MAY 2025

An

Interview

With

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BIG Guitar SOUND ON A BUDGET

Epiphone

Blackstar

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PRECISION GIBSON & BLACKSTAR

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WELCOME TO THE MAY EDITION OF PROAUDIO MUSICGEAR MAGAZINE

This month, we turn up the volume on inspiration, innovation, and the gear that fuels it all.

Inside, we chat with two standout artists—Billy Monama, a master of African guitar and musical storytelling, and Deon Groot, whose songwriting is rooted in soul and place. We also spotlight rising stars from the School of Rock, proving that passion and talent start young.

Looking to upgrade your rig without breaking the bank? Big Sound on a Budget explores the value-packed Epiphone range, while Power & Precision highlights the firepower of Gibson guitars and Blackstar amps.

New gear this month includes the expressive Nord Organ 3, the compact Pedal Key 25, and mobile must-haves like the Carry-On Soundtrack Speaker and Folding Controller 25. And for the road warriors, the Steinberger headless guitar brings sleek portability to a whole new level.

Whether you're a bedroom producer or stage performer, this issue is loaded with tools, tips, and stories to elevate your journey.

Stay loud. Stay inspired.

HAPPY READING! Proaudio MusicGear Team

MusicGear

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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.

Proaudio MusicGear – May 2025 Edition

"Inspiration, innovation, and the sound of possibilities"



BIG SOUND ON A BUDGET

In this article, we spotlight artists who proudly endorse Epiphone, explore why they choose Epiphone, and how these guitars deliver premium tone without the premium price.

BILLY MONAMA

In this exclusive MusicGear Magazine interview, we sit down with celebrated South African guitarist, composer, and cultural custodian Billy Monama.

DEON GROOT

In this heartfelt interview, MusicGear Magazine catches up with Deon Groot, the soulful singer-songwriter whose roots in Namakwaland and Namibia have shaped his unique sound.

POWER & PRECISION

Gibson guitars are legendary for their tone-rich mids, warm sustain, and iconic humbucker bite. But finding the right amp to bring out those characteristics can make or break your sound.

SCHOOL OF ROCK - PARKTOWN NORTH

Nestled in the vibrant suburb of Parktown North, Johannesburg, the School of Rock offers an immersive music education experience for aspiring musicians of all ages.





NOA DEL FABBRO 8 MATTHEW HAGGARD



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"Great music isn't just heard—it's felt. This month, we celebrate the artists, students, and gear that remind us why we play in the first place."

FUEtars

LES PAUL STUDIO SMOKEHOUSE BURST

It's Gibson heritage with modern practicality. Built to perform, crafted to inspire.

LES PAUL STD ADAM JONES ANTIQUE SILVERBURST

It's crafted chaos in a classic shell. A sonic canvas for players who think big, go deep, and play with purpose.

HUMMINGBIRD AGED ANTIQUE NATURAL

It's heritage you can hear and hold—a guitar that inspires every time you pick it up.

BANJO NATURAL

It's a road-ready banjo with heart, built for both casual strumming and serious picking.

VIOLA BASS VINTAGE SUNBURST

It's retro elegance with modern reliability—a bass that sings as sweet as it looks

SPIRIT GT-PRO DELUXE ELECTRIC

The Spirit GT-PRO Deluxe is a precisionengineered, ultraportable, and stylish instrument that's built to go where traditional guitars can't—and to sound great when it gets there.

Comtroller

FOLDING CONTROLLER 25

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Your Studio, Folded Into a Backpack





For decades, Epiphone has been known as the more accessible cousin to Gibson-but don't let the price tag fool you. From garage stages to festival mainlines, Epiphone guitars are being slung over the shoulders of some of the world's most respected and boundary-pushing musicians.

In this article, we spotlight artists who proudly endorse Epiphone, explore why they choose Epiphone, and how these guitars deliver premium tone without the premium price.



"It's not about the logo on the headstock. It's about the sound that moves you."

- Jared James Nichols

Jared James Nichols

- The Face of Modern Blues Rock

Nichols doesn't just endorse Epiphone-he's helped redefine it. His signature "Old Glory" Les Paul Custom and the recent Gold Glory are stripped-down, single-pickup monsters designed for raw, unapologetic blues-rock. Jared famously never uses a pick, and his tone is proof that Epiphone can hang with the big dogs.



Noel Gallagher

- Britpop Royalty

Yes, that Noel Gallagher. The Oasis legend's Epiphone Supernova (in Union Jack finish) became iconic in the '90s and remains a fan favorite. Gallagher has said many times that he prefers the Epiphone semi-hollow feel and tone for certain tracks, and he's been spotted using both Gibson and Epiphone in major shows.

Lzzy Hale

- Epiphone Explorer Queen

The Halestorm frontwoman's Epiphone Lzzy Hale Explorer is as bold as her voice-featuring gold hardware, an Alpine White finish, and custom pickups that deliver fiery hard rock tones. It's a fan favorite among shredders and frontwomen alike.

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Tommy Thayer

- KISS Guitar Firepower

Thayer's Epiphone Les Paul "White Lightning" proves that signature sound and epic tone doesn't have to cost a fortune. Designed to deliver high output and sleek looks, his Epiphone model has been used on global toursproving its road-worthiness.

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Emily Wolfe

- Texas Guitar Hero

Emily's Epiphone Sheraton Stealth model offers dark, refined aesthetics with a punchy tone. She blends rock, blues, and indie styles-and says Epiphone gave her the creative freedom to design a guitar that matched her voice as an artist. 0



Affordability without Compromise -

Artists love that they can beat on an Epiphone night after night without worrying about a \$5,000 price tag.

Inspired by Gibson Series - Epiphone's new lines are closer to their Gibson counterparts than ever before, using upgraded electronics, finishes, and neck profiles.

Road-Tested Reliability - These guitars hold up on tour and in studio environments alike.

Signature Style - Artists are creating unique custom models with Epiphone that aren't just clones-they're statements.

