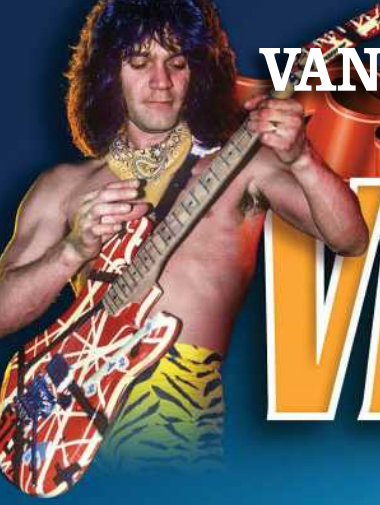

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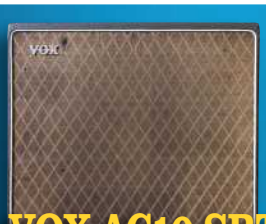
Instrumental Array



'64 VOX AC10 SRT

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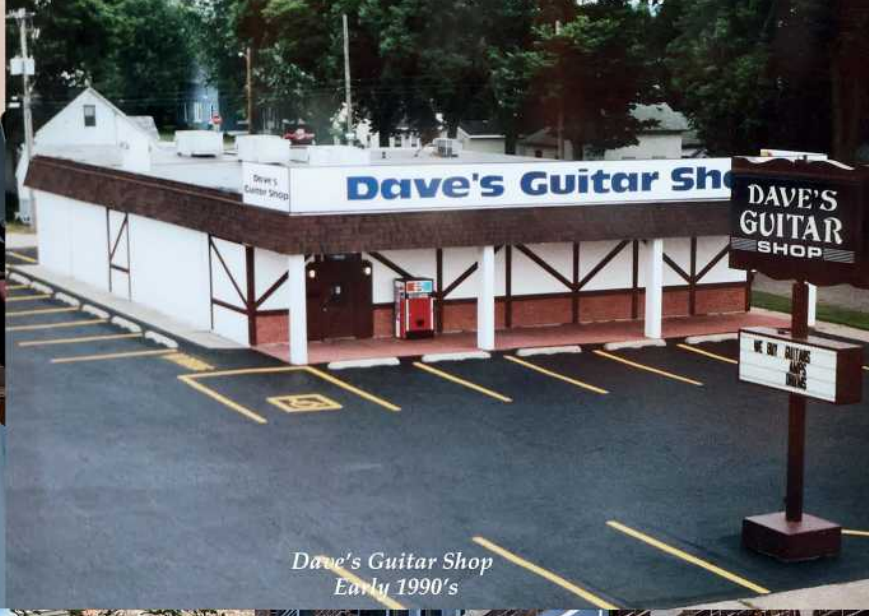

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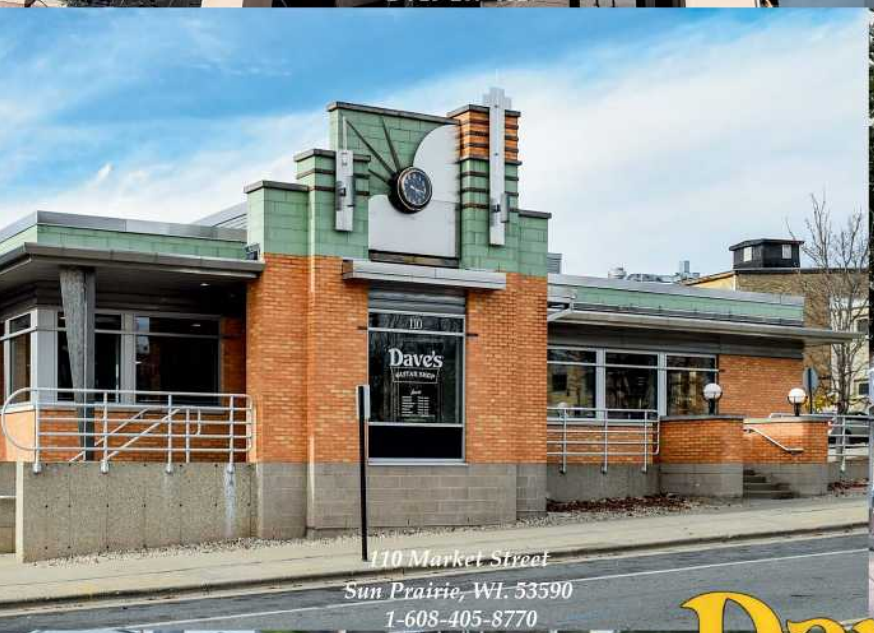



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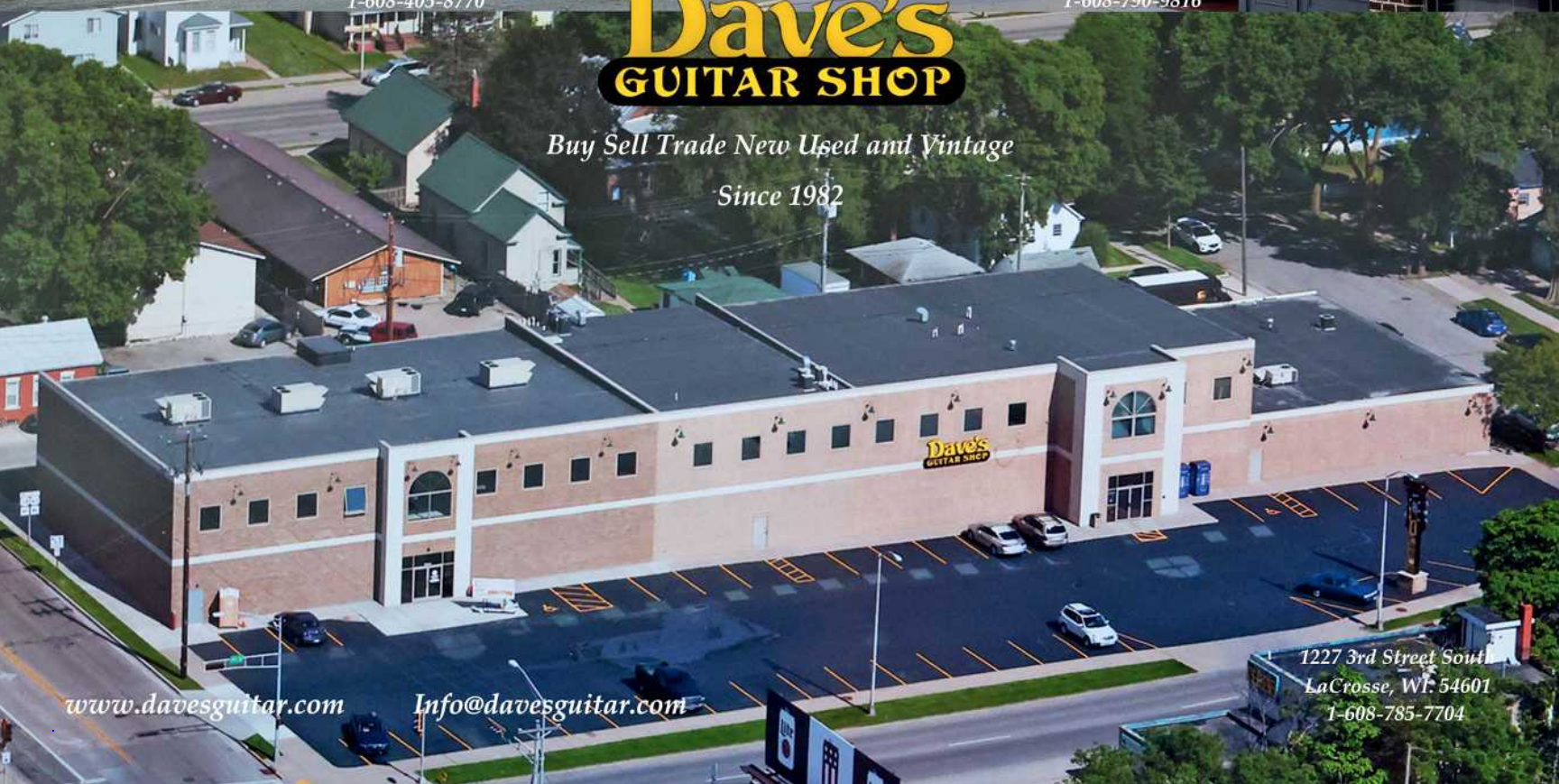

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By the mid '60s, Vox amps were the hottest thing for young guitarists eager to sound like their British heroes. And when an industry sees rapid growth (think "guitar boom") odd ducks are often hatched. This one is especially fascinating.
| *By Dave Hunter*

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Gods of Fusion 1970-1980
In the '60s, rock and roll became so popular so fast that guitarists playing anything else had to adapt – or perish. For jazzers, that meant learning to solo in blues scales, getting bigger amps, and ditching their hollowbody. We revisit those who emerged on top.
| *By Pete Prown*

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He moved to L.A. at 17 and compiled a list of session and stage credits that includes Mark Knopfler, Neil Diamond, Glen Campbell, Marvin Gaye, Ringo Starr, Kenny Rogers, Billy Joel, and Liberace. Along the way, he has recorded eight solo albums of original instrumentals. We asked him to recount a truly enviable career.
| *By Dan Forte*

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COVER: Richard Bennett: Nick Bennett. Eddie Van Halen: Kevin Estrada/Alamy. Joe Bonamassa: Marcus Bird. '64 Vox AC10 SRT: Collin Whitley. **THIS PAGE:** Hackett & Rothery: Anne-Marie Forker.

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READER MAIL







SEPTEMBER SATISFACTION

I've been a steady reader since a buddy in my band turned me on to *Vintage Guitar* back when it was a sizeable read on the bus; I had to hope other passengers would leave room so I could turn the pages!

That size was otherwise never an issue with me, but you made the right call in making the magazine a more-normal size, and it has always been better than normal in its content. In fact, it has gotten better. I was in heaven, getting *VG* and *Guitar Player* at the same time, but they went online only not long ago. I'm 77 and like turning the pages, and *VG* has never let me down (with quality paper, I might add).

The September '26 issue was one of your best, with more great features, especially "The 40 Greatest Guitar Albums." I wasn't surprised to find the expected in the top 10, but I was happily shocked to find that #11 went to The Beatles *Revolver* and thought, "Maybe this is the start of a trend." Sure enough, they followed at 18, 19, and 21.

I will always say The Beatles are the greatest band of all time because of how they went from pop to way beyond in such a short period. They were also the band to beat when it came to overall talent – singing, writing, and production – and Ringo was more than an in-time drummer. But I really had to mature before I realized the Fab Four were a bona fide rock-guitar band.

Not every Beatles tune turned me on to my rock-loving core – their ideas and talents covered a lot of fine music – but at least the four albums in the piece had some of the grittiest, hardest-rocking guitars I've ever heard (I played guitar in a band and especially loved learning those). Every album on the list deserved a spot, but I was particularly overjoyed to see The Beatles being so recognized.

On the cover was Bill Kirchen, whom I knew of but never heard. The photo certainly wasn't from his school yearbook, and it gave me a chuckle until I showed my wife saying, "Look at this old guy." She immediately said, "Honey, he looks like you." I enjoyed the interview and am finally listening to his music. It's not the first time *VG* spurred my interest in someone, and being old means nothing when talent is involved.

Anyway, I read every issue and get a lot of enjoyment out of it. Keep up the always growing vintage vibe.

Steve Pirie
Milton, Massachusetts

VG is the best! I enjoy every page. The interviewers are very good at their job and I love the blend of genres – it turns me on to music I may not consider otherwise. Also, the gear reviews are fantastic. After I pass away, I hope someone figures out how to continue my subscription to heaven!

Jeff Sonkowsky
Greenleaf, Wisconsin

I love *VG* best of all guitar mags; the format is great, you cover a proper blend of genres, the interviews are great, and I especially love the Dave Hunter and "Classics" features.

Kevin Healey
Hornell, New York

ALBUM AGREEMENT

Thumbing through the September issue, I thoroughly enjoyed "The 40 Greatest Guitar Albums" feature. Everyone has an opinion, and I totally agree with the pick of the Allman Brothers Band at #1. I'm 74 and have heard a lot of great guitar over the years, but there's noodling and then there's soloing. The Brothers had that locked down on *Fillmore East*. Great issue!

Phil Stewart
Grapeview, Washington

As a reader for almost 40 years, I have in my collection all of the albums cited in "The 40 Greatest Guitar Albums" feature. I was quite surprised I agreed with all the rankings, especially *Live at the Fillmore East* at #1. I had the pleasure of seeing the Allman Brothers in Philadelphia during that tour.

Mike Costello
Stanardsville, Virginia

ALBUM ARGUMENT

I just read the September issue, including the feature on greatest guitar albums plus the 30 honorable mentions. *VG* staff must be under the age of 16 because it's totally unacceptable to not mention Freddie King. Every album on that list started with Freddie's *Hideaway*, *The Stumble*, and many more. Though this is "Reader Mail," it should be in your "Oops! Dept."

August Scalzitti
Santee, California

(*Ed. Note: You won't catch us arguing that Freddie King should've made the list. And to reiterate, voting was done by subscribers and followers on social media. Our staff merely wrote the synopses for each album.*)

I enjoyed the article about the greatest guitar albums, but I'm shaking my head about the absence of the Outlaws' *Lady in Waiting*. Not even honorable mention? Come on.

Fred DeCaprio
Middlefield Connecticut

Regarding your September "40 Greatest" feature, one thing stands out – the omission of Roy Buchanan. His first two recordings on Polydor are every bit as groundbreaking as any on that list.

I realize the way you compiled this list has everything to do with the results, but it's very sad, to say the least!

Jim Scoppa
Boston, Massachusetts

BECK-HURRAH

As a longtime subscriber, I want to thank Wolf Marshall for the September "Fretprints" on Jeff Beck's *Guitar Shop*. It's my favorite Beck album and sounds as new today as it did back in 1989. The world lost a guitar genius on January 11, 2023, and I don't think we will ever see his like again.

Alvin Simons
Perry, Florida

MEMO-RAY

I was glad to see the "In Memoriam" about Ray Gomez, however, I was disappointed it failed to mention Ray's work with drummers Lenny White (*Venusian Summer*, *Big City*) and Narada Michael Walden (*Garden of Love Light)*, and those are just a couple examples.

Ben Suncin
Daly City, California

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FIRST FRET



Mike Campbell and Chris Stapleton

PETTY & HEARTBREAKERS HONORED BY AMA

The surviving members of Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers were presented a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Americana Music Association during its 25th Annual Honors & Awards ceremony, September 16 at the Ryman Auditorium.

Mike Campbell (VG, August '26), Benmont Tench, Stan Lynch, and Ron Blair opened the show with their first performance together in almost 25 years, alongside Chris Stapleton. Latter-day Heartbreakers Steve Ferrone and Scott Thurston also joined the group for a song.

Molly Tuttle (*VG*, August '19) was awarded Artist of the Year.

GIBSON OPENS MIAMI ART GALLERY

Gibson has opened its first permanent art/photo gallery in the U.S., inside the new Gibson Garage Miami.

Located in the Wynwood Art District, the gallery will present rotating exhibitions exploring the relationship between music and visual culture. Its first, "Amplified: Icons of Music Through the Lens," includes more than 30 photographs of musicians across rock, blues, pop, country, folk, jazz, reggae, and Americana.

Gibson also commissioned large-scale murals by local artists Solano and Nate Dee; Solano's is inside the Garage while Dee's is on the building's south facade.



Joe Satriani and Steve Vai

JOE SATRIANI & STEVE VAI

Oddballs

To mark 50 years of friendship, Joe Satriani and Steve Vai have released Sea of Emotion, and it's some of the most inspired, guitar-driven music of their careers. Idiosyncratic, charismatic, and bodacious, Sea of Emotion is a compendium of wild guitar with fire and heart.

They took a break from individual projects to talk about it.

It's crazy that you guys wrote an album while touring in separate bands.

Steve Vai: Once it began to unfold, it felt natural, authentic, and yes, Joe was duck-

Mike Campbell and Chris Stapleton: Andy Tennille. Joe Satriani and Steve Vai: Jon Luini.

ing out and playing with Sammy Hagar while I was doing the Beat thing. *Sea of Emotion* had to be worked between the cracks, and that's exactly what we did. It's such a creative, engaging project. Every day felt like Christmas. It was so much fun. Subliminally, Joe and I have been preparing for this our whole lives.

It sounds like a Satch-Vai Vulcan Mind Meld.

Joe Satriani: (laughs) I listened to it the other day like a normal person, and it struck me as a super-creative effort by the whole team: Steve and I writing and Eric Caudieux producing. Eric somehow figured out how to handle the two of us while we wrote and recorded remotely; 99 percent of it was done remotely and we were never in the room together. Steve was trying to figure out Robert Fripp parts and I was trying to figure out Eddie Van Halen parts (laughs).

SV: Working with another musician who's at the top of their game really inspires you. We both inspired each other to raise our bar. When I would receive a solo from Joe, it was Joe plus (laughs). Working together encouraged us to go beyond what we might normally do. I would hear one of Joe's solos and go, "Oh, my God! I gotta up my game!"

JS: (laughs) We needed a theme to guide us on what kind of songs would support a collection, so I went back in time to this place where Steve and I grew up. There was a little field that was part of the high school that we went to called the Sea of Emotion. My friends and I used to hang out there late at night and talk about life.

SV: It was the Den of Inequity for greasers. We ran from the cops and got into so much trouble – fun trouble. 1970s trouble.

JS: It's mind-boggling to think that we were just kids growing up with similar family situations on Long Island in the middle of Nassau County. Somehow, our parents encouraged us to play loud music in our basements (laughs). There wasn't much to distract you from the idea that you wanted to be a rock-and-roll star.

Which guitars did you play on the album?

SV: On "Bronco Freight Train," Joe plays slide on a Telecaster, and it's beautiful.

JS: It's a '58 Esquire I've had since '92. It's on every album. It's a keeper. For modeling, I used ToneX and Neural DSP, but for me, the SansAmp was the way to go. The first time I used it was back in '98 on *Crystal Planet*.

SV: I used my Evo JEM, my Flo III, a Coral Sitar, and this magnificent seven-string Coral Sitar that Sterling Ball made for me.

JS: I also used my main Ibanez JS1CR, a gold JS, my JS paisley, and my JS MCR number two. I also used a Taylor 714ce-N on "Sea of Emotions," a Guild 12-string acoustic, and a Jerry Jones Electric Sitar.

There's great chemistry on the record.

SV: The intro to "Sea of Emotion Part 3" is a little piece of tape that Joe and I recorded in his bedroom when we were teenagers. I transferred it to digital, took that snippet, fleshed out the riff, and created a piece of music.

The album is a love letter to your friendship.

SV: Joe was my mentor and teacher for the first four years of my guitar life. He's always been a tremendous source of inspiration. He's been so effective at that whole movement of inspired, melodic, instrumental rock guitar. It was helpful for anybody doing that, as it was for me.

JS: I met Steve when he was 12. We became guitar-playing best buddies; we were crazy teenagers, and that bond has come to fruition on this album. We had to share, not be afraid to ruffle each other's feathers when we didn't like something, and praise each other when we were on the right track. I'm so glad that the world made space for oddballs like us. ***– Oscar Jordan***

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IN MEMORIAM

CHEETAH CHROME

American punk pioneer Cheetah Chrome, co-founder of the Dead Boys and part of the classic lineup of Rocket from the Tombs, died September 13. He was 71.

Born Eugene (Gene) O'Connor, he was part of the first wave of punk and New Wave acts that exploded out of New York City and drew global acclaim – and revulsion. Their 1977 album *Young, Loud and Snotty* remains a classic of the genre, plastered with the snarl of singer Stiv Bators and Cheetah's Chuck Berry-on-speed double-stops.

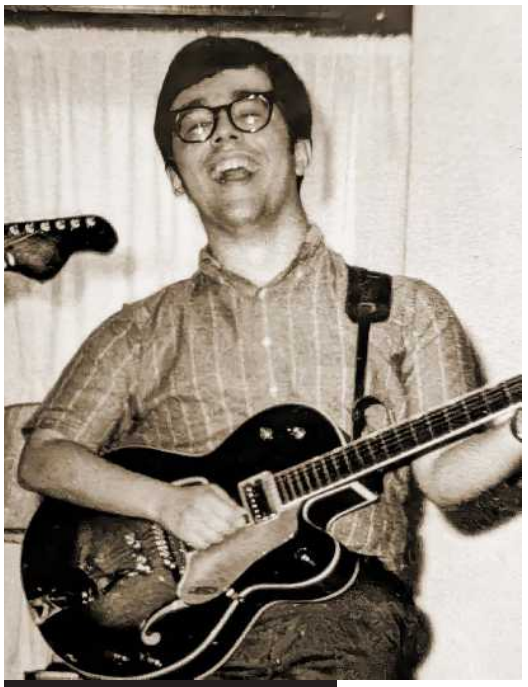
Recalling the sessions to *VG* in 2016, he said, "Really, it's a blur of beer, uppers, Hell's Angels, and long walks to wind-down enough to sleep. I ran into Peter Frampton – then the biggest rock star in the world – and growled into his face, which was a high point. Watching Stiv do vocals in the studio was the biggest revelation. We'd never been able to hear him before and Stiv sounded great!"

Despite the edgy veneer, Chrome was initially inspired by the Beatles playing "The Ed Sullivan Show" and reminisced, "I knew from the first notes what I would be doing for the rest of my life. I began bugging my mom for a guitar; the Beatles were my gateway to Elvis, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, and Tamla/Motown. By mistake, my mom bought me the first Iggy & the Stooges album as a birthday present – that led me to scouring record stores for the MC5 and New York Dolls."

In memoriam, the Dead Boys posted, "Cheetah Chrome… was a one-man hurricane, tearing [it] up with his feral guitar riffs and manic energy... also a really sweet guy that loved rock-roll." Cherie Currie, lead singer of the all-girl '70s group The Runaways, added, "My cherished friend Cheetah passed suddenly today. He just called me to sing with him at The Whisky and I sang on his new album. An exceptional man, musician, and friend."

Grunge icons Pearl Jam paid homage, saying, "Cheetah co-wrote 'Sonic Reducer' before turning it into a snarling classic. Since then, the song's become a recurring favorite in our live repertoire. In 2003, Cheetah joined us onstage to rip through 'Sonic' – an unforgettable, full-circle moment for the band." ***– Pete Prown***





Cheetah Chrome: Jeff Fasano/VG Archive. Rich Kienzle photo courtesy of Chris Angelopoulos.

RICH KIENZLE

Vintage Guitar lost one of its finest writers when contributing editor Rich Kienzle passed on September 1. He was 75 and suffered a heart attack.

A native of western Pennsylvania, he was a leading expert in country guitar lore, and possessed a staggering knowledge of blues, jazz, Western swing, and early rock and roll. Aside from *VG*, he wrote for *Country Music Magazine*, *No Depression*, *Guitar Player*, *Guitar World*, *Fretboard Journal*, and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* newspaper. He wrote liner notes for many album reissues and authored books including *Great Guitarists: The Most Influential Players in Blues, Country Music, Jazz and Rock*, *Southwest Shuffle*, and *The Grand Tour: The Life and Music of George Jones*.

Editor-at-large Dan Forte worked with Kienzle at various magazines for decades and offered these memories.

"Rich was a colleague and kindred spirit, as we both began getting published in the mid '70s. When I was on staff at *Guitar Player*, I edited pieces he contributed in the days before e-mail and the internet, meaning we'd actually talk on the phone. His cynical persona belied an absolute passion for music, which he dedicated his life to chronicling. Rich was a veritable encyclopedia when it came to country music, also loved early jazz, and I looked to him as fact-checker if there was something I wasn't sure about. A very large music community will miss him."

One of Rich's strengths was his ability to apply scholarly research and a rigorous standard to his writing, never resorting to hyperbole or speculation. He also had a sardonic sense of humor, particularly about foibles of the music industry, yet delivered compelling interviews with top artists and, more importantly, newcomers deserving of wider recognition. He was particularly impressed with Daniel Donato (*VG*, October '25), the young Telecaster ace. Upon hearing of the writer's death, Donato told *VG*, "Rich's style of journalism can be likened to that of a brave musician; he was discerning, inspired, uncompromising, and uniquely curious. Each time he and I spoke, I could tell that what inspires me also inspired him. May Rich's words live on." ***– Pete Prown***

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JOANNA CONNOR

Full-Throttle Slide

Recorded at The Fallout Shelter in Norwood, Massachusetts, Joanna Connor unleashes virtuoso slide guitar, fretboard pyrotechnics, and passion on *Live On 11/11*. After 36 years on the road, the Queen of Blues-Rock Guitar is taking time to reflect.

Listening to *Live On 11/11* is like walking into Kingston Mines blues club.

I really like it. I feel like a fish out of water in the studio, as many times as I've been there. Stage is home.

When you're planning a live album, are you thinking about marketing?

Never (laughs)! We had to do two sets, which is two hours worth of material and an encore. The only thing we did was edit some things; some of the songs were 17 minutes long. I think it shows our strongest material. Whenever I do shows, I try to mix it up. You're getting a ballad, you're getting something rocking; I'm just giving everybody something to keep it interesting – interesting for myself, too.

The great thing about The Fallout Shelter is they have a studio right there, and five cameras. It's one of my favorite venues. It's all about the music. They had their own back line – a B3 and an old Twin. We flew in, played, and that was it.

You play the hell out of that Les Paul. What model is it?

It's a '59 Standard Murphy Lab reissue. That's my guitar. It's so sweet. The neck on it is gorgeous.

Did you bring your pedalboard?

Of course. I'm very basic. I've been using a Boss Digital Delay, a Boss Chorus, a Blues Driver, and a Boss Tuner.

You're using a new slide.

Voodoo Slides reached out to me. It's hard for me to find the right glass slide because of the weight. They measured my finger and sent me five slides in different colors – red, yellow, pink, and green. One has my name on it. It's very cool. I don't like to have a lot of room between my finger and the slide. It should come off easily, but it should be tight. I don't want it to flop around.

I wear my slide on my pinkie. That was the one slide-guitar lesson I had, when I was 15. I hold my slide exactly like Ry Cooder. My guitar teacher was a Ry fanatic, so that's the technique I use.

Slide is not your typical way to play guitar, but look at Derek Trucks or Bonnie Raitt. Everybody's got their own technique. When I teach people slide, I tell them, "This is the way *I* learned."

You completely transform "Further On Up The Road."

I used to do an acoustic set, and one time I started messing around with it onstage. It's 12 bars, but a little different. Then it became one of my staples.

You have an emotional connection to certain songs.

"Can't Find My Way Home" has that. I go off into memory lane. I try to make sure the songs are in different keys, but it's about the groove more than anything. Is it a good song to improvise on? Is there something I can bring to the table with this song, rhythmically, or solo-wise that's different from other songs?

Are you concerned with pleasing traditional blues fans and critics?

For many years, I was criticized by blues purists. I had major labels sniffing around, saying I was too rock for blues and too blues for rock.

The Blues Police.

The Blues Police (laughs)! I love the blues, but I also want to honor myself. I grew up in the '70s, and we heard everything. I also had a mother who introduced me to every kind of music. Even though I love the blues and it's the foundation of American music, I still have to feel good about what I'm doing. There are many types of blues, but sometimes it's hard for me to be in a straight blues box all night. For years, I backed up singers playing straight blues, but always thought, "When it's my turn, I'm going to push the envelope a little bit."

