

news. music. players. instruments.

Babbling Brook



issue 5

autumn 2017



From Genesis
to orchestration

Anthony Phillips on guitars...and creation



Welcome...

...to the latest edition of *'Babbling Brook'*, our online magazine for all things 'Brook Guitars'.

It's been quite some time since the last issue – but Easterbrook has been a constant hive of activity, with no shortage of building and repair work going on, we're glad to say!

Many of you will undoubtedly keep up to date with what's going on in our monthly website *'News'* section – but the magazine gives us the chance to look at some of the stories and players we feature there in a bit more depth...

...and depth is certainly what our cover story on ex-Genesis guitarist **Anthony Phillips** goes into – more than a few revelations (*groan*) about his career past and present for you to discover.

Professional session musician **Pete Walton** owns and plays probably the most listened-to guitar we've ever built; you can find out why on [page 35...](#)

Between them, **Dev Patel** and **Marcus Corbett** provide an interesting and somewhat unexpected contrast of musical cultures. Read their stories side-by-side, beginning on [page 3...](#)

There are a couple of 'part twos' in this issue: the concluding instalment of **Tony Hazzard's** fascinating extended interview on [page 27](#) and the second in our series of articles on home recording by *'Babbling Brook'* writer **Robbie Jessep**, whose expertise helped Brook owner **Phil Taylor** complete his debut CD – see [page 43](#).

There's also a follow-up on last issue's cover story on **Tim 'TV' Smith** and his road-ravaged **Taw** – and the steps we took to help 'airline-proof' his latest Brook...

We always value your opinion and enjoy hearing from you. Please do call or drop us an email to tell us what you think of *'Babbling Brook'* – and if you have a 'special order' in mind...well, even better!

Cheers for now...

Simon and Andy
Founders, Brook Guitars

Guitarist **Dev Patel** – interviewed in our *'East meet West'* feature – publishes his first book of fingerstyle studies this year. For this issue, Dev has generously provided his own arrangement of a traditional Irish tune for readers to play themselves...*on their Brook guitars, needless to say!*

A short breath of Irish air

“

The real challenge with slower pieces is to create a full, lush arrangement without cluttering the melody or, conversely, leaving it sounding too empty...

”



HELLO, and welcome to this fingerstyle guitar arrangement!

'The Bright Black Rose' is an old Irish air.

Traditional airs are slow, melodic tunes, usually performed as a part of a 'set' – several tunes joined together to form a longer performance piece.



Devkinandan Patel - The Bright Black Rose - Fingerstyle Guitar
Devkinandan Patel
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The air is usually followed by two reels or jigs.

This particular arrangement makes use of the **DADGAD** tuning. The melody is instantly haunting, and sits well in this tuning.