Endorsements prove one thing

Tone doesn't have to cost a fortune. Epiphone guitars are not "starter" guitars anymore -they're serious instruments played by serious musicians.

Choose Epiphone



BILLY MONAMA



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BILLY MONAMA Interviewed by MusicGear Magazine

In this exclusive MusicGear Magazine interview, we sit down with celebrated South African guitarist, composer, and cultural custodian Billy Monama. From his early days sneaking in guitar sessions in the township to sharing stages with legends and preserving the rich history of African jazz, Billy opens up about his journey, influences, and mission to inspire the next generation. His story is one of passion, purpose, and a deep commitment to both craft and culture.

Billy, let's start from the beginning—how did your journey into music begin? Who were your early influences, and what drew you to the guitar?

I grew up in a neighborhood where music was always in the air. My neighbor used to host stock fairs, and the music would play all night long—no curfews in the township. While the music had drums and bass, it was the guitar that really captured my attention. I'd sing along to the guitar lines, mimic them, and even draw guitars at school and church.

Church played a big role too—it's where I saw a real guitar up close for the first time. Around 1997, everything shifted. My neighbor, had a guitar I used to sneak in and play when he wasn't around. He played at church and owned both Epiphone and Gibson guitars brands that left a lasting impression on me. He was an amazing guitarist and a major influence on my journey.

At home, I was constantly watching jazz music on TV. That steady exposure pushed me further toward the guitar and the sound I would eventually pursue.



While jazz is clearly your musical home now, did your early career explore other styles as well?



Absolutely. Jazz actually came later in my journey. The first style I played was

township pop—the kind made famous by Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens, and legends like West Nkosi. That was the pop music of the '90s.

Then came the exiled South African musicians returning home after apartheid. They brought back a fresh take on African jazz, which quickly spread through TV, radio, and media. I started seeing jazz guitarists on TV playing hollow-body Gibsons, and I knew that was the guitar I wanted to play.

Jimmy Dludlu's 1999 album Salome was another big turning point. Everyone was playing Gibson. The sound, the look, the vibe-it all just made sense to me.

Who helped shape your sound most significantly? Were there specific musicians who inspired you to turn this passion into a career?



Jimmy Dludlu was a huge influence. His unique style, his dress sense, his soundhe stood out. Being from Mozambique, he brought deep roots and blended styles in a way that felt fresh and alive.

George Benson was another big one for me. People know him for his singing, but that man can really play the guitar. Long before his pop success, he was a phenomenal jazz guitarist. Trying to emulate him made me realize I needed formal training to take my playing to the next level.







Where did your formal music education begin, and how did it shape the musician you are today?



I studied at Central Johannesburg College. That's where I dove deep into music history and discovered legends like Joe Pass and Wes Montgomery who, by the way, also played Gibsons.

When I got to college, I already knew how to play, which helped me engage actively with the program. I joined a cultural exchange initiative, where students from around the world wanted to learn about African music. That experience made me realize how little I knew about our own musical roots, so I started researching.

That led me to incredible South African guitar pioneers like General Duze—our first successful jazz guitarist—and Johnny Fourie, an exceptional white jazz player. They were both using Gibson guitars. That cemented my connection to the brand.

How would you say Gibson Groude and Epiphone guitars have influenced your sound? What do they bring to your performances?



It depends on the context. When I play pop-heavy music with lots of effects and pedal work, I use my solid-body Les Paul—either the Studio or Standard. It's perfect for distortion, sustain, and expressive bending.

But for jazz, I want a warm, mellow tone. That's when I switch to my Epiphone Joe Pass Emperor II Pro or the Gibson ES-335—both classics. I also choose flatwound strings for that smoother tone, and I don't bend notes much on hollow bodies.

I've been a session player in pop, R&B, and all kinds of gigs. Before I became a solo artist, I spent years backing others, which taught me discipline and respect for every role in a band. I've had the privilege of working with legends like Stix Mabuza, Dorothy Masuka, and Abigail Kubeka. Their mentorship shaped not just my sound but also my professionalism.



"I dove deep into music history and discovered legends like Joe Pass and Wes Montgomery-who, by the way, also played Gibsons."



You're also a composer, producer, and researcher. Can you tell us about your Y-Factor Project?



Before the Y-Factor, I released *Rebounce*, an album that told the story of my journey. Each

track carried emotional weight memories that listeners often connected with deeply. Some songs reminded people of gospel hymns, loved ones, or past experiences. For me, music is like a museum of memories. When I compose, those moments just rise to the surface naturally. That's why I named the album *Rebound*—because the sound always comes back.

The Y-Factor Project is the next chapter. As I've matured, I've grown more intentional. It's no longer just about expressing myself—it's about reaching people. I asked myself, "Why am I making this music?" That question became the foundation for the Y-Factor.

I collaborated with younger artists like Langa Mavuso to bridge generational gaps and make jazz cool again for the youth.

What legacy do you hope to leave through your music and work?

I want future generations—10, 20 years from now—to look at my albums and say, "That's where we were in 2025." Every album I release includes a hymn. That's deliberate. I grew up in the church, and hymns have deep emotional and cultural resonance.

When people hear them, they say, "This reminds me of my grandmother... my roots... my childhood." The church has always been a cradle for musical talent artists like Whitney Houston and John Coltrane started there. It's a safe space for young musicians to fail and grow.

I want to protect and promote that culture. When I began researching South African guitar history, there was almost nothing available. That's why I wrote a book and donated it to libraries. I also created video tutorials—accessible on my website—that teach maskandi and African jazz styles, both pre- and post-1950s. It's all part of preserving our story and passing it on.

"I'm showing that jazz isn't stuck in the past—it's evolving, and young people can carry it forward."





Billy, what can we look forward to from you this year and into 2025?



I produce two major concerts each year. The first, Back to the Future, was already staged earlier this year. The next is MAYIBUYE IAFRIKA: The Rebirth of Ubuntu, happening in June during

Youth Month. It's all about unity, peace, and compassion. We're bringing together young artists to remind South Africans of our shared humanity. Before race, before status-we are human. Ubuntu needs a revival.

