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# Australian musician

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## NEW HR626 ACTIVE STUDIO MONITORS HELP CLARIFY "THE MATRIX" TRILOGY

Danetracks Studio was responsible for audio post-production and design on the second of The Matrix trilogy *The Matrix Reloaded*. The facility also worked on the first Matrix movie and are currently working on the third Matrix film, *Matrix Revolutions*. Recently Danetracks equipped their studios with Mackie's newest monitor, the dual 6-inch **Mackie HR626** Active Studio Monitor. Sound Effects Designer **Eric Lindemann** stated "The Matrix is one of the most challenging projects of my career, and the accuracy of the new **Mackie HR626s** has played a major role in translating my work to the big screen. The HR626s sounded very accurate and did not over-emphasise any one part of the mix. We created almost all of the 5.1 sound design for the film with the 626s, and the translation to the large dubbing theatre was phenomenal." (Pictured: Dane A. Davis, Founder and President of Danetracks)

## OSCAR WINNER DAVID LEE AND HIS MACKIE 1604 VLZ PRO MIXER

Production Sound Mixer **David Lee** recently took home an Oscar® for his work on Hollywood blockbuster *Chicago*. Best of all, he did it on a **Mackie 1604-VLZ Pro**. "Mackie 1604s have been used on all of the live dialogue shooting I've done for the last three to five years. They're better than the \$25,000 boards that are commonly used in this area of the business. You can generate up to six separate aux mixes, and we made liberal use of this functionality. The producer got a separate mix, as did the director. The dancers had the rhythm tracks boosted in their headpieces, and so on. All coming from an inexpensive Mackie 1604! We tracked directly into Pro Tools, using all of the eight sends that the Mackie provides."



## MACKIE RECORDERS CAPTURE KYLIE

Two of Australia's audio legends **George Gorga** and **John Simpson** have been using a swag of Mackie HD Recorders for an impressive list of shows both live to air and for CD, video and more recently DVD release. "We used to use twelve DA88/38s" says George, "six for the record and six for the backup. The sheer number of tapes was a nightmare". Monitoring is performed using **Mackie HR824** Studio Monitors. They have tried monitors costing ten times the price but according to George they found "mixes translate better" when they use the Mackies. Some of the shows they have recorded include *Kylie Minogue* at the Sydney Entertainment Centre, *Richard Clapton DVD*, *The Goodwill Games*, *Sydney's Carols in the Domain* and *The Big Day Out*.

## MACKIE IS VERY ACTIVE AT MUSIC WORKSHOP

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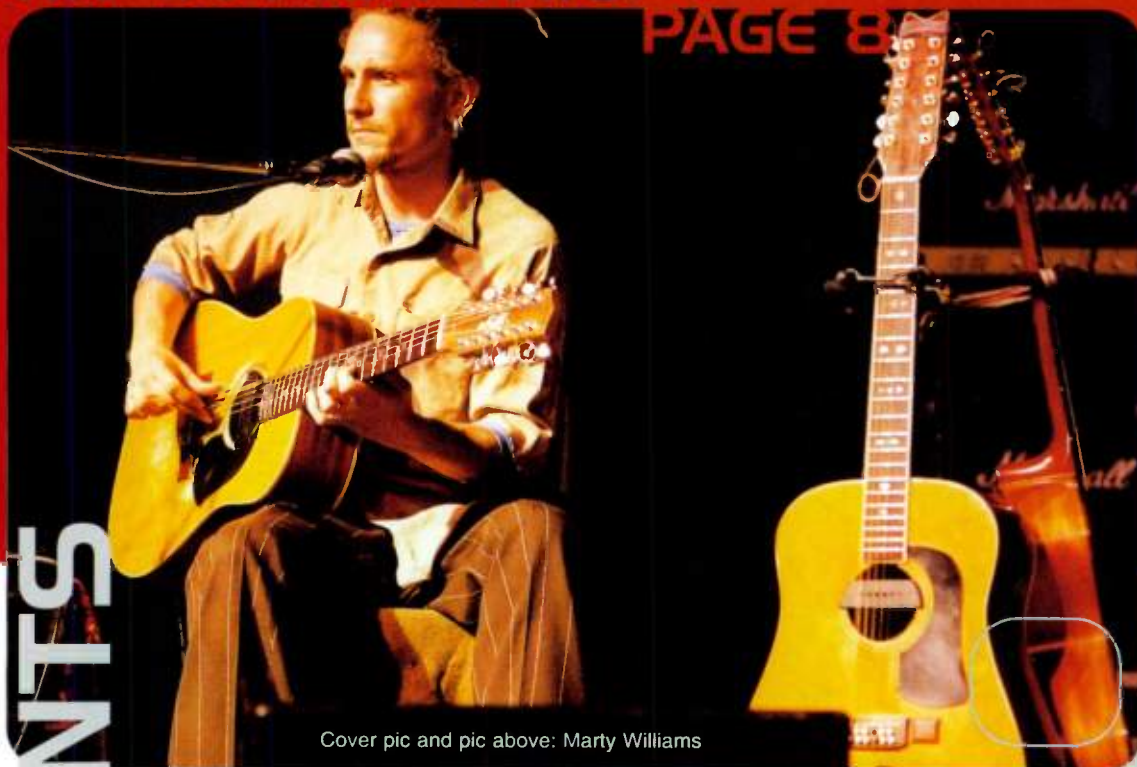
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# JOHN BUTLER TRIO >>

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Cover pic and pic above: Marty Williams

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## COLDPLAY FOR HOT WINTER TOUR

Currently one of the hottest bands in the world, UK's Coldplay are heading to Australia in July for headline shows in Sydney and Melbourne. Coldplay's eruption into the popular music scene is owed to the passion in their licks and to the honesty of their lyrics.

"There is an alternative," said singer Chris Martin. "You can try to be catchy without being slick, poppy without being pop, and you can be uplifting without being pompous." The band was formed, not to become famous, but because they wanted to write songs and music that generated real honesty and passion.

Coldplay's debut album 'Parachutes' was a collection of direct soulful, utterly beautiful

songs. It sold nearly five million copies worldwide, including nearly three times platinum in Australia. The album also received a swag of awards including a clutch of NME and Q awards, two Brits in 2001 and the Grammy Award for Best alternative album in 2002.

The acclaimed album A Rush of Blood to the Head, featuring "In My Place" and "Clocks", is louder than the last, more uptempo and energetic. "We've grown up a bit, travelled a lot more, met so many people. Musically too, we've heard more," Martin said. "The last two years, we've been like a cultural sponge. We've sucked it all in and now it's coming out on this record. A lot of it is meant to be about drive and confidence in the face of worry and insecurity."

Dates so far include **Friday July 18 Rod Laver Arena, Melbourne** and **Monday July 21 Hordern Pavilion, Sydney**.



## What's Hot

Compiled by Joe Matera

Laney valve amps and Cort guitars are very popular and outselling any other brand in the electric and acoustic range guitars. Casio keyboards and the German made Basix drum kits were also hot sellers. Violins and Cellos are also doing brisk business.

### Davis Music, Footscray, VIC.

Second hand U.S.A 1970's Fender Telecaster Deluxes are selling like hot cakes in the store. Also popular were second hand Gibson ES335 and Epiphone guitar copies. In the used amplifiers market, any Fender 30 watt or below, particularly the Deluxe Reverb and the original Champ, were in high demand with shoppers and running out the door at a high rate.

### Lounge Guitars, Leederville, WA

The Yamaha C40 nylon series and Valencia TC40 series of guitars were selling well. The Monterey and Magnum acoustic steel strings were also moving well. In keyboards the Yamaha PSR series did brisk business. In the drums department, the Gretsch series of kits were very popular.

### Allison Music, Wagga Wagga N.S.W

DJ turntable mixer kits were extremely popular with DJ's and buyers. Also budget guitars such as the Yamaha EG112 did well along with amps particularly the Peavey 158. In Effects the most popular selling were the Zoom 505 II effects range.

### Holden Hill Music, Holden Hill, SA.

Guitars were the most popular instruments selling throughout the store in particular the entry level Valencia series of guitars. In keyboards the Casio CTK range of keyboards were most popular with musicians. In the drum department, the range of Zildjian and Vater sticks were being snapped up by shoppers regularly.

### Top End Sounds, Darwin, NT

A lot of music software products have been very popular and selling in large numbers especially the Sonic Foundry Super Duper Music Looper. Also notation software especially the series of Sibelius and Finale notation software programs clocked up good sales.

### Binary Designs, Birkdale, QLD

## AUSTRALASIAN MUSIC BUSINESS CONFERENCE Sydney SuperDome August 14-16

Two invaluable new keynote speakers have been added to an already impressive line up for the annual Australasian Music Business Conference to be held at Sydney's Superdome from August 14-16. Joining record company CEOs, A&R guys, major band managers, internet experts, legal eagles, radio personnel and promotions gurus are guest speakers, **John Woodruff** who's the legendary Australian manager behind Savage Garden, Cold Chisel, Icehouse, and others, plus **Universal Music Chairman for Australia, NZ & Africa, Peter Bond** who is one of the most knowledgeable people on Asia and this region as well as being the market leader in Australia as a label.

For musicians, bands and management this is a must-go event. Some of the topics include; How to make it without a deal, What A&R people want, Preparing your music for OS, Capturing radio airplay, touring issues and much more. Where previous events focused on technology, this year, concentration will be more on deal making, legalities, media handling, as well as maximising live performance and touring potential. If you're truly serious about your music, then this 3 day event should be an essential investment.

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## ANDROIDS SET UP BASE IN UK

The Androids began their quest for world domination in May with a successful three week promotional tour of the UK. Their first single "Do it With Madonna" debuted at number #15 on the British charts. As of June 13th they'll be back again to capitalise on the huge wave of publicity the band created.

The promotional tour consisted mainly of television, radio and magazine interviews however, the band convinced their UK agent to book a couple of shows in order to show first hand what the band is all about. One of the two gigs included a spot at The Water Rats, a venue which Bob Dylan and Oasis used to launch their London music campaigns. The Androids also appeared on the world famous TV show Top of the Pops alongside Annie Lennox and Feeder. Madonna played the same episode but recorded on a different day to the band. Word got back however that she loves the song "Do It With Madonna".

"We keep getting messages back via other people" said singer Tim Henwood "it would be fantastic though if finally we got to speak to her. We were working with a make up artist at a TV show we were doing who also worked on her *American Life* film clip. He told us that after the first showing of the clip to her people, she announced a 'less offensive' edit and she put our clip on. They all had a bit of a giggle apparently. Hopefully she'll like our next one too because there won't be anything about her in it." said Henwood who's beginning to tire of the subject.



The Androids on the set of Top of the Pops

The obligatory tourist walk across Abbey Road

As the band arrived back in Australia for some local shows in support of the new single "Brand New Life", the album was released in the UK and followed soon after throughout Europe. When the band returns to England they will be setting up camp for a while, making it easier to access the different territories the album is doing well in.

The Androids are committed to making the album work overseas and are considering buying a second set of gear while there to save on freight.

"We love Marshall amps and they're made over there." said Tim "I really like the vintage gear. I'd love to get some old Marshalls and perhaps an Ampeg rig. Maybe Marty could score a drum kit from Pearl. The people at Belman, the guitar company in Melbourne are in the middle of making me another guitar. I just love the one I already have. I think I'll be putting Bigsby's on this one."

The album is also now available in America where the single is on high rotation on MTV, but America is such a huge market and takes a lot longer to break, consequently they're concentrating on the countries where The Androids are currently more in demand. "The way the music business works in England is different. People tend to go out and buy things straight away, then it's gone." explains Henwood "Although our single is hanging around and that's an uncommon thing. Whereas in America the record comes out and nothing happens for a while. But the record company in the states is really pushing us. They have us on a soundtrack to a movie and a lot of other things planned."

Great to see the boys from Melbourne's west "Do it" with the world!



## Disc

### RICHARD THOMPSON

#### The Old Kit Bag (Shock)

Celtic guitar great Richard Thompson returns with his best work in years. Played with a fluency most will never accomplish, the album features a dozen deep, dark folk-infested gems. Bonus disc includes extra tracks and documentary footage.

### VARIOUS

#### The SBS Whatever Sessions (Universal)

Uncovered by SBS TV over a 12 month period, this double disc reveals some incredible and diverse new Australian talent. From the dreamy minimalist approach of Minimum Chips to the cinematic grandeur of The Night Terrors and The Gammarays, to Pete and Fiete's edgy pop (currently heard on triple J), there's some serious and significant work going on here. Check it out, then seek them out.

### BLUR

#### Think Tank (EMI)

Damon Albarn erected sign posts to Blur's new direction when he dabbled with cartoon beat band Gorillaz. Some will find the album tough going but one man's weird shit is somebody else's musical treasure trove. Fascinating rhythms and fluctuating mood swings are appreciated more and more with each spin.

### DEVIN TOWNSEND BAND

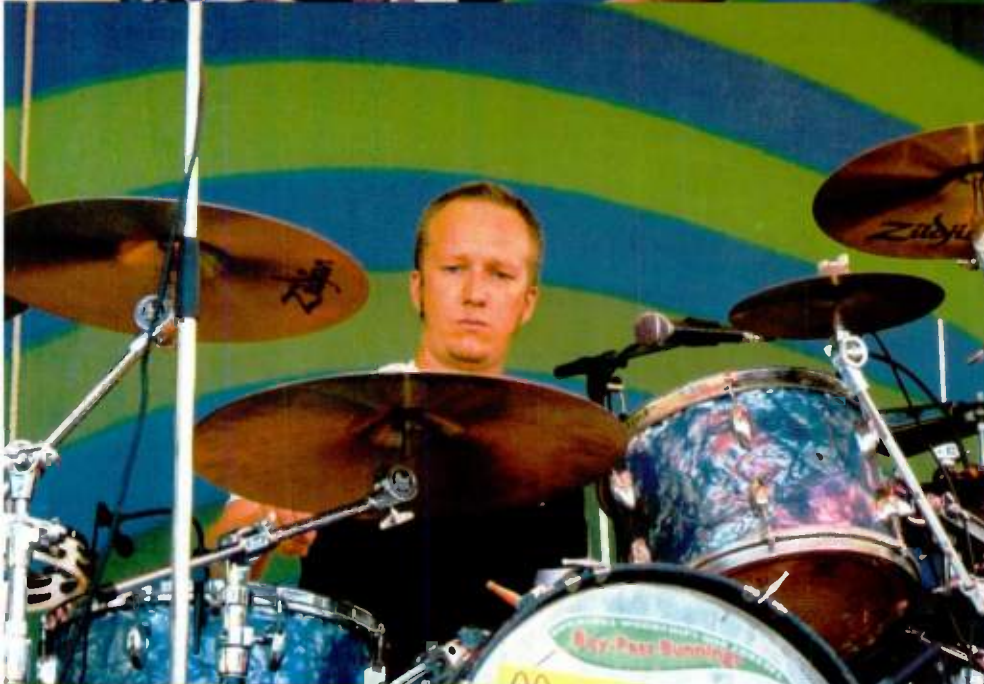
#### Accelerated Evolution (Roadrunner)

Strapping Young Lad main man Devin Townsend recorded this solo project at the same time as the current SYL album. Whereas SYL emits a raw, angry and ferocious brand of heavy metal, Townsend's "side project" delivers a heady blast of mind altering power chords more in the vein of Faith No More. Metal with a soul.

