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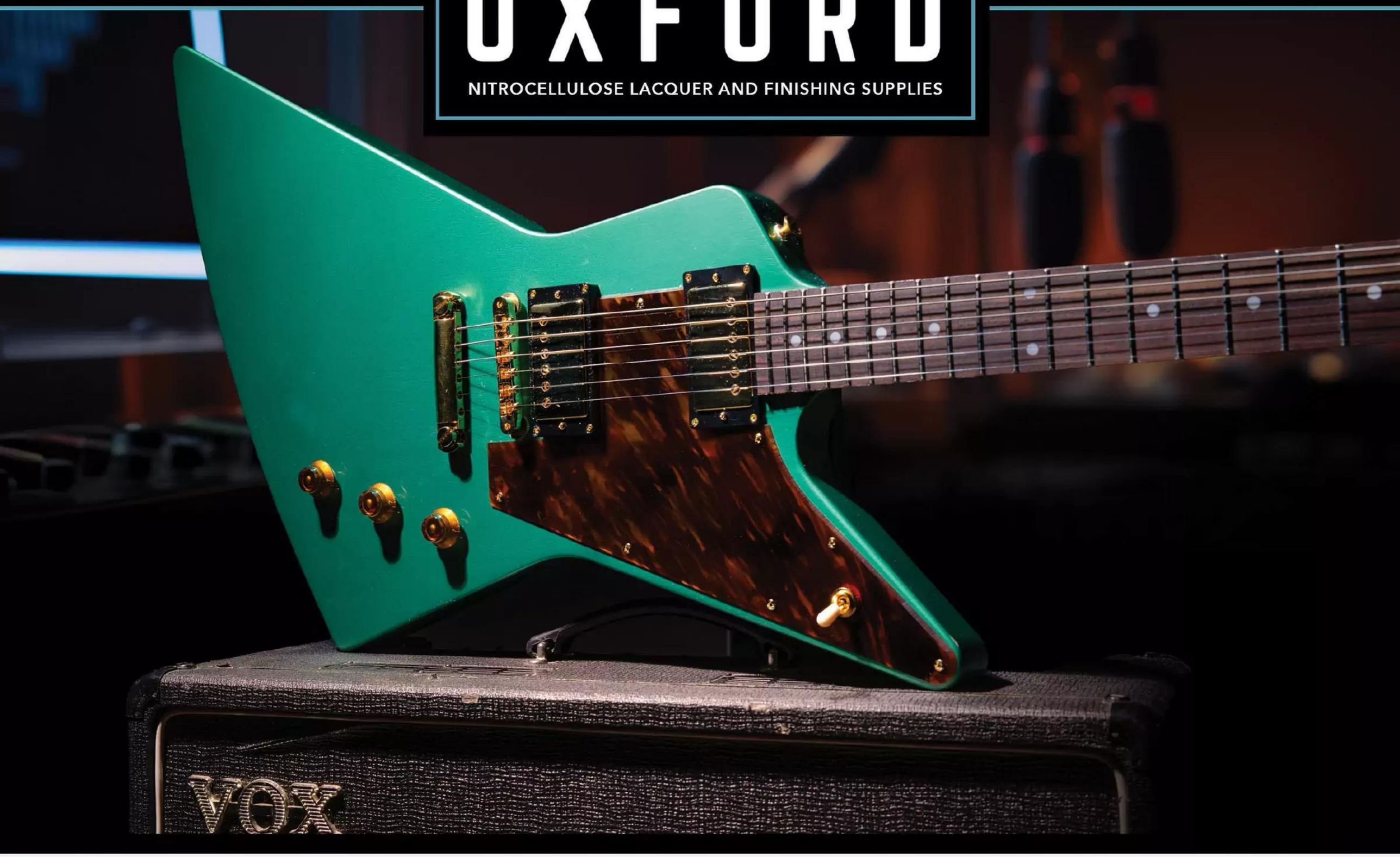

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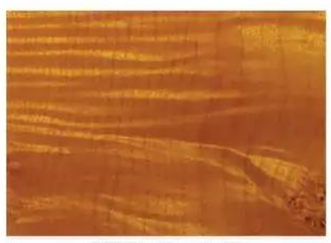
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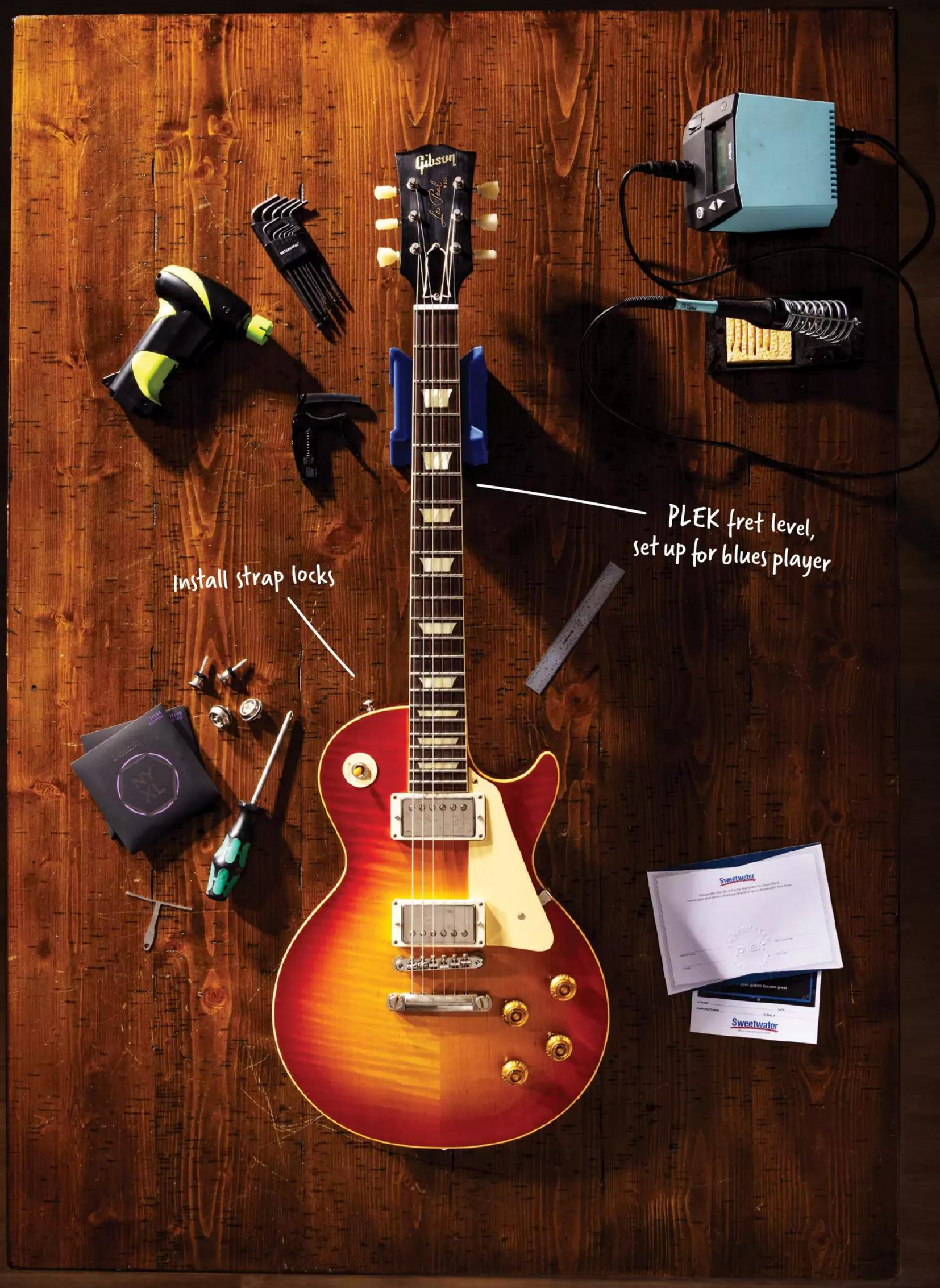

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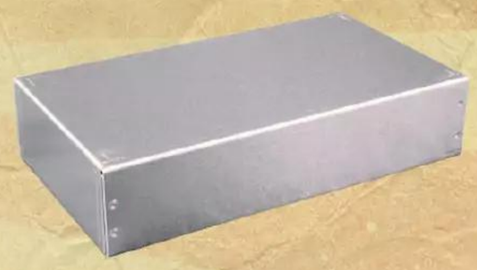

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Binky Philips was just 21 when he walked into a NYC music store in 1972 and saw Rick Derringer's '59 Les Paul hanging on the consignment wall. For 53 years, it has been his most-prized possession.
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60 **RICK DERRINGER**
1947-2025
Ignited by a visit to Gibson headquarters when he was nine years old, the legendary rock guitarist used "Hang On Sloopy" to springboard a career that was varied and lengthy. We remember the man behind many classic rock-guitar riffs. | ***By Willie G. Moseley***

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COVER PHOTOS: Rick Derringer: Andrea Fulton Collection, courtesy of the Ann Arbor District Library. Kid Ramos: Brad Elligood **THIS PAGE:** Kurt Rosenwinkel: Marco Preikschat.

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READER MAIL

JUNE TRUTHS

I almost dropped my po' boy in my gumbo when I saw George Porter on the cover of the June issue! The photo on page 60 made me think you don't wear out basses that way by stirring grits – some look as beat as [Willie Nelson's '69 Martin N-20] Trigger.

Mr. Porter is all over New Orleans, putting out the jams and entertaining locals and visitors at venues high and low. As we say, "You can't swing a dead cool cat without hitting one of George Porter's bands playing someplace." What a great ambassador for New Orleans, and music in general.

I anxiously await the next issue.

George Lopez
La Place, Louisiana

George Porter

I'm a longtime subscriber and big fan of *VG*. I'm 76 years old and you keep introducing me to new artists and music. I'd love to see more bass coverage like the feature on George Porter. Thanks for a great magazine.

Ron Carey
Indianapolis, Indiana

While reading Dave Hunter's profile on the Fender Twin-Amp in the June 2025 issue, I made an important discovery looking at the top-down picture on page 33. The reason why this amplifier is so iconic is obvious – you can turn it up to 12!

Rand Boettger
St. Jacob, Illinois

Thank you for the (June '25) "Pop 'N Hiss" feature on the first album by Quicksilver Messenger Service, from the days of San Francisco psychedelic music.

Many years ago, my father got me interested in Craig Chaquico from Jefferson Starship/Starship, but I was not aware of the influence that QMS had on him. I listened to their first album for the first time after reading the piece and it has guitar tones that still sound amazing today. I can hear why Mr. Chaquico was influenced by John Cipollina and Gary Duncan.

It's always cool to be made aware of classic guitar music – acoustic and electric – as well as players who have stood the test of time for future generations, and *VG* is the best source for such information.

Minesh Patel
Martinsville, Virginia

GEAR GUY GRATITUDE

Thanks for the great interview with Andy Babiuk and the photos of the instruments used by The Chesterfield Kings (July '25). Andy's *Gear* books are sensational and the Bigsby book even came with a T-shirt. I'd wear it, and it never failed: "What's a Bigsby?" was always asked. Keep up the great work!

Darreld Shepel
Creston, British Columbia

SUMMER BLEND

I appreciate the breadth and quality of the coverage offered in *VG*, and hearing the perspective of a wide range of players. I particularly love the columns and features by Dan Forte, Dave Hunter, and Dan Erlewine. Keep up the good work!

David Porter
St. Paul, Minnesota

Thanks to *VG*, I have discovered so many new artists over the years – Molly Tuttle, J.D. McPherson, Kinga Glyk, D.K. Harrell, and others. Please keep featuring performers like them!

Andrew Whitehurst
London, England

I have been a subscriber since the '90s and would like to compliment *VG* for its dedication to the highest-quality publishing. Though your format is slightly smaller, the upgrades to paper and the photography are challenged only by the exemplary quality of your creative writing. The instrument profiles are entertaining and informative, and your interviewers ask the right questions – I'm always interested in the instrument choices of noted players, including the stories of the guitars that got away!

VG is my most prized subscription. To quote Chris Matthews, "It sends a thrill up my leg," when it arrives each month.

George Nicholas
Huron, South Dakota

SEND LETTERS TO Send letters to vguitar@VintageGuitar.com, or Vintage Guitar, Attn: Reader Mail, PO Box 7301, Bismarck, ND 58507.

George Porter: Steve Rapport. Amp courtesy of Chicago Music Exchange, photos by Ian Szymankiewicz.

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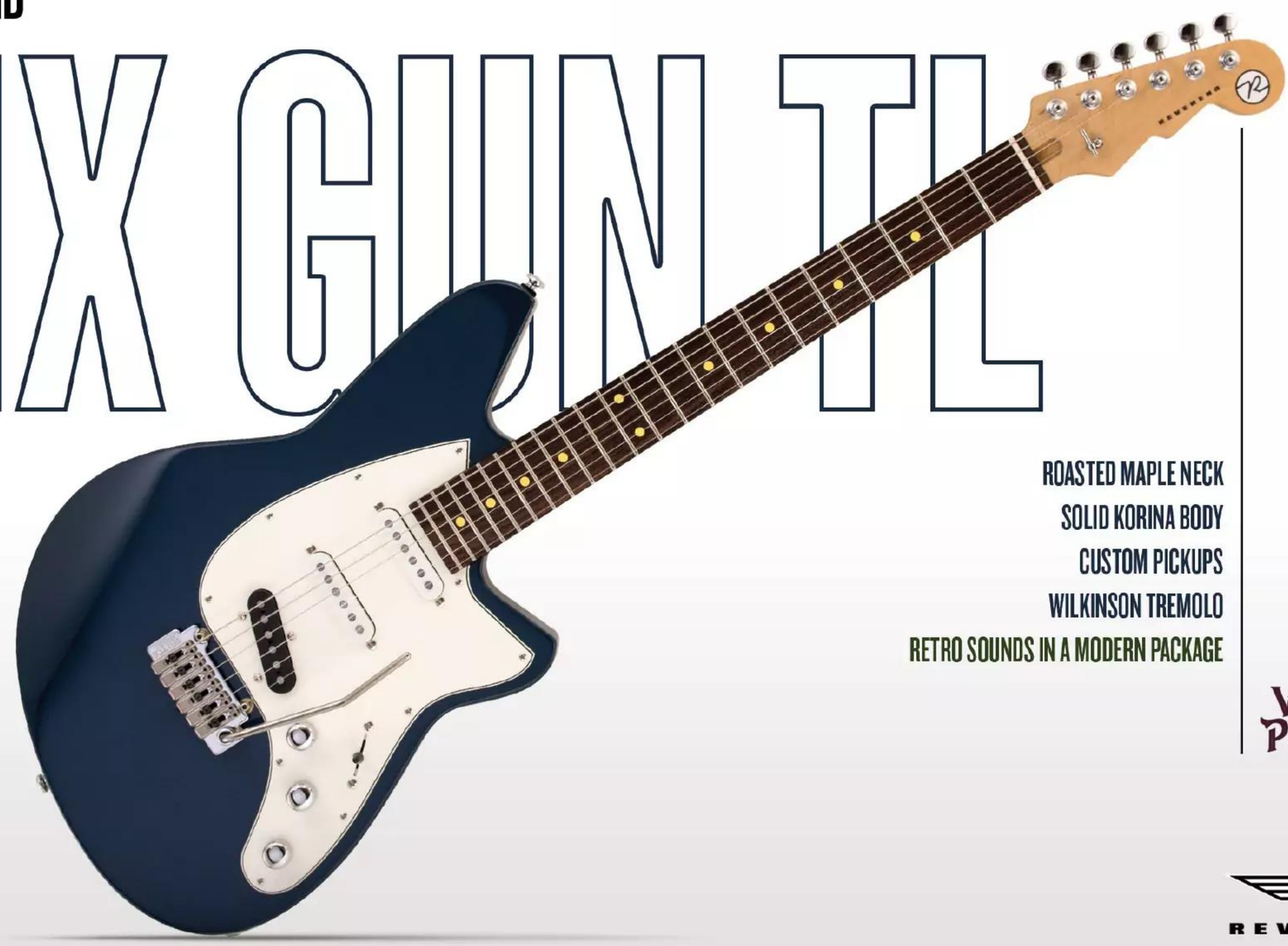

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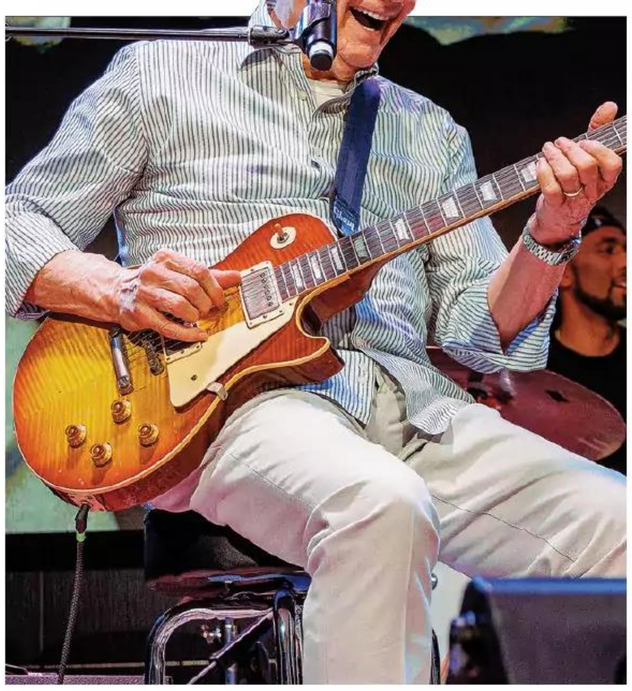

Steve Miller performed at the Gibson Garage after receiving the Les Paul Spirit Award, June 9 in Nashville.

LES PAUL FOUNDATION HONORS STEVE MILLER

The Les Paul Foundation, which honors the life and legacy of guitarist/inventor Les Paul, awarded Steve Miller (*VG*, August/September 2010) with its Les Paul Spirit Award during an event June 9 at the Gibson Garage in Nashville.

The award is presented to individuals who exemplify the spirit of the late innovator/engineer. A grant was made in Miller's name to Jazz at Lincoln Center's non-profit education program. Past recipients of the award include Peter Frampton, Bob Weir, Nile Rodgers, and the Edge.

DYLAN CENTER EXHIBIT FEATURES BLOOMFIELD TELE

The Bob Dylan Center is hosting an exhibit titled "Going Electric: Bob Dylan '65," opening July 24 at its home in Tulsa.

A multimedia exploration, the exhibit examines Dylan's musical roots in '50s rock and roll and R&B, and traces the lead-up to his set at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival using never-before-seen manuscripts, film footage, and artifacts from the Bob Dylan Archive and private collectors.

Other highlights include photographs, artifacts, and ephemera from Dylan's final all-acoustic concerts, including the '63 Telecaster played by Mike Bloomfield at Newport (*VG*, October '15 and at vintageguitar.com).

Steve Miller: Eric Ahlgrim. Steve Stevens: Bruno Talledo.

STEVE STEVENS

Return of the Atomic Playboy

Steve Stevens is back tearing it up on the new Billy Idol record, *Dream Into It*. As usual, the songwriting is stellar, production is dreamy, and the guitar playing is off the chain. Stevens shares his writing process with Billy Idol and welcomes long-time buddy Joan Jett to the team.

How have you maintained a distinct personality on guitar and continued to evolve?

I try to stay current, but I'm a song guy and a collaborator at heart. Even from the time I was a little kid, I didn't pick up the guitar to be a guitar player. All my musical heroes seemed to be in bands. It always seemed like

they were collaborators. They were part of the production side of it or the songwriting side of it. I think that's what helped me keep a long career. I really love the challenge of working with different people.

You love the back and forth.

Exactly. I have the perfect foil with Billy Idol because we know each other so well. We have so many shared life experiences and also new things. I'm able to tap into that. I almost look at my gig with Billy as a director. I've never been the kind of guy who couldn't wait to get to the middle of the song for my "Moment of Glory" guitar solo. If there's a solo and it's appropriate, great. The end result is, "Let's see if we can write a good song." I want to help channel a great idea or a concept.

You two sit together and write?

It's always been that way. A couple of guys in a room with two acoustic guitars. If we can make it work that way, we know we have something. Very rarely do we start with anything too elaborate. On *Dream Into It*, we had some really good collaborators and co-writers. Our producer, Tommy English, is a really good writer. We never did demos for this record. We laid the groundwork for each song and kept building on it.

Joan Jett is on the record!

It only took 40 years (laughs)! Billy knew her from way back in the '70s. I knew her from the early '80s in New York. Her original guitar player, Ricky Byrd, was a buddy of mine. Forty years later, she's part of the current tour.

What was your process for choosing the guitar sounds for *Dream Into It*?

We did the initial recording at Tommy's studio at his house, then we cut the drums. We got enough of a song together so we could bring in Josh Freese on drums and Chris Chaney on bass. I had the files sent to my home in Las Vegas, where I have my studio. I went through all the guitar parts. Where I thought I could get something better, I recorded at home. Most of the heavy guitars were done at home. All the acoustic playing was done at Tommy's place. I have one Knaggs Steve Stevens model that's fitted with the Jimmy Page wiring. I can get virtually any sound out of it. I can replicate a Tele or a Strat. I can get us in the ballpark with that one guitar.

Do you use amps or plug-ins?

I mix and match. That's the best way to describe it. The heavy tones are all real amps. Some of the guitar sound design stuff was done on the computer. I use a lot of the Neural DSP plug-ins. Their amp plug-ins are really good for clean stuff. I get better clean guitar tones with in-the-box than miking an amp. But when it comes to slightly overdriven or super overdriven sounds, a real amp is the way to go.

Which amps did you use?

We're on the second generation of the Friedman Steve Stevens model (SS-100), but I have a bunch of Friedmans; in my home studio, I have them set for certain tones. For a couple of the tracks, I used a Supro.

The Steve Stevens Ascender Premier by Ciari Guitars is a travel-friendly rock-and-roll machine.

I needed a travel guitar, so Ciari redesigned the neck joint and added my Bare Knuckle Ray Gun pickups. It sounds really good. The guitar also has a ray gun that lights up depending on the pickup position. It's not a gimmick. I play it on stage during the encore. I needed a guitar I could travel with and track with, and this was the perfect instrument for me. You put it in a backpack, it fits underneath the seat of a plane, and now I can record real guitar tracks in my hotel room.

What's next?

We're heading to Europe to play the Wembley Arena as a headliner. *Dream Into It* is the highest-charting Billy Idol record since *Rebel Yell*. It's crazy. **– *Oscar Jordan***

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IN MEMORIAM

DREW ZINGG

Guitarist Drew Zingg passed away in San Francisco on April 7. He was 67; cause of death has not been released by the family.

Born in New York City, Zingg was a next-level guitarist who weaved the sounds of rock, soul, and blues into the harmonic sophistication of jazz. While he built a reputation as a phenomenal player on the New York club scene, he garnered wider attention through his work on the 1991 album *The New York Rock and Soul Revue: Live at the Beacon*. This album featured Donald Fagen, Boz Scaggs, and Michael McDonald with Zingg performing "Drowning in the Sea of Love," "Chain Lightning," and "Minute by Minute."

He received wider accolades in '93, when he became Steely Dan's music director for their first reunion tour in 20 years. Their Los Angeles performance in the following year weaved iconic lines from the studio albums while adding impressive fretboard brilliance. Called "The Drew Zingg Show with special guests Steely Dan," it culminated in Steely Dan's 1995 release *Alive in America*. A deep dive can be found on Youtube with raw, mind-blowing Steely Dan shows. In particular, Live at the Shoreline Amphitheater, Mountain View, California, September 12, 1993.

Drew Zingg

In the 2000s, Zingg toured with Scaggs, supplying soulful guitar parts that blurred the lines between R&B, soul, blues, and funk. In '04, he played on *Boz Scaggs: Greatest Hits Live*. He also performed on Broadway in the Grammy-winning shows *Jersey Boys*, *Hairspray*, *Mamma Mia*, and *Smokey Joe's Café*.

In 2012, Zingg released a self-titled solo album that also featured Donald Fagen, Michael McDonald, Will Lee, and Vinnie Colaiuta.

A passionate guitarist, musical historian, and excellent arranger, Zingg is survived by his wife, Katerina Akassoglou, a son, and two brothers. Contributions can be made in his honor to the Sweet Relief Musicians Fund, www.sweetrelief.org. **– *Oscar Jordan***

BLUES SPECIALS

BY LINDY FRALIN

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KID RAMOS

The Blues Spirit

A wondrous concoction, Kid Ramos' new album is an explosion of electric blues guitar and gospel music, aided by two great singers – Brian Templeton and Kid's son, Johnny Ramos – who help make it all happen. *Strange Things Happening* cooks with the swingin' vibe of West Coast blues, yet mixed with hands-in-the-air spirituals and Ramos' smokin' licks. Gospel or not, this is a blues album for everyone.

How did this project get started?

I received a phone call from an old pastor friend, James Rasmussen, who told me about missionary work he was supporting overseas. He had lost confidence about where the money was being spent. So, James decided he was going to start supporting musicians that were playing gospel music and spread the word that way. He wanted to know if I wanted to make a God record, so of course, I had to call my brother, Brian Templeton, who happily said "Yes." We recorded everything live in basically two days; I also had my son, Johnny, singing. My first gospel record is really from the heart.

Brian and Johnny are tremendous singers. How did you pick the right songs for the right singer?

Brian and I picked most of the material. Some songs I played in a worship team some years ago, like "More Love More Power," which was great for Johnny and Brian singing together. When I heard "God Walks the Dark Hills" and "Oh What A Meeting," I thought Johnny was perfectly suited for those.

Do you have separate toolboxes of blues and gospel licks? Or are they the same?

They're absolutely the same – I approach everything trying to serve the song. Whatever I think the song needs, I try to play. To me, a song is the person singing it; everything else is accompaniment unless you're doing an instrumental. But when you take a guitar solo, it's *you* singing the song.

Was the band your regular crew or did you get gospel-specific players?

We had both new and long-time members. I met Dave Limina, a Berklee professor who played all the keys on the record, just the day before we started, while rehearsing. Brian recommended him, and we couldn't have had a more perfect organist. I've played with bassist Mike Turturro for years and Stephen Hodges is a drummer I've worked with since the James Harman days, as well as in the Fabulous Thunderbirds. We're going to play the album this November at the Lucerne Blues Festival, with the whole band on the record. It's gonna be great.

Let's talk influences. Sister Rosetta Tharpe is the natural bridge between blues and gospel.

Oh yeah, *definitely*. There's some great footage of Sister Rosetta playing that white SG. That's like proto-rock and roll. My other guitar influences include legends like Magic Sam, T-Bone Walker, Lightnin' Hopkins, Kenny Burrell, and Wes Montgomery.

On "Jesus Dropped the Charges," we hear echoes of Steve Cropper. Your rhythm playing is as strong as your lead work throughout the album.

Steve Cropper, *wow*, that's a great compliment! I'm a huge fan of those Stax records and Steve's rhythm guitar is really important in all of that. Again, it all comes down to complementing the singer.

On "Oh, What a Meeting," you're playing is particularly fiery. Which guitar did you use and what's the tremolo/vibrato effect?

It's a '57 Stratocaster reissue through an old Magnatone 2x12 with tremolo.

Which other guitars, amp, and pedals did you use?

I used a '71 ES-355 on "Jesus Dropped The Charges," "I'm Working On A Building," and "I'm A Pilgrim." I had a '56 Harmony H62 on "Strange Things Happening" and also played that '57-reissue Strat a lot. There were no vintage amps besides the Magnatone, which I used on all the tremolo songs. I played a bajo sexto on "Satan's Jeweled Crown."

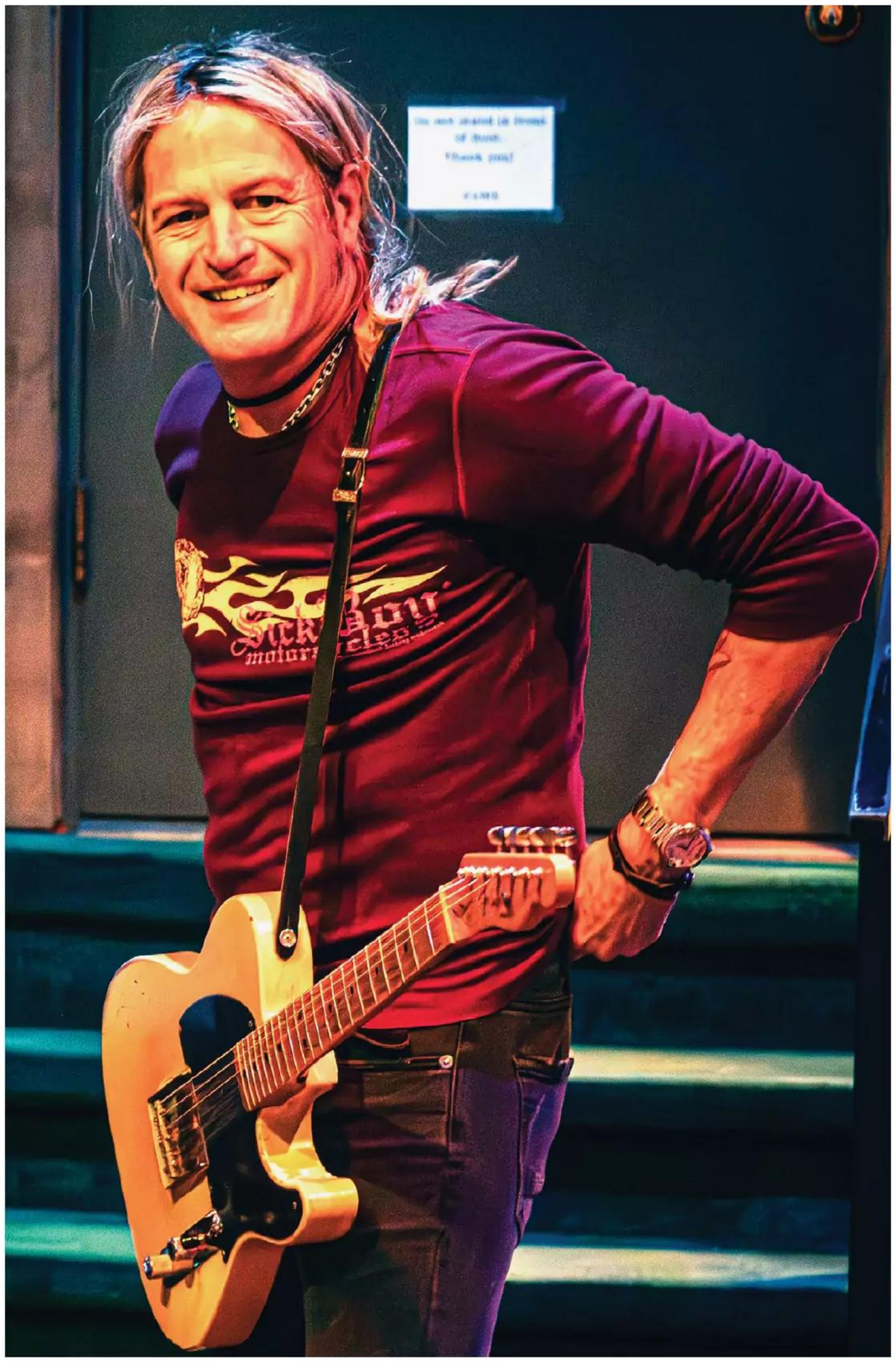
Your tone is particularly strong on the record. Did you deploy any special miking tricks to get a "live guitar sound" in the studio?

I think it came down to the room and the engineer, John Schreiner, who really knows that space. We tracked in a small room and only overdubbed extra keys and Spanish guitar after. Otherwise, we were all in the same room, staring into the whites of each other's eyes. The vocalists were also singing live with us, and we had a little speaker to hear them.

Reconnecting gospel and blues music feels so natural on this album. How did you thread the needle, especially since blues was once considered "the devil's music."

I think music is just music. If it's good and from the heart, expressing what's in a person's soul, then it's good music. I don't give the devil his due at all. ***– Pete Prown***

Kid Ramos: Brad Elligood.



DOUG ALDRICH

Out of the Blues

Since forming in 2012, The Dead Daisies haven't operated in typical "band mode." A collective with a fluctuating roster, its new release, *Lookin' for Trouble*, is 10 blues standards by Muddy Waters, Freddie King, Albert King, and others given a makeover. Lead guitarist Doug Aldrich, rhythm guitarist David Lowy, vocalist John Corabi, bassist Michael Devin, and drummer Sarah Tomek recorded the album while also making 2024's *Light 'Em Up*.

We asked Aldrich how it happened.

How did the band end up recording *Lookin' for Trouble* and *Light 'Em Up* simultaneously?

We like to do everything together, whether it's writing, preproduction, recording, whatever. We had a couple weeks booked where we were going to get together and write an original record, and then we were planning to go to Nashville to record it. But they got us booked into FAME Studios (in Muscle Shoals, Alabama). It was a new place, new energy, new vibe, and it was refreshing to go to a new spot. We weren't really there to record, but we did during the daytime. They'd do tours every day. We'd be in the middle of tracking or writing, and there'd be a tour coming through where they'd be talking about the history of the place.

Then there were late-night blues jams, the first being "Crossroads."

The Cream version is the most famous, probably even more than Robert Johnson's. We started plucking around on that and then it's like, "Why don't we do something different with this?" We didn't really talk about making a record. We just took one song, experimented with it, recorded it, and it was fun. It sounded good and we thought, "Maybe we use this for some special promotion or something." Then we went to another song. Little by little, we had four or five in the can. Our producer, Marti Frederiksen, said, "This is really cool. We should do something with this." I thought, "Okay, down the road we'll do something." We just kept doing our writing for the original record, which was pretty much done by the fourth day or so. We had a couple days left and we just kept banging through whatever song somebody would bring up. I brought up B.B. King's "The Thrill is Gone" because I love that melody. But of course, we wanted to do it differently. So, we put it in a 6/8 feel.

The one we did a real number on was "Black Betty." Ram Jam's version is killer and it's almost got a Fleetwood Mac "Oh Well" thing. We started going, "That's a little more progressive than we want to do." John Corabi said, "Let's go back and listen to the original version. It's really stripped down." It was just the vocal of Lead Belly, who wrote it. What we ended up doing with it was more of a ZZ Top track. It's got a Texas feel to it, and that was cool.

The songs all have raw, immediate energy.

At some point Marti said, "You know what? This sounds really good. Let's talk to management about putting it out." And that's what happened. There was stuff that I would love to have gone back and revisited and hit it again and try stuff. But Marti was like, "It sounds great. You're never going to play it the same. Just leave it – mistakes and all."

How important was it to change the arrangements on these famous blues songs and put your own spin on them?

These were famous songs that we all liked and thought, "We know these songs well enough that we can go out and jam them." At that point, then you can change it up. I think it's important to change it up because everybody should have their own interpretation of something. We're not known for doing blues music or anything like that, so it was like, "The purists probably aren't even going to hear it. It's just going to be for our fans." We're too old to be worried about what other people think. We were just trying to have fun. And it wasn't meant to be an album at first, so it was like, "Let's take some chances."

Which guitars did you use?

I used a '53 Les Paul I bought from Chicago Music Exchange, already converted to a '57 style. It has P-90 pickups. I played that on a lot of stuff. I also played a Nachoguitar Tele. At the studio, they had a '69 ES-340 and a Strat Custom Shop Relic. ***– Bret Adams***

Doug Aldrich: David Pear.

Luther Dickinson: Wyatt McSpadden.

LUTHER DICKINSON

Comfortably Clean

The North Mississippi Allstars have returned. And while they look back fondly on the 25th anniversary of their first album, *Shake Hands with Shorty*, they refuse to rest on their laurels. *Still Shakin'* shows the band looking back, looking forward, movin', groovin', and evolving. Luther Dickinson talks guitars, experimentation, and how women changed his guitar tone.

What's the connection between your *Shake Hands with Shorty* and the new one?

It's the 25th anniversary of *Shake Hands with Shorty*. At first, I was thinking, "Let's do a vinyl boxed set." But then I thought, "Man! Let's just record some new stuff in celebration!" Part of what's so inspiring about doing this is our bandmates – guitarist Joey Williams and multi-instrumentalist Rayfield "Ray Ray" Holloman. They bring so much to the table, and I wanted to feature them.

The cool sounds of Ray Ray and the blues-gospel licks from Joey rubbing against your slide creates a tasty recipe.

Ray Ray is playing bass and pedal steel. He plays guitar, as well – he's Eminem's guitar player. He's also Robert Randolph's cousin, so he's got that sacred-steel flavor, and his pedal-steel work is so profound. The solos he composed are so deliberate. His work ethic blows me away.

