

# Guitar

Interactive

ISSUE  
**13**

EXCLUSIVE  
INTERVIEW

WIN!



Aphex FX pedals!

## Authrie Gavan

Reaching new heights!

### Derek Trucks

The slide king interviewed  
+ gig footage + slide technique special

### Don Alder

Guitar Idol winner exclusive  
acoustic performance + interview!

**Marshall at 50** - live in the Marshall amp vaults! + Marshall 50th anniversary gig footage + interviews with Joe Satriani, Paul Gilbert & Doug Aldrich!

**Bass** - EBS Reidmar head/cab, Peavey TKO digital combo, G&L 5 string & Aphex Punch Factory FX

**Acoustics** - Simon & Patrick Pro Parlor, Bedell dreadnought + Mariner Vertys

## REVIEWS

EXCLUSIVE - Vigier 7-string, G&L Ascari, Sonuus Wahoo, TC Flashback x4, Fender Tele, Orange OR15, Peerless, Egnater, Aphex, Pro Co Rat, Snark & In Time Trainer





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Finally, a digital panacea for guitar tone which actually works: I never thought the day would come, but the sound and feel of this magic black box are so "real" that witchcraft would appear to be the only logical explanation... Most pleasing!

—Guthrie Govan

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# Guitar

**the first fully interactive magazine  
for guitarists the world over**

# Guitar

Welcome to Guitar Interactive Issue 13

It's free - it's interactive  
- it's packed with  
interviews, lessons,  
reviews and features.  
It has dedicated sections  
for acoustic and bass  
guitars. And now iGuitar  
has its own vintage feature  
too! Oh, and did we  
mention that it's *still* free?

**Gary**

Gary Cooper - Editor

# Guitar

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# REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Following our exclusive live footage of The Aristocrats in Gi 12, **Jamie Humphries** meets the one and only Guthrie Govan.

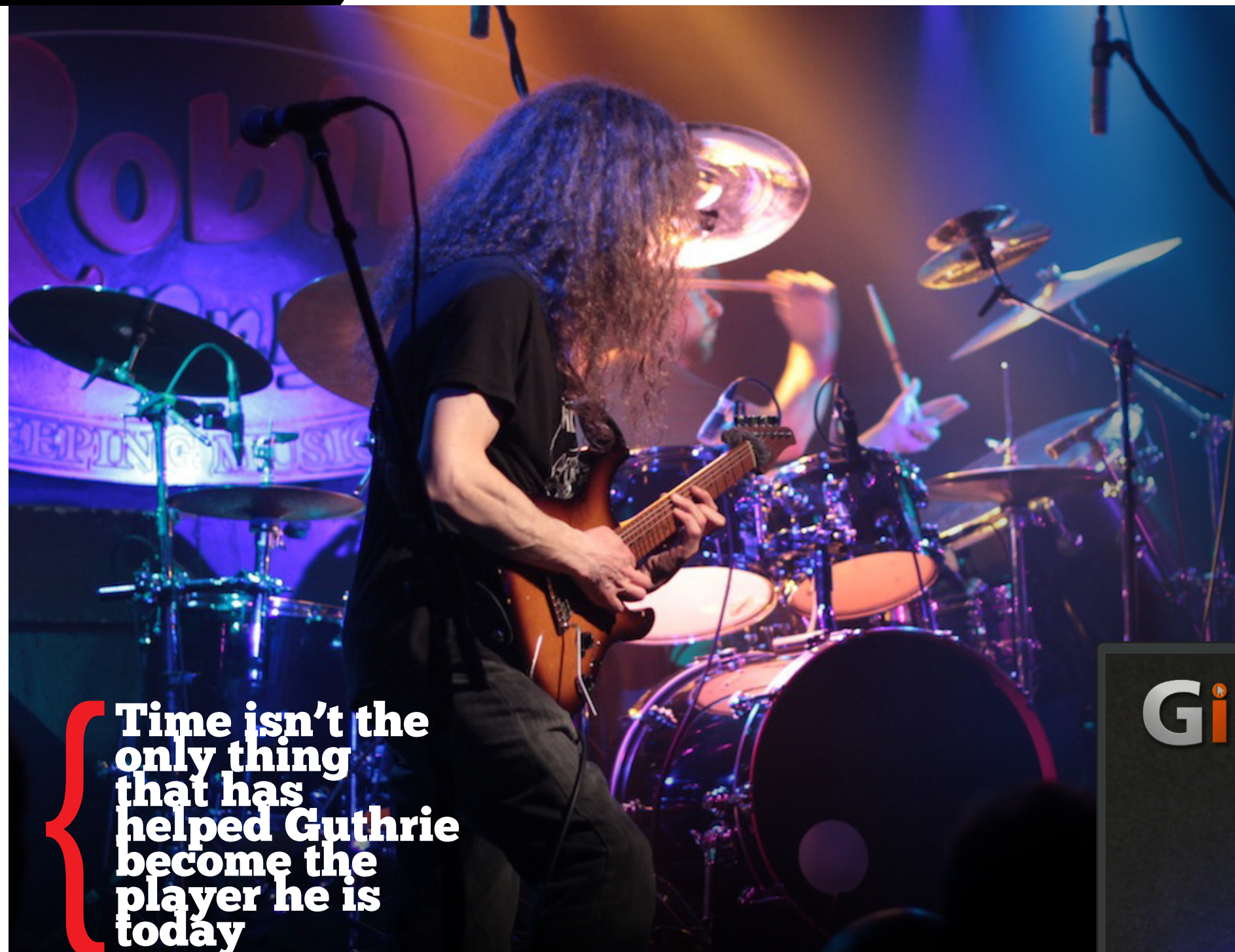
As regular Gi readers will know, Guthrie Govan is very much a part of the family here at Guitar Interactive and a long term staple of the British guitar scene, so it gives us great pleasure to see him finally getting the international recognition he deserves. Whether you know him as the “saviour of shred” or “the best guitarist alive” it’s becoming increasingly difficult to hide from Guthrie’s ever increasing popularity!

Many guitarists will first have come across Guthrie via his superb instructional material with LickLibrary, or maybe from transcriptions for various UK magazines, or maybe even as the 1993 Guitarist of the year winner - which he stormed through with his song Wonderful Slippery Thing. From that launch platform he spent many years working on his own material and gigging weekly with his Jazz fusion project The Fellowship.



[...>]





**Time isn't the only thing that has helped Guthrie become the player he is today**

It's worth understanding that, as you'll know if you've met him, Guthrie and his guitar are very much one entity and at times you wonder if he'd be happier to communicate with just those six strings. This is the sort of thing you would expect from someone who has no memory of starting the guitar - although he is told he did so at three. He has no understanding of a time *before* the guitar, so when you think about it, to Guthrie his guitar has been around pretty much as long as he's been talking.

Time isn't the only thing that has helped Guthrie become the player he is today, in fact his environment was just as influential on his development as a musician. As Guthrie himself admits, his parents were musical, but "more musical enthusiasts rather than accomplished practitioners of the art; they had a great record collection." The result of this was a broad musical education, being exposed to everything from The Beatles and Eric Clapton to Miles Davis and Joe Pass. It was during these formative years that Guthrie learnt to listen to music properly, which led to him replicating all the subtle nuances like vibrato, timing, tone, volume and beyond. This is worth mentioning because the best way to reach the same sort of musicality as Guthrie is to start at the beginning. Remember, that this is a man who's done incredible covers of both T Bone Walker and Steve Vai! It's all in the details. You can dig into some of Guthrie's thoughts in his widely popular Creative Guitar books.



[...>]



It was 2006 that Guthrie was treated to his first real international exposure, being invited to join Asia featuring John Payne. This was a massive project and saw him playing to packed venues around the world. He featured on two live records and two studio albums with the band before stepping aside for original guitarist, Steve Howe. The next step in his career was to continue on with John Payne and Jay Schellen to form GPS, another progressive rock outfit where Guthrie got to shine as the guitar star he should be. The band put out one album, Window to the Soul, in 2006 but then went

quiet, though it was announced recently that they will have a two DVD and four CD set called Two Seasons: Live in Japan, available soon.

From there things finally just seemed to take off for Guthrie. The release of his debut album Erotic Cakes became a cult classic on the guitar scene, he gained worldwide exposure around this point on YouTube due to his outrageous improvisation techniques and a performance of his composition, Fives. Erotic Cakes encompasses many facets of Guthrie's playing, from beautiful ballads like



Guthrie Govan Interview Part 2

[...>]



# MAKE ROOM

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Soundblox 2 Dimension Reverb Review

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Eric, to mock Country picking on Rhode Island Shred; there's something for most fans of guitar here because, despite the other worldly playing, you still listen to a song like Waves and marvel at its melody.

Guthrie's next projects were the more electronic and grime-based outlets of The Young Punx and hip hop superstar Dizze Rascal. In fact he can be seen in the video for The Young Punx Rockall (as a demonic pirate ghost no less!) and a whole host of Dizze Rascal outings, including BBC Live Lounge, Later with Jools Holland and The

Electric Proms. The Proms show is definitely one to watch, if only for Guthrie's solo on Bulls on Parade, where he manages to make his guitar sound like R2D2 on drugs!

Gear wise Guthrie is a man rooted in the classics. For the longest time he was seen playing pretty conventional fare ranging from Strat and Tele-style guitars and models from PRS and JJ Retro as well as his trusty Gibson 335. In more recent years though, he has become associated with Suhr. If you look at Guthrie's Rasmus signature model, what you have is a modern take on the

[...>]



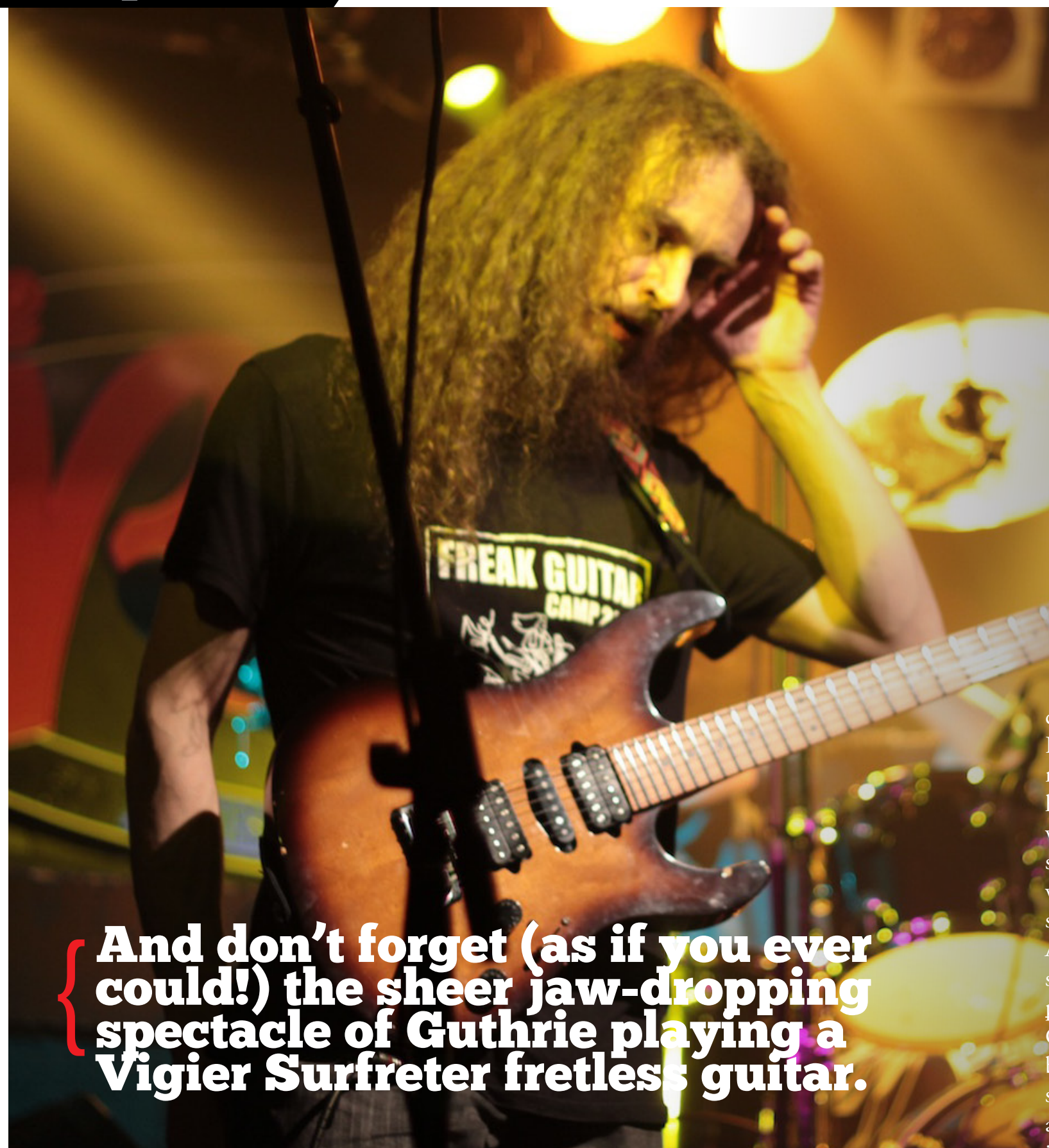
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**And don't forget (as if you ever could!) the sheer jaw-dropping spectacle of Guthrie playing a Vigier Surfreter fretless guitar.**



Guthrie Govan Interview Part 3

classics. At a glance it might call to mind Ibanez and ESP, but in reality you have a mahogany body and neck combined with humbuckers, so it actually sits more in line with an SG than a superstrat. From that starting point, he has added a few bells and whistles, like a trem system and five-way switching so he can get all of his Straty tones. And don't forget (as if you ever could!) the sheer jaw-dropping spectacle of Guthrie playing a Vigier Surfreter fretless guitar. Guitar Interactive scored a world exclusive back in issue nine when he dropped into our studio to demonstrate his mastery of this astonishing instrument. If you haven't seen it, prepare to be awestruck! As for amps and pedals, Guthrie has opted for both Cornford

and Suhr over the years, both of which are based on the classic Marshall circuits, so you can't go wrong with an old Marshall. When it comes to pedals though, the bill really racks up as Guthrie likes to experiment with anything and everything. His smaller board consists of wah, auto wah, delay, chorus and a boost, but when there are no limits, expect phasers, ring modulators and anything that can make a funny noise!

As we saw in Gi 12, Guthrie's next project was alongside Marco Minnemann and Bryan Beller in the rock fusion supergroup, The Aristocrats - and if you haven't, check out our live video of the band in that issue!

[...>]





Guthrie Govan and Jamie Humphries Performance

The Aristocrats project is a real coming of age for Guthrie in terms of recording, reaching new highs in terms of melody and groove, not to mention his best tone to date.

Which brings us to the present day, and it's clear that Guthrie has become one of the most in demand players on the scene. This year has seen him guest on Periphery's much anticipated second album and, most recently, join Steve Wilson (of Porcupine Tree) for his upcoming third album.

What next? Well he recently recorded guitars for the new Steven Wilson album in EastWest studios, Hollywood (with Alan Parsons engineering) is now formally a member of the SW band and "...will be doing copious touring with them throughout

2013", he tells us. Meanwhile, the Aristocrats are busily touring Europe, while December 2012 sees the release of the band's live album Boing! January 2013? Fully booked for recording the Aristocrat's second studio album. All that and still he's in demand for sessions, with recent activity including playing the bulk of the guitar parts on The Mystic Technocracy by Docker's Guild. Also he's been playing guest solos on Periphery's Periphery II: This Time It's Personal and soon-to-be-released albums by Richard Hallebeek and Marco Minnemann.

Busy? In demand? A phenomenon? You might say so.





Derek Trucks

# Slide King

Derek Trucks is one of a new generation of American Bluesmen breathing new life into the genre. Acknowledged as one of the world's finest slide players, Trucks recently spoke with Gi's **Stuart Bull. Levi Clay**, meanwhile, offers a profile of the man keeping the slide tradition very much alive

The Blues is the genre that you just can't keep down. As time moves on it seems to evolve - even mutate at times - all the while retaining its core following and picking up new fans along the way. From the original greats like Robert Johnson, through BB King and T Bone Walker, to the British revival of Clapton and Peter Green, and now the success of contemporary artists like Joe Bonamassa and Kenny Wayne Shepherd, there's always going to be a place in our hearts for good rootsy Blues. And at the heart of that Blues tradition there is slide guitar and few better exponents of that dark art than the American slide maestro, Derek Trucks.

Trucks started at the age of nine, purely by chance after getting a guitar from a garage sale, "Just because it was the only thing interesting I could get for \$4". At that age, it's certainly a struggle to fret the strings (especially if it's a cheap poorly set up guitar!) so the young Trucks would play around with a bottleneck slide. Influenced by Duane Allman, Elmore James, and Albert King, Trucks displayed all the traits of a musical prodigy and by the age of 11 he was playing paid gigs.

[...&gt;]





Derek Trucks - 'Bound for Glory' Live Performance

By his 20th birthday he had played with Joe Walsh, Buddy Guy and Bob Dylan.

In 1996 Derek formed The Derek Trucks Band and by '97 they had released their self-titled debut. This album really showcases both Trucks' phenomenal slide style and Blues phrasing, but also his passion for various legends of Jazz, playing renditions of classic compositions by John Coltrane, Wayne Shorter and Miles Davis. It's beautiful to hear such staples of the Jazz scene played with such a soulful slide approach. Over the years the Derek Trucks band have released six hugely popular studio albums and three live albums. 2009's *Already Free* netted them a Grammy award for best contemporary Blues album.

His own band notwithstanding, it's undoubtedly his long serving stint in The Allman Brothers Band which he is best known for. His uncle, Butch Trucks, was actually a founding member of the Allman Brothers Band, so Derek was often around while he was younger, even touring with them when he was 13. He became an official member in 1999, his first album with them being the live *Peakin' At The Beacon*, alongside original Allman's guitarist Dickey Betts. From there Warren Haynes came in and replaced Betts for the writing and recording of *Hittin' The Note*, which features the incredible *Old Friend* - the only Allman Brothers tune to not include an original member, but bearing a stunning display of slide talent from both Haynes and Trucks.



Derek Trucks - 'Midnight in Harlem' Live Performance



Derek Trucks Interview - Part 1

[...>]



While the band haven't put out a disc in eight years, the Allmans still gig semi-regularly, having played a string of shows in 2012. If you get the chance, they're certainly a band to behold, and if you don't there's always the spectacular Live at the Beacon Theatre DVD, which contains three hours of classic Allman Brothers material with Derek and Warren on fire.

If you want to sound like Derek, there's plenty of good news but, inevitably, it will have to be contrasted with the sad reality that you'll probably never sound as good as the man himself, however hard you try! You could consider Derek to be quite a cheap gear date. He doesn't use any pedals, or even a pick, just his guitar straight into a Blackface Fender Super Reverb.

The guitar itself also nothing particularly earth-shattering either, just a Gibson '61 reissue SG loaded with a set of '57 classic humbuckers. You could try to hunt one of these down, or go for the Gibson Derek Trucks signature model, though an SG standard will do the exact same job, especially if you switch those pickups.

Action wise, Derek uses a standard set-up which requires an incredible amount of control from his slide so as not to fret out. His slides are always glass, styled like actual bottle necks. Fortunately for us, Dunlop manufactures a signature slide which will give you a good starting point. Just as an aside, Derek wears the slide on his ring finger.



**Derek Trucks Interview - Part 2**

[...>]

**Vigier**

Vigier guitars are crafted in small quantities, not large industrial production runs. Instruments are available at select dealers. To find yours, please visit [www.vigier.com](http://www.vigier.com) or [www.htd-uk.com](http://www.htd-uk.com)



The other key to Trucks' signature sound is his tuning. He pretty much always plays in open E (E,B,E,G#,B,E) and uses a custom set of 11-46 (.011, .014, .017, .026, .036, .046), this is certainly not an easy gauge to find as its the top two strings from a set of 11s and the rest from 10-46. When it comes to EQing your tone, you're going to want to roll off the bass quite a bit, you'll be thickening that end by the use of the neck pickup and fingers.

In 2010 Trucks put TDTB on a hiatus and decided to form a project with his wife, Susan Tedeschi. An accomplished singer in her own right, she married Derek after meeting him when her band opened for The Allman Brothers band.

Tedeschi had been nominated for five Grammys herself (including best female Rock vocal performance) prior to the formation of the Tedeschi Trucks band, so her pedigree as a Blues, R&B Soul singer was the perfect blend for Derek's unique brand of slide.

The Tedeschi Trucks band released their debut album, Revelator, in June 2011 and it was an instant hit. Showcasing everything that was great about TDTB, the Delta Blues, Memphis Soul, classic Soul and groovy funk vibes, it all comes together to make one of the most authentic Blues albums in a long time. This sentiment was reflected when the album won a Grammy for best Blues album at the 54th Grammy Awards.

This success was followed by a series of tours around the world, from which they compiled a double disc live album, Everybody's Talkin',

which was released this year. This contains several Tedeschi Trucks band songs as well as classic Blues numbers like Rollin' and Tumblin'.

With Blues currently making one of its periodic returns to popularity, it's hard not to see Trucks Tedeschi gaining far wider attention from the music buying public. Let's hope they admire Trucks' astonishing slide playing even half as much as guitarists, who can understand what he is doing and why it makes him one of the greats.

**Gi**



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Win the fantastic **Aphex Aural Xciter And Optical Big Bottom Pedal** Or the **Aphex Punch Factory Optical Compressor** in our free entry competition!

**WIN!**



Here's how.

# COMPETITION CLOSED

OK pay attention! In the back there because this issue we're changing things around!

We have two fantastic Aphex effects pedals as prizes - both from US audio legend Aphex and instead of giving two prizes to one winner, we are going let you choose which you want to win (though you can enter for both if you like).

The pedals in question are two of the most sophisticated effects units on the market.

Both are reviewed in this issue - Michael Casswell at the Aural Xciter in our main reviews section, while Dan Veall takes on the Punch Factory down in the Basement. But don't be confused - Aphex gear is sophisticated and either pedal could be used for bass or guitar - even an electro-acoustic guitar.

You have to decide which you would like to own - and if it's both then you need to send us two entries!



Email your answers (e.g. Q1 - B) along with your name, email address and daytime phone number, clearly marked 'Punch Factory Competition' or 'Xciter Competition' to [competition@guitarmag.com](mailto:competition@guitarmag.com). You can enter for both pedals, though the odds if you do is low. Entrants with the correct answers will be chosen at random. You will receive these fabulous prizes - just be ready to be very lucky!

## Aphex Xciter Questions:

**Q1.** Aphex's first big hit - the Aural Exciter - was first used in:

**A]** Recording studios? **B]** Live PA rigs?

**Q2.** Aphex is based in:

**A]** Switzerland **B]** The USA

## Punch Factory Questions

**Q1.** Aphex's Punch Factory uses optical technology?

**A]** True **B]** False

**Q2.** The Aphex Aural Exciter first appeared in?

**A]** 1985 **B]** 1975

1/ All entries must be received by 19th November 2012. 2/ No cash alternative is offered instead of the stated prize. 3/ All entries must be submitted via e-mail. 4/ Employees of Guitar Interactive, Licklibrary, Aphex, SCV London and their immediate families are ineligible for this competition. 5/ The winner will be chosen, at random, from registered readers of Guitar Interactive who provide the correct answers. 6/ The judges' decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into regarding this competition. 7/ Winning entrants must respond to email notification of having won within 10 days, otherwise prizes may be forfeited and alternative winners chosen. 8/ Winners may be responsible for import duty when levied. Where possible prizes will be despatched from the winner's own country, but this will not always be possible. 9/ Winners must provide a contact telephone number and valid email address 10/ Prizewinners must consent to having their name and city/country (e.g. 'Andres Segovia, Madrid, Spain') published in a future issue.



## GUITAR INTERACTIVE ISSUE 11 MATRIX GT1000FX GUITAR POWER AMP COMPETITION - THE RESULT!

Gi

The British-made Matrix GT1000FX guitar power amp won a rave review in Guitar Interactive's [issue 10](#) and in issue 11 we had one of these fabulous amps to give away!

The Matrix GT1000FX represents an entirely new generation of advanced power amplifiers and teams perfectly with a wide range of guitar products, from digital modellers to valve pre-amps, pre-amp pedals, 'slaving' traditional amplifiers and newer mini-amps with line outputs and can power either full-range or guitar cab speaker systems.

As Tom Quayle said in his review: "I must admit I was blown away by both the tone on offer and the feel

and response of this combination. The GT1000FX matched the (Fractal Audio) Axe FX II perfectly and in a blindfold test I'd never have known I was using a digital and solid-state pairing."

Delivering 500 Watts per channel into 4 Ohms (bridged it will deliver 1,000 Watts mono into 8 Ohms) the twin channel GT1000FX is available worldwide direct from the manufacturer and is part of a growing family of high-end amplification products aiming to take guitar amplification into the next generation.

Thank you to all those Gi readers who entered and, of course, our thanks to Matrix Amplification!

## AND THE WINNER IS....

So who was our lucky winner? Chosen at random, step forward Mr Alan Seegar of Mission, South Dakota, USA. Congratulations to Alan who will very soon be finding out just how loud his guitar can really sound!

Gi



BOOK

REVIEWS

Hot Wired Guitar - The Life of Jeff Beck  
**Author:** Martin Power  
**Publisher:** Omnibus Press  
**ISBN:** 978.1.84938.869.9  
**Format:** Hardback  
**Price** £19.95/\$34.95



If you asked a hundred professional guitarists 'who is your favourite player' I've absolutely no doubt that Jeff Beck would win the poll by a country mile. How do I know that? By having spent many years asking just that question. In fact the longer you do it, the more obvious it becomes that even if your own ears don't tell you Jeff Beck has something no one else has, there is an almost spooky consensus on the subject among his peers.

Which makes Beck overdue a definitive biography. Is this it? Not exactly - but it is a good read and it is exhaustive. The problem facing the author, Martin Power, was the fact that Beck is anything but a self-publicist and direct personal access is needed to make a truly revealing work. Without that, the danger was the book could have become one of those Rock pot-boilers that are little more than cut and paste exercises of other people's interviews. Power's book isn't one of those. True, he hasn't interviewed Beck and there is a fair amount of 'as he told Rolling Stone in 1984...' , but his original research seems authentic. In particular, there is a lot of detail about Beck's side projects which even his fans might have missed - other people's albums he has appeared on and the sometimes quite obscure film soundtracks he has contributed to. For the Jeff Beck aficionado who wants a definitive discography, this is a must have.

Being a biography, what it isn't is a 'how to play or sound like' guide. Nor do you really get the feeling that the author is doing much more than peering at his subject through a glass, darkly.

He portrays Beck as moody, awkward and unpredictable but we've heard that before. There's not much sense of why. Again, this isn't the author's fault.

Without the great man's personal input or access to close friends and family who are willing to be candid, this is probably as good as we could have hoped for and is certainly worth the admission price. Jeff Beck is the guitarist's guitarist and this isn't really a guitarist's book - it's a no-nonsense biography. But it's none the worse for that and a very welcome contribution.

GC.

Gi

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 Click [here](#) for competition details.



*Paul Brett's*

# VINTAGE GUITAR HEAVEN

Guitar Interactive 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?

In this issue I'm going to again present a varied article concerning collecting vintage guitars that, in its fundamental form, highlights what you should steer away from when buying vintage - or anything else for that matter. The first guitar I want to illustrate falls under my 'bridge too far' category as even for an experienced luthier it would cost far too much time and money to repair to its former glory and in this case, wouldn't be worth the costs involved, as these Collegiate guitars do not fetch that much in the market. Here is a 1930's guitar I fondly call 'The Old Dog'. It was, in its day, a low budget guitar that was passed around students and some have left their names and marks etched into it, which was a common practice back in the '30s with these kinds of shared student

guitars. This would not be a major issue to repair under normal circumstances but then someone else got out the Polyfilla (*Spackle, for our American readers - Ed*) and had an artistic moment creating what can only be described as amateur mayhem in trying to effect repairs! I keep it purely for illustration purposes and it acts as a reminder to check out repair costs when buying vintage instruments that have issues. The photographs feature the scribing of names and etchings all over the back of the body and on the scratch plate, the massive side split attempted repair, side hole Polyfilla repair and the headstock with the Collegiate logo - still mostly intact would you believe? Value, totally worthless!