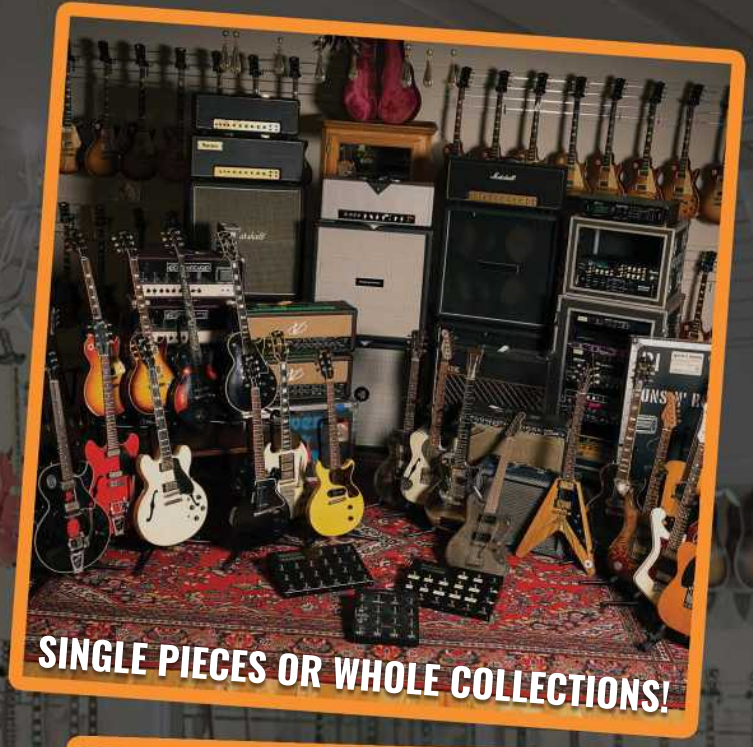
Rick Zito and Albert Castiglia said they saw me in the early '90s. They said I pushed it so far into different territories that it made them want to do the same thing. I'm not saying I was a pioneer, but now it's not such a big deal. Everybody's doing it their own way – infusing other styles. You can't live for the critics.

What's next?

I just signed with a European agency. I haven't toured Europe for a while, so I'm going to do another studio record and tour Europe. ***– Oscar Jordan***

Joanna Connor: Dan Busler.









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Steve Hackett and Steve Rothery

HACKETT & ROTHERY

Making Waves

Recorded by two progressive rock marvels – solo artist/longtime Genesis guitarist Steve Hackett and Marillion guitarist Steve Rothery – *The Roaring Waves* is an atmospheric, ambient instrumental album inspired by sea themes. Keyboards, bass, and drums are crucial components, but it's propelled by their guitars. We spoke with Hackett & Rothery.

Why did you decide to do an all-instrumental album instead of something full-band? Did you think that might be too similar to *GTR*, which you did with Steve Howe in 1986?

Steve Hackett: The difference is we're in a completely different era in terms of record sales. That was a corporate era, where Steve and I had an album heavily funded by Arista Records and we were accountable from the word "go." There had to be a hit single, there had to be this and that. The band was together for two years before we had anything released, so you can imagine the debts we were building up. Now, with Steve, we're self-funded and working in studios that we both had available. I had a studio working with (bassist/keyboardist) Riccardo Romano, who works with Steve's solo band. Everything started to coalesce once Riccardo was involved. We started to sound like a band the moment that it was a three-piece with him. He was playing bass with us, and he provided a drummer, Daniele Pomo.

Steve Rothery: People want to hear us play the guitar throughout a song, not just a 30-second solo. The idea is that we "sing" with our guitars – the melodies a singer might perform. This album was done for the pleasure of doing it, really, not with an ulterior motive of global megastardom or even an idea how it's going to be received. GTR was designed to be another Asia, and that didn't quite happen.

You created *The Roaring Waves* by jamming together.

SH: What we *didn't* want to do was this thing where guitarists get together and out-shred each other – the guitar competition. This was much more of a conversation between two guys. I would say 99 percent of it was written face to face. The remote activity that goes on with most modern albums wasn't really part and parcel of this. There are one or two things that were cleaned up at home, but there's a minimum of overdubs.

SR: There are moments like the end of "The Roaring Waves," where the two guitars are weaving around each other, that I can't imagine happening with any other two players because of our influences, our sensitivity, our shared language. Steve was a huge influence for me. The reasons I started playing when I was 15 were him, David Gilmour, and Andy Latimer. But we are different enough that we don't overlap. We have a different touch and approach sound slightly differently, including bending and vibrato.

All you need is to feel inspired. I'd fire up a couple of drum loops on my laptop and we'd jam along. I found that's a really good way of writing – having a rhythmical element to play against. We recorded everything.

Have you thought about a tour or a residency?

SH: It's a very interesting idea. You are the first person to mention the idea of a residency somewhere – somewhere where the pressure is off, perhaps. Maybe we can film it. Steve was the first to say we should do another album and then we'd be able to use what we can cobble together from two albums for a live show.

Which guitars did you use?

SH: A Fernandes with the Sustainer pickup. I've got several of those, a couple of which belonged to Gary Moore at one point because we shared the same guitar tech. They looked, if not sounded like, a Les Paul, but each had a Floyd Rose. So, you've got the Sustainer plus the Floyd Rose, which gives you infinite control, and they're great for all sorts of noises.

I've got two or three Fernandes goldtops, but I was using a black one that doesn't always come out. It's great for recording, but tends to feed back a bit too much live; I'm having that addressed. The classical guitar is a Yairi.

SR: I played a few guitars custom made by Jack Dent – a Raven with P-90 pickups and a Raven SR with two single-coil pickups and one humbucker with boost switch. I also used a signature Blade RH-4 – my main live one, which is an original 1988 model with Lindy Fralin vintage single-coil pickups and Blade humbucker – along with a Blade Texas Classic TC-2 with EMG SA pickups and a Vega-Trem, a Blade Delta T-1 with Lindy Fralin single-coils, and an Ibanez AS200. Also, an '81 Les Paul Standard and a Reverend Airwave 12-string. I used a Squier Jazz Bazz on "Pacific Coast Highway." ***– Bret Adams***

Steve Hackett and Steve Rothery: Anne-Marie Forker.

1967 The Summer of Love

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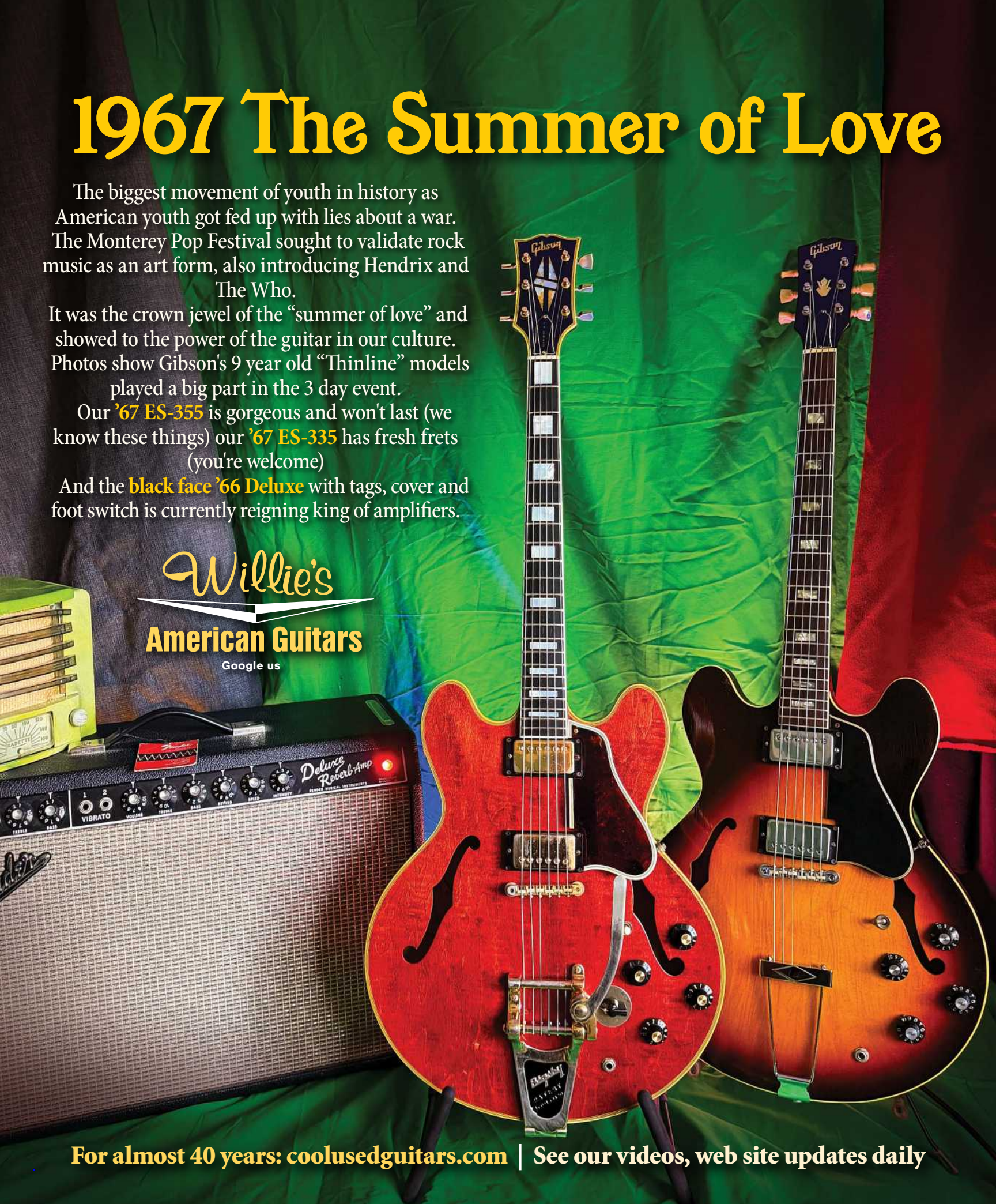

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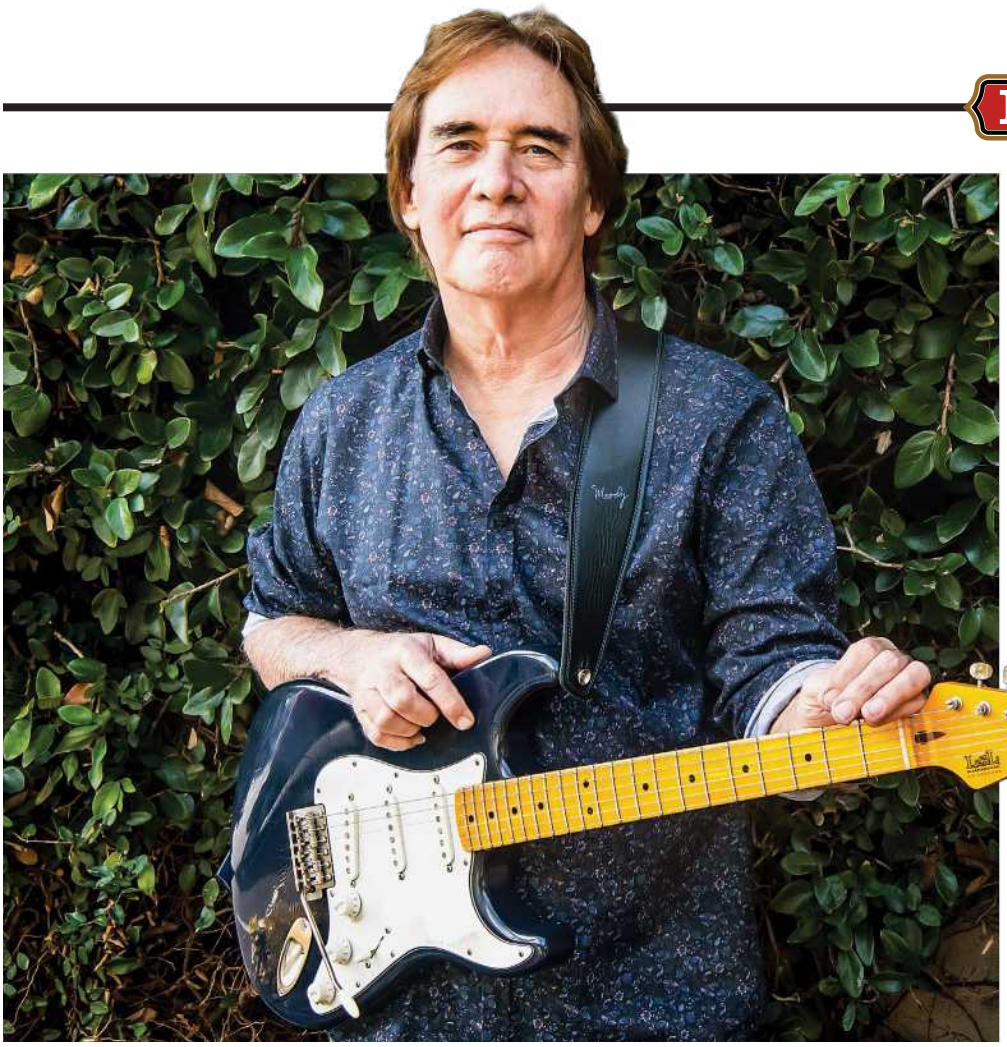

CARL VERHEYEN

Optimism and Hope

Supertramp guitarist and A-list L.A. session player Carl Verheyen has just released his 18th solo album, *Promised Future*. It's a mix of seven original and two cover songs about optimism, support, and hope wrapped in Verheyen's fiery fretwork.

Did you record *Promised Future* with your touring band?

Yes, but I bring in Jim Cox on almost every record. He's such a great keyboard player, so he's on four of the tunes.

You have been working with drummer John Mader and bassist Dave Marotta for years. When did Troy and Hollye Dexter join the band?

I've known Troy since the early '90s. He joined about five years ago and was on my previous album, *Riverboat Sky*. We were playing in Basel, Switzerland, in 2023, and I invited his wife, Hollye, to sing a song with us. I was totally blown away by how well our voices blended. She really elevates the whole vocal part of the band.

What was the first song you wrote that's on the album?

It was the title track, which I actually wrote for *Riverboat Sky*. It came together quickly because the guys loved the groove.

How many songs did you have when you decided it was time to record an album?

I had four together and then Troy and I wrote a two-guitar harmony part for "Light Shine" that was going over so well live. We recorded it in one take, live in the studio.

Was the album recorded as an ensemble?

Always. If you've been out on the road with these songs for a tour or two, it's just natural. I actually intended on doing a live album, but songs like "Survive," "Promised Future," and "Hippie Wedding" just need overdubs to really flesh them out.

Was this the first time you recorded the Supertramp hit "Take the Long Way Home" on a solo album?

Yes, that was recorded live at the Alvas Showroom in San Pedro.

Which came first, "Hippie Wedding" or "Hippie Reception"?

It was "Hippie Wedding," then I figured it needed a jam at the end. We started playing it on tour and they just flowed into each other.

Is "Promised Future" optimistic or pessimistic?

To be quite honest, it's a little more pessimistic. Lyrically, it doesn't bode well for the future. It's kind of like, "Is this the future? You can't be serious!"

Is it about lowering expectations?

I think it really is. It's that it's not going to be as great as we hoped it would be.

Is "Shallow Harbor" about relationships, in general?

No, it's more directly political; the truth isn't left or right, it's just... real. It's about the political divide in our country. I look at it like, "Hey, I'm a guitar player. It's not really my place, to tell you how to think."

Is "Survive" about self-awareness?

It's more about friends who are dealing with life-changing illnesses. It's about meeting your reflection 10 years from right now, meaning you're going to survive.

"Dark Angels" addresses the Palisades fires.

It's about our drummer's house burning down. I had him booked for a session and he called that night and said, "I know I'm supposed to be at Sunset Sound tomorrow morning, but we have to evacuate and I can either take my kick drum or the cat." He called back at 6 a.m. and said, "Everything's gone."

Jesse Colin Young's "Light Shine" closes the album, and also closes your shows.

We try to do it at the end because it leaves people with a real positive, good vibe. When I was 17 or 18, I was a huge Jesse Collin Young fan. I wrote to him, saying, "I'm a big fan of your music, and know all your songs and all the Youngbloods stuff. I would love to play guitar in your band." He sent a postcard reply that said, "Your letter is a great compliment." Years later, I showed him the postcard and he was blown away.

What were the main guitars, amps, and effects on the album?

I used my '61 and '65 Strats along with three LSL Sativoys. Others included a '66 Rickenbacker 330, '68 Gibson 335, '68 SG, and a '72 Les Paul. I also used a Bill DeLap baritone Alan Holdsworth gave me, and a '54 goldtop.

The acoustics were a '51 Gibson F-50 and a '38 L-00. The amps were two Fender Princeton Reverbs and a pair of '64 Vox AC30s, all in stereo for the chimey clean tones. For solos it was either my Dumble Overdrive Special or a Dr Z Carmen Ghia.

The effects included a Vintage Boss CE-1, Dunlop Rotovibe, a Klon, VDL II Distosore, and a Landgraff Perfect Distortion. ***– Bob Dragich***

Carl Verheyen: Danley Verheyen.

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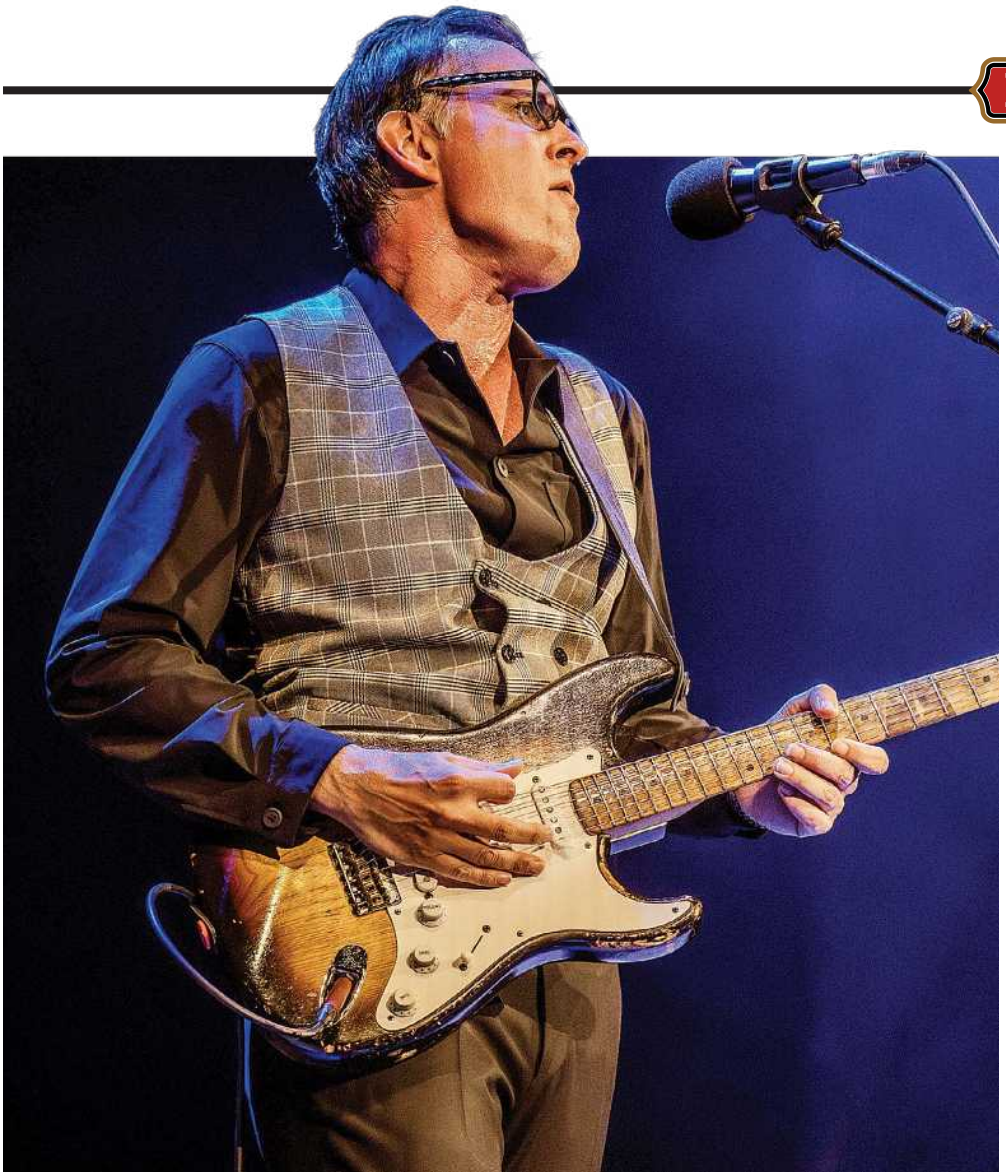

JOE BONAMASSA

Thank You, Rory

Celebrating the music of Rory Gallagher was the perfect excuse for Joe Bonamassa to whip out the vintage Stratocasters. *The Spirit of Rory Live from Cork* celebrates the music via inspired, passionate playing. We asked him about Gallagher, gear, and his return to the Strat.

***The Spirit of Rory Live from Cork* is absolutely intense.**

Rory was a comet – unrelenting. He never let up. That's why we called it "The Spirit of Rory." We tried to capture it, but there's only one Rory Gallagher. I'm such a different singer and player than he is, but obviously I'm a huge fan. There are guys who are a lot better at this than me – Davy Knowles comes to mind. I was like, "Call Davy!" (laughs)

To see what that music meant not only to his hometown of Cork, but also to people from all over Ireland, who came to see this thing on the 30th anniversary of his passing. Rory was a cult icon, especially in Ireland, and the recording came off great. It was the right band, the crowd was into it, and it was a lot of fun.

There's a lot of love on the album.

Everyone defaulted to arrangements from Rory's *Irish Tour '74* (laughs). I gave everyone a song list and said, "We'll just put it together." As we were playing, we'd say, "That's the way it was on *Irish Tour '74*." That record was ingrained into all of us.

You manhandled those vocals.

Rory was a deceptively high singer, and his singing style is so different than mine. He was a talk-singer; there'd be notes, but it was almost like he was rapping, as well. He'd finish phrases, then talk through it. I wanted to get some of that in there, but I also did not want to destroy 25 years of vocal training that allows me to sing five nights a week. It was a really challenging vocal gig.

Any revelations regarding his playing style?

He was equally astute on slide guitar in standard tuning as he was in open tunings, which is hard to do. I had to bring a bunch of guitars; there's open E, open G, open A, and capos. "Cradle Rock" is in standard tuning.

The other revelation I had was his use of the treble booster. Rory's family gave me his #1 Dallas Rangemaster, and I brought it, thinking it would just sit onstage. But I plugged it into the Vox amps, and I was like, "Oh! That's how he did it!" He dimed the Rangemaster, used the Normal channel on the Vox, and was a huge component of his sound, pre-1980 – that raw, driven, Strat-through-Vox thing. The Rangemaster really makes a difference and works great with Vox amps.

Did you have issues with 60-cycle hum at stage volume?

From my live rig, I used two high-powered Twins and a Dumble, then rented a couple of Vox amps. I thought it was going to be a humming nightmare (laughs). To my surprise, we plugged everything into a Vahlbruch A/B/C splitter, and within 30 seconds, I was like, "Yeah, that's it." We got it in phase, and that was the rig. It worked great and I had no 60-cycle weirdness. It was one of those gigs where everything worked out. Great vibes all the way around.

It's surprising to see you playing Strats again.

Thirty years ago, I was predominantly a Strat guy. On this last summer tour, I was playing one nine out of the 14 times. It's the nature of the material. After so many years of being a Les Paul guy, the Rory shows reconnected me to old friends.

Which Strats did you use?

I had a '60 slab-board that was beat like Rory's, a weird '64 greenburst that was a tribute to the Irish, a '63 Dakota Red with gold parts, which is a pretty rare guitar, and a couple of maple-necks because Rory used them.

What's next?

My next solo album is in the can and I'm going back to Europe for some arena stuff. As far as keeping the pace I've done for the past 20 years, those days are done. I'm happier not working and being at home. If you never go home and you never enjoy the things you've worked for, what good is all of this? I'd rather slow down than burn out. ***– Oscar Jordan***

Joe Bonamassa: Marcus Bird.

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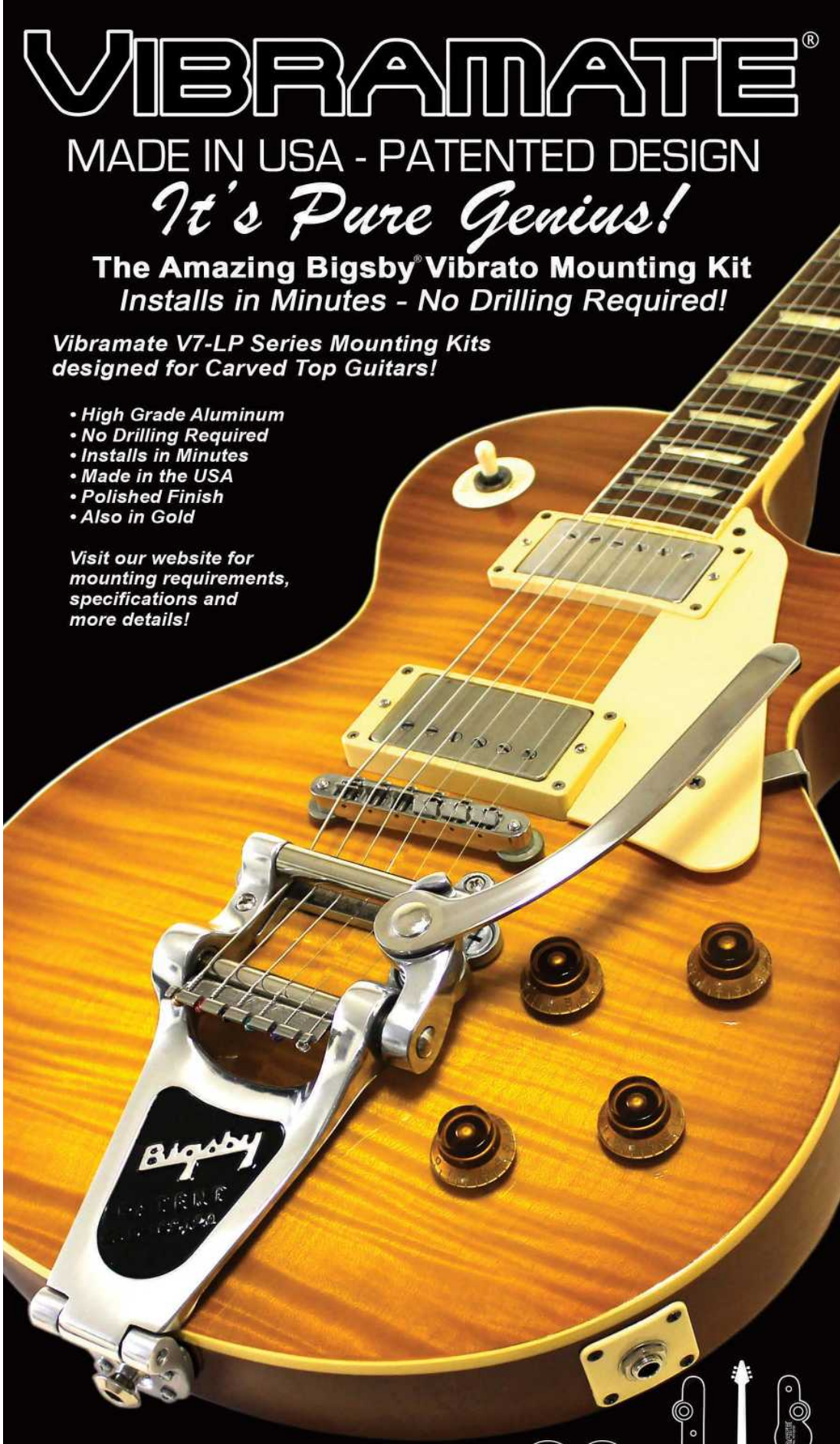

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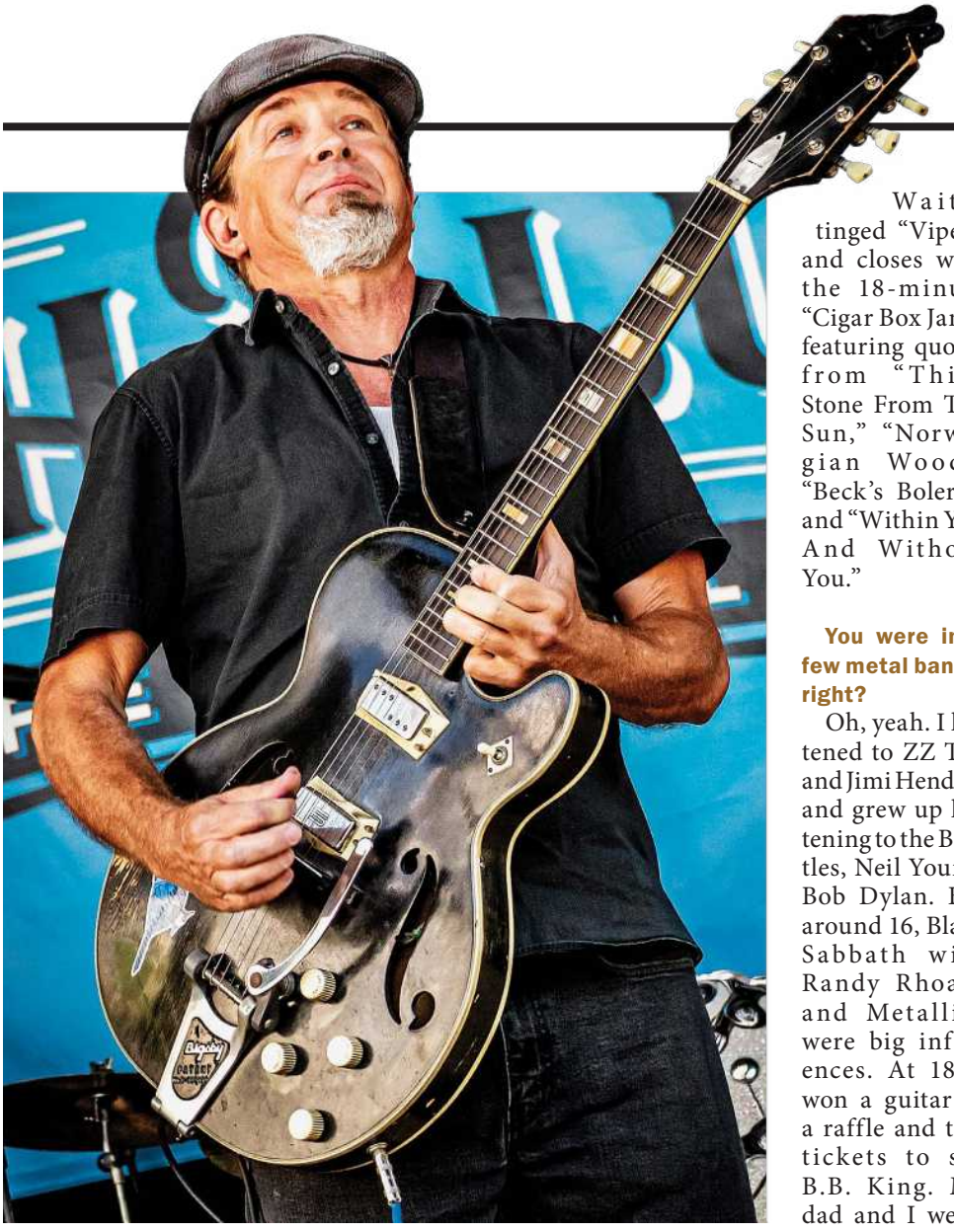

J.P. SOARS

Gypsy Bluesman

John Paul "J.P." Soars was born in 1969 and grew up in Cedarville, Arkansas, the oldest of seven kids.

