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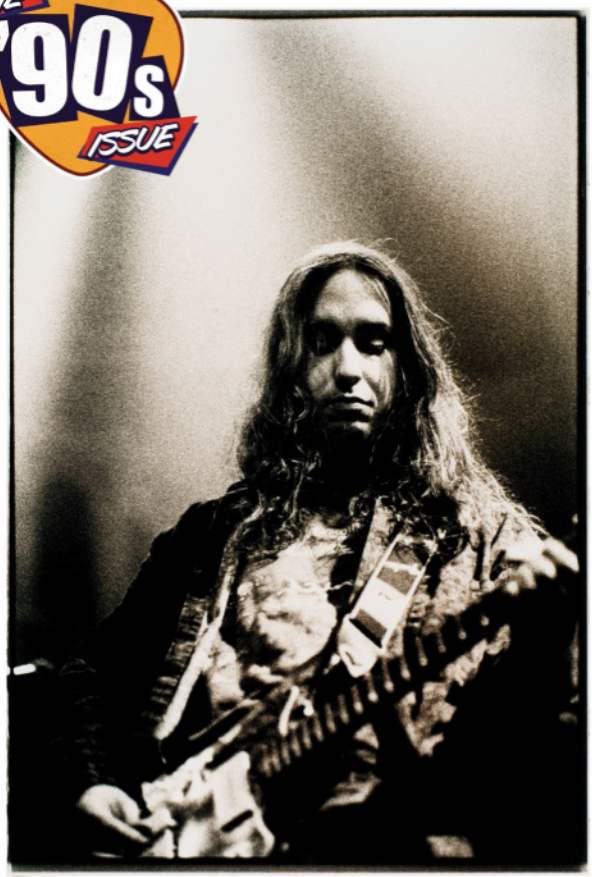
THE NINETIES!

VOL. 44 | NO. 11 | NOVEMBER 2023

SO YEAH, HERE'S WHAT WE'VE GOT...

>>>>>>**14**: In the lush, green land where you'd normally find the Tune-Ups, former *Guitar World* editor-in-chief Brad Tolinski explains how something that smelled like Teen Spirit ruled the Nineties. And don't hyperventilate — the Tune-Ups will be back next month!
>>>>>>>**20**: Tired of the same old Nineties albums? So are we, sort of. Check out these 10 gems that you might've missed — or simply forgotten about.
>>>>>>>**22**: The rise and fall of Britpop, the Nineties' other massive, guitar-based movement. Well, one of them, anyway.
>>>>>>>**30**: Ten essential live rock and metal albums from the Nineties. Of course they're from the Nineties. And yes, we like to spell out the word "Nineties" around here.
>>>>>>>**32**: An interesting assemblage of guitar-playing humans — including **Steve Stevens, George Lynch, Richie Kotzen, Richie Faulkner, Gavin Rossdale, Dave Mustaine, Nita Strauss, Paul Gilbert, K.K. Downing, Myles Kennedy** and many, many more — choose the Nineties' best stuff.
>>>>>>>**42**: We take a quick glance back at nu metal...
>>>>>>>**44**: ...before revisiting the retro designs, digital innovations and misfit toys that defined guitar technology in the Nineties. After that, we interview...
>>>>>>>**52**: Everclear's **Art Alexakis**
>>>>>>>**56**: Living Colour's **Vernon Reid**
>>>>>>>**60**: The Verve Pipe's **Brian Vander Ark**
>>>>>>>**62**: Former Black Crowes guitarist **Marc Ford**
>>>>>>>**66**: Ride guitarist — and former Oasis (and Hurricane #1) man — **Andy Bell**
>>>>>>>**70**: The guitarist from a band called Soundgarden. We believe his name is **Kim Thayil**.



Dinosaur Jr.'s J Mascis in action in Amsterdam, March 10, 1994. Coheed and Cambria's Travis Stever considers Mascis the Nineties' guitarist of the decade and cites Dinosaur Jr.'s *Where You Been* as one of the decade's greatest guitar albums

NIELS VAN IPEREN/GETTY IMAGES

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by Rage Against the Machine
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The Gibson J-200's questionable modifications didn't matter much to many of the most popular recording artists of the Sixties and beyond. The list of legendary recordings featuring a Sixties J-200 is truly astounding. George Harrison used one with the Beatles on the White Album, *Let It Be* and *Abbey Road* on songs that include "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" and "Here Comes the Sun."

THIS MONTH'S COVER: GETTY IMAGES (PHOTOS) / MAGICTORCH (ILLUSTRATION/TREATMENT)

WOODSHED

VOL. 44 | NO. 11 | NOVEMBER 2023

GROANING THE NINETIES BLUES

IN 1993, I lucked my way into my first editing/writing job at a daily newspaper in upstate New York. A year later, I asked our music reviewer if I could review a CD or two — and that's when all *this* began — the kinda unthinkable thought of melding my love of editing/writing with my love of music. (Of course, as a longtime guitarist, coming to *Guitar World* in 2011 was a whole new level of "I can't believe this is happening!" — but I'll just stick to the Nineties for now.) I'll never forget the albums I reviewed in '94 and '95; I still listen to them, still love them, still mentally review them... still mentally review my reviews! That said, those albums — and a lot of my other favorites from those floppy-haired days — have sort of slipped into obscurity. They're not even mentioned by anyone (except me, of course) in this issue, which is literally an entire issue of *GW* dedicated to the Nineties. Obviously, I can't allow this! So, on that long-winded note, here's a quick guide to some of the albums that meant a lot to the younger, "newsie" version of me. Enjoy!

The Fabulous Thunderbirds, *Walk That Walk, Talk That Talk* (1991): Jimmie Vaughan quits the band? Just replace him with two excellent guitarists!

The Vaughan Brothers, *Family Style* (1990): Stevie Ray Vaughan's (totally ignored these days) swan song.

Eric Clapton, *From the Cradle* (1994): Why doesn't anyone talk about Clapton's angry-ass solo on "Groaning the Blues"? I'm tore down over this!

R.E.M., *Monster* (1994): Peter Buck buys a distortion box and goes glam/grunge. Hey, at least "Strange Currencies" has been making a few appearances in Hulu's (excellent) *The Bear* lately.

Teenage Fanclub, *Grand Prix* (1995): A masterpiece.

Sonic Youth, *Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star* (1994): "Bull in the Heather" is an alternate-tuned gem that even your grandma could love. Tell her!

Various, *Stone Free: A Tribute to Jimi Hendrix* (1993): Home of top-notch Jimi covers by Jeff Beck & Seal, Living Colour, the Spin Doctors and Eric Clapton.

George Harrison, *Live in Japan* (1992): Wanna hear the former Beatle play slide guitar in a live setting? Here's your one option. This one comes with a side order of Clapton, whose band Harrison borrowed for this tour. ***— Damian Fanelli***

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CINDY MOORHEAD

SOUNDING BOARD

Got something you want to say? **EMAIL US AT:** GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com

Sophie's soulful shred

I'd like to thank you for the excellent cover story on Sophie Lloyd [*September 2023*], who is like a breath of fresh air. As a longtime contributor to *Guitar World* (for 37 years, from 1982 to 2019), I've listened to — and interviewed — hundreds of great guitarists. What I enjoy so fervently about Sophie is the sheer exuberance of her playing; she combines finesse and technique into a spellbinding style that lifts my mood every time I hear it.

— Joe Lalaina

Vito Bratta, still the Lion king

I just read your interview with Vito Bratta in the September 2023 issue, and I savored every word. He's been a favorite of mine, and I think I can speak for many others when I say it was euphoric to hear him talking about White Lion again after all these years. Good job! Now do us all a solid and transcribe something from the White Lion catalog.

— Ted Corby

Thanks for the story on Vito Bratta. Man, I remember that summer listening to *Pride* and wearing out the VHS copy I had of White Lion's *Live at the Ritz*. He's one of those guys; give him a guitar and he can solo over anything and never miss a note. I'm surprised he didn't mention the ADA MP1, though. He's the reason I bought one! Maybe when he switched to the Carvin Power Amp?

— Ron Whitemyer

Back when yelling "Free Bird" at shows wasn't a tired joke

How's this for a Lynyrd Skynyrd story [*June 2023*]? The first time I ever heard "Free Bird" was at the old Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Columbus, Ohio, on September 29, 1974. I had sixth-row seats and T. Rex opened. The price of the ticket was $5. I owned *Second Helping*, but the only song being played on the radio was "Sweet Home Alabama." At that time, Columbus had a great, progressive FM station, but — like me — it had yet to experience the brute force of the song. During the show, there were some random shouts of "Free Bird," but that meant nothing to me. Until their encore. Needless to say, the first thing I did the next day was go buy *Pronounced 'Lĕh-'nérd 'Skin-'nérd*.

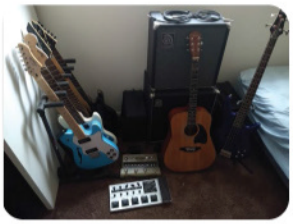
— Steven H. Spring, South Charleston, Ohio

No Metallica song? Sad but true

How in the hell can you have Metallica on the cover of the June 2023 issue, yet not even have a transcription of one of their songs? It's like wiping before you poop: it makes no sense!

— Christian Rivera

DEFENDERS *of the Faith*



Haldane Bradshaw

AGE: 36
HOMETOWN: West Valley, UT
GUITARS: Jackson 7-string Dinky, LTD M-100, LTD MH-53, Firefly Pure Series semi hollow Telecaster, Squier Mustang, Washburn acoustic, Ibanez GIO Bass, 1969 Ampeg Jet J12, Ampeg BA-115, Line 6 Spider IV, Crate 112
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Avenged Sevenfold "Afterlife," Slipknot "Psychosocial," Muse "Hysteria," Journey "Separate Ways" and stuff I've written
GEAR I WANT MOST: Fender Telecaster Deluxe, Gibson Les Paul, 1977 Marshall Master Volume amp head with 1960B cabinet

Rick Patt

HOMETOWN: Los Angeles, CA
GUITARS: Jackson Soloist, Peavey Vandenberg w/DiMarzio pickups, Jackson 8-string, Fender Telecaster and Martin X Series acoustic
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: "Bat Country," "Nightmare," "Shepherd of Fire" and "Unholy Confessions," all by Avenged Sevenfold; plus Paul Gilbert "Colorado Bulldog" and Nita Strauss "Alegria"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Fractal Audio Axe-Fx III and Ibanez JIVA10

Marcelo Roascio

AGE: 54
HOMETOWN: Buenos Aires, Argentina
GUITARS: Ernie Ball Music Man Luke III, Sterling by Music Man LK100, DOH Series, Fernandes Ravelle Deluxe, Ibanez R335GF, Fender Jeff Beck Strat
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Originals for my instrumental trio (Roascio RCM), plus Deep Purple "Black Night," Gary Moore "The Loner" and Whitesnake "Fool for Your Loving"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Valeton GP-200, Orange Super Crush 100, Godin Fairmount CH

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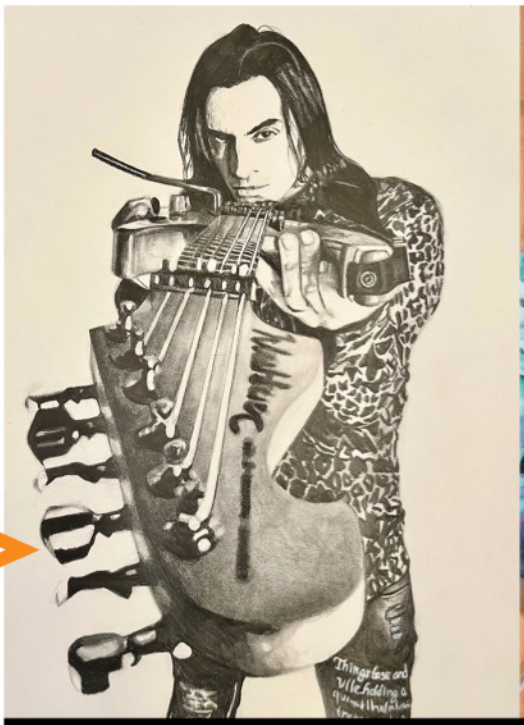
OF THE MONTH

If you've created a drawing, painting or sketch of your favorite guitarist and would like to see it in an upcoming issue of *Guitar World*, email **GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com** with a JPG or PDF of the image!



NUNO BETTENCOURT BY ANTHONY DAVIS

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN BY CAITLIN LANG

Jimmy King

AGE: 47
LOCATION: Toms River, NJ
GUITARS: Fender 1988 HM Strat, Fender 1997 Jimi Hendrix Voodoo Strat, Fender 1957 Reissue Stratocaster with a Custom Shop neck
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Slayer "Angel of Death," Black Sabbath "A National Acrobat," Madball "Set It Off," Sick of It All "Never Back Down"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Gibson Jimi Hendrix 1967 SG Custom, Fender Custom Shop Dale Wilson Stratocaster

Sam Cassiano

AGE: 64
HOMETOWN: El Paso, TX
GUITARS: Gibson Les Paul Classic goldtop, Fender American Standard Stratocaster, 1976 Fender Fretless Precision Bass
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Pink Floyd "Comfortably Numb," Jeff Beck "Diamond Dust," ZZ Top "La Grange"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Fender Princeton Reverb

Ted Loughry

AGE: 55 (I can't drive it, either!)
HOMETOWN: A mile high in Denver, CO!
GUITARS: '88 Charvel, Model 4, Fender USA Professional Strat, Fender Acoustasonic Tele, EVH Special, Gibson Challenger II
SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Buddy Miles "Them Changes," John Moreland "You Don't Care Enough for Me to Cry," Stevie Ray Vaughan "Texas Flood"
GEAR I WANT MOST: Mono M80 Dual Electric Guitar Case and a Mono Tick

Are you a Defender of the Faith? Send a photo, along with your answers to the questions above, to **GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com**. And pray!

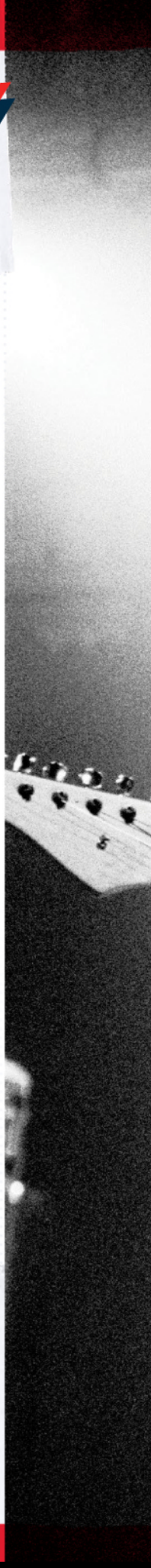
THE '90s ISSUE

SMELL-O-VISION!

A GRUNGY GUITAR GUIDE TO THE '90s

GUITAR WORLD

SPECIAL ISSUE



14

After the electric guitar shredded itself to death in the Eighties, it had to rebuild and start over again. This is the story of how something that smelled like teen spirit ruled the NINETIES

By Brad Tolinski

PETER PAKVIS/REDFERNS

Nirvana's Kurt Cobain with his mouth ajar in Amsterdam, November 25, 1991. Cobain was a ferocious rhythm guitarist who rarely lost the groove, even when hurtling himself across the stage with total abandon

"AAARRRRRGGGHH!!! THIS IS so flippin' AMAZING! Hahahaha. Hmmm, what should I do first? Burn my guitar ... or light MYSELF on fire! Give me MORE, but GOD ALMIGHTY, MAKE IT STOP!" Does that sound insane?

Yes, indeed. But that was the kind of crazy talk many guitarists engaged in during the Eighties. And who could blame them? George Lynch, Vito Bratta, Steve Vai, Nuno Bettencourt, Reb Beach, Yngwie Malmsteen, Kirk Hammett, Eric Johnson, Paul Gilbert, Marty Friedman and about a billion other handsome virtuoso shredders just kept getting faster and better until all you could scream was, "I surrender! Fuck playing the guitar, I'm gonna join the Marines."

Then suddenly on September 10, 1991, a date that will live in infamy, everything changed.

Nirvana, a melodic punk rock band from Seattle, released a simple four-chord slugfest titled "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and sparked a musical revolution that blew all the fleet-fingered pretty boys out of the water.

Nirvana and their charismatic singer/guitarist Kurt Cobain championed gritty "authenticity" over the glamorous excesses of the hair metal of the Eighties, and their disheveled presence suddenly made bands like Winger, Warrant and Whitesnake look like dolled-up saloon girls in comparison. And just like that, the guitar virtuoso crazy train was completely derailed like the Norfolk Southern locomotive in Ohio.

As shredder extraordinaire George Lynch recalled in Tom Beaujour and Richard Bienstock's excellent 2021 book *Nöthin' But a Good Time: The Uncensored History of the '80s Hard Rock Explosion*, "Unfortunately, [*Eighties hair metal*] worked its way to an apex, and then we backed ourselves into a corner. There was no place to go. Because you could only play so fast and then what did it really matter? Nirvana came along and said it all with one nasty, dirty, attitude note. You go, 'Ah, that's rock and roll!'"

In a purge that would've made a Russian dictator green with envy, anything to do with Eighties guitar hair metal — the Spandex, the decadence, the pointy guitars, the makeup, the tapping, the whammy dives — was put up against the wall and shot. And whoever managed to escape was sentenced to live out the rest of their days doing hard labor at the bottom of the charts or playing 400-seaters in Poughkeepsie.

While some *Guitar World* readers mourned the loss of their well-coiffed heroes, many more breathed an audible sigh of relief. You no longer had to be genetically superhuman to play rock 'n' roll or get a record deal; being a talented schlub was just fine. You still had to play well, but you didn't have to lock yourself in a room like a Benedictine monk and practice arpeggios in three octaves for 10 hours a day. A good song with a solid riff was all you needed, and you were good to go.

THE MYTH OF GRUNGE GUITAR #1

ONE OF THE biggest myths of the Nineties was that the alternative musicians of the day were as primitive as cave-dwelling mud people. The truth is, there were many imaginative, if not downright sophisticated guitarists during that era, including Nirvana's great insurrectionist, Kurt Cobain.

While Cobain's primary gift was writing spectacular vocal melodies over surprising chord changes like on "Lithium," he was also a ferocious rhythm guitarist who rarely lost the groove, even when hurtling himself across the stage with total abandon or screaming the choruses to any of his memorable anthems.

"All the years I spent practicing scales and virtuoso-type riffs, [*Cobain*] was locking onto these chords in a very connected way," shredder icon Steve Vai once observed. "When you saw Kurt strumming chords, it was virtuosic in a sense because it sounded like an orchestra when he slammed that guitar. Every string had its own ZIP code, if you know what I mean."

Even if you don't buy Vai's assessment that Kurt was a "virtuoso," there were plenty of other alternative rockers that deserved the title during the Great Nineties Reset. Seattle's Kim Thayil and Chris Cornell of Soundgarden, for example, created daring textures via unorthodox drop tunings and unusual time signatures on many of their biggest songs. In 1994 the duo used a bizarre E-E-B-B-B-B tuning over an unconventional 5/4 time signature on their single "My Wave," a song made even more unusual by the fact that Ben Shepherd used a wah pedal on his bass.

And there was no denying the greatness of Thayil's wild-ass solo on the band's chart-topping "Black Hole Sun." Sounding like it was being played forwards and backwards at the same time, it was perhaps the most avant-garde lead guitar break on a Number 1 song in the history of rock. (It's interesting to note that "Black Hole Sun" also went to Number 1 in Iceland, because if I had to guess what Icelandic rock music sounded like, it would probably resemble the alien splatter-art guitar solo on "Black Hole Sun.")

In addition to Soundgarden, there were other groups and guitarists serving up more great riffs and solos than you could shake a Led Zeppelin at. Hard rock bands like Alice in Chains ("Man in the Box," "Them Bones"), Red Hot Chili Peppers ("Under the Bridge," "Give It Away"), Stone Temple Pilots ("Interstate Love Song," "Plush"), Smashing Pumpkins ("Bullet with Butterfly Wings," "1979") and Green Day ("Longview," "Basket Case") kept mainstream rock radio humming for the next decade with ballsy, memorable guitar rock.

JOE GIRON/ATLASICONS.COM

Soundgarden's Kim Thayil — surrounded by a lovely sofa and his ubiquitous Guild S-100 — in 1994. "The pickups were somewhat microphonic, so you'd get this cool feedback," he tells us. "It wouldn't really squeal, but you'd get this nice little hum." For the rest of this interview, aim your eyeballs at page 70!

And it could be argued that the Nineties was superior to the Eighties when it came to top-notch, up-your-nose-with-a rubber-hose heavy metal. Just skimming the surface, you had Ozzy Osbourne (with Zakk Wylde), Tool, Korn, Deftones, Rage Against the Machine, System of a Down, Meshuggah, Machine Head and Napalm Death releasing brilliant and innovative albums.

> One of the biggest myths of the '90s was that its alternative musicians were as primitive as cave-dwelling mud people

COME AS YOU ARE

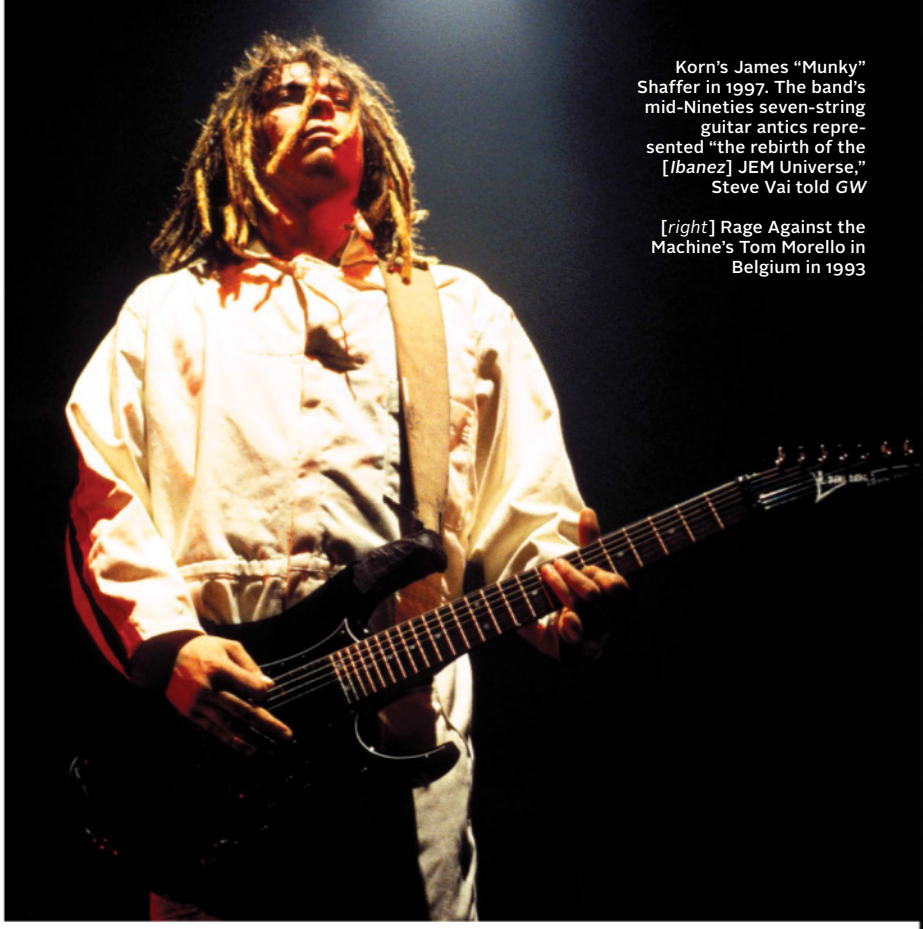
NOT ONLY DID attitudes regarding guitar playing shift, but so did just about everything else. Lyrics became more introspective, and attitudes toward the opposite sex and gay people became more enlightened.

Seattle punk rock also introduced a more relaxed dress code, which also came as a relief to many guitar players.

To be a guitar hero in the Eighties you had to have chiseled cheekbones, washboard abs and look good in tight pants. You also had to know how to apply hair dye and eye makeup with the expertise of supermodel Cara Delevingne. It was exhausting. While it was hard enough to play like Whitesnake's John Sykes, it was even more difficult to look like him!

In the Nineties, being a slob was no issue. You could wear jeans or baggy shorts, a thrift-shop T-shirt and a flannel shirt or hoodie and be done with it. That was a fantastic development if you had a gut and would rather pound a beer (or seven) rather than spend a week's pay on a line of cocaine. And if you were balding and sorta ugly it didn't matter that much... you could just grow a beard, get some tattoos and shave your head. That was awesome, too!

That development was particularly good news for Pantera and their incredible metal guitarist Dimebag Darrell. Pantera had struggled throughout much of the Eighties because, frankly, they looked ridiculous in the Spandex. But once fashion trends shifted, and they were able to become who they really were — a bunch of drunk, lovable dirtbags from Texas — the world became their öyster.



Korn's James "Munky" Shaffer in 1997. The band's mid-Nineties seven-string guitar antics represented "the rebirth of the [*Ibanez*] JEM Universe," Steve Vai told *GW*

[*right*] Rage Against the Machine's Tom Morello in Belgium in 1993

BRIGITTE ENGL/REDFERNS (MUNKY) GIE KNAEPS/GETTY IMAGES (MORELLO)

UNPLUGGED

ANOTHER INTERESTING MANIFESTATION of the Great Nineties Reset was the enormous success of *Unplugged*, the MTV music series that showcased musicians performing acoustic versions of their songs. What could be more "authentic" than stripping your biggest songs down to their bare essentials than playing them on a Gibson Hummingbird with no amplification?

New-school bands who performed on the show like Nirvana, Alice in Chains, Hole, Stone Temple Pilots and Oasis took great pleasure in demonstrating that they didn't need big-ass amps to bring drama and intensity to their songs.

At the same time, the show allowed classic rockers like Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Kiss to reemerge, while showing "the kids" how big boys played "real" guitars.

SUPERFUZZ BIG MUFF

GUITAR GEAR ALSO went under some major transformations in the Nineties. During the Eighties, players took pride in performing with shiny, candy-colored, custom instruments tricked-out with things like locking tremolos, scooped fretboards, pointy headstocks and unusual pickup configurations. Whereas in the Nineties, even being seen with a guitar that had any of those qualities could get your grunge card revoked permanently (unless you could prove you were being ironic!).

Most new-school guitarists gravitated toward vintage models, like Foo Fighter Dave Grohl who could be seen playing a Pelham blue 1967 Gibson Trini Lopez guitar. But really, almost any guitar would do as long as it had some wear and tear and didn't look like it cost an arm and a leg. In a hilarious *Guitar World* interview conducted with Cobain by our ne'er-do-well Seattle correspondent Jeff Gilbert, the Nirvana iconoclast summed the general aesthetic and attitude of the era perfectly.

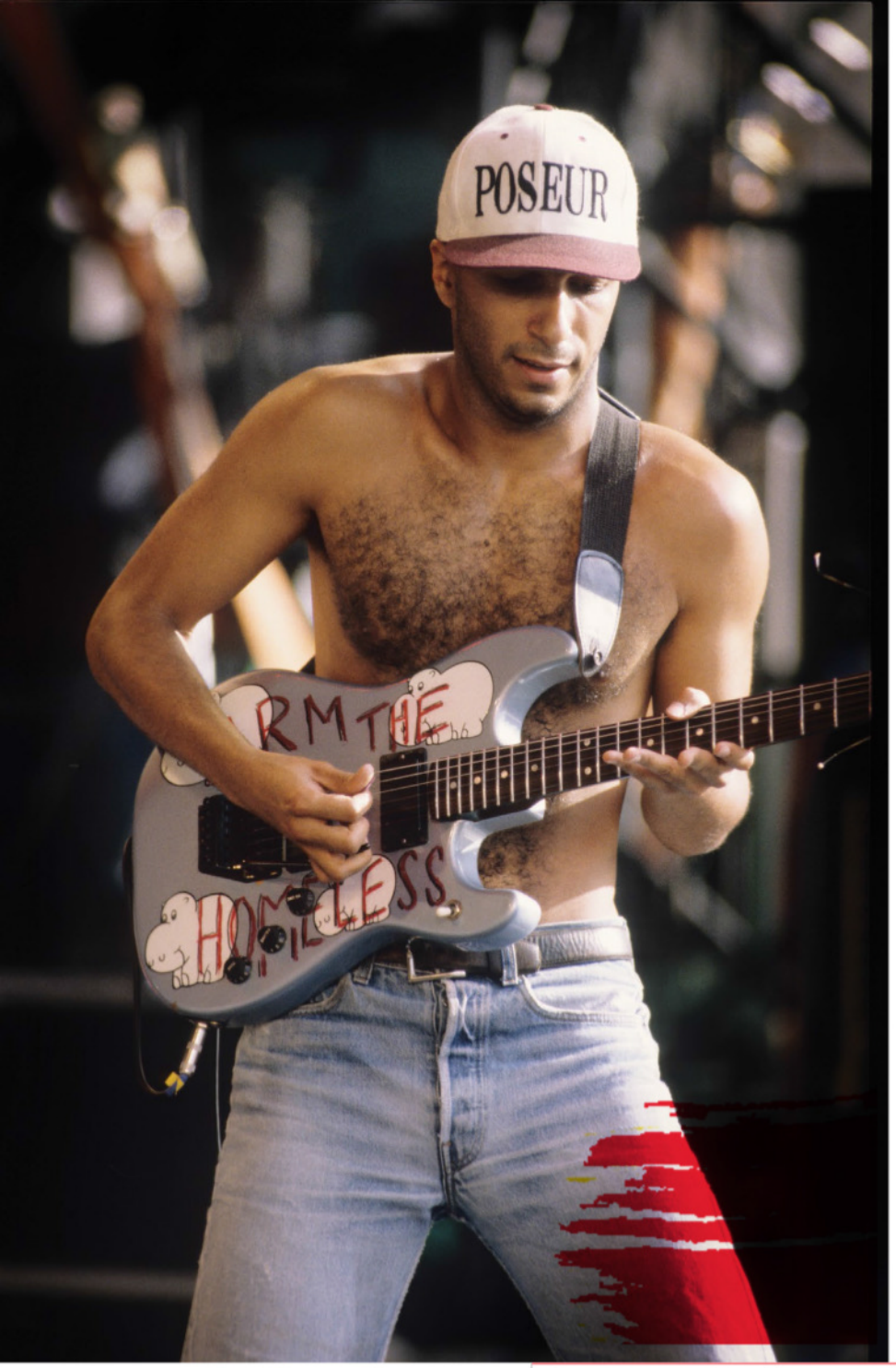
After proclaiming his love for Fender Mustang guitars, he counterintuitively explained why. "They're cheap and totally inefficient, and they sound like crap," he said. "They are also small and don't stay in tune, and when you want to raise the string action on the fretboard, you have to loosen all the strings and completely remove the bridge. You have to turn these little screws with your fingers and hope that you've estimated right. If you screw up, you have to repeat the process over and over until you get it right. Whoever invented that guitar was a dork."

And that was why it was his favorite instrument!

Pedalboards also shrank in size and ambition. Just a few years earlier, elaborate Bob Bradshaw rigs that allowed you to control a bunch of rack-mounted effects were all the rage, but in the punk rock Nineties, a few pedals seemed to do the trick. Even Rage Against the Machine guitarist Tom Morello, a man known for his innovative use of effects, pulled most of what he needed out of a modest four or five pedals and a Marshall amp.

Speaking to *Guitar World*, Morello laughed off any assertion that he had a gargantuan pedalboard. "I've been accused countless times of using a ton of effects — but I've used the same four pedals for the last 30 years: a wah, a [*Digi-Tech*] Whammy, a delay and a phaser. It's just about finding different applications for the same old shit. The electric guitar is a relatively new instrument on the planet. It's just a piece of wood with six strings and a few electronics. But you can manipulate it."

He continued by explaining his unique hip-hop approach to his place in the



band: "As soon as I had that revelation in Rage, it was like, 'I'm the DJ in the band, but rather than sampling, I'm gonna use my bare hands to create this new vocabulary for the electric guitar.'" And he did exactly that.

But perhaps the most hilarious irony of the Nineties came when Korn released their debut album in 1994. Guitarists James "Munky" Shaffer and Brian "Head" Welch raised more than a few eyebrows when they each appeared on stage with the ultimate tricked-out Eighties guitar — a Steve Vai seven-string Ibanez Universe. But instead of using it to shred, they took advantage of the low seventh string to produce some of the dirtiest, most bone-rattling power chords the world had ever known.

> Korn raised eyebrows when they appeared with the ultimate tricked-out '80s guitar — a Steve Vai 7-string Ibanez Universe

According to the duo, they stumbled upon the axes at a local California pawn shop. During the early days of the Nineties, no guitarist wanted to be caught dead with one, so the price of the instruments had fallen through the floor. Although the two guitarists were broke, the guitars were so cheap they decided it was worth buying a couple of them as an experiment. To their amazement, they discovered the gleaming seven-string guitars were actually incredible for creating the ugliest of sounds.

"I knew that somewhere, some kid was going to get the concept of the seven-string and do things with it that were beyond what I was doing," Vai told *Metal Injection* in 2020. "Then, I'm driving down the street and this song comes on the radio and I'm like, 'What the heck is that?', and I pull the car over. It sounded so heavy, I instinctively knew it was a seven-string and somebody was doing something with it that was much different than what I was doing. And that band was Korn. That was sort of the rebirth of the JEM Universe."

THE MYTH OF GRUNGE GUITAR #2

WHICH BRINGS US TO perhaps the biggest myth about the Nineties. Grunge and alternative rock did many things, but one thing it didn't do was kill shredding. A number of brilliant guitar technicians came of age during that era, including Dimebag, John Petrucci, Ben Weinman, Adam Jones, Buckethead and Jeff Loomis, to name just a few.

The real difference was in the Eighties, you had to be one of the attractive "popular kids" to play in a rock 'n' roll band. The genuinely awesome thing about Seattle punk rock was it knocked down those walls and gave everyone permission to participate. You could be tall, short, fat, bald, hairy, pretty, ugly or even wear a bucket on your head, but as long as you had soul, wit and imagination, you could at least jump on stage without everyone laughing at you. Like a rock 'n' roll sequel to the *Revenge of the Nerds*, everyone laughed, cried and learned.

And that, as the great philosopher Miley Cyrus once said, "was pretty cool." GW

[*from left*] **Teenage Fanclub's Gerard Love (who left the band in 2018) and Norman Blake in 1992. BTW, their new album, *Nothing Lasts Forever*, comes out September 22**

GUITAR WORLD
SPECIAL ISSUE

NEVERMIND NEVERMIND!

10 overlooked **rock albums** from the **Nineties** that are worth a second listen

By Andrew Daly

20

SURELY YOU'VE HEARD Nirvana's *Nevermind*, Pearl Jam's *Ten*, Metallica's Black Album and Red Hot Chili Peppers' *Californication*. How could you not? When those albums first appeared, they were everywhere, saturating eardrums throughout the Nineties via FM radio, MTV and VH1. And yeah, it's always a treat to return to the *crème* of the proverbial crop, but then again, doesn't it get tiresome listening to something that's been played to death? If you're nodding your head in agreement, then please do check out our guide to 10 overlooked albums from the Nineties that are worth a second look and/or listen.

10. *NEVERLAND*, NEVERLAND (1991)

SOME BANDS HAVE all the pieces but can't catch a break, Neverland being no exception. It's a shame, as 1991's *Neverland* is loaded with upbeat cuts defined by Dean Ortega's impassioned vocals and guitarist Patrick Sugg's dandy licks. Ortega

MARTYN GOODACRE/GETTY IMAGES

is a solid frontman, but Sugg steals the show through his tasteful choices that cleverly harken back to the Seventies. You might recall Neverland for their single "Drinking Again," which was featured on the *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* soundtrack, but their self-titled album proved that while they never achieved significant success, they were primed for so much more.

9. *AMERICRUISER*, URGE OVERKILL (1990)

MOST WILL RECALL Urge Overkill's cover of Neil Diamond's "Girl, You'll Be a Woman Soon," featured on the *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack, and with good reason — it rocked. But the Chicago-born group's 1990 effort, *Americruiser*, gave a much clearer picture of what the band was truly about. Urge Overkill's dynamic was forever shrouded in a hint of darkness, mostly due to the complex relationship between vocalist Nash Kato and unwilling guitar hero Eddie "King" Roeser. That uneasiness was documented across *Americruiser* through its raw production (thanks, Butch Vig), angsty lyrics and bleeding-heart fretwork.

8. *NEVER BEEN CAUGHT*, THE MUMMIES (1992)

IN A DECADE alternating between grunge doldrums and leisurely, breezy pop whims, the Mummies presented something of an off-the-beaten-path alternative. As a punk band leaning heavily in the direction of late-Sixties garage rock, *Never Been Caught* advised listeners that it was still cool to swing and sway with unladen rage. The best part? That has to be how guitarist Larry Winther uses his angular Vox rig to lacerate eardrums across 17 bristling tracks, making this garage punk gem an invigorating listen.

7. *DESPISED*, SEAWEED (1991)

SUFFERING FROM A startling case of genre confusion, Seaweed cropped up on the Seattle scene with grunge intentions but were never able to rein themselves in. *En route* to interweaving punk, post-hardcore, Eighties alt and, oh yeah, grunge, Seaweed might not have been able to settle in one place for too long, but they didn't stop *Despised* from being absurdly good. Clint Werner and Wade Neal give Stone Gossard and Mike McCready a run for their early Nineties money (seriously), delivering some metal-tinged riffs bookended by crunching solos and blistering rhythms.

6. *SONGS FROM NORTHERN BRITAIN*, TEENAGE FANCLUB (1997)

STARTING SOMETIME AROUND early 1992 or so, Scottish rockers Teenage Fanclub began blissfully colliding with listeners' ears through a cavalcade of hyper-gorgeous jangle-ridden power pop records. But perhaps the best of the bunch is 1997's *Songs from Northern Britain*, which dropped at (the tail end of) a time when all things U.K. were dominating the charts. And yes, this record was a success in the U.K., but despite a massive tour with Radiohead, it was a different story worldwide, leaving *Songs from Northern Britain* in semi-obscurity. P.S.: If you really want to jump-start your Teenage Fanclub education, you should back things up to 1991's *Bandwagonesque* and 1995's *Grand Prix*, which might just be the greatest power pop record of all time.

5. *WAR BABIES*, WAR BABIES (1992)

WITH A BLOND-HAIRED, gravel-voiced stud up front in Brad Sinsel playing voice box and a lead guitarist that went by Tommy "Gunn" McMullin, you'd think *War Babies* would hike up the charts through sheer swagger alone. Sprinkle in a bit of Paul Stanley songwriting magic [*"Hang Me Up"*] and a contract with Columbia Records, and you've got a winner, right? Wrong. The problem? War Babies dropped their self-titled late-stage glam metal record just as a little band named Nirvana were beginning to make noise. Ouch.

4. *EVERY DOG HAS ITS DAY*, SALTY DOG (1990)

GIVEN THE SUCCESS of the Black Crowes' *Shake Your Money Maker*, also released in 1990, Salty Dog's near-immediate relegation never did make much sense. Seething with bluesy magic, cocksure vocals, stomping rhythms and general guitar badassery, *Every Dog Has Its Day* still manages to stop hearts all these years later. It's too bad so few have heard it. Nevertheless, Pete Reeven was a revelation on guitar, conjuring primal licks, which surprisingly are placed against his tangy banjo assertions. It's not a stretch to say Salty Dog matched the Black Crowes pound for pound here, but fate served them a raw deal. Such is life in the fast lane.

3. *SUNBURN*, BLAKE BABIES (1990)

JULIANA HATFIELD WENT on to have quite a nice solo career, but have you heard her early exploits with the jangle pop outfit Blake Babies? If not, *Sunburn* is a great place to start, with Hatfield's sweet vocals and heavy bass licks being blissfully accented by John Strohm's — whom you might also know from the Lemonheads — chiming fretwork. The lyrical themes heard on *Sunburn* can sometimes be dark, but the music has a feel-good way about it, providing the perfect dose of disconcerting duality. What's more, while Strohm's guitar interludes had been done before, *à la* Chris Bell, Johnny Marr and Peter Buck, that doesn't make them any less enjoyable.

2. *THE BOOTLICKER*, MELVINS (1999)

IF YOU'RE A Melvins fan, the weirder, the better, right? Right. To that end, the Melvins' 1999 record, *The Bootlicker*, is a prime example of the freakout hair-brained musical surgery that only Buzz Osborne and company can dare to undertake, let alone execute. *The Bootlicker* found Osborne taking his guitar on a journey through pop, jazz, metal and funk, resulting in one of the group's finest yet most bewildering albums. But the initiated be warned: once you hear Osborne deliver a riff careering into an off-the-rails solo as only he can, the mundane efforts of more pentatonic-leaning acts probably will no longer cut the musical mustard.

1. *UNION*, UNION (1998)

BEFORE FORMING UNION, Bruce Kulick and John Corabi were freshly jettisoned from Kiss and Mötley Crüe respectively, leaving their hearts, minds and egos justifiably bruised. Wondrous music ensued, but alas, despite Kulick's shredding guitar heroics, *Union* fell flat. Making matters worse, after spending years playing arenas and stadiums, languishing in clubs supporting an ailing record must have been a bitter pill. Still, *Union* is a special record with a ton of on-brand Corabi emotion built into its structure. While Kulick and Corabi will forever be associated with Kiss and the Crüe, the truth is that *Union* might be their greatest achievement. GW

IT'S ALL A BLUR...

GUITAR WORLD
SPECIAL ISSUE

The rise and fall of **Britpop**, the Nineties' *other* massive, guitar-based movement

By Jon Wiederhorn

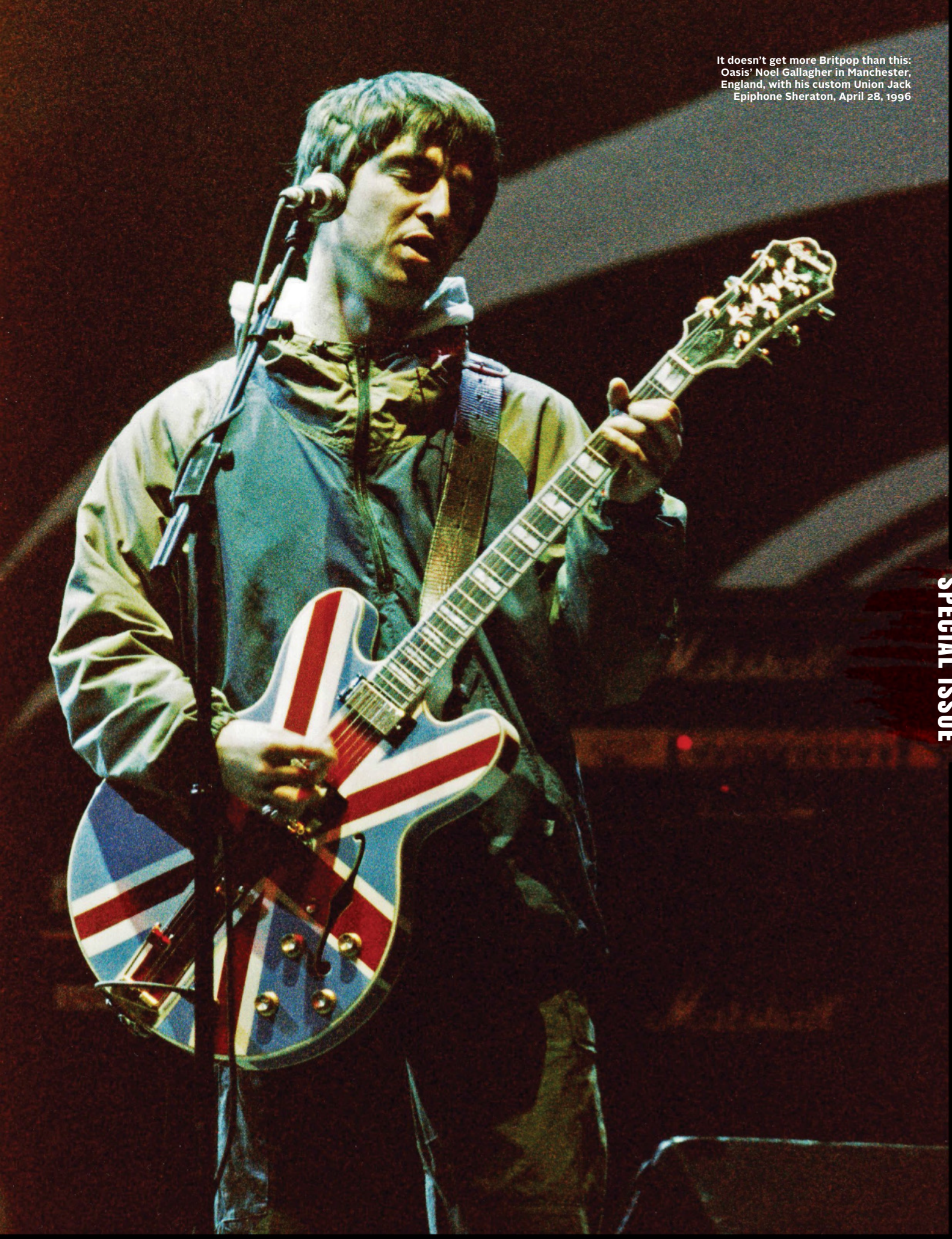
FOR THE 90,000 screaming fans on their feet at London's Wembley Stadium this past July, it must have seemed like it was the spring of 1994 all over again. Back then, Blur had just blown up on the back of the disco-ish, new wavey hit "Girls & Boys," the first single from their third album, *Parklife*, and it looked like they were going to lead their countrymates through an exciting international scene that steered around the boilerplate alt-rock sounds of the day and paid tribute to some of the greatest bands in the history of British rock.

Deemed the pioneers of Britpop, Blur spoke for a generation of British youth — at least for a while. Their guitarist, Graham Coxon, was one of the most skilled and innovative players on the scene, and frontman Damon Albarn was one of the most charismatic and quintessentially English vocalists, singing every line in an accent stronger than a keg of Fuller's Golden Pride. Gloriously incestuous, the scene flourished on connections. Albarn's muse and romantic partner was Justine Frischmann, the co-founder of (the London) Suede and the future frontwoman of Elastica. For her, Suede, Oasis, Pulp and other emerging U.K. bands, the coming years would be as wild as the crowd at the World Cup finals and as regal and majestic as the Union Jack flapping in the breeze.

Blur's two Wembley shows marked the largest audience the band had ever played for. Those immersed in the euphoria enjoyed a stunning flashback of Britpop history, back when Blur were on the top of the U.K. charts and making inroads in the rest of the world. Back before a bunch of arrogant, rude Mancunians who called themselves Oasis would release albums full of songs that upended Blur as the champions of working-class Britpop.

Today, Oasis are no longer a threat, and England, at least for the time being, has taken Blur back under its wing. During the Wembley shows, the band played hit after hit from their nine-album career while the Oasis brothers, Noel and Liam Gallagher

PETE STILL/REDFERNS



It doesn't get more Britpop than this: Oasis' Noel Gallagher in Manchester, England, with his custom Union Jack Epiphone Sheraton, April 28, 1996

remained distanced from their former rivals, carrying on with their respective solo projects and enjoying their celeb lifestyles. Judging strictly from the audience's ecstatic reaction to "Girls & Boys," "Parklife," "The Universal" and "Song 2," it's hard to imagine that Oasis could recapture this much adoration from the British public... Of course, stranger things have happened — like back in April 1994 when Oasis left the nation slack-jawed, popping out of nowhere with their first chart single, the chemically euphoric and Stones-ish "Supersonic." Or when Oasis released the fourth single from their second album *(What's the Story) Morning Glory?*, "Wonderwall," a sparse, infectious number that became a worldwide smash and turned Oasis into kingpins of Britpop, making Blur seem somewhat disingenuous by comparison.

Structured after, and primarily influenced by the British Invasion, the Nineties Britpop movement wasn't nearly as monumental as the Sixties revolution that spawned it. But for about a decade, it was a high point in English music and spawned a generation of enthusiastic players and songwriters turned off by the dominance of American music in the late Eighties and early Nineties.

"If punk was about getting rid of hippies, then I'm getting rid of grunge!" Albarn told the *NME*. "It's the same sort of feeling: people should smarten up, be a bit more energetic. They're walking around like hippies again — they're stooped, they've got greasy hair, there's no difference."

Oasis guitarist Noel Gallagher also lashed out at the aggression and negativity of alt-rock, crafting highly melodic songs, many rooted in open chords. By the time they released their first album, *Definitely Maybe*, in 1993, Oasis were press darlings and poster children for cockney lads who blew off steam by forming bands with their friends, hanging out in the pub, getting in skirmishes with rival gangs and popping ecstasy by the handful.

