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'Live And Let Die'

NIRVANA
'Son of a Gun'

CREAM
'Badge'

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Behind the scenes at the making of 'In Utero'
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50 Best Guitar Albums of 2004

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'Live And Let Die'
SLIPKNOT
'Millionaire'
THE WHO
'Statute'
THE LIBERTINES
'Crystallised'
THE MUSIC
'Boom Fights'
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We love a good fight, us. Alien versus Predator, Rocky versus Apollo Creed, Dimebag versus T.G... er, Kramer versus Kramer.

There's nothing like a good bust-up to clear the air. But sometimes [cue syrupy music] it's good to put our differences aside and work together for the greater good.

T.G.'s letters page has been known to turn into a slanging match between different schools of guitar playing. Frankly, we're as sick of it as you no doubt are.

Europe's best-selling axe manual ain't called TOTAl Guitar for nothing: we cover everything from pristine pop (Maroon 5 to the foulest, mankient metal (Slipknot and Slayer). If it rocks, it's in. Likewise, learning how to play the hook to this year's biggest pop-rock hit's gonna get you laid, it's in the flickin' baby, baby!

Playing the guitar should be fun. So never mind the bollocks, let's rock – together.

Stephen Lawson, Editor
Peavey and Joe Satriani set out to build an amplifier that has the widest range of EQ options and gain structures possible, combining the tones and flexibility he's always sought into one amplifier. Introducing the Peavey JSX, the most versatile all-tube guitar amplifier, designed with a legendary, virtuosic talent.

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MONITOR
NEWS ★ INTERVIEWS ★ HEROES ★ HOW TOs

ROCK'S GREATEST SUPERGROUP RETURN FOR 2005

We're knocked off our feet this month to learn that a Cream reunion is in the works. The legendary trio of guitarist/vocalist Eric Clapton, drummer Ginger Baker and bassist Jack Bruce are planning a string of shows in 2005 at London's Royal Albert Hall. They have already begun rehearsals for a possible week-long residency at the venue. The dates are so far unclear and it is yet unknown if there will be any additional shows in other parts of the world.

Cream split in 1968 and haven't performed together since the band's induction into the Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame in 1993. They were one of the most respected, influential and successful bands of the 1960s: blending blues, rock and the growing strains of psychedelia. Their brief lifespan, which lasted a little over two years, yielded the albums Fresh Cream (1966), Disraeli Gears (1967), Wheels Of Fire (1968) and Goodbye (1969). Disraeli Gears sported such signature tracks as Strange Brew and Sunshine of Your Love, which features one of the most distinctive riffs in rock.

After they split, Clapton and Baker went on to record albums with supergroup Blind Faith, featuring Traffic's Steve Winwood and Family bassist Rick Grech, before Clapton left to pursue his hugely successful solo career.

"Live, Cream was a great band and those original live albums were probably the best of their kind, up to that point," Bruce told Billboard.com in 1997, prior to the release of the box set Those Were the Days. "But our studio recordings were more important; you can tell each one of us had a different idea of what Cream should have been."

Turn to page 88 to learn Badge in full! >>
Keith Richards has influenced a generation of guitarists—and the odd Hollywood actor, too.

**CLASS ACT**

Rolling Stone axeman Keith Richards is gearing up for his role in the sequel to the 2003 blockbuster Pirates Of The Caribbean, starring Johnny Depp.

The 60-year-old guitarist has accepted the role of main character Jack Sparrow's father in the film. Johnny Depp, who reprises his part as Sparrow, is said to have convinced Keith to accept the paternal role after reading the script.

Keith Richards has already signed up for four guaranteed days of shooting, which begins on the set of Pirates Of The Caribbean: Treasures of the Lost Abyss. In February, he took time out of working on the new Rolling Stones studio album, the follow-up to 1997's Bridges To Babylon, to get a costume fitting in preparation for filming.

Following the trend and looking forward to his own 15 minutes of screen stardom, Keith Richards is not the only guitarist set for a film role. Gene Simmons of KISS, who has a featured role in the new Harry Potter film, has also revealed his part as a character in the movie will be a wizard with a guitar.

**STARS OF STAGE AND THE SILVER SCREEN**

Keith Richards is determined to go out on a high, both on stage and on screen, but the rock 'n' roll star says he will not be attending the Oscar ceremony on Sunday night to present his Academy Award for best original song.

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**TODAY'S TOP TIPS**

**GUITAR COS LTD** offers a secure website for guitarists to sell any of their old, rare or vintage guitars.

**AEROSMITH** guitarist Joe Perry is planning to release a solo album in April, after the recent death of his wife, Linda. Joe recently told a friend, "I'm going to get back to touring and promoting the album..."
Formed in 1993, The Hives hail from Sweden, where their third studio album *Tyronosaurus Hives* was recorded. Moving away from the punk influence that shaped their last offering, *Your New Favourite Band* (a collection of album and EP tracks from their previous studio offerings), they have nonetheless retained their strict black and white dress code and a penchant for 1960s kitsch guitars like the Danelectro, Epiphone, Gretsch and a Sundberg Arsonette. Plugging into Fender combos, the brash tone forms a link between their old sound and the more metronomic, electronic feel that has superseded it.

On the original recording the two guitar parts are cleverly arranged across the stereo picture, playing interlocking rhythms. For our version, we have condensed the two parts into one to enable you to play both in one pass. The things we do for you, eh?

Use the bridge pickup with a bright sound and a hint of distortion and try to hit all six strings of these major bar chords evenly, with the accent on downstrokes of the pick. The shifts in position can be tricky on first attempt, but persevere and you will triumph in the end! (RB)

**THE HIVES: Two-Timing Touch & Broken Bones (main Intro riff)**

These chords form the intro to *Two-Timing Touch & Broken Bones*. Try to hit them as evenly as possible, using mainly downstrokes. To achieve the machine-like feel, mute the chords as soon as they have sounded the required length.
Interview

Hoobastank

When Dan Estrin Wrote 'The Reason', He Had No Idea It Would Become the Biggest Radio and Download Hit of 2004...

Guitarist: Dan Estrin

Late last year, shortly before the release of über-ballad The Reason, Hoobastank's Dan Estrin found himself at a high-powered record company meeting. A sharp-suited exec drew him to one side and whispered, "Are you ready for what's about to happen? This song is going to change your life." Dan was unimpressed. Big wigs had made similar promises in the past. He resolved to ignore the warning. After all, it was just another song. Wasn't it?

In the end, The Reason surpassed even the record company's expectations. Within weeks of its release it was the No 1 airplay hit in America, receiving constant rotation on every major radio and music TV station. It would eventually become the second most downloaded song of all time. "It was crazy," recalls Dan, who's sat backstage at London's Kentish Town Forum. "I remember coming back from tour and friends saying to me, 'Dude, I am so sick of that damn song!' It was everywhere.

The song's runaway success was particularly sweet for Dan since he'd written most of it himself. He'd even composed the emotive chorus melody - though he'd actually imagined it as a guitar line and it was singer Doug Robb who suggested it would work better as a vocal hook. He demoed it in his bedroom using Pro Tools. "I still have that actual recording on my laptop," he explains. "It's funny listening to it now because it sounds exactly the same. Even the little overdubs are on there."

At that stage he had no idea of the song's potential. It was only in the studio, when a string section was brought in, that he realised he'd created something special. "Once it was totally finished I remember listening to it and feeling extremely proud. I was stoked because it was so different from anything we'd done before. I felt like it was our Nothing Else Matters. Metallica were a metal band who showed another side to themselves with that song, and I think we achieved the same thing with The Reason."

Clearly, Dan regards himself as a songwriter first and a guitarist second. His setup's pretty tasty, too. He has several piece-equipped PRS Custom 24s and McCarty's to choose from, owns a vast selection of boutique pedals and horns his live sound with a combination of a four-channel Mesa/Boogie Road King (distorted) and a Roland JC-120 (clean) - but it's not a subject that consumes him. He'd rather spend his time experimenting with new tunings (open E and open C# are particular favourites right now) and coming up with killer hooks.

Of course, one by-product of his co-authorship of The Reason is vast personal wealth. Every time the song gets played on the radio, anywhere in the world, he gets paid. And that's a hell of a lot of cheques through the mail. Yet there are two members of Hoobastank - drummer Chris and bassist Markku - with no writing credit on The Reason. Don't they resent his newfound fortune?

"Possibly. Some bands split it equally, which is a nice thing to do. But me and Doug wrote the entire fucking song. I'm in this for the music. But if getting rich is involved, I'll take it, you know? I'd be lying if I said money doesn't influence anything, because it does. I worked really hard on this record and I wasn't about to let anyone take away what I deserved."

He leans back in his chair. "And I don't think that's unfair in any way." (LL)
Objects of Desire

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www.rickenbacker.com

Not only is this Rickenbacker 325C58 one of the most beautiful guitars you'll ever set your eyes on, it also has a unique place in British rock history. This is the guitar that John Lennon used to drive the rhythm of The Beatles from the band's early Hamburg days to their legendary first US television appearance on the Ed Sullivan show, 9 February 1964.

Lennon bought his 1958 edition 325 from the Musikhaus Rothloff Music store in Hamburg in 1960. Over the next few years he would customize the guitar with different control knobs, a Bigsby vibrato (in place of the original temperamental Kauffmann unit) and, more dramatically, a total black refinish in late 1963. He would later take delivery of a 1964 325 and a 12-string version of the guitar – both gifts from Rickenbacker – in Jägello (Hamburg)

The guitar in the picture is the re-issued version of Lennon's original 1958 maple top, correct in every detail. The 3/4 scale 325 features a 2-inch thick hollow body, three vintage toaster-style pickups and four humbuckers, four big "cooker-style" control knobs. The guitar is very light and plays like a dream. Total class...

Chords of the Month

Pedal Tone Chords

Many thanks to Mike Smith of Mix tube (www.mixtubec.com), the UK's only dedicated Rickenbacker retailer, for the photo of this guitar. Contact him on 0121 533 0000 for further details. Rossetti Ltd (www.rossetti.co.uk) is the exclusive distributor of Rickenbacker instruments for the UK.

Stairway Denied!

The Tunes You're Annoying Guitar Shop Workers With

CRAIG SIMPSON
17, student
"Enter Sandman by Metallica and Jimi Hendrix's Purple Haze – just stuff I jam to in my bedroom."

BILL NELSON
20, electrical fitter
"What are you playing?" "Basically my own stuff or a bit of Kitar and Nirvana – grunge and rock, really. Grunge is coming back!"

KEITH GONNER
38, guitar teacher
"What are you playing?" "It depends on what I've picked up, but nothing specific. Obviously not Stingray & Heaven, because everyone plays that one." "Anything take your fancy?" "An Electro-Harmonix Double Puff and a Fender Strat Deluxe. It sounds brilliant. I've got two Big Muff pedals, so the Double Puff will make it easier. It's a brilliant distortion pedal." "What are you playing?" "An Electro-Harmonix Double Puff and a Fender Strat Deluxe. It sounds brilliant. I've got two Big Muff pedals, so the Double Puff will make it easier. It's a brilliant distortion pedal."

MARK CONNELLY
37, unemployed
"What are you playing?" "Picking through the notes in different orders to establish a picking pattern."

The complete Guitar Cards range is available from all good music shops, priced £0.99. Each pack contains over 50 essential chord shapes in a unique playing card format. Visit www.guitarcards.com for more information.

This month we decided to pick a handful of chords inspired by metal act Pantera. There are two basic chord shapes (the Fmaj7 and Bmaj7) and a variation of each shape created by altering the bass note (the Fmaj7/G and Bmaj7/C). Try out these chords for size by picking through the notes in different orders to establish a picking pattern. Sound familiar, Dimedog Fans?

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STEROGRAM

THANKS TO THAT iPod AD, THIS GANG OF SUPERCHARGED KIWIS ARE EVERYWHERE – BUT STILL CAN'T GET RECOGNISED IN THE STREET

GUITARISTS:
TIN YOUNGSON,
BRAD CARTER

I've course you know Stereogam. Purveyors of the 100mph anthem Watch That Man, invaders of the airwaves and riders of the wave of success that can only come from featuring on a trendy advert.

Since being signed by Capitol two years ago the Kiwi five-piece have been on a whirlwind, non-stop touring schedule which has seen them cover 100,000 miles in a van, support white trash rockers Saliva and hit the big time by landing that iPod contract. Flashback to Whangarei, New Zealand, two years ago and Stereogam were five bouncy baddies sleeping on floors and making a name for themselves in high schools throughout the land with their manic live show, featuring frenzied punk riffs and rap vocals. Talents. They rented a beach house and wrote and recorded a batch of new music, resulting in a set of demos and many phone calls from the neighbours.

"We used a whole bunch of amps to get the sound," says axeman Brad. "It's a mixture between the Beastie Boys and the Foo Fighters, with a bit of AC/DC thrown in." A homemade video for their song White Trash, released on their own label Saim, got rotation on local and nationwide TV stations and came to the attention of an eagle-eyed freelance A&R man in LA. "The New Zealand government has really come on board the music train," says fellow guitarist Tim. "Bands can get recording grants to make videos. We were on artists' benefit -- which is basically the dole but you don't have to look for work, you just have to convince them you're trying to be a successful musician."

After they signed a deal with Capitol in 2002, they moved to LA for three months, recorded their debut Schnackl and have been on tour ever since. "There's not a lot to do when you're crammed into a tour bus," says Tim. "But we've been watching a lot of movies."

“Our tour manager hit some black ice in Wyoming and we were a 720-degree spin which was pretty scary. But it's like that's gonna happen when you do 100,000 miles in 18 months. When we bought our van it was brand new and it's a total wreck already. That's why it's so great to be here in the UK – no 20-hour drives!"

For Stereogam, came in the most unlikely of formats. A fax, to be precise.

"It was weird. We bought an Apple Computer and did a video clip of all our live shows, which is what we got signed from. So we sent a fax to Apple and they called us up and asked if we wanted to help us out. We applied for the iPod advert and got it. No-one was more shocked than us!"

If Busted want a rough idea of how they'd do in America, they need look no further than their Kiwi counterparts. American bands are so concerned with the US market, says Tim. "We toured with Saliva, kind of a redneck rock band who are fucking huge in the US, but nobody has heard of them over here. So we want to crack the UK market as well. That's the true indication of success."

"Except I haven't been recognised yet," says Brad. "Maybe because I'm just standing in Trafalgar Square on a mobile and I look like everyone else."

Stereogam tour the UK in February. Learn Wookie Talkie Man on p105.
Justin Hawkins was born at the wrong time. He's an 1980s metalier trapped in the body of a buck-toothed East Anglian; a prancing cyclone of huge hair and day-glo beads; a man with a CD collection full of Whitesnake and a wardrobe full of spandex.

New-fangled concepts like subtlety and introspection seem across the surface of his bulletproof self-belief; the vitriol of the music press merely ceases him to turn up the pomposity knob. Hawkins couldn't give a toss for passing fads or studied cool. His devotion to hard rock – to the exclusion of all else – has given The Darkness a strange sort of integrity in the sea of fake cockneys and privately educated New Yorkers.

Permission To Land remains a thrilling album. It's still ridiculous, of course; overblown, camp and tongue-in-cheek in an endearing way that only a rare few (Julian Clary, Queen) have been able to pull off. It's also a guitar masterclass: the product of years spent crouched in a Lowestoft bedroom trying to work out the fiddly bit from Since You've Been Gone. If Hawkins' virtuosity – and that of his brother Dan – is stunning, then it's still eclipsed by his songwriting. Friday Night, Black Shuck, I Believe In A Thing Called Love – are all moments engineered to have you strumming the air and jabbing the jukebox.

He's a cocky bastard. That's fair enough. The knives are out for Hawkins, while he continues to be the best soloist, songwriter and shrieker in Britain, the Prince of Darkness needn't watch his back. He's really growing on us. (HYM)
GU MEDICINE

It's time for TG's Checkup and GU Medicine's visceral onslaught of classic rock and metal guitar is just what the doctor ordered...

Guitarists: Dale Evans, Lee Storrar

It's pissing with rain on a cold autumn night in Yorkshire and Dale Evans is drinking a can of Carlsberg and talking about genital warts. He's just got back from work (as a computer technician) and he's "f*cking knackered".

Dale is the lead guitarist with GU Medicine. A band that mixes old school AC/DC riffs. Josh Homme-style vocals and Thin Lizzy's groove-laden backbeat, to become the first and greatest example of a new genre they've invented: collision rock. The Medicine are flying in the face of the post-hardcore trend and encouraging us to remember what was so good about noisy rock...

"Everybody likes a drink," says Dale in his cherubic Northern brogue. "And drinking seems to be the main subject matter of what we write about. We're just f*ckin' louts, basically."

Emerging from the ass-end of a UK tour with Viking Skull, the four-piece are struggling through the onslaught of activity that comes with releasing a debut album, touring it and trying to hold down a day job at the same time. How the hell do they do it?

"Use up shit loads of love!" says Dale. "That, a load of last minute s**cks and just being absolutely f**ked in work. We all work, so it can be pretty difficult most of the time. It is possible to do, but you don't get much sleep."

Drugging themselves away from their local boozers, the band managed to record three tracks in Doncaster, early 2003, with producer Matt Ellis (Groop Doggirl, Number One Son). Indie label Undergroove instantly wanted a bigger dose of the action and soon everyone was in on their sleazy rock trip. Radio 1 DJ Mary Ann Hobbs described their live session as "better than sex," and even we at TG could not resist their ephemeral firecracker of a debut. "I couldn't believe it when we got a 5/5 review in Total Guitar!" boasts Dale. "I've been reading TG since I was a teenager, so it was a boyhood dream come true."

Revealing how he and fellow axeman/vocalist Lee Storrar got their awesome sound, he says: "In the studio I used my Epiphone SG, it's like an extension of my left hand. It has these crazy monster pickups on it. I've no idea where they came from, but they sound fantastic. I also used a Les Paul Studio, which I got cheap of a mate - he fell on hard times and I took advantage. That's my number one guitar now."

Whispers Lee writes most of the riffs and listens to classic rock bands like Deep Purple, Dale and bassist Ryan Senior are a bit more current with their tastes. "Listen to a lot of Converge and that new Mastodon record (Leviathan) is amazing. It's a clash of classic rock and contemporary metal."

When citing his influences, TG was pleased to hear last month's cover star getting a mention. "Slash has influenced me loads; Josh Homme and Jimmy Page too. I also like Thurston Moore, so it's a wide range. You wouldn't be able to tell from the album, but I would like to think I fall somewhere between Slash and Josh Homme."

And finally, what's this link between genital warts and the band's moniker?

"Lee spent a lot of time in the GU clinic as a young man. He's had some weird stuff. But he always said it's not because he's prolific, he's just unlucky. I don't believe him though." (NC)

GU Medicine is out now on Undergroove.

How to create GU Medicine...

Some rocking AC/DC-style riffs...

Josh Homme's vocals...

The North...

A venereal disease...

GU Medicine!

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WHAT DO YOU GET WHEN YOU MIX GLASSJAW WITH GORILLAZ? AN INFECTIOUS BLEND OF TRASHY BEATS, SLEAZY ROCK AND ADRENALINE-FUELED GUITARS...

Guitarists: Brandon Anovick; Craig Bonich

In May 2000, New York-based hardcore metal band Glassjaw released their debut album Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Silence on Roadrunner Records. In 2002 they signed a deal with Warner Brothers and released Worship and Tribute. In December 2003, guitarist Todd Weinstock was dropped from the band. They continued to tour for a while longer until deciding to put Glassjaw on hold to pursue solo interests. It was then that lead singer Daryl Palumbo set about forming one of 2004's most exciting electronic-rock bands, Head Automatica...

"Daryl decided to take a break from Glassjaw because he wanted to form a side project that was more dance oriented," says Head Automatica's lead guitarist, Brandon Anovick. "He wanted to make more of a pop-rock kinda record, which he could never do with Glassjaw."

Palumbo drafted in famed Gorillaz producer Dan Nakamura with the aim of fusing vintage rock and processed beats. A sound that Anovick describes as "pub-rock" introduced by mutual friends, the duo began working on their debut album, Decadence, which was released in August this year. "Decadence has done really well; we've had no promotional stuff for it," says Anovick. "The record company have been comparing it to the sales of Glassjaw's first album and it's beyond what they expected."

The first big project that Anovick has been involved with, he's relishing the experience of playing live to thousands of people. "It's amazing, I love every second of it," he says enthusiastically. "I jump around a lot onstage, I like to rock out and have fun when I'm up there, and a lot of my playing style is taken from Brian May and Jimmy Page."

Not averse to rippin' a solo or two, Anovick boasts a setup to match his ambition to wild. "I use the Gibson Flying V exclusively when I'm playing live. It works really well for me because it's light, it has a good tone and I can get around the fretboard real easy," he plays his Flying V through a Marshall Plexi 50Watt amp. "It's a reissue of a 1960s head and it has more of a vintage tone to it, but because it's 50 watts, you can really push it for that extra crunch."

Anovick may well play lead, but he insists that rhythm guitarist Craig Bonich is the real expert. "He was the guitar technician for Glassjaw, so he probably knows more about guitars than the rest of us!" he laughs.

"Craig's tones are way different to mine. We complement each other really well... Craig has a Rickenbacker and a Fender Thinline Tele that he plays through either a vintage Fender amp or a Silvertone - he gets them both worked on regularly."

Despite having to pull out of supporting Welsh rockers Lostprophets for a major part of their UK tour last month, the band will be touring the UK in January to support The Used. But, according to Anovick, they're still riding high from playing as part of The Cure's 2004 Curiosa tour of America. "The Curiosa tour was awesome. Rob Smith [The Cure] watched our whole set one night, and that was really cool." The tour also featured other acts including Muse, Interpol and The Rapture. So, surely there must be some tales of excess and binging to tell? "Not really, there was a chilled, mellow vibe," says Anovick. "They're not the kind of bands you'd find in hot tubs with big-boobied women, y'know?" (CD)

As TG went to press we were informed that Brandon Anovick is no longer with Head Automatica and has been replaced by Craig Bonich as lead guitarist. The band are still planning to go ahead with their support slot...
Peering out from NHS specs and lumbered with the most bookish name imaginable, Graham Coxon was surely doomed to a life of library monitoring and getting chased by local kids on his way home. Fortunately, neither Coxon's myopia nor his parents' unfashionable choice of Christian name could stamp out his stone-dead ability on the guitar; a talent that would burst into glorious bloom on meeting Damon Albarn at Goldsmiths College in 1988.

Albarn didn't like Coxon's trainers – a taste of the failouts to come – but the band they formed, with bassist Alex James and drummer Dave Rowntree, was signed to Food Records within two years. Despite having played under the name Seymour up to this point – proving that Graham could dole out rubbish names as well as receive them – Albarn's eye for commercial success soon found the quartet renamed Blur.

Fifteen years later and it's been quite a ride. There was the patchy debut album Leisure and the early sparring with Suede. Then the sublime Modern Life and Parklife era followed, elevating Blur to pop aristocracy and Gallagher punchbag status. The bridge-too-far years yielded The Great Escape and finally the ragged experimentalism of Blur, 13 and Think Tank. Throughout, Coxon's playing has refused to stand still, veering wildly between sweet, sour, soft and scabrous. One minute steeped in a virtuosity that leaves his contemporaries for dead, the next as raw and imprecise as a blundered schoolboy.

By 2002, the creative tug-o-war between Coxon and Albarn had reached crisis point. While Fatboy Slim was brought in to smear Think Tank with breakbeats and bleepy noises, the guitarist quietly left through the back door for a solo career that's merely confirmed his considerable talent. The library's loss is our gain. (HY)

Graham Coxon: the thinking man's guitar hero
Interview:

DRAGONFORCE

They solo! They shred! They don’t suck! Meet the UK’s hottest new guitar act — and hear them rip it up on this month’s TG CD...

If we put six solos in a song, we fight over who gets to play the chorus solo because that’s the heaviest part

Sam Totman

Is that so you can be fresh when you take to the stage?

