

A TAYLOR GUITARS QUARTERLY PUBLICATION • VOLUME 47 • WINTER 2006

WOOD & STEEL

pure acoustic

THE GS SERIES TAKES SHAPE

Letters



Illustration by Rick Geary

T5 Deposition

Music is very important to our law firm; all the partners play in an amateur band — the Objections. I just received a T5 as a birthday gift from my partners. This is my third Taylor, and I am amazed by the quality, sound, feel, and looks of this instrument. I am now 55 and still astonishingly good-looking, so I might quit the firm and hit the road. If my partners sue Taylor for damage done to our firm, I will represent you.

I thought that my 714 was the most beautiful guitar I had ever played. Not any more.

Joe Williams
Via e-mail

Pilot Program

I got the Fall [2005] issue of *Wood&Steel* and took it with me on a flight to New Jersey, where I did the Springsteen “Light of Day” benefit at the Stone Pony in Asbury Park. As I got on the plane with my gig bag, the pilot, who was standing at the entrance to the plane, asked me what kind of guitar I had. I said, “Collings.” He said, “I have a Taylor.” I said, “Oh yeah, great guitars.”

Then I told him I had the new *Wood&Steel* with me and he asked to see it. He took it into the cockpit to show his co-pilot (I guess) and to read it. He came back out and we talked about guitars; he has a 314ce. I told him that I bought a Taylor for “a friend” and had played his, but that I had some really great acoustics and couldn’t really justify getting another one, unless it was something completely different.

We talked some more and he suggested that I look at the T5. Then I read *Wood&Steel* during the flight and read my name associated with [Boston Red Sox pitcher] Tim Wakefield — so wild! So, after the flight, I showed the pilot [the item about Tim Wakefield] and said, “This is ‘the friend!’” He said, “You’re Cindy Bullens?” It was a great little connection!

The upshot is, I went on the website that night after the gig (around 2 a.m., because I couldn’t wait) and looked at the T5s. I watched all the videos, and now I have to have one! It’s the perfect guitar for me, with all my traveling *and* the fact that I need both electric and acoustic sounds. I haven’t actually played one yet; I will try to find one in Nashville.

Cindy Bullens
Nashville, Tennessee

[Ed. note: In addition to working as a vocalist with Elton John and on the Grease soundtrack, and as a songwriter with Nashville stalwarts Al Anderson and Rodney Foster, Bullens has enjoyed a highly regarded recording career. Her new CD, *Dream #29*, features guest performances by Elton John, Delbert McClinton, and Tim Wakefield.]

It All Ads Up

I typically read right over ads and don’t give them a thought. Then I saw your ad in *Guitar Player* magazine about the woman who got nine innings alone with her Taylor. My friends have known me to say that “football season is guitar season.” I may be a football widow, but my husband is guitar widower.

I’m a 30-year-old mother and wife who loves to play guitar. I currently own two Fenders. But after seeing you recognize my kind of player, my next guitar will be a Taylor (keeping my fingers crossed for Christmas). Thanks for thinking of me.

Bonnie Manning
Via e-mail

Aloha, Mahalo Nui Loa, A Hui Hou

Aloha from Maui! I met David Hosler, Rob Magargal, and David Kaye at Bounty Music on Maui last August, and I hope they survived their Hawaiian tour [Events, Fall 2005]. Thank you for the privilege of having your team come here to serve us. I have loved owning and playing my Taylor guitar for two years, and I was planning to take it in to Bounty for some minor repair work when I learned about the [Taylor Day event]. I was excited to have people look at my guitar who really know Taylors.

It also was fun to watch the guys work on all the guitars, especially mine, and I enjoyed learning from them and speaking with Rob. David [Hosler] told some great jokes, so he was fun, too. Thank you for the care with which you handled my guitar. I am even more sure now that Taylor is Number One in every way. Please thank those who thought of the idea to tour Hawaii. It is deeply appreciated. Mahalo Nui Loa (thank you very much), a hui hou (until we meet again). Aloha.

Dale Kreps
Maui, Hawaii

A Cut Above

I have to write about the astounding quality of your instruments. I have been a cabinetmaker for 20 years and a guitar player/teacher for much of that time. My trade keeps me close to the wonderful stuff we call wood. It also keeps my hands close to sharp blades.

Two years ago, I was working at a table saw and received a rather nasty cut that required tendon surgery on my guitar-fingering hand. When I rather jokingly asked the surgeon if I’d be able to play again, he stopped sewing and said it would be “the best therapy” I could do. So when the bandages came off, I dusted off my old [other brand] and started at it.

Well, time, lack of care, and a new left hand made the old guitar seem even older! Then I played a Taylor 414-RCE. It fit like a glove and sounded like a dream, so I risked divorce to buy her. Six months later, I had mastered the C chord again and was on my way to fingerpicking heaven.

I am now fully recovered from the injury and back to playing [material by]

Jorma Kaukonen, Bert Jansch, Leo Kottke, Reverend Gary Davis, and others, and my listeners tell me I am better than before the “incident”. That’s a long story about a great guitar saving my hand, my music, and my job. Thanks for building your product like I build mine — with pride and quality materials.

By the way, I saw Artie Traum conduct a workshop here in Wakefield and it was a very good time. Artie is a fine musician and a real down-to-earth guy — my kind of people.

Bob “Slice” Crawford
Wakefield, Rhode Island

Web TV

Just a quick note to tell you how much I love the Taylor website. It’s a fantastic resource and the video content is superb: I can watch Taylor videos on my laptop, while my other half watches the soaps on TV — we’re both happy!

I have a 2001 315ce and I love it to bits. I’m coming over see my brother in L.A. next year, and I’m hoping to fit in a factory visit to see you all. Thanks so much, Bob and Company; you’re fabulous.

Dave Scott
West Midlands UK

The 15-Year Report

You probably get tired of hearing this, but I have some praise for your company. I bought my Taylor 810 in 1989 and have loved it now for 15 years. In that time, I’ve had some dealings with Taylor customer service, which has always been extraordinary. *Wood&Steel* is fantastic and I’m sure it is very effective at bringing you new business. It sure does make me want a second Taylor.

Recently, I ordered some accessories from Janet [Reynolds] in the TaylorWare department. She was terrifically helpful and polite. Your company is as impressive as your products, which are stellar. Yours is a shining example of American business the way it *should* be.

Mike Dosch
Via e-mail

Two-part Harmony

I’m a drummer, but I go to all the Taylor workshops. Recently, I caught Pat Kirtley at the Candyman in Santa Fe, New Mexico and he gave us his all, for two hours! By the way, there was not one Taylor owner in the audience for Pat’s clinic — he said that was a first! Keep doing the workshops. I love them, and it breeds a respect for Taylor Guitars. Thanks again for your community support. When I sell my big

1959 Harmony Sovereign to a collector, I will buy that Taylor 110, or even a 200 series model, which are priced right.

John-Hans Melcher
(former percussionist for
Elvis Presley and Ann-Margret)
Via e-mail

After many years of searching and trying all manner of quality instruments in order to improve on the sound and feel of, would you believe, a 1966 Harmony Sovereign, I’ve done it! It’s called a Taylor 710ce-L9. Thank you for this superb instrument.

Michael Betteridge
Via e-mail

Mute Testimony

Thank you a thousand times. Yesterday, I opened my new 510ce-L9 at the store, tuned it up, and played one big E chord, then muted it — and all the other Taylors on the wall were still ringing harmonics! The shopowner and I were so amazed, we both just broke into delighted laughter! It was surreal.

Your new Dreadnought voicing is beautiful. Your short-scale is way more playable. Your ES system is simply the most perfect amplified acoustic ensemble of sound (string tones, harmonics, thumps, scratches, and every other sound that playing creates) I’ve ever heard from a guitar. And the fragrance of the guitar — from what source, who knows? — is a really unexpected bonus.

Who could ever expect a new guitar not only to sound wonderful, play easily, and meet all my expectations times 10, but also *smell* good? Incredible. I played it for hours and hours last night. I love this new guitar!

Bill Cory
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Guru Gone Wild

A heartfelt thank-you to Bob Taylor and his engineers, technicians, craftsmen, and administrative staff — you are all incredible people to have created the finest line of acoustic and electro-acoustic instruments I’ve ever held in my hands. I’ve tried all kinds and have been playing since the Beatles blew up the world with their atomic array of spectacular music.

As a guru for the high-technology industry for 35 years, I searched local music stores and pawn shops from the East to the West Coast and from the Rio Grande to Toronto, checking out and playing every guitar I could get my hands on. I thought Mr. Parker had the right idea, but that

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BobSpeak

Constant development is causing us to be “luckier”.

devotion into acoustics for 2006. For this guitar, we started with blank paper, or at least as blank a sheet as we can effectively come up with at Taylor.

The fact is, we have a design philosophy that fills in the first half of all our “blank papers”, but what remains to be pulled out of thin air is always exciting and can really be seen and heard in a new creation when we get it right. Sometimes, those design sessions are frustrating, yielding less change than we’d hoped for. Other times, it works very well.

From our vantage point, it almost appears to be luck when something really works, like the T5 or the new GS, but then we realize that we are always developing ideas and that constant development is causing us to be “luckier”, if you know what I mean.

The GS (Grand Symphony) is a guitar with a fresh new voice and a larger size. Still, it’s all Taylor in appearance, sound, and feel — just a new Taylor like one you’ve never heard. This guitar will be arriving at Taylor dealers in April. Be sure to check it out. ■

players in which they *mention* that both the acoustic and electric sounds make their life onstage easier, but they *exclaim* how wonderful the tone is in each of the settings.

It’s the tone of the T5 that so many people have fallen in love with. This tone is the result of many years of acoustic development and understanding, coupled with our willingness as woodworkers to venture into our own designs of electronics. It doesn’t hurt to see artists like Dave Matthews, Jason Mraz, Collective Soul, and Prince using their T5s in their latest videos.

In this issue of *Wood&Steel*, we are very happy to introduce the new “GS” guitars. We decided to pour our attention and

Before going home for the recent Holidays, I opened my copy of *MMR* (*Musical Merchandise Review*) to see that music dealers had voted Taylor Guitars the “Acoustic Guitar Line of the Year” for 2005. I congratulated everyone in our company, and I thank you, our customers and dealers, for making such recognition possible.

That was a nice way to end what was an exciting year for us at Taylor Guitars. The T5 had a successful launch and the players who’ve discovered this guitar have been very happy with it. Its success isn’t totally predicated on the fact that it is so versatile, but rather on the fact that it sounds so good. We get comments from

Bob Taylor. Photo by Rita Funk-Hoffman

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Kurt's Corner

I'm writing this on our last day of business in 2005. The last day we build and ship guitars, speak with customers on the phone, have meetings, and plan for the next year. It's a good day to reflect and to look ahead.

We had an incredible year this year. We launched our first electric guitar, the T5, in May, and Taylor has been one of the Top 10 selling brands of electric guitars in the US ever since — with only one product!

We entered the year with some guitars in inventory, but we're ending the year with just 24 unsold guitars on hand, and with a good chunk of the next six months' production already sold. We had demand from our dealers for several thousand more guitars this year than we were able to produce. After several record months of shipping, we're ending the year with our highest-ever revenue.

We're busting at the seams for space and need more production capacity. To that end, we've negotiated a lease for an additional build-to-suit structure next door, and it's already under construction. We also added another building in Tecate, Mexico, and successfully moved our Baby and Big Baby production there. Our work force and management there has become well grooved-in, and the place is running very smoothly. It's been five years since we started our Tecate facility,



Jenny and Kurt Listug at the Taylor holiday party. Photo by Marina D

which is a 45-minute drive from our facilities in El Cajon.

We hired and trained several new sales people who are getting their own territories for 2006. We're making our sales territories smaller next year, so that our sales people have fewer dealers to service and can thereby give each of their dealers a higher level of service.

We piloted the concept of "Taylor Days", where we send factory technicians to a store to tune-up and restring customers' guitars, and answer their questions. Some of these were done in conjunction with a workshop conducted by a Taylor clinician, others were not. These proved to be extremely popular. We'll be doing

more in 2006.

Looking ahead, we're about to launch our first new body shape since 1994. It's an entirely new sound for Taylor guitars, but distinctively Taylor. I think it will be very popular, and reach guitarists for whom we haven't made the right guitar — until now.

We're also introducing new electronics developed by the same people who produced our Expression System and K4, and we're adding some new color and pickup options to the T5. You can read more about all these exciting new developments elsewhere in this issue.

Here's wishing you a prosperous and expanding New Year! ■

WOOD&STEEL

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2006-07 HOLIDAY / VACATION SCHEDULE

If you are planning to visit Taylor Guitars in 2006, please be aware that we normally are open Mondays through Fridays, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Pacific Time) and always are closed on weekends. Factory tours begin promptly at 1 p.m. and you need not make a reservation unless you are part of a group of ten or more, in which case please give us at least two days' notice by calling the number below and asking for the factory tour manager.

Please take note of the weekday exceptions below; on the following dates, the entire complex will be closed, and no one will be answering phones. We wouldn't want anyone to suffer the fate of the Griswolds in *National Lampoon's Vacation* (there's no Taylor Moose out front to tell you we're closed).

For more information about tours and/or for directions to the factory, see the "Contact" page of our website. If you live outside of the San Diego area and can't remember if we're going to be open on a certain date, please call us at (619) 258-1207. We look forward to seeing you!

- Closed Monday, February 20 (President's Day)
- Closed Monday, May 29 (Memorial Day)
- Closed Monday-Friday, July 3-7 (Independence Day vacation)
- Closed Monday, September 4 (Labor Day)
- Closed Monday, October 16 (Taylor Guitars Anniversary)
- Closed Thursday-Friday, November 23-24 (Thanksgiving)
- Closed Monday, December 25, 2006–Friday, January 5, 2007 (Holidays, Company Vacation)

FROM THE EDITOR

If you fly into San Diego International Airport/Lindbergh Field in early 2006 and disembark at Terminal 2, you'll have a chance to see *Made in San Diego/Played Around the World*, an exhibit that showcases several of this region's musical-instrument icons. Presented under the auspices of the San Diego County Airport Authority's Cultural Exhibits Program, it's the handiwork of the Museum of Making Music, itself a fascinating repository of musical instrument memorabilia, archival materials, and interactive fun located in Carlsbad, just north of San Diego (museumofmakingmusic.org).

The airport display case devoted to Taylor Guitars features a koa XXX, a Liberty Tree Guitar, and a guitar Bob Taylor made in 11th grade. Also represented are Deering Banjos, Carvin Guitars and Pro Audio, Azola Basses, Dell'Arte Guitars, Snider Amplification, and Wild Thing Trumpets. There's even a one-of-a-kind, doubleneck electric guitar handcrafted in 1957 by the late Walter James Harvey (1922-1981).

Made in San Diego/Played Around the World accomplishes two things: it reveals that sun-baked San Diego is home to some prestigious instrument makers, and it provides a breather after the interminable schlep from the Terminal 2 gates to the baggage-claim area. The exhibit, on display through March 31, 2006, is visible on the second-floor landing just past the escalators that take you down to the baggage area.

In recent years, we've welcomed some excellent non-staff contributors to the *Wood&Steel* fold, and I'd like to acknowledge and thank them for their journalistic, illustrational, and photographic contributions to this publication.

In alpha order, our outside writers have included **Julie Bergman** (folk-blues guitarist, former music-biz publicist, current feature contributor to *Acoustic Guitar*, *Guitar Player*, and other music publications), **Buddy Blue** (founding member of the Beat Farmers, current music columnist for the *San Diego Union-Tribune*), **Dan Forte** (Stanford journalism grad, contributor to *Vintage Guitar*, *Guitar World*,



Made in San Diego/Played Around the World exhibit at Terminal 2, San Diego International Airport. Photo by Andy Robinson

and *Guitar Player*), **Marc Harris** (editor/contributor to major guitar publications), **Randy Hoffman** (pro musician, photographer, award-winning music journalist), **Len Jaffe** (singer-songwriter/guitarist, concert promoter, founding member of the Songwriters Association of Washington, DC), **Deborah Liv Johnson** (singer-songwriter, journalist), **Tom Mulhern** (former *Guitar Player* stalwart, writer/editor of numerous magazine columns and books on audio and musical equipment), **Dylan Schorer** (former editor of *Acoustic Guitar* magazine, Telluride Bluegrass Festival fingerstyle-guitar champ, author of instructional guitar and transcription books), **Simone Solondz** (journalist, former editor of *Acoustic Guitar* magazine), and **Kenny Weissberg** (former music journalist, long-time producer of San Diego's Humphrey's Concerts by the Bay series, current host/deejay of the acclaimed radio show, *Music Without Boundaries*, streamed Saturday mornings at 91X.com).

In addition, several of Taylor's esteemed clinicians have shared their expertise in print, among them **Bryan Beller**, **Wayne Johnson**, **Mike Keneally**, **Pat Kirtley**, **Chris Proctor**, and **Artie Traum**.

Since its maiden issue in mid-1994, *Wood&Steel's* pages have been bookended by two of Southern California's best illustrators — **Rick Geary** ("Letters") and **Tom Voss** ("Seasonal Tips"). Geary's credits include regular contributions to *National Lampoon* (1979-1992), *MAD*, *Spy*, *Rolling Stone*, the *San Diego Reader*, the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, and *Los Angeles* and *San Diego* magazines. Voss has done illustrations for a number of top advertising agencies and publications, and his original art has been recognized in some prestigious jur-

ied shows, including that of the New York Society of Illustrators. High-quality prints of selected "Seasonal Tips" works are popular items in our online TaylorWare catalog.

More recently, we've been honored to feature illustrations by **Elwood Smith** ("Sessions"), whose work appears in the *New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Rolling Stone* (and on the cover of the Artie Traum/Chris Shaw/Tom Akstens CD, *Big Trout Radio*).

Photographers have been a huge part of the *Wood&Steel* story from day one, and although we can't list everyone whose work has appeared herein, several deserve special mention: **Randi Anglin** (Nashville-based voting member of the Recording Academy who has photographed many of the biggest names in music), **Pat Boemer** (BFA with Honors from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, photographs featured in *Digital Imaging* magazine, art photography featured in group exhibitions, Award of Excellence from the Creative Show-San Diego), **Mike Campos** (guitar and TaylorWare photography), **Marshall Harrington** (longtime guitar "glamor shot" and Taylor catalog photographer, clients include Intel, Nissan, Reebok, *TV Guide*), **Pat Hier** (proud Taylor owner who balances a day job in Crete, Nebraska with an interest in photography and music), **Randy Hoffman** (see contributing writers, above), **Robert Sanders** (award-winning digital photographer whose clients include Tony Hawk, Qualcomm, Easton Sports and BMG Music), **James Steinfeldt** (Photographer of the Year at the 1998 Los Angeles Music Awards, photos placed in *Rolling Stone* [Bob Dylan, Madonna] and *SPIN*, CD covers for Miles Davis, Willie Nelson, John Denver, Dee Dee Ramone), and **Chris Wimpey** (various Taylor ad campaigns and catalogs, has shot for Lexus and the 2006 advertising campaigns for Harley-Davidson and Kawasaki Motorcycles).

And a special heartfelt thanks to **Dale Van Zant**, who for years squired this publication through the critical, high-tech, pre-press production phase to make it look as good as possible. Dale has moved on to another line of work, but his high standards and selfless work ethic remain a benchmark for *Wood&Steel*.

— John D'Agostino

On The Web

What's new at taylorguitars.com

latest features



taylor videos



T5 soundcheck

Capping what might be our most ambitious website project yet, we're excited to announce the launch of the T5 Soundcheck. In this feature, we give you the power to hear exactly what the T5 can do. Choose a T5. Pick an amp. Hit the 5-way switch, then go.

You can compare the T5's different top woods. Or get that "dirty" electric sound. Strum through a PA. If you don't already own three T5s and a bunch of cool amps, this is the next best thing. Look for it in the T5 section.

video library

Visit our See/Hear section, where our "Factory Fridays" series continues with a two-part segment about milling master-grade koa, and in February, with a new installment on finish and colors. After reading Artie Traum's "Sessions" piece in this issue, hop online for a virtual lesson with Artie on thumbpicking your way through the blues. And join professional studio engineer Gary Hedden (Pink Floyd, Grateful Dead, Michael Jackson) as he reveals his secrets about recording an acoustic guitar.