I'll also be performing at the Joy of Jazz festival on 27 September, with more summer gigs lined up. Beyond live shows, I compose for film and television too.

It's essential to diversify your income. If you don't have a gig this week, how do you survive? I want to teach young musicians how to plan for their future—with masterclasses, mentorship, and financial literacy. If you earn a million, don't blow it—invest in yourself and your legacy.

> "Looking forward, my mission is to help artists build sustainable careers."



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It's Gibson heritage with modern practicality. Built to perform, crafted to inspire.

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WHY IT'S WORTH IT

The Les Paul Studio is the working musician's weapon of choice. You're getting legendary tonewoods, reliable Grover tuners, and a fast-playing SlimTaper neck—all at a price that's more accessible than a Standard. And with the Smokehouse Burst finish, you're not just getting a tool. You're getting a statement.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

Versatility is where the Studio shines. Equipped with Gibson's 490R and 498T humbuckers, this guitar handles everything from classic rock and blues to hard rock, alternative, jazz, and even modern worship music. The pickups deliver warm, articulate cleans and fat, punchy overdrive with bite and clarity. Roll back the volume and you've got subtle, bluesy tones. Crank it up, and it roars with rich harmonics and searing lead potential. нŤ

WHAT IS IT?

The Gibson LPST00-KH Les Paul Studio in Smokehouse Burst is a modern classic with a rich legacy.

It delivers everything players love about the legendary Les Paul—soulful tone, powerful sustain, and timeless style—while stripping away some of the extras to focus on raw performance and feel.

Built in the USA, this Studio model keeps the spirit of the original alive with a sleek, no-nonsense attitude and a finish that turns heads.

The Smokehouse Burst finish adds a smoky, dark allure to the carved maple top, set against a solid mahogany body. Cream binding, chrome hardware, and acrylic trapezoid inlays finish off the look with understated class.

It's got weight, tone, and presence, but with comfort enhancements that make it ideal for studio sessions and live gigs alike.



"This guitar just speaks-every note feels alive. The Les Paul Studio Smokehouse Burst doesn't just play music, it pulls it out of you." — Session Guitarist & Live Performer





In this heartfelt interview, *MusicGear Magazine* catches up with **Deon Groot**, the soulful singer-songwriter whose roots in Namakwaland and Namibia have shaped his unique sound.

Known for hits under labels like Sony, Universal, and Vonk Music, Deon shares stories behind his lyrics, his love for Gibson guitars, and how the people and landscapes of his homeland continue to fuel his creativity.

With a new single on the horizon and a heart full of stories, this conversation is as grounded and sincere as the artist himself.



MC Deon, you've got deep roots in Namakwaland and Namibia—how do those landscapes and people inspire the way vou write songs?



I think it's more about the people and what I've learned from them. That's when you really get a feel for the country and its landscapes. It's the same with music and

songwriting-it's about the stories and the people of the land. The landscapes are the cherry on top, but the heart of the song comes from those lived experiences.

You discovered your talent a bit later in G life—what was that "a-ha" moment when you realized you were meant for this?



For many people, it might seem like we only recently discovered our voice and songs, but we've been performing in pubs and venues since 2007. It's taken years of hard work and a deep desire to learn. That's what's brought

us to where we are today.

We heard the Gibson Hummingbird is on your wishlist. What is it about that guitar that's calling you?



Oh yes, that one's definitely on the list. The natural tones and the soulful sound just make songwriting feel more heartfelt. Over the weekend, I got to play a friend's J-45, and

there's really no comparison. Gibson guitars speak to you-they connect with you the moment you pick them up. The Hummingbird and J-45 just have that special magic.

Your new track "Dans in Afrikaans" drops on the 25th what can fans expect, and what inspired the vibe?

The vibe is lively, energetic, and rooted in modern country, rock, and bluegrass influences. We've made sure to bring something fresh and different—it doesn't sound like anything else out there. It's definitely going to grab attention.

IVG Your lyrics really speak to the heart. When you sit down to write, what usually comes first—the words, the melody, or a feeling?

It really depends on the song. Sometimes it starts with a poem or a message you want to share. Other times, a great riff sparks the process, and then the words follow to match the music. But I think it's the feeling that really makes a song special—it's what connects to our being.

You've had major hits with Sony and Universal. What does it feel like hearing your music on the radio or seeing people sing along?



what we do.

It's crazy to think about! With Vonk Music, we even have platinum and gold singles. Hearing people sing along—that's what we live for. It creates a real sense of success, one that means we're connecting with people through



Tell us about your guitar collection. Any favourites with a good story behind them?



Right now, I've got a Yamaha TransAcoustic LL-TA dreadnought that gives me a

deeper tone and is great for plugand-play setups on tour. At home, I keep my Taylor 324ce baritone guitar in the studio—it's perfect for writing. Its deeper tones match my voice really well.

You go by Deon Groot, but you were born Deon Laubscher. How did the stage name come about?



My dad was known as "Big Deon," and I was always "Little Deon." To honour him and both my parents—I chose to become "Big Deon," which in Afrikaans is "Deon Groot." Since his passing a year ago, the name means even more to me now.





If you had to choose— writing a new song at sunrise in Namakwaland or jamming under the stars with friendswhich would win?

That's a tough one! But if I had to choose, I'd say jamming under the stars with friends. Music is meant to be enjoyed with others. It's about connection, and sharing that moment makes it unforgettable.

Lastly, what's something your fans might not know about you—a hobby or guilty pleasure off-stage?

Haha, I have a passion for arachnology and herpetology. I love learning about the things that scare people and overcoming that fear. That's hobby number one. And my guilty pleasure? On Mondays—my day off-you'll find me on the PlayStation, just clearing my head and resetting for the week.



DEON GROOT

Wishing **Deon Groot** all the best for the release of *Dans in Afrikaans*—may it dance its way into the hearts of listeners across the country!