Joey plays rhythm guitar in a gospel quartet. His playing beautifully harkens back to our first record. Our first bass player was Chris Chew, who was a Southern Baptist church bass player. It's special when you have these young psychedelic rock dudes working with gospel musicians (laughs). It's a unique chemistry that we'd veered away from over the years. So it was perfect timing to nod back to that.

You and Joey have a beautiful musical relationship, weaving guitar lines without stepping on each other.

Joey is a really good freestyler. He gets in there and floats. He said playing with us reminded him of being a kid and playing with his dad and all his friends in the basement doing gospel jams. He's such a great weaver (laughs). It's my newfound joy of playing with other guitar players. I had to grow into, find the right cats, and get into the right space myself to be able to do it.

Which guitars did you use?

Electric-wise, it's mainly been guitars I've been making with friends of mine. We started making guitars in 2020. Those were hard times. I sold almost all my Gibsons and was selling enough s**t every month to pay the mortgage. Easy come, easy go. I still have some great guitars, and the ones I had from when I was a kid, which I got from my parents. But most of all, my tastes had changed. That neck pickup, hollow body, fat midrange sound has turned on me, and it hurts my ears. I do not want to hear it, much less play it. My friend Steve Selvidge, from the band The Hold Steady, turned me on to the Fender Wide Range humbuckers. It changed my life! We use the Lollar version, which are called Regals. He gave me a partscaster that he built with Regals, and it changed my life, so my friends in Nashville started making partscasters. I make 'em, I play 'em, and I sell 'em. We've sold 11 so far. We cut bodies and necks and make 'em from scratch.

What was your main electric?

The Vibratone Rufus. It's named after my grandfather and looks like a cross between a Hound Dog Taylor guitar and a Peavey T-90 (laughs). It's a modern pawn shop classic. My Harmony Bobkat also makes some appearances. Anytime you hear lead slide, that's not pedal steel, that's that Bobkat.

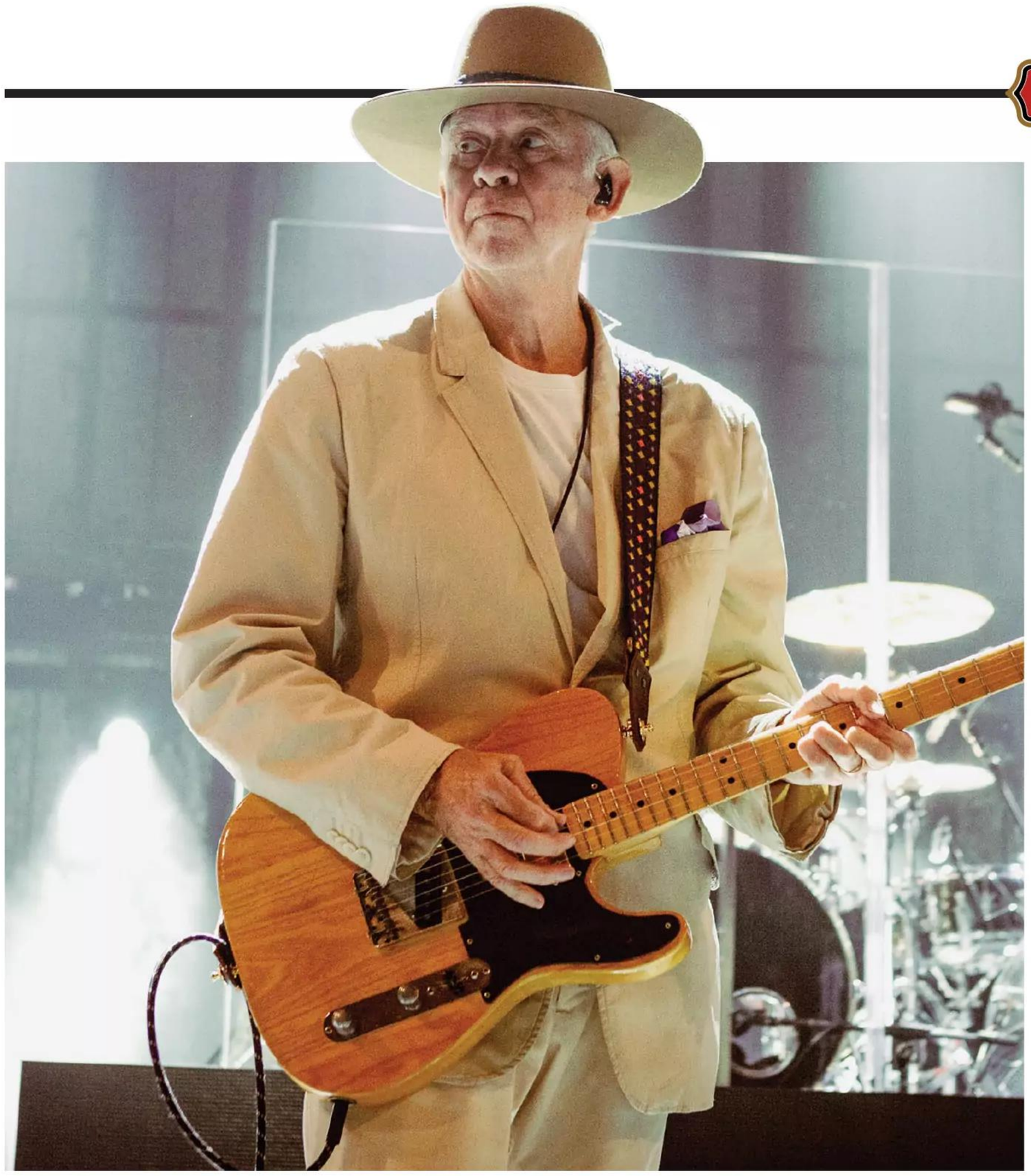
What inspires you to try new things?

Having daughters. As soon as my first daughter was part of the scene, she responded to female singers. It totally changed my listening habits, my output, and what I wanted to do. I started working with more female singers. If we hear some Van Halen, Hendrix, or any aggressive, loud, distorted guitars, we go, "Uggghhh!" It's a good thing their mom likes it (laughs). Between having girls, their taste in guitar tones, quitting the Black Crowes, and working with the late Phil Lesh, I cleaned up my tone. Thank God Phil Lesh hired me!

I didn't grow up playing The Grateful Dead; I had to learn it, and he was such a great teacher. His community was a safe space where I could learn to play comfortably clean. For decades, I relied on the distortion.

What's next?

I have a solo record coming out featuring this great singer named Datrian Johnson. – ***Oscar Jordan***



PHIL MANZANERA

Looking Back – and Forward

Roxy Music guitarist Phil Manzanera had led a fascinating life, and he covers it all in a new autobiography, *Revolución to Roxy*. Born in London, his father's work took the family to Cuba, Hawaii, and Venezuela. He returned to London for boarding school, where he embraced rock and roll before joining Roxy Music. The highly influential band is best known in the U.S. for the 1975 hit "Love is the Drug."

Manzanera has released many solo albums, played in side groups, and worked as a producer and songwriter for countless artists including David Gilmour and Pink Floyd. With saxophonist and Roxy bandmate Andy Mackay, Manzanera has a live AM/PM album in the works.

Your peers didn't have the influence of Latin music that you did in your youth.

If you talk to guitarists from the '60s and '70s about how they started, a lot of them, especially the British ones, started listening to skiffle and then rock and roll, then they managed to get some sort of acoustic guitar. For me, it was Cuban music – the kind you'd eventually hear in *Buena Vista Social Club*.

Those are the first songs I learned to play. There's no rock and roll and stuff until eventually we left after the Cuban Revolution. We went to Hawaii, then Venezuela, and a lot of American college kids came, playing Buddy Holly and Chuck Berry, and I thought, "Wow, what's this?" A British boy came over and showed me what they used to call rhythm and blues. It was the kind of stuff that Chuck Berry played. That changed my whole life. That's when I started heading toward rock and roll and got totally carried away.

Roxy Music was sophisticated and innovative, musically and image-wise.

Basically, we had this sort of mission statement that we wanted to do different, weird music, but presented in an attractive fashion. It wasn't like being, "We're all very arty and we're just looking at each other and just looking down." We wanted to entertain, but say, "We've got weird music, mate." We're singing and dancing, but it's weird. When we came to tour America, we had water bombs thrown at us. It confused people. But it was sort of great. We stood there going, "Yeah, we're going to do this." Things were whizzing past our heads and we were determined that we were going to put this across.

Musically, everything blended well, but you had standout guitar moments, especially live, like on *Viva!* and *Heart Still Beating*.

I used to feel, "Hey, there should be more guitar here or more up front." But [in 1976], we were learning how to make records. You're serving a song. You're playing your little part. I was brought up listening to George Harrison and those immaculate parts that he played, which were absolutely perfect – short, but beautifully played and succinct. Our producer, Chris Thomas, used to say, "It's got to all lock together to create a whole. So, we won't be having a huge guitar solo all over the vocalist. However, you can go away and do a solo album and do whatever you like." Which I did, eventually.

I recognize my place in the firmament, but occasionally I'd break out. There's a solo in "In Every Dream Home a Heartache" on the second album (1973's *For Your Pleasure*). It was a chance for me and (synthesizer player Brian) Eno to experiment with a much longer type of guitar solo, but with treated sounds and trying to do something that maybe people hadn't heard before.

Do you appreciate how influential Roxy Music was?

I don't think about that hardly at all, but it's nice when people mention it. I'm always looking forward to the next new thing. To tell you the truth, all the people in Roxy are continually into bringing out new music.

You were widely known for playing a '64 Firebird VII. What's your main guitar now?

I have been using a Les Paul Studio. It's cherry red, stock, about 10 years old. It's a nice all-around guitar. It does very well. I've still got the Firebird in my studio, but it doesn't travel that well, and the tuning's not [reliable]. I *did* use it on the Roxy farewell tour. The Les Paul is a lot more reliable if I'm just going to have one guitar with me.

– Bret Adams

Phil Manzanera: Charlie Targett-Adams.

KURT ROSENWINKEL

Jazzical Guitar

While not a household name, jazz-fusion guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel is so respected that even Eric Clapton gave him a Stratocaster. For *The Brahms Project*, Rosenwinkel worked with pianist/arranger Jean-Paul "JP" Brodbeck to reimagine Johannes Brahms' classical masterpieces as jazz, with stunning results. Another listening thrill is trying to figure out Kurt's dazzling tone and legato technique – Brahms himself would be stumped.

Many attempts to hybridize jazz and classical sound stilted, but *The Brahms Project* swings effortlessly. How did you get that natural feel?

Everyone in our quartet is rooted in a natural approach that's not coming from one style or perspective. When you broaden your understanding of music, you begin to see the commonality that runs through all traditions, just like the old saying: "At the root, all traditions meet." For the recording sessions in Berlin, JP wrote the Brahms arrangements and brought them to me much like a scriptwriter creating lines for an actor. I'm so happy to play this part and say these lines; to create these worlds and bring the audience through these stories. It's like I found a perfect script for my abilities as an actor.

You're not just playing melodies, but also various parts or instruments of a symphony orchestra, but on electric guitar?

Absolutely! There are cello parts, piano parts, violins, clarinets – there are lots of orchestral reductions in there, all of which I translated to guitar. There are also classical progressions that jazz musicians would recognize, but one of the coolest things is experiencing what Brahms does with the harmony. He wrote beautiful and unpredictable resolutions and cadences, all working in a very tightly controlled compositional space, which of course is a good thing. We open it up when we play the solos; JP might take a piece of the progression and we will improvise on that. It's so inspiring to explore the details of the harmony and the emotional depth of the melodies. It gives you a lot to go on, as a jazz improviser.

There's sweet groove at the beginning of "Intermezzo, Op. 118, No. 2." I was trying to imagine Brahms' reaction if he heard it. What do you think?

Oh man, I think he would really dig what we are doing. It honors his music and from it springs a new music, as well, so I would think Brahms would be happy about that. But maybe I'm wrong (laughs)!

Are you gigging with the Brahms Project?

Yes, we have been touring in Europe and the USA. The reactions are wonderful and I think people are really enjoying it. We came off stage after a set at the Jazz Showcase in Chicago and one lady yelled out, "That was f***ing incredible!" It was hilarious in the moment, but also felt good – there's been great energy from the crowds.

Which guitars and did you use?

I played a solidbody Westville, which is a prototype modeled after the Yamaha SG-500 that I've been playing in recent years. That goes into a ProCo Rat pedal from the '80s, then into a Fractal Audio FM-9, which is modeling a Twin Reverb and providing delay, reverb, and compression. Then it goes out to a Seymour Duncan power amp and the cab of a Twin Reverb. So, I'm replacing the preamp and amp portion of a Twin with its exact model because then I can really get in there and tweak the parameters of the amp that are otherwise inaccessible within a real tube amp.

You're known for your slow-attack legato tone. How do you achieve that?

From the Fractal, the signal goes out to an EHX Pog 2 to get the polyphonic attack effect, where I control the transient portion of the sound. Basically, shaving off a bit of the attack and using compression to push the fast swell back to the zero point, temporally speaking, so when I pick a note it comes out with almost zero latency.

Do you own any vintage guitars?

I have a great J-45 from the '70s. I just bought an Epiphone Casino from 1969 that is absolutely beautiful and in perfect shape. In recent years, I've been trying to cover all my my guitar bases at home. After I played his Crossroads Festival, Eric Clapton gave me a Stratocaster – one of his semi-old ones – and that's the only Strat I've ever played and it's gorgeous. It was painted with the same gray paint Ferrari used for one of Eric's sports cars. He ordered extra and sent the Ferrari paint to Fender in order to finish this Strat; it's beautiful and sounds great.

Any other axes?

I also got two guitars from the Gibson Custom Shop – a black Les Paul and an SG. Now I just need a Telecaster, Jaguar, ES-175, and a Rickenbacker and I'll have most of my bases covered. It's a love thing, you know (laughs). ***– Pete Prown***

Kurt Rosenwinkel: Marco Preikschat.

ERIC JOHANSON

Living Live

Live In Mississippi is Eric Johanson's blues magnum opus. For lovers of overdriven semi-hollowbody guitar tones and rugged slide playing, look no further. It's an album of passionate performances and heartfelt storytelling. Johanson sat with *VG* to share his tonal secrets, live recording, and parleying with fascist live-sound engineers.

Live In Mississippi sounds like being in a room with you.

Some of the artists I grew up listening to, especially blusier artist's live records, pulled me in. You could feel where the music lives. So, for me, that's the idea.

Had you been touring before the recording?

I was doing a lot of touring. The idea was to capture where we were versus creating anything special in terms of a set. I wanted to capture the vibe of the live shows. We more or less did it like a regular gig. We may have put out a few extra mics for the audience and stuff like that, but it was pretty straightforward.

Were you selective regarding which songs would end up on the record?

Because I wanted it on vinyl, I knew it would be a selection of a show that would fit in 45 minutes. I think I may have pushed it closer to 50 because that's about all you can get on vinyl. I love the vinyl thing, and was getting a lot of requests to do a live record. Going in, we were going to be playing things that weren't going to make the record, but I thought I'd see what would make the strongest album.

The show was two sets. Playing live, I extended some of the songs or played a little bit less, but I pretty much went for it. I *did* know that this was the show. That's a little different from my previous live record, which was me just happening to have ended up with the recording then thinking, "This is good." For *Live In Mississippi*, I wanted to highlight the live vibe of the newer songs. I live for the live thing. As much as I like being in the studio, I get excited hearing my favorite bands live.

What kind of gear did you use?

I've been using Category 5 amplifiers for several years now. Their stuff is super well-done and they just came out with my signature model, which is a refinement on an amp I tour with. It's essentially their version of a '60s Super Reverb, voiced a little smoother on the high end. It's a head that I run with a 4x10 cabinet. Because of the realities of playing live, I run some overdrives that I feel help maintain the amp's character while allowing me to dial in the right amount of grit for the situation.

I'm always experimenting. I've been trying to find a way to get a comfortable stage volume that sounds like my amp, cranked. The concept of what's loud has changed. I've been amazed at what some sound engineers think of as too loud. It's an ongoing issue (laughs). There's a certain amount of volume you need when you're trying to get the tone right. Sound engineers want you to turn way down. I say, "Look, we're bashing drums onstage. There's going to be volume (laughs)." I've been using the Revival Drive set at about 50 percent on the Mix knob. It's adding a bit of amp saturation and low-gain stuff mixed in with the direct signal. I also use a Klon KTR in front of that. For fuzz, I use the Zvex Fuzzolo.

How about guitars?

The two main ones are Duesenberg Starplayer TVs. The white one is called the Phonic, the black one is the Deluxe. There's something about the semi-hollowbody thing and their combination of a Fender scale length, humbuckers, and the tremolo that is pretty unique. I also use a Gibson Explorer on a couple of tracks, like on "Galaxy Girl" and "I Walk on Guilded Splinters." For resonator stuff, I use the Mule Resophonic Modest Mavis tuned to open D. That's what you hear on "Just Like New," "Hard Time Killing Floor Blues," and "Familiar Sound."

What's next?

I'm looking to do a bit of recording this summer and touring more in the fall. Then I'm heading to Europe at the end of the year.

– *Oscar Jordan* VG

Eric Johanson: Kaylie McCarthy.

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GIBSON'S 1955 ES-175 SPECIAL WURLITZER

Thinline "Black Beauty"

BY GEORGE GRUHN AND WALTER CARTER

From Gibson's early years through the 1960s, it made many custom instruments that mixed and matched specifications from various models. Few have been as intriguing as this custom ES-175 from 1955, made for musician Andy Nelson.

The guitar is interesting even without a connection to a player. Serial number A-20852 puts it in 1955, the label says "ES-175 SPEC," and its special features start with the body. The 16" body with Florentine cutaway would appear to be an ES-175D (D for double-pickup) or an ES-225TD, which was built as a thinline version of the 175; no other Gibson electrics had a pointed cutaway until 1960. The double-pickup ES-225TD didn't appear until '56, so unless this was an early example that didn't ship until then, ES-175D seems to be the only possibility.

The body, however, is 2½" deep – a full inch shallower than the standard ES-175 but almost an inch deeper than the thinline ES-225T and ES-350T that Gibson introduced in '55. It's only a ¼" deeper than the Byrdland, the short-scale, thinner-bodied version of the ES-5 that was also introduced in '55. Apparently, Billy Byrd and Hank Garland (for whom

1966

The Beatles quit touring as Jimi Hendrix and Cream begin. "The Flintstones" end "Star Trek" begins.

Leo Fender gets a new office in the company he sold and suggests neck binding and block inlays. Guitar factories start to expand.

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the Byrdland was named) were not the only musicians who thought a medium-depth guitar would be the most comfortable.

The ornamentation is obviously custom – for an ES-175. But its black finish, multi-layered binding, mother-of-pearl block fretboard inlays, and five-piece split-diamond peghead inlay would be standard on the Les Paul Custom introduced a year earlier.

Again, the mixing of model specs is nothing unusual for Gibson. In the '70s, Gibson even did it on official models, such as the Super V (an L-5CES with Super 400 neck) or the Les Paul Artisan (which featured banjo-style hearts and flowers on the fretboard). In that context, this mid-depth ES-175 with Les Paul Custom ornamentation is a typical custom order. Gibson's ledgers, however, tell a much more interesting story.

On May 24, 1955, the entry for A-20852 shows "ES-175 Spec. Wurlitzer – for Andy Nelson – WBBM." All three elements of the entry have some connection to guitar history.

SPECIAL WURLITZER

The Rudolph Wurlitzer company is best known today for jukeboxes, pianos, and the Mighty Wurlitzer theater organs, but in the mid 20th century, it was a full-line musical instrument distributor and retailer. Martin made guitars for Wurlitzer in the 1920s. In '55, Martin made some 12-fret solid-peghead models for a different Wurlitzer – the E.U. Wurlitzer store in Boston; those led to the D-28SW and D-35SW models, with SW designating "Special Wurlitzer." Coincidentally, Gibson president Ted McCarty had worked for Rudolph Wurlitzer before going to Gibson, but we're not aware of any guitars that Gibson might have made for Wurlitzer.

WBBM

In 1934, Chicago radio station AM 790 introduced country singer Sunny Joe Wolverton and his hotshot guitarist, Rhubarb Red, later known as Les Paul. It's reasonable to assume that WBBM still served up music in '55, but any connection to Wurlitzer or Andy Nelson is unknown.

Nelson is, however, known in Gibson history. Born in 1921, he grew up in Chicago and made a living playing guitar in clubs as a teenager. After World War II, he traded one (or more) of his three ES-150s for a blond cutaway L-5 and promptly customized it by adding an ES-150 "Charlie Christian" pickup. It would be the first of his many custom guitars.

Through the first half of the '50s, Nelson played with a music/comedy act called the Tune Toppers. His decision in '55 to leave the band (and road work) was pivotal to his career. He quickly worked his way into recording sessions, including what would become one of the biggest hits of 1956 – "The Auctioneer," by Leroy Van Dyke. He also landed a position as bass player in the staff band at Chicago's WGN.

Nelson had been playing a single-pickup blond ES-175 and an ES-295 (essentially a gold two-pickup ES-175) when Gibson introduced the Les Paul Custom. Some-

time in ’55, Nelson ordered a thinner ES-175 trimmed out like the “Black Beauty.” Why it was logged in as “Special Wurlitzer – WBBN” is a matter for speculation. It’s possible Nelson had a spot on that station sponsored by Wurlitzer, or that he was pitching a custom Gibson to Wurlitzer.

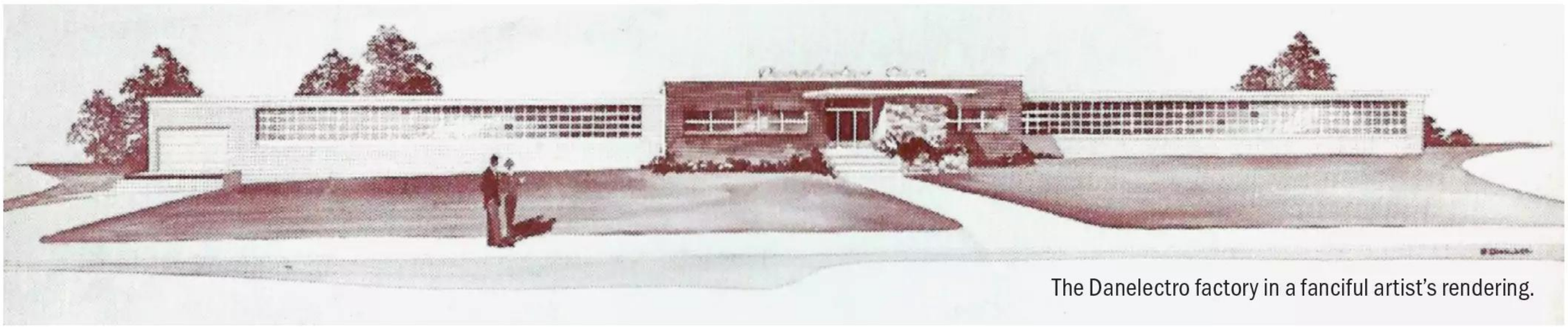
The most important event of ’55 for Nelson came when he was hired by Gibson as a clinician, a job that in ’57 expanded to include sales. Gibson got more than they bargained for, as Nelson was constantly coming up with new ideas. He was the driving force behind the company’s first amps with reverb, he conceived the L-5CT – a thinbody, shorter-scale (24 3/4") version of the L-5C – for comedian/musician George Gobel, and he was the “poster boy” for Gibson’s semi-hollowbody line of ’58, appearing in literature playing a customized 355 (possibly a prototype) with a flowerpot inlay on the headstock rather than the standard split-diamond.

In ’62, Nelson went to work for Gibson as an Epiphone salesman. His first good guitar had been an Epi Triumph, and he threw himself into the job. He sketched out an new line that included a highly ornamented flat-top called the Excellente. By Nelson’s account, he was too successful with Epiphone, to the point that Gibson president Ted McCarty felt that Epi was threatening Gibson’s prestige. In ’65, Nelson resigned in frustration and went to work for Fender. A heart attack in 1970 forced him into early retirement, and he played for recreation from then until his death in ’95.

This ES-175 “Black Beauty” remains part of Nelson’s legacy, but somewhere along the way, it ended up in an Ohio music store, where in 2008 it was purchased by Shelton Williams, a.k.a. third-generation country star Hank Williams, III.

Andy Nelson

The original version of this story appeared in the May ’09 issue of *VG*.



The Danelectro factory in a fanciful artist's rendering.

TWILIGHT IN NEPTUNE

The Last Days Of Danelectro, Part 1

BY PETER STUART KOHMAN

The "little guitar that could" story of Danelectro is well documented. Amidst the "guitar boom" of the mid '60s, its factory in New Jersey employed more than 500 people churning out amplifiers and guitars by the thousands, filling an outgoing 40-foot trailer every day while running "Help Wanted" ads in the *Asbury Park Press* saying "No experience necessary... High School shop training helpful."

In contrast, the firm's final years are a blur of conflicting stories and claims; instruments it made from 1967 to '69 are less familiar to players and collectors than the earlier Masonite-and-pine Shorthorns, Longhorns, and Amp-in-Case Silvertones, but they are equally interesting.

After nearly 20 years of growth, founder Nathan Daniel sold the company to Music Corporation of America (MCA) in 1966, during a wave of corporate takeovers in the guitar business. Founded in 1924 as a talent agency, by '59, MCA was a powerhouse in television production and artist management. In '62, they merged with Decca records in a deal that included Universal Film Studios. By then, MCA had a history of antitrust complaints, political influence, and shady dealings. In the showbiz world it was often derided with the nickname "The Octopus."

Danelectro beckons dealers on in, April '67.

Daniel remained president, but Danelectro soon changed direction. In March of 67, Magnus Hendell was named director of marketing and brought an aggressive sales approach led by the ad agency Loewy Stempel Zabin, which launched an extensive print campaign; their April '67 Music Trades ad featured a come-hither bikini babe and read "Don't Peek – Dynamic new things are happening at Danelectro." This heralded a major shift in distribution wherein the factory began selling directly to dealers. Daniel had been content to let others handle distribution, but MCA wanted the whole pie without surrendering the jobber's 10 percent cut.

"We are launching a program to capture a significant share of the electric guitar and amplifier market," Daniel announced. The company regularly ran "Help Wanted" ads in the local *Asbury Park Press* noting "No experience necessary," but "High School shop training helpful." In September of '66, it advertised for new employees in its shipping department.

At the same time, the previously huge Sears account was dwindling. Danelectros had been mainstays in its catalogs for more than a decade, but the late-'65 Silvertone Model 1450 abandoned the Masonite-and-pine construction in favor of a solid Fender-styled offset body. By spring '67, only two Dano-made Silvertones remained – the single-pickup 1451 and the 1452, with two pickups and vibrato. These successors to the familiar 1448 and 1457 still included the Masonite amp/case and retained distinct Danelectro touches. Matching short-scale 1442 and long-scale 1443 basses were supplied by Danelectro, but Japanese imports appeared the following year in Sears' catalogs, and by spring/summer '68, Dano-made Silvertones were extinct.

By then, many changes had already come to the company's headquarters in Neptune. Catalogs had contained variations of Daniel's trademark Masonite-and-pine body design since the '50s, but the '66 catalog was full of new designs dubbed "Dane" replacing nearly all earlier models. The cover showed Vincent Bell, a top New York session guitarist and tinkerer who met Daniel at the

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6

7

Solid-body Electric Guitars with "All-in-One" Amplifier-Case

6 Slim, fast-action neck with 18-fret rosewood fingerboard is reinforced with dual steel rods. *Single pickup* with tone and volume controls. Black finish with contrasting white guardplate. About 36x14x2 in. Amplifier-case with 6-in. speaker, 2 tubes and rectifier. Tone, volume controls. Gray vinyl covered case 37x15x13 in. deep.
57 B 1451L—Shpg. wt. 28 lbs. . . . $77.95

7 Slim, fast-action neck with double steel reinforcing rods in neck. Professional style, cut-away body, sparkling chrome-plated trim. Body 1⅜ in. thick. *Three-way pickup switch*, 2 pickups, 2 volume and 2 tone controls. Adjustable bridge.

Case-amplifier with 8-in. speaker. . 3 tubes, rectifier; tone, volume, tremelo strength and speed controls. On-off tremolo foot switch. Black vinyl case 14x39x3 inches deep. Sunburst red.
57 B 1452L—Shpg. wt. 34 lbs. . . . $109.95

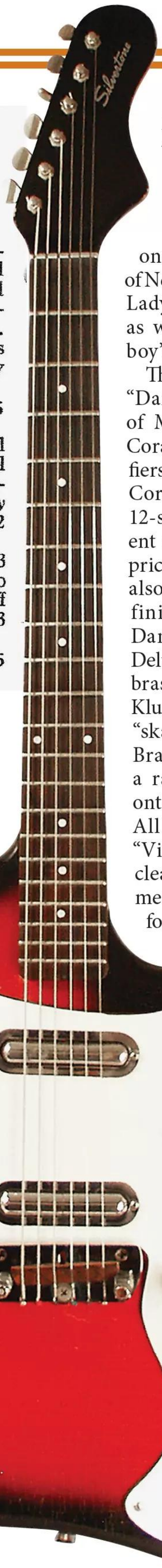
840 Sears CPBKM 2AEDSLG

1958 NAMM show and became Danelectro's product demonstrator. In the early '60s, they collaborated on the Bellzouki – the first single-neck 12-string electric guitar – then Bell helped design much of the new line, with his most memorable being the Electric Sitar they were set to launch.

The "Dane Line" catalog depicted five instruments in numerous variations. "A" models were basic, built on a similar but slightly more appealing body than the 1963-'64 Pro-1. It inherited the Pro's 18-fret neck and the cheapest piece of guitar hardware ever attempted – a bridge/tailpiece made from a strip of bent metal. Offered with six or 12 strings and as four-string basses priced from $59.95 for a single pickup six-string to $84.95 for a double-pickup 12. Soon renamed the Hawk series, these survived nearly until the end of Danelectro.

Dane B and C models were variations on a Fender offset and built on thin Durabodies – still primarily Masonite, but slim at the rim. The differences were color and trim, with the B ranging from $90 for two pickups with no vibrato to $120 for a three-pickup 12-string and offered in white with black body trim or green with white trim. C models were the same style and pricing but with textured "Gator" finishes; four- and six-string C basses were listed, as well. This line would shortly be condensed and renamed Slimlines.

The top-line D series were thin-edged/sculpted solidbodies made of actual wood, also Fender-styled with swirly silver plastic pickguards. In the '67-'68 catalog, these would be re-branded as the Coral Hornet, Wasp, and Scorpion. The E series was two specialty instruments – the older Bellzouki and a long-scale E2N4 bass, a fancier ($150) version of the Silvertone 1443. On the back page languished the familiar Longhorns ($150), Convertible ($45 to $65), and the $175 Doubleneck.



The final Silvertones from Neptune, spring '67.

A major marketing change arrived in mid '67, when the line was split in two, with higher-priced models adopting a new "Coral" brand and Danelectro saved for budget instruments. MCA owned the Coral trademark, and Corals premiered at the June '67 NAMM show, promoting the new direct-sale program. "Visit us in our display rooms and enjoy a fine cigar to celebrate the birth of our new babies," read one. An infamous promotional photo of New Jersey's topless all-girl band The Ladybirds was reportedly distributed, as well, with a wink to the industry boy's club.

The full color 1967-'68 catalog from "Danelectro Corporation, a subsidiary of MCA Inc." introduced "The new Coral brand Prestige guitars and amplifiers." Dane D models were re-branded Coral Hornet six-strings, Scorpion 12-strings, and Wasp basses in different configurations and finish options priced from $139 to $169. They were also available in "22 Custom Color" finishes at five percent extra. The Dane E bass reappeared as the Coral Deluxe at $169. Upgrades included a brass nut in place of aluminum and Kluson tuners instead of the in-house "skate key" machines. They had solid Brazilian rosewood headstocks with a raised chrome Coral logo spliced onto Danelectro's poplar neck blanks. All but the Deluxe Bass were stenciled "Vincent Bell Signature Design" on the clear pickguard; Danelectro instruments lacked his endorsement except for the venerable Bellzouki.

Even bigger news was Bell's Coral Electric Sitar, heavily promoted in 1967-'68 and generating loads of press coverage. MCA cross-promotion included Bell cutting a *Pop Goes The Electric Sitar* LP on Decca Records (of course) featuring him twanging popular songs accompanied by a Mantovani-like orchestra. While not the height of 1967 hip, the album today sounds like

DANE "E" series

4-String Bass with Extended Neck for the BIG BASS Sound and the BIG STAGE Look • Sculptured Solid Body • Reflective Stylized Pickguard • Twin Finger Rests • Flat wound strings • Sure-set Wide-Wing Keys and Choice of 4 Colors. Separate Tone and Volume Control for each Pickup affords full variations. **Another magnificent DANE instrument that adds the big sound to groups.**

E2N4	Double Pickup 4 String Bass Standard Colors, Red, White Black, Natural	$150.00
E88	Hard Shell Case	40.00

BELLZOUKI

The Original 12 String Electric Guitar — developed by Vincent Bell for Danelectro — this guitar is used extensively in recordings of Folk Rock Music, Rock and Roll, Jazz, and "the Oriental Sound."

DOUBLE PICKUP
Model 7021 ..... $210
Order with Hard Shell Case or Fully Padded Bag
CASE No. 9742 ..... $30 BAG No. 9710 ..... $35

The Danes debut, 1966-'67.

a cheerfully cheeseball classic. The instrument did generate a genuine buzz and appeared on numerous hit records well into the '70s.

This catalog also introduced a thinline/ES knock-off called the Coral Firefly, which used laminated maple/spruce bodies imported from Kawai in Japan mated to bolt-on Coral necks and Danelectro hardware. More in this vein would follow. Coral's "professional" amplifiers were solid-state or hybrid, while Danelectro amps (intended for amateurs) retained their tube designs.

The '67 Danelectro line was drastically reduced, relegated to the catalog's back pages. A few Dane B/C models were renamed "Slimlines" and priced from $99 to $129 with the budget Hawk series running $64.95 to $89.95, along with the veteran Convertible, with the new single-sided headstock. Masonite Longhorns were not listed, but apparently that was deemed a mistake; one-sheet inserts for the basses and Guitarlin still were added to later mailings. All were priced lower than comparable offerings from most U.S. manufacturers.

A SUBSIDIARY OF MCA INC.

DANELECTRO CORP. 211 West Sylvania Avenue · Neptune City · New Jersey · 07753
AREA CODE 201 774-7600

Dear Sir:

Your Coral-Danelectro color catalogue represents a dramatic forward step in amplifiers and electric guitars.

I regret the pictures cannot reproduce sound...or demonstrate the engineering excellence built into every amplifier and guitar. Two of the outstanding products in the Coral line are THE WORLD'S FIRST ELECTRIC SITAR and our new solid state "mix and match" amplifiers. The speaker systems feature UNI-CASE cabinet construction... the most rattle free amplification system ever devised.

If you are interested in purchasing a Coral or Danelectro product may we suggest you contact your local music dealer. If he does not have your choice in stock he can readily obtain it for you by ordering direct from our factory.

Sincerely,
THE DANELECTRO CORPORATION
John D. Kahrs
John D. Kahrs
Customer Relations

Coral® FINE GUITARS AND AMPLIFIERS · Vincent Bell SIGNATURE DESIGNS

Danelectro's direct sale letter to customers, 1967.

Coral endorsers included the Turtles, riding high with "Happy Together" and featured on the 1967-'68 catalog cover. Others ranged from logical (the Cyrkle, whose hit "Turn Down Day" had a prominent sitar line), Clear Light, the Strawberry Alarm Clock, Spanky & Our Gang, and the Beacon Street Union to the more unlikely – Buddy Greco, Richie Havens, Gabor Szabo and... Henry Mancini!

The Hornet was billed as "Featured by the Who" in '68. Pete Townshend did play them for a time on tour though the initial attraction was that they were much cheaper than Fenders, thus more economical for the Who's destructive stage act. Townshend apparently was fond enough of one Hornet to spare it for use in his home studio.

A fold-out Coral brochure from '68 showed an expanded line in glorious color. The Firefly line included 12-string and bass versions. Hip new creations included a hollowbody teardrop guitar (a la Vox), violin-shaped

Sound Facts about Guitars and Amplifiers

THE TURTLES

THE CYRKLE

Al Nichol of THE TURTLES and Tom Dawes of THE CYRKLE are just two of the many recording stars featuring the CORAL ELECTRIC SITAR.

