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MÅNESKIN & TOM MORELLO  
GOSSIP

THE ROLLING STONES  
JUMPIN' JACK FLASH

NITA STRAUSS  
RISK-TAKING 101

BUDDY GUY  
HIS FAREWELL  
TOUR!

PLUS

IN FLAMES  
DIRTY HONEY  
DRUG CHURCH  
DUANE BETTS

6  
• BLUEGRASS GUITARISTS  
YOU NEED TO KNOW •

"It was Mick saying,  
'I can't be in the band'  
that forced us into  
making a decision"

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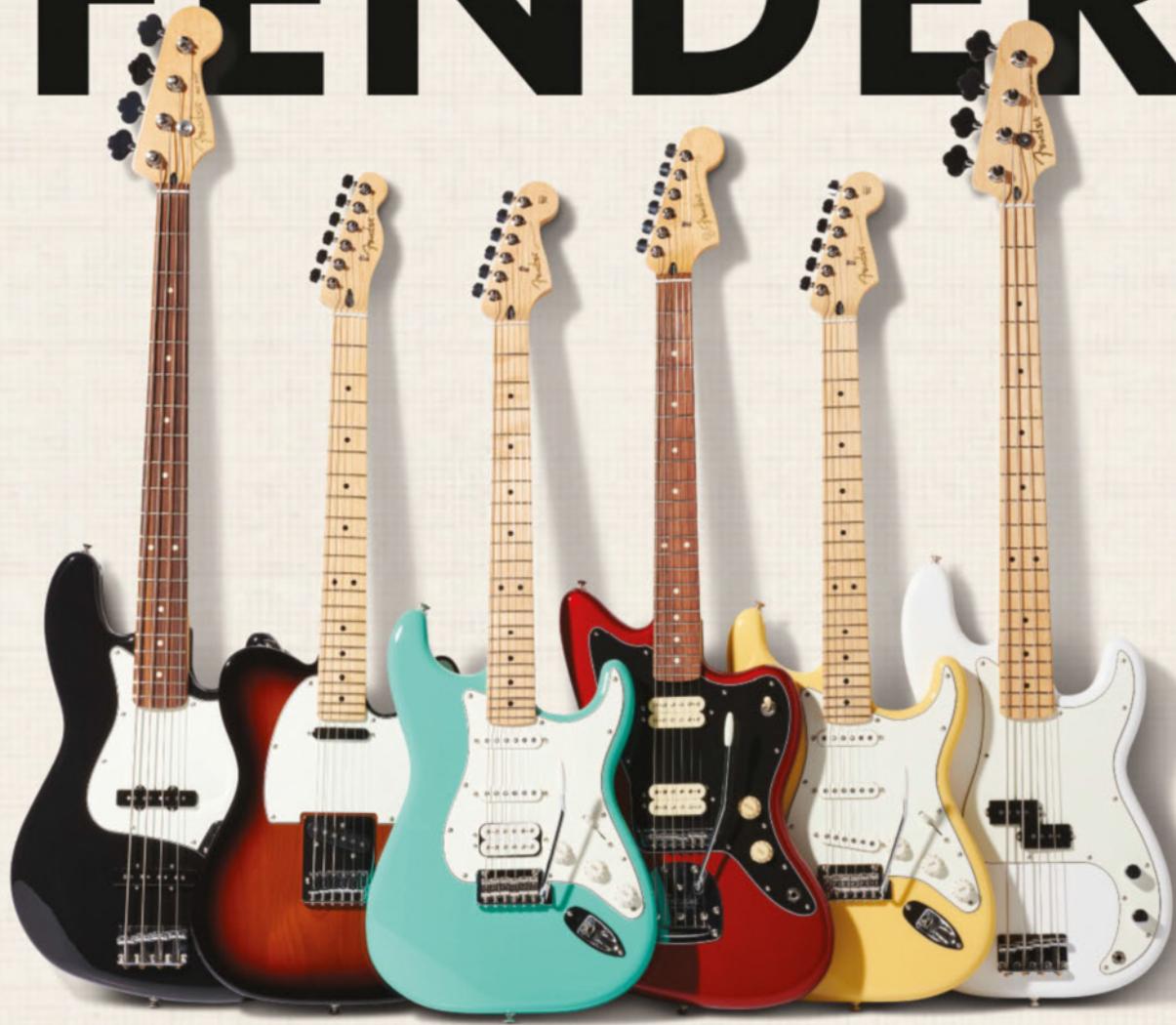
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# CONTENTS

VOL. 44 | NO. 10 | OCTOBER 2023

## 28 STEVE BARTEK

A rare chat with the former Oingo Boingo guitarist

## 32 IN FLAMES

The Swedish metallers' new album marks ex-Megadeth master Chris Broderick's recording debut with the band

## 38 SIX BLAZING BLUEGRASS GUITARISTS...

...you need to know about!

## 44 NITA STRAUSS

Thoughts on the importance of taking risks, stepping out of your comfort zone and never settling

## 50 BUDDY GUY

GW catches up with the 87-year-old blues legend

## 56 MÖTLEY CRÜE

John 5 details his ascension into the ranks of Mötley Crüe. Nikki Sixx provides his own account of how the recent Crüe brouaha went down — and how 5 fits the fold



56

Mötley Crüe's John 5 [left] and Nikki Sixx

## TRANSCRIBED

### "Gossip"

by Måneskin (featuring Tom Morello)

PAGE  
**90**

### "Jumpin' Jack Flash"

by the Rolling Stones

PAGE  
**94**

### "Fear of the Dawn"

by Jack White

PAGE  
**98**

### "Moonlight Sonata" (1st movement)

by Ludwig van Beethoven

PAGE  
**102**

## DEPARTMENTS

### 12 SOUNDING BOARD

### 13 TUNE-UPS

How bands like Drug Church and Scowl are leading the melodic movement in hardcore punk, plus Dave Mason, Tracii Guns, Jax Hollow, Melanie Faye, Duane Betts, Dirty Honey, the Undertones, Richie Faulkner, Marcus Machado and more

### 77 SOUNDCHECK

- 77. Orange OR30
- 79. Yamaha FG9 M
- 80. Charvel Pro-Mod So-Cal Style HSS FR E
- 81. EarthQuaker Devices Aurelius Tri-Voice Chorus
- 82. Seymour Duncan HyperSwitch

### 84 COLUMNS

- 84. In Deep  
by Andy Aledort

### 85. Tales from Nerdville

by Joe Bonamassa

### 86. Melodic Muse

by Andy Timmons

### 87. Live from Flat V

by Josh Smith

### 89 PERFORMANCE NOTES



### 110 POWER TOOLS

For about the first two decades of the electric solidbody guitar's existence, very few players thought about changing their pickups. That all changed when DiMarzio developed the Super Distortion humbucker in the early Seventies.

# WOODSHED

VOL. 44 | NO. 10 | OCTOBER 2023

## OUR CREATURE (COVER) FEATURE

 I GUESS EVERYONE out there expects me to say something nice about the person who's on our cover. I mean, it's not like I'm ever gonna say, "Yeah, I know he's on our cover, but this guy sucks!" That said, I don't think I've ever been in the presence of a more "precise" guitarist than John 5 (BTW, I was tempted to add the word "dedicated" to that sentence, but I don't want to piss off all the other guitarists I've met in my 12.4 years at *GW*. But I'm still tempted to add it...). The last time Mr. 5 was physically in the "Guitar World space" was March 2019, when he dropped by our studio to shoot a few videos tied to *Invasion*, his new-at-the-time album with the Creatures. Everything was done in one take. And I mean *everything*, including, "Could you please play bars 16 to 21 again for this other camera angle?" This ain't normal, folks (at least on my planet) — and this is also where the word "dedicated" sneaks back into this column. When I get home at 2:26 a.m. after a Friday-night gig, I might not say hello to my Telecaster again until 10:30 p.m. the following Friday. And I've met pros who've told me similar stuff, including the great Albert Lee. But John 5, well... As he told us a couple of years ago, "I play so much guitar that it might not even be healthy — and I'm not joking. I was playing just before you called, and I'll be playing again as soon as I get off the phone." So whatever you or the loudmouth down the street think about the whole



Crue/Mars/5 situation, all's I can say is the band got themselves a good one. So good that it might not even be healthy!

And by the way, we hope to speak to Mick Mars (for a *Guitar World* story, of course) in the very near future. Stay tuned!  
— **Damian Fanelli**

[from left] Jimmy Brown, John 5 and me in the bowels of *GW* (NYC), March 2019



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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](mailto:GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com) with a digital file of the image!



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DEFENDERS *of the Faith*



Rachel Raye "Ricki" Oien

AGE: 18

GUITARS: Fender American Performer Stratocaster, Gibson Les Paul Studio, Jackson JS32 Dinky DKA

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Dire Straits "Down to the Waterline," Slayer "Skeletons of Society," Jimi Hendrix "Who Knows," B.B. King "Why Do Things Happen to Me" and originals

GEAR I WANT MOST: ESP LTD SH-7, Marshall JCM900, Mesa Boogie Rectifier Traditional cab



Sam Cassiano

AGE: 65

HOMETOWN: El Paso, TX

GUITARS: Gibson Les Paul Classic goldtop, Gibson Midtown, American Performer Telecaster, Fender Stratocasters and Telecasters, Fender Jazz and Precision basses

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Jeff Beck "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," Jimi Hendrix "The Wind Cries Mary," Pink Floyd "Comfortably Numb"

GEAR I WANT MOST: Gibson ES-175, Fender '65 Princeton Reverb



Are you a Defender of the Faith? Send a photo, along with your answers to the questions above, to [GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com](mailto:GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com). And pray!

# TUNE-UPS

DAVE MASON

15

TRACII GUNS'  
PEDALBOARD

16

17

JAX HOLLOW



18

MELANIE FAYE

20

DIRTY HONEY  
IN THE STUDIO

22

DUANE BETTS

UNDERTONES  
(AND MORE!)

24



## Hardcore Breakdown

HOW GUITARISTS FROM DRUG CHURCH, MILITARIE GUN AND SCOWL ARE LEADING THE MELODIC MOVEMENT IN HARDCORE PUNK

By Jim Beaugez

EVERY GENRE OF music has its signature elements. Extreme metal has its blast beats, pop rock follows the familiar verse-chorus-verse-chorus-solo formula, and hardcore punk uses bludgeoning breakdowns to give momentary respite from its frenetic assault.

But every so often, the exceptions become the rule. When the Baltimore-based melodic hardcore band Turnstile released their breakthrough album *Glow On* to acclaim in 2021, reaching the top 30 on the

Billboard Top 200 albums chart, the dam holding back a new group of outliers in the hardcore scene burst.

The ethos and the attitude haven't changed — empowerment, independence and camaraderie are still central to hardcore music — but bands like Drug Church, Scowl, Fiddlehead and Militarie Gun are now bringing a much broader range of stylistic influences to the genre. Citing canonic alt-rock and pop-punk bands like Nirvana and Green Day, not to mention OG

pop icons like the Beatles, the new breed of hardcore bands treats boundaries with as much respect as a barricade at a Knocked Loose show.

"[We] came from punk, and punk never really had rules," says Malachi Greene of Scowl. "You look at the early Gilman scene [in Oakland, California] and you see bands like Op[eration] Ivy or Rancid or any of those bands; they'd be playing with Filth and Neurosis and Green Day. When you come from a melting pot of creativity, ➔

it's gonna come out in some way, shape or form."

Nick Cogan, who pulls double duty on guitar in Drug Church and Militarie Gun, is more intentional about pulling from a diverse range of influences while avoiding some of hardcore's most inked-in trademarks.

"I have no interest in a breakdown for the sake of a breakdown," Cogan says. "I just think someone needs to be able to take something away from the song, and I would love for [that to be] a catchy melody or chorus. I think a lot of bands are learning that."

In Drug Church, Cogan instead uses those moments to wrestle more sounds from his Fender Jazzmaster, like the buzzing riffs on *Hygiene*, the band's 2022 set and fourth album overall. Since their debut self-titled EP in 2012, Cogan and co-guitarist Corey Galusha have inched away from the conventional sonic signifiers of hardcore punk, weaving melody into their interplay without compromising their crushing riffs. And according to their atypical songwriting process, the music has to stand on its own even before vocalist Patrick Kindlon gets hold of it.

"I'm writing most of the music for Drug Church, and the writing process is pretty non-traditional — I'm very rarely considering vocals at all," Cogan says. "Even in the beginning, there would be four instrumentalists in a room trying to write entertaining instrumental music, trying to keep ourselves excited enough to play songs without vocals."

The approach to songwriting and guitar couldn't be more different in Militarie Gun, one the most adventurous bands to arise from the hardcore scene in years. "Ian [Shelton, vocalist] comes from more of a singer-songwriter perspective, where he might approach me with a riff that sounds really simple in my mind, but in his head he already has a melody figured out for vocals."

In place of chunky riffing, Militarie Gun's repertoire explores open and unconventional chords, mining jangly alt-rock and post-punk guitar styles for texture. On the mid-tempo, major-key "Very High," Cogan punctuates Shelton's vocal breaks with stabs of dissonant guitar licks. Alternately, "Will Logic" rides a Foo Fighters-esque guitar riff to a dreamy, shoegaze chorus.

Cogan — who is currently anchoring the bass while Will Acuña and Waylon Trim handle guitars live — recorded most of the guitars on their 2023 album, *Life Under the Gun*. "When I joined the band [in 2021], there was a purposeful intention



**Scowl** [from left]:  
Cole Gilbert, Malachi  
Greene, Kat Moss, Mikey  
Bifolco and Bailey Lupo

## "Nowadays, with bands like Turnstile and Militarie Gun, you can cite the Beatles as a reference and you're not lame. There's room for everyone"

— NICK COGAN

to not use big, heavy power chords, 'cause that's what I was doing in Drug Church," he says. "The effect of having two people [and] two sets of hands playing the same exact part with completely different tones and different styles, it has that natural chorus thing."

While Page Hamilton of Helmet once lamented how hardcore purists derided him for singing more than screaming on their 1992 classic *Meantime*, today that move is seen as creative growth. Scowl vocalist Kat Moss alternates in the same manner on their 2023 EP *Psychic Dance Routine*, bridging their scathing 2021 debut, *How Flowers Grow*, to whatever comes next, with one major difference: After hearing her sing on that album's "Seeds to Sow," fans actually wanted her to sing more.

"We did that as kind of a midpoint in the album, and a lot of people really liked it and were really adamant about [Moss] singing more stuff," Greene says. "We felt

the same way, and we're influenced by a lot of bands that have melody and singing. The stuff we wrote for *Psychic* came out that way because of us wanting to lean a little more into the melody, juxtaposed to really aggressive stuff like 'Wired' or 'Sold Out.'

Scowl came out of the same Santa Cruz, California, hardcore scene that produced bands like Good Riddance, Fury 66 and Bl'ast!, and their gnarled riffs often have more in common with Black Flag and Dead Kennedys than their contemporaries. That's due in part to how Greene and Bifolco both played bass before they switched to guitar — like Greg Ginn and Kurt Cobain (especially on Nirvana's *Bleach*), menacing single-note runs are prominent on songs like "Psychic Dance Routine."

"It's all about what sounds cool to me," Greene says. "Not theoretically what you're supposed to do — it's more or less what I could sonically get out of the guitar, whether it's single notes or harmonics or punching it. [Laughs] Whatever I have to do to get the sound out of it."

Cogan sees his bands, and the current melodic movement in hardcore, as the center of the Venn diagram between unabashed pop and the punishing hardcore punk of their forebears.

"I just think times are a little bit different [now]," he says. "Maybe like 10, 15 years ago, you had to be a little bit more pigeonholed in regards to your interests and genres. Nowadays, with bands like Turnstile and even Militarie Gun, you can cite the Beatles as a reference and you're not lame. There's room for everyone."



## INQUIRER DAVE MASON

THE FORMER TRAFFIC GUITARIST AND ACE SONGWRITER/SIDEMAN DISCUSSES HIS RECORDINGS WITH — AND POTENTIAL INFLUENCE ON — GEORGE HARRISON

**Q: Do you remember your first gig?**

I don't, but most likely it was with my first band — an instrumental outfit called the Jaguars — when I was about 16.

**Q: Ever had an embarrassing moment on stage?**

Yes, about four years ago. I collapsed on stage before the second verse of one of the songs. I was severely dehydrated, and it wasn't pretty.

**Q: What's your favorite piece of gear?**

I don't have any one favorite piece of gear; everything I use is a favorite. But my TC Electronic stage rig rates very high. It's a custom-built preamp and effects unit made by Bob Bradshaw. I run it in stereo through two Fender amps, bypassing their preamp stage.

**Q: Suppose the building is burning down. What one guitar from your collection would you save?**

It would probably be my Strat. It's always been about a Strat for me, ever since Hank Marvin. The one I play is fairly new; I have two from the Fender Custom Shop.

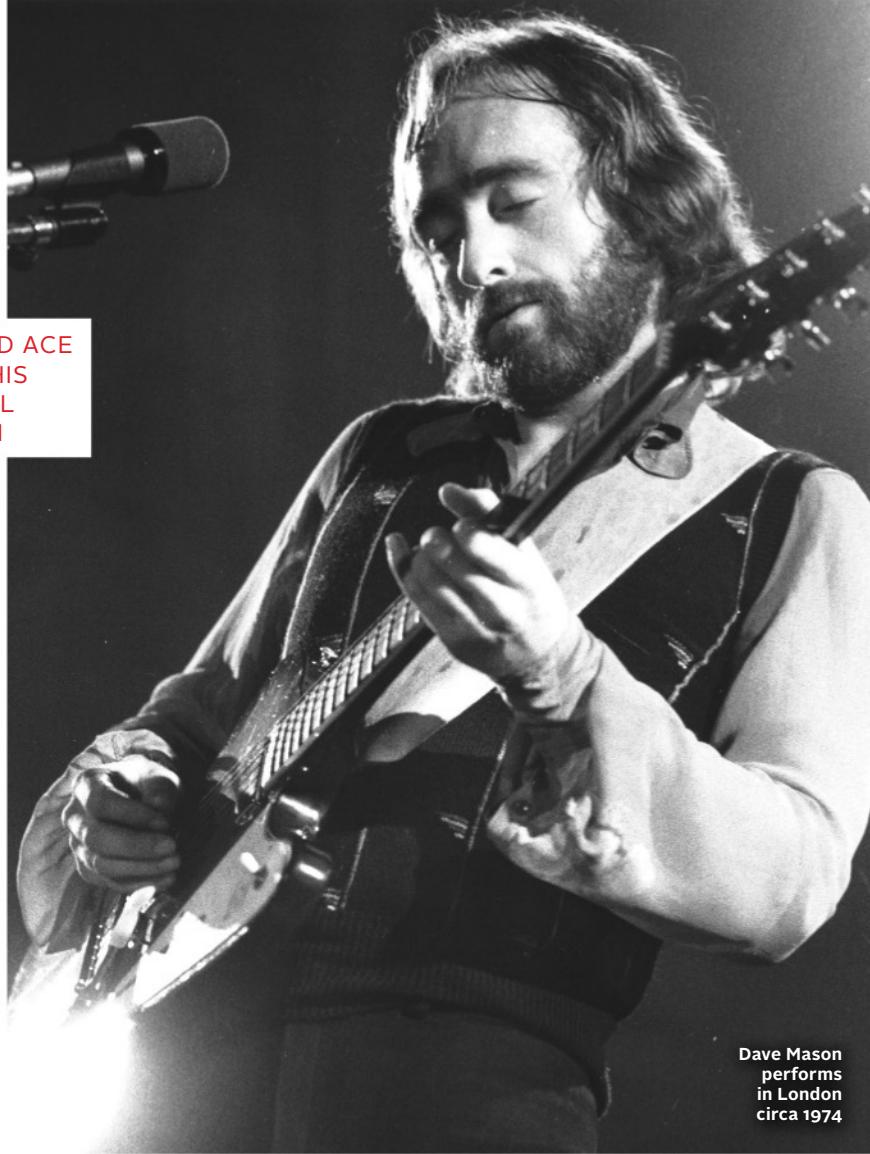
**Q: What aspect of guitar would you like to be better at?**

Everything! There's not going to be any lightning blazing speed with me as I don't have a lot of technique. My hands aren't that fast. I wish I knew more about what the hell I was doing when I'm playing. I've treated guitar more as a melodic instrument than anything, so if I'm noodling around it's probably mostly going to be some blues stuff.

**Q: What advice would you give to your younger self about the guitar if you had the chance?**

To get some lessons from the get-go, and maybe learn to write music. It would have been great because I'm just basically self-taught on the guitar. I can't read or write music. Some [lessons] from the beginning would've been great, but I just keep playing and never stop learning.

**Q: Do you think theory is vital in terms of understanding the guitar?**



Dave Mason performs in London circa 1974

Theory has nothing to do with the creative process. You just get to interpret that part of it easier. I'm more concerned with tone than playing 20 million notes. I'd rather play three notes in the right place.

**Q: You played on George Harrison's *All Things Must Pass* in 1970. What do you remember about it?**

I was just one of a lot of people there; if you ask me which tunes I played on it, I can't remember. I just played some acoustic rhythm guitar on a couple of them, and I think I played electric guitar on one, but I'm not sure. I was one of a number of musicians that were invited. I knew George more from the Beatles and from hanging out with him, as I sort of knew a little more of him socially than I did musically. He gave me my first sitar; he also played me *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* before it came out.

**Q: Do you think George was underrated as a guitar player during his time with the Beatles?**

I think for what they were doing and for that band, he was perfect. Each part was perfect, as attested by their success.

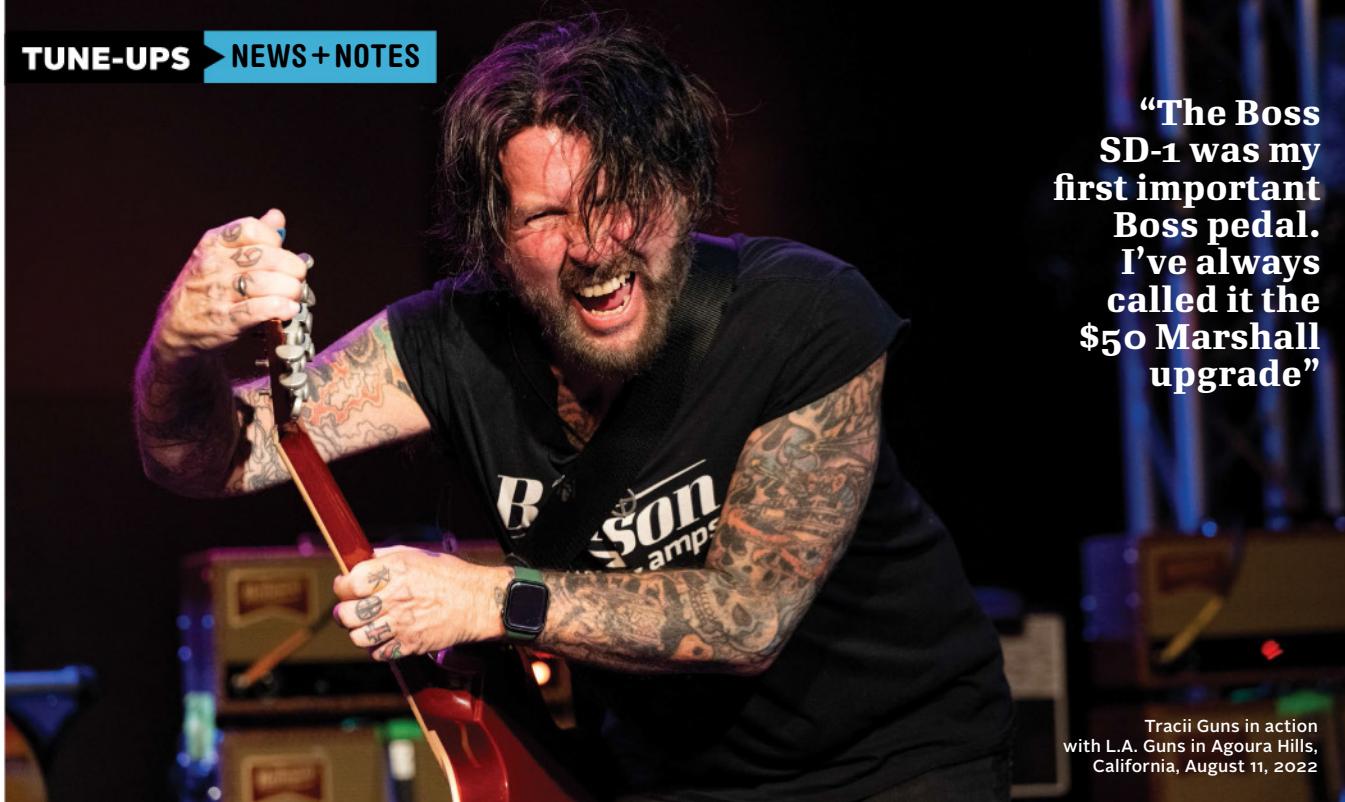
**Q: What can you tell us about another of your Harrison collaborations, "If You've Got Love" from your 1973 album, *It's Like You Never Left*?**

He was around and in L.A. at the time, and I obviously would have connected and asked him if he wanted to come and play on the track. He said, "Sure," and that's basically it.

**Q: Harrison once said in an interview that he credited you with inspiring him to play slide guitar.**

Yes, I read that same interview. I was playing with Delaney & Bonnie, who had a hit with my song "Only You Know and I Know," and we were doing a show at Croydon's Fairfield Halls. Eric [Clapton] came down and George was with him. Eric was going to come up and play, and we were like, "George, you've got to come up and play too!" He said, "I don't know any of the songs," so I sat him down and said, "Here, let me show you something — just learn this lick." And it started him off with that whole slide guitar thing.

— Joe Matera



**"The Boss SD-1 was my first important Boss pedal. I've always called it the \$50 Marshall upgrade"**

Tracii Guns in action with L.A. Guns in Agoura Hills, California, August 11, 2022



## MY PEDALBOARD TRACII GUNS

WHAT L.A. GUNS' SUNSET STRIP STALWART SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN

Interview by Andrew Daly

**►** "WHEN I STARTED, it was all about creating more gain and distortion. While I began with MXR pedals, the Boss stuff kicked that into hyperdrive for me — and the Boss SD-1 Super Overdrive was my first important Boss pedal. I've always called it the \$50 Marshall upgrade. My philosophy has changed over the years, but not by much. I still go back to my initial desire to emulate Jimi Hendrix, Randy Rhoads and Eddie Van Halen.

"I still use Boss stuff. If you're putting your board together with your ears rather than your eyes, you know Boss makes some fucking rad pedals. You don't have to use the crazy boutique stuff to get good sounds. With that in mind, my board begins with a Boss Chromatic Tuner, which feeds into my OC-5 Octave, the brown one. Man, what a great pedal. I've always loved it.

"Next is — and all of these are Boss — my PH-3 Phase Shifter, which leads to the SD-1w Super Overdrive. I mentioned that

earlier, and honestly, it's still as essential today as it was back in '88 during the first L.A. Guns record. I can't stress how much I love it. But the big difference now is that I use the Waza Craft version. It's such an upgrade. As much as I love my original SD-1, the SD-1w nails it.

"After that, I've got a Fuzz, which is also a Waza Craft [FZ-1w], and that feeds into the ST-2 Power Stack, which feeds into my DM-2w Waza Craft Delay. Again, that Waza stuff is the shit; it's totally gnarly. From there, the Delay snakes up and over

to another Boss Waza Craft, my CE-2w Chorus. Oh, and I've got this crazy RE-2 Space Echo; it's the dark green one, and it's just insane.

"These pedals have served me well over the years. There have been a few versions of the board, but it's always been something similar. I have a tongue-in-cheek saying that 'pedals make you a better player,' but they really don't. But they do make you more hirable because you can create more sounds. It's like, 'My Crayon box is bigger than yours.'"



# Jax Hollow

ON ONLY THE WILD ONES, THE NASHVILLE-VIA-MASSACHUSETTS AX-SLINGER IS HAVING A BLAST

By Jim Beaugez

 THE JAX HOLLOW who opens *Only the Wild Ones*, her 2023 debut album, with the Hendrixian hammer-ons of “Wolf in Sheepskin” sounds markedly subdued compared to the one who seared speakers with “High Class Bitch,” the barnstorming opener on her 2021 EP, *Underdog Anthems*. But then the chorus hits and there she is, singing about watching the sunrise with her .45 pistol by her side.

With *Only the Wild Ones*, Jax is back with an album stacked with hummable riffs and memorable lyrics, and she's determined to be the complete package. “I come from two worlds,” she says on a call from a springtime gig aboard a cruise ship in the Caribbean. “I like to merge lyricism and songwriting with the more exciting elements of rock, like the energy and the sexiness and the power.”

What she can't get across with song



**AXOLOGY**

- **GUITARS** Fender Stratocaster
- **AMPS** DSM Humboldt Simplifier direct; Fender for stage volume



Jax Hollow takes a stroll down MacDougal Street in New York City

**“You’re just gambling, but you could be one spin away from something cool. I like that chase”**

titles like “Whores and Heathens” and “Runnin’ Like a Gypsy,” Hollow channels through her Fender Strat. “Ride or Die” is a gruff blues rocker, while the wicked concoction of tricky hammer-ons and pull-offs on the main riff of “Ethereal Diamond” undergird her radio-ready melody. She mastered the acrobatics of singing over odd meters and riffs by learning songs like the Police’s “Message in a Bottle,” whose finger-stretching riff has beguiled players for decades.

“For two weeks straight, all I did was put the metronome on until one day I could do

it,” she says. “Luckily that spills out into the original music, so I’ve got so many more options of writing. It just opens up a whole ‘nother door when you can play and sing stuff at the same time.”

Shades of Jimmy Page and Eddie Van Halen, two of her guitar heroes, emerge elsewhere amid her Americana-rock blend, and the smoky jazz of “Ventriloquist” reveals yet another dimension to her playing. “I was in New Orleans exploring and busking in Jackson Square, having fun,” she says. “That night, I wrote that little descending thing and I was like, ‘Damn, this is spooky and kind of sexy.’ That’s the vibe I got.”

No matter where she roams, though, she’s always gunning for the rush of writing a great song. “Every day you try for it, and you get maybe one out of 500 songs,” she says. “You’re just gambling, but you could be one spin away from something cool. I like that chase.”

# Hurts So Good

ACCORDING TO A NEW STUDY,  
SHREDDING CAN MAKE YOUR  
WRISTS AND SHOULDERS GO OUCHIE

By Adam Kovac

 IF YOU'VE EVER gotten wrist pain after spending hours perfecting the "Stairway to Heaven" solo, you can breathe a sigh of relief: you might be a boomer, but old age isn't necessarily the cause.

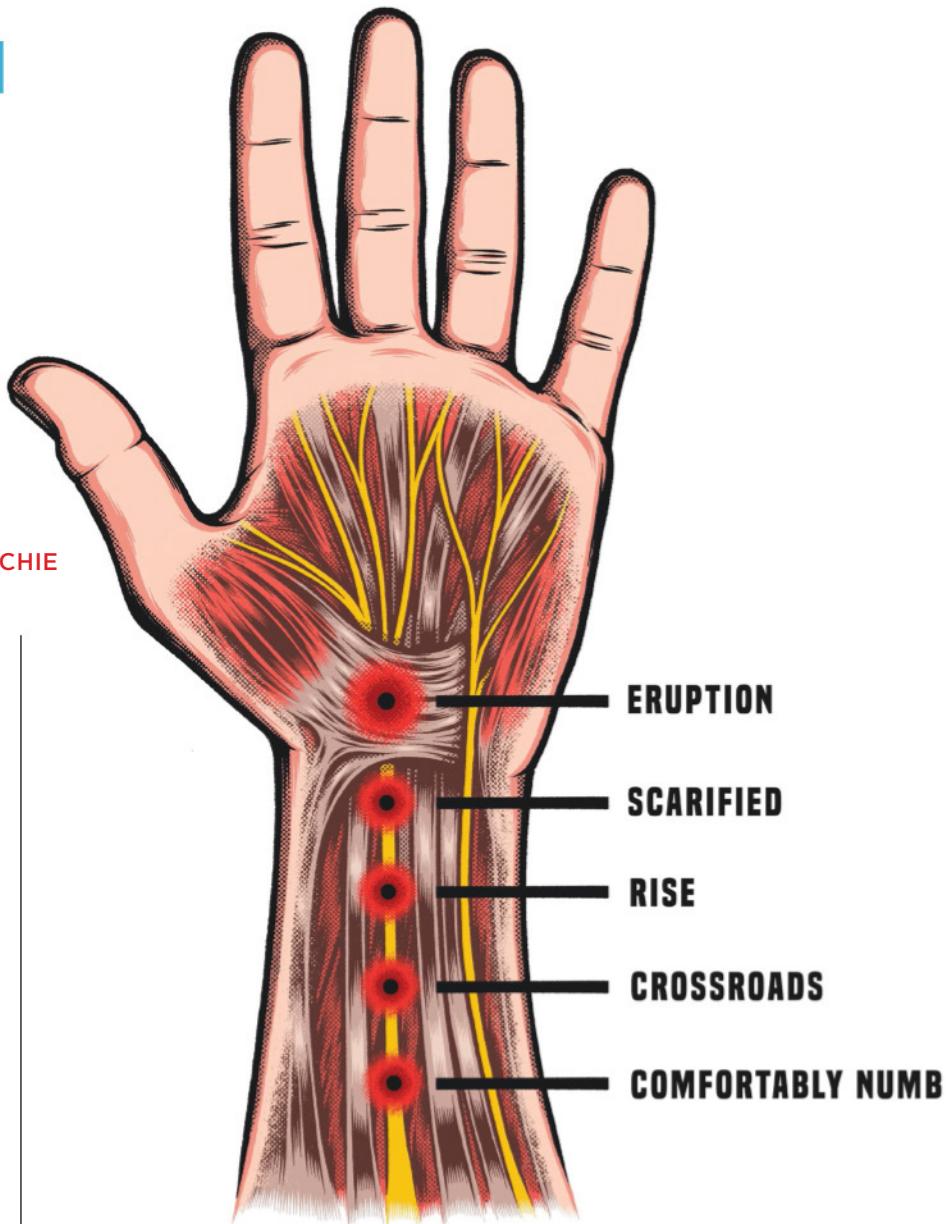
In a recent study published in the scientific journal *PLoS One*, a team of researchers from Israel's Tel Aviv University found that playing guitar can lead to developing musculoskeletal injuries. Or, in words that a bassist could understand: Shredding can make your wrists and shoulders go ouchie.