Look for additional information on the Taylor website, including audio and video content, when you see these icons associated with *Wood&Steel* articles.



Read this and other back issues of *Wood&Steel* online ([news/events](#))

T5 the Next Generation: New Options for '06

While many people were reacting to the sonic boom of the T5's 2005 debut, the minds behind the innovative guitar were working on new options that promise to increase its already broad appeal. Specifically, an expanded palette of colors, premium tops, a new pickup option, and a left-handed model ratchet things up a notch for the second generation of the Thinline Fiveway.

The new finishes — **Sage Green**, **Lake Placid**, **Pearl Blue**, and **Crimson Red** — are striking, and strikingly different for Taylor. They look like something you'd see on a classic electric guitar, and that's no accident.

"Our new colors definitely give the T5 more of an electric-guitar vibe," says

Product Specialist Brian Swerdfeger. "All four colors are rendered in small-flake metallic, which gives you depth and dimension while avoiding the 'gaudy' look of some metallics. And they all look great with the white binding.

"In a sense, these finishes reflect the ongoing romance a lot of us have with cars and guitars. Some of the finishes on the most iconic electrics of the past were borrowed from the hot cars of the day. There was a natural correlation between cars and guitars, and we've carried that forward with the new T5 colors. When you see the chrome appointments and the colors and the white binding all together, you get the sense of looking at a great hot-rod."

As if the new solid colors weren't enough of a tease, we'll also be offering new **premium wood tops** as options on our 2006 T5s. Joining the existing forest of T5 woods are a master-grade quilted maple, and some of the most amazing koa we've ever used (see the "Killer Koa, Part 1 & 2" video in the Factory Fridays section of our website).

But the super-charged changes don't end with visual aesthetics. An important new custom option enables you to order a **neck-position humbucking pickup** on any new T5.

"The neck-position humbucker replaces the body sensor and turns the T5 into more of an electric guitar," Swerdfeger explains. "All the positions will still sound good through an acoustic amp or PA, although you might surrender some of the super-zingy top end. But the new pickup,

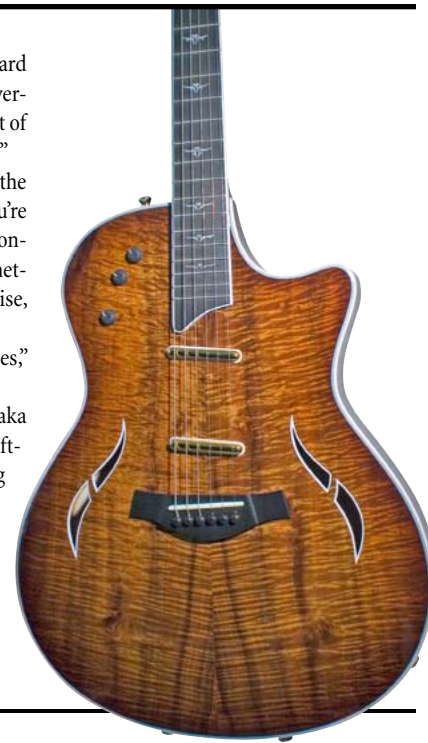
in conjunction with the under-fretboard pickup, will give you jazz tones and overdriven-neck-pickup sounds that are out of this world — they just sound so good!"

The technical explanation of the effect of adding that pickup is that you're increasing the aperture that the electronics have on the strings and on the magnetic field; it just does things, physics-wise, that create new sounds.

"You can even get Strat-like tones," Swerdfeger adds.

Also new for 2006 are **lefty T5s**, aka "answered prayers" for the many left-handed players who've been jonesing for a T5.

To see the new colors and read about the new options for 2006, see the T5 section of our website. Consult your local authorized Taylor dealer for ordering instructions.



TAYLOR GUITARS



THINLINE 5-WAY™

T5 Tone Tips: A Guide to Getting Started

The immediate pleasures of the T5 are well documented, no more eloquently or extravagantly than by new owners who continue to send us detailed mini-journals of their experiences (see Q&A this issue). In the spirit of shared discovery we offer our own tips on getting the most out of a T5 — information that should be useful both to those who've already put a T5 through the paces and to those who are just opening the guitar case and wondering, "Now what do I do?"

live sound, is processed, compressed, and "effected". Modern music is full of cool sounds like chorus, delay, and overdrive. Don't leave them out of your recipe.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT AMP

ELECTRIC

Try the T5 through an electric amp first (the same amp you would use to for any high-quality electric guitar). The T5 is a fully electric guitar, capable of driving

high-gain distortion, and you easily can drive a band just by plugging it in and grinding a few chords! Be sure to check out the "High-Gain Tips" video on the Taylor website, in the Performance Tips section of "See/Hear".

Start with full distortion in the center switch position on the T5. Put the amp on overdrive or go through your favorite stomp box and drive it. Move through positions 2-5. Only position 1 has a body sensor and should be avoided at full gain.

Tone Tip: With the amp in distortion mode, go to switch position 5 on the T5, dial the treble up past the center detent,

halfway up toward "wide open". Turn the bass knob the same amount in the opposite direction (down). This will slightly bump-up the mids. Use the T5 volume to control the amount of drive.

Switch to the clean channel on the amp. The T5 has amazing tones available in all five positions.

ACOUSTIC

The T5 offers an incredible tone palette when run through a good acoustic amp or PA system. Just plug-in and dial-in what you want. Switch through different positions and turn the tone controls.

Start with the T5 tone controls in the center detent position and volume slightly higher.

Set the amp EQ flat to start. If the EQ controls are active on the amp or PA, be sure to start in the flat or "no EQ added" position, then dial-in EQ to taste. If the EQ controls are *not* active, turn them all up slightly, maybe around 3, and work from there.

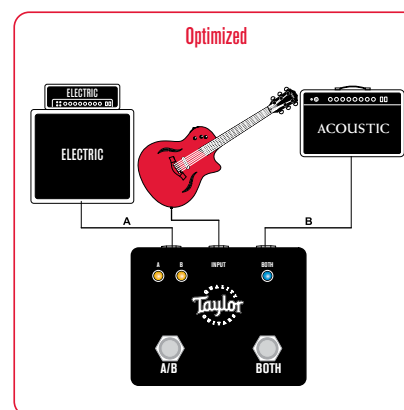
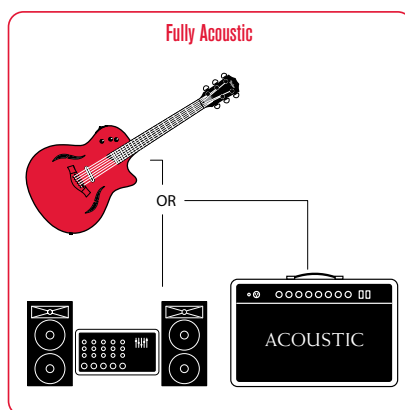
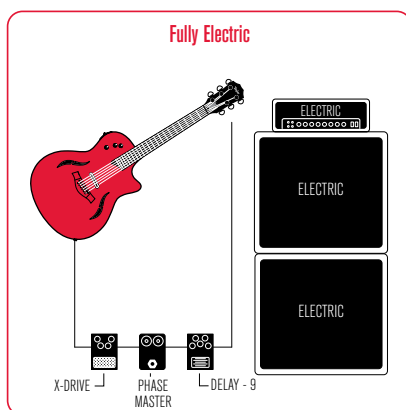
Note: The T5 and ES pickup systems are magnetic. If you plug into an amp or PA channel that is set up for a piezo pickup system, you'll need to start with fresh EQ settings.

Important Safety Note:

Before you plug into any amplifier, make sure it is properly grounded for both safety and proper shielding. In addition, carefully check to make sure that the ground lug is not broken off of any amps, extension cords, or power strips in the AC chain.

USE EFFECTS

Consider this: no one listens to dry, flat sounds! Everything we hear, from recorded CDs to



OPTIMIZED SETUP: ELECTRIC AND ACOUSTIC AMPS TOGETHER

Pick a good high-gain amp and a clean PA or acoustic amp. Incorporate an A/B/Y box (see page 8) and some effects. Switch between a great overdrive setup on the gain amp and a totally clean sound on the acoustic amp. Then hit "both" on the A/B box.

Now cancel all your appointments and prepare to have some serious fun!

THE WALNUT VALLEY FESTIVAL September 14-18, 2005 Cowley County Fairgrounds Winfield, Kansas

Temperatures remained in the low 90s for much of the **Walnut Valley Festival** — better known as “Winfield” — as attendees were treated to performances by guitar hero Tommy Emmanuel, the Wilders, the Greencards, and many others. In addition to the concerts, acoustic players are drawn to Winfield by the National Championship competitions held in a number of musical categories, including flatpicking and fingerstyle guitar.

Roy Curry from Tennessee took home a W10e for placing third in the flatpicking division, while Oregon resident and Solid Air Records artist Doug Smith chose a W14ce after placing third in the fingerstyle category. Special mention goes to 16-year-old Adam Gardino from Colorado Springs, Colorado, who in his very first trip to Winfield made the top five in the fingerstyle competition, playing his 214.

The festival kicked off on Wednesday night with the annual Taylor Guitars Concert, this time featuring past Winfield fingerstyle champion and Taylor clinician Chris Proctor playing for a standing-room-only crowd.

On Thursday, the festival was in full-swing. The PR department's Lonny Brooks and David Kaye and Regional Sales Manager Steve Bernstein were the eye of the storm of activity at the Taylor booth, which didn't let up until Sunday. They were joined by Jim Baggett of Mass St. Music, our dealer in Lawrence, Kansas, who brought more than 25 Taylors for visitors' playing and viewing pleasure. And, for the first time ever, Taylor brought veteran guitar tech Tim Luranc to do free diagnostics and re-stringings for wide-eyed Taylor owners.

A number of top-notch performers got a long-awaited chance to audition our T5, among them Emmanuel and Andy



Taylor guitar tech Tim Luranc re-strings a Taylor owner's guitar at Winfield.
Photo by David Kaye



McKee, who plays percussive fingerstyle a la Preston Reed. McKee had never even held a T5 before, and after he coaxed lush tones from it he was moved to exclaim, “Sweet guitar — I really can't believe how easy it is to play!” A total of 12 Taylor guitars were sold at Winfield, among them a 30th Anniversary XXX-MS, a 912ce, and a T5-S1.

SAN FRANCISCO BLUES FESTIVAL September 23-25 The Great Meadow at Fort Mason San Francisco, California

Founded in 1973 by Tom Mazzolini, the **San Francisco Blues Festival** celebrated its title as “America's longest continuously running blues festival” by holding

its 33rd annual installment in late September. The event manages to retain the community spirit common to festivals of the '60s, and always has attracted a world-class lineup of musicians to the historic Fort Mason grounds, which have the Golden Gate Bridge as majestic backdrop.

Since its inception, the SFBF has hosted some of the biggest names in blues, includ-



T5 raffle winner Barrie Broadbent at the San Francisco Blues Festival.
Photo by Lonny Brooks

ing B.B. King, John Lee Hooker, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Etta James, and Bonnie Raitt. This year was no exception, with par-

ticularly electric performances by Huey Lewis and the News, Jimmy Dawkins, the Fabulous Thunderbirds, blues harmonica master James Cotton, and an amazing set by Mavis Staples.

Taylor's Lonny Brooks held down our exhibitor's booth, demo-ing guitars throughout the weekend, giving many bluesers their first glimpse of the T5, and even contributing to the relief efforts for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. Barrie Broadbent of Millbrae, California was the lucky bidder on a Taylor T5 Standard we raffled off, raising \$2,500 that was donated by the festival organizers to the New Orleans Musicians Relief Fund. The N.O.M.R.F., founded by Benjamin Jaffe, director of Preservation Hall, distributes grants to New Orleans musicians of all genres who apply for relief and lack the economic means to pursue their craft, replace their instruments, or gain access to live performance venues.

Music events we're co-sponsoring and/or exhibiting at during the first trimester of 2006 include: **Folk Alliance Conference**, February 9-14, Austin, Texas (folk.org); **Wintergrass Bluegrass Festival**, February 23-26, Tacoma, Washington (acousticssound.org/wg_home.htm); **SXSW**, March 15-19, Austin, Texas (sxsw.com); **Dallas Guitar Show**, April 21-23, Dallas Texas (guitarshow.com); **MerleFest**, April 27-30, Wilkesboro, North Carolina (merlefest.org); **Tulsa Guitar Show**, May 6-7, Tulsa, Oklahoma (tulsaguitarshow.com). Please come by and say hello!

To ensure that you don't miss the Taylor events coming to your area, register for our free “E/vents” reminder e-mail program by going to our website, rolling your cursor over the “news/events” tab, and clicking on “Taylor Calendar”. You'll see where to click to enroll. Once enrolled, you'll automatically be notified a month in advance of every event.

If you'd rather not receive e-mail notices, simply refer to our online Calendar for information, which is updated daily. ■

New Stomping Grounds: Taylor Introduces Two New Quality Accessories



A/B/Both Box

Taylor's **Universal A/B/Both** box allows a player to run a Taylor T5™, Taylor acoustic, or any brand of electric guitar, acoustic guitar, or bass to two separate outputs. Foot switches are used to toggle between amps, PA systems, and other destinations, or to activate both outputs at the same time.

The box initially was conceived with the T5 player in mind, says Taylor Special Projects Manager David Hosler. "Players might want to send their signal directly to a PA system for clean acoustic sounds, and then switch to an electric-guitar amplifier for electric clean and high-gain tones. Or they might want both sounds happening at once."

The box features a 1/4-inch unbalanced input jack, two 1/4-inch unbalanced output jacks, two road-ready foot switches, and three individual LED status lights, and is housed in a

sturdy, pedalboard-friendly aluminum enclosure. While there are other A/B/Both boxes on the market, the Taylor box is uniquely useful in that the three LED status lights make it easy to keep track of where you're sending your guitar sound at all times. Because the "A" or "B" indicator stays lit even when the "Both" switch is activated, you'll always know where your signal is going when you switch out of "Both".

The A/B/Both box also can run in reverse (two inputs and one output). When used this way, it allows a player to plug-in two guitars and have them share one output, and that enables two different guitars to be ready to go at all times. The player simply selects a guitar using the A/B footswitch, which automatically mutes the guitar not in use.

As part of our continuing effort to develop useful and exciting tools for the gigging guitarist, we're kicking off 2006 by introducing two new Taylor control boxes – the **Universal A/B/Both** and the **Expression System Tuner Mute Balanced Breakout™**.



Balanced Breakout

The **ES Tuner Mute Balanced Breakout** is a foot-controlled mute switch for tuning offline, and was designed exclusively for an Expression System-equipped Taylor guitar. This handy little box allows you to keep a tuner connected and mute your signal when desired, all the while maintaining the pure, balanced signal path of the ES. It also includes a high-quality audio transformer that sweetens your tone and eliminates switching surges caused by mixers with undefeatable phantom power.

The box features balanced XLR input and output jacks, a tour-ready mute switch, and an independent 1/4-inch output for an electronic tuner, and is housed in a sturdy, pedalboard-friendly aluminum enclosure.

"It was designed so that players with Taylor ES electronics can mute their guitars and tune silently onstage without compromising the high-quality balanced signal of the onboard system," explains David Hosler. "The Balanced Breakout also is a bit of a 'tone machine'; we use a high-quality audio transformer in it, so you'll not only maintain a balanced signal, but you'll also get the sonic benefit of that transformer simply by plugging in."

The control box can also function as a microphone mute, offering on/off foot-switchable control for any dynamic microphone (such as a Shure SM58). This is a great way to help avoid feedback problems when the mic is not in use.

Both control boxes will be available in early 2006, through both Taylor dealers and TaylorWare. Suggested retail list price is \$118 for each. Consult your local dealer or taylorguitars.com for more details.

Opposing Thumbs: Thumping Your Way to Great Blues

by Artie Traum

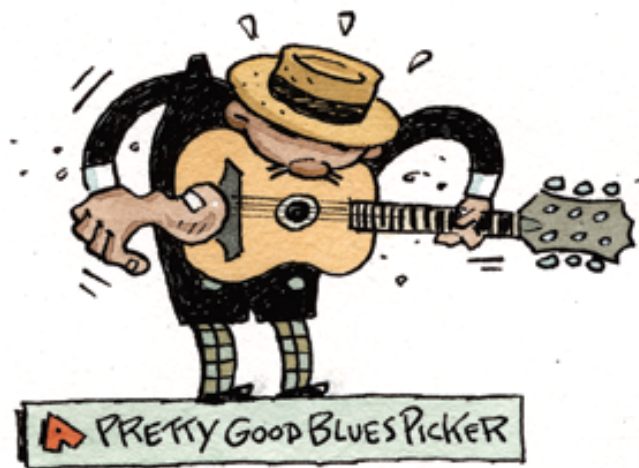


Illustration by Elwood Smith

Opposing thumbs are said to be an essential feature of primates, which my encyclopedia defines as mammals with “opposable thumbs and big toes.” We human primates can use our thumbs for hitchhiking, pressing stamps on envelopes, or scratching our ears. By comparison, the big toe is not quite as useful, or even noticeable, unless you stub it while looking for a midnight snack.

The thumb plays an essential role for guitarists who wish to play acoustic blues. It also establishes the rhythmic foundation for fingerpicking in genres that include country music, slack key, contemporary-guitar compositions, and songwriting. By my measure, there are three ways to use your right thumb in blues: thumping, alternating bass, and snapping the strings.

The old-time blues players — Lightnin’ Hopkins, Son House, Mance Lipscomb, Charlie Patton, Blind Blake, and Robert Johnson — played by “thumping” on the bass strings with the right thumb. Because they often played solo guitar, the thumb was a kind of rhythm section that kept the time going, the way a bass player and drummer

otherwise would. Once the thumb established a steady groove, blues players would pick out melodies on the treble strings with their first, second, and third fingers.

In the key of E, for example, the thumb hits the low 6th string (root E) on every beat, *or* plays the downbeat of each measure. In the key of A, the thumb hits the open 5th string (root A) and in G it would be on the 6th string, 3rd fret. Simple? You bet. But getting a proper *feel* for this style of playing, as exemplified by Brownie McGhee, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Big Bill Broonzy, or Doc Watson, might take some serious practice.

Generally, the thumb plays the root of each chord, although some players might hit a 3rd, a 5th, or some other interval. It’s good to bear in mind that there are no absolute rules in this regard. Try pinching the bass and treble strings together and you’ll be on your way to playing fingerstyle blues.

Example 1
This example for beginners gets your thumb and picking fingers warmed up in the key of E:

In fingerpicking styles, the thumb tends to alternate between strings. In E, for example, the thumb would move back and forth from the 6th string to the 4th string on every other beat — back and forth, back and forth, steadily creating a groove. It is recommended to practice this with a metronome at various tempos.

Example 2
This example also is for true beginners, to get your thumb working back and forth:

While many classic blues guitarists thumped on the bass strings, Mississippi John Hurt, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and Elizabeth Cotten most definitely were fingerpickers on such songs as “Candy Man Blues” and “Freight Train”. If the thumb is steady and keeps good time, everything else falls into place. If the thumb loses momentum, the entire song will fall apart.

Recently, I chatted with blues artist Rory Block, who reminded me of a technique we call “snapping” the bass strings.

“I think it was Willie Brown who invented snapping the bass,” she recalled. “He’s the hardest snapping guitarist. You do it by pulling up on the bass string, actually getting under it, to give it a percussive snap.”

Big Joe Williams also used this technique, in addition to hitting the body of the guitar like a percussion instrument. Funk bass players use this technique, as well; Victor Wooten, for one, slaps, pops, and snaps all over the fingerboard.

We tend to think of blues as a standardized form consisting of 12-bars, 16-bars, or 24-bars, and as a player you *must* know how to stay within this form. Rufus Thomas, who wrote the R&B classic “Walkin’ the Dog”, once noted that “12-bar blues is the backbone of American music.”

