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# The Wizards of Oz!

*We sat around trying to come-up with something really special for our Zakk Wylde cover issue. After a while, **Jamie Humphries** said: “Hey! What if Ozzy’s most famous “Axe Men” got together for a jam?” Heads turned and off Jamie went to start laying down tracks for... **The Wizards of Oz Jam!***

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ver the years the job of filling the position as Ozzy's guitarist has been one of the most revered and well publicised guitar jobs in the business.

I myself have always waited with baited breath to see who was the next hottest young gun slinger that the Dark Prince of Heavy Metal would pluck from obscurity and fire into the guitar spotlight!

Ozzy obviously started his career with heavy metal pioneers Black Sabbath. Sabbath were formed in 1968 in Birmingham England, and although Ozzy was fired due to excessive alcohol and drug use in the late 70's, the period with Ozzy as lead vocalist is still seen as the most classic period of the band. Guitar duties were occupied by Tony Iommi, who is seen as one of the pioneers of big heavy metal riffs. Iommi lost the tips of his middle and ring fingers at the age of 17 whilst work in a sheet metal factory. Iommi fashioned false finger tips, to extend his fingers and enabling him to continue to play. His style is based around very heavy riff based playing, and aggressive pentatonic soloing. Iommi's has long been associated with SG style guitars, mainly a Jaydee custom. Iommi also plays various Gibson SG's, including two prototype Gibson SG's based on his famous Jaydee.

The Gibson and Epiphone guitar companies also released the P94 Tony Iommi Signature model, as well as a custom shop Gibson Iommi SG. Tony's amp of choice is his signature Laney head.

Following Ozzy's departure from Sabbath he embarked on his solo career, enlisting the talents of Quiet Riot guitarist Randy Rhoads. Randy was a master of both electric and classical guitar, fusing classical scale based lines and arpeggios with blues licks. Randy was a guitar teacher, but would seek out classical guitar lesson while on the road. Randy's main choice of guitars was his white Les Paul custom, as well as his famous Polka Dot and white Jackson V's. His amp choice where white 100 watt Marshall heads. Sadly Randy was tragically killed in a flying accident, and although he only recorded two studio albums with Ozzy, plus the posthumous release of the live Tribute album, Randy's influence and legacy still have a huge timeless effect on the world of rock guitar.

Following Randy's death Ozzy enlisted the talents of Jake E Lee. Lee recorded two very successful albums with Ozzy, which included two big singles. Lee's style was quite different to Randy, still using blues based ideas, but with a very "American" sound. His signature lick included huge left

[...>] 11







hand stretches, fretting notes with his thumb to achieve wider intervals. Lee's choice of guitar was a Charvel strat with a fixed bridge, he would often emulate dive bombs by dropping the pitch of a string by drastically detuning it with the machine head! Lee used Marshall heads with a Boss distortion to achieve his aggressive metal tone. Following his final album with Ozzy, "The Ultimate Sin" he was fired by the Osbourne camp via a telegram.

Ozzy's next gun slinger, and longest standing guitarist to date, was Zakk Wylde who is extensively profiled in this issue. Zakk's relationship with Ozzy finally ended when Ozzy felt his own material was sounding more like Black Label Society!

Ozzy's newest guitar sideman is Gus G, a Greek born ex-Berklee student. Gus was chosen to join Ozzy for his latest album, and as well as working with Ozzy he is the lead guitarist in his own metal band Firewind. Gus is renowned for his blistering technique, which include fast alternate picked lines, legato runs, sweep picking and tapping; his technique and contributions to rock/metal guitar have already earned him several awards in Guitar Magazine polls. Gus's choice of guitars are his two ESP signature models, the Gus G "FR" and Gus G "NT". Gus uses nine Blackstar Series One 200 watt heads, plus his signature Blackstar valve HT Blackfire pedal, a twin channel valve driven distortion unit.

Above I have listed the main guitarist's associated with Ozzy, but he has worked with others including Steve Vai, Joe Holmes, Brad Gillis, and its rumoured he choose George Lynch as Randy's replacement, but then went with Jake E Lee.

Ok, now for the fun bit! The idea of this article was to have a dream jam; what if all of Ozzy's guitarists got together and blasted over a track. I have presented five licks from each axeman, twenty five in



total. I have composed a short backing track based around two sections. The first section is very Sabbath inspired and features a heavy riff based around E minor. The second section modulates

up to F# minor, and is more in the style of earlier Ozzy, "Miracle Man" era.

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# Tony Iommi

**Lick 1**

demonstrates Tony's use of unison bend, as well as his use of the E minor pentatonic scale. This lick is pretty straight forward, and as with many of Tony's runs, is based around pretty straight forward two note per string pentatonic phrases. This lick moves around a lot, so make sure you're up to speed with your pentatonic patterns.

**Lick 2**

is another pentatonic lick, but this lick has a slight twist, with a slightly tricky fast left hand slide between the 15th and 17th frets of the top E string.

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# Randy Rhoads

**Lick 1**

is a classic Randy lick and is based around the F# minor pentatonic scale, but also includes the blues scale, plus notes from F# Aeolian. This lick is a little tricky so practise slowly to start.

**Lick 2**

illustrates Randy's classical influences, with a descending figure based around a Diminished arpeggio. This lick covers a lot of the neck, so practice it in sections. The lick concludes with more F# minor pentatonic lines. Lick 1 is an E minor blues based lick that kicks off with a slow gradual bend. Make sure you dig in to this lick with lots of aggressive vibrato.

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# Pike & Lee

**Lick 1**

is an E minor blues based lick that kicks off with a slow gradual bend. Make sure you dig in to this lick with lots of aggressive vibrato.

**Lick 2**

is a pretty unusual lick, that starts off with notes performed by sliding into them, followed by a line where the fretted note is then re played by a right hand tapped note, giving a delay effect.

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# Licks: Wizard

**Lick 1**

is a blues based figure that uses the F# minor pentatonic scale and includes double stops and classic bending phrases.

**Lick 2**

is another pentatonic based idea that shifts up the neck on the top two strings through all of the F# minor pentatonic positions. Be sure that you have your pentatonic patterns down, and take care with the slides at speed.

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# Gus G.

**Lick 1**

demonstrates one of Gus's bluesy style licks, with a searing bend that rises gradually, before heading into a fast loop pattern, and concluding with a unison bend. This lick is based around the E minor pentatonic scale.

**Lick 2**

is another Gus G signature lick, and demonstrates how Gus negotiates the neck using 5th intervals on the top two strings. Take care with the position shifting slides.

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# DOUG ALDRICH

Whitesnake's Doug Aldrich is one of the hardest working guitarists in Rock. **Jamie Humphries** caught up with him at Marshall Headquarters to find out about the new Whitesnake tour and album.

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# WORD SPREAD FAST ABOUT THE HOT NEW GUITAR PLAYER IN TOWN



For many guitarists, hitting the major league as a gun for hire is their dream - and these days it's a dream that is becoming even more difficult to achieve and maintain. Doug Aldrich is proof that hard work, determination plus a healthy dose of talent will help you achieve your goals.

Hailing from Raleigh, North Carolina, Doug became interested in guitar at a young age after being introduced him to the music of Jeff Beck. Like most teenagers, he worked on his chops listening to the likes of Jimmy Page, Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton and Jimi Hendrix. At the weekends he could be found playing in cover bands, performing material by Van Halen, Deep Purple, UFO and Black Sabbath. After finally making the decision that guitar playing was his chosen path, he packed up and headed off to L.A.

Word spread fast about the hot new guitar player in town, and still in his teens Doug found himself auditioning for Kiss. Although

Doug didn't get the job, it formed a great foundation for future musical situations and also cemented a strong friendship with Gene Simmons.

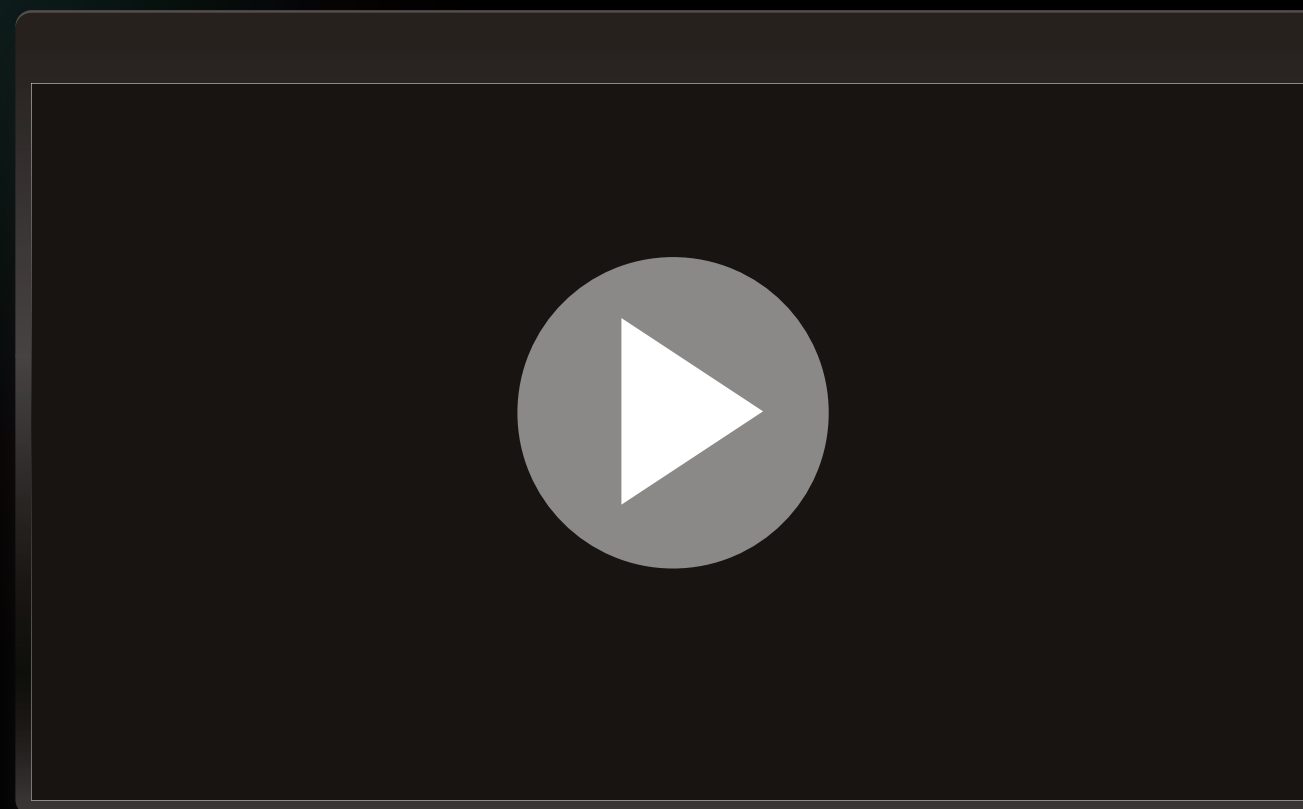
As well as working as an in-demand guitar teacher, Doug also formed the band Lion, and had success with a top 20 single on MTV's Headbangers Ball. Following the splitting-up of Lion, he went on to work with Hurricane, and House of Lords, the latter helping establish Doug as a 'name' for his technical prowess, tone and feel.

Doug went on to form Bad Moon Rising and also released two solo albums. Although instrumental, his albums were more about feel than technique. He was also hired to play on many compilation and tribute albums, including Little Guitars, A Tribute to Van Halen, Bat Head Soup, A tribute To Ozzy, Crossfire A Tribute to SRV, and Carmine Appice's Guitar Zeus, laying down many of the rhythm tracks for such players as Brian May, Slash and Yngwie Malmsteen.

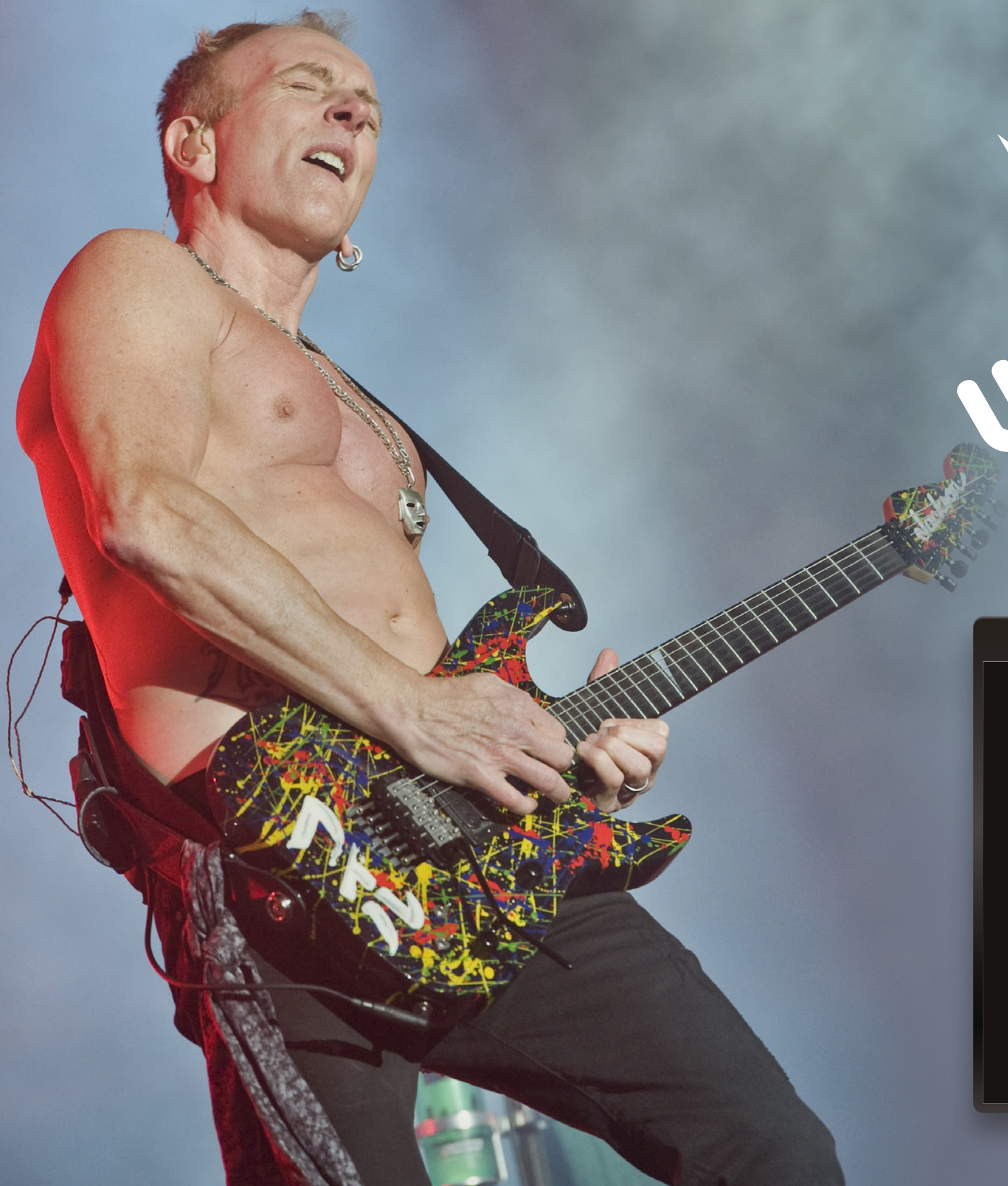
Doug also landed the gig as the late Ronnie James Dio's

guitarist, recording the studio album Killing the Dragon, plus appearing on several live albums. It was around this time that he was approached by David Coverdale to tour with Whitesnake. At first he thought it would be a tour playing the band's hits, which to begin with it was. But before too long he and Coverdale formed a strong musical bond and began collaborating on material. This year saw the release of Forevermore, the second Whitesnake studio album to feature Doug.

As if he wasn't busy enough, Doug Aldrich is also an active clinician for Marshall Amps, and his clinics are both informative and entertaining and he has to be one of the most down to earth, and most genuine musicians I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. As Doug said himself, career wise he was a late bloomer, which just goes to show that experience goes a long way when it comes to landing a profile gig or session!



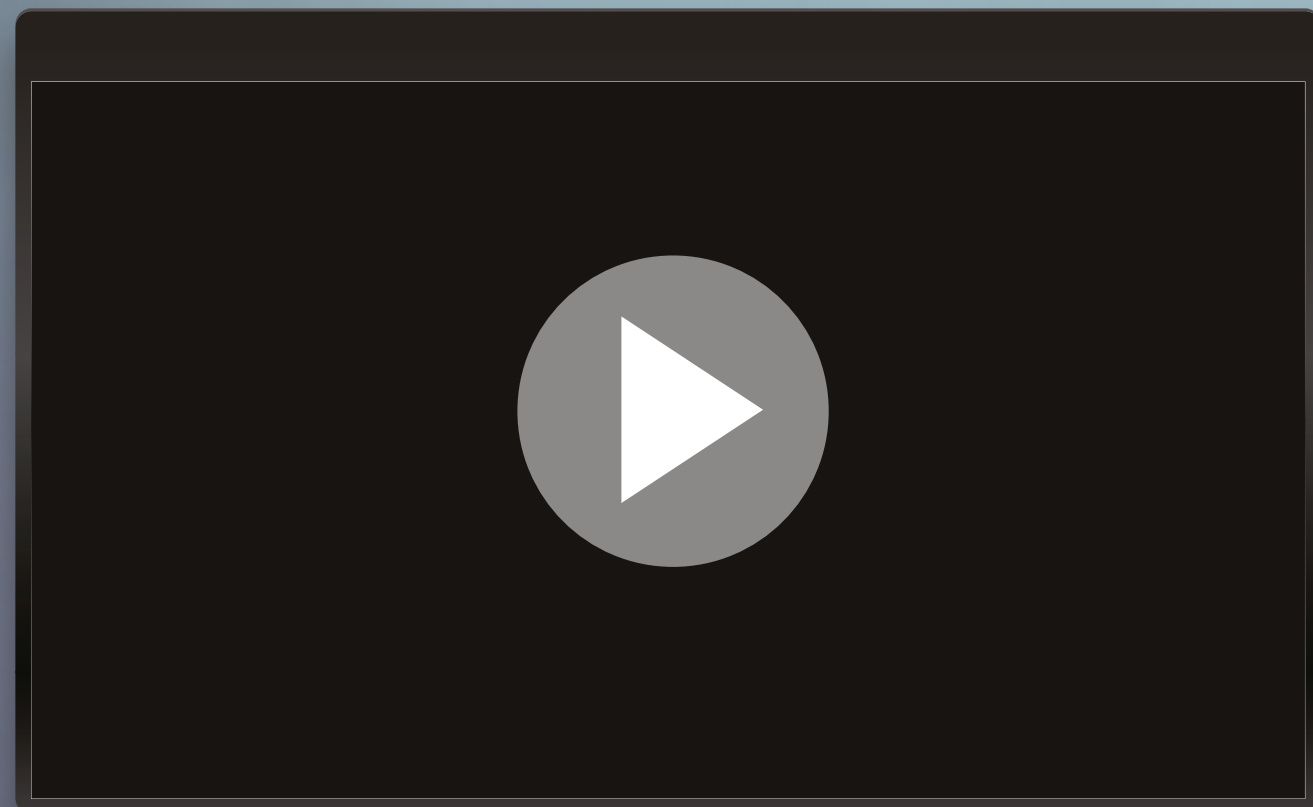




# UNRAVELED!

With Def Leppard in the middle of a US tour, GI's **Stuart Bull** caught up with Phil Collen to find out a little more about one of Rock's survivors.

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Def Leppard's first ever live album, *Mirrorball*, is currently roaring away and with live dates in Ireland, the UK, the USA and Japan, the band is back with a bang in 2011. International tours take months of planning and GI's Stuart Bull caught-up with Def Leppard's highly regarded Phil Collen for our interview, just as the tour – which continues until November 2011 – and the final album details were taking shape.

Collen isn't just a great guitarist – in common with the rest of the band he has serious vocal skills, too – one of the features that sets Def Leppard apart from run of the mill Metal outfits. But it's as a guitarist that Phil Collen made his mark – first with bands like *Girl*, then stepping into the troubled Def Leppard, as Pete Willis departed. The band's rocky career continued, with the untimely death of fellow Leppard guitarist, Steve Clark, in 1991, but with Vivian Campbell on board and Collen seriously cleaning-up his act, the band has gone on to greater and greater strengths since those

days, culminating in the current album and tour.

Collen's a hardcore Jackson user, with as impressive a collection of pointy headstock guitars as you could hope to find – including a signature model of his own – the PC1, which he discusses with Stuart Bull in our video interview. His collection isn't quite all Brand J, though, as it also includes an Ibanez Destroyer, a late 1970's Telecaster and an SG – but Jackson seems to be his first love. Stage amps with Def Leppard are Marshall all the way (with some help from an ancient Randall power amp), though Collen has also been spotted using Fender Cyber Twin combos on clinics and smaller gigs.

As if Def Leppard duties weren't enough to keep one man busy, super-fit Collen has another band too – the three-piece *Man Raze*, which has a new album due this summer.



Collen isn't just a great guitarist – in common with the rest of the band he has serious vocal skills.

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# Wylde Life

## Zakk Wylde is a force of nature.

Zakk Wylde is a force of nature. He also happens to be one of the most talented and charismatic guitarists of his generation. **Gary Cooper** analyses the master's career. **Stuart Bull** and **Andy James** provide the interviews

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© Photography by Kim Waller

I

t's all too easy to write-off Zakk Wylde as 'the Wylde man' – the shredder par excellence, but not much more than that. And, to be fair, he doesn't do a lot to play the myth down. The beard, the hair, the physique, the clothes, all shriek metal – even the trademark bullseye Les Paul. It's right in your face. And then there's a career that encompasses well documented problems with drink and subsequent 'health issues' and – possibly an even greater risk to life, limb and sanity – a large chunk of his career spent with Ozzy Osbourne.

Born in 1967 in New Jersey, Zakk (he was christened Jeffrey) abandoned his early guitar studies and didn't pick up the instrument again until he was 14. It's worth noting the year there – 1981, long past Rock's 1970's golden days, but close enough for him to have been immersed in the influences of that era – Jimmy Page, Jimmy Hendrix, Clapton and later guitar gods, like Gary Moore and Randy Rhoads. Read the standard biographies and it all fits neatly into place. Wylde (his real name is Wielandt) went on to slay his local contemporaries with material from Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin and Rush. So far,

so very predictable. But also inaccurate. If Zakk Wylde was just another fast metal guitarist, he'd probably still be in New Jersey. The fact is, Zakk Wylde is a very much more accomplished guitarist.

Listen closely to Wylde's playing and you'll hear not just the straight-ahead Blues influences of so many of his contemporaries, but Jazz influence and, perhaps even more surprisingly, some extremely accomplished Country picking. True, it's played at ear-splitting volume and somewhere close to the speed of light, but it's there – and it makes Zakk Wylde an individual stylist and instantly recognisable – one of the least appreciated reasons why some guitarists make the big time and some don't.

Classical is another big influence on Wylde's style – perhaps not so surprising when you realise Randy Rhoads was his idol and that Rhoads was also influenced by classical techniques and style.

And then there's the missing link – Southern US Rock. Wylde says that, though he was aware of Lynyrd Skynyrd and other Southern/Country influenced bands when he was young, Sabbath had been his main thing and it wasn't until after he joined-up with Ozzy, in 1987,

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that the Country bug bit – intriguingly, Wylde has said, deeply implanted in his brain by having listened to the great Albert Lee. And, before you could say 'how about the real devil's instrument?' Wylde was soon starting to perfect his fingerpicking – on a banjo!

It all came home to roost in 1993, when he depped for The Allman Brothers' Dickey Betts. It was just one gig, but it was a signpost in Wylde's career.

Jumping back in time, Wylde's big break with Ozzy meant stepping into Randy Rhoads's gigantic shoes and, with the greatest respect to Rhoads fans, Wylde managed the transition with aplomb, for all that he had never played in a world class band before. He may have joked that he put a bullseye on his trademark Gibson Les Paul to help the Rhoads lovers take aim at him,

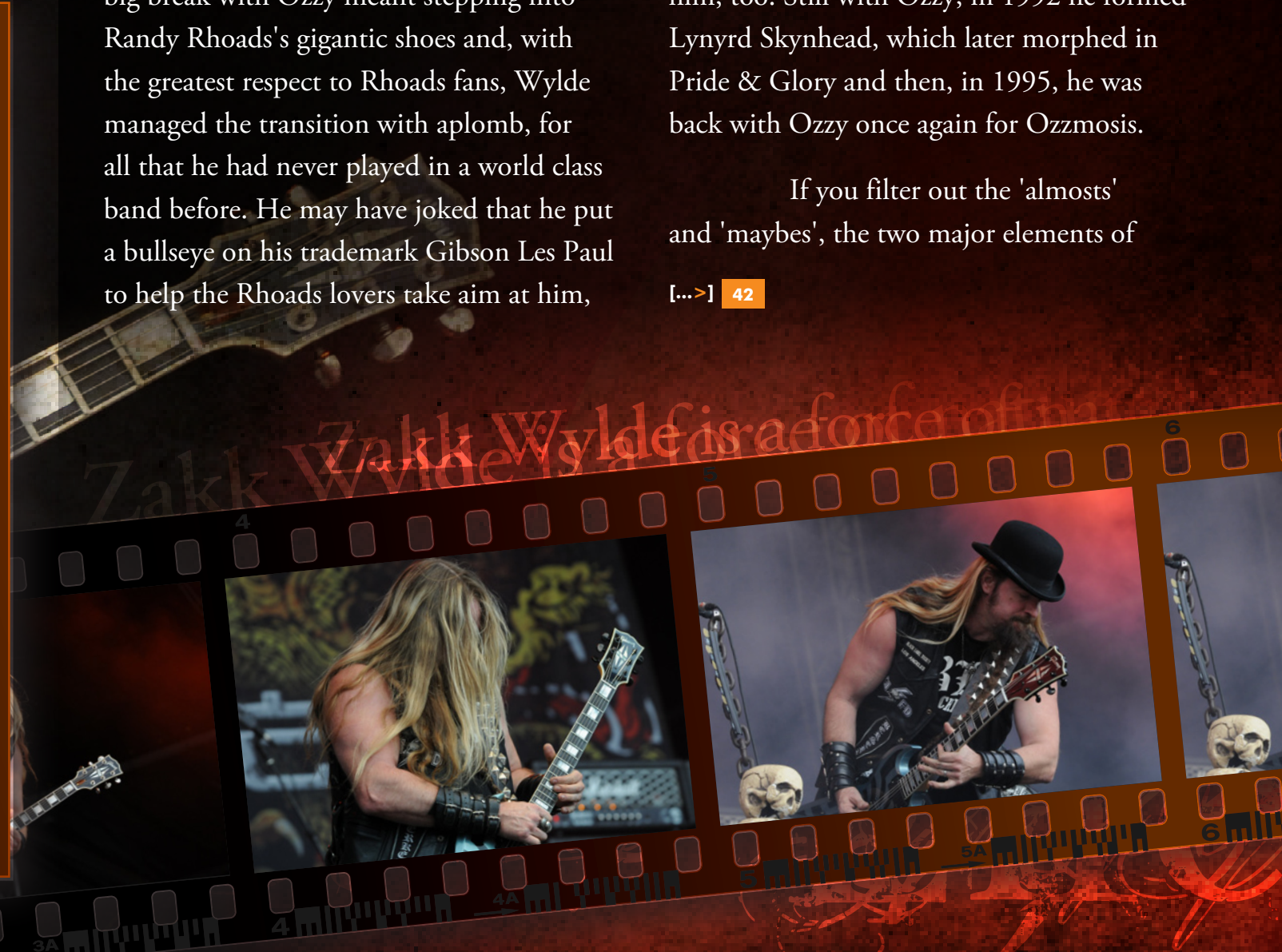
but only the most bigoted would have failed to recognise Wylde's own prodigious talent.

In 1990, Ozzy released his second album featuring Zakk Wylde: No More Tears. It's regarded as one of Zakk's best performances and GI's Andy James says: "I think he came into his own as a writer and guitar player evoking more of the Lynyrd Skynyrd style influence in his playing as well as his super accurate picking technique and ferocious vibrato on that one"

Wylde had a solo career ahead of him, too. Still with Ozzy, in 1992 he formed Lynyrd Skynhead, which later morphed in Pride & Glory and then, in 1995, he was back with Ozzy once again for Ozzmosis.

