

SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S ISSUE

GUITARPLAYER.COM

Guitar Player



GREATEST

SOLOS

of
ALL TIME



PLUS
READER'S
POLL
WHAT DID YOU
VOTE FOR?

AS CHOSEN BY

KIRK HAMMETT JOHN PETRUCCI STEVE VAI JOE SATRIANI
ERIC JOHNSON BRIAN SETZER TOMMY EMMANUEL STEVE HOWE
ANDY SUMMERS PAUL GILBERT YNGWIE MALMSTEEN
STEVE MORSE MARK TREMONTI & MANY MORE!



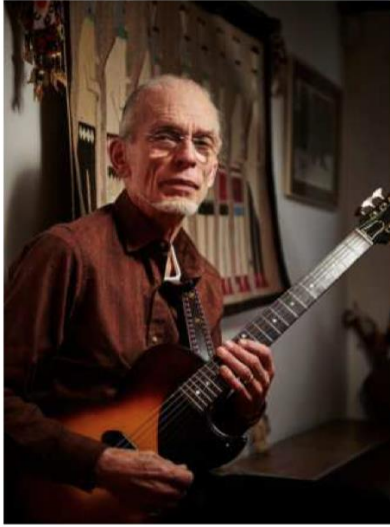
WHEN WE SET out to poll our readers about the greatest guitar solos of all time (see page 46), we thought it would be interesting to see what solos our current crop of star guitarists would choose. But first we decided to set a rule: Nothing obvious. No Hendrix. No Clapton. No Gilmour... You get the drift. What we wanted were the deep cuts that inspired and influenced some of the day's most famous players. Plus, we thought it would be fun for our participants to champion the players and songs that they hold dear, but which might not get much love from the community at large.

Unintentionally, though, we created a conundrum for many players, who wondered just how off the charts to go. Nels Cline summed up the dilemma for many guitarists when he wrote, "I found myself thrown into a swirl of possibilities that pretty much overwhelmed me. The assignment was to avoid the 'obvious' biggies like Jimi Hendrix, Jeff Beck... Okay, but what about Duane Allman? Dickie Betts? Wes Montgomery? Steve

Howe? George Benson? John McLaughlin? John Scofield? Fred Frith? These guys are *huge* for me!

"Then I started thinking about mentioning overlooked players like Ollie Hallsall, Jan Akkerman, Michael Gregory Jackson, Ted Dunbar. Even Stephen Stills is pretty much overlooked at this point but was very important to my young ears and fingers way back when. And what about my cherished colleagues/friends with whom I sometimes collaborate and whom I adore? Julian Lage, Jeff Parker, Elliott Sharp, Marc Ribot, Bill Frisell, Mary Halvorson, Brandon Seabrook, Ava Mendoza..."

Ultimately, Nels and the rest of our celebrity participants worked out the kinks and delivered a trove of fantastic solos for our poll — although a few couldn't resist the urge to pick a tried-and-true hero (we're looking at you Brian Setzer and Mark Tremonti!). To everyone who participated, we thank you. Now, without further delay, let's have our celebrity participants take it away.



◀ STEVE HOWE (Yes)

HELLO MARY LOU Ricky Nelson, *Rick Is 21*

GUITARIST: JAMES BURTON

“Before he played with Elvis, James Burton was Rick Nelson’s guitarist. This song established him as a phenomenal ‘guitar-break taker.’ The backing track is tight as a duck’s ass, and you can hear James passing licks around. But when he takes the break, it’s an all-time great solo — short, nifty, dynamic, twangy... Everything you could want.”

WHAT YOU GONNA DO Chris Farlow & the Thunderbirds, *Single*

GUITARIST: ALBERT LEE

“When I first saw Albert Lee, people had to stand me up. I was so taken with his playing. On this track, there’s hardly anything going on; it’s sort of a boogie. And then it goes off into this guitar break that’s astounding. It goes off in a whole new direction because of Albert.”

SOME OTHER GUY The Big Three, *Single*

GUITARIST: BRIAN GRIFFITHS

“They were a competitive Liverpool band right when the Beatles were going big, and Brian Griffiths was their guitarist. The song is fun and snappy, but when the guitar solo breaks out — oh, my God! For an early ’60s guitar moment, it was really inspiring.”

