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Interactive Magazine

Live in the Harmony Hut studio

EXCLUSIVE Andy James Steve Vai style session

REVIEWS

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issue 12

The Aristocrats & Guthrie Govan - Live on stage

Marshall factory tour + interviews!

An Ibanez Steve Vai JEM70V!

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04

GET IN TOUCH

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As his new CD The Story Of Light sets the flame burning again, iGuitar was privileged to meet the legendary Steve Vai in his 'Harmony Hut' home studio. Stuart Bull asks the questions, while Levi Clay offers his thoughts on one of Rock's greatest guitarists.

There are few guitar players with genuine cult status. Most guitarists little deeper and see what all the fuss is agree that Hendrix was the icon of the about. 1960s and in the '70s we were spoiled Steve Vai was born on June 6th, 1960, for choice, while in the '80s you didn't in Long Island, New York. As a young get much bigger than Van Halen. In the child he had the perfect combination '90s, however, grunge had taken hold of exposure to music along with a deep and pushed guitar into a dark dusty fascination with what he was hearing. cupboard, but there were some names The defining detail here is how broad who still managed to keep the torch the young Steve's musical palette was; alive for fans of instrumental guitar and being as drawn into Bernstein's music shred. Among that handful, Steve Vai for West Side Story just as much is undoubtedly one of greatest, with as Hendrix and Zeppelin. Looking

[...>]

Live in the Harmony Hut



a pedigree like no other - so let's dig a



back Steve recalls, "When I first heard Led Zeppelin II for the first time, it was a changing point in my life. I just immediately thought that Jimmy Page was the coolest thing there ever was." This was all before Steve even turned 10, years before he even picked-up a guitar. Around this time Steve began toying with a spinet organ and even getting relatively serious on the accordion, but as he says, "The accordion is not the coolest instrument in the world if you want to be a rock-and-roll guy, and I always wanted to be a guitar player".

When Steve was about 13 he wanted to get deeper and deeper into the Rock guitar thing, so armed with a guitar and a packet of strings he headed off to guitar lessons with none other than Joe Satriani. Joe tells it how it was:



"I started at the very beginning, you know, this is an E chord", and it was these lessons along with intensive theory classes with Bill Wescott that would lay the foundations for what Steve would go on to become. There was a desire to compose and "understand the dots" but as Rock music and progressive bands, in particular, were creeping into his classical compositional tasks, and while he could play songs by Hendrix and Page, he was also composing for small orchestral ensembles.

When reaching the end of his teens Steve attended the world renowned Berklee College of Music (other notable students include Pat Metheny, John Scofield and John Petrucci). It's well documented just how seriously Steve took this, developing a deep







understanding of reading, transcribing, arranging and composing; all the while adhering to his strict "10 hour workout" which helped Vai develop dexterity, technique, aural skills and stamina. This was all hard work and dedication, in fact Steve has often said that he was very unnatural on the guitar and that 90% of everything he has now has come from work.

It was actually this more academic side that landed Steve his first big break in the music industry when he transcribed Frank Zappa's The Black Page and sent it to the great man, hoping to find a job. Zappa as so impressed that by 1980 Vai had become a fully fledged member of the band. There were some monumental things Vai did with Zappa's band, including inviting members of the audience to bring any piece of music to the show, saying he could sightread it; but the scariest moment was undoubtedly The Jazz Discharge Party Hats, where Vai transcribed and played a freetime Jazz poem that Frank had spoken previously.

After the Zappa project, Vai went on to record his first solo album Flex-Able, as well as recording a couple of albums, including Disturbing the Peace with Alcatrazz and filling the shoes of Swedish virtuoso Yngwie J. Malmsteen. However, these were all small projects compared to the critical acclaim that was heading Steve's way as part of David Lee Roth's (Ex Van Halen) Eat 'em and Smile band. During this stint, Vai got to see the world and become a fixture of the Rock guitar scene - and that's before we take into account the impact of songs like Yankee Rose, Shyboy and the follow-up album, Skyscraper's Just like Paradise. There were few Rock fans of the day who didn't hear Steve Vai's instantly recognizable style, and if the DLR connection wasn't enough, then being drafted into Whitesnake to record 1989's Slip of

© Photography by Kim Waller

[...>]



STORY OF LIGH "You can beat the Mutha Fu*#in piss out of them and they still come back in tune, just a little meaner.

AVAILABLE AUGUST

12













the Tongue certainly did the trick and set the perfect platform for Steve to record his breakthrough solo record, 1990's Passion and Warfare.

This record is essential listening, and should be in every guitar fan's CD collection. It really covers everything Vai is about, from Rock tunes like Erotic Nightmares and The Audience is Listening, to powerful ballads like Blue Powder and For the Love of God and that's before listening to the experimental Ballerina 12/24 and ethereal Alien Water Kiss. At times this album might sound dated and overly flamboyant, but it's still an excellent slice of guitar wizardry and to this day, an inspiration to guitarists. In fact there are those who consider it to be the greatest guitar album of all time. Either way, it was to be Vai's first Grammy nomination, and although he didn't win with it, he would go on to be nominated for ten more, winning three of them.

Gear-wise Vai really came to rest around this time, after having played a multitude of guitars and amps his, now legendary, relationship with Ibanez guitars was established as he helped to design both the Universe seven-string and the hugely popular JEM. These guitars were just perfect for pulling off all of Steve's circus tricks, featuring a locking Floyd Rose tremolo capable of huge pull ups due to an especially deep recess, 24 frets with scalloping on the top few for grip, a lavish set of inlays and the infamous "monkeygrip" cut in the body. To come close to approximating this set-up, you're looking for a modern Rock guitar with a Floyd Rose and some exceptionally high output humbuckers. Vai's two most used axes are named "Flo" and "Evo", though he's played a huge collection of swirls, mirrored JEMs and even plexiglass guitars. There are probably quite a few guitars that would do the trick, but why bother to look past Ibanez, when it's 'the real thing' for Vai fans? And if a budget approach is your goal, we even have a brand new sort-of budget signature model reviewed in this very issue - not to mention the chance to win one in our free entry competition!

For amps, Steve has played everything from Marshall to Bogner, but over the last 20 years he has had three signature amps released by Carvin, these are certainly worth a look as they give you an instant Vai tone at an unbeatable price. When it comes to



Steve Vai - The Interview Part 3

pedals he has various signature pieces of gear, including a wah (check out our review <u>here</u>), volume, and the Jemini distortion (based on an Ibanez tubescreamer and a Robert Keely modified BOSS DS1). Steve has also use a huge list of rack gear over the years, from Eventide to TC electronics and most recently Fractal Audio's fantastic Axe FX (Check out Tom Quayle's definitive review <u>here</u>.

If you want to get close to Steve's sound on a budget, I'd recommend a BOSS DS1, some form of delay, a wah pedal and a pitch shifter/whammy pedal.

As you'll see from Andy James' video lesson in this issue, Steve Vai is incredibly wellversed in virtually every aspect of Rock guitar technique, from his circular vibrato to flashy whammy bar antics. He's well respected for his slippery legato runs, blistering alternate picking passages, intervalic tapping ideas and



sweep picking unlike that you often see from neoclassical shredders.

These are all integrated into one instantly identifiable style and even if you're lucky enough to acquire a great Steve Vai tone, it's very possible that you could spend a lifetime learning to come close to actually playing like the man!

Since Passion, Steve has gone on to record over ten more CDs of original music, from the vocal album Sex & Religion, with Strapping Young Lad frontman Devin Townsend, to Alive in an Ultra World, a live album where Steve composed an original

piece of music for each country he visited. There are epic records, like Fire Garden and artist albums like Sound Theories Vol. I & II, where Vai finally had his dreams realised, having his orchestral compositions played publicly. There really is a rich discography to his name and that overlooks the work he has done in films and games. In fact, there are few scenes as universally enjoyed as Steve's appearance in the '80s Blues flick Crossroads, in the words of Papa Legba: "He's a real good gi-tar player, name of Jack Butler"; essential viewing for guitar fans! Vai's uniquely individual voice also makes him one of the most in demand guest soloists too, so in recent years Steve has appeared on CDs with









John 5, Meatloaf, Orianthi and Mike Stern.

Although he's well respected for it, it's not just as a composer that Steve shines though. For me he's one of those guitarists who is best heard with the ears and the eyes. He puts on a show and manages to convey additional expression through his facial movements alone. For this reason I can't highly recommend enough his DVDs Live at the Astoria, featuring Tony MacAlpine, Virgil Donati and Billy Sheehan, or the more recent Where the Wild Things Are, featuring violin virtuosos Ann Marie Calhoun, Alex DePue and Aristocrats' bass man, Bryan Beller. The other perfectly valid route to go down is the G3 path where you'll get to see Vai alongside fellow legends such as Joe Satriani, John Petrucci, Eric Johnson, Steve Morse and Yngwie Malmsteen. Live in Denver is a perfect starting point for this adventure, especially if you want to see someone play a triple necked guitar better than us mere mortals play a regular one!

That brings us to now, and after seven years Vai has finally been back in the studio, giving us The Story of Light, released August



14th. Without a doubt, this is Vai on form delivering track after track of expressive Rock guitar. If you're still debating on whether or not to pick it up, give Racing the World a listen and you'll soon be convinced. Tours are planned for both the USA and Europe, giving us all the chance to see someone who really does deserve that much overworked title - a living legend.

Gi

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Just in case you thought the 'supergroup' was a 1960s/70s phenomenon, iGuitar would like to remind you that the idea is very much alive and kicking today - and never more so than with the Aristocrats, with guitar duties held down by the astonishing Guthrie Govan! We're proud to bring you world exclusive footage of the band live on stage and, just to whet your appetites, **Levi Clay** offers his thoughts as to why you really do have to stand in awe of this latest example of transatlantic alchemy



FEATURES_THE ARISTOCRATS

It seems as the months go by we have the pleasure of covering more and more supergroups here at iGuitar, from Joe Satriani's Chickenfoot to Steve Morse with Flying Colours. It's always a pleasure to listen to bands of this calibre as you know you're going to be getting the absolute cream of the crop, all on one recording, and no band exemplifies this as well as the Aristocrats.

Born completely by chance at the winter NAMM show's Anaheim Bass Bash 2011; Bryan Beller and Marco Minnemann were set to play a one off show with fusion master Greg Howe, but when Greg sadly had to pull out the first guy he recommended was UK guitar star Guthrie Govan. After just one rehearsal and the gig the band left the stage reeling from their chemistry, not only did they groove well, but they had an almost telepathic level of communication, making the improvisational elements of the show so seemless, the uninitiated could mistake them for rehearsed. The moment they left the stage Guthrie remembers saying "This is working. We should record this."

As our regular readers will know, Guthrie is very much a part of the iGuitar family,



The Aristocrats Live Performance - Bad Asteroid



and there's very little that needs to be said here about him. His combination of flawless technical prowess and unparalleled musicality makes him, what many consider to be, the perfect modern guitar hero. Influence wise, everyone is fair game for Guthrie; from Joe Pass to Yngwie Malmsteen there doesn't seem to be anyone Guthrie hasn't studied in detail. It's this versatility that has made Guthrie one of the go to guys when you want something a little bit special and he's worked with bands ranging from The classic prog rock of Asia to the hip hop grime of Dizzee Rascal.

Bryan Beller may come across as a relative unknown, but in reality the man has a collection of solo albums to his name,



along with some serious sideman projects too. As you will have no doubt spotted from our Steve Vai feature, Bryan has been a long time go to guy for Steve, playing on several albums from "The Ultra Zone" onward. It's highly recommended that you check out Vai's last DVD "Where the Wild Things Are" as Bryan has a killer solo on Freak Show Excess. Bryan has also appeared on the recordings of other legends on the scene including Dweezil Zappa and James LaBrie of Dream Theater. The thing that grabs me about Beller is his mastery of harmony, in fact at times with the Aristocrats he can be spotted playing high register chordal parts just to fill in for the lack of a keyboard in the band.



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The driving force that made this band happen was Ed Yoon of Suhr Guitars.

ARTIST SIGNATURE GUITAR STRING SETS

PAUL ALLENDER - PA10

1111



Marco Minnemann is another one of those instrumentalists who's managed to achieve cult status on their instrument, but also transcend that by being play a key role next to a master of another instrument; of course, this is before you think that Marco has well over 10 of his own albums. He's a seasoned clinician, and the author of some highly respected books including the hugely popular "Extreme Independence".

On the guitar scene Marco has worked with some great players such as Greg Howe and Paul Gilbert. Marco can be seen on Paul's Spaceship Live DVD where he plays an entire show in a spacesuit; one particular highlight comes when Marco drops his stick on Scarified only to watch it bounce around his toms and then caught again, the most impressive of fills!

The driving force that made this band happen was Ed Yoon of Suhr Guitars. for the past few years Yoon has been plugging Guthrie to anyone and everyone for no reason other than being a huge fan. So after many years at Suhr, Ed decided it was time to do something new and suddenly these



[...>]

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MCHAEL AMOTT MAS11



MIKEYDEMUS - MD11



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FEATURES_THE ARISTOCRATS



three musical legends had a manager who could help steer things in the direction the music buying public wanted them, and that was in a studio making a record. We owe Ed a lot!

The resulting album was released in September 2011, recorded over a 5 day period in Chicago, and showcases what this band are all about, a power trio with jazz rock influences playing live off each other. The record sounds very organic, if slightly minimalist due to a lack of keys or guitar overdubs, but this works quite well as you know that what you hear is exactly how the band are going to sound live. The record consists of 9 tunes, three from each member. The key factor is that they're not just a tune written to showcase talent, for example, Sweaty Knockers was penned by Beller with Guthrie in mind "to have fun with", and Guthrie wrote I Want A Parrot just for Bryan to open up on. The album has much more of a Mahavishnu Orchestra vibe than a Joe Satriani thing going on, you're more likely to think of artists like Frank Zappa than anything shreddy and self indulgent, the guys can play, but it's about having fun and making music. Just listen to Flatlands and you realise you're listening to a band who write songs, not a guitar player.



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The Aristocrats Live Performance - Boing!...In The Back

As you can see from our footage taken on the band's recent UK tour, you can hear anything from these guys, Boing!... I'm In The Back opens with some pseudo country picking, and it comes across as fun.

The melody to this song is playful too, then just a few minutes later the song steps down a gear and becomes a sorrowful ballad which Guthrie begins to open up over, to me this is exciting as you don't know what's going to happen, and it's going to be different every night. On the other side of the coin there are songs like Guthrie's Bad Asteroid which has been knocking around in various forms for years, on demos, Asia shows, on Guthrie's solo shows and even popping up on acoustic sets. This feels a lot closer to the

If you haven't seen the Aristocrats yet, you absolutely need to take the chance if it arises

traditional Steve Vai instrumental guitar vibe that a guitar nerd is going to want to see, but in the Aristocrats it becomes something a little more raw and rocky, the band shift seamlessly between the complex unison sections to the jazz improvisations and the result is a joy to behold.

If you haven't seen the Aristocrats yet, you absolutely need to take the chance if it arises, they are without a doubt one of the most exciting acts to launch in recent memory and all we can do to help nurture it is to support them, in return we can hope for many more albums of beautiful jazz rock fusion.

Gi



FEATURES_COMPETITIONS



Ibanez has broken the mould with its new Steve Vai inspired JEM 70V! Reviewed in this issue, alongside the incredibly limited edition EVO-JEM, the 70V manages to get astoundingly close in sound and playability to one of the world's most collectible guitars. And while the JEM 70V isn't exactly cheap, it is still a major triumph for its manufacturer!

fabulous prize!!

model is a superb g some amazing tone a real triumph for I achievement, given feels incredibly comfo



As Tom Quayle said in his review: "This 70V All you have to do to enter our competition



questions

- A] 50 years B] 10 years C] 25 years
- A] American basswood B] Oak C] Alder
- **A**] The Tone factory **B**] The Harmony Hut **C**] The Radio Shack

TO ENTER

Email your answers (e.g. Q1 - C) along with your name, email address and daytime phone number, marked "banez Competition" to competitions@ ignitarmag.com

1/ All entries must be received by 8th October 2012. 2/ No cash alternative is offered instead of the stated prize. 3/ All entries must be submitted via e-mail. 4/ Only one entry per subscribed reader will be accepted. 5/ Employees of iGuitar/Guitar Interactive, Licklibrary, Headstock Distribution or Ibanez Guitars and their immed families are ineligible for this competition. 6/ The winner will be chosen, at random, from registered readers of iGuitar/Guitar Interactive who provide the correct an 7/ The judges' decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into regarding this competition. 8/ Winning entrants must respond to email notification of having within 10 days, otherwise prizes may be forfeited and alternative winners chosen. 9/ Winners may be responsible for import duty when levied. Where possible prizes be despatched from the winner's own country, but this will not always be possible. 10/ Winners must provide a contact telephone number and valid email address 11 Prizewinners must consent to having their name and city/country (e.g. 'Andres Segovia, Madrid, Spain') published in a future issue.



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FEATURES_COMPETITION WINNERS

iguitar's issue 10 peavey delta blues combo COMPETITION - THE RESULT!

Peavey's all-tube Delta Blues combo so impressed us in our <u>Issue 9 review</u> that we asked if Peavey would be willing to give one away as a competition prize. Generous as ever, the Meridian Maestros said they would - so in Issue 10 we asked our usual three simple questions and waited for your response - which was overwhelming. It seems our admiration for this combo is widely shared!

Thank you to all those iGuitar readers who entered and, again, our thanks to Peavey.

AND THE WINNER IS....



So who was our lucky winner? Chosen at random as ever, step forward Mr David Townend of Doncaster, Yorkshire, in the UK, pictured here looking justifiably pleased with himself with his brand new Peavey Delta Blues! Congratulations to David and better luck next time to everyone who entered.





G

STEVE TROVATO'S

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Disc 1 Rock Guitar in 6 weeks Danny Gill

Learn America Blues in 6 Weeks

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VINTAGE GUITAR HEAVEN

iGuitar welcomes back the noted guitar collector and historian Paul Brett with his unique take on vintage guitars. Just what's left that is affordable and – most importantly fun to play?

This issue -

1960s Harmony Stratotone Mars (selling August 2012 for \$200-\$350*)

1950s Goldklang archtop (selling August 2012 for c.£600*) and

1920s/30s Supertone 'Lindbergh' acoustic (selling August 2012 for \$1,300-£2,000*)

I'm going to delve into something completely different in this issue: two guitars from the American continent and one from the European. First up is what must be one of the iconic guitars of the late '50s early '60s. The Harmony Stratotone 'Mars' was for many early electric players, their first guitar. It was affordable and accessible at a time when the market didn't have anything like the choice or variety we have today. Of course the Harmony Company has a history in the American and world instrument market dating back to its formation by William Schultz in Chicago in 1892. In 1916, it was then bought by Sears & Roebuck and finally ceased trading in 1975, when the once illustrious name was sold (*you can find the complete Harmony story in iGuitar issue 5*).

