

GUITAR

✦ MATTERS ✦

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ISSUE 1

Discover
your guitar
personality
inside!

INTERVIEW

Laurence Lean shares his guitar collection, and tells us about his time in the 90's indie scene.



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A letter from the editor

Welcome to the first issue of *Guitar Matters*! This magazine is all about celebrating the gear, stories, and icons that have shaped the music we all love.

From iconic guitars and pedals, to the bands and albums that have become synonymous with great guitar music, we'll dive deep into the technicalities, the histories, and the personal connections that make guitar culture so special.

Whether you're a seasoned player and expert, a bedroom jammer, or just a fan of great music, we've got something for you to get stuck into.

Matthew Gordon
Editor of *Guitar Matters*.

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The Evolution of guitar music

From 1950's Rock n' Roll, to today's: A whistle stop tour of the evolution of guitar music.

Words by Matthew Gordon

1950s

The Birth of Rock 'n' Roll

The '50s saw the electric guitar emerge as the defining instrument of popular music. Pioneers like Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly took rhythm and blues influences and turned them into something fresh, new, and rebellious. Chuck Berry's wild guitar licks, and riveting stage presence made him one of the first true guitar heroes. Meanwhile, Scotty Moore's work with Elvis Presley brought country-style finger picking to the electric guitar and rock music.

Amplification was relatively primitive, pedals were yet to come to light, and distortion was often an accident, rather than an artistic choice, but the seeds of modern guitar music had been planted.

1960s

The Guitar Revolution



The Beatles - Rubber Soul Released 1965

Often described as the bridge between the 'olden days' and modern times, the '60s were a period of rapid evolution, with the British invasion of rock music, and the explosion of drug-infused, psychedelic experimentation taking guitar music to new heights. The decade started with blues-driven rock bands such as The Rolling Stones, while later on, Liverpudlian four-piece, The Beatles, became the biggest band in the world, remaining to this day as the bestselling band or artist of all time. The group has since been credited with revolutionising songwriting, and studio experimentation.

However, the '60s also saw the revival of folk music peak in popularity, keeping the acoustic guitar in the mainstream. Artists such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and Simon & Garfunkel were often pushing powerful lyricism and finger-style acoustic picking to the centre stage, maintaining the popularity of more traditional guitar playing.

1966 saw the beginning of the short career of Jimi Hendrix, the man whom many believe to be the greatest guitarist of all time, due to his incredible shredding ability and wild solos. This was also the period where pedals and effects were becoming more widespread, allowing guitarists to sculpt their own unique tones in ways which were never before possible.

1970s

The Rise of Hard Rock, Metal, and Punk

With the '70s came louder amps, more distortion, heavier riffs, and the birth of guitar hero culture. Led Zeppelin's, Jimmy Page created anthemic riffs that remain iconic today, while bands like Black Sabbath laid the foundation for heavy metal, with Tony Iommi's dark, doomy power chords.

The scent of the '60s was still fresh in the air, with bands such as The Doors and Pink Floyd beginning to push the boundaries of rock music, most notably with Pink Floyd's David Gilmour. His dreamy, atmospheric lead playing would help create some of rock music's most iconic songs and timeless albums like Dark Side of the Moon (1971) infused with chiming reverb and psychedelia.



Pink Floyd - The Piper at the Gates of Dawn Released 1967

Eddie Van-Halen arrived at the tail end of the decade and changed everything. His two-handed tapping and lightning-fast runs set a new bar for guitar virtuosity. The '70s also saw the birth of punk music. Bands like the Sex Pistols and the Clash brought a new, rebellious attitude to guitar music, proving that you don't need lessons in music theory to make great songs.

1980s

Shreds and Synths

The '80s saw guitar playing become flashier and more technical than ever before. The influence of Eddie Van-Halen had exploded into rock bands everywhere, inspiring a wave of technical brilliance, with guitarist such as Yngwie Malmsteen bringing classical-inspired speed and precision to the genre.

Guitar gear and technology was starting to become more advanced, with guitarists such as the Edge of U2 using delay pedals to create vast sonic landscapes. With these technological advancements came the dominance of synthesizers in popular music, sometimes pushing guitar to the background, or even off stage. But the birth of metal and hard rock refused to let the guitar fade into nothingness.