For the study, the researchers had 25 guitar players, all of whom had been playing for at least five years and practiced for at least 20 hours a week, fill out a questionnaire about their guitar-playing habits. Every single one of the players had reported joint pain at least once in the previous year, with some having as many as 18 incidents of joint pain during that time. The players ranged in lifestyle — some were married, while others were single, some in shape and others less so.

They then had each of the players run through a popular Israeli rock song twice, and measured the angles of the shoulders, wrists and torso in standing and sitting positions.

What they found was likely unsurprising to many guitarists with a dedicated practice routine: standing and sitting, there was a correlation between the range of joint rotations and ensuing discomfort in those joints. They found that the injuries were most likely to occur in the back, wrists and strumming hand — and less so in the fretting-hand fingers.

"Mechanically, since the moment arms of our muscles are longer in big joints (like the back and wrist) compared to smaller ones (like the fingers), the overall moment of the contracting muscles is larger in these large joints," researchers Navah Ratzon and Sigal Portnoy told us via email. "This induces higher joint reaction forces that may



**Researchers have advice for guitarists to ensure that their “solo face” is a grimace of ecstasy rather than agony**

harm the joints. Also, the ligament complex of the fingers is tighter and more firm compared to that of the bigger joints."

The bad news is that the injuries weren't the result of bad technique: improving your tremolo picking will not, sadly, reduce your risk of wrist pain. Rather, the injuries are the result of repetitive motions and putting the body into an awkward position. Even worse — they found that the more years of playing someone had, the higher the amount of joint pain they tended to report.

There is good news — the researchers

have advice for guitarists to ensure that their “solo face” is a grimace of ecstasy rather than agony: keep yourself in shape, exercise regularly, play standing rather than sitting as much as possible and make sure to warm up before playing and maintain a comfortable posture.

As for who is most at risk — metalheads or classical players? — the researchers said they couldn't say, as that was outside the purview of the study, although all the players involved were studied while playing on a nylon-string acoustic.

As the children of the thrash Eighties and grunge Nineties move into middle age, medical science has started taking note of the health effects that loud guitar music can have on the body. A warning to those who prefer punk to Paganini: in 2015, a doctor documented the first ever case of headbanging causing a subdural hematoma, a serious condition in which blood pools on the surface of the brain.

**GATORCASES**



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# Melanie Faye

**THE R&B GUITARIST AND PRODUCER TALKS US THROUGH HER NEW D'ANGELO SIGNATURE MODEL, HER UNIQUE APPROACH TO NEO-SOUL GUITAR AND THE ONE CHORD SHE JUST CAN'T STOP PLAYING**

By Amit Sharma

AS ONE OF the rising stars of the neo-soul movement, having amassed hundreds of thousands of followers across her social media channels thanks to her exquisite fingerstyle skills and rhythmic embellished chords, Melanie Faye is a name we suspect everyone will be hearing more and more over the coming years. Right now, she's busy launching her debut signature model with D'Angelico, a semi-hollow limited to just 50 pieces worldwide and available only in a custom Metallic Surf Green.

#### What first drew you to D'Angelico?

I love how they build the old-school style guitars, like the big semi-hollows and jazz boxes, but they often put a modern twist on it. You get things like locking tuners, slim neck profiles, boutique pickups and modern colors. I started playing them about six years ago when one of my videos went viral and the company reached out.

#### What is it about semi-hollows in particular? What do they bring out in your playing that a solidbody might not?

I wanted a semi-hollow because all we ever studied at performing arts high school was jazz and players like Wes Montgomery or Joe Pass. So I started going really deep into jazz and the culture around it. One thing it brings out in my playing is an infinite sustain, a bit like those Sustainiac pickups.



"I wanted a semi-hollow because all we ever studied at performing arts high school was jazz and players like Wes Montgomery or Joe Pass," Melanie Faye says

**"I'm going to call it 'the Faye chord' because Jimi Hendrix had his and I want my own!"**

If you have a semi-hollow with a tube amp and overdrive pedal, and you set it all up correctly, you can get your guitar to ring out forever.

**Anyone who has seen your videos will be able to tell you have a strong understanding of music theory and chord structures on the fretboard. What kinds of chords do you find yourself playing most?**

I feel like I'm really coming into my own as a musician, artist and woman, so I've started just making up stuff. I have this one chord that I love to play, one that very few guitarists use. It's a minor chord with a major 7th [ $m(maj7)$ ], in 1st-inversion. So the bass note is the minor 3rd of the chord. If you were to play it in C minor [ $Cm(maj7)$ : C, E $\flat$ , G, B], the bass note, E $\flat$ , would be on the A string's 6th fret. The C root would be at the 5th fret on the G string, the 5th, G, would be at the 8th fret on the B string and the major 7th, B, would be on the high E string's 7th fret. I'm going to call it "the Faye chord" because Jimi Hendrix had his, and I want my own!

With his debut solo album, Duane Betts reckons with his father's legacy — and makes considerable strides toward creating his own



# Duane Betts

ON HIS SOLO DEBUT, THE ALLMAN BROTHERS-PEDIGREED GUITARIST EMERGES WITH A VISION ALL HIS OWN

By Jim Beaugez

**► AS THE ONLY son of Dickey Betts and the namesake of Duane Allman, his father's legendary foil in the Allman Brothers Band, Duane Betts has spent the past two decades honing his craft between the massive legacy he inherited and the contemporary music he grew up on.**

Now, with his debut solo album, *Wild & Precious Life*, Betts reckons with his father's legacy and makes considerable strides toward creating his own. "The idea was to take the kind of playing I come from and intertwine it with some cool songs that have a modern kind of flavor to them," he

says. "I think we accomplished that."

Betts cut his teeth playing alongside his father in his backing band, Great Southern, and later toured as a member of Dawes and co-founded the Allman Betts Band with Devon Allman. For his solo debut, he recruited longtime sidemen Johnny Stachela and bassist Berry Duane Oakley and recorded at Swamp Raga Studio, the Jacksonville haunt of friends Derek Trucks and Susan Tedeschi.

Trucks makes an appearance on the jammy "Stare at the Sun," a 6/8-meter tour de force named in reference to the late, elder Betts that finds the trio of guitar slingers stacking licks toward the song's crescendo. "Derek said something about my dad being one of those players that's not afraid to stare directly into the sun," he says. "It was a no-brainer to have Derek on that song."

The spotlight shifts to a guest turn by

**"It has a little bit of the Allman Brothers influence, but it definitely has this other really mysterious, beautiful, dark energy entangled in it"**

Marcus King on "Cold Dark World," but one of the album's most unexpected moments arrives on the instrumental "Under the Bali Moon." Arranged by drummer Tyler Greenwell — and every bit as adventurous and exotic as its title suggests — the song flits from light to dark and back again, as Betts and Stachela weave dreamy, Allmans-esque guitar harmonies around a taut rhythm.

"I love stuff from the early Nineties when I was a teenager, like Jeff Buckley, and it has a little bit of that," he says. "The drumbeat could be something Radiohead would do. It has a little bit of the Allman Brothers influence, but it definitely has this other really mysterious, beautiful, dark energy entangled in it that's unique to anything we've done."



## AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** Gibson Les Paul Dickey Betts prototype, ES-335, Martin D-28
- **AMPS** Fender Deluxe Reverb



**Dirty Honey**, caught in the act of recording their next album in Byron Bay, Australia; [from left] Jaydon Bean, Justin Smolian, Marc LaBelle and John Notto

## In the Studio with Dirty Honey

**JOHN NOTTO PREVIEWS THE HIGH-FLYING L.A. RIFF-ROCKERS' HIGHLY ANTICIPATED SOPHOMORE ALBUM**

By Joe Bosso

**► WHEN DIRTY HONEY'S** John Notto spoke with *Guitar World* back in 2021, ahead of the release of his band's self-titled debut album, the guitarist exuded supreme confidence. "There was no doubt I was going to succeed as a guitarist, and I knew this band would go over," he told us. "I know that sounds bold, but for me, failure just wasn't an option."

Reminded of his words today, Notto lets out a laugh. "Wow, it's so funny to think I said that," he says. "I'm normally not so arrogant. I think I was trying to sum up the band's mentality at the time. We were dealing with a lot of skepticism, so we took a mantra of, 'we're going to get there however we can.' We had to rally each other. But it's nice to put your dreams out there

and be held accountable for them."

During the past two years, the L.A.-based quartet (which also includes singer Marc LaBelle and bassist Justin Smolian, along with new recruit Jaydon Bean on drums) has found a sizable audience for their action-packed, good-time brand of hard rock that draws heavily from Seventies groups such as Led Zeppelin, Aerosmith and AC/DC. Notto, in particular, has garnered significant praise for his modern approach to classic guitar sounds.

"I always get compliments on my tone," he says. "It's become a running joke: 'Aren't they gonna say I'm awesome? Is it all about my tone?' I also get comments on my lyricism — people say my solos are memorable. I don't pretend to be a technical wizard

doing a masterclass tour, so if people like what I do, I'm pretty happy about it."

He singles out a particular bit of praise he received from a fan recently: "One guy told me, 'You're the most rock 'n' roll guitarist I've seen.' Hey, I'll take it. I learned by listening to gritty, sloppy, wild guitarists of the Seventies, so I'm cool with being thought of in that way."

The band has been a touring machine of late, playing sold-out theater shows in the States and Europe, co-headlining a tour with Mammoth WVH, as well as opening for big-league acts like Guns N' Roses, Kiss and the Black Crowes. Ahead of more touring, which includes a slot on Guns N' Roses' summer stadium tour of the U.S., Dirty Honey are finishing their second



**"Nobody expected anything from our first album, so the situation is different now"**

album with producer Nick DiDia (who helmed their first full-length and their debut EP).

"Nobody expected anything from our first album, so the situation is different now," Notto says. "That said, there's no external pressure on us — we put it all on ourselves. We want this record to be a more complete statement, and we're pushing ourselves harder than before. There's no crazy left turns; we still want to sound like ourselves, but only more so. I'm still trying to write that great, elusive riff."

**Dirty Honey's success comes after Greta Van Fleet opened the doors for new rock bands. Have you followed them at all?**

Yeah, we pay attention to them. They're a

great band. I appreciate how they're doing their own thing and pushing forward in the face of such harsh criticism. I saw them at the Greek here in L.A., and I was impressed at how they've created their own little world. Our music is different from theirs. It's more carefree — I have that in me. We came up in bars. Not to overuse the word, but our thing is dirtier. It's lighthearted, sexy, after-hours music.

**Another rock band that's broken through recently is Måneskin. Have you checked them out?**

I have a little bit. I think our bass player has listened to their new record. I've seen their pictures; they've got fishnets and that whole vibe. I heard that track they did with Tom Morello [see page 90], and that was great. They're killing it.

**What's it been like opening for Guns N' Roses?**

We did one show with them here that was like a Caesar's Palace thing, but we did six or seven stadiums with them in Europe. The first night was in Poland, and it was my first stadium experience. They're not lying when they say that if you walk away from your monitor, the band feels like they're in another ZIP code. But the magic of the night was getting to watch Guns N' Roses from the side of the stage. I was so close that I had Axl's in-ear monitor mix in my head. Looking out at that audience was incredible.

**Before those shows, you toured with Slash. Have you ever jammed with him?**

No, I haven't. When we opened for Slash, it was so early in our career. We didn't get a lot of face time with him. He did some photos with us, and he ran into some of the band and said, "You guys are great." By and large, he's a bit of a mystical creature. [Laughs]

**Now that you're playing bigger places, have you changed your performance style?**

I try to be authentic. Any time I think, "I have to do this now," I try not to do it. The music opens me up, and whatever comes out comes out. It's a process: I'm self-conscious for the first song, and then that fades away. By the third or fourth song, I'm in full expression mode.

**Any changes to your gear to accommodate larger venues?**

When we toured with Mammoth last year, I brought out a second Silver Jubilee half-stack that I used as an overdrive pedal. I would hit the A/B switch and use the amp



as my boost. It was pretty blistering.

**Because of the pandemic, you recorded your first album remotely with Nick DiDia. It must feel good to work in person with him again.**

Oh, definitely. We did the EP with him in Australia, where he lives, so we went back there with him this time. It was a bit different because he's got a new studio, a much bigger place. Our whole thing with Nick was, "We know who we are and what we sound like — what's next? How can we widen this thing?" We just wanted everything to be better. We wanted to add more instrumentation without it sounding artificial.

**Can you talk about any of the new songs?**

I don't want to give too much away, but we've got some bangers and some down-tempo stuff. There's more Southern rock. We've got some acoustic guitars, but we're not an acoustic band. There's more colors, but we've got the rock sound as the core.

**As a guitarist, are you drawing inspiration from any new sources?**

I've been listening to more Eric Gales. I just met Joe Bonamassa, and he's great. But Eric is something else. He's got such soulfulness and he's so exciting.

**What about the guitars on the album? Are the majority of them Les Pauls?**

Yeah. I got an amazing gift recently; Gibson sent me a 2021 heavy relic'd lemon drop '59 from the Custom Shop. That thing is spectacular. I swore by my '58 from 2003, but live I defer to the lemon drop. It's got more high-end bite. It's already worn out, so I don't have to worry about bumping it. I used both of those guitars along with a '59 double-cutaway Junior from the Custom Shop.

I also had an actual '64 ES-330, a '66 335, and there was an old Strat — I can't remember the year. For one solo, I used a Greco Les Paul. We used some 12-strings and some acoustics. I played a Dobro with a slide on one song. I don't think I used the same guitar for solos that I did on the main parts; that's always been a thing with me. There's a lot of cool guitar sounds. I think people will dig it.



The Undertones perform on *Top Of The Pops* in London in 1981; [from left] John O'Neill, Damian O'Neill, Michael Bradley and Feargal Sharkey

[right] Damian O'Neill onstage in Leeds, England, December 9, 2011

## Positive Undertones

**BECAUSE WE FELT LIKE IT, WE ASKED THE UNDERTONES' DAMIAN O'NEILL ABOUT THE NORTHERN IRISH ROCKERS' OUT-OF-LEFT-FIELD 1981 ALBUM, *POSITIVE TOUCH*. THANKFULLY, HE OBLIGED US!**

By Mark McStea

**►** WHEN THE UNDERTONES released their third album, *Positive Touch*, in 1981, it marked a distinct change in direction for the Northern Irish punks. They broke through with the all-time punk classic, "Teenage Kicks" in 1978, followed by a string of hits and two albums that were very much in tune with the rough-and-ready punk ethos of the era. The Undertones always had strong pop sensibilities, but *Positive Touch* pushed those elements to the forefront — with an overt Sixties influence in the mix — and is now viewed as something of a lost classic.

The Undertones are still active as a band, touring regularly with all of the original lineup still intact, save for the substitution of Paul McLoone for original vocalist Feargal Sharkey, who left the band in 1983. Damian O'Neill, the band's lead guitarist, has released a number of solo and collaborative albums since 2000, and is now promoting his recent, largely instrumental solo album, *An Crann*.

***Positive Touch* was a substantial stylistic shift for the band. Was that deliberate or just a natural evolution?**

We'd just signed a big, new deal with EMI Records after leaving Sire and we thought this album was going to do really well. I think we thought it was almost like a more "grown up" record that was going to propel us to another level. Unfortunately it didn't, sales-wise. [Laughs] We didn't deliberately say we weren't going to write songs like "My Perfect Cousin" any more; it was partly a product of what we were listening to at the time — bands like the Teardrop Explodes and Dexys Midnight Runners, who I particularly adored. Another band that seemed to set us off on a different path was Orange Juice, who supported us on a U.K. tour. We really loved the sound they were getting from their Gretsch guitars, which prompted me and my brother, John, to find some Gretschs. We actually got a great deal and bought three old Gretschs for £1,000 (approx. \$1,400) in a second-hand music store — a Country Gentleman,

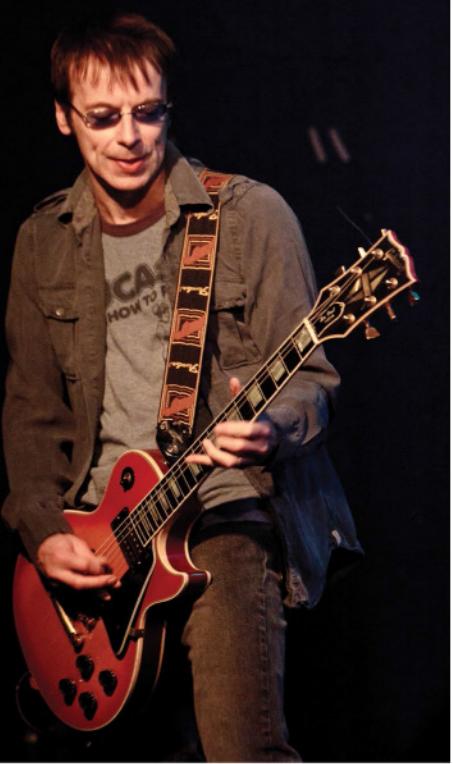
a Duo Jet and a Chet Atkins. Imagine how much you'd pay now for those three! There wasn't any real interest in Gretsch around 1980 in the U.K., though. When John started writing, the Gretsch sound really affected what he was coming up with.

**Was the whole band looking to change direction or was it driven by the songwriting?**

We all wanted to change. I don't ever remember any discussions about our direction. We were all enthusiastic about it and thought it was definitely the direction we should be going in.

**Did the songwriting process differ for *Positive Touch*?**

I think that was a problem — for the first two albums we had all the songs written and it was just a matter of knocking them out when it came to recording them, but by this record, the writing had become a bit of a struggle, with us coming up with songs in the studio as we didn't have enough mate-



**"I played a Japanese CSL Les Paul copy on 'Teenage Kicks' but, ironically, I still think it's the best sound I ever got on a record"**

rial. I think you can tell that from listening to the album. "Life's Too Easy" is a perfect example where we had three songs that we welded together with everyone's ideas, but I think maybe we should have just dropped that. Previously, John would have brought a lot of his songs in quite fully formed and we'd all contribute to the arrangement.

**Was it always your intention to add extra instruments?**

The Dexys influence was what made us think about using the brass players, but once we had them in the studio we just thought that since we were paying them anyway, we could get them on a few more tracks.

**There is quite a strong Monkees feel about "Crisis of Mine."**

That riff? Yeah, I guess so. I think there's also some Love in there as well. I was listening to the Seeds, the Standells and the Left Banke a lot prior to recording *Positive Touch*. When we started off, we were into the Sixties R&B like the Stones and Them and the MC5 – particularly the *Back in the USA* album. I was also a huge fan of

Dr. Feelgood and Eddie and the Hotrods. When punk came in, we basically just sped up all our songs. I think the MC5 were also an influence on *Positive Touch*, where John and I worked out a few dual-guitar things, where we'd play different parts that kind of worked off each other in the way that Wayne Kramer and Fred "Sonic" Smith would do.

**How were you tracking down the music you were discovering back in the early Seventies?**

It was very much a case of reading the weekly music papers, seeing something that sounded interesting then sending off for it by mail order. It was hard to get a lot of the music in Northern Ireland. We also had a good friend who was quite rich – he was a doctor's son – and he'd buy all these amazing albums and let us tape them, like the Doors, the Stooges and the *Nuggets* compilation albums. I think it made finding music more exciting as it felt like nobody else in the world knew who they were.

**How did the guitar parts divide themselves? Were you always the lead player and John the rhythm?**

Before *Positive Touch* I guess I did most of the solos, but we'd both play hooks and things like that. Johnny Thunders was one of my heroes and he was always an influence on my solos. I think *Positive Touch* saw us divide the responsibilities between us for solos.

**Did you all go out and spend a lot on gear when the first success came in and the money started to improve?**

Yeah, we went out and bought real Les Pauls. I played a Japanese CSL Les Paul copy on "Teenage Kicks" but, ironically, I still think it's the best sound I ever got on a record – I never equaled it. [Laughs] It probably cost less than £100 in 1976 when I bought it. I've still got it; maybe I should pull it out and use it on a few songs.

**How did you view the album at the time? Were you happy with it?**

Yes. We thought it was a great pop record and we were really pleased with the way it turned out.

**How about now, looking back at it?**

I think we tried to be a little bit more sophisticated, but there are a few songs I think were a bit patchy. I think the production also lets it down a bit; it's a little flat and small sounding. Roger Bechirian had produced our first two albums, but I don't think he did us any favors with his work on *Positive Touch*. We always had total control

over who would produce our records; he did a good job for the first two albums, but we did have doubts at the time over whether to use him or not. We had a band vote and he got in by the skin of his teeth. [Laughs] I still think it stands up well overall. It was a band trying to find its feet and it had courage; we were breaking free from our past, and of course, that doesn't always work, but we still do some of the songs live. *Sin of Pride*, our fourth album, is the one I have problems with, looking back.

**With the songs – the arrangements in particular – getting a little more complex, did it present issues playing them live?**

No issues, really. I played keyboards on some of the songs, and we also took the brass section out with us as we were making decent money, which was great because we got them to add brass to some of the older songs that didn't have it.

**Was there a lot recorded that you didn't use?**

No – nothing, really. Years later, though, when we had the album digitized, there was an extra instrumental track on there that none of us had any memories of. It was kind of good, but I don't think it'll ever see the light of day.

**The first album was a really happy, upbeat, joyous explosion of catchy instant classics, whereas *Positive Touch* doesn't have the same optimistic vibe. Is the difference just the passing of a few years, the maturing of the band or a sense of changing perspectives on what the whole success thing was really like once it hit for the band?**

I think you're right; there is maybe a bit of sadness about the record even though it is quite poppy. I think we were all a bit unsure about things musically and there was a lot of tension in the air in Northern Ireland with the Troubles, the hunger strikes, etc. – 1981 in particular was a bad year – so it was a different time. We were living in it, and you can't really ignore it.

**What's coming up for you and the band?**

We're still touring around the world, and we still play a few songs off *Positive Touch* in the set, so they've definitely stood the test of time for us. I'm also going to be going out to promote my new solo album, so there's plenty happening. I would say that I never thought, way back in 1978 when we had the first hit, that I'd still be talking about music over 40 years later. I feel very lucky to have been able to have a career doing what I love.

"I didn't want to become a cover band [playing] 'Purple Haze' or 'Hey Joe,'" Marcus Machado says



# Marcus Machado

WHEN HENDRIX IS CHILD'S PLAY, THE ONLY PLACE TO GO IS UNCHARTED MUSICAL REALMS

By Jim Beaugez

**► LEARNING THE SONGS** of Jimi Hendrix is a rite of passage for guitar players as they woodshed and work to master the instrument. But some get there earlier than others — like Marcus Machado, who treated students and parents at his own kindergarten graduation to a cover of "The Wind Cries Mary."

For the legend's 80th birthday in 2022, he organized a sold-out celebration of his music at Cafe Wha?, the Greenwich Village spot where Chas Chandler discovered Hendrix in 1966. Machado recruited musicians like Juma Sultan, a percussionist who played with Hendrix at Woodstock, and curated a set heavy on songs from his *Band of Gypsies* era.



## AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS** D'Angelico Bedford SH
- **AMPS** Fender Twin Reverb, Fender Princeton

"I didn't want to become a cover band [playing] 'Purple Haze' or 'Hey Joe,'" Machado says, "so I took some of the deeper cuts and put my own spin on it."

The well-established rock, funk and soul guitarist expresses the influence of Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Prince — as well as hip-hop luminaries A Tribe Called Quest and J Dilla — not by copying their styles, but by soaking up inspiration and making genre-blending music of his own. After establishing himself on his 2015 EP 29 and debut long-player *Aquarius Purple* in 2021, Machado now uses his collaborations with jazz-R&B artist Jon Batiste, and rappers Pharoahe Monch and Pete Rock, to step out of his usual lane.

"With Jon, it's like free range," he says. "Of course, you have to learn the material and know the structure of the song, but overall I'm free to improvise and do what I do," he says. "Me and all the other musicians in the band, we really complement each other."

Machado's latest projects take his wiry

**"I'm pushing the envelope, progressing, just trying something new, and trying to create my own sound"**

funk playing to new heights. He scored *Black Pop: Celebrating the Power of Black Culture*, a documentary released in June and spearheaded by NBA star Stephen Curry, and his 2023 album *Blue Diamonds*, which soundtracks the film by Patrick House.

*Blue Diamonds* is psychedelic soul, I like to call it — you have your Curtis Mayfield influence, but then you also have Latin vibes and percussion," he says. "There's an orchestra and a whole range of R&B, funk, soulful stuff."

The vinyl-only LP showcases Machado's songwriting and production chops as much as his guitar playing. "It's still guitar driven, but I'm pushing the envelope, progressing, just trying something new, and trying to create my own sound."



## That time Judas Priest's Richie Faulkner jammed with Tool

**CHANCES ARE,** IF you got a message from Adam Jones inviting you to play with Tool in front of 20,000 people, it wouldn't take very long for "Yes" to come out of your mouth. Then, a few seconds later, you might realize you've potentially set yourself up for a spectacular failure — unless, of course, you do your homework. It's the kind of opportunity that screams for some intense preparation.

That's exactly what happened to Richie Faulkner, who guested on "Jambi" with the progressive metal titans at Nashville's Bridgestone Arena on January 29, 2020. The second track from *10,000 Days* packs all kinds of twists and turns in its sprawling seven-and-a-half minutes — enough to throw even a well-drilled diehard or seasoned veteran off-course.

"It was pretty daunting... let's just say it wasn't like jamming some AC/DC," Faulkner says. "I got a call from Cesar Gueikian at Gibson. He knew Adam, but I didn't. He basically told me Adam was a big fan of my playing, amazingly, and asked if I would be up for getting up to jam on 'Jambi' when they came through."

"I said, 'I'd be honored!' without really thinking. I put the phone down and then it dawned on me, like, 'Hold on a minute, what have I done?!!' I knew the song but didn't know it well enough to get up in front of 20,000 people."



## PHOTO OF THE MONTH

"This photo is from the *Texas Flood* album-release party at Fitzgerald's in Houston, June 20, 1983," says Texas photographer Tracy Anne Hart. "Stevie Ray Vaughan is playing his single-pickup Strat, 'Yellow,' which was customized for him by his dear friend, Charley Wirz, owner of Charley's Guitar Shop in Dallas. (When Wirz died a few years later, Vaughan wrote 'Life Without You' in his honor.) The Strat's previous owner, Vince Martell of Vanilla Fudge, had the body hollowed out to put in four humbuckers. Stevie said the guitar had a particular bell-like tone... Unfortunately, I can't recall what song he was playing when I took this photo!"

TRACY ANNE HART  
theheightsgallery.com

[Laughs]

Faulkner spent the next week or so learning the track in his home studio so that he could keep up with Jones and his cohorts. And while he jokes that some of these practice sessions saw him "almost throw up because of how technical the song is," on the evening of January 29, he brought another level of pentatonic shred to the Tool masterpiece. At one point, the two guitarists even harmonized with each other, adding new layers to the dramatic octave

bends heard on the original recording's lead section.

"Adam was so gracious," Faulkner says. "I only had to play half the song and I still messed it up at one point. After the set, I told him I thought I'd made a fuck-up and he said, 'Oh no, I think that was me!' He was just being nice. Of course it was me that messed it up. [Laughs] They were great to play and hang out with. That production and the way they connect with their fans is unreal..."

As well as the once-in-a-

lifetime chance of joining Jones and the progressive metal masterminds in front of an arena crowd, Faulkner also struck up an ongoing friendship with the fellow Les Paul devotee. Who knows, maybe we'll see him pop up in Nashville with Tool again.

"Adam's great; I just spoke to him last week," Faulkner adds. "He's become a good buddy. He's a great artist who's awesome to bounce ideas with, always happy to share advice. I've got a lot of time for him!" — Amit Sharma



## WILL THERE BE AN OINGO BOINGO REUNION?

"Danny [Elfman] has more or less said that a reunion will never happen. He's just not interested. But the rest of us love playing together, and that's why we've been doing the 'former members' tribute thing. We play pretty often, and it's all the members of Oingo Boingo except for Danny. We've been doing that for around 15 years, and we're especially active around Halloween because that's when interest in Boingo spikes"



# STEVE BARTEK

The former Oingo Boingo guitarist talks "Dead Man's Party," his early days with future Skynyrd guitarist Ed King, upcoming shows with Danny Elfman and a lifetime of scoring films

By Andrew Daly

**G**UITAR HEROES COME in all shapes and sizes, but the imagery often associated with the "greatest" ax-slingers always seems to coincide with bombast, pomp and circumstance. But there's another side of the proverbial pillow. Don't believe us? Just ask former Oingo Boingo six-stringer Steve Bartek.

Throughout the Eighties, Bartek played sideman to Boingo's founder, vocalist and primary songwriter,

Danny Elfman. And if the duo's exploits had stopped there, to be sure, their legend as champions of all things quirky and alternative would be set in stone. But in truth, cuts such as "Weird Science," "Fool's Paradise" and "Dead Man's Party" were just the tip of their musical iceberg.

"The chemistry between Danny and me was immediate," Bartek tells *Guitar World*. "It was the kind of thing where we connected on many levels.

We had similar musical interests and loved injecting ethnic elements into our work. And Danny had ventured to Africa and brought back all these African instruments, some of which we used on our albums. So we had a shared mindset for sure."

Elfman was a deft songwriter and inventive multi-instrumentalist. But without Bartek, who "filled the gaps" in Elfman's seemingly endless creativity, what happened post-Boingo might never have come to pass. And what happened was a succession of hyper-successful film and television scores such as *Back to School*, *Beetlejuice*, *The Simpsons*, *Edward Scissorhands* and so much more.

And in retrospect, it makes sense, given the eclectic nature of Bartek's resume. Considering he'd gone from a teenager playing flute in psych-rock band Strawberry Alarm Clock to sling Ed King's Gibson SG to unleashing unruly yet jangly riffs with Oingo Boingo, why wouldn't he make the jump to helping score some of the most significant films in history?

Still, despite his immense success, Bartek keeps a level head when articulating his longevity in a business that thrives on chewing up and spitting people out: "Longevity is a tough thing to sort out. I'm still here because I've always insisted on trying things that seem just out of my reach. I like to push myself, and doing so still excites me.

"I've thrived while doing things that I never thought I'd be called on to do," he adds. "And each time that happens, I say, 'Well, I can't do that.' But then I force myself, and it works out. I've always had to push away the temptation to say, 'Hey, I'm just a guitar player; I shouldn't do that,' I learned a long time ago that I need to be prepared to do anything to survive as a musician. And so, if an opportunity arises, and it makes sense, I go for it."

### What inspired you to first pick up the guitar?

It was probably the Beatles. But I have to say I was a flute player before I heard them. But then the Beatles showed up, spurring my brother and me to pick up the guitar.

Oingo Boingo's Steve Bartek with his Gibson Les Paul goldtop in 1982

"BEING AROUND ED KING CERTAINLY DID IMPACT ME... I BOUGHT MY FIRST SOLIDBODY ELECTRIC

**Your style has always struck me as unique. Did the flute inform how you approached the guitar?**

I think, in retrospect, yes. Because I took flute lessons from third to sixth grade, I had a concept of music notation, melody and everything else. So when I took up the guitar when I was 11 or 12, I think I looked at it slightly differently than other young kids at that time. From the beginning, I was told, "Steve, you're looking at the guitar as if you're playing the flute," which I don't think was bad. The flute allowed me to approach the guitar from a more melodic sense, which, admittedly, is sometimes hard to find in my old recordings. But I like to think of myself as a melodic player, and I think my early training on the flute certainly lent itself to that.

**How did you become involved with Strawberry Alarm Clock?**

Right around the time I started playing guitar, my neighbor was George [Bunnell], and he asked me if I'd like to record with this band that he was starting, along with a few other guys, called Strawberry Alarm Clock. So, I went down and played flute on four or five songs while they were recording the first album. But the funny thing was my mom wouldn't let me officially join the band because I was only 15. [Laughs]

**But you still managed to grab four writing credits, including "Birds in My Tree," "Strawberries Mean Love," "Rainy Day Mushroom Pillow" and "Paxton's Backstreet Carnival."**

That was incredible for a young kid like me. I remember George and I would sit in my bedroom, find phrases or things from books or song titles and write songs. I'd say we wrote maybe a dozen songs or so, and it just so happened that Strawberry Alarm Clock needed four for the album. So we played them all for the rest of the band, and they recorded them. But they changed the titles to more psychedelic things, as you mentioned. The songs we wrote had nothing to do with strawberries; that was about incorporating that whole vibe into the songs.

**Ed King, who later went on to play with Lynyrd Skynyrd, notably played in Strawberry Alarm Clock. Did his style impact you?**

I think it did. I didn't think much of it at the time, but being around Ed certainly did impact me. And something a lot of people don't know is that I bought my first solidbody electric from Ed. It was a Gibson SG that he'd used as his main guitar in Strawberry Alarm Clock. He used it during the double guitar solo in "Strawberries Mean Love" and for many other things. And speaking of that solo, I think it impacted me significantly. The idea of interacting with another guitar player became a big part of my life.

**Did you use that SG on any notable recordings, and do you still have it?**

No. I got the guitar before I could do any substantial recordings. And again, no, I don't have it anymore. I wish I did, but I gave it to a friend who was down and out and has since disappeared. But I also gave it away because while I thought it sounded great and felt pretty good, I was a very aggressive player. So if I bent the neck a bit or got overexcited, the guitar would easily fall out of tune. At the time, it seemed like an instrument that would constantly go south on me, but now I wholly regret letting it go.