[...&gt;]



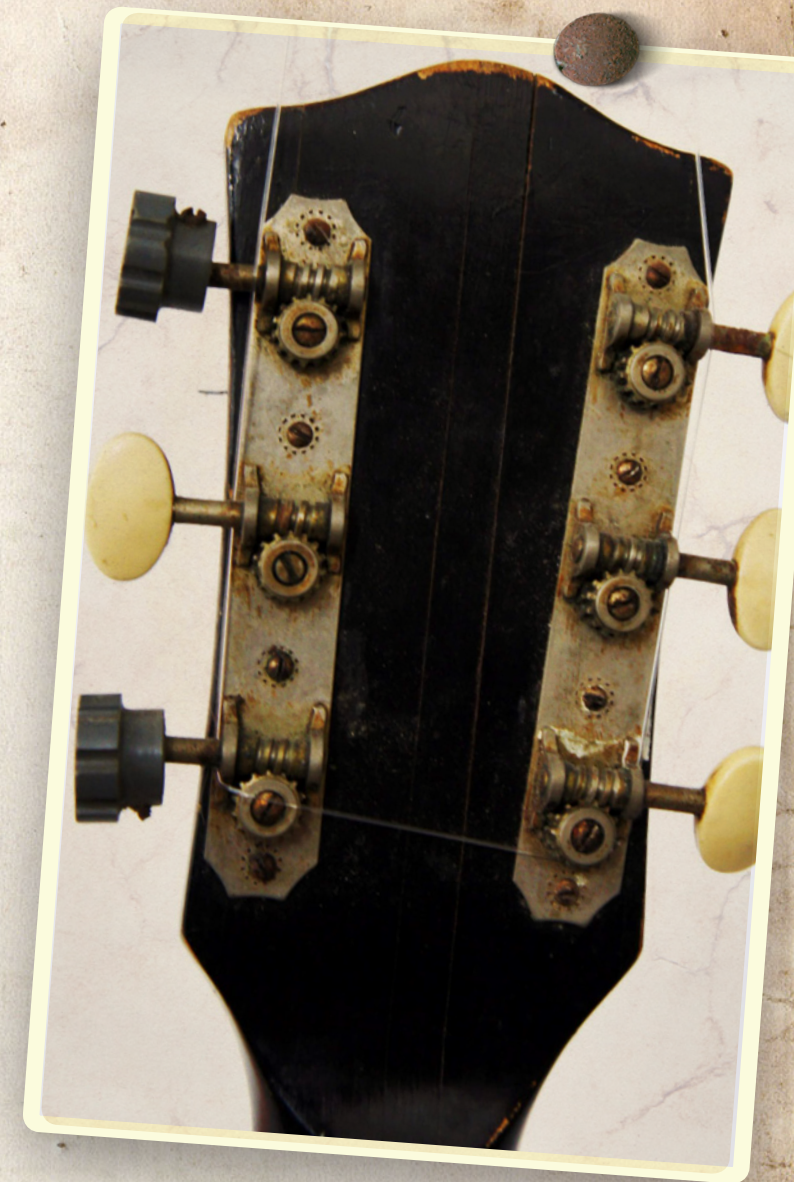


On the other hand, the second guitar would be very collectable if it was in top condition. May I therefore present a member of the Hofner arch top family, first introduced to the market in 1954 and often referred to as the Black Beauty. Whilst this has had an awful attempted repair to re-attach the neck to the body, it's still salvageable and restorable, albeit needing some parts and a major repair.



The Hofner model 458 was a deluxe version of the 456 and has an all laminated body. Standard in size, 410mm wide and 80mm deep, it has a five piece neck and a rosewood fingerboard adorned with mother of plastic inlays. The particular model under discussion does not carry the original tailpiece, which was usually a trapeze style and adorned with the Karl Hofner logo. The tailpiece on my one is a compensated one usually associated with those fitted to Hofner Presidents under the Selmer brand, so I guess this was a later replacement addition. The single pickup is a Hofner twin coil type 511 with exposed staples and a wide plastic surround, this and the control panel, may also have been a later addition. There is no bridge and the machine heads carry a couple of awful unrelated replacement tuning knobs in grey on the bass side of the strip. Some of the laminate is also coming away from the neck join, probably because whoever tried to repair it, used a claw hammer! As I said, this can all be repaired. So, unlike the Collegiate guitar, the Hofner is probably worth restoring because there's not a lot of them about.

Now here's the rub... If you didn't want to restore it, you could easily sell it for its parts! Hofner original parts are worth lots of \$\$\$\$. For example: an original compensator tailpiece is averaging around the \$270 mark. A pair of strip machine heads in vgc, around \$240. A plastic pick up mounting around \$30, scratch plate \$95, single control knob, \$30, vintage neck around \$450 and a body even more, while a pot from the '60s fetches around \$60 and so on. Original Hofner parts are very rare to find and collectors will pay good money to restore their original guitars.

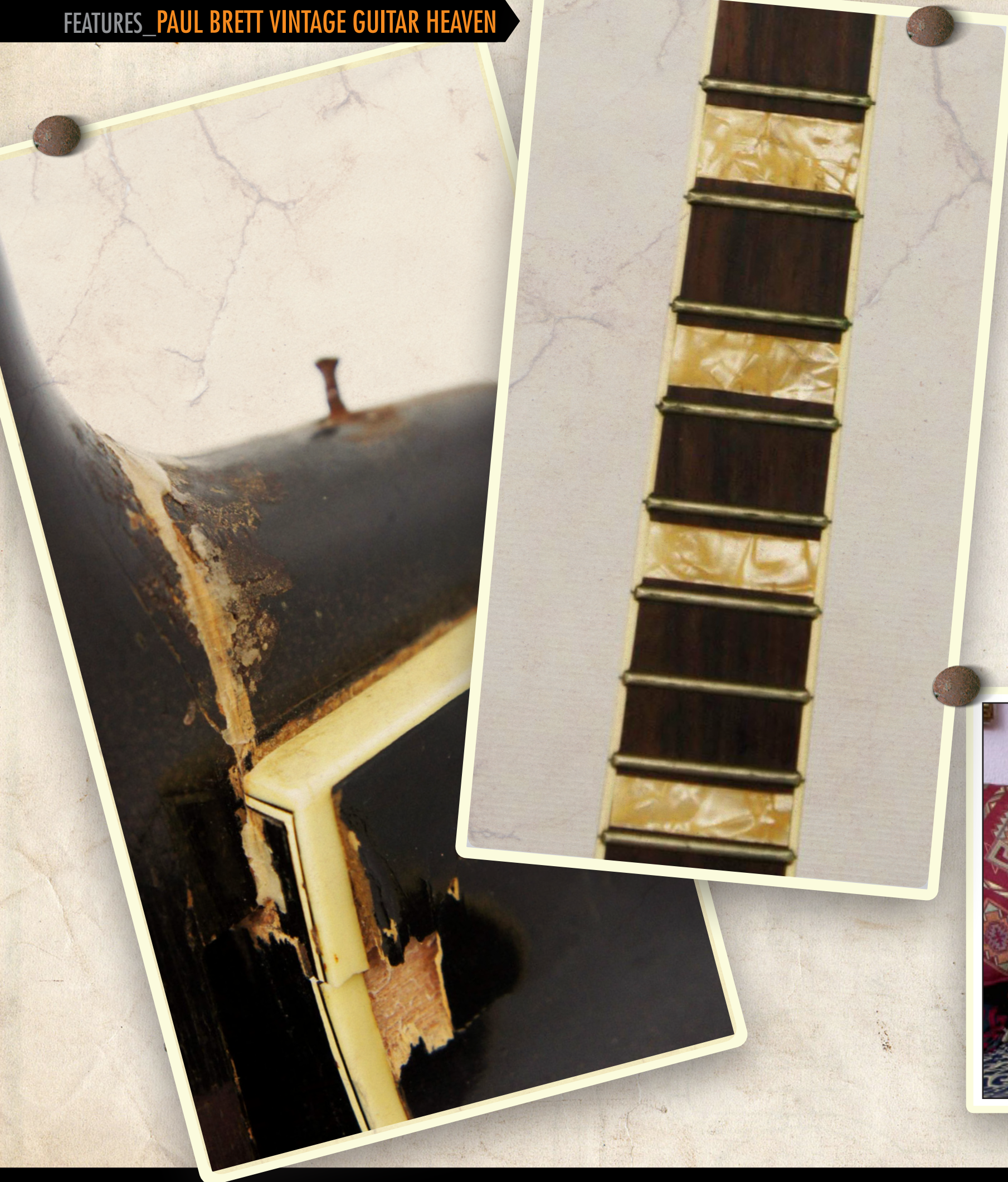


There is quite a healthy market in collecting Hofners and my mate Gordon Giltrap wrote a very good book on the company and its guitars, which is well worth a read.

It could even be argued that even after restoration to a guitar like this, you will make more money on selling the parts individually, without the hassle! Of course you'll never realise the price that John Lennon's own Senator achieved at the Christie's auction in 2009, where it sold for a staggering \$337,226 dollars but as a guitar, it wasn't worth more than six or seven hundred.

[...>]





**It's a must, also, to check out the electronics on any vintage guitar that is being sold as original.**

Goes to show you what people will pay to own a legendary musician's guitar he only played when first starting out on his monumental but tragic journey!

It's a must, also, to check out the electronics on any vintage guitar that is being sold as original. Check the dates on the pots, serial numbers on pickups etc. against listings that are readily available on the 'net to see if you are actually buying an original. This is fairly easy to do on solid bodied guitars. I have seen some beautiful, yet cheeky fakes that people have made and sold for far more than the item was worth, because what they purchased was made up of other parts from later models or repros. Others have had resprays and alterations made, which will devalue the instruments sell-on price. If you are serious in starting or building a collection, research everything you can before parting with your cash.







A couple of years ago, someone put Robert Johnson's Gibson 1928 L1 up for sale with an asking price of \$6 million dollars. It made the headlines in the press but seeing the photographs on line, it looked like a new guitar which, if it was Johnson's, would certainly have shown signs of playwear and probably more down through the years. There is also the conjecture that Johnson never owned a Gibson because at that time, many photographic studios carried suits and prop guitars for artistes with little money to have their pictures taken with. It's more than likely that of the two known Johnson pictures with guitars, he played the Kalamazoo KG -14, which was the cheaper version brand Gibson produced. Oh, the joys of collecting!



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# Marshall at 50

**- the power and  
the glory!**

In Gi 12 we promised you a treat - and here it is! We sent **Michael Casswell** to the Marshall Amp Museum at the company's HQ in Milton Keynes, UK. What Marshall may not have been expecting was that he brought with him some vintage Marshalls of his own!

Aided by Marshall's demonstrator, Chris George, the dynamic duo set about taking some of the world's rarest and most valuable Marshall amps down from the shelves, firing them up, alongside some of Mike's own collection, and putting them through their paces.

Ladies and gentlemen - Guitar Interactive proudly presents a world exclusive: a crash course in the magic and mystery of Marshall!

[...>]



## Michael and the Marshalls

I have used many amps over the years, but the brand I always end up coming back to is Marshall. My first amp was a 50 Watt late '70s 2x12 combo which, during my ownership, never had any valves changed, had beer spilt inside it, fell out the back of a moving French hatchback onto the road at 30 mph, and still it always fired up, never broke down or even blew a fuse. During the '80s I had the whole rack, pre-amp power amp thing but by 1994 I went back to amp heads and bought a three channel 6100 Marshall anniversary 100 Watt head equipped with 6550 tubes (not EL34's) which to this day is still running strong and is probably my main amp. It has never let me down and even when an output tube stopped working at a gig at a festival in Holland, it still kept going without complaint for the rest of the show.

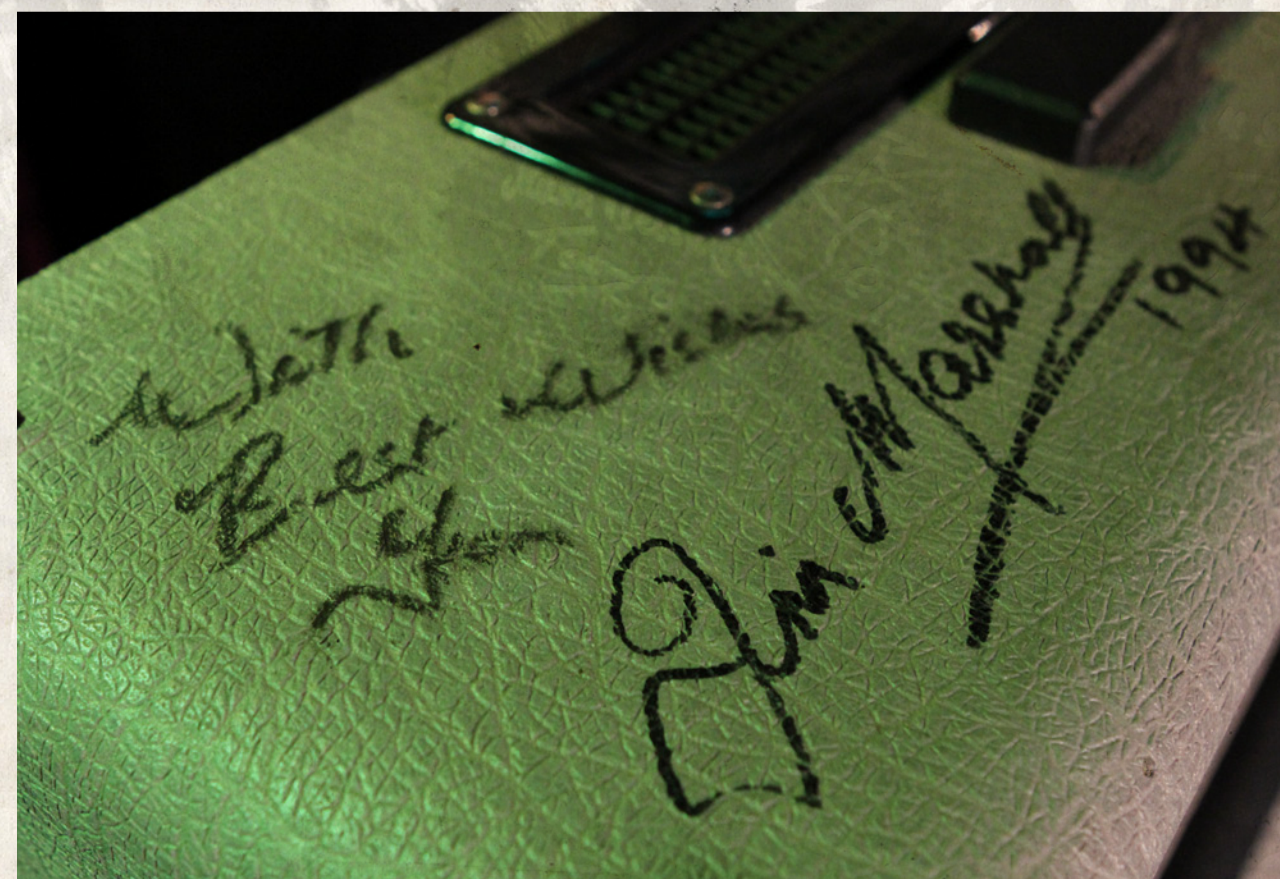
So I have a lot of time for the Marshall brand, and nowadays own a few more of their products. Recently I have been using a 100 Watt 1994 6L6 equipped 4100 JCM 900 for live work, a JVM 410H for studio and I am also lucky enough to have bought wisely a long time ago, two JTM 45 heads, and a '71 JMP 100 Watt head, which are all pieces of history and are now too rare and valuable to work hard. Along with a Marshall JMP1 rack pre amp and 100 per side Marshall rack power amp, that's a lot of Marshall going on in my life!



So I was honoured to be allowed to play through some historic amps from the Marshall museum, especially since it took place so close to the sad loss of Jim Marshall, who obviously has been a huge part of music history.

So, down to Milton Keynes we went, where my two JTM 45's were verified, checked over, and photographed. Jim himself would have personally had a lot to do with the manufacture of both these amps, which both run and sound perfect 47 years later. I wonder how many amps made today by all your favourite amp makers, will still work without fault in the year 2059?

It was great to hang out with Marshall demo and products guy Chris George, and between us, we knew enough Marshall history to talk about the amps involved on the day. It was hard to know what guitar to grab as I left the house for an occasion like this, but I guessed one of my Les Pauls was a fairly safe bet. A Les Paul and a loud Marshall is a classic combination, but I did spoil things slightly for all you purists by also grabbing my '89 Valley Arts







Marshall Blues Breaker Review



Marshall JTM 45 Review

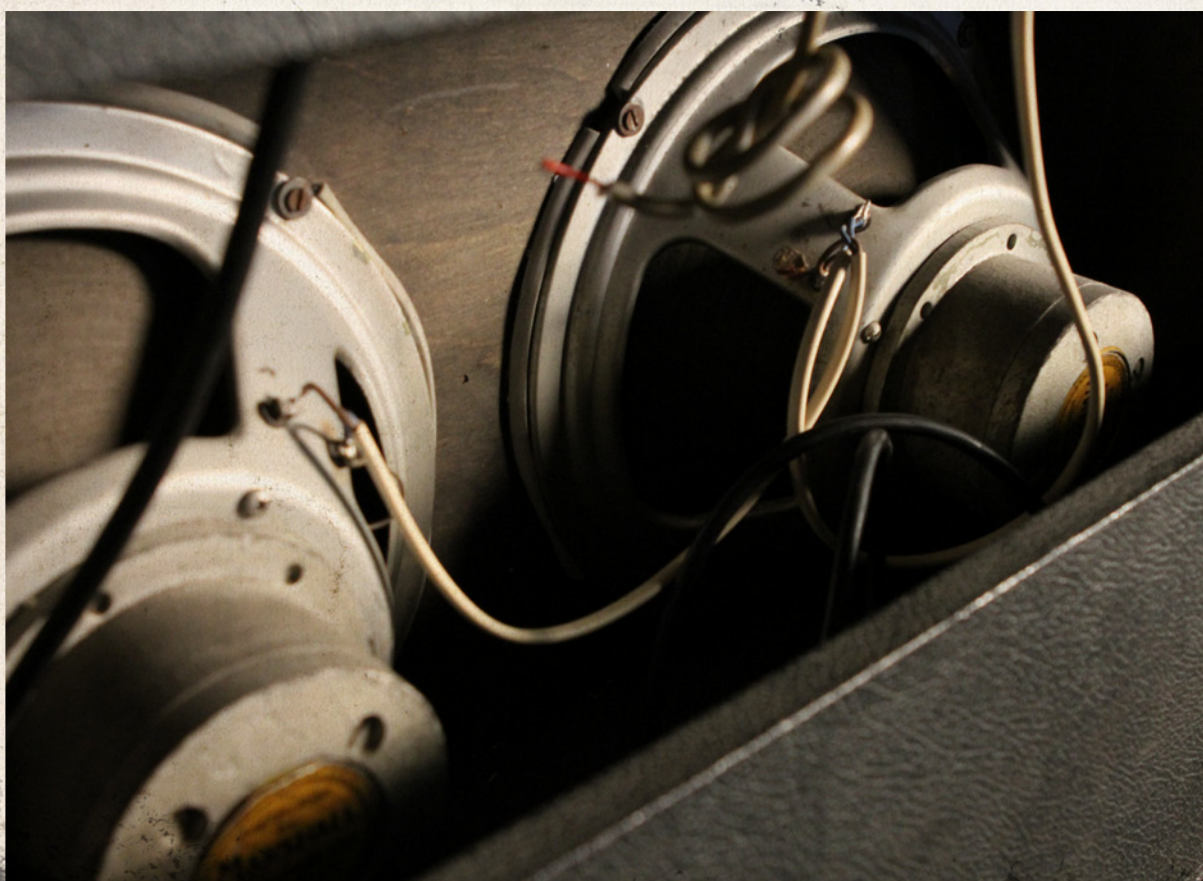


Marshall JMP 100 Review



Marshall JCM 800 Review





(which is my friend and insisted on looking after me when the Les Paul got a bit big for its iconic boots).

I played through some rare amps indeed. A mock up of the first type of Marshall manufactured, a 'Bluesbreaker' combo from the same week or month as Eric's Beano album one, one of my JTM45s, a JMP head, a silver jubilee head (I want one!) and the limited edition Anniversary.

Each era and amp has its own character and flavour, but was inherently Marshall. We could have gone on and on, especially with the remakes of the plexi heads, the signature Slash, Zakk Wylde, Yngwie Malmsteen,

Kerry King, Satch heads - all loaded with newer technology and innovations that keep Marshall at the top of the amp building game.

The newer breed of Marshalls are fantastic, but if you ever have the chance to plug in and turn up a hand wired vintage Marshall from the '60s or '70s then, trust me, if you are into guitar, it will stay with you and teach you the short comings of a lot of more modern amps out there!

A very enjoyable day indeed. And thank you,  
Jim Marshall.



[...>

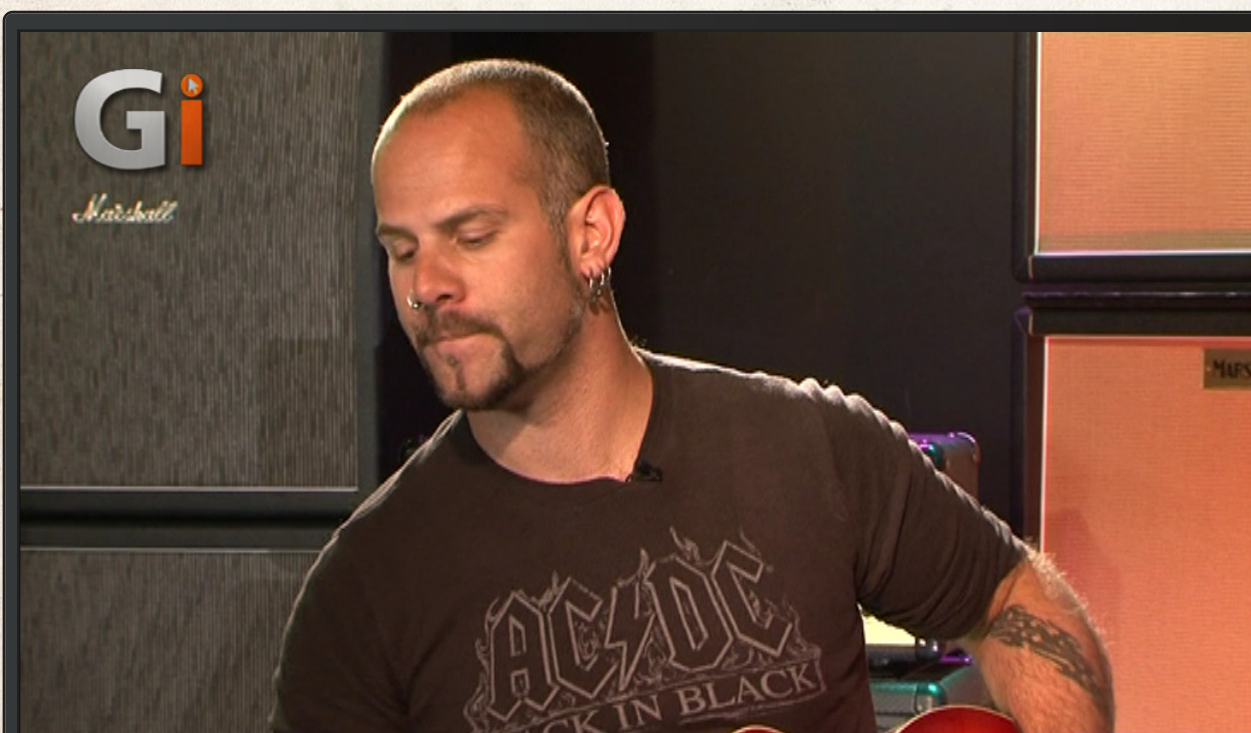




Marshall JCM 25 50 Review



Marshall 6100 Review



Marshall No.1 Review

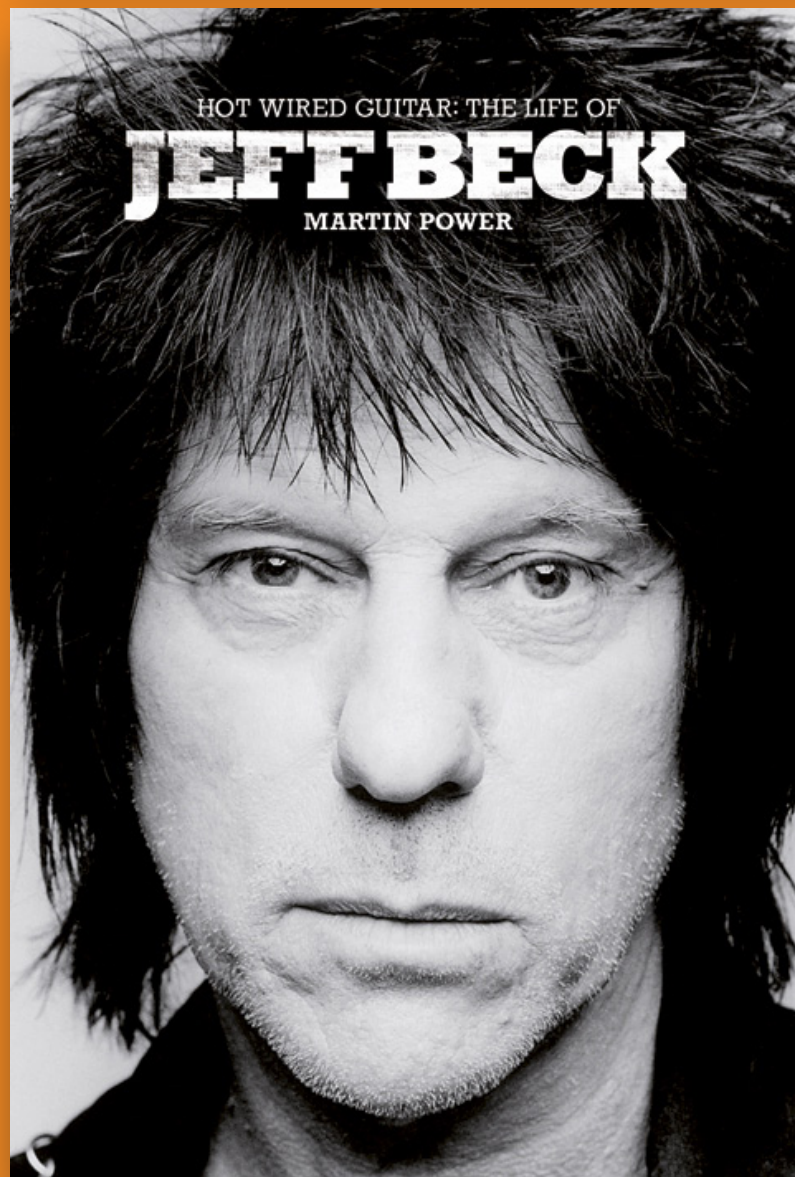


Chris and Mike Jam Performance



# Hot Wired Guitar - The Life of Jeff Beck!

**WIN!**



We've a copy of Martin Power's superb new Omnibus Press biography of Jeff Beck up for grabs, as reviewed in this issue!



Remember - entries to [competitions@guitarinteractivemagazine.com](mailto:competitions@guitarinteractivemagazine.com) marked 'Beck Book' must reach us by no later than 19th November 2012. Good luck!

