

GUITARGIRL MAGAZINE

#GuitarGirl guitargirlmag.com

VOL. 1, ISSUE 3 MAY/JUNE 2018

Interviews

Diana Rein

Sue Foley

Peach

Kathryn Grimm

Sunny War

Ally Venable

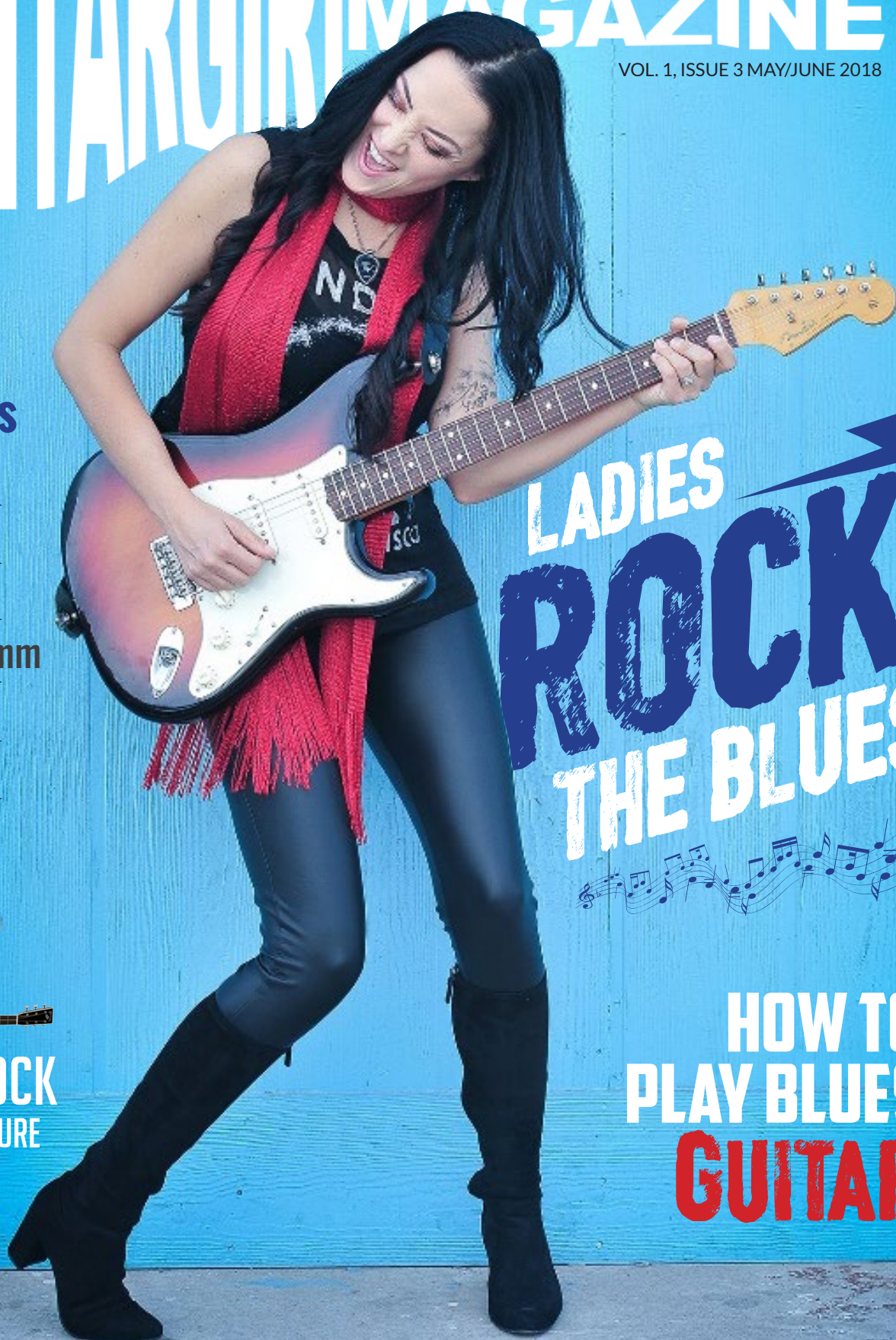
Rory Block

LADIES
ROCK
THE BLUES



RORY BLOCK
ON HER SIGNATURE
MARTIN GUITAR

HOW TO
PLAY BLUES
GUITAR





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TARA *Talk*

Ladies Rock the Blues

With Sister Rosetta Tharpe's induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame this year, what better time to focus on ladies that rock the blues. Tharpe influenced so many great musicians like Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jeff Beck, and Eric Clapton, and that's just to name a few...she was a true trailblazer!

So, in this issue, we have an article on the lady rock and blues legend titled "Sister Rosetta Tharpe: The First Lady of Gibson and Rock and Roll." We also have one on "Ten of Blues Early Influential Female Guitarists" from Elizabeth Cotten to Bonnie Raitt.

We are pleased to feature **Rory Block** again as she has her first CD of her new "Power Women of the Blues" series coming out soon where she pays tribute to Bessie Smith. We also talk about her signature Martin Guitar. Along with Rory, we'll chat with **Sue Foley, Sunny War, Peach, Ally Venable, Diana Rein** and **Kathryn Grimm** – a great lineup!

And here's some great news! If you've been wanting to learn some blues, Nikki O'Neill has a lesson for you, and we've got a few tips for you on how you can improve your practice skills, and even which strings and pedals are best-suited for blues, you'll love this!

Let's talk about review. In this issue, we'll cover some great guitars from Martin and Washburn, some Fender harmonicas, a strap, strings, and capo, and after all that, have fun with some of our simple games including our adult coloring, mind games, trivia, and so much more!

Lastly, I was pleasantly surprised while at Barnes and Noble when I came across *Classic Rock Magazine's* issue titled "She Rocks! The Women Who Rock Our World." In the Editor's Letter, she admitted they were "guilty as charged" for not covering the women as much as men. The issue was full of coverage of female musicians...whoa...looks like people are starting to get it...ladies rock! Great job CR!

So now, if you're ready, I'm ready, let's (rock and) roll!

~ Tara Low



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Founder/Editor: Tara Low

Contributors: Steph Caster
Marco DiSandro
Paige Harwood
Lisa Lim
Steve McKinley
Nikki O'Neill
Caroline Paone
Victoria Shaffer
Sasha Vallely

Editorial Requests may be submitted to
info@guitargirlmag.com

Advertising Requests may be submitted to
media@guitargirlmag.com



Subscription Requests may be submitted to
info@guitargirlmag.com



Comments may be submitted to
info@guitargirlmag.com

Mailing address:
The Low Group, Inc.
d/b/a Guitar Girl Magazine
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MEET THE TEAM



Tara Low, Editor



Steve McKinley



Steph Castor



Nikki O'Neill



Marco DiSandro



Caroline Paone



Paige Harwood



Victoria Shaffer



Lisa Lim



Sasha Vallely

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GGM COMMUNITY

We want to hear from you! Questions, comments, suggestions, road stories, and, ...well, anything else you may have on your mind!

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NEWS

MIRANDA LAMBERT: Most Decorated Artist in ACM History



The 53rd Annual Academy of Country Music Awards held in Las Vegas on April 15 marked a major milestone in Miranda Lambert's career. The megastar made country music history as the most decorated artist in ACM history with a collective 32 career wins.

Lambert walked away with three awards at the show: one for "Female Vocalist of the Year" making that her ninth consecutive time receiving the award, and two (songwriter and performer) for "Song of the Year" for "Tin Man" from her Platinum double-album *The Weight of These Wings*.

"I cannot believe this, I really can't," Lambert said. "I love country music. It's my entire life, and the fact that you all care so much about what I'm doing, I'll never take it for granted." Lambert gave a stunning performance (which prompted a standing ovation) of her newest

single, "Keeper of the Flame," which just hit the radio at the end of April, from the Platinum-certified double-album, *The Weight of These Wings*.

The Weight of These Wings was re-released in late 2016 and was accompanied by a deluxe, hardbound book, containing exclusive images and details about the album's creative and recording process of which only a few hundred copies were printed.

Now, those images and words have been combined with official videos and previously unheard audio interviews from Lambert into a one-of-a-kind, interactive Virtual Book. Fans can visit *The Weight Of These Wings.com*, connect to their own Spotify accounts with a single click, and stream all of *The Weight Of These Wings* double album 24 songs, which were originally spread across two CDs (and six sides of vinyl), thematically dubbed 'The Nerve' and 'The Heart.' 🎸



Photos: Getty Images/Courtesy of the Academy of Country Music



Martin Guitar Adds New Exhibit Showcasing Iconic D-28 to the Martin Museum

Martin Guitar added a new exhibit to their already informative and educational museum which is located at their factory in Nazareth, PA. Longtime Martin enthusiasts and new-found fans alike will enjoy a walk through the factory for an in-depth look behind the history of the Martin family and beginnings of the C.F. Martin & Co.® brand.

The museum houses well over 1,000 products from tools, memorabilia and instruments dating back to the 1800s, as well as instruments played by Elvis, Eric Clapton, Kurt Cobain, Willie Nelson, Elizabeth Cotten, and May Singhi Breen, also known as the "Ukulele Lady."

The new exhibit, "EVOLUTION of the D-28," displays 14 Style 28 guitars crafted from 1880 through 2017 including memorabilia throughout the years. Some of the guitars included in the exhibit are an O-28 from 1880, a 1914 000-28, 1931 D-28, 1941 D-28, 1966 D-28, 1974 HD-28, and the Reimagined D-28 from 2017. A true Martin enthusiast's dream.

Memorabilia include a Martin price list from the early 1800s. Interesting and historical news headlines and milestones include:

- » the beginning of the Panama Canal construction in 1880,
- » the opening of the Empire State Building in 1931,
- » the premiere of *Miracle on 34th Street* in 1947;
- » and the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976.

The molded backdrop for the exhibit was created by Robert Goetzl, who is

also part of the Martin lineage. “When the theme of the exhibit became the “EVOLUTION of the D-28,” said Goetzl, “I envisioned this guitar evolution process as a series of heavily textured ‘fossilized rock’ panels, from which the selected guitars on display would be attached. Each of these ‘fossil rocks’ are embedded with D-28 parts and impressions of familiar shapes that

any Martin Guitar enthusiast would immediately recognize—like leaves, shells, handprints, guitar strings, and plectrums, all combined into each panel, giving the impression that the stone monoliths appear to be rising out of the void, with each beautifully crafted instrument hovering over the stone backdrops as if emerging through the ages.”

MIRANDA LAMBERT’S PASSION: Music and Mutts

Not only can country music megastar Miranda Lambert pack stadiums for star-studded performances on her 2018 *Live! Like Hippies Tour*, she can make sure that local, no-kill animal shelters receive much-needed support.

Presented by Live Nation and MuttNation Foundation, a 501c3 nonprofit founded by Lambert, fans brought gifts of dog food, supplies,

toys, treats and cash to be donated to the venue’s *Fill the Little Red Wagon* location. The gifts were then donated to a pre-selected shelter in their city.

“My fans are passionate – they care about music and they care about animals. Without them, neither my music nor MuttNation could reach as many people or help as many dogs as we do. It’s incredibly heartwarming to see *The Little Red Wagon* overflowing

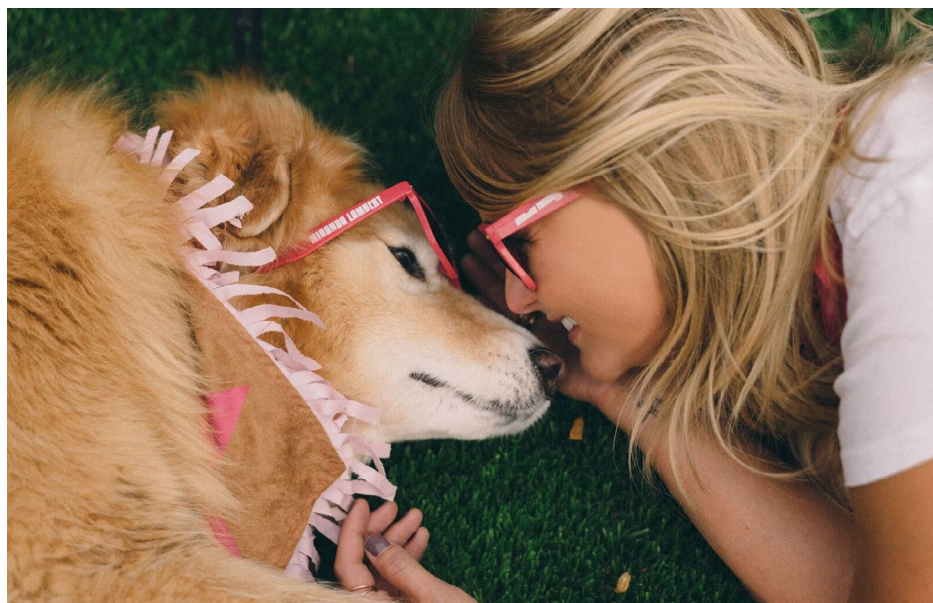


Photo Credit: Becky Fluke

at each show and it makes me crazy happy to combine two of my biggest loves, music and mutts, every night” said Lambert, the proud owner of 8 rescue dogs.

Tito’s Handmade Vodka also joined in through their Vodka for Dog People program by making a generous donation to the MuttNation Foundation and, of course, provided vodka backstage for Lambert and guests.

Look for *The Little Red Wagon* to roll back out this summer when it jumps on the *Bandwagon Tour*, featuring Miranda and Little Big Town.



Peavey Electronics Donates Guitars and Gear to Boys & Girls Club of East Mississippi



Peavey Electronics was recently reorganizing its manufacturing building and, in the process, collected over 90 acoustic and electric guitars, as well as cases, to be cleared out. The lucky recipient of the gear was the Boys & Girls Club of East Mississippi.

“Learning to play a musical instrument is great for the development of your mind,” said Courtland Gray, Chief Operating Officer at Peavey Electronics.

“Somebody might be the next Hartley Peavey in here or the next great musician to come out of the south, in Mississippi.”

The Boys & Girls Club of America’s Mission Statement: To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

Kudos to Peavey! 🎸

Countdown to Summer NAMM

The music industry is abuzz as Summer NAMM (also referred to as SNAMM) is right around the corner. Music City is gearing up for the event which will be held this year from June 28-30, 2018 at Music City Center in Nashville, TN.

This year, it’s reported there will be over 1,600 exhibitors and an expected 14,000 registrants from over 38 countries that will be attending the convention, which will be a great networking opportunity for retailers and dealers alike.

NAMM is known for their educational sessions and this show has plenty in store. This year the Retail Boot Camp is being expanded. The NAMM U Breakfast Sessions will focus heavily on innovation for retailers and keeping up with the digital consumer. Not only is there plenty of events for retailers, the general public is allowed is on Saturday (more details below). Musicians

can learn all about building a fan base, getting endorsements, and pitching their music. Advanced Audio Applications Exchange (A3E) will return with the Future of Audio Summit.

When it comes to events and music, one will not be disappointed. NAMM’s Opening Night Party will include the American Eagle Awards. Last year’s recipients were Crystal Gayle, Patti Smith, and Harry Shearer. The traditional Top 100 Dealer Awards will be held on Friday. There’s plenty of music throughout the event. As of this writing, performers had not been announced, so stay tuned or visit namm.org.

The Music Making Experience will be held on Saturday, June 30, and is an opportunity for what NAMM is calling the “prosumer” to experience NAMM without having to be a member. It is open to the public for a fee of \$10 in advance and \$20 at the door. It is an all-day,

all access pass to test the latest and greatest in music and pro audio gear from top musical manufacturers across the globe, as well as partake in the NAMM U sessions, enjoy live performances, and to experience the vibe of NAMM.

The Women’s International Music Network will be putting on their annual She Rocks showcase on Thursday evening, June 28, 2018 starting at 8:30 p.m. at The Listening Room, 618 4th Avenue South, Nashville, TN. Presale tickets are \$5.00, while tickets at the door will be \$7.00. Performers will be announced soon, so stay tuned on our Facebook page. 🎸



Experience PRS 2018 to be held June 8-9, 2018 at the PRS Factory

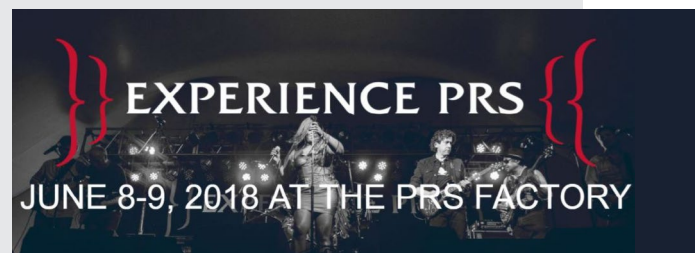
Paul Reed Smith Guitars will be holding their ninth open house – the Experience PRS 2018 event – on June 8-9, 2018 at their factory in Stevensville, Maryland.

For those that might be unfamiliar with what Experience PRS is, PRS Guitars describes it as “a chance for guitar players and music fans to see first-hand what we do at PRS. We open up our factory headquarters

in Stevensville, Maryland for factory tours, instrument clinics, interactive areas where you can try new products, plus, great performances by talented PRS Artists and their bands.

“You’ll have the chance to see hundreds of PRS guitars at the same time and find your perfect fit. We’ll have over a dozen of our authorized dealers on site to help you make your dreams come true!”

PRS will be updating their site with event details and artist announcements, so if you’re interested in attending, check out their website at prsguitars.com. 🎸



APPLE MUSIC TO FEATURE DOCUMENTARY HORSES: Patti Smith and her band beginning May 22nd

Horses: Patti Smith and her band documents one of the last concerts of the 40th anniversary tour of Patti Smith’s seminal album *Horses* performed in full in sequence at the famed Wilvern Theater in Los Angeles, California in January 2015. Smith’s band includes Lenny Kaye, Jay Dee Daugherty, Tony Shanahan, and Jack Petruzzelli, joined by her guitarist Jackson Smith and Flea. The documentary

also includes intimate backstage footage.

Apple Music acquired the film earlier this year from film director Steven Sebring and executive producer Jimmy Iovine. *Horses: Patti Smith and her band* had its world premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival in April and will be available to stream exclusively on Apple Music beginning Tuesday, May 22, 2018. 🎸

Lana Del Rey Receives ASCAP Global Impact Award

ASCAP, the American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers, hosted its 35th Annual ASCAP Pop Music Awards on Monday, April 23. Lana Del Rey received the Global Impact Award. The ASCAP Global Impact Award recognizes the enduring worldwide popularity of ASCAP members and their music.

Lana Del Rey is a multi-platinum, three-time Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter known for her

stylized, cinematic music with references to 1950s and 1960s Americana. Del Rey’s fifth studio album, *Lust For Life*, was released on July 21, 2017 and debuted atop the Billboard 200 last summer. It became her second to reach #1 in the US while also reaching the top ten in almost every other country it charted in. She was honored by indie rock favorite Father John Misty, who presented the award and performed Del Rey’s “Ride.” 🎸





Tronical Sues Gibson Brands for 50 Million US Dollars

It was announced last month that the world's leading company for the development and production of patented Auto Tuning Systems for guitars, Tronical GmbH (Tronical) based in Germany, is suing Gibson Brands (Gibson) which markets their product under the name "G-Force" for \$50 million dollars for breach of contract. The suit has been pending in Germany before the Hamburg State Court since December of 2017.

In an article in Music Radar, Tronical's founder Chris Adams gave a statement stating, "Tronical is claiming licensing fees to the amount of 23 million US dollars from the share in the profits agreed in the contract, and a further 27 million US dollars on the grounds of Gibson's breach of contract of the exclusive research and development agreement with Tronical, which Gibson should have met by 2026."

Gibson marketed Tronical's robo-

tuning technology as a standard feature on most of their 2015 models. Due to mixed reaction from consumers, in 2016 Gibson decided to remove it from their standard guitars and only offer it on their High Performance models over the next two years before eliminating it from most of their lineup this year.

Needless to say, this only adds to the Gibson's current financial situation. —

Women in Music in the News

Cathy Fercano has been hired by **Marshall Electronics** as the Regional Sales Manager to cover the Broadcast and Pro A/V markets in the greater Northwest U.S. territory. Her responsibility will be to increase Marshall Electronics' market coverage and cultivate closer working relationships with dealer and distributor networks in these key areas.

Cathy Fercano is an experienced sales executive in the Broadcast and Pro A/V industry, having worked for many years as a sales manager for IDX System Technology and Hoffman Video Systems



Traci Adams has been appointed executive vice president of promotion for **Epic Records**. She will be based in the Sony label's New York office and report directly to Epic Records president Sylvia Rhone. In her new role, Adams will oversee all of Epic's promotional campaigns in the urban space, including urban, hip-hop and adult contemporary formats. She was previously senior vice president of promotion.

Adams has been with Epic Records since 2012, when she joined the label as vice president of promotion. She previously worked with Island Def Jam Records as national director of promotion and music director at Radio One's WFUN/St. Louis.