PIEBER

BEACKSTAR

Why BLACKSTAR Amps Are A Perfect Match For **Gibson Guitars**

Gibson guitars are legendary for their tone-rich mids, warm sustain, and iconic humbucker bite. But finding the right amp to bring out those characteristics can make or break your sound.

That's where Blackstar Amps come in.

Built by guitarists, for guitarists, Blackstar offers one of the most versatile, powerful amp lineups for Gibson players-whether you're playing an SG, Les Paul, or an Epiphone Casino.

What Makes Blackstar Special?

Blackstar was founded by ex-Marshall engineers who wanted to push the boundaries of traditional British amp tone. The result is a line of amps with modern flexibility, boutique tone, and pro-grade features-without losing that old-school soul that Gibson players love.

KEY BLACKSTAR FEATURES that pair beautifully with Gibson guitars

- ISF (Infinite Shape Feature): Dial in American-style scooped mids or British-style crunch with a single knob.
- **Tube or Hybrid Options:** All-tube warmth or solid-state reliability-Blackstar's got you covered.
- USB Recording & Cab Simulation: Plug straight into your DAW or PA-perfect for gigging Gibson players or studio sessions.
- **Dynamic Response:** Whether you're on a Les Paul or SG, Blackstar captures your picking attack and volume knob nuances with pro-level precision.



Blacksta

Best Blackstar Amps for Gibson Players

1. Blackstar HT Club 40 Mkli

Perfect for: Les Paul Standard, SG Classic

Why it works: 40 watts of all-valve power, two distinct channels, and lush reverb. This amp sings with humbuckers-ideal for classic rock, hard blues, and even jazz.





2. Blackstar St. James Series

Perfect for: Les Paul Modern, SG Modern, Epiphone Inspired by Gibson Series

Why it works: Lightweight, all-tube design with modern features like built-in reactive load and USB out. You get boutique tones in a compact package-ideal for the gigging pro.



3. Blackstar ID:CORE V4 Series

Perfect for: Gibson Les Paul Tribute, 1964 ES-335 Reissue (Bigsby, Custom Made Plate, Murphy Lab Light Aged – 60s Cherry)

Why it works: Whether you're after the raw power of the Les Paul Tribute or the vintage class of the ES-335, the ID:CORE V4 delivers. Its stereo effects, versatile amp voicings, and headphone output make it the perfect match for both guitars—handling everything from crunchy classic rock and blues to clean, expressive jazz and ambient tones. No pedals needed, just pure Gibson tone, enhanced and expanded in a home-friendly package.





Why Gibson & Blackstar Just Work

It's a setup that works across genresfrom hard rock to blues, jazz to indie. The natural warmth and midrange push of a Gibson guitar meets its perfect match in Blackstar's responsive toneshaping. Crank up the gain, and you'll get articulate crunch. Back it off, and you'll discover creamy cleans that still keep your guitar's character front and center.

If you're playing Gibson, you need an amp that understands tone, feel, and performance. Blackstar delivers all that and more, with cutting-edge tech and pro-quality sound. Whether you're in the studio, on stage, or just jamming at home, Gibson + Blackstar = a modern classic.



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It's crafted chaos in a classic shell. A sonic canvas for players who think big, go deep, and play with purpose.

WHY IT'S WORTH IT

You're not just buying a guitar. You're stepping into an artist's world. Every detail of this instrument was chosen to reflect Adam Jones' tone, taste, and style. From the artworkinspired case to the powerful pickups and unique wiring, this Les Paul Standard is for musicians who want **more than a sound—they want a signature.**

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

This is not your average rock machine. The Adam Jones Les Paul is engineered for heavier, more atmospheric genres—from prog rock and metal to experimental and alt-rock. It shines in drop tunings, layered effects, and dynamic compositions, responding with clarity and punch whether you're whispering clean melodies or pounding out walls of sound.

But make no mistake—it's still a Les Paul at heart. This guitar can groove, growl, and glide through anything you throw at it.

WHAT IS IT?

The Gibson LPS7PAJ00-AS is a bold, unapologetic tribute to one of rock's most sonically adventurous guitarists—Adam Jones of Tool.

This Les Paul Standard model in Antique Silverburst isn't just a signature guitar; it's a weapon of tone, built to channel the dense, textured sounds that define Jones' iconic playing.

Add to that a vintage-style wiring setup and a period-correct Silverburst finish, and you've got a guitar that's both collectible and completely road-ready. 110

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Crafted with an ultra-resonant mahogany body and maple top, it delivers classic Les Paul weight and sustain, while its custom Adam Jones BurstBucker bridge pickup and reverse-mounted neck pickup bring a soundscape that's aggressive, articulate, and full of harmonic complexity.



The Adam Jones Silverburst pushes you to explore sounds you didn't know you had in you."