Sam: “Not really, I’m just lazy.”

Dragonforce have been compared to Helloween and Iron Maiden. Would you say there’s a 1980s vibe to your sound?

Sam: “Yeah, you could say that, because we use a lot of double harmonies and the singing hints at that sort of style…”

Herman: “… But guitar-wise it’s not like those bands because there’s pinched harmonies all over the place – it’s more Steve Vai territory.”

Are the album lyrics true fantasy or metaphors for something else?

Sam: “We just write lyrics to fit the melody line, really. If you have a triumphant, happy melody line you have to sing something that’s triumphant and happy.”

Herman: “The lyrics are very much open to interpretation. If you were told what they mean, it would take away the magic.”

How do you share all the guitar parts on your album Sonic Firestorm?

Sam: “When we write a song we’ll know from the start that we are going to put, say, six solos in, ending up with the chorus solo. So we work backwards from there. One of us will play the chorus solo and the other will play the one before that, and then we just alternate. We usually fight over who gets to play the chorus solo because that’s the heaviest part.”

Herman: “We both play the chorus solo live though, because we harmonise more when playing live than we do on record. Live, everyone’s a winner.”

How about the writing process, is that a joint effort as well?

Sam: “Not really. We say to each other ‘I’ll write this one, you write that one, go do what you want. We’re pretty much have a free range.”

Herman: “Sometimes I tell him his solo’s crap and get him to do it again. So yeah, it is a joint process really.”

Sonic Firestorm is out now on Noise Records

Power Metal Uprising!

More Old School Metal Bands You Must Hear...

Hammerfall

This Helloween-influenced quintet from Sweden are one of the more traditional power metal acts. Check out their live album One Crimson Night.

Blind Guardian

Often credited as one of the main innovators of power metal, Blind Guardian have enjoyed several years’ success in Europe with their skilled musicianship and fantasy lyrics.

Ice Eart

Fighting for America’s corner in the power metal war are Floridians, Ice Earth. Reminiscent of 1980s heavy metal, their precise playing style stops them from sounding too dated.

Stratovarius

Another hugely influential band, Finland’s Stratovarius combine power and progressive metal to form an intricate yet melodic style.

Power Quest

Featuring Dragonforce’s Sam on lead guitar, London-based Power Quest are catchy, upbeat and slightly reminiscent of Bon Jovi. Metal with extra cheese!
When you need to get your ideas down in a hurry...

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There's nothing quicker or simpler for capturing that killer riff than the CR-4. Just plug in and you're ready to create your demo. No need for a tangle of wires connecting to outboard effects or for a separate monitor amp - the CR-4 has everything you need, allowing you to get on with the important job of making music. Or, if you just feel like a bit of late night practice, the CR-4 serves up pro-quality guitar tone at neightbourly volume levels.

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listen to your imagination
PUB QUIZ

SO YOU THINK YOU KNOW A PENTATONIC FROM A POWERCHORD? CRUISE THROUGH EVERY PUB QUIZ'S MUSIC SECTION? WELL, PREPARE TO MEET YOUR MATCH WITH OUR MONTHLY QUIZ FOR GUITARISTS...

1. What were The Cure called before The Cure?
   A No Cure
   B Fools Cure
   C Cure Nation
   D Easy Cure

2. Who said: “Rock is so much fun. It’s about filling up the chest cavities and the empty kneecaps and elbows.”
   A Elvis Presley
   B Jimi Hendrix
   C Nick Jones
   D Johnny Cash

3. What new guitar is Slipknot’s Mick Thomson sporting these days?
   A Ibanez Custom Shop 5125
   B Fender Custom Shop Stratocaster
   C Ibanez IC400 Iceman
   D Gretsch Country Classic

4. Which Beatles’ song did Motley Crue cover on their album, Shout At The Devil?
   A Holter-Skater
   B Come Together
   C I Am The Walrus
   D Tomorrow Never Knows

5. What guitar is this?
   A Fender Guitars
   B Musicman Jim Beam
   C Peavey Jack Daniels
   D Gibson Guitars & Black

6. How long did Pink Floyd’s Dark Side Of The Moon stay in the US Billboard Hot 200?
   A 741 weeks
   B 352 weeks
   C 58 weeks
   D 541 weeks

7. Who said: “Jimmy Page did play tambourine on our first record. It was very good tambourine and he’s a very good musician.”
   A Pete Townshend
   B Ray Davies
   C Noel Young
   D Johnny Ramone

8. What is the name of the ex-Winger and current Whitesnake guitarist?
   A Alex Skolnick
   B Dan Auerbach
   C Reeb Beach
   D Kenny Wayne Shepherd

9. When did The Stray Cats release Built For Speed?
   A 1982

10. Who said: “We followed the philosophy of playing anywhere and everywhere, whether it’s a bar mitzvah or someone’s bathroom.”
    A Billie Joe Armstrong
    B Mike Lewis
    C Chris Van Malmsteen
    D Kenny King

11. Which guitar manufacturer was the official sponsor of Ozzfest 2004?
    A Fender
    B Gibson
    C ESP
    D Ibanez

12. What is the first chord for Jimi Hendrix’s Purple Haze?
    A E7
    B B
    C B,5
    D C

13. Under what name did the band Chicago release their first album?
    A Chicago Public Transportation
    B Chicago Refuge Disposal
    C Chicago City Authority
    D Chicago Transit Authority

14. Tripp Eisen’s (Static X) new signature BC Rich guitar comes in which colour?
    A Airforce blue
    B Gun Metal grey
    C Army green
    D Twisted black

15. What band does this guitarist play for?
    A Lostprophets
    B Eighteen Visions
    C Stereogram
    D Muse

16. Chuck Berry only ever received one gold record, but which of the following was it for?
    A Sweet Little Sixteen
    B Johnny B Goode
    C Roll Over Beethoven
    D My Ding-a-Ling

17. Whose real name is David Evans?
    A Dave Grohl
    B John S
    C The Edge
    D Jim Root

18. When did Creedence Clearwater Revival release their first album?
    A 1968
    B 1969
    C 1970
    D 1972

19. What was the name of Nirvana’s first studio album?
    A Nevermind
    B In Utero
    C MTV Unplugged In New York
    D Bleach

20. Who said: “The 1980s was probably one of the worst decades of all time for music.”
    A Pete Willis
    B Stash
    C Joe Perry
    D Tony Iommi

HOW DID YOU SCORE?

0-5 You're now here, right?
6-9 You spend more time standing in front of the mirror than practising
10-14 You know a powerchord from a pentatonic
15-17 Nice one, centurion
18-20 You work here, don't you?
Soulful, Sweet-Toned, Articulate.

Vintage Electric
- V6LB £169.00rrp
- Over 70 models to meet your need, match your mood, suit your style.

Vintage Acoustics
- VEC1500N £399.00rrp
- Over 70 models to meet your need, match your mood, suit your style.

Warm, Responsive, Dynamic.

All Vintage Acoustics
- Selected source materials and superior build quality.
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- Solid Body Instruments
- Fitted with Wilkinson hardware, tuners and pickups

All Vintage acoustic guitars feature solid spruce tops.

ANDY CAIRNS
Therapy? guitarist trades metal for Pink Panther

What was the first riff, song or solo you learned on the guitar?

“It was a Buzzcocks tune called ESP, which was on their album Love Bites. Steve Diggle played this high-pitched figure, which repeats itself over and over. I remember sitting down with this Schecter guitar and managing to work it all out on one string. My fingers were in absolute agony by the end of it.”

Who are your all-time favourite guitarists?

“Johnny Ramone is one. Geordie Walker from Killing Joke too. His sound was quite metallic, like a punk version of Tony Tommi. He would do something with open strings so that it would sound as though bells were ringing. Greg Glenn from Black Flag introduced me to a darker, heavier side of punk. And as for modern guitarists, my two favourites are Josh Homme and Omar Rodriguez (Nars Vota).”

Is there a riff or lick you wish you’d written?

“Another Girl, Another Planet by The Only Ones. John Perry was the guitarist and, to me, the opening assault is a perfect piece of lead guitar playing. I’ve tried to work it out many times and I’ve never done it. I’ve heard Perry play it live many times too and he’s never nailed it the way he did on that record.”

Punk or heavy metal?

“Has to be punk. The first record I was totally into was the Buzzcocks Ever Fallen In Love? Then I got into The Sex Pistols and AC/DC. I preferred punk. It was more abrasive.”

If you wanted to impress someone with your guitar playing, what would you play?

“I’ve never been one for sitting down and learning pieces. I’m lazy and when I read tablature I can’t pick it up quickly. Actually, one song I did learn came from an issue of Total Guitar a couple of years ago! There was a transcription of the Pink Panther theme, and I’ve got a little son who’s just getting into music. So, I learnt that because he’s a fan of the Pink Panther and I knew he’d like it.”

You’re asked to get on stage at a wedding and play a song, what would you play?

“I suppose I could hack through Substitute by The Who or You Really Got Me by The Kinks. I’ve played them in the past and I think I could play them and remember the words at the same time.”
RAMMSTEIN

HOW WOULD YOU FACE GOING BACK INTO THE STUDIO IF YOUR LAST ALBUM NEARLY DESTROYED YOUR BAND? RAMMSTEIN GUITARIST RICHARD KRUSPE-BERNSTEIN MOVED TO NEW YORK AND TOOK UP THE ACCORDION...

WORDS: NICK CRACKNELL

Trust Rammstein to break the mould. While other bands are content with more Bush-balloting, the titanic tones have taken it one step further with Amerika. The satirical first single off their comeback album, Reise, Reise, manages to combine the words, war, Mickey Mouse and Wonderbra all in the same sentence...

"It's German humour..." says their guitarist Richard Kruspe-Bernstein. "Something we have not a lot of...

You've been away for a few years now. What have you been up to since last album Mutter? We needed a little time to calm down. Mutter was a really intense record and everyone was too close to each other. I even moved to New York afterwards to get away and find a new view of the band.

So, what's different this time round? "It's a collection of firsts: the first time we recorded in Spain; the first time Olly [Oliver Riedel, bassist] has sung on an album; the first time we worked on songs we weren't all committed to from the start; the first time we recorded a track as commercial as Amerika but, above all, the first in a long time that the recording vibe was relaxed.

We went through a really difficult and important time after Mutter. And we managed to become a lot closer as a band. Before, it was really pressurised and tight - everything had to be so perfect. Now we realise that it's better to allow people to make mistakes rather than risk the break up of the band.

Did you take a different approach when recording Reise, Reise? "We had to reacquaint and feel comfortable around each other. It was important for us to start writing the record in a rehearsal room because on Mutter we wrote all the songs on a computer and each person did his parts separately. We did things on the recording side that we wouldn't have done in the past, including writing in the studio, which was something that gave us a real sense of freedom. But I honestly don't think we could have reached the place we are at now without going through the whole Mutter experience. We survived that and it has made us all a lot stronger.

So, does your new record Reise, Reise still sound like Rammstein? "Absolutely! Our signature motifs are still there, along with the production and German vocals. But this time we made sure that the atmosphere was a lot lighter and that we explored each other's ideas in full. At the same time it was more dramatic and adventurous - we used mandolins and accordions, choir and orchestra parts.

Tell us a bit about the guitars on the record... "The album was actually recorded within a week in Spain. It was great to get away and really concentrate on the album. Mutter was too controlled. I would go into the studio and know exactly what I was playing. I was muttering to myself crazy. On Links 2-3-4 we laid down around 24 dubs for a single guitar track. On Reise... we just played two guitars, so it was much more like an adventure. Half the time I didn't have a clue what I was going to play. It was much more improvised, which is not typical Rammstein at all.

What guitars did you use? "I used the same guitar - my ESP Viper - on this album that I used on Mutter. Actually, I'm now building my own signature model. For the clean sounds I went direct to the preamp and used some German Bezel amps, but mostly the Rectifier and the ESP. One song, Los, was actually an old song that the producer wanted us to try again, but after we recorded the normal typical Rammstein version I said, 'Let's try something different.' I ran and got this old acoustic that was lying around, tuned it down to C and played this really heavy riff. All of a sudden it had this kind of, fucking, power groove which sounded really cool.

Are your live shows inspired by Kraftwerk? "That's interesting, but I haven't been to one Kraftwerk show for a very long time. I'd love to, though. Kraftwerk are really unique in the way that they pioneered the electronic approach. But I wouldn't say they are one of our main influences. I listen to a lot of AC/DC but, on the other hand, I listen to a lot of pop music as well. I love Depeche Mode, and I always try to combine the two genres together in a way that works.

It's not unusual to see you on stage with an acoustic and a huge sombrero...

"Ha, ha! It's just for show, you know? The fire, the sombrero - you gotta put on a good show. We haven't been able to play any of the new numbers live yet, so they will probably change here and there when we take them out on tour (which I know is something that happens with a band like Depeche Mode). No it's a positive thing because it means that we'll end up with two different versions of the songs: the studio one, which we did our very best on at the time, and the live one, which will develop night after night.

Are Rammstein more metal or more pop? "More country right now! No, just kidding. I think a mixture of both. It's hard to explain. There is too much guitar in normal pop music at the moment. We just try to create our own sound and identity. You have a lot of bands copying other bands. I used to do it myself and it took me a long time to find myself and to be confident enough to say, 'Well, that's me.' There are people who think we're incredibly funny and there are people who think we're incredibly serious - it's just down to personal opinion. I suppose in that respect we, as a band, have something of a mirror-like quality - whatever views or preconceptions people may have about us and our music just reflect straight back onto ourselves.

Ever feel you're getting too old...?

"Age is a thing that I don't really think about. I get huge pleasure from turning on my amp and cracking out a huge fucking riff. I have at least ten years before that becomes unacceptable, don't I? So, until then, keep on rocking!"

The new album Reise, Reise is out now on Universal Records.
“There are people who think we’re incredibly funny and there are people who think we’re incredibly serious – it’s down to personal opinion”
TOTAL GUITAR'S PICK OF THE YEAR'S FINEST GUITAR RELEASES. HOW MANY HAVE YOU GOT?

AMERICAN IDIOT

(Reprise)

Ten years after Double and the Californian punk-pop vets still have it in 'em. Pumped with socipolitical comment, American Idiot segued effortlessly between fist-pumping three-chorder and nine-minute rock operas. Simply unique.

GREEN DAY

LOST PROPHETS

(Visible Noise)

Taking heed of the death of nu-metal, the "Prophets" expanded their brand of high-energy pop metal and wheeling-spiral with their second record. In doing so they stomped over the Manics and "Philosophy to Become Wales" top rock export.

VOLUME 3: THE SUBLIMINAL VERSES

(Roadrunner)

More hate-fuelled, throat-lacerating aggression from the Iowa nonet, this time with textures and soloing. With the help of producer Rick Rubin, Slipknot delivered their best and most extreme record yet. Ass-kickin'!

FRANZ FERDINAND

(Domino)

These ruch-touched Glaswegian hard hat back to the vanguard punk/funk movement of the late 1970s to produce an insistently catchy collection of anthems that, for once, lived up to the hype. The Arch Dukes of Indie? Kings, more like....

MELTDOWN (Infected)

(Metallica)

Fusing punk melody with metal's white-knuckle intensity, this five-piece stunned critics with their must-see live act. Their album was incredible too; a modern masterpiece fuelled by the fancy fretwork of guitarist Synyster Gates.

WAKING THE FALLEN (Hopeless)

(As I Lay Dying)

"A new dawn has broken, the world is set alight, the universe is frameworked with fire, and the massive explosion of the end will shake the Earth, and I am here to say, 'I am ready.'"

INFERNO (SP)

Inferno saw Lemmy and co return to form with a fistful of pounding riffs, guest guitar from Steve Vai and a renewed sense of purpose. Killers is probably the mostia track on here but, if you're a Van fan, Down On Me has the most impressive solo.

CHUCK (Mercury)

Chuck's fourth album was a genre hopper to the beat. Despite flitting from punk to grunge to thrash to one of the most blatant Metallica rip-offs ever in The Bitter End, Chuck saw the band firing on all cylinders and loving it.

PROBOT (Southern Lord)

Indulging his penchant for 1980s metal, rock's nicest guy Dave Grohl called in Lemmy. Max Cavalera and a host of other metal stalwarts to collaborate on this uncharacteristically evil-sounding record. Of riffs.

REISE, REISE (Sloam)

The remaining reece featured more of what the German Industrial-metal machines do best – namely trademark military riffs and growing vocals but with a more melodic approach overall. They remain an odd but intriguing proposition.

GU MEDICINE (Undergroove)

Straight out of Barnsley, GU Medicine pulled on one of the month's most storming debuts of their filthy bag. Groovy riffs, sabretooth vocals and pile-driving drums are all underpinned by sex and bocce. Surely one of the UK's brightest rock hopes.

ONE DAY REMAINS (Eye)

Fans of the now defunct Crew rejoiced when its former members reunited without singer Scott Stapp. Guitarist Mark Tremonti delivered riffs laced with late 1970s and early 1980s metal spirit, backed by Mike Kennedy's soaring tenor vocals.

VAN LEER ROSE (Polygram)

OK, so Jack White of White Stripes fame produces, sings and plays guitar on this Fine album. However, Loretta Lynn's re-appearance, and often harrowing, vocals are the real star. If you don't 'get' country music, this'll do it.

LORETTA LYNN

MORRISSEY (US)

Not everyone was pleased to see the return of Morrissey, and this album will not convert unbelayables. For the rest of us though, it's a real return to form. Theres the trademark scathing ballads of course, but it rocks in places.

MARK LANEGAN

(Slings & Arrows)

Sounding like the ghost of a thousand harmonica players, Bubblegum was introspective, intelligent and powerful. Guest guitar from Josh Homme, Troy Van Leeuwen and others complemented Lanegan's fine vocals.

PAPER (Carnaby)

A welcome return. Echoing the free-wheeling spirit of the 1970s, the ex-Black Crowes guitarist mixed laid-back psychedelia, folk craziness and energizing rock purity on his first solo album. Great stuff.

BUBBLEGUM

MARK ROBINSON

(3 Cheers for Sweet Revenge (Sloam))

Hearty's chunky-arsed double riffing and thrashy, double-click drumming patterns kept the budgey vibe of old school running through these 12 melodic slabs of noise. File next to Slayer on yer CD rack.

THE THREE CHEERS FOR SWEET REVENGE (Sloam)

THE END OF THE WORLD (Roadrunner)

Heartbreaker's chunky-arsed double riffing and thrashy, double-click drumming patterns kept the budgie vibe of old school running through these 12 melodic slabs of noise. File next to Slayer on yer CD rack.

THE LIBERTINES (Playfair)

For Studio 150, Wellers took a break from songwriting duties to belt out some personal favourites including a terrific stab at All Along The Watchtower and the beautiful Wishing On A Star. His best since Stanley Road.

THE LIBERTINES

STUDIO 150

(Playfair)

The second album from London's dandilings channels embittered 1970s pop-punk and comic wit into a smouldering, heart-wrenching recording. The guitars may be shambolic, but the tunes shine through.
LET'S DO THE TIME WARP AGAIN

"Distortion pedal, sir? Well, we've got this one, sounds very authentic. And then there's this one over here, gives me a nice vintage tone, just like something from the 60s."

"Great, but what about a different type of distortion?"

"Sir?"

"I don't know, something a little more, you know, contemporary. What have you got in the way of digital processors?"

(Blank expression)

"I was thinking maybe, some sample rate reduction, bit decimation?"

(Blank expression)

"OK, never mind. What have you got in the way of filters?"

"Sorry sir, we're a guitar shop, not a..."

"I mean things like wah pedals."

"Oh, right, well this sounds very 60s, very Hendrix..."

"...Oh, how about a comb filter or something?"

"I hear you can get some cool digital filters these days."

"Comb, sir?"

"Look, I'm trying to get some really unique sounds out of my guitar, I want it to sound really different."

"Well, this pedal gives a very warm classic tone."

"Classic, you say? Don't want to know. How about something new? Have you heard of The Prodigy?"

"Yes, but they are a dance band, sir."

"And?"

"We're a guitar shop."

(Slaps self on cheek, open jawed)

"Do you have anything that doesn't have the word vintage, or authentic, or classic written on it?"

(Smiling practically) "No, sir. Everything here sounds like it was made 30 years ago."

"Heard of granular synthesis?"

"Granular? Sorry sir, we don't sell bread."

(Rolls eyes. Leaves. Loses all faith in the forward thinking of guitarists.)

Does anyone else have the same problem or is it just me?

Russell Newlove, via email

Huh. Russell. Hope this Pro Go You Dirty Rat pedal adds you in your quest for new sounds. May you boldly go where no guitar man has gone before... No, not a leukemia concert!

TOTAL GUITAR COST ME MY DEGREE AND BROKE MY LEG

I think Total Guitar is belittling and have just subscribed. Some may say it was a gluton for punishment. About 18 months ago I took up guitar playing and was proud as anything with my slity Jap-o-caster, belting out Smoke On The Water and Smells Like Teen Spirit. Looking for some inspiration, I took to the shops to buy a guitar magazine and Total Guitar jumped out at me. Here's where it begins...

I read that issue from cover to cover and started to play some of the songs on that issue, including a rather tasty solo from Hotel California. Learning this solo consumed me - all I wanted to do was was play guitar. After several weeks of drunken student nights out and incessant guitar playing I remembered I was meant to be attending lectures... Anyway, after a fairly hefty drinking session I was strolling leisurely across my landings and was caught off guard by a rogue copy of TG, which sent me over to tick down the stairs, resulting in concussion and a broken leg. But never mind, eh? TG rocks!

JV Martanna, Lancashire

WOT - NO CHILIS? 

Just wanted to say the magazine is great and all, but, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CHILIS' "INSIDE STORY" AND TAB YOU PROMISED FOR TG129? They're my favourite band and after getting excited about your article, what do you write? Don't you give us the sodding story and instead give us some crap about the blues? I may have to re-consider my subscription now, as it runs out soon. May you die a thousand terrible deaths involving DC Rich guitars. Regards, one very pissed off Chili's fan.

PS The rest of the magazine is pretty damn good though. Keep up the good work and GIVE ME MY CHILIS STORY! Peace out.

S. Gomie, via email

I was just wondering how come there was nothing, no interview, no tab, of the Red Hot Chili Peppers in Issue 129 when there was a big ad for it in the previous issue? Please you could actually include big features like this, rather than squeezing in a White Stripes feature (not disproving how good that was) in the mag. Please you could write back and tell me if you are going to include that RHP feature in a future issue?

George Bell, via email

We're as gutted as you are, dudes! We desperately wanted to publish some Chili's tab and an accompanying feature, but were denied permission to print the tab. Don't worry, we won't rest until we've persuaded the powers that be to let us transcribe some freshest Sussexie licks!

PLAYER-HATERS

The article in TG126 on why Clapton still matters was refreshing to read and proves I'm not the only one who still loves old Slow Hand. However, I have alarming news: having eradicated all these Clapton hators, TG has moved the firing squad onto another unsuspecting rock god. Over the past few months a surprising amount of people have started to tell me that Jimmy Page is overrated. Surely it is impossible to over-estimate the brilliance of one of metal's pioneers. Whether he be his acoustic session work or the more rocky stuff with Led Zeppelin and the Yardbirds, Jimmy rules. Please silence these ignorant critics immediately or no one will be safe. Hendrix, Beck, Matt Bellamy (don't deny him his rightful place among the greats) - watch your backs, guys. The knives are out.

Greeme Quinn, Glasgow
GOTTA PAY YOUR DUES BEFORE YOU PLAY THE BLUES

I would like to contest Jack White's opinion on the blues. He claims the blues are 'easy.' Hmm... Yes, solos patterns are straightforward, but the real challenge comes in the sheer feel and application. Lacking either of these requisites will result in you being found out very quickly. I have found that unless your heart sings the blues, it is impossible to capture the overall feel that blues music thrives on.

SVP, to me, was the greatest blues player in history because of his beautifully apt timing and chordal structures; not to mention his exquisite soloing. He was not necessarily original, but his music encapsulated what was in his heart and his approach to music was second to none.