"We were the first people to come out and say, "The world's a great place, life is for living!" Gallagher told *Billboard*. "Forget grunge music. Get a pint of Guinness down your neck and pick that guitar up."

Led by Blur and Oasis, the Britpop scene exploded in the U.K. in the early Nineties and soon included a sonically diverse collection of acts, including the aforementioned groups as well as Supergrass, Ocean Colour Scene, Gene, Cast, Sleeper, the Bluetones and Echobelly.

BRIAN RASIC/GETTY IMAGES (SUEDE) GIE KNAEPS/GETTY IMAGES (BLUR)

Each of the Britpop bands had their own sound, but they all turned to classic British groups in an effort to stray from the downcast, testosterone-fueled vibe of grunge and alt-rock. "From punk onwards, every generation of artists spent their entire time trashing the monuments of the Sixties," Gallagher said in Daniel Rachel's *Don't Look Back in Anger*. "They didn't want anything to do with it. What my generation did was rebuild the monuments of the Sixties because the Eighties didn't mean a great deal to us. We reinvented the Beatles."

As with almost every band inspired by British rock, the cornerstones of Britpop were the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. But there were other mainstays. Blur were influenced by the Kinks and art-pop bands like XTC; the La's resembled the Hollies; the London Suede aped David Bowie; Ocean Colour Scene loved the Small Faces; the Bluetones mirrored Squeeze; Elastica sounded a lot like the Stranglers; Gene and Echobelly resembled the Smiths; and Cast and Supergrass were reminiscent, in their own ways, of the Who.

"It occurred to us that Nirvana were out there, and people were very interested in American music, and there should be some sort of manifesto for the return of Britishness," Elastica frontwoman Justine Frischmann said in *The Last Party: Britpop, Blair and the Demise of English Rock* by John Harris.

"It was a time when it literally felt cool to be British," Echobelly guitarist Glenn Johansson added in *Don't Look Back in Anger*. "Especially in relation to the creativity that seemed to be pouring out of the country at that time."

Not every burgeoning English band went along for the carnivalesque Brit-

Blur's Graham Coxon — better known as Jackie Venson's pick for the Nineties' guitarist of the decade — in action in Belgium, April 2, 1997

[*facing page*] Suede guitarist Richard Oakes in London, October 11, 1996. Suede had to change their name to the London Suede for the U.S. market

pop ride or eagerly toured with other groups from the scene. When Radiohead released their second album, *The Bends*, in 1995, some lazy journalists lumped them in with Britpop, ignoring the skewed offbeat artistry of songs like "My Iron Lung" and "Planet Telex." Radiohead loathed being pigeonholed, and they weren't too fond of Britpop.

"To us, Britpop was just a 1960s revival," guitarist Jonny Greenwood told *Rolling Stone*. "It just leads to pastiche. It's you wishing it was another era. But as soon as you go down that route, you might as well be a Dixieland jazz band, really."

For Blur's Coxon, the experimentation and noise of American indie bands like Pavement and Dinosaur Jr. was as exciting as music by his English heroes. Also, it was less homogenous and predictable than the song structures of other Britpop bands.

"Talking as a guitar player, Britpop for me was fucking really dull," Coxon told *The Guardian*. "No one was doing anything interesting with a guitar. They're all jolly nice and totally good on their instruments, but it became a thing... For me, people like Sonic Youth, Bikini Kill, Pavement and other small-label punk groups from America — these kids were teenagers. They were playing like they didn't give a shit and like their life depended on it. That's why I got so upset [*about being typecast in a Britpop band*]. ...the Melvins and the Wipers, and these bands are brilliant unsung heroes, really."

Britpop took off in England almost as fast as a souped-up Triumph Stag down an empty motorway

But while he loved the ramshackle quality of indie rock, Coxon also admired unconventional and creative guitarists from the British Invasion, including Dave Davies and Pete Townshend. Also hugely influential to Britpop songwriters: Deep Purple, the Smiths, the Jam, the Clash, the Cure, New Order and, in a big way, the Nineties rave scene in Manchester. Nicknamed Madchester due to the abundance of drugs and alcohol consumed and the insanity that prevailed, bands including the Happy Mondays, the Charlatans UK, Inspiral Carpets and the Stone Roses provided an inspiring soundtrack to the all-night revelry. Blur even appropriated the Roses' Sixties psychedelic vibe and loose backbeat groove on two commercial hits from 1991's *Leisure*, "She's So High" and "There's No Other Way."

"When Blur first started and we were playing Manchester, the Haçienda [*a club co-owned by members of New Order*] was the place to go," Coxon told *Designer* magazine. "That was where a lot of exciting stuff was happening, and London was pretty dead."

Gallagher reached for the stars in the same venues. Before he joined Oasis, he was a guitar tech for the Inspiral Carpets. "I was at the Haçienda from its early days

and at all the big raves," Gallagher said in *Don't Look Back in Anger*. It gives me shivers when I think about it. That's all wrapped up in being young and not being famous and just being carefree and high on ecstasy and dancing in a field at fucking 2 in the afternoon."

Britpop took off in England almost as fast as a souped-up Triumph Stag down an empty motorway. Blur went gold with *Leisure*, Suede (which became the London Suede in the U.S. since an East Coast singer-songwriter trademarked the name years earlier) hit Number 1 in the U.K. in 1993 with their eponymous album, and Oasis' *Definitely Maybe* sold 100,000 copies in its first four days of sale in the U.K., easily topping that week's chart.

In the U.S., Britpop was a slower burn. Indie magazines like *Alternative Press* and *Ray Gun*, as well as MTV's alt-rock show *120 Minutes* covered the movement since the dawn of Blur and contributed to the early Nineties recognition of Pulp, the London Suede and the Verve. But the scene didn't become mainstream until Oasis stormed the castle with a batch of simple, melodic pop songs that swaggered like Jagger and glistened with 'tude.

Before that, two factors prevented Britpop bands from breaking America as the Fab Four had done decades before. Having never played outside of Europe, Britpop bands mistakenly thought they could become rock stars in the U.S. after one or two tours of major cities. More significantly, the way many bands flaunted British culture and acted (singing in heavy English accents, badmouthing American rock and raising the Union Jack at every photo op) was a major turn-off to grunge-loving Americans.

"That whole anti-American, 'Yanks go home' thing — a lot of those bands weren't really successful in America," Lush guitarist and vocalist Miki Berenyi told *Vice* (Lush started out as part of the ethereal shoegaze scene before gravitating toward Britpop). "It felt a bit sour grapes," she continued. "Like, 'We don't want to be big in America because it's shit, we're big in Britain.' Then suddenly they get a bit big in America and it's like, 'We've conquered it.' Fuck off."

Not surprisingly, U.K. bands trumpeting their British-ness was a major selling point for English audiences. Suddenly, Blur, Oasis, the London Suede, Pulp and others were celebrating working-class England. Nothing epitomized this tell-it-like-it-is scenario like Pulp's "Common People," in which an upper-crust college student romanticizes the English squatting lifestyle and hooks up with an impoverished bloke to see how glamorous it is to be poor. In the song the student says, "I wanna live like common people/I wanna do whatever common people do/Wanna sleep with common people," to which he replies, "Pretend you've got no money/... Smoke some fags and play some pool/ Pretend you never went to school."

Britpop was empowering for common people who lived paycheck to paycheck. And with so many English musicians lacking a college degree, it wasn't a huge stretch for them to write about their ordinary lives and their aching desire to escape their hometown and make something of themselves.

"When I learnt to play the guitar and started to write songs and joined Oasis, I remember thinking, I've got one chance," guitarist and songwriter Noel Gallagher told *Don't Look Back in Anger*. "It wasn't about Britpop. I thought, 'I have one chance to make some fucking money'; just not to be fucking poor, and to see the world. That was it. I come from a family of grafters. And you don't get anything by not working, [*so*] I did it all the time, every day."

Blur's evolution into storytellers for the working class was more reactionary. Albarn came from a solid middle class family. When the band returned from their 1991 44-date U.S. tour to support *Leisure*, they were so dispirited by how awkward and misunderstood they felt that they nearly broke up. Albarn was especially distraught and sought solace in English culture. He developed an especially strong appreciation for the Kinks' approach to storytelling. "[*Ray Davies*] was very near my idea of perfection in songwriting, who carried it off with an immense amount of dignity," Albarn told the *NME*.

After a bit of soul-searching, Albarn wrote a batch of songs about the British working class and the little victories they found in their daily lives. He based his lyrics on the white Anglo-Saxon families he encountered after his family moved from progressive, ethnically diverse, Leytonstone, East London, to the small town of Colchester 50 miles away.

"Those characters were my bedrock — the good yeomen of the fair county of Essex — people I watched and observed and lived among, and who then populated my songs for many years," he told *Don't Look Back in Anger*.

As with other music scenes, once enough bands became popular enough in the U.K. for the masses to notice, a rivalry developed between two top dogs. In this case, it was Blur and Oasis, and record companies and magazines exploited the friction between the two as an opportunity to make lots of money. The press baited both bands and, while neither had especially kind things to say about the other, Oasis were particularly vicious. Blur may have claimed Oasis were simplistic and derivative, but the Gallagher brothers smack-talked Blur with plenty of F-bombs and ultimately accused them of being elitist, inauthentic art-school hypocrites who, nonetheless, claimed to represent the British working class.

Coxon insists he never hated Oasis (despite his distaste for Britpop) and found the battle of the bands to be unnerving and unnecessary. However, he claims he understood how, in a high-stakes game of Nineties pop superstardom, the rivalry was inevitable. "If you throw a bunch of competitive young men into the ring and all they have is music ... the single door that might lead to them becoming rich and famous, then of course they're going to stand their ground, get ratty and act territorially," Coxon wrote in his autobiography, *Verse, Chorus, Monster!*

The friction between Blur and Oasis hit critical mass in 1995. Blur's fourth album, *The Great Escape*, came out on September 11, 1995, and Oasis released the follow-up to *Definitely Maybe* — *(What's the Story) Morning Glory?* — on October 2 that same year. To create pre-release hype, Oasis' first single for the album, "Roll with It" was scheduled for April 24, one week before Blur's "Country House." So, to encourage discord, Blur's record company moved the release date back a week, which became national news. The Blur vs. Oasis battle wasn't so much about the songs as what the groups represented. Blur came from the South of England, an affluent, educated area, and all of the members were articulate and comfortably middle class. By contrast, Oasis were from the North, where families crowded into council homes, worked in factories and sometimes never ventured beyond the borders of their hometown. Neither of the Gallagher brothers went to college and their accents were so strong, they made Blur's accents seem like BBC broadcasters by comparison.

"Country House" sold 274,000 copies and "Roll with It" sold 216,000, earning Blur the victory and the invitation to perform on that week's *Top of the Pops*

ERIC CATARINA/STILLS/GAMMA-RAPHO VIA GETTY IMAGES

Oasis' Liam [*left*] and Noel Gallagher, coexisting in Grenoble, France, in 1996. In 2015, we asked Noel what it would take to get the band back together: "Half a billion dollars," he said. "None of that Canadian shit. American dollars. Half a billion. Not million. Billion. With a B!"

TV program. But while Blur won the battle, they lost the war. It didn't matter that none of the members grew up wealthy; in the fight between the classes, they were widely perceived as artsy, privileged college boys and Oasis were embraced as true working-class heroes.

"The weird thing was the casting of myself, and us as a band, as these public schoolboys," Albarn told *Don't Look Back in Anger*. "Noel identified a very unprotected part in the armor and very effectively stuck his sword in there. I went, 'Ow, that really hurt.'"

While Blur hardly fell into obscurity with *The Great Escape*, which entered the U.K. charts at Number 1 despite the controversy, it was Oasis that rocketed to multi-platinum stardom. Of course, the fact that *(What's the Story) Morning Glory?* was filled with slightly melancholy, easily accessible guitar-pop hits like "Wonderwall," "Champagne Supernova," "Some Might Say" and "Don't Look Back in Anger" legitimized Oasis' success. By comparison, Blur, like their influences, wrote more complex, eclectic songs; they were never a hit factory.

> "Half a billion dollars. None of that Canadian shit. American dollars… Not million. Billion. With a B!"
>
> NOEL GALLAGHER NAMES HIS PRICE FOR AN OASIS REUNION

"I couldn't write something like 'Wonderwall,'" Albarn told the *NME*. "I just can't bring myself to write simple stuff like that. Why on earth would I want to?"

"'Don't Look Back in Anger' was when I realized Oasis were the ones who had made that journey from being alternative to being a part of everyday life," Pulp's Jarvis Cocker said in *Don't Look Back in Anger*. "Every single bar seemed to be playing it. They'd done that thing that everybody had been trying to do of making that connection with the mass public. 'Wonderwall' had been a massive hit, but 'Don't Look Back in Anger' was like a done deal. It has a tune that instantly sets it apart. A great song is indestructible. It can survive anything you throw at it — even the terrible video didn't kill it."

Ironically, Oasis set the bar so high with *(What's the Story) Morning Glory?* that they couldn't top themselves, let alone match their greatest achievement. Not that they didn't try. For their follow-up, 1997's *Be Here Now*, they pulled out all the stops, recording in numerous studios, including Abbey Road, and layering songs with horns, strings and multiple guitar overdubs. They seemed to have forgotten that it was simple, catchy songs that won over audiences, not grandiose arrangements and overinflated production. Even so, the album entered the U.K. charts at Number 1 and sold almost 1.5 million copies in England alone. Today it is seven times platinum in the U.K. and platinum in the U.S. Even so, it was the band's last platinum release, and looking back at Oasis' career, Noel considers it to be the band's low point.

"I know where we lost it," he told

Pulp's Jarvis Cocker [*left*] and Steve Mackey in action in June 1994

MICHAEL PUTLAND/GETTY IMAGES

Q magazine. "Down the drug dealer's fuckin' front room is where we lost it. If you're given a blank check to record an album and as much studio time as you want, you're hardly gonna be focused."

As much of a blow as *Be Here Now* was to Noel, he and Liam kept the band going with a revised lineup (including Ride's Andy Bell, who's interviewed on page 66) and in 2000 released the electronic-embellished psychedelic record *Standing on the Shoulder of Giants* with a slightly different lineup. The record went double platinum in England, where it topped the charts, but was the band's first album not to go gold in the U.S. Oasis followed with three more albums, including their swansong, 2008's *Dig Out Your Soul*.

Meanwhile, after *The Great Escape* and the Britpop war that followed, Blur shifted directions, integrating more elements of American indie rock into their sound, which yielded them their most popular song in the U.S., "Song 2," the distortion-drenched main riff of which sounds like a satire of American aggression. Ultimately, it wasn't the missteps by Oasis or the musical about-face from Blur that killed Britpop. That had more to do with the way everyone from runway models to politicians exploited it to gain favor with the masses.

Tony Blair, the youngest English prime minister since 1812, hobnobbed with Oasis and trumpeted Britpop as a symbol of a newer, hipper Britain. The term Britpop was replaced by the more nationalistic slogan Cool Britannia. It was a loaded term, one that some argue was the first step toward Brexit. The media's adulation for all things British led to a climate of intolerance and "lad culture" that yielded an increase in misogyny, racism and homophobia. When many British people looked back at the aftermath of Cool Britannia they didn't like what they saw, and many Britpop bands recoiled in horror at what they had inadvertently helped cultivate.

"I think like all movements it started off with good intentions," Cocker said in *While We Were Getting High*. "When we were writing those songs in 1991 it felt thrilling and against the grain, but what began as a frank documentation of life as a poor, white, marginal man living in rented rooms in London — and which was in broader terms an exciting rejection of American cultural imperialism — soon became a jingoistic, beery cartoon when the money moved in."

The death knell for Britpop came with music that took some of the English pride of Blur, Oasis, Pulp and others, and codified it into a more commercial, palatable form of entertainment: Enter the Spice Girls. When singers and dancers Geri Haliwell, Victoria Adams (now Beckham), Melanie Brown, Emma Bunton and Melanie Chisholm burst onto the English scene in 1996, screaming "Girl Power!" a new generation of happy, kid-friendly cartoon revelry took over, and the mass media dismissed Britpop as callously as it previously wrote off hair metal.

The next obvious step was the resurrection of teen pop. As the Backstreet Boys, NSYNC, Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera and others took over the mainstream, a few English rock groups influenced by classic songwriting continued to draw large audiences, including Coldplay, Muse and Keane, but Britpop was effectively over.

On August 28, 2009, Noel Gallagher disbanded Oasis due to irreconcilable differences. "It is with some sadness and great relief that I quit Oasis tonight," read his statement. "People will write and say what they like, but I simply could not go on working with Liam a day longer."

Liam started the new band Beady Eye, with whom he recorded two albums, then he went solo and has released three albums to date, the most recent of which, *C'Mon You Know*, came out in May 2022 and hit Number 16 on the U.K. charts. Meanwhile, Noel launched Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds, who have released three studio albums, including *Council Skies*, which came out June and peaked at Number 20 in the U.K. Blur fell apart before recording 2003's underwhelming *Think Tank*, which didn't include Coxon, and broke up shortly after. They reunited with Coxon in 2015 and recorded *The Magic Whip*, which debuted at Number 1 in the U.K. (Blur's sixth album to do so) and Number 24 in the U.S. In late July, Blur released *The Ballad of Darren*, a blend of American and British rock styles that span the band's career.

None of the above put Britpop back on the map, and despite Blur's triumphant Wembley shows, there's not likely to be a full-scale resurgence of the genre. Still, several bands have come back for a second go-round. Pulp re-formed this summer for U.K. shows but have no plans to enter the studio. Cocker's last release was his 2021 solo album, *Chansons d'Ennui Tip-Top*, a collection of 12 French cover songs. Suede remain active and recently played a 12-date tour in the U.S. to support their ninth album, 2022's *Autofiction*, which debuted at Number 2 in the U.K. (their highest slot since 1999) but failed to chart in the U.S.

A big Britpop package tour — or a bunch of small reunion tours — would be exciting and nostalgic. It wouldn't lead to headline slots at Coachella, of course, but as Radiohead and even Noel Gallagher said, the Britpop movement started as a celebration of the Sixties. So maybe it was always meant to be a wild romping nostalgia trip. GW

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UBISOFT

THE '90s ISSUE

WE'VE GOT OURSELVES A LIVE ONE

10 essential LIVE ROCK & METAL ALBUMS from the Nineties

By Andrew Daly

PICTURE THIS: YOU'VE wrapped up an episode of *Seinfeld* and have time to burn. But you're bored of the latest via Z100 pop-fodder, and the slick songs that VH1 has been slinging via *Pop-Up Video* aren't cutting it. No; this time, you're looking for the raw energy that can only be delivered through rockin' live music, but you're stuck at home. What's the next best thing? Peruse your CD collection and dig into the tastiest discs you've got on hand, of course.

If that bit of nostalgia sounds familiar, then you were probably a rock- and metal-loving kid in the Nineties. But what if you missed out? Not to worry; *Guitar World* has got you covered. We're taking a trip back to dig into some of the finest live performances of the Nineties. What follows are 10 essential Nineties rock and metal live albums.

10. *'98 LIVE MELTDOWN*, JUDAS PRIEST (1998)

RECORDED DURING THE Tim "Ripper" Owens-era *Jugulator* World Tour, *'98 Live Meltdown* finds the mighty Priest sporting a different configuration than their Eighties heyday. Sure, the twin-guitar attack of Glenn Tipton/K.K. Downing is in fine form, but this record might not be one for purists. Still, *'98 Live Meltdown* smokes, and if we're being honest, Owens never did get a fair shake from Priest fans. Indeed, Owens does a fine job with the Halford-era tracks, but it's (unsurprisingly) the *Jugulator* cuts that scintillate most.

9. *LIVE ON TWO LEGS*, PEARL JAM (1998)

PEARL JAM'S COMMERCIAL viability had waned, if only slightly, by 1998, but that didn't stop them from booking a monster world tour in the wake of *Yield*, released the same year. As fate would have it, the shows from the summer leg of said tour were so strong that the band couldn't help themselves by releasing *Live on Two Legs* to commemorate the jaunt. In truth, no self-respecting Nineties list of this nature would be complete without Mike McCready and Stone Gossard's dueling grunge fury.

8. *HELL FREEZES OVER*, THE EAGLES (1994)

WHEN THE EAGLES called it a day in 1980, Don Henley famously said the band would play together again "when hell freezes over." Well, in 1994, hell did freeze over, resulting in an Eagles reunion — and this tidy live disc. *Hell Freezes Over* will probably always be secondary to *Eagles Live* (1980). Still, it did one's heart good to see the Eagles' *Hotel California*-era lineup winding down that desert highway again. *Hell Freezes Over* is essential because a new generation was clued in on the heroics of a Les-Paul-slinging Joe

LARRY HULST/MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

Phish's Trey Anastasio in action at Red Rocks Amphitheatre in Morrison, Colorado, in August 1996, just a few weeks before their Clifford Ball show in Plattsburgh, New York

Walsh, ably bookended by Don Felder, and for that, we're forever thankful.

7. *LIVE AT THE ROXY*, SOCIAL DISTORTION (1998)

IF YOU'VE NEVER had the pleasure of seeing Mike Ness and company live, you should probably change that; if you're a fan of twangy cowpunk, that is. Regardless of where your musical allegiances lie, it's hard to deny that the SoCal staples were on fire on the evening *Live at the Roxy* was recorded in the spring of 1998. Moreover, it could be said that the versions of "Ball and Chain" and "Story of My Life" — with some tasty fretwork from Ness and Dennis Danell — should be considered definitive.

6. *NO QUARTER: JIMMY PAGE & ROBERT PLANT UNLEDDED*, PAGE & PLANT (1994)

IF YOU'RE A Zep-head, there's no denying that *No Quarter: Jimmy Page & Robert Plant Unledded* is a thing of musical glory. Some will point out that Page and Plant should have involved John Paul Jones, but no matter, this album is at times explosive. The eclectic renditions of the classics combined with four new songs made for true listeners' delight. Also, the *Unledded* version of "Kashmir" — featuring Page going off with his Les Paul goldtop tuned to simulate the sound of his Danelectro DC-59 — might be the best version of all. Seriously.

5. *A LIVE ONE*, PHISH (1995)

IF YOU'RE THE type that enjoys listening to 15-to-20-minute renditions of modern-day jam band classics resulting in 131 minutes of tomfoolery, then we'd wager Phish's *A Live One* is for you. To be sure, listening to Trey Anastasio run wild in all his fusion glory is quite lovely, but guitar heroics aside, the Giant Country Horns getting in on the fun for "Gumbo" may well be the highlight. The horns, Anastasio's exploits and the eclectic nature of Phish make for a listen that is utterly distinct, if not entirely over the top, in the same breath.

4. *ALIVE III*, KISS (1993)

MAKEUP DIEHARDS CAN, will, and do deride this album, but true fans know the truth: Kiss' *Alive III* gives *Alive!* (1975) a run for its money. But if we detach ourselves from those bold assertions and get down to the crux of the matter, *Alive III* is a hyper-charged merging of Kiss' past exploits, blended with (at the time) new cuts from *Revenge* (1992). If anything, *Alive III* is a reminder that Kiss' Nineties lineup was not to be trifled with. Moreover, Bruce Kulick proved that with an ESP in his hands, he was (and is) one of the genre's most unassuming heroes.

3. *AC/DC LIVE*, AC/DC (1992)

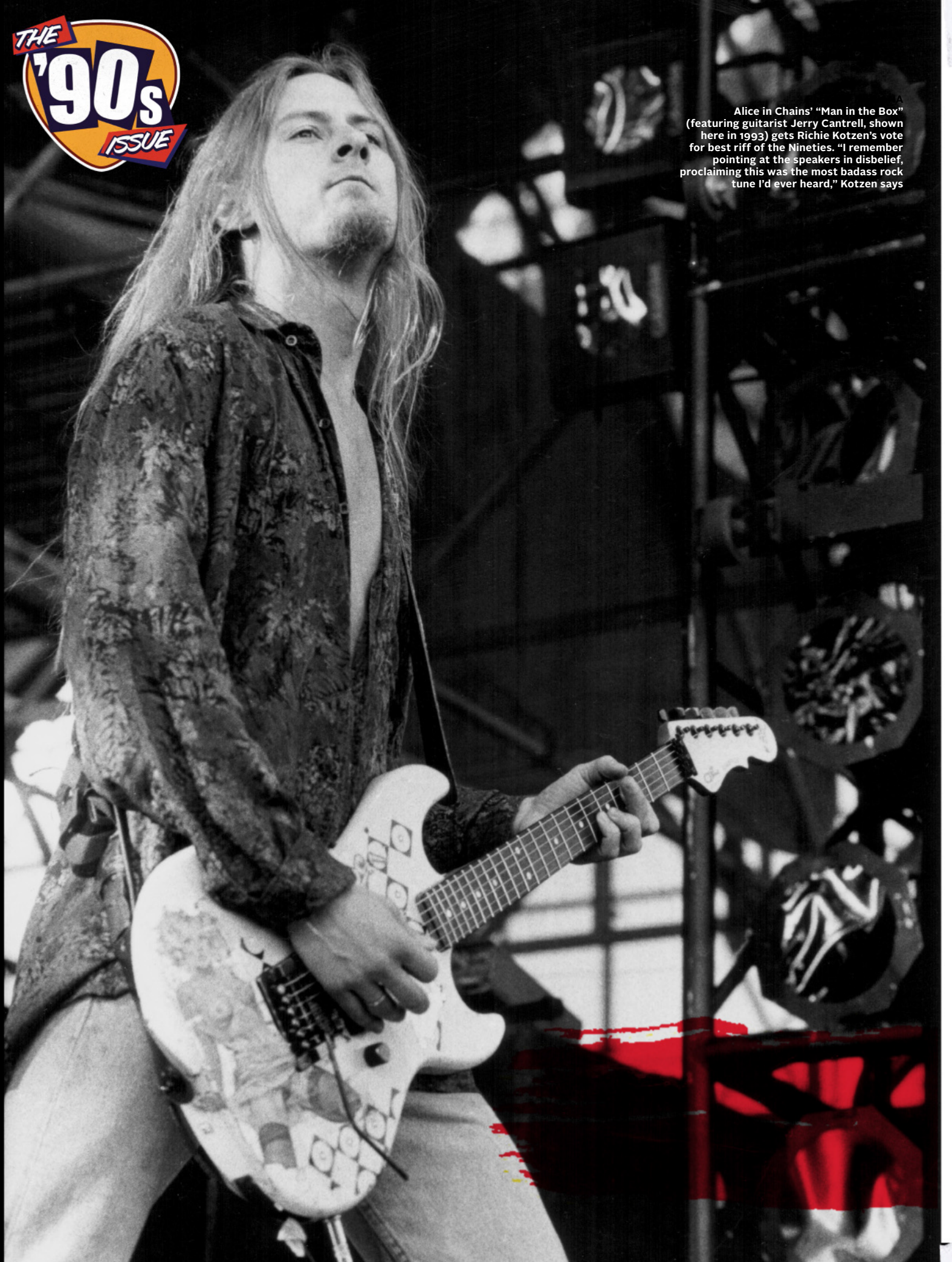
LIKE A HAMMER to your skull, *AC/DC Live* reminded us of the simplistic power of AC/DC. Sourced from a riveting show at Donington Park during *The Razors Edge* Tour in August of '91, AC/DC wound through a set featuring hits from all eras, treating fans to heaping servings of good ol' boogie-woogie rock from Down Under. Angus and Malcolm Young's interwoven leads and rhythms were never better, making *AC/DC Live* the group's most essential live testament.

2. *WELD*, NEIL YOUNG (1991)

NEIL YOUNG HAS long been the guitar anti-hero that linchpins generations of nonconformists' musical outlooks. In the spirit of bucking all things pop-oriented within the zeitgeist, we direct you to Young's essential live masterstroke, *Weld*. *Weld* found Young reunited with Crazy Horse — notably low-key guitar hero Frank Sampedro — treating devotees to an awe-inspiring amalgam classic mixed with cuts from *Ragged Glory* (1990). If you missed *Weld* when it dropped and have remained in the dark since then, this is your call to action.

1. *MTV UNPLUGGED IN NEW YORK*, NIRVANA (1994)

FEW IMAGES FROM the Nineties are as everlasting as Kurt Cobain's final aching moments delivering the conclusive utterances of Nirvana's iconic cover of Lead Belly's "Where Did You Sleep Last Night?" Cobain was never a shredder, nor did he claim to want to change the world. Still, the unwilling hero did just that through his songwriting and unique, aggressive approach to the guitar. Many will remember Nirvana for their cockalorum bluster, but the truth is that Cobain and company were never more vulnerable, honest and memorable than during *MTV Unplugged in New York*. GW



Alice in Chains' "Man in the Box" (featuring guitarist Jerry Cantrell, shown here in 1993) gets Richie Kotzen's vote for best riff of the Nineties. "I remember pointing at the speakers in disbelief, proclaiming this was the most badass rock tune I'd ever heard," Kotzen says

BEST SOLOS, RIFFS AND FORGOTTEN HEROES

GUITAR WORLD
SPECIAL ISSUE

33

A horde of guitar stars — including **Dave Mustaine**, **Marty Friedman**, **Scott Ian**, **Joe Bonamassa**, **Paul Gilbert** and **Nita Strauss** (not to mention **Blackbyrd McKnight**, **Steve Stevens**, **Gavin Rossdale**, **Nancy Wilson** and **K.K. Downing**) choose the Nineties' best stuff

Compiled by Andrew Daly, Joe Bosso and Damian Fanelli

WHAT WAS THE greatest guitar solo of the Nineties? How about the best riff? The ultimate guitar album? The decade's most underappreciated player? Was *Seinfeld* really better than *Beavis and Butt-Head*? Burning questions, all of them. But instead of answering them ourselves, we decided to open things up to a mess of guitar stars, some of whom were already doing their thing 28 years ago, and some who weren't even born yet. We asked them to answer these nine questions about the Nineties — and to elaborate whenever/wherever they deemed it necessary:

1. Guitarist of the decade
2. Ultimate guitar album
3. Greatest guitar solo
4. Best riff
5. Best TV show
6. Underappreciated guitar hero
7. Piece of gear that screams "Nineties"
8. Doc Martens or Converse?
9. Pop-song guilty pleasure.

And now, let us kick things off with...

EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

DAVE MUSTAINE

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: "Dimebag" Darrell Abbott
GUITAR ALBUM: Pantera, *Cowboys from Hell*
SOLO: Marty Friedman, "Tornado of Souls"
RIFF: Kurt Cobain, "Smells Like Teen Spirit"
TV SHOW: *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Yngwie Malmsteen
GEAR: Marshall JCM800
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse
GUILTY PLEASURE: No guilt here.

MARTY FRIEDMAN

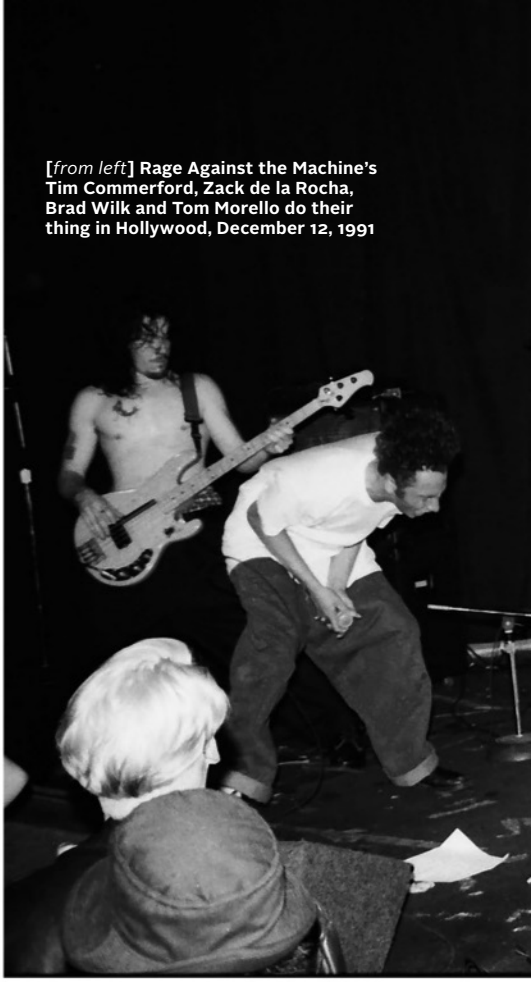
GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: All the guys who were great then are even better now, so it would do them a disservice to relegate them to one decade in the past. How's that for an evasive answer?
GUITAR ALBUM: Trouble's *Manic Frustration*. Check it out!
SOLO: Jason Becker on David Lee Roth's "It's Showtime"
RIFF: "It Ain't Like That" by Alice in Chains — or anything played by anyone on the Clash of the Titans tour
TV SHOW: *The Wonder Years*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: I sat in at this blues bar in Texas, and every single guitar player there wiped the floor with me. There are seriously great players everywhere. It's probably safe to say that whoever your favorite guitar player is, he or she is underappreciated.
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Docs, but only because the heels are slightly higher.
GUILTY PLEASURE: Anything by Britney Spears, Matsuda Seiko's "Anata ni Aitakute," Kahala Tomomi's "I'm Proud" or anything produced by Max Martin, for that matter. And there's nothing to feel guilty about!

JOE BONAMASSA

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Kurt Cobain. Suddenly everything from rack gear, super Strats and shredding became less important in the eyes of the public, mostly to do with the significance and impact of Nirvana.
GUITAR ALBUM: Eric Johnson's *Ah Via Musicom*. Great songs, impeccable playing, tones, construction and a couple of radio hits to boot. It has it all.
SOLO: Robben Ford on "Cut Me to the Bone" from *The Blue Line*. Blazing and so tasteful at the same time. That album made everyone want a Dumble amp.
RIFF: "The Distance" by Cake. Xan McCurdy had a great tone. It was very raw and captured what a good Sears and Roebuck amp could sound like in the right hands.
TV SHOW: Happiness is a 12-hour *Law & Order* marathon.
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: It'll always be Trevor Rabin. That guy is a complete badass in every facet of music — and a hellava nice guy. Check out his band Rabbit.
GEAR: Boss DD-3 Delay; 16-bit digital is all I need. That and a Sovtek MIG-50. $350 for the pair back in the day, and I'm still using them.
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Digging in the Dirt" by Peter Gabriel. Not a guilty pleasure, just a pleasure to listen to.

BLACKBYRD MCKNIGHT (EX PARLIAMENT FUNKADELIC)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Vernon Reid or Steve Vai
GUITAR ALBUM: *Passion and Warfare* by Steve Vai and *We Live Here* by Pat Metheny Group
SOLO: "For the Love of God," Steve Vai
RIFF: "Heart-Shaped Box," Nirvana
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Jeff Lee Johnson
GEAR: Roland GR-1 Guitar Synthesizer, Roland GP-8, Roland VS-880, Fender Stratocaster, Parker Fly Deluxe, Mesa Boogie Dual Rectifier, DigiTech Whammy, Marshall JCM800, EMG pickups, etc.!



[*from left*] **Rage Against the Machine's Tim Commerford, Zack de la Rocha, Brad Wilk and Tom Morello do their thing in Hollywood, December 12, 1991**

DEVIN TOWNSEND

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: OLD's James Plotkin
GUITAR ALBUM: OLD's *Formula*
SOLO: "Smells Like Teen Spirit," Nirvana
RIFF: "Loud Love," Soundgarden
TV SHOW: *Mystery Science Theater 3000*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Smashing Pumpkins' Billy Corgan
GEAR: Roland GP100

SAMMY BOLLER

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell
GUITAR ALBUM: Megadeth, *Rust in Peace*
SOLO: Ozzy's "No More Tears" (Zakk Wylde)
RIFF: "Vasoline," Stone Temple Pilots
TV SHOW: *The Sopranos*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Dean DeLeo

SCREAMIN' JACK NOVAK (FASTEST LAND ANIMAL)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Tom Morello

FUTURE (DECEMBER '91 GW) LINDSAY BRICE/GETTY IMAGES (RAGE)

"Having something fresh like Tom Morello with his simple riffs and amazing sounds was a relief"

DEEP PURPLE'S SIMON McBRIDE

GUITAR ALBUM: Soundgarden, *Badmotorfinger*
SOLO: Jane's Addiction, "Ain't No Right"
RIFF: Beastie Boys, "Sabotage"
TV SHOW: *Seinfeld*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Dimebag Darrell
GEAR: Ibanez Tube Screamer
DOCS OR CONVERSE: For jumping around on stage, Converse. For diving into the mosh pit, Docs!
GUILTY PLEASURE: Lisa Loeb, "Stay (I Missed You)"

MYLES KENNEDY

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Kurt Cobain
GUITAR ALBUM: *Ah Via Musicom*, Eric Johnson
SOLO: "For the Love of God," Steve Vai
RIFF: "Killing in the Name," Rage Against the Machine (Tom Morello)
TV SHOW: HBO's *Tenacious D*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Danny Gatton
GEAR: Alesis QuadraVerb effects processor
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Docs!
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Freedom! '90," George Michael

MARK TREMONTI

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Zakk Wylde
GUITAR ALBUM: Steve Vai, *Alien Love Secrets*
SOLO: Steve Vai, "Tender Surrender"
RIFF: Megadeth, "Holy Wars"
TV SHOW: *South Park*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Audley Freed
GEAR: ADA MP-1
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse
GUILTY PLEASURE: Robbie Williams, "Angels"

STEVE STEVENS

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Jerry Cantrell
GUITAR ALBUM: *Ágætis byrjun*, Sigur Rós
SOLO: "No More Tears," Ozzy Osbourne (Zakk Wylde)
RIFF: "Bulls on Parade," Rage Against the Machine
TV SHOW: *Seinfeld*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Dean DeLeo
GEAR: DigiTech Whammy
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Doc Martens (But I wore mine in 1982!)
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Teardrop," Massive Attack

NANCY WILSON

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Prince
GUITAR ALBUM: *Nevermind*, Nirvana
SOLO: Tom Morello with Bruce Springsteen, "The Ghost of Tom Joad"
RIFF: "Enter Sandman," Metallica
TV SHOW: *The Larry Sanders Show*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Dave Grohl
GEAR: Old Fender Deluxe amp with distortion pedal
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Doc Martens
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Waterfalls," TLC

SCOTT LUCAS (LOCAL H)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Josh Homme
GUITAR ALBUM: *Ragged Glory*, Neil Young & Crazy Horse
SOLO: "In Bloom," Nirvana (Kurt Cobain)
RIFF: "Song 2," Blur
TV SHOW: *Mr. Show with Bob and David*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Stephen Malkmus of Pavement
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse!
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Got You (Where I Want You)," the Flys

SIMON McBRIDE (DEEP PURPLE)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Tom Morello. It was fresh, unique and energetic. We had a period of shred guitarists, so having something fresh like Tom with his simple riffs and amazing sounds was a relief.
GUITAR ALBUM: Steve Vai, *Passion and Warfare*. The thing I love about Steve is that he's not afraid to push the boundaries — and this album does that to this day.
SOLO: Steve Vai, "For the Love of God"
RIFF: "Killing in the Name," Rage Against the Machine
TV SHOW: An English show called *Bottom*. It pushed the boundaries of TV comedy for its time.
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Mike Einzeiger from Incubus — a great player and innovator
GEAR: Rocktron Intellifex

SCOTT IAN

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell
GUITAR ALBUM: *Vulgar Display of Power*,

Pantera
SOLO: "Floods," Pantera. Dime was insane there.
RIFF: "Walk," Pantera
TV SHOW: *Seinfeld, The Larry Sanders Show, Mr. Show with Bob and David* and *Twin Peaks*. Can't pick one!
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Page Hamilton of Helmet
GEAR: DigiTech Whammy
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Vans!
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Wonderwall" by Oasis. And there's nothing guilty at all about it.

EVA WALKER (THE BLACK TONES)

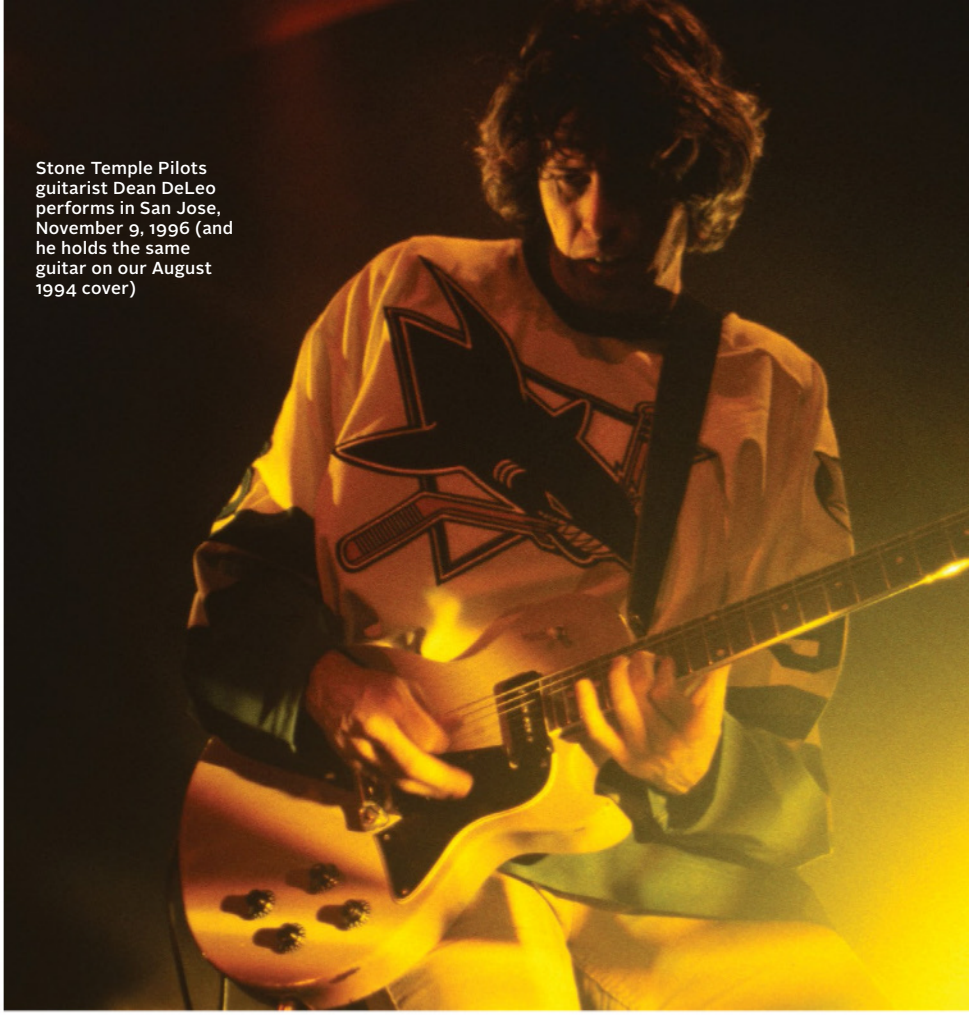
GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Mike McCready or Jerry Cantrell
GUITAR ALBUM: *Jagged Little Pill*, Alanis Morissette
SOLO: I love the simplicity and vibe of "Scar Tissue" by the Red Hot Chili Peppers
RIFF: "Rooster" by Alice in Chains
TV SHOW: *Living Single* or *Family Matters*
GEAR: DigiTech Whammy

MICK SWEDA (EX BULLETBOYS)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Jeff Beck
GUITAR ALBUM: Jeff Beck, *Who Else!*
SOLO: "Brush with the Blues" by Jeff Beck
RIFF: "THX138" by Jeff Beck
TV SHOW: *Cops*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Chris Whitley
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse!
GEAR: Akai 1214 12-track recorder

NILI BROSH

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Nuno Bettencourt
GUITAR ALBUM: *Pornograffitti* by Extreme. Because my favorite band, Extreme, is heavily associated with this decade, you're going to continue to get biased answers on this one!
SOLO: "Get the Funk Out," Extreme
RIFF: Tom Morello, "Killing in the Name"
TV SHOW: *Seinfeld* or *Friends*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Can I say Nuno again?
GEAR: In the Nineties, I was the proud owner of some 3/4-sized nylon-string guitars.



Stone Temple Pilots guitarist Dean DeLeo performs in San Jose, November 9, 1996 (and he holds the same guitar on our August 1994 cover)

FUTURE (AUGUST '94 GW) TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES (DEAN DELEO)

DOCS OR CONVERSE: Chucks! But I love both.
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Everybody" by the Backstreet Boys

BOBBY KOELBEL (EX DEATH)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell. He pretty much owned the Nineties as rock's preeminent guitar force.
GUITAR ALBUM: *The Guitar Trio* by Paco de Lucia, Al Di Meola and John McLaughlin. No three better guitarists were ever assembled on the same album.
SOLO: "Ruhkukah" by Allan Holdsworth. You could pick just about any of his solos, and I'd probably agree.
RIFF: "Symbolic" by Death. I'm super biased, but this is a perfect example of how so few notes can mean so much.
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Charlie Hunter. The man plays bass and guitar at the same time, and you'd never know it if you didn't actually see him do it.
TV SHOW: I didn't watch much TV, but I've got a movie, *The Big Lebowski*. It really ties the room together.
GEAR: Marshall JCM900 (aptly named for the decade) and my DigiTech Whammy

PHILIP SHOUSE (ACCEPT/ ACE FREHLEY BAND)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Tom Morello
GUITAR ALBUM: *Vulgar Display of Power*, Pantera
SOLO: Nuno Bettencourt, "Get the Funk Out"
RIFF: "Bulls on Parade," Rage Against the Machine
TV SHOW: *Seinfeld*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: I have to mention Noel Gallagher here somewhere, so I suppose I'll do it now.
GEAR: My first Marshall, a 50-watt DSL
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Chucks all the way!
GUILTY PLEASURE: No guilt here! "No Diggity" by Blackstreet

DAVID PAJO (GANG OF FOUR, EX SLINT)

GUITAR ALBUM: Slint's *Spiderland*!
SOLO: Slint, "Washer"

The biggest winner in this issue's "Underappreciated Hero" department? Stone Temple Pilots' Dean DeLeo

RIFF: The Jesus Lizard, "Here Comes Dudley"
TV SHOW: *Twin Peaks*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Jim O'Rourke
GEAR: Boss DS-1
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Chucks
GUILTY PLEASURE: Madonna's "Erotica"

BOBBY KELLER

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell
GUITAR ALBUM: Metallica's Black Album
SOLO: "For the Love of God" by Steve Vai
RIFF: "Enter Sandman," Metallica. The Black Album is still slaying sales today. All of its riffs are just iconic.
TV SHOW: Anything on Nickelodeon or *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Jerry Cantrell, at the time, didn't get the praise he deserved.
GEAR: Any Nineties ESP M-II guitar!

KIKO LOUREIRO (MEGADETH)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Zakk Wylde
GUITAR ALBUM: *The Extremist* by Joe Satriani
SOLO: "Get the Funk Out" by Nuno Bettencourt
RIFF: Megadeth, "Symphony of Destruction"
TV SHOW: *Beavis and Butt-Head* and *Late Night with David Letterman*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Shawn Lane
GEAR: Marshall JMP-1 preamp
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Angels" by Robbie Williams

LEXII LYNN FRAZIER

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dean DeLeo of Stone Temple Pilots
GUITAR ALBUM: *Extreme II: Pornagraffiti*. Nuno takes the cake with his playing on this one. He's one of the greatest to ever do it!
SOLO: Tom Morello with the Whammy at the end of "Killing in the Name"
RIFF: "Walk," Pantera
TV-SHOW: *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Dave Matthews

ANA POPOVIC

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Robben Ford
GUITAR ALBUM: John Schofield's *Groove Elation*, featuring Larry Goldings, Idris Muhammad and Randy Brecker
SOLO: Pretty much anything Dominic Miller did with Sting
RIFF: Living Colour's "Love Rears Its Ugly Head" (Vernon Reid)
TV SHOW: *MTV Unplugged*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Dominic Miller. He's a true guitar hero!

K.K. DOWNING

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell
GUITAR ALBUM: *Burn My Eyes*, Machine Head
SOLO: "No More Tears," Zakk Wylde
RIFF: "Sad But True," Metallica
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Jeff Waters from Annihilator
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Neither!
GEAR: DigiTech Whammy
GUILTY PLEASURE: I have no guilty pleasures, just music that I love.

ISIAH MITCHELL (BLACK CROWES/EARTHLESS)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: John Frusciante
GUITAR ALBUM: *Ask the Ages*, Sonny Sharrock
SOLO: Slash's outro solo on "November Rain" is pretty iconic
RIFF: I think most people will say "Smells Like Teen Spirit" or a GNR track, so I'll say "Outshined" by Soundgarden.
TV SHOW: *Beavis and Butt-Head*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Craig Ross from Lenny Kravitz's band
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse!