In the UK, a whole host of post punk and new wave bands were born out of the rise of electronic music, bringing a different vibe to guitar music. Bands like The Cure, The Smiths, and New Order, began to incorporate synths and other ingredients of electronic music into their guitar-driven tunes. Often combining jangly guitars with melancholic songwriting, proving that guitar music didn't have to be loud, aggressive, and impossibly technical to be powerful, influencing the indie music scene massively, and opening creative doors for many bands to come in the '90s and onwards.

1990s

Grunge, Alternative, and Britpop takeover

The '90s saw a major shift away from the perfectly polished and technical playing of the previous decades. Grunge and Indie rejected over-the-top shredding in favour of raw, unfiltered emotion. With Nirvana's iconic 1991 album, Nevermind leading the charge, bands like Pearl Jam and The Smashing Pumpkins followed suit, taking classic rock influences and making them dreamier and more unpolished, while the arrival of shoegaze bands made reverb and distortion into something of an art form.

Meanwhile, in Great Britain, Britpop was taking the nation by storm. Rooted in classic British rock influences like the Beatles, The Rolling Stones, and even more recent bands like the Smiths and the Stone Roses, indie bands like Oasis, Blur, Pulp, and Suede brought guitar-driven rock music back to the forefront of the British mainstream. The '90s also saw the birth of Radiohead, who despite originating from Oxford, England, refused to be categorised as a Britpop band, and wanted nothing to do with the sudden regurgitation of '60s rock. Instead, they went on to create some of the most genre-bending and critically acclaimed albums of all time.

It's safe to say that the 1990s was the birthplace of some of the most loved and popular bands of today.

2000s

The Revival and Genre-Bending

The 2000s was a time where guitar music began to split off into many different directions. While bands like Radiohead continued to blur the lines between genres with albums such as Kid A, and In Rainbows, outfits such as the White Stripes and the Strokes brought a garage and punky feel back to the mainstream, proving a few chords and a catchy riff is enough to top the charts, all while directly influencing the birth some of the biggest rock bands of the last 20 years such as The Killers, Arctic Monkeys and The Libertines.



The Strokes - Is this it Released 2001

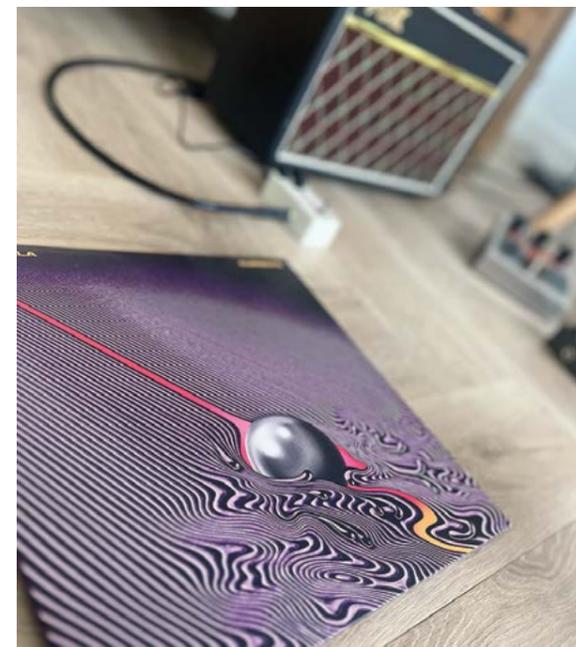
2010s

Indie, Social Media, and the Bedroom Artist

In many ways, the 2010s can be seen as a continuation of the noughties, with garage inspired indie bands like the Strokes, and Arctic Monkeys continuing to release high quality albums that would top the charts, while the indie culture amongst the fan bases of such groups continued to grow.

Artists such as Tame Impala and Mac Demarco began to blend psychedelic influences from the '60s and '70s, with a more modern, poppy approach to their production and melodies. The decade also saw the rise of the bedroom producer. By this stage, technology was becoming so advanced and accessible that many independent artists were releasing albums from their home studios, and with the rise of social media, it became possible for anyone to become a professional musician.

There is no denying that the 2010s had some huge moments for guitar music, with albums such as Arctic Monkey's AM (2013) and Tame Impala's Currents (2015) having already become staples of any indie rock fan's record collection.