BLUE MICROPHONES CUSTOM SHOP BOTTLE LIMITED EDITION MIC

Retail: \$4,999.00

The Blue Custom Shop's first offering is the Bottle Limited Edition microphone available in six magnificent finishes. From the custom-wound transformer to the hand-selected EF86 tube, each mic is meticulously hand-built in California by their master craftsmen. The system includes the Custom Shop Bottle Limited Edition of your choice, plus the B6 Bottle Cap—all housed in a custom-designed SKB® case. These are a limited-edition item, so contact a Blue dealer today. bluedesigns.com/customshop/



DARCO® ELECTRIC GUITAR STRINGS

Retail: \$3.49

Darco® Electric strings debuted their revamped strings at Winter NAMM in Anaheim, California. They will be available in a variety of gauges to suit every player and promise quality, tone, and value in every pack. They are designed for the pros and priced for the working musician, so every guitar player can

afford to change their strings as often as needed to keep their guitar sounding new all the time.

Darco® Electric strings are meticulously constructed of authentic nickel and steel at a price that allows guitar players to keep a spare set of strings in their gig bag and a few extra sets in the van, the studio, and at home. Darco® strings offer guitar players that pre-gig-peace-of-mind or heading-to-the-studio fresh set string change. darcostrings.com



CORT X500

Retail: \$1099.99

Cort completely revamped the X Series of electric guitars and introduced the flagship X500 model featuring a neck-thru-body construction made of 5 pc Maple and Panga Panga with a "U"-shaped design, Swamp ash body wing, and an ebony fingerboard with a compound radius fretboard. It's outfitted with EMG® pickups with ceramic magnets, and a Floyd Rose® Special Tremolo system. White binding on the fingerboard, black hardware and die-cast tuners complete the edgy aesthetics. Built for aggressive metal styles. cortguitars.com





FENDER® CALIFORNIA SERIES™ ACOUSTIC GUITARS



Designed in California, the Classic, Special, Player Models Defy Convention with Energetic Colors, Stratocaster Headstocks, Innovative Fender Body Shapes

Fender tells us this series is already being played across multiple musical genres by top alternative, indie, punk and grunge artists/bands. Of particular note, Lydia Night of The Regrettes and Angela Petrilli, guitarist for the duo Roses & Cigarettes, both play them.

The series features three original Fender body shapes and are named after cities in Southern California – Malibu™, Newporter™ and Redondo™ – and are available in several colors at three price points: California Classic (\$799.99), California Special (\$699.99) and California Player (\$399.99). fender.com

FENDER® EFFECTS PEDALS

Reverb, Delay, Overdrive, Distortion, Compression and Buffer Effects Pedals Designed by In-House Experts reasonably priced from \$99.99 to \$199.99.



- **Pugilist Distortion (\$99.99)** features dual gain engines—with independent tone controls for each—letting players select multiple variations of distortion. The Series/Blend switch allows stacking channels for thick, cascading distortion; the Bass Boost switch fattens the tone; and the Blend control mixes the two channels.
- **Level Set Buffer (\$99.99)** allows players to easily swap guitars without negatively affecting tone. This original design features Level, Hi-Freq and Load controls to adjust the signal, along with a Main Mute footswitch for silent tuning. The tuner output allows

the tuner to stay on without interrupting the signal path.

- **The Bends Compressor (\$129.99)** tames wild volume spikes without altering tone. Drive and Recovery controls let players dial in the perfect amount of compression and extend sustain, while the Blend control mixes the dry signal to maintain natural pick attack. The Amp Jewel LED changes color from white to pink while playing, to show when the signal is being affected by the compressor and for how long.
- **Marine Layer Reverb (\$149.99)** features multiple reverb types, including classics like Hall and

Room, along with modern ones, like Shimmer. Reverb tails continue when the effect is muted, ensuring a smooth and natural decay.

- **Mirror Image Delay (\$149.99)** is an atmospheric delay effect, helping players create depth with a simple slapback or an epic soundscape with modulated repeats. The pedal offers Digital, Analog, and Tape modes—each with two voicing variations—and an option to add a dotted-eighth note.
- **Santa Ana Overdrive (\$199.99)** lets players dial in sounds all the way to thick, fully saturated overdrive, using FET technology for Tube-like performance. Flexible tone controls unlock a wide range of sonic flavors and cleans up with the guitar's volume control.

For more information on these products: fender.com



Celtic Knot

Celtic Symbol

THALIA CAPO CELTIC WOOD GUITAR PICKS

Known for their high-quality, gorgeous capos, Thalia also makes wood picks from Santos Rosewood. They recently added two Celtic designs to their collection – the Celtic Knot and the Celtic Symbol. There are six different designs in each – the Celtic design is engraved on one side with the Thalia logo on the other – and arrive in a collectible aluminum tin with a Santos Rosewood inlay. Six-piece tin sets are \$19.99.

And for the guitar enthusiast that's getting married, Thalia now offers engraved wooden guitar picks. Contact Thalia for pricing. thaliacapos.com



BOSS GT-1000 GUITAR EFFECTS PROCESSOR

The GT-1000- a premium amp and effects processor for guitarists. Designed for superior tone and exceptional musical response, the GT-1000 is the first-ever guitar multi-effects processor with 32-bit AD/DA, 32-bit floating-point processing, and 96 kHz sampling rate throughout. Driven by BOSS's latest custom DSP engine and filled with cutting-edge BOSS technologies, the GT-1000 delivers class-leading performance in a compact and lightweight floor-based unit.

The GT-1000 includes a wide range of expressive amplifier

types, newly built with the comprehensive Tube Logic design approach behind the acclaimed Katana, Waza, and Blues Cube amplifiers. Also featured is the groundbreaking AIRD (Augmented Impulse Response Dynamics) technology, realized with BOSS's extensive research into the complex component interactions in classic guitar amplifiers. AIRD provides fully optimized performance with all types of devices, bringing new levels of audio quality, flexibility, and practical usability to this product category.



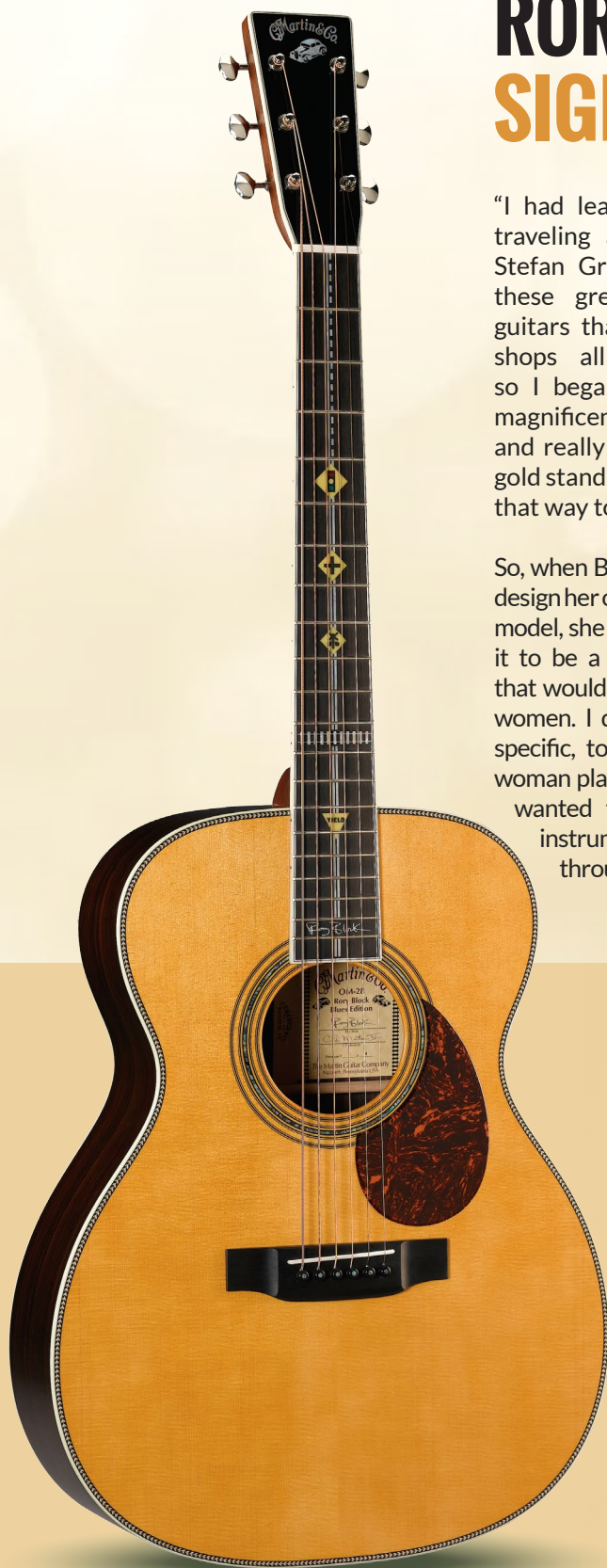
The BOSS GT-1000 Guitar Effects Processor is available now for \$999.99 (U.S. street price).

BOSS Tone Studio for GT-1000, the GT-1000 AIRD Output Select Library software, and the GT-1000 IR Loader software will be available in May 2018 as free downloads for Mac and Windows computers.

To learn more about the GT-1000 Guitar Effects Processor, visit Boss.info.



RORY BLOCK ON HER SIGNATURE MARTIN GUITAR



"I had learned about guitars from traveling across the country with Stefan Grossman. He collected all these great old pre-war Martin guitars that he would get at pawn shops all along these journeys, so I began to see and play these magnificent guitars as a teenager and really came to see them as the gold standard and I still think of them that way today."

So, when Block had the chance to help design her own Signature Martin Guitar model, she chose an OM-40. "I wanted it to be a strong guitar and a guitar that would be a right size for a man or women. I didn't want it to be gender specific, to design a guitar just for a woman player," she said. "So, I basically wanted to take the quintessential instruments that I had been playing throughout that time period."

"I think of Martin Guitars as being perfect for what I wanted to do because I play hard. I pound, and I snap, and do all those country blues techniques that I started emulating early on. You can't do that on a delicate guitar," she said.

"Then I wanted it to be a guitar that could hold medium gauge strings because you can't really play on light gauge strings and get the particular volume. It just won't hold up to that style. So, all those things had to be right for the guitar." The design, a neck that emulates a black-top highway, is a credit to Martin Guitar's artist Dick Boak.

Excerpt from "Rory Block Takes Classical Approach to Blues Guitar" by Richard O. Jones from Guitar Girl Magazine, May 23, 2012



Argio Kurhajec



Sister ROSETTA THARPE:

The Godmother of Gibson
and Rock-and-Roll

By Caroline Paone

You can't help wonder why Sister Rosetta Tharpe – a groundbreaking electric guitarist – was buried in an unmarked grave until 2009? Unfortunately, some of the musicians who helped shape rock music simply faded into obscurity with little fanfare.

But luckily people are once again rejoicing for Tharpe: A gospel singer with a rock-and-roll heart. She was popular from the 1930s through the 1960s, and uniquely paired rhythmic accompaniment with spiritual lyrics.

On April 14, 2018, she was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as an Early Influence – and, indeed, her influence is felt. A newfound appreciation for her genius exists. Whether it's her image on the cover of a guitar magazine or a postage stamp, it's clear she had an impact on music history.

Sister Rosetta Tharpe (Rosetta Nubin) was born March 20, 1915 in Cotton Plant, Arkansas. One of the first women to play electric guitar, she slung a Gibson SG and embraced distortion long before Jimi Hendrix.

At a time when few women played guitar, Tharpe (and blues legend Memphis Minnie) achieved national fame. For mid-century musicians, life on the road wasn't simple. It was a time of racial unrest and these musical pioneers faced many challenges.

A woman of color pursuing an unorthodox lifestyle, Sister Rosetta faced prejudice. Yet, she forged ahead. The institutional segregation of the times made traveling from city to city extra daunting. When motels denied Tharpe accommodation, she stayed

on the sleeper bus. Her white bandmates (like the Jordanares) would bring her meals so she wouldn't have to pick up food at the back of restaurants.

On stage you'd never suspect her challenges. After a blistering solo, she'd say, "Pretty good for a woman, ain't it?" Tharpe knew what she was facing, but her voice, her guitar, and that spirit in the sky led her.

Me," fused gospel and rock-and-roll, and three other gospel songs followed: "My Man and I," "That's All" and "Lonesome Road" (all on Decca Records).

Tharpe was soon one of the nation's first commercially successful gospel singers. Her unique sound set her apart from her contemporaries. Singing in front of a gospel choir, she made her guitar sing, too, with blues bends and jazz improvisations.

Her music became more accessible and her tone beefier. In a floral-print dress, she kickstarted rock-and-roll playing the same guitar hooks and boogie-blues rhythms that Chuck Berry would eventually employ. Later, she would delve deeper into Delta blues and New Orleans jazz styles of music.

As far as her legacy, not much has been taught about her influence on rock/blues music. Historians and critics have long acknowledged the influence that blues musicians have had on British and American rockers. But what they left out was that a woman was alongside blues greats T-Bone Walker, John Lee Hooker, and Muddy Waters.

Still, she was called the "original soul sister" and "Godmother of rock and roll." Tharpe clearly predated rock music influencing everyone from Little Richard and Chuck Berry to Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash. She was one of the few artists at the time to play electric guitar aggressively as a lead instrument. Even today she stands out as a top performer for her vocal range, intricate fingerpicking and quick slides.

Respected by her fellow musicians, she shared the stage with many legendary performers such as jazz great Cab Calloway at Harlem's Cotton Club. In fact, her European tour with Muddy Waters in 1963 and 1964 would prove a notable inspiration for legendary British guitarists Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton, and Keith Richards.

“Today, songs “Down by the Riverside,” “That’s All,” “Up Above My Head,” and “This Train” are popularly visited on YouTube. “That’s All” is a stand out for its rocking solo and pre-Townsend windmills.

Tharpe's early musicality began with her mother (a church singer and mandolin player). She first picked up the guitar at age four, and by six was on the road with her mother and a southern evangelist troupe. In the 1920s, the duo settled in Chicago and continued performing at church revivals. Tharpe became known as a musical prodigy, billed as a "guitar-playing miracle."

In the 1930s and 1940s, she recorded several gospel albums. At 23, her first single, "Rock

Her accomplishments kept coming. She was one of two gospel artists who recorded V-discs for World War II troops overseas (during the recording ban by the American Federation of Musicians 1942-44). In 1944, she released the classic "Down by the Riverside." Then her 1945 hit "Strange Things Happening Every Day" was the first gospel record cross-over hit, which rose to number two on the Billboard "race records" (now called the R&B chart).

Even with the honorable mentions, she was somewhat forgotten after the 1960s. The reason why is unclear; although, in general, female musicians were not covered much in technical publications. However, some feel the gospel community were unhappy with Tharpe's secular leanings; others cite the times and young listeners seeking different forms of music. Whatever the case, it was a dying shame.

According to playwright George Brant who wrote the musical "Marie and Rosetta" about Tharpe: "Chuck Berry borrowed her guitar stylings, and Little Richard said she was responsible for his career. Elvis Presley counted her as an influence, and even Jimi Hendrix once said he just wanted to play like Rosetta," Brant told the Daily Beast. "Jerry Lee Lewis, Bob Dylan, and Johnny Cash have all cited her as influences – which makes it even more frustrating that she fell out of fashion."

Overseas audiences never forgot her as she was still touring Europe close to the end of her life. The guitarist had several health issues but remained passionate about playing. In 1970, she suffered a stroke; and after complications from diabetes, her leg was amputated. She kept going. In 1973 the night before a scheduled recording session, she had another stroke and sadly passed away.

Tharpe was laid to rest in Northwood Cemetery in Philadelphia and had a small service at a Baptist church.

[One can speculate that the latter part of her career and legacy was also mismanaged.] Since her husband at the time, Russell Morrison, could not provide her with a proper grave stone, her plot went unmarked for decades.

Things changed with the 2007 biography *Shout, Sister, Shout!: The Untold Story of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe* written by Gayle Wald. It garnered renewed interest in Tharpe and bolstered her legacy.

Finally, in 2009, a beautiful rose-colored monument adorned her grave site. The headstone was partially funded by a benefit concert at the Keswick Theatre including performances from gospel and spiritual music legends. Her epitaph reads, "She would sing until you cried and then she would sing until you danced for joy. She helped to keep the church alive and the saints rejoicing."

Sister Rosetta Tharpe is a revolutionary woman in music. She pushed religious and racial boundaries and crossed musical genres – surely a soul to be reckoned with.

The singer is now appropriately honored in her resting place. And rightfully so the guitar virtuoso holds a prominent spot in music history as well. Indeed, there's music up above her head and all around.

Lively Performances – Soulful Voice and Bluesy Guitar

Luckily, many of her live performances were documented, such as the legendary 1964 Manchester, England, Chorlton railway station show. It was part of the American Folk-Blues festival tour including Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf, among others. Tharpe plugged into a Vox amp and wailed on an electric guitar for songs "Didn't It Rain" and "Trouble in Mind" giving the blues-loving Brits something to cheer about. In a decorative coat and high heels, she made her mark as an iconic, confident woman in music.

Today, songs "Down by the Riverside," "That's All," "Up Above My Head," and "This Train" are popularly visited on YouTube. "That's All" is a stand out for its rocking solo and pre-Townsend windmills. 🎸

LEGENDARY GUITARS OF SISTER ROSETTA THARPE

- » 1929 Gibson L-5
- » Gibson SG Standard Electric Guitar
- » Gibson Les Paul Goldtop Electric Guitar
- » Gibson Barney Kessel Custom
- » Gibson ES-330
- » 1932 National Triolian Resonator guitar



TEN OF BLUES

MOST EARLY INFLUENTIAL FEMALE GUITARISTS

By Victoria Shaffer

Often underrated or unappreciated, several principle female innovators of blues music are equipped with a staggering amount of raw talent, undeniable moxie, and impressionable guitar skills. Whether referencing the pioneers who excelled despite time periods that were oozing with racism, or pointing out those who maintained the blues tradition, never allowing the music to shed its important cultural components, each woman mentioned here successfully maneuvered through their path, creating crucial and influential space for those women who hoped to follow in their wake. It is safe to say, that without these audacious women, blues music would not be remembered for what it is today.



ELIZABETH “LIBBA” COTTEN

Elizabeth Cotten and her guitar ‘Stella,’ on-set of the Documentary ‘Me and Stella: A film about Elizabeth Cotten’ November 16, 1977

Widely remembered for her everlasting tune “Freight Train,” Elizabeth “Libba” Cotten was an American blues and folk musician whose impact can be heard within the soulful strumming of The Grateful Dead and Americana essence of Bob Dylan. Recognized as a “living treasure” by the Smithsonian Institution, Cotten was a self-taught, left-handed guitarist whose unique strumming was later trademarked as “Cotton Style.” After being discouraged by her church during her teenage years to discontinue playing what they considered to be the work of the devil, Cotten respected their wishes and put down the instrument. She went on to

marry and have a child and would later on only occasionally play at church. It wasn’t until 25 years later that she would revive her love of the instrument. Cotten’s first album wasn’t released until she was 62 years old. Despite the late professional start, and due to the folk revival of the 1960s, Cotten toured throughout the United States, playing shows the likes of the Newport Folk Festival (“The Kingston Trio Lineup, Biography”). Prior to her passing in 1987, Cotten received a Grammy for Best Ethnic or Traditional Folk Recording; she was ninety years old at the time.

SISTER ROSETTA THARPE

Crowned the Godmother of Rock N' Roll, Sister Rosetta Tharpe rattled conventions throughout the 1930s and '40s when she unabashedly exposed women to be soulful, gritty singers and passionate, well-practiced guitarists. At the tender age of six, Tharpe began performing throughout the south with her mother's gospel evangelist troupe. After relocating to Chicago, it became apparent that Tharpe's southern roots style began to absorb the chi-town blues sound, producing a unique and captivating quality to Tharpe's music. Beyond being a female African American guitarist throughout a time of heavy racial prejudice, controversy arose in Tharpe's career as she strove to perform for both religious and secular audiences, as well as when the news of her same sex romantic relationships became public. Persevering beyond the many hurdles, Tharpe's most celebrated songs are "Rock Me" and "Strange Things Happening Every Day," which became the first gospel single to cross over onto the Billboard charts. A resurgence for Blues in the United Kingdom emerged in the 1960s allotting Tharpe an opportunity at a long and prosperous career. Her influence over musicians such as Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, and Eric Clapton prove Tharpe's strong and lasting impression on music, which recently led to her induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2018.