"My parents were hippies, and they got a place in the middle of nowhere for $25 a month, no running water," he recounts. "My dad played guitar with his friends, just for fun, and I was always drawn to it. When I was about 11, he started showing me chords. I could just pick it up. After about a year, some of his friends who had bands invited me to sit in, and I was hooked. It was mind-blowing."

Now based in Boca Raton, Florida, his eighth album, *Gypsy Blue Revue*, shares billing with violinist Anne Harris. Along with Django Reinhardt's "Minor Blues," the repertoire embraces lowdown blues, swing, the Tom Waits-tinged "Viper," and closes with the 18-minute "Cigar Box Jam," featuring quotes from "Third Stone From The Sun," "Norwegian Wood," "Beck's Bolero," and "Within You And Without You."

You were in a few metal bands, right?

Oh, yeah. I listened to ZZ Top and Jimi Hendrix and grew up listening to the Beatles, Neil Young, Bob Dylan. But around 16, Black Sabbath with Randy Rhoads and Metallica were big influences. At 18, I won a guitar in a raffle and two tickets to see B.B. King. My dad and I went, and I thought, "This transcends boundaries. I can be playing this music when I'm 80." But I didn't have any idea how to play it. I was touring and recording with metal bands – real heavy stuff – but I'd check the local paper to see where I could find an open blues jam. At one point, I decided I was too old for that stuff, and what I really wanted to do was play roots music.

Who were key influences?

I played with [singer/saxophonist] Terry Hanck for years; he was a huge influence. He gave me recordings of Fats Domino, Tiny Grimes, Johnny "Guitar" Watson, and learning his material was an education in itself. I got into T-Bone Walker and Muddy Waters; I stumbled across his *Real Folk Blues*. In its own way, it was heavier than any of the metal stuff I was into. Howlin' Wolf and Hubert Sumlin are big influences, and Jimmie Vaughan. He's more accessible and simplistic than Stevie Ray, but amazing.

Another influence was Wes Montgomery. I love the octaves and thumb. I also love horn players – Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis, especially *Kind Of Blue* – and Steely Dan's *Aja* never gets old. I found an album called *Pete Fountain's New Orleans* at a Salvation Army for 25 cents; hands down, it's one of my favorite records.

Did you build your cigar box guitar yourself?

My dad's a carpenter. He and I made the one I use onstage, with a DiMarzio Super Distortion humbucker. We've sold a bunch of them. They only have two strings and no frets, but they're fun. I use a Dunlop glass slide. Metal is more abrasive, not as warm and smooth.

What's your main guitar?

It's a Silvertone 1446. We were playing this tiny town, Fort Gaines, Georgia, middle of nowhere. A shop there had this dusty guitar hanging on the wall. It only had three strings, but I played a few notes, not even plugged in, and it had a vibe. I asked the owner if he'd sell it. He said "No" but asked, "What have you got to trade?" I gave him 25 of my CDs to sell. I put new strings on it, and I played it the whole way home in the van. It's become my favorite guitar, and when that model was reissued, I got an endorsement. The new version has a center block, so it sustains really well, and a roller bridge so it stays in tune. The whole *Gypsy Blue Revue* is my old one, and, believe it or not, I'm playing through a solid state Fender Tone Master Twin.

The album has lots of variety. For instance, "Old Silver Bridge" sounds Appalachian.

That's played on a Merlin stick dulcimer – basically a dulcimer you hold like a guitar. On the Latin thing, "Paradise," that's a cavaquinho, a Brazilian instrument used in traditional sambas. It's four strings and looks like a ukulele, but it's tuned real high – DGBD, but an octave higher.

I also got into Django Reinhardt and had a band trying to do the Hot Club of France. I've got a couple of copies of Selmer-Maccaferri guitars. I was really focusing on it, practicing four hours a day with a metronome, listening to that stuff constantly. I met Little Charlie Baty on a blues cruise in 2013, and we hit it off because of the Gypsy jazz stuff. He was awesome and we'd jam. He'd always ask, "What are you working on?" He was very forward-thinking in that way.

If it feels good to me, someone else is going to dig it. If it's blues, Latin, bossa nova, Gypsy jazz, it's all roots music. **– *Dan Forte* VG**

J.P Soars: Marilyn Stringer.

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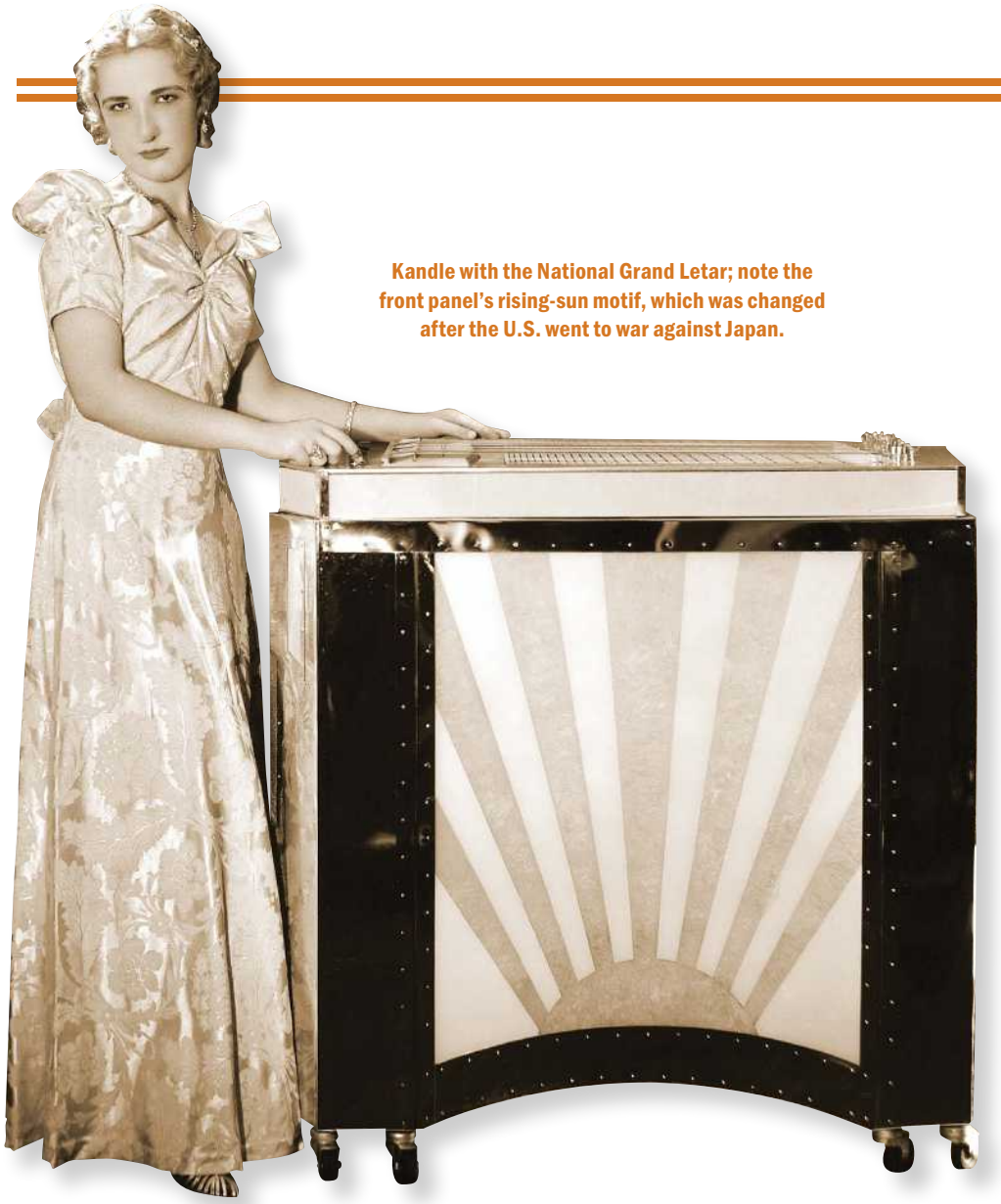

Kandle with the National Grand Letar; note the front panel's rising-sun motif, which was changed after the U.S. went to war against Japan.

LETRITIA KANDLE

and the Magnificent Grand Letar

BY DEKE DICKERSON

Run down the list of early electric-guitar innovators and an all-male group typically comes to mind – Les Paul, Alvino Rey, Charlie Christian, Merle Travis, and the like. However, a woman named Letritia Kandle deserves to be on the list, as well – her 1937 Grand Letar being the first "console" steel guitar, the first steel with more than two necks, its built-in amplifier was the first guitar amp to use two speakers, and it boasted a series of tuning advancements that pre-dated the modern pedal steel. Perhaps most incredible, though, was its built-in lighted front, sides, and fretboards!

The story is really about two people, Kandle and Paul Warnik, a steel-guitar historian/collector who was haunted by a photo in Tom Wheeler's *American Guitars* showing a young woman from decades past posed in front of a multi-neck steel guitar. Its caption reads, "Teacher Letritia Kandle poses with National's Grand Letar Console Steel."

Though he looked, Warnik could find no information on Kandle. But when he purchased a National lap steel at a vintage-guitar show in the early '90s, it had a signed receipt from Kandle's guitar studio, with a Chicago address. Assuming she'd passed away, years went by before, in 2007, he met one of Kandle's former students at a steel-guitar convention in Illinois. He told Warnik that Kandle was still very much alive and living in the Chicago suburbs.

Kandle was born November 7, 1915, the only child of Charles and Alma Kandle. In her early years, she was a typical young lady of the era; she took piano lessons, but when at 13 she saw Warner Baxter play the Spanish guitar in the film *The Cisco Kid*, she immediately wanted to play guitar instead. Her instructor told her that the Hawaiian (also known as "steel") guitar was becoming popular, and helped Kandle get started on the acoustic Hawaiian guitar.

Her father was supportive, and after she proved to him she was serious about playing the Hawaiian guitar, he bought top-of-the-line instruments. Her early acoustics included a koa Weissenborn and a National Style 2 (followed later by a top-of-the-line Style 4) resophonic guitar. When she spotted a turn-of-the-century doubleneck harp guitar (possibly made by Almcrantz) hanging in a second-hand shop, she asked her father to buy it. They then converted it to a Hawaiian raised-nut instrument with a standard neck and a 12-string neck capable of different tunings.

At the Chicago World's Fair in 1933,



Big-band leader Paul Whiteman, who named the Grand Letar.

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The restored Grand Letar.

Hawaiian music and culture was all the rage. There, Kandle met George Kealoha Gilman, who mentored her in Hawaiian lore – speaking the language, Hula dancing, and making leis and grass skirts. The following year, she formed an all-girl ensemble known as The Kohala Girls, which played Hawaiian music and had matching National Resophonic guitars.

Unlike many young musicians, Kandle was continually thinking of ways to not only improve her musicianship, but to improve the steel guitar itself. After a few years of playing with The Kohala Girls, during which time electric lap steels and double-neck lap steels became more popular, Kandle had a vision. In a series of articles for *Music Studio News*, she wrote about how the National Grand Letar console steel came to be; "Have you ever indulged in dreaming? If you have, you know that there are primarily two different kinds – one where the dreamer tries to escape from the reality of living, and one where the dreamer sets a mental goal for himself, and then tries by hard, honest endeavor to reach it in reality," she wrote. "The second type of dreamer is responsible for many of the advancements of our Modern way of life.

"And so while waiting for an appointment on one of the upper floors of a tall office building in Chicago, the idea for a 26-string guitar was born. It was summer, and through the large window facing the West from where I was sitting, the sun, like a huge ball of fire, surrounded by a myriad of colors, sky blue, pink, yellow, purple, and green was dropping by the horizon, there appeared an instrument seemingly blown of glass. I kept looking at the sky, when the crisp friendly voice of the receptionist called my mind back to this world. In those few moments of daydreaming, I knew what I wanted.

"A guitar that would enable me to stand while playing it, one that would sound full, like an organ, and yet produce tones like a vibraharp – one with not less than 26 strings, for complete harmony, and one that would change colors as the different tones were produced. When I arrived home, later that evening, I told my father of the dream. Although my dad is an engineer and not a

Letritia conducted the 49-piece Chicago Plectrophonic Orchestra, which featured no fewer than 17 steel guitarists!







A look inside the Grand Letar reveals the controls for its lights, and its 20-watt tube amplifier. Kandle (right), age 94, showing her slant-bar technique on the Small Letar.

musician, he offered to help build the 'dream instrument' for me, if I would help.

"The problems we encountered were many, each one had to be dealt with separately – a metal had to be chosen for the casting, that would not expand or contract when in contact with heat – sizes of strings, electronics, etc. until finally after many days, weeks, and months of labor, emerged a finished instrument.

"Now that the instrument was finished a name for it had to be selected, so, from my first name, Letritia, [Paul Whiteman and I] took the first three letters, and from the word guitar we chose the last two letters. With this combination, the 'dream instrument' became the 'Grand Letar!'"

In early 1937, Kandle's father worked on the Grand Letar to his daughter's specifications. A large console was made, with its top cast in aluminum and sides made of wood covered with a chrome-plated steel wrap. This was the first steel guitar that would *not* be played sitting in the lap, so it was a radical construction for the time. Previously, no steel guitar had ever had more than two necks. Kandle's Grand Letar appeared to have four – three six-string and one eight-string neck – but in reality it had three six-string necks and two four-string necks!

Kandle's father built the console, then went to see Louis Dopyera at National Guitars. Kandle had been playing National Resophonics with The Kohala Girls and knew the Dopyera family. National installed pickups and a 20-watt amplifier with two 12" JB Lansing field-coil speakers. It holds the distinction of being the first guitar amplifier to use two speakers, a full 10 years before Leo Fender made the Dual Professional, and 20-odd years before Leo began offering the Twin with JBL speakers as an option!

In contrast to all of its construction and technical innovations, the Grand Letar's *coup de grace* was its built-in light show, which relied heavily on Mr. Kandle's engineering know-how. The fretboards, sides, and front were etched glass that displayed lights that shone from within. The front panel was originally a rising-sun motif, per Letritia Kandle's vision. With the advent of World War II and the Japanese attack of Pearl Harbor, she later opted for an art-deco motif with musical notes.

Inside was a '30s vision of the future – a network of 120 bulbs in four colors that flashed and changed colors as a motor in the base

Kandle's first gig was with the all-female group The Kohala Girls, which played National Resophonic instruments. Kandle, seated second from left, is holding a National Style 4.

Kandle photo: Deke Dickerson. Restored Grand Letar photos: John Norris.

engaged electrical contacts on a flywheel. On back was a control panel with four rheostats and 12 toggle switches to control brightness and other aspects.

National built a case to transport the instrument; weighing 265 pounds by itself, once in the case the Grand Letar represented 400 pounds of freight!

At the time the Grand Letar was finished, Kandle was playing with big-band leader Paul Whiteman (who came up with the name) and she played it with Whiteman during a residency at the Drake Hotel in Chicago in 1937.

National was eager to have Kandle demonstrate the Grand Letar at the '37 National Music Trade Convention. Held in New York City, the convention was where musical-instrument manufacturers displayed their products, and many great names demonstrated them. National signed an endorsement deal with Kandle, and arranged for her to demo the instrument at its booth. During one of the demonstrations, Kandle looked up to see her idol, Alvino Rey, watching. One of the country's greatest steel guitar players and bandleaders, Rey left before Kandle had a chance meet him. Rey was one of the country's greatest steel-guitar players and bandleaders – on the cusp of technological innovation – and Kandle was intrigued by the fact he left before they had a chance to speak about her instrument. Within two years, however, Rey and Gibson introduced the Console Grande steel guitar, which incorporated many of the ideas first presented in the Grand Letar at the '37 trade show.

The dates of Kandle's innovations can be verified through press on the instrument. *The Music Trades* ran an article about Kandle and the Grand Letar in its September '37 issue. *Down Beat*, the highly regarded jazz magazine, ran a piece in October of '37. During the made rush of stringed-instrument innovation of the late '30s, it's difficult to prove who did what first, but these articles prove exactly when Kandle introduced her innovations.

One of her ideas for the Grand Letar was the tuning of its necks; lap steels and doubleneck lap steels were usually tuned with one or two standard tunings, such as the low-bass A for Hawaiian playing or the C6 tuning for jazz. Kandle envisioned being able to cover all harmonic and chordal bases in a style that necessitated switching between the necks during each song. The chord inversions she devised were later utilized by pedal-steel players, with their pedals achieving the same result as switching between necks. The first neck was tuned to an A-major (high bass) tuning – A-C$^{\#}$-E-A-C$^{\#}$-E. The second neck had the standard E7 tuning – B-E-D-G$^{\#}$-B-E. The third was an A minor tuning which could also make C6th inversions. The fourth – an eight-string – was arranged in two small clusters, with four strings for each. One was tuned to an augmented chord (F-A-C$^{\#}$-F) and one was tuned to a diminished chord (F$^{\#}$-A-C-E).

The Grand Letar proved unwieldy, so it was mostly used for higher-profile engagements and residencies. In '39, Kandle and her father came up with a more portable instrument, like the Grand Letar but without the amplifier and lights. The Small Letar added a seventh string to each of the standard necks, with one interesting variation on the E7 neck – a high F$^{\#}$ string on the top of the E7 neck, which when played turned it into an E9 chord, pre-dating the Nashville E9 tuning by 20 years!



After the Grand Letar proved too bulky to transport feasibly, Kandle had National build the Small Letar. Essentially the same console-steel concept, it didn't have the built-in amp or lights.



DOWN BEAT

Chicago, October, 1937

Designs New 24 String Guitar

Letritia Kandle

This new instrument, known as the "Grand Letar," is the invention of Letritia Kandle shown here playing it. She designed it and had it built especially for her. The instrument has 26 strings and a lighting effect that is very new and novel, being the first instrument to change color while it is played.

The string grouping used on the "Grand Letar" which has complete harmony has been studied and developed by Miss Kandle over a period of six years, the development being derived from an eighteen string triple-neck Hawaiian guitar which she also designed and had built for her. Miss Kandle has played coast to coast programs over NBC and has done electrical transcription work for RCA. She also has had her own string ensemble for which she did all the arranging.

Miss Kandle demonstrated this instrument at the recent manufacturers convention in New York City.

An article in *Downbeat*, October, 1937, sings the praises of Letritia's Grand Letar.

In the years that followed, National fielded several inquires about manufacturing and selling Grand Letar consoles, but the cost and weight prevented another from being made. National promoted Kandle's involvement by picturing her

in the 1940 catalog holding a Princess lap steel.

In '41, Kandle became the featured soloist of the 50-piece Chicago Plectrophonic Orchestra, which featured her playing classical numbers such as "Blue Danube Waltz" as well as other pop and Hawaiian numbers. When conductor Jack Lundin passed away in '43, Kandle assumed the role.

Througout the '40s, Kandle taught hundreds of students at her guitar studio in downtown Chicago. She was featured in the *Who's Who Of Music*, judged talent competitions, made the cover of *B.M.G.* magazine, and authored articles for *Music Studio News* and other publications. She also continued her interest in advancing the steel guitar. In the late '40s, she endorsed the Harlin Brothers Kalina Multi-Kord steel guitar, one of the early attempts at a pedal-steel guitar.

In 1955, Kandle married Walter Lay, a one-time string bassist for the Chicago Plectrophonic Orchestra. Both went to work for Kandle's father, who had begun manufacturing earth-boring equipment. Kandle retired from music to concentrate on raising a family. Walter passed away in December of 2008.

Kandle's story and early innovations could have been relegated to obscurity, since she never made any recordings (beyond a few radio transcriptions which have yet to surface), never pursued fame beyond her own musical endeavors, and never entered the public consciousness in the manner of Les Paul or Alvino Rey.

Fortunately, she archived the magazines and publicity photos that document her career. Better yet, she stored the Grand Letar in its case and out of harm's way – under her stairs – for 55 years. Warnik restored the instrument with the help of Jeff Mikols and Sue Haslam. In September of 2008, it was transported to St. Louis, where it was played during the International Steel Guitar Convention.

Even as her story was being told and the Grand Letar was back in action, Kandle's modest attitude belied the fact that her accomplishments deserved a great deal of recognition.

The Grand Letar was an amazing technological innvovation. Kandle, however, remains humble.

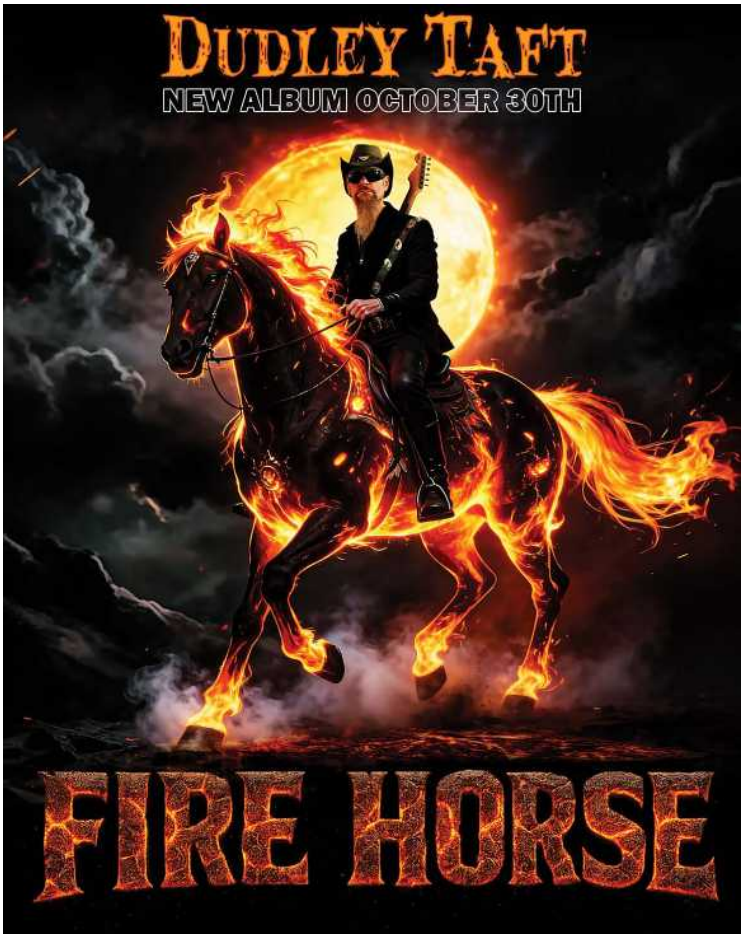
"All I ever tried to do was elevate the steel guitar into a more versatile instrument that was capable of playing other styles of music, like modern and classical – not just Hawaiian music," she said.

So while it may be 70 years late, it's time to acknowledge the debt we owe to early electric-guitar innovators like Les Paul, Alvino Rey, Charlie Christian – and Letritia Kandle!



In addition to two Letars, Kandle used other Nationals, including this doubleneck console lap steel and matching amp from the early '40s.

This feature was first published in the August '10 issue. Letritia Kandle passed away in June, 2010. Special thanks to Paul Warnik, T.C. Furlong, Sue Haslam, John Norris, Jeff Mikols, and Kay Koster.



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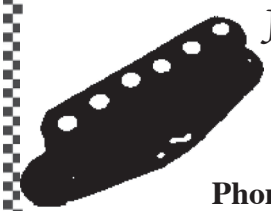

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MAN OF MYSTERY

The Vox AC10 SRT

BY DAVE HUNTER

Any time an industry grows as rapidly as the guitar business did in the mid '60s, it's bound to generate odd ducks and eccentricities. Likely none were as fascinating for enthusiasts as this amp from the heart of the JMI-Vox era.

Thanks to their use by The Beatles, Dave Clark Five, Kinks, Yardbirds, and other influential British bands of the time, by the mid '60s, Vox amps were the hottest thing for young guitarists eager to create "that sound." Even amid the unwavering popularity of big hitters like the AC15 and AC30 (and the more-powerful AC50 and AC100 developed specifically to help The Beatles be heard above the screaming hordes), Vox saw a need to address other markets to make its brand more widely available. And while the AC4 and AC10 suited two levels of "student" amp, owner Tom Jennings, head designer Dick Denney, and the engineering team at JMI saw fit to experiment liberally with the formula, kicking out some enigmatic oddballs in the process.