It wasn’t quite that clear in the 1920s and ’30s. Producer Bobby Shad — known for his work with Charlie Parker and Dinah Washington, as well as with many blues artists — noticed

that Texas bluesman Lightnin’ Hopkins rarely stuck to blues form. “He had no conception of a 12-bar blues,” Shad told writer Arnold Shaw. “It could be eight-and-a-half [bars] or 13-and-a-quarter.”

I recently came across a story on the Internet about Hopkins and Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top. It seems Lightnin’ wasn’t changing chords at the right moment, and when Gibson commented on this quirky style, Hopkins said, “Lightnin’ changes when Lightnin’ wants to.”

Hopkins came from Centerville, Texas and was strongly influenced by Blind Lemon Jefferson during the time when Lightnin’ helped the older musician navigate the streets of southern towns. And Lightnin’ certainly was a no-nonsense guy. Many years ago, at the Swarthmore Folk Festival (near Philadelphia), some friends and I managed to get backstage to see him warming up. One friend had learned several Hopkins riffs note for note, and he played them for Lightnin’, who shook his head and said, “Good son, but you need feeling.” Then he walked away.

John Lee Hooker had a similar sense of style. “I don’t think about time,” Hooker once said. “You’re here when you’re here.”

One thing about the guys who invented the blues: they were a tough, stubborn lot who didn’t suffer fools gladly.

Many country-blues musicians lived in isolated areas and rarely got to hang out together, which might account for that blues subgenre’s loose form. Muddy Waters once told folklorist Alan Lomax, “We settled down way out in the country, where there wasn’t another house in sight.” Similarly, Howlin’ Wolf was born in the small community of West Point, Mississippi. He learned guitar whenever he could take a break from “fixing fences, picking cotton, and pulling corn.”

In those heady, early days, blues riffs, ideas, and traditions were passed on whenever musicians ran into each other on the streets of Greenville, Mississippi, Houston, Texas, or New Orleans, Louisiana.

Memphis Minnie was from Algiers, Louisiana, but moved at age 13 to Memphis, where she played guitar in clubs under the name “Kid” Douglas. She was one of a handful of women blues performers at the time, and she knew many styles of music, including gospel, jug band, and blues. Her guitar playing was so good she is said to have beaten Big Bill Broonzy in a guitar contest.

The original bluesmen (and women) were ruthlessly competitive. They tended to upstage each other and show-off their speed licks. A guitarist was said to “cut” a fellow musician whom he out-played, and there was a lot of bragging and boasting at jam sessions. But in spite of all the bravado, the old bluesmen acknowledged other players as sources of inspiration.

Fred McDowell, a shy and quiet genius from Tennessee (and a major influence on Bonnie Raitt’s slide playing), admitted he “learned a lot from one fellow, Raymond Payne. He was really good.” Muddy Waters gives credit for his wounded, volatile style to Son House and Robert Johnson, two undisputed geniuses of the Delta. Muddy’s playing skills sharpened through endless performances at rough juke joints, fish-frying parties, street-corner gigs, and eventually in working-class clubs in the slums of Chicago.

Let’s look at an essential blues riff in the keys of E and A.

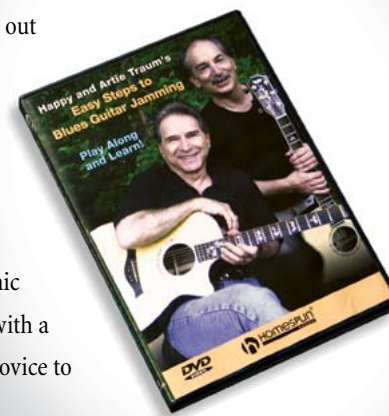
John Lee Hooker told a newspaper in Atlanta, Georgia, “I don’t play a lot of fancy guitar. The kind of guitar I want to play is mean, mean licks.”

To further your blues education and develop those chops, check out

Happy and Artie Trauma’s Easy Steps to Blues Guitar Jamming:

Play Along and Learn! — the new instructional DVD

released on Homespun Tapes. In just under two hours, the Traumas teach you the techniques and raw materials you need to play six blues standards in the keys of E and A (e.g. “Key to the Highway”, “Trouble in Mind”), and then provide the rhythmic backing so you can jam with them. Although the DVD is filled with a lot of material for all skill levels, it’s designed to enable even a novice to learn and play along (homespuntapes.com).



The ideas in Examples 3 and 4 recall the styles of Brownie McGhee, Lightnin’ Hopkins, and such contemporary artists as Keb Mo, Bonnie Raitt, and Taj Mahal. Please note that while these figures capture the essence of acoustic blues, they aren’t exact stylistic replicas of any particular artist’s riffs. Certainly, less is more with these exercises.

At times, you’ll want to play a full E or

A chord. Mostly, though, you’ll be focusing on the “inner” strings, which makes it that much funkier. Sliding into notes, or hammering-on, will enhance your style. Bending the strings, whereby you lift a string so it moves up a half or a whole tone, is another technique you can use to enliven your sound.

B.B. King was one master who never felt comfortable using a slide. Instead, he learned to bend strings and use vibrato to approximate what he heard from bottleneck players. “I learned to trill my finger,” he said.

Vibrato can be achieved by planting your finger(s) on a string and moving your wrist back and forth. The faster your wrist moves, the deeper the vibrato.

John Lee Hooker told a newspaper in Atlanta, Georgia, “I don’t play a lot of fancy guitar. The kind of guitar I want to play is mean, mean licks.” I’ve heard that Hooker was a kind, generous man, but when his thumb started hammering on the bass notes, it was simply *scary*.

continued on page 28

Example 3 Lightnin’ Hopkins Riff in the Key of E:

Corey Harris snuck up on the blues milieu a decade ago with his debut album, *Between Midnight and Day*. Here was a young upstart playing old-time country blues with the virtuoso chops and natural conviction of such legendary figures as Charley Patton, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and Robert Johnson, and the blues world trembled in awe.

Where so many others had taken similar journeys deep into this music's past, inevitably only to come across as forced or downright spurious, Harris managed to sound as if he'd just stepped out of a time machine from the year 1928 — no small trick for a college-educated language teacher from Denver.

Not content to exist as a mere revivalist, Harris on subsequent outings used the blues as the foundation for a myriad of musical adventures: 1997's *Fish Ain't Bitin'* grafted on New Orleans-styled brass; 1999's *Greens From the Garden* explored the blues roots inherent in funk and even hip-hop; 2003's *Mississippi to Mali* found Harris bringing the blues back "home" to Africa — a voyage also chronicled that year in the PBS docu-series, *Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues: A Musical Journey*.



COREY HARRIS

By Buddy Blue

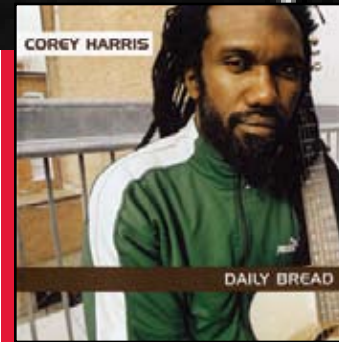
"I think there are different types of blues for different types of people."

The glue binding these projects together was Harris' seemingly supernatural ability to make everything he recorded sound completely musical and unaffected, as opposed to the well-meaning but ultimately artificial results of a musicologist's experimentation.

His latest CD, *Daily Bread*, finds the 36-year-old swimming in the rich, blue waters of the Caribbean, effortlessly connecting the melodic and rhythmic dots from Jamaica to Mali and back to America. Harris recently spoke with *Wood&Steel* about his past and future, his passions and techniques, the state of the blues today, and how his Taylor 514ce helps him to fulfill his musical vision.

Wood&Steel: I love your new CD, *Daily Bread*, and like most of your albums it came as quite a surprise to me. What would you call it — reggae? Caribbean?

Corey Harris: I don't know what I'd call it; to me it's just "roots". It definitely has some reggae in there, but it's not really a reggae record. We try to keep it simple and keep a message in there, try to have it be about something other than simple entertainment.



W&S: Having been categorized as a blues musician early on, do you consciously try to get away from that pigeonhole, or do you just go wherever the path leads you as a musician?

CH: People are always going to say certain things about you, that you should do this or do that, but you gotta do what you want to do. I just try to be myself, that's all.

W&S: So few people have been able to get that raw, raspy, Charlie Patton kind of vocal style you had down on your early albums without sounding phony and affected. Now your vocal style is much more clean and smooth. Do you view the voice as an instrument like a guitar, which

you utilize to draw different tones and feelings from?

CH: I'm always learning how to be a better singer. I'll sing different songs in different ways, you know, try to hit the vibe that'll get the song over to the listener. I'd say the voice is definitely an instrument. All my favorite singers have different ways of singing.

W&S: Who are some of your favorite singers?

CH: Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong. I like B.B. King's singing, Stevie Wonder...wow, there are so many to choose from.

W&S: You were an anthropology student, and many people who approach recording as anthropology come off as sounding like they're trying too hard. How have you been able to avoid that syndrome and keep your music sounding natural?

CH: I think when a lot of people do that, they tend to step outside of themselves, they're not expressing what they really are, you know? I don't go outside of myself in my music, I always try to express what I really feel inside, the way I see things. To me, that's it — keep it genuine and about something grounded. I try to write from experience, or if I'm singing a song, I try to relate to it one way or another as opposed to just singing something I think *sounds* cool.

W&S: You're playing guitar in a new style on this record, yet you're utilizing cyclical hooks and grooves that remain blues-based. It's like the vocabulary is different but the feeling remains the same. Is blues so deeply grounded within you that it always informs your guitar playing?

CH: Yeah, definitely. That's how it all started out for me, so it seems natural that I'd refer to that. Actually, I didn't start out playing blues, but when I started to play guitar well, I realized I needed to learn how, because it was a foundation for so many different kinds of music. When I was coming up, I heard a lot of musicians saying that if you could play the blues, you could play anything — and that's really true, you know?

W&S: That is true, but very few modern guitarists have mastered the early country-blues style to the degree that you have. How does a well-educated, middle-class kid from Colorado find that connection with the cultural and emotional elements of a style so far removed from your own experience?

CH: I grew up in Colorado, but my family is all from the South. That was the

reference point. Somebody would die and we'd all go down South, and I'd see where my mom was from. As a black kid dealing with the family history, the things you'd hear from your elders about what it was like when they were coming around, and what it was like when their own elders were coming around, that had something to do with it. Plus, there's a big black community in Denver. Even when we moved to the suburbs, we were always involved and in touch with our people.

W&S: I grew up in an integrated neighborhood in the '60s, and the black kids had no interest whatsoever in the blues; they looked at blues as "Uncle Tom" jive. They were all listening to Wilson Pickett and Aretha Franklin, but there was no interest in seeking out the roots. You're of a younger generation — has that outlook changed with time?

CH: I think it's always that way, just like kids now don't want to listen to Wilson Pickett, you know? Every generation wants to be on the cutting edge, they want to be happening. If it ain't goin' on, the youth don't want nothin' to do with it. I think one thing about black music is that it never gets into much nostalgia. It does what it does at the time that it does, and when that time is over, they move onto something else.

W&S: How do you feel about hip-hop as an extension of black musical and cultural heritage? Is it a positive thing? Is it really even music?

CH: I think it definitely is real music, but it kinda depends...like I tell my kids, there's a difference between being a rapper and being an MC. You take someone like Mos Def or Chuck D, they are truly MCs, whereas someone like P Diddy is not an MC. He can rhyme and he's got a little rap and flow, but he's not truly an MC. An MC has really mastered wordplay; these are cats that read the dictionary. The power of words and sound is elevated to a height that you don't really see with some cat who's just got a catchy rhyme about a girl or jewelry or something.

I think a lot of people's vision of hip-hop has been distorted by corporations and record companies who put out music that's just junk — you know, just fun little jingles that youth can get into so they can make money. That's rap music, that's not hip-hop in my book. People who really do hip-hop don't do it because there's money in it, they do it because that's what they are and that's what they do.

W&S: There's been a real glorification of that whole bling-bling, what-I-got-that-you-ain't got mentality.

CH: Yeah, yeah, there's a lot of that. Hip-hop has become very corrupt and very hedonistic, but it wasn't always about that. When I first got to know hip-hop, it was just starting to have the gold chains and stuff, but there were more kids wearing natural jewelry with red, gold, and green or that had a picture of the African continent on it. It was more about what you were inside as opposed to how much money you had. I mean, let's face it — all these cats going around showing off all this money, well, it's nothing compared to what the people who are selling their records have, the people who wrote the contract. It's an illusion.

Most of the kids doing hip-hop now are middle class, they don't come from the projects or rough, tore-up neighborhoods. It's a stereotype that the media likes to perpetuate about young black people as a whole. But in general, I love hip-hop, I think it's great. It's just another development from the same tree that the blues came from.

W&S: I guess another problem I have with hip-hop is that kids aren't learning to play instruments anymore. Is that an old foguey's attitude?

CH: Well, that's true and that is important, but I think hip-hop came about because of cuts in school funding during the '70s and '80s. Kids in inner city schools didn't have access to instruments anymore, there were no band programs anymore, all that dried up. All the kids had access to were their wits, maybe a turntable and a microphone. I think what's going on in society has a tremendous effect in how music turns out. If it weren't for all the economic problems that started with Carter and went on with Reagan, hip-hop would have evolved differently.

“I feel like I’m a messenger between what’s going on over [in Africa] and what’s going on here.”

W&S: On the subject of instruments, when did you start playing Taylor guitars, and which Taylor model do you play?

CH: I have a 514ce. [Piedmont blues artist] John Cephas suggested that I try a Taylor and I really liked it. It was featured in the movie I did with Martin Scorsese over in Mali. I've played it into the ground; I love it. Now I'm on the *Wood&Steel* mailing list and I'd really like to get another Taylor.

W&S: How much did you use the 514ce on *Daily Bread*?

CH: It's the only acoustic I used. I use it anytime I do an acoustic song. Even on an electric song, I'd use it for the "skank", a rhythm or something.

W&S: Most of my life I was primarily an electric guitarist — I had acoustics, but they were cheap models, just to bang around and practice with. When I finally started shopping for a quality acoustic guitar a few years ago, several people told me I should get a Martin because my playing is blues-based and Martins were supposed to have a warmer, rounder, bluesier tone. But when I sat down with a Taylor, it was life-altering, I couldn't believe how beautifully it played and sounded compared to any other acoustics I tried out.

CH: The thing about a Taylor is that it's always consistent. You know what you're gonna get, whereas I've run across other brands that just don't deliver. Other companies that've been around for a long time have had so many changes in technology and glues over the years that

now they're just a name. You gotta look at the *guitar*, and for me, Taylor is consistent. I've never picked up a Taylor that didn't sound like a Taylor, but I've picked up Martins, for example, where I said, "This doesn't sound like a Martin." I like something you can count on. With Taylor, you know there's a certain level it'll live up to. It's always gonna be high-quality.

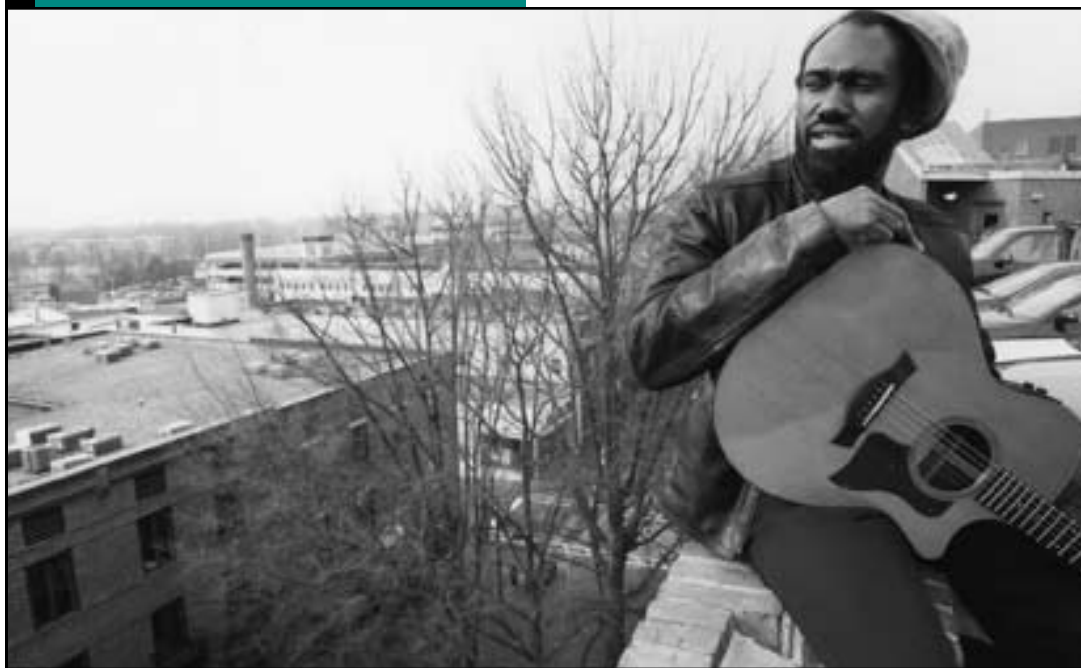
W&S: Back to what you were talking about with the Scorsese thing, I found that segment where you were playing with [legendary African folk musician] Ali Farka Toure tremendously moving. The merging of continents and cultures and traditions...I actually got a lump in my throat. If it had that effect on me as an observer, what must it have been like for you to experience it all firsthand? What did it mean to you musically and personally?

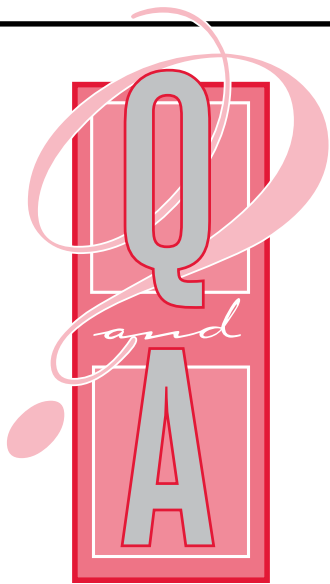
CH: Personally, I feel like I'm a messenger between what's going on over [in Africa] and what's going on over here. I feel like we need to become closer in music and in other aspects, because that's where we came from. Even though it was a long time ago, that's our reference point, that's where it started. They realize that over there. No one sits down and has any philosophical, highbrow discussions about it, they just know it's the case. People over there knew black-American music, and I was accepted, whereas very few people over here are into any African music style at all. Ali Farka Toure picked me up at this little airfield about two hours outside of Timbuktu, this little strip in the sand, and he's listening to Bobby "Blue" Bland and Otis Redding.

It's no big deal to him. Everyone over there knows these cats, this American music. I think that's why I'm here — to be a bridge between us and them, and try to facilitate understanding, musically and otherwise.

W&S: I'm more of an American roots-music guy than a world-music guy — I'm admittedly very uneducated about that stuff — but I've always been able to get into Ali Farka Toure because when I listen to him, it touches me from

continued on page 19





Q I recently got the koa top T5 with chrome hardware. Kudos for creating an awesome guitar that I love playing. Everything since the creation of the Tele, Les Paul, ES 335, Strat, and SG has pretty much been a re-make or hybrid, and virtually all of the round-hole acoustic and archtop body styles and designs came before all the solid-body innovations. I really think the T5 stands as a truly new and innovative guitar design.

For my eclectic style of playing (standards, James Taylor, Police, '50s ballads, hymns arranged for guitar), this guitar is what I have been looking for all my life! I've found it to be equally good for solo or duo work with a female singer who plays acoustic guitar about 25 percent of the time. When my partner plays, I get separation from her acoustic sound, and I get greater clarity when it's just me on guitar backing her voice. And because the guitar is acoustic, there is enough decay on the notes to avoid the constant annoying sustain of an electric guitar in a soloduo situation.

Here is how I would describe the five pickup positions: 1) with a lot of bass and treble, kind of an older Ovation sound, but roll-off either bass or treble and it could be any number of electric acoustics; 2) gets more of the "woody" tone of a modern hand-made archtop (rather than the '60s Gibson L5 or ES 175 thru Fender Twin tone); 3) maybe a Tele bridge pickup — there is a sparkle



there; 4) Gretsch Filtertron pickups, like on a Gretsch Country Club (which I used to have; I also had a Tennessean); 5) there is a little spank there, like a second- or fourth-position, out-of-phase Strat sound. When it comes to electric guitars, I am a "Fender guy" rather than a "Gibson guy", so this is perfect for me.