MEMPHIS MINNIE

Elizabeth Douglas, better known as Memphis Minnie, claimed her title as Queen of Country Blues by beginning her 200-song recording career in the 1920s. Minnie was notorious for out-playing the boys while simultaneously presenting herself in fancy dresses and a flawless face of makeup. Always evolving, Minnie took her traditional southern blues style and transitioned to Chicago, where she became one of the first performers to plug in and go electric. Remembered for her storytelling lyrics and impressive guitar picking skills, Minnie is credited as an important contributor towards the R&B and Rock N' Roll genres. Though a massive inspiration for men and women alike, female musicians such as LaVern Baker, Maria Muldaur, Bonnie Raitt, Rory Block, and Tracy Nelson have credited Minnie as a trailblazer who greatly influenced their careers.

BEVERLY "GUITAR" WATKINS

Inspired by the successful female blues musicians of the 1930s and 40s, Beverly "Guitar" Watkins taught herself to play the guitar by listening to her mother's records. Watkins spent the early 1960s performing rhythm guitar with Piano Red & the Interns. She can be heard playing on their singles, "Doctor Feel-good" and "Right String But The Wrong Yo-Yo." Watkins then joined Eddie Tigner and the Ink Spots, which later led to her residency with Leroy Redding & the Houserockers. It wasn't until the rise of the internet in the 1990s that Watkins was re-discovered and began gaining the recognition that she had long deserved. In 1998, she was part of the Women of the Blues "Hot Mamas" tour with Koko Taylor and Rory Block, and her 1999 solo debut, *Back in Business*, earned her a W. C. Handy Award nomination. Watkins remains an influential blues guitarist, as she can still be caught jamming in Atlanta, Georgia clubs to this very day.





PEGGY “LADY BO” JONES

Peggy Jones, aka Lady Bo, grew up in New York City where she attended Manhattan's High School for the Performing Arts. Initially focusing her studies on opera, tap dance, and ballet, it wasn't until a run in with Bo Diddley that her guitar aspirations began to take flight. Diddley quickly recognized the raw talent and potential behind Jones' playing, and soon after their initial meeting asked her to join his backup band. This relationship blossomed into a beautiful exchange of style and technique, to the point where it became nearly impossible to decipher the difference between Diddley and Jones' sound. Jones departed from Diddley's band in 1961, forming her own group, The Jewels, who went on to become one of the most popular touring bands on the East Coast. When Jones eventually reunited with Diddley in 1970, the crowd was so overcome with excitement that they began chanting “Lady Bo,” cementing her beloved nickname and undeniable link to Bo Diddley. Though remembered as a sturdy pillar within Diddley's legendary career, Jones deserves individual recognition as a forerunner within rhythm and blues music as well as an outstanding innovative female guitarist.



ODETTA

Growing up in the Deep South within the era of the Great Depression, Odetta's initial love with music blossomed through hearing the painfully honest tales sung by the struggling people throughout the 1930s. Continuing to be musical throughout her adolescence, Odetta eventually graduated from Los Angeles City College in 1950 with a degree in music. Soon after, while singing in a traveling chorus, Odetta found herself in San Francisco and deeply submerged in an obsession with folk music. Odetta gained notoriety with her first solo album *Odetta Sings Ballads and Blues*, as well as with her live recordings of her performance at Carnegie Hall. The 1960s proved to be Odetta's most significant years. Throughout this time, Odetta used her influential voice to promote black equality. Performing at rallies and demonstrations, Odetta gave one of her most widely acclaimed appearances on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial after being introduced by Martin Luther King Jr. In 1999, Odetta was awarded the National Medal of Arts, in 2004 she was named a Kennedy Center Honoree, and in 2005 she received the Living Legend Award by the Library of Congress. Odetta's music was so powerful that it would later be christened the “Soundtrack of the Civil Rights Movement” and go on to influence musicians and activists alike for generations.



DEBORAH COLEMAN

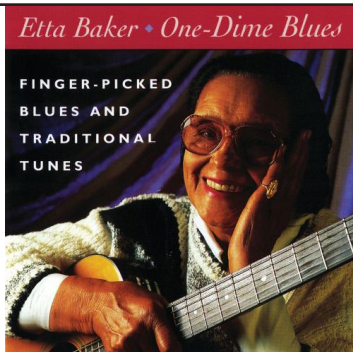
Deborah Coleman, an American blues guitarist, songwriter and vocalist, in concert in Albéitar.

Deborah Coleman was eight years old when she picked up a bass after witnessing a televised performance by the Monkees. It wasn't until her teenage years, when her love for Jimi Hendrix, Cream, and Led Zeppelin emerged, that she exchanged the bass for a guitar and began following the roots of rock n' roll back to the soulful basic blues. After performing with a series of R&B bands, Coleman had all but quit pursuing her musical career to raise her daughter. Returning to the lime light in 1985, Coleman collaborated with the all-female group Moxxie which began her experimentation into developing her own sound and eventually led her to joining the R&B trio, Misbehavin. After minimal success, Coleman forged her own path when entering the Charleston Blues Festival's National Amateur Talent Search. Taking first place in the competition, Coleman was awarded free studio time. This prize provided Coleman the opportunity to record her album, *Takin' A Stand*, which was succinctly followed by a record deal. Coleman then produced a string of blues albums that initiated her win of the Orville Gibson Award for “Best Blues Guitarist, Female” in 2001, and four nominations for the W.C. Handy Award.



ETTA BAKER

Etta Baker was taught how to play guitar and banjo by her father, a skill that had been passed down in their family for generations. This kindred talent prompted her performances at local dances and parties, where she experimented with hymns, parlor music, rags, and Tin Pan Alley songs. She all but ceased live performances to raise her family, but in 1956, Baker contributed to Paul Clayton's *Instrumental Music of the Southern Appalachians*. This album would go on to become one of the key influences towards the legendary Folk Revival of the 1960s. At age 60, Baker decided to professionally pursue her musical career and went on to become a smash hit in the international folk-festival circuit. Playing well into her 90s, as well as being awarded with the 1991 Folk Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, Baker is celebrated for her iconic two-finger guitar picking style, driving rhythm, and undeniable impact within the folk and blues genres.



DEBBIE DAVIES

With both parents' as professional musicians, Debbie Davies' introduction to the world of music occurred at an early age. Her father had written arrangements for Ray Charles and worked in the recording studio with Frank Sinatra. His experiences bled into Davies' life, perpetuating her infatuation with guitar. As Davies grew and her guitar interests evolved, it became apparent to her that she did not want to strum an acoustic, but instead, shred an electric, much like the British-blues-bands that were overtaking the United States throughout that time. After first performing in the San Francisco Bay area, Davies returned to her native city of Los Angeles, and began playing lead guitar in the all-female band, Maggie Mayall and the Cadillacs. Three years later, Davies joined Fingers Taylor and the Ladyfingers Revue as the lead guitarist. In September of 1993, Davies debuted her first solo release, *Picture This*, which began a string of successful solo albums. Davies has worked with the likes of Ike Turner, James Cotton, Rod Carney, and Mick Taylor. Her extensive resume and years of touring experience mark Davies as a massively successful contributor to the blues music genre.



BONNIE RAITT



When Bonnie Raitt's passion for social issues are aligned with her soulful voice and feel-good guitar playing, it becomes apparent as to why she is one of the most impactful musicians of her generation. Raised

in L.A. but stationed in Massachusetts to attend Radcliffe College, Raitt dropped out of school to begin performing at local folk and blues clubs. Soon after, Raitt was introduced to Dick Waterman, an established blues manager, who signed and quickly got her performing with some of the biggest names in blues music; Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, and Mississippi Fred McDowell. In 1989, Raitt began making her anticipated commercial breakthrough. Her album, *Nick of Time*, in 1990 won three Grammy Awards, and its follow up, *Luck of the Draw*, in 1993 added two more Grammys onto Raitt's rapidly expanding shelf. Her singles "Something to Talk About" and "I Can't Make You Love Me" sold more than eight million copies in the United States, and in 2000, Raitt was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Additionally, her 1996 tribute album to Stevie Ray Vaughn earned her yet another Grammy, exposing that Raitt is indeed an unstoppable force to be reckoned with, as well as one of the most decorated blues musicians of all time.

PHOTOS:

Odetta: National Archives Archaeological Site [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons
Memphis Minnie: Public Domain

Deborah Coleman: By Javier Díaz Barrera (originally posted to Flickr as Deborah Coleman) [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Bonnie Raitt: By John Edwards (Flickr) [CC BY-SA 2.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons

Debbie Davies: By Tabercil [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)], from Wikimedia Commons



2018 GUITAR GIRL MAGAZINE CALENDAR

JULY – AUGUST – SEPTEMBER ARTISTS

GUITAR GIRL MAGAZINE 2018 CALENDAR



MONALISA TWINS - WWW.MONALISA-TWINS.COM | PHOTO BY RUDOLF WAGNER

THE MONALISA TWINS

As a continuation of our feature in our Debut Issue, our first annual **Guitar Girl Magazine** 2018 Official Calendar was released in January and features some of the very talented ladies that we have had the pleasure of interviewing throughout the years.

Gracing the cover are the extremely talented twin sisters from the United Kingdom, Mona and Lisa

Wagner. The MonaLisa Twins' love for the '60s and sounds from that era has influenced them as musicians with an emphasis on rhythm, lead guitar and a great back beat from the drums. Their sound is unique in today's music landscape but bears a striking resemblance to the sounds of perhaps the most influential decade of our past- the 1960s. Their recent album *Orange* was released last Fall to rave reviews.

The next twelve months feature artists across all genres from blues, rock, soul, pop to Latin pop/reggae. Meet the women of Guitar Girl Magazine's 2018 Calendar.

➤ JULY ELJURI

Born in Guayaquil Ecuador and raised in New York City, Cecilia Villar Eljuri is a compulsive genre-fuser writing songs that mirror the experiences of her life. Touted as one of the top Latina guitar players in the world, she blends the sounds and rhythms she heard from her mother's piano, her father's vinyl records, her siblings' CDs and from the clubs she frequented on Manhattan's lower east. eljurimusic.com



ELJURI - WWW.ELJURIMUSIC.COM | PHOTO BY MANOVILL RECORDS



LUCY LAFORGE - WWW.LISTENTOLUCY.COM | PHOTO BY VICTORIA ZENGO - WWW.VICTORIAZENGO.COM

➤ AUGUST

LUCY LaFORGE

Lucy LaForge is a Los Angeles based singer, songwriter and activist and heads the American folk pop band Lucy & La Mer. With her signature baritone uke and delicate, breathy vocals, along with the bands' stunning string instrumentation, they have developed a catchy indie pop sound. listentolucy.com

➤ SEPTEMBER

GRETCHEN MENN

Given her passion for the guitar, it's interesting that Menn did not pick up the instrument until her late teens, when she began working on her music degree at Smith College. Her education focused on classical music — an unusual turn for someone with a great love for rock and roll, but one that has served her well as a composer and arranger.

Upon graduating from college, she attended flight school and became a commercial pilot. Although she enjoyed her newfound career, her heart was in playing guitar. After a year of flying jets, she returned to music full time, exploring jazz, funk, rock and acoustic music. She spent three years covering Angus Young's guitar work in tribute band AC/DShe, then moved on to Zepparella, with whom she has been mastering all things Jimmy Page for over a decade. gretchenmenn.com



GRETCHEN MENN - WWW.GRETCHENMENN.COM | PHOTO BY MARK MANION

The calendar can be purchased on our website at <http://guitargirlmag.com/shop/>. GGM



What's Your "Go To"

Electric Guitar for Playing the Blues?

My Introduction and Inspiration Behind the Blues

By Lisa Lim

Recently, I posted a question on social media welcoming feedback from electric blues guitarists asking what is their "go to" electric guitar for playing the blues. I received a lot of great feedback. It was actually a variety pack. Everything from Fender Stratocasters and Telecasters to Gibson Les Pauls and 335 hollowbody guitars, Gretsch hollowbody electrics, and some additional brands and styles made the list. There was even the occasional comment, "that's not a blues guitar." Yes, everyone is entitled to their opinion.

As I was formulating this article, I decided to focus on female blues electric guitar players and discuss a few that have had a direct impact and influence on me, as a guitarist, playing this genre of music. Like many female guitarists, I grew up



listening to an all-star lineup of male guitar players. In the blues genre, the three "Kings" made the cut- B.B., Albert and Freddie. And, lots of Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

However, my introduction to the female arena of blues guitarists started with, of course, Bonnie Raitt with her Fender Strat and supreme slide playing skills. As I was progressing and digging deeper into the genre, Memphis Minnie on her National Archtop slid into the picture and my listening space. I was a rocker at heart, but I always had an

The blues is in every style of music and lives on. I'm also excited to see and hear today's up-and-coming talent in the blues genre.

interest in the blues. My early days on the guitar had me studying and playing jazz standards. I bounced all over the place stylistically. In my musical journey, I also played and acquired many electric guitars along the way. You can read about my Gear Acquisition Syndrome in our January 2018 edition.

I had the good fortune in my early 20s of receiving an invitation to work with an all-female blues project. Here I was, the female rocker, walking in with a Kramer Pacer American electric guitar and some rock dominant guitar effect pedals. It's pretty funny now reflecting back on that experience. They welcomed me with open arms. And after jamming, they sent me homeward bound with a lot of cool music to listen to and woodshed with. They had me listening to powerhouse Debbie Davies who plays a Fender Stratocaster; Guitar Woman Sue Foley, a Texas blues Fender Telecaster guitarist; and Susan Tedeschi, a blues rock Fender Telecaster guitarist. Of course, all these women were prolific songwriters and vocalists, in addition to their gifted guitar chops.

Immersing myself in their music made me realize I had to rethink my approach completely. I had played many blues tunes over the years, but now it was time to really strip it down and dissect the style and approach. First, phrasing. Second, my vibrato. Third, my sound. What effects I was using, amplifier, and so on. Fourth, revisiting and expanding upon rhythm technique. And last, working on that never-ending obsession- the ultimate guitar tone. I decided my 40th Anniversary Fender Strat would be a good fit to woodshed with.

The all-female blues project was good for me in so many ways. I had

already played in country, pop, folk, and rock projects. Playing the blues tapped deeper into my soul. I was fortunate, after that, to continue to get opportunities to play and work with some really gifted blues musicians. They challenged me and encouraged me to grow at my craft. Additionally, partaking in blues jams and blues society functions really continued to enlighten me in the genre and all the talent that exists in the blues. I attended festivals, catching regional and nationally known artists perform Texas, Chicago, and West Coast blues. The blues scene is one big family. And the music enthusiasts that go to the festivals, club dates and partake on the blues cruises are very loyal and devoted in their love and appreciation of the genre.

I've caught many great shows over the years. The late Deborah Coleman comes to mind. What a force this woman was on stage wailing on her Gibson Les Paul. Powerful entertainer! Deborah and I corresponded a bit over the years. She was always humble and incredibly supportive. Deborah was truly an inspiration as a performer and female blues guitarist. The blues community lost an amazing artist.

Carolyn Wonderland, who plays Texas blues, roots and Americana typically on a Fender Telecaster, is another amazing artist. I caught one of her shows a few years ago when she was passing through town. Simply mesmerizing! She is a true force performing with her power trio. A true road warrior touring nonstop.

Laura Chavez used to tour with the late Candy Kane. One of Laura's axes is a red Fender Stratocaster. The night I caught up with her, she was playing straight into a Fender Bassman amp. I was completely

blown away. After the show, we chatted about her setup. And Candy Kane was her usual- gave a 100% performance. Candy was always cool to me. She remains forever in my heart and mind, the toughest girl alive.

As the years have progressed, so many female guitarists have entered the blues arena. Ana Popovic playing her beloved Fender '57 and '64 Fender Reissue Stratocasters. Samantha Fish, breaking out with the Blues Caravan, playing her Delaney Signature Tele-style electric. British blues rock guitarist and singer, Joanne Shaw Taylor, playing a Fender Telecaster. And, blues rock guitarist, Kelley Richey, typically seen playing a Fender Strat.

What once seemed rare and obscure, now is reality. There are so many female blues guitarists making their rounds. Unless you've been living under a rock, you know this. It's an exciting time in music for women in blues.

These are my closing thoughts. Yes, it seems Fender and Gibson are head of the pack for "go to" electrics in playing the blues. But, I feel, at the end of the day, it comes down to personal preference. What enables you to capture that sound is what you're looking for. What is comfortable to you, the player. All guitar players have their favorite axe. Blues is telling a story, capturing that emotion, be it joyful or sad. It's an extension of you, the player. It's a touch, finesse, in how you articulate the notes in a song. It can be simple, repetitive, an infectious riff or hook, or a scorching, climatic guitar solo. A rhythm you just have to move to.

The blues is in every style of music and lives on. I'm also excited to see and hear today's up-and-coming talent in the blues genre. Play on. 🎸



BEYOND THE SIREN:

DIANA REIN IS THE QUEEN OF HER CASTLE AND HER GUITAR

By Steph Castor

A few simple questions can bare a world of complex conversation, especially in regard to music, social responsibility, creative integrity, and a deeper and broader vision for generations to come. Guitarist and songwriter Diana Rein recently opened up to Guitar Girl Magazine about her experience as a powerhouse female artist in the music business, DIY ethics, modesty, and responsibility as a mother and role model to young aspiring artists. All of these topics have played into her efforts to fund and produce her newest record titled *Queen of My Castle*, which is comprised of 15 infectious blues tracks.

Beyond the new album, Rein tightens her grip on the shortcomings of an industry notoriously run by men

and snaps the false reality of where their true power is held. She is more than the Six String Siren. She is a majestic and musical matriarch with an authentic devotion to the blues, her family, and her guitar.

What inspired the one-woman show that is your current act?

I think a lot of things played into it-- I'm trying to think of, consecutively, how it happened. This could get really deep [laughs]. So, over my career that's spanned on and off for 11 years, I always thought it would be great and important to do your own singer-songwriter shows and get hired on your own. Being in a band can be challenging in many ways. Like scheduling everybody and making sure everyone is available. Making sure everybody is on the same page-- I've always written my

own music, so I think it's important that you pay a band if you're a solo artist and they're playing your music. If you're not playing enough shows or the types of shows that warrant paying the band, then I always thought that you should do the solo thing until you make enough money to be able to pay the band whether the venue pays you enough to cover it or not. I always want to make sure the band is happy and comfortable. Honestly, the pay for bands has not appreciated in 11 years. It's pretty much the same amount of money that I was getting 11 years ago and hasn't gotten that much better.

Having a band is challenging, and with being out there and wanting to make and share music, you just have to figure out how to make it happen and do it artistically and not just



Photo credit: Steve Polacek



With this last iteration of my one-woman act, which is pretty complex, it took me about nine months to form and plan out the right equipment that would help me express myself the way I wanted to.

throw something together. With this last iteration of my one-woman act, which is pretty complex, it took me about nine months to form and plan out the right equipment that would help me express myself the way I wanted to. I came up against a lot of roadblocks and challenges, and the reason why it took me so long is because I would buy different stuff to try out-- digital pedals and stuff. It never sat well with me because here is this huge piece of equipment that my whole show fits into-- if it craps out during a show, then I don't really have a way to continue the way I'm doing it. So, I've tried to find more analog stuff-- things that could be easily replaced. I feel like I'm really happy where it is right now. It's a nice feeling as an artist to be able to create something on your own and have the option to add people to it when you can.

Can you tell us about your current setup and what you're rocking these days?

Right now, I'm operating with my Fender Stratocaster or-- I just got a Guild Black Starfire 5. I have two amps. One is a Fender Blues Jr. Then between the guitars and the amps, I run my guitar pedalboard that has two sides to it. One side goes to one amp, which I call my rhythm guitar amp, and the other pedals go to my lead guitar amp. I switch back and forth when I play so I don't mix the rhythm and bass sound in the same amp, otherwise it starts to sound pretty muddy. So, on the rhythm guitar side, I use a Boomerang looper, which I really like because you can have one track that keeps your beat and then use a drum pad to program live drums for each song on the spot. There are two other tracks, so I can do different things with the verses and choruses between rhythm and

solo stuff. I also have a Nano Pog that helps me get a bass tone and an Ibanez Tube Screamer. I use a switcher to go back and forth. Then on my lead guitar side, I use a Little Fuzzy drive, an EP Booster, and The Dude made by J. Rockett Pedals, and a Wampler Tape Echo Delay. It's not crazy or a ton of pedals. I wish I could condense even more [laughs]. But I use my own mixer. It's a lot of stuff-- a lot of equipment, but it's probably the equivalent of what a drummer usually has to bring [laughs].

A lot of fans know you as the Six-String Siren, which is rad, but it is also really gendered. What kind of marginalization have you experienced as a woman in the music industry?