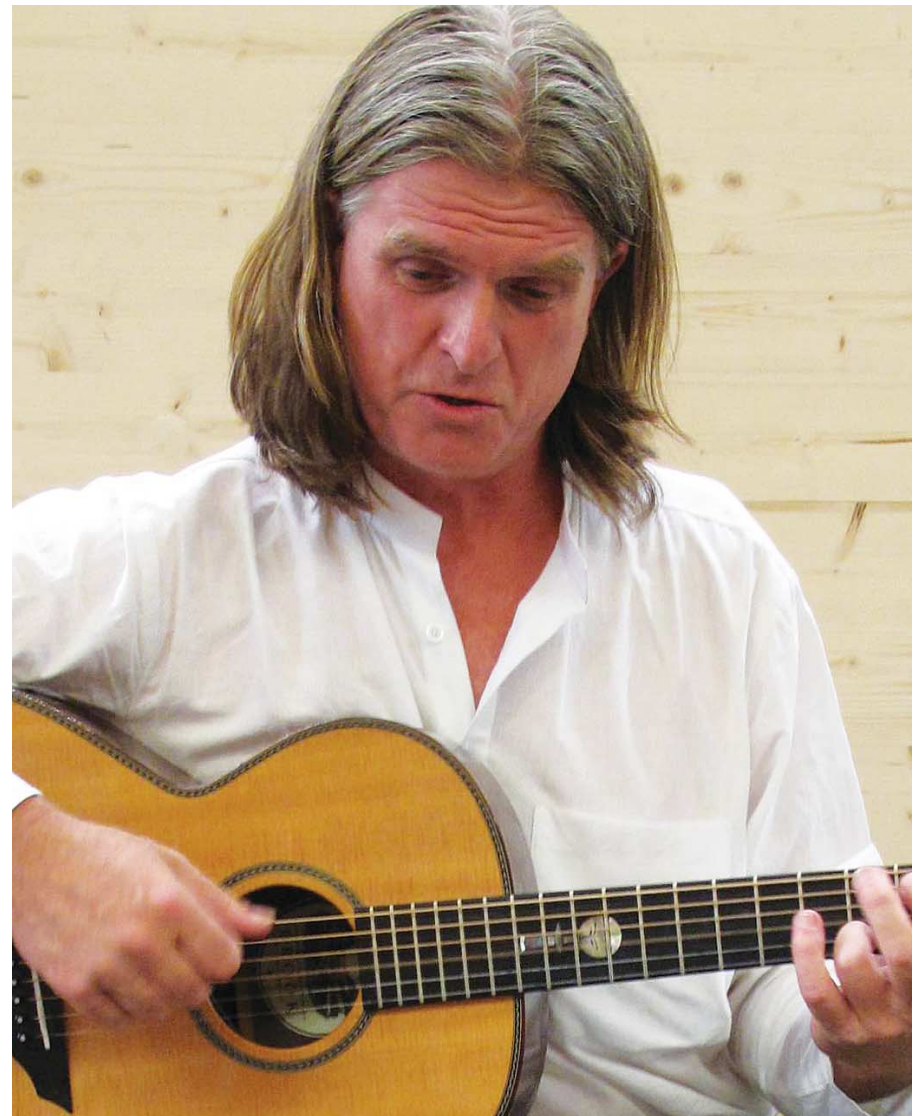
I would recommend that it's a good idea to learn the melody first and then work on the arrangement.

Watch and listen to Dev playing *'The Bright Black Rose'*:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=052_YGHKIQE

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NEVER has the word 'crossover' been more appropriate than in describing the music of **Devkinandan 'Dev' Patel** and **Marcus Corbett**; Dev was born in India, but has embraced the music, open tunings and repertoire of Western folk and fingerstyle, while Kent-raised Marcus has immersed himself in the modalities, ragas and rhythms of traditional Indian music. *Martin Bell* finds out more about their contrasting approaches to world music – and how their Brook guitars have accompanied them to the places where...

East meets West



“ I still love the ghazals and bhajans of artistes like Jagjit Singh... but once I'd discovered the music of Nick Drake and DADGAD, I never looked back... ”

वेदर

“ For me, Blues figured large during adolescence...then I heard some Indian classical music during an enlightened teacher's musical appreciation class... ”

Marcus

East meets West

देव

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AFTER an orthodox Hindu upbringing, surrounded by traditional Indian music, **Dev Patel** heard a schoolfriend playing Pink Floyd's 'Wish You Were Here' – and was bitten by the guitar bug. He went on to study music in England and America – and is just about to publish his first book/CD of fingerstyle guitar pieces, with a solo CD also in the pipeline...



MB: To begin with, Dev, could you tell us a little about yourself - your background, upbringing, current circumstances etc?

DP: I was born in a city called Anand, into an orthodox Hindu family. The county or state is Gujarat. My father's an ex-cop, which meant quite a bit of re-locating during his career, depending on where he was posted. My family moved to Ahmedabad, Gujarat, when I was in grade/year/class 4, and I have lived here ever since. Ahmedabad is also where the famous Gandhi Ashram (*Sabarmati Ashram*) is located. I teach from a small home studio setup in Ahmedabad, and spend some time gigging and recording.

MB: What was your first musical experience? How/when did your first get into music/start playing yourself?