ROB MONK (TREMONTI); SCOTT DUBELSON/GETTY IMAGES (MENN); JOSEPH BRANSTON (HI)

JOHN PETRUCCI ► (*Dream Theater*)

LA VILLA STRANGIATO

Rush, Hemispheres

GUITARIST: ALEX LIFESON

"Rush was the first concert that I ever attended, back in 1982, and when I saw them play that song live and witnessed Alex perform that solo, it literally blew my mind! Alex starts off very bluesy and melodic but slowly builds to this insane crescendo. That solo-building technique was so impactful and is something that I try to incorporate in my own playing."

YOURS IS NO DISGRACE (LIVE)

Yes, Yessongs

GUITARIST: STEVE HOWE

"*Yessongs* is one of the first albums that I ever owned. There's a moment in this song where Steve Howe does an extended unaccompanied guitar solo. I can remember listening to it over and over and just being mesmerized by his playing and creativity. It's such a great highlight to me and really exemplifies why he is such an incredible artist. Made me want to practice like crazy as well!"



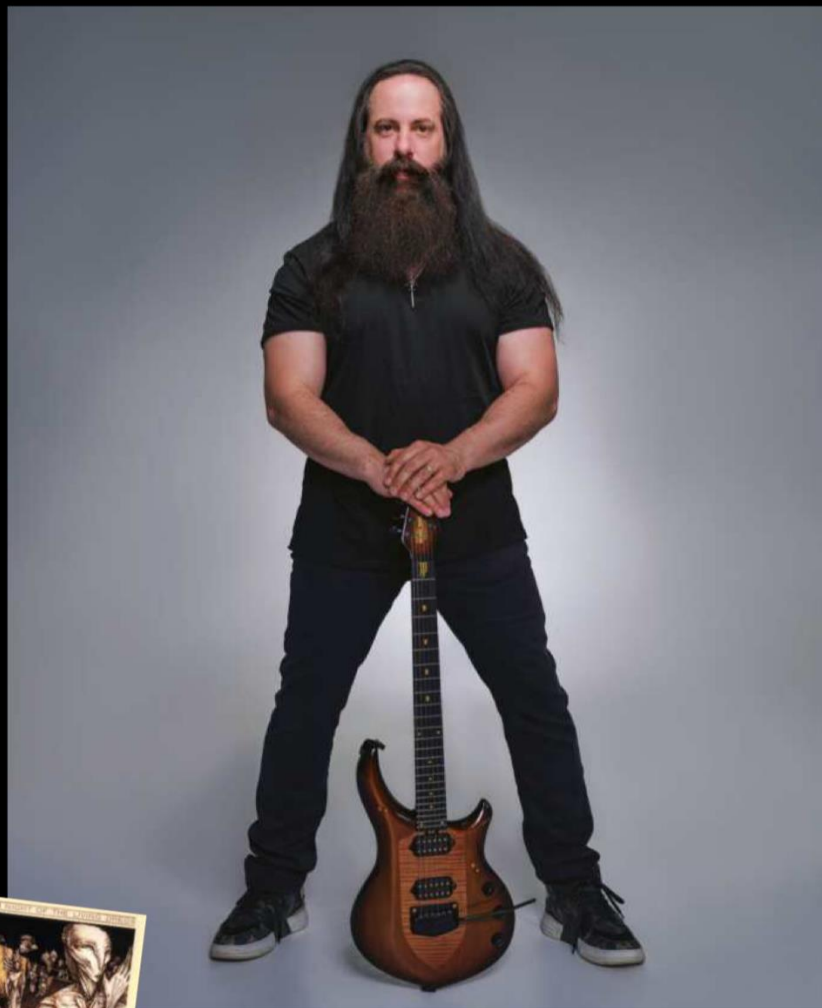
THE BASH

Dixie Dregs, Night of the Living Dregs

GUITARIST: STEVE MORSE

"More than any other player, Steve Morse changed my whole way of thinking on the guitar from the moment I heard him play. The first time I heard him was on this high-energy rock/bluegrass take on the 'Wabash Cannonball.' My first reaction after hearing Steve's solo on this song was, 'How does anybody play guitar like that?' I was a teen and really into rock and metal, so to hear Steve play guitar in that highly technical bluegrass style at breakneck speeds really took me by surprise. He quickly became my favorite guitar player. He changed how I thought about playing guitar, how I thought about my technique, and he inspired me to practice for hours on end. I can

RAYON RICHARDS



remember transcribing his solo and trying to figure it out, using a metronome,

and focusing on my right-hand picking technique. It just helped with my playing tremendously."

