

MAG

proaudio

MAY 2026

COACHELLA

The unmistakable sound of the guitar at this years event.

A TRIBUTE TO GARY CLARK JR.

SCHOOL OF ROCK

JOHANNESBURG

is excited to announce the opening of its newest South African campus in Sandton

Gibson Guitar Icons

DEREK TRUCKS

MATT HEAFY

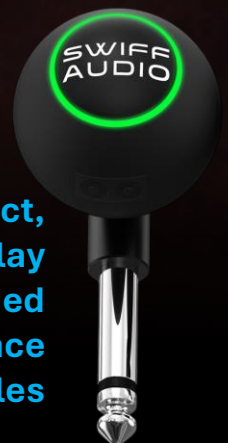
Guitar Showcase

- Les Paul Custom White
- Les Paul Std 50' Figured Tobacco Burst
- SG Std '61 Maestro T-Type
- Les Paul Studio Blueberry Burst
- Les Paul Classic Ebony

NEW

WT-09

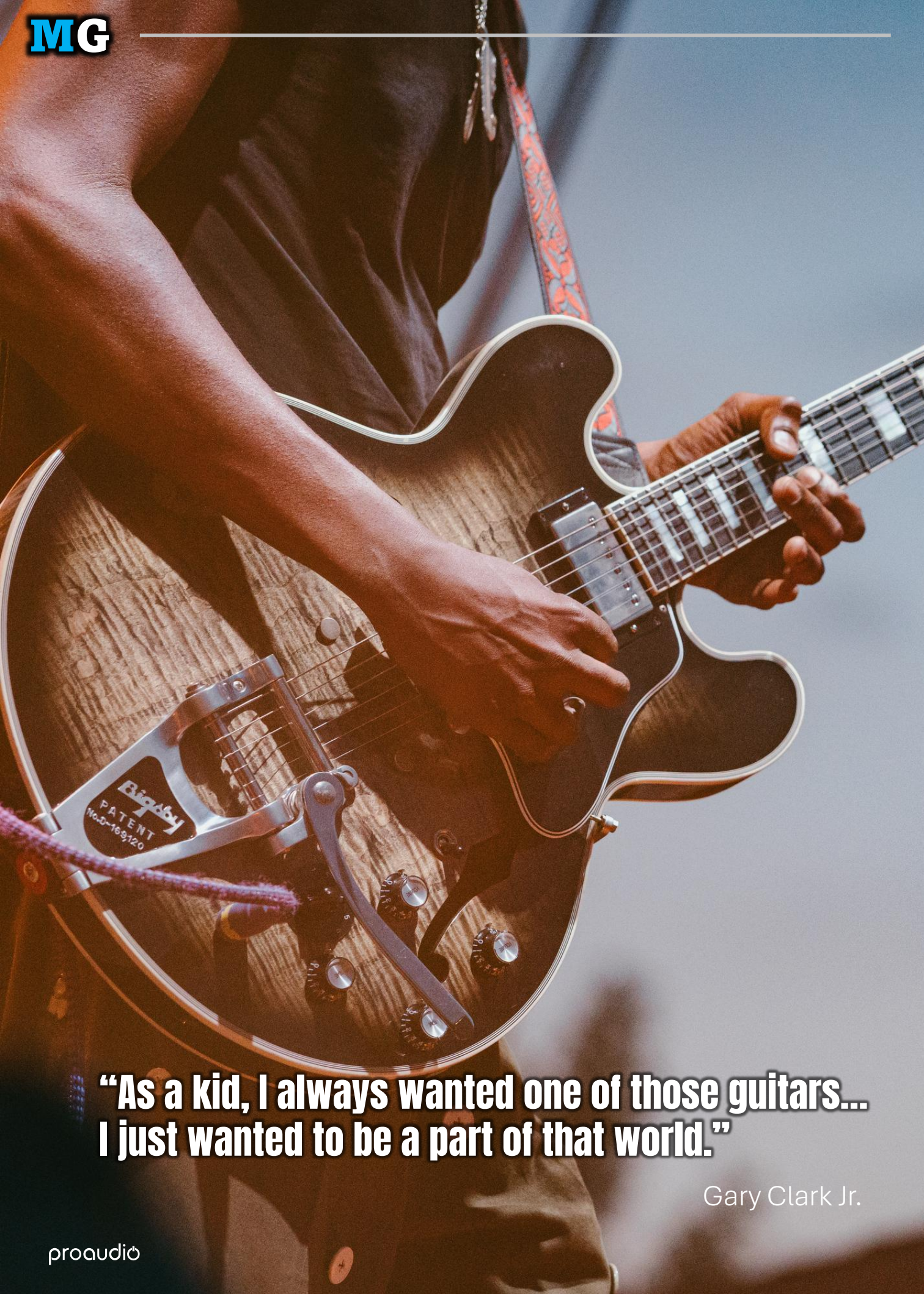
Compact,
plug-and play
solution designed
to replace
instrument cables



nord®

AUTHENTIC TONE

ELECTRO 7, Built For Real-world Performance



**“As a kid, I always wanted one of those guitars...
I just wanted to be a part of that world.”**

Gary Clark Jr.

MAY EDITION OF PROAUDIO MUSICGEAR MAGAZINE

From global stages to deeply personal journeys, May's MusicGear is built around artists, instruments, and tools that continue to shape modern music.

Inside this issue, we pay tribute to three remarkable guitarists — Gary Clark Jr., Derek Trucks, and Matt Heafy — each bringing a unique voice, yet all sharing a commitment to depth, feel, and authenticity. Alongside them, we explore the legacy and continued relevance of both Gibson and Epiphone guitars, and how these instruments remain at the centre of modern performance.

We also step into the global energy of Coachella 2026 — a space where genres collide and creativity thrives — and where the presence of the guitar continues to stand strong.

Beyond guitars, this edition brings you new tools shaping today's sound. We take a look at the Swift Audio WT-09, a compact solution designed for freedom and simplicity, as well as the ever-reliable Nord Electro 7, a favourite among performers for its feel and versatility.

We also explore new textures in the Nord Lo-Fi Collection — adding character, grit, and personality to modern productions.

STAY LOUD. STAY INSPIRED.
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This magazine is designed to inform, supply, and provide information relating to the industry that we find ourselves in. Some of the material that we have used is resourced from websites around the world to help bring perspective and insight to your business' and your lives. Products highlighted and reviewed may or may not be available, if you have any questions relating to the information herein, please contact us.

Feature Articles



“The moment you stop waiting to be ready and start playing — that’s where your real journey begins.”

TRIBUTE Feature Article

GARY CLARK JR.

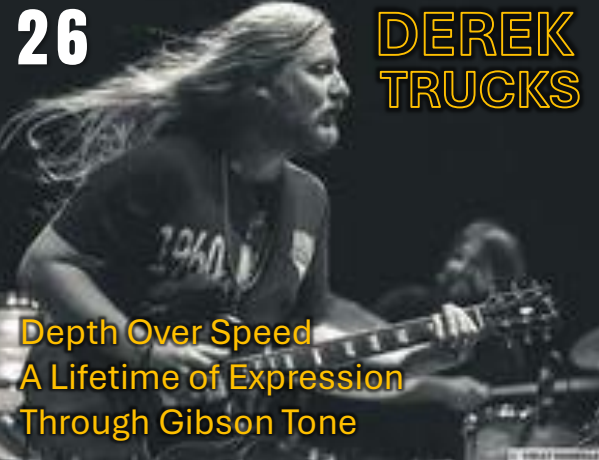
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“Talent may start the journey, but it’s community, consistency, and real-world experience that turn musicians into artists.”

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“From the first note to the live stage, growth happens when you move beyond learning alone and start creating with others.”

COACHELLA

COACHELLA VALLEY MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL



Coachella 2026 marked more than just another year in the desert — it celebrated 25 years of one of the most influential music festivals in the world, bringing together a global mix of artists across genres and generations.

From pop and hip-hop to indie, electronic, and rock, the stages were filled with diversity, energy, and constant evolution.

But beneath the scale of production and the spectacle of performance, something far more grounded stood out — the continued presence of real instruments, and the unmistakable sound of the guitar.



And within that, the voice of Gibson was impossible to ignore.

Walking the festival, it became clear very quickly that Gibson wasn't just present — it was everywhere. I genuinely lost count of how many Gibsons I saw at Coachella.

From SGs to Les Pauls and ES models, they appeared across performances, carried by artists and musicians who still rely on the raw, expressive power of a well-built guitar.

Make no mistake — rock music was well represented, and more importantly, it's thriving.

Acts like The Strokes brought their unmistakable guitar-driven sound to the stage, reinforcing the timeless appeal of rock in a modern festival setting.

At the same time, artists such as Dijon blurred genre lines with performances that leaned heavily on live instrumentation, where guitar remained central to the emotional delivery.



Across the weekend, countless band members and session players could be seen using Gibson-style guitars, particularly SGs and Les Pauls, further cementing the brand's quiet but powerful presence throughout the festival.

What stood out most was not just who played, but how music continues to be expressed. Even in an era dominated by digital production and electronic soundscapes, the guitar remains a vital voice — not as nostalgia, but as a living, evolving instrument.