DP: I remember winning singing competitions in school when I was in class 5. My Dad used to play a lot of old Hindi movie songs, ghazals and bhajans (religious songs). I loved (I still do) the ghazals and bhajans of Jagjit Singh. I sang a bhajan in a school competition and came first – I was absolutely over the moon and surprised! My family is very religious, so I grew up reciting a lot of Sanskrit slokas (Hindu prayers) and there were plenty of bhajans going around.

My brother moved to the US in '98. Everytime he came home to see us, he would bring me a CD. One those CDs had Santana & Rob Thomas' 'Smooth', 'American Pie', a Third Eye Blind song, etc. I used to go to a school called St. Xavier's Loyola (an English medium school) and had some Christian/Catholic friends who introduced me to heavy music; the likes of Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden; I also heard (Jimi Hendrix's) 'Voodoo Child' around that time and remember thinking, 'Man this would be just the greatest thing to play'. I had no idea what a wah-wah pedal was. Ha ha! I hate to admit this, but I'd already discovered Westlife and Backstreet Boys and had actually bought CDs and cassettes. Around that time I had started discovering things on my own thanks to the internet. I heard Pink Floyd's 'Wish You Were' here and the first

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Marcus

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SCHOOL piano lessons – closely followed by trumpet and, finally, guitar – set **Marcus Corbett** off on his own lifelong musical journey. But blues, rock and roll and western classical music very soon gave way to the 'fear and fatal attraction' he found in Indian music – the influences of which are abundant on his latest CD, 'Every Little Spirit'...



MB: Tell us something of yourself, Marcus – where did you grow up and how did you first 'discover' music?

MC: I grew up on a farm in Kent, and I have a mental image of a very young me sucking on the ice from frozen puddles mid-winter, which is a little scary! My first musical experience that I can remember was my grandfather's wind-up music box with Uncle Tom Cobley and all – 'Widdecombe Fair' – on it, and which strangely, through its mechanical evocation of timeless times past, induced internal emotional warp in a very young person.

I didn't know much about the music scene locally, but early on at school I took a pretty conventional course by studying piano. A familiar story: piano taught to me by a teacher who had an affair with, and then was left stranded by, the headmaster, and so left the school – a promising start thereby derailed! I took up trumpet, which didn't last for very long...Bunny Bingam was someone I listened to and Louis Armstrong. Then, by the time I was 14, the guitar was in the crook of my arm...

MB: What/who were your earliest musical influences?

MC: Mainly Western classical. Before my teens, the first records I bought were Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino...then after, 'Best of Cream'. I heard Indian classical music in an enlightened teacher's musical appreciation class, along with J.S. Bach and Hendrix, aged 14 and I found the exacting melody drew me in. I enjoyed string quartets at that time and the sharp relief of tune in this music was probably a link in common.

MB: Did you have any idea early on about what sort of a musician you wanted to be? For instance, did you want to play 'guitar tunes' – or use the guitar more as a vehicle to accompany songs?

MC: Blues figured large during adolescence, although I never learned the licks – and then a track on 'School Days' by Stanley Clarke called 'Desert Song' by

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East meets West

Marcus

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John McLaughlin haunted me. It showed me the value of space and silence in music in which the dynamic of acoustic guitar could gain traction... and I thought I sensed a direction I might like to travel.

MB: What were your first experiences of playing in public/gigs?

MC: Aged seven I played a solo piano piece at a school show. While I was in the van on the way to the concert I realised I had forgotten the sheet music. It was weird as I mentally rehearsed the piece and imagined playing it. No fear or panic. So I just walked on stage and played. I was aware at the time that I'd taken some kind of step into somewhere previously unexplored...

MB: Your music has been described as 'a unique fusion of Indian classical music and British folk' – so, how/ when did you discover or develop an interest in Eastern music?

MC: When I travelled overland to India before going to university...on the road I and others suddenly realised I could play; it was very fluid and bluesy.

It was my first visit to India that exposed me to the dimensions and vistas revealed by the untempered musical scale...and the desire to understand it remained...