### BEST KEPT SECRET

#### Unorganised Crime (MGM Distribution)

The road to mainstream acceptance might soon be less congested for NSW's Best Kept Secret with the release of their new EP 'Unorganised Crime'. No re-invention of the wheel, but no less credible than much of the alternative pop/rock outfits currently flooding the charts. Fans of The Ataris, Blink 182 and co might want to give this local band a listen.



# JOHN

Their latest live album 'Living' was recently certified gold in Australia, and deservedly so. A hectic national tour beckons, and the John Butler Trio is already in the process of looking to record their next studio disc. "Yeah I've got about three albums worth of material already written for the next album!" exclaims the softly spoken Butler. "And it's going in a direction towards more of a groove and roots based record. I'm really into the roots music and country stuff at the moment so I want it to be more stripped back. And I want to try to infuse those two styles together as well as separately, concentrating more on the 'upbeat' of each particular style to give it more of that 'skank' feel".



australian Winter 2006



# BUTLER TRIO

Story:  
Joe Matera  
Pix:  
Marty Williams

John Butler was born in Torrance, in the sunny American state of California on April 1st, 1975. The first seeds of his musical path were sown when his father, having a desire to return to the country of his birth, moved the family from Los Angeles to Australia in 1986 to a small town in Western Australia called Pinjarra. It was here the young John started to play the guitar at the tender age of sixteen. The ensuing years saw Butler develop and further his instrumental prowess until 1998 when an early incarnation of the John Butler Trio took root with the band making their official debut in 2000 at the East Coast Blues and Roots Festival. 2001 saw the band's breakthrough release 'Three' garner much critical and commercial acclaim. Since then, the John Butler Trio has constantly stayed on the road playing to ever increasing crowds night after night.



"I really enjoyed the last two times I was in the studio to be honest with you" he reveals. "I think they both have their merits and can't be compared. But I do prefer playing live music with other musicians." Explaining the writing process within the context of the band he points out: "I usually set everything to music with the words coming after the music. Then I usually craft it up a bit, work on it and refine it and arrange it. Then I bring it all to the band and tell them what I'd like to hear and let them see how they can interpret it, and how it works for them."

One distinctive trait of Butler's bluesy roots-based guitar playing is the sound and style he achieves from his vast range of 12 string guitars and lap steels. "I mainly play a lot of 12-string guitars" he states. "Like I've got a couple of Matons and a Washburn 12 string acoustic. I do use a lot of C tunings like the CGCGCE tuning and a little bit of the B tuning and drop D. I also do a couple of songs in DADGAD tuning, but mostly I write in C tuning. I also play a 12-string lap steel and a little Weissenborn copy which is made by Carson Crnkmore in Victoria. I usually have two pick-ups in all my guitars; one magnetic like an electric pick-up and the other a bridge or microphone pick-up near the bridge which kind of gives me the best acoustic sound. I plug that into a Fender Blender. I then take a send out from the magnetic pick-up and plug that into a volume pedal through a 1974 JMP Marshall amp which I can turn on or off."

It was during their 2001/02 tour, when the John Butler Trio decided to record four of their gigs - two in Melbourne at the Forum, two in West Australia, one at UWA and one at the 'Rockit' festival. From these recordings Butler chose 13 songs, along with one new studio song "Home is Where The Heart Is", to feature on the live album called "Living", a double CD set released earlier this year. The tracks that appeared on the album had been played live constantly over a four year period, so Butler thought it would be a fitting way to end one chapter and start another.

"For the last five years we've just been on the road touring and playing live" explains Butler on why he decided to release this live disc. "And that's how we've built our reputation. So it seemed fitting to put down what we've done over the past five years and give people an example of that and give the fans a bit of the magic that we've all shared over that period. We just recorded four of our gigs and tried to pick the best stuff out of them and tried to stay objective about it all."

With the gypsy lifestyle of a travelling musician and a touring schedule that is at times both hectic and gruelling, how does Butler cope with life on the road? "It's like a travelling circus really" he says. "You go to a town and set up a tent and go play a show. Then everybody goes home and you take the show down and move on to the next town and do it all again. You do about 10 hours a day of transporting and work for that two hour performance each night. It's a lot of work but at the same time it's a total honour. It's definitely a different type of lifestyle to live."

It's obvious from witnessing Butler's live performances and the energy that the band creates, that he would rather be performing on stage than be in the studio, but he insists both have their merits.

## My main goal in music is to keep evolving and having a good time

While Butler is gaining an increasing fan base locally, he is also starting to make inroads overseas. "I've got a great agent over in the States and he's scored us some really good gigs with artists like John Mayer and Dave Matthews" he muses. "And playing some of the good festivals over there. But it's really early days for us over there, but it is building. As for Europe, I've only been there once and for a very short amount of time, like two to three days. But I would really like to go back and play some more maybe later this year. It's really good to have another country to play in instead of your own, you don't want to saturate too much in Australia. In the last four or five years, I've done hundreds and hundreds of gigs."

The method by which Butler keeps his ideas fresh, is by a constant regime of listening to his musical influences as well keeping his ear to the ground on current faves. "I have been listening to a lot Gillian Welch and Ani DiFranco recently" he reveals. "And lots of old 1970's Bob Marley and Jimi Hendrix circa Band Of Gypsies along with lots of old country folk-blues and hillbilly and roots music." And what does Butler hope to achieve with his music? "My main goal in music is to keep evolving and having a good time" he ponders. "While getting constantly better as an artist, songwriter and musician at the same time."



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World Radio History

# THE DATSUNS >>



**At the beginning of 2002 The Datsuns - Dolf De Datsun - vocals & bass; Christian Datsun - guitar; Matt Datsun - drums; Phil Datsun - guitar; were busy languishing in Cambridge, New Zealand, contemplating their future. Putting their money where their mouth was, they jacked in their jobs; took out a loan and headed west to tour the States with good buddies The White Stripes. After a much-scrawled-about slot on the annual music biz convention South By South West they hit the UK. And then things snowballed.**

**T**opping off a remarkable 12 months for the band, they also scooped the pool at this year's New Zealand Music awards taking home four gongs: Album of the Year, Export Gold Best Group, Outstanding International Achievement and Breakthrough Artist of the Year. During their recent Australian tour JOE MATERA spoke to guitarist Christian Datsun.

**Joe Matera: Both the band and yourself proudly wear their musical influences on their sleeves?**

**Christian Datsun:** Yeah I'm very much a huge Deep Purple fan. I used to have this video of the MK 3 version of Purple playing at a concert called the 'California Jam - Live in 1974'. It's an amazing video and I basically wore the tape out as I liked it so much.

**JM: There's more than a passing nod to Led Zeppelin in your live performances too?**

**CD:** The first band I ever saw live was Led Zeppelin as part of the footage in the video 'The Song Remains The Same'. I saw Jimmy Page rocking out onstage and I thought that was what everybody did. I love to perform and when you're playing something good, the music makes you move. If it doesn't make you shake your ass then there's something wrong. If we don't get excited enough to move on stage then how can we expect other people to be excited enough to jump up and down and enjoy the show?

**JM: The band have a Gibson guitar frontline?**

**CD:** Yeah I play a '78 Gibson Les Paul which has been my main guitar for 8 years now and I've used it on everything we've ever done. Phil has a '74 Gibson SG while Dolf plays a Thunderbird bass. It's very much a Gibson attack!

**JM: With all the success you've achieved, you still seem to be well-aware of the pitfalls inherent within the music business. I mean, your record deal for example is all in the band's favour?**

**CD:** When we went to England in April of last year, there were like 20

record labels that were chasing us. We realised at that point in time that we better learn how the business worked - and fast! Otherwise, we were going to get screwed. I had read stories about bands doing really bad deals and getting screwed over. So we were really cautious and made a conscientious effort to learn about the business. So when we did our deal we did what we considered was the smartest and best thing for us to do, and that was to retain control and ownership of all our material. We have creative control and can call all the shots which I think, is important for any band.

**JM: So has success changed The Datsuns in any way?**

**CD:** No, we just do what we always have been doing, the only difference to us as a band now is that we do a lot more of it and play a lot more shows. Now rock and roll is our full-time rather than a part-time job. But the pace and intensity of everything is a lot more now.

**JM: You recently debuted a few new songs during the Australian tour?**

**CD:** Yeah we did three new songs. Obviously we're working towards another album so we're trying out a few in the set here and there. But we're not going to put too many songs in the set because we're getting bootlegged quite a lot with stuff on the internet. We don't want the whole album to be released before we've even recorded it! We're so flat out at the moment it's very difficult for us to find the time to go into the studio to put down tracks. But we're trying to set aside September/October so we can hopefully go in and record the next album to release early next year.

**JM: Finally what has been your greatest lesson you've learned in this rollercoaster of success?**

**CD:** To appreciate and enjoy what I do because not everyone gets a chance to travel around the world and play rock and roll. Sometimes it's a lot of hard work and you wish you were somewhere else but at the end of the day, you're getting to do what you love and you should always appreciate and remember that aspect.



# FRENZAL RHOMB

Fancy having your pants pulled down on stage, being head butted or knocked over by your vocalist and being gaffer taped to your mattress by your drummer after you've been drinking until 5am? It's all in a day's work for new boy Tom Crease, bass player from Frenzal Rhomb. The band are currently playing gigs in support of their new album *Sans Souci*. James O'Toole spoke to Tom on the phone before one of their frenetic Melbourne shows .

**O'Toole:** Can you start by telling us how you came to join Frenzal Rhomb?

**Crease:** I was actually playing in Adelaide with my old band and the rumours started to go around the crowd that Lex had left. I got a phone call from Jason, the vocalist, very late one night. I was up playing Nintendo and he said, "Mr Crease, it's time for a special news update," as he knew my dad was a news reader on Channel Nine in Adelaide. He suggested I come to Sydney for an audition so it wasn't too long before I saved up some bucks and went. We played about five songs that night, then went to the pub. got really drunk, had a rock drinking quiz-a-thon, then we took a walk back along King Street in Newtown at 5am like drunken idiots. I had a flight back to Adelaide at 8am that morning.

**O'Toole:** Were you a fan of the band before joining?

**Crease:** Yeah, I went to the shows and listened to the records and thought they were a pretty good band. I knew quite a few of the songs on bass because I had been playing bass a fair bit already by then. I've played guitar, bass and drums since I was nine or ten and played guitar in a couple of bands until I was about twelve.

**O'Toole:** What kind of bass guitar are you playing now?

**Crease:** I have a Music Man 4 string. I played a passive G & L bass on the album through an active box because it sounds really warm and punchy, but live the Music Man has some extra growl that cuts through any shitty mix. I owned one a couple of years ago but then I sold it to experiment with a few other basses. I got this Music Man just before The Big Day Out in January. I managed to get a really good deal through the music shop I worked in and they have really good pick ups in them so they sound great.

**O'Toole:** What do you use for your amp and cabinet setup?

**Crease:** I use an Eden World Tour 800, which is 400 watts a side. Usually when we tour around we get hooked up with an Ampeg B x 10 cabinet so I just use run one half of the amp. If we play in Adelaide where my speaker boxes are or if we have two Ampeg cabinets like at the Big Day Out I run the full rig. It was great fun playing the full rig in sound check through the big PA without having to play the set straight away.

**O'Toole:** Tell me about the Eden...

**Crease:** They're made in America. I suppose they're only becoming more popular recently, with funk and jazz more so than rock players. I guess the standard is Ampeg, but the Eden sounds really punchy and they're good for that bright, sparkly kind of sound. It's a hybrid amp with a tube input stage then half of the power amp is solid state.

**O'Toole:** Are you a pick or finger player?

**Crease:** I play with a pick for all of the new songs except for one and for the old songs I just do whatever the old bass player did, whether it is slapping or fingers and slapping, but mostly I play with a pick.

**O'Toole:** So how did the song writing go for *Sans Souci*?

**Crease:** We had an eight track at Jay's house and just started recording things on it every day and every night. We'd get Gordy up from Melbourne and get basic guitar tracks down for four or five songs, go to the rehearsal room and Gordy would put down drum tracks. Then we'd record bass, guitar and vocals, until we had a CD of five or six songs together. We would churn out a CD of five or six songs every three to four weeks for a couple of months. When we went on tour in Europe we took it all to show to Fat Mike from NOFX as we release through Fat Records over there and he would say, 'Yeah that's good, that's shit, or change that,' or whatever. He's pretty honest about that sort of thing which is cool.

**They'll push you to your limits until you've gone past being on the floor in the corner crying in the dark to the point where you actually begin to laugh at your own shame and misfortune.**

**O'Toole:** Since you've been in the band where would you say is the most unusual place you've played?

**Crease:** I can't decide whether to say Haifa, Israel or Kalgoorlie, Western Australia (laughs). Playing in Israel was pretty far out, because it was like, 'Wow, we're in the Middle East playing a punk rock show.'