Yes [laughs]. I was gonna get in deep with this earlier, but I feel like it's way more appropriate right now. I remember going to NAMM and there was this panel of women talking about how being in bands as the only woman they would overhear jokes or just hear weird comments that, in the moment, you might kind of just laugh off or sweep under the rug, but they really affected you. Once I heard that, I was like "wow." Something just clicked in me and I felt like I had found my tribe. These women understood. They've been where I've been, and I just couldn't vocalize it completely. In the moment, I was a lot younger and couldn't quite understand. It's like I was playing along with it. If it was me now, I would probably quit the band right then and there, because that's how serious it was. I feel like in every band situation I've tried to be in -- hence the one-woman band -- there's been a lot of extra junk that you have to deal with that really messes with you. It's too much crap to even have to

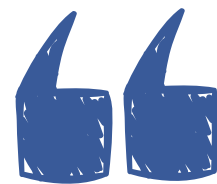
deal with when all you want to do is play music and play guitar and have a positive experience. I was sick of the situations I was in creating a negative experience, and one of my last band situations I remember always -- this is hard -- as a female, sometimes people think that you are where you are just because it's rare to have a female that plays guitar. It's not as rare nowadays, but when I first started, I felt like I was used in a way by the bands I was with as eye candy. But when it came to making me feel like I actually had something musical to bring to the table, I was diminished. I always felt like I was hearing, "Oh, I'm the guy, I'll take care of this. You just do that..." You know? It's like this really weird power struggle and "put you in your place" and "this is the hierarchy" kind of thing. I just want to play music. I'm the captain of my own boat. I get to play whatever music I want to play. I get to compose whatever music I want to compose. I get to play whatever solo I want to play. And I get to see how that rises. The cream rises to the top. I don't know if it's a vendetta thing for me [laughs], but I really feel like I'm out to prove something more to myself. I feel like, in a way, I was damaged by all these experiences I was a part of, and now I need to do all of these things to prove that I'm not associated with any of that stuff anymore.

What are some responsibilities you've given yourself as a strong female artist?

I don't think that anything can touch the undeniability of practice and the confidence that it gives you. If you show up every day with your instrument and practice, over time, no matter what anybody says, it can't touch you. Unlike acting, which I was a part of a long time ago, it's not as quantifiable as someone that knows -- *really knows* -- how to play their instrument inside and out. It

doesn't matter if you're male, female, who knows what -- it doesn't touch the undeniability of the relationship that you have with your instrument. So, one of the responsibilities that I have adopted is to show up and spend at least three hours with my instrument. I'm an indie artist, so the business side can kind of take precedence. I don't know what happened but there was like a switch in me about two months ago that said, "You know what? The business side can wait. You just have to keep creating." That's another responsibility I've given myself-- keep creating. Nothing is better for a musician as food for the soul than creating is. Make cover videos, try out new gear, try out new sounds-- just always be in that creative mindset. The business side is going to have to be an afterthought. If I just do business all day then I will crack [laughs]-- all systems fail. Another responsibility I've given myself is to not lead with overt sex appeal. I feel like it's outdated. There are so many people and women in my genre of music that lead with that. Maybe it's me being a little bit older-- me being a mom-- I don't know what. I've always had a sense of modesty, and if you *don't* like me for my guitar playing, then I don't want you to like me for anything else. I feel like I can emotionally express myself best with my guitar and don't want to be known for anything else. Be modest. Have a sense of respect for yourself. There is this whole antiquated thing that sex sells, and maybe it does, but I don't care. I feel like we need to create change, and it starts with us.

Are you interested in helping Diana Rein fund her next album? You can still chip in and receive some awesome rewards in return, including an instant download of 3 songs! Visit her official website to contribute to her campaign and help bring *Queen of My Castle* to life! www.dianarein.com 🎸



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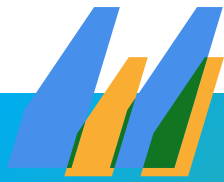
INTERVIEWS

Photo credit: Chris Strother

PLAYING WITH HEAT:

PEACH'S INSPIRATION FOR THE BLUES

By Marco DiSandro



For me, musical influence is about the heat - whether it's jazz or blues or any genre, you have to perform with heat, like Prince did. That's what it's all about.

A musician can be subject to the blues, while the blues itself can be, well, rather subjective. Simply put, everyone has their own definition of the genre. Even while sticking to the recipe of basic 12-bar forms and antiphonal riffs, blues artists tend to add their own flavor to classic blues songs.

While blues has evolved significantly since the late 19th century, it has always remained based in emotion, giving artists the freedom to create their own unique style. This is, in part, due to the fact that blues artists draw inspiration from a variety of places.

Peach is one such artist. With decades of experience as a performer, Peach has toured far and wide, lending her unique style of blues to delighted fans worldwide.

Peach opens up to GGM about what inspires her, recording live, and the state of blues today.

You've performed music all over the world and have put a lot of miles into getting where you are today. At what point along your journey did you realize writing and performing music was what you wanted to do?

That realization happened early on in my career. I was, at first, a language

major at the University of Denver, and then switched to being a music major. Around that time, I said to myself, "I just want to play music." That was in my very early twenties, and I've been playing music ever since.

You've said yourself that you've played a lot of different kinds of music - from jazz to rock, and bossa nova to blues, you've expressed a variety of musical interests. Has your style changed or been influenced recently, perhaps as a result of your time in Europe?

Absolutely. I'm guilty of being constantly influenced, changing styles, and crossing genres.

Over the past couple of days, I've been obsessed with Prince. For me, musical influence is about the heat - whether it's jazz or blues or any genre, you have to perform with heat, like Prince did. That's what it's all about. I've never confined myself to or focused on one specific genre, like so many other artists do.

When I was young, I played jazz. This had a lot to do with being female. At that time, I wanted to prove to the world that I was a girl who could play guitar, thank you very much! I was really in-your-face about what I was doing. I loved jazz, but I mostly loved singing and delivering a song.

These songs were very poignant and beautiful and fit the melancholy mood of my twenties and thirties.

After I had my daughter, I just wanted to rock. I got more into blues rock - which in a lot of ways is like jazz. So, I've been playing blues for over twenty years.

Lately, believe it or not, I've been playing country music with my daughter. If you told me a year ago I'd be playing banjo, I'd shoot you. Though I think the only person to do any shooting now is my downstairs neighbor, who has to hear us practicing.

Tell me more about playing with "heat."

Playing with heat is about bringing passion and emotion to whatever music you're performing. For example, when I perform with the Almost Blues Band in Europe, I egg on the guys to play their best performances. I want them to really go for it and blow it out. Playing with passion takes the performance to a whole new level.

Going back to Prince, one thing I loved about him is that he would play another artists' material as well as his own. I do the same thing, because if I feel passionate about a certain song at a certain moment, I just go for it. It could be one of my songs or someone else's, but I make sure to bring that heat and intensity.

In regard to your last album *A Night in Copenhagen* - what was it like recording blues numbers in front of a live audience as opposed to in a studio?

I like live recording because there's more energy. For better or for worse, the only way for me to record is live. You do lose the ability



to go back and overdub and be a perfectionist, but, going back to the concept of heat, the energy you get from an audience is so important to your performance that I prefer recording live.

For that particular album, the feeling in the room was so warm. I needed an audience like that because when I perform, I'm trying to connect my energy to the audience, and have the audience's energy connect back to me. Some artists are studio people, but I'm more a live audience player. I've played almost all my life, and I've found that's the kind of energy I like and need.

Are the Blues alive and well in Europe?

In my opinion, blues is much more alive and well over there than here. I haven't played in the South lately, so I can't speak to what it's like to play in a blues club in Alabama these days. But I've played blues in Europe for 10 years now, and I can tell you, they really love it.

For example, in the States, if I tell my American band to play classics like "Sweet Home Chicago" or "Kansas City," at least one band member will groan. They've played those tunes so many times, they're tired of them. But if you call out those tunes in Europe, you'll see smokers come running back inside just to hear them. And that's just fine with me, because sometimes I want to play "Kansas City" – it's easy to play, it's fun, and it's energetic. I love those old songs, and so do the crowds in Europe.

As I've come to learn in time, if my name is on the marquee, then I get to choose what the band plays, so it really doesn't matter if any members groan.

Speaking of *A Night in Copenhagen*, you wrote a song included on that album titled "Tell Me You Love Me" – where did you draw the influence for this song?

That song had a long history before we recorded it. I wrote it when I was younger, and from the perspective of who I was at the time. I was trying to be with someone who was too proud and macho to tell me they loved me. By the time I recorded it, I added some Danish to the lyrics because I was fascinated with a man in Denmark at the time.

The best songwriters can draw inspiration from everything. For example, when I was younger, I played guitar with a guy who wrote incredible love songs. I had such a crush on him. So, of course, I thought this one song he wrote was about me. Eventually I asked him who the song was about. He said, "Oh, it's about a whole bunch of women I've known." I was in shock! But over time, I've realized artists use life experiences and the people they have known to write their songs.

From your first live show to the point you're at now, how significantly have you progressed as a live blues guitarist?

As a young girl, I was very proficient at playing chords. I was playing with jazz guitarist Davis Ramey – he was incredible. He'd teach me different chords to play while singing and he would solo over them. In the era I grew up in, girls weren't encouraged to play solos. In fact, there were bands I played in that didn't want me to play guitar at all. They wanted me to be the "chick singer" – I never liked that, even at the time. Partly because I've always been proud of my guitar playing.

It was at some point in my forties when I decided I wanted to take my

own solos. What made it hard was the fact that I always have played with great performers – guys who played with Lionel Richie and Rod Stewart, who could really clean the slate with their guitar solos. And here I was taking my first public guitar solo in my forties.

I was very dedicated to developing my guitar solos. I've realized that my solos are simple, but I like them like that. When I take a solo, it's extremely different than when other people in my band take solos. This is because of how my playing has developed over time, and because it's what I want.

I hate to admit it, but I'm not a shredder. Even if I could play like Stevie Ray Vaughan, I don't think I would.

Some say, in part due to performers such as yourself, blues is making a comeback; but was it ever really gone?

No, but some say that it's gone because clubs in America don't make money on the blues. Music in America is all about the money, and if a club isn't making money on a blues artist, that's it. The House of Blues in Los Angeles was really a rock club because they could make more money on artists that weren't blues artist. We blues musicians called it "House of No Blues."

Is that changing?

It's certainly not changing on the west coast. I've had a lot of my favorite blues clubs close and nothing replaces them. It's hard for blues musicians to make a living in America. In 2004, I released a record called *The Real Thing*, which featured Taj Mahal. It was doing pretty well and getting decent radio play. But I never got a dime for any royalties.

Blues in America is really difficult for the artists.

Despite the tumultuous state of blues in America, what is it about the genre that really speaks to you as an artist?

The blues is my home base. Any artist will tell you, they cannot change their art because of public opinion; you just have to play what you want to play, what speaks to you. Even if it means going to Europe to play. I did the same in the late '70s – I was young and fearless, and I got this contract to perform in Japan. I've always managed to follow my heart and play what I want to play. And now, I'm doing the same thing playing in Denmark, where they like blues and support blues artists.

I've noticed that you – like many notable blues artists – play fingerstyle, meaning you don't use a pick. Have you always used this technique?

I actually used a pick when I was younger. It wasn't until my bossa nova phase in my twenties that I played with my fingers, picking the bass string with my thumb and the high notes with my nails. This is, in part, due to a private guitar teacher I had while at the University of Denver. He was a flamenco guitarist who was obsessed with his nails and would show me all these techniques about trimming and filing nails to get an edge. I remember taking his advice, but thinking he was nuts! Later, I tried acrylics, which are rough on your fingers. I then switched to playing with gel polish. Playing fingerstyle gives me better control of the strings, letting everything fall into place.

In playing the banjo, I've realized you use your finger to pick single

lines – not your thumb. That's been fun to learn but challenging.

Speaking of your guitar work, what's one technique every Blues musician should master and why?

Start by keeping your guitar in tune. It can be a problem when you're hitting the strings hard and they're fresh and without realizing it they'll go out of tune. That's the most important thing.

It's just as important for a blues player to listen. Most of the great artists I've known are great listeners – they have encyclopedic knowledge of all these different players and ways to play. It's all about listening and emulating sounds, like slides and vibratos. Listening is key.

***A Night in Copenhagen* received great reviews. Can you tell us about your next move and whether your last album set the bar high?**

There are a lot of things on the horizon.

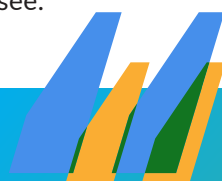
The band in Europe wants to record a studio album at some point, so that may happen. It'll take multiple trips and a lot of time, plus we'll have to write new material. So, we'll see.

At some point I'd like to record with my daughter. I know she's my daughter and I'm biased, but she sings like an angel. She's also really into bass guitar. I'd prefer to just record a few songs and not a full album, and perhaps a video. When we sing harmonies together, she adopts my Midwest accent – even though she's from Los Angeles. It's so funny. I'd like to do this with her before she moves on to join a punk band with people her own age, which I'm sure will happen.

Is there any message you would like to share for aspiring female blues guitarists?

One thing I've found about young women now, this new generation, is that they're fearless about everything in regard to music. Unlike how it used to be, there's no question now that women can play solos. I'm amazed every time I come away from a group of young women who are musicians. Their orientation now is so different, which is great.

People like that realize they have to keep on pushing their dream, because no one else is going to push it for them. You have to follow your own ideas, because in the end, it's all you really can do. 🎸



I wanted to prove to the world that I was a girl who could play guitar, thank you very much!

WHY KATHRYN GRIMM IS JUST GETTING STARTED

Guitarist. Bassist. Vocalist. Songwriter. Teacher. Frontwoman. Producer. The list goes on...

By Marco DiSandro

Kathryn Grimm is a Renaissance woman, and an all-around musician who is not bound by traditional definitions of style or genre. She's musically liberated and says she's only halfway through.

For years, Grimm has been blowing up the unsuspecting music scene in Portland – working in not just one, but now *three* music groups, having recently established a duet group with Portland Blues Legend Sonny Hess.

The genre-crossing artist speaks with GGM about what inspires her version of the blues, Portland's music scene, balancing multiple bands, and the role of women in music today.

You've put a lot of time and effort into getting to this point in your career. When did you realize writing and performing music was your calling?

I've been singing since I was nine, which was when I started listening to Joni Mitchell. But it wasn't until age fifteen when I had the epiphany that I should be a musician. I knew from an early age that I wasn't like most kids at school – I wasn't really a conformist. I wasn't a jock. I wasn't in a clique. I spent a lot of time alone

listening to music, because that's what really intrigued me.

In regard to writing music, I didn't even try doing that until my twenties. When I first got into music, there were so many songwriters I adored, and it was intimidating to even attempt to write songs like Joni Mitchell.

Did you always want to play the blues, or did it come to you organically throughout your career?

Around the same time that I was listening to Joni Mitchell, I was listening to Jimi Hendrix and Buddy Guy. They were blues all the way, and I liked it a lot. Blues spoke to me because it is so simple and guitar-oriented – I love anything guitar.

I got intrigued by the blues at that point, and eventually also got into rock, like the Pretenders and Led Zeppelin, which isn't too far from blues. I got into some folk stuff too, since that's what my sisters were listening to in the 1960s.

I've been intrigued and influenced by all types of music, but especially the blues.

Considering you delve into a variety of musical genres, how can you

best sum up your style of blues?

My style of blues isn't your typical blues. I'd call it "Electric Blues," with more of a rock edge. Lately, I've really been into Eric Gales – he's a blues-rock guitarist who, to me, is the closest thing I've heard to Hendrix. Not that there can be – or needs to be – another Hendrix, but his creativity and musical chops are outstanding. Eric's techniques have rubbed off on me.

Your 2004 album *Grimm Again* features a particularly bluesy number titled "Can't Stop the Train." What inspired this song?

My partner at the time was playing with this bass line. He was about to throw it away, but I loved it, so he gave it to me to do something with. I started with that line for the verse, came up with a melody, and ended up writing the song in just a few minutes. As for the lyrics, most of my songs are introspective and autobiographical, but "Can't Stop the Train" was fictitious. But everything was built off of that bass line.

Does songwriting really come that easy to you?

Writing a song is easy sometimes. It's rare for me to write lyrics and a melody simultaneously. I usually need a reason, some inspiration. It's taken me a decade to write one





Photo By: Maureen Jamieson

song. I'd love to say it's always easy, but I have to work hard at my songs. "Can't Stop the Train" was easy, but I've only experienced a handful of songs like that.

You've worked with so many great artists – Jeff Buckley, Bo Diddley, and Michael Bolton, just to name a few. Musically speaking, of the artists you've worked with, which one has had the most influence on you?

Hands down, this would be my late partner Mark Frere. He is not a household name or a rock star, but he had more talent than most. I heard Jeff Buckley sincerely tell him in our living room, "You are my songwriting muse, man!" Jeff was mesmerized by him as were so many others.

Mark was a bassist and a gifted writer. He played for a short time in Steppenwolf and Blues Image. He was good friends with Steppenwolf's guitarist, Kent Henry, who lived in Portland. We traveled through Portland together many times over the years.

It was Mark who taught me how to write, sing, and play. Just being in his presence was awe inspiring. He labored over lyrics and expressed how important it is to live the lyrics when singing them – to try to relate them to your life, making you sing with feeling. That bit of advice was more useful than anything any vocal teacher ever taught me. Mark had his own unique style of playing, pretty much

exclusively with his thumb. I've never known anyone who loved the blues so much. Robert Johnson was his favorite. He was sweet, humble, and sensitive – not demonstrative or self-promoting. Those are the same qualities Jeff had. Sensitive people have a very difficult time surviving in the music business, which is filled with aggressive and narcissistic characters.

But Mark was a true musician, writing every day and playing his bass until he was too weak to pick it up. He died of cancer in 2007, ten years after Jeff passed away. Losing those two has been profoundly sad for me, they were both in a class of their own.

You can hear one of Mark's songs, "Money Talks" on YouTube. The song features one of Jeff's best guitar solos, and me on vocals. Mark wrote the song about a homeless man who wandered the streets in our neighborhood of Laurel Canyon in Los Angeles. It's one of the best songs I've ever heard. Someday I'll release all the songs Mark and I recorded with Jeff – they are stellar.

Here you are with several bands – Kathryn Grimm and the Blues Tools, Hippie Love Slave, and now, Strum Broads (a duo featuring Kathryn and Sonny Hess) – while many musicians have their hands full with just one. How do you manage writing, practicing, and performing



with multiple groups?

Needless to say, my life is pretty busy. Luckily, I don't oversaturate our schedules and we don't all play at the same time. The Blues Tools play at the Blue Diamond once every two-and-a-half months. It's the same for Hippy Love Slave. I space everything out, so I don't go crazy. But the truth is, I couldn't do just one thing. I'm influenced by a lot of genres, so I'd get antsy if I did just one thing and had one band. Having a few simultaneous projects allows me to play everything I want.

What can we expect from a live performance by *Hippy Love Slave* as opposed to that of *Kathryn Grimm and the Blues Tools*?

Hippy Love Slave is a psychedelic jazz band. Although we play covers because we perform at clubs, we do original numbers too. The music is very spontaneous – there are a lot of bass solos, which aren't featured in blues a lot. I don't consider one band better than the other, they're just different.

You've been performing in front of live audiences for decades. Over time, has the experience changed for you in any way?

I've definitely gotten more comfortable performing. When the gig involves backing someone and playing their material, that's one thing. But with my own material, I'm really relaxed.

Performing music is still exciting and challenging – it never gets boring. I'm always trying new things. My bands get excited to play something new and different. It's funny, I've been doing this for so long and it's still fresh and fun – which is most important. At this age, it's got to be fun or pay a lot of money, and I don't want to be bored.

Though you're now residing in Portland, you've experienced blues crowds in countless cities across the country. What's the blues scene like in Stumptown?

Portland is definitely a blues-loving town. When I first got to Portland, I brought my pedal board to a blues jam and got a



The women musicians who came before me influenced me, and now, we get to influence the next generation of female musicians.

certain look from everyone there. Portlanders like traditional blues, not electric blues. But the fact that they love old-style blues is exciting to me. Blues is a simple, repetitive style of playing, built around three chords. For some reason, no one in Portland gets tired of hearing it.

Speaking of the Portland blues scene, your blues band performs regularly at the Blue Diamond. What is it about that place that is ideal for a blues artist?

There's something special about the Blue Diamond. I'm not a bar person, but I do end up there a few times a week because there's always great live music being performed. The Blue Diamond books great blues and R&B bands. It just has a certain vibe about it – it's small, quiet, and full of regulars. It's like Cheers, but with great live music.

Not only can you play a variety of musical instruments, but I've noticed you change up the type of electric guitar you use. Does the type of guitar you use depend on the style of music you're playing at the moment?

Yes – I use different guitars to get different sounds. Some are more for rock, and others are more for blues. For my blues playing, I stick with my Stratocaster because the sound is cleaner. My Paul Reed Smith is more versatile, so I can play it for any genre.

I have an amazing 335 from 1969. It's the perfect blues guitar, but since I'm only 5'1" it's way too big for me. It's featured on the cover of *Grimm Again* though.

You somehow find the time to give guitar and vocal lessons to up-and-coming artists. When did



you start doing this and why?

I started teaching twelve years ago in Los Angeles. When you're a musician living in a city like that, you always try to find ways to earn money while still having time to make music. Once I started teaching, I felt that it was something I was born to do. I was a born mentor. I enjoy teaching, though I never formally learned how to teach. I looked at it through the viewpoint of the student and taught based on what I would have liked to learn. I became the teacher I had always been looking for.