Though I first seriously heard Indian music at the age of 14 in the UK, it was this first visit to India four years later that exposed me to the dimensions explored and vistas revealed by the untempered musical scale in India. It intrigued me by way of fear and fatal attraction in equal measure. Once infected, the strain would not fade away, and the desire to understand it remained as I struggled to understand my desire to make music. So, a struggle for self-definition began, and what I do now is related to that time also.

MB: What was it about this music that appealed/ 'spoke' to you?

MC: Indeed...what was it in Indian music that both drew me in and repelled? Aged 18 I travelled overland to India. That slow arriving to a destination that was both physical and psychological was made real in a town beside the river Ganga where I heard a public masterclass given on Hindustani vocal. Sarod and sitar (*Indian stringed instruments, pictured right*) can be compared to the guitar by Westerners. Bansuri flute is so mellifluous that who could possibly object? But vocal? There are few landmarks to help one whose home is so far away feel secure...how could I have been prepared for the information passed on by this means?

The music seemed to ask so many questions that could not be formulated in any other way; no chordal structure, but abundant in harmony – a storyline that one could create for oneself without programme notes.

Indian music deals in the fundamentals of music. It uses untempered tuning. It has another name –



'Shastria Sangeet' – which translates as 'knowledge music'. With its feints, 'meend' (*a glide from one note to another*) and decoration it has for me a siren call, but connects to something we all have in common.

It can extract meaning and create of cinema through a focus on one note and its supporting harmonics,



Indian 'guitars' the sarod (left) and sitar.

and the unknown suggestion of where it might lead, accompanied by the slowly evolving spell of the tabla, was a heady mix for an 18-year old. It was a concoction I could never forget and would later want to incorporate in my own music to some degree.

MB: How did you learn to play this sort of music? Did you travel to 'the source' to learn more about it, or did you turn to recordings/other musicians?

MC: There was a collision of cultures in my head. I told myself I would return to India to resolve the



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East meets West

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solo on 'Comfortably Numb' and really wanted to play guitar! Bryan Adams' 'Run to You' was another riff I wanted to play.

MB: What was the musical scene like where you lived?

DP: There were a few cover bands playing mostly rock music. Nirvana, Iron Maiden, Deep Purple, Black Sabbath, The Doobie Brothers, The Eagles, etc. In a country like India the majority of people listen to what comes out of Bollywood and then there's the minority listening to rock, jazz, blues etc. There was a 'golden era' of music in Bollywood which is now gone. Then again from time to time you hear something really good.

MB: What/who were your earliest musical influences?

DP: I discovered Stevie Ray Vaughan after going to ACM (Academy of Contemporary Music in Guildford), and spent weeks after that trying to learn 'Texas Flood' note-for-note. Jack Johnson also influenced me a lot, particularly his albums 'In Between Dreams', 'Brushfire Fairytales' and 'On & On'. I love Nick Drake and always will; I went through a phase of playing Red Hot Chili Peppers and Rage Against The Machine songs, and got into The Beatles a little later on.

MB: Did you take any lessons to begin with, or were you self-taught?

DP: There was a local guitar teacher at school. I went to him for four or five months before heading over to ACM. He taught me some major scales, open and barre chords, major/minor arpeggio shapes and some chord progressions. I remember being very excited about learning a new chord once or twice a week. I was six months into guitar playing before going to ACM! The teacher had a band who played music of Deep Purple, Iron Maiden, etc, so I used to go to watch their practice sessions.

MB: Did you have any idea early on about what sort of a musician you wanted to be?

DP: Not really!

MB: What about your first instrument? Can you tell us something about that?

DP: We had a keyboard lying around in the house when I was growing up. I used to noodle around on it as a kid, to see if I could figure out some melodies. I really don't remember my

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East meets West

Marcus in the grounds of Easterbrook with his custom-built Tav.



Marcus

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issue. I listened to tapes by Ajay Pohankar and copied the approach. I had read as an adolescent of the vocal practise techniques and I applied these. I kept this dream alive. It was difficult because it can feel alien while at the same time fundamentally correct. However, it took a failed relationship to make me realise that it was now or never and I went to the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (*the Institution of Indian Art and Culture*) in London and started vocal studies under the guidance of Gauri Bapat.