**How did you meet Danny Elfman?**

I was friends with a guy named Peter Gordon, the brother of Josh Gordon, who played trumpet in Boingo from '73-75. Josh was playing with a theater group called the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo, and they needed a guitar player. The guy they had before me — whose name I can't remember — was basically a Django Reinhardt specialist. But Danny was trying to turn Mystic Knights into a group that could handle doing theaters. So Josh auditioned, and I found they needed a guitar player through him. I auditioned for Danny, and... the rest is history.

**Considering your history with the flute and Boingo's theatrical tendencies, how did you best impact the band from a guitar perspective?**

Danny trusted me and shared some of the responsibility of ensuring we had something the band could play. Again, we had a shared mindset, so he'd be writing songs, and then he'd ask me what I thought — and there'd be this back and forth. I ended up writing most of our horn parts and ensuring all of that was in order when

it came to rehearsal. So Danny trusted me to help him communicate what he wanted and to help form his songs in the early stages. And that informed how I approached my guitar parts. The fact that I had a technical background and knowledge probably filled up some of the holes within Danny's creativity.

**Dead Man's Party is perhaps Oingo Boingo's most well-known album, and "Weird Science" is probably its most famous track. Do you remember putting it together?**

That was actually a very fun one to do. I remember having to detune my guitar to play that little riff and the hook in the middle because I had to play it down one octave. And then the fun of being able to jam out on the end and do all kinds of wild stuff was terrific. I also recall we wanted to do a sort of dance version, so it was a one-off deal. It came together quickly; the whole song took one or two days.

**"Dead Man's Party" features an extremely quirky riff. Did you or Danny write that?**

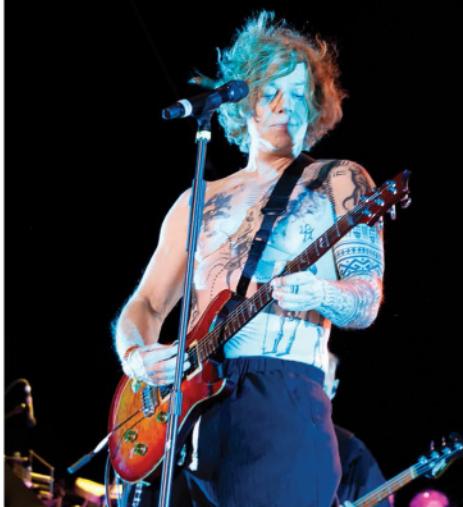
That one was Danny's composition. I think he started that tune with a drum machine and then based the whole thing on some African Highlife stuff he'd heard while traveling through Mali. I then added the horn stuff, and we banged it out as a band. But Danny had made a sequence with his little drum machine that had custom sounds that he created himself, and that's where that riff spawned from. And the bass part is composed of a continuous bass loop that keeps going, which I think is part of the unusual and disarming nature of the song.

**What guitar did you use for the Dead Man's Party sessions?**

My main guitar at that point was mainly a Les Paul. I had a '69 goldtop reissue with some deluxe pickups. Not the high-output pickups, but the smaller humbucking pickups. I think that guitar was great for songs like "Dead Man's Party" because it gave me a much cleaner tone — even though I turned up the amp for the introduction to make it more distorted for the first riff on the recorded version. But the rest of the album is all fairly clean guitars, which was intentional, to emulate that African Highlife style that Danny was shooting for.

**FROM ED. IT WAS A GIBSON SG THAT HE'D USED AS HIS MAIN GUITAR IN STRAWBERRY ALARM CLOCK"**

Danny Elfman [*left*] and Steve Bartek perform at the Coachella Valley Music And Arts Festival in Indio, California, April 16, 2022



### **How did you manage to balance all those horn arrangements with your duties on guitar?**

That's a good question, but I have no idea. [Laughs] I guess I did what I thought was right and felt good. Going back to "Dead Man's Party" and "Weird Science," I had just gotten a Mac, and I remember trying to write out all the arrangements on that, which was major technology in the Eighties. I had this really crude software that let me write it all out, but because it was so crude, mistakes did happen. I accidentally wrote an eighth note, and when it came in, I listened to it and went, "Oh, I'm glad I made that mistake; I like that much better."

### **Oingo Boingo was notably featured in Rodney Dangerfield's cult 1986 comedy, *Back to School*. What was that experience like?**

As I recall, Danny was hired to do the score, and I think we did the live performance because of that. But I could be remembering wrong, meaning we might have been hired to do the appearance and then the score stemmed from that. [Laughs] That aside, working with Danny on that score was a lot of fun. It was the second "bigger" film score we'd worked on, and I thought I'd be a smart aleck. So what I did was try and do what's called a "transpose score," and — long story short — I failed. A lot of questions and crap came from that to the point that I never

tried to do that again. That's my greatest memory of that whole thing.

### **Can you explain to us what did go wrong, specifically?**

It would be easier just to ask what I hated about it. [Laughs] That's a tough one because there were so many wrong things. But there were also things that I thought were wrong, but ended up being right. And that's a theme that followed me even when Danny and I did the *Beejuice* and *Batman* scores. But I remember the first day we had a famous conductor there, and he was just tearing apart everything we did to the point that I was almost in tears. And this was early on, and I looked at the page and was just like, "Everything is wrong. I did this completely wrong." But luckily, Danny ended up firing the guy and everything was fine. But before that, all I could think was, "Man... I really fucked up."

### **Is there a dividing line between being a composer and a guitarist for you?**

There might have been in the past, but I just see myself as a musician these days. And that's important now because every musician has to do everything they can to survive. I'm lucky enough to have been allowed to try a different avenue, and it's worked out. Fortunately, my career trajectory has allowed me to not just be a guitar player. I'm not sure where I'd be if it didn't happen that way.

### **You and Danny appeared at Coachella recently. Is that something you plan to continue?**

Coachella was wonderful. We did it again at the Hollywood Bowl last Halloween, and I think we're about to announce more appearances like that in San Diego and Irvine, California. So yes, we'll do that again. It's such a joy to be a part of those shows because it involves all the music we've done. And that means I get to conduct a small orchestra on stage while doing the *Batman*, *Edward Scissorhands* and *Simpsons* scores. It's a true encapsulation of our entire career. And then we do "Dead Man's Party" at the end, which is special, too.

### **While you've recently come full circle with Strawberry Alarm Clock, Oingo Boingo remains dormant. Is a reunion in the cards?**

I think Danny has more or less said that a reunion will never happen. He's just not interested. But the rest of us love playing together, and that's why we've been doing the former members tribute thing. We play pretty often, and it's all the members of Oingo Boingo except for Danny. We've been doing that for around 15 years, and we're especially active around Halloween because that's when interest in Boingo spikes... It's interesting because it is a tribute band, but with original members, so we are essentially paying tribute to ourselves. **GW**

**"MY MOM WOULDN'T LET ME OFFICIALLY JOIN THE BAND BECAUSE I WAS ONLY 15"**



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In Flames' Chris Broderick  
[left] and Björn Gelotte in  
action in December 2022

# Stoking that Fire

In Flames reignite the death metal fire with *Foregone*, an album that marks ex-Megadeth master Chris Broderick's recording debut with the band

By Jon Wiederhorn Photos by Neil Lim Sang

HEN THEY SURFACED from the darkened streets of Gothenburg, Sweden, in 1990, In Flames were among the pioneers of Swedish melodic death metal, combining the speed of fellow countrymen Dismember and Entombed with the guitar harmonies of Iron Maiden and Judas Priest, injecting the genre with a newfound virtuosity that inspired scores of other acts, including American metalcore bands like Killswitch Engage and Unearth.

By the early 2000s, however, In Flames weren't blazing quite as brightly. They slowed down their songs, curbed their aggression, incorporated more melody and drew from elements of alternative rock and industrial, causing many of their early fans to jump ship. In Flames didn't care. They enjoyed playing death metal for about 10 years, then became more inspired by other, more experimental types of metal. That's exactly what they delved into between 2002 and 2019 — and in the process, they attracted a larger fanbase.

"We've always been lucky enough to do whatever the fuck we wanted," says guitarist and main songwriter Björn Gelotte. "We don't ever go into an album with anything in mind, but we decided early on that we never want to repeat ourselves, and we've had the opportunity to make so many records, so we've always tried to make the process interesting and challenging."

The follow-up to 2019's *I, the Mask* marks yet another departure — at least it's a departure from the commercial metal they've written over the past 17-plus years; *Foregone*, the band's 14<sup>th</sup> full-length studio album, is fast and frenzied — pretty comparable to the melodic death metal In Flames released in the late Nineties. *Foregone* isn't exactly a return to form, since there are still clean vocals and the songs are more structured than those on the band's first five records. At the same time, fans who have missed the savagery and velocity of 1997's *Whoracle* and 2000's *Clayman* should be thrilled with the rapid tempos, buzzsaw riffs and fleet-fingered leads of *Foregone*.

"I don't think that the difference in the songwriting is necessarily that extreme; it's more a matter of how we packaged and arranged the songs," Gelotte says. "I've always enjoyed fast songs, and as we were going along on this album, we liked the big, heavy stuff we were coming up with and decided we should make something heavier and more metal sounding than the previous couple of records."

*Foregone* marks the In Flames recording debut of lead guitarist Chris Broderick (ex-Megadeth, Act of Defiance), who has played live with the band since 2017, when Niclas Engelin left. And while all the rhythm parts on the album were written and played by Gelotte, Broderick's multi-faceted, neo-classical and technical thrash-based runs provide a welcome contrast to Gelotte's slower, more hook-laden solos. As In Flames gear up for the summer festival season, Gelotte and Broderick discuss Broderick's leap into the Flames, how his seven-string guitar blends with Gelotte's six-string, the obstacles the band navigated while making *Foregone*, and why Gelotte hates being in the studio.

**Did writing *Foregone* take you back to the late Nineties, when you released the Gothenburg melodic death metal classics *Colony* and *Clayman*?**

**BJÖRN GELOTTE:** Not much, because how I write and arrange are so different now compared to how I did things back then. I like to think everything through these

days, and we didn't do that in the beginning. It was full-on riff after riff without much thought about structure or even how to be able to recreate it live. Chris [Broderick] is obviously a wizard, so it didn't take him long to learn those older songs that we still play. But sometimes I don't understand the arrangements anymore and I have to work hard to play them because they almost sound wrong to me now.

**Was this new level of aggression on *Foregone* a reflection of surviving the pandemic and creating music during a period of fear and instability?**

**GELOTTE:** Perhaps it was. I didn't think about it at the time. I was just writing what came to me. But I think I was fueled by the frustration not just of the world turning upside down, but of not being onstage. Playing live is my absolute favorite thing — not recording. Recording sucks. It's hard work, and I'm not in a band for the hard work. I'm there to enjoy myself doing shows. And that was all gone for two years. So, in hindsight, that might have been part of the reason for the level of intensity in the songs.

**Chris, were you an In Flames fan before you joined?**

**CHRIS BRODERICK:** I grew up in this hole in Colorado, so I wasn't exposed to a lot of different kinds of metal. I just heard what they played on the radio. But when I was touring with Jag Panzer, [the label] gave us access to the warehouse and I was looking at all these shelves full of CDs. The first one I picked up was In Flames. That was my first exposure to Scandinavian metal. And from that, I discovered At the Gates, Meshuggah and Scar Symmetry, and that all became a big influence.

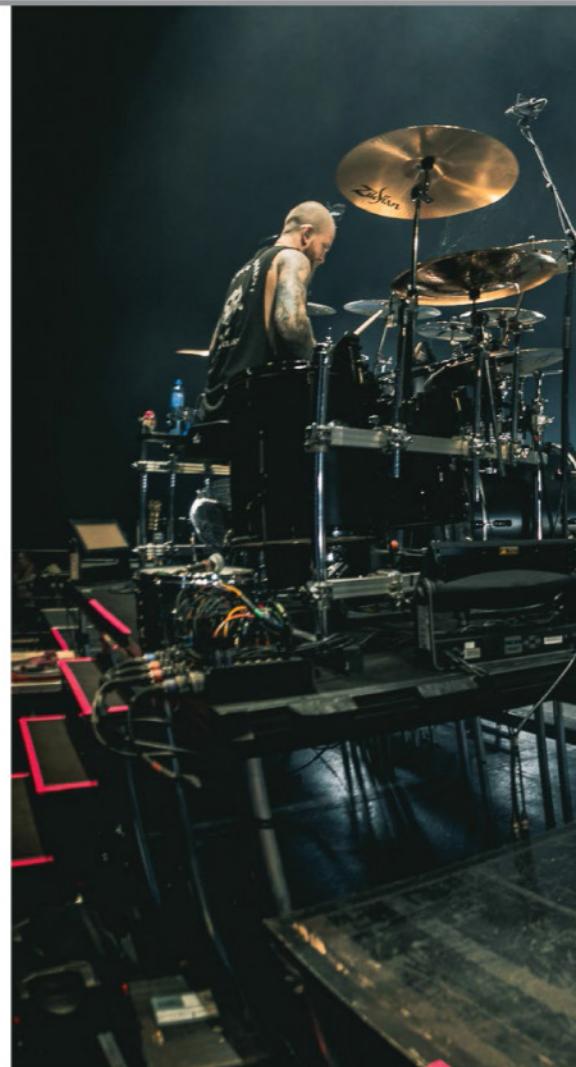
**Were you able to incorporate any of the chops you learned from Swedish metal into Megadeth?**

**BRODERICK:** I think everything you like can't help but influence you. It was never an intent, but you internalize it, and it becomes part of your personality.

**When did you first meet In Flames?**

**BRODERICK:** They toured with Jag Panzer and Iced Earth in 2002. To me, they were the cool guys on the tour. I was a dorky nerd playing my guitar and they were this happening band. We got to know each other, and then when they would come through town, I'd go see them and we hung out and became friends.

**Did they ask you to join or did you call**



**them when Niclas Engelin left the band?**

**BRODERICK:** In the beginning of 2019, I heard through a friend that In Flames needed a guitarist to fill in on tour. They asked me if I'd be interested. I thought it would be awesome. I would get to tour with my friends who I haven't seen in a long time. It came together very fast, and everything took off from there.

**Vocalist Anders Friden told *Sticks for Stones* that Engelin "had to stay home to deal with some personal things" and called you "48 hours before [you] had to leave, and he went to the hospital."**

**More recently, in June 2023, bassist Paul Bryce Newman, who joined in 2017, quit and was replaced by ex-Dillinger Escape Plan's Liam Watson. Why so much turn-around?**

**GELOTTE:** In Flames has always been an awesome band to tour with when people are at 100 percent. But as soon as that feeling is not the same anymore, it starts to deteriorate. There's obviously so many layers to everything, but I'll just say that you



[from left] Tanner Wayne, Gelotte and Broderick in late 2022. "I've been pigeonholed as a solo lead player, so it's fun to work with Björn, especially on harmonies," Broderick says



## "It was like I had my teacher with me; I learned so much from [Chris Broderick] every day"

Björn Gelotte

can't force somebody to tour, right? So even though the situation was shitty, we came out stronger in the end because now we don't have any negative feelings about anything anymore. We're all out there knowing we're doing this together.

**You seem level-headed about the situation, considering how Niclas left you in the lurch. Do you think he's as accepting of what happened?**

**GELOTTE:** I will not speak for Niclas, but it was a difficult situation because not only is it something involving a work colleague, it's

something with a friend. You share so much together when you're in a band. That part will always be really, really hard to think about. But if you look at it from a musical perspective, I would say we're in a better place, playing-wise. Vibe-wise, everything is for the better.

**Did you have a lightning round of auditions to find a full-time replacement for Niclas?**

**GELOTTE:** There wasn't time. We were really in a weird place because the tour was not only announced, it was already on.

Our crew was in the U.S., and we were getting ready to fly over. We didn't know what to do since we are a two-guitar band. We talked to management, and they gave us a couple of names of people that were available. As soon as we heard Chris' name, I knew we were good. 'Cause I know of nobody who works harder and has the ability to learn songs quicker than Chris. And that developed into a really cool relationship for me because it was like I had my teacher with me, and I learned so much from him every day.

### **What has Chris taught you?**

**GELOTTE:** Just stuff about technique, warmup routines, different ways to do things. I'm not a natural lead guitarist and he's a master. He picked up the songs so quickly, we developed our own versions of them live. He would say, "Okay, you play this. Can I do this instead?" Even though we've known each other for so long, we never really played together, so to be able to work together like that was incredible.

**BRODERICK:** It has been fun for me because I've always loved dual guitars and trying different things with the melodies and the harmonies. A lot of times, I've been pigeonholed as a solo lead player, so it's fun to work with Björn, especially on harmonies. Even if we don't use them in the songs, we'll work on them backstage and incorporate them with little things that we write.

**Chris, what was the biggest adjustment when you joined In Flames?**

**BRODERICK:** Seeing the relaxed nature of everybody, because I'm used to being in an environment where you've got to... How do I put this? I'll just say it was great to be in a position where there was no real pressure on me to make sure things were done right. I adjusted my playing based on what I knew I needed to work on. Björn has a really good right hand for rhythm, so I've had to up my game in that area. But he just let me do my thing and handle anything I needed to do to integrate what I do into the band. And



that has left us with more time to develop friendships, and now we really get to have a lot of fun onstage.

**GELOTTE:** I love it because I don't need to think about anything onstage but what I'm playing, and that hasn't always been the case. I've had to worry about what other people were going to do. I've never worried about Chris.

**Chris, you play a seven-string guitar and Björn plays a six-string. How do you make the two work together?**

**BRODERICK:** Björn will tune down to C standard. I actually take my seventh string, the B, and tune it up to C and tune the rest of the strings in C standard.

**GELOTTE:** It's really cool that he can use his first string to pull off a lot of super high-pitched notes that I could never do with C standard tuning. It's refreshing to hear his solos.

**When did you start working on *Foregone*?**

**GELOTTE:** We did the majority of the early stuff in a four-week session before Christmas 2021. Then after a break, we got back together in mid January and sat down and started making actual demos. We don't make 30 songs and then pick 12. It's always about getting the right stuff all the time and making a record we're super comfortable with — something you want to hear from

track "A" all the way to the end. We worked again with [producer] Howard Benson for four to six hours a day. The sessions were really intense, but super-productive, and I still had the energy afterwards to go back home and continue writing to get ideas together for the next day. We did most of the recording in two and a half months.

**You recorded at West Valley Recording Studios in Woodland Hills, Los Angeles. Was that enjoyable for you?**

**GELOTTE:** We're really comfortable with Howard and the way his team works. We bounced ideas off each other really well and he was really into the new songs. But it was intense. I worked for all those weeks and months, and I rarely did anything else. I sat in front of a computer with a guitar in my lap for hours and hours. But that just means we can finish everything quickly and we don't have to spread it out over two or three years. Also, the fact that bands started playing a little bit after the pandemic made us feel like we saw the light at the end of the tunnel, and it was not an oncoming train. The world was opening up a little bit, which was extremely inspiring for me because I could see live shows, and then, all of a sudden, there was a real reason to make another record.

**Chris, did you plan to play on *Foregone*?**

**BRODERICK:** When Björn told me they

were starting to work on an album, I thought, "I hope he asks me to play a solo or two." Then, all of a sudden, he brought me into the studio and put me to work. I laid down a decent amount of soloing on the CD, so I was really happy about that.

**GELOTTE:** We've had some guest solos before, but having Chris doing that as an integral part of the band was really special.

**Did working quickly help you make a more spontaneous album?**

**GELOTTE:** No, it just helped us finish everything, in like, three months. We didn't cut corners or anything. We just worked really, really hard. But right now, we're sounding so great and it's such a joy to walk onstage.

**Has self-belief and motivation kept In Flames going for 30-plus years through lineup changes and shifting metal scenes?**

**GELOTTE:** I've always done this because I love it. I never had a backup plan. I never went to college. After grade school, I did two years as an electrician, but I never wanted to end up as an electrician. I want to be in a band, and it's incredible when I think about how long I've been able to do this with my friends, who have been like my family. There's so much more that we can do, what we can achieve, and how we can sound. The sky's the limit. **GW**

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# Bare Knuckle



Trey Hensley [*left*]  
and Rob Ickes

# SIX BLAZING BLUEGRASS GUITARISTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT (BESIDES BILLY STRINGS AND MOLLY TUTTLE!)

**F**ROM THE ICONIC roots planted by Bill Monroe to innovators like Billy Strings and Molly Tuttle, bluegrass continues to thrive. The traditions expand, but they never stray far from their foundations. The genre's contemporary players are as likely to cite Ralph Stanley as they are Eddie Van Halen among their influences. Selecting only six guitarists to profile was a challenge for *GW*'s editorial team. Search YouTube to watch these guitarists shine, and each will lead you to more, and more, and more...

BY ALISON RICHTER PHOTO BY JEFF FASANO

## BRAD DAVIS

**Who He Is:** Solo artist, session musician, songwriter, producer, instructor and one of *Guitar World's* "Greatest Texas Guitarists of All Time" [Holiday 2022 issue]. Nicknamed "The Shredder" and recognized for his "double-down-up" technique (a form of *economy picking* whereby you perform a mini downstroke sweep across two adjacent strings, followed by an upstroke), his credits range from Marty Stuart to David Lee Roth. Davis' new trio, with bassist Craig Langford and drummer Stephen Ritter, has been described as "Joe Satriani and Tommy Emmanuel meet Billy Strings."

**What He Does:** "My flat-picking family brothers did not accept my playing style. Steve Kaufman spoke against it because he felt I was attempting to replace traditional down-up-down. Joe Carr [*Country Gazette*], my first real bluegrass teacher, said, 'What are you doing? Don't do that. That's weird!' I also asked my 'grass guitar hero, Tony Rice, if he used a double-down-up pattern in a repetitive sequence. He said, 'I use down-down-up-up once in a while, but never in a repetitive sequence.'

"After studying my heroes Rice, [Clarence] White, [Norman] Blake and [Dan] Crary, and even my colleagues [Bryan] Sutton, [Colby] Kilby, [David] Grier and others, I realized I was on an island with this technique. A few years later, Kaufman's camp attendees requested me to be [part of the] guitar faculty at [Steve Kaufman's *Acoustic Kamp*], and Joe Carr hired me to give a double-down-up clinic at Levelland Music College in Levelland, Texas."

**How He Does It:** "My technique was influenced by metal/rock, for sure. I stumbled onto my new way of picking with my right hand after hearing Eddie Van Halen's ripping guitar on 'Hot for Teacher.' I took my flat pick and worked hard to mimic his style. I was shocked when I saw him solo for the first time on a TV special and realized he was tapping with both hands and not using a flat pick. I also realized my technique was similar to a drummer's paradiddle.

"Being a session guitarist for so many years is an incredible opportunity, no doubt, and required me to play a myriad of styles to meet the needs of the song and producer. My session work created a lot of confusion for me. I was all over the place with tracking records for other artists, and I knew I needed to focus on my technique, but the bills have to be paid, right? This manifestation moment raised its head back when I began working for Sam Bush. Sam wanted me to 'expand the use of my technique, be myself and rock 'n' roll.' I am so looking forward to shredding up the future."

**Gear:** Brad Davis Signature Alvarez, 1993 Gretsch 6120, 1969 Fender Tele with B-bender, 1992 Ernie Ball Silhouette

## ANDY FALCO

**Who He Is:** Guitarist, singer, songwriter, producer and one-fifth of Grammy winners the Infamous Stringdusters. Most recent solo album: *The Will of the Way*. With the Stringdusters: *Toward the Fray*.

**What He Does:** "I'd say my style is less of the delicate, floaty type of bluegrass guitar playing and more of an all-in approach. I like to really dig in, which probably comes from all the years playing on a microphone in loud bars where you had to play hard to be heard. I developed my style by playing as much as I could at jam sessions and gigs. Every social event or family gathering at the time would have a jam session involved. I'm lucky to have two brothers who also play, so there was always an opportunity to play with people."

"I never quite engaged in the discipline of learning someone's entire solo, although that is a really great way to learn. I would take bits and pieces of things I heard that sounded cool to me, like maybe the way someone played over a certain change or something, then I would incorporate that into my solos. I was gigging a lot at night and working during the day at that time. I didn't really have time to woodshed full solos, so I would work on just the phrases that sounded particularly special and different to me, and learn just enough to get a little of that particular flavor to add to my vocabulary. On the gig or in a jam I would try to fit it in, and usually it would morph into its own lick by the time it became part of my musical lexicon."

**How He Does It:** "I came to bluegrass in my late 20s, which is probably much later compared to most in the genre. Until then, I was playing mostly electric guitar influenced by the Grateful Dead, the Beatles, the Allman Brothers Band, Jimi Hendrix, etc., which led me to the blues. I got into artists like B.B. King, Buddy Guy, Albert King, Freddie King, and then David Bromberg, who, probably along with Jerry Garcia, were my first connectors to bluegrass. I got turned on to Michael Bloomfield, who became my favorite and was a huge influence on my electric style.

"When I started really playing bluegrass, I was trying to shed the blues and rock parts of me to sound like a bluegrass guitar player. Eventually I realized it was all a part of my musical DNA, and fusing those styles into my bluegrass playing was actually a good thing and helped me find my own sound, my own unique voice. Now I feel like my acoustic and my electric playing are not separate, but one and the same, and whatever I'm playing, I try my best to serve the song, which is always the most important part of the job."

**Gear:** Bourgeois Dreadnought on *Toward the Fray*. Bourgeois Large Soundhole OM with Madagascar Rosewood, Bourgeois Rosewood Dreadnought, Bourgeois Custom Nova.

## TREY HENSLEY

**Who He Is:** Guitar prodigy, instructor, International Bluegrass Music Awards nominee, vocalist and songwriter who made his Grand Ole Opry debut at age 11. Half of acoustic duo Rob & Trey with Rob Ickes, the 15-time International Bluegrass Music Association Dobro Player of the Year. Their new album, *Living in a Song*, arrived February 10.

**What He Does:** "I would classify my style as mostly traditional bluegrass flatpicking. I grew up listening to a lot of the greats — Doc Watson, Maybelle Carter, Tony Rice, Larry Sparks — and trying to play those licks from listening to records. Starting in my teen years, I became pretty obsessed with metal. Since then, I have been hugely influenced by metal and metal guitar players. My introduction to heavier guitar playing was through a friend letting me borrow his iPod with a Van Halen album cued up. I started digging from that point on and got way into Randy Rhoads through Ozzy Osbourne, Marty Friedman through Megadeth, Adrian Smith and Dave Murray with Iron Maiden, Dimebag Darrell and, of course, players like Zakk Wylde, Steve Vai, Kirk Hammett and James Hetfield, and the original legends like Tony Iommi and Ritchie Blackmore. I'm a big Slayer-head, too, and also got way into bands like Converge, the Dillinger Escape Plan, Revocation, Mastodon and Power Trip several years ago."

**I DEFINITELY FEEL LIKE THAT METAL GUITAR STYLE OF PLAYING STARTED INFLUENCING MY PLAYING, KIND OF BY OSMOSIS**

**How He Does It:** "I definitely feel like that metal guitar style of playing started influencing my playing, kind of by osmosis. I play by ear and can't read music or tablature, so I just like to absorb what I'm listening to and see if it comes out in my playing. I still listen to so much metal that it just sneaks into my playing. I've always wanted to sit down and formally learn how to really play metal guitar and start a band, but I think I'll stick to the acoustic for the time being! I definitely feel there is a similarity in metal and bluegrass, especially for guitarists. There's an intensity to it that seems like a common thread in both styles."

**Gear:**

**Living in a Song** studio guitars:

- 1954 Martin D-28
- Chuck Tipton T-style
- Producer Brent Maher's Gibson J-200

**Live rig:**

- 2021 Martin D-41
- Berly T-style

ALLEN CLARK (HULL) MANDY FLOCK (DAVIS)

GEORGE TENT GROGAN (FALCO)

[clockwise from top]  
Andy Falco,  
Sierra Hull  
and Brad Davis



"WHEN I STARTED  
REALLY PLAYING  
BLUEGRASS, I WAS  
TRYING TO SHED  
THE BLUES AND  
ROCK PARTS OF ME  
TO SOUND LIKE  
A BLUEGRASS  
PLAYER"



"METAL,  
BLUEGRASS,  
CLASSICAL, JAZZ  
— SO MUCH  
OF THE ENERGY  
AND SKILL OF  
THESE MUSICAL  
FORMS  
ARE THE SAME"



Ronnie James Dio  
[left] and Tony  
Iommi perform at a  
U.K. Black Sabbath  
show in 1992

[facing page]  
Rainbow's Dio  
[left] and Ritchie  
Blackmore in Los  
Angeles in June 1975



“ONE WAY MY BLUEGRASS PLAYING IS UNIQUE IS BECAUSE OF THE LONG THREE- AND/OR FOUR-NOTE-Per- STRING LICKS I’LL THROW IN”

## SIERRA HULL

**Who She Is:** Singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist and featured demo artist for *Guitar World*. Made her Opry debut at age 10, played Carnegie Hall at 12 and signed a record deal a year later. Two-time Grammy nominee and four-time winner of IBMA Mandolin Player of the Year. Most recent release: *25 Trips*.

**What She Does:** “I grew up very much surrounded by bluegrass musicians playing the traditional repertoire — fiddle tunes, songs of Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs, the Stanley Brothers, etc. It gave me a great foundation to really fall in love with and learn the roots of the music, while at the same time I was hearing and discovering more modern influences of the time like Alison Krauss, Béla Fleck and Nickel Creek.

“When I think of my own playing, it really is a combo of those worlds. I may have a more modern, clean sound as a player overall, but without the influence of the first-generation bluegrassers, I certainly wouldn’t have the same foundation as a musician.”

**How She Does It:** “Yes to other genre influences for sure, though not specifically metal.

Maybe one day I’ll do a deep dive there! It’s funny, though, because metal, bluegrass, classical, jazz — so much of the energy and skill of these musical forms are the same. To the listener, they are quite different on the surface, but the technicality, rhythmic importance and musical expression through either improv or interpretation that it takes to play these genres well is shared.

“I love all types of music and try to really be an open-minded listener to a vast variety of styles. I am a believer that everything we listen to and learn comes back out in the music we make in one form or another.”

### Gear:

#### Mandolins

- Acoustic: 2009 F5 Gibson Master Model (main instrument)
- Octave: 2009 Weber with F5 Body
- Octave: 2019 Clark with Archtop Body
- Electric: 2018 5-String Rono Baritone Electric
- Electric: 1964 Fender Mandocaster

#### Guitars

- Bourgeois LDB-O
- 2021 Bourgeois Dreadnought

“I GREW UP VERY MUCH SURROUNDED BY BLUEGRASS MUSICIANS PLAYING THE TRADITIONAL REPERTOIRE”

## BRYAN SUTTON

**Who He Is:** Bandleader, producer, Artist-Works instructor, mentor, studio musician, solo artist, Grammy winner and nine-time IBMA Guitar Player of the Year. Most recent release: *The More I Learn*.

**What He Does:** “I’d describe my stylistic goals as a blend of influence from Doc Watson, Tony Rice and Norman Blake, along with my own improvisational sense. The influence from these icons of the style help me with things like tone, groove and overall musicality. My improvisational voice is something that’s always changing and hopefully growing and maturing.”

**How He Does It:** “I’m a huge fan of all gui-

Bryan Sutton and  
[facing page]  
Jake Workman



"I'M SUCH A FAN OF EDDIE VAN HALEN'S FREEDOM AND POWER AND JAMES HETFIELD'S RHYTHMIC FIRE AND GROOVE"

tar styles and enjoy allowing what I pick up from other styles to find their way into my playing. To just name a few, I'm such a fan of Eddie Van Halen's freedom and power, Julian Lage's playfulness and vulnerability and James Hetfield's rhythmic fire and groove."

**Gear:** 1936 Martin D-28, Bourgeois Slope D, Harmony Sovereign, Epiphone Seville Model o

## JAKE WORKMAN

**Who He Is:** Lead guitarist for Ricky Skaggs' Kentucky Thunder, multiple IBMA winner, solo artist, songwriter, educator, studio musician, multi-instrumentalist. Graduate of University of Utah with a degree in Jazz Guitar Performance. Most recent release: *Landmark*.

**What He Does:** "My bluegrass playing style definitely isn't a clone of any other player, though it honors the bluegrass tradition well in its own way, I feel. I've absolutely listened to and studied my favorite bluegrass players over the years — Tony Rice, Doc Watson, Norman Blake, Bryan Sutton, Kenny Smith, David Grier, Cody Kilby, to name a few — but was never wanting to become any one of them too closely. I rarely transcribed any of their solos in high detail; I would rather take more of the gist and then make things my

own. Doing this also allowed me to incorporate my influences from other genres. Before I played bluegrass, I was big into classic rock — anything from the Beatles and Creedence Clearwater Revival to AC/DC and Van Halen. I loved the Eighties shredders while in high school — Eddie, John Petrucci, Steve Vai, Eric Johnson and many more."

**How He Does It:** "I'm a huge fan of electric guitar playing in general. I'm intrigued by the possibilities for creative phrasing, the speed potential and the big stretches in the left hand. One way my bluegrass playing is unique is because of the long three- and/or four-note-per-string licks I'll throw in. I find them very useful for playing quick bluegrass runs, as they allow you to stay more linear, which can be helpful for playing at quick tempos.

"I also love gypsy jazz music and Irish music; honestly, so many of the various kinds of European music styles mesmerize me. The gypsy jazz right-hand technique showed me more about how to acquire big volume and tone with smart right-hand movement. I watched players like Bireli Lagrene, Gonzalo Bergara and Joscho Stephan on YouTube and listened to Django [Reinhardt] for some inspiration pretty regularly as I was

also studying bluegrass. I know musical and technical ideas spread back and forth naturally. I'm fascinated by the tenor banjo players in Irish music, such as Enda Scahill and Gerry O'Connor. The way they incorporate triplets and the various ornaments is super cool and can apply very well to bluegrass tunes as well.