In between these times, Harmony produced millions of instruments across all musical genres. The one pick up 'Mars' was made between 1958 and 1965. The pre- '62 models can be identified by a plain white pick



FEATURES_PAUL BRETT VINTAGE GUITAR HEAVEN



guard and an elongated 'Y' on the headstock. From '62 the pickguard was outlined by a black surround line coupled with what are described as 'Atomic' logos, positioned on the headstock and mid plate. It was a very simple guitar to operate and many players, including myself, are amazed with the variety of sounds this single cutaway, hollow bodied guitar can produce. From sweet Jazz to twang, to a thick Rock sound and a very clean Blues too.

The body is a hollow/laminated construction, with a hardwood neck and a white binding surround, a floating bridge which is moveable and adjustable, tailpiece and white dot fret markers. They came in a sunburst finish but there is no truss rod, however they do have a steel reinforced neck. They have a single 'Golden Tone Indox' pick up and there are two control knobs for tone and volume, plus a two way switch for treble and bass (it just boosts either tone). The neck is really comfortable to play and they generally stay pretty well in

I think the average price for this model is extremely low for such a great little piece of Rock and Roll history and

tune.

it still holds its own today as a guitar. They generally sell for around the \$200 - \$350 in vgc. Brian Jones of The Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton both played Stratotones in the early days and, in fact, at the Christie's auction in 1999, Clapton's 1960 Mars guitar sold for \$18,400. Eric's Mars was no different to any other you could pick up for a few hundred bucks, but his name and charitable cause made all the difference. Still, you can enjoy one of these guitars for many dollars less.



the German Democratic Republic (under Russian control), even though Rock and Roll was banned, guitars were still being built and some of the most iconic were made by Heinz Seifert, who was following in his father's footsteps. Seifert built some really beautiful instruments over the years, mainly archtops for Jazz players. Some of these guitars are a joy to behold visually, as the craftsmanship in them was indeed inspirational. I'm not really into archtops as a player or collector, possibly because I have never really been into Jazz as a player. I have a few early Americana ones and most of the German/Selmer Hofners, as they were definitely historical to early British Skiffle and Rock.

[...>]

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Check them out, they're fun to play, inexpensive to buy and I'm sure there value will rise over the coming years.

Just like the Walls of Jericho, centuries before, another famous wall came tumbling down in 1989. The people shouted and down it came, unifying a nation that had been divided thirty years before, in 1961. The Berlin Wall, as it had become known to the world, was a symbol of the cold war between East and West. During this dark time, Rock and Roll reared its virulent head and changed the musical world - and possibly the physical world - forever. But behind the wall, in what was known as



FEATURES_PAUL BRETT VINTAGE GUITAR HEAVEN

brand in an early catalogue, but that was mainly early mandolins, lutes, mandolas etc - nothing about high-end archtops. Further research however, leads me to believe this guitar was made by Heinz Seifert for Goldklang. Lots of really good instruments in the '50s came out of the Markneukirchen area that some refer to as the GDR's Luthier's paradise. This model has an all solid wood construction with a carved top, the most amazing Art guide, look to pay around the £600 mark in auction and more from a retailer. Of course auctions are random events as you could get one cheaper or pay a lot more, depending on who's bidding against you!

Finally, back to Americana. I'll finish this article on a really beautiful Supertone six string from the late '20s

I had however, never seen or played - or even heard of - the Goldklang brand, until I saw a really stunning 1950s arch-top on German eBay. I don't usually buy guitars from eBay, but I got a bit carried away in this instance and I'm very glad I did!

PAUL BRETT'S

When a guitar appears with an unfamiliar brand, but is obviously a guitar of highend quality in build and looks, I do chance the odd speculative bid. I only found the Goldklang brand in an early catalogue, but that was mainly early mandolins, lutes, mandolas etc - nothing about high-end archtops. Further research however, leads layers.

Some of these guitars are a joy to behold visually, as the craftsmanship in them was indeed inspirational. I'm not really into archtops as a player or collector, possibly because I have never really been into Jazz as a player. I have a few

me to believe this guitar was made by Heinz Seifert for Goldklang. Lots of really good instruments in the '50s came out of the Markneukirchen area that some refer to as the GDR's Luthier's paradise. This model has an all solid wood construction with a carved top, the most amazing Art Deco inspired scratchplate with overall adornments and I must admit, it's a joy to play too. Someone later added a floating pick up which amplified the woody tone of the guitar really well. The downside was, they cut away a small part of the pickguard to fit the pick up.

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[...>]



The sound is rich and full and it plays Jazz and early rockabilly very true to tone and genre. I'll look out for more, but I doubt there will be many about. It's difficult to put a price on an instrument as rare as this as a guide, look to pay around the £600 mark in auction and more from a retailer. Of course auctions are random events as you could get one cheaper or pay a lot more, depending on who's bidding against you!

Finally, back to Americana. I'll finish this article on a really beautiful Supertone six string from the late '20s early '30s, unusual and rare too, because it has the airplane bridge. These were put on some guitars at that time to commemorate the Charles Lindbergh flight from Roosevelt Field, Long Island to Paris, France in 1927. Spruce top and celluloid binding all round, generously appointed inlays, paper label still mostly attached and a great little parlour for Blues picking! This one is in very good condition and certainly Harmony made, although the high end Supertone models were made by Oscar Schmidt (he of Stella and Sovereign fame). Schmidt made guitars for other brands apart from his in-house ones too. There are different versions and constructions out there, even Regal made one but again, they are rare and especially so in 'VGC'.

> What you have to remember with all early vintage instruments, is that they have survived two world wars and therefore condition is of paramount importance when buying. Acoustics from back then didn't have truss rods through the neck, so you have to be careful that necks are fairly straight, otherwise it can be expensive to re-set them if you are not a luthier. I've seen these sell for between \$1,300 -\$2,000, depending on model and condition.

Of course auctions are random events as you could get one cheaper or pay a lot more, depending on who's bidding against you!





FEATURES_PAUL BRETT VINTAGE GUITAR HEAVEN

These are usually attention grabbers because not only are they an historical piece of Americana, they also bring up the Lindbergh story, which as many of you will know, turned out tragically in the end.

* Important note about our guide prices:

The prices quoted are US-based (prices in the EU tend to be higher) and represent a spread between private and dealer figures at the time the article was written, as shown in the text. They are not meant to be any more than a very approximate guide and are subject to change on a weekly basis!

Caveat emptor!

Gi

At Fret-King® we have a saying. "Knowledge is Power." What does this mean?

Trev Wilkinso

Decades of listening to guitar players' needs has taught us that while we have some great ideas, it is your goals which must be ours too!

With a design team led by the legendary Trev Wilkinson, the father of Fret-King, we use our knowledge positively; we have a determination to produce guitars with flair, and creative innovations that give you an amazing, tactile and emotional guitar playing experience

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Fret-King guitars stand apart, consistently outclass the established benchmarks, yet be comfortable, friendly and familiar.

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Artist Inspired

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Hugely experienced players like Jerry Donahue, Dave 'Bucket' Colwell, Gordon Giltrap, and Geoff Whitehorn - all players who have definitely paid their dues and reflect a huge variety of styles. As well as being great players, they know a thing or two about guitars, and have collaborated with us to create a series of artist-inspired guitars featuring attributes that all players will find valuable, useful, and above all, musical

Because you deserve the best, with no compromise, Black Labe takes a fresh view of how to build in real custom shop high end features, the benefits they bring, and the advantages you get from instruments designed to be professional working tools.











151.1962 LONDON - ENGLAND

In iGuitar 13 we'll be bringing you a Marshall, the biggest name in guitar amplification, is celebrating its fiftieth celebratory world exclusive. We sent one of the iGuitar team down to Marshall's legendary anniversary this year and iGuitar is proud to bring you a two part celebration of the iconic amp museum where he was given free reign brand. In Part One Paul Marshall talks us to pull priceless historic Marshall amps off through the history of the company started by display, fire them up and try the amps that his father, the late Jim Marshall, with exclusive virtually created modern Rock music. Find out inside photographs, stories and reminiscences. who got the gig and what he sampled in the Meanwhile Gary Cooper speaks with Marshall next iGuitar - and hear and see these legendary amp design guru Steve Dawson who discusses Marshalls for yourself! what makes a Marshall tick and the latest

× [....>]

thinking on guitar amp design.

YEARS OF LOU





FEATURES_MARSHALL FACTORY TOUR



Steve Dawson has one of the best jobs in music. He gets to design Marshall amplifiers. Gary Cooper had a few questions for him...

There are a handful of plum jobs in the musical instrument business. Test pilot for Fender or Gibson guitars, perhaps. Head cymbal sampler at Zildjian, maybe. But for a man with a background in electronics and sound, probably nothing can come close to being one of Marshall's lead designers. That's Steve Dawson's job (officially



he's one of Marshall's R&D Analogue Design Engineers) and it's a role he clearly relishes. It's part of Dawson's brief to interpret what superstar Marshall users who are collaborating on a signature model want when they say "Well, something a bit like a JCM800 but with a bit more XYZ ... y'know?" and deliver it. But perhaps more importantly for the rest of us, he also has to create products using briefs provided by Marshall's marketing department. who peer into the murky future and predict what we, the world's average working guitarists, are going to want a few years from now and deliver it at a price we will be willing to pay and built to a quality consistent with Marshall's legendary bomb-proof status.

Steve joined Marshall in January 2005 and did so with the perfect background for someone who was going to be designing amps for the real world - he's a former professional guitar player (he toured the world with the legendary Geordie band, The Animals) who had previously worked for a bespoke Pro Audio studio equipment company. "But I've always played around with valve amps - restoring, repairing, modifying, doing just about everything it's possible to do to a valve amp," he says.



"All the while I was a pro player I was always working on amps in the background and that worked out well with the Animals, where we'd probably be on tour for about six months of the year, which left me the rest of my time working on electronics."

Eventually joining Marshall, Steve must have thought long and hard about where the venerable brand would go next. His was a problem faced by some of the people who use the amps, too. If your first six albums were million sellers, what do you do from there? If you offer your fans more of the same, you run the risk of being left behind as trends change. But if you change too radically, the people who put you where you are might not be willing to accept anything that radically departs from what they know and love.



Marshall Factory Tour

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So how did Steve approach the task?

"It is a question of trends. You'll always have fine clothes in fashion but the trend and the style changes. For instance, you may have 100 Watt heads and stacks as flavour of the month, then suddenly everyone wants combos. At the moment, low power amps are very popular, which are far better for use around the house - and we've found that that's exactly where the majority of players use their amps: at home. We've researched this carefully, as you can imagine, and it turns out that the percentage of players who actually gig is relatively small. From a practicality point of view, even 1 Watt can be really too loud for playing in a lot of home situations.



FEATURES_MARSHALL FACTORY TOUR





DRP-1 Direct Recording Pre-amp



"Having said that, most players also want to have what their heroes have - so you have a lot of 100 Watt stacks in peoples' bedrooms, with power brakes, or Hot Plates, or the master volume turned down and a pedal. That was always the thing back in the day getting the sustain at lower volumes".

Beside the trend for smaller and smaller amps (though paradoxically, increasingly pure valve circuitry in many cases) there are other trends at work, Steve notes. "Gain goes up as the years go by. The sound is changing, too, more towards the Nu Metal sound, with a lot of low-mid chunk, a very tight sound with a lot of noise gates being used, as the



guitar has begun to take on a different role with many bands."

It's vital for any manufacturer that they keep their ears to the metaphorical ground talking with users, finding out where things are going because sounds and styles do change: and sometimes quite quickly. Get it wrong and you could be left with a line-up of stale products.

Marshall has worked hard to avoid that, while doing everything to hold on to the reputation it has had since it began for tone. The result is a balanced range, aiming to offer something for everyone, Dawson says. "Essentially, what we have at Marshall are entry-level amps - the MGs and so on - for people who are just starting - then models for the mid-market, the semi-pro players where people have money to spend but who can't justify spending thousands on an amp, and then finally you get the very top level the flagship amps. People might think they are the biggest sellers but the opposite is true. Those top end amps sell in relatively smaller numbers as fewer people can warrant that kind of cash outlay.

"And, of course, what people want varies from country to country and it's more than just about sound. The look and feature set preference is different in different markets. For example, in Germany, they want 12 effects loops, two sets of MIDI outs, five channels - every possible thing you could put on an amp, but our Japanese customers would be horrified by that. They want a classical amplifier - in fact Japanese guitarists are still very much into tone and heritage."

It may seem a bit 'inside business' but these are the considerations that a major manufacturer like Marshall has to take on board before it can design and market a new amplifier. One guy with a soldering iron working in his garage doesn't have the same constraints - he may only need to sell a few dozen amps a year, but all of the big brands have to take the world as a whole and somehow devise ways of satisfying as many people in as many different markets as possible.

Another problem that besets amp makers just as it does guitar companies like Fender and Gibson - is that they have to 'compete'

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with their own heritage. Just as there is always someone who will tell you that only a pre-CBS Strat is worth buying, so there are other forum warriors who will insist that 'only a Marshall Plexi will do'.

What are Steve's views about this 'golden age' stuff? Were 'the old ones' really better?

"You have to understand that consistency wasn't as good in the past. You could get ones that were great and ones that weren't so great and, to be honest, there's a lot of romance at work here. If you give a Plexi to a lot of the guitarists who go on about Plexis, they wouldn't know what to do with one! It's actually a very unforgiving amp by today's standards and you have to crank it right up to get the best out of it. A Plexi is an amp that most players either have to pair with a pedal, or have it modified, to make it sound 'right'. Of course, there's a lot to be said for the classic combination of a Les Paul plugged straight into a Plexi turned up high, but not many players play in venues where you can do that sort of thing these days and that's a factor that has to be borne in mind."

There is another element, too (and it is also true of electric guitars). Components deteriorate with time. Pickup coils get shorted with sweat and grime and while that might count as a fault, it can actually produce a unique sound which a player will make his own. The same can be true of amplifiers, where not just the tubes age, but various other components too.

"Yes, in some respects components drifting in value can be the key to the magic sound," Steve says. "And bear in mind that the tolerance range of components when new,"



FEATURES_MARSHALL FACTORY TOUR



was far wider than it is today. You put a 100k resistor in an amp back then and it could be anywhere between 90k and 110k - even more - so you can imagine all these resistors with different tolerances going to produce an amp that has the magic sound. Again, you will get a player who will plug into one of these and it will sound great but for another player it sounds awful. The valves too, in the past were better quality than they are now. You can still get good tone but you might find that if you can afford to buy a set of new old stock Mullards that you get that je ne sais quoi..."

Another aspect of Steve's role is working with artists on signature models - and it turns out to be a very collaborative process. Far from the 'stick my name on it and give me'the money' process that a cynic might imagine, Steve works face to face with artists to get their chosen sound. He reveals that the 'older guys' tend very much to want the amps and the sounds they started with. Jeff Beck, for example, doesn't much care for multi channel amps and favours single channel classic sounding amps. Much the same is true, apparently, of Angus Young. Zakk Wylde basically likes the JCM800 tones he grew up with that he can plug a Les Paul into and just Rock out. The latest signature Marshall, Joe Satriani's customised JVM410, meanwhile, dispenses with the four reverbs in favour of four noise gates as well as some channel revoicing The clean channel now sounds like the old Marshall 6100 - Joe's previous favourite Marshall. Joe Bonamassa, on the other hand, loves Jubilees, it turns out, and recorded Dustbowl with a Marshall Artist combo from the late 80s which featured a solid state pre amp with a valve power amp not exactly a popular combination!

"It's very much collaborative and interactive," says Steve, in passing, revealing that, tragically, he was working on a signature amp for Gary Moore when the guitarist died in 2011. Sadly, this is one Marshall signature model that will never see the light of day.

"Ultimately, your ear is the finest instrument on the planet but the knowledge of how to dial in a sound isn't a skill everybody has and, of course, sound is very subjective. People will try an amp and maybe condemn it when all that is wrong is that it's plugged into the wrong set of speakers. In a perfect world you would go into a shop and say 'I want to try this amp with every different type of speaker





you have', but while artists have the luxury of doing that when they go to visit the amp manufacturer, not many others do. But it is worth bearing in mind, as the speakers do make a tremendous difference to the sound.

"There's a lot of mythology on the Internet about amps - if you do this, that'll happen and so on. But really a valve amp is like a car: it needs a regular service to keep it at its best, bearing in mind that components degrade slowly and you won't necessarily realise how much, until you come to have it serviced and then realise how good it sounds when it's back to 100%! You do have to be wary of the Internet for spreading unsolicited information and bad advice in that respect," he cautions.

When it comes to buying a new amp, beside the wise advice to try it with as many speakers as possible, Steve advocates the use of common sense. "If you're after the sound that someone else gets using a head and a four by twelve then you really are going to need a four by twelve to get that sound." He cites Angus Young as a case in point, it being a common request of players that they get the trademark AC/DC sound but want to do so with a small combo. The answer is, you might get somewhere near it, but you won't nail it precisely without the right amount of air being moved by the speakers. And even that doesn't take account of the individual player's unique, personal style, he reminds us.

"Experiment! Use your ears rather than your eyes when you're setting an amp. Forget blindly following advice like 'Turn everything to maximum' because on modern amps the controls can be far more effective and the full-on approach makes less sense. The key is to spend quality time with the amp you're thinking of buying."





TECH SESSIONS_STEVE VAI - THE STYLE

demystifying the magic

Andy James takes you through a Steve Vai style analysis. The good news? You don't really need any special gear, he says. The bad? You're going to need all your chops!

As I talk about in the video a few times, this Steve Vai style file is rooted in the E Lydian scale, a mode which Steve is very fond of using. The Lydian mode is the 4th mode of the major scale, so E lydian is mode 4 of the B major scale, it contains the notes E, F#, G#, A#, B, C#, D#, in essence we have the E major scale with a #4. This mode is so popular with Vai because of its mysterious quality which comes from that #4.

The main riff is typical Vai and plays off a chugging Emaj7 chord voicing then an F#5 to G#5. Although this riff doesn't actually feature the characteristic A#, there's something about this riff that calls lydian. Try jamming over this riff with the regular Emajor scale and see how off it sounds. In bar 3 I move into playing octaves which is always a nice melodic contrast to a Rock based riff. I'm just playing around with the E lydian scale on the A and G string set.