As for the five-position switch, I sometimes use the number-1 acoustic position, but primarily I use the second and fourth positions — the modern humbucker and the '50s archtop sounds. When we do the Nora Jones song, "Humble Me", the third position mimics a good resonator guitar sound. Initially, I was getting a little too much Fender "spank" in all the positions, but I put the next gauge strings on and got less string snap, especially while finger-picking, and that helped tremendously. Now for a couple of questions.

If I go up a gauge (D'Addario jazz electric mediums, 12-54), should I get the guitar set-up, or can it handle a one-step gauge change as is? Also, is there a piezo pickup under the saddle? I know there is a neck pickup under the body and the "lipstick" pickup near the bridge (that actually is a humbucker, too, correct?) Is there another pickup, magnetic or piezo?

Mark Shuttleworth
Via e-mail

A Sounds like you're having fun experimenting with that T5-S2, which was one of a limited run we offered only at the 2005 NAMM show (thus explaining why it has chrome and not gold tuners). Now for your questions.

The change in string gauge is fine; maybe just a little turn on the neck to keep it straight would help. There is no piezo under the saddle; we use a magnetic body sensor to pick up the body sound. Yes, the pickup near the bridge is a stacked humbucking pickup. And last, yes, there is a body sensor located behind the bridge that functions in the first selector position.

Mark, you seem to be totally into exploring your T5, so when you get a chance, hit our website for more information on sounds and ideas: taylorguitars.com/guitars/T5/feature

Q I just bought a XXX-KE [30th Anniversary koa] and I am still trying to quit trembling! Wow, you really did a wonderful job with this truly magical guitar — so impressive! Last year, I purchased a K65ce-L7 Custom and I dearly love this darling. Now that

the XXX-KE has joined the family, I have a question: will you please make a 12-string model with the short-scale advantage? Can I custom-order one? Please remember that we 12-string lovers would very much like to enjoy the benefits of this revolutionary improvement, and maybe even save our fingers to play a few extra hours.

Mr. Taylor, your fantastic guitars have really changed my life. I have read that you are a 12-string lover also, so you undoubtedly understand the magic of the 12 and the benefits of the short-scale. What a truly incredible day it would be if these two fantastic ideas joined forces in one guitar to add another miracle creation to the Taylor family! Please put me at the top of the list if one of these becomes available.

Larry Burkhart
Via e-mail

A While a short-scale 12-string might not be on the front burner at this time, it doesn't mean we haven't been thinking about that. Such developments begin with building prototypes before moving on to the tooling-up process, which is a considerable investment of time, energy, and labor. But with the people we have here at Taylor, today's inspirations frequently are tomorrow's realities, so keep reading *Wood&Steel* and checking our website, Larry, and maybe your ship will come in!

Q I'm the proud owner of a Taylor and I'm thinking of buying a new one soon. But could you please clear up a gray issue for me? I understand that Taylor has provided money and supplies to high school shop programs across the U.S. and elsewhere, which is great; I believe that young people need to acquire skills through shop classes, etc. But I feel that sooner or later guitar buyers like me could be buying guitars with parts made by kids. This raises red flags.

John Nichols
Via e-mail

A You can lower the red flags. In the Spring 2004 issue of *Wood&Steel*, in both the "Bobspeak" column and the "FYI" feature, we wrote about



Bob Taylor (center) with students from El Capitan High School's guitar-building class. Photo by Erin Fitzgerald

Taylor Guitars' efforts to jump-start guitar-building courses at two local high schools — Valhalla and El Capitan, here in the San Diego area. The guitars these students make are their own to keep; they have nothing to do with Taylor except that we helped get the programs up and running and Bob Taylor himself has feted the graduates in ceremonies that took place in our performance venue.

Not sure where you got the idea that we're doing this "across the U.S. and elsewhere," but perhaps the last line of the "FYI" piece will assuage your fears: "Hopefully, this innovative pilot program will also serve as a model for other school districts, and attract the attention of school administrators to help generate future funding, so that the same opportunities will be available to more students."

Q I own a Taylor 614ce. Last time Glenn Tilbrook (of Squeeze fame) came through this area, he played a solo show in Northampton, Massachusetts. He is as accomplished a "live" player/singer as I have ever seen. That night he played two Taylors — a six-string Dreadnought that looked to be either walnut or koa, and a red 12-string Jumbo cutaway that I assumed was a maple 655.

After the show, I asked him what woods the guitars were made from. He looked me straight in the eye, shrugged, and said, "I have no idea." I do not think he was joking, but maybe he was just being coy. Do you guys know what models he tours with? I was not about to go onstage and look in the soundhole to see the model numbers.

Point of interest: if Glenn really does not know which woods were used on his guitars, can one assume that players of this caliber just do not care about such things as long as the instrument feels right and plays well? I was under the impression that with each level artists move up, they get deeper and deeper into the nuances of everything, especial-

ly equipment. Am I wrong about this? Anyway, if you get the chance, check out Glenn's incredible live solo shows.

James Anas
Via e-mail

A Happy to solve the mystery. Glenn tours with a K20 (koa Dreadnought) and a red 655c (Jumbo maple 12-string cutaway), so you were right on both counts. As to the depths to which artists delve to discover the nuances of their gear, that ranges as far and as wide as the differences in various artists' skill levels and musical styles.

Some recording artists get very involved in the gear thing; Clint Black is a fine example of someone whose interest in his guitars and amplified tone and signal chain seemed to intensify the more famous he got (see Buzz Marcus's revealing, two-part "Wood&Steel Interview" with Clint in the Spring and Summer 2001 issues). Other performers leave the guitar stuff to their techs and can't tell you much at all about their instruments or equipment — all they need to know is that something sounds, feels, looks, and/or works well enough to properly deliver their music.

There simply is no corollary linking an artist's talent, or an artist's interest in creating the best-possible music, with his or her knowledge or expertise concerning their instruments. Some incredible guitarists and superstars don't even bother to change their strings and wouldn't know a cutaway from a cold cut; conversely, some amateur players and weekend warriors can tell you how the wood cells line up in their favorite axe. It's all a matter of personal inclination and nothing should be read into either a preoccupation with guitar specs, or a lack thereof.

By the way, we agree with you about Glenn Tilbrook's talent and great performance skills, and there's a news item in this issue's "Soundings" section that should interest you. ■



GS
S E R I E S

pure acoustic

THE GS SERIES TAKES SHAPE

The T5's sterling rookie season in 2005 has prompted no shortage of frothy speculation regarding fresh developments for 2006. In the broader context of Taylor's electronics advances over the past several years, from the Expression System to the K4, from the T5's versatile pickup system to a pair of new stomp boxes (see page 8), the momentum certainly seems to be surging along the lines of amplified tone.

What might be next on Taylor's design frontier?

Rewind to May of last year. In the immediate wake of the T5's official spring launch, a fresh wave of excitement was spreading as T5 models began arriving at (and quickly exiting) dealers' stores. The factory was steadily increasing production to fulfill the demand. The company's product development group was already actively exploring the second generation of T5 ideas, from different pickup configurations to new color options (see page 6).

Bob Taylor, as the guiding hand of development, had been assessing the T5's trajectory and pondering the R&D focus and possible tooling efforts that would be necessary to lead the company into 2006. A realization came one weekend, and early the following week Bob convened his design team for a product development meeting at which they would begin charting the course for the coming year.

Bob's top priority: to make a strong *acoustic* statement.

"We certainly were riding high on the T5's success, and a lot of people in our product development group were trying stuff," Bob recalls, "but the next direction wasn't clear. And it occurred to me that there was a whole lifetime to make new iterations and let the T5 develop."

Bob told his design group that Taylor owed it to customers to let them know that the company's head was still very much in the acoustic game.

"We weren't going to go away and become the electric guitar company that used to make acoustics," he continues. "Besides, there were still a lot of ideas that we had yet to express with acoustic guitars."

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BY JIM KIRLIN

PHOTOS BY

PPM / PAT BOEMER &

RITA FUNK-HOFFMAN

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Bob's comments provide an update to the *Wood&Steel* cover story from the Summer 2002 issue ("New Frontiers in Tone", archived on the Taylor website), which illuminated a similar mindset of tonal exploration. That period would lead to the revoicing of the Taylor Dreadnought and our other steel-string models; the expansion of the Nylon Series, the development of the Expression System, and experimentation with scale length, which would come to fruition with Taylor's 30th Anniversary model, short-scale L9s, and eventually, the DDSM.

For 2006, the renewed focus on acoustic guitar has spawned an even more dramatic breakthrough, in the form of a brand new body shape, a bold new Taylor acoustic sound, and ultimately, a new way of thinking about the Taylor line.

SHAPING THE SOUND

"There was a sound I had in mind, and a shape that I thought would yield that sound," Bob says of the initial inspiration for the new body. "The shape centered on the concept of the Grand Auditorium [Bob's first original guitar shape, introduced in 1994 to celebrate our 20th Anniversary] and how it could be modified, in a way."

Bob shared his ideas with senior guitar designers Larry Breedlove and Ed Granero, giving them some basic design direction.

"I asked Larry to take the waist and move it up toward the neck, and then make the lower bout a little more 'pregnant,'" he elaborates. "What that does is add a little bit of real estate in an area of the lower bout where every little bit can pay back big dividends. It's really all geometry. People don't realize that a 14-inch pizza is actually twice the size of a 10-inch pizza. But do the math. You make the guitar a

little bit bigger, and in reality, it's a lot bigger."

Larry Breedlove says that although the new body shape does bear some similarities in shape to the Grand Auditorium, he never approached it simply in terms of re-working the GA shape.

"We worked from certain dimensions, but we really drew a whole new guitar. In fact, I even used some T5 lines, initially."

In addition to pushing the waist up, Breedlove widened it 3/8 of an inch, lessening the "pinching" effect that can diminish the tonal output of the guitar. Coupled with the bigger, rounder lower bout, the new body geometry was now capable of producing a more powerful sound.

"There's so much energy going into a guitar via the strings," Bob explains. "It's what I call 'fixed overhead'. The question is what happens with that energy? With something like the GA, all of the sound is produced and then stops at the edge of that guitar; we just pushed the fence out a little bit on this new body, so you get a bigger payback with it."

Bob feels that the new shape offers players a truly fresh acous-



GS

INDIAN ROSEWOOD
WESTERN RED CEDAR

"THE GOAL WAS TO DESIGN A GUITAR THAT HAS A DEEPER, PIANO-LIKE BASS, WAY MORE VOLUME, AND A GOOD LOW-END SUSTAIN, WITHOUT RUINING THE CLARITY OF THE MIDS AND THE HIGHS."

— BOB TAYLOR



tic voice, much like the Grand Auditorium did when it was introduced.

“The GA is the hands-down winner of that particular shape and tone. Nobody even comes close to the success of that model in a non-dreadnought guitar. It’s great for fingerstyle and all-around light rhythm, but it’s not a bluegrass guitar — a thunderous, low-E and -A-string kind of a flatpicker’s

GS

BIG LEAF MAPLE

SITKA SPRUCE

delight, with that low-end, traditional thump.

“So the goal was to design a guitar that has a deeper, piano-like bass, way more volume, and a good low-end sustain, without ruining the clarity of the mids and the highs. The idea was to start with the concept of the GA and make it more boisterous. And it made sense to go there by changing the body shape.

“It’s got a great mid-range — if you want, you can get a little bit of that ‘low-fi’ mid-range *chunk* that people like to hear in recording, but you also can play it more clearly if you want. And if you just want to strum or play fingerstyle, it’s loud and really bright.”

GS

The new shape was officially christened the Grand Symphony, or GS. In addition to the body’s modified dimen-

INDIAN ROSEWOOD

SITKA SPRUCE

sions, other shape refinements, such as a more sloped shoulder, were incorporated to give the GS unique aesthetic appeal.

Inside the guitar, as Larry Breedlove and Ed Granero note, the GS bracing isn’t a significant component of the new sound at all. It’s essentially a standard Taylor bracing scheme, which includes the forward-shifted X-bracing and the relief rout around the outer edge of the soundboard. A few other very subtle structural changes were made in top, back, and side thickness, but the distinctive tonal properties remain predominantly shape-driven.

GS

TROPICAL

AMERICAN MAHOGANY

WESTERN RED CEDAR

NO SIX-STRING BLING

From the outset, Bob and his team assumed a back-to-basics design approach with the GS, focusing purely on tone. In returning to an acoustic roots concept, he took into account that for better or for worse, over the last 12-15 years, Taylor has come to be perceived by some as the “CE” (cutaway-electric) company.

“Part of it is that we did such a good job of it that everybody said, ‘I want a cutaway with electronics on my guitar,’” Bob says. “Pretty soon the guitar is the ‘c and e’, and in some ways people forget about the rest of the guitar.”

The decision was made not to make a cutaway version of the GS, at least initially. An option for electronics is available, but all standard models will be made without them.

Another major distinction of the GS body shape is that, rather than simply being inserted into each Taylor series up the line, it’s being grouped as its own separate series, consisting of four different tonewood combinations — mahogany/cedar, maple/Sitka spruce, rosewood/cedar, and rosewood/Sitka spruce.

Because the emphasis is on tone, all four models feature the same simple, understated appointments, including ivoroid binding, an abalone rosette, and abalone microdot fretboard inlays. Three of the models are priced the same (\$2,698), while the mahogany/cedar version is \$2,598. Without trying to deconstruct the existing Taylor line, the pricing parity



of the GS Series represents an opportunity to break free of some of the conventions that have come to govern the other steel-string series. The GS also reflects shifting realities both in wood supply and market preferences.

“Everything tends to run through a cycle, and people’s tastes are changing in terms of what they want in a guitar,” Bob says. “For a long time, it’s been a paradigm where, ‘here’s the plain-Jane mahogany guitar, and here’s the expensive rosewood guitar, which has to

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THE FARMERS *Loaded*

(Clarence Records)
Taylors Used: 710ce-L9, DCSM
Thefarmersmusic.com

The Beat Farmers came roaring out of San Diego, California in the 1980s to earn a diehard international underground following for its aggressive country-blues-rock. The band carried on until 1995, when singer/drummer/guitarist Country Dick Montana died onstage of a massive heart attack.

Recently, founding members Buddy Blue (vocals, electric, acoustic, slide, and steel guitars, banjo, harp), Jerry Raney (vocals, electric, acoustic, and 12-string guitars), and Rolle Love (bass) reunited as the Farmers, rounding out the lineup with drummer Joel "Bongo" Kmak, a Montana friend and occasional fill-in during the Beat Farmers' heyday.

The group's reemergence has been well-received. In September 2005, they were honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the San Diego Music Awards, and their new CD, *Loaded*, was the year's number-one seller on the milesofmusic.com website, which specializes in Americana, alt-country, roots-rock, folk-rock, folk, bluegrass, and singer-songwriters. The Farmers beat out such Americana heavy-hitters as Ryan Adams, Nickel Creek, John Hiatt, and Sonny Landreth — a feat made more appreciable by the fact that *Loaded* wasn't released until October.

Loaded easily ranks among the band's best work. Overall, it's a bit gutsier than the Beat Farmers' earlier efforts, perhaps owing to Raney's rock influences, and evidenced in the fierce overdriven riffs of "Lost in My Car" and the soaring electric leads of "Beans 'n' Weenies". The CD also is very wide-ranging. Among its exciting tracks are the psychedelic "Hard Knot", with its distinctively Hendrix-y vibe, and the down-home "Shadows of Glory", with its pitch-perfect slide work.

The highlight of *Loaded*, though, is "Impressed", an acoustic strummer in the fertile key of G major, on which the Farmers make their own rootsy sound while giving a nod to the great mid-

late-'60s songs of Bob Dylan. Therein lies the formula of the Farmers' success: they're able to harness classic American idioms to create their own organic sound. And nowhere is that sound better represented than on this satisfying new album.

— Marc Harris

BRANDI CARLILE *Brandi Carlile*

(Red Ink/Columbia Records)
Taylors Used: 914ce, 612
Brandicarlile.com

Twenty-three might seem a tender age to score an album deal with a major label, let alone put out a mature debut effort. But when a musician has been singing and performing since the age of eight, and playing guitar since she was 17, that's already a good number of years spent getting to know the mic, the stage, and what works to get a song across.

Brandi Carlile's self-titled album, recorded in part in her Washington State log cabin, might not be the most adventurous collection of tracks, but it serves notice that this young singer, songwriter, and guitarist has the ability to deliver a song with extraordinary expression, honesty, and grace.

Carlile's music is a close mix of alt-country and acoustic-laced pop, and her delivery, alternating between her roots-music-flavored lower register and a soaring falsetto, has drawn comparisons with Patsy Cline. Carlile co-wrote the majority of the tracks with musical partner Tim Hanserath, who also plays guitar and contributes backing vocals. Hanserath's twin, Phil, plays bass and adds harmonies, and Carlile and the twins share production credit. In the main, the songs are sparingly produced and driven more by acoustic guitar than hard-edged electric.

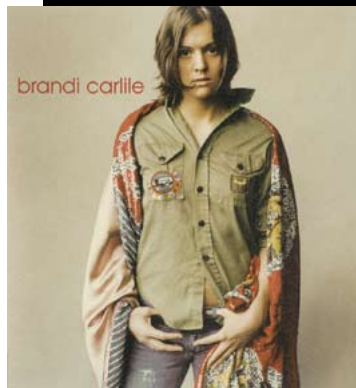
Carlile's lyrics and stories tend toward the darker side of self-discovery, but the narratives flow easily and pull you in to feel the emotion. A few songs — "Throw It All Away", "Fall Apart

The Farmers / *Loaded*



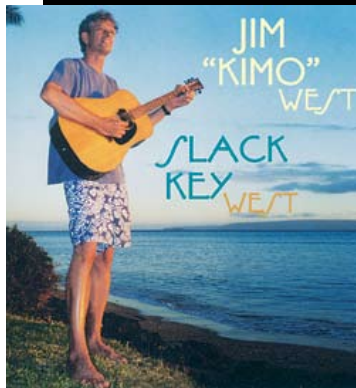
"...able to harness classic American idioms to create their own organic sound."

Brandi Carlile / *Brandi Carlile*



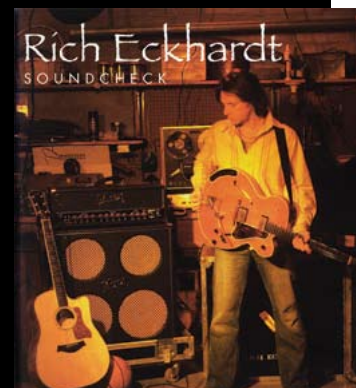
"...has the ability to deliver a song with extraordinary expression, honesty, and grace."

Jim "Kimo" West / *Slack Key West*



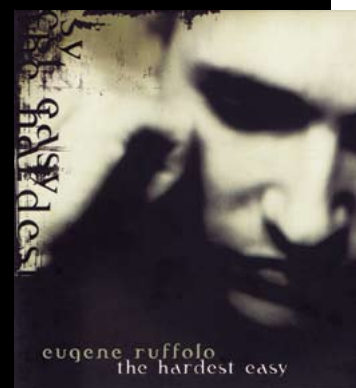
"...his instrumentals all take place in an assortment of lush, open, tropical tunings."

Rich Eckhardt / *Soundcheck*



"...the new breed of Nashville picker: plays country but comes from a rock background."

Eugene Ruffolo / *The Hardest Easy*



"...rich, soulful singing...the ability to evoke deep emotion line by line..."

Jonathan Kingham / *That Changes Everything*



"...a wistful, late-night ambience that flickers with mellow sophistication."

Again," and "Follow" (which features a late-Beatles-esque arrangement and production values) — could pass for solid country-rock standards, while songs like "Happy", "Someday Never Comes", "Gone", and "Tragedy" have an acoustic core, tasteful instrumentation, and an unpretentious quality that puts a great distance between this artist and the rest of the pack.

