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<https://www.guitarworld.com/news/tommy-emmanuel-mike-dawes-smells-like-teen-spirit>

Watch Tommy Emmanuel and Mike Dawes' thrilling acoustic cover of Nirvana's Smells Like Teen Spirit

By [Jonathan Horsley](#)

In this GW premiere, the acoustic virtuoso duo combine powers to rework the era-defining grunge anthem, with spectacular results

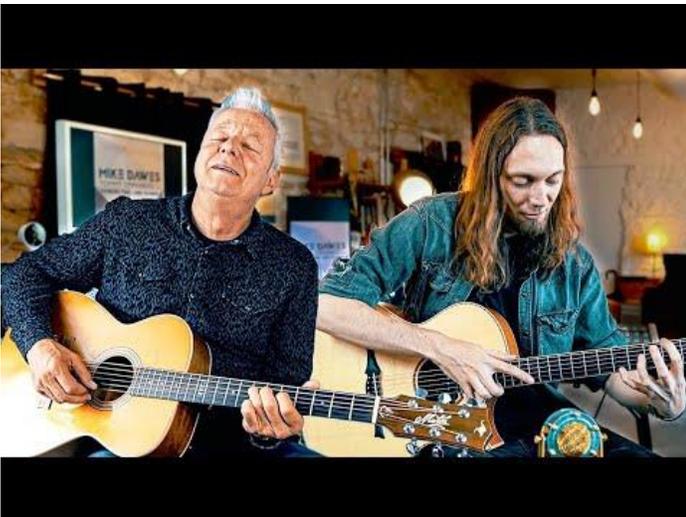


<https://youtu.be/kqLlpDoMv6w>

Tommy Emmanuel and Mike Dawes have teamed up for a cover of Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit*, transforming the grunge anthem into a supernova [acoustic guitar](#) duet.

The video, which is making its official world premier on *GW* – right up there above this text – is a fitting way to mark the announcement of Tommy Emmanuel's *Accomplice Series Vol. 3*, on which Mike Dawes joins the Australian guitar virtuoso in the studio for a handful of covers.

Together, the pair will tackle Sting's *Fields of Gold*, 1975's *By My Mistake*, *Somebody I Used to Know* by Gotye, the video for which was revealed last year, and *Slow Dancing In a Burning Room* by the one and only John Mayer.



<https://youtu.be/2bx9vTF8x2s>

Emmanuel's *Accomplice Series* has thrown up some fascinating collaborations. On *Vol. 2* he worked with fingerpicking phenom Richard Smith on four tracks that saluted the influence of Jerry Reed and Chet Atkins. *Vol. 1*, meanwhile, saw him hook up with Rob Ickes on Dobro and Trey Hensley on guitar.

Smells Like Teen Spirit, however, might just be the most audacious work yet. Ostensibly, Dawes is on rhythm, while Emmanuel sketches out Kurt Cobain's vocal on his signature Maton, but those roles are kind of interchangeable.

Dawes handles his parts on his Andreas Cuntz cutaway acoustic, with a DiMarzio [acoustic guitar pickup](#) in the soundhole, and credits his rhythm approach to his old guitar teacher, the fingerstyle whiz Stuart Ryan, who teaches guitar the BIMM Institute, in the UK.



https://youtu.be/8x3b61rb6_k

In 2021, *Total Guitar* readers voted *Smells Like Teen Spirit* the 17th [greatest guitar riff of all time](#), and for a generation of players it was the very first they learned. Here Dawes and Emmanuel transform it into something altogether more baroque, without forgetting the energy that made the song so vital in the first place.

Indeed, this is an instrumental performance but of course Emmanuel can't help singing along to the pre-chorus – that has been most people's experience since 1991. The video was directed and edited by Joshua Britt and Neilson Hubbard for *Neighborhoods Apart*, recorded live by Dylan Allredge, with mixing and mastering by Marc DeSisto.

[Tommy Emmanuel's *Accomplice Series Vol. 3* \(opens in new tab\)](#) is available to pre-save on digital platforms, and is set for release in September.