MOTHER, FATHER

Journey, Escape

GUITARIST: NEAL SCHON

"Neal's music and playing have had a tremendous influence on me...not only his impassioned and fiery side but his beautifully melodic side as well. 'Mother, Father' is a bit heavier and darker-sounding compared to other Journey tracks, and it has one of the greatest solos ever. I love when you look forward to the guitar solo on a song and it helps elevate the composition and bring it to the next level. That song is so emotional and intense, and Neal's solo really does this perfectly, with passion and soul."

MOANJAM

King's X, Faith Hope Love

GUITARIST: TY TABOR

"I've seen King's X perform countless times live and had the pleasure of touring with them. They are an absolutely incredible trio to see live, and 'Moanjam' became a staple of their set. The song is basically a vessel for an epic guitar solo that destroys everything in its path, like a runaway freight train. Ty Tabor demonstrates his ability to take complete ownership of that moment, and the solo just keeps going and going and going, to the point of insanity. It used to amaze me that he could solo that intensely at that energy level for so long, while always keeping the interest of the audience. People talk about guitar players that do self-indulgent solos, but in this case, you didn't want it to stop. It's just so incredible."

STEVE STEVENS▼ (*Billy Idol*)

GEORGE BENSON WITH THE BROTHER JACK McDUFF QUARTET *Brother Jack McDuff Quartet, 1963 live performance*

GUITARIST: GEORGE BENSON



“Just Google ‘1964 – Brother Jack McDuff Quartet (live video).’ A 21-year-old George Benson playing a Gibson Les Paul has to be seen to be believed. He’s trading solos at breakneck speed. At one turn,

George starts imitating a chicken, never forgetting to be entertaining as well as virtuosic.”

YOURS IS NO DISGRACE (LIVE)

*Yes, from the **Sounding Out**
TV special*

GUITARIST: STEVE HOWE

“It’s on YouTube. This live version is the best I’ve ever heard. No one was soloing like this in a rock band context in 1971. Blinding alternate picking. It’s as if he

were channeling Joe Pass and Chet Atkins.”

FIVES

*Guthrie Govan,
Erotic Cakes*

GUITARIST: GUTHRIE GOVAN

“He’s the best guitar soloist I’ve heard in 20 years. Even if this piece didn’t include a solo, I’d put it on this list. It’s a killer composition. Like Eddie Van Halen before him, he’s damn good fun to listen to.”

RED ALERT

*The New Tony Williams
Lifetime, Believe It*

GUITARIST: ALLAN
HOLDSWORTH

“Allan Holdsworth gets such tone. A masterwork in how to build tension and melody to finally stun you with fury and speed. It’s like Coltrane on guitar.”

CATCH YOUR TRAIN

Scorpions, Virgin Killer

GUITARIST: ULI JON ROTH

“Uli Jon Roth is the forerunner to neoclassical metal guitar. Beautifully recorded. The use of reverb to complement the solo is artful in the way it enhances the long sustained notes.”

ZAKK WYLDE▼

FANTASY

Aldo Nova, Aldo Nova

GUITARIST: ALDO NOVA



“The tone, the structure and everything fits perfectly. To me, it’s some of the best guitar playing out there. It has all of the elements

— the trifecta of greatness.”

BYE BYE LOVE

The Cars, The Cars

GUITARIST: ELLIOT EASTON

“I’m a huge fan of Elliot Easton. His guitar playing is so creative and inventive. He throws so many great licks inside this little window where he gets an opportunity to play. There’s country and blues influences that fit within the framework of new-wave sounds.”

PROMISES IN THE DARK

*Pat Benatar,
Precious Time*

GUITARIST: NEIL GIRALDO

“I’ve always been a fan of Neil’s guitar playing. The framework of this solo has great technique and great performance. It all just fits the song perfectly.”