MB: When anyone mentions British musicians (guitarists) being influenced by/embracing Indian music, two of the names that immediately spring to mind are George Harrison and John McLaughlin; were there/are there any similarities or inspiration there for you?

MC: Only slightly with the latter. I didn't enter into jazz, preferring to develop some acoustic folk base, but I loved much of the early Mahavishnu Orchestra. 'Open Country Joy' from the 'Birds of Fire' album along with many other tracks work deep magic. And, as I mentioned earlier, McLaughlin's 'Desert Song' with Stanley Clarke on bass showed me a way.

MB: How deeply into learning Indian music have you gone? Have you approached it from an

academic/theory point of view, for example, or have you gone entirely by 'feel'/'spirit'?

MC: To the best of my ability, both, I hope...

MB: What are the particular challenges involved in playing this music?

MC: Creating the skeleton of the raga (*melodic mode*) and continuing to build until there is a completed picture. Establishing and maintaining the harmonic flavour – understanding and learning by example of one's guru the specific flavours of particular ragas. This can involve different placement of some notes, utilising the 'srutis' (*musical intonation, or 'that which is heard'*). They use untempered tuning, which requires fundamental adjustment. It can be scary, allowing oneself to dive in, to grasp the nettle and 'learn to swim'!

MB: Do you make any/extensive use of altered tunings in order to create the music you do?

MC: One or two, but not many and not often. Before I concentrated on combining with tabla I used them more often.

MB: Certain musics – flamenco, for example – can only be fully and properly embraced by 'living the life', rather than simply 'playing the notes'. How closely is the music you write and play influenced by or reflected in your own lifestyle

and beliefs, religious or otherwise?

MC: I think there is a connection. Perhaps I'm also always trying to create and maintain that connection in order to continue doing what I do.

MB: Tell us something about your album, 'Every Little Spirit'; how long was it in the making? It's the follow-up to your debut album, 'Strung Deep'?

MC: I could say one track has taken a lifetime... I could say one track has taken 10 years, and another six months. The actual time from departure to arrival post the first CD 'Strung Deep' was a bit more than two years. By contrast, I took nine months just getting the tabla I felt I needed for 'Loving Kind' (from 'Every Little Spirit') and developing the song. I've recorded it before, but suddenly there were new vistas to explore.

The first track called (perhaps a little confusingly!) 'Strung Deep' came about through an accidental discovery while I was editing and mixing 'Castanets' off the previous CD of the same name, 'Strung Deep' (*below*). A chance cycle discovered in this way created



a great new perspective on the song; for me, it was an irresistible digital accident.

(Producer) Sam Williams did in three days what would have taken me three months, and infinitely better. He added a fresh dimension to it with his

vocals and I enjoyed it enormously. When you take a song to someone else for their input, that's what you get. Someone wrote: 'It builds bridges into the consciousness of the unsuspecting' allowing easier access into the rest of my stuff. I hope it does.

It has been a case of loosening one's boundaries, letting go of some moorings and keeping others, setting the scene in such a way as to allow room for convincing input from the Indian side...gracefully making this the predominant rule.

Tabla, precisely because it has such a (beautiful) strong but static harmonic element to it, can be used more flexibly in conjunction with guitar, but to

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East meets West

The note separation is something that I love in this music; the way the voices move and the tonal palette... there's so much room for expression as a solo guitar player...



देव

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first acoustic guitar. I think it was a local 'Hobner' or a 'Hobmer' guitar. You can get one of them for approximately £25.. These sound like rubber bands on a box and last about three months! However, I did learn my first chords on that guitar – I was over the moon to own one of them back then. I went through a few more acoustics after that. There was a GB&A, and a Takamine G320. My first electric guitar was a Yamaha Pacifica and I still have it! It's still playable but stays on the wall. My Dad bought me that guitar.

MB: What were your first experiences of playing in public/gigs?

DP: Oh, that was at The Electric Theatre in Guildford, right next to ACM. We used to have live performances there every Friday. Playing live for the first time, too, for a room full of musicians – that was nerve-wracking, but a great experience.