If you filter out the 'almosts' and 'maybes', the two major elements of

[...>] 42







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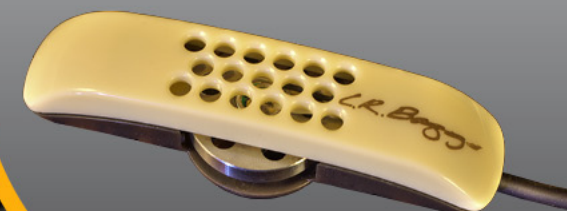
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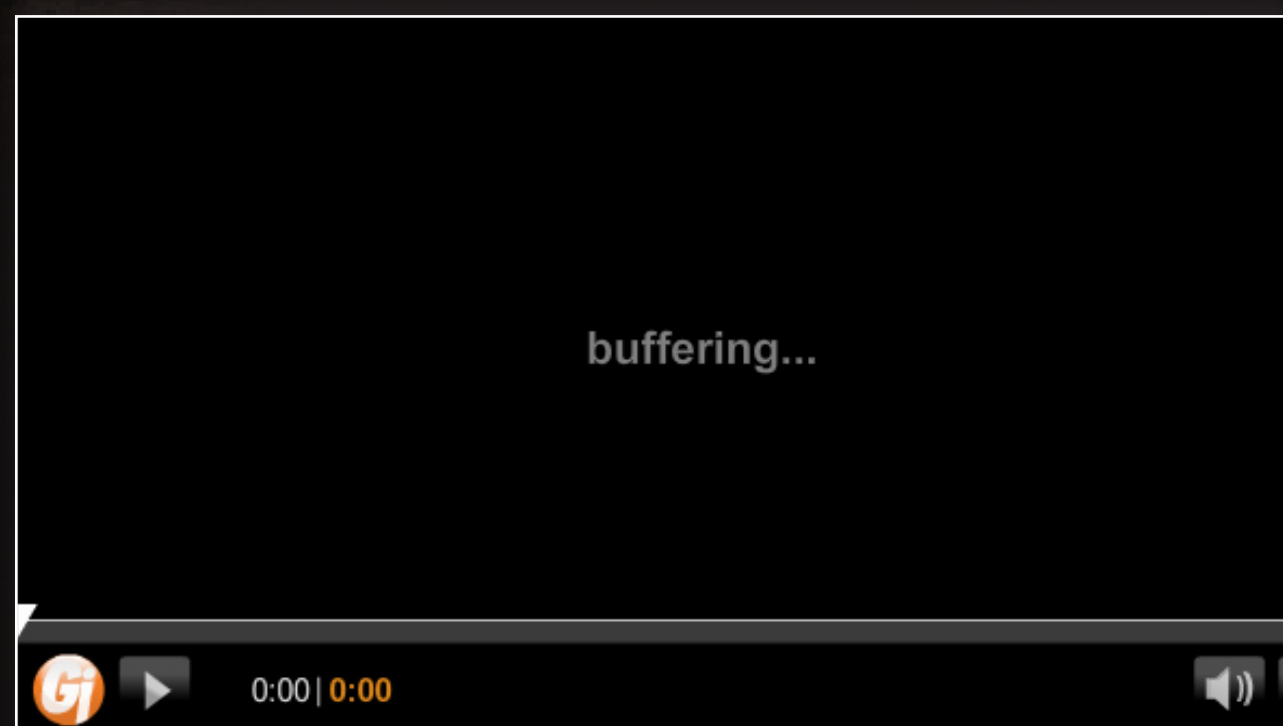


Wylde's career to date have been his monumental work with Ozzy Osbourne and the project that was to come next – the Black Label Society, which he formed in 1998. OK, there was also his solo album *Book Of Shadows*, not to mention the legendary jamming with Guns 'n Roses, being dropped by Ozzy in favour of Joe Holmes for the *Ozzmosis* tour – but that's stuff from Wikipedia.

Important as those other career events were, it is Black Label Society that has gone from strength to

strength, despite its floating population. Zakk worked again with Ozzy, eventually being replaced by another great guitarist – Gus G – but still powering on with BLS, still blending his mix of apparently quite disparate styles - Metal, Blues, Jazz, Classical, Rock and Country, as if it was the easiest thing in the world.

In terms of his gear, Zakk has been a loyal and steadfast Gibson/Epiphone man since the start. He says that the first players he admired were [...>] **44**





# There's more - a lot more – to Zakk Wylde's guitar playing.

all Les Paul wielders and he has become one of that family, in spades. He has also flirted with Gibson's more adventurous sister brand, Epiphone. He's had several Signature Les Pauls launched in his honour (one of which we review in this issue) but some of the Epiphones have been... well, Wylde to the point of distraught – look at the Epiphone Wylde ZV Custom, apparently the result of a night on the town between a Flying V and an SG. Equally as worrying is the Epiphone Graveyard Disciple – not even a new idea, as Vox beat Epiphone to the coffin-maker's pattern book, way back in the 1960s.

Zakk's taste in amps is as classic as his taste in Les Pauls (let's ignore some of the Wylde Epiphones for now). He uses JCM800s, with Marshall cabs loaded – unusually – with EV

speakers. This latter makes more of a difference than you might suppose, in case you have never tried an EV driver!

And effects? Having used a variety of classic designs in the past, these days they are from the Jim Dunlop/MXR stable and we have all four of them on review in this issue. Wylde's pedal board is about as simple as it gets.

Which is more than you can say for Zakk Wylde. On the surface he's a hard-nose Heavy Metal guitar slinger – faster than lightning and master of a thousand riffs. But there's more - a lot more – to Zakk Wylde's guitar playing. Cast aside the image for a moment and listen carefully. This is one of Rock's greatest contemporary players and a guitarist with surprising depths.





# Shredding with the *Master*

Zakk Wylde is the master shredder – the monster player behind some of the best of Ozzy Osbourne's solo work and the front man of Black Label Society. **Andy James** puts the Zakk Wylde style under the microscope.

In this issue we're going to be looking at the style of ex-Ozzy axe man and Black Label Society front man Zakk Wylde. Zakk is world renowned for being a master of pentatonic shredding and we're going to take a look at how you can reproduce the style of one of Rock's most identifiable guitarists.

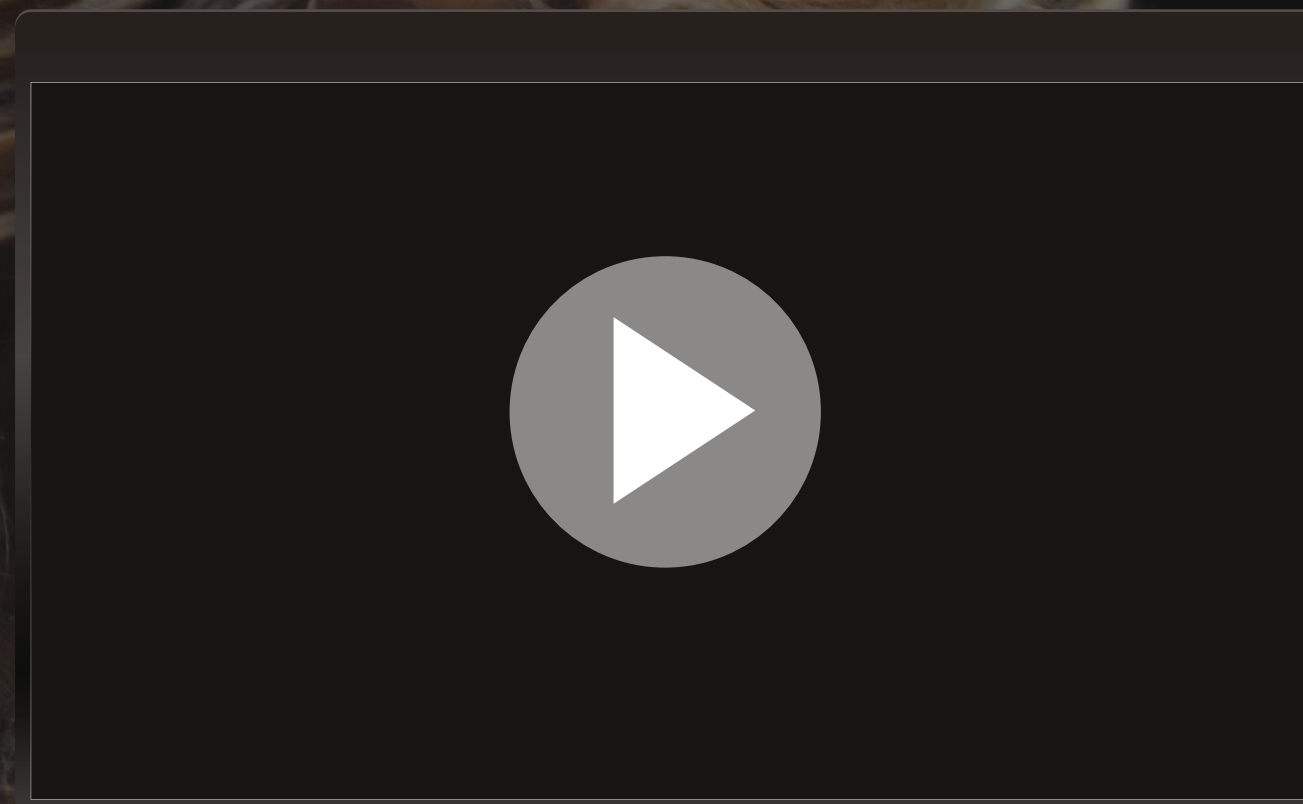
One thing to bear in mind with playing in Zakk's style is the conviction with which he plays the guitar. Every note is really grabbed hold of and his vibrato has a very definitive style. When approaching these licks, make sure that you get them down at a slow tempo and that you are comfortable with your co-ordination when speeding up the licks. This will serve you well as the licks will still be clean and audible

at a higher speed. Zakk has a very clear sound, so clarity as well as speed should be one of your main concerns here.

One thing worth noting is that Zakk's string choice is gauge 10-60. The reason for the heavy low end is so he can tune down the low E string as far as a B note. For Black Label Society, the only alternate tunings are on the low E string.

The backing track is in the key of E and has an up-tempo feel. There are no key changes so you can play the licks as they are in my performance or mix up the licks and incorporate some of these ideas in your own playing and have a go at improvising your own solos in this style.

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**Lick 1:** This lick is classic Zakk Wyld as it incorporates a very aggressive double stop bend which is very common in Zakk's style. Following on from that there is the use of the open B string, which is a great way of building towards the classic Zakk vibrato, which often signifies the definite end of a lick or solo. This features heavily in the other licks too.

**Lick 2:** In this lick it covers Zakk's approach at having the sound of a whammy bar on a fixed bridge guitar. Like so many of Zakk's licks, this is a very identifiable part of his sound and a unique approach to getting this type of effect.

**Lick 3:** The hammer-ons in this lick are used quite a bit by Zakk to sound like the solo is building and progressing

to another part, almost like a bridge within a solo.

**Lick 4:** This lick starts with a very classic pattern that Zakk uses, not too dissimilar from the build-up to the end of the No More Tears solo, just lower down on the guitar. As this lick gets faster it requires a more palm muted and picked approach to build tension.

**Lick 5:** Utilising the first position pentatonic scale in the key of E, this is a building lick that requires good use of hammer-ons, pull-offs and palm muting which Zakk uses, as well as alternate picking to inject a lot of speed and dynamic into his playing.

**Lick 6:** In a lot of cases Zakk will introduce the wah pedal to add an added dynamic. This can also make the final note of any lick sound more

aggressive. Even if the wah has not been used for the duration of the lick, he will often turn it on for the last note to add conviction. In this lick there is good use of hammer-ons and pull-offs in this pentatonic repeated lick which is a good exercise for the left hand as well as having a cool sound!

**Lick 7:** This lick was inspired by a the solo in a song called War of Heaven from the new BLS album, Order of the Black. Due to the more up tempo nature of the BT, this is slightly exaggerated on the speed side of things to fit in. There is a very wide stretch to be negotiated as well as incorporating strict alternate picking, so attention to detail at a slow tempo with a lick like this is a must before speeding it up. This introduces a more technical side to Zakk's playing which is not for the faint of heart. Who said shredding pentatonics was easy?

**Lick 8:** Once again, another repeating pattern that is often associated with Zakk's playing, a lick like this can be found on the solo for Miracle Man from Zakk's first album with Ozzy No Rest for the Wicked. The ending to this lick is a chromatic sounding lick where Zakk puts his right hand over the neck and pulls off the G string with his left hand moving down with his right towards the headstock. On my performance, I played this in a more

conventional way so you can get the desired effect a bit more easily.

**Licks 9-10:** These all link-up together to make one long phrase to demonstrate my performance of Zakk's style. This is probably the hardest part as it highlights Zakk's highly accurate and skilled picking technique which is hard to make easy from a teaching point of view. I've broken it down into sections and the same train of thought should be present when practising these type of licks/phrases as the co-ordination is key to making this kind of playing clean and precise. Zakk for most of this style playing often favours the neck pick-up as for picking, it can bring a more rounded definition to the notes and adds a different dynamic in terms of definition.

Make sure you practice all these licks bearing in mind clarity and precision and accuracy and then Jam over the track to create your own Zakk style solo's. That's it from me and until the next issue, Rock On!





# Past master

## PETE TOWNSHEND

The master of windmilling, chord genius and the writer of some of Rock's greatest songs - Pete Townshend is a unique guitar player in a world of soundalikes. But what influenced Townshend's remarkable style? And why have so few dared follow in his footsteps? **Gary Cooper** has found some surprising answers.

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**Y**ou don't have to be dead to feature in GI's Past Master series - but you do have to have had an enormous influence on modern guitar playing. Which, when I started to think about The Who's Pete Townshend as a likely candidate, gave me a pause for thought. Townshend is, thankfully, very much alive but, though there can't be a serious Rock guitarist who isn't aware of his contribution to guitar pyrotechnics and his prodigious songwriting skills, it has to be admitted that he possibly isn't the world's most influential guitar player. To which you can only say 'more's the pity!', because while Pete Townshend is not a particularly great soloist, he is unquestionably one of the modern masters of the guitar.

The story starts, curiously enough, on a banjo, and it's worth bearing that fact in mind when you listen to Townshend's playing. It's not that there's a wannabe Earl Scruggs or Bela Fleck fingering furiously in the mix of My Generation or Won't Get Fooled Again, but there is a direct influence on his use of chords. Though Townshend's first instrument was a Spanish guitar, it was the banjo he was given, at the age of 12, by his grandmother, that led to a meeting with John Entwistle, with whom he would perform in several bands, playing Dixieland Jazz (then as popular in the UK as Rock is

today) and Country music. Later, he was asked to join Roger Daltrey's band, The Detours - as rhythm guitarist. Back then, it was Daltrey who played lead!

The Detours were a band in the right location at the right time, West London, one of the centres of the live British music scene in the early 1960s, and one that featured contemporaries including the fledgling Rolling Stones. In fact it was the Stones that gave Townshend one of his most enduring trademarks. In 1963, playing on the same bill, Townshend watched another of our past masters, Keith Richards (see GI Issue One) flailing away at his guitar. Townshend liked what he saw, adopted and exaggerated the technique and his trademark 'windmill' action was born.

The Detours morphed into The Who in 1964 - just in time to join in the burgeoning early 1960's British 'Mod' scene, in which they became the lead band, closely followed by The Small Faces and The Kinks. But were The Who really Mods? In a sense it doesn't matter to anyone but social and fashion historians, but it's worth suggesting that maybe they weren't quite. Townshend had already worked out his legendary guitar-smashing routine while in The Detours, when he accidentally shattered his Rickenbacker against a low ceiling at a West London

[.. >] **54**

**“By the time The Who first appeared on British TV, the fashion images had already begun to take shape.”**



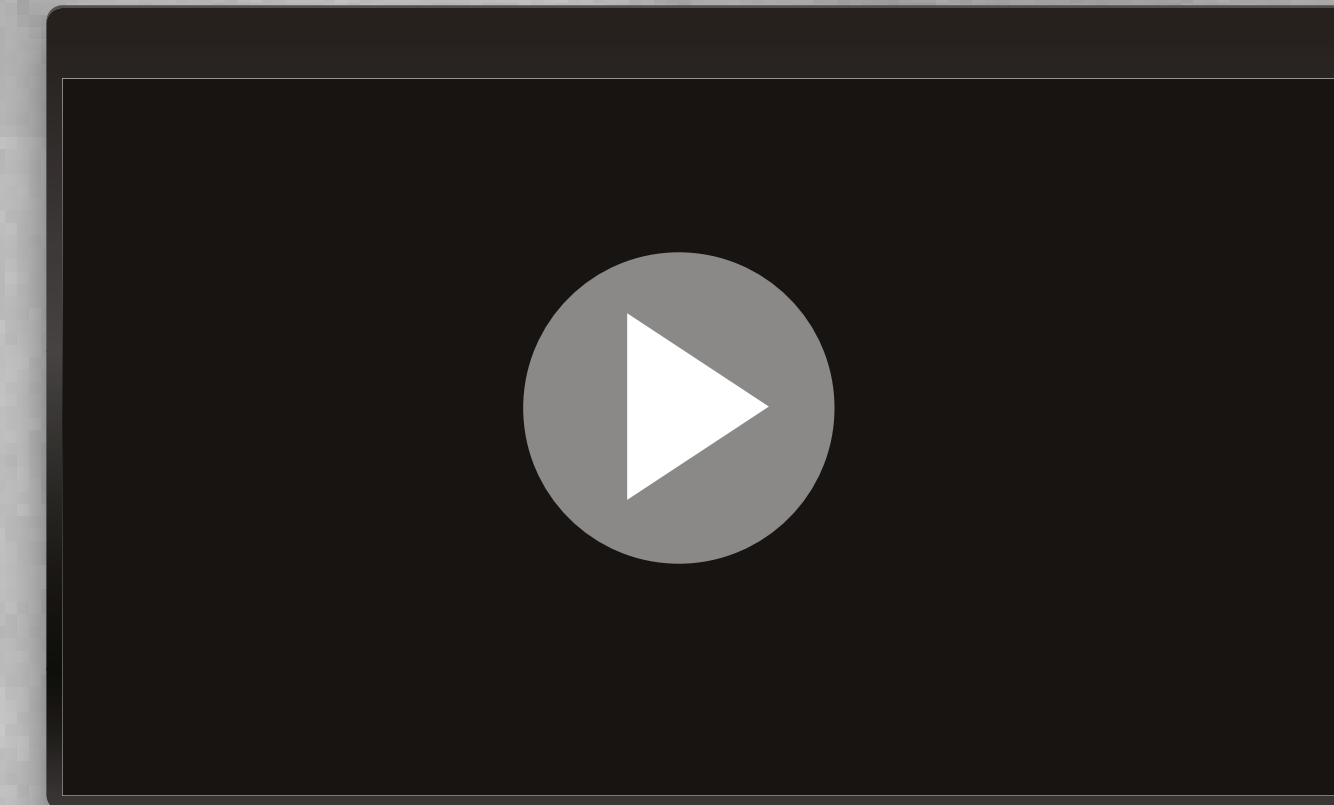


“By now the mid-late 1960s, a catalogue of TOWNSHEND'S gear would take up pages: MOSTLY BECAUSE HE WAS SMASHING IT FASTER THAN THE BAND COULD AFFORD TO BUY IT.”

club - and pretended he'd done it on purpose. This pose wasn't much to do with the Mods' interests in clothes and pills and Tamla Mowtown - it came from Townshend's art school background and the influence of Austrian modern artist Gustav Metzke, who had been lecturing at Townshend's school on the joys of 'auto-destruction'. Townshend was, let it never be forgotten, a highly intellectual young man with horizons already way beyond those of most of his contemporaries. It was to show in his songwriting, too. Townshend's influences were far, far wider and deeper than those of any of his contemporaries.

Shortly after Townshend's guitar-smashing initiation, the Detours changed their name to The Who (after a brief period as The High Numbers) and were taken under the erratic but dynamic management of Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp - themselves no strangers to high art influences.

By the time The Who first appeared on British TV, the fashion images had already begun to



take shape. Though he is on record as saying he preferred the sound of Fender amplifiers, Townshend became famous as one of the early Marshall users and, perhaps even more importantly, one of the first guitarists to use a stack. But even that wasn't quite as folklore suggests. In fact it was bassist John Entwistle who was the first to buy one of Jim Marshall's first 4x12s (at the time regarded as a massive speaker cabinet) and Townshend, no doubt frustrated that the new purchase had led to his bass player doubling in volume, followed suit. But he didn't buy a Marshall head. Though the band had a short-lived deal with Vox (Townshend reputedly hated all Vox amps except the AC30) most people assumed he used Marshall amps because of his 4x12s. Indeed, the image of Townshend with a Union

flag draped Marshall stack became an icon at the time - despite the fact that the amp perched on top of those Marshall cabs was a Fender Bassman. Of course, Townshend's other hallmark was the Rickenbacker - 1997s (335s) and 1998s (345s) plus, of course, the amazing Rickenbacker 12-string, called the 1997 model in the UK, but known everywhere else as a 360-12.

Again, images can be deceptive. Most people think of Townshend as an exclusive Rickenbacker/Marshall user at that early stage, but as well as using a Fender amp (in fairness, he did use Marshall JT45s now and then, as well as Vox AC100s) he also played a UK-built Grimshaw guitar at times, not to mention a Fender Telecaster. He was also one of the first users of

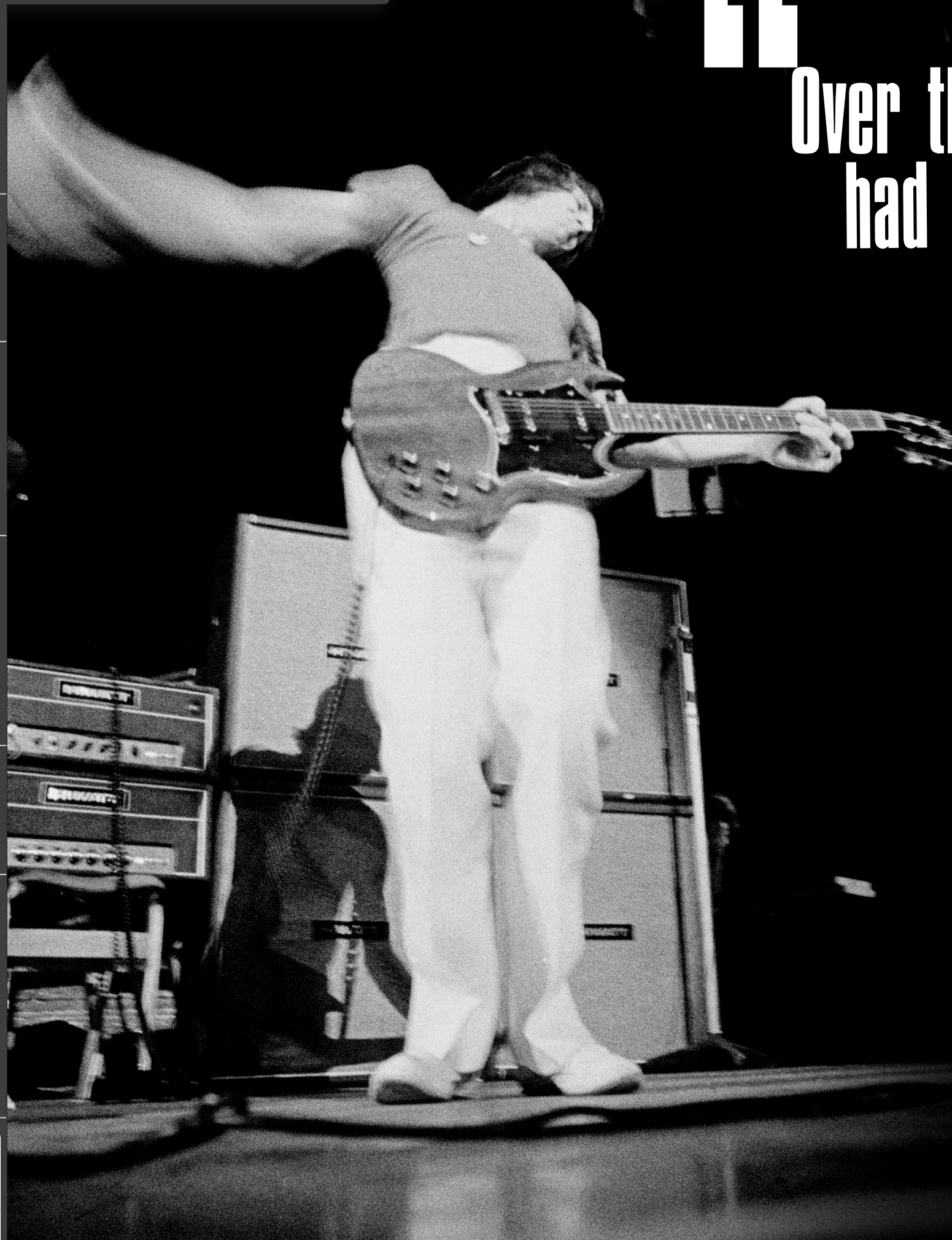
[...>] **57**



“

# Over the years, Townshend's gear has had many additions and subtractions.

”



the original Gary Hurst Tonebender - the first British-made fuzz box as also used by Jeff Beck, Jimmy Page, Steve Winwood and so many others.

By now, the mid-late 1960s, a catalogue of Townshend's gear would take up pages: mostly because he was smashing it faster than the band could afford to buy it! What had started as an accident in a West London pub had become an international celebration of destruction as art and audiences demanded that a Who concert should end with the ritual trashing of a Rickenbacker and a stack of Marshall amps and cabs. Townshend's gimmick had, in fact, painted him into a corner.

If this all seems a bit gear heavy it's because it needs to be. Townshend's trademark sound was loud, which came from his stacks of Celestion-

loaded Marshall cabs. It was clean - that was (mostly) courtesy of the Fender amps and it had a ringing, jangly sound which drew the ear to some of the most unusual chord work then to be heard in Pop (as it was still being called). That came from the Rickenbackers, via Townshend's creative genius and musical influences.

And, of course, there was one other essential trademark - feedback. Arguments still rage over who used it first, Townshend, Beck, Clapton, The Kinks' Dave Davis - but the fact is that Townshend's Marshall cabs being at pickup level with hollow-bodied Rickenbackers (never the least likely guitars to break into feedback) was an open invitation to feedback and Townshend, with an eye to drama, showmanship and musical innovation, was among the first in the world, if not the very first,

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to realise the potential of feedback as something to be used, rather than endured, as part of his unique style

And what a style it was! If you could tell a Clapton or Beck track within seconds back in the 1960s and '70s, you could just as easily tell what was Pete Townshend at work. It wasn't his soloing - he was never better than competent in that department - it was the sheer inventiveness of his chord playing: jagged, jerky rhythms, which led the music critic of the Times to compare him with Stravinsky at one point! - and unusual chord shapes that owed very little to anything his contemporaries were playing.

And where did those strange chords and discords come from? Enter the

17th century musical genius, Henry Purcell. As Townshend himself said in a BBC interview a few years ago: "Right the way through my writing for the Who's first album, I was experimenting with new chord shapes. The normal Pop music chords - the three chord tricks of the day - were songs like Peggy Sue by Buddy Holly. I'd been listening to a lot of Purcell and instead of playing a straight G, I would drop to a two note chord and if I wanted to add the third note, I'd add it as a suspended fourth."

Then again, reputedly, the Who's first major UK hit, Anyhow, Anyway, Anywhere, was inspired by Charlie Parker, so it's clear Townshend's influences ranged far and wide!

Though Townshend was no lead guitarist in the classic mould, his effectiveness is undeniable. The band's singles, the anthems; My Generation, I'm a Boy, Substitute, Happy Jack, Magic Bus and 1967's pinnacle, I Can See For Miles, were like nothing else being recorded at the time. Nor was 1969's stunning Tommy. But if guitar is what you are interested in, check out 1970's Live at Leeds as an example of what a guitarist with a limited lead technique but a phenomenal attitude and a unique mastery of chords can achieve. To this day there are many critics who claim it is the best live Rock album ever. Of course, it helped that, in John Entwistle, Townshend had probably the best bass player Rock has produced. All the same, Townshend was, at that time, stylistically, completely out on his own.

Over the years, Townshend's gear has had many additions and subtractions. The Fenders gave way to Dave Reeves's early Sound City amps and cabs and then his superb Hiwatts, which in turn led Townshend back to Fenders, via a spell with Mesa Boogie. His choice of guitars wandered away from Rickenbackers to Gibson Les Pauls and SGs (about both of which he could be incredibly rude at times) through Fender Telecasters and Schecter Telecaster clones (see our review in GI Issue two), to the Eric Clapton Signature Stratocasters he has been using for some years now. For amps, he has reverted to the Fender principle - Vibro Kings for the most part,

“Quite what Henry would have made of smashed Rickenbackers, toppled Hiwatt stacks and feedback is anyone's guess”

though he has lately turned (along with several other virtuosos, including Jeff Beck and Joe Bonamassa) to handbuilt Lazy J amps, which painstakingly replicate early Fenders.