Tain Harding, Essex

JOHN PEEL: RIP

I am sure that you will receive lots of letters about this great man. But I just want to say that I was deeply saddened by his death. He was a big part of my life for so many years and his dry wit always used to brighten up my day (or night). There are so many famous presenters on the radio today, I think it will be a long time before we can relate to someone in the same way that we did with John Peel. That's all I want to say.

Daren Woodward, via email

TG LETTERS PAGE: A MUPPET SHOW

I've been reading your magazine since I can remember, but there's one thing I find really irritating. I can't stand the Muppets that write in and ask, "How do I get Slash's sweet tone?" No offence to you guys, because I think you're all great, but... always say, "Well, get a Gibson Les Paul Standard and put Seymour Duncan Alcoa 1 Pros on it. Use a Marshall JCM800 stack, 1.5mm Dunlop Tortex picks..." That is all. Bollack.

I have three examples to back me up: 1) a few issues back when Zak Wyldie did a tutorial, he used a normal Les Paul with regular humbuckers on; 2) Slash on the Illusions Vol. 2 DVD uses that double neck thing with regular humbuckers on; 3) My dad uses a Washburn with an EMG-81 and if you didn't know otherwise, you'd say Slash himself was standing in front of you. Anyway, the moral of all this is that you aren't the gear you use (although to a degree, obviously, you have to have good gear) - it's how you play.

Dan Greenfield, via email

"I know this is技术 Gutted isn't half bad!"
"No, you're all bad!"

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a) Queen  b) Beatles  c) Led Zeppelin  d) U2

Text TG followed by your answer (eg, TG BEATLES) to 83070 by 31 January 2005. Texts cost 50p. The winner will be picked at random and notified by telephone. Good luck!
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WHEN SLAYER AND SLIPKNOT STORMED THE UK IN OCTOBER, TG WAS THE ONLY GUITAR MAG IN EUROPE BRAVE ENOUGH TO TAKE THEM ON – TOGETHER. THOSE OF A NERVOUS DISPOSITION, LOOK AWAY NOW; WHAT FOLLOWS IS A HORRIFYING GLIMPSE INSIDE THE MINDS OF METAL’S MOST FEARSOME GUITARISTS...

WORDS: JOEL KEIVER  PICTURES: JOHN McMURTRIE
hen two generations of guitar-feverity stride menacingly through the door towards the moth-eaten sofa where TG is waiting to greet them, it’s tempting to crawl out of the window and do a runner. Unsmiling, with tattoos crawling over their bodies like snakes and impenetrable shades clamped to their faces (although we’re indoors and it’s after dark), Kerry King and Mick Thomson aren’t the most welcoming of geezers. But get them talking about the love of their lives – the guitar – and they kick back, relax and open up. Why, they even crack a smile at times...

Who were your musical heroes when you were starting out?
Mick: I used to listen to Slayer a lot, and then I got into Morbid Angel and Deicide. As I got older, I moved away from speed and thrash metal into technical death metal. The first album of that genre I got was *Human* by Death. After that, I went back and listened to their early stuff. It was the same with Metallica. I listened to *Master Of Puppets* first and then went back and listened to *Ride The Lightning*.
Kerry: I loved Exodus. Their first record is great. I think Metallica took the wrong guitar player – they could have had Gary Holt instead of Kirk Hammett. I’m sure Gary wouldn’t have lasted as long.
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"He could have been the best ever, but we never got to find out, did we? He was so fuckin' good, though."

MICK:
PAUL GILBERT
"He was a god!"

YINGWIE MALMSTEEN
"Even though you wouldn't want to listen to the lyrics and the vocals, there was some of the sickest guitar playing on there. Great playing will shine through all that shit."

EDDIE VAN HALEN
"I saw them six times across the first three records. He inspired me to get better and find my own route."

GLENN TIPTON
(JUDAS PRIEST)
"He's my unsung choice for best guitarist ever. He is a god and highly underrated."

MICHAEL ANGELO
"I used to love his crazy classical shit. Y'know, all of that really crazy Paganini-inspired stuff."

Because he was a big alcoholic back then, but he was always my favourite guitarist in that band.

You used to advise Dave Mustaine's guitar playing didn't you, Kerry?
Kerry: I used to go watch him play with Metallica. Me and Jeff Hanneman [Slayer guitarist] would be blown away because he'd be ripping through all these solos and looking around, not paying any attention to what he was playing.
Mick: But the new Megadeth album [The System Has Failed] is fucking horrible. They really lost me with their album Countdown to Extinction. Rust in Peace was their shining moment and, in fact, anything before that was great. The songs, the construction, the guitar playing, the arrangements. The one after Countdown to Extinction was even worse, whatever the fuck that was...
Kerry: ...Khanzadah, wasn't it? Mick: Yeah, that was it.

What music do you listen to when you're on the road?
Mick: I usually listen to The Rolling Stones or Ben Harper or something to help me mellow out a bit. On stage we hear the loudest shit all day, every day, and you don't want to listen to metal after that... Unless it's four in the morning and you're drunk as fuck on the tour bus.
Kerry: Oh yeah, then it's rock'n'roll! On our bus it would be George Thorogood

"Just parking the car makes me wanna cut people into little pieces and play with their organs" Mick on music as therapy

...or any other wacky old shit. Oh AC/DC, Judas Priest, Van Halen, Deep Purple, UFO... Anything really. Sometimes we'll put on all the old punk records: Minor Threat, DRI, The Adolescents...
Mick: Just the other day we all got tucked and played Lynyrd Skynyrd!

If guitar playing therapeutic for you?
Kerry: I never think about it, but I imagine so.
Mick: I've been doing this for so long, it's a fuckin' way of life. The shows are very physical: it's like going to the gym. You end up pretty dejected by the end of the show. So, when I'm at home I usually just...
"Playing guitar is a release that stops me from doing some real bad shit" – Mick Thomson

You’re both worked with producer Rick Rubin. He’s said to be a hands-off producer. Kerry: He’s a fuckin’ nothing. He’ll sit back because he’s got better things he wants to do. [It's] a win-win situation. I’ll tell you straight-up like it is, motherfucker! Huh, huh!

Mick: Yeah, he was very hands-off. He helped out with the vocals and the basic tracks. But we recorded the fuckin’ record with the engineer, who was a genius. It’s not like Rick had nothing to do with it. I’m just used to Ross Robinson punching you out.

Rick was good with psychology, though. When we got to the studio we didn’t talk to each other for almost two years. People had been out in different bands and there were major egos. But he was good at getting us to sit down and stop all the bullshit, which was priceless.

What attracted you to playing the guitar in the first place? Kerry: I wasn’t really into it at first, but my dad had a guitar around the house and it was one of his options for me when I was seven. So I took it up. Mick: I was really into guitars when I was a little kid. My dad had Hendrix records, and Johnny Winter, and The Grateful Dead. All of which had good guitar on them. Then MTV came out when I was seven-years-old or whatever. In the early days there were actual musicians on MTV. They were legends compared to the kind of shit they put out now, where bands don’t even have guitar players.

What was your first guitar? Mick: It was a fuckin’ Höfner [Fender], LePrix, T-style guitar, with one single coil pickup. Dead centre. It was built out of plywood and was about an inch thick. Kerry: Mine was a fuckin’ Gibson ES-375, which my dad had. A blonde one with a big fat fuckin’ body. He had a 335 after that. The first BC Rich Mockingbird I ever had – the one I used on our first album, Show No Mercy [1983] – I got when I traded a 1963 Fender L Series Strat, which I guess was something special. I just saw the BC Rich and looked at all the switches on it and thought, ‘I can get anything with this’.

Mick: You recently moved away from BC Rich to Renance.

Mick: The guitars llance make are fucking incredible. The custom shop
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makes them to my exact spec: I have Steve Vai's neck profile with the wide, flat shredder neck. None of my BC Rich necks were even in the same ballpark as my Ibanez. I have 9 BC Rich necks – it's my addiction – and my three Ibanez guitars are easily the finest guitars I've ever had.

**Do you play seven-string?**

**Mick:** I own some, but I haven't played them for a while. They became very trendy with jazz guitarists. They have their place, but when I was teaching guitar kids would come in and say, 'I want to play seven-string to be heavy' and I'd be like, 'You can't even play six-string! Why not beef up your string gauges and drop your fuckin' tunings! Then you'll be heavy.' You should learn your instrument before you start trying to do different fuckin' things. Just because Korn plays 'em and Limp Bizkit plays 'em, let them if they want to. But if you're just playing them because some other band is, then go fuck yourself! To all the little 14-year-olds out there who are just beginning to play and think that in order to be heavy or to be cool you need this or that, no you don't. You can learn anything. [Points to Kerry] He learned on a Gibson ES-175.

**Do you ever listen to Meshuggah?**

**Kerry:** From time to time. It's not something I can stomach on tour because you've got to pay so much attention to it and work out what they're trying to do.

**Mutt metal bands these days tune pretty far down, but you recorded Reign In Blood in a relatively high-pitched E. Kerry...**

Kerry: That's right. The NO Mercy was A#40 (concert pitch). But after that everything was E, until we recorded the song Genitorturers, which was in C#. We've got like, four fuckin' tunings now. I like to change every break we take, to make sure I get a guitar that's in tune. We beat the fuck out of our guitars.

Mick: I like to check the tuning all the time. They're never out of tune but I always check them: it's like a mental block for me. Especially because I use thick .058s that have a lot of stretch to 'em. There's nothing worse than a fuckin' band that's out of tune.

Kerry: I gotta warm up... [Fetches BC Rich Sharkfin guitar and begins playing Slayer riffs, unmuffled.]

**To this day it's such a rush to play Raining Blood and watch everybody tearing each other to shreds**

Kerry King

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Since their formation in 1982, California-based Slayer have been one of the most influential metal bands of all time. Their combination of sheer aggression, speed and precision set the benchmark against which all other thrash metal bands are measured.

With his uncompromising attitude to rhythm guitar and one of the most recognisable soloing styles in metal, Kerry King is truly the forefather of thrash guitar. Kerry's rules for riff writing are: no rules.

"I'll be watching an NFL game and googling around on the guitar. When I come up with an idea I'll tape it and later hone it until it's Slayer-worthy. Generally I'll complete a song before presenting it to the band."

Kerry has a similar no-nonsense attitude to soloing. "When I'm soloing I like to play the harmonic minor scale [like the natural minor scale, but with a major 7th, which gives the scale its exotic sound]. Although I only know a few shapes. Guys like Yngwie Malmsteen and Tony MacAlpine own that scale; I just rent the space. My leads are 70-80 per cent prepared before I go into the studio. The rest is improvised mayhem and chaos."

Kerry's live setup has remained much the same since the early Slayer years. His usual weapon of choice is a BC Rich Flying V type with EMG pickups and a Kahler bridge. "I've been playing Kahler for 15 years. I found them more comfortable for palm muting than a Floyd. I'm using two 100-watt Marshall JCM800s and an old Boss rack EQ I've had since the 1980s. The only effects I use are a Rocktorn Hush, a Crybaby Wah and occasionally a harmoniser so that Jeff can still play the rhythm part while I'm playing lead."

Kerry uses D'Addario strings.

For D# tuning (a semitone lower than standard E tuning) the gauge is 0.09-0.42. The C# tuning (a tone and a half lower than standard E tuning) is 0.10-0.46. For dropped B tuning Kerry prefers a 0.56 on the bottom to keep the string tension even. If you want to play at the same pitch as Kerry, do as he does on his Pignose Warlock - which was tuned to C# (D/F/A/B/E/G/C#).

CHARLIE GRIFFITH

AMP SETTING

To recreate Kerry's guitar sound, you'll need to use your guitar's bridge humbucker and a strong distortion from your amp or pedal. We had Kerry plugged into a Fender amp with the contols set as above. The amp settings were a variation on a Rectifier plugged into a virtual 4x12 cab.

WAR ENSEMBLE

SLAYER: War Ensemble - tapping section
SLAYER: War Ensemble - tapping section

The bulk of this open-string pedal-tone lick takes place almost entirely on the sixth string. The pattern is the same throughout, so master the first shape before applying it to the rest of the lick. The trickiest part is the ending. Aim to learn what each hand does separately before combining the two.

MANDATORY SUICIDE

WORDS AND MUSIC BY
HARRISON, KIRK, KING
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SLAYER: Mandatory Suicide - riff 1

Kerry demonstrates his mighty downstroke technique here. The side of your palm should be parallel to the bridge, semi-resting on the strings. Kerry angles his pick at a 45-degree angle to add bite to each note.

SLAYER: Mandatory Suicide - riff 2

This is a good powerchord: work out as your fretting hand needs to move very quickly and accurately. Imagine your fingers are frozen in position and move your hand around as a solid block. Kerry recommends starting slowly to build up hand co-ordination.
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Kerry shows how a relatively simple melody can sound huge by adding some nuances. Palm-mute the chromatically descending chords and slide up to the 9th fret with your third finger. Then play the 8th fret with your second finger and add some vibrato. Finally slide out of the last note of the melody and you're back to the chords.

**Mandatory Suicide**

**SLAYER: Mandatory Suicide - riff 3**

In this extract from the Spirit In Black solo Kerry utilises a D Phrygian Dominant scale (D E♭ F♯ G A B♭ C). The pattern is a sequence of three, but played as 16th notes, which results in an interesting cross-rhythmic effect.
This is quite a demanding riff to perform cleanly. Notice the fingerings Kerry uses - everything is played with the first two fingers except where there are three chromatic notes in a row (at the beginning of bars 4 and 5), in which case use your third finger as well.

Again, the picking here is all down strokes. Most of the movement comes from the wrist, but it's important that your whole arm's relaxed if you want to make it past the first verse!
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“I’m surprised that people call us a punk band. I mean, there aren’t any punk tracks on this record” Benji Madden
Berri Madden is only 25, but he speaks with the air of an old man. That's not to say he's boring – far from it. But there is a certain world-weariness hanging over him that stems from more than just two years of incessant touring. It's rooted in broken homes, flipping burgers and school bullies. And stretches all the way to endless press interviews, pandering record execs, business launches and the like. He sighs when we inform him that he's a hard man to get hold of: "Oh, well, I'm, uh, sorry man."

By contrast, Billy Martin is like Odie on heat. Two years Benji's junior, and his fellow guitarist in pop-punk uber-group Good Charlotte, Billy's enthusiasm is utterly contagious: "I still can't believe I'm in London again. I love how old everything is. Like all the intricate architecture and shit..."

In the movie-like milieu that is Good Charlotte, Madden and Martin compliment each other like a Disney version of Jekyll And Hyde. While Benji waits quietly for the next question and formulates his answer, bow-tied, Billy spews opinions with all the subtlety of a charging rhinoceros.

But behind their heavily tattooed façades and pare-punk veneers lurk two surprisingly astute young businessmen. Between them they own, and operate, two clothing lines (Made and Level 27), a production company (they plan to direct music videos), a record label (DC Flag) and a toy company. Aye, they've come a long way since those day jobs sweeping floors in Waldorf. And we're afraid there's no easy way to tell you this, readers... Good Charlotte have grown up. To the extent that shifting units by the million has become commonplace since bursting onto the scene two years ago with second album, The Young And The Hopeless.

"The sarcastic power of their singles Lifestyles Of The Rich And Famous and Girls And Boys struck a chord with millions of teens; angry at their parents for living and the mall for closing early. Formed by Benji and his identical twin brother, Joel Madden (vocals), in 1996, the band has become one of the biggest-selling US acts today. Having been on tour since 2002, they are now back with album number three. Recorded at Barefoot Studios, Hollywood, by longtime producer Eric Valentine, The Chronicles Of Life And Death sees the band growing by remarkable leaps and bounds without sacrificing their spirit, style or sincerity. Billy is seemingly trying to grapple with two thoughts at once: "I'm really proud of the new album. I mean I loved our last record, but I really love this one!" Benji resurces him. "This is definitely our best record. If you listen to the last couple of albums it's clear we've come a long way as guitarists and writers. It's definitely a step in the right direction."

"So what's changed this time, then?" "We're older!" says Billy. "Between 20 and 23 you grow up a lot. We've toured the world and seen a lot of different stuff. Before, I would get really angry if I heard somebody didn't like the band or if I read a shitty review or something..."

But now I realize just how lucky I am. "This record is a lot darker and more sophisticated. We're not like, 'Is it weird if we change? Is it bad?' This time we made the kinda record we wanted to. We didn't have anything to prove."

Benji thinks hard... "As much growth as there was from our first record to our second, there's so much more on this one. We've become more comfortable in our own skin. We have nothing to prove. Once we realised that, it opened a lot of creative doors for us."

"But it wasn't like we were trying to get away from this pop-punk image we had cultivated," chimes in Billy. "Personally, I never grew up listening to punk. So I'm always surprised when people label us as punk. I mean, there aren't any punk tracks on this record."

"There's no denying the current trend in punkier rock bands (Green Day, Blink 182) to show off a more mature side, lately. Coincidence perhaps? Or a carefully orchestrated strategy on Good Charlotte's part?"

"We take inspiration from a lot of bands," says Benji. "We love Blink and Green Day, but I honestly feel that we've never been like those bands – we've always been a rock band. But the fact that we get labelled as a pop or punk band is cool. We always take it as a compliment because we love all those types of bands. Though none of our albums so far have been punk records."

"Where does the pop label come from?" "I guess from the fact that our records are really well produced. But if you took that away you'd be left with a
“We love Blink and Green Day, but I honestly feel we’ve never been like those bands” Benji Madden

“ collection of really gritty rock songs. If we made The Young and The Hopeless again not only would we disappoint fans, we’d disappoint ourselves. You need to challenge people to listen to something different. Our next record may sound like St Anger.” He pauses, “Except for that snare sound.”

So, did they aim for a completely different guitar sound on The Chronicles?

“I definitely wanted to use a wider variety of guitars this time,” says Billy. “I bought one of those John 5 Telecasters. It’s an awesome guitar and I beat the shit out of it. I also got a new PRS M7 with Singlecut pickups – like on the Mark Tremonti guitar.”

“A guy in the studio had this amazing 1969 Gibson hollow body, which I used on a lot of songs as well as a Les Paul and my signature Ernie Ball model,” says Benji. “I really like the tone on our records to be the same as when we play live. I actually used Billy’s John 5 Telecaster strictly because I loved the way it looked! But Billy’s tastes and mine are different; he’s more of a metal guy and I like raw, gritty guitar sounds.”

Whereas Billy admits to taking a backseat during the writing process on previous albums, during The Chronicles sessions he came into his own both as a guitarist and keyboardist.

“I put a lot more into the songwriting process this time – more than before – and my influences have changed. As a kid I liked heavy stuff like Deftones, Korn and Silverchair and I always try to find new ways of bringing all those influences into Good Charlotte songs. But it’s never worked. I recently started listening to 1980s stuff again and have become obsessed with Depeche Mode.”

He also admits to a fairly healthy obsession for Devon’s very own, Muse. “Muse have been one of my favourite bands for a while, now. When I came over here two years ago I bought Origin Of Symmetry and couldn’t believe that I never heard of them before. Matt Bellamy is such a cool guitar player. He never does crazy tapping guitar solos, but I love that massive sound he gets.”

“There’s a lot of ambient stuff on our new record, but instead of trying to be heavy, I used more pedals and a lot of texturing and overdrives; a ton of reverb and a tremolo on one string so that the sound gets bigger and bigger and eventually builds like an orchestra.”

Billy also designed the covers for the album, which has been released in two formats: a Live version and a Death version, with a different bonus track on each one. He explains the logic behind it.

“We wanted to do something special. We thought, ‘What would be fun?’ The book for our CD is a 15-pager, with a different story for each song, and when you put the CD into your computer you can access the bonus track. So it’s not a clever marketing ploy to get fans to buy both albums. Anything you don’t get on one album you can get on the website.”

So, there you have it, Good Charlotte have gone from bingo hall mimosas to stadium gigs in just over two years. And they’re heading our way in late January for a European tour with TIG’s favourite punters, Green Day. “We’re really looking forward to it. The shows over here are always crazy,” says Billy.

“It’s only in the last couple of months we’ve really done big we’ve become. It was a whirlwind up until then. There wasn’t any time to step back.”

“I got home recently and just stared at the huge pile of mail on the floor and thought, ‘Have I really been away for two years?’ I was looking through all the magazines I’d subscribed to and saw we were in quite a few and it occurred to me, ‘Shit, we’re one of those bands now.”

PIRACY

“THERE’S NO ANSWER!”

BILLY PUT A LOT OF WORK INTO THE NEW GC ALBUM AS A PACKAGE. SO HOW DOES HE FEEL ABOUT PIRACY AND ILLEGAL DOWNLOADS?

“It’s obviously it sucks because it affects my job. But there are some instances where I believe it’s very helpful. When we were first starting out, and we would go play in Nebraska or somewhere, there would be a hundred kids singing along and we didn’t even have a record out. How did they know?”

But then there comes a point when the money that you make comes from people supporting your band. Unfortunately there’s no other way to get paid. I hope the whole situation will kind of work itself out. I just want people to like our band. You know, if some kid’s poor and he can’t afford to buy a copy and a friend gives him a burnt copy then that’s cool, if it makes him happy. I guess there’s no real answer, though.”
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MAROON 5

THEIR SHOWS FEATURE “MASSES OF SEXUALITY AND CRYING.” YOUR GIRLFRIEND FANCES THEM.

BUT FOR GUITARIST JAMES VALENTINE, THE BEST THING ABOUT MAROON 5’S STELLAR SUCCESS IS NOT HAVING TO CHANGE HIS OWN GUITAR STRINGS ANYMORE... WORDS: NICK CRACKNELL

At the beginning of 2004, Maroon 5 were languishing in pop purgatory. It had been 18 months since the US release of their debut album, Songs About Jane, and the LA five-piece were wondering whether they would ever make it big. Nowadays, if you ask any music fan who Maroon 5 are they’ll probably start singing “She wiiiiiiiiill be loved!”

As we near the end of 2004, the preppy funk-rock outfit have become this year’s biggest success story. They’ve had three massive singles, She Will Be Loved, Harder To Breathe and This Love (the first song ever to be certified as a platinum download), been certified platinum in Europe, double platinum in the US, and Songs About Jane is still hanging around the UK album charts.

TG caught up with them as they prepared to take to the stage and reduce Shepherd’s Bush to a screaming throng of moist, screaming fans...

Twenty-six-year-old guitarist James Valentine puts their success down to good, honest, hard work. When Maroon 5 enjoyed their first taste of success on US rock/indie label Octone late last year, they embarked on a relentless touring schedule to try and build up a large, dedicated fan base.

“It was a conscious effort,” he shouts, trying to find a quiet spot behind the stage as 2,000 impatient fans shriek, “This! Love! Has! Taken its toll, on me!” in anticipation less than 50 yards away.

“We always had a long-term gradual plan for the band. We didn’t want to be in the position a lot of bands are in, where, maybe, they get a single out on the radio but nobody really cares to go and see them live. We wanted to develop our live following first.

“We had to plan it well, as we didn’t have MTV or radio on our side at that point. Not that the record wasn’t doing well; it was always doing better. We’d sell 500 copies one week and then a thousand the next. It was gradual, but it was always sort of happening.”

When their first single came out in America they didn’t exactly achieve overnight success. “Harder To Breathe was doing well regionally and eventually reached a critical mass. All of a sudden people couldn’t ignore us anymore. It was pretty crazy from then on, I was totally shocked by the success of the album. We all were. I mean, we have the raw material to be a successful band, but this kind of success we never imagined.”

Shocking or not, it must be nice to be on the receiving end of a well-deserved royalties cheque. But the band have also received stick for setting out to write an album that intentionally appealed to a female audience.

“Again it wasn’t something we planned on doing,” says Valentine. “The music we are inspired by – The Beatles, The Police – they all wrote about those sorts of things, it’s a pretty universal theme.
“A lot of rock stars play up the lifestyle thing. We have fun too, but we don’t brag about it.”