"There are so many great genres of music out there. I'm constantly encouraging my students to listen to anything and everything that intrigues them. If they are studying bluegrass, I will, of course, recommend first to get a solid grip on the bluegrass playing that has come before — so much to study there — so that they can truly honor that tradition, but also encourage them to make things their own too. Borrowing ideas from these other genres is a great way to do that."

### Gear:

#### Live guitars

- 2019 Collings D2HA Traditional with Madagascar Rosewood

#### Recording guitars

- 2022 Boucher BG-152-GM
- 2022 Boucher BG-42-GM
- 2007 Collings D1AV. **GW**

# WITH A NEW SOLO ALBUM SHAKING UP THE AIRWAVES, **NITA STRAUSS** DISCUSSES THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING RISKS, STEPPING OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE AND NEVER SETTLING

by Andrew Daly

Photo by Jen Rosenstein

If YOU VENTURED over to Nita Strauss' Twitter account, below the image of the leather-clad gunslinger hoisting a radioactive green Ibanez JIVA over her shoulders, you'd find a Tweet that's been pinned in place since July 23, 2018. For five years, said pinned Tweet has been the very definition of the intrepid six-stringer, seemingly guiding her every musical move. But at the time, it was merely an answer to a simple question: "How did you get your start in the hired scene as a guitarist?"

"I played guitar for anyone who would have me," Strauss wrote in her 2018 Tweet. "Rock, pop, funk, metal, covers, originals... sometimes two shows a night with different bands. Went on tour for next to nothing. Built a reputation for being on time, professional and a strong performer... better gigs came with time."

When Strauss first penned that Tweet, she was 31. At the time, she was mere months out from a successful April 2018 Kickstarter campaign — which raised eight times its initial goal in two hours — that ultimately funded her first solo record, *Controlled Chaos*, released in September 2018. Her resume already included stints with Alice Cooper, the Iron Maidens, Femme Fatale and even as the house guitarist for the Los Angeles Kiss (Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons' arena football team). So at the time of *Controlled Chaos'* release, Strauss was undoubtedly a star on the rise, but no one could have imagined the shift into hyperdrive that came next.

"Someone recently brought up my pinned Tweet," Strauss tells *Guitar World*. "It came from someone asking me how I got my start. And I basically said, 'I played guitar for whoever would have me.' And that really was the mentality. I'd do funk, death metal, punk and folk gigs; it didn't matter. I built my reputation by playing different gigs with different bands. I had to do that because I knew that's what it took. And that's what it still takes; you can't just do the same thing forever. All you see me do is part of working to encourage that mindset."

# In the eye of the hurricane



Fast forward to the summer of 2023. Strauss is now 36. As has been the case for years, she affectionately goes by "Hurricane Nita." And most importantly, she's one of the most preeminent guitarists in the world. Still a member of Alice Cooper's band — though never to be thought of as just "Alice Cooper's guitarist" — Strauss' immense chops have forcefully been matched by her blistering work ethic and a boundless need for exploration that has seen her join the ranks of mega star Demi Lovato.

And so, in conversation with *Guitar World* in support of her second solo offering, *The Call of the Void*, when asked if she still sees herself as she did in 2018, Strauss pauses, clearly deep in thought, before saying, "I think that for a while now, I've been at a point where I get to choose what I do. But I was that other person for a long time where I would jump in with anybody that needed a guitar player. If I was available, I was there. But now, I can be more selective with what I do. I don't want to turn down gigs that inspire me because I don't have time. So I'm careful about what I choose to take on. I'm thankful for being in a position to do that now."



## "FOR A LONG TIME, NO MATTER WHAT I DID, I WAS SEEN AS 'ALICE COOPER'S GUITAR PLAYER'"

**Considering how busy you've been between Demi [Lovato] and Alice [Cooper], where did you find time to record *The Call of the Void*?**

I actually recorded the bulk of the music during the pandemic in 2021 and early '22. Since then, I've been tackling the task of finding different vocalists, making sure we can record on their schedules and that my album doesn't conflict with any releases they have coming out. That's been the major delay between finishing what I had to do, which was just playing guitar, and this record coming out.

**Did the delays lead to overthinking what you had in the can?**

I mean... I just naturally overthink everything. [Laughs] So it was probably a blessing that I kept thinking the record was about to come out because I didn't have the opportunity to pick apart my playing and performances. Because once I was finished, I was out of the studio and on to the next thing, you know? So as much as I would have liked to listen back and be like, "Well, maybe I'll change that; maybe I'll fix this and redo that," I couldn't because it was done, and I was off to the races. I could only wait for the vocalists to do their thing. The lag ended up being a blessing in disguise in that way.

**The first thing I noticed was how aggressive this record is. "Summer Storm" feels like a statement of intent.**



That's exactly why I have it as the first song on the record. It really does encapsulate who I am and where I'm at as a player now. On my first record [Controlled Chaos], "Our Most Desperate Hour" was that song. And I'd say that "Summer Storm" is that song for this record. If someone were to say, "Hey, Nita, I'd like to hear what you sound like as an artist," "Summer Storm" is what I'd play them. I'm glad I chose to have it be the first song on *The Call of the Void* because it really does come out of the gate hot, saying, "Here it is. This is what we came here to do."

**Tell me about your experience working with Lzzy Hale on "Through the Noise."**

Lzzy is obviously at the top of everybody's wish list. She's a powerhouse performer and an incredible vocalist. Anybody who has ever been around Lzzy will tell you she's an absolute gem of a human being. And being able to work with Lzzy ended up being one of the beautiful benefits of this album taking so fucking long. [Laughs] I reached out to her in 2021 while I was recording, asking if she would like to be on my album. Her response was, "I would love to, but Halestorm has an album coming out, so it's not the right time. Thank you so much for asking; I would love to do something in the future." But because we had so much time between Halestorm's album cycle and the delayed release of my album, I could ask her again a year later. So I'm glad my album was delayed because Lzzy knocked it out of the

park. Her voice is on another level.

**Lzzy aside, how did you decide which vocalists you wanted to work with?**

I wanted to have a good mix of generations and styles. I didn't want it only to have one field throughout. And it was cool to get to work with legacy artists like David Draiman and my long-time boss Alice [Cooper]. And there's Anders Fridén from the mighty In Flames, along with a group of up-and-coming talent and people from the current generation like Dorothy and Chris Motionless. The result is a wide range of styles — some radio-friendly tracks and some heavier songs. Overall, this record says a lot about who I am as a player.

**A lot of people have boxed you in as "just a shredder" or "a hired gun." Can you elaborate on the player you are outside of those labels?**

I think I'm a versatile player. If you look at the arc of my career as far back as my touring with Jermaine Jackson and the Iron Maidens to last year when I toured with Alice Cooper, Demi Lovato and my solo band in the same year, I've always wanted to be a guitar player who didn't fit into only one mold. I'm excited that I've gotten to break out of that throughout my professional life. And I'm excited that I also broke out of that on this record.

**I'd venture to guess that with versatility comes continued growth. How do you feel you've grown as a player?**

I'm literally going to write that down and hang it in my studio: "With ver-



satility comes continuous growth.” I love that! But for a long time — and this had often been the case leading into 2022 — no matter what I did, I was seen as “Alice Cooper’s guitar player.” It was always, “Oh, Alice Cooper’s guitar player did this” or “Alice Cooper’s guitar player did that.” Don’t get me wrong, I’m proud beyond belief to be Alice’s guitar player. But I also do my own thing. So if every headline says, “Alice Cooper’s guitar player has a song that went to number 1 on rock radio,” to me, that meant I had to do something to break the mold. So the last year was about me proving that even after successfully touring with Alice for years, I can still go out and re-establish myself and take risks.

**Hopping on tour with Demi accomplished that goal. How did it change you as a player, if at all?**

In terms of songwriting, touring with Demi gave me a fresh perspective on what makes a song a massive hit. I’ve been playing these massive Alice

Cooper songs for almost a decade, and that’s one side of how it’s done. But going out and working with Demi, where you have songs like “Cool for the Summer,” which is in the billions — with a *B* — in streams on Spotify, I’ve got a renewed sense that simplicity often makes these massive songs. And that’s something I want to carry into my playing as I write my next record. I plan to incorporate all these different experiences to develop my sound further.

**So working with Demi has allowed you to fearlessly tap into the mainstream pop side of things, whereas Alice keeps you grounded in rock.**

I think that’s a great way of putting it. And then, on the flip side, even though Demi is at the top of her game and one of the biggest stars in the world, to work with someone as seasoned as me during a time when she’s having a true expression of self

for the first time, maybe ever, has been important, too. We have to remember that Demi made this incredibly raw, authentic, hard rock, pop punk album [2022’s *Holy Fvck*], which she’s never done before. Bringing that to life with her on stage for six months was so cool. It’s so rare that you get to be beside someone while they’re experiencing a truly authentic experience after being in a spot where things were very manufactured. It was special to be with her as she went through that.

**Your mindset reminds me of Marty Friedman in many ways, which is interesting because he’s also on *The Call of the Void*. Has his trajectory factored into your thinking during your own career?**

Not explicitly, but that’s an interesting point. I love Marty. The first metal song I heard was “Trust” by Megadeth. That was my introduction to that style of music that we all love so much. The first time I heard Marty’s searing solo in “Trust,” I was like, “Whoa, what is this?” It really was my musical awakening to heavy music. So your comparison of me to Marty is very kind, as I’ve always been a massive Marty fan; I’ve always admired his fearless nature. A lot of people said there was no market for him in Japan, but just look at what he’s done on his own. He’s an

[left] Nita Strauss performs with Demi Lovato in Wheatland, California, September 22, 2022

[above] Strauss with Alice Cooper in Birmingham, England, May 30, 2022

inspiration in that, as an artist, there has to be a time when you draw a line in the sand and say, "I'm gonna do this because I want to, I'm excited about it and I like it." That is something that has to be okay. And even if fans don't follow you down that path, you still have to do it now and again.

#### **What was your experience like working with Marty on "Surfacing?"**

Working with Marty was unique compared to the other guest features. In most cases, I wrote a song and then handed it over to the guest to put their stamp on it. But with Marty, we sent a lot of riffs back and forth and worked on it together. I'd send Marty a concept, and he'd say, "Okay, I like it, but I don't know if it's exactly what we should run with. Send me some more stuff." So I just sent him a ton of demos and riffs and said, "How about you pick from these? Let me know what you think." And we ended up crafting this amalgam of different ideas that I had, which became "Surfacing." And I really appreciated the process because it was so cool not just to send him a song and say, "Hey, throw a quick solo on this." We got to create something together.

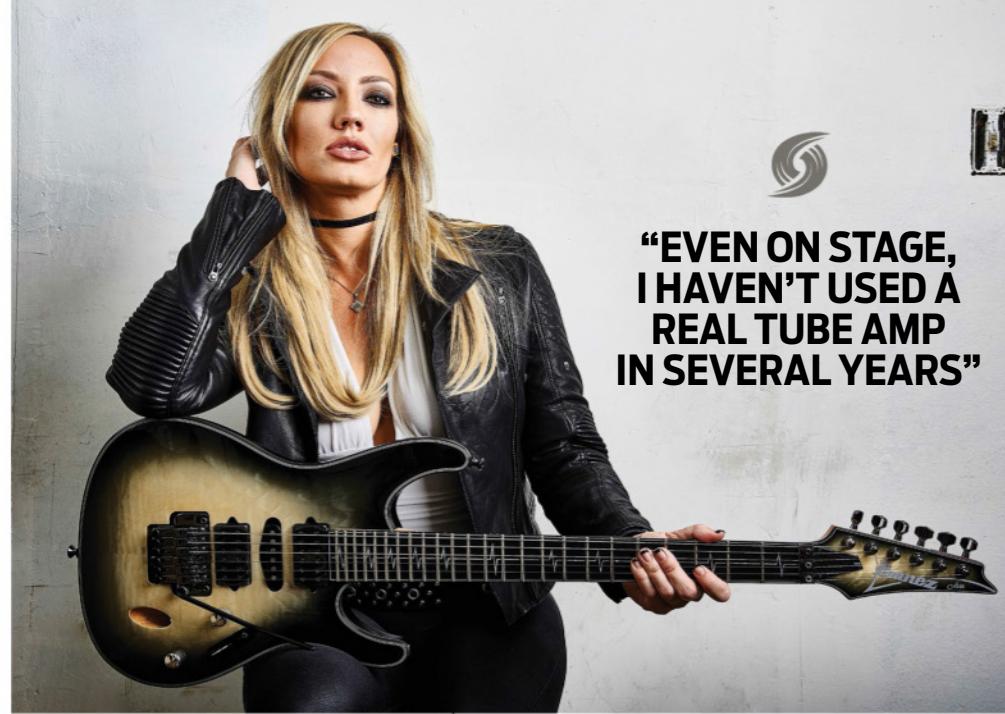
#### **Did you deploy your signature Ibanez JIVA while recording *The Call of the Void*?**

I used the JIVA for around 85 percent of the record. I also have a seven-string that was used on the Alice track "Winner Takes All"; I did that because I wanted to shake up the Alice Cooper track. A lot of people know Alice for what he's done, and the sound associated with that. So I said, "Let's put a seven-string on this track and have Alice sing over something super heavy that you wouldn't normally associate him with." Then I also have an Ibanez RG equipped with an Ever-Tune bridge, which is a great guitar for laying down rhythms in the studio.

#### **As I recall, you'd hit the pause button on your signature line earlier in 2023. Any change there?**

It's insane, but there are five guitars in the JIVA line now. There's the original JIVA, the JIVA10 and the JIVAJR, which is the more affordable one. And then there are the two Japanese models — the JIVAX2, which is black, and the JIVAX2-GH Ghost, which came out in April [2023]. The Ghost is a favorite of mine, and I'm very excited about it. And it's so cool because John 5 just came out with his [Fender] Ghost Tele [See page 74], and we're gonna play some shows together when Mötley Crüe tours with Alice. So you'll see my Ghost JIVAX2 and John 5's Ghost Tele.

JEN ROSENSTEIN



**"EVEN ON STAGE,  
I HAVEN'T USED A  
REAL TUBE AMP  
IN SEVERAL YEARS"**

#### **What was your methodology while designing the JIVA?**

I was definitely *that* guitar player who would bring three or four guitars to the studio. I'd be in a session and be like, "I'm gonna use this guitar for rhythms, this guitar for the solo and this guitar for the cleans." I didn't have that *one* guitar I could do *everything* with. I really wanted that. When I was making the JIVA, I was like, "I want a guitar that can shred, be heavy, fast and super easy to play." But I also wanted the JIVA to be my guitar for rhythms, cleans and all the rest, you know? So, Ibanez and I chose the tonewoods [*black quilted maple over African mahogany*] and designed the pickups [*DiMarzio Pandemonium for neck/bridge and DiMarzio True Velvet for middle*] with Larry DiMarzio to make the JIVA the most versatile instrument it could be. With the JIVA, you can do breakdowns and chugs without much feedback. And with the neck pickup, you can do beautiful soaring leads with almost a vocal quality. But you can also do pretty cleans, split the pickups, and even have a sort of Strat sound. It really does do it all.

#### **A versatile guitarist needs a versatile guitar.**

Bam! Tagline. [Laughs]

#### **What combination of amps did you use on *The Call of the Void*?**

We recorded everything direct, just for the ease of it. I was always traveling in and out, still playing [*Los Angeles*] Rams games and doing all kinds of different stuff, so that made life easier. I recorded everything

direct and then re-amped later. Even on stage, I haven't used a real tube amp in several years. With Alice, we have our Marshall settings programmed into our Kempters. But I have to say, there's a punch that you get from a real amp that is very hard to replicate with a plug-in or a pedal. But if it makes the sound I like, then I'd say it's good.

#### **As far as pedals, have you added anything noteworthy to your signal chain?**

The only pedals that I operated on the record were a wah and a DigiTech Whammy; everything else was done in preamp and post. But I do like a lot of effects; it was easier to take a DI and then re-amp later with the effects we wanted rather than print the effects into the session. Because if we did it that way and I wanted to change a delay or whatever later, it would be more difficult on the fly.

#### **It goes without saying that the last year or so for you has been nothing short of interesting. What are your most important takeaways now that you're on the other side of it all?**

It definitely has been interesting. But I think the most important lesson I've learned goes full circle back to what we talked about. Like I said earlier, you have to take risks as an artist. It's just so important to constantly be pushing yourself. Because if you stay in the same place forever, things will get stagnant. You can't just do the same thing forever. And so, a massive part of what I try to do is encourage young and seasoned musicians to keep stepping out of their comfort zones, take risks and never settle. If more artists do that, the scene will only be better for it. **GW**

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NELS AKERLUND FOR THE WASHINGTON POST VIA GETTY IMAGES

# GUY TALK

PAGE

51

GW

On the eve of his farewell tour, living legend BUDDY GUY looks back on his nearly 70-year career (and a particularly unforgettable Fender Bassman amp)

BY ANDREW DALY

# HE MIGHT NOT

have admitted it then, but when Eli Toscano signed a 22-year-old Buddy Guy to his first recording contract with Cobra Records in 1958, Toscano undoubtedly knew Guy was special. Unlike anyone before him, Guy reshaped the sound of the electric guitar, pushing the blues to its limits in the late Fifties and into the Sixties. Of course, when we look at the now 87-year-old bluesman on stage, years' worth of polka dot-tinged exploits come to mind. But in his early days, Guy was as mild-mannered as they come. Profoundly religious and hailing from Lettsworth, Louisiana, Guy's formative years were more about survival than chasing dreams. But it didn't take long for Guy to catch on with Cobra and later Chess Records as a session man, a period when he received his "first real education on guitar," he says.

"I was never someone who would jump out in front of Junior Wells or Muddy Waters," he adds. "When I walked in, I said, 'It's time for me to go to school.' And that's what I did. They'd put me in the corner, and when it was time to play, I'd play. And when it was time to learn, I'd learn."

"But I've always been quiet," Guy says. "I remember going into those studios with all these crazy, loud men who were all yelling. And whenever they'd see me in the morning, the first thing they'd say was, 'Oh, good morning, motherfucker.' And then, I'd go back in the corner, and when they needed me, they'd say, 'Come over here, motherfucker,' or 'Turn that guitar up, motherfucker,' or, 'Hey, I told you to play this differently, motherfucker. So I was 'Motherfucker,' but I remember thinking, 'Well, shit... I thought my name was Buddy.'"

By the late Sixties, having realized he had captivated the imagination of several young British bluesbreakers, Chess Records turned Guy loose. The result was 1967's *Left My Blues in San Francisco*, which saw to it that Guy's energetic style — which included the innovative use of a Fender Strat and featured hard-rocking yet blues-soaked sounds — was finally allowed to be laid to tape.

But despite his influence, Guy was unable to break through to the mainstream. He soldiered on for another 24 years before going dormant in the Eighties. But in 1991, well past 50, Guy unexpectedly found widespread success with 1991's *Damn Right, I've Got the Blues*.

Looking back, Guy recalls the difficulties resulting from waiting so long to find success, saying, "It was hard because *Damn Right, I've Got the Blues* was recorded when I was 55. I had gotten used to things being how they were and never expected anything big to come. I came from nothing, and to have *Damn Right, I've Got the Blues* do so well, all I could think was, 'Well... better late than never.' I've been living by that motto ever since."

In the years since, Guy has recorded a dozen more records, with 2022's *The Blues Don't Lie* being his most recent. At 87 — a full six years older than Paul McCartney and his generation — Guy's energy is still infectious,

his voice in fine form and his smile as wide as ever. And so, in early 2023, it came as a bit of a surprise that Guy — a man who has made a habit of playing at least 150 shows a year — announced his farewell tour. Of course, it had to happen sometime, but considering Guy is a man who has outlasted his contemporaries, the idea of a Buddy Guy-less touring circuit is hard to fathom. But Guy is unfazed, knowing his time in the sun has come and gone. To that end, he elaborates, insisting, "I'm not calling this a *full* retirement. It's just time for me to be done with traveling.

"I don't want to cheat people," he says. "I have a reputation for giving 100 percent, but I'm 87 now, and I can't kick my leg as high as I did when I was 27. [Laughs] I'll still do blues festivals and one-offs, but I can't tour the world anymore. I'm too old to be jumpin' from town to town on a bus. I'll still be playing guitar; I'll do that until I can't. And I'll keep making music, but I'm at the age where my heroes passed away. I've gotta keep that in mind."

It's comforting to know this isn't the end of the road for Guy, only an end to his wide-scale touring. Still, the knowledge that one of music's most effervescent personalities will be globetrotting no more comes with more than a hint of finality. As for Guy, he, too, is aware of the impending finish line. Having watched the likes of B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Junior Wells and oh, so many more strum their final chords and slay their final solos, Guy knows time waits for no one. Now more than ever, Guy is reflective as he looks back on a career bred through grit and determination.

And while it's undeniable that music as we know it will forever show the imprint of Guy's growling tone when it comes to special treatment, he is having none of it. "I remember growing up with people who I won't name, and we'd be sitting there eating a hot dog together as friends," he says. "Then they got a hit song, and it was like they had no idea who I was. I'd go up to them, and it was like we were strangers. I didn't know success could do that, but I swore I'd never do that. So I'm still the same Buddy Guy who used to pick cotton and hang out. I ain't never gonna be someone dif-

ferent. But people sometimes look at me and say, 'Are you Mr. Guy?' And I say, 'No, I'm not Mr. Guy. You can call me Buddy.'

Man, look — I'm just a guitar player who taught himself to play long ago. I never wanted to be treated no better than you or anybody else. I ain't gonna start now."

You've been performing at a breakneck pace for years. Why stop now?

Age is something I've been thinking about more and more. I watched all the old guys like B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters go until they got old. Often, when you watch older people playing shows, you think, "Man... they just don't sound the way they did when they were younger." I remember listening to some of my heroes when they got older



Buddy Guy in action  
in New York City,  
circa 1970

and thinking it wasn't the same. I don't want someone coming away from my show thinking, "He doesn't sound any good."

**How vital were guys like B.B. King, Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf in terms of developing your sound?**

They were everything. I would listen to a little bit of everything, man. But it wasn't just guitar music; if I heard a note on a horn, I'd try to play that with my guitar. If I was listening to gospel, I'd see what I could learn from that. And when B.B. came along, I loved his licks. I wanted to play a few of those licks just like he did, but I also knew I wanted to add something else. I wanted to add a little bit of lighting. I saw the guitar as being almost like Louisiana Gumbo. I put a little bit of everything in.

**Is it true that you signed your first recording contract with Cobra after winning a competition against Magic Sam and Otis Rush?**

A lot of people say that, and I've heard it, too. But the way I remember it is I sent a letter to Cobra, and I never heard anything. So I went in there and asked them, "Did you get my letter?" and they said they never got it. After that, I started playing some of the old blues clubs, and it was around that same time that Magic Sam and Otis Rush showed up. And I don't remember any competition; those guys were always patting me on the back, saying, "Hey, Buddy, hang in there and keep trying." I think they were the ones who spoke to the president of Cobra, a guy named Eli [Toscano], saying, "Man, you had better sign that mother-

fucker, Buddy Guy." Well, they signed me, and not long after, I did my first single ["Sit and Cry (the Blues)/Try to Quit You Baby"].

**In your early days, Chess often credited you as "Friendly Chap." Was that to keep the attention on the bigger artists?**

Yeah, I think so. Those guys were the hit-makers. They had big contracts, and they were the stars, you know? My job was just to back them up. They didn't want any attention on me. They wanted me to back them up and add whatever they needed for the record. Nothing more than that. And when the records came out, no one wanted Buddy Guy's name on the sleeve. No, sir. So they came up with the idea of me going by a different name. And they called me "Friendly Chap." I think the Chess brothers

initially hoped nobody would ever figure out who I was if they called me that. [Laughs]

**It's said that Cobra and Chess were initially reluctant to allow you to record with the same energy that you brought to your live shows. Why is that?**

I wanted to turn up and add some energy. But they weren't ready for that. And I can understand why because they made many hit records doing what they did. Having someone like me come along probably scared them. But I'll never forget something that happened in the Sixties when the Chess brothers sent old Willie Dixon to my house, saying, "Go get that boy and bring him back down here." And when I got down there, they had me come to their office, and all I could think was, "Oh, boy... they're gonna get rid of me now. I've really done it." But they said, "Buddy, I want you to kick us in the ass." And I said, "Why? What's wrong with you?" And they played some Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton licks for me, saying, "Buddy, these guys got this stuff from you."

**When you started playing in that style, it was far from common. What inspired you to push the limits?**

I had to find my own unique voice on the electric guitar. Because I had heard guys like B.B. King and T-Bone Walker, I said, "I'll never be that good. I've got to do something different from them or I'm done for." A guy like Guitar Slim was wild, and B.B. King had a left hand that could do things that were not of this earth. I knew I could never do any of that. So I told myself, if I can ever become any good at guitar, I'd like to act like Guitar Slim but play like B.B. King and T-Bone Walker.

**In retrospect, many people would argue that you were their equal, if not better.**

I don't know about that. Those guys had something special that they took with them to the grave. I ain't never gonna be those guys. I can try, but I ain't one to ever say I'm that good. But I did find my voice, and Leo Fender's Stratocaster guitar had a lot to do with that. But my first endorsement was with Guild, not Fender — but my amp was a Fender; it was a Bassman. And the first time I played Newport [Jazz Festival], Guild heard my amp, and they told me, "Buddy, keep that amplifier; we love the tone. Give it here; we want to take it back to our factory and reproduce it." Man, Guild had that amp at their factory for maybe a year, and they couldn't find the sound. They returned to me and said, "We can't figure out what Leo Fender did. Keep that amp, and don't ever let it go. Whatever he did with that amp is going to die with him."

**Have you changed your settings since then?**

I never messed with that Bassman amp. And after I switched to Fender guitars, I told Leo Fender how special it was, that Guild wanted it and not to mess with it. It sounded so good



## LOUISIANA FLOOD

Two vintage Buddy Guy tracks that had a major impact on Stevie Ray Vaughan's 1983 debut album

### "SIT AND CRY (THE BLUES)" (1958)

Guy arrived in Chicago with a Gibson Les Paul goldtop. Two days before his first recording session, though, the guitar was stolen, changing the course of guitar history. A desperate Guy borrowed \$160 from a club owner to buy a Strat, which he used on this, his debut single. The all-star band also included Willie Dixon on bass, second guitarist Otis Rush and future Chuck Berry sideman Odie Payne on drums. Although the tone is cleaner and more controlled than Guy would have preferred, his lead style was already well developed. At 2:17 there's a turnaround lick that Stevie Ray Vaughan clearly borrowed, and Guy's approach undoubtedly informed Vaughan's version of "Texas Flood."

The riffs to this song and Larry Davis' original "Texas Flood," released the same year, are similar, but Vaughan's lead fills sound more like Guy than Davis. Compared to the likes of B.B. King, Guy is noticeably busier. The licks between vocal lines have a tumbling quality, tripping over themselves with rhythmic variations.



Buddy Guy onstage in March during the 2023 Savannah Music Festival in Savannah, Georgia

[right] Guy with a Fender Stevie Ray Vaughan Strat in 2001

that all those British guys started using it too. The thing was, though, there was something special about that amp. I think it had something to do with the transformer Leo Fender put in it. Nobody could reproduce it.

**Do you still have that Bassman?**

I had it for years, but it got lost after I did some shows in Africa. I didn't realize it got left behind until I was on the plane, and I was devastated. I searched and searched for it but couldn't find it. But then, about five years later, we finally found it. But it had been sitting outside in the wilderness and was all rusted out. I had it fixed up, but all the parts were ruined. So when I got it back, it looked alright, but with all the redone electrical parts, it never sounded the same. I've still got it. It's stored away. But I don't play it much anymore because it doesn't sound like it did.

**Why did you switch from Guild to Fender?**

The first time I saw a Strat, I thought it was a joke. [Laughs] So I had gone down to New Orleans and saw Guitar Slim playing a Strat, and I had no idea



R. DIAMOND/GETTY IMAGES (ABOVE) PAUL NATKIN/GETTY IMAGES (RIGHT)

what to make of it. But I realized the hollowbody guitars I was playing needed to be babied because of the weather. God forbid one got wet; they'd swell up and break. Then I'd have to get them repaired, and they'd have all these nasty scars all over 'em like someone was chopping at them with an ax. So I turned to Strats because they didn't get overwhelmed by the weather. And I've stayed with them ever since.

#### How'd you come up with your classic polka-dot finish?

My mother would have a stroke with worry whenever I'd go out into the world. At the time, I was working at LSU [*Louisiana State University*], making nothing. I knew I had to do something different. So I decided to go to Chicago, but my mother was sick over it. So before I left home, I lied to her and said, "Don't worry, I'm going to Chicago. I can make more money there." Then I told her, "And when I make some money, I'm gonna drive back down to you in a big polka-dot Cadillac." That made her smile. But I regretted it because I never got the chance to tell her that I



lied to her before she passed away. So, I said, "You know what? I never did get that polka-dot Cadillac, but I can get a polka-dot guitar in her honor."

#### Is it true you were still driving a tow truck to make ends meet before recording *Left My Blues in San Francisco*?

Oh, you'd better believe it. I was driving that tow truck because it was the only thing I could do to afford anything. I couldn't make any money playing the blues until the British guys started getting big. That's when it came out that they were influenced by all of us guys. I'd play in the clubs, but I wasn't going to Europe like other black players who made a name for themselves by going there to make money. I had a family and couldn't do that. Only when the British guys came along did playing the blues become an honest living. That's when we were able to start playing the colleges. Before that, I couldn't make enough money playing guitar. So I said, "I'm gonna drive this tow truck in the daytime to feed my family." And I'd play guitar seven nights a week for pennies.

#### You recorded *Left My Blues in San Francisco* in 1967 — and 1991's *Damn Right, I've Got the Blues* was your breakthrough. Do you see either of those as your "definitive" album?

I don't know what the people who buy albums think, but I've always liked *Feels Like Rain* [1993] and *Skin Deep* [2008], which have a lot of songs that people request. I guess maybe those resonated with people. I even like the album I made last year [*The Blues Don't Lie*]. But at my age, people don't look for anything new; they wanna hear the old stuff. So I try to carry on with the type of music people want to hear and give them the old licks that can make the whole house stand still.

#### Regarding solos, is there one guiding principle you carry with you?

B.B. King once told me that he'd never play the same thing twice. He said, "If you come to hear me play, you'll never hear me play anything as I did before." So if you come and see a Buddy Guy show, you won't hear me intentionally try and do anything note for note. I might hit a note that sounds the same, and maybe it even is the same, but I ain't tryin' to. I don't care if it's a hit song or one nobody knows; I go with the flow and do what feels right.

#### Is there anything you'd go back and change?

No, I wouldn't change anything. Whatever I have achieved seems to have come later, but that's alright. I've always been someone who gives everything he has to what he's doing. When you come to see me, you know you're getting the best I've got. I know I ain't never been the best in town, and I see a lot of guitar players who are 10 times better than me. But I've always been the best I can be 'cause that is all I knew. I never wanted to be the best in town; I just wanted to be the best that Buddy Guy could be.

#### What will you miss most about touring?

Looking at all the good-looking women smiling up at me when I hit the right notes. [Laughs]

— Jenna Scaramanga



# CRÜE TO THE

MONSTER GUITARIST JOHN 5 DETAILS HIS ASCENSION INTO THE

TIM SACCENTI

Mötley Crüe



# 5TH POWER

RANKS OF **MÖTLEY CRÜE** BY JOE BOSSO PHOTOS BY ROSS HALFIN



**"AS LONG AS MÖTLEY CRÜE  
ARE AROUND, I DON'T PLAN  
ON LEAVING"**

# EARLIER THIS YEAR, JOHN 5 WOKE UP

from a dead sleep and had no idea where he was. He looked around, disoriented, blinking his bleary eyes. "Oh, my God. I'm on an airplane," he said to himself. Still not fully awake, he scanned his surroundings some more — the massive aircraft was a chartered affair, plush and roomy. All of the other passengers were stretched out, sound asleep. Then he started to scrutinize their faces. "Who are these people?" he thought. After a few seconds, he recognized guitarist Vivian Campbell, and soon he realized that all of the members of Def Leppard were on board. Not only that, but so were Vince Neil, Tommy Lee and Nikki Sixx of Mötley Crüe.

"I started freaking out," John 5 says. "I got up and went to the back of the plane to wake myself up." What at first seemed like an out-of-body experience soon became very real. The guitarist was winging his way from the U.S. to South America in spare-no-expense rock-star style as both bands, Mötley Crüe and Def Leppard, were about to begin their 2023 co-headline world tour.

But the guitarist was no mere guest on the flight; a couple of nights earlier, he had made his official debut as Mick Mars' replacement with a pair of warm-up shows in Atlantic City. Dispensing with the elaborate costumes and horror-goth makeup he famously donned during his years as Rob Zombie's lead axeman, John 5 adopted a stripped-down, modern Mötley look; wearing a black leather jacket and with his medium-length blond hair neatly slicked back, he resembled a badass biker as he expertly peeled off familiar riffs and solos during the Crüe's 15-song, hit-filled show. Grinning a wide, exuberant grin, he seemed to be having a high, heady time — as if he

were living out one of his wildest teenage dreams.

Which, in a very real sense, he was.

"These things are so strange to me," he says. "I'll be on stage with them, and I'll be like, 'I still can't believe this.' I'll start laughing when we're playing a song. The guys will say, 'What's so funny?' And I'll be like, 'This is just so weird.' We'll play 'Same Old Situation,' and it's so cool. Or we'll play 'Home Sweet Home' in front of 60,000 people, and I'll look at Vince and say, 'This is just like the video!'" He pauses, then adds, "This is where it's going to sound funny, because it sounds like a dream. I'm so worried that I'll wake up and tell my wife, 'Whoa... I had this dream that I was in Mötley Crüe.'"

