

INSIDE THE WORLD

OF TAYLOR GUITARS / VOLUME 76 SUMMER 2013

Wood & Steel

Mahogany Strong

**New 500
Series Models**

**Mahogany
Top 300s**

**Grand Orchestra
718e / 818e**

**Allen Stone's
Soulful Sound**

**Music's Healing Power
Dehumidification Tips**

QUALITY
Taylor
GUITARS

Letters



Double Shot

"Hit Your Mark" by Shawn Persinger [Vol. 75 / Spring 2013] certainly hit my mark with the picture of the girl "shooting" the archery target with her guitar. I have two great loves: making music with my guitar (I started taking lessons a year and half ago) and shooting a bow and arrow. I am a Level 1 coach for the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP), and a strong proponent for getting kids into music and outdoors.

I'm really looking forward to your Road Show coming to Mojo Music here in Bellingham, Washington, as my next guitar will be a Taylor.

Allan Scott

Taylor Treasure

I recently purchased a granadillo/spruce 416-LTD. I have played and owned many Taylors, but this is without a doubt the best one I've heard. The sound is unbelievable. The big body gives it power and bottom end; the granadillo makes the notes sing and sustain. It's a beautiful combination like no other. You guys have hit a record-breaking home run with this guitar. I love it and look forward to what it will become as time goes by. It is a true treasure.

Arnie Vasquez

Getting Set Up

In the summer of 2006, I put a Taylor 810 on layaway, and in the summer of 2007 I paid it off and took it home. I worked my tail off for that guitar, and it means the world to me. As time went by, the sound quality diminished, and I spent countless dollars going from guitar tech to guitar tech with terrible results. Everyone had completely different opinions; I was pulling my hair out.

Two weeks ago I attended Merlefest in Wilkesboro, North Carolina. This was

my fifth year in a row. As soon as I got there I set up my campsite and went straight for the Expo tent where Taylor usually has an exhibit. That is where I met [district sales manager] Barney [Hill] and [repair technician] Sam Eakins. I explained all the trouble I was having, and they told me they would be happy to look at it the next day at 10 a.m. I got there 30 minutes early, so I helped them unload the van and set up. While setting up, an elderly fellow asked if we (I had my Taylor shirt on) had any 12-strings. We had just taken one out of the case and handed it to him to play. After we finished setting up, Sam grabbed my axe and looked over it with a fine-toothed comb. He took it totally apart, taking the time to explain each part/issue with me. When he handed that guitar back to me and I strummed it, holy cow. It was better than the day I bought it. In fact, I have had to re-learn to play it. I'm not afraid to say that I teared up. As a company owner of 15 years, it's employees like that whom you owe your success. Sam and Barney define why Taylor is Taylor.

Thomas Beachley Korpala

P.S. The old guy bought the 12-string.

Clear Musical Direction

I'm the bassist and music director for an upcoming artist, Daniel Stokes. We were cutting one of the soon-to-be singles, and his guitar wasn't doing it for me. It sounds decent on stage, but in the studio, no! The producer, who also felt my pain, suggested that Stokes use his guitar, which was a Taylor. Man, talk about miles ahead! It even made Stokes play better! We have about five songs left to record, and that Taylor will be the acoustic he uses. Either that or I'll break his legs! Kudos for making such fine guitars.

Anthony "Woodchuck" Durham

Vote of Confidence

A little while back I purchased a 214, and because of it I am practicing daily and singing and playing in song circles and a local coffeehouse. You guys don't seem to sing the praises of your 100 and 200 Series enough. I know they're not solid-wood guitars, but their quality and voice are among the best I've seen. My confidence level has greatly increased due to this instrument (and practice), and I am flatpicking the lead to some songs while playing with others! The care and pride

you take with each guitar definitely shows. Soon I will be ready for the next step up in guitars, and I want it to be a Taylor.

Glynn Walker Palatine, IL

Embracing Change

I am a relatively new guitar player and absolutely dreaded changing the strings on my guitar. It was a frustrating experience, and the results were terrible. I am not exaggerating when I say it used to take two hours. It occurred to me that there had to be a better way than doing it by hand, so I started looking for some kind of attachment I could use with my cordless screwdriver. I was so excited when I found that such a device existed that I immediately ordered it. Because I really didn't know what I was doing, I visited taylorguitars.com, where I found the video featuring Rob Magargal demonstrating the Taylor way of changing strings. I cannot tell you how much this video helped me. I used my new peg winder this evening, the entire process took about 30 minutes, and for the first time ever I actually enjoyed the experience. Just like my guitar-playing ability, this is something that will only improve with practice. Someday, I will be able to afford to upgrade my equipment, and my first purchase will be a Taylor guitar. I actually had a Taylor 110 that I had to sell after I lost my job. I loved that guitar, but making sure my family has a roof over their head was considerably more important. Someday I will buy a DN3, which in my opinion is a functional piece of art.

Brian Taylor

Essential Adventure Gear

My wife and I recently celebrated our 10-year anniversary with a trip to Costa Rica. My Taylor GS Mini could not have been any better for our adventure. From our time on the coast to our road trip through rain forests to Arenal Volcano, my GS Mini provided hours of enjoyment. I've been amazed from the first day I purchased the GS Mini by its tone and ability to sound like a full-size guitar. I'm looking forward to my future Taylor purchases!

Gary and Michelle Morgan

Renewed Interest

I wanted to thank the Taylor Service department staff for the work done on my 810-B 25th Anniversary guitar. I had the "Renew" package done, along with a repair for a slight vibration rattle. You guys did a superb job bringing it

back to life. It now plays and looks like the day I brought it home in 1999. It's amazing how much better Brazilian rosewood sounds after 14 years. Thank you for making such wonderful instruments.

Bob Worley Bayfield, CO

Music Womb

I've been a traveling musician for a few years now and have been looking for a guitar upgrade. My parents knew I loved the Taylor sound and bought me a brand new Taylor 214ce for Christmas. I was stoked! Such a rich- and full-sounding guitar with a beautiful tone. A short while later we got wonderful news: We were expecting our first child! We found out that we were having a boy. I had heard stories that babies can hear sounds from the womb, so, naturally, I played my new Taylor guitar every night to my fiancée's stomach in the hope that our son would love music just like his father!

Nine months later we got a surprise. It turns out that "he" was a "she" all along! Our beautiful daughter, Maila, was born on October 4. Playing guitar to her in the womb may have worked... she just loves when I play and sing to her!

Since upgrading my guitar to a Taylor my music career has taken off. I've been an opening act for some national artists/bands such as Train and Chris Isaak and recorded a few singles that were successful on various local radio stations using my Taylor...truly a dream come true! Thank you for making such amazing guitars.

Mark Saito

Co-writing Credit

Sometimes the guitar writes a song for you. I had been stuck with a progression and about a quarter of a riff of a song that I had been working on for a couple days. Nothing was sounding right. I was playing a cedar-topped dreadnought, and it had great bass but just wasn't doing it. My roommate had just bought a 314ce, so I figured, what the heck, I'll give it a whirl. I tried the riff higher up on the neck, and that ebony fretboard made my highs sing. It was just the bump I needed. I kid you not, within the next 15 minutes I had that entire song written and ready to go. A week later I played it at an open mic, and was booked because of it. My roommate was more than generous to let me borrow the guitar, but now I wonder if he regrets it... because I have trouble putting it down!

Silas Mishler

Under His Skin

I wasn't planning to buy a Taylor. Instead, I was simply trying to replace my old [other brand] that I'd played for nearly 20 years. But when I was in the music store, I asked the salesperson, "Let's assume I want to step up with my guitar rather than just stepping sideways. What would you recommend?"

He stepped behind the counter and placed what is now my Taylor 114ce in my hands. I took one strum and was hooked. I couldn't believe the difference in tone. Everything I played sounded richer and fuller. My wife, who knows nothing of guitars, could also tell the difference — it was that obvious.

My Taylor is now my baby. It's my favorite guitar. Ever. To date, I still haven't played anything with the same feel and the same tone. In fact, I designed a tattoo for my forearm with my Taylor 114ce as the centerpiece.

Keep making great guitars, Taylor.

Jim Streisel

Christmas Exchange

I'm 16 and had been saving up for a Taylor guitar for about two years. Finally, just before Christmas, I had enough money to buy one! I had been ill and was waiting for a date for an operation on my face, so as a surprise my sister decided to phone up the owner of World Guitars in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire, and pick me up my dream guitar on Christmas Eve, which was a Taylor 416ce limited edition.

It came to Christmas day and we were sitting around opening our presents when I came to the final one. It was a blindfold and a note which read something like, "Close your eyes and wait for your surprise." I waited while something came down my stairs. I unwrapped it. I screamed. Then I began to open the case. It was lovely and all I could have ever dreamed of. Until my mum asked as a joke, "Is it the right one?" I checked again, and no, it wasn't; it was the 414ce. Most people would be annoyed, but I couldn't care less because I went back a couple of days later and exchanged it. I never thought I'd be able to say I owned a Taylor guitar, let alone two in one week!

Millie Coleman

We'd like to hear from you

Send your e-mails to: pr@taylorguitars.com

Wood&Steel

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ON THE COVER / 12 ALL-NEW, ALL-MAHOGANY 500S

We build upon the rich heritage of all-mahogany guitars with new models that fuse vintage character with signature Taylor playability. Also: Mahogany-top 300s.

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While dry conditions can hurt a guitar, long periods of high humidity can also lead to problems. Here are some symptoms and solutions.

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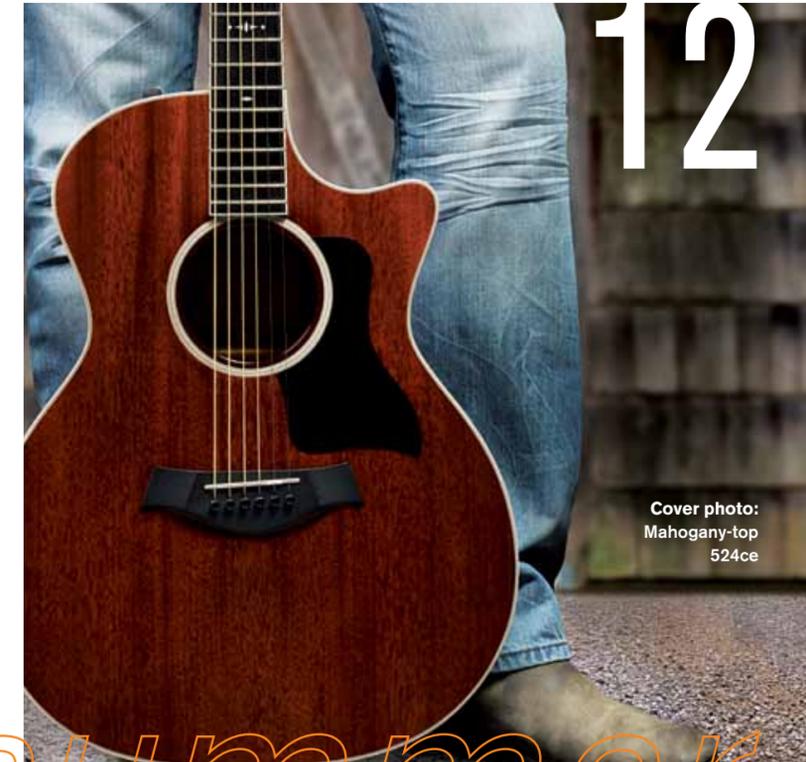
Performing artist Erika Luckett shares her story of beating cancer and what she learned about the connection between music and wellness.

28 IMPROVEMENTS IN CAMEROON

Better cutting tools, GPS referencing, and community engagement are among the latest developments of our ebony supply operation.



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Mahogany-top
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Summer

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DEPARTMENTS





Editor's Note: Kurt is on vacation, so he invited Taylor's Chief Financial Officer, Barbara Wight, to sit in as a guest columnist this issue.

From CFO to C, F, G

When I was in my early teens, I was lucky enough to have a friend who knew how to play guitar and who even had an extra guitar. We spent many hours that summer strumming and singing along to the Eagles, John Denver and other early '70s acoustic artists. We certainly weren't talented, but we definitely had fun.

I don't remember why, but I drifted away from the guitar after a few months and moved on to other teenage pursuits. Fast-forward a few decades, and I found myself frequently wishing with nostalgia that I was still playing guitar. In my 40s, I even went so far as to purchase a guitar with the intention of learning again. Unfortunately, I did what many people do. I purchased a very low-end guitar, thinking that I didn't want to spend the money in case it turned out that I couldn't recapture the joy I'd found in my youth. Of course, that became a self-fulfilling prophecy. The guitar was hard to keep in tune, hard to play, and the sound wasn't particularly inspiring. At that point, I had never played a quality guitar, so I assumed that I was the problem. Maybe I was just too old and too busy to learn guitar. My dream went back into its dormancy phase for another decade.

Four years ago, I became the Chief Financial Officer for Taylor Guitars. All of a sudden I was surrounded by amazing guitars and really great players

every day. Eventually I purchased a 512ce and began to wonder if I might still be able to learn to play someday.

Truthfully, it was a bit intimidating at first. I didn't want to look stupid, especially since I wasn't a good player even when I played in my teens. However, the Taylor Guitars family was amazingly supportive. Every time I mentioned that I was thinking of taking lessons and trying to learn to play, I received tons of encouragement. Finally, about four months ago, I took the leap and started taking lessons. I'm proud to say that I can finally play an F chord. I'm still training my fingers to learn to play a bar chord, but I'm finding plenty of songs to strum along with, even with my limited (but growing) repertoire of chords.

My experience has taught me several things: A little encouragement can make a big difference; having a good guitar really helps, especially if you're a beginner or rekindling an interest in playing after an extended hiatus; it's never too late to learn something new; and the joy of achievement is incredible.

We'd love to hear about your Taylor journey. Please feel free to share it with us at taylorstories@taylor-guitars.com!



512ce

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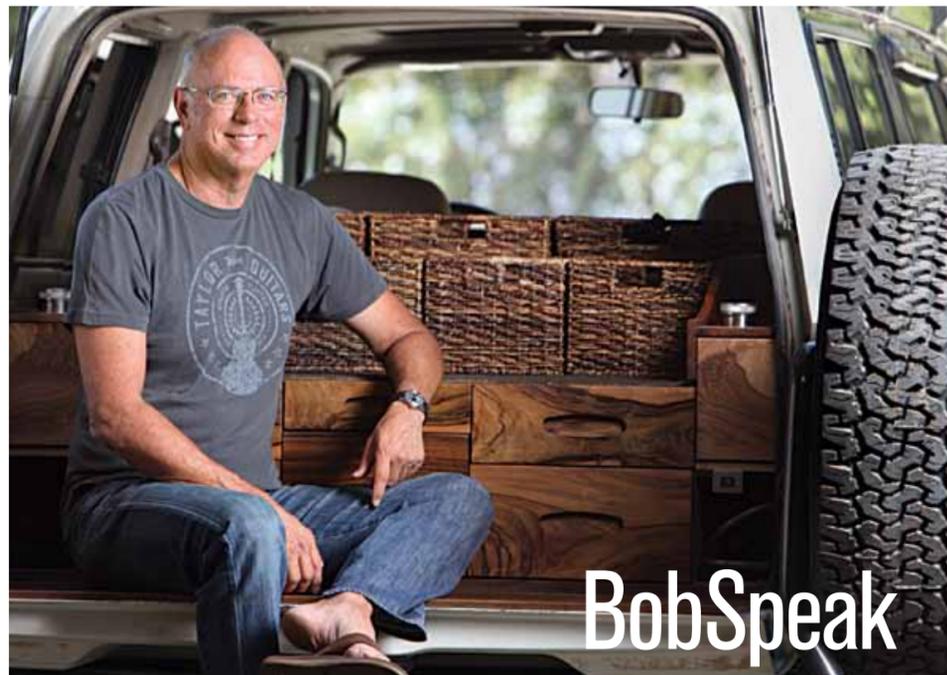
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Can Guitars Get Better?

So, where do we go from here? This is a question I've been asking myself for years now. Is it better tone? Prettier wood? Better electronics? Cheaper? More expensive? What's the next big improvement?

I think the answer is yes, guitars can get better, and we certainly work on that full time. Andy Powers is making our guitars sound better with his incredible skill. We already make great-playing guitars and have taken on the task of understanding pickups and electronics from a guitar maker's perspective. David Hosler and crew are in the throes of even more inventions in this area. We also work every day on the husbandry and care of the natural resources that we consume and resell to you.