JAMES VALENTINE’S TIP TOPS ON HOW TO GET GUITAR FUNKY...

The first thing you should do is try and figure out different chord substitutions. That really helps in generating new ideas. Basically, chords come in four families: major, minor, dominant and altered. And within each one of those families there are a number of possibilities. With an E minor, for example, you could play an Em7 or Em11, and with each substitution there are different voicings. I try to figure out as many of those as possible.”

And musically, Songs About Jane is a rocker. From the uplifting funk of Harder To Breathe, to the groove of Secret and the soul of Sunday Morning, the record combines late 1970s rock ’n’ roll with the emotive influence of Prince and Stevie Wonder. Funky rhythms and classic melodies underpin soaring guitars and a powerful rock bottom end. Their blue-eyed soul is infused with a hip-hop awareness that allows Maroon 5 to cross genres like almost no other band, handily in an era of fragmented, niche-marketed radio stations. On top of it all, Levine’s expressive voice belts out tale after tale about an ex-girlfriend. You can probably guess her name.

Valentine hopes the band can continue breaking down barriers between musical genres. How many other chart artists can claim to have been influenced primarily by late 1970s jazz-fusion?

“When I was a teen I really got into jazz players, like Joe Pass and Wes Montgomery, and really tried to study jazz voicings on the guitar. I played in a lot of jazz ensembles from small combos through to gigs at wedding receptions and country club parties.

“In fact, there was a period in my life where I was listening to nothing but instrumental jazz. So those guys had a huge influence on me and continue to do so. If there’s anything that makes me unique as a guitarist in a rock band it’s that I try to play with a sort of rock energy, but incorporating those funky jazz chord voicings. I love the way they sound. It relates to a lot of 1970s jazz fusion stuff, like Steely Dan. They were really good at having these awesome harmonies but with a rock approach.”

With three guitarists in the band (Levine and keyboardist Jesse Carmichael also play their eclectic range of influences make the songs shine, both live and on the album.

“I didn’t have the guitars that I’m using now on the road when we were in the studio. A lot of the guitars belonged to our producer Matt Wallace, so we just grabbed whatever felt right. He had a lot of Strats and Teles. He also had a really cool late-1960s Les Paul, which we used on the more riffy stuff like Harder To Breathe. For the funky stuff though, I’d always use a Strat or a Tele.

“Adam had a really cool, old 1970s Tele that belonged to his uncle. And when we started touring Jesse went to a vintage guitar shop in Cincinnati and bought a 1973 Tele Deluxe, which I ended up adopting as my main axe on the road. Whenever I go into a guitar shop I’m always on the look out for another one of those guitars.”

From the beginning the band set out to do something different, says Valentine.

“I feel like there aren’t that many rock bands making really good records anymore. We take a pretty classic approach to songwriting. Our biggest influence is The Beatles.

“Most of the chord progressions were written by Jesse, because he was primarily the main guitarist in the previous incarnation of the band. But as he got more into the keyboard he got more influenced by jazz harmonies and also classical melodies. A lot of it is classically influenced – especially by Bach – but the diminished chords and jazz oriented stuff is a reflection of his growing interest in jazz.

“1 was the last person to come into the band but, being into jazz, I melded really well with Jesse. He would play voicings I already had an understanding of and we would then come up with different ideas to complement each other.”
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TIME FOR PLAN B

MAROON 5 have now played over 500 live shows since summer 2002, including opening stints for Sheryl Crow, Counting Crows and Train, but they are also a consistent headline act in their own right. Having played the same songs over and over again for nearly three years, they are keen to get back in the studio and expand their repertoire.

“We’re going to work on a new record after touring. We’re doing a final US headlining tour in February/March and that will be it. Then we’ll probably take a month or two off before going into the studio. We’re not really in a creative space while we’re on the road. Some bands are, but it’s not the way we work. But we have a pretty healthy amount of material already.”

What we all want to know, of course, is how do they write songs that are catchier than a hoot of a phreath during freshers’ week?

“To break it down: people will always want to hear good songs sung by people with a good voice. But, I think, because Adam writes about his own experiences in relationships, those lyrics strike a chord with people. That’s a huge reason for our success.”

“And the greatest thing about hitting the big time?”

“Oh man, this is gonna sound really silly now,” he laughs. “The greatest thing, for me, is actually not having to change my own guitar strings anymore. I’m serious, man. It’s heaven!”

Love bites: Valentine’s
guitar licks are
good enough to eat

58 | TOTAL GUITAR | JANUARY 2005
LEARN TO PLAY

MAROON 5
HARDER TO BREATHE
DON'T GET SHIPWRECKED WITHOUT OUR TAB OF MAROON 5'S DEBUT SINGLE!

MAROON 5 were formed in Los Angeles, California, USA from the remnants of a semi-successful 90s rock band called Kara's Flowers. The quintet are Adam Levine (vocal, guitar), James Valentine (guitar), Jesse Carmichael (keyboards), Mickey Madden (bass) and Ryan Dusick (drums).

"HARDER TO BREATHE"

M aroon 5 were formed in Los Angeles, California, USA from the remnants of a semi-successful 90s rock band called Kara's Flowers. The quintet are Adam Levine (vocal, guitar), James Valentine (guitar), Jesse Carmichael (keyboards), Mickey Madden (bass) and Ryan Dusick (drums).

Harper to Breathe is the opening track on the group's hugely successful number one selling debut album Songs About Jane, a selection of songs inspired by singer Adam Levine's relationship with his now ex-girlfriend. The track was also Maroon 5's first UK single release and peaked at number 13 in the UK charts in January of this year.

The song is written in the key of C# minor and is based around a C# minor pentatonic riff that varies in intensity diverse as Tom Morello, Jim Hendrix and Steve Lukather!

The chorus section builds on the pentatonic riff idea by adding an extra chord to the sequence (alternating between I (C#7) and, VII (Bm7)), and also adds weight to the riff by accenting the semiquaver syncopations with the bass drum. The frantic eight-bar guitar solo that follows the second chorus is based on the C# minor pentatonic (the G natural in the first bar is the 5th interval from the blues scale) shapes one and two, and demonstrates guitarist James Valentine's accomplished soloing skills. We've done our best to transcribe this solo, but it's low in the mix and is obscured by vocals in bars live to eight so treat it as a suggestion rather than 100 per cent accurate.

James plays a Tele through Bad Cat amps. He's also a devotee of Digitech pedals and uses an EP-1 Envelope Phaser for "a wide range of warm tones that make my solos stand out in the mix". To achieve his sound, select your bridge pickup and dial in a touch of distortion for an edgy, funky sound. PHIL CAPONE

AMP SETTING

To get close to James's guitar sound, we used a Telecaster's single coil bridge pickup plugged into a POD Pro XTX set to a virtual Marshall 60 PLEXI Super Lead through a Marshall 4x12. The above setting is more suited to his solo, so for the rest of the playing turn down your guitar's volume to clean up the sound.

MAROON 5: Harder To Breathe - verse 1
Play this riff entirely in second position with your first and third fingers (C# minor pentatonic, shape three). Use alternate picking throughout the example, including the damped notes which are achieved by damping the strings with your fretting hand.

As with the verse, the chorus riff is also played in second position and can be played entirely with your first and third fingers. Notice that in the second and third choruses, bars 7 and 8 should be played as indicated in the last two bars of the example.
The octaves in the first bar should be played with your first and fourth fingers and strummed with a pick - angling your fretting hand fingers you will be able to damp the adjacent open strings. Try tapping the rhythm of each bar before you play it - this will help you 'hear' the phrase you are working on.

The entire outro chorus consists of the regular chorus (with the alternate bars 788) with these five bars tagged on to conclude the song.
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          Krist Novoselic (bass)
          Dave Grohl (drums)
          Kera Schaley (cello)

"The way I would describe it, in non-technical terms, is that they fucked it up"

Steve Albini on the remixing of *In Utero*

Any things about *In Utero* were a direct reaction to *Nevermind* and the success it enjoyed. The choice of studio (a low-key one, well away from the major media centres), the choice of material (edgier, punk and new wave songs) and the choice of producer (Steve Albini) were all engineered to put some distance between Nirvana and their breakthrough album. "I don't listen to records like that at home," said Kurt Cobain about *Nevermind* in 1993. "I can't listen to that record. I like a lot of the songs on there; I really like playing some of them live. In a commercial sense, I think it's a really good record, I have to admit that, but that's more in a Cheap Trick sort of way. But for my listening pleasure, you know, it's too slick."

"I know Kurt liked the way *Nevermind* sounded," replied Krist Novoselic. "That was just a reaction to a lot of things. It was kind of a reaction to get Steve Albini. We didn't want to be sell-outs, and Albini is known for having integrity. It just seemed like it made sense going back to our roots instead of just making another really slick album."

"The material on the record was dark, too. It's beautifully beautiful, but at the same time, it is very dark and abrasive. Whereas *Nevermind* was kind of like a bubblegum record."
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SESSION 28: THE TRACKS

**HEART-SHAPED BOX**

A

It wasn't just the production of the album that was a result of the previous 18 months; the lyrics were pretty hard-hitting, too. "Listening to some of the lyrics," Dave Grohl told music journalist, Michael Azerrad, "and knowing what they're pertaining to is kind of strange because there's a lot of spit, a lot of 'Fuck you!' or 'I've been fucked over' and a lot of lines that refer to money or legalities or babies. It's intense, but at the same time it just seems like Kurt feels he's backed up against a wall and he's just going to scream his way out."

The band arrived in Minnesota on Valentine's Day 1993. Like their last recording trip to the Mid West in 1990, it was a cold and snowy environment. Pachyderm had its own on-site residential buildings and the band soon settled in.

It was the first time they had actually met Steve Albini in person, and they wasted no time in setting up their equipment. Albini had insisted on a flat rate fee of $100,000 for his services. It may sound like a lot, but he refused a royalty agreement that was pretty much guaranteed to make him five times that amount—a figure that Albini described as an "abundant amount of money." When you add Albini's fee to the studio rental costs ($24,000 in one report—though Cobain was quoted as saying it was $17,000—either way it was peanuts) you get a miniscule cost for the follow-up to a multi-million selling album.

As well as the three band members, Albini and engineer Brent Sigmeth, there were two others present when the session began. Robert Weston was the studio maintenance technician and his girlfriend, Carter Nicole Launt, was the chef. Albini had even more experience at Pachyderm than the house engineer Sigmeth, as Albini had worked there before on PJ Harvey's * Rid Of Me and The Wedding Present's *Sad Simple Beautiful *True.* To his punk ethic, Albini refused to be listed as a 'producer,' insisting that he simply recorded the bands he worked with, not 'produce' them in any shape or form. As he saw himself as a 'recording engineer,' he took this part of the process very seriously, using a myriad of specially positioned microphones. There were five for the snare drum alone.

Once he had been asked to work on *In Utero,* Albini had to go back and listen to Nirvana's previous work. "As absurd as it sounds, at the time I wasn't that familiar with Nirvana's music," admits Albini. "I had heard it at other people's houses, but I couldn't count myself a fan at that point and I didn't particularly think that they were the best of the bands of

**VERY APE**

†The working title of "Punky New Wave Number" perfectly sums up this sub-two minute romp. Cobain's driving guitar riff opens proceedings before another Eastern-sounding guitar motif is woven across the chugging mix. It has been noted that the line "out of the ground / into the sky" is very similar to the line "out of the blue / into the black" from the Neil Young song *My My, Hey Hey.* The aforementioned Young song also included the lyric "It's better to burn out than fade away," a line that Cobain would later use in his suicide note.

Despite the press release of this track, Cobain still managed to fit in a short guitar solo (when *In Utero* was re-issued on 180g vinyl) this track featured, for some unknown reason, a longer guitar solo with two verses and an outro section.
that generation. I picked up their other records and listened to them. They didn't change my impression.

"Their weakest album is obviously Nevermind. It's also the least representative of the band as I knew them. The way their friends described them, that record was the least like they were. There was a strange intension to all their records and there was a sort of subtle perversion to almost everything that came out of Kurt's mouth that I liked. And Dave Grohl is an absolute monster of a drummer, so it's hard to imagine a record with him drumming on that wouldn't be fun to listen to."

Albinli had also been critical of the band's previous production. Talking about Nevermind he commented: "To

"Some of the songs we did first take. We'd been rockin' for years and we had our licks down"  
Krist Novoselic

my ears, it is sort of a standard back recording that has then been turned into a very controlled, very compressed radio-friendly mix. That is not, in my opinion, very flattering to a rock band.

There was a lot of double-tracked vocals and stuff, which is a back production technique to make vocals sound special. It sounds like that not because that's the way the band sounds, but because that's the way the producer, the remix guy and

the record company wanted it to sound."

Perhaps he was unaware that at the time it was the way Cobain and co had wanted Nevermind to sound.

Work started in earnest on Monday 15 February and continued for 12 days, concluding on Friday 26. The band would rise around 11am, cat and then work from midday until midnight with a break for lunch in the afternoon and dinner in the evening. The basic tracking went very well and was completed by the Friday of the first week, as most songs were first takes recorded live. 16 songs were recorded in this time. 12 for the album (Gallant Of Rubbing Alcohol Fire Through The Strip came from the earlier Rio sessions), a couple of b-sides and a couple that were subsequently given away to compilations: I Hate Myself And Want To Die and Verse Chorus Verse.

Cobain had initially been working from a list of 18 possible songs, so either two songs were dropped or two were recorded but have never surfaced. Steve Albini said: "I'm sure some of that stuff exists as master tapes, but I really don't know." Overdubs were added over the middle weekend, in between a trip to see [local punk band] the Cows play in Minneapolis, and mixing was completed from Monday 22 to Friday 26.

One of the reasons for working so swiftly was that the band were very well rehearsed. "We just focused intensely on rehearsing," said Novoselic. "We had the songs down tight. So we showed up in Cannon Falls, set up our gear and started playing. We tracked almost all the songs in the first two days. Some of the songs we did first take. We knew that Albinli didn't want to deal with some big-time rock band or have to coddle some half-assed musicians. So, we knew how to rock! We'd been rockin' for years and we had our licks down. I remember Albinli standing by the tape machine, arms folded, bobbing his head, and we would just pop 'em out, one after the other."

UTTERLY IN UTERO
THE GEAR USED ON THE ALBUM

In Utero was recorded with producer Steve Albini, the former guitarist of Big Black – one of Kurt's favourite bands.

Albinli loaned Kurt a rare all-aluminium guitar called a Veleno for the session. Although there were 250 of these expensive axes were originally made in the 1970s, £5,000 will buy you a re-issue. Check it out at www.veleno.net.

Most of In Utero's electric guitar parts were recorded on Kurt's much-loved 1965 sunburst Fender Jaguar – with retro-fit Dimarzio humbuckers – running through two Fender amplifiers: a 1982 black-faced Twin Reverb and, the more unusual, silver-faced Quad Reverb.

The early 1970s Quad Reverb was basically a 4 x 12-inch speaker version of the classic Twin (the Twin had two, notchi) with 100 watts of valve power.

Kurt preferred to keep his effects simple by only using his Boss DS-2 for distortion and three Electro-Harmonix pedals: a Small Clone chorus, a Poly chorus, owned by his guitar tech Earmie Bailey, and his own vintage Echo Ranger. He may also have used a Tech 21 Sansamp Classic – one of his favourite live units at the time.

For all of the acoustic parts on the album Kurt grabbed his trusty old sunburst Stella 12-string (serial # 16409512). Not that it actually had its full complement of a dozen strings fitted. In true punk style the Stella sported a mere five strings, and they were nylon classical items.

During the In Utero sessions it was created to some new machines and a new, full set of strings. The beat-up guitar had a white screw-on scratchplate and a floating wooden bridge glued down to prevent it from moving – Kurt liked to hit his guitars hard.

Considering that this old guitar was used on two massive-selling albums (it also made its eural mark on Nevermind) it didn't exactly break the bank. Kurt bought the Stella from the Edgewood Pawn Shop of Olympia, Washington, for $35.23 (£16.81) including sales tax on October 12, 1989, (Bk)

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NIRVANA: IN UTERO

WITH THE LIGHTS OUT

THE RECENTLY RELEASED NIRVANA BOX SET PROVIDES A FASCINATING INSIGHT INTO KURT COBAIN’S DEVELOPMENT AS A GUITAR PLAYER. HERE ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS:

HEARTBREAKER

This early live recording from 1987 has Kurt, Krist and an unnamed drummer performing the Led Zeppelin classic with admirable enthusiasm, but precious little expertise. Kurt was clearly no Jimmy Page at this early stage (he was 20 at the time). And if you didn’t know better, you’d think this was a school band rehearsing at the local village hall.

TOKEN EASTERN SONG

Remember the cool Eastern guitar figures in Love Buzz (off Bleach)? This previously unreleased demo is cut from the same cloth, though it’s marred by a truly lame chorus. Kurt’s ear for a hook was clearly not yet developed.

BLANDEST

A self-addictive track that only the most obsessive Nirvana fans will have heard before. Interesting for the way the vocal melody in the chorus is doubled by the guitar—a trick that Kurt would later use to explosive effect on In Bloom and ... Teen Spirit.

SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT (DEMO)

An embryonic rehearsal room version complete with muffled drums and fluffed lyrics. Kurt hasn’t quite worked out the verse melody at this point so the guitar solo—which in the final version mimicked the verse—is still very much a work in progress on this version.

RAUNCHOLA/MOBY DICK

One of three moments that reference Led Zeppelin (the third is a crude cover of Immigrant Song, included on the DVD). Raunchola is built on a quirky, ultra-fast riff that calls to mind oddball cult rockers Primus before slowing down and morphing into a raucous run-through of Moby Dick.

EVEN IN HIS YOUTH

Another pre-Bleach demo that starts with a discordant, nerve-shredding guitar motif. While melodically slight, the song nonetheless presages the uncompromising textures of In Utero.

OH THE GUILT

A no-frills song with a one-word chorus. Boasts a dramatic stop-start riff in the mould of Aneurysm and In Bloom. Kurt’s keen grasp of rock dynamics is clearly evident here.

TEEN SPIRIT (BUTCH VIG MIX)

A fascinating listen in the importance of mixing and mastering. Butch Vig producedNevermind, but he didn’t mix it. That job went to the more experienced Andy Wallace ( Slayer, RATH) who was evidently responsible for giving the album its radio-friendly sheen. Vig’s mix is nowhere near as powerful or immediate: there’s no reverber on the vocals and the drums sound thin and boxy, even though it’s the exact same performance as on the final version, Intriguing…

PENNYROYAL TEA

A heartbreakingly human moment. Kurt’s acoustic home demo of the In Utero classic is impossibly raw and stripped-down, with the great man barely able to finger the chords. (LL)

Cobain’s lyrics were also closer to being finished than at any previous sessions. Despite reports that he was again finishing them in the studio, most had been sung live sometime over the previous three years. “They were as prepared as any band I’ve ever worked with,” commented Albin. “On every record there are a few little things that somebody asks you to do that you have to figure out. At the end of Rape Me, there was meant to be this really extreme vocal. On the Milkmaid [Milk It] song, or whatever it’s called, the vocal had to sound crazier than it had up to that point. So I had to find a way to make the vocal leap forward at the end.

Those are things you solve in the moment. But there are no magic tricks. Making records is a straightforward process — it’s not black magic. You set up a microphone and listen to what it sounds like. If it doesn’t sound good you put up another one. In order to figure out where to put the microphone and what to do with it, you have to know something about acoustics, electronics and the interaction of sounds in the studio, and I suppose that’s where the experience comes in. But I’m still convinced that any competent engineer who doesn’t run away with himself, who doesn’t become infatuated with his own ego, can make a decent record.”

Albin’s used the studio’s vintage 24-track Neve board for recording (as used on AC/DC’s Back In Black), a favourite of the band’s, and Cobain played a battered old guitar through a Fender Quad Reverb amp. As things were going so well there was time for a few prank telephone calls — to the likes of Eddie Vedder, Gene Simmons and Evan Dando — and some practical jokes in the studio.

Courtney Love visited Pachyderm during the second week of recording. However, she and Albin did not get along. “I think it was stressful for Kurt,” recalled Carter Nicole Launt. “I think she put a lot of pressure on him. She was very critical of his work and was kind of confrontational with people there.” Through the band were initially happy with the recordings, Love’s scepticism proved to be founded and later things had to change. Albin recalls that as the session drew to a close, “everybody was really happy. There was this really serious sense of accomplishment. I thought they did a great job. I’ve been asked repeatedly if Kurt was on drugs while I was there. And I’ve been around people who use dope a lot and my best estimate was that, no, he wasn’t. He was being very productive. He was focused on making this record and he didn’t want to let the other guys in the band down.

“It was the easiest recording we’ve ever done, hands down,” said Cobain. “It had indeed been easy and fast, in hindsight perhaps too fast. When they left Minnesota things seemed fine, but that was all about to change. [Palm tree emoji]
NIRVANA: IN UTERO

SESSION NUMBER: 29
VENUE: Bad Animals Studio, Seattle, WA, USA

DATES: May 1993
PRODUCER: Scott Litt
PLAYERS: Kurt Cobain (guitar, vocals), Krist Novoselic (bass), Dave Grohl (drums)

his (possibly the most controversial Nirvana session) was, in fact, not even a real session. The lead up to, and fall-out from, this brief liaison with R.E.M. producer Scott Litt produced more column inches than any other Nirvana session. Even though things had been fine when everyone departed Minnesota, Nirvana claimed that the songs sounded different once they got back home.

By April, reports were leaking out that Geffen and the band's management were unhappy with the way In Utero sounded.

Chicago writer Greg Kot found himself in the middle of the storm after the publication of his article in the Chicago Tribune headed "Record Label Finds Little Bliss in Nirvana's Latest." The general slant of the article was that members of the Geffen 'hierarchy' wanted the album re-mixed. There then followed a series of phone calls between Cobain, Albin and Novoselic.

Every time the band members said they thought it should be re-worked, Albin said it was as good as it was going to get. Albin had earlier insisted that any post-production should only be carried out by him. But by saying he couldn't improve it, he left an opening to bring in someone fresh.

"I got a call from a journalist in Chicago," says Albin. "I told him that the publicity department had been in touch with him and had told him, off the record, that the next Nirvana record was awful, that it was all my fault and what did I have to say about that? What I said was that Nirvana made the record they wanted to make and the record company could stick it up their ass.

"But everyone involved with that record, except the band, was not being shy about letting everybody know they didn't like the record and that it didn't sit right with the fans. So we worked through that and recorded this album."

Cobain also added a new acoustic guitar part, giving it a final effect that was masterful and the track became a genre classic. When taken alongside the noise-fests on the album, such as 'Scentsless Apprentice' and 'Radio Friendly Unit Shift', it becomes clearer that Heart-Shaped Box is both the high point of Nirvana's short career and also the beginning of the end.

The dynamic range was narrowed, the stereo width was narrowed, there was a lot of mid-range boost EQ added and the overall sound was softened. And the bass response was compromised to make it sound more consistent on radio and home speaker. But the way I would describe it, non-technical terms, is that they fucked it up. The end result is that the record in the stores doesn't sound like the record that was recorded.

A further complication was the use of a new backing vocalist, who was just as experienced as the others but was already working with the band. This resulted in a more polished sound, but one that was less authentic.

Overall, the band was happy with the final product and felt that they had achieved what they set out to do. The album became a commercial success, reaching #3 on the Billboard charts and selling over 6 million copies worldwide.

PHOTO CREDITS: Alain Ruggiero, Joe Tonnard, Steve Earle, Joe Tonnard, Kim Steele, Rob Jovanovic

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NIRVANA: THE RECORDING SESSIONS

THE TOTAL GUITAR TEAM
"He wanted to mix the vocals at an unnecessarily low level. That's not the way we sound good." Kurt on Steve Albini
SON OF A GUN

NIRVANA PLAYED MANY A GOOD COVER TUNE IN THEIR TIME. THE VASELINES' SON OF A GUN WAS CERTAINLY ONE OF THEM

Besides the obvious influence of American bands like the Pixies and Sonic Youth, Kurt Cobain also admired seminal British alternative act The Raincoats and 80s Scottish band, The Vaselines. Nirvana covered three Vaselines tunes: Torn Doesn't Want Me For A Sunbeam, which appeared on MTV Unplugged In New York, Molly's Lips (tabbed in TG72) and the three-chord thrash tune, Sun Of A Gun. The latter two both appeared on 1992’s Incesticide.