## OK...here are the questions

All you have to do is answer the following two questions, then email your answers ( e.g. Q1 - A) marked 'Beck Book' along with your name, email address and daytime phone number to [competitions@guitarinteractivemagazine.com](mailto:competitions@guitarinteractivemagazine.com) The same rules apply as for this issue's Aphex pedals competition, so we're not going to waste space by repeating them. All you really need to know is that you must be a subscriber to enter: it's easy and it's free!

**1] Jeff Beck has signature pickups made by which company?**

- A] DiMarzio
- B] Seymour Duncan
- C] Kent Armstrong

**2] As well as his legendary association with the Stratocaster, which other Fender model is Beck famous for using?**

- A] Jaguar
- B] Coronado
- C] Esquire



# Marshall

## 50 YEARS OF LOUD LIVE!

September 2012 saw Marshall Amplification celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday with a major live show, held in Wembley, West London. And what a show it was, featuring some of the iconic Rock musicians who have helped make Marshall the most famous name in amplification. Needless to say, Guitar Interactive was there. Our man in the mosh pit, **Levi Clay**, reports.

Jim Marshall's place in Rock history was cemented long ago, in 1962 to be precise, when the former band drummer, by then a drum teacher and music shop owner, created Marshall amplification to meet the demands of local guitarists who wanted something 'bigger and louder'!

Over the last 50 years Marshall has released top of the line amplifiers and been the gear of choice for players like Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, Pete Townshend, Richie Blackmore, Slash, Zakk Wylde and Yngwie Malmsteen - and that's to name just a few. The iconography of the Marshall amp needs no detailing.



◀ Zakk Wylde

When Joe Public imagines a Rock show, the chances are he sees a huge wall of Marshall amps. From music videos, to television show, to films and music related games, the Marshall logo has become one of the classic international brands, recognised even beyond the music industry.

To celebrate those 50 years and to honour the passing of the man, earlier this year, who started it all, for one night only Marshall brought together some of its star players for a night of music that would never be forgotten. Joe Satriani, Paul Gilbert, Yngwie Malmsteen, Zakk Wylde, Doug Aldrich and many more shared one stage, playing for Jim - and Guitar Interactive was lucky enough to be invited to cover it.

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◀ Billy Duffy



◀ Doug Aldrich

After a short opening jam with the house band and Billy Duffy coming on to play Lil' Devil, Whitesnake axemaster Doug Aldrich takes the stage sporting a stunning goldtop Les Paul; he's joined by power metal vocal titan, Tim "Ripper" Owens. After tearing out some great covers of Heaven And Hell (Black Sabbath) and the Whitesnake classic, Slide It In, Nicko McBrain gets behind the kit for the Iron Maiden tune, Flight of Icarus. Corey Taylor then returns to the stage with Marshall's Nick Bowcott on guitar, and the seven men tear apart Living after Midnight (Judas Priest). This was a great close to Doug's set because, aside from his remarkable fretwork, Corey and Ripper got to really go at it in this early Halford-era gem.



Marshall 50th Gig 'Doug Aldrich' Interview





Paul Gilbert

Next up is Motorhead guitarist Phil Campbell, joined by Corey Taylor again as they play through a heartfelt version of Thin Lizzy's Still In Love With You and then Motorhead's Ace of Spades, with Slayer guitar demi-god Kerry King coming to the stage with his pointy BC Rich. Next Campbell leaves and things get a little heavier as the group rock out a crazy cover of Pantera's classic Mouth For War. Kerry even gave a perfect tribute to Dimebag with the classic solo played note for note.

Next is Zakk Wylde, and the only complaint that could be made is that he's playing his Gibson bullseye ZV (the half-SG and half-V hybrid) and it would be nice to see the iconic Les Paul. But these thoughts are quickly forgotten when he launches into the Sabbath classic, Fairies Wear Boots. Zakk is on fire as always, throwing out his trademark brand of pentatonic playing as they blast through the Sabbath tune Into the Void, before ending on the Black Label Society favourite, Stillborn. The set was short, but its impact will last!

The next guitar giant to take the stage is Paul Gilbert, he's joined by Emi Gilbert on keys, Jaz Lochrie bass and ex-Dream Theater drummer Mike Portnoy behind the kit. Paul and Mike have a long history of working together, having put out DVDs of four different tribute shows together. Unfortunately this means we won't be seeing any of Paul's new material tonight, but instead we're treated to great covers of ZZ Top's Cheap Sunglasses, Hendrix's Manic Depression and the Joe Walsh classic, Rocky Mountain Way. Aside from the obvious observation that Paul's phrasing has changed so much over the years and he's now a really tasty Blues player, it's also worth mentioning that his single coil equipped Ibanez Fireman allows him to stand out as one of the highlights of the night.



Phil Campbell



Next the roadies wheel out a full stack with two heads, so it can only be time for Yngwie Malmsteen. This icon of shred guitar is 49 now, but you'd never guess it from his outlandish stage presence, flipping his guitar round his head, dropping to his knees and kicking out so many picks to the audience that his guitar tech spends most of the set restocking his pick holder. His material is strong too, tearing through three of his own compositions, Baroque & Roll, Evil Eye and Far Beyond The Sun, it really is hard to find fault in his set, and easy to see why he's been at the top of the shred pile for 30 years now.

The guitar giant of the night is the fantastic Joe Satriani, who takes to the stage to play classics, Satch Boogie and Always With Me Always With You, before bringing G3 touring friend Paul Gilbert out for a jam

**THERE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN A MORE APPROPRIATE TRIBUTE PAID TO JIM MARSHALL THAN THE LOVE SHOWN BY THESE MARSHALL ICONS.**

Joe Satriani



Paul Gilbert and Joe Satriani







◀ Glen Hughes

and to play the Freddie King tune, Going Down. Joe's material is strong and it's especially nice to see him play with Paul as their tones are so far apart you can really hear them complementing each other nicely.

Bassman Glen Hughes is next with a collection of tunes before bringing Andy Fraser of Free out to play on the Free classic Mr Big, followed by Malmsteen for a cover of the Deep Purple's Mistreated. His playing is solid and his voice is incredible, even if his set does drag on a bit compared to someone like Joe Satriani, who only had two of his own songs. Fortunately, the last song of the night sees almost all of the artists from the night return to power out Smoke On The Water and although there are so many guitarists you can't really hear any solos, the song sounds amazing.

There couldn't have been a more appropriate tribute paid to Jim Marshall than the love shown by these Marshall icons. As Zakk mentioned earlier in the night, he sure the great man was looking down. And if he was, then I'm sure he'd have been smiling.



◀ Yngwie Malmsteen



Marshall 50th Gig 'Paul Gilbert' Interview



# Marshall at 50

## Satriani – Caught in the act!

One of the highlights of Marshall's celebration was the appearance of the always stunning Joe Satriani. **Jamie Humphries** persuaded Joe to take time off from rehearsals to discuss amps, playing oh... and even to have a bit of a jam!





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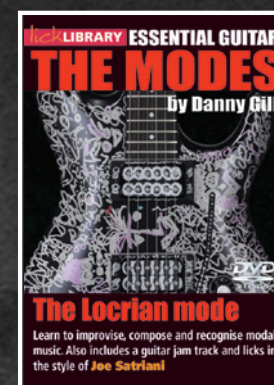
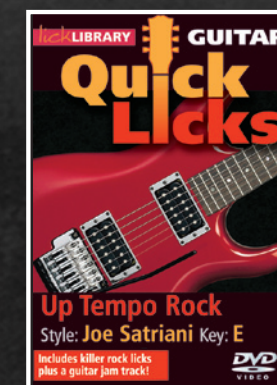
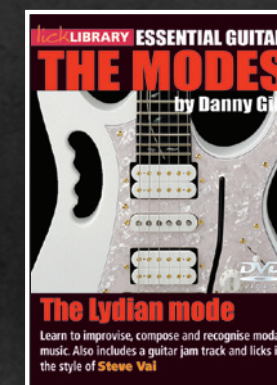
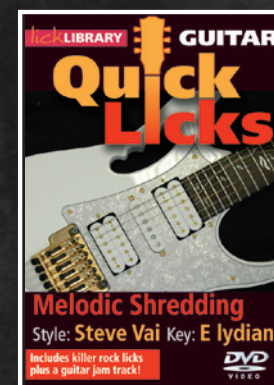
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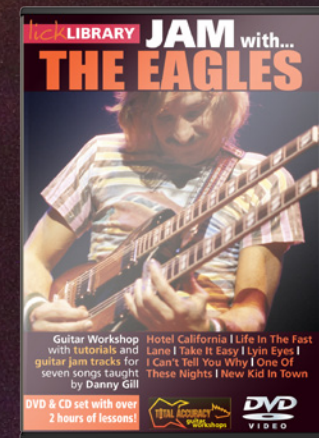
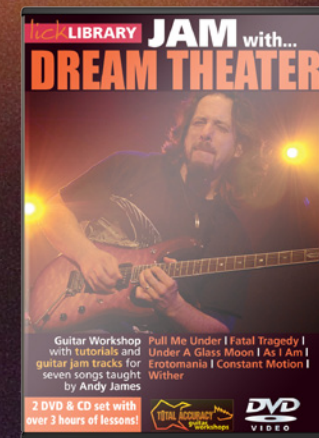
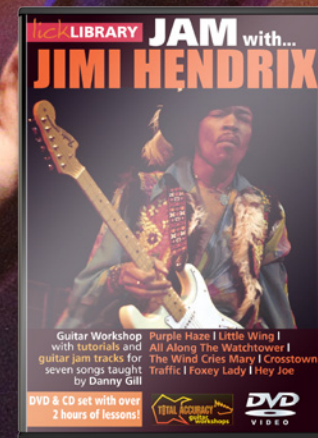
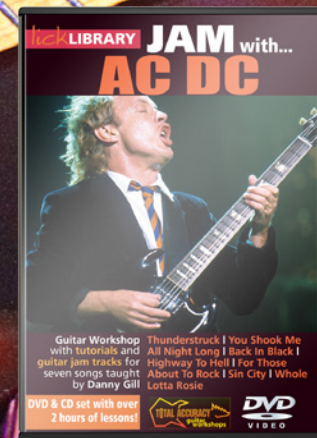
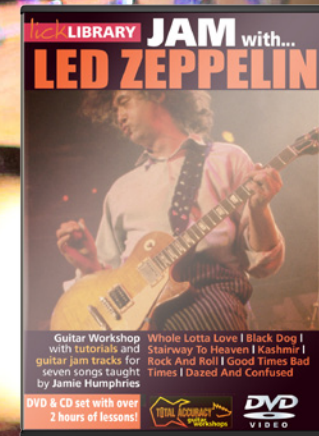
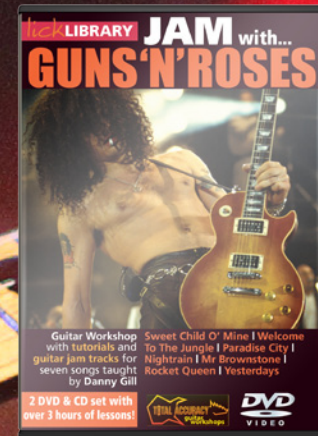
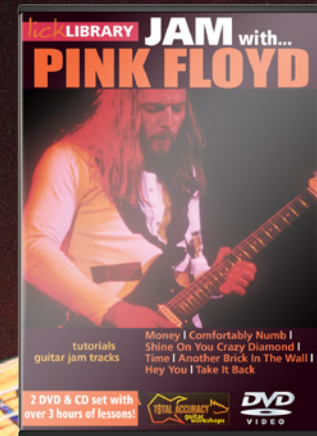
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# Reviews

We seem to have gone from the most traditional to the very latest in this issue! Fender makes a welcome return to our pages with one of the current Telecasters - arguably the world's first solid bodied electric guitar, while at the opposite end of the novelty spectrum we have the astonishing - and brand spanking new - Wahoo pedal from British MIDI specialist Sonuus.

Also new and very, very hot, is French manufacturer Vigier's Excalibur seven string guitar and not far behind it is G&L's Ascari. You thought all G&L made were single coil Leo Fendery guitars? Think again!

Rounding-off our guitar selection is a Peerless Songbird. Peerless? Read our review and you'll discover that there is a good chance you have already played at least one Peerless-made guitar in your life.

Amps are represented by the fast-growing American brand Egnater, making their Gi debut this issue, followed by one of the older names in the business, Britain's Orange, with the brand new OR15 - both manufacturers

offering valve/tube amps but completely different from one another in concept.

You want pedals? In addition to the mind-expanding Wahoo, we've headed straight back to the 1980s with a clutch of Pro Co's venerable Rat distortion units, a brand new Snark tuner and what may well be one of the first reviews you will see of a brand new introduction from TC - the amazing new Flashback X 4.

Finally, we have the Aphex Xciter - something completely different and one half of a pair of prizes we are giving away in this issue - the other being one of Aphex's equally versatile Punch Factory units, reviewed in our Bassment section, but by no means restricted to bass duties.

We try hard to put a really mixed bag of reviews in each issue but we need your help. If there's a product you would like to hear our views on, why not email and tell us? [editor@guitarinteractive magazine.com](mailto:editor@guitarinteractive magazine.com) will always find me!

**Gary Cooper** - Editor



p074 Fender American Tele



p078 Vigier Excalibur 7-String



p082 Orange Amp



p086 Egnater Tweaker 40 Combo



p090 G&L Ascari Guitar



p096 Peerless Tonemaster Player



p100 TC Flashback



p104 Aphex Xciter



p108 Sonuus Wahoo Pedal



p112 85 Rat Pedals



p116 Snark Tuner



p120 Intime Trainer App



# Fender American Standard Telecaster

It's the granddaddy of them all - and yet it's still going strong: Fender's immortal Telecaster. But how good are the current versions and does Leo's first thought still stand up to modern demands? **Rick Graham** gets analytical.

Having been rocking the world now for over half a century, the guitar that makes up one quarter of Fender's classic quartet of instruments, the Telecaster, has seen a variety of changes over the years - some successful, some less so. The most recent occurred in 2008, the most notable of which was the inclusion of a six saddle bridge, veering the Tele into a more Strat-

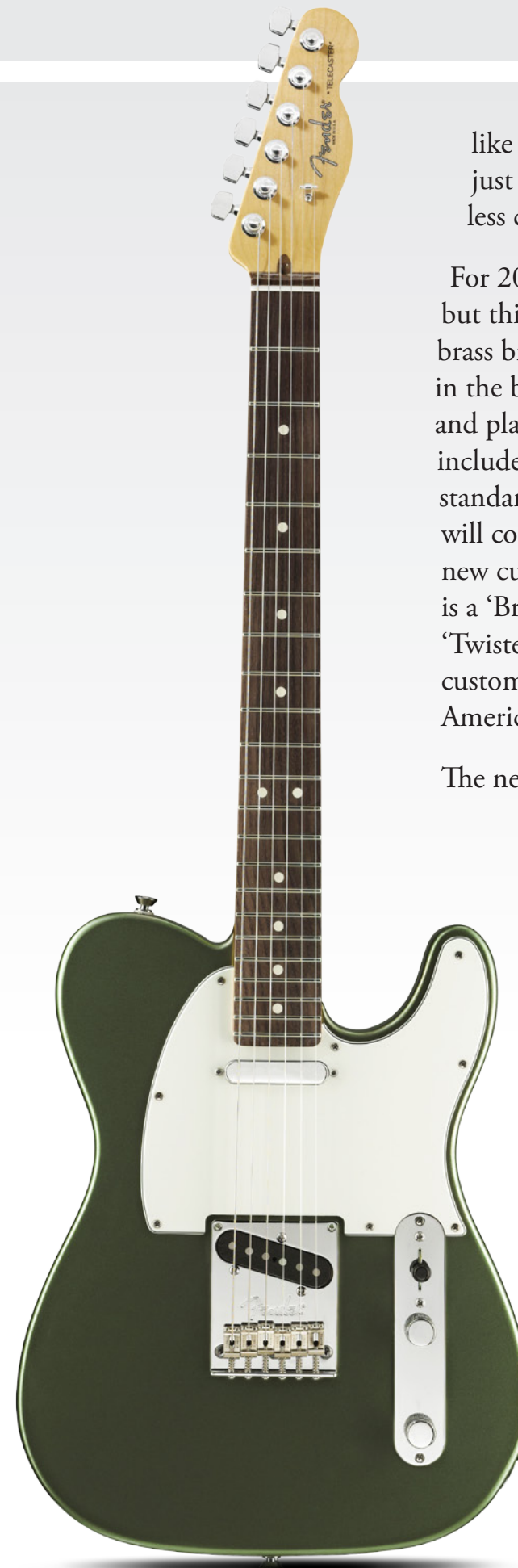


Fender American Standard Telecaster



STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC



like territory and which, according to Fender, was not just for intonation but also offered a much improved and less compressed sound.

For 2012, the six saddle bridge remains firmly in place but this time round they are placed on an open sided brass bridgeplate. It also features longer string slot holes in the bent steel saddles to ensure an easier transition and placement of the strings. Other features new for 2012 include a new ribcage contour shaping as opposed to the standard 'plank' like shape of older Teles, which for some will come as a very welcome upgrade, and the addition of new custom shop Fender pickups. In the bridge position is a 'Broadcaster' pickup and in the neck position sits the 'Twisted Tele' single coil, which was formulated in Fender's custom shop but has now found itself as being a part of the American Standard Tele series.

The neck has a much slimmer profile than some Tele die-hards will be familiar with, adopting Fender's 'C' shape and as a consequence will feel a little more modern, or dare I say it, less vintage, a sense complemented by a flatter radius of 9.5 inches instead of 7.25 inches. Couple that radius with the medium jumbo frets and you have a very playable guitar with a slightly more modern feel.

There is also 'behind the nut' truss rod adjustment access and on the four screw neck plate you'll find the micro-tilt neck pitch adjustment system, enabling quick and easy adjustments compared with those on vintage Fenders.

The new Jade Pearl Metallic finish, as sported by our review guitar, looks very classy indeed adding even further to its already modern vibe.

[...>]



## I am finding it extremely difficult to come up with anything I didn't like about the new American Standard Tele.

But is it any good? In action, it is quite simply stunning! While it's true that I have a soft spot for Teles generally, there's no doubt in my mind that the benchmark Fender originally set for American built instruments remains exceptionally high.

The first test, as always, as a quick burst unamplified and, as you would hope, the Telecaster was really resonant - though a little brighter than some I have tried in the past. The intonation was absolutely spot-on, meanwhile, and the playability was a breeze and somehow still seemed to retain that classic feel, even with the more modern upgrades found on this version.

Plugged in, the bridge pickup offered all of the classic Rock tones that Teles are so well known for and the 'Twisted Tele' in the neck position always sounded nice and full, with an addictive warmth to the tone but with plenty of attitude too.

That said, the neck pickup did sound a touch brighter than I'd expected, giving rise to a more Strat-like tone, while still being unmistakably Tele, if that makes sense! Check the video and hear for yourself. The new ribcage contour felt great too and as mentioned before and will no doubt be a very welcome upgrade for lots of Tele fans.

In summary, I am finding it extremely difficult to come up with anything I didn't like about the new American Standard Tele. It is quite simply a superbly well made instrument, which while easing in a more modern direction still sounds, plays and feels so good that it just couldn't be mistaken for anything else.



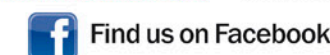
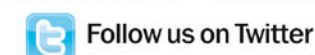
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# Vigier Excalibur Special Seven string

Seven string guitars have a cult following. Players who love them, really love them. So what could be better than France's master luthier Patrice Vigier turning his attention to the genre? **Tom Quayle** flexed his fingers, got his chug on and went all heavy on us.

Patrice Vigier has the reputation of building some of the best guitars and basses in the business, boasting incredible build quality, attention to detail, playability and tone. Having reviewed one of his guitars in a previous issue I knew I was going to be in for a treat and as a seven-string novice I was excited at the creative prospects the Excalibur Special seven could offer. I wasn't disappointed at all and there's no denying that 'special' is a very appropriate term in the name of this guitar!

The Excalibur Special seven comes in a beautiful hard case and is a treat for the eyes upon inspection. The body is made from two centre-jointed pieces of solid, naturally aged alder with a stunning flame maple top that can be customised in a range of finishes. Our review model featured a gorgeous trans-denim finish with scraped binding around the body, giving a tasteful yet striking appearance. The neck is a single piece of naturally dried maple with 24 medium stainless steel frets and a lovely, smooth matte finish. A rosewood fingerboard is an

option if required. I've always been a big fan of the Vigier headstock and whilst this is no exception, the added low B string does make it significantly larger and detracts from the look somewhat. This is unavoidable with seven-strings though and is something other manufacturers have suffered from too.

The usual Vigier 10/90 system is present, placing a carbon strip down the middle of the neck for extra strength and reliability. It's a proven system and makes the Excalibur very attractive to touring musicians where climate fluctuations might be an issue. A Teflon nut and zero fret aid intonation and tuning stability, helped further by oversized locking tuners and the 2017 tremolo system, featuring ball bearing joints as opposed to knife edges for greater reliability and pitch accuracy. Vigier claims that this system is as stable for tuning as a locking nut and I have to agree.

The Vigier's pickups are DiMarzio Blaze humbuckers matched with a Blaze single coil in the bridge. This gives a range of humbucking and single coil tones for added

versatility and they are a great choice for seven-string guitars given their high output and tight bottom end response. To complete the package, Vigier has included chrome volume and tone knobs and a kill switch for added creative potential.

In use, the Excalibur Special seven is a very comfortable instrument that is surprisingly light, considering the extra mass needed to accommodate that seventh string. Equally surprising is how comfortable the neck is with its 25.6" scale length and 11.81" radius. This slightly rounder radius allows for easy chordal and lead playing on what might otherwise be quite daunting to the uninitiated. The stainless steel frets feel silky smooth and should last forever with flawless fretwork throughout and a low action making this a fast and accurate guitar. Often the low B string can suffer from excessive rattling on lower spec guitars but no such problem exists here with great sustain and very little buzzing from the lowest string, a great sign for those looking to perform high gain, chugging riffs.

Plugged in, the Excalibur shines with overdriven and high gain tones with some serious filth provided by the Blaze humbucker in the bridge. This is a relatively dark sounding pickup in all positions but a quick tweak of the treble control on our studio valve amp and all manner of bone crunching riffs appeared. The neck position sounds thick and works superbly for high gain lead tones that require more roundness. The other three positions are all single coil variants and work very well in this respect, giving a versatility not normally associated with this style of guitar. Clean tones were slightly less inspiring, as the Blaze pickups sounded slightly bland, especially in the single coil positions, but most people will be buying this guitar for the heavier sounds anyway so it's not too much of an issue. Of course, this element of the guitar can be changed very easily anyway if required, so it doesn't detract from the Excalibur in any major way.



STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC 

[...>]





It would appear that Vigier can do no wrong with their range of guitars and basses (the latter having consistently impressed our Bassment dungeon master, Dan Veall, too) and the Excalibur Special seven is no exception. These are expensive, custom made instruments so will be out of reach for all but the most dedicated or wealthy buyers but if you want one of the best seven-string guitars on the market then you need to check out Vigier's offerings as they really are as good as it gets and represent good value when you consider the workmanship and quality involved.



Vigier Excalibur Special Seven String



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# Orange OR15 H

There's a definite buzz about Orange amps these days - and we don't mean an earth loop! The veteran UK brand is hotter than it's ever been and now there's a brand new model, the 'pics only' OR 15. So what does our equally veteran tone purist **Michael Casswell** think of it?

There's no mistaking the look of an Orange amp - and there's definitely no mistaking the looks of this one! Innovative, right from when the brand sprang to life in the 1970s, one of Orange's little design 'quirks' was the series of amps with no words on them - just pictures describing what the controls do. Orange revived the style back in 2008 when it reissued the OR 50 but as we all know, 50 Watts of valve power can be awfully loud. Hence the OR 15 version we have here, launched at last year's NAMM show and just becoming available now.

The OR 15 is a single channel, all valve, 15 Watt, class A micro amp. The 'micro amp' trend is sweeping through the industry and every company is putting out their own version of a low wattage small portable practice-studio amp, but Orange was in there right at the very start of the trend and clearly has a lead over some of the competition.

If the layout is simple enough to rely on pictures for guidance, so is actually driving the OR 15. If you want it clean, you turn down the gain and turn up the master

volume. If you want filth, you turn up the gain volume and maybe even the master volume yet again, depending how loud you want it. 15 Watts is more than loud enough for home and studio use, but it will struggle next to a drummer. I have found 30 or 40 Watts is the point in a band where you have a bit of headroom to hold your own. If 15 Watts is too scary for you, then there is a switch on the front to half power it to 7 Watts - something you are probably going to want to do for practice at home unless you own your own barn!

The OR 15 has three ECC83 pre amp valves and two EL84 output valves - a classic arrangement for the 'British' sound, although in some ways that's a misnomer in this case as what this Orange is really good at is allowing you to get the sound you make with your guitar and playing style. There is also a valve driven series effects loop which is always good, because sometimes practice at home can involve your pedals and getting familiar with what you need on and off and how you want them set, so that when you



play with your bigger and louder stage rig, you are already rehearsed with those reverbs and delays.

The amp weighs 7kg and is small enough to be very portable. Obviously, you are going to need a cab to use, which is the point where it becomes less portable because this little 15 Watter can sound very grown up indeed through a big fat 4x12 cab. Orange cabs do sound big fat and huge. I think they are deeper in depth size than most brands out there which makes them sound great. I was spoilt with the sound, because we put it through the 4x12 cab it came with, and if you are going to use it to practice or record

at home, the chances are you will be using a basic 1x12 cab, which means it will still sound good, just not as good. Try it with a 4x12, though and you might change your mind about what to use with this great little amp.

The OR 15 takes boost and overdrive pedals well, which is the sign of a nicely voiced amp. Because it has just one channel, it will teach you how to control the volume on your guitar to get clean, crunch, gain and then more gain if you kick in your favourite pedal. These is a technique that often gets missed and if it is, will lead to your touch, note production and tone being average rather than fantastic.



An amp that teaches you how to get a good sound? In a way. It certainly nudges you in the right direction!

I like Orange amps. Every time I've plugged into one it has been a good experience and while the OR 15 may not have the sweetest tone in the world, it certainly has some sizzle and grind and it's not hard to see why Orange is so popular with so many younger, cool bands.

Another winner? Undoubtedly and at a good price, too!



Orange OR15 H

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# Egnater Tweaker 40

So you thought solid state powered modelling amps were the only way to get a myriad different sounds from one amp? Bruce Egnater begs to differ. He reckons he can do it with tubes. **Michael Casswell** looks thoughtful.

Never was there a better name for an amp! This combo is, just as the name suggests, a 'tweakers' dream, with many, many tonal options. It's a two channel design, sharing the basic bass, middle, and treble EQ, but each channel has four mini toggle switches to play with, consisting of normal-midcut, clean-hot, normal-bright and deep-tight settings. If I was good at maths, I could tell you how many voicing combination options that is, although there is no point in working it out, because there is also a mini toggle next to the bass, mid, treble pots which voices the amp either 'Brit' (i.e. Marshall), 'USA' (i.e. Fender), or AC (i.e. Vox). So how many tone combinations is that? Well whatever figure you have now is *still* going to be wrong, because each channel master volume pot also has a mini toggle switch next to it that says 'Vintage-Modern'. If you can now work out the voicing options, you are wasted being a guitarist and should be teaching advanced maths at the local university!

So lots of options but options can easily put off a lot of guitarists. I can certainly sympathise with that. Part of me is very old school, believing that you just need one or

two superb sounds from your amp, and all the colour and variation should come from your hands and your playing. The chances are that even though this amp can put out many variations on a theme, you will quickly find your favourite couple of sounds, and probably stick to them. Then again, if you need variation for different musical situations but can't afford a collection of guitars, amps and pedals to cater for what might be required soundwise, then surely the options on this amp are a life saver. It is very capable of going from thrash metal to smooth Jazz - and probably more capably than a lot of players trying to do the same!