You don't have to be Hindu to play the Coral® Electric Sitar

Around the recording circuit, Vincent Bell, one of the country's outstanding recording artists, has been producing an exciting new sound. It's the world's first electric Sitar, which can be played by any guitarist.

Coral Electric Guitars achieve the ultimate in performance and playing ease at a moderate price

Coral Guitars set a new standard of quality at a price to amaze the most critical artist. The handsome sculptured solid body is designed for perfect balance, superb tone . . . with all deluxe custom features for fast action. The thin-line neck is designed for speed with dual steel bar internal construction which permanently prevents warping. Genuine Brazilian Rosewood head and fingerboard.

Coral Solid-State Amplifiers with Mix 'N' Match speakers feature Uni-Case* the most rattle-free, buzz-free construction ever devised.

Coral achieves a new excellence in quality sound and flexibility with the Thor 100 . . . Stentor Bass 100 . . . Jupiter 50 . . . Neptune 25. The engineering and rugged performance of the new Coral Amplifiers place them head and shoulders above the field. It is destined to become the most imitated amplification system in the music world.

Each Piggy-back amplifier, except Stentor Bass, is equipped with two channels on a handsome brushed chrome panel. Both channels produce full power. Channel 1 contains Volume, Bass and Treble controls. Channel 2 contains all the special features desired by the guitarist! Tremolo with its own speed and strength controls. Reverb with drive and depth adjustment. New, original *Pitch-Switch**, unique electronic tune-up tone is standard equipment on all amps except Stentor 100. New *Uni-Case** speaker cabinet invented by the engineering staff of Danelectro Corporation features permanently glued back and baffle resulting in the most rattle-free construction ever devised. A variety of *Uni-Case** Speaker Systems are available with each amplifier to meet individual needs. All Coral amplifiers and speaker cabinets are covered with heavy duty, deep grained black vinyl.

*UNI-CASE**

*PITCH-SWITCH**

FREE! Send coupon for FREE color catalog and price list!

DANELECTRO A Subsidiary of MCA Inc.
211 West Sylvania Avenue
Neptune City, New Jersey 07753 P-1

Send me a copy of your catalog and price list.

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____

STATE_____ ZIP_____

Coral® by **DANELECTRO** A subsidiary of MCA Inc.
Solid-State AMPLIFIERS and ELECTRIC GUITARS

*PATENTS AND TRADEMARK REGISTRATIONS PENDING

DANELECTRO
CORPORATION

INTRODUCING THE NEW

Coral® BRAND

PRESTIGE GUITARS and AMPLIFIERS

1967-68 CATALOGUE

TURTLES lead guitarist, Al Nichol, (left) plays up a storm with the new Coral Electric Sitar at New Haven performance. The "Happy Together" group feature the electric sitar sound at concerts and recording dates. See the world's first electric sitar on page 5.

A SUBSIDIARY OF MCA INC.

Danelectro HAWK

No Greater Value in Popular Priced Electric Guitars

Convertible

ACOUSTIC/ELECTRIC. As a non-electric, this model produces clear sustained tones. The special pickup kit may be added if and when desired, to convert to electric guitar. Simple installation. Pre-drilled holes have decorative inserts.

C5005 GUITAR WITHOUT PICKUP . . . Uses standard Danelectro neck. Fully adjustable bridge.

9010 PICKUP KIT includes all controls and 10 ft. cord. Especially designed for Model 5005 guitar. Not for use with any other make or model.

C5015 GUITAR WITH PICKUP . . . Same as 5005 with Pickup 9010 completely assembled at the factory. May be used with or without amplification.

9842 Hard Shell Case

HAWK 1N	Single pickup, tone and volume control.	**HAWK 2N**	Double pickup, separate tone and volume control for each pickup
HAWK 1V	Same as above plus vibrato FLEXBRIDGE*	**HAWK 2N12**	Same as above, 12 String
HAWK 1N12	Same as above, 12 String	**HAWK 2V**	Same as above plus vibrato FLEXBRIDGE*
HAWK 1B4	Single pickup, 4 String Bass	Colors: Brilliant Red, Baby Blue, Panther Black	

Compare for sound and performance . . . Famous Danelectro rigid Never-Warp Neck has simple positive action at neck socket for custom feel. Hard lacquer finish provides durable protection.

*Flexbridge, Hand vibrato, Patent Pending

Introducing Coral, 1967. The Coral/Danelectro '67 catalog, with the Turtles. The colorful Bottom-of-the-line Danelectro Hawks, '67-'68.w

"fiddle bass," and a fully hollow version of Danelectro's Longhorn offered as six- and 12-string guitars and long- and short-scale basses. These were described as "Great new sound, original body design by Coral... a professional instrument in every way."

All were built on Kawai-made bodies with arched laminate-spruce tops over "English maple" back and sides. Most hardware was common across the range, including the ubiquitous lipstick pickups. They retained the poplar neck with a Brazilian rosewood fretboard and slab headstock grafted on, the new models using a three-and-three shape.

A more-original new design was the Vinnie Bell Combo, a full-depth/17" single-cut archtop with round sound hole. It was offered with one or two pickups, but the standout feature was "ASP" – the Adjustable Sound Post. A knob mounted through the back of the guitar elevated an internal post to press up against the top, deadening the vibration to suppress feedback. For playing at lower volume or acoustic, it could be backed off to allow the top to resonate. A practical idea in the increasingly loud late '60s, it didn't help sales of the Combo.

Mysteriously, by 1969, Magnus Hendell Associates, Inc. was billed as exclusive distributor of Coral and Danelectro products, with no mention of MCA. Had Hendell taken over distribution or formed a subsidiary under MCA? Information is lacking. By the release of the 1969-'70 catalog, the only remaining Danelectro products were the original "Funky semi-solid Longhorns," the Convertible, the reappearing Doubleneck, a few smaller amps, and a simplified "Baby" sitar introduced the year before on a one-sheet. All the rest were Corals.

Unfortunately, MCA's ambitious marketing failed. They bought Danelectro just after the guitar boom had reached saturation. Sales declined in the late '60s, and hardest hit were companies producing budget in-

Coral *Featured by the "WHO"*

Sculptured Body Designs

Meet the Hornet . . . favorite of recording artists for the true electric sound. Handsome sculptured body designed for perfect balance. Detailed with custom features for fast action and complete flexibility. The price of these fine instruments will surprise the most critical artist. Available in Pearlescent Black, Flame Red, Three Color and Natural Sunburst . . . pickup with and without vibrato.

Dimensions: Length 40-3/8". Body 19" long, 14" wide, 1¼" deep, 25" scale, 21 frets.

H2N6 — Double pickup with individual volume controls plus master volume control. Four switches provide complete tone variations for highs, lows and mid-range effects.

H2V6 — Same as H2N6 with vibrato arm.

H3N6 — Triple pickup with individual volume controls plus master volume control . . . switches for each pickup.

H3V6 — Same as H3N6 with vibrato arm.

CORAL SCORPION — 12 string, sculptured solid body for oriental, folk, rock and roll and a variety of effects. Pearlescent Black, Flame Red, Three Color and Natural Sunburst finishes.

S2N12 — Double pickup with individual volume controls plus master volume control. Four switches provide complete tone variations.

S3N12 — Triple pickup with individual volume controls with switches for each pickup . . . plus master volume control.

C82 — Hard shell case covered in deep grained black vinyl . . . plush interior

Coral

Let's talk Bass...

Coral presents three outstanding performers in the Sculptered Body Bass. Each is designed to produce the deep bass tones most desirable for groups.

D2B4 — CORAL DELUXE BASS with extended neck. This is the instrument featured by the Turtles', Jim Pons. Reflective stylized pickguard, twinfinger rests, flat wound strings, wide wing keys. Unique in staging and performance.
Length: 49". Body: 20" long, 15" wide, 1¼" deep
33½" scale, 22 frets.

C88 — Hard Shell Case for Deluxe Bass only, covered in deep grained black vinyl with plush interior and custom corners.

W2B4 — CORAL WASP features the standard bass neck, same fast action. Coral 25 year gold bond guarantee that the neck will never warp. Four string, double pickup with individual volume controls plus master volume control. Four switches provide complete tone variations.
Length: 45". Body: 19" long, 14" wide, 1¼" deep
29½" scale, 24 frets

W2B6 — CORAL WASP SIX STRING BASS for the artist who wants more than conventional bass performance. This fine instrument can chord and create Baritone effects to enhance any group. A great jazz, rock or pop instrument. The six string electric bass is a Danelectro original design and is increasing in popularity with the "IN" musician.
Same dimensions as W2B4.

C86 — CORAL Wasp Bass Case

C82

Coral

Fiddle Bass

Coral

Teardrop GUITAR

FB2B4 — Coral has added a new dimension to the famous Fiddle Bass. The rosewood bound neck is extended, with special scale measuring 33½" from nut to bridge. Brazilian rosewood head, fully enclosed machine heads, adjustable pickguard. Arched spruce top with rich English Maple back. Priced to amaze the most discriminating professional. Double pickup with individual tone and volume controls. Superb Sunburst finish.

Length: 46¼", Body: 18-5/8" Long, 13" wide, 3½" deep, 33½" scale, 22 frets.

T2N6 — The Coral Teardrop for those who prefer this unique shape. Carefully detailed with all famous Coral features. Arched spruce top, English Maple back, beautifully bound. The famous Coral neck guaranteed not to warp is supported by two dual steel beams and detailed with rosewood binding. Rich Sunburst finish.

Length: 38½", Body 16-7/8" long, 13½" wide, 3¼" deep, 25" scale, 21 frets.

INTRODUCING the

Long Horn Series

The Long Horn . . . great new sound, original body design by Coral. The beautiful spruce top is backed by English Maple rich in grain . . . richer in sound performance. Handsome rosewood head tops the famous Coral fast action neck backed by our 25 year warp-free guarantee. This guarantee is made possible by our dual steel bar reinforcement. And each neck is subtly bound with rich rosewood to afford you maximum speed and comfort in performance.

Pickups and bridge are fully adjustable. Fully enclosed machine heads. Famous Coral total shielding prevents static and interference from outside sources. Beautifully detailed pickguard is adjustable. Superb Sunburst finish. A professional instrument in every way. Choose from these models:

L2N6 — Double pickup with individual tone and volume controls.
Length: 38". Body 17-1/8" long, 14¾" wide, 3½" deep, 25" scale, 23 frets.

L2N12 — 12 string, double pickup with individual tone and volume controls.
Length: 39¾". Body 17-1/8" long, 14¾" wide, 3½" deep. 25" scale, 23 frets.

L2B4 — 4 string bass with standard bass neck.
Length: 41¼". Body 17-1/8" long, 14¾" wide, 3½" deep, 29-5/8 scale, 23 frets.

L2LB4 — 4 string bass with extended neck.
Length: 43½". Body 17-1/8" long, 14¾" wide, 3½" deep, 33½" scale, 22 frets.

Adjustable Sound Post

NEW Vincent Bell

"Combo"

Featuring ASP

This is the guitar you have been waiting for. Superb as either electric or acoustic because of our new innovation, ASP (patents pending). ASP means Adjustable Sound Post. A simple turn of the ASP knob recessed in rear of the body (illustrated) disengages the sound post permitting free vibration of the body face for loud, natural, reverberant tone comparable to a fine acoustic (non-electric) guitar. A reverse turn of the knob engages the sound post locking face and back giving you the finest in electric sound. (This is the conventional way in which a hollow body — electric guitar is made).

Handsome carved top of close grained spruce. The gentle arched back of rich English maple. The neck meticulously bound with rosewood for the ultimate in speed and comfort, is backed by our famous 25 year gold bond guarantee against warping. Dual steel bar reinforcement makes this guarantee possible.

Famous Coral total shielding prevents static and interference caused by neon, flashing lights and other noise sources. Brazilian rosewood head and fingerboard, fully enclosed machine heads and superb Sunburst finish make this instrument a prized possession.

Length: 43", body 21-3/8" long, 17¼" wide, 5" deep, 25" scale, 20 frets.

V2N6 — double pickup with individual volume and tone controls plus master volume control.

V1N6 — single pickup with volume and tone controls.

The expanded Coral line, 1968.

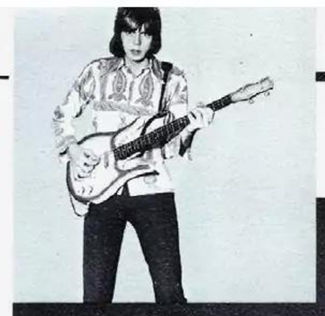
struments. Imports from Europe and Japan severely undercut that market, and despite very economical pricing, the Coral line had not taken off. MCA was struggling to be profitable in film production, and the guitar company was small potatoes. About Three years in, MCA cut its losses and folded the company. The demise of Danelectro became a blip in the corporation's complex history.

Of course, Danelectro meant more to musicians. Through 1968-'69, it continued to advertise for employees: "Openings in several departments… General factory work – we will train you." The last appeared September 22, 1969, suggesting factory managers had no idea their days were numbered. Many young Jersey Shore locals had found their first real employment there, and some were aspiring musicians like Gary Tallent, later of the E Street Band.

Stories of the company's demise vary. According to one ex-employee, the foreman blew the whistle one day and announced, "Sorry boys, they're closing us down. Take anything you want, today is our last day." The closure left thousands of parts and completed/half-completed instruments in stock, and Danelectro flotsam has continued to surface ever since.

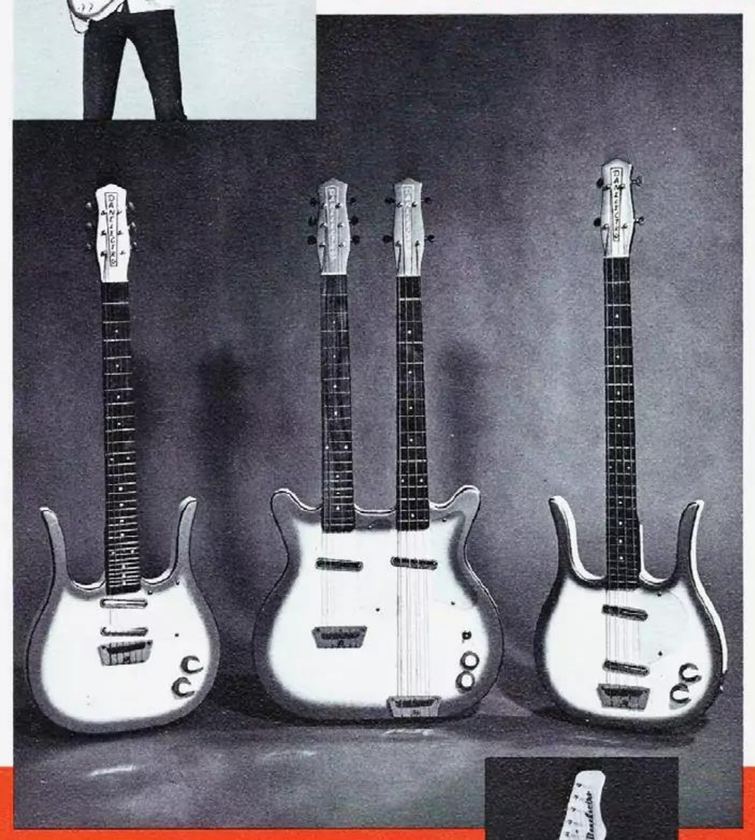
"We used to sell them off the back of a truck [at a flea market] in Englishtown," Tallent once told me. A Jersey Shore store, Claude's Surplus, advertised Danelectro "… Amplifiers, Cabinets, Speakers, Guitar Pickups" for sale in the spring of 1970. On 48th Street, black-finished Longhorn basses assembled from new old stock (NOS) bodies and long-scale necks were a regular sight in the mid '70s.

New York repairman/designer Dan Armstrong ties into the story, as well. He recalled how the physical assets of the company were sold for the paltry sum of $20,000 to William C. Herring, who apparently had no clue what to do with the empty guitar factory and leftover stock. Armstrong agreed to help.



DANELECTRO MA INC.

Funky Semi-Solid Long Horns



Guitarlin

This unique instrument is a guitar with fingerboard extended deep into the body. 31 frets combine the guitar and mandolin range. Tuned and played as a guitar with regular guitar strings. Guitar tone in lower register shades to mandolin in upper register. Bronze and White Sunburst.

4123—Guitarlin $169
9842—Hard Shell, plush lined case ..... $ 35

Double Neck

The versatile one . . . guitar and bass. Compact thin body design, overall size 17½" x 39" is smaller than some concert model guitars. Separate tone and volume controls for each neck. Three way switch connects either neck alone or both together. All frets within easy reach. Bronze and White Sunburst.

3923—Double Neck Model $189
9943—Hard Shell Case ..... $ 35

Long Horn Bass

Unique in design . . . outstanding in performance! A superb instrument featured by many of the country's leading recording artists. Used on T.V. and motion picture sound tracks because of excellent sound reproduction. Available in 4 string or 6 string . . . Bronze and White Sunburst.

4423—4 string Bass $169
4623—6 string Bass $169
9842—Hard Shell, plush lined case ..... $ 35

Convertible

ACOUSTIC/ELECTRIC. As a non-electric, this model produces clear sustained tones. The special pickup kit may be added if and when desired, to convert to electric guitar.

C5005 GUITAR WITHOUT PICKUP — Same as 5015 without Pickup.
List price $55.00

C5105 GUITAR WITH PICKUP — Completely assembled at the factory. May be used with or without amplification.
List price $69.00

9010 PICKUP KIT includes all controls and 10 ft. cord. Especially designed for Model 5005 guitar. Not for use with any other model.
List price $20.00

D87 Canvas carrying bag.
List price $10.00

C5005

C5105

Several hundred single-cutaway husks were cycled through Armstrong's shop, re-built into hybrid guitars and basses labeled "Dan Armstrong Modified Danelectro." Armstrong put up money, assuming he owned the Danelectro trademark, but that ended up in litigation, and many bodies and necks were ruined after being stored in a Jersey chicken coop!

Still, NOS parts continued to turn up. In the '80s, New Jersey native Anthony Marc acquired the trademark and a large stock of parts, selling them and hybrid Longhorn basses through print ads. Unused Kawai-made Coral bodies have populated the secondary market for 50 years, sometimes still new in the box. Many have been assembled into randomly appointed instruments sometimes sold as "original." Daniel's classic designs were eventually reimagined by Jerry Jones and the Danelectro brand has continued since the late '90s on an imported line.

Coral and Danelectro Sitars, 1968-'69, and the last gasp for the Longhorn, Doubleneck, and Convertible, 1969. The Coral/Danelectro '67 price list. No Longhorns!

By November, 1970, the empty Neptune City factory was in use by a garment company. A newspaper story of the time said it was, "...built five years ago for the production of Danelectro Guitars, recently discontinued by MCA." The building was sold in October '71 to THF Publications for use as a warehouse. It stands today, the '60s-moderne facade around the entrance offering mute testimony to its glorious history. Nathan Daniel moved to Hawaii, leaving the guitar business behind. But the unique designs created by him and Bell still fascinate, and thousands continue to make music with them today. In part two, we'll look at a variety of instruments from these later days. **VG**

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Four original Sylvania 6L6GC output tubes give this Showman a big, open sound.

THE ENTERTAINER

1967 Fender Showman "Promo" Amp

BY DAVE HUNTER

1966/'67 FENDER SHOWMAN "PROMO"

- Preamp tubes: two 7025, one 12AX7, one 12AT7
- Output tubes: four Sylvania 6L6GC
- Rectifier: solid-state
- Controls: Normal channel: Volume, Treble, Bass; Vibrato channel: Volume, Treble, Middle, Bass, Speed, Intensity
- Output: approximately 85 watts RMS

For all the fanfare over early iterations of classic Fender amps, the real bread and butter was often found in slightly later versions. Such is the case with this pristine "Promo" version of a 1967 Showman, one of the premier big-venue amps of its day.

As origin stories go, Fender amps of the late 1940s, '50s, and early '60s provide fascinating reading, and the tale behind the birth of the Showman is as enthralling as any. But once the dust had settled on events that birthed the original design – complete with the drama of Dick Dale's demanding input, blown speakers and output transformers, and the glee of thousands of surfer youths at the Rendezvous Ballroom in Balboa, California – the new Fender model settled into a workhorse-like existence as a powerful amp for capacious rooms, if not an overly sexy piece of gear. As in the case of this model, we often read about their use by guitar stars of the day and how stylistic tides influenced designs, especially via a maker like Leo Fender, who collaborated with so many West Coast artists. That can make it

Amp and photos courtesy of Bob Walters.

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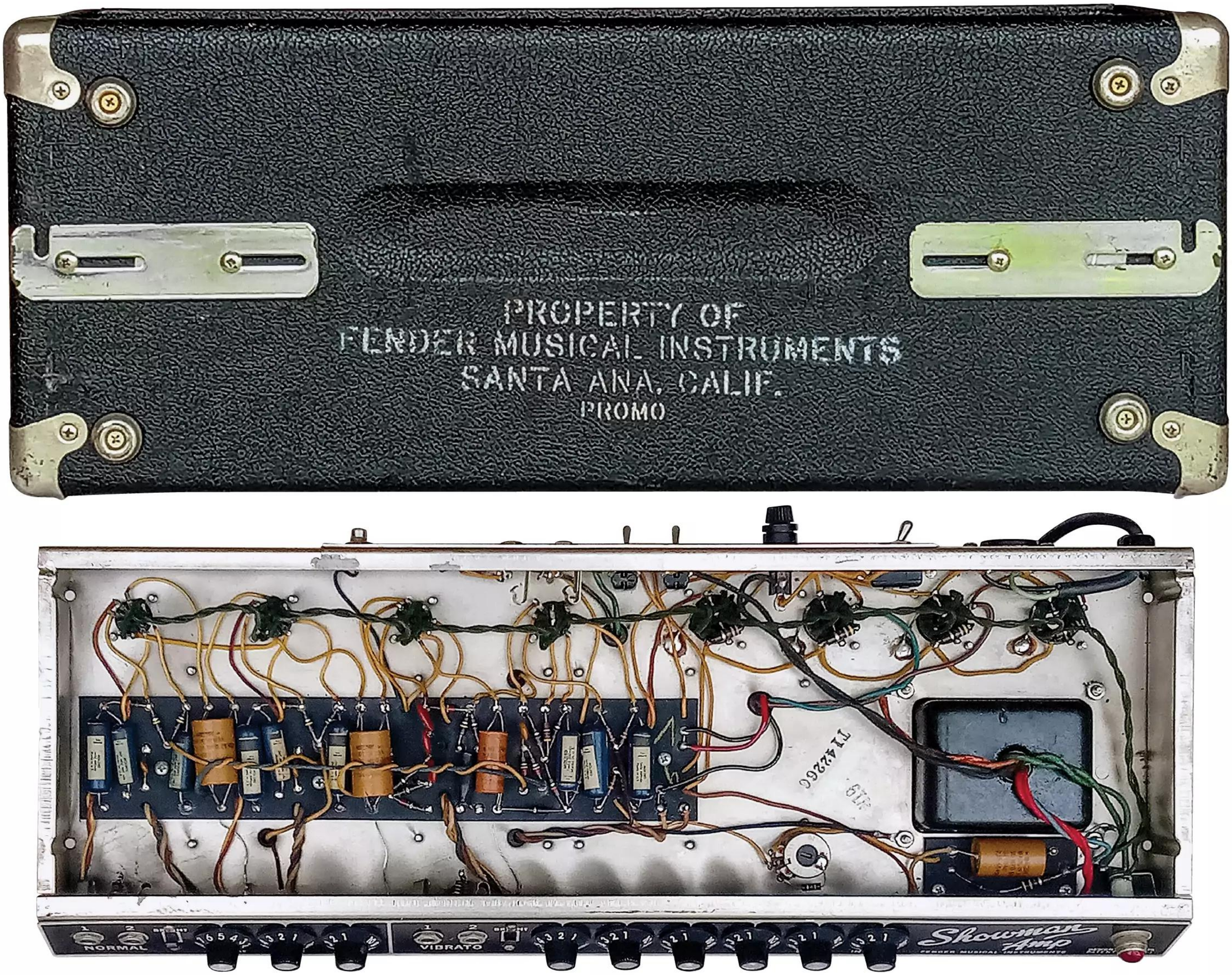


easy to forget that these amps were also sold to school and college music departments, rented to studios and performance halls, and fielded out as demo units to large music stores. One or the other was likely the case with this Showman.

Aside from being an extremely clean and original example, a stencil on the bottom reads, "Property of Fender Musical Instruments Santa Ana, Calif. Promo."

Santa Ana had been home to Fender Sales since Don Randall established the sales and distribution department in 1953 (guitars and amplifiers were manufactured in Fullerton). The stencil, however, tells us this amp was some form of demo, loaner, or sample to be used at NAMM or elsewhere. The features and several stamps, date codes, and serial number indicate it was likely put together in late '66 but circulated in early '67, toward the end of the black-panel era.

VG reader and retired musician and electrical engineer Bob Walter acquired the amp nearly three years ago, under interesting circumstances.

"Whenever I'm in the New Orleans area, I visit pawn shops. About six months prior to getting this, I saw the amp on the floor behind a counter in Metairie, but never inquired about it, since I was on my way home. Six months later, the shop was having a sale. I noticed the Showman was still there, but with more items stacked on top of it. I asked, but they didn't know what to sell it for. They wanted to move inventory during the sale, so I made an as-is offer of $250, and they agreed on it."

The stencilled bottom of this extremely clean and original amp indicates it was distributed for promotional use. The inside of the chassis reveals a circuit that's as pristine and original as the outside of the amp.

Even if the amp needed work, that was a steal. But after Walters got it home, he found no issues on the bench. The original Sylvania 6L6GC output tubes and preamp tubes all tested good, and it needed just some cleaner/lubricator spray in the potentiometers to cure a little scratchiness and noise.

"This indicated the amp had seen very little use," he tells us. When plugged in, "It had

the classic, wonderful tone of a black-panel Fender, but with a bigger sound typical of a Twin Reverb. It's versatile, and I like using it with either a '60s Bassman cab or one with an Electrovoice EVM12L."

The circumstances of this amp ending up in a pawn shop are lost to time, as Walters has no idea who owned it between Fender and the eventual point of sale. It was well cared for, and we can speculate that a prior owner passed away and whoever inherited the piece found it easier to pawn than to fathom the vintage-amp market for themselves. As to official use prior to that, Walters offers a guess: "Werlein's, a four-story music store on Canal Street, was the biggest music store in New Orleans for more than 100 years. It closed in the mid '80s, and maybe this had been one of their demo units."

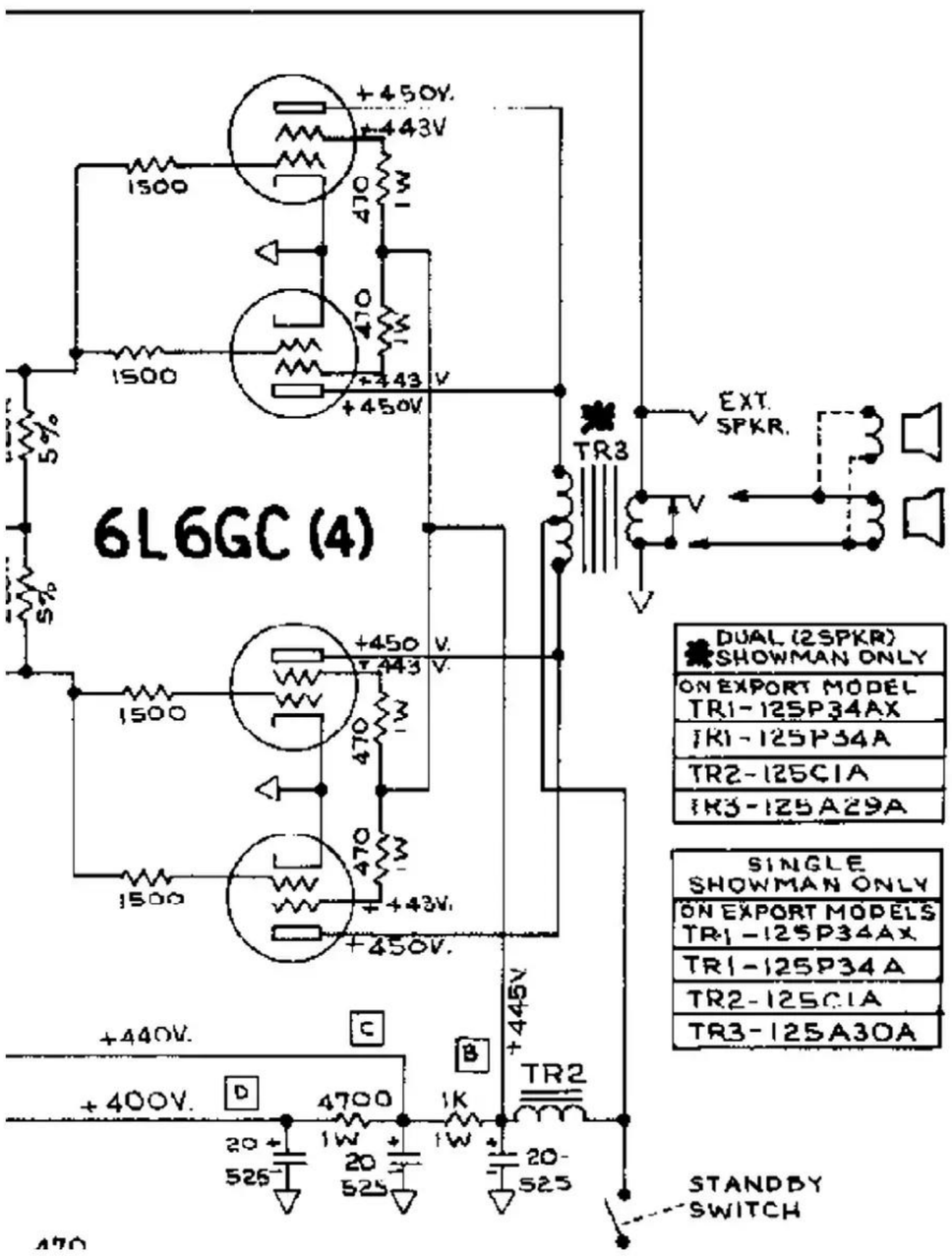
History aside, this Showman provides an excellent window on Fender's big-amp designs of the mid '60s, and despite not being among the earliest and most revered iterations of the model, it also shows us that Fender was continually improving its designs toward the goal of more power and improved headroom. Walters, who has worked on old amps since the '70s, says his examinations of the circuit indicate this build retains the pre-CBS AB763 designation, and the internals bear this out. The CBS-era changes were slow to come to many amps, and rolled out in stages, which is how this amp and others stayed Leo-certified a good year and a half or more after CBS had taken the reins in early '65.

Showman amps were available in what Fender called Single or Dual, indicated by whether the amp was sold with a 1x15" or 2x15" cabinet (both of which used JBL D130 F speakers). One other change declared its status: Noting info in the chapter on the Showman in *Fender Amps: The First Fifty Years* by John Teagle and John Sprung, Walters determined this example was a Single, according to the code on the output transformer (OT). It appears, however, that Teagle and Sprung got that detail backward, as on Fender's schematic for the AB763, the Dual Showman is listed as having a 125A29A OT – also present on this amp – while the Single has the 125A30A (the former designed to drive a 4-ohm load for two 8-ohm speakers in parallel, the latter 8-ohm for a single speaker). Likely, this is another sign that

The OT code (125A29A) indicates this was a Dual Showman, for use with an accompanying 2x15" speaker cab.

this amp was put together in '66, before Fender started putting "Dual" above "Showman Amplifier" on the control panel. Either way, Fender OTs of the era are legendary for their resilience when shown a mismatch between output and speaker-cabinet load, and a disparity of twice the rated load in either direction typically does no harm and produces no obvious sonic evidence, especially when speakers of different types and number are being compared.

Whatever the details, this '66/'67 Showman – a product from the height of the company's amplifier production – is likely one of the best "finds" of this model still to be had in the wild. The bottom stencil is a bonus, even if the new owner won't be honoring it any time soon. **VG**



Fender's schematic for the AB763 Showman indicates the output transformer used with the Dual and Single models, respectively, as seen alongside "TR3" in the two boxes to the lower-right.

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A fixture on the New York City music scene in the '70s, Binky Philips damn near made it. His band, The Planets, shared bills with The New York Dolls, Kiss, The Ramones, Television, Blondie, and others. A record deal with Warner Brothers was *right there* on the table before being quashed by a dishonest and incompetent manager.

"Instead of a bright or fading red, it has a compelling dark-brown jazz-box-type sunburst," Binky Philips says of the '59. "Rick told me, 'I beat the st out of that guitar and it took it.'" says Binky Philips. "I put the Moon Eyes on it as an homage to my love of hot rods, and to tell the world that this was my guitar and I'd do what I want with it."**

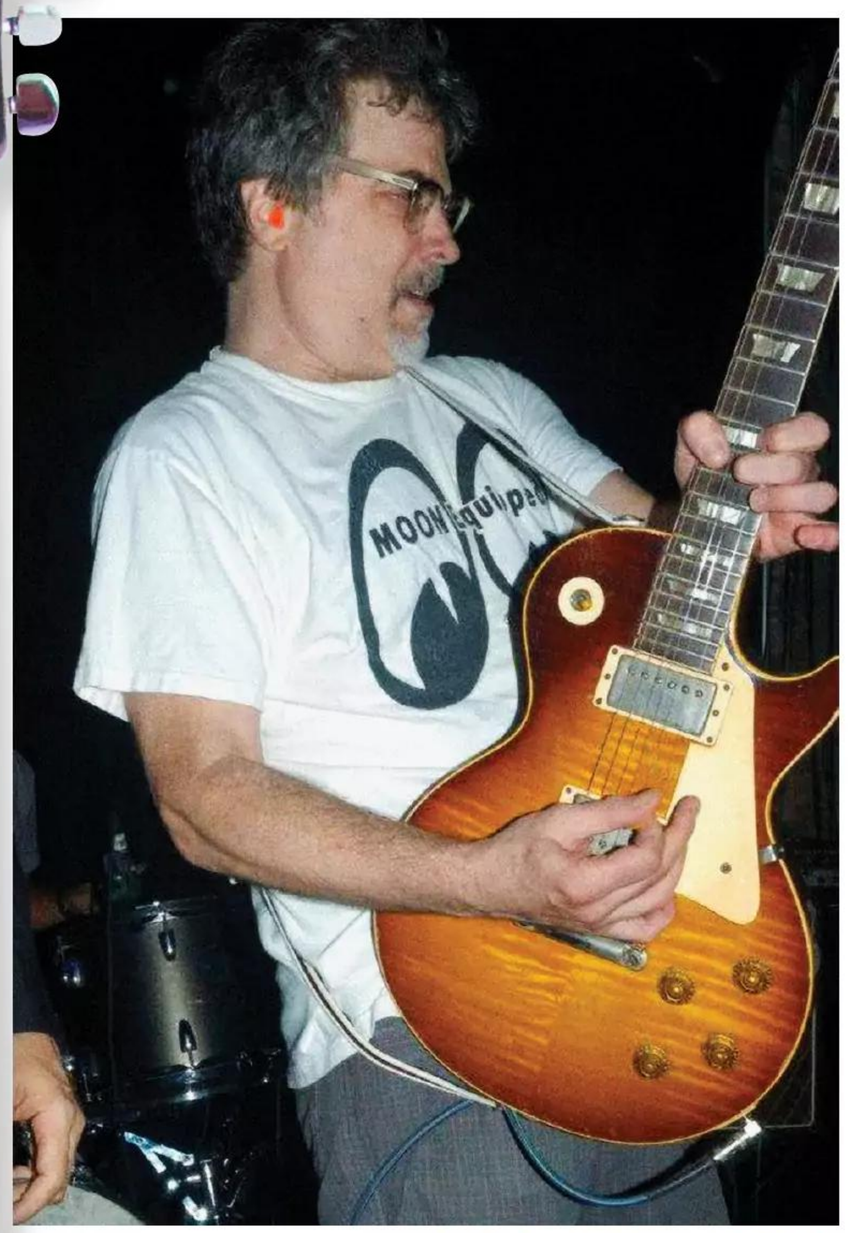
Before all that, though, Philips was just an eager music-loving teenager who spent more than a little time at Guitar Lab on West 47th Street, where staff loved talking about cool old instruments and amps.

"In 1970, during the greatest summer of my life, I was their gopher," he laughs. "I got to know Carl Thompson, who'd hired me that June, co-owner Charlie LoBue, and Bruce Hoeb, who fixed everything on guitars except the electronics, which were handled by Steve Blucher."