They were recorded during Nirvana’s sessions for the John Peel Show at Maida Vale studios in October 1990, hence the very live, raw production without any overdubs or solo. The session had previously only been available on the rare Japanese import. Housemaid, but after the overwhelming success of 1991’s Nevermind, Nirvana decided to put out what was essentially a gap-filler album, to satisfy the demand for new material while Cobain worked out his next musical move. Incesticide is thus a motley selection of material pulled from rare singles, b-sides, demos from the Bleach album sessions and live performances, of which the BBC sessions are by far the most exciting.

Sun Of A Gun captures the raw energy of a young band on the up. There’s no hint of the self-loathing that would colour Cobain’s later work; the band are simply having fun playing a great song. It’s a very straightforward arrangement: there’s only one verse, which alternates twice with the chorus, before a 16-bar powerchord middle section, and a final run through of the verse and chorus.

Although it’s not certain, we reckon Kurt used a Fender guitar (Mustang, Jaguar or Strat with a humbucker), a Mesa/Boogie Studio valve pre-amp, a Crow power amp into Marshall JCM 12 cabs to record the song.

SIMON YOUNG

NIRVANA: Son Of A Gun - intro

AMP SETTING

GAIN CHANNEL DISTORTION

To get close to Kurt’s guitar sound on Son Of A Gun, use a guitar with a bridge humbucker and a thick valve distortion. We used a Fender Stratocaster with a bridge humbucker and a P100 XT preamp set to Brit 16 gain and boosted the treble.

So, how do you play it? Belt these simple open-position chords and don’t worry about clinical accuracy! The chord changes at the end of beats 2 and 4 occur naturally at this tempo and aren’t conscious anticipations, although we’ve indicated what they are.

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SON OF A GUN ■ LEARN TO PLAY

NIRVANA: Son Of A Gun - chorus

Switch to downstroked for this part, to create a sense of urgency and lift the energy. Again, raw power is more essential than accuracy - Indeed, it doesn’t really matter if you play full barre chords or just powerchords as long as it’s energetic.

NIRVANA: Son Of A Gun - middle section

Continue using downstrokes as much as possible for this part. The slide only occurs on the first time through bars 3 and 4. After the second time through, play four times through the first two bars, before going back into the verse.

THE CHORDS YOU’LL NEED

INTRO A E D5 E x4

VERSE 1 A E D5 E
Up up up and down, turn turn turnaround
A E D5 E
Round round roundabout, and over again
A E D5 E
Gun gun son of a gun, you are the only one
A E D5 E
Makes any difference what I say

CHORUS G C D C
The sun shines in the bedroom when we play
G C D C
The raining always starts, when you go away
G C D C
The sun shines in the bedroom when we play
G C D C
The raining always starts, when you go away

VERSE 2 as verse 1

CHORUS

MIDDLE G D G D A5 E(v2) G D x4

VERSE 3 as verse 1

CHORUS x2
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LEARN TO PLAY

IN THIS MONTH’S LEARN TO PLAY WE FEATURE CLAPTON, SLASH, A CHEEKY YOUNG BAND, A SCARY METAL BAND, A 1970S LEGEND AND A MAN THAT PLAYS WAY TOO FAST!

WHAT IS TAB?

Tab is short for tablature which is a notational system used to give more detailed information as to where the notes should be played on the fretboard than traditional music notation can provide.

Tab appears underneath conventional music notation as six horizontal lines which represent the six strings of the guitar, from the sixth (thickest) string at the bottom to the first (thinnest) string at the top. On these six lines, numbers represent the required frets. For example, an A note on the 2nd fret, third string will be shown as a number ‘2’ written on the third line down on the tab chart. Likewise, if the first string is to be played unbated, ‘0’ will be written on the highest string.

Providing fret and string numbers is tab’s main role but it also provides more performance detail. As guitar playing has evolved so has the tab notation standard allowing for precise representation of technique like hammer-ons, pull-offs, whammy bar dives and two-hand tapping.

NOTATION AND TAB DIAGRAM

This is where the key signature and time signature are shown.

2nd string 3rd string 4th string 5th string 6th string

0 1 2 3 4 5 6

CD time (where the part occurs on the original CD).

The note pitches and their rhythmic values are shown in the music notation; here it’s the notes B C and another D played as quarter notes. Where they occur on the fretboard is shown in the tab.
The tab and notation system shown here is a thorough coverage of all guitar techniques used today. For quick reference, it has been divided into fretbox and technique definitions with short musical examples explaining how to play the printed music in the magazine. So if you're wondering how a hammer-on, pinch harmonic, or a dive bomb is illustrated, look no further!

**FRETBOX EXAMPLES WITH PHOTOS**

**Hand Labelling**
Here are the abbreviations used for each finger:
- Fretting hand: 1, 2, 3, 4, (T)
- Picking hand: p (thumb), i (index), m (middle), a (annular), c (little finger)

**NUT AND FRETBOARD**
The fretbox diagram represents the guitar's fretboard exactly, as seen in the accompanying photo. This design is used for ease of visualising a fretboard scale or chord quickly.

**Chord Example**
The G chord diagram represents the G chord in the photo. The 'O' symbol is an open string, and a circled number is a fretting hand finger. A Black 'O' or circled number is the root (here, G).

**Scale Example**
The fret box diagram illustrates the fret hand fingering for the A major scale. The photo shows part of the scale being played on the fourth string with fingers 1, 3, and 4.

**Bending Example**
The green and yellow fingerings show the size of a string bend. Green circles are 2 fret bends (1 tone) and yellow circles are 3 fret bends (3/2 tone). The photo shows a 2 fret bend, third string.

**Treble Clef and Tablature Examples**

**Musical Stave** - The five horizontal lines for music notation illustrate a combination of note pitches and rhythms, and are divided by bar lines.

**TAB** - Under the musical stave, Tab is an aid to show you where to put your fingers on the fretboard. The six horizontal lines represent the six strings on a guitar - the numbers on the strings are the fret numbers.

The two stave and tab examples show four notes and then four chords.

The chords are: C (C major), Em (E minor), D7 (D dominant 7) and Am7 (A minor 7).

**Guitar Technique Examples**

**Picking**

**Down & Up Picking**
This diagram tells you the first note to be down-picked and the last note to be up-picked.

**Tremolo Picking**
Each of the four notes are to be alternate picked (down & p picked) very rapidly and continuously.

**Palm Mutting**
Palm mute by resting the edge of the picking hand's palm on the strings near the bridge.

**Pick Rake**
Drag the pick across the strings shown with a single sweep. Often used to augment a rake's last note.

**Arpeggiated Chord**
Play the notes of the chord by strumming across the relevant strings in the direction of the arrow head.
**FRET HAND**

**HAMMER-ON & PULL-OFF:**
Pick 1st note and hammer-on with fretting hand for 2nd note. Then pick the 3rd note and pull-off for 4th note.

**NOTE TRILLS:**
Rapidly alternate between the two notes indicated in brackets with fretting hand hammer-ons and pull-offs.

**SLIDES (GLISSANDO):**
Pick 1st note and then slide to the next. For the last two notes pick the first, slide to the next and then re-pick it (RP).

**LEFT HAND TAPPING:**
Sound the notes marked with a square by hammering on/tapping with the fretting hand fingers.

**FRET HAND MUTING:**
X markings represent notes and strings that are muted by the fretting hand when struck by the picking hand.

---

**BENDING AND VIBRATO**

**BENDING AND VIBRATO**
Fret the start note (here, the 5th fret) and bend up to the pitch of the bracketed note, before releasing again.

**RE-PICK BEND**
Bend up to the pitch shown in the brackets, then re-pick the note while holding the bent note at the pitch shown.

**PRE-BEND**
Bend the note up from the 5th fret to the pitch of the 7th fret note, then pick it and release to 5th fret note.

**QUARTER TONE BEND**
Pick the note and then bend up a quarter tone (a very small amount). This is sometimes referred to as a blues curl.

**VIBRATO**
The fretting hand vibrates the note by small bend ups and releases. The last example is whammy bar vibrato.

---

**HARMONICS**

**NATURAL HARMONICS**
Pick the note whilst lightly touching the string directly over the fret indicated. A chiming harmonic results.

**ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS**
Fret the note as shown, then lightly place the index finger directly over 'x' fret (M'sx) and pick (with a pick, p or a).

**PINCHED HARMONICS**
Fret the note as shown, however, dig into the string with the side of the thumb as you sound it with the pick.

**TAPPED HARMONICS**
Fret the note as shown, but sound it with a quick right hand tap at the fret shown (TH17) for a harmonic.

**TOUCH HARMONICS**
A previously sounded note is touched above the fret marked TCH (eg. TCH 9) for it to sound harmonic.

---

**VIBRATO BAR/WHAMMY BAR**

**VIBRATO BAR BENDS**
The note is picked as shown, then the vibrato bar is raised and lowered to the pitches shown in brackets.

**SOOP AND DOOP**
Scoop - Depress the bar just before striking the note and release. Doop - lower the bar slightly after picking note.

**SUSTAINED NOTE-DIVE BOMB**
Note is sustained and then the vibrato bar is depressed to slack. A square bracket is used only if a long held note has a new articulation applied.

**GARGLE**
Sound the note and ‘flick’ the vibrato bar with the picking hand so it ‘quivers’. This results in a ‘gurgling’ sound!

---

**CAPO NOTATION**
A capo creates a new nut so that the above example has the guitar’s ‘iteral’ 5th fret now as the 3rd fret.

---

**OTHERS**

**PICK SCRAPE**
The edge of the pick is dragged either down or up along the lower strings to produce a scraped sound.

**VIOLINING**
Turn volume control off, sound note(s) and then turn volume up for a smooth fade in. Referred to as ‘violinising’.

**FINGER NUMBERING**
The numbers after the notes are the fingers required to play the fret numbers in the tab below.

**PIMA DIRECTIONS**
Any kind of fingerpicking requirements are shown at the bottom of the tab notation.

**RIGHT HAND TAPPING**
Tap (hammer on) with a finger of the picking hand onto the fret marked with a circle. Usually with "P or "m".

---

**JANUARY 2005 | TOTAL GUITAR | 85**
CREAM
BADGE

CREAM SHOWED THE WORLD THAT ERIC WAS A GREAT ROCK GUITARIST. ON THIS GEORGE HARRISON COLLABORATION, HE ALSO REVEALED GREAT SONGWRITING SAVVY...

'CREAM'
WORDS AND MUSIC BY HARRISON, CLAPTON
© 1976 EMI MUSIC AND APPLE PUBLISHING LTD (50%) WARRIORS/CHAPPELL MUSIC LTD, LONDON W6 8HS (WARRENS) (50%) REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL MUSIC PUBLICATIONS LTD AND HAL LEONARD CORP. INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT SECURED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Cream were the UK's first 'supergroup', featuring not only Clapton, but the talents of bassist/vocalist Jack Bruce and the mighty Ginger Baker on drums. From Cream's final album Goodbye, this track was co-written with George Harrison, guitarist with some impressive band from Liverpool. As best friends, the two men often worked together. Eric lent his soulful lead guitar to George's 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps' and apparently Harrison wrote Here Comes The Sun in Clapton's back garden. This month's Classic Track gained its name when Eric looked over George's shoulder at the piece of paper he was doodling away on. The heading was 'Bridge', but Clapton mistook this for the word 'Badger'. Much hilarity ensued and the title stuck, even though it bears scant relevance to the song's subject.

The 'choppier' guitar on the intro and verses is played by Harrison, in a similar style to that heard on the Beatles' Get Back. Note there are a couple of different versions of the Am, D and Em chords featured here - possibly by design, though equally likely as a result of spontaneity during recording. Clapton's guitar makes its entrance after the second verse, playing arpeggiated chord patterns which continue throughout the middle section (this is probably what Harrison was referring to as the 'Bridge'). The swirling sound comes from the use of a 'Leslie' or rotating speaker. Usually partnered with the popular Hammond organ, the speaker literally revolves at various speeds, providing the inspiration for the famous 'Uni-Vibe' unit.

Here, Eric overdubs a typically melodic solo, using both D major and D minor pentatonic scales. You can hear little echoes of his playing in White Room and Crossroads and it's worth noting that this style of playing was pretty much pioneered by Clapton. There are some choice moments too like the partial release of bends in the first few bars and the phrasing in bar 14 where the last note of the bar moves deliberately out of the pentatonic 'box' shape to play a B (and not a more expected G). He continues to add melodic embellishments between the vocal lines for the rest of the song.

Though not as demanding as some solos, his use of bends, vibrato and overall phrasing presents some really class touches. RICHARD BARRETT

AMP SETTING

To re-create the sound, plug an electric guitar into a Line 6 POD or a Fender amplifier, and set the gain to a medium level. Use a Marshall cabinet and a British-style reverb to get the right tone.

MPEG VIDEO FOR THE SOLO

To watch the video for the main solo to Badge, load the CD into your PC/Mac, click on the Badge video box, then double-click on the MPEG/Quicktime file. Once you have opened it, hit Play and you can watch the solo over and over to nail each fretted note, ascending run and emotive string bend. Don't forget you can step through each section by pausing and then clicking on the Forward button, or by clicking on the Time Bar and dragging it slowly forwards or backwards. What a masterful example of string bending!

CREAM: Badge - complete

TRACK 9

Intro

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chord</th>
<th>Tab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A♭</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D♭</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A♭</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D♭</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

80 | TOTAL GUITAR | JANUARY 2005
VERSE

Am  D  Esus^2
Thinkin' bout the times you drove in my car.

Em  Am  D
Thinkin' that I might have drove you too far.

Esus^2  Em  C
And I'm talkin' bout the

Am  Bm7  Am^9
love that you laid on my table.

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Em
Am
D
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Esus²
Em
C
Then I told you 'bout our
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Verse
Am
D
E sus^2
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Em
Am
D
She didn't have the time to wake you.

E sus^2
Em
C
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GUNS N’ ROSES

LIVE AND LET DIE

SLASH & CO. GIVE MACCA’S BOND THEME A KICK UP THE ARSE WITH LOUD GUITARS AND BONKERS ORCHESTRAL BACKING...

Guns N’ Roses, the 80s champions of no-frills, bluesy, powerhouse rock ‘n’ roll, were a breath of fresh air in a decade dominated by disposable electro-pop and ludicrous haircuts. The quintet were formed in the mid 80s in Hollywood, USA from the remnants of various local groups. The original line-up featured Axl Rose (vocal), Slash (guitar), Izzy Stradlin (guitar), Duff McKagan (bass) and Steve Adler (drums).

The band celebrated the arrival of the 90s by simultaneously releasing two albums, Use Your Illusion I and Use Your Illusion II in September 1991. The first of these albums featured their cover of Paul McCartney's famous Bond movie soundtrack, Live And Let Die – Axl's powerful, tortured vocals and Slash’s wall of sound guitar riffs (accompanied by a full orchestra) make this a spectacular and evocative cover of such a well-known song. The track was also released as a single and peaked at No 5 in the UK charts during December 1991, beating Maccy’s highest chart position of No 9 in June 1973 almost two decades earlier.

Written in the key of G major and featuring a half-time verse groove, the main riff (Ex 3) and bridge (Ex 4) not only up the ante by belting along at twice the speed, but also modulate to G minor - a neat piece of arranging that adds depth and intrigue to the arrangement. The doubling of the highly syncopated guitar riff in the bridge by the flute section is another interesting feature of the song so we’ve added this to our backing track. The original track was recorded in the Gunners’ favourite E4 tuning, but we’ve kept our backing track in standard E tuning so you don’t have to twiddle with your tuning pegs (aren’t we kind?). Slash’s axe of choice is a Gibson Les Paul through a Marshall JCM head and Marshall 4x12 cabs.

To achieve the sound of the original recording, crank up the input gain of your amp to achieve some natural distortion and select your guitar’s bridge humbucker pickup. For the song’s mellower verse sections simply back off your guitar’s volume and try adding a touch of chorus.

AMP SETTING

We used a Les Paul Custom’s bridge humbucker and plugged it into a POD Pro XT with the virtual Marshall Plexi ‘jump lead’ setting. We boosted the treble a little so the tone had a little more cut and then added a dash of reverb for ambience.

GUNS N’ ROSES: Live And Let Die – verse 1

TRACK 11 %

0:00 let ring throughout

PHIL CÂPONE
Although the notation indicates individual notes in most of the bars, you should hold down the chord shape indicated and then pick the pattern indicated in the tab, making sure you allow all the notes to ring for the full bar.

For the open G chord in this example with your second finger on the sixth string (ring your finger so that you also damp the fifth string), and your fourth finger on the first string. This will leave your first and third fingers free for the remaining notes.
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GUNS N' ROSES: Live And Let Die - main riff

The doublestops in this example should be played with a semi-barre using your first and third fingers - this will enable you to move swiftly around the neck. Notice that the repeat section is played three times during the outro before adding the last four bars to finish.

GUNS N' ROSES: Live And Let Die - bridge

As in Ex 3, make sure you play the doublestops on the same fret with a semi-barre using your first or third fingers. Notice how the entire doublestop section is played on the second and third strings only.

GUNS N' ROSES: Live And Let Die - interlude

JANUARY 2005 | TOTAL GUITAR | 101
As with the original recording, there are two simultaneous guitar parts in this example. Listen to the guitar panned hard left on our full mix. Notice the extensive use of 6ths in bars three to six.

The first six bars of this example feature the creamy lead at the start of the second verse. Keep the pitch of your bends in check by playing the fretted note you are bending to first. On the original recording and our full mix this part is doubled an octave lower.
SONIC-ART

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STERIOGRAM
WALKIE TALKIE MAN
IT'S THE SONG FROM THAT IPOD AD ON TELLY – TRANSCRIBED FOR YOUR PLEASURE

Welcome Sterio gram were formed in Auckland, New Zealand back in the Summer of 1999. The quintet are currently based in Los Angeles, USA, and boast a twin-guitar line-up featuring: Tyson Kennedy (vocals), Tim Youngson (guitar), Brad Carter (guitar), Jake Adams (bass) and Jared Wrennall (drums). Their current single Walkie Talkie Man (which also features in the latest iPod TV ad) was released in November and is taken from their debut album, Schmuck!

From the moment you hear the opening Chuck Berry-esque riff you know this is going to be a no-frills, riff-out song. The verse riff (based on the same harmonic sequence as the chorus) is incredibly catchy and somehow manages to effortlessly blend rap, punk and The Jacksons (check out the intro to Blame It On The Boogie). The chorus is a spectacular open-chord thrash built on a II major (E) – V (A) – I (DS) – VI (Bos) sequence that uses the non-diatonic E major chord to create an ambiguous tonality only resolved with the outo D major cadenza and the concluding chord stabs [Peter: – Ed]. Even though this is a two-guitar outfit, guitarists Brad Carter and Tim Youngson have opted for a double riff approach with the guitars panned right and left for a huge sound.

Brad's favourite guitar is an Epiphone Goldtop fitted with Bartolini pick-ups. Brad plays the Goldtop through a Marshall TSL100 amp and Marshall cab via stompsboxes including an Ibanez TS50 Tube Screamer and the Crowther Hotcake overdrive. Tim plays a Gibson SG and a Gibson Firebird guitar through a Vox AC30 via a Pro Co Rat, Boss DD-6 Digital Delay, Crybaby Wah and another Crowther Hotcake overdrive.

PHIL CAPONE

AMP SETTING

To recreate the sound, select your bridge pickup and dial in a touch of overdrive but don't overdo it otherwise your chords will turn to mush! We used a Les Paul Custom (bridge humbucker) plugged into a POD XT with a slightly driven Brit Classic setting. The EQ should have some cut without sounding too thin.

STERIOGRAM: Walkie Talkie Man - main riff

This riff is played entirely in second position and should present no problems. Use alternate picking throughout and watch out for the string jump from the 8 to the 12 at the end of the second bar - use your first finger to play both notes.
STERIOGRAM: "Walkie Talkie Man" - verse

As with the main riff, this should also be played in second position. The first note in the second bar (D) can also be played on the fifth string with your fourth finger - this will involve a stretch to the F# on the sixth string, but it eliminates playing consecutive open strings and awkward string jumping.

STERIOGRAM: "Walkie Talkie Man" - chorus

Notice how none of the open A chords contain the E on the first string. This is because the chord should be played by barring your first finger across all three fretted notes (angle your finger slightly to damp the first string). The added notes in the seventh bar are quite easy when played this way.

STERIOGRAM: "Walkie Talkie Man" - drums chorus

A conventional A chord fingering is used in this example. Use down and up alternate strumming throughout.

STERIOGRAM: "Walkie Talkie Man" - outro

With the exception of the first note (D), the cadenza is played entirely with D major pentatonic, shape 5 in seventh position. If you are unfamiliar with the major pentatonic, just think B minor pentatonic shape one - it's the same scale.
### Electric Guitars

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SLIPKNOT

VERMILLION

A SHRED SOLO AND JAZZY MAJOR 7 CHORDS? SLIPKNOT PUSH THE BOUNDARIES AND PROVE ONCE AND FOR ALL THAT NU METAL REALLY HAS LEFT THE BUILDING...

Considering there weren't any solos on their first two albums, Slipknot are making up for lost time and demonstrating that lead guitar breaks are a good thing on their most recent album Volume 3: The Subliminal Versus. The solo isn't the only thing to get your teeth into, however, as there are plenty of the usual grinding riffs, fast powerchord sections and Slipknot trademarks. Perhaps most surprising is the use of some major 7 chords. Are Slipknot going soft? Hardly - in context these chords sound truly evil. The trickiest aspect that immediately confronts you is the phrasing and timing during the intro and verse riffs. Although the start of the track is firmly in 4/4, it takes a while to get used to the placement of each chord and especially the recurring sliding octave chords. This is mainly due to the 'three over four' feel of the first bar. The stress of the chords in the next three bars isn't the same, so it can throw you a bit, rhythmically, at first. The best approach is to break it down slowly, and then listen to the original so you can memorise how it feels in context. As the bridge section is pretty syncopated and the drum arrangement is sparse, we recommend you tap out fours with your foot to maintain good timing. Technically, the pre-chorus is probably the trickiest riff, as it's fast and uses a large area of the fretboard. You're gonna find your eyes darting around to keep up with your fingers!

TIME TO SHRED

We know the riffing alone has been tough, but now it's time to solo! Don't be too frightened by the seven-fret whammy bar bend in bars 5-6 as the lower tuning means the strings have more slack in them to accommodate this (make sure your action is high enough to prevent fretting out before reaching the 20th fret). The second half of the solo is definitely in the realms of shred, based on three-note fragments of the B minor scale (B C# D E F# G A). There's relatively little picking going on with legato techniques (hammer-ons and pull-offs) providing the necessary speed. Soundwise, aim for humbucking pickups and the usual valve distortion. As always, your guitar setup may need tweaking at this lower tuning, and you may also need to invest in slightly faster strings to prevent any annoying tuning problems.

STEVE ALLSWORTH
Work slowly on alternating between palm-muting and not muting the strings with your picking hand as this will give you the desired accents in the correct places. A combination of down picking (bar 1) and alternate picking (octave riff) may help with the timing, but ultimately work with whichever technique feels most comfortable.

Although this is essentially the same idea as the intro, phrases such as the final three palm-muted A# notes can feel awkward at first. As always spend time learning this at a slow tempo before finally going for the desired speed of 142bpm.

Keep the picking hand moving in a constant 8th note motion using alternate picking to help with the groove of this riff. Ideally you should end up sounding the chords with down, up, up, down, up, upstrokes.
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We've combined the first half of guitar 1 with the second half of guitar 2 so you can have a go at both parts. Use alternate picking throughout and watch out for the tempo slow down after the drum break.