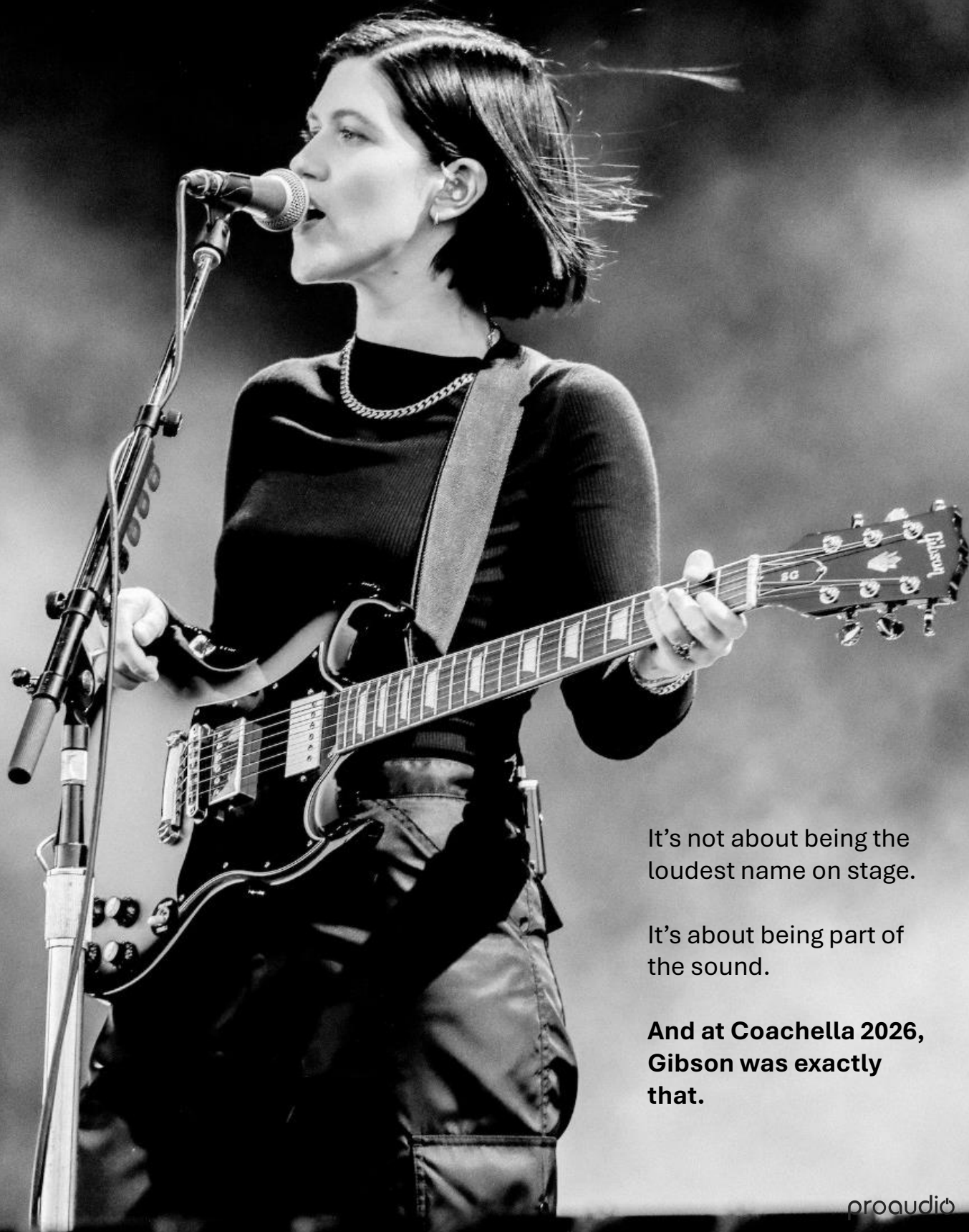




Gibson sits confidently in that space, bridging past and present, tradition and innovation, without needing to announce itself.

Coachella 2026 showed us where music is going — fast-moving, genre-fluid, and globally connected.

But it also reminded us of something just as important: the foundation still matters. The feel, the touch, the connection between player and instrument.



It's not about being the loudest name on stage.

It's about being part of the sound.

And at Coachella 2026, Gibson was exactly that.

Epiphone

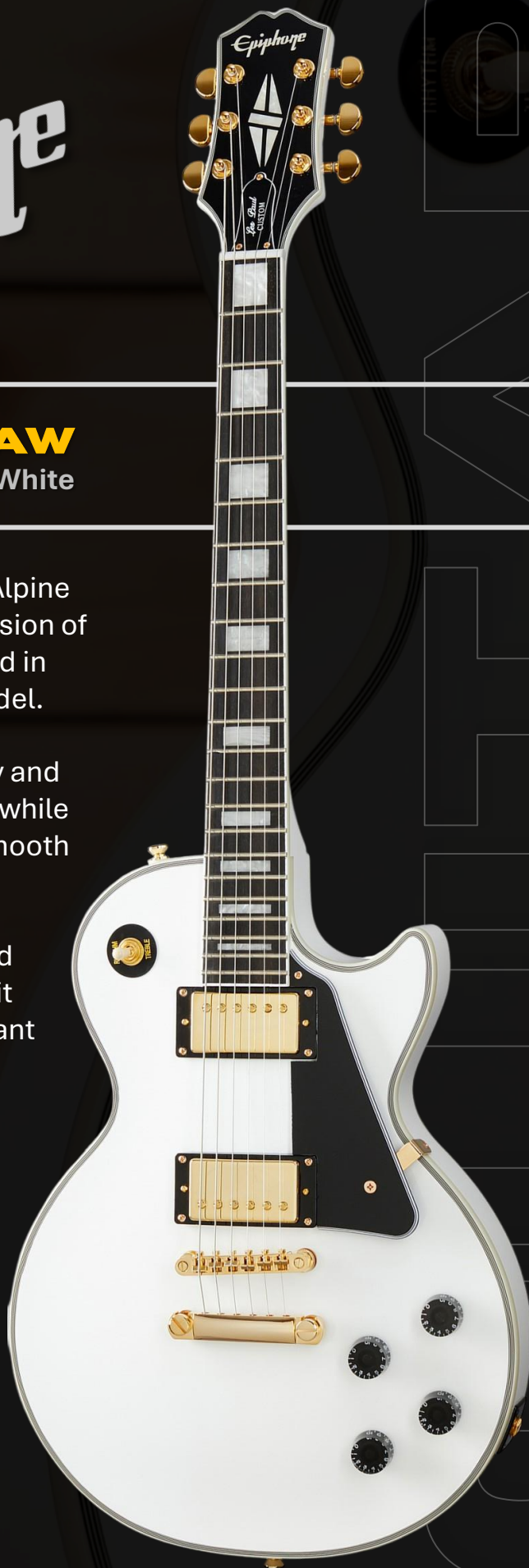
ECLPC-AW

Les Paul Custom Alpine White

The Epiphone Les Paul Custom Alpine White ECLPC-AW is a refined version of the Les Paul, originally introduced in 1954 as a premium “tuxedo” model.

Built with a solid mahogany body and set neck, it delivers rich sustain, while an ebony fingerboard ensures smooth playability.

Finished in Alpine White with gold hardware and multi-ply binding, it combines classic tone with elegant Gibson craftsmanship.



WHY IT'S WORTH IT

The Epiphone Les Paul Custom Alpine White ECLPC-AW is worth it for combining iconic Les Paul tone with premium craftsmanship. Built with a mahogany body and maple top, it delivers rich sustain and clarity, while 490R and 498T humbuckers offer a wide tonal range. Its ebony fingerboard, multi-ply binding, and gold hardware reinforce its refined “tuxedo” design and performance.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?


The Epiphone Les Paul Custom Alpine White ECLPC-AW is well suited to rock, hard rock, blues, and metal, thanks to its powerful humbucker output, sustain, and clarity. It also handles cleaner styles like jazz and classic rock effectively, making it a versatile choice across both high-gain and clean tones.



WHO WOULD USE IT?

The Epiphone Les Paul Custom Alpine White ECLPC-AW is typically used by professional and serious players seeking premium Les Paul tone, craftsmanship, and stage presence. It appeals to guitarists in rock, hard rock, blues, and metal, as well as those needing a versatile, high-end instrument for live performance and studio work.





“A true ‘tuxedo’ Les Paul—
delivering powerful tone,
effortless sustain, and a
level of refinement that
stands out on any stage.”

GARY CLARK JR.

Where Blues Tradition Meets a Modern Gibson Voice



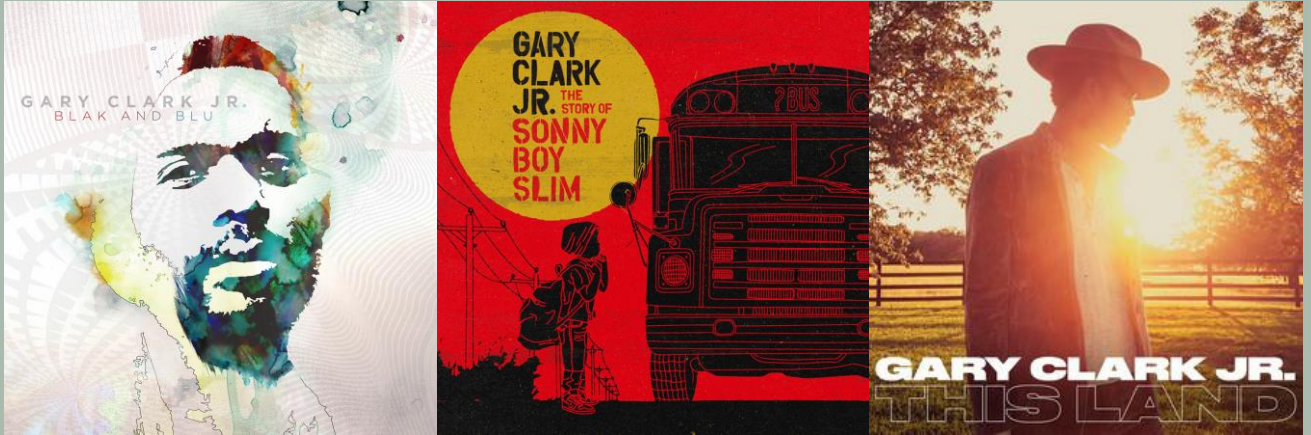
Some artists play guitar. Others *speak* through it — and **Gary Clark Jr.** has built a career doing exactly that.

Born in Austin, Texas in 1984, Clark grew up surrounded by a city where live music is part of everyday life. It didn't take long for him to find his place in it.

By his teenage years, he was already performing, developing a style that didn't rely on speed or flash, but on something far more difficult to master — feel.

From the beginning, his playing carried a sense of space and intention, allowing every note to land with purpose rather than excess.

That approach would go on to define his sound and ultimately reshape how modern audiences experience blues music.



His breakthrough came with *Blak and Blu* in 2012, an album that didn't just introduce him to a wider audience, but redefined expectations.

Blending blues, rock, soul, and R&B, the project showed that tradition didn't need to be preserved in isolation — it could evolve. He followed this with *The Story of Sonny Boy Slim* and later *This Land*, the latter earning multiple Grammy Awards and solidifying his place as one of the most important guitar voices of his generation.

More than the accolades, *This Land* confirmed something deeper — Clark wasn't just playing music, he was telling stories rooted in identity, tension, and lived experience.