One day, after Philips had delivered lunch and the men gathered to eat in the break room, he passed Hoeb's workbench and noticed a familiar guitar case. Though he didn't have permission, he opened it to sneak a look at its contents – a Les Paul Standard that belonged to Rick Derringer, waiting for Hoeb to repair a 1" crack on the bass side of its headstock.

Photos by/courtesy of Binky Philips.

Philips with the '59 on the cover of his 1986 EP, recorded live at CBGB...



...and at Arlene's Grocery in 2012.

"That was the first time I'd ever held a sunburst Les Paul," Philips recalls, and though he didn't dare play a note on it, "It *glowed* with vibe! I just held it and stared at myself in a mirror hanging in the hallway. I had it out of the case for maybe 60 seconds, but I'll never forget how it felt."

A fan of Johnny Winter And, Philips was particularly fond of Derringer's playing, which is why his jaw dropped when he walked into Guitar Lab on May 2, 1972, and saw the Les Paul hanging on the consignment wall with a price tag that said "$650" – $100 above the going rate for a 'Burst. Reflexively, Philips shouted toward the counter, where Thompson stood, "*Sold*! Carl, please take it down *now*!"

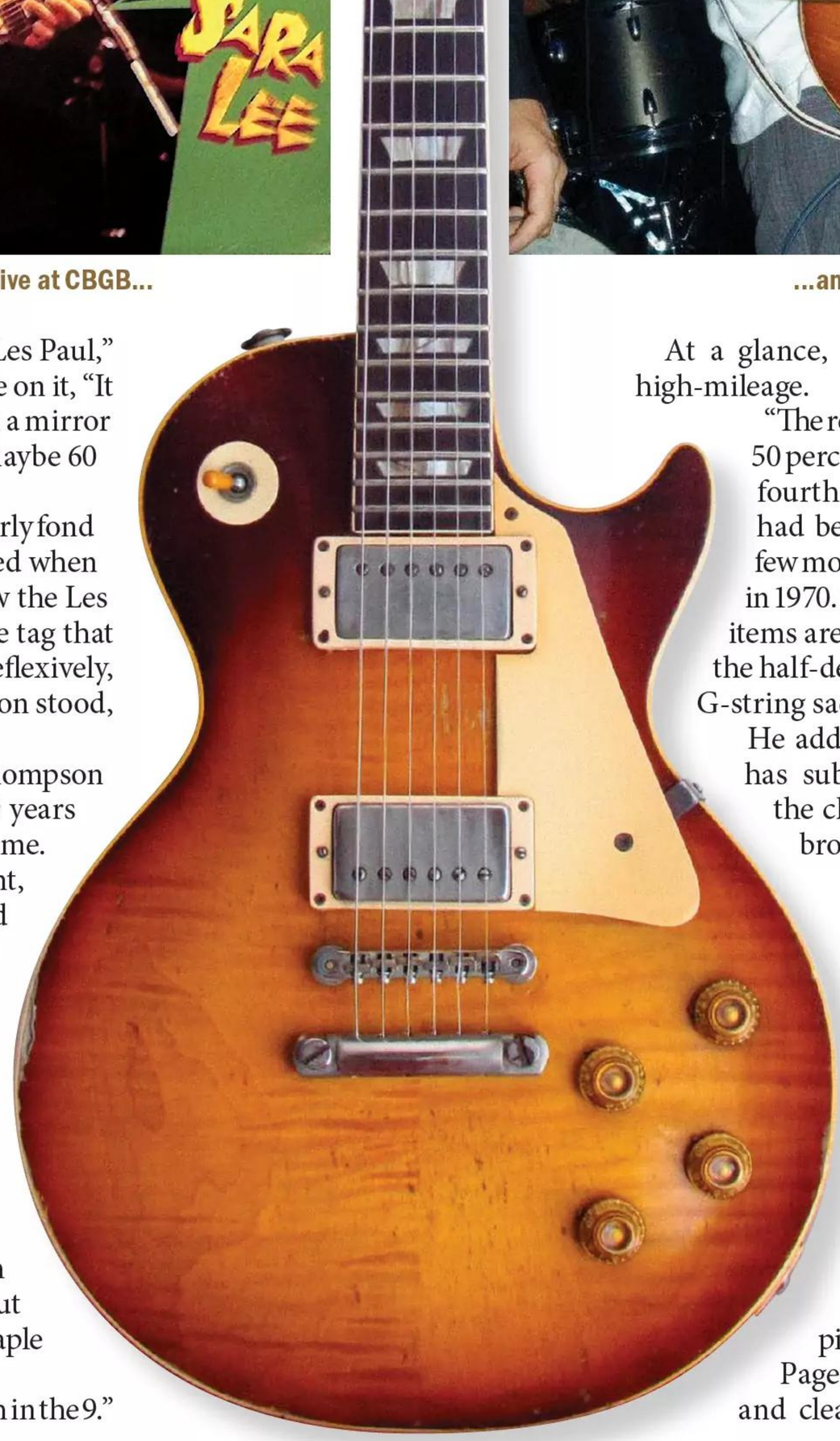
The first person to see the guitar on the wall (Thompson had hung it just 15 minutes before), Philips was 19 years old at the time, working two jobs and living at home. He happened to have $652.80 in his savings account, and from that moment, the Les Paul dutifully served as his main stage and studio axe as The Planets chased stardom.

"If I played 100 gigs, I used it through my 50-watt Marshall on at least 90 of them," he says.

For decades, Philips believed the guitar was a '58 because a tiny black blemish in the wood distorted the 9 in the serial number, but...

"Someone reminded me that there were no double-cream PAFs in 1958," he says. "So, I sent pictures to Vic DaPra and George Gruhn, and both determined it was a '59 not only for the pickup, but the small heel, neck profile, and the wider-flamed maple on its top.

"I looked more carefully and finally saw the blemish in the 9."



At a glance, it's obvious the guitar is high-mileage.

"The road rash is 50 percent Rick's, 50 percent mine," he says. "It's on a fourth set of frets, and the tuners had been changed to Schallers a few months before I held it that day in 1970. The only other non-original items are the jack plate – I still have the half-destroyed original – and the G-string saddle."

He adds that with age the guitar has subtly become more red as the clear coat ambered and the brown dye faded.

"With the pickguard removed, you can see a strip of ruby red running around the edge and how the brown started out almost black. When I bought it, you couldn't see the flame on the cutaway bout or by the toggle unless you were in direct sunlight. Now you can.

"The double-black bridge pickup has the classic Jimmy Page PAF snarl – razor-sharp and clear at lower volumes. And

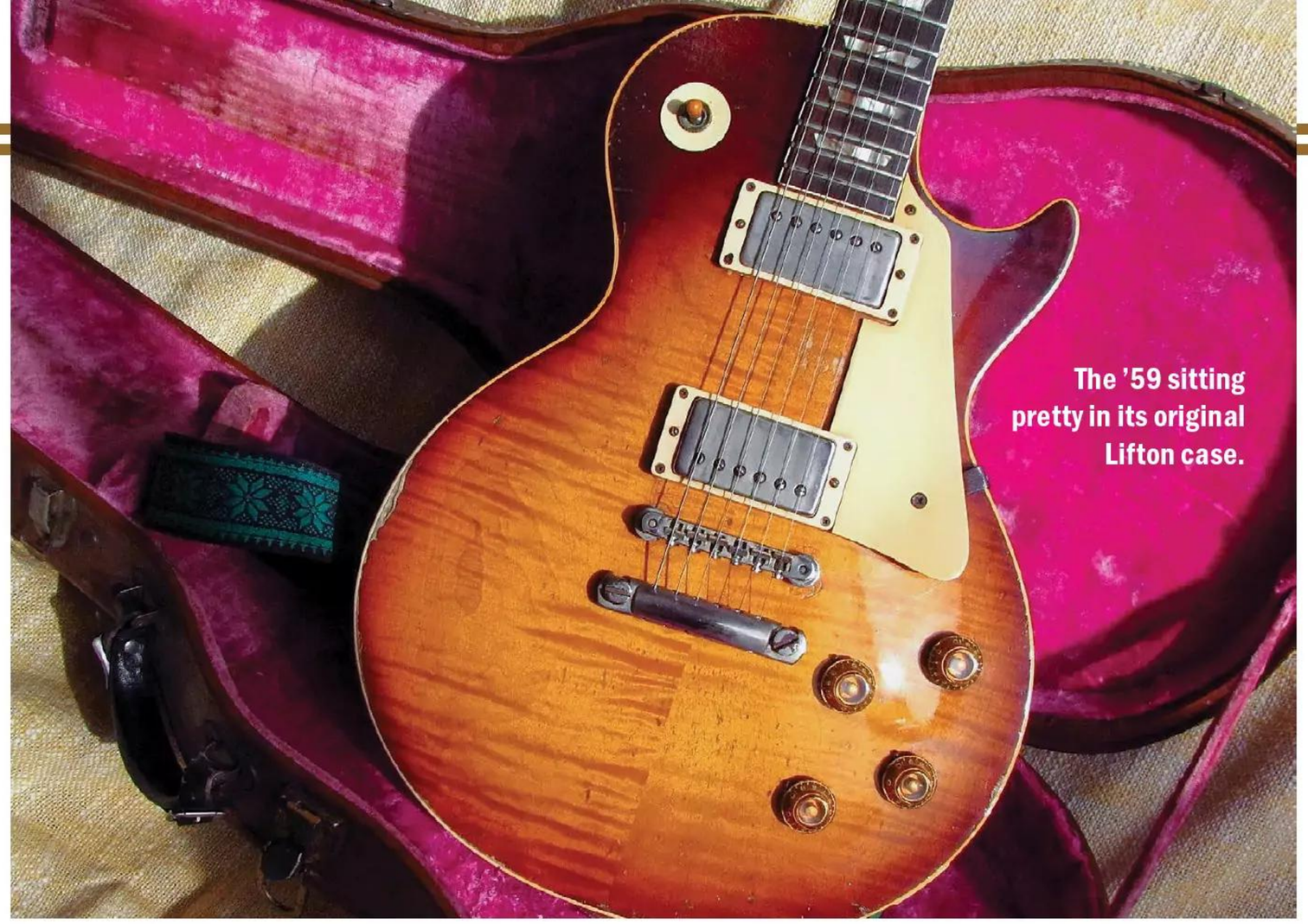
Philips EP: Ebet Roberts. Binky Philips 2012: Gary Soffer.

the neck pickup doesn't sound like any other humbucker I've ever heard – it's much glassier than you'd expect, and ultra-articulate. And there is unique acoustic rumble on the low end, almost like a J-200. Cranked, it's so delicious that it's sometimes difficult to switch to the bridge pickup, but when you do, if you have both pickups in 'Goes to 11!' mode, when you bang the toggle down, you get a serious decibel kick."

After almost five decades in the music biz as a player/writer in bands, record-store manager, independent radio promotion man, artist manager, record producer, and label owner, Philips is now, "...happily retired and playing guitar on my couch." He tends to a collection of vintage gems that includes a '57 Strat re-fretted by Hoeb in the '70s ("His work on it still thrills me more than 50 years later," Philips says), a '54 goldtop, '61 mono ES-355, '61 SG Custom, '61 Strat, '64 Esquire, '62 Dwight, and a '65 Rickenbacker Model 1998. He plays mostly through a '66 black-panel Vibrolux Reverb. "I crank it in my windowless storage room," he says. "I love its super-rich tone and delicious breakup – and that classic Fender reverb. Yum!"

Even with all of his goodies, there's never been a moment of doubt about which guitar would remain if he could have only one, and few days have passed where Philips didn't ponder how fate brought it into his world.

"I am acutely aware of my good fortune and remarkable timing," he says. "I feel honored to have 9 0714. It's the best electric guitar ever made." ***– Ward Meeker***



The '59 sitting pretty in its original Lifton case.

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

Binky Philips is the author of *You're A Liar, Binky Philips*, set for release in September '25.

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0-18 '57, needs neck reset, etc..... $4500

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Gibson LP Jr '58, slab, Cherry, vgd+ cond, $9750
Gibson CS LP '60 Murphy Lab "Dutch Burst" $7500
Gibson LP Std, '80, Wine Red, "second", $3250
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Collings CL DIxe '09, Flame IT Burst, exc+ $5500
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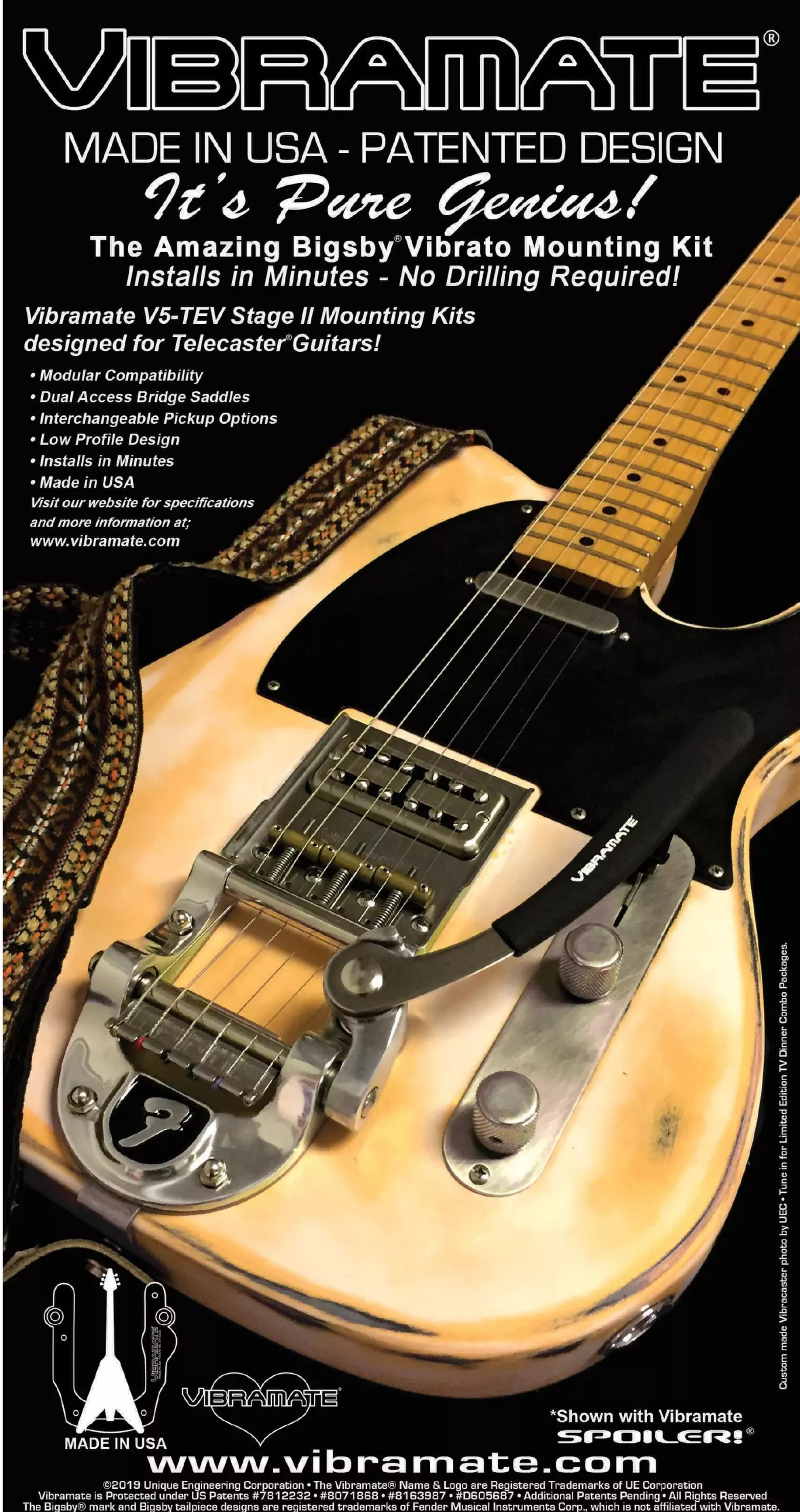

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Price Guide

By Alan Greenwood & Ram W. Tuli

1994 Guild Brian May Signature Red Special

YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND. LOW	EXC. COND. HIGH
1984	Acoustic 114	50 watts, 2x10	$250	$360
1920s	American Conservatory (Lyon & Healy) Acoustic Guitar	Spanish 6-string	$650	$850
1987	Ampeg SVT-400 Head		$400	$650
1980	B.C. Rich Eagle Doubleneck		$12,500	$15,500
1965	Baldwin Model B2 Bass	35 watts, 1x15	$350	$450
1991	Charvel Surfcaster	2 singles, vibrato	$1,500	$2,000
1975	Colorsound Wah Wah		$750	$975
1998	Danelectro 59-DC/'59 Dano (Reissue)		$350	$500
1960	D'Angelico Special (Cutaway)	Sunburst	$9,000	$12,000
2012	Deering Boston	6-String	$1,125	$1,500
1977	DOD 6 Band Equalizer EQ601		$65	$80
2009	EarthQuaker Devices Grand Orbiter		$110	$150
1999	Electro-Harmonix Bass Micro-Synthesizer		$200	$300
1933	Epiphone Blackstone	Masterbilt	$1,500	$1,875
1953	Epiphone Emperor Cutaway	Sunburst	$10,000	$12,500
1955	Fender Bassman	Tweed, 4x10, 2 inputs	$7,500	$10,000
1960	Fender Concert	Brown (pink) tweed	$3,000	$4,000
1966	Fender Jazzmaster	Sunburst	$7,500	$10,000
1966	Fender Mustang		$4,000	$5,000
1963	Fender Princeton	Black, 6G2	$2,750	$4,250
2019	Fender Eric Clapton Signature Stratocaster (Custom Shop)		$3,000	$4,000
2020	Fender George Harrison Rocky Stratocaster	Custom Shop LE	$16,500	$22,000
1959	Fender Stratocaster	Mary Kaye, gold hw, maple	$85,000	$165,000
1959	Fender Telecaster	Sunburst, slab	$32,000	$42,000
1971	Fender Telecaster Thinline	Sunburst, 4-bolt, singles	$7,000	$9,500
2010	Fender '52 Telecaster (Custom Shop)	Closet Classic	$3,000	$4,000
2005	Fender '67 Telecaster (Custom Shop)	Closet Classic	$3,000	$4,000
1998	Fender Will Ray Signature Mojo Telecaster		$3,000	$4,000
2010	Fender Snakehead Telecaster	45 offered	$5,000	$6,500
1986	G&L L-1000		$1,250	$1,625
2020	Gibson 1968 Les Paul Custom Reissue (Custom Shop)	Ebony	$4,000	$5,000
1966	Gibson C-0 Classical		$575	$750
1972	Gibson EB-4 L		$1,500	$2,000
1990	Gibson Firebird V/Firebird V Reissue	Sunburst, White, Black	$3,500	$4,500
1933	Gibson L-5/L-5N	Value per specs	$15,000	$20,000
1979	Gibson Les Paul Custom	2 or 3 pickups	$5,000	$6,500
1998	Gibson Les Paul Junior	Sunburst, single-cut, stop tailpiece	$1,500	$2,000
2010	Gibson Les Paul Standard Mike McCready 1959	VOS	$7,250	$9,500
2012	Gibson Midtown Standard		$1,625	$2,250
2006	Gibson SG Custom Elliot Easton Sign.	Blue or white	$3,500	$4,500
1998	Gibson SG-Z	Z-tailpiece	$1,625	$2,125
1962	Gibson Tal Farlow	Viceroy Brown	$8,500	$10,500
1992	Godin Artisan ST I/ST I		$725	$950
1957	Gretsch Chet Atkins Solid Body 6121	G brand	$10,000	$12,500
1968	Gretsch Model 6071	1 pickup	$1,750	$2,250

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YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND. LOW	EXC. COND. HIGH
1955	Gretsch White Falcon Mono 6136	Single-cut	$50,000	$65,000
1994	Guild Brian May Signature Red Special		$4,250	$5,250
1963	Guild Duane Eddy Standard DE-400	Sunburst	$4,250	$5,250
1962	Guild Model 98-RT	30 watts, 1x12 reverb	$875	$1,250
1965	Guild Thunder 1 (T1RVT/T1)	1x8, 1x12	$675	$1,125
1980	Hamer Special Series	1st version	$2,250	$3,000
2000	Ibanez Auto Wah AW7 (Tone-Lok)		$50	$100
1960s	Imperial Electric Hollowbody		$250	$350
1965	Kalamazoo Electric	Various models	$500	$650
1961	Kent Electric	Common models	$250	$350
1986	Kramer Pacer Deluxe		$950	$1,250
1980s	Larrivee C-10 Deluxe		$2,000	$2,500
1950s	Magnatone Model 199 Student	6 watts, 1x8	$650	$950
1969	Marshall JTM 50 Model 1962 MK IV 2x12 Combo	50 watts, 2x12, post Bluesbreaker assoc.	$6,500	$10,000
1971	Marshall Model 2040 Artist 50-Watt Combo	2x12 combo	$1,750	$2,500
1969	Martin 5-28		$5,375	$7,000
2001	Martin 000-40SPR Peter Rowan Midnight Moonlight	$3,500	$4,500	
1898	Martin 00-21	Gut bracing	$9,500	$12,000
1930	Martin 0-21	Belly bridge	$11,000	$15,000
2003	Martin DC-16GTE Premium		$1,250	$1,625
1987	Martin HD-28SE	Brazilian rosewood	$6,250	$8,250
1931	Martin OM-28	Mid '31, banjo tuners, large 'guard	$100,000	$125,000
1898	Martin Style 5		$1,625	$2,125
1983	Mesa-Boogie Mark II C + Head	Hardwood cab	$6,000	$9,000
1966	Mosrite Combo Mark 1		$2,000	$2,500
1954	National Model 1103 Del-Mar		$1,250	$1,625
1930s	Old Kraftsman Archtop		$450	$575
2006	Ovation Glen Campbell Artist 1627		$1,250	$1,625
2008	Peavey Classic 30/112	Head	$325	$500
2012	Peavey Void IV		$250	$350
1971	Rickenbacker Model 331 Light Show	Type 2, 2nd edition	$12,000	$16,000
1954	Rickenbacker Model 800/Combo 800	Blond/white, 1pickup	$7,500	$9,500
2020	Santa Cruz Eric Skye 00	Cocobolo, Adirondack	$5,500	$7,000
1966	Silvertone Model 1442 Standard	1 pickup	$750	$1,125
1940s	Strad-O-Lin Style A		$475	$625
1960	Supro Sahara/Sahara 70		$1,250	$1,625
1979	Tokai CE-300 Cat's Eyes	Flat-Top	$525	$675
1918	Vega Imperial Electric	5-string	$2,000	$2,750
1990s	Vox AC30 Reissue Model	Reissue	$1,250	$2,000
1970s	Wal Pro II		$5,500	$7,500
1966	Yamaha SA (Super Axe) Series	Highest-end	$1,750	$2,250

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The band in '67, after Donald "Duck" Dunn replaced Lewie Steinberg.

ACCIDENTAL LEGEND

Booker T. & The M.G.s' *Green Onions*

By Bret Adams

As the house band for Stax Records, Booker T. & The M.G.s invented the Southern soul sound while backing Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett, and others in the famed Memphis studio. One day in 1962, a happy accident led them to create the most famous pop instrumental ever recorded.

The quartet – organist Booker T. Jones, guitarist Steve Cropper, bassist Lewie Steinberg, and drummer Al Jackson, Jr. – released the groovy R&B/funk "Green Onions" that summer, and it raced to #3 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart (#1 on R&B) on its way to achieving gold status. Riding its success, the band recorded 11 more songs for its debut album, *Green Onions*.

The M.G.s had a distinctive style; riding a hypnotic beat laid down by Jackson and Steinberg, Jones played nimble organ lines while Cropper's Esquire riffs added the right spice at the right time. The music breathed.

"There was open conversation many times in the sessions," Jones told *Vintage Guitar*.

"We would remind ourselves just to do that particular thing. Don't get too complicated. 'Let's keep the space here.' And that became a rule of thumb from Al Jackson.

"The Stax sound was built around the drums. Most songs were driven by the drums and then the guitar, and all have some type of instrumental in the middle. That's where I came in."

The legend of "Green Onions" starts one day in the studio, when rockabilly singer Billy Lee Riley showed up hoarse. Antsy, the M.G.s started jamming on a blues riff. Stax President Jim Stewart was engineering the session, loved the tune, and hit "Record." The song was titled "Behave Yourself" and Stewart wanted to release it immediately as a single, but a B-side was needed. Cropper remembered an organ riff Jones had played at a gig a few weeks before. He played several until Cropper recognized it. The others jumped in, and "Green Onions" was composed on the spot, recorded, and cut on a lathe.

The next day, Cropper took the 45 to a Memphis disc jockey who played "Green Onions" – not the A-side "Behave Yourself" – four times back to back, generating a flood of phone calls. It quickly became a national sensation. The question was how to capitalize on it.

"Let me give you a little back story," Jones said. "In '62, my focus was to get into Indiana University to study music. I was taking theory lessons to try to learn chords and chord structure, and that's when I stumbled on the chords that became 'Green Onions.' It wasn't planned; it was a session outtake.

"We needed to record an album to make any money off of the popularity of 'Green Onions.' I was going back to Memphis on weekends and holidays, whenever I could while I was a freshman at IU. That's how the album was conceived and recorded."

In addition to "Green Onions" and "Behave Yourself," the only other original song was "Mo' Onions."

"My memory is of Jim's sister (Stax co-founder Estelle Axton) walking in and she said, 'You guys don't have anything else like "Green Onions" on this album.' And I think that was an attempt – not a *good* attempt – to get back to the 'Green Onions' sounds," said Jones. "That was the closest I could get, but it didn't have the unique changes that 'Green Onions' had. It just stays on F and Steve comes up with a nice little guitar lick."

The other tracks were covers. Two – "I Got a Woman" and "Lonely Avenue" – had been recorded by Ray Charles.

"I was a big Ray Charles fan. The reason I was even playing the Hammond M3 was because of him when he was in Quincy Jones' band."

The Top Notes' "Twist and Shout" – best-known for the Isley Brothers and Beatles versions – is given a workout.

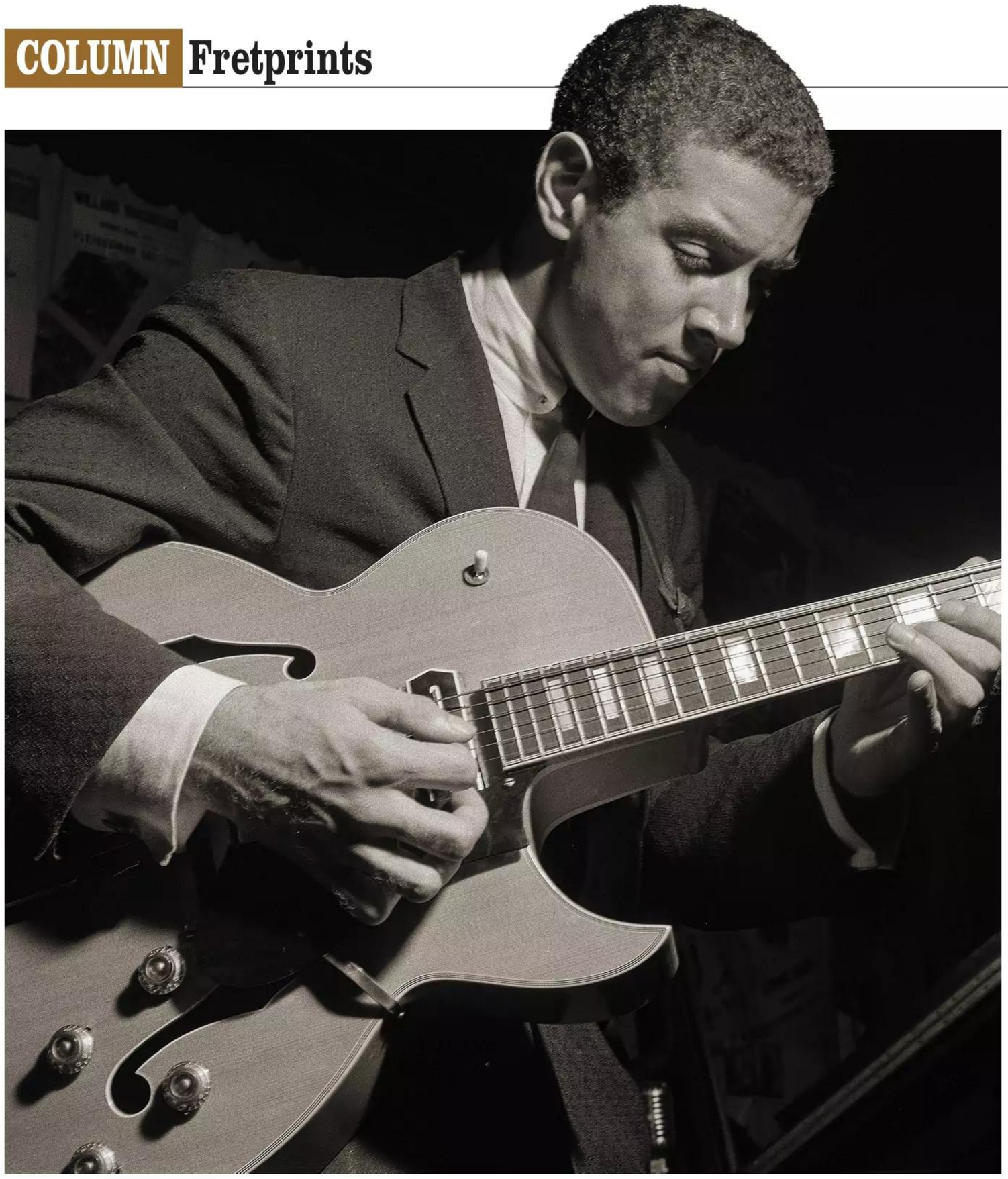
"We heard them live at one of the clubs in Memphis, which was great for us. There was a lot of energy, and that was one of the more-authentic covers," Jones recalled.

Others included songs by Dave "Baby" Cortez, Acker Bilk, Mary Wells, the Bim Bam Boos, and Jackie Wilson. Jones knew versions of "Comin' Home Baby" recorded by both the Dave Bailey Quintet and Herbie Mann. And what the sessions lacked in original material they made up for in musicianship and spontaneity.

"(Everything) was recorded live. If somebody messed up, we did it again. We paid attention to each other. There were times when we couldn't believe how quickly it came together and 'Oh, did you have the tape on?' And then there were times it took days to really try to get a song to come together," Jones said. "Mostly, there was a short rehearsal and somebody was in the control room. Very often they caught the takes."

The interracial band from the segregated South was not pictured on the cover because some believed it would hurt sales. Steinberg left in 1965, replaced by Donald "Duck" Dunn. Tragically, Jackson was only 39 when he was murdered at his home in '75. The band continued to record and perform with drummers including Willie Hall and Steve Jordan, but stopped after Dunn's death in 2012; Steinberg died at 82 in 2016. Cropper and Dunn were members of the Blues Brothers band fronted by actors John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd, which had a 1978 hit with a cover of Sam & Dave's "Soul Man" (during which Belushi reiterates the original's call-out going into Cropper's lead break, "Play it, Steve!" – Cropper played on both). Along with Hall, Cropper and Dunn appeared in the 1980 feature film *The Blues Brothers* and the '98 sequel *Blues Brothers 2000*.

Green Onions reached #33 on the *Billboard* Top 200 and its title track has been heard in many movies and television shows. In 1999, it was named to the Grammy Hall of Fame, then added to the Library of Congress' National Recording Registry in 2012. **VG**



BLUES, BOP, BALLADS AND BEYOND

Kenny Burrell's *On View at the Five Spot*

By Wolf Marshall

Born in Detroit, Kenny Burrell moved to New York City in early 1956, after touring with Oscar Peterson, and immediately entered the aristocracy of the world's jazz mecca. He debuted as band leader on Blue Note that May, and by '59 was a sought-after collaborator. The role had him rubbing shoulders with John Coltrane, Jimmy Smith, Billie Holiday, Benny Goodman, Horace Silver, Quincy Jones, Kenny Dorham, et al.

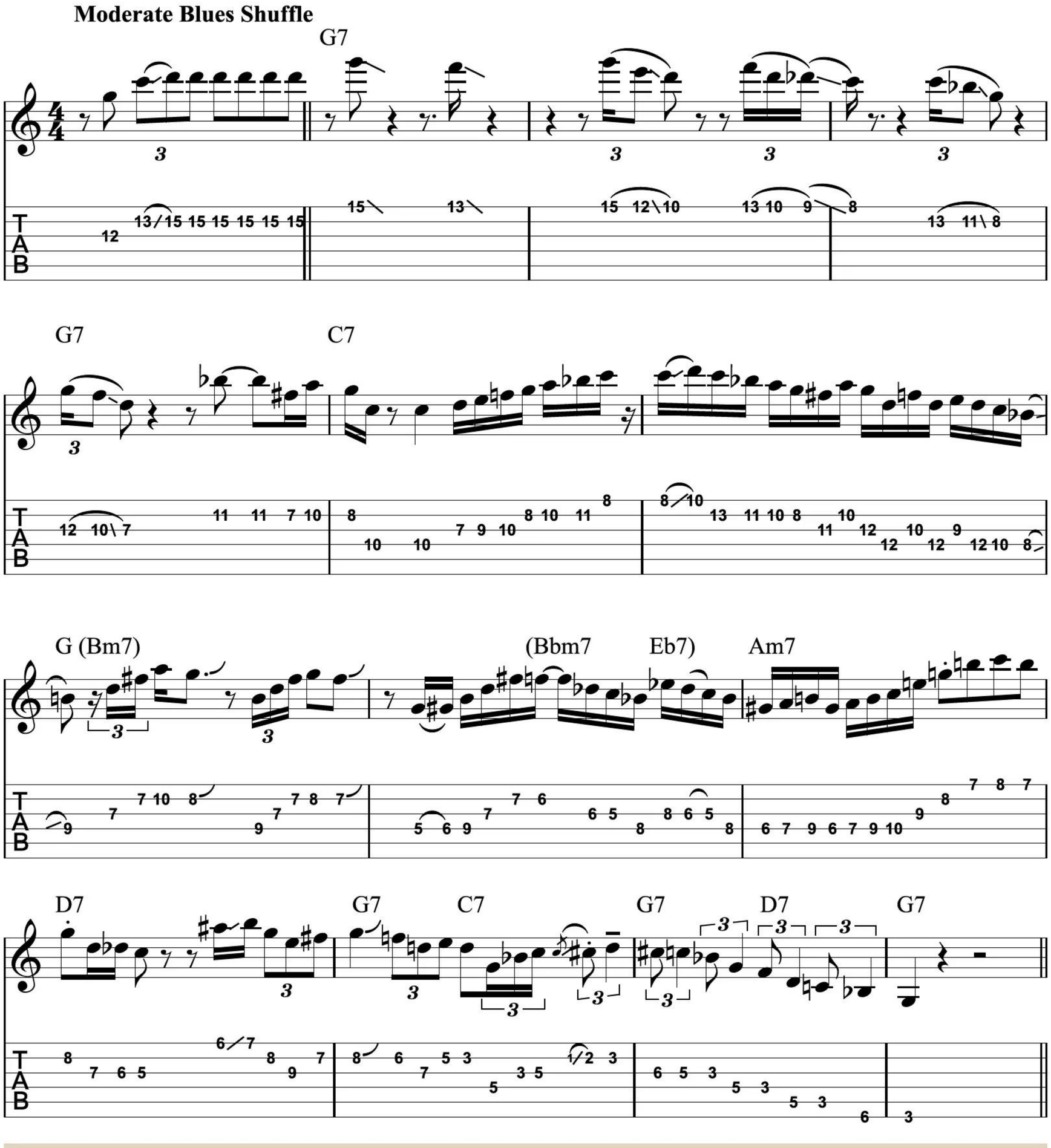
After a string of impressive albums, the time was right for Burrell's first true live recording. Though jazz albums of the era were largely "live in the studio" affairs, Kenny and Blue Note founder Alfred Lion decided to record his group in a club before an attentive audience of connoisseurs. It happened the evening of August 25 at The Five Spot – haven for bohemian writers and artists, and one of several venues in Greenwich Village that offered an alternative to 52nd Street. It was an ideal location, boasting the suitable ambiance.