The underpinning of Townshend's unique style were set in The Who's early days, magnificent, ringing chords and an understanding of how music works that few Rock composers have approached. And much of that goes back to Purcell, who in the 17th century took the rules of harmony and shook them by the neck. "When I was about 19, Kit Lambert gave me Purcell's

[...>] 60



The Gordian Knot Untied. It kind of changed my life - it went right into my body and stayed there ever since. Kit Lambert was my composing mentor - he hadn't played it to me by accident," Townshend has said.

Quite what Henry would have made of smashed Rickenbackers, toppled Hiwatt stacks and feedback is anyone's guess, but he might have glimpsed a spark of recognition if he'd heard Pete Townshend play acoustic guitar. Though it's perhaps not the instrument he is famous for, he has used acoustics throughout his career and anyone who has seen Townshend pick up a Gibson J-200 and produce from it a ragged symphony of cliff-hanging discords, massively complex rhythms and sheer, vibrant, excitement will know exactly what I mean.

As I said at the beginning, Pete Townshend doesn't have a legion of players who say they have been influenced by him, though, clearly, some have: among them Paul Weller, Joe Walsh, Slash and Alex Lifeson. But in an age when so many guitarists are apparently only interested in soloing at speed, it's hard not to feel that it's a pity more haven't lent an ear to one of the most genuinely inventive and creative guitarists of them all - Pete Townshend.



### \_USEFUL LINKS

<http://www.thewho.com/>



### \_VIDEO LESSONS

- ▶ *Behind Blue Eyes*
- ▶ *Substitute*
- ▶ *Who Are You*



### \_JAM TRACKS

- ▶ *Won't Get Fooled Again (The Who)*
- ▶ *My Generation (The Who)*
- ▶ *Behind Blue Eyes (The Who)*



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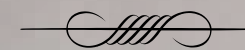
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# Revisited

## THE VOX AC30

**Gary Cooper** tells the story of Dick Denny's 1950s masterpiece.



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It may be hard to credit today but in 1958 30 Watts output from a guitar amp was regarded as A Very Big Deal. Then again, if you've ever stood in front of a Vox AC30 running at full toot, you might be surprised just how loud that 30 Watts can sound!

Loudness was what the AC30 was originally all about. Design genius Dick Denny's first big hit for Tom Jennings's Vox company - the AC15 - had been a huge success for the relatively young British outfit in the late 1950s, finding instant acceptance with the country's first guitar band - The Shadows. But as the The Shadows' gigs grew bigger and their fans noisier, an arms race was in

classic combo - twin Celestion 12" speakers with Alnico (it stands for an combination of ALuminium, NIckel and CObalt in case you've ever wondered) magnets and four EL84 output valves. Various adjustments have been made down the years but this basic template is more or less what defines the AC30 - save for the one major change: the development of what became known as the 'Top Boost' - more on which soon.

Housed in a high quality cabinet covered in beige Rexine and with that trademark diamond patterned grille cloth, the AC30 was already the single most sought-after amplifier in Britain, even before

sought-after today. The Top Boost gave the AC30 an extra gain stage and additional EQ labelled 'Bass' and 'Treble'. The earliest AC30s had simply offered a single 'Tone control'.

Why six inputs? These were hard times and it wasn't unknown for an entire band to plug into a single AC30 - the vocalist included!

What is often overlooked today is that no one who used an AC30 before the mid-1960s did so looking for an overdriven or distorted sound. A measure of a guitar amplifier's

ability back then was its cleanness not its dirtiness and the AC30 had characteristic jangly edge to the sound, that ideally suited both The Shadows' clean melody-driven guitar lines and the Beatles' early-era melodic Pop. Even today, many who use the AC30 (and they have become enormously popular again among younger Indie bands) do so because they value that distinctive 'jangle' which one amp historian has, pretty accurately, called a 'chime'.

The same arms race that had seen the AC30 supplant the AC15,

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## Why six inputs?

*There were hard times and it wasn't unknown for an entire band to plug into a single AC30 - the vocalist included!*

the making and Denny was under pressure to deliver more firepower. What he did, essentially, was double-up the winning formula that had made the Vox AC15 so popular.

There was a short period when the new model came with a single 12" Goodmans speaker and EL34 valves (tubes) but rapid changes to improve loudness and reliability soon saw what became the established format of this

manager Brian Epstein did his deal with Vox that saw the Beatles excursively using Vox amps on stage throughout almost their entire career.

Among the many changes the AC30 underwent in its early years, the 1961 version with its six inputs grouped in three channels, ECC83 (aka 12AX7) tubes in the pre-amp and the introduction of 'Top Boost' circuitry, became the version that is probably





# THE VOX AC30

*It wasn't the case that AC30s couldn't produce an overdriven sound.*

hadn't stopped. The AC50 and the AC100 followed but the AC30 became the workhorse of almost every British band who could afford one, up until the arrival of Marshall, in the mid-1960s. Marshalls were louder, brasher, they were new and immediately adopted by a generation of bands like The Who and The Small Faces. They quickly started to oust Vox from stages that had, until then, been dominated by the diamond grille cloth.

Oh, and Marshall had something else going for them too - distortion.

It wasn't the case that earlier amps couldn't produce an overdriven sound. The Kinks' Ray Davies had managed it - though he had sliced his speaker cones with a razor blade and taped them back together again to enhance the effect! - and various players who hadn't made the change to Marshall and

other 'next generation' amps found they could get a Vox to distort quite well - even if it didn't sound like a Marshall JTM45, as newly demonstrated by the young Eric Clapton, just out of the Yardbirds and creating the archetypal Marshall sound with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.

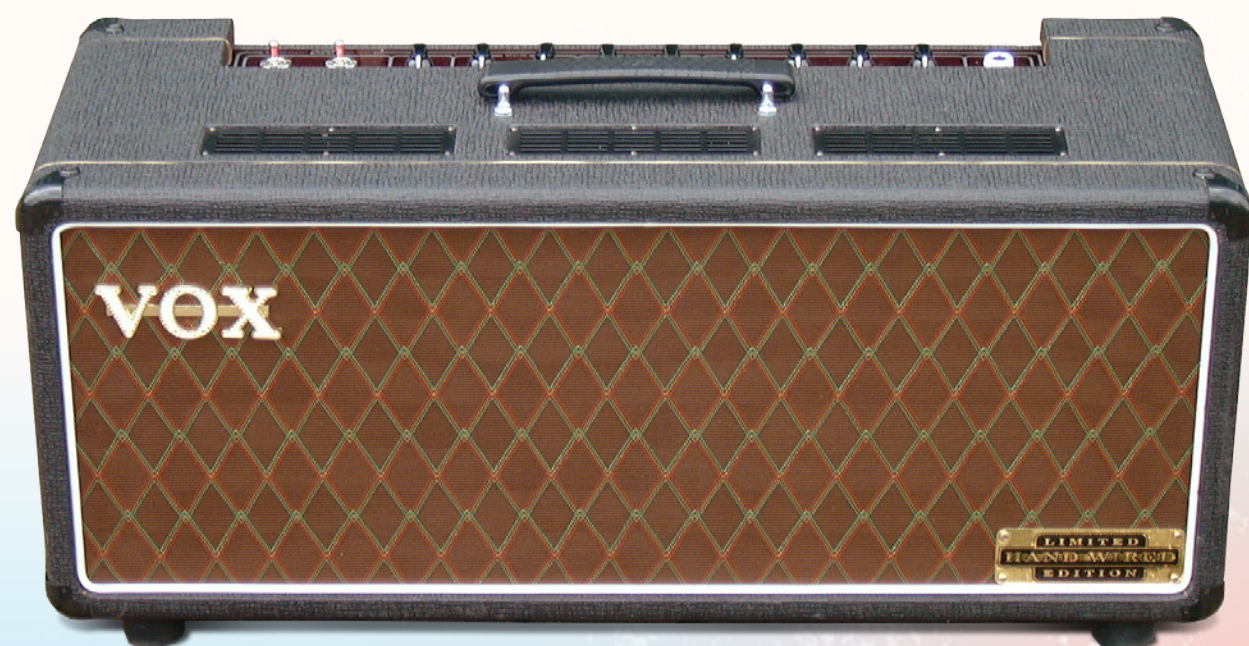
But there were the renegades who stuck with the Vox - guitarists who exploited the unique tonal properties of AC30s and made the resulting sound

their trademark. Of them, the great Irish Blues player Rory Gallagher and Queen's Brian May stand out as the most significant.

Sadly, Vox itself got into all sorts of financial trouble in the late 1960s as a series of bad management decisions saw the brand stagger from owner to owner - few of whom did much to enhance its reputation.

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And then along came Japan's Korg, which purchased the Vox name in the early 1990s, at a time when most pundits had written Vox off as a historical curio with little potential. How wrong they were! Korg cleverly exploited the nostalgia boom among Indie bands who were most certainly not looking for a '70s or '80s classic Rock sound (all three Radiohead guitarists, for example, have used AC30s), while simultaneously developing modelling technology to launch new products under the revived Vox name.

Today the AC30 is as iconic as it has ever been - maybe even more so. Sadly, it is no longer produced in the UK, production having been moved to China. Countless re-issues and 'special editions' have ensued, most of which have been well received.

The AC30 is one of the few real icons of amp design - like Fender's Twin and Bassman, Marshall's JT45 and the 'Plexi', Hiwatt's DR103 and Ampeg's SVT bass head. In common with them it has spawned imitators - and even a few downright copies - but it remains an all-time classic.

If you want one, watch out for fakes. Vintage AC30s have been faked as often as Les Pauls, Strats and 'undiscovered' Rembrandts, so watch your step. Avoid models produced during the 1980s (and most of the '70s come to that) and if you can't find or afford an original, buy one of the proper post-Korg re-issues (carefully avoiding the solid state lookalikes and 'affordable' remakes which do little credit to the legend) and enjoy playing through one of the greatest guitar combos ever made.



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Orange is a part of Rock history with a unique culture and style. To celebrate the history of this iconic brand, there's a new 200 page coffee table book – The Book Of Orange - put together by Orange founder Cliff Cooper and author Martin Celmins. Guitar Interactive is offering 15 readers the chance to win their very own copy, each one signed by Orange's founder, Cliff Cooper!

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ogy behind Orange amps. Turn the book over and Building the Brand takes you from the late 1960s, to the present day.

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The competition is completely free to enter but you must be a registered Guitar Interactive reader (it's easy - if you haven't already, just sign-up today). All you have to do is answer the following three questions by e-mail.

### TO ENTER

Email your answers (e.g. **Q1 True/False**) along with your name, email address and daytime phone number to: [competitions@guitarinteractivemagazine.com](mailto:competitions@guitarinteractivemagazine.com)



# COMPETITION CLOSED

### questions

**Q1** – Orange users have included Frank Zappa, Stevie Wonder, Geddy Lee and Slipknot. **A: TRUE OF FALSE?**

**Q2** – Orange's distinctive control section graphics are often referred to as: **A: Illuminations B: Frescos C: Hieroglyphs**

**Q3** – Orange's latest development – the Orange OPC - is: **A: The Orange Private Collection B: The Orange Personal Computer or : C: The Orange Price Challenge**

1/ All entries must be received by 15th September 2011. 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, Orange and their immediate families are ineligible for this competition. 5/ The winner will be chosen, at random, from registered readers registered of Guitar Interactive who provide the correct answers. 6/ The judges' decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into regarding this competition. 7/ Entrants must provide a contact telephone number and valid email address 8/ Prizewinners must consent to having their name and city/country (e.g. 'Andres Segovia, Madrid, Spain') published in a future issue.





## COMPETITION RESULTS..

### Guitar Interactive's great TASCAM Giveaway – and the winner is....!

Issue one's fabulous competition to win a TASCAM 2488neo 24-track, 24-bit recorder has a result!

Out of a huge number of international entries our lucky winner - chosen at random from the correct entries - was **Mr Tim Rose** from Banbury, Oxfordshire, in the UK. Congratulations, Tim!

In the next GI we'll be announcing the winners of issue two's fabulous Joe Satriani D'Addario competition. In the meantime why not try your luck with this issue's super Orange giveaway on **Page 70**.



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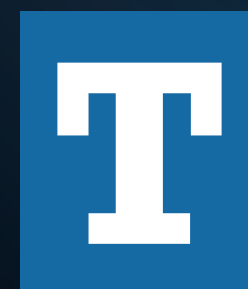
ORANGE





# THE Tom Quayle

## COLUMN



Tom Quayle is a jazz and fusion guitarist from the UK. In 2008 he was a finalist in the international Guitar Idol competition and is currently writing and recording his debut album, whilst working on various masterclass projects, running his own very successful tuition website and contributing regularly to GI.

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FUSION  
FUNDAMENTALS



# Developing Speed and Accuracy – *Legato*

The blues is an interesting structure in that it only contains three chords. This can be both a blessing and a curse in one. When I started to develop my legato technique and really worked on my speed and accuracy I used a very useful phrase as my guide. The phrase went something like this: 'speed is a by-product of accuracy and relaxation'. Whilst practising my alternate picking as a shred-minded 16 year old I found that my goal was speed, rather than accurate execution of the technique. I used to play along with my favourite

solos on records, trying to match every note as best I could, but I never really focused on the technique in a slow, detailed way for any length of time. Instead, I would play slowly for short periods of time and then fixate myself on this ever-increasing pursuit of speed! As a result, my picking technique suffers many flaws that I am all too aware of and have great difficulty breaking down after 15 years of playing guitar.

As a 22 year old wanting to develop my legato playing into something close to its current state, I approached things from a more mature perspective. My goal shifted from raw speed to one of accuracy, relaxation and timing. I found that by practising the movements involved in legato technique very slowly and deliberately, using the same right hand techniques that I would use were the technique to be played at a faster speed, the speed element came as a by-product. By practising the finger movements very slowly and accurately for long periods of time, in a repetitive fashion, my fingers and brain learnt the movements in a sub-conscious, relaxed and accurate manner. When it came to speeding up the movements I remained relaxed and accurate as the technique had become second nature. In other words, I was in control of the technique.

I've presented you with a lick that I used to practice as part of the routine I used for this style of technique development. I would, however, encourage you to write as many ideas of your own as you can, then practice them slowly for around five minutes with no breaks if possible. Only stop if you feel pain or if you are making lots of mistakes. The idea is to repeat the lick or phrase slowly enough that you

make as few mistakes as possible – ideally none. This way, over time, the technique will become unconscious for you and speeding up the movements will be far easier. You should practice until the technique feels easy to you. You can check this is by trying to hold a conversation with someone whilst performing the lick slowly. If this is easy for you then you know the technique has become sub-conscious and the conscious part of your mind can think about more important elements such as phrasing, time feel, note choice and responding to the other musicians around you. The amount of time this takes will vary greatly from person to person. I practised this way for months and the benefits were enormous.

Finally, I would always recommend you practice technique with a musical backing. In other words some kind of drum groove, a backing track - or even just a friend playing chords for you. A metronome is great but will never allow you to grasp how the technique feels over a groove or in a real musical situation. A metronome can never inspire you in the same way a real musical backing will.

I wish you lots of success developing your technique!





# Guitar Roadmaps



# R

ick Graham began his musical journey in 1991, learning by ear, listening to artists such as Joe Satriani and Nuno Bettencourt. He later studied classical guitar at the prestigious Guildhall School of Music and Drama and has been featured performing on French Television and Radio on numerous occasions, both as a soloist and a session player. 2010 saw the release to rave reviews of Rick's debut solo album *Insideout*. In June 2011 he won *Guitarist Magazine's* Guitarist of the Year Award.

## Part three – melodic arpeggios

So far in my series of columns we 've looked at useful ways of unlocking the fretboard by manipulating scale shapes. This month I'd like to apply a similar principle to arpeggio shapes which I like to call 'Melodic Arpeggios'. What exactly is a 'Melodic Arpeggio'? I mean by it arpeggio shapes which can be articulated with expressive techniques such as vibrato, sliding and string bending. More often than not, when a Rock guitarist plays arpeggios they tend to be played at a face-melting speed with rapid-fire sweep picking. While there is nothing wrong with playing arpeggios in this fashion, it can become somewhat predictable to do this every time an opportunity to use an arpeggio presents itself. One of the main reasons for this is that the traditional arpeggio shapes tend to be one note per string type shapes which make it quite awkward to apply those expressive techniques.

The arpeggio shapes that we are going to learn all contain two notes on every string. The way these patterns work

[...>] 80



on the fretboard make it very easy to learn the shapes because for each pair of strings the shape is exactly the same, meaning we only have to learn one shape for each arpeggio inversion.

What I have prepared for you are five different 7th chords which are: Major 7, Minor 7, Dominant 7, Minor 7 b5 and Diminished 7 arpeggio shapes. As these arpeggios contain four different notes we have four different shapes to learn for each Inversion. I have opted to start all of these arpeggios with the 3rd inversion shape as this is by far the most often used. This is then followed by root position, 1st inversion and 2nd inversion respectively.

One of the most important things about learning these shapes is to relate them all so that you can visually see how each arpeggio shape changes due to the intervallic structure of each arpeggio. Not only does it make learning these shapes much easier, it also serves to help you think more in terms of intervals and not just shapes alone. It is a good idea to just play the 3rd inversion arpeggio on the 6th and 5th strings only for each of the 7th arpeggios as it is very easy to see the intervallic differences between each one.

Have fun and I'll see you in the next issue.



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Andy James is one of the U.K.'s rising stars of shred and metal guitar. A regular contributor to Licklibrary, he has also recorded solo albums *In the Wake of Chaos* and *Machine* and is a member of the band *Sacred Mother Tongue* touring their debut album **The Ruin of Man**.

Andy is currently working on his third solo album that will be available soon.

*I'm a firm believer that if you play musically interesting stuff it keeps your interest for longer and practice ceases to feel like just that - practice.*

# METAL EDGE



Welcome to this issue of *Guitar Interactive*, where we're going to look at some interesting ways of playing extended arpeggios. Throughout my own learning process on the guitar, I've always found with playing arpeggios, like most techniques on the guitar, there is a trial and error process you go through to find out which techniques you gravitate towards as a player. Some players favour sweeping arpeggios, others prefer to tap them, but for the most part in this tutorial we're going to look at using string skipping as a basis to play these patterns I've come up with for you to work through.

[...>] 84



String skipping is a very clean and effective way of playing arpeggios and can give you a much more modern and up-to-date sound, as opposed to the older style of playing arpeggios straight up and down, relentlessly. This is more relevant to the first two examples, to really highlight the benefits of this technique. In these examples I hope to give you an idea of how to come up with some of your own ideas using this technique and, as always, try improvising some of these in conjunction with your own playing. Using a new technique in anyway possible is a good way of imprinting it into your general motor skills on the guitar. Let's face it, with this type of playing, if you had to pre-think every note individually at high speed, your brain would explode, so the as the old adage suggests, practice makes perfect. In this case, practice makes fluidity which is what you're aiming for, essentially.

### *Arpeggios 1-2:*

This is a very good example of how string skipping can add a different sound to your arpeggios. It also shows how this technique can be incorporated into other more traditional ways of playing, which is more apparent in the descending part of both these examples. The first is a minor arpeggio, which basically means you flatten each third interval to give it that mean and dark sound to it. The same pattern applies to the major version, but the third is raised up from the minor third to give a more happy, positive sound generally associated with the major sound. The emphasis on this is always to opt for a clean execution, rather than playing it as fast as you can. It's important to practice both of these slow to get your brain and fingers used to the shifts. This will make it easier when you start to speed it up.

### *Arpeggio 3:*

String skipping for this lick is less apparent but still present. The first position I have always favoured as an approach over sweeping this position as I've always found it to be cleaner. As I mentioned earlier, with some aspects of playing guitar there is a trial an error process and this just seemed to work. The next two positions are slightly easier positions to play as they don't incorporate string skipping but use more picking. Then we are back to where we were in the beginning but an octave higher. This style of playing extended arpeggios was largely inspired by Yngwie Malmsteen, arguably the father of neo-classical shredding. I always struggled to play in the more traditional style in which Malmsteen plays, so this is a result of my interpretation of that style!

### *Arpeggio 4:*

This a string skipping pattern I use quite a lot as its a great way of playing diminished arpeggios at a fast pace that isn't to difficult to master. The great thing about diminished arps in this style, is the positions when you string skip are the same frets, so you don't have to factor-in awkward position shifts. There are also taps involved which give these arps a more fluid sound. Just by practising in one of the positions will allow you to play the shifts just as easily as all the fret gaps remain the same.

As always, practice all these examples slow and cleanly and try and use this stuff in your own playing. Until next month, Rock on!



#### **\_USEFUL LINKS**

[www.andyjamesguitarist.com/](http://www.andyjamesguitarist.com/)



#### **\_VIDEO LESSONS**

- ▶ *Andy James Full Shred Ahead - Series One*
- ▶ *Get The Funk Out*
- ▶ *Juice*



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# THE RHYTHM METHOD

Rhythm guitar is one of the most important - and most neglected - aspects of playing. In this second of a new series of columns Jamie Humphries looks at building progressions and explores rhythm techniques. He also looks at using some of our chords from last month's lesson in a more advanced blues progression.

## W

elcome to another instalment of the Rhythm Method. Last month we looked at building chords around the CAGED system.

This month we are going to look at the basic subdivision of time, understanding time signatures, playing swing rhythms and also building a more sophisticated blues progression.

Although many guitarists like to just play the guitar, and enjoy how it sounds, I really feel that having a basic understanding of music theory really helps you achieve much greater goals. I am not suggesting for a second that you should put your guitar down for the next few years and bury your head in theory books, but I think a little more of an understanding will go a very long way.

The first thing we need to look at is the basic sub-division of time and understand and practice different types of rhythms - also to understand time signatures. The majority of popular music is based around a 4/4 time signature, the top number tells us how many beats in the bar, the bottom number what type of beat it is: 4/4 being four crotchet or quarter notes to one bar, or measure, depending on what side of the Atlantic you come from!

Ex1 illustrates the basic sub-division of time chart. This is explained in full in the video, and makes more sense in a practical application. The example starts with a semi-breve, or whole note, 4 beats, then a minim, or half note, 2 beats, then a crotchet, or quarter note, 1 beat, then a quaver, or eighth note, half a beat, and a semi-quaver, or sixteenth

[...>] 88



# Just remember to spend time with your metronome or drum machine and pay attention to really locking in with the count - and be strict with yourself!



note, a  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a beat. You will notice I have presented this example twice, the second time example shows the same chart but the note heads are different. This time I have shown them as rhythm slashes; which are used by professional guitarists to notate strum patterns when performing chords.

Ex2a and Ex2b illustrate the difference between straight  $\frac{1}{8}$  notes rhythms, and a swung  $\frac{1}{8}$  note rhythm. As explained in the video, a swing rhythm is basically a broken triplet, making the down strum last slightly longer than the up strum, giving it a swing feel. Writing a

rhythm as a broken triplet would be untidy for reading, so we use a metronome mark, in the form of two straight  $\frac{1}{8}$  notes equalling a broken triplet, and this can be seen above the time signature on Ex2b. Ex3 shows our chord progression for our Blues, performed in the video. The progression is made up of two sections, marked with arrangement symbols. You will see these marked over the top of the chart with an A and a B. These types of markings are used on professional charts, giving an MD (musical director) an easy way of communicating sections when rehearsing a band or show. I would suggest going back to last

months Rhythm Method lesson and looking at the CAGED chords that I presented to you. I showed you all five shapes of A major, A minor and A7th, and from this you should be able to work out the correct chords used in the progression. As I mention in the video, try experimenting with different chord voicings in different positions. This will help you to learn more about the neck and also you can choose for yourself as to which voicings you prefer the sound of. Also this will enable you to not have to cover huge portions of the neck when changing from one chord to the next, as you can locate chords in the same position, which also leads to smoother changes.

That pretty much rounds up this month's instalment. Just remember to spend time with your metronome or drum machine and pay attention to really locking in with the count - and be strict with yourself! Also before you play along with the lesson track make sure you practice all of the chords found in the progression in all five positions of the neck, utilising all of the CAGED shapes. Good luck!



## \_USEFUL LINKS

[www.jamiehumphries.com/](http://www.jamiehumphries.com/)



## \_VIDEO LESSONS

- ▶ 'Cause We've Ended As Lovers
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# Michael Casswell

## PRO CONCEPTS

**Michael Casswell** is an experienced professional guitarist who has toured or recorded with The Brian May band, Cozy Powell, Ronan Keating, Tony Hadley, Wang Chung, Dean Freidman, Rose Royce and Limahl. He has played in the London, West End show ***“We Will Rock You”***, has been signed to RCA with Heroes, MCA with Walk on Fire and to Polygram with Cozy Powell. Michael is a regular lecturer at the ACM in Guildford, Surrey, England and is a key member of the **Licklibrary** team. He is currently working on his solo album.

[...>] 93




**W**

elcome again to my Pro Concepts column where we explore some cool ideas to take

your playing up a gear and give it a certain 'something'. I hope you enjoyed last month's exploration into thinking creatively and giving an idea 'musical weight'. We're going to carry on with that theme this month, incorporating some string bends.

String bending is standard issue to all guitarists out there, and the law of averages says that after a number of years, you will be using this as a tool in your playing. So hopefully, you are at the stage where your string bends sound expressive, and not like a dying cat! But just in case you still are at the dead feline stage, in this issue I'll run through some tips and ideas to get you past this painful time in a guitarist's life, quicker.

Firstly, when you practice, check the pitch you are going to bend too, before bending the string to it. It's all

about muscle memory, and your hand has to learn what it has to do, on that particular string, with that particular interval bend. Remember, each string has a different tension so, again, your hand has to learn to compensate to perform a bend accurately.

Secondly, use two or three fingers on the string when you bend. The more fingers, the more strength. The more strength, the more accuracy and control. This is especially important for vibrato at the top of a bend, which is another hurdle for your muscle memory. Thirdly, if you use a floating whammy bar on your guitar, you will have to bend a string further in order to reach the pitch you are after, to compensate for the movement of your tremolo as you bend a string up in pitch.

So do bear that in mind if you ever switch between stop tail and whammy bar equipped guitars!

Initially, try to keep your bends snappy and direct, because that gets rid of a lot of the 'dying cat syndrome'

which can plague your inaccurate string bend - 'searching' for a pitch to land on! Only until your muscle memory is up to speed, can you even start thinking about doing those expressive slow bends from the book of Gilmour or Moore. It does pay to record yourself, too, and listen back to how you are doing. As a kid, I took a cassette recorder (giving my age away now!) to every jam, rehearsal or gig, so I could listen back to myself and hear any moments that were great, or any moments that were horrible and never to be repeated. I did this not just for string bending, but for my playing as whole. It really works, and lets you know in no uncertain terms what you need to work on.

Please be critical about your own playing, because string bending and vibrato can instantly say where and what you are as a player, and can be the difference between you being respected and getting work, or just someone that owns a guitar.

[...>] **94**

© **Gj**

Firstly, when you practice, *check the pitch* you are going to bend too, **before** bending the string to it





There are many aspects to bending a note in way that catches the ear. In the filming of this, I only had time to explore a couple of ideas, but hopefully the musical weight will give you some food for thought - or at the very least, will give you a cool run that you can steal!

As you saw last month, the end phrase or lick that we get to, is only part of the story. What I do in front of the camera is try to show you how to arrive at a cool idea that has massive weight, and get us away from the mundane and mediocre stuff that we have all heard a hundred times before. I don't have a prepared specific idea when we film, just a theme and a creative thought proc-

ess which I'm trying to get across. So hopefully, thinking creatively will help me, on camera, compose a run or a phrase that uses some interesting string bending ideas that you can take away and work on. Or at the very least, I hope we end-up with a strong phrase that we can simply throw in a solo.

String bends are a huge subject, and I plan to show you more in future 'pro concept' columns. You can always let me know if you are enjoying where we are going with this project, on my LickLibrary forum, or my facebook page.



### \_USEFUL LINKS

<http://www.licklibrary.com/contributors/mike-casswell>



### \_VIDEO LESSONS

- ▶ Are You Gonna Go My Way
- ▶ Black Hole Sun
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# Stuart Bull's

GUITAR WORLD

## hybrid picking

**Stuart Bull** had his first guitar at age nine, it was an acoustic.

One day the neck broke off and his dad fixed it back on, only to leave the guitar with an incredibly high action. Being put off by this, Stuart started playing drums at age eleven and pursued a career in music with the drums. Returning to the guitar at around age 19, Stuart played both instruments for a few years, eventually starting the Total Accuracy Co. nine years later.

The guitar became the dominant instrument and Stuart found great satisfaction sharing knowledge with other musicians. Stuart has produced many instructional books and CDs for the Total Accuracy series plus many instructional DVDs for Lick Library. Stuart has recorded with a wide array of artists from the Rubettes and World's Apart to Michael Angelo Batio and East 17.