The solo kicks off with a real Vai trademark, which consists of moving up the neck using 5ths, this is made even more Vai by 'double picking', which can actually present some technical challenges when you build up speed. To finish this idea we play two unison bends before descending down around the 12th fret area and then slipping back down to the 6th fret on the D string. After just a few bars you get the sense that Vai can and will move around the neck a lot when phrasing, so if you're uncomfortable shifting around a lot, sit down and familiarize yourself with the seven 3 note per string patterns as this may help you out of a jam. In bar 11 I play another uniquely Vai idea, what I call 'distressed' vibrato. The idea is to play a note, then play a note a fret below but bent up to the original note, you can then apply a violent and thin vibrato to it to create the illusion that the original note is falling apart. Vai is full of quirky little ideas like this and is a master and bringing them out naturally in phrases.

Bar 13 – 14 include some wide interval tapping, so move your hand over the fretboard which will allow you pick each new string much more freely, this series of rapid 7th arpeggios flies up the neck before resolving to a pattern which you may



Steve Vai - Getting the Style





recognize as the C#minor pentatonic scale. This is augmented with the added taps at the 21st fret. Pay careful attention though, this isn't your run of the mill Van Halen style tapping (*run of the mill?! Ed*) and time needs to be taken with the left and taps and the double tapped note on the G string.

Bar 15 showcases Vai's mastery of the alternate picking technique. In essence what we have is very simple, it's a 20 note pattern that is repeated starting on each string of our 3 note per string scale. The difficulty comes in the speed and accuracy that Steve executes lines like this with. It's also worth mentioning the exit point, as a line like this means nothing without a meaningful ending. In this instance we hit three unison bends and apply vibrato.

Bar 19 is probably the most "Steve Vai" lick in this piece and consists of a series of sweep picked arpeggios, position shifts and pentatonic legato patterns. This lick is definitely hard! The best advice I can give you is (once you're comfortable with all the techniques of course) try to look at where you're going, rather than where you are. For example, you start around the 4th fret area, but really you want to be looking at the 14th fret so that when you slide up there you know you're going to land in the right place. Once you're here your eyes should shoot straight down to the 6th fret so you end up in the right place there.

To finish this solo off we have another fast picking part which, as before, takes one idea and moves it across a 3 note per string pattern. You then need to jump up the neck for some ascending tremolo picking and end it with a huge bend on the 24th fret. As normal, don't worry if you don't have 24 frets as you can hit the 21st fret and bend up to the 23rd which will give you another note from the Lydian scale.

In order to get the tone required to play something like this you're really going to want a humbucker equipped guitar and a high gain amplifier, that's all really. As you can see from the video, I played this on my signature ESP which has a fixed bridge, but Steve plays an Ibanez with a floating trem. The point is that your guitar doesn't need to stand in the way of you sounding like Steve, and you don't need all of the effects either your guitar and amp should be fine as it's the notes you play, and not what you play them on.

Hopefully that will give you enough to work on for this month, and leave you with lots of research to do into this certified guitar legend.



[...>]



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Contact us at info@floydrose.com





Steve Vai is an icon - and so is his amazing Ibanez EVO guitar. Ibanez has recently gone to enormous lengths to replicate Steve's original, much-loved and much-worn instrument, handcrafting just 100 examples in its renowned Japanese workshop. We were thrilled to be loaned one for review in this issue. But what if you desperately want a Steve Vai Ibanez but just can't afford one of these custom shop models? Fear not, still expensive but much closer to reality, Ibanez also has a new JEM model - the 70V and we have that on review too.



p060 Ibanez JEM-EVO & JEM 70V

p068 Duesenberg Fullerton CC

p072 Fender Excelsior combo p076 Godin Session Custom p082 Cornell Value Pre-amp



p086 Hayden HGT A20 head and 2x12 cab

p090 IK Multimedia iRig Stomp

p096 TC Electronic Spark booster

p100 A/DA APP-1 Pre-Amp Pedal





Even better - one lucky iGuitar reader is going to be receiving one absolutely free when he (or she) wins our free entry competition in this issue!

If your tastes are a little more retro than starship, check-out Duesenberg's impressive Fullerton semi, also in this issue. It would make a perfect match with Fender's wonderfully faux-vintage Excelsior amp, also in our line-up. Rockabilly, anyone?

Maybe a future classic is Canadian brand Godin's exceptionally good value Session Custom, and so are almost all this issue's review subjects, which include a unique all-valve pedal amp from Dennis Cornell, TC Electronic's new Spark Booster, a Hayden valve head, a clutch of Rocktron's boutique pedals, the return of the A/DA FX brand and IK Multimedia's iStomp.

Something for everyone? We hope so! But please continue to email and let us know what you'd like us to be looking at in future issues.



p104 Rocktron Boutique Series FX pedals





Ibanez JEM-EVO & JEM 70V

There are only 100 Ibanez JEM-EVO guitars being made - each one a hand-crafted replica of Steve Vai's own legendary guitar - issued to commemorate the guitarist's 25 year association with the company. Now, for the first time, Ibanez is also offering a more affordable version of the Vai masterpiece, the JEM70V. iGuitar was privileged to be loaned one of the only two JEM-EVOs coming to the UK. We also borrowed a JEM 70V to compare the two. **Tom Quayle** put them side by side and let them shoot it out!



Before teaming-up with Ibanez to produce the JEM series of guitars, Steve Vai was using typical '80s super-strats like Charvels and Jacksons. He often customised these early instruments with modifications to the whammy bar cavity, scalloped the upper frets and added deeper cutaways for easier access. Once his career began to take off a few years later, it was inevitable that such a stunning player would be snapped-up by a major guitar brand and the honour, when it came, went to Japanese guitar masters, Ibanez.

Thus, the Ibanez JEM was born in 1987 and it certainly didn't disappoint, being the perfect accompaniment to Steve's radical and creative technique featuring all of the innovations that Vai had attempted on his previous guitars,













such as the Monkey Grip, Lion Claw bridge cavity, super-slim 24-fret neck, scalloped upper frets and deeper cutaways. 25 years later, it has proved to be one of the most successful modern designs and the inspiration for a whole generation of new players and guitar builders.

Over the years there have been many iterations of the JEM series but for 2012 Ibanez has released two really interesting variations that add something new to the design, guaranteed to excite both the collector and the more budget-minded player. The JEM-EVO is an incredible artistic pursuit to create a carbon copy of Steve's original EVO guitar, complete with every ding and scrape, crack and flaw. It is a real marvel to behold and represents the highest level of Ibanez's Japanese output. The JEM 70V, meanwhile, is a little closer to the other end of the price scale, occupying territory that a JEM has never previously entered, being a budget-friendly Indonesian made 'Premium' model, attempting to match the quality of the Japanese models at a more affordable price. Before you reel in horror at the idea of an Indonesianmade JEM, rest assured that some of the best factory produced guitars iGuitar has seen in the past year or two have been made in Indonesia. Several major brands are now being produced there and we have seen some stunning results.



As you can imagine, we started by checking out the EVO model (I was too excited not to!) only to find out that we had model 1 of 100! Well, that's how it seemed. Later, we learned that to avoid disappointment, Steve Vai has ordained that every one of them is being numbered one out of a hundred. Oh well!

There is always a sense of occasion when you are confronted with something as rare as this and you know, as soon as you see the included heavy-duty case, that something amazing awaits inside. Just to prolong the

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suspense, let me add that this is easily the best Ibanez case I've seen and would survive a direct hit, so it's perfect for the collectors, at whom I assume this guitar is aimed.

And once you finally pluck-up your courage and open the sarcophagus? What you find within is a guitar that looks exactly, stunningly, like Steve's original guitar, in every way possible. Exactly as you'd hope, the EVO features an alder body, maple neck and rosewood fretboard with the iconic abalone/ pearl 'Tree of Life' inlay.





REVIEWS GUITAR REVIEW

But those are just the bare facts of the matter. Ibanez has surpassed itself here in the level of detail in this re-creation. Every single scratch, dent and flaw has been reproduced in painstaking detail, right down to a simulated neck joint crack that matches the actual crack on Steve's guitar. It even has tape appearing to hold the neck pickup in place, in honour of the original!

Whether you're into the idea of aged/ stressed guitars or not, you have to appreciate the sheer craftsmanship and artistry that has gone into this guitar. All the hardware is exactly as you would want it, from the monkey grip, the DiMarzio Evolution pickups in an HSH configuration, the original Edge tremolo with Lion Claw (some say this is the best version Ibanez ever released and I agree), a locking nut, scalloped frets, jumbo Dunlop fret wire and back stops to support tuning stability. The EVO logo is present and for the sake of detail Ibanez has even used Velcro to attach the back plate and pick holder as on Steve's guitar. This is a JEM through and through but not just any JEM - this is Steve Vai's actual guitar, or as close as you're ever going to get to it! What's more, Mr Vai has even signed every single one, in the exact place on the guitar where his own bears the signature of the late Les Paul, inscribed on the latter's 95th birthday.

As you would expect, the EVO's playability is supreme, thanks to a super low action, matched with the slimmer than normal neck profile and a fantastic set-up. The EVO almost plays itself and feels just like a wellworn friend that you've known for 25 years. Ibanez has left the neck finish as close to



bare as possible, simulating years of use and as such it feels fast and smooth. The Edge bridge stays in tune perfectly, thanks to the back stop, and performs all of Vai's whammy bar dives and squeals with perfect accuracy. The Evolution pickups are tight and aggressive sounding, with a clarity that gives almost a Hi-Fi like tone. The neck pickup is creamier and allows for a full range of sounds from warm cleans to thick, saturated leads, all the while retaining clarity. This is a very versatile guitar thanks to the HSH set-up and can reproduce both Strat and Les Paul like tones in addition to a wide range of sounds of its own.

So is the JEM-EVO as good as we hoped it would be? Unquestionably! Whoever buys one of these guitars is getting as close to owning Steve Vai's own guitar as it could be,

without buying it off him and for a collector that accuracy is what matters.

It does, of course, come at a very substantial price, so what about those of us who would dearly love to own something like it, but don't seem able to find that much loose change down the back of the sofa?

We were expecting a bit of a disappointment from the JEM 70V, to be frank. How could you not be a bit underwhelmed after playing a guitar as stunningly good as the EVO? But we were wrong. Very wrong. In fact I was surprised to find that this guitar feels almost as good to play as the EVO itself!



[...>]

True, the Indonesian version features a different construction in order to save cost, so we have a sea-foam green basswood body with a five-piece maple/walnut neck and a rosewood fretboard. The rosewood grain is nowhere near as dark and tight as the EVO's but it still looks great sporting the 'Tree of Life' inlay in matching sea-foam green. There's no abalone or pearl going on here either, but the inlay work is still flawless. All the JEM's hardware is identical to that on the Japanese model, too, featuring proper DiMarzio Evolution pickups, Edge bridge with lion claw and monkey grip. The seafoam green finish won't be for everyone but I loved it and it looks a lot better in person





REVIEWS_GUITAR REVIEW

than in pictures. The fretwork, which can often be a problem on lower priced models, was also very good with no sharp or unfinished ends and whilst the neck is a little thicker than the EVO model's. the set-up on our sample was very good, with a low action and even feel



across the whole range. There were a couple of tiny finish flaws around the neck joint but nothing to cause any concern. This is undeniably a very well made guitar.

But the real surprise is in the playability and tonal performance. This 70V model is a superb guitar to play, featuring some amazing tones and a set-up that plays almost as easily as the EVO version. This is a real triumph for Ibanez and an impressive achievement, given that their Japanese instruments are as good as it gets. The neck feels incredibly comfortable and smooth and thanks to the same Edge Bridge and locking nut, tuning stability is perfect, even after very aggressive whammy bar antics.

Tonally the 70V is in the same world as its bigger brother and has a tight, aggressive output that is perfect for harder Rock and Metal material, giving a gorgeous tone for lead work that really responds well to pick attack and volume changes. The HSH set-up is very versatile and both guitars surpass their stereotypical image, being useful for many other styles too.

Both of these guitars represent the best of Ibanez's work and it's a real testament to the company's commitment to quality that they can produce an Indonesian made JEM that feels so close to the real deal. Whilst I love both guitars I can't justify giving the EVO a 4.5 or 5 star score as it is just so expensive. It's really for collectors only, which is a shame in a sense, as it's a supremely playable guitar that looks and sounds insanely cool too.

The 70V, on the other hand, seems like a complete no-brainer to me, providing you can live with the colour. True, it still isn't a cheap instrument but it sells for a fraction of the price of the 'real thing' and it gets terrifyingly, impressively close to it!



serious guitar

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66





Duesenberg Fullerton CC

There are times when a pointy headstock just won't do. When what you really need is a guitar that shouts retro semi-acoustic class and takes you straight back to the '50s. Cue Germany's Duesenberg, a time machine and **Michael Casswell's** take on the legendary Scotty Moore.

OK, guess why this Duesenberg is called the Fullerton? Because it comes from the Duesenberg factory that they built a stones throw from Leo Fender's original Californian workshop in Fullerton. That's a pretty cool fact, a good marketing angle and a great heritage for any electric guitar. But by doing that, this Duesenberg Fullerton had better be good, or it'll be almost sacrilegious to be putting out less than wonderful instruments from Fullerton, considered the birthplace of the modern electric guitar!

Duesenberg should be able to pull it off, though. Started in the 1980s by German designer Dieter Gölsdorf, the company immediately staked a claim to retro Art Deco styles, cleverly creating a past that never existed and, in the process, appropriating the name of an iconic US car maker, beloved of vintage fans but not with us since the 1930s. It was clever marketing and very well timed for a generation of guitarists who were itching to throw over the '80s big hair and pointy headstock era. But it wouldn't have worked if the guitars had just been all show. They weren't and Duesenberg soon had a list of users including Joe Walsh, Vince Gill, Ronnie Wood, Elvis Costello, John Mayer and Robbie Macintosh, to name just a few.

So back to the first Duesenberg we've had in the studio to try. The Fullerton certainly shouts vibe, coupled with quality. Even the case it came in was superb. Strung with heavy-duty 10 gauge strings, acoustically it was loud, vibrant and very alive, like a good semi-hollow body should be. Beneath the laminated top back and sides there is a centre block of maple with a hollow chamber either side, so even before you plug it in, it's all there. Plug it in and you are rewarded with a fine old school tone that you just can't get from standard solid body guitars. Combined with Duesenberg's own P90 and Grand Vintage pick ups, which are full of great usable character, the sound is clear, full and rich. This is one of those guitars that even if you plugged it into the worst amp imaginable, you would still be able to get a cool vibey tone to work with. It's just that good.





CHECK THE SPEC 🧿





The Fullerton CC has a laminated spruce top, with laminated maple back and sides and a maple neck with a quality rosewood board. A solid colour guitar is usually a way of using plain looking wood, which is not a bad thing because sometimes the plainer the grain, the better the sound, and this guitar looks great in white. As with all Duesenberg guitars the look and design is very Art Deco and the image is backed up by up-close scrutiny of the workmanship and detailing. Even the locking strap buttons have their own cool style. As for the Deluxe tremolo, well I was ready to say it was form over function and as good as useless, much like most Bigsbys I've tried - but it wasn't!

It actually worked smoothly, stayed in tune, and would be a fantastic colour soundwise if used tastefully (much like any trem). You couldn't be as extreme as Jeff Beck on it, but it certainly is very usable and adds to the overall retro vibe of the guitar. On the face of it, the trem seems to be based on the fundamental Bigsby design, but I'm fairly confident that Duesenberg has tweaked the whole lot to make a unit that actually works, and works well!

I own a lot of Guitars, but none of them could put out the same tones that the Fullerton could. You are probably not going to be playing metal with this guitar, but for





rootsy Blues and Soul, Rockabilly, slide, Jazz and general cool vibes, this would be a very nice purchase indeed. OK, it wouldn't be a cheap one, because Duesenbergs are at the higher end of the market, and as usual, quality comes at a price. So this isn't a cheap guitar. All the same, in terms of what you are getting for your money, this would be a great buy for the guitarist who wanted that retro vibe from a professional class guitar and wouldn't be satisfied by cheap clones.

What can I say? The Duesenberg Fullerton CC made me come over all Scotty Moore in the demo, and it would certainly have a good effect on you too. A good guitar will do that to you and if this stunner is anything to go by, Duesenberg certainly make good guitars!

Gi





•
Fender Excelsior Combo

Fender's Pawn Shop series may be the cleverest marketing idea ever for music gear - a glorious exercise in 'let's pretend we once made these' or 'what Leo might have done - but didn't'. Alongside some great hybrid guitars there are equally fine looking retro amps, too, like the Excelsior. But looks aren't much use if the sound doesn't match. And does it? We asked **Rick Graham** to find out.

There's no question about it, Fender's Excelsior is one cool looking amplifier. As part of Fender's 'Pawn Shop' range, it is the perfect embodiment of all that was cool about the post war era. It looks more like a old radio than an amp and you'd certainly be forgiven for expecting an episode of 'The Archers' or a Wolfman Jack show to suddenly start resounding from its speaker! The beauty of this range is that you don't have to go scouring second-hand and antique shops to find one of these little beasts and what's more, you'll get one in perfect working condition and not need a repairman on every gig with you - just in case!

But although there is most definitely an element of novelty with the Excelsior, don't be fooled into thinking that it's not a serious amplifier. Weighing in at 33lbs (15kg) and measuring up at 21"x 19.5" x 9" it's a highly portable amp more than suitable for the mobile gigging musician as well as being ideal as part of any home recording studio set-up. With its brown textured vinyl covering, uber cool 'E' design front grille and the double crossed-swords Excelsior badge boldy displayed across the front of the amp, the Excelsior exudes a uniqueness which is hard to ignore.

It's all tube amp, housing twin 6V6 valves in the power section and a pair of 12AX7 valves in the preamp section delivering 13 Watts of power through the specially designed Excelsior 15" speaker. Fender has opted for a bottom loaded primary chassis in conjunction with a top-loaded control chassis for low noise and operating convenience. Controls are kept nice and simple but with some interesting options, such as the three inputs which are individually optimised to suit certain playing scenarios. These are labelled: GTR, MIC and ACCORDION respectively. These are great if you are using a guitar loaded with particularly high output pickups and want as much clean headroom as possible. A voicing switch located on control panel gives you the option to either go 'Bright' or 'Dark', the former giving more



treble response than the latter, which I'm presuming is an alternative to a standard rotary tone control. Finishing off the control panel is the inclusion of the onboard tremolo effect with variable speed control. A very welcome addition indeed! It is also possible to disconnect the speaker and allow the amp to drive an extension cab should you so wish.



CHECK THE SPEC 💽

In action the Excelsior is most certainly no novelty act. I spent quite some time with the amp at lower volumes and I was very surprised and impressed at how responsive it was to my playing. Turning up the volume a little more and adopting more of a thumb and finger lead technique really allowed the amp to shine following my playing dynamics





all the way with real class and attitude. Flicking between the Bright and Dark settings allowed me to go from a very bright sparkling clean tone to a thicker, Jazz like tone in an instant. Although some players may prefer a rotary tone control for more fine tuning, I quite liked having the ability to just flick the switch without thinking too much. Pushing the volume further still, the amp started to break up giving rise to some really nice Blues style lead tones. A little further with the volume and I was kicking out some great sounding AC/DC style crunch Rock rhythm with some serious attitude. It's worth noting at this point that I was using high output humbuckers for this review so with single coils it would probably

take a little more pushing of the volume control to reach the same gain levels. The Excelsior is not short of volume either and is more than capable of holding its own for gigging at pubs and small clubs.