Inside, we have a pair of 6L6 power tubes and three 12ax7 pre-amp tubes making all the loud stuff, and it would certainly be loud enough for most grown-up musical engagements. It's a bit of a misconception that the tubes make the character of an amp's sound. It's actually more to do with how the EQ section is put together and the thinking behind it, that makes a Marshall all 'Marshall' and a Fender all 'Fendery'.



Hence, Bruce Egnater can squeeze many different amp characteristics from a stock tube set up, due to what he is doing at the EQ stage.

To deliver all that tube goodness, the Egnater has a single Celestion derived 12" speaker on board, with the inclusion of an option to an external cab. It also has a switch for 4, 8 and 16 Ohms if you do decide to feed that other cab, which is a very nice touch.



**Gi** STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC

[...>]



There is also a series effects loop, which is footswitchable in or out, as is the channel. It's nice to see a generous length of cable attached to the footswitch as well.

This amp takes pedals well and even the cheapest overdrive stomp box in-line will sound good when it comes to your big moment, because the core sound of the amp is nice, with a harmonically rich sound to build on. Both channels are put together exactly the same, but you would obviously voice them differently with the mini switches and the pre-amp gains. A good compressor in front of a chimy clean channel and fat crunch channel would also add a whole new dimension to the word 'Tweaking'!

However there was a slight issue with our sample, which I'm pretty sure must have been an individual fault. I detected an irritating intermittent jump in gain when I set the amp on its highest gain setting. A lot of the time it sounded crunchy rather than full gain, and when I wiggled the clean-hot mini switch on channel 2, it would suddenly jump in gain and volume amount, leading me to presume that the mini switch was faulty, but I'm guessing.



Since our review, we've been in touch with Egnater, who assure us this was a one-off problem and does not affect these amps generally.

In a perfect world, we'd all have a Marshall for when we want a Marshall sound and a Fender for when we want that - and so on. But this isn't a perfect world and as an extremely versatile, nice sounding amp, the Egnater Tweaker 40 certainly can cover many music genres well. Certainly for a purist, it's a better way of getting versatility than most of the transistorised, or even the hybrid, modelling amps out there and you would certainly be very hard pushed to get this many sounds out of any regular tube amp on the market.



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## G&L Ascari GTS

So you thought G & L was just about Leo Fender's final thoughts on his original ideas for guitars and basses? So did we. And then someone suggested we tried the altogether more Gibsonesque Ascari. Really? We asked **Tom Quayle** to investigate.

Part of G&L's 'Tribute' line, the Ascari GTS and its sister, the Fiorano GTS, models represent a historic first for the company. Inspired by a recently uncovered prototype drawing by G&L co-founder George Fullerton, dated Jan 18th 1980, showing Leo Fender's vision for his first 24 $\frac{3}{4}$ " scale, three-tuners-to-a-side guitar with a set-neck, the Ascari was designed jointly by G&L's Vice President of engineering, Paul Gagon, and Grover Jackson, founder of Jackson Guitars and, most recently, GJ2.

The original, 30 year old design, named the G-100, featured a bolt-on neck but was updated to a set-neck, thanks to technological developments at the company. Starting with the '80s hard rock designs such as the Interceptor, Superhawk and Rampage for inspiration, Paul Gagon and Grover Jackson added the more subtle curves and contours to the body, producing a modern design with a broad appeal.

This design is completely new for G&L, giving them a model that is traditional in its Rock and Roll looks and construction but with a character and personality of its own.

The Ascari features a mahogany body with a very pretty flame maple veneer top and translucent red or black finish and binding running up through the neck. This is paired with a mahogany neck and rosewood fretboard with set-neck construction and traditional 24  $\frac{3}{4}$ " scale length. The neck is a very comfortable medium C slim shape with a 12" radius, ideal for chordal and lead work and is topped by the understated but classy looking three-tuners-per-side headstock, complete with abalone fan inlay and logo. The pickups are in-house humbuckers, designed by Paul Gagon and with the added push/pull coil tap, can be split for single coil tones for extra tonal options, making this more versatile than the average three-way switch, dual humbucker guitar.



STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC 

[...>]



Tonally, the Ascari really shines as a great choice for a variety of styles.



A Tone-Pro's locking bridge, stop-bar tailpiece and chrome volume/tone controls complete the design.

The Ascari is constructed in Indonesia and, as with many of the Indonesian-built instruments we've seen in Gi in recent months, the build quality is superb with no flaws or issues to be seen. The set-neck is beautifully done and very clean, while the polyurethane finish is flawless with a lovely grain on the flame top. The fretwork is also top-notch and, thanks to the 24 3/4" scale and 12" radius on the slim neck, the Ascari is fast and furious to play, perfect for any Rock-based player. Set-up was superb out of the box with a low action and no fret buzz to speak of.

Tonally, the Ascari really shines as a great choice for a variety of styles. The humbuckers are pretty high output at 8.22k in the neck and 13.24k for the bridge.



**G&L Ascari GTS**

[...>]



Whilst not in vintage territory, both exude clarity with their aggression and cope equally well with clean and distorted tones. The neck pickup is thick and creamy with overdriven tones and imparts a lovely woody characteristic to cleaner sounds, while the high output bridge humbucker is fantastic for heavy tones with enough bite for percussive palm muting and tons of sustain for lead work. Both pickups clean up very well, retaining clarity and top end making them good candidates for lower gain bluesier riffs and lines. The coil-tap feature aids versatility further still allowing for some very cool single-coil tones that have a sound all of their own.

I'd say that G&L are onto a winner here, even if they are a little late to the party. The 24  $\frac{3}{4}$ " set-neck design was something that was sorely missing from their range and the Ascari is a great first model at a superb price for the specification, playability and tone on offer. There are virtually no negatives to speak of when a guitar represents such great value for money. The pickups/hardware are great and won't require upgrading for most users and whilst some may want a less conservative design (see the Fiorano) the narrow horns and asymmetrical design give it a unique look in a world full of clones. If you're in the market for a great value rock guitar with a bit more versatility than the average model then you'd be well advised to check out G&L's Ascari GTS.



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Vintage Guitar Magazine USA. L50H & L412 Review, July 2012, Vol. 26 No. 09



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Pickup Magazine, UK





# Peerless Songbird

A new take on an old theme? Or is there something peculiarly authentic about the Peerless Songbird? **Rick Graham** investigates.

Peerless guitars may not be a brand that you are familiar with but you can bet your bottom dollar you have played one of its instruments in one form or another at some point. Established in 1970, the South Korean company has been building guitars for some of the largest and most popular guitar brands in the world for decades. In fact, Peerless has recently celebrated its 40th anniversary and as such has released a handful of new limited edition models of some of the most popular instruments from its product line. Although the subject of this review isn't one of those limited edition models, it is certainly one of its most popular instruments to date.

The Peerless story is interesting. It's an unsubstantiated rumour but word has it that the company was busily building guitars for a handful of the top US brands (including Gretsch and Epiphone) when it found itself stranded, as the brand owners decided to ditch the Korean manufacturer in favour of the cheaper labour sources to be found in China. Rather than give up without a fight, Peerless decided to strike out on its own, using everything it had learned about building very high quality semi-acoustics (much harder to make than solid bodied guitars) in the process. Let's just say that it shows!

The Peerless Songbird forms part of the company's 'ThinLine' range of guitars and is one of its best selling instruments. There is absolutely no denying that the Songbird owes more than a nod of the head to Gibson's 330 style guitars and, perhaps even more, Epiphone's classic Casino, made popular by a young man who was a member of a relatively popular Merseyside Beat combo during the '60s. But, I digress.

The Songbird is without doubt a very classy looking instrument and even though it occupies a relatively low cost position on the market, it looks anything but low cost. Not only does it look very well made, the arch top with double cutaway gives it an uber cool look and couple that with its beautifully finished maple top, back and sides and aged white single binding and you have one sexy looking axe indeed!

The wood of choice for the neck is mahogany with the inclusion of a rosewood fingerboard, upon which are very nicely set acrylic fret markers. The neck itself is a 22 fret neck with a real bone nut and the neck and body join at the 17th fret. The headstock houses the vintage style tuners and the headstock shape is the Peerless 'Lady Lip' design, which has the Peerless name and logo

proudly emblazoned across the front of the headstock itself.

Moving on to the electronics and we have two 'Dog Ear' pickups (classic P90 style Alnico v-magnet pickups) in both the neck and bridge positions. Pickup selection comes in the form of the three-way toggle switch and each pickup has its own separate volume and tone controls on board. The Songbird comes fitted with a Tune-o-Matic style bridge and arch top tail piece and the clear, transparent pickguard finishes off a rather tasty looking instrument.

Being primarily a solid body player, it's great for me to have such volume from an unamplified guitar! Of course, the Songbird is a hollow body, making it very light, and playing unamplified shows that this guitar can not only sing but can do so like a bird!

Aside from its vocal-like qualities, the set-up of our sample guitar was excellent and the playability was absolutely fantastic.

Once tuned and plugged in, the Songbird sounded very nice indeed. Initially, I was quite surprised by the high output of the 'Dog Ear' pickups, as P90's tend to be relatively low output, but this in no way affected the sound quality. Ever the versatile instrument, it proved itself equally comfortable whether playing Jazz or Blues or even bashing out distorted power chords a la Oasis.



STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC 



Either way, it's both a fun and impressive instrument to play, capable of producing some lovely tones indeed.

There's lots to like about the Peerless Songbird. It's a very well made instrument, which looks great and sounds great too. If I had to pick negative point it would be that the volume and tone pots did feel a little on the cheap side but other than that very slight issue you'd be hard pressed to find anything you wouldn't like about it. Pricewise? That's difficult. The 'real thing' sells (in the UK at least) for similar money and you might feel that having the name Epiphone on

the headstock was better insurance in case you ever decided to sell it. Then again, the general view in the Guitar Interactive office is that you really should buy a guitar on its own merits - and that, in our view, would swing things in favour of the Peerless and its build quality. It should also be said that the brand does have its own following too and has the endorsement of the great Martin Taylor, who has his own Peerless Signature models - so whose to say that, in time, having the Peerless logo on the headstock might not have its own value?



Peerless Songbird

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# TC Electronic Flashback X4

We raved over TC Electronic's original Flashback delay pedal back in issue seven - and now there's a brand new version with even more to offer. But does it still offer the great value for money of its predecessor? Gi was one of the first magazines in the world to get a review sample and **Tom Quayle** was first in the queue to try it!

At the time we videoed our review of the Flashback X4, the pedal was so new that there was literally no information available about its features or specs. TC Electronic's hugely efficient publicity department had kindly sent us a very early review sample but I had no idea what to expect, other than great sounding delays I always expect from TC, so I went into the experience with a definite sense of excitement!

I wasn't disappointed then, when I opened the box to find a pedal loaded with new features but familiar enough that I could operate it immediately. The X4 is about four times the width of the original Flashback but the same length and depth. Whilst this takes up a larger footprint on your pedal board, the extra features make it more than worthwhile.

Housed in the same style blue aluminium casing as the original, the X4 has four footswitches along the bottom, three of which function in principle as three separate delay units, each of which can store a preset

from the myriad of delay options available. The fourth footswitch controls tap tempo functions and keeps the audio tap function of the original unit. Saving a preset is as simple as choosing your delay options and holding down the relevant footswitch until it saves the sound. Recalling the preset requires a simple press of the required footswitch, effectively giving you three delay units in a single footprint.

A small switch converts the Flashback X4 into a fully functioning looper pedal, something that the original unit featured but which was very limited in functionality. The new version has full undo functions, allowing you to delete single layers of audio and will store a loop after you've recorded it for playback later on. You can't save loops but providing you don't switch the unit off, your last recorded loop will be preserved. You can also now use the delay functions of the pedal at the same time as the looper, something that was sorely missing from the smaller pedal.



One of the most exciting features of the X4 is the ability to store up to four Toneprints, as opposed to one on the original Toneprint pedals - hence the name X4. This allows a much greater degree of flexibility and the range of Toneprints is now so vast that you'd be hard pushed to not find some sounds that push your buttons. The range of on-board delays has been expanded too, in the form of Tube and Space modes plus modulated analogue and 2290 variants.

Ins and Outs have been upgraded with the addition of MIDI in and thru, allowing for MIDI control over preset selection and internal parameters plus an expression pedal input. You still get stereo ins and outs plus a USB port for transferring Toneprints and firmware updates. These additions really put the Flashback X4 into the pro-level market, allowing it to be integrated into sophisticated

switching units and midi setups for the ultimate control over your delays.

Tonally, the Flashback X4 is everything you expect from TC with beautifully pristine digital delays through to thick modulated analogue repeats and crazy infinite space-type sounds. The ability to select between quarter, eighth and quarter with dotted eighth note rhythms allows for easy textural or rhythmic delays that mimic the sounds of the Edge or Albert Lee. With such a multitude of options you'd be hard pressed not to be inspired by this pedal and the new looper functions push this aspect way beyond the practice tool that it was in the original Flashback into a serious musical addition.

With the original Flashback, TC created a pedal that represented such good value for money that you wondered how it was even possible. The new X4 version makes this

**Gi** STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC

[...>]



question even harder to answer and gives a product that will be really hard for the competition to beat. Superb sounds, flexibility, ease of use and expanded I/O options makes this a very attractive and pro-level delay pedal that is affordable for all but the most budget conscious of players. TC is leading the way once again. I recommend you check one out as soon as you can!



TC Electronic FlasHback X4

## ONE GUITARIST DEFINES VINTAGE TONE. ONE SPEAKER DELIVERS IT.



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# Aphex Aural Xciter

Aphex's Aural Xciter has been around as an idea for many years. But does the magic still work? **Michael Casswell** finds out.

Back in the mid '80s, a lot of the top recording studios would pay mega bucks to hire by the hour something called an Aphex Aural Xciter for their final mixes and mastering. Nobody actually knew how or what it did, but they knew it did do something magical when it was added to the sonic equation. I caught the tail end of the initial frenzy, when the Aphex Aural Xciter became affordable and people started putting a scaled down rack version in their guitar rigs.

I'm no scientist, or audio geek, but I do know a few chords and probably a little bit about guitar sounds, so I'm going to try and explain what the Aphex Xciter does as I understand it. Here goes! When our guitar speakers are dealing with all the notes and chords we throw at them, they are having to deal with all those frequencies in one big lump at the same time. A speaker will function a lot more efficiently if it gets fed an organised flow of lows, mids and highs. This has the perceived effect of more clarity, with replaced frequency harmonics and a general 'what have I been missing all these years?' type of reaction. So, if you are still with me, the Aphex Xciter processes your sound and feeds it to your speakers in a way that makes them happy, allowing them to work a lot more efficiently, delivering lots of lost harmonics and clarity that you

didn't even know you had. It's almost as though somebody lifted off a big heavy sleeping bag from in front of your speaker cab.

From the lessons I learnt from the days of big racks and big hair, I knew this sort of thing is a bit of a secret weapon when it comes to guitar sounds, so I have had a BBE Sonic Stomp in my main pedal boards for quite a few years now, and I try not to tell too many people about it because it's my secret. The Aphex Xciter (they seem to have dropped the Aural!) is reckoned to do a similar job but is much more programmable than the BBE, because you are able to be far

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**Aphex Aural Xciter And Optical Big Bottom Pedal**



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**Gi** STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC

[...>]





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*Biffy Clyro*

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Biffy Clyro



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more specific about what part of the frequency ranges you want to work on, and how loud you want the effect to be.

It's very intuitive. Basically the centre knob lets the pedal know what instrument you want it to do its magic on. You can select acoustic, bass and electric. There is a phantom powered D.I. out from the back of the pedal, ideal for acoustics and bass, but not so good for electric guitars because the sound is obviously not speaker emulated. Then you have two knobs for the low end which are frequency and effect level, and same for the high end. This gives you the ability to fine tune your sound depending on what amp and what guitars you use. Some amps are darker and fatter in tone, some guitars are more toppy and harsh, but the Aphex will always deliver a sweet spot that will work well and provide an improvement over your original sound.

Aphex claims that the Xciter delivers: "increased presence and clarity, greater perceived loudness, improved detail, deeper, more resonant bass, little or no increase in peak output, tighter bass articulation and extended low frequencies." No doubt it does all of those but it's the overall effect that impresses most so check out the video to see if the fairy dust it sprinkles appeals to you!

Having used this general type of sound enhancement on and off for a while, I know there are a couple of things to watch for, especially when it comes to using on your electronical guitar. Firstly, your core tone has to be good. The Aphex Xciter will not make a rubbish


guitar sound better. It will just make it clearer, deeper and more three dimensional, but it will still be a rubbish guitar sound! Secondly, moderation and subtlety works much better than maxing out the knobs on this pedal. You've got to do it tastefully. I say the same thing when people ask me about using reverbs: you've got to feel it rather than hear it! Thirdly, I would suggest that this pedal works best in the effects loop of your amp rather than in front. Experiment all you like with using it in front, but you will end up sticking it in the loop. Lastly, it does make guitar sound more studio quality, which I personally love, but sometimes, you want lo-fidelity for some of those organic SRV, Hendrix, Trower, early Clapton moments, and that is the time you stamp on the true bypass button and turn it off.

The Aphex Xciter even comes with some Velcro and a clear space at the bottom of the pedal to use it, and it also comes with some little sticky feet to use if you are that way inclined. Most times you want the bottom of a pedal to be dead flat, so the Velcro can do its thing, but I'm sure little sticky feet can be stuck other places!

It's built strong enough that you could use it to hammer in nails and Aphex has been around more than long enough to have ironed-out any bugs. So - is it for you? It's a subtle thing in some ways - but I would advise you definitely to check one of these out - and that goes just as much for bass players and acoustic-electric guitarists, too, as the Xciter has settings for those instruments as well and can deliver its magic just as well with them.

I would rather you didn't though, because I want it to be my secret.









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*PULLED APART BY HORSES*

Tom Hudson  
Pulled Apart By Horses



MoFo - 55 Head  
Hayden - 412

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# Sonuus Wahoo Pedal

Want two analogue filters with masses of digital control in a compact format, complete with an expression pedal? UK MIDI specialist Sonuus has the very thing with its just launched, 'Best of NAMM' nominated Wahoo pedal. **Tom Quayle** put one of the first production samples through its paces.

Sonuus is a UK-based guitar technology company run by boffin Dr. James Clark. Over recent years it has made a real stir in the world of pitch recognition and conversion for guitar and bass players, providing a compact and budget friendly solution for entering the world of synths and sequencing. First shown at winter NAMM 2012 where it was nominated for a 'Best of NAMM' award, the Wahoo is the company's first effects pedal unit and represents a few firsts within the industry.

The Wahoo is a dual analogue filter/wah stomp box where each filter can be configured as low-pass or band-pass and operated independently in wah pedal, envelope, LFO, and pitch-tracking modes. Each filter features a true analogue design, similar to those found in vintage synths, giving the Wahoo a warm organic feel that is very hard to achieve with digital products.

The digital front end allows for masses of control, giving you a huge spectrum of sounds from vocal formant filters, to envelope controlled wahs, to sequenced

filter sweeps. Sounds can be stored in up to 100 user presets and the unit ships with 100 factory sounds to show the potential that the Wahoo provides. Sonuus has also packed in its pitch tracking technology, allowing for some truly unique sounds that can be controlled with pitch recognition: a first for a filter pedal.

Construction quality is very high, as the Wahoo is made from aluminium, housing high quality electronic components and a unique expression pedal design, featuring a brand new type of position sensor that allows super-fine precision control with no mechanical couplings. No potentiometers here or optical sensors that are susceptible to dust and wear - in fact, Sonuus claim that the Wahoo pedal will never become noisy and will never wear out!

In use the pedal is super smooth and precise, with just the right range of travel for all of those fat filter and wah sounds.

On the front of the unit are the controls for storing presets, editing filter sounds



and assigning the control parameters using envelopes, LFOs, onboard pedal and pitch tracking. Having this many options on board allows for some truly expressive sounds that can be dialled in with relative ease. That said, this is definitely not a plug and play pedal. You'll probably want to read the manual a few times, but in no way is it beyond the average user to program and come up with some cool sounds. If you want to go deep though you really can, with mind-boggling levels of parameter tweaking outlined very nicely in the manual and editable with a very intuitive user interface!

Round the back of the pedal you'll find basic ins and outs, plus a USB port for utilising the impressive looking software editor (MAC

and PC compatible), MIDI control via DAWs and uploading firmware updates. This means that the Wahoo can be updated via new software releases, adding new features or effects, making it truly future proof – a great asset. The software allows full control over all parameters in a user-friendly interface, making editing as painless as possible and allowing storage and uploading/sharing of user patches. Finally, a lock switch allows the user to perform without worrying about accidentally editing their settings by locking all controls other than preset selection and the expression pedal.

The Wahoo can be powered via USB, four AA batteries or any standard 9v power supply, although this is not included in the

**Gi** STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC

[...>]



box, something that is an oversight in this reviewer's opinion, but is certainly not a deal breaker. True-bypass operation keeps your signal intact when the pedal is off and it's surprising how quiet this unit is even with a ton of filtering going on.

In use the Wahoo presents an amazing array of very inspiring sounds that are all warm and fat without the blandness and tonal thinning associated with many digital units. Running through the 100 factory presets can be a little daunting at first but they are arranged in groups giving you access to each filter type and controller function. A nice addition might have been a list of all 100 presets giving you some idea of how each sound was achieved, but simply

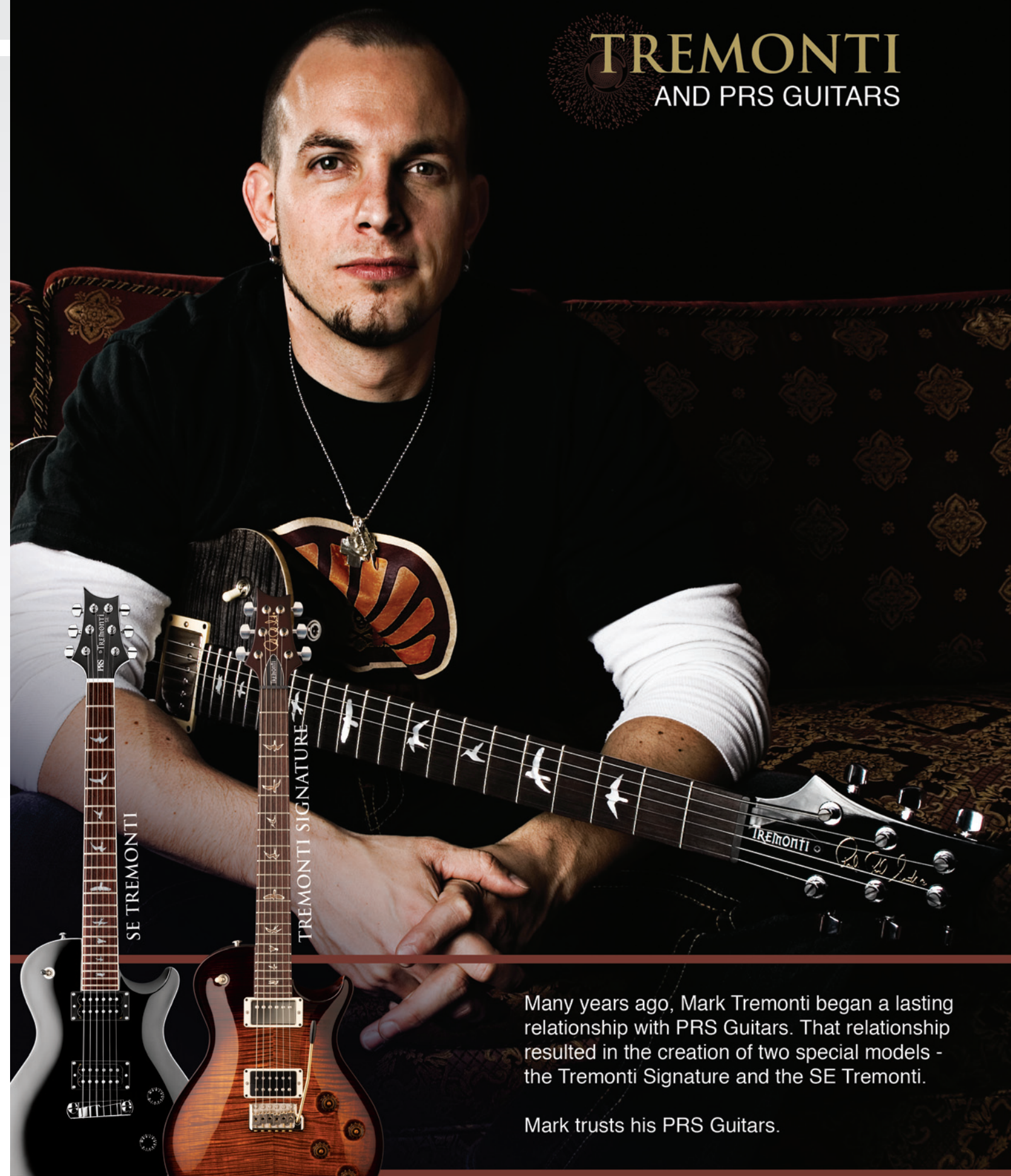
scrolling through each sound is a lot of fun! My favourites were the very vocal sounds using the expression pedal to move between multiple vowel sounds and the fantastically fat envelope filters. If you can imagine a filter sound it can almost certainly be achieved with the Wahoo!

The really great thing about the Wahoo is how inspirational the sounds can be - I can fully imagine using some of these sounds to write entire riffs or songs and after all, what else do we use effects pedals for if not to inspire us to be more creative? In this respect the Wahoo is highly successful and I very much recommend that you check one out!



Sonuus Wahoo Pedal

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# Pro Co Rat Distortion Pedals

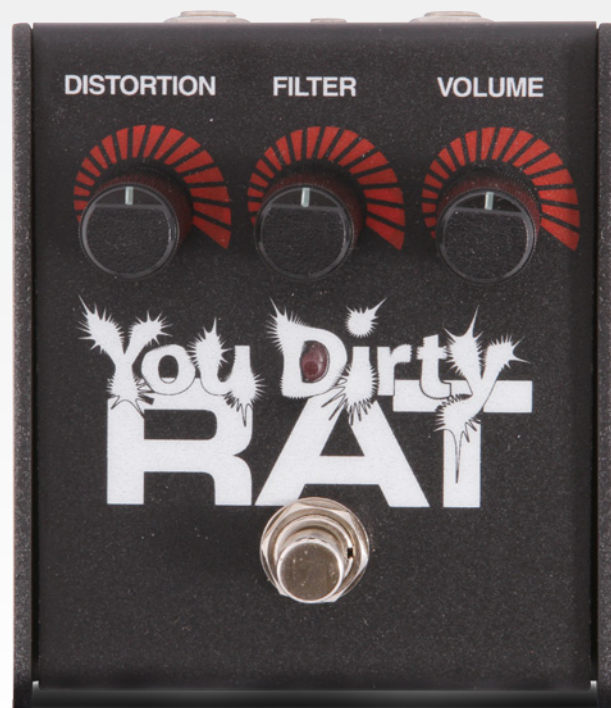
Pro Co's original Rat distortion pedal has spawned a whole family - six in fact. We invited four of the rodents to meet **Michael Casswell**.

## GUITAR INTERACTIVE STAR RATING

RAT 2 ★★★★★  
DIRTY RAT ★★★★★★  
WHITEFACE 85 REISSUE ★★★★★★  
TURBO RAT ★★★★★★

The Pro Co Rat pedal first burst on to the guitar scene in the mid '80s and swept through the guitar playing world like no other dirt pedal has. There was a good reason for this. It was really good. At lower settings it would act like a cool overdrive that would kick a good amp into some really musical high gain fun. At mid-way settings it would become a filthy animal that would turn the cleanest Fender amp into metal monster. And at its highest setting it would turn into the best retro fuzz like pedal, so good that Hendrix would probably have been using one, had he still been with us.

It found its way on many albums and was used by many of the biggest names of the time. I remember Jeff Beck being big on using one in the late '80s with his green Strat plus and a red knob Fender Twin. Since that first white logo version, Pro Co has put out



various versions of the Rat, all sort of doing that 'Rat' thing, but apparently not in quite the same way as that original 1985 model.