## MAKING THE (CRÜE) CUT

John 5 comes to the Crüe as something of a name brand. As a solo artist, he's released a series of albums that highlighted his accomplished and inventive instrumental skills while reflecting his wildly eclectic tastes

(everything from bluegrass to molten metal). During much of that time, the guitarist (born John Lowery in Grosse Pointe, Michigan) also enjoyed an enviable run as one of L.A.'s most in-demand musicians. Before his 17-year stint with Zombie, he served as a key member of Marilyn Manson's band. In addition, he collaborated with David Lee Roth and has contributed to projects by a dizzying

*"I had to put this weird contraption on my guitar — it's called a Floyd Rose," John 5 says. "I was a Van Halen nut, so I had Floyds, and I know everything about them"*

and diverse array of artists — Rod Stewart, Garbage, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Lita Ford, Rick Springfield, Paul Stanley, Ricky Martin, Steve Perry and Alice Cooper, among others. One of his first pro gigs after he arrived in Los Angeles was playing guitar for pop-country singer k.d. lang on her 1996-97 world tour.

"To me, any similarities between any of the people I've worked with, whether it's k.d. lang or Mötley Crüe, it all comes down to one thing: I just love music," John 5 says. "Ever since I was a kid, I've loved music. It didn't have to be rock or a certain kind of thing. As a lot of people know, I watched *Hee-Haw* on TV. There were amazing players on that show. Anybody who could do anything very well — if you were good at your craft — I was excited about."

## THE CRÜECIBLE

JOHN 5'S ASCENSION to the Crüe fold comes at what could be a problematic time for the veteran band. When it was announced last October that Mick Mars was leaving the group as a touring member, a representative for the musician issued a statement to *Variety* that cited the guitarist's long struggle with Ankylosing Spondylitis (a form of arthritis that, over time, can cause some of the bones in the spine to fuse) as the reason for his departure. In the statement, it was said that Mars would "continue as a member of the band, but can no longer handle the rigors of the road." There was no firm word at the time as to a replacement for Mars, though it was widely assumed that John 5 would step in.

This was confirmed the next day when Neil, Lee and Sixx issued their own statement, saying, "No doubt it will take an absolutely outstanding musician to fill Mick's shoes, so we are grateful that our good



## TIME TO CHANGE VER STRINGS!

10 TIMES A BAND SWAPPED OUT THEIR FAMOUS GUITARIST WITH A FRESH FACE

BY ANDREW DALY

COVER FEATURE

WOULDN'T IT BE nice if we lived in a world where the original lineups of the bands we love oh-so-dearly stuck it out and stayed together for the kids?

It's a nice thought, but it's nothing more than a pipe dream. The grizzled reality is we live in a world where some of the most famous acts still take to the stage and have one, or even none, of their original members among their ranks.

This demands the question: how much are original lineups worth? While we can hope and pray that if our favorite bands lose a member, it's not anyone "important," history dictates that even keeping the essential members can be too much to ask. Still, we've also seen that replacing even the most seemingly integral cog in the wheel isn't impossible. And don't look now, but some of these replacement players have become fan favorites.

So the next time you gripe and complain about your favorite band featuring a new face, take a step back and remember — for better or worse, that band might not be here otherwise. What follows is a guide to 10 memorable replacement guitar players.

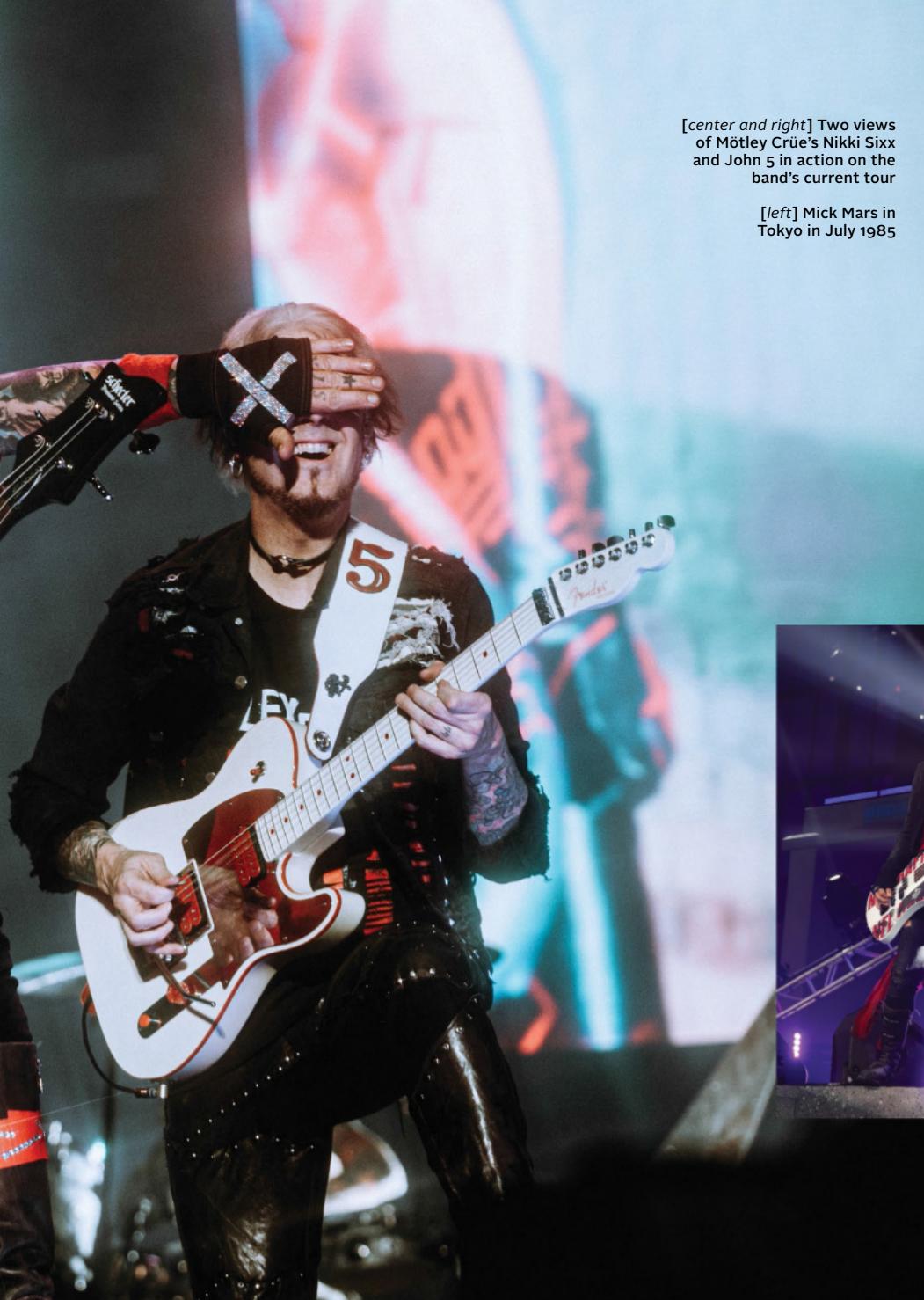


friend John 5 has agreed to come on board and join us moving forward." Notable in their statement was a line that read, "While change is never easy, we accept Mick's decision to retire from the band due to the challenges with his health."

And then all hell broke loose. In April, Mars filed a lawsuit against Mötley Crüe, alleging that the band had attempted to divest him as a major stakeholder in the group's corporation and business holdings. What's more, Mars alleged that the band

had engaged in a pattern of "gaslighting" him, belittling his musical and cognitive abilities, in an effort to oust him entirely. While an attorney for the band maintained that Mars' decision to cease touring equaled quitting the band outright, Mars fired back in an interview with *Variety*, saying, "Those guys have been hammering on me since '87, trying to replace me."

How this situation will be resolved remains to be seen, and it should be stressed that none of these issues were broached during *Guitar World*'s interview with John 5 (our discussion took place before Mars' lawsuit was made public). In the meantime, as the guitarist acclimates to his new gig, he remains the ultimate Mötley Crüe fanboy. He recalls how, as a budding young picker



[center and right] Two views of Motley Crue's Nikki Sixx and John 5 in action on the band's current tour

[left] Mick Mars in Tokyo in July 1985

## JOHN 5

John 5's big break came when he joined David Lee Roth's band for the recording of 1998's *DLR Band*. But his first true turn as a replacement guitarist came when he replaced Zim Zum in Marilyn Manson's band in 1998. While John 5's time in Manson's band ended in 2004, he's remained busy through his solo work and his membership in Rob Zombie's band. But most recently, the Telecaster-toting shredder has made headlines as Mick Mars' replacement in Motley Crue. With new music on the way and an ongoing tour, fans must accept that John 5's polarizing presence as a member of Motley Crue has only just begun.



## MICK MARS

While Mick Mars was present for Motley Crue's early hours, Greg Leon and Tommy Lee formed the sleaze titans. And there's no denying that the addition of Mars proved pivotal, as his fire-breathing antics defined the band's early sound. Furthermore, as the group's finest and most experienced musician and dedicated showman, Mars was also essential live, too. One listen shows that Mars' fingerprints are all over records such as *Too Fast for Love* (1981), *Shout at the Devil* (1983), *Theater of Pain* (1985), *Girls, Girls, Girls* (1987) and *Dr. Feelgood* (1989), making Motley Crue worldbeaters. And so, it's a crying shame that a combination of failing health, infighting and nasty legal proceedings saw to it

in the early Eighties, he missed out on one of his earliest opportunities at seeing his heroes live: "When they came to Detroit, they were opening for Ozzy. I was going to go — I really wanted to see the Crue — but it was on a school night so I couldn't go. I remember sitting in my friend's kitchen, and I said, 'Motley Crue is on stage right now.' I remember that vividly because I wanted to go *so bad*."

Putting a fine point on his unbridled admiration for the

band, he says, "It sounds kind of cheesy, but they're the soundtrack of our lives. Just like the Beatles were for a lot of people, or the Stones or anyone else — these songs have been in my head for as long as I can remember."

**Before you joined Motley Crue, you rubbed shoulders with the guys quite a bit. You and Nikki even formed a side band called L.A. Rats, which includes Rob Zombie, funny enough.**

Oh yeah. I've known Nikki for a very, very long time. We've been best friends — literally best friends, like we know everything we could possibly know about each other. We've done a lot of work together. I worked with him on "The Monster Is Loose," which was the title track

that Mars' 2022 departure came with heaping doses of finality.

## KANE ROBERTS

Finding himself amid a commercial nadir that came about through massive bouts of substance abuse, by the mid-Eighties, Alice Cooper was at an impasse. Sure, Dick Wagner had served Cooper well throughout the Seventies, but 1983's *DaDa* still plays as one of Cooper's worst records. Thankfully, with his mega-burly stature, aggressive nature and melodic-meets-metal style, Kane Roberts came along, making Cooper's following two offerings, *Constrictor* (1986) and *Raise Your Fist and Yell* (1987), his finest in years. Roberts didn't stick around much longer, going solo in 1989, but he did return in the fall of 2022 when Nita Strauss took a respite from Cooper's band.

## KELLEY DEAL

It's hard to imagine the Breeders without the presence of Kim and Kelley Deal. But if we dial back to the group's inception, Kelley was nowhere to be found. Truth be told, the Breeders' critically acclaimed debut, *Pod* (1990), featured Throwing Muses six-stringer Tanya Donnelly. As for Deal, she came along after Donnelly cleared off to form Belly. And it's a good thing considering the Breeders somehow managed to best *Pod*, releasing one of the Nineties' finest indie rock affairs in 1993's *Last Splash* to critical and commercial acclaim.

## LINDSEY BUCKINGHAM

Starting with Peter Green and Jeremy Spencer, Fleetwood Mac had run through several guitarists by the time Bob Welch occupied the position. But by 1974, Welch's time in the seat was also coming to an end, leaving the Mac without a guitarist. Luckily, Mick Fleetwood ran into Lindsey Buckingham (along with Stevie Nicks) at Sound City Studios, leading to the duo joining the band. The rest, as they say, is history. Albums such as *Fleetwood Mac* (1975), *Rumors* (1977), *Tusk* (1979) and *Mirage* (1982) are stone-cold classics. These days, Buckingham is away from Fleetwood Mac once more. Only time will tell if he'll weave his way back for a third act.

to Meat Loaf's album [*Bat Out of Hell III: The Monster Is Loose*]. That was amazing. We did "Lies of the Beautiful People" for Sixx: AM. We did *The Dirt* together and so many other things — L.A. Rats, of course. Nikki and I talk every day, like, 30 times a day. We're like two kids. We go to the mall and do stupid stuff. We run around and have fun. I've known Tommy forever, but I didn't know Vince.

### **Take me inside how you were asked to take over guitar duties from Mick Mars.**

There was never really any talk about it. It's funny because we didn't talk about business a lot. It was so much in our lives, so we didn't talk about it. We talked about music and bands and records we love, movies and things like that, but I wouldn't say, "Oh, Zombie, John 5 and the Creatures..." I mean, Nikki would say, "We're getting ready for the tour, and the tour's huge," and things like that. I don't even know how it all came about.

### **But at a certain point, Nikki must have said to you — I assume it was Nikki — "Mick is thinking of leaving. What do you think? Are you interested?"**

I was on the road, and they were finishing up their tour. We were actually missing each other a few times. Mötley were still touring, and I went right out with my band, the Creatures. There were times when I was playing a show in the exact same city as Mötley. I'd be three miles away in this large club while they were in a stadium.

At the end of the tour, Nikki was like, "You know, I think Mick's going to retire. A tour's coming up. We're gonna go to Europe and South America and do all this touring." He said, "Is this something you'd be interested in?" To be honest with you, I look at this as 'life is very short, and I want to experience as much as I can.' I was like, "Well, of course."

You know, this is my best friend. I know every single song. That's the other thing — I didn't have to learn any songs. I know them all. To get a new chapter, a new beginning in your life — what a gift it is. It's hard to explain. It's such an epiphany to receive a gift like this, to go, "OK, here we go."

### **You didn't have to think about it for a few days? Right away, you said you were interested?**

I said, "I'm interested" right away. This is how to say it: I'm still very, very hungry. I'm not ready to go, "Boy, what a great life." I was like, "Yeah, I'm very interested and I want to do this."

### **At the time this was going down, were you thinking of leaving Rob Zombie?**

That's a great question. No. We're friends. We're buddies. We love each other. He's the best guy ever.

### **Still, I imagine it was a hard decision, because as you said, Rob Zombie is a friend.**

It was a hard decision, yes. I thought I could do both. Even Nikki was like, "Well, maybe you can do both." Me, Rob, Nikki, Tommy — we're all friends. But life is short.

### **Was Rob understanding about everything?**

He was understanding. He understood because he's professional. It was hard because I never wanted him to be sad. That was tough, of course, because we were so close.

But I had to look out for myself this time. I had to take this opportunity.

### **Do you know Mick? Did you talk to him at all before you made your decision?**

I know Mick. We're good friends and things like that. But I didn't talk to him beforehand.

### **Despite your strong relationships with Nikki and Tommy, was there anything like an audition? Did you have to get in a room and jam — just to make sure?**

Not really. Nikki and I have played so many times before. We've worked together in the studio, and we've even played live together. He played "Helter Skelter" with Zombie; he played "Shout at the Devil" with me at one of my solo shows. I've worked on Tommy's records. They know how I play. I didn't have to audition, but I'll tell you this: When we got into the first day of rehearsal, it was so smooth. We ran through the whole set, with intros, outros, medleys — everything in one take. It was amazing. We got into the room and they said, "What do you want to start with?" I said, "Let's start at the top." We just went through every song — bam, bam, bam. It gave me chills.

### **You were meeting Vince pretty much cold. Was there any kind of getting-to-know-you period?**

Good question. OK, Tommy was having his birthday party, and Vince was coming. We were all there. Tommy introduced us, and Vince said, "Hey man, we're gonna have such a great time." I was so excited to meet him, and I got emotional. I told him, "You have a birthday coming up, and I think it's when we're going to be rehearsing. I'm gonna get you a really cool gift." He said, "You're the best gift I could have ever gotten." I was like, "Oh, my God." It was amazing.

We have such a good time together. We laugh all the time. On tour, we have these different cars to take us to the venue, but we wind up getting into the same car. We all want to hang together and laugh and chit-chat. I think that's why we all got sick recently — because we're in each other's faces all the time.

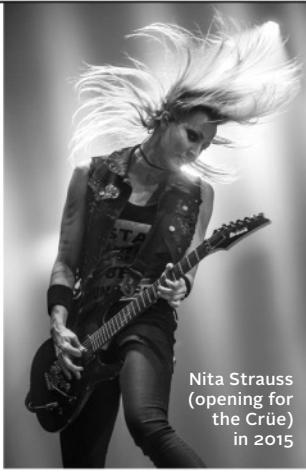
### **Even though you knew the band's**

Mötley Crüe

Mötley Crüe in early 2023;  
[from left] Nikki Sixx, John 5,  
Vince Neil and Tommy Lee

"THEY KNOW  
HOW I PLAY.  
I DIDN'T HAVE  
TO AUDITION"





Nita Strauss  
(opening for  
the Crüe)  
in 2015

## NITA STRAUSS

There was a time when Nita Strauss was the sort of player who'd never say "no" to a gig. It's hard to believe now, given her stature as a superstar, but it's true. Early in her career, Strauss made a name for herself with the all-women tribute to Iron Maiden, the Iron Maidens. And she even featured as the in-house guitarist for the Los Angeles Kiss (Paul Stanley and Gene Simmons' arena football team). But Strauss' signature moment came when she replaced another powerhouse player, Orianthi, in Alice Cooper's band. In the year since, Strauss' legend has grown to the point that these days, as a member of Cooper and Demi Lovato's band, she's earned the right to say "no."

## BRUCE KULICK

By the time Bruce Kulick entered the picture for Kiss, the band had run through two guitarists in two years after the departure of Ace Frehley in 1982. While Vinnie Vincent proved too enigmatic and Mark St. John's physical issues limited him, Kulick was a breath of fresh air. His crisp solos and affable personality made him a perfect foil to the huger-than-huge personas of Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley. So it's sad that Kulick lost his spot to a returning Frehley in '96. And while Tommy Thayer now holds the distinction of Kiss' longest-tenured axman, make no mistake: Kiss probably wouldn't exist today without Kulick. Oh, and for those keeping score, Kulick accomplished the feat again when he replaced Mark Farner in Grand Funk Railroad in 2000.

## MICK TAYLOR

If Mick Taylor's only example of replacement guitar heroics came

### **music, did you do a little homework before that first rehearsal?**

I would go through the set every day. I prepare myself for everything because I never want to feel nervous. I don't like that feeling. I would study their stadium tour concerts — what Vince is going to say, where I should go during this, where I should go during that — and I mean really *study*. In rehearsal, Nikki would say, "At the end of the song, we're going to do 10 hits here." I knew all of these endings. I knew the different ending of "Live Wire," going down from A to A<sup>b</sup>, G, F<sup>#</sup>, F and then ending in E, which segues into "Looks That Kill." They looked at me like I had the memory of a crazy elephant. I knew their show so well because I didn't want to be nervous.

### **Did you have to pull out any of their CDs, just to make sure you had the licks and solos down?**

That's what I'm saying. I did it every day for months. I wanted to play those solos exactly as they were written. Those solos are so important to me as a fan, and they're so important to the audience. The squeals in "Looks That Kill" or the harmonics in "Dr. Feelgood" — these are very important to me and the world. It's like you're looking at some sheet music; you're looking at Mozart, and you're like, "Well, I'm gonna improvise over this part." No. That's how those songs were written, how they were recorded, and how they should be performed. I wanted to give those songs respect.

**I'm just trying to get the picture here. So there wasn't even one song by the band that you didn't already know very well?**

Honestly, I really did know all the Crüe songs. The only thing I had to learn was the arrangement of the medley that's in the middle of the band's live setlist. I've known all the songs for as long as I can remember.

### **Did the guys say you were free to take the songs outside and "John 5" them a bit?**

I checked with the guys and said, "I'm going to play them as they are on the records." They said, "OK, well, you can have a solo." And that's when I go completely berserk. It's kind of a perfect situation.

### **Do you think you might suggest to the guys the idea of playing some deep cuts?**

Oh, of course. At rehearsal, I'm that guy. They'll say, "Can you check the guitar really quick?" And I'll play "Louder Than Hell" or "Bastard." I'll play "Ten Seconds to Love" — any of these deep cuts. They'll say, "Oh, kick ass!" Whenever they suggest something, it's like, "You know all these songs." It's like you were in the Beatles, and they said, "Hey, let's try 'Hey Bulldog.'" Who knows what we'll do in the future? I'm ready and prepared.

### **Let's talk about your first show with the band. Were you nervous about Crüe fans accepting you? There's always that thing — "He's not Mick."**

I wasn't nervous about the show. I was like, "Yay, let's do this!" Everybody was like, "Are you nervous?" And I was like, "No." Because I was prepared. If somebody said, "Give me bar 22 of 'Shout at the Devil,'" I would say, "OK." That's how prepared I was. But of the people wanting to accept me? If they said, "He's not Mick Mars," it's like, "I'm not Mick Mars. I'm John 5." It would be silly if I came out with a long black wig and a hat, you know? I'm my own person.

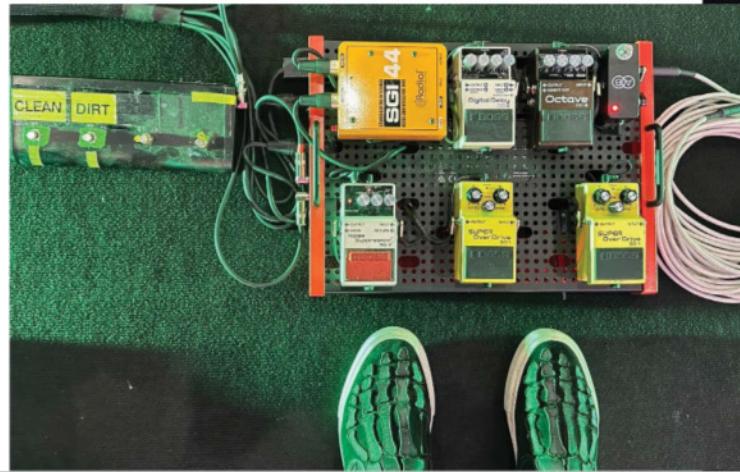
For instance, I love Kiss, right? I *love* Kiss. But I would never put on Ace's makeup. Never. I'd create my own character, and if they said I couldn't do that, I'd say, "Then I'm not the guy."



## MY PEDALBOARD JOHN 5

### **WHAT MÖTLEY CRÜE'S NEW GUITARIST SEES WHEN HE LOOKS DOWN**

**MY RIG IS VERY SIMPLE:** I have a Boss Noise Suppressor, two Boss SD-1 Super Overdrives, a Boss Digital Delay and a Boss OC-5 Octave pedal. I have Marshall JCM900s and a bunch of Teles. That's it. Everything's the same — except for the Floyd Rose. — John 5



# "I LOVE MICK MARS"



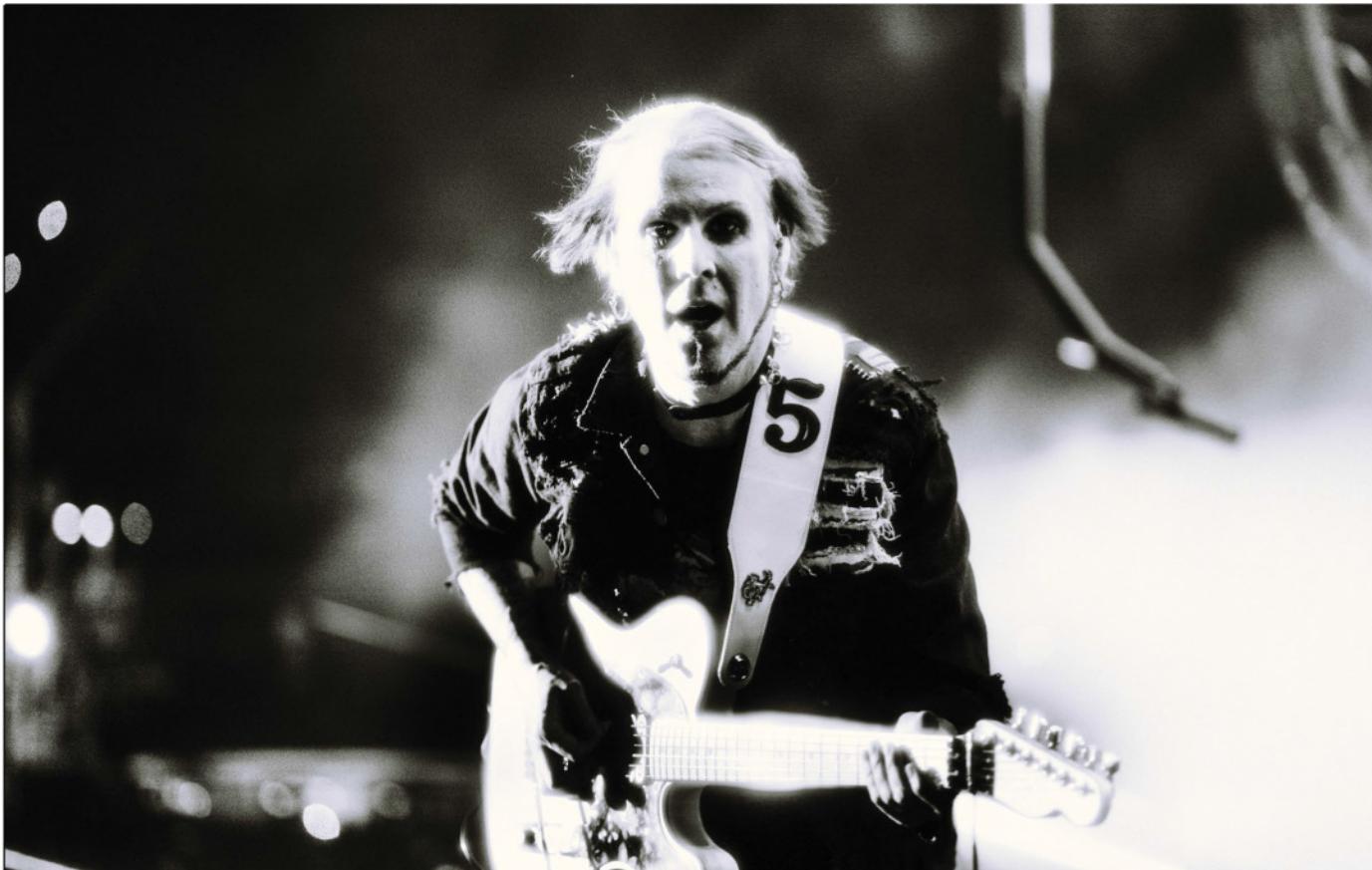
when he replaced Peter Green, who had replaced Eric Clapton, in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, his legend would be cemented. But no, Taylor replaced Brian Jones in the Rolling Stones, leading to some of the group's most celebrated recordings. The only real issue with Taylor's time as a Rolling Stone was that it didn't last long enough. There's just something about Taylor's time in the band that scratches the guitar-related itch. But considering he co-authored albums like *Let It Bleed* (1969), *Sticky Fingers* (1971), *Exile on Main St.* (1972), *Goats Head Soup* (1973) and *It's Only Rock 'n Roll* (1974), it's not hard to see why.

## MARTY FRIEDMAN

Megadeth has featured 11 different players on lead guitar over a 40-year career. Staggering as that is, it's true. And it goes without saying that given the demanding nature of Dave Mustaine and the complexity of the music he creates, those 11 players were damn talented. Still, Marty Friedman, who came in as a replacement for Jeff Young in 1989, remains a fan favorite. There's no denying that the tormented solos and riffs heard across the likes of *Rust in Peace* (1990), *Countdown to Extinction* (1992) and *Youthanasia* (1994) are unrelenting in their beauty. Friedman's playing was so inspiring, and so well-loved that to this day, no Megadeth six-stringer carries his level of cache.

## KIRK HAMMETT

Kirk Hammett's entryway into Metallica is a tale as old as time. But for the uninitiated, the abridged version goes like this: Dave Mustaine was Metallica's original lead guitarist. And depending on who you ask, Dave wrote much of Metallica's early material. But Mustaine's gruff personality and alcohol-induced fits of rage saw to it that he was fired from Metallica. From there, Hammett — who had founded Exodus — entered the fold, never to relinquish the spot. Now 11 albums deep, the Bay Area legends have never made an album without Hammett. So, considering Metallica continues to dominate the globe, along with the fact that Hammett is a hell of a nice guy and a damn good player, it seems that the right call was made.



**Have you had to change anything about your own personal guitars or gear for the Crüe gig? You're still playing the Teles...**

I'll tell you, I had to put this weird contraption on my guitar — it's called a Floyd Rose.

**Oh, I've heard of those. They're new. [Laughs]**

Yeah, it's weird. This thing's got a bar on it, and it makes the strings go up and down. Again, I'm who I am — I've always played Teles. Actually, Mick played Teles a lot throughout his career.

**Now that you mention it, in some of the clips I've seen of you with the Crüe, I noticed you were using a whammy bar.**

Yeah, I had to put Floyds on all of my Teles. Listen, I was a Van Halen nut, so I had Floyds, and I know everything about them. I just haven't played with a Floyd in a while, because I would do all that stuff behind the nut. So when I got the guitars with Floyds, it wasn't any kind of crazy thing. It was fine.

**Are there any significant tonal**

**adjustments you've had to make to suit the Mötley Crüe sound?**

I did have to make my sound more distorted at some points. I'm using the two distortion pedals to have the harmonics and the squeals both come out just perfect every time.

But you know, I wanted to say something because you mentioned the fans. The fans have been so happy and accepting. They know I'm one of them. I love these guys so much, and the fans have been so kind. I'm just playing the songs the way they've heard them. It's not like I'm trying to do anything crazy.

I read all the comments, and of course, you're always going to have the people who say, "He's not Mick Mars." And it's like, "Yeah, I'm not trying to be Mick Mars." If they say, "He shouldn't be playing a Tele," it's like, "But Mars played a Tele for so many years." For "Girls, Girls, Girls," he played a Tele. When the band went to Russia, he played a Tele the entire time. He loves Telecasters. But the fans have been very accepting. I'll go down to the lobby and I'll sign all the stuff. It's just wonderful. Of course, it's concerning, but it's been such a smooth transition.

**"We've been in the studio with Bob Rock, having a great time just like we do on tour, laughing and playing music," John 5 says. "It's coming along really quickly"**

**Has being in the band given you a different or renewed appreciation for Mick Mars' work?**

Oh, no, no, no. I've had a beyond appreciation for Mick Mars ever since I was a little kid. I love Mick Mars. Nothing has changed. Knowing these songs as a kid is how I know them now.

I used to play Harpo's and the Ritz and all these clubs, and we'd play Mötley Crüe songs. I have such a high appreciation for Mars, of course. I always have and I always will. I just want to play these songs to where the guys are proud.

**Has there been any talk of recording new material with the band?**

We've been in the studio with Bob Rock, and we've been having a great time just like we do on tour, laughing and playing music. It's coming along really quickly. The songs are super heavy and everybody's excited.

**In your mind, how long do you envision staying part of the Crüe lineup?**

I envision staying with Mötley Crüe... As long as Mötley Crüe are around, I don't plan on leaving — and I hope I never get fired. It's such a wonderful band to be in. It really is a dream to be playing with your friends. It's something I never envisioned, but I'm so thankful it's happened. **GW**



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**W**HEN IT WAS confirmed that Mötley Crüe bassist Nikki Sixx would take part in this issue's cover story (he agreed to respond to emailed questions), it was requested that we keep the focus on "what's happening now — the tour, music, nothing about Mick Mars." At the time, this didn't strike us as outwardly odd or significant (somewhat rock-star quirky, perhaps), and there was nothing to indicate that there was any kind of drama, legal or otherwise, surrounding Mars' departure as a touring member of Mötley Crüe.

A short time later, news broke of Mars' lawsuit against the band, and it became clear why Sixx preferred to sidestep the elephant in the room. Seeing as we were very careful to steer clear of asking the bassist even the vaguest question about Mars, we were more than a little surprised when he brought up the guitarist by name and provided his own account of the events.

**When and how did John 5 get on your radar? When did you become aware of him?**

I had heard of John years before I met him. Then we met and became friends first. We'd be hanging out and things would come up.

# NIKKI SIXX PROVIDES HIS OWN ACCOUNT OF HOW THE RECENT CRÜE BROUHAHA WENT DOWN — AND HOW JOHN 5 ENTERED THE FOLD

BY JOE BOSSO

PHOTOS BY ROSS HALFIN

# WHEN SIXX



# MET 5

# IF SIXX WAS 9

## A GUITAR-CENTRIC LOOK BACK AT MÖTLEY CRÜE'S NINE STUDIO ALBUMS

BY ANDREW DALY

**T**EAS EASY TO take Mötley Crüe for granted. But if we step back from the recent drama surrounding the band and instead focus on the music they've created over the last 40-plus years, surely we'll be reminded that their influence over rock and metal is undeniable. And so, to turn the attention back to the music we've all come to know and love, we present a play-by-play guide to all nine Mötley Crüe studio outings.

### *Too Fast for Love* (1981)

If you didn't grow up with it, or if you have an aversion to leather, the significance of Mötley's debut might be lost on you. Sure, it's a little bit



wild and a whole lot sleazy, but the fact remains: Mötley changed the game with *Too Fast for Love*. Remember, this record came out before "hair metal" was a thing. So in retrospect, a track like "Live Wire," with its crunchy riffs and frenetic solo, was a total outlier. And who could forget other stunners like "Piece of Your Action" and "Too Fast for Love," which all but cemented Mötley Crüe as

kings of the Sunset Strip?