I have an academic background – I received scholarships, went to school for four years, and earned two degrees. With a music degree, they don't teach you how to teach. But I do have this really expensive diploma on my wall.

I think all musicians should teach. If you share what you know, it will make you a more well-rounded musician. As a music teacher, you have to explain what you're doing and why, and in doing that, you learn at the same time. If you teach music, your ear is always getting challenged.

You've performed with some of the greatest artists blues has to offer, received honorable mention on the Official Grammy Ballot, and produced songs for the award-winning *Homeless, the Musical*. You've made it clear that you're not done yet. Is retirement anywhere in the back of your mind?

I can't even imagine not playing music. I simply wouldn't exist. Literally, I'm singing all throughout the day. My attraction to music is unconscious. When I'm shopping, when I'm in the kitchen, I'm

thinking of music – it's in my bones. If I were to have a tragic accident and couldn't use my hands, I would still sing. That's why I feel like I'm only halfway through. I'm just getting started.

What can you tell us about your next project?

Strum Broads is a brand-new development. We're not writing yet, but we will soon, because Sonny is a great songwriter. We're both playing electric guitars, which I haven't seen a duet do – that's one aspect that makes it unique and exciting.

I wrote a blues song about domestic violence called "The Best of Me." The song's message is subtle but intended for anyone who is a victim. I'm pushing that now and want to make a video to market it. My hope is to make it an anthem for all of the victims out there. I'm really excited about it and will probably create a GoFundMe for the project.

What inspired you to write "The Best of Me"?

When I was living in Seattle, I volunteered for a domestic violence organization. I was on the crisis hotline for a year and a half. When these women first come in, they're making a decision to get away from their abuser. They're wondering if they're doing the right thing. That experience was life-changing for me.

A few times I accompanied victims to court and was stunned by the way they were perceived. They were often blamed for the abuse and looked upon as if they were stupid. The women had been stalked, beaten physically, tormented emotionally, and told it was their fault.

I had been writing this song for a long time. I wanted to write a song a victim could hear and be inspired to get out of their situation as soon as possible. There's a lot of mental manipulation going on in those situations, so I've taken some terminology abusers use and applied it to the lyrics. I think I nailed it with this song.

In recent years, there has been a surge of great female artists – from rock to blues and everything in between. Since you started your career as a musician, how have you seen women's role in music change?

I think more women are being courageous about being musicians. Being a musician is not an easy life, for anyone – not just women. It's a hard lifestyle and you can't be sensitive. I'm pretty sensitive, so I don't know how I survived. You have to teach yourself to survive.

Nowadays, there's more acceptance of women musicians. When I was 20, there weren't a lot of us. People would be amazed that a woman could play an instrument. It was a myth that you couldn't be musically talented as a woman.

There have been some phenomenal female musicians, especially from Portland. Esperanza Spalding is a great example of female talent coming out of Portland. She's a fusion jazz artist who plays the upright bass. I recommend everyone check her out.

The women musicians who came before me influenced me, and now, we get to influence the next generation of female musicians. The level of musicianship from women is growing because of this – it's both wonderful and exciting. 🎸



Photo by Florencia P. Marano



SUNNY'S WAR OF WORDS:

New-Style Blues with Powerful Lyrics

By Marco DiSandro

Sunny War is a Los Angeles-based artist whose influences vary as much as the music she produces. Though she claims her version of blues is “new-school,” Sunny has a unique two-finger picking style heard in more traditional blues guitarists. This comes as no surprise, since some of her key influences have

been heavy-hitters in the genre; artists like Robert Johnson, Bo Diddley, and Mississippi John Hurt have had an impact on Sunny’s craft.

What separates Sunny from traditional artists, however, is her words. While her playing is light and unique, her lyrics are deep and meaningful. With a tinge of desperation, her songs draw upon real-life experiences and are steeped in a kind of self-reflection everyone can relate to.

Whatever she categorizes her music as, you’ll dig her brand of blues.

When did you realize writing and performing music was your calling in

life?

I've always loved music. I've loved playing guitar for 20 years now. I didn't start singing or playing my own original music until I was a teenager in my band, Anus Kings. Later, I had to really depend on playing music for survival. I have a criminal record and no education, and at this point in my life, I really feel like I have no choice but to continue to play music. I recently was turned down by a dog walking company. I'm not even qualified enough to walk people's dogs for a living.

You have a musical background diverse in genres ranging from country to punk. How can you best sum up your style of blues?

I would call it "new school" blues, I guess. I love old blues and country, but I am not from the same time as Mississippi John Hurt – and I shouldn't pretend to be. I hope 100 years from now, maybe someone can listen to my music and really get a sense of how things are today. People will always have the blues, but as we learn more about our world and environment as human beings, I think there we will also experience new blues causing traumas ... like nuclear war.

You were born in Nashville. How has your time in Music City impacted the style of blues you play today?

I was born in Nashville, but only lived there until I was about ten. Luckily, in my short and sweet time there I took guitar lessons with a man called James Nixon and my mother took me to see Bo Diddley. Both guitarists have influenced me greatly, and I still remember seeing them both play like it was yesterday.

You're currently in Los Angeles. How is the blues scene in the City of Angels?

I don't honestly know much about the Los Angeles Blues scene. But I do know a lot of it takes place at venues like The World Stage and McCabe's Guitar Shop.

Like many "old school" blues artists, you play fingerstyle meaning you don't use a pick. Have you always played this way, or

did it come to you over time?

I have always played this way. The first song I ever learned to play was "Blackbird" by the Beatles, and I have been fascinated by finger-style guitar ever since.

You've been very open about a period in your life of homelessness, train-hopping, and substance abuse. Many artists, particularly blues artists, reflect on these times as inspiration for their songs. Do you?

I do in a way. I think, "Girl, you better try to write something someone will want to listen to before you become homeless again!"

Your last album *With the Sun* features "Gotta Live It" – a song with particularly powerful lyrics. What inspired this tune? Is it autobiographical?

It is autobiographical indeed. I was forcing myself to write a poem a day, no matter what, at the time. I was working fulltime as a janitor and I was drinking every second I wasn't working. My daily poems got brutally honest and dark. I was just reflecting on my life at the moment.

You've received positive reviews and great publicity from outlets including NPR and Rolling Stone. How would you describe your following – are they blues purists, hipsters, or a little bit of everything?

I'm not really sure who listens to or follows me. But I am curious!

Can you tell us about your next move and whether *With the Sun* may have set the bar high?

I just plan on making another album and touring. Writing, recording, and touring. There is a split album with me and Particle Kid that we just released April 20th titled *Particle War*. I like *With the Sun*, but I definitely like the songs I'm currently working on a lot more.

What message do you have for up-and-coming blues artists who want to achieve your level of success?

Hire a publicist. ☹—



I've always loved music. I've loved playing guitar for 20 years now.



ALLY

By Steph Castor

VENABLE:

A "PUPPET" MASTER OF MODERN BLUES

Gender has been at war with the music business since the beginning of time, but 19-year-old blues sensation Ally Venable continues to win the battle as she hits the road this spring in support of her newest album, *Puppet Show*, released on April 13th via Connor Ray Music. Venable's work has received high praise for its timeless sound and flow combined with her immutable voice for a new generation of blues fans and fellow artists. Guitar Girl Magazine chatted with Ally Venable about the record, her identity and intention, and her experience as a young female guitar player and vocalist fighting to make her story heard.

You've been called an old soul time and time again. How did you get your love for blues?

When I first started playing guitar, I gravitated towards the players that could sing and play, and most of those players were blues artists. The main one that stuck out for me was Stevie Ray Vaughan. Then I started looking into his influences. What's cool about Stevie is that he introduced so many people to blues that didn't really know about it, and I hope to do that for people now with my music. I think the reason why I

love blues so much is because it's where ALL genres derive from-- Rock, R&B, Country, etc. They all base their sound from blues, and that's why I can connect with it so well.

How has being from Texas shaped your musical perspective and ambitions?

Texas has surfaced many great blues guitarists like SRV, Billy Gibbons, Johnny Winter, T-Bone Walker, Lightnin' Hopkins, Gary Clark, Jr.-- to name a few-- and that "Texas Style" is certainly integrated into my guitar playing and live performances. I've been blessed to meet so many great players around my area like Guitar Slingers Wes Jeans and Lance Lopez. Lance has really helped me over the years with things like technique and guidance within my career as a musician. Those guys have a big influence on my playing, though I do feel like I have my own sound and individuality with it.



When I write songs, I try to write about what goes on in my life, and something that I think can relate to others.



Photo credit: Nathan
Gardner/Jacquelyn Henly



Can you explain the concept behind your new album *Puppet Show*? What story is being told?

The story behind *Puppet Show* portrays a message of taking control of your life and surpassing the struggles you face. It's about not letting anything, or anyone keep you from setting yourself up for success in whatever you do. When I write songs, I try to write about what goes on in my life, and something that I think can relate to others. I want to let people know that it's okay to feel a certain way and that we are only human. I hope this album can really connect with individuals and help them see that we all go through the same things, and that we can always conquer what is put out in front of us.

Have you experienced sexism and marginalization as a young woman in the music business? How so?

There have been a few cases where I've come across individuals unintentionally stigmatizing my guitar playing. For example, I have had many people tell me this exact quote, "You play really good for a girl." And there was another time when I was playing a festival, and someone only heard my playing and didn't see me yet. After the set was done, they came over to "compliment" me on my playing by saying, "I thought you were a 40-year-old man playing." I feel like there is this false stigma that women - especially young women - can't play guitar as well as men. I know these people don't mean anything by it, and it really doesn't bother me. It's just one of those things. There are a lot of great female guitar players out there like Bonnie Raitt, Ana Popovic, Susan Tedeschi, Samantha Fish, Orianthi, and so many more!



I feel like there is this false stigma that women - especially young women - can't play guitar as well as men.

Who have been some strong female figures present throughout your life?

My mom has been a strong female figure in my life throughout my upbringing and support with my musical endeavors.

Do you ever feel that gender and age prove to make work difficult?

I feel like it's challenging sometimes to be taken seriously as a musician for my work because I am so young and a female, especially in pursuing this genre, but I love what I do, and when I hit the stage and feel the love from my fans it makes it all worth it.

What are some experiences you've had touring previously?

You drive and set up more than you play, but my two bandmates Bobby and Elijah like to crack jokes and make fun of me while we are the road to break down the monotony. Ha-ha. They aren't just my bandmates, they are like my brothers. I've also learned that it's always good to have something and not need it than to need it and not have it. Like a spare tire.

You've won several awards for "Best Female Guitarist." Do you feel that the word "female" is necessary for titles pertaining to music and creativity?

Absolutely not, and it goes back to that stigma of women not being seen equal to men when it comes to playing the guitar. The award thing is great, but I really don't like the competition aspect of it because music is subjective, and as long as my fans keep

coming and packing the house I'll keep playing for them. It's nice to be recognized for your talent and hard work, but I just would like to be known as a great blues-rock player and songwriter.

Describe your current setup (guitars, amp, pedals, etc.).

My current live setup consists of my Category 5 -Andrew Model amp - Head & 1 12 Speaker Cab. I love using pedals, so I push them through the clean channel of the amp. Right now, I am using the Lex Rotary Pedal by Strymon to emulate a Leslie speaker, Carbon Copy Delay, Dynamic Distortion by Vertex, and Dunlop 535Q-B Cry Baby Multi-Wah. The guitars I am using right now are my Fender Stratocaster Deluxe- I also work with a company called Fishman, and I have Fishman Fluence pickups in that guitar. I also have a Gibson Les Paul. In the '90s, they did this "Limited Colors Edition," and I have the magenta colored one. I love that guitar. I also play my Telecaster when I play my slide stuff. I am using Ernie Ball Strings, usually 10's....11's on my tele.

What do you hope to see more of from other young women in music?

Building each other up to reach a broader audience at shows and encouraging one another to be successful in this business. You can do anything you set your mind to, and encouragement and reassurance from other girls - especially female musicians - can help. —

Photo credit:
Scott Doubt

SUE

Foley:

"GUITAR WOMAN"
EXTRAORDINAIRE

By Lisa Lim



At age fifteen, after witnessing James Cotton perform live, Sue Foley felt inspired to pick up an electric guitar and begin what would become a lifelong devotion to the blues. In 1990, Foley sent a demo tape to Antone's Records, was quickly signed to the label, and moved to Austin, Texas from Canada. Performing with the likes of B.B. King and Buddy Guy, Foley swiftly solidified herself as a legitimate lead blues guitarist. Having also released a string

of successful and well-regarded albums, Foley continues to contribute to the long legacy of hit blues music to this very day.

I recently caught up with the blues guitar woman Sue Foley. Sue is currently gearing up to tour throughout the U.S. and abroad in support of her new music release *The Ice Queen*.

At age fifteen, after witnessing James Cotton perform live, Sue Foley felt inspired to pick



up an electric guitar and begin what would become a lifelong devotion to the blues. In 1990, Foley sent a demo tape to Antone's Records, was quickly signed to the label, and moved to Austin, Texas. Performing with the likes of B.B. King and Buddy Guy, Foley swiftly solidified herself as a legitimate lead blues guitarist. Having also released a string of successful and well-regarded albums, Foley continues to contribute to the long legacy of hit blues music to this very day.

We chatted candidly about the making of her new release, the future of the blues, her music gear, her upcoming book *Guitar Woman*, and what's next for Sue in her musical journey. Sue is by far one of the hardest working women in the business of performing the blues.

Tell me about the latest happenings with your new release *The Ice Queen*.

We just released officially a month ago. We did three weeks of release dates in my hometown of Ottawa. Then Austin, and, also Toronto. I've been staying busy with a lot of radio and newspaper interviews. Gearing up to head back to Austin on a more permanent basis. I'm looking forward to touring.

Is Texas going to become home base for you?

Yes, within the month. I was actually just packing today getting ready to head down there.

You have a lot of tour dates coming up stateside, and overseas, as well.

Yes, the schedule continues to get updated. Not all the dates have been added yet, but we are in the process. Doing a fair amount of festivals over the summer in Europe. That's generally what blues musicians do. I'm still working on my book *Guitar Woman* and I'm writing a monthly column for *Guitar Player Magazine*. I finally found an outlet for these interviews I've been compiling for my book *Guitar Woman*. *Guitar Player Magazine* is printing excerpts from my interviews. It's really motivating me

to focus on that stuff again. I'm hoping within a year that volume one will be released. I did a lot of research and a lot of interviews. I think it's going to be possibly two volumes.

How long did it take you to write the repertoire and select the tunes that you chose for *The Ice Queen*?

I started writing in the Fall of 2015 and we started recording in January of 2017. So, I was living with those songs for about a year, but I kind of needed that time to tweak them. I had a whole other concept I had started recording in the Spring of 2016. I did a whole session and had a clear vision for an album and then I shelved it. I started talking to Mike Flannigan in Austin. He ended up producing the album. It started out with me playing him some of the tunes, and he decided I really needed to come to Austin and get everybody involved. It took a while – it was over a year. Then we did a Kickstarter campaign; to make an album that high end, I needed to raise a lot of money. You know, record companies aren't putting up any money anymore, much less that kind of money, for recording an album. Over forty grand! It's hard to imagine spending that much. It's a high-end product. Boutique!

Are you taking any of the heavy hitters that recorded with you out on tour? For example, Billy Gibbons?

No, everybody has their own projects they are involved in at the present. I've got a core band up here in Toronto – really good band – and then I'm forming another band in Austin to work out of both cities.

Do you anticipate doing any solo shows? More intimate settings while you're touring?

Yes, I actually did one last night. Sort of

a private concert. I do acoustic shows. I do shows based around the 'Guitar Woman' concept. A tribute to some of the historical figures, some of the people that have influenced me. For example, Maybelle Carter and Memphis Minnie. A one-woman show on my nylon string guitar in an acoustic setting. I love my nylon string guitar – almost as much as my Tele, at this point.

Are you going to be on the East Coast at all?

Eventually, but probably not until the Fall. I'm not sure yet. We're still posting dates and throwing stuff back and forth. Probably in the Fall I'll be doing a run of clubs and theaters up and down the East Coast.

Tell me about your performance rig. Your amps and effects pedals. Are there any other guitars in addition to your Fender Paisley Tele your audience will see onstage?

My nylon string, a Mexican model, it's not a well-known model. My Tele and my

Fender Bassman amp. I just got a Flint Tremolo and Reverb pedal which I'm quite enjoying. That's about it. I don't like to use a lot of pedals.

You've been playing the blues for a long time. What do you feel have been some significant changes in the blues music scene?

Well, I think the most significant is people are dying. All the true bluesmen are dying off and that's pretty drastic. Turning up the earth kind of thing. It's a huge hit, I think, to the whole art form that's drastically changing the way the music is played and even the way people are interpreting history. When those guys were here, you couldn't deny this music that came from that. That's a huge deal. It's a really important thing, you know? We can all sit and watch on YouTube Albert Collins' videos,



I really love my work. So, I work a lot. It's hard to pull me away from it.

but that's not the same as going to an Albert Collins' show. Not having that direct transmission with those masters, I think that's pretty drastic. It remains to be seen how it will evolve.

With the up-and-coming generation of blues artists, do you feel they are going to strive to capture some of the traditional aspects of the blues' sound and format?

I think people still study it. Like I said, without being able to directly get it from those true bluesmen, I think it's going to have a different sound and vibe, probably.

Do you think it's more hybrid crossover?

It's probably better if it is. I think it's exciting. Like Jack White interprets blues his own way. And he's a huge blues fan. But he's not tied down to having to be a traditional guy. He's playing rock and he's mixing it with whatever's interesting to him. That's interesting to me. Like Gary Clark, Jr. is really interested in hip hop, but he's a great blues player. So, it's nice to see how things will evolve. It's great to have traditionalists, but I'm not sure it's that necessary.

In comparison to when you first got into the blues scene in Austin, do you see a lot of new up-and-coming female guitarists pursuing careers playing the blues throughout the U.S. and abroad?

Yes, there are a lot of young, up-and-coming females. Not necessarily guitar players, though. There's some great instrumentalists. Great example. There's a girl named Lindsay Beaver who's also Canadian but lives in Austin. She's a great drummer and singer. I think in blues, it's always been pretty acceptable to

have females on instruments. Even when I was researching my own stuff for *Guitar Woman*. In the blues, there was quite a few. There's some good, young people coming up for sure.

So, what's in the future for Sue Foley? New music, writing, in addition to continuing to work on your book?

I think my book, probably, will be my next focus. Unless something surprises me in the middle, I'd like to go right into the *Guitar Woman* project. Also, work on a one woman show and finish volume one and market that. Do something a little different. The immediate future is touring and trying to figure out how to finish that other project while I'm on and off the road.

I know that you were teaching at a college in the Carolinas for a bit. Are you still doing that?

No. I'm actually in school getting my Ph.D. So, I think maybe eight to ten years down the road I might plant myself at a college somewhere when I'm tired of running around. That's kind of my long-term plan. Right now, the album, the book, maybe volume two, and solo guitar woman shows. Maybe a few collaborations, and in the process, get that Ph.D. Down the road, I can do some teaching. I enjoy teaching, but I wouldn't want to do it only. Right now, I'm still pretty driven to play. In regard to teaching, there was a time I didn't think I would want to do that. But after a year of

teaching, I realized I enjoyed working with young people in that setting. And I feel I have a lot to offer based on my knowledge of the business – enlightening up-and-coming artists. You get a lot of wisdom after doing this for a while. And then you're like, 'well, what can I do with this, with

what I've learned and experienced?' It's a really good outlet, especially at a college level when people really need that. They need to figure out how to enter the world from school, from college. And a lot of kids don't know how. I feel that's where I can be of service. To share something that you have. I mean, what else, is all of this for?

Music is a 24/7 love affair for you. But, I know there's got to be some down time for Sue, too. Now, I'm not talking about you packing and relocating to Texas! But, what do you like to do when you have a day off?

I like to get in shape. Go to the gym. Go to yoga. Sometimes I go to a meditation class. I like to get a good meal. Catch up with friends. I'm pretty low key, actually. I really love my work. So, I work a lot. It's hard to pull me away from it. I'll work until 1 A.M. Even if I'm not on the road, I'll be doing stuff. So, anything that pulls me away, in a healthy way, I think is great. I'm pretty basic. I practice, too. But I consider that part of my work.

Do you have any suggestions for up-and-coming musicians trying to break into the industry, regardless of genre they're pursuing? Any words of wisdom you'd want to pass along to them?