1964 VOX AC10 SRT "MYSTERY AMP"

- Preamp tubes: one ECC83, three ECC82
- Output tubes: two EL84
- Rectifier: EZ81
- Controls: Volume, Tone, Speed, Depth, Reverb
- Speaker: 12" Celestion T531
- Output: approximately 10 watts RMS

Amp and photos courtesy of Collin Whitley.

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1978 Gibson ES-347
TDN Blonde & Minty


1981 Gibson 335 Dot
"Moog Prototype"


1950 Stromberg
G-3 Cutaway


1956 Gibson ES-175
1 P-90 pickup


1961 Gibson ES-175
DN Blonde w/2 PAF's


1963 Gibson Johnny
Smith Double Mint


1965 Gibson Trini
Lopez Custom


1969 Gibson Barney
Kessel Std. 3 in stock


1996 R.C. Allen
Aristocrat 18"


2023 Gibson Byrdland
extremely Flamey Maple


1958 Rickenbacker
325 1 of 30 ever !


1961 Rickenbacker
365 Rare Thin Body !


1962-3 Fender Strat
w/all SRV features


1968 Fender Telecaster
C.A.R. w/Maple Cap Neck


1969 Gibson SG Custom
Walnut w/Chrome parts


1969 Gibson Les Paul
Std. Gold Top P-90's


1993 Gibson Flying V
Rudolf Schenker 1 of 103


2007 Hamer Korina
Vector Brazilian'board


1930 National Triolian
"Polychrome" Clean !


1933 Gibson L-C
Century of Progress


1933 Gibson L-00
1st issue very Rare


2015 Gibson SJ-200
Quilt Vine Ltd. Edition


1939 Martin 000-21
Scalloped all original


1940 Martin D-18
Tortoise H'stock


1962 Martin 000-28
"Brazilian" 1 owner


1980 James Olsen
rare Dreadnaught


1958 Gibson EB-2
rare 1st year Mint


1964 Gibson T'bird
IV Bass ultra clean


1961 Fender Jazz Bass
original "Stack Knob"


1961 Fender Jazz Bass
1 owner & MINTY !


1967 Fender Precision
Bass Rare Teal Green


1973 Fender Precision
Bass Factory Black


1968 Rickenbacker
4001 "Mono" Bass


1979 Rickenbacker
4005 Bass Azurglo


1965 Ampeg BB-4
Baby Bass BLACK !


1978 Music Man
Stingray Bass Clean


1990 Wal Mark II
5-string Bass "Olive"

1998 Tobias NAMM
1-off "Butcher Block"

2001 Rick Turner
RB5-F "Bon Jovi"

2012 Fodera Monarch
Std. 4-String Bass

2015 Warrior Isabella
5-string special order

2020 Warrior DM 5
NAMM 5-string Bass



This AC10 SRT has a one-of-a-kind 12" Celestion speaker complement. A closer look shows the blocked tweeter ports and lower notches for 10" speakers. The copper control panel carries the essentials of a simple yet great-sounding amp.

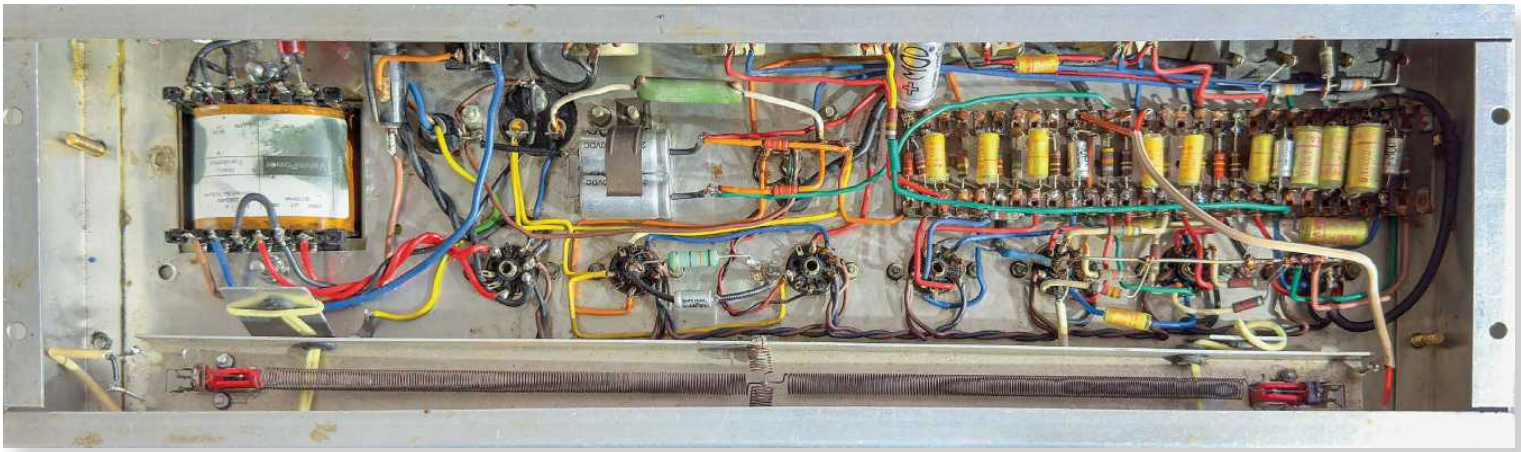
One such creation was this AC10 SRT combo, referred to by Jim Elyea in his comprehensive book *Vox Amplifiers: The JMI Years* as the "Mystery Amp" since so little is known about it. Part of that is because so few were ever produced, and among that sparse selection, the 1964 example featured here – supplied to *VG* by California guitar and amp collector Collin Whitley – is the only known 1x12" combo. "SRT" stands for Super Reverb Twin, the latter being an appendage Vox applied to many of its dual-speaker models (accounting for the 2x10" cab the more common AC10 SRT head was paired with) yet, as used here, it's another interesting anomaly, considering the format of all extant AC10 SRT combos.

"Little is known about these amps, but they pair an AC10 SRT single-channel chassis in a combo cabinet originally made for the AC30L (Lightweight AC30) transistor amp," says Whitley. "There are fewer than a dozen known examples in circulation, but this is the only known example with a 12" speaker, and the only one with the earlier style copper panel control plate and small horizontal Vox logo. All other known AC10 SRT 'Mystery Amps' have the late-'64 grey panel, three 10" Elac speakers, and Mk III vertical logo. None had a typical Vox ID plate with serial number."

While Whitley notes the lack of ID plate, one nailed to the back of many erstwhile AC10 SRTs carried the letters "DOM," indicating they were part of JMI's more-affordable Domino lineup, the catalog for which gave them the model name of Domino Super Reverb. More-common Dominos like the Standard, Normal, and piggyback Bass model, however, which were manufactured between 1963 and '65, had their own "Domino" logo on the front. They were also more basic and arguably downgraded construction befitting their entry-level status, but have still become collectible today given the JMI manufacture and the Vox connection.

The JMI Domino Super Reverb and Vox AC10 SRT, on the other hand, share the same chassis and circuit, and the former retains the fully fledged Vox construction. Ported to the odd AC10 SRT 1x12" combo, however, and its handful of 3x10" cousins, the chassis remains the same but other construction details appear less thoroughly thought through, as we'll learn.

First, though, it's also worth noting that



despite the shared model name the AC10 SRT – whether "Mystery Amp" combo or its standard sibling in the catalog – has less in common with the standard AC10 than might be expected, to the extent that they employ two very different circuits. The far more common non-SRT version, the AC10 Twin, was a 10-watt 2x10" combo that a lot of players have come to appreciate for its sweet cleans and easy breakup at relatively low volumes, but it was also quite different in design from the AC15 and AC30 that forged the bulk of Vox's popularity.

The AC10 Twin's Tremolo channel is adjacent to the AC15 of the era with a high-gain and thick-sounding EF86 pentode preamp tube. But the Normal channel is driven by the lower-gain triode side of an unusual ECF82 tube, which also includes a pentode preamp that Vox used for the tremolo circuit (even though that effect acted on the other channel). The AC10 SRT, on the other hand, used a more-traditional ECC83 (12AX7) preamp tube in the first gain stage and tremolo circuit of its single channel, with ECC82s (12AU7) further down the line for reverb and phase inverter. Both used a pair of EL84 output tubes in cathode bias with no negative feedback (nominally Class A) and an EZ81 tube rectifier, but the differences in the front end led to a rather different sound and performance.

"Experts have mixed guesses on the history of these 'Mystery Amps,' but everything about mine is squarely dated to 1964," says Whitley. "That's exactly when the AC30Ls were introduced, and the factory was producing the copper panel AC10 SRT chassis for the Domino line. Even the blue Celestion G12M T531 Alnico speaker dates to 1964. While the cabinet of my amp was notched for the three 10" speakers, the baffle board is factory work, including the 12" speaker cutout and blocked-off cutouts for two 3" speakers, presumably tweeters.

"My theory is that this amp was some kind of factory experiment for an AC10 SRT combo, using whatever components they had available. That concept never made it into production, but JMI later built a handful of others using the vertical Vox logo and grey control panel, and kept them in 3x10" configuration. Considering the scarcity of AC10 SRT models – and their rarity within that group – we might never know the true story. But they represent a time when JMI was on top of the world and willing to try new things, even if it meant raiding the parts bins."

A few necessary repairs have been made, but the amp still carries most of the WIMA signal capacitors and other constructional details that thrill fans of vintage Vox amps.

Tone-wise, Whitley says it's one of the best-sounding circuits JMI ever created, especially after being serviced by Tanner Yates, who owns a Domino-branded '64 AC10 SRT head and has become an SRT guru.

"The single-channel SRT goes from bedroom-level cleans to a saturated, harmonic overdrive that sounds like an amp five times its size and volume. My favorite aspect of the SRT's sound is how much gain it delivers without losing the glassy top-end and touch sensitivity associated with Vox, and it does all this at manageable volumes. The reverb is unremarkable – like most British amps – but the tremolo goes from light warbling to a deep, pulsating psychedelic freak-out that is all but guaranteed to burn some tubes.

The ECC83 and three ECC82 preamp tubes make the AC10 SRT quite different from the standard AC10 Twin.



"The 12" Celestion really unlocks the SRT's potential, giving it increased bass response and drive compared to 10" speakers. And the entire amp is under 37 pounds, nine of which is the speaker. In a lot of ways, it's the ultimate grab-and-go club amp." VG

Price Guide

By Alan Greenwood & Ram W. Tuli



1964 Fender Jaguar in Foam Green

YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND. LOW	EXC. COND. HIGH
2007	Acoustic B100 (MKII)	100 watts, 1x15, classic style	$125	$175
1987	American Showster The Biker/Tank		$1,800	$3,000
1956	Ampeg Super Combo		$750	$950
1970s	Audio-Phonic Mu-Tron III		$800	$1,500
1966	Baldwin Jazz Split Sound/ Split Sound (Model 503)		$1,000	$1,500
1979	Bon, Mfg Tube Driver 204		$1,000	$1,500
2002	Bourgeois LC4 Archtop Limited Edition		$10,000	$14,000
1992	Chandler 555 Model	sharp doublecut	$1,000	$1,500
2004	Collings CL Series (City Limits)	City Limits Jazz	$3,000	$4,800
1967	Coral Hornet H3V	3 Pickups, sunburst	$1,200	$1,800
1967	Danelectro Dane B Series	12-string	$1,200	$1,800
1950	D'Angelico Special (Cutaway)	Sunburst	$10,000	$13,000
2000s	Death By Audio Fuzz War		$125	$300
1933	Dobro Model 60	Square neck	$5,000	$6,500
1902	Dyer Harp Guitar Style 6	Bound top/bottom	$4,500	$7,000
1961	EKO Model 700/3V		$1,100	$1,500
2001	Electro-Harmonix Octave Multiplexer Pedal		$50	$65
1966	Epiphone Casino (2 Pickups)	Various colors	$5,000	$7,500
2003	Epiphone Elitist Series	Casino	$1,200	$1,800
2020	Epiphone Les Paul Prophecy		$700	$1,000
2007	Epiphone SST Classic		$400	$600
1995	ESP Vintage/Vintage Plus S		$1,200	$1,800
1966	Fender Bass VI	Sunburst	$6,500	$8,500
1968	Fender Esquire	Sunburst, nitro	$11,500	$15,000
2000s	Fender Hot Rod Blues Junior Limited	Blond, wheat grill	$450	$600
1964	Fender Jaguar	Foam Green	$13,000	$20,000
2012	Fender Deluxe Jaguar	Japan	$550	$750
1966	Fender Jazzmaster	Rare Color	$18,000	$25,000
2018	Fender American Performer Jazzmaster		$900	$1,500
1959	Fender Precision	Blond	$32,000	$40,000
1965	Fender Stratocaster	Rare color	$50,000	$65,000
2014	Fender Ritchie Blackmore Tribute Stratocaster	Custom Shop	$4,000	$6,000
2016	Fender '58 Stratocaster Journeyman Relic	Custom Shop	$3,000	$4,500
2013	Fender Modern Player Stratocater HSH/HSS		$500	$800
2021	Fender Squier Stratocaster Special (Contemporary)		$300	$500
1970	Fender Taurus	ss, 42 watts, 2x10	$450	$600
1998	Fender '90s Telecaster Thinline		$1,800	$2,800
2014	Fender Cabronita Telecaster (Classic Player)	Mexico	$700	$1,000
1962	Fender Telecaster Custom	Custom color	$45,000	$60,000
2005	Fender Twisted Telecaster Limited Edition	Shishkov built	$4,000	$6,000
1960s	Framus Jumbo Model 5/97 & /197		$800	$1,200



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YEAR	INSTRUMENT	FEATURES	EXC. COND. LOW	EXC. COND. HIGH
1984	G&L Invader	1st version	$1,000	$1,250
2007	Gibson B.B. King Lucille	King logo	$3,500	$5,500
1974	Gibson EDS-1275 Double 12	Various colors	$10,000	$15,000
2019	Gibson ES-275	Satin, opaque	$2,200	$3,800
1963	Gibson ES-335 TD or ES-335N TD	Sunburst, factory stop tail	$18,500	$24,000
2019	Gibson Chuck Berry 1955 ES-350 T	VOS	$8,000	$12,000
1984	Gibson Explorer	Various finishes	$1,750	$2,750
1965	Gibson Firebird VII	Sunburst, reverse	$17,000	$22,000
1999	Gibson GA-30 RVH Goldtone Head		$1,000	$1,500
1972	Gibson Hummingbird	Double X, block markers	$3,000	$4,000
2009	Gibson J-45 Natural Anniversary	20 made, zebra and spruce	$4,500	$7,000
1946	Gibson L-48		$2,000	$2,500
1995	Gibson Les Paul '63 Corvette Sting Ray	SG body, 40 made, COA	$8,000	$12,000
2006	Gibson Les Paul Deluxe #9 Pete Townsend	75 made, cherry burst	$7,000	$10,000
2005	Gibson Les Paul Music Rising Limited Edition	unsigned	$4,000	$6,500
1995	Gibson Les Paul Standard Plus	Figured maple, non-chambered	$2,500	$4,000
2010	Gibson '59 Les Paul Burst Brothers	2nd run, 37	$10,000	$15,000
2015	Gibson True Historic 1959 Les Paul	COA, Aged	$6,000	$9,000
1965	Gibson Melody Maker D	Sunburst, cherry, double-cut	$2,000	$2,800
2012	Gibson SG Dickey Betts	VOS, unsigned	$5,000	$6,500
2009	Gibson SG Standard Robby Krieger	Aged, signed	$8,000	$10,000
1935	Gibson Super 400	Early, L-5, highly flamed	$19,000	$25,000
2003	Gretsch Black Penguin (6134B)		$2,500	$4,000
2005	Gretsch Duo-Jet (6128TCG)		$2,000	$3,500
1963	Gretsch Princess (6106)		$2,750	$3,500
1970	Guild Aragon F-30 NT	mahogany	$2,000	$3,000
1963	Guild Duane Eddy Standard DE-400	Sunburst	$3,500	$5,500
1960	Guild Manhattan X-175 (Sunburst)		$2,000	$3,000
1997	Guild Starfire III	Reissue	$1,500	$2,200
2004	Hagstrom F Series	Various models	$250	$850
1960s	Harmony H-420	30 watts, 1x15	$425	$550
1990s	Heritage H-150	Ebony	$1,800	$3,000
1960s	Hofner Model 4575VTZ Extra Thin	3 pickups	$1,000	$1,500
1983	Ibanez AM Stagemaster Series	Various models	$1,200	$2,200
1981	Ibanez Joe Pass JP20	Sunburst	$1,500	$2,500

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1988	Ibanez Modulation Delay PDM1		$100	$200
1994	Jackson Kelly Pro		$800	$1,125
1965	Kalamazoo Bass	2x10	$600	$850
1940s	Kay Small Tube	Wood cabinet	$350	$500
1978	Kramer DMZ-2000		$1,250	$1,750
1989	Kustom KBA-30 Combo		$40	$60
2000s	Larrivee Parlor Walnut		$1,200	$2,500
1959	Magnatone Mark VI/ Artist Mark VI	Barth/Magna	$1,250	$1,750
1982	Marshall JCM 800 Model 2203 20th Anniver.	100 watts, 4x12, halfstack	$4,500	$5,500
1965	Marshall Model 1960 4x12 Speaker Cabinet	Black, weave	$5,000	$6,500
1991	Marshall Model 8040 Valvestate 40V Combo	Hybrid, 40 watts, 1x12	$175	$250
1998	Martin 0000-28 Custom		$2,500	$3,500
1921	Martin 000-28K	Rare model	$50,000	$65,000
1947	Martin 00-18		$9,000	$12,000
2015	Martin 00-X1AE		$400	$600
1932	Martin C-1-12		$2,800	$4,200
2019	Martin D-18 Modern Deluxe		$2,500	$3,800
1970	Martin D-35	Center panel only	$4,200	$5,500
2000	Martin DCX1E		$500	$800
1987	Martin HD-18LE	Indian rosewood	$3,000	$5,000
2003	Martin MC-16GTE Premium		$1,500	$2,500
2013	Martin OMC-LJ Pro Laurence Juber	Custom Artist Edition	$5,000	$7,500
1996	Matchless Lightning 15 210		$2,500	$3,500
1999	Mesa-Boogie Nomad 45 Head		$575	$850
1975	Morley Pro Phaser PFA		$200	$300
2003	Music Man Axis Super Sport	figured top, bound	$1,800	$3,200
1940s	National Chicagoan Model 1220	17 watts, 1x10	$800	$1,000
1935	National Style O	Round 14-fret, rare etching	$4,500	$7,500
1984	Orville by Gibson Firebird V		$1,300	$2,000
1993	Parker Fly		$2,500	$5,000
1965	Peavey Musician Head		$150	$200
1950s	Premier Semi-Pro 16 Archtop	Acoustic	$800	$1,200
2007	PRS Mira Korina	Korina body, natural	$1,500	$2,500
1978	Renaissance Electric Plexiglas Solidbody		$1,200	$1,800
2002	Rickenbacker Model 325C58		$2,750	$3,500
1957	Rickenbacker Model 450 Combo		$5,500	$7,000
1985	Robin Raider II	2 pickup	$1,200	$3,000
2010	Santa Cruz Model 1929 00		$5,000	$7,500
1965	Silvertone H1434 Rocket	3 pickups, Bigsby	$950	$1,250
1990s	Sovtek (New Sensor Corporation) Bass Balls		$100	$150
1967	Sunn Sonic II	Head Only	$1,000	$1,500
1939	Supro Supro 60 Steel Amp-in-Case		$900	$1,250
2012	Taylor 456e and 456ce		$1,625	$2,000
1997	Taylor CUJO-10/CUJO-14		$1,625	$2,000
1960s	Teisco Teisco 88		$150	$250
1970s	Univox EC-100 Echo		$350	$500
1950s	V-M Corp Small Portable		$350	$500
1965	Vox Phantom VI	Italian-made	$2,200	$3,300
2011	Xotic Effects Stereo X-Blender		$175	$225
1996	Zoom 1010 Player		$60	$75

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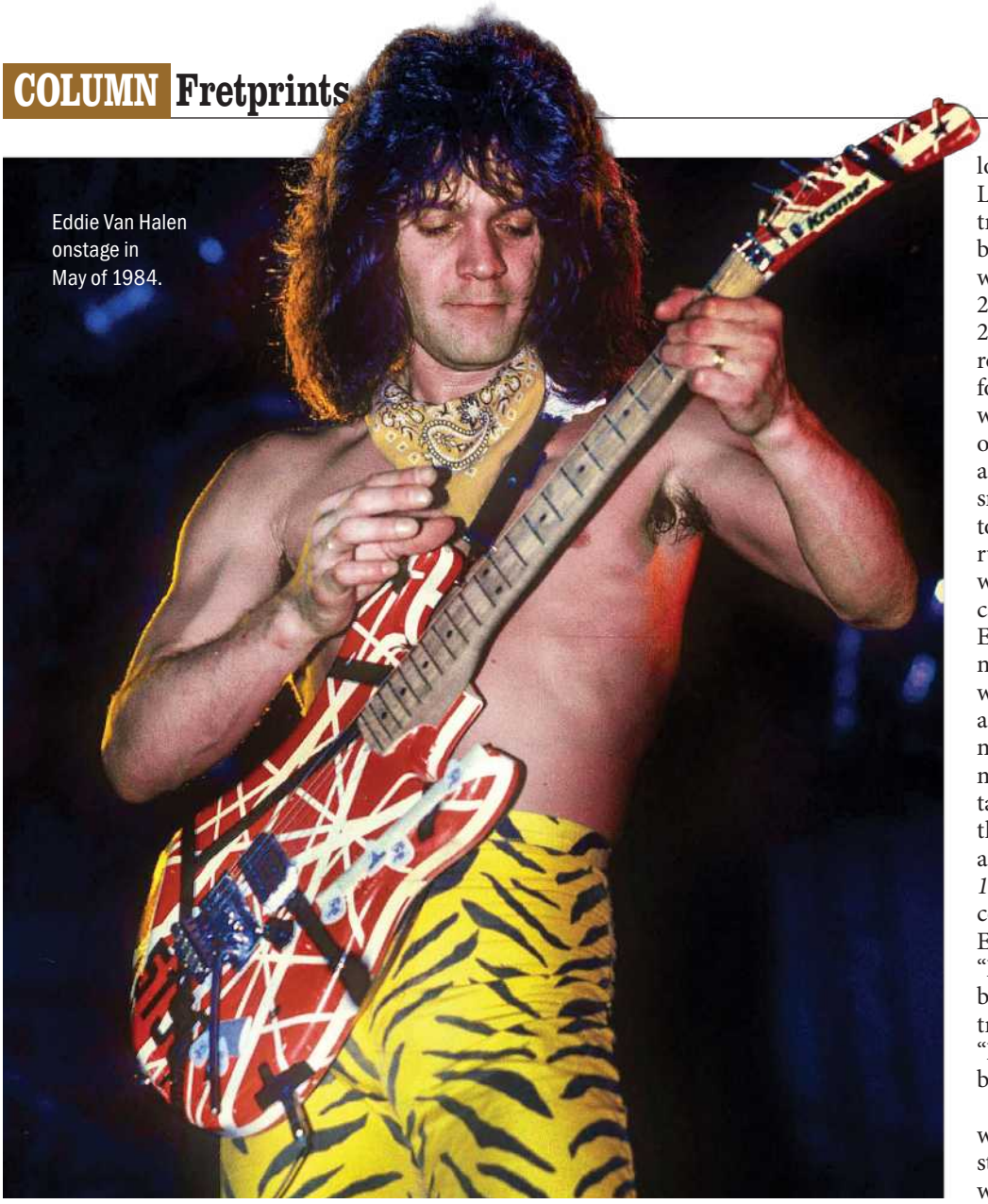

Eddie Van Halen onstage in May of 1984.

INTO THE FUTURE

Van Halen's *1984*

By Wolf Marshall

For Van Halen, 1984 was a pivotal year. Guitarist Eddie Van Halen, drummer Alex Van Halen, bassist Michael Anthony, and vocalist David Lee Roth were major parts of the MTV era's sound and image. The band was preeminent, and practically every '80s guitarist bore the stamp of Ed's influence and heroics. Their sixth album, *1984*, was the turning point.

After more than a decade together, attitudes and aspirations within the group had reached a crossroads. Ed sought to create greater musical complexity and darker minor sounds, while Roth remained comfortable in the guitar-hero niche; he and producer Ted Templeman disdained adding prominent keyboards to the band's sound. In a 1983 conversation (parts of which were published in *Guitar for the Practicing Musician* from '86 through '88), Ed explained how he'd wanted to incorporate keyboards since '79, when he played a Wurlitzer electric piano through a Marshall amp on "And The Cradle Will Rock," from *Women and Children First*. He subsequently pursued synth sounds in the '80s – gradually and sporadically on *Fair Warning* and *Diver Down*, but explicitly in his soundtrack to *The Wild Life*. *1984* saw his vision realized.

Created at 5150, Ed's new studio with longtime compatriot and engineer Donn Landee from June through October '83, the tracks (except for "1984/Jump") were written before the sessions. The studio was equipped with a Universal Audio 16-track console, 3M 2"/16-track tape machine, and Ampex ATR800 2-track. Basic tracks were recorded in the main room (a converted racquetball court with baffles for isolation) and Ed turned his cabinet to the wall in one corner with Alex's drum kit in an opposite corner. Space necessitated the use a Simmons electronic drum kit (except for snare) and overdubbed cymbals. Compared to previous sessions at Sunset Sound typically running less than two weeks, far more time was spent in the recording/mixing process to capture the authentic sound. Moreover, At 5150, Ed had time to develop arrangements, explore new sounds, and experiment with synthesizers without the scrutiny and resistance of Roth and Templeman. Consequently, *1984* is their most-diverse work, marrying hard and art rock, metal, prog, glam, techno-pop, and commercial tangents. Any qualms about compromises in the pop direction are mitigated by their artistry and core rock aesthetic. Released January 9, *1984* would have reached the top spot if not competing with Jackson's *Thriller*, on which Ed had contributed the landmark solo to "Beat It." Nevertheless, it was a monumental breakthrough that supercharged the Van Halen trajectory, yielded hit songs "Jump," "Panama," "I'll Wait" and "Hot for Teacher," and presaged bolder moves to come.

In '82, Ed had signed an endorsement deal with Kramer and retired his DIY "Frankenstein" superstrat. His first signature instrument was a Kramer replica nicknamed the "5150 guitar" and bore similar features – bridge humbucker, single Volume control, Floyd Rose locking vibrato, and trademark red-black-white striped graphics – but had a Baretta body and unfinished maple-board neck with 22 jumbo frets. He also played a '58 Flying V and prototype stereo guitar made by Steve Ripley. Ed plugged into a reworked '68 100-watt Marshall head (running Sylvania EL34 tubes) stepped down to 90 volts via Variac, feeding 4x12 cabinets – the amps heard on five previous VH albums. He preferred Fender XL strings (.009-.042) tuned down one half-step, and 48mm D'Andrea picks. His pedalboard, used onstage and in the studio, included MXR phaser, MXR flanger, ADA preamp, MXR Micro-amp, MXR Echo, Roland DC30, and Echoplex tape delay.

Was "1984," the album's short instrumental opener, the new "Eruption"? The orchestral prelude, a potpourri of synth sounds and chordal pads, was edited from 45 minutes of noodling on an Oberheim OBX-A and connotes

Eddie Van Halen: Kevin Estrada/Media Punch/Alamy.