There's so much to like in the Excelsior. It's one of the coolest looking amps I've reviewed and most certainly has the sound to match. It also has the versatility for use in a variety of playing scenarios and although some of the features have been added to accentuate the retro feel, they also happen to be extremely useful features too. Nice work Fender!

Gi





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Godin Session Custom

Canadian guitar maker Godin has made quite an impact on both sides of the Atlantic, offering quality to match the major US brands but at extremely tempting prices. We gave a Godin Session Custom to **Rick Graham** to try. Don't be fooled by the price or the traditional styling, he says - this is a cracking guitar with hidden depths!

Godin guitars is a Canadian company, under the watchful eye of Robert Godin. Based in Montreal, Godin made the decision to spread his production across 1000km, using six small factories as opposed to one giant plant, the main reason for which was to ensure a more intimate working environment for the firm's workers, ensuring that every employee was an integral part of the production process. There is no doubt that this approach to production is reflected in the quality of the instruments themselves. One of the main elements that sets Godin guitars apart from the rest of the pack is their approach to guitar design. This element is less about the aesthetics and visual aspect of guitar design and more focused towards the musical end result of the design itself. The truly amazing 'Glissentar' by Godin being a case in point.

The subject of this review is the new Session Custom which is clearly a more traditional instrument, Telecaster-like in its aesthetics, but don't fear because there are some great additional features which will allow us to explore new tonal territories. Like all Godin's guitars, the Session Custom's parts are made in Canada and assembled in the U.S.A. which is something Godin is extremely proud of - no cheap Far Eastern production here! This guitar features a Canadian Laurentian basswood body coupled with a rock maple neck upon which is a choice of either a rosewood or maple fingerboard. There are two finish options available: the Lightburst and the Blackburst, our review guitar coming in the latter finish and looking very nice indeed as you can see in our video.

The pickups are Godin's own design and are a very interesting choice of a Humbucker in the neck position and a 'Cajun Custom' single coil at the bridge. The first of the additional unique features is Godin's own Tru-Loc tremolo system. This enables a player to regulate tremolo arm placement with a quick and easy allen key adjustment at the rear of the guitar.





CHECK THE SPEC 🧿







Personally, I find it a huge distraction at times to have a tremolo arm that I just can't keep in place and what should be a simple process becomes an awkward affair and a hugely annoying one at that! This is a great feature by Godin that I'm sure will be welcomed by lots of players. The second additional unique point is the 'High Defenition Revoicer' system, or H.D.R. for short, which can be activated via a simple push of a button located between the volume and tone controls. This system essentially revoices the frequency range of the pickups, changing them from passive to active and in the process providing extra bite and dynamic response. Coupled with a five-way pick up selector switch this makes for a whole range of tones for the discerning player to explore!

Unamplified, the guitar was very resonant and quite bright sounding, much as I was expecting due to the basswood body construction coupled with the maple neck.





I2AT7 VALVE FX LOOP

ORADGE

Make no mistake, this is a professional quality instrument at an exceptionally good price!

In action the Session Custom proved itself to be a kind of Swiss Army Guitar of sorts, capable of a whole range of tones from just the one instrument. I really liked the sound and quality of both pickups but particularly enjoyed using the 'Cajun Custom' single coil which is a high-output pickup but one of great clarity which always projected forward the true tonal characteristics of the guitar itself.

Engaging the H.D.R system felt like the guitar had undergone an instant pickup transplant, offering a High Definition version of what I had just heard through the amp. Awesome stuff indeed! The playability was great and it was clear that the guitar had been very well set-up.

The Session Custom is most definitely a guitar that would be at home in any playing scenario. I can imagine it fitting comfortably in the hands of any player whether it be for Rock, Blues, Country, Jazz and pretty much any other genre of music with ease. However, it is the additional unique features which set this guitar apart from others and makes the Godin Session Custom a very formidable instrument indeed. And then there is the price! This is a North American made guitar of the highest component and manufacturing quality, selling for the sort of money that some other brands are starting to ask for Far Eastern mass produced instruments. Make no mistake, this is a professional quality instrument at an exceptionally good price!

OFF 15 WATTS

OUR NEW SIGNATURE JIM ROOT #4 TERROR HEAD AND 2x12 CABINET

"It's my sound in a portable and compact half stack that's affordable but with loud, saturated rock and metal tone." - Jim Root -

HALF POWER SWITCHABLE













Cornell Valve Pre-amp

Is it an amp? Is it a pedal? Well, actually it's a pedal amp from bespoke valve amp maker Dennis Cornell. **Michael Casswell** investigates.

Dennis Cornell has built a great reputation amongst amp purists for creating hand built, point to point hand-wired amps - amps that have been given the seal of approval by no lesser beings than Eric Clapton, Robin Trower, Albert Lee, Larry Carlton and Hank Marvin! Dennis is a true craftsman and uses the best components for his products. Nothing is mass produced in large numbers and everything is hand built to exacting standards. So I was very curious about the Cornell Pedal Amp, which looks like the love child of your favourite mini boutique practice amp, and the most sought after boutique overdrive stomp box. So what exactly is it? In fact, as you have probably guessed, it is both of those things.

The Cornell Pedal Amp can be very useful in a few ways. Firstly it can be a four Watt amp. The single 8 Ohm output can be connected to a speaker cab of your choice and would be great for home practice, recording and even for quieter live work. Four Watts through a good speaker cab is surprisingly loud and with a decent front of house and on-stage monitor system, you would be good to go for general live work. It's also very cool for recording. Stick a mic in front of your speaker cab, and this pedal will give you some convincing vintage Fender and Vox tones at very manageable volumes. You could certainly get some very nice pure valve tones recorded, and then add any reverbs or delays you need in the mix, which is the best way to do it if you are not an expert in sound manipulation with effects.

It can also act as a fantastic true bypass boutique, valve driven overdrive pedal, pushing the front of your amp and bringing it alive and generally giving you more of everything. It sounds to me that the best results would be with cleaner sounding amps than those needing silly amounts of volume to come alive. This in front of a plexi Marshall or vintage Fender twin would be very cool, but I'm sure that great results can be got from most amps out there. Obviously it would also sound great with a loud Cornell amp! Maybe with higher gain amps, hiss and general saturation can be a consideration, but no more than when using any overdrive based pedal in front of an amp with gain. One very cool feature is the ability to power other pedals with the 9 Volt out. In a pedal board, daisy chaining power to other pedals is very welcome.



[...>]



STAR RATING ★ ★ ★ ★

CHECK THE SPEC 🧿



You also get a preset EQ boost on the pedal which basically gives you more gain. Great for solo boosts and although it's pre-set, sounds just about right.

We also have a headphone out socket, which kills all sound, making it perfect to use when the neighbours, parents, brothers, sisters, wife, girlfriend, dog.... just can't take your widdling any more!

Less successful for me is the speaker simulated mixer out.

The bar is set very high nowadays for good direct feeds straight to a desk, simulating a good mic'd-up speaker cab tone. This is was too fizzy on the more driven tones for me, but may work for some people.

I feel it would work well for compressed clean tones though, but on the dirt, I'm not convinced. You can draw your own conclusions from the demo.

So generally, I think Dennis has identified a bit of a gap in the market, because I can't think of another product out there that does what the DC Pedal Amp does. It's not cheap, but it is handmade, with full back up and after sales service from Dennis Cornell. This is very much a niche product, but it does what it does very well and for the right player (albeit one with a big wallet) it could represent a quality buy.

Gì







The Dean Custom 550 embodies unsurpassed quality & profeatures that are uncommon at its price point from most other brands. The C550 features a thru maple neck and extremely comfortable arched body design with an all access heel joint for effortless playing at the upper 24 frets. Equipped with EMG 81/85 pickups, Floyd Rose 1000 Tremolo, mahogany body and ebony fingerboard, the C550 gives you everything you need: tight low end, bright attack and crisp, clean definition throughout its vast tonal register. The Dean Custom 550 is a must-have axe for any guitarist's 6-string arsenal!



AVAILABLE IN METALLIC WHITE & CLASSIC BLACK FINISHES



Hayden HGT A20 head and 2x12 cab

Hayden may be a relatively new name to the guitar amp scene but it comes from the long established Ashdown bass amp company. So how does it stack up, we asked? **Michael Casswell** ignored the pun and got on with his review.

Have you have heard of Ashdown bass gear? Good, because Hayden is the guitar amp brand from the same stable, based in the county of Essex in the UK. Here we have the HGT A20 head, boasting three channels and delivering 20 Watts, which is switchable down to three Watts via the back panel, making it versatile enough for studio use, sensible gig volume and home practice. By yourself in a room, 20 Watts is always deafening but the big test for amp power is putting it in a band situation next to a drummer, and if that's where you plan to use your amp, you might want to consider the 40 Watt version of this head, not surprisingly called the HGT A40! It's not that this amp is quiet - just that drummers are loud and any 20 Watt amp would struggle!

Plugging into the tasteful looking head, we find three channels: Clean, Crunch, and Full Gain, all switchable via the supplied footswitch, and powered courtesy of three ECC83 pre-amp valves, and two EL84 output valves - the classic arrangement. The clean channel has its own independent bass, mid and treble EQ, and can go from super clean to a nice bluesy break up, which would benefit even more with the right compressor and overdrive pedal in front to help things along. Channels two and three both share the same EQ and are where you will find some nice crunch and hi gain tones, great for full bodied Rock sounds as well as high gain solos. Again, you could easily expand these channels with the right choice of stomp box in front of the input and this is a very attractive proposition as this amp takes pedals well, as a good valve amp should.

You also get a contour control pot, that works on channels two and three, which you can treat as an extra flavour to dial in to your EQ settings. I guess they are wanting the contour control to give what we consider a more 'British' sound or a more 'American' type voicing, which it sort of does, but in my book, you just find where it sounds fattest and warmest and then leave it! But it is a nice little feature to fine tune your sound.

The Hayden also benefits from a nicely voiced onboard digital reverb, which sounds somewhere between a spring and plate in its character. It's very usable, and dialling it in to feel it, rather than hear it, adds some nice air around the sound. Around the back we have a series effects loop, two speaker emulated outs (one that mutes the amp and cab once employed) and comprehensive speaker out options.

Our Hayden head was supplied with the matching 2x12 Hayden cab, which seemed to get the job done. It's nicely made, features a pair of 'Hayden Custom' speakers (we've no idea what these are, but they seemed



[...>]



OK) and the only comment I'd make is that I, personally, thought the logo on the front seems a bit large. But that's just my opinion!

In use, the HGT A20 seems to be nicely voiced on the dirtier tones, which give a sort of bark in the mid-range, where the best guitar tones lurk. Channel three was a little hissy, I felt, but it is the hi gain channel, and a certain amount of noise is to be expected.

Hayden is still a relatively new name on the amp scene and has to compete against some of the longer established brands for customers, so, as you can see in our Tech Spec file, it has been priced to tempt. The company behind the brand, Ashdown, is a major force in the bass amplification market,



REVIEWS_GUITAR REVIEW

and has the resources to design and support the Hayden offshoot, so we will watch with real interest to see how it develops.

In all, this is a versatile and very nice sounding 20 Watt head, which also comes in a 1x12 combo form, or as a more powerful 40 Watt head with a 1x12 combo version. Before spending your money on the more obvious brands, I would suggest you hunt down a Hayden amp to try as a comparison. It certainly deserves to be on your audition list.









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BILL KELLIHER MASTODON SG1820





IK Multimedia iRig Stomp

Following iGuitar's issue 11 review of IK Multimedia's AmpliTube Slash app, **Tom Quayle** turns his steely gaze on the company's innovative iRig Stomp. So, just how much tone can you get from a phone?

If you own an iOS device such as an iPhone, iPod touch or iPad then this is a very interesting time to be a guitar player. With a mass of companies producing apps for musicians of all types you might be wondering if there was a way to incorporate some of these new sounds within your existing set-up. IK Multimedia has produced one such solution in the form of their iRig Stomp - a traditional looking stomp box style interface that plugs into the microphone input on your iOS device and can be added to your pedal board in the usual manner.

The unit features a very solid, yet lightweight, aluminium body, housing a guitar input jack, stereo output jacks (or a mono jack for guitar amp connections), output to your iOS device (lead included) and a headphone socket for use on the move. On the front of the pedal you'll find an input dial allowing you to alter the battery powered, active input signal to match your guitar and a bypass switch. This is not a true bypass circuit, so bear in mind that your signal will still be running through the pedal whilst it is in bypass mode. IK Multimedia includes the free version of its AmpliTube iOS amp modeller and this can be upgraded to the full version for a modest price from the app store. By utilising the microphone input socket on your iOS device, IK Multimedia has ensured maximum compatibility with apps and the active battery powered output circuitry increases headroom and minimises the feedback and crosstalk associated with this kind of interface.

The iRig stomp can be utilised in a number of different ways and whilst it is designed for use with IK's AmpliTube app, it can be used with others depending on what you want to achieve. The most obvious use would be within a pedal board set-up, or as a standalone pedal, plugging the output into an existing guitar amp and utilising the amp models and effects within AmpliTube. But herein lies the first problem with the iRig Stomp - and it's not really the fault of the device itself but the software it depends upon. Due to the limitations of the iOS hardware and the inherent low cost of the apps, the sounds and software are underwhelming to say the least. If you're running into a guitar amp you need to be aware that, at present, there is no way of by-



passing the cabinet simulations in any of the existing amp modeller apps. This means that, unless you're prepared to put up with the very weird sound of a modelled cab running through your actual cab, you might as well forget the amp modelling capabilities of these apps.

膨 STAR RATING ★ ★ ★ ★





You can use just the effects though, and these work adequately but I'm afraid they don't match the quality of the better pedals on the market and tend to really suck your tone. Things improve when running the iRig Stomp into a PA or DAW soundcard, however, where the amp models become much more useful - but you'll need to

[...>]



temper your expectations as iOS amp modelling apps are nowhere near the quality of their more expensive PC, Mac or hardware equivalents. There just isn't the processing power on tap to do the job.

If you are going to incorporate the iRig Stomp into your set-up (which is the point after all) there is one other very important consideration. Unlike some of the other devices we've reviewed in past issues, the iRig Stomp requires your very expensive iPad, iPhone or iPod Touch to be plugged in at all times. That means you're going to have to find somewhere safe to place your precious device near your pedal board: something that would make me VERY nervous during gigs or rehearsals! Where the iRig Stomp works very effectively though, is as a portable interface for one of the many iOS multi-track recording apps, although IK Multimedia already makes an even smaller and cheaper device for this purpose.

"Where the iRig Stomp works very effectively though, is as a portable interface for one of the many iOS multi-track recording apps"





There really isn't anything wrong with the iRig Stomp as such - it's a well-made product at a good price and the concept is a good one. Its problems are really associated with the platform for which it is designed and the idea that you might want to incorporate iOS apps into your existing rig. Guitar players are very picky about their tone and to my mind there are much better sounding alternatives out there that won't put at physical risk your beloved iPad/Phone/Pod. As iOS hardware gets more powerful and the apps improve, I'll be the first in line for this kind of product but for now I fear it just doesn't sound good enough to be part of a live or rehearsal rig.

Gì





ReValver[™] MK III set a new standard for capturing the true characteristics of vacuum tubes while giving players the unprecedented power to tweak amp models at the circuit level. ReValver MK III.V continues that trend with the introduction of nine exclusive new modules, representing some of the most sought-after amps, effects, and stompboxes ever made. With enhanced component modeling, full RTAS support, and true 64-bit performance, ReValver continues to be the most advanced amp modeling software on the planet.

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PART #71011162







TC Electronic Spark booster

A 'Spark Booster'? Doesn't that belong under the bonnet of a vintage Bentley? Maybe it does, but **Rick Graham** reckons TC Electronic's latest pedal might very well be worthy of pride of place on your pedal board too.

The Spark Booster is the fourth and final pedal in TC Electronic's compact series, which showcases the company's specific approach to drive, distortion and boost pedals. Following hot on the heels of the previous three of their hugely successful effects (the Dark Matter Distortion, the more modern voiced Röttweiler Distortion and the MojoMojo Overdrive) the Spark Booster is a boost pedal with a difference. Well, lots of differences in actual fact!

The first noticable thing about this pedal is that there are more than two knobs on it. More often than not, most boost pedals on the market have just one 'level' control and if you're lucky, it may have two. The Spark Booster is a much more feature rich boost pedal than most, offering a Gain and Level control and active Bass and Treble controls. The Gain control blends a very subtle overdrive to the signal which adds more 'grit' giving you access to those kind of sounds only accessible when your amp is being driven hard. The Level control enables and additional 26dB which is more than enough for the moments when you really need to be heard above everything else. The active Bass and Treble controls really give you the opportunity to zone-in and boost or cut those frequencies so that you can sculpt your sound even further. As if this already wasn't enough, there is also the very welcome addition of a voicing switch offering clean, fat and mid boost settings, which enables you to emphasise different parts of the frequency spectrum according to taste. Couple all of this with its high build quality and true bypass capability and you have a formidable boost pedal!

Starting with the amp's clean channel with the voicing switch on the Spark Booster set to clean mode and all controls set to the 12 o' clock position, the boost really allowed our test valve/tube amp to open up more, giving the signal a much more dynamic sound. Pushing the gain control added a beautifully smooth and subtle level of grit and compression to the signal. With the Fat voicing switch engaged, the tone had much more body to it and the increase in the amount of gain available with this voicing allows for some great overdriven rhythm and lead tones.





CHECK THE SPEC 🧿



This is a great setting for fattening up your single coil, Strat-type tones and also adding extra attitude to humbucker equipped axes.

The Mid boost setting gives a mid bump and enables the signal to cut right through the mix. Personally, I found that the active EQ controls are such an important function of the Spark Booster and to have the option to fine tune those elements to your liking in addition to the voicing modes is fantastic. The Spark Boost works superbly with an OD pedal too, as I found when I placed it in front of one of my own pedals. I was treated to some stunning tones from low to high gain settings and yet all the while the Spark Boost retainined the classy characteristics that it is capable of. Long sustained

notes bloomed into beautifully musical feedback and the tone was nothing short of inspirational!

There's no questioning the high quality of TC Electronic products and the Spark Boost is no exception. In some ways it's a reinvention of TC's early classic the Booster + Line Driver & Distortion - just with more features and greater flexibility. It's very well made and is thoroughly inspiring to use and with the fantastic features it offers at such a good price, it's pretty hard to beat.