What makes Gary Clark Jr. remarkable is not just his ability to play across genres, but how naturally he does it. Blues sits at the core, but his music moves freely through rock, soul, and even hip-hop influences without ever feeling forced.

His vocals mirror that same flexibility, shifting from controlled restraint to raw intensity in a way that feels instinctive rather than calculated. Every performance becomes a balance between precision and emotion, structure and spontaneity.


At the centre of that expression is his relationship with Gibson — not as a brand, but as a tool for translating feeling into sound. Clark has worked closely with Gibson on several signature instruments, including the Gibson SG Standard, Epiphone Casino, and the Gibson Custom Shop ES-355 — a guitar that reflects both heritage and modern performance.

These instruments aren't designed for show; they are built for responsiveness, allowing him to move effortlessly between subtle phrasing and explosive lead work.



As Clark himself once reflected on his connection to these guitars, “As a kid, I always wanted one of those guitars... I just wanted to be a part of that world.”

That sense of aspiration has come full circle, with his signature models now placing him firmly within the lineage of players who have defined the sound of electric blues and rock.



And that is where his true impact lies. Gary Clark Jr. is not trying to recreate the past, nor is he trying to move away from it.

He stands in the space between — carrying the emotional weight of blues forward while reshaping it for a new generation. His influence is not built on imitation, but on translation, taking a timeless musical language and making it relevant again.

In doing so, he reminds us that the electric guitar is still capable of saying something meaningful — not through complexity, but through honesty.

And in his hands, it continues to speak.



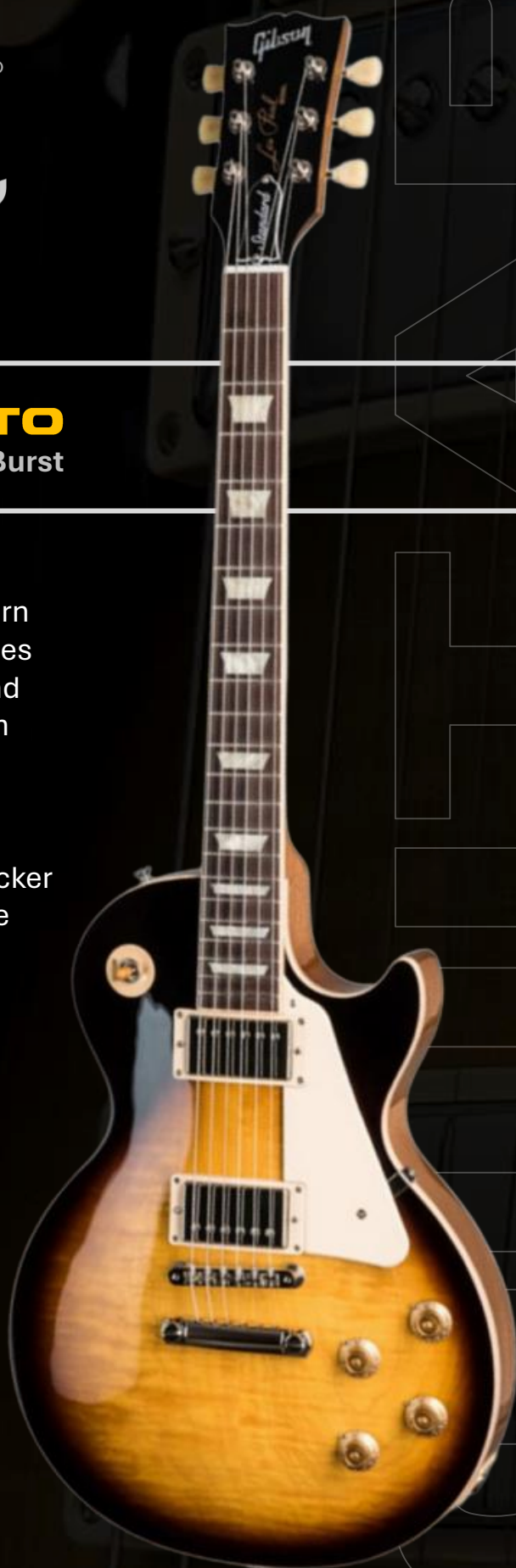
Gibson®

LPS500-TO

Les Paul Std 50s Figured Tobacco Burst

The Gibson LPS500-TO Les Paul Standard '50s Figured Top is a modern take on Gibson's iconic late-1950s Les Paul, built with a mahogany body and carved maple top for classic warmth and sustain.

Featuring a rounded '50s neck, rosewood fingerboard, and Burstbucker pickups, it delivers authentic vintage tone with the reliability of modern Gibson craftsmanship.



WHY IT'S WORTH IT

The Gibson LPS500-TO Les Paul Standard '50s Figured Top is worth it for its authentic late-1950s Les Paul tone in a modern instrument. Built with a non-weight-relieved mahogany body and carved maple top, it delivers classic sustain, while Burstbucker pickups capture the warmth and dynamics of original PAF humbuckers. With handwired electronics and a rounded '50s neck, it preserves the traditional feel and performance of Gibson's Golden Era design.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

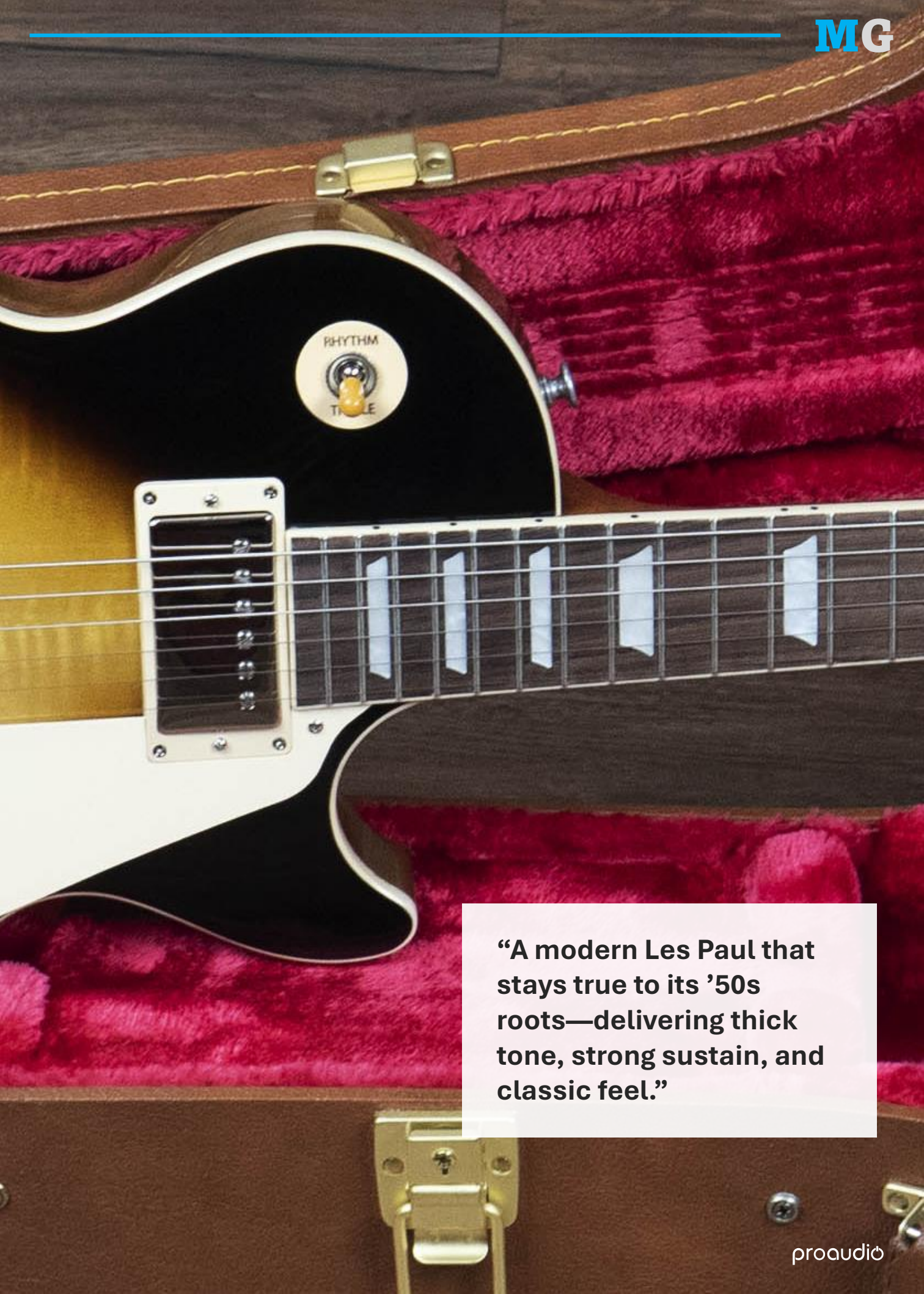
The Gibson LPS500-TO Les Paul Standard '50s Figured Top is well suited to blues and classic rock, offering warm mids, strong sustain, and dynamic response for both rhythm and lead playing.

It also performs well in hard rock, with humbuckers that deliver clear, powerful tones that cut through a mix. Its versatile sound allows it to handle both clean tones and overdrive effectively across a range of styles.



WHO WOULD USE IT?

The Gibson LPS500-TO Les Paul Standard '50s Figured Top is known for rich tone and sustain, and has been used by artists like Jimmy Page, Slash, Eric Clapton, Billy Gibbons, Neil Young, and Zakk Wylde, making it well suited to rock and blues.



“A modern Les Paul that stays true to its ’50s roots—delivering thick tone, strong sustain, and classic feel.”

DEREK TRUCKS

DEPTH OVER SPEED

A Lifetime of Expression Through Gibson Tone



**Some guitarists
impress you.
Others take you
somewhere deeper.**

Derek Trucks belongs to the latter — a musician whose playing is less about performance and more about exploration.

Born in 1979 in Jacksonville, Florida, Trucks picked up the guitar at a young age and quickly moved beyond conventional playing.

By his early teens, he was already performing professionally, and by 20, he had joined The Allman Brothers Band — one of the most respected groups in American rock history. It was here that he began shaping a voice that would become unmistakable.

But Trucks never followed the expected path.

Instead of chasing speed or technical showmanship, he turned inward — focusing on phrasing, tone, and emotion. His slide guitar work, influenced by blues, jazz, and Indian classical music, became his signature. It's not about how many notes he plays, but how deeply each one resonates.