**O'Toole:** Who would be the wildest band you've played with or toured with?

**Crease:** This would be the wildest band I've played with. Absolutely. It's pretty ridiculous. They'll push you to your limits until you've gone past being on the floor in the corner crying in the dark to the point where you actually begin to laugh at your own shame and misfortune. It's a terrible thing. I've wanted to quit the band three times on tour because they have just driven me past my limits. You know like you'll be drunk in Japan at four o'clock in the morning and it's freezing cold, you're loading stuff down the fire escape and Gordy keeps bashing you in the head with things and throwing cigarettes at you. Then you get in the Tarago and he'll bash you over the head with the back of the seat and try to strangle you. He'll gaffer tape you to your mattress then come in and piss on your suitcase. You wake up outside the hotel in Western Australia taped to a mattress covered in alcohol. So I would say this is the wildest band I've played with, yeah.

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**What do you mainly use now?**  
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**Through what amp?**  
When I was a kid my friends mum had an amp that she had fixed up at the music shop but she didn't really want it any more. So I paid for it and have used it ever since. It's an early 70's Peavey Classic.

**Any effects?**  
I've dabbled, but really all I use is the tremelo and reverb on my amp and a home made gain pedal. It goes up to eleven.

**What would be your worst guitar nightmare?**  
Guitar getting smashed on a plane.

**Most memorable guitar performance seen?**  
Jon Spencer Blues Explosion at Melbourne Big Day Out about 3 years ago.

**Most memorable of your gigs?**  
Album launch at the Corner Hotel (Richmond) recently.

**What's Matt Walker up to for rest of 2003?**  
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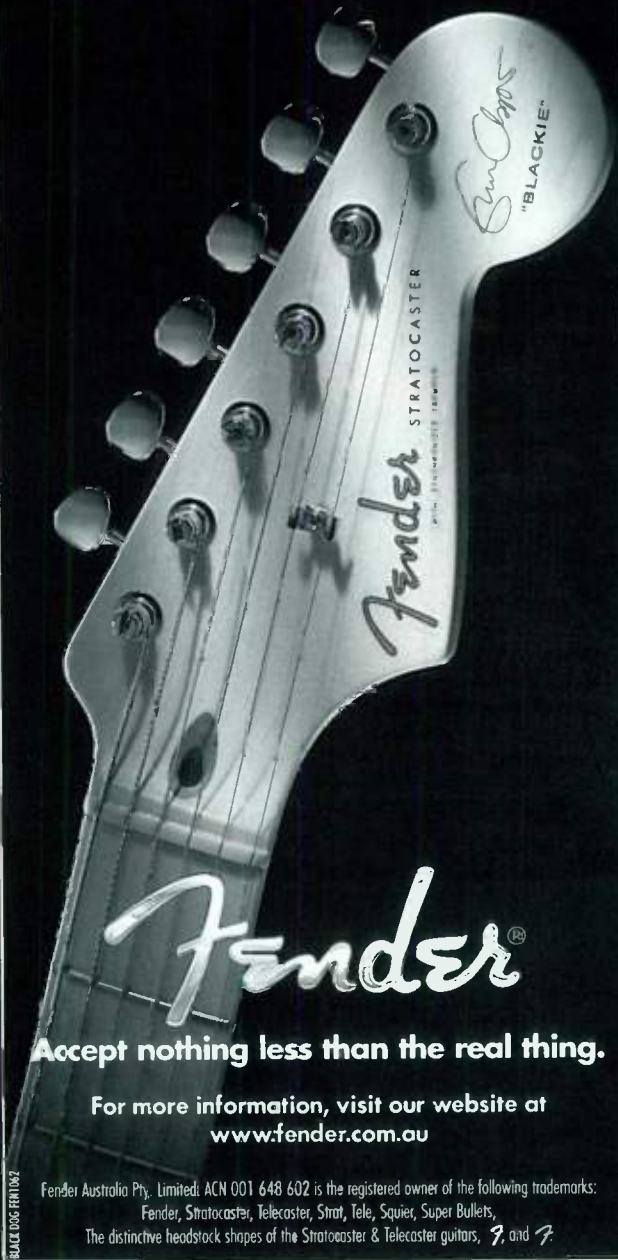
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# JUNKIE XL

Mention the name Tom Holkenborg to most people and they would most likely struggle to place his name. Mention Elvis Presley and there's no such problem. Well Holkenborg is the guy who put Elvis back at the top of the charts in 24 countries via his reworking of the somewhat obscure track 'A Little Less Conversation'. It became synonymous with the soccer world cup and if you haven't heard it by now then what are you doing with a copy of 'Australian Musician' in the Gobi desert? It's been everywhere. But this amazing level of success is really only a small part of Holkenborg's story. More usually known as Junkie XI, or just JXL due to American industry nervousness about drug references, Holkenborg is a regular workaholic and it was this ethos that inspired his project name. Friends apparently described him as a studio junkie, and his personal vision is to expand musical limits – hence Junkie XL. He co produced Sasha's 'airdrawndagger' album; has released his own very successful Junkie XL albums; has produced music for TV commercials, films and video games; and produced artists like Fear Factory.

It first came across Holkenborg via his work as part of 90s industrial rockers Nerve. He had already been in a moderately successful band by then, and via his work at a music shop (quaintly called 'Music Shop') in his homeland of Holland he had come into contact with synthesizers and become intrigued by the possibilities of electronic music. 'There was still a lot of anarchy in me' he states in explanation of Nerve, 'and I wanted to make hard, aggressive music.....basically over the years I mellowed and I moved more towards the dance music side...' He states that he has consistently been interested in the fusion of electronics and various styles of more populist music. What actually got him signed to the Road Runner label, an international label more usually known for its metal acts, was doing remixes for their artists. The fusion of guitar energy and electronics impressed them and the first Junkie XL album surfaced, 'Saturday Teenage Kick'. Given its rock meets electronica sound it was not entirely surprising that Junkie XL hit the road as a band playing alongside The Prodigy. It was the second album 'Big Sound of the Drags' that attracted the attention of DJ superstar Sasha, specifically the track 'Future in Computer Hell' which was included on the Global Underground Ibiza compilation. An album collaboration with Sasha followed.

Holkenborg survived a health scare when he was just 27. I asked him if that contributed to his decision to do Junkie XL and veer away from the more aggressive styles. 'It was a separate issue.....I was producing bands and it just takes so much energy...' Clearly note enjoying the vast volume of work he was attempting he decided to concentrate on his own material. 'I still work sixty hours a day, but it feels more relaxing!' His studio sounds a bit unusual in that he states he doesn't use MIDI. He does have 'a proper studio with all the good analogue gear' and enjoys the 'combination of sounds' this affords him. Pro Tools allows him to edit tracks and he's not afraid at all of recording live musicians and using chunks of their work in tracks. A little unusual for a dance music producer but indicative of his background with band production.

I had to ask Holkenborg if he got a co writing credit for 'A Little Less Conversation'?

'At least it's called JXL versus Elvis so that says it all but of course I didn't write the tune. With remixes it's always like.....even if you take just a bar of vocal and you make a whole new track, they would still say it's written by the original artist. I basically got a fee upfront.....' Holkenborg points out that Junkie XI has three main aspects, one of which is writing originals, another is remixing and the third is music for movies and commercials. The whole thing came about however when Nike approached him to do the music for the world championship advertisement, which led to the remix idea, and certainly won't hurt sales of his original music.

The attraction of electronic music for Holkenborg is 'the flexibility on one hand, and the sound on the other. I really like the idea of the sound designing you can do nowadays with programs, it's absolutely insane and I really like that...' He talks about spending a day playing with sounds to the point where 'you can not tell their origin anymore, and I really like that idea.' In fact it's the whole idea of music production that gets him animated and it's clear that even with so much success, his passion for creating sound has not diminished. He advises new producers to 'explore all the possibilities of the programs' available to them. He sees the sonic potentials as being 'limitless.....it's really a case of trial and error and just keep on going.....something like what I did was fifteen to twenty years and at a certain point luck is going to smile upon you, and things will come together'. Which is a bit of an understatement!

Gone are the days when Holkenborg was 'part psychiatrist, part engineer' trying to get the best performance from bands he was producing. Large scale success has allowed him to increasingly do things on his own terms. His new album 'Radio JXL' features two CDs and guest vocals from an impressive array of established artists including Gary Numan and Republika's Saffron. And he even finds time to work with lesser known artists such as Australia's Infusion. I asked him about the benefits or pitfalls of such huge success and he stated, 'to a certain amount I like that aspect, and from a producer point of view I think it's great to create this massive success with this Elvis tune, but now I'm here on the Gold Coast in Australia and I can just walk around, and no body knows who I am, which is great I think.' He seems to really enjoy the anonymity whilst also realising that having such huge success is a privilege and a big part of now being able to create exactly the music he wants. Talking to him it's hard not to be struck by just how sensible and non egotistical he is. And just for once he provides proof that nice guys don't come second.....they come first in 24 countries and counting.

By Baz ([www.psyburbia.co.uk](http://www.psyburbia.co.uk))



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# ROLLING STONES' PIANO MAN

## CHUCK LEAVELL

Story: Greg Phillips  
Pix: Marty Williams



There's something almost romantic (in a rock n'roll kind of way) about entering the Rolling Stones lair. It's a place where many a rock n' roll legend was born, a place where you never believe you'll ever find yourself. Of course times have changed, not so much of a need to lock up your daughters when the The Stones hit town now. Nevertheless, there was still an element of surrealism as I walked through the lobby of Melbourne's Park Hyatt Hotel on my way to speak with The Stones' piano player of 20 years, Chuck Leavell while he was in town with the band on their Forty Licks tour. Any image of rock n' roll excess, pretentiousness, and even perception of where I actually was disappeared quickly as Chuck invited me to "Come on in." Chuck is as down-home as they come and made Marty, our photographer and myself feel like we were old friends who had come to visit.

**M**usically, Chuck is an old friend to many of us. His first contribution to rock history was as keyboard player with the Allman Brothers on their legendary *Brothers and Sisters* album. From the Allmans he formed the 70s instrumental band many musicians still hold in high regard, Sea Level (note the name C.Leavell). Recordings and gigs followed with Eric Clapton, George Harrison, Aretha Franklin, The Marshall Tucker Band, Indigo Girls and many more contemporary music icons. In 1982 he joined the Stones' *Tattoo You* tour and has been with the band ever since. He's not only a fine piano player, he's also an incredibly knowledgeable and thoughtful conservationist. He owns a timber plantation/ nature reserve in Georgia and has just released a book on forestry called *Forever Green*. A companion piece to the forestry book is his beautiful and eloquently played solo piano CD called *Forever Blue*. Needless to say, there is much to discuss with Chuck Leavell.

**The solo album that you've just released 'Forever Blue', was that recorded at home?**

I recorded this at my friend Paul Hornsby's studio. I wanted to do some of it at my place, but I was having technical problems with my studio at the time and I was in a hurry to get into the studio. I thought why not just call Paul, he's twenty minutes away, has a nice studio. I thought it would be nice to have someone on the other side of the glass to critique and help engineer it.

**Was it very long in planning?**

I was well overdue for a solo album. I kept getting calls to go on tour, and I kept procrastinating. During the last two Stones tours I spent a lot of time in the dressing room on a digital piano, writing and practising. At the same time I was writing a book, *Forever Green* my book on forestry. I wrote

**Let's talk about your gear ... your main synthesiser is a Korg Triton?**

I've been associated with Korg for a long long time. I think they make really great gear. The Triton is a multi-faceted, multi capable instrument. I use it for a lot of things, but also on stage I use a Yamaha P200, for the piano. I also use a MIDI B which is a Hammond organ fitted with MIDI by a company called Keyboard Specialities that 's in St. Petersburg Florida. Paul Homb is the guy who fitted it out and he's the best I know of with the Hammond Organ. Not



**What were you using in The Allman Brothers days?**

We carried a Steinway, with a Countryman pickup to get it through the amplification. Greg Allman played B3, and I also used a Fender Rhodes. We would do these long solos. I would get to play a 10 minute solo if I wanted. I got into muting the piano strings as something interesting to do during the course of my solo. Our roadie at the time, Dwights London saw me doing that and he was very inventive. He said if you're doin' that you can't use both hands, I'd like to come up with a piano mute for you. So he did. It was an incredible thing that went across the top of the harp of the piano. It used hydraulics and was connected to a foot pedal. The hydraulics would push the mute down on top of the strings.

**"... you don't want a perfect Rolling Stones now! If you have that it doesn't work. It's gotta fall apart every now and then ... and it does"**

**When you joined The Stones, was there anything that surprised you about the band?**

What surprised me was their knowledge of American roots music, much broader than my own. I think it was more precious to them growing up than it was to us in America. It was difficult for them to get the kind of records they wanted to hear. They studied it a little closer. They knew all the labels and what year things were recorded, and all the musicians that played on them. Charlie fascinated me too with his knowledge of jazz. I was a fan as a kid playing Rolling Stones records at the YMCA. I knew the work, and it wasn't difficult for me to fit in. I had the attitude of just do

the book *Forever Green* because I felt there was a lot of misunderstanding in the world on what forestry is. There are those who say you should never cut a tree. Well if you don't cut a tree, you are not going to have that piano or nice piece of furniture or house or even magazines. The important thing is how you do it. While I think the word sustainability is well overused, basically the concept is correct. You want to make sure you are planting, growing and managing more wood than you are harvesting. It's as simple as that. So I was working on both the book and album and I thought why not bring them out at the same time. The CD I called *Forever Blue*, mainly because I'm a blues player no matter what. I thought it would be an interesting concept to marry the two together and promote them together. I thought it was just a wonderful way to make a statement about the resource of wood, and doing an album using an instrument that is made of wood

only does he know the Hammond and the Leslie, but he does a great job of putting together a combination that you're looking for. Not only do I have a B3 from him but also a 8100 that I bought too. He does a great job of fitting them with MIDI, which has been great for me particularly with Clapton and The Stones. A lot of the times I will have my piano assigned to the lower manual and playing chords and comps with my left hand on the B3, then on the upper manual I get to use the organ sounds. I also have a good ol' Wurlitzer, an old noisy thing. It still makes a sound that is hard to reproduce accurately but I enjoy using that. Also a Kurzweil sampler that we get a couple of sounds out of ... sitar sounds which I use on 'Street Fighting Man'. A couple of times I use the Wurlitzer sounds on the Triton which are very, very good. We use it for all the string sounds on songs like 'Angie' or 'Paint It Black'. We use it for choral sounds on 'Can't Always Get What You Want' for that big vocal build up at the end.

what you gotta do. Either it works or it doesn't, don't try to adjust yourself to be someone you're not. That was my attitude and I think it served me well.