And yet, I wonder what the consumer will want in the future, and who we will be competing against for that sale. I can't help but look at the products and offerings of other industries. One of my favorites is food. Not only because I love to eat, but because it really does show two sides of a coin. On one hand there are the people who make the perfect wood-fired pizza with the most authentic ingredients and time-tested recipes. Many customers are happy to pay for that quality and feel it's a treat each and every time. Then there are the big chains that have customers who've grown tired of a pizza the way it normally comes, so they want ranch dressing to dip the crust in, or extra crust with cheese inside, and they want

cheaper pizzas – two-for-one, or four-for-one, with dressing and supersized drinks for free!

There are customers for both. People like a lot for their money, and to some, that means a stack of pizzas for \$10, and for others it means high quality for \$20.

Personally, I like the latter: something that's special, that pleases me because it's good and because the people who made it are taking care to make it well. That's an easy choice to make as a consumer. I like one over the other, so I go buy what I like.

But after I've eaten my slice, I realize that I paid for it with the money I earned from selling something to other consumers, and I have to make that choice again and again, as to what I want to sell. That's a much harder choice. We all sell something; you realize that, right? Everyone makes their money from something that's sold, even if they're far removed from the process. If you're one kind of a consumer, are you another kind of seller? Do you spend your money one way and earn your money in the same way, or in the opposite way?

A company like Taylor Guitars needs sales to survive and prosper, and one of the easy places to go for those sales is to offer more and more for less and less. In that scenario, our costs become a huge issue, and we who are involved in making the guitars, or supplying the wood, etc., suffer and have to work to push the cost off onto others.

Another approach is to work hard to make guitars better and continually substantiate the price that we feel they are worth. This is hard work, but far more interesting to me and our team. Fortunately, I've found over the years that there are customers who feel the same way and are pleased to step up and buy into what we have to offer. They feel that the exchange is a good one.

The pressure to compete with what others do in the marketplace is always looming over us at Taylor Guitars, and we take that seriously. But even more interesting to us is the pressure to be good at what we do, and make guitars that people truly love, and be the kind of company, or brand, that people feel good about being associated with. And I'm not just talking about our customers, but also our employees, suppliers and retail store partners.

In the end, what interests me the most is making and delivering something that people feel is special and good, and selling it at a price that both makes the consumer happy to part with their money, plus pays an equitable price to those involved in building and delivering the guitar. It's ironic how the success of Taylor Guitars makes that balance more and more difficult all the time. There are more and more people who want to experience our guitars and our brand, and we have both types of buyers to consider.

We work to do a good job of both, but let the record show that we lean

Editor's Note

Playing Well, Feeling Well

The connection between music and wellness is no secret. Many of us can probably attest that just 10 minutes of playing guitar after a long day at work can help us shed stress. More and more research has been rolling in to validate the benefits of incorporating music into our lives, both as listeners and players, at every stage of life. That theme resonates frequently on the pages of *Wood&Steel*, particularly this issue. From the Taylor owner who wrote about playing guitar for his daughter while she was still in the womb ("Letters") to the joy our Chief Financial Officer Barbara Wight felt in rekindling an interest in playing guitar later in life ("Kurt's Corner"), music embodies a vitality that nourishes both the mind and body in myriad ways.

Taylor Guitars has been a longtime supporter of music education programs in part because we understand, as educators do, that kids who play music fare better in school and in life. In our profile of Allen Stone, the soulful singer-songwriter reflects on the socially conscious music of artists like Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye and the way it inspired him to create a positive vibe through his live shows. In her thoughtful article on the way music aided her recovery from cancer, performing artist Erika Luccetti talks about the endorphin-releasing and immunity-boosting properties of music, and touches upon music therapy as an important frontier of holistic medicine.

We plan to continue to explore the relationship between music and wellness through different themes in future issues, including the benefits of music therapy for wounded war veterans and the positive effects of music among our senior citizens. If you have any stories you'd like to share, feel free to e-mail them to pr@taylorguitars.com or share them at taylorguitars.com/taylor-stories.

– Jim Kirlin

2013 Taylor Factory Tours & Vacation Dates

A free, guided tour of the Taylor Guitars factory is given every Monday through Friday at 1 p.m. (excluding holidays). No advance reservations are necessary. Simply check-in at the reception desk in our Visitor Center, located in the lobby of our main building, before 1 p.m. We ask that large groups (more than 10) call us in advance at (619) 258-1207.

While not physically demanding, the tour does include a fair amount of walking. Due to the technical nature, the tour may not be suitable for small children. The tour lasts approximately one hour and 15 minutes and departs from the main building at 1980 Gillespie Way in El Cajon, California.

Please take note of the weekday exceptions below. For more information, including directions to the factory, please visit taylorguitars.com/contact. We look forward to seeing you!

Factory Closures

Monday-Friday, July 1-5
(Independence Day/
Company Vacation)

November 28-29
(Thanksgiving Holiday)

Monday, September 2
(Labor Day)

Monday, December 23
through **Friday, January 3**
(Company Vacation)

October 14
(Taylor Guitars Anniversary)

much more toward the idea of making higher quality items, delivered with great service and support, and sharing a good experience with the players who buy our guitars. I think it will always be

that way with us, and we work relentlessly to do it right each and every day.

– Bob Taylor, President



PLAY LIKE YOU

Copping the styles of our guitar heroes is fun, but shaping your own guitar identity will help you express the true you

By Shawn Persinger

In this lesson we're going to tap into your creative side from some unlikely angles, generate new ways of looking at old ideas, and push your playing to new levels – in some cases without pushing or playing! Best of all, I'm going to introduce you to a new favorite guitar player: you! Here are six different ways to develop your own voice as a guitar player.

1. Play Like Everyone Else

Learning from the greats who came before you is not only helpful; it is *essential* to building a vocabulary of chords, solos, techniques and compositional ideas. Ecclesiastes states, "There is nothing new under the sun." Paraphrased or not, keep it in mind. We all want to think we are doing new things, but if you have no real grasp of musical history, what chance do you truly have? Listen to every guitarist (and instrumentalist) you can, learn what he or she is doing, and endeavor to play along. If you think Chuck Berry (Ex. 1), Eddie Van Halen (Ex. 2), or Keith Richards (Ex. 3) has nothing to teach you, you might as well stop playing right now. These players, and many more, built the foundations of popular guitar music, and their legacy remains because what they gave us is as vital today as it was 40, 50, even 60 years ago. Not to mention that every one of those players will cite an influence or two on their playing: For Berry it was T-Bone Walker and Charlie Christian; Van Halen credits Eric Clapton and Allan Holdsworth; Richards cites Leo Kottke and...Chuck Berry.

2. Get Skeptical

I've learned a lot of great guitar music due to my skeptical spirit. As a teenager I'd hear someone compliment a famous guitarist and think, "That player is dreadful – and I'll prove it. I'll learn one of his solos and show everyone how lame it is." Usually, as it turned out, the exercise left me humbled and forced me to reevaluate my opinion of any given player. There is an immense amount of knowledge to be gained from actually taking the time to learn a piece of music, rather than simply listening to it and then dismissing it offhand.

When I was younger I was not a big fan of Larry Carlton, but at Musician's Institute, students and teachers alike raved about his skill. Arrogant youth that I was, I thought I'd dispel the myth of Carlton's musical acuity by learning his solo on Steely Dan's "Kid Charlemagne." It turned out that everything I'd heard about Larry's playing was true and fully realized in that one solo. Navigating complex changes with the ease of a jazz purist and the energy of a bar-room blues player, Carlton throws in classically tinged pedal tones, flawlessly

controlled bends, even some pre-Van Halen two-handed tapping.

So the next time you are incredulous regarding one of the "greats," put your skepticism to the test by learning one of their classic licks. You might end up singing, and playing, a different tune once you're done.

3. Write It Down and Develop It

I encourage all of my students to keep a music notebook – tab or notation – write down every lick they learn, and, more importantly, make some up themselves. Licks are ephemeral and capricious, so if you don't capture them when they materialize you can lose them forever. Beyond writing them down I also encourage you to record them. The subtle difference between three straight eighth-notes versus a triplet configuration can be the distinction between a classic riff and a mundane series of notes. So write it and record it. But then what?

This is where the real work begins. Once you've filled half of your "licks journal," start writing songs with them. What may seem like an insignificant four-note pattern could turn out to be a classic riff waiting to be unleashed on the listening public. Think of all the great three- and four-note riffs that define popular music today. Jimmy Page's "Whole Lotta Love," Ritchie Blackmore's "Smoke on the Water," Miles Davis's "So What," and Beethoven's Fifth Symphony (Ex. 4) were all small ideas that blossomed into grand masterpieces because these composers had the sense to see beyond their simplicity and develop them into important works of art. Don't dismiss anything you consider even remotely valid. Put in the time and effort to expand these flashes of inspiration beyond their embryonic stage.

4. Take a Break

Time away from your instrument can do wonders for your creativity and, believe it or not, for your technique. If you are playing the same ideas over and over, you are only getting good at that particular physical motion, and who is to say even that is correct?

Classical guitarist Liona Boyd developed a neurological condition called "task specific focal dystonia" from repetitive motion with her fingers. This condition causes her fingers to do the *opposite* of she wants them to! So take a break and reflect on your playing. Then go for a walk, cook a meal, read a book, write a book. The guitar will still be there when you need it.

5. Don't Fool Yourself

Few things are more insulting to real music fans than claiming your play-

ing is "totally original." When I worked at an independent record store, the local bands would frequently drop off their self-released CDs for consignment sales. We would sell any band's CD, but I always asked, "What do you guys sound like?" If the response was, "We sound like 311..." or Oasis or the Stray Cats, I would say, "Great, I like those bands," and then suggest them to customers. But more frequently the response was, "We don't sound like anyone else, we're original!" I'd then play their CD only to hear a band that sounded like 311, Oasis or the Stray Cats and would *never* promote them to patrons. Did these bands really think someone who worked in a record shop and listened to literally thousands of different bands and styles of music wouldn't find a point of reference? It was offensive to me as listener and even more so as a musician.

In the mid-1990s I performed in a group that not only played music that sounded like that of King Crimson and The Mahavishnu Orchestra, but we also had the same instrumentation (sans the keyboards). When the uninitiated asked whom we sounded like, I always said, "King Crimson and The Mahavishnu Orchestra." While many others, critics and fans alike, were quick to point out this obvious reference, no one ever accused us of ripping them off or simply imitating them. If anything we were heralded as picking up where these iconic bands had left off. (King Crimson was inactive when my band started playing.) I believe this was because I readily admitted that these two groups, and many others, were a major influence on us, rather than making the impossible claim that we were "original."

So do yourself and the listening public a favor: Be aware of and cite your influences. Frank Zappa, John Zorn and Yngwie Malmsteen have all included a laundry list of their influences on record sleeve liner notes. Not only is it magnanimous of the artist compiling the list to give due credit to the artists who inspired them, it's also fun for the reader/listener to discover.

6. Embrace What You Don't Like About Your Playing

I can't remember who first said this, but when you strip away everything you like about your playing and are left with only what you don't like, then that is what you sound like. This was a "slap in the face" realization for me personally. I'm a bit of a sloppy player. For many years this bugged me as I tried my best to clean up my technique and smooth out the rough edges. Then one day it dawned on me that many of my favorite players are pretty sloppy too!

Take time to consider what it is that

bothers you about your playing and why it troubles you. A deeper reflection might produce new insight that you've neglected and denied. Yes, I'm asking you to psychoanalyze your guitar playing. Don't just settle for what you hear at face (ear?) value. You play the way you do for a reason, for better or worse.

Play Like You

By Shawn Persinger

Ex. 1 $\text{♩} = 170$

Ex. 2 $\text{♩} = 146$

Ex. 3 $\text{♩} = 124$ Open G tuning: DGDGBD

Ex. 4 Allegro con brio $\text{♩} = 124$ Cm

Fast, with a lively spirit

G7/B

Embrace the "worse" as a way of moving forward rather than an impediment that holds you back. Besides, what one player hears as bad, another appreciates as beauty. We should all be so lucky as to have a distinguishing characteristic that sets us apart. Let your true player shine, warts and all. **W&S**



Shawn Persinger, a.k.a. Prester John, owns a Taylor 410, two 310s and a 214ce-N. His music has been described as a myriad of delightful musical paradoxes: complex but catchy; virtuosic yet affable; smart and whimsical. His book *The 50 Greatest Guitar Books* is being hailed as a monumental achievement by readers and critics. (www.GreatestGuitarBooks.com)



BACKSTAGE PASS

ALLEN STONE



HOW A SHELTERED PREACHER'S SON FOUND HIS VOICE THROUGH SOUL MUSIC

By Jim Kirlin

At first it's a shock to hear such a melodically soulful singing voice — think Stevie Wonder meets Donny Hathaway — coming from that face. There's the blond-locked boyishness, the thick-rimmed glasses, and a curious fashion sense one might describe as thrift store hippie. But the moment Allen Stone's supple voice takes flight in song, any visual disconnect melts into soul-stirring bliss. If you like vintage R&B and haven't heard Stone, do yourself a favor and give this kid a listen.

The word-of-mouth buzz has been simmering for a couple of years now in a modern-grassroots way, a blend of relentless touring and the viral magic of YouTube and social media sharing. Stone has been a rapt student along the way, eager to both elevate his craft and learn the business, and fueled by natural talent, musical passion, and an infectious joyful heart, he has cultivated a growing fanbase around the world. When he called in for a chat from his home in Seattle in April a few days before playing Southern California's popular Coachella Festival, he had just returned from two months of touring through the U.S., Europe, Japan and Australia.

"Australia was epic," he raves. "All the shows were sold out. We played for between three and four thousand at the Byron Bay Bluesfest. In Germany I did a tour with a band named Seeded. They're really big. We played big arenas, like 15,000 people."

In conversation, Stone comes across as genuinely sweet and gracious. He's prone to saying "bless you" in response to compliments in place of "thank you" — perhaps a residual effect of being a preacher's son. He grew up in Chewelah, Washington, a tiny dirt-road town with a population of less than 3,000. Under his father's roof, listening to secular music was forbidden.

"I was definitely sheltered," he says. "My parents attempted to raise me the way my father was raised, which was in a very conservative household, and being a minister you kind of attempt to guide your flock accordingly. So I wasn't too turned on to pop culture growing up."

He did sing at his father's church, where people told him he had a good voice, although, in a small town, he probably didn't realize *how* good. He

started leading worship at age 13 with his acoustic guitar. He says he learned a lot about connecting with an audience in that setting.

"That was a huge help, just being in front of people and learning how to sing in a way that people could sing along," he recalls. "Even now, I have to relearn almost every show that people want to sing along with me. It's not always about showing off and being able to do a bunch of cool notes and runs. It's really about locking into a melody that people can remember and sing along with. So it was really a great experience. I got to play in front of people almost twice a week at church, and that would have never otherwise happened in Chewelah. There were no venues or live music scene."

Stone would eventually be exposed to rock music through his brother, and when a friend turned him on to Stevie Wonder, it was all over. He immersed himself in Wonder's records for a year and a half. He says Wonder and Donny Hathaway in effect became his musical mentors.

"Listening intently and attempting to sing along really taught me how to sing the way I do," he says. "But it was kind of my own journey, really. I feel like it was a good way to learn, because I learned through the feeling and not so much the technical side of things. Once I heard Stevie and got into soul music, I knew that was the route I wanted to take."

Beyond the music itself, Stone also found himself drawn to the deeper social themes that Wonder and other artists were exploring through their lyrics.

"I was always into socially conscious hip-hop, and folk music is traditionally pretty socially aware," he says. "But it was Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On* record I think that really inspired me to sing about more than just relationships. It gave me a glimpse into the power that soul music can have."

Once he knew he wanted to make music for a living, Stone dedicated himself to every aspect of his craft, writing songs and honing his performance chops at every kind of gig imaginable, both solo and with his band. He released a self-titled album on his own independent label in 2011, which climbed into the Top 10 on Billboard's Heatseekers chart and cracked the top 5 of iTunes' R&B/Soul charts. He also came to understand the power of viral videos, and that YouTube and social media sharing are tremendous tools for spreading his music to the masses. Case in point: The music booker for *Jimmy Kimmel Live* had seen Stone play and wanted to schedule him, but needed a video to show the pro-

ducer, so Stone and the band quickly recorded a live performance of his song "Unaware," a mellow-grooved R&B tune that slowly builds into a goose bump-inducing vocal climax. The video, dubbed "Live! From His Mother's Living Room," not only led to appearances on *Kimmel*, *Conan* and other national TV programs in the U.S., but it went viral in a big way — at press time it had climbed to over 2.3 million views.