Carlile already has a strong musical identity, which might be even more apparent onstage than in this initial CD outing, but this is a good introduction to an artist who has every chance of becoming a significant player.

— Julie Bergman

JIM "KIMO" WEST

Slack Key West
(Westernmost Records)
Taylor Used: 514ce
Jimkimowest.com

On the cover of his new CD, Jim "Kimo" West stands barefoot on the beach, clad in baggy shorts, looking more blissful than Swami Satchidananda after his 19th epiphany. There is no accompanying thought balloon, but if there were, it might read, "Slack key, si — Weird Al, no!"

Many musicians lead double lives (at least), but West's fluctuations are true synapse shredders. Not only does he split his time between L.A. (where there's more work) and Hawaii, but to keep the fresh mahi-mahi and opah on the dinner table, Kimo has worked for years as musical director/lead guitarist for Weird Al Yankovic. After playing theatres, casinos, and state fairs, arousing fans of musical satire via "My Bologna", "Another One Rides the Bus", and "Like a Surgeon", West retreats post-tour to the solace and sanity of the Islands to decompress and go acoustic.

Slack Key West is his third foray in a passionate pursuit of all things *ki ho 'alu* (slack key). It could have been subtitled *Seven Shades of Modal*, as his easy-to-digest (just short of New Age) instrumentals all take place in an assortment of lush, open tropical tunings. The soothing collection of 11 originals and three well-chosen covers is not only reminiscent of slack key masters Gabby Pahinui and Ledward Ka'apana, but also harkens back to the '80s



Windham Hill sounds of Will Ackerman and Alex de Grassi. (West acknowledges Windham Hill mainstay, pianist George Winston, for his ongoing entrepreneurial efforts to bring *ki ho 'alu* into the mainstream.)

There is nothing on this CD that will make you laugh or groan like the stuff West plays in his other life, where he dons the spandex and turns the amp up to 10 during songs like "I Lost on Jeopardy", "Eat It", or "Addicted to Spuds". On *Slack Key West*, you get mild-mannered Clark Kent, not Superman. And if he isn't able to save Metropolis, he's certainly capable of easing your troubled mind and rocking your little baby to sleep.

— Kenny Weissberg

RICH ECKHARDT

Soundcheck

(independent release)

Taylor used: 610ce, 514ce, NS52ce
richeckhardt.com

Best-known as Toby Keith's guitar-slinger, Rich Eckhardt represents the new breed of Nashville picker — one who plays country music but comes from a decidedly rock background. A product of the D.C. area, he cut his teeth playing covers of Foghat, the Doobie Brothers, and Bachman-Turner Overdrive, and cites the Beatles and Monkees as early inspirations.

After landing a road gig with Eddy Raven, Eckhardt moved to Music City in 1989, and has since played with some of country's biggest names. But hearing the Ventures made him "realize that some songs were complete without lyrics," and consequently his solo debut is an instrumental feast.

Opening with the crunchy squawk of the Jeff Beck-inspired title track, Eckhardt makes it clear that we're not in Nashville anymore, Toto. But the mood quickly swings to an almost New Age feel for the acoustic "Old Chanoanon River" (its title a reference to the Native American name for the Cumberland) before skipping to the Austrian-titled, Celtic-sounding "Zwergelgarten" — two of ten Eckhardt originals in the set.

Rich's main acoustic is a 610ce, which he miked with two Shure KSM 27s. "One is close, near the soundhole," he explains, "and the other is just over the top of my head and back about two feet." He also ran a DI from the guitar's preamp. He used

the 514ce for rhythm accompaniment because "its size gave me an even and less-bassy tone." It was double-tracked, using just the microphones, and panned hard left and right.

The bouncy "Workin' for Peanuts" shows off some fancy fingerpicking, and a non-steel remake of the chestnut "Sleepwalk" recalls D.C. forefathers Danny Gatton and Roy Buchanan. Then things get romantic on the jazzy "Catalina" and on the gut-string, flamenco-esque "Tronar Los Dedos (Snap Your Fingers)", which boasts an instantly memorable melody.

It's that level of maturity — never resorting to chops for chops' sake (even though he obviously has them to spare) — that simultaneously illustrates why Eckhardt is so in-demand and proves that he's no mere sideman. Indeed, he's an artist with a lot to say — no lyrics necessary.

— Dan Forte

EUGENE RUFFOLO

The Hardest Easy

(Oats Music)

Taylor Used: 514ce
Eugeneruffolo.com

Pop songwriting, as a craft, is deceptively elusive and difficult. The writer makes choices about instrumentation, harmonic content, form, melody, lyrics, and myriad other components long before the song's final vision is realized. The hope is that the little pieces blend into one, the composite parts are forgotten, and only the song and its true meaning are heard and understood by the listener. It's a lot easier said than done, especially when trying to convey feelings of loss, love, sadness, and hope.

Enter Eugene Ruffolo, a New York-based singer/songwriter/guitarist of the highest professional order. His vocal talent alone has landed him session work with artists as disparate as Garth Brooks, Livingston Taylor, and Tony Bennett, and his voice can be heard on countless Hollywood film soundtracks. But his rich, soulful, singing (certain passages conjure up a modern-day Bill Withers) is but a piece of his true talent: the ability to evoke deep emotion through his own material, line by line, seemingly at will.

The Hardest Easy, Ruffolo's third album, is his take on the dangers and aspirations of love. On the title track, he makes his

mixed feelings clear — affairs of the heart, described in fragile detail, are not without effort, fear, pain, and wavering resolve. He's certainly not afraid to get dark. "Irreplaceable" and "A Kiss for Your Travels" are desperate, plaintive wails in song form for a dearly departed friend, and the ironically titled "Gracefully" could be a candidate for the songs-to-stab-yourself-over hall of fame ("We walked here together/it takes two to break the vow/ from glory to ashes/yeah, just take a look at us now").

Just when you think all is hopeless and lost, Ruffolo smiles and winks with "Run to You", a sly, clever, "I'm in love with you" ditty with a bouncy groove, major tonality, and a quirky string arrangement, all of which could fit perfectly on side two of the Beatles' "White Album". And the uplifting album closer, "Only Love", speaks for itself in its yearning for The One True Thing, no matter what the cost.

Ruffolo's songs are so holistically complete that it's easy to gloss-over the rewarding instrumentation. Backing vocals, percussion, strings, and even lap steel guitar weave in and out, seamlessly, almost unnoticeably. You can be lulled into forgetting that acoustic guitar anchors nearly every track. In particular, "The Hills of Sicily" (co-written with Taylor clinician Artie Traum) features a beautiful-sounding, room-miked guitar and rich, complex harmonic textures that make you wonder how he keeps it so simple with so much songwriting and instrumental talent at his disposal.

But that's how Ruffolo's craft works, and its simplicity in execution only serves to illuminate how far a heart can rise, fall, and rise again. Utterly conventional, yet somehow effortlessly unique in its beauty and emotional expression, this album landed square in my chest and is stuck there still.

— Bryan Beller

JONATHAN KINGHAM

That Changes Everything

(Exact Records)

Taylor Used: 510
Jonathankingham.com

Romantic balladry is slippery turf. It takes a special knack for nuance to craft love songs (in this case an entire album's worth) that conjure the feeling without laying it on too thick or setting off the

cliché alarm. Fortunately, award-winning singer-songwriter Jonathan Kingham applies a sensitive touch on *That Changes Everything*, a classy assortment of candlelit confessions.

Kingham's smoky baritone is the perfect mood setter, infusing his original material with velvety warmth as he pays homage to the vintage R&B and torch-song traditions. Kingham's melodic phrasing forms each song's emotional centerpiece, while spare, well-appointed arrangements, including piano, B3 organ, and archtop and pedal-steel guitars match the expressiveness of his voice. The pared-down production enhances the intimacy of the record and gives every element room to breathe; the effect is a wistful, understated, late-night ambience that flickers with mellow sophistication.

Kingham dims the lights and gets his groove on with the jazzy R&B opener, "Every Little Step", the album's most up-tempo track, as his husky vocal cascades over silky hollowbody electric, gently shimmering B3, and laid-back horn fills. From there, Kingham lights his torch on the softly swinging "All That's Missing Is You", his aching vocal reminiscent of Lyle Lovett, tinged with pedal-steel and a sultry sax solo. Kingham works in mostly hushed tones the rest of the way, employing tasteful restraint, heightening the emotional impact of his sentiments.

Thematically, *That Changes Everything* illuminates the full spectrum of love, from its heart-fluttering beginnings to its time-weathered reaffirmation. The title track toasts the pivotal moment of acquiescing to love's pull; "Real Woman" is a tribute to love aging gracefully; "Better Word For Love" reflects on the inability of words to encompass deep feelings. On the slow, soulful lament, "Only a Dream", Kingham's longing hangs thick in the air before his voice slips into a pristine falsetto worthy of a Chris Isaak tune.

After the irony-soaked "I Don't Love You Anymore", Kingham closes with a beautifully minimal cover of Sade's "It's Only Love That Gets You Through", accompanying himself on piano. Though the album runs its course in under 40 minutes, Kingham takes his sweet time every step of the way, savoring love's many splendors and enduring power.

— Jim Kirilin ■

COREY HARRIS

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the same place as Charlie Patton or Blind Joe Reynolds or Skip James.

CH: Right! They're very hip to American music over there. They check stuff out and they travel. They've been doing that for decades — longer than a lot of us have. It's something that's universal to me. It goes beyond the words to the songs. There are certain vibes, the vibration of the singing and playing comes through.

W&S: Alvin "Youngblood" Hart got angry with me not long ago because I wrote a story saying that as much as I loved his country-blues playing, I couldn't hang with his electric rock records. He sent me this nasty e-mail implying I was a bigot, that I was in the yoke of the oppressor, and he refused to tap-dance for my benefit and whatnot. I must admit, I took a bit of umbrage at that! Is there some implication of bigotry among white people who love old-time country blues?

CH: Wow...people hold their music right on their sleeve, with their heart. Sometimes people will have hostile reactions [laughs]. We might say we don't care what people think, that we'll do what we want, but obviously, we want people to like what we're doing. *Whew!* [laughs]

W&S: What's your opinion on the state of the blues today — its health, its long-term prospects for the future?

CH: I think there are different types of blues for different types of people. I don't think the meaning of the blues was ever tied down in the first place, and it's more vague than ever now. In general, blues is something that's gonna be sold in the marketplace as a commercial product. But the kind of music that R.L. Burnside or Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown played — yeah, that's dying out, plain and simple. Even if we all go out and learn all those songs and reproduce them note-for-note, it's still dying out. We should appreciate it and do what we can to let people know it exists and play the music and everything, but music reflects an era and time period, not simply entertainment or nostalgia.

There's different music for different times, and this is not really blues time anymore. Blues time was back when my mom and them were coming up and a bit before that. Everything has changed. It's cool to know where you come from and to

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get fancier to help justify the cost. The statement we're making with the GS Series is that *all* woods are getting rare. Mahogany is becoming more rare and harder to get than rosewood.

"So one reason we've compressed those prices is to let people know that it really is all about the tone with these guitars. We're not going to say one guitar is way more valuable than another guitar based on the wood. We've broken down the lines of the decoration, so it's not like you have to buy into the idea of a fancy guitar to get the rosewood.

"These are just guitars; they're very workmanlike, they're elegant with ivory binding and nice little abalone rosette and microdots on them. Pick the one that you think sounds the best. You don't really have to pick the one in the line that you can afford, because if you can afford one, you can afford all four. It's really about getting back to basics, yet it's a guitar that needs to be played, because it's a sweet-sounding guitar."

BIG VOICE, PURE JOY

"This is a real *player's* guitar", assesses Taylor product specialist Brian Swerdfeger, whom many readers may recognize from his T5 demonstration videos on the Taylor website. Swerdfeger is a busy gigging guitarist who worked on the T5 with Taylor Special Projects Manager David Hosler and Bob Taylor, and on the prototype refinement of the GS over the last several months. He's also a self-confessed gear hound who owns numerous acoustic and electric guitars. As a discerning player, he recounts his first impressions of the GS.

"It felt like the Taylors I'm used to, and it played great, but it was a completely different sound. I mean, I'm usually surrounded by different guitars, but every once in a while I pick one up, start playing, and later realize, this is the first time I've played

for a half an hour straight just for the pure joy of it.

"Something about the GS struck me on the emotional side and just made me want to play. It has such a big voice, plus a fun aspect. I would play it one way, grab a different pick, play a little harder, play a little softer, finger-

pick it, de-tune it. Before I knew it, I was probably an hour and a half into an evening of discovery, which was a lot of fun.

"The GS is the first guitar in a long, long time, probably since the GA in the acoustic guitar world, that says, 'Here's a new voice that's inspiring,'"

GIRTHY AND GIVING

Last fall, Taylor product specialist Brian Swerdfeger took a few GS prototypes out to music stores in Orange County, California.

Below are some initial impressions from players.

COREY WITT, BREA, CALIFORNIA

"'Girthy' is definitely the word I would use to describe the GS. I own a 25th Anniversary, all-mahogany 314-MCE, which to me is just the perfect Taylor. I casually play Taylors at stores all the time, and while they're all beautiful guitars, none compares to mine. This was the first time I played a Taylor and felt like it really resonated and had the girth and the warmth that I feel my all-mahogany one does. And what's notable is that my wife, who doesn't know anything about guitars except for the fact that they're the 'other woman', heard it, too. It actually felt louder than my all-mahogany, but it didn't feel boomy like a Jumbo. The GS has that sweet spot in the lower-mids; they just felt so round."

IAN WILLIAMS, OWNER, ROCKIT MUSIC, BREA, CALIFORNIA

"For me, the beauty of Taylors is the articulation; you hear those notes and all of that pretty upper end as well. I thought the GS had a nice way of marrying that nice clarity with bottom end."

BRIAN TONG, COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA

"I've owned other Taylors, but to be perfectly honest, I've never really liked the Taylor tone. I love their playability, but to my ear, they just never gave me that deep, visceral, 'bone-resonating' feel. But with the GS, the way the top moves...I felt an instantaneous feedback in the way it vibrated. What I like the most is the natural compression of the wood to where there's no sort of dead feeling when you hit it harder. It felt a lot like my favorite OM in terms of how it projected; it gave me that initial push, but compressed really nicely to where, when I laid into it, everything smoothed out. It kept giving me more the harder I played it, and it kept giving me more the softer I played it. I never felt like it let me down."



BODY TYPE:	6-STRING GS
STRINGS:	ELIXIR MEDIUM
CUTAWAY:	NONE
ELECTRONICS:	NONE
BODY:	WIDTH: 16 1/4" DEPTH: 4 5/8" LENGTH: 20" WIDTH AT WAIST: 10" OVERALL LENGTH: 41"
NECK:	WIDTH: 1-3/4" HEEL LENGTH: 3 1/2" SCALE LENGTH: 25 1/2" NO. OF FRETS: 20
BINDING:	MATERIAL: IVOROID BODY: IVOROID FRETBOARD: IVOROID PEGHEAD: NONE HEEL CAP: IVOROID SOUNDHOLE: NONE
PURFLING ROSETTE:	MATERIAL: PLASTIC SIZE: 3-RING MATERIAL: ABALONE
INLAYS:	PEGHEAD LOGO: MOTHER-OF-PEARL FRETBOARD: 4 MM ABALONE DOTS
FINISH:	BACK/SIDES: GLOSS TOP: GLOSS NECK: SATIN
TUNERS:	TAYLOR GOLD
BUTTONS:	GOLD
NUT/SADDLE:	TUSQ
BRIDGE PINS:	EBONY W/AB DOT

he adds. "And when you run across a sound you've never heard before, it inspires new songs. Now I have this instrument that can articulate what I hear in my head."

Swerdfeger's feelings were validated when he started taking GS prototypes out on gigs (see "Girthy and Giving" sidebar).

"People would hear it and say, 'What's *that*?' — not because they visually recognized it as a new shape, but because it had a voice they hadn't heard from other Taylors. A lot of people didn't expect it from a Taylor. That's another fun thing about the GS. It's a sound that Taylor isn't known for, yet it's not someone else's sound. It's a very distinguished, complex sound. If you're a connoisseur, when you play this guitar you'll find things in it that you would expect from the most boutique-y specialty builders — yet at an amazing price."

Returning to the notion of the GS as a "player's guitar", Swerdfeger points out that it's an instrument that can really be driven dynamically with one's picking/strumming hand.

"I've noticed that really good guitarists who've played a long time can get all kinds of amazing voices out of one acoustic guitar, because they know how to lean into it or back off, or move their hand closer to the bridge or neck. I think the GS guitar is so dynamic in that sense, from really quiet to blistering loud. There are so many subtle nuances and complexities in there."

While both Swerdfeger and David Hosler can talk at length about their personal impressions of the GS, both stress that rather than trying to define the tone themselves, people should play and



A guitar of the caliber of the Taylor GS Series deserves a case of equal distinction. A rugged yet elegant chocolate brown, alligator-inspired, polyvinyl exterior wraps the sturdy 6mm, 5-ply archtop shell. Inside, the rich texture of crushed velvet covers thick layers of open and closed cell foam for a tailored, glove-like fit. Custom touches include a removable, formed heel pad, an adjustable, padded headstock wedge, a wooden belly band, gold-plated hardware, a combination lock, and hand-stitched leather handles.

PRICING:

GS / TROPICAL AMERICAN
MAHOGANY
WESTERN RED CEDAR
\$ 2,598

GS / INDIAN ROSEWOOD
SITKA SPRUCE
\$ 2,698

GS / INDIAN ROSEWOOD
WESTERN RED CEDAR
\$ 2,698

GS / BIG LEAF MAPLE
SITKA SPRUCE
\$ 2,698

listen to them on their own. And they encourage people to play all four models, because each one really responds uniquely to an individual player.

"I think we proved that in-house," Swerdfeger says, "where I'd be playing or David would be playing the cedar/mahogany model and getting great sound from it. Then Bob Taylor would pick it and it just wouldn't sound the same. But then Bob would pick up the spruce/rosewood guitar and sound spectacular on it because he has a really light touch, and for the way he plays, that's his sound. Almost the opposite is true for me — I sound clunky on the spruce/rosewood guitar."

"So, that's what led us to the idea that these are all going to be priced the same, because we can't say one is better; depending on your playing style, it might not be. It's like having four different flavors, each of which is completely valid and yet totally subjective."

In reflecting on the GS project, Bob Taylor sums up the merits of reaching forward and designing a guitar that truly offers something new.

"The GS has allowed us to refresh ourselves, and to refresh the experience with players. It's important for us to continue to develop some new frontier. We need it. Customers need it. The industry needs it. This is all an ecosystem, and our role in that is to take a cool idea and turn it into something a person can find in a store and take home and play. I try to never forget that role. It's our contribution to inspiring new music, by giving players a new, great sound." ■

LOOK FOR GS SERIES GUITARS IN STORES STARTING APRIL 1, 2006. VISIT TAYLORGUITARS.COM FOR MORE DETAILS.



SHORT SCALE, HIGH MARKS

Acoustic Guitar / Nov 2005.

Our short-scale **710ce-L9** came up anything but short in a gear review. Then-editor Scott Nygaard starts by recalling how the “bassy whomp” of a Martin D-28 established a defining acoustic voice for a generation of players in the ‘60s and early ‘70s. While the arrival of companies like Taylor and Larrivée introduced a more balanced, refined contemporary tone, Nygaard acknowledges, the robust low-end of a D-28 remained a sonic benchmark for many. If Nygaard is implying his own subjective preferences, he also professes that the 710ce-L9 “is the first Taylor I’ve played that duplicates the vintage D-28’s woody boom....with the first strummed G chord, my face brightened and I was off, boom-chucking like one possessed, ripping into G-runs and launching first-position flatpicked leads with abandon.”

But Nygaard quickly realized that this was no Martin clone. The short-scale’s slinkier feel made it easier for him to play, “great for bending and wiggling strings — even in the first position”, which also caused him to lighten up his attack. The guitar’s strong point, he felt, was versa-

these short-scale dreads because of their playability, vintage warmth, and powerful ES electronics. Previously you’d have to install aftermarket electronics in a vintage or vintage-reissue dread to get this combination of vintage whomp and acoustic-electric sound. But not anymore.”