[...>] 99




**H**

ey everyone and welcome to my second column for Guitar Interactive. Let's start by looking at lick number one – but first, the bad news. I made a mistake in my vocal description of the lick on our accompanying video. Unfortunately, I have to take this one on the chin and say it's completely my fault. I described the lick as being 8th note triplets, instead of 16th note triplets in groups of nine. We only have to adjust our thinking a little bit. I said it would be 12 notes per bar if it were 8th note triplets and 24 notes every two bars. The difference is it's 24 notes per bar as 16th note triplets, which are 6 notes per beat, 4 quarter notes per bar (if the time signature is 4/4)  $4 \times 6$  is 24. We just have to think for example two groups of nine is 18 leaving us six notes to complete our bar, one group of six, two groups of three, three groups of two etc.

OK, here we are with lick number two. Lick number two uses 8th note triplets in groups of seven. By now we have hopefully established that this concept is pretty much mathematical. Once we get our head around which note rhythm we are going to use e.g. 8th note triplets 16th notes etc, we simply observe the amount of notes that will appear in one bar and divide it up accordingly. If we are using 16th notes we have 16 notes in one bar, so if we are using groups of fives we can have two groups of five and a group of six or two groups of fives and two groups of three. Do remember we do not have to fill the bar or bars with 16 notes - we can have two groups of five and one note which sustains for the length of six 16th notes or one quarter note and one eighth note. The nice thing with this concept is we have taken a very simple blues lick and turned it around into something with a cool twist.

[...>] **101**



“The nice thing with this concept is we have taken a very simple blues lick and turned it around into something with a cool twist.



Licks three and four are exactly the same notewise as lick two, however if we play them side by side against the backing track, they appear to speed up. This is because lick two uses 8th note triplets (12 notes per bar) lick three uses 16th notes (16 notes per bar) and lick four uses 16th note triplets (24 notes per bar). Each version of the lick is using more notes, thus making the lick speed-up but in a logical way. OK that's enough brain strain for this month! You can apply this concept to any licks you have. If you have a six note lick, take off one note, now you have a group of five. If you have a lick with six notes add one note, now you have a group of seven. Apply your new lick to your chosen note value and boom shanka you have your own new lick!

See you next time.



### \_USEFUL LINKS

<http://www.licklibrary.com/contributors/stuart-bull>



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- ▶ *Californication*
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# Marshall MG50FX

Buying an amp on a tight budget can be a worrying business. Do you buy a lesser known name, assuming the 'big boys' charge extra for a famous badge? Or do you put your trust in the market leaders, figuring they must know a thing or two to have become major brands? We handed top pro **Jamie Humphries** a distinctly affordable Marshall and asked him to be ruthless.

# M

arshall may be best-known for its world-class stadium shaking valve amps, but not everyone needs a stack – nor even a hand-crafted

amp. For those who don't, Marshall has long offered more affordable products, but few more aggressively priced for the 'average guy' than the 50 Watt MG50 we've recently been testing. An analogue (solid state) amplifier with digital effects, the MG50 is a compact and very portable combo, making it easy to transport for gigs, rehearsals and jam sessions and also small enough for home use.

The first thing to say is that this amp is packed with features and includes two channels that include four modes, clean and crunch, plus OD1 and OD2 - all off which have been independently voiced. Using these, it's possible to dial-in everything from

## Marshall MG50FX



**RATING** ★★★★★

glassy cleans, to vintage crunch on channel 1 then kick-in the OD channel for modern crunch and high gain rock/and metal sounds. These channels share the same EQ, but they are fully programmable, which is explained and demonstrated in full in our video. The Marshall also includes an overall master volume, a global control which means even after storing the sounds, you can turn them up or down, but

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still keep any volume differences between the two channels.

The amp also features a headphone socket for quiet late night practice sessions, and also an MP3 input, so that you can jam alone with your favourite Guitar Interactive or Licklibrary backing tracks! This also acts as an emulated output so that you can record directly into your computer/ recording workstation. The Marshall



further offers an external FX control, so you can kick in any FX units that are running in the loop. Yet another very handy feature is the damping control, which alters the sound of the power amp, the effect raging from a slightly 'honky' sounding vintage tone, to tighter, more modern, American sounds. The amp includes a 12" speaker, which produces a thick and punchy tone.

So far, so good. Now let's look at the onboard effects. The MG includes a quality digital reverb, which can be mixed into your sound with ease by simply turning the dial. The reverb is turned on by simply pressing the reverb button. The amp also includes several different modulation effects, which are selected by once again simply turning the dial. These effects range from chorus, phaser and flanger. Once again they are dialled-in with the rotary control and are fully programmable. The amp also has a digital delay, which adds the FX post, so after the preamp, giving you a studio quality tone. Once again the amount of delay is adjusted by simply dialling the effect in. Another great feature with the delay engine is the tap tempo control, so you can set the delay times to the tempo of the track. I should point out that the delay, reverb and modulation FXs can all be stored at one time on this amp,

[...>] **110**



## Autumn Colours

The ever popular PRS SE Custom 24 is currently available in five special limited edition colours. Exclusive to the UK, just 100 guitars of each colour will be produced, each shipping in a quality PRS SE gig-bag.

With stunning flame maple veneer tops finished in Whale Blue, Grey Black, Santana Yellow, Purple Burst and Vintage Natural, the limited SE Customs retain all the features that have won the model so many fans. SE HFS and SE Vintage humbuckers, PRS SE tremolo, Wide-Thin neck and classic Birds inlays are just some of the highlights.

giving you not just a great sounding amplifier, but your very own multi FX unit!

It may sound a bit complicated but in fact the MG50 proved very easy to programme and your programmed settings can be accessed with the MG foot controller, making it easy to call up you favourite tones instantly. In use the sounds are very rich and warm, and although the amp takes a little bit of work to achieve the tones, once you get there the sounds don't sound like an entry level piece of kit at all. Be sure to check out our video for a full demonstration of the amp in action, and also to see just how easy it is to programme and store your favourite sounds.

To sum this amp up, I think this is a great little amplifier which will suit the beginner/semi pro, and even pro player, as a great little practice/jamming amp! It's light in weight, portable, has enough punch for small gigs, yet is also quiet enough not to get you kicked out of the house! Add to this the MP3 in and head phone socket, and it's a great practice tool which I am sure will result in hours of playing pleasure. This Marshall proves even the biggest names can offer great value for money gear and gets a big thumbs up from me!



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# Zakk Wylde FX

Zakk Wylde has a four-strong range of custom signature pedals from US FX-masters Jim Dunlop/MXR, recently expanded with a new Wylde Phaser. Now who do we know who's first in the queue when we have new pedals to play with? Cue **Michael Casswell** for our Zakk Wylde FX review roundup.

# W

hen I was a kid, the very first pedal I bought was a secondhand script logo MXR distortion plus. I used it for most of my teens into a '70s Marshall 50 Watt combo. Stupidly, I sold the Marshall, but I still have that pedal and it still works perfectly and still sounds great 41 years later! So the MXR brand has a big place in my heart. Despite that, I've tried to be unbiased - which is hard, because I can't think of any MXR pedal that I don't like, or couldn't put a use to. What does slightly irritate me is the marketing ploy involved here, in that a company putting out pedals with a big name linked to them, such as these ZW pedals, or the very fine Van Halen range that Dunlop also offers, is going to sell many many units to people who think that if they buy one a

signature product they'll immediately sound like the name on the top. It also suggests that you have to buy the signature product to sound like these guys. The plain fact is that Zakk and Eddie would sound like Zakk and Eddie no matter what gear they used (within reason). Still, and with that firmly in mind, and with the Editor's words ringing in my ears that we need to know if these pedals can be used for anything else other than sounding like Zakk Wylde, as they have to be able to earn their keep beyond tribute bands, I set out to try all four.



## Cry Baby Zakk Wylde Signature Wah

### Cry Baby Zakk Wylde Signature Wah

**Gi** RATING ★★★★★

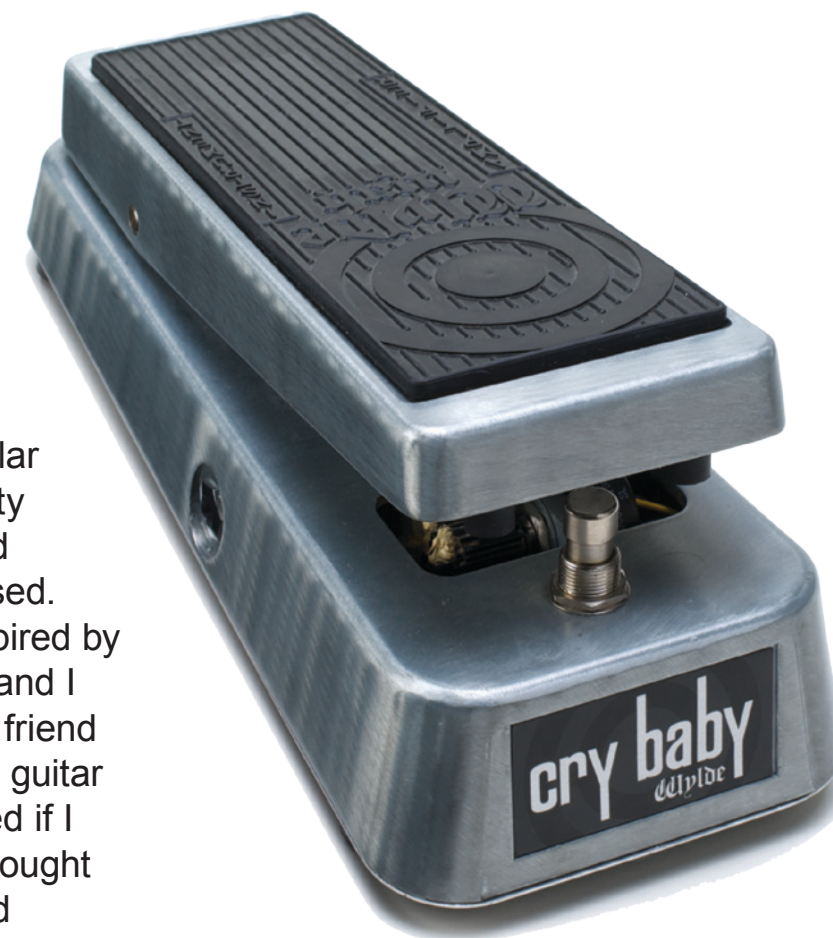
OK, this was an easy review because I've personally been using one of these ZW wahs for some time now. Over the years I have used many Cry Babys, including the vintage ones and the Keeley modded versions, and they always sound good – though strangely, they each had their own particular sound. I think that a wah's quality comes a lot from the player, and what guitar and amp is being used. Saying that, you need to be inspired by a sound to get the best from it, and I tried this wah purely because a friend who was struggling with playing guitar was swapping to bass and asked if I was interested in a ZW wah. I bought it without trying it, but when I did eventually plug it in, I was seriously surprised - it was like all my other Cry Babys in one.

Basically, this pedal sounds fat, and just gives you more of that wah sound, combined with a tiny boost to your signal, which is very musical and exactly what you need when you jump on a wah. It's not true bypass, but unlike my vintage wahs, I can detect no signal loss

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when the wah is not in use. Like the majority of Dunlop/MXR pedals, the buffering is high quality. It's also fairly quiet when it comes to hiss, so it's a great wah, and I use one myself - not because Zakk Wylde uses one, but because it sounds really very cool.

[...>] 114



# MXR ZW44 Wylde Overdrive

## MXR ZW44 Wylde Overdrive



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Before buying an overdrive pedal, you have to realize what it is they do best - and what they do best is push the front end of a good tube amp, to give you more from your guitar, and more from your amp. I have three favourites overdrives in my board: the Klon Centaur, the Xotic BB and a Keeley modded Boss Blues Driver. These are three great pedals which sound fantastic, no matter what tube amp I put them in front of. So they were what I was measuring the ZW overdrive against. I plugged the overdrive into the front of the Zakk Wylde Marshall head, and it did do very nice things to the already crunchy tone. Did it sound like Zakk Wylde? Probably, but only if you play like Zakk! It did sound huge, fat, with nice attack on the front of the note, so that fast runs do not turn into a mush. I liked it so much that I stole the pedal for the weekend and swapped it into the spot my BB pre amp normally occupies in my board. Through my amp, I was slightly less impressed. My current main amp is a Marshall 6100LM head with 6L6 tubes and through my rig, it seemed

to sound a bit more processed than the Klon or the BB. It still sounded good, but it wasn't quite what I'm used to with the Klon, the BB or the Keeley blues driver, which seem to give purer, more organic tone. But overdriven sounds are so subjective, and had you been there, you might have loved it. The ZW overdrive is a fantastic pedal, but I think it does depend on factors such as the individual player, the type of guitar or pick up and basic amp tone.

[...>] 116

**Did it sound like Zakk Wylde?**  
Probably, but only if you play like Zakk!





# MXR XW90 Wylde Phaser

## MXR XW90 Wylde Phaser



This is the latest of the Dunlop/MXR ZW signature pedals, and we were lucky to grab one of the first samples to arrive in the UK, shortly after its launch. An effect like a phaser is a cool effect but in short bursts only because it can become very tiresome very quickly. I own an old MXR Phase 45, which sounds more like a Univibe than a phaser and is one of my favourite pedals (think '90s Mike Landau). This Wylde phase sounds very, very similar, and it wouldn't surprise me if it's the same circuit inside. There's just one knob on it, which controls the rate, so the amount of effect is set. At a lower speed, it gives a nice sweeping phase, which you could kick in every now and then. At higher speeds it does have that Univibe thing going on, which is really cool. I think I'd stick on one of those rubber covers for the rate knob, so that I could delicately adjust it with my foot to give some variation to the sweep (though probably not a good idea after a few wines!). A cool pedal, but as said, in short bursts.

[...>] 118

**Check the Spec.**

Get the product info you need.

**GO**

At higher speeds it does have that Univibe thing going on, which is really cool.





## MXR ZW38 Black Label Chorus

### MXR ZW38 Black Label Chorus



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GO

Now this was really nice! It has the usual rate, depth and level pots to get it just how you want it, plus bass and treble controls to adjust the EQ of the chorus effect, not your guitar signal. It also has a very cool direct out, which means you can send a nice lush or wobbly chorus to one amp and a unaffected signal to another amp - which would give you a huge stereo

spread guitar sound that will definitely turn heads (think early '90s Lukather). The actual quality of the chorus is very cool, without sounding all '80s. The best chorus I have tried (but do not own yet), is the one by Analog Man, and this MXR ZW pedal compares sound-wise very well. You have to run it on a power supply, because it will eat batteries quickly – but it's really very good.



## Conclusion

These are four very well made, professional quality pedals and in answer to the Ed's question – yes, they are well worth checking-out, whether you are trying to sound like Zakk Wylde, or not!





# Gibson Custom Shop Zakk Wylde Signature Les Paul

Zakk Wylde has a clutch of 'signature models' from Gibson and its stablemate Epiphone. We handed **Jamie Humphries** a top-end Bullseye signature Gibson Les Paul and asked him to assess it from two angles: how close it gets to the ZW sound and whether it's a good choice as an all-rounder.



Along with Fender's Strat and Tele, the Gibson Les Paul is one of the most sought after and widely used guitars in popular music. A

collaboration between Gibson and legendary guitarist and multitrack recording pioneer Les Paul, who had originally approached Gibson some time in 1947, a deal between Gibson and Les Paul was agreed around 1951. He used the iconic guitars until his death in 2009, aged 94.

Since its release Gibson has made many models and variations in the Les Paul line, among them countless Signature models including guitars named for Slash, Gary Moore, Peter Dinklage, Jimmy Page, Ace Frehley,

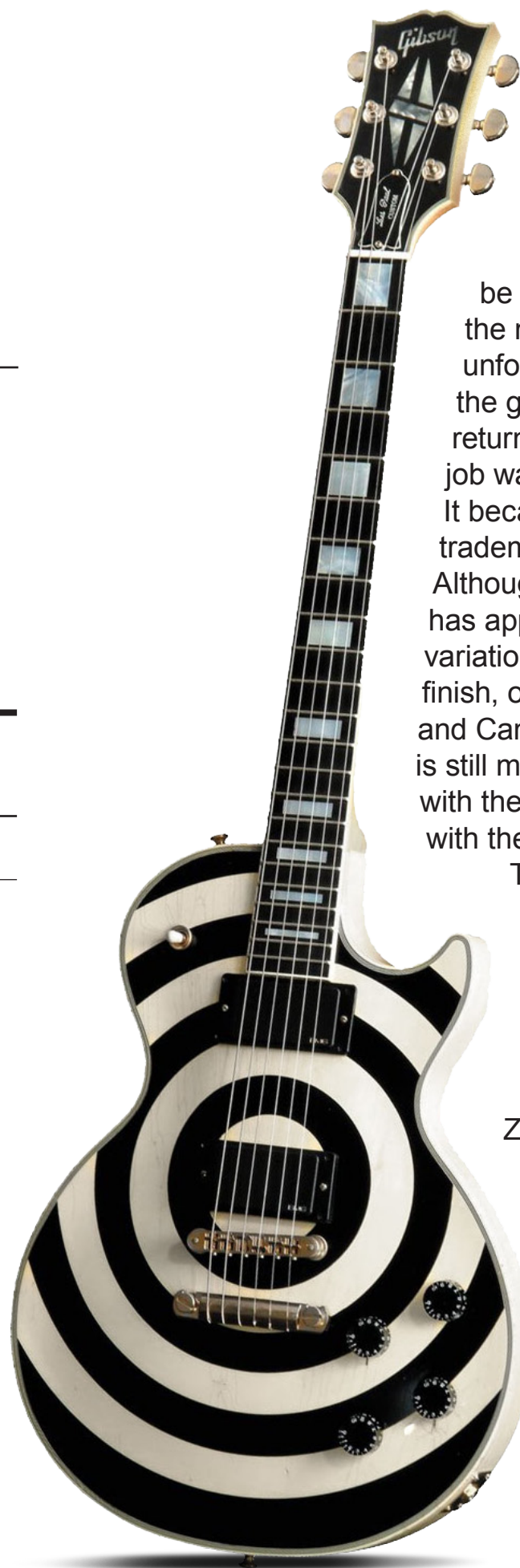
## Gibson Custom Shop Zakk Wylde Signature Les Paul



**RATING** ★★★★★

Billy Gibbons, Buckethead and the subject of this review, Zakk Wylde.

Zakk Wylde first joined Ozzy Osbourne's band in 1987 at the tender age of 20. He'd been a long time fan and user of the Les Paul, mainly his cream white Custom with the Bullseye paint job. There were many similarities drawn between Zakk and the late Randy Rhoads, whom he replaced in Ozzy's band - long blond hair, bell bottom jeans, and also the cream coloured Les Paul. Although Zakk cited Randy as an influence, he had his signature Bullseye design sprayed on his



guitar to give himself a trademark.

The original design was meant to be the spiral from the movie *Vertigo*, unfortunately, when the guitar was returned, the paint job was incorrect. It became Zakk's trademark all the same. Although the finish has appeared in many variations including Mirror finish, orange Buzz Saw, and Camo graphics, Zakk is still mainly associated with the Cream Les Paul with the black Bullseye.

The original guitar, affectionately called the Grail, was actually lost after it fell out of the back of a tour truck while Zakk was on the road with Black Label Society.

The lost Gibson saw the inside of several pawn shops, before it was finally returned to its rightful owner.

**Check the Spec.**

Get the product info you need.

**GO**

As well as its slightly radical paint job, the guitar includes Zakk's choice of pickups, active EMGs, an 81 and an 85, resulting in a thick heavy tone, aiding Zakk with his signature squealing harmonics. Another unusual feature of this guitar is the unfinished maple neck, giving a smooth, worn-in feel to it. Finish this off with gold hardware, and you have a worthwhile, pretty distinctive addition to the Les Paul range.

Although the guitar is pretty weighty, you soon forget that when you hear it in action. The tones are thick and creamy, ranging from classic Blues, with the tone backed off, to searing Rock metal lead tones in the bridge position. The Gibson also cleans-up surprisingly well, considering the high output active pickups, resulting in glassy cleans when on the bridge pickup, or woody vintage tones on the neck pickup.

I've put most of my impressions of playing the sample Gibson loaned us (a pretty roadworn one, I should say, but very well set-up and nicely playable) in the accompanying video, so make sure to check that out!

[...>] **122**





Obviously, visually this guitar screams Zakk Wylde and metal, but if you find the finish appealing, this guitar would make a good, if rather expensive, addition to your collection. I'm not sure if I would personally choose it if I was in the market for a higher range Les Paul, but after spending some time with this instrument it's definitely not a one trick guitar, and is well worth a serious and close look.

Of course, you have to bear in mind that the distinctive graphic means, should you have to sell one secondhand, that the appeal is likely to be limited to Zakk Wylde admirers

and, sadly, this model also carries a whopping price – even bearing in mind it comes from Gibson's Custom Shop range. If all you wanted to do was look like Zakk, there's a far cheaper Epiphone version. The Gibson will get you closer to the ZW sound, of course – though it won't give you his great technique! - and you can buy a lot of fantastic guitars for this sort of money that aren't quite so limited in their appeal.



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**LINE 6**



# Marshall JCM800

To tie-in with our Zakk Wylde interviews and style analysis, GI takes a look at the legendary Marshall JCM 800 head to see just what it is that makes Zakk go Wylde for this amp! **Jamie Humphries** takes this all-time classic for a spin.



The JCM 800 is a classic amp in the history of Marshall, and has been the basis for many of the brand's leading signature models

for guitarists including Zakk Wylde, Slash and Kerry King. It has also been used by countless guitar super stars and has helped to carve many of the classic tracks and solos in Rock history. I myself used a JCM 800 50 watt combo back in the 80's, and as a young teen. Of course, I didn't understand what the amp would become and I sold it - the things we do!

Although Zakk Wylde has a signature version of the head, including custom Bullseye graphics, we've chosen to take a look at the standard model, which is what you will find in the stores and may be more suited to the everyday needs of most guitarists, as well as being visually a little less stylised. Zakk also favours his signature EV speakers, whereas the cab we used in our

## Marshall JCM 800 (2203) head



video demo was loaded with stock Marshall Celestion speakers.

This is a classic British 100 watt amp using the time-honoured complement of four EL34 power amp valves/tubes, and 3 ECC83s in the preamp. The construction and quality of the amp is fabulous, as you would expect; the rugged black vinyl covering and corner caps will keep this amp protected in and out of gigs and rehearsals. And of course, the classic styling is iconic: the gold front panel with the white Marshall logo. The control panel is very straightforward, including three band EQ, plus a presence control. The amp is a single channel design, so it's a real 'players' amp, which I love, making you really have to work the controls on the guitar. The JCM has a master volume and a preamp volume, which means the harder you drive it, the more the amp will crunch.

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GO

There are two inputs on the front, Hi and Low sensitivity. The amp also has a series effects loop situated on the back and, because it's a single channel head, no footswitch is required.

For our video demo, I used the Zakk Wylde Les Paul we were loaned by Gibson for this issue, plus a Zakk Wyle signature MXR overdrive pedal. Using the two, you can really hear why Zakk chooses this combination. The amp itself when pushed goes from bright glassy cleans to a vintage style crunch, which is surprisingly clean when you look at the players that use it. One thing that I would have loved Marshall to have done with this head would have been to have voiced the EQ slightly differently to the originals. These amps were always a little bit

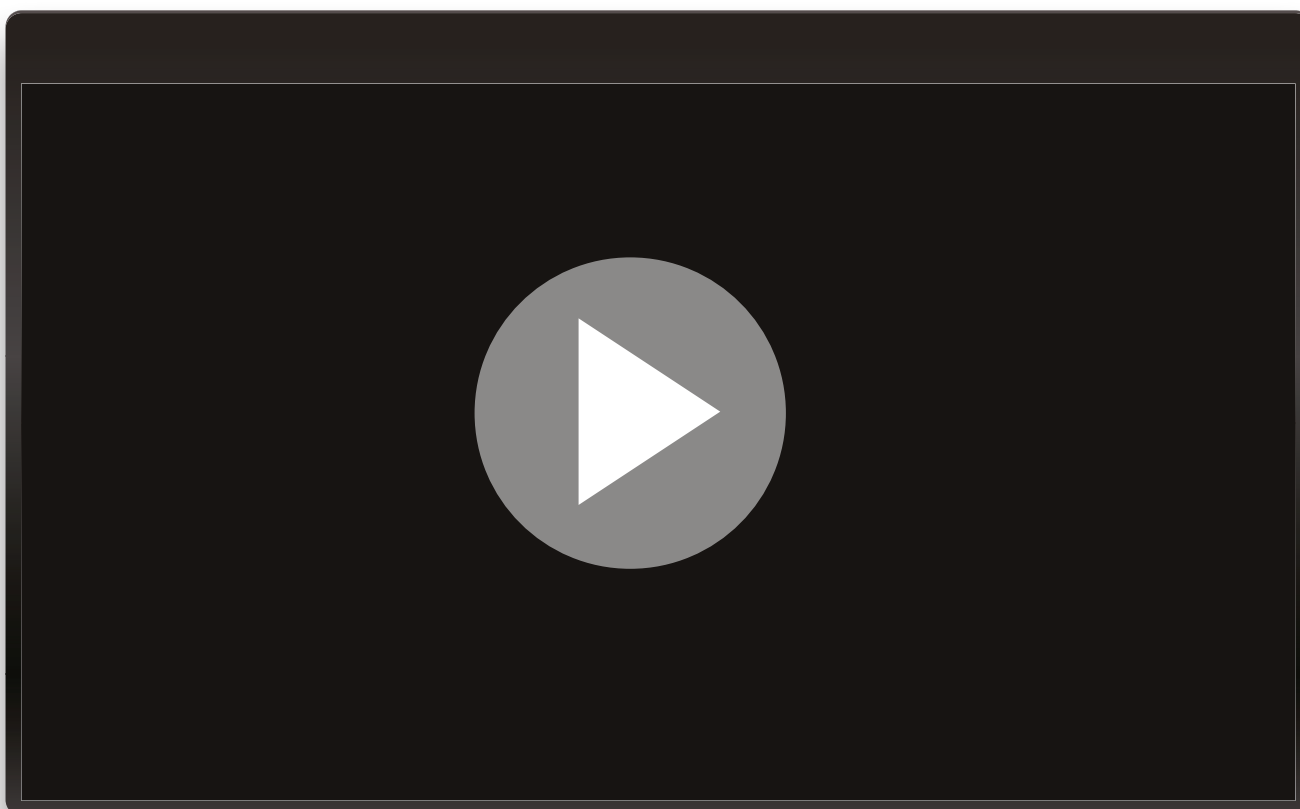
bright, which is why so many top players from the '80s loved them as a basis, but would have them modified. I guess Marshall are sticking to the original spec, but I did find myself rolling-off quite a bit of top end.

As I mentioned before, this type of amp really makes you work the guitar. I set the gain pretty high and then backed off the volume on the guitar to get bright, clean tones. Go to the neck pickup and you get buttery warm, vintage sounds, that make you want to play Hendrix licks all day long! Like the amp, and although I'm not reviewing the MXR Wylde overdrive here, Zakk's signature pedal is also surprisingly clean, and not a gain saturated mess of a pedal. Add that pedal to the

[...>] 126







crunchy amp, set everything pretty much half way on the pedal, and the Marshall starts to sing beautifully, with plenty of gain, but also lots of definition when picking. Dig in with some palm muting for thick rock/metal power chord chunk! This combination of gear helped me pop out some real squealing Zakk-esque tones, yet switch to the Gibson's neck pickup and just listen to those warm sustaining Gary Moore like sounds - beautiful stuff!

To round things up, this amp is a classic and I wouldn't hesitate to add it to my wish list. Is it very versatile? Some may argue that's there are amps that have many more features, but to my mind this is really all you need. I personally

don't want an amp that comes with a pilot's handbook and that you need a degree to get a sound out of. This amp does everything that you would expect it to do, plus it makes you work your guitar, and unlock tones that you hear the pros get. Add an overdrive in the front, and delay in the FX loop, and there you have it: the tone that so many top players have used to record and perform on their classic tracks. Don't mess about, this is serious pro gear - but watch that treble control!



# ROAD TESTED

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Guthrie Govan



Alex Hutchings



Richard Fortus - Guns n' Roses



Jim Davies - Victory Pill



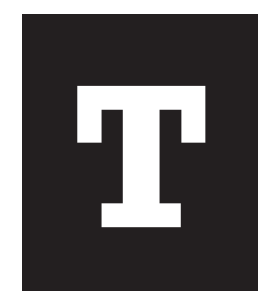
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# Vigier GV Wood

GI introduced **Michael Casswell** to a stunning French model. Was it love at first sight?