DAMON FOWLER

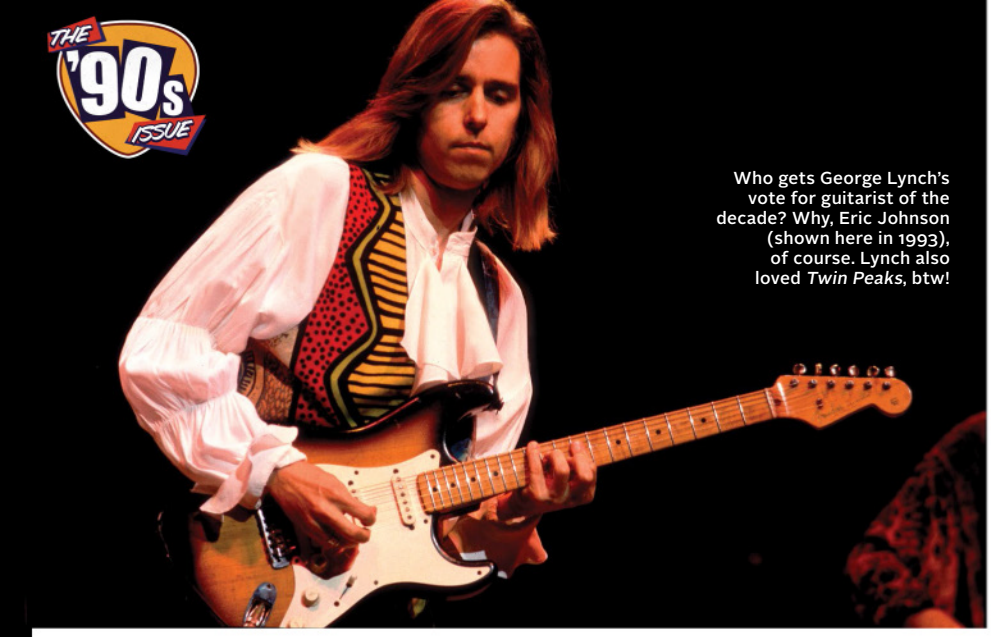
GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Steve Vai
ALBUM: Steve Vai, *Passion and Warfare*
SOLO: Steve Vai, "The Audience Is Listening"
RIFF: "Mama Said," Lenny Kravitz
TV SHOW: *Beavis and Butt-Head*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Anson Funderburgh
GEAR: PRS EG bolt-on with Fralin single coils

JACKIE VENSON

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Graham Coxon of Blur
GUITAR ALBUM: *Diamonds and Pearls*, *Love Symbol* or *The Gold Experience*, all by Prince
SOLO: Built to Spill, "Carry the Zero"
RIFF: Weezer, "Say It Ain't So" is to the Nineties kids what the Beatles' "Blackbird" was to guitarists of previous generations.
TV SHOW: *The Real World*. The OG of reality TV, for better and for worse.
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Adrian Utley of Portishead
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse
GEAR: Prince's Love Symbol guitar
GUILTY PLEASURE: "The Macarena"

STEVE CONTE (MICHAEL MONROE BAND)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Eric Johnson
GUITAR ALBUM: *Living with the Law*, Chris Whitley
SOLO: "Paranoid Android," Radiohead
RIFF: "It's Love," King's X (Ty Tabor)



Who gets George Lynch's vote for guitarist of the decade? Why, Eric Johnson (shown here in 1993), of course. Lynch also loved *Twin Peaks*, btw!

PAUL NATKIN/GETTY IMAGES

TV SHOW: *The Sopranos*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Kim Thayil
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Chuck Taylors all the way

EDDIE 9V

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Jonny Lang
ALBUM: *Cowboys from Hell*, Pantera
SOLO: "Take Your Hands Down," Eddie Taylor
RIFF: Junior Kimbrough, "All Night Long"
TV SHOW: *The Sopranos*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Jeff Buckley
GEAR: Boss DS-1 Distortion. Regardless of your ego, it can go up against any Klon if you know how to use it.

RICHIE FAULKNER (JUDAS PRIEST)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Slash, John Petrucci, Dimebag Darrell, Glenn Tipton, K.K. Downing, Marty Friedman, Jerry Cantrell, Kirk Hammett, John Frusciante and Zakk Wylde
GUITAR ALBUM: *Images and Words* by Dream Theater. Lord Petrucci is on fire with the perfect blend of virtuoso guitar playing and killer songs.
SOLO: "November Rain." What Slash did there is the literal stuff of legend. The composition, the video, the whole thing is historic.
RIFF: "Walk" by Pantera is a game-changing riff from a genre-defining band. You don't get more "Nineties metal brutality" than this.
GEAR: Line 6 "kidney bean" Pod. Everyone had a version of the Pod and was freaking out about it at the time.

RICHIE KOTZEN

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Slash really had it all.
GUITAR ALBUM: *Dirt* by Alice in Chains. Incredible songwriting and production. Stunningly creative guitar work. Recorded to perfection and stands the test of time.
SOLO: "For the Love of God," Steve Vai
RIFF: "Man in the Box" by Alice in Chains. In 1990 or '91, I was riding down Sunset Boulevard in Beverly Hills, and this song came on the radio. I remember sitting in the back of the car, pointing at the speakers in disbelief, proclaiming this was the most badass rock tune I'd ever heard!
TV SHOW: *The X-Files*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Richie Kotzen. I'm saying this as a bit of a joke, but the reality is after I lost my recording contract with Geffen in 1995, the remaining years were a bit rough for me. Thankfully in 1999, things began to turn around when I joined Vertu with Stanley Clarke and Lenny White.
GEAR: Marshall model #1959 100-watt head. It's been the most consistent solid piece of gear. I've gone from amp to amp — Cornford, Fender and now Victory, but this particular piece of gear was my go-to head for many years until I developed my own amp with Cornford and, later, Victory.

JD SIMO

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: John Frusciante
GUITAR ALBUM: *Buena Vista Social Club*! This is a lot more than a guitar album, of course, but it's an absolute fountain of inspiration. Ry Cooder and Bill Frisell are the Obi-Wans of our time, and this is just an essential album.
SOLO: Junior Kimbrough's "Lonesome Road" from *Most Things Haven't Worked Out*. It's raw as fuck, and while it's rough, it's incredibly compelling. It just put me in a trance. The realness of it kinda shut me up and made me focus, unlike anything else I'd ever heard.
RIFF: Nirvana's "Heart-Shaped Box"
TV SHOW: *The X-Files* all the way!
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Ted Greene was an L.A. jazz master that so many of my favorite guitarists held in the highest regard. He was low-key and never really famous at all. He was and is probably one of the greatest guitarists that have ever lived.
GEAR: The Klon. I remember paying $300 and thinking, "This is crazy!" Sure wish I still had it.

JOEL HOEKSTRA (WHITESNAKE)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: David Gavurin from the Sundays
GUITAR ALBUM: Steve Vai, *Passion and Warfare*
SOLO: Eric Johnson, "Cliffs of Dover"
RIFF: Metallica, "Enter Sandman"
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Nuno Bettencourt. Extreme is often lumped in with Eighties bands, but they really were breaking through in the Nineties.
GEAR: Having my Roland VS-880 to record on felt so modern and high-tech at the time.

ERHAN ALMAN (HERIOT)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Stephen Carpenter of Deftones
GUITAR ALBUM: Limp Bizkit, *Significant Other*
SOLO: Primus, "Jerry Was a Racecar Driver" (Larry LaLonde)
RIFF: "Be Quiet and Drive (Far Away)" by Deftones
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Larry LaLonde from Primus
GUILTY PLEASURE: Underworld's "Born Slippy"

GEORGE LYNCH

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Eric Johnson
GUITAR ALBUM: Pantera, *Vulgar Display of Power*
SOLO: Eric Johnson, "Cliffs of Dover"
RIFF: Rage Against the Machine,

"Killing in the Name"
TV SHOW: *Twin Peaks*
GEAR: DigiTech Whammy
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Docs... better for riding.
GUILTY PLEASURE: Backstreet Boys, "Larger Than Life"

IVAN JULIAN (EX RICHARD HELL/MATTHEW SWEET)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: PJ Harvey. She was innovative and reintroduced the guitar to the mainstream after the Eighties synth decade.
GUITAR ALBUM: *To Bring You My Love* by PJ Harvey. The entire record is guitar driven and is delivered with immediacy as if something were at stake.
SOLO: PJ Harvey's "Long Snake Moan." Just listen to the layers and overtones.
RIFF: "Long Snake Moan" from *To Bring You My Love*. It's explosive, and it rocks!
TV SHOW: *Northern Exposure*. It was the only show I watched because I spent most of the decade on the road.
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: PJ Harvey. Though she's known more as a songwriter than a guitar hero, I don't see any reason why one can't be both. Just listen...
GEAR: Maestro Echoplex. I used the Echoplex in a live setting in "sound on sound" mode so it would keep playing the solo from the last song after we left the stage.

GAVIN ROSSDALE (BUSH)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Joey Santiago of the Pixies
GUITAR ALBUM: *Badmotorfinger*, Soundgarden
SOLO: "Smells Like Teen Spirit"
RIFF: Smashing Pumpkins, "1979"
TV SHOW: *NYPD Blue* and *Beavis and Butt-Head*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Nigel Pulsford of Bush
GEAR: My purple 1967 Jazzmaster
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Iris," Goo Goo Dolls

STEVIE DACANAY (BUCKCHERRY)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell. In the decade where the guitar solo seemed to meander, he kept it brutal, relentless and laser focused.
GUITAR ALBUM: RHCP's *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*. John Frusciante, highly underrated, corralled a dozen classic styles, conjured Jimi Hendrix from the beyond, weaved in and out of Flea's thunder and created a masterpiece.
SOLO: "Killing in the Name" by Tom Morello
RIFF: C'mon. Gotta go with Buckcherry's "Lit Up"!
TV SHOW: *Seinfeld*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: How about Stevie Dacanay?
GEAR: I still use today what I used then — almost exactly. Gibsons into Marshalls.
GUILTY PLEASURE: "You Get What You Give" by the New Radicals

GREG FRASER (BRIGHTON ROCK/STORM FORCE)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell
GUITAR ALBUM: Eric Johnson, *Ah Via Musicom*
SOLO: "Cliffs of Dover," Eric Johnson
RIFF: "Enter Sandman," Metallica
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Tim Kelly from Slaughter. I never hear his name mentioned. He had a great tone, great melodic leads and a killer vibrato.
GEAR: Boss Metal Zone
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse. Way more comfortable!
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Waterfalls" by TLC

TRAVIS STEVER (COHEED AND CAMBRIA)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: J Mascis
GUITAR ALBUM: Quicksand's *Slip* and Dinosaur Jr.'s *Where You Been*
SOLO: Red Hot Chili Peppers' "I Could Have Lied"
RIFF: Dinosaur Jr.'s "Out There"
TV SHOW: *Beavis and Butt-Head*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Christopher Thorn and Rogers Stevens from Blind Melon don't get enough credit. *Soup* is a masterpiece.
GEAR: The Boss Metal Zone. That thing got carried into Coheed and Cambria live shows up until, like, 2001. Then some good friends suggested we leave it behind.
GUILTY PLEASURE: The Cardigans

GRAHAM WHITFORD (TYLER BRYANT & THE SHAKEDOWN)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dean DeLeo of Stone Temple Pilots
GUITAR ALBUM: *By Your Side*, the Black Crowes
SOLO: Slash, "November Rain"
RIFF: Tonic, "Casual Affair"
TV SHOW: *Twin Peaks*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Dave Grohl
GUILTY PLEASURE: Shania Twain, "Man! I Feel Like a Woman!"

BLAKE ALLARD (JOYOUS WOLF)

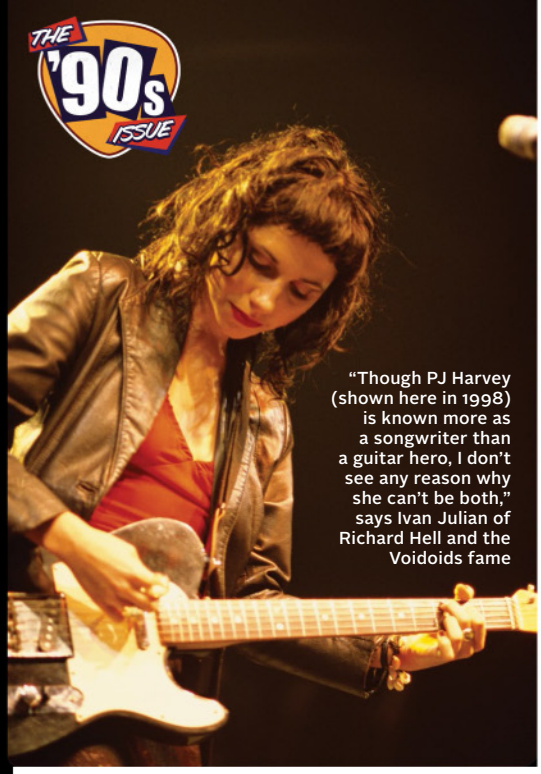
GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell
GUITAR ALBUM: *Purple* by Stone Temple Pilots
SOLO: Tom Morello, "Bulls on Parade"
RIFF: Jerry Cantrell, "Man in the Box"
TV SHOW: *The Simpsons*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Dean DeLeo
GEAR: 1997 Marshall 1987X
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Doc Martens
GUILTY PLEASURE: "You Oughta Know" by Alanis Morissette!

JOHN NOTTO (DIRTY HONEY)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Slash
GUITAR ALBUM: Guns N' Roses, *Use Your Illusion II*
SOLO: Slash, "November Rain"
RIFF: Tom Morello, "Killing in the Name"
TV SHOW: *The Simpsons*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Trey Anastasio from Phish
GEAR: As a kid, I played the shit out of the Zoom 505.
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Both!
GUILTY PLEASURE: Third Eye Blind, "Semi-Charmed Life"

DANE PIEPER (CLASSLESS ACT)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Jerry Cantrell
GUITAR ALBUM: *Dirt*, Alice in Chains
SOLO: Slash, "November Rain"
RIFF: Tom Morello, "Killing in the Name"
TV SHOW: *Hey Arnold!*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Dean DeLeo
GEAR: Klon Centaur
GUILTY PLEASURE: "I Want It That



"Though PJ Harvey (shown here in 1998) is known more as a songwriter than a guitar hero, I don't see any reason why she can't be both," says Ivan Julian of Richard Hell and the Voidoids fame

FUTURE (MARCH '93 GW) EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS

Way," Backstreet Boys

JESSE DAYTON (JOHNNY CASH, WILLIE NELSON, ETC.)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Jimmie Vaughan was it for me. I liked rock players like Dean DeLeo and Billie Joe Armstrong and even hung out with Dimebag in Dallas, but I was obsessed with Jimmie Vaughan.
GUITAR ALBUM: *Damn Right, I've Got the Blues* by Buddy Guy was super important. Stevie Ray Vaughan had just passed away, and the world needed Buddy, who was still in his prime, killing it every night onstage.
SOLO: Brian Setzer's instrumental version of "Sleepwalk"
RIFF: "Smells Like Teen Spirit" and "Come As You Are" owned Nineties riff-rock radio
TV SHOW: It's all about *The Sopranos*!
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Junior Brown. Check out *12 Shades of Brown*. He's from a different planet!

STEVE BROWN (TRIXTER)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Edward Van Halen
GUITAR ALBUM: *For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge*, Van Halen
SOLO: Eric Johnson, "Cliffs of Dover"
RIFF: Jerry Cantrell, "Them Bones"
TV SHOW: *In Living Color*
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Poison," Bell Biv DeVoe

RICHIE RANNO (STARZ)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Eddie Van Halen
GUITAR ALBUM: *Ten*, Pearl Jam
SOLO: "Alive," Pearl Jam
RIFF: "Enter Sandman," Metallica
TV SHOW: *Seinfeld*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Billy Duffy
GEAR: Vox wah
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Counting Blue Cars" by Dishwalla

MALINA MOYE

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Kurt Cobain, John Frusciante, Prince
GUITAR ALBUM: Nirvana's *Nevermind*, Eric Clapton's *Unplugged* and Prince's *Diamonds and Pearls*
SOLO: Clapton's *Unplugged* version of "Layla"
RIFF: Carlos Santana with "Smooth" and Kurt Cobain with "Smells Like Teen Spirit"
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Greg Howe, Nuno Bettencourt and Paul Jackson Jr.
GEAR: Korg M1. The sounds in the Korg scream Nineties!

BOBBY GUSTAFSON (EX OVERKILL)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Darrell "Dimebag" Abbott
GUITAR ALBUM: *Passion and Warfare* by Steve Vai
SOLO: Marty Friedman, "Tornado of Souls"
RIFF: "I'm Broken," Pantera
TV SHOW: *Seinfeld*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Dave Mustaine and Terrance Hobbs of Suffocation
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse

ALEX GROSSI (QUIET RIOT)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell. He truly was one of a kind, the perfect combination of feel and chops.
GUITAR ALBUM: Skid Row, *Slave to the Grind*. The riffs on this record are killer from start to finish; I think Snake Sabo and Scotti Hill are criminally underrated; they are by far one of the great guitar duos in hard rock.
SOLO: "The Sleep" by Pantera and "Estranged" by GNR. "The Sleep" embodies all of Dime's playing in one solo — creepy melodic, screaming harmonics and amazing dexterity all in one solo. I still get chills from it.
RIFF: Tom Morello, "Freedom"
TV SHOW: *Melrose Place*. Who wouldn't want to live there?
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Ross Childress from Collective Soul
GEAR: DigiTech Whammy and Peavey 5150 head

JASMINE STAR

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Kurt Cobain
GUITAR ALBUM: *Rust in Peace* by Megadeth (chops) and *Cowboys from Hell* by Pantera (vibes)
SOLO: Zakk Wylde's solo on "No More Tears"
RIFF: "Killing in the Name," Rage Against the Machine
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Eric Johnson. I was lucky enough to see him play at NAMM a few years back. Everything he plays always feels ready to go, even when he's just noodling.

JACKIE PARRY (DIANTHUS)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Paul Gilbert
GUITAR ALBUM: *Passion and Warfare* by Steve Vai
SOLO: "Floods" from Pantera's *The Great Southern Trendkill*
RIFF: Metallica's "Sad But True." It's just so catchy.
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Jade Puget of AFI. He's extremely talented, and I love his approach to the instrument and his writing style.
GEAR: EHX Big Muff

RYAN ROXIE (ALICE COOPER BAND)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Kurt Cobain
GUITAR ALBUM: Happy Mondays, *Pills 'N' Thrills and Bellyaches* is one of the most underrated guitar albums of all time, not just from the Nineties.
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Noel Gallagher of Oasis. Hands down, the leader of the Britpop, Manchester, guitar-driven rock brigade.
GEAR: Hughes & Kettner Rotosphere. It's the best (and only) authentic Leslie-sounding pedal. It's all over the 2000 Slash's Snakepit record, as well as my guitar work with D.P.M. and Roxie 77 (both Nineties hidden gems... wink, wink)!

PAUL GILBERT

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Eric Johnson
GUITAR ALBUM: *Ah Via Musicom*

by Eric Johnson
SOLO: Eric Johnson, "Desert Rose"
RIFF: "I Wanna Go Where the People Go" by the Wildhearts
TV SHOW: *Seinfeld*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Ty Tabor
GEAR: Ibanez PGM300

ERIC SCHENKMAN (SPIN DOCTORS)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Kurt Cobain
GUITAR ALBUM: Nirvana's *Nevermind*
SOLO: Kurt Cobain, "Lithium"
RIFF: Kurt Cobain, "Come As You Are"
TV SHOW: *The Sopranos*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Me!
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse
GEAR: Ibanez Tube Screamer
GUILTY PLEASURE: None

TRISTAN THOMAS (FLORENCE BLACK)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Jerry Cantrell of Alice in Chains probably wrote my favorite guitar riffs of the Nineties, so I'd have to pick him!
GUITAR ALBUM: *Superunknown* by Soundgarden
SOLO: "Nutshell" by Alice in Chains
RIFF: "Breed" by Nirvana
TV SHOW: *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. That intro theme tune is engraved into my soul for eternity!
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Buzz Osborne of the Melvins

ALLY VENABLE

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Kurt Cobain
GUITAR ALBUM: Nirvana, *Nevermind*
SOLO: Kim Thayil, "Black Hole Sun"
RIFF: "Smells Like Teen Spirit"
TV SHOW: *That '70s Show*

BRUCE KULICK (GRAND FUNK RAILROAD, EX KISS)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Jerry Cantrell; Slash is a close second.
GUITAR ALBUM: Pearl Jam's *Ten*. Such great, guitar-driven songs
SOLO: "Airbag" by Radiohead. Completely unique and brilliant.
RIFF: "Spoonman" by Soundgarden. I played this one often!
TV SHOW: *The X-Files*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Billy Corgan
GEAR: DigiTech Whammy, as heard on "Hate" from Kiss' *Carnival of Souls*.
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Chuck Taylors — but I had Docs too. I had to have 'em in the Nineties!
GUILTY PLEASURE: Weezer's "Hash Pipe"

KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Tom Morello
GUITAR ALBUM: Santana's *Supernatural*
SOLO: Eric Johnson, "Cliffs of Dover"
RIFF: Who doesn't instantly recognize Jerry Cantrell's riff on "Man in the Box?"
TV SHOW: *Seinfeld* was hilarious
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Kurt Cobain ushered in a new era for the sound of rock 'n' roll and showed everybody that you don't have to be flashy to have a powerful impact on the guitar.
GEAR: My Klon Centaur

NITA STRAUSS

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell
GUITAR ALBUM: Steve Vai's *Passion and Warfare*
SOLO: Dream Theater's "Under a Glass Moon" (John Petrucci)
RIFF: Metallica's "Sad but True"
TV SHOW: *Frasier*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Wes Borland from Limp Bizkit
GEAR: My first multi-effects pedal, the Zoom 505
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Doc Martens all day long!
GUILTY PLEASURE: Seal's "Kiss from a Rose"

DIAMOND ROWE (TETRARCH)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell. Riffs started getting heavier and more metallic, and he paved the way for all of that.
GUITAR ALBUM: The Black Album by Metallica. Metallica showed us all how to keep things on the heavier side while writing hit songs that can cross over.
SOLO: The solo Marty Friedman did in Megadeth's "Tornado of Souls" is one that has always stuck with me!
RIFF: "Smells Like Teen Spirit" by Nirvana. That is the song that got me into hard music and, in my opinion, a song that will be relevant until the end of time.
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Head and Munky from Korn

NIKKI STRINGFIELD (IRON MAIDENS)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell
GUITAR ALBUM: Steve Vai's *Passion and Warfare*, hands down!
SOLO: Pantera's "Floods" from *The Great Southern Trendkill*. Melodic, yet dark, heavy and catchy!
RIFF: Nirvana's "Heart-Shaped Box." It's so simple yet so great.
TV SHOW: *Tales from the Crypt!*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Kurt Cobain. I was always given a hard time for saying he was my favorite guitarist, but I still stand by it!
DOCS OR CONVERSE: On stage, Docs. Off stage, Converse.
GUILTY PLEASURE: The Backstreet Boys, "I Want It That Way"

JUSTIN SANE (ANTI-FLAG)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Tom Morello
ALBUM: Nirvana, *In Utero*
SOLO: Kurt Cobain, "Serve the Servants"
RIFF: Fugazi, "Suggestion." Two notes played fucking fast!
TV SHOW: *Xena: Warrior Princess*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Chris Wollard of Hot Water Music and Justin Sane of Anti-Flag!
GEAR: Marshall Valvestate. The definition of thin, in a bad way.

CHRIS TRAYNOR (BUSH)

GUITARIST OF THE DECADE: Dimebag Darrell
GUITAR ALBUM: *Loveless*, My Bloody Valentine
SOLO: Zakk Wylde on Ozzy Osbourne's "No More Tears"
RIFF: Sepultura, "Roots Bloody Roots"
TV SHOW: *The X-Files*
UNDERAPPRECIATED HERO: Page Hamilton of Helmet [*as seen on our March 1993 cover, above*]
GEAR: Green Sovtek Big Muff
DOCS OR CONVERSE: Converse All Stars
GUILTY PLEASURE: "Joining a Fan Club," Jellyfish. GW

Limp Bizkit's Wes Borland [*left*] and Fred Durst visit New York City in 1999 during the Family Values Tour

THOSE HAPPY NU YEARS

10 late-Nineties **nu metal** gems (What, you didn't think we were gonna mention **nu metal**?!?)

By Andrew Daly

IN A DECADE looked back upon for trends that suffocatingly enveloped one another, nu metal may well be the most infamous of them all. Filled with baggy-jeaned, backwards-hat-wearing types (Hello, Fred Durst!) who conjured the full gamut of emotions, from eternal sadness to hyper-illicit wrath, nu metal set the stage for a generation of angst-filled musical fans to groan, moan and sob along with.

Of course, 12 or 12,000 of you might be wondering aloud, "What is nu metal?" And to be honest, with all the shade that's been thrown its way, combined with the fact that many of the bands labeled as such are so different... it's a bit difficult to define. But if we were to try, we'd say: nu metal combines elements of heavy metal and hip-hop with lovely syncopated layers, dense guitars and gloomy (but not *really* doomy) downtuned guitars. Oh, and there are bits of grunge, funk and just about everything else mixed in there. And, for better or worse, we should men-

tion the general aggression and anger that seems to run rampant through nu metal. Sounds fun, right?

The guttural music of the all-too-short nu metal era will forever be trapped in a vacuum of the Nineties, with those who lived through it being the genre's willing (or unwilling) victims. Though it's not always taken seriously, it's also not to be taken lightly. What follows are 10 late-Nineties nu metal albums worth a second listen. Or something like that.

10. *THE FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF SOUTHTOWN*, P.O.D. (1999)

BEFORE "YOUTH OF a Nation" came along after Y2K, Christian-meets-nu-metal outfit P.O.D.'s finest hour was 1999's *The Fundamental Elements of Southdown*. With rage-filled yet altruistic visions relayed through platinum-selling hits like "Southdown," it was easy to get down with Marcos Curiel's chugging, atmospheric licks. Also of note: this record includes a trapped-in-time cover of U2's "Bullet the Blue Sky," which, if nothing else, is a curiosity worth hearing at least once.

9. *TONIGHT THE STARS REVOLT!*, POWERMAN 5000 (1999)

FUELED BY GUITAR duo M.33 and Adam 12, Powerman 5000's *Tonight the Stars Revolt!* was a weapon of mass destruction. More alarming than a noose made of roofing nails, yet brimming with suffocatingly sweet hooks, *Tonight the Stars Revolt!* was one to remember, to be sure. The group was unique if only for their apparent obsession with all things sci-fi en route to their biggest hit, "When Words Collide."

8. *COAL CHAMBER*, COAL CHAMBER (1997)

COAL CHAMBER WERE early torchbearers for an impending nu metal scene, along with a few others. Released on the genre's commercial peak precipice, 1997's *Coal Chamber* obtained gold status, but the band has been mostly forgotten since. Never a group to dazzle; instead, tracks such as "Sway" found the L.A. natives brandishing an uber-simplistic approach, as evidenced by Miguel Rascón's rudimentary yet effective Telecaster-driven methods.

KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE

7. SOULFLY, SOULFLY (1998)

SOULFLY HAVE BEEN known to genre-hop over the years, but for their 1997 debut, the group shined with a period-correct approach steeped in nu metal splendor. Jackson Bandeira and Max Cavalera trade guitar tricks throughout *Soulfly*, but most interesting about this record is the array of guest stars scattered throughout. What self-respecting nu metal aficionado wouldn't love a roster featuring Dino Cazares, Chino Moreno, Fred Durst and more?

6. *DYSFUNCTION*, STAIND (1999)

NU METAL SUFFERS from several disorders, the most unfortunate of which is that some (OK, many) people don't take it entirely seriously. But that was never an issue for Springfield, Massachusetts act, Staind. Indeed, with Mike Mushok handling the fretwork, Staind were musically sound, but what truly set them apart was Aaron Lewis' depressingly stark lyrics, which covered just every grizzly subject one could imagine. Pair that with semi-deranged cover art and you've got a recipe for a nu metal-driven nightmare.

5. *AROUND THE FUR*, DEFTONES (1997)

THE MEMBERS OF Deftones, — notably guitarist Stephen Carpenter — are a bit evasive when asked about their foray into nu metal. Sure, they've stepped away from the genre for the most part, but in the late Nineties, few did it better, a trick on full display via 1997's platinum-selling *Around the Fur*. In truth, Deftones are often thought of as a cut above the rest of the field, and it's with good reason, considering Carpenter's ringing open strings, dissonant voicings and deafening use of power chords in his polyrhythms.

4. *SLIPKNOT*, SLIPKNOT (1999)

WIDELY CONSIDERED ONE of the better metal albums of the past 25 years, it's no surprise to see Slipknot's 1999 self-titled effort still soaking up ink in rock's back pages. Though classified as "nu metal," Slipknot also indulged their desires for expansiveness, injecting healthy doses of death, thrash, industrial and speed metal into the nu metal mix. "Purity" and "Frail Limb Nursery" are remembered for issues pertaining to copyright infringement but are lasting just the same. Problems aside, Corey Taylor showed his mettle as a songsmith, and Mick Thomson, Jim Root and Josh Brainard's attack on guitar was nothing short of seismic.

3. *DEVIL WITHOUT A CAUSE*, KID ROCK (1998)

YOU DIDN'T THINK we'd make it out of here without mentioning Kid Rock's "Bawitdaba," did you? And who could forget what would become a harbinger of country rap and cowboy metal, the indomitable "Cowboy"? Say what you will about Kid Rock's value as a songwriter, *Devil Without a Cause* dominated radio waves and MTV alike in the late summer of 1998, en route to fame, fortune and, yes, infamy. Far from a guitarist's delight, Kid Rock's backing band, Twisted Brown Trucker (featuring Jason Krause and Kenny Olson) is, at the very least, a semi-memorable duo capable of crafting tidy riffs.

2. *SIGNIFICANT OTHER*, LIMP BIZKIT (1999)

NETFLIX'S 2022 DOCUMENTARY *Trainwreck: Woodstock '99* vividly reminded fans that "Break Stuff" was indeed the mantra for Limp Bizkit. Considering its rage-filled lyrical themes, which inspired the masses to tear plywood from the walls of outdoor concert venues and crowd surf to their destiny, yeah... you could say *Significant Other* was critical to the nu metal movement. And if we're being honest, Wes Borland is one of the few actual guitar heroes in a genre that's a bit lacking in said department.

1. *FOLLOW THE LEADER*, KORN (1998)

IT DIDN'T MATTER where you were; there was no escaping Korn's 1998 magnum opus. The album was popular from the get-go on the strength of "Freak on a Leash." And the accompanying Family Values Tour was a boon, carrying Korn to nine MTV Video Music Award nominations and one Grammy nod. In retrospect, Jonathan Davis' depressing yet at times awe-inspiring lyrics, bookended by Head and Munky's effects-filled guitar heroics, made *Follow the Leader* a pillar of nu metal. In a genre defined by tortured souls and savage imagery, Korn gifted the masses with a record to yelp to at ear-splitting volumes. GW

DAYS OF FUTURE PAST

GUITAR WORLD
SPECIAL ISSUE

The **retro designs**, **digital innovations** and **misfit toys** that defined **guitar gear** and **technology** in the **Nineties**

44

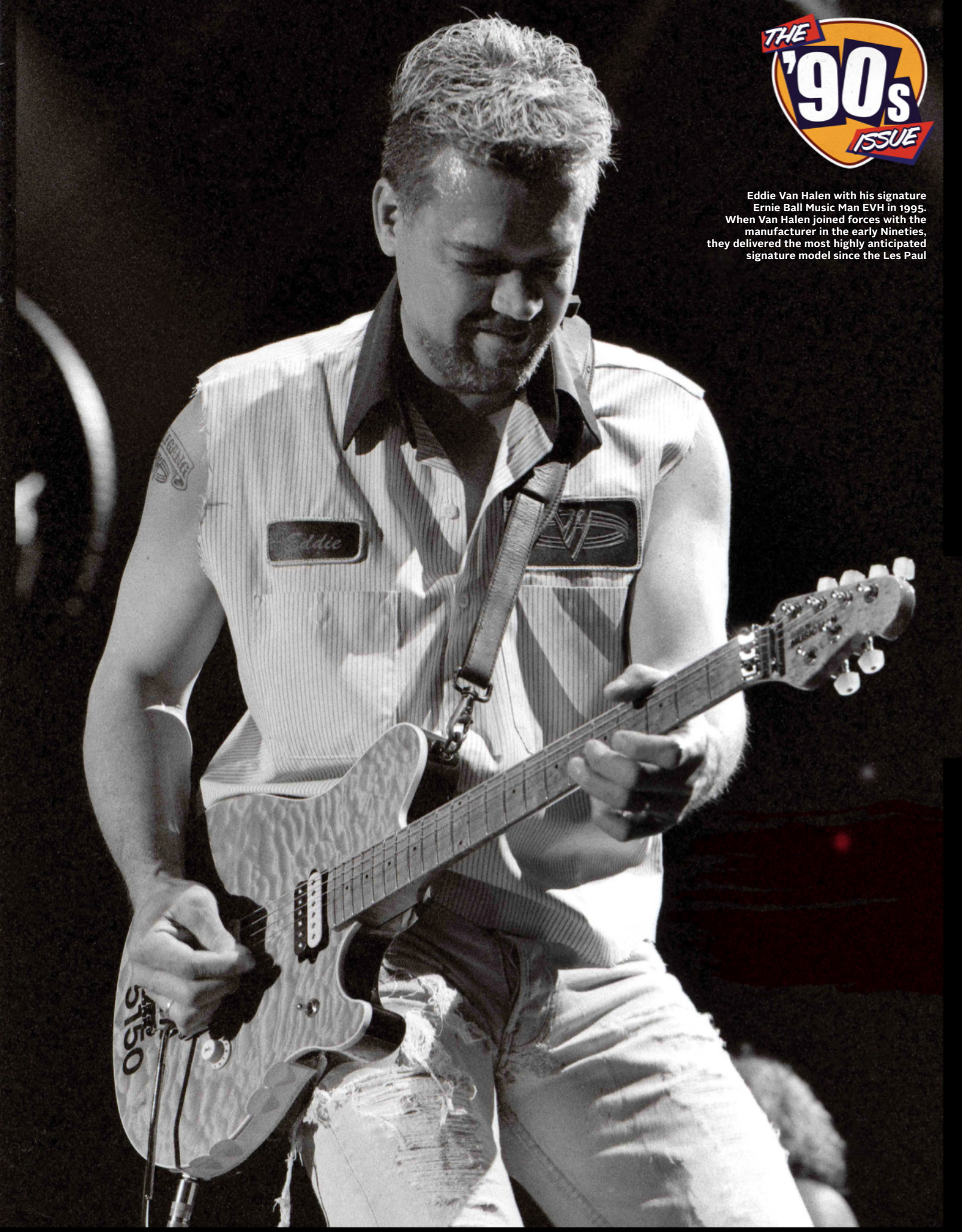
By Chris Gill

ELECTRIC GUITAR TECHNOLOGY progressed at a steady pace for four decades from the Fifties through the Eighties, but by the Nineties many guitarists seemed ready for a break. The sudden shift of the dominance of "hair metal" to grunge was partially responsible for the revolution against evolution that took place, as the renewed interest in guitars and effects from the past that developed seemed to be inspired more by a desire to challenge the status quo than nostalgia. Another factor was the ever-increasing prices of super Strats, rack effects and high-gain multi-channel amps, which helped cash-strapped musicians realize that many unpopular guitar models and low-tech classic stomp boxes maybe weren't as crappy as they previously were led to believe.

Although retro spirit dominated the Nineties, technology still progressed onward even as players were discovering the new-found joys of lipstick-tube pickups and germanium transistors. The digital revolution was starting to gain steam, making crystal-clean multitrack recording affordable and accessible to home studios and providing credible duplications of desirable amps and effects through advanced modeling technology. And while high-gain multi-channel amps remained relatively expensive, amp designers continued to push the envelope to provide features and tones that guitarists still desired.

Retro/future arguments aside, perhaps the most exciting development for the musical instrument industry was how level the playing field had started to become. The boutique builder phenomenon gained a strong foothold that paralleled the success of independent record labels at the time, and soon even a small company with good products was able to thrive as

ROBERT KNIGHT ARCHIVE/REDFERNS



THE '90s ISSUE

Eddie Van Halen with his signature Ernie Ball Music Man EVH in 1995. When Van Halen joined forces with the manufacturer in the early Nineties, they delivered the most highly anticipated signature model since the Les Paul

players became more open and accepting of instruments and effects that were uncommon and unusual.

The following items represent some of the most significant trends and new products that emerged during the Nineties.

GUITARS

RETRO GUITARS

Although the pointy solidbody and super Strat designs that ruled the Eighties didn't entirely disappear, they faded into the background as traditional Les Paul, Strat and Tele designs returned to dominance during the Nineties. A more stunning and unexpected development was the rise of retro "misfit" guitars that earned a level of respect they never experienced before, particularly Fender Jazzmasters, Jaguars and Mustangs as well as previously ignored "pawn shop prize" solidbodies like the Guild S-100, which were reissued, thanks to their use by grunge icons. The lo-tech innovations of Danelectro guitars from the Fifties and Sixties inspired everything from the lipstick tube pickups found on the Ibanez Talman and Charvel Surfcaster to the semi-hollow construction and phenolic laminate tops and backs of Reverend's first models. Even the Danelectro brand itself came back from the dead, joining several other newly resurrected brands from the past like Gretsch and Framus.

ERNIE BALL MUSIC MAN EVH/PEAVEY WOLFGANG

Although Eddie Van Halen endorsed Kramer guitars during the Eighties, he never played any of their production models and Kramer never offered an official Van Halen signature model. When Ed joined forces with Ernie Ball Music Man in the early Nineties, he finally delivered the most highly anticipated signature model since the Les Paul. Ed was heavily involved in his Music Man signature model's design, which included a neck that duplicated the shape of his favorite Kramer 5150 neck, a non-floating Floyd Rose and a single volume control with a "tone" knob. Because of Music Man's limited production capabilities (the company made only about 6,000 Van Halen guitars from 1991-1995), Ed switched to Peavey in 1995, which offered a modified version of the Music Man EVH signature design named the Wolfgang after Ed's son.

David Bowie/Tin Machine guitarist Reeves Gabrels, shown here in 1997, was one of several players to embrace the Parker Fly's radical design in the Nineties. Others include Adrian Belew, Amir Derakh, Vernon Reid and Dave Navarro

PRS MCCARTY

In the late Eighties, Paul Reed Smith reached out to Ted McCarty, who was president of Gibson during its electric guitar "golden era" from 1950 to 1966, seeking McCarty's wisdom about guitar building and production, which led to a long friendship between the two. The PRS McCarty model introduced in 1994 represented the culmination of their collaborative know-how, combining the most desirable aspects of McCarty's successful golden era designs with Smith's sophisticated production techniques, attention to detail and relentless pursuit of perfection. The PRS McCarty model represented the modern evolution of the vintage dual-humbucker maple-capped mahogany body set-neck design with its refined craftsmanship and enhanced playability. It has since become a classic in its own right.

IBANEZ UNIVERSE UV7

Introduced in 1990, the Ibanez Universe was the very first mass-produced seven-string solidbody electric, but despite playing a prominent role on Steve Vai's best-selling *Passion and Warfare* album, it initially struggled due to its expensive price and later due to backlash against technical guitar playing. However, as the Nineties progressed the Universe found new life in the hands of death metal guitarists like Trey Azagthoth of Morbid Angel and emerging nu-metal players like Munky and Head of Korn, who used it to pound out ultra-heavy rhythms. Ibanez discontinued the Universe in 1994 around the time Korn released its debut album, but the model was resurrected in 1996 due to a massive surge in demand largely thanks to Korn's incredible success and the instrument's use by an increasing variety of bands like Deftones, Dream Theater, Fear Factory, Meshuggah and many others. By the end of the decade, dozens of companies offered seven-string guitars and Ibanez offered numerous different models, including a seven-string acoustic.

KARJEAN LEVINE/GETTY IMAGES (GABRELS) MARTIN (MARTIN) FUTURE (GUILD/IBANEZ) NIGEL OSBOURNE/REDFERNS (HAMER)

[*from left*] **Martin's first Eric Clapton signature model, the 000-28EC; a modern reissue of the Guild S-100, famously used by Kim Thayil in the Nineties; an original Ibanez Universe UV7; a 1994 Hamer DuoTone**

PARKER FLY

The Parker Fly was by far the most innovative mass-produced electric guitar introduced during the Nineties. Although the body and neck were made of traditional tone woods, they were reinforced with a carbon fiber/fiberglass/epoxy resin composite exoskeleton that enabled an extremely slim, highly contoured body design with outstanding dynamics and sustain and acoustic-like resonance while reducing the weight to less than five pounds. The fretboard was also made of composite material and featured 24 stainless steel tang-free frets glued to the fretboard. A combination of magnetic pickups (usually a pair of humbuckers although some models featured single coils) and optional Fishman piezo bridge delivered a wide range of electric and acoustic-electric tones. One of the Fly's most ingenious innovations was its triple-mode vibrato system that could be set for floating, dive-only or fixed bridge operation. Players like Adrian Belew, Amir Derakh, Reeves Gabrels and Dave Navarro embraced this radical design, but the Parker Fly never surpassed cult status and was discontinued in 2016.

HAMER DUOTONE

Featuring a true hybrid electric-acoustic design that combined a spruce top and acoustic-style rosewood bridge with piezo pickups and a semi-hollow mahogany body with dual humbuckers, the Hamer DuoTone provided an ideal solution for guitarists who wanted to instantly switch between acoustic and electric sounds without switching instruments. Released just before the Parker Fly, the DuoTone may have stolen some of the Fly's thunder, particularly since its more traditional design conformed more to the era's retro focus. Like the Fly, the DuoTone had an impressive list of pro users like Stone Gossard, Ty Tabor, Jeff Tweedy and Dweezil Zappa, but it also suffered a similar fate of not catching on with the greater guitar community.

UNPLUGGED

Eric Clapton's appearance on *MTV Unplugged* and his subsequent release of the *Unplugged* album, which soared to RIAA Diamond status (10 million units sold), had a profound effect on the acoustic guitar market during the Nineties. Clapton's use of a pair of vintage Martins influenced a significant spike in sales of Martin guitars, which Martin capitalized on by issuing its first Eric Clapton signature model — the 000-28EC — in 1996. Martin wasn't the only acoustic guitar maker to benefit — sales of Taylor guitars also increased dramatically and even independent acoustic luthiers experienced a dramatic uptick in demand. Nirvana's *Unplugged* appearance had a similar, albeit lesser, impact on the sales of lower-cost entry-level acoustic-electrics as grunge, alternative and post punk bands followed suit.

AMPS

BOUTIQUE AMPS

THE BOUTIQUE AMP phenomenon did not start in the Nineties, but whereas only a handful of builders like Dumble, Mesa Boogie, Soldano, Trainwreck and others emerged during the Seventies and Eighties, the number of boutique amp builders and companies exploded exponentially during the Nineties. Bogner, Budda, Diezel, Dr. Z, Kendrick, Matchless, Naylor, Rivera, Tone King, Top Hat, Victoria, Voodoo, VHT and Wizard are just a handful of boutique amp companies that started or came to prominence during the decade. Part of this movement was a natural progression of amp techs moving beyond doing modifications when the old Fenders and Marshalls they hot-rodded became too valuable on the vintage market to modify, while others were inspired to replicate classic Fender, Marshall and Vox amps that had become scarce. Many boutique builders also developed innovative high-gain and multi-channel designs that significantly pushed amp technology forward. Even Fender (sort of) got into the boutique amp business, hiring designer Bruce Zinky and starting an amp custom shop that turned out the acclaimed Dual Professional, Tone Master and Vibro King models.

MESA DUAL RECTIFIER

RANDALL SMITH AND his engineering team started designing the Dual Rectifier in the late Eighties to satisfy the preferences of "hair metal" and hard rock players of that era and provide an alternative to the hot-rodded Marshalls and Soldano amps they preferred. However, by the time the first Dual Rectifiers hit the market in late 1992, grunge had effectively killed hair metal. The ironic twist was that the Dual Rectifier was immediately embraced by several grunge bands, including Soundgarden and Alice in Chains. During the mid- to late-Nineties, the ultra-heavy high-gain tones of the Dual Rectifier essentially defined the sound of heavy rock, alternative/punk and nu metal music of that era as it was used by numerous popular bands, including Bush, Creed, Foo Fighters, Korn, Limp Bizkit, Metallica, Tool, 311 and dozens of others.

PEAVEY 5150

AROUND THE SAME time that Eddie Van Halen was collaborating with Music Man on his first signature model guitar, he also started working with Peavey on his first signature amplifier — the 5150. It took about two years for Ed and lead engineer James Brown to refine the production version of the 5150's design before the first 5150 amps were shipped in 1992. A 120-watt beast driven by four 6L6 power tubes and four cascading gain stages, the 5150 delivered an entirely new definition of the "Brown sound." Its outrageously saturated distortion made it an instant favorite of British metal producers Colin Richardson and Andy Sneap, who made the 5150 as popular in extreme and underground metal circles as the Dual Rectifier was in mainstream genres.

[*north to south*] **Fender hired designer Bruce Zinky and started an amp custom shop that created the Vibro King, among other models; Eddie Van Halen's first signature amp, the Peavey 5150; the Mesa Dual Rectifier was immediately embraced by several grunge bands, including Soundgarden and Alice in Chains**

MATCHLESS DC30

RICK PERROTTA AND Mark Sampson started the Matchless company in 1989 and offered a variety of impressive amp models during the Nineties. Developed as a more reliable alternative to a Vox AC30, the Matchless DC30 2x12 combo was actually more like a hybrid of an AC30 Top Boost (channel 1) and AC15 (channel 2), thanks to channel 2's high-gain EF86 pentode preamp tube. Channel 2 also

FUTURE

Demand for pedals made from elusive, obsolete components increased as taste for vintage tones grew

[*clockwise from top left*] **Tech 21 SansAmp; DigiTech Whammy WH-1; Klon Centaur; Z. Vex Fuzz Factory**

featured a six-position tone switch that engaged different coupling capacitors that provided a variety of different tones. The DC30 and its head-only counterpart the HC30 were quickly embraced by a wide variety of high-profile pros, including Jimmie Vaughan, Stone Gossard and Mike McCready (Pearl Jam), Dave Matthews, John Rzeznik (Goo Goo Dolls), Dave Pirner (Soul Asylum), studio legend Mike Landau and country producers and session players like Kenny Greenberg, John Jorgenson and Brent Mason.

DIGITAL AMP MODELING

IN 1996 LINE 6 introduced the world to the wonders of digital amp modeling with the AxSys 212 combo. It was followed shortly afterwards by various Johnson Amplification (a division of DigiTech) models, including the flagship One Fifty and Two Fifty combos. Interestingly, the earliest digital amp modelers packaged as combo amps experienced disappointing sales figures, but when Line 6 offered the same technology in 1997 as the Amp Farm real-time TDM software plug-in for Pro Tools and in 1998 as a compact standalone processor called the POD, which sold thousands of units, guitarists eventually warmed up to digital modeling, paving the way for the various amps, processors and software available today. Even though digital modeling employed state-of-the-art technology, it fit in perfectly with the retro Nineties by providing the authentic sounds of classic amps and effects for the stage and studio without the expense, bulk and upkeep of collecting the real deal.

SOVTEK

THE DISSOLUTION OF the Soviet Union in the early Nineties was bad for weapons sales, but it was good for the electric guitar industry. Mike Matthews, the founder of Electro-Harmonix, was already involved in the manufacture and export of vacuum tubes via New Sensor's Sovtek brand, and during the early Nineties Sovtek expanded its efforts into making effect pedals like the Big Muff fuzz and Small Stone phase shifter and affordable guitar amp heads, reportedly built in former military factories. The Sovtek MIG series amps were designed by Tony Bruno and consisted of a variety of models: the MIG-30, MIG-50, 50-watt Tube Midget, MIG-60, MIG-100 and high-gain MIG-100H. Featuring a sound described as a combination between a Fender Bassman and Marshall Plexi, Sovtek MIG amps had their own distinct vibe. Priced well under $1,000, these amps provided a hell of a lot of rock for your ruble.

PEDALS/EFFECTS

FUZZ

ALTHOUGH GUITARISTS NEVER stopped using fuzz pedals since the first units appeared in the Sixties, during the Eighties fuzz was mostly used as a sort of "appetizer" during solos by players like Adrian Belew, David Gilmour, Eric Johnson and Stevie Ray Vaughan. However, during the Nineties fuzz became the full-meal deal, as players like Mudhoney's Mark Arm and Steve Taylor, Kurt Cobain, Billy Corgan, J. Mascis, Buzz Osborne and many others used fuzz as a main component of their guitar tones. Fuzz wasn't just for grunge either, as a wide variety of bands like White Zombie, Korn, Ministry, Nine Inch Nails, Radiohead, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Fu Manchu and Sonic Youth also wallowed in fuzz's filthy sounds. As prices for vintage fuzz stomp boxes soared, boutique pedal builders filled the void with designs based on the Big Muff, Fuzz Face, Super Fuzz and Tone Bender as well as outrageous new circuits like the ZVEX Fuzz Factory.