**Download:** "Live Wire"

### *Shout at the Devil* (1983)

Following up a debut like *Too Fast for Love* couldn't have been easy. But follow it up they did with *Shout at the Devil*, which clocks in as one of the group's finest. Some bands would have looked at the raw nature of an album like *Too Fast for Love* and seen it as a detriment. But not Mötley. Instead, the band seemingly leaned into that

sound, further driving home the point that as far as hair metal goes, they were not to be messed with. Of course, songs like "Shout at the Devil" featuring gargantuan power chords draped in echo-laden effects, only aided that narrative. As did the equally abrasive and utterly ear-rupturing "Looks That Kill."

**Download:** "Shout at the Devil"



I remember working on a Meat Loaf song with Desmond Child, and John's name came up to work on the song with us. I was like, "That's great." As we became friends over the years, I was doing some songwriting, and we wrote "Lies of the Beautiful People," which was the Number 1 song for Sixx: AM. We've been friends, musicians, just sitting on the back patio playing guitar and noodling around, making jokes about *Hee-Haw* and the Seventies. He became a really good friend, a collaborator — and now he's in the band.

### **What was it about his playing that stuck out to you? How did he seem different from his contemporaries?**

John has the ability to play so precisely, and at the same time he keeps so much emotion in his playing. He obviously can play any style of music, and even blend them together. As a collaborator, it's amazing with John; you're like, "Could you do...?" And he's like, "Yes." "Hey, could you do...?" "Like this?" He's fun and exciting to hang out with — whether it's his guitar playing, as a writer, and now on stage. It's literally like having your little brother right by your side. It's such a nice feeling.

We never saw it coming that Mick wasn't going to be able to tour and was going to have to quit the band. In the middle — not even the middle — of a huge tour, we had to ask ourselves, "Do we want to let the fans down? Do we want to let Live Nation down? Do we want to let Def Leppard down? Do we want to let ourselves down because an original member of our band can't tour anymore?" We had to have a deep, deep look into what we were going to do.

[In regard to] John, knowing all the members of the band, and me having this relationship with him writing and as friends, and even being in the studio with him writing stuff with the band for *The Dirt*, it felt like a no-brainer in a horrible situation — something we did not ask for or want. And then it was just kind of obvious. If there was "the guy," John was the guy. Like I said, we didn't choose this, but since we had to be put in this position, we're very happy with where we're at right now.

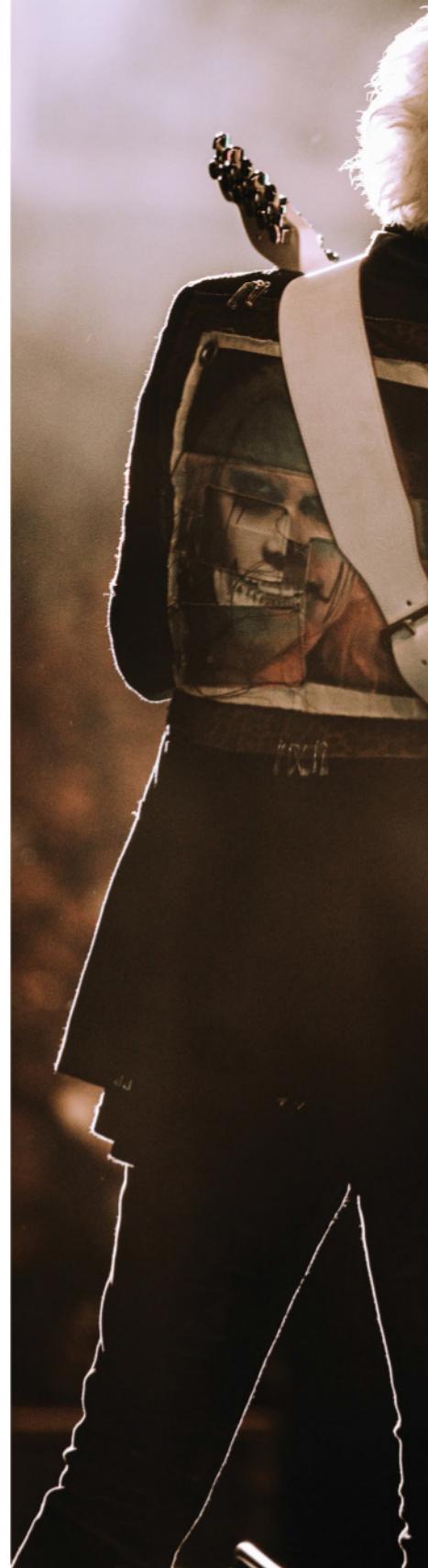
### **Did you ever think, "If we needed somebody, John 5 would be the guy"?**

No, we've never been like that — never, like, "Nikki's not in the band. Who are we gonna get?" I mean, Nikki's in the band. Tommy's in the band. Mick's in the band. Vince is in the band. It was Mick saying, "I can't be in the band" that forced us into making a decision — one that we didn't expect, by the way.

### **Take me inside the band discussions about who to bring in. Was John always the top pick in your mind? You said he "checks all the boxes."**

I sat down with Tommy and Vince and said, "We're in this situation. What do you guys think we should do?" We kind of talked about it for a while, and John's name came up. We were all like, "I mean, if he's available." It would be like the perfect solution, not only as a friend, just as a human being, as a player — obviously, as a player comes first, being in a band. So I called John, and I said, "OK, this is gonna be kind of

John 5 [left] and Nikki Sixx during a stop on the band's current tour. "If he wants to do a guitar solo or ad-lib at the end of a song, it's completely free-form at that point," Sixx says



### Theatre of Pain (1985)

Say what you will about the Crüe regarding their sporadic latter-day output, but if we dial back to the Eighties, they were nothing short of prolific. And it's a good thing, considering the mounting success of each successive release. Want proof? Look to *Theatre of Pain*, a genre staple that rocketed out of the gate, careening up the *Billboard* charts and landing at Number 6. Oh, and by the way — the album went quadruple platinum. Not too shabby, eh? *Theatre of Pain* also signaled a shift toward a slightly more commercial sound, as evidenced by songs like the quintessential power ballad "Home Sweet Home," featuring one of Mick Mars' finest and most bluesy solos. And their cover of Brownsville Station's "Smokin' in the Boys Room" finds Mars owning the track like the Strat-toting boss he is.

**Download:** "Home Sweet Home"

### Girls, Girls, Girls (1987)

The skinny on *Girls, Girls, Girls* has long been that it's Mötley Crüe's "blues rock album." And while that's debatable, what's not is the fact that *Girls, Girls, Girls* managed to find a way to better its predecessor, ascending to Number 2 on the *Billboard* charts. It might have reached Number 1 had Whitney Houston not thwarted Mötley's efforts with her own Eighties classic, *Whitney*. Regardless, we suppose there are blues touches to be found here, as Mars has often made it clear he admires those players. But make no mistake — *Girls, Girls, Girls*, and its hit single, "Wild Side," is nothing short of a period-correct hair metal buffet that Mars owns with some of the catchiest and cleanest fretwork you'll hear within the genre.

**Download:** "Wild Side"

### Dr. Feelgood (1989)

Considered Mötley's last "classic era" record, *Dr. Feelgood* is also one of Mötley's finest from a guitar-related perspective. Of *Dr. Feelgood's* 11 tracks, Mars chimed in with eight songwriting credits. And with that prolific burst came bundles of slick riffage and some utterly sexy solos. The wailing opener of "Kickstart My Heart" is one we all know and love, as is the good-time boogie nature of songs like "Rattlesnake Shake" and "Same 'Ol Situation (S.O.S.)". And, of



"IT WAS JUST KIND OF OBVIOUS. IF THERE WAS 'THE GUY,' JOHN WAS THE GUY"



course, the title track features a riff/solo combination that could only have been extracted from an over-the-top glam metal record. So there's a solid case to be made that *Dr. Feelgood* is Mötley's finest hour. But it's bittersweet, as Vince Neil would split the scene shortly after.

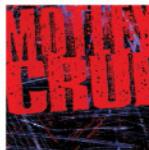
**Download:** "Same 'Ol Situation (S.O.S.)"

#### Mötley Crüe (1994)

When Mötley Crüe entered the studio in '92 to work on its follow-up to *Dr. Feelgood*, all was seemingly well. But

before long Sixx, Lee and Mars fell out with Neil, leading to him being fired or quitting. And sure, they needed a singer, but hiring John Corabi, a very different animal than Neil, was unexpected. What also was unexpected was Mötley proceeding to unleash their version of a grunge album. But then again, when in Rome... Still, despite it being an outlier amongst an otherwise campy discography, *Mötley Crüe* remains a high point. Corabi has long been a capable riffsman and rhythm player, and his presence seemed to open Mars up. That, along with a renewed approach, leaves tracks like "Misunderstood" as memorable as it is aptly titled.

**Download:** "Hooligan's Holiday"



#### Generation Swine (1998)

A reunion with Vince Neil was inevitable. Mötley (and their fans) just weren't down with Corabi's brand of alt meets metal. And that reunion resulted in 1998's *Generation Swine*, aka Mötley's "reunion album." Interestingly, even though Neil was back in the fold, some of Corabi's cuts remained. And without a doubt, the alternative metal vibes still run deep throughout. But while songs like "Afraid" and "Beauty"

are filled with fine riffs and solos, there's no denying something is missing. And that checks out given Mars' recent revelation during an explosive interview with *Rolling Stone* that he was "squeezed out of the decision making process" for *Generation Swine*.

He continued, "I don't think there's one note that I played. They didn't want my guitar to sound like a guitar, basically. They wanted it to sound like a synthesizer. I felt so useless. I'd do a part, they'd erase it, and somebody else would come in and play."

**Download:** "Afraid"



weird..." And since we talk almost every day, he was like, "What could be weirder than some of your off-color humor?" [Laughs] I go, "Well, this one's gonna top all of our shit." There was quiet, and he said, "I'd be honored." We were like, "OK, here we go."

You know, we were, "This is a major change for us." I remember going to rehearsal, and it felt, well, seamless, if that makes sense. It has nothing to do with anything other than John was so prepared. The very first rehearsal, I was like, "What do you want to do?" Vince or someone said, "Let's try a song." We were like, "Let's just do the first song in the set," which is "Wild Side" at this point. We played "Wild Side" — it segues into "Shout at the Devil." We ended "Wild Side" and we're kind of grinding, and then this sequence with some of the sounds of the '97 "Shout at the Devil" remake — a lot of backward loops and swells. John started swelling up. I looked at Tommy and "Shout at the Devil" started. We ended that, and we didn't even say anything, and we went right into "Too Fast for Love." We played the whole show — seamlessly. And we were like, [Laughs] "Well, I guess band rehearsal's over." We started laughing.

His personality, his professionalism, his sense of adventure as a guitar player, his understanding of what's so important about so many of the solos Mick played on; him wanting to honor that, not wanting to do something different during "Home Sweet Home"; wanting to stick to what fans expected and want to hear and grew up hearing... has been just a really wonderful experience.

#### Did Tommy or Vince have any other candidates in mind?

No, we talked about John, and that was that. I mean, it's just like we kind of knew. Because we knew him, too. It wasn't like, "We're in a shitty situation. Let's just get a guitar player, and then we'll get another guitar player, and then we'll get another guitar player." We were looking for somebody that wanted to be here permanently with us.

**As for that first rehearsal, what would you have done if, for whatever strange reason, things didn't**



#### click with John and the band?

[Long pause] We would have been fucked, I guess.

#### How much musical leeway are you affording John?

Within the song structure, it's important that John delivers what people are used to listening to — the solos, and honoring the songs. Outside of that, complete freedom. If he wants to do a guitar solo or ad-lib at the end of a song, it's completely free-form at that point.

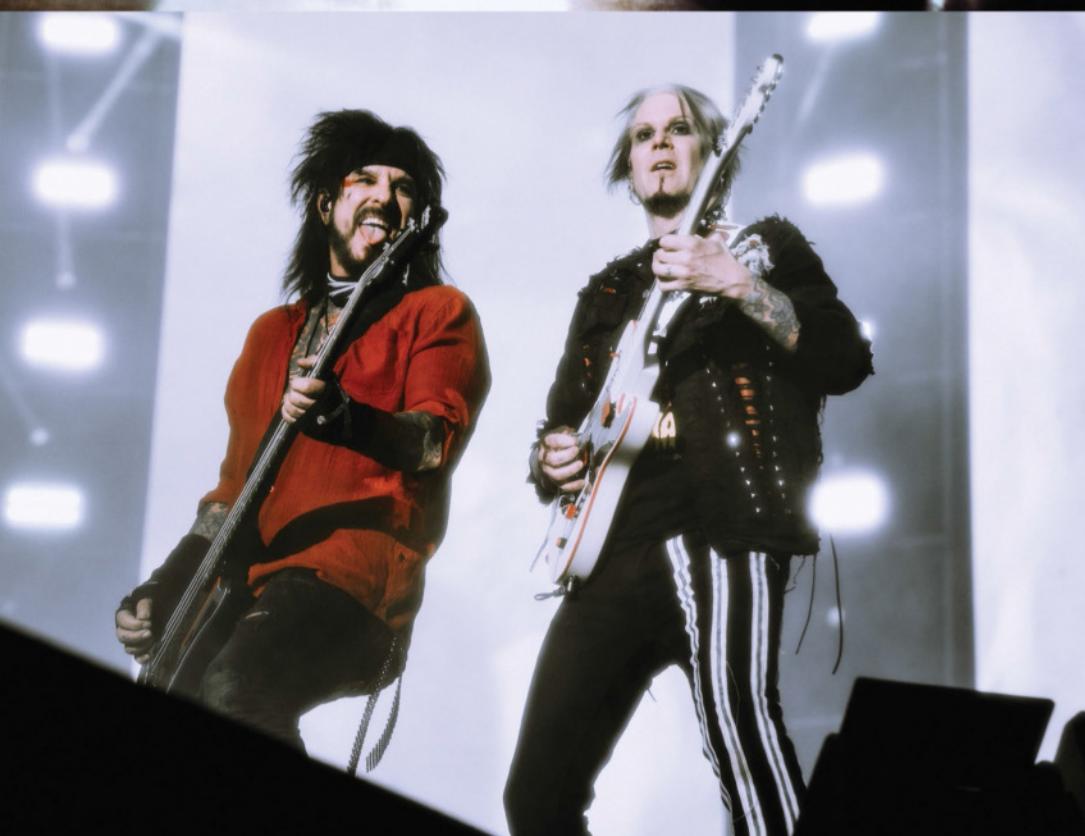
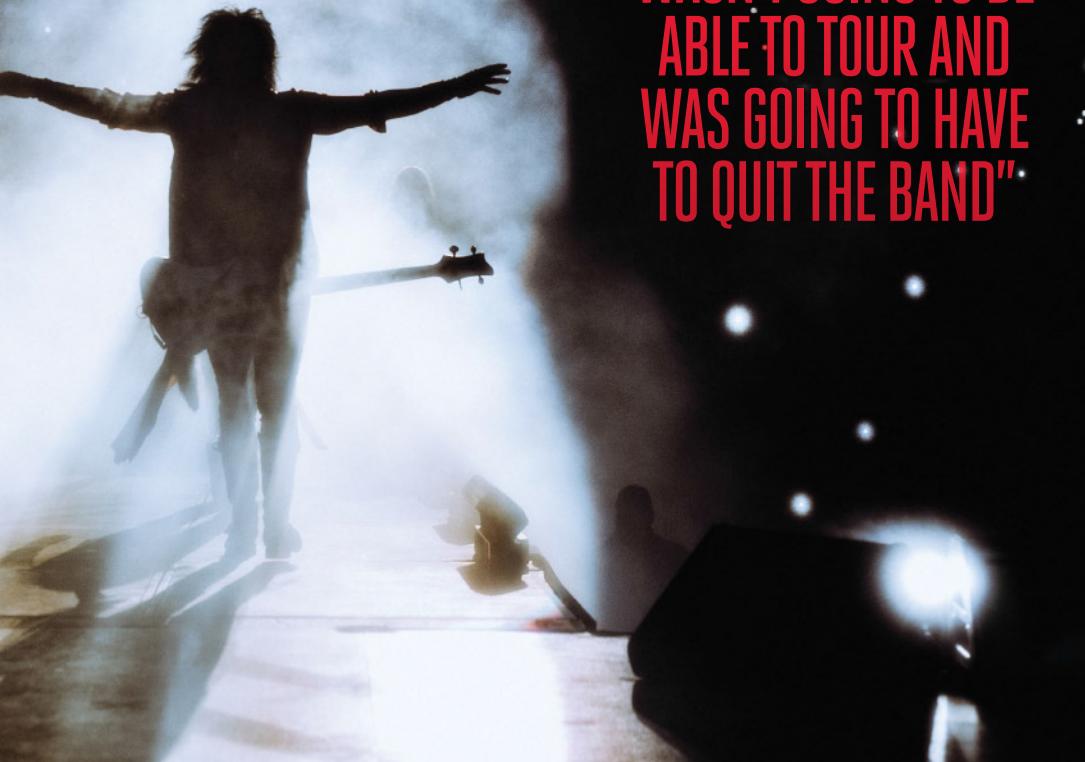
#### Obviously, these are songs the band has played thousands of times. But in some small ways, did you notice anybody making any kinds of musical adjustments to suit how John plays?

I think, in general, the band — bass, drums and guitar

— is a rock band at our core. But any time you play with another musician, it's going to change a little bit. Such

"[John's] personality, his professionalism, his sense of adventure as a guitar player... has been just a really wonderful experience," Sixx says

**"WE NEVER SAW IT COMING THAT MICK WASN'T GOING TO BE ABLE TO TOUR AND WAS GOING TO HAVE TO QUIT THE BAND"**



### New Tattoo (2000)

Interestingly, the Crüe titled this record *New Tattoo*, even though old themes are prevalent. But we suppose that was the idea! To that end, Motley dropped the doomy, gloomy, alt-metal vibes for said album in favor of riffage, soloage and vibe-age akin to its Eighties heyday. Oh, and of note — Tommy Lee is nowhere to be found here as he picked up and left the band just after they'd made nice with Vince Neil. Ouch. From a guitar standpoint, whoever handled the duties featured a hyper-dialed-in approach that screams, "We love the Eighties!" across tracks like "Hell on High Heels" and "New Tattoo." But if Mars is to be believed, it wasn't him. In the previously mentioned *Rolling Stone* Q&A, Mars says he "didn't write any of those songs as I wasn't invited," adding, "I think I got one lick on that album." But if you ask Sixx, his version is that, "Mick played lead guitar, rhythm guitar and any other guitar that's on that record."

**Download:** "Hell on High Heels"

### Saints of Los Angeles (2008)

The years it took to release *Saints of Los Angeles* was worth it as the Crüe crafted its most "Motley-sounding" album since 1989. After years of upheaval, a once-again



reunited Sixx, Lee, Neil and Mars made what should probably be considered the truest spiritual follow-up to *Dr. Feelgood*. That's not to say *Saints of Los Angeles* is as "good" as *Dr. Feelgood*. But there's no denying that the title track, along with "Face Down in the Dirt" and "This Ain't a Love Song," conjures those ghosts damn well. And that's largely due to Mars' ability to capably pair massive hooks and catchy rhythms alongside Motley's patented gang vocals and sleazy imagery. But it's worth noting that he had some help in the form of former Guns N' Roses man D.J. Ashba. With Mars reportedly kinda, sorta agreeing with Sixx's assertion that, "Mick was struggling to play his parts, so there's a mixture of D.J. and Mick, and we would always make

Mick the center of focus, unless, of course, he couldn't play his parts, or remember his parts."

**Download:** "Saints of Los Angeles"

# THE ULTIMATE

## HOW JOHN 5 DECIDED TO REVOLUTIONIZE ONE OF THE OLDEST ELECTRIC GUITAR DESIGNS FOR THIS YEAR'S EYE-CATCHING FENDER JOHN 5 GHOST TELECASTER

BY AMIT SHARMA

THOUGH there have been a few signature models in the past — the first being the Squier J5 Telecaster launched in 2009 and the two Custom Shop instruments that came after — this year marks the first John 5 model to be produced in the “regular” Fender factory. The heavily customized Ghost Telecaster features a one-piece maple neck and alder body, as well as a pair of ceramic magnet DiMarzio D Activator humbuckers, a three-way toggle mounted to its upper bout and an Arcade-style kill switch. It’s been a few years in the making — but only because the guitarist wanted to road test the instrument before committing to its final specs. Given that it’s his name appearing on the neck plate found on the rear, you can’t really blame him.

“I’m very proud of this guitar,” John 5 tells *GW*. “I insisted on putting it through the wringer first and taking it on tour before the final release. I didn’t want anything to go wrong, so I was trying to see if the white paint would wear off or if the toggle might break. The only way to make sure of the quality was to take it out for a few years. I was constantly using it and sweating all over it... nothing happened. This stuff won’t break or wear away. It looks and

sounds unbelievable and is 100 percent *tough*. Basically, it’s a road guitar.”

Unlike the Ghost model seen in his hands on Mötley Crüe’s current tour, the all-new production model comes with a vintage-style six-saddle bridge instead of a Floyd Rose, though he teases that “a double-locking tremolo system could be a good idea for the next run.” What might surprise some readers is that the concept of an Arctic White finish with striking red appointments was partly inspired by another Fender instrument in the guitarist’s possession — a limited-edition model designed in collaboration with, believe it or not, New York fashion brand Supreme.

“I have to give credit where it’s due,” he says. “I once saw and ended up buying a guitar Fender put out with Supreme. I still own it and I think it looks *insane*. When we were starting to work on the Ghost, I said, ‘Hey, can we do something like this where the neck and fretboard come completely white?’ This is what we ended up with.”

As the guitarist goes on to explain, every aspect of the new signature was carefully thought out. For example, the toggle switch is on the upper bout like the Telecaster Custom models of the Seventies, so it doesn’t get in the way of his picking hand (“It’s easier to have it higher up and out of the way,” he says). As well as protecting the ash body, the chrome pickguard doubles up as a mirror for reflecting spotlights and final checks before hitting the stage. “This pickguard was designed a little bit differently,” John 5 says. “They’re usually made out of two pieces, but I pleaded and pleaded with Fender to make it just one. So it’s the same bit that goes into the volume, tone and kill switch controls. When I’m picking frantically, I don’t want to feel that connection where they meet. It triggers my brain and could make me lose concentration. Another bonus is when

the spotlight hits you on stage, you can reflect it back into the crowd. It’s like having a light beaming out of my guitar, which looks so cool. And I know this sounds silly — but it’s very true — if you play this guitar live, you can use it as a mirror. It’s a pretty handy feature! The other guys and gals in the band will love you for it.” [Laughs]

While they are medium to high in output, the two passive DiMarzio D Activator humbuckers are deceptively versatile and perfectly balanced to cover everything from country twang to heavy metal thunder. Genre-crossing guitar players like him, he notes, require well-rounded pickups that pack enough punch where needed. “Even when I’m playing regular country music, I always want a little grit. I’ve been around a lot of those country pickers and they tend to be quite loud, which is exactly how those D Activators sound. They work perfectly for country, Crüe and my solo music. I’ve tried many pickups, but the ones that work best for me are undoubtedly the D Activators.”

If a vintage-style guitar finished in a very modern white with red features, ceramic magnet pickups

**"NO ONE IS A BIGGER BUCKETHEAD FAN THAN ME!"**

# POLTERGEIST



and a kill switch sounds a bit familiar, it might very well be down to John 5 counting himself as one of Buckethead's biggest fans. Listen to the instrumental solo works of either guitarist and you'll easily be able to detect heavy doses of freakish inventiveness and chicken picking in their compositions and approaches. "No one is a bigger Buckethead fan than me!" John 5 says. "I love to go to his shows and get inspired. That's one of the most important things about being creative. When you find the person or thing that really inspires you, it's always

best to roll with it. What Bucket's done with instrumental music has inspired me greatly. I actually think he's the reason I ended up doing my own instrumental stuff. You see him live and it might just be him on stage with a backing track. I thought it was absolutely unbelievable when I first saw that. People like him made me want to explore the idea of using a kill switch. I love how creative you can get and use mine all the time, so why not add it as an extra feature?" **GW**



*Eastman*

INTRODUCING

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# SOUND CHECK

*the gear  
in review*

79

YAMAHA  
FG9 M

80

CHARVEL

Pro-Mod So-Cal  
Style 1 HSS FR E

81

EARTHQUAKER  
DEVICESAurelius  
Tri-Voice Chorus

82

SEYMOUR DUNCAN

HyperSwitch



## Simply Orange

ORANGE OR30

By Chris Gill

► ORANGE AMPS SEEM to be showing up on concert stages more and more frequently these days — admittedly they're pretty hard to miss with their bright orange covering. But there's a good reason for that increased visibility, as Orange has steadfastly expanded their products' features and variety of available tones with some well-designed heads and combos introduced over the last few years.

Orange's new OR30 is likely going to keep that trend going strong. In addition to providing its own unmistakably British/"simply Orange" tone that fits a nice sweet spot between Marshall and Vox, the OR30 adds a few helpful new features that

provide expanded stage performance and tone-shaping versatility.

**FEATURES** With an output section driven by a quartet of EL84 tubes, the OR30 is conservatively rated at 30 watts, although its impressive output levels suggests it's pumping out more than that. Three 12AX7 tubes handle preamp and phase inverter tasks, while a 12AU7 is employed to buffer the effects loop. The amp also features a good old 5AR4/GZ34 tube rectifier that provides tantalizing, expressive sag and smooth attack without sacrificing low-end punch and tightness.

Front panel controls include a few new features:



## CHEAT SHEET



a cross-line Presence control that is audible at any volume settings (unlike typical negative-feedback presence that is more apparent at higher volume levels), a footswitch-controlled second volume control and a three-way Bright switch, the first Bright switch ever featured on an Orange amp. Other controls consist of Volume, Treble, Mid, Bass and Gain, and all of the controls are designated in Orange's signature pictogram fashion. In addition to 1/4-inch send and return jacks for the tube-buffered effects loop, the rear panel includes one 16-ohm and two 8-ohm speaker output jacks, a jack for an optional footswitch to engage the second volume control and the perfect-named "headroom/bedroom" switch that provides either the full 30 watts or only two watts of output.

**PERFORMANCE** Orange proudly notes that the OR30 is one of the company's first made-in-the-UK amps in a long while, but don't worry — it's rock-solid, reliable and won't spontaneously combust like Moss's fire extinguisher in *The IT Crowd*. Even with all of the controls at maximum settings the OR30 seemed to barely break a sweat and delivered noise- and hum-free performance. Even after a straight half hour of pummeling the top wasn't even hot enough to brown a bagel.

I tried the head with various cabs, including a Vintage 30-loaded 4x12, a 2x12 with 65-watt Celestion Creambacks and a 1x12 with an Eminence Wizard. The OR30 delivered pretty consistent tones over this wide variety of configurations and speaker styles, with the 4x12 sounding like the best match to my ears. The

Bright switch can nicely compensate for darker speakers, with the left setting providing just a touch more edge while the right setting is much more dramatic, providing a noticeable zing with clean settings (similar to my favorite Sixties Watkins amps) and a razor-like fizz with extreme high-gain settings. The middle setting is neutral.

The footswitch controlled second volume control gives this single-channel amp quasi-dual-channel performance, although it's really more of a "same sound but boosted" effect rather than a dramatic tonal/textural shift of a true dual-channel amp. You can go from crunch to high-gain roar, however, which is ideal for rhythm/lead switching.

The OR30 provides a decent amount of clean headroom with the Gain control set from minimum to about 9 o'clock with humbuckers, but this amp performs best when belting out loud and proud overdrive crunch and distorted high-gain tones. The EQ knobs are very interactive, and the Presence control and Bright switch provide quite an impressive variety of tonal options in the upper mids and treble regions.

The headroom/bedroom switch lives up to its promised functionality. For high-gain ho's like myself who live to push amps to the edge but don't want the neighbors calling the cops every time I want to lay down some tracks, the bedroom setting is particularly effective as it provides those elusive "fire-breathing" tones at mic- and neighbor-friendly volume levels. Clean tones at 2-watts are perhaps a little too polite and genteel, but some nice crunch tones can be dialed in for AC/DC-style head banging without having downstairs neighbors banging on their ceilings.

### STREET PRICE

\$1,799

### MANUFACTURER

Orange Amplification,  
[orangeamps.com](http://orangeamps.com)

● The three-way Bright switch, cross-line Presence control and footswitch-controlled second volume are all first-time features on an Orange amp model.

● Four EL84 tubes provide a conservatively rated 30 watts of output, and a GZ34/5AR4 tube rectifier provides classic smooth attack and subtle sag.

● The Bright switch settings include neutral (middle), slight treble edge (left) and zinging, fizzy treble boost (right).

● The Headroom/Bedroom switch toggles between full 30-watt or reduced 2-watt output, the latter providing fully driven tones at "responsible" volume levels.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

The Orange OR30 delivers Orange's distinctively British tonal character, but with a lot more tone-shaping versatility, particularly in the upper mids and treble, along with enhanced performance flexibility thanks to its footswitch-controlled second volume.



# One Piece

**YAMAHA FG9 M** By Chris Gill

► WHEN MOST GUITARISTS talk about acoustic steel string guitars, a few American brands like Martin, Taylor and Gibson usually dominate the discussion. However, for many decades Yamaha has remained the world's best-selling acoustic guitar brand, quietly but prominently leading the market thanks to the incredible value and quality that Yamaha instruments offer beginning-to-intermediate guitarists. It's like Yamaha acoustics are so ubiquitous, players simply take their presence for granted.

With the recent introduction of their FG9 model steel string flattops, Yamaha has made a bold statement by offering guitars that deserve serious consideration by guitarists seeking an uncompromising, professional quality acoustic. Meticulously designed by Yamaha's most experienced and skilled custom shop luthiers, using a combination of scientific analysis and hand-crafted attention to detail, the FG9 represents Yamaha's decades of insight as well as its cutting-edge vision for the acoustic's future. Two FG9 models are available, both dreadnought style with the main differences being rosewood (FG9 R) and mahogany (FG9 M) construction. We took a look at the latter model.

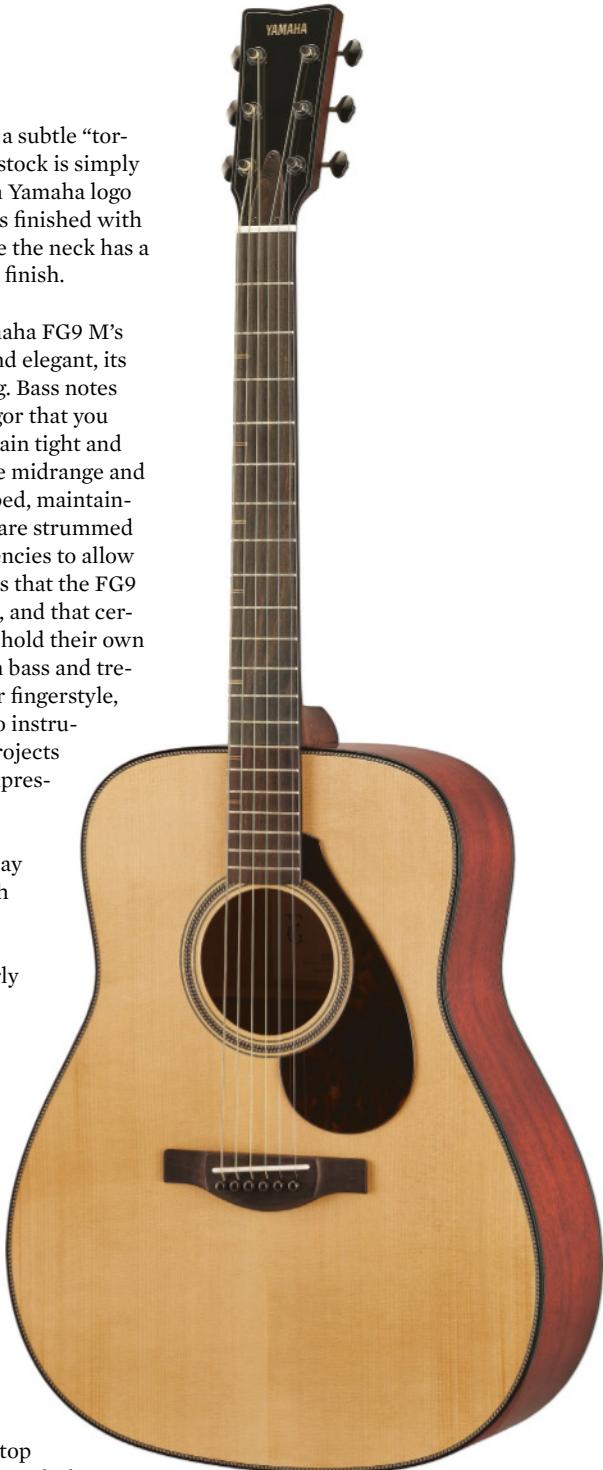
**FEATURES** The FG9 M's overall specs follow the relatively standard, classic formula for a square-shoulder, non-cutaway dreadnought. The top is solid Adirondack spruce with scalloped x-bracing and tapered edges; the back and sides are solid African mahogany; and the bolt-on one-piece mahogany neck offers an ebony fingerboard, slightly longer 25 9/16-inch scale length, flat 15 3/4-inch radius and 20 medium frets. The belly bridge and bridge pins are ebony; and the nut and saddle are bone, the latter featuring compensation for the B string. Tuners are open-back Gotoh SXN510 models with a Cosmo Black finish.

Styling is relatively minimalistic. The body is bound with ebony strips and rope-pattern (sort of a "half herringbone" design) top purfling, and two rope-pattern rings surround the soundhole. The layered wooden rectangular fingerboard fret marker inlays are reminiscent of Japanese Kumiko woodworking geometric patterns and are placed along the low E and A strings extending into the upper edge to do double-duty as

side markers. The pickguard has a subtle "tortoiseshell" pattern, and the headstock is simply appointed with an inlaid wooden Yamaha logo and pinstripe outline. The body is finished with gloss nitrocellulose lacquer while the neck has a durable semi-gloss polyurethane finish.