**Did you go back and listen to Ian's and Nicky's playing?**  
I knew it pretty well. When *Beggars Banquet* came out we played that thing 40 times in a row. I remember where I was when I first heard 'Honky Tonk Woman', even though it doesn't really have a piano on the record. Sure I went back in a few cases and did some detail work just to get things a little more proper, if you will. That gave me an even better respect for those players. Nicky Hopkins was a master musician, I call him the motif master. He had an amazing way of coming up with little phrases, much like Keith has a talent for riffs. Nicky had a gift of the little quick melody, the motif. Billy Preston, goes without saying he's the funk master and has that gospel thing. He was already an influence on me before he was working with The Stones. Stu, I didn't know who Stu was until all this came about. Stu didn't like playing on slow songs. I would say Stu, you're a great player, why aren't you on all the Stones songs?" Why Nicky Hopkins and Billy Preston, all these other guys?" He said "I don't like slow songs, they're boring, don't like minor chords they sound Chinese". All he wanted to do was to play the boogie stuff. He was wonderfully eccentric

Continued over page



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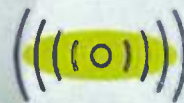
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**ROLLING STONES' PIANO MAN**  
**CHUCK LEAVELL** CONTINUED

**A lot of players say that when they're playing live, they listen to the drummer, or sometimes the bass player. In the Stones who does your ear hone in on?**

I think it is so important to listen to everything, and I try to do that no matter what band I'm playing in. I'm all ears man. To me that's the most important thing a musician can do because you never know who is going to come up with a little something you can build on. But I gotta say Charlie Watts is the driving force behind this band. I'm very comfortable when I can hear Charlie really well. If I am physically close to him like I am on the 'B' stage, that makes it even better. (The Stones used a second stage on this tour which sat at the opposite end of the venue to the main stage, consequently everyone got to see them up close)

**Are there some nights when you feel the playing is at another level?**

Yeh sure. I'll say this about the band. When I first came into the band in '82, it was a lot looser than it is now. I think the band was reborn in '89 on the Steel Wheels tour. I think the attitude before was 'let's just go play' and not worry about things so much. They had a huge body of work, but often times it was a bit sloppy. In '89 I think there was a concerted effort to tighten things up. There was an effort to rehearse and make it tighter, and make it as good as it can be. But within the confines of The Rolling Stones, with that caveat, because you don't want a perfect Rolling Stones now! If you have that it doesn't work. It's gotta fall apart every now and then ... and it does. That's something else I'll say about this band. Groups I have been with in the past, they have taken themselves too seriously. You know, you have an accident on stage, a minor train wreck and everybody freaks out, gets upset. With the Stones it's like "wasn't that cool". That's a tradition with the Stones. In the twenty years I have been with the band, I truly believe this is the best we've sounded.

**What do you see your role as?**

Well it's not a role to step out and do long solos like in The Allman Brothers band. My role I think is to be a catalyst. Aside from being a musical catalyst. I also see my role as being a catalyst to keep track of this enormous body of work. Which I do. I have these two huge books which I've kept over the years. Every time we rehearse a tune, I do a chord chart and often we'll do changes from the record and I'll make a note of that. If we've changed the horn arrangement or changed the background vocals, sometimes the keys have changed. It's 'Only Rock n Roll' was in the key of E on the record and we do it in B. So I keep this database. Often times Keith will ask what key is 'Dead Flowers' in or 'what's the bridge?'. So I have to be ready with quick answers.

I do the set list every night and I submit it to Mick and if he sees something he disagrees with, naturally we change that. Then we show it to Keith, and he has his comments but I'm the one who gets to make the first draft.

You're always going to do 'Satisfaction' and 'Jumpin' Jack Flash', and 'Sympathy' or whatever. But it's the more obscure ones you want to change around. But we came up with this album theme for this tour.

One night we'd have a *Let It Bleed* theme, another night it might be *Exile On Main Street*, where we'd do three or four songs in a row from these albums.

**At what stage are new songs brought to you?**

These days, most of the time Mick and Keith write separately. I recall a recent interview where somebody asked Keith what his role was in 'Don't Stop'. His answer was it was all Mick. All he did was add the fairy dust. While a tune may have already been written, Keith makes that immeasurable

contribution just by the fact that he strums his guitar on it. The song takes all the character it needs because Keith is one of the primary songwriters for the Rolling Stones. When we were in Paris, we were doing one of the four new songs that are on the *Forty Licks* album. It was one of Mick's songs but Keith wasn't happy with the bridge. Don Was, the producer put them both in the same room. He got everyone else out of the way and asked them both to write a bridge, and they did, and it was wonderful to see.

**What's the best thing about being in The Rolling Stones?**

The two hours you spend on stage. That's the obvious answer, when you're playing the music. The most fun I have is in rehearsals because that's when you get to do all these lovely songs that they won't play. I get so frustrated. You got 300 odd songs to choose from and we only do 40 or 50. So the rehearsals are a highlight for me. What else is good? Well it's all done in fine fashion, you stay in nice places, travel first class, but that's also hard. Being away from home is hard. But the Stones are witty, they're funny, they're family. It's a good family.

Readers can find out more about Chuck Leavell on his website [www.chuckleavell.com](http://www.chuckleavell.com)

The solo album 'Forever Blue', currently unavailable in Australia can be purchased through his site. Readers can also find out more about forestry and Chuck's plantation at [www.charlane.com](http://www.charlane.com)



# QUEEN'S BRIAN MAY >>

Melbourne has been chosen to host the Australian premiere of "WE WILL ROCK YOU" the futuristic rock musical based on the music of British supergroup Queen and featuring 24 of their biggest hits. The musical is a huge success in London's West End with bookings taken through until early 2004. "We Will Rock You" was written by Ben Elton, whose penmanship was responsible for legendary TV shows like 'Black Adder' and 'The Young Ones'. "We Will Rock You" debuts at Melbourne's Regent Theatre on August 7 this year. Elton, along with Queen guitarist Brian May and drummer Roger Taylor were recently in town to audition potential cast members. Australian Musician's Greg Phillips managed to grab ten minutes with Brian May to talk about the show and that distinctive Queen sound.

**GP:** Your guitar sound is very distinctive and plays a huge part in the sound of Queen, so how much attention is paid to the sound of the band in the stage show?

**BM:** The band is the driving force in the show so a lot of time was spent with it. We were determined that the band would not sound like your regular pit band in a musical, so they are a real rock band. They play some of my licks but they don't have to be me.

**GP:** I noticed in the promotional footage of the London show that one of your replica guitars was played, was that one of the guitars that the Australian luthier, Greg Fryer produced for you?

**BM:** No they're too precious. It's a Burns copy. I have a new edition of the Brian May model in England that is made by Burns, who actually made the pickups I used on the original. So those are the ones the guys use in the show. So we go to a lot of trouble to get the sound but the band don't have to be robots. They have a bit of freedom to play the licks that they want to play in certain parts of the show. The show is very big, very theatrical.

**GP:** If Freddie had been alive, what would Queen be sounding like now?

**BM:** Good question. Bigger, better and louder I'm sure. It's hard to say really. I know for a fact Freddie would have loved this project even if we hadn't been together as a band.

This is a great extension of our oeuvre, as Ben calls it. I don't know what the band would be doing? We'd just be playing and making more music. We'd probably be still doing the individual things that we still do.

**GP:** Is there much material laying around? Were you the type of band who recorded stuff and shelved it?

**BM:** Yes. At the moment we are still sifting through it but there will be a box set at some point of our unfinished stuff. We put a lot of stuff down on tape.

**GP:** I just wanted to go back to Greg Fryer if I could and discuss the work he did for you with your Red Special guitar...

**BM:** Well Greg is an amazing craftsman. I have never met anyone like him. He spent 2 years making 3 copies of my guitar, in identical ways I made my original. He went to so much trouble to replicate every single material and technique. Every thousandth of an inch was checked. Those things are masterpieces. I have two of them and he has one. Mine are called John and George and his is called Paul. Those things are stupendous, so whenever I go out and play, they are sitting beside me. I use them for different tunings. I still use my original most of the time but if there is a different tuning or have to change the guitar for another reason then I will pick up a Greg Fryer guitar.

**GP:** He's developing pedals under your name too I believe?

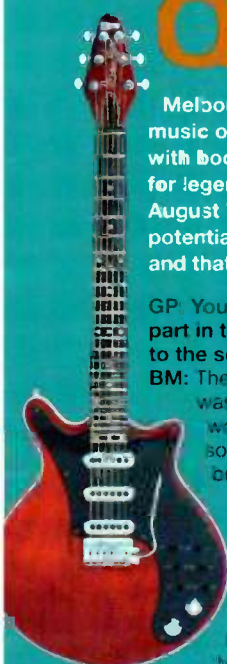
**BM:** He's very much into pedals now. Part of my sound is that treble booster which is a modification of the old Greenwich master circuit. So Greg has been working on those and extended them. He makes great treble boosters and I use them all the time.

**GP:** Will they be commercially available?

**BM:** Yes I think he plans to do that. Greg moves very carefully and slowly with the utmost precision so nothing happens quickly but happens to the highest possible quality.

**GP:** Apart from producing rock shows, what else takes up your day?

**BM:** Producing rock shows takes up a lot of time. I've devoted the last year of my life to this, almost exclusively. I don't sleep. I do stuff the whole time. I have so many hobbies. I'm passionately into Victorian photography and astronomy. I'm passionately into various kinds of computer stuff. I'm very involved in my website now. It's something



The Red Special copy that Burns UK produce. Fine and affordable, but not to be confused with the detailed replicas that Aussie Greg Fryer has built (See story below).



## A word with GREG FRYER, builder of Brian May guitar replicas

After speaking with Brian about his replica guitars, I put in a quick call to Australian guitar builder, Greg Fryer to see how the Brian May connection originally came about

**GP:** When did you first meet Brian May?

**GF:** I met Brian in 1996. Basically I wrote to him through his management because I had been a big fan of his music and of his guitar for a number of years. I was interested in making a much more accurate replica of his guitar than those that had been done to date by the various people that had attempted it. I'd been involved in guitar making and electronics since the 1980s and had become well known in Sydney for the guitars and pickups I had been making. Fortunately they (Brian and his guitar tech) had heard of my name and checked out all the bone fides, and it was the right opportunity for them and me at the same time. Brian was

looking for someone to make an accurate replica too. I flew to London in July 96 to meet him. I looked at his guitar in great detail and took measurements. He and his guitar tech, Pete were very, very helpful. They gave me great access to his guitar and studio. I came back and researched every detail and 18 months later I had completed three replicas of his guitar which I then took back to England in November '97. They were extremely pleased with the work that I had done.

**GP:** You rebuilt his original too didn't you?

**GF:** That was the main project Brian had in mind. Amazingly he had played that guitar, the Red Special for 30 years and it virtually never received any repair work. But by that stage there was a long list of things that he was anxious to have looked at

**GP:** And you're also working on some pedals?

**GF:** For last 4 years I have been involved in the process of research and development on different pedals which are signature



which has enabled me to become closer to the world. I've always been in my own sort of sheltered world. It might sound strange, I've been all over the world, but I've been slightly insulated. The website has enabled me to become more aware of what's out there and enabled me to communicate in a two way fashion, I'll probably be typing away tonight on what happened here. So there's a little bit of a journal aspect and it's a bit of an interactive website, and of course it's not a Queen website. I mean obviously there is a Queen website which I contribute to, but with this one I can say what I like. I don't have to put out an official view. (brianmaynews.com)

**GP: You have recorded two solo albums Back To the Light and Another World, will there be a third solo album?**

**BM:** I'd like to do one more, not this year. I suppose what's happened in this situation is that I have put the Queen hat back on. I was very loathe to wear it for a long time. I found it painful, restrictive and I sort of protested too much if you know what I mean. I just had to get away but now I'm happy wearing the Queen hat, and the Queen hat brings a lot of bonuses. You instantly communicate with a lot more people if you call it Queen than if you call it Brian May. So I'm reaping the benefit of that. Roger and I get on well now, we didn't always. We have very different artistic ideas and sometimes that's been a strain, but at the moment we seem to have evolved a way of dealing with each other. That's a big help.

Note: Vox has just released a new Brian May model amplifier which can be used in conjunction with a Burns Red Special copy guitar to produce those classic Queen tones.

*We Will Rock You opens at Melbourne's Regent Theatre on August 7. General Phone and counter bookings ON SALE JUNE 2. Call Ticketek on 132 849. www.ticketek.com or for groups of 16 or more call Gleada on 03.9299 9003*



Roger Taylor, Ben Elton and Brian May at the media launch of the stage show "We Will Rock You", which begins in Melbourne on August 7th.

Brian May pedals. I've been making those for the last 18 months. They've been commercially available, but they are hand made, very expensive items. I'm doing all the work and going to great lengths and thoroughness. They are available only from me direct only, they're not the type of thing you will find in stores. However, I've just finished development of a particular pedal for the Burns company, a prototype which they hope will be mass produced in China as part of a Burns Brian May/Fryer pedal. It's kind of a Treble Boost/Overdrive pedal that works with all the regular amps as opposed to just the AC30 that Brian uses. Brian uses the first very original developed channel that sounds very 'bassy' and unlike any other amp on earth. Burns wanted a pedal that would work with all amps.

I've also got 8 or 9 of my own range that has been developed over the last couple of years. From acoustic guitar pre amps to bass pre amps, and guitar pedals from big fuzzy distortions to overdrive boost pedals.

Those interested in Greg Fryer products can reach him on 02 9938 3379.