Documenting the rise of modern jazz guitar, *View at the Five Spot Cafe*, co-billed with drummer Art Blakey, is a jewel in Burrell's crown. Steeped in hard bop, the trio (with bassist Ben Tucker) alternated between quartet with classically trained pianist Roland Hanna, and quartet-plus-sax lineups with pianist Bobby Timmons and tenor saxophonist Tina Brooks. The original album contained five tunes but has been expanded with nine additional jazz standards, Great American Songbook tunes, and Kenny's originals as *On View at the Five Spot – The Complete Masters*,

From the set, much can be gleaned about jazz and how its exponents operate. Burrell had developed a highly recognizable sound – a warm, clean acoustic/electric tone with blues bite and occasional grit enhanced by slight overdrive expertly captured by engineer Rudy Van Gelder, who paid close attention to mic placement, made judicious adjustments, and heeded Kenny's input during the process. Photos reveal Burrell favored the Gibson archtop seen in sessions and live performances with Benny Goodman. He'd suggested a deeper Florentine-cutaway L-5CES years earlier, and in '58, Gibson complied with a custom blond version bearing the atypical configuration of Charlie Christian bar pickup near the neck, PAF at the bridge, upper-bout pickup toggle, adjustable tailpiece, unadorned plastic pickguard with plain bracket, and headstock-mounted Van Eps damper. Kenny was one of the earliest jazz guitarists to embrace Fender amps and likely used his tweed Twin.

The appropriate opener, "Birks' Works," was penned by Dizzy (John Birks) Gillespie. Its minor-blues marked Burrell's earliest major record date in '51, the first time Dizzy replaced piano with guitar. It proved ideal for the quintet with Timmons, who launches the performance with groove-conscious piano. The group develops a solid medium-tempo swing feel (Blakey's forté) during the sax/guitar theme statement. In his first solo of the night (1:10), Burrell strikes an imitable balance of blues, bop, and modal elements, setting the pace for Brooks and Timmons. He trades call-and-response riffs with the rhythm section (8:14) and recaps the theme (8:53). The alternate take has a looser feel, with greater spontaneity, suitably understated playing by Timmons and Tucker, and a quote of "Summertime" underscoring the close connection between standards and the bebop lexicon.

"Hallelujah," Vincent Youmans' '27 composition, became a favorite with swing and bebop bands. In the intro, the quartet establishes a walking ostinato while Burrell supplies familiar but dissonant blues lines for a modernistic effect. During the theme, Blakey drives the infectious upbeat groove and spurs Burrell on to one of his finest solos (0:54-3:52). In his improvisations, he blends static and rhythmi-

Kenny Burrell:Francis Wolff.

Burrell's blues expertise made him a favorite among guitarists like Hendrix, Santana, Howe, and SRV, as well as R&B players and jazz traditionalists. This excerpt (1:17-1:46, third chorus) from his original blues in G, "36-23-36," makes the case convincingly. In the opening he plays simple space-conscious blues-scale fragments delivered with rhythmic panache and soulful phrasing over G7. His double-timing over C7 provides contrast with intricate lines reflecting his bop side, as do harmonically savvy Coltrane-inspired substitutions (Bm7-Bbm7-E^{b}9) over the G chord in measures 8-9 and melodic-minor and bebop scales over Am7-D7. He segues back to traditional blues with his resolution to G7, landing squarely with an idiomatic blues-scale descent.

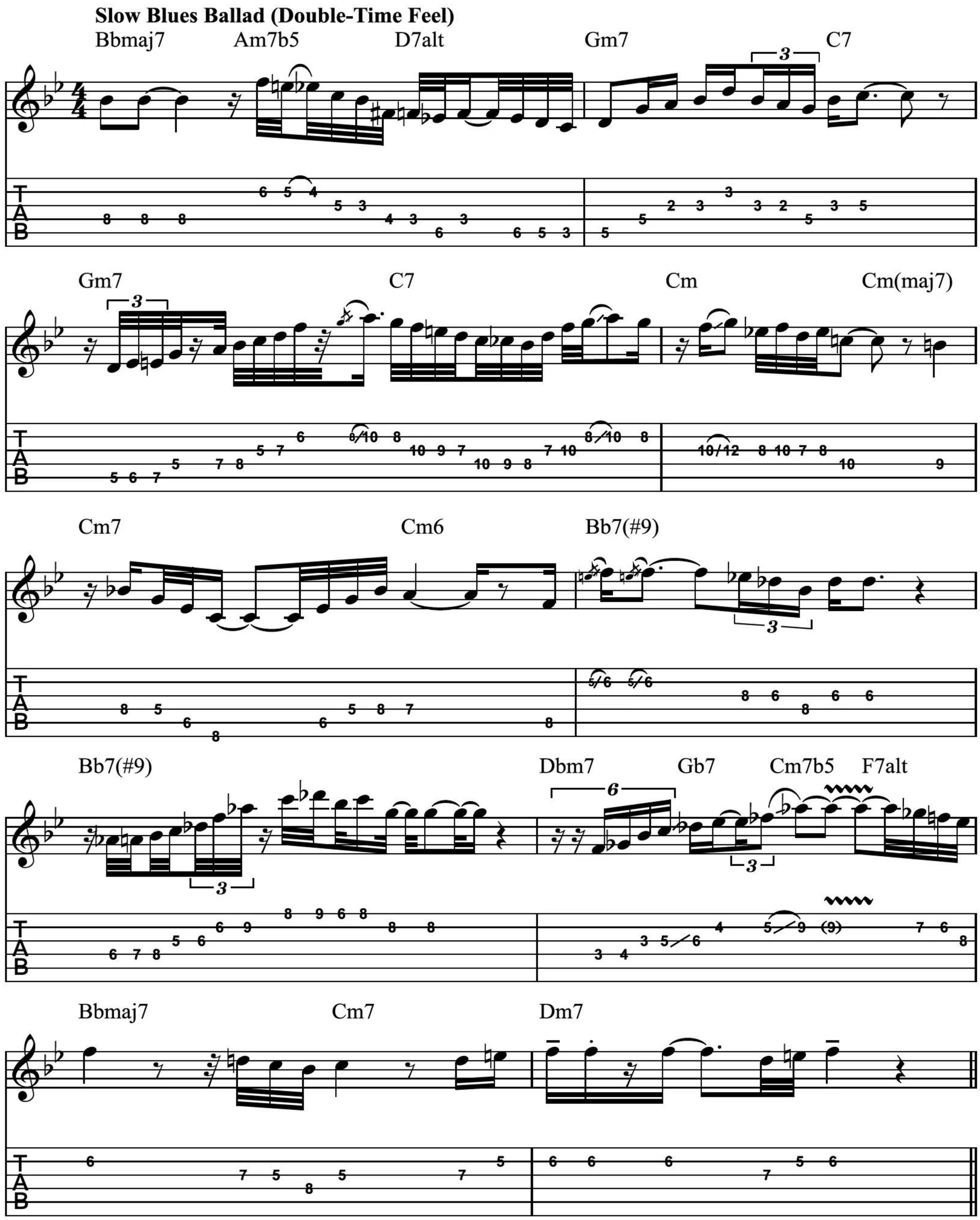
cally charged blues passages juxtaposed with harmonically savvy bop virtuosity enlivened by articulate accenting and incisive pick attack. Hanna and Blakey follow with solos leading to a reprise of intro, theme, and an outro based on the opening ostinato.

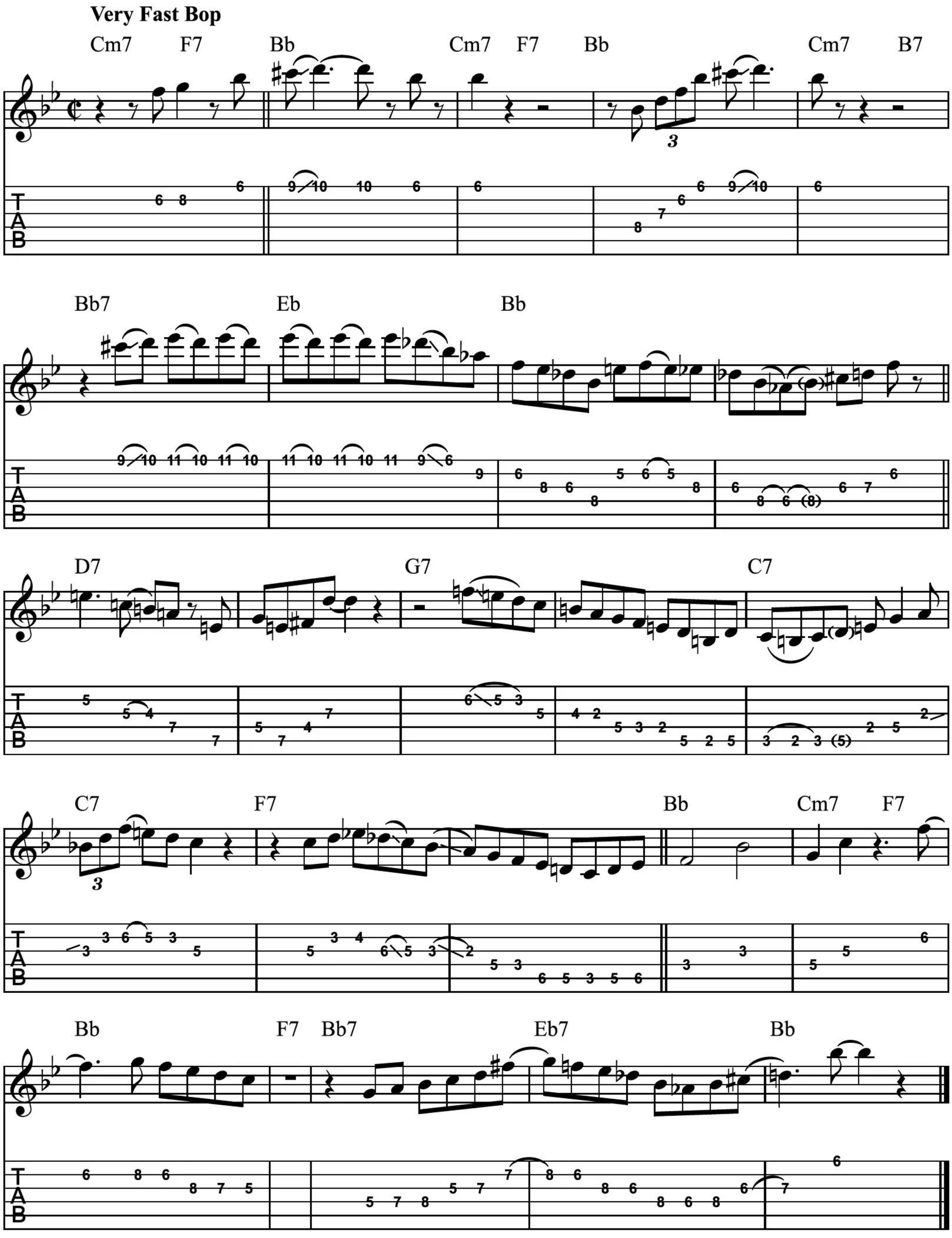
"Lady Be Good," a Gershwin brothers show tune from the 1920s, prompted Thelonious Monk's contrafact "Hackensack," which is what the band actually played. Their quintet performance personifies bebop energy at the outset, with Blakey's drum intro, fast swing groove, and an arrangement that finds Burrell adding lead lines during the theme's bridge. He takes the first solo (0:37-3:26) and stays firmly within bop parameters endemic to the tune, applying blues riffs sparingly in key spots. In a familiar jazz maneuver, he feeds a rhythmic motive to Brooks (3:20), who responds in his solo entrance, strengthening the camaraderie. After Timmons' improvisations, Burrell leads the group back with a one-chorus solo (8:51) and theme restatement, where Blakey solos in the bridge. The alternate take, also uptempo, is slightly slower drawing out a more relaxed feeling that compliments Kenny's exploitation of a slightly overdriven tone and exploration of greater chromaticism and double-timed phrasing. The impromptu arrangement is distinguished from the earlier take with extensive "trading fours" (alternating four-bar phrases) between Burrell, Blakey, and Brooks after solos.

Andy Summers asserted "Lover Man" bears "one of the best jazz guitar solos ever recorded." The bluesy ballad composed in '41 by pianists Ram Ramirez, Jimmy Davis, and James Sherman, received a worthy quintet treatment. After Timmons' intro, the band sets a slow, soulful pace that coaxes Kenny to present the elegant melody and unfold seamless improvisations with logic and momentum toward a strong climax. Noteworthy are his rhythmic fluctuations in phrasing and decorations of the theme, elastic rubato feeling, use of space and dynamics, blues references, florid double-timed passages offset by singable lines, and thoughtful allusions to the melody while improvising. In the hands of a jazz master, the interpretation of the melody is as compelling as freely improvised solos. The coda sports a colorful closing chord episode (7:50), a familiar Burrell trait that developed from his attention to Oscar Moore, pianists, and classical guitar.

Blues is showcased on two takes of "36-23-36," an original 12-bar in G that reinforced his growing reputation as the leading guitarist in soul jazz. His double-stop theme and soul-

ful fills practically define the genre, as do the hints of gospel, call-and-response phrases with Hanna, and shuffling urban blues. Kenny's three-chorus solo boasts the singular blend of groove riffs, sophisticated bop melodies, and unabashed blues licks that comprise his calling card. The alternate take was the night's final tune, where quartet performance was recast as a quintet playing slow blues in E♭. Kenny replaces his double-stop theme with a soulful improvisatory blues-scale melody and his solo (0:42) boasts blues/jazz mannerisms delivered with the touch and conception that earned him the distinction of being B.B. King's favorite guitarist... period. By contrast with the earlier take, he favors a more-aggressive attack and slightly overdriven tone that suits the funkier phrasing, decidedly down-home approach and 12/8 feel cultivated in the arrangement. After Brooks and Timmons solos, Burrell and Brooks return home with a new theme (6:44) before adding an uptempo rendition of "The Theme" (Miles Davis' famous "I Got Rhythm" contrafact) as a coda, modified with "Honeysuckle Rose" bridge changes.

Clifford Brown's "Swingin," contrafact on "I Never Knew" channels Brownie's bop spirit and returns Brooks to the bandstand in the second set. Interestingly, Burrell covered the original several times in the period. He states Brown's classic intro lines, plays the catchy theme in unison with Brooks, and improvises melodies in the minor-mode bridge. Following Brooks' flight, he delivers a balanced, animated bop/blues solo that epitomizes his evolving late-'50s style. The recap (7:31) features Burrell and Blakey trading fours then progresses to free sparring between Brooks and Burrell, punctuated by Blakey's breaks. It closes with a characteristic jazz reprise of the theme and intro as outro.

A jazzman's journey through balladry is beautifully conveyed in this portion of the theme (0:44-1:20) in "Lover Man." Burrell decorates the melody exquisitely, blurring the line between statement, connective fills, and complex improvisation. Note elements like the altered-chord line over Am7♭5-D7, bebop-scale run over C7, modal sounds over Cm, and minor-blues references on B♭7(♯9) that bring out the "Detroit grease." Even a cursory glance at his extemporized melodies compared with the lead sheet reveal the depth of his multiple variations on the theme.

"If You Could See Me Now," Tadd Dameron's 1946 ballad popularized by Sarah Vaughan, conjured a romantic blues-laced mood from the quartet inspiring one of Kenny's most emotional excursions. A favorite (re-recorded in trio form on '77's *Tin Tin Deo* and as chord

Burrell's nod to bebop traditions is epitomized with "The Take Off." The lightning-fast swing (298 BPM!) in this B♭ "Rhythm changes" tune evoked some of his finest uptempo playing. This excerpt (1:06-1:23) reveals varied approaches that hint at both Charlie Christian inspiration and horn-like modern-jazz. He starts with blues-based groove riffs in measures 1-5 and develops a longer line with an ostinato figure and quick blues passage combining minor and major sounds in 6-9. He switches to pronounced bop sounds in the bridge, measures 10-17; outlining the cycle changes with colorful harmonically-active phrases. His closing thoughts purvey simpler lines that reconcile intervallic playing with diatonic melody and a blues-oriented phrase ending.

solo on *Lotus Blossom* in '95), it suits his tendencies perfectly. Burrell reinterprets the melody with exquisite extemporizing, intricate phrasing, strong double-timing, and ubiquitous blues inflections rendered with the expressiveness of a vocalist – splitting the difference between a personal jazz reading of the theme and free improvisation. He passes it to Hanna for an improvised solo chorus, then returns midway to an ornamented bridge, theme recap, and extended coda that features his chordal work.

"Beef Stew Blues," Randy Weston's 6/8 altered blues, with its enriched chromatic changes, bouncy waltz feel and gospel implications, is given a quartet treatment that mirrors Burrell's ethos of stretching blues into jazz without sacrificing its soul factor. Hanna's florid solo sets the stage for Kenny's improvisations that echo and re-work the pianist's final phrase before settling into a groove-oriented approach with tight rhythmic figures, light string bending, double stops, and quick melodic flurries. He ushers in Tucker's first solo and comps effectively behind the bassist's improvisation, momentarily foreshadowing the timbre of the guitar/bass/drums format.

"The Next Time You See Me, Things Won't Be The Same" was a straightforward blues from Earl Forest and Bill Harvey, a '56 R&B hit for Junior Parker that crossed into rock with the Grateful Dead's version. The quartet arrangement begins with the theme played as guitar-bass duet to introduce Burrell's rendering of the melody, which grows organically into hard-swinging blues improv and riff-based phrases heightened by urgent lengthy double-timed passages (2:07, 2:45, 3:04). After Hanna and Tucker solo, Burrell re-enters with an abbreviated solo (5:36) that segues into a recall of the opening guitar/bass duet and

decrescendo rendition of the theme with a brief tag and altered chord as closure.

Kenny's second original of the date, "The Take Off" was an aptly titled contrafact based on "rhythm changes" combining riff-dominated A sections and florid B sections. The tune is played at a fiery tempo, ideal for the setting, which Burrell further ignites in his solo with virtuosic single-note lines. Though renowned for his tasteful, often restrained, blues-based style, his fleet bop improvisations belie the generalization. The quick flurries and longer energetic phrases recall the "sheets of sound" approach championed by Coltrane and reveal his hard-bop side.

The previously unreleased gem, "Love Walked In," kicked off the fifth set. The evergreen Gershwin standard is rendered as quartet with Timmons onboard and distinguished by the band's irresistibly swinging mid-tempo groove. From Burrell's opening notes, a slightly grittier tone on the brink of overdrive elevates the blues quotient of both melody rendition and soloing, though his melodic content evades obvious blues stereotyping. The soulful Burrell touch and sensitive dynamic shadings are evident throughout the bop-based lines, and his phrasing is relaxed, assured, and swinging, constituted primarily of solid eighth-note lines punctuated with short double-timed flurries and quick triplet bursts.

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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'62 Sunburst/Slab Rose neck 100% original in WX condition
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'65 Candy Apple Red 100% original, Excellent condition, Mint-Green pickguard
'65 Olympic White 100% original, Excellent condition, Mint-Green pickguard
'65 Olympic White 100% original
'65 Olympic White "Tortoisheshell Pickgurad" Gold Hardware 100% original
'65 Olympic White "Tortoisheshell Pickgurad" 100% original
'66 Sunburst We have 3 in stock, Super clean!!
'69 Blond/Rose neck 100% original, Amazing tone!!
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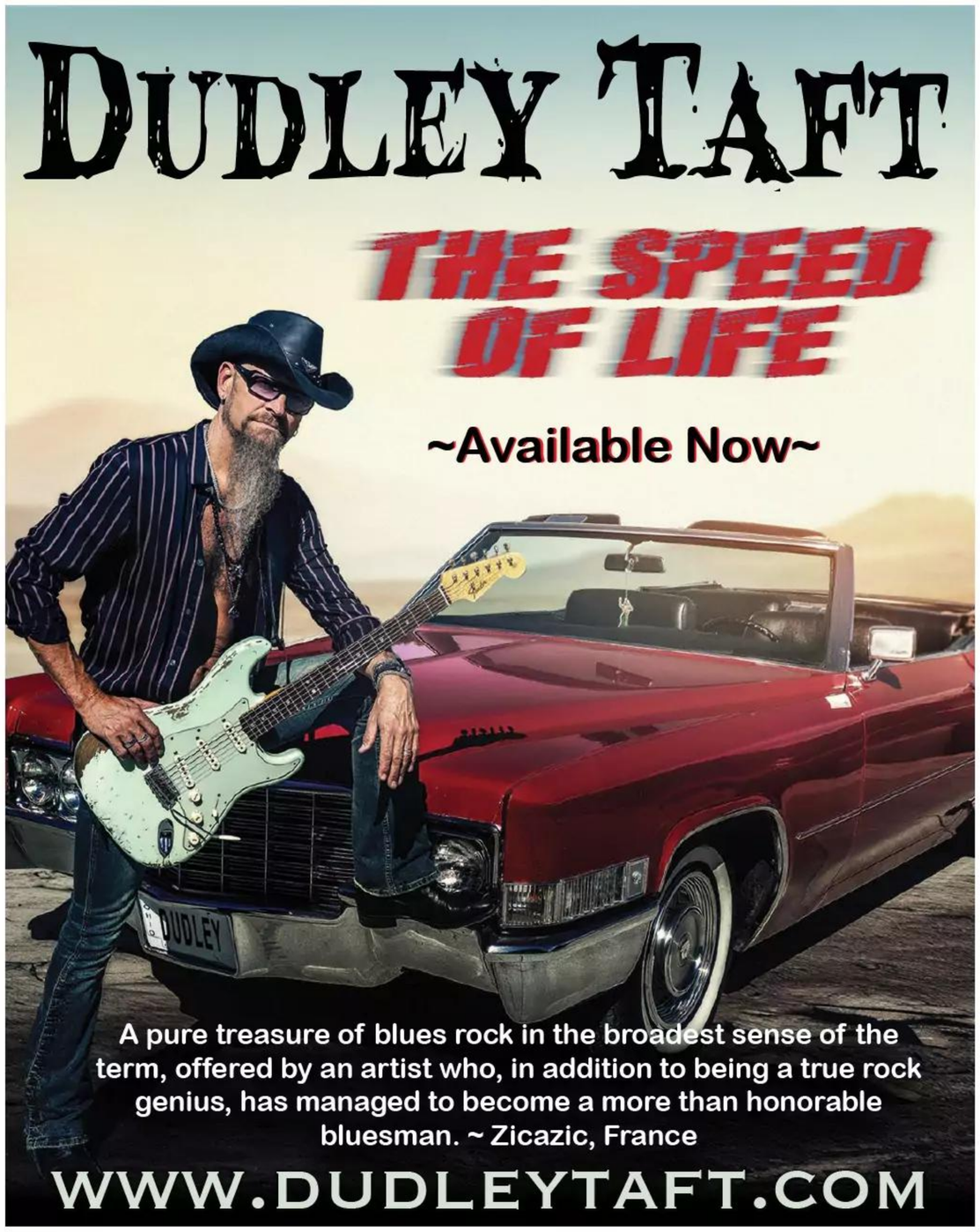

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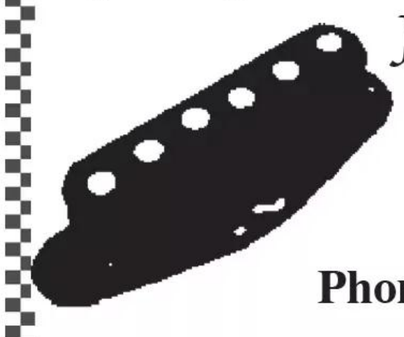

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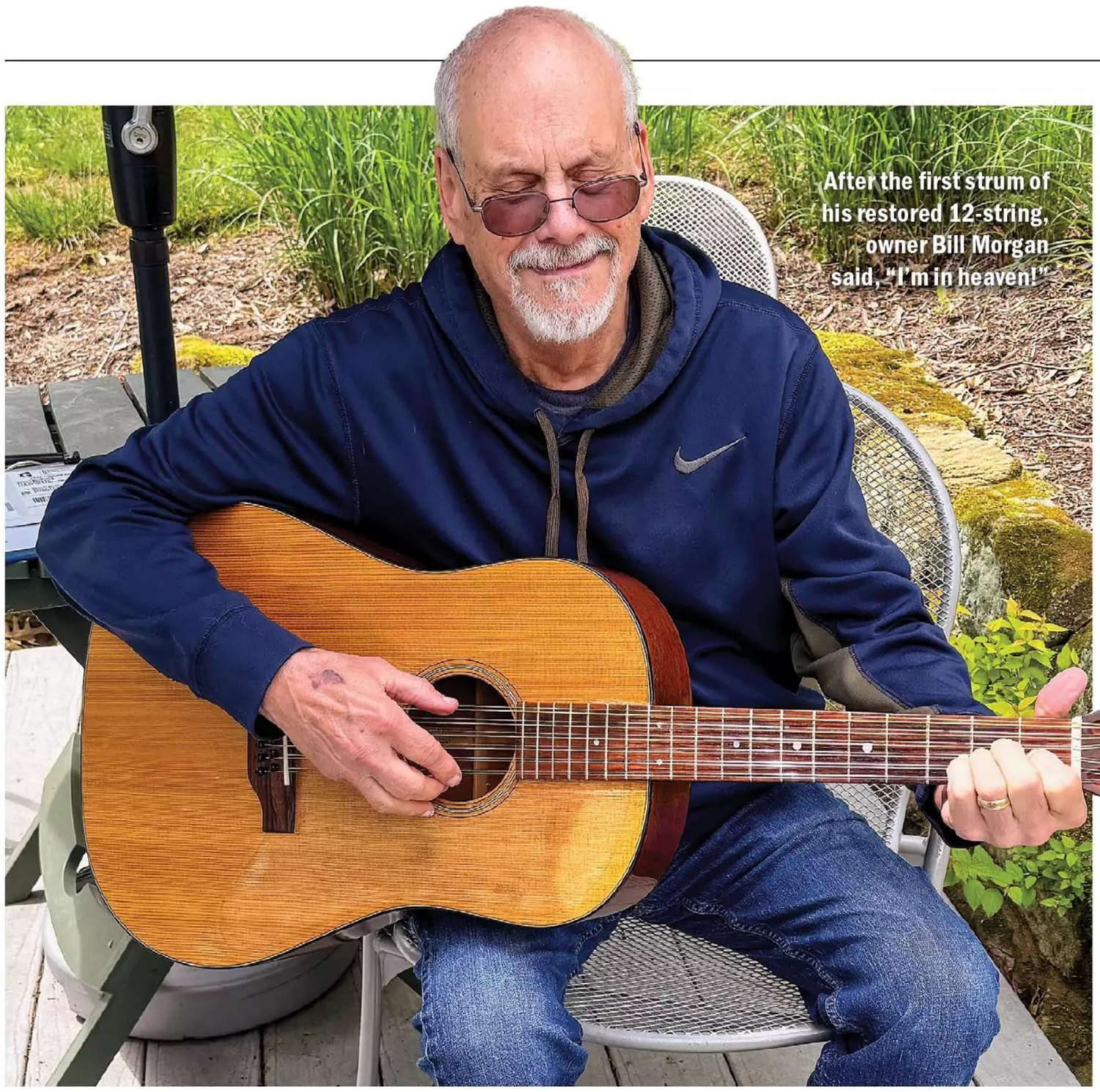


After the first strum of his restored 12-string, owner Bill Morgan said, "I'm in heaven!"

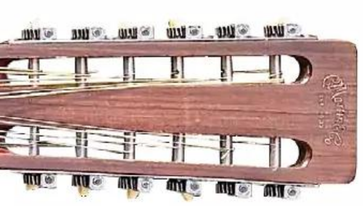
HOT-TRUNK BLUES, PART TWO

A '64 D12-20 Returns to Glory

By Dan Erlewine

In the June issue, I started restoring a '68 Martin D12-20 (mistakenly identifed as a '64). Along the way, it needed something unusual – replacement of the hollow, square truss rod that Martin used on some instruments from 1967 to '85. These often fatigued under string tension and because they couldn't be adjusted, the neck tends to up-bow so much that simply re-setting its angle can't make up for it. Combined with settling of the top, a neck reset sometimes becomes a necessity.

On several occasions when removing a neck with one of these square trusses, I've clamped the neck straight and glued a rectangular carbon fiber flat rod into the tube. It works well *and* makes for better tone. However, it's still not adjustable. So, imagine my excitement when my friend Todd Sams, a member of the StewMac R&D team, came up with a way to remove the tube and install an adjustable truss in its place! A veteran repairman who has reset many Martin necks with the square truss, Todd developed this technique and the tools to do the job 25 years ago. Since then, his technique and tools have come in handy on many occasions.



1) Todd made a custom "slide hammer" similar to those used to pull dents in auto body shops. It's a steel rod with a piece of steel fastened on one end, and a round steel weight with a hole drilled through its center that slides back and forth.

2) Todd's slide hammer uses a 5/16"-diameter rod with a slug at one end and two thread sizes on the other, turned to accept a 1/4-20 thread and cut a 5/16-24 thread after it.

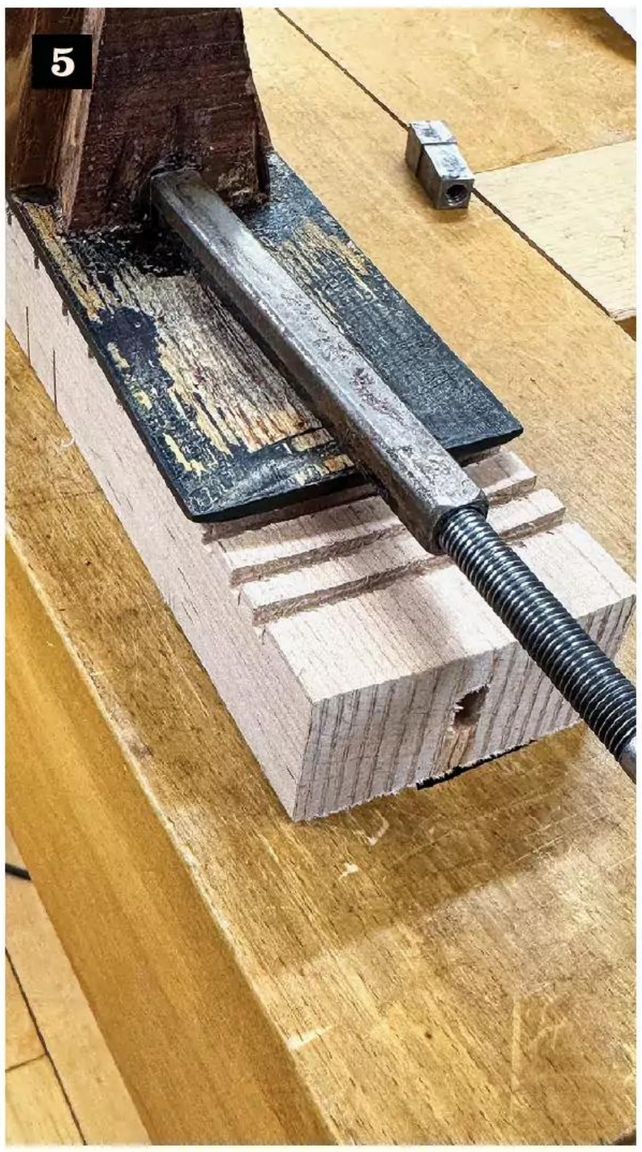
3) Using a long-shaft 5/16-24 tap, Todd threads the inside of the hollow tube so it'll accept the 5/16-24 section of the rod (left). The smaller 1/4-20 section slides freely into the tube and will be used after the tube is pulled free of the neck.

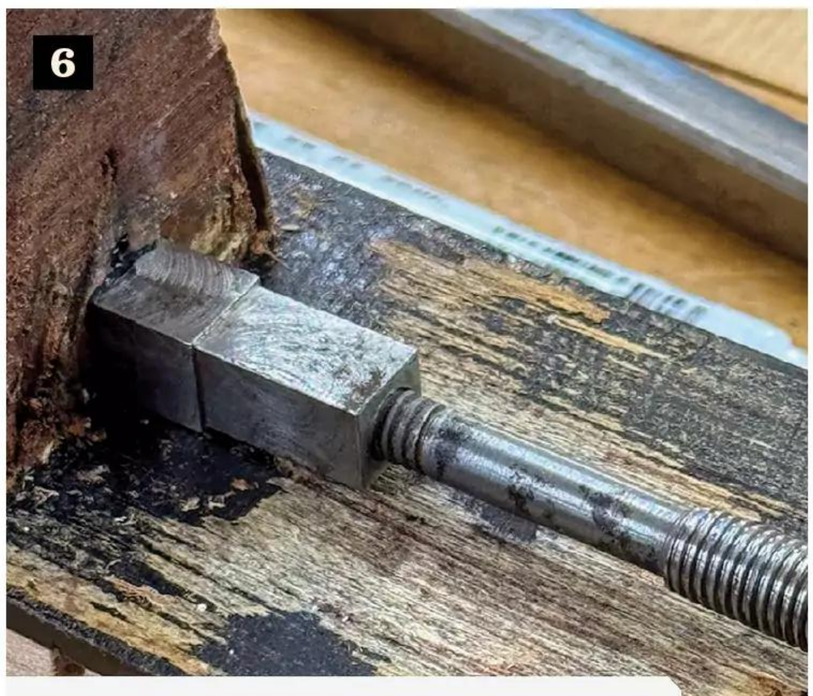
4) With the neck clamped face down on the bench and the slide-hammer rod threaded in the tube, Todd moves the weight against the stop with enough force that, after three to five slides, the tube is removed.

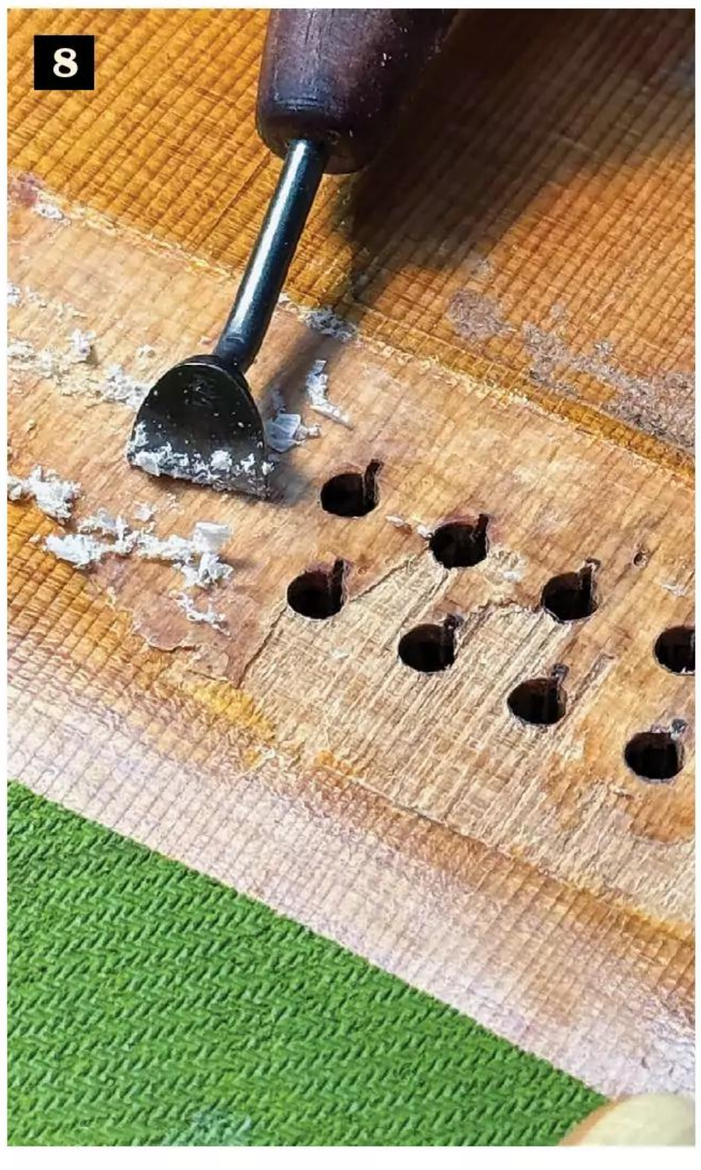
5) Once the tube is halfway out...