LIONHEART L5T-112

"Your first valve amp might well be the only one you'll ever need, especially if it's one as nice as this! Okay, these amps are not cheap but you're not paying boutique price for unrivalled quality and gorgeous tones.'





A/DA APP-1 Pre-Amp Pedal

It was the 'must have' brand of pre-amps and effects in a 1980's pro rack system. Now A/DA has bounced back with a new pedal for the 21st Century. But can A/DA still compete, asks **Tom Quayle?**

Dave Tarnowski formed A/DA back in early 1978 after working for Seamoon, designing and working on high quality effects units such as the Funk Box, Studio Phase and the Controlled Tone pre-amp. In 1976, Seamoon was experiencing financial difficulties and Tarnowski bought up its existing inventory and formed A/DA, producing pedals with features that were unique for the time, such as a flanger with a 40:1 ratio and a phase pedal with built in distortion circuit for added flexibility.

Eventually the pedal range was discontinued to make way for sophisticated digital delay rack units and switching pre-amps such as the MP-1 that became a staple in many rack systems during the '80s and '90s.

The APP-1 presents a return to the preamp market for A/DA and also has a few unique features thrown in for good measure. Designed in pedal form (*rack systems have been out of fashion, though there's a sense the tide is starting to turn again - Ed*), the APP-1 is an all analogue unit that is really three devices in one - a clean to high-gain twochannel pre-amp, a dual buffer for your effects and a final signal boost for soloing or overdriving your power amp. Both channels can be voiced for anything from crystal cleans to high gain distortions and are designed using Tarnowski's 'D-Tortion' technology that is supposed to give a much greater level of dynamic and overdrive control, from pick attack and volume changes, without the need for tubes.

A dynamic control allows the user to select the level of the dynamic variance in almost the same way that keyboard players can alter their velocity response, giving a huge range of control over the feel of this pre-amp. A/ DA has included a great sounding FX Loop with a return level control to match your effect's output as required. Both the input and FX loop are buffered, allowing you to retain your tone along the whole signal path, even with long runs of cable or pedals. A post-gain/master boost offers up to +16dB for solos or can be used in isolation of the pre-amp for boosting the front end of an existing amp. A dedicated tuner output is also included for convenience.



The APP-1 is a very flexible beast considering its diminutive size - it's smaller than many distortion pedals I've used and can be run from a good pedal board power supply. Each channel has an independent threeband, passive EQ that is based on a 1960's Fender tone stack design. Drive and Master controls are independent for each channel



and the three voicings can also be switched per channel, allowing for a clean to high gain setting on both channels as required. The pedal can be run in three modes allowing for standalone pre-amp operation, pre-amp plus footswitchable boost, and boost only mode. The FX loop can also be switched in and out as needed.





A bypass switch allows for true bypass or tuner mute functionality. It would've been nice to see the bypass in the form of a footswitch but as you'll normally have a preamp on all of the time it's not a deal breaker. Channel switching and boost functions are controlled by footswitches.

Build quality is superb - apparently, the units are all handmade in California - the pedal feels bomb proof and all controls are solid with a positive motion for each dial and switch. Ins and outs are high quality and the included buffers do their job very well with an extremely low noise level. In use the APP-1 was very impressive, with a wide range of tones that were all exceptionally responsive and musical. A/DA has much experience with pre-amps and this shows with the APP-1. Super clean, sparkling tones reacted just like a classic tube amp and can be brought into lovely crunch territory using the dynamics and drive controls. The OD and Dist voicings allowed for huge variances in drive level and you have to work really hard to draw a bad tone out of this unit. Pick dynamics and guitar volume changes are represented with frightening accuracy and the experience is very refreshing in this day of digital amp and cab modelers.



Drive tones are thick and full sounding, ranging from bluesy breakup to high gain metal tones with scooped mids and the boost produces nothing but volume, keeping your tone intact at all times.



If you are looking for a compact, quality sounding and flexible pre-amp then I can't recommend the APP-1 highly enough. It responds better than many tube pre-amps and has a huge range of tones on offer in a very sturdy, small package. The FX Loop and boost add to the professional appeal of this unit and I can see this popping up in more and more rigs as people remember just how good A/DA's products can be.

Gi

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REVIEWS GUITAR REVIEW

Rocktron Boutique Series FX pedals

Rocktron offers one of the widest ranges of stomp boxes on the market - and in several distinct series too. We borrowed three of the US company's prestige Boutique range, including the new Guitar Silencer. First in the queue for reviews duties? Michael Casswell, of course!

Back in days when everyone was using huge stereo rack systems, Rocktron became a big player in that whole guitar processing scene, making switching systems, pre-amps, power amps, delays, reverbs, and just about everything you needed to have the guitar rack of your dreams. I know because I still have mine, and the Rocktron units I have in there all still work great. Last time I fired it all up, it still sounded really good, just different to a head and some stompboxes. Rocktron still makes all those units, which are nowadays shinier and probably more powerful, but they also make some nice true bypass stompboxes too, four of which we have here to check out and are from Rocktron's Boutique range. Constructionally, they all looked to be very rugged, with tough metal casings, standard 9V powered (via battery or a transformer). But what you want to know is how they sound, don't you? Check the video, then read on!

SACRED FIRE COMPRESSION STAR RATING $\star \star \star \star \star \star$ CHECK THE SPEC

The Sacred Fire Compressor does what all good compressors should, which is smooth out any peaks in your tone, give you bags of sustain and generally add life to your sound. They're great for dead clean sounds that need sustain, or for pushing the front end of crunchy amps, or even average overdrive pedals. A compressor is the one pedal I would hate to do without, and if you haven't tried one, then I strongly suggest you do, because you could seriously be missing out on a whole new world of fun!

If you are no expert on compressors, or haven't tried many, then the Sacred Fire will indeed



be a welcome addition to any pedal board. The trouble is for me is that I have tried a lot of compressors and it takes a lot for me to be blown away by one. I took this home and did a direct comparison with my old '80s Boss CS2, and the Sacred Fire did well in the shoot-out, but lacked some fatness to the note, and could not produce the same extreme compression to be got from my old favourite. The Sacred Fire is still a great compressor, and will do a great job in any pedalboard, and out of what is available to buy brand new, has got to be one of the better choices out there. It even has a picture of a fire, which is obviously sacred, on the front of it.

ODB OVERDRIVE

Next we have the ODB overdrive, which stands for 'Overdrive Dynamic Blues' apparently. Just in case you weren't sure it's good for playing Blues, there is a picture of a man in a nice hat, obviously 'playin' da blooz' on the front of it. Does anybody else find that a bit irritating, or is it just me?

Essentially, it is a good sounding overdrive that has inside it two of those magical germanium diodes, good for soft knee clipping and bringing out subtle nuances in your harmonic distortion, symmetrical and asymmetrical clipping, and output waveforms! The big trouble is, as I switched in these two plus and minus magical diodes, I could neither audibly hear nor feel the difference. I'm sure something very magical was happening, but it went way over my head. Thankfully, with or without the magic germanium diodes, the pedal gives a nice warm, dark sounding overdrive. With the right amp, you are in for some very juicy tones. With the wrong amp, you may find you lack a little high end to cut through.

As with any hunt for good tone, it's all about the right guitar, pedal, amp combination, and the ODB sounds like it has a lot of promise.

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CHECK THE SPEC STAR RATING $\star \star \star \star \star$







THIRD ANGEL DISTORTION

STAR RATING $\star \star \star \star$ CHECK THE SPEC O

The Third Angel Distortion pedal is just that. A distortion pedal giving copious amounts of gain. Just to tell you it can unleash doom, there is a nice picture of a skull with wings coming out of it, on the front. Is it just me again? If that isn't irritating enough, the Gain control is named 'Deceived' and what seems to be a contour control is named 'Unrighteous'. Really? C'mon!! Fortunately, sanity prevailed on the bass, treble and level pots, because they are called bass, treble and level. In terms of sound, well it will give you lots a saturated gain. Whether it's saturated gain and great tone is another



thing! The unrighteous pot goes from OK to fizzy, the deceive pot (gain) to me isn't quite extreme enough, so again, it all depends on you as a player and what guitar and amp you plan to use.

If you are serious about tone, it's better to hunt down high gain by pushing the front end of your amp with a compressor or overdrive, rather than buying a dedicated distortion pedal. But if you disagree with me, then the Third Angel could be for you. It's true bypass and with its onboard controls, you should be able to find the sound that works for you. It just wasn't for me.



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Gi guitar silencer

STAR RATING $\star \star \star \star \star$ CHECK THE SPEC 🧿



is a fantastic inclusion in an already fantastic pedal. This pedal does lack pictures of skulls, wings, fires, and men in hats, but don't let that put you off, because it does what it does superbly!

The Guitar Silencer is a pedal that will clean-up any hiss generated from your system and this one is a great pedal because not only does it have the famous Rocktron Hush circuitry on board, but it can also act as a harsher noisegate, an effect (if you can call it that) made famous from the greatly missed Dimebag's recordings. The difference between the Hush and noisegate mode is that the Hush circuitry will clean-up the sound without messing with your sustain and subtle tail-offs, whereas the noisegate will clamp down hard which gives dead silence in between heavy riffing or chording.

This pedal does it very well, and Rocktron was one the first to get noise reduction right. There is also a fantastic send and return to make your worst tone-sucking vintage pedal, true bypass, which

CONCLUSION

Pedals are very subjective. What works for me might not work for you and all one can do when reviewing them is look for obvious faults and if there aren't any (there weren't - they are clearly well made, high quality products) then be honest about how you thought they sounded. There is a whole range of these Rocktron true bypass Boutique series pedals as well as less expensive non-Boutique style stompboxes, power amps, preamps, rack processors and noise reduction units and you can't go too far wrong with Rocktron. But you do have to know what it is you are searching for and which of their products will give it to you and then you need to audition them, like all pedals, very carefully to find what works for you.









Rotosound Vintage Fuzz Pedal

It's brand new - it's impeccably vintage - it's one of the original fuzz boxes created by the legendary designer Gary Hurst - the pedals that helped create the sound of the guitar as we've known it since the mid-1960s! As used by Jimmy Page in early Led Zeppelin days, it's Rotosound's take on the immortal 1965 Tone Bender, finally reissued in handmade replica form. Guitar Interactive's **Rick Graham** is the world's first reviewer to try one, while **Gary Cooper** tells the tangled Tone Bender story.

In 1965 a new guitar sound knocked pop music (it was still called pop music back then) off its feet. There is no disputing who started it: it was Keith Richards, whose use of a Gibson Maestro FZ-1 Fuzz Tone gave the Rolling Stones' Satisfaction a sound that still has the power to stop listeners in their tracks 40 years later. Back then it was the sound that ruled an entire summer. Suddenly, everyone wanted Fuzz - but there were problems. The musically hotter side of the Atlantic back in 1965 was the UK, where Maestro effects were nowhere to be found. And, anyway, the FZ-1 had 'issues' - not least a lack of sustain. Session legend, Vic Flick, the man whose twang created the immortal James Bond theme, also had a Maestro and wasn't happy with it. He gave it to Londonbased designer Gary Hurst, whose job it was to 'sort it out'. The story started exactly there.

Hurst, who had cut his teeth working for Tom Jennings' Vox empire (he worked alongside Dick Denney on the AC 30 Top Boost design) had, by then, moved to the back room of another of London's MI scene veterans, Larry Macari, whose Denmark St music shop was hallowed ground for all the nation"s guitarists. Hurst freely admits he took the Maestro's circuit idea and improved on it. That's how design worked then (now too, in most respects) and eventually he was making the very first 'Tone Benders' which he built into wooden boxes during the evening, using components he bought as he needed them from component stores in nearby Lisle St. In ten days, Hurst made and sold ten Fuzz boxes per day - he says he doubts if he made more than 100 in total and he realised had a tiger by the tail.

WORLD EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!





CHECK THE SPEC 🧿

Demand was insatiable. A sand cast metal box was designed and rushed through, components sought in more quantity and Larry Macari, out of whose shop they were being sold, began to move more in to the picture. The Fuzz was soon known as the Sola Sound Tone Bender, Sola Sound being Macari's brand name, with Hurst being paid on a 'per box' basis. Derivatives soon followed as the craze grew. Vox wanted its own - hence the birth of the Vox Tone Bender - and soon not only did every guitarist list a fuzz box as his 'must have' - so did most of the top gear brands in the UK and many of them got them direct from Macari, including Marshall, whose renowned Supafuzz of the era was simply a modified Hurst Tone Bender, with it shape based on that of an early Olivetti calculator!

Which leads us to Rotosound - and Jimmy Page. One of Hurst's first customers (and probably the one who did most to popularise his pedal) was Jeff Beck, then still newly with the Yardbirds. Beck used the distinctive, waspish sound of the Tone Bender on the band's massive hit Heart Full of Soul and has, more or less, used pedals ever since! And another early customer was Beck's friend, the,

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[...>]



REVIEWS_PEDAL REVIEW



An original Rotosound Fuzz in all it's glory. Price? You guess!

then, session man who later joined him in the Yardbirds for a brief, glorious, period of duelling lead guitars - Jimmy Page.

Hurst says he had a lot less contact with Page than he did with Beck, but it's clear from countless photographs (let alone the first two Led Zeppelin albums) that Page was making fabulous use of Tone Benders, right throughout Zeppelin's early glory years. However, a curiosity is that among those photographs showing Page's pedals are just a handful, showing him using an extremely rare variant of the Hurst - the Rotosound model.

Here we're deeply in the land of legend and lore. Nobody remembers how Page ended-up using a Rotosound 'Tone Bender' and even exactly how it differs from the Sola Sound and Vox models isn't as clear as we might hope, but one website (www.led-zepplin. org) insists the Rotosound version was a three transistor design (one BFY71 and one NKT214) design, which endowed it with a "more mellow fuzz tone".

Now, 40 years on, Rotosound's Jason How, son of the company's founder, the late James How, has finally decided to have replicas handmade and Gi was honoured to have the world's first review sample. How admits that the

exact story surrounding his father's involvement in the Fuzz frenzy of the mid-1960s has been lost in the mists of time, but he has worked with tone guru Dr Barry R. Pyatt to get as close to the original as possible, allowing for the complete unavailability (not to mention unreliability) of some of the original components. But not, the Rotosound team insists, at the expense of the sound. They have stuck with vintage germanium transistors with a Darlington Pair for high input gain but have incorporated true bypass operation to suit modern tastes and, mercifully, use a more conventional 9v battery than the original version, which used a battery type which is now extremely hard to find.





[...>]





And does the Rotosound work as well as Mr Page's original? Over to my esteemed colleague, Mr Rick Graham!

I'm not going to beat about bush, I love my job and I love reviewing gear. From amps of all kinds to guitars of all kinds, I'm in a guitar geek's paradise, but I don't think I've ever been as excited to review anything than I was with the classic 1960s Fuzz Pedal Reissue by the UK manufacturer, Rotosound. The now classic original pedal was actually never released on sale to the general public but still managed to find its way into the hands of an amazing array of ultra high profile players, who have since achieved legendary status not least, we believe, the great Jimmy Page!

Handmade in the Rotosound factory, in Kent in the UK, this beast is visually identical to the original, with the same dimensions and weight.

As expected, the pedal has a very simple layout with three main controls: Volume, Treble and Fuzz. The volume control does what it says on the tin and controls the output level. The treble control essentially varies the ratio of bass to treble, allowing for a muddy fuzz tone, right through to a more crisp fuzz. The pedal uses a Darlington Pair input just like the original circuit, which then drives a temperature compensated 'Fuzz' transistor, controllable via the fuzz rotary control on the front panel. From this you can then dial in the amount of drive you want.

Now that's the tech speak done, it's time to talk about the most important element: how it sounds!

Being the closet hippie that I am, I'm partial to a decent bit of fuzz and was really hoping that this pedal would transport me right back to the swinging sixties. Well, it did and then some! Watch to the video!

I was immediately blown away with not only the quality of the tone but also how stunningly musical and inspirational it was. I've tried lots of fuzz pedals and in the main the majority of them just don't have any warmth to them.

With the treble control on the front panel, I was able to dial in any style of fuzz, from a thick muddy fuzz to a much brighter, crisper sound and pretty much anything in between. That, used in conjunction with the fuzz control itself, made for an absolutely killer combination which had me blasting out classic Hendrix and Led Zep tunes all afternoon!

I feel that Rotosound has created an absolute gem in this reissue. Not only does it recreate the truly stunning tones of the original, but thanks to a subtle and unobtrusive upgrade of some of the components, it also comes with bags more reliability and usability, too.

There's no doubt that ardent fans of classic, vintage fuzz tones with that unmistakable germanium sound will be clambering over one another, desperate to take one home. Well, let's face it, they have waited long enough and let me be the first to tell you: It was most certainly worth waiting for!





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THE QUIET ROOM

We've three very different products up for review this issue's Quiet Room. The first is a 12-string electro-acoustic from Faith, whose guitars have impressed us so much in the past. Though manufactured in Indonesia, Faiths are designed and overseen by the respected luthier Patrick James Eggle and the Faith acoustics that we have looked at so far in iGuitar have consistently impressed as fine instruments at excellent prices. But the Faith Venus model we're looking at this time around is something quite different. It's a 12 string and it features the German-designed Shadow HEX pickup - one of the most advanced designs on the market. Is this Venus a step too far? We find out.

You could, if you were so minded, plug an electro-acoustic into more or less any old guitar amp and it would work. But why would you want to? Modern amps designed for the purpose let you blend vocals, CD tracks, effects and are almost more mini PA systems than conventional backline amps. Sadly, the best are sometimes very expensive. But what's this? A Marshall acoustic amp? At a very wallet friendly price? It turns out that Marshall's AS50 is the company's best selling amp ever. We set out to discover why.

And, finally, it's time to settle down and daydream. What if you wanted one of the finest acoustic guitars money can buy? We've long hankered after trying a Huss & Dalton and we've finally got our wish. Handmade in Virginia USA, Huss & Dalton are reckoned to be up there with that tiny handful of the very best American acoustic guitar makers. Do we agree? Here's where you find out!

In the next issue of iGuitar was have a real treat in store for you - a major interview with one of the world's most acclaimed acoustic players - followed by the start of a brand new technique series! Make sure you're registered as a reader, so you you don't miss it!

Gary Cooper - Editor

gary@iguitarmag.com

Gi





Faith Eclipse Venus 12 string

We're great fans of 12 string guitars here at iGuitar. We've also been consistently impressed by the quality of Faith's acoustic guitars. But will the Faith magic touch hold true when the company makes a 12 string? **Rick Graham** found out.

Having reviewed a number of Faith acoustic guitars in previous issues, I'm fully aware of the kind of quality that the company put into their products. The man at the helm of their design department is none other than Patrick James Eggle, who enjoyed considerable success during the '80s and '90s with his electric guitar designs and who has more recently become renowned as a maker of beautiful quality acoustics, as reviewed in iGuitar issue 5.