This riff moves laterally (sideways) across the fretboard quite quickly so will need practising! You may prefer to use an 11th fret A# note on the sixth string (rather than 4th fret, fifth string) if you'd feel happier using your fourth finger before returning to bar 1's octaves.
SLIPKNOT: Vermillion – chorus

This is the easiest riff so far and uses single notes on the sixth string. Be careful you don’t pick too hard otherwise the string will go out of tune.

SLIPKNOT: Vermillion – breakdown

Aim to maintain down-picking here, and watch out for the rogue 5/4 bar!

SLIPKNOT: Vermillion – solo

Grad. release—
Although this solo is based around B minor you might like to ‘think’ in D minor because of the fretboard positioning - it’s based around the first shape of the minor pentatonic scale at the 10th fret with minor 6ths and major 2nds thrown in for good measure. Use a wah pedal throughout as this not only enhances notes that feature vibrato, but will also mask some of the definition of the faster flurries to a certain extent. Due to the blurred note definition it’s not worth getting too pedantic about the exact order of notes in bars 16-17 at the end.

The ideas here are in a similar vein to the chorus sections, so shouldn’t prove too tricky. The only real difference is the addition of the powerchords.
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THE MUSIC

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

DESPITE THEIR TENDER YEARS, THE MUSIC'S CURRENT SINGLE OOZES CONFIDENCE AND COJONES BY THE BUCKETLOAD...

Still lingering just within the top 40 at the time of writing, Freedom Fighters is the current single from Leeds-based retro-rock quartet The Music. It peaked at No 15 in September this year and is the first single to be taken from their new album, Welcome To The North.

It's the follow-up to their much-acclaimed self-titled debut album, released in 2002. All but drummer Phil Jordan were childhood school friends in Leeds; Jordan joined the other three in 1999, while they were all still at school.

By 2001, they had cobbled together a demo, which featured an early version of their debut single, the space-rock inspired Take The Long Road And Walk It.

A copy of the demo reached Radio 1's Steve Lamacq, who hailed The Music as the best unsigned band in Britain, an accolade that guaranteed they wouldn't remain that way for much longer.

Fierce Panda records secured the rights to the demo and released it as a limited edition EP, but it was Hut Recordings who ultimately signed The Music—and all before any of them had turned 20.

They recorded their second album in Atlanta, Georgia, over a seven-week period in May this year, with producer Brendan O'Brien at the helm. O'Brien's previous credits include the likes of Pearl Jam and Soundgarden, so inevitably the album is an epic, big-sounding production.

Freedom Fighters illustrates the point perfectly: all the rhythm guitars are double- and sometimes triple-tracked, and in places there are up to six guitars playing at once. Although singer Robert Harvey sometimes plays rhythm guitar, Adam Nutter takes care of most of the fretwork. Like the song itself, Nutter's playing harks back to rock legends of the late sixties and early seventies, especially Hendrix and Page. His style is supremely confident, but simultaneously loose and relaxed, so it shouldn't present any major difficulties.

**AMP SETTING**

Nutter plays a sunburst Gibson Les Paul that he plays into three Fender Stage 100 heads feeding two Baja cabs. Effects-wise, he uses a small phase for the solo and a Dynohead Otavia fuzz pedal in the second part of the solo which reproduces the classic Hendrix fuzz-tone effect. We reproduced all the effects and distortions using a Lindy PLECTRUM. Go for a thick valve-style distortion, using your guitar’s bridge humbucker.

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**THE MUSIC: Freedom Fighters - main riff**

**TRACK 17**

Fret the initial A at the 5th fret with your second finger so you're in the correct position to fret the D riff in bar 2. After this, move down two frets to play the C rift. Use alternate picking throughout.
THE MUSIC: Freedom Fighters - verse

Fret the initial A5 chord with your first and third fingers, lifting them off the fretboard to damp the strings for the muted hits. The offbeat hits are a little tricky, so take it slow before increasing speed. Note that the end of bar two lies over to the repeat, so there is no hit on beat one of the repeat.

THE MUSIC: Freedom Fighters - pre-chorus

This is essentially a two-bar pattern that repeats over a simple chord change, with minor ad-libbed variations. The part is played by two guitars, both using wah pedals in a static position, one up, one down. This is a transcription of the brighter, pedal down part, panned right, and it should be played using alternate picking and fretted with just your first and third fingers.

THE MUSIC: Freedom Fighters - chorus

Use your first finger to barre the top four strings at the 7th fret, then hammer on with your second and third fingers, using an upstroke to play the offbeats at the end of beats 2 and 4 in bar 1. This part is played by the guitar panned right, but it’s doubled by two more guitars that play the fourth time ending every time through.
THE MUSIC: Freedom Fighters - bridge lead

This part is played entirely at the fifth position, so fret the initial chord hit with your first finger. The triplet rhythms of this part are quite tricky at this speed, so take it slowly first and build up to speed, trying to keep the hammer-ons as even as possible.

THE MUSIC: Freedom Fighters - solo and outro

Fret the initial A with your second finger, then stretch up to the 9th fret with your third finger for the first bend, then reach back with your first finger for the second bend. Fret the G at the 8th fret in bar 2 with your second finger, which you should also use for all the subsequent slides.

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TUXEDO JUNCTION

Wile Bill has obvious talents on the guitar, his main focus has always been on the actual music. "Technique is only important up to a point," maintains Bill. "Things like meaning and content are what it's really about. I've said for many years that a musician has to work on themselves. Unless that happens then there's nothing to communicate, no matter how cleverly you can manipulate the instrument."

That said, Bill has technique and music savvy in bucketfuls and it's because of this we visited him at home to see exactly what he has to offer TG for playing pointers. First up, Bill pulled out a Gretsch 6120 Nashville (the Gretsch to own) and launched into his version of a country pickers favie made famous by Chet Atkins, Tuxedo Junction. Full of great chords and rhythms he played it both slowly and then up to tempo to make it easier to learn.

Next, he switched to his standard guitar, a 90s Patrick Eggel Berlin deluxe and a unique device called an Ebow. This is an electronic gizmo (held in the picking hand) that produces a magnetic field to vibrate the string. The resultant sound has a softer attack and sustains for as long as you want, just as if the string were being bowed (hence the name). Bill first encountered one in the States when on tour with Be Bop Deluxe in the mid 70s. He's used them extensively on albums since, and the inventor, Greg Heet, gave a load to him as a thank you for bringing the Ebow to the public's attention. Since then many bands have employed Ebows, including the Edge from U2 and the late Stuart Adamson of Big Country.

The Ebow example Bill recorded for us is over a cycle of chords that are found in the key of A major. All of the example is played along the length of the third string, using slides, hammer-ons, pull-offs and bends. One quick of Ebows is that they actually cause the string to resonate at its first harmonic, ie an octave higher than you are fingering, although it sometimes 'breaks' back to the actual fretted note. Bill comments that he likes this sort of organic feel as you are never quite sure how it will route.

BLUES SOLOING

Following this, he then opted to finish with some soloing in a blues-rock style. So with the Ebow discarded and a pick in his hand, he played over one of our backing tracks. It's a standard 12-bar blues progression and Bill lets rip, demonstrating his wide ranging influences and adroitness at switching between several scales. These are E Dorian (for example, in bars 3 and 4), E major pentatonic and mixolydian (as in bars 5 and 6), E minor pentatonic and E blues scale (such as bar 8).

The lick that runs from bar 3 into bar 4 is a favourite of his. It is essentially an E Dorian phrase that uses chromatic passing notes to move down from the first shape of the scale at the 12th fret, through the fifth shape, and ends with the fourth shape at the 7th fret. Playing the dorian over a blues is fine as it's sweeter than a straight minor pentatonic but not as 'cheesy' as a major scale. At the end of the first 12 bar notice the chromatic climb up to the B note in bar 12; a classic blues turnaround.

The second pass opens with more classic licks before Bill sticks in a very angular line in bar 3. It's a repeating pattern with no harmonic basis, but it sounds cool because Bill resolves it sweetly. Bill also slips in some nice diatonic thirds in bar 19, showing one of the popular approaches in rock and roll playing. Tasty!

PETE WHITTARD
This piece revolves around a technique known as Travis picking, named after the country great Merle Travis. Basically, use a pick on the low notes (usually played with a steady crochet rhythm) then add the melody and extra notes on top using the second, third and fourth fingers of the picking hand. This approach (with or without a regular bass line crochet rhythm) is also called hybrid picking. Take each bar slowly and build it up section by section. You’ll notice that the last section moves into straight time, as opposed to the swing feel that the rest of the piece has.

BILL NELSON: Ebow melody example
Notice that although we’ve tabbed the notes played at the conventional pitch, the Ebow ‘excites’ the string in such a way that the first harmonic is sounded to produce notes an octave higher. How you finger and execute the slides is up to you as the main concern here is what the Ebow offers in terms of sustain and articulation. In particular, you can hear where Bill uses string bends and trills to provide an eastern quality.
This solo uses a lot of slippery fretting and shows that Bill's keen on using chromatic notes to move from position to position; for example, in the lick in bars 3-4. Note that Bill's lick repertoire moves from minor (typically around the 12th fret) to the sweeter sounding major pentatonics focused around the 2nd fret.
All of the techniques Paul has demonstrated thus far will come in handy when attempting Paul's latest challenge. It's taken from the track Street Lethal from Racer X's debut album of the same name, released way back in 1986. "For some reason, because of the way the guitar was recorded or mixed, it's quite tricky to hear what's going on," explains Paul, "and I've never heard anyone play it correctly, so I'd like to set the record straight." Maintain strict alternate picking throughout both examples, as if you opt for only down picking during the first two bars, it will prove impossible at high speeds. String skipping features in the main riffs, so it's wise going through Paul's advice about this technique in previous columns. "It's worth pointing out that I use my first and second fingers for the first shape and then my thumb for the low G# in the second shape. Of course, I go back to normal fingers for the E5 chord." The second half of Paul's explanation involves the use of double stops based around the F# minor pentatonic scale (F#, A, B, C#, E). The pedal F# is fretted in a similar way to before with the thumb, in order to avoid any awkward finger movements. The following bar uses a combination of legato and picking which is undoubtedly one of his trademark speed techniques. Notice how Paul uses palm-muting lower down through the scale to help separate the notes. Another trademark comes in the penultimate bar, where a super-fast three-note per string is given an airing. To help the notes pop out more, palm-muting is used again. Have a listen to a clip of the original track on Paul's website, www.paulgilbert.com.

STEVE ALLSWORTH
Even at slower tempos this whole riff can be a major challenge. Spend time nailing it very slowly before gradually increasing the tempo. Paul’s speed is attainable over time, but be prepared to be patient as you aim for accuracy before speed.

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ESSENTIAL RIFF – BLACK SABBATH

N.I.B. featured on Black Sabbath’s 1970 debut album, Black Sabbath. Comprising Ozzy Osbourne (vocals), Tony Iommi (guitar), Bill Ward (drums) and Geezer Butler (bass), the band developed an intense heavy sound that was eight years ahead of anything their contemporaries were doing. In particular, Tony Iommi’s pioneering sound and playing style meant that players generally consider him the godfather of heavy metal guitar and Black Sabbath the biggest defining force on current metal bands.

Although Sabbath have created numerous strong riff songs (Paranoid, War Pigs and Sabbath Bloody Sabbath), this month’s first Essential’s riff is a great powerchord workout. Played on the sixth and fifth strings, its simplicity and attitude makes this one of the most important metal riffs of the early 1970s.

Based in the doom-charged key of E minor (the notes of which are E F# G A B C D), each chord in the riff contains only the root and the fifth to provide a hollow sound (there’s no third in either chord to make it major or minor). Notice the same two chords (E5 and D5) start each bar followed by one of three variations (powerchords, a string bend lick or a trill). This is a great balance of repetition and variation, and worth taking note of when you start creating your own riffs. (JS)

BLACK SABBATH – N.I.B. (main riff)

Use downstrokes throughout this riff. Use your third finger, supported by keeping your second finger on the fretboard for the bend. Select your guitar’s bridge humbucker and use a rich distortion, ideally from a valve amp to emulate 1970s Marshall-type distortion.

ESSENTIAL RIFF – THE LIBERTINES

Narcissist is typical of the frenetic material found on the Libertines’ self-titled second album, which was released in August 2004. The band are Britain’s answer to the garage-rock revival, pioneered by The Strokes, The Vines, The Hives and The Datsuns.

The band first came to the fore with their debut single, What a Waste, which was produced by former Suede guitarist Bernard Butler and made the UK Top 40 in June 2002.

Singer/guitarist Pete Doherty and lead guitarist Carl Barat formed the core of the band in the squats of East London back in 1996. Eventually they secured a deal with Rough Trade and after the success of that first single, they recorded debut album, Up the Bracket, with former Clash guitarist Mick Jones (they must have a thing for guitar-playing producers). Jones also produced their second album and perfectly captures the sound of an incoherent band teetering on the edge of self-destruction.

On Narcissist, both Doherty’s rhythm chops and Barat’s intro lead line that we’ve transcribed are played loosely, so that Barat plays an ad lib variation of the last two bars of the repeat. This is definitely a lick to practise slowly first, as it’s quite busy with pull-offs and quick 16th notes. To get close to the band’s guitar sound, use a bridge humbucker through some mild, bass-light valve overdrive. And don’t forget to practise! (SY)

THE LIBERTINES – Narcissist (main riff)
The first three bars of this lick essentially repeat the same pattern in different positions and can be played entirely with your first and third finger. The second half of bar 3 is probably a fluffed attempt at the pattern established in bars 1 and 2. Use your third finger supported by keeping your second finger on the fretboard for the bends in the final bar.

**ESSENTIAL TECHNIQUES – VIDEO TUTORIAL**

**ESSENTIAL CHORDS:** Chord progression using Dm Dm7 G G7 and Dm

This month we look at two chords (Dm and G) that provide a Dorian-flavoured progression (it's a minor chord followed by a major chord built on a fourth interval above). Dorian progressions are a popular choice in both pop and rock (try out some Santana and Chic). This is further enhanced by turning both chords into 7th chords to sustain listener interest. We've used four down strums to sound each chord, but feel free to use whatever you like after having memorised them.

**ESSENTIAL LEAD:** A minor pentatonic with hammer-ons and pull-offs

Ever wanted a flashy lick that's not too hard? Well, try this A minor pentatonic lick for size. It's based on the common minor pentatonic shape 1 that everyone starts out with and uses a few hammer-ons and pull-offs to make it sound slippery (make sure these are performed around the same volume as your picked notes). Get both hands synchronised (to avoid unwanted open-string noise) before increasing the tempo. Ultimately aim for four notes around 140 bpm, as you'll be entering Paul Gilbert territory then!

**ESSENTIAL FINGERPICKING:** C Csus4 G and C using thumb and two fingers

This fingerpicking pattern would serve you well for numerous folk and pop songs as it involves using your thumb (p), first (i) and second (m) fingers in a steady eighth note pattern. Notice how the Csus4 chord provides a colourful link between the previous C chord and the following G chord.
THE WHO

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ROLLING STEADILY

ingleaders of the 'British Invasion' and mod movement, The Who broke onto the music scene in the mid-1960s with a completely original sound. The ferocious guitars and awesome drumming were far heavier than on any other record of the day and they soon became known as much for their destructive stage antics as their music.

The high-octane saw legendary guitarist Pete Townshend smash guitars and amps to pieces, scissor-kick the air and violently windmill his guitar.

Having reached No.2 with their biggest ever hit, My Generation, Substitute was their next single – released in early 1966 – and became their fourth Top Ten hit. The double tracked 12-string guitars on Substitute were played using a Guild acoustic (although our Washburn D-12 did the job just fine).

Most of the chords used sound pretty sophisticated as they're not all in root position (eg. a D chord with a D in bass). Instead they consist of a chord with a different note in the bass. These are known as slash chords, because the bass note of the chord is written after the slash. For example, an A/D chord involves an A chord with a D note in the bass. Clever stuff, eh?

MIKE HANNON

THE WHO: Substitute – Intro

<table>
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<tr>
<th>D</th>
<th>A/D</th>
<th>G/D</th>
<th>D</th>
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<td>x2</td>
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There are some position shifts when changing between the first three chords, so familiarise yourself with the shapes first before building up the speed. Play the second D chord by using your first finger to barre the 2nd fret.
THE CHORDS YOU'LL NEED

VERSE 1
D(v2) G D(v2)
You think we look pretty good together
G D
You think my shoes are made of leather

BRIDGE 1
E5 G E5 G
But I'm a substitute for another guy
E5 G E5 G
I look pretty tall but my heels are high
E5 G E5 G
The simple things you see are all complicated
E5 G E5 G A7
I look pretty young but I'm just back-dated yeah

CHORUS
D(v2) A/D G/D D(v2)
Substitute lies for fact
A/D G/D D(v2)
I can see right through your plastic mac
A/D G/D D(v2)
I look all white but my dad was black
A/D G/D D(v2)
My fine looking suit is really made out of sack

VERSE 2
I was born with a plastic spoon in my mouth
The north side of town faced east and the east was facing south

BRIDGE 2
And now you dare to look me in the eye
Those crocodile tears are what you cry
If it's a genuine problem you won't try
To work it out at all, just pass it by, pass it by

CHORUS 2
Substitute me for him
Substitute my coke for gin
Substitute you for my mum
At least I'll get my washing done

SOLO
D(v2) G D(v2) D(v2) x2

BRIDGE 3
E5 G E5 G
But I'm a substitute for another guy
E5 G E5 G
I look pretty tall but my heels are high
E5 G E5 G
The simple things you see are all complicated
E5 G E5 G A7
I look pretty young but I'm just back-dated yeah

INST. CHORUS
D (v1) D(v2) A/D G/D D(v2) x4

VERSE 3
I was born with a plastic spoon in my mouth
The north side of town faced east and the east was facing south

BRIDGE 4
And now you dare to look me in the eye
Those crocodile tears are what you cry
If it's a genuine problem you won't try
To work it out at all, just pass it by, pass it by

CHORUS 3
Substitute me for him
Substitute my coke for gin
Substitute you for my mum
At least I'll get my washing done
Substitute lies for fact
I can see right through your plastic mac
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IN DEPTH

REGGAE AND SKA RHYTHMS

FROM JAMAICA TO SUNNY CALIFORNIA AND THE COUNCIL ESTATES OF 70s BRITAIN, REGGAE AND SKA HAVE COME A LONG WAY

Ska was developed from the Caribbean musical traditions of calypso, blue beat and mento. The most dominant musical force in ska was Prince Buster, who influenced successful ska bands such as The Upsetters and The Skalites. In the late 1960s, Jamaican musicians such as Bob Marley & The Wailers, and Toots & The Maytals, took the rhythms of ska but slowed down the tempos to create a more soulful style of reggae.

Years later, both styles were drawn on by English bands to create a new sound. Two-tone bands like Madness and The Specials melded ska with a raw punk vibe while bands like The Clash, The Police and (especially) UB40 drew on reggae.

RHYTHM STYLES

Listen to any reggae song and you’ll notice how prominent the bassline is. This means the guitar’s role is to add regular chord ‘chops,’ which provide rhythmic consistency. In the purest form of reggae, the guitar part is limited to a single downstrum on the second and fourth beats of the bar (see example 1).

This might take a little getting used to if you’ve never played reggae before. A good tip is to listen to the bass (as this often plays a low note on the first beat of the bar) and then start your rhythm on the second beat. It’s important that you keep an even, steady beat because the guitar is acting as an essential part of the rhythm section.

To get the short, crisp guitar sound as used in reggae and ska, chords must be played ‘staccato’, often striking only the top three or four strings. Here’s a tip for getting an authentic performance: immediately after each strum mute the strings by resting your strumming hand against them. In addition, slightly release your fretting hand pressure to prevent chords ringing-on.

In some styles of reggae a downstrum is played four times a bar on the ‘off-beat.’ This is known as ‘single skank’ style (example 2). This method is occasionally followed by a quick upstrum to create a ‘double skank’ (example 3). Some players even mix single and double skanks within a song (example 4).

Ska rhythm usually involves playing on all four off-beats. It differs from reggae, not only in the faster tempo that is often used, but in that chords are normally played only with upward strums (examples 5 - 7). TONY SKINNER

EXAMPLE 1: ‘Two-drop’ reggae rhythm

EXAMPLE 2: ‘Four-drop’ reggae rhythm

Play a single downstroke on beats two and four. Notice that you don’t need to strum all of the strings in each chord: playing just the top four strings will provide a more cutting and crispier sound.

Play four staccato upstrokes with a silent downstroke on each main beat – each on the ‘off-beat’. Aim to keep a constant regular rhythm throughout.
**EXAMPLE 3: 'Double skank' reggae rhythm**

To play these double strums you will need to do a precise downstroke followed quickly by an upstroke. Although we’ve tabbed out four-string chords, it’s fine to sound only the top three. You’ll need to use both forms of muting here (picking hand and fretting hand), otherwise the notes will ring on.

**EXAMPLE 4: Mixing single and double skanks**

To make this example 'bounce' use downstrokes on the first three chords and then a quick down-up for the last two chords. As in the previous example, good string muting ability is important, otherwise you’ll have open strings ringing on and ruining the reggae vibe.

**EXAMPLE 5: Ska rhythm**

This fast and repetitive off-beat strumming style requires a flexible wrist action, so use small but sharp upstrums generated from the wrist. If you were using movement from the elbow (or even) the arm you’d be using way too much energy and wouldn’t get further than the first few bars!

**EXAMPLE 6: Ska rhythm with slides**

This rhythm features a slide from a chord one fret below the target chord. This slinky technique is often used in ska as a way of varying the rhythm.

**EXAMPLE 7: Ska rhythm variation**

This rhythm uses an up/down/up rhythm pattern, creating an interesting alternative to the standard off-beat rhythm. Bands like Madness often used this pattern in their ska-based music.
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Hey, was that you I saw at the Music Live show in Birmingham last month? I was there of course, on the sniff for some cool gear to review, and I reckon it was a damn good show... Judging by the amount of gear that was shifted over the weekend, it looks like you enjoyed it as well...

The show did make me feel like an old bastard, though. In fact, if it had still been for all you spiky-haired Green Day fans milling around, I could've sworn I'd had a wrong turn back to the 1980s. You see, I've been going to these big guitar shows for almost 20 years now and it seems like we've come full circle...

At Music Live I spied the same ancient guitar demonstrators that I first saw back in 1986 - still clinging to their stonewash jeans and mullet hairdos. And did you see that bloke with the studded leather codpiece? It's like Grunge never happened...

Fashion horrors aside, I still reckon that guitar shows are fun. There we can indulge our passion with like-minded axe-friends, surrounded by loads of guitars, amps and gadgets. We enjoy it so much that we even allow has-been 1980s widdlers, who always turn up to these shows, to impress us with their silly licks, outrageous posing and outdated backing tracks.

Hell, this old bastard can't wait till the next one comes around...

Ed Mitchell - reviews editor
GEAR BC RICH NJ CLASSIC SERIES MOCKINGBIRD

The Mockingbird's body is less spiky than your average BC Rich, but it still has attitude.

Beefy tone comes as standard with the Mockingbird and it deals particularly well with classic distortion.

£599

BC RICH NJ CLASSIC SERIES

ARE YOU LOOKING AT OUR F*CKING BIRD? WE DON'T BLAME YOU, MATE... WORDS: HENRY YATES

That's a BC Rich? It looks almost respectable...
First off, I'd like to apologise to our more psychotic readers. The NJ Classic Series
Mockingbird only has one spike. It hasn't been smeared with the blood of virgins. In
fact, this guitar's antique natural finish wouldn't look out of place on an Edwardian
tea chest, while its cloud frett inlays could have been lifted straight off a hippy's VW
camper van. This is hardly what TC has come to expect from BC Rich. Has the world's
foremost producer of guitar artillery gone all sensitive on us? No chance. The Mockingbird
might be trying to go straight, but like
Michael Corleone in The Godfather, this axe has violence in its bloodstream. Metal is the
family business — capiche?
Let's get some perspective. The
Mockingbird was first introduced back in
the 1970s; a time when people were shocked
by bare ankles and Mick Thomson was still
a glint in his father's eye. With guitars
growing ever sleeker, smoother and easier to
tuck under your arm, this axe and its starfish-shaped counterpart (the Bich) set a new
trend for aggressive looks and sounds.
Clearly this specific model wasn't knocked up in the 1970s — try eBay if you want
that — but BC Rich, realising that most
psychopaths are paid minimum wage, have
now introduced an entry-level version of
their classic design. All of the features,
without the need for loan sharks.