Tame Impala - Currents Released 2015

2020s

The future of Guitar music

Today, the guitar continues to evolve. While commercialised pop music often tops the charts, guitar remains a staple of alternative, indie, and rock music. The recent resurgence of raw, analog-style recordings has brought back a retro feel to the current guitar scene, with bands such as Fontaines D.C., The Last Dinner Party, and Wunderhorse, carrying the baton of guitar-driven tunes, continuing to experiment and push boundaries.



Fontaines DC - Romance Released 2024



Liam Gallagher - OVO Hydro Glasgow, 2024



Fontaines DC - OVO Hydro Glasgow, 2024

Fender

Stratocaster vs Telecaster

Words by Matthew Gordon

Few rivalries in the world of guitar are as iconic as the Fender Stratocaster versus the Fender Telecaster. Both instruments have redefined and shaped guitar music as we know it and are beloved by world famous guitarists and casual players alike, becoming just as celebrated as some of the legends who have wielded them. But what are the main differences?

Telecaster

Released in 1951, the Telecaster was the first ever mass-produced solid body guitar. With a slab body, two single coil pickups, and a three-way selector switch, its minimalist design has stood the test of time, with the Tele remaining largely unchanged to this day. Its bright bridge pickup, and warm, rounded neck pick up, offer a perfect contrast, making the instrument one of the most versatile guitars available. The simplicity of the Tele is part of what makes it so special and adaptable.

It's for these reasons that the Telecaster became a favourite amongst various genres of guitarists. Initially a staple of country music, the Tele grew to be loved by many rock n roll greats, such as Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones, Blur's Graham Coxon, and Bruce Springsteen.

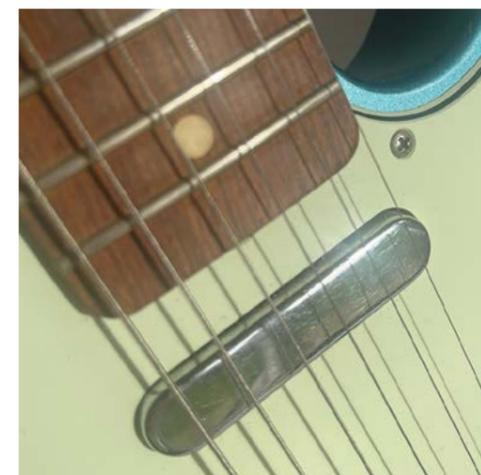
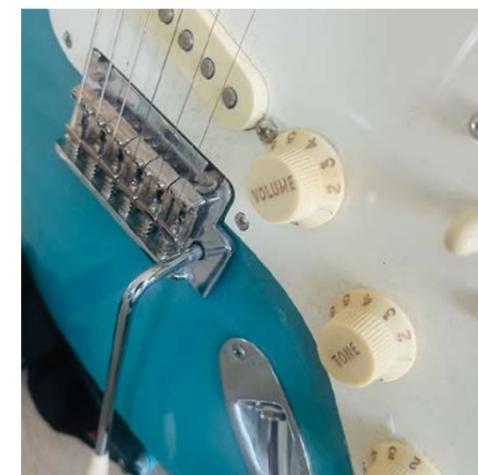
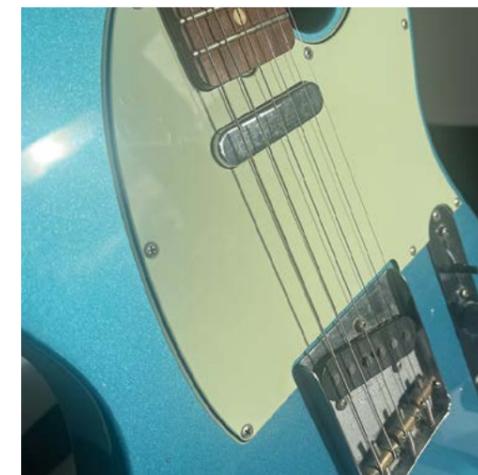
The Telecaster has continually proven itself as one of the most reliable and versatile guitars on the market with a timeless sound and enduring influence.

Stratocaster

First introduced in 1954, the Stratocaster was something of a game changer in electric guitar design and manufacturing. Its double-cutaway body was a revelation in terms of comfort and more accessible playability, allowing the higher frets to be more easily reached. This gave the Strat a reputation as being an extension of the player.

The instrument's three single coil pickups, and five-way selector switch offer an extremely broad tonal palette, and when paired with its sleek design, dynamic range, and ergonomic contours the Strat was, and still is, a favourite of some of the most legendary guitarists to ever play, largely due to its flexibility.