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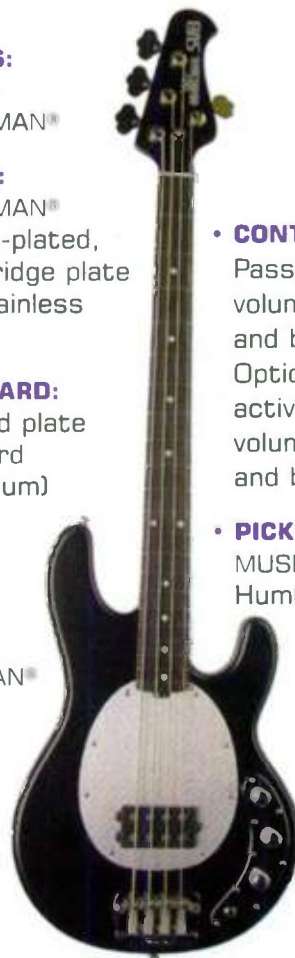
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# SANTANA

Those who were fortunate enough to witness any of Santana's shows on their recent 'Shamen' tour of Australia would have marvelled at the musicianship displayed, not only by Carlos himself but also the members of his unbelievable band. Christie Eliezer spoke to Carlos about the tour and all things spiritual. (Pix by Marty Williams)

Every time Carlos Santana comes to Sydney, he makes it a habit to go to the zoo. He goes in search of the black panther. He is inspired by how, unlike the other animals, the beast never lies down or feels defeated. He never seems bored. Says Santana, every time he looks at the panther's eyes, he sees jazz legend Miles Davis. It also reminds him never to get bored. Santana takes very seriously the idea of performing music, and of music's link with spirituality. Each day he wakes at 6 am on his property in California's San Rafael, heads to his study (which is filled with guitars, jazz bootlegs and a Spider Man pinball machine) to light incense and candles to meditate and

communicate with his angel Metatron. He swears by Metatron. In 1996, the angel appeared to him as an eye inside a triangle, and told him his career would change. That he would be heard on radio, that he would start to draw huge crowds and he'd spread his spirituality to them. "Be patient, gracious and grateful," he had told the guitarist. In those days, Santana records were selling 500,000 copies each - typical of a Baby Boomer hero from the Woodstock era. Then, of course, "Supernatural" went on to sell 20 million worldwide, followed by his tribute to Metatron, "Shamen".



**Q: You must have been surprised to be told back in 1996 that you would one day be on radio again.**

**A:** "Totally, because after having had hits with 'Soul Sacrifice' and 'Black Magic Woman' and 'Evil Ways', by 1972 when I made 'Caravanserai' I thought my relationship with radio was over. I wanted to play with people like Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter, and thought that ambition meant that radio was out of the question. But I had just been close minded. I had forgotten that the real masters had never seen such boundaries. Miles Davis did a version of Cyndi Lauper's 'Time After Time' and John Coltrane did 'My Favourite Things'. So you can do both."

**Q: How do you best describe your concerts these days?**

**A:** "It became like a holy experience. We see people dancing, laughing and crying at the same time. It's like a revival meeting. Mohawks, suits, straight hairs, grandchildren, grandmothers, tie-dyes, metal T-shirts... Do they all get the same thing from Santana music? Yes, because we're all unique but we all feel the same."

**"What you need to know about the note that you play is what's ripe and what isn't ripe."**

**Q: It's funny that while you're idolised as a pioneers of Latin rock, initially when you were a teenager you didn't like that kind of music.**

**A:** "I didn't feel anything for it. I loved blues and rock. It didn't impress my dad who played in a mariachi band and wanted me to do the same. I went to San Francisco, this poor kid from Tijuana, to see B.B. King at the Fillmore. I hero worshipped B.B. He came on, and the audience gave him a standing ovation, and he got tearful. Then he played one note - ONE NOTE - and that changed everything for me."

That was the sound that I'd always followed. I hadn't found it in my father's band. But it was right there with B.B's music."

**Q: One of the reasons why the band Santana sounds so distinctive is that the congas is approached as a melodic instrument.**

**A:** "That's what I learned from listening to jazz drummers. They see congas as melodic instruments, even though most people don't think so. I think of them as bass patterns. It's funny but I always see myself as the sole female in the band. Because I play the melody. To me, melody is feminine and rhythm is masculine."

**Q: What crew you to play with POD?**

**A:** "Their passion and their Christian beliefs."

**Q: Are you at a disadvantage if you don't know how to read music?**

**A:** "Just remember, the birds outside your window each morning cannot read music. Yet they have beautiful songs. What you need to know about the note that you play is what's ripe and what isn't ripe."

**Q: How do the 11 members psyche up before a show?**

**A:** "Ten, or twenty minutes before the show, we commune. We wait in silence, we breathe together and we think enlightening thoughts."

**Q: How do you cope with the pressures of fame?**

**A:** "The beautiful actress, Ingrid Bergman said to treat success and failure as the same impostor. I've been married to the same incredible woman for 30 years, I've lived in the same house. My greatest moment is still going on holiday with my wife and our three children to our place in Maui (in Hawaii) and spend time together, play tennis, read books, listen and share each others' experiences. My family is sacred, my experiences with them are as sacred to me as, say, my experiences with celebrities like Desmond Tutu or Wayne Shorter or Nelson Mandela. Money and fame don't change me, I refuse to let them."

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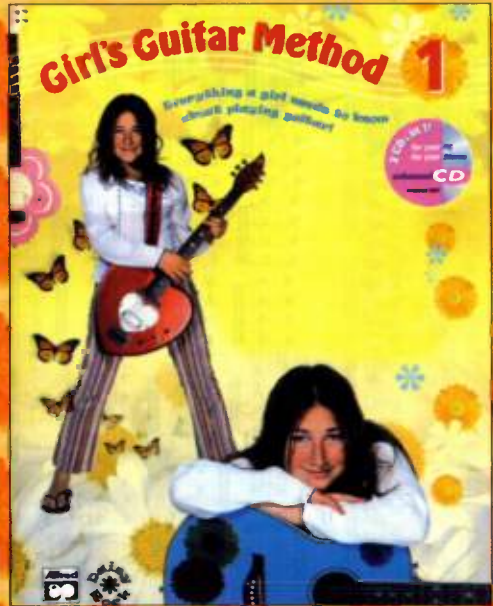
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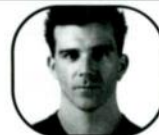
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# Paradiddle Extensions -Part 2

by Grant Collins



Now that you are familiar with paradiddle extensions – part one using quintuplets, and the various inversions, I'd like to add an extra bass drum to the pattern, which will give us 16th note triplets:

R L R R      L R L L L

Now that you've got the different ideas with the paradiddle extensions, here is a 16 bar exercise which combines all of the variations that we have looked at so far. At first, this is going to look pretty scary. Just treat each bar as an exercise until you can play them all individually. Then the next step is to put them all together. Good luck and I'll see you next time...

## 16 Bar Paradiddle Extension Exercise

R L R R L R L L L R L R R      L R L L      R L R R      L R L L      R L L R L L R L

R L R L L R R L R L R R      L R L L R L R R      L R L L R L L R L L

R L R R L R L R R L R R      L R L L R L R L L R L R R R L R L R L L

R L R R L R L L R L R R      L L R L R R R L R L L R L R L L L

R R L R L R L L R L L R L R L L R L R R L R R L R L R R L R L L

R L L R L R R L R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L

R L R R L L R L R L R R L R R L R L R L L R L L R L R L L

R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R R L R L L R L

Grant is a professional performing artist who has built a reputation as being a leader in his field and a pioneer of new techniques. His success in Australia is easily documented by the thousands, which have attended his solo performances. He has also been very successful on the international scene, having done several solo tours of Asia and most recently a series of highly successful solo performances in the United States. Website: [www.grantcollins.com](http://www.grantcollins.com)

# Quick Guitar Tips

by Simon  
Patterson



Welcome to this edition's guitar column. Following the theme of self-improvement, here's a list of quick tips to get you thinking about how you approach the guitar. This is a bit of a compilation of ideas passed on covering both playing and equipment.

## 1. Play more acoustic

There's nothing but you and the guitar and requires you to generate all the sound from your hands. Builds strength and definition in your playing. Makes the electric guitar seem comparatively easy.

## 2. Try your electric guitar sound dry

By this I mean play without any time-based effects such as reverb and delay. The focus then shifts towards the quality of your tone (especially distorted tones) and the nuances of your playing.

## 3. Go to the source

If you take contemporary players such as Tommy Emmanuel or John Scofield, find out who their influences were and listen in turn to some of their recordings. This gives you a fresh perspective on how to develop your own style and voice. For example, in the case of Tommy, listen to some Merle Travis, Chet Atkins or James Burton. With John Scofield, listen to some Jim Hall or John Coltrane. This gives you a whole different perspective and also exposes you to music you may not have been aware of.

## 4. Record yourself

Any chance you get to record your playing, be it at home, rehearsal or gig, the better. Recording allows you to scrutinise your playing in all areas; your time, tone and phrasing all become present for you to analyse.

## 5. Try playing in different styles

Playing styles that are foreign to you allows you to gain fresh perspectives and a whole different appreciation of other musical genres. If you are a rock player, try some classical or country and see what it can add to your own voice.

## 6. Bigger strings

If you use either 9-42s or 10-46 gauge strings, try using 11s or even 12s, for an ultra big sound. The higher the gauge, the more mass creates a larger image to your sound.

## 7. Small amps

If you regularly use 100 watt or 60 watt amps, try using a small 20 or 30 watt valve combo. You can often achieve greater control with the smaller amps as they clip earlier. Also, the lower rated speakers in these amps compress earlier which adds to the sound. Ideal for smaller sized venues – tone!

## 8. Make the most of your time

Set goals and be specific towards what you're working on. Don't just play things you're already comfortable with – try working on that transcription or picking exercise.

## 9. See other guitarists play live

It still surprises me how many students I come across who don't go to see various guitarists play live. Live playing is the real deal and there's something you get from the experience of seeing someone play in person that is hard to duplicate otherwise.

## 10. Maintain your equipment

If you can, try to get your equipment serviced regularly. This is important not only from a reliability point, but also from a consistency view point. When you're trying to achieve an individual voice, having your equipment set up to your own needs plays a large part.

Hopefully there are a few points covered here that might add to your approach to the guitar!

Check out Simon's website at [www.users.bigpond.com/simonpatterson/](http://www.users.bigpond.com/simonpatterson/) for latest updates on his gigs and recordings.



## Get Connected

by George Urbaszek



The hookup of bass and drums is arguably the most important connection of any two instruments in most music genres. Before you can get connected, you must be very comfortable with your own part. You must be able to play that part consistently with a good groove. First listen to the drum part while humming your own part. Don't play your part at this stage, as that may detract from concentrating on the drums. Does your humming groove with the drums? If not, consider changing elements such as note duration, articulation and rhythm. Once this is sorted out, play with the drummer. The drummer, in turn, may have to do exactly what you did, because it is possible that the bass groove is great to begin with. Wouldn't that be good!

If you have no bass part to begin with, but an excellent drum groove, then begin with extracting the bass drum rhythm and play along with that. If the bass drum rhythm is complex, extract a "core" or "central" rhythm and play that.

Here is an example of a relatively complex bass drum rhythm:



And here is an extracted core rhythm:



After playing this rhythm on one note until it grooves, start adding more notes. One note:



More notes, possibly chord roots:



Experiment with note duration and articulation.

Let's stick with the target notes (C, A, F) and add leading and passing tones:



Check out how it relates to the bass drum rhythm now! You can, and should, work out the other rhythmic events in the drum pattern and relate your part to those too.

If you are in any way serious about your involvement in a band, then it is imperative that you do separate bass and drum rehearsals. This is where you can fine tune elements such as dynamics, placement of rhythmic events in relation to the absolute beat ... and much more. The results of such rehearsals are immediately noticeable by the other band members, possibly inspiring them to get their act together as well.

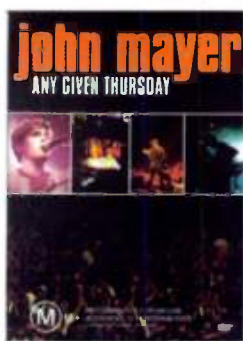
Until next time – where I will address preparation for recording sessions – groove it up and stay connected!

**For my ready-made lesson on CD titled "Groove Creation" or for the bass and drums play-along CD titled "The Feel of the Real Deal" please contact me through any medium listed below.**

**George Urbaszek is a freelance bass player of almost any style of music. He offers uniquely individualised bass lessons by tape. For more information, visit his website: [www.creativebass.com](http://www.creativebass.com) phone 02 66886143, or email: [bassbytape@austarmetro.com.au](mailto:bassbytape@austarmetro.com.au) SPECIAL! For a limited time only, contact George for your FREE bass lesson by tape.**

### ANY GIVEN THURSDAY

John Mayer (Sony Music)

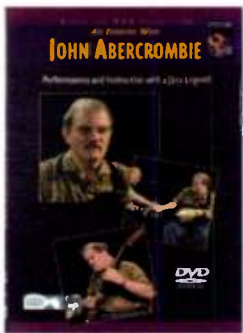


Early last year as John Mayer's debut album "Room For Squares" was slowly climbing the US charts, his record company had him doing showcase media gigs here in Australia. The one I was invited to on a cold winter night in Melbourne was attended by no more than 50 people. It was obvious to me then that this would be the last time John would ever play to such a small and unknowing crowd. Just 12 months later Mayer is a Grammy Award winning recording artist playing to thousands of eager fans worldwide. 'Any Given

Thursday" is the title of his new live album and also the DVD. Recorded at the Oak Mountain Amphitheater in Birmingham, Alabama, the DVD features a 16 track vibrant performance by John and his band. John performs tracks from his award winning album and his re-released independent disc "Inside Wants Out". The DVD also includes Sound check documentary, 'Next Morning' interview, photo gallery, discography, audio commentary, and comes in PCM stereo Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround Sound.

### AN EVENING WITH JOHN ABERCROMBIE

(Alfred Publishing)



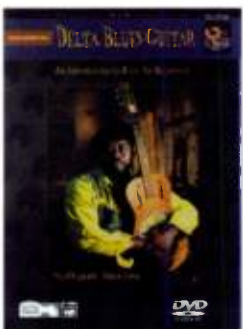
Jazz guitar legend John Abercrombie presents a performance and instruction DVD in another instalment of the always great National Guitar Workshop series. John's amiable personality makes watching and learning from this DVD a joy.

Jazz fans of all levels will delight in this 60 minute collection of performances and conversations. Topics covered include improvising over standards, free improvisation, guitar synthesis, use of scales and composition. DVD is as close as you get to an in-person lesson with

experts in their field. The ability to pause, easily find scenes, slow down frames ensures that learning is no chore. Check out [www.alfred.com/DVD](http://www.alfred.com/DVD) for more information on other Alfred Publishing titles.