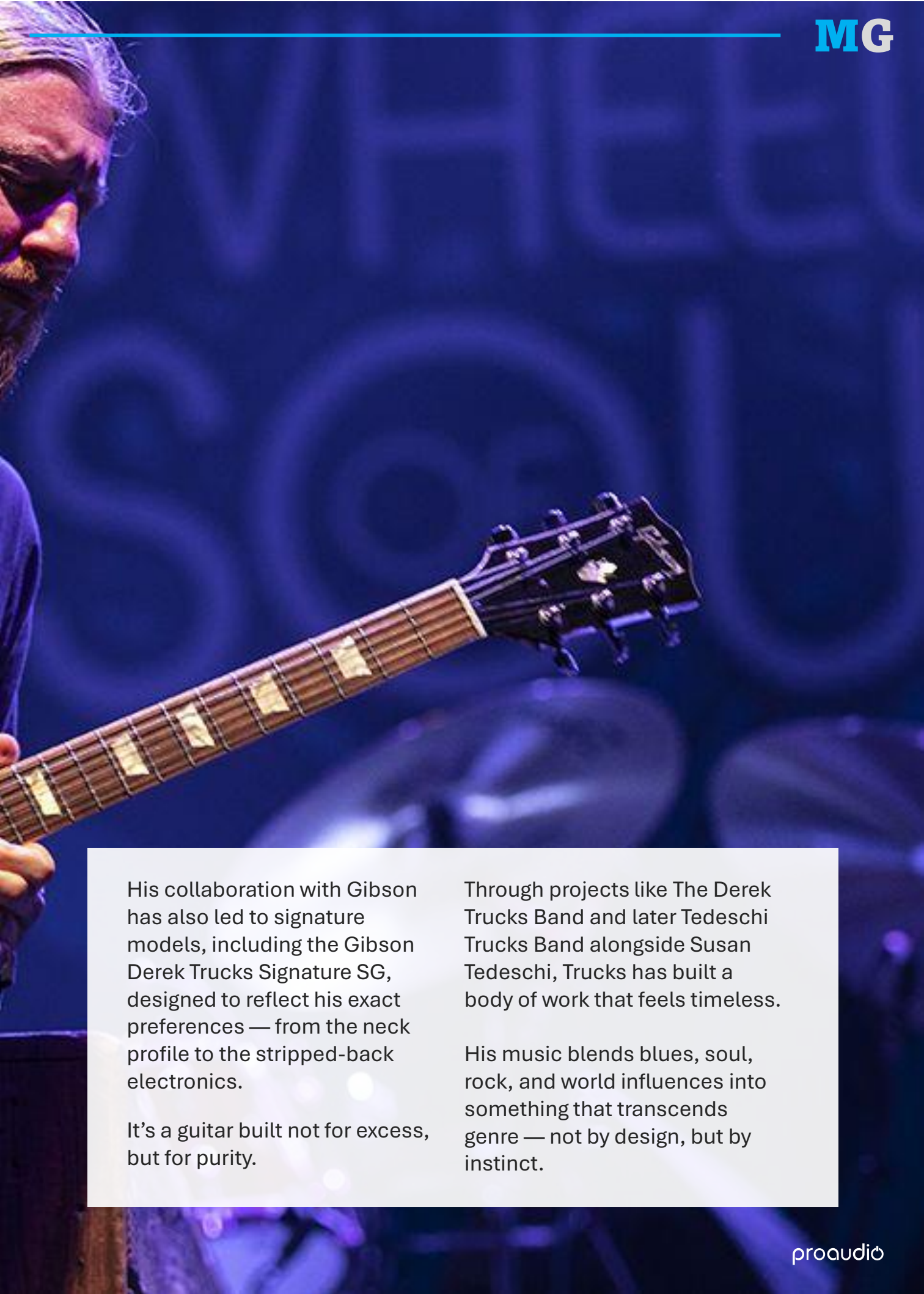
At the heart of Trucks' story is a philosophy rarely seen in modern guitar culture: "You don't need more — you need to go deeper." That idea defines everything about his playing. And at the centre of that sound is his long-standing relationship with Gibson.

Trucks is most closely associated with the Gibson SG — particularly his iconic 1961-style SG, which has become almost inseparable from his identity as a player.

Unlike many modern setups, his approach is strikingly simple. He typically runs straight into an amp, relying on touch, dynamics, and control rather than pedals or heavy processing.

**That simplicity
is intentional.**





His collaboration with Gibson has also led to signature models, including the Gibson Derek Trucks Signature SG, designed to reflect his exact preferences — from the neck profile to the stripped-back electronics.

It's a guitar built not for excess, but for purity.

Through projects like The Derek Trucks Band and later Tedeschi Trucks Band alongside Susan Tedeschi, Trucks has built a body of work that feels timeless.

His music blends blues, soul, rock, and world influences into something that transcends genre — not by design, but by instinct.



What makes this guitar so important to his sound is not just its history, but its character. The 1961 SG is known for its lightweight feel, fast neck, and open, expressive tone — qualities that respond instantly to the player.

For Trucks, whose slide technique depends on nuance and control, that responsiveness is everything. Every movement of his hand, every slight variation in pressure or vibrato, is translated directly into sound.

There is very little between him and the music. No heavy effects, no unnecessary layers — just the SG, his slide, and a direct connection to the amplifier. It's a stripped-back approach that demands honesty. The guitar doesn't mask anything; it reveals exactly what is there.



Live, that approach becomes even more powerful.

Performances stretch, evolve, and breathe. Songs are not repeated — they are rediscovered. Each note feels like it exists in the moment, shaped by emotion rather than expectation.



That's what separates Derek Trucks.

He doesn't try to stand out.
He simply goes deeper.

And in doing so — with a Gibson SG in his hands — he reminds us that the guitar isn't just something you play... it's something you *listen through*.



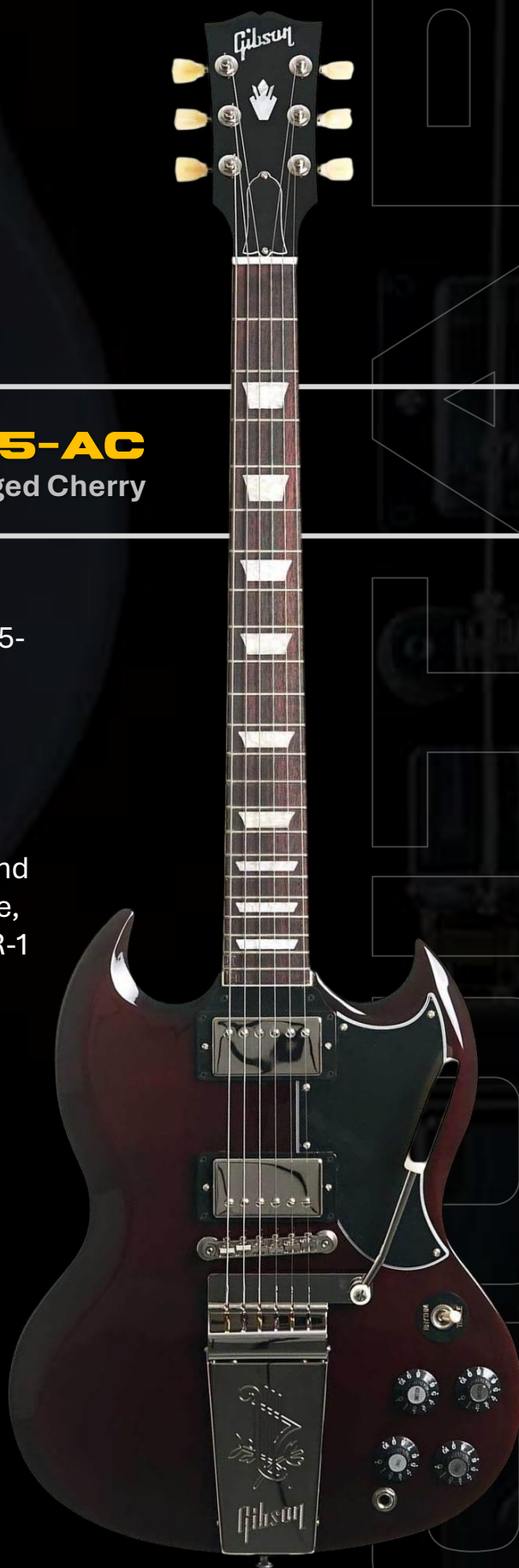
Gibson

SG61VTY25-AC

SG STD '61 Maestro Vibrola T-Type Aged Cherry

The Gibson SG Standard '61 Maestro Vibrola T-Type Aged Cherry SG61VTY25-AC revisits the classic SG design with modern performance.

It features a mahogany body and SlimTaper neck for lightweight playability, a rosewood fingerboard, and T-Type humbuckers for classic SG tone, paired with a Maestro Vibrola and ABR-1 Tune-O-Matic bridge, finished in gloss nitrocellulose Aged Cherry lacquer.