BOUTIQUE PEDALS

RENEWED INTEREST IN the simple joys of stomp box effects led to a sudden surge of small, independent pedal companies during the Nineties, many of which were staffed by only a handful of employees and operated out of basements or garages. Demand for pedals made from elusive, obsolete components increased as taste for vintage tones grew, and whereas large manufacturers couldn't convince their accountants that building units in limited runs of a dozen, a few hundred or even thousands would be profitable, boutique builders were able to do so and thrive. Independent pedal companies that emerged during the Nineties included Analog Man,

Released in 1991, the Boss Metal Zone MT-2 was an instant hit that has remained in continuous production ever since (There's even a popular MT-2w Waza Craft version)

Digital recording technology became affordable to the masses during the Nineties, thanks to the introduction of standalone hard disk recorders like the Fostex DMT-8

Black Cat, Frantone, Fulltone, Klon, Prescription, Way Huge and Z. Vex in America, Lovetone in England, and Bixonic and Sobbat in Japan.

KLON CENTAUR

Guitarists rarely talked about things like "clean boost" or "transparent overdrive" before Bill Finnegan unleashed the legendary Klon Centaur upon the world in 1994, but after most guitarists plugged into a Centaur those elusive tonal qualities became essential. The Klon Centaur was really more of a sonic sweetener, providing a slight boost of "just right" midrange frequencies and overdrive that fattened up tone in the good way, similar to what a tube amp pushed to its sweet spot should do, without changing the rig's tonal character significantly. Demand for the Centaur far exceeded Finnegan's production capabilities, which eventually drove prices into the stratosphere and inspired the huge variety of Klon clones seen today.

BOSS METAL ZONE MT-2

Released in 1991, the Boss Metal Zone MT-2 was an instant hit that has remained in continuous production ever since and sold more than a million units. Something that popular is bound to have its detractors, but the criticism usually comes from individuals who are too lazy to dive into the intricacies of the Metal Zone's rather powerful and somewhat sensitive "tweaky" EQ section, which can dial in an incredible range of tones both sublime and sloppy. Thanks to Nineties users like At the Gates, Cannibal Corpse, Korn, Marty Friedman (whose rig during Megadeth's *Countdown to Extinction* era was photographed containing two Metal Zones) and many others, the MT-2 has rightfully earned stature as a bona fide metal icon.

DIGITECH WHAMMY WH-1

Introduced in 1989, the first-generation DigiTech Whammy WH-1 took a while to catch on with guitarists, but when it finally did by the early and mid Nineties it seemed like almost everyone used one. It became an instrument unto itself in the hands of Tom Morello with Rage Against the Machine, but other prominent users who established the WH-1's iconic status during the Nineties included Dimebag Darrell, Jonny Greenwood, both James Hetfield and Kirk Hammett with Metallica, David Gilmour, Steve Vai, Joe Satriani, Kevin Shields and more. Later versions like the Whammy II and XP-100 Whammy-Wah found favor with players like Trey Anastasio and Korn, but the glitchy quirks and gritty lo-fi tone of the WH-1 made it indispensable for initial Whammy fans like the Edge, who snatched up every available WH-1 he could find.

TECH 21 SANSAMP

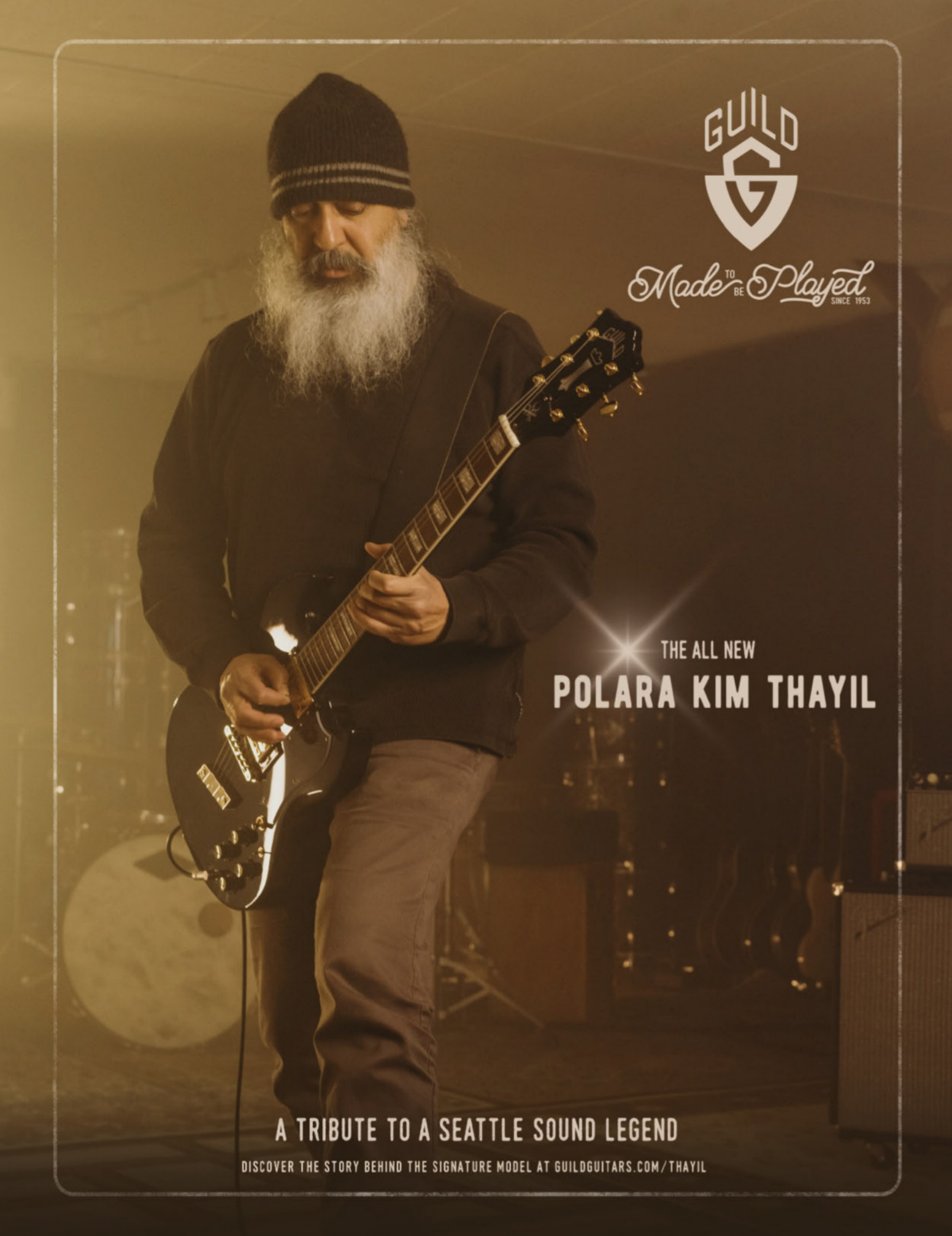
The original Tech 21 SansAmp is another product that actually came out in 1989 but made significant impact throughout the Nineties. It is probably best known for its use by Kurt Cobain in his rig as an overdrive pedal, but this revolutionary all-analog amp emulator was also a not-so-secret weapon of dozens of recording engineers and producers, including Tchad Blake who used it on everything and not just guitars. Its ability to replicate the tonal personality of Fender, Marshall and Mesa Boogie amps made it a godsend for direct recording applications, and as a result it was employed to great effect on numerous recordings. After Tech 21 introduced additional SansAmp products, the original SansAmp was renamed the SansAmp Classic.

RECORDING

DIGIDESIGN PRO TOOLS

Digital recording technology became affordable to the masses during the Nineties, thanks to the introduction of standalone hard disk recorders like the Fostex DMT-8, Roland VS-880, Yamaha 02R and Zoom HD8, and digital multitrack tape recorders like the Alesis ADAT. But the real game-changer was Digidesign's Pro Tools, which employed software, PCI cards and AD/DA hardware to turn a computer into a digital multitrack workstation. The power and capabilities of Pro Tools increased rapidly throughout the Nineties, and by 1999 when Digidesign introduced Pro Tool 24 Mix-Plus producers were able to complete projects from tracking through mastering entirely "in the box" using only Pro Tools. Digidesign also introduced the home studio-oriented Digi 001 at the end of 1999, making Pro Tools the new standard for digital recording for pros and project studios alike. GW

FUTURE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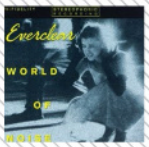

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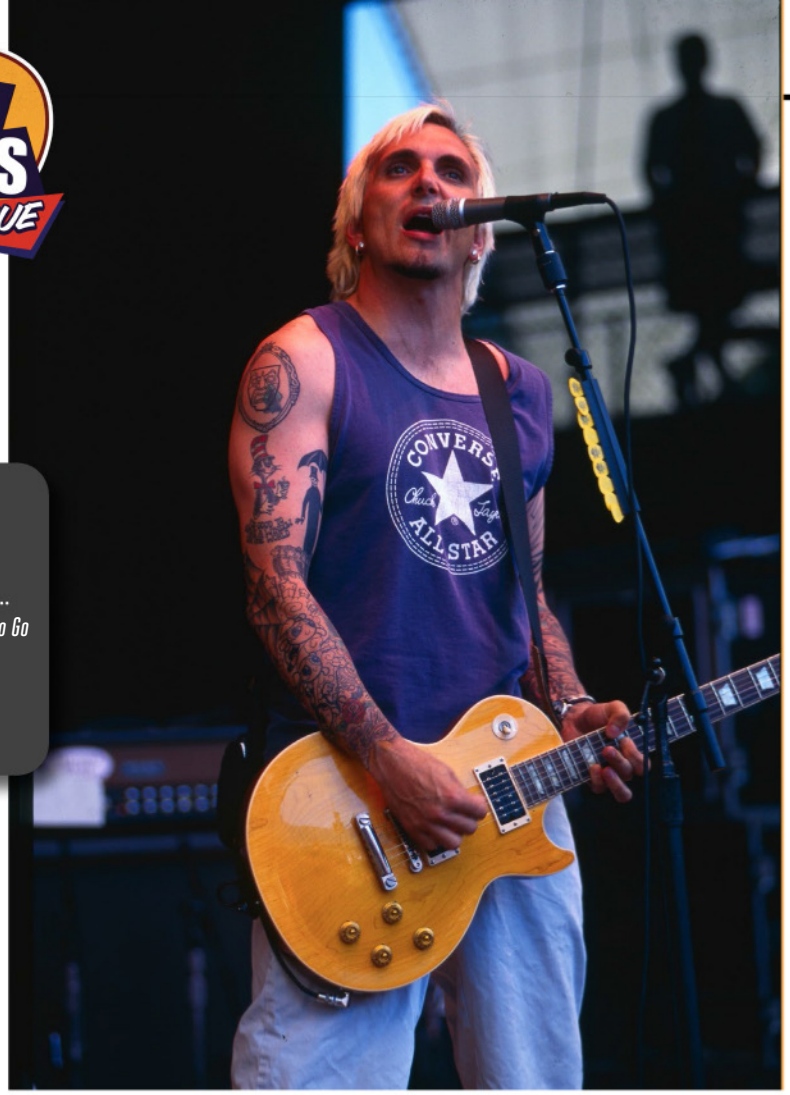

TIM MOSENFELDER/CONTRIBUTOR/GETTY IMAGES

ART ALEXAKIS

The tenacious Everclear frontman/guitarist discusses the music, moments and "dangerous" amps that changed his life — and maybe ours — in the Nineties and beyond

By Andrew Daly

BY THE TIME the sessions for 1993's *World of Noise* began, Art Alexakis had reached the end of his rope. A raging punk-rocker at heart, the then 31-year-old songwriter had reached an impasse, leaving him in a make-or-break situation.

"God, if Everclear didn't hit, man, I was fucking done," Alexakis says. "I'd spent years trying hard to make it work, but nothing was happening. My back was up against the wall, and I knew I had to try something different. My kid was on the way, and life was staring me in the face, telling me, 'Get this done, or get out.'"

Luck shined down on Alexakis as the underground success of *World of Noise* laid the groundwork for a major label deal with Capitol Records. Still, no one could have anticipated the breakneck triumph of Everclear's follow-up records — *Sparkle and Fade* (1995) and *So Much for the Afterglow* (1997) — leading to fame and fortune via platinum-selling success.

"That was the ultimate 'fuck you' to all the doubters," Alexakis says. "No one believed in Everclear or me, at least not in the sense that we would go platinum. I don't know what it was, though; it's not like you can plan for that. Years of angst and upset built up, creating a storm of creativity that no one saw coming."

In the years since, Alexakis had soldiered on. There have been more hits and the inevitable downturn that all aging artists face. But none of that deters Alexakis; the West Coast native is still defiant, boundlessly capable of spinning off angelic pop tunes on a whim.

"I don't think about matching what I've done," Alexakis says. "I have no need to do that. I've done what I set out to do. As for the world today, we've got people who seem to be accepting less of each other, which sucks. I guess I'm still angry and still writing about sad stuff. But there's so much bullshit in the world; I have to do my best to call people out on it when I see it. I won't be led around like a donkey; I'd rather see myself as a tiger, you know?"

Still incensed with the same vigor that defined his heyday, Alexakis dialed in with *Guitar World* to discuss the music and moments that changed his life forever in the Nineties and beyond.

What are some of your most poignant memories of the Nineties?
For me, there were a couple, but the main one was when I got the call that we had our first gold record with *Sparkle and Fade*. Our manager called us up and said, "Art, this thing isn't just projected to go gold... it's shipping gold this fucking week." I just stood there, and all I could say was, "That's

"I'D SPENT YEARS TRYING HARD TO MAKE IT WORK, BUT NOTHING WAS HAPPENING.

amazing," I jokingly said, "Hey, maybe we'll go platinum or something." And then he told me, "It looks like it could happen, for real." That record went on to go platinum, something I never thought could happen.

How did that alter Everclear's trajectory as the rest of the Nineties unfolded?

It was a huge turnaround because no one at Capitol Records thought we had that in us. We thought the record might do okay — but gold? Come on now. [*Laughs*] We weren't signed for a big hit like many bands were, and "Santa Monica" hadn't even been written when we signed the deal, so there was no sign of a "hit." So when we signed with Capitol, I started writing new songs immediately; I guess I felt a sense of urgency.

In the Nineties, the way it worked was they built records around one song with the hope that it would be a hit; that's generally how it went. But once I wrote "Santa Monica," I knew I had a great song on my hands, but who can predict that a song will change everything? Okay, so, like I said, I was told the record would ship gold, possibly platinum. And then I get another call: "Art, I was wrong... the record is shipping platinum tomorrow." That gave me chills; even thinking about it now, that conversation gives me chills. It was such a big deal, and it changed the trajectory of Everclear. *Sparkle and Fade*'s success was a "thank you" to everyone who believed in the band and me. And it was a "fuck you" to everybody who didn't.

The next record, *So Much for the Afterglow*, soundtracked many people's lives in the Nineties. What does that record mean to you?

I think that record is my masterpiece. It was validation for me because after *Sparkle and Fade* came out of nowhere to go platinum, many people doubted we could do it again. But the writing for that record wasn't easy, and there were a lot of stops and starts. I went down one road; it didn't work. I got my bearings, took a break, returned and had a whole new mindset. It went from a mediocre record that I was calling *Pure White Evil* to what would become *So Much for the Afterglow*.

I remember I had this *Pure White Evil* record in January of '97, and I wasn't happy with it. I rewrote some things, changed the title and then went in and remixed the record with Andy Wallace. By the spring of '97, it was called *So Much for the Afterglow*, and it was a new record. It was shorter, stronger and more representative of Everclear. And there's a thing called "cringe factor," where you do something, and after the fact, you think, "Okay, is there anything that makes me cringe?" I gotta say, with *So Much for the Afterglow*, there was very little cringe.

Are there any Everclear records that *do* make you cringe?

After *So Much for the Afterglow*, I wanted to make a double record called *Songs from an American Movie*. My idea was to make an album that was edgy but poppy at the same time. But my manager at the time talked me out of it; he said, "If we split it into two records, we can get an even bigger payday rather than doing the one double album." He played against my ego, "Hey, man, no one but Guns N' Roses has really done this. You can do it too. Let's cash in," and I bought into it.

So the first album of the two, subtitled *Learning How to Smile*, is a pretty great record. I have no cringe factor. But volume two, *Good Time for a Bad Attitude*, sounds tired to me. There's lots of cringe. It sounds tired because I was making two records in a year. Instead of 24 songs over two albums, I should have done 18 or 20 over one double album. If I had done that, it would have been perfect. It would have rivaled *So Much for the Afterglow* for my masterpiece. It was all ego. I shouldn't have listened to my manager. But it was up to me, and I made a choice. I don't blame anybody but myself.

What are your memories of recording "Wonderful"?

When I was working on that song, I had the music for it, and I was figuring out the chords on the piano. So I'm working on the song, and the guys in the band said, "Wow. You finally wrote about something positive." And I was like, "What the hell are you talking about?" And they said, "It's called 'Wonderful'; that must be positive, right?" If you know the song, you'll remember it's not very positive. They assumed it must be positive because it was called "Wonderful."

After that, I ended up flying down to L.A., and while I was on that plane, "Wonderful" fully formed. I decided to do it from the perspective of an inner-child, not necessarily me, but an amalgam of different people, including myself and even my own daughter. It became this song about a combination of kids from broken homes, and I wrote all those parts by singing them in my head on that plane ride. By the time I got to the studio, I walked up to the mic and did it in three takes.

Has the shelf-life of that song surprised you at all?

No. I don't want to sound arrogant because I'm not. But when it was done, I was like, "This is just about the most perfect pop song I'm ever going to write." It builds the way it's supposed to build. It ebbs and flows perfectly, and it crescendos just the right way. And my vocal take is one of my better ones, I think. It's a great song, and there's definitely no cringe factor there.

Do you ever feel pressure to match songs like "Santa Monica" and "Wonderful"?

Nope, I never have. Songs like that either happen or don't. I didn't write those songs to try and have hits. When I wrote those songs, that's just what came out, and I'm grateful for that because they changed my life. Things were very different for me after I wrote those songs, bad in some ways but better in most.

Even though those songs are two of my most well-known, I think the songs from *Learning How to Smile* are some of the best I've written. The expansiveness of the story, the buildup and the fall all make sense. I've been accused of not smiling enough, so those songs have a personal element, too. It's bits and pieces of my life, and it all came together. But you can't try to match that; it happens on its own or it doesn't.

Is there one guitar or piece of gear that you owned in the Nineties that holds particular significance?

When we were recording *World of Noise*

Everclear's Art Alexakis in action at the Shoreline Amphitheater in Mountain View, California, 1997 (It looks like his shirt answers the "Docs or Converse?" question...)

MY BACK WAS UP AGAINST THE WALL, AND I KNEW I HAD TO TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT"

in late '93, I had a semi-hollow body Guild Bluebird. I paired it up with a Fender Super Twin that was completely melted down. All the tubes were completely blown out, but the combination of those two produced a sound I couldn't get again, even if I wanted to. The Guild was so beaten up that it was impossible to keep in tune, and the amp was so fucked up that an insane and uncontrollable amount of feedback was coming off it.

Honestly, it was dangerous, but I couldn't afford a new one. I was on my last legs, so I said, "Fuck it, let's roll with this." It was so bad that sparks were shooting out of the amp, and when it got bad enough, I'd have to stop and lay bags filled with ice over the amp to cool it down. Once it cooled down, I'd have to rush to finish the take, and then it would start squealing again immediately. There were a few moments where I thought I pushed it past the point of no return. I'm shocked we didn't burn the place down.

You've said that if Everclear didn't hit, that would be the end of your music career, and you're still here. To what do you owe your longevity?

Tenacity. Flat-out tenacity. I'm not good at anything else because there never was anything else for me. If Everclear failed, I probably woulda been an A&R guy or maybe gone into production. But it did work out, thankfully. I'm not a great instrumentalist. I'm not a great singer. But I can sit down and write a song and come up with a melody that you'll remember, right?

I'm still here because I maximize that, keep working to stay creative and keep trying to learn. And when I teach people about songwriting, I'm like, "I can teach you how to structure a song. I can teach you what generally works and doesn't work, but I can't teach you melody." You can't teach how to make your voice match what you have on paper or hear in your head. No one can teach that. Either you have it, or you don't. I think I'm blessed to have that. At least, I think I do, and I guess that's why I'm still hanging around. GW

GIE KNAEPS/GETTY IMAGES (BOTH PHOTOS)

Two views of Everclear during their March 1996 tour date in Brussels, Belgium; [*from left*] Craig Montoya (bass), Art Alexakis and Greg Eklund (drums)

"I'D HAVE TO STOP AND LAY BAGS FILLED WITH ICE OVER THE AMP TO COOL IT DOWN"

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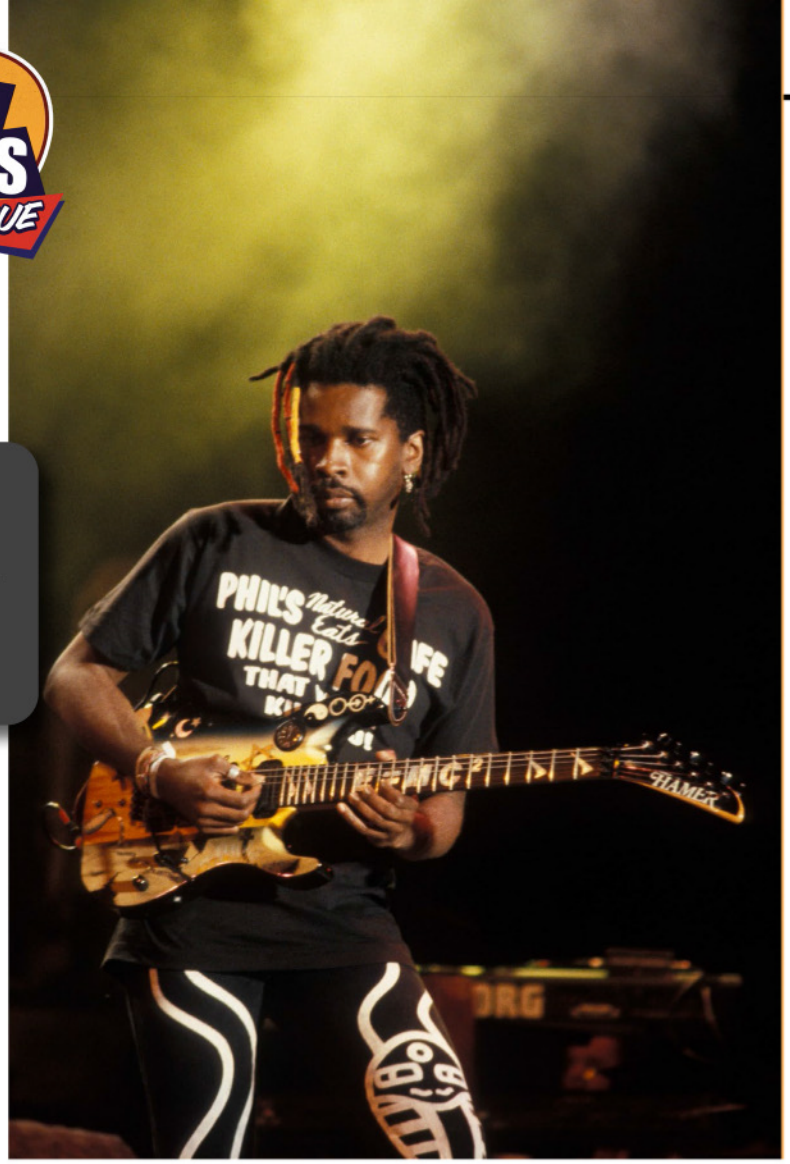

EBET ROBERTS/REDFERNS

VERNON REID

From *Vivid* to *Time's Up* to *Stain*: How Vernon Reid's expressionist shredding juiced Living Colour through the grunge era

By Matt Wake

UNLIKE MANY BANDS that got big in the late Eighties, Living Colour's sound didn't require an overhaul to avoid obsolescence once the new decade hit. The prismatic metallics and social consciousness on the New York band's 1988 debut album *Vivid* scanned alternative immediately. Their dino-riff breakthrough hit, "Cult of Personality," in addition to being one of rock's best singles ever, was an off-ramp from Eighties hedonism to the next decade's underground-music uprising. In a Reagan-rock sea of perma-sloshed white dudes, Living Colour was full of thoughtful Black virtuosos. So the band, which featured singer Corey Glover, guitarist Vernon Reid, bassist Muzz Skillings and drummer Will Calhoun, was a refreshing contrast to say the least.

Although they were future-proof, during the Nineties Living Colour's music grew new vines. "We evolved with the times in a way," Reid, the band's guitar-artiste, tells *GW*. "*Vivid* is a very upbeat record, even though we talked about social things. We were on our mission. We were happy to be in the mix. We were filled with a kind of realistic optimism, you know?"

In the coveted opening slot for the Rolling Stones' 1989 U.S. stadium tour — Stones frontman Mick Jagger was a fan and did some production on *Vivid* — Living Colour saw plenty to reflect on. "And on [*1990's*] *Time's Up*," Reid says, "we kind of took on a lot of the landscape around us."

Time's Up's opening and gnarly title track served as a tip of the cap to another great all-Black band: Bad Brains, the Washington, D.C., hardcore combo whose roaring 1982 debut album has influenced musicians from Soundgarden to the Roots. "Without Bad Brains," Reid says, "we probably wouldn't exist. They were such an essential component of how we arrived." Glover's lyrics to "Time's Up" were about the environment, a brilliant counterpoint to the track's brass-knuckle grooves. "It was like, 'This is novel,'" Reid says. "We just wanted to say something, and Corey came up with this completely unexpected conversation — and it worked."

Glover's yearning, asphalt-opera vocals always peeled ears. On social media and elsewhere, Reid has maintained that Living Colour's frontman is one of the greatest rock singers of an era overpopulated with star throats. And he's not wrong. Meanwhile, the guitar-and-drums canyons Calhoun and Reid carved out are in the Page/Bonham ZIP Code.

"We have a lot in common in terms of our families," Reid says of his connection with his bandmates. "We're all children of the civil rights movement, those kinds of aspirations. That whole time period had a huge impact on us. The promise, the fear, the hope and all of that." It's a musical connection that energizes every Living Colour track — past, present

"*VIVID* IS A VERY UPBEAT RECORD, EVEN THOUGH WE TALKED ABOUT SOCIAL

and future."

"Love Rears Its Ugly Head" was *Time's Up*'s hit single and MTV video. (The song has since been streamed more than 13 million times on Spotify.) It's a swinging, Prince-worthy mix of R&B and hard rock, and Reid peels off sauntering lead lines wiggled with a Cry Baby.

"During the making of the album, I bought a [*Gibson ES*]-345," says Reid, who's known for playing distinctively post-modern ESPs and Hamers. "I went to Norman's Rare Guitars [*in Tarzana, California*] and we were kind of making a deal. I was getting a [*Don*] Musser acoustic and [*the 345*]; the salesman looked up the serial number and it turns out the Gibson was 10 years older [*than what it was listed as*]. He was kind of freaked out. [*Store namesake*] Norman Harris came out and said the deal was made in good faith and the deal will stand. It was very formal. And it's one of those great bargains. The Vari[*tone*] switch [*which tweaks the 345's tonal spectrum*] didn't work. But basically, I bought this guitar as if it was from '68. And it turned out it was a '58 or a '60. I played that guitar on the track and in the video for 'Love Rears Its Ugly Head.'"

Reid says he and Prince shared a short yet sweet connection. "I did have a couple of moments with him. I wish we'd had more moments, you know? He liked the band. He would come see us. He would mysteriously appear and then he would mysteriously disappear, which always made me mad — 'Damn it!'"

During sessions for Living Colour's multi-platinum debut album, Reid's guitar rig had been catch-as-catch-can. "I had a Dean Markley [*RM*-]150 amp when I was working on *Vivid*, plus a Fender Bassman and a Marshall," he says. "It was a mess. It was a lot of different things. And then it became a little more systematized by the time of *Time's Up*. I was using the MP-1 (guitar preamp by A/DA) and VHT power amps. It's a pretty great combination. I'd started getting into the MIDI control system to organize everything. The MIDI Mitigator from Lake Butler Sound, rest in peace! A great company from Florida. They did MIDI control in a way that was practical and really cool."

On the cinematic/frenetic *Time's Up* cut "New Jack Theme," Reid deployed a Bomb Squad-style tonal collage. Public Enemy's landmark album *It Takes a Nation to Hold Us Back* frequently soundtracked Living Colour tour-van rides. "That influence in that particular time period was very much in evidence," Reid says. "I was messing around with different kinds of samples — and even Sustainiac coils in some of my Hamers. And there was a DigiTech delay, I think the [*DSP*] 256XL — it had some sample-and-hold stuff. It was definitely marrying a lot of different kinds of proto-electronics and things."

In addition to his Walter-Payton-in-open-field fretboard burn, Reid's tones and phrasing evoked visual artists like no other guitarist back then. Listeners could see Reid's solos as much as they heard and felt them.

After I tell him his guitar playing sounds like Jean-Michel Basquiat's expressionistic paintings look, Reid sounds legitimately touched. "Well, thank you for that. I'm not gonna make a big claim, but I knew Jean-Michel a little bit. He was on the downtown [*NYC*] scene. And I remember the first time I saw a Jackson Pollock painting, and that struck me. This is going way back to when I was playing with [*avant-garde jazz group*] the Decoding Society. Right when you got off the elevator in the Centre Pompidou in Paris, it was really the first time a painting kind of put me into shock. It was so visceral. And his rage, his thing, was so coming out of the canvas. That really struck me."

Reid drew inspiration, like many guitarists before and since, from Jimi Hendrix's "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)," which he connected to the voodoo-tinged imagery in Basquiat's visuals. The work of genre-leaping writer James Baldwin affected Reid's lyric writing, on tracks like *Vivid* gem "Open Letter (to a Landlord)."

"Baldwin's whole concept was that he's a witness," Reid says. "So there were many different things that influenced me. I do believe in things having connections across boundaries. One of my primary cultural and media experiences that really had an influence on me was *The Twilight Zone*. In the score, the first thing you hear is that guitar figure that lets you know you're going into a dimension. [*Laughs*] I didn't start playing guitar until two years later. But as a kid, that show scared the shit out of me, and I couldn't wait to see the next episode."

There are only 12 notes. But Reid is one of a select group of guitarists who sound like they've found a 13th note all their own, as heard on his leads on *Time's Up* sidewinder "Pride."

"I'm kind of more of an improviser. But there's a feeling that I want the solo to be," he says. "There's an effect I want to have, which is an outgrowth of whatever the song is saying. And very much so, in terms of 'Pride' or the solo on 'Ignorance Is Bliss' from [*Living Colour's third album*] *Stain*, I wanted it to be its own statement. Because the lyrics and melody are making one statement, and the guitar — particularly in how it comes in — has to stand as an adjunct to the voice. That kind of immediacy. And there's a feeling of pleading on the solo on 'Pride.' I'm really happy with how that turned out."

The William-Burroughs-cut-up guitar intro to *Time's Up*'s "Information Overload," which sounds like a Tom Morello prequel, is one of Reid's favorite personal guitar moments. "It's completely bonkers," he says with a laugh. "That was, like, my first real experiment with extreme electronics. I've had a warm relationship with Eventide ever since. They're very innovative. They've tried to stretch the boundaries of mad sonic innovation, and I'm very grateful to have the relationship I have with them."

Living Colour was the only band that could've been a part of both the Stones reunion tour and the first Lollapalooza, the 1991 Jane's Addiction-led traveling cavalcade that brought alt-rock to the masses. "That's pretty crazy, right?" Reid says. "Totally different modes. It's pretty insane that we did both of those things. And they were both really important moments in the band's life." (Likewise, it's difficult to imagine another rock outfit that could convincingly cover bluesman Robert Johnson and rap-god Notorious B.I.G., as Living Colour has done.)

By *Stain*, Living Colour's 1993 album, the band had rebooted its low. Doug Wimbish, previously a part of early

Living Colour's Vernon Reid in action in 1992. Stylistically speaking, Living Colour were one of the only bands that could've fit nicely into a Rolling Stones tour and the first Lollapalooza

THINGS. WE WERE ON OUR MISSION. WE WERE HAPPY TO BE IN THE MIX"

EBET ROBERTS/GETTY IMAGES

Living Colour's Reid [*left*] and Corey Glover at NYC's CBGB in 1993. Reid has maintained that Glover is one of the greatest singers in an era overpopulated with star throats

rap label Sugar Hill Records' house rhythm section, replaced Skillings on bass guitar. Reid declines to compare the playing of Wimbish and Skillings. "They're both great in their own space," he says. That said, he adds, "Doug is a master sonic craftsman. His command of sound effects... He kind of changed the game for bass in the way effects on the bottom are utilized. It's incredibly inspiring."

That manifested on songs like *Stain* closer "Wall," where Wimbish's bass goes from chain-link-fence to extraterrestrial. "He exploits the full range of the bass," Reid says. "That song dates back to Living Colour's early days at [*NYC punk-club mecca*] CBGB. It was a good song, but it really wasn't working. Basically, it just got completely rethought and resurrected. We were a different band from *Vivid* to *Time's Up* to *Stain*, and, of course, the change in bass players was a major factor."

The nose-punching *Stain*, released amid grunge cha-ching, out grunged the grunge bands without resorting to flannel-clad gravy-training. In an era when guitar solos were uncool, Reid's arthouse shredding remained intact, as heard on songs like "Mind Your Own Business." On "Nothingness," the band was brave enough to sculpt soundscapes that weren't particularly valued in mainstream rock back then.

Reid says, "We just wanted something completely with a different sonic palette that still had the force of something heavy. And it made that song very elegiac, really going for a sense of grandeur." Reid says "Nothingness" also shows his fondness for guitar synths. "Since they've started to introduce them, I've been a guitar synth advocate. I love it. A bunch of my guitars have the 13-pin Roland setup. I used the VG-99 for years, and one of the things about those early days was, are you going to get glitching? And what have you. But the thing is, we played that track straight [*through*]. It wasn't like he had to piece it together, you know what I mean? And I think it's also MIDI-ed to string things, so it's a combination of tones, but it really worked well. It was like the universe had said, 'OK, you can do this now.' It was pretty cool."

Amp-wise, by *Stain*, Reid says he'd "pretty much completely transitioned to [*Mesa*] Boogie and the Dual and Triple Rectifiers."

Now in 2023, with *Vivid* having turned (gulp) 35 this spring, upcoming band projects include a Living Colour documentary, Reid says. The band also turned in a memorable set at Rock in Rio with Steve Vai guesting and trading alchemy with Reid.

Even though Reid's a guitar-seeker in the truest sense, to this day he's mesmerized by the simple symphony of a good riff. "Smoke on the Water." "Sunshine of Your Love" (of which Living Colour notably Living Coloured a cover). The Isley Brothers' "It's Your Thing." Even more recent stuff by the likes of Queens of the Stone Age. "When you hear one of these riffs that are kind of basic or whatever," Reid says, "you always go, like, 'Damn. I wish I thought of that!' Remember when [*the White Stripes'*] 'Seven Nation Army' came out? Everybody caught that riff." GW

"IT WAS LIKE THE UNIVERSE HAD SAID, 'OK, YOU CAN DO THIS NOW.' IT WAS PRETTY COOL"

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BRIAN VANDER ARK

Determined as he moves out of the shadow of his past, the guitarist recounts the origins of the Verve Pipe and the recording of a definitive Nineties anthem, "The Freshmen"

By Andrew Daly

HAILING FROM EAST Lansing, Michigan, the Verve Pipe's Brian Vander Ark and his cohorts quickly built a following among a vibrant Midwest indie rock scene. The recording of 1993's *Pop Smear* did nothing to slow the momentum of the young band, leading to their signing a deal with RCA, a label that saw the Verve Pipe as its ticket to the top of the alt-rock charts.

"I think the whole reason RCA wanted us, to be honest, was that they were severely lacking in rock bands at the time," Vander Ark says. "They had Dave Matthews, who no one knew at the time, and they had ZZ Top, but they weren't relevant at that point. We got a ton of attention from RCA because they had hung their hopes on us. I remember going into that album; I was living in a storage unit with all our gear because I'd been kicked out of my apartment. That's when I started writing."

With a record deal in hand and his creativity invigorated, Vander Ark put pen to paper, crafting the songs that would lead to the Verve Pipe becoming alt-rock darlings in the wake of *Villains* (1996). For the members of the Verve Pipe, the sudden success of *Villains*, linchpinned by the unexpected smash hit "The Freshmen," brought forth incredible pressure to continue to deliver.

"I wanted to write another hit song, and 'Hero' from *The Verve Pipe* [*1999*] did OK, but it wasn't in the cards for us," Vander Ark says. "I wrote another song from that same album called 'The F Word,' which is my sort of commentary on how fleeting it all can be. I was a bit bitter at the time, but I got over that. It's like I said; 'The Freshmen' came about when I knew nothing about songwriting, but I still managed to create something poignant with an enduring message."

Now 27 years later, Vander Ark no longer harbors the bitterness and anger that led to the Verve Pipe falling mostly silent for years in the wake of their biggest hit. Now as creative as ever, the contemplative rocker is embracing his legacy, basking in the glory of "The Freshmen" in all its Nineties glory.

"I'm not bitter anymore. I'm happy to be still riding the wave of 'The Freshmen,'" he says. "I feel nothing but pride and happiness when I play it. I know it brings a lot of joy to people, and it's one of those songs that allows people to remember where they were during that period. It seems to hit our fans harder now because they're no longer kids in high school and college. They're adults — and they get the meaning of it all."

How did the Verve Pipe get together?

My brother Brad [*Vander Ark*] and I formed a band called Johnny with an Eye, mostly playing cover tunes with some original stuff. And there was another band called Water for the Pool, which got all the local weekend gigs and a strong following. That band, which had Donny [*Brown*] in it, was doing well while me and Brad were playing Tuesday nights in dive bars.

"IT SEEMS TO HIT OUR FANS HARDER NOW BECAUSE THEY'RE NO LONGER KIDS

We were great admirers of theirs, and we decided we wanted to try to form a band with them.

One evening, we approached Donny and said, "What do you say we break up our bands and form a new one? We've got all this new material; we're recording an album. Let's break up our bands, take the members we want, combine a fan base and make a go of it." We took Donny, the drummer, from Water for the Pool and found A.J. [*Dunning*] for guitar. Brad played bass, and I sang and played guitar. That would have been August of '92.

How did the recording of *Pop Smear* prepare you for what was to come?
Back then, I wrote most of the lyrics, which weren't particularly great. I like some of the stuff, but when I listen to *Pop Smear*, it's cringeworthy. What I do hear in that record is — even back then — I was a storyteller. I've always liked to tell stories with my lyrics. But what clicked during *Pop Smear* was finding a way for my guitar to help me tell the story. For a long time, there was a disconnect between the story in my head and what my fingers were trying to convey. I think, at least in some ways, I started to put that all together on *Pop Smear*.

How did the Verve Pipe end up with RCA?
The early Nineties was a crazy time to be in an "alternative rock band." It seemed like a major label was signing every band, so that was the focus for us. It happened quickly for us, but it wasn't without hiccups. There were seven or eight major labels interested in us, and they all passed after coming to check us out. They passed even though we sold 10,000 CDs on our own. So we said, "We don't need them. We'll keep running our own little business. We'll wait."

But as soon as we decided to go it alone, RCA came sniffing around. They liked what they heard, we liked what they had to say, and they said, "Here's a four-album deal; sign here." Then new struggles came — playing cities we didn't know to crowds bigger than we'd ever seen. We'd play campus shows, and kids would be freaking out, asking us to sign CDs; it was crazy.

Set the stage for recording what would be the Verve Pipe's defining album, *Villains*.
It was a hard time, but I rolled up my sleeves and toughed it out. It was worth it because more than half of *Villains* was written in the storage unit I was living in. Being secluded did something to my brain, and that's probably a big part of why those songs resonate. I sent the demos to RCA, and they flipped out and said, "We need you in the studio now." They hooked us up with Jerry Harrison from the Talking Heads, and we recorded the album. I went from living in a storage unit to sharing a house with the other guys while recording an album with a budget of $250,000. It was ludicrous, but it was a blast.

"The Freshmen" was a phenomenon and is still revered. Did you grasp what you had at the time?
As I was writing it, I thought, "This is pretty good," but I didn't know what I had until after it was entirely written. Then, once we started playing it live, I became excited about it. But "The Freshmen" as we know it today is not what it was when it first came about. I wrote that in '92, and then we reworked it for *Villains*. I knew I had something early on, even though the lyrics were all messed up; after shows, people would ask, "Hey, what was that song about the girl touching her face?" [*Laughs*]

What led to the decision to rework the song for *Villains*?
I always loved the song, but I wasn't ever thrilled with it. I think RCA also saw potential in it as a song that could be redone and successful. The original '92 version sounded dated and was done with my beat-up Gibson acoustic. I knew that if we were gonna redo it, we'd have to grunge it up a bit. Once we got in the studio with Jerry, I got my Les Paul out, and we all got in a room together and recorded it live in the studio. It's that version that everyone seems to remember over the original.

The Verve Pipe's Brian Vander Ark performs on *The Tonight Show*, August 4, 1999

Can you recall anything else about that Les Paul or your approach?
It was a Les Paul Standard, which I still use. I was never too technical; I use the guitar to help me tell the linear story I am trying to relay with my lyrics. The guitar is a backdrop to the story, and that's how I approach it.

What about "The Freshmen" has allowed it to endure?
I wish I knew. I was a neophyte songwriter and not a very good guitar player, which frustrates me when I listen back. I've gotten so much better in both areas, and now, when I listen back to it, so many things about that song make no sense to me. But my ineptitude was fortunate because had I continued to mess with it, I don't think it would've been a hit song. I guess the ambiguity works, and the fact that anybody can take what they think the song is about and make it their own makes it so popular.

So you wouldn't change it if given a chance?
I don't think I would. I was a neophyte songwriter, but that song is pretty damn heavy. It's about abortion, suicide and these bad things that I crammed into one song, which is yet another neophyte mistake. But I didn't say the word "abortion," and I didn't hit people over the head with the pro-life message, and I think that worked because people discussed it, trying to figure me out.

Here we are all these years later, still discussing all the same stuff, so in a way, "The Freshmen" is more poetic than I ever could have imagined. It's loaded with metaphors I'd never be able to pull off now because I'm not that person anymore. That's probably why I've seen a lot of subsequent failures because as I became a better writer, things got more specific, and when you get more specific, you alienate people. That probably worked to our detriment.

Does being labeled a "one-hit wonder" bother you?
We lay that on artists because even if they only had one song, having one truly great song is more than most artists ever get to do. I guess we fit the definition, but I look at it as being lucky enough to have written a song that'll be remembered forever. That one song still resonates to this day; that's validation. GW

IN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE. THEY'RE ADULTS — AND THEY GET THE MEANING OF IT ALL"

THEN
The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion (1992)

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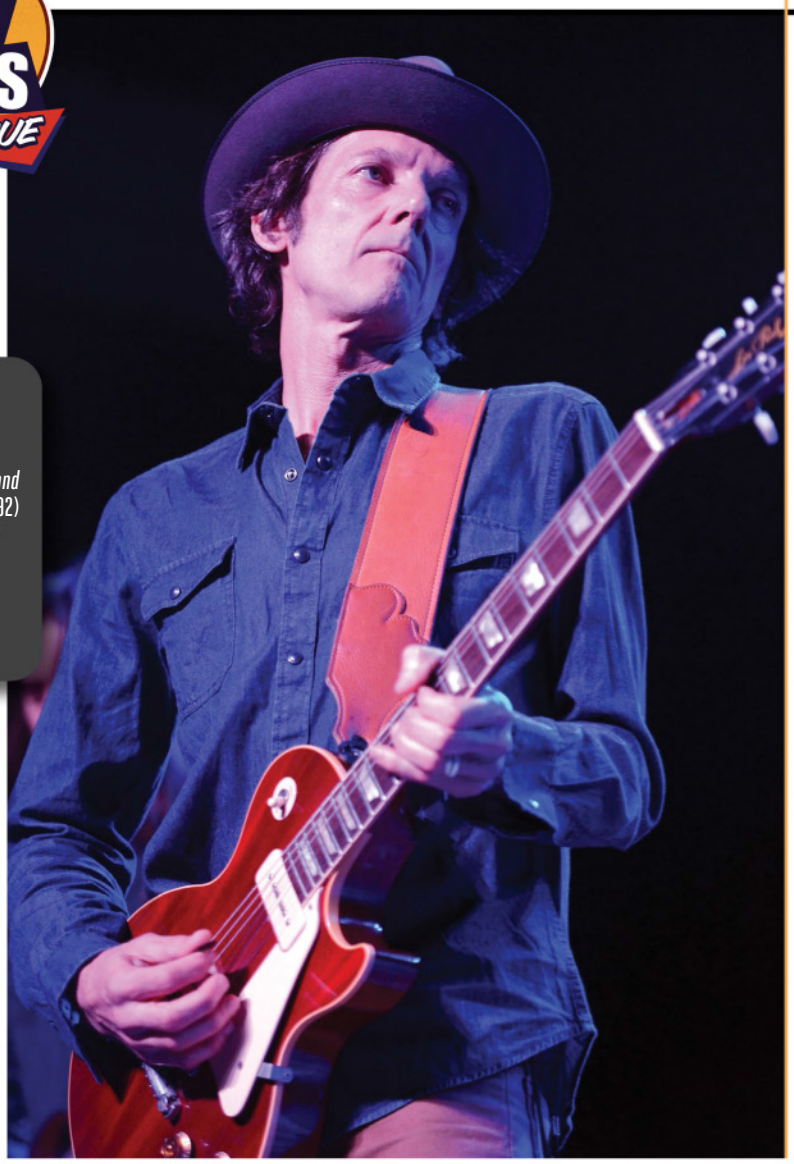


SCOTT DUDELSON/GETTY IMAGES

MARC FORD

The respected SoCal guitarist explains why he chose the Black Crowes over Guns N' Roses — and how the Crowes' internal friction helped make them a compelling alternative to grunge

By Andrew Daly

IN RETROSPECT, THERE'S no denying that while the Black Crowes might've been a touch shy on originality, they were nonetheless outliers of an era that was simultaneously watching hair metal flame out as grunge was meteorically rising. One listen to 1990's *Shake Your Money Maker* will tell you all you need to know: the young and rowdy Georgia band were dutifully beholden to the icons they grew up watching and hearing — Keith Richards, Mick Taylor and their comrades.

Still, *Shake Your Money Maker* was an unexpected smash success, injecting ounces of boogie-woogie into a scene yearning for something more. And the Crowes were more than happy to serve up heaping doses of said boogie-woogie, but of course, not without equal doses of the turbulence that would come to define them later in the decade.

The first sign of said turbulence — aside from the Robinson brothers' perpetual sparring — was the firing of Jeff Cease in 1991, who, to that point, had proved to be a perfect foil to Rich Robinson's gain-drenched heroics. And with Cease out of the picture, the Crowes found themselves needing someone who was like-minded enough to tackle blues rock in the thick of the grunge era but also calm enough to handle the rigors of life in a band that wasn't exactly harmonious.

Thankfully, the answers to the Crowes' prayers came swiftly in the form of Marc Ford, a slick six-stringer out of Southern California, who recalls his entry point into the fray as surprisingly nondescript. "Honestly, I don't know that there really were any conversations about me joining," Ford tells *Guitar World*. "The way I remember it is they needed a guitar player, they knew what I did, and we played well together."

But before he could even think about making an imprint on the Crowes, Ford got what many would consider the call of a lifetime when Slash asked him to join Guns N' Roses as a replacement for the departed Izzy Stradlin. But shockingly, Ford declined the invitation to join the established powerhouse, instead staying a member of the on-the-rise Black Crowes.

"The music of the Crowes spoke to me a bit more," Ford says. "But also — and even Slash agreed with me on this — the Crowes were a better fit for me over Guns N' Roses because, with the Crowes, I could have more of a voice. If I had joined Guns N' Roses, that would have basically been me fill-

"I KNEW THEY WERE A ROCK 'N' ROLL BAND THAT PLAYED ROCK 'N' ROLL MUSIC. AND

ing the role of someone having to back up Slash. I don't think it would have been all that fulfilling or satisfying to do that. I would have gotten bored, and that would have been dangerous..."