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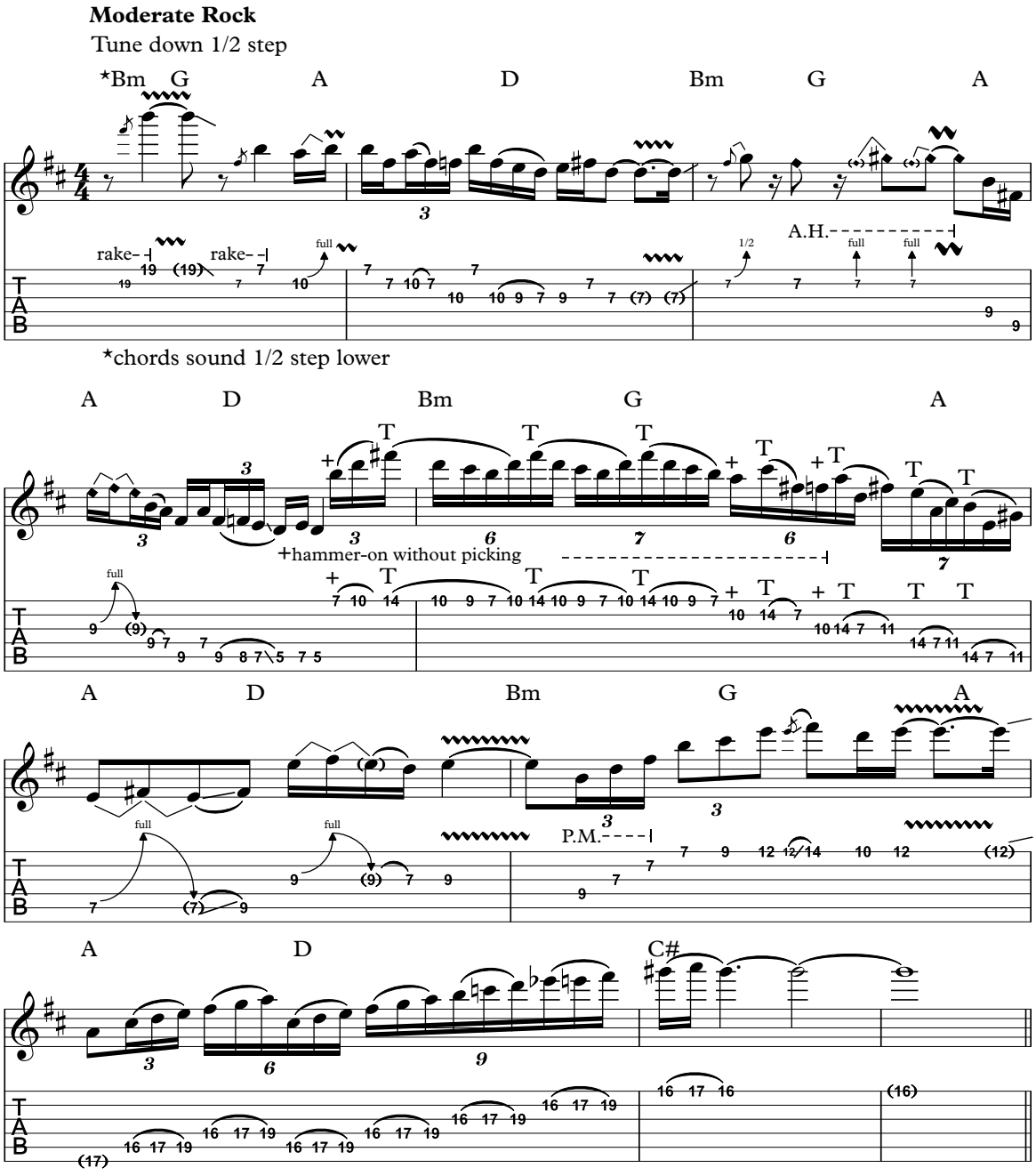
techno/prog aspirations. Ed had piano training from the age of six until 12, and won several youth competitions, though he played by ear, never learned to read music, and turned to rock-guitar music. "1984" was the first track recorded in 5150 and cleverly anticipated "Jump" with foreshadowing at 0:50, where he quotes a snippet of the riff before the final sustained sonority.

The Grammy-nominated "Jump" (Van Halen's only #1 hit) was written on a Sequential Circuits Prophet 10 in Ed's bedroom while 5150 was under construction. Several years in the making, Ed had been tinkering with the keyboard riff until Roth finally agreed to provide lyrics. The track was captured in a single take and had to be quickly faded as the tape ran out. Ed's brief-but-tasty guitar solo was a spontaneous single-take flight that supplies the hard-rock quotient while leading to his arpeggio-laden synth solo. Keyboards and sophistication aside, Templeman couldn't dispute the potential of "Jump" and ultimately embraced the song.

Named for the race car Panama Express, "Panama" was derived from Ed's stockpile of riffs. Epitomizing the band's rock roots, it's a nod to the three-chord style of AC/DC and a perfect reply to "Jump," contrastingly guitar-driven and visceral with its power-chording, aggressive fills, "neat noises," and emblematic solo (2:05) replete with double-stops, whammy-bar dives and two-hand tapping augmented with a recording of Ed's Lamborghini Miura S. Originally intended for "Jump," it was flown in during the bridge (2:39-2:47), recalling the car horns that opened their debut album. The charging rock mood is reshaped with Ed's harmonic/modal colors and chromatic moves in the breakdown interlude (2:20-3:06) pushing to a strong conclusion in the catchy chorus recap.

Top Jimmy & the Rhythm Pigs were among Roth's favorite local bands; "Top Jimmy" salutes his friend James Koneck and the Hollywood club scene. Notable is the juxtaposition of half-time and double-time feels in the shifting grooves of the arrangement, suggesting the mood swings of clubbing. The song began as a guitar instrumental titled "Ripley" before Roth added lyrics. Ed had the theme melody in his head and tuned his guitar D-A-D-A-C-D – a rare VH song in open tuning. Seeking greater tonal variation he used his Ripley guitar (Gtr.1), humbucker-plus-two-single-coils and built-in vibrato effects. He employed panning capabilities for swirling, harp-like open-harmonic arpeggios and atypical voicings in rhythm chording, and added his 5150 (Gtr.2) for lead parts.



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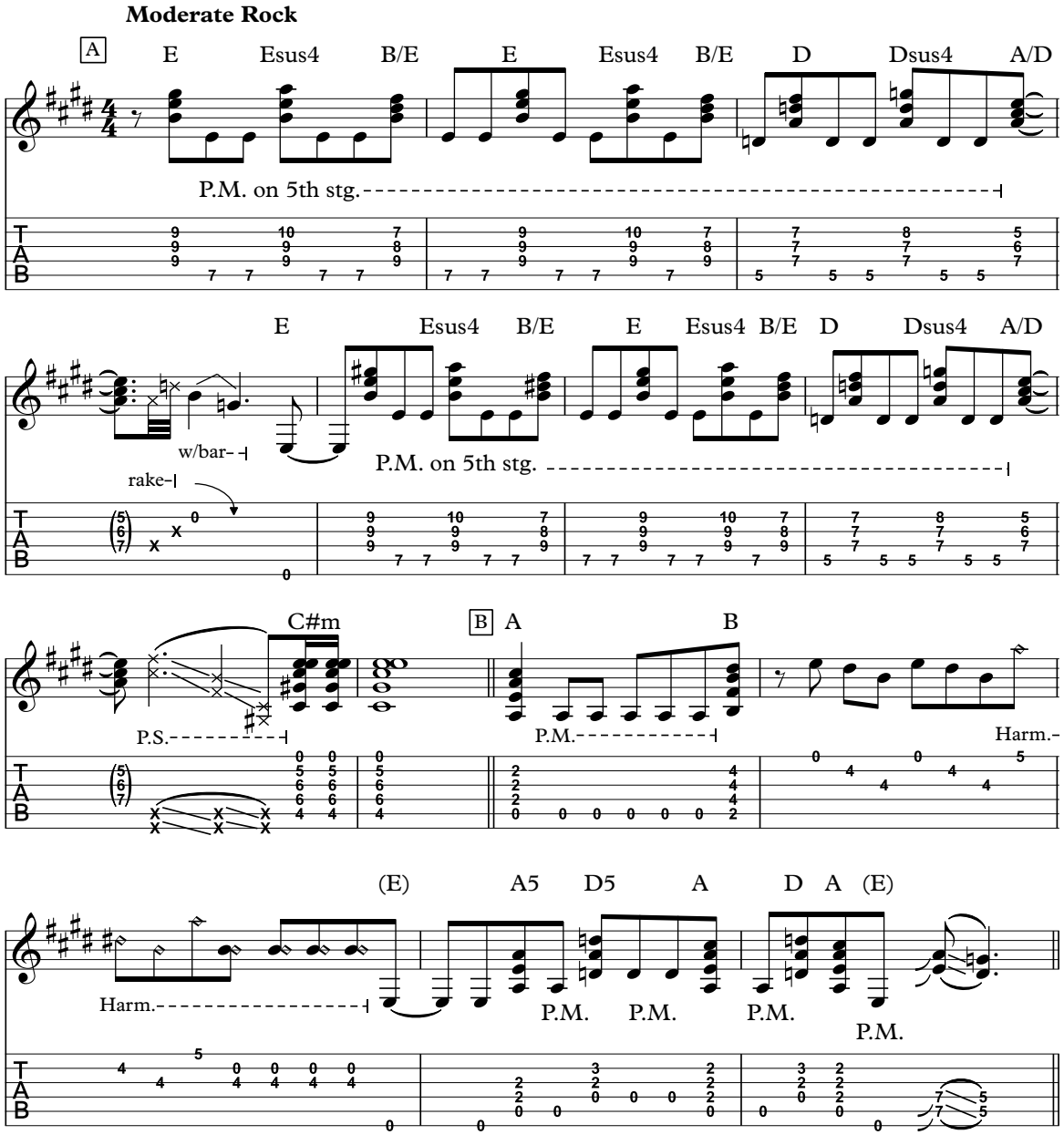
Ed's solo in "Jump" made it acceptable to play shredding licks in Top 40 songs. What makes it so special in the VH catalog is the shred attached to pop sensibilities. Ed doles out textbook heroics in this tight eight-bar section between power-pop chorus and synth solo. Note his hyperkinetic blues-rock licks and pinch harmonics in measures 1-3, tapped sequential passages in 4-5, and quick, ascending flurries in 8 to set up the modulation for the keyboard entrance.



Riff making has always been a VH specialty, and the driving figure in "Panama" is exemplary. In Example A, Ed builds a riff from changing sonorities over a pedal point. Check out the E, Esus4, and B triads over E bass note in measures 1-2 with a repeat, D-Dsus4-A over D in 3-4. He adds whammy-bar dives and pick slides as fills. In Example B, measures 2-3 present a different fill; the chord shape Badd4 is played first as standard notes (E-D#-B) then repeated in open harmonics – another VH mannerism. A second riff of power chords and open strings in 4-5 evokes an AC/DC factor.

"Drop Dead Legs," also inspired by AC/DC, contains some of Roth's most hedonistic lyrics. Ed called it an "...almost jazz version of 'Back in Black'," citing its similar descending progression with "a lot more notes," particularly in the intricate syncopated fills of verse ending sections. He employed his Flying V in Drop D tuning for a different sound and feel. The opening finds him freely arpeggiating and sustaining A and D open chords of the chorus for an anthemic effect before cadencing on an F triad – a surprising twist that directs the band into the strutting main riff: D-G/C-G/B-C-A. Ed's coda solo (2:38-4:10) is an album highlight, channeling his idol, jazz-rock virtuoso Allan Holdsworth. The jazz influence is explicit in the careening dissonant runs woven into familiar rock passages, particularly at 3:37-3:54, where his blistering legato chops and double-timed runs are taken to extremes.

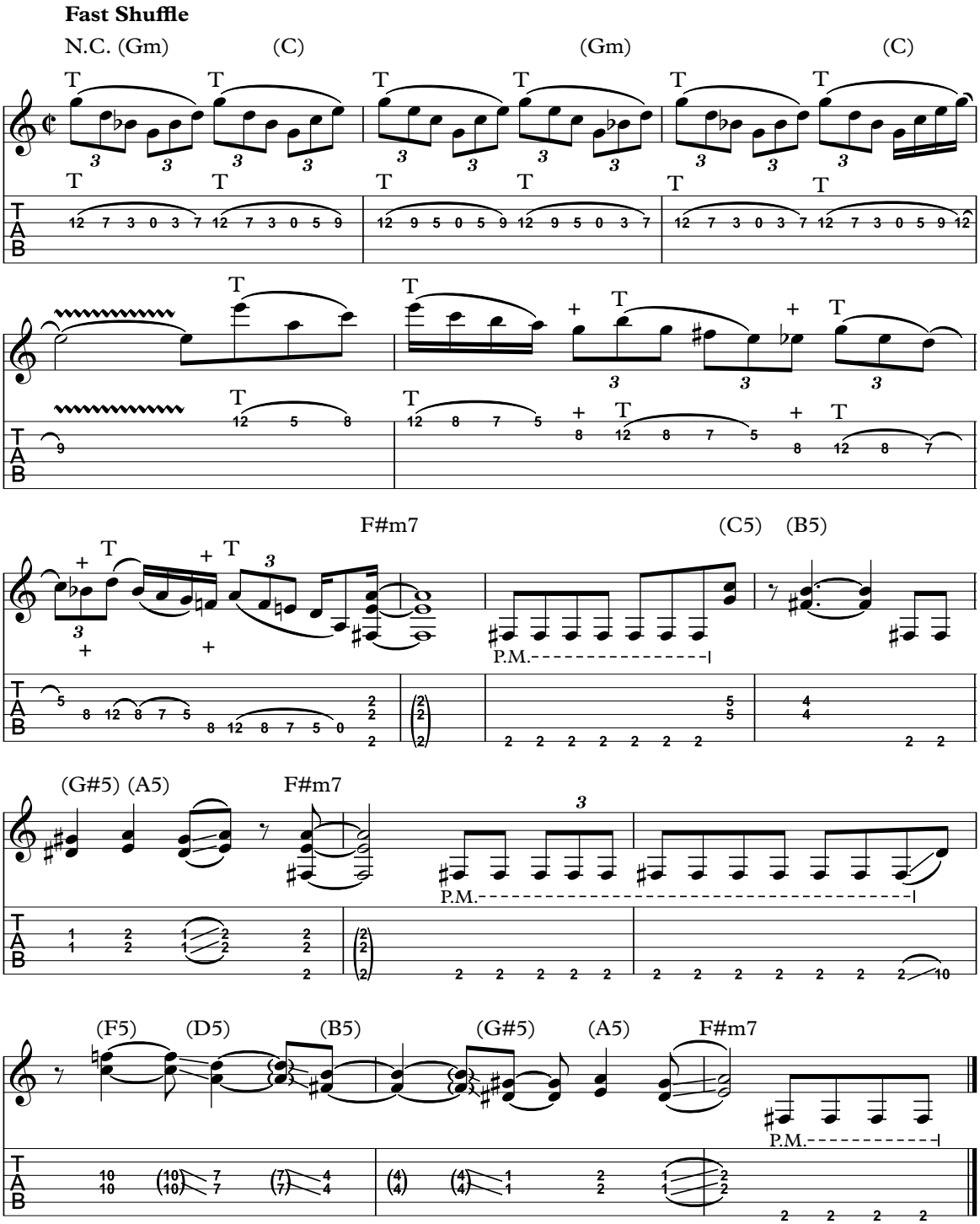
"Hot for Teacher" is a boogie with a fast shuffle groove – a VH forté in the spirit of "I'm the One" and "Sinner's Swing." Ed had an affinity for swinging shuffles, alluding to his father's big-band jazz influences. The thundering drum sound of Al's Simmons kit establishes a propulsive feel in the intro, setting the pace for Ed's opening solo machinations and driving metallic riff. Ed again relied on his Flying V. The cascades of tapped arpeggios are an outgrowth of "Eruption" and "Spanish Fly." By contrast, his quiet, fingerpicked boogie riff (0:56, neck pickup) exudes a John Lee Hooker blues impression answered by a louder rendering in verses (1:11, bridge pickup), while the pre-chorus ushers in bold chromaticism and leads inexorably to a rhythmically charged hard-rock chorus and Ed's groove-conscious soloing. The outro is reputedly drawn from "Voodoo Queen," a relic of their club days. Varied dynamics and energy levels in the arrangement suggest the light/shade balance of Zeppelin married to Americana. Characterized as "ZZ Top on speed," the song/video was an immediate MTV favorite.

Templeman and Roth disliked the power-pop piece "I'll Wait" and campaigned against it. However, Ed was eager to explore its mid-tempo/synth-driven arrangement and minor modality. He tried an Oberheim OB-8 but claimed the mainstay OBX-A, in for repair, had a warmer tone. When the band was short a chorus, Templeman tapped Michael McDonald (credited on the U.K. single but not the album) for input; covertly capturing his improvisations on a cassette recorder. The collaboration yielded a rare VH original with an outside writer. Its sophistication drew tepid reviews from rock diehards, but sparked interest in new listeners. The song, hardly predictable VH fare, reached #13 in America. Anthony added synth bass, the interlude implies an electronica dance track enlivened by Al's hyperkinetic Rototom rolls and fills, and the overall impres-

sion invites comparisons with Foreigner and Survivor. Ed's solo is remarkable, restrained, and appropriately tasteful, with minimal Van Halenisms.

Ed wrote "Girl Gone Bad" in a hotel room, humming and whistling bits into a micro-cassette recorder. He imagined the entire piece from fragments; in the intro, he employs tapped harmonics that date back to "Dance the Night Away," tracing chord outlines with right-hand attacks an octave higher on the fretboard. The tune's multifaceted arrangement, extended instrumental sections, unabashed fusion elements, and modernistic sonorities epitomize the growing sophistication that Ed sought to incorporate. Elements that illustrate the new with the old include aggressive riffing expanded with characteristic fills in the interlude (2:15) that build to his solo (2:26), distinguished by tremolo-picked lines, legato passages, and virtuosic blues-rock phrases.

"House of Pain" harkened to demos done in '77 with Gene Simmons as producer before VH was signed. The music evolved and only the original main riff remained. The album's most-metallic number, it revisits the band's early vibe with Ed's hard-hitting Blackmore-inspired riff in triads and dyads over palm-muted low-E pedal-point peppered with colorful fills. The interlude progression (1:26) provides the characteristic alter-ego contrast with a singable melody line in relative minor and dynamic chromatic re-transition into Ed's solo (1:44) over a double-time feel. The classic VH flight is a how-to of whammy-bar manipulations, pinch-harmonic moves, fast legato runs, tapping patterns, and mutated blues-rock licks. A return to original tempo (2:19) introduces a new riff exploiting double-stops expanded with his neatly placed fills played into the fade-out.



Ed is the undisputed master of two-handed tapping. One of the most copied sounds in rock, it was a rite of passage for '80s players. What began with "Eruption" started a cycle heard later in "Spanish Fly" and "Mean Streets." Ed presented a new wrinkle on every album; on *1984*, it's blended into the opening of "Hot for Teacher." This excerpt demonstrates his classically inspired triplet arpeggio figures expanded into six-note patterns combining tapped notes, fretted notes, and open strings. Accompanied by drums, it's a distinct part that launches the tune and sets up the intro with an idiomatic tapped run in measures 5-6.

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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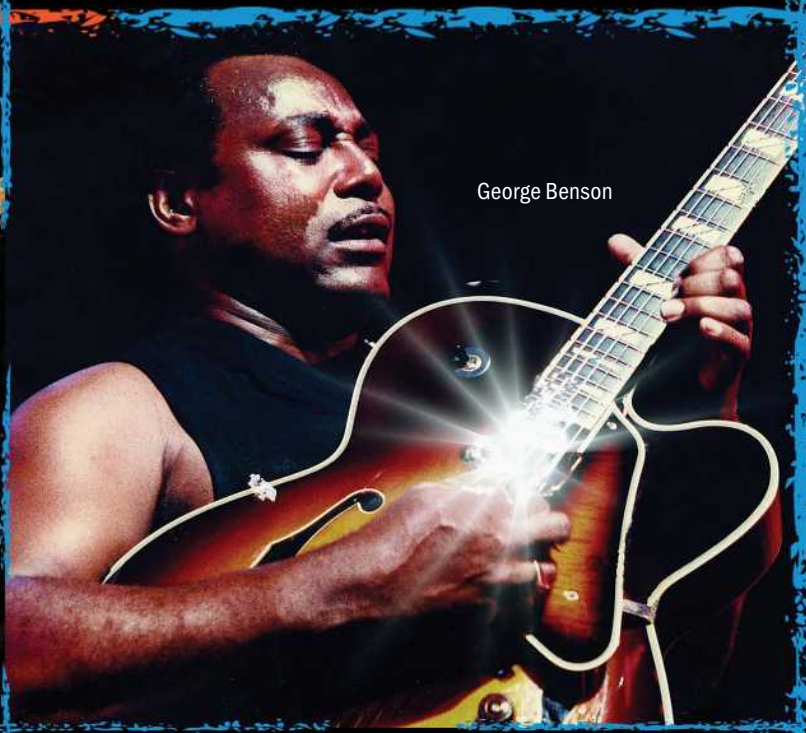

George Benson

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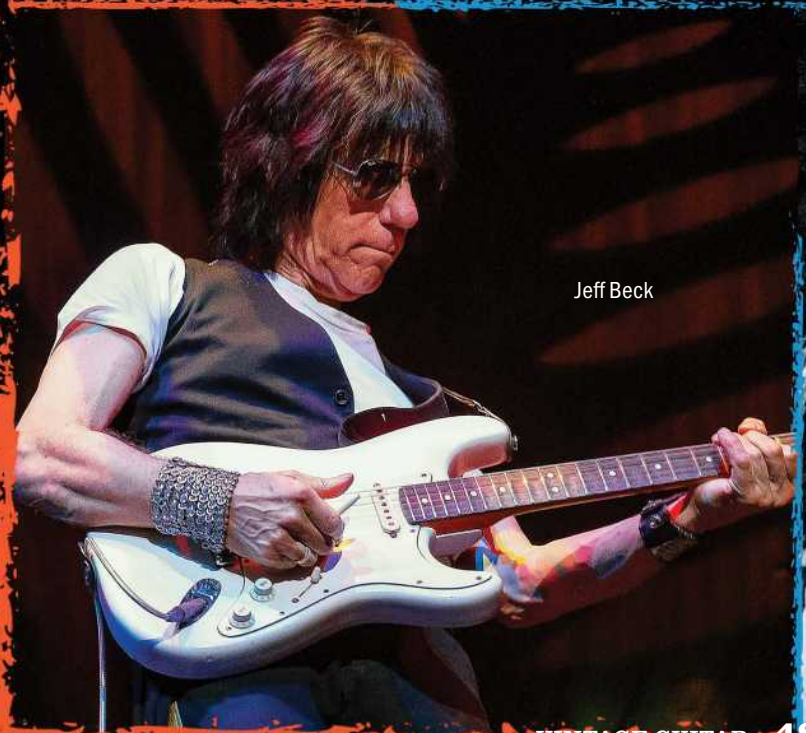
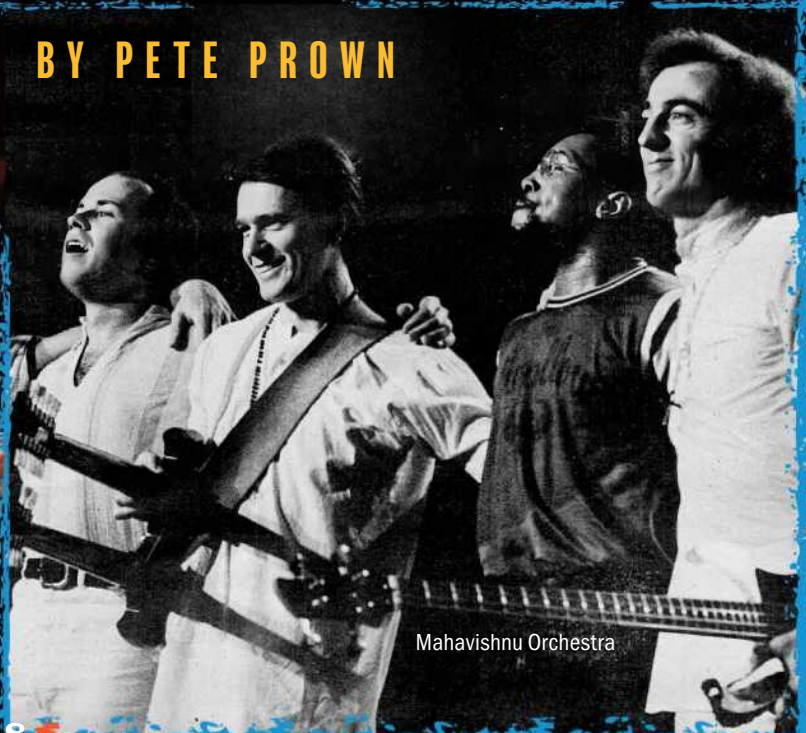
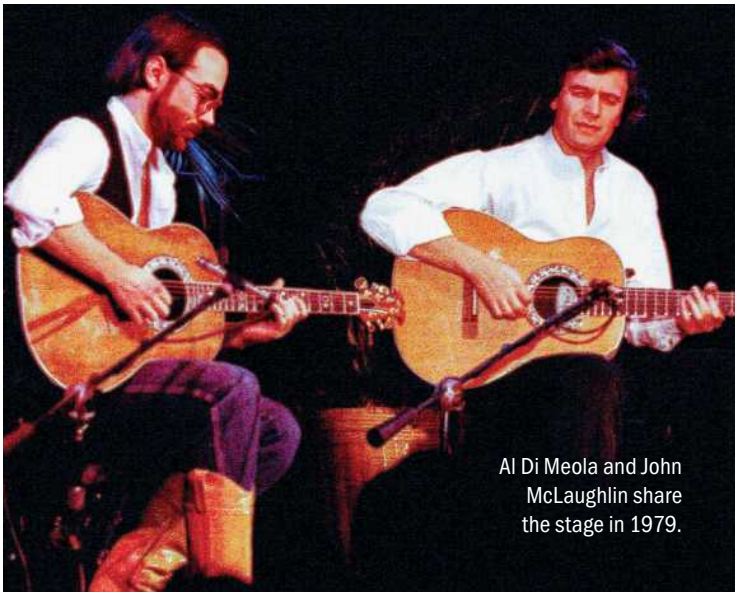


Jeff Beck



Mahavishnu Orchestra

Allan Holdsworth: VG Archive. George Benson: Robbie Drexhage/Wikimedia Commons. Jeff Beck: Takia Kyono/Wikimedia Commons. Mahavishnu Orchestra: Billboard/Columbia Records/Wikimedia Commons.



Al Di Meola and John McLaughlin share the stage in 1979.



Carlos Santana going deep on an inlaid Yamaha SG-2000.

The rise of jazz-rock fusion in the 1970s was inevitable. In the '60s, rock and roll and soul became so popular so fast that musicians playing jazz, blues, R&B, and country had to adapt – or perish.

For jazz guitarists, that meant simplifying their approach and learning to jam over straightforward drum grooves, using 9th chords and soloing in blues scales. It also required bigger amplifiers and solidbody or semi-hollow guitars, as archtops tended to feed back at high volumes. The resulting style came to be called jazz-rock – or fusion – and was, in effect, loud jazz.

There had already been experiments mixing jazz and rock and roll, from old-school boppers playing pop sessions (think Howard Roberts on the Beach Boys' "California Girls") to young experimenters like Larry Coryell, Jerry Hahn, and John Abercrombie. Certainly, King Crimson's 1969 masterpiece, *In the Court of the Crimson King*, was critical – at last, here was rock that exuded the demanding musicianship of jazz. But 1970 was the breakthrough year, as trumpeter Miles Davis released *Bitches Brew*, an album of dark improvisations that melded hard bop, funk, and psychedelia aided by English guitarist John McLaughlin. The album was a hit with fans and critics, and started bringing rock fans to Miles' concerts, something noticed by revenue-craving label heads and concert promoters.