## Vigier GV Wood



here are certain guitars you could buy unseen and unplayed and know they're going to be superb. For example, I can't say

I have ever encountered a bad Music Man, Suhr, Tyler or PRS. The Vigier GV Wood we have on review here exudes just the sort of quality and confidence I would expect from that class of American makers – which is saying a lot.

But Vigier, in case you don't already know, are French – not a country you immediately associate with great Rock guitars. All the same, Vigier can certainly make a great guitar! The most recent example I tried belonged to Guthrie Govan. It was a fretless, a fine guitar, and great fun to hear him play it!

Over the years, I've tried quite a few Vigiers and they have always been great, but I have to admit I've never taken the step of actually owning one. That could be purely because

when I was a kid, I had posters on my wall of various guitar heroes, who would inevitably be playing a Strat or a Les Paul. Those early impressions run deep in my bones and all these years later, I'm lucky enough to own a 'few' guitars, all of which were made in the US and span 50 years of guitar making. But that makes me very narrow minded when it comes to guitars,



From the moment you pick it up, you know the GV Wood is a quality guitar.

**Check the Spec.**

Get the product info you need.

**GO**

particularly when it comes to me parting with my hard earned-cash – at which point I always end-up

hunting-out something rare, and American.

But there's really no excuse for being as dumb as me, because if the Vigier GV Wood I was loaned to review is anything to go by, you'd

definitely be dumb not to consider it alongside the world's best.

From the moment you pick it up, you know the GV Wood is a quality guitar. Acoustically it rings and sustains really well, which means no matter what the

pick ups are

like, it's going to sound good when you plug it in. And it turns out that the pickups do sound good. They're hand wound and respond nicely to my usual trick of working the volume pot. They also are switched to single coil mode on positions four and two on the five-way selector, making this guitar more versatile than your average twin humbucker guitar, with full-on Les Paul tones in position one and five.

In positions two and four, you get the same pickups but cut to single coil mode, giving a nice Fender type twang. In position three, it's classic Telecaster country. It's all really very convincing soundwise and more versatile than your average Gibson – in fact, putting it right into PRS territory. This is one of

[...>] 130



# OK, this Vigier guitar is not cheap. In fact pricewise, it is pitched up against the very high-end American makers, whose instruments we all tend to gravitate towards.

those guitars that will give you back more than what you put in: and it will certainly hold its own against the big brands.

Hopefully, the clip of me jamming with this guitar illustrates some of the more expressive sounds you can

squeeze out, in ways that it's difficult to put into words.

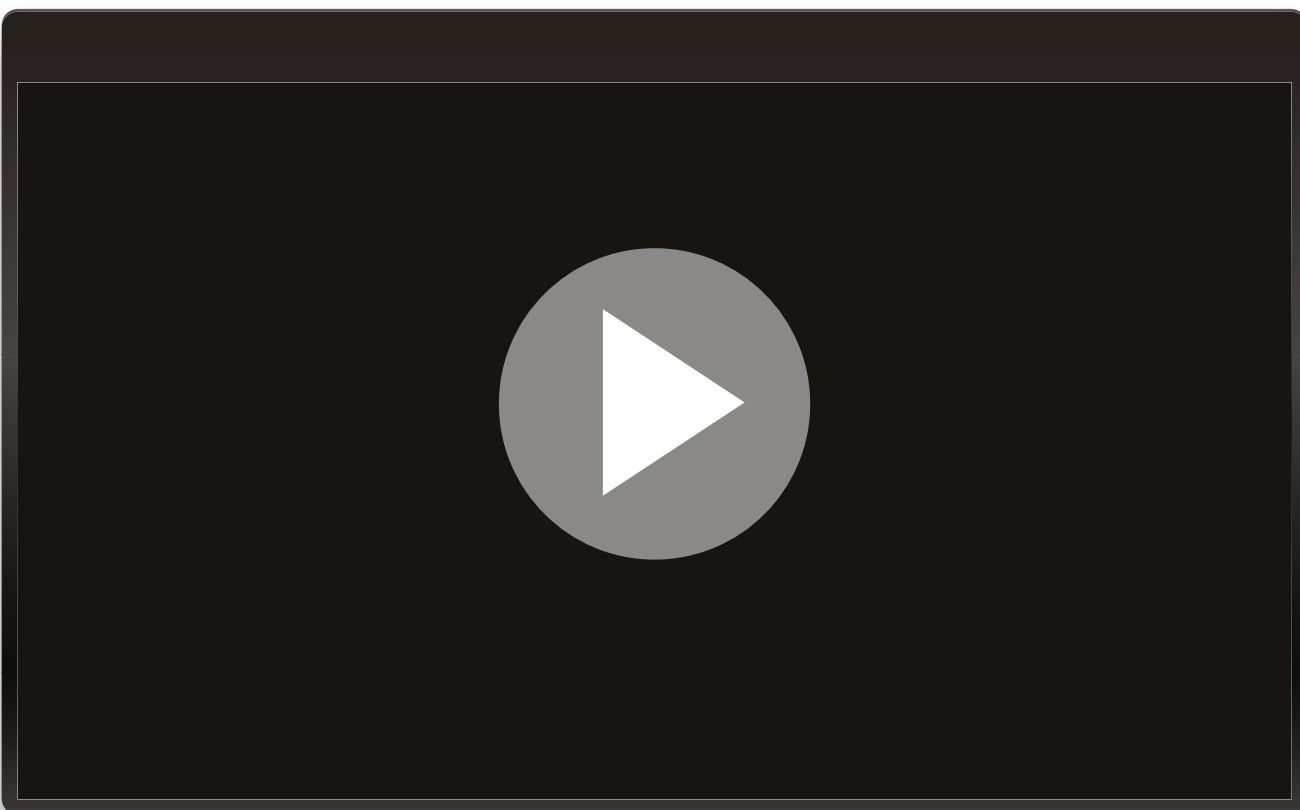
The build quality here is superb. The carbon fibre reinforced neck has a chunky feel to it, which fills the palm of the hand nicely. It's not silly-big like early Jeff Beck Strats, but sort of just

right (although I love those Jeff Beck necks!) The Phenowood fretboard, with its zero fret for more accurate intonation, feels nice and wide, which makes string bending and huge Zakk Wylde vibratos feel effortless, I think helped by the fantastic feel of the frets. These are perfectly domed and just the right height, with no feel of the fret tangs as you slide your hand along the edge of the board. Guitars with unseasoned wood often suffer fretboard shrinkage, leaving a nasty feel as you slide over the protruding fretwork, but there is none of that due to the quality of the workmanship employed and, of course, the use of Phenowood.

OK, this Vigier guitar is not cheap. In fact pricewise, it's pitched up against the very high-end American makers, whose instruments we all tend to gravitate towards. But that's the only negative thing I can find to say about this superbly made and crafted guitar. And, fair or not (after all, why shouldn't Vigier charge as much for their guitars as Gibson or PRS?) a guitar in this

sort of price bracket is a very serious investment indeed. God forbid you fell on hard times and had to sell this purple beauty, because the resale value compared to your initial outlay, could be quite a hard blow to take. If instead, you'd spent your money on something rare and American at least you stand a chance of getting some outlay back, and in certain cases, you might a profit. It's tough – but musicians have to think that way!

But really, you shouldn't let that put you off. This really is a fine instrument which combines many of the best tonal qualities of Gibson and Fender very well. What's more, Vigier as a brand is now really starting to be recognised, is gaining name endorsers quite rapidly and it's probably only a matter of time before Vigiers command premium secondhand prices in their own right. Frankly, if it wasn't for those damn posters, I would probably buy one myself!





# PRS SE Santana

So you want to sound like Santana but don't want to re-mortgage your house for a top-end PRS? Enter the PRS SE Santana - your search may be over. **Tom Quayle** checks it out.



Think PRS and you think Santana – the association is legendary. Sadly, think PRS and you also think high prices but that

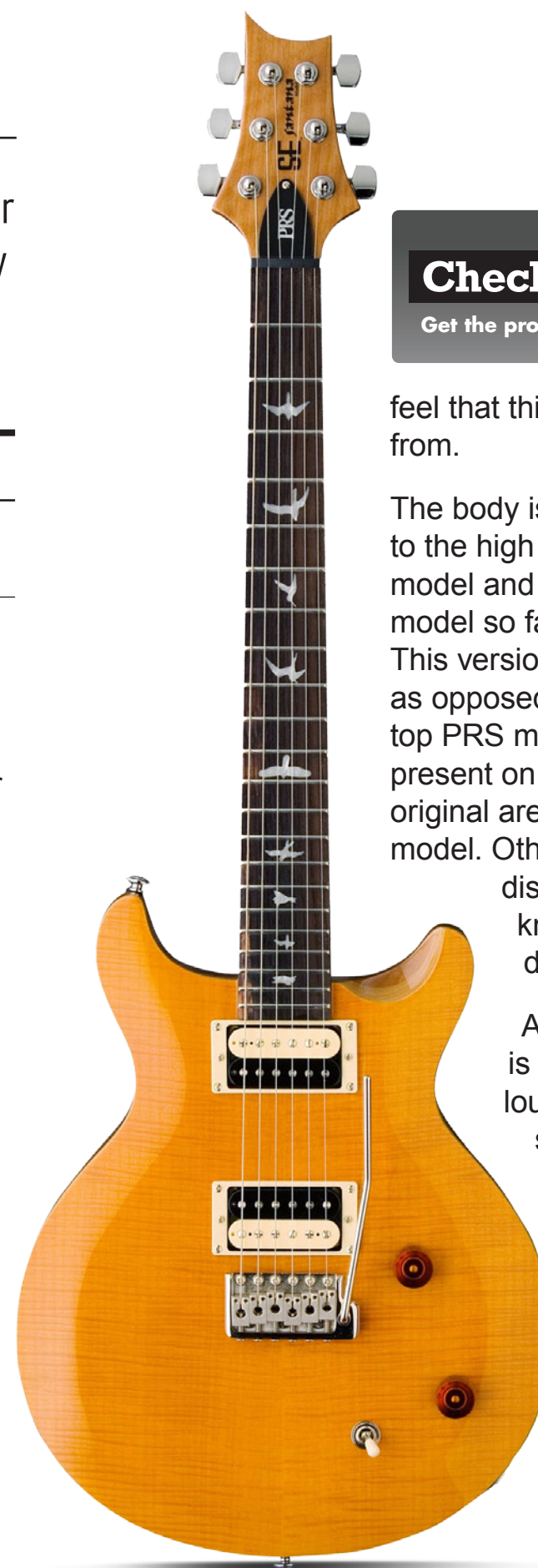
association needn't be taken for granted as since 2001 PRS have sold a range of Korean-made guitars that take the renowned quality of the brand and place it within reach of the average guitar buyer. The PRS SE Santana is the company's solution for those people who always wanted a Santana signature model as close as possible to the original, but couldn't afford the high-end model that the man himself uses. In-fact Santana had a significant hand in the production of the original SE series of guitars, the first of which was a Santana SE model. This guitar is an evolution of that original version released back in 2001.

The review model sent to us by PRS had a reassuringly heavy mahogany body with a lovely flame maple veneer (not on the opaque

## PRS SE Santana



black model), mahogany neck, rosewood fretboard with 22 frets and 'Old School' Birds Inlays, nickel hardware, PRS SE 245 Zebra colour humbuckers in the bridge and neck positions, PRS designed tremolo and a three-way position switch with volume and tone controls. The body is the classic Santana shape and looks superb with its flame maple veneer. It's not a top grade PRS 10-top but it looks great and gives the effect of a much more expensive guitar. If that's not for you then the opaque black finish will give you a subtler look. PRS call the neck shape regular and it fits very comfortably in the hand, the shorter 24 1/2" scale length providing a smooth and fast playing experience, especially for smaller hands. The guitar balances well on the knee and when stood up, not experiencing the body-heavy



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GO

feel that this shape can suffer from.

The body is a very close match to the high end PRS Santana model and is the closest SE model so far to that great guitar. This version features 22 frets as opposed to the 24 on the top PRS model and the inlays present on the body of the original are missing on the SE model. Other than that, from a distance, no one would know it wasn't the real deal.

Acoustically the guitar is resonant and fairly loud. The setup was superb with a low action and no buzzing to be heard anywhere across the neck. One complaint is that I wish more guitar manufacturers would stretch their strings

once the guitar has been setup. It doesn't create a good impression when the guitar is going out of tune as you're playing it for the first time. This is

not a problem specific to PRS, but it is something that would be appreciated. As issues go this is a minor one, however.

Plugged in, we tried the neck and bridge pickups with clean, crunch and lead sounds and the SE Santana sounded great with all combinations. The PRS designed pickups have a cool, clear tone and chime that produce those classic Santana tones with ease. Chords sound defined and warm and single notes are fat and full. The combination of two humbuckers, three-way switch and volume/tone controls is a classic one but not particularly versatile. This is a guitar designed for one purpose and it fulfills that purpose exceptionally well. Just don't expect it to fit with every musical scenario you find yourself in. I found myself thinking more about phrasing and feel and playing more Latin-

[...>] 134



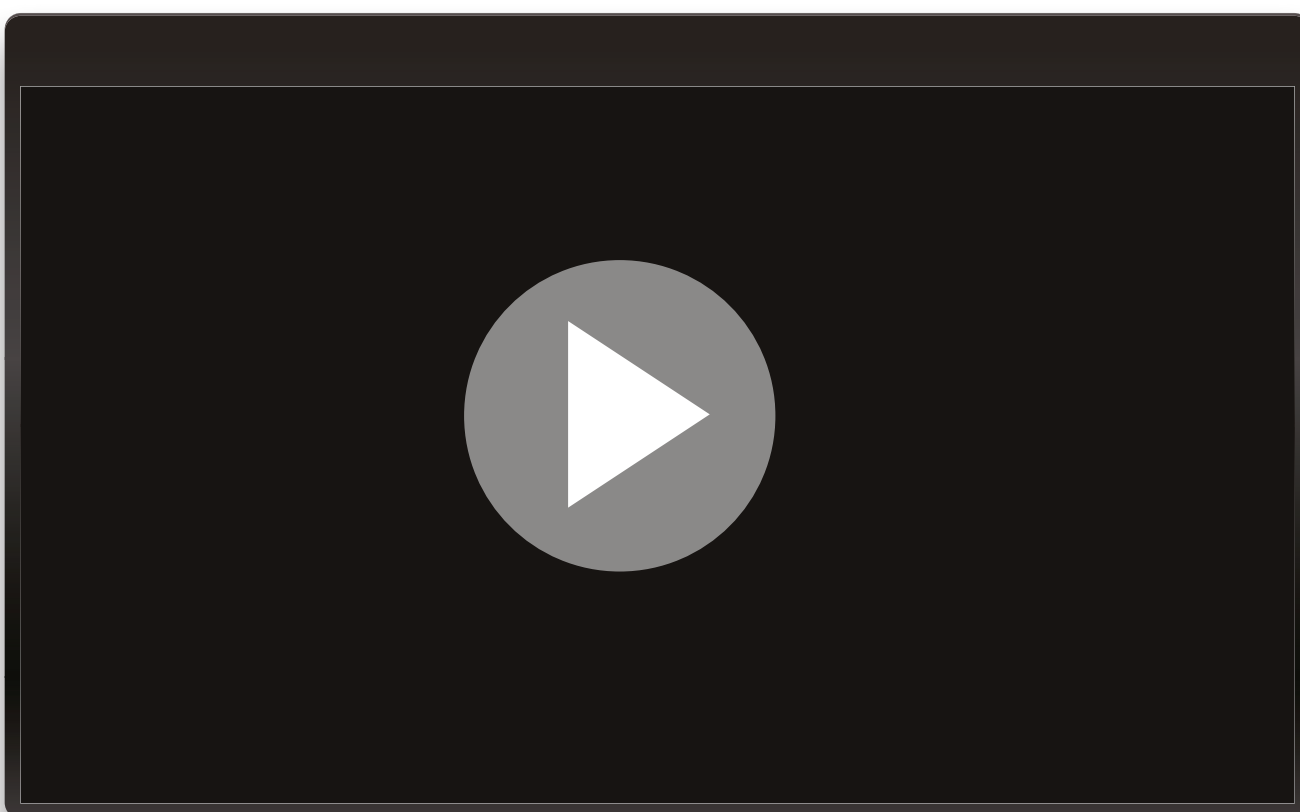
## The tremolo on this guitar is PRS designed as are the tuners and both feel **solid** and **responsive**.

based lines because I had a Santana guitar in my hands. It's funny how a signature guitar makes you think differently about how you play!

The tremolo on this guitar is PRS designed as are the tuners and both feel solid and responsive. After a small amount of tightening, the trem arm was convinced to stay in place and dive bombs, subtle vibrato and small raises in pitch could be achieved with very few tuning issues to speak of. Frets feel exceptionally

smooth and with the lower string tension provided by the shorter scale length the guitar it is incredibly easy to play.

If you're looking for an exceptional guitar to get you as close as possible to that Santana signature sound and don't want to spend a small fortune then here is the solution!



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# Yamaha SG1802

Gibson's Les Paul may be the original mahogany/maple solidbody sandwich but there's another contender - an original in its own right - which many think can give the venerable Gibson a run for its money. Enter the Yamaha SG series. We handed one of the latest versions to **Rick Graham** ... and watched his eyes light-up with joy.



he inception of Yamaha's SG range, all the way back in 1973, proved a point in the guitar playing world, which finally realised

that high quality guitars don't only come from the USA. Handmade, superbly finished, the Yamaha SGs were rapidly accepted as being fully the equal of anything coming out of Gibson or Fender in that period – and many went further: the Yamaha SG, some said, was the world's finest production solid bodied guitar. It was a view reinforced when people saw Carlos Santana toting one and not exactly harmed when Santana was joined by other top name professionals, including Robben Ford, Bill Nelson and Larry Carlton.

Despite all that, and some serious success in the international market, the fizz seemed to have gone out of Yamaha's professional guitar range

## Yamaha SG1802



during the 1990s – almost as if the company had lost interest in the top-end of the guitar market. Lately, however, the Sumo has reawoken and is again introducing new models aimed at causing a few sleepless nights in Nashville. Indeed, the 2011 Winter NAMM show in California saw the unveiling of three brand new models, all based on the SG2000 but with a more modern twist: the SG1820, the SG1820A and the subject of this month's review, the SG1802 – our sample coming in the GT (gold top) version.

I only had to unlock and open the Yamaha's hardcase (which is an impressive SKB high-spec hardshell case, included in the price, I might

[...>] 138



**Check the Spec.**

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**GO**

The Sumo has reawoken and is again introducing new models aimed at causing a few sleepless nights in Nashville.



# Picking it up surprised me: it wasn't as heavy as I'd expected it to be.

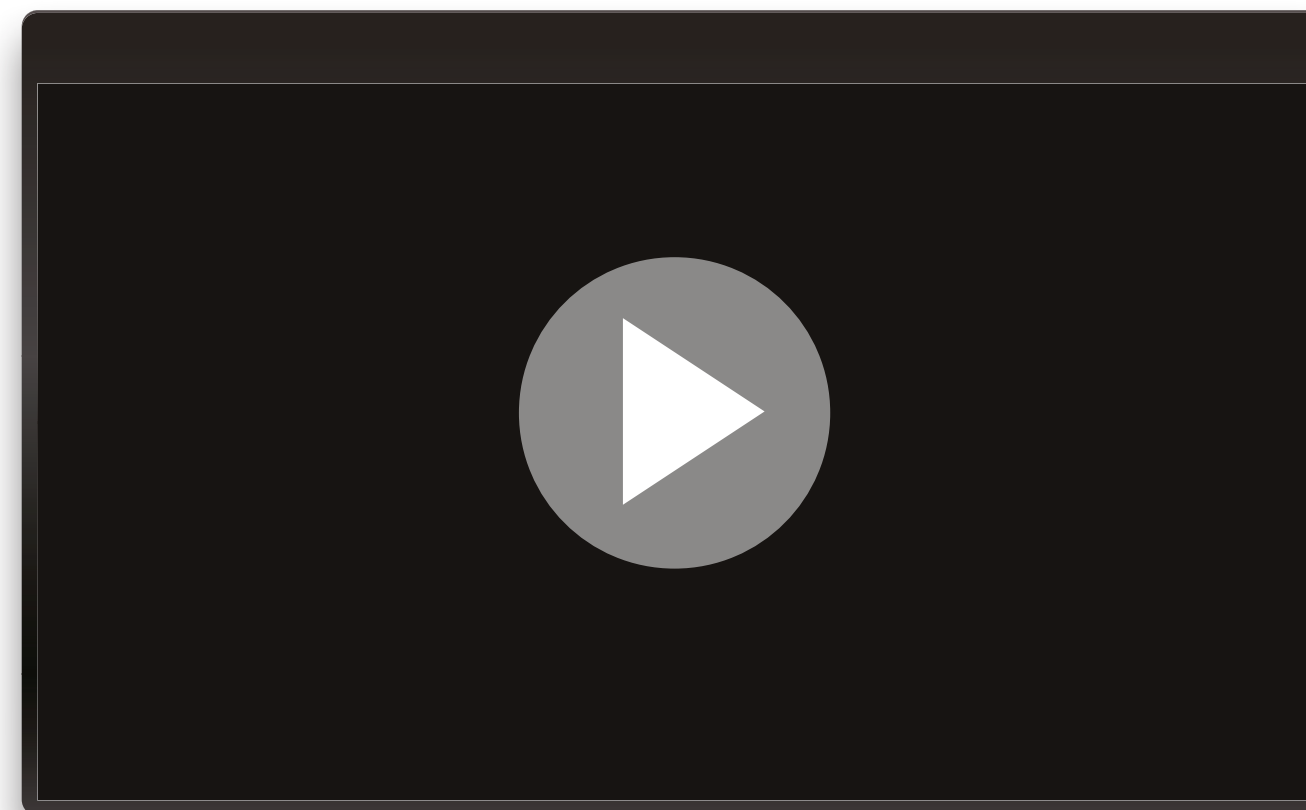
add!) to realise what a prospect I had in store. I was greeted by a rather fine looking guitar with unmistakably vintage looks and vibe. I had an inkling that I was going to be impressed. Construction-wise, Yamaha have opted for that killer combination of a mahogany body coupled with a carved maple top, which in this case is a match made in tone heaven. Also different for this range is the choice of a set neck rather than the through-neck design employed by some previous models.

Moving onto to the hardware side of things, the 1802 comes equipped with a pair of high-output Seymour Duncan SP90 soapbar pickups in addition to a nickel-plated Tone Pros AVR11 bridge and T1Z stud tailpiece. The headstock bears the standard SG flower design and has been reduced in size compared with previous models, giving it a more modern look. With the inclusion of Grover locking tuners, one can't help

but get the feeling that this is a guitar that has come straight out of the custom shop.

Picking it up surprised me: it wasn't as heavy as I'd expected it to be. Les Paul owners out there will know exactly what I mean and although it isn't a light guitar, it felt very comfortable strapped on. Tuning stability is solid as a rock and as I'm used to having to retune a guitar submitted for review on many an occasion after un-boxing, it was great to pick one up for the first time to find it perfectly in tune!

I was also struck by the guitar's resonance when played unamplified. It's one of those guitars that just begs to be played. Amplified, The Yamaha is a joy. It produces everything from bright, sparkling clean tones and bluesy low gain settings right the way through to crunchy rock-rhythm and soaring high-gain lead tones – all delivered with character and class.



## Check out the video!

In summary, it is very hard for me to find a fault with the SG1802. Everything from the superb build quality and stunning good looks right down to the fantastic playability and wide range of tones it is capable of makes it hard to beat. Add to that the classic vintage vibe that Yamaha have captured so well and you have an instrument that is a winner in every department. It's not cheap, but it's a thoroughly professional guitar

and well up to the standard of any of its rivals.

One curious note is that GI readers in the US wanting to own one of these fine instruments may have to buy it from a retailer overseas as for some strange reason, the SG 1802 isn't listed for sale by Yamaha USA.





# Line 6 Spider IV 75

Line 6 has recently announced sales of over one million of its budget Spider modelling amps. **Tom Quayle** investigates why so many people make this their amp of choice.



Line 6 launched the original Spider amp back in 2007 as a budget modelling amp for practicing, rehearsing and light gigging. Since

then, the Californian company has released three further updates, resulting in the latest version, the Spider IV. In that short time Line 6 has sold over one million Spider amps to guitarists around the world, so, as Line 6 has recently been celebrating this hugely impressive achievement we thought we should find out why so many people have made this their amp of choice - and why so many still do, despite the growing competition.

The amp Line 6 loaned us for review was the 75 Watt combo version featuring a 1x12 design but the range comes in many flavours, from a 15 Watt mini combo all the way up to a 150 Watt head. The two lower powered 15W and 30W combos have a smaller complement of amp and FX models and can store four channel presets. The higher end

## Line 6 Spider IV 75w



models feature an LCD display with more amp and FX models and over 250 presets, switchable either on the amp itself or from a foot switch. As with many amps in this price range the footswitch must be purchased separately.

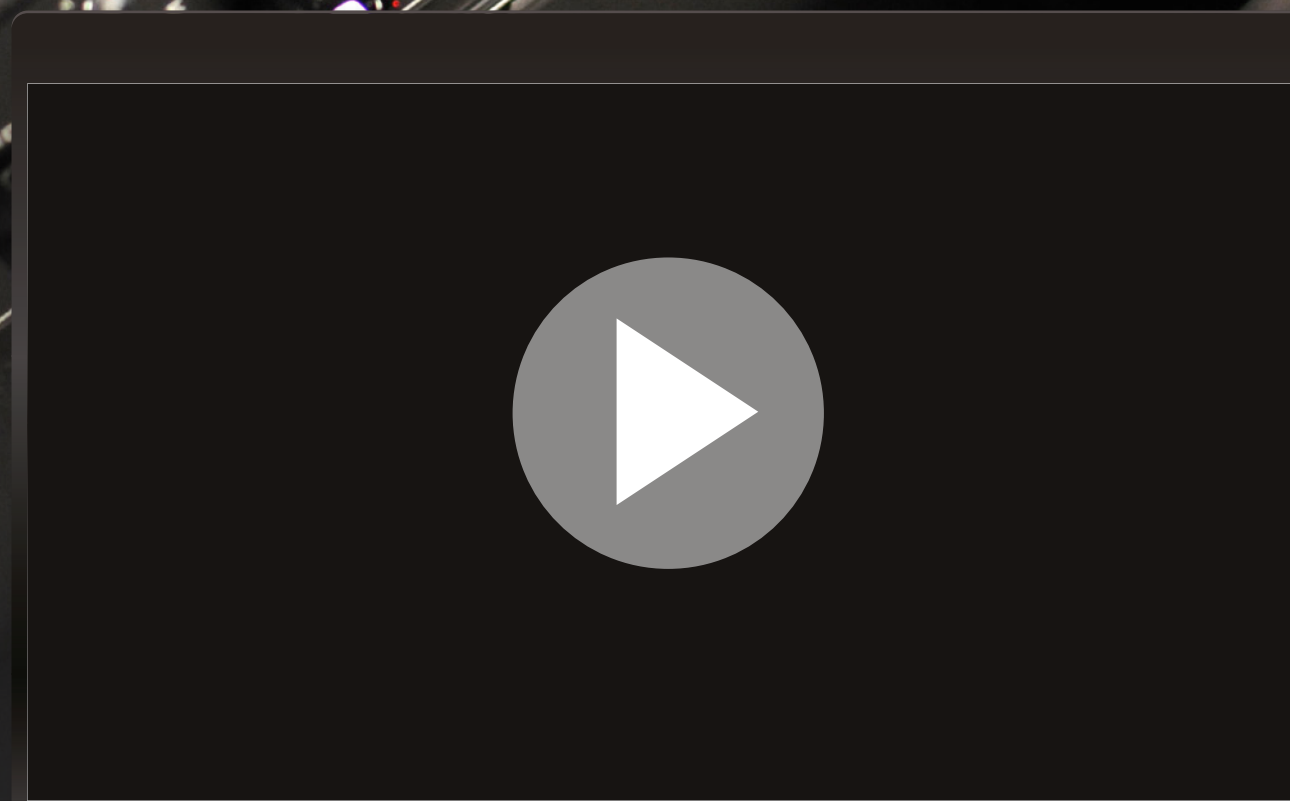
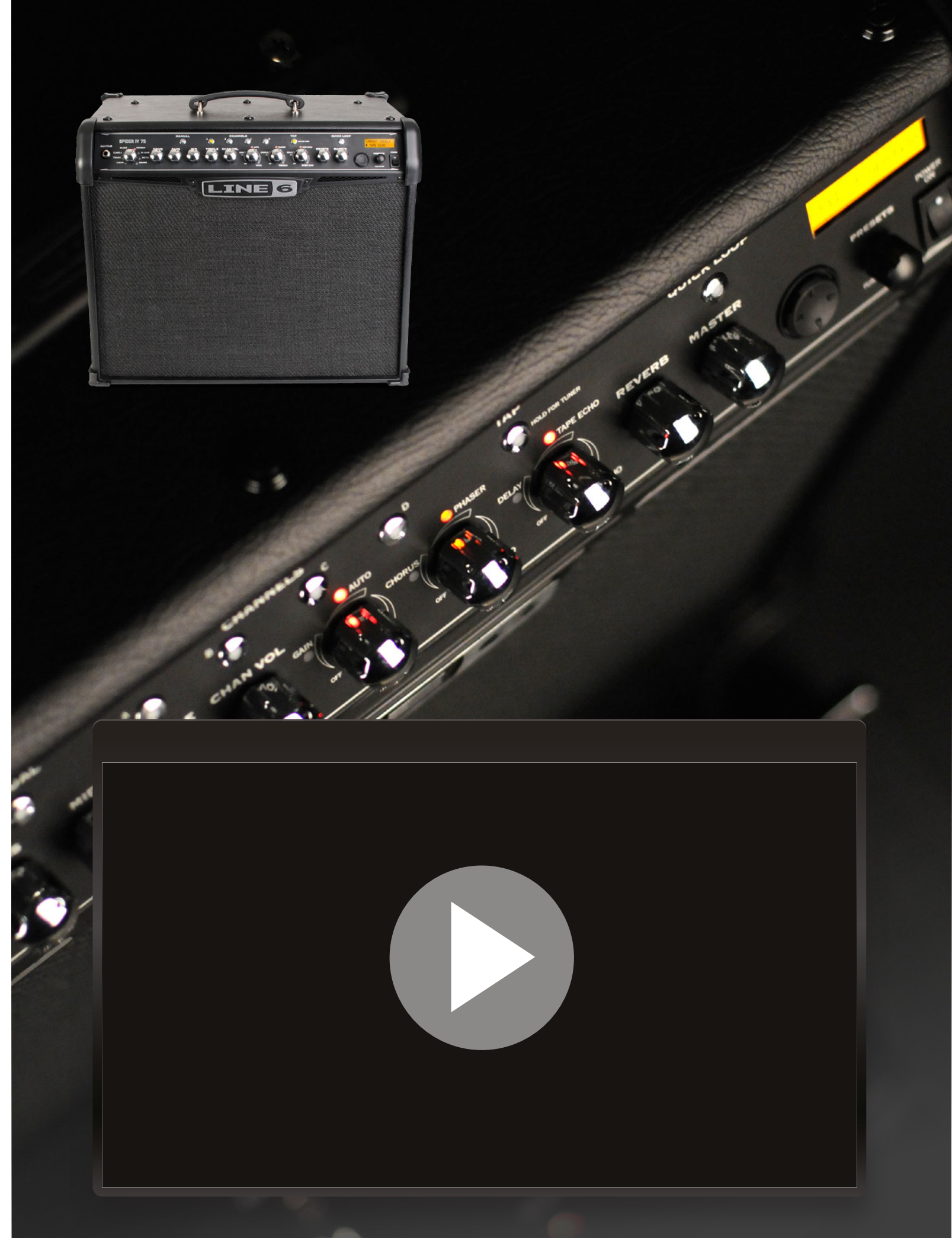
Our 75 Watt Spider boasted a 12" Custom Celestion Speaker, 16 amp models, 20 adjustable 'smart' FX with up to four in use at once, over 250 artist created presets, 64 user presets, four switchable channels and even a looping mode. The front panel features full EQ controls, a small LCD display for editing effects and presets, a chromatic tuner and a very intuitive layout with sensible

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controls that you don't need a Ph.D. to use. On the back panel we have a Headphone/Direct out (effectively turning the amp into a POD for recording) and an mp3/CD player input for jamming. This amp is feature rich and feels like exceptional value given its budget price point.