TAYLOR DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN

MMR (Musical Merchandise Review) / Nov 2005. A nice item in the “Upfront” section details the runaway success of the “Taylor Day” events we launched at various dealers’ stores in 2005. The multi-pronged efforts combine a regular workshop featuring a Taylor clinician with a diagnostic/re-stringing session conducted by techs from the Taylor factory and a meet-and-greet with the Taylor Regional Sales Manager for that area of the country. We did 43 such Taylor Days before the year ended, and more are in the planning stages for 2006.

To ensure that you don’t miss the Taylor events coming to your area, register for our free “E/vents” reminder e-mail program by going to our website, rolling your cursor over the “news/events” tab, and clicking on “Taylor Calendar”. You’ll see where to click to enroll. Once enrolled, you’ll automatically be notified a month in advance of every event.

If you’d rather not receive e-mail notices, simply refer to our online Calendar for information, which is updated daily. Do a search for “Taylor Day” to get specific dates for those events.

COUNTRY CLAMORING

Country Weekly / Nov 7, 2005. Taylor sightings in this issue included Alan Jackson, Neil Thrasher, Pam Tillis’s band, and Craig Morgan.

Chevy/CMA calendar. Chevrolet and the Country Music Association teamed to



produce a full-color 2006 calendar prior to the November 16 CMA Awards, held for the first time in New York’s Madison Square Garden. The “April” photo featured longtime Taylor player **Billy Dean** crouched in front of a Chevy pickup with one of his all-koa K20 Dreadnoughts. Dean’s latest CD is *Let Them Be Little*.

LEO AND MIKE’S EXCELLENT VENTURE

Guitar World Acoustic / Oct/Nov 2005. An article about the latest collaboration between Leo Kottke and Phish bassist Mike Gordon has two photos of Leo playing his signature Taylors.



Also, a “First Stringers” review of Brandi Carlisle’s CD mentions her 914ce and 612 (see “On Review” this issue for Julie Bergman’s review of the CD).

ETC.

New York / Sept 2005. The venerable city magazine’s “Best Bets” page sports a full photo of the **T5** with a description titled “An Acoustic That Blows the Amps” and directs readers to Rudy’s Music Stop in New York City.

Music Inc. / Sept 2005. There’s a nice nod to Taylor in the “NAMM News” section (“Taylor T5 a Bonafide Hit”), and info on the new **Doyle Dykes Anniversary Edition** in the “Gear” section. ■



LA GUITARE À DEUX TÊTES

Guitarist Acoustic / Jan 2006. This lavishly produced French magazine has a two-page story about the **T5**. Dusting off the college *Français*, we were able to translate the headline (“Two-Headed Guitar”), and we could read enough to discern a predominantly favorable slant to the article (nice photos).

Among the variety of solidbody and chambered-body models that guitar makers have introduced since then, the **T5** is rightly lauded for not just blurring but transcending the categories that have long defined the “acoustic-electric” realm. The **T5**’s pickups and five-way switch dramatically distinguish it from the other guitars in the pack (including the Godin Multiac Steel SA, Gibson Americana Pioneer Cutaway, and Fender Acoustasonic Strat), most of which utilize a piezo pickup platform. As in most other magazine reviews, the **T5**’s extraordinary versatility and amp compatibility are cited for giving the player a diverse range of tonal colors.

Also in this issue, the cover story on Neil Young mentions his Taylor 12-strings; the “First Stringer” section features three artists who play Taylors (Iron & Wine [Sam Beam], Ali Handal, and Bob Burger); and an LR Baggs ad shows Jim Messina playing his DDSM.

RIBBONS AND GUITARS

Electronic Musician / Nov 2005. The cover story is about recording with ribbon (or velocity) microphones, and the cover photo is a beautiful shot of a Taylor **110**, poised and ready to “sing” into an expectant ribbon mic. Ribbon mics are known for their “punch”, natural room sound, and excellent low-end definition. The article, “Capture That Vintage Vibe”, focuses on 13 quality ribbon mics for the project-studio owner, organized in groups by price and physical construction. The **110** pictured on the cover belongs to *EM* Senior Editor

Gino Robair, who told us in an e-mail, “Feel free to mention it’s my personal guitar. I love the sound of that instrument.”



tility, inviting him to play “up-the-neck jazz chords” as well as fingerpick. He reckons that the axe would be especially loved by players who employ a variety of techniques.

Nygaard also raves about the **Expression System**, calling it one of the best amplification systems on the market. He mentions that as he cranked up the volume (playing through a new AER AcoustiCube 3), a couple of passers-by remarked how natural it sounded. His bottom-line assessment: “There will certainly be a lot of guitarists falling in love with



THIN LINEUP

Guitar World Acoustic / Dec 2005. The **T5** is featured in a roundup of 10 thinline acoustic-electrics. The story (“The Thin Crowd”) traces the development of the hybrid concept back to Gibson’s 1982 launch of the nylon-string Chet Atkins Standard (followed by the



steel-string SST in ‘87), and notes the influence of semi-hollowbody electrics like the Gibson ES-335.

ON THE WEB

For the latest Taylor media coverage, visit taylorguitars.com/news/news.html



MEXICAN GUITAR ON

Taylor Guitars has established a formal presence in the Latin American retail market, forging a relationship with Elizondo Music, a distributor based in Guadalajara, the capital of the Mexican state of Jalisco. In March 2005, Elizondo officially debuted the Taylor line at the Soundcheck Expo, the Mexican equivalent of the U.S. NAMM show, held at Mexico City's World Trade Center. More than 12,000 musicians attended the event, according to Elizondo Music President Raul Elizondo, who deemed the show "a great success" for introducing Taylor to Mexico's "pro" music community.

"Music is like a religion in this country, and guitars are a main instrument in the music," Elizondo reflected after the event. "Many musicians don't have access to high-quality guitars like Taylors, so they were very excited when they saw our booth. We had great attendance, and many prominent musicians stopped by, including members of the band Molotov, guitarist Arturo Ibarra from the legendary Spanish rock band Rostros Ocultos, songwriter Sergio Fachelli, Sin Banderas, Benny Ibarra, members of the band Maná, renowned producer Memo Gil, Timbirichi, and many others."

Elizondo says that the Taylor Expression System impressed many of the pro musicians, who were well aware of Mr. Rupert Neve's audio-design legacy, yet were amazed that such quality electronics were available on an acoustic guitar. The T5, not



ingly, also added to the excitement at the booth.

Given the high-end market position of Taylor relative to the income limitations among portions of the Mexican customer base, one might wonder how commercially viable Taylor can be south of the border.

"The truth is that when you see and feel a Taylor, you don't want to let go," Elizondo explains. "This is exactly what happened during the Expo, and we feel that this will happen across the country. Musicians had never been exposed to such quality craftsmanship and are willing to save for that guitar after they play one."

"The number of Hispanic pro-end users, like Maná, La Ley, Pepe Aguilar, Sin Bandera, Joan

Sebastian, Alejandro Sanz, guitarist Vicente Fernandez, Juan Gabriel guitarist Gustavo Farias, and others, has created a frenzy among the pro community. Many stores are already in negotiations to become part of the dealer network, which will make Taylor a household name in Mexico in the very near future. We look forward to a great future with Taylor Guitars in Mexico and are very proud to be part of this family of guitar craftsmanship."

Many of those popular and emerging Latin artists, including Maná, La Ley, Bacilos, Chayanne, Julieta Venegas, Juan-Carlos Formell, and Reik, already play Taylors, so it was not surprising that the sixth-annual Latin Grammy Awards show, held November 3 at the



millions (a month earlier, La Ley had staged its official final concert at Luna Park Stadium in Buenos Aires, Argentina). Chances are good that we'll be hearing more from Cuevas, who plans to pursue a solo career.

Taylor player Julieta Venegas (Soundings, Summer 2004 issue) also performed at the Latin Grammys, and another past winner, Marco Antonio Solis (who again was nominated in the Best Male Vocal Album category), was a 2005 presenter. Two weeks before the program, Solis had played his red T5 for a crowd of thousands at one of Southern California's premier venues, the Arrowhead Pond of Anaheim.

"Also, I recently was invited to the House of Blues in Hollywood to see Aleks Syntek," Elizondo relates. "I showed him Marco's T5 and he fell in love with it and ended up playing it during his concert. He will take delivery of his own T5 in Mexico City and wants an 815, as well."

Taylor-playing melodic-pop group Reik also was nominated (Best New Artist) and served as presenters. But the biggest winner of the night was Colombian rocker Juanes, who walked away with Latin Grammys for Best Rock Song, Best Rock Vocal Album, and Best Music Video honors. Juanes performed solo vocal, just his voice and a Taylor.

GUITAR SIGNED BY ROBBIE WILLIAMS RAISES £20,000 FOR CHARITY

A Taylor 614ce signed by British pop star Robbie Williams raised £20,000 (about \$35,000) at a late-November charity event in London. Taylor Guitars' UK distributor, Sound Technology, donated the

black-stained maple beauty to be auctioned off during a fundraising ball at the Royal Lancaster Hotel to benefit the Willow Foundation. The winning bid of £20,000 — a record for the event — came from the chairman of Liberty Bishop, an accountancy firm specializing in providing services for UK and international contractors, particularly those in the IT sector.

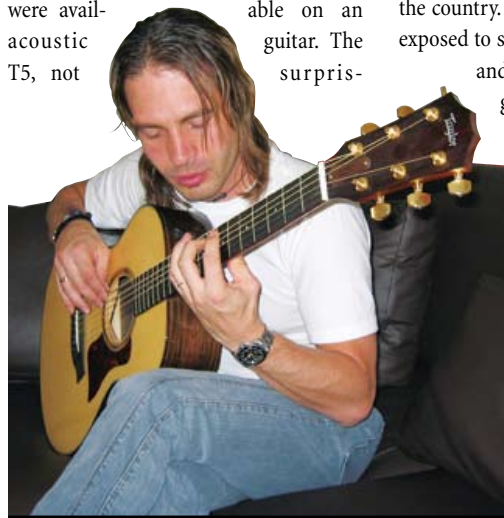
The Willow Foundation was founded years ago by former Scotland and Arsenal football (soccer to Americans) goalkeeper and British television sports commentator Bob Wilson and his wife Megs in memory of his daughter, Anna. The organization funds and organizes "special days" that provide seriously ill young adults with a respite from the routine of illness and treatment that can dominate their lives. Recently launched as a national charity, Willow hopes to help the estimated 12,500 people in the UK, aged 16-40, who are diagnosed every year with a life-threatening illness.

"This wonderful gift [the 614ce] achieved an extraordinary result for the Willow Foundation," said Wilson. "We are indebted to both Sound Technology for donating it and to Kim Scott, Chairman of Liberty Bishop, for his generosity in purchasing it."

David Marshall, Managing Director of Sound Technology plc, added, "As our chosen charity, we are delighted to have helped the Willow Foundation raise such a significant sum of money, and are very grateful to Taylor Guitars for their help with this project."

For more information visit willowfoundation.org or soundtech.co.uk.

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Clockwise from top: Latin artists Aleks Syntek, Marco Antonio Solis (photo by Oscar Elizondo), and Sergio Vallin of Maná

Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, was awash in our guitars.

Lead singer Beto Cuevas of the Chilean rock group La Ley played a T5 during the band's farewell performance. The repeat nominees, who formed in 1987 and already had a Grammy and a Latin Grammy to their credit, exited in grand style by performing energized renditions of "Mentira", "Aqui", and "El Duelo" for a television audience numbering in the



L-R: David Seaman and Bob Wilson hold a 614ce signed by Robbie Williams along with TaylorWare items



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BOB AND DAVID IN JAPAN

In October, Bob Taylor and David Hosler traveled to Japan for the second time to visit our distributor, YMT, headquartered in Tokyo. Their first official event was a dealer summit held at the YMT National Showroom and Service Center in Tokyo. In attendance were storeowners and sales staff from many of the 38 Taylor dealers that cover Japan. Some had traveled six hours, one way, by train to attend the gathering.

“It was a fantastic time of fun and information-exchange with them,” Hosler reports. “We discussed numerous topics, from the increasing popularity of Taylor guitars in Japan to wood combinations and the sounds of different body shapes. YMT has built a fantastic service and sales center, where they have a dedicated staff of sales and product support persons, as well as skilled and gifted in-house techs.”

According to Hosler, the dealer summit

questions to us, and then explaining the answers to each other in Japanese. It was amazing and quite humorous at times, but totally successful. Immediately after the summit, we held an interview session with two national Japanese magazines, including *Acoustic Guitar (Japan)*.”

The following day, Bob and David accepted a personal invitation from Ichiro Katayama, President of Takamine, to visit their new factory. Bob and Ichiro have been friends for many years, and it was a great honor for the Taylor duo to be invited to tour their new facility. The Takamine factory is located on Takamine Mountain, in the Kiso Valley — a two-hour train ride south. After a delicious lunch consisting of numerous traditional Japanese dishes, the group drove up the mountain to the factory for an afternoon of hospitality and friendship.

“When we returned to Tokyo, we had dinner with guitarist Kazumi Watanabe, his wife Coco, and YMT staff members,” Hosler recalls. “Kazumi is a fantastic player and a national treasure in Japan, and he’s very popular in American jazz circles, as well. He gave the T5 a huge endorsement at NAMM 2005 and continues to talk about it in Japanese music magazines.”

On Friday night of that week, YMT and Taylor Guitars sponsored an evening concert featuring four acts — all

Taylor players — in the Shibuya district of Tokyo.

“The hall was equipped with one of the best sound systems I have ever experienced,” says Hosler, “and the bands took full advantage of it. The concert was absolutely great — fantastic players and performers, all Japanese.” Among them was Yoshiyuki Sahashi, who performed with his Life on the Longboard Band and accompanied many of the guest artists.

The following day the Taylor team took a four-hour train ride to Osaka for lunch with two more local dealers, then conducted a combination re-stringing clinic/T5 demo at the local Taylor dealer, Yamaha Music. There was more guitar-playing fun and four Taylor guitars were purchased before the night was over.

“On the way back to Tokyo the following day, we stopped in Kyoto to tour the various temples,” Hosler says. “Kyoto is an absolute must-see for anyone who travels to Japan. It is an amazing area that leaves a lasting impression on anyone who visits. We arrived in Tokyo late that evening for dinner with a well-known Japanese producer/writer and our good friend Hiro, of Leo’s Music, a successful ‘pro’ instrument rental company not unlike Center Stage and Lighting in the States. Hiro is real Taylor fan and owns several beautiful Taylors that he refers to as ‘the best guitars in Japan!’

“One of the major impressions with which we left Japan is that the popularity of Taylor Guitars and acoustic guitar playing in general is at an all-time high. YMT and Taylor are significantly contributing to that trend by supporting the culture of acoustic music in Japan with a dedicated and passionate staff of professional people who really love what they do!”

3958 MILES WITH KENEALLY, BELLER, AND THE T5

*A tour journal by
Thomas Supper,
Marketing and Sales
Manager for Taylor*

Guitars at our distributor, Meinel, located in Neustadt (Bavaria), Germany.



Above left: Bob Taylor and David Hosler pose after a meal with staffers from Japanese distributor YMT and friends; Above: a temple in Kyoto. Photo by Bob Taylor

started on an interesting note. A sales staffer from Aomori, in the northern region of Japan, had created a list of questions to ask Bob. The person spoke very little English, and was hoping that someone would be able to translate.

“What at first looked like a difficult situation actually turned into a really cool time for all of us,” Hosler says. “It was impressive watching the entire group working together to translate the



- 1 Aosta, Italy
- 2 Neustadt, Germany
- 3 Berlin, Germany
- 4 Hamburg, Germany
- 5 Cologne, Germany
- 6 Walldorf, Germany
- 7 Freilassing, Germany
- 8 Vienna, Austria
- 9 Amsterdam, Netherlands

region, located at the “hub” of the Alps, surrounded by Europe’s four highest mountains — Mont

B l a n c -

M o n t e

Bianco, Matterhorn-Cervino, Monte Rosa, and Gran Paradiso — all more than 13,000 feet high].

After 12 hours on the road, we meet Mike and Bryan and a film crew in a nice Italian restaurant in the middle of nowhere (Mike and Bryan were guests on a DVD shoot for a German drummer). The next morning, we leave Italy and return to Neustadt around midnight, where we’re met by Mike’s European road manager, Pieter van Hoogedam from Amsterdam, Holland.

Tuesday, October 4, first workshop day. After a quick stop at Meinel to meet the boss, Mr. Meinel, and show the guys our facility, we hit the road through the former East Germany to set up our first workshop at Just Acoustic Guitars, in Berlin. Mark Bazaniak, the store manager, gives us (and his customers) a

really warm welcome, with snacks and Italian red wine. It is always a pleasure to hang out with Mark and his crew in Berlin; I’ve known him for a long time, and our relationship is a cool mixture of friendship and straight business.

Mark was well prepared; a nice and interested crowd showed up and we had a wonderful evening. Mike and Bryan played as though it was a stadium gig, while we stood in disbelief at the things that are possible using the T5 — am I still on the same planet? Mike’s use of the T5 was amazing as he switched so fast between the acoustic side and the rock ‘n’ roll rig that our brains could hardly keep up — and he was using regular, borrowed gear from the shop. Those two hours totally kicked my knowledge and understanding of the T5 to a new level, and I already had been working with the guitar for a while! (Mark and Ray, thanks again — you rule Berlin!)



Top: The Keneally/Beller tour route; Above: Mike Keneally warms up for a workshop in Vienna. Photo by Thomas Supper

Sunday, October 2, 7 a.m. Time to leave Neustadt for the long ride down to Aosta, Italy to pick up Mike Keneally and Bryan Beller for a one-week Taylor workshop tour of Germany, specifically to show the T5 to our dealers and their customers. It had been my big wish to get Mike over here ever since I saw him rocking the Anaheim Hilton during a Winter NAMM show 15 years ago. I couldn’t imagine anyone better suited to this “job”.

After a quick stop to pick up Max (a Meinel trainee) to show him “life on the road,” we head down to the Swiss/German border (I couldn’t pass by historic Montreux, Switzerland without showing Max where the Deep Purple song, “Smoke on the Water,” was born). Then it was up to the mountains, through the big tunnel where the Swiss/Italian border is and down again to lovely Aosta Valley [the smallest Italian

Wednesday, October 5. I agreed to a late checkout at the hotel because this would be an almost 24-hour day. I drove us to the former East Berlin, past the Reichstag, the Brandenburg gate, and ending up at Potsdammer Platz, which used to be the “dead zone” back in the cold war times. It remains a very strange feeling to drive on a road where you still can see the marks on the ground where the wall used to be. I explained to the guys that you could hold your hand out of the window and it would be in East Germany, while your body would still be in the West!

Enough sightseeing. We hit the road to Hamburg for our second workshop day. A shop called Amptown would be hosting us; they’d had a “grand opening” a couple weeks earlier after moving to a new location inside Hamburg’s well-known “The Bunker”, leftover from the bad days of WWII. When we started right on time at 7 p.m., store manager Michi Palow and acoustic department manager Frank Elwart couldn’t believe that more than 90 people had shown up, because this was the last date confirmed and they had not had time to publicize it in a big way.

An enthusiastic crowd celebrated a great evening, in which Mike and Bryan had to do more Frank Zappa material because a couple of hardcore Zappa fans were in the audience. Again the T5 shined. Mike had to sign tons of CDs — more than 30 for one customer! (Thanks again to Michi, Frank, and the whole Amptown crew for setting up such a well-prepared evening for us all!) I decided to cancel our Hamburg hotel reservation and drive the four hours down to Cologne, site of our next workshop.

Mike and Bryan had requested that

we rent a rehearsal room so they could rehearse the next morning with a drummer and violinist for an upcoming gig in Amsterdam. We arrived in Cologne at 3 a.m., and after a short night’s sleep Mike and Bryan left for rehearsal. A few hours later, we were saying, “Hello, it’s nice to be in Cologne at Beyer’s Guitar Center. Let’s have a cool evening together.”