WHY IT'S WORTH IT

The Gibson SG61VTY25-AC SG Standard '61 Maestro Vibrola T-Type Aged Cherry is worth it for its classic SG design with modern reliability. Its lightweight mahogany body and SlimTaper neck offer comfortable playability, while T-Type humbuckers deliver powerful, articulate tone and sustain. The Maestro Vibrola and Tune-O-Matic bridge add expressive vibrato with stable performance.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

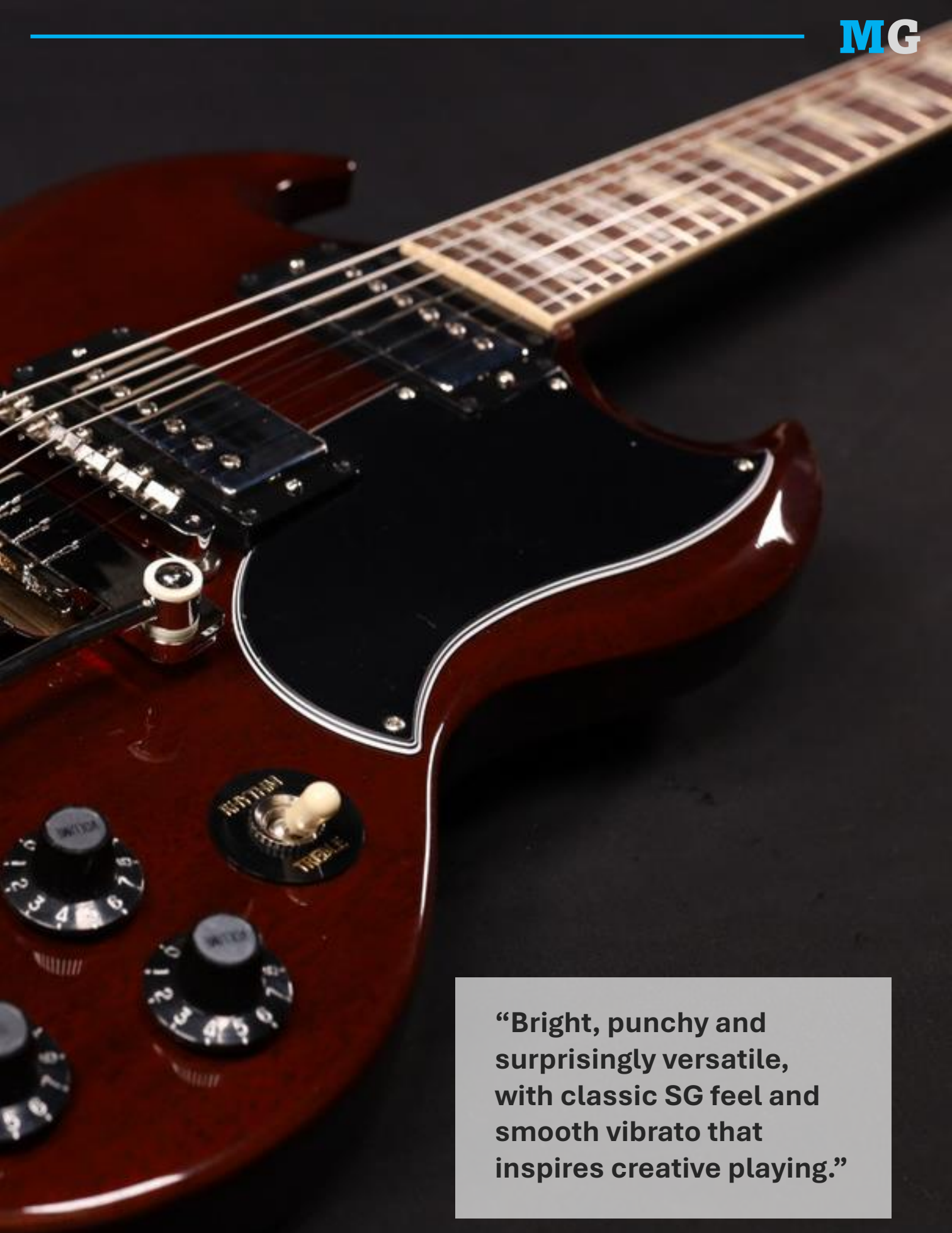
The Gibson SG61VTY25-AC SG Standard '61 Maestro Vibrola T-Type Aged Cherry is well suited to rock, hard rock, blues, and metal, thanks to its powerful humbucker tone, strong sustain, and articulate response. It also works well for classic rock and alternative styles, where its clarity and dynamic range can be used for both rhythm and lead playing.



WHO WOULD USE IT?

The Gibson SG Standard '61 Maestro Vibrola T-Type Aged Cherry is typically chosen by rock and blues guitarists, as well as players in hard rock, alternative, and metal who value its lightweight feel, fast neck, and expressive tone.

Suited to both professional and serious musicians, it offers a reliable stage and studio instrument with classic SG character and performance.



“Bright, punchy and surprisingly versatile, with classic SG feel and smooth vibrato that inspires creative playing.”

MG

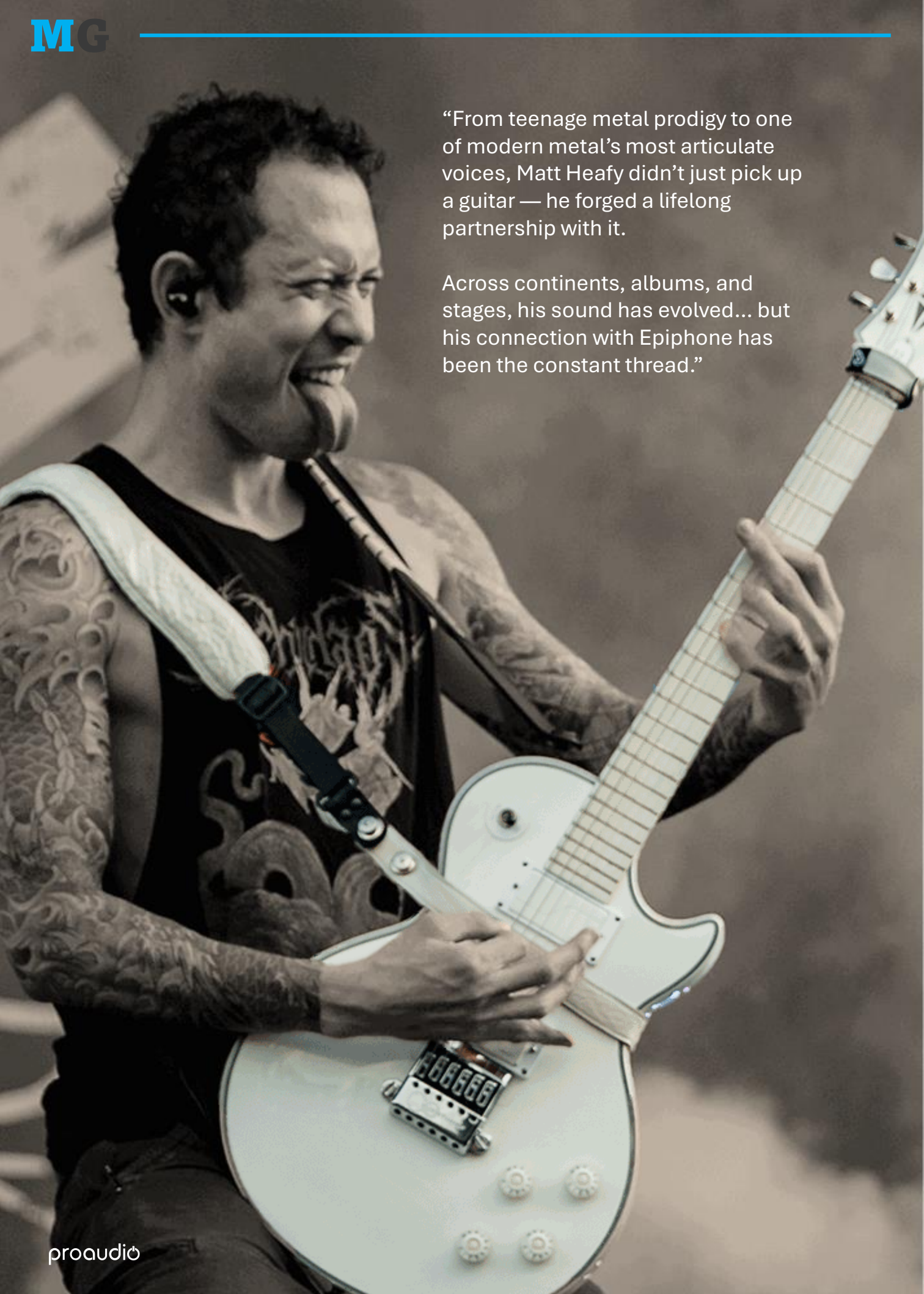
MATT HEAFY



The Story of
Matt Heafy and
His Relationship
with
Epiphone

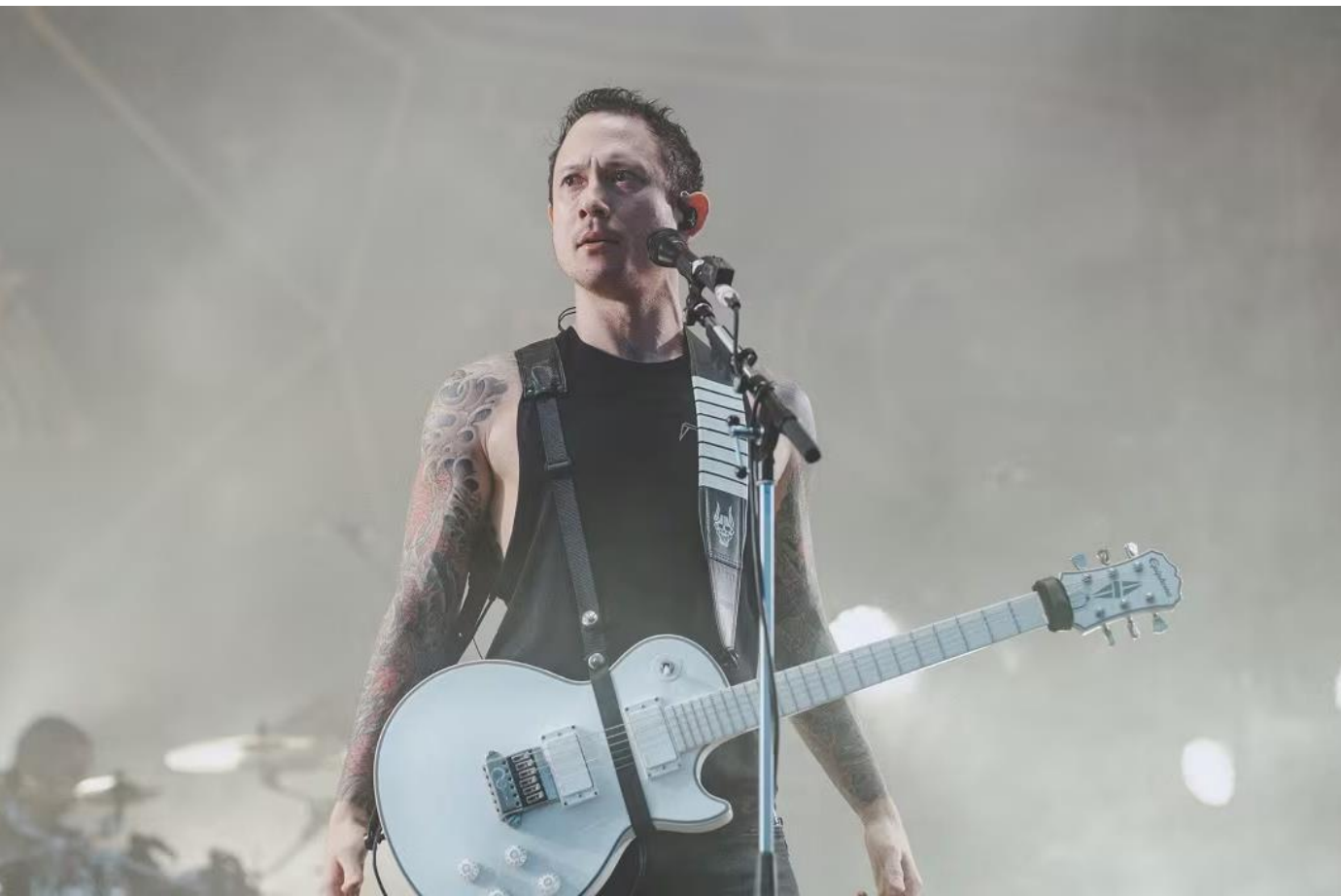
Matt Heafy's journey as a guitarist is closely tied to growth, discipline, and a long-standing relationship with a single brand that helped shape his sound.