### DELTA BLUES GUITAR (BEGINNING)

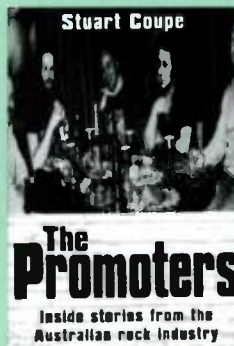
Fruteland Jackson (Alfred Publishing)



Also available as a book and audio CD, the DVD version of Delta Blues Guitar will have your mates naming you Blind Man Chicken in no time. Fruteland Jackson teaches basic chords and strums for playing Delta Blues including slide techniques, authentic blues tunings and their basic chord forms. On screen graphics, close-ups of hand movements, plus simple navigation make learning the blues as easy as momma's pie. Diagrams and examples in standard music notation and tab appear on screen adding to the ease and enjoyment.

### THE PROMOTERS

Stuart Coupe (Hodder Headline)



Sydney based journalist, independent record label director and part-time promoter himself, Stuart Coupe presents a fascinating peek into the world of concert promoting in Australia. Coupe focuses on the big 5 promoters (Gudinski, Chugg, Dainty, Coppel and Jacobsen) currently bringing bands to our shores and reveals some interesting, amusing and sometimes down right frightening accounts of some of the tours that these people have been involved with. Some of the acts and their managers, whose exploits downunder are graphically revealed in the book, are

confirmed as the stereotypical sex, drugs and rock n'roll animals we'd only assumed they might be. Some other portrayals are just down right sad. As for some of the promoters, their moral ground isn't painted any prettier than some of the greedy and selfish rock stars that keep them in business. Anyone with the slightest connection to the local music industry is guaranteed to be at least entertained by The Promoters. Those firmly entrenched in the music biz, and maybe even close to some of the events presented, will knock this one over in a weekend.

### DRUMSET ESSENTIALS VOLUME 2

Peter Erskine (Alfred Publishing)

Author Peter Erskine has been a student of the drums since the age of four, and has recorded on over 400 albums. Credits include performances with Steely Dan, Freddie Hubbard, Weather Report, Chick Corea, Diana Krall and numerous orchestras. The material presented in Volume 2 (of a 3 volume set) is presented with the assumption that you have worked through the first volume in the series. A play-along CD contains tracks with and without drums as well as complete band tracks. The exercises concentrate on advanced coordination of the hands and feet, more highly developed beats and rhythmic comping styles, and the challenge associated with playing slow and fast tempos. All of the material is presented in a nurturing and positive manner, and Pete's unique musical and teaching sensibilities are evident on every page.

### GIRL'S GUITAR METHOD 1

Tish Ciravolo (Alfred Publishing)

Aimed at pre-teen girls, this book and accompanying enhanced CD might just be the thing to inspire young ladies to pick up a guitar, learn a few chords and begin their journey to stardom in the footsteps of Sheryl Crow, Jewel, or Sarah McLachlan. Beginning with the basics like type of guitars available, how to tune, how to hold etc, it graduates up to chords and song exercises. Girls may listen to the CD through their CD player or play it on their PC. The enhanced CD component includes a dictionary of 96 chords and a guitar tuner. You can even adjust the tempo of the songs and record yourself playing with a band. This colourfully illustrated tuition book is as much about inspiration as it is education. Highly recommended.



# Introducing the 828mkII

24-bit 96kHz resolution. DSP-driven mixing and monitoring.  
Front-panel programming. Stand-alone operation.



## 828mkII feature highlights

- **CueMix DSP™** — the 828mkII delivers DSP-driven digital mixing and monitoring for all 20 inputs. Connect mics, guitars, synths and effects processors, and monitor everything from the 828mkII's main outs, headphone out or any other outputs with no separate mixer needed.
- **Front-panel control** — access your entire mix, or any 828mkII setting, directly from the front panel.
- **Stand-alone operation** — program your mixes at the studio and then bring the 828mkII to your gig — no computer needed. Need to tweak the mix? Do it on site using the back-lit LCD and front-panel controls.
- **Multiple CueMix DSP mixes** — create different monitor mixes for the main outs and headphones. Add send/return loops for outboard gear — with no latency.
- **Front-panel mic inputs** — connect a pair of mics or any TRS input with front-panel convenience.
- **Mic/guitar/instrument sends** — insert your favorite outboard EQ, compressor, amp or effects processor to the two mic/guitar inputs, before the signal goes digital.
- **20 inputs / 22 outputs** — there's no channel sharing in the 828mkII; the mic inputs, SPDIF I/O, headphone out and main outs are all handled as separate channels.
- **Support for 96kHz ADAT optical digital I/O (S/MUX)** — provides 4 channels at 88.2 or 96 kHz.
- **Sample-accurate MIDI** — connect a MIDI controller and/or sound module with no separate interface needed. MIDI I/O is sample-accurate with supporting software.

## Basic features

- **Expandable 24-bit 96kHz audio interface** for Macintosh and Windows with 20 channels of input and 22 channels of output (simultaneously).
- **24-bit S/PDIF digital input/output** up to 96 kHz.
- **Sync** — word clock in and out; built-in SMPTE (LTC) in and out; sample-accurate ADAT sync input.
- **Compatible** with virtually all audio software on Mac OS 9, Mac OS X and Windows Me/2K/XP.
- **Includes AudioDesk®** sample-accurate workstation software for Mac OS with 24-bit recording/editing and 32-bit automated mixing/processing/mastering.
- **2 mic/guitar inputs** with phantom power and sends.
- **8 TRS analog inputs** with switchable input levels.
- **8 TRS +4dB analog outputs** — perfect for surround.
- **Separate TRS main outs** and front-panel headphone jack, each with independent volume control.
- **8 channels of 24-bit ADAT optical input/output** with sample-accurate ADAT SYNC.
- **MIDI I/O** — no separate MIDI interface needed.



**MOTU**  
www.motu.com



## NEW FROM FENDER

### • AERODYNE JAZZ BASS

Something very different from Fender is the new Aerodyne Jazz Bass. Cutting-edge bass players looking for a high performance and lightweight bass with a strikingly different appearance will flip over this special edition Jazz Bass featuring a bound Basswood body with a unique 39" radius carved top, a Maple neck with Rosewood fingerboard and matching painted headstock. It's loaded with an Active Precision/Jazz pickup combination and top-mounted controls. Offered in Black.

### • HIGHWAY 1

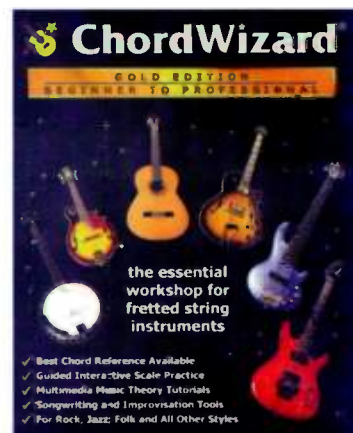
The Highway 1 Stratocaster was a huge hit in 2002. Pleasing to the eye, made in the US, and at an affordable price, Fender has released a new batch of Highway 1s.

The inspiration for the new Highway 1 Series is the Pacific Coast Highway U.S. 1, which winds south through California. It's one of the most scenic drives in the world and has weathered the elements and inspired the creative. The first thing you'll notice about the Highway 1 Series is its unique finish—a high resonance, low gloss, acrylic lacquer that lets the tone ring out and sustain for days. Deep saturated transparent colours over premium Alder, the Highway 1 guitar and basses are loud even before you plug'em in (the acid test for a great sounding electric instrument!) All Highway 1 models feature a special stamped neckplate ("Corona, California") and a Fender gig bag. Highway 1 Telecaster offered with either a Rosewood or Maple neck, Highway 1 Jazz Bass offered with a Rosewood neck, and Highway 1 Precision Bass offered with a Rosewood neck. Also available in Toronado, Stratocaster HSS and Showmaster.

### • STANDARD STRATOCASTER – SATIN FINISH

All the same great features incorporated into the Standard Strat are now available with velvety satin finishes with black pickguards that resonate class! Offered with Rosewood or Maple fingerboards. Made in Ensenada Mexico.

Check all new Fender models out at your local Authorised Fender dealer, or visit the website [www.fender.com.au](http://www.fender.com.au)



## CHORD WIZARD VERSION 2.0 OUT NOW

The upgraded Gold Edition of Chord Wizard, the essential workshop for fretted stringed instruments is now available. Version 2.0 delivers a profound experience of music on the fretboard. Perfect for self-learning or for getting more out of your lessons, it saves you time and money and extends with you as your playing improves. A CD Rom contains 6 walk-through videos which can be played on any Windows PC. These demonstrate how to use Chord Wizard to focus on rhythm playing, lead playing and song writing, with all instruments and playing levels. Features include 5 rich interactive workspaces, universal chord search engine, identification of your own chord shapes, ability to print chord books, tuner, metronome and many other essential tools. An evaluation copy of the software can be downloaded from: [www.chordwizard.com](http://www.chordwizard.com) or call 02 4960 9520 for details on your nearest store.

## MOTU'S 828MKII FIREWIRE AUDIO INTERFACE WITH 20-INPUT, 8-BUS MONITOR MIXER



MOTU, inc. has announced the release of the 828mkII, a single rack-space, FireWire audio interface for Macintosh and Windows computers. The 828mkII replaces the 828 at the same price and adds many new features, including more simultaneous inputs (20) and outputs (22), 24-bit 96kHz operation, 8-bus monitor mixing with front panel LCD programming, stand-alone operation, front-panel mic/guitar/instrument inputs with preamps and sends, SMPTE time code sync and MIDI input/output.

"The 828mkII is equally well-suited for both studio and stage," said Jim Cooper, Director of Marketing at MOTU. "It gives you all the analog and digital I/O you need for desktop recording, including convenient front-panel mic inputs with sends for your favourite compressor, EQ or guitar amp. You can program multiple monitor mixes on-screen with the included CueMix Console software, hit the road, and then tweak mix settings at your gig using the front-panel LCD display, without the computer. And we've added convenient MIDI jacks so you don't need to carry an extra MIDI interface.

For more information please contact: Intellware Australia Pty Ltd Tel: 08 8277 1722 or web: [www.intellware.com.au](http://www.intellware.com.au)

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# Mind

Let your MIND explore the endless tonal possibilities of the TT's clean channel. Warm rich clean tones with masses of headroom.

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Feed your BODY with daily doses of healthy CRUNCHY tone from the TT's CRUNCH channel.

Channel 3

# Spirit

Free your SPIRIT and soar as you play. The TT's amazing lead channel lets you explore the limits of your imagination, get in-touch with your feelings.

Total Tonal Karma

## ROLAND'S VS-2400CD. 24 TRACK RECORDING/CD BURNING



The VS-2400CD Digital Studio Workstation brings professional 24-track recording and CD burning to a new low price. This compact recording workstation inherits many features from the flagship VS-2480CD-like premium analog components, motorized faders and powerful software control-while adding new features of its own such as RSS 3-D panning and V-LINK for integrating Edirol video products. **For further information phone Roland on 02 9982 8266**

## RANDALL AMPLIFIERS

Don Randall started out as Leo Fender's partner and was the man responsible for amplifier design beginning in the 1940's. Eventually, Don decided to start his own company in order to develop new, more radical designs. This became the basis for the Randall Amplifier Company. Today, Randall build a pro-touring line of amplifiers designed specifically to meet the demands of the modern guitarist. Their amps are road-worthy in their dependability and provide the tone that guitarists demand from their equipment.



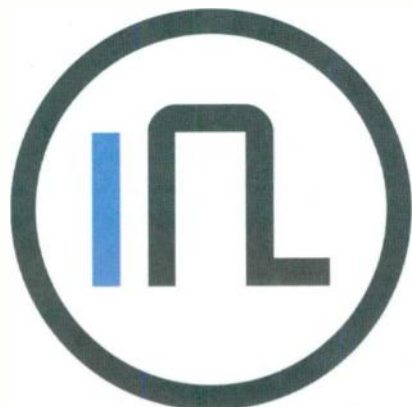
A selection of artists using Randall include Paul Stanley (KISS), Dimebag Darrell (Pantera), Mike Doling (Soulfly), Scott Ian (Anthrax), John Connolly (Sevendust) and Dan Donegan (Disturbed).

The first shipment of new Randall Amplifiers into Australia is due around July. Watch out for them.

**Contact CMI head office for more details: (03) 9315 2244 or email [cmi@cmi.com.au](mailto:cmi@cmi.com.au)**

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Whether you are performing live or rehearsing, you need to be able to hear yourself to be your best. That's what monitoring is all about. Some performers still struggle with booming floor wedge monitors and loud stage volume. But in-ear monitoring is a more comfortable and accurate way to monitor.

Shure has introduced its new PSM 200 Personal Monitors. The PSM 200 is the personal monitor price breakthrough for performers who want to start out In Ear and stay there. It's a personal monitor system that allows you to start out with a wired system, and go wireless later by simply adding the P2 Wireless Transmitter to your existing system. Smart, versatile components that grow with your career.

PSM 200 in-ear monitors offer each performer a personal mix, individual volume and balance controls, freedom of movement and an ease of portability far greater than bulky floor wedge monitors. When used properly, PSM systems will also aid performers with hearing conservation.

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## REVIEWED: Cort M Series M800 Guitar

REVIEWER: Phil Para DISTRIBUTED BY: Lamberti Bros 03 9376 8111



Cort guitars are finely crafted instruments, finished by hand and made from North American hardwoods. Their new Cort M800 guitar features a hollow body with a carved flame maple top and a mahogany neck and body.

The neck is set in, the carved top is arched, and has f-holes. The guitar I have for review is in a beautiful dark antique violin finish.

The fretboard with cream binding is set off well by pearl block inlays, which have a touch of abalone shell on the corner of each block. The black headstock sports the Cort characteristic of a bite out of the corner.

All in all this is a very handsome guitar.

The neck has 22 medium sized frets which are neatly tapered and set snugly into the binding. The fret leveling is very consistent. The width of the nut falls slightly short of the binding and the edges could have been rounded off but as it is well set these things do not really cause a problem.

The neck is quite wide but this has been countered by a nicely contoured depth which makes it very playable. The radius of the neck and the cutaway also allow good access to the whole fretboard which is not overglossed and therefore feels very comfortable. The action is light and low and very easy to play.

The headstock has three standard tuners a side which are well spaced for even string pull and I found that the guitar stayed in tune very well. The truss rod adjustment is placed for ease, in the headstock.