Doesn't cheap just mean crap?
In the guitar market — as in life — the more
money you've got to splurge, the less likely
you are to go wrong. The good news for us
huddled masses is that budget electrics are getting more competitive all the time,
with most major US luthiers now producing cheaper guitars that stick admirably close
to the tone and build quality of their pricier forebears. The Mockingbird is a classic case
in point. It was made in Korea, but otherwise promises comparable performance to the
original. We'll see...

So it doesn't feel flimsy then?
It's a solid package. You've got a bolt-on
maple neck set reassuringly deep into the
mahogany body, along with a sleek maple
top and sealed BC Rich tuners that find pitch
and seem to hold it. The tone controls rotate
with a weightiness that suggests durability
and the three-way pickup selector clunks

Who's it for?
Metallers who are getting too old for pointy headstocks and frissoned pain jobs.

Information
ORIGIN: Korea
BODY: Mahogany, with maple top
NECK: Maple, bolt-on
FRETBOARD: Ebony, with cloud inlays
FRET: 24, jumbo
PICKUPS: 2x BC Rich humbuckers
CONTROLS: Volume, tone, 3-way selector
HARDWARE: Chrome, boxed BC Rich tuners, adjustable bridge with stopbar piece
CASE: No
LEFT-HANDERS: No
COLOURS: Antique natural
CONTACT: Rosetti 01236 550033
WEB: www.bcrich.com

Alternatively
Jackson JS38D $250
BC Rich Platinum Bye $499
BC Rich NJ Classic
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On the CD
We recorded three sounds on the
Mockingbird: bridge pickup clean, bridge
pickup dirty and a fuzzed up neck humbucker

Users and Abusers

The Mockingbird has been around for three
decades now, but that doesn't mean it's
the sole reserve of grizzled metallers and
grunting rock dinosaurs. Of the nu-school,
both Tracii Guns of Brides of Destruction
and Acey Slade of The Murderdolls are keen
advocates of the Bird (albeit in tandem
with their Gibson Les Pauls), although the model's
most famous endorser is undoubtedly Slash.
Despite a long-running association with
the Gibson Les Paul, Slash has been known
to dig out his Mockingbird signature SL when
he wants to lend a touch of tremolo wobble
to his guitar parts. Unlike the NJ Classic
Series Mockingbird you're drooling over
here, however, Slash's own model features
enough knobs, buttons and switches to
give Matt Bellamy an inferiority complex.
He's got tone, volume and a pickup selector,
between positions convincingly. We didn’t
hear any rattles or spot any gaps. Everything
feels smooth, professional and finished with
decent attention to detail.

But there are a couple of exceptions. First
of all, 76 couldn’t help noticing the nut
was slightly too small for its groove on the
Mockingbird we tested. While this didn’t
seem to compromise the playing experience,
it didn’t exactly reassure us either. There
was a fairly bit of note bend when you
yank the neck too, although it’s
less pronounced than on, say, a
Gibson SG and hardly a deal-
breaker. Now that we’ve got
those niggles out of the way,
we can crack on with telling you
how bloody great this guitar is.

It looks nice and simple...

Oh yes. With guitarists too stoned to
operate pliers throughout the
1970s – and the Floyd Rose
tremolo design not patented until
1979 – it’s no surprise to find the
Mockingbird boasting a basic setup.
Strings thread simply through the
stop bar tailpiece, over the adjustable
bridge and along the length of the ebony
fretboard before being stretched up to pitch
on a three-a-side headstock. You could trust
a monkey to restring it.

Neither should the electronics prompt
scratched heads. You’ve got a pair of BC
Rich humbuckers and a traditional choice
between either or both. But before you start
calling the Mockingbird limited, consider the
fret count. This guitar has 24 of ’em, giving
you all the artistic freedom you’ll ever need.
It makes the neck look huge when you start

...playing, mind you, but that’s the price you
pay for being a middle-aged showboater.

That spike’s gonna jab into my thigh,
Isn’t it?

It doesn’t. Actually. However ludicrous their
designs get, BC Rich always remember that
people need to sit down and practice. And
the Mockingbird is no exception. It stays on
the lap when seated and doesn’t plummet
when you stand up. It ain’t exactly light, but
the kind of nutter who would buy this can
probably bench-press 300 lbs anyway.

Otherwise this is a comfortable playing
experience. With a scale (the distance
from the nut to the bridge) of 25.5 inches,
compared to the Les Paul’s 24¾ figure,
76 was concerned that our surprisingly
small hands might be overstretched. We
needn’t have worried. The Mockingbird’s
manageable neck profile grows a long
way, while following the clouds from
first position to the upper echelons
is smooth and painless. There’s great
access too, and a fingerboard so fast
that you will soon have bags of confidence
to let rip.

I’m guessing this thing is all about fifth?

Well, that’s the theory. BC Rich has long
been known as the discerning headbanger’s
choice, and celebrity patronage from
Kerry King and Rick Thomson has done
little to dispel this. In reality, introducing
Mockingbird to Marshall has surprising
results. It’s certainly got more tonal
character when clean than your average
metalhead’s axe, and it impressed us with a
warm, woody tone that becomes soaring at
the bridge humbucker. It’s far removed from
the flat performances we’ve had from other
thresh guitars when stripped of the gain,
and this seemed to suit the Mockingbird’s
cultured appearance.

That’s all fine when your grandparents
are staying, but how about when you need
to unleash hell? The Mockingbird is only
too happy to oblige, although we did find
it dealt better with moderate crunch than
paint-stripping tone. Don’t get us wrong,
though, the Mockingbird can bark, roar
and snarl with the best of ’em. But it didn’t
always have the sheen that modern metal
demands. Instead, this Bird feels more at
home when you ease off the overdrive and
start chugging through Led Zeppelin riffs.
And it’s here that you can’t go wrong. With
a mighty helping of sustain that sees your
fuzzy vibrato ring out for Les Paul-baiting
times, it’s bloody addictive. You might even
say it’s the icing on a damn good rock guitar.

Yeah, but is it worth the wad?

For £599, we think you can demand an
investment. Maybe not a guitar you’d expect
to play at Wembley, but certainly one you
won’t outgrow until you turn professional. In
a competitive marketplace, the Mockingbird
delivers. Between its distinctive tone
and cultured appearance, this is a long-term
electric guitar at a reasonable price.
A versatile and rounded player with balls by
the sackful. Get a bird in yer hand.

FOR: Great sounds, striking looks and good
value for your money

AGAINST: Slightly dodgy nut, not as mental
as some metal axes

TG RATING:
LINE 6 TONE CORE STOMPBOXES

SOME FOOT-DRIVEN FIRE POWER FROM THE KINGS OF MODELLING: WORDS: HENRY YATES

It's been 40 years since Hendrix wobbled through Purple Haze on his Octavia pedal. Back then, anyone who could coax an octave doubling effect from a small plastic spaceship would be accused of meddling in things they didn't understand and chased down Carnaby Street with pitchforks. Nowadays, we're positively blase about stompbox technology. If anything, the rise of multi-FX units has elevated these dedicated pedals looking dated and overpriced; relics of an age when players would rather have one outstanding effect than 50 mediocre ones. The stompbox is far from finished, but in this gleaming new millennium it needs to raise the bar. Enter the Line 6 Tone Cores...

TONIC CORE SPACE CHORUS

It's easy to tell a bad chorus pedal. It's the one that sounds unmistakably 1980s: that makes all your riffs feel processed and throwaway that causes your jacket sleeves to roll themselves up as soon as you start playing. The Space Chorus is not a bad chorus pedal. In fact, it reminded TG why this effect wasn't mothballed back in 1982 along with our permig iron.

It's a chunky little bugger. Looking and weighing like Robocop's amputated foot, the Space Chorus is tough enough for the gigbag and intuitive enough for the stage. It's simple to use but hardly limited, covering a hefty range of options with a minimal number of knobs. Fine by us.

First stop is the Model Switch, giving you the choice between three different chorus types. We loved the warmth and thickness of the Tri setting, while Constrictor has a cool glassy tone that feels tight and useful. From there the depth and speed of the effect can be tweaked from subtle to comical, with the Color dial taking you from vintage analogue to modern; or mellow to abrasive, if that's your bag.

Yes we know, it's £89 for a standalone pedal. And no, chorus isn't everyone's cup of Babycham. But you owe it to your inner Peter Stringfellow to give this one a go.

FOR: Great versatile tone and rugged design
AGAINST: Choruscan sound a bit 1980s...

TG RATING: ★★★★☆

TONIC CORE ECHO PARK

For £112 you could take your girlfriend out for a swanky dinner and still have change left for the illegal minicab home. It's a fair way by anyone's standards, but for a delay pedal as good as the Echo Park, we're prepared to skip the lobster bisque. Straight out of the box, this unit feels worth the wonga. Chunky and durable, with a knob count that suggests you'll be fiddling late into the night.

Delay is a popular effect and a crowded marketplace. It's included on virtually every multi-FX and many amps. That said, you won't find many with the quality or versatility of the Echo Park. Starting with the basics, you've got a choice of three delay models each achieved by the Echo Park virtually 'rewriting' its circuitry to capture every nuance. Line 6 veterans will be familiar with the concept and TG wasn't surprised to find convincing renderings of tape, digital and analogue delays.

From there, it's a tweaker's playground. Adjust the spacings of your echoes; decide how many repeats you want and throw in some of the modulation effects included on the unit. The function control knob even offers 11 different echo types: from ping pong to a glorious swell effect.

FOR: Plenty of options to choose from; great level of authenticity
AGAINST: Can you afford £112 for one effect?

TG RATING: ★★★★☆

TONIC CORE ÜBER METAL

Be honest. We all need dirt. Compression, delay and chorus we can live without, but a gigbag without a distortion pedal feels strangely weedy and demasculinised. It's the most popular effect in guitarland, and consequently the most overstuffed marketplace. This means the Über Metal will have to deliver a masterclass in filth to impress TG.

Line 6 have a deserved reputation for their overdrive and the Über Metal ain't about to piss on the bonfire. Whether you choose the sneery scorch of Metal, the more hefty agrano of Pulverise or the aural-masochism of Insane, all the bases are covered convincingly. While you'd expect treble, mid and bass dials from a pedal at this price, Line 6 have also included a scoop
dial (perfect for nu-metal saturation – if anyone still plays that stuff) and an optional noise gate to banish stray squeals. It’d be a cracking gig weapon – tough and compact – although seeing as Line 6 haven’t thrown in the required 9V power supply, you’ll either have to cough up for it yourself or befriend the Duracell bunny. Irritating, but when a pedal’s this good, you can’t stay mad at it for long. A right filthy bastard...

**FOR:** Mental sounds and tough construction  
**AGAINST:** Power supply would’ve been nice

**TG RATING:** 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟

**TONE CORE CONSTRUCTOR**

Pity the compression pedal. As the unsung hero of the gigbag this effect has been quietly plying its trade for years without recognition or backslaps. Just to clarify then, compression evens out soft and loud notes to make your playing sound more constant. The novice may not even notice it’s there, but whenever you hear a pro squeezing out an airtight groove you can bet this effect will be somewhere on their pedalboard.

It’s obvious that the Constrictor is meant for gigging – it’s virtually bulletproof and simple to operate. It also makes a real difference to your tone. Moving between model types gives you a choice between the flat frequency response of Mellow, the 1980s treble boost of Squeeze and the higher mid frequency of Compact. Then there’s the sustain dial – doing exactly what it says on the knob – a level control and a noise gate to keep your guitar parts totally under control. And that’s it. No trimmings, no modulation effects thrown in for free and no power pack either.

The Constrictor is an invaluable tool. It lends a tightness to your riffs that’s more professional than any number of fizzy distortions but, at £85, it’s unlikely to be the first pedal on your list.

**FOR:** Tough, intuitive and effective  
**AGAINST:** Compression won’t get you laid...

**TG RATING:** 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟

**TONE CORE CRUNCH TONE**

The Crunchtone is designed for cavemen. We know this from its unbreakable shell, its rugged footswitch and its minimalist stance on knobs. But more than that, we know it from the unreconstructed racket this little bastard makes. Where the Uber Metal fizzes with modern malcontent, the Crunch is a pedal for guitarists who like their distortion fuzzy, primitive and chewing on a bat’s spinal column.

Bass and treble? You should know these already. Drive is another easy one; it simply determines how much filth you want in your tone. Level? That’s your volume dial, although if you pump it high enough you’ll spawn even more distortion. Last of the dull-but-vital trimmings is the noise gate. You’ve got three options: no gate at all (we wouldn’t recommend it), a gate that adjusts to your drive setting, or one that clamps shut fast – perfect for stabbid chords and precision picking.

But sod that. What we’re interested in are the three distortion models. Blues is fantastic, with real earthiness and great response, while Pop is even better, morphing from jingle-jangle to ragged attitude as you dig in with the pick.

But best of the lot is Crunch: a setting that’s woollier than a wooby mammoth’s knackersack, with great valve-style response. Get it in your gigbag.

**FOR:** Ultra-convincing valve-style fuzz and great response  
**AGAINST:** Tweakers might find the limited options frustrating...

**TG RATING:** 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟

**TONE CORE TAP TREMOLO**

Tremolo is the signature sound of the 1960s, an effect that evokes the golden age of surf guitarists like Dick Dale and bands like The Ventures. It’s come a long way since then, and Line 6’s Tap Tremolo is the proof. This pedal drags the elder statesman of the gigbag kicking and screaming into the new millennium and slaps on a price tag to match.

The sonic options are certainly impressive, with three separate types of basic tremolo. There’s Opto, with its authentic 1960s judder, Bias, with its strong 1990s British flavour, and a Pan setting that swings your sound between left and right outputs for an otherworldly effect. That choice made, you’ll be wanting to tweak the shape and speed of your chosen wobble – easily done with a turn of the pedal’s rugged dials. Speed (you’ve guessed it) alters the pulse from slow to fast. Turning Depth up full will dip your volume to silence with each pulse, while Peak follows the dynamics of your playing: speeding up when you’re rocking out and slowing down as you cool off. Shape is the coolest though, giving you a choice between smooth fade in/out or a choppy change from mayhem to silence. A tap tempo is also included, making this a trem-endous (sorry) unit.

**FOR:** Tough and versatile; all the tremolo effects you’ll need  
**AGAINST:** Expensive; it’s also a bit of a battery-guzzler

**TG RATING:** 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟
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I have designed the Course to be easy-to-fall in love with - there are so many Guitar books about that completely confuse the reader within the first few pages - I bet you have a book that has left you puzzled.

The Course is superbly structured to bring along all of your skills evenly; if you are reading this you are probably one of those guys who have hit a brick wall and got stuck - well this Course will tell you out whether you are a beginner or if you are playing is a bad habit you want to improve.

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DAISY ROCK ROCK CANDY

IT’S MADE FOR GIRLS – BUT DOES THE ROCK CANDY HAVE BALLS?  WORDS: HENRY YATES

> Guitars for women? They’ll be wanting the vote too...

Stuck in the 1950s, eh? Well, for anyone who’s spent the last century living in a cave – wearing a string vest and reading Auto Trader – here’s a quick update of the modern female manifesto. First off, they don’t want to bake cakes anymore. They couldn’t give a toss about the finer points of needlework. And they’ll quite happily kneel your groin into pancake proportions if you suggest that they belong in the kitchen. Now run along and make them some dinner.

But there’s more. With lady Architects now outnumbering Cotswolds housewives by two to one, the guitar industry is finally starting to wake up and smell the cestrogen. Famously enough, it seems that most women don’t fancy the turgid finishes and crippling weight of the average electric guitar – and would prefer something that doesn’t resemble a giant mahogany rock, thanks very much. Which is where Daisy Rock comes in.

Metaphorically speaking, no luthier has chained itself to more railings in the name of equal rights than Daisy Rock and its growing number of instruments aimed squarely at the female market. Luckily, it was allowed a few days with the new Rock Candy. Even though we are the enemy and all men are bastards...

It looks pretty sexy...

Jesus! Is that all you men ever think about? But you’re right: it would gladly drag the Rock Candy back to our cave by the hair. We don’t usually ‘do’ glitter – in the same way that Zakky Wylde probably doesn’t ‘do’ pyjama parties – but somehow this guitar’s flawlessly applied champagne sparkle finish appealed even to the most Neanderthal of 70’s writers. Very glam rock...

We also loved the Rock Candy’s star

WHO’S IT FOR?

One-size, PhD grade, and men who are comfortable with their sexuality

INFORMATION

DESIGN: Indonesia
BODY: Mahogany, with glitter contour top
NECK: Rock maple, bolt-on
FINGERBOARD: Rosewood
FRENTS: 22, medium
HARDWARE: Grover tuners, tune-o-matic & stop bar
PICKUPS: 2x Duncan Design humbuckers with coil tap
CONTROLS: Master volume, master tone/ top, 3-way selector
COLOURS: Champagne Sparkle, Atomic Pink
LEFT-HANDED: Yes (£15 extra)
CASE: Optional
CONTACT: Rock Solid Distribution 01483 498422
WEB: www.daisyrock.com

ALTERNATIVELY

Daisy Rock Starlight Elite – £369
Daisy Rock Starlight Venus – £399
Daisy Rock Starlight Candy Special – £469

Make no mistake, the Rock Candy is as serious as spilling James Hetfield’s pint over Mick Thomson’s boilersuit.

Fret inlays, chrome hardware and stylish headstock; while the Les Paul-derived styling gives this pretty axe plenty of rock credibility. Granted it’s as likely to end up in Kenny King’s gigbag as a copy of Baudelaire’s Les Fleurs Du Mal, but we wouldn’t put it past Justin Hawkins...

Is this a serious guitar then?

Make no mistake, the Rock Candy is as serious as spilling James Hetfield’s pint over Mick Thomson’s boilersuit. This guitar has a build quality and attention to detail that ticks all the right boxes. To their credit, Daisy Rock haven’t assumed that women treat their guitars like china dolls – they’ve obviously seen Courtney Love in action – and have built the Rock Candy to last. The slim, rock maple neck is bolted to the mahogany body courtesy of four tough-looking screws; while clocking Grover tuners on a headstock is always comforting. It must have been tempting for Daisy Rock to develop a pretty bridge that doesn’t actually work, so it’s testament to the firm’s ‘substance over style’ ideology that they’ve stuck to the trusty tune-o-matic and stop bar combination. Exotic? Maybe not. But it’ll never fail you.

It doesn’t have many knobs...

The Rock Candy actually packs more into its spec than the browser might realise. You’ve got two Duncan Designed humbuckers – another reassuring touch – along with master volume/tone dials and a three-way selector. So far, so yawn inducing. But it’s just the tip of the iceberg. By giving the tone dial a yank, you tap the Daisy Rock’s humbuckers and bring in the snappier tone of a singlecoil, sending your sonic options through the roof.

Does it weigh as much as a Les Paul?

Nope. And that’s fine by us. If all guitars were as light and subtly contoured as the Rock Candy, a lot of chiropractors would be put out of business. It won’t roost you to the spot on stage, doesn’t have dodgy weight distribution and – more importantly – gets you right on top of the action. It found ourselves playing with increased confidence, bending with precision and sliding accurately to the upper frets exposed by the single cutaway. The scale might well be the same as a Les Paul, but we found this far more manageable.

And how about the tone?

Considering it’s designed for women, the Rock Candy has a great big pair of swinging balls. Hell hath no fury like this guitar scorched. It deals well with both modern and vintage distortion voices, while the tap option means there are very few tones that can’t be coaxed from a decent quality amp. Solos and rhythm playing also feel equally natural – you’ll almost forget it’s the colour of blanccange.

Aye, that colour...

It’ll no doubt put the hardened metal-heads off, but that’s their loss. If you want a guitar that’s flamboyant and professional, then the Rock Candy won’t let you down. Bugger diamonds, this is a girl’s best friend.

FDR: Flamboyant looks, good build; versatile AGAINST: It’s pink...

TG RATING: ★★★★★
XMAS STOCKING FILLERS

1. DUNLOP JOE PERRY BONEYARD SLIDE
   JOHN HORNBY SKEMES & CO LTD
   0121 286 3185/WWW.JHSGITAR.COM
   While everyone else is slathering through the Queen's speech you can be working on your Delta blues slide chops. There are plenty of good guitar bottleneck choices to choose from, but none match the sheer mojo of Joe Perry’s Boneyard. It's not cheap, but it's worth every penny in our opinion. Featuring the Aerosmith guitarist’s own spooky voodoo graphics, this ceramic slide has a shiny exterior for a smooth ride over your strings. And the interior is porous, which is ideal for soaking up finger sweat. Er, nice....

2. PLANET WAVES GUITAR CARE PRODUCTS
   SUMMERFIEIID 0190 444 9000/WWW.PLANET-WAVES.COM
   A guitar is for life, not just for Christmas, OK? So make sure you look after your new pride and joy and it will last and look great in return. These cool tools from gadget gurus Planet Waves will make routine maintenance a breeze. Get yourself a bottle of Mirror Finish guitar polish for £4.95 (never use furniture polish), a lint-free duster (£2.25), The Headstand neck support (£9.95) for easier access to the machine heads when restringing, and the groovy new Pro-Winder combined string cutter/winder/stretcher gizmo (£8.95). Any of these will make a great guitar investment.

3. JHS GUITAR CHRISTMAS STOCKING
   JOHN HORNBY SKEMES & CO LTD
   0121 286 3185/WWW.JHS.UK.CO
   Ho, ho, a stocking-shaped stocking filler. Genius. It's stuffed full of cool guitar-friendly treasures, too. Inside that funky fishnet bag lurks a handy set of strings, a capo, some Guitar Tech plectrums, a slide, a guitar lead, a strap, a string winder and a great Digi-Tune electronic tuner. This stocking has everything you need to get started. And the price won't make you choke on your Christmas pudding.

4. D'ADDARIO XL SERIES GUITAR STRINGS
   SUMMERFIEIELD - 0161 444 9000
   WWW.DADDARIO.COM
   Now we shouldn't really have to tell you this, but it's amazing how many guitarists forget the golden rules always carry a spare set of guitar strings! Sods Law dictates that you will always break a string at the worst possible moment... usually onstage during an encore, splitting solo.
   So make sure you load up your gig bag with plenty of spares. There are plenty of brands to choose from, but we dig D'Addario XL strings a lot. They stay in tune, last for ages and keep their tone, and there's a range of gauges to suit every player. What more could you want?

5. AXL THIN AMPLIFIER
   BRITISH AMERICAN DISTRIBUTION
   01792 714401/WWW.BRITISHAMERICAN.DISTRIBUTION LTD
   It's the new Thin Amp from AXL, of course. OK, it might not fit in a regular stocking, but it's seriously cool and easy to use and should be on your letter to Santa. Not only do you
XMAS STOCKING FILLERS GEAR

get kickass distortion tones, you'll also bag loads of digital effects including delay, reverb, chorus and flanger. You also get a mains adaptor too. All for £99! These rocking 'skinny minnys' should be popping up in your local music shops right about now, so get out there and try one...

6. AAA OUTSTANDING GUITAR STAND
ACCESS ALL AREAS • 0800 228 2028 • WWW.FRESHMANGUITARS.CO.UK
Nothing gives your new guitar more of a fighting chance against a rampaging Howser than a good sturdy guitar stand. And having your axe perched on a stand also makes it easier to grab when you want to rock out. Trust us, you'll actually play it more often if you can see it. Put it in its case and you'll forget all about it.