Tonally, the Spider IV was a great deal of fun to play with. I think one of the elements an amp like this has to excel at is producing realistic and inspirational sounds that are attractive to beginner and intermediate guitarists. The Spider certainly doesn't disappoint in this area, with a huge number of great sounding presets from many famous artists and even a selection designed for specific famous songs. Dial in the sound for the song you want to learn and you're all set to go. I wish it had

been this simple to get great tone when I was learning! Once you've dialled in your chosen preset it's supremely easy to edit and tweak any aspect you desire. The LCD display gives you an accurate read-out of each parameter as you edit using the dials on the front panel. Each sound can be stored as a user preset and assigned to one of four channels making it easy to match four sounds for a set list and switch between them quickly. This is a great feature making preset switching fast and pain free. All tones can be edited via computer and saved back to the amp using Line 6's foot pedal.



Tonally, the Spider IV was a great deal of fun to play with.

The built in FX are good quality and live up to their Line 6 pedigree. They'll never match boutique pedals but here you have everything contained within one compact, portable and high quality package. FX include the usual suspects such as Delays, Flangers, Chorus and Reverbs but you also get Smart Harmony, Tremolos, Auto Wah and Auto Swell effects. It's amazing how much content Line 6 have squeezed

into the Spider package. An on-board looper allows for 14 seconds of loop time with a sound on sound feature for creating soundscapes. The looper function allows you to change presets whilst looping so you can record a clean chord sequence and switch to a lead tone for soloing. Unfortunately, while the looper can be triggered from the front panel of the amp, you'll need

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either a willing volunteer or a foot pedal to make use of the feature properly.

All of the amp models were very musical and almost any tone you can think of can be approximated with this many options on board. Two versions of each model are on offer with all levels of drive from a soft bluesy break-up to a monster distortion for detuned madness. The models respond well to your playing and attack, cleaning up well with volume changes. Channel and amp model changes can result in large volume changes so be careful with your ears whilst editing. Build quality is generally great, my only niggle being that the control knobs feel a little cheap but construction was impressive and solid for this price. A huge bonus is that as Line 6 develop its models and effects the Spider can be updated with new firmware as it's released. New features make the amp even better value for money

and a more attractive prospect for the consumer.

So why have so many people bought a Spider? I think its feature to price ratio and its simplicity combined with quality is the answer. As a consumer I want to feel like I've got more than I paid for and my purchase will keep going as long as I do. I want it to be easy to use and inspiring to play. The Spider IV fulfills these criteria with room to spare and is well within most budgets. Line 6 has also catered for all corners of the market from the beginner guitarist looking for a starter but quality amp, to a pro looking for a serious practice and rehearsal amp. If you're in the market for a budget amp that does pretty much everything, it can be a crowded, confusing place, but you can be sure the Spider IV should be at the top of your list. Can 1 million people be wrong? Judging from this sample, I'd have to say a resounding no!

## GI STOP PRESS!

Just as we were going to press, Line 6 announced the launch of a new facility for registered Spider owners - **Spider Online**, a new free online resource offering over 500 lessons, jam tracks and tones created by Line 6, artists and fellow Spider owners. In addition to the lessons, users can play along to over **100 jam tracks, bass and drum grooves and drum loops**. Spider owners can also access hundreds of new tones that can be downloaded directly to Spider amplifiers or displayed on screen. That just adds to the outstanding value for money, we'd say!



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# T-Rex Pedals

We gave **Michael Casswell** a bunch of Denmark's renowned T-Rex pedals to play with. Six weeks later, he was still deep in Jurassic Park playing the Monster Mash. **Gary Cooper** grabbed a net, a big stick and went in after him.

**D**enmark must be a curious place. Not the largest country on earth, it is, nonetheless, home to two of world's leading effects brands, one of the pioneers of the craft, TC Electronic, and, more recently, T-Rex, which has become one of the world's leading purveyors of up-market guitar effects. Pausing to consider the idea that Danish trolls must lurk beneath bridges, secretly whiling away the long Northern nights arguing about the ultimate circuit diagrams for compressors, or worrying over the optimum frequency response for a phaser, it is worth noting that Denmark has a long and important history in the audio business. Ever heard of Bang & Olufsen? Danes take sound very seriously, it seems.

T-Rex pedals was formed in 1996 by Lars Dahl and Sebastian Jensen to make MIDI gear. They were successful but (fortunately, some might say) guitarists soon tired of

racks of soulless MIDI everything, returned to the roots of tone and started hankering after vintage valve/tube amps, fine old guitars and classic effects. Not really MIDI country at all.

Fortunately, T-Rex's founders were ahead of the game and responded to the new trend with the first of the company's effects pedals. Since then, T-Rex has become one of the mainstays of the upper-middle market. T-Rex prices aren't in boutique stratosphere territory, but unless you are very fortunate, they are pedals you aspire to own. And just look at the company you'll be in if you do: T-Rex users include Carlos Santana, Pete Townshend, John Meyer and Steve Lukather!

But are they as good as their press? We borrowed a fully-loaded pedal board of T-Rex pedals, which we gave to Michael Casswell (no stranger to an FX board!). Frankly, 11 pedals were far too many to go into detail about and we didn't want to miss any out, so we're leaving it to

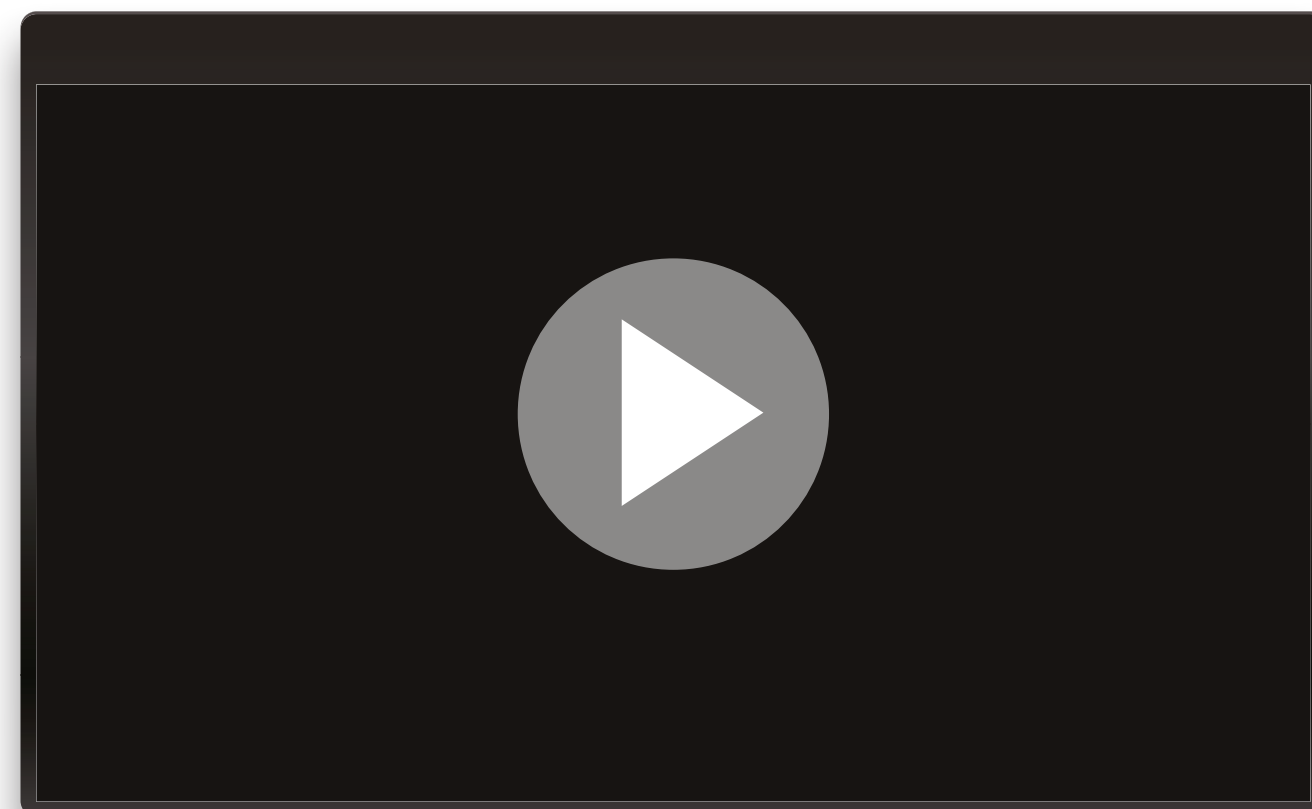
Michael's video to convey the detail of what they are like.

To deal with the boring but essential bits quickly – yes, the pedals were all sturdily made, with nice stomp-proof metal casings. None of them popped or fizzed or farted or squealed or did anything other than we expected. This is a fully professional range and all you have to do is decide whether you like

the sound. And this is where it gets difficult. The world is awash with effects pedals these days and the choice is simply bewildering. In the end, all a guitarist can do is find a sound he likes, find out which pedal makes it and buy that. In other words audition as many as you can till you find what suits you best, because your choice of pedal is a matter of personal taste.

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Here are Michael's brief assessments of our clutch of some of T-Rex's finest. Check out the video for the details!





## T-Rex Comp Nova

**Gj** RATING ★★★★★

One pedal you need to explore is a compressor. I've always rated the vintage CS2 Boss and the MXR Dyna Comp. The Keeley compressor, too. But this T-Rex is easily as good, if not better. It's quieter and features true by-pass. Excellent!



## T-Rex Mudhoney II

**Gj** RATING ★★★★★

This is a dual distortion pedal that gives tons of filth. You can set either side with different settings, making it two pedals in one. Works and sounds great if you run it into a clean amp, but if you run a crunchy tone, kicking this in can make everything too squashy and compressed. You just have to be more careful how you set things up, so that this pedal and your amp work with each other, rather than fight.



## T-Rex Moller

**Gj** RATING ★★★★★

This is a great sounding overdrive that enables you to blend in your clean signal with the gain (which sounds good in theory but in real life, I'm not sure). It can also give you a huge boost to lift your solo above the band, or drive the front of your valve amp so that it gives you more of everything. It's a really versatile pedal that has a number of uses, but I'd suggest you need to explore how it works with your particular amp and guitar.



## T-Rex Dr Swamp

**Gj** RATING ★★★★★

A warm sounding dual overdrive-distortion that blends the best of the Moller and the Mudhoney in one pedal. Dual design again, so two pedals in one, with great versatility. Sounds very cool!

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## T-Rex Octavius

**Gi** RATING ★★★★★

Basically an octaver pedal that can blend in an octave down, or up, or both. Plus it has a boost function. Things can get seriously 'PHAT' with this. Great fun!



## T-Rex Tremonti

**Gi** RATING ★★★★★

Gives a nice phaser to flanger effect. Sounds great but don't over use it.



## T-Rex Tremster

**Gi** RATING ★★★★★

Gives a great tremolo effect with all the variations that involves. We need more of this effect out there, because it always sounds cool!



## T-Rex Reptile Delay 2

**Gi** RATING ★★★★★

A really good delay pedal, with modulation, tape flutter, tap tempo, tone adjustment of the repeats, everything you want. As good as a delay pedal gets!

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## T-Rex The Replica



Another great delay with the emphasis on analogue and retro warmth, which means you are supposed to call it 'echo' rather than delay.



## T-Rex The Room-Mate



A valve reverb pedal with a warm retro tone. Put this in the effects loop of your amp, blend it in so you feel it rather than hear it - and just play!

## T-Rex Fuel Tank



Lastly in the pedal board we were loaned by T-Rex's UK distributor Westside, was the fantastic Fuel Tank power supply, which can power a whole bunch of different pedals, silently and efficiently. Do not skimp on your power supply because it just ends up in a world of hum and will inevitably break down just before you go on stage! This, like the rest of the T-Rex range, really was about as good as it gets. Tastes vary and some

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pedals might move you more than others - but that's down to personal preference. Overall, I'd say if a T-Rex pedal was a car, it would be a Porsche. Not cheap, but definitely among the best.





# Brace Audio DWG1000 X digital wireless guitar system

Wireless guitar systems get more affordable all the time. But still not everyone is convinced they're ready to replace leads. US maker Brace Audio has been winning accolades all round for its affordable, digital DWG1000 X system so we decided it was time to put it to the test.

**Rick Graham** was ruthlessly unplugged and asked to explore.



hen musicians think of a wireless system, my guess is that the first image that comes to their minds is a rack full of complicated

gadgetry that takes a lifetime to get one's head around. Well, the award-winning DWG1000 wireless guitar system by Brace Audio couldn't be further from that. Aimed at the entry-level market (though it should be said, it has been reeling-in Pro users and endorses since its launch) the DWG1000 consists of two main units: the transmitter and the receiver. Even as we unboxed the product it was clear that Brace has opted to keep the user interface as simple as possible making for a very fast, easy, no-hassle set up.

The units are slightly different in colour, enabling the user to quickly

## Brace Audio review



identify which unit is which. Both have battery compartments to the rear that are easily accessible and both can be powered using two AA batteries, although there is a very handy AC adapter input onboard the receiver too. You'll find that there is no power switch, instead the transmitter will power up only when the supplied 1/4-inch to 1/8-inch jack has been connected to your guitar and transmitter. Upon connection, the 'Link' LED on the transmitter will flash until you have connected the receiver

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to your amplifier. A solid 'Link' LED indicates that you have a successful wireless connection.

In addition to the 'Link' LED there is also a low battery indicator and a 'Function' button. The later has been included to avoid the unlikely scenario of finding yourself sharing the same channel with another user. If this does occur, you'll need an unfolded paper clip to access the button, which will enable you to change channels and solve the issue. Brace Audio have stated that since the conception of the DWG1000 no one has ever reported that this procedure has had to be used and also that it is extremely unlikely that it will be used. Good news there, then!

Once connected, my first task was to compare the quality of the signal after going through various conversion processes compared with a standard cable connection. Although we did notice some very slight degradation, particularly in the high-end frequencies, the quality of the signal was extremely impressive. I must admit that as a lifelong cable user, having the freedom that the wireless system gives you is a little strange at first. However it didn't take me long to get used to walking around the studio without worrying about where I was going! In actual fact I ended up on the roof balcony of the Licklibrary studios, which was around

[...>] 156

In addition to the 'Link' LED there is also a low battery indicator and a 'Function' button.



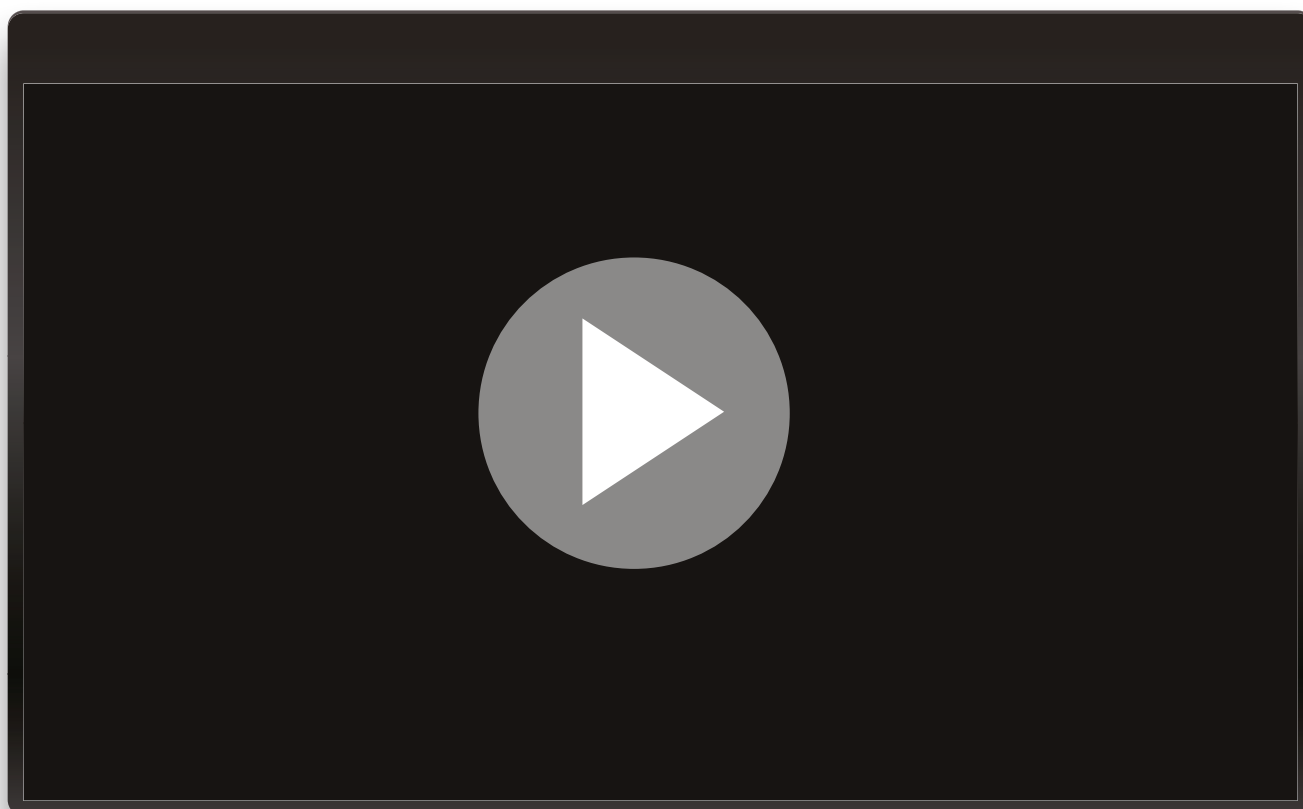


with the several walls that existed between the transmitter and receiver, which is pretty amazing – not least because of the huge amount of electronic gear at work in the building which, if anything was going to cause interference with a wireless signal, that certainly would!

If you are looking to ditch your cables for the freedom on stage that a wireless system gives you but don't have the funds to jump straight in at the high end then you can't go wrong with the DWG1000. It's plug and play, hassle-free set up is a breeze and that coupled with the fact that you aren't going to break the bank means that, really, you can't go wrong.



90ft from the receiver, and there was no drop in signal. It is also worth noting that the signal didn't drop even



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- Gus G

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# Providence Pedals

The pedal market is overloaded with choice - which makes it all the more surprising that a small Japanese maker, Providence, has become one of the most talked about ranges around. Why all the fuss? We gave a clutch of Providence effects to **Tom Quayle**. So Tom, just how tempting is Providence?

**P**rovidence is a Japanese company producing quality audio components, best known for its superb cables and audio routers.

The company's artist list reads like a who's who of great guitar players including Guthrie Govan, Carl Verheyen, Larry Carlton, Mike Landau, Steve Lukather and Robben Ford. As such, when given the chance to check out some of their effects range, I jumped at the chance.

Each of the pedals reviewed shared some interesting features demonstrating Providence's emphasis on innovation, reliability and musical sound quality. Every

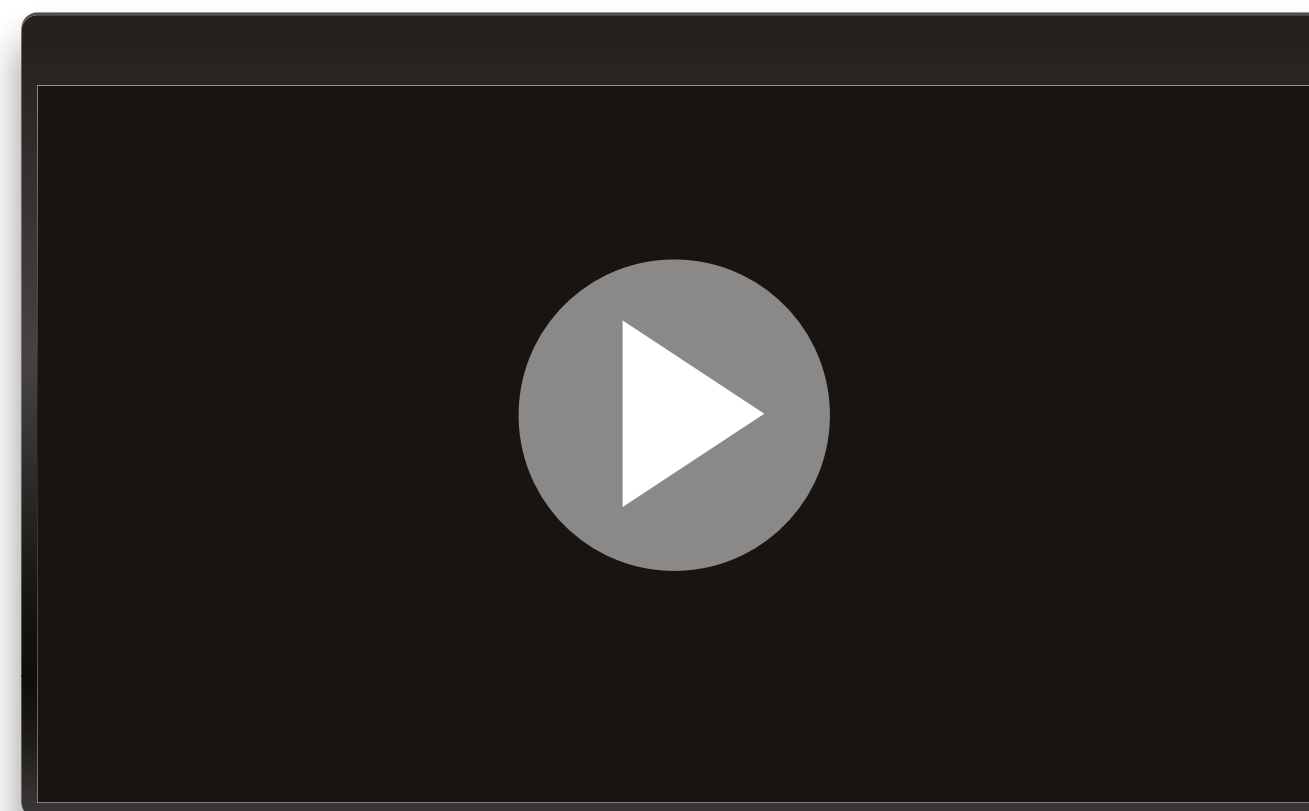
unit is constructed using a heavy-duty case and foot switch. They all feel bomb proof and have solid, smooth control pots that won't break if stood upon by mistake. Providence provides True Bypass circuitry for all the pedals but use what they call the S.C.T. (single contact true-bypass) circuit, meaning the signal passes through a single contact in bypass mode. This provides better sound quality and less signal degradation and I'm happy to report that I could hear no tone change whilst in bypass mode with each pedal. The controls feel solid and responsive and the pedals have a small footprint so won't take up all the space on your pedal board. Let's have a closer look at the range.

## VLC-1 Velvet Comp



The VLC-1 is Providence's compressor pedal. It features Level, Attack and Sustain controls and the rugged footswitch design of the rest of the range. The compression is very transparent and does nothing to affect your tone. The compression is smooth and doesn't 'pump' in and out like cheaper units will and even at higher sustain setting things remain musical and never get ugly or too 'effected.' Settings worked very well with both

[...>] 160





## Providence Pedals cont..

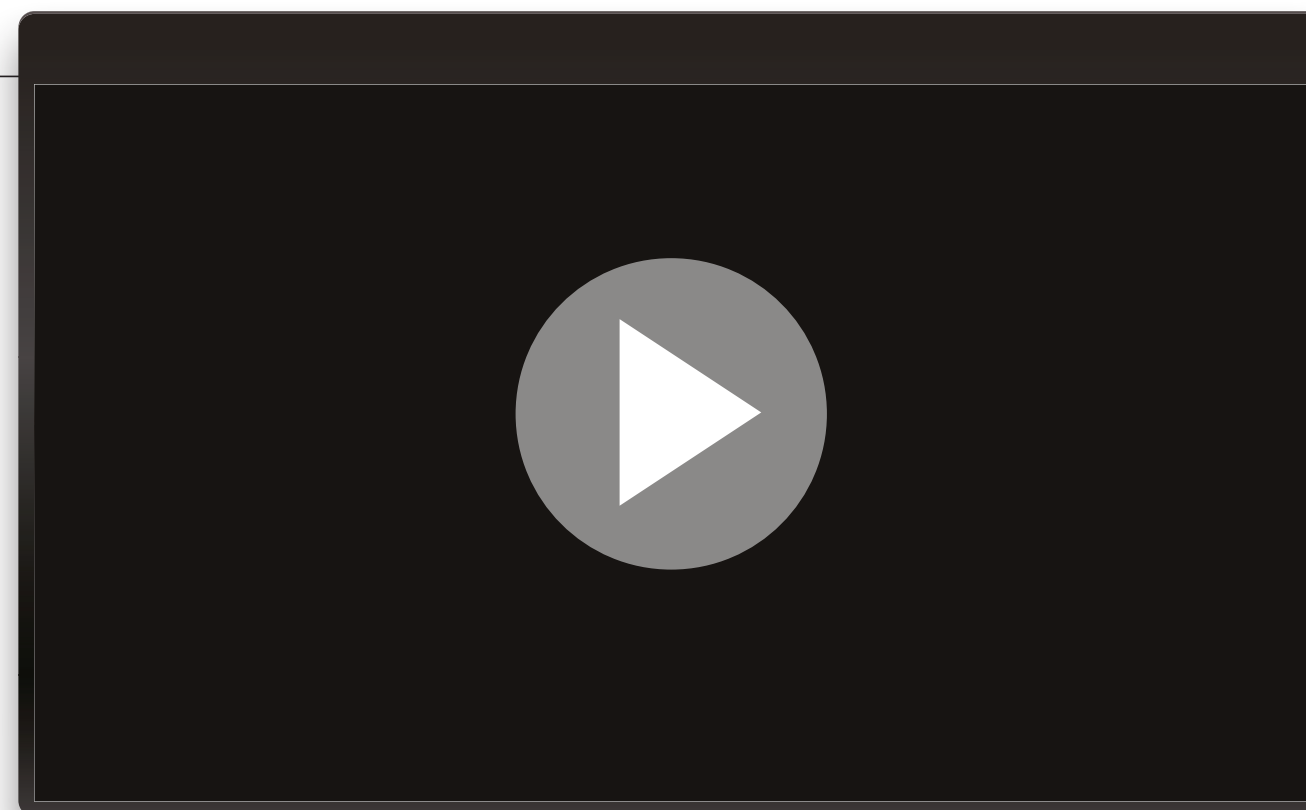
clean and overdriven sounds, providing that feeling that your guitar was just that bit easier to play. For me, this would be a 'set and forget'

kind of pedal, left on all the time and, in my mind, that's the best kind of compressor.