From the psychedelia of Jimi Hendrix to the emotive leads of Eric Clapton, whether you're seeking warm bluesy growls, or bright rock 'n' roll tones, the Strat has it all!



Laurence Lean

Lead guitarist and vocalist of 90s indie rock band Annie Christian talks us through his guitar collection, influences, personal stories, and what he's up to now.

How did your interest in guitars and music start?

When I was six or seven years old, we were getting music lessons in primary school, and the music teacher had brought in loads of instruments like tambourines and triangles. Then she got out this big acoustic guitar with a real flowery, hippy strap and I was just all over it straight away. Then around that same time, my older brother who was into punk, had started playing guitar, and so a guitar appeared in the house, which I wasn't allowed to touch, but as soon as he went out with his mates, I would start playing it, and then eventually my mum and dad got me one for Christmas, a little junior acoustic.

How did the band come about and what was it like being on the indie scene in the '90s?

The band came about when I was doing a music course at Perth college and that's where I met the other members. We knew we all got on really well, which was the most important thing, and we were all good drinking friends, so we thought, why don't we get a band together, see if it works?

We didn't really have any huge aspirations in terms of wanting to be a massive band, all we wanted was to be in a band that was like the bands we liked and be at that level where we could put out an album and go on tour. To finally get involved in that was great. We signed a record deal 1997, following on from the 90s stuff like Oasis and Blur which blew up all over the UK. So by the time we came along in '97, everything was kind of crazy, I can imagine it must have been a bit like being in the London music scene in this '60s.

What was your most memorable moment as a musician?

I had all the vinyl albums of all the bands I loved, and I'd always thought if I can at least commit one thing to vinyl, I'll be happy, because then it's printed and it's historic and whatever happens, if it works if it doesn't work, that physical thing is there. So, the first thing that comes to mind is getting that first vinyl pressed and I still have it at home.

Were there any albums or artists that shaped your sound with Annie Christian?

When we graduated, that would be about 1993 or 94, there was this amazing music scene that started with the pixies and Jane's addiction, and then Nirvana kind of blew everything up. A lot of UK bands as well, I loved Suede, Ride, and Lush. That sort of stuff was a huge influence on us when we were at college and then when we started Annie Christian.

There were four of us in the band and we all had a kind of equal influence on each other when it came to what we were doing with the band. Chris, the guitarist, was really into Depeche mode, the drummer, Andrew, was into things like Nirvana, and David, the bass player, had more of a similar taste to me. We were both into more Indie, alternative stuff like My Bloody Valentine, The Sundays, and Suede. There was one band in particular who we probably ripped off a bit too much and got away with it, and that was a 90s band called Levitation. Seeing them play at the venue in 1993 was just one of the most mind-blowing gigs I've ever seen.

“**95% of the time I play Telecasters. They've got the biggest pallet of any guitar, the biggest versatility, the most sounds you can use.**”



Annie Christian photographed in 1997 for their first single.

©V2 Music

What are your favourite guitars to play?

I've played Stratocasters, I've played hollow body guitars, and I've got a Gretch, which are all great guitars, but 95% of the time I play Telecasters. They've got the biggest pallet of any guitar, the biggest versatility, the most sounds you can use. If you put on the bridge pickup, you've got really kind of scratchy abrasive kind of tones, the middle pickup has got loads of great rhythmic things that can come with that, but I always end up falling back on the neck pick up of a Telecaster through a reverb pedal.

It's just heaven, my go-to every time.

Are there any guitars in your collection with a sentimental value or interesting story behind them?

My black and white 1996 telecaster. I gave myself that as a present when we signed a record deal after we got an equipment budget. I just wanted to sound like Jeff Buckley at the time, so I bought that telecaster and a reverb unit. That guitar came on the road with me all the way through Annie Christian, it's been on countless tours and probably done over 400 gigs. I used to throw it around quite a lot because Telecasters were always quite sturdy, it's got chips all over it!

The night before we played Glastonbury Festival, we were doing like a little warm-up thing and for once I was actually being quite careful with the guitar. I thought I was going to need it for the festival, so I couldn't afford to harm it. During the rehearsal, I took the guitar off after the last song and let it lean against one of the monitors on the stage and it fell and completely snapped the head in half. I had to replace the whole neck of the guitar and get it repaired. So that one has the most sentimental value, not necessarily the one I play most now, but throughout my time with Annie Christian, that was definitely the one.