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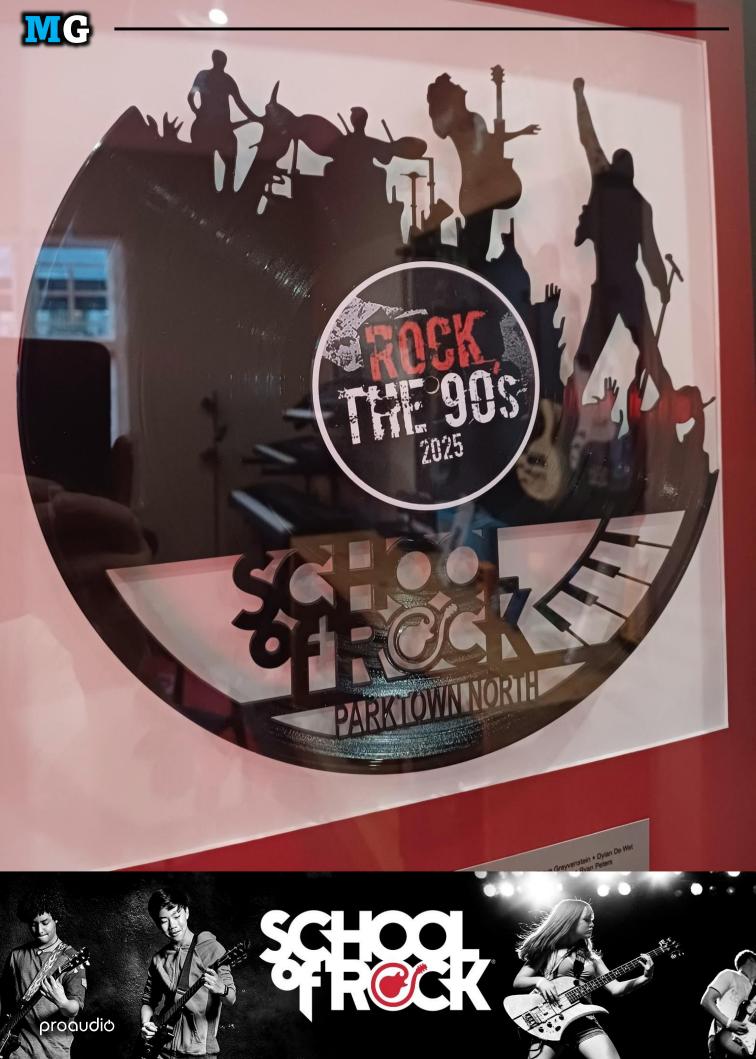
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— Touring Rock Guitarist

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DISCOVER Learning at School of Rock Parktown North

Nestled in the vibrant suburb of Parktown North, Johannesburg, the School of Rock offers an immersive music education experience for aspiring musicians of all ages.

This dynamic institution combines individual instruction with group rehearsals, fostering both technical proficiency and collaborative skills. Students engage in a variety of programs tailored to their skill levels and musical interests, ranging from beginner lessons to advanced performance groups.

At School of Rock Parktown North, the emphasis is on learning by doing. Students don't just study music—they live it. Regular live performances and community events provide real-world platforms for students to showcase their talents, building confidence and stage presence.

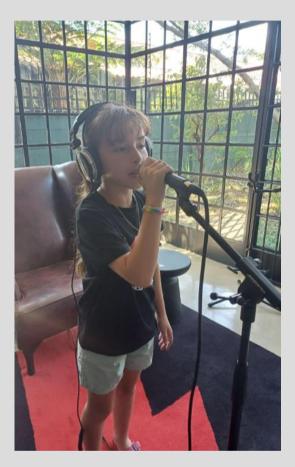




Among the dedicated young learners at this location are **Noa Del Fabbro** and **Mark Haggard**. Noa is known for her passionate approach to music, bringing energy and enthusiasm to every rehearsal. Mark, on the other hand, has demonstrated remarkable growth and commitment, quickly advancing through the program's levels.

Both students exemplify the spirit of School of Rock: learning, performing, and growing through the power of music.

Noa Del Fabbro (9)



What instrument are you learning? Voice

What song do you really want to learn how to play? Jailhouse Rock by Elvis Presley

What is your favourite part about School of Rock?

Getting to train my voice and to get better at my goal. And the support I get from everyone at School of Rock to help me on my journey and to take it further

What is it like being in a band? Quite fun because I get to interact with other people and not just be on my own

How do you feel about performing live on stage on 15th March at Barnyard theatre emperors? Nervous but also really glad that I'm doing it





Matthew Haggard (17)

What Instrument are you learning? I am learning electric guitar, specifically an Epiphone SG

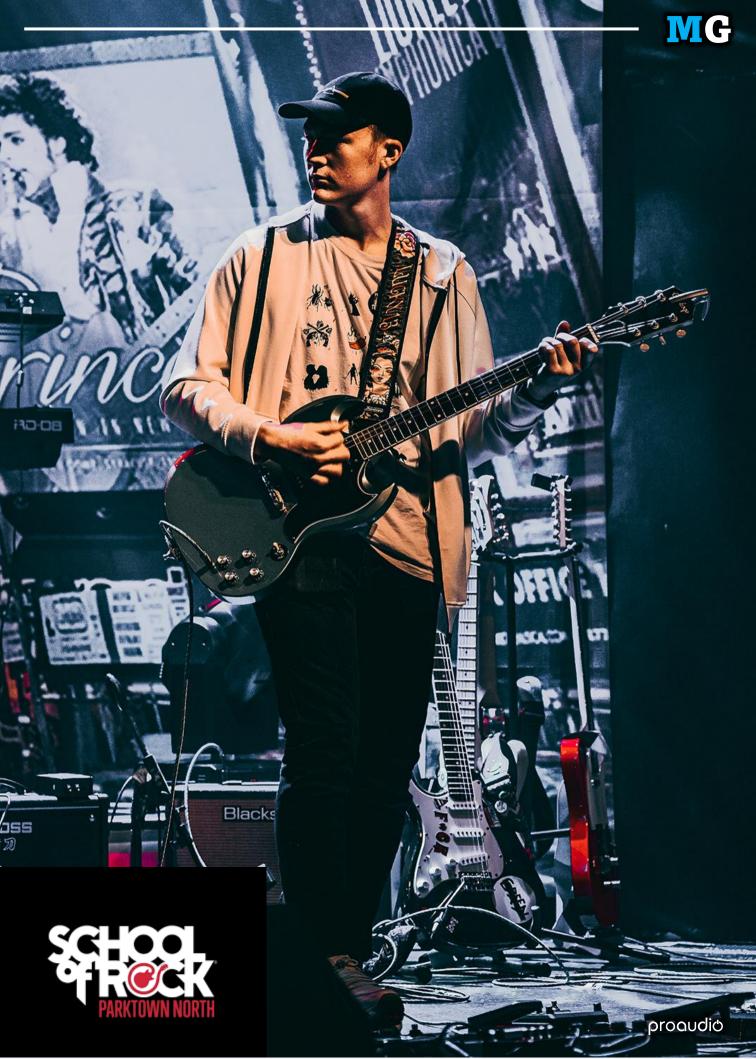
What Song do you really want to learn how to play? I really want to learn the song "Time" by Pink Floyd; the catharsis of the solo is incredible, and Pink Floyd is my favourite band.