Thinking back on what brought the SoCal native together with a raucous band of kids out of Atlanta, Ford continues, "I don't know... me joining them just seemed to make sense. There wasn't much talk or thought put into it; we just got in a room together, started playing, and it felt right for everyone in our camp."

Of course, the shadow of the Black Crowes' successful debut lingered, as did the throwback-laden work of Jeff Cease. And so, while Ford had been around the block a bit with the likes of Michael Monroe and Burning Tree, it wouldn't necessarily be a stretch to think he'd move to duplicate the template set forth by Cease on *Shake Your Money Maker*.

But while that might have been a factor for some, Ford, ever the laid-back technician, paid no mind, instead choosing to do what got him there in the first place: "I didn't think much about what they'd done before I got there. I didn't have much of a plan, you know? The thing with me is that when it comes to guitar, I only respond to what I'm hearing. So, whatever [*Jeff*] was hearing, that didn't mean much. When I joined the Crowes, I knew they were a rock 'n' roll band that played rock 'n' roll music. And I was already playing rock 'n' roll myself, so I didn't need to learn how to fit in. The important thing for me was listening to what was going on around me and generating a response to that."

Overthinking (or lack thereof) aside, the fact remains that whatever unseen force was between Ford and his bandmates in the Crowes, it was undeniably electric. In short order, Ford hit the ground running, playing hundreds of shows with his new band, developing smooth and shockingly easy chemistry with Rich Robinson in particular.

"The chemistry came to us pretty quick," Ford says. "But obviously, we learned as we went along, which came about through everyone listening to each other. From that, we were able to make the adjustments that needed to be made. But again, all of that was pretty immediate. Rich and I came from a similar enough background to where we could easily make it work."

And make it work they did; 1992's *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion* was a smash success — even more successful than *Shake Your Money Maker*. Moreover, the ensuing tour was a boon, finding the Crowes dominating stages worldwide. But sadly, the ride didn't last long, and by 1994, despite the albeit lesser success of the turbulent *Amorica*, relations within the Black Crowes were at an all-time low. Drugs, massive infighting and general toxicity had polluted the waters, leading to a nadir that not even a band as musically cohesive as the Crowes could avoid.

Looking back on what is now remembered as the beginning of the end, Ford sighs, "The band was all over the place by that point and very scattered regarding our relationships. People were trippin' on whatever they were trippin' on, which also muddied the waters. But, man, the band was as tight as ever by that point because we had been on the road constantly for years. So we weren't always getting along, but musically, we were a unit that functioned incredibly well. It felt good to be able to step outside the whirlwind of the other stuff and do that for sure."

Ford hung around for one more album, 1996's *Three Snakes and One Charm*, before jettisoning himself from the band in 1997, although he did return for a brief, not-so-friendly reunion in 2005 before parting ways for what appears to be the final time.

These days, the Black Crowes continue with only Chris and Rich Robinson remaining as original members, not that Ford cares. He's got his solo work and various production-related projects that he devotes his time to. But alas, the sweet sounds of Ford's distinctively rich tone still live on in the hearts of Black Crowes fans worldwide who wish he would take the stage with the band once more. And while Ford has made it clear that a reunion is not to be, he's set aside the ugly parts of his past exploits with the Crowes, focusing on the memorable music they created instead.

Marc Ford on stage with the Magpie Salute (a band formed by the Black Crowes' Rich Robinson in 2016) at the Fonda Theatre in Los Angeles, September 13, 2017

"I like to focus on the fact that it feels great to know you're functioning at your best," Ford says. "And you're making great music, and people are connecting with it. We did a lot of that, and I'm proud of it."

What intangibles did you bring to the Crowes entering the sessions for *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*?

That's a tricky question... maybe I was slightly more advanced on my instrument than the other guys. The other guys in the band hadn't played all that long before they got a record deal; Rich was only 19 then, you know? So I think I had more experience under my belt than they did then, which helped. Those guys all learned how to play together as teens and had a certain chemistry, so all I had to do was fit in. But yeah, I had been playing longer and had been in more diverse situations, leading to me having a bit of a larger musical vocabulary and maybe more melodic sense than them.

How did you deploy that vocabulary on a song like "Remedy"?

It was all pretty much instinct. A lot of things that you heard on that record — like "Remedy" — were things I came up with off the top of my head. There wasn't a lot of planning when I was working on stuff. The way I saw it was it was either working or it wasn't. If it works, and the motion is there, we left it on the record.

I've read somewhere that you see music as visuals and colors due to your lack of formal training. Can you expand on how you applied that approach?

Yeah, that's true. Whenever I was putting together a solo — and I still do this — I first listened to the song and tried to identify where the holes were. It's basically me assessing the track and saying, "Okay... what's missing here?" And once I had that dialed in, I'd think, "What does this song need me to add?" From there it was a matter of, "Does this need more? Is there even a place for another part?" Often it was a matter of finding what it needed and then figuring out if I

I WAS ALREADY PLAYING ROCK 'N' ROLL MYSELF, SO I DIDN'T NEED TO LEARN HOW TO FIT IN"

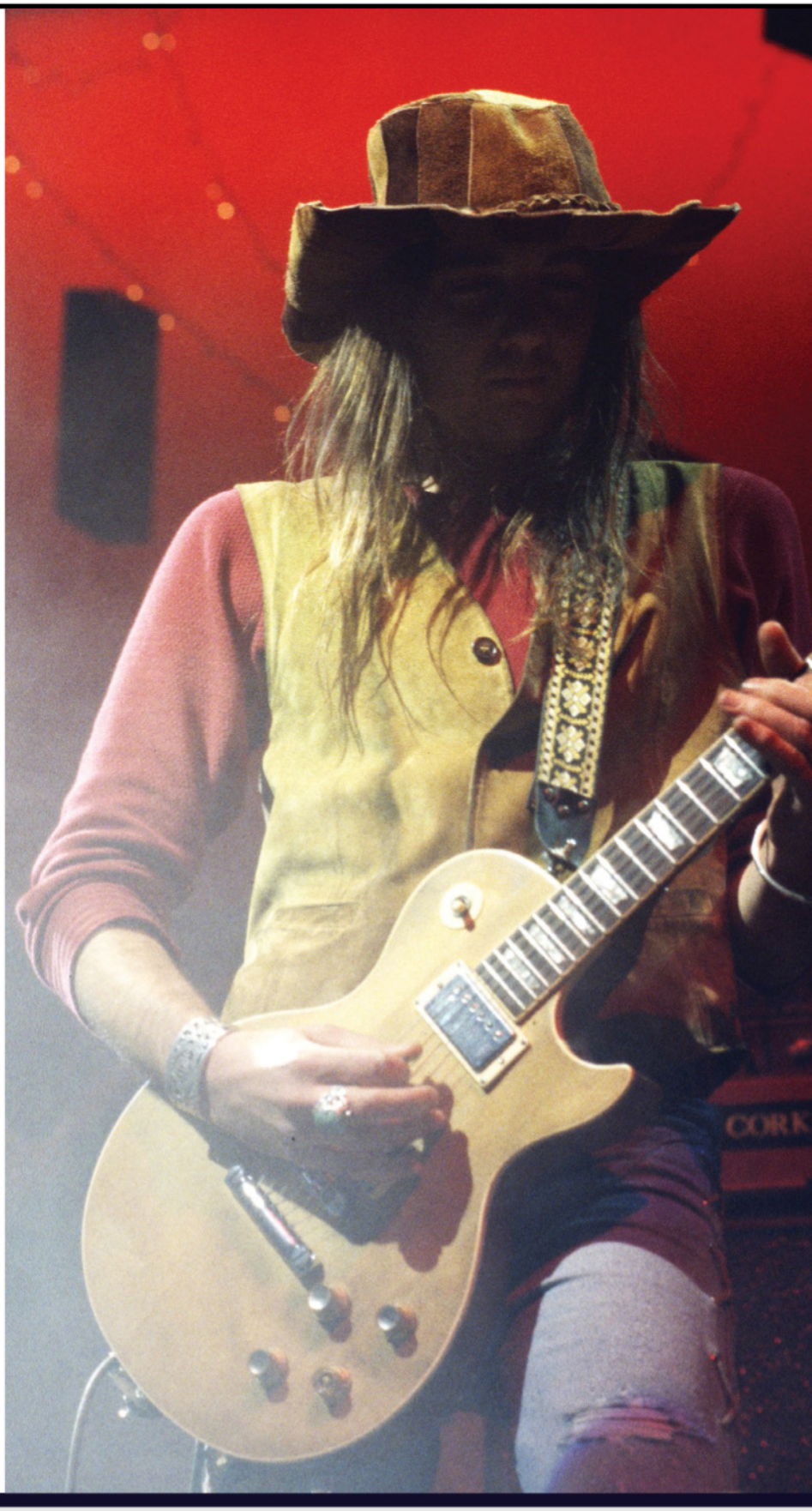
should leave it or reinforce it. And that would have been based on the emotional context — if the track was laid back, or if it needed to be exciting.

One of the hallmarks of the Crowes sound in the Nineties was the call and response between you and Rich. How did you delineate who would handle what parts in the studio?
I was the "lead" and Rich was the "rhythm," but like you said, there was some gray area. But there wasn't much discussion. Rich wrote the songs, so his parts were pretty much there and in place. And as far as the call-and-response stuff — that really developed when we were out on the road. So by the time we got into the studio, there were a lot of things we'd already been doing live that we wanted to adapt. From there, we felt it out, and again, the biggest part of that was listening to each other very carefully.

Which guitars and amps played the most significant role while recording *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*?
My main amp was a red-knob Fender Twin Reverb through a Marshall half-stack. And then I had my 50-watt Marshall that I used on a couple of things, most notably the "Sometimes Salvation" solo. As far as guitars are concerned, the whole thing was done with my Strat, a Les Paul and maybe a guitar or two that I think I borrowed from Rich, which was probably a Tele. But the Fender Twin Reverb did a lot of heavy lifting, and I seem to remember using a [*Dunlop*] Fuzz Face and an Ibanez Tube Screamer.

What were your thoughts when you first listened back to *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion*?
I mean... we thought it was good. We knew what we had done was valid. Of course, you can't really say how popular anything is gonna be, but we thought we had done good work. We were proud of it, and at the time, it made us happy.

Was it difficult becoming so successful so quickly?
It was. There was so much happening, and it was happening so fast. A lot



TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES (ONE GUY) GIE KNAEPS/GETTY IMAGES (TWO GUYS)

"WITH US BEING SO YOUNG AND HAVING PEOPLE GIVE US WHATEVER WE WANTED,

of adjusting goes on as you try and get used to that sort of thing. And with us being so young and having people give us whatever we wanted, it became a dangerous headspace. It caused some of us to skid out a little bit — I guess everybody skidded out in their own way — and nobody was equipped to handle that kind of admiration.

How did the aftermath of that period affect the band going into the *Amorica* era?
The bigger problems were between the brothers [*Rich and Chris Robinson*] in that they couldn't figure it out between them. They left the rest of us waiting for their cue. They wrote the songs, and they dictated things, you know? So if they weren't getting along, no one could move forward or do anything until they figured it out.

Do you feel the — at times — less-than-harmonious nature of the band fueled the creativity of the Crowes, as in, would you guys have been as strong of a band musically had things been friendlier?
There was frustration that came with waiting for other people to decide on what they wanted to do. But the playing part was easy once the decision was made to move forward. I focused on that when my time came. But if I couldn't play, I had to wade through all the other bullshit to get to that point. But having said that, yeah, friction causes certain things to happen, some good and some bad. I wouldn't want to do it again, but there's no denying it raises the energy level of some people. But even when we weren't getting along, by the time we did *Amorica*, we were exactly where we wanted to be musically. That's all that mattered.

So the waning commercial success didn't bother you?
I don't really remember. I mean, yeah, I'm sure it did with other guys in the band. And it's not like I didn't care, but I've never been one to pay attention to stuff like that. I'm not the type of person to try and adjust to the point that I'm pleasing other people. So if a record isn't selling, there are probably underlying reasons as to why.

[*left*] Marc Ford in San Jose, December 8, 1994. That "Corkscrew" amp is actually a Matchless Clubman, btw...

[*above*] Ford with Black Crowes bassist Johnny Colt in Belgium, December 2, 1992

Do you feel grunge greatly affected the Black Crowes' fortunes?
Probably. But I felt like we were doing great work, which was more important. Like I said, if it's not selling, some things happen that are underlying, a lot of which can't be controlled. But our records never had an issue because our work wasn't good. And, as you mentioned, it was the height of the grunge scene, and people's heads were in other places. But I'm sure there could have been some decisions that would have helped us out rather than some of the ones that were made, but at the time, I didn't think much about it. The only thing I could control was what I was doing, and I thought I was giving my best.

***Three Snakes and One Charm* was your last studio record with the Black Crowes, and it features some interesting moments from you and Rich. What lent itself to that?**
With that record, like the others, everything was dictated by what Rich brought to the table. And as I recall, Rich was getting into some things that were not really straight-up rock 'n' roll songs. He was getting into other types of music, so things were more eclectic. I think I used more open tunings on *Three Snakes and One Charm* to try and make things more interesting and allow myself to stand out a bit from what was going on musically.

What made the chemistry of your era so special?
It was just a matter of the right guys ending up together at the right time. And the fact that we were all willing to do what we needed to do and shared a similar mindset early on. The music was always important to us, allowing us to do some things we were really proud of.

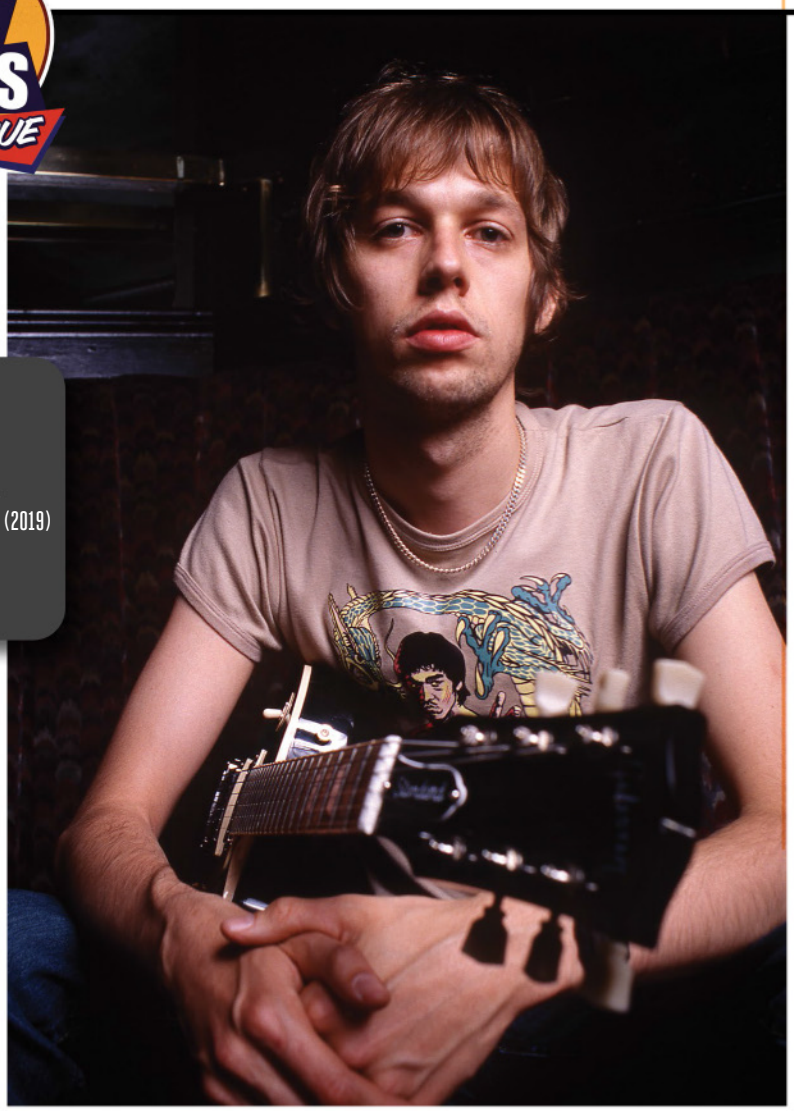
What's your proudest moment as a member of the Black Crowes?
I guess the tour for *The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion* would have to be what stands out most. That tour was pretty phenomenal. And, of course, playing with some of our heroes at the festivals was unforgettable. But the big thing was feeling like we had arrived and could do what we had always wanted.

When you look back, do you have any regrets?
Not musically. But I think that's kind of a pointless question, isn't it? Other than being more mature and grown-up — which is not what we were — there are none. I guess I regret what went along with the thinking and feeling that it was never going to end. That was probably something that was foolish, but you know, it is what it is. GW

IT BECAME A DANGEROUS HEADSPACE. IT CAUSED SOME OF US TO SKID OUT A LITTLE BIT"

THEN
Nowhere (1990)

This Is Not a Safe Place (2019)
NOW-ISH



RICHARD ECCLESTONE/REDFERNS

ANDY BELL

The U.K. shoegaze pioneer discusses the recording of Ride's classic Nineties albums and his 10 years as a member of Oasis

By Andrew Daly

BEFORE ANDY BELL strode across grand stages with the U.K.'s most cocksure band, Oasis, he handled six-string duties for Ride, one of the shoegaze genre's preeminent acts. Bands like Lush and Slowdive linchpinned shoegaze on the other side of the pond. And, sure, they were stout, but Ride's first two records, *Nowhere* (1990) and *Going Blank Again* (1992), proved to be high points of the period.

Looking back on his reaction to *Nowhere* and *Going Blank Again*, Bell tells *Guitar World*, "I think there's one moment that I remember that came after we finished *Going Blank Again*. When we finished that album, and it was mastered, [*Ride guitarist*] Mark [*Gardener*] and I drove back to Oxford, and he put it on his stereo at home. When we sat there and listened to *Going Blank Again*, we didn't speak; we just listened. At the end, we were just like, 'That is so good.' But I don't have a similar memory with *Nowhere* because, at the end, it was so stressful because we were hammering up against a deadline. The last days of *Nowhere*'s recording were chaotic; we worked night and day to mix it. But the guy who was supposed to mix it had a breakdown, which led us to call [*producer*] Alan [*Moulder*] to save the day. I don't really remember having that same pleasurable playback moment with *Nowhere* where I said, 'Ah, that's a great record.' I remember it being stressful."

Stressful as it was, Ride's greatness was painfully obvious, making it even more shocking that they didn't last long. The group's third record, *Carnival of Light* (1994), was a departure. And their fourth album, *Tarantula* (1996) — the final nail in the coffin before Ride's breakup — while reminiscent of their earlier efforts, wasn't enough to save the band in the face of dodgy relations and the ever-looming shadow of Britpop.

Thinking back on *Tarantula*, Bell says, "I don't think the songs on that album have the same feeling as the first two. But I'll say this: *Tarantula* was an attempt to bring back the vibe of the earlier records. We started the *Tarantula* sessions soon after the *Carnival of Light* sessions because we were searching to get our vibe back. We could feel it slipping away; it was a last-ditch attempt to try and cook something up."

Digging deeper, he continues: "A lot of those songs were not quite as ready as they should have been, but we wanted to try and capture a moment of spontaneity. But unfortunately, we didn't. And I suppose those sorts of ideas can work, but they didn't this time. And it wasn't enough to save the band because it had already gotten

"BEING CREATIVE AND MOVING FORWARD IS ESSENTIAL TO ME. THE ALTERNATIVE,

away from us."

Not long after Ride's demise, Bell formed Hurricane #1, which he recalls as "The first time I was in a band that had very defined roles," before revealing that "It was like a rebound," where the objective was "to do the opposite." And while that was fine, and Hurricane #1's two albums — *Hurricane #1* (1997) and *Only the Strongest Will Survive* (1998) — were memorable, when the call came to join his old friends Noel and Liam Gallagher in Oasis, Bell didn't hesitate.

"It was interesting," he says. "Because when Guigsy [*bassist Paul McGuigan*] and Bonehead [*guitarist Paul Arthurs*] left Oasis, it's not like it was something I was privy to. There were no prior discussions leading up to that point. I had been reading about it in the music press like everybody else. So when the offer came about, it came completely out of the blue."

After a quick audition and reorientation from guitar to bass, Bell was off and running with Oasis. Thankfully, though, his first shows as part of the band's new lineup — now with Gem Archer on guitar — were smaller, allowing Bell to break in gently.

"I seem to recall [*my first gig with Oasis*] was in the States, although I don't know exactly where," he says. "We did a short tour at the end of '99, where there were maybe four or five shows. It was a sort of radio-promoted tour or something to that effect. It was Oasis, Blink-182 and a few other bands. I can't remember much more than that. But I know it was quick, and we only played maybe five songs in the set."

For the next 10 years, Bell, along with the rest of the members of Oasis outside of Noel and Liam Gallagher, weathered critical, commercial and interpersonal storms. And while it wasn't always easy, unlike most before him, Bell managed to earn the respect of his bandmates, leading to him becoming a steady contributor across Oasis' final three studio records.

Of course, Oasis have been gone for nearly 15 years, which is fine, seeing as Ride are back together and stronger than ever. Beyond that, Bell has his solo work and his latest project, Mantra of the Cosmos.

"I don't feel pressure to amalgamate my history into what I'm doing now," Bell says. "We make tracks and look to find freedom in the music. And we also think people should be able to dance to it. Being creative and moving forward is essential to me. The alternative, I guess, is making music that's not meaningful, which is not an option."

He concludes, "But I don't have anything against nostalgia, to be honest. When the time is right, I love the opportunity to celebrate an old album. Ride recently played *Nowhere* in full, and we did *Going Blank Again*, too. But I guess I've always had a forward-moving approach in life that always has me embracing the chance to play. Life is too short, and outside of family, the greatest satisfaction I get is doing different things, finding different lineups and getting out there with my friends again."

Considering the success of Ride's reunion — and Bell's willingness to bridge gaps via song — one can't help but wonder if he'd be up for hitting the stage with Oasis should their long-awaited reunion come to pass. To that end, Bell enthuses, "Oh, absolutely. If that happens, I'm there for it, mate."

After the release of 1990's *Nowhere*, the media labeled Ride "the brightest hope for 1991." Did that sort of pressure register at all?

My reaction was, "Yeah, you're fucking damn right we are." [*Laughs*] But we were full of confidence by the end of 1990. We'd only been going for around a year by that point and had really put the right foot forward with the three EPs we did, and then *Nowhere*. The songs we were writing were great, and we'd just been on an American tour, so we were cooking with gas. So we finished 1990 on a high note, and I remember seeing a lot of positive press about us, which fueled us going into the second album, *Going Black Again*.

Andy Bell in 1996, near the end of his first go-around with Ride. His stints with Hurricane #1, Oasis and Beady Eye were still in the future

People often attribute Ride's songs to Mark Gardener, but you wrote a ton, one being "Vapour Trail," which, for my money, might be the best song on *Nowhere*. How did you put that together?

"Vapour Trail" was one of those songs that came together very fast. The guitar line stands out; I remember exactly how it was written. We were on tour in the U.K., playing in small venues and staying in bed-and-breakfast hotels with a series of beds in the same room. All four of us were sleeping in dormitory-style rooms, and after the gigs, we'd sit around with a couple of guitars, having a smoke or drink. I remember sitting there with a guitar while hunched over the bedside, and that's when I came up with the four chords that make up "Vapour Trail."

Did you immediately know you were onto something?

As soon as I started playing it, I said, "Guys, listen to this. This is really good." And my next thought was, "How the fuck am I gonna remember it?" Because we didn't have any way of recording it while sitting in this room as we were. I just went to bed thinking, "I've got to remember this riff, and if I can remember it in the morning, then it'll be cemented in my head." And luckily, in the morning, I grabbed my guitar and picked up where I left off the night before. I was like, "Right, cool, that's locked in now; it's recorded in my brain."

Did the lyrics come just as quickly?

The phrase "Vapour Trail" and the lyrics that follow came from a friend of mine who ended up moving into my house in Oxford. He was dating this girl and had written a card to her and was trying to think what to write in it, and he wrote this message to his girlfriend, "Your vapour trail in a blue sky..." and I thought, "That's cool. I'm having that. I'm gonna put that into a song."

***Going Blank Again* features heavy doses of distortion, wah and feedback. How did that progression take place? Was it natural, or did you seek to apply that approach?**

Personally, the progression from *Nowhere* to *Going Blank Again* was pronounced because I had bought a 12-string Rickenbacker in between the two albums. And I had become friends with Graham Coxon of Blur, who I'd see often as they'd just become popular. I loved Graham's fluid, bendy guitar style. That sort of elastic guitar play-

I SUPPOSE, IS MAKING MUSIC THAT'S NOT MEANINGFUL, WHICH IS NOT AN OPTION"

ing appealed to me, and I remember saying to him, "How are you getting that sound?" And Graham said, "It's really simple; it's just a Les Paul," and then he said, "See, you're playing a 12-string Rickenbacker; the strings are not going to bend. You'll kill your fingers trying to bend on that guitar."

So the Les Paul was the key to your sound on *Going Blank Again*?
Yes! Graham telling me that was what made me get my first Les Paul. And when I did, I took it to the studio and started talking to Alan Moulder about the string-bending thing I wanted to do. That's when Alan showed me the classic, *cliché* Jimi Hendrix string bend where you bend the third string up, which matches the second string's note. You know what I mean? He showed me that, and then, if you listened to "Leave Them All Behind," you can hear that I immediately adopted it and played my own version of what Graham was doing in Blur.

By the time *Carnival of Light* came out, Britpop was in full swing. How did the success of bands like Oasis and Blur affect what Ride were doing, if at all?
I can only talk about my own experiences at the time, but I think it did. We started on *Carnival of Light* not too long after *Going Blank Again*, and it definitely was more of a retro-sounding record. A lot of people were listening to Sixties music around that time, and you can hear that with us; bands like Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd and other late-Sixties and early Seventies prog rock bands were being embraced. Whereas with Oasis and Blur, they went down a route that was more like the Kinks. I know a lot of people linked them to the Beatles, but when I first heard Oasis, I didn't think of the Beatles. I heard the Kinks and the Sex Pistols way more than I heard the Beatles in the earlier stuff.

You became friendly with Noel and Liam Gallagher somewhere between *Carnival of Light* and *Tarantula*, right?
Yeah, well, it was just before *Carnival of Light*. I remember going to see Oasis at a Creation Records showcase that Alan [*McGee*] took us to, and that's when I was introduced to Liam. I told him, "You guys are amazing; we'll have to get you out on tour with us," which was me naively thinking that Oasis would be supporting Ride on the *Carnival of Light* tour. Little did I know that Oasis' first single would come out a few months later, and they'd be bigger than Ride overnight. They just exploded.

The overnight success of Oasis, Blur and other Britpop bands undoubtedly changed the state of music in the U.K. How did that affect Ride's fortunes?
We had our own stuff going on as well. We had made two great albums, but we were starting to flounder because of the direction we were going in with *Carnival of Light*. Looking back, that direction didn't particularly suit Ride very well. We were cleaning up our sound when other bands were getting dirtier. There's a real dirtiness to Oasis' first album, *Definitely Maybe*, which was punky and aggressive. That sound was a lot like the early Ride sound, but we'd moved away from that and became cleaner and more polished. It felt like by the time *Carnival of Light* came out, what we had moved toward was sort of irrelevant. But there was also stuff happening where things weren't working well anymore. It wasn't long before we broke up, maybe a year or so later.

[*above*] Andy Bell and Liam Gallagher in action in Mountain View, California, September 11, 2005

[*right*] Bell in a London warehouse, August 26, 2015. "The progression from *Nowhere* to *Going Blank Again* was pronounced because I had bought a 12-string Rickenbacker in between the two albums," he says

TIM MOSENFELDER/GETTY IMAGES (TWO GUYS) GEORGE FAIRBAIRN/FUTURE (ONE GUY)

"LOOKING BACK, THAT DIRECTION DIDN'T PARTICULARLY SUIT RIDE VERY WELL.

When you joined Oasis in 1999, what was the directive?
I hadn't played bass to any great degree before I tried out for Oasis. So when I was invited to come out, when I got on the plane, I didn't have a bass. So I couldn't even try to learn anything before I got there. But I knew the chords to the songs, and I did my best to play the root notes; but I have to say, I probably wasn't that good on the first run-through. The other thing was that I was playing bass with my fingers, and Noel said, "Guigsy played with a pick. Try it that way." And when I did, I found I could attack the bass in a way that sounded a lot more like Oasis.

How steep was the learning curve from there?
I did enough in the audition to get me into the band, and then I went away and learned the catalog. I literally spent hours every day over the Christmas holiday learning all the tracks inside out so that I could nail it. And that was a massive education for me; being in that band, in general, was such a learning experience. To get inside a new instrument and feel the way drummers and bass players work together through that dynamic within a band was brilliant.

Was being in a band with Noel and Liam Gallagher as tumultuous as it's been made out to be?
I would have to say yes. [*Laughs*] I've been in many bands over the years, but that was my first brush with true greatness on a worldwide scale. And that's not meant to put Ride down because I love Ride. That's what I identify with most because they're my school friends. But in terms of global superstars of music, being in Oasis was just so huge. To be in a band with those guys was a huge learning experience. And their charisma — it's a real thing. It was another level. And later, one of my proudest moments was that Oasis would start its set with a song I wrote called "Turn Up the Sun." That was just unbelievably cool. GW

WE WERE CLEANING UP OUR SOUND WHEN OTHER BANDS WERE GETTING DIRTIER"

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KIM THAYIL

The mighty Soundgarden guitarist looks back on his most iconic riffs and solos, as well as the gear and tunings that guided him deep into the creative superunknown

By Amit Sharma

FEW MUSICIANS COULD say they shaped the Nineties quite like Kim Thayil.

The Soundgarden co-founder laid the foundations for what would become known as the "Seattle sound" and later get referred to as grunge or alternative rock, paving the way for a whole movement of world-conquering noise that included the likes of Nirvana, Alice in Chains and Pearl Jam. Typically seen with a black Guild S-100 electric in his hands, and on occasion its S-300 sibling, his approach to guitar has been an incredibly multifaceted one, with an easily identifiable personality to his riffs and leads that ranged from the fast and furious to the doomy and esoteric. In that regard, he was and very much still is the full package and, by proxy, an inspiration to many.

Soundgarden, which formed in 1984 and reunited in 2010 before disbanding after the tragic death of singer/guitarist Chris Cornell in 2017, rose to prominence as sonic daredevils hellbent on otherworldly experimentations — using natural harmonics and feedback to intricately detail their acid-laced hard rock. And while they embraced a number of alternate tunings, it's arguably drop-D that would end up becoming a defining feature for a lot of Nineties guitar bands. With the sixth string detuned a whole step to allow for one-finger power chords, its sound leant to a meatier and more muscular whirlwind of noise, inspiring some of the band's most famous tracks such as "Outshined," "Spoonman" and "Jesus Christ Pose" — anthems that, it's worth noting, wouldn't have sounded quite the same in standard.

"I can't say we invented or designed these tunings," Thayil says while sipping coffee out of a white Scrabble mug on a humid summer's day at home in Seattle. "You'd hear stories about players like Keith Richards playing in open [*tuning*] and maybe only using five strings instead of six. I also remember reading about Kiss dropping their guitars half a step down and realizing a lot of rock players were doing that."

By his own admission, his first adventures in drop-D felt "kinda weird." Early on, he'd ask himself why guitarists were purposefully choosing to play an instrument that tuned incorrectly, at least in the conventional sense. And then, of course, those lightbulb moments he built a career out of started arriving thick and fast. "When you're learning, you start orienting toward what you are told is

"I REMEMBER THESE PURISTS AND NITWITS WHO WOULD WRITE INTO GUITAR

correct, but then you go on and liberate yourself from those constraints," Thayil says. "Yes, there's a common rule of thumb for tuning guitars, but there are other ways to approach it to facilitate playing or writing, or even just to change the tone. You loosen a string and get a different sort of sound... you can bend more, thanks to the extra floppiness!"

Do you remember when you first became aware of drop-D?
I was friends with Mark Arm [*of Mudhoney fame*] back in college. I don't think Mudhoney were around at that point; I was in Soundgarden and he was in Green River. Buzz [*Osborne*] from the Melvins was hanging out a lot too. We'd listen to bands like the Young Gods, the Scientists and early Metallica at Mark's apartment in the U District. One time we started talking about our favorite Sabbath songs and Buzz told us about this tuning Tony Iommi used called 'drop-D' that made everything sound darker and heavier. I remember going home and being like, "Whoa, you don't say!" I started farting around and realized you could make a power chord with just one finger. Playing them really fast up and down the neck became easy. It's funny; I remember these purists and nitwits who would write into guitar magazines saying, "Drop-D is cheating; you're not really playing if you do that!"

It's easy to forget that trolls existed before the age of the Internet.
Yeah! I'd be sitting there wondering, "What do you think this is... Monopoly?! Is it like 'do not pass go' or 'head straight to jail' just because you don't approve of that tuning? What do you mean it's not a proper way of playing guitar? No wonder you're sitting there writing angry letters to a guitar magazine instead of writing songs!" It was such a crazy thing to say — "Those Seattle grunge guys are cheating because it's easier playing in drop-D!" I'd be thinking, "Thank you, and you're right, more people should be experimenting and having fun! Oh, and by the way, we're doing this because Black Sabbath did it. Neil Young did it. Van Halen did it. How far back are we going? Are you going to tell Eddie Van Halen he wasn't playing guitar properly?" Anyway, I went home from Mark's that night and wrote "Nothing to Say." I brought it to practice with Soundgarden the next day, saying, "Buzz showed me a Sabbath tuning and I came up with this!"

That must have caused quite a stir.
Chris and our first bassist Hiro [*Yamamoto*] were like, "Whoa!" with their jaws dropped open. Chris got excited and said he had just the right lyrics to fit that idea, so he ran into another room and grabbed a pen. Then he started singing this melody that had that Dio-esque thing where he'd go up high. At the time, heavy music was a bit like the Partridge Family through a distortion box. There was a lot of Aqua Net and Spandex! This thing was dark, psychedelic and trippy underneath Chris' majestic voice. It generated a lot of attention from major labels and made me want to write more things like that. I loved the unorthodox way we were approaching heavy music.

It almost feels like songs like "Outshined" simply wouldn't have existed in standard.
Heavy metal and drop-D is a match made in heaven... it just works. Then Chris started dropping his sixth string even further down to B, writing songs like "Rusty Cage" during the *Badmotorfinger* era. By doing that, we could make the octave by fretting up a whole step on the next string along... which sounded cool! So messing with tunings definitely spawned a lot of stuff. Then Ben [*Shepherd, bass*] came along, and he had a background in country music with some open and slide tunings. Matt [*Cameron, drums*] started writing stuff with weird tunings too, like "Birth Ritual," which had the sixth and fifth strings detuned. We were turning each other on to different ways of thinking. The drop-D thing became really big for us — and then other Seattle bands like Nirvana and Alice in Chains. Smashing Pumpkins were doing similar things too.

Kim Thayil performs with Soundgarden on the Lollapalooza main stage at Winnebago County Fairgrounds in Rockford, Illinois, June 30, 1996

What would you say are the other defining features of Nineties rock guitar?
Feedback was a big part of the sound. One of our first recordings was "Tears to Forget," and we only had eight tracks to work with, one of which was entirely dedicated to guitar feedback. Some people thought it was funny, but it sounded cool. Utilizing unorthodox techniques became a big part of our style, like playing behind the bridge or using harmonics as part of the riff as we did on "Heretic." We weren't just using harmonics as an effect or lead element; it was part of the actual riff. And we did that frequently — if something sounded strange, we'd usually be inclined to explore. We'd say things like, "Let's write a song where the riff is just feedback" or "Let's come up with a riff mainly using harmonics!" In drop-D it felt a lot easier to bend the strings, almost like lead players would in solos.

It's a very Sabbathy move!
Yeah, Sabbath did a lot of that. That became a very distinct signature of Alice in Chains. Jerry Cantrell writes the coolest riffs with those howling, sexy bends. Listen to "It Ain't Like That" and you'll see what I mean. I fell in love with that as soon as I heard it. That became Jerry's thing, riffing with those awesome bends. Nobody could bend the note the same smooth way as consistently as he could. I'd say the two signature elements of Alice in Chains' sound was Jerry's bent riffs as well as those vocal harmonies. And if you listen to the Nirvana song "Blew" from *Bleach*, Kurt [*Cobain*] was using bends as part of the riff. These were things that were probably introduced early on in the Seattle scene through us.

You have a strong identity as a lead guitarist — mixing elements of classic rock pentatonics and more atmospheric ideas that seem to capture a moment in time.
As for the impressionistic guitar solos, I'm definitely not a metal lead player. Those kinds of solos owe more to classical, and as far as I'm concerned, that's "mom music"! It's the kind of stuff you do to tell your parents, "See, I'm not just making noise, I'm not a long-haired drug-taking asshole... this is real music influenced by Paganini!" I feel like those really ornate and baroque-sounding passages are almost written to show other people you're not a fuckup. Well,

MAGAZINES SAYING 'DROP-D IS CHEATING!' WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS IS, MONOPOLY?"

in that case, go play "real" music. My approach has always been more like impressionism. It's partly blurry and down to the feel. You hear a song and then it's time for the solo, and there's a way to attack it — whether that's manic and chaotic or moody or sad. That's what the takeaway should be, rather than how many notes got played, where they fell and why. If that's the question, my answer would be, "I don't know; here's a paint-by-numbers book for you!" Of course, there are some songs where you have to write a part that's melodic and emphasized, complementing the vocals or riff. But I like the idea of getting to the solo section and having things fall apart, like a car careening off the edge in a dangerous way or something really noisy and inexplicable. I like making people go, "What the hell is going on there?"

Players that came after you — including Tool's Adam Jones and Radiohead's Jonny Greenwood — also had that esoteric approach to their leads, almost as if they were painting through their guitars.

Totally! It is a kind of painting, just using sonic colors. Music should be evocative. There's something one-dimensional about having the notes occur linearly and in series... it can be compelling and stand for something, making you think, "What an interesting series of notes and intervals." But in terms of mood, you can create more emotive ideas by freeing yourself. Is the solo dark, strange, uplifting or casual? You can tap into all of these things. Adam Jones and Jonny Greenwood are beautiful examples of guitar players doing amazing service to the song, choosing sounds that are emotive and colorful.

What do you remember about recording "Black Hole Sun"?

I remember when I heard those little arpeggios in the verse sections, I thought, "This is stylistically not like me!" It sounded more like a piano part — or like little fairies and angels dancing on the head of a pin. I thought, "I don't know, man... it's too crystal." Obviously, I did end up playing that part live, but the song would come in during the middle of the set when I'd already had a few beers in me. It was really shifting gears, going from playing fast and free to, "Uh oh, I have to play all these notes in the right place!" It almost felt like I had to pull up a stool, sitting there with my legs crossed. So I had some resistance to that verse part. On the recording I think I just played the chorus parts and solos. Chris wanted me to do the verse, but here's the problem... there's a Leslie on it. If you stop, there's no way they can punch you back in exactly where you were. It was so frustrating. Eventually I turned to Chris and said, "You wrote this part; you can probably get further than I can!"

The solo seems to capture those different sides of you well; it's frenetic and ambitious, almost shredding in places, but also abstract to a certain degree.

I think so! I have friends who have criticized me for playing too fast. They'd say, "You play so fast — we have no idea what you're doing... Slow down, dude!" But they're also players who mainly like Eric Clapton, Duane Allman... that kind of stuff. I am a Cream fan, and on Soundgarden's early European tours we'd play "Sunshine of Your Love" at the end, mainly because we'd been drinking through the show. We all loved the song, as well as the rest of *Disraeli Gears*. My friends who were more into soulful and blues playing definitely wanted me to slow down. I think what I do is soulful... it's just not blues!

It's the 30th anniversary of *Superunknown* next year. Tracks like "Let Me Drown" and "Mailman" have an almost intoxicating sense of drag to them.

Chris wrote that opening riff to "Let Me Drown," and I added the harmonies. I used to like throwing in things like that because they sounded a little bit perverted. [*Laughs*] Matt wrote that "Mailman" riff. He's very on it when it comes to tempos. It's one of the three or four songs on the album that Chris didn't play on. I was using a single-coil guitar, either a Strat or G&L, that was tuned down to whatever Matt had written it in. I believe it was standard but with the two lowest strings dropped down to C and G. We have so many songs in weird tunings. That's why we'd tour with so many guitars — eight or nine in some cases — because every few songs we'd need to change tuning. It's strange that I chose to use a single-coil guitar instead of my Guild on that one. And then on the track "Superunknown" I switched back to my Guild and Chris was playing his Les Paul on the verses. "Fell On Black Days" might have even been Chris on his Gretsch. Different songs needed different colors.

Soundgarden do their thing in London, June 15, 1994; [*from left*] Kim Thayil, Matt Cameron, Chris Cornell and Ben Shepherd

BRIAN RASIC/GETTY IMAGES

What drew you to the Guild S-100?

I found an affordable second-hand Guild electric. It had a black finish, and I think I got

"HEAVY METAL AND DROP-D TUNING IS A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN"

it for around $235 when I was 18. The new guitars were out of my price range so I had to look at the used models. This one was in good condition and a nice color. It had peculiarities too, because of that area behind the bridge. The pickups were somewhat microphonic, so you'd get this cool feedback. It wouldn't really squeal, unless you knew how, but you'd get this nice little hum. If you stood near the amp, you could move that hum around. There was also something cool about the fact it was a little lighter. I could make all those cool poses like Ace Frehley, even though he used a Les Paul. Kiss made guitars look like some kind of action instrument. The lighter Guild facilitated all those poses, which, admittedly, I didn't make because I was still busy trying to learn what to play and not screw up!

Were you still using Peavey amps or had you crossed over to Mesa Boogie by this point?
I don't actually know. There was a transition around then because I'd been using the Peavey VTMs around *Badmotorfinger*. Mostly because we endorsed them and they gave us a lot of gear for the road, which you need. There would be times where we'd break our amps or sometimes borrow a tube from one head and put it in another. By [*1996's*] *Down On the Upside*, we were definitely using Boogies, but I'd also sometimes track with a Music Man head or a Fender.

Songs like "Spoonman" and "4th of July" also became fan favorites from this era of Soundgarden, but for very different reasons.
"Spoonman" was crunchy and visceral. It had that percussive sort of feel, with Matt directing that heaviness. "4th of July" was not as percussive, but it had more of a droney kind of element that relied more on ambience. It was a tough song to record because of the tuning. We had to use really heavy strings that would interfere with how I liked how to play, in terms of bending and finger vibrato. Heavier strings are a bit tougher, but they are able to hold the tuning better. Looser strings dropped down go sharp when you squeeze the neck too hard. It was a tough one to record; you'd think you got the take and then listen back to discover the guitars were slightly out.

Looking back now, which songs are you most proud of?
My answer changes every time I'm asked. "4th of July" has this melodic lead that I doubled an octave up. It sounds very wilting and melancholic; there's something about it that's really sympathetic and sad, especially against the doomy riff. It could have been more chaotic and more recognizable as me throwing a bunch of paint against a wall... or shit, as the case may be. But it required something like that — a written lead in context of the song. Then there's "Like a Suicide," which has a frenetic sort of chaos with a sense of melody too. A lot of my solos are like that, a combination of punching in and Frankensteining different takes. I was tapping into the lyrics and sadness of the song, which has a Beatles-y "Dear Prudence" vibe. When the solo comes in, it's not crying but rather shrieking and wailing. It's like this inconsolable outburst of tears.

Which players do you think impacted you most — and in what ways?
I'd like to remind all the perfectionist guitar nerds reading this to listen to Jimmy Page's solo on [*Led Zeppelin's*] "In the Evening." It sounds like the guitar is falling down the stairs... It's brilliant. I remember people writing about it in the late Seventies asking, "Did he mean to fuck up there?" And I'd be thinking, "It's just cool!" The same goes for Jimi Hendrix with all that feedback. He was always pushing himself and making people ask, "Why did he choose to go there?!" He wouldn't play things the same way every time because it came from his heart, not the chart or some textbook. He was living it, thinking it and feeling it. Feedback was all over the place. It was part of the passion and intensity... and a lot of that fed into what I was trying to do! GW

"JERRY CANTRELL WRITES THE COOLEST RIFFS WITH THOSE HOWLING, SEXY BENDS"

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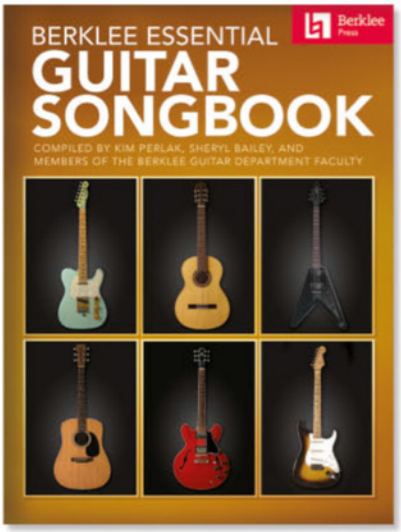

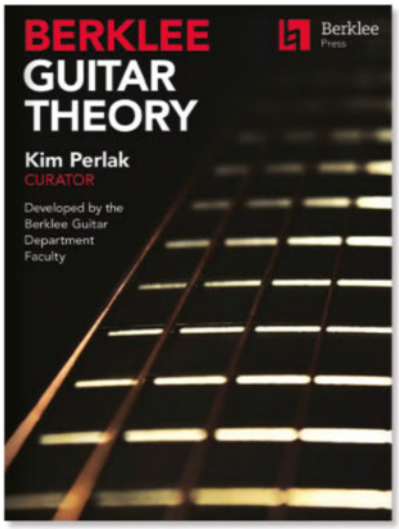

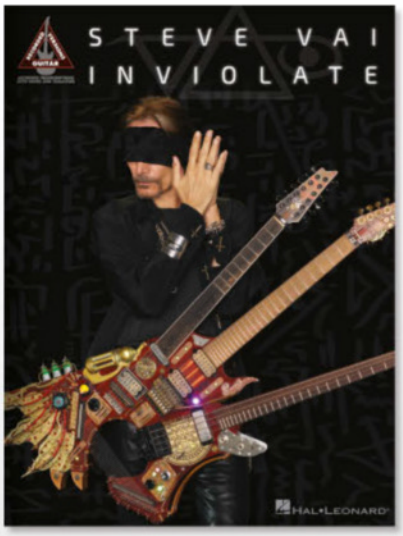

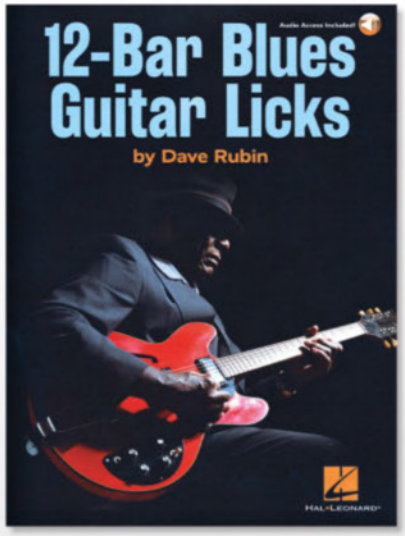

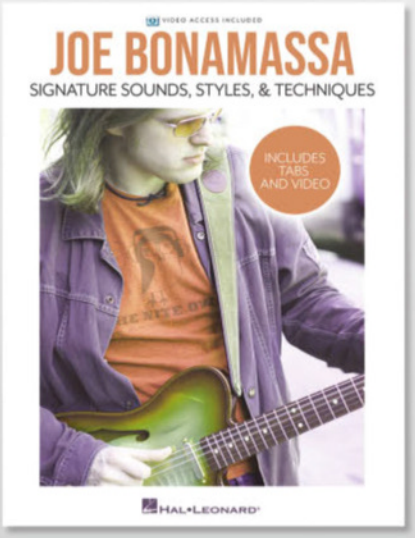

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Maestro II: Electric Boogaloo

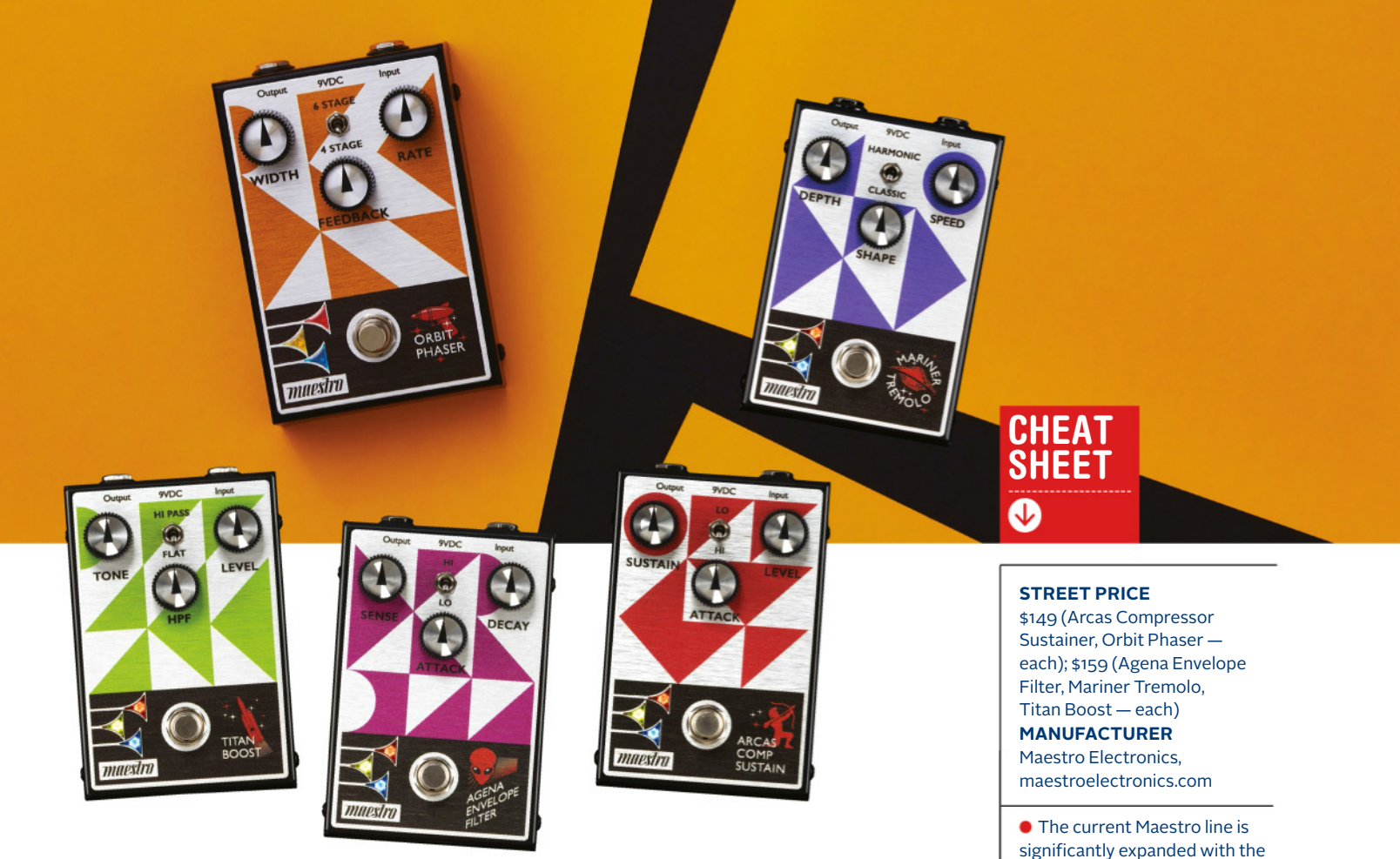
MAESTRO AGENA ENVELOPE FILTER, ARCAS COMPRESSOR SUSTAINER, MARINER TREMOLO, ORBIT PHASER AND TITAN BOOST PEDALS

By Chris Gill

LAST YEAR'S REVIVAL of the Maestro pedal line by Gibson was sort of the music industry equivalent to the most recent *Star Wars* trilogy. The first five pedals released were familiar (overdrive, distortion, fuzz, delay and chorus) but perhaps a bit too predictable — kind of like *The Force Awakens*. More recently Maestro came out with another set of five pedals that offer a few surprises and twists without deviating too far from the familiar plot—a scenario similar to *The Last Jedi*. This latest Maestro lineup, which consists of the Agena Envelope Filter, Arcas Compressor Sustainer, Mariner Tremolo, Orbit Phaser and Titan Boost, still retains the same populist approach of its predecessors by delivering very sensible designs that get the job done without getting arty or weird.