"It was simply meant as an audition tape," Stone admits. "I wasn't even going to release it online, but we did, and people have just been sharing it. It's been wonderful!" Stone can count esteemed purveyor of rock & soul gold, Daryl Hall, as one of his biggest boosters. When Stone was invited to join Hall and his band on an episode of Hall's Web/television series *Live From Daryl's House*, the natural musical kinship between the two was instant. As Hall's keyboardist Eliot Lewis noted over dinner during the episode,

"MARVIN GAYE'S *WHAT'S GOING ON* RECORD REALLY INSPIRED ME TO SING ABOUT MORE THAN JUST RELATIONSHIPS. IT GAVE ME A GLIMPSE INTO THE POWER THAT SOUL MUSIC CAN HAVE."

speaking for the band, "Allen is the epitome of what we love; it's all about feeling the music." Hall ended up bringing Stone out with him and the band on their Nu-Soul Revue Tour, along with popular neo-soul diva Sharon Jones.

Stone continues to be humbled and gratified by the mainstream success he's started to enjoy, especially now that he's been signed to the artist-friendly label ATO Records, and insists he still has much to learn.

"It's just a passion of mine to get as good as I possibly can vocally, as a songwriter, and an all-around performer," he says. "Anymore it's not so much just about the singing aspect; it's about the whole package of being an incredible performer and a business man and a writer and a fully encompassing artist. There are so many facets that you have to be really, really good at, including your branding, and music videos are a huge help with one's career. I'm definitely learning as I go. I feel blessed to be in the industry and around people who are very talented."

A largely self-taught guitar player, Stone, like many singer-songwriters, is self-effacing about his chops. Although he studied a bit of music theory and wishes he had taken more lessons, he says that learning to play by hearing and paying attention to the feeling behind

the music has helped him connect in a deeper way with a wider audience.

"I envy people who know music technically more so than me, but I also think that really good technical players sometimes forget that most people don't really understand music [at that level], and that's why it doesn't resonate so much," he reflects. "That's why jazz is one of the least popular types of music as far as pop music goes. For me, being more on the feeling side, I believe that maybe I have a better understanding of how listeners perceive the music, because they're not as fluent in augmented fifths and stuff like that."

Stone says he's been a fan of Taylor guitars for a long time.

"It's such a well-crafted instrument," he says. "I think when you're attempting to play guitar like I do, which is more like an electric guitar, it's a lot of bar chords and muting; it's very rhythmic. For the style of music I play, to me those guitars sound really beautiful!"

mid-tempo groove. Tunes like "What I've Seen" and "Satisfaction" dial up the funk. "Contact High" draws inspiration from the Stevie Wonder songbook as Stone ponders the alienating side effects of social media culture. At the show I attended, Stone prefaced the song by encouraging the crowd to personally acknowledge each other and not overlook the value of in-person interaction. The sentiment seemed both ironic and spot on, especially given the sea of craning smart phones capturing the moment. I point this out and ask him what inspired the song.

"First and foremost it was a gut check for me, because I noticed in my own life that I was using my phone as a crutch a lot in social scenarios," he reflects. "I would be on Facebook chatting with people or updating my Twitter, and I was noticing people taking pictures of their breakfast. It was like they were living in this fake world that we've created. I definitely still use all those vessels and think they're incredible tools if we are good stewards of them and don't use them in excess. It's kind of hard...especially with my generation. We've started to lose the ability to live in the now; we try to be in a million places at once, and our culture is so fast-paced that I think it's good to have a rein on it and at least open up the conversation of whether we're forgetting about the power of peer-to-peer relationships and looking people in the eyes. That's something I dealt with myself and just wanted to address."

One of Stone's most potent yet nuanced social reflections is his stripped-down tune "Last to Speak," in which he examines institutional hypocrisy and the negative impact of polarized discourse.

"I actually wrote that in my head on a car trip back from a college show I had played," he shares. "It was at the point in my life when I was evolving past the Church but still trying to figure out what I had learned there that I still cherish, and humility is one of those things. I had noticed that I kept pointing at everything that was wrong with the government and the Church and the way I was raised, but wasn't doing anything constructive about it. I would just point and shoot instead of trying to find a way to influence my culture and be a positive light."

Based on the impact he's making through his music, Stone seems well on his way to a brightly lit career. (Allenstone.com). **W&S**

To view video performance clips of Allen Stone from the Taylor room at NAMM, visit taylorguitars.com/artists/allen-stone

Opposite page, top photo: Stone performs on the Taylor stage at the Winter NAMM Show; additional photos by Lonnie Webb



Ask Bob

Fretboard wear, Grand Orchestra cutaways, and playing with violins

I own an early 410, rosewood fretboard and bridge, that has grooves in the fretboard and significant fret wear from 22 years of G, C, D, E and A [chords]. I know that frets can be replaced. What would the procedure be for leveling the fretboard? Can it be planed, or would it have to be replaced? I would like to keep the guitar as original as possible.

**Ben Hogben
Spencer, NY**

Good question, Ben. We can plane the fretboard before replacing the frets. However, I wouldn't say that it's actually better to remove all of the old worn grooves if they're deep. Rather, it might be good to leave some of them. Why? Well, you'll just start wearing new grooves on day one, whereas if we leave a bit of them, it will have already given some relief for where your fingers love to go. The frets themselves will be level. If you send your guitar to us for work, our Service department will be happy to discuss the best approach for you and your guitar.

Do different neck profiles have any effect on tone, or is it strictly the player's preference?

**Dave Henry
Las Vegas, NV**

No, Dave, the different neck profiles won't affect the tone. You can order any neck shape you want and not worry that you ordered one that reduced your tone. *Ed. Note: In addition to Taylor's standard acoustic neck profile, additional neck profile options offered through our Build to Order program are Slim Carve, V-Carve and T5 Carve.*

I have three Taylors that are all Jumbos (and one R Taylor Grand Symphony). Obviously I like big guitars. I'm thinking of ordering a BTO guitar soon, and since you don't make Jumbos anymore, I'm thinking of getting a Grand Orchestra. I play frequently high up on the neck, so a cutaway is a must for me. When will you begin

you're aware and willing to do the work. *Ed. Note: Jacob, considering the frequent swings in your hygrometer readings, it's possible that you have a defective hygrometer. We recommend that you get another one – make sure it's digital, as it will be more accurate.*

I am the proud owner of a new 618e, number 98! I was lucky enough to encounter it in Bozeman, Montana, and I instantly fell in love and could not put it down (still can't, actually). I really enjoy how crisp and clear it is, while still maintaining a powerful yet controlled bass response. This is my first maple guitar, so I am unfamiliar with what to expect for the tone down the road. What can I look forward to as this guitar ages?

**Adam Hutter
Billings, MT**

Adam, one of our Taylor employees, Anne Middleton, who lives and works in Cameroon to keep watch over the environmental impact of our ebony operation, is also from Billings. So I thought I'd give a shout-out!

What can you expect? More goodness, more clarity, more round, sweet notes. Here's the thing: A guitar doesn't change its spots with age; rather, the spots just get prettier. All the things you love about this guitar will just be enhanced, and you'll hear the changes come in spurts. At least that's what I've noticed over the past 40 years. I like to say they come in the first 30 minutes, the first month, five years, 10 years, and 15 years. I have a 1978 810 that's a great-sounding guitar, but I haven't noticed much of a change since it was 15 years old. Maybe something will happen at 50 years.

Bottom line, the tone will just be better. And I'm not talking about more bass, or more treble, which people confuse for tone. I'm talking about the actual tonal quality of each of the notes. They'll sound prettier.

I have enjoyed all the different voices of the Taylor guitars I have acquired over the years. My first Taylor was an 810 in 1993 when bluegrass was my mainstay. I moved to fingerstyle and loved the W14ce, and then to praise and worship with the 814ce-L7. Seven Taylor guitars later, I ask a stupid question: What will happen if I string my Baritone-6 with medium gauge strings, [tuned to] E-A-D-G-B-E? My thought is I will get a deeper bass response with increased sustain in the midrange, and that it



Being a huge Taylor fan and having rather small hands for playing guitar, I was thrilled when you introduced the short-scale neck. I have a 2007 GA8 custom short scale, and it has been a true blessing. I would like another guitar to maintain in D tuning; my preference would be a short-scale 816ce. Will this option cause any intonation, buzzing or other issues? Would heavier gauge strings help, or is a normal scale 816ce the best option?

**Doug
Dracut, MA**

Doug, the short-scale 816ce would be a great guitar for you. It won't cause any buzzing or intonation issues for you. And, as you say, you have small hands, so in that regard it would be perfect, and you'll end up playing it more. I think it's a great idea and that you'll be quite happy with it.

might be provocative for fingerstyle playing with rhythmic bass notes. Any insight?

Mitch Schuster, MD, FACOG, FACS

Mitch, you've had lots of cool guitars. To answer your question, the guitar would be under too much tension, or at least the strings would, if you tuned your baritone to standard pitch. That's because strings are made to be under a certain tension, and their length is figured into that design. Actually, the good tension range for your strings would

be reached if you tuned it with medium gauge strings to Eb or D.

Are there any plans to add ukuleles to your product line apart from the matched sets that you offered last year?

Mike Hogan

Honestly, Mike, we have a desire to add ukuleles but not a plan yet. We'll be sure to keep everyone posted on our plans

when we actually start moving toward producing a uke.

I had a Big Baby from 2003 to 2008 and bought a GS Mini recently (and added the ES-Go pickup last night). Both are a great bang for the buck (great tone at a not-too-expensive price). I'm totally blown away by the huge sound coming out of such a small instrument in the GS Mini. The Big Baby practically plays like an electric (I had .011s on it). Have you had any feedback from customers on putting the lighter gauge (.012-.053) strings on the GS Mini? I want to know if the loss in volume by the lighter strings is noticeable, and if there is any issue with intonation. I'm primarily an electric player and sometimes perform heavy rock songs "unplugged."

Lou

The guitar will work equally well with lighter strings, Lou. Yes, it will lose a little volume, but not much. If it suits your needs better and you make the music you like to make with it strung that way, then feel free. No problem with intonation either. The best bet is to simply try it, because one person may not like it, while the next person will. Toss a set on and see what you think.

I am currently researching 12-string guitars, as I am fascinated by the sounds they produce. I am finding that many of them can be very chimey/jangly. I am hoping to avoid that particular quality if at all possible. I am mostly a strummer with some limited ability to throw small licks in from time to time. I love the way mahogany sounds, with its rich mids. I am having a hard time deciding what will work best for me. I have read so much about tonewoods, but I am still uncertain. I would love to go to my local stores here in Southern California to try as many as possible, but being a lefty really kills that option. I love the looks of the GA, and the new GO seems very exciting. What do you think would be a good combination of woods to avoid the too-bright tone that can often accompany the 12-string?

**Jason
Ventura, CA**

Jason, I'll answer it this way. I think a GS body with mahogany would be a great 12-string for you. If you like, you can put a bit heavier string set on it and tune it down to D because it will sound a lot

less jangly. A 12-string tuned down is a different guitar altogether, and I think you may appreciate the tone that way more than at standard pitch. But even if you stay tuned to standard pitch, the body of the GS and the mahogany will be a good combo.

I have been playing second violin parts [on guitar] with a chamber group and really love doing this. The group has two violins, a viola and two cellos. I started with a Larrievie D-60 dreadnought because I thought I would need the volume, but even though it had a beautiful sound, there was too much of a "ring" to it, so the notes weren't separated well. I then bought a Taylor NS74ce thinking it would blend better with the violins; it has an absolutely gorgeous sound, the notes do separate, and it does blend better, but the volume isn't there unless I really crank up the volume, which kind of distorts that beautiful sound. I am using a Phil Jones AAD Cub amplifier. I would appreciate your suggestion as to the best guitar for this purpose. I would definitely want another Taylor.

Irene

Irene, I understand. A nylon-string guitar can't compete volume-wise with violins. It seems you are using the pickup in your guitar to be heard. This is one of those situations where I probably can't fix it in this response. In your case there are so many parts of the electronic signal chain that someone will need to talk to you over the phone and guide you through steps, or you'll need to have an expert at a repair center or a dealer help you to dial in your tone. You should be able to get a nice clear tone with your pickup and amplifier. Help is out there, so give our Service department a call and let's help you find a fix.

I owned a 114ce for several years, and recently traded up to a 314ce, which I really love. Although both of these models have Sitka spruce tops, it appears to me that the 314ce has a "prettier" top than my 114ce had (finish notwithstanding). Are better examples of Sitka spruce used in the tops of higher-grade Taylor guitars?

Jerry Downs

Yes, Jerry, that's right. We definitely grade tops, as does our spruce supplier, for separate uses, with the tops that have more even and sparkly grain going to higher-priced models.

I have a three-year-old 214ce with perhaps 1,500 hours of playing time on it. While changing the strings, I noticed that the top three or four frets closest to the neck have developed grooves in them where the strings make contact, particularly the high E, B and G strings. My technician says that these frets need to be replaced. Is this routine maintenance? I'm surprised the frets are made of material that is so soft the strings are able to press grooves into them. Is there a reason you don't use material that is hard enough to stand up to string pressure?

**Rob Coley
Lone Tree, CO**

Rob, fret wire by nature is softer than other metals. It's roll-formed and is meant to be malleable. It is, in fact, pretty hard, but some people have more impact on its lifespan than others. I've seen people (like me) go 20 years between frets being replaced, and other people who get a year out of the first few frets. So, I'd say it's pretty routine for many people to replace a few frets after a few years. If you have them replaced before the others are worn, it's not too costly or invasive. Not much leveling or fitting will be required, and you'll be good to go for another three or four years. After that, if you find that you're wearing them out to your dismay, you could talk to our Service department about other options.

With all the difficulty getting exotic hardwoods, I wonder why no one pays attention to some domestic species. I have land in Central Florida and see big, old, straight and tall oak trees that I have been told are Laurel oaks. I have seen them come down in storms, and when cutting them up for disposal, the wood looks spectacular – multi-colored from yellow to red to purple, and even black and grey, and quite attractive! Even though I have never operated a sawmill and can't estimate accurately, I'm sure just one big straight log would yield a good amount of wood. So why not entertain the idea of a domestic line of guitars that would utilize a variety of available timbers like ash, birch, hickory, oak, elm, etc? Edward Placha

Edward, it's a good question. The answers are varied. One, and probably the most important, is that the market isn't quite ready for guitars made from the woods you mentioned. We can sell maple and walnut. But to a fraction, and I mean a small fraction, of

even the plainest of nearly any tropical hardwood, like sapele or ovankol. So there's that. The other answer is that the real supply of these trees is very scattered – so scattered in fact, that it would be hard to gather a supply of them. You mentioned trees you see that come down in storms. Those are probably park trees, yard trees, trees on someone's ranch or the beltways of public property, what I like to call "urban forests," and while they exist, there's no easy way to obtain them. Most trees like this, even if we could get them, are full of bullets, nails, road signs, barbed wire, and an occasional roller skate. They tend to be hard on the sawmill. And the forests are not very full of these species in large size for guitars.

Someday the realities of life on earth may force us there with solutions, but for now we're concentrating our efforts on treating the forests where we get guitar woods with better regard than in years past. When I say "we," I mean people in general who are involved in logging in a larger way than just the guitar makers.

I live in Central Alabama. It's very humid here. I bought a GS Mini about a year ago. I have made no adjustment to the guitar, and I have a buzz that has developed in the treble strings, particularly the G. Other than the intermittent buzz, it's a terrific guitar. Strangely, it seems to be worse when the humidity is higher. Any suggestions?

**Fred Harris
Hoover, AL**

Fred, I wish I could diagnose this in my response, but I don't think I can. I'd really have to see the guitar. In this case, I'm going to ask you to call our Service department. They'll help you send your guitar to us, or help you find a local authorized repair person near you. It could be so many things that we just need to look at it.

I own two of your fine guitars: a GC7 and my most recent purchase, a 214ce-N. I really like this guitar a lot. I was wondering about the "bloom" factor with the 214ce-N. I know that a good-sounding laminate guitar is just that – as long as one takes care of it, it will continue to sound just as good as the day it was purchased. Because the 214ce-N has a laminate back/sides construction, will this guitar mature at all given that it has a solid Sitka top? My GC7 is over

six years old now and is opening up and blooming with amazing tonal qualities.

Robert Wojcie

Robert, I think you'll find that guitar will get better with age as well. Maybe not to the extent that your all-solid-wood guitars age, but as you point out, the top is solid, and it certainly contributes a lot to the aging process. At least you know that it will never sound lesser than it does now, and that's a pretty good start, I think.