Love the work and you'll be fine because it's nothing but hard work. Practicing is hard work. Learning new stuff is hard work. Get better at your craft, and, also, think of it as a craft. That's another thing I like to think of. That takes your ego out of it a lot if you're thinking like a crafts person. For example, I'm a carpenter and every year I get to be better at my craft. By the time I'm an old man or woman, I'm going to be an expert at my craft. Because that's how expert carpenters are. They know everything about wood. So, it's kind of like that. Don't worry about stardom or fame. Try to be a great crafts person. Love the work. —



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RORY BLOCK PAYS TRIBUTE WITH HER OWN BRAND OF BLUES

By Marco DiSandro

For decades, Rory Block has lived and breathed music. Very early on she dug her heels deep into the blues tradition and has since been recognized as one of the finest acoustic blues guitarists of the modern era.

With a style similar to that of Robert Johnson's Delta blues recordings of the 1930s, she has undoubtedly become a dominant figure in the world of slide guitar – playing the blues the way it was meant to be played. With her Mentor Series, comprised of albums that pay tribute to legendary blues artists, Rory is unrestrictedly preserving blues traditions – one song at a time. She's been called one of the most impressive contemporary blues artists. But because she is so deeply rooted in country blues traditions, it's hard to call her contemporary. The word "genuine" is more accurate.

Rory took the time to fill us in on her beginnings, her signature model guitar, and her blues heroes, and give us insight into what it means to play the blues.

Your work has been recognized by countless groups – from being inducted to the Capital Area Music Association (CAMA) to being nominated for Acoustic Blues Album of the Year -- you've seen a lot of well-earned acknowledgements. When you were first starting out, did you ever think your music would be so appreciated?

I started out as a country blues artist in my teens, but in the 1960s, there was almost no encouragement from

the industry. I was essentially told that I would never make it doing blues, and that to succeed I would need to embrace the "commercial" trends. As a result, I went in a different direction for a while but eventually became discouraged and decided to go back to blues, and that's when things started to make sense. At that time, I recorded *High Heeled Blues*, thinking I would keep a copy for myself and give a couple to friends – I certainly never thought anyone would care. But then Rolling Stone gave it a wonderful review saying, "... some of the most singular and affecting country blues anyone, man or woman, black or white, old or young, has cut in recent years,"... and I was blown away. In fact, I am always amazed when anything good happens. That's just my mindset. I think I see myself as the little match girl standing outside in the cold looking through a glowing window at the happy people inside.

Speaking of beginnings, you were born in Jersey and soon after moved to Manhattan, where you've said sightings of musicians such as Bob Dylan and John Lennon were not uncommon. How did a childhood in the Big Apple lead you towards a career in music, and in particular, the blues genre?

There was an acoustic music revival in New York City that probably started in the late 1940s, but I became aware of it in the mid-60s. People were listening to early American music styles – old-timey Appalachian music, country blues, folk, and songwriters such as Phil Ochs, John Sebastian, Bob Dylan,

Donovan, and, of course, the Beatles. The Village was a hub, a meeting place and melting pot for some of the best musicians in the world. I was just lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time as an impressionable youngster growing up in a musical family. My friends were musicians, record collectors, music historians, and music fans. Son House, Skip James, Mississippi John Hurt, Reverend Gary Davis, Bukka White and others were rediscovered and brought back into the limelight, and I was able to meet and spend time with many of them as they came through the city to perform.

What can you tell us about your first encounter with a guitar?

My parents were both accomplished musicians, and both played guitar throughout my childhood. When I was 10 years old I began teaching myself by picking out simple melodies and chords. Immediately, the guitar became my life – my best friend, and my full-time obsession.

It's hard to count many modern musicians who can play the slide guitar as well as you. How did you pick up this technique?

I avoided slide for years because at first it seemed like Robert Johnson's playing was too clean to be slide. So, I played the same notes but with my bare fingers. Years later I realized that I just couldn't continue to avoid the slide any longer. This led to several years of frustration: not being able to get the sound I wanted, lots of buzzing, intonation problems, and a frantic sounding vibrato. Then Bonnie Raitt put a solo on one of my records and as we were mixing, we soloed her iconic playing in the speakers. That's when I heard things that informed me and opened doors. Her technique was relaxed. She was taking a stroll up the neck. When she got where she wanted to be she hesitated for a moment, and then the vibrato was funky, slow, and super cool. I said "Oooh, I'm doing it

Photo by Sergio Kurhajec



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I think I see myself as the little match girl standing outside in the cold looking through a glowing window at the happy people inside.



all wrong!" So, I started working on it anew – I finally found "the pocket," and from there kept expanding the options. For the sake of space that's another article, but I soon developed a list of unexpected moves a slide could make. I teach these in my workshops and to my students. Slide is one of the most versatile tools out there.

The slide guitar can be rather intimidating to many guitarists. Do you feel more comfortable playing with the slide, or is conventional fretting more your style?

Sometimes it seems I am forgetting how to play without a slide. It seems like practically everything I record calls for slide – slide is really the way I hear music at this point. If I can't find my slide, I get really freaked out. I have one favorite that just works for me ... a nice heavyweight socket wrench.

You've collaborated with so many great artists, such as Stevie Wonder, Mark Knopfler, and Bonnie Raitt. Of the many well-known artists you've worked with, which one has had the most impact on you?

As per above, I have explained some of the inspiration from Bonnie. Her singing too has always inspired me. Mark Knopfler was another kind of revelation when I heard his gorgeous bent notes and outstanding tones. "WHO is *that*?" I said. Someone said, "That's Mark Knopfler," and he later put an amazing solo on my song "Faithless World." Ry Cooder has also been a huge inspiration as a great slide player. Stevie Wonder ... what can I say – who would not be inspired by Stevie Wonder? The story of how he came to play on my record is in my autobiography, *When a Woman Gets the Blues*.

What is it about the blues that really speaks to you?

The incredible soulfulness of the music. I think this was particularly intense as it was played by the blues artists in the

early 20th century. They were living the words they wrote, in some of the worst of times, and it doesn't get any more compelling and powerful than that.

Blues lyrics can be very personal, yet universally relatable. Where do you find influence for your music?

Yes, blues is universal, but as you point out, it's also a personal matter for each artist. Life ... life is where inspiration comes from. No one escapes suffering. No one avoids heartbreak. I don't mean to be flippant when I say, "read my book" (that's where I wrote most of it down), but that's where it starts – from birth to the present, our life experiences translate into the music.

From the time you first recorded an album to the point you're at now, how significantly have you progressed as an acoustic blues guitarist?

Sometimes I listen to my earliest records from when I was a teenager, and with the notable exception of slide, I think I haven't actually advanced or changed a lot since then. From 14 to 16 years old, I had researched and transcribed most of the music I play today. Perhaps I play more aggressively now, perhaps I've added more improvisation, and some people tell me I have developed my own style. I just think that slide has added another dimension for me that I hadn't discovered at first, but now it seems to have given me a way to keep on celebrating the music in a new way.

Speaking of your guitar skills, what's one skill every acoustic blues musician should master?

DRIVE. If there's one thing I try to teach my students, it's to put more energy into their playing. The original masters put amazing power into every note, which is one reason we love them so much. You need to stomp, you need to put your body into the playing and rock around like Mississippi John Hurt, you need to slam into the frets like Robert Johnson, and roll your head like

Son House. Blues is not timid. Drive is needed. You can't have too much.

What's the current state of blues in America – is it making a comeback? Was it ever really gone?

I like that you ask "was it ever gone?" No, it never was. It has been there simmering and percolating-sometimes appearing in bars and on small tent stages off to the side at festivals. I always wanted to turn acoustic blues into a main stage kind of thing, and I have succeeded in many ways. But it has been somewhat of a battle to bring the foundational music back into the public consciousness, to give credit to the original writers – credit where credit is due. This is a mission I have been on my entire life – to mention the names of the founding artists to prevent them from fading into the mists of time or being forgotten in the advancing tide of modern music. Now we see rare recordings turned into compilations, tribute concerts, documentaries, and celebrations of some of the great legends of blues. But when I first started playing in 1964, only a handful of people had even heard of Robert Johnson. I always hoped this day would come, and I feel a sense of joy to see how the early players are now being celebrated.

Let's talk equipment: you know you've had some level of significant success as a musician when C.F. Martin & Company works with you to design your very own signature model guitar. How did the Martin OM-40 Rory Block Signature Edition come to be?

In the 1960s, I witnessed the resurgence of interest in old guitars – Martin guitars in particular. From abandoned instruments brought out of the back rooms of pawn shops to what I believe is the most widely beloved and esteemed of all acoustic guitars – I watched these same pre-war Martins go from undervalued to almost priceless within a couple of decades. Even though I had never



In my opinion, it's impossible not to get inspired by Bessie Smith. She was everything great - powerful, compelling, influential, fascinating, funny, sexy, and bold.

owned one myself, I could only watch with despair as others collected them. Then one day I got a call from Dick Boak at Martin saying that they wanted to design a Signature Model guitar for me. I couldn't believe it – I thought I had gone to heaven. You see, to me, Martin will always be the top guitar in the universe.

Dick took my husband Rob and me to a restaurant where we drew our designs on paper napkins. Later, he translated our concepts into sketches which were sent back and forth until we had completed the design. The neck would be a blacktop highway (an iconic symbol of the traveling life of a blues musician), complete with passing and no-passing zones in mother of pearl. We placed road signs – railroad crossing, stop, and yield – along the neck, and Dick created an artistic rendering of a Terraplane car on the headstock. Then came the wait for the manufacturing process, the testing of prototypes, and finally the release at one of the big industry conventions. I stood there next to my shiny new Signature Model guitar shaking hands and practically fainting from happiness.

One of your latest projects is your Mentor Series, a collection of tribute recordings dedicated entirely to the rediscovered blues masters that have had an impact on your career. As a musician deeply steeped in the blues, what does it mean to you to pay tribute to these legendary blues artists?

Aside from the obvious opportunity to say “thank you” to great artists like Son

House, Skip James, Mississippi John Hurt, Reverend Gary Davis, Bukka White, and Mississippi Fred McDowell, it gave me a fresh opportunity to re-examine and immerse myself in the playing of the original artists. One can't help but be informed and deepen one's understanding with each listening. I also thank the artists in my Mentor Series for the gift of personal interaction – for listening to me play, for supportive comments, for generosity and the willingness to share their music and insights, for their energy, their experience, and, last but not least, for politely putting up with a 15-year-old admirer. I knew I was sitting at the feet of the masters, receiving instruction directly from the source. It imparted a sense of being connected to history and something deeply meaningful.

Your new album, *A Woman's Soul: A Tribute to Bessie Smith*, is receiving great reviews. What prompted you to single her out as part of this series?

The choice to start my new series “Power Women of the Blues” with Bessie Smith was a no brainer. Along with McKinley Morganfield (aka Muddy Waters), Bessie Smith was one of the first blues singers I heard growing up. In my opinion, it's impossible not to get inspired by Bessie Smith. She was everything great – powerful, compelling, influential, fascinating, funny, sexy, and bold. Bessie was the voice of liberation in her day, proclaiming female sexuality without apology. She was gritty, intelligent, and had an utterly fabulous voice.

There are so many blues greats who, like Bessie Smith, paved the way for

women like you. Do you have any other artists in mind for future tribute albums?

Top secret... no really, I just haven't decided!

In 2010 you released your autobiography, “When a Woman Gets the Blues.” In the past eight years, you've been fiercely productive; whether its designing guitars, painting, or purchasing and restoring historical buildings, you keep busy. Is it time to add one final post-script to the Rory Block story, or are you nowhere near done?

I'm going to be doing way too much for the rest of my life. Every stage and step of the way is a new beginning, and I'm just beginning. I've got work to do, and that's why I'm here. I absolutely love and celebrate every day.

Do you have any words of inspiration for up-and-coming acoustic blues guitarists?

I just produced a record for an up-and-coming young artist named Heidi Holton. She came to me and asked if I would produce her, and in pondering how I could fit yet another major project into my schedule, I only had to hesitate for a second. I love to pass on information and inspiration to other players – that's part of my mission. I want others to succeed, I want others to carry the torch, to know and love the old music, and to keep it alive. I always say, “don't stop until everybody knows who you are.” It's really about persistence – and courage, too. Don't listen to detractors, just do your own thing. If you value it, others will too. —



MUSIC RELEASES



Jamey Geston
www.JameyGestonMusic.com
"Sonic Baby"
▶ May 1

Jessica Risker
www.jessicarisker.com
See You Among The Stars
May 4



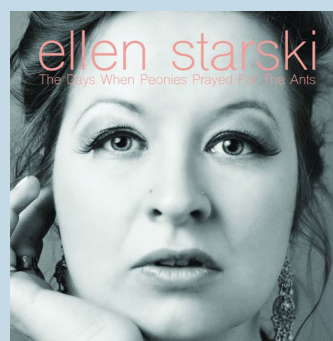
Ashley Campbell
www.ashleycampbellmusic.com
The Lonely One
▶ May 11

Brandy Zdan
www.brandyzdan.com
Secretear
▶ May 11



Angela Josephine
www.angelajosephine.com
Daylight
▶ May 4

Mariel Buckley
www.marielbuckley.com
Driving in the Dark
▶ May 4



Ellen Starski
www.ellenstarski.com
The Days When Peonies
Prayed for the Ants
▶ May 11

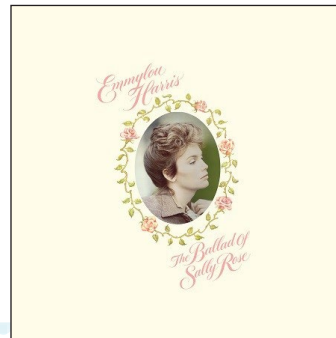
Skating Polly
www.skatingpolly.com
Make It All Show
▶ May 11





Kelly Willis
www.kellywillis.com
Back Being Blue
 ▶ May 18

Hilary Williams
www.hilarywilliams.me
My Lucky Scars
 ▶ May 25



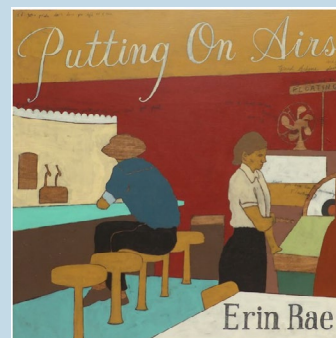
Emmylou Harris
www.emmylouharris.com
The Ballad of Sally Rose: Expanded Edition
 ▶ June 1

Melody's Echo Chamber
[https://www.facebook.com/MelodyProchet/Bon Voyage](https://www.facebook.com/MelodyProchet/BonVoyage)
 ▶ June 15



Courtney Barnett
www.courtneybarnett.au
Tell Me How You Really Feel
 ▶ May 18

Natalie Prass
www.natalieprass.com
The Future and the Past
 ▶ June 1



Erin Rae
www.erinraemusic.com
Putting on Airs
 ▶ June 8

Jill Barber
www.jillbarber.com
Metaphora
 ▶ June 22



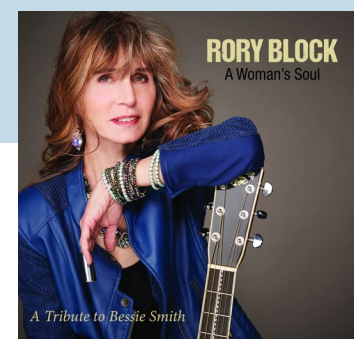
TT [Theresa Wayman, guitarist and vocalist from Warpaint]
<https://www.ttlovelaws.com/>
Love Laws
 ▶ May 18

Neko Case
www.nekocase.com
Hell On
 ▶ June 1



Galen Ayers
www.galenayers.com
Monument
 ▶ June 15

Rory Block
www.roryblock.com
A Woman's Soul - A Tribute to Bessie Smith
 ▶ July 6





MARTIN GUITAR 00ORS1 ACOUSTIC-ELECTRIC GUITAR

By Paige Harwood

Martin Guitar has an amazing reputation and the Martin 00ORS1 Acoustic-Electric Guitar from the Road Series does not disappoint. It is very affordable for a solid-wood guitar, let alone a Martin, and has the sound and projection of a much more expensive guitar. It has a lovely sound right out of the box, and I am sure that it will only improve with age. It is an instrument that will reach its potential with a little breaking in.

Founded in 1833, Martin has been a name associated with quality guitar making in America for just as long. The home of Martin Guitar is in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. Part of the cost cutting measures for the Martin 00ORS1 is that it is manufactured in Novajoa, Mexico. Don't let that steer you away from this lovely guitar. The craftsmanship is still exactly what you would expect from a Martin.

The top, back and sides of this guitar are made from solid Sapele which gives the guitar a very warm and rich sound. Overall, it is a very comfortable guitar to play. I especially enjoyed the good bass response and the low action. Several students and teachers in my music studio gave this instrument a go and they all had an easy time bringing a great sound out of it. It is very well suited to fingerpicking, but also a joy to strum.

The Sapele also gives a really endearing stripy look to the body of the guitar that gives it a very approachable personality to match the quality craftsmanship.

An instrument can sound incredible, but the look of the guitar is really what makes people fall in love. This beautiful instrument feels very down to earth to me.

Another factor in the affordability of this guitar is the fretboard which is made of black Richlite, an eco-friendly material made from resin infused paper and used as a replacement for ebony. It truly does look and feel like ebony. The materials used allow for an exceptional entry-level Martin to not only sound great, but also be more environmentally friendly.

This acoustic-electric guitar is rounded out with a Fishman Sonitone electronic system. For me, I didn't find the soundhole controls super easy to access, but I also didn't find this to be too much of a problem, especially considering how well out of sight this keeps the electronics. It is a fantastic guitar for both gigging and the studio with awesome plug-and-play output. Playing live is just easy with this guitar.

For anyone who wants the history, reputation and sound of a Martin with a lower price tag, this is the perfect guitar for you. It will ground you in the history and tradition of guitar making and playing that has been a staple in America since Martin's founding while helping you meet your potential as a musician. —



Street price:
\$759.00

For full specs, visit:
www.martinguitar.com

 **Martin & Co.**
EST. 1833

Washburn HB36

Vintage Hollowbody Electric Guitar

By Paige Harwood

Washburn, a well cherished brand among musicians, has been around since the 1880s. The name Washburn has long been associated with incredibly high-quality craftsmanship and materials. Their guitars have stood the test of time and have been played by several of the most famous blues musicians. The brand itself is iconic, and the Washburn HB36 lives up to the hype while remaining relatively affordable.

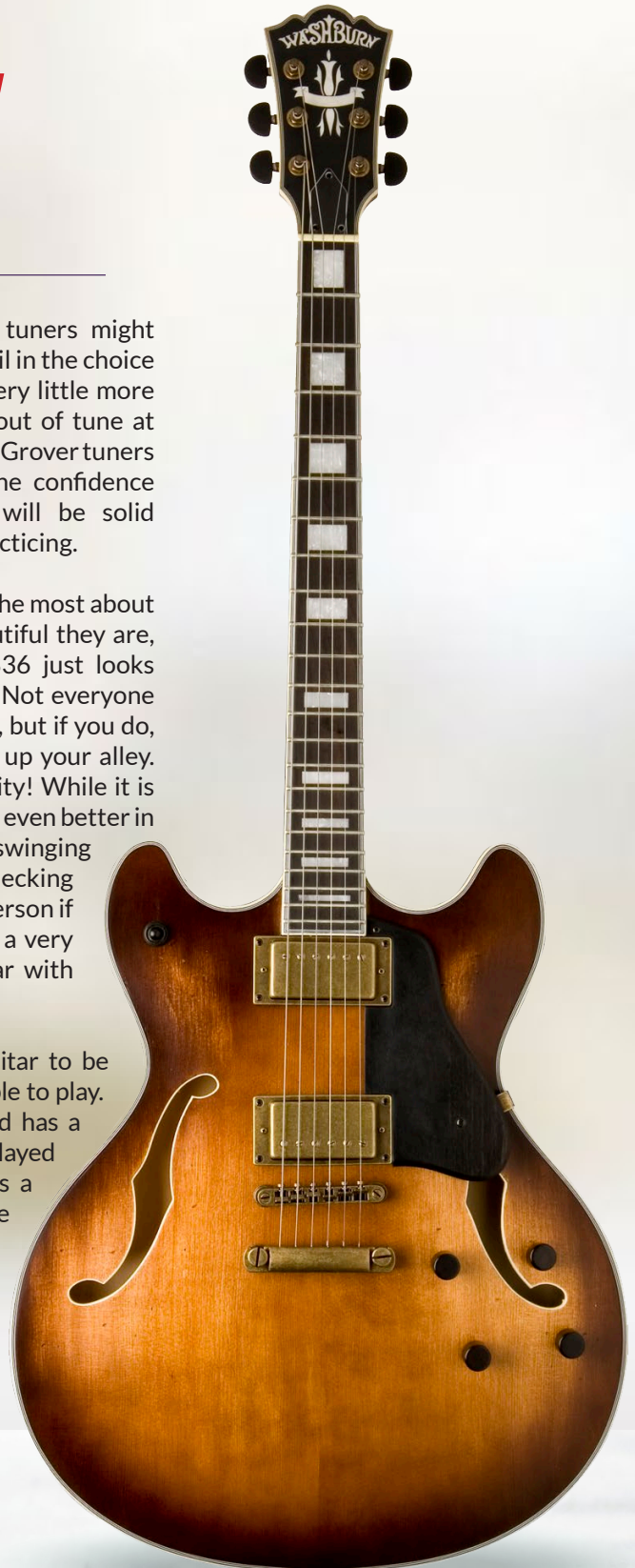
This semi-hollowbody electric guitar is a versatile instrument with the tone of a much more expensive model. In my opinion, the spruce top really pushes the tone of this instrument to the next level. Hollowbody guitars are on average more resonant than a solid body and here Washburn has given this guitar a Paulownia block that increases sustain and reduces the risk of feedback at high volume. The semi-hollowbody gives this guitar a mellow tone that is well suited to the blues as well as jazz and rock.