FEATURES The new Maestro pedals retain the same medium-size, wedge-shaped housings as their predecessors, with different color shades and graphic patterns to help identify one from another. All five of the new pedals also retain the same configuration of three control knobs in an upside-down triangle with a mini toggle switch at the center, true bypass footswitch and tri-color "bugle" LEDs at the lower left corner. Each pedal can be powered by a 9-volt battery or 9VDC power supply.

The Agena Envelope Filter has Sense, Attack, Decay and a Hi/Lo switch to provide funky dynamic filter sweeps and wah-like effects with rising or descending frequencies that respond to picking intensity. The Arcas Compressor Sustainer comes with



Sustain, Attack, Level knobs and a Lo/Hi switch that provides a selection of light or heavy compression effects. The Mariner Tremolo features Depth and Speed controls, a Shape knob that varies the modulation waveform from triangle to square wave and a Harmonic/Classic switch that offers either Classic tremolo that can be dialed from a subtle shimmer to dramatic choppy on/off effects or Harmonic tremolo, which sounds warmer and more organic. The Orbit Phaser is a versatile phase shifter that offers a selection of 6-stage phasing (similar to the Maestro PS-1A, one of the very first phase shifter effects) or 4-stage phasing (*á la* MXR Phase 90 or Electro-Harmonix Small Stone) via its mini toggle switch, plus the standard Width, Feedback and Rate knobs. Finally, the Titan Boost joins the ever-growing ranks of transparent boost effects, with its Level knob providing up to 25dB of clean boost, while its HPF (hi-pass filter) knob rolls off bass frequencies when the Hi-Pass/Flat switch is at the Hi-Pass setting. Its Tone control is a low-pass filter that shaves off treble frequencies and it's available in both Hi-Pass and Flat modes.

PERFORMANCE Like the first five Maestro pedals, this latest group is also designed to provide very straightforward, workmanlike effects without frivolous frills or quirks. Each pedal does its job and does it quite well, but the effects are more tried and true rather than offbeat and new.

The Agena Envelope Filter is sort of a descendent of the funky Maestro FSH-1 Filter/Sample Hold pedal from the Seventies (without the Sample Hold feature, of course), but with a narrower filter sweep range that won't blow out your speakers with excessive bass or your eardrums with piercing treble. It really hits the funky sweet spot without too much tweaking, unlike many highly temperamental envelope followers. The Arcas Compressor Sustainer provides excellent transparent compression and sustain effects without too much squish or breathing — sometimes it's hard to tell it's there until you hold a note that seems to go on forever. The Mariner Tremolo benefits from its two-in-one design provided by the very distinct personalities of the Harmonic and Classic modes.

My personal favorites were the Orbit Phaser and Titan Boost. Although the Orbit Phaser's 6-stage mode doesn't match the psychedelic swirling textures of the original PS-1A, it's a great deep phasing effect, and the four-stage mode delivers timeless classic phase effects at the flip of a switch. The Titan Boost offers rock-solid transparent boost capabilities, but it stands out from the pack thanks to its sensible low- and hi-pass filters. Excess bass frequencies can obliterate a guitar's clarity on stage, so it's ideal to be able to cleanly roll off frequencies below 200 to 150Hz without affecting the frequencies above that range.

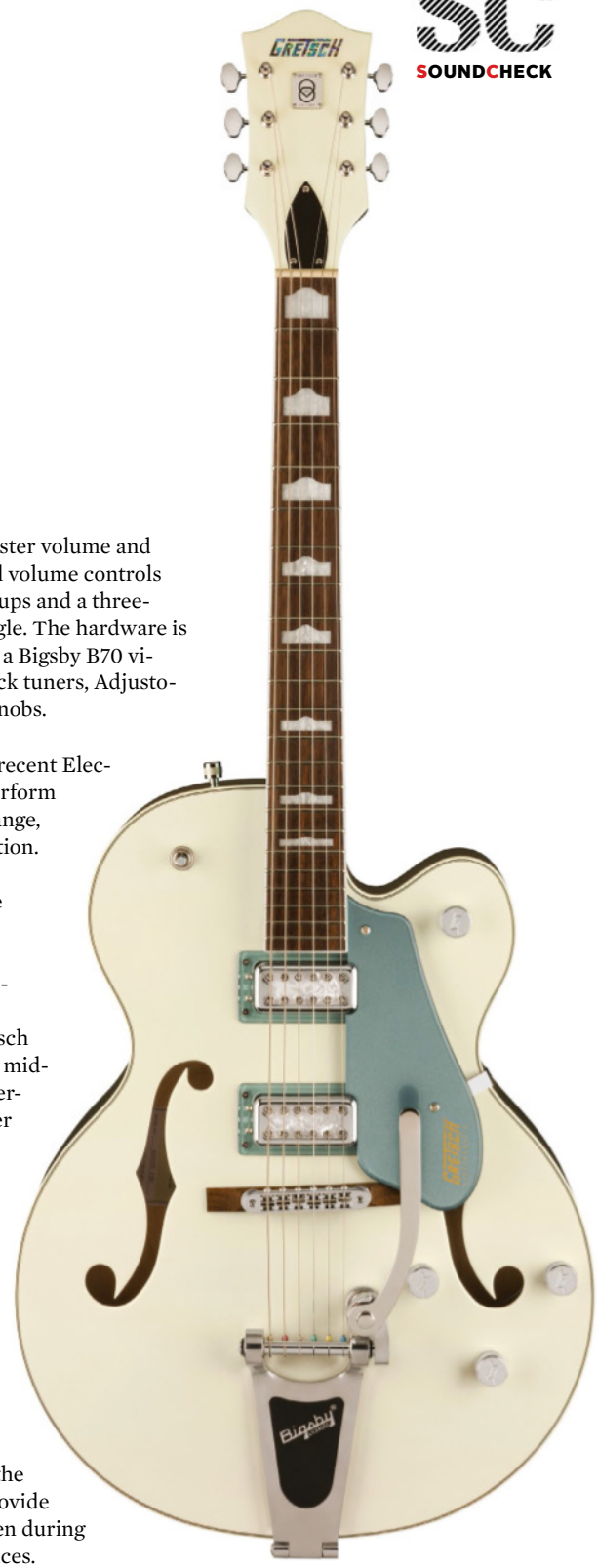
CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE
$149 (Arcas Compressor Sustainer, Orbit Phaser — each); $159 (Agena Envelope Filter, Mariner Tremolo, Titan Boost — each)

MANUFACTURER
Maestro Electronics, maestroelectronics.com

- The current Maestro line is significantly expanded with the addition of boost, compression, envelope filter, phaser and tremolo effects.
- Mini toggle switches provide "two-in-one" versatility for the Arcas Compressor Sustainer, Mariner Tremolo and Orbit Phaser or Hi/Lo filter sweeps (Agena Envelope Filter) and Hi-Pass Filter/Flat EQ settings (Titan Boost).
- Red, yellow and blue "bugle" LEDs illuminate when the effect is engaged via the true bypass footswitch.
- Each pedal can be powered with either a 9-volt battery or a standard-size center-negative barrel plug 9VDC power supply.

THE BOTTOM LINE
Maestro's new pedals are especially ideal for filling gaps in pedal boards that don't already have these specific effects, but players looking for a no-nonsense upgrade should consider them as well, especially the models that offer two-in-one functionality via the mini switches.



GUITAR WORLD GOLD AWARD PERFORMANCE

Luxury Sweet

GRETSCH G5420T-140 ELECTROMATIC 140TH

By Chris Gill

WITH GRETSCH'S INTRODUCTION of its new 140th Anniversary Electromatic models, the gap between an affordable sub-$1,000 guitar and a professional-grade model costing $3,000 and up just got a lot narrower. In addition to being some of the coolest and most luxurious deluxe-looking guitars in their price range, the Gretsch 140th Anniversary Electromatic models deliver playability, craftsmanship and tantalizing tones that come pretty damn close to their more expensive counterparts with the main differences coming down to finer details of the tone woods, pickups and hardware. We looked at the (deep breath) G5420T-140 Electromatic 140th Double Platinum Hollowbody with Bigsby model.

FEATURES With its hollow body measuring 16 inches across the lower bout and 2.75 inches deep, large f-holes, trestle block bracing and laminated maple top, back and sides, the G5420T shares some DNA with the beloved Gretsch 6120 and Double Anniversary models. The maple neck's attributes include a laurel fingerboard with pearloid hump block position inlays and 22 medium jumbo frets, an uber-comfortable 24.6-inch scale length, 1.6875-inch nut width, 12-inch radius and Classic "C" shape profile. Multi-layer binding, the two-tone Pearl Platinum (top, headstock) over Stone Platinum (back, sides, neck) finish, 140th anniversary headstock badge, pearloid pickup face insets, Stone Platinum pickguard and pickup bezels, and sparkling, luminescent blue front headstock logo and rear headstock dual ring/diamond inlays — both made of abalone — give the guitar elegant, classy visual appeal.

Electronics include a pair of FT-5E Filter'Tron humbuckers, master volume and tone controls plus individual volume controls for the bridge and neck pickups and a three-position pickup selector toggle. The hardware is chrome-plated and includes a Bigsby B70 vibrato, vintage-style open-back tuners, Adjusto-Matic bridge and G-arrow knobs.

PERFORMANCE Gretsch's recent Electromatic models often outperform most guitars in their price range, and the G5420T is no exception. Unplugged, the guitar delivers responsive resonant tone that only gets better when it is plugged in. The FT-5E Filter'Trons have the distinctive twang, honk and snarl that defines "that great Gretsch sound" with a characteristic mid-range that delivers tons of personality and attitude whether played crystal clean or with generous amounts of gritty overdrive.

The neck's overall feel is smooth and luxurious with comfortably rounded edges along the fretboard, and the shorter 24.6-inch Gretsch scale is super comfortable as well. Whereas many vintage Gretsch models can feel a bit delicate or fragile, the G5420T is solidly built to provide sturdy reliability onstage even during the most raucous performances.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICE: $899.99
MANUFACTURER: Gretsch, gretschguitars.com

- The 16-inch bout, 2.75-inch depth, trestle block bracing and large f-holes share DNA with Gretsch's beloved 6120 and Double Anniversary models.
- A pair of FT-5E Filter'Tron humbucker pickups deliver the distinctive twang, honk and snarl that defines "that great Gretsch sound."
- **THE BOTTOM LINE**
If you want a glamtastic ax for rockin' club shows that can also pair well with a tux for wedding gigs, the Gretsch G5420T Electromatic 140th Anniversary model looks the part while delivering tones and playability that are as impressive as its appearance.

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Molten Hot

WARM AUDIO ODD BOX V1 AND MUTATION PHASOR II

By Paul Riario

IF YOU'RE LIKE me, you did a double-take when you saw the images for the ODD and Mutation Phasor II. No, neither of them is the original stompbox that we've seen before (and probably own); rather, both are very faithful recreations of the originals from Warm Audio. Right now, Warm Audio is smoking hot with its "inspired by" pedals that accurately replicate the specs of tried-and-true originals that have attained legendary status. One look at its Centavo and Warm-drive clones and you'll quickly understand why the company is gaining traction for producing lookalike rare pedals with tones nearly identical to the originals — and at a fraction of the cost. Now, with the release of the ODD "Over Drive Disorder" Box and Mutation Phasor II, Warm Audio aims to continue in this trajectory. Moreover, after spending a great deal of time with both, it's hard to deny how close these two sound to the classic pedals they emulate — I could even argue, maybe too close.

FEATURES Both almost look like the real thing, apart from the less-bold font used for the logo and a UK/US label for the mini-toggle on the ODD, and the Mutation Phasor II coming in a sensibly shrunken brick-sized steel housing compared to the enormous metal chassis of the vintage one. To duplicate the hard-clipping and op-amp-based circuit of the genuine pedal, Warm Audio goes above and beyond under the hood for the ODD with through-hole construction using premium components, including a TLO82CP Op-Amp, 2N7000 transistors and hand-selected capacitors and resistors. With the same controls for Drive, Volume and Tone, the clear tonal shift comes courtesy of the UK/US mini-toggle switch — with the UK setting having bumped upper-mids, warmer saturation and detailed harmonic chime. Flipping down to the US setting ushers in more clean headroom with scooped mids, a brighter boost and crumbly breakup tones. The ODD features true bypass switching and runs on a 9-volt battery or an external 9- to 18-volt regulated DC adapter. Running the ODD at 18 volts offers even more headroom and expressive dynamics.

The Mutation Phasor II is a true-to-spec circuit recreation of the vintage original built with premium components that include classic RC4558P op-amps, vintage-style diodes, carbon resistors and film caps. Of course, it features the exact control set of Depth, Rate, and Feedback, which govern the MP II's width and speed of modulation and frequency range of phase-shifting swirl. The MPII is buffered bypass and operates with a 9-volt battery or an external 9-volt regulated DC adapter.

PERFORMANCE Lucky for me, I actually own a Fulltone OCD and a prized Seventies-era Musitronics Mu-Tron Phasor II to compare Warm Audio's ODD and MPII with. Starting with the ODD, it's astonishing how much the ODD actually feels like an OCD in your hand, having nearly the same substantial weight. But what's more important is tone, and the ODD, again, in its impressiveness, sounds almost indistinguishable from the OCD. The ODD delivers that unmistakable dynamic overdrive that approaches distortion — just like the OCD — in a lively and forthright manner, poking and cutting through with what feels like a natural tube-like response.

It's staggering to hear how well the ODD is able to match the OCD's distinct overdriven character in the same sweetly saturated way. I'll also point out I spent more time with the UK setting rather than the US simply because the UK setting provided a much warmer tone, whereas the US setting had more treble bite and cleaner boost, which I found complementary when I stacked the ODD with other drive pedals.

Comparing the Mutation Phasor II to the Mu-Tron Phasor II is where I started to distinguish the more noticeable and subtle differences between the two. There is no mistaking the MPII deftly imitates the chewy phasing of the Mu-Tron at modest settings using the Depth and Feedback controls — and it's a unique type of funky swirl and throaty "wobble" you just don't get from other popular phase stompboxes. But at peak settings, the MPII falls just short of the extreme rise-and-fall sweeps and vowel-like growl of the original's jet-style phasing. Not to say the MPII doesn't get there, but to my ears, the phasing is more polite than rude, yet still retains a defined swirling complexity of the original but without any of the hiss (since the Mu-Tron's antiquated power switch and AC power cord contributed to that chaotic noise). Regardless, having the MPII with a more practical pedalboard footprint and that distinctly warm and richly textured swirl is enough for me to retire my vintage unit.

CHEAT SHEET

STREET PRICES: ODD, $119; Mutation Phasor II, $149
MANUFACTURER: Warm Audio, warmaudio.com

- The ODD features classic controls along with a UK/US switch to replicate the cranked tube-like amp tones of the original pedal.
- The UK/US switch on the ODD engages two distinct modes, with the UK setting distorting earlier, and with increased mids and volume, while the US setting offers boosted and "edge of breakup" tweed-style tones.
- With the same original controls as the vintage pedal, the Mutation Phasor II delivers chewy and ultra-swirly phasing in a road-worthy build.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** At prices that are hard to beat, Warm Audio's ODD and Mutation Phaser II are near-faithful recreations that sound convincingly close in tone to the real things.

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Buzz Bin

CIOKS DC7 Power Supply

THE GOLD STANDARD is a term you don't throw out lightly. But allow me to be so bold and use it for CIOKS, a forward-thinking company from Denmark that has been a leader in creating low-profile, isolated power supplies for musicians. We've come a long way in terms of powering your pedalboard — from wall warts strung together on a power strip to legit pedal power units — so the question now becomes, which one is the best for your needs? I don't begrudge premier manufacturers like Voodoo Lab, Strymon, Dunlop and Truetone, among many others, for their outstanding power supplies, all of which I've used (and still do), but at the moment, CIOKS has refined the idea of a slim pedalboard power supply into an art form. Coming in at a one-inch profile and weighing 1.1 lbs, the DC7 Power Supply is the company's thinnest and most powerfully versatile unit to date.

What makes the CIOKS DC7 so exceptional? Put aside its diminutive form factor, and what you have are seven isolated DC outlets with four selectable voltages on each outlet that can feed juice to just about any pedal. Using the recessed dipswitches at the top of the unit, you can switch an outlet to run 660mA at 9V, 500mA at 12V, 400mA at 15V or 330mA at 18V. The DC7 also includes a 5-volt USB outlet for charging your smartphone or tablet, and if you need more juice for extra pedals, an onboard 24-volt auxiliary outlet can be used for expansion with CIOKS 4 or CIOKS 8 units. Another key benefit of the DC7 is the company's advanced LED monitoring with individual-status LEDs. If there's an overload or a short circuit, the LED will shut off, letting you know you might have a short in a cable or that the pedal's current consumption is over the outlet's limit. There's also a global-status LED on the "O" of the CIOKS logo that lets you know if you exceed the 48W power limit, and a triple-LED power meter that indicates in three steps how much of the unit's total available power is being used. In addition, its universal mains input voltage (100-240V AC) means you can safely run the DC7 anywhere in the world. The DC7 comes with 12 different flex cables for connecting pedals or daisy-chaining a few to a single outlet and a mounting hardware kit to mount it on top or underneath most popular pedalboards.

A few years ago, I reviewed Eventide's PowerMax (by CIOKS), which is, more or less, the DC7 reviewed here. I was blown away by it then, and it's still, by far, my favorite of the power supplies that I'm currently using, and it hasn't failed me yet. So, in essence, what I'm saying here is that the CIOKS DC7 will prove to be the same exceptionally reliable power source for anyone who is serious about keeping their stompboxes running efficiently and quietly. I've already wired up the DC7 for a new pedalboard, and as expected, the unit is completely noiseless, and I mean dead quiet. What's great is I was able to switch voltages to accommodate a new wireless pedal tuner as well as a few power-hungry stompboxes like the Strymon TimeLine and Eventide H90 processors. For its feature-rich compatibility and reliable performance, you'd be hard-pressed to find a compact power supply better than the CIOKS DC7. — *Paul Riario*

STREET PRICE: $249
MANUFACTURER: CIOKS, cioks.com

GUITAR WORLD PLATINUM AWARD EXCELLENCE

Feel the Burn

DRIFTWOOD PURPLE NIGHTMARE TUBE PREAMP PEDAL By Chris Gill

THERE ARE MANY here among us who feel that tube amps are the only way to go, regardless of how good digital modeling amps and apps may sound. One of the few problems with tube amps is that they can be pretty damn expensive, and for some of us the prospect of buying a new amp demands sacrifices like walking to work or going without food for a year. Fortunately, the Driftwood Purple Nightmare Tube Preamp Pedal offers a more pleasant alternative thanks to its ability to function as an additional fully independent amp channel or even as a standalone amp itself, in addition to the usual front-end preamp applications. This is no solid-state or digital preamp masquerading as a tube preamp — it features a pair of 12AX7 tubes driven by 250-volt plate voltage to deliver true tube tone and performance.

FEATURES The Driftwood Purple Nightmare Tube Preamp Pedal is essentially the Burn channel from Driftwood's mammoth Purple Nightmare amp reconfigured in a preamp pedal format. Gain, Bass, Mid and Treble controls and a High/Low gain voicing switch provide fundamental tonal and textural shaping, while the master section's Rumble and Sharp knobs (similar to resonance and presence controls) and a three-way Sizzle switch further refine the sound while the Master volume control dials in the overall output level. A built-in T/S overdrive (as in "Tube Screamer") with Gain, Volume and Tone controls and its own on/off switch is also included. A T/S Sep toggle switch allows the overdrive to operate independently like a standalone pedal (up) or be used only when the preamp is on (down).

The back-panel jacks are where most of the Purple Nightmare pedal's versatility lurks. Standard ¼-inch Input and Output jacks allow connection to an amp's front end like a typical stompbox application. To use the pedal as an entirely independent additional channel, you can employ a four-cable setup using the Input, To Amp Input, Send (to an amp's FX loop Send jack) and Return (to the FX loop Return) jacks. The 2W Out To Cab jack lets you connect the pedal directly to a speaker cabinet to use the pedal as an amp for practice or recording. An External Switch jack on the side lets you control bypass and T/S on/off with an optional footswitch controller.

PERFORMANCE Pure and simple, this pedal gives guitarists all of the guts and glory of the Driftwood Purple Nightmare head's Burn channel without the $3,000 or so investment. The pedal produces tight, sparkling clean tones, but let's face it — 99 percent of the players interested in this pedal will use it for its mammoth, face-melting high-gain distortion tones. The differences between the middle and lower Sizzle settings are subtle (with the lower setting sounding tighter and more focused), but the upper setting pulls out upper midrange sparkle and, yes, sizzle that cuts through a mix. Remarkably, the pedal delivers absolutely noise-free performance even with the volume and gain knobs dialed to the most extreme settings, eliminating the need for a noise gate. The T/S overdrive section works best, or at least is most noticeable, when used with the preamp dialed to low- to medium-gain settings. At higher gain it tends to blend with the overall sound and the boost is barely noticeable.

By far the best way to use this pedal is by employing the four-cable setup with an effects loop so it can perform as an additional channel. This allows you to experience those Purple Nightmare Burn channel tones in their full, unadulterated glory. The pedal sounds good and is quite versatile when plugged into the front of an amp like a distortion pedal, but I generally preferred how the pedal sounded on its own in an effects loop rather than how it sounded when blended with an amp's tone stack and gain settings.

CHEAT SHEET

LIST PRICE: €599
MANUFACTURER: Driftwood Amplifier, driftwoodamps.com

- High/Low gain voicing and a three-way Sizzle switch provide flexible versatility for fine-tuning the texture and character of the preamp's tones.
- A built-in T/S overdrive section can boost the preamp's output and gain or can operate as a standalone effect.
- **THE BOTTOM LINE** If you love the Driftwood Purple Nightmare head's Burn channel but not its $3,000-plus price or you want to add a world-class high-gain tube channel to an amp you already own, this pedal is a dirty dream.

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COLUMNS

IN DEEP

by Andy Aledort

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/november2023

TRIPLE PLAY

More on devising three-part guitar harmonies

IN THE LAST two columns, we learned how to build harmony guitar lines by stacking diatonic (scale-based) 3rd intervals above melody notes. To review, this technique involves taking each note of the melody and adding above it a note that's the interval of a 3rd, or two scale degrees, as it occurs within a related scale. You can then add another note a 3rd above that one, to build three-part harmony.

Oftentimes, the most musical-sounding harmonized line will involve using a variety of intervals in addition to 3rds, such as 4ths or 5ths. This will be the case with the harmonized lines presented in this lesson The line we will harmonize is played over a 12-bar blues progression in the key of D with a shuffle, or triplet-based, feel.

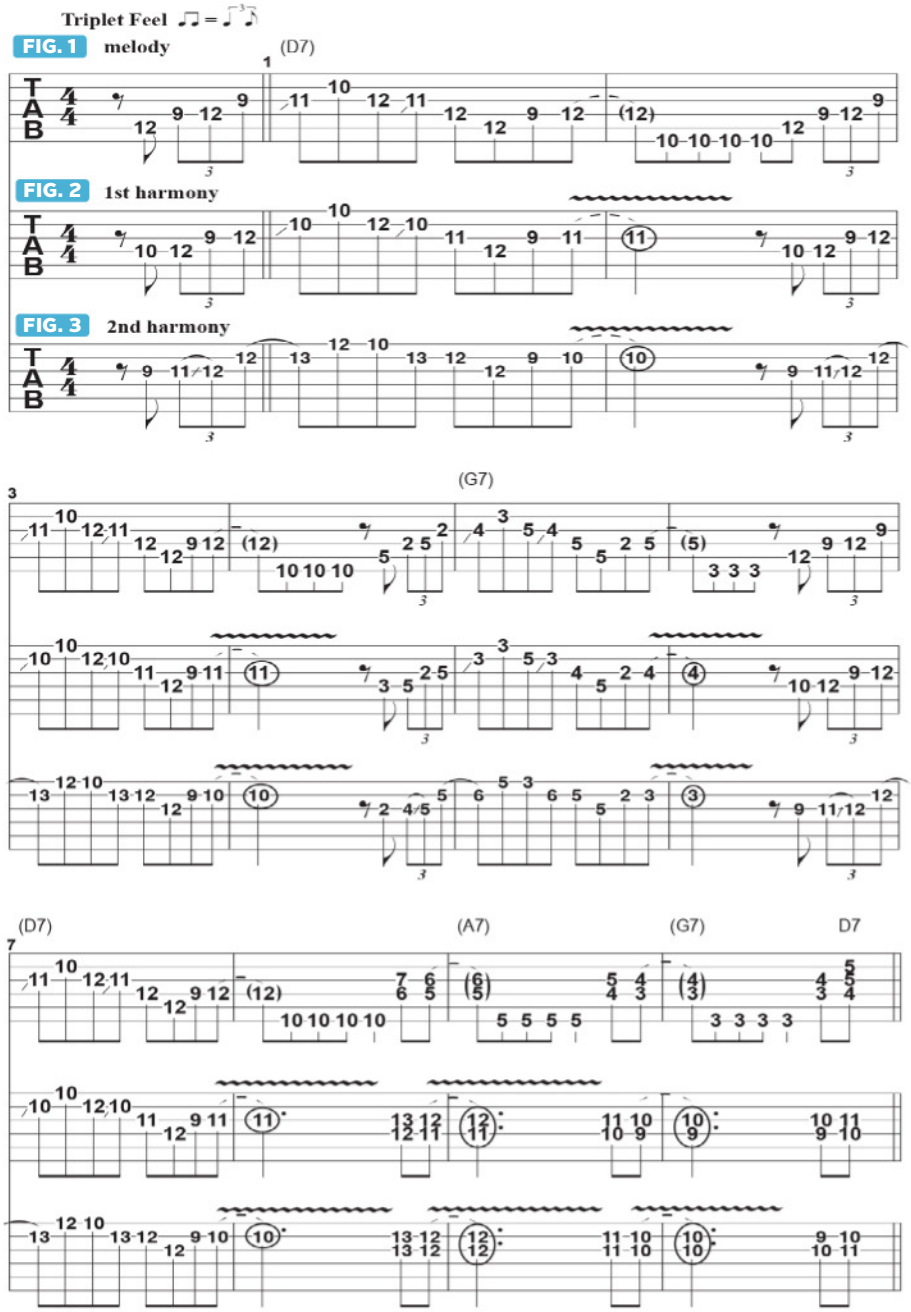
Stylistically, the three-part harmony presented here is inspired by the type of horn lines featured in classic R&B and blues recordings of the 1950s and Sixties, prime examples being the "horn band" sounds of guitarists B.B. King and Albert King from that era.

FIGURE 1 presents our melody, which begins with a one-and-a-half beat pickup bar, utilizing the notes A, B, D and E, followed by the major 3rd of D, F♯, played on the downbeat bar 1. The accented notes are those of a D major triad (D, F♯, A), and the additional melodic pitches are B, F♯ and G. If we look at these six notes in total, in ascending order — D, E, F♯, G, A, B — we can analyze them as being the D major hexatonic scale which takes D major pentatonic (D, E, F♯, A, B) and adds the fourth, G (D, E, F♯, G, A, B). If we broaden our look to the scale that best represents a D7 chord, we get the D Mixolydian mode: D, E, F♯, G, A, B, C, which adds the note C, which is the ♭7 (flatted 7th). Notice the use of finger slides in the articulation, which help give the line a horn-like quality.

FIGURE 2 illustrates the first harmony that's in 3rds above the melody notes, diatonic to D Mixolydian. Since the first melody note is A, we skip up to C for our first harmony note. As this initial harmony line progresses, the majority of it is played in 3rds, although other intervals are used, namely major 2nds and perfect 4ths.

FIGURE 3 adds a second harmony line above the original melody, beginning on E, which is a 3rd above C. Akin to the first harmony line, this one is built from a combination of 2nds, 3rds and 4ths.

A great exercise is to try playing these harmonies together as two- or three-note chord shapes on one guitar. Doing this can be technically challenging, but it will give you a "drawing board" for crafting your own original harmony lead lines, which you can then assign to two or more single-note guitar parts.



ALISON HASBACH

***GW* associate editor Andy Aledort's latest album, *Light of Love*, is available now.**

COLUMNS

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/november2023

TOOLS OF THE TRADE, PART 7

The Tommy Bolin 1960 Gibson Les Paul Standard

THIS MONTH, I'D like to talk about the utterly unique Tommy Bolin 1960 Gibson Les Paul. It took me a decade to find this guitar, which makes it the object of my greatest "guitar safari" of all time!

The iconic Tommy Bolin, one of rock's greatest guitarists and known for his work with the band Zephyr, the James Gang, Deep Purple, Billy Cobham and as a solo artist and performer with other artists, used this guitar in just about every one of these musical situations throughout his career. The guitar did not belong to Tommy; it was owned by his guitar tech, David Brown, who bought it in 1966 for $150. David lent Tommy the instrument to use all the way back in the Zephyr days, after Tommy's own goldtop Les Paul had been stolen.

Tommy sadly died of a drug overdose in 1976, and the guitar ended up in Moab, Utah, as David went back to his hometown after Tommy's passing. Because Tommy was primarily a Stratocaster player, he and David had found a Bigsby tremolo unit from a Fender Telecaster and they jammed it onto this Les Paul, necessitating a ground wire that runs from the bridge pin to underneath the neck volume knob.

One of the most distinctive things about this guitar is the pickguard, which was hand-painted by David in an American flag design. There's a little part of the paint that's scratched off; when Tommy performed with Zephyr on the TV show *American Bandstand*, one of the producers went to Dick Clark and said, "Hey, that long-haired hippy guitarist has the word, 'Fuck' on his guitar!" So they made him scratch it off! When I play this guitar live, I use a replica pickguard made for me by Tony at Pick Guardian, because I would never want to damage the paint and the patina on the original guard.

In **FIGURE 1**, I have the guitar set on the bridge pickup, and, like all really good 1960 Les Pauls, the sound is huge — fat but with a ton of high-end bite, with "Bluesbreaker"-like tonal characteristics. It screams! These riffs are in the key of E and based primarily on the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D), with occasional use of the major 3rd, G♯, and the major 2nd, F♯. In **FIGURE 2**, I switch to the neck pickup, and the sound is very warm and absolutely clear as a bell.

FIGURE 3 presents licks played with the toggle switch in the middle position, engaging both pickups. I utilize more of a modal approach here, with lines based on E Dorian (E, F♯, G, A, B, C♯, D). In bars 4 and 5, I use the Bigsby vibrato arm to effect a slight dip on the open low E note, followed by a 12th-fret "touch" harmonic then a natural harmonic at the high E string's 12th fret.

So, it's the one! It's a "tomato soup" 1960 sunburst Les Paul, very flame-y, with a slim-tapered neck. The quest to acquire this instrument resulted in the greatest guitar safari of my life. For any of you treasure hunters out there, there's a rumor that the money I gave David for the guitar, before he passed away, is buried somewhere in the desert near Moab, Utah.

FIG. 1 bridge pickup, freely

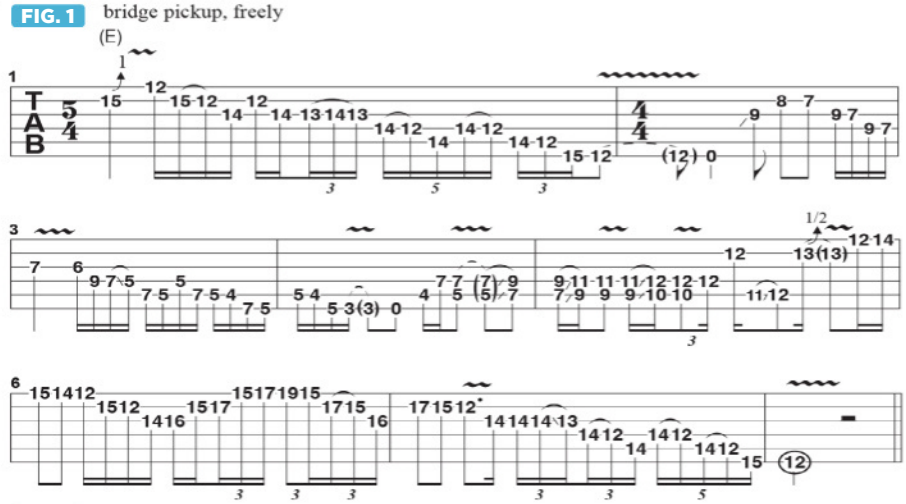


FIG. 2 neck pickup, freely

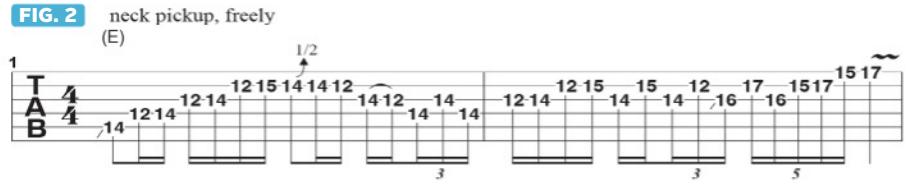
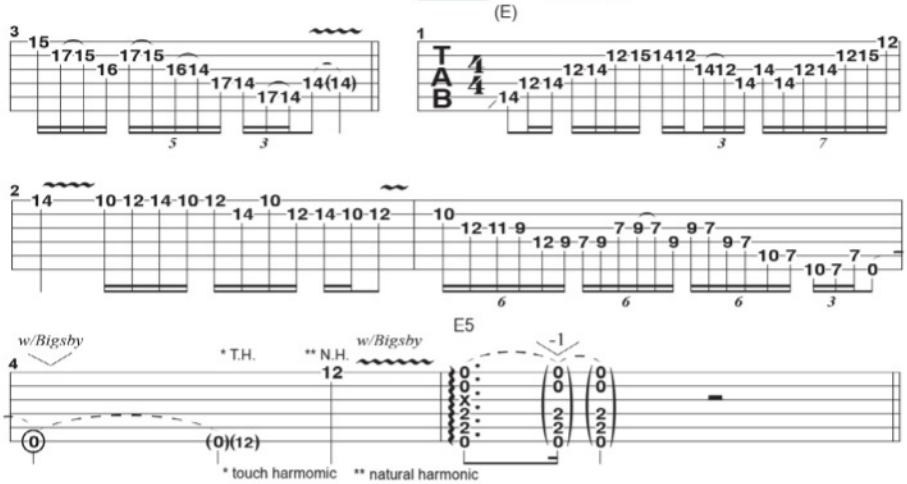


FIG. 3 both pickups



Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and *de facto* ambassador of the blues.

JEFF FASANO

COLUMNS

MELODIC MUSE

by Andy Timmons

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/november2023

MELODY WITHIN THE CHORDS

How to play "Winterland," part 1

IN THIS AND the next few lessons, we'll be digging into the "theme" music for this column's videos, which is from my song "Winterland," originally recorded with the Andy Timmons Band for our 2016 album, *Theme from a Perfect World*. This track very well might be my favorite piece on the record. It encompasses a good study of melody as well as how to support that melody with other tones, and the song also features what may be my favorite solo that I've ever crafted.

We'll start with the intro. As I often do, I like to address the underlying harmony of a piece before dissecting the individual notes. In **FIGURE 1**, I begin with a simple and common chord progression of F♯m followed by E6. Each chord is strummed and held for four beats and sounded by deliberately raking the pick in a downward motion across the strings, achieving a quick arpeggiation effect. Also, I add some subtle whammy bar vibrato to each chord. For both chords, I mute the A string, so the only strings heard are the 6th, 4th, 3rd and 2nd.

When playing the E6 voicing of E, G♯, C♯, if I were to allow the open A string to sound, the result would be an Amaj7 chord, with the notes A, E, G♯ and C♯. This is why I mute the A string and sound the open low E instead.

In bar 3, the chord switches to Dmaj7, and in bar 4 the initial four-chord sequence culminates with Bm7, shown in **FIGURE 2**. The second time through the four-bar sequence, as shown in bars 5-8 of **FIGURE 1**, the last two chords switch places, so the progression is F♯m - E6 - Bm7 - Dmaj7.

I should mention the sound and signal chain that I use for this song. On the recording, I used a Keeley-modded Boss Blues Driver pedal, but here I'm using a modern iteration of that called the Keeley Super AT Mod. This is basically a gain pedal, but when played with my guitar's neck pickup volume set very low, the tone cleans up a great deal. Also, I have a "treble bleed" resistor on the guitar's master volume, which preserves the top end in the sound regardless of where the volume knob is set. And I have the Keeley Halo dual echo engaged, as well.

The highest note for each of these chords is C♯, on the B string's 2nd fret, and this note serves as the target melody throughout, as shown in **FIGURE 3**. The opening four-bar phrase is reiterated in **FIGURE 4**. When I hammer-on from C♯ to D in bar 4, that's where the bass note switches to B, so the D note then functions as the minor 3rd of an implied Bm7 chord. All the notes sounded on the B string are picked with an upstroke, to accentuate the sharp high-end harmonic content of the string.

In bars 5-8, I switch to the single-note line shown in **FIGURE 5**, which is built from a series of half-step and whole-step bends combined with a legato finger slide. The introduction of the G♯ note alludes to an F♯m9 sound, as shown in **FIGURE 6**.

Another key element in the way I articulate this melody is the use of a fingerpicked upstroke on the G string, as shown in **FIGURE 7**. Akin to using an upstroke with the pick, fingerpicking in this way will provide the note with greater emphasis.

FIG. 1 ♩ = ca. 130 F♯m (subtle vib. w/bar) E6 (Dmaj7) (Bm) (F♯m) (E6) (Bm7) (Dmaj7)

FIG. 2 F♯m E6 Dmaj7 Bm

FIG. 3 F♯m E6 Dmaj7

FIG. 4 F♯m E6 (Dmaj7) (Bm) (Dmaj7) (Bm) w/bar

FIG. 5 (F♯m) (E6) w/bar

FIG. 6 (F♯m) F♯m(add9)

FIG. 7 (F♯m) (E6) * fingerpick

Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. His latest album, *Electric Truth*, is out now.

SIMONE CECHETTI

COLUMNS

LIVE FROM FLAT V

by Josh Smith

For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/november2023

THEM CHANGES

More on utilizing ii - V - I substitutions for soloing

THIS MONTH, LET'S continue to investigate ways in which to incorporate ii - V - I (two - five - one) turnarounds into one's improvised solos. In the previous column, we went over the substitute ii - V - I chord forms and arpeggios themselves. Now I'll demonstrate how to use these ideas within a melody.

Let's begin by looking at how to use ii - V - I harmony to get from the I (one) chord to the IV (four) chord in the key of A. The first bar of **FIGURE 1** illustrates the move from the I chord, A, to the IV, D. In bar 2, I play Em7, with slight embellishment added on the B string, to A7 and A7sus4, which deliver us to the IV chord, D7, in bar 3.

As D7 is now our "temporary tonic," or "destination," I'm thinking of Em7 as the ii chord (two minor) of D7, and A7 as the V of D7. (In music theory, lowercase Roman numerals are used to indicate minor chords.) In this way, it's the same as a ii - V - I in the key of D: Em7 - A7 - D7. In this application, the ii - V - I in D is a chordal substitution that sets up the change to D7.

In **FIGURE 2**, I take this same idea and play it within a moderate "shuffle" grid, starting on two quarter-note A7 chords followed by a double hammer-on into Em7, back to A7 and then to the IV chord, D7.

If I were playing over this type of blues shuffle in A and wanted to get the sound of the ii - V - I in there, I'd play something like what's demonstrated in **FIGURE 3**. In bar 1, I play a line using the notes C♯, E, F♯ and A, which outline an A6 chord. The last note of bar 1 is D, which anticipates the change to Em7 with the ♭7 (flatted 7th) of Em7, which is then followed in bar 2 by the other notes of an Em7 chord — B, G and E.

On the return to A7 across beats 3 and 4 of bar 2, I play the notes of an A major triad, A, C♯ and E (with F, the raised 5th, thrown in for color). I end the bar by moving down chromatically, from E to E♭ to D, on beat 1 of bar 3 as we arrive at the IV chord, D7.

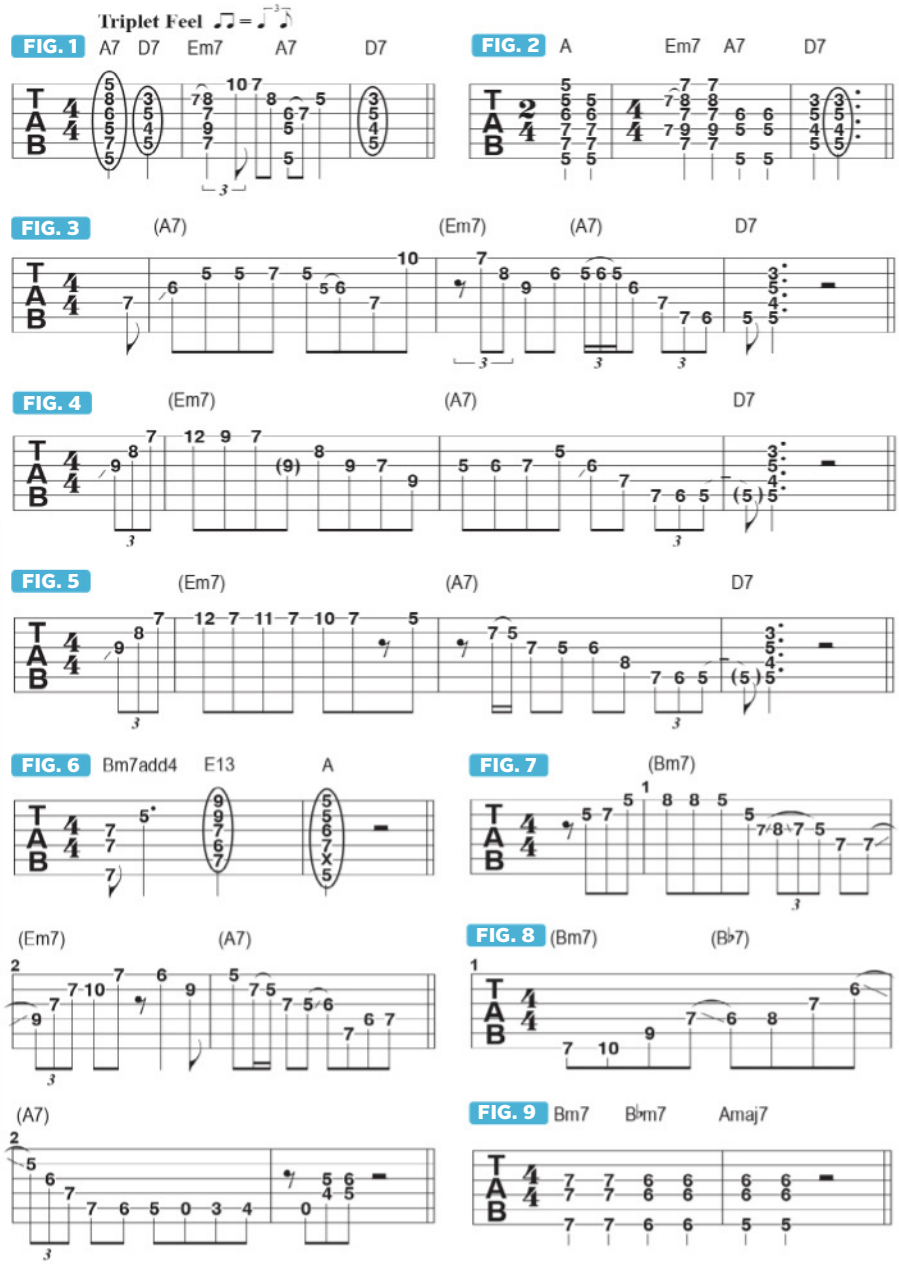
FIGURE 4 offers another way to achieve the same effect, as the line begins with an eighth-note triplet Em arpeggio (E, G, B) into a full bar of Em7, which resolves to A7 in bar 2 and then D7 in bar 3.

FIGURE 5 offers a similar approach but with the inclusion of chromatic notes played on the high E string, moving down from E to E♭ to D, with each note alternating with a lower B note.

Now, in order to head back to the I chord, A7, we'll use a ii - V - I in A, which translates to Bm7 - E7 - A. In **FIGURE 6**, I play this as Bm7sus4 - E13 - A.

FIGURE 7 is a lick inspired by the great Danny Gatton that offers a single-note line that reflects this ii - V - I substitution.

FIGURE 8 offers yet another twist, as I begin with a Bm7 arpeggio and then substitute a B♭7 arpeggio for E7. This move is known as a *tritone substitution*, as B♭ is three whole steps, or a tritone, above or below E. This is shown in chordal form in **FIGURE 9**.



Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-around tone wizard. His new album, 2022's *Bird of Passage*, is out now.