What is your favourite part about School of Rock? My favourite part about School of Rock is the performance aspect. It's great to be able to play good, fun, and interesting music with other people my age.

What is it like being in a band? It is great. I feel like I can do what I want with people who want to do with me, playing music that is, and it's cool just to make new friends with people I otherwise would have never met

How did you feel about performing live on stage on the 15th March at the Emperors Palace, in the Barnyard theatre? It was one of the most incredible feelings I have ever had. Going in front of people and jamming out to great songs was outstanding. I would 100% do it again, and I recommend it to anyone even remotely interested in music







Epiphone

IGMTHUM-ANA

HUMMINGBIRD AGED ANTIQUE NATURAL

WHAT IS IT?

The Epiphone IGMTHUM-ANA Hummingbird in Aged Antique Natural is a faithful tribute to one of the most iconic acoustic guitars in music history. First introduced in the 1960s, the Hummingbird became a favorite among legends for its bold tone, ornate pickguard, and commanding presence. Epiphone's modern take, part of the Inspired by Gibson collection, brings that legendary look and sound to a wider audience—without compromise.

Built with a solid Sitka spruce top, mahogany back and sides, and a vintage-style SlimTaper[™] neck, this guitar is made for both tone and comfort. The Aged Antique Natural finish adds a timeless feel, while the classic Hummingbird pickguard, with its intricate engraving, makes a visual statement as iconic as the tone it produces.

MG

WHY IT'S WORTH IT

This Hummingbird isn't just about vintage looks—it's a modern player's dream. Outfitted with a Fishman Sonicore pickup and Sonitone preamp, it's ready to plug in and shine. You get dependable electronics, quality craftsmanship, and unmistakable vibe—all in one beautifully crafted instrument that plays and sounds like a far more expensive guitar.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

From country and folk to rock ballads and gospel, the Hummingbird is a storyteller's guitar. Its balanced tonal response makes it perfect for strumming, fingerpicking, and accompaniment. You'll hear clear highs, warm mids, and full-bodied lows—all wrapped in a vintage voice that cuts through without being overpowering.

It's a stage and studio favorite for singer-songwriters and rhythm guitarists alike. Whether you're laying down tracks or leading worship, this guitar adds emotion and texture to every performance.



It's heritage you can hear and hold—a guitar that inspires every time you pick it up.



"The first chord I strummed on this Hummingbird, it just rang out with soul.

It's more than a guitar—it's a voice for what you feel."

— Singer-Songwriter & Acoustic Performer





Epiphane

EFBO-NA MB-100

BANJO NATURAL

It's a road-ready banjo with heart, built for both casual strumming and serious picking.

WHAT IS IT?

The **Epiphone MB-100** is a lightweight, open-back 5-string banjo that blends traditional craftsmanship with playerfriendly features. Designed for musicians who value portability without sacrificing tone, this model delivers an authentic banjo sound in a comfortable, travel-ready form.

Crafted with a **mahogany body and neck**, the MB-100 radiates warmth and character, making it a favorite for **folk**, **bluegrass, country, and Americana**. Its **smooth rosewood fingerboard**, comfortable scale length, and vintageinspired natural finish give it a timeless look and feel that suits players of all levels.



WHY IT'S WORTH IT

The MB-100 offers remarkable tone, solid construction, and classic aesthetics—all at a price that invites new players in without turning seasoned pickers away. With a Remo head, reliable tuning hardware, and a build that balances sound and simplicity, this banjo proves that quality and affordability can go hand in hand.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

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This banjo shines in bluegrass breakdowns, old-time folk tunes, and acoustic jams. Whether you're flatpicking on the front porch or recording Appalachian-inspired melodies in the studio, the MB-100 delivers that unmistakable plucky brightness with a warm undertone perfect for adding rustic charm to your arrangements. Its open-back

design gives it a lighter, more tone than heavier resonator making it a great choice clawhammer style, frailing, or lighter fingerpicking techniques. percussive models, for

"The MB-100 is my go-to for jam sessions and acoustic sets—light in the hand, rich in the sound, and ready to sing

wherever I take it." — Indie Folk Multi-Instrumentalist

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A Brief History of the Open-Back Banjo

The banjo has deep roots in **African musical traditions**, brought to the Americas by enslaved people and gradually evolving through generations. The **open-back banjo**—recognized by its lighter frame and exposed drum head—became especially popular in the **19th century**, finding its place in **folk, minstrel, and early Appalachian music**.

Unlike its resonator counterpart, the open-back design offers a **softer, more percussive tone**, ideal for **clawhammer and frailing styles**. It remains a staple for **traditional folk musicians and modern revivalists**, praised for its simplicity, portability, and authentic sound.

Today, instruments like the **Epiphone MB-100** continue this legacy, offering a nod to tradition with the benefits of modern craftsmanship.



Epiphone





WHAT IS IT?

The **Epiphone EBVI-VS Viola Bass** is a stylish short-scale bass with serious vintage charm and unmistakable McCartney-inspired flair. Modeled after the legendary violin-style basses of the 1960s, this instrument combines classic aesthetics with Epiphone's commitment to playability and solid construction—all at a price point that makes vintage accessible.

The Vintage Sunburst finish, elegant body curves, and traditional hollowbody design give it a striking stage presence, while the set mahogany neck, maple top/back/sides, and mini humbucking pickups deliver warm, woody tones perfect for players chasing that retro thump.

WHY IT'S WORTH IT

With its iconic looks, responsive tone, and comfortable neck, the EBVI-VS offers a unique playing experience. It's not just a throwback—it's a creative tool that invites you to explore melodic basslines, experiment with flatwounds, or simply enjoy its rich, resonant voice. For anyone looking to add character to their sound and a touch of history to their setup, this Viola Bass delivers in full.