MB: How did your

Dev rocks out on an electric gig.

decision to go to ACM come about?

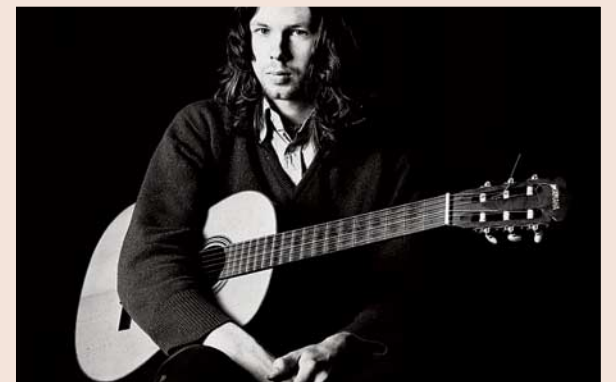
DP: After a few months of lessons I wanted to learn more so I started Googling music schools and found ACM. It looked promising. After checking the website and doing some research online I applied and was offered a place! I was 18 years old and over the moon. It was a great experience and a reality check. The late Eric Roche was the Guitar Department head and the great Guthrie Govan was also around. And this was all before YouTube days!

MB: Three years at home after that – and then off to Los Angeles! Again, that's a huge, ambitious, exciting step – did you have an idea at that stage of the sort of musician you wanted to be?

DP: I was more into jazz at that point. I met so many great musicians and teachers, and played music day in, day out – jazz, fusion, funk, soul and R&B. I just wanted to excel and be a fine musician. I remember sight reading two-three hours every day in the morning! Learning a bit of theory and reading music goes a long way in 'real world' situations.

MB: So, when did the fingerstyle bug first bite?

DP: I think it was Nick Drake, really – particularly his songs 'Riverman' and 'Road'. I spent many hours learning them. I had a Jack Johnson DVD called 'A Weekend At The Greek'. I saw Matt Costa play his song 'Astair' on that one. It's a Travis-picked tune and I just had to learn it. Then I discovered DADGAD from a book I had and have never stopped ever since.



The late Nick Drake – Dev's formative fingerstyle influence.

MB: What was it about this music that appealed/ 'spoke' to you?

DP: That's a good question! I think I just felt so moved by the melodies and the way everything falls in place. Also I used to listen to some Eric Roche and Stuart Ryan recordings. I just couldn't believe how rich the guitar sounded! I think I had heard a Brook on one of those recordings (*Stuart Ryan played a custom Brook Torridge throughout his debut solo CD, 'The Coast Road'*) but didn't know it was a Brook at the time. Also, the note separation is something that I love in this music; the way the voices move and the tonal palette. There's so much room for expression as a solo guitar player. I also love the fact that you can stretch the time as you see fit...

MB: With the breadth of musical education you've already had – along with the rich musical heritage of India – have you ever delved into/played the music of your homeland or integrated it into your own playing in any way?

DP: I think I have absorbed some of it on a subconscious level. Every now and then I have to play a gig which requires me to play a particular

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East meets West

Marcus

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me, the bell must ring true. To find a 'natural fit', a rhythmic sentence that gives the 'lay' (the rhythm part of a piece of music) within a song its *raison d'être* and function, is a 'beautiful' problem.

I want the tabla to shine and to have enough scope to use an extensive vocabulary. I learned tabla in order to have an informed opinion, so as to be more aware of what might work. I want to avoid the comfort of cliché in performance and also presumption on the part of the listener.

MB: Who are the other musicians on the CD?

MC: Saylee Talwalkar does some vocal on T1. Great to have her aboard.

I have learned tabla with both **Sharanappa Guttaragi** (Head of Pankshakshree Tabla Department in Gadag, N.Karnataka) and **Nitin Gaikwad**, who comes from a stalwart family of musicians in Pune and who maintain the tradition of Shenhai. Through time they have also got to know my material...this has taken quite some time and is important if the tabla is to show its potential as an instrument.