The Cort M800 has dual, chrome, Mighty Mite Humbuckers and an M2 Tunamatic bridge, a three way toggle switch, a volume control and a tone control which has a coil tap.

Firstly, I played the guitar through a Tube Screamer and JMP Marshall Head and Quadbox loaded with Celestions.

When I tried the bridge pickup with the coil tap in the single position, (which is up) the tone was quite clean and bright. With an even response all the way down the neck. It produced some really cool lead tones that were reminiscent of early Santana when he was using these types of humbuckers.

Still on the bridge pickup but with the coil tap down in the humbucker position there was a roll off of the highs and a boost in the midrange. This didn't interfere with the tone but rather enhanced it.

The middle position with both pickups engaged produced a very fat and even tone without losing any of the clarity of the mid range thereby making for a fantastic rhythm tone. Great jazz solos can also be played in this position.

Then finally the neck pickup sounded very warm but was still articulate. I played a variety of styles in this position and it handled them all well.

I played this guitar through a range of other amps and effects and although I obviously found some variations in sound, the tonal qualities were always consistent.

### The guitar's general playability is excellent and I cannot fault it.

As a hollow bodied guitar, played at the right levels it yields a nice creamy resonance but when cranked up the M800 will come alive and want to feedback so caution would be advised there

This guitar can translate all styles of music rather well but I would say that jazz players will particularly enjoy it's lively tonal qualities. That's not to say that blues or rock players wouldn't feel comfortable with the M800, in fact there would be many guitarists who would appreciate this guitar's specific characteristics.

For example Ted Nugent chose to use big hollow bodied guitars for rock and fixed the feedback problem by blocking the f holes.

The M800 is not a wide bodied guitar in fact it is probably comparable in width to a Les Paul, it is also a reasonably light guitar with a nice balance.

The retail price of \$1595 makes it a reasonably accessible instrument and you are getting a whole lot of guitar for that money.

It is also worth noting that Cort instruments carry a three year warranty which should assure potential buyers of the products integrity.

The guitar's general playability is excellent and I cannot fault it. I really enjoyed it's rich and deep tonal qualities. In my opinion Cort have really come of age in the last few years, their attention to detail, the ease of playing and their overall choice of components and craftsmanship all contribute to the end product being of an extremely high standard.

### WHAT WE RECKON!

QUALITY ★★★★★ PLAYABILITY ★★★★★  
BANG-FOR-YOUR-BUCK ★★★★★ OVERALL ★★★★★1/2

### FEATURES/SPECS

- Hand finished
- Constructed of North American hardwoods
- Hollow Body
- Carved flame top
- Mahogany neck and body
- Pearl block inlays
- Dual chrome Mighty Mite humbuckers
- M2 Tunamatic bridge
- 3 way toggle switch

## REVIEWED: Radial Tonebone "Classic" & "Hot British" Guitar Pedals

REVIEWER: James Manson DISTRIBUTED BY: Network Entertainment Technology 02 9905 5997



With every man and his dog now recording to hardisk, there is an endless supply of tools being released daily to compliment a PC recording set-up. From plug-ins to a swathe of hardware units all claiming to help you capture "The sound", the choice is limitless. Guitar players in particular have a large range of options when looking to define their sound, from the tried and tested POD to software plug-ins like IK Multimedia's Amplitude. The road to killer tone without having to mic up an amp at full bore has become a lot less bumpy. The people at Radial have released two guitar pre-amps/tone sculptors that claim to provide tube tone in abundance with the pre amp section utilizing a 12AX7 tube.

Constructed in Canada, the TONEBONE "Hot British" and "Classic" distortion boxes are bullet proof, constructed from 14 - gauge steel with a baked enamel finish and look ultra cool conjuring up images of stomp boxes seen in the pages of Guitar Player Magazine in the mid seventies. The Tonebones differ from the current day amp simulators which provide a range of modeled amps available for selection. The premise of the Tonebones is to provide a guitar amplifier in a box with full tonal diversity and killer sound. Rather than selecting a pre-designed amp simulation, the player has full tweakability at their finger tips to create unique and individual tones.

### The Radial Tonebone "Classic"

The Classic has a cool retro look and is said to be inspired by American guitar tradition. The documentation that comes with the unit states that tones from the original Bassman to hot-rod amp tones are achievable and provides approximations to achieve these sounds with settings such as "Joe Sat Solo", "ZZ Texas Riff", "Slow Hand Blues", "Stoneage Sugar" to name a few. The Classic Function overview is as follows,

DRIVE CONTROL, used to adjust input gain and distortion  
 DRIVE GAIN, switch used to boost gain with three settings - low, mid and high  
 FILTER CONTROL, used to balance the high frequency ratio between unit and output  
 MID BOOST, switch used to boost mids with three settings - +7dB, +12db and OUT  
 LOW CONTROL, Active post distortion that boosts or cuts 14.5 dB at 100Hz  
 TOP END, switch with three positions, Bright +6dB, Flat and Dark which cuts 6dB at 4.3KHz  
 HIGH, is an active post distortion control that boosts or cuts 10dB at 4.3KHz  
 LEVEL CONTROL, used to adjust output level  
 FOOT SWITCH, bypass switch

The fact that the TONEBONES are controlled by switches and knobs in a hands on approach is a delight. There are no pre-sets, banks, LED's etc just a quick turn of a dial for fast easy tone control. The Filter control is the key to dialing up a good amp tone and is the way to find the type of harmonics suited to the particular sound that is sought. The Classic provided a very usable distortion/overdrive that certainly surprised when A/B'd against various overdrive plug-ins, amps and DI's. The sound is very direct and up front when compared to a well known amp simulator and sat in a mix with no problems.

There is no roominess to the tone, it is much better to have to pull in the reigns of where the guitar is sitting in a mix than having to EQ it to try and make it slot in.

**"They are extremely usable, just plug in and play."**

For my ears the distortion was maybe a little buzzy, think early Black Sabbath, but in conjunction with a little slap delay the tone was able to be rounded off a little. This unit sounded great when plugged directly into an amp. All ranges of tones were achieved with the Classic and we used it to track some guitar which made it to CD. I guess it says it all when the guitar player exclaims "Where can I buy one of these?" which he did.

### The Radial Tonebone "Hot British"

The Hot British is a more organic sounding tone device with user defined settings such as Stevie R Neck, Early Zeppelin, Big Mean Scoop and Acey Deacy Chunk to name but a few. The sound of the Hot British is not that dissimilar to the Classic but I felt more laid back sounds were achievable. For example a great AC 30 type setting was easy to dial up. Again as with the Classic, the overall control of tonality was infinite with thousands of various tones at your finger tips.

The controls of the Hot British are as follows

DRIVE CONTROL, used to adjust input gain and distortion  
 VOICING, switch used to boost coloration of low and highs and in FAT position is a passive midrange tight filter, three settings - FAT, NOTCH and OUT  
 CONTOUR CONTROL, used to balance the high and low frequencies in the Notch and Fat voicing mode  
 MID BOOST, switch used to boost mids with three settings - +7dB, +12db and OUT  
 LOW CONTROL, Active post distortion that boosts or cuts 14.5 dB at 100Hz  
 TOP END, switch with three positions, Bright +6dB, Flat and Dark which cuts 6dB at 4.3KHz  
 HIGH, is an active post distortion control that boosts or cuts 10dB at 4.3KHz  
 LEVEL CONTROL, used to adjust output level  
 FOOT SWITCH, bypass switch

The Hot British is a very usable device for both DI'ing or for plugging in to a PA or AMP. I again found the distortion/overdrive to be a little buzzy but some guitar players love this. I have never brought the hype that units with a single 12AX7 tube claim when they state "Tube Warmth" Most of the tonal colouration and individual qualities of an amp come from the type of output tubes used, transformers and pre amps containing cascading 12AX7's. That all being said the Hot British does a great approximation of an amp and you really can find yourself a unique tone of your own.

The Radial TONEBONE "HOT BRITISH" and "CLASSIC" are fantastic units that could find use in a studio as an affordable great sounding alternative to expensive amp modelers. They are extremely usable, just plug in and play. No midi outs, no LED's, no rows of buttons to press, no option anxiety. You just get down to finding a good guitar sound and press record. You could also make the TONEBONE units a part of any live set up and the fact that they are indestructible is a modern day rarity, no plastic to be seen.

What I liked : Construction, tonal control, ease of use.  
 What I disliked : Overdrive somewhat buzzy, no onboard fx, no stereo out.

## WHAT WE RECKON!

### CLASSIC

QUALITY ★★★★★ PLAYABILITY ★★★★★  
 BANG-FOR-YOUR-BUCK ★★★★★ OVERALL ★★★★★

### HOT BRITISH

QUALITY ★★★★★ PLAYABILITY ★★★★★  
 BANG-FOR-YOUR-BUCK ★★★1/2 OVERALL ★★★1/2

## REVIEWED: MusicMan S.U.B. Bass Guitar

REVIEWER: Rob Little DISTRIBUTED BY: CMC Music 02 9905 2511



Hi ! The guys at Australian Musician have asked me to take a look for you at the new offering from Musicman , creator of the legendary Stingray bass. Their newest release is called the S.U.B. and a little beauty it is too ! Made in the same factory in San Luis Obispo, California as its more famous big brother, I think this is a bass we will see a great deal more of. The version I have for review is the passive version, so it would be wise to mention now that there is also a bass / treble 2 way active version of this bass available as well . This is by no means a mere " poor mans" Stingray but a genuine offering for those of us who prefer the more open sound of passive basses . The initial response when I unpacked it was that it had the familiar Stingray size and shape , but visually a lot is different.

The finish was one of the first things to catch my eye... a subtle textured matt white body ( as opposed to the more familiar high gloss finish) with a heavy-duty metal scratchplate and the neck and headstock are finished in a matt black. The neck is very well shaped and comfortable in the hand and the example I was given was very well set up from the factory, requiring only a few very minor tweaks to make it play like a dream. The Frets are large and well dressed showing no sharp edges or unevenness in height. It is not quite as heavy as a standard Stingray but has enough body density to give strength to the low frequencies. On a strap it sets up very comfortably indeed and I found that all the controls were well placed to be easy to reach without being in the way. The basic setup is Volume / Tone with the last knob bringing in the second section of the pickup for extra grunt. Machine heads are the standard Musicman style and are well made and very solid and the strap buttons are well placed and solid. The Musicman bridge provided is the same as the Stingray and to the best of my knowledge the S.U.B. uses the same pickup as your standard Stingray.

The body timber is Poplar , a timber that is getting a lot of use in instrument building as it has the same basic tone and weight as Alder without the cost . The neck is of very dense hard Maple but doesn't make the instrument head heavy and is well finished off with a quality Rosewood fingerboard. The S.U.B. is only available in the Rosewood board at the moment , and is also only available in 4 string but there

are apparently plans afoot to make 5 strings at a later date. The overall tone of this bass is precisely what we would expect from Musicman..... deep and rich but with clear bright tops that make articulations stand out effortlessly and precisely. This is one mean little slapping machine too ... the open upper-mids of the passive setup give it a great edgy bite without the overabundance of " glassiness" which some active basses are prone to. I found it to be very even in its tonal response and very even across the neck in volume from string to string . I thought I'd give it a tough test so I ran up several tracks of Protocols and recorded the S.U.B. direct into the board in

**... deep and rich but with clear bright tops that make articulations stand out effortlessly and precisely**

several different styles of music. The result was that it passed with flying colours .. a Latin track showing that with the tops wound back that it had a smooth filling sound that still had enough mids to give punch and clarity without overusing the E.Q.. A quick Funk track had me convinced that it will sit up and give you a tight punchy sound when played firmly back near the bridge and the obligatory Slap track was as expected. The S.U.B. cut through cleanly and followed through with a solid bottom end that supported the Kit very well indeed. Played with a pick on a Rock track , that familiar growl was easily found and gave a mean sound to the overall track. A quick visit to one of my standard solo pieces ..a blues in which the bass plays a bass line under a upper end chordal figure while also playing a pinch harmonic melody at the same time .. also let me know that this is not a bass that will smear notes ...every chord was easy to distinguish and the separation between the 3 different tones that I use in this piece was very pleasing. Of note also was the low background noise ... very acceptable and without the "hiss" that some actives are prone to. In summary , the S.U.B. is a great , American made bass that will provide you with a good range of strong useable tones in a well made and finished instrument that also happens to be very affordable ... retail price will be \$1795.00 excluding case and the Active version will be \$1995.00 so for those of us unable to rise to the cost of a Stingray , the S.U.B. will be a godsend. I would advise you to get down to your local store and ask about the Musicman S.U.B., I think you'll be delighted at what you find.

### WHAT WE RECKON!

QUALITY ★★★★★ PLAYABILITY ★★★★★  
BANG-FOR-YOUR-BUCK ★★★★★ OVERALL ★★★★★

### FEATURES/SPECS

- Custom Music Man tuners
- Chrome plated, steel bridge plate
- Diamond plate pickguard
- Custom Music Man textured finish
- Music Man humbucker pickup
- Controls: Passive volume, treble and bass. Optional Active preamp-volume, treble and bass



## REVIEWED: HUGHES & KETTNER EDITION BLUE AMP

REVIEWER: Phil Para DISTRIBUTED BY: Central Musical Instruments 03 9315 2244



For this edition I was asked to road test a Hughes & Kettner, Edition Blue 30 watt amp, distributed in Australia by Central Musical Instruments.

The amp features 2 channels: Clean + Lead, 3-band-EQ, Effects loop, CD input, Adjustable reverb effect, 10" Jensen speaker and a novel control panel that lights up blue.

First impression; A good looking amp; I couldn't help but be fascinated with the deep blue lit control panel, that gives this amp it's namesake. It is a very cool visual effect and apart from the novelty factor, it is actually a helpful feature for those darkened spots us guitarists often find ourselves in. All functions are easily accessible and the hardware is sturdy. The whole unit is compact and quite light making it easily transportable.

In the manual Hughes and Kettner describe a newly developed preamp which "not only produces authentic harmonic overdrive but also responds to your picking style. Based on semiconductors, this innovative circuitry simulates the sound shaping elements of tube amps and delivers sound quality unparalleled in this price range." It also claims to deliver the 'sought after tone of a classic tube amp' and 'perfectly capture the essence of vintage sound.' Now words like 'authentic', 'unparalleled', 'perfectly' and so on tend to make me a little nervous. I'm not one to rely totally on written information about a product, so having browsed the manual, I guess I approached the amp with slight scepticism. I was also determined to really put it through its paces.