Epiphone

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

The Viola Bass is a vintage tone machine—ideal for classic rock, British invasion pop, folk-rock, country, and blues. It's particularly great in bands where the bass needs to stand out with round, melodic lines rather than rumble through the mix.

Thanks to its short 30.5" scale, it produces a naturally deep, fat sound that's great for smooth walking bass or warm, punchy rhythms. It's also easier on the fingers, making it a hit with guitarists crossing over to bass or players who prefer a more compact feel. It's retro elegance with modern reliability—a bass that sings as sweet as it looks.

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"The Viola Bass isn't just cool-looking—it has a voice of its own. It grooves, it glides, and it always finds a way to fit in

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the mix without overpowering it." — Studio Session Bassist



STEINBERGER

GTPRO-HR1 SPIRIT GT-PRO DELUXE ELECTRIC

WHAT IS IT?

The Steinberger Spirit GT-PRO Deluxe in Hot Rod Red is more than just an electric guitar—it's a bold design statement built for the modern musician on the move. Famous for its revolutionary headless design, Steinberger's compact, lightweight body doesn't just turn heads—it delivers outstanding tuning stability and rugged portability that traditional guitars can't match.

It's no wonder it's been dubbed the Ultimate Travel Guitar™, small enough to fit in an overhead compartment but powerful enough to command the stage.This headless innovation isn't just about looks. By removing the headstock, Steinberger drastically reduces the instrument's susceptibility to temperature changes and tuning drift.

WHY IT'S WORTH IT

Beyond its iconic form and travel-friendly dimensions, the GT-PRO is packed with pro-level features. Its 3-piece hard maple neck is built for strength and stability, paired with a SlimTaper[™]-D profile that feels instantly familiar in the hand. With 24 medium-jumbo frets and a 14" radius, it's smooth across the board, whether you're riffing hard or gliding through solos.

It also features Steinberger's patented 40:1 Ratio Direct-Pull tuning system—one of the most accurate tuning mechanisms in the business and the R-Trem[™] Locking Tremolo for both expressive playing and tuning peace of mind. Dive bombs, pull-ups, or clean chords—this bridge does it all, and it locks down tight when you need it to.

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC IS IT GOOD FOR?

The GT-PRO is a genre-spanning workhorse, thanks to its versatile pickup configuration. Featuring powerful Steinberger HB-1 and HB-2 humbuckers at the bridge and neck, and a full-range SC-1 single-coil in the middle, it delivers tones that are punchy and clean, or full and aggressive—depending on your settings.

Whether you're into rock, pop, fusion, funk, or progressive metal, the 5-way pickup selector gives you plenty of tonal options to shape your sound.







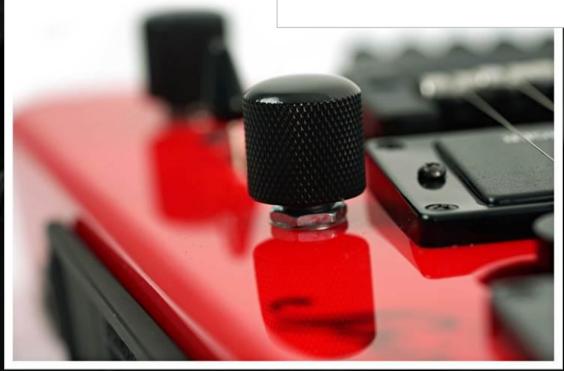
The **Spirit GT-PRO Deluxe** is a **precision-engineered**, **ultra-portable**, **and stylish instrument** that's built to go where traditional guitars can't—and to sound great when it gets there.





"It's the kind of guitar that makes you rethink what a guitar can be—ultra-light, ultra-reliable, and always stage-ready. It's built for players who never sit still." — Touring Guitarist & Session Player





Carry-On FOLDING GONTROLLER 25 Your Studio, Folded Into a Backpack

From the bedroom producer to the traveling artist, the Carry-On Folding Controller 25 brings together the power of a studio and the portability of a travel essential—making it the ultimate companion for creative freedom, wherever you go.

CONTROL ANYWHERE, ANY TIME.

proaudio







UP TO 8 HOURS OF PLAYING TIME



TOUCH SENSITIVE DESIGN

Where mobility matters just as much as performance, the **Carry-On Folding Controller 25** is a smart, forward-thinking solution for modern musicians and producers on the move. Compact when closed but fully functional when unfolded, this clever design transforms into a full 25-key MIDI keyboard, delivering serious control without the weight or bulk of a traditional controller.

Despite its small footprint, it doesn't cut corners. The **velocitysensitive keys** provide dynamic response for expressive playing, while **backlit drum pads** offer the tactile feedback needed for precision beat creation. Whether you're laying down synth lines or finger drumming in real time, the feel and responsiveness match expectations usually reserved for much larger rigs.

Adding to its expressiveness are touch-sensitive pitch and modulation sliders, giving you intuitive and fluid control over your sounds. Coupled with four userassignable control knobs, the Carry-On controller gives you instant access to key parameters in your DAW or virtual instruments, making live tweaking and production flow smooth and effortless.



Perfectly suited for life off the grid, the built-in **USB-rechargeable battery** gives you up to **8 hours of continuous use**, so you can create music wherever inspiration strikes on the beach, on the plane, or in the studio.

And with versatile connectivity options including MIDI over Bluetooth, MIDI over USB, and a 3.5mm TRS MIDI output, this controller seamlessly integrates with a range of devices, from laptops and tablets to synthesizers and grooveboxes. Its compatibility with popular DAWs is enhanced by MMC transport controls, allowing easy navigation and control during recording sessions.

The **Carry-On Control app** gives even more power to your fingertips, offering customizable settings for every control—save and recall velocity curves, pad functions, and key responses to suit your playing style perfectly.

Rounding it all off, the Carry-On Folding Controller 25 comes bundled with **CUBASE and CUBASIS LE**, giving both desktop and iOS users an immediate way to dive into full-scale music production right out of the box.