As well as creating his own handmade instruments, Eggle also oversees the Faith brand which, though mass produced in the Far East, has won unanimous praise from reviewers for its quality of design and manufacture.

In iGuitar issue 9 I reviewed a Hi-Gloss series concert guitar and this time around it's the turn of the 12 string Venus version of the Eclipse series. Just like its six string counterpart, it features similar specifications and an onboard Shadow L4020 HEX preamp and Nanoflex 6 pickup, delivering a stereo output of really excellent quality.

Like all of Faith's current product line, the top is made from Engelmann spruce, mated, in this case, with solid mahogany back and sides which allow the guitar to deliver a more focused mid-range tone. The guitar looks visually stunning with the black high gloss finish. "With the Eclipse series, the black colour is actually part of base coating process, with a thin layer of lacquer applied on top. We never apply the lacquer so thick that it restricts the sound, rather we allow the thin layer of lacquer to sink into the grain of the wood a little, ensuring the wood is free to move sufficiently." Eggle says.

The wood of choice for the neck is mahogany upon which is a maccassan figured ebony fingerboard. I personally love the mother of pearl 'F' logo at the 12th fret which I feel adds a touch more elegance into the mix.

In action the Venus had a very robust and rich sound, full of subtle tones and nuances as a 12 string should be and with a great playability to match that sound. Though this isn't a cheap guitar, it needs to be borne



In action the Venus had a very robust and rich sound, full of subtle tones and nuances as a 12 string should be and with a great playability to match that sound.

in mind that it is by no means an expensive one, either and the quality on offer here is, frankly, in advance of quite a lot of 'major brand' acoustics which can command far higher prices. Good value for money? You bet!

Amplified, the Faith comes even more into its own, thanks to the advanced onboard Shadow HEX system. As well as offering an onboard three band EQ with Bass, Mid and Treble controls, the preamp features a volume control, pan control, phase button, onboard tuner and perhaps the most important element: individual volume controls for each pair of strings. For acoustic players, there is nothing worse than an unbalanced sound between strings and the HEX system alleviates this issue beautifully with a simple turn of the rotary control. Couple all of these features with a pristine high quality output and you are ready to go in any musical situation - and thanks to the quality of the Shadow preamp, none of those characteristics were lost when we put it through our PA system.



STAR RATING $\star \star \star \star$

CHECK THE SPEC 🧿

The Venus never lost any of that beautiful richness when playing higher up the fretboard either and I'm talking 12th fret and above here, thanks to the great addition of the cutaway.



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With any 12 string, an extremely important aspect to get right is the quality of the machine heads. I can't imagine many things worse than a 12 string that doesn't hold its tuning. It's bad enough with six, never mind 12! I can assure you that you needn't worry as, in this instance, the Venus comes equipped with high quality Grover Rotomatic tuners which do a sterling job of keeping the Venus nicely in tune.

The Eclipse Venus 12 string is another triumph for Faith Guitars. Everything about it exudes the high quality that the company is well known for and with this model, the addition of the HEX pre-amp really does make it a 'must try' for those of you looking to invest in a new 12 string.









The All-New Washburn WD Acoustic Series

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From the WD10S series, which continues the legacy of the D10S's affordable playability and sound, to the embellishments that set the 40 and 50 Series apart from the pack, these guitars are truly the culmination of Washburn's 127-year legacy.

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Washburn



Marshall AS50D Soloist

So you thought Marshall only made iconic Rock screamers? If so, it's time you met the Marshall AS50D - designed for electro-acoustic instruments and with a very special claim to fame in the Marshall story, as Michael Casswell explains.

So would you believe it? Marshall's best selling product ever turns out to be an acoustic amp! I can see why, having tried this AS50D. It's a 50 Watt combo with two eight inch drivers, a tweeter, two channels, auxiliary input, mix input, reverb, chorus, all wrapped up in a very portable package that won't hurt your back or your pocket. There are more expensive, complex, purist acoustic amps out there, but really, for the money, this is very hard to beat!

I used my cheap Yamaha nylon string to get a gauge on what this amp is like. The Yammy has generally always sounded good in studio situations, sometimes mic'd, sometimes DI'd, and for best results, a combination of the two, but for live work, having a good acoustic amp gives you control of things, and stacks the odds of a good on-stage sound in your favour. Yes, you can use the house PA, but then you are at the mercy of the on-stage monitor guy, who probably will not have the same idea of EQ as you, and will not be able notch or cancel out any feedback issues you might encounter at volume, or even be

bothered to give you a nice reverb to monitor with! The AS50D deals with it all for you.

If you play bigger professional gigs, then you could plug into the AS50D, set your EQ with the onboard bass and treble (separate on both channels), set the amount of onboard digital reverb you fancy, which is voiced very nicely for acoustic use, cancel out any frequencies that might feedback with the onboard anti-feedback pot, or even reverse the phase with the phase button, and DI out of the back of the amp to the PA. Then tilt the amp up facing you and away from the audience for your own monitoring. The sound guy is happy, you're happy, and the world is a nicer place.

Equally, supposing you go out solo, just you and your acoustic, playing to backing tracks anywhere that will have you. The AS50D will let you plug your guitar into channel one, set your level, EQ and reverb, then you could plug your mp3 or CD player with your backing tracks in to the aux in, and plug your vocal microphone in to the mic input



on channel two, which will then allow you set another EQ, reverb, and level, effectively turning the AS50D into a mini PA system. What more do you need?

The 50 Watts in this amp seems more than adequate, but headroom is always a good thing, so there is a 100 Watt version if you think you will need that little extra in reserve. Don't forget that this amp amplifies the sound and tone from your electro-



STAR RATING $\star \star \star \star \star$

acoustic, so if the sound coming from your guitar is a bit rubbish, then the AS50D will do its best, but don't expect miracles!

I haven't mentioned the onboard chorus which has depth and rate and is capable of quite extreme warbles, but I'm not a fan of chorus on acoustics. Personally, I think it can cheapen a really good tone. Reverb is always welcome, but you have to be careful with your chorus taste meter!



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There is an effects send and return around the back if you want to add extra toys, which is a nice inclusion.

Some of the competition include compression as a feature on an acoustic amp, but I don't think this amp lacks anything for not having it, and the sound and features you do get for the money simply makes the AS50D a 'no-brainer'. Yes, there are more expensive - much more expensive! - acoustic amps out there, but this delivers all the working musician could ask for and does so at a fantastic price. Well done again Marshall!

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Joe Bonamassa

In an interview with Guitar & Bass magazine (August 2012), Joe lists his guitars as "A trio of '59 Les Pauls is augmented by a 1960, two 1960 dot-neck 335's a '64 Firebird, a '53 Tele and about eight or nine Les Paul Historics ranging from a Joe Bonamassa model to a Gary Rossington plus other re-issues. He also has a couple of Musicmans and a few Alvarez acoustics"

Alvarez Artist Joe Bonamassa New Album "Driving Towards The Daylight" Available Now



No matter if you're just starting out or starting a world tour, we have a guitar for you. **Alvarez**



Huss and Dalton MJ acoustic

Huss and Dalton are renowned for making some of the world's finest acoustic guitars and we've been hoping to get one into iGuitar's studio for a long while. When a review sample arrived we were delighted to see find it was an MJ (Mini Jumbo) pure acoustic, as played by the legendary Albert Lee. Who got to review it? Step forward a very happy **Tom Quayle!**

Formed in the late summer of 1995, the Huss and Dalton Guitar Company represents the guitar building skills of Jeff Huss and Mark Dalton. Based in Virginia, USA, Messrs. Huss and Dalton both began their careers with Stelling Banjo Works, where they honed their instrument building skills before deciding the time was right to begin production of their own line of guitars. In just a few years, the company has achieved tremendous acclaim for professional class instruments that are ranked along with the top names in US quality guitar making.

The guitar we received for review was a stunning looking MJ Custom model. MJ stands for Mini Jumbo and it's a custom version of this line that Albert Lee is now using for his acoustic duties. The first thing you notice is the beautifully crafted tweed case that the MJ is shipped in. Its construction is flawless, with a lovely Huss & Dalton logo embossed on the top.

This quality of case always bodes well for the instrument inside and you certainly won't be disappointed as you undo the clasps and open it up for the first time! The MJ is a beautiful guitar in every respect, featuring a Sitka spruce top, stunning flame maple back and sides, maple neck, ebony fretboard and gold-plated Waverly tuners with ebony buttons. The figured maple on the back and sides is some the loveliest I've ever seen and is in real contrast to the rather understated Sitka spruce top. The combination works beautifully, though, and from an aesthetic point of view this is as good as it gets. The design is finished off with Indian rosewood binding across the neck and body, plus some lovely 'stingray' inlays and the Huss & Dalton logo on the headstock. Custom options such as wood types and finishes are available of course, giving you the ability to specify a truly unique instrument, if you choose to. There is also a popular 'C' version with a cutaway.



STAR RATING $\star \star \star \star$

The Huss and Dalton's construction also features some of the best craftsmanship you're likely to find, with immaculate internal and external work in every area. All of the internal bracing is done with hand-split Appalachian red spruce and the braces are radiused to produce a natural curve in the top, reducing built-in stress and altering the tone, reducing bass muddiness and more focused midrange, which can be a problem with some Jumbo bodied acoustics - though not this one, as you can hear in our video!

The fretwork and general finishing were also exceptional throughout, leaving you with the feeling that you are holding a real labour of love in your hands, not a mass-produced instrument. There's certainly a feeling of exclusivity here thanks to little touches such as the half-herringbone rosette and top purfling adding to the classy look and feel. These guitars command a high price tag but it's certainly not hard to see where your money goes. Clearly, if you want flawless design and build quality Huss and Dalton will provide it.

> The MJ was strung with medium tension 12 gauge strings and set up with a medium to high action. This was a little uncomfortable for my taste but this is a personal preference and as H&D will set the guitar up however you like, it's certainly not something to worry about. The 16" body width and 25.4" scale length make for a very comfortable playing experience, enhanced by the beautiful fretwork and very playable neck profile.



[...>]



Tonally, the MJ is a powerhouse of a guitar with a massive sound projecting from that Sitka spruce top and jumbo body. You can go from subtle light strums represented with intimate and delicate accuracy, to a powerful and focussed attack that never gets too muddy or unbalanced. The most amazing thing is how tonally consistent this instrument is across its entire range, with upper fretboard work sounding just as strong, clear and responsive as the lower range. Each part of the frequency range is presented in great detail with a tone that will really impress live or mic'd up in a studio. We mic'd up the MJ for our demo and were amazed by how easy it was to get an incredible tone almost immediately.

Obviously this is a very expensive guitar and at this price the Huss and Dalton is up there alongside guitars from the likes of Martin, Taylor and Collings. At that sort of quality level what separates one from another is purely personal taste as no guitar for this sort of money is going to be technically flawed.



Guitar Interactive Magazine Issue 12



What the smaller makers have going for them, of course, is that sense of exclusivity and the indefinable satisfaction of owning a guitar that was made by hand, by a craftsman. Alternatively, of course, you might prefer to find a vintage classic that has already aged and developed its tone over the years - that is always an option, too. But there's an extra satisfaction to be had from taking a guitar of this class from new and playing it in, listening to how it develops and matures - making it your own.

It's very hard to say that any guitar of this price range represents great value for money but what Huss & Dalton have done is to take traditional designs, like the Jumbo in this case, and improve on them in almost every way, resulting in a guitar that is pretty much flawless in terms of tone, aesthetics and playability. If you can afford a guitar of this calibre and want/need the best that can be achieved in the acoustic world, then you owe it to yourself to check out Huss and Dalton's immaculate work.









Compositional strategies and harmonic analysis

Hello there and welcome to my fingerstyle column for iGuitar!

In this column we will be looking at a short composition of mine simply called Study in E major, as it does exactly what it says on the tin. E major and E minor are some of the most popular tonalities for guitar music. This is mainly due to the high number of open strings we can incorporate into the arrangement. The main advantage of using as many open strings as possible (particularly to generate bass lines) is that we won't strain our fretting hand as much. Furthermore, their abundance in a composition or arrangement can definitely help getting a more fluid and idiomatic outcome.

Study pieces are normally bespoke compositions constructed around a particular concept or technical idea such as an arpeggio, a picking or fretting hand technique a time signature etc. This composition, for example makes use of the following picking hand permutation: '*p*' and '*a*' fingers simultaneously and respectively on D and high E strings. These are followed by the i, m, i, m, i, m, i on the G and B strings. The fretting hand follows a descendingparallel harmonic movement, which starts an Emaj6 chord voiced as follows: root, 5, 6, 3.

Below is the harmonic content I have chosen for this composition in its entirety. E6 / / / B7/D# / / A/C#/ / C6 / / / E/B / / / C/Bb

Please note the use of slash chords like, for example the B7/D#. This is essentially a B7 with its 3rd on the bass. (This voicing is normally referred to as a 1st inversion, as the third of the chord is on the bass).

Similarly the A/C# means an A chord over C# (another 1st inversion). The same applies for the E/B, however this is called 2nd inversion as its 5th is on the bass. Next is a C/Bb chord, which is essentially a C7 third inversion. Please compare the notes and the sound of a C7 with a C/Bb, and try to note the similarities as well as the different mood or connotation they do have.

This sequence is repeated twice to resolve on an Eadd9 chord. I personally love the way the C/Bb leads nicely onto an E chord. In theory, being a camouflaged C7 this should lead nicely to an F chord too (V – I also known as perfect cadence).



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THE QUIET ROOM_GIORGIO SERCI



Try landing on an F chord as well as on an F/A. (F 1st inversion)

The finger picking permutation used in this tune (mentioned above) could be changed as you wish. Once you find a chord sequence you like, you'll notice that any arpeggio or strumming pattern will work nicely. In other words, the most important thing when crafting a composition is to make sure that the harmonic content makes musical sense on its own (even without a melody).

Here is a breakdown of the composition bar by bar. You will be able to download a transcription by selecting the menu option in this page. As always, I recommend starting with learning the above-mentioned picking

pattern with open strings, using the planting technique explained in the previous issues.

Let's do it!

Bar 1: 2nd fret barre up to the 4th string. Ring f. on fret 4 of G and little f. on fret 4 of E.

Bar 2: Index f. on fret 1 of D. Ring f. fret 2 of G. Open B and little f. on fret 2 of E.

Bar 3: Ring f. on fret 4 of A. Index f. on fret 2 of G. Open E.

Bar 4: Similar to the previous but with the middle finger on fret 3 of A.

Bar 5: Exactly the same shape as the previous down a fret. Middle f. on fret 2 of A. Index







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THE QUIET ROOM_GIORGIO SERCI

on fret 1 of G and open B.

Bar 6: Index f. fret 1 of A. Open G. Middle f. on fret 1 of B and open E.

The above six bars can be repeated twice (or as many times as you wish). When repeating any section twice or more, you may want to play *'sul ponticello'*, (closer to the bridge) or *'sul tasto'* (over the frets) for a more contrasting result.

Using a wider dynamic and tonal range is important to keep our listeners engaged, especially when repeating the same section. I guess we could call this a 'yawn-buster' strategy!

Now let's continue with the tag of the piece!

Open E (low) and B simultaneously. Middle f. on fret 2 of A. Ring f. on fret 2 of D. Little f on fret 4 of D. Index f on fret 1 of G. Open E and E. Index f. on fret 2 of E (high). Little f. on fret 4 of E. Alternate with

> open B. Little f. on fret 7 of E. Open B. Little f. on fret 12 to be played simultaneously to an open E string. Barre on fret 9 and arpeggiate string 4, 3, 2, 3, 4. Let ring and play a *'rallentando'*, namely slowing down, for a more conclusive outcome.

Congrats! You've completed this tune.

As always, tonal and dynamic awareness is what makes our playing sound 'expensive' or 'cheap'. To meet the former objective, slow practice is key, as we certainly don't want memorise wrong parts or develop bad technical habits.

Take one beat at a time, memorizing the fretting hand shapes and pattern.

It is wise to follow the recommended fingering and muting techniques, as per the video and the transcription included. Practice singing the melody in the low register played with the 'p' finger while playing the piece.



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facebook.com/giorgiosercimusic Guitar Fingerstyle iGuitar interactive issue 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 Lick Library Video Lessons: Acoustic Colours Series 1, 2, 3, 4 Cavatina



This strategy can help performing the tune in a more '*cantabile*' (singing like) manner.

As recommended in the previous columns, where we mainly focused on the picking hand, we ought to focus most of all on accuracy and consistency of tone. Strategies to further improvement include the use of the planting technique described in the previous columns, resting our fingers onto the chosen strings, and executing each stroke with a controlled and even pressure and with tonal and dynamic awareness. Each note we play should sound as full-bodied and as good as the previous one.

Please focus on minimum-movement approach, as this will help delivering the piece in a more accurate and consistent manner, while saving energy.

This will complete this fingerstyle and guitar composition lesson.

Whether you will play this composition on a steel strung or a nylon strung guitar, this will provide a great opportunity to improve your muting techniques as well as coordination skills of the picking and fretting hand.

I hope you will enjoy playing this study piece and that this will give you some ideas on how to write your own solo guitar compositions. I will be pleased to get your feedback on facebook.com/giorgiosercimusic or giorgoserci.com

Till the next time, Good-bye!







HE BASSNEN .

We make no apologies for returning to two brands we've visited before for this issue's Bassment: Overwater and Laney. Overwater is one of the UK's longest established bespoke bass makers and a couple of years ago took the brave step of expanding its ideas into volume produced instruments. This can be a dangerous step for a handcrafted instrument maker. What works when you make a handful of instruments a week and can inspect each one, doesn't always translate to volume production in a factory thousands of miles away. Fortunately, Overwater's founder, Chris May, teamed-up with the Tanglewod acoustic company, which already had the contacts and knowledge to make volume production work, having established Tanglewood as one of Europe's best selling acoustic guitar brands. We looked at an early Overwater Tanglewod (some people call them 'Tanglewaters') in an earlier issue. Now the company has two even less expensive models on offer and we couldn't resist coming back to see if the formula was still working.

Laney was a much quicker return. Its SVTbashing Tube Nexus and 8x10 blew us away iGuitar 11, so when we spotted an even louder model in the catalogue, the FET head, we asked to sample its delights too. This time we chose a 4x10 and a 1x15 to give it voice. Was Dan Veall suitably impressed? Could he hear us if we asked?

Finally, Elixir, the US company that introduced coated strings to the world, has a new coating as well as stainless steel sets to add to its well established Nickel strings. Has Elixir finally made stainless steel a comfortable choice? We pitched Elixir's two new bass sets head to head.