A black and white photograph of Matt Heafy, the lead guitarist of the band Bring Me the Horizon. He is shown from the waist up, wearing a black tank top with a graphic design and a white guitar strap. He has extensive tattoos on his arms and is smiling broadly while playing a white electric guitar. The background is a blurred outdoor setting.

“From teenage metal prodigy to one of modern metal’s most articulate voices, Matt Heafy didn’t just pick up a guitar — he forged a lifelong partnership with it.

Across continents, albums, and stages, his sound has evolved... but his connection with Epiphone has been the constant thread.”



Early beginnings and discovering guitar

Matt Heafy began playing guitar at a young age and quickly developed a strong passion for heavy music

As he grew up, he became deeply influenced by metal and hard rock.

From the start, his focus was not just on playing, but on building a serious musical identity—writing, performing, and evolving rapidly as a guitarist and songwriter.

Why Matt Heafy chooses Epiphone

Heafy's continued use of Epiphone comes down to consistency, familiarity, and performance.


Over the years, Epiphone has provided instruments that align with his evolving needs—from early career reliability to modern, stage-ready versatility.

Rather than treating guitars as disposable tools, Heafy's approach reflects a long-term partnership where the instruments grow with the artist.



Like many emerging players, Heafy gravitated toward Epiphone's Les Paul-style guitars, which offered a balance of accessibility, reliability, and the tonal characteristics associated with classic rock and metal.

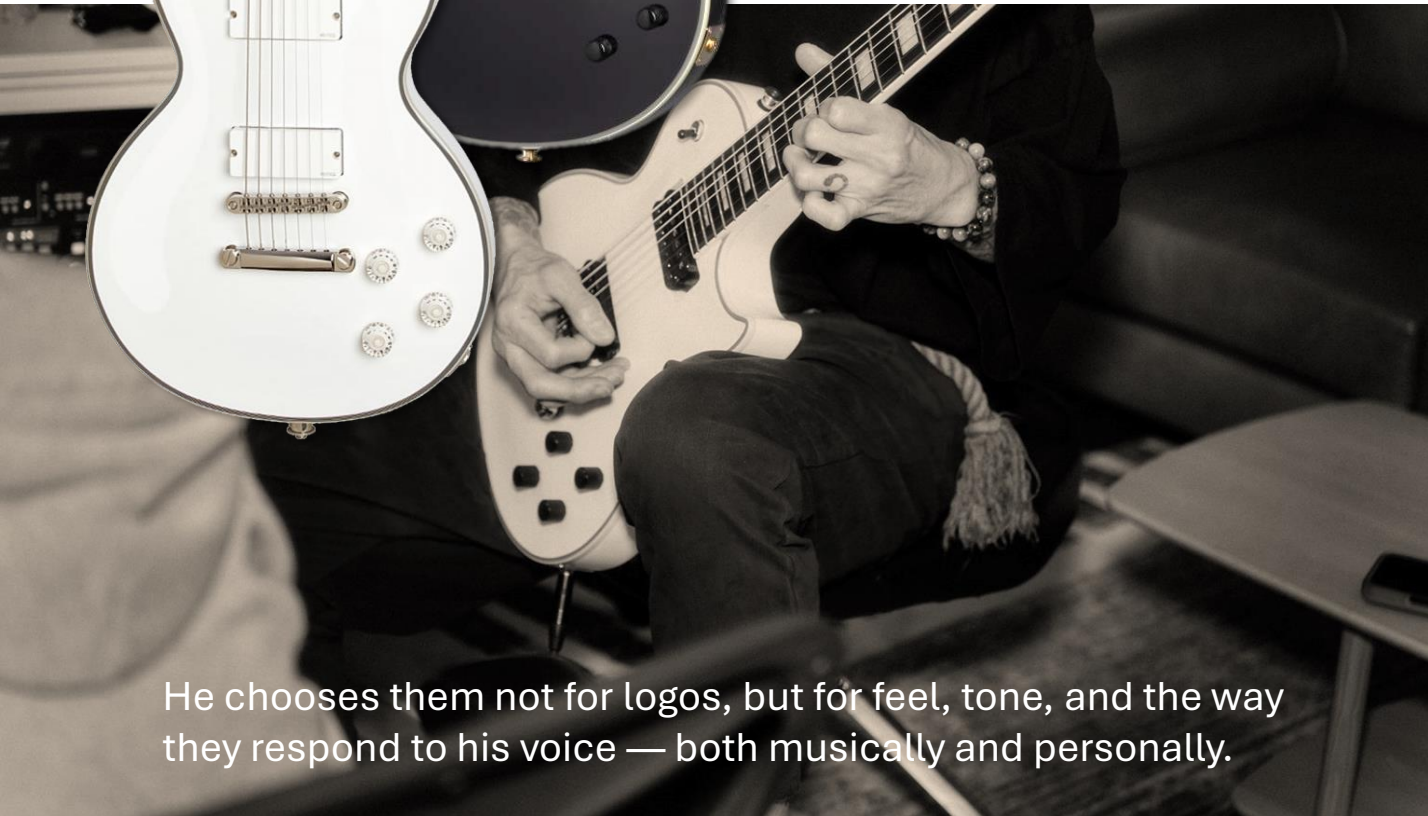




As Heafy's reputation grew, Epiphone collaborated with him to create signature models tailored to his exact preferences.

The first major step was the Epiphone Matt Heafy Les Paul Custom (2013), this marked the beginning of a deeper partnership between artist and brand.

This was followed by the Snøfall Les Paul Custom, a visually distinctive model inspired by the Silence in the Snow era of Trivium.



He chooses them not for logos, but for feel, tone, and the way they respond to his voice — both musically and personally.

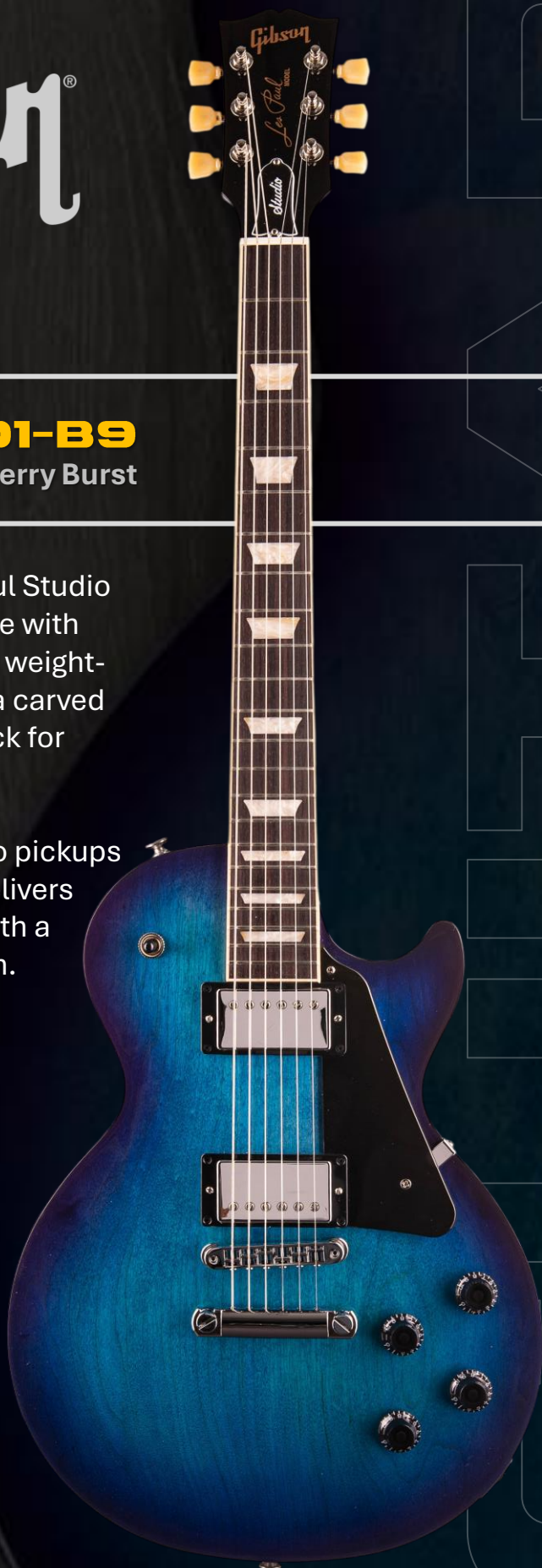
Gibson®

LPST01-B9

Les Paul Studio Blueberry Burst

The Gibson LPST01-B9 Les Paul Studio combines classic Les Paul tone with modern playability, featuring a weight-relieved mahogany body with a carved maple top and a SlimTaper neck for comfort.

Equipped with Burstbucker Pro pickups and coil-tap functionality, it delivers versatile humbucking tones with a lighter, more accessible design.



WHY IT'S WORTH IT

The Gibson LPST01-B9 Les Paul Studio is worth it for delivering classic Les Paul tone with modern playability at a more accessible level. Its weight-relieved mahogany body with a maple top provides balanced resonance, while Burstbucker Pro pickups with coil-tap controls offer a wide range of tones. The SlimTaper neck and lighter design add comfort for extended playing while retaining the signature Les Paul sound.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

The Gibson LPST01-B9 Les Paul Studio is versatile and suits styles like blues, rock, hard rock, jazz, and metal, thanks to its warm humbucker tone and sustain.