Why? I think it's a lot to do with the LM308 chip that was in the first version, which if you know or are interested in such things, is the Corvette C7 of stomp box overdrive chips. These original issue white logo Rats are very sought after and collectable nowadays, and not ones to miss a trick, Pro Co has re-issued it and called it the Rat 85 Whiteface



reissue. We should be sceptical of re-issues, because there is usually a compromise somewhere in the manufacture, due to costs or parts no longer being made or available, but if we are going to believe Pro Co, which I guess we all are, this reissue is identical in every way to the original, which is very good news indeed.

This reissue has all the crucial features of the original. Which are, the white Rat logo, the same shape and size steel box, the same circuit board layout, the cool large CTS pots (labelled distortion, filter, volume), a true bypass switch (did the original have that?) and that crucial LM308 chip.

It's not a huge list but it's a good one!

I was sent the whole range of Rat pedals to look at which consists of the regular Rat, the Dirty Rat, the Turbo Rat and this 85 whiteface reissue. Plus I own a Rat from around 1990, so it was like a Rat convention at my place! My first comparison was between the '85 and my second generation, early '90s version. I did a back to back comparison with same amp and same

settings and couldn't really detect much, if any, difference, which made me happy because it meant my 1990 version held its own against this limited edition 85 reissue. I then spent the next hour comparing the other Rats.

The regular Rat sounded much like the 85 and my own one and did very similar things to the amp, which makes it very good value for money indeed! What the 'Dirty Rat' did was more noticeable in its differences in that it had silly amounts of squashy, fuzzy gain coupled with a bit more hiss. The one I really liked a lot was the Turbo Rat, however. It reacted more like a booster pedal with a fatter sounding overdrive, less hiss and generally nice tones all round. To me, the Turbo Rat was the winner at the Rat party.

Why didn't I review them all, I hear you say? Well mainly because to my ears they do all sound very similar, and the differences are



[...>]





very subtle so it wouldn't have made for good viewing. Safe to say, they all sound good and it just depends on your style and idea of tone, as to which pet Rat should belong to you. The 85 reissue is twice the price of the others and would be very nice to have but I am happy with my second generation pedal from 1990 or thereabouts. As I said earlier, the king Rat for me was the Turbo version. I thought it had something nicer in the tone that the others didn't. But if LM308 chips are your thing, then you probably need to go find yourself the 85 reissue.

Everyone should have a Rat in their life.

And lastly..... The word 'Rat' appears 19 times in this review.



**FRET King**  
by  
Trev Wilkinson

**Black Label**



At Fret-King® we have a saying...  
"Knowledge is Power."

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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.

Our love for what we do means that we create with a passion.

Trev Wilkinson's decades of guitar building expertise and unrivalled guitar know-how mean that we can go where other guitar makers don't, using innovative, meticulous construction methods and premium materials and components throughout the whole Black Label building and finishing process.

We embrace obsession, follow our hearts, not our heads, and revel in detail to make Fret-King guitars stand apart, consistently outclass the established benchmarks, yet be comfortable, friendly and familiar.

Our passion for thinking outside the usual constraints, while keeping a close eye on the styling cues we are all comfortable with, and the classic tones we all enjoy produces guitars you'll feel you've played all your life.

## Artist Inspired

Our vision is to inspire you.

There are standards to be acknowledged, surpassed and improved upon.

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The result, Fret-King Black Label™ – the newest member of the Fret-King family.

Part of the Black Label design brief was to actually listen to pro players, and to work with them to create their ideal guitar.

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 Label 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.

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# Snark SN10 Pedal Tuner

In which **Michael Casswell** goes hunting for a Snark....

We all need a good tuner. A good accurate tuner is something we all take for granted and it's the little touches that make the difference when it comes to picking one tuner over another.

The US firm Snark has been around for a while and was one of the first to come up with a handy little tuner that clips on your headstock and listens to the pitch resonating through your guitar. Never bought one myself but it seems everyone else did. Now Snark has put out a more traditional stomp box version, and very nice it is too. It has the little touches that make the difference, such as the ability to daisy chain power to other pedals, which is always a handy feature. Also, it features true bypass switching, that takes it out of your signal path when not in use, which makes it even more desirable for the tone purists amongst us. We also have a serious full colour display, to show you your state of tune. One of the biggest brightest and best. This will be easily seen in any situation. It also mutes for silent tuning when you stomp on the very slick switch button, which doesn't really need you to stomp on it at all, because a slight gentle stroke will do the job.

One very nice touch is underneath the pedal. In order to change the battery (should you need to use it on a battery, away from a powered pedal board) there is a big sliver cross head screw, which at first glance you think you are going to have to be carrying a big phillips screwdriver around with you to undo it. Not the case. The screw is sort of curved in, allowing you to use any small coin that's handy, and we all usually have a few bits of loose change in our pockets don't we. Or if you don't, someone near you will. So although it seems a small thing, it's forethought like this that makes me warm to this pedal.

It looks and feels very rugged too, with a strong die cast metal casing. This makes it heavier in weight than some pedals but that is a small price to pay if it is going to last life on the road. It's also not the smallest tuner out there, and sometimes real estate on a pedalboard can be at a premium. I'm not saying it too big, it's just an average sort of size that will want it's own territory next to your other pedals, rather than squeezing in a smaller tuner in any left over gap (as a lot of us do). But when you look at how cool and great its readout is, then its size makes sense.



STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC

[...>]

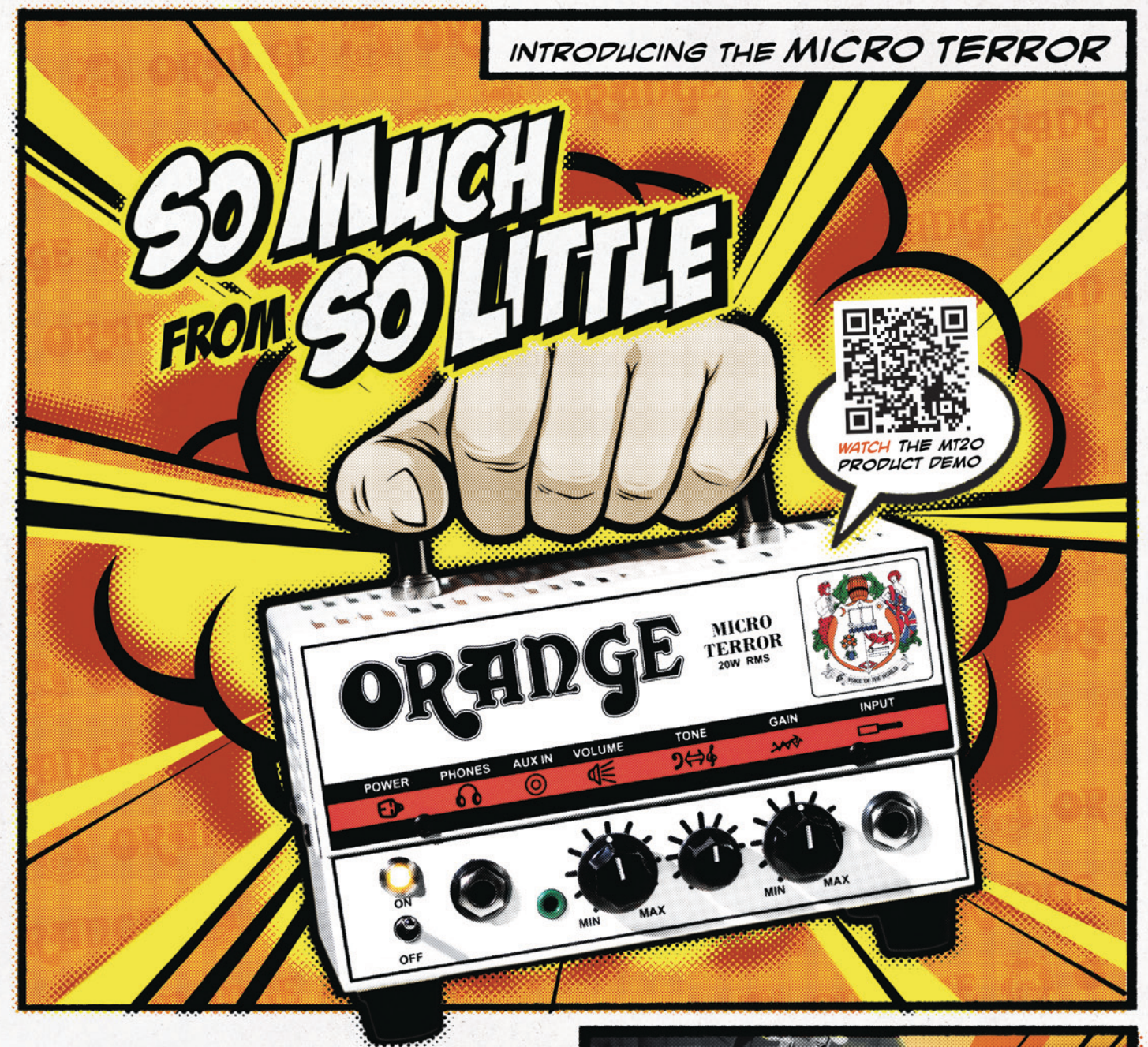


It's obviously accurate at what it does, showing you in no uncertain terms when you are in tune.

So add up all the nice little touches the Snark and it certainly is as good as anything out there, with a very reasonable price tag. I'm convinced.



Snark SN10 Pedal Tuner



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FEATURES A SINGLE TUBE  
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**20 WATTS OF POWER**

IT'S AN **AMAZING** LITTLE AMP  
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# Time Trainer Metronome App

Looking for a simple, cheap, reliable metronome? Own an iOS device?  
**Tom Quayle** has a suggestion..

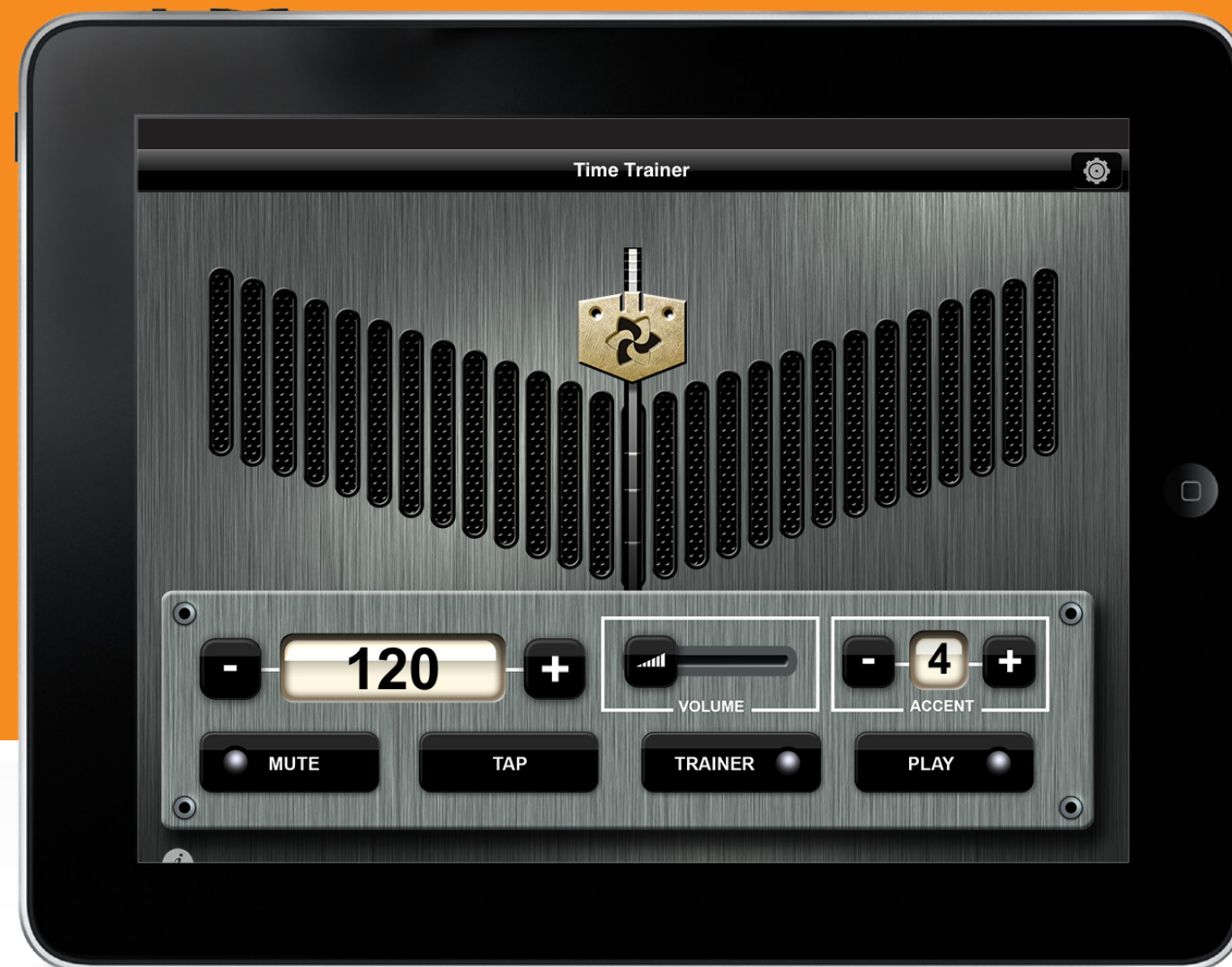
A metronome is an essential tool for the practising guitar player and with the ever-increasing iOS user base there are tons of metronome apps out there for use on your iPhone, iPad or iPod. Designed by guitar teaching guru and Youtube phenomenon, Justin Sandercoe, the 'Time Trainer' app is a high quality metronome and rhythm-training program that gives the user some interesting tools that make it sit above most of the others. The first thing that you may not notice immediately, but is vitally important, is that Time Trainer is a very accurate metronome.



Time Trainer Metronome App



STAR RATING ★★★★★



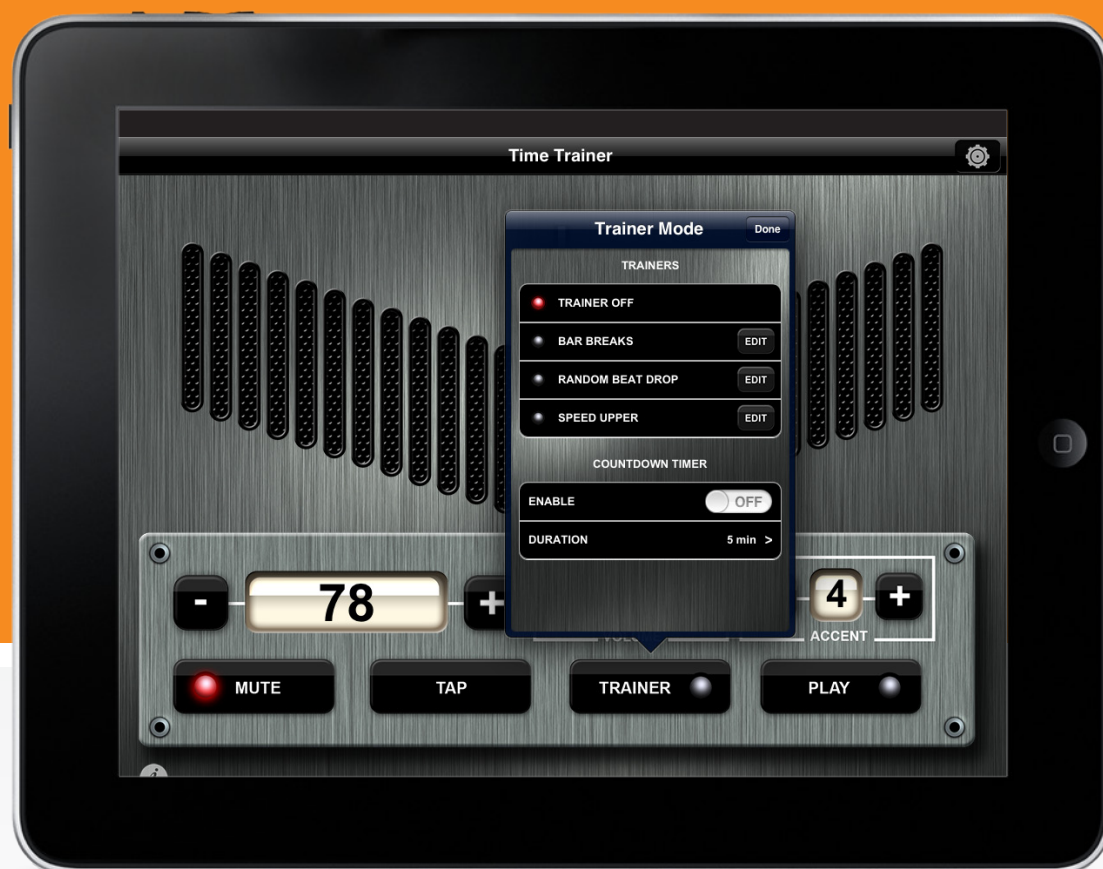
There are some apps out there that can be up to a beat or more out after only a minute or so of use and whilst you may not notice whilst using them at first they are doing nothing to improve your time feel if they aren't accurate. Justin states that his app is accurate to hundredths of a second and I certainly had no problems using it.

Offering all of the usual tools such as accent control, tempo tap and multiple metronome

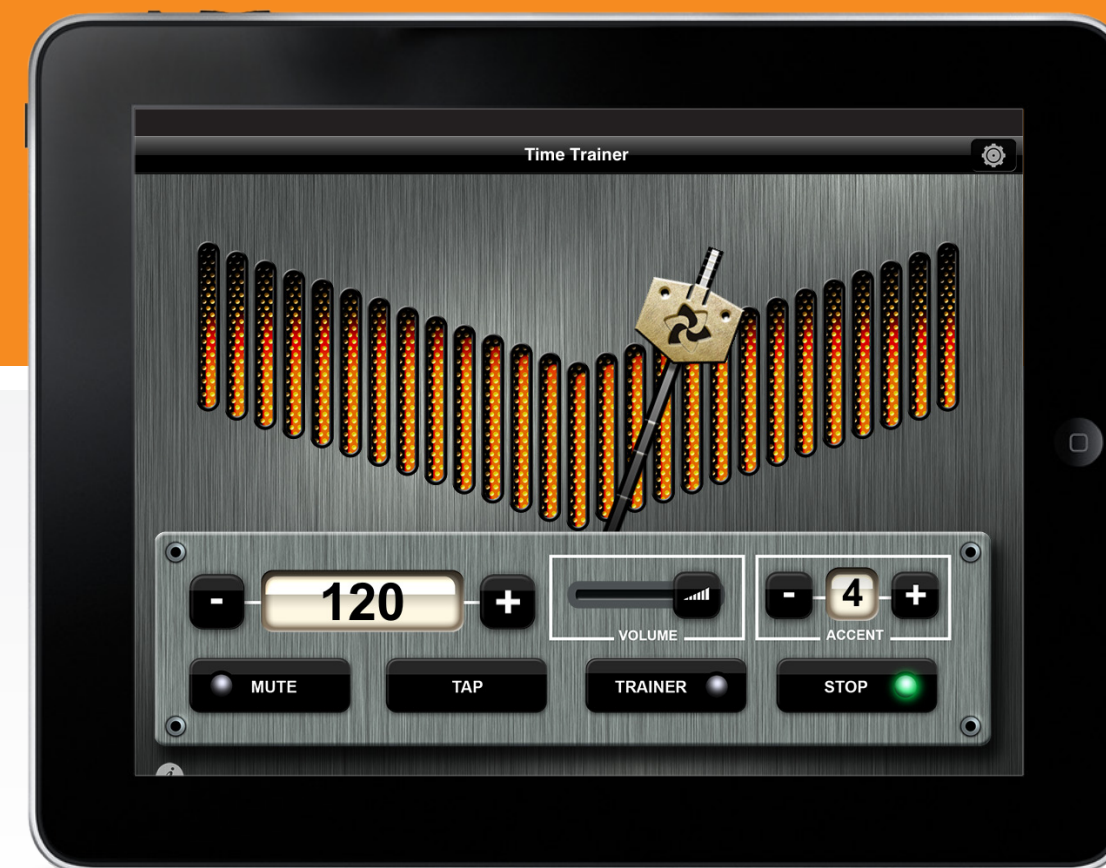
sounds, the app also offers functions to help you develop your timing away from the metronome. Bar breaks, random beat drops and a speed upper function are all designed to develop your time feel and ability to stay in time without the metronome - in other words, in the real world! Bar breaks mutes the metronome on specific bars as set by the app's parameters giving you the opportunity to see if you can stay in time until the metronome comes back in.

[...>]





The training functions are a superb added bonus and really make this an easy to recommend practice tool.



Beat drop causes certain beats to be muted allowing you to develop your inner metronome, trying to stay in time whilst hearing only certain beats. Both of these options can be customised to produce increasingly challenging tests of your internal time and make a superb practice tool for all guitar players.

The final option is the Speed Upper function and gives you a start tempo, end tempo and duration control. The metronome

will begin at the start tempo and gradually increase over the given duration to the end tempo allowing you to practice a particular phrase or technical exercise at ever increasing difficulty levels.

Time Trainer is a great app at a very good price with an easy to use interface that looks great. The training functions are a superb added bonus and really make this an easy to recommend practice tool.





# STYLE FILE ON Slide Guitar

Inspired by our Derek Trucks feature but just don't know how to get your head around slide guitar? **Michael Casswell** comes to the rescue.

We all agree Derek Trucks is an amazing slide player. But what can you do to even contemplate getting close to what he does? Unfortunately, you have to get the fundamentals nailed first. Hopefully the track I have put together is pitched about right to improve any slide skills you have already, but not so difficult that a beginner can't have a go.

Derek Trucks often favours open E tuning but I have purposely kept this track and my guitar in regular tuning. I did this because the chances are you will more than likely use your favourite regular tuned guitar to attempt a slide solo, rather than have a guitar specifically tuned to an open E, A, D, or G, which are all good fun, but part of the fundamental skill is being able to play some lines and licks in regular tuning.

[...>]



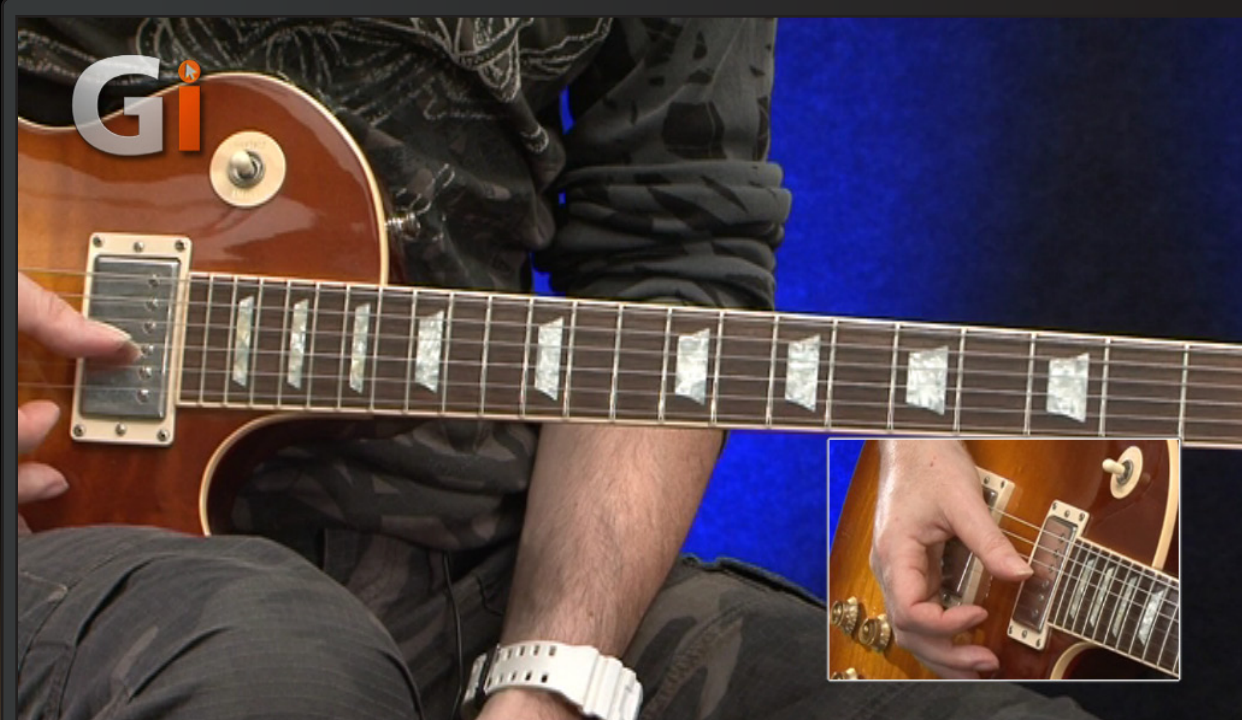


If you don't want investigate my playing over the track and just want jam over it yourself, then all the chords are diatonic to the key of D major except the G min6, where G Dorian works well. Which means for the most part all the notes in a D major scale will work over most of the song.

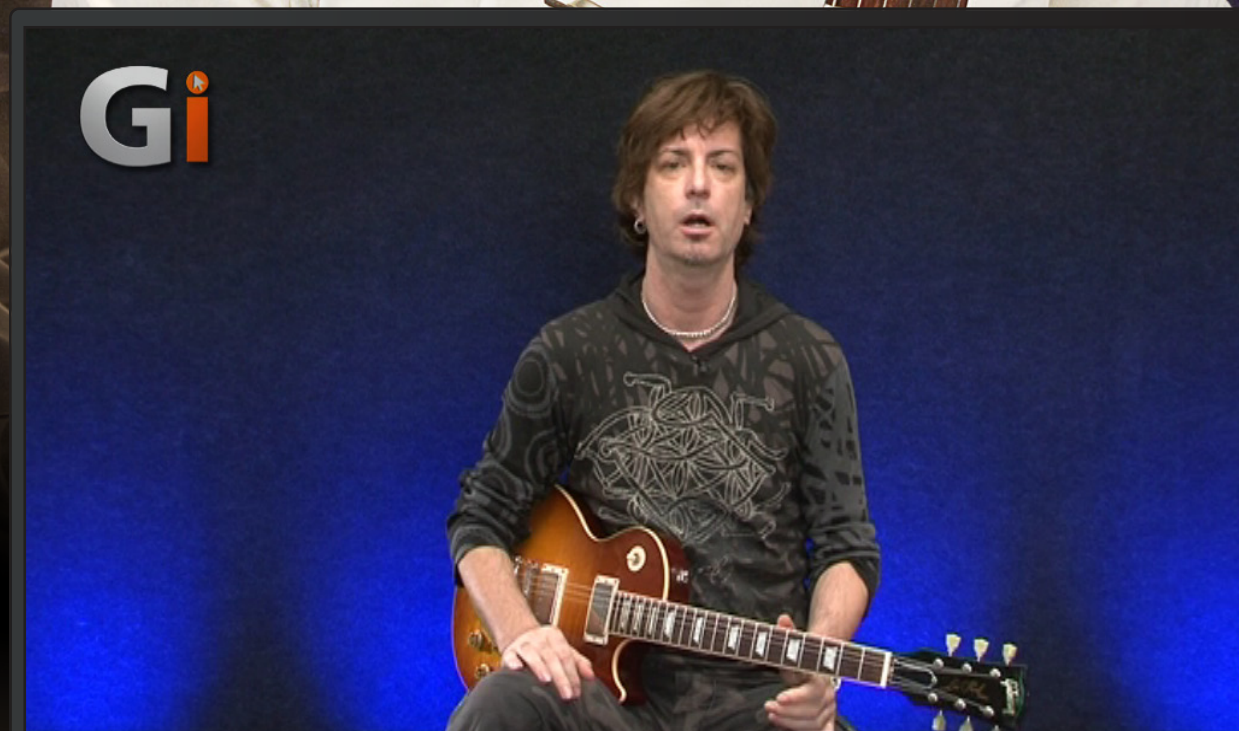
Unfortunately, to be as convincing as Derek, you need to start thinking about outlining chord tones and playing melodic lines, which is something he is great at. So just playing a D major scale without flare, thought, discipline and chops will not really cut it - but with a little perseverance, simple combinations of notes can sound great with a slide!