Are you still creating music? And if so, what are your plans.

I am still creating music. The only plan really is to just keep pushing and pushing. It's a personal goal, not really to impress anyone other than myself. I just want to push and see where it can go. There's just so many different avenues to explore with music and with the new age of digital audio and posting stuff online, which we didn't have back in the '90s, you can write things at home, and they can be online within ten minutes. The problem with that is that you've also got to learn how to edit and produce music yourself, which is a painful blessing, especially if you've had a few beers on a Friday night! But it's all good fun.

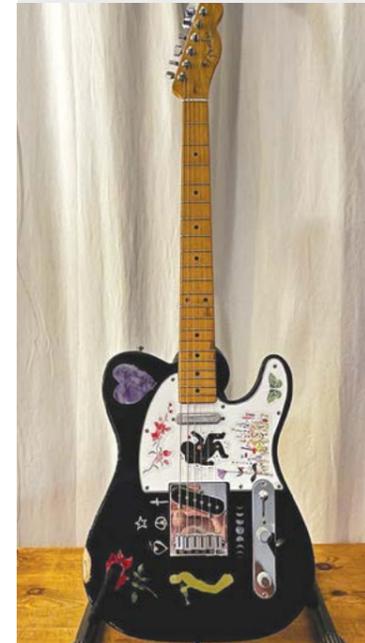


© Joanne Gordon

Lean's guitars

As described by Laurence himself

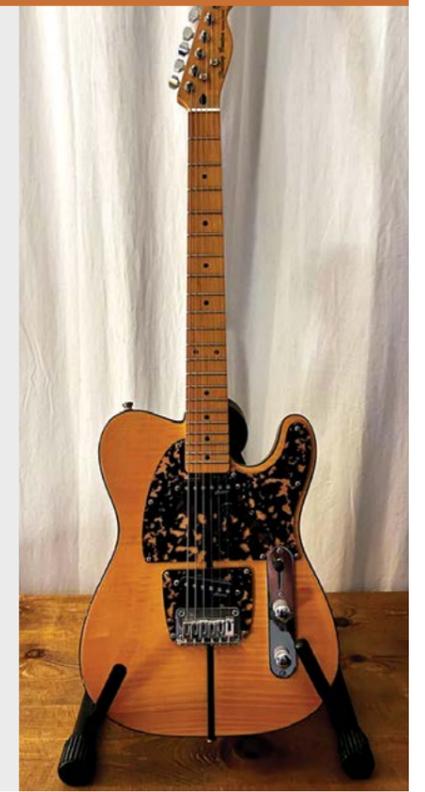
Fender Telecaster 1996 USA Standard



'The Annie Christian guitar'.

Harley Benton - Customised Prince Telecaster Copy

"This is modelled on the one Prince used to use. You can see the animal-like print on it, which is an exact copy of what Prince's guitars looked like, so you could say this one is a bit of a vanity purchase."



PRS SE Standard

"The PRS was a bit of a nostalgia purchase. When I was studying at Perth College, my dad let me choose a guitar as a present for passing my exams, and obviously I chose the most expensive one in the shop, which was a black PSR."



Faith Naked Venus



"Faith branded this one 'naked' because there's no lacquer on it, it's just pure mahogany, which totally changes the sound. It's not quite as bright as other Faith guitars, a bit more of a folksy tone to it, a more organic sound."

Hybrid Thinline Telecaster



"This was actually a gift from my brother for being the best man at his wedding. When I went to pick him up in the morning of the wedding, I was presented with this purple Telecaster. For that reason it's one of my more sentimental guitars."

Fender Telecaster 2012 USA Standard



"I bought this one when I got back into a band after taking a few years out. When I joined Deer Lake, I thought 'I just need another Telecaster'. The old '96 Telecaster was just so worn in and had a bit of an old, dull sound to it, but when I got this newer one, it just had such a beautiful, bright tone. The word I always use to describe it is 'glassy', when you put it through a reverb pedal it's chimey and almost bell-like."

Gretsch Hollow Body



"The Gretsch has a very unique sound, it's great to use on certain songs or for creating specific sounds, but it's nothing like a Telecaster which you can use as an all-rounder. From a guitar playing point of view, I loved Brian Seltzer from the Stray Cats, and also Johnny Marr, who both play hollow body guitars, so it was something I wanted in my collection."