**PERFORMANCE** While the Yamaha FG9 M's overall appearance is unstated and elegant, its tone is bold and attention-getting. Bass notes vibrate the top and body with vigor that you can really feel, yet low notes remain tight and focused and don't overwhelm the midrange and treble. The mids are subtly scooped, maintaining sufficient body when chords are strummed while carving just enough frequencies to allow vocals to dominate. Yamaha notes that the FG9 M is ideal for singer-songwriters, and that certainly shows. However, the mids hold their own nicely and maintain balance with bass and treble notes when playing the guitar fingerstyle, so this model is also ideal for solo instrumental performers. The treble projects with a crisp, metallic cut with impressive body. The sound chamber's resonance is rich and complex, with a subtle hall reverb-like decay even when playing above the 12th fret on the high E string. Volume projection is notably louder than a typical dreadnought, particularly when playing notes with a light touch and not just when bashing chords.

Playability is outstanding as well. The neck's profile has a shallow C shape that transforms to a subtle, rounded V at the seventh fret and up, and the frets are polished for minimal resistance and smoothly rounded for maximum comfort at the fretboard edges. Materials and craftsmanship are first-class, with our example featuring an arrow-straight, medium width grain pattern on the top and the back and sides featuring similarly straight grain and subtle dark streaks.



## CHEAT SHEET

### STREET PRICE:

\$3,999.99

### MANUFACTURER:

Yamaha,  
Yamaha.com

- A classic square-shoulder dreadnought built to Yamaha's finest standards combining old world craftsmanship and state-of-the-art technology.

- Tastefully understated appointments include the rectangular Kumiko-style woodworking fingerboard inlays and rope-pattern purfling.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

Yamaha acoustics have a great reputation as beginner's and affordable intermediate instruments, but the FG9 M shows that Yamaha deserves serious consideration from guitarists seeking top-quality, no-compromise professional acoustics as well.



# The Gold Standard

CHARVEL PRO-MOD SO-CAL STYLE 1 HSS FR E

By Paul Riario

**► EVER SINCE I laid eyes on the back cover of 1979's *Van Halen II* with Eddie Van Halen debuting his brand-new Charvel "Bumblebee" guitar, I said to myself, "What the hell is a Charvel? Because I've gotta have one!" Fast forward many decades later and we now know Charvel has long since blazed an illustrious trail of producing and creatively refining what is commonly known to many as the "superstrat" for players of all stripes, including marquee guitarists like Guthrie Govan and Jim Root. It's no secret that I've been a fan of the brand and still own several in various colors and pickup configurations. So when tasked with reviewing yet another Charvel, it's at this point that I realize it's not a job but a privilege to disclose that Charvel is still the king in a world of superstrats. And if you ask me, the new Charvel Pro-Mod So-Cal Style 1 HSS FR E is proof that the company continually raises the bar in building hot-rodded guitars that combine the utmost comfort while elevating your playing to a whole new level.**

**FEATURES** I've touched on this before, but Charvel is well known for including high-performance upgrades like premium pickups, locking tremolos and flatter-radius fingerboards with jumbo frets that encourage dexterous playing. And for this Pro-Mod So-Cal Style 1 HSS FR E, you'll find all of it onboard — along with recent improvements. The guitar comes with Charvel's sleekly carved So-Cal alder body, a bolt-on maple neck with a 12- to 16-inch compound radius ebony fingerboard, 22 jumbo frets and white dot inlays. For its high-voltage voice, the guitar comes loaded with a Seymour Duncan Distortion TB-6 humbucking bridge pickup and Seymour Duncan's SSL Custom Flat Strat single coil pickups in the middle and neck positions, which can be selected via a five-way blade switch and knurled flat-top volume and tone control knobs.

**STREET PRICE:** \$1,099.99

**MANUFACTURER:**

Charvel Guitars,  
charvel.com

- The Pro-Mod So-Cal Style 1 HSS FR E comes with explosive Seymour Duncan pickups and a five-position pickup selector for a wide range of beefed-up tones.

- The guitar comes standard with a Floyd Rose 1000 Series double-locking tremolo that keeps tuning in check for harmonic screams and extreme dips.

- Its speed neck features a 12- to 16-inch compound radius that allows you to stretch notes toward the ceiling without fretting out.

**● THE BOTTOM LINE**

An exemplary model of versatility and advanced performance, the Pro-Mod So-Cal Style 1 HSS FR E epitomizes everything a superstrat should be.

ever, you'll find those adjustments will be few and far between, thanks to its pair of graphite-reinforced truss rods. In addition, the Floyd Rose 1000 Series double-locking tremolo system will be familiar to dive bombers who want to keep everything in tune after some high-altitude whammy-strafing. Finally, the guitar is available in Ferrari Red, Lambo Green Metallic and Pharaoh's Gold finishes.

**PERFORMANCE** While Charvel has been often recognized for its boldly graphic finishes found on the Satchel and Warren DeMartini artist series and custom shop guitars, the Pro-Mod So-Cal Style 1 HSS FR E is elegantly understated with a black pickguard, black hardware and pickups, and a bright finish (Pharaoh's Gold, in this case), making this guitar an easy fit for guitarists willing to wield this all-rounder for weddings or Wembley. One of the most important aspects of whether a guitar speaks to you or not is usually revealed once you grasp its neck. Charvel's speed-carved neck lives up to that moniker for its slim and stress-free profile along with a hand-rubbed satin back, and smoothly rolled fingerboard edges that allowed me to execute complex chording and fast runs with ease and relaxed comfort.

The high-output Seymour Duncan TB-6 and Flat Strat pickups offer the requisite variety of tonal options in an HSS configuration and are well-suited for this guitar. The TB-6 humbucker handles both the punch and distorted aggression for metal but retains all the clarity and upper midrange bite needed for hearing single notes cut through without muddiness for any musical style — especially with the no-load tone circuit activated. The overwound Flat Strat single coils pleasantly compliment the bridge humbucker in the notch positions, and on their own, sound fat with juicy compression for bluesy solo excursions, whether overdriven or clean. The Floyd Rose 1000 trem has often been criticized for its tottering throw but I found Charvel's spot-on setup made it a smooth ride, whether I decided to throttle away or gently nudge it. The Pro-Mod So-Cal Style 1 HSS FR E is a solidly versatile guitar, and you'd be hard-pressed to nitpick it for just about anything outside of its polite appearance.



## Buzz Bin

# EarthQuaker Devices Aurelius Tri-Voice Chorus

IT'S NOT ENOUGH to be solely a chorus pedal anymore. It's been some time since EarthQuaker Devices released their Sea Machine Super Chorus with six knobs to keep you fully immersed in modulated waters. And sure, there are many other lone chorus stompboxes out in the wild that are capably adequate. But for players who demand their chorus to be multifaceted as well as plush sounding, EarthQuaker Devices has introduced the Aurelius Tri-Voice Chorus. The Aurelius offers three modes of sweeping digital effect modulations in the form of Vibrato, Chorus and Rotary; best of all, this divine trinity of chorused goodness can be saved and recalled via six user presets from the pedal and so much more.

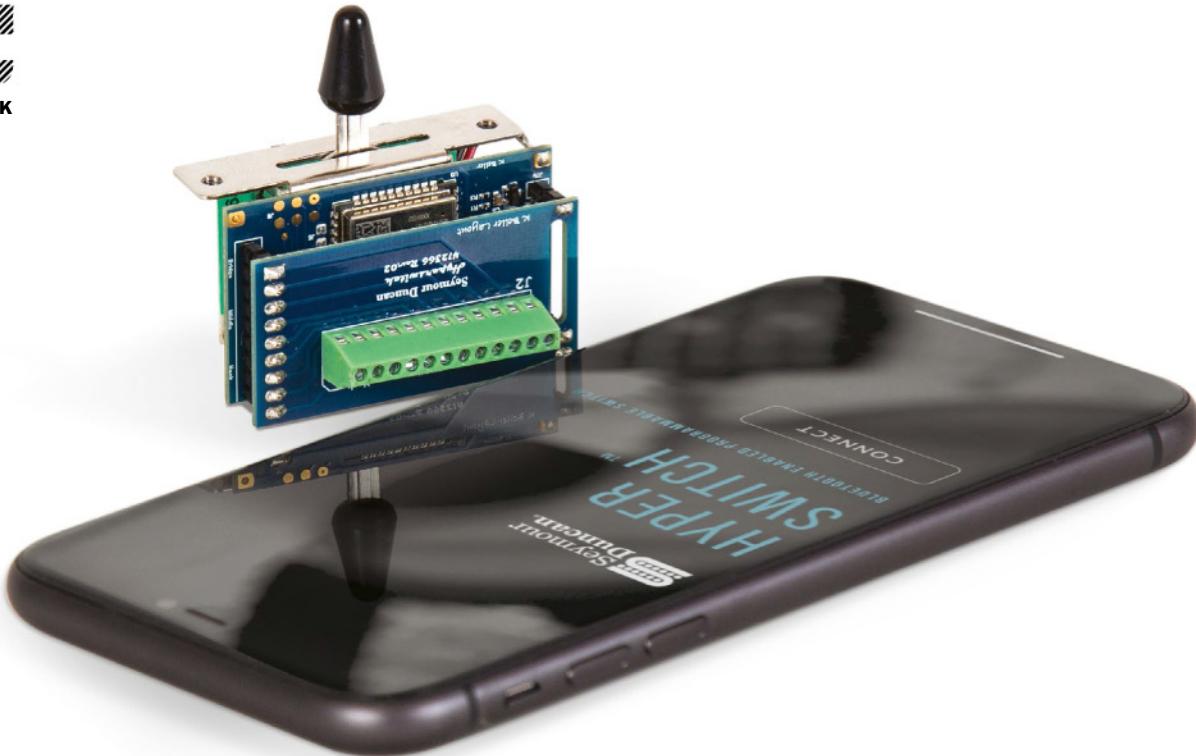
Rather than jam a bunch of controls on its face, EQD keeps it economically spacious with a mini-toggle Mode selector for its Vibrato, Chorus and Rotary voices, a six-position Preset rotary knob, Save/Recall LED button (to access and save presets) and Width, Rate and Balance knobs to finely tailor any and all warble and wobble. You can also assign the Width, Rate or Balance control to an expression pedal via the pedal's side-mounted TRS jack. The pedal also features EQD's Flexi-Switch technology for relay-based, true bypass switching to simultaneously use momentary and latching-style switching. So, for example, you can switch between the pedal's current setting and a chosen preset by simply holding the footswitch. Finally, the Aurelius features input/output jacks (sorry, no stereo option) and a standard 9VDC center negative power input.

EQD claims the Aurelius is inspired by the Seventies CE-1 Chorus Ensemble pedal, and for those who know how bulky that legendary unit is, it's nice to see how the Aurelius packs its comprehensive chorus emulations in EQD's traditional compact chassis despite it not employing old-school BBD tech. Regardless, the Aurelius is still a warm-sounding chorus that's richly textured and comes damn close to sounding analog. Because of its three voices, the Balance, Width and Rate controls take on different roles depending on which mode is active. For instance, in Vibrato mode, the Balance control blends the amount of modulation to the dry signal, where I was able to tame the effect's seasick wobble. But by increasing the speed of the Rate's LFO and pulling back on the Width, I achieved a lovely warble in this chorused vibrato mode. On the other hand, in Chorus mode, when the Balance knob is pushed to extremes, a pronounced flanging effect emerges, so, for lush chorusing, Balance sounds best just below the noon position. I dug the rise and fall of Rotary mode more for its faster Leslie-like pulse rather than its slower sweeps, but it could be that I'm missing the stereo effect here. Either way, The Aurelius is a warm blanket of chorused modulations that sound sweetly familiar, and having the option to store six of them is more chorusing than I will ever need. — Paul Riario

**STREET PRICE:** \$199

**MANUFACTURER:** EarthQuaker Devices, [earthquakerdevices.com](http://earthquakerdevices.com)





# Believe the Hype(r)

SEYMOUR DUNCAN HYPERSWITCH By Chris Gill

**WE'RE ALREADY** A good 23 years (or 24, depending on how you count them) into the 21st century, but even though most of us carry the equivalent of a supercomputer in our pockets, the electric guitars that we play are like driving a 1955 Chevy in a world full of Lucids, Polestars and Teslas. That is to say, electric guitar technology is still about as primitive and basic as it gets. The new Seymour Duncan HyperSwitch is a radical technological advancement that brings the humble electric guitar into the 21st century without sacrificing its classic appeal. It's a pickup selector switch, but not as we know it, Jim, offering the ability to instantly assign a comprehensive variety of wiring configurations (series, parallel, split, reverse, out of phase, etc.) to passive humbucker and/or single-coil pickups via a Bluetooth connection to a smart phone with the HyperSwitch app.

**FEATURES** The HyperSwitch looks like a standard five-position blade switch with a microprocessor-equipped circuit board

attached to it, and it's designed to be a quick and easy replacement for any Strat- or Tele-style blade switch. The extra electronics allow wireless Bluetooth communication with a smartphone via the HyperSwitch app. While the technology may seem complicated to tech-phobic guitarists, installation is surprisingly easy. Use of a soldering iron is only required for removing pickup and certain control wires. All switch wiring connections to the HyperSwitch — pickup, volume, tone and ground — are made with screw terminals. The installation instructions are very clearly written and helpful, but if you're DIY-averse any guitar tech could perform the installation quickly and cheaply.

With the HyperSwitch installed in your guitar and the app on your phone set to the proper pickup configuration settings, connection is made instantly by touching the app's connect button and toggling the selector to different settings. Once the connection is made, a graphic display of the guitar's pickup configuration appears. Changing wiring is now a simple matter of tapping

the setting you want. For example, a humbucking pickup provides full (both), north coil and south coil settings along with standard (series), reverse, RP (out of phase parallel), PRP (out of phase parallel reversed) and off. Note that any pickup or pickups can be assigned to any of the HyperSwitch's five positions. In essence, the switch provides five fully programmable presets for your pickup wiring configurations.

**PERFORMANCE** HyperSwitch opens up a vast world of tonal exploration possibilities for guitarists who have never ventured beyond traditional pickup wiring configurations. A three-humbucker setup provides literally more than a hundred different options. The Bluetooth connection is so quick and reliable that players could even change a guitar's pickup wiring in seconds between songs. If you've wanted to explore parallel sounds or add split coil tones to your guitar without the hassle of switch or push/pull pot installations, HyperSwitch offers an easy and painless solution. Bravo!

## CHEAT SHEET

### STREET PRICE:

\$149

### MANUFACTURER:

Seymour Duncan,  
seymourduncan.  
com

- Installation is easy, thanks to screw terminals for up to three passive humbucking and/or single-coil pickups.

- The HyperSwitch app allows users to completely customize wiring configurations that are saved to any of the switch's five positions.

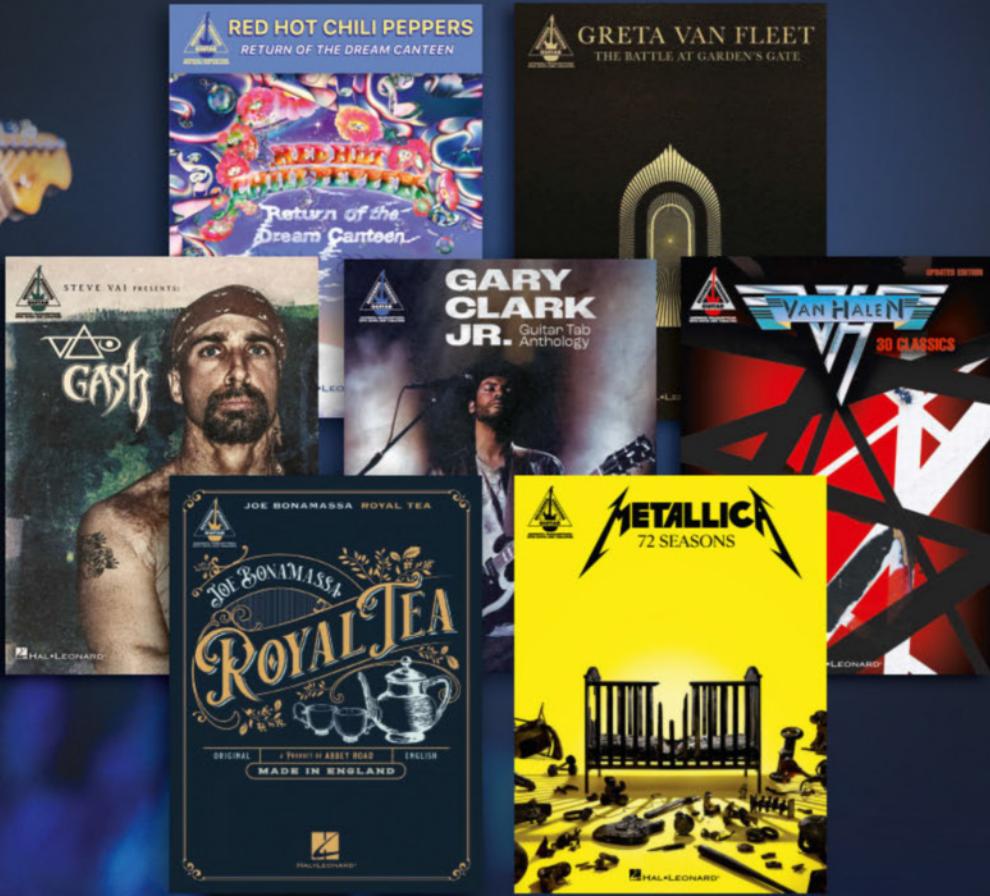
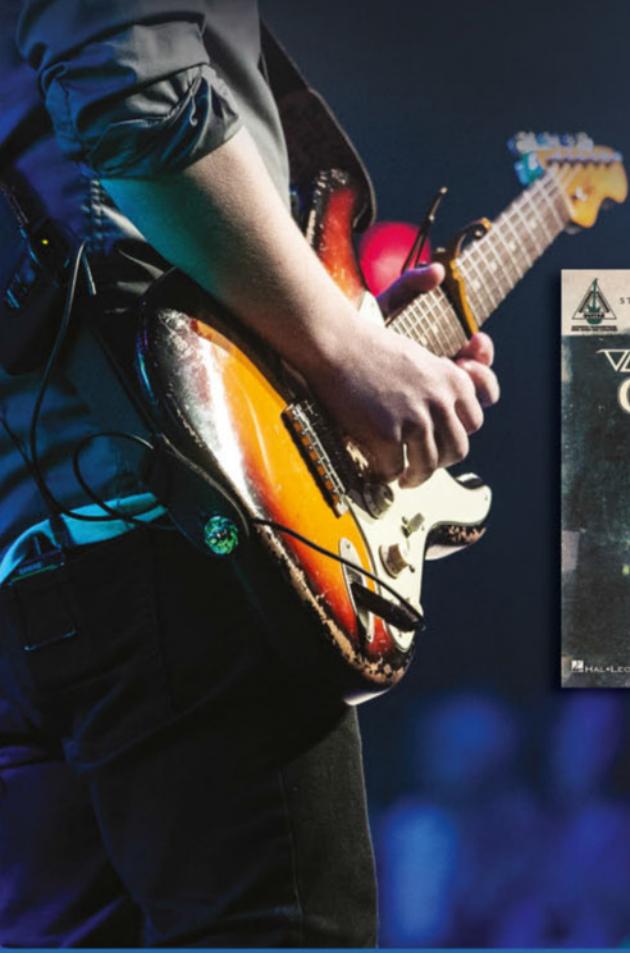
### THE BOTTOM LINE

The Seymour Duncan HyperSwitch unleashes a vast rainbow of tonal options and optimizes a guitar's versatility by enabling guitarists to customize a comprehensive selection of pickup wiring configurations in seconds without the hassles of soldering and installing or replacing additional switches.



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## IN DEEP

by Andy Aledort



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# TRIPTOPHONIC

## Building three-part lead harmonies in stacked 3rds

LAST MONTH, WE explored techniques for harmonizing a melody, by starting with a single-note line and adding three additional ones above it, using the same rhythmic phrasing. The result was four individual "stacked" lead lines playing in harmony. This month, we'll look at another melodic line, this one based on a different scale, and add two harmony lines above it, resulting in three single-note lines.

As you recall, the technique we used previously was this: whatever the first note of the melody was, the first harmony line would start a 3rd higher within the related scale, and the following notes would all be *diatonic*, meaning they would stay within the intervallic structure of the scale. Last month's melody was based on the E Dorian mode (E, F#, G, A, B, C#, D), so each harmony line was likewise built from that scale.

As I also mentioned, guitarists Duane Allman and Dickey Betts of the Allman Brothers Band crafted beautiful harmony lead lines in several of their classic songs, such as "Blue Sky," "In Memory of Elizabeth Reed" and "Whipping Post." The chord progression for this lesson is along the lines of one in another ABB classic, "Melissa."

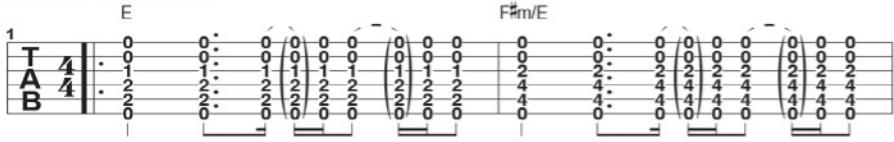
**FIGURE 1** illustrates the repeating progression, upon which we'll build our harmony lead lines. Each chord is played for one bar, starting with E, followed by F#m/E and then Emaj7 (G#m/E) then back to F#m/E. Notice that the open 1st, 2nd and 6th strings are included in each chord voicing.

**FIGURE 2** introduces the primary melody. It begins on the E root note, which is held for three beats. On beat four, I play straight 16th notes, beginning one whole step higher, on F#, and then descend within the scale structure of E major hexatonic (E, F#, G#, A, B, C#). This formula is then applied to each subsequent bar, starting one scale degree higher each time: in bar 2, the line begins on F#, in bar 3, it begins on G#, and in bar 4, it begins on A.

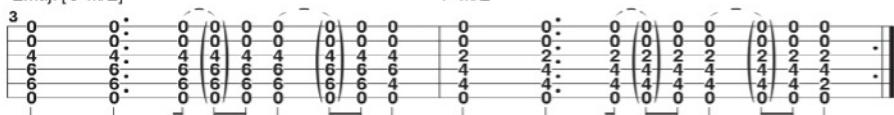
E major hexatonic is a six-note scale that is a variant of both the seven-note E major scale (E, F#, G#, A, B, C#, D#; see **FIGURE 3**) and the five-note E major pentatonic scale (E, F#, G#, B, C#). **FIGURE 4** illustrates E major hexatonic.

Now that we have our melodic line, we

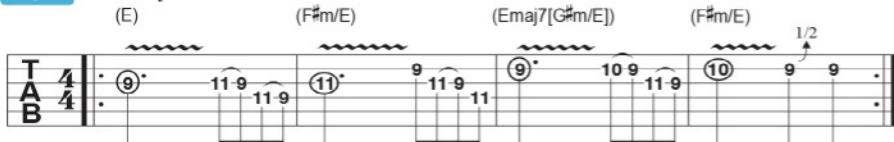
**FIG. 1** rhythm part



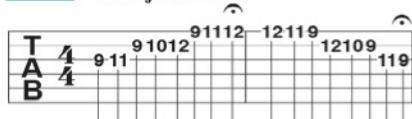
Emaj7[G#m/E]



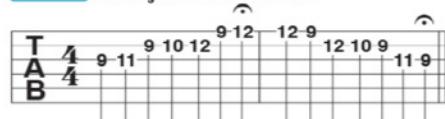
**FIG. 2** melody



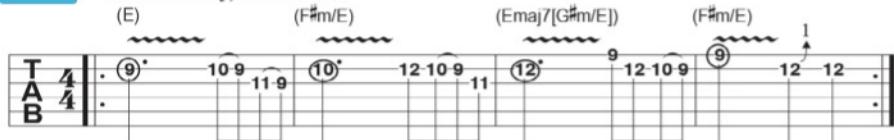
**FIG. 3** E major scale



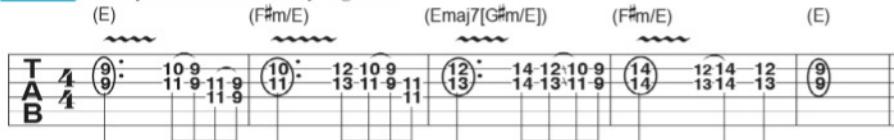
**FIG. 4** E major hexatonic scale



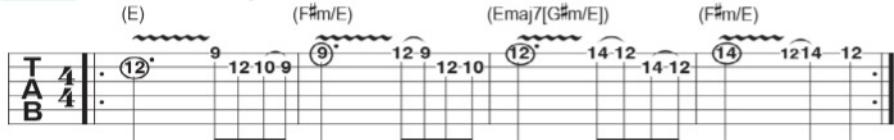
**FIG. 5** first harmony, a 3rd above



**FIG. 6** melody and first harmony together



**FIG. 7** second harmony, a 5th above



can harmonize it a 3rd higher. As shown in **FIGURE 5**, this harmony line begins on G#, which is a major 3rd and two scale degrees above the starting E root note from **FIGURE 2**. **FIGURE 6** presents a way to perform both single-note lines together.

**FIGURE 7** adds our next harmony lead line by repeating the process, now starting a diatonic 3rd above the first note of the previous line. If one were to play the first note of each single-note line together, the result would be an E major triad, spelled E, G#, B.

**GW associate editor Andy Aledort is recognized worldwide for his vast contributions to guitar instruction. His latest album, *Light of Love*, is available now.**



**For video of this lesson, go to  
[guitarworld.com/october2023](https://guitarworld.com/october2023)**

# **TOOLS OF THE TRADE, PART 6**

## The 1959 Gibson ES-335 with Varitone circuit

**THIS MONTH, I'D** like to feature a very rare guitar, a 1959 Gibson ES-335 fitted with a Varitone circuit. For those who missed the previous column, the Varitone is a multi-position tone control that offers six distinctly different EQ settings. It also puts the guitar in stereo, so one needs to use a stereo cable to access the instrument's wide array of sound possibilities.

At the time, the Varitone circuit was standard on other Gibson semi-hollowbody guitars, like the ES-345 and ES-355, but it was almost never seen on an ES-335. Delimiting factors between 1959 335s and 345s/355s are that 335s have rosewood fingerboards with dot inlays while 345s have split parallelogram inlays and 355s have block inlays on ebony fingerboards.

As this particular 335 has the Varitone circuit, it means it was custom-made, making it very rare. The guitar that B.B. King played on his legendary 1965 album *Live at the Regal* was also a rare Varitone-equipped ES-335. That instrument was additionally fitted with a Bigsby tremolo bridge and finished in the very rare color of Argentine Grey. The way to determine this unusual color is that 335s painted in it are “sunburst-ed” on the sides, which is visible when looking at photos of B.B. with the guitar.

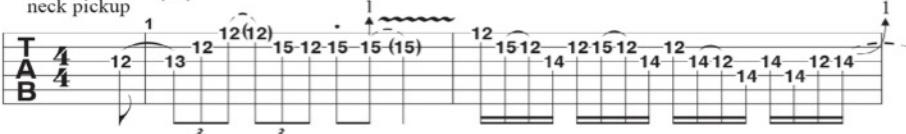
For the examples played in this column, I have the Varitone set in the #1 position, though, as I stated last month, B.B.'s *Live at the Regal* tone was achieved with the Varitone on the #2 setting.

**FIGURE 1** is played with the toggle switch set to the neck pickup, and the tone is very fat and thick, with luscious low-end response while also providing plenty of high-end to cut through a mix. These lines are played in 12th position and are based primarily on the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D), with inclusion of the major third, G#, as is often the case in blues solos (think B.B., Freddie King, Albert King, Buddy Guy, T-Bone Walker, etc.). This particular guitar is strung with flatwound strings, so even though bending the G string is more of a challenge, to me, it's a real party to play!

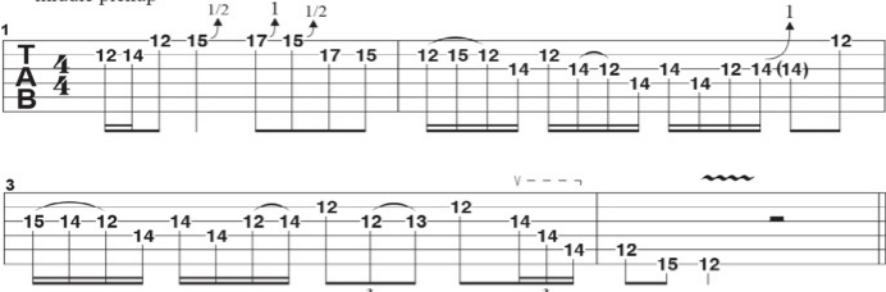
In **FIGURE 2**, I switch to the middle pickup selector position and play similar

**FIG. 1** Triplet Feel 

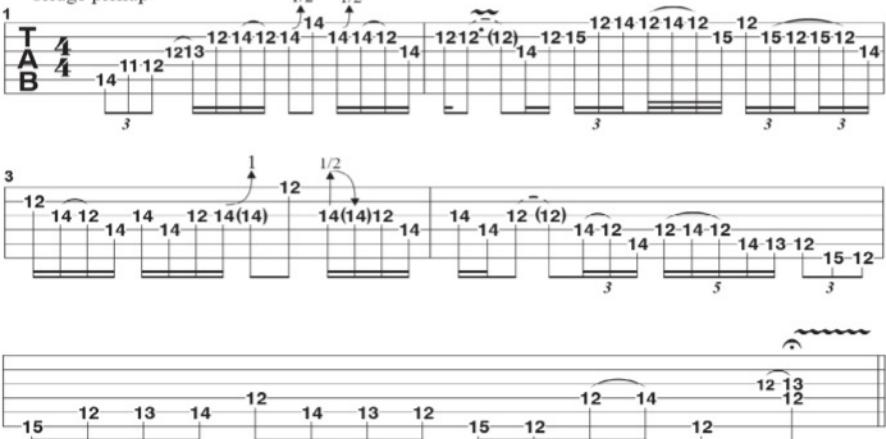
(E7)



**FIG. 2** (E7)



**FIG. 3** (E7)  
bridge pickup



lines, but here I also incorporate the major sixth of E, C $\sharp$ , which makes reference to the E major pentatonic scale (E, F $\sharp$ , G $\sharp$ , B, C $\sharp$ ). Bar 3 begins with a hammer/pull on the G string, which is a very comfortable way to play this type of line on flatwound strings. Heading into bar 4, I set up the end of the line with an upstroke rake across the G, D and A strings.

In **FIGURE 3**, I switch to the bridge pickup, and though the sound is brighter, as expected, the guitar's semi-hollow body provides tons of low-end oomph. Once again, I incorporate the major sixth, C#, within lines based primarily on E minor pentatonic.

When it comes to playing classic blues, a 1959 335 is hard to beat. To me, it's the perfect blues machine.

**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.**

## MELODIC MUSE

by Andy Timmons



For video of this lesson, go to  
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# DEVELOPING THE STORY

**More on my approach to the “Welcome Home” solo**

THIS MONTH, I'D like to pick up where we left off in the previous column, covering my solo on the track “Welcome Home,” which I recorded for the 2016 Andy Timmons Band album *Theme from a Perfect World*. As I explained, the solo is played over a repeating four-bar chord progression that moves between E5, C and A5 chords.

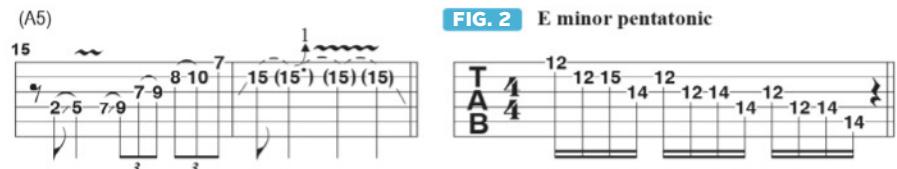
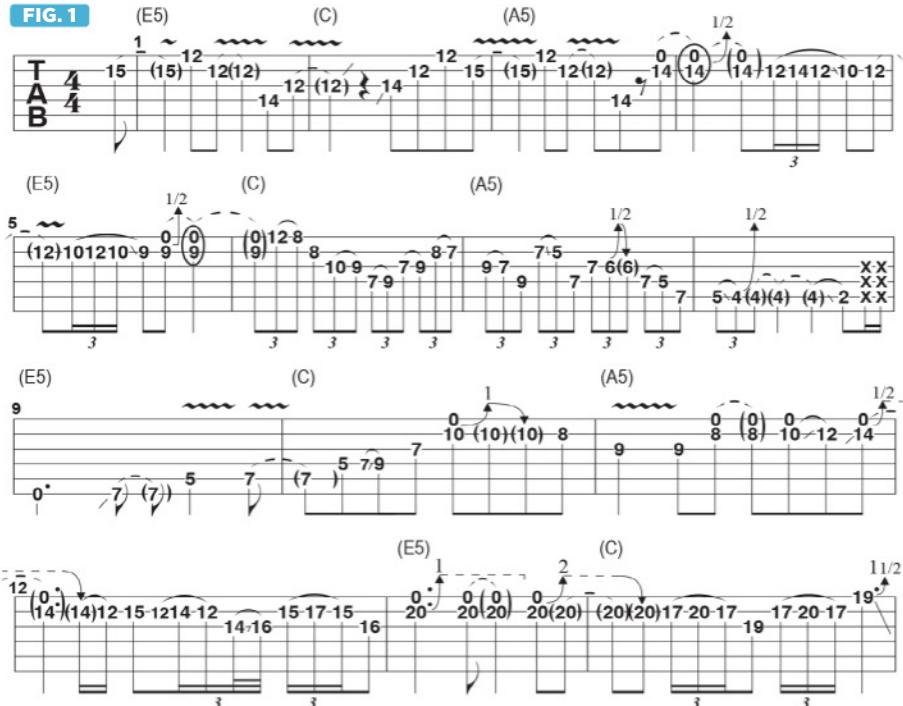
My approach with this solo was to craft improvised lines that satisfy multiple criteria. First, I wanted the solo to be built on solid, memorable melodies, with the goal of pulling the listener in. I also wanted it to “sit” in the environment of the tune harmonically. So, to my mind, the lines needed to relate to the chords in the progression. I achieved this by targeting chord tones. And, as always, I strove to make every solo expressive and emotive and take the listener on a journey.