Sometime back I heard a story on Public Radio about how Americans were no longer playing pianos, and that there were thousands of old pianos being thrown away every year. They interviewed a piano mover in New York City, and he said that his company took 20 pianos a month to the dump. I was wondering if you might be missing out on a lot of good, aged wood here, not to mention the ivory. Could you use the wood from a piano to make a guitar? I'm looking at an old upright piano at this moment, and it's got some really large pieces of maple or walnut in it.

**Steve Toland
New Smyrna Beach, FL**

Well, Steve, technically the answer is yes, you could use wood from an old piano. Spruce in particular. Usually the walnut, being the case of the piano, is plywood and wouldn't do much good on a guitar. The maple pieces aren't the right shape and size for guitar parts, and even the spruce soundboard, while solid spruce, it made up of narrow pieces, whereas guitars are wide pieces. So, while the theoretical answer is yes, the practical answer is probably no.

Got a question for Bob Taylor?

Shoot him an e-mail:
askbob@taylorguitars.com

If you have a specific repair or service concern, please call our Customer Service department at (800) 943-6782, and we'll take care of you.



**NEW
ALL-MAHOGANY
MODELS BRING
A PUNCHY
SOUND AND
CLASSIC VIBE
TO THE
500 SERIES**

By Jim Kirlin

There's a lot to love about a rich, complex acoustic sound. That said, a guitar's tonal personality should fit comfortably into its playing context, and sometimes complexity can get in the way, like when other instruments are in the mix. When a more focused, direct tone is desired, a guitar with a tropical hardwood top, such as koa or mahogany, will often make a good choice.

Though less prevalent than spruce-top guitars, hardwood-top acoustics boast a notable musical heritage. They trace back more than a century to the Hawaiian Islands, the birthplace of the steel guitar, and would later infuse American roots music with distinctive tonal flavors. Not surprisingly, many early Hawaiian steel guitars were made with backs, sides and tops of koa, a native tropical hardwood, which resonated with a long and even sustain when a metal bar was slid along the strings to create an evocative elastic slur. As Hawaiian instruments and Island music migrated to the U.S. mainland in the early 20th century and became popular, U.S. guitar manufacturers fueled the trend by making Hawaiian-style guitars and ukuleles. Along the way, instrument makers embraced mahogany, a more readily available tropical hardwood, which produced a similar tone profile.

Between mahogany's abundant supply, tool-friendly properties, and overall durability, it made a natural choice for instrument makers.

For similar reasons, mahogany was already coveted by craftsmen in other parts of the world. Great Britain had been importing it from the West Indies

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and Central America for a couple of centuries, and it became associated with fine furniture and boats (due in part to its resistance to wood rot). In the guitar world, companies like Washburn placed a premium on mahogany, although in subsequent years guitar makers began to use it on less expensive instruments partly because the large size of the mahogany trees harvested produced a plentiful supply.

"The lower cost wasn't due to it being an inferior wood," explains Taylor luthier Andy Powers. "It was just that you could get more boards out of a mahogany tree than a rosewood tree because the trees grew bigger. It was also more stable than rosewood when you dried it."

Mahogany's greater durability compared to softer soundboard woods like spruce also enabled it to be used for guitar tops without the need for binding or extensive finish work, which helped lower the production costs.

As Hawaiian-inspired music and instruments cross-pollinated with popular American music forms, all-mahogany instruments brought a dark, earthy musical character to American guitar-based genres like country and blues (which had borrowed some of Hawaii's slack key tunings). Mahogany-top guitars have continued to maintain their identity in the Americana world in the years since, ebbing and flowing in response to different musical trends and history. When the Adirondack spruce supply was heavily depleted by the U.S. military during World War II, mahogany joined Sitka spruce as a viable alternative for tops. More recently, as roots music has enjoyed

a revival that has bubbled into a mainstream embrace, led by acts such as Mumford & Sons, The Avett Brothers, The Lumineers, Heartless Bastards, Old Crow Medicine Show, and countless others, interest in hardwood-top guitars has been rekindled, as musicians strive for authentic vintage sounds to fit their music.

All-Mahogany Tone: Fundamentally Strong

Any sort of hardwood-top guitar, whether all-koa or all-mahogany, tends to produce a natural compression, so it won't yield as quick a response as a spruce-top guitar will. As Andy Powers explained with the recent introduction of the all-koa Grand Orchestra K28e, there tends to be more of a subtle "roll-in" effect to a note.

"To put that into a more practical context for the player, it sounds like it's a really long, sustaining, very controlled attack," Andy says.

Compared to a spruce-top mahogany guitar in Taylor's 500 Series, an all-mahogany steel-string produces a distinctive flavor. "It still has the fundamental, strong, direct sound you can expect out of a mahogany guitar with a spruce top – that dry, woody quality," Andy says. "But the mahogany top will make it even more controlled, to where it starts to accentuate its unique sustain a little more."

"Punchy" is a word that's often used to describe the character of mahogany, particularly in the midrange.

"It's punchy in the sense that the notes you play are the notes you get," Andy elaborates. "That's what people

mean by 'dry' tone. Many players will hear the response and say, 'Oh, it's right in my face. I hear just the notes that I played. I'm not hearing this sharp attack, or a long, ringing complex overtone mix.' So, the common description is a focused midrange punch."

That focused midrange character highlights some of the tonal differences between mahogany and rosewood, which tends to feature a more scooped midrange and ringing overtones. Bob Taylor spoke to the sonic contrast in an interview for *Acoustic Guitar* magazine back in 2010, describing a hardwood-top guitar like mahogany as "typically lo-fi, great for strumming and blues, but no church bell tones." In ensemble playing, those differences actually can work together nicely to create a complementary acoustic sound, as mahogany's strong midrange and rosewood's scooped mids fit together well without competing.

New Mahogany-Top 500s

Over the years, Taylor has produced several batches of mahogany-top guitars. The summer of 1996 saw the release of the limited edition Grand Concert 412-M, while that fall brought the 512-M. Both were conceived with acoustic blues in mind, at a time when fingerstyle music was enjoying a resurgence. The beloved Baby Taylor (which was originally conceived as a ukulele) would welcome a mahogany-top sibling in 1998. Our 2005 Fall LTDs included the all-mahogany 512ce-L10 and 514ce-L10. The GS Mini Mahogany, which debuted in 2012, has brought another flavor to our modern-day parlor guitar. And last fall, our Builder's Reserve VII offering celebrated the all-mahogany sound with a special 12-Fret and ukulele pairing.

This spring, we renew our commitment to the all-mahogany guitar sound with the addition of mahogany-top models to the 500 Series, in every body shape, including the Grand Orchestra, as well as a 12-fret edition of the Grand Concert. The mahogany tops will be designated with a "2" as the second digit of the model name, so the naming conventions for the models will look like this:

Dreadnought: 520
Grand Concert: 522
Grand Auditorium: 524
Grand Symphony: 526
Grand Orchestra: 528

Extensions of these base models include versions with electronics (e.g., 520e) and those with a cutaway and electronics (520ce).

Playing Applications

Considering mahogany's strong fundamental focus, an all-mahogany guitar will fit a number of playing scenarios.

"Like koa, it's a fantastic wood for recording or stage use," Andy notes. "Because of its unique response, an all-mahogany guitar really flatters its pickups. And since its sonic imprint isn't a mile wide, it's a guitar that plays well with others. On a track with other guitar parts you don't want interference between players."

Depending on the body style, an all-mahogany guitar also makes a great option for players with an aggressive attack, due to the natural compression effect of the wood.

"I can play these guitars as hard as possible with the thickest pick in the world, and they sound great," Andy shares. "You don't have to play them that way, but they can take it. A mahogany-top guitar basically takes that huge abundance of raw energy and helps control it. That focused sound comes in handy. That's why

some bluegrass players might prefer a mahogany Dreadnought over one with rosewood back and sides. The rosewood one might have too much ring for playing their rhythm parts on fast fiddle tunes."

Another big-body all-mahogany option, the Grand Orchestra 528, will produce a husky, burly voice that would also respond well to lively strumming.

"It's a guitar I would have loved to have seen Johnny Cash play," Andy adds. "I could see him playing 'Folsom Prison Blues' and just wailing on it. Or Elvis Presley. He was a fine rhythm guitar player. He would have sounded great on that guitar."

Smaller bodies like the Grand Concert 522, particularly the 12-Fret, yield a smooth, balanced, easygoing character that will work well for blues, country and ragtime picking, and the hardwood top can easily handle the kind of gritty, snappy plucking that adds funky tonal color to roots music. Give the wood a little time to open up and you'll have a guitar with serious

mojo that injects a dark, warm, sweet and surprisingly dynamic vibe into a tune.

All-New 500 Series Appointments

The addition of mahogany-top models literally changed the complexion of the 500 Series, inspiring a design overhaul that helps express the identity of these guitars. With the mahogany top's rich, saturated color and prominent grain front and center, Taylor's development team, led by Andy Powers, embraced the old-school aura that reflects mahogany's guitar heritage. He relates it to Taylor's recent neovintage treatment of the rosewood 700 Series.

"After we re-designed the 700 Series with all-ivoroid appointments, players really flocked to it," he says. "The sentiment was like, 'This isn't my dad's guitar, this is more like my *granddad's* guitar,' but with all the refinements of modern guitar-making techniques. So we brought more of that aesthetic to the 500s."

New Mahogany-Top 500 Series Models

520, 520e, 520ce

522, 522e, 522ce

522 12-Fret, 522e 12-Fret, 522ce 12-Fret

524, 524e, 524ce

526, 526e, 526ce

528, 528e

Note: All spruce-top 500 Series models will now feature Sitka spruce rather than Engelmann.

A black pickguard adds a bold visual counterpoint to the mahogany tops (spruce- and cedar-top models will retain the faux tortoise shell version). Other new appointments include an ebony headstock overlay (formerly rosewood), chrome tuners (12-Fret

tuners are slothead gold with synthetic ivory buttons), ivoroid binding, an ivoroid rosette, and an ivoroid Century fretboard inlay design that comes from the same family as the 700 Series Heritage Diamonds inlay motif.

"We played with the weighting and the placement of the inlays to make it feel modern and yet like it belongs to an older time," Andy says.

First Editions

Like Taylor has done with the launch of new Grand Orchestra models this year, the mahogany-top 500s debuted with 100 First Edition models for each body shape. Premium features include an additional Century peghead inlay, CV bracing, and a custom First Edition label and case plate. Once the guitar is registered, the owner will receive a custom First Edition guitar strap, a numbered certificate of authenticity, and a special commemorative booklet. After the First Editions are produced, the models will officially join the 500 Series. To sample an all-mahogany guitar, visit your local Taylor dealer. **W&S**

All-Koa vs. All-Mahogany

Players might wonder about the tonal distinctions between an all-koa and an all-mahogany guitar. We asked Andy Powers how he would compare them.

"Both will be fairly similar overall, because of their relative similarity in density and grain structure," he says. "Koa will have a touch more shimmer and chime, because of its slightly denser nature. The mahogany will produce slightly stronger fundamentals, with clear and direct focus. Some folks will describe koa as sounding more wet or saturated, because of the upper register harmonic structure, and mahogany as sounding more woody and dry because of its strong fundamentals. I usually avoid talking about mahogany's upper-end dampening effect, because the word 'dampening' sometimes has a negative connotation among players. But dampening is actually a good musical attribute when it occurs in the correct place or is applied in the right way. It silences the noise that would otherwise obscure the notes we are attempting to produce. The sustain will be quite close between the two woods, although the upper-end harmonic chime of the koa might give the impression of a slightly longer sustaining tone."

NEW MAHOGANY-TOP 300S JOIN THE LINE

In addition to bringing all-mahogany models to the 500 Series, we're also introducing several mahogany-top guitars to the 300 Series. The African sapele used for backs and sides shares many of mahogany's tonal properties, with slightly less midrange punch and an extra splash of treble brightness. Mahogany tops will be offered with three non-cutaway body styles: Dreadnought (320), Grand Concert (322), and Grand Auditorium (324), with optional electronics.

L-R: 320e, 322e





wet threat

EXTENDED EXPOSURE TO HIGH HUMIDITY CAN HURT A GUITAR.
HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO DEHUMIDIFY.

By Jim Kirlin



Planet Waves Humidipak

Over the years we've devoted a lot of attention to helping Taylor owners keep their guitars properly humidified. Though dry conditions are the more common concern, too much humidity also can lead to problems. During the summer months or wet seasons, regions that experience extended periods of high humidity can put guitars at risk. This is especially true in areas of Southeast Asia, such as Taiwan, the Philippines and Singapore, along with Central America, Florida and Hawaii in the U.S., and other tropical zones around the world. The good news is that there are several ways to protect your guitar from the effects of over-humidification.

How Much is Too Much?

The ideal relative humidity range for a guitar is 45-55 percent. (At the Taylor factory, we maintain a climate-controlled production environment of about 45 percent.) Humidity levels above 55 percent are considered high, while anything above 65 percent (especially for extended periods) is considered very high.

Signs of a Wet Guitar

There are a number of possible symptoms of an over-humidified guitar, says Taylor's Rob Magargal, a long-time service and repair technician who handles a lot of our service training and has extensive experience nursing both

dry and wet guitars back to health.

"If the action is too high, even with the neck straight and tuned to pitch, that's often a sign," he shares. "Also, you might see wood swelling on the guitar body. You could see mold or water stains inside the guitar or case. You could see cloudy finish, or the finish beginning to delaminate because it only has so much elasticity. A common example of that would be circular bubbles of lifting finish on the peghead around the tuners. You could have binding separation. The nut might look smaller or the frets look shorter on the ends because the neck has actually expanded. Also, the tone of the guitar changes. It becomes less responsive, kind of sluggish, because the guitar is holding on to so much moisture."

Solutions

There are several dehumidification products on the market that will help combat high humidity. The level of effectiveness for each may depend on how much moisture is in the environment where the guitar is kept.

Regardless of whether you're humidifying or dehumidifying a guitar, you'll want to start with a digital hygrometer so you can gauge and continue to monitor the relative humidity of the area where the guitar is stored (ideally in its case). One difference between adding and removing moisture, Magargal has found, is that dehu-

midifying a guitar often takes longer, especially in higher humidity conditions.

"For some reason the guitar doesn't want to give the moisture up," he says. "Once it gets to about 65 percent for extended periods, the guitar seems to start grabbing as much moisture as it can. I did an experiment where I over-humidified a guitar to 72 percent and then dehumidified it. It took about 6-8 weeks to get it back to normal!"

Below are a few dehumidification options that Magargal and our factory service technicians have found to be effective.

Silica Gel Packs

Silica gel beads can typically absorb 40 percent of their weight in water vapor. Several packs can be placed in a guitar case with the guitar. Depending on the humidity level, they may last a month or two before they need to be removed and either replaced or dried and then re-used.

"You need packs that are bigger than the small versions that come with a camera case," Magargal says. "Use packs that are 6-10 ounces to absorb enough moisture to bring the humidity to manageable levels."

Mini-Dehumidifiers

These are small, portable units designed to remove moisture from small spaces. One company whose product Magargal has used with suc-

cessful results is Eva-Dry (eva-dry.com). Designed to absorb moisture from boat cabins, safes, bathrooms, lockers and closets, this renewable mini-dehumidifier also uses silica gel beads. When the beads are fully saturated with moisture, they turn from blue to pink, which is visible through an indicator window on the



Eva-Dry E-333

unit. It can then be plugged into a wall outlet to warm and dry the beads, and after about 10-12 hours (for the small model) it can be used again. The higher the level of humidity, the more frequently the unit will need to be dried. With normal use, the product will work for up to 10 years, according to the company.

The smallest model, the E-333 (designed for areas of up to 333 cubic feet) will fit inside the storage compartment of a guitar case. Our Service department recommends leaving the compartment lid fully open inside the closed case to allow the unit to absorb

the moisture from the entire case and the guitar. If you have a cutaway guitar, another placement option is in the space created by the cutaway.

Ken Cameron, owner of Hilo Guitars and Ukuleles, a Taylor dealer in Hawaii, learned about Eva-Dry from Magargal, and he has found the product to be extremely effective. He immediately ordered a supply of mini-dehumidifiers to sell in his store.

"I swear by them," he says. "We're considered to be the rainiest city in the U.S. Since Rob gave me one to test, we've probably sold at least 60 of them. I personally own five Taylors, and I've got one in each case with the guitar. I pretty much won't let a Taylor guitar out of the store without one."

Taylor has had discussions with Eva-Dry's product team about the possibility of designing a smaller model for guitar cases, which could be placed on either side of the compartment within the case. We'll be sure to share any development news as it unfolds.