I love the distressed bronze hardware and the Grover 18:1 tuners. They are incredible and help the instrument stay solidly in tune. I also like that they are side mounted for ease of use. The construction of a quality instrument should focus on making the player

sound their best. The tuners might seem like a smaller detail in the choice of guitar, but there is very little more frustrating than going out of tune at just the wrong time. The Grover tuners here give the player the confidence that their intonation will be solid when performing or practicing.

One of the things I love the most about guitars is just how beautiful they are, and the Washburn HB36 just looks both fun and beautiful. Not everyone likes the faux aged look, but if you do, then this guitar is right up your alley. It has a ton of personality! While it is pretty in photos, it looks even better in person. I recommend swinging by a guitar shop and checking this instrument out in person if you have an interest in a very reasonably priced guitar with a great sound.

Overall, I found this guitar to be balanced and comfortable to play. The rosewood fretboard has a great matte feel and played fast and smooth. This is a lot of guitar for the price point – and it comes with a case! I commend Washburn for both the craftsmanship and the affordability.



Price: \$699.00
www.washburn.com

Washburn
 GUITARS



Darco Electric Guitar Strings, D930 Extra Light

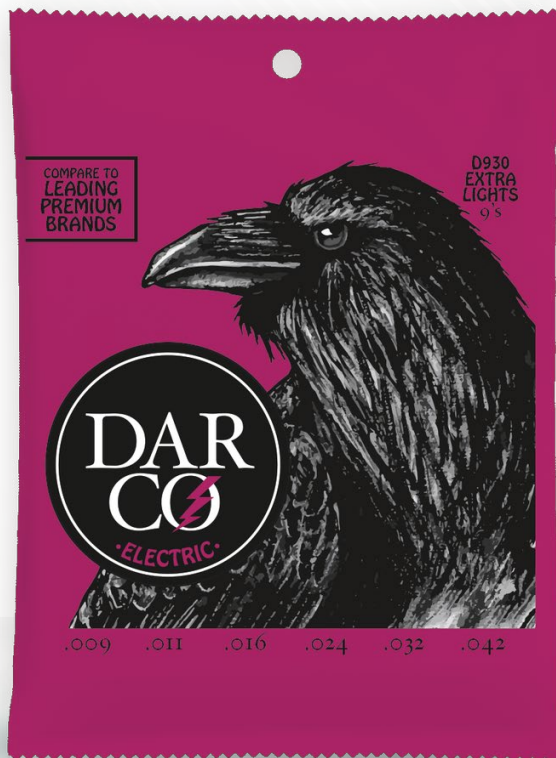
By GGM Staff

I have the Epiphone Inspired by John Lennon 1965 Casino Outfit that's been sitting around for a while because I've been having some trouble getting a sound from it that I really enjoy. I picked up a pair of the revamped Darco strings at the Martin booth while at Winter NAMM, so I decided to give them a try on the Epiphone. Preferring light strings, I chose the D930 9s which are extra light. After I completed the string job, I sadly put the Epiphone back where I keep it preferring some of the other guitars in my collection, such as my Gretsch and Rickenbacker models.

For this review, I picked up my Epiphone, tuned it up, started playing some of my favorite songs, and WOW! I did not know what I was missing. Sometimes when you put extra lights on a guitar, you get some sloppy bends and maybe even some less than solid sounds. I think that's the reason that many guitar players prefer to go with a heavier gauge like 10s or even 11s. But I can tell you that is not the case with these 9s by Darco. The playability is smooth, and they lend themselves to fast action and awesome bends. The sound is crisp and clean. I don't usually play at the middle position of my pick-up switch (both pickups), but I think that's

where these strings sound best on my Casino. Luckily, my Casino will be back in the roundup for quite a while with these new strings as I have found the sound I've been missing.

These are nickel wound and the gauge range is .009, .011, .016, .024, .032, and .042. The price point is low perhaps causing an advanced player to pass them by, but I would advise otherwise; you've got to give these sweet sound makers a try, you will not be disappointed. —



Price: \$3.49
<https://www.darcostrings.com/>



Fender Hot Rod Deville Harmonica Set

By GGM Staff

The Fender Hot Rod DeVille 10-hole diatonic seven-piece harmonica set is great for any harmonica player from beginner to advanced. The sleek look and feel of the Hot Rod DeVille really sets it apart from other more traditional instruments in this space. We noticed right away that the body has balance and weight which makes it feel like a quality instrument, and the smoothness of the fit and finish along the note holes makes blowing, inhaling and moving a breeze.

Upon opening the carrying case, the matte black finish with gold accents including the iconic Fender logo is striking. While beauty is in the eye of the beholder, sound is not. This harmonica gives a crisp, clean sound with lots of bass in the home range and clear highs as you move away from that zone.



This seven-piece set includes harmonicas in the keys of A, Bb, C, D, E, F and G all neatly tucked away in a handsome black carrying case which resembles a mini suit case with loop straps. When you open the case, you see seven harmonicas tightly fit in their own space with the key of each harmonica clearly

labeled in gold forming a straight line of letters from A through G.

This is the best-looking harmonica set we've ever seen and these instruments are a dream to play and to hear.

FEATURES:

- Matte black cover
- ABS comb
- Phosphor bronze reeds
- Valve blow reeds 1-6
- Valve draw reeds 7-10
- Includes vented carrying case and polish cloth
- Available in A, Bb, C, D, E, F and G

Price: \$269.99
www.fender.com

Fender®

Dog Days Vintage Guitar Straps

By Tara Low

Besides being gorgeous, one of the best things I like about this company is that they hand make their products in Santa Cruz, California choosing beautiful, luxurious designer upholstery fabrics and vintage fabrics. They utilize the fabric on both sides of the strap. What does this mean for you? It's soft and comfortable, with no scratchy rough edges where the front and back of the strap meet. And, they have such a beautiful and unique set of fabrics to choose from so you can have a unique and comfortable strap.

The quality of the leather used for the end strap is a high-quality thick, yet supple, leather which fits nice and snug around the strap pin giving you the peace of mind that your guitar is

securely attached. I did check their website and they do have an option for vegan materials. Also, the metal hardware used for these straps seem to be of a very high quality.

I reviewed the Red and Grey 2" wide guitar strap which is a thick cotton designer fabric with a red velvet classical design raised over a silvery grey background and is simply gorgeous and pairs nicely with a black electric guitar! They also come in 3" wide and offer ukulele and mandolin straps.



Price: \$64.99
www.dogdaysguitarstraps.com

DOG DAYS



ULTRALIGHT GUITAR CAPO

By Sasha Vallely



The G7th UltraLight Guitar Capo is the lightest capo on the market weighing only 8g and is made from a flexible hard composite material that fits across the fretboard with a strap made of nylon. It is designed in such a way that the grip is evenly distributed across all the strings rather than being a bit heavier on one end like you would get with some trigger capos. It is fast, and fairly effortless, to put on a guitar.


I have tested out many different types of capos as a guitar teacher as my students bring along many different varieties. You usually have to spend a little more to get a good capo that is quick and easy to use. I usually prefer the trigger type capos as you just grip and then place over the fretboard. Some of the different types can sometimes take a lot of hand strength to open it wide enough, and many of my beginner students struggle with this and end up dragging the strings along the guitar with the capo as they put it on making it go out of tune. Other types take a while to unscrew which if you are using one at a gig could make for a slightly awkward long pause as you try and put on the capo as fast as you can between songs.

I really like the slim design of this particular G7th UltraLight capo as it is simplistic, user friendly, and so streamlined you barely notice you have a

capo on your guitar. It features a clip and screw design which rises to allow for wider necks and can be lowered to fit a narrower neck. It is super light and small and can easily fit into a purse or pocket. The Ultralight comes with a really reasonable price tag; and although not as fast as a trigger capo, it is way faster than many other tension screw capos I have used in the past.

It is easy for beginners to use although you need a minute to get used to it. I like the way it keeps the tone of your strings without buzz and doesn't pull them too much out of tune as can be the case with some other capos. I would recommend this capo to my students, especially my younger ones with less hand strength.

If I can get super-fast at putting it on I would want to use it at live shows, but right now my trigger capo is easier, though I don't like the bulkiness of it after using the UltraLight.

A great option for beginner and pros alike, it also comes with a lifetime warranty. 

Price: \$14.99
www.g7th.com



CHECK OUT SOME OF OUR PAST INTERVIEWS OF THESE LADIES THAT ROCK THE BLUES:



Michelle Malone

Michelle Malone on her career, guitars, new album *Slings and Arrows*, and Georgia music (3/26/18)



Malina Moya

Interview with Female Rocker and Warrior Malina Moya on a Mission to Redefine the Status Quo (1/18/18)



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Samantha Fish

Samantha Fish explores acoustic music with new album *Belle of the West* (11/16/17)



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Clare Free

Clare Free...and How She Rolls With the Blues (12/5/12)



Jackie Venson

Jackie Venson on new EP *Transcends* (10/20/17)



E. G. Kight

Interview with Blues Artist and Georgia Songbird EG Kight (12/4/14)



Joanne Taylor Shaw

British Blues Guitarist Joanne Shaw Taylor on Her New Album *Almost Always Never* (9/26/12)

HOW TO PLAY BLUES GUITAR

By Nikki O'Neill

Do you get inspired by blues artists like Sue Foley, Jackie Venson, Ana Popovic or the legendary Sister Rosetta Tharpe? Do you want to experiment with blues sounds in your guitar playing and songwriting, but don't know where to start? I will help you make that happen in this video lesson and article. I am an Americana recording artist, guitar instructor,

and author of the book, *Women's Road to Rock Guitar*.

Three Ways to Get a Bluesy Sound

Here, I am going to show you how to play dominant seventh chords and the blues scale and share some great tips on how to do string bends — these are the three most essential parts of blues guitar playing.

Dominant Seventh Chords

The heart of the blues sound is rooted in "7th chords" (their formal name is dominant seventh chords). You'll hear them in blues songs like "See See Rider" by Ma Rainey or the Sippie Wallace/Bonnie Raitt duet "Women Be Wise."

Without going into music theory, 7th chords are like major chords

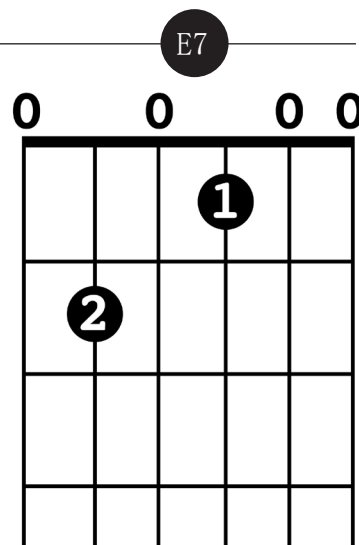
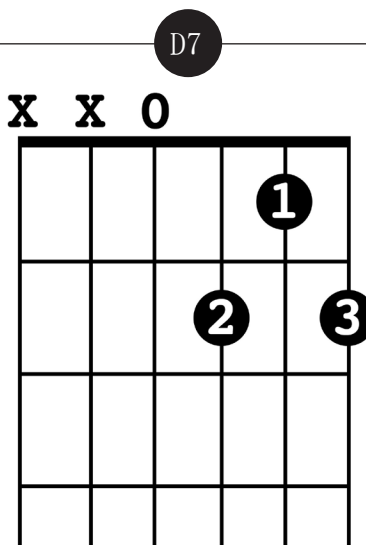
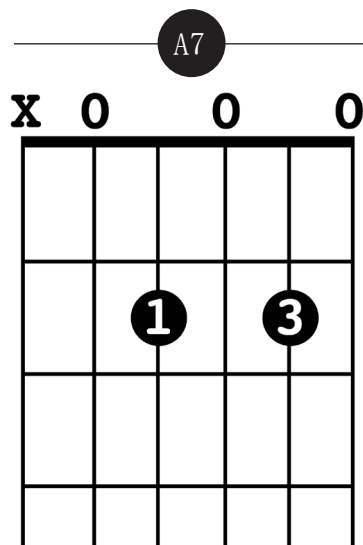
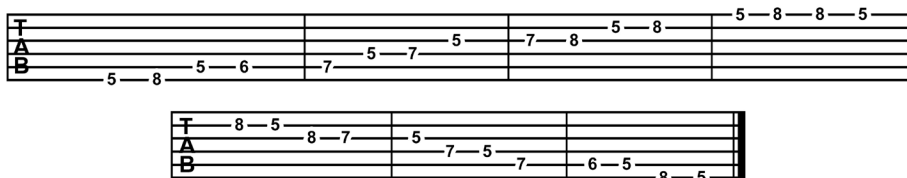
Photo credit:
Chris Moseman



with one specific extra tone that give them a very distinctive color.

If you know how to play some basic open chords like A, D and E, it's easy to learn A7, D7 and E7 – see the chord diagrams below:

Here's a TAB showing the same blues scale in A that I play in the video:



You can look up more of these 7th chords online or in a chord book. If you're comfortable with playing barre chords, you'll easily learn the dominant seventh versions.

The Blues Scale

In the blues, many of the song melodies, guitar riffs and solos are based on the blues scale. In the video lesson, I will show you how to play the blues scale in the key of A. I start it on the fifth fret of the low E-string (the 6th string). Pay close attention to which finger I use to play each note:

5th fret notes: index finger
6th fret: middle finger
7th fret: ring finger
8th fret: pinkie

Note: I am right-handed, so I use my left hand to fret the notes and right hand to hold the pick. If you use a regular guitar, do the same. But if you play a lefty guitar, use your right hand to fret the notes.

Blue Notes and String Bends


String bends are easier to learn by watching my video lesson. Bends are the guitar player's way of mimicking a singer's voice. It's a very expressive technique that adds a lot of color and emotion to your playing. Some of these bent notes are often described as "blue notes."

By bending a note, you're raising its pitch — how much depends on how widely you bend the string. There are quarter step, half step, whole step and even larger bends.

If you're totally new to string bends, it's easiest to try a quarter step bend on the low E string or the A string.

When you bend notes on the two lowest strings, you want to do the bend downward, away from you (otherwise you might push the string off the fretboard).

In blues soloing, you'll often bend notes on the higher/thinner strings. Because these strings are tighter, you want to use three fingers to do the bend (instead of just one). On these strings, you'll bend the string upward, towards you.

If you have the digital version of our magazine, watch the video as I walk you through these different bends. If you have our print version, check out our website under our Lessons tab to view this and other videos. 

<https://youtu.be/DMC4oKBr6zU>





Got the Acoustic String Blues?

By Marco DiSandro

When it comes to playing acoustic blues, you've got to have the right strings.

But making the right choice is not so simple, as there are a lot of factors to consider before threading that steel and turning those pegs.

First of all, think about how important sound projection is

for your guitar. This depends on whether or not you're playing your acoustic unplugged or plugged. Thicker strings (that is, strings with a heavier gauge) have a louder and fuller tone. While great for strumming rhythmic chords, that thickness can hold you back from letting your fingers fly and experimenting with some rather bluesy riffs. If you're not

an acoustic purist, and your sound is getting a little help from an amplifier of some sort, you can get away with lighter-gauged strings.

Aside from volume and projection, the right strings matter when you have a specific sound you want to achieve and style you want to convey. As a lead guitarist, you may prefer a



brighter, lighter, and more sustained sound. As a rhythm guitarist, you could be partial to a warm, mellow resonance.

Being an acoustic blues guitarist in particular doesn't make the choice any easier. Emphasizing hammer-ons, pull-offs, slides, and bends, acoustic blues possesses a very distinctive sound and style. The strings you select for this genre will make a significant difference in your playing.

Let's look at four types of strings you should consider if you play acoustic blues. We'll help you make an informed decision about which ones to purchase and cure your case of acoustic string blues once and for all.

Ernie Ball 2146 Earthwood Phosphor Bronze Medium-Light Strings (gauge .012-.054)

Ernie Ball strings always perform well. When playing, they have an unforced feel and superior projection – ideal for performing unplugged. The Phosphor Bronze Medium-Lights are versatile, in that they possess a warm and rich tone that suits rhythm playing as well as distinctly clear trebles that suit lead playing and singular notes. In regard to sustainability, the packaging these strings come in prevent oxidation (not to get too scientific) and prolong their lifespan and sound quality. These strings don't sound metallic like many others, but rather provide a slight twang that is perfect for playing acoustic blues.

Martin MSP4150 SP Phosphor Bronze Light-Medium Strings (gauge .0125-.0550)

If you're an acoustic guitarist, you know "Martin" means quality; C.F. Martin & Company makes some of the best guitars in the world – and their strings are no different. Whether you're strumming or picking individual strings, the MSP4150SP Phosphor Bronze Light-Mediums will produce a sound and range that a blues player needs. The

core wires and plain strings are plated with an acoustic bronze finish that makes them very durable and responsive, particularly for fingerpicking. However, some find these strings to be harsher than most in the light-medium category, so if you're a novice guitarist, these aren't for you. Build up your calluses before trying these out.

Cleartone Phosphor-Bronze Light Strings (gauge 12 – 53)

Guitarists either love these strings or hate them. With that in mind, you should try them at least once. These strings are a perfect example of how some can sound great on one guitar but may fall flat on another. These could be the strings that will give you that bluesy sound you've been searching for, or they could sound terrible – but there's only one way to find out. The Cleartone Phosphor-Bronze Lights tout a "treated" string instead of "coated" string, which offers a more natural tone and effortless feel that many blues guitarists prefer. For the price, these strings hold up and are worth a shot.

D'Addario EJ17 Phosphor Bronze Medium Strings (gauge 13-56)

The packaging on these suggest a "warm, bright, and balanced tone," and that's what they deliver. D'Addario's EJ17 Phosphor Bronze Mediums project a quality resonance and exceptional intonation. These strings don't break too easily, and universally sound great on almost any acoustic. You may chew up your fingers on the deeper bass strings, but it is worth the crisp sound you will get playing rhythm or lead. Cleverly enough, the tuning end of these strings have about a four-inch section of unwrapped core, making it easier to insert the string into the tuning axle hole and saving time and frustration. Many swear by D'Addario products, and if you're an acoustic blues guitarist, you need to try these at least once. 🎸

IMPROVE HOW YOU PRACTICE THE BLUES WITH THESE TIPS

By Marco DiSandro

You either have the blues or you don't. That's obvious.

But while you may undoubtedly have the blues, you may not have a solid approach to practicing the blues on the guitar. The blues has a unique style and sound, full of lower pitches, flatter notes, and repetitive

patterns. So, while you may feel the blues in your soul, it may not be so easy to express with an instrument.

Being schooled in the way of playing blues guitar isn't a straightforward or sequential process. Though methodical and generally based on a

standard chord progression, blues is highly-improvised and spontaneous.

Let's take a look at some essential techniques to playing the blues. By applying these to your practice regiment, you'll easily hone in on that distinct bluesy sound.





12-Bar Forms

If you're new to the blues, this concept may blow your mind. Once you put it into practice, you'll recognize it as a definitive standard in a lot of songs. A repeated twelve-bar chord progression is the most common structure in the genre. Throughout the course of the song, you will be repeating each twelve-bar measure, which consists of four beats per bar. Try it out in a key you're comfortable with. If you're not sure where to start, try the E-A-B combination, starting out in the key of E. You could even cycle through the twelve bars with a G-C-D structure – it's up to you. Just be sure to start and end on the same note after cycling through the twelve bars.

Minor Chords

Minor chords are the sad and depressing cousin of their respective major chords. That's why they're perfect for playing blues. If the music you currently play doesn't emphasize an occasional D-minor, A-minor, or E-minor, start adding them to the mix. Because minors consist of a flatted third degree of a major, they offer a more despondent and emotional tinge to your sound. When you're strumming, be sure to follow through on all the strings in the note so you can emphasize that one string that drops down a fret or two. After all, that one note can make the difference between a cheerful song and a blues song.

Seventh Chords

Hearing "Seventh Chords" may conjure up memories of music theory and make you want to

run and hide. There's no need to hesitate – in the context of blues, anyway. Dominant seventh chords consist of four notes that really pack a bluesy punch. This is particularly true if you apply seventh chords to your transitions – that is, moving from one note to the next. For example, if you're transitioning from a D major to a G major, toss in a D7th chord between the two. Some find these chords to be awkward and counterintuitive in relation to their parent chords; but once you master these, you'll get a bluesy sound that's easy to distinguish.

