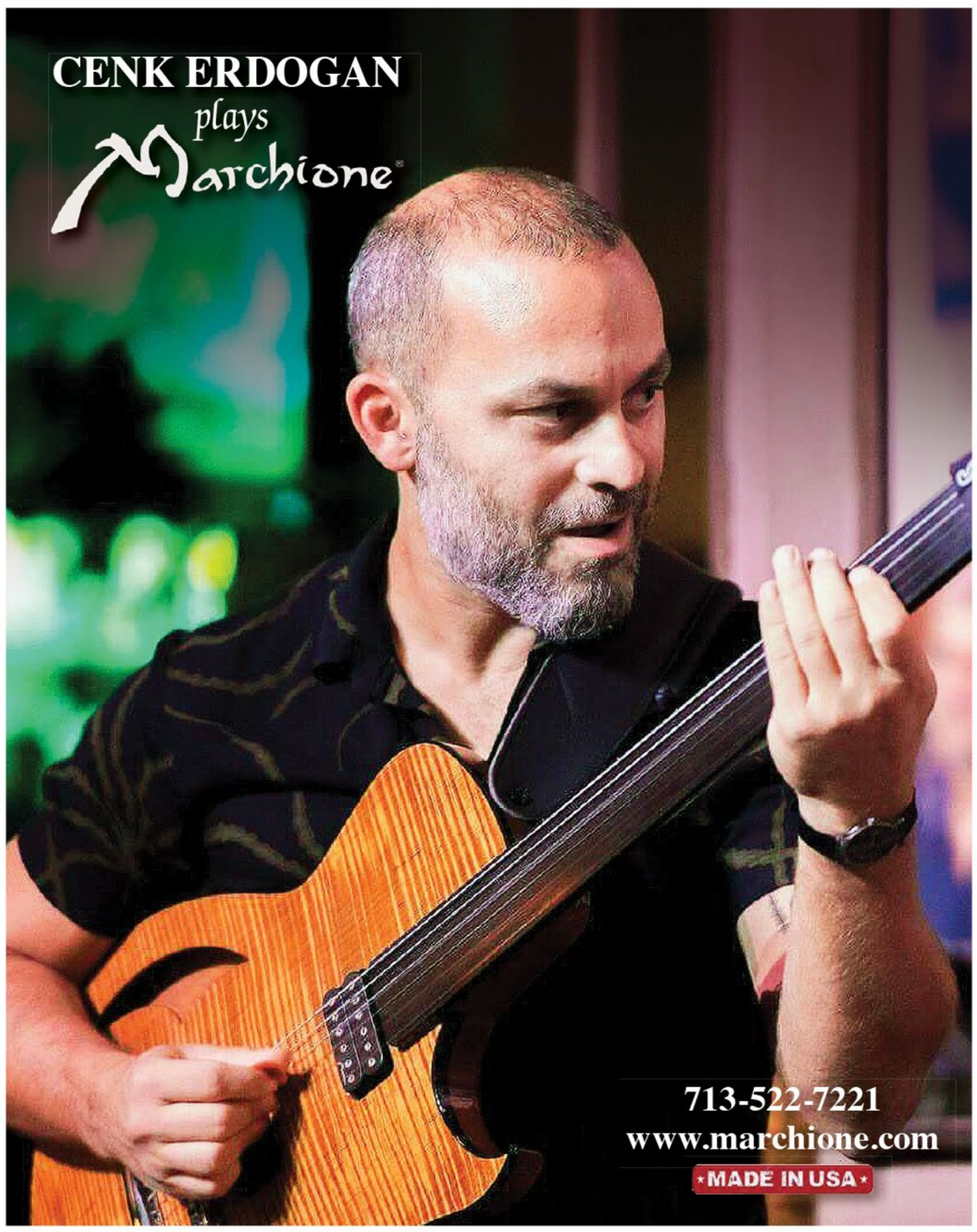

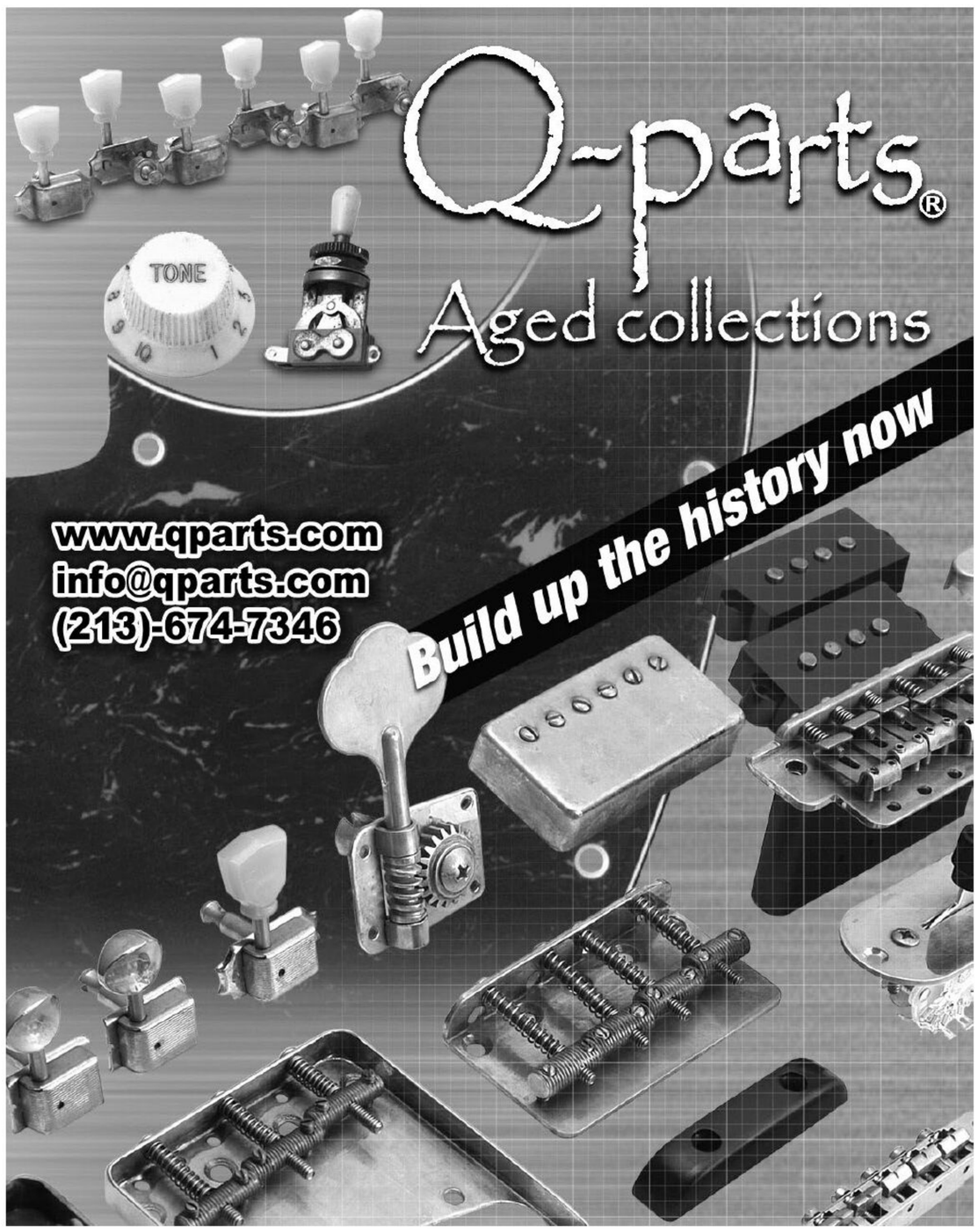

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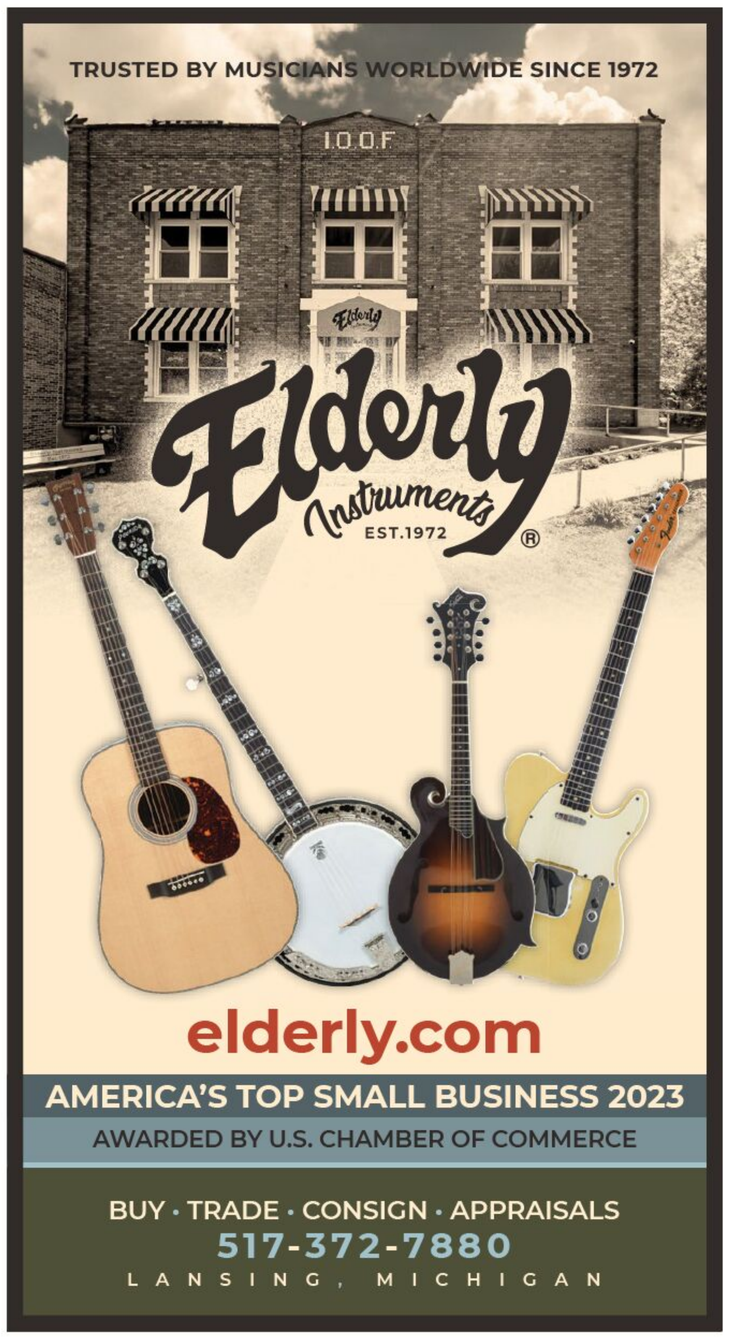
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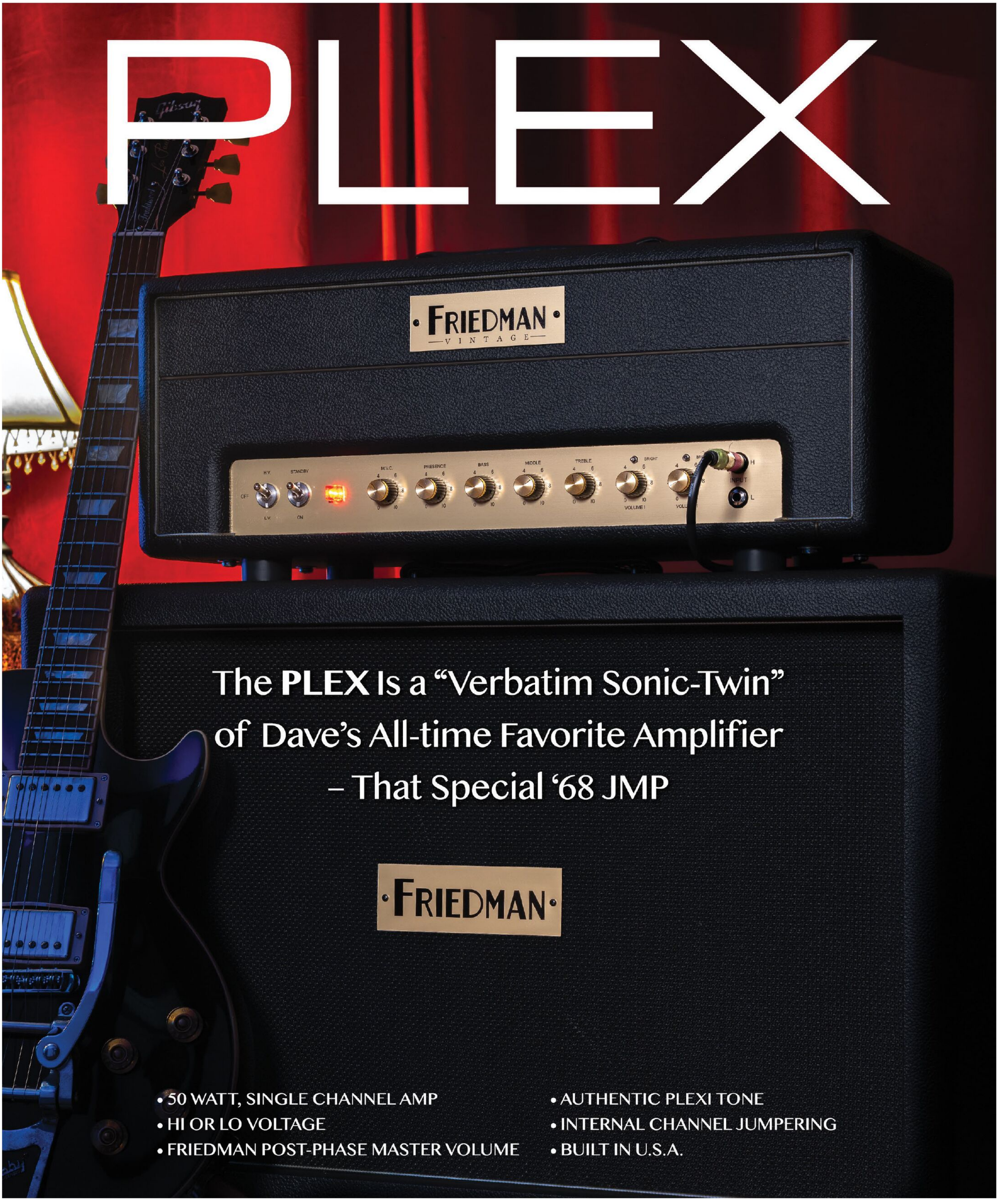