### ADC-3 Anadime Chorus



The ADC-3 Anadime Chorus is the analogue chorus pedal in Providence's range and I loved it so much that it's ended-up on my pedal board! The pedal features a multi-function LED displaying ON/OFF mode, dimming when a battery change is required and a synchronised blinking in time with the LFO of the chorus speed. The other controls are Speed, Depth and a Deep switch. There's a very wide range of chorus speed and depth with the deep switch gives even more modulation, very useful for Leslie type sounds. The chorus is incredibly lush and rich whether subtle or more involved and remains musical right up to the top of its range. It works superbly with chords, single notes and overdriven tones. This is my favourite pedal in the range. GI only awards four and half stars to



### FDR-1F Flame Drive



The Flame Drive is an overdrive pedal designed with versatility and dynamics in mind. It features Level, Tone and Drive controls and a Bass Boost. Dynamics are beautifully represented with this pedal and the tone is fat and warm with an amp-like feel responding well to pick attack and volume changes. The pedal features a V.N.S. (Vitalized Noiseless Switching) circuit that makes sure there's no switching noise when turning the pedal on or off. The bass boost works well and gives you more tone shaping options. Our review model's tone control seemed to only function well within the last 2/3rds





## Providence Pedals cont..

of its range but once it kicked in it worked well and remained musical throughout its range. As with Providence's other overdrive pedals, there is a decent amount of drive on tap and things never get fizzy or ugly. The pedal also functions very successfully as a boost and is silent

in bypass mode. Also present is a Vitalizer circuit to prevent signal degradation even when the pedal is in bypass mode. It works well and we heard no change in tone when using the pedal.

retains note clarity for single notes and chords right up to high drive settings. As with the other drive pedals in the range the tone control only kicked in after a third of a turn but was also musical throughout. Dynamically the pedal responds very well to pick attack and volume changes. The Sonic Drive also features what Providence call a Double-Contact Grounding Circuit, providing two points of contact to the pedals ground circuit. This makes it more difficult for a loose connection to occur and is supposed to improve sound quality. It's hard to judge this one but the connection certainly felt reassuringly solid and tonally we heard no noise whilst the pedal was on or off.

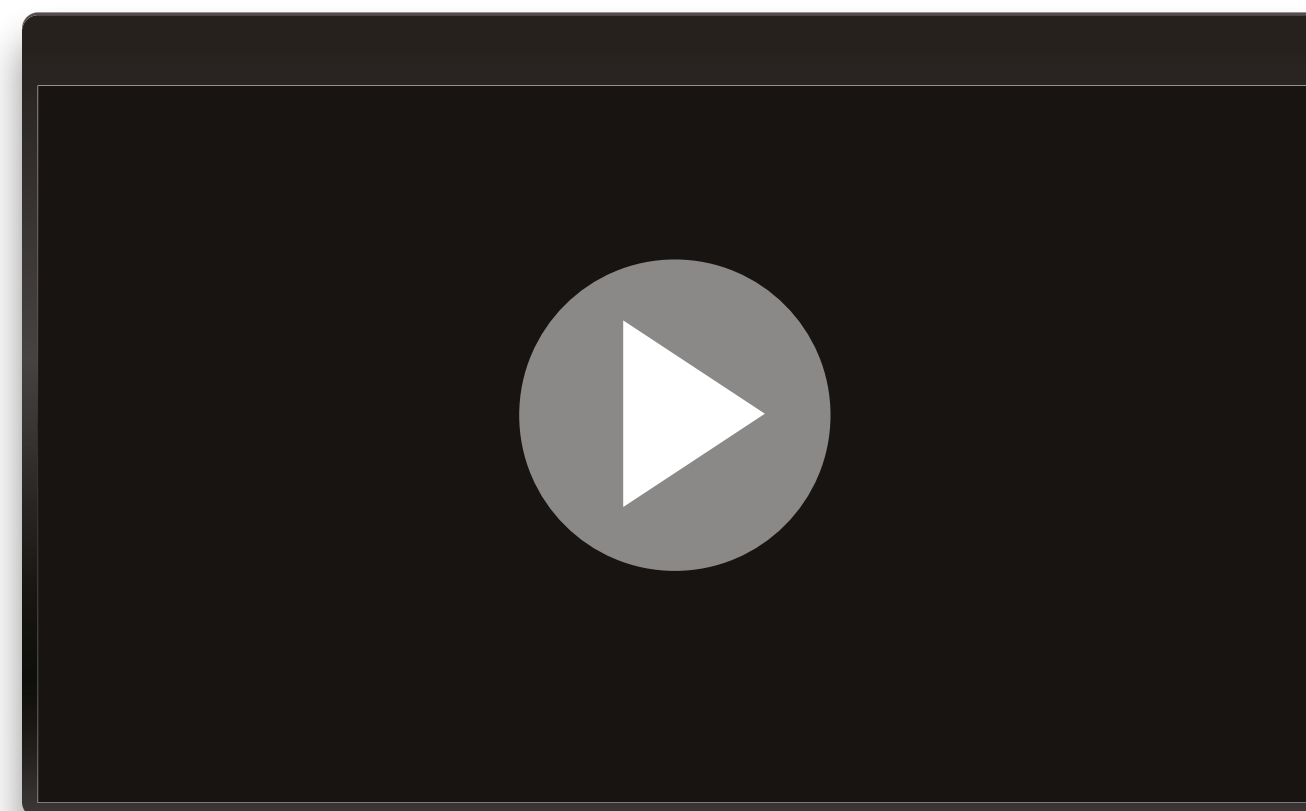


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### SDR-5 Sonic Drive



The Sonic Drive is designed with a very fast attack time so that it responds very well to your dynamics. It features Level, Drive, Tone controls and a Fat switch designed to increase the low end gain of your sound. The tone is fat without being fuzzy and





## Providence Pedals cont..

### SOV-2 Stampede OD



The Stampede Overdrive has Level, Drive and Tone controls and features a very innovative design in that it uses a special bipolar power supply to power the internal circuit at a higher voltage than a standard 9 Volt pedal. This gives a better dynamic range and very transparent tone, retaining the original characteristics of your tone exceptionally well. The downside is that a battery life is about 30 minutes



for an average 9 Volt battery. A power supply is a must for this one but don't let that put you off, as it is a supremely musical overdrive pedal that responds very well to your dynamics and retains your tone as well as any other high-end overdrive I've played. The drive is singing and warm with a very

comfortable playing feel on every drive setting. Again I experienced a slightly unresponsive initial third of the tone control but after that it was very useful and never became harsh or muddy. This was my personal favourite drive pedal in the range.

### DLY-4 Chrono Delay

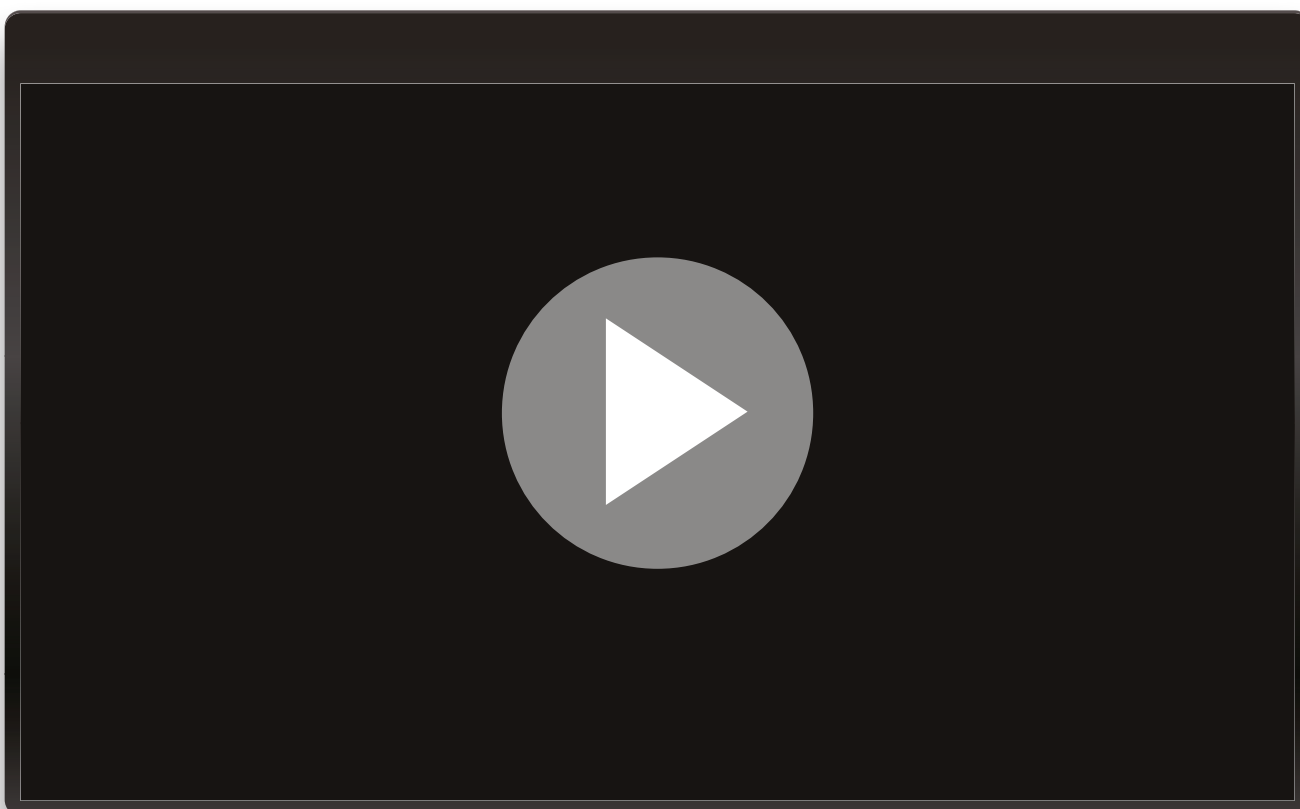


The Chrono Delay is a feature packed digital delay with some unique features to set it apart from the pack. The input signal remains within the analogue domain across its entire path. This reduces latency and means less signal degradation. The pedal has two A/B presets and a tap tempo function that reads in either msec or bpm with the flick of a switch. Delay times range from 1-2700msecs and the time is displayed on a huge, four segment LED display. A Vitalizer circuit is used to remove any signal degradation whether the pedal is on or bypassed. Delays sound fantastic, very clean and life-like. Use of the



[...>] 166





Echo-hardness control can produce anything from tape-like delays to super clean studio repeats for U2 style moments. Once the tempo is set the beat select control lets you select seven different delay subdivisions including eighth notes, eight note triplets and half notes. Feedback and mix controls let you select the amount of effect and number of repeats and even at full mix setting noise is minimal and things remain musical. To complete the package a power supply is included and there

is an input for a separate tap tempo pedal for remote controlling tap functions. For a fully featured delay pedal that can be used in a variety of musical scenarios you'd be hard pushed to beat the Chrono Delay.

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## The final verdict

The boutique pedal market is rather saturated at the moment with many small companies making a multitude of boxes claiming to be the greatest effects you'll ever hear.

Providence has a proven track record in great tone and quality products and this range of effects will do nothing to harm that reputation. Great construction, innovation and superb tone are all here in abundance and I recommend that you try these out if you want quality tone shaping products that won't harm your original signal and will last forever. They aren't the cheapest but, then again, when you look at the extra features they offer compared with some of the major brands, you can see what you are getting for the extra cost.



Providence has a proven track record in great tone and quality products





# THE QUIET ROOM

# I

t's nice to shut the door occasionally and relax to the natural sound of an acoustic guitar lightly played, isn't it? And then along comes Tommy Emmanuel with a style as explosive as a box of fireworks – and a technique as powerful to match!

We're delighted to have Tommy featured in this issue's GI Quiet Room and we're honoured that he has allowed us to include several numbers from a recent gig he played in London, which will let that readers see for themselves just why he is regarded as one of the world's finest exponents of the acoustic guitar.

For reviews, we're continuing to try to cover every price – this issue a little less luxurious than the last, with some intriguingly affordable guitars from Breedlove and Tanglewood. We've not neglected the needs of the electro-acoustic performer either, as we have the latest DI system from L.R. Baggs on test and we were delighted when the man who more or less invented the acoustic guitar amplifier, Paul Stevens, from Trace Acoustic, dropped into our studio to discuss the ideas behind Trace Acoustic's latest range – a sample of which - the TA 200 - we've also reviewed.

So that's the Quiet Room for this issue. Next time around we'll have some major additions to this haven of sanity in the world of guitar mayhem – so why not register today and be notified as soon as GI Four goes live?

**Gary Cooper** - Editor

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





A photograph of Tommy Emmanuel, an older man with grey hair, wearing a red and blue plaid shirt. He is holding a light-colored acoustic guitar and looking over his shoulder towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a building and a yellow school bus.

# TOMMY Emmanuel

- the man from \_\_\_\_\_ who's on top of the world!  
'down under'

**T**ommy Emmanuel makes every show a spectacle – an evening you'll never forget, even if you're not an acoustic guitarist. But behind the showmanship and stagecraft is the man widely regarded as among the best of his kind. Winner of countless 'world's best acoustic guitar player' awards, twice a Grammy nominee, the Australian virtuoso talks to **Michael Casswell** about his approach to playing. **Gary Cooper** provides the background.

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Tommy Emmanuel is a one-off – and not just because he's one of the world's finest exponents of the acoustic guitar. Even if your auntie wouldn't know an acoustic guitar from a banjo, you could take her to a Tommy Emmanuel show and she would be as thrilled as you are. The man isn't just a fabulous acoustic guitarist – he's a showman and a genuine entertainer – far removed from the stereotype of the acoustic guitarist sitting on a stool, eyes fixed to the floor as he struggles with his craft. Emmanuel has all the technique in the world – but he still has resources left to put on a fine show.

The Tommy Emmanuel story begins in New South Wales, Australia, in 1955. Born into a musical family, he was already gigging professionally at the astonishing age of six, in a family band that toured the country, living out of two cars.

Starting out as rhythm guitarist to his brother Phil, Tommy became fascinated at an early age by the legendary American guitarist Chet Atkins. Many regard Atkins as the originator of the Nashville Sound and the father of modern fingerstyle guitar and Emmanuel isn't alone in revering the great Tennessean – Atkins fans

included George Harrison, Mark Knopfler and many others. But as he tells Michael Casswell in our interview, he was also influenced by the rhythm plating of the Shadows' Bruce Welch – though with a twist, as he didn't realise Welch also had the late Jet Harris alongside him, playing bass. Emmanuel just learned to play both parts simultaneously!

By the 1970s Tommy Emmanuel was a regular figure on the Australian scene – and not just as a guitarist because he played drums, too – demonstrating a sense of rhythm which he was soon to transform into a dynamic acoustic guitar style which includes playing using the body of his battered Maton guitar like a drum – a feature recently adopted by many younger players, but never improved on.

Emmanuel took up a solo career in the late 1980s, following a stint with Tina Turner. It wasn't long before his prodigious ability to draw him to Nashville, where, in 1999, he was presented by Chet himself with the coveted 'Certified Guitar Player Award'. A light-hearted tribute? Far from it. Only three other players were ever given that award by Atkins: Jerry Reed, Steve Wariner and John Knowles and Emmanuel's website to this

day proclaims him as 'Tommy Emmanuel CGP'. Like so many others who were inspired by the great man, he takes that award very seriously indeed. In fact, Emanuel was on Atkins' final album, *The Day Fingerpickers Took Over The World*, recorded just before Atkins' death in 1997.

Finally, recognition began to shower on him as the USA, in particular, realised that Tommy Emmanuel was something very special indeed. Grammy nominations, inductions to halls of fame, an invitation to play at Carnegie Hall for Les Paul's 90th birthday – Tommy Emmanuel was at last being recognised as one of the finest acoustic guitarists in the world.

It's a reputation he works hard – very hard – to maintain, even to the detriment of his health. Emmanuel has recently maintained a steady 300 live shows a year, despite health problems brought on by the strain. And when you see him on stage you can understand how – this is a man who pours his heart and soul into every performance. That sort of effort has to take its toll.

You could write thousands of words trying to describe Tommy Emmanuel's

[...>] 174



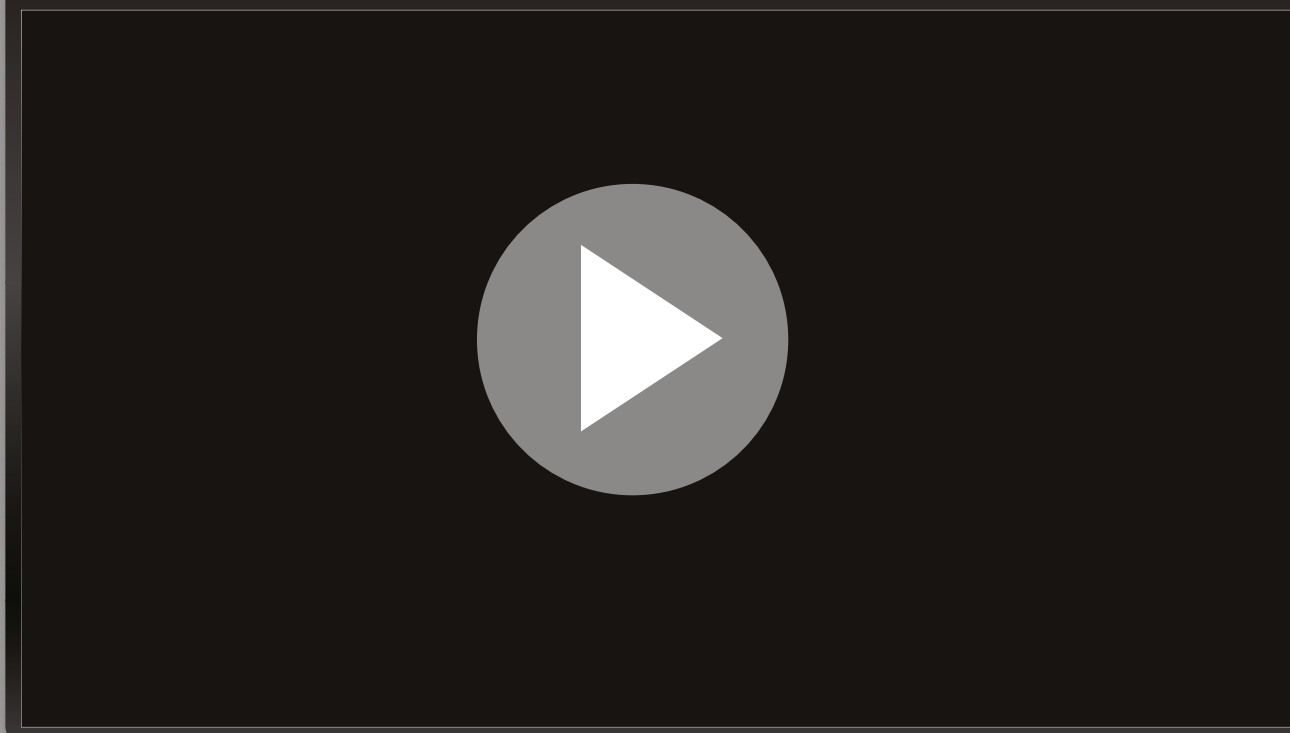
unique style (and thousands of words have been written about it) but nothing does justice to the man's extraordinary talent like seeing him at work – which is why Guitar Interactive is proud to bring you live footage of one of Emmanuel's recent gigs in London.

As for his gear – Emmanuel's battered guitars are almost always Matons – an Australian brand, founded by Bill and Reg May in 1946 in Melbourne - not widely distributed around the world, but stocked in a handful of specialist acoustic retailers here and there. Tommy has two signature Matons – the TE1 which matches a Sitka spruce top with rosewood back and sides, and the TE2, which features

the less common choice of maple back and sides. Interestingly, both models feature indigenous Australian woods where possible, which just adds to their uniqueness.

The sound produced by Emmanuel's Matons is one thing but a word or two needs to be said about their extraordinary resilience. Tommy Emmanuel is famously demanding of his guitars. Apparently he sands down the top of every new one, so he can use the roughened wood for percussive effects and he is a fine exponent of bending the neck to achieve an almost whammy bar effect. Somehow, his Matons survive the sort of battering he gives them, night after night!

[...>] 176





The Matons' pickup system is important, too. Emmanuel is demanding and he needs to be as he plays to big audiences in a way that could never be served by a mic on a stand. Maton uses a combined internal pickup and condenser mic (the MP5, they call it) and Emmanuel relies on the output totally for his gigs – being quite disparaging about the importance of the acoustic instrument's sound in a live setting. Of course, he is right – the audience only hears what comes out of the PA – and the key to that is the Maton's pickup system feeding is AER amp.

AER is a key component in Tommy Emmanuel's stage sound – indeed he is one of the German amp

maker's most prominent endorsers (see our AER review in GI Issue Two.)

Words simply can't do justice to Tommy Emmanuel's playing – so sit back and enjoy the show as Tommy talks guitar playing with GI's Michael Casswell, then take a front row seat to see the master at work!



#### **\_USEFUL LINKS**

**Tommy Emmanuel:**  
[www.tommyemmanuel.com](http://www.tommyemmanuel.com)

**Maton Guitars:**  
[www.maton.com.au](http://www.maton.com.au)

**AER amplification:**  
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# Trace Acoustic TA200

Trace Acoustic more or less invented the acoustic instrument amplifier. But are they still top of the tree? **Michael Casswell** met Trace's designer Paul Stevens for a tutorial - and then we let him loose on the TA200.



Trace Elliot - the bass amp brand that swept to prominence during the 1980s - is, these days, part of the Peavey empire and

while the TE range has undergone a major overhaul in recent years, being intended for bass players it needn't detain us for too long. Trace Acoustic, on the other hand, should definitely be commanding your attention - particularly if a big part of your music making is acoustic based. Designed by Paul Stevens, the man whose electronic and acoustic expertise has made the bass models so respected, Trace Acoustic's amps promise similar levels of performance for amplified acoustic instruments - and judging by the 200 Watt TA200 I've been trying, could be just what you've been looking for.

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## Trace Acoustic TA200



In fact Trace has a good claim to having more or less invented the specialist acoustic instrument amplifier, in the late 1980s and while almost every amp maker today offers an acoustic combo, very few have investigated what an acoustic guitarist needs with the thoroughness of Paul Stevens. The result shouldn't be confused with barely modified guitar amps. This is a purpose-designed tool - as much a mini-PA as it is a guitar amp - so it isn't cheap. But for a Pro player, or anyone else who takes their sound really seriously, this is the sort of product you need to be looking at.

When I'm required to play acoustic live, I'm usually at the mercy of the stage monitoring, and even worse, the monitor engineer! In the studio, I usually combine a



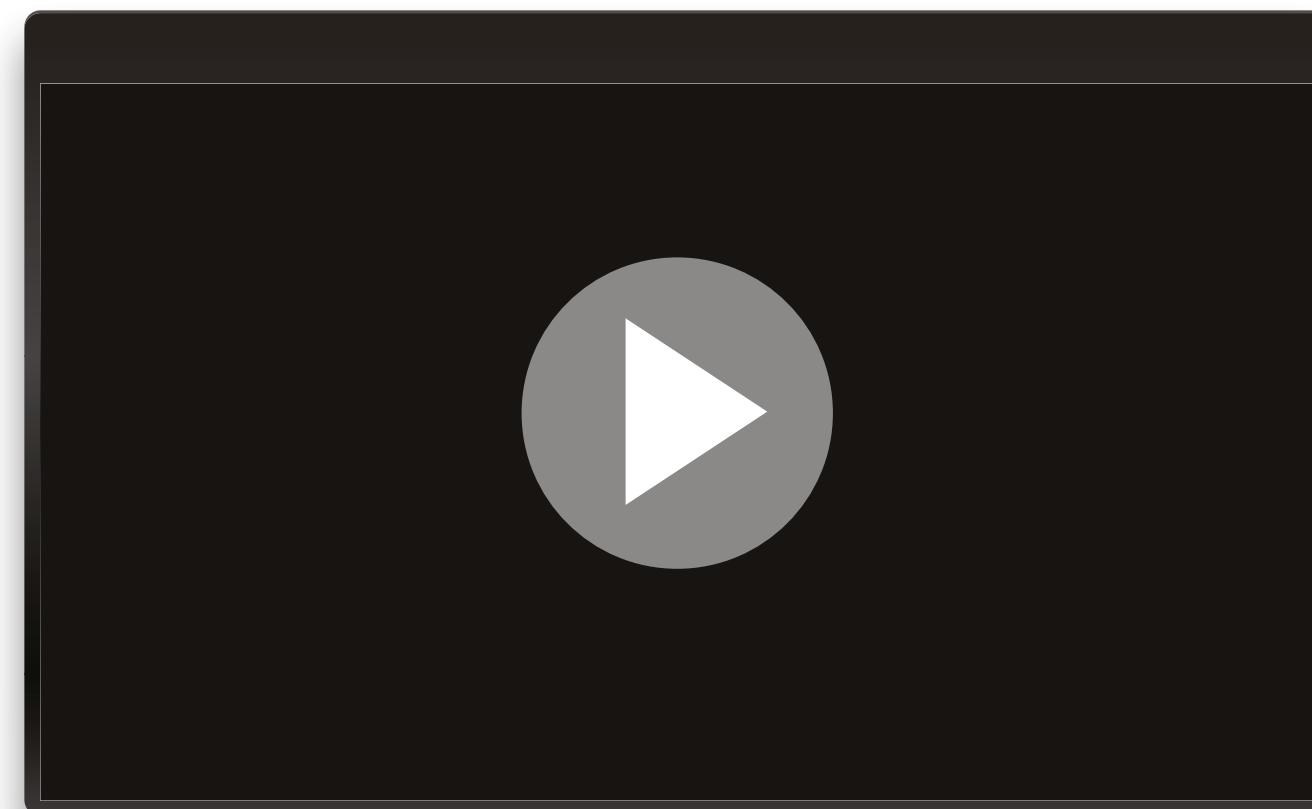
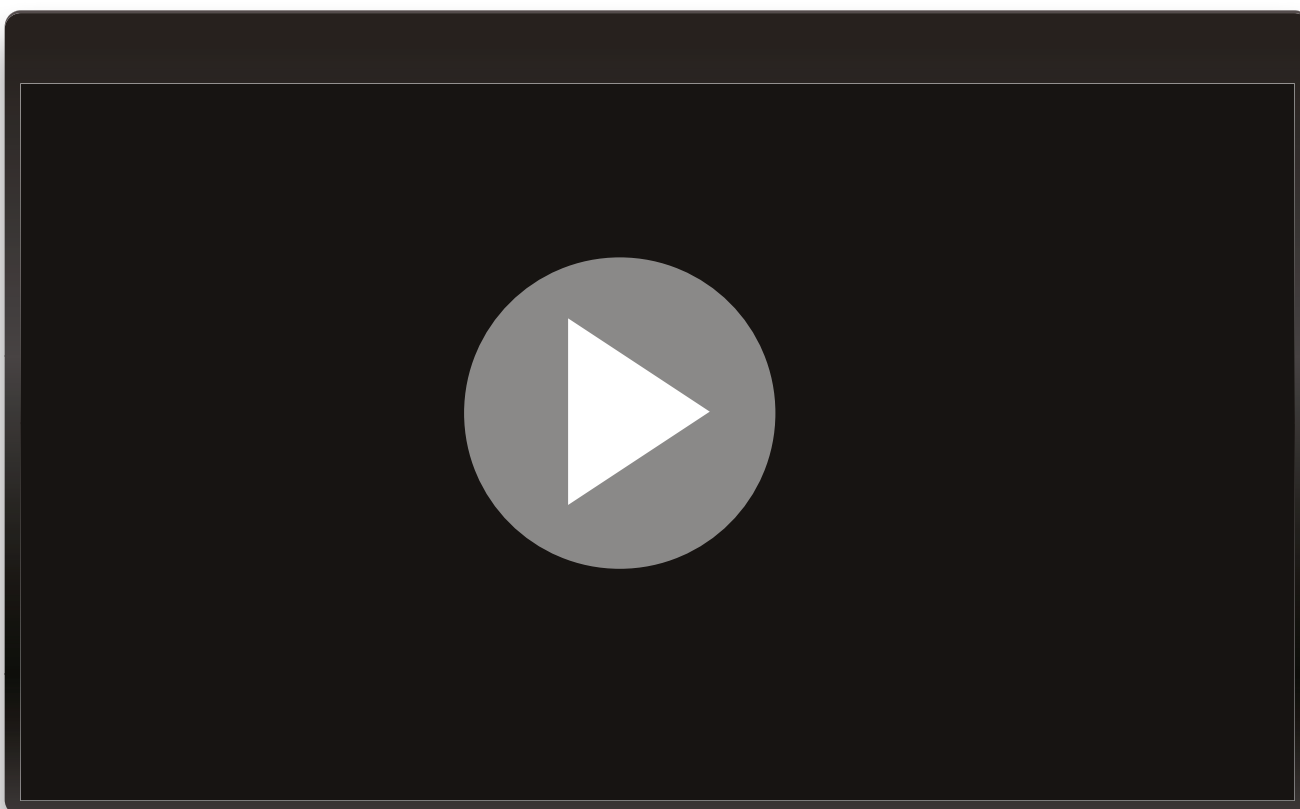
direct signal from the guitar into the desk, with a nice mike on or around the soundhole. So a purchase like the TA200 can go a long way to giving you back some control over your acoustic sound on stage, and give you some very cool sound-enhancing options when recording. After chatting with Tommy Emmanuel during this issue's interview, it became clear how important the right acoustic guitar matched with right acoustic amp really is. He gets a fantastic live tone using his Maton into an AER, and he told me that his amp is so important for him to do what he does. It would be very interesting to hear Tommy's thoughts on this amp, because I was very impressed. If like Tommy,

it's just you, an acoustic guitar and an audience, then the TA200 could well be the one, because even if you only have a more modest budget acoustic, they seem to be able to up their game once plugged in.