I was pleasantly surprised on most counts.

The new technology that Hughes & Kettner have employed within their preamp has captured an authentic vintage tube tone and allows the user to achieve substantial creative expression with a minimum of fuss.

The clean channel certainly provides a nice wide choice of clean tones. I also pushed the clean channel into some nice crunchy tones and it performed well at both lower and high volumes.

Lead channel delivered some classic British rock as I had expected it would. I also found it appealing for a broader spectrum from heavy rock / grunge styles to blues to searing lead solos. Wind back the mids and power chord riffs are also easily achieved.

The channels are footswitchable and the jack allows for most standard footswitches.

The reverb has been placed after the FX loop allowing for it's use with external effects. It is also automated to adjust when you change between clean and lead and I thought these transitions were appropriate. A comparatively good reverb it performed well enough in most applications.

No surprises in the EQ section, bass, mid, treble but everything worked very effectively here. Bass is dense and warm. The mids and treble compliment each other well and produce some interesting tones with different settings.

**Whilst being a fantastic amp for rehearsals and studio work, it packs a sizeable punch and would be perfectly suitable for small to mid sized venues**

The Edition Blue has a serial effects loop, enabling the preamp signal to be rerouted to the FX device for processing. It worked well and I didn't notice signal degradation with any effect I tried.

I can imagine the CD input jack being a very attractive add-on feature for a variety of users. It enables you to connect a CD player or other audio source (tape, DAT) to either jam along with pre-recordings, or those of your own making. This is also ideal for the one-person show, allowing a very practical and compact setup for backing tracks. You can control the input signal volume through the preamp master.

For the output rating the Edition Blue is certainly loud and the speaker, which is a 10" Jensen upholds a true tone at any volume. Whilst being a fantastic amp for rehearsals and studio work, it packs a sizeable punch and would be perfectly suitable for small to mid sized venues. Using the line out I would perceive it to work well slaving another amp such as a Marshall, although I did not get the opportunity to try this myself.

Overall I think this is a very well thought out amp. I believe that Hughes and Kettner have committed a lot of energy to providing an efficient and practical, easy to use and easy to handle combo that does deliver the tone of a classic tube amp. In my opinion they have succeeded well with this mission and crafted an amp that I believe is very good value in it's price range and lives up to it's promises. It is an easily understood amp for the newer player but will please the seasoned guitarist as well.

Sure, by the time you are playing arenas you are going to need something a little bigger than a 30 watt Edition Blue but my bet is you will probably keep this versatile little gem for your home studio.

### WHAT WE RECKON!

QUALITY ★★★★★ PLAYABILITY ★★★★★  
BANG-FOR-YOUR-BUCK ★★★★★ OVERALL ★★★★★/2

### FEATURES/SPECS

- 30 watts
- Clean & Lead Channels (footswitchable)
- 3 band EQ
- Effects loop
- CD input
- 10" Jensen speaker
- Blue lit control panel
- Adjustable reverb effect

## REVIEWED: Jose Ortega JCE Rafael Classic Guitar

REVIEWER: Ian Noyce DISTRIBUTED BY: Central Musical Instruments 03 9315 2244



The Jose Ortega range of classic guitars has been designed by guitarist Brett Kingman and Drago Trojkovic of Central Musical Instruments of Melbourne. They are built in China in order to provide a quality instrument at a great price and the model I looked at (the JCE Rafael) is sure proof of that!

The Rafael is a standard size Classic with a soft (rounded) cutaway with excellent specs for its price of \$1199.00. The top is solid Cedar with an ornate marquetry sound hole rosette, and Spruce five fan strut layout. The back and sides are of solid book matched Indian Rosewood, with four piece wood bindings to the top and three piece wood bindings to the back. The neck is a reinforced Mahogany unit with Ebony finger board and Ebony Bridge with a bone nut and bridge saddle.

The finish is full gloss and hardware consists of Gold Plated tuners and a Fishman Classic four pickup/preamp unit with Volume, Bass, Middle, Treble and Brilliance sliders and the guitar comes in a moulded hard case. Pretty good specifications for a twelve hundred dollar guitar!

The finger board scale is close to standard at 652 mm. and the nineteen frets are 2.2 mm. wide which I quite liked compared to the

more standard 2.0 mm. Finger board nut width is 52.0 mm. and the Rafael comes strung with D'Addario strings.

The guitar was very well set up with optimum string height at the nut and an action that is almost too low. The saddle was not shaped for compensation which I found strange, but Brett Kingman of C.M.I. assures me this is one of a couple of teething problems that will be sorted out with the Chinese builders. The only other fault I could find was a slight sinking of the finish which is not at all out of the ordinary for a Rosewood guitar.

**The Jose Ortega Rafael represents real value for money providing an all solid wood guitar at a price point that many others would only have perhaps a solid top with laminated back and sides and no pickup unit.**

Unplugged this guitar immediately impresses with a well balanced response across and along the finger board and a G string that does not sound weak compared to the other strings!

Plugging in to my Noyce 130 Watt valve amp was just as impressive - the guitar sounds fat and full across the range with very good punch and attack response without the often attendant piezo harshness.

Overall this guitar looks feels and plays like at least a \$1500.00 guitar without a case or pickup unit and I guess that's a result of having it built in China to Australian specifications and quality control. It's interesting to note that the Australian Music Association 2002 market report tells us that 68% of guitar imports by unit volume are made in China and that represents 40% of import value.

The Jose Ortega Rafael represents real value for money providing an all solid wood guitar at a price point that many others would only have perhaps a solid top with laminated back and sides and no pickup unit.

### WHAT WE RECKON!

QUALITY ★★★ PLAYABILITY ★★★1/2  
BANG-FOR-YOUR-BUCK ★★★★★ OVERALL ★★★1/2

### FEATURES/SPECS

- Solid cedar top
- Ornate marquetry sound hole rosette
- Spruce five fan strut layout
- Solid Indian rosewood back and sides
- Neck: reinforced mahogany unit with ebony fingerboard
- Bridge: Ebony with bone nut and bridge saddle
- Gold plated tuners
- Fishman Classic four pickup/preamp unit

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## REVIEWED: Electro-Harmonix Small Clone 4600 Chorus Full-Chorus Pedal

REVIEWER: Phil Para DISTRIBUTED BY: Lamberti Bros 03 9376 8111



This month I tried out an Electro Harmonix - Small Clone 4600 full-chorus pedal.

It's features are depth & rate controls with a led function indicator.

This chorus device is a reissue of the analogue chorus pedal that the late Kurt Cobain popularised.

Playing my Fender Strat I ran the Small Clone firstly on it's own straight into a Marshall JMP Head and Quadbox and I was immediately impressed with the full lush chorus effect.

The depth switch has two functions, in the up position it allows for a more spatial chorus effect and tonal difference. Even at zero setting on the rate control there is still a nice chimy chorus, as you increase to about ten o'clock, the chorus effect, in my opinion, is enhanced to its best grade. At this point it is still very even and extremely lush. Up to this point I would be well pleased with it's sound qualities for my own live work. Past ten o'clock it starts to become warbly, at this rate point I could possibly use the effect perhaps at the end of a song and I understand that many players may consider it advantageous as an unusual effect during a piece of music. The warble effect then increases to such a dramatic point that I would personally find unusable.

In the down position it provides a more jangly style of chorus effect. At zero setting on the rate control it offers a spatial chorus sound and as the rate control is advanced, the jangly chorus effect remains whilst the speed of the frequency increases adding a pleasant vibrato effect. The taper of rate control is very responsive from zero to ten which allows a good control over the vibrato. I could also use this setting in my own live performances quite often.

I then used the effect with a variety of other pedals, mainly distortion and delay and in different positions in the chain; In each case the Electro-Harmonix Small Clone performed very well. Experimenting with placing this pedal in different positions in your effects chain

may result in some truly interesting effects. I really enjoyed the analogue quality of the tone and therefore overall I rate it as a very versatile unit effects wise.

### Experimenting with placing this pedal in different positions in your effects chain may result in some truly interesting effects

The adapter fitting is 9 volt 100ma tip-positive AC adapter with a 1/8" plug. The adapter for this fitting is not supplied with the unit and therefore your options are; to access one or use a 9 volt battery or have the fitting modified.

Although I am very pleased with the actual tonal qualities and efficiency of this effect, unfortunately I must point out that some things that did not meet my expectations.

There is a distinct 'click' when the unit is switched on and whilst it is engaged there is a slight hiss. Both of these points bothered me as did the absence of a more compliable adapter fitting.

OK, the housing is not military issue but it is of reasonable quality and the controls and jacks seem to be sturdy enough. The battery compartment is situated underneath the pedal and access is gained via a phillips head screw. If I owned this pedal I would remove the screw and gaffa the compartment lid for quicker access at live gigs where maintenance time needs to be limited.

" The band will just take a short break while I change batteries...."

The points are not necessarily to be considered a drawback when you are weighing up whether to buy this unit or not. You will be purchasing a great effects unit sound wise and remember the more precise the external features are the pricier the unit must become.

The Electro Harmonix Small Clone retails for \$ 249 which I believe to be reasonable for an imported item.

Lush is the catch phrase for a chorus pedal and this one does capture that essential quality as well as any other chorus effect

### WHAT WE RECKON!

QUALITY ★★★1/2 PLAYABILITY ★★★★★  
BANG-FOR-YOUR-BUCK ★★★★★ OVERALL ★★★★★

### FEATURES/SPECS

- Depth and Rate controls
- LED function indicator
- 9 volt battery operated

## REVIEWED: MASTERTONE vHO & SPA PICKUPS

REVIEWER: Brett Kingman DISTRIBUTED BY: Noyce Guitars 03 5330 2244



slam, sweetness or subtlety with a simple tweak of the volume pot. I have to drop names now; a couple of weekends ago I decided to put the pickups to the ultimate test by using them live with Joe Camilleri, Daryl Braithwaite and James Reyne at a triple bill on the Gold Coast. Normally I would take a Les Paul or other familiar US guitar for the job but I found that I could coax all of the necessary sounds right from the Mastertone appointed Tokai. 'Commonly known' single coil twang was to be had just by turning the guitar down and running it clean into a Twin. You'd be hard pressed to get standard

**Razor sharp attack, biting tops but still possessing that woody beauty found in the vHO. it's a metal player's dream but coupled with a vHO in the neck position it suited me fine for all of the chorus drenched clean stuff**

humbuckers to do that without sounding muffled. I also tried them in the studio with a H&K zenTera, possibly the last word in modeling amps. The digital nature of the amp tended to over emphasize the high-end qualities of the pickups but this could be fixed by backing the presence off a little. Valve amps are the go for these pickups as they drive them like a well-oiled and very noiseless machine.

What's black, chrome, gold and shiny, hand made in South Australia and guaranteed to give your guitar new life? Well, according to Tony Snape, ex-Australian Airforce technician, Mastertone Pickups. Mastertone have been on the scene, bubbling away and threatening to do huge things, for a few years now. Ian Moss is one well-known name that is said to favour them and a look at their guest book at [www.mastertonepickups.com](http://www.mastertonepickups.com) suggests that he is not alone and that there's a real treasure waiting to be discovered by the uninitiated.

The SPA was not as aggressive as I had anticipated although it is certainly loud and packs a fair whomp. Razor sharp attack, biting tops but still possessing that woody beauty found in the vHO, it's a metal player's dream but coupled with a vHO in the neck position it suited me fine for all of the chorus drenched clean stuff I have to play in the James Reyne set. Wind it up with a decent amp or overdrive pedal and you're in solo heaven. The SPA is available in two output voltages: 2.5 or 4 which would really melt your amp – in a good way! The Maton, I'm glad to say, is now a very functional alternative in my choice of weapons.

But are they any good? I was sent a matching set of vHO - Vintage High Output - and the SPA - Super Phat Ass - pickups to try. First impressions are important and three beautifully finished chrome humbuckers greeted me when I opened the boxes. They look unique as the cover is as smooth and contoured as a baby's bum – a chrome baby. They ship with pots and wiring including the battery clip – Mastertone Pickups are active but not in the traditional sense as you will see.

Due to the fact that these pickups are hand made with US Alnico pole pieces and NASA standard circuitry, they are not cheap. A set of vHO's will set you back the best part of \$500 but these are not your run-of-the-mill pick ups either. They genuinely offer something different and in my opinion, better. Tony has told me that he has plans for another 28 models that will hopefully see the light of day before the year's up. I look forward to this a lot. If you are after standard sounding humbuckers then these are probably not for you; if you want something exciting and more alive sounding then definitely check these out. I'm converted.

I quickly had them installed into my beloved Tokai LS75Q, which is basically a very fine Japanese built '59 quilt top Les Paul copy previously fitted with Seymour Duncans. The SPA was installed into a first issue Maton Mastersound MS500 whose original pickups were pretty questionable to say the least. I couldn't believe my ears when I fired up the Tokai. The vHO's are plenty loud but not over the top. They are designed to accentuate all of the woody qualities that a Les Paul can offer and this they most certainly did. To paraphrase another Mastertone convert, it was like pulling the cotton wool out of my ears. Super tight bottom end punch, sparkling tops that don't diminish when you wind down the volume pots and so much definition that any shortcomings in your technique are soon made loud and clear. Their all-round sound could be described by the sound a cricket bat makes when you 'donk' the leather on the sweet spot – spot on and hair raising. They don't have any of the dryness normally associated with active pickups nor are they glassy like some modern passives. Just tone, tone and more tone. There's no microphonic feedback due the double potting and the Alnico 5 polepieces give you that traditional element sought after in a good PAF. That said, they are not to be compared to PAF's as they are certainly something more. The neck pickup is smooth, woody, sparkly yet bluesy and so usable and the bridge pickup can deliver

### WHAT WE RECKON!

QUALITY ★★★★★ PLAYABILITY ★★★★★  
BANG-FOR-YOUR-BUCK ★★★★★/2 OVERALL ★★★★★/2

### FEATURES/SPECS

- Hand made
- Chrome finished humbuckers
- US Alnico pole pieces
- NASA standard circuitry

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