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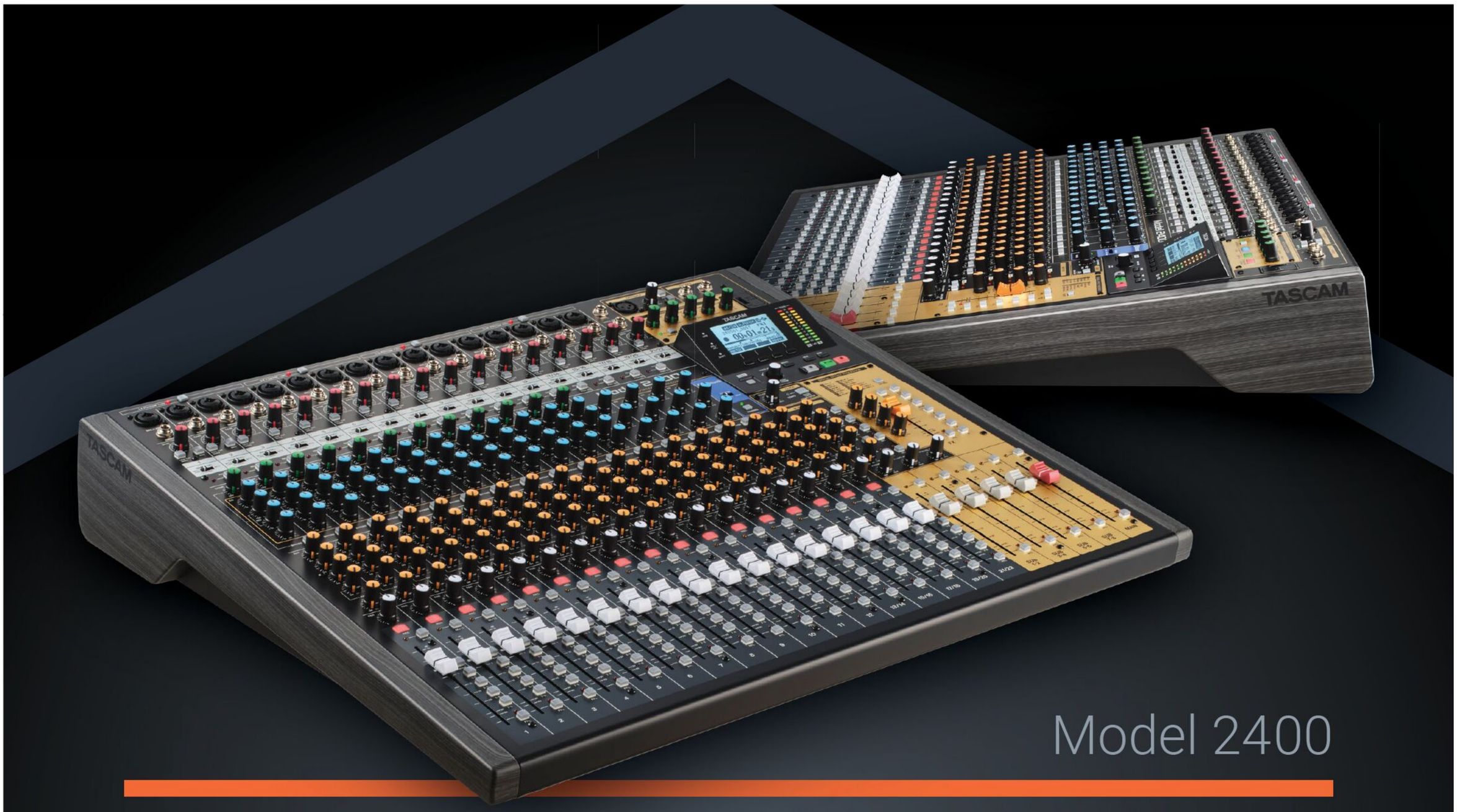

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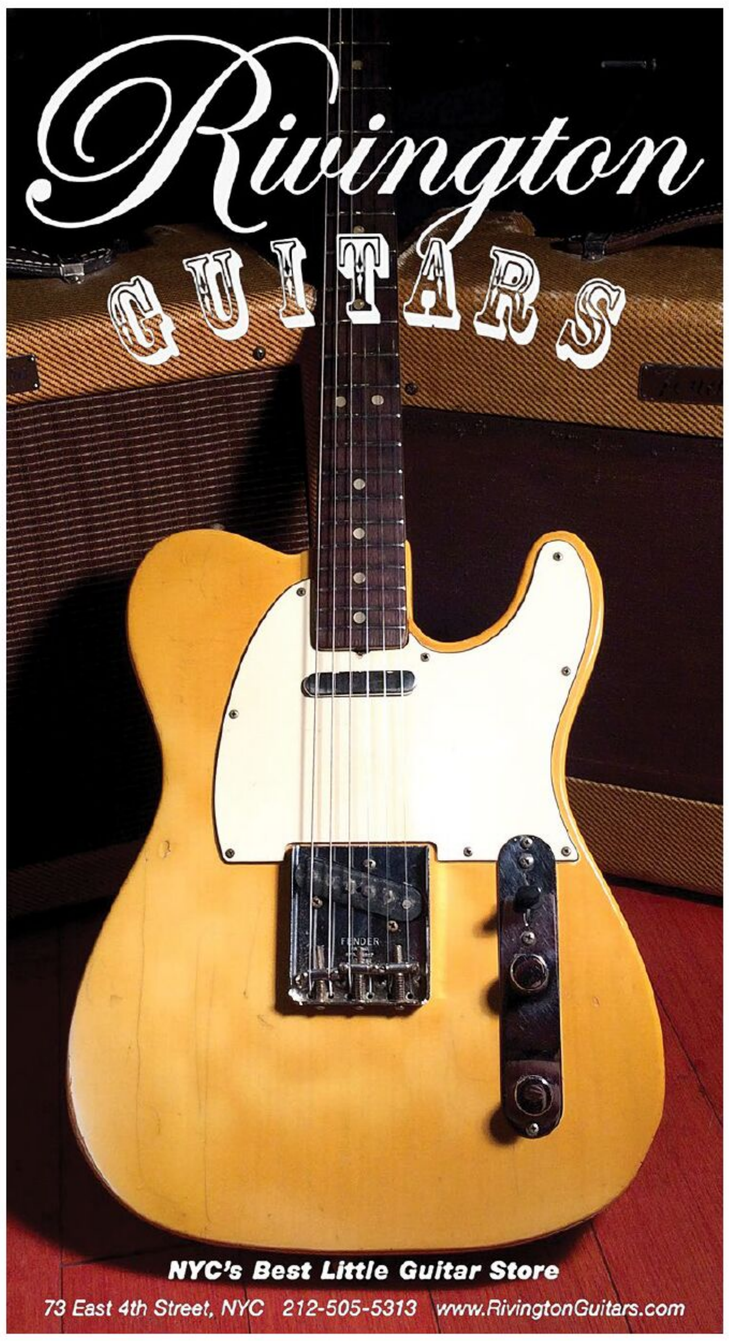

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01 Doug Brimmell's growing collection mixes electrics and acoustics. Some favorites