Milind Date plays Bansuri flute. This instrument has a smooth allure and can speak volumes, reinforcing the presence of moments that are suspended in time. He lives in Pune and has had a wonderful classical training with Hariprasad Chaurasia. He also has good experience of, and an interest in, much western music.

Sanjay Upadhye, Anjali Singde-Rao and Sachin Ingale on violins have added the unpredictable in



A tabla masterclass for Marcus with Sharanappa Guttaragi.

Marcus with
tabla player
Nitin
Gaikwad.



spades as they entangle themselves cinematically in the music. It is an adventure for them also as no one performance is the same as the previous.

Finally, there was **Bruno Guastalla** from Oxford on cello; he's a great instinctive improviser; I needed a little more 'X factor' for the song 'No Time', and he did a wonderful job, with some atmospheric drone and ethereal harmonics.

MB: Are you happy with how the album turned out? It was truly an 'East-West' project, being recorded in India AND the UK, wasn't it?

MC: Most of it was recorded in India. It's an 'East-West' project insofar as I am from the West and all the players except Bruno Guastalla are from India. I cannot help but take my origins with me, however much I manage to meld with my surroundings there, and so we look from different sides of the river and try to make something that rings true. It is so important not to cheapen the Indian element, for the respect of the classical community there. I can only hope my good intentions have been realised. I did re-record some guitar parts here, however, as well as Bruno's cello.

MB: From the opening notes of the opening track, it manages to sound like traditional Indian music AND with an English folkly vibe at the same time; was that intentional, or just to be expected, given your influences?

MC: I think given my influences this is to be hoped for, against all probability.

MB: What sort of a critical reception has it received so far?

MC: Well, unfortunately Songlines trashed it. However, Fiona Talkington of BBC Radio 3's 'Late Junction' played it saying: 'the obvious warmth of Marcus Corbett...his rich amalgamation of both British and Indian music'. And Ashanti Omkar, of BBC Asian Network, said: "Loving Kind...what an uplifting track - I've heard many tracks from it and I like them all...very soothing and very lovely". There has been generally a good reception, I'm happy to say.

People often seem to need a starting point for a perspective when writing a review and want to draw comparisons and make links with what has gone before. I'm not sure what I do has much connection with what has gone before.

MB: What sort of gigs do you typically play? Is there a specific audience that you're aiming for – and what sort of venues tend to suit your music?

MC: The cost of and time spent creating this music has prevented me from doing many gigs for two years. Prior to that, I did a month's tour around Bremen in Germany with Nitin Gaikwad on tabla. All promotional activity with Sebastian Reynolds – <https://m.facebook.com/pindropmusic> – is aimed at improving this situation.

Arts centres seem an obvious target...but not only arts centres are appropriate. Anywhere John Martyn

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East meets West

वेदर

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Raag. I think of it in modes and arpeggios. Sometimes I just transcribe it from a recording. But Indian classical is a different discipline and would require years of dedicated practice. I love Raag Yaman and Jog.

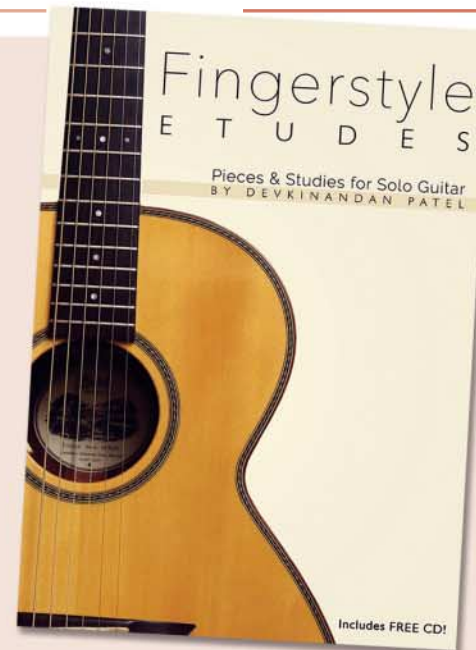
MB: You placed highly in a fingerstyle competition in India about three years ago – what's the fingerstyle guitar scene like over there? Do players look to Western styles/guitarists for inspiration and material?