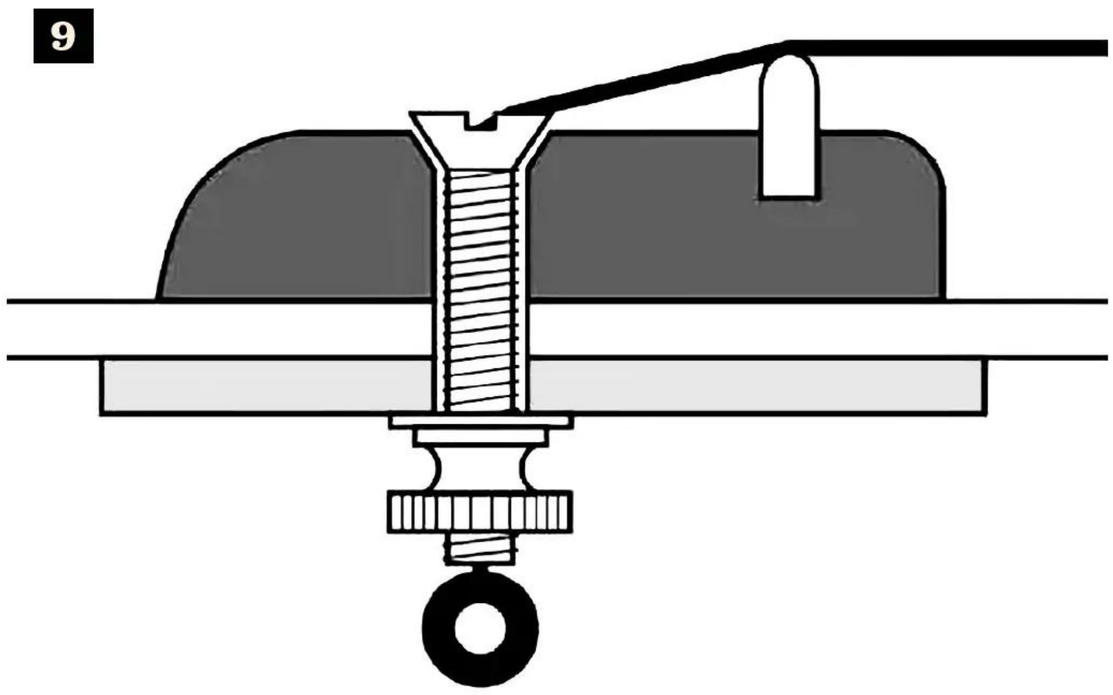
6) ...the smaller thread on the end of the slide hammer comes into play. Todd drilled a hole through a 1" length of $^{3}/_{8}$" x $^{3}/_{8}$" solid square steel and threaded a portion of it $^{1}/_{4}$-20, then enlarged the hole on the other end and sharpened its edges into a cutter (inset).

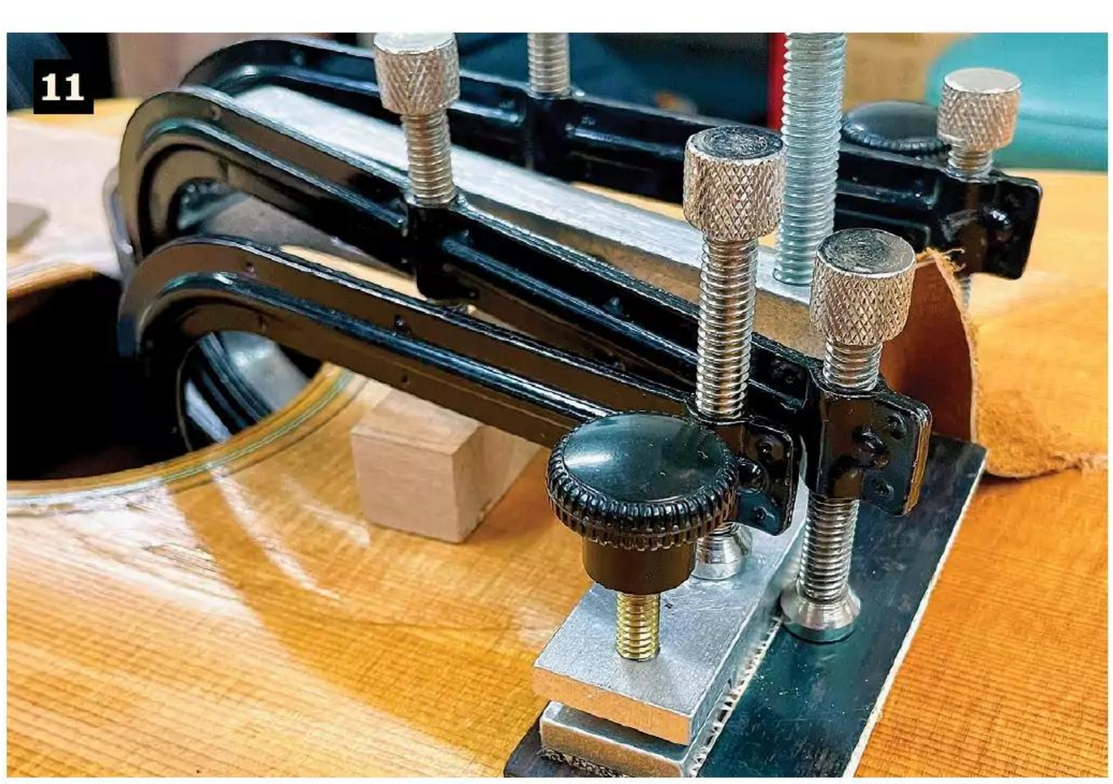
7) The new truss is a StewMac low-profile two-way that measures $^{3}/_{8}$" high (the height of The threaded end fastens to the rod and is hammered gently through the square hole in the neck to trim dried glue from the sides, which makes it easier to install the new truss.

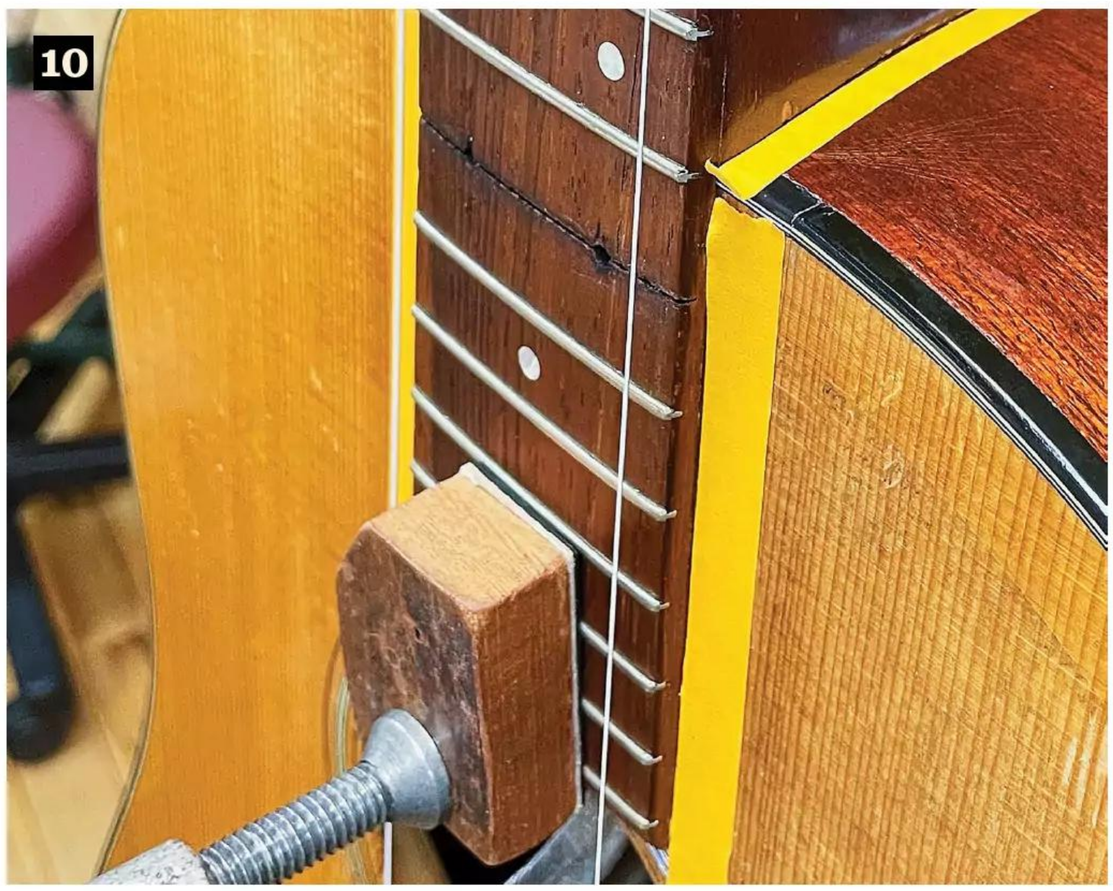












the empty channel) and 1/4" wide. To make up the 1/8" difference in width, we slid two pieces of plastic guitar binding along each side. Since the adjusting end of the new truss has a rounded adjusting nut, we drilled a round hole into the end of the square channel to make room for it. To complete this repair we...

8) ...scraped away a thick layer of epoxy to make way for the new bridge...

9) ...and clamped the bridge with two Acoustic Bridge Bolts, which have holes through their centers that use the two E strings to help set the neck on center in relation to the bridge. I designed the bridge bolts for StewMac, and they're very handy.

10) Once the neck was set to the proper angle in relation to the bridge and saddle, I marked the location so I could get it in place quickly because hot hide glue sets quickly. The procedure should be done within two minutes and allowed to dry overnight.

11) After reinstalling the neck, I unclamped the bridge and glued it on, using hot hide glue.

12) Once the bridge dried, I cut the saddle slot where it would have the best intonation. Since the saddle would be installed close to the front of the bridge, and because it would have the pressure of 12 strings against it, I cut the saddle slot with a step down in the center and made the saddle match. To lessen the chance of the bridge splitting, I didn't cut the entire slot that deep, as most are. I've done this a number of times over the years when necessary.

Dan Erlewine has been repairing guitars for more than 50 years. The author of three books, dozens of magazine articles, he has also produced instructional videotapes and DVDs on guitar repair. From 1986 through his retirement in late 2019, he 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, and 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.

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RICK DERRINGER

1947-2025

By Willie G. Moseley

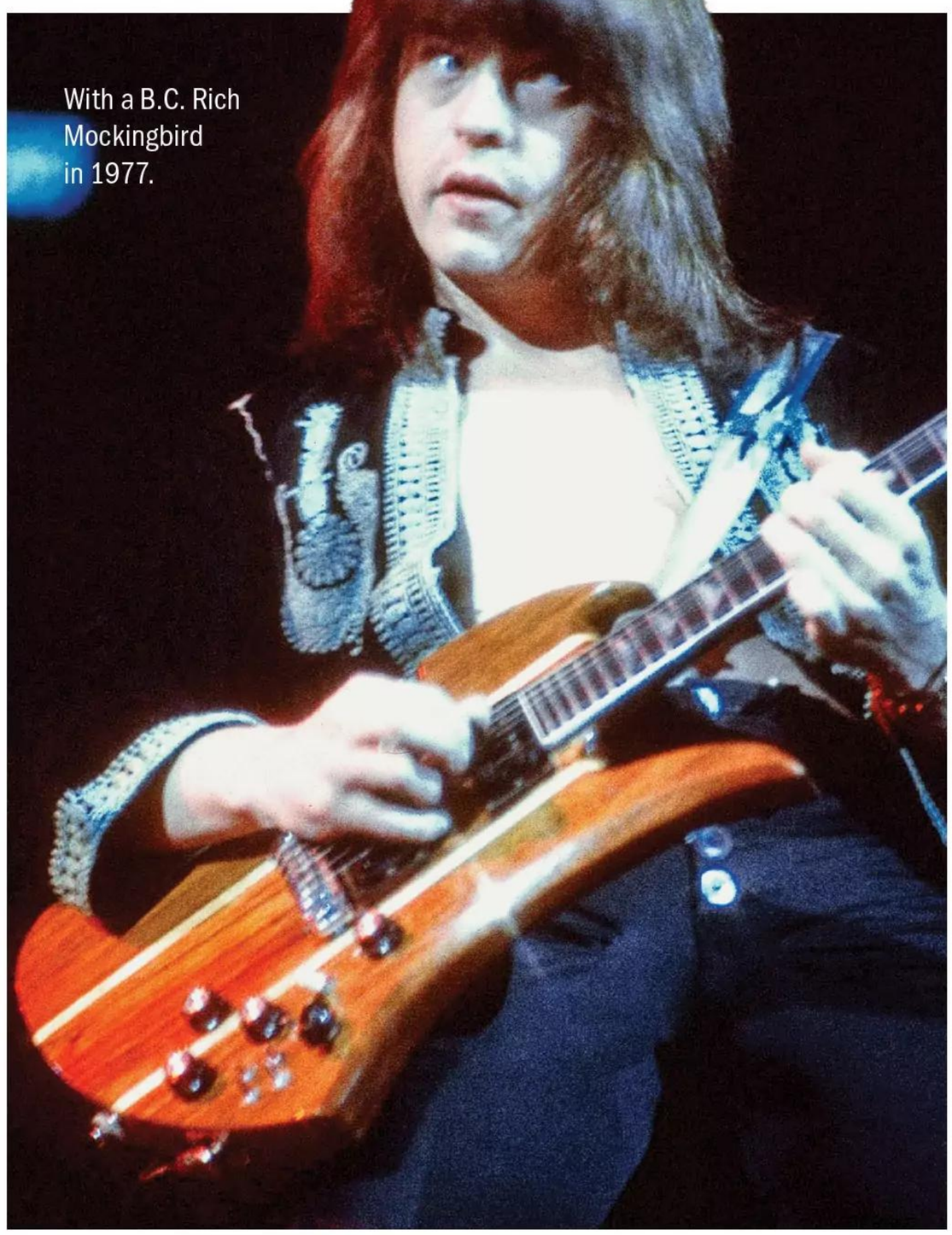
Loping and easy to learn, The McCoys' "Hang On Sloopy" was a three-chord singalong pop masterpiece recorded by a group of teenagers in Ohio then adopted by garage bands across America. In October of 1965, it hit #1 on the *Billboard* Hot 100. For lead guitarist Rick Derringer (nee Zehringer), it springboarded a career in popular music that lasted six decades.

Derringer was 77 when he died May 26 at a Florida hospital; two months prior, he had undergone triple-bypass surgery.

Not long after he began playing guitar at age nine, his parents took him to tour the Gibson guitar factory in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In a lobby display case was an Explorer with a split-V headstock and Bigsby vibrato, alongside a Flying V presented as "Guitars of the Future." Later, he and his brother, Randy, formed a band that played around northern Ohio and went through more than one name

Rick Derringer: Pat Johnson/ MediaPunch/Alamy.

Derringer onstage in 1974 with a LoBue Explorer copy.



With a B.C. Rich Mockingbird in 1977.

Rick Derringer 1974: Jim Summarria. Rick Derringer 1977: Carl Lender/Wikimedia Commons.

change before becoming known as The McCoys.

"The Ventures were heroes of mine, and when I pulled out my most current Ventures album, I found what I thought was the easiest song – 'The McCoy.'" he told *VG* in a 1998 interview. "I thought it was cool and figured if we called ourselves The McCoys, we'd have a theme song."

His first guitar was a Supro, "…one of those three-pickup models with gold hardware and lots of knobs" that he plugged into a small Gibson amp. He later acquired a Gretsch Silver Jet and a mono Gibson ES-355TDC, among other instruments.

The explosion of "Hang On Sloopy" took the quartet across the country, playing all sorts of venues including Murray the K shows at Brooklyn's Fox Theater and black clubs in Chicago. The follow-up was an improbable cover of Peggy Lee's "Fever" (penned by Little Willie John), and while they gave it an innovative arrangement, it wasn't a sensation.

"It didn't have that big chorus," Derringer recalled. "There's something about a big hold note at the beginning of a chorus that really sells it."

The band charted again with "I Got To Go Back (And Watch That Little Girl Dance)," which was later covered by soul singer Otis Redding. They opened for the Rolling Stones on a 1966 American tour, and would continue to record and tour throughout the decade before frustration set in over being categorized as a "bubblegum" band.

"It's really a shame we never did a live album," Derringer said. "One of the reasons we got a record deal is we really were a good live band. When we did our Mercury records, *Infinite McCoys* and *Human Ball*, we did a live instrumental called 'Human Ball Blues' that showed the kind of stuff we were doing live."

The McCoys finished the '60s with seven Top 100 hit singles. Though they matured, musically, sales of their singles and albums waned.

In 1970, three members left to back Texas blues icon Johnny Winter. The quartet was known as Johnny Winter And, and their first two albums were co-produced by Winter and Derringer. The second, a live effort on which Derringer used a goldtop Les Paul with a Bigsby vibrato, became a favorite of many aspiring guitarists including Craig Chaquico.

"I first found out about Johnny Winter albums at Tower Records in Sacramento in the very early '70s," he recalled. "(I was) a bicycling teenager with a yellow Tower Records bag on the handlebars. So, many of us discovered *Live – Johnny Winter And*; Rick Derringer was so young to be so good! But then I heard he'd been in the McCoys with 'Hang On Sloopy' at the age of 16, and that the original McCoys band were the ones rockin' out so well on that live album with Johnny.

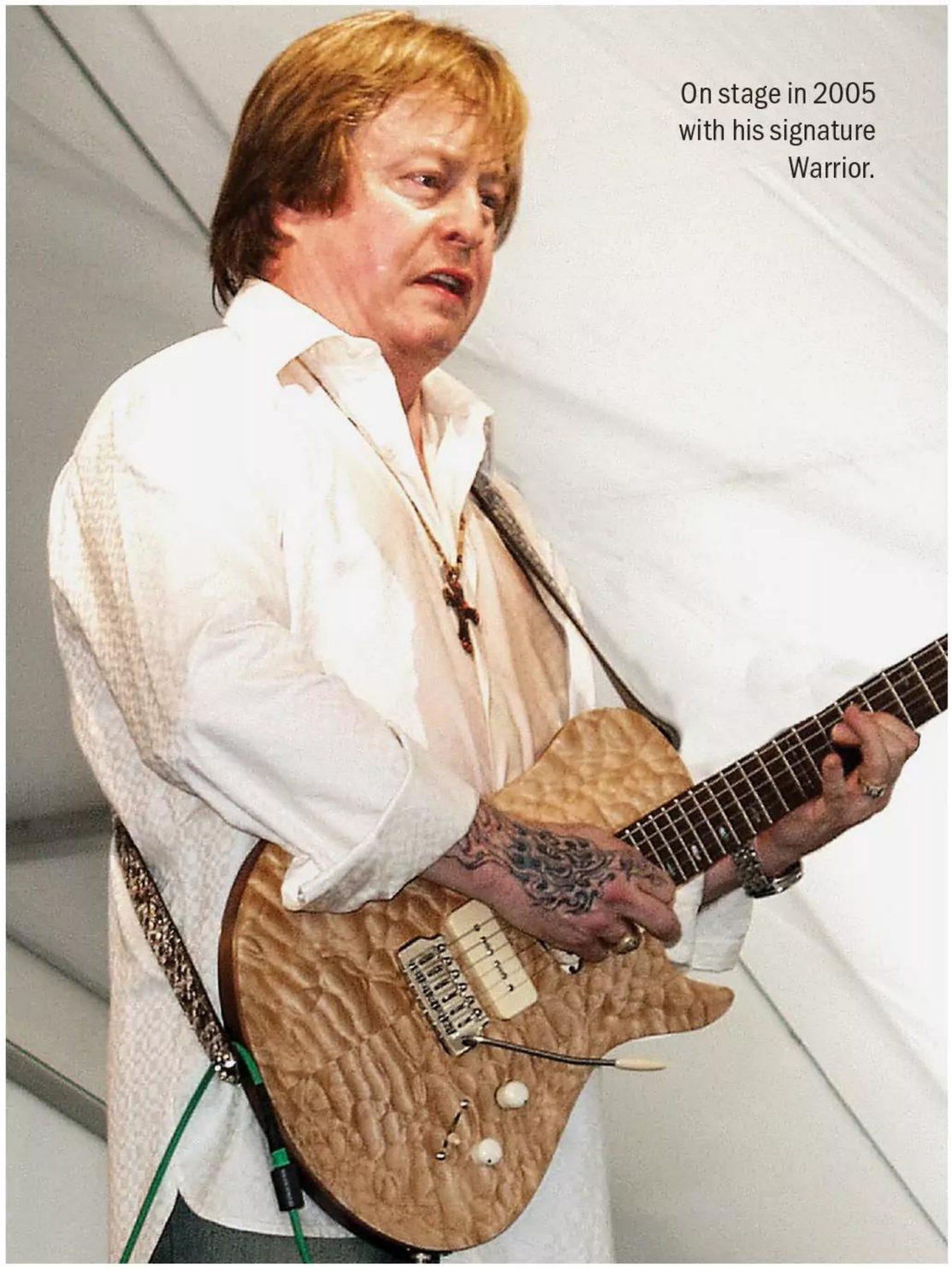
"I was one of many who listened to that record in high school way more than I listened to my teachers. I played along with it day and night. A lot of players my age did the same, wishing we could be that kid rocking out with Johnny Winter onstage."

Surprisingly, Derringer didn't cotton to the presentation on the live effort.

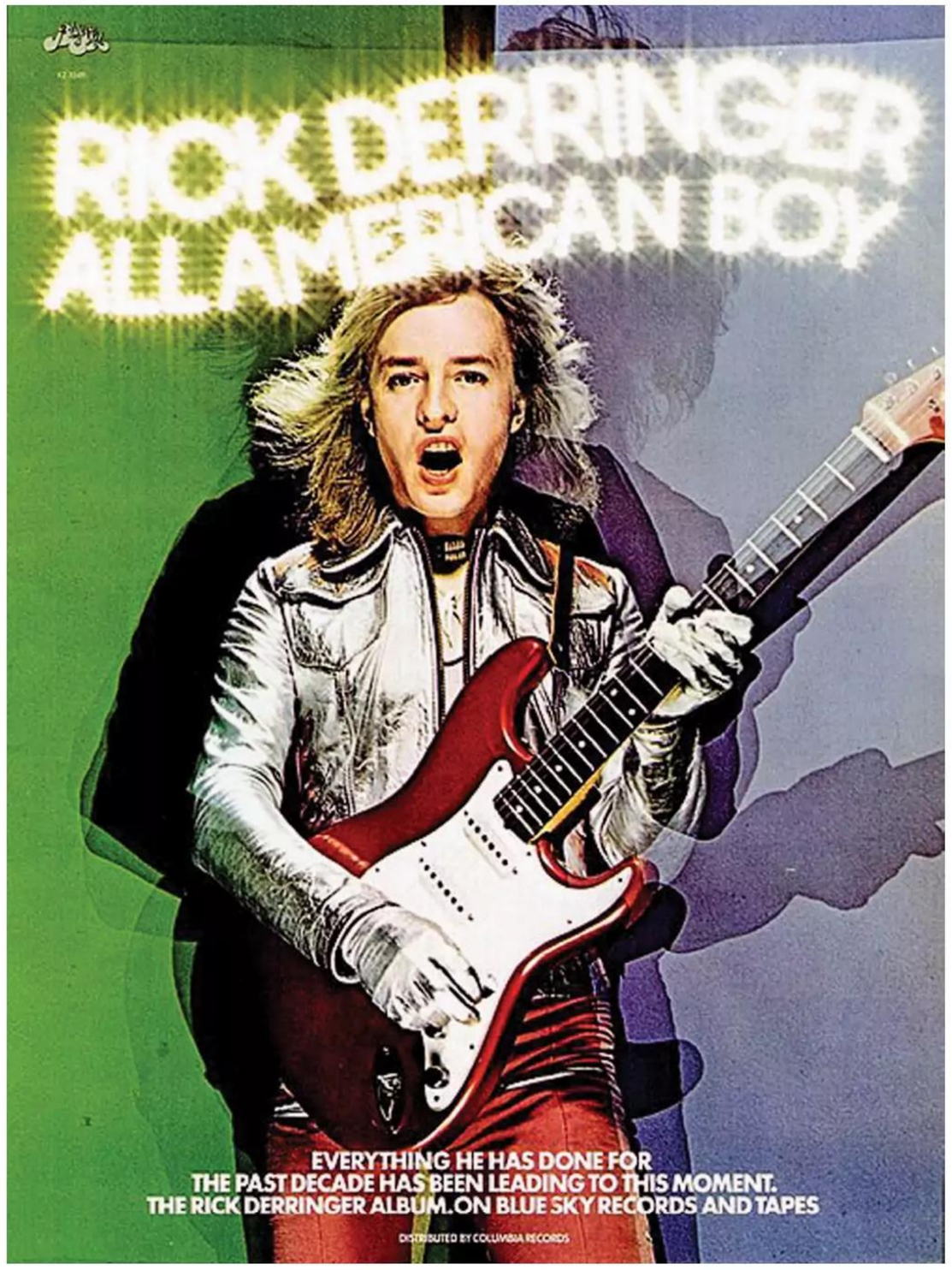
"It drives the guitar players wild," he said with a chuckle. "It seems to be the favorite of a lot of players, but to me it was overboard – too frenetic – and had too many edits."

In the early '70s, Derringer bought a vintage Gibson Explorer with a split-V headstock from Gruhn Guitars in Nashville. Research led him to conclude it was the same guitar he'd seen in Kalamazoo as a child.

"Gruhn sent it to me on approval because



On stage in 2005 with his signature Warrior.



A trade ad for Derringer's first solo album, holding a Strat borrowed from Johnny Winter.

it didn't have the headstock they normally saw on such guitars," he said. "When I got it, I flashed on the memory of the showcase in the lobby at the Gibson factory. It took me a while to realize it had two holes that were plugged where there once was a Bigsby. I did some investigating, and found out the headstock was on the original patent drawing for the Explorer, and that they made very few that way. Taking the guitar apart, I found hand-routing, and later, Gibson told me it was the only real V-headstock Explorer they've ever seen, which means it's the guitar I saw in that display case."

George Gruhn recalls selling the guitar to Derringer.

"Rick [called] shortly after I opened my shop in 1970," he said. "Very few players were familiar with the Explorer, since so few had been made. His prominent use of this guitar onstage played a significant role in making musicians and the general public aware of the Explorer and creating a demand for guitars of this design."

The Explorer was later sold to New Jersey collector Scott Chinery and in '96 appeared in a book featuring his collection.

Following his brief time with Johnny Winter And, Derringer produced and performed on two albums by Edgar Winter's White Trash, a band founded by Johnny's younger brother.

"The live album I'm proudest of was [White Trash's] *Roadwork*," he averred. "It had horn players, better songs, better arrangements. The Johnny Winter And live album was over the edge, but that's what people loved about it."

Derringer then produced two albums by the Edgar Winter Group, replacing Ronnie Montrose as a member on the second album. His first solo album, *All American Boy*, was released in '73 and featured his iconic rendition of "Rock and Roll, Hoochie Koo." For the album cover, Derringer borrowed Johnny Winter's modified Candy Apple Red Strat.

Through the '70s, Derringer's studio skills continued to evolve. He became more involved with recording and production, and formed a band called Derringer, which included bassist Kenny Aaronson and drummer Vinnie Appice. He also formed an association with B.C. Rich guitars and participated in the design of its Stealth model.

Veteran tour manager/technician Jeff Jackson was a longtime fan of the Johnny Winter And live album and saw Derringer play several concerts starting with a 1978 performance in Dothan, Alabama.

"I was Cindy Lauper's stage manager in 1986, after I got off of the 38 Special *Strength In Numbers* tour, and (Derringer) was her guitar player. He was a nice guy and always looked like he was having fun on stage. I was mesmerized watching him perform each night. Her band was incredible; it also included Shelia E on percussion."

Derringer's production and studio recording credits were more diverse than many realize. His riffs, licks and solos appeared on albums by Barbra Streisand, Steely Dan, Richie Havens, and many others. He played guitar on songs as raucous as Alice Cooper's "Under My Wheels," as well as melodic power ballads like Bonnie Tyler's "Total Eclipse of the Heart." In '98, he noted that his all-time personal favorite solo was the lead break on Air Supply's "Making Love Out of Nothing at All."

Derringer also produced several parody albums by Weird Al Yankovic, but while

Derringer 2005: Carl Lender/Wikimedia Commons.

some of those novelty records won awards, Derringer, who had grown up as a fan of comic musicians like Spike Jones and Ray Stevens, was put off by the reception to his production of Yankovic's satire.

"I thought producing Grammy-winning songs by Weird Al would really enhance my career," he recalled. "But it almost *destroyed* my career because everybody started thinking of me as a novelty producer."

In 1999, Derringer produced an album by Mambo Sons, fronted by *VG* contributor Tom Guerra. Their connection originated when Derringer called a radio show on which Guerra was promoting an earlier album.

"As we spun songs on the air, I got a call from a guy saying he really liked the guitar playing on it and he'd like to work with me," said Guerra. "He sounded like he knew his stuff. I said, 'What's your name?' and he said 'This is Rick Derringer.' A few weeks later I told him of my plans to record a solo album of blues rock, and he said, 'That sounds fun; I'm in.' His bass player from the Derringer (band), Kenny Aaronson, played on the album and ended up being my main collaborator for the past 20 years.

"Rick loved to talk guitars and told me his first good Strat was a '66 sunburst he played with The McCoys. He played a lot of mine and really fell in love with a '65 that I had."

In later years, Derringer branched into smooth jazz and contemporary Christian music, and experienced success in both. On his jazz albums, he used a red archtop built by Jim Triggs.

In the early 2000s, Derringer endorsed Warrior guitars with a signature model and toured with Ringo's All-Starr Band in 2010. He was admired by peers for his advocacy of professionalism onstage and in the studio.

"One thing I'll never forget was bumping into Rick at the Warrior booth at NAMM," recalled Jeff Carlisi, who co-founded 38 Special and lived near Derringer on the Atlantic coast of Florida. "He was playing some very deep jazz. I said, 'Sounds like you've been listening to some jazz,' to which he responded, 'I listen to it all.' It was one of the most profound statements I've ever heard!"

"I first met Rick in 1974, when I helped line up an interview with him for Catherine Orentreich's Les Paul documentary *The Wizard of Waukesha*," said New York City musician Binky Philips, who bought Derringer's famed '59 Les Paul in 1972 (see "Classics" in this issue). "Rick did a great job. He was super down-to-earth and treated me like an equal. He was witty, wise, and an absolute monster player. It was an honor to know him."

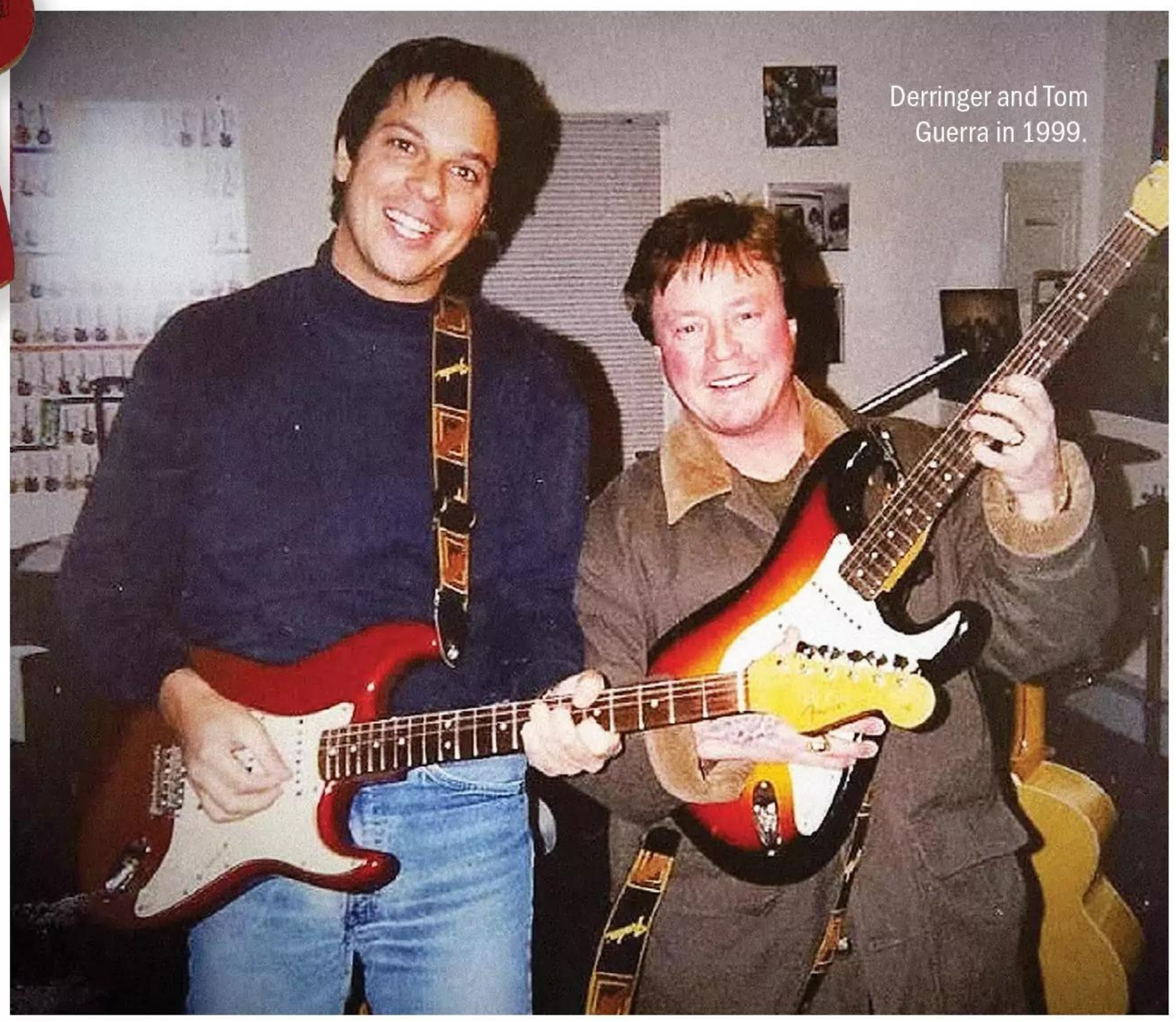
As news of Derringer's passing spread, contemporaries posted memorials online. Ted Nugent, who performed with Derringer several times, called him "…a guitar music force of nature, a great man, and a great friend."

"I was Rick's drummer and tour manager from 1994 until 2012," added Tom Curiale. "Rick was not only a brilliant guitarist, he was an amazing producer. He was admired and respected by many legendary artists, not only for his talents, but for the kind and gentle nature of the man he was. He was a very humble and approachable person. I will miss him greatly."

"I was really saddened to hear about [his passing]," Chaquico said. "I wish we could've played together... Besides an outstanding early guitar hero, he also was an excellent songwriter, arranger, and producer."

Few guitarists have had a career that was as varied and as lengthy as Rick Derringer's, and Styx guitarist Tommy Shaw's succinct memorial spoke for many.

"He was a trail blazing-genius… before his time, and never, ever disappointed. Thank you for the inspiration and fun!" **VG**



Derringer and Tom Guerra in 1999.

The Candy Apple Red Strat held by Derringer on the cover of *All American Boy*.

Derringer Strat: VG Archive. Derrigner/Guerra: Joe Lemieux.

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Denotes a new or updated listing.