Yamaha Classical

"This one was another nostalgia buy. When I first began to play the guitar, I never really had any lessons, it was my brother teaching me stuff. Then when I got up to High School, and I started studying music, you had to play an instrument, so I would play classical guitars, and hadn't really played one since. When I started listening to Nick Drake over lockdown, I wanted to go back to a classical and practice my discipline and acoustic finger-picking."



Discover your guitar personality!

Ever wondered which legendary guitarist matches your style, attitude, and approach to music? Answer each question and keep a note of how many times you answer for each letter and tally up your scores to discover your guitar personality!

1. What's your go-to guitar?

- A) A sunburst Fender Stratocaster, worn-in and full of vibe.
- B) A beautiful Gretsch or Rickenbacker, something classic.
- C) A vintage Fender Jaguar or a Telecaster, jangly and smooth.
- D) A Gibson ES-335 or an Epiphone - big, bold rock tones!
- E) Anything odd, modified, or covered in weird electronics.

2. How do you approach songwriting?

- A) I jam and let the music flow naturally, feeling my way through it.
- B) I craft beautiful melodies and let the song tell a story.
- C) I focus on layered, intricate parts that complement the whole song.
- D) I write huge, anthemic tunes meant to be played LOUD.
- E) I experiment with textures, weird sounds, and unexpected changes.

3. What's your ideal amp tone?

- A) Warm, fuzzy, and drenched in wah.
- B) Clean, chimey, and smooth with a touch of reverb.
- C) Shimmering, jangly, and full of depth.
- D) Distorted, punchy, and as loud as possible!
- E) Unpredictable - sometimes clean, sometimes a wall of chaos

4. What's your favourite way to play live?

- A) Free-flowing, improvisational, with wild solos.
- B) Poised and elegant, focusing on perfect phrasing.
- C) Moving around the stage, locked in with the rhythm section.
- D) Strumming furiously, commanding the crowd to sing along.
- E) Manipulating pedals, tweaking sounds, creating sonic landscapes.

5. How do you view your role in a band?

- A) The leader, the driving force, setting the stage on fire.
- B) The soulful player, bringing emotional depth to the music, but sometimes under-appreciated.
- C) The architect, crafting intricate layers and melodies.
- D) The rockstar, making the crowd sing along to every chord.
- E) The sonic scientist, pushing boundaries with sound.

6. What's your approach to effects and gear?

- A) Wah, fuzz, and pure expression.
- B) Classic tones, a little reverb, and a slide when needed - let the guitar 'gently weep'.
- C) Subtle chorus, reverb, and a touch of delay, and lots of layering.
- D) Plug it in, crank up the volume, and let it rip - simple and effective.
- E) A massive pedalboard filled with weird, atmospheric effects

7. How do you handle guitar solos?

- A) Long, expressive, and full of personality - solos are my moment to shine!
- B) Short, sweet, and full of emotion - serve the song, not the ego.
- C) I don't need flashy solos - I'd rather craft a provoking melody.
- D) I just rip into it - simple but powerful, all about vibe.
- E) I use unconventional approaches - maybe a violin bow, maybe a coin.

8. What's your ideal gig setting?

- A) A packed festival, under the stars, jamming with the crowd.
- B) A beautiful theatre with perfect acoustics.
- C) An intimate venue with a deep connection to the audience.
- D) A massive stadium, thousands of people singing my songs.
- E) A weird underground venue where I can go wild with the sound system.

9. What's your attitude towards music theory?

- A) Who needs it? I just play from the heart.
- B) I respect it, but I let my ear guide me.
- C) It's useful for arranging parts and crafting melodies.
- D) No idea - I just write songs and let it happen.
- E) I dive deep into it - I love pushing harmonic boundaries.

10. If you could jam with any band, which would it be?

- A) The Jimi Hendrix Experience - pure psychedelic blues.
- B) The Beatles - timeless songwriting and lush production.
- C) The Smiths - melancholic, intricate, guitar-driven tunes.
- D) Oasis - massive, anthemic rock 'n' roll swagger.
- E) Radiohead - genre-bending, avant-garde brilliance.