The Guitar Center workshop rocked. They had a well-prepared stage for Mike and Bryan, drew another big crowd, and again I had to stop the guys with hand signals because they were oblivious to the time. Our thanks to Peter Alexius, acoustic floor manager of Guitar Center/Cologne, who did the scheduling, let us use his rehearsal room, provided overnight accommodations for Mike’s violin player, and made a perfect workshop possible, and without whose unselfish help all our plans for Cologne could not have happened. Also, thanks to the Guitar Center boss, Winni Beyer, who drove to his second store in Bochum to get a rehearsal drum set for Mike’s drummer. We’ll never forget your support!

The next morning, we said goodbye to Max, our Meinl trainee, who left by train for home. It was a great experience for him to hang out on the road with us “old rabbits”, and it helped to prepare him for future tasks in the world of guitar business! For Pieter, Mike’s road manager, Max’s departure was a blessing — he no longer had to sit between all the boxes of *Wood&Steels*, merchandise, and luggage.

Thanks to my GPS, we were able to avoid some serious traffic jams on the short drive down to Walldorf, near Heidelberg, where Franz Schobert, manager of Session Acoustics, awaited us. Franz loves to

host musicians from all over the world, whether it is the acoustic guitar festival, Dan Crary, or Beppe Gambetta, and being so well received made us feel like we were home. Because the European NATO headquarters is in Heidelberg, some American friends showed up for the workshop and an audience of more than 85 made it an unforgettable evening. Mike broke the ice by asking a question and rewarding the person with the correct answer with a free copy of a *Sounds of Wood&Steel* CD I’d given him. We did that for the rest of the tour.

Bryan was in seventh heaven meeting Geli [Angelika Taylor], the pro bass player on *Super Idol*, Germany’s version of *American Idol*. One moment in the workshop stands out for me: Mike broke a string on a T5 Custom Koa but kept playing while pointing to the string, hoping for a replacement guitar. Franz kept pointing to the wall, where there were three different T5s to choose from. Mike kept pointing and playing, Franz would respond by pointing to the wall as if to say, “You have your choice — which do you want, the spruce top, the maple top, or another koa?” The whole audience started to laugh. After the workshop, the “spare” T5 Mike had played found a new home with a proud, excited customer. (Thank you, Franz — we’ll be back!)

Saturday workshops always are a bit difficult because there are so many things to do on a late Saturday afternoon. But while driving from Walldorf to Freilassing (border town to Salzburg, Austria), I was sure that George Oellerer, Andy (of Sound-Andy), and Giancarlo of Musikhaus Oellerer had done a perfect job preparing for our T5 performance. Over many years of working together, George, the owner, has become the “man of special requests,”

and his demanding customers know that they always will find hard-to-find Taylors on his newly designed “Taylor Wall”. Whether

it’s Anniversary models, LTDs, or simply guitars with outstanding wood figures, George, Andy, and Giancarlo carefully choose guitars, and their customers love them for it!

This workshop, like all those before it, went very well, and we were really surprised that Sound-Andy used a Midas 56-channel console and a big touring P.A. system to give Mike a 10,000-seat-venue sound! Because of the workshop’s early starting time, we were able to spend a lot of time afterward talking to interested customers about the T5 and its possibilities. This is a good time to acknowledge Mike and Bryan for devoting so much time to discussion and to answering customers’ questions after the workshops.

The last official tour day started with a bombastic wake-up concert, courtesy of a traditional Austrian marching band playing right in front of the window of Bryan’s hotel room! Once on the road, we travelled to Vienna, Austria, where we were guests at Musik Produktiv’s house fair. Big stage, big lightning, and Jennifer Batten — former Michael Jackson guitarist — conducting a clinic right before we set up the gear!

Mike and Bryan met some friends from Prague and we had a great tour finale. Shopowner Martin Sobotnik couldn’t stop smiling and telling me how cool the guys are. He decided to keep another T5 in Austria, which he took from the Meinl booth that my two colleagues, Matthias and Rolf, were running there.

We left Vienna and started the murderous 800-mile drive to Amsterdam, where the Mike Keneally Band had a show at the legendary Paradiso Club. For me, it was time to say goodbye to the guys and head back to Germany.

I can’t say “thank you” enough to everybody involved in this fantastic 10-day trip — Mark and Ray in Berlin, Michi and Frank in Hamburg, Winni, Peter and Dennis in Cologne, Franz, Holger and Geli in Walldorf, Georg, Andy, Giancarlo, Sound-Andy in Freilassing, Martin, Meinl-Matthias and Headliner-Rolf in Vienna, Pieter van Hoogedam from Amsterdam,



Diane Magagna. Photo by Erin Fitzgerald

and the masterminds, Mike Keneally and Bryan Beller! And above all, thanks to Taylor Guitars for making the T5 and for sending such wonderful clinicians all over the world; they help us to understand your passion for making guitars!

— Thomas Supper

DIANE MAGAGNA GOES INTERNATIONAL

On October 1, longtime Taylor sales staffer Diane Magagna assumed a new role as International Sales Manager. In essence, she’ll be responsible for all of our international business, working closely with our overseas distributors and reporting to Robert Sandell, Taylor Senior Vice President of Sales.

Diane had been the Regional Sales Manager for the Northeastern sector of the U.S. since she started at Taylor in January 1993, but she arrived with a long résumé of experience in the international market.

“In 1975, my husband and I started an export company, Cobble Hill Associates, with the objective of taking American-made products overseas,” Diane says of her early days in the business. “I was very lucky when two people in the music industry took a chance on me — Michael Gurian of Gurian Guitars and Ron Lazar of Dobro. Those associations and several other product lines became the basis of our overseas business, and off I went — selling American-made products around the world, going door to door. What a thrill it was to travel the world and make relationships and friendships that would last 30 years.”

There was speculation that Diane was the first American woman to sell U.S.

continued on page 27



L-R: Bryan Beller, Winni Beyer, Mike Keneally, and Peter Alexius at Guitar Center in Cologne. Photo by Thomas Supper

SHINING RAY

Paul McCartney launched his fall 2005 “US” tour of America with a September 16 concert in Miami. As the entourage snaked its way across the country, the reviews were almost unanimous in their praise for the show, and especially for a set list that included some long-unperformed Lennon-McCartney songs.

The 63-year-old former Beatle was ably backed by a young band that featured drummer Abe Laboriel, Jr., guitarist Rusty Anderson, keyboardist Paul “Wix” Wickens, and guitarist/bassist **Brian Ray**, who wielded an ES-equipped Taylor 655 played through a K4. Sound engineers (including FOH knob-pushers) told Taylor Artist Relations Manager Bob Borbonus that the ES/K4 combination is “the best acoustic amplification system [they’ve] ever heard.” The tour ended with two dates in late November at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

GOT LIVE PICKUP IF YOU WANT IT

On October 10, the **Goo Goo Dolls** performed a pair of tunes on NBC’s *Today* show, entertaining a live crowd from the program’s outdoor stage at Rockefeller Plaza in New York City. Frontman Johnny Rzeznik strummed a 915ce on the first song, “Better Days,” a single that appears on the compilation *Sounds of the Season — The NBC Holiday Collection*. The band also used Taylors in the video they shot for the song on October 3.

On September 10, the band and its 915ce were among a raft of Taylor acts who performed in the *ReAct Now*:

Music & Relief concert that raised funds and other support in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The three-hour, commercial-free program aired on MTV, VH1,



and CMT, and featured a mix of live and taped performances and messages, broadcast from staging areas in New York, Los Angeles, Nashville, and Atlanta, along with satellite feeds from bands during their concerts in other cities that evening.

Other Taylor artists included **Dave Matthews** (914ce), **Jewel** (her older 914ce), **Maroon 5** (814ce), **Alan Jackson** (custom 610), **Three Doors Down** (710), **Rob Thomas** (914ce), the **Radiators** (814ce and another GA), and **Mark Broussard** (T5).

The big surprise in the *ReAct Now* sequence was **Sir Mick Jagger** strumming his 414 on a rendition of “Waiting on a Friend” during the Rolling Stones show in Milwaukee (Jagger bought the Taylor, sans pickup, some time ago in the UK). Earlier in the summer, Bob Borbonus had spent some time with Jagger and Keith Richards at A&M Records during a private listening event to preview the new Stones record, *A Bigger Bang*. In addition to showing the Glimmer Twins some T5s, he talked Mick into letting us install a pickup on his acoustic in case he wanted to play it live.

Prior to the Stones’ November 11 concert at San Diego’s Petco Park (home of the Padres baseball team), Charlie Watts’ drum tech bought an 814ce and Jagger bought another 414 to use as a backup.

MO MONEY FOR KIDS

A pair of Taylors helped save the day in October when bluesman **Keb Mo** and a San Diego radio station found themselves in a bind. Independent rock station 102.1 KPRI-FM had organized a

private benefit concert featuring Mo to raise funds for the local non-profit *Voices for Children* organization. Unfortunately, most of Mo’s music gear had been stolen the previous night from the band’s van.

Taylor already had contributed a 614ce as an auction item (it would fetch \$3,000), so Mo played it throughout the show, along with an 810 that was loaned to him through a local audio production com-



Above: San Diego Padres pitcher Scott Linebrink. Photo by Scott Schorr; Right: Actor Terry O’Quinn on the set of the show *Lost*

the organization works with key agencies, legal counsel, and community resources to serve the best interests of children both inside and outside of court.

To raise additional funding for the organization, KPRI in November issued another *Live Tracks* CD compilation, recorded by various artists visiting San Diego during the past year [see “Soundings”, Winter 2005].

“We’re pleased to once again acknowledge Taylor Guitars (with the Expression System) as ‘the official acoustic guitar of KPRI Studio i,’” said Hughes, alluding to the sterling reputation of our axes among many guest musicians who perform acoustically at the station. “One of the stand-out tracks is Jars of Clay’s ‘all-Taylor’ version of America’s ‘Lonely People.’”

pany, Unisound 2.0. As if the logistics weren’t already askew, it started raining halfway through the outdoor show, forcing everyone to seek shelter in the living room of the home that hosted the event.

KPRI co-owner and afternoon deejay Robert Hughes said the audience ultimately was thrilled with the more intimate performance, and he thanked Taylor and Unisound for rising to the occasion.

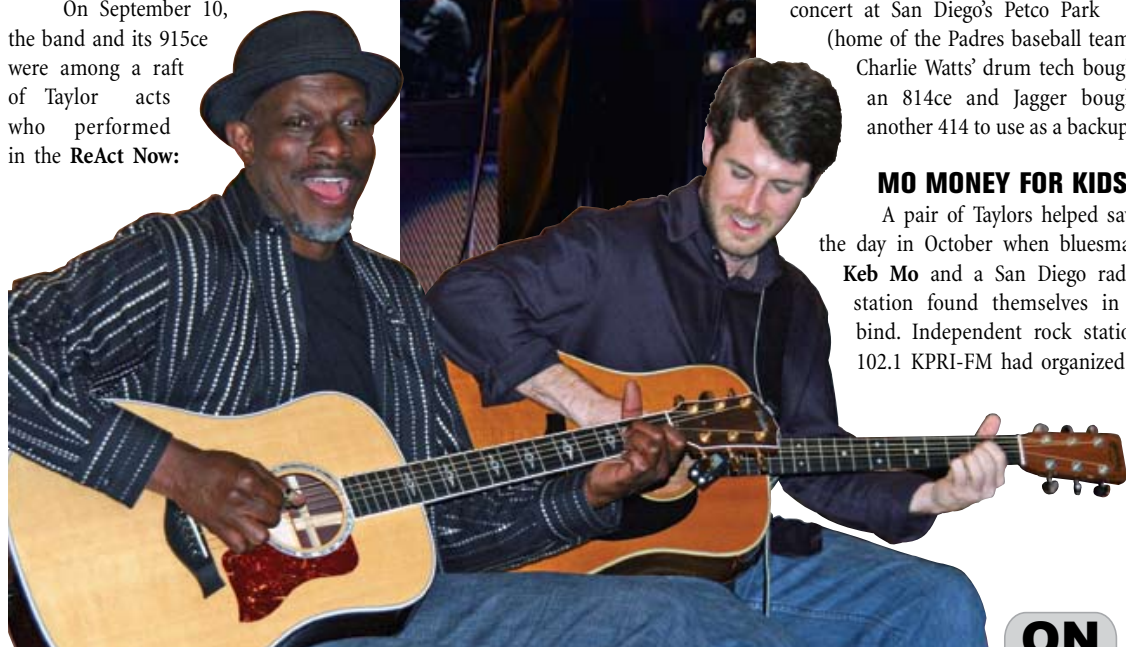
“I know Keb was particularly impressed with the 614ce,” Hughes informed Bob Borbonus the next day. “Who wouldn’t be?” Keb also signed and personalized the guitar for the winning auction bidder, Loretta Morris.

Voices for Children works to ensure that abused, neglected, and abandoned children who have become dependents of the San Diego County Court will have a safe and permanent home. Using a network of trained and educated volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs),

TAYLORSPOTTING

It would come as no surprise if music players were to list a Taylor guitar among items deemed essential for survival and sanity were they stranded on a desert island. Apparently, actor **Terry O’Quinn** is one of them. O’Quinn plays castaway John Locke on ABC’s hit show, *Lost*, now in its second season. On the recently released DVD set of 2004’s debut season, O’Quinn is shown in one of the “behind the scenes” features playing a Taylor 30th Anniversary Commemorative 714ce-L30.

On September 26, NPR’s daily *All Things Considered* program broadcast a story about a new CD, *Oh Say Can You Sing?*, which showcases the musical talents of 11 major league baseball players. Among those who scored album cuts were San Diego Padres hurler and Taylor



Top: Brian Ray. Photo by Bill Bernstein; Above (L-R): Keb Mo picks on an 810 with guitarist Clayton Gibb

For more Soundings, visit www.taylorguitars.com/news/news.html



man **Scott Linebrink**, former St. Louis Cardinals shortstop and Hall of Famer Ozzie Smith, Philadelphia Phillies shortstop Jimmy Rollins, Florida Marlins first baseman Jeff Conine, and two Cleveland Indians — centerfielder Coco Crisp and first baseman Ben Broussard.

All Things Considered host Melissa Block spoke with the album's producer, Scott Schorr, about bringing the project to life, and about each player's personality and musical interests. The record spans a mix of genres, including country, rock, hip-hop, bluegrass, and soul, and includes both cover tunes and originals. Linebrink chose to cover the song "Wave on Wave", written by his friend and fellow Texan, country singer-songwriter Pat Green. There's also a nice photo on the NPR website of Linebrink in the studio with his Taylor 310.

STILL ROCKIN'

Add old-school roots rocker **Dave Edmunds** to the list of T5 lovers. He just took delivery of his second — one is for use in London, the other for New York — and e-mailed us a thank-you. "I can't really find the words to describe how pleased I am with her — perfect fingerboard dimensions, sounds unbelievable, classy looking, and very easy to play. Absolutely perfect for Atkins/Travis fingerpickin' style — and I have two! Once again, thanks for the best guitar I've ever played."

Some might be surprised that Rock & Roll Hall of Famer **Dion** has released a new acoustic blues CD, but *Bronx in Blue* is more a return to his roots than a departure. Born Dion DiMucci in the Bronx in the late '30s, the always-evolving artist would have hits spanning several decades — from the teen doo-wop of "I Wonder Why" and "A Teenager in Love", to such early-'60s solo classics as "The Wanderer" and "Runaround Sue", to his elegiac 1968 folk-pop hit single, "Abraham, Martin, and John". If the blues wouldn't seem a likely next step in that progression, it's entirely natural to the Dion.

"This music is part of my very fabric," he recently told Austin-based writer Dan Forte in an exclusive for *Wood&Steel*. "There was no rock and roll when I was a kid. I grew up on Jimmy Reed, Howlin'

Wolf, and John Lee Hooker. Rev. Gary Davis used to sing on the street in my neighborhood in the Bronx, and my friend Willie Green, who was a janitor of a tenement building, played guitar, so I picked it up from him.

"You put country music and blues together, and it's almost like if you turn blues into a major key — you get rock and roll," Dion continued. "You get what Chuck Berry and Fats Domino and I were doing, like 'blues-country'. But that's what we called 'rock and roll' back in the '50s."

On *Bronx in Blue*, Dion does justice to the music of Reed, Wolf, Robert Johnson, and Lightnin' Hopkins, employing his "backpack guitar," a Baby Taylor.

"[The Baby Taylor] almost sounds like an official Delta blues guitar — to me, anyway. That guitar has a lot of midrange. It's not the big bass and the fullness, but you grab a chord, and it just jumps right out at you — *bing!* It's right in the middle. When you're playing some guitars, if they sound too pretty, you can't get what you want out of them when you're playing that kind of music."

The Baby obviously is special to Dion. "I accidentally left it in Italy and had to pay \$435 to get it back [via] Federal Express," he laughs. "That's more than the case

and the guitar cost me. But I just like it, and it's worth it. All guitars sound different, even when they're the same model, same specs, made from the same wood, but you have a favorite among them. That's why I didn't just buy another Baby Taylor; I wanted *that* one."

FRESH SQUEEZED

Fans of **Glenn Tilbrook** (of the band Squeeze) should know that on January 24, 2006 filmmaker Amy Pickard's documentary, *Glenn Tilbrook: One for the Road* (The Story of One Man, Two Guitars, and an RV!), is being released worldwide on DVD by Image Entertainment.

The film, which took several years to finish, was already in the works when Tilbrook and Pickard visited the Taylor factory in December 2002 to have his K20 and red 655ce (with Florentine-cutaway) worked on. Tilbrook performed at a local club, the Casbah, before leaving town.

In describing her interest in doing the doc, Pickard said she was expecting luxury tour buses and five-star hotels, and was surprised to find Glenn touring in a used motorhome and bedding down at roadside campgrounds. Still, "it was worth it to be able to tour with my musical hero and to be able to capture Glenn on film," she says.

In addition to its "video verité" components, *Glenn Tilbrook: One for the Road* boasts exclusive live (acoustic) performances of such Squeeze hits as "Tempted", "Black Coffee in Bed", "Take Me I'm Yours", "Up the Junction", and "Hourglass", as well as Tilbrook's solo material. The film provides an intimate look at what it's like to be an established artist in today's musical climate, and has gotten rave reviews on the film festival circuit. VH1 Classic is set to world premiere the film to coincide with the January DVD release.

For her part, Pickard is seeking sponsorship for her own RV trek around America to promote the film, and is hoping to publish a companion book to the movie. To view trailers from the film and for more information, visit glennmovie.com or glennstilbrook.com. ■



continued from page 25

products overseas, but even if that's difficult to verify, it's irrefutable that she broke new ground. "Early in her career, Diane spent a lot of time pioneering the acoustic guitar business with musical instrument importers and distributors abroad," says Sandell. "In combination with her success selling Taylor products to U.S. dealers, we think her experience in the export market will be put to good use representing Taylor and helping distributors to grow Taylor's market share in their areas."

"I'm very much looking forward to representing the Taylor brand overseas and getting reacquainted with many old friends and places," Magagna adds. Responsibility for the crucial Northeast U.S. territory has been assumed by our Sales Department's longest-tenured staffer, Regional Sales Manager Rick Fagan.

DENA DOWN UNDER

Diane Magagna will get valuable help with the foreign market from International Sales Assistant Dena Hickman, whom Senior Sales VP Sandell credits with having carried a significant portion of the international-sales load over the past year or so.

"In addition to handling the internal operations for the International Department here, Dena has attended several trade shows in the U.S., Germany, and Australia, and has visited dealers in several foreign countries," Sandell said. "She's done an exemplary job and will continue with all her export duties and responsibilities, reporting directly to Diane."

Last September, Hickman traveled to Australia for a visit with our distributor, Electric Factory, whose headquarters are in the Melbourne suburb of Preston, Victoria. On arrival, she was the guest at a welcoming party, and the next day she was shepherded to Taylor dealers in Melbourne and Sydney.

"Their stores are a lot like ours," Hickman said on her return. "Most of them had acoustic rooms, and one incredible store — the Bass and Acoustic Center

— has dedicated the entire second floor to acoustic guitars, where they keep 18 to 22 Taylors in stock at all times. While I was there they sold a 914ce and a PS10ce to one customer, while in another part of the store a rep from another guitar company played a T5-C2."