2025

AUGUST

Guitarfest Guitar Show, August 3rd at the Summit County Fairgrounds Arena, 229 E Howe Rd. Tallmadge, OH 44278. Hrs 10am - 4pm. For more info visit www.guitarfestguitarshow.com

The Atlanta Guitar Show, August 23rd 10-6, August 24th 10-4 at the Acworth Community Center Logan Farm Park, 4361 Cherokee St. Acworth GA 30101. Call Greg 770-433-1891 or Eddie 317-430-2222 TheIndianaGuitarShow@gmail.com or www.theatlantavintageguitarshow.com

SEPTEMBER

Amigo SoCal World Guitar Show, September 13-14, 2025, OC Fair & Event Center, Arlington & Fairview St., Costa Mesa, CA. For more info call Larry at (918) 288-2222, amigoshows@stringswest.com, www.amigoguitarshows.com

The Space Coast Guitar Expo, Sunday, September 14, 2025 from 10am to 8pm at the Eau Gallie Civic Center, 1551 Highland Avenue, Melbourne, FL 32935. For more info, contact John Sekul at 321-557-3779 or spacecoastguitarexpo@gmail.com

Big Als' Lake County Musician's Swap Meet, Sunday, September 14, 2025 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

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

The Indiana Guitar Show, September 27-28 2025, at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds 1900 E. Main St. Danville, IN. 10:00 to 5:00 on Sat & 10:00 to 3:00 on Sun For more information contact Eddie at (317) 272-5222 or visit www.theindianaguitarshow.com

The Seattle-Tacoma Guitar Show, Sunday September 28th 9:30am-3:30pm at Kent Commons, Kent, WA. For more info: bruceadolph@mac.co or www.WestCoastGuitarShows.com

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OCTOBER

The 20th Anniversary Greater Pittsburgh Guitar Show, Sunday, October 5, 2025 CFS Bank Event Center 111 Gallitin Rd Belle Vernon, PA 15012. Show hours 11-4. For more info contact Scott Talarico at (412) 716-8411, scotpro@comcast.net or visit www.guitarshowusa.com

Chicago Vintage Guitar Expo, Sunday October 5th. NEW LOCATION..Hyatt Regency 1800 Golf Road, Schaumburg Illinois. 9am to 3pm. For Booth Info Contact Beverly Bakes R&B Productions @ 847-931-0707, Bakesguitar@aol.com, or Chicagovintageguitarexpo.com

KC Guitar Show, October 10-11 at the Ward Parkway Shopping Center, Kansas City MO 64114 from 10am - 6pm. Contact Mark at Valentine@BoxOfCalk.com or visit www.kcguitarshow.com

Mesquite 2025 - formerly Guitarlington, October 18-19 at the Mesquite Convention Center, 1700 Rodeo Dr, Mesquite, TX. For more info contact Ruth Brinkmann (817) 312-7659 ruthmbrinkmann@gmail.com, Larry Briggs (918) 288-2222 larryb@stringswest.com, Dave Crocker (417) 850-4751 davelcrocker@gmail.com, Fax 817-592-3381 www.amigoguitarshows.com

Best Guitar Show, Sunday, October 19 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

The Tampa Guitar Show, from 10-5 October 25 and 10-4 October 26, 2025 at the Florida State Fairgrounds, 4800 US 301, Tampa, Fl 33610. Dealer day October 24 from 9-5 - Vendors can register @Mvgguitarshows.com. For more info contact Marty Beeson at info@mvgguitarshows.com or 813-400-0803 **(See Advertisement on page 66.)**

NOVEMBER

Great American Guitar Show (Fall Philly), November 8-9 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 9, 2025 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 9, 2025 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

Midwest Music Gear Swap, presents its Fall Swap meet, Sunday November 16 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

2026

JANUARY

Big Als' Lake County Musician's Swap Meet, Sunday, January 11, 2026 at Renninger's Florida Twin

Upcoming Events

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

Orlando International Guitar & Music Expo, January 30-31 through February 1, 2026 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

FEBRUARY

Best Guitar Show, February 22, from 10am to 4pm at the Blair County Convention Center, 1 Convention Center Dr., Altoona, PA 16602. For more info contact Allen Jones at adjinv@outlook.com

MARCH

Cincinnati Guitar Show, Sunday, March 15, 2026 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.

Frantic Mid Atlantic Guitar Show & Swap Meet, March 27-29, 2026 (New Location) Delaware State Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall 18500 S. Dupont Hwy Harrington, DE 19952 Visit www.MidAtlanticGuitarShow.com

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

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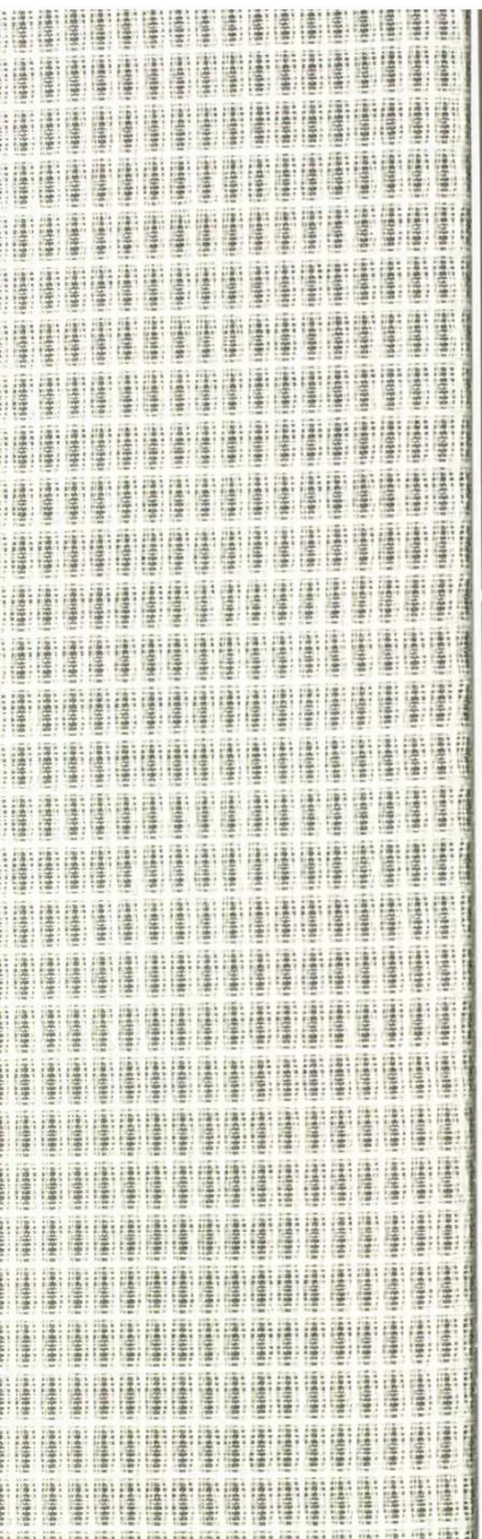

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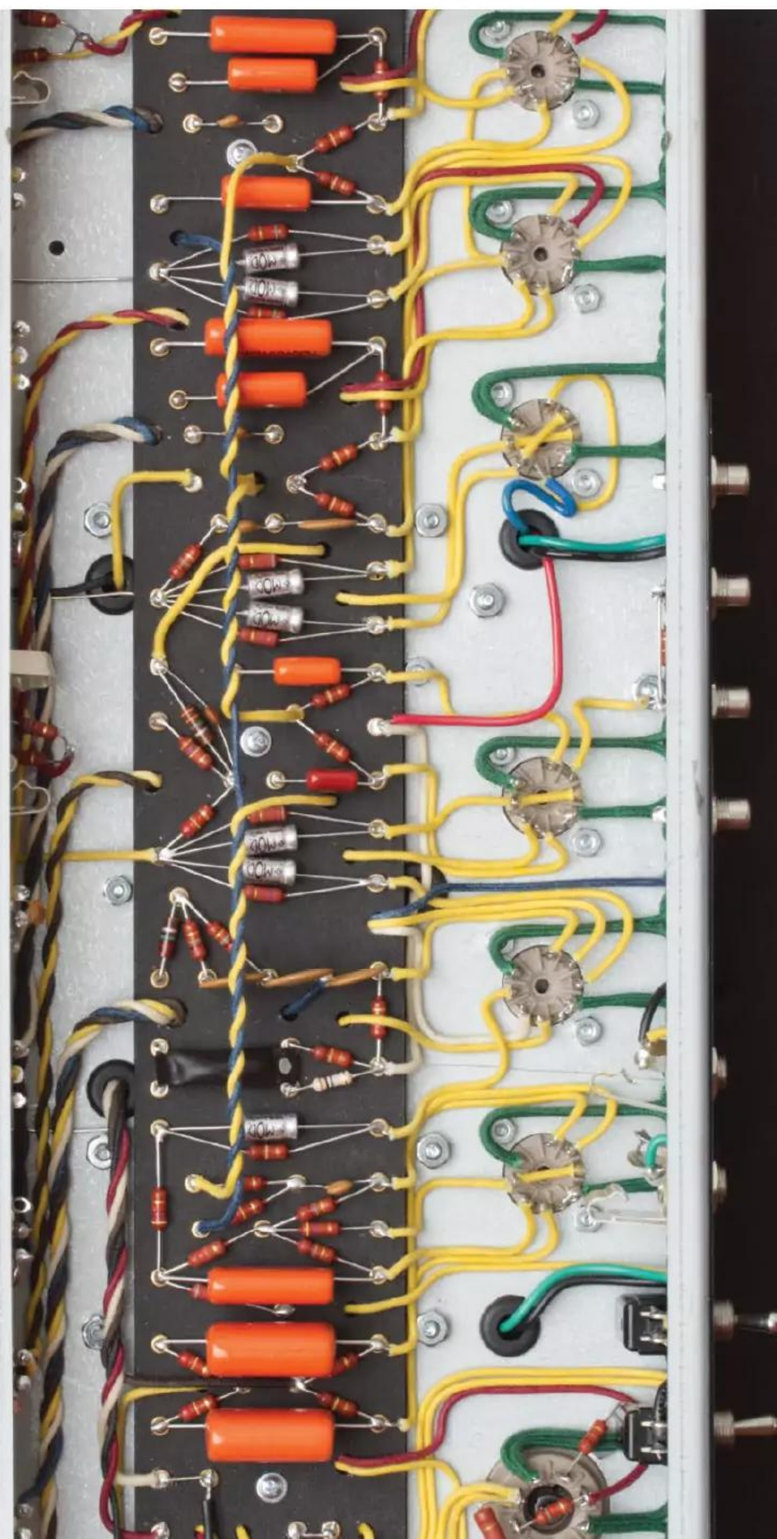
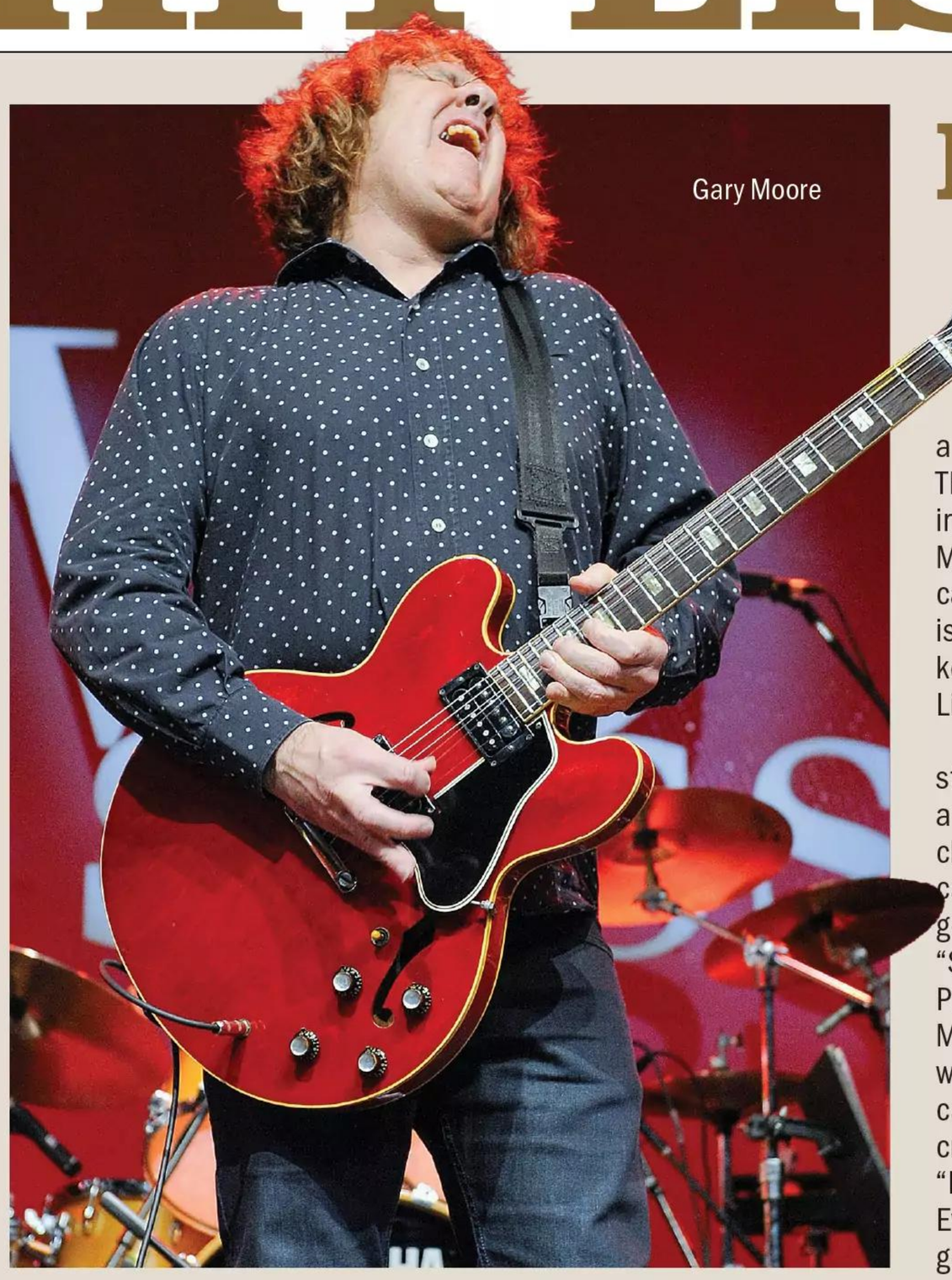
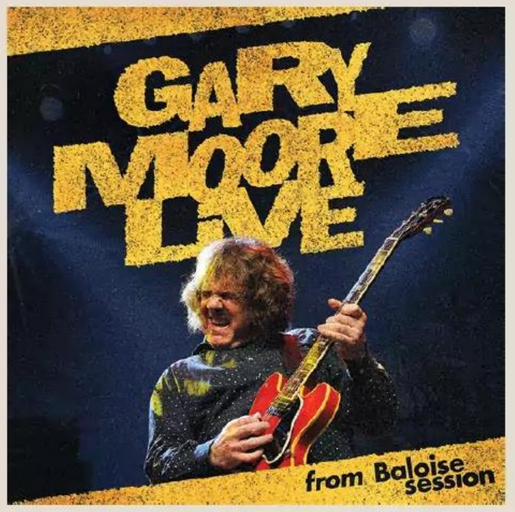



Gary Moore

NEVER TOO MUCH



Gary Moore
Live from Baloise Session

The great Gary Moore, who died in 2011 at the age of 58, was a rock, blues, and fusion beast. This live album recorded in 2008 in Basel, Switzerland, displays Moore in all his passion, technical brilliance, and guitar glory. He is joined by bassist Pete Rees, keyboardist Vic Martin, and Thin Lizzy drummer Brian Downey.

This is late-period Moore, still consumed by the blues and wielding all the ferocious chops from his long and varied career. Blues-rock fanboys get incendiary versions of "Since I Met You Baby," "Oh, Pretty Woman," and "Walking by Myself." For discerning devotees who were around before Moore cashed in on the SRV blooze craze, he covers Al Kooper's "I Love You More Than You'll Ever Know" and the Thin Lizzy gem "Don't Believe A Word."

On Moore's worst day, he could play circles around most guitarists. While there is plenty of material to prove this, *Live from Baloise Session* makes a great playlist addition due to covers like Chuck Berry's "Thirty Days (To Come Back Home)." Other live recordings and posthumous releases cover much of this material, but you can never get too much Gary Moore. **– *Oscar Jordan***

Marty Stuart & his Fabulous Superlatives
Space Junk

Stuart and the Superlatives are one of the greatest bands in country music – and one of the most eclectic. From 2008 to 2013, on the sorely missed *Marty Stuart Show*, the quartet expertly backed a coterie of country legends, as well as rock and soul artists like Duane Eddy, Sam Moore, and Roger McGuinn. It's not unusual for the guys to squeeze some Link Wray into live gigs.

For years, Stuart has threatened to put out an all-instrumental album, and *Space Junk* proves worth the wait. The TV show's theme, "La Tingo Tango," tips its hat to the Ventures – one of Stuart's favorite instrumental outfits, along with Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass. Also among the 20 tracks are the spaghetti western of "The Ballad Of The Lonely Surfer" and the title cut, featuring steel drums, chimes, the sampled signal of Sputnik, and intertwining guitars of the leader and super-fab Kenny Vaughan.

"All The Pretty Horses" is the title song of the 2000 film that earned Marty a Golden Globe nomination for Best Original Score. "Rhapsidio Sangre de Cristo in E Major" also has a cinematic vibe – "western," in this case, referring to Capitol Studio in Hollywood, where the record was cut. **– *Dan Forte***

Kid Ramos
Strange Things Happening

No matter your spiritual beliefs, Kid Ramos' latest is a revelation. Here, the concept is to mix gospel songs with hot, *swingin'* West Coast blues – the results are joyous and soul-stirring. The congregation includes powerhouse vocals from both Brian Templeton and Kid's own son Johnny Ramos, who possesses a dazzling upper range. Listen to father and son torch "Oh What a Meeting," peppered with Kid's savage reverb runs. Lord, have mercy!

With Templeton, the pair ignite "Jesus Dropped the Charges" using witty lyrics and sublime chord and lead licks – there are primo nods to Steve Cropper's rhythmic finesse, as well as a stabbing solo that would make Albert Collins blush. For "Strange Things Happening," Kid adopts that tricky dead-string tone over a walking bass line and holy-ghost organ vamps. It's potent stuff.

For "I'm Working On a Building," the jazz roots of Cali-blues emerge through linear guitar phrases and sly, just-enough string bends. "Nobody But the Lord" is a barrelhouse boogie cut at a fast tempo, letting Kid swing out his lines like a master. *Strange Things Happening* could easily be one of the best blues albums of 2025. **– *Pete Prown***

Gary Moore: Dominik Pluess.

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Bob Stroger

BOB STROGER: HoF BASSIST

By Dan Forte

In its 45 years, the Blues Foundation Hall of Fame has inducted only five bass players: Willie Dixon (mainly known as a composer and producer), Donald "Duck" Dunn and Lewie Steinberg as members of Booker T. & the MG's, Dave Myers as one-third of The Aces, and in the class of 2025, 94-year-old Chicago mainstay Bob Stroger.

On the phone the day before flying to Memphis for the ceremony, Bob was unaware of the exclusivity. "Oh, wow! That's an honor! Being there with the giants," he exclaimed humbly.

In the words of Austin bassist Sarah Brown, who has backed Buddy Guy, Dr. John, Lazy Lester, and numerous others as alumnus of the Antone's house band, "When all the crazy, enormous shows were happening at Antone's, I'd try to find a couple of square feet close enough to the stage to see and hear Bob. He always plays something perfect – I mean, *perfect*. My favorite blues bass player. And always kind and classy."

For decades, Stroger has been tapped for session and road work by Pinetop Perkins, Jimmy Rogers, Carey Bell, Billy Boy Arnold, Dave Specter, Louis Myers, Bob Corritore, Big Bill Morganfield, and others.

Bob Is Back! is his second album with superb Brazilian bluesers the Headcutters, following 2022's *That's My Name*. Originals and covers of Amos Milburn and Muddy Waters highlight Bob's deep, smooth vocals. Also included is "Love You Baby," which Stroger cut backing Eddie King in the '60s. Onstage, the dapper, smiling Stroger provides a solid but supple bottom, while making you believe blues is the happiest music on earth. "All music tells a story of life," he muses. "If people see you having fun, then they get a different outlook on life."

Born in 1930, the bassist grew up chopping cotton in tiny Hayti, Missouri. "We weren't allowed to listen to blues, because that was 'devil's music,'" he explains. "It was all church. I listened to Louis Jordan, but mostly I came up on country and western; that was the only station we could get. Spade Cooley and all of those old guys, and Minnie Pearl, Grandpa Jones. Things got hard, so my dad moved to Chicago and worked for the Wabash Railroad."

Having followed at age 16, Bob recounts, "I lived near Silvio's club on the West Side, when it was on Lake Street. I was on the corner of Oakley Boulevard, and I could walk out my back door and look right into the club and see Muddy and Howlin' Wolf. In their suits and everybody enjoying and buying them drinks, they were really respectable. By me being from the country and working on the farm, I wanted to be respectable, too."

After initially playing a guitar tuned down an octave, he received a Fender Precision from Calvin Jones. "I paid three dollars a week until I paid it off," he details. "What I really learned on was Elmo James, and I'd see Hip Linkchain playing with Jimmy Rogers. I'd listen to them and then run back and get note for note. Bobby Anderson was a bass player, and he taught me a lot of stuff. Calvin taught me how to do Jimmy Reed on the bass, before he got with Muddy Waters."

After the Precision was stolen, Stroger says, "I got the Fender Jazz Bass that I've been playing for 50 years from a boy named Left Hand Frank. Later, when I went to Austin, Clifford Antone gave me a black Precision. I did five years of the American Folk Blues Festival tours in Europe. Sunnyland Slim and Eddie Taylor got me on that, and made sure I got good money. Me and (drummer) Odie Payne were the rhythm section. He really learnt me about the music. We'd sit up at night and figure out how we were going to play with each guy to make the music sound different."

Unpredictable blues singers like Snooky Pryor and Homesick James are known for making irregular chord changes, but Bob follows them like a second skin. "That's our job. I tell young people, if you're a sideman, you're playing with the artist you are working with. You support him – not you doing *your* thing. If he makes a bad change and you don't do it, talking about him doing wrong, people come to see him, not to see you. Your job is to make him sound good as you possibly can. Whatever it takes to make the artist sound good, that's what I do. There ain't such a thing as bad changes. Learn to play with people and listen."

Looking back on 60-plus years, Stroger reflects, "I've been so lucky. I came up with the greats. Everybody liked me and tried to help me along. Freddie Robinson, Luther Tucker, Memphis Slim – just about everybody who played the blues. Whenever I play with people, we end up being friends, period. With Jimmy Rogers, we were real close, or Sunnyland. Otis Rush gave me my first tour of Europe. And now the Headcutters, we bond. That makes music so easy, because we have fun together. It's not just a job. I'm trying to give something back to young musicians, like the people that helped me along the way."

As for retirement, he feels, "If I start talking about age, I'll think I'm too old and don't wanna play anymore. If I get so I can't carry my weight or feel that I'm not having fun, that's when I'll retire. It's not too many people can love going to work. Music is my life."

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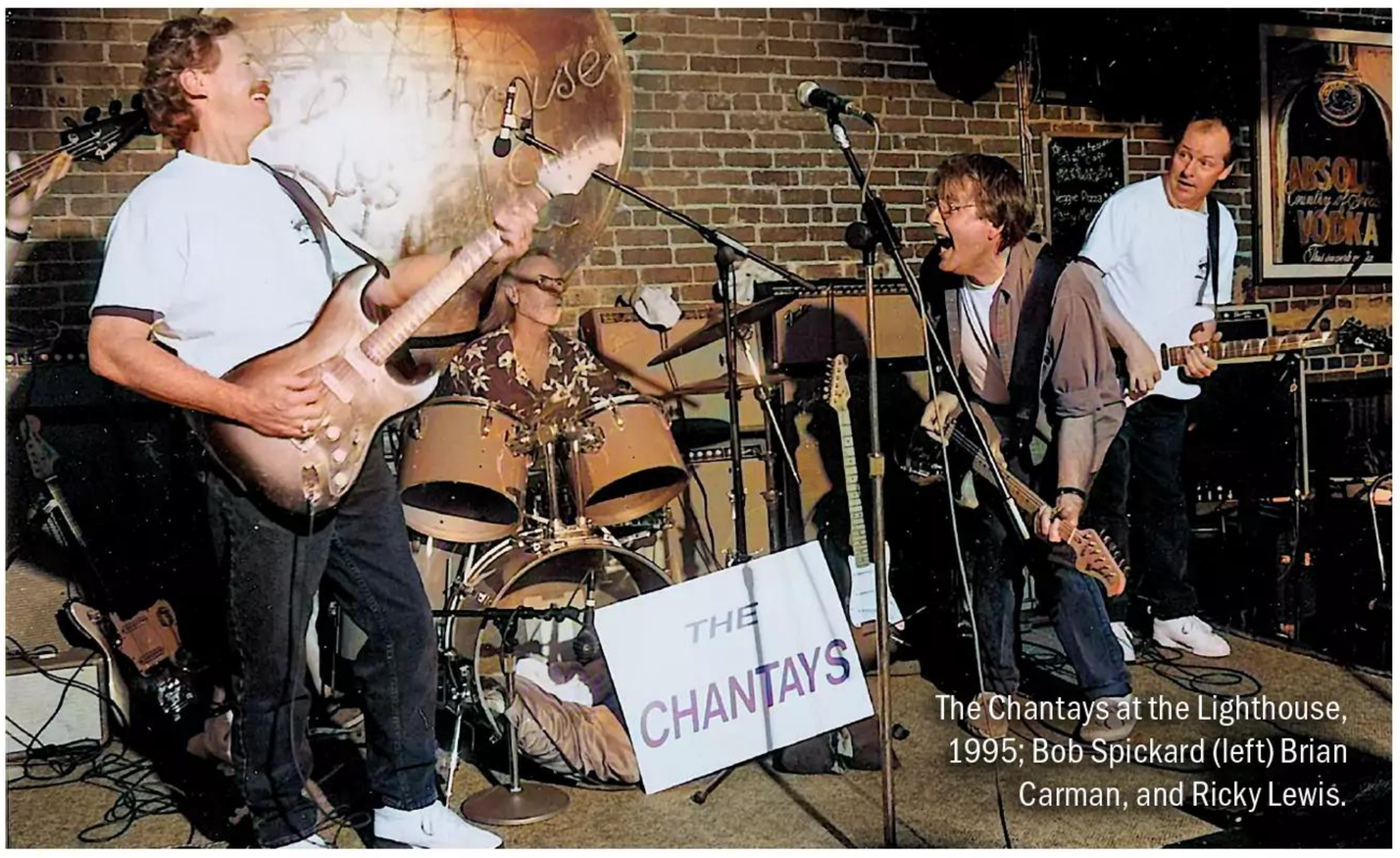
Bob Stroger: Peter Hurley.

Styx
Circling from Above

Rocking fans since 1972, Styx has become a reliable FM institution. Weathering lineup changes that would've hobbled more-fragile bands, Styx's 18th studio album offers mostly straightforward rock and pop with some socially conscious lyrics. Strong progressive-rock flavorings, part of Styx's DNA, appear primarily in the early tracks, unlike their last two albums.

Singer/guitarist Tommy Shaw and vocalist/keyboardist Lawrence Gowan split most lead vocals, but producer/guitarist and longtime collaborator (now official member) Will Evankovich also steps up to the mic. Signature chorus harmonies abound, too. Stinging guitar solos are James Young's specialty, but Shaw also tears up the electric. The parts by co-bassists Chuck Panozzo and newest member Terry Gowan (Lawrence's brother) are more prominent.

Evoking *Animals*-era Pink Floyd, "Build and Destroy" relies on keyboard melodies, wah guitar solo, and ace drummer Todd Sucherman's rumbling booms. "King of Love" is an unusual rocker with a swinging beat and Young's processed vocals in the middle. Shaw's "Blue Eyed Raven" is blistering folk bombast with mandolin, tambourine, a fiddle solo, and distorted electric guitar. Evankovich's catchy "We Lost the Wheel Again" grooves on acoustic rhythm and lead guitars. ***– Bret Adams***



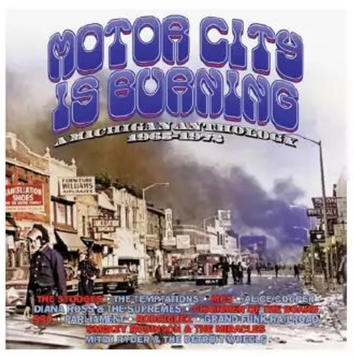
The Chantays at the Lighthouse, 1995; Bob Spickard (left) Brian Carman, and Ricky Lewis.

The Shootouts
Switchback

This rootsy Akron, Ohio-based unit centers around singer/guitarists Ryan Humbert and Emily Bates, with lead guitarist Brian Poston delivering powerful assets. Humbert and Bates are strong vocalists with Poston's outstanding guitar a constant, and the guests are impressive, too. Sam Bush appears on mandolin while Russ Pahl provides expressive pedal-steel and Willie Nelson sideman Mickey Raphael plays harmonica. Vince Gill and Rodney Crowell add guest vocals on one track each.

Well-executed flatpicking from Poston and Bush enhance the upbeat "Only You." The zesty ensemble passage on "Half a World Away" reflects great taste and timing. Bush and Poston conjure ample bluegrassy fireworks on the buoyant instrumental "Switchback." While Crowell adds his voice to "Half a World Away," for Gill, "I'll Be Damned" revisits a tune he first recorded in 1980 during his Pure Prairie League days, enhanced by Pahl's steel and Poston's high-velocity picking.

Poston's break on "A Few Old Memories" is concise and well-executed. The edgier "Dancing with the Distance," with Humbert handling lead vocals, has the feel of '60s pop singer Gene Pitney. It's another tour-de-force, complete with shredding. Sometimes, guests merely compensate for a band's weaker spots, but not this time. Their contributions only affirm The Shootouts' formidable vocal and instrumental strengths. ***– Rich Kienzle***



Various Artists
Motor City Is Burning: A Michigan Anthology 1965-1972

Detroit has a reputation as hardscrabble, and the music reflects it – evidenced by these 66 tracks. On the boxed set's title cut, John Lee Hooker strums the I chord, oblivious to the 12-bar changes, while Buddy Guy solos. On Mitch Ryder & the Detroit Wheels' "Jenny Take A Ride," Jim McCarty proves that you can get your point across in 20 seconds flat. "Mystery Man," by future Lou Reed guitarist Dick Wagner's hard-rockin' Frost, is oddly catchy, and Ron Asheton gives his wah pedal all kinds of hell on the Stooges' Bo Diddley-channeling "1969."

Motown session veteran Dennis Coffey's Detroit Guitar Band scored an instrumental hit with "Scorpio," featuring an extended bass solo by Bob Babbitt. A fuzz and wah specialist, Coffey also shows up on the Temptations' "Ball Of Confusion" and Parliament's "I Call My Baby Pussycat" and as co-producer of "Inner City Blues" by folkie Rodriguez, who became a cult star in South Africa and the subject of an Oscar-winning documentary.

Usual suspects Grand Funk Railroad, Brownsville Station, and the MC5 show up, but the collection's most attractive tracks are regional acts' covers, tapping Hendrix, the Kinks, Stones, and plenty of Cream-era Clapton. ***– DF***

Various Artists
The Legends of Surf Guitar: Recorded Live at the Lighthouse

Recorded in 1995 at the famed jazz club in Hermosa, California, this tape captures an all-star gig featuring honchos from the first wave of '60s surf (The Packards, Chantays, Lively Ones, The Sufaris) as well as later vets like Jon & the Nightriders and The Surf Raiders. No gremmies allowed.

With a core lineup involving surf legend Paul Johnson (The Belairs, P.J. & the Galaxies) and next-gen ace John Blair, the hits keep coming. The Packards serve up "Apache," a speed-picked "Squad Car," "Mr. Moto," and the compositional genius of "Tally Ho." The Chantays – with

The Chantays: Les Perry.

Luther and Cody Dickinson

original heroes Bob Spickard and Brian Carman – rock out with "Killer Dana" and the quintessential '63 hit, "Pipeline."

For sick fuzz riffing and whammy bar hijinks, listen to Davie Allan and The Arrows attack a medley of "Peter Gunn" with "Baby Elephant Walk." Also on the heavy side, Jim Masoner of The Lively Ones delivers a snarling version of the stone-cold 1963 anthem "Surf Rider." One highlight throughout is the audio fidelity; it's not pristine, but nails the rawness of a SoCal gig, rife with twang and 'verb. Another is the barrage of rapid-fire tremolo picking – one mark of these heroes' abundant virtuosity. **– *PP***

North Mississippi Allstars
Still Shakin'

The Hill Country experts are back with their 12th album. Capturing the evolution of Northern Mississippi soul, the band returns to basics with a nod to *Shake Hands with Shorty*, released in 2000. The Dickinson brothers – Luther and Cody – are joined by guitarist Joey Williams and multi-instrumentalist Rayfield "Ray Ray" Holloman. The album also features Robert Kimbrough on "Stay All Night," Jojo Williams on "K.C. Jones Part 2," Duwayne Burnside on "Poor Boy," and "My Mind Is Rambling," by Sharisse and Shontelle Norman.

The album features revisions of "K.C. Jones" and "Prayer For Peace" listed as "Pray For Peace." "Preachin' Blues" moves the blood with its invigorating groove and excellent guitar interaction between Luther Dickinson and Williams. Deep southern-fried slide meets clean gospel/blues guitar stylings for a wonderful recipe. On "My Mind Is Rambling," Luther's understated drawl adds equal amounts of grit to the black girl magic of the Norman sisters. Ethereal slide work makes for a soulful, far-out, dreamy excursion.

The title track is 100 percent Mississippi soul and groove. Effects-laden guitar parts flirt with severe back-beat drumming, girl-group vocals, and Luther and Williams' twin guitars. A stuttered effect on the vocals and stinging blues licks make this an entertaining listen. **– *OJ VG***

Luther and Cody Dickinson: Wyatt McSpadden.

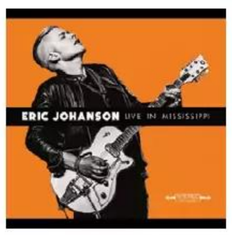
extra EXTRA

PHIL MANZANERA
Revolución to Roxy

The Roxy Music guitarist's autobiography recounts a privileged childhood in '50s Cuba, Hawaii, and Venezuela, absorbing the music and culture. He witnessed swinging London in the '60s, then enjoyed success with Roxy. Today, he maintains a prolific solo and production career. Guitar stories include his trademark '64 Firebird VII. Also available is a superb companion CD with five previously unreleased tracks. **– *BA***

SANTANA
Sentient

The guitar icon's collaboration-focused, carefully sequenced retrospective features 11 songs, three of them previously unreleased. The concert cover of Michael Jackson's "Stranger in Moscow" is loose and jazzy. "Please Don't Take Your Love" highlights soulful, bluesy lines, while on "Coherence" (featuring wife/drummer Cindy Blackman Santana), Carlos delivers a psychedelic jam soaked with wah. In all, an intriguing compilation. **– *BA***



ERIC JOHANSON
Live In Mississippi

The latest from Eric Johanson is a sonic business card with earthy guitar tones and scintillating blues-rock performances. Recorded at the Ground Zero Club in Biloxi, 10 tracks display the artistry of a passionate performer. From the single-note onslaught of "Galaxy Girl" to the sultry slide of "Just Like New," Johanson delivers the gut-level goodies keeping the blues alive. **– *OJ***

HILLAI GOVREEN
Every Other Now

An Israeli-born jazzer now based in New York, Govreen plays tenor sax and clarinet on a set of tunes co-written with bassist Ben Meigners. Guitarist Steve Cardenas – who has worked with six-stringers Jim Campilongo and Kurt Rosenwinkel as well as bassists Steve Swallow and John Patitucci – sports a just-bright-enough tone and tasteful melodicism reminiscent of Pat Metheny. **– *DF***

MIKE FARRIS
The Sound of Muscle Shoals

Singer/songwriter Farris' homage to the music of Muscle Shoals features original tunes with his take on the classic, soulful spirit of the region's legendary studios. His seasoned, soulful voice shines throughout, particularly on the smoldering ballads "Sunset Road" and "Before There Was You & I," enhanced by a crack session band including guitarists Will McFarlane, Kelvin Holly, and Wes Sheffield. **– *RK***

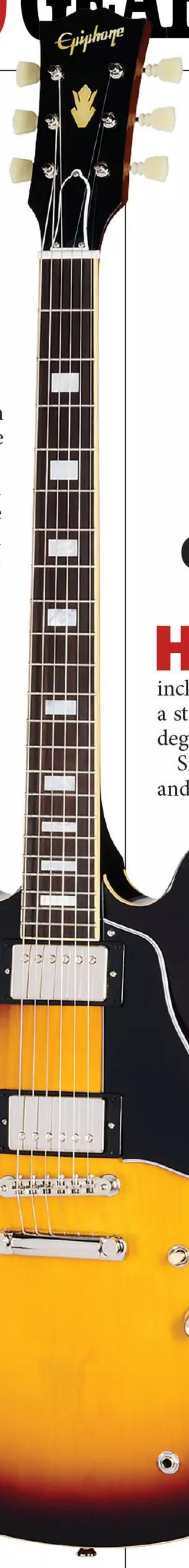
ENVY OF NONE
Stygian Waves

The post-Rush studio project featuring Alex Lifeson, EoN is something of a retro-electronica band that taps into heavy synth grooves and breathy vocals from Maiah Wynne. Unlike the first album, Lifeson is finally soloing again, stepping out on "The Story" with one of his magical, melodic whammy breaks. "Under the Stars" is another stomper, blending ambient crunch with Alex's liquid leads. **– *PP***

VG APPROVED GEAR

SMALL BLOCKS, BIG TONE

Epiphone's 1962 ES-335 Reissue



The concept behind Epiphone's "Inspired By Gibson" collection is to offer accurate reissues with key appointments like the 1962 ES-335 Reissue's "open book" headstock.