Remember that we're always keen to hear your suggestions about what you'd like us to look at. Just email editor@iguitarmag.com

Gary Cooper - Editor



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LANEY NEXUS FET + NX410 AND NX115 CABS

In last issue's Bassment **Dan Veall** was so blown away by Laney's mighty Nexus tube head that we whistled-up its MOSFET sibling, the even more powerful Nexus FET head - this time paired with 4x10 an 1x15 Laney cabs. So come on, Dan - what's the difference between these two massive rigs?

Hot on the heels of the British made powerhouse Laney Nexus Tube and NX810 cabinet reviewed in issue 11 of iGuitar, comes the mighty Laney Nexus FET head sporting 650W RMS output power from a solid state Mosfet amplifier, driving punchy bass tones fed from the similarly fully featured pre-amplifier of the Nexus Tube. Are we spoiled for choice, or what?!

The front panel layout of this FET Nexus is exactly the same as the Nexus Tube and is just as much a total breeze to use, even without the manual. There are some great features on the front panel that makes this Nexus head one of the most flexible on the market in terms of tonal shaping options. Not many heads, or even separate preamplifiers, can boast a clean FET stage and a tube stage that can be used independently or in tandem with each other but also be able to control the amount of dirt and its level in the mix with your punchy clean bass sound; usually mixing those two signals together is the reserve of multi-effects pedals or boutique bass distortion pedals.

If that wasn't enough, foot switchable via the included robust metal cased five-way pedal is the parametric equaliser section that can be punched in or out as a solo or boost channel, or used simply for tonal variation. Most manufacturers stop at just one switchable EQ section - but not Laney! A graphic equaliser for further tonal adjustment is also switchable. Yes, you can use that independently of the parametric too! Does the Laney FET actually need these to sound good though? Well, no, even with all the additional features turned off, it makes for a pleasing and clear tone with lots of headroom. The amplifier head has four 'always on' controls that set your 'base' tonal shaping. Bass and Treble shelving EQ as well as a global Presence control and my favourite 'deep' control for when you really want to shift some air - an additional 'low end bass boost', if you will. It's not as if the 650W head is going to struggle providing girth, but those of us who like a beefy low B, or in the case of my seven string, an even lower F# string, the sub control adds that all important heft! - but beware - it's not always





CHECK THE SPEC 🧿



wise to over-cook this control – especially if you are using cabinets that can't handle this sort of low end. I think the Laney NX range won't have too many problems, however, as they are well matched, feature premium drivers, and have a suitable power rating to stop them frying too quickly!

NX410

Four Neodymium Celestion speakers in a ported cabinet provide punch and a balanced sound that will cut through well in pretty much any environment. Plenty of headroom on tap with these custom lightweight drivers as they are able to handle 800W RMS at 8 Ohms. In the middle of the baffle lives a compression driver tweeter that can be set for three different levels of operation. Full on, attenuated to 'half output' and off. The Off position works very well if you prefer

using high gain sounds and distortion. I like a bright tone and found that the full on setting with my naturally bright sounding bass needed reigning in a little with the tone control. To be honest, I'd rather have this than not enough clarity. Those with 'warmer' sounding basses will approve of the added top end sparkle.

NX115

The NX115 cabinet features a single Neodymium Celestion woofer rated at 400 Watts RMS at 8 Ohms and a shelf port at the bottom of the baffle for extending the low frequency roll-off. The cabinet is the same width as the NX410 but not quite as tall. It's an easy lift at 20Kg, featuring heavy duty side handles as do its bigger brothers, the NX410 and NX810.

CONCLUSION

It has to be said that both the Nexus FET and Nexus Tube heads with their wooden sleeves are mighty beasts. We are as far removed here from the dinky, lightweight heads of recent years as we are likely to get! Even without the valve technology, the Nexus FET head alone still weighs in at a monstrous 27Kg. The weight of...well, the NX410 to be exact. You can however remove both heads from their sleeves and rack mount them should you need to. This is a





serious touring rig. If you are not too fussed about the size and weight of these machines and you are looking for a 'proper man's rig' then for the money, you're in for a real treat!

In terms of sounds, it's each to their own and a close race between the FET and the Tube. For me though, despite being a huge beast of a head, the Laney Nexus Tube and the NX810 cabinet really were the winning combination. I can absolutely understand why some players would prefer the Nexus FET, but personally, even though the tube version is quite a lot more expensive, I loved

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THE BASSMENT_HEAD AND CABINET REVIEWS

the real grind in the tube channel and would very much like to have used the rig at a gig to hear what it can really do! A huge full sound!

I've played a lot of Laney gear over my short music career but have to say that both the FET and Tube Nexuses (Nexi?) strike me as as being amongst the very best in UK engineering. Laney is obviously very proud of the Nexus range and the attention to detail in the specifications is stunning. Gold contacts in signal relays and gold plated circuit boards, a massive toroidal transformer and the best industry proven FET transistors on board, all go toward making the Nexus amplifiers the best they can be.

This is big hefty professional-class kit that is getting noticed by bass heavyweights the world over - it's not hard to see why!







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Every time you play your bass, bits of you are left to invade the windings, contaminate your strings and kill your tone. Elixir® Strings is the only brand to coat the entire string and form a barrier against tone-killing gunk. That's why players report with Elixir Strings their tone lasts longer than any other string, uncoated or coated. You'll get the tone and the feel you love - gig after gig.

Hear more from Yolanda Charles: www.elixirstrings.co.uk/artists/YolandaCharles.html



Click to watch the video Yolanda Charles plays Elixir Strings Nickel Plated Electric Bass with NANOWEB® Coating, Medium Gauge .045 - .105



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"I've been playing the hell out of the new nickel strings. I really love their sound, feel and durability."

- Yolanda Charles



youtube.com/elixirstringsmedia



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OVERWATER BY TANGLEWOOD STANDARD AND STANDARD PLUS BASSES

Overwater is one of the UK's longest established and most highly regarded custom bass manufacturers. Its Tanglewood volume-produced models have impressed us before - and now there are two newcomers to the range at even better prices! Can the newcomers really justify wearing the prestigious Overwater badge? **Dan Veall** finds out.

Back in issue five, we looked at something unusual - a volume produced Overwater bass. Overwater has an illustrious history of offering handmade basses of the very highest quality, stretching back to the 1970s, but commissioning a range of instruments to be made in the Far East is always a gamble and some illustrious brands have come horribly unstuck when they've tried it. Not, we found, Overwater, whose strategy of teaming-up with the highly regarded Tanglewood acoustic company gave it access to the best factories and a company highly experienced at handling this sort of operation. The Aspiration Deluxe got a top score - but what happens when Overwater and Tanglewood try to reach towards the entry-level? Let's find out!

From the start, the two newcomers looked impressive as we took them from the packaging and a closer inspection certainly didn't disappoint. I had the Standard (passive) model on my lap first and was impressed with both the set-up and the finish. I accept that in order to keep the price down, the bass cannot feature the premium hardware of its boutique brethren, but the hardware that is included is certainly functional and rewards us with a usable tone with no undue buzzes or rattles.

Speaking of tone, I spoke to Overwater's founder, Chris May, who told me that even on this entry level instrument, the passive 'J style' single coil pickups are custom wound specifically for this model. A nice touch.

The passive electronics, featuring volume, pan control and 'treble roll-off' tone control all work as expected, with a smooth response throughout each of their travels. Check out the video for examples of the sounds available from the bass. Plugged in the bass has a great passive tone to it. Quite organic!

The metallic red finish is blemish free and coats a poplar body on to which a one piece maple neck is bolted. There's a neat set of mini Gotoh tuning keys and I love the attention to detail which means that even a budget Overwater bass has a matching coloured headstock.

ho standard \star \star \star \star \star \star standard plus \star \star \star \star \star \star Check the spec 🧔



[...>]



THE BASSMENT_BASS GUITAR REVIEWS

We're also treated to a full 24 fret neck with a 19mm spacing and a 40mm nut width that feels nice and slim and quick to navigate. - Incidentally, both basses come fitted as standard with Overwater's own light gauge nickel strings.

The 'Standard' model has some great features, but Overwater felt that there was an opportunity for another variant of the Standard model to fit in before you get to the Aspiration Elite, Deluxe, Artist, Classic J and Contemporary models. That's right! There really is something for every four or five string player in the range. So next up in the Aspiration range is the very tasteful metallic white 'Standard Plus'. This model features better components and a totally different voice to that of the 'Standard' model - and for not a lot more money! First of all we have the same poplar body with a bolt on maple neck the main differences being hardware related as the electronics feature a John East 'Aspiration' active circuit paired up with the same Aspiration passive soap bars that you'd find in the company's Deluxe series basses. The active circuit is a two-band model featuring bass and treble cut and boost as well as a 'pull up' bright switch on the volume control should you need it. The neck has a rosewood fret board again and we are treated to 24



Overwater by Tanglewood Standard and Standard Plus Basses

high nickel silver frets that are much harder than you will find on cheaper mass produced basses. Chris May wanted to make clear that even with a price conscious instrument, he wants to see these models, just like the premium counterparts, enjoying a long service life. Good for him!

Out of the two instruments, the Standard model with the J pickups was a joy, but plugging in the Standard Plus unleashed a fantastic vibrant, modern and characteristic tone. The Overwater Standard Plus certainly does a good job of showing up weaknesses of other mass produced instruments at the same price point!







THE BASSMENT BASS GUITAR REVIEWS



It's clear that the combination of Overwater's experience making handmade basses for professionals and Tanglewood's ability to make mass produced instruments to an uncommonly high standard has been a success. We are firmly in mainstream bass territory here where there may be bass beginners who simply haven't heard of Overwater and may not realise that what they are being offered is like finding a Bentley for Ford money. We can only hope that retailers take them aside and explain why these basses shouldn't be confused with run of the mill mass market instruments. Price notwithstanding, they are in a different class - particularly the Standard Plus!



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ELIXIR COATED STAINLESS STEEL AND COATED NICKEL PLATED STRINGS

Elixir completely shook-up the string market when it launched its polymer coated strings. Now well established, the Elixir range has just been improved with new coating technology. But can our resident Bassment dungeonmeister, Dan Veall, tell the difference between the nickel and stainless versions? We set him the test...

In iGuitar issue nine we enjoyed our first bass string review. To be honest, it was something we were a little unsure about undertaking. The good news is that it went well and you, dear readers, gave us much positive feedback! So, when we were contacted by Elixir Strings about new developments to its coated strings range, we hopped right on it to bring you a working comparison guide between the two new types.

Elixir provided us with two identical Ibanez basses, one strung with the brand new Nanoweb coated stainless steel strings and the other with the coated nickel strings. Just to clarify, these both featured the new Nanoweb coating, but the stainless steel sets are completely new, nickel having always been available from Elixir but now coming with the new coating.

Given the cost of bass strings, particularly coated premium quality ones, we felt this is a test that you'd not be able to do very easily at home. After all, how many of us have two identical basses that we can strap different types of strings onto, then compare back and forth?

So first up. What of Elixir and why coated strings?

Elixir, owned by the WL Gore company (they of the fabulous GoreTex waterproof fabric beloved of outdoor types), has been producing coated strings since 1995 and has carved-out a sizeable chunk of the guitar and bass string market, despite having to persuade musicians to spend more than they were used to for strings and having been a completely new name entering an already crowded field. Clearly, players were impressed. Now, Elixir says its strings are even better.

Elixir's strings feature a 'microscopically thin' Nanoweb fluoropolymer coating that the company says is the only type that covers the entire outer string surface, whereas quote: "other string manufacturers offer coatings that protect the wrap wire going round the core but neglect the gaps between the windings, allowing deterioration to occur." This deterioration is the result of dirt, sweat, oil and skin debris being rubbed in to the windings every time we play our





instruments. For some, even a single high energy gig in a hot sweaty venue is enough to take the brightness and life out of standard uncoated strings.

Let's take a closer look at each of the sets of the strings in for this review. First, have a look at the video. I specifically plugged the basses directly in to the studio DI and not an amplifier because I wanted an uncoloured sound for you to hear. All of the settings on both basses were set identically. Both pickups are full on and EQs were set flat. Once again I didn't 'shred' but kept my playing simple, so that you could hear the tone of each of the sets of strings.

Visually, it was obvious up close which set was which. The stainless steel Elixirs had the usual more grey look in comparison to the



STAR RATING ★ ★ ★ 🔸

Elixir Strings

Only brand that provides a patented coating that covers the entire string Gaps between the windings are protected Forms a barrier against tone-killing gunk

nickel strings, which have a richer 'tinge of gold/yellow' colour.

We (myself and my crew) had an opportunity to listen to the strings acoustically too before recording and found that there was a noticeable, yet subtle, difference in the sound. Though we actually found it difficult trying to describe that sound. I have to admit!

The stainless steel strings still sounded rich, but with grittier mids, while the nickels sounded sweeter and had a more refined top end. I guess, in short, the nickels sounded like you'd hope nickels would and the same for the stainless. That's a good thing and certainly justifies offering two different types - the coating being an added benefit and not inhibiting the essential nature of the string beneath.



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THE BASSMENT_STRING REVIEW



I want to talk about the string's physical attributes before we get to plugging in and listening. Both sets feel balanced and of an even tension across the neck. The most noticeable difference between the strings was certainly one of the key points that Elixir is very keen to stress. The nickel strings felt silky in use and finger slides were smooth and effortless up and down the neck. Swapping the basses over, I'd expected to feel the more usual 'textured' finish of uncoated stainless steel windings but was very pleased to note that the Nanoweb coating really does make a difference here. I think it's safe to say that for those who really are looking for a stainless steel string sound but have been put off by the rough feel, this could very much be the way forward. Smooth and again easy to change positions!

Are they worth the premium price? Elixir insists that, averaged out, its strings are cost

effective because they last so long. This isn't quite such an issue for six string guitarists as the investment per set is so much less than it is for bass players so buying a set to test doesn't hurt as much! To be fair, the only way we could make a direct comparison in terms of longevity would be to have taken these two basses on the road - one with coated strings and one without. Maybe we'll try that one day but for now, we're happy to report that these newcomers sound as different from each other as you hope, the stainless set is more comfortable to handle than stainless strings usually are and, if past precedent is a guide, both sets will stay fresh sounding for a lot longer than conventional strings. If maintaining new string tone is your goal these must be high on your list - and now you have the choice between stainless and nickel.











BY RICK GRAHAM

GUITAR ROADMAPS

Vibrato

In this issue I'd like to take a look at what I consider to be one of the most important techniques a guitarist can have: Vibrato technique. The actual technique itself can come in many forms and often depends on the style of music that you play. What I'd like to do though, is talk about my particular approach to the technique and the methods I employ to keep my vibrato in top form. Back in the early days, vibrato was definitely a technique that was high up on my priority list and it still is to this day. I realised early on that in order to deliver a phrase well, I needed to be in complete control of all aspects of my vibrato. Before we go straight into the first methods though, I feel it is vital to understand that Vibrato technique is pretty much the same technique as string bending. For me, the main difference is that with Vibrato, is that we bend the string multiple times, as opposed to just once.

One of the first methods that I used and one that really helped me gain more of an understanding, was to view pitches as an imaginary line. The actual vibrato itself I would view as an oscillation of the pitch and I would see that as a wave. The depth of the wave would directly correspond to the width of the vibrato e.g. the more subtle the wave, the more subtle the vibrato. Once I started to view it in this way it became a lot easier for me to work on the actual technique itself.

A great place to implement this is to take a pitch, for example the C note at the 5th fret of the G string, and at regular intervals, bend the string up a semitone. It is vital that when you are bending, you return to the exact same pitch every time. I cannot stress enough the importance of this. It is a perennial problem that occurs amongst players and is often the cause of a poorly executed vibrato. Once you feel you have total control you can then speed up the process but be sure that you stay in control when you do. Try practicing this in several different areas of the fingerboard and on various different strings too.

The next step is to alter the depth of the wave i.e. the width of the vibrato. Do the same thing but this time make it a wholetone bend. After that do a minor third and so on. I used to do this for hour after hour and believe me, it works!

The next and far more demanding application of the technique is to apply the

principle to a note that is already bent. For example, play the D note on the 15th fret of the B string and bend it up a tone to E and then apply the vibrato. The key with getting a good vibrato here is to apply the vibrato so that we go just below and just above the E note. Again, you must return to the exact

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same pitches every time you do this or it will not sound good. As with the previous application of vibrato technique, it is important to try the same thing in different areas of the fretboard and on different strings.



DIFFERENT VIBRATO TYPES

You can achieve the effect of vibrato by using different techniques other than string bending too. One very effective method is to use the side to side, classical style vibrato. Lots of players employ this technique to varying effect and I have been known to use it on occasion too! This technique involves applying pressure to the string and then moving the fretting finger in a horizontal, side to side movement. This results in a very smooth sounding oscillation of pitch but it may take some practice to return to the exact same pitch every time. Another technique is the sliding vibrato technique as used by players such as Greg Howe. The way to apply this technique is to slide a semitone above and below the actual pitch itself. It's important to do this at some speed because it just doesn't sound right if performed too slowly.

I hope I've given you food for thought regarding this very important but often overlooked technique. Have fun and I'll catch up with you next issue!

Gi



Rick Graham - Vibrato

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COLUMNS_TOM QUAYLE



Introducing the II-V-I Progression

In previous issues we've been expanding your chord knowledge and vocabulary by looking at using modal formulae to develop 7th, 9th, 11th and 13th chords. We followed this by harmonising melody notes to expand our knowledge of chords further. Now it's time to start putting this knowledge into practice using chord progressions and we're starting out with the most commonly used progression of them all - the II-V-I progression.

To begin this topic we need to look back a few issues to our basic diatonic chords in a major scale. Let's use C Major for our example. You may remember that the diatonic 7th chords in the key of C Major are as follows: -

Chord I - C major 7 **Chord II - D minor** 7 **Chord III - E minor** 7 **Chord VI - F major 7 Chord V - G dominant** 7 **Chord VI - A minor 7** Chord VII - B minor 7 flat 5

Notice that each chord is associated with a Roman numeral, denoted by its place within the major scale. C major 7 is built from the first note within the major scale so gets the Roman numeral I. If you're not familiar with Roman Numerals I recommend that you learn them up to the number seven as all of the chord progression we'll be studying will rely on this system.

It would follow then, that a II-V-I progression in the key of C major would use the II chord, Dm7, followed by the V chord, G7, followed by the I chord, Cmaj7. As you've

learned in previous columns you can add extensions to each of these chords from their relevant modes giving you 9ths, 11ths or 13ths as you see fit. The progression could be played as: -

Dm11 - G13 - Cmaj9 Or Dm9 - G11 - Cmaj13

The extensions you choose is an artistic and compositional decision, but they will all work in this context, adding colour to the existing chord progression as you see fit.