You can choose from hundreds of good guitar stands these days, but we like this affordable classic from Access All Areas. At £9.99, it won't break the bank and it's sturdy enough to make it more than a, ahem, one-night stand...

7. PLANET WAVES GUITAR STRAPS
SUMMERFIELD • 020 7444 9000 • WWW.PLANET-WAVES.COM
Fight gravity in style with one of these cool new design straps from Planet Waves. There are over 40 to choose from including some killer tribal designs, psychedelics swirls or even the art of the late Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead. It doesn't matter if you're a metalhead or a folklor, there's sure to be something here for you.

Of course, quality matters too and we reckon these straps will go the distance thanks to their rugged nylon panels and thick leather ends. Check 'em out.

8. RETROMAN LOLA
AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.RETROMAN-MUSIC.COM
This amazing fuzz pedal was one of our greatest discoveries of the year and the best £200 you'll ever spend. We reviewed it back in TG125 and it's still top of our Chrimbo wish list. Built by Joe Wolf in Wisconsin, US, the Retroman Lola is the star of his cool-as-fuck range of vintage style reissues. If you like early punk pioneers like the MC5, Iggy and the Stooges, the New York Dolls and the Cramps, you're gonna go ape for this bad mofo...Yeah!

When you're bored with mass-produced effects units try one that's built by hand. The difference in tone will knock yer socks off.

9. DIGITECH DDM DEATH METAL
SOUND TECHNOLOGY
01462 480000 • WWW.DIGITECH.COM
If you really want to shatter the silent night and send the carol singers running for cover, this pedal will do the business for you. Released a couple of months ago, as part of a five pedal line-up from Digitech, the Death Metal is a true classic that won over our black hearts with its hell-for-leather metal grind. Whether you stomp on it, turn it up or hit a powerchord, you'll be able to strip a Christmas tree at 50 paces.
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TAKAMINE EG523SC

PLUG IN, BABY... A NEW GUITAR WITH ATTITUDE FROM TAKAMINE

WORDS: RICHARD WOOD

Looks a bit of a handful to me...

Where have you been, wimp? Don't you know that high actions and baseball bat neck profiles are a thing of the past, thanks to players - and reviewers like us - demanding better playability, and sound, for their hard-earned beans? The good news is that Japanese electro-acoustic gurus Takamine have been paying attention to all of us moaners and are producing some kick-ass guitars. We have a prime example right here. The tasty combination of a slim playable neck, a low action (also known as string height) and great upper fret access makes this new EG523SC axe well worth a good strum. That's enough waffle, let's get our sticky paws on the beast...

So what's lurking beneath that glossy black finish, eh?

Only a solid spruce top, mate. Take a peak inside the guitar and you'll see back and sides constructed from flamed maple: a decorative wood that's usually found on top-end electric guitars produced by companies like Gibson and Paul Reed Smith. So it's nice to find it on your £500 or less electro-acoustic. Of course, here the glorious timber has been covered up by thick black gloss paint. Although there is a natural option available if you like to see a bit of grain.

Do these different woods affect the tone of the guitar?

Yes - that's where all the sound comes from, so they make a huge difference. The top is pretty typical as most guitar makers use spruce as the wood for their acoustic tops: It sounds great and is tough enough to resist the effects of string tension.

Using maple for the back and sides, instead of the much more common rosewood or mahogany, gives you a lot more bottom-end kick. We weren't at all surprised to hear a bright tone when beating the hell out of the EG523SC. It really cuts through...

Played with a bit more compassion, with your fingers say, the guitar responds well with bags of sustain and a cheery top-end sparkle. It's a good all rounder in fact, and we haven't even checked out the pickup yet...

You can plug it in?

Takamine are famous for their electro-acoustic guitars and this guitar is fitted with their new, slexy named, TK4NT preamp. Cor blimey, guv'nor!

Let's take a closer look. The gain control allows you to set an overall output level (or volume, as we used to call it). Then to the right of the gain control nestles a three-band EQ, which allows you to cut or boost the bass, middle and treble for a huge range of tone options. There's also an EQ in/out switch that, er, takes the EQ in and out of the signal chain - that's two sounds at the touch of a button basically. Cool, huh?

Live players will love the notch filter. At high volume, electro-acoustics like to squeal with ear-splitting feedback. But the notch filter targets the frequencies that are causing the trouble. As soon as your guitar starts to feed back, turn on the notch filter and sweep through the whole frequency range and the squealing will disappear.

As if all that isn't tempting enough for you, Takamine have managed to squeeze a chromatic tuner into the limited space of the TK4NT preamp. And it works great: fast, accurate and dead easy to use. So now there's no excuse for playing out of tune, is there? Nice work, Takamine dudes...

Sounds like a bargain?

It should certainly be on your must-try list for when you next hit your local music emporium. As it stands, the Takamine EG523SC is pretty damn good for the money, we reckon. It's not perfect by any means - there are some areas that could be better finished in our opinion - but we think the playability and tone all add up to a great little axe.

We would have liked to have seen a second strap button included too - it seems mad that in this day and age most guitar manufacturers still fail to provide this simple accessory as standard issue. Of course you can tie the strap around your headstock, but we don't want to, dammit! OK, rant over...

It's a buyer's market of course, as 20 years ago you would have had a choice between half a dozen guitars. But now you can take your pick from hundreds of great electro-acoustics for £500 and all you have to do is find one that you like.

That said, the EG523SC has a good acoustic tone for the quieter moments when practising at home. But the amplified tone is what this axe is all about. The TK4NT preamp gives you a great variety of tones. Whether you're on stage with a band or in a recording studio, the EG523SC will give you all the sound options you could possibly want.

We like it. You might like it too. Try it for yourself and find out...

FDR: Comfortable action: great amplified tone: built-in tuner AGAINST: Finish has a few blemishes; a second strap button would be nice

TG RATING: ★★★★★

TAKAMINE EG523SC GEAR
QUICK TESTS

NEW GEAR IN A NUTSHELL WORDS: ED MITCHELL, CHRIS VINNICOMBE, HENRY YATES

FAITH JUPITER

£399, BARNES AND MULLINS 01869 552449 / WWW.BANDM.CO.UK

It’s a funny old price bracket, sub-£500. Too expensive for paperboys, too cheap for collectors. A twilight zone of budget axes with ideas above their station, and cut-price gems. For this kind of wedge – and especially for an unamplified acoustic – TG demands a sound investment. And, a big fiddler, that’s what the Faith Jupiter represents.

The Jupiter’s cultured appearance is not the stuff of animal desire, but that’s fine. We’ll always take classic styling over novelty – the combination of solid spruce top and solid mahogany body will never go out of fashion. Diamond fret inlays, a modest soundhole design and subtle headstock provide the icing to this impressive visual cake, while a purge of joins and finishes didn’t suggest the work of cowboy builders.

Clamping barre chords onto the Jupiter’s neck isn’t as easy as some, and you should make sure that the guitar is set up for your needs before you scurry off home with it. But for all that, the ebony fretboard is hard to fault with a smoothness and playability that lends itself to both strumming and picking.

That’s your fingers covered – so let’s talk tone. The Jupiter does have a rounded voice, although it’s not quite as rich as the burble claims. As with any solid top acoustic, we would expect the tone to mature with a few months of concentrated strumming. It already has plenty of welly, however, and fingers soften the jangle nicely. Good thing too, as with no means of amping the Jupiter up you’ve got to love its raw tone. Our advice? Suit it and see. (HY)

FOR: Cultured looks and superior tone
AGAINST: Not the easiest player; the tone has some growing up to do...

TG RATING: ★★★★★

COLLINS CD28CENT

£79, MUSIK PRODUKTIV UK LTD 0845 4563034 / WWW.MUSO.CO.UK

Collins might not be the biggest name in acoustic circles, but that may change if they keep producing budget guitars of this quality. Faced with an £80 electro-acoustic, many things flash through TG’s mind – least of all desire.

The CD28CENT is different. Despite its price this is an instrument of cultured understatement, combining a fresh spruce top with a luxurious mahogany body. Dot fingerboard inlays, chrome tuners and a sensible headstock make the package look so classy that TG had to check the decimal point was in the right place.

Dreadnought bodies are massive, and the Collins is no exception. Fortunately, what could be a tiresome playing experience is saved by a manageable fretboard and neck profile – enabling the guitar’s tone to ring out without too much effort. A good EQ enables you to beef up or slim down the tone once the CD28 is plugged in, and through a decent amp there’s scope for bite and warmth.

It’s not the best electro-acoustic we’ve played, but rigging seems chalkish at this price. (HY)

FOR: Good looks and nice tone; that price
AGAINST: Tone is competent, not exceptional

TG RATING: ★★★★☆

KORG AX10A

£119, KORG UK 01908 857101 / WWW.KORG.CO.UK

Pity the acoustic guitarist. Starved of wah pedals, flangers and the joys of the Big Muff, these electrically-challenged souls have traditionally had little more to drool over than a new set of pitch pipes. But now the tide is turning and Korg’s AX10A unit confirms what Line 6’s Acoustic Variax implied. Yep, acoustic guitarists want toys too.

The AX10A is a modelling signal processor, meaning that it simulates the tones and nuances of the kind of acoustic guitars only available at auction. Scanning the manual reveals 11 of the usual suspects: vintage resonators, parlours, nylon-stringers – each with adjustable depth settings to replicate the ambience of a microphone placed at varying distances from the soundhole.

But the spec list doesn’t stop there. You’ve also got 40 preset programs – comprised of guitar type, mic depth and suitable effects – accessed via the intuitive Bank pedals and infinitely tweakable to your own design. Three types of pre-effects (refining your signal); a three-band tone control (to adjust treble, mid and bass) and 11 types of ambience effects (reverbs, delays and general echoey stuff). Finally, there’s the expression pedal and a tuner.

That’s all fine, but does it work? We think so. Finding your way around the AX10A isn’t complicated – although the print on the dials is ridiculously small – and TG was impressed by the accuracy of the simulations Korg have provided. Selecting a dreadnought model brings in warmth, while the resonator offers a suitable steely resp. Sealing the deal, meanwhile, is that expression pedal. A feature that takes the AX10A from bedsit curiosity to genuine gig weapon.

Not bad for £119, all told. And much more sensible than taking Junior’s college fund down to Sotheby’s... (HY)

FOR: Intuitive layout; convincing simulations
AGAINST: Slightly fiddly controls

TG RATING: ★★★★★
EPiphone Lynyrd Skynyrd Les Paul Goldtop

£649, Rosetti 013760 550033 / www.epiphone.com

"Sweet Home Alabama..." Oh, wait a minute, that was played on a Strat, wasn’t it? Anyway, fans of Southern Rock monoliths Lynyrd Skynyrd can now pledge their undying allegiance to the cause with this new Epiphone Les Paul 30 Year Anniversary Goldtop. Resplendent in circa 1957 cosmetics — arguably the coolest finish option for a Les Paul — the metallic gold paint that Epiphone have used here is a little untidy, noticeably darker and less rich than the classic Gibson hue. While the dark-stained back and neck may not be historically correct, they do resemble the visually pleasing dark-back option that is available on Gibson’s £3,000 custom shop 1957 reissues. Pretty cool... But the finish isn’t this guitar’s most outstanding feature. What really sets this axe apart from the rest of the Gibson crowd are the, er, subtle Skynyrd Skynyrd fingerboard inlay, chrome truss-rod cover and a huge 30 year Anniversary graphic on the rear of the body. This combination will either have you in hillbilly heaven or squealing like a little piggy — Ned Beatty style...

Elsewhere, you’ve got the usual Epiphone hardware onboard. The tune-o-matic bridge and stoptailpiece are classic appointments, as is this Skynyrd axe’s two volume, two tone control setup. Twin Alnico V magnet-equipped humbuckers provide that trademark Les Paul crunch and sustain.

If you love Lynyrd Skynyrd this is the axe for you. If not, there’s plenty of other Les Paul guitars in the Epiphone range. (CV)

FOR: Classic sounds; Individuality AGAInst: Cosmetically, this is strictly ‘one for the fans’

TG RATING: ★★★★★

Chicago Iron Pedals

£205.61 Each, Killer Pedals 0115 947 0011 / www.killerpedals.co.uk

You’ve probably never heard of Tycobrahe guitar pedals. Made back in the 1970s they are now highly sought after by tone freaks and are as rare as a snake’s kneecaps. But all is not lost. Chicago Iron is a US boutique pedal manufacturer that produces accurate replicas of Tycobrahe’s original classics. Joe Perry of Aerosmith uses them, so they must be good. Let’s have a stomp...

The big one is the Parachute — a clone of the original Tycobrahe Parapedal. This is a wah pedal with attitude. The tone is really thick, with an unusual spacey phaser-like sweep. We’ve never heard a wah sound quite like it. It’s easy to see why tone-obsessed guitarists sell their grannies for one of the originals. The Parachute is in a class of its own.

Now we come to the awesome Octavia pedal. This is a spot-on reproduction of the Tycobrahe Octavia and it’s classic Jimi Hendrix all the way, baby! The originals were notoriously variable in quality, with famous users like Jimi and Texan blues legend Stevie Ray Vaughan testing as many as they could to make sure they had a good one. Chicago Iron’s offerings have based their pedal on a great original item. If you like your fuzz thick and juicy, then you’ll love this pedal. While it’s not quite the best we’ve ever heard (the Retroman Lola reviewed in TG125 stole our heart) it’s pretty damn close.

Chicago Iron pedals rock. They’re expensive, but they’re built like tanks and sound awesome, dude. You have got to try them out... (EM)

FOR: Great vintage sounds; built to last; they look cool too
AGAInst: They’re not cheap

TG RATING: ★★★★★

Stetsbar Tremolo System

£259, Madison and Fifth 01858 446782 / www.madisonandfifth.co.uk

Back in the 1980s, widdling and dive-bombing were fashionable and overnight you had to have a tremolo on your guitar. Unfortunately, this sudden wobbling frenzy meant that many great axes were drilled and chopped to bits, often irreversibly, to force a trem unit where it didn’t belong. The main victim of this senseless carnage was the Gibson Les Paul. It’s enough to reduce a grown man to tears...

Now here’s a tremolo — yes, we know vibrato is the correct term, so don’t write in — that fits a Les Paul and ES-335 guitar perfectly. It’s a chunky old thing, and beautifully made with lots of nice shiny moving parts. But. best of all, it actually works. Operation is smooth and it stays in tune really well.

This Stetsbar will fit any guitar with a Gibson-style tune-o-matic/stopbar tailpiece set-up, so Epiphone owners should be interested in this cool gadget too. They also produce a model for Fender Telecasters and, ahem, most similar-looking guitars. There’s even a choice of finishes: chrome and gold bodies with the option of a black, cream, gold or chrome base. Pretty damn cool, we reckon.

At £259 the Stetsbar isn’t cheap, and not quite as beautiful as a classic Bigsby, but it’s perfect for those of you that love your Les Pauls, SGs, ES-335s and Telecasters, but need the extra dimension of a trem. Don’t change your axe... Get a Stetsbar. (EM)

FOR: Easy to fit; works well; doesn’t damage your guitar
AGAInst: Not as pretty as a Bigsby; it’s a bit pricey

TG RATING: ★★★★☆
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NEED A NEW SWITCH? GO PRO

Q: I've got an Epiphone Sheraton semi-acoustic guitar that needs a new switch. I want to fit it myself, to save money, but I can't figure how to remove the old switch. Any ideas?
Billy, Swansea

A: You are probably about to bite off more than you can chew, Billy. Replacing any electrical component on a guitar is an absolute nightmare, we reckon, and a job best suited to a professional. Unlike most other electrical guitars, semi-acoustics don't allow easy access to their internal wiring and components: the switch, pots and the jack input socket. Before you can start you have to remove all the wiring through the narrow f-hole on the face of the guitar to the part you want to replace. Once you have changed the component, you then have to thread all the wiring and pots back into the correct position using lengths of solder or thread. Sound difficult? It is. With knobs on. Just bite the bullet and take the guitar to your local guitar wizard and save yourself the grief OK?

HOW TO GET KORN'S SOUND

Q: I have a Vintage SG-style guitar and small Peavey practice amplifier. I'm trying to get a heavy Korn type sound but I'm having little luck. Am I wasting my time?
Mark, Lincoln

A: You really need a seven-string axe to get the right-fusty Korn vibe, Mark. But you can improvise with your standard six-string guitar. You probably know that Messrs Munky and Head tune their guitars down a full tone. (low to high) A, D, G, C, F, and A. Right? Well, to follow in your heroes' de-tuned footsteps you must first replace your light gauge guitar strings with a heavier set: think .011s or .012s, with a heavy bottom string. With the new strings in place, tune your guitar to (low to high) D, G, C, F, and A. Obviously you don't have the seventh string, so you must decide whether to tune your bottom E string to A or D – either will give you some of that metal grind you crave. The tiny speaker in your practice amp may not like the heavier frequencies pumped out by the de-tuned strings, but you should be able to get a decent muddily Right Now-style sound by whacking up the distortion. Now get to work on that sound!

PUT A STRING IN YOUR STRAT

Q: The tremolo arm on my Fender Stratocaster is very loose. I want it to stay pointing towards the neck, so that it's easy to grab, but it always gives in to gravity. It wasn't always this bad, have I broken it? Thanks for your help.
Mike Hammond, Doncaster

A: Don't panic, Mike. It happens to the best of us. What you're experiencing is normal wear and tear for your type of guitar. The threads on a vintage-style Strat tremolo can wear down over a period of months or years with the result that you lose the snug fit that you had when the guitar was new.
The good news is that Fender now has a cheap solution for this problem. The company has come up with a tiny spring: it sits in the bottom of the hole in the tremolo unit that holds the arm. The little spring pushes up on the tremolo arm keeping it firmly in place. It really works. You can order these springs from your local Fender dealer or visit Fender online at www.fender.co.uk.

STRING DILEMMA

Q: I'm trying to replace the strings on my Squier Strat, but one of them won't go through its hole in the tremolo. It's got me baffled and I can't play my guitar now.
Darren, Essex

A: Ah, this is an easy one. Sounds like the ballend of your old guitar string is still stuck in the hole. Take a look through the hole in the tremolo block (hold your guitar up to the light to make it easier), and if you can't see through it then you have a blockage. To remove the offending item, take something of a reasonable length that fits easily in the hole (an Allen key or jewellers screwdriver is ideal) and poke around until the old ballend falls out. Now you can fit your last string and play until your heart's content. It's really that simple...

OVERDRIVE OR DISTORTION?

Q: What's the difference between an overdrive pedal and a distortion pedal? I'm a big Metallica fan and would love to nail their tone. Which of those pedals is right for me?
William Martyn, Hull

A: An overdrive pedal simulates the sound of a valve amplifier running at full steam, with all the beef and warmth that you would expect. Blues players and vintage tone rockers (Jimmy Page, Joe Perry, Rickie Nitchen) love the 'transparent' sound of a good overdrive pedal that allows the sound of the guitar to shine through.

By contrast, a distortion pedal is a much more clinical sounding beast, with a lot more power and a sharper tone. It mimics a solid-state amp setup – think Randall Warhead X2 – and would be better suited to provide that powerhouse Metallica grant that you're looking for.

You should always try out as many different pedals as you can – make sure you use your own guitar when testing new gear. If you want to know what floats our boat with regards to effects units, check out the range of DigiTech pedals we reviewed in TG129. Every taste from screaming blues to serious death metal is covered.

INTO THE GROOVE

Q: The strings on my guitar sometimes get stuck in the grooves of the top nut, causing tuning problems whenever I use my tremolo. A mate says that I should put oil in the slots to make them slippery. Is he mad?
Richard Owen, Reading

A: Er, yes he is. Don't even think about putting any type of motor oil near your guitar. It won't stay where you want it to, will stain your fingerboard and is a bitch to remove. If the slots in your top nut are too tight for the strings, you really need to have them re-cut or, at the very least, smoothed out with some very fine glasspaper – a job for a qualified guitar boffin, not an amateur.

Here's a great tip if you use your tremolo a lot: give your strings a bit more slide in the slots, by using a pencil. The graphite in the pencil will prevent the strings from binding in the top nut. Just rub some in the grooves.

OLD WIVES TALE BOLLOCKS

Q: I haven't been playing guitar for very long and the tips of my fingers are still soft. This means that notes...
A Vinegar, huh? Are you sure he’s not talking about your conkers make? To be honest, this whole vinegar thing is an old wives tale and complete bollocks in our opinion. But it does work wonders for conkers...

There is something you can do to harden the tips of your digits for better fretting ability and killer tone, but you might not like it. Here goes... Why not try practising? It’s that simple. It’s the only way to get better, with proper tone and buzz-free notes. So get playing and leave the vinegar for teatime.

SNAP, CRACKLE AND POP!

Q When I play my guitar at rehearsal I get an annoying crackle through my amplifier. I’m not sure if it’s coming from the guitar or the amp and it’s dreadful when I use my overdrive channel. I’m not using pedals so it can’t be that...

Buz, Cardiff

A The first thing to do is to isolate the problem. Plug your guitar in and turn up the amp. Grab the jack plug sticking out of your guitar and give it a good old shake. If it makes the noise then the jack socket in your guitar may need to be cleaned or replaced. Repeat the operation at the amp end of the cable; the same applies if you hear the noise.

If both sockets are OK, the most likely cause of your irritating crackle is your humble guitar lead. Guitar cables can crackle if they’re cheap, or just past their best. Give the lead a good shake, Zorro-style. If it cracks, drop it in the nearest bin and get a new one. Look for copper core cables with ‘noiseless’ printed on the side. They provide better sound quality and absolutely no crackle. And no snap or pop either.

BRIAN SETZER’S KNOB(S)

Q I’m a massive Brian Setzer fan and I absolutely love his big Gretsch guitars. What I want to know is, where does he get those totally awesome dice knobs? They’re wicked and I’d love to get some on my guitar...

Rockabilly Guru, London

A Hey, you’re preaching to the converted here, duddio. We totally agree with ‘cha. Brian Setzer is the King of Cool and we love his groovy knobs as much as you do. To be honest, we don’t really know where Brian got his original units, but we do know of a company that supplies cool-as-fuck genuine Las Vegas dice cut as control knobs. And they’ll fit any guitar. Just check out www.guitar-bones.com for a great range of new and vintage-style dice. Pretty hip, we think...

BAG A CHEAP LES PAUL

Q I am thinking about getting an Epiphone Les Paul but I’m not sure if it’s really the next best thing to a Gibson. What do you guys think?

Cheers, Matt

A It’s the next best thing for the money, Matt. Everyone would love a Gibson Les Paul, but they are expensive (you might find a good second-hand Studio at a good price if you’re lucky). However, Epiphone provide a great way of bagging that cool Gibson look and sound for less than half the price. We reckon the Epiphone Les Paul Standard is a great guitar in its own right and it has been improved a lot this year.

There are other companies that sell Gibson-esque axes, but only Epiphone can officially carry the Gibson brand. Try one out for yourself...

FIGHT SCRATCHPLATE DECAY

Q I recently sent an email asking for some advice, but you haven’t answered. I know you’re busy, so I’ll ask you again...

I have a one-year-old black Squier Stratocaster with a white scratchplate that is gradually turning yellow. I think it looks awful. How can I get it back to the original white finish?

Jotisinop Singh Kaulon

A Hey, sorry we haven’t been in touch with you, dude. We can’t personally reply to everyone – it says that at the top of the Q&A page. Anyway, on with your problem...

It’s actually very common for a white scratchplate to turn yellow after a certain period of time. Although they are snow coloured when they’re born, the plastic reacts to outside influences like nicotine, dirt, sweat and sunlight. Most people actually prefer the vintage look of a yellowed scratchplate, but if you can’t live with it you will have to replace it. That’s your only option.
EAT. SLEEP. DRINK. LEARN.

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TENOR SAXOPHONE WANTED to join a band in the Warrington area. Influences: Jamiroquai, Ginger Baker and Can. Contact: J. Johnson, Age 18-16, Text Approx 07404 246476.

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