After a day visiting the stores in Sydney, Dena and her hosts flew to Broad Beach on the Gold Coast for the yearly AMAC

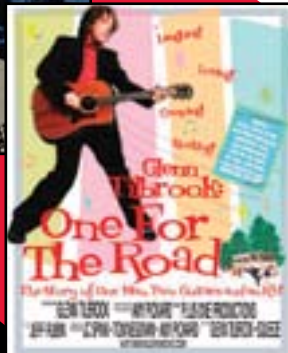


Top (L-R): Mick Richardson from Acoustic Centre and "Canada" John Schoenenborn of Electric Factory, South Melbourne, Australia; Above: John Schoenenborn at the annual AMAC show. Photos by Dena Hickman Wolff

trade show, a sort of Australian NAMM. Most Aussie dealers attend the event, and many were drawn to the Electric Factory booth, which was configured to simulate a nightclub, complete with bar.

"All the dealers I met at the show were impressed with our lineup of Fall LTDs, especially the 814ce-L10," Hickman reported. "And there was lots of praise for the T5."

Although the flight from Southern California to Australia is more than 15 hours — said to be the longest continuous route in the world — Dena said she felt right at home in Australia and is looking forward to her next visit. ■



Top: Dion's *Bronx in Blue*; Above right: Poster for the new Glenn Tilbrook DVD *One for the Road*

WINTER 2006 almanac

For information updated daily, including individual clinicians' concert listings, and to register for the E/vent E-mail Reminder Program, visit the Taylor website online calendar at taylorguitars.com/calendar. To hear sound clips of the clinicians' recordings, go to taylorguitars.com/artists/clinicians. Select clinicians' CDs are now available through TaylorWare.

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Artie Traum spent a chunk of the early fall doing guitar-for-hire work on an album of country cover tunes for Japanese singer-songwriter Dorothy Cowfield at Dreamland Studios in New York's Catskills region. Joining Artie

on three songs were in-demand Taylor bassist Jerome Harris (AB1) and drummer Pheeroan akLaff. According to a mini-report Harris filed with us in early September, "Artie sounded superb on his 30th Anniversary Limited Edition XXX-MC and T5, with the K4 Equalizer also employed." Engineering the sessions was Tom Mark, whose credits include Carla Bley, Tony Levin, and Jack DeJohnette.

Other projects that have kept Artie jumping include writing several new songs and a few guitar instrumentals, continuing his Artist-In-Residence series with the State University of New York at Ulster, and putting together his annual Happy and Artie Traum Solstice Concert at the Kleinart/James Gallery in Woodstock, New York. This year, the Traums' very

special guest was fellow Taylor clinician Wendy Waldman, all the way from Los Angeles. Wendy and Artie have been writing some material together, and in October they conducted a few special Taylor "duo workshops" in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

In new-product news, Homespun Tapes has just released *Easy Steps to Blues Guitar Jamming*, featuring the Brothers Traum teaching everything you'll need to play at a jam session. The DVD is available on Artie's website, artietraum.com. See Artie's "Sessions" article in this issue.



Workshops

Greensburg, Pennsylvania
Vittone's Music Center
Monday, February 27,
7 p.m.
(724) 837-0877

Lancaster, Pennsylvania
Prodigy Music
Tuesday, February 28,
7 p.m.
(717) 295-0620

WENDY WALDMAN



SEEDS AND ORPHANS

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Wendy Waldman
P.O. Box 261815
Encino, California 91426-1815
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To order CD, visit
www.wendywaldman.com

In November, Wendy Waldman headed to the Northwest to perform at a festival/conference in Seattle and to participate in a songwriters' seminar in Portland. Of course, we jumped at the opportunity to schedule workshops for her at some of our very favorite dealers, who are long-time supporters of the Taylor Workshop Program. Wendy reported that all the events went great, and soon thereafter we received this e-mail from happy workshop attendee Gary Benson:

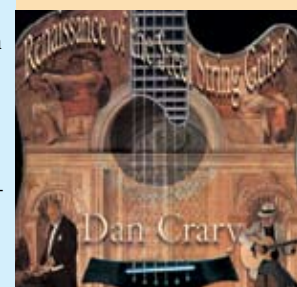
"I went to see Wendy Waldman's songwriting workshop at A-Sharp Music in Renton, Washington, and she was fabulous! She has a humorous yet straightforward way of teaching us how songwriting transcends so many musical styles,

yet is alive and well in us should we choose to use our talents. It's up to us, and she helped bring it out in me. P.S. She also has a great respect for rhythm guitar, and proved it with her abilities. I've been to all of the workshops, and she was far and above the best! Regards from Seattle, Washington."

Workshops

San Antonio, Texas
Sam Ash
Tuesday, February 9, 7 p.m.
(210) 530-9777

DAN CRARY



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Plans are already in place for Dan Crary, along with fellow Men of Steel bandmates Beppe Gambetta, Don Ross, and Tony McManus, to do some serious



Above: Artie Traum at Appalachian Bluegrass Shoppe in Baltimore, Maryland. Photo by Nick Fleckenstein. Left (L-R): Pheeroan akLaff, Jerome Harris, Dorothy Cowfield, and Artie Traum at a recording session at Dreamland Studios in New York. Photo by Tom Mark

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Dan Grary in a recent promotional shot. Photo by Cohen & Parks

touring during the first half of 2006. The group kicked off the new year with appearances at the Celtic Connections Festival in Glasgow, Scotland (January 13-15), and in May the guys will play some gigs in Italy (Genoa and Rivoli) before crossing the Atlantic to embark on a two-week Canadian tour. That covers everyone's home country except for Dan (Beppe is Italian, Don is Canadian, and Tony is the Scotsman), so we're hoping there will be some U.S. dates in the mix somewhere

along the way; we'll keep you posted.

In April, Dan will be heading out to Illinois, Missouri, and Kansas, and we'll be scheduling another workshop or two to go along with that trip, so be sure to check Dan's page on the Taylor website for updated information.

Workshops

Edwardsville, Illinois
Mojo Music
Tuesday, April 4, 7:30 p.m.
(618) 655-1600

WAYNE JOHNSON



With his first year as a Taylor clinician successfully under his belt, **Wayne Johnson** has been hard at work writing material for his next CD, which will showcase his Taylor NS74ce and his T5. Wayne has

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had plenty of time on the road with the axes, discussing and showcasing their attributes in detail at every Taylor workshop, and playing them at both his own concerts and at Manhattan Transfer gigs.

Still, some quality studio time is in the very near future, and

we're looking forward to the results. Wayne also will be recording a tune on his Nylon Series Taylor for the next Solid Air Records compilation CD, which will pay tribute to "de lovely" Cole Porter. (Wayne shared in a Grammy win for the label's *Pink Guitar*, featuring the best of Henry Mancini interpreted by an impressive line-up of acoustic guitarists.)

In late March, Wayne will be heading to the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states on a Taylor workshop tour, but initial plans were just starting to come together as this issue went to press, so check the website for dates as we get closer. One stop will be for a special "Guitar Lovers Weekend" at the Weathervane Inn, a charming bed-and-breakfast in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts. Proprietors Jeffrey and Maxine Lome first contacted us last year about co-sponsoring a fun weekend concept for guitar players, and we sent Artie Traum to give it a test run. Everyone had a great time, so we're going to do it again, this time with Wayne the weekend of March 31-April 2.

Activities include a master class with Wayne, plenty of time to sit around and play guitar with other guests, and an open-mic evening concert. Visit weathervaneinn.com for more details.

Workshops

Sterling, Virginia
Melodee Music
(part of all-day Acoustifest '06)
Sunday, March 26, Time TBA
(703) 450-4667

L-R: Jim Steilberg (Steilberg String Instruments, Louisville, Kentucky), and Wayne Johnson following Wayne's October workshop at the store.
Photo by Mick Sullivan



BEPPE GAMBETTA



BLU DI GENOVA

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Beppe's website:
www.beppegambetta.com

In November, **Beppe Gambetta** embarked on an almost month-long solo tour throughout Germany, during which he had the opportunity to do a number of Taylor workshops. Beppe (who is Austrian on his mother's side and fluent in German) commented that, "The appreciation for Taylor guitars in Germany is really vast, and the dimension and quality of the shops are extremely high."

Beppe's favorite stops were BTM Guitars in Nuremberg, Music World in Augsburg (where the showcase stage and the PA system made the workshop seem more like a rock concert!), and the Folkladen in Munich, where more than 100 people filled every nook and cranny of the shop. That workshop ended with an impromptu bluegrass jam ses-

sion. As always, a huge "thank you" to Thomas Supper at Meinl for his help in organizing the workshops, and also for playing host to Beppe's fellow Taylor clinicians, Mike Keneally and Bryan Beller, just a month earlier on their Taylor tour (see Supper's journal entry in WorldView, this issue).

Beppe returned from Germany for a brief break before packing his bags for Argentina, where he performed the music of the Italian immigrants, which he's studied for many years and documented so beautifully in his CDs, *Traversata* and *Serenata*. Beppe was accompanied by his wife Federica Calvino who played guitar and performed traditional dances, and Maurizio Geri on guitar and vocals. The trio played to sold-

out audiences in Buenos Aires, Mendoza, and Rosario.

Workshops

Ottawa, Ontario
Lauzon Music Centre
Monday, February 20, 7 p.m.
(613) 725-1116

Burlington, Vermont
Advance Music Center
Tuesday, February 21, 7 p.m.
(802) 863-8652

New Haven, Connecticut
G Guitars
Wednesday, February 22, 7 p.m.
(203) 786-4734

Wakefield, Rhode Island
Wakefield Music Co.
Thursday, February 23, 7 p.m.
(401) 783-5390

Wilmington, Delaware
Accent Music
(Kirkwood Hwy. location)
Tuesday, February 28, 7 p.m.
(302) 999-9939

Louisville, Kentucky
Steilberg String Instruments
Tuesday, March 7, 7:30 p.m.
(502) 491-2337



Beppe Gambetta at Sweetwater Sound in Fort Wayne, Indiana.
Photo by Garry Harshbarger

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L-R: Rob Hay, owner of the Music Loft in Wilmington, North Carolina, Taylor Regional Sales Manager Aaron Dablow and Pat Kirtley. Photo by Joyce Kirtley.

PAT KIRTLEY



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Last fall, Pat Kirtley had a great Taylor workshop tour

through Colorado, New Mexico, and the Southeast, including Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. During parts of the trip, he was joined by Taylor's new Regional Sales Manager for the Southeast, Aaron Dablow. Pat reported that it was a pleasure to have Aaron at the workshops, and the attendees had plenty of questions about Taylor products for him.

The guys were concerned about the viability of the workshops in hurricane-weary southern Florida, but every event went very well, with good attendance and lots of interest from both dealers and players. Pat later commented that the overall feeling from the attendees was that they very much appreciated a chance to enjoy some music and to take their minds off of every-

thing else for a night.

Just before the tours, we sent Pat a T5 to add to his arsenal, and he filed this report: "The new T5 has been extremely well received and I love playing it. Mine is a custom, in the 'Black Burst' finish, and it turns heads wherever I go. While it comes across great on stage, my favorite experience is just playing it unplugged, for practice or for fun. Its acoustic side is very satisfying, and that's something that cannot be said for electric guitars in general. It responds acoustically like an old archtop, but it plays like a new Taylor — what a combo!"

Workshops

Glendale, Arizona

Sam Ash
Wednesday, February 15, 7 p.m.
(602) 863-7746

CHRIS PROCTOR



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Chris Proctor and his lovely wife Tomi embarked on a very memorable Italian vacation in October (see Chris's "Ultimate Venice Tourist" photo for proof). The trip included lots of sightseeing, great food and wine (natch), a nice visit with fellow clinician Beppe Gambetta and his wife, Federica, a couple of concerts, and one *fantastico* Taylor workshop in Milan in conjunction with our distributor, Backline.

But the adventure-to-remember started out on a scary note: just a few days before the Proctors were to depart for Italy, Chris learned that he had pneu-

monia. After "floating on a sea of antibiotics for the first week," Chris began to feel much better. "I think that boatloads of Chianti Classico Riserva made the crucial difference," he reported.

Back home, Chris has been auditioning local studios to find just the right spot to start recording his next CD, which will be a return to the all-original-music approach of his first six CDs. He also will record an old Stephen Foster tune with fellow clinician Artie Traum for another future project, and he's been testing some new strings for Elixir in his spare time. That, and working off

the few extra pounds he brought back from Italia.

Workshops

Boise, Idaho
Old Boise Guitar Company
Saturday, February 11, 10 a.m.
(208) 344-7600

Cedaredge, Colorado
Starr's Guitars
Monday, February 27, 7 p.m.
(970) 856-2331

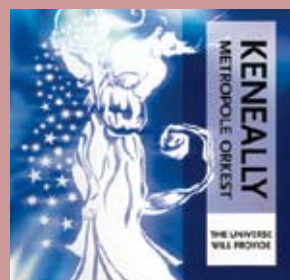
Santa Fe, New Mexico
The Candyman
Wednesday, March 1, 7 p.m.
(505) 983-5906

Arvada, Colorado
Old Town Pickin' Parlor
Friday, March 3, 7:30 p.m.
(303) 421-2304



Chris Proctor in Venice, Italy.
Photo by Tomi Ossana

MIKE KENEALLY



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In the Summer '05 "Almanac", we mentioned that Mike Keneally had taken to the road with bassboy extraordinaire Bryan Beller, guitarist Rick Musallam, and drummer Joe Travers, for a very special Mike Keneally Band "Guitar Therapy Tour". According to the guys, each performance was "magical," and Mike and Bryan opened every show with an all-acoustic, all-Taylor set, which was really cool. (Mike's T5 was shown off in grand style throughout the band's set list, which included many new renditions of songs



Mike Keneally and Bryan Beller at the Flora Theatre in Delft, Holland.
Photo by Scott Chatfield

spanning Mike's career.)

If you were not able to catch one of the shows, fear not — *Guitar Therapy Live*, a lovingly-crafted CD/DVD package made from digital multi-track recordings of several of the performances, is now available for pre-order from Keneally.com. The first 3,000 copies of this Special Edition package will be hand-numbered and autographed by Mike, and delivery is expected in the first quarter of 2006.

Various features of this pre-

mium CD/DVD set are still being worked out, but they hopefully will include an entertaining band-commentary track, as well as footage from the MKB's Los Angeles show at the Baked Potato, which was mixed in stereo and Dolby 5.1 Surround Sound and makes you feel as though you're sitting in the front row. A Standard Edition of *Guitar Therapy Live* also will be released, probably in March, but wouldn't you rather have the super-cool one? Order yours today.

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It has become a Taylor tradition that every fall our UK distributor, Sound Technology, hosts Doyle Dykes for a couple of whirlwind weeks of workshops, concerts, and other perfor-

mances/appearances. According to Doyle, the 2005 tour was "the best ever," largely because he had two very special travel companions along this time — his amazingly talented daughter, "Miss Haley", and our amazingly talented Bob Taylor.

The goal of this trip was to effectively introduce the T5 to the UK market; to accomplish that goal, Doyle, Bob, Haley and Sound Tech's Robert Wilson traveled 2,000 miles across England and Scotland. Doyle reported seeing many familiar faces along the way, and each workshop was well attended by enthusiastic Taylor fans.

Every night, Bob would get onstage and tell the story of Taylor Guitars and the development of the T5. Then, Bob and Doyle would demo the different capabilities of the new axe, wow-ing the crowds with the diverse sounds all coming from the same



Left: Doyle Dykes and daughter Haley at Lauzon Music Centre in Ottawa, Ontario. Photo by Ken Lauzon.
Below: Haley and Doyle at Stonehenge in England. Photo by Bob Taylor

guitar. Although Bob originally was scheduled to be on the tour for just the first week, he decided to extend his trip and stayed for the whole tour!

Another highlight for attendees was hearing Haley Dykes perform a couple of tunes (backed by dad, of course) from her brand-new debut CD, *The Mystery of Her*. Be sure to check it out at haleymusic.net, and look for an upcoming review in *Wood&Steel*. Congratulations, Haley!

Workshops

Riverside, California
Wild West Guitars
Saturday, February 4, 12 p.m.
(951) 369-7888

Gilroy, California
(presented by Gilroy Guitar Gallery)
New Hope Community Church
Monday, February 6, 7 p.m.
(408) 847-6350

Springdale, Ohio
Sam Ash
Monday, February 27, 7 p.m.
(513) 671-4500

SEASONAL TIPS

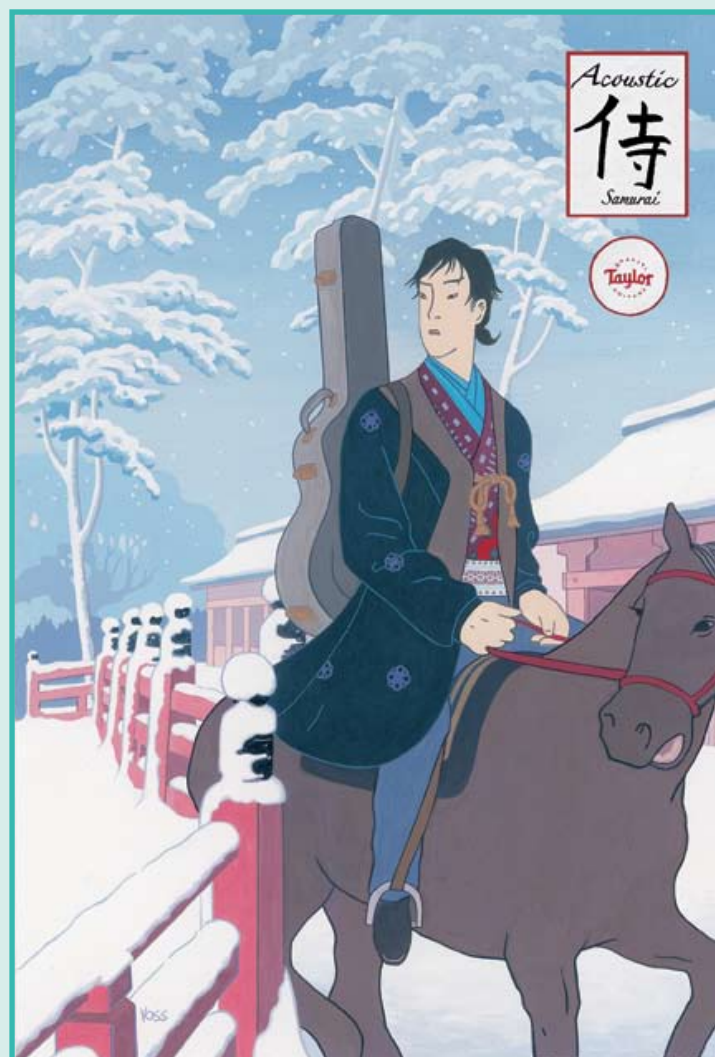


Illustration by Tom Voss

Now that brilliantly colored leaves have given way to bare trees in some parts of the country, and the nights have grown colder almost everywhere, many of us will be playing our guitars in the warmth of our homes. Remember that if you live in "cold country" and use an indoor heater, the relative humidity in your house will drop to a point that's hazardous to the health of solid-wood guitars.

Purchase a Dampit or other soundhole humidifier from your local music store and be ready to use it if your guitar shows signs of drying (i.e. "buzzing" strings, lowering action, fret ends feeling sharp, etc.). A refreshing little drink — administered via a soundhole humidifier — will restore the guitar's moisture content.

If a Taylor "Tech-Sheet" on the specific use of a soundhole humidifier was not enclosed in the

accessories compartment of your Taylor guitar, you can print one out from our website (www.taylorguitars.com/global/pdfs/guitar_humidifier.pdf). Or, call our Customer Service department at 619-258-6957 extension 212, and we will be happy to send you a printout.

As always, unless you have a humidity-controlled music room, you should store your guitar in its case when you are not playing it. Although it's very beautiful, your guitar is not a decoration. Even a few days of exposure to low humidity could dry the woods enough to cause damage.

NOTE: To learn from the master about keeping your guitar properly humidified (including the use of Dampits), check out Bob Taylor in the video "Understanding Humidity", now viewable on our website.