OLLY CURTIS/FUTURE

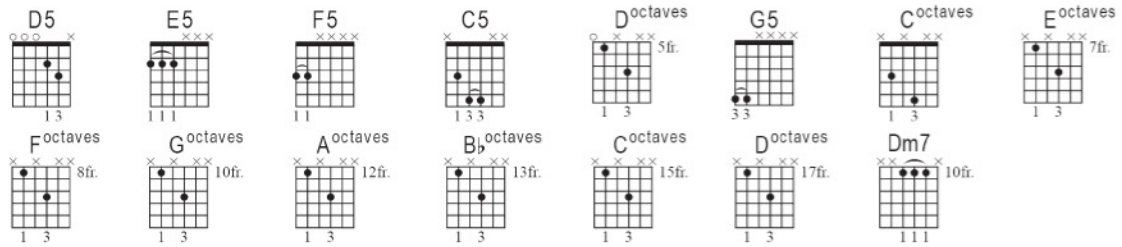
"KILLING IN THE NAME"

Rage Against the Machine

As heard on **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE**

Words and Music by TOM MORELLO, TIMOTHY COMMERFORD, ZACK M DE LA ROCHA *and* BRAD WILK • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are in drop-D tuning (low to high: D, A, D, G, B, E).
Bass tuning (low to high: D, A, D, G).



A **Intro** (0:00) (0:09)

Moderate Rock ♩ = 110

D5 N.C.

Gtrs. 1 and 2 (elec. w/dist.)

(play 4 times)

(fade in w/vol. knob)

Bass

sim.

(0:17)

P.M. *(repeat previous bar)* P.M.

Bass Fill 1 (2:31)

Fill 1 (2:31)

N.C.

Gtrs. 1 and 2

"KILLING IN THE NAME"
WORDS AND MUSIC BY TOM MORELLO, TIMOTHY COMMERFORD, ZACK M DE LA ROCHA AND BRAD WILK.
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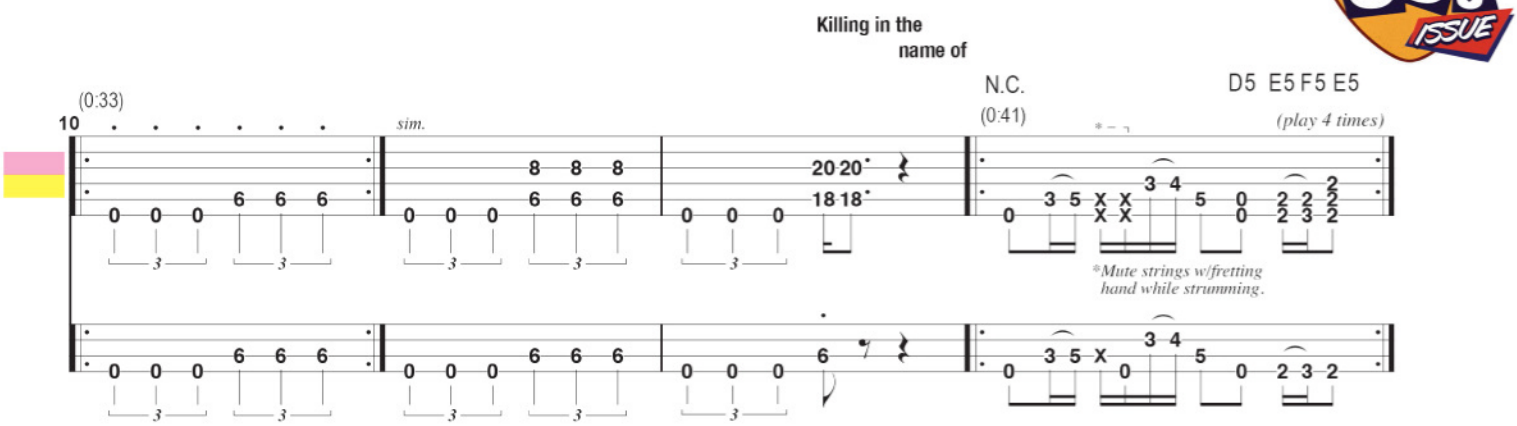
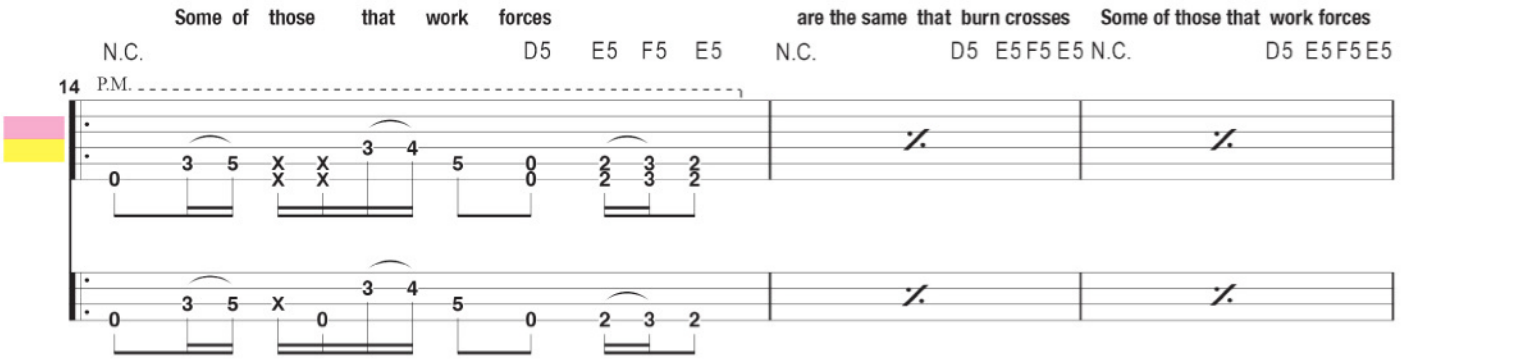
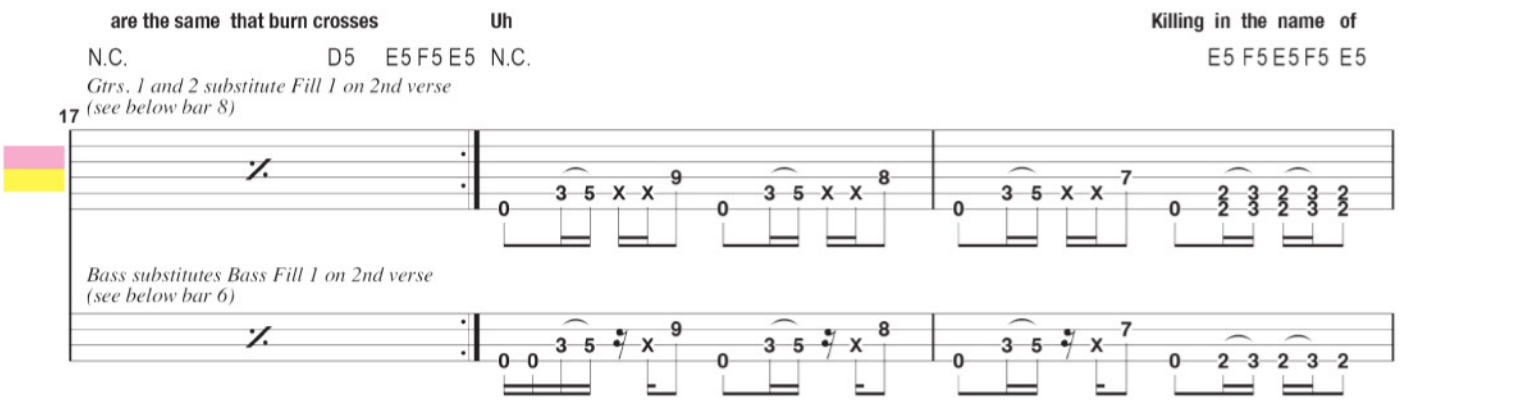


B **Verses** (0:53, 2:22)

Slower ♩ = 81

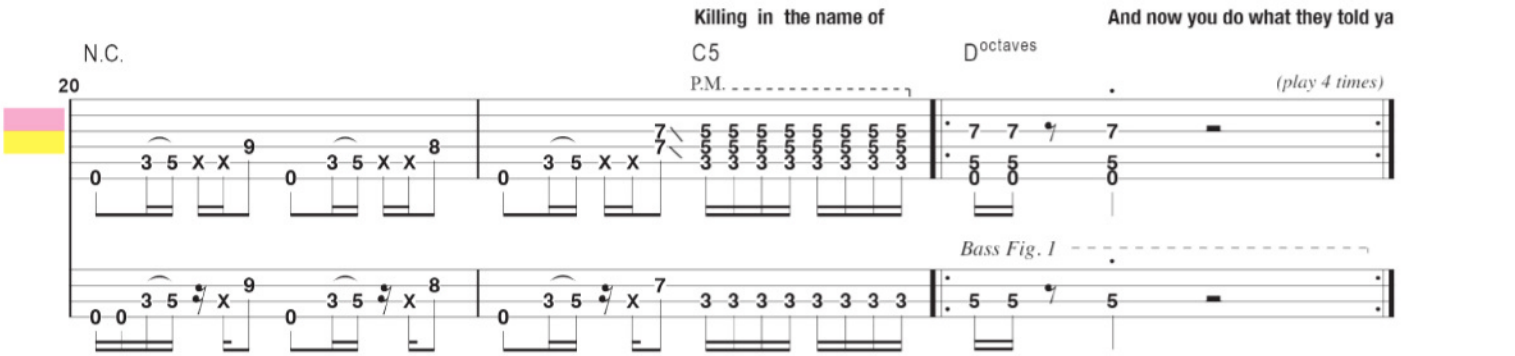


C **Pre-chorus** (1:17, 2:25)



D **Chorus** (1:29, 2:57)

♩ = 90 **Swing 16ths Feel**



Grad. increase tempo to ♩ = 94
(1:39, 3:08)

And now you do what they told ya (2nd time only) (And now you're under control) And now you do what they told ya (And now you're

D
Gtrs. 1 and 2

23

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 five times (see bar 22)

under control) And now you do what they told ya (And now you're under control) And now you do what they told ya (And now you're under control) And now you do what they told ya (And now you're

Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fill 2 first time (see below)
Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fill 3 second time (see below)

25

under control) And now you do what they told ya (And now you're under control) And now you do what they told ya (And now you're under control) And now you do what they told ya

Gtrs. 1 and 2

28 (trem. strum)

Bass (trem. pick)

E (2:00, 3:29)
♩ = 88

(2nd time on 1st Chorus)
Go back to **B** *(bar 14)*
2nd time on 2nd Chorus,
proceed to **F** *(bar 35)*

Those who died are justified for wearing the badge and your clothes in while You justify those that died for wearing the badge and your clothes in white
(2nd time on 2nd chorus) (Come on)

D octaves F5 G5 C octaves D octaves F5 G5 C octaves D octaves F5 G5 C octaves D octaves F5 G5 C octaves

Rhy. Fig. 1
end Rhy. Fig. 1

31

Bass Fig. 2

Rhy. Fill 2 (1:50)
Gtr. 3

**Allen wrench dragged up and down strings w/pick hand.*

Rhy. Fill 3 (3:18)
Gtr. 3
w/slide*

**Allen wrench used as a slide.*

F Guitar Solo (3:50)

Gtr. 1 (w/whammy pedal*)

Uh

35

*Whammy pedal set to pitch-shift note two octaves higher.

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 eight times (see bar 31)

Yeah

37

39

G (4:12)

Fuck you I won't do what you tell me | Fuck you I won't do what you tell me | Fuck you I won't do what you tell me | Fuck you I won't do what you tell me

D octaves | E octaves | F octaves | G octaves

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fill 4 seven times simile (see below bar 52)

Gtr. 1

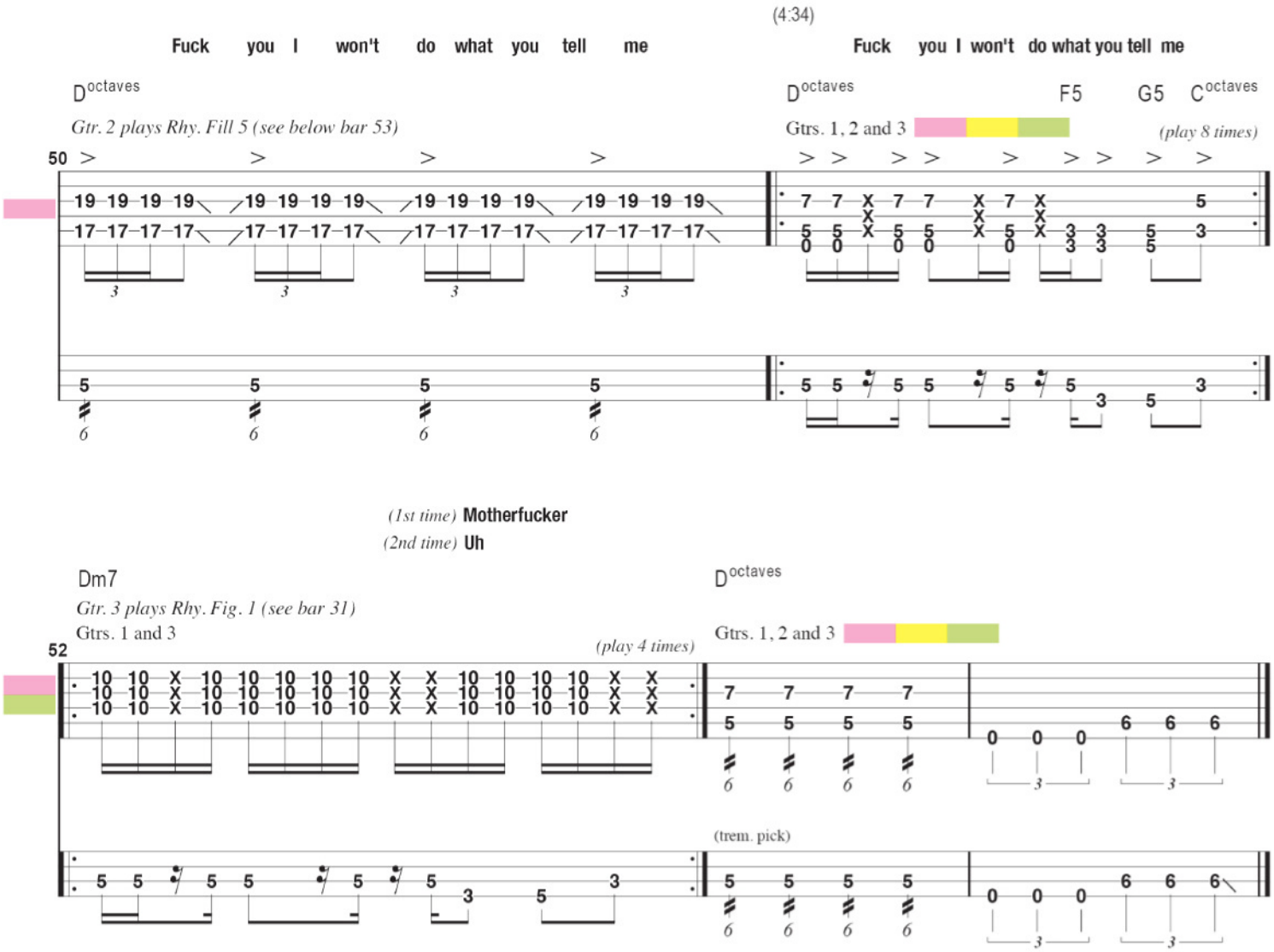
43 (trem. strum)

Bass (trem. pick)

Fuck you I won't do what you tell me | Fuck you I won't do what you tell me | Fuck you I won't do what you tell me

A octaves | B♭ octaves | C octaves

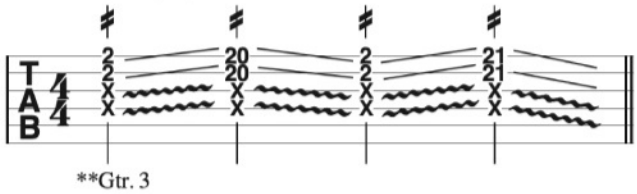
47



Rhy. Fill 4 (4:12)

Freely

*Gtr. 2 (w/whammy pedal)
(trem. pick)

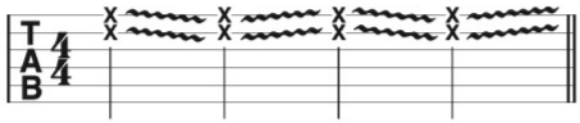


**Gtr. 2 strums while sliding fret-hand finger up and down 1st and 2nd strings.*
*** Gtr. 3 plays random pick scrapes.*

Rhy. Fill 5 (4:31)

Freely

Gtrs. 2 and 3
(pick scrapes)



Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS **By Jimmy Brown**

"KILLING IN THE NAME"
Rage Against the Machine

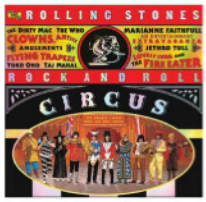
THIS TIMELESS ANTHEM of social angst and enormously popular breakout song from RATM's 1992 debut album elevated innovative axman Tom Morello to modern guitar god status, but not for the usual reason. Eschewing the shred credo that was *de rigueur* for rock players at the time, Morello took a different but equally compelling approach to creating musical drama, focusing instead on crafting an arrangement that features the use of drop-D tuning and the DigiTech Whammy pedal to perform powerful, in-the-pocket ensemble riffs and a uniquely angular, otherworldly solo that sonically darts to the stratosphere like an alien spaceship.

With his Fender Telecaster plugged into his Marshall JCM800, Morello exercised judicious restraint in his moderate application of gain and non-use of reverb or delay, dialing in a dry, punchy single-coil crunch tone that effectively serves the song's single-note riffs, stacked power chords and strummed octaves. When playing the opening riff in bar 6, be sure to continually palm mute the open low D string, even when picking the melody notes that follow. The goal is tightness and noise suppression, which means the notes on the 6th string must not be allowed to ring beyond their brief durations.

The use of both palm and fret-hand muting are key to performing the song's various riffs authentically. For example, when playing the pounding staccato quarter-note triplets in bars 10-12, you'll want to dampen the strings with both hands between each note. And the strummed octaves and pitchless "chucka" strums (indicated by stacks of X's) in sections D and E require fret-hand muting with multiple fingers, to avoid sounding unintentional notes or natural harmonics.

When playing the solo (section F), if you don't have a Whammy pedal, you can sort of emulate the two-octave portamentos Morello attained with it as follows: quickly slide up to the note on each downbeat with your pinkie, from several frets below; then, using fretted octave shapes (with the octave below), alternate between tremolo picking the tabbed note on each downbeat and the note one octave lower on the eighth-note upbeat.

"YER BLUES" (LIVE, 1968)
The Dirty Mac



FEATURING A BRIEF "dream team" collaboration of rock 'n' roll royalty, this wonderfully inspired and remarkably well-recorded live performance of John Lennon's Beatles song "Yer Blues" showcases the great songwriter's multiple talents, including his powerfully soulful and expressive singing and tasteful guitar playing, alongside the distinctive, highly polished lead work of the already legendary Eric Clapton, with the Rolling Stones' Keith Richards providing a rare and noteworthy demonstration of his solid blues-rock bass playing skills.

Tuning down a half step and playing very similar guitars — Lennon donning his trusty Epiphone Casino and Clapton his Gibson ES-335 — and employing stock chord shapes in the key of E and tried-and-true E minor pentatonic box shapes, the two guitarists play off each other very well, with complimentary rhythm and lead parts that mesh together beautifully without musically stepping on the other player's toes or creating sonic confusion or mush.

Clapton adorns many of his licks with his signature "crooning" finger vibrato, which is a big part of his unique, celebrated lead guitar "voice." Within the first four bars of this performance alone, he demonstrates how he uses three different fret-hand fingers to produce the effect, with equally pleasing results. Being down in 1st position in bar 2, Clapton employs his 2nd finger to shake the E note on the D string's 2nd fret, using a push technique to effect a series of quick, even microbends. Having relocated up to 12th position in bar 4, he then uses his 1st finger to shake the G note on the 3rd string, again using a pushing technique to produce a flurry of shimmering microbends. Shortly after that, in bar 5, Clapton similarly engages his 3rd finger to repeatedly push the E note on the D string's 14th fret slightly sharp. The lesson to be learned here is that Clapton's touch is guided and controlled by his ears, which is the way it should always be when performing a vibrato, string bend or any other technique, whether you're pushing, pulling, hammering-on, pulling-off, picking, tapping or whatever.

"NEED YOU TONIGHT"
INXS

THIS SLICKLY PRODUCED hit song from INXS' 1987 album *Kick* features a funky groove and catchy, tastefully minimalistic clean electric guitar parts, compliments of Kirk Pengilly and brothers Andrew and Tim Farriss, that interweave unobtrusively and provide simple but effective accompaniment to singer Micheal Hutchence's vocal swagger.

The arrangement offers a great study in the musical effectiveness of *dynamics* — contrasts in volume and texture. For example, following a short but loud and huge-sounding chord-driven riff in the song's intro (see *Rhy. Fig. 1* and *Rhy. Fig. 1a*), the first verse gets under way at section B with a simmering, subdued single-note accompaniment in the upper middle register that, together with a sparse, deep, punctuated bass line, implies a C♯5 tonality behind Hutchence's breathy vocals. The part played by Gtr. 3 here, labeled *Riff A*, is a prime example of a stock r&b-style supportive 16th-note background line built from a handful of rearticulated notes, like something written for a horn section but more percussive.

The key to copping the desired feel and groove for this part, as well as the nearly identical *Riff C* (see bars 11-18) is to keep your pick hand moving in an unbroken down-up-down-up oscillation across the string, even though you're not picking continuous 16th notes but rather using a combination of eighth notes, 16th notes and 16th rests. Following this directive, any eighth note should be picked with a downstroke. And the two 16th notes at the end of each of these bars, which are separated by 16th rests, should be caught with upstrokes. Doing so will help ensure a flowing groove and rhythmic "pocket." This same advice applies to the funky three-note chord strums played by Gtr. 1 in bars 25 and 27, for which we've indicated the prescribed pick strokes.

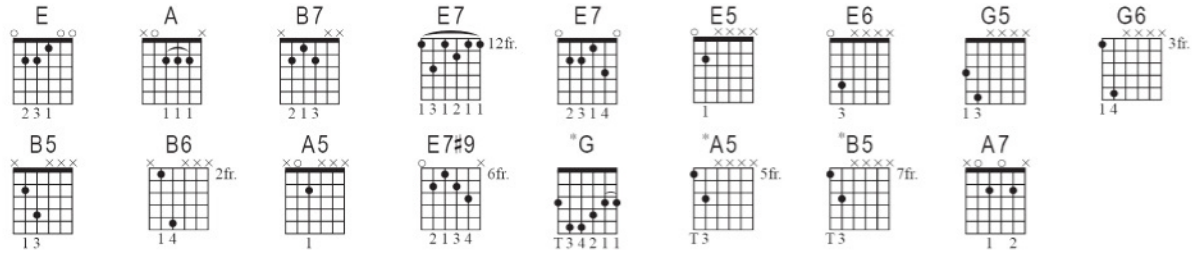
The only other technical tricky spots to watch out for in this chart are the legato chord slides between C♯5 and B5 in bars 24, 29 and 31. When sliding, don't grip the strings any tighter than necessary to fret the notes cleanly, as applying excess finger pressure will only create undue friction.

"YER BLUES" (LIVE, 1968)

The Dirty Mac (John Lennon with Eric Clapton & Keith Richards)

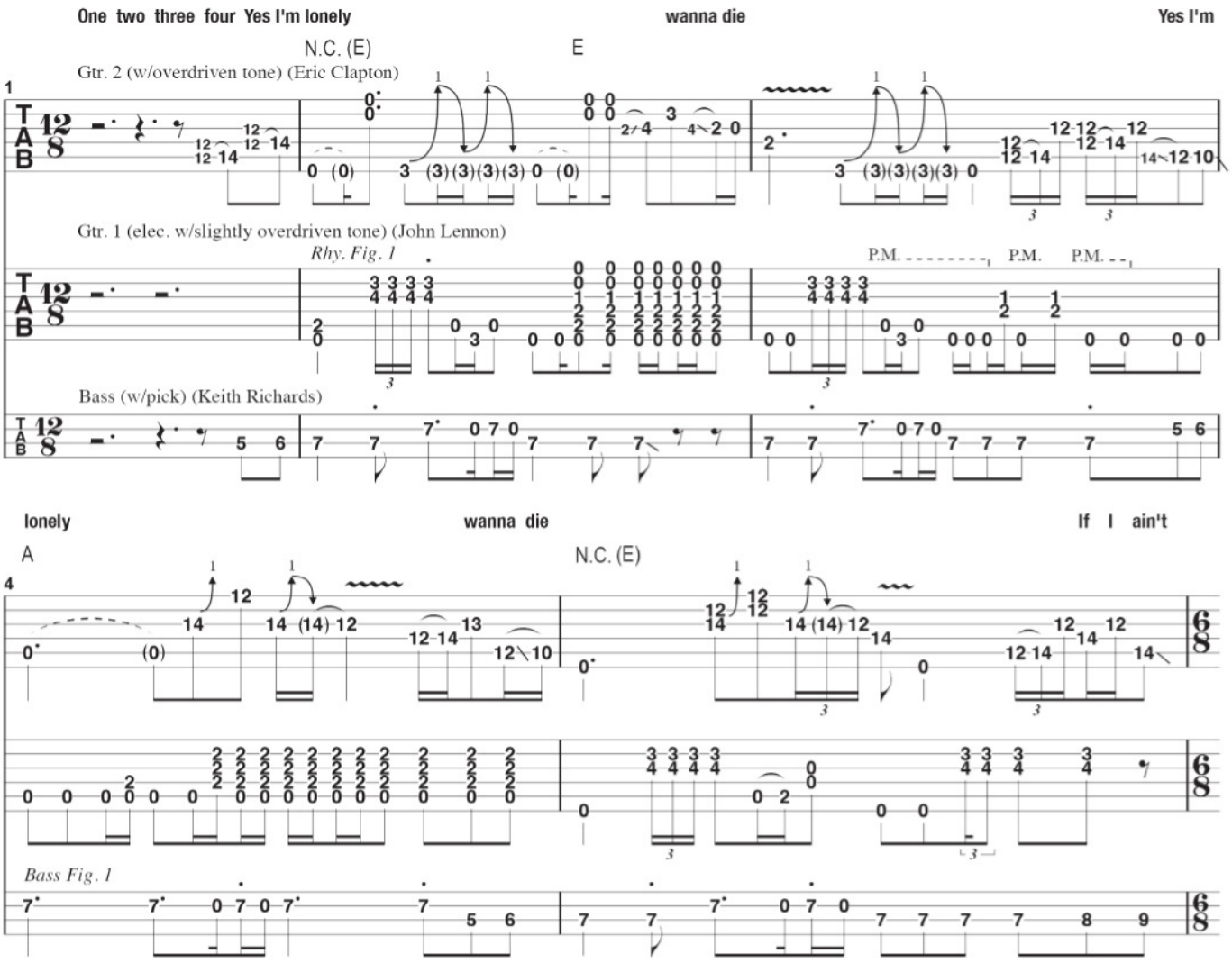
As heard on **THE ROLLING STONES ROCK AND ROLL CIRCUS (LIVE)**
Words and Music by JOHN LENNON *and* PAUL McCARTNEY • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are tuned down one half step (low to high: E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭, B♭, E♭).
Bass tuning (low to high: E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭).
All music sounds in the key of E♭, one half step lower than written.



**Chord fingerings specific to Eric Clapton for bars 49 and 50.*

A **Intro** (0:00)
Moderately ♪ = 158



"YER BLUES"
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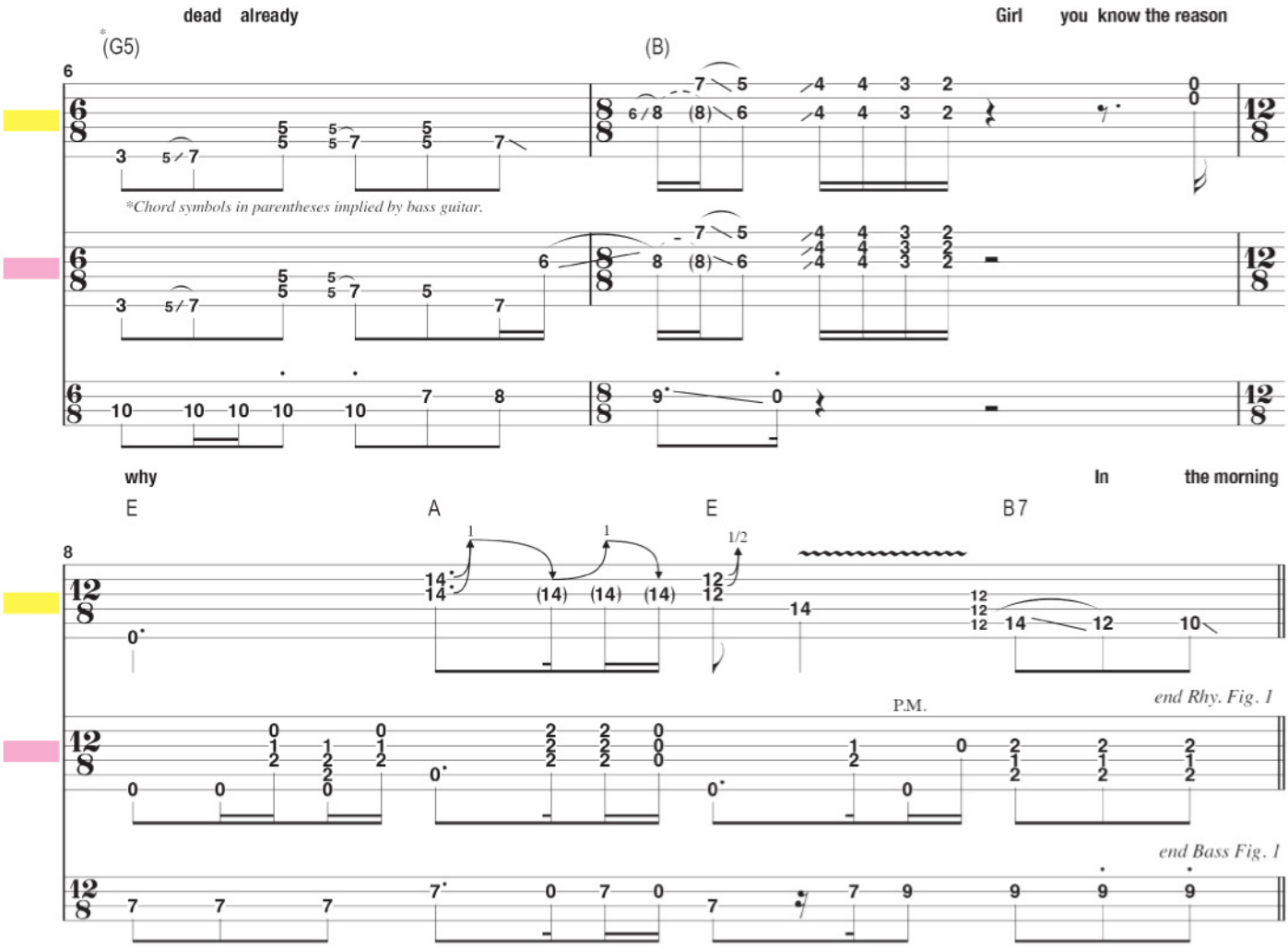
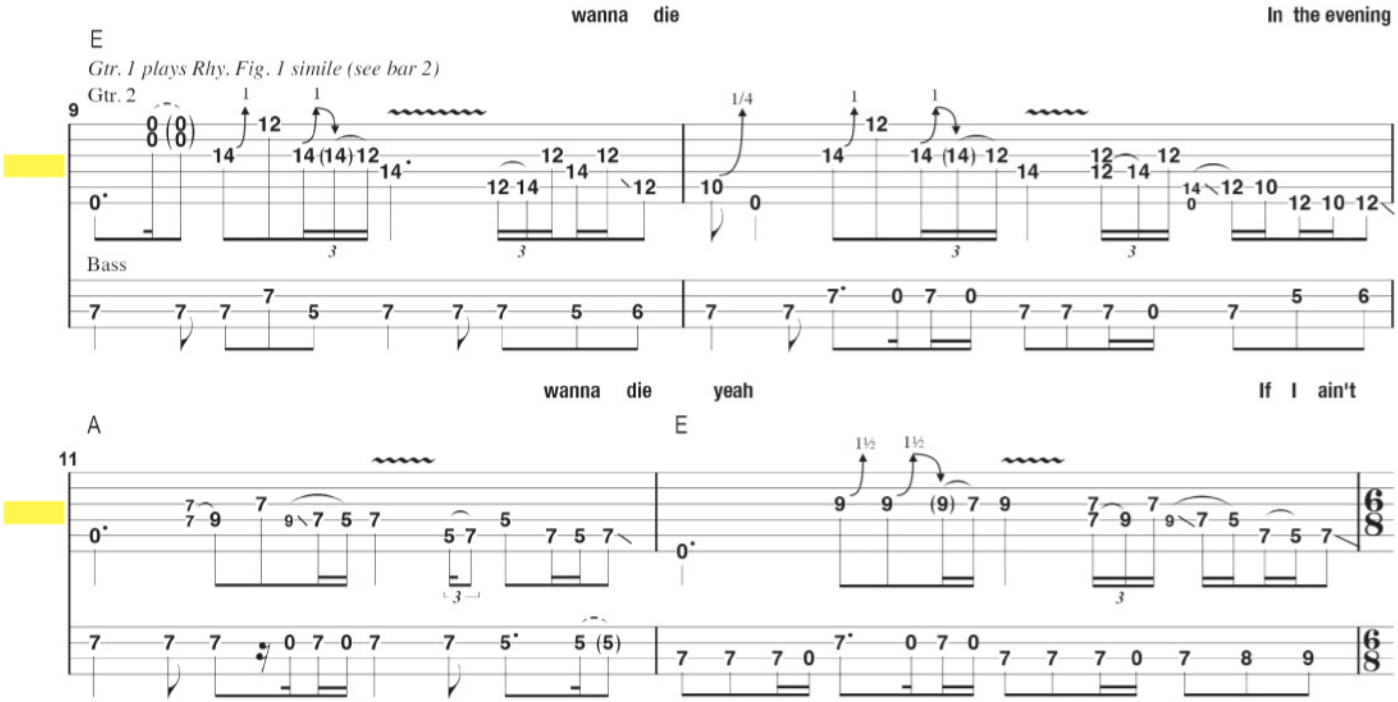
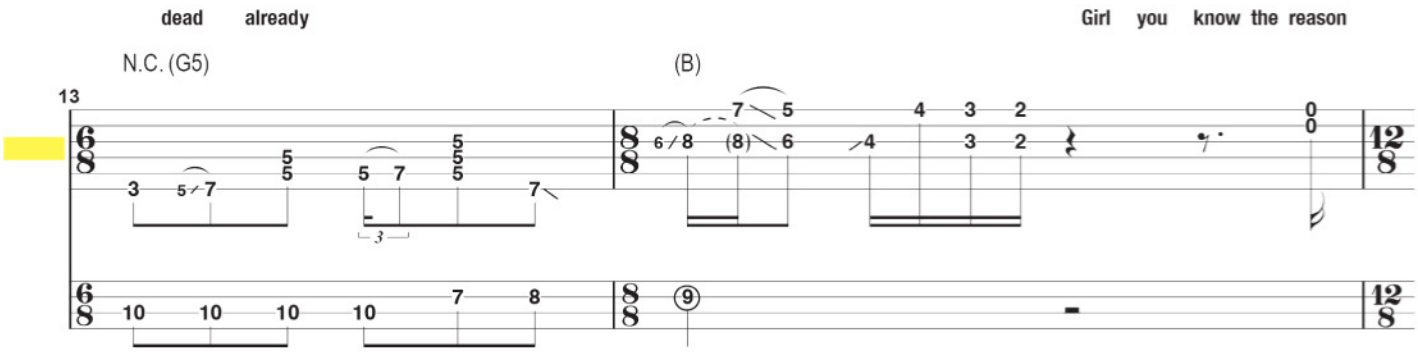
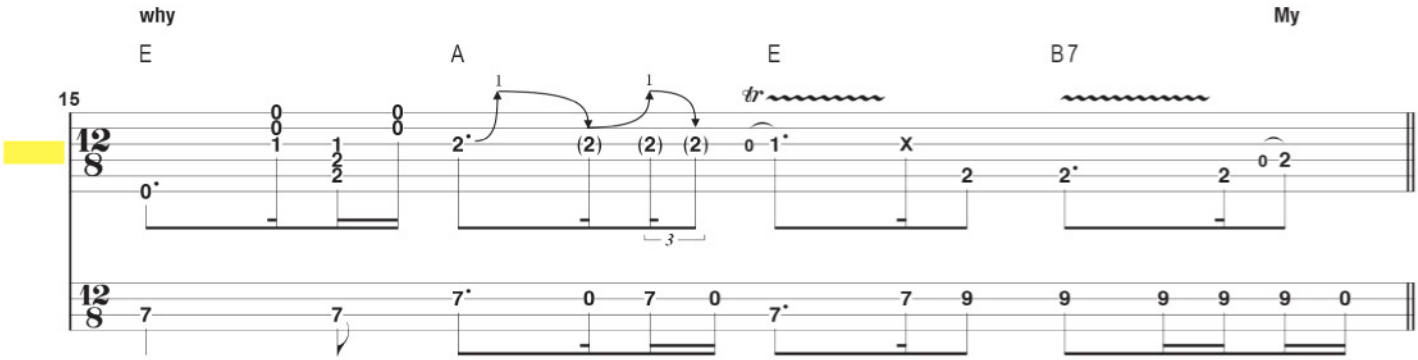


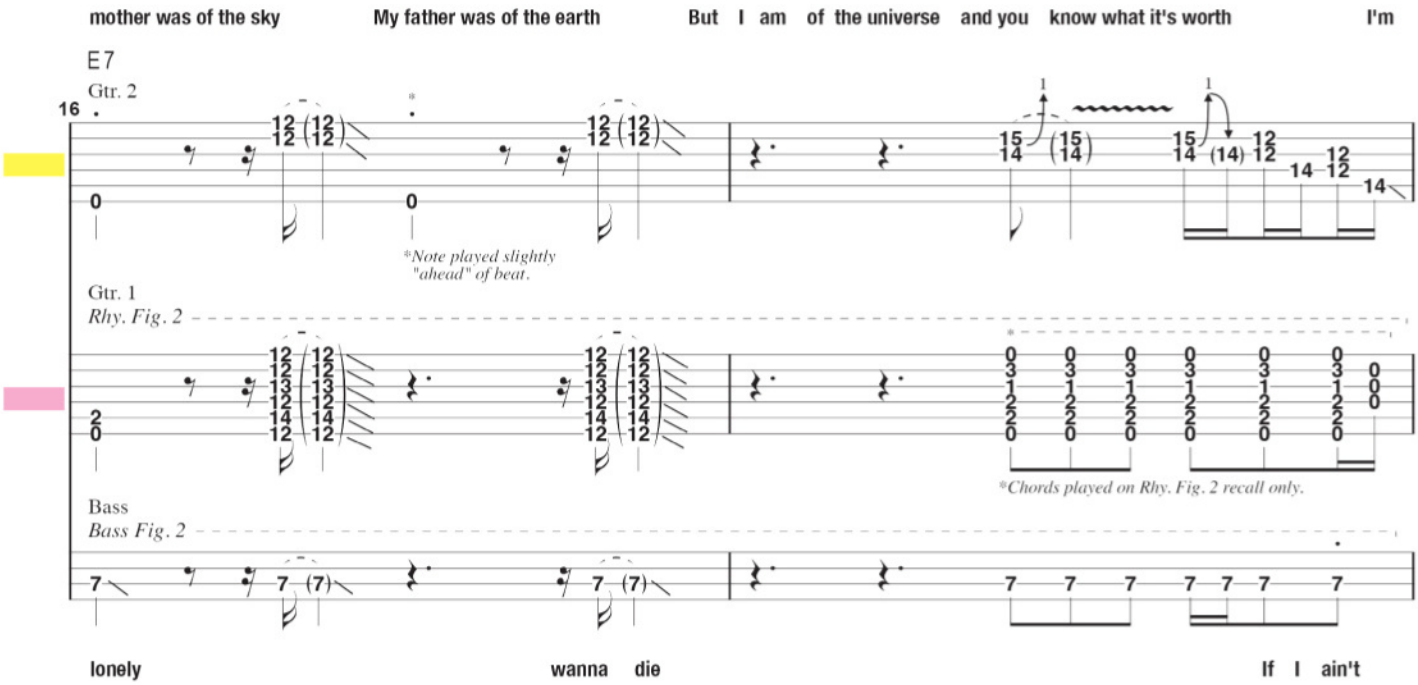
B **2nd Verse** (0:33)

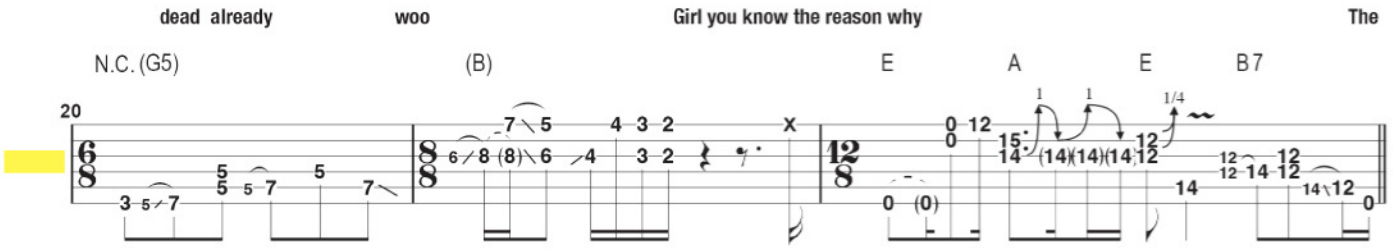




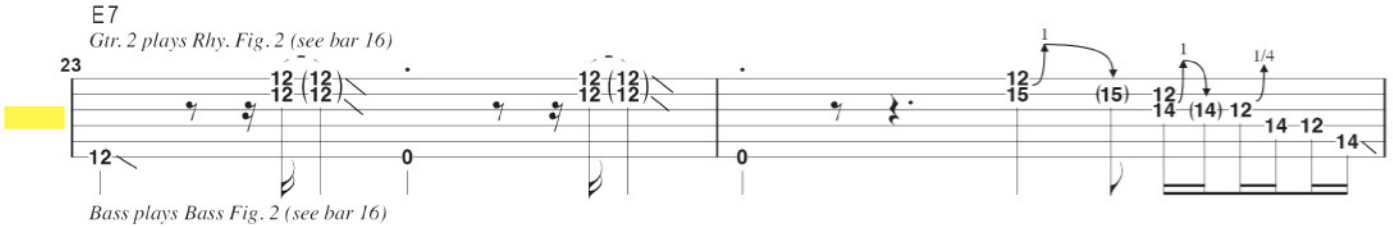


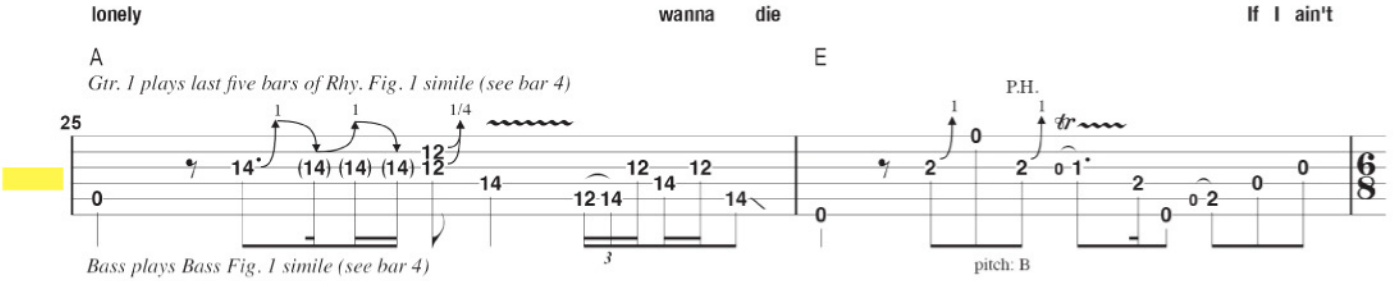
C **1st Chorus** (1:01)

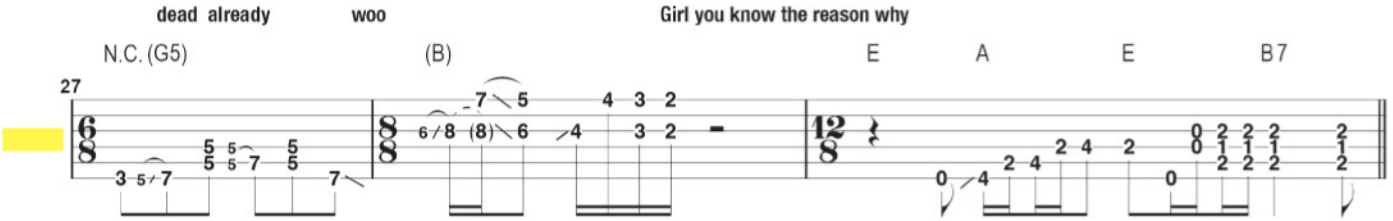




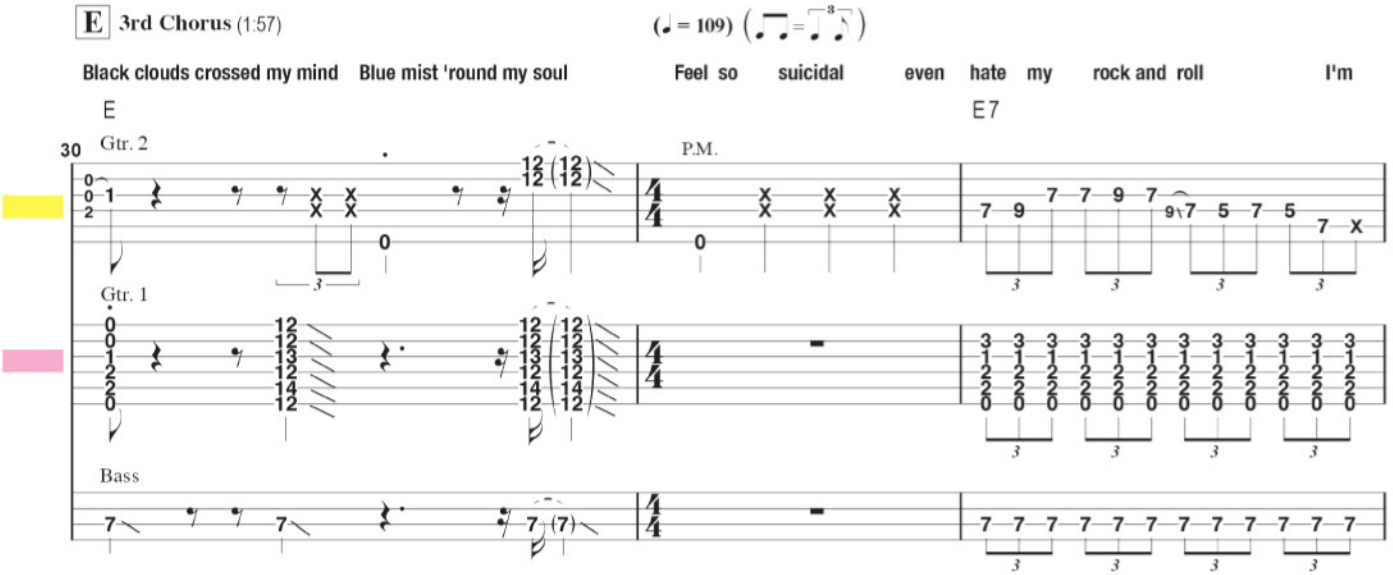
D **2nd Chorus** (1:29)