As I stated last month, the “Welcome Home” solo is 32 bars long. **FIGURE 1** presents the second half of it, from bar 17, which we'll refer to as bar 1 in this example. On the pickup to the downbeat of bar 1, I play a D note, which is the b7 (flattened 7th) of the E5 chord.

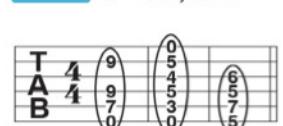
At the start of this second half of the solo, I based the shape of the melody more on repeating patterns than specifically the targeting of the 3rd of each chord. To review, the 3rd of E5 is either G, for Em, or G#, for E major. The 3rd of C is E, and the 3rd of A5 is either C, for Am, or C#, for A major. Within this context, I lean mostly on C#, alluding to an A major sound.

Through the first three bars of this section, I move within a repeating theme that's based on the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D), as shown in **FIGURE 2**. By this point in the solo, the listeners hopefully have the chord progression E - Cmaj7 - A7 (see **FIGURE 3**) established in their ears.

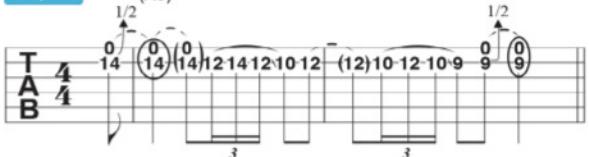
In bars 3 and 4, I purposely include the open high E string as a drone note along with the fretted melody notes. This is illustrated in **FIGURE 4**, starting with a bend from C# to D on the B string, which I sound together with the open high E string. This E note relates perfectly to each chord, being the root of E, the major 3rd of C and the 5th of A. I'll often utilize the open high E string



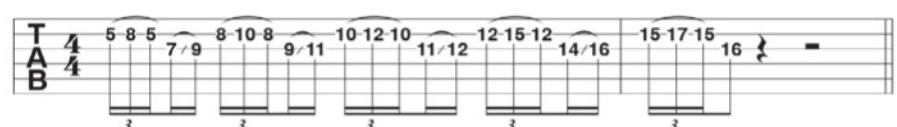
**FIG. 3** E Cmaj7/E A7



**FIG. 4**



**FIG. 5**



in this way for dramatic effect, as it supports the harmony while lending a nice “rub” to the sound.

In bar 5, I use the open E note once again when bending from G# to A on the B string, and I also revisit the C# to D bend with the open high E string in bar 12.

At the end of bar 12 into bar 13, I play a quick phrase that pays homage to Ted Nugent's “Stranglehold” via the ascending hammer/pull-slide lick that sets up the phrase at the downbeat of bar 13. **FIGURE 5** illustrates in greater depth the ascending shapes that Ted utilized in that classic solo.

**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.


 For video of this lesson, go to  
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## SUBSTITUTE MOVES

### Utilizing a ii - V - I approach to improvisation

OVER THE LAST five lessons, we've been exploring various ways in which to incorporate chromaticism and diminished chords into improvised solos within a standard 12-bar blues, using these approaches as musical bridges to "connect the dots" between the chords. The goal in bringing these elements into your soloing picture is to expand your harmonic vocabulary via these devices.

The third "bridge" I like to use to connect the chords together as I travel through a 12-bar blues solo is the use of *turnarounds*. Heard often in blues, jazz and pop, a turnaround is a short, often two-bar, chord progression occurring at the end of a verse, chorus or bridge that leads to the beginning of the next section. For example, the most common use of a turnaround in the 12-bar blues form is in bar 9, where the V (five) chord is usually played, you instead play the II (two major) or ii (two minor) chord for one bar before the V chord, which is then played in bar 10 and followed by the I (one) chord in bar 11. In the key of A, this would be Bm - E7 - A (or A7).

I like to expand on the ii - V - I concept by using it as a bridge to pretty much every chord in the progression, as opposed to just using it at the end of the 12-bar form.

When I was a kid, I didn't know what a ii - V - I was. One day I was listening to jazz guitarist Freddie Green play rhythm guitar with the Count Basie Orchestra on a blues tune, and I heard him play what is shown in **FIGURE 1**. Playing in the key of A, I start on the I chord, A. Then, thinking of the IV chord, D, as being a new, temporary key center, or I chord, I play a ii - V turnaround to that chord in bar 2, Em7 - A, to set up the D chord in bar 3. In bar 4, I play the ii - V back to A — Bm to E13 — followed by Amaj7 in bar 5.

While listening to Freddie play this substitute ii - V - I turnaround, I could hear and appreciate that he was creating a strong feeling of forward motion, by momentarily changing keys to create a new tonal center when landing on the next chord in the progression. As shown in **FIGURE 2**, one can move from A to D by playing Em - A7 - D. Doing this makes our

Triplet Feel 

**FIG. 1**
**FIG. 2**
**FIG. 3**

Bm      E13      Amaj7

Bm      E7sus4/B      A7

E13      Bm7Cm7C#m7      F#13      Cm7Bm7      E7#9 E7b9      Bbmaj7Amaj7

**FIG. 4**

ears think the music is modulating to the key of D via Em - A7 - D, which is a ii - V - I turnaround in the key of D.

In **FIGURE 3**, I demonstrate how to apply a ii - V turnaround approach to each chord in the 12-bar blues progression. Starting on the I chord, A, I then play Em - A in bar 2 to set up the D chord in bar 3. In bar 4, I play Bm - E13 to lead us back to the Amaj7 chord in bar 5. In bar 6, I add a ii - V across beats 3 and 4 to set up the D chord in bar 7. Bar 8 then replicates the Bm - E (this time using E7sus4/B) to set up A7 in

bar 9.

In bar 10, I introduce the vi (six minor) chord, F#m7, to set up the ii - V, Bm7 - E13, in bars 11 and 12. **FIGURE 4** illustrates this more clearly. Finally, I close out the form with a iii (three minor) - VI - ii - V turnaround, C#m - F#m7 - Bm7 - E7, leading to Bbmaj7, the ♭2 (flat two) chord, then the tonic, Amaj7.

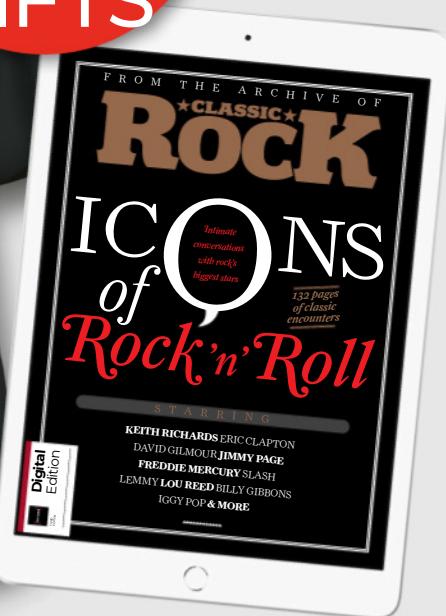
Using ii - V - I turnarounds with chromaticism and diminished phrases can help provide a broad, rich musical vocabulary while playing through the blues form.

**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.**

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# Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS By Jimmy Brown

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## "GOSSIP"

**Måneskin (feat. Tom Morello)**



WITH A GUEST performance by guitar hero Tom Morello, this rousing new rock song by Måneskin showcases the popular Italian band's knack

for crafting catchy hooks and riffs.

Guitarist Thomas Raggi and bassist Victoria De Angelis, their instruments both tuned to drop-D, kick off the tune with a punchy eighth-note melodic line, doubled in octaves, that effectively outlines an implied chord progression with single notes and goes on to serve as the accompaniment for the song's verses behind singer Damiano David's vocals (see sections A and B).

Note the guitarist's and bassist's judicious use of rests, or "holes of silence," during these parts of the song, as well as in the chorus (section C), where, in bars 13, 14 and 15, the entire rhythm section, including drummer Ethan Torchio, create a "stop time" effect that dramatically highlights the vocals. When playing these parts, be sure to completely silence your strings during the rests, using both hands.

Morello's first solo (see section D), which is more of a post-chorus instrumental hook, features the guitarist playing a simple, lyrical melody that he greatly enhances via his signature use of a DigiTech Whammy pedal, set to seamlessly sweep, or glissando, up one octave when pressed forward, creating a series of soaring portamentos, enhanced by the guitarist's use of a shimmering finger vibrato on each held half note.

If you don't own a Whammy pedal or similar device, you can sort of emulate the glissando effect by sliding into each note from one or more fret below. Just be careful to "stick the landing" on each note and not under- or overshoot it. The same suggestion applies to the last four bars of the guitarist's second solo (bars 51-54), which are also Whammy-inflected.

It's interesting to point out how, in the song's final outro chorus, Raggi breaks down and simplifies his rhythm guitar accompaniment, resorting to strumming straight power chords in a nearly unbroken stream of eighth notes, with De Angelis following suit with her bass line. This is a fine example of power pop songcraft.

## "JUMPIN' JACK FLASH"

**The Rolling Stones**



THIS LATE-SIXTIES Rolling Stones classic was built around a few simple, iconic chord riffs crafted by a young Keith Richards, which

he and the band's producer Jimmy Miller cleverly recorded using the novel approach of internally miking his acoustic guitar and intentionally overdriving the microphone's preamplifier, which was in a portable cassette tape recorder. As the guitarist told *GW* back in 2005, "On the record, I played a Gibson Hummingbird [acoustic] tuned to either open E or open D with a capo [at the 2nd fret]. And then I added another [acoustic] guitar over the top, but tuned to Nashville tuning [restrung and tuned like a 12-string guitar without the lower octave strings] to get that high ring."

For live performance, Richards eventually reworked his guitar parts in this song for his preferred open G tuning, using similar, albeit less shimmering, chord voicings. Our transcription offers a time-capsule chronicle of "Jumpin' Jack Flash's" original iteration, but with the practical accommodation of arranging the Nashville-tuned parts (see Gtr. 3 at sections D, E and F) for a conventionally-strung guitar in open E tuning, or open D with a capo, with some of the chord-melody figures transposed up an octave and played on higher strings.

When playing the intro, notice the X's on the 2nd and 3rd strings. These strings are to be intentionally muted with the fret hand's 2nd or 1st finger, by lightly laying it across them while fretting the other notes and strumming.

If you choose to play the song in open D tuning with a capo at the 2nd fret, which alleviates the added string tension and resulting stiffness that open E tuning creates on an acoustic, everything would need to be played two frets higher. Whichever tuning you use, note that the recording sounds a quarter tone, or 50 cents, flat of concert pitch, which is most likely the result of an intentional slowing down of the tape speed in the mastering process, a practice called "vari-speeding." So, to play along, you'll need to tune all your strings accordingly (50 cents flat).

## "FEAR OF THE DAWN"

**Jack White**



JACK WHITE MAKES great use of fuzz distortion and octave-down and -up doubling effects on this new psychedelic rock shuffle. The guitarist

begins the song with a haunting single-note riff that he plays with a swing-eighthths, or triplet-based, feel and entirely on the low E string, mostly pedaling on the open note. Notice how he demarcates each bar with a simple melodic fill on beat 4, using fretted C and B notes, which, together with the low E note, imply a dark E minor tonality (E natural minor scale: E, F#, G, A, B, C, D). Also note how White slightly varies the fill in each of the first four bars, so as to create four different "endings" to the simple one-bar idea, transforming it into a longer and more interesting four-bar phrase, which then serves as the accompaniment for his vocals during the verses (see section B).

White ends each verse with a two-bar fill, using denser triplet rhythms that create heightened momentary tension. In the first ending (bars 17 and 18), the guitarist employs double pull-offs, which, with the half-step and perfect 5th intervals (between C and B and B and E, respectively), creates an angular and interesting melodic contour. At the end of the second verse, he simply rides out on the 12th-fret E note, which creates its own tension, due to both the aforementioned triplet rhythm and the "woofy" tone produced by playing high up the fretboard on the low E string.

Both of White's solos (sections C and D) feature the guitarist wailing away in the upper register and on the top three strings with a searing, wah-inflected fuzz tone, playing notes from the E minor pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D) and relying mostly on the scale's stock "box" shapes and adding lots of bends. In bars 37 and 38, White plays whole-step pre-bends at the B string's 14th fret to sound a dissonant D# pitch, which musically works in this psychedelic setting, as an ear-catching "outside" note. To perform these bends and the ones on the G string in these bars, lay your 3rd finger across both strings and push them upward, using your 2nd finger to assist with the push, similarly laid flat across the strings.

# **“GOSSIP”**

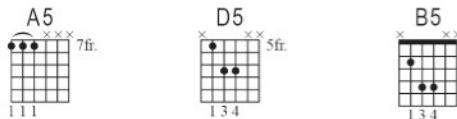
## Måneskin (featuring Tom Morello)

As heard on **RUSH!**

*Words and Music by DAVID DAMIANO, VICTORIA DE ANGELIS, ETHAN TORCHIO, THOMAS RAGGI, JOE JANIAK,  
MADISON LOVE and THOMAS B. MORELLO • 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).**



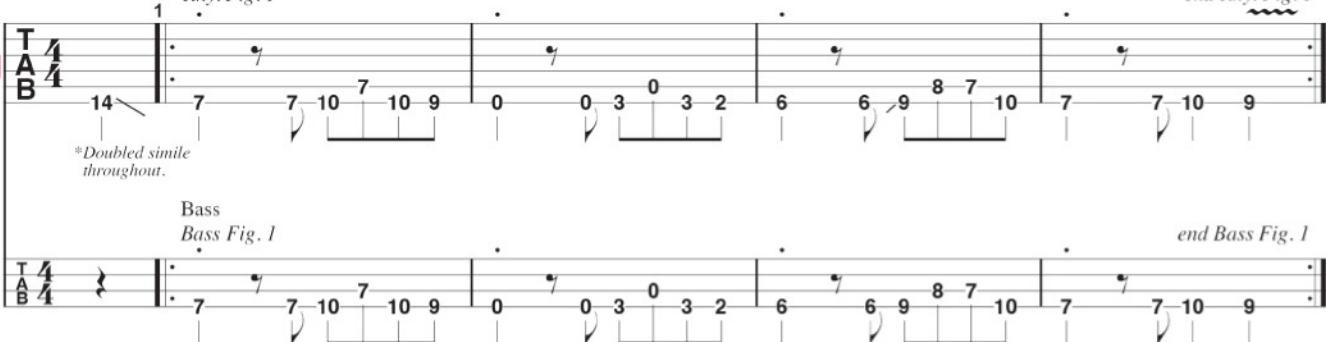
## A Intro (0:00)

Moderately Fast  $\omega = 140$

N.C. (A5)

\*Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.)

### Rhy, Fig. 1



**B** 1st Verse (0:14)

Welcome to the city of lies where everything's got a price Gonna be in your favorite place  
place is a circus You just see the surface They cover shit under the rug You  
(A5) (D5) (E/G4) (A5) (C5) (B5)



*Bass plays Bass Fig. I twice (see bar 1)*



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"GOSSIP"

**C** Chorus (0:41, 1:50)

Sip the gossip Drink 'till you choke Sip the gossip Burn down your throat You're  
 A5 D5 B5 B5 A5

Gtr. 1

13

Bass

not iconic You are just like them all Don't act like you don't know so  
 A5 D5 B5 A5 N.C.(C5) (B5)

17

Bass Fig. 2

end Bass Fig. 2

Sip the gossip Drink 'till you choke Sip the gossip Burn down your throat You're  
 A5 D5 B5 A5 N.C.(C5) (B5)

Gtr. 1

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 17)

2nd time, skip ahead to **F**  
2nd Guitar Solo (bar 45)

not iconic You are just like them all Don't act like you don't know so  
 A5 D5 N.C.(B5) (A5)

Gtr. 1

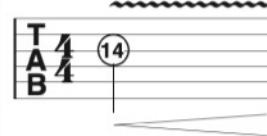
25 light P.M. ----- .

Gtr. 2 plays Fill 1 on second verse  
(see below)

Bass

Fill 1 (2:16)

Gtr. 2





(A5) (C5) (B5) (A5) (D5)

Gtr. 2 (w/whammy-pedal effect)

48

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/dist. and whammy-pedal effect)

51 So

(E/G#) (A5) (C5) (B5)

**G** Outro (2:31)

sip the gossip Drink 'till you choke Sip the gossip Burn down your throat You're  
 A5 D5 B5 A5

Gtr. 2 plays first seven bars of 1st guitar solo (see bar 29)

53 Gtr. 1

Bass

not iconic You are just like them all Don't act like you don't know

A5

D5

B5

A5

57



**B** (0:16, 0:54, 1:52)

1. I was born
2. I was raised
3. I was drowned

B A5/B  
Gtr. 3 doubles Gtr. 2 simile on repeats

Rhy. Fig. 1

Bass Fig. 2

end Rhy. Fig. 1

end Bass Fig. 2

**C** Verses (0:23, 1:01, 1:59)

(1.) in a cross-fire	hurricane	And I howled
(2.) by a toothless	bearded	I was schooled
(3.) I was washed up and left for	dead	I fell down
(3.) at the crumbs of a crust of	bread	I was crowned

B5

A5/B

B5

A5/B

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 simile (see bar 9)

Gtr. 1

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 simile (see bar 9)

3rd time, go back to **C**.  
for extended 3rd verse

at my ma	in the driving	rain	But it's all
with a strap	right across my	back	But it's all
to my feet and	I saw they	bled	I frowned
with a spike	right	through my head	But it's all

B5

A5/B

B5

A5/B

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2

Bass

## TRANSCRIPTIONS

### D Chorus (0:37, 1:15, 2:27)

right now in fact it's a gas But it's all

D5 A5 E B5 D5

\*Gtr. 3

\*Nashville-strung acous. gtr. (bottom four strings replaced with thinner strings tuned one octave higher) arranged for conventionally-strung acous. gtr. in open E tuning.

Gtr. 1

Bass

right I'm Jumpin' Jack Flash it's a

D5 A5 E B5

\*Gtr. 3

1st time, go back to [B] (bar 9)

2nd time, continue to [E]

3rd time, skip ahead to [F] Outro (bar 42)

gas gas gas

### E Interlude (1:33)

B5 E5 A5 B5 E5 A5

Gtr. 3 Riff A

end Riff A

Gtr. 2

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see bar 5)



# "FEAR OF THE DAWN"

## Jack White

As heard on **FEAR OF THE DAWN**  
Words and Music by JACK WHITE • Transcribed by JEFF PERRIN

**A** Intro (0:00)

Moderate Shuffle  $\text{♩} = 139$  ( $\text{♩} \text{ } \text{♩} = \text{♩} \text{ } \text{♩}$ )

N.C. (E5)

(C5) (E5)

(C5)

Gtr. 1 (elec. w/fuzz and octave doubling effect\*)

Rhy. Fig. I - - - - -

\*Gtr. 1 doubled throughout. Octave effect produces additional pitches both one octave below and one octave above dry signal.

**1. When the moon**

(E5)

(C5) (E5)

(C5)

(w/random theramin sounds throughout)

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. I twice (see bar 1)

Bass

5 Bass Fig. I - - - - -

**B Verses (0:13, 0:31, 1:15)**

is above you does it tell you I love you by screaming  
when the dark covers the light from the sparks in the city  
two cigarettes or the light from the match will betray us

Like when the  
To  
But in the

(E5) (C5) (E5)

(C5)

9 Gtr. 1

Bass plays Bass Fig. I four times (see bar 5)

sun starts to fall and it's crushing the walls and the ceiling  
keep us alive I'm gonna hold you and hide electricity  
dark I can bet you and I won't regret that it saved us

Yeah

Yeah

(E5) (C5) (E5)

(C5)

13

"FEAR OF THE DAWN"  
WORDS AND MUSIC BY JACK WHITE.  
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1.

2. Oh I can't control

2., 3.  
(E5)

N.C.  
Gtr. 1

**17** Rhy. Fig. 2 - - - - -

Bass  
Bass Fig. 2 - - - - -

Bass Fig. 3 - - - - -

**C** 1st Guitar Solo (0:48)

(E5) (C5) (E5) (C5)

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 four times (see bar 1)  
Gtr. 2 (w/fuzz and wah pedal)

**21**

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 four times (see bar 5)

(E5) (C5) (E5) (C5)

**25**

N.C.

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 17)

**29**

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 17)

(E5) (C5) (E5) (C5)

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 1)

**31**

\*random natural harmonics

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 5)

Go back to **B** 3rd Verse (bar 9)

3. No more than

**35** Gtr. 1

Bass plays Bass Fig. 3 (see bar 19)

**D** Outro Guitar Solo (1:32)

(E5)

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

Gtr. 2

(C5)

(E5)

(C5)

Bass plays Bass Fig. I four times (see bar 5)

<sup>Note doubled  
by Gtr. 3</sup>

(E5)

Gtrs. 2 and 3 (elec. w/fuzz and wah pedal)

(C5)

(E5)

(C5)

N.C.

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 (see bar 17)

45

(E5)

(C5)

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 twice (see bar 1)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 (see bar 17)

Bass plays Bass Fig. 1 twice (see bar 5)

(E5)

(E5)

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 3

Gtr. 1

Bass

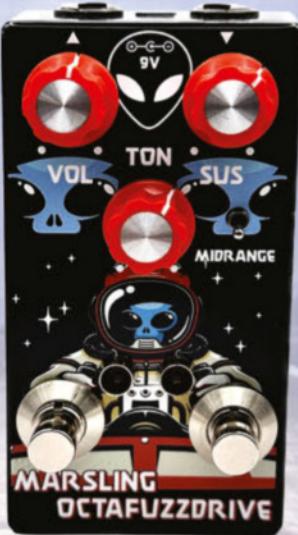
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# **“MOONLIGHT SONATA” (1st movement)**

## Ludwig van Beethoven

**Written by LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN** • *Arranged for two electric guitars by JIMMY BROWN*

**For a playthrough and complete lesson, watch the video at [guitarworld.com/october2023](https://guitarworld.com/october2023)**



**Tune down to C# standard (low to high: C#, F#, B, E, G#, C#).**

All music sounds in the key of C $\sharp$  minor; a minor 3rd (one and one half steps) lower than written.

A Intro

Em Em/D C F/A B7 Em/B Bsus4 B7  
Gtr. 1 (elec. w/light dist. and thick hall reverb)  
*w/pick & fingers; let arpeggios ring throughout*

Fretboard diagram for guitar string 1. The diagram shows the first six frets. Fingerings are indicated above the strings: T (thumb) at the 12th fret, A (index) at the 8th fret, and B (middle) at the 7th fret. The notes correspond to the following fingerings: T at 12, A at 8, B at 7, 5 at 6, 3 at 5, 3 at 4, 4 at 3, 5 at 3, 4 at 2, 0 at 1, 4 at 3, 5 at 3, 4 at 2, 5 at 3, 4 at 2, 5 at 3, 5 at 2, 5 at 1, 6 at 1, 5 at 1, 6 at 1, 5 at 1, 6 at 1, 5 at 1, 7 at 1, 8 at 1, 10 at 1, 9 at 1, 9 at 1, 8 at 1, 9 at 1, 9 at 1, 7 at 1, 8 at 1, 7 at 1.

## B Main Theme

Em B7/D# Em Am G/D D7  
Gtr. 2 (elec. w/heavy dist., delay and hall reverb) vibrato  
w/fret buzz

Fretboard diagram for measure 5. The first six strings are muted (x). The 10th string has a note at the 10th fret. The 11th string has notes at the 10th and 11th frets. The 12th string has a note at the 10th fret. The 13th string has a note at the 8th fret. A bracket labeled "1 (hold bend)" points to the 10th string's 10th fret. A bracket labeled "w/fret hand" points to the 13th string's 8th fret.

Gtr. 1

G Gm B $\flat$ 7/F Eb Edim/D C $\sharp$ dim7

\* Artificial "harp" harmonic: lightly touch string directly over 15th fret with tip of pick-hand index finger while picking string w/thumb.

Dm Gm6 Gm6/B $\flat$  Dm/A A Dm D Gm/D Gm Gm/B $\flat$  Gm/B $\sharp$

D      Gm/D      Gm      Gm/B♭      Gm      D      Bdim7      E7/G♯      Am

17      14\*      (14)\*      x      14\*      14\*      (14)\*      (14)\*      x      14\*      14\*      14\*      x      14\*      14\*      x      13\*      (13)      (13)13      (13)\*

7      5      5      7      5      7      5      7      8      6      6      8      6      6      7      5      7      6      4      7      6      4      7      5      7      5      5      5      5

B♭/D      D♯dim7      Am/E      Esus4      E      Am      E7/G♯

10\*      x      8\*      (8)      (8)(8)5      7\*      (7)      (7)(7)5      7\*      x      15\*      (15)15      (15)\*      x      15\*      (15)15

3      1      3      1      2      1      2      2      1      2      2      1      0      7      5      5      5      9      10      8      9      12      10      9      12      10      9      12      10

Am      F♯dim7      Am/E      B7/D♯      Em      F♯dim/A      A♯dim7      B7b9

15\*      15      (15)15      (15)      17\*      (17)\*      (17)\*      17      (17)17      15\*      (15)      (15)\*

10      8      8      10      8      9      10      8      11      10      7      11      10      7      11      10      7      12      12      12      12      11      10-13      9      8      8      7      7      8      8      7-10      8      7

**D Interlude**

Gtr. 1

Em/B      B7b9

29      8      7      9      8      7      10      8      7      7      8      7      12      12      12      15      12      12      12      12      0      2      0      0      0      3      0      0      0      0      9      10      7      8      10      7      13      10      11

Em/B      Edim7/B      B7b9

33      14      14      12      12      12      15      12      12      14      15      17      14      15      17-14      20      17      18      20      21      7      8      10      7-13      10      11      13      14      16      14      17      16      14-8      7      10      8      7-10      9

## TRANSCRIPTIONS

Am/E      B7b9      F#dim      Am/E      B7b9      F      Am/E      B7b9      C

37

### E Main Theme Recapitulation

Am6      B      Em      B7/D#      Em      Am

Gtr. 2

41

Gtr. 1

G/D      D7      G      D7no3      G      B7/F#      Em

45

B7/D#      Em      F/A      B7      Em      E      Am/E      Am      Am/C      Am

49

## **“MOONLIGHT SONATA” (1ST MOVEMENT)**

E

Am/E Am Am/C Am E Am D7/F# G

53

1/2 (16)° (16)' 16 (16)° (16)' 16 (16)' 16 (16)° (15)' x (15)' x (15)' x (13)' (13)' x

7 9 7 9 9 7 9 9 7 9 10 8 9 10 8 9 10 8 9 9 7 9 9 7 9 10 8 9 10 8 7 10 8 7 10 8 7 10 8 12 16

9 9 7 9 9 7 9 9 7 9 7 10 9 10 7 9 10 7 9 10 8 9 10 8 9 10 8 9 10 8 9 10 8 9 10 8 9 10 8 12 16

**F# Ending**

57

Cmaj7/E F#dim B7/D# Em Am6/C Bsus4 Am6 Em/B B7 Em

12 (12)12\* 10 (10)10\* 8\* 10\* 11\* 10\* (10) (10)8 9\* (9)\* 6 (6)6

12 11 10 10 9 8 | 7 9 7 9 7 10 9 7 | 9 9 8 9 9 8 7 7 8 7 || 10 9 9 9 8 9 9 9 8 8

Fretboard diagram for guitar showing a blues scale with B7b9, Em, Em/B, and N.C. (Em) chords. The diagram includes fingerings, string muting, and dynamic markings.

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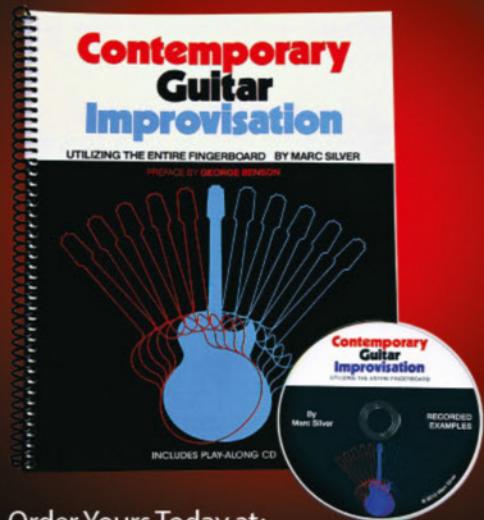
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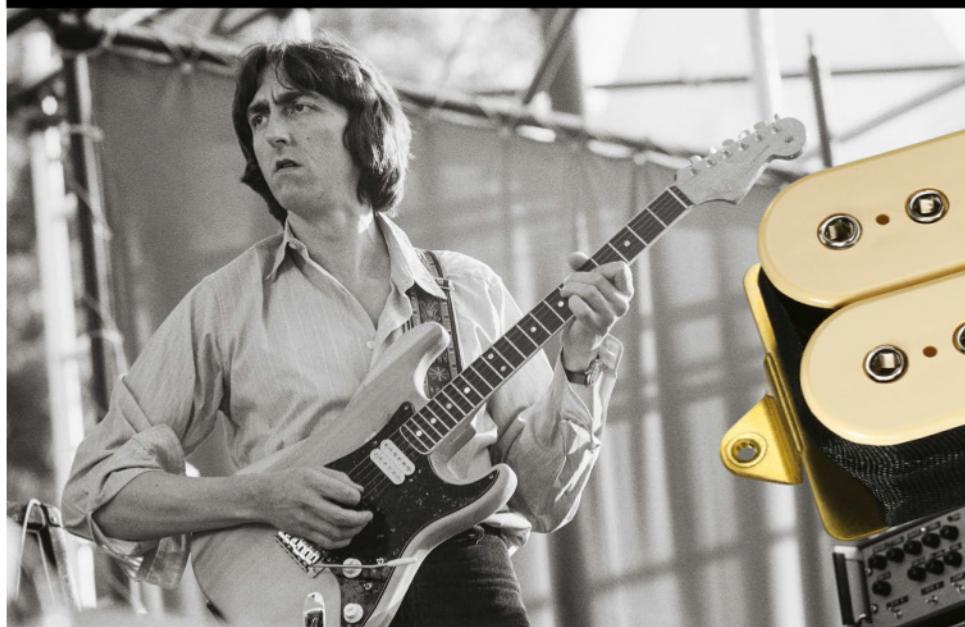


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# DIMARZIO SUPER DISTORTION HUMBUCKING PICKUP

CATEGORY: REPLACEMENT PICKUP



Allan Holdsworth — playing a Strat that's been decked out with a DiMarzio Super Distortion humbucker — performs with U.K. in New York City's Central Park, July 7, 1978

**T**HE REPLACEMENT PICKUP is so commonplace these days that most guitarists have swapped pickups on at least one of their electric guitars to improve its sound. However, for about the first two decades of the electric solidbody guitar's existence, very few players ever thought of changing their pickups, and the few who did found it wasn't a very easy task.

That all changed when Larry DiMarzio created the market for replacement pickups by developing and intelligently marketing the Super Distortion humbucker in the early Seventies.

DiMarzio made the Super Distortion to provide an improved alternative to the stock pickups manufactured during the late Sixties and early Seventies when companies like Gibson, Fender and Gretsch were owned by big corporations (Norlin, CBS and Baldwin, respectively) that cared more about cutting costs than satisfying players' needs. Guitarists were also seeking ways to increase the distortion, crunch and sustain of their rigs, especially without needing to turn their amps up to ear-splitting levels or use fuzz pedals.

DiMarzio's ingenious solution was to develop a pickup with higher output that also delivered the desirable tonal qualities that rock guitarists preferred. He designed the pickup to fit perfectly into standard Gibson humbucker mounting to minimize installation hassles, and the replacement

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pickup was born.

Larry DiMarzio's design featured smaller-gauge wire and a tighter layered coil than Gibson used for pickup construction, which allowed a higher amount of turns per coil. This design significantly boosted output, particularly when combined with its strong ceramic magnet that also enhanced brightness and mid-range punch. Other distinctive features included 12 large adjustable hex Allen screw pole-pieces and exposed cream-colored bobbins (no cover), the latter providing a distinctive look that made DiMarzio pickups instantly identifiable (a registered trademark that DiMarzio still rigorously protects today).

The DiMarzio Super Distortion humbucker played a major role in the sound of hard rock guitar from the mid Seventies onward as players like Rick Derringer, Buck Dharma, Elliott Easton, Ace Frehley, Steve Hunter, Ronnie Montrose, Rick Nielsen, Joe Perry, Tom Scholz, Earl Slick, Dick Wagner and many others embraced its aggressive tones. Dimebag Darrell, Paul Gilbert, Kerry King, Mick Mars, Dave Mur-

ray and Randy Rhoads later kept the Super Distortion flame burning bright for metal during the Eighties and beyond, and in the Nineties the pickup found favor amongst the grunge and alternative crowd through players like Kurt Cobain, Kim Thayil and Lee Ranaldo. The pickup also made a significant impact in the sound of jazz-rock fusion, thanks to guitarists like Al Di Meola, Allan Holdsworth and John Abercrombie.

Also during the Seventies, up-and-coming US guitar companies like B.C. Rich, Charvel, Dean and Hamer, boldly defying Fender and Gibson's status quo, built numerous guitar models with DiMarzio Super Distortion pickups as standard equipment, as did several Japanese guitar companies like Aria, helping make the sound and glory of the DiMarzio Super Distortion readily accessible and affordable to the masses.

Although DiMarzio has offered a few hundred different models over the last 50 years, the Super Distortion is still going strong, thanks to its distinctive voice that is irresistible to guitarists who love the aggressive snarl and bite of late-Seventies hard rock tones. The pickups sound magical when paired with a circa Seventies-through-mid-Eighties Marshall, but they also work great with numerous Mesa Boogie amps as well as many modern high-gain beasts. 500k ohm volume and tone pots with a .022uF tone capacitor are recommended for optimal performance.

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