Specs on the 1962 Reissue commemorate the year Gibson introduced "small block" inlays on the ES-335, as seen in the hands of heroes like Alvin Lee, Larry Carlton, and Rich Robinson of the Black Crowes. Built in Epiphone's factory in China, it has a semi-hollow five-ply maple/poplar body (with spruce bracing) and solid-maple center block, mahogany neck, and a 22-fret rosewood fretboard with mother-of-pearl inlays. Another draw is the fretboad's rolled edges, providing a touch of comfort. The shiny nickel-covered pickups are unpotted Gibson Custombucker Alnico III humbuckers, while the hardware includes an ABR-1 Tune-O-Matic bridge and Historic Reissue aluminum stop bar, Epiphone Deluxe tuners, and tophat knobs. Finish choices are Sixties Cherry and Vintage Burst that, combined with that timeless headstock shape, looks every inch a classic 335.

Price: $1,149
www.epiphone.com

On the job, the ES-335 Reissue proved a well-made worker bee. Fit and finish are above average, which you expect from Epiphone, and hardware is satisfactory for its price. It has a meaty neck, cutting the line between speed and sturdiness; Epi calls its carve a 1960s SlimTaper C, but it displays a bit of girth at the ninth fret and above.

Perhaps the best part of the ES-335 Reissue experience is tone. It's a big, bold semi-hollow that can bark out the blues, rock, or anything else you have in mind. The neck Custombucker delivers warm, fat tones for days, while the bridge is suitably brash and rocking. The middle combination has a fine, funky honk to it, even swampy, venturing into Meters/Little Feat territory. There are three distinct and usable sounds, which is not always the case with two-humbucker guitars.

Bottom line: with a price in the mid zone, Epiphone is offering a dead ringer for a Gibson ES-335 that will set you back about one third of a U.S. build. No doubt, the 1962 Reissue is bound to be an attention-getter. ***– Pete Prown***

Price: $220
www.hardenengineering.com

OD WITH TEETH

The Harden Engineering Gator

Harden Engineering is known for its custom guitars (*VG*, December '24), but they also make pedals, including their latest – the Gator – an overdrive with a straightforward mandate to provide a commendable degree of natural breakup to your tone.

Sitting between Harden's other gain boxes (the Rodeo and Green Tiger), it traverses that fine line between booster and overdrive. In the words of the builder, "The Gator overdrive is a Klon-like, handwired overdrive that won't color your sound and distorts in a natural, tube-like way."

The Gator is designed primarily for tube amps, but certainly works on modeling guitar and bass amplifiers. If you're a techie, this pedal utilizes an FET buffer into a TLO72 op-amp, Switchcraft jacks, Alpha pot, and true bypass. For those of us who are not, the beauty of the Gator is that it has an on/off switch and single unlabeled knob to control gain. Like a Klon or other transparent booster, the Harden takes your natural guitar tone and simply gives it a nice, sweet kick in the preamp.

The player who wants a Gator already loves their amp and only wants a bit more *hair*, without coloring it with tone-altering dirt. To that end, the Gator's knob lets you dial in the perfect amount of edge, accentuating the tube tone to an exact degree. It does one job perfectly – making a great amp sound even better. ***– Pete Prown***

TRAVEL TONES

Ciari Guitars' Steve Stevens Ascender Premier

Any guitarist who has traveled the "friendly skies" knows the horrors of checking an instrument into baggage claim. Wouldn't it be nice to have an easy-to-transport, low-maintenance six-string companion on business trips or vacations that could deliver the sonic goodies *without* looking like some sort of skeletal or short-scale oddball not meant to be seen on a stage?

Thanks to CEO Jonathan Spangler and renowned Nashville luthier/tech Joe Glaser, Ciari has the fix with its Ascender, which is made with a weight-relieved basswood body, mahogany neck with shallow C profile, and ebony fretboard. It also brings adult-guitar features like a 24¾" scale length, 12" radius, locking Bezel tuners, a tune-o-matic-style roller bridge, and Seymour Duncan pickups in several classic formats. Weighing 7.9 pounds, it folds down to 18.5" and slips easily into its custom bag.

Price: $3,449.99
www.ciariguitars.com

The Steve Stevens Ascender Premier version adds a bit of flare with aesthetic touches like Stevens' Ray Gun logo and signature Bare Knuckle Ray Gun coil-splitting humbuckers.

Offered in Josie Pink, Gloss Black, and Olympic White, right out of its backpack, the guitar is easily unfolded and put into action. The LED pickup selector alternates between red (bridge pickup), blue (center position), and green (neck pickup), and is both functional and super cool-looking. The smaller body may cause skepticism, but after a few hot licks, the Ascender Premier becomes a comfortable and efficient tool for facilitating honest expression.

Plugged into a Peavey JSX set clean, the guitar yielded chunky rock tones with plenty of tonal variation and singing sustain, from bluesy warmth to country bark. The pickups are pure rock and roll; the Tone and Volume controls allow for adequate EQ variation, and the instrument truly shines when it's time for overdrive. Its girthy neck provides effortless soloing, and chord work is easy-peasy.

The Steve Stevens Ascender Premier is fun to play, easy on the eyes, and can easily be tucked into an overhead bin or under a seat. For the traveling player, it's pretty much a dream guitar. **– *Oscar Jordan***

GEARIN' UP

GATOR MINIVAULT REV2

Gator Cases' MiniVault Rev2 is a weather-resistant, roto-molded case for electric guitars with padded interior walls. Engineered for professional use, it has a broader footprint than the original, for improved balance. It also serves as a stage rack for live performances.

PRS CE 22 LIMITED EDITION

The PRS CE 22 Limited Edition has a mahogany body, maple top, and a bolt-on maple neck. It uses the company's 58/15 LT pickups with push/pull Tone, three-way toggle, and locking tuners. It's offered in Black Amber, Carroll Blue, Faded Blue Smokeburst, Faded Gray Black, and McCarty Sunburst.

LEVY'S TRI-GLIDE/ SUNBIRD STRAPS

Levy's Tri-Glide straps are handmade with garment leather tops, suede backing, and five color options that draw inspiration from vintage guitar finishes. The Sunbird Leather Series have layered artwork that is laser-cut with designs that include hummingbirds, flowers, and celestial motifs. They're available in black or dark brown variants.

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

BOUTIQUE FLASHBACK

The Tobias Killer B and Classic IV

Gibson has owned the Tobias brand since 1990, applying it to mid-priced instruments, mostly imports. In January, it announced the Tobias Original Collection, consisting of six Indonesian-made models that mark a return to founder Michael Tobias' '70s concept of using "exotic" woods, laminate necks, and high-quality hardware and electronics. All have a 34" scale and are offered in four- and five-string formats (including left-handed). We tried a pair of four-strings.

The mid-priced Killer B IV has a two-piece sapele body and five-piece maple/purpleheart neck with the Tobias Asym (subtly thicker on top, narrower on bottom) profile and topped with 24 frets on a wenge board that measures 1.61" at the nut, 2 3/8" where it joins the upper bass bout at the 20th fret.

Price: $1,499 (Killer B IV); $2,199 (Classic IV)
www.gibson.com

Weighing 8.9 pounds, the bass hangs on the body with perfect balance. Its body has rounded edges and a belly contour, making for a high degree of comfort that carries over to a neck that will agree with hands of all sizes (nit: the bone nut would benefit from a quick filing along the edges). Action on our tester needed no adjustment. Hardware is a Babicz bridge, Gotoh tuners, and knurled knobs, all in black.

Plugged into a pair of powered three-way monitors and a passive 2x10 cab, the Bartolini Soapbar pickups mated to an 18-volt preamp brought more than ample oomph for any occasion, and the control set – Treble, Mid, Bass, Volume, and Blend knobs teamed with a three-way mid-frequency switch for rapid, nuanced tweaks at your fingertips (no knob turning required) – granted a high degree of control. No matter your preferred tone or needs, it's certainly there – snappy highs and punchy mids for the Larry Graham devotees, and thick low-end with a range of cream that'll show the world (and your cab if you're not careful!) who's boss.

As its name implies, the top-line Classic IV most closely resembles an original Tobias. It brings identical dimensions, measurements (including pickup spacing), and weight. Neck shape and materials are also the same, but very different is the neck-through "stringer" construction that attaches to a body made of walnut with a wenge veneer and quilted-maple top that ends just shy of the top edge of the lower bass bout, in further homage to early Tobias axes. Hardware is the same, but in gold instead of black.

Given the similarities, it's no surprise the two feel much the same in-hand – until the time comes to reach for the highest notes, when the Classic IV's neck delivers that heel-less sensation some players crave and will gladly pay a premium to get.

Electronics are the same except the Classic gets standard Bartolini humbuckers paired to that 18-volt preamp and control set (which more than compensates for variances in wood), so choosing a favorite between them would be a taste-testing good time! **– *Ward Meeker* VG**

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— Steve Stevens

www.ciariguitars.com

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All Deluxe Flux pickups are designed, developed, and meticulously handmade by the L-Guitar Co. in Chatsworth, California. The instrument pictured is a Candy Apple Green Lancaster.

www.l-guitar.com

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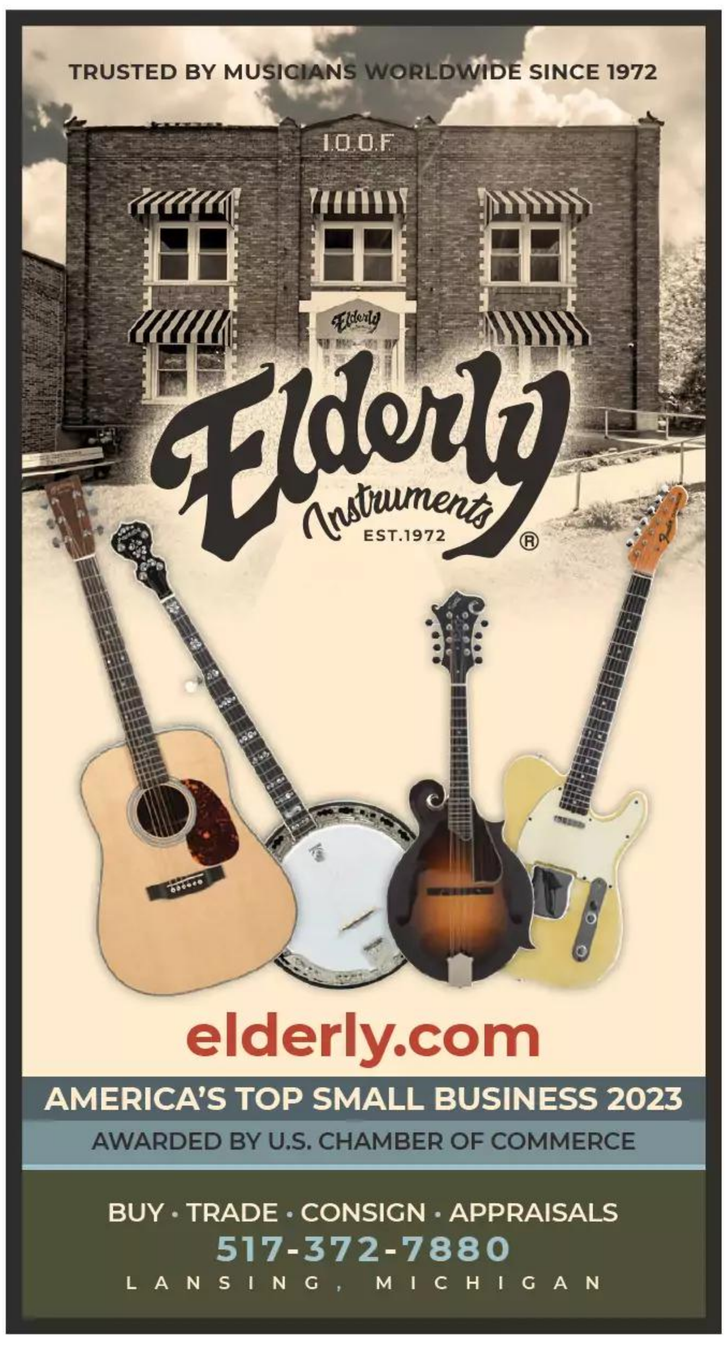
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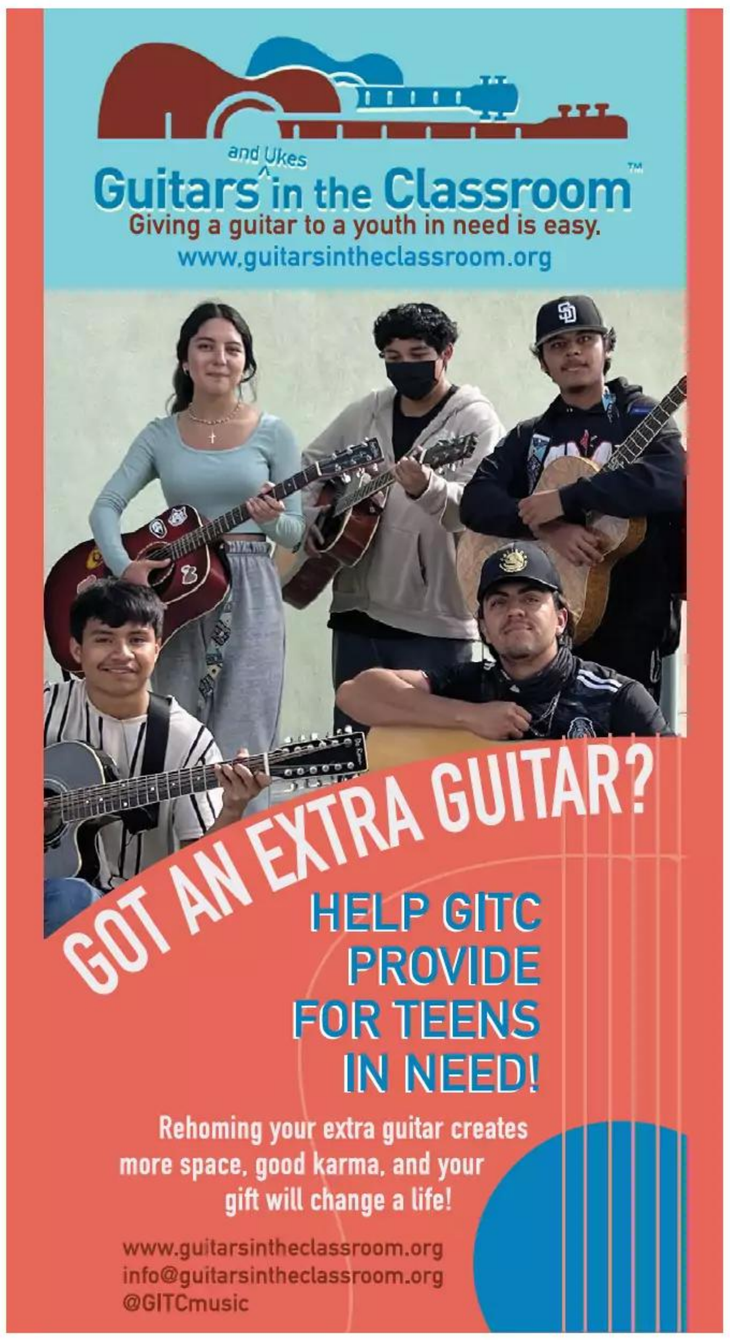

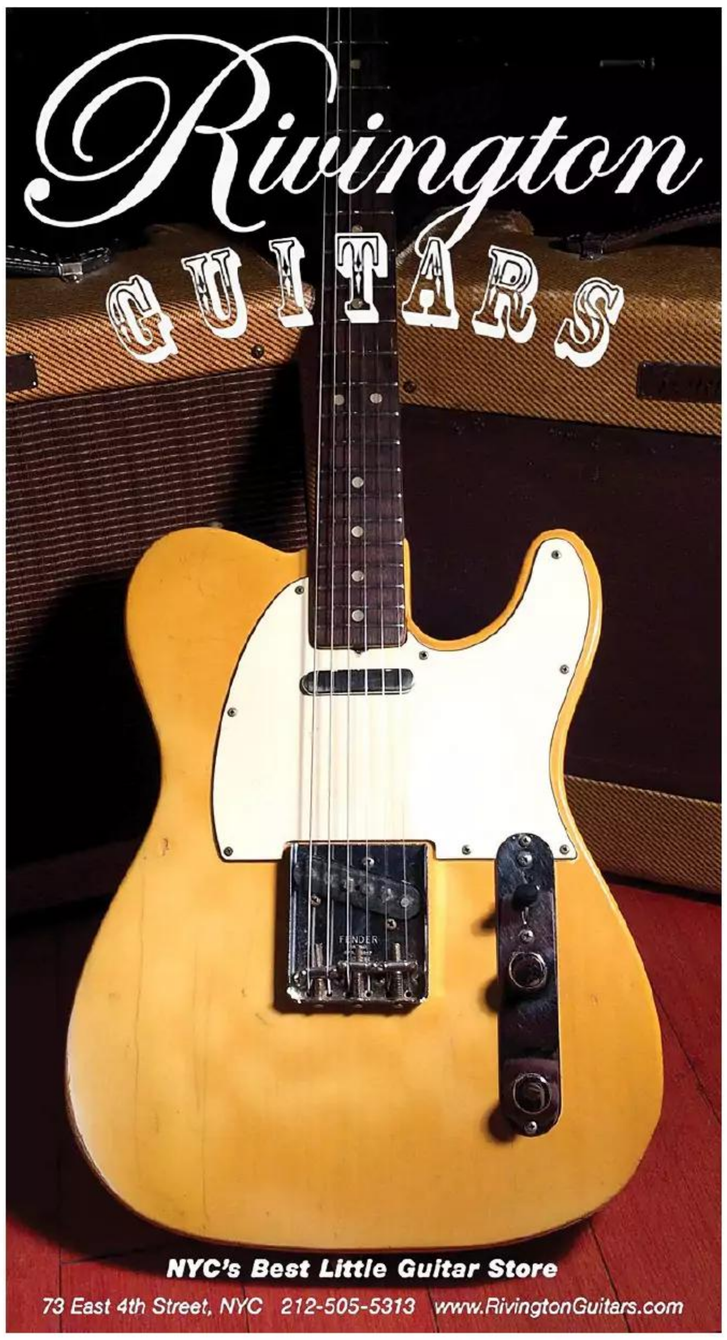

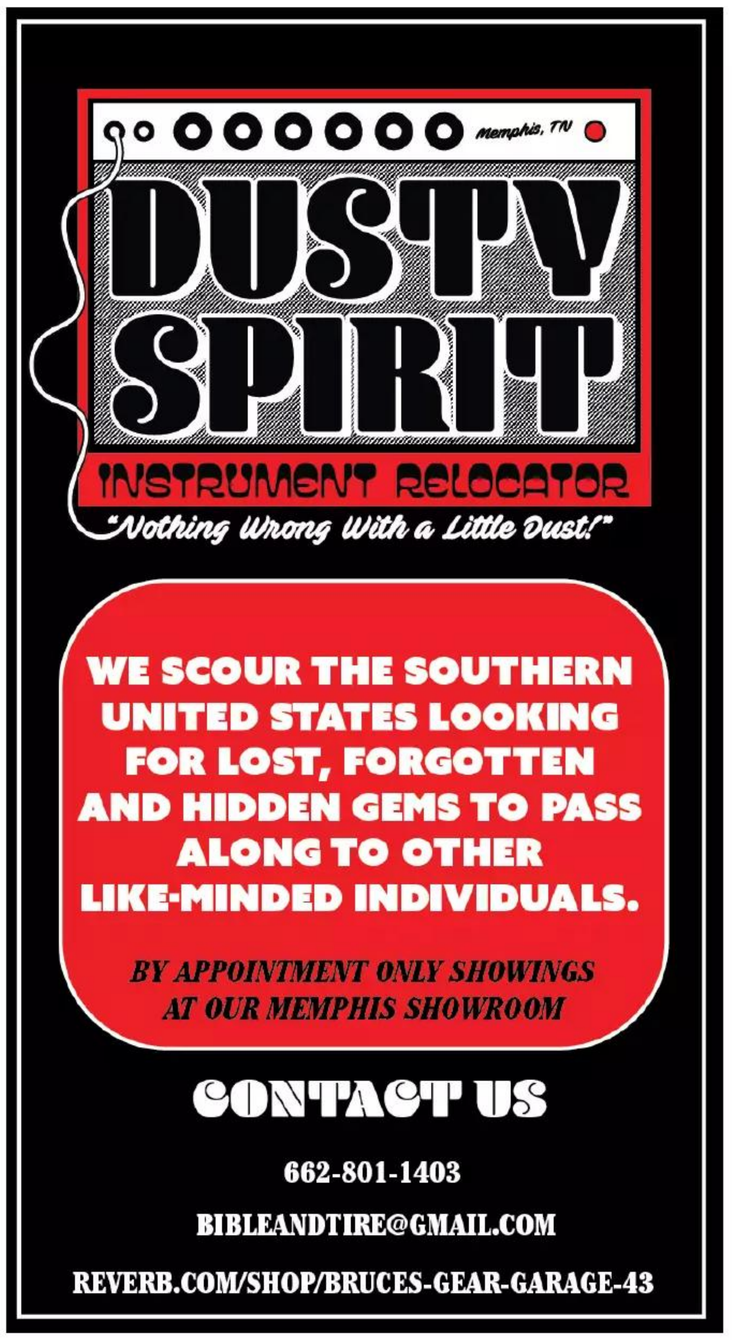

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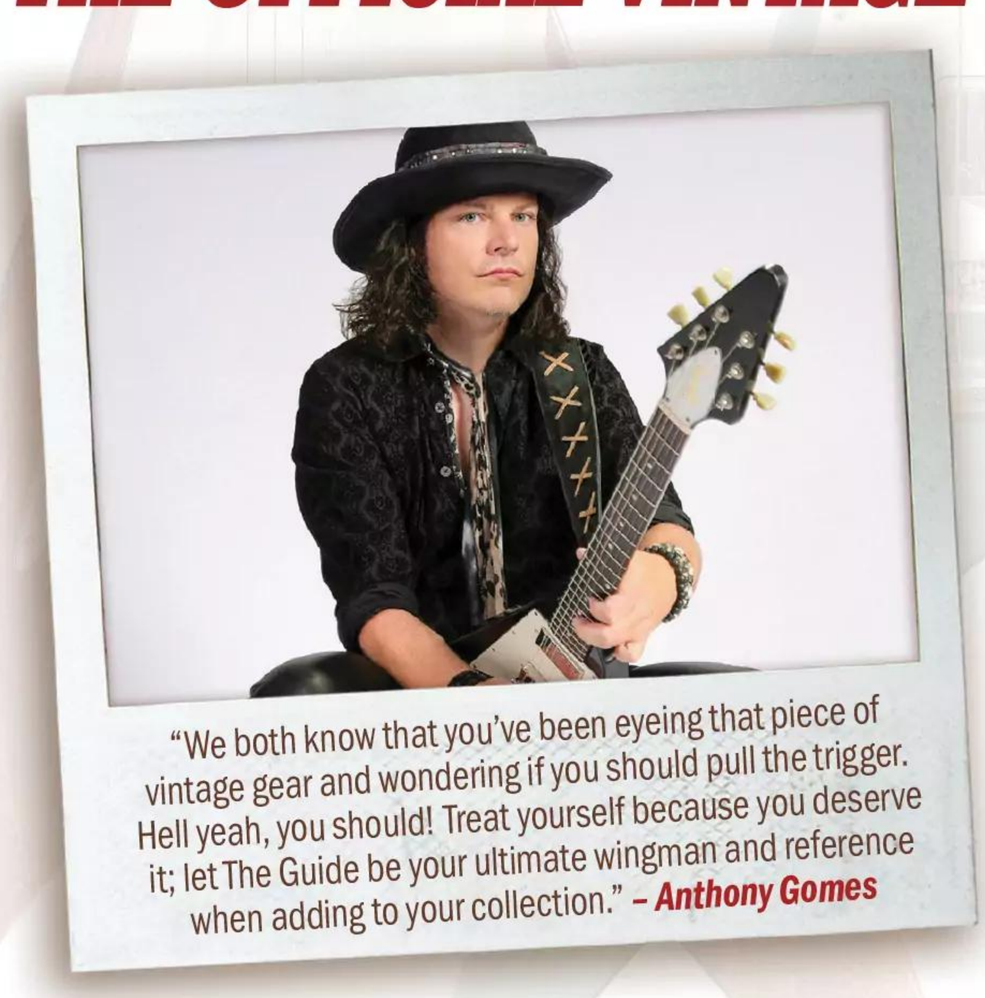

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01 Dave Mullikin appreciates "budget" collectible instruments of a certain age, and keeps all of them fresh with regular play – some even get to gig. Clockwise from left are a '61 Gibson ES-125T, '62 National Studio 66, '64 Teisco WG-2, '64 Solo (made in Italy), a '60s Klira (Germany), '66 Harmony H1215, '68 Mosrite Combo Mk I, '69 Teisco ET 220, and a '69 Del Ray EV-3T.

02 Bill Farrell's gigging amps are these old-school Acoustic 110 and the 220 bass heads that he runs into two Model 406 cabs. "The heads have all the original dials and sliders!" he says.

03 Michael Gentile enjoys the varied flavors of his bass collection. From left are his 2017 Taylor GS Mini, '10 Thunderbird, '94 G&L SB-2, a "...road-worn but reliable '74 Precision that's pure vintage mojo," and an '03 reissue Jazz Bass in Lake Placid Blue. "Together, they keep the low-end alive," he adds.

04 Accompanying him on 150 gigs each year and a bunch of studio work, Gus Fafalios' workhorses are these Strats (top) from 1960, '61, and '59, along with (bottom) a '54 Les Paul, '67 Tele, '61 Esquire, and '61 SG.

05 Lou Tielli calls this shot "Lesters Lounging." In front is his Les Paul Heritage Series Standard 80, in back are a 2012 Standard and an '18 '59 reissue.

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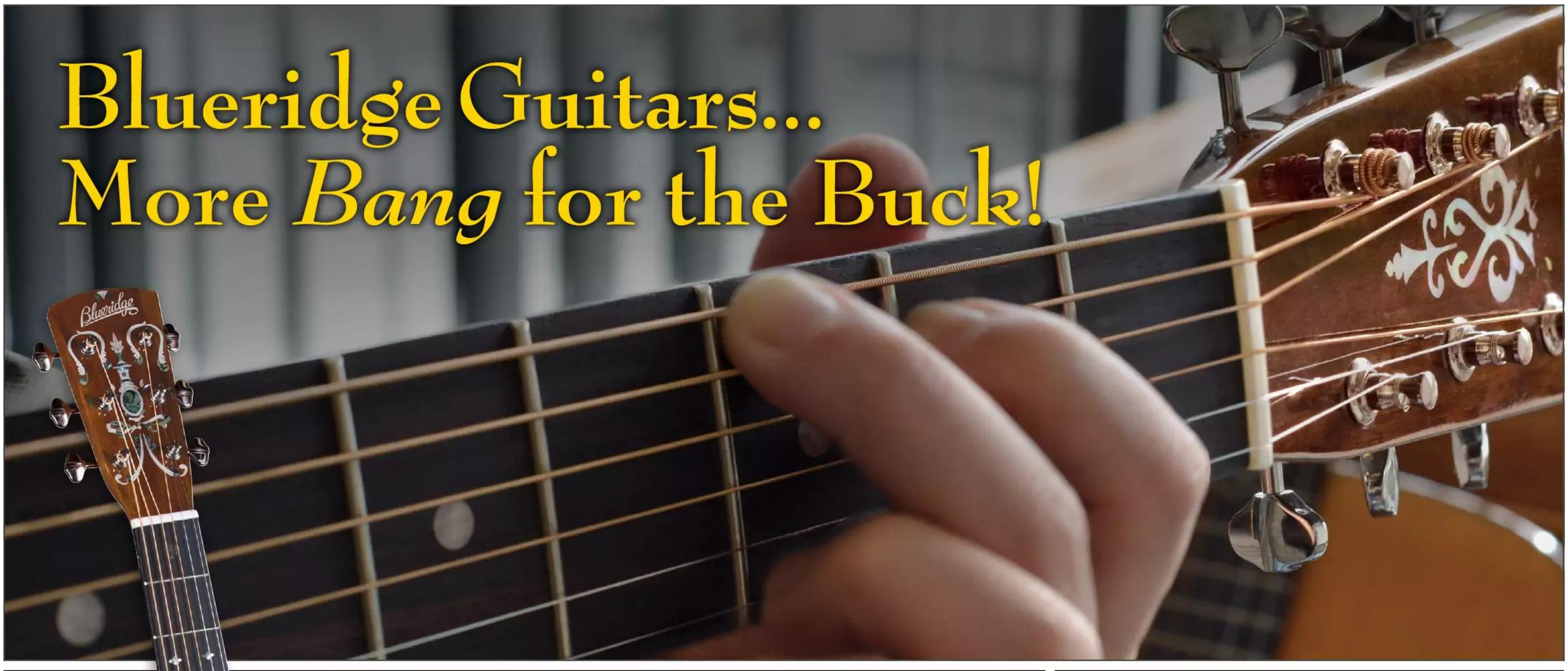

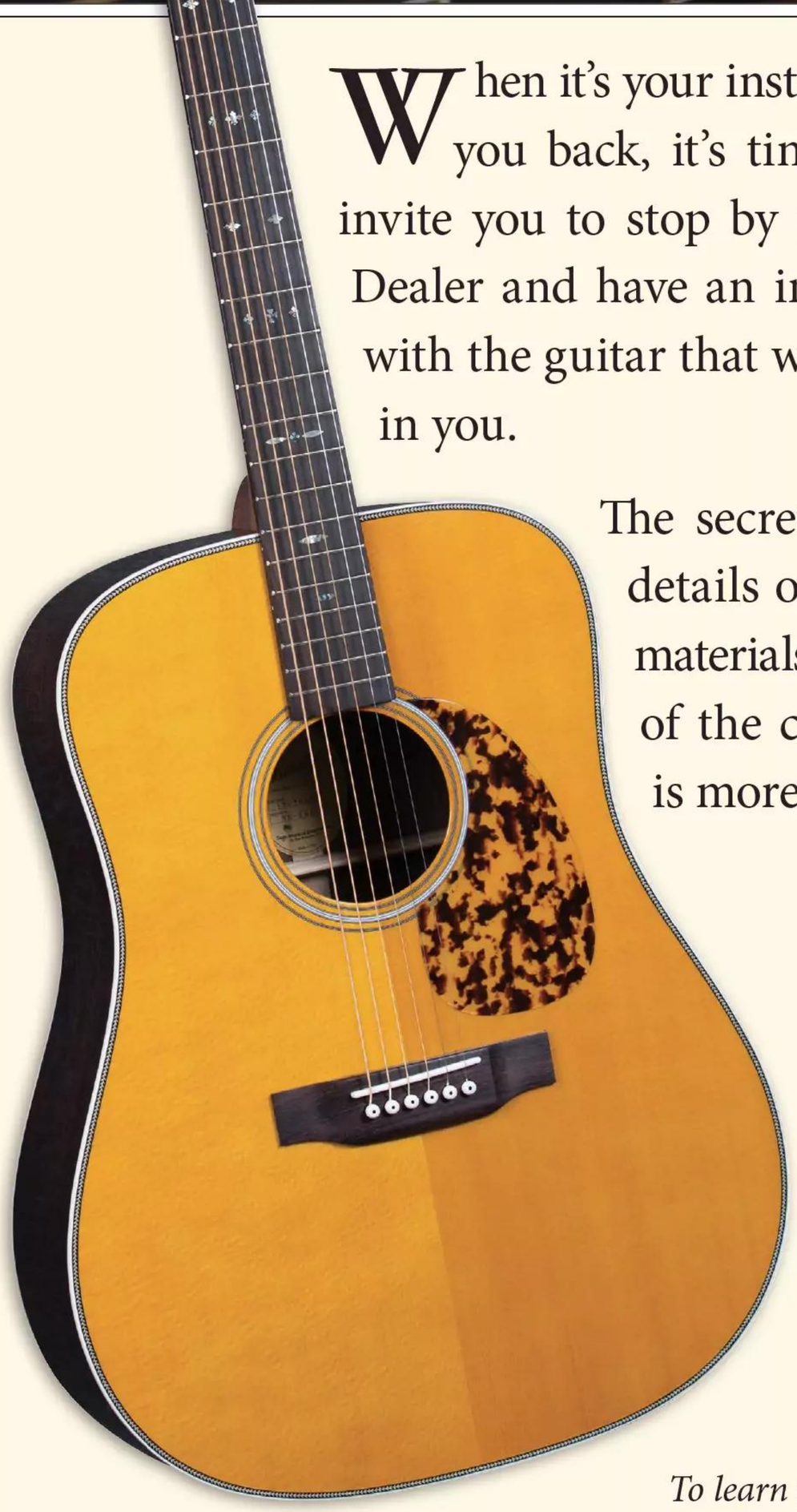

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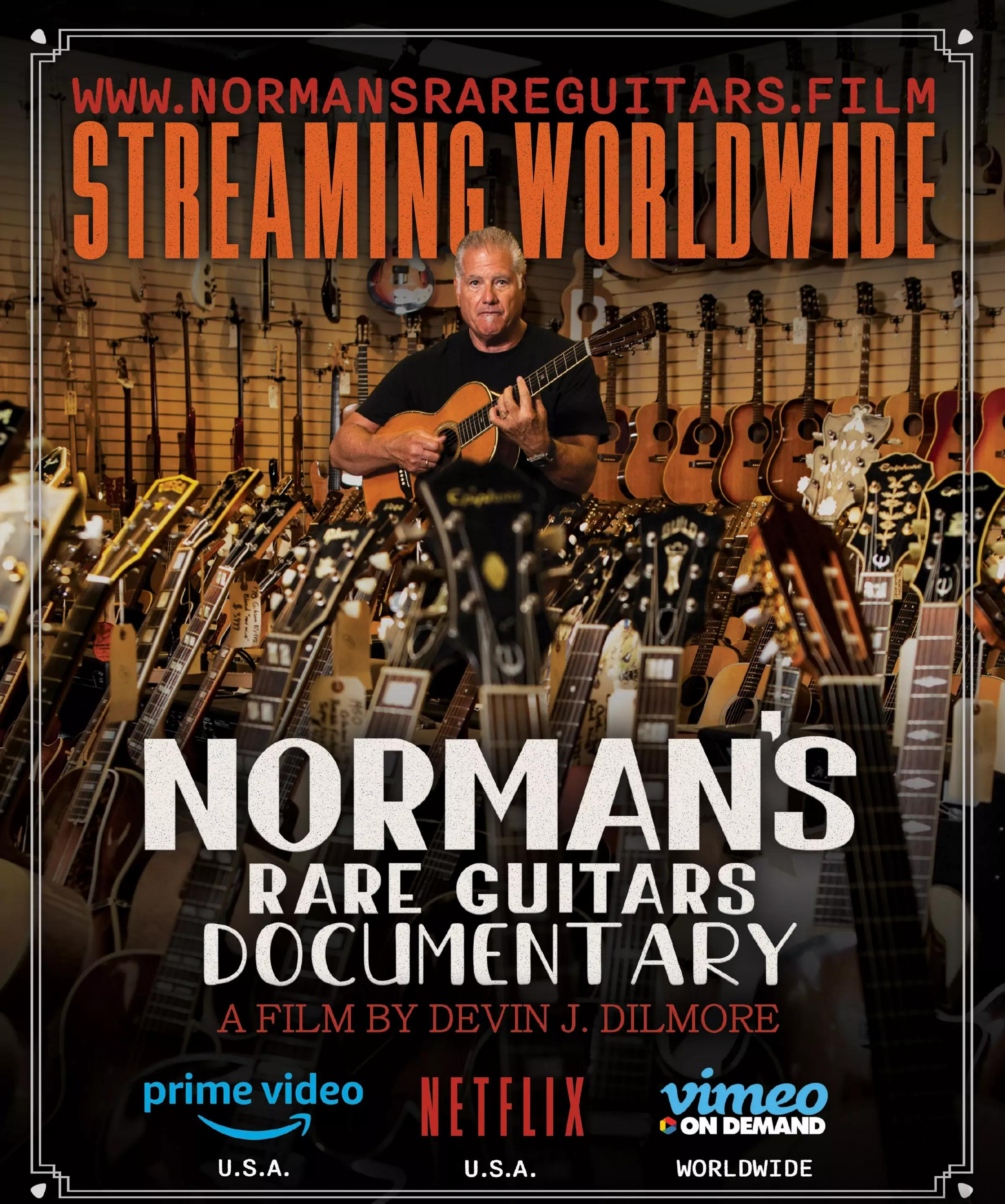

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