The chords are fairly straight forward. We have an intro vamp which is simply F sharp minor with some double stop slides that sound best when played with your fingers. Derek plays predominantly with his fingers, probably because the tone is so much better. Playing slide with your fingers is another fundamental in that Derek Trucks tone. You can use a pick, but it just won't sound as cool.

Then the chords for our A section are D maj7/ F sharp min 11 / X2 B min7 / G min6. Refer heavily to the structure I teach you in the film, but these are the chords.



Derek Trucks 'Slide Guitar' Performance



Derek Trucks 'Slide Guitar' Lesson 1

[...>]





Similar chords for the B section which are G6-9 / F sharp min11 / X2 E min / B min7 / G min6 / D maj9.

The big trick, with not only slide playing but regular playing too, is playing something that counts over these chords (check out my 'pro concepts' column elsewhere in this issue), so I have tried to put strong melodic lines over each chord which can be delivered in various ways using the slide. Derek will often put in little micro tonal nuances as he ends a phrase. Micro tones could be described as tones between the regular pitch of our regular notes. I have done some of these micro tonal touches as a phrase ends, blending them with vibrato.

Ah vibrato! This is a big fundamental. Get it wrong and it's pretty much game over. The vib is so important when it comes to slide and regular playing. Derek favours a quicker vib, where as someone like Joe Walsh favours a slower, wider, moodier vib. There is no right or wrong speed on this one but it does have to sound sweet and accurate and expressive. For the sake of the track I have

used a slightly quicker vib than perhaps I normally might, just to tip it slightly towards Derek's style.

If you check my performance, you may also notice I am playing a lot of the lines along the string rather than being confined in one position. This is something that Derek Truck is amazing at. He will play a pentatonic along one string and it will sound just awesome, whereas I have mostly done the same as everyone else, by using a scale shape and pretty much keeping within a certain position. Doing it the way Derek does it gives a real fresh flavour to the sound and is definitely not a fundamental. It's a very advanced technique!

You also need to choose a slide that works for you. I favour small light glass slides, because most of my guitars are set up with a low to medium action with 9-42 strings, and using a big thick brass monstrosity would just be a nightmare to control, and certainly wouldn't sound any better than what I can do with a glass slide. The slides I use are made by Picato Pete and Dunlop and they work well

[...>]

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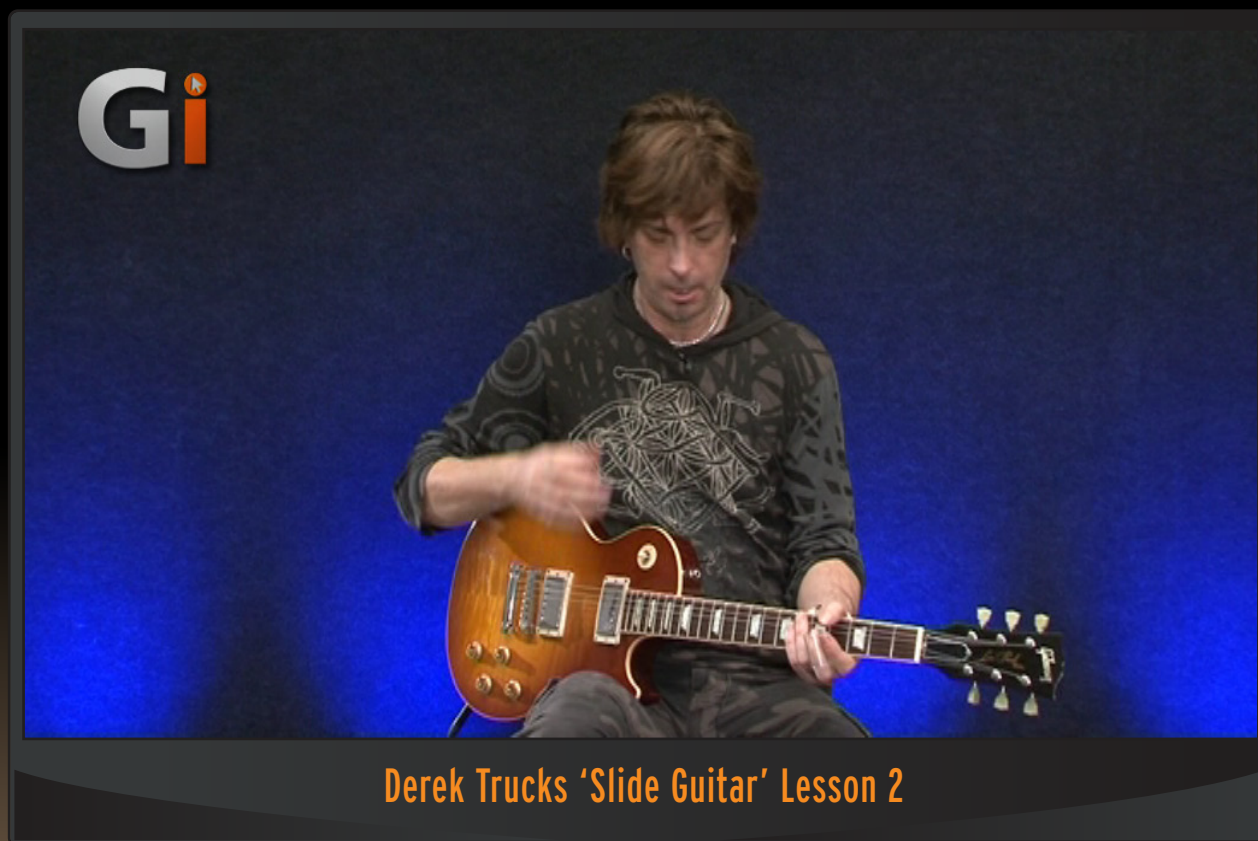


for me. I buy them in bulk because once you drop them, they shatter. I guess you could throw a thick brass slide at the floor and it would be fine! Getting the slide you are comfortable with is a big fundamental and there may be some trial and error involved.

Muting unwanted strings is also a must, especially when playing in regular tuning as we are for this track. Everybody has their own way of doing this and it's something that's not easily taught. Probably playing a slow simple line and getting it to sing out true and clear without other strings spoiling the magic is a good starting point. I remember as a kid trying and trying to play the slide line from Freebird, until one day there it was, clear as a bell, with no overtones or noise from other strings.

Maybe the last basic decision to make is to decide what finger you are going to use. Derek Trucks uses his third finger. I use my second. Again it's more about what works for you than emulating what Derek does. There are many pros and cons on finger choice, so more trial and error involved.

Our song goes out with some simpler pentatonic type licks which are always good to have at your disposal. Pay special attention to the feel to make them sound cool. As with regular playing, feel, touch and tone is the difference between a good player and a fantastic player, and Derek Trucks is the definition of feel, touch and tone!



Derek Trucks 'Slide Guitar' Lesson 2

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# THE BASSMENT

We tossed four products down into The Bassment for Dan Veall to chew on for this issue - two amps, a bass guitar and one half of the duo of Aphex FX pedals which we are giving away as competition prizes in this issue.

Our amps follow an evolving trend in the bass market, both of them by being digital and coming from manufacturers with major reputations who weren't among the first to embrace the move to digital - Peavey and EBS. Peavey's TKO bears up a name that will be familiar to hard working bassists around the world as one of the industry's workhorses, but now coming in a completely new digital version, while those familiar with Norse mythology will get a clue as to the EBS Reidmar's purpose when they recall that Reidmar was a dwarf with prodigious strength!

Bass players who like the general idea of what Leo Fender came up with when he invented the bass guitar all those years ago, but hanker

after something a bit more modern, might find the G&L M2500 their kind of thing. But did Dan Veall? Read on...

And, finally to the Aphex Punch Factory, not by any means solely aimed at the bass market but widely used by pro bass players to sprinkle extra magic on their sound. We liked it (and its Xciter cousin, reviewed in the guitar gear section) so much that we are giving them both away as prizes in this issue. You are going to enter, aren't you?

Remember that we're always keen to hear your suggestions about what you'd like us to look at. Just email [editor@guitarinteractivemagazine.com](mailto:editor@guitarinteractivemagazine.com)

**Gary Cooper** - Editor





# G&L TRIBUTE SERIES M2500 BASS

Enjoy traditional Leo Fender styled basses but want something just a little bit more advanced? That sounds like the new G&L M2500 to us! **Dan Veall** takes one for a spin.

1981 saw the release of the original L2000 and L2500 four and five string basses from G&L, the company formed by George Fullerton, Leo Fender and Dale Hyatt in the 1970s. Leo left a lasting legacy for G&L, as you might expect, and was quoted in a magazine advert as saying 'these are the best instruments I have ever made'. But instrument design is never set in stone - even Leo's! - and the latest G&L we have here, the M2500, is from the company's new Tribute Series and is an evolution from the original L series.



G&L Tribute Series M2500 Bass



STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC 



[...>]





Opening up the custom G&L case included with the instrument was a treat - a quality case including paperwork and tools and a great start. Things only got better when we had the bass out for a pre-review warm up. The build quality was flawless and I have to say that I'm liking white basses more! This is only the second white bass we have had in for review and the finish on it was spotless.

The M2500 sits on the knee well balanced and is not too weighty or neck-heavy, which isn't necessarily what you might expect from an instrument with five standard open backed tuning keys in a three-two layout. The smooth finish to the medium C carve hard rock maple neck is a joy to navigate and the rosewood fretboard with its 22 nickel frets was equally perfectly finished.

G&L premium instruments are well known for their build quality; but the M2500 has had an upgrade in the electronics department too. Leo's MFD humbuckers have been the mainstay of the successful L-Series and in the new M-Series, they are voiced to fully exploit a new studio-quality 18v preamp created by G&L's R&D wizard Paul Gagon. The new preamplifier features an LF442 chip, 100v poly caps, 1% metal film resistors and military specification circuit board. In use, the controls, volume, pan and the three band EQ are solid, with a quality feel to their rotation. The pan and the EQ controls have centre detents for their mid-way positions, which we also liked.

Plugged in, the M2500 has a full character with 'everything set flat'. It's hard to describe the sound of pickups (*it's a good job we have video, then! - Ed*), but these humbuckers have a pleasing roundness to their tone, not overly bright with a slightly zingy 'Musicman' rasp, but at the same time the kind of fatness you'd expect from a classic P bass pickup too.

One thing on our sample was that the bridge pickup was set a little low, which made it quieter than the neck pickup (easily compensated for with the pan control, of course) and I'd also personally have opted for a lower action, though if you are looking for a studio clean tone, there's not a single buzz or rattle even with aggressive playing styles! That is



noteworthy. Either way, it reinforces the point we always make on Gi, that when you buy a new instrument it is important to negotiate a personal set-up in the price, because everyone's tastes are different.

That aside, the EQ is centred perfectly and I found the boost and cut to really enhance the voice of the instrument.

Moving on to the hardware, as expected the tuning keys have a smooth operation and I'm always happy to see a high mass bridge on a quality bass to aid sustain and fullness of tone, in comparison to those less substantial 'bent tin' style bridges. The G&L bridge, designed by Leo Fender, features saddles that can be secured in position to stop sideways movement thus helping to improve tone still further.

The M2500 is a great bass, beautifully made and with a great tonal character. It's something a bit different to Leo's other well known designs and has an added modern vibe, without losing that essential rounded, vintage sound you get when pulling those high end frequencies back.

If you are a fan of Leo's other basses, then the M2500 will feel like an old friend even new out of the box. That's got to be a good thing if you are looking for wider tonal variation from a traditionally profiled instrument. It isn't a cheap bass: it's a handmade, US-produced one designed for serious players who know exactly what they want and it's certainly worth the asking price.



[...>]



# APHEX PUNCH FACTORY OPTICAL COMPRESSOR

Compressors are a kind of Swiss Army knife and Aphex is reckoned to be the Victorinox of compressors. **Dan Veall** puts the Aphex Punch Factory through some of its many paces.

Aphex is absolutely no stranger to signal processing and has been at the forefront of audio production since the original 'Aural Exciter' hit the market back in 1975. That experience of 35 years in the field, working with countless top name artists, as well studios all over the world

and applied to a huge range of products including microphone pre-amplifiers, compressors, aural exciters or even Aphex enhanced MP3 playing phone apps (!) means Aphex is among the most qualified outfits in the audio business, so we had high expectations of the Punch Factory when it arrived!

So, Punch Factory? What is it? Put simply, it's a compressor pedal with a D.I. output. In reality, it's a whole lot more.

I should add, the Punch Factory is just as suited to guitar users as it is to bass, but because probably more bassists use the Punch Factory, it ended up in The Bassment. That doesn't mean it's only suitable for bass use by any means, so please bear that in mind!

The components of the Punch Factory are engineered by Aphex themselves for the best possible response and clean signal path. This model, much like its predecessor that featured a rather eye-catching orange and black livery, uses 'opto' technology. In short, this is an optical compression method that makes for a practically invisible sounding compression on very low settings, through to some lovely squashy compression on very high ones. With this method, the input signal is tracked directly and both attack and release times of the compressor are automatically set in relation to that signal.

## YOU CAN WIN!

**Aphex Aural Xciter And Optical Big Bottom Pedal**



Click [here](#) to enter competition.



I like this approach as it is very easy to apply controlled compression quickly - for the novice or 'technophobe' set-up is a total breeze.

[...>]



STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC



I demonstrated two extremes of settings in the video, but I'd recommend experimenting with the pedal yourself if you get the opportunity. It's dead easy to understand and near impossible to break! Speaking of understanding, I have to give the manual a thumbs-up too. It describes each of the controls clearly, so you'll quickly find your perfect low-end punch.

What makes the Punch Factory such a hit is how good it is with so many sources too, not just for bass guitar. However if it's bass that is your thing, here's a few of my own tips for using the Punch Factory:

Use the pedal as a solo boost. Set up a hard compression and extra gain on the output to send your signal in to overdrive when it is time to crack out a percussive monster bass

solo! The added compression will make fast passages a breeze as the compressor works to keep the levels smooth.

Put the pedal at the end of the signal path, for example the last pedal on your pedal board to provide signal limiting before going off to your amp/mixer/recording device. Especially useful if you use effects that vary dynamically such as filters that boost and cut the bass frequencies.

Mild compression in the effects loop of a solid-state amplifier to make it react more like the compressing effect of valves. You can leave this plugged in and switched on all the time for a pleasing fattening of your bass sound at all volumes, instead of having to push a valve-amp over the edge in to natural compression.

I prefer using compression to tame slap bass parts, or for when I need a signal boost for tapping. Mostly for finger and pick work I rely on a smooth technique, but I think a mild setting with this pedal would be great for a near invisible controlling of your dynamics.

Finally, if all of this functionality wasn't enough to make this a compressor that should be high up on your shopping list, then the D.I. output on the back is an added bonus. This pedal doubles as a D.I. box - and believe me, if you turned up for a show and plugged your bass directly in to this and out to the P.A. I think the engineer would be very happy with you. You'd be sending a tight, controlled and limited signal to the front of house - which means less chance of overdriving the mixing desk with sudden transients.

Aphex has thought carefully about the needs of the gigging musician and I am really

pleased to see that not only does this pedal run from batteries but also phantom power via the D.I. socket coming from a mixing console. There is also provision for a wide range of both DC and AC adapters - so the usual pedal board types easily catered for.

My only reservation - and it is a minor one - is that my own pedal board for example is already cramped with kit. Personally, I preferred the smaller form factor of the original Punch Factory pedal. That said, let's not take away from the fact that this is practically bomb proof and a real 'Swiss army knife' of a pedal with lots of uses. It looks great and would be perfect for the gigging bass player. Come to that, it would be just at home on a guitarist's pedal board, too, where the lack of 'pumping' and overall smoothness would make it one of the most desirable compressors around



Aphex Punch Factory Optical Compressor



[...>]



# EBS REIDMAR 250 D CLASS HEAD AND EBS CLASSIC LINE CL112 CABINETS

Swedish bass amp maker EBS has finally unveiled its first Class D head - the pint-sized but potent Reidmar mini stack. Was it worth the wait? Dan Veal donned his Viking helmet and prepared to do battle.

Swedish bass amplification and effects master EBS has already established itself in the bass gear market with a long list of credible bassists as endorsing artists. However, it has taken until now for EBS to take its first foray in to the 'D Class amplification' market.

Why? Well, the design specification of the Reidmar, (whose name interestingly is that of a dwarf in Nordic mythology) was to bring out a D Class amplifier to compete in the market, not to be the lightest or the most powerful on paper, but to actually deliver the same power and girth as the other amplifiers in the EBS range. Owing to the space and weight savings of D Class technology, it would mean that the amplifier could shave off pounds and inches, making a more compact and portable unit.

Setting up in the studio was a total breeze. We rapidly had everything hooked up and ready to go with my usual six string Shuker custom bass plugged in. The Reidmar's pristine sounding preamp is all analogue with no DSP sections. The front panel is tidy and very easy to operate including a 'mid scoop' pre-shape control and by-passable four band EQ.

A simple, but musical, EBS compressor with just a single control is on board to control transients or just to make your bass sound lovely and squishy at more extreme settings! The four band EQ is a nod to the controls on Reidmar's siblings, featuring bass, semi-parametric mids, treble and bright controls. It's musical and great sounding, with just the right EQ frequency centres for most instruments. The mid control has a frequency knob that can be swept from down in the bass range at 100Hz all the way up to 6kHz, meeting the point at which the treble control takes over. The bright control allows you to add some real sheen and air to your bass sound, making new strings sound extra zingy!

I really liked disabling the EQ altogether in favour of using just the pre-shape function instead. Much like the Session 60 combo I reviewed in an earlier edition of Guitar Interactive, as I think that the frequency curve for the pre-shape for each of these models is actually spot-on! In my previous review I mentioned how I thought it made the combo sound much bigger than it actually was.

No surprises to hear that the same effect was noticed with this mini stack too!

The Reidmar isn't about growly tube tone, nor does it pretend to be a hot rod bass monster, but what it does do is reproduce your bass tone faithfully with lots of power. I felt that playing through the stack with my normal bass, my notes were controlled without flappy subs or incoherence. Some would call this a 'tight' and 'clean' sound. I'd agree.

Round the back of the amplifier, the 'clean and tidy' theme continues, with an effects loop and D.I. output (with pre/post EQ switch and ground lift) and also a Line Out and Headphones socket. There is, unusually, only one Speakon output socket and it is not a 'jack combination' type either. So, if you have a pair of cabinets, you will need to connect the amp to one cabinet, then, in the case of the EBS CL112, daisy-chain a Speakon lead from the link (parallel) socket on the same cabinet out to the next cabinet. This will set you up with a 4 Ohm load to match with the Reidmar's minimum load to give you maximum output wattage.



[...>]

**Gi** STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC



The amplifier features no limiting and to that end you are afforded as much of the power amplifier's output as possible before it clips. EBS says that when the amplifier does finally push into clipping, it does it in a musical way. I have to say though, when we cranked the levels, the cabinets gave in to the crazy volume levels before the amplifier showed any signs of breaking a sweat!

It's pretty loud for a standard 12" speaker pair I have to say!

EBS quotes this amplifier as having a 250W RMS output stage with a 'dynamic output' at four Ohms of 470W. In EBS marketing videos, the heads are said to be comparable to the output power of competitors' 500W rated heads. We were unable to test these claims.

We loved this wonderfully compact rig in the studio. The head sits comfortably and substantially upon the pair of EBS CL112 cabinets featuring a single EBS 12" bass speaker and 2" tweeter. We left both tweeters switched on in the review, preferring to use the EQ controls to adjust the tone and top end. To be honest though, the sound was incredibly well balanced and even with my reasonably bright bass, I chose to leave the EQ mostly flat, but boosted the low end a bit to add depth to the sound.

Each of the CL112 cabinets has a rating of 250W at 8 Ohms, paired together giving you a 500W mini stack at 4 Ohms.

This is a perfect configuration for the Reidmar as a small modular rig – but make no mistake, the Reidmar would be very happy powering EBS's much larger cabinets comfortably.



EBS Reidmar 250 D Class head and EBS Classic Line CL112 cabinets

Interestingly, despite EBS not wishing to compete in the race for the lightest amplifier, the Reidmar still weighs in at a tiny 3.2Kg! It's really not going to be a problem popping it in a bag and throwing over your shoulder with the bass hanging off your other shoulder! Some of the other small high power D Class heads will slip in to a front pocket of a bass soft case, however you may prefer the added protection of a dedicated amp case/bag for the Reidmar as it is a little larger than some rivals.

The construction of the head and the cabinets is absolutely flawless – no marks or ill-fitting cabinet covering - and these units were packed well and inside their sealed

factory bags so clearly hadn't been selected specially for this review. Tick in the box EBS!

I think the rig will suit a wide range of players, mostly those not needing to fight Mr 5150 with his stonking 4x12! The Reidmar rig is loud, but probably not ideal for ear-splitting gigs. It's a great versatile piece of kit that rewards you with an honest and faithful reproduction of what you put into it. And when you really do need more volume? The Reidmar head could happily sit on larger EBS cabinets when the time comes to 'see off' your fellow guitarist's rig – and at a fraction of the weight!





# PEAVEY TOUR SERIES TKO COMBO

Peavey has been making 'the working man's bass amps' for over 30 years. Now the company has brought its combo range bang up to date with digital versions. Do they still cut it for the hard working, cash-strapped pub and club player? **Dan Veall** tries a digital TKO to find out.

If you have been out to bar and club gigs, or through rehearsal rooms, any time since the 1980s, I could almost guarantee that you have seen or heard one of the original TNT or TKO combo amplifiers from Peavey. Immediately recognisable black and silver square boxes whose weight sorted the men from the boys! Even many years after their release, a good friend of mine uses one in his studio now - albeit as a table... I jest of course, but it is safe to say that despite being a little long in the tooth by today's technological standards, those original combo amps were built like the proverbial outhouse and that's probably why so many are still battling away today!

But Peavey never rests on its laurels and the company hasn't been left behind in the race to digital, having completely redesigned both its stalwart combos with digital amp stages and other enhanced features.

Bang up to date the TKO model boasts a brand new 400 Watt peak 'D Class' power amplifier and new custom designed 15" speaker. Inside the tilt back 'monitor style' cabinet, a tweeter is included to drive that clear top-end out.

The whole front of the amplifier waves goodbye to the original angular wooden cabinet and utilitarian stackable boxes of the past in favour of a smooth front grille - the controls move from the front face of the old design and are now on the top of the amplifier at the back, facing upward. I love the facelift actually - it reminds me of high spec PA cabinets with the smooth curved metal grille. On these models, the grilles are strong and secured to withstand kicks and bumps in transit.

The whole thing doesn't offer the back-breaking manoeuvrability challenge of yesteryear either. The unit is about the same weight as a modern Neodymium speaker loaded 4x10 - around 73 lbs/33Kg.

Up top, the features on board the amplifier are both useful and easy to access. A pad switch is included for taming basses that have output levels that are a bit on the high side. That doesn't necessarily mean just active electronics - some passive pickups are wound to have a higher output too. Any distortion at low volumes should be able to be cleaned up by engaging this function. There's a bright



switch giving you a boost to frequencies above 1kHz for top end sparkle and next to that a contour switch that provides a preset bass and treble boost with a mid cut. A classic equaliser 'shape' setting giving the amplifier a deep scooped sort of sound - great for slap styles, for example. The seven band graphic equaliser is fairly typical of bass amplifiers. It is smooth in operation and is effective even with subtle adjustments. 15dB of boost and cut available from each slider, meaning there's more than enough leeway for some pretty extreme settings!

Either side of the graphic EQ are shelving bass and treble controls centred at 50hz for the bass and 8Khz for the treble, respectively. Finally on the front panel you will find the

master volume and headphone jack for silent rehearsal and also a switch to bypass the internal limiter should you need to do that. I'd suggest leaving it enabled to help protect your speaker, personally.

Round the back with the power connector and power switch there is an effects loop for your out-board signal processing gear - a D.I output for connecting to a P.A system, mixer or recording device and a socket for plugging the combo in to a passive extension speaker cabinet. When opting to do this, there is a minimum advised load of 4 Ohms total.

It would have been an interesting test to have gotten in an original TKO or TNT combo to compare with this new amplifier. However, even in its absence I am still pretty confident

[...>]



STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC



in saying that this combo sounds clearer and more articulate than its predecessors - I've used enough of them in the aforementioned rehearsal rooms and provided backline at gigs to know!

There's plenty of tonal control available to make the TKO sound deep and rumbling; if however you need more power and more features, the TNT version of this combo features a 600W (peak) D Class amplifier and is decked out in matching livery. It also includes the all-important carry handles on each side of the cabinet.

To sum-up, I think this is a good solid combo with a punchy tone that will be happy in a number of situations and, as such, is very much in the honourable tradition of its Peavey forebears. It's competitively priced and benefits from Peavey's excellent five year warranty, so I've no doubt we will be seeing lots of these in pubs, clubs and venues across the country in the same way as the original TNT and TKO combos!

Oh, and did I mention the logo lights up and is dimmable? Deeply cool!



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- Yolanda Charles

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



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Peavey Tour Series TKO Combo



# THE QUIET ROOM

This issue of the Quiet Room has a special treat in store - an interview with the remarkable Canadian fingerstyle guitarist Don Alder. Winner of numerous international awards and widely regarded among his peers as one of the world's finest players, Don came into our studio to perform a series of stunning pieces. In addition to his trusty Yamahas, he also brought with him a special treat - his vintage Dyer harp guitar, which you can hear and see him in action with.

Never heard of a harp guitar? It's an instrument that is starting to make a comeback after over 100 years of relative obscurity - indeed Gi's Paul Brett has become a leading champion of the instrument.

From our next issue, Don joins the Guitar Interactive Quiet Room team as a guest columnist too - so don't miss it!

Product wise, we have a strong line-up, including a Simon and Patrick parlour guitar (also hailing from Canada), a dreadnought acoustic from US newcomers, Bedell and something very different indeed - a UK-designed guitar from Mariner, a company which is making a name for itself by using only woods from 'sustainable' sources. You may never have heard of some of the woods they use, but you will certainly be able to hear the guitar in our review!



**Gary Cooper** - Editor

[gary@iguitarmag.com](mailto:gary@iguitarmag.com)



# Bedell HGD-28-G

Old Hippies - what do they know? When it comes to acoustic guitars, quite a bit, thinks **Rick Graham** as he tackles a Dreadnought from new/old comers Bedell.

Born in a time and space where Peace, Love and Rock and Roll were at the forefront of everyone's minds, the success of Bedell Guitars has been a long time in the making. Originally based in Iowa, USA and set up in the 1960s by the then 14 year old Tom Bedell, the Bedell Guitar Company eventually had two retail stores and also supplied retailers in other states with instruments.

After a successful career out of the music business and several years of retirement, Tom Bedell yearned for a return to the 'good old days' and made the decision to start in the guitar business again and in 2010 his Company 'Two Old Hippies', run by Tom and Molly Bedell, joined forces with one of the most highly respected luthiers in America, Kim Breedlove of Breedlove guitars. Both brands are being run as separate companies, it seems, so Breedlove fans needn't worry!

Bedell has a varied product line which includes some top end instruments such as the 'Limited Edition' series and 'Performance' series and counts such big names as Kenny Loggins, Skunk Baxter

and Phil Keaggy on their artist roster. The subject of this particular review, though, is the HGD-28-G model, which forms a part of their more accessible 'Heritage' series of guitars.