Planet Waves Humidipak

The patented two-way humidity control packets incorporate a semi-permeable, leak-proof membrane that is formulated to either add or remove moisture to maintain a predetermined humidity level. The version designed for musical instruments is calibrated for 49 percent. Easy to use and maintenance-free, the packets generally last from 3-5

months, although more extreme conditions may necessitate more frequent replacement. Magargal says that Humidipak (known in other industries by the brand name Boveda) is getting ready to release an additional version of the product that is specifically engineered for humid environments.

"It will be able to absorb much more vapor and then level off in the 50 percent range," he explains. (Humidipak.com)

Bamboo Charcoal

Bamboo charcoal's porous properties enable it to absorb moisture, odors and polluted air particles. It's made from fast-growing moso bamboo, and we first learned of it from our Japanese distributor, Yamano Music.

"It was initially sold with athletes in mind," says Magargal. "Any activity where you sweat a lot and end up changing and throwing your sweaty clothes or shoes into your bag. It deodorizes and absorbs the moisture so you don't get mold and things like that. They've recently started marketing it for guitars."

The charcoal comes in different sizes, shapes and packaging. One company, Ever Bamboo (everbamboo.com), offers it in soft nylon bags that can be kept in a guitar case. The product can be dried in direct sunlight (2-3 hours per side) and reused for a year or more.

Room Dehumidifiers

If you keep multiple instruments in a music room and humidity is an issue, a dehumidifier is essential. They typically draw indoor air across warm and cool coils that contain refrigerant. As the air passes through, the water vapor is condensed and collected in a container.

Make sure you choose a dehumidifier that is large enough for the room you are trying to dehumidify. Depending on the size of the container, the unit may require frequent maintenance, as the collection tanks sometimes need to be emptied daily. Models tend to vary by the amount of moisture they can collect in a 24-hour period. An important consideration when shopping for models is how easy the water container is to empty. A premium feature on some units is a drain hose that sends the water to a floor drain or the plumbing system in the house.

If you don't have a room dehumidifier, air conditioning will also remove water vapor. You can put a guitar on a stand in the room and also keep the case open to allow the air conditioning to dry the inside of it.

For more information about dehumidifying a guitar, contact our Factory Service Center in El Cajon, California (1-800-943-6782) or our European Factory Service Center in Amsterdam, Netherlands (please visit taylorguitars.com/support for phone numbers). **W&S**



DOUBLE ORCHESTRA

{ The Grand Orchestra rollout continues with rosewood 700 and 800 Series models }

One of the reasons rosewood has amassed an iconic heritage in the acoustic guitar universe is that its broad frequency range and sparkling overtones yield a wonderfully complex voice. Coaxed into the shape of our full-figured Grand Orchestra body style and refined with proprietary GO bracing, that rich musical character now extends even further in every direction: The voice becomes richer, deeper, more powerful, more balanced, more responsive, more dynamic. Each individual note sounds fully formed, and because of the clear articulation, one can better appreciate the fine details that contribute to the complexity. It's the sonic equivalent of watching high-definition television.

"Luxurious" was a word that the guitar's designer, Andy Powers, used to describe our first rosewood/spruce Grand Orchestra, the 918e, upon its release earlier this year.

"You simply play that low E string and it yields all this color and bloom," he marveled, as both a builder and a player.

This summer, we're excited to bring the rosewood/Sitka spruce Grand Orchestra playing experience to the 700 and 800 Series. We begin, as we have with each new GO offering this year, with a limited release of 100 First Edition models. The premium features are largely the same for the 718e and 818e: AA-grade rosewood, Adirondack spruce bracing, and a bone nut and saddle. One difference is that the First Edition 718e, like the other First Editions, incorporates a headstock inlay

(Heritage Diamond), while the 818e is inlay-free. Andy says he and fellow Taylor luthier Larry Breedlove were originally planning to include one, but after stepping back and considering the guitar's overall aesthetic, they felt that the clean, modern identity of the 800 Series was better served by a slightly more understated treatment.

Like Taylor's other First Edition models, the 718e and 818e versions each feature a custom label and case plate. Once the guitar is registered, the owner will receive a custom GO First Edition guitar strap, a numbered certificate of authenticity, and a special commemorative photo book. And because the limited run will disappear quickly, both models will immediately join the Taylor line as standard models, as the 918e has.

Because of a recent change in 700 Series specifications, all 700 Series models now feature Sitka spruce tops rather than Engelmann, so the only difference between the 718e and 818e models will be the respective appointment packages. Fans of a more vintage personality will likely gravitate toward the sunburst treatment on the 718e (although a tobacco or honey sunburst top is available as a standard model option on the 818e), while the 818e's blend of curly maple binding, abalone rosette, and refined pearl fretboard inlay tastefully define Taylor's flagship rosewood/spruce series as a contemporary classic.

Look for these rosewood Grand Orchestra models at your local Taylor dealer.

L-R: First Edition 718e, 818e

MUSIC'S HEALING POWER

**PERFORMING ARTIST ERIKA LUCKETT REFLECTS
ON THE VITAL ROLE MUSIC PLAYED IN HER
RECOVERY FROM A LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESS.**

By Erika Lockett



Photo by L. Seed

Editor's Note: We begin a series that explores the connection between music and wellness with Erika Lockett's account of her difficult journey through cancer. Some readers may remember Lockett, a longtime Taylor player, from our past coverage of her music, or from her appearance in our catalog several years ago. We had already been planning this series when, in an unexpected coincidence, she reached out to us, offering to share her story. We're glad she did.

SOME OF MY EARLIEST MEMORIES REVOLVE AROUND MUSIC:

as a four-year-old, lying under my grandmother's baby grand piano and feeling "Moonlight Sonata" envelop me, eyes closed, awash in the vibrations pouring from the keys; as a six-year-old, cuddled next to my mother while she strummed the nylon-string guitar and sang Mexican rancheras. It wasn't long before I took her guitar (though still too big for me to hold across my lap) and laid it on the floor. There I plucked my first songs on six open strings. Little did I know that my love affair with music would become a lifelong relationship. Not only would it be my passport to a rewarding career, but ultimately it would also prove to be an essential part of my very survival.

The sun sparkled off San Francisco Bay as I headed over the Golden Gate Bridge for a recording session in Sausalito. My partner Lisa and I had just returned from a couple of tours, and I was happy to be home. As a performing artist, I was used to being away for long stretches, but the last six months had felt different. I was more tired than usual. It was hard to point to a single symptom, but something felt off. Maybe it was time for me to slow down. We were preparing to record a new album and already had over a year of concert dates booked. It was hard to think about slowing down with so much ahead.

I arrived at the studio and had to muster the energy to get out of the car and walk up the stairs to the entryway. It was so strange to feel this level of depletion. I had been a lifelong athlete — a long-distance swimmer, marathon runner, triathlete, mountain biker, yogi. What was this about? As I made my way up the short flight of stairs I felt progressively dizzy until everything went dark. It was the sound of the engineer calling my name that brought me back to consciousness.

The paramedics arrived in a flurry of efficiency. In seconds I had EEG monitors on my chest and back, and a battery of basic tests were underway. My blood pressure, temperature and heart rate were normal. Did I want to go to an emergency room for further tests? No, I was fine. I would go into the studio to complete the session, then call Lisa to let her know what happened. I didn't want to alarm her, and I also

knew that, more than anyone, she was aware of my steady health decline. I couldn't pretend anymore. The next day we saw a physician, and within three days I was diagnosed with two massive ovarian tumors and a staggering CA-125 count that pointed to ovarian cancer.

Over the next few days I began making a handful of important calls to my family and closest friends. The story still seemed foreign, as if I was delivering someone else's news. My mother, forever the optimist, said, "It's just a cyst, right?" "No, Mama," I replied. "There are two very large tumors, one the size of a melon, the other the size of a mango."

While it was important to lean towards the good and see myself emerging from this unexpected firestorm in complete health, it also was critical to look unflinchingly at my condition and understand the specifics of what was occurring. The changes in my body were accelerating at a buckling speed, and by Sunday, just two days after the discovery of the tumors, I could barely move. My abdomen was increasingly swollen and pushing against my diaphragm, making it hard to speak. I had to sit up in bed in order to sleep because I couldn't breathe lying down. It was shocking how quickly my condition had deteriorated.

Within days we discovered that in addition to the tumors, I had innumerable blood clots and pulmonary embolisms. Cancer can cause the blood to be sticky, and due to the extended hours spent on airplanes and cars while touring, I had amassed a collection for the record books. The chief radiologist who reviewed my scans said he had "never seen such diseased lungs on a young person." It was such a bizarre revelation, but by this time I could barely move or breathe, so I simply took in his words.

Lisa and I made our way to see Dr. Stern, the surgeon. Driving up Dwight Way in Berkeley, we arrived at the Women's Cancer Center, a building I had passed hundreds of times before but never really noticed. It was a nondescript, beige structure that had no reason to attract attention except for those who needed its services. It now had become a part of my world and

would continue to be a weekly fixture for the next year. We made a swift entry into this new reality.

We had heard that Dr. Stern's surgical skills far outmatched his bedside manner and were prepared for a brusque encounter. What we found was just the opposite. A tall, gentle man, Dr. Stern welcomed us into his office and looked over his professional glasses as we discussed my case. We had a barrage of questions, with Lisa leading the way. My talking was hampered by an inability to breathe easily, and we asked about that. A flood of new vocabulary entered the conversation. Words and concepts that flowed effortlessly from Dr. Stern's lips lodged awkwardly on my own: tumor markers, CT scans, surgery, chemotherapy, ascites. With uncanny timing, a short man with a closely shaved head and piercing green eyes entered the room. "Ahhh, this is Dr. Cecchi," said Dr. Stern. "He'll be your oncologist." *My oncologist?* I thought. I couldn't believe I was hearing these words. *Cancer. Chemotherapy. Oncologist.* Where did this come from? There was talking around me, but I couldn't process the conversation while a turbulent emotional undertow was pulling me into mysterious dark waters. I tried to plug every new piece of information into a familiar frame. How long would it take for me to get back to "normal"? How long before I was able to perform again? It was as if my small dinghy had lost its mooring, and the further I slipped out to sea, the more I looked towards the ever-shrinking shore. My world — the external structures, rhythms, appointments and deadlines — was fading behind the urgency of saving my life.



Before I could move, I listened. While still in the womb, the cochlea in our ears forms by the fifth month, making sound the first sense to connect to the outer world. It is primal. Fundamental. Music, an organized and coherent expression of sound, becomes one of the first forms of nourishment for the

continued on next page

body. Besides the stream of nutrients flowing through the umbilical cord, each of us carries the initial imprint of our mother's heartbeat, the first drum.

In order to heal from my life-threatening situation, I had to start at the beginning. First, by tapping into the innate intelligence that courses through the body, the incomprehen-

sible brilliance that instructs and coordinates the symphonic interplay of trillions of cells. And second, by remembering that although my body had fallen dangerously out of balance, a vast majority of functions and organs was still working well. Surgery and chemotherapy would be powerful tools to eliminate the cancer, but I also had

to balance these intrusive and toxic approaches by nourishing my body/mind/spirit in other ways. As I had first done in the womb, I leaned towards music.

In my hospital bed, I could barely move yet was still keenly aware of the sound around me. Most of it was jarring noise: monitors beeping, paging on the overhead speakers outside the room, the unsettling groans from the woman recovering from surgery and now sharing my room. It was nearly impossible to rest. Considering that cancer is a chaotic proliferation of cells, it seemed that bringing a calm order and beauty to my soundscape would be a great place to start. A dear friend brought me noise-canceling headphones, and Karen Drucker and John Hoy gave me one of their healing music CDs. I put on the headphones and listened to the CD again and again. The lyrics affirmed my wellbeing, but after a while, I stopped "hearing" the lyrics and simply felt the pulse and vibration move through me. In the unfamiliar terrain of the hospital world, I closed my eyes and felt at home. It was a first step towards healing, reconnecting with the drum of a mother's heartbeat.



Science is beginning to explain what healers have known and practiced for millennia: Music is a powerful force for healing. Whether it comes through a shaman's rattle or a Latin American curandera's song, cultures around the world have incorporated music into their healing traditions. Though many of these energetic properties have yet to be empirically proven, there is ample evidence of music's beneficial effects. While allopathic physicians have made great strides in understanding the "matter" side of medicine, they have historically rejected modalities that work through an "energetic" approach. This is beginning to change. In 2007, cardiac surgeon, author and television personality Dr. Mehmet Oz proclaimed to Oprah Winfrey's audience that the next big frontier in medicine is "energy medicine." His perspective adds to a growing chorus of esteemed scientists, researchers and physicians. Norm Shealy, M.D., founding president of the American Holistic Medical Association, wrote that "energy medicine is the future of all medicine." In his book *Vibrational Medicine*, Richard Gerber, M.D., goes further by stating: "The ultimate approach to healing will be to remove the abnormalities at the subtle-

energy level which led to the manifestation of illness in the first place."

The resistance to accepting energy-based healing is akin to the resistance people had towards believing the presence of invisible waves that transport radio signals, the possibility of transmitting visual images wirelessly, or the unimaginable folly of having a global communication web that serves as a real-time exchange of audio and visual data. Thankfully, our understanding of the world and its mind-boggling intricacy and interconnectedness continues to evolve.

Over a hundred years ago, Einstein introduced the notion that matter is energy. Quantum physicists such as Max Planck, David Bohm and Erwin Schrödinger further demonstrated the vibrational capacity of every atom. Everything vibrates. The densest of granite slabs vibrates. We live in a vibrational universe. I have spent my life in the creation and study of music, a coherent expression of sonic vibration and beauty. From composition and film scoring studies at Berklee College of Music to a career as an award-winning songwriter and guitarist, now I had the opportunity to apply everything I had ever learned to my own healing. This was no longer an abstract pursuit, but rather an essential part of my return to wellness. I stepped onto the healing path with my mind, heart and ears resonating to the highest possibilities.

Subtleties aside, there are numerous measurable effects that music has on healing. First, listening to music releases endorphins, the body's own painkilling wonderdrug. Released by the pituitary gland and the hypothalamus, endorphins not only relieve pain, they also enhance the immune system, reduce stress levels, postpone the aging process, modulate appetite, lower blood pressure, and influence calm or euphoric states of mind. All of these benefits come without side effects, and best of all, they're free!

Endorphin release is just part of the constellation of benefits offered by listening to healing music. Dr. Mitchell L. Gaynor, director of medical oncol-

ogy and integrative medicine at New York Hospital's cancer prevention center, and author of the book *Sounds of Healing*, writes that music "also trims complications after heart attack, calms anxiety, slows breathing and increases production of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers. Consider: 80 percent of stimuli that reach our brains come in through our ears." When we think of the brain as the central command station coordinating the myriad functions of the body, sending the

"REUNITING WITH MY GUITAR FELT LIKE REIGNITING MY MAINFRAME'S POWER SYSTEM."

signals that trigger cellular response and organ function, it only makes sense that we monitor what we ingest through our ears.

Although there are various esoteric systems that establish specific tonal relationships to different organs, we can also use our own awareness to monitor how music makes us feel. Certain genres induce feelings of calm and relaxation, while others energize and infuse our bodies with joy. When I underwent my first surgery, I created a playlist that included the album of songs inspired by Rumi's poetry that Lisa and I had recorded a few years earlier. I wanted to infuse my mind and body with a sonic stream of memories and songs that reminded me of joy, my connection to my loved ones, and to the loving presence imbued in the universe. While receiving my eight-hour chemotherapy infusions, I listened to an extended playlist that included Beleruth Naparstek's compositions, which were specifically tailored to wellness.

There were two more important aspects to my healing music journey. Part of my healing was stepping into



Photo by E. Pedersen

a new expression, bringing my attention to something beyond my cancer treatment, something that would feel rewarding and nourishing. I began to play the cello. Grace (and in this case, Google) guided me towards a beautiful couple in Berkeley who were open to teaching a neophyte undergoing chemo treatments. They were angels who ushered me into a luscious world of sound. I sat for hours feeling the low tones emanate from this instrument and expand throughout my entire body. I felt stronger every day.

Finally, I was able to take my guitar

off its stand and reconnect with my dearest musical friend, the one that had been with me since my childhood, the six strings that had heard my laughter and felt my tears. Songs began to pour out, a stream of memories and release. Reuniting with my guitar felt like reigniting my mainframe's power system. My mom said that once she saw me with my guitar in hand she knew I was going to be all right.