"It's like carrying a full studio in your backpack. The Carry-On Folding Controller doesn't just travel with me—it keeps up with my creativity the moment inspiration hits." — Independent Producer & Touring Artist



THE NORD ORGAN 3 A New Era of Expressive Power and Authentic Sound



The **Nord Organ 3** represents a bold new chapter in the evolution of digital organs, designed for musicians who demand authenticity, versatility, and inspiration in every note.

Building on Nord's respected legacy, the Organ 3 refines and elevates everything players loved about previous generations delivering an experience that feels alive under your fingers, whether you're on stage or in the studio.

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At the heart of the Nord Organ 3

is a newly refined organ engine that brings an unprecedented level of realism to the classic sounds of the past. The legendary B3 model has been meticulously reworked, now capturing every subtle nuance of the original's vibrato, chorus, and tonal character.

Players will also appreciate the upgraded Farfisa and Vox models, which now offer an even closer replication of the bright, punchy sounds that defined entire eras of popular music. Whether you're chasing the soulful grit of a B3, the psychedelic shimmer of a Vox, or the punchy attack of a Farfisa, the Organ 3 brings these classic voices to life with stunning authenticity.

Adding to its realism is a dramatically enhanced rotary speaker emulation. Nord's new rotary engine doesn't just spin your sound—it immerses you in it. With options for multiple microphone placements and three different overdrive types, you can now tailor the rotary effect to match your exact tone, room, and performance style, creating a three-dimensional feel that was once only possible with vintage, bulky hardware.







The sound-shaping possibilities go even further with an expanded effects suite. The addition of a lush spring reverb, an analog-mode delay with feedback filters, and a collection of modulation effects like phaser, tremolo, ring modulator, flanger, and chorus offer a broad creative palette. Whether you want to drench your sound in swirling ambience or subtly enhance your tone with vintage-style movement, the Nord Organ 3 places all the tools you need at your fingertips. Speaking of fingertips, the redesigned user interface is a dream for live performers. With a clear OLED display, responsive dual 61-key manuals featuring triplesensor keybeds, and LED indicators that show exact drawbar settings at a glance, every aspect of the design keeps you connected to your instrument. The layout is intuitive, fast, and built for real-world playing where every second counts.



Versatility is also front and center. The Nord Organ 3 doesn't stop at traditional organ sounds—it includes two beautifully crafted pipe organ models and new synth bass options inspired by classic pedal synths. Connectivity is seamless too, with an 11-pin Leslie connector, flexible auxiliary output routing, and full MIDI integration, allowing it to slot easily into any live or studio rig. The Nord Organ 3 isn't just an update; it's a reinvention. It offers a stunning tribute to the classic organs that shaped music history, while boldly stepping into the future with the tools today's musicians need. Expressive, powerful, portable, and beautifully crafted, the Nord Organ 3 is everything an artist could ask for—faithful to tradition, yet fearless in innovation.



The New Nord Pedal Keys 25

A Game-Changer for Organists



We're excited to unveil the latest addition to the Nord family — the **Nord Pedal Keys 25**. Designed with professional musicians in mind, this nextgeneration pedalboard delivers an exceptional playing experience and modern versatility in a compact, rugged format.

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Featuring **25 all-wooden keys**, the Pedal Keys 25 offers a natural and expressive feel underfoot, ideal for players who demand precision and comfort. It's equipped with the **Nord EP30 expression pedal**, ensuring seamless dynamic control during performances.

If you're integrating it into your existing setup or building a new one from the ground up, the Nord Pedal Keys 25 is **MIDI-compatible with all major gear**. Pair it with the **Nord Organ 3** and enjoy plug-and-play power directly via MIDI — no extra cables or clutter required.

nord pedal keys 25

Built with a **lightweight yet durable aluminum chassis**, the Pedal Keys 25 is made to handle the demands of both stage and studio. With its sleek design and top-tier craftsmanship, it's the perfect partner for organists who need reliable performance in a portable form.

Stay tuned — the Nord Pedal Keys 25 is coming soon!





SOUNDTRACK Speaker

BIG SOUND in a Portable Package

The Carry-on Soundtrack Portable Bluetooth Speaker is your ultimate goanywhere sound system, designed to bring powerful audio and party-ready features to any setting. Whether you're throwing a backyard braai, hosting a karaoke night, or setting the vibe at an outdoor event, this speaker packs a serious punch—without weighing you down.



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With an impressive **55 watts of output**, the Soundtrack delivers rich, clear sound that fills a room and commands attention in outdoor spaces. You'll get dynamic audio that holds its clarity even at higher volumes, making it just as suited for background music as it is for leading the charge at a celebration or public event.



True Wireless Stereo Capability

Powerful Audio Performance

What makes the experience even bigger is its **True Wireless Stereo (TWS)** feature. You can pair two Carry-on Soundtrack speakers together wirelessly to create a full left/right stereo setup. The result is deeper, wider, and more immersive sound ideal for larger spaces or when you want that professional stereo spread.

Water-Resistant Protection

Rated **IPX4 splashproof**, the Soundtrack speaker is built to handle outdoor use with confidence. Whether it's a splash from the pool, a bit of unexpected rain, or just the general mess of a fun party, this speaker is ready to keep playing through it all.

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Long Battery Life

You don't need to worry about plugging in mid-party either. The **USB**rechargeable battery provides up to three hours of continuous play at full volume, giving you the freedom to go wireless and stay in the moment.



Microphone Inputs with Echo Effect

This speaker also doubles as a **portable performance hub**. With **two microphone inputs**, each equipped with an **echo effect**, your voice gets extra clarity and presence. Whether you're giving a toast, leading a group, or singing your heart out in a karaoke showdown, your vocals will shine through the mix.

LED Light Settings

It's not just about the sound—four vibrant LED light modes add atmosphere to your event. The sync-to-beat mode reacts to the rhythm of your music, creating a mini light show that enhances the mood and keeps the energy flowing.

THANK YOU BILLY MONAMA



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