The Big Bang came in the fall of '71 when McLaughlin's group – The Mahavishnu Orchestra – released its debut, *Inner Mounting Flame*. There was no precedent for this earthquake-triggering sound. "Meeting of the Spirits" reveals the paradigm shift, as the five-piece assaulted listeners with some of the most aggressive sounds ever recorded, all on a virtuoso level. The follow-up, *Birds of Fire*, was even more popular, highlighting the radical Moog synthesizer of Jan Hammer. The title track alone was a revolution, with McLaughlin shredding on a Gibson ES-1275 doubleneck and, in real time, changing the sound and technique of electric guitar.

Modern fusioneer Jimmy Herring (Widespread Panic) served as second guitarist on McLaughlin's final U.S. tour, performing Mahavishnu anthems night after night.

"John's absolutely fearless approach to improvisation is intoxicating," said Herring, who has been listening to Mahavishnu since his teens. "I'm hoping some of that rubbed off on me. And I absolutely love Jan Hammer; his Moog solo toward the end of 'Birds of Fire' was a hotly debated topic when my friends and I first heard this music – a lot of people thought it was guitar!"

Larry Coryell is another first-wave hero, especially for his work with Gary Burton, The Free Spirits, Eleventh House, and on solo albums like 1969's bold *Lady Coryell*. "Sunday Telephone," for example, is the sound of a jazzer having a fuzzed, Hendrixian meltdown. 1970's *Spaces* album was even closer to contemporary fusion, Larry jamming on five tracks with none other than John McLaughlin. Coryell told *VG*, "Looking back at my fusion years, I think that the genre had a lot of good playing, some memorable compositions – and it helped the rock crowd come over to jazz."

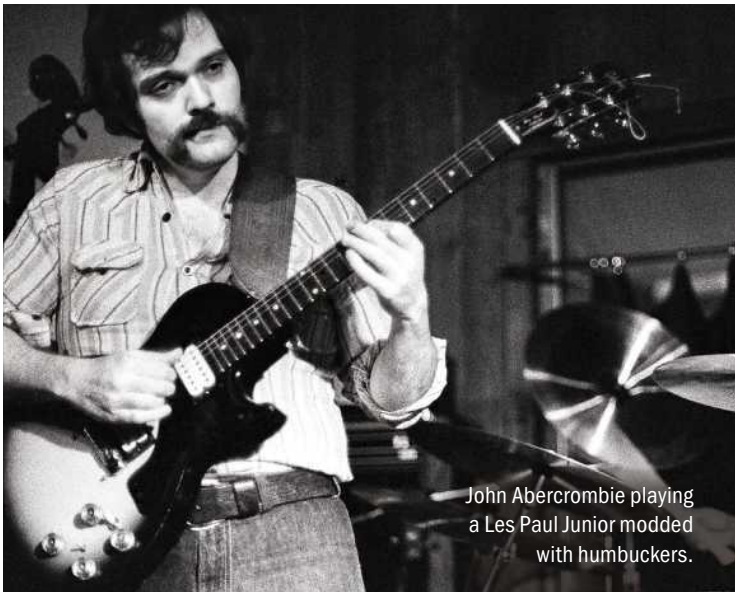
Yet, as early innovators found out (perhaps too late), there was stiff competition in the rising genre. One of the biggest and baddest was a band called Return to Forever. Founded by ex-Miles keyboardist Chick Corea, RTF shifted gears in time for 1973's *Hymn of the Seventh Galaxy*. Featuring bass star Stanley Clarke and newcomer Bill Connors on guitar, RTF was reborn as a high-volume quartet that could play Corea's complex music with elegance and eardrum-shattering volume.

Hymn's title cut was a Gothic barn-burner, with Connors torching the frets while "Captain Señor Mouse" accentuated Corea's Latin shadings. Though *Hymn of the Seventh Galaxy* remains one of the greatest jazz-rock albums, Connors left Return to Forever not long after its release. In '74, he told *Guitar Player*, "Everything started getting less aesthetic, more rock. Just too much like Mahavishnu. I was having trouble expressing myself the way I wanted to in that context."

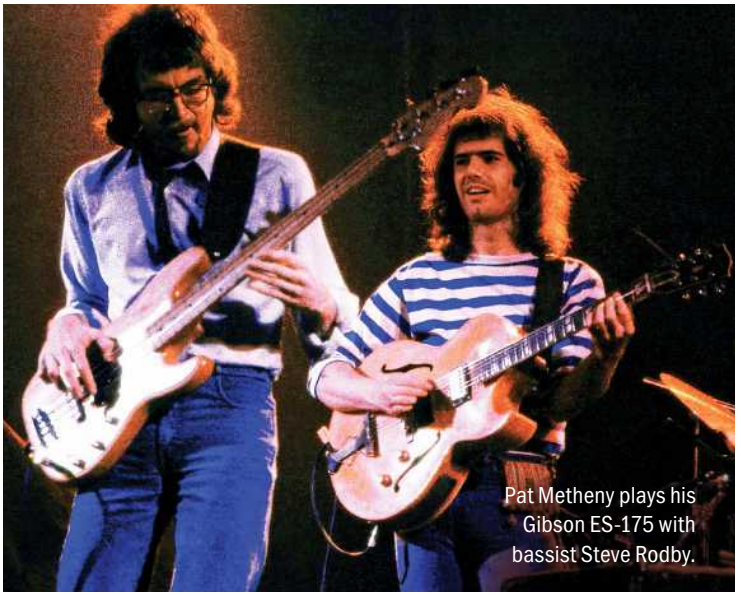
Into the void came Al Di Meola, a 19-year-old whom Corea had poached from the Berklee College of Music. Over the course of three albums with RTF, an explosive solo career (notably 1977's *Elegant Gypsy* and '78's *Casino*), and acoustic neo-flamenco work with McLaughin and Paco de Lucia, Di Meola became legendary for his fast alternate-picking technique and chunky Les Paul-through-Marshall tone. Looking back, *VG* asked Di Meola how he views the revolutionary scene today.

"I think the emphasis on displaying proficiency and technique in those early days was vital to what the jazz-rock fusion was all about," he said. "My influences were players with impeccable articulation and strangely, *not* guitar players – more often

Return to Forever: Grant Gouldon/Wikimedia Commons. Carlos Santana: Chris Hakkens / Wikimedia Commons.



John Abercrombie playing a Les Paul Junior modded with humbuckers.



Pat Metheny plays his Gibson ES-175 with bassist Steve Rodby.

keyboard players like Chick Corea, Jan Hammer, or Keith Jarrett. Even drummers like Steve Gadd had a tremendous influence on my guitar technique."

Drummer Billy Cobham, then winding down his stint with Mahavishnu, went solo and released a spate of funk-fusion albums. His debut – 1973's *Spectrum* – has long been recognized as a groundbreaker, as well as a career apex for American guitarist Tommy Bolin. Bolin, who died of a drug overdose in '76, is known for replacing Joe Walsh in the James Gang and Ritchie Blackmore in Deep Purple, but his contribution to *Spectrum* was mindblowing. Without his manic playing, there would have been no *Blow By Blow* or *Wired* by Jeff Beck, as the British guitarist was clearly listening to the Cobham sessions. For proof, cue up "Red Baron," where Bolin's playing is simply off the hook.

Another cool platter is *Timeless*, by John Abercrombie. This '74 set was heavily influenced by the omnipresent Mahavishnu tsunami, and the American plays fast and aggressively along with keyboardist Jan Hammer and drummer Jack DeJohnette.

After John's death in 2017, the accolades poured in. Jazz-loving thrasher Alex Skolnick of Testament tweeted, "Just as there'd be no Van Halen or Satriani without Allan Holdsworth – there'd be no Metheny, Scofield, and more without Abercrombie." Joe Satriani chimed in, "I had the privilege to take a lesson from John in New York City back when I was 18. *Timeless* still blows me away."



Steve Morse

CROSSOVERS

Fusion blew up so fast that everyone began jumping onboard, even chartmakers from mainstream radio. The pop ensemble Blood, Sweat & Tears might be counted as a charter member, considering its big band-inspired horn charts and soulful melodies. Hot on their heels was Chicago, another brass machine that scored in 1970 with the rocker "25 Or 6 to 4." Avoiding pentatonic licks, axe man Terry Kath concocted a full-blown chromatic fantasy at breakneck speed – unheard of in rock and roll circles. Was it early jazz-fusion? Definitely.

There are countless tracks by non-fusion acts that count as the genuine item. In '72, the Rascals jumped onboard with "Jungle Walk," a world-class piece of funky guitar by Buzzy Feiten, who also played in the Paul Butterfield Blues Band and is renowned for the Buzz Feiten Tuning System. Parliament/Funkadelic axe men like Eddie Hazel and Michael Hampton were also hip to jazz winds and applied them liberally – and loudly.

Thrilled by the sounds of Mahavishnu, Carlos Santana dove head first into the new genre, displayed on the 1972 record *Caravanserai* and a duo collaboration with McLaughlin, *Love Devotion Surrender*, that swiftly earned gold status. Carlos wasn't jazz trained, but he spent untold hours listening to hard bop, and folded those ideas into his guitarmanship. He credited Davis and John Coltrane as key influences; conversely, you can argue that Miles' funk projects of the '70s owed so much to the Santana band and its loose-jam approach.

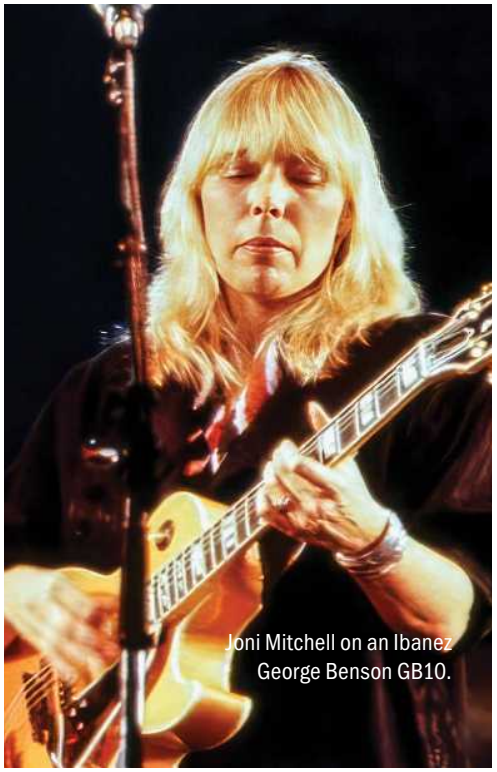
You can put George Benson in the crossover camp thanks to hits "Breezin'" and "On Broadway," where he adapted swing guitar lines to crowd-pleasing arrangements and found platinum. Like Benson, Pat Martino was an archtop player who dug into fusion with stunning results. Martino had been among the '60s rebels who broke away from straight jazz to play edgier, funkier sounds, like Grant Green and Wes Montgomery. A masterwork was 1977's *Joyous Lake*, laced with Pat's blistering pick attack and ensemble work. As contemporary guitarist Jim Campilongo reflected in *Guitar Player*, "The opening track, 'Line Games,' basically says it all: athletic impassioned playing, almost impossible unison lines, and yes, one could use the F word – fusion – to describe it accurately."

Many arena-rock bands incorporated this

John Abercrombie: Tom Marcello/Wikimedia Commons. Pat Metheny: Pino d'Amico/Wikimedia Commons. Steve Morse: Matt Gibbons/Wikimedia Commons.

heavier, more harmonically complex approach, including Gentle Giant, ELP, Yes (*Relayer*), and the '72-'74 lineup of King Crimson. Frank Zappa's allegiance to both jazz and classical music is boundless and his frenetic, fuzz-fueled solos are fusiony showcases (in Lydian or Dorian modes). A fine example is "Eat That Question" from 1974, featuring the stunning Fender Rhodes piano of George Duke. Steely Dan was mixing bop and pop from day one, with solidbody aces like Elliott Randall ("Reeling In the Years"), Jeff Baxter, the underrated Walter Becker, and Denny Dias (the electric-sitar break on "Do It Again" and chromatic flurries of "Bodhisattva"). Session player Jay Graydon's horn-like break on the Dan's "Peg" pasted fusion over AM airwaves in 1977.


Tommy Bolin


Joni Mitchell on an Ibanez George Benson GB10.

L.A. studio guitarist Larry Carlton is a common thread between Steely Dan, the wildly influential Crusaders, and singer/songwriter Joni Mitchell, an intriguing guitarist herself, known for distinctive open tunings. Clue into Carlton licks on Joni's 1974 smash *Court & Spark*, such as on "Help Me," and improvs in Steely Dan cuts like "Kid Charlemagne" and "Don't Take Me Alive." His tone was also widely duplicated, the woody sound of a Gibson ES-335 going into a tweed Fender Deluxe with a bit of overdrive. By 1980, half the aspiring guitarists in the world wanted to be Eddie Van Halen – the other half wanted to be Larry Carlton.

MID-DECADE MONSTERS

In '75, fusion took a dramatic turn with one album – *Blow By Blow*. The LP showcased Jeff Beck's transformation into an instrumental artist on ballads and stompers that made jazz-rock accessible to everyone. Tracks like Stevie Wonder's "Cause We've Ended as Lovers" and "Freeway Jam" put guitar in place of lead vocals and the LP shot to #4 on the *Billboard* charts, an astounding feat for an all-instrumental set. An acclaimed tour with the second lineup of the Mahavishnu Orchestra brought Beck extra acclaim, as did the follow-up, *Wired*, featuring synth god Jan Hammer and its FM hit "Blue Wind."

By then, Beck had inspired so many guitarists it would take all day to list them, but as ace sideman and soundtrack composer Lyle Workman (*VG*, April '21) noted, "Jeff Beck is otherworldly. He got better with age and developed such a unique approach to the instrument. Jeff is like a magician, but it's all real! I've listened to *Blow by Blow*, *Wired*, and *There and Back* countless times."

Another mid-decade radical was Allan Holdsworth, whose Coltrane-infused legato and improv were so fluid that it took years for most players to comprehend what was going on. Following stints with Tempest, Soft Machine, Gong, and Jean-Luc Ponty, Holdsworth stepped out on the first two Bruford albums (*Feels Good To Me* and *One Of A Kind*) and one with U.K., both supergroups.

"The Bruford albums had a massive impact on me, and I often use *One of a Kind* as a benchmark for impeccable writing and arranging," says Australian fusioneer Brett Garsed. "There's not a note on those albums that didn't serve a purpose, as opposed to it being just a live jam in the studio.

Discussing Holdsworth, Bruford's studio engineer, Stephen Tayler, adds, "Allan was quite the character. He was extremely focused and critical of his contribution, but very insecure about his playing – and never that happy about a performance. He always wanted to keep recording parts again, so the other members of Bruford really had to encourage him and tell Allan we had captured it!"

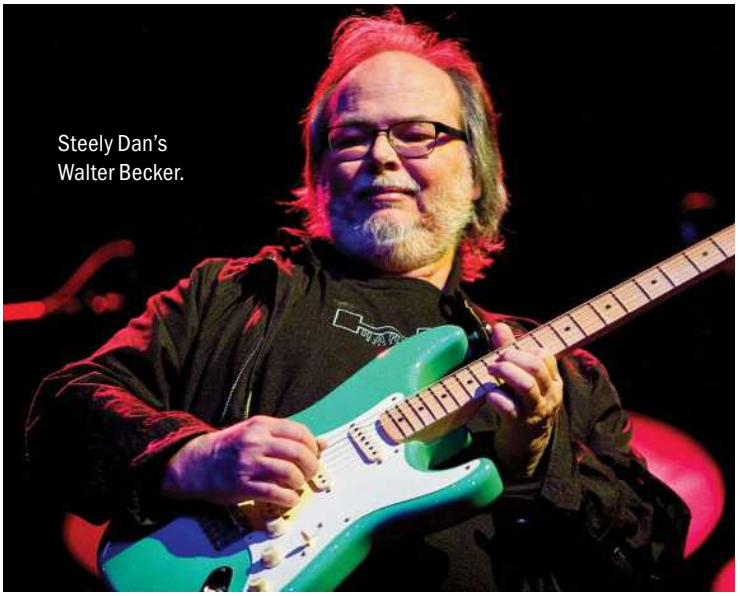
Appearing next to Holdsworth on Jean-Luc Ponty's *Enigmatic Ocean* was Daryl Stuermer. The two made an interesting pair, contrasting Stuermer's staccato picking with Holdsworth's legato. Daryl made a big impact on the previous Ponty album, 1976's *Imaginary Voyage*, deploying high-speed acoustic breaks in "New Country" and "The Gardens of Babylon." Later, Daryl landed a lucrative 40-year stint with Genesis, after Weather Report bassist Alphonso Johnson passed on the gig.

Lastly, no discussion of unplugged jazz-rock can be complete without looking at Shakti and Oregon with guitarists John McLaughlin and Ralph Towner. The output of both bands remains virtuoso-caliber; ignore them at your own peril. Also check out Towner's work with Abercrombie, such as *Sargasso Sea*. Another brilliant acoustic piece is "The Play and Display of the Heart," featuring David Sancious (Bruce Springsteen, Eric Clapton) playing both highly dextrous acoustic guitar and piano. Worth seeking out.

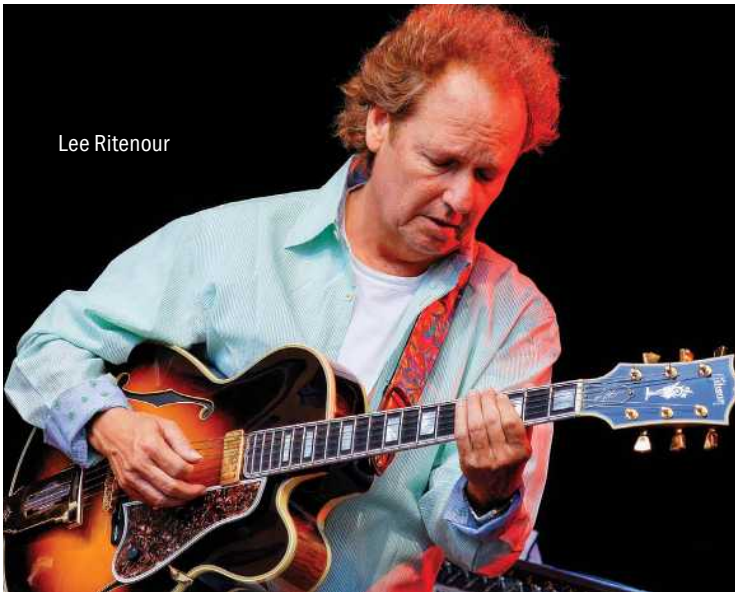
We lost fusion icon Ray Gomez this year, and his contributions to the music of bassist Stanley Clarke, solo recordings, and a host of sideman gigs should not be overlooked. His brand of Strat abuse combined blues scales, chromatic explosions, and shreddiest-shred of the period. Talking to contributor Tom Guerra in *VG* in 2016, Gomez discussed how be broke into the top tier of fusion players.

"Cream broke up and Hendrix died; at the end of the '60s, we were like, 'What's gonna happen now, who's gonna lead us?' So, along came John McLaughlin, and he was making a statement… then came *Spectrum* and Return to Forever. These became the new heroes. I played my ass off

Tommy Bolin: John McDavid/Wikimedia Commons. Joni Mitchell: Capannelle/Wikimedia Commons.



Steely Dan's Walter Becker.



Lee Ritenour

on [RTF drummer] Lenny White's album, then I called Stanley Clarke – after being in America for less than a year, I was getting called to play on albums by two of the baddest mother*****s on the planet. They were the gods of fusion! We did Stanley's *School Days*, all of it, in one or two takes, straight up and live."

A guitar giant usually associated with the mid '80s and onward, Eric Johnson was a local kid in the mid '70s with Electromagnets, and archival recordings of the Texas unit reveal what a monster he already was. Barely 21, Johnson's playing answered the question, "What if Jeff Beck joined Return to Forever?" Explaining his improvisational concepts, he told us, "I'm sort of on the cusp between a rock player who thinks about scales and a jazzer who thinks about notes and colors over particular chords. I don't know enough about scales to be really free, but I'm starting to learn notes here and there that will take me out of the standard pentatonic thing. I basically think of my solos as compositions."

SURVIVING THE DISCO INFERNO

In 1976, the pop universe was rocked by the two-headed monster of disco and punk. Yet again, the "adapt or perish" concept won out, forcing guitarists to find new ways to get their music out. L.A. studio veteran Lee Ritenour made a splash in '77 with his *Captain Fingers* album, combining funk and fusion with an emphasis on jaw-dropping finesse. He also kept the studio work going with hundreds of credits, including a small appearance on Pink Floyd's blockbuster, *The Wall*. Hippest of all was his frighteningly quick picking on the Brothers Johnson



Larry Carlton's 1980 album, *Strike Twice*.

hit, "Strawberry Letter 23" (at 02:28). It's a good example of fusion making its presence felt in AM pop.

Another jazz-meets-pop recording was "Feels So Good," the #4 single by flugelhorn player Chuck Mangione. Guitarist Grant Geissman delivered the letter-perfect solo – it's almost hummable – and was spun nonstop on radio in the summer of '78.

"The guitar was a '68 Gibson L-5, recorded direct into the board – with no amp – through a script-logo MXR Phase 90," he told *VG* in 2022. "Engineer Mick Guzauski added a bit of delay when mixing. Later on, the Mangione band played all the major TV shows, like Johnny Carson's 'Tonight Show' and 'Midnight Special,' so we were very high profile for a jazz-oriented band. It was great to get to play improvised solos for good-sized crowds every night."

Emerging from the University of Miami's music department was a kid named Pat Metheny, whose post-bop ideas threaded the needle like no one else. He could play straight-ahead jazz, but with the Pat Metheny Group, created melodies that found a sophisticated listener base. Their self-titled 1978 album (sometimes called "the white album") was a sensation, allowing Pat to weave gossamer tones, heavy with chorus-styled delay effects on "Phase Dance" and "Jaco," a tribute to fellow U of Miami master bassist Jaco Pastorius.

A different kind of hero came from the same music department – Steve Morse. Like Bolin and Beck, this Telecaster-toting towhead approached harmonic complexity from the rock and roll side with the Dixie Dregs. From '77 to '82, the quintet raised a ruckus that assimilated Southern boogies, country hoedowns, and classical pastiches, allowing Steve to burn on his Tele night after night. His penchant for blues bends and lightning-quick chromatics were dazzling. Remembering the Dregs' formative years, Morse told VG, "We were sort of a prog rock band before the term got used. When we played at a dance, people were divided in the audience between really liking us and really hating us because we didn't play Top 40 hits."

FUSION TODAY

As tastes changed, the dangerous edge of '70s fusion evolved into something softer and more danceable for the masses. Fortunately, the decades since have brought a new generation of artisans, among them Mike Stern, John Scofield, Scott Henderson, Shawn Lane, Jimmy Herring, Matteo Mancuso, and Julian Lage. Perhaps most surprising, today, fusion is thriving, and in cities and towns around the world, you'll inevitably find a few players who crave the sound of loud jazz. VG

Walter Becker: Daniel Knighton/Zuma. Lee Ritenour: Henryk Kotowski/Wikimedia Commons.

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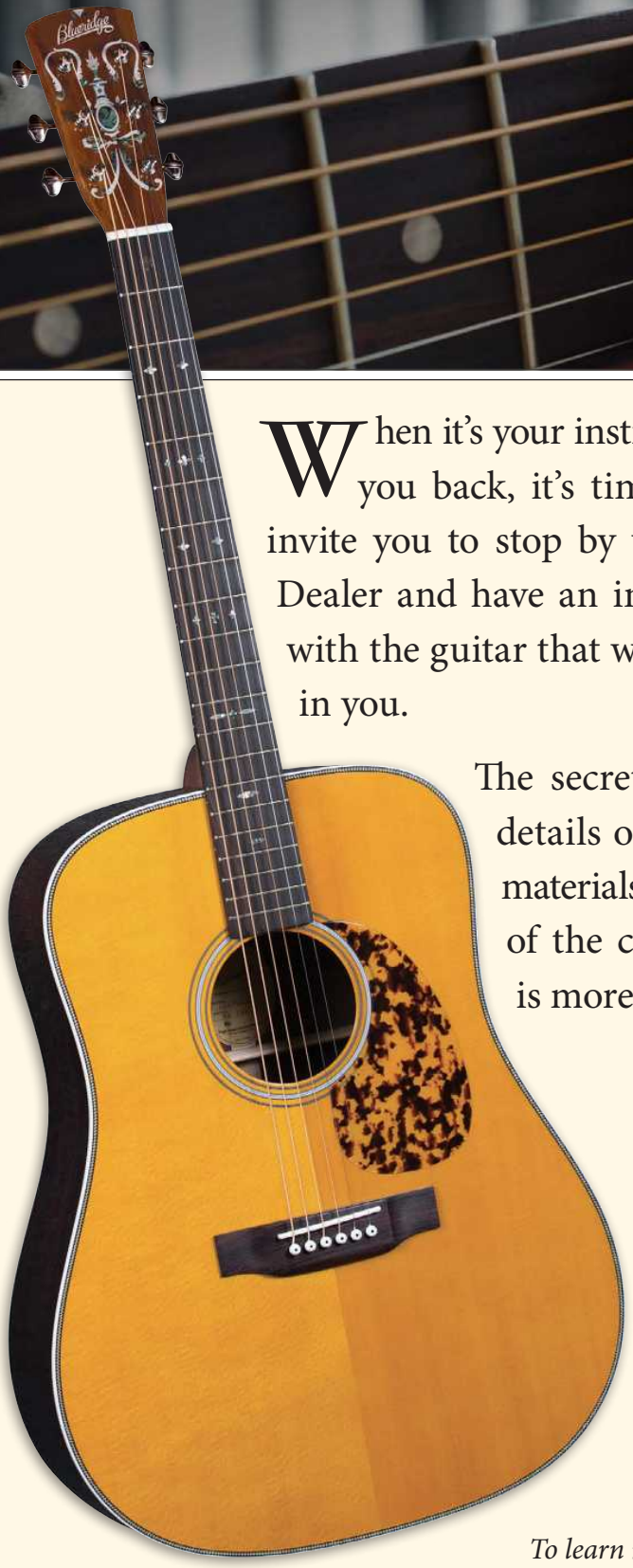

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Richard Bennett

Instrumental Array

BY DAN FORTE

Richard Bennett has carved a truly enviable career as accompanist to superstars like Mark Knopfler and Neil Diamond while also producing Marty Stuart, Emmylou Harris, the Mavericks, and many other artists. Time and again through decades, he has delivered the goods in studios from the City of Angels to Music City.

"If anybody would've told me 20 years ago that I'd have written and recorded so many albums under my own name, I'd have thought them mad," he muses. "Now, these records are my main driving focus."

Born in Chicago in 1951, his family moved to Phoenix in 1960. There, he was mentored by Al Casey, whose one-time bandmate, Duane Eddy, became a dear friend.

He moved to L.A. at 17 and immediately began to compile a list of session credits that included Glen Campbell, Bread, Lonnie Donegan, the Bellamy Brothers, Marvin Gaye, Ringo Starr, Kenny Rogers, T-Bone Walker, Billy Joel, Roger Miller, and even Liberace.

He relocated to Nashville in 1985 – the year he co-produced Steve Earle's *Guitar Town*, which reached #1 on the *Billboard* Country chart. Additional studio credits include George Jones, Trisha Yearwood, Conway Twitty, George

Bennett with a 1930 Martin K-5.

All photos by Nick Bennett.



1) Bennett's '54 Telecaster was a gift from songwriter Paul Kennerley. 2) "I got this '56 Gretsch 6120 at a music store in North Hollywood for $500," he says. "That's the Duane Eddy sound, those DeArmond Dynasonic pickups." 3) Bennett's Danelectro Longhorn six-string bass dates from the mid '60s. 4) '38 Gibson ES-150.

Strait, Patty Loveless, Waylon Jennings, Vince Gill, Joan Baez, and Rodney Crowell.

He toured with Neil Diamond from '71 to '87 and co-wrote "Forever In Blue Jeans." Then, he recounts, "In 2017, my son (guitarist Nick) and I did what ended up being Neil's last tour. It was like putting on a comfortable old cardigan."