It's been nearly two years since I was diagnosed. I'm cancer-free and back to full and vibrant health. I'm practicing yoga daily and delighting in

the privilege of being alive. Because of the variety of complications with my case, doctors had given me about a 3 percent chance of survival. In the same way that we can never know the singular cause for cancer and find ourselves teasing through the mix of genetic, environmental, stress or lifestyle-related factors, I know that my healing was also due to an integrative and holistic approach that included the traditional treatments of surgery and chemotherapy along with "alternative" approaches of diet, meditation, visualization, acupuncture, yoga, uncondi-

tional love, and, of course, music. With guitar in hand, I return to the deep joy of wellness, grateful for this love affair that has lasted a lifetime. **W&S**

Erika Luckett is an internationally acclaimed composer, performing musician and educator. Her work for film and television earned an Academy Award nomination and two Emmy awards. She has collaborated with international organizations to deepen the understanding of human consciousness, healing and the body/mind/spirit connection. Together with

Lisa Ferraro, she presents retreats and workshops across North America that guide participants in the transformational and healing power of music and creativity. She is a proud owner of three Taylor guitars: an 812ce, 714ce-LTD, and a koa T5. ErikaLuckett.com

Soundings

Iommi's Acoustic Side

In early April, Taylor Director of Artist Relations Tim Godwin spent time with the godfather of heavy metal guitar, Black Sabbath co-founder **Tony Iommi**, at a rehearsal studio in Los Angeles, as the legendary band geared up for a string of tour dates leading up to the release of a new album, *13*, in June. Iommi seemed in good spirits, after having spent much of 2012 undergoing treatment for early stage lymphoma. Based on his thoughts from a recent addendum to his 2011 autobiography, *Iron Man*, which addresses his illness, Iommi emerged from the ordeal with a renewed sense of purpose.

"Making music has always been my passion," he writes, "but now it's even more meaningful to me. I'm definitely not thinking about retiring." He says his illness even inspired new songs – and in a fittingly Black Sabbath way. "I think the songs actually got better," he reflects. "More, for lack of a better word, 'doom'."

The new album marks the return of original Sabbath vocalist Ozzy Osbourne, who hadn't worked in the studio with the band since 1978. The studio lineup also featured original bassist Geezer Butler, with drummer Brad Wilk (Rage Against The Machine) subbing for co-founding member Bill Ward. The band teamed up with Grammy-winning producer Rick Rubin, whose burning mission with the band was to recapture the essence of the raw, jammy Sabbath vibe of their debut record, which was recorded in one day back in 1969. Based on the extended length of some of the tunes, Rubin and the band clearly succeeded.

Though Iommi's calling card is his heavy, detuned electric guitar sound (developed out of necessity after an accident in a sheet metal factory when he was 17 claimed the tips of his two middle fingers on his fretting hand and subsequently made bending strings difficult), he also prides himself on the way he has embraced the acoustic guitar to weave lighter interludes between the band's menacingly sludgy riffs for dynamic impact. Iommi told Godwin he picked up his first Taylor acoustic (he can't remember the model) around 1998.

"It was really good," Iommi recalls. "As soon as I tried it I liked the feel, the sound. It was really a nice, comfortable guitar to play."

Iommi had an assortment of Taylors in the studio during the recording of *13*, including an **816ce** and **914ce**, and Godwin brought a couple of guitars to the rehearsal studio, including a **714ce**. (Iommi also has a **T5**, **T3** and **GS Mini** at home in Birmingham, England.)

"I used the acoustic quite a bit on this album," he says. "There's one track that's just acoustic and bass and vocal. It's a really nice sound. It's more like one of our old ones, 'Planet Caravan' [from the 1970 album *Paranoid*]. It's that sort of mood."

Iommi says it wasn't hard to get a good acoustic sound in the studio, and that he and Rubin tried recording the acoustic both direct and with a studio mic.

"Rick is very much into the old way of recording, so I think it was the mic [version] that was used," he shares. "The sound was lovely. I was really pleased with it."

Iommi says he typically tunes down a semitone on the acoustic guitar, and his preferred string gauges for his acoustics are: .010, .012, .021w, .026, .030, .035. Blacksabbath.com

Kid Rock

Taylor recently made a donation pledge of 300 guitars to **Little Kids Rock**, the leading provider of music education and free instruments to public school children in under-served communities across the United States. The organization currently serves nearly 110,000 children with weekly rock and pop-oriented music lessons on donated instruments.

"Little Kids Rock is so grateful to Taylor Guitars for investing in our children's creativity," says founder and executive director David Wish, a former elementary school teacher who established the organization in San Francisco in 2002 after growing frustrated with the lack of music education funding at his school. "Music changes children, and children change the world. Because of Taylor Guitars, many more children will get the chance to leave their mark on the world!"

The guitars will be distributed to schools across the nation and are expected to benefit thousands of K-12 school children. On April 5, the first 40 of the 300 donated guitars were

unveiled at PS 34/Franklin Delano Roosevelt Academy in New York City. These 40 are being distributed to schools across the city, while the rest will be donated to schools across the country. The students at PS 34 were ecstatic at the opportunity for guitar instruction.

"Little Kids Rock and Taylor Guitars share a mutual affinity for fostering creativity through music education," shared Taylor co-founder and CEO Kurt Listug. "We're honored to enrich the lives of today's students and tomorrow's leaders."

Taylor has a rich history of partnering with leading organizations to benefit music education, including the San Diego Music Foundation, which led to the development of the Taylor Guitars for Schools program. Since 2001, the program has placed over 2,000 guitars in San Diego schools and benefited tens of thousands of school-aged children.

Littlekidsrock.org

Doing Well

Joe Dunwell from the UK roots-rock act **The Dunwells** (**714ce**, **414ce**, **214ce**, **GS Mini**, **T5-S1**, **SB1-SP**)

checked in with us this spring to share that the band been recording tracks for their next album with their "beloved" Taylors at Dave Grohl's studio in California. Ever since making their breakthrough splash in America at the International Folk Alliance Conference in 2011, the group has been touring up a storm in support of their debut release, *Blind Sighted Faith*, building momentum in the States and adding to their following across the Atlantic on the strength of their impassioned shows and tight familial harmonies (courtesy of brothers Joe and Dave, plus two cousins). They'll be busy throughout the summer's event-packed festival season, playing at gatherings that include Lollapalooza, Bunbury and Summerfest in the U.S.; Winnipeg, Ontario and Calgary in Canada; and The Great Escape, Cropready and Live at Leeds in the UK. TheDunwells.com

Brown Goes Big

You can add **Zac Brown** and his bandmates **Clay Cook** and **Coy Bowles** to the growing list of Grand Orchestra fans. Taylor's Andy Powers says the Southern boys have had three GO models, a **918e**, **518e** and mahogany-top **528e**, with them on their current tour. (Zac plays the 918e in the official video for the band's tune "Jump Right In.")

"They are the go-to guitars that don't get packed with the gear," Andy passed along. "They are riding on the bus." Zacbrownband.com

Goners

American Idol Season 11 winner **Phillip Phillips** (**GS7**) has been devoting some of his time and creativity to support music education, enlisting fans to bring some creativity of their own to the effort. Together with DoSomething.org and the VH1 Save The Music Foundation, Phillips recently tapped fans to contribute video submissions to be considered for a compilation video for his hit tune "Gone Gone Gone." The crowdsourcing campaign, dubbed "Band Together," ran for six weeks, from April 30 through June 14, during which Phillips issued a different musical/video challenge to fans each week, such as copying the a beat, riff, melody, etc. from the song. At press time the campaign was still underway, after which Phillips planned to review and select the video snippets that would star along with him in the music video for the song. The video is scheduled to be released sometime this summer. You can learn more about Band Together by visiting dosomething.org/band.

DoSomething.org is the country's largest not-for-profit organization for young people and social change. Campaigns include causes such as bullying, animal cruelty, homelessness, cancer, and of course, music education. The national campaigns provide an outlet for 13- to 25-year-olds to make a positive impact. Phillipphillips.com

Red-Handed

Country-pop powerhouse **Taylor Swift** has been sporting a new Taylor guitar on her latest tour: a ruby-hued **614ce** to color-coordinate with her *RED* album. Since its release in October of last year, nearly 6 million copies of the album have been sold, and as we readied this issue for publication, Swift had just hauled in eight trophies at the Billboard Music Awards, where she claimed Artist of the Year, Top Billboard 200 Artist, Top Female Artist, Top Digital Songs Artist, Top Billboard 200 Album (*RED*), Top Country Artist, Top Country Album (*RED*), and Top Country Song (for "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together"). Her six-month North American tour, which extends through September, will cover 66 shows, including 13 stadium dates, before she heads to Australia and New Zealand. Swift also recently picked up

a sunburst-top Grand Orchestra First Edition **718e**. Taylorswift.com

Live at 35

We recently partnered with Southwest Airlines, in conjunction with their Live at 35™ concert series (35,000 feet, that is), to organize the Travelin' Taylor Tour, a series of six in-flight shows featuring a half-dozen Taylor-playing acts spanning multiple musical genres. We provided the talent, and the lineup included country up-and-comers **Parmalee**, **The Farm** and **Easton Corbin**, along with the folk-rock trio **Good Old War**, retro-rockers **Vintage Trouble**, and former *American Idol* winner **Taylor Hicks**.

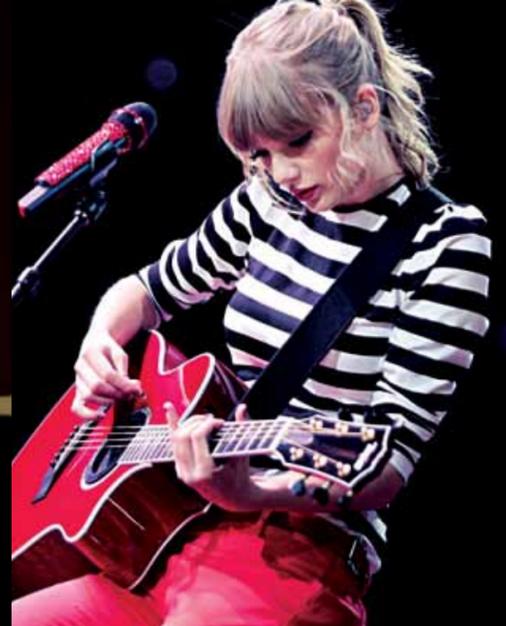
The in-flight shows took place over a two-week period in the second half of May. Each music act boarded a Southwest flight on a separate day, performing at least two songs with a custom Southwest-branded **GS Mini** guitar. The artwork for the six guitars was designed by a Southwest Airlines employee, and the graphic treatment was later adapted for the guitars. Each act signed their GS Mini after their performance, and all six were slated to be given away through a sweepstakes promotion that eligible contestants entered through the Southwest website. Each performance also was documented by video, the results of which have been posted for viewing both at taylorguitars.com and blogsouthwest.com/blgsw.

To chronicle the making of the special guitars, Southwest sent a videographer to the Taylor complex, and footage was shot on location at our factory in nearby Tecate, Mexico, where the GS Mini is produced. Taylor luthier Andy Powers added some nice commentary about Taylor's philosophy of craftsmanship to the video, and in a nod to both the playful spirit of the GS Mini and the Southwest culture, he noted that "the best musician is, in a lot of ways, the one having the most fun."

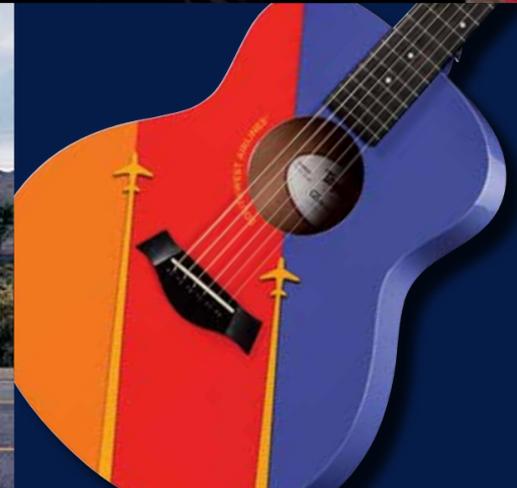
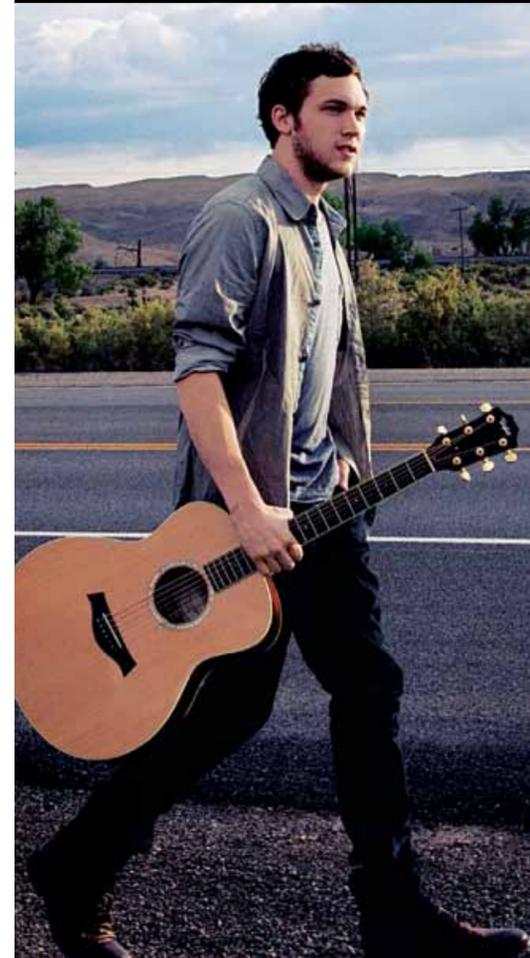
Porch Rocking

While the cabins of their airplanes may make for a unique music venue, Southwest Airlines has also been hosting concerts in more terrestrial settings. Among them is the Southwest Porch, which brings a loungy outdoor vibe, food and drink, and good music to residents of four of their destination cities: Atlanta, Dallas, Denver and New York. In the wake of our creative collaboration

continued on page 26



Clockwise from top left: Tony Iommi; Taylor Swift (photo by Christie Goodwin); members of The Farm (in the aisle) with Southwest Airlines passengers; Students enjoy a Taylor SolidBody donated to Little Kids Rock; The Dunwells; Phillip Phillips; Custom Southwest Airlines-branded GS Mini



for the aforementioned Travelin' Taylor Tour, the airline knew just who to call to book a blues artist for a recent show at their "Porch" location in midtown Manhattan's Bryant Park. The occasion was a celebration of Southwest's Chicago-to-New York service and the airline's partnership with the Chicago Blues Festival, the largest free blues festival in the world.

We recommended blazing blues-rock guitarist and soulful singer-songwriter **Michael Williams (812ce)**, a surging talent who has toured with musical greats Buddy Guy, Eric Johnson, Robert Cray and Jonny Lang. His most recent record with the Michael Williams Band, *Fire Red*, was produced by Grammy-winning legend Eddie Kramer (Jimmy Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, Buddy Guy). Though Williams' tasty fretwork with his band is more steeped in the electric blues world, as a songwriter he also draws inspiration from the acoustic guitar and his Taylor. We asked him how he knows which guitar is right for him in a recent interview for our Taylor Sessions online feature at taylorguitars.com.

"It takes a few weeks of getting to know the instrument," he says. "After I have it in my hands for a while and I start to really connect with the instrument, it's hard for me to put it down. And with the particular guitar I'm playing now, I feel that way. That's how I know that it's the one for me. When you're falling asleep with it, waking up next to it."

As a blues player, Williams seemed like a great fit for our new all-mahogany 500 Series, so Tim Godwin from Artist Relations set him up with a Grand Orchestra **528e** for his solo acoustic

Southwest Porch gig in New York. He immediately picked up on its "big sound, big range," and noted that its sweetness and versatility would suit a variety of roots music applications.

"This is probably one of the coolest guitars I've ever picked up," he said after some extended playing time. "This guitar really brings you back to the basics...it had a look and feel like a Robert Johnson body style...Suffice it to say I won't be putting it down anytime soon."