Les Paul-style guitars are widely used across genres for their ability to handle both clean and overdriven sounds.



WHO WOULD USE IT?

The Gibson LPST01-B9 Les Paul Studio is used by players who want classic Les Paul tone and versatility at a more accessible level.

It's a practical, stage-ready choice for genres like rock, blues, and hard rock, offering the iconic Les Paul sound and feel in a comfortable, weight-relieved design.



“A stripped-back Les Paul that still delivers the tone and feel players expect from Gibson.”

MG

SWIFF AUDIO WT-09





SWIFF
AUDIO

The Swift Audio WT-09 Wireless System is a compact, plug-and-play solution designed to replace traditional instrument cables while maintaining high-quality sound.

Its lightweight, portable design makes it easy to integrate into any rig.

A key focus of the WT-09 is high-fidelity, lossless audio transmission, preserving the tone, dynamics, and character of the instrument.

The system is designed to accurately reproduce sound without the degradation often associated with wireless setups.

This makes it a reliable option for players who prioritise tonal integrity.

TRANSMISSION RANGE

- Up to 30m (100ft)

LATENCY

- < 4ms

HARMONIC DISTORTION

- < 0.04%

6 CHANNELS**SENSITIVITY**

- < -81 dBm

CHARGING PORT

- USB Type-C

FREQUENSCY RESPONSE

- 20Hz-20 kHz (-3dB)

Captures Precise Detail and Dynamics



Captures Precise Detail and Dynamics

The system also supports up to 4 units operating simultaneously, allowing multiple players to perform wirelessly without interference. It's a flexible option for bands and ensembles.

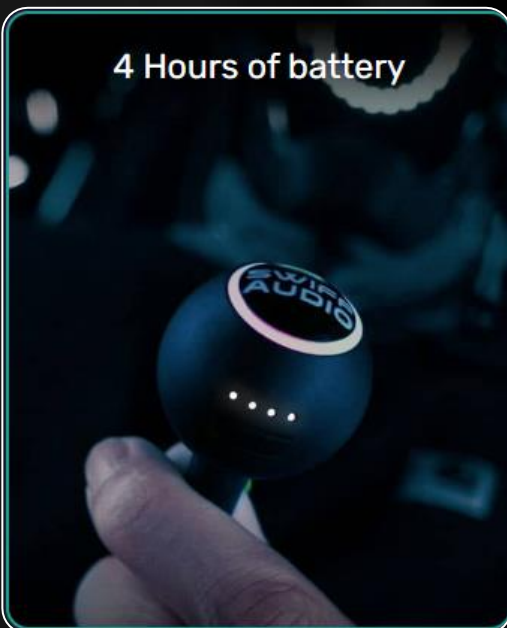
Broad Compatibility, Plug-and-Play



Broad Compatibility. Plug-and-Play

Designed with simplicity in mind, the WT-09 features a plug-and-play setup with auto pairing, making it quick and easy to get up and running.

4 Hours of battery



4 Hours of battery

With a typical operating range of over 30 metres, the WT-09 gives you the freedom to move across the stage with confidence.

Epiphone

EILO-EB

Les Paul Classic Ebony

The Epiphone Les Paul Classic Ebony is a modern take on the iconic late-1950s Les Paul Standard, featuring a mahogany body with a plain maple cap, open-coil Alnico Classic PRO™ humbuckers with coil-splitting and phase switching, SlimTaper mahogany neck, and Grover® Rotomatic tuners — all wrapped in a glossy Ebony finish.



WHY IT'S WORTH IT

This guitar delivers classic Les Paul tone and feel at an accessible price point, with versatile electronics (coil-splitting and phase options) and quality hardware that expand its sonic range while preserving the warmth and sustain players expect from a Les Paul style instrument.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

It's well suited to rock, blues, hard rock, and classic pop, where its rich humbucker tones, dynamic response, and versatile controls can shine.





WHO WOULD USE IT?

This model appeals to intermediate to advanced players and gigging musicians who want the classic Les Paul look and sound with modern flexibility, as well as players seeking a versatile guitar for both rhythm and lead roles.

“A versatile classic —
captures Les Paul heritage with
modern tone and playability.”



A musician with a beard and a white t-shirt is playing a Nord Electro 7HP keyboard on stage. The musician is wearing an in-ear monitor. The keyboard is a dark wood finish with a black and white keyboard. The text "nord electro 7" is overlaid in large white letters across the middle of the image. The background is a dimly lit stage with some equipment visible.

nord electro 7

A New Chapter in Live Performance Power, Simplicity, and Sound

There's a reason the Nord Electro series has remained a favourite on stages around the world — it delivers exactly what musicians need, without overcomplicating the experience.

With the release of the Nord Electro 7, that philosophy hasn't changed — it's simply been taken further. This is not just an update. It's a refinement of everything the Electro has always stood for.

At its core, it still delivers the three essentials — piano, organ, and now a much more capable synth section. The addition of virtual analogue and FM synthesis opens up a wider range of sounds, giving players more creative freedom without complicating the workflow.



The organ section feels more refined, with improved tone and rotary simulation, and the inclusion of physical drawbars across all models brings a more hands-on, expressive experience. The piano section remains strong, offering the clarity and character Nord is known for, with enough control to shape your sound in a live mix.

Everything about the Electro 7 is designed for the stage. A cleaner interface, faster navigation, and smooth transitions between sounds mean you can focus on playing instead of managing your setup.





LO-FI COLLECTION

New sounds

Crafted from carefully sampled vintage instruments and textures, the **Nord Lo-Fi Collection** delivers **authentic character and warmth** in a *modern performance-ready format.*



nord stage 4
HAMMER ACTION

Created by Swedish keyboardist and producer Andreas Arvidsson, the Lo-Fi Collection for the Nord Stage 4 brings together a rich and characterful range of sounds.

From classic lo-fi keys and cassette-worn synths to textured strings, warbly electric pianos, and even a nostalgic vintage trumpet, the collection captures a distinctively warm and imperfect sonic aesthetic.

“I’ve always been drawn to the character of analog sounds, and I’ve made beats for as long as I can remember. I find inspiration in organic and nostalgic sounds and love when a preset can spark a whole idea and that’s what I hope to bring you with this collection”

- **Andreas Arvidsson**

video

LO-FI

COLLECTION

exclusively for

nord stage 4



The new campus will begin welcoming students during its soft launch on April 1, 2026, with a grand launch celebration taking place on April 18, 2026.

SCHOOL OF ROCK[®]

JOHANNESBURG

Johannesburg, South Africa:

April 2026 - Global music education leader School of Rock is excited to announce the opening of its newest South African campus in Sandton, bringing its performance-based music education model to one of Johannesburg's most vibrant cultural hubs.

The Sandton location will offer lessons in guitar, bass, drums, keys, and vocals, following School of Rock's renowned methodology that combines one-on-one instruction with group band rehearsals and live performances. The program is designed to help students of all ages develop confidence, musicianship, and real stage experience.

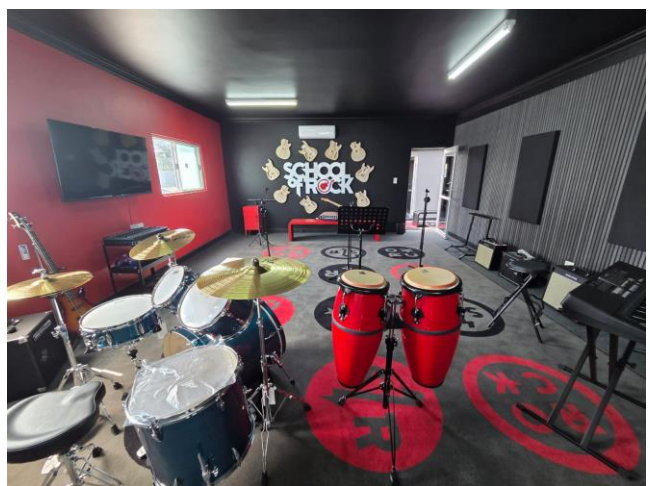
Following the success of the Parktown North campus, the expansion into Sandton reflects the growing demand for contemporary music education in Johannesburg and the increasing popularity of performance-based learning.

“Opening our doors in Sandton is an exciting next chapter for School of Rock in Johannesburg,” says the team behind the local franchise. “We’ve seen firsthand how powerful music education can be in building confidence, creativity, and community. We’re thrilled to bring this experience to even more students and families.”

The April 18 launch event will give the public an opportunity to explore the new facility, meet instructors, experience live performances, and learn more about the programs available for children, teens, and adults.

School of Rock is internationally recognized for its unique approach to music education, which prepares students not only to learn instruments but also to perform on real stages. With more than 300 schools worldwide, the program has helped thousands of young musicians develop their skills and passion for music.

Enrollment for the Sandton campus is now open.



A photograph of Russel Lund, a man with glasses and a beard, playing a red electric guitar on a stage. He is wearing a dark t-shirt with 'SCHOOL OF ROCK' printed on it and dark pants. The background is a dimly lit stage with blue lighting. Other musicians are visible in the background, including a woman at a keyboard.

Building More Than Musicians

Russel, owner of School of Rock Sandton, shares his vision for creating more than just a music school. With a strong focus on performance, community, and real-world experience, his goal is to build a creative hub where musicians develop not only their skills, but their confidence, identity, and sense of belonging within the local music scene.

MG What excites you most about bringing the School of Rock experience to this new location, and how do you see it impacting the local music community?

RL What excites me most is that School of Rock brings a genuinely different way of learning music to Sandton. It's performance-based, which means students aren't only learning in isolation — they're learning through private lessons, band rehearsals, and real live performances.

For the local music community, I think that has real impact. It creates more than technically strong musicians — it creates confident performers, collaborators, and young people who feel part of something bigger. My hope is that School of Rock Sandton becomes a place where talent is nurtured, community is built, and more young artists feel empowered to step onto a stage and into the broader local music scene.

And what makes it especially powerful is our Patented SongFirst approach: students learn through the songs that inspire them, and through those songs they begin to understand technique and music theory in a way that feels practical, exciting, and immediate.

MG What role do you see this new branch playing within the broader local music and creative scene?