He started working with Mark Knopfler in '94, touring until the Dire Straits front-man retired from the road in 2017, though he still records with him. These days, instead of playing "Sultans Of Swing" and "Money For Nothing" in Madison Square Garden, he plays ukulele with Hawaiian guitarist Steve Dawson's Volcano Brothers. Their debut, *Light Of The Hilo Moon*, was released earlier this year.

Somehow, he has managed to release eight stellar solo albums of original instrumentals. The eclectic *Some Kinda Summer*, from 2025, offers a dozen mini screenplays evoking an array of images for as many listeners. The epic "Fortune's Frontier" could be the theme of a big-budget Western, "Debonair" a Bob Wills 78 with none of the surface noise but all the authenticity. "Whistlejacket" transposes its inspiration from Jack Nitzsche's "Lonely Surfer" to lap-steel, while the deceptively simple "Beauty And The Beatnik" is simply beautiful.

The unifying element in his self-described "musical whiplash" is the same quality inherent throughout his resumé – taste.

Do you still have your first guitar?

Yes. It's not playable anymore, but I touch it every day. When I was 11, my folks went to Nogales, just over the border, and bought a little three-quarter guitar off the street. Boy, did I love that guitar. I just took to it.

Did you learn how to read music?

Yes. It came in very handy, and still does – not in sessions anymore, but I use it for writing stuff that I want somebody to play.

Forrest Skaggs put me through that orange *Mel Bay Chord System for Rhythm and Orchestral Guitar* book. It was so complex, but I persevered, and I can't recommend it enough. It says, "Every chord, atomic powered." About once a year, I spend a couple of days going through it to the end. That's the foundation of a lot of my chord stuff.

Skaggs also taught Al Casey before I became aware of him. I was a huge Al fan because of the Sanford Clark record "The Fool," and "Endless Sleep" by Jody Reynolds. That was Al. Of course, in my L.A. session days, there were still parts being written out. I didn't read like Tommy Tedesco – very few did. Al Casey didn't read like Tommy, but I didn't even read like Al. If it was outside of my league; I'd happily pass it off to one of the other players.

The day after you graduated from high school, you moved to Los Angeles.

My parents had moved to L.A. a few months prior, for my dad's work. I stayed in Phoenix to finish high school, plus I was playing gigs at beer joints and I didn't want to leave yet. I lived with my grandparents, then moved in with Skaggs. Graduation night, instead of going out to party, I went to say goodbye to the musicians I'd played with. Monday morning, I was waiting on the doorstep of Al Casey's music store, ready to go to work.

I've had an incredibly fortunate career and would have had none of it were it not for Al. I'm always clear about not being part of the so-called Wrecking Crew. I see that as a timeframe, not so much a personnel roll call. I did my first Hollywood date, sitting next to Al, in '68, which, to me, was the Wrecking Crew cut-off date. They taught me the ropes, and I worked with all of them. For all of their joking around and hijinks, they were deadly serious cats who could cut anything that was placed on their stands.

Duane Eddy also came from Phoenix.

Right, and we knew a lot of the same musicians and people and places. After I moved to L.A., we would bump into each other. He called me for a Phil Everly album he produced, *Star Spangled Springer*. To me, he's a titan of guitar. The great thing was he treated me like a contemporary instead of an idiot kid, and we became pals.

About 20 years ago, out of nowhere, he said, "I just figured out what my place is in this whole world of music. I've taught a million kids how to play guitar." I completely understood what he meant. Every kid in that era learned how to play "Rebel Rouser." He knew exactly who he was, how to be Duane Eddy, and he was very proud of that. He certainly wasn't the first player to use those low notes, but anybody who plays down there invokes his name. That shows you what an impact he had. He fully owned that real estate. There was a lot more to him than that – he could play beautiful little chord-arrangement things – but he knew who he was and was happy to be that.

When did you take up steel guitar?

I dearly loved early pedal steel. Bud Isaac and Jimmy Day were my men. In high school, I bought a Fender 400 with four pedals and eight strings. I immediately knew what I wanted to do with it, so it was just a matter of the mechanics, finding out how to do that. I didn't want to be Buddy Emmons, and I certainly have no facility to be Paul Franklin. I still approach it in a very simplistic way. Most of the early Nashville George Jones Mercury stuff is Jimmy Day. He was so soulful back in the mid '50s on records like [Marvin Rainwater's] "Going To Find Me A Bluebird," early Ray Price, and recordings with Jim Reeves.

In Nashville, how much freedom did you have to figure out what was right for a record?

All the freedom in the world, because there weren't arrangers on those records, so it was up to the musicians to come up with the goods, as it always was here. It was 100 percent arranged in L.A. by the time I started playing there. At times, you would



5) '36 D'Angelico Excel. 6) "It's the first year they did a round Spanish neck," Bennett says of his '28 National Tricone. "It's a Style 1, with no engraving, but it's a lovely thing and plays really well."



7) '69 Del Vecchio Dinamico. 8) This 1927 parlor-size Weymann was a gift from guitar teacher Forrest Skaggs. 9) This no-name Mexican acoustic was Bennett's first guitar, at age 11. 10) Bennett describes his '36 National cast-aluminum solidbody Hawaiian guitar as "a sustain machine."

get a chord chart and the band came up with a head or a chord arrangement, but there always seemed to be an arranger, even if it wasn't written out.

In Nashville, I was often called as a rhythm guitarist or acoustic player, and I had the freedom to present an idea for an electric part or line, and jump in or offer it as an overdub.

How did you hook up with Mark Knopfler?

In early 1994, [producer] Chuck Ainlay called about doing a session with Mark. Of course, you don't even look in your book, you just say yes, which I did. Then I thought, "Well, what am I supposed to do?" I was a bit nervous. When Mark runs down a tune, people gather around and he plays it acoustically. I made it a point to get right in front and watch what he was doing. The tune was "Rüdiger," a fairly involved piece on *Golden Heart*. I was looking for what and where not to play; I had to be above or below him, and what he was doing would indicate how simple or how complex I needed to be.

In the process, a little line came to me in the intro. We all went off to our iso booths and did a rundown. I'm thinking, "I'm either going to play this line and be a hero or get smacked upside the head." So I committed and played the little line I had. At the end, Mark said, "Do you remember what you did?" I said "Yes," and he said, "Good, do that, and do it again on the outro."

Besides playing with a great guitarist, part of your job is backing up the vocal, as it also was with Neil Diamond.

I see it as the exact same craft as playing on a record. You try to not get in anybody's way and try not to harm the tune. Whatever that takes, I'm perfectly happy. Acoustic rhythm guitar – I love that. If that's what needs to happen, I'm happy to do it. If it's a line, I'm happy to do that. There's a certain amount of freedom within that, both Neil's thing and Mark's deal. Mark's was a lot more

creative with a bit more leeway, but you have to hit the signposts. It's always a little different, but it's like Shakespeare; you don't go out there and rewrite Shakespeare.

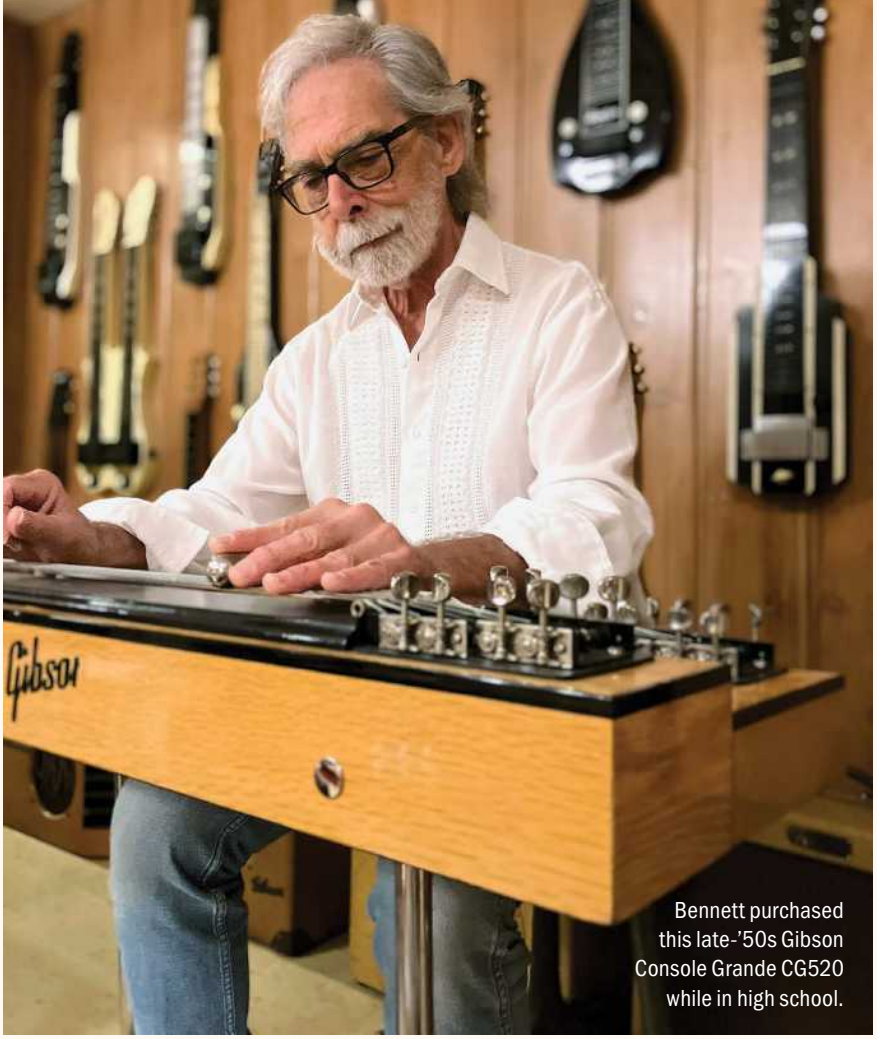
Your solo albums hearken to the era when instrumentals were Top 40 hits.

We're all victims of our record collections, and our age. I've played a lot of styles, and I try to get it right. I've devoured all of the Bert Kaempfert stuff, early Ray Conniff, Al Caiola, Tony Mottola – any of those fabulous Command records. Les Baxter and so much of that middle-of-the-road stuff was a dirty word. I know that stylistically there's a bit of musical whiplash, but man, those are my heroes. I love Billy Mure, who played one of my favorite guitar parts, if you remember Marty Robbins' "A White Sport Coat." That's why I try to be a grown-up guitar player, because everybody my age is still kind of in the blues pentatonic world or trying to be a rock-and-roll thing. I love that, as well, but there are eight billion people doing that and I don't need to be the billionth-and-first. I've always been really happy to go down the quieter path. It's just the way I write, and I try to somehow make an interesting arrangement.

Songs like "Wonderland By Night" by Bert Kaempfert are so well-recorded. Get a greatest hits CD; there's this wonderful bass sound on them. Everybody thinks it's a Danelectro, but it's a Fender bass, muted with the palm and played with a pick. It's got the Danelectro thing, but it's got some meat on the bottom, as well.

Multi-instrumentalist George Bradfute co-produced several of your albums.

I cannot say enough about him – as a musician, recording engineer, guitar builder, and friend. I'd be lost without him. On my first two albums, I was very aware of staying focused, but by the third one, I call it musical whiplash. I like the idea of being very different from one song to another. If you don't like this one, go to the next one; you very well may like it. I get kind of tired of hearing the same artist doing the same thing for 12 tracks. "Here's the fast one, here's the slow one," but it's all of the same fabric.



Bennett purchased this late-'50s Gibson Console Grande CG520 while in high school.

Are there guitars you don't take out of the house?

On tour with Knopfler, I took my '54 Tele, and he took his '54 Strat. That's what they're for and I'm not afraid to use them. Paul Kennerley, who's a great songwriter and very successful, always had great guitars. I asked him how he'd feel about lending the Tele to me while I was producing George Ducas. When it was done, I re-strung it and brought it back to him, and he insisted that I keep it. I wrote him and said, "Look, when you come to your senses, you know where the guitar is. It's a phone call away." I would honor that phone call if it came today.

Your W.G. Barker guitar is rare and historic.

I think it's the third one Bill made, when he was still in Ohio. He sold it to Bobby Gibbons, who was also a studio player in Hollywood, and Bobby sold it to Al Casey, who used it on "These Boots Are Made For Walkin'," "Everybody's Talkin'," "Never My Love," and others. I absolutely lusted after it and ended up buying it from Al not long before he died.

The Gibson ES-150 "Charlie Christian" is less dressy than a 250.

In '36, it was their entry-level archtop that they put the pickup in, when they didn't know if electric guitars were going to take off. They just took a cheap archtop and put this heavy-duty pickup in it. It required three bolts through the front; the whole apparatus went almost down to the bridge inside. But God, they're killer pickups. It can do a lot of things. Apart from, obviously, jazz, it's really good for clean melodic playing, or if you want to put some thinner strings on it, it's a great rocking guitar.

Brazilian Del Vecchios were popularized by Chet Atkins and Los Indios Tabajaras.

They gave one to Chet. I was working at Al Casey's store around 1969, and he sold one to me for what he paid for it, $150. They're not really well-made – it's like a carpenter made them – but my Dinamico stayed tight and sounds fantastic.

What's so special about D'Angelicos?

Every single one was different from the other, and they evolved into something slightly different in the late '40s, when guys started putting pickups on them. The mid-'30s models, like my '36 Excel, was a real watershed period for John D'Angelico. They just have everything. They're not thin-sounding – they're very rich. They're loud and sustain like crazy. It's just the most gorgeous thing.

One of many things I learned from Al was that you can use an archtop for so many things other than the obvious, because they get on a record so well. You can play rock and roll, R&B, just everything. I use archtops on my records instead of round-holes. You can play cowboy chords, and they sound fantastic.

How did you join the Volcano Brothers?

Steve Dawson did a deep dive into pre-World War II Hawaiian music, particularly '20s and '30s instrumental music. Fats Kaplin had a passion for that, as well, and they decided to bring in Dave Jacques on upright bass. I was a massive Hawaiian-music fan, came up playing it, and I have an extensive 78 collection and transcriptions of Dick McIntyre's and Sol Hoopii's radio shows. We quickly found that it was really cool to have two ukuleles playing rhythm. Fats approaches it in a completely different way, and the two work wonderfully together. We were getting ready to do this

album, thinking it might be nice to have a good archtop rhythm guitar. I suggested Andy Reese, and once he came in, we couldn't live without him.

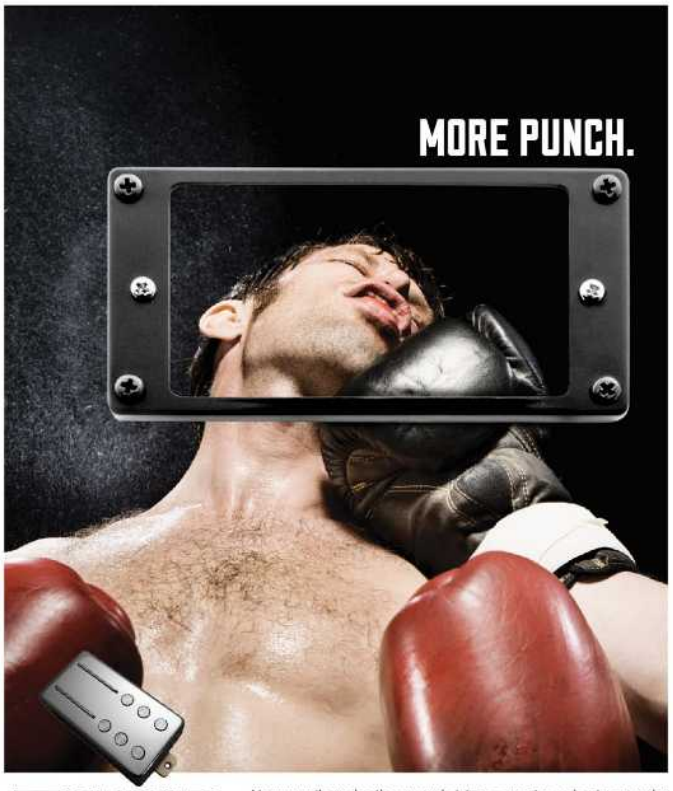
The uke is not without its limitations, and I've learned so much about an instrument that I thought I could just kind of take a swipe at; there's a hell of a lot more to it. It's kind of coming full circle, because part of my learning how to play rhythm guitar – my chords – wasn't entirely the Mel Bay book. It was Skaggs, who was a great Hawaiian-guitar player.

The tenor uke I play was a gift from Tony Mottola to his nephew, and about 10 years ago he gifted that ukulele to a good friend of mine, David Conrad. When I started playing with the Volcanoes, he said, "I've got something I think you need." He opened the case, and there was this beautiful 1950 Gibson T-1.

What can we expect with your next solo album?

It's called *Echoes Of Us*. I had a spell where I was hating everything I played, hating guitar, going through a fallow period. I pulled out the little ethnic instruments – a charango, the Hawaiian guitars, tipple, a Cuban tres. The sound of them jumpstarted me into writing for this album.

My friend, Paul Burch, a wonderful singer/songwriter and author, is really good about taking a historical figure and creating a story around them. He said, "What if you wrote a tune about Joseph Kekuku?" – who is the acknowledged inventor of the modern Hawaiian steel guitar. So many Hawaiians of that first generation of musicians came to the mainland, partly because the monarchy was overthrown, and the Americans came in and started appropriating everything. I ended up writing a very early Hawaiian-type tune called "Stranger In Otherland." There are echoes of other lands in this batch of tunes. VG



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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 "Tortoiseshell Pickguard" Gold Hardware 100% original.
'65 Olympic White "Tortoiseshell Pickguard" 100% original.
'66 Sunburst We have 2 Super clean gears in stock.
'66 Sunburst 100% original in EX condition.
'69 Blond/Rose neck 100% original, Amazing tone!!
'70 Sunburst/Rose neck 100%original in Near Mint condition. We have 2 in stock.
'70 Olympic White/4 Bolt Rose neck only refrets changed nut, Super clean!!
'70 Black/Rose neck 100% original.
'71 Blac/4Bolt Rose neck Only changed Nut & 5Way-SW in VG condition.
'71 Sunburst "Lefty"/4Bolt One Piece Maple neck Refret & Cahnged nut.
'71 Black/3Bolt Rose neck Early 3Bolt neck Strat, 1Strings Tree Steel Tremolo Assy.
'72 Sonic Blue/3Bolt Maple nneck 1Strings Tree Steel Tremolo Assy.
'72 Sunburst 1Strings tree Maple & Rose neck We have both in stock.
'73 Black Rose neck 100% original in Near Mint condition.
'74 Sunburst/Maple & Rose neck. We have both in stock.
'74 Sunburst "Lefty" Maple neck 100% original in Mint condition, Super rare!!
79 25th Anniversary "Pearl White" Strat 100% original, Perfect condition.
'79 Sunburst "Pretotype" 4-bolt Maple neck 100% original, Perfect condition.
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Upcoming Events

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Denotes a new or updated listing.

OCTOBER

Southern Ohio Guitar Show, October 11, 11 am - 5 pm, at the Chillicothe Highschool, 425 Yoctangee Parkway, Chillicothe, Ohio, 45601. For more info contact www.sohioguitarshow.com

Chicago Vintage Guitar Expo, October 11, 9 am - 3 pm, at the Marriott Hotel, 50 N Martingale, Schaumburg, Il. For more info contact (847) 931-0707 Bakesguitar@aol.com www.Chicagovintageguitarexpo.com

Amigo Guitar Show - Mesquite, October 17, 10 am – 5 pm - 18, 10 am – 4 pm. For more info contact Ruth at (817) 312-7659 ruthbrinkmann@gmail.com www.amigoguitarshows.com/mesquite/

2026 Tampa Guitar Show, October 23 - 25, 10 am - 5 pm, at the Florida State Fairgrounds, 4800 U.S. 301. Tampa, Florida 33610. For more info contact Marty Beeson at (813) 400-0803 info@mvgguitarshows.co/m https://mvgguitarshows.com/

NOVEMBER

The Chicagoland Guitar Show, November 1, 9 am - 4 pm, at Atlantis Banquet Facility, Prospect Crossing Plaza, 1273 N. Rand Road. For more info contact Wayne at 773-545-2020 mwbuynsell@sbcglobal.net

Great American Guitar Show (Fall Philly), November 7 - 8, at Greater Philadelphia Expo Center, Rt. 422, Exits at Oaks, 100 Station Ave., Oaks, PA 19456. For more info contact Bee 3 Vintage at (828) 298-2197 www.bee3vintage.com

Rose Quarter Guitar Show, November 15, 10 am - 3:30 pm, at Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Portland, OR. For more info contact Bruce at bruceadolph@mac.com https://westcoastguitarshows.com

2027

JANUARY

Orlando International Guitar & Music Expo, January 30, 10 am - 5 pm - 31, 10 am - 4 pm, at the Central Florida Fairgrounds, 4603 West Colonial Drive, Orlando, FL. For more info contact Britt Keen at (850) 294-5537 orlandoguitarexpo@outlook.com or Morty Beckman at www.guitarexpo.net

MARCH

Chicago Vintage Guitar Expo, Sunday March 7, 9 am - 3 pm, at the Marriott Hotel, 50 N. Martingale, Schaumburg, Il. For more info contact Beverly Bakes at (847) 931-0707 Bakesguitar@aol.com www.Chicagovintageguitarexpo.com

Carolina Guitar Show, March 13 - 14, at the WNC Ag Center, Davis Expo Bld, I-26, Exit 40, 1301 Fanning Bridge Rd, Fletcher/Asheville, NC 28732. For more info contact Bee 3 Vintage at (828) 298-2197 www.bee3vintage.com

The Amigo Nashville Guitar Show, March 20–21, at the Williamson County AG Expo Park in Franklin, Tennessee. For more info contact www.amigoguitarshows.com/nashville-2

APRIL

4th Annual Mid Atlantic Guitar & Music Show, April 9 - 11, at the Delaware State Fairgrounds, 18500 S. Dupont Hwy, Harrington, DE. For more info contact Mary Knight at (302) 402-3055

If you have information regarding upcoming guitar shows or events, visit http://www.vintageguitar.com/guitar-show-submission or e-mail Mike@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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HOPEFUL MESSAGE



Keb 'Mo
The Breakdown

A substantial departure from Keb 'Mo's prior work, the deeply personal tone of *The Breakdown* was inspired by his recent divorce and open-heart surgery. Alone with his guitar, he offers hard-hitting, honest reflections on the turmoil, including relevant older compositions and recordings; his deft, steady guitar is up front throughout.

Given the theme, Keb adjusts his playing to fit. His blues licks frame "They Don't Make 'em Like They Used To," a reflection on changing times, includes backup vocals from the jazz-vocal group Take 6. "Fussin' and Fightin" also features authoritative blues picking, while alternating bass drives "One Day Away." One notable surprise: his jazzier chordal approach to "Every Step of the Way."

Delicate fingerpicking frames the redemptive "Walking on Water," with a brief-but-effective break near the end. Accompanied by the Soweto Gospel Choir on the rhythmic "Hand it Over," bass and arpeggios frame the vocals, as they do on "One Day Away." The straightforward "Stitched-Up Heart" draws from 'Mo's surgery experience, conveying gratitude and optimism with minimalist accompaniment to emphasize the album's hopeful message. ***– Rich Kienzle***



The Volcano Brothers
Light Of The Hilo Moon

It's refreshing to find A-list session musicians playing for sheer enjoyment – no clock, no red light. Like the Time Jumpers playing Western swing with sometime-members Vince Gill and Paul Franklin. Some of Nashville's best comprise the Volcano Brothers, a quintet is dedicated to jazzy pre-WWII Hawaiian music – and it's easy to see why it was all the rage in the '20s and '30s.

Leader Steve Dawson's slide darts over a National Tricone resophonic and koa Weissenborn, with Fats Kaplin on ukulele and fiddle, Andy Reiss on archtop guitar, Richard Bennett on ukulele, and Dave Jacques on upright bass. Jim Hoke guests a clarinet/horn section on "Swingin' In a Hammock." All acoustic, their debut was recorded live in mono at Dawson's home studio with ribbon microphones, using no headphones or isolation.

In lesser hands, such a project might drown in formaldehyde or be reduced to nostalgic kitsch. Instead, the Brothers breathe life into the 100-year-old form. They also extend the repertoire, with originals by Dawson ("Kulaniapia Waltz"), Kaplin ("Stompin' The Uke"), and Jacques ("My Puako Paradise") sitting comfortably alongside the George and Ira Gershwin standard "Fascinating Rhythm" and Irving Berlin's "An Orange Grove In California." ***– Dan Forte***

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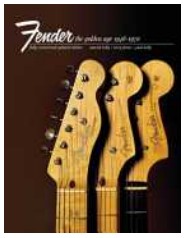

Martin Kelly, Terry Foster, Paul Kelly
Fender: The Golden Age 1946-1970

There are a million books on Fender history, but this revised tome is hard to resist. There is solid research, plus lavish photos of gear – vintage Fender guitars, amps, and basses along with tweed cases, steels, electric mandolins, advertisements, catalogs, and press photos of bygone guitar heroes like Buddy Merrill, Jimmy Bryant, and Johnny Meeks of the Blue Caps.

The hardcover starts with primordial lap steels and amplifiers of the 1940s, when Leo ran the Fender Radio Service shop on South Spadra Avenue in Fullerton (between a Hudson auto dealership and Kelvinator appliance store). The earliest Esquires and Broadcaster/Telecaster prototypes are well-covered, and there are Stratocasters aplenty, including a rare prototype onstage. Look for basses and offsets (in custom colors), but also groovy Fender acoustic guitars and 12-strings of the '60s. A particularly interesting image shows young John Paul Jones of Led Zeppelin playing a Fender V, an obscure five-string bass from the late '60s.

Keb 'Mo: Rachel Deeb.

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Del Rey

INDEPENDENT ECLECTICS

By Dan Forte

Independent eclectics or eclectic independents? Each artist covered this month embraces a wide-angle stylistic scope. Perhaps more important, they are self-contained cottage industries, releasing music without major-label backing.

That's not something consumers always consider when purchasing a CD or listening online, but every step in putting music out into the world – arrangements, bandmates, engineers, studio time, artwork, pressing, promoting, shipping – costs money. All the more reason to doff my trucker cap to this trio of guitarists.

Since 1985's *High Society*, **Del Rey** has released 18 solo albums, give or take, in addition to duo efforts with Steve James and Suzy Thompson. *Music For Dog Lovers Only* is subtitled "Jazz and Jive For Dogs," and its cover art is a nifty take on Jackie Gleason's well-known easy-listening LP from 1953, *Music For Lovers Only*.

The 66-year-old has also released instructional DVD courses on fingerpicking and boogie-woogie guitar, ukulele, and the music of Memphis Minnie. Accompaniment on some tracks comes courtesy Matt Weiner on upright bass and tenor guitar, and Jacob Rex Zimmerman on clarinet and saxophone, but her Ron Phillips-made steel-body guitar and ukulele do the heavy lifting. In addition to a great rendition of the Rodgers and Hart standard "This Can't Be Love," the canine theme extends from Hank Williams' "Move It On Over" ("There's a new dog moving in") to Rufus Thomas' "Walking the Dog" and "Hello, Doggie" (er, Dolly).

On her originals, Del Rey has the ability to make intricate runs sound effortless, much like her nonchalant vocal delivery belies top-drawer pipes. "Camouflage One Step" is a ukulele duet with bowed bass, while "Pushing The Bowl Around" is reminiscent of the days when cartoons featured Cab Calloway music. Having lectured and curated exhibits on female guitarists, she is carrying on the tradition of greats like Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Maybelle Carter, and Mary Osborne.