Michaelwilliamsband.com

Cowboy Farewell

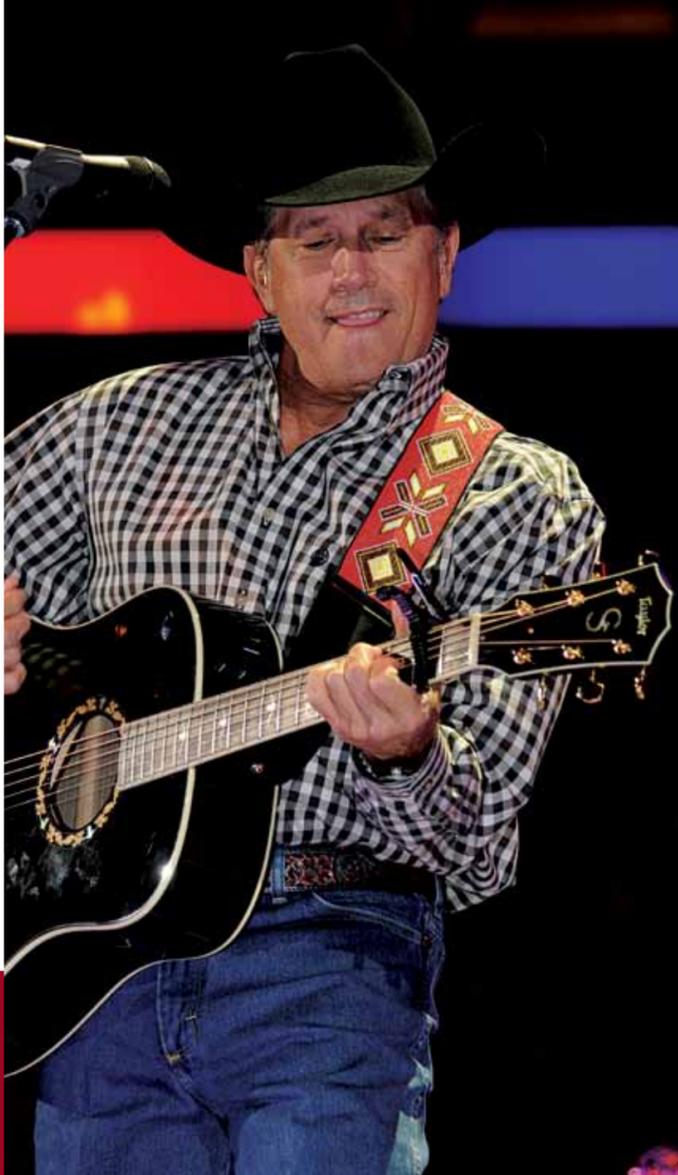
In mid-May, golden-voiced country crooner **George Strait** released his 40th album, *Love is Everything*, whose cover image shows him posing with his sunburst-top **custom Taylor rosewood Dreadnought**. As the new record's first single, "Give It All We Got Tonight," reached the top of the country charts, Strait achieved the remarkable career milestone of being the first artist to notch 60 No. 1 singles. (By comparison, the Beatles had 20, while Elvis Presley had 18.) As a testament to Strait's enduring popularity among fans, fellow artists, and country radio, a campaign and website (sixtyforsixty.com) had been launched upon the single's release to quickly push it to No.1 while Strait was still 60. It came down to the wire, as Strait turned 61 on May 18. Strait says he's deeply appreciative of the support he's received from the country music community over the years, and downplayed the importance of getting the song to No.1 before his birthday. "I'm only gonna want 61,"

he mused in a video interview on the website. The "Sixty For Sixty" site also features heartfelt video tributes to Strait from dozens of country's leading artists, each of whom share fond memories of knowing and touring with Strait, and reveal their favorite songs of his.

After more than 30 years as a performing artist, Strait recently decided to wind down from the grind of touring, so he began making the rounds earlier this year on the first leg of his "Cowboy Rides Away" farewell tour. Along the way he's been playing his newest Taylor, a custom **all-black maple/spruce Dreadnought**. Unique inlay touches on the fretboard and bridge include a stylized "longhorn" motif in pearl and paua (the bridge inlay features an additional leaf element in English boxwood), with the longhorn/leaf designs beautifully integrated for the rosette. Discerning Taylor enthusiasts may recognize the design elements as a spin-off from our 900 and Koa Series 30th anniversary commemorative models offered in 2004.

Strait plans to embark on a second leg of his farewell tour in 2014. Fans needn't worry about Strait's string of hit singles coming to an end, though. He says he still loves working in the studio and has no plans to stop recording. Georgestrait.com

Top down: George Strait performs with his latest custom Dreadnought; **Inlay details on the guitar;** **Bottom left:** Michael Williams with a 528e



The Art of Aging Gracefully

Unlike many other products, a quality guitar will improve with the passage of time

One of the great personality traits of well-made guitars is that they get better with age. Lots of guitar owners know and appreciate this. When I stop and consider this scenario, it seems extraordinary. Typically, physical objects wear out. A thing is made, and upon completion, a process of deterioration soon begins. As if that weren't enough, continuing refinements often push a thing into obsolescence, rendering it less suitable than its replacement for a certain task.

As a fairly young guy, I feel like I grew up in what could be described as a disposable society. My impression is that generations past would have likely repaired an implement when it broke or wore down, while my generation would replace it, due largely to the rapid pace of advancements. I can assure you, I've got no personal vendetta or smug stance against technological progress. I welcome it. I'm writing these words on an iPad that is smaller and slimmer than my sketching notebook, while riding in a winged silver bullet as it speeds through the sky above a cold northern Atlantic Ocean. I'm certainly grateful for a warm and comfortable seat, rather than the cold, wet and dangerous voyage I would have endured to make this same

crossing a century ago. Technological advancement has brought us modern luxuries such as this.

And yet, when I observe the incredible innovations and constant changes these modern developments bring forth, I can't help but also harbor a deep appreciation for simple, quality older objects that assist with time-honored tasks. Not solely for the article itself, but for how long it has performed a task well.

Many of the hand tools I use in the shop were given to me by my granddad, who received them from their original owner, my great-great-granddad, the late inventor Arthur Taylor. (Believe it or not, I come from a line of inventive people with the last name Taylor. Go figure.) These tools were expensive in their time, but have done their duty for a century without flaw or complaint. They function as well now as they did when new. They were built with quality materials and carefully considered design that allowed for wear, maintenance and repair should damage occur. More often than not, the designers and builders even bestowed them with a style and functional grace that has endured, even though aesthetic tastes and the concept of what denotes modern design have changed so much

over the last hundred years. It reminds me of a stirring observation from Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Perpetual modernness is the measure of merit in every work of art."

My appreciation for styling with a past that remains contemporary is what led to our redesign of the new mahogany-topped 500 Series guitars, with a new inlay scheme dubbed the "Century." This line of thinking conjures images of the great instruments from the past. These vintage instruments were deemed great not because they were a certain brand or model built in a certain year or era. What made them great was their musical function. There were some good designs, carefully constructed with quality materials. Musicians enjoyed and praised these instruments because they yielded clear notes with good volume, sustain and balance, along with a host of other musical attributes that enhanced the musical experience. An instrument like that remains as useful and viable now as when it was first built. Arguably even more so, as use and time have improved the very function of these instruments.

Where does all this leave me? With the notion that a quality instrument is one of the few things made today that improves with age. I asked

my wife Maaren what she could name that improves after its creation. "Maybe your favorite cast iron skillet, or something made of leather, like a baseball mitt," she offered. "And some wines, although once they are enjoyed they are gone."

Because of this special characteristic of instruments, as a guitar maker I enjoy the unique privilege of carefully designing and crafting an instrument and handing it off to a player, knowing it will improve with time and use, and remain as useful and pleasing a century from now as it will tomorrow.

On a tangible, physical level, the wood of a good instrument ages and vibrates. It humidifies and dries, and becomes a more efficient sound producer. Its elasticity changes. It's a lot like a new dollar bill that starts out crisp and stiff, resistant to bending and movement. As it is folded, rumpled and creased, and gets wet and dries, it gradually takes on the texture of a swatch of limp cloth. Wood undergoes a similar process in that it becomes far less resistant to movement over time.

It is true that an instrument's finish will lose its carefully polished gleam, and that the inevitable dents and scratches will accumulate. But rather than ruining the guitar, to me, these reveal a life well lived. Each will contribute to the heritage and life story of that unique instrument, even the frustrating accidents. Of course, a guitar

Recently, Bob Taylor and I were talking with a friend about the real cost of a good instrument and how it compares to other items. At first glance, a quality guitar seems expensive, but I can draw a comparison to another purchase I made. My wife and I bought a new computer about six years ago. Many of you are probably already laughing at the age of such a dinosaur. It wasn't a top-of-the-line model, but it was similar in price to the 320e model guitar we've begun making. The computer worked well, for a while. Then it needed updates and a security program, which cost a certain amount every year. Then, a disk drive failed, followed by another. Fortunately they were repairable, but at a significant cost. Then the letter "T" broke off the keyboard and was not repairable. I'll tell you, great creativity is needed to type without the letter "T". We were fortunate it wasn't the letter "E" or we would have been in real trouble!

Recently, the machine entered its final phase of life, delivering stern messages of impending doom on its screen. Evidently, the technological world surrounding this computer has moved on, making this machine no longer functional. Meanwhile, at the same age, the 320e would still be happily settling into its real personality, the top and back becoming more efficient sound transmitters with regular playing time, the guitar sounding better

On a physical level, the wood of a good instrument ages and vibrates. Its elasticity changes. It becomes far less resistant to movement over time.

needs to be well cared for to stay in top trim. Strings need changing; frets need occasional leveling or replacement. But these are repairable and accounted for. In fact, anticipating the potential need for service is one of the primary reasons Taylor's NT neck was developed. As the geometry of a guitar slowly changes throughout the aging process, the relationship between the neck and the body may need to be minutely adjusted to maintain perfect function. In the past, this might have meant a difficult and possibly damaging repair operation. No longer. We are slowly moving toward the time when the very first Taylor guitars with NT necks will reach adolescence and may need an adjustment to keep the playing action ideal. Instead of a difficult operation, this adjustment has been reduced to a simple 10-minute tune-up.

and better with every day and string change. It would probably be about time to have the frets dressed, and possibly a saddle replaced, depending on how much it had worn. After a minor tune-up, the guitar would be ready for another decade of music, every day continuing to sound better, and far better than the day it was completed.

I recognize that these two objects perform radically different functions and have very different expectations placed upon them. I only make this comparison to point out that a quality guitar is a lasting gift, uniquely built to offer a lifetime of enjoyment, and likely several. That is something very, very valuable and dear to us, and something we are proud to offer.



Enrichment in Cameroon

Improvements continue within the Crelicam mill and out in the forest, and employees celebrate Cameroon's holiday traditions together

By Anne Middleton

Ed. Note: Taylor assumed an ownership stake in Crelicam, an African ebony mill in Cameroon, in late 2011. Since then, we have been working with our partner, Madinter Trade, to improve the processes of harvesting and processing ebony to reduce waste and build a more ethical, sustainable sourcing operation. Our periodic reports will share our latest developments there. In this update, Crelicam Community Relations Manager Anne Middleton reports on progress so far in 2013.

Crelicam has been busier than ever this year as we've worked to improve the cutting process, implement new harvesting procedures, and build relationships with forest communities. But it hasn't been all work and no play. We've also taken the time to celebrate Cameroon's holidays together as a company. Here are some highlights from the past several months.

Better Cutting Tools and Techniques

Bob Taylor arrived in March with his team of technical experts from Taylor's factory complex in El Cajon, California. The team, led by tooling engineer Wayne Brinkley and mechanical wizard Jesus Jurado, designed and built two custom sets of parts for the saws here called "blockworks." Once mounted onto Crelicam's table saws, the blockworks enable the operators to cut the raw timber perfectly straight using pneumatics and magnets. Hav-

ing straight-edged wood enables our sawyers to make thoughtful decisions on how to further cut it, with an eye toward getting the most yield from each specific piece. Rather than simply cutting to order, the sawyers now can cut the wood depending on what they see, assessing whether it would be better suited for fingerboard or bridge blanks, for example. As a result, our yield continues to increase, which means more trees in the forest for conservation or future guitar building.

Taylor's continual investment of technical expertise at the mill provides Crelicam employees with valuable knowledge, training and tools that they didn't previously have. Looking ahead, Bob and the team in Cameroon have drawn up plans to completely overhaul the existing factory; the plans include the installation of new machines to better process wood. This, in turn, will allow Crelicam to increase its profits so that more revenue from the ebony stays in Cameroon to continue improving the local economy.

Traceability and Community Development

Now that Charlie Redden, Taylor's Supply Chain Manager, is based in Cameroon to manage the Crelicam factory, the wood buyers really have time to dig deep into how the ebony goes from being a standing tree to a piece of sawn timber in the mill, and to improve that end of the supply chain.

International laws such as the U.S. Lacey Act and the European Union

Timber Regulation (EUTR) stipulate that wood products traded in the U.S. and EU are legally sourced. What does this mean, exactly? It means that Taylor Guitars is responsible for knowing where wood was cut and by whom, and that no plant protection laws were broken during the harvest and transport of the wood. This is precisely why Taylor Guitars purchased Crelicam – to better manage the ebony harvesting process in Cameroon. It's not easy. When one examines the details of legality in Cameroon, things get complicated in a hurry. Unlike bigger stakeholders in Cameroon, Crelicam has no land concession, or Forest Management Unit (UFA in French). And due to the special permitting process for ebony, Crelicam is limited to very few areas of the country. Therefore, employees and suppliers must work diligently to find ebony in other areas of Cameroon, such as community forests. Harvesting wood from these forests enables Crelicam to play a role in community development as well, and each trip to the forest now includes meetings with local officials, community leaders and forest experts. Slowly but surely, Taylor's investment in Cameroon is reaching the far corners of the jungle.

Crelicam suppliers now know how to use GPS units to specifically georeference the location of each ebony tree. Suppliers are experimenting with different ways to cut and store the wood, including wrapping the wood in plastic and keeping it out of direct sunlight, as well as using wood

sealer to prevent billets from splitting at the ends. When the wood arrives at the factory without cracks, the yield increases even more. And again, increased yield means more trees in the forest.

International Women's Day

March 8 is International Women's Day. Here in Yaoundé, this is celebrated with a big parade, and every woman in the country dons a dress made of the International Women's Day fabric of the year. Currently we only have four women working at Crelicam, so we chose not to march in the parade. However, we still wore our dresses, and everyone enjoyed refreshments at the factory after work. Our management made speeches on the importance of empowering and employing women. Maybe next year we'll have more working here!

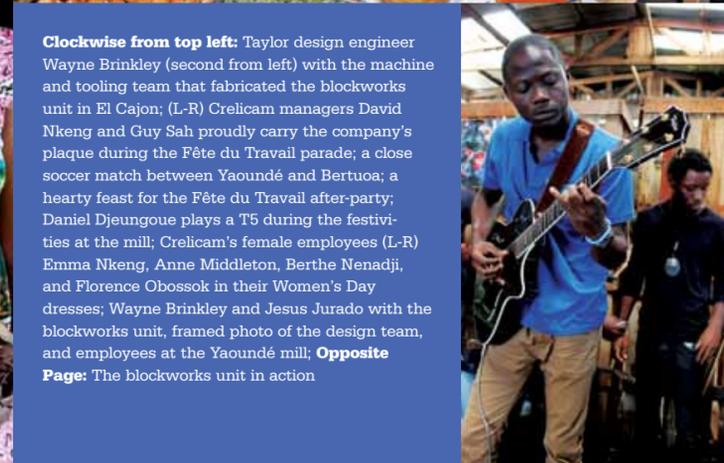
La Fête du Travail

May 1 is La Fête du Travail (Labor Day) and is arguably the biggest party of the year in Cameroon. This year Crelicam had a celebration for the books. The day before the big parades, the employees from our Bertoua mill arrived in Yaoundé to challenge the Yaoundé sawyers to a game of soccer, which is not only popular in Cameroon as a recreational activity but has special significance: It's the country's only sport with a professional national team. (The team has qualified six times for the FIFA World Cup, and the Indomitable Lions, as they're known, have deified

status in the local villages.) It was particularly difficult to decide which team to root for, especially since they are equally matched. In the end, the family and friends who gathered enjoyed cheering for both teams.

On the actual holiday, everyone has the day off, and companies march down the main streets in matching outfits as a huge party unfolds. This year, Crelicam employees wore blue shirts, which bore – for the first time – our new logo. People arrived in the local jurisdiction of Mfou by the carload and ambled proudly down the streets, saluting the local authorities as they passed by. After the parade, everyone returned to the mill, which the Crelicam house band had transformed into a stage with seating, while the Crelicam kitchen served a feast of Cameroonian fare 36 hours in the making. The local primary school performed a few musical numbers for employees, and then the band got started. Mid-set they played a special "American" tune for Charlie Redden – their version of rock/heavy metal. Employees and their spouses ate, drank and danced into the night. Miraculously, when the next workday rolled around, only a few lingering soda bottles hinted that a celebration had taken place.