RL I see this branch becoming much more than a music school — I see it becoming a creative hub. School of Rock’s model is designed not only to build musical proficiency, but also confidence, teamwork, resilience, and a real sense of belonging through playing with others. That matters in any creative scene, because great artists don’t just need skill — they need community, confidence, and opportunities to perform.

In Sandton, I’d love to see this branch become a space where future bands are formed, where young musicians discover their identity, and where the local creative ecosystem feels stronger because there’s a place actively developing the next generation of performers.

MG For aspiring musicians thinking of joining, what advice would you give them about making the most of their time at the school?

RL My biggest advice would be: fully embrace the process. Don’t just come for the lesson — lean into the rehearsal experience, the performances, the teamwork, and the challenge of growing with other musicians. The more open you are to the full experience, the more you’ll get out of it.

And finally, don’t wait until you feel “ready.” Growth happens by doing — by showing up, trying things, making mistakes, and getting back on stage again. That’s where confidence is built, and that’s where the real magic happens.

MG Can you walk us through what a typical student journey looks like here — from their first lesson to performing live?

RL A typical student journey starts with us getting to know the student with a Trial Lesson — their musical interests, experience level, and what excites them. From there, they move into weekly private lessons and weekly group rehearsals, with songs and parts tailored to their age, ability, and stage of development.

The goal is always to help them grow steadily while building toward live performance. Every few months, that work comes together on stage at a real local venue, in front of a live audience.

What makes that journey really special is our teaching Method. It’s not just about learning notes or scales in a vacuum — it combines performance, song-based learning, Method Books, and the Method App to make music education more engaging and more practical.

The Method App, for example, gives students assigned exercises and songs, instructor feedback, access to thousands of song transcriptions, adjustable playback and tempo, backing tracks to rehearse with, and even tools like a built-in tuner.

It helps students keep progressing between lessons and makes practice feel much more interactive and motivating.



Building Community Through Music

In this short conversation, Jarred shares his vision for bringing the School of Rock experience to a new location, focusing on community, real performance, and creating opportunities for musicians at every level. It's a simple but powerful reminder that music isn't just about playing — it's about people.

MG What excites you most about bringing the School of Rock experience to this new location, and how do you see it impacting the local music community?

JR A new venue means building a new community. The excitement of having a real, positive impact on peoples lives

MG Can you walk us through what a typical student journey looks like here — from their first lesson to performing live?

JR From complete beginners to advanced musicians, the journey is very similar. Our curriculum addresses every student's needs. From your individual lessons where our skilled instructors will teach what's required, to band rehearsals, culminating in a real rock performance.

MG What role do you see this new branch playing within the broader local music and creative scene?

JR I see it forming and growing a community of music lovers. Kids meet like-minded kids, adults meet like-minded adults. That is where it all starts. Once there is that, the rest happens organically.

MG For aspiring musicians thinking of joining, what advice would you give them about making the most of their time at the school?

JR Show up committed, push yourself outside your comfort zone, and practice with purpose. Learn from the people around you, take every chance to perform, and build relationships along the way. Most importantly - have some fun!

Ridge unpacks what it means to bring the School of Rock into a new space, not just as a place to learn, but as a hub for community.

MG What excites you most about bringing the School of Rock experience to this new location, and how do you see it impacting the local music community?

RH What excites me most is filling a genuine void in our local scene. Right now, there's a huge gap for musicians who want more than just solo lessons—they're looking for a real community to create with. Bringing the first School of Rock to this area means providing that missing connection. Plus, seeing students thrive in a professional-grade space with top-tier equipment will raise the bar for what our local music community can achieve together

MG Can you walk us through what a typical student journey looks like here — from their first lesson to performing live?

RH The journey kicks off with a trial lesson, where we really get to know the student's goals and musical taste. From there, they dive into a dual-track approach: weekly one-on-one sessions to sharpen their technical skills, and group rehearsals where they learn the 'magic' of playing in a band. It all builds toward the ultimate payoff—taking all that hard work out of the practice room and onto the stages of great local venues for a live performance.



MG What role do you see this new branch playing within the broader local music and creative scene?

RH Since we are the first of our kind in the area and have such incredible facilities, I see this branch becoming the go-to community space for music. It's a place where everyone is welcome and where 'mass encouragement' is at the core of everything we do. My goal is for this location to act as a bridge—connecting our students with local artists and music stores to build a thriving scene where every musician feels empowered to grow.

MG For aspiring musicians thinking of joining, what advice would you give them about making the most of their time at the school?

RH My biggest advice is to be open-minded and really trust the process. Learning an instrument has its ups and downs, but if you believe in yourself and lean into the support of our instructors, the progress will follow. Most importantly, remember to have fun—the best music happens when you're enjoying the journey and the people you're playing with.



Building the Next Generation of Musicians

Ryan shares his vision for creating a space where musicians of all ages can develop their skills, connect with others, and step onto a real stage.

With a strong focus on community and hands-on experience, it's all about inspiring the next generation to find their sound and enjoy the journey along the way.

MG What excites you most about bringing the School of Rock experience to this new location, and how do you see it impacting the local music community?

RP The new school is a place where we build our own community for musicians and where kids can learn and be inspired to become our future rock stars

MG Can you walk us through what a typical student journey looks like here - from their first lesson to performing live?

RP Our students start with a trial lesson for whichever instrument or singing they like. Our song's first approach helped them jam from the get-go which keeps the lesson engaging and goal orientated. They are placed in a band setup to understand the dynamics of playing together and to understand each other within that setup. Within 3 months they are ready to perform on a real stage with their bands, gaining experience while attending weekly lessons and band rehearsals.

MG What role do you see this new branch playing within the broader local music and creative scene?

RP To create a bigger platform and music community for everyone interested in music and performance.

MG For aspiring musicians thinking of joining, what advice would you give them about making the most of their time at the school?

RP Have fun, learn as much as you can, play music and always ask many questions.



Where Talent Meets Opportunity

Snazo shares the vision behind creating a high-energy, performance-driven space that goes beyond traditional lessons.

MG What excites you most about bringing the School of Rock experience to this new location, and how do you see it impacting the local music community?

SV What excites me most is the opportunity to move beyond traditional, isolated music lessons and give local students a purposeful, high energy environment. I see us becoming a community within a community. We plan to collaborate with local venues for our student performances, which not only gives our kids real-world experience but also breathes fresh energy and new audiences into the local live music ecosystem.

MG Can you walk us through what a typical student journey looks like here — from their first lesson to performing live?

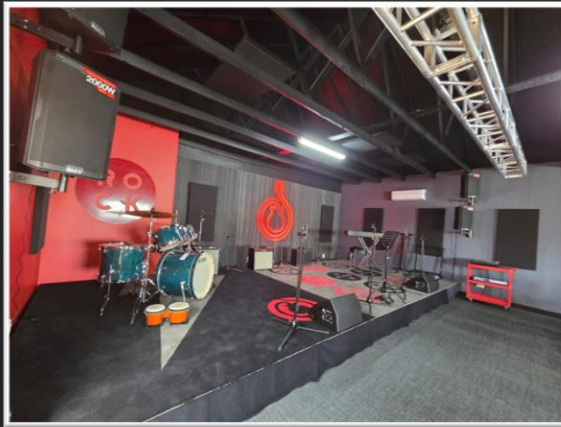
SV At School of Rock, we're thrilled to bring our performance based approach to the local community. The student journey begins with the Song First method in private lessons, quickly moving into weekly group rehearsals where they learn the essential teamwork of a real band then to the spotlight where they get to be a part of the local music scenes by performing full sets in professional venues.

MG What role do you see this new branch playing within the broader local music and creative scene?

SV We see this new branch serving as a vital talent incubator that bridges the gap between music education and the professional stage

MG For aspiring musicians thinking of joining, what advice would you give them about making the most of their time at the school?

SV My advice is to lean into the community and say yes to the stage as soon as possible. While private practice builds your skill, the real growth happens during rehearsals when you're collaborating with your bandmates and learning the language of teamwork. Never be afraid of making mistakes, this is your safe space to experiment



THIS IS THE STAGE. IT IS THE GREATEST TEACHER

YOU WILL EVER KNOW. WHEN YOU JOIN THE SCHOOL OF ROCK, YOU WILL COME TO KNOW IT WELL, AND YOU WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT MUSIC THAN YOU EVER

DREAMED POSSIBLE

YOU WILL PLAY THE SONGS YOU LOVE. WORK WITH INCREDIBLE INSTRUCTORS, AND BE PART OF A COMMUNITY OF MUSICIANS THAT SUPPORTS EACH OTHER'S

CREATIVITY

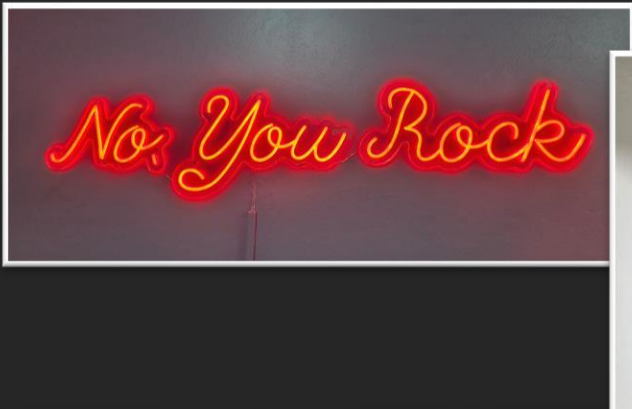
YOU WILL BE INSPIRED AT EVERY LEVEL IN YOUR JOURNEY TO BECOME A GREAT MUSICIAN, AND YOU WON'T BE ALONE. WITH SCHOOLS ALL AROUND THE WORLD, YOU WILL BE CONNECTED TO A GLOBAL NETWORK OF ARTISTS, TEACHERS, FRIENDS AND FANS THAT SHARE YOUR

LOVE OF ROCK & ROLL.

TOGETHER, YOU WILL DEVELOP TEAMWORK AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS WHILE PLAYING INCREDIBLE SHOWS FOR LIVE AUDIENCES ON AMAZING STAGES. THIS IS WHY MORE THAN A MUSIC LESSON, THIS IS A WAY OF LIFE.

THE STAGE AWAITS.

INSPIRING THE WORLD TO ROCK ON STAGE AND IN LIFE.





MG

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