This guitar comes with a classic Dreadnought body style and features an Alaskan Sitka spruce top with rosewood back and sides. This traditional tonewood combination should give a pronounced attack on the bass notes and increased clarity on the treble range. The neck, which has a scale length of 25.5" and has 20 frets, is attached via a dovetail joint, is made from mahogany and bears a rosewood fingerboard. The nut has a width of 1 11/16" and is crafted from bone, as is the bridge saddle itself. Vegetarians might not approve but tonally and historically it's a good, traditional choice! Attached to the rather neat and tidy looking headstock are chrome die-cast tuners and there is a Bedell logo (without the brand name) emblazoned across the very top of the headstock itself.

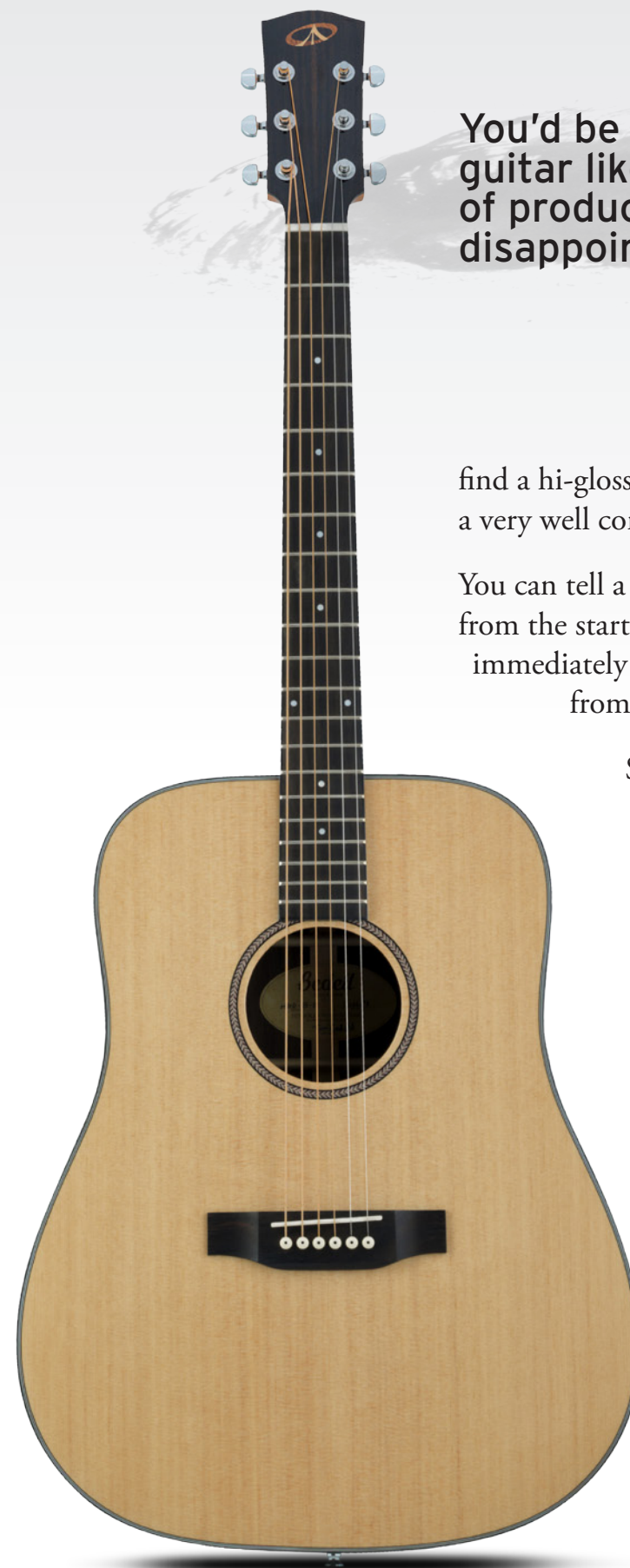
Inside, the Bedell has a customised 'X pattern' scalloped bracing pattern crafted from Engelmann spruce, while outside you

You'd be right to expect a larger sized guitar like this Dreadnought to be capable of producing some volume and it didn't disappoint in that department either.

find a hi-gloss finish, which adds a touch of class to what is already a very well constructed guitar indeed.

You can tell a lot from first impressions and the Bedell felt right from the start. It comes in a very good quality gig bag and it immediately felt comfortable to hold. I was at home with it right from the word go.

Soundwise, the first thing that I noticed was how full the bass strings were. I always liken a good quality bass register of a guitar to have a very 'piano' like sound and this guitar offered that comfortably. The treble register had plenty of clarity though and was never at any point overshadowed by those big, bold bass notes. That classic combination of spruce with rosewood back and sides was working in perfect harmony. You'd be right to expect a larger sized guitar like this Dreadnought to be capable of producing some volume and it didn't disappoint in that department either. You'd certainly have no trouble being heard amongst your bandmates gigging at small pubs and clubs with this guitar, that's for sure. Although the action felt a little on the high side for me, I had no issues with playability at all and the intonation was absolutely spot on.



STAR RATING ★★★★★

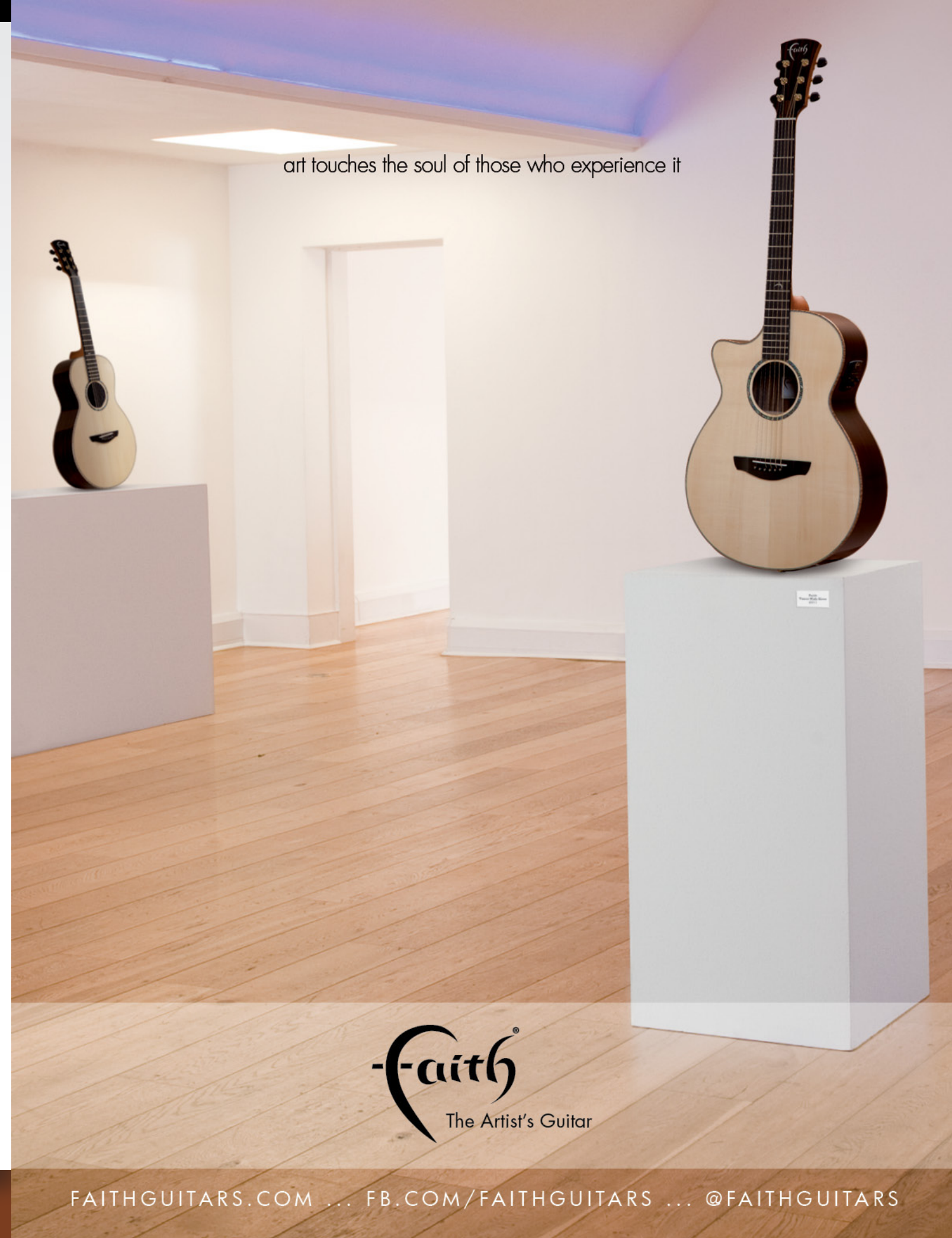
CHECK THE SPEC

[...>]



There's a lot to like about the Bedell HMG-28-G. It's an attractive looking instrument, if a little on the plain side, is well constructed and has a great sound with lots of volume on tap. And that's without taking into account the affordable price tag you'll find attached to it.

If you're in the market for something with a powerful voice, good build quality and tone on a limited budget then this guitar is recommended for your 'ones to try' list. We liked it a lot.





# Mariner Vertys AX-BB acoustic

Worried about the dwindling supply of tonewoods and damage to the environment, but still want the best sounding acoustic you can get for your money? UK brand Mariner builds guitars using 'sustainable' woods. But how do they compare tonally? **Tom Quayle** finds out.

Designed in the UK and made in China, Mariner Guitars are a breath of fresh air in an industry that isn't exactly always dedicated to environmental sustainability. By its nature, guitar manufacturing uses many woods that are becoming more and more scarce and whilst many steps have been taken over the years to counter this, Mariner has gone to great lengths to make sure that it embraces the use of woods that are sustainable and don't aid the destruction of rainforests.

This is an admirable goal for certain but there are very good reasons why woods like mahogany and rosewood have been used for so long and we've all become used to the sound, feel and look of these classic tone woods - so can Mariner produce sustainable guitars that sound great? Well, this reviewer thinks so.

The guitar we had in from Mariner was a Vertys AX-BB model, featuring solid Paulownia back and sides, a one-piece Nato neck with maple binding, a Sonokeling fingerboard and bridge, mated to a more traditional solid Sitka spruce top. It's essential these days that guitars in this price range have a solid top and even though you may not have heard of the other woods on offer rest assured that they look and sound every bit as good as their more conventional counterparts. The guitar is finished off with mother of pearl inlays, rosette and logo, bone nut and bridge saddle, quality die-

cast tuners, multi-wood binding and a choice of brown-burst or honey finish.

The build process takes place in a specialist acoustic guitar factory in China and each guitar is handmade as far as possible. Thanks to the use of Asian woods, prices can be kept down and this allows for great build quality at a very good price for the consumer, Mariner says.

The review model was flawless in construction and gave the impression of a much more expensive instrument with no obvious corner cutting taking place. Aesthetically the Vertys is pretty, with its auditorium shaped, lightweight body. I'm not so taken with the Mariner headstock shape but that's a very personal preference and others may love its unique appearance. The Paulownia back and sides have a lovely, strong grain and the brown-burst is skilfully applied for a classy and individual looking guitar.

The Mariner's set-up was also very good with a very playable low action with no buzzing to speak of and a 628mm scale length giving a very comfortable playing experience for chordal and lead work.

Tonally, the Mariner is a great sounding guitar thanks to that solid Sitka Spruce top and quality construction and it will only improve over time.



STAR RATING ★★★★★

CHECK THE SPEC

[...>]



Thanks to the smaller body size of the Auditorium design, the Vertys AX has a very tight sound that is balanced in a most pleasing manner. It's not bass or treble heavy as are so many budget friendly instruments, but projects a good mid-range with a tightness in the lower and upper frequencies that lends itself well to plectrum work whether strumming or playing lead lines. Don't get me wrong, we're not talking super high-end piano like tones here, but for the cost this guitar sounds great and it's great to know that this can be achieved with sustainable woods.

For finger picking and more modern techniques the Vertys performs well also, with a good dynamic range and response, perhaps lacking enough volume for some, but there's a wide choice available for anyone who wishes to attach a pickup or internal mic for gigging.

The Mariner Vertys is certainly a quality guitar that proves that you don't always need to use the classic wood combinations to achieve good tone and aesthetics. The AX-BB would make a superb upgrade from a first acoustic guitar or those looking for a great sounding and playing budget friendly instrument. Equally it would make a very good second guitar for more advanced players, or as a studio guitar for a recording studio on a budget. If you fit into these categories or feel a moral obligation to buy an environmentally friendly guitar then I strongly suggest you to check-out the Mariner range.



Mariner Vertys AX-BB acoustic



Thanks to the smaller body size of the Auditorium design, the Vertys AX has a very tight sound that is balanced in a most pleasing manner.



# Simon & Patrick Woodland Pro Parlor

After over 100 years out of the limelight, parlour sized guitars have recently become best sellers again. But does Parlor size automatically mean tone at the expensive of audibility? Not in the case of the Simon & Patrick Woodland Pro says **Rick Graham**.

Any brand that stems from the passion and musical vision of Canadian luthier Robert Godin is a brand to take note of and Simon and Patrick is certainly no exception. These guitars are built by artisans who share the same passion as the man who put the wheels in motion and created what the company is today. Based in the small village of LaPatrie Quebec, in the Eastern Townships just several hours outside of Montreal, Canada, the emphasis of the brand is to create instruments in the mid to high range price bracket that have the utmost focus on sound and build quality. One particularly intriguing aspect of their design is Simon and Patrick's unique approach to pressure testing the tops on all of its guitars to make sure that they meet the company's exacting standards.

According to S&P: "pressure testing the tops benefits the overall tone, projection and resonance of our instruments. So, not only do these select solid tops possess aesthetic beauty and appeal but they are graded and pressure tested for their excellence and structural integrity, which in the end benefits

the player and increases the lifespan of the guitar". In addition, all Simon and Patrick models also feature compound curve tops, to further heighten the structural integrity and overall projection. These select solid tops are further enhanced by the support of the very strong, yet very light, Adirondack spruce bracing.

The subject of this review, the Woodland Pro Parlor, forms part of the Simon and Patrick Woodland Pro series. As the name would suggest, this instrument veers towards the tiny, but, as I soon found out, a small guitar doesn't always equate to a small sound!

Specification wise, this guitar has a select, pressure tested, solid spruce top with mahogany back and sides and also comes with a hand sanded and finished mahogany neck bearing a rosewood fingerboard. The rather cute looking bridge is also made of rosewood, while the nut and bridge pins are Graphtech's Tusq.



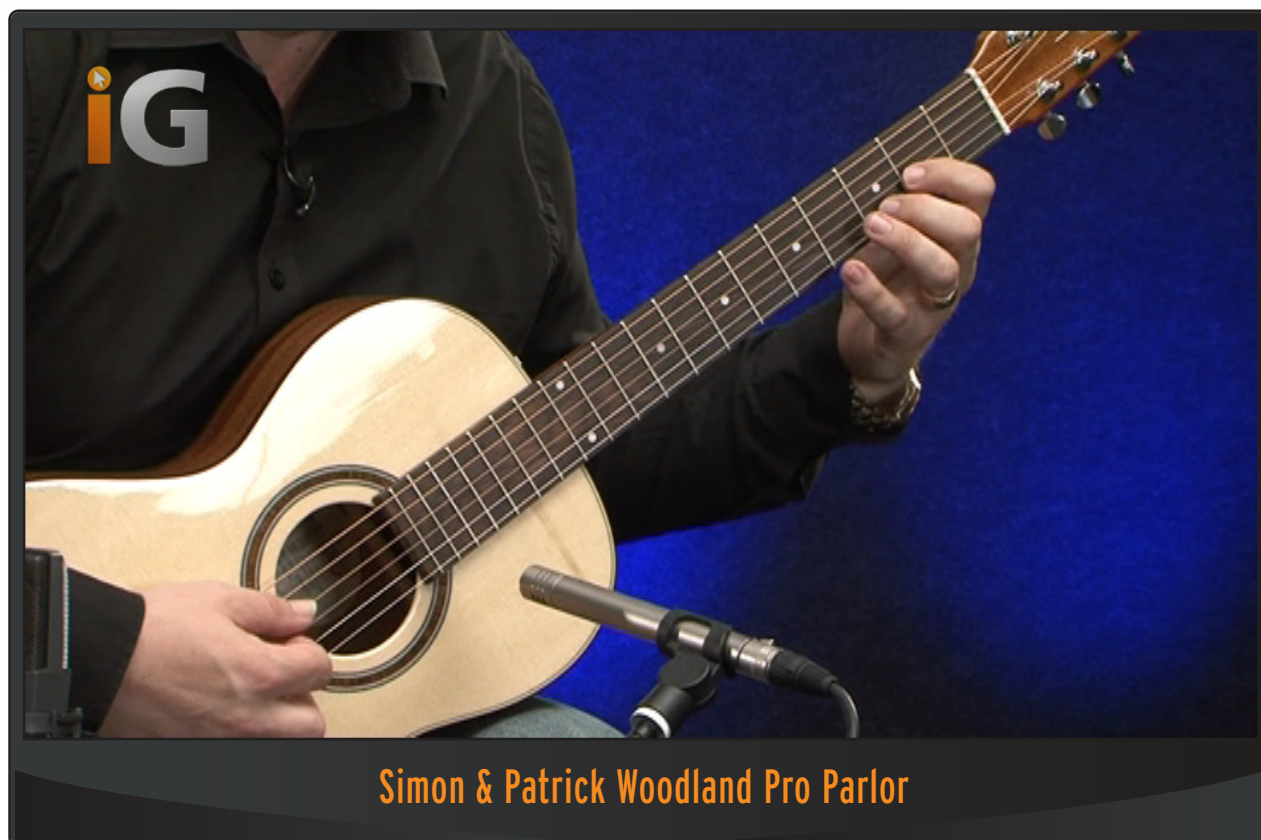
The layered binding, rosette, hand contoured headstock and very high quality hi-gloss finish complete the ensemble to reveal what is a fine looking instrument indeed.

Onto the performance side of things and the Woodland Pro Parlor had some surprises up its sleeve I can tell you! The first of which was the sheer volume of sound. Be under no misapprehension; this guitar has a big sound! In fact, at times I had to remind myself that I was playing a Parlor guitar because the sound was so big. The other surprise was the quality of sound. Having played various parlour guitars in the past, I prepared myself to be greeted with a somewhat flat, boxy sound quality. This was not the case with this guitar. The tone was remarkably sweet and very inspiring, so much so that I wanted to take it home with me! It also proved itself to be a very well balanced instrument with crisp, clear basses and sparkling trebles with lots of sustain too. Check out the video!

The S&P's playability was comfortable and the intonation was as perfect as can be, showing the guitar had clearly been very well set-up before leaving the factory in Canada. Although our review guitar didn't come fitted with a pre-amp, you do have the option to have a B-Band A3T electronics pre-amp installed with this guitar and any of their Woodland Pro series models.



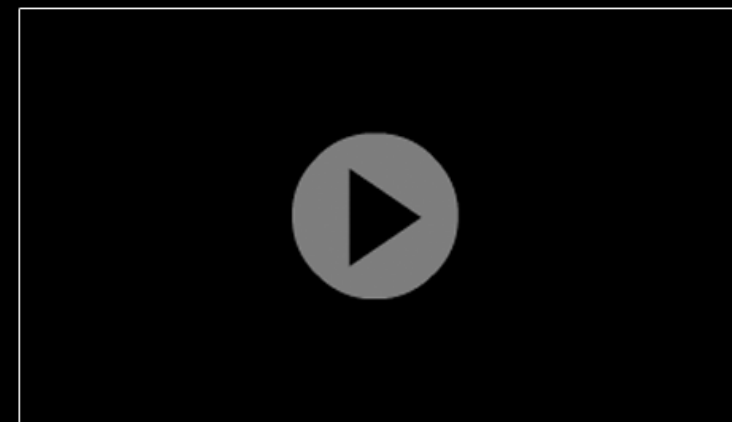
The Woodland Pro Parlor is a very well made instrument that can most certainly hold its own in the volume stakes. It is a unique instrument with a big sound and a big character to match, not to mention beautiful design, and, for me, it is a guitar that is impossible not to like. What's more it is exceptionally well priced for a handmade North American guitar of real professional quality. This is the second Simon & Patrick acoustic we have reviewed (see our Showcase CT review in Gi Issue 6) and to say we are impressed would be a serious understatement.



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# a touch of genius

Don Alder

Guitar Interactive is proud to welcome Canadian fingerstyle maestro Don Alder for a revealing interview with our own **Giorgio Serci**, plus a series of exclusive video performances. And don't miss our next issue when Don joins us for a short series as a guest Quiet Room columnist!

**Gary Cooper** profiles the man widely acknowledged as one of the world's finest and most musical fingerstyle guitarists.

It's offering a hostage to fortune to describe any guitarist as 'as good as it gets' (there's always someone new just around the corner) but it's an almost inescapable reaction to hearing Canadian fingerstyle genius Don Alder. Music isn't a contest to see who's best, but if it were - well, the list of guitar competitions Alder has won stretches back to 2004, when he swept the board in his native Vancouver, managed a creditable fourth in Germany's Openstrings International Fingerstyle Competition and then went on to grab prizes in completions and festivals around the world, culminating in the international Guitar Idol competition held in London in 2011. Don has now won all three major international guitar contests, including 2010's North American Guitar Superstar contest and the 2007 International Fingerstyle championship. Meanwhile, praise has been showered on him by fellow musicians and manufacturers have been keen to snap him up as an endorser - including both Yamaha guitars and Seymour Duncan pickups.

*Sherry Hudson 2012*



# BILL KELLIHER

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Don Alder Interview Part 1

Having begun as a young child on a cheap catalogue guitar, bought for him while he was convalescing from an illness, Don eventually gravitated to a better instrument, catching the fidgets bug along the way. But a budding career nearly ended in tragedy when, as a teenager, he was thrown from a truck coming home from a fishing trip. With him was a friend, Rick Hansen. While Alder recovered, Hansen's spinal injuries resulted in his confinement to a wheelchair. Not that this stopped Hansen, who was determined to live life to the full. In 1985, Alder suspended his musical career to help his friend achieve his goals, including a round the world wheelchair tour from 1985-7. So heroic was the story that it has since been used both as the basis for a theatrical production and a movie (Heart Of A Dragon), in which (and this is probably

another first for an acoustic guitarist!) Alder's character is portrayed by an actor.

"My character is played by British actor Andrew Lee Potts who's gained a lot of popularity in roles for TV," Alder says. "I then went back into music and with the lessons in determination I learned from Rick during the tour I went on becoming the only guitarist in the world to win all three major contests. There were some key lessons I learned that may be of value to share with other aspiring guitarists.

"A lot of times people never pursue their dreams for fear of failure, when really, failure is just not having the courage to try. It sounds corny but it's true, especially for a guy like me that cannot read or write music in a functional aspect.



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"After the tour I got involved with non profits and disability related areas due to my time on the Rick Hansen tour, so in other words more socially responsible, aware and involved. In 1987 music was just a hobby. The wheelchair tech skills I got from the tour eventually let me to representing Canada as the equipment manager/tech for the 1996 and 2000 Paralympic Games. I retired from that then got involved with the Vancouver Adapted Music Society, which led to playing in a band called Spinal Chord that had two members with quadriplegia.

The band came to an end when the lead singer/keyboardist became mayor of Vancouver. That's when I started to go solo."

And what a solo career Don has had! In between making CDs and winning contests, he has toured extensively both on his own and with others, including Andy McKee.

"It's amazing to see Andy have such an impact on the acoustic guitar around the world, great guy and proud to know him," he says.

Don's association with Yamaha is well known but he doesn't play Yamahas exclusively - and, indeed, has become something of a star on the harp guitar. Harp guitars seem to be starting a renaissance currently and Don is an accomplished exponent on his - a 1918 Dyer, which he bravely took on tour in the UK in 2012 and brought into Guitar Interactive's studio - you can see a performance with it in this feature. Don reveals that he is currently working on a signature model with Scott Burwell, the owner of Holloway Harp Guitars.

That said, Don's stage guitars are Yamaha LLX hand-crafted series, A3CR A-series, and silent guitars and he also has a Greenfield Signature



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Don Alder and Giorgio Jam

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Don Alder - Vibrato Lesson



Don Alder - Not A Planet Performance

Model, the G4-DA Fanfret. Like many of the latest generation of, let's say 'athletic' acoustic guitarists, the Yamahas sometimes take a beating and Don is wryly proud of the fact that the Yamaha he used to stun those of us lucky enough to witness his winning performance at the 2011 Guitar Idol final, was held together with liberal applications of duct tape! I'm honestly not sure whether that says more about Yamaha or Don!

As our interview with Giorgio Serci shows, Don is an engaging and modest man with an astonishing talent, but it is in his performance pieces that he shines - and where he shines isn't solely with technical brilliance (though he has it in spades), it's by

displaying an impeccable feel - that quality which you can write reams about and yet still never manage to capture the essence of. The best acoustic guitarists (two that spring to mind are the late Bert Jansch and the late John Martyn) both exemplified it. Though technically gifted, it wasn't their technique that mattered.

Guitar Interactive is proud indeed to welcome Don Alder to the Quiet Room, both as a remarkable performer and, from our next issue, as a guest columnist.



Don Alder - Over The Top Performance





# First Steps In Fingerstyle

Giorgio Serci

## A Banjo Roll in D Minor

Hello there and welcome to Guitar Interactive's Quiet Room!

In this column we will be looking at a short composition of mine simply called Banjo Roll in D Minor, as it does exactly what it says on the tin! The technique needed for this study is in fact a three-finger technique, very common in banjo music thanks to the one and only Earl Scruggs, the legendary leading exponent of Bluegrass music, who recently sadly past away. (RIP)

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', 'm', 'i' and 'p' respectively on D, B, G and D. This is a typical 4-note pattern used to generate the so-called 'banjo rolls, but also common in Flamenco and Classical guitar. To ensure fluidity, the above-mentioned pattern is embellished with various articulations, such as pull-offs and hammer-ons. This will become clearer from the example below as well as from examining the enclosed score.

The legendary violinist & composer Nicolo Paganini used to compose many study pieces using a similar approach, navigating a set of harmonic changes with a recurrent pattern, like an arpeggio, broken chord or a melodic pattern. I recommend trying this strategy to construct your own compositions.

Below is the harmonic content I have chosen for this composition:

**Dm / / / A/C# / / / (x2)**

**Dm/ D / Gm/ / / Dm/ / / A/C#**

**Dm/ D / Gm/ / / Dm/ / / A/C# / / / Dm**

Please note the use of slash chords like, for example the A/C#. This is essentially an A major triad with its 3<sup>rd</sup> on the bass. (This voicing is normally referred to as a 1<sup>st</sup> inversion, as the third of the chord is on the bass).

As I mentioned in the previous column, 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.

#### **Fretting Hand positions:**

**Bar 1:** Middle f. on fret 3 of D, index on fret 2 of G and ring f. on fret 3 of B. Pull-off from the note F to an open D.

**Bar 2:** Index f. barre' on fret 2 of D and G. Ring f. or little finger on fret 4 of A. Apply the same picking pattern including articulations.

**Bar 3:** As bar 1.

**Bar 4:** As bar 2.

**Bar 5:** As bar 1 to start with and then little finger on fret 4 of D to generate a D major chord.

**Bar 6:** Index f. barre' on fret 3 of G and B. Ring f. on fret 5 of D.

**Bar 7:** As bar 5.

[...>]





Bar 8: As bar 6.

Bar 9: As bar 1.

Bar 10: As bar 2.

Bar 11: As bar 5.

Bar 12: As bar 6.

Bar 13: As bar 1.

Bar 14: As bar 2.

Bar 15: Open A, Little f. on fret 5 of A,

middle f. on fret 3 of D, index f. on fret 2 of G. Ring f. on fret 3 of B and open D simultaneously.

As mentioned in the video, feel free to experiment with a few variations, changing the chords as you wish in terms voicing (higher or lower), as well as trying the same picking pattern on a different chord progression.