DP: There's no scene at all, I'm afraid. There are many talented musicians all over India; it's a big country

and an actual fingerstyle scene is not possible. We just don't have a listening audience. It's a tiny community, but there are players. It is changing slowly, so let's hope for the best. A lot of young players are influenced by the modern percussive guitar players they can see on YouTube. Quite often, melody and harmony takes a back seat. But the music of Tony McManus, Jerry Reed, Chet Atkins et al needs to be heard.

MB: What are the particular challenges involved in playing this music for you?

DP: With such a humungous repertoire



Dev's instructional book, 'Fingerstyle Etudes', due to be published this Autumn.

of this music, keeping it fresh is always a challenge. I enjoy arranging old melodies for solo guitar; it's a fun challenge and I learn a lot about myself in the process. Celtic music is technically challenging to play, but it is rewarding; DADGAD can be a rut as well.

MB: Do you make any/extensive use of altered tunings in order to create the music you do?

DP: I have tried a few but ended up writing music in DADGAD and CGDGAD, which is similar to DADGAD but with those low bass notes. I like the sound of those wide intervals you get when using a low tuning. My Brook loves DADGAD! I like drop D, as well; those slow airs work particularly well with drop D.

MB: Do you play any acoustic gigs? What sort of gigs do you typically play? Is there a specific audience that you're aiming for? What about venues etc? Do you venture far afield to play live?

DP: Not many acoustic gigs. The ones that happen are usually intimate ones, like house gigs. Once in a while, I get called for an acoustic set, but the majority of the gigs are electric. Travelling to cities in Gujarat is common. I usually drive to cities which are 200km from Ahmedabad. Once in a while, I may have to fly out to somewhere like Mumbai...

MB: What can you tell us about your 'works in progress' – the book of etudes and your debut album? All original material or any covers/arrangements in there, too?

DP: My book 'Fingerstyle Etudes' is just about to be published. The tunes are short and long compositions, based around specific right hand



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Every little track...

Marcus Corbett provides a brief song-by-song guide to his latest CD, 'Every Little Spirit'...



Track 1 - 'Strung Deep' Saylee Talwalkar, daughter-in-law of perhaps the most famous of tabla players in Maharashtra was good enough to get involved on this one. We are going to see if we can genuinely collaborate and do more.

Track 2 - 'Loving Kind' I needed a short version of this in case of radio play. Luckily, this has resulted!

Tracks 3 & 4 - 'No Time' and 'Get Set Free' actually run seamlessly together because they are one piece of music. This, again, was done in case of radio play. I'll quote (Detroit DJ) Anne Carlini (http://annecarlina.com/ex_cd.php?id=2048) in part here because she seemed to like what I like about it: 'One of my very own personal favorites on this wonderful eight-track album, 'No Time.' It is an instrumental track that features everyone and more, for also included are both Sachin Ingale and Sanjay Upadhye on violin, and Bruno Guastalla on cello. It's just a beautiful, empowering near five minutes track that, if you close your eyes, will transport you to a place you never thought you could ever travel to.'

After 'Get Set Free' had been recorded I found I could not sleep – unheard of for me until now in India! I got up at 4am and wondered what to do; I picked up the guitar – *what else?* – and started to noodle around, and realised that in the stress of rehearsing with the violins, coming to see how we could combine I had forgotten the prime mood of the song and the original way of playing it. Suddenly, with a pin drop being audible and with rough estimation of microphone positioning I recorded...

Tracks 5 & 6 - 'Loving Kind' (extended) I wanted to put in the variations that give ebb and flow to the song. There is a tabla solo as track 6 to part of the same song. I wanted to pay respect to tabla and it was an ideal place for that to happen.

Track 7 - 'Sitting On A Cloud' It tells a woman's story. There is some social comment here – a possible interpretation of what globalisation feels like for some people even if it glitters and they think they want it.

Track 8 - 'Nothing More Than This'....continues from track 7. Perhaps I should have left it without a track break. It is self-explanatory...

Marcus

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played we should be able to play. Although I can play