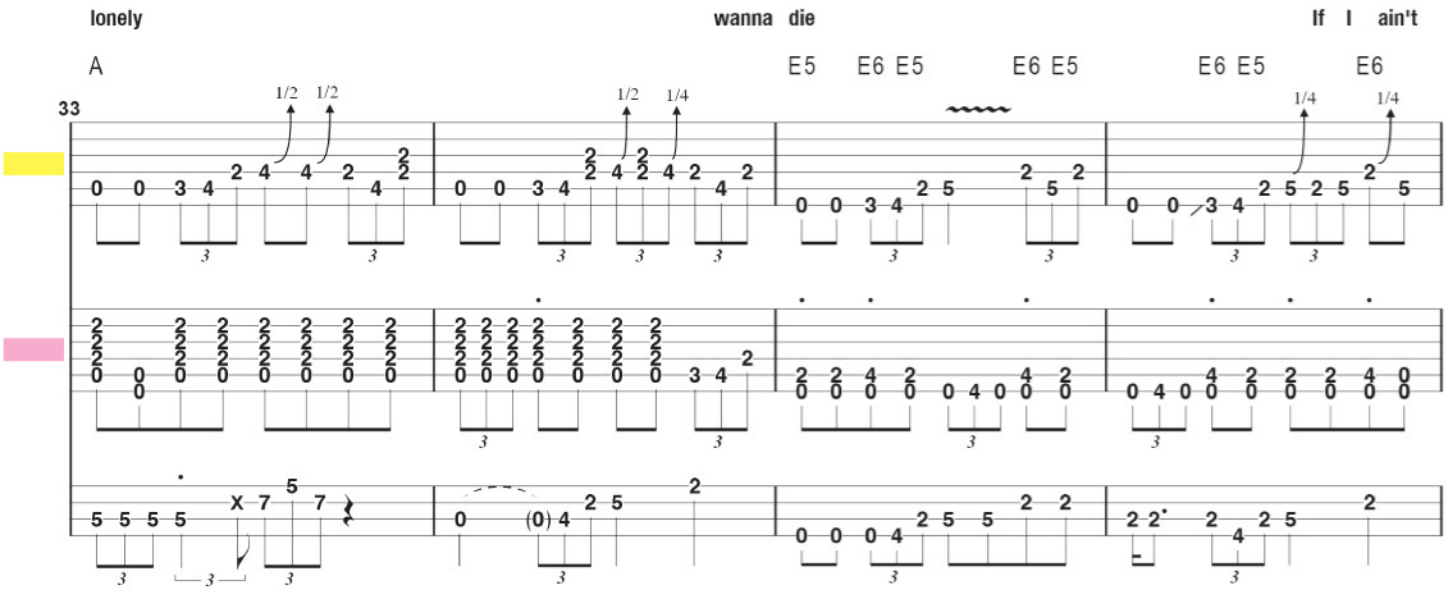


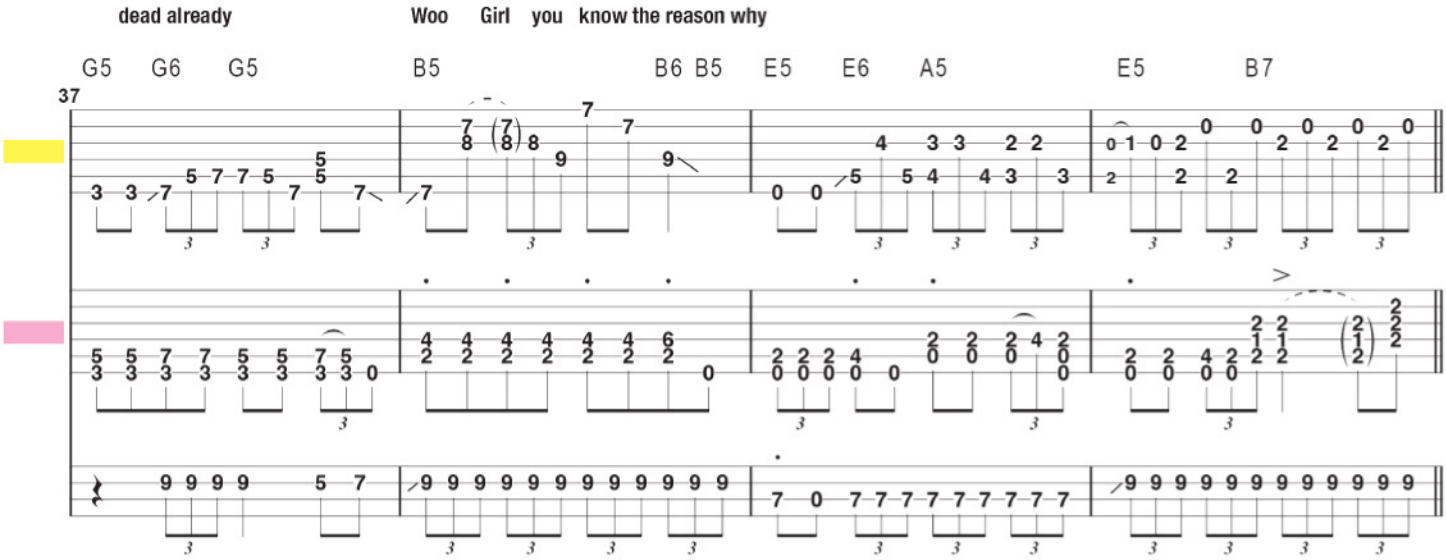




E **3rd Chorus** (1:57)

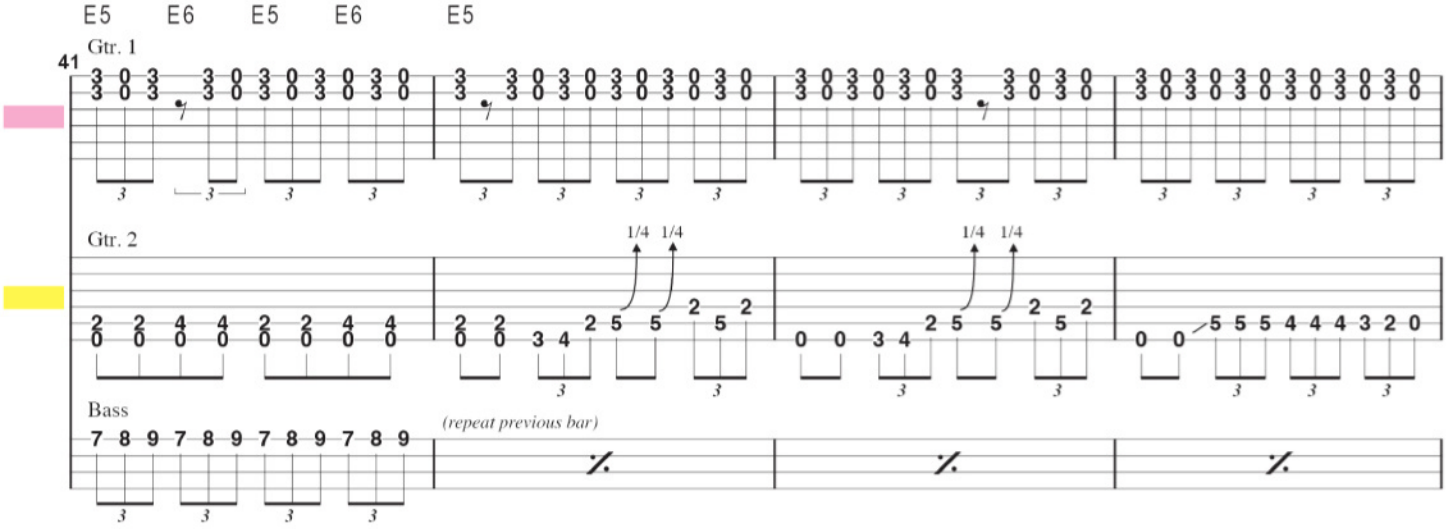


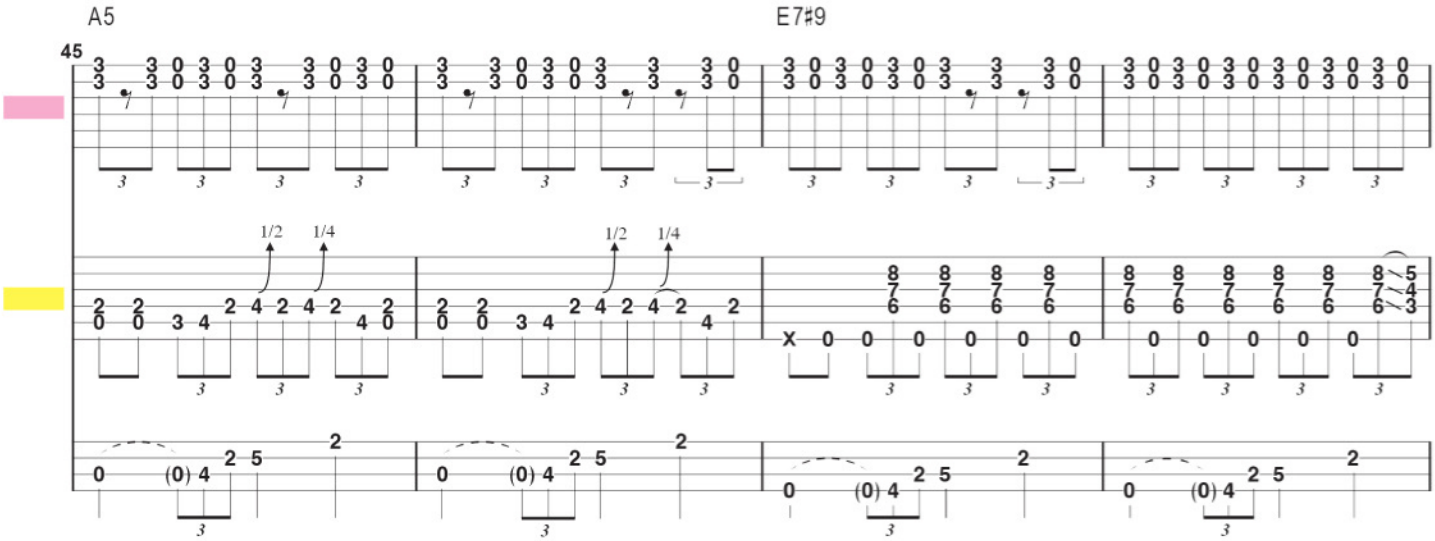


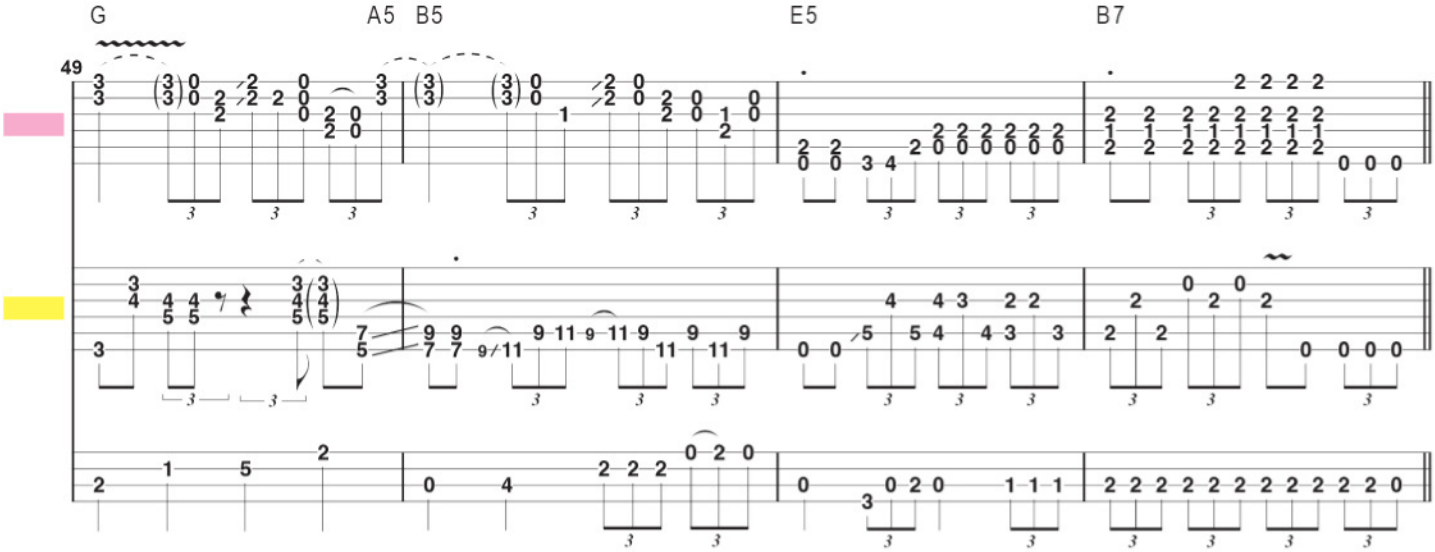


F **1st Guitar Solo (John Lennon)** (2:24)

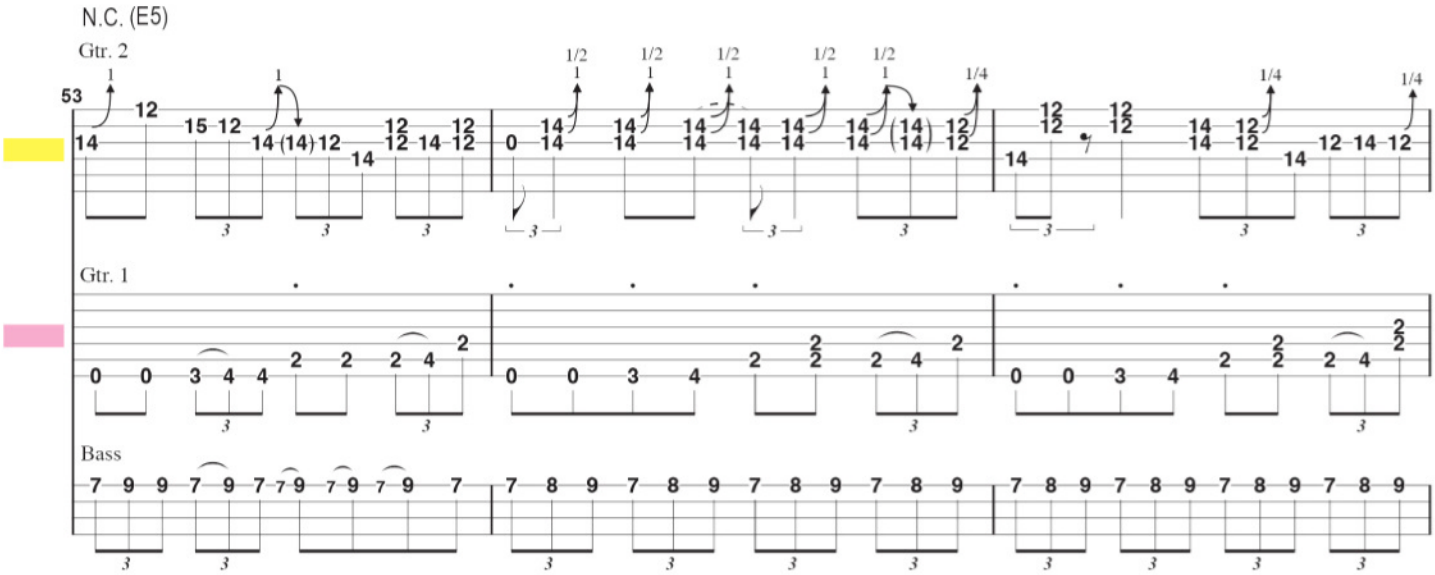
Grad. increase tempo to ♩= **112**

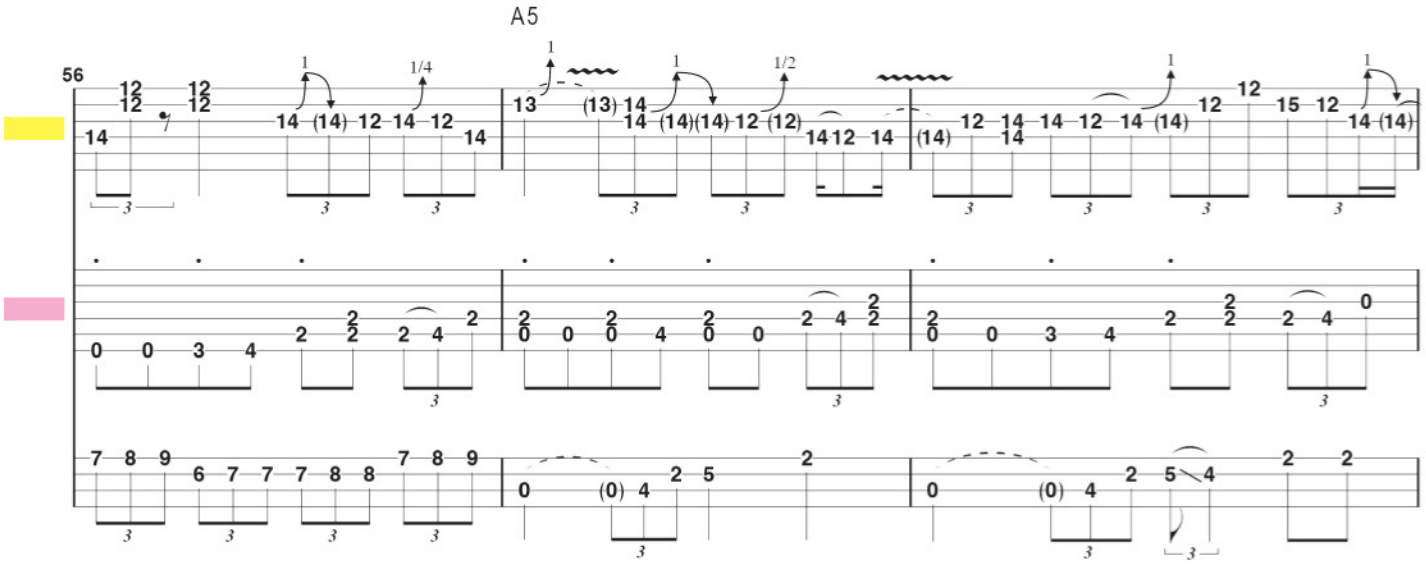


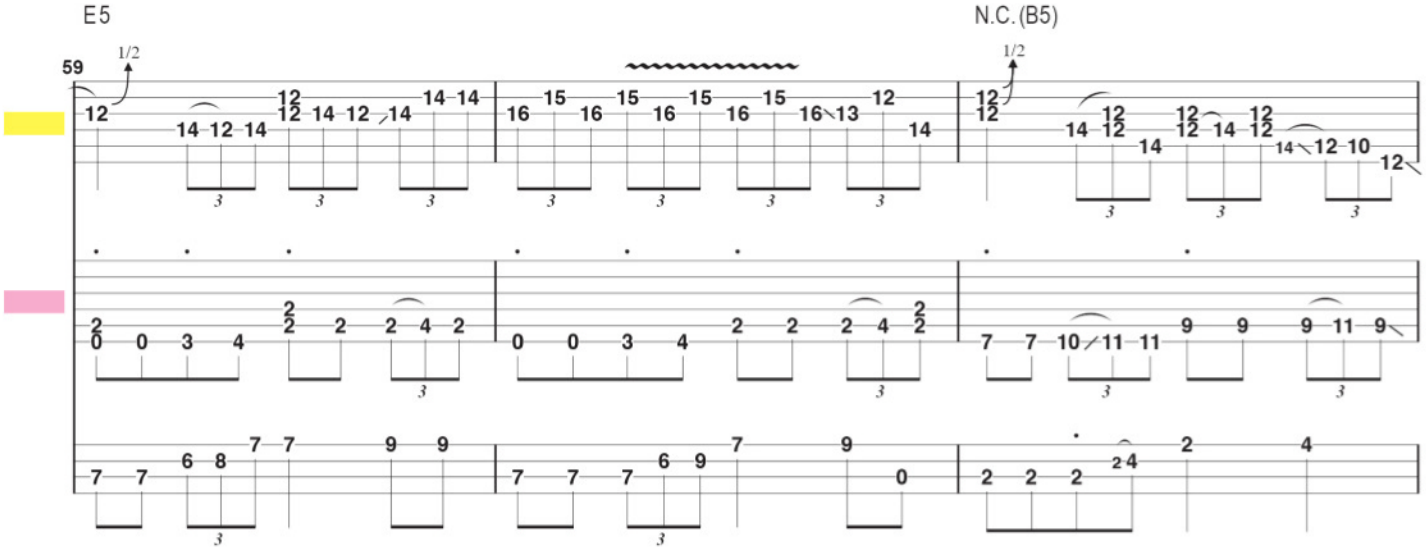


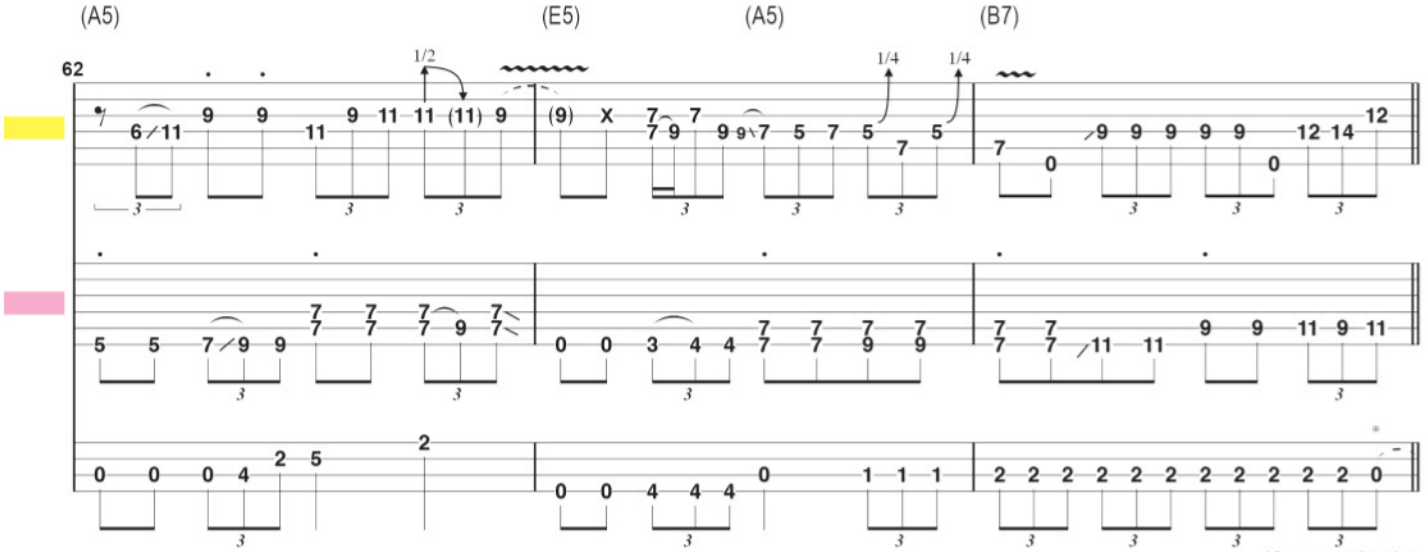


G **2nd Guitar Solo (Eric Clapton)** (2:50)









*Let open string ring into next bar.

H (3:15)

(E5)

65

(A5)

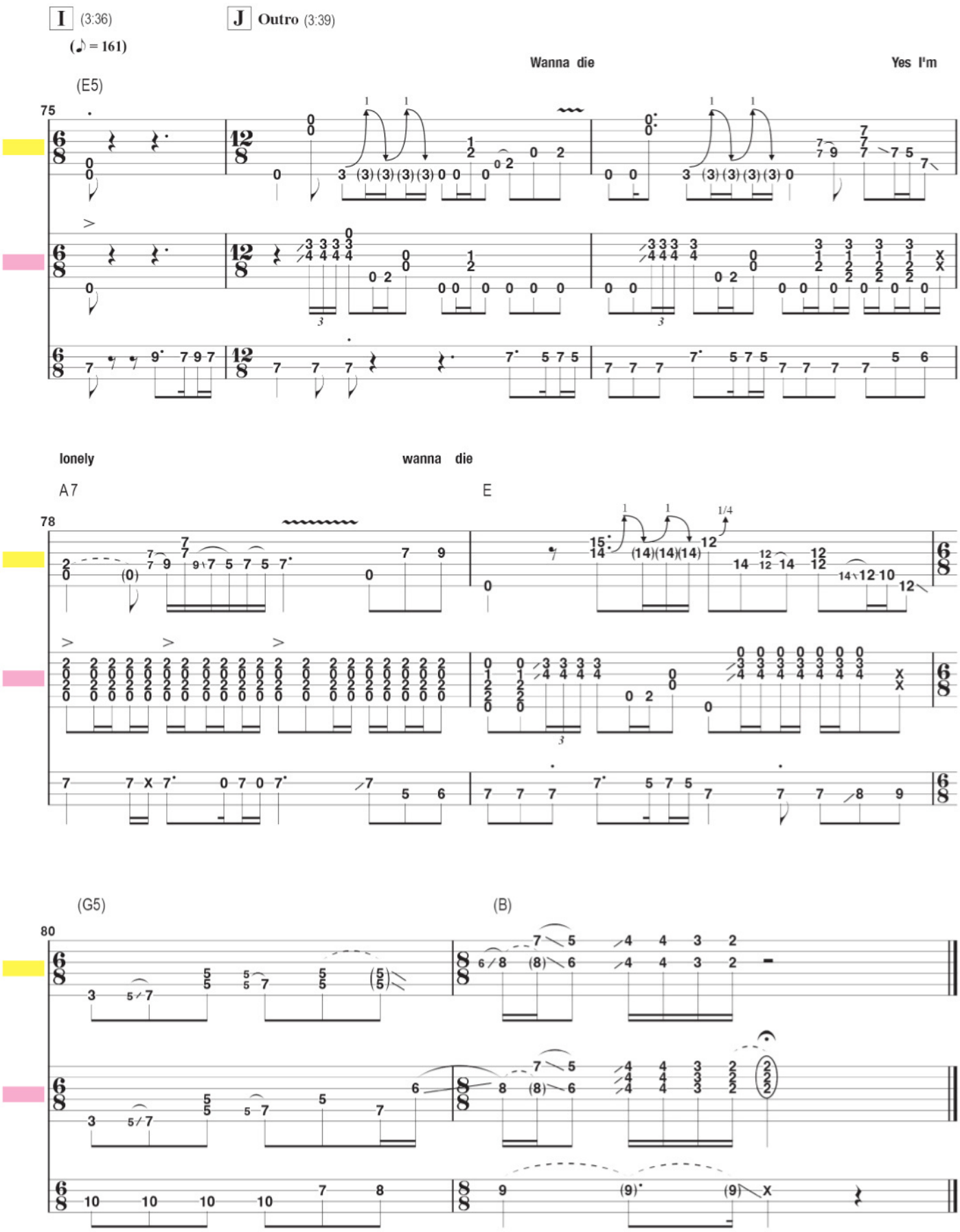
68

*Double-stop bends performed with fret-hand ring finger barré.

(trem. pick)

(E5) (B5) (A5)

71


I (3:36)
(♪ = 161)
J Outro (3:39)
Wanna die
Yes I'm
(E5)
75
lonely
wanna die
A7
E
78
(G5)
(B)
80

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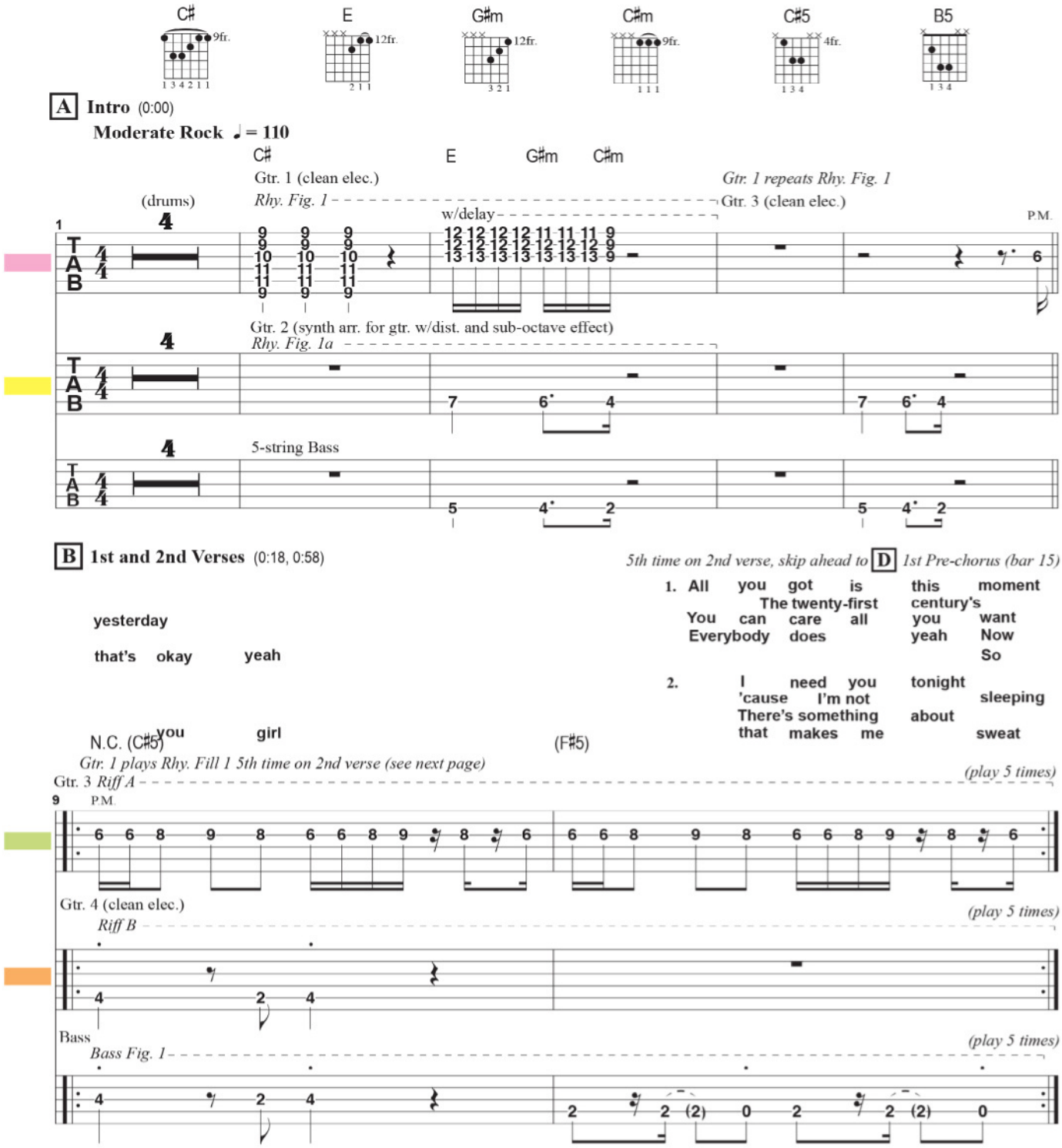
INXS

As heard on **KICK**

Words and Music by ANDREW FARRISS *and* MICHAEL HUTCHENCE • *Transcribed by* JEFF PERRIN

All guitars are tuned down one half step (low to high: E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭, B♭, E♭).
Bass is a 5-string, tuned down one half step (low to high: B♭, E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭).
All music sounds in the key of C, one half step lower than written.



"NEED YOU TONIGHT"
WORDS AND MUSIC BY ANDREW FARRISS AND MICHAEL HUTCHENCE.
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C 1st and 2nd Choruses (0:40, 1:33)

slide over here and give me a moment Your moves are so raw I've got to let you know I've

C♯ E G♯m C♯m C♯ E G♯m C♯m

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 5)

Gtr. 3

Riff C

11 P.M.

Bass

Bass Fig. 2

1st time, go back to B *2nd Verse (bar 9)*

2nd time, skip ahead to E *3rd Verse (bar 21)*

got to let you know You're one of my kind Ow

C♯ E G♯m C♯m C♯ E G♯m C♯m

15

D 1st Pre-chorus (1:20)

How do you feel I'm lonely What do you think Can't think at all

N.C. (C♯5) (F♯5) (C♯5) (F♯5)

Gtr. 3 plays Riff A three times (see bar 9)

Gtr. 1

19

Gtr. 4 (w/dist.)

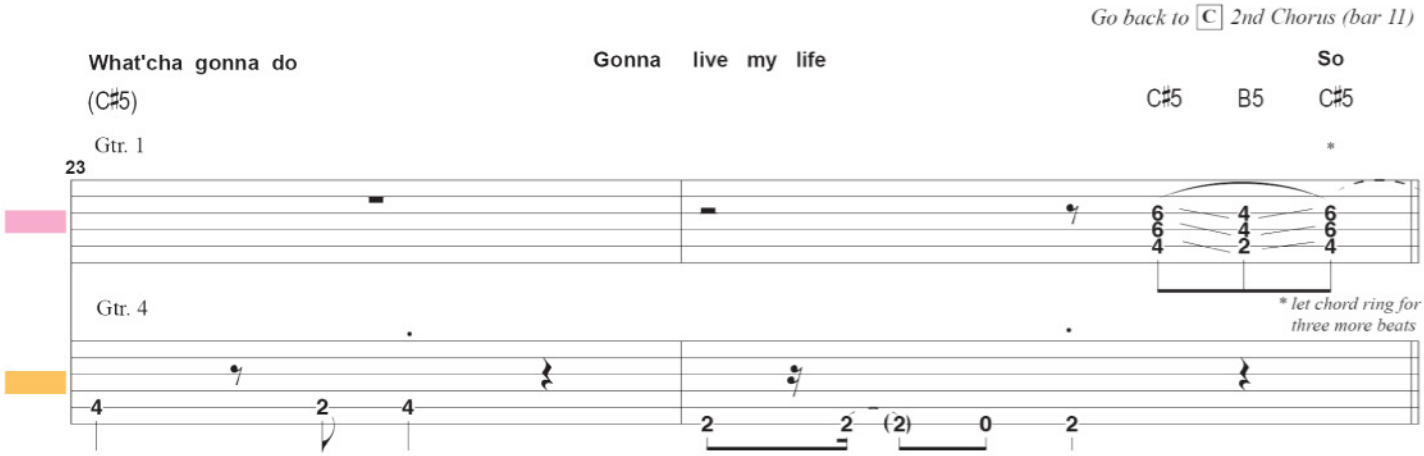
Riff D

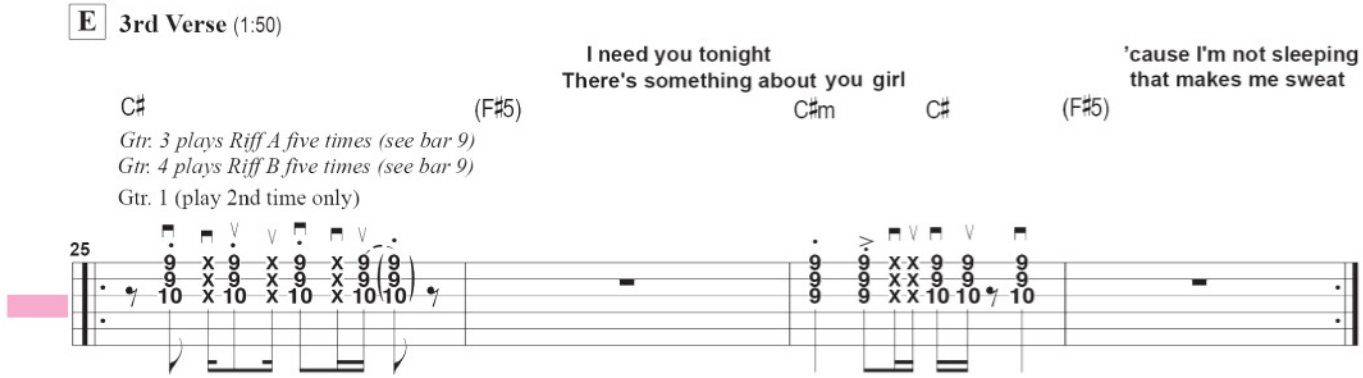
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 three times (see bar 9)

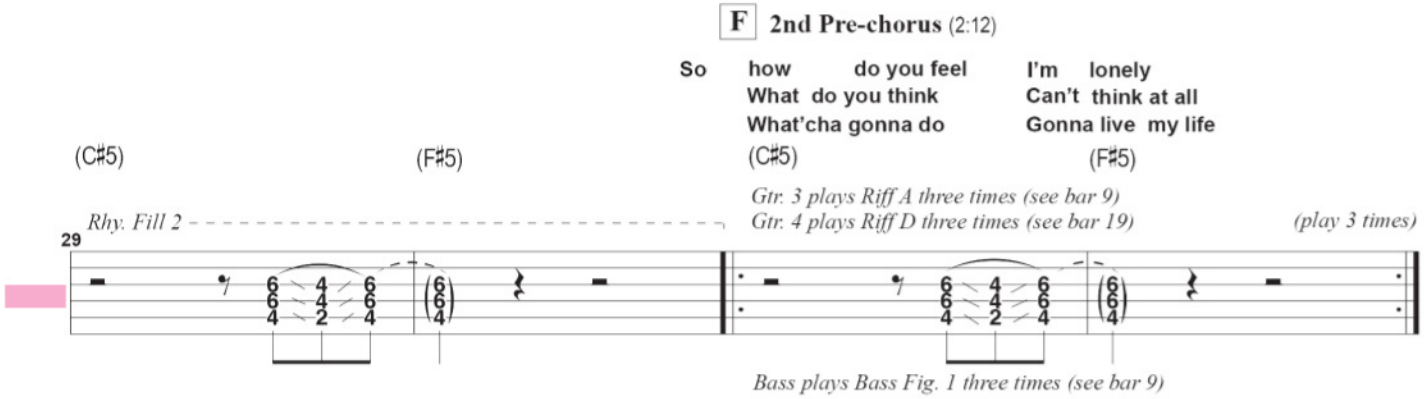
Rhy. Fill 1 (1:15)

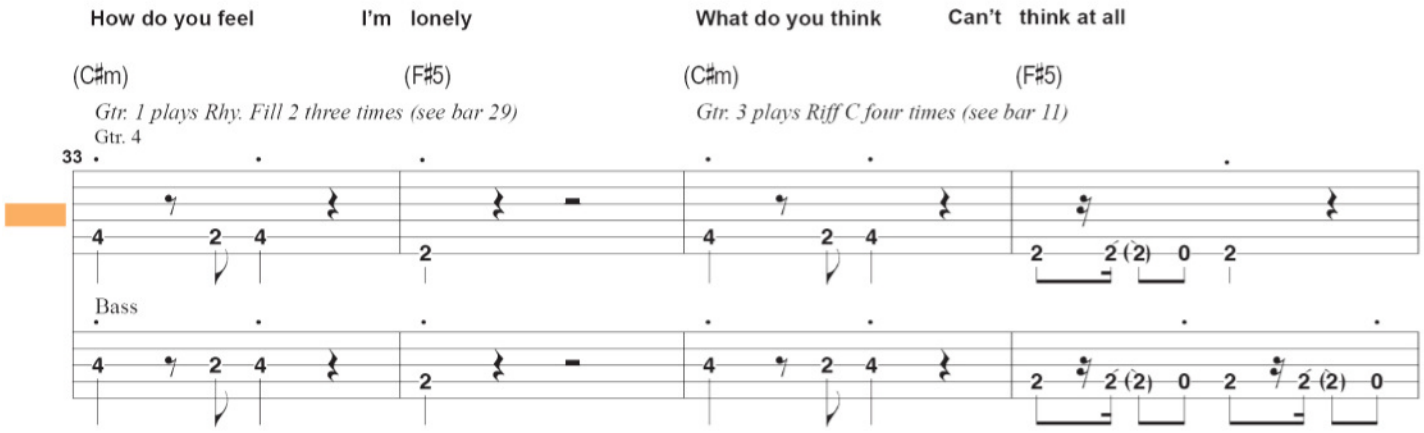
C♯

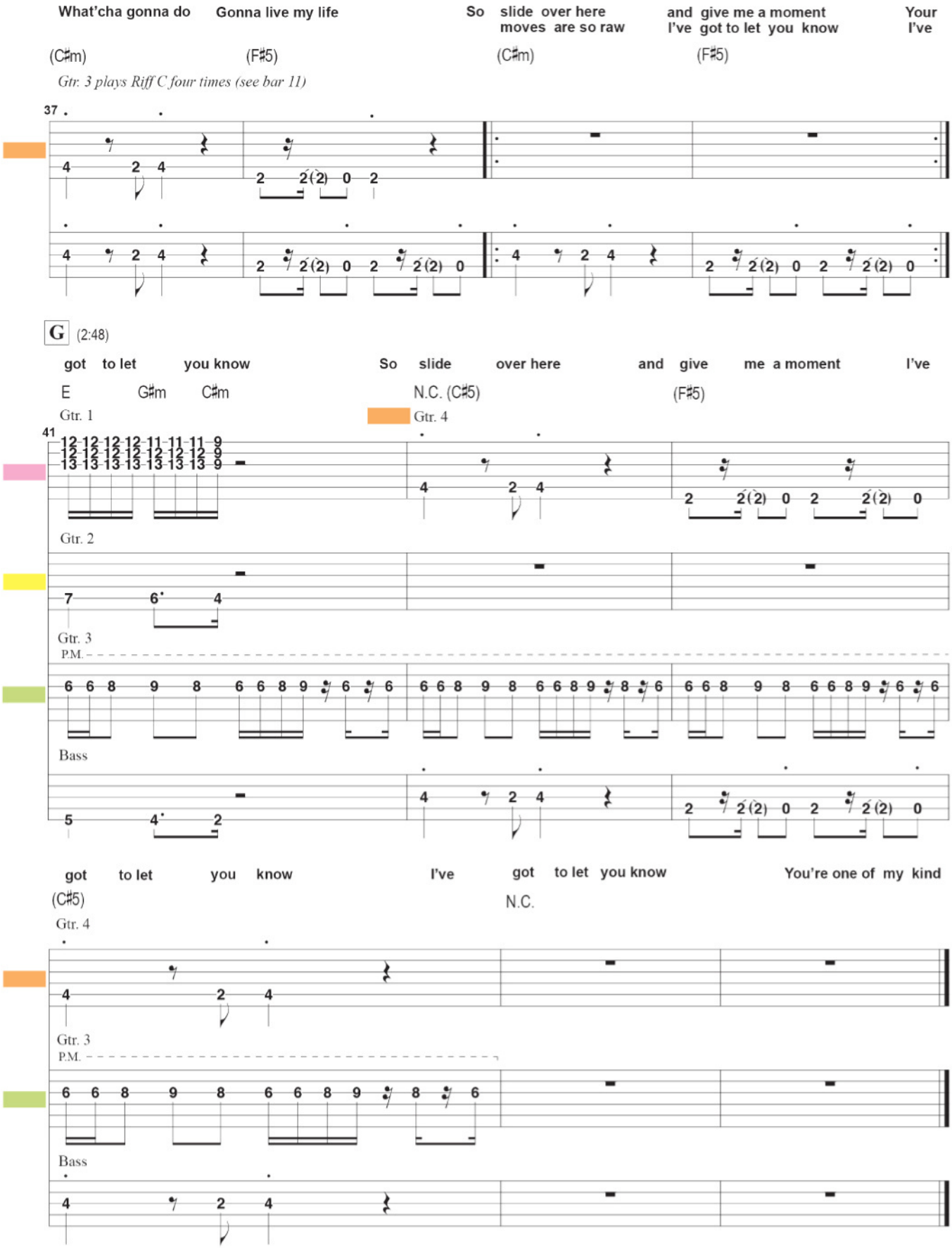
Gtr. 1 (w/modulation effect)


Go back to C 2nd Chorus (bar 11)
What'cha gonna do
Gonna live my life
So
(C♯5)
C♯5 B5 C♯5
Gtr. 1
23
Gtr. 4
* let chord ring for three more beats


E 3rd Verse (1:50)
I need you tonight
There's something about you girl
'cause I'm not sleeping
that makes me sweat
C♯
(F♯5)
C♯m
C♯
(F♯5)
Gtr. 3 plays Riff A five times (see bar 9)
Gtr. 4 plays Riff B five times (see bar 9)
Gtr. 1 (play 2nd time only)
25


F 2nd Pre-chorus (2:12)
So how do you feel
What do you think
What'cha gonna do
I'm lonely
Can't think at all
Gonna live my life
(C♯5)
(F♯5)
(C♯5)
(F♯5)
Gtr. 3 plays Riff A three times (see bar 9)
Gtr. 4 plays Riff D three times (see bar 19)
(play 3 times)
Rhy. Fill 2
29
Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 three times (see bar 9)


How do you feel
I'm lonely
What do you think
Can't think at all
(C♯m)
(F♯5)
(C♯m)
(F♯5)
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fill 2 three times (see bar 29)
Gtr. 3 plays Riff C four times (see bar 11)
Gtr. 4
33
Bass


What'cha gonna do
Gonna live my life
So slide over here
moves are so raw
and give me a moment
I've got to let you know
Your
I've
(C♯m)
(F♯5)
(C♯m)
(F♯5)
Gtr. 3 plays Riff C four times (see bar 11)
37
G (2:48)
got to let you know
So slide over here
and give me a moment
I've
E
G♯m
C♯m
N.C. (C♯5)
(F♯5)
Gtr. 1
Gtr. 4
41
Gtr. 2
Gtr. 3
P.M.
Bass
got to let you know
I've got to let you know
You're one of my kind
(C♯5)
N.C.
Gtr. 4
Gtr. 3
P.M.
Bass

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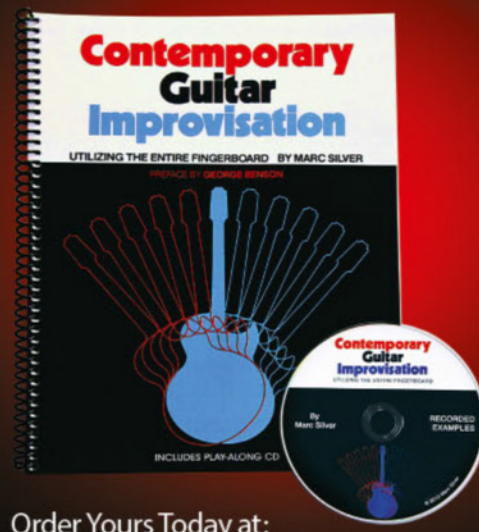

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BY CHRIS GILL

1961-69 GIBSON J-200

STEEL-STRING FLATTOP ACOUSTIC

The J-200's modifications didn't matter much to many of the most popular recording artists of the Sixties and beyond...

Cat Stevens tunes his Gibson J-200 in May 1971

GEORGE WILKES/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

MANY GUITARISTS ARGUE that behind every great song is a great instrument. To prove their point, they'll bring up songs recorded with 1958-60 Gibson Les Paul Standard "bursts," Fifties and early Sixties Strats and Teles, vintage Gibson and Martin acoustics, one-of-a-kind custom guitars (like Jerry Garcia's Wolf and Tiger) or even modern guitars like EVH, Music Man, PRS and Taylor models.

If you were to ask even the most casual vintage acoustic guitar collector if the Sixties Gibson J-200 was a great guitar, most would answer with an emphatic "No!" In its original pre-WWII iteration with rosewood back and sides, the Gibson SJ-200/Super Jumbo (as it was originally named) is one of the most desirable acoustics of the 20th century. The post-war version with maple back and sides produced through the Fifties (when the name was shortened to J-200) is not far behind.

But for some unexplainable reason during the early Sixties Gibson decided to mess up the J-200's divine design in a HUGE way by embedding an ABR-1 Tune-o-matic adjustable bridge into an oversized rosewood bridge (screwed to the top, no less) with the previously open sections filled with heavy pearl inlays. (One of my acoustic purist friends compared the Sixties J-200 bridge to "painting a huge handlebar mustache on Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa then driving a Buick through the middle of it!") It now also had a massive maple bridge plate and large wooden brace between the bridge and soundhole that adversely restricted top vibration. The modified neck design featured a narrow fretboard and slim, flat profile similar to a Gibson solid-body electric of that era. How could Gibson president Ted McCarty — the man behind such timeless classics as the Les Paul (!), Flying V, Explorer, ES-335, Firebird, SG and so on — allow such an abomination to happen under his watch?

Acoustic traditionalists may have averted their gaze in disgust, but the J-200's modifications didn't matter much to many of the most popular recording artists of the Sixties and beyond. The list of legendary recordings featuring a Sixties J-200 is truly astounding. George Harrison used one with the Beatles on the White Album, *Let It Be* and *Abbey Road* on songs that include "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" and "Here Comes the Sun." John Lennon also played Harrison's J-200 during the *Let It Be/Get Back* sessions. Jimmy Page borrowed producer Mickey Most's J-200 to record "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You," "Black Mountain Side" and "Your Time is Gonna Come" on Led Zeppelin's debut album. Bob Dylan famously posed with one on the cover of his *Nashville Skyline* album and played it on the record. Pete Townshend used his 1968 J-200 on every Who and solo recording he made from 1968 through 1989, most notably on "Pinball Wizard."

But wait, there's more. Brian Jones can be seen playing a Sixties J-200 in the Rolling Stones film *Sympathy for the Devil*; Cat Stevens recorded and performed with a Sixties J-200 during his late Sixties/early Seventies prime; John Fogerty played his on the Creedence Clearwater Revival classics *Cosmo's Factory* ("Lookin' Out My Back Door") and *Green River* (the title track); and the Sixties J-200 often appeared in the hands of everyone from Gram Parsons to pop sensation Mike Nesmith of the Monkees to Texas country-blues songster Mance Lipscomb.

The Sixties J-200's heavily reinforced and heavy bridge, maple back and sides (often made of laminated materials) and skinny neck combined to deliver a rather percussive tone (i.e. lacking the sustain and rich resonance of previous J-200 models) with pronounced, brilliant treble and subdued bass, but that made it effective in the recording studio for recording bright, aggressive rhythm tracks that cut through the mix. As Harrison proved on "Here Comes the Sun," this bird could also sing quite sweetly when fingerpicked, particularly when using a capo.

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