Overall, spirits continue to soar, yield continues to increase, and Taylor remains more committed than ever to improving the lives of the employees and the sustainability of ebony. **W&S**



Clockwise from top left: Taylor design engineer Wayne Brinkley (second from left) with the machine and tooling team that fabricated the blockworks unit in El Cajon; (L-R) Crelicam managers David Nkeng and Guy Sah proudly carry the company's plaque during the Fête du Travail parade; a close soccer match between Yaoundé and Bertoua; a hearty feast for the Fête du Travail after-party; Daniel Djeungoue plays a T5 during the festivities at the mill; Crelicam's female employees (L-R) Emma Nkeng, Anne Middleton, Berthe Nenadi, and Florence Obosok in their Women's Day dresses; Wayne Brinkley and Jesus Jurado with the blockworks unit, framed photo of the design team, and employees at the Yaoundé mill; **Opposite Page:** The blockworks unit in action

Events

BottleRock Napa Valley Napa, California May 9-12

In early May, a Taylor contingent from our marketing and sales team ventured upstate to the picturesque Napa Valley in Northern California to take part in BottleRock, a first-time festival that delivered a sensory feast of world-class music, wine, food, craft beer and comedy. The event was set in the middle of downtown Napa, as dozens of local wineries, restaurants and food trucks tantalized people's taste buds over

four days. The diverse musical lineup featured more than 80 top music and comedy acts, including Taylor players Allen Stone, Iron & Wine, Zac Brown Band, Train, Tristan Prettyman and Grouplove. The sun was out the entire weekend, creating an ideal setting for a spring outdoor music gathering. The BottleRock organizers projected that about 35-40,000 people would pass through the festival grounds during the weekend, and our crew was ready.

Our exhibition space was set up near the entrance, which meant that arriving guests were treated to an enticing display of guitars. Our exhibition team answered questions and talked with players about their guitar preferences. Nearly 30 guitars were showcased, including GS Minis, the Baritone

8-String, and a gorgeous Hawaiian koa K24ce. The latter two were among the stars of the show, as almost everybody who dropped by had to try out both, while the Mini, predictably, also ended up in plenty of hands. Many people were happily surprised to see a guitar manufacturer exhibiting at the festival, and were even happier when we told them they could play any of the guitars on display. The fun ensued in a variety of ways, from impromptu jam sessions with onlookers dancing to singer-songwriters belting out original tunes. The show was a mix of young and old, and many visitors commented that they were originally there to just listen to music, but enjoyed having a chance to make some off their own. Several guitars even found new homes that weekend.

This was essentially the first mainstream rock festival that Taylor has attended as an exhibitor, and the positive reception all around validated our desire to do more of these types of events. It's always a pleasure to connect with new audiences, especially when we treat people to their first Taylor experience, hopefully with many more to follow.

Musikmesse Frankfurt, Germany April 10-13

Musikmesse, Europe's answer to the U.S. NAMM Show, serves as Taylor's premier trade event for interacting with international MI retailers and European consumers. This year's event was an unqualified success, as our European sales and marketing staff met with over 100 dealers, distributors and prospective dealers over the course of the show. Now that Taylor has established a dedicated presence in Europe, there was a discernable sense that we are beginning to reap the rewards of the infrastructure we have built in terms of supporting the retail and service experiences and strengthening Taylor's brand awareness.

We began the show with a special event to formally introduce the Grand Orchestra (GO) to members of the international media. About 60 music industry journalists enjoyed drinks, dinner and a presentation by Andy Powers and Bob Taylor on the guitar's development, followed by an opportunity to sample different Grand Orchestra models and talk further with Andy and Bob. The GO was later honored at the show with a Musikmesse International Press Award (M.I.P.A.) for Best Acoustic Guitar, and Taylor's Andy Powers

accepted the award on the company's behalf. More than 160 publications from around the world cast their votes for the top products in over 40 musical instrument categories to determine the M.I.P.A. winners. The prestigious award has been called the "Grammy" of the Musical Instrument/Pro Audio industry.

Beyond the GO, other new models made their debut at our trade fair exhibition booth, including our koa 200 Series guitars, our Spring Limited Editions, and a couple of offerings that hadn't yet been developed at Winter NAMM: our all-mahogany 500 Series models and mahogany-top 300 Series guitars (both of which are featured this issue).

Our sales manager for Europe, Frank Stevens, said the new offerings were well received all around.

"Everybody – dealers, distributors, industry friends and the press – agreed that the new models add value to an already crowded marketplace," he noted. Stevens acknowledged that Taylor has strengthened its relationships with its network of more than 220 independent dealers by being good business partners during a time of economic challenges in Europe.

"Taylor is able to create solutions for guitar retailers during these times," he says. "I'm convinced retailers will invest the limited budgets they have with reliable, supportive partners such as our company."

Stevens relayed that one dealer who was impressed by the Taylor booth referred to the atmosphere as one of "relaxed professionalism."

"I'm proud of what our team achieved at Frankfurt," he added. "It takes quality guitars, quality people, and a big sense of pride in order to be successful. All of those ingredients were combined perfectly at Musikmesse."

www.taylorguitars.com

Calendar

After a great season of Road Shows across North America and Europe through June, we're taking a brief hiatus before rolling out with a fresh stock of guitars this fall. In the meantime, we have more than 40 Find Your Fit sales events scheduled in North America, and we'll be attending a variety of festivals and other events. If we don't see you, we hope you enjoy a relaxing, music-filled summer!

North America Find Your Fit Sales Events

Hollywood, CA

Monday, July 22, 1 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Sam Ash Music - Hollywood
(323) 850-1050

San Diego, CA

Monday, July 29, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Music Power
(858) 565-8814

Santa Monica, CA

Tuesday, July 30, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
McCabe's Guitar Shop
(310) 828-4497

Palo Alto, CA

Thursday, August 1, 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Gryphon Stringed Instruments
(650) 493-2131

San Rafael, CA

Friday, August 2, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Bananas at Large
(415) 457-7600

Lewes, DE

Monday, July 15, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
B&B Music and Sound
(302) 645-0601

Spring Hill, FL

Tuesday, July 30, 12 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Quality Guitars
(352) 200-4851

Daytona Beach, FL

Wednesday, July 31, 12 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Total Entertainment
(386) 254-8727

Merritt Island, FL

Thursday, August 1, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Island Music
(321) 459-5000

Lakeland, FL

Friday, August 2, 12 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Carlton Music Center
(863) 686-3179



Myrtle Beach, FL

Wednesday, August 28, 1 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Andy Owings Music Center
(843) 448-1508

Houma, LA

Monday, August 19, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
C&M Music - Houma
(985) 876-9711

Lafayette, LA

Tuesday, August 20, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
C&M Music - Lafayette
(337) 989-2838

Gonzales, LA

Wednesday, August 21, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Music Inc. of Louisiana
(225) 647-8681

Mandeville, LA

Thursday, August 22, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
C&M Music - Mandeville
(985) 626-3920

Kenner, LA

Tuesday, August 23, 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.
C&M Music - Kenner
(504) 468-8688

Waldorf, MD

Tuesday, August 27, 2 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Hot Licks Guitar Shop
(301) 843-2799

Bozeman, MT

Saturday, July 27, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Music Villa
(406) 457-4761

Billings, MT

Monday, July 29, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Hansen Music
(406) 245-4544

Helena, MT

Tuesday, July 30, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Piccolo's Music
(406) 443-4709

Missoula, MT

Wednesday, July 31, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Outlaw Music
(406) 541-7533

Monroe, NC

Tuesday, August 27, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Holloway's Music Center
(704) 283-2814

Wilmington, NC

Thursday, August 29, 12 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Music Loft of Wilmington
(910) 799-9310

Jamestown, NY

Thursday, August 8, 1 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Trinity Guitars
(716) 665-4490

Webster, NY

Friday, August 9, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
The Music Store
(585) 265-1210

Ithaca, NY

Saturday, August 10, 12 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Ithaca Guitar Works
(607) 272-2602

New York, NY

Monday, August 12, 12 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Rudy's Music Stop
(212) 391-1699

Roslyn, NY

Tuesday, August 13, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
The Music Zoo
(516) 626-9292

Tarrytown, NY

Saturday, August 24, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Rock Island Sound
(914) 631-9100

Middletown, NY

Monday, August 26, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Alto Music - Middletown
(845) 692-6922

Spartanburg, SC

Monday, August 26, 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Roper Music
(864) 542-2263

Houston, TX

Saturday, September 7, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Fuller's Guitar
(713) 880-2188

Virginia Beach, VA

Saturday, August 24, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Alpha Music
(757) 486-2001

Richmond, VA

Monday, August 26, 2 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Richmond Music Center
(804) 330-7875

Spokane, WA

Thursday, August 1, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Hoffman Music
(509) 444-4140

Richland, WA

Saturday, August 3, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Ted Brown Music
(509) 783-3481

Waterloo, ON, Canada

Thursday, July 25, 11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Folkway Music
(519) 772-0424

Newmarket, ON, Canada

Friday, July 26, 12 p.m. - 8 p.m.
The Arts Music Store
(905) 898-7164

Richmond Hill, ON, Canada

Saturday, July 27, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Cosmo Music
(905) 770-5222

Ottawa, ON, Canada

Monday, July 29, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Lauzon Music
(613) 725-1116

Ontario, ON, Canada

Wednesday, July 31, 12 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Walters Music
(519) 660-1460

Festivals/Events

Nashville, TN

July 11-13
Summer NAMM
(615) 259-4730
www.namm.org/summer/2013

Copper Mountain, CO

August 9-11
Guitar Town at Copper Mountain
(866) 264-1837
www.villageatcopper.com/guitarTown

Lyons, CO

August 16-18
Rocky Mountain Folksfest
1-800-624-2422
www.bluegrass.com/folks

Honolulu, HI

August 18
Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Festival
"Oahu Style"
(808) 226-2697
www.slackkeyfestival.com

Charlotte, NC

August 22-25
Carolina Guitar Show
(828) 298-2197
www.bee3vintage.com

Kailua-Kona, HI

September 1
Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Festival
"Kona Style"
(808) 226-2697
www.slackkeyfestival.com

Mississauga, ON, Canada

September 8-9
MIAC (Music Industries Association of Canada)
(416) 490-1871
www.miac.net

Winfield, KS

September 18-22
Walnut Valley Festival
(620) 221-3250
www.wvfest.com

São Paulo, Brazil

September 18-22
Expomusic
11 2226-3100
www.expomusic.com.br

Shanghai, China

October 10-13
Music China
+852 2802 7728
www.messefrankfurt.com.hk

Arlington, TX

October 19-20
Arlington Guitar Show
(GuitArlington)
1-888-473-6059
www.texasguitarshows.com

Ewa Beach, HI

October 20
Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Festival
"Westside Style"
(808) 226-2697
www.slackkeyfestival.com

Philadelphia, PA

November 9-10
Great American Guitar Show
(828) 298-2197
www.bee3vintage.com

Lihue, HI

November 17
Hawaiian Slack Key Guitar Festival
"Kauai Style"
(808) 226-2697
www.slackkeyfestival.com



Top Down: Festival attendees enjoy the weather at BottleRock; Taylor's exhibition booth;
Bottom right: Taylor's acoustic showcase at Musikmesse



TaylorWare®

CLOTHING / GEAR / PARTS / GIFTS



Gustavo from our Milling department helps grade and process mahogany, transforming it from raw form into what will eventually become a sleek Taylor neck. He can wear our Icon T with pride, knowing that he has a hand in shaping the playing experience of thousands of Taylor owners.

Nate from our Sales team and Grace, a web designer in our Marketing department, sport the men's and ladies' versions of our California T-shirt.



Antique Logo T
Fashion fit - a slimmer silhouette than the standard fit T. Medium weight, short sleeve. 100% cotton. (White #1456; S-XL, \$22.00; XXL, \$24.00)



Logo T
Standard fit - traditional fit, heavy-weight T. Short sleeve. 100% pre-shrunk cotton. (Tan #1750; S-XL, \$20.00; XXL-XXXL, \$22.00)



Ladies' Burnout Tank
Garment-dyed, pre-shrunk 50/50 cotton/poly blend. "Burnout" fabric treatment is weathered, light-weight and sheer for a soft, vintage look and feel. Slim fit. (Kelly Green #4060; M-XL, \$25.00)



Baseball T
Cotton/poly blend for an ultra soft, worn-in feel. 3/4 raglan sleeve, with Taylor Guitars headstock banner print. (White/Sand #2295; M-XL, \$28.00; XXL, \$30.00)

Men's California T
100% combed cotton. Taylor logo on left chest, with large type treatment on back. Crew neck. Fashion fit. (Black #1441; S-XL, \$25.00; XXL-XXXL, \$27.00)

Ladies' V-Neck California T
100% cotton with satin wash for a luxuriously soft feel. Mitered V-neck. Features Taylor logo on left chest, with large type treatment on back. Slim fit. (Black #4441; S-XL, \$25.00)

(opposite page)

NEW Icon T
100% combed cotton. Fashion fit. Medium weight. (Navy #1423; M-XL, \$22.00; XXL, \$24.00)

Ladies'

Two-Tone Guitar T

100% combed cotton, featuring gradient guitar design on front. Slim fit. (Warm gray #4560; S-XXL, \$25.00)



Black Composite Travel Guitar Stand

Made from durable recycled ABS composite material to securely hold your Taylor guitar. Travel-friendly design. Folds up to store in gig bags and most guitar cases. Accommodates all Taylor models. (#70180, \$39.00)



Lightweight Hoodie

Cotton/poly blend featuring zip front and kangaroo pocket, with Taylor treatment on left chest and right sleeve. Slim fit. Men's sizing. (Heather Navy #2810; S-XL, \$42.00; XXL, \$44.00)



Taylor Work Shirt

Permanent press, stain-resistant poly/cotton blend. Two front pockets. Distressed screen print over left pocket and on back. Short sleeve. (Charcoal #3070; M-XL, \$34.00; XXL-XXXL, \$36.00)



Authentic Taylor T

100% preshrunk ringspun cotton. Pigment-dyed for a soft, comfortably weathered look and feel. Distressed graphic treatment on front with Taylor logo on back. Generously cut, short sleeve. (Khaki Green #1430; S-XL, \$25.00; XXL \$27.00)



Men's Two Color Embroidery T

Burgundy and gold embroidered logo on left chest. Standard fit. Short sleeve. 100% preshrunk cotton. (Natural #1205, \$24.00; XXL, \$26.00)

Michelle, a supply chain analyst on our Materials Management team, kicks back in our Two-Tone Guitar T.



Taylor Etched Mug (above left) 15 oz. mug with Taylor hand-etched into one side. (Black #70007; \$15.00)
Taylor Mug (above right) Glossy ceramic bistro mug featuring the round Taylor logo. Holds 15 oz. (Brown with cream interior, #70006; \$10.00)

Taylor Guitar Polish
Spray-on cleaning polish softens, lifts and encapsulates moisture, salt and dust in a protective lubricant that is easily and safely wiped away. The light carnauba wax haze is then buffed away, leaving a beautiful stage-ready shine. 4 fl. oz. (#80901; \$12.00)

Taylor Polish Cloths
Microfiber with serrated edge. Features embossed Taylor logo. 11-1/2" x 9-1/2". Single or assorted 3-pack. Single (Chestnut #80907; \$7.00) 3-pack (Chestnut, Tan, Brown #80908; \$18.00) 3-pack (Black, Taupe, Charcoal #80909; \$18.00)

Travel Guitar Stand
Sapele, lightweight (less than 16 ounces) and ultra-portable. Small enough to fit in the pocket of a Baby Taylor gig bag. Accommodates all Taylor models. (#70198; \$59.00)

Taylor Guitar Straps
(L-R): **Byzantine** (Brown #64030, Burgundy #64000, Black #64010, \$80.00); **Suede/Web** (Chocolate #65010, Black #65000, \$32.00); **GS Mini** (Brown/Brown Suede #66500, \$32.00); **Taylor Swift** (#66000, \$32.00); **Suede Logo** (Black #62001, Honey #62000, Chocolate #62003, \$48.00)



Taylor Plush Towel
Oversized 40 x 70" heavyweight towel. 100% cotton. White body with Taylor hibiscus design in red, orange and gold. (#74000, \$39.00)

TaylorWare
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1 - 8 0 0 - 4 9 4 - 9 6 0 0

Visit taylorguitars.com/taylorware to see the full line.



Wood&Steel

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socially responsible and economically viable management of the world's forests.*

Amber Waves of Grain

This Build to Order short-scale Grand Concert features sumptuous quilted sapele reminiscent of one of last year's Fall Limited Edition offerings. The wood has been flatsawn to produce its beautiful rippling effect. A flatsawn set tends to be slightly more flexible than if it were quartersawn, which can add warmth to its sonic profile. In this case, the sapele will sound clear, focused and woody, with an extra touch of bass, while the cedar chosen for the top will contribute a warm and complex tonal flavor. Together with the short-scale neck and Grand Concert body, this guitar promises to be a fingerstyle gem. We have a few sets of this sapele left in our BTO reserves. Your local Taylor dealer can help you bring it to life.