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 check the additional Flamenco passage!

Middle f. on fret 2 of G, index f. on fret 1 of B, open E.

Picking hand permutation: p, m, I, p, pull-off to an open G, m, i, p, p, m, i, p, pull-off from fret 3 to fret 2 of D.

Practise as explained at the end of the video tutorial, using open strings and focusing on articulating notes in a fluid manner, by refining your pull-offs and hammer-ons.

### 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. 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.

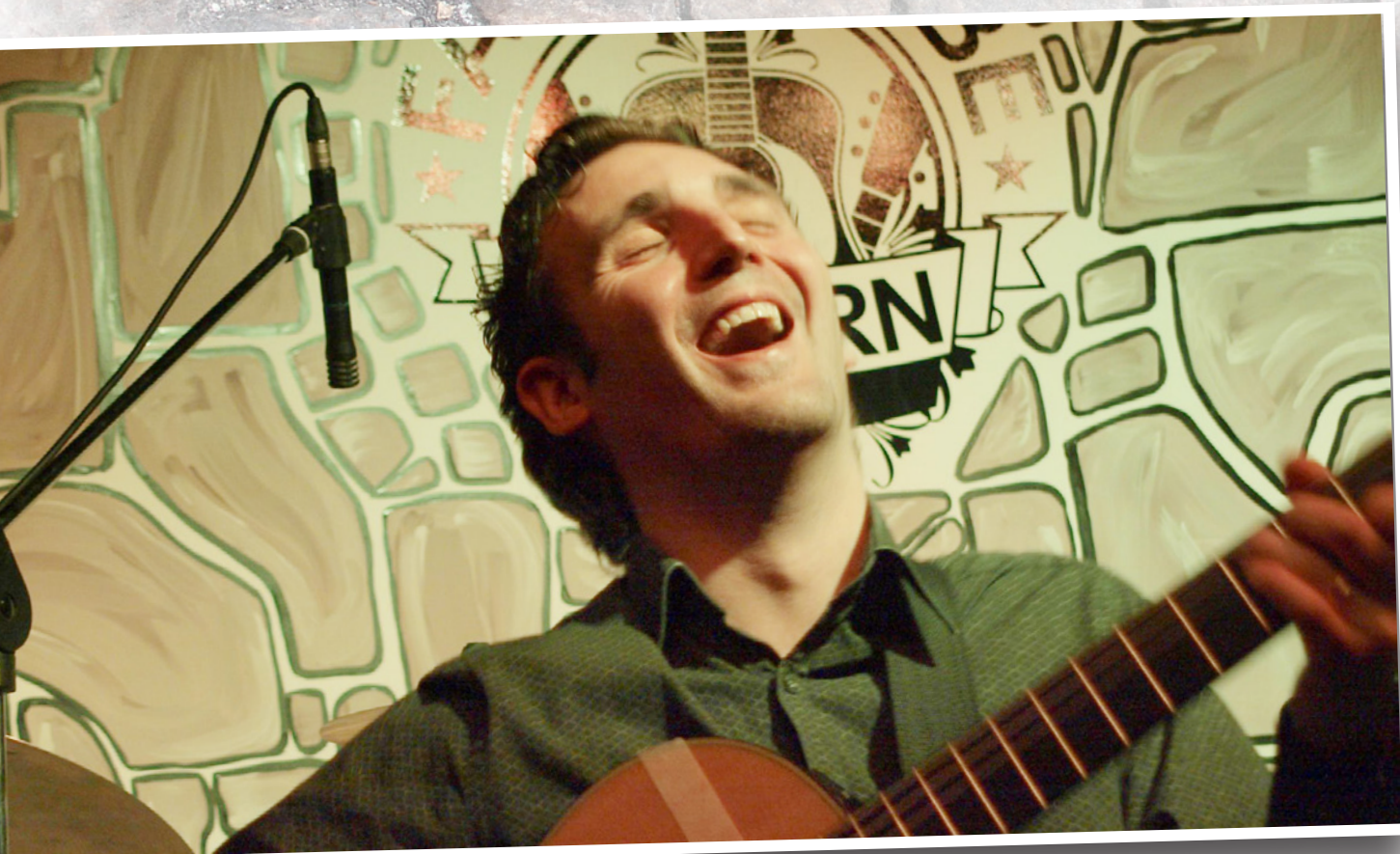
This will complete this fingerstyle and guitar composition lesson.

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](https://facebook.com/giorgiosercimusic) or [www.giorgioserci.com](http://www.giorgioserci.com)

Till the next time, Good-bye!

Giorgio Serci



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BY RICK GRAHAM

# GUITAR ROADMAPS

## Melodic Minor for the Rock Guitarist

Firstly, let's take a look at the C melodic minor scale

Standard tuning

E-Gt

mf

3 5 6 3 5 2 4

Scale	C	D	Eb	F	G	A	B
Formula	1	2	b3	4	5	6	7

As we can see from the above table, the scale has a flattened 3<sup>rd</sup> degree and natural 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> degrees. It can be beneficial to try to create an image in your head when you hear this scale as a whole. I find that by doing this, it enables me to instantly identify the scale whenever I hear it.

Of course, it is essential to see each interval within the scale as an individual colour too. Don't just stop at this scale either; apply it to everything you know.

There are many ways that you can view the melodic minor scale. Some musicians see it as a major scale with a flattened 3<sup>rd</sup> degree. Some see it as a natural minor scale with sharpened 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> degrees, others as a dorian mode with a sharpened 7<sup>th</sup> degree. I think the best advice is to try and view it in as many ways as you possibly can, as it will help to keep your options, as well as your mind, well and truly open.

### Using Scale Fragments

A further way in which the melodic minor scale can be viewed is that it is a hybrid scale of sorts. If we start on the 7<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale (which is actually superlocrian mode, but we are not thinking in modes yet) which is B natural, the sequence of tones and semi-tones can be seen as a hybrid of the half/whole scale and the whole tone scale. The 7<sup>th</sup>, root, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> degrees of the scale are the same as the first 4 notes of a B half/whole scale. The 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> scale degrees can be seen as the first 4 notes of an F whole-tone scale. Played as a complete scale they form the C melodic minor scale. It can be extremely useful to use this approach as a means of learning the scale, especially from an intervallic perspective. Using scale fragments also comes in very handy when we want to negotiate particular chord progressions too.

### Practicing the scale as double stop intervals

When I first started to work on the melodic minor scale, one particular approach that helped me to get more of an understanding of its construction was to play the scale as intervals. Just as you can do with conventional diatonic harmony, I started with 3<sup>rd</sup> intervals adding 6<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> intervals as I became more comfortable. Once you have the shapes down you can then use sequences to make the intervals sound more interesting.

[...>]



Standard tuning

E-Gt

1

mf

TAB

3 1 3 5 6 5 7 8

2

TAB

10 9 10 12 14 12 13 15

Be sure to try to come up with your own sequences using these and a variety of other intervals made up from the C melodic minor scale. Have fun and see you next issue!



**Rick Graham - Melodic Minor Scale**

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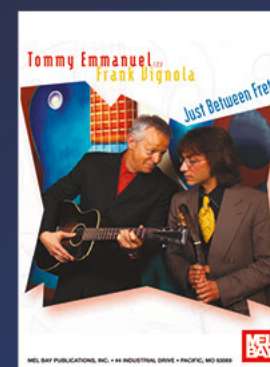
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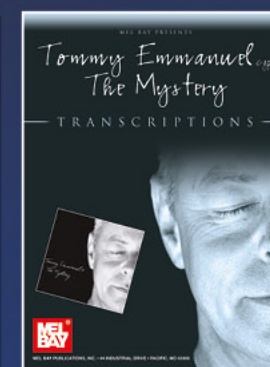
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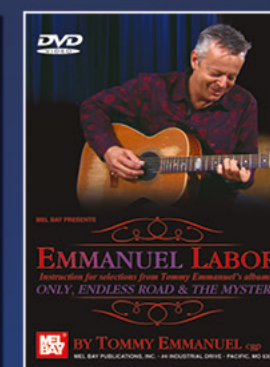
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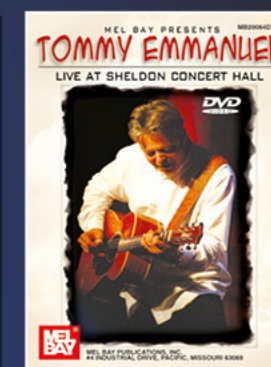
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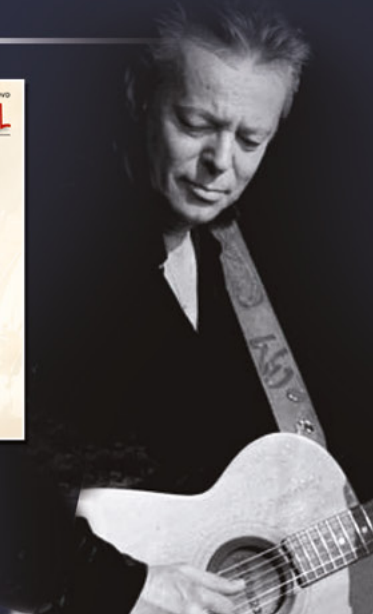
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## Expanding your harmonic knowledge:

In the previous issue I introduced to you the concept of the 'II-V-I' progression in both major and minor keys. If you haven't checked that column out then I recommend that you do so before proceeding, as it contains required knowledge for this tutorial!

Let me outline the basics of the II-V-I progression once more in the keys of C major and C minor: -

**Dm7 - G7 - Cmaj7 (key of C major)**

**Dm7b5 - G7alt - Cm7 (key of C minor)**

In this issue I want to expand this further for you by introducing a concept known as secondary or non-diatonic II-V-I progressions. For the sake of simplicity we'll stick to the key of C major for now. Obviously, when we think of the II-V-I progression in this key we are using the II chord, Dm7, the V chord, G7 and the I chord, Cmaj7. However, we can expand upon this and introduce extra II-V-I progressions that are non-diatonic and lead to the other major and minor 7 chords in the key. Let's take chord II for example, Dm7. In Jazz and Fusion harmony and even a large chunk of Pop music, this Dm7 can be temporarily treated as a I chord in its own II-V-I progression. In other words we temporarily create a resolution to a Dm7 chord so that it acts as a I chord. To do this we need to imagine that we're in the key of Dm and wanted to play a II-V-I progression in this minor key. What would the chords be?

The progression must contain some kind of m7b5 for the II, followed by an altered dominant 7 chord as the V, leading to the Dm7 as the I chord. The II chord's root note is always located two frets higher than the I chord, giving us the root note E, so Em7b5. The V chord is located a 5th below or a 4th above (these are effectively the same thing) the II chord, giving us the root note A and thus, an A7alt chord. Remember, the altered part refers to the chord having a b5, #5, b9, #9 or any combination of the above. In the video I use an A7#5 voicing. Here's the complete progression: -

**Em7b5 - A7#5 - Dm7**

Notice that neither the Em7b5 or A7#5 are diatonic to the key of C major, but the progression works because of its very strong root motion and resolving nature. The temporary I chord that we are leading to is always diatonic to the original key but the II and V chord needn't be.

This process can be repeated for all the Minor 7 and Major 7 chords in the key giving us secondary II-V-I progressions leading to the II, III, IV and VI chords as well as the original I chord too of course. Remember that if the chord you are resolving to (your temporary I chord) is a major 7 chord then you need to play a Major II-V-I progression and if the chord is a minor 7 you would use a Minor II-V-I progression.

Here are all of the available II-V-I progression in the key of C major including the original II-V-I leading to Cmaj7: a

[...>]



Dm7 - G7 - Cmaj7 (original, diatonic II-V-I)

Em7b5 - A7#5 - Dm7 (leading to chord II)

F#m7b5 - B7#5 - Em7 (leading to chord III)

Gm7 - C7 - Fmaj7 (leading to chord IV)

Bm7b5 - E7#5 - Am7 (leading to chord VI)

In the accompanying TAB/Notation for this tutorial you'll find an example chord progression from a well known standard

that is made up of two secondary II-V-I progression in the key of C.

The final thing to say is that you can utilise the voicings we've looked at in previous issues, using 9th, 11th and 13th chords within these progressions to enhance the sound to your liking. Use your ears as a guide for now and we'll expand on some of these ideas in future issues.

Good luck until next time!



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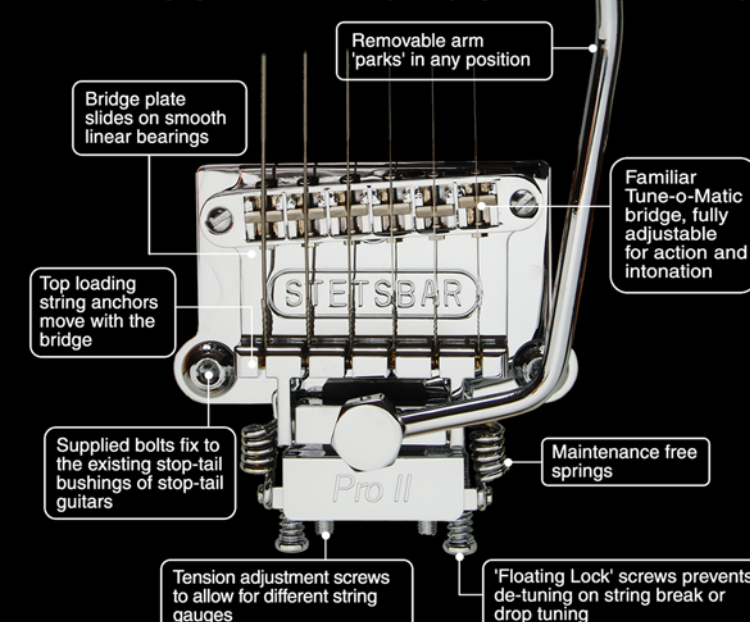
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**PRO CONCEPTS13****MELODY**

So what makes a melodic player? I could answer but giving a few examples of players I think are melodic a lot of the time. Brian May springs to mind. Give him a couple of days in the studio and he will compose the most beautifully crafted melodic guitar break you have ever heard. Neil Schon from Journey came up with some lovely guitar melodies. A lot of his solos from the Journey days are like mini songs within a song. Or how about Steve Lukather? He doesn't need two days in the studio because he will just improvise melodically. And Jeff Beck, who when he is in that frame of mind, will play a slow Blues that is a melody followed by a melody followed by a melody.

There is no easy route to this one (I probably say that in every pro concepts feature!). Not all guitar playing is down to repetitive practice, but being musically aware certainly does help. If you are musically aware, you should be capable of singing or hearing in your head, little melodies that fit over simple chord sequences. The chances are the first thing you sing or hear over a sequence will make a good starting point for a nice solo, be it on guitar, piano, sax or kazoo.

Being musically switched on and aware in this way is different to being technically proficient or confident with all forms of musical theory. Good melody, or being able to combine a series of notes that speak to people comes from a whole different place. Again it's that creative area that separates good guitar players from inspirational players. Ideally, you need a balance. You need enough technical ability to execute ideas with flare, fire or restraint. You need enough theory to join each idea together to make a nice coherent musically strong passage of notes. And you need that creative element to come up with something that isn't just throw away or a few tricky licks pieced together, but actually moves the listener. It's a hard one that I'm hoping I can demonstrate.

In the '90s I was doing a lot of pop/funk/rock style sessions - some jingles and TV stuff and some songwriting or band stuff. Rarely was any guitar solo a full shred widdle. It was all more about good lines that gave you chills when it kicked in. I learnt pretty quickly a cool trick of taking the main melody that was threaded through the song, usually the vocal, and incorporating it in my

[...]



solo. Usually the producer or songwriter would love it and I guess that where I learnt a lot about playing melodically rather than showing off my latest tapping lick. The other approach I used was to choose musically strong notes from the chord sequence. Roots, 3rds, 7ths, 2nds or 9s all give a flavour if you can put them in just the right place in just the right way. Arpeggios, without it sounding like an obvious arpeggio are also a great starting point. I know that sounds a bit of a contradiction, but if it does sound too much like an obvious arpeggio, to me it does lose a little of that 'cool' factor.

As usual, this stuff isn't easily taught. It has to come from inside you, but if I can make you aware of it, then that is a good starting point. Don't get me wrong, a melodic approach isn't always what's required or wanted. The trick is to be able to do it if needed, and that's where a lot of technically gifted players fall down.

I am writing this after we filmed the tutorial, which with hindsight, seemed to go well. I didn't have it planned and relied a lot on my experience, gut instinct and personal musical decision making. Plus I figured if it went horribly wrong we would just cut and start filming again, and I would develop another idea, and you guys wouldn't know any different (*he's honest, isn't he? - Ed*). As it turned out, I think what we got on the first try shows the approach and decision making involved. As a pro player, you will be put in a situation at some point where it's about strong lines, melody and feel. That's the point where you get tested as a player, so please be ready.



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# METAL EDGE

## HYBRID PICKING

Welcome to another edition of my Guitar Interactive column. In this article we're going to start taking a look at the hybrid picking technique and how we can use that in our metal soloing.

Hybrid picking, by definition, is the use of the fingers on the picking hand to execute notes in conjunction with the pick. This is a technique closely associated with top Country players like James Burton or Albert Lee, but over the years it's become commonplace to find it used in Rock, Metal and shred by guys like Zakk Wylde and Eric Johnson.

One of the best application of the technique is to enable you to play complex string crossing licks without having to jump around with the pick. If you look at some of Zakk's solo guitar pieces like the later part of Speedball or the second half of Takillya (Estyabon) you can hear guitar parts that are more reminiscent of classical guitar, and these can work great for textures. When used in a solo you get that sound that can only be described as Chickin' Pickin', and that's a big part of Zakk's soloing style.

In this first part of the series we're going to play it real simple and just play notes on the D and G strings, picking notes with the pick on the D string with the pick, then using the middle finger to pluck the G string. When you do this motion it's really important that you don't dig in too hard and pluck the string aggressively, you want to try and make it sound just as it would if you'd picked the string with a pick. Remember, the audience wants to listen to your music, not the techniques you use to make it!

If you look closely, when I do this I like it to be a pluck of the finger rather than a twist of the wrist. This way, when you pluck a note your hand is good and ready to go with the next picked note, this may not seem like a big deal when playing slowly, but playing fast is all about efficiency, so pay attention to how much movement you're making.

The first basic exercise is to move between just two notes, this could get very boring very quickly, so in exercise two we make it a little more interesting by changing the notes on the G string to create a simple melody.





This shouldn't be too hard to do if you spend some time mapping scales out horizontally up the neck, and if that's not something you've ever done, this is a great reason to!

The next three exercises take this simple mechanic and then move it to different chords in the key of E minor. So we take the note E on the D string (14th fret) and then on the G string we play a melody from the key of Em. We then play a similar melody (sequence) but starting on a D, and then finally on a C. This is one of the best ways to practice in my opinion, because we're working on technique, but in a musical context.

When you have your head around each of these positions, you want to slowly start to put them together to create one flowing musical exercise. When you've got this down try to expand on it by outlining some of your own chord progressions, or take the chord progression from a song you're working on and see if that is somewhere you can apply this technique. It's always best to get using technique in the real world as soon as possible.

Next month we're going to move onto some more complex pentatonic patterns that move across multiple strings, so make sure you have this down by then. Until then, keep rockin'!



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Stuart Bull's

**GUITAR WORLD**

## Groups of five, continued.

Hi everyone and welcome back to my latest Guitar Interactive column. Last issue we looked at using groups of five as a concept for building licks and phrases. We discussed some rather interesting ideas to help us make these unusual patterns stick in our heads and hopefully become a natural part of our playing. In this column we are going to take our foot off the mathematical gas pedal and try and have some fun with the groups of five concept. Last time our licks were basically repeating figures using different note combinations to achieve our musical goal, this time we are going to change up our concept to achieve more "run" based ideas.

The first lick we are going to look at is an idea I stole from Sean Lane, this idea is perfect for both the sixteenth notes in groups of five as discussed in the previous column, or simply ripping across the neck as fast as you can in the pentatonic position of your choice. I am playing this lick in the first position of the pentatonic scale. Let's look a little closer at this idea. We start out with two hammer-ons moving across two strings giving us our first four notes, to achieve our fifth note we simply go back to the second note we played to finish our group of five e.g. 5 to 7 on the A string (hammer-on) 5 to 7 on the D string (hammer-on) play 7 on the A string and there you have it. I would encourage you to start this lick on different strings and different pentatonic positions. You can really get a lot out of this lick if you spend some time working with it.

The next lick we are looking at is a typical Eric Johnson idea which I have changed around a bit to suit my strengths as a player. When Eric Johnson plays this idea he will use this picking formula to execute one group of five in the A minor pentatonic position one, starting on the eighth fret high E string. Down up (high E) down up (B string) then down on the G string completing the group of five, he starts the next group of five on the B string with a down

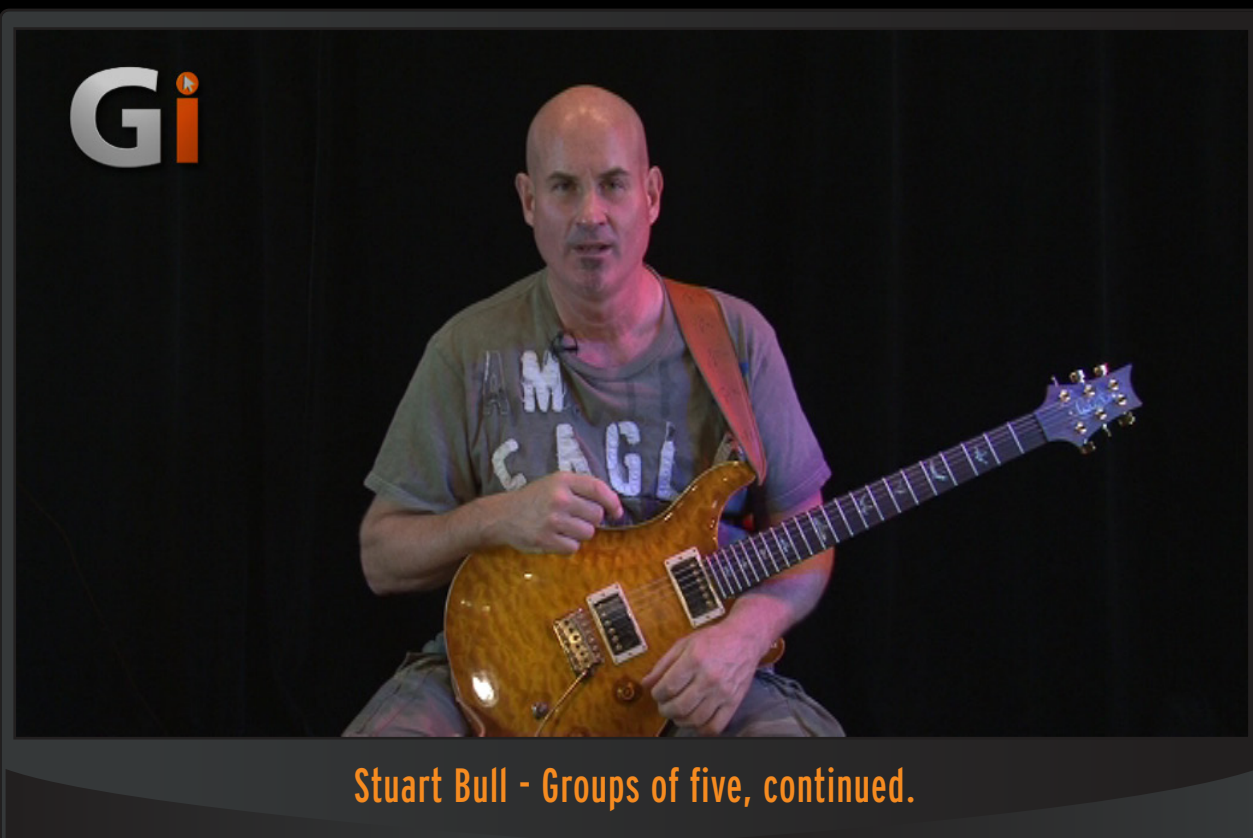
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stroke and the lick now moves to the B and G strings and continues on in the same fashion. In simple terms, the lick picking wise goes down, up, down, up, down..down, up, down, up down giving to downs or mini sweep pick between the end and start of each group. I use a fair bit of hybrid picking in my playing so it seemed logical to utilize this technique here. My formula is pull off on the high E string pull off on the B string down stroke on the G string then I start the first pull off of the next group of five with the second finger of my right hand. When you see the video footage it's very clear. When you learn these licks don't feel stuck to the techniques I have used as there may be a different way of executing these licks that is easier for you.

The third lick is pretty much the same as the last one, except I have demonstrated a way of descending by playing the first two pull-offs on the same string. It is also possible to ascend with this idea and many combinations of the two are possible. The final lick adds one more grouping of five idea where the first four notes are played on the high E string, I threw in this idea (also typical of Eric Johnson) to show there are many ways to play these five note groupings and I hope you endeavour to find some of your own and hopefully share them.

That's it for this issue and I hope find some fresh ideas within these licks. See you next time.



Stuart Bull - Groups of five, continued.

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# THE LISTENING ROOM

John Stix listens as top players discuss their influences.

Richie Sambora on Al DiMeola's *Race With The Devil*



**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.

## **Race with the Devil on Spanish Highway – Al DiMeola**

“Al Di Meola is amazing. I used to play *Flight Over Rio*. Because I didn’t have the scalar technique, I used to try to make my fingers go as fast as that. It didn’t matter what I was doing, as long as I was in the right key and my fingers kept up. To get that finger speed first, that was my first method of learning how to play that quickly. Then I applied the right notes to my hand speed to be able to play with the record. I did the same thing with *Mediterranean Sundance*: because of my love for acoustic.

*Electric Dreams* by John McLaughlin, is also one of my favorite records. There was a record with Santana and McLaughlin that I listened to a lot. It was very Zen-oriented. I tried to explore as many different avenues of music as I could. Al is working out here. He’s showing people he can play melodies so quickly and still get to you. They got to me the first time I listened to them. Besides the technique, Al’s melodic selection of motifs is brilliant. Fusion is more soulful because it takes you out past the parameter of pop music.”

**Richie Sambora**



# VIDEO GEMS

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

*Midnight in Harlem. Tedeschi Trucks Band at Crossroads Festival.*



## **Trucks/Tedeschi and live performance.**

Let's talk about great live performances, cause we've got one here. Midnight in Harlem was the highlight of the Tedeschi Trucks Band *Revelator* recording. It also appears on their live album, *Everybody's Talkin'*. But the version I'm talking about, the one that goes into the folder marked "Best Versions," is on the Clapton Crossroads 2010 concert DVD. Derek starts acapella with what amounts to an Indian Lullaby that drifts into the simple chord progression of the song. We're talking about hanging on E and A chords. The Hammond B-3 turns the song into a liquid. The mood is quiet and the band is playing with comfort and ease, turning a major venue into a small club. The venue is in fact a football stadium and Susan Tedeschi (Derek's wife) is singing about "Midnight in Harlem" in the afternoon sun. She is inviting and authentic akin to the best of performances of Norah Jones. The bass of Oteil Burbridge offers up a low boil groove laying down as much mood as rhythm. The band is in synch. They are not in a hurry.

And even in this huge venue they are not projecting out. They are inviting us in.

Halfway into the song, Derek takes over on lead vocal, reminding us that Jeff Beck isn't the only guy who sings on the guitar. Derek's solo conversation is easy to understand. At first he sings simply with a nod to Duane Allman. With each chorus he gets more animated and lively but all the while he speaks in a common tongue. This is great guitar playing that non-guitar fans will understand. It's in the same vein as the Allman's "Blue Sky." It is technically and emotionally rich. This is music that can make you smile and cry at the same time, easily fulfilling the prime requirement for a spot to the best versions folder: it places you right there in the moment. You are not looking around at some cute girl, or thinking about what you have to do tomorrow. You are present with the band, right here, right now, in this moment, with this music, in this life. And that's what great music is supposed to do.