Hammer Ons/Pull Offs

Hammer Ons and Pull Offs sound great – and are a lot of fun – no matter what style you're playing. However, there is no doubt that these are essential for the blues. There are a lot of different ways you can go about practicing these tricks and building up muscle in your fingers, but the simplest and most common place to start is hammering from your first finger to your third, encompassing a total of three frets. By taking your time and perhaps even playing along with a slow beat, you'll be able to properly assess how much strength and force you'll need to get sufficient sound from your hammering. Once you feel comfortable with hammering from your first to third finger, try a pull off. This technique is very different from hammering. Actually, it is like hammering – but in reverse. The only difference is, you want to be sure to pull your third finger down, not directly off; it's that

down motion that vibrates the string and subsequently produces sound. Pulling down, feeling down ... that's what the blues is all about.

Bends

A staple in blues, bending a string can give your guitar solo what it needs to qualify as "bluesy." Firmly pushing down on a string on whatever fret you choose and bending it upward or downward essentially shortens the length between the note of choice and the bridge, changing the pitch of that note. If you're a lead blues guitarist, adding random bends to a basic pentatonic scaling progression can go a long way for your big solo. By holding those bended notes and letting them reverberate for a couple beats, you can nail that blues sound. Just listen to Stevie Ray Vaughan or B.B. King – they were masters at getting the most out of one string/fret.

Try combining all of these techniques together in a sequential fashion. Once you've got the 12-bar form down, throw in some minor and seventh chords. When it comes time for a solo, throw in a basic scale progression full of hammer ons, pull offs, and bends, before going back into the cycle of bars.

Practicing the blues guitar shouldn't give you the blues. Ironically, it can be a lot of fun and very enjoyable. This is due to the fact that despite a few standard forms of playing the genre, it's off-the-cuff and inventive, leaving those bends, hammer ons, pull offs, and chord variations up to you.

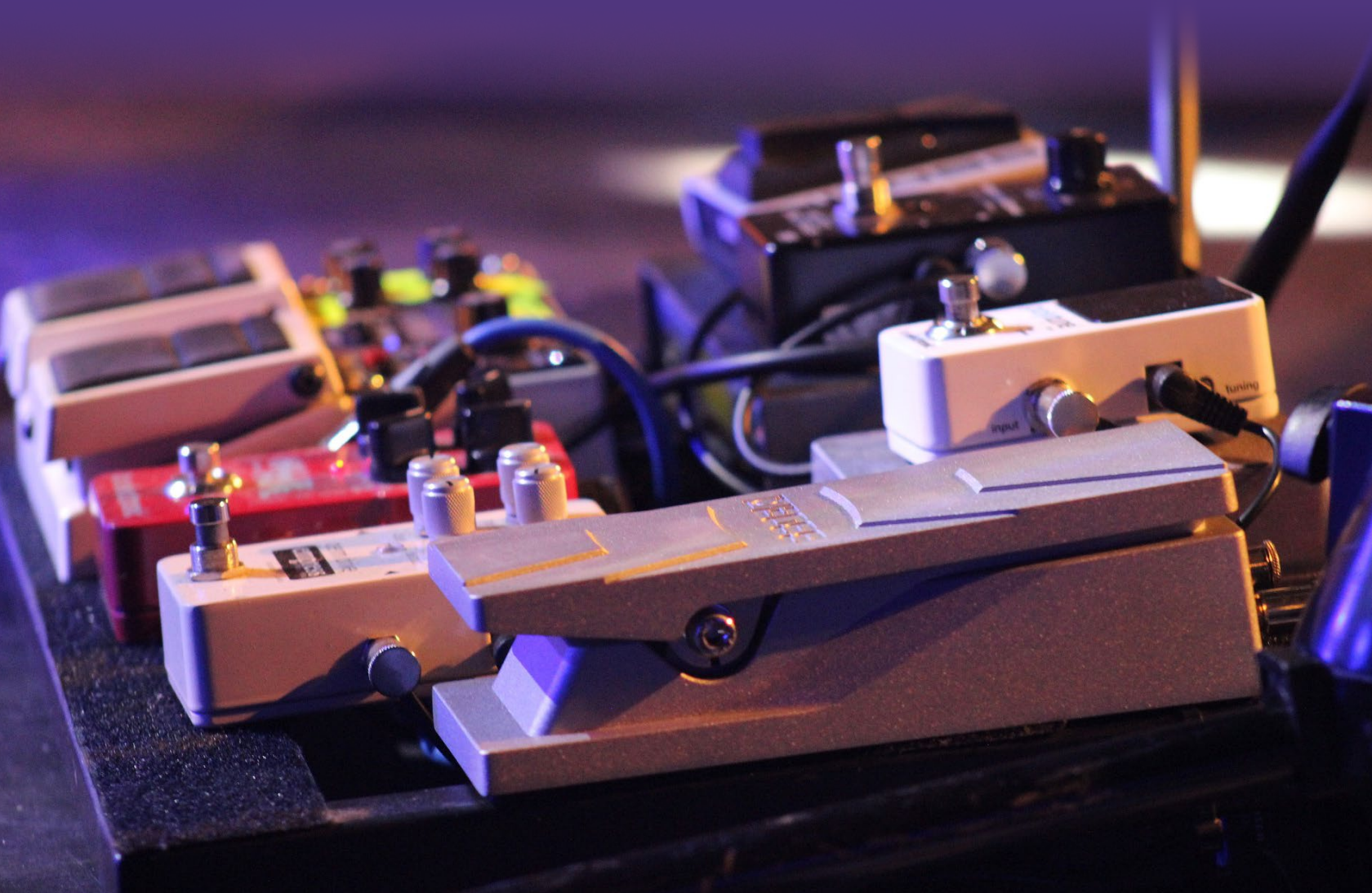
THREE BLUES PEDALS TO RULE THE WORLD

By Steve McKinley

You want your guitar to wail the blues? To cry out the despair and agony in your broken heart while standing in the cold, cold rain on a dark, lonely night 'til the break of day? The blues greats of yesteryear felt the same way and were able to capture that soulful, deep down tone on record.

So, you ask, how can I, a mere Earthly mortal, rise to the heights of amazing blues tone? Well, I'm glad you've asked as you've come to the right place. Here at Guitar Girl Magazine, we'll help you get a deeper perspective of the blues as we take a look at some of its inspirational players and recognize some of its ingredients.

Now before we get down to the nitty gritty, it goes without saying that there is absolutely no substitute for the "magic is in the hands" with the obligatory wood shedding, knowing your craft and paying the blues dues (shake your hands back in forth in the air in the customary jazz hands





motion). Also, there's no experience like being in the midst of a get down blues jam session at your late night local honky tonk. In Atlanta, there's Blind Willie's Blues Club, Fat Matt's Rib Shack, and Darwin's Burgers and Blues when you're looking for a double shot of that wicked mojo. Years ago, I was at Blind Willie's having drinks with some friends and the guitar player was tearing it up in a downright righteous way so I had to ask who it was...it was Beverly "Guitar" Watkins, who's in her 70s and playing like the only way to get her anguish out was through her guitar.

Now to really get to know the blues, you want to start at its beginnings and who better to introduce you to the blues than with the Godmother of Rock 'n' Roll herself, Sister Rosetta Tharpe (March 20, 1915 to October 9, 1973). I'm always amazed that there are not volumes written about her and numerous monuments erected in her name as she served as an inspiration to many of the greats (Little Richard, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Chuck Berry, Elvis Presley, and Jerry Lee Lewis to name a few). Open your ears and welcome into your heart her soulful servings of "Down By the Riverside" and "This Train" as examples. Her blues are gospel and vice versa. You get your churchin' and blues all at the same time. You'd be hard pressed to find a better starting place for your blues journey.

Getting back to how YOU can find your blues tone, while you have to look at your whole guitar rig we're going to focus on three effects pedals because they can have a big impact on your tone with relative ease and at reasonable cost.

We'll start with the best-selling pedal of all time, the Ibanez Tube

Screamer. Released in the late 1970s, it has gone through many versions but they all have the signature Tube Screamer tone (TS808, TS9, TS9DX, TS5, TS7 and TS10). It shines at pushing your guitar's signal into a blissfully beautiful and warm clipping (aka overdrive) and drives your guitar amp with a louder, grittier and warmer tone with a mid-range boost which has graced countless recordings. Essentially everyone has used one at one time or another, but some notable players associated with it are Nancy Wilson, Joan Jett and Stevie Ray Vaughan. If I could only have one pedal, it would be a Tube Screamer. Most honorable mentions go to the BOSS SD-1 Super Overdrive as its circuit is very similar to the Tube Screamer's, and the BOSS BD-2 Blues Driver as it's another exceptionally sweet-sounding blues pedal.

Next on our list of prime suspects would be the ubiquitous Dunlop Cry Baby Wah pedal which allows you to vary which frequencies are boosted with its rocker foot pedal. Making its debut in the late 1960s, this is another iconic pedal seemed to be used by almost everyone in nearly every style of music. It was originally made to imitate the crying of a muted trumpet but came into its own right as a tone shaping tool. The most popular modern model is the GCB95 but there are a number of variations like the signature models, all of which give you the ability to add its "bow chicka wow wow" flexible sonic expressiveness to your tone. Orianthi puts hers through the dirty blues paces on her soloing on "You Don't Wanna Know." Ana Popovic burns the house down with hers on the Hendrix cover of the same name. An equally iconic wah is the Vox V847 which has its own cult following.

Finishing out the trilogy of pedals for superior blues tone is the Electro-Harmonix Holy Grail Reverb. Very briefly, reverberation (aka reverb) happens naturally as it is created when a sound is reflected off surfaces, but luckily it can be created with spring, analog and digital reverb units and it adds a sense of space and depth to your tone so it's like the cherry on top of your hot fudge sundae as it adds the finishing touch to your awesome blues tone. Kathy Mitchell, Queen of Surf Guitar, makes excellent use of reverb with her work with Eddie and the Showmen, the Blazers and others. You may remember the furious surf guitar in Pulp Fiction ("Misirlou" by Dick Dale). I once had the honor of playing a show with Dick Dale and he suspends his trusty Fender 6G15 reverb unit from a ceiling rafter by a rope so his reverb is pure. It's also safe to say that Debbie Davies and Pink Floyd put reverb to good use. Another recommended contender for reverb is the BOSS RV-5.

Admittedly not a guitar effects pedal but a guitar slide can give your guitar yet another voice to sing those blues in a most emotional way- Bonnie Raitt would agree.

To wrap it up, your guitar tone is about as personal as it gets as it exudes from you. Tone mining for a satisfying blues tone can take some time but is a worthy pursuit. Feeding your mind for a good understanding of its roots is where it starts. Seeing it live helps you soak it in to become a part of you. Next, having a few top performing pedals up your sleeve will give you the tools to have your guitar emotions take shape. Lastly, with all the pieces in place, is to get you to dig deep into your soul to let your blues tone flow through you to soar with the greats...your stardom awaits. 🎸

#GUITARGIRL

Every month, we select a guitarist from social media that has tagged themselves with #guitargirlmag to be featured on our website and here in our magazine. So, head on over to **Instagram** and tag yourself.

YOU MAY BE NEXT!

JESSIE GLENNON



ABOUT ME: My

name is Jessie Glennon and my handle on social media is @jetgirl888.

I've been playing the guitar for about two years. I play almost every day for three to five hours. I'm always learning new stuff to hone my skills. I also sing. I have a band @ SpitfireSarcasm where I am the lead singer and lead guitarist.

MY MUSIC: I love rock music and when I started playing the guitar, that's all I'd learn. Now that I've been playing awhile, I'm opening myself up to new types of music in order to get a sense of what music other people like. When I write my own music, I always try to combine some elements from different genres to get new and unique sounds.

MY INSPIRATION: My biggest music inspiration is Jimmy Page. Led Zeppelin is one of my favorite bands and I've learned so many of their songs that I can't even count them. When I'm working on a new Zeppelin song, I always learn some new tricks and they always have cool riffs that are complicated and great to play. I've always wanted to be able to play as well as Jimmy can, so I practice a lot so that I could maybe get there someday.

MY GEAR: I've played a lot of guitars and I own over 30. I have an LTD EC-1000 Deluxe that I enjoy playing the most. I've found it to have a great neck that I can play any type of music on, and it's got a great sound that can be really soft and clean, or it can be mean and distorted. I have a bunch of amps too including two full stacks. One of my stacks is a Peavey Valve King that sounds super sick when it's cranked, and it can really rock the house with some good sounds.



WHAT WE'RE READING NOW!

By Tara Low

Shout, Sister, Shout!

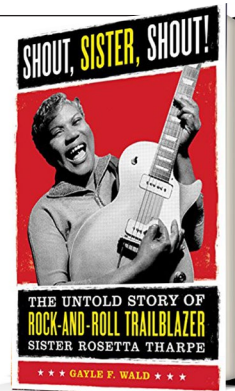
The Untold Story of Rock-And-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe
By Gayle F. Wald

Although published ten years ago, *Shout, Sister, Shout!* still remains relevant today, especially with Sister Rosetta Tharpe's induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Blues is alive and Tharpe gets credit as one of its "trailblazers."

Author Gayle Wald interviewed over 150 people who knew or worked with

Tharpe in her research for this biography. The book is laid out in 12 chronological chapters with two "Bridges" in between the chapters – how clever. There's a great index at the end which I found very useful.

Tharpe was such an accomplished guitarist and influenced artists across all genres of music and blazed a trail for future female guitarists through her strong spirit and incredible talent. Wald did a good job taking her research and bringing the story of the beloved Sister Roset-



ta Tharpe to life. Through this book, she's opening up a new generation to the life and music of Sister Rosetta Tharpe and giving her the recognition she so deserves.

About the Author: Gayle F. Wald is a professor of English at George Washington University and the author of

Crossing the Line: Racial Passing in Twentieth-Century U.S. Literature and Culture. Wald also wrote the liner notes for a critically acclaimed 2003 Rosetta Tharpe tribute album. She lives in Washington, D.C.

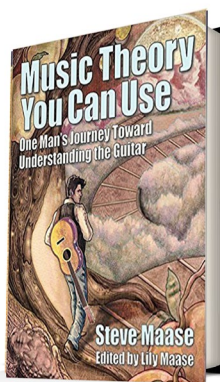
Music Theory You Can Use: A Guitarist's Handbook

By Steve Maase
Edited by Lily Maase
\$28.95

Author Steve Maase passed away before the printing of this book and daughter Lily Maase lovingly writes the Dedication which beautifully tells the story of her upbringing and her father's love and passion for the guitar which has been passed on to her.

As an outlet for female guitarists, I was especially moved by her Dedication

as she reflects on the fact that she learned guitar at a time when it wasn't common for young women to play guitar and the debt of gratitude that she owes her father for making this possible.



The book is set out in ten chapters and starts at the very basics of what chords are and how to make them and then on to building them, moving on to scales, 7th chords, pentatonic scales, and more. There's also a chapter on The Blues.

Written in very easy to read terminology with diagrams and worksheets along the way. One of the

things I like about it is it's almost as if you're being taken along Maase's personal journey as it also has some historic photos included in some of the chapters to explain some of the reasoning behind the theory.

About the Author: Steve Maase was a legendary session guitarist in Albuquerque, New Mexico who lived and breathed his instrument. During his long and illustrious performance career, he taught thousands of young people music in a way that reached them not only as musicians, but as people. He passed this passion on to his daughter, Lily Maase, who is also a well-known guitarist based in New York. Steve died on September 30, 2016--just after completing *Music Theory You Can Use*.

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

A U P W M K A K P I U C P D I K H B H P M G K F M R Y O U X I I F L V W I B D Z
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 P X X V D S F Y Z F R R N W B U B M Q V U K O O S K P D D T W C P U M Y E O C D

WORD LIST:

ALLY VENABLE
 ASCAP
 BLUES
 BONNIE RAITT
 CALIFORNIA
 ACOUSTICS
 DARCO
 DEBORAH
 COLEMAN
 DELTA BLUES
 DIANA REIN
 ELIZABETH COTTEN
 FENDER
 GIBSON
 HOT ROD DEVILLE
 KATHRYN GRIMM
 LITTLE SISTER
 MARTIN GUITAR
 MEMPHIS MINNIE
 MIRANDA LAMBERT
 PATTI SMITH
 PEACH
 ROADIE
 RORY BLOCK
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 THARPE
 SNAMM
 STRATOCASTER
 SUE FOLEY
 SUNNY WAR
 TELECASTER
 WASHBURN
 WOMEN IN MUSIC

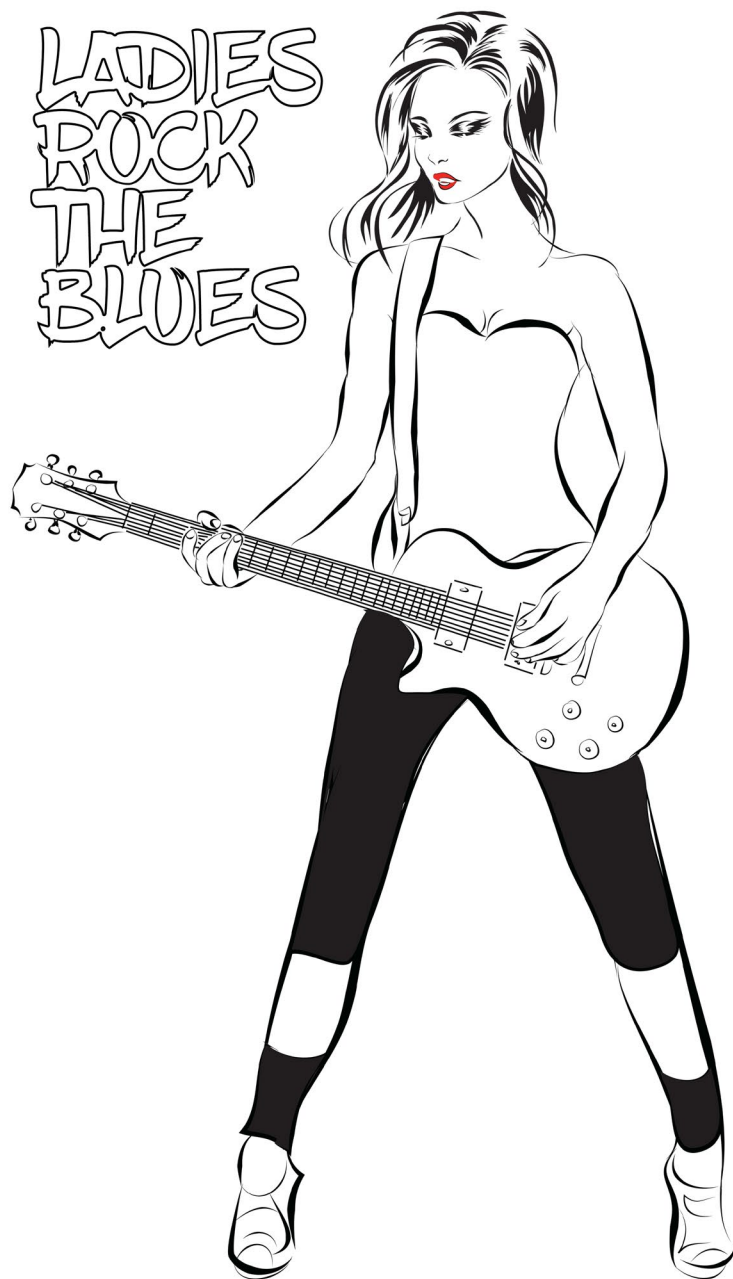
TRIVIA

1. What company approached Rory Block about designing her signature guitar and what model was it?
2. How many consecutive Academy of Country Music Awards has Miranda Lambert won?
3. What iconic guitar company is getting sued for \$50 million by a foreign corporation?
4. Fender recently released how many effects pedals?
5. What is the name of the album Diana Rein is currently producing?
6. What artist released the album *The Ice Queen* and what guitar is she seen with in her photograph?
7. Sister Rosetta Tharpe was given what title and was known for playing what brand of guitar?
8. How does Sunny War refer to her music?
9. What university did Peach attend?
10. When and where will Summer NAMM take place?

→ Mind Game and Trivia answers found on last page.



It's said that coloring can help reduce stress, so grab some color pencils, along with your guitar and notepad, and de-stress...



GUITARGIRL MAGAZINE

WORD SEARCH ANSWERS:

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TRIVIA ANSWERS:

- 1) Martin Guitar OM-40
- 2) 32
- 3) Gibson
- 4) Six
- 5) *Queen of My Castle*
- 6) Sue Foley – Pink Paisley Fender Telecaster
- 7) The Godmother of Rock 'n' Roll – Gibson Guitars
- 8) Old school
- 9) University of Denver
- 10) June 28-30, 2018 in Nashville, TN

WHAT'S NEXT

July 2018
 Sister Acts

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