To say **Skip Heller** has worn a few hats is the definition of understatement. The 61-year-old grew up in Philly and absorbed its teeming jazz scene before moving to Los Angeles. In addition to a dozen-plus solo albums, he produced Ray Campi, a John Hartford retrospective, and a cast of Philadelphia females interpreting Captain Beefheart. He has also annotated releases ranging from smooth-jazzer David Sanborn to the country-gospel hit-making Oak Ridge Boys. His 2002 compilation was titled *Career Suicide*.

Far from a dilettante, Heller has dipped his headstock into organ-jazz, rockabilly, bluegrass, noir soundtracks, and (as on his new *Hypnocoin*) exotica with his percussion-packed band Voodoo Five. John McDuffie's pedal-steel and Heller's electric are understated on the Mickey & Sylvia ballad "Dearest" (covered by Buddy Holly), while vocalist Lena Marie Cardinale channels Sumac on Nino Rota's "Faccette Scintillanti," featuring Heller on baritone guitar amidst flute and vibraphone. Adding to the list are "I Just Don't Understand," from Ann-Margret's early career, the theme song to Russ Meyer's *Faster Pussycat, Kill! Kill!*, Georgie Fame's claim to British Invasion glory via Lambert, Hendricks & Ross, "Yeh, Yeh," and tributes to pachanga star Eddie Palmieri and jazz/pop pianist Ahmad Jamal.

Throughout, Heller's guitaring is melodic, his arranging skills enviable. There's no telling where his tastes and talent will take him, but hopefully he'll stay still long enough to mine Voodoo Five some more.

Brazilian guitarist **João Erbetta** came to my attention in 2009, by way of his instrumental album, *Guitar Bizarre, Vol. 1*. When everyone else was aping Dick Dale, his touchstones were people like Al Caiola, George Barnes, and Les Paul. I soon discovered he was a prolific producer and composer while also being singer/guitarist in the Brazilian cult band Los Pirata and later scored the Netflix series "Girls From Ipanema." In 2010, he was a member of L.A.'s Panamericans, whose self-titled CD featured drummer Pete Curry, bassist Rob Douglas, guitarist Eddie Angel, and saxophonist Ron Dziubla.

As usual, the 54-year-old handles production, writing, engineering, and most instruments on *Love Letters*, singing nine songs in English, four in Portuguese. "My Time At Night" has the feel of a standard, with Dutch singer Koosje Sekreve sharing vocal duties and Erbetta delivering a sweet, jazzy solo, with distant lap-steel in the background. "Another Dream" features Kobus Assinck's cello, and "What We Need" layers swirling guitars. The set closes with the succinct "In My Dreams," where he duets on two gut-strings.

They say music is its own reward, and I couldn't agree more. But it's nice when it can also pay the bills. Consider this my less-than-subtle nudge to check out these multitaskers.

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Del Rey: Sage Lee.

Fender: The Golden Age winds down in 1970, as mass-production and corporate CBS culture pervaded Fender, but this book celebrates the company's glory days. Bonus tip: if you haven't snagged yourself a holiday gift yet, this could be it. **– *Pete Prown***



Joanna Connor Band
Live On 11/11

Recorded at The Fallout Shelter in Norwood, Massachusetts, *Live on 11/11* documents the miles, years, and chops Joanna Connor has acquired over a 36-year career.

Affectionately called the Queen of Blues-Rock Guitar, Connor ignites the crowd with sweat and frenzy with the funky classics "Cissy Strut" and "Shake Your Money Maker." Growling power chords, funky single-note lines, jazzy embellishments, and searing slide guitar take listeners on a musical voyage. Dynamics are key as the band modulates from furious raw power to pin-drop volume levels. Connor continues weaving her guitar-gonzo spell with "The Sky is Crying," and her personal take on the crowd favorite "Further On Up the Road." Fretboard pyro with sparks fly alongside a wicked keyboard solo by Dan Souvigny.

The band grooves deep with the gospel-tinged funkiness of "Are You Going With Me," while Connor increases the heat on "Magic Sam Boogie" and the album's closer, "When the Levee Breaks." Pentatonic artistry collides with '80s rock licks, fretboard harmonics, and haunting volume swells. In all, *Live On 11/11* is a feast for blues-rock guitar lovers. **– *Oscar Jordan***



Hackett & Rothery
The Roaring Waves

The kind of collaboration craved by fans of progressive rock, this all-instrumental album by Steve Hackett (Genesis, 1971-'77) and Marillion guitarist Steve Rothery was more than eight years in the making. Heavily inspired by the sea, the bulk of *The Roaring Waves* is cinematically ambient in scope and sound, with a prog/new-age sweep that feels like a film score. Bassist/keyboardist Riccardo Romano and drummers Daniele Pomo and Leon Parr provide a firm foundation, letting guitars soar.

"The Storm" is appropriately eerie, with slow guitar melodies and rumbling drums. Glossy slide and bright, resonant guitars light up "Red Dragon." Hackett's virtuosic classical guitar opens the title track before keyboards and clean electric guitar build up the layered sound. The liquid guitars of the ethereal "K-129" are superb, while scratchy keyboard percussion backing adds dramatic tension. Cosmic guitar sounds permeate "The Black Sea," which at times has a distinct Pink Floyd feel. "Pacific Coast Highway" is a rockin' jam (with Rothery's bendy leads and Hackett's bluesy harp) that departs from the overall theme.

The prog-rock landscape is littered with short-lived projects, but let's hope Hackett and Rothery keep developing this duo soundscape. **– *Bret Adams***



Steve Vai and Joe Satriani.



Joe Satriani & Steve Vai
SatchVai: The Sea of Emotion, Part 1

This collaboration not only celebrates the 50-year friendship between Joe Satriani and Steve Vai, but also offers compelling music. Combining a headlining world tour and music video directed by Joe's son, ZZ Satriani, *The Sea of Emotion* captures the idiosyncratic trademarks that distinguish these shred giants from the '80s multitudes. While fans know what they're in for, multiply it by two – and then some.

"Mayhem" is a bombastic production flex with layered and harmonized two-handed tapping, massive power chording, and bodacious soloing. The production is pristine and dense; "Bronco Freight Train" features a stunning Satch slide solo and hip Whammy pedal harmonizations. "Old Sins Have Long Shadows" echoes the groovy mid-period Satch with expressive melody lines and emotive leads.

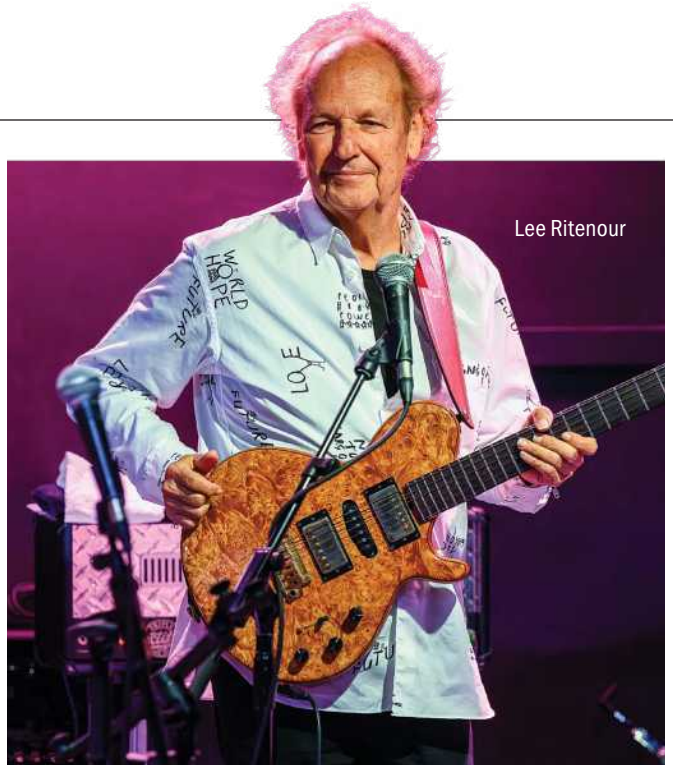
The title track is separated into three parts. Part One is a muscular ballad featuring over-the-top leads. Part Two begins as an acoustic duet that morphs into a lyrical movement with modal world-music flourishes. Part Three, titled "Reflections On a Year and a Half," takes flight with a complex arrangement, wall-to-wall guitars, and airborne melodies. For those saying rippin' guitar music is on the decline, *The Sea of Emotion* proves otherwise. **– *OJ***



J.P. Soars & Anne Harris
Gypsy Blue Revue

Ever imagine Howlin' Wolf backed by the Clinch Mountain Boys, or Django Reinhardt jamming a mambo with Tito Puente? Well, J.P. Soars did. Typically placed in the blues bag, his eighth solo album has the Arkansas-bred, Florida-based leader on acoustic and electric six-strings, Dobro, lap-steel, and dulcimer teaming with violinist Anne Har-

Joe Satriani/Steve Vai: Larry DiMarzio


Lee Ritenour

ris, who is classically trained. Not surprisingly, eclecticism is the order of the day.

The instrumental "Go With The Flow" features octave runs over Gene Krupa-esque jungle drums. On a cover of Django's "Minor Blues," Harris recalls Reinhardt's partner, Stéphane Grappelli. Tom Waits would be at home on "Viper." The closer is an 18-minute slide tour de force on cigar-box guitar, hitting on Indian music, psychedelia, "Third Stone From The Sun," and "Norwegian Wood," with an energetic turn by drummer Chris Peet.

Are Soars and Harris mixing-and-matching genres – or inventing a new one? "Gypsy Blue" is as apt a monicker as any. **– *DF***



Lee Ritenour
Live at Ronnie Scott's

L.A. ace Lee Ritenour is captured onstage at Scott's London jazz club, playing in the panoply of styles he has delivered for 50-plus years. Ritenour originally blasted out of L.A.'s studios, coinciding with jazz-rock fusion, but there's been so much more: rock, pop, funk, and his beloved South American sounds. Sure, he rode the smooth-jazz bus for too long, but on this live set it all comes together in a magnificent performance.

The opener, "Cravo E Canela," is wonderfully sophisticated Latin-jazz, with Rit on nylon-string amidst vocals and stunning grooves. From 1977, "Captain Fingers" remains a fusion anthem – a blend of funk-jazz, deep chops, and overdrive tone – he burns with fast ensemble runs and bottleneck. "For the Palms" has that soft-and-silky sound (think Fourplay), while "Meu Samba Torto" brings a divine Brazilian vibe. "The Village" is slow-burn funk with Lee on electric – tasty, quick, and masterful – along with a killer bass break by Munir Hossn, whose work througout the album is insanely good.

Now 74, Ritenour is a master of the craft, no longer having to shred like Captain Fingers. This album is all about taste, style, and the joy of living inside his own music. **– *PP* VG**

Lee Ritenour: Kevin Nixon.

extra EXTRA



JOE BONAMASSA
The Spirit of Rory Live From Cork

Celebrating the music of Rory Gallagher is the perfect excuse for Joe Bonamassa to strap on a Stratocaster and play guitar like his hair is on fire. Ripping through 17 Gallagher classics including "A Million Miles Away," "Bad Penny," "Bullfrog Blues," and "Cradle Rock." The band is spot-on, and Bonamassa offers a high-voltage tribute to the Irish hero. **– *OJ***



ELI PAPERBOY REED
Getting There

Return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear when the dulcet sounds of soul, country, and early gospel all marinated together – now heard in Reed's crafty guitar parts, tight horn arrangements, and wafting pedal steel. Highlights include the inspired duet "Love You More" featuring Zaniah, "How Can I Forget," and countrified "Asking for a Friend." **– *OJ***



BOILED IN LEAD
King Of the Dogwoods

Bassist Drew Miller founded this Minnesota Celtic quartet in 1983 with singer/guitarist Todd Menton joining soon after. Its stylistic range and instrumental prowess – from the Serbian folk song "Adje Jano" to Haley Olson's brisk fiddle instrumental, "Fast Reels" – belies their punk tag. After the herky-jerky "Bučimiš" (in 15-something time), the infectious "Je T'aime, Helena" will satisfy Cajun dancers. **– *DF***



RON CARTER & YOTAM SILBERSTEIN
Duets

Silberstein, whose previous solo albums revealed an articulate, harmonically sophisticated player with a sensitive touch, teams with 89-year-old bassist Carter. In the tradition of Carter's past collaborations with the late Jim Hall, he provides solid accompaniment as Silberstein spins sinuous lines on the funky "Blues for Brother Malone," a tribute to the late Russell Malone, and the moody, Latin "Nova Illusao." **– *RK***



ASIA
Indigo

Original keyboardist Geoff Downes continues with the first Asia studio album featuring guitarist John Mitchell, drummer Virgil Donati, and vocalist/bassist Harry Whitley. The band's patented prog-pop style is here ("Night and Day"), yet *Indigo* leans heavily on midtempo songs. Mitchell launches quality solos and riffs throughout and there's admirable interaction with Downes. The iconic Steve Howe guests on acoustic for "Chesapeake Bay." **– *BA***



CARL VERHEYEN
Future Promise

The Supertramp sideman is one of the tastiest cats around, even giving lessons to John Fogerty. His latest showcases songwriting and singing, but there's plenty of stunning six-string. "Future Promise" is funk that includes a lead that would make Jeff Beck smile. Check out his cover of "Take the Long Way Home" – Carl's astounding solo will leave you on the floor. **– *PP***

VG APPROVED GEAR

BATTLE AXE

Guild's S-300 Deluxe

In the late '70s, the solidbody universe was pivoting toward new ideas and inspirations, as bands like Van Halen, Aerosmith, Heart, and Queen flooded charts and coliseums. One byproduct was the rise of pointy, asymmetrical guitar shapes like the B.C. Rich Mockingbird, Ibanez Iceman, and Guild's Rhode Island-built S-300. Shaped like a battle axe, with its curved bottom edge, the original wasn't a smash but was nonetheless part of the era's stylistic shift. Now, it has been reissued as an affordable import.

As with many guitars of the late '70s/early '80s, the goal was to build a better mousetrap or, more to the point, a better Gibson. The new S-300 Deluxe retains plenty of Kalamazoo-inspired traits like a solid mahogany body and set neck, 22-fret rosewood fretboard (12.5" radius), 24.75" scale, and two humbuckers controlled by a pair of Volume and Tone tophat knobs. The era also marked the beginnings of the "mod" craze, and the S-300 has a phase toggle to offer a nasally, Strat-flavored tone. Some old S-300s had DiMarzios, but this one comes with Guild HB-2+ humbuckers with nickel covers. The headstock displays Guild's elegant peak/Chesterfield logo and open-gear Grover tuners, while the other end sports a tune-o-matic bridge and compensated tailpiece with a dramatic angle that suggests hard rock (the target demographic for the original S-300).

Price: $799.99
www.guildguitars.com

In hand, the S-300 Deluxe balances surprisingly well on the lap and, better still, our tester (in Neptune Blue Metallic) only weighed about six pounds, 13 ounces – similar to an SG. The "vintage soft U" neck carve and broad fretboard are reminiscent of a Les Paul and, overall, plays well.

Plugged into a Focusrite Scarlett recording interface and iMac rig, the Guild rocked hard clean or dirty, while the phase switch added a *subtle* dash of Leo tone. What makes the S-300 Deluxe worthy of your time is that it's a well-made import at a great price and speaks to the sounds of arena rock from 50 years past. In the right hands, this axe will speak to today's rockers just as loudly. **– Pete Prown**





Price: $349 www.crazytubecircuits.com

GREEK GOD

Crazy Tube Circuits' White Whale Junior

We're seeing more cool pedals from Europe, and the Crazy Tube Circuit (CTC) White Whale Junior is a good example. A genuine analog spring reverb and tremolo pedal made in Greece, it's designed to offer the real-deal feel of a Fender brownface or blackface circuit, but on the floor.

A smaller version of CTC's White Whale, the Junior has simple controls for its reverb and tremolo functions; for 'verb, you have an independent Volume and Dwell, while tremolo gets Volume, Intensity, and Speed (indicated with a blinking LED). Master controls for each side are Mix and Tone, plus sturdy footswitches for each effect in its oversized box.

Using a '75 Strat into a recording setup, the White Whale Junior delivered clear and definite vintage vibe. While digital pedals and emulations might be cleaner and more-precise, they can't match the physics of electricity pushing through analog circuits. Here, the tremolo was spot-on, from slow-and-warbly to quicker pulsations, while the reverb was "Pipeline" ready. A secret feature is that the Volume knobs are also preamps, so you can smack the signal to get natural overdrive.

All told, the Crazy Tube Circuits' White Whale Junior is absurdly cool, and delivers something you won't get from a digital box or software. You can even tap it with your foot to make the springs clank together. *That* is old-school! **– Pete Prown**



CRANK IT DOWN

The Dr Z Reactive Reducer

Over the couple of decades they've been on the market, Dr Z's Z-Brake and Brake Lite have won many fans for their ability to lower a tube amp's volume without impeding tone, but the high-quality resistive elements used in these designs have become exponentially more expensive recently (if they can be found at all). Enter Dr Z's Reactive Reducer, a new design that instead uses a reactive load – that is, one that interacts with your playing touch and the amp's dynamics more like an actual speaker does – to knock down amp volume in three switchable increments.

Price: $299
www.drzamps.com

Built into a rugged metal box measuring 6.75" x 5" x 4" and weighing around two pounds, it's optimized for 8-ohm loads but also works fine with four and 16 ohms, and can handle amp outputs of up to 50 watts. In addition to the three-way switch for –3dB, –11dB, and –18dB reductions, it carries a high-quality toggle switch to bypass the attenuator, sending your amp's full signal to the speaker(s). An entirely passive unit, it simply connects your amp's speaker/speaker out or cab's connection where indicated.

Tested between a '65 Fender Tremolux, Matchless Spitfire, and a Dr Z Z28 (with their respective speakers), it was not only an effective means of volume reduction, but stayed relatively responsive and transparent compared to many other attenuators on the market. It went a long way toward reducing that oft-perceived "disconnect" between fingers and speaker that some resistive attenuators induce, while simply making it easier to dial in volume levels to the room or situation at hand.

Mike Zaite (a.k.a. Dr. Z), designed it with these applications in mind and explains that –3dB is the "sound guy setting" that drops stage volume just enough to make a front-of-house mixer happy. Going further, he says the –11dB switch is the "studio and restaurant, prayer and worship setting," and –18dB is the lowest setting achievable that still retains tone.

All in all, that nails it, and the end result is a simple, effective, affordable attenuator that a lot of players will dig. ***– Dave Hunter***

GEARIN' UP



CORT CR300MT

Cort's CR300MT has a mahogany body finished in Black Satin and dressed with white-and-black binding, set mahogany neck with 24.75" scale, and a Micarta fretboard with 12" radius and 24 frets. Pickups are EMG 81 and 60 actives with individual Volume and Tone knobs and a three-way toggle. Other features include Grover Rotomatic tuners, Tune-O-Matic-style bridge, and stop tailpiece.



FENDER JOHN OSBORNE TELECASTER PICKUPS

Fender's John Osborne Signature Telecaster Pickups use beveled Alnico V magnets wound with Formvar wire, along with flush-mount polepieces, cloth wire, and open-coil fiber bobbins.



SPECTOR EURO 4 REX BROWN

Spector's Euro 4 Rex Brown signature bass has a flame-maple top on empress-wood body wings finished in Desert Gold. Its through neck is three-piece maple carved to Brown's profile with Indian rosewood fretboard and a brass nut. Electronics are EMG PJ-X pickups with TonePump active preamp, which includes a rear trim pot. Other details include smoke crown inlays and gold hardware.

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



DIRT BIKE

The Carr Trail Rider 1x12 Combo

North Carolina-based amp maker Steve Carr once explained his "rule of 35" – that it's easier to sell anything under 35 pounds or 35 watts – and the new Trail Rider is a law-abiding citizen for sure. Measuring 20.5" x 15.75" x 9" and weighing a mere 28 pounds, the 1x12" combo packs a feature set intended for home, studio, and smaller clubs, and is well suited to today's "less is more" mindset at every turn. Delivering five watts from a single EL84 output tube (or 1.2 watts to 0 with the built-in attenuator engaged) pumping a Celestion A-Type speaker, the Trail Rider has two 12AX7s and one 12DW7 in the preamp and reverb stages plus solid-state rectification. Controls include Volume, Treble, Bass, and Reverb, plus a two-position T57/V67 switch that re-voices the amp between tweed- and Vox-like tones, respectively.

Construction is immaculate, including the chassis innards, which feature high-end capacitors, carbon-comp resistors, and French polypropylene electrolytic caps in a performance-art ballet of point-to-point wiring. Outside, the look hits Carr's retro-hip styling beautifully, with our example covered in two-tone gray and pink Tolex complemented by a white cartoon-font control panel with unique push-button "Go" switch for powering up, something we've not seen before.

Price: $2,990
www.carramps.com

Set for clean tones with a Telecaster and ES-335, the Trail Rider presented loads of chime and sparkle as might be expected from the design, yet alongside a fullness of body that prevented it from being overly bright or harsh. At edge-of-breakup settings it displays stunningly good dynamics that enable great pick control and encourage very expressive playing. Overall, we don't recall playing a single-ended amp with one EL84 that has delivered this much muscle and grunt – which isn't to say overdrive as such (though that's there when you want it), but sheer girth and solidity of tone. Thanks to the T57/V67 switch there's an exceptionally broad range of sounds from its mere three controls, with creamier midrange grunt in the former and more scoop and bite in the latter. And when it does overdrive, it's a lush and multi-dimensional lead tone. Add rich spring reverb and the ability to dial it all down to genuine homestead volumes and it's another winner from this inspiring maker. ***– Dave Hunter***







RUBY TUESDAY

Blackstar's DA5 Doug Aldrich Signature Combo

Throughout his work with Whitesnake, Dio, The Dead Daisies, and others, Doug Aldrich has been known for the searing, muscular tone he squeezes from his Blackstar DA100. The DA5 Doug Aldrich Signature combo brings his sound to the masses in a compact five-watt 1x12" that packs a front end patterned after its big brother, plus a host of features that suit it to home, studio, and smaller venues.

The DA5 uses one 12AX7 (a.k.a. ECC83) tube drive stage in the preamp and a second preamp tube (12BH7) as a push/pull output stage. Other solid-state elements come into play to achieve its full two-channel clean/lead performance, and the reverb is digital. Controls include Volume and Tone for the Clean channel with a switch for boost, along with Gain, Volume, two-way voicing switch, Bass, Middle, Treble, ISF (Infinite Shape Feature) for the Lead, and Reverb. A built-in attenuator can reduce output to a half watt.

Extras include a buffered effects loop, built-in CabRig with three onboard speaker/cab sims (more are available using Blackstar's editing software), XLR output, internal load for silent-speaker or headphone use, and a USB-C output for direct-to-DAW recording. It's all covered in Aldrich's preferred Ruby vinyl.

Price: $849
www.blackstaramps.com

Tested with a Les Paul and a Telecaster, the DA5 delivered major high-gain sizzle and singing sustain from its Lead channel, with a surprising amount of girth for an amp this size, likely aided by the deep cab and Custom Aldrich 12" speaker. Between the voicing switch's bump in saturation, the three-band EQ, and the ISF (effectively an American-to-British sweep) there's an abundance of moods available in what proves a convincing modern-rock channel for such a small amp. The Clean channel in such amps can sometimes feel like an afterthought, but this one acquits itself well, seeming primed for power-balladry with a little chorus and delay in the loop. It can take some adjusting to keep Clean output levels in line with the Lead's, and the channel can be a little "barky" and strident when hit hard, but it does the job well. Add the handy onboard CabRig for DAW or headphone practice, and ultimately the DA5 is a fun and versatile little rock monster for well shy of a grand. – ***Dave Hunter*** VG



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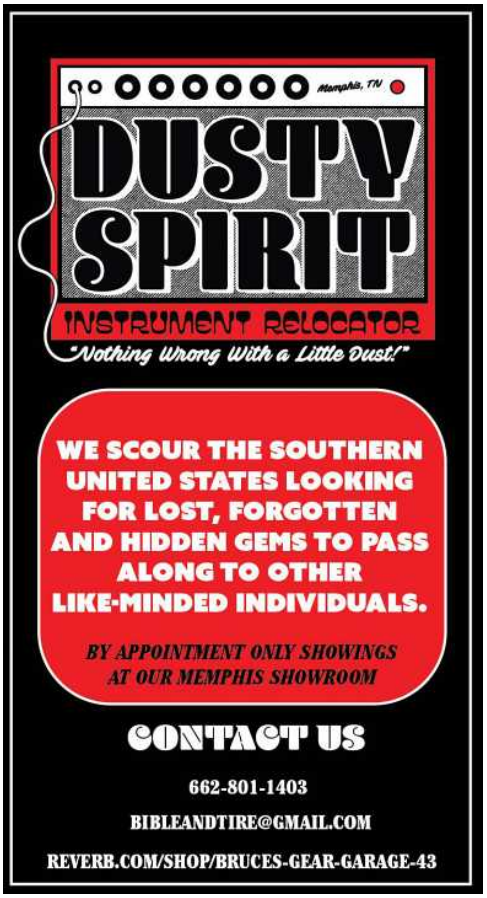
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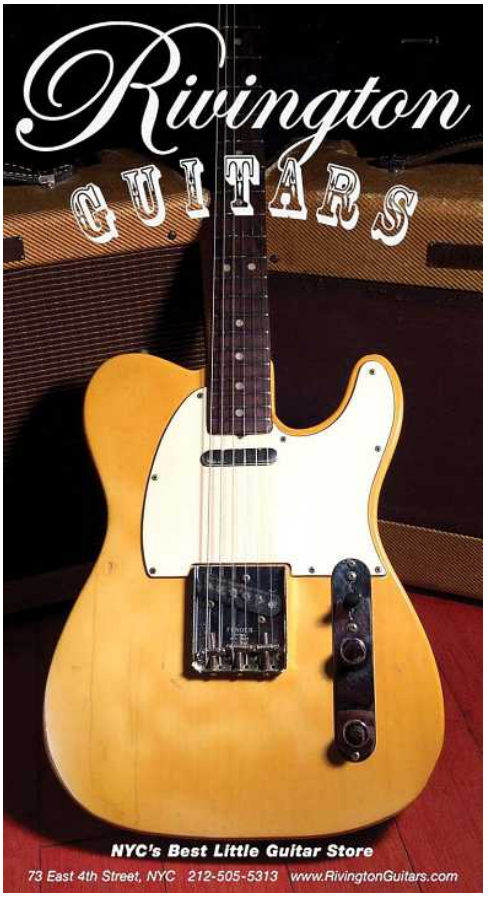
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READERS Gallery

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01 Mike Slubowski returns to the Gallery with the Gibson ES-335 portion of his collection. Arranged chronologically from left, they are a '58, two '59s, a '60, '61, '62, '63, and two '64s.

02 Scott Mishoe's early-'30s Gibson L-0 has been in his family for generations and, before he got it in 2025, had been tucked in a closet since 1999. Having spent its life in the dry Colorado air, it had a few cracks along with a small hole. With the help of two luthiers (who believe its non-original pickguard was added in the '50s), he's returning it to playability.

03 Reader Don Thomas' collection includes an array of modern "vintage" bits including (from left) an Epiphone "Bats in Flight" Les Paul, Epi Les Paul Custom, Epi Mary Ford Les Paul Custom, Gibson '60s Standard, a Peter Green "Greeny" Standard, Epi '62 ES-335 Bonamassa, and an all-gold Fender Tele Deluxe.

04 Longtime subscriber Richard Johnson's collection includes this '59 Martin D-18, '71 Guild D-25, early-'60s Orlando koa uke, '74 Guild F-212, '72 Guild D-50, and '69 Silvertone.

05 As VP/GM at Rickenbacker from 1986 to '91, Derek Davis helped develop the limited edition 370-12RM Roger McGuinn, and bought the last one for himself. "I asked factory manager Richard Burke to select the wood, and he picked a beautiful birdseye maple," he said. "I've had it in my collection since the '80s, and it's a great guitar."

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