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Effects Pedals Review

Words by Matthew Gordon



Electro-Harmonix Big Muff Pi

A Fuzz that defines generations

Few guitar pedals boast a legacy as iconic as The Big Muff. Since its debut in the late 60's, this fuzz/distortion powerhouse has shaped the sound of rock, grunge, and shoegaze, delivering thick, sustain-heavy tones that range from smooth and bluesy, to raw and chaotic. Its unmistakable character has fuelled the sounds of various guitar legends such as David Gilmour of Pink Floyd, Billy Corgan of the Smashing Pumpkins and even Jimi Hendrix who experimented with prototypes prior to his passing.

By the 90's, The Big Muff had become synonymous with the explosion of the grunge and shoegaze scene, most famously driving the dense, layered guitar tones of Siamese Dream (1993) by The Smashing Pumpkins. It's no doubt that The Big Muff has cemented its place as one of guitar music's most iconic pedals.

The Big Muff sports a simple three-knob layout – Volume, Tone, and Sustain - Housed in a rugged metal enclosure designed to withstand years of stomping, a design that to this day, remains largely unchanged. Sonically, the pedal is defined by its massive sustain, thick fuzz, and rich overtones. Unlike other fuzz pedals, that can have a harsh, undefined sound, The Big Muff produces a smooth, violine-like sustain, making it ideal for unleashing soaring lead riffs, or thick, shoegaze-style chord layering.

Rating: ★★★★★



Lekato Loop Pedal

Compact creativity on Tap

The Lekato loop pedal has quickly become a go-to for guitarists seeking a budget-friendly, yet capable looping solution. Despite its compact size, the pedal offers 3 loops, with a total of 40 minutes of recording time, which is more than enough for jamming over chord progressions, or creating complex, Johnny Marr-esque layers. The uncompressed audio quality plays straight from the amplifier, keeping your loops sounding clear and crisp, while the undo/redo function makes it simple to refine your loops without starting from scratch.

While the pedal may not be the flashiest on the market, its price and simple layout make it a stand-out for budget pedals. A single footswitch handles recording, overdubbing, and playback, making it an incredibly simple pedal to use on the fly. While it may not be the most advanced or high end looper pedal, the Lekato looper's clean, natural sound and minimal learning curve make it perfect for home jamming, and a capable addition to live performances.

Rating: ★★★★★



Pogolab Analog Delay Pedal

Warm and Lush Echoes

The Pogolab Analog Delay Pedal is a love letter to vintage tape-style delay, delivering warm, organic repeats that decay beautifully, and sometimes chaotically, into a hazy trail. With up to 600ms of delay time, it can cover any style from subtle echoes, to spacey, atmospheric textures, and chaotic pitch shifts. The simple three-knob layout-Time, mix, and repeat, make it relatively simple to use once you get the hang of it.

When it comes to tone, the pedal excels at producing natural, tape-like modulation, adding subtle warble and grit as the repeats fade. This makes it particularly effective for creating dreamy soundscapes. Responding well to both clean and overdriven guitar tones, the pedal consistently retains tone clarity without becoming muddy, making it easy to dial in everything from a quick rockabilly bounce to washed-out, shoegaze-inspired ambience.

Rating: ★★★★★



Editor's picks: My Essential Guitar Albums

Words by Matthew Gordon

A personal look at the records that shaped my love for guitar music.

As the editor of Guitar Matters, I've spent years obsessing over the albums that, to me, define great guitar music. With each issue, I'll be sharing 5 records that have shaped my love for the instrument and the music synonymous with it—albums that showcase the very best of what guitar music can be (at least in my opinion!).



Revolver (1966)

The Beatles

In truth I could have picked any Beatles album. Their catalogue boasts a ridiculous number of classic records; however, Revolver represents a key moment in the evolution of not only the Beatles, but also popular music, both musically and sonically. Moving on from their early pop sound, the band embraced more experiential techniques particularly in the production stage of the album.

Featuring some of their most inventive guitar work, Revolver perfectly encapsulates the mid 60's psychedelic era, where The Beatles changed music forever.

Favourite Tracks: I'm Only Sleeping; Here, There and Everywhere; And Your Bird Can Sing

In Rainbows (2007)

Radiohead

With In Rainbows, Radiohead redefined the way we consume and experience albums. Released in a groundbreaking, pay-what-you-want, online model, the record blends intricate guitar work, with lush, atmospheric production. Some may say that OK Computer and Kid A, are superior albums from Radiohead's catalogue, but In Rainbows is an album that sounds like no other, creating the ultimate chilled out vibe with zero skippable tracks. Johnny Greenwood's subtle yet incredible guitar playing shines on the more stripped-down tracks, while Thom Yorke's lyrical vulnerability and bold creativity are at the forefront, as with every Radiohead success.