among the latter are this National Triolian and Style 1 along with two Martins – a 000-28VS and a 000-18MC.

02 Billy Soutar pays homage to the late Gerald Weber ("In Memoriam" July '24) with a look at his amps, which include a '69 Marshall Super Lead 100 and 4x12 slant cab, '64 Fender Reverb tank, a '66 Twin Reverb, '66 Bassman, '89 JTM 45 head, and a '69 Marshall 8x10. Amongst his pedals is a Kendrick ABC switcher. "Thanks for the tone secrets, Gerald," he says. "You will be dearly missed."

03 Johnny Cola liked speaking with the late Dave Wintz about the guitars he used to build, like this (left) '98 Robin Savoy Custom, '96 Metropolitan Glendale Custom, and '97 Metropolitan Tanglewood Custom Acoustic. "He always found the most beautiful wood for his guitars, and was very proud of them," said Johnny.

04 Brent Graves thought you'd appreciate seeing his '65 Strat (in original Candy Apple Red) and '59 Bassman. He was right.

05 Dan Prater returns to the Gallery with a shot of his Norlin-era Les Pauls – a '76 Deluxe in Wine Red, '77 Deluxe in Natural and converted to full-size humbuckers, an '80 Heritage 80, and an '81 Heritage 80.

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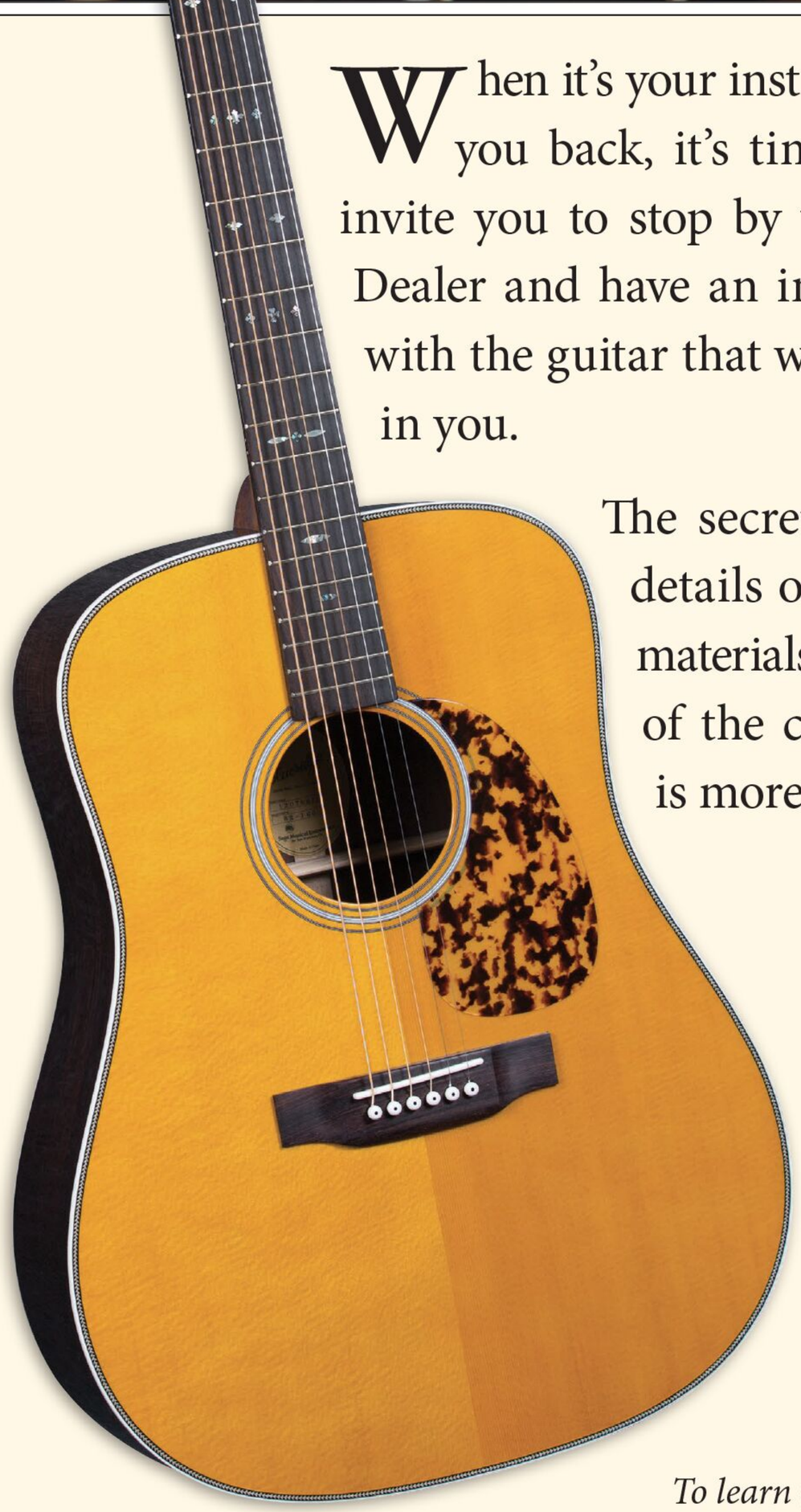

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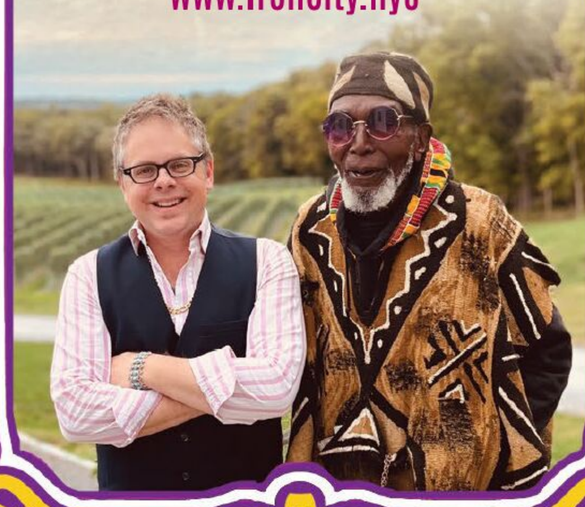

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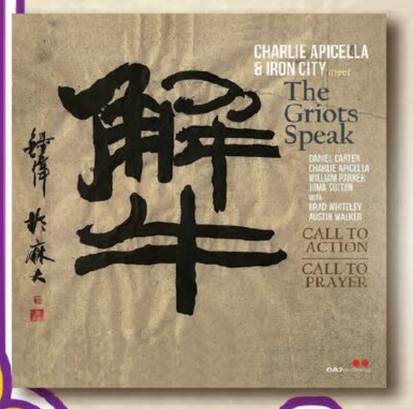

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