Then there's the mic side. One of the main uses for this style of acoustic amp is for solo performers who sing as well as play - which is where so many acoustic amps let you down. They do an OK (ish) job with your guitar, but really can't handle that and your vocals at the same time. What you really need, in effect, is a miniature PA system and that's what this Trace

[...>] 180





Acoustic is - a five speakered, hi-fidelity, miniature stereo PA system with all the acoustic shaping, effects and gizmos you could possibly wish for and with a good 100 Watts per side, delivered through high quality neodymium Celestions.

For this review, I plugged in a Yamaha, a Peavey Ecooustic (very rare, but great) a Martin, and the Faith FNCE Neptune, which I reviewed in Issue Two and loved. The TA200 made each guitar sound fantastic, without colouring the purity of the instrument, and the amplified sound brought out the best from each.

But an acoustic amp isn't just for solo work. The TA200 would also be a great tool if you play live

in a band, where sometimes the subtleties of acoustic playing can be lost in the mix when you start playing harder. The TA200 could be set up behind you with the backline and you could still give a signal from the amp to the monitor guy and front of house, where they could just push up the fader and not worry about any effects, compression or reverb, because you have done it for them.

It isn't just the sound that impresses, either. I was shocked when I picked the amp up to find it weighs next to nothing, and comes supplied with a very cool gig bag. In fact you could easily stick the amp on your back if you didn't want to take the car, and with your acoustic in hand, you could happily jog to your musical engagement, thereby

keeping lean, mean and fit at the same time.

I won't list the Trace Acoustic's features here, because we were fortunate to have Trace's Paul Stevens drop into our studio to talk us through the design ideas behind the amp and to take us through some of its finer points. You can see the conversation we had in our accompanying video. In fairness, this was probably just as well because this isn't a simple amp to get to grips with. Like all top-flight acoustic amps it has a lot to offer and a big job to do - and that means it takes some getting to know.

If had to be picky, I'd have say this is not a cheap amp. But saying that, there has been no compromise in build quality and development and none at all in terms of performance. It is not

built in the Far East like so many amps and guitars today, but is assembled in the Peavey factory in Mississippi. Personally, I like that fact, and would be prepared to pay the extra for quality products. Not that there is anything wrong with products made in China but, right or wrong, when it comes to guitars and amps, I'm a bit of a purist.

If you are serious about your acoustic sound, then you should definitely check out this Trace Acoustic range. It's about as good as it gets in acoustic instrument amplification. It's also very important to realise it comes with a five year warranty, which is pretty much unheard of these days and shows how much faith the maker has in its build-quality!





# Breedlove Atlas Stage

Recent years have seen Breedlove become one of the top-selling quality acoustic guitar brands in the USA. But if you fancy a Breedlove and don't quite have that much cash to hand, there is another way of getting your hands on that distinctive styling.

**Jamie Humphries** reviews the Korean-built Stage C25/SRe.



It's common these days for American guitar manufacturers to offer more affordable models built in countries like Korea, China

or Indonesia. Inevitably, it raises a question in the buyer's mind as to whether he is getting a poorer quality instrument, but the rapid pace of change in guitar manufacturing means that what was once seen as a cheap source of labour can, almost overnight, be transformed and the best Korean factories now produce guitars as good as any, which means it's best to leave your prejudices at the shop door when buying a new guitar these days!

Breedlove is known for its high quality instruments including guitars, basses and mandolins, handmade in Bend, Oregon and designed by Kim Breedlove himself. Until 2003 all Breedloves were made in the USA but in that year the company launched its Atlas

## Breedlove Atlas Stage C25/SRe



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series of Korean-made instruments. US Breedloves offer some very distinctive ideas to match their looks (they're a far cry from the usual Martin clones) and the Atlas models feature traditional bracing designs but maintain the distinctive looks and the unique Breedlove bridge truss system (which is claimed to counterbalance the top and increase sustain) across a range that comes in Stage, Studio, Solo and Retro models and includes six-string Concerts, Dreadnoughts and Jumbos, twelve-string Concerts and Jumbos and four and five-string acoustic basses.

Importantly, a lot of work was done on getting the electrics

right, Breedlove says, notably with L.R. Baggs, who developed his Stage Pro Element pickup system for the range.

OK, so on to the guitar! Straight out of the box this instrument has a vibrant tone and feel. The guitar features a deep concert style body with what Breedlove describe as a soft cutaway. The top is made from AAA Sitka spruce matched with with rosewood back and sides.

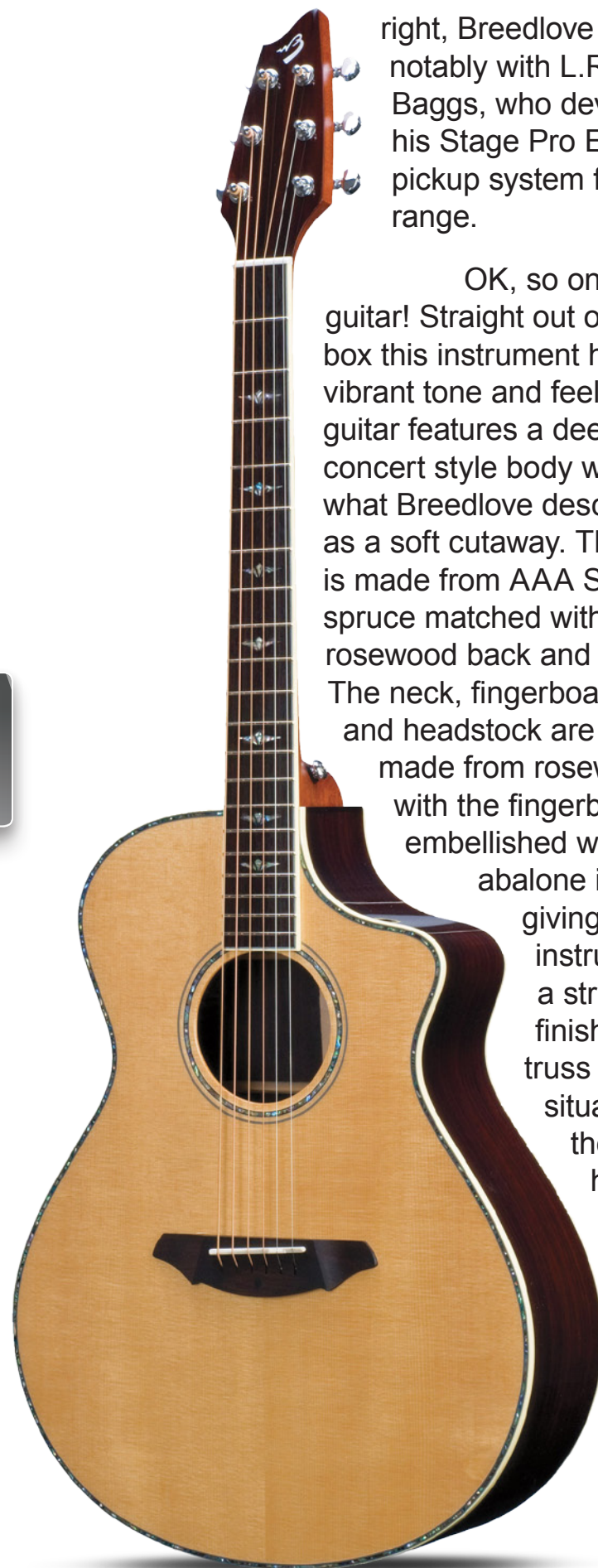
The neck, fingerboard and headstock are also made from rosewood, with the fingerboard embellished with abalone inlays, giving this instrument a striking finish. The truss rod is situated in the sound hole for easy and quick neck

adjustment; no fiddling around removing a truss rod cover at the headstock! The neck also has a satin finish, which I am personally a big fan of. This means the neck is not sticky, giving it a comfortable played-in feel. The finishing of the frets was also very good; no sharp edges, or high spots, a great set-up out of the box, which is always very encouraging to see and, surprisingly, not always the case with review instruments!

The Breedlove's sound acoustically was bright and loud, with a lush bottom end, and sparkling highs. This instrument really has a high-end sound and feel to it, and would record beautifully if mic'd up.

Now let's move onto the electronics. The L.R. Baggs pickup and preamp system has the controls situated on the side, top position when the instrument is being held in a playing position. They include volume and EQ to help tailor your sound and also to cut unwanted frequencies to eliminate feedback. A full demonstration and explanation of the electronics can be found in my demo video. A very useful addition to the control panel is the inclusion of a chromatic tuner. I'm always a little unsure of built-in tuners, as regards to their accuracy and also how visible they are but this tuner works great, is very accurate, and also has a clear visual display. Once again a full demonstration of the tuner can be seen in our video.

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So did I like it? I found this Breedlove to be a very well made and set-up guitar that felt and sounded great straight out of the box. I also think it's visually stunning. Never mind that it isn't built in Bend, Oregon, because Breedlove says all its Atlas series models are shipped there to be properly inspected and set-up, before they are sent: so maybe that explains why this was such a high quality instrument?

The guitar was comfortable to hold, with a fast and very smooth feeling neck. It includes a very high quality pickup and preamp system. Is it value for money? Well it's not cheap. It inhabits a small part of the market where you just start to see instruments from the big names in US acoustic guitars, like low-end

Martins and Taylors, as well as Takamines and others of that ilk. Certainly, this Breedlove is their match and can stand comparison with anything at that price that we've yet seen. All guitars are personal, though, so you need to audition as many as you can. Just make sure you include this one on your list! I'd add that it comes with a deluxe fitted hard shell case, which you need to consider. If you are a serious acoustic guitarist in the market for a higher quality instrument a league above the usual mass-produced models, then this guitar may be the instrument for you. it could be (Breed) love at first sight. Sorry!



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IRON & WINE PHOTOGRAPH © CHRIS BATA



# L.R. Baggs

Acoustic specialist L.R. Baggs says the venue DI is one-stop solution for live electro-acoustic guitarists. But does this unit stand up to the test? **Jamie Humphries** took one on the road to find out.



One of the biggest problems the acoustic guitarist faces when playing live is being able to amplify the sound and yet keep it

natural and as un-DI'd as possible. And the other the other problem is the risk of feedback!

According to its makers, The LR Baggs Venue DI presents a one-stop solution that tackles both of these problems. L.R. Baggs is an American company with a long history of producing professional pieces of gear for electro-acoustic players, including some renowned, very natural sounding, acoustic pickups, top quality pre-amps and acoustic amplifiers, so we had high hopes for this chunky piece of kit when it arrived.

## L.R. Baggs Venue DI



In essence what you have here is an acoustic preamp that combines a transformer-coupled DI output, an EQ specifically tuned for acoustic instruments, a volume boost footswitch and an easy to read chromatic tuner with a mute/tune footswitch. Baggs calls it a one-stop solution and it is – effectively doing the job of three pedals in one.

The first thing to say is that is a piece of equipment clearly designed for pro and serious semi-pro users. It's extremely well made and has a series of controls, two

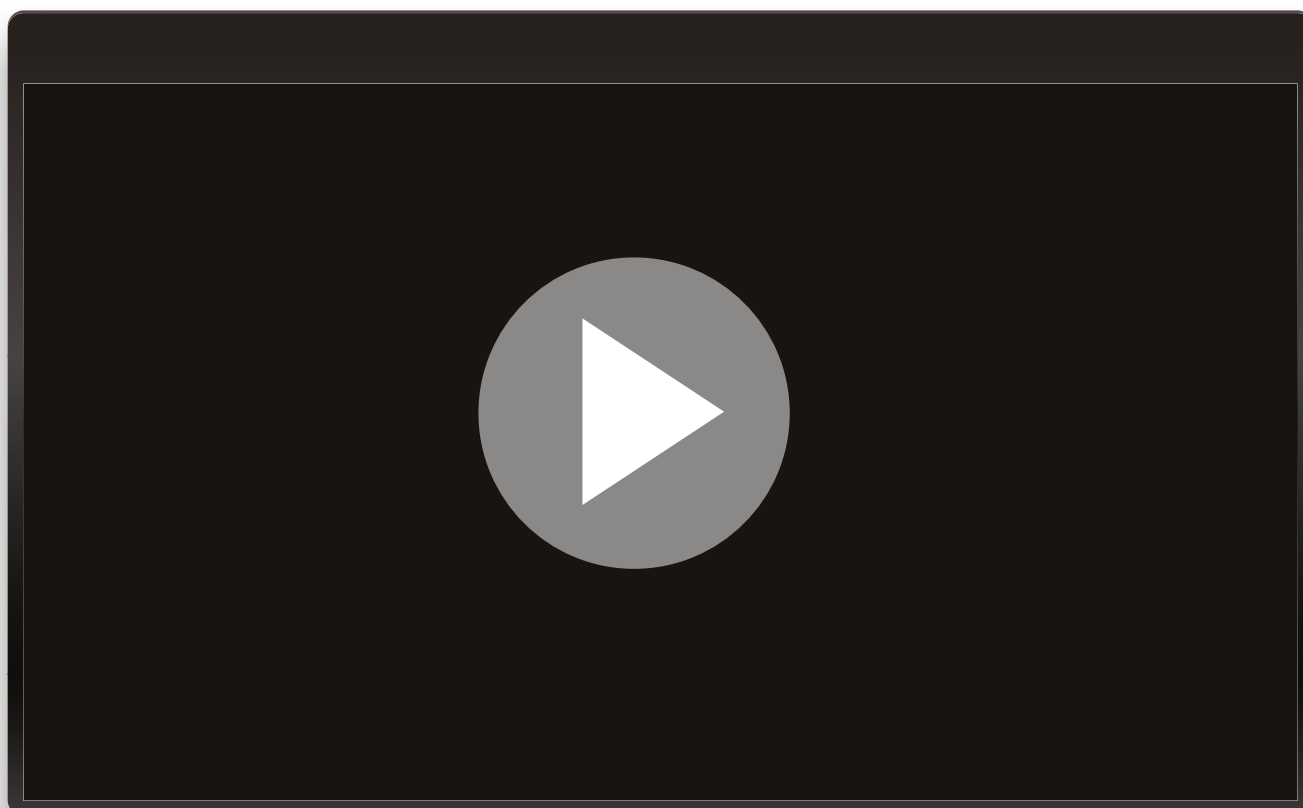


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The unit itself has adjustable gain controls for both passive and active pickups, as well as a five band EQ system, for tailoring your sound and cutting unwanted frequencies, or boosting, as desired.

rugged footswitches and a tuner display. The unit boasts a very natural, transparent pre amp, that with the EQ set flat, will amplify the natural sound of your guitar and its own onboard pre-amp. Obviously, the quality of the sound you get there of this depends on the quality of your guitar and its pickup system.

The unit itself has adjustable gain controls for both passive and active pickups, as well as a five band EQ system, for tailoring your sound and cutting unwanted frequencies, or boosting, as desired. It also has a phase switch to achieve your optimum tone and also help combat feedback. There's

also a notch filter that helps you eliminate feedback through fine-tuning. Finally, there is an adjustable boost control that enables you to increase your signal by pressing one of the footswitches - a very useful feature for soloing or pushing up the level when swapping from pick to fingerstyle.

The unit also has a very clear visual display meter, in the form of a clip meter, for setting the correct gain, and also a tuner display. The tuner is very clear and accurate and ideal for those dark stage moments between songs. As well as this, the tuner features a mute function for silent tuning. The box also includes

both 1/4" and XLX output, and the application of these is explained in the accompanying demo video.

For the demo I tested the unit with a Yamaha APX guitar, and as you can hear in the demo the results are very impressive. I personally was very interested in this unit, as although I play mainly electric, my guitars are all fitted with piezo pickups and I've been searching for a unit to help amplify these live for a while. I gave the unit the ultimate road test and took it out on a month long UK tour. The unit stood up to the rigours of pro touring and the sound of the unit was very impressive, giving my piezo a more authentic tone.

The Venue DI isn't cheap, but it's also not super-expensive and I should point out it comes with a case that will help you to protect your investment. In terms of value for money I think it would be well worth checking out if you are serious about your acoustic tone. Just as the maker says, it really does everything you need in a single tough, compact unit and also offers professional connection options. Definitely a keeper!





# Tanglewood Sundance

## TW40 O AN E

Tanglewood is probably the biggest selling quality acoustic guitar range in the UK. It's huge in Europe too and now starting to appear in US stores. But with the world awash with good quality, affordable acoustics, what makes Tanglewood stand out? We gave **Rick Graham** one of the latest models and asked him to try to get to the bottom of the Tanglewood mystique.



t's with a tip of the hat to the 'classic' manufacturing period of the 1940's that Tanglewood conceived its brand new 'Sundance

Historic' range of acoustic guitars. To help them, the UK company called on Swedish guitar builder Michael Sanden - not the first time he's loaned Tanglewood his highly regarded design expertise. From the aesthetics right down to the playability it's clear, though, that this range is not just a recreation of an existing guitar. It's a character in its own right.

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### Tanglewood Sundance TW40 O AN E



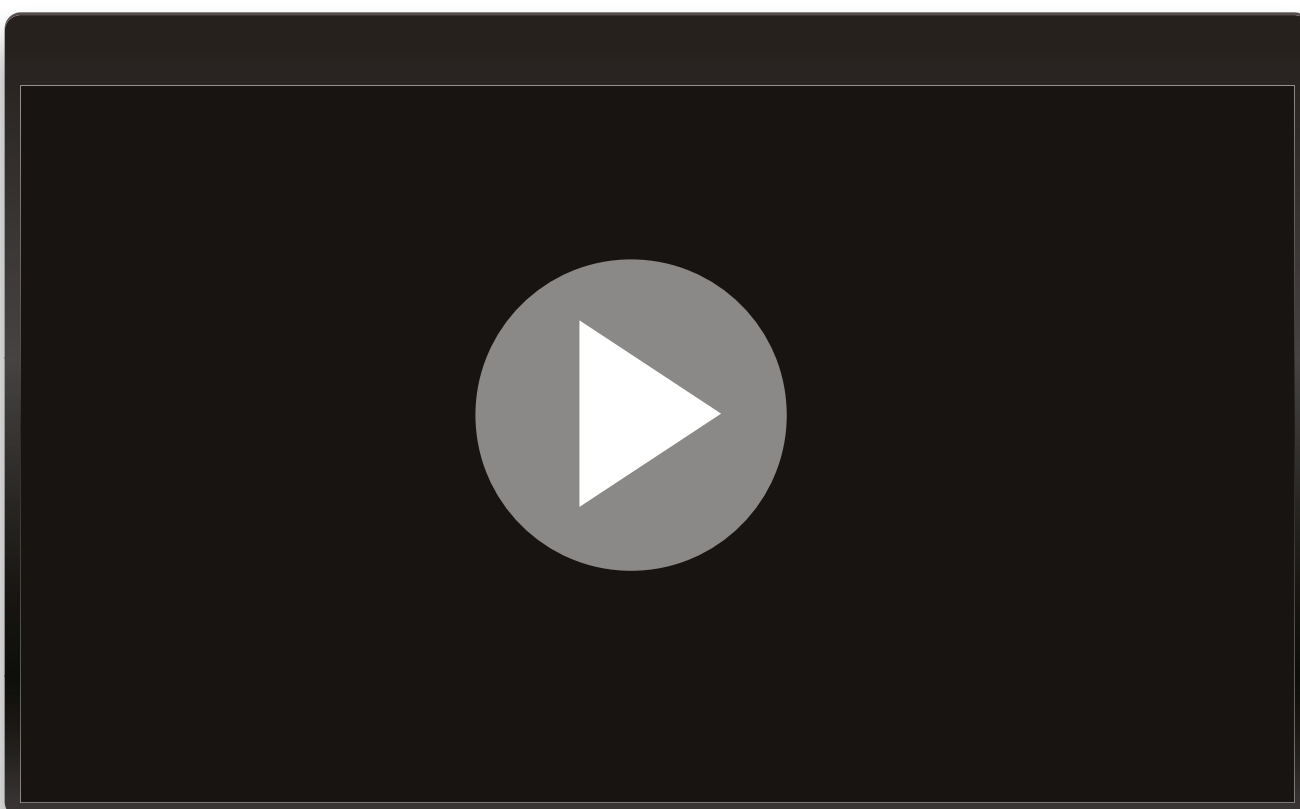
**RATING** ★★★★★

I must admit that I wasn't quite sure what to expect – 'modern vintages' can be a mixed bag - but from the moment the TW40 O AN E was unboxed I couldn't help but be impressed by its beauty. The first thing to catch my eye was the fabulous natural gloss finish, coupled with those distinctive vintage features. The 'O' refers to the fact that it is an 'Orchestra' shape (like so many acoustic designations, originally a CF Martin size), while the 'E' indicates that it is an electro-acoustic model. That might have been awkward on a guitar designed to look like an old-timer, but the

[...>] 192







electrics have been very cleverly hidden inside the guitar to maintain the impression.

In terms of specifications, Tanglewood have opted for a solid spruce top with laminated mahogany for the back and sides. The word 'lamine' can set off alarm bells with purists, but it shouldn't. The most crucial part of an acoustic guitar is the soundboard and the Tanglewood's solid top is what matters here. The use of laminated wood for the back and sides keeps the guitar affordable and is common in this price range. The neck is also made of mahogany and profile wise does feel like a bit of a handful, but that's testament to Tanglewood's desire to keep things as authentic

as possible and is by no means a negative, because it really does feel great to play. It's a traditional one-piece design with a reinforcing diamond volute at the rear of the headstock. The fingerboard is rosewood, as is the bridge, while bone is the material of choice for the nut and saddle. The bridge pins are made from Ivory ABS and the 'tortoiseshell' pick guard really does add to the guitar's vintage vibe. I found the 'squared off' headstock also particularly attractive and the open back Waverly-style machine heads really made me feel that I was playing a very unique guitar – a far cry from the countless more or less identical Chinese acoustic guitars currently out there.

[...>] 194





From the moment I started playing the Sundance it became quite apparent that its size has no bearing on the sheer volume and quality of tone that it can produce. I put it through its paces playing styles ranging from very subtle classical fingerpicked arpeggios, to full on powerful open chord strumming and it responded to everything I gave it with ease and class. Yes, this really is a lovely guitar.

Amplified, the result was no different thanks to the inclusion of a Fishman Sonitone pickup and pre-amp. The pre-amp itself, comprised of a volume and tone dial, is housed just within the sound-hole for easy access and although at first I found it to be a little fiddly to access, it didn't take long to get used to.

It's not that often that I come across a guitar that is not only a pleasure to play straight out of the box, but that also has good looks and tone and comes at such an attractive price. And that's really the key here.



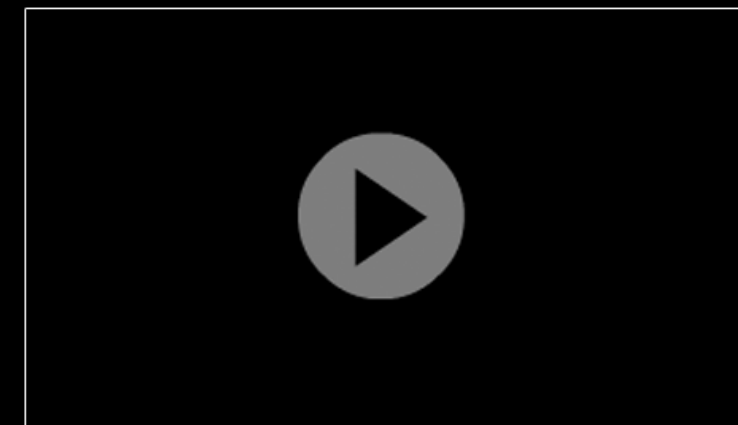
There are dozens of electro-acoustic guitars selling around the price of this Tanglewood, but few of them look anything like so nice, thanks to the vintage inspiration, few are as well built and few sound as good - acoustic or amplified. If this is your target price range, check this one out. It's going to be hard to beat.



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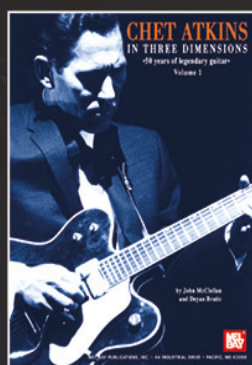


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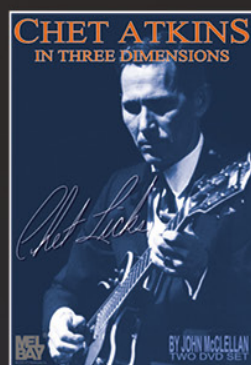




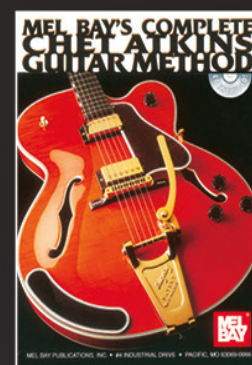
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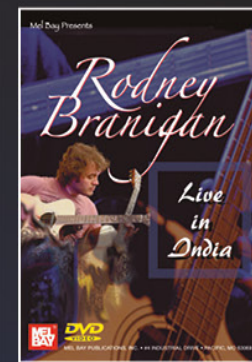
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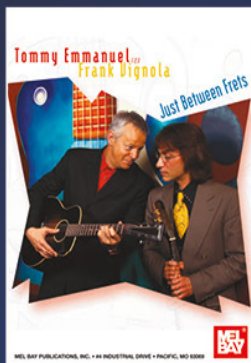


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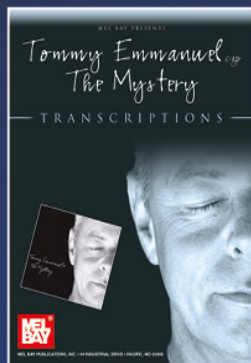


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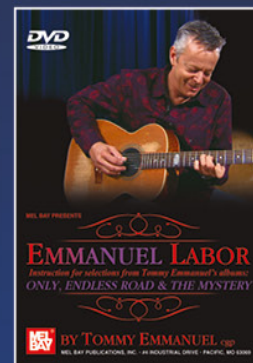
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**ACOUSTIC.**  
magazine

Rating out of five  
How well did this guitar fare?

Build Quality	○○○○○
Sound Quality	○○○○○
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