So that covers our MAJOR II-V-I, but you'll already know that we can write in a minor key also - so how do we play a II-V-I in a minor key? Well, Jazz and fusion musicians think about this progression in a slightly different way that will be explained more fully at a later stage but for now I'll be teaching you the progression so that you can play a minor II-V-I and use it in a chord sequence in the next issue.

In the key of C minor our root notes remain exactly the same as for C major. The II chord has a D root note, the V a G root note and the I a C root note. The quality of the chords changes though, giving us the following progression: -

Dm7b5 - G7alt - Cm7

The Dm7b5 is a minor 7 chord with a flattened 5th, the G7alt stands for G7 altered. Altered dominant chords contain altered 5ths and 9ths, meaning that those intervals are either raised or lowered (sharpened/flattened)



by a semitone. This gives us the following available chord voicings (in the video I use a G7#5 chord as an example): -

G7#5, G7b5, G7#9, G7b9, G7#5b9, G7#5#9, G7b5#9, G7b5b9

I've included voicings for all of these altered chords. Again, it is an artistic choice as to which one you use with some exhibiting more dissonance than others. All are correct though as V chords in our minor II-V-I progression.

As an assignment for this month try to play major and minor II-V-I progressions in as many keys as you can, figuring out what each chord would be and trying the progression out in at least two places on the neck. I'll see you in the next issue where we'll be combining II-V-I's to make longer Jazz progressions. Good luck and see you there!







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PROCONCEPTS11 RYHTHM

In this Pro Concepts we are again going to look at rhythm playing. Hopefully this crosses over to that grey area of 'feel', which is not a thing you can easily teach. We have touched on this before, but rhythm really is such a huge subject that needs a lot of coverage and talking about, because without it, you will not be a rounded player (apart from if you eat too many pies, then you would be a rounded player that has no rhythm!)

When we looked at the whammy bar techniques last issue, that was more about control, phrasing and sound, with a more freeform approach. Well, with good rhythm playing, you definitely need control, phrasing and the right sound to lock things down and you need to be a lot more defined and disciplined, rather than freeform in your approach. All very easy to talk about, but a frightening amount of players are a bit rubbish when it comes making things sit well and feel good in a song! Great rhythm can really communicate to the listener and also when it becomes no effort, it becomes great to play .

I'm almost obsessive about time and feel. If I'm playing live and the drummer starts to speed up, or slow down, it's real torture for me because I really feel it, and it really gets to me. I know some muso friends that are gifted with perfect pitch and apparently it's very similar for them if something is very slightly out of tune. Obviously there are situations where it does feel good to play with the tempo a little, and that is a completely different mindset and can be totally cool. I'm not saying I have perfect time, but I have been tested with clicks and recording situations and it does seem that I've developed an internal clock to be reckoned with. I can also get very frustrated with my own playing, if I improvise a fast solo that isn't, for the most part, bang in time with the subdivisions available to me within the bar. I really know when I go out of the pocket, because my internal pulse is thumping away inside telling me that I have, and because it's there, I'm able to adjust and bring whatever I'm playing back in line. The big danger is when you DON'T know if you've gone out of time, and you don't feel an internal metronome, and you just play merrily on without a care in the world!



COLUMNS_MICHAEL CASSWELL

You are going to ask me how to develop this internal feel for time and a cool feel for rhythm guitar . And I'm going to admit I'm not really sure! There is probably no right way or wrong way, but I can say I was continually surrounded by Motown music when I was a kid, having a much older brother and sister, which must have sunk into my little brain on many levels. Groove, hooks, vocals, the pulse, the arrangements, the songcraft, it all must have had an effect. Around the same time it was the big Disco era of the late '70s. Listen to the main guitar hook in the Bee Gees' Staying Alive. Total groove, feel and rhythm! How about the guitar on Pick Up The Pieces by the Average White Band. Or Steve Lukather's guitar on Michael Jackson's Beat It. They are all fantastic rhythmic ideas that add so much to the piece of music. This approach to the guitar is probably one of the hardest things to master. Not sweep picking or Legato or Hybrid tappy happy widdly woo solos, but rhythmic chops, with the right feel, tone, groove, chord inversion and approach!



Michael Casswell - Rhythm







COLUMNS_MICHAEL CASSWELL



So with that all in mind, I have tried to break down and show a few things that may or may not help, because we are talking tiny details here, between something sounding OK, or something that instantly grabs you. One general rule you can take note of, is the fact that very rarely do you need to play all six strings all of the time. Breaking up the chord into smaller parts adds a ton of mojo. My trick of using the thumb over the neck to take care of the low E adds a lot, and is a technique used by many of my favourite guitarists in music. Hendrix being one of them. How you hold the pick, how you strike the string, what sound and which pick up you choose are all considerations, as is good chordal inversion and voicing knowledge.

In the video take you through a little improvised C minor chord sequence and try to show you how to execute and expand upon the idea. Good rhythmic chops are essential in all aspects of guitar. Without it you are always going to sound like the next guy, and in this business, you don't want that!





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MISHA MANSCOR

Sometimes there's nothing more refreshing than taking a look at something different to expand your horizons and introduce some new ideas into your playing and writing. To show you this in practice, this month I've decided to do a style profile of Misha Mansoor of the "Djent" band Periphery. Those of you familiar with my own style will know that this is far from the sort of thing I play, but looking at some of the great ideas Misha has has spurred me towards using some of these concepts in my own style.

Misha himself has drawn his own influences from artists like John Petrucci, Meshuggah, Sikth and even the ethereal fusion of Allan Holdsworth and now puts them all together in the hugely popular band Periphery. As I mention in the video, checking out the bands self titled album, and this year's Periphery II: This Time It's Personal is essential to really get what this is all about. Then again, this isn't just about Periphery, you should definitely go and check out other bands in this style, such as Tesseract, Aliases, and even Animals as Leaders.

In this column I'm playing a 7 string guitar tuned AEADGBE, but these idea would still work quite well if you just tuned the low string on a 6 string down to A (AADGBE). There are no rules when it comes to tuning for the extended range instruments and Misha is known to play in various tunings like, CGCFAD, AGCFAD, and even a drop D 6 string with an added low 7th string BDADGBE – these tunings are always used to help inspire creativity, so give some of them a try.

When you really look at the A section of this, it would be easy to say, "well this riff shifts between 7/8, 11/8, and 7/4" but if that were actually the case then the drum accents would fall here giving you a rather jolting feeling when listening. In actual fact, the riff is played over a basic 4/4 groove and the rhythm fights the pulse (rhythmic displacement). These need to be felt rather than thought, so a long session listening to Meshuggah will help here. The basic idea is to have a series of riffs that fight the beat, then line-up again for the repeat.

On beat 3 of bar 1, you have a trademark of this style, and that's the clashing sound of two notes a semitone apart, it sounds great when you have these ring into each other to create a dissonant high frequency contrast to the lows chugging rhythms. Sometimes Periphery will have a second guitar just playing this interval high up on the neck as little rhythmic stabs or dissonant melodic parts. Check out Insomnia from Periphery's self titled album at 0:42 onwards to hear this in action.

Bar 4 really highlights one of the more finger twisting elements of this style as we have a descending run that skips strings, shifts positions and uses open strings for some big intervalic skips. These ideas sound great, but they're definitely not the sort of thing you can just









improvise, so learn this one carefully, or try and write your own series of licks that you can pull out whenever a riff calls for it. As an example of this, if you look at the second time bar, this lick changes slightly as I move right up the neck for some left and right hand tapping ideas. This idea is also quite complicated and needs to be taken slowly.

The B section to this piece is obviously physically easier to play, but in the grand scheme of things, this is just as hard to play as rhythmically this part is a nightmare. As I've already mentioned in this article, these riffs really need to be felt rather than counted, but this riff can be a real pain if this

is the sort of riff you're not used the hearing. This is very much in the style of Meshuggah, but can be heard in the music of plenty of other bands such as Matiias Eklundh's Freak Kitchen, it can bring a really modern sound to your playing if it's something you can get on top of. Use the tab provided carefully and you should have this one down in no time at all, but playing it up to speed will be the real battle. Remember, feeling it is the goal, but it has to be accurate and you need to be play it the same way every time so that you can synch up with the bass and drums.

Until next month, keep rocking!



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COLUMNS JAMIE HUMPHRIES

RHYTHM METHDD

The Rhythm Method - 1/16th note rhythms

Welcome to the 11th instalment of the rhythm method. Sorry about the missed edition in iGuitar 11, but pressure of work got the better of me! In this feature I'm going to start a new series of lessons that look at funk guitar rhythm techniques. Funk playing crosses over many styles and genres and such guitarists as Nuno Bettencourt, Tom Morello, John Frusciante, Jimi Hendrix, Brian May and David Gilmour, to name but a few, have all crossed over into the territory. But let's not forget key artists in the genre, The Meters, James Brown, Michael Jackson, Chic, The Average White Band; all of whom have some classic and inspiring rhythm parts to study.

To many inexperienced students, the idea of playing funk guitar means just full blown five and six string minor 7th chord voicings, often performed with lots of mutes and very undynamic in their effect. This isn't me being disrespectful, it's just that in many years of

teaching guitar I see the same issues arise again and again. There is a lot more to funk than that! When performing funk we often use simple partial chords that don't take up too much of the mix, and also use a much lighter and more subtle rhythm technique. To get you into the idea I am going to present you with a series of practice rhythms that use different combinations of 16th notes, as well as some cool funk strum pattern examples for you to practice.

First let's discuss the principle behind 1/16 note rhythms; there are four 1/16th notes to a ¹/₄ note beat, meaning our beat is divided into 16 equal sub-divisions. These should be called 1e&a, 2e&a, 3e&a, 4e&a, as I always think it is important to be able to verbally say what you are playing. Something else you should understand is that the $1/16^{th}$ notes can also be replaced with $1/16^{th}$ note rests. Remember; you can rest or pause any subdivision you can play.



COLUMNS_JAMIE HUMPHRIES

Often when 1/16 note rests are used, and the strums fall on the off, or up beat, it's called a syncopated rhythm, which is common practise in funk. Something else that I should point out before we look at the examples is that you need to understand

basic strum directions, meaning what direction strum falls on the 1/16 note, or other divisions used within the strum pattern, so be sure you pay attention to those on the exercises.



1/16th note rhythms Lesson



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Ex1 is just our basic 1/16th note rhythm, which I have explained the counting for. Try and keep the picking hand light and don't dig the pick too far into the strings.

Ex2 is a very common pattern, with the first two 1/16 notes being replaced with an eighth note. Make sure you pay attention to the counting in the video and also the strum directions.

Ex3 is another common rhythm with the last two $1/16^{th}$ notes being replaced with an $1/8^{th}$ note.

Ex4 is a very tricky rhythm the 2nd and 3rd 1/16th notes being replaced with an 1/8 notes, giving us 1/16th, 1/8th, 1/16th. Again, pay attention to the strum directions as they will take a bit of getting use to.

Ex5 demonstrates two 1/16th notes performed on the first half of the beat, with the second half of the beat being replaced with an 1/8th note rest. This exercise is pretty straightforward, just be sure to cut off the final strum.

Ex6 is the reverse of the previous exercise, with the 1/8th note rest appearing on the first half of the beat. This type of rhythm is often associated with reggae as well as funk.

Ex7 is a very tricky rhythm, as we have replaced the 2nd and 3rd 1/16th notes with an 1/18 note rest, so you have to really pay attention to the rest, and muting so that we get a definite break between the rhythms. **Ex8** is a variation on Ex3, with this exercise including a $1/16^{th}$ note rest for a very tight syncopated sound.

Ex9 is our first stylistic rhythm, where once again it is vital that you pay attention to the strum directions, as well as the rests.

Ex10 is another tricky rhythm that makes use of lots of rests, for a very syncopated feel. Once again pay attention to the different strum directions being used, and make sure that you really mute the strings where the rests appear.

Ex11 is our most syncopated idea yet, with lots of rests throughout. Beat one also includes a dotted rhythm. When a dot is added next to a rhythm it adds half the value on again. If we dot our 1/18 note it will last for three 1/16th notes.

Ex12 is our final exercise and although it doesn't use rests, this one makes use of another technique call a tie. The tie literally joins the rhythms together.

So there we have our introduction to 1/16th note rhythms. These combinations of rhythms are pretty hard, and are made harder with the rests. Also as I have already mentioned, make sure you pay attention to the strum direction, and study them on the video.

Gi



Stuart Bull's

GUITAR WORLD

Odd Groupings

In this issue's column we are looking at odd groupings and how we can use this concept to develop existing ideas and licks to a different level. We all love licks but I believe concepts are just as valuable as they help us compose our own ideas, which for me personally provides a great feeling of achievement and possibly a better chance remembering the ideas as we developed them ourselves.

This time we are working in a Rock Blues format which suits these licks perfectly as a lot of Blues ideas and licks can sound similar, so providing fresh twists to our existing ideas can help to attract the ear of the listener. We start out with a grouping of five, the great thing about the group of five is that I guarantee you already have a lot of four note licks. If you have been playing Rock or Blues, or just popular guitar solos, you will definitely have a bunch of them. All we need to do is add one note of your choice to your existing lick and boom! - you have something new.

Playing the group of five perfectly in time can be tricky so I'm going to offer some suggestions on how to achieve it while not playing the guitar, getting this concept in your head can make the transition to the guitar much easier. There is exists a system that is utilized by drummers, the system uses the the spoken TA KA DIMI. Please go online and investigate this system, as I use it in my own way which is probably to the annoyance of the inventor or inventors and if you want to get it exactly right you might want to look into it further!





COLUMNS_STUART BULL

For a group of five I would say TA KA TA DIME which as you can see has five syllables. You can tap quarter notes on your leg or with your foot and start out saying TAKADIME over and over, this will give you a group of four and get you in the swing of things then you can start saying TAKATADIME over and over giving you the group of five. You can also just do two groups of five, followed by a group of six to make up one bar, giving you a chance to get into the concept a little easier: this idea would be TAKATADIMI TAKATADIMI TA KA TA KA DIMI, like I say, if my way doesn't work for you check out the system for more information!

There is another way we can go with this, which is to use words or phrases to achieve the same goal, here is a phrase

that contains five syllables like "TIE IT TO A BOAT" If you say this using the above technique you will have learned the same group of five.

Once you have this concept in your head, you can pick up the guitar and start creating licks, which for me is the fun part. Secondly, I talk about speeding up the lick as we play it to create excitement, this is also a great "get out of jail free card" as if you attempt to play the lick in time against the quarter note and it starts to go horribly wrong, you can speed the lick up claiming that's what you meant to do all along!

Well that's it for this issue, have fun creating your own licks and phrases and I'll see you next time.

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THE STENNGROOM

John Stix listens as top players discuss their influences.

Aerosmith's Joe Perry, Brad Whitford and Tommy Hamilton discuss The Pretenders' Middle of the Road



Joe Perry: That voice

Tommy Hamilton: That's the kind of music that gets you hot. I've always liked the Pretender's bass player. He plays very simple classic elements, but they work great; they make the most sense. It's the smartest thing to play and they are the most fun to listen to.

Joe: That is a real bass player. That's roots music. It's very Yardbird-ish. They are purists. I love it. The way the lead is structured it's very simple. We've talking about hardly playing single notes.



Brad Whitford: It's double stops.

Joe: But it picks up after the intro of the solo, which sort of stutters and starts to go. Then it gets into the next gear. Technically it's a very simple solo; but knowing to play that and put it in that way is very exciting. I love the way he interacts with the drums. The drummer is starting out quiet then he opens up his high hat as the guitarist brings it up a notch. That's the

same kind of thing we do. We naturally know that Joey (Kramer) will open up. He'll know to go to the toms.



COLUMNS_JOHN STIX

I don't know how they structure the songs or if he figures out the lead beforehand.

Tommy: It sounds to me like it could have been the first or second time he played it. That lead has a lot of fire to it without being acrobatic. Lead breaks should obviously be flashy, sexy and boisterous, but not just for the sake of acrobatics.

Brad: It's not about how many fingers you use. He tuned into the song. He complements everything about the song. This particular song has all the elements to make it excellent.

This is an album I can listen to again and again. Her voice just does something to me. I know it's universal. I saw this bass playing and guitarist play with her live and I was blown away. He used different guitars for different songs just because they fit right with the song.

Joe: I get the same high watching him play as I do watching Chris Spedding or Link Wray. It's a classic lead style.



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John Stix was the Founding Editor-In-Chief of Guitar For the Practicing Musician Magazine and a principal architect for the creation of Guitar World and Guitar One Magazines. He started Guitar Recordings where he signed Blues Saraceno, Mike Keneally, Mark Bonilla, Randy Coven, and Brad Gillis Currently he runs the print dept. at Cherry Lane Music.







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Interactive



John Stix searches the web for choice guitar gems that you may have overlooked in the vast universe of Internet videos.





Eric Clapton and Gibson....

I am biased and that's it. There's plenty of great playing when Eric Clapton picks up a Stratocaster. But when he plays a Gibson guitar there is a growl and intensity that gets me every time. And I miss it with contemporary Clapton. Can we all agree that Clapton's first album shook the world with his playing on John Mayall's Bluesbreakers album? If Clapton was God, then God was playing a Gibson. We've then got the fire and fury of the Cream recordings. And a Gibson was there.

It could have been the influence of Robbie Robertson and The Band that brought him around to Fender guitars. We know he picks up the Stratocaster for his guest stint with Delanie and Bonnie. From there Strats become his main voice.

What's a Gibson loving Clapton fan to do? How about checking out this great performance with EC sitting in with Dr. John on John's classic Right Place Wrong Time. Mountain's Leslie West is always looking for cuts where Clapton does the call and response with the vocals. He'd be happy here. Clapton's like a boxer with finesse. Rather than looking for the knockout punch, he's going to hit you sharp and clean, and often. His Gibson 335 delivers the blows with power and warmth. I miss this sound. If only he were a bit louder in the mix.

Billy Preston: "That's the Way God Planned It (Parts 1 & 2)"

Here's another great Clapton performance on à Gibson. Somehow I missed it. I knew Billy Preston's single "That's the Way God Planned It" from radio play back in the day (1969). I saw it performed in The Concert for Bangladesh film from 1972. So now I apologize that there is no proper video for this song. You only get to hear it, which is actually the way it was



COLUMNS_JOHN STIX

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intended for all recorded music before MTV. So what do you get to hear on this extended version besides a first rate gospel rocker? You get to hear a band consisting of Billy Preston on vocals and Hammond B-3, Keith Richards on bass, Ginger Baker on drums, George Harrison on rhythm guitar and Eric Clapton on lead. In particular you get to hear E.C. trading fours with Preston and burn with the fire and focus of the best of the Bluesbreakers and Cream studio recordings. This hidden gem belongs in any future best of Eric Clapton package or folder. It's a real keeper.

Billy Preston: That's the Way, God Planned It (Parts 1 & 2)



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