Favourite Tracks: Weird Fishes/Arpeggi; Bodysnatchers; Jigsaw Falling into Place; Reckoner; (could have picked the whole album!)



The Queen is Dead (1986)

The Smiths

To me, The Queen is Dead is The Smiths at their very best. An artistically brilliant blend of Johnny Marr's jangly guitars, a melodic and bouncy rhythm section, and Morrissey's never-ending sharp lyrics and witticisms. In my book, Johnny Marr is arguably the most underrated guitarist of all time. His layered, reverbed guitar melodies would go on to define generations of indie bands, and combined with Morrissey's sardonic lyrics, The Queen is Dead is definitely one of the best and most influential indie rock albums to ever come out of Great Britain.

Favourite Tracks: Cemetery Gates; Some girls are bigger than others; There is a light that never goes out



Skinty Fia (2022)

Fontaines D.C

Fontaines D.C are the leading the charge of the new era of indie rock, with a mix of post-punk energy and introspective lyricism. Throughout their four studio albums, Fontaines D.C's guitars have remained gritty and ungrounded, With Grian Chatten's political views and Irish identity a constant lyrical undercurrent. The band haven't yet missed with any of their releases but have continued to evolve from record to record. To me, Skinty Fia is the best effort from the band to date and is an album that resonates strongly amongst the new wave of post punk influenced indie rock.

Favourite Tracks: Nabokov; Roman Holiday; I Love You; Skinty Fia



The Stone Roses (1989)

The Stone Roses

The Stone Roses self-titled debut album is the perfect combination of jangly, 60's-style guitar playing, and drumbeats reminiscent of acid house music, which was extremely popular in 1980's Manchester, creating the indie rock sub-genre of 'Madchester'. The band were heavily influenced by classic bands like The Beatles, as well as the club-scene in Manchester, made popular by New Order and their nightclub, 'The Hacienda'. John Squires shimmering guitar playing still sounds fresh today, blending elements of rock, dance, blues, and funk throughout in ways few others could replicate. It's a shame we didn't get a great deal more music from them.

Favourite Tracks: I am the Resurrection; Shoot You Down; This is the One; Bye Bye Badman



Discover your guitar personality!

(quiz on page 20)

Mostly As

You're Jimi Hendrix!

You're a trailblazer, a fearless improviser, and a true guitar visionary. You don't just play the guitar—you become the music, channelling raw energy and psychedelic blues.

Mostly Bs

You're George Harrison!

You have an elegant, melodic approach to guitar, always serving the song first. You value subtlety, emotion, and crafting timeless solos that stick with people forever.

Mostly Cs

You're Johnny Marr!

You're a master of layered, intricate guitar work, creating textures that define songs rather than just playing over them. You love shimmering tones, clever chord voicings, and making everything sound beautiful.

Mostly Ds

You're Noel Gallagher!

You believe in big, bold, no-nonsense rock 'n' roll. Simple chord progressions, powerful strumming, and anthemic songs are your calling card. You don't need to be the most technical—you just own the stage.

Mostly Es

You're Johnny Greenwood!

You're an experimental genius, always looking for new ways to manipulate sound. From eerie textures to wild sonic explosions, your approach to guitar is boundary-pushing and unpredictable.

That's a wrap on the first issue of *Guitar Matters*. Whether you're a lifelong guitarist, or just a fan of music and the stories behind it, I hope you have enjoyed reading through the magazine. I can't thank you enough for taking the time to flick through the pages of something that I have put so much time, effort, and love into.

I also want to thank Joanne Gordon for her amazing work with helping me design the magazine and bringing my ideas to life, and a huge thanks to Laurence Lean for taking the time to sit and chat with me about his amazing stories and awesome guitar collection. I'd also like to thank Allan Boughey for his invaluable support and advice throughout the creation of *Guitar Matters*.

This magazine is for those who believe the guitar still matters—past, present, and future. Keep playing, keep listening, and we'll see you next time.

Matthew Gordon,
Editor of *Guitar Matters*

All photos taken by Matthew Gordon
except where stated otherwise.





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For further information or if you would like to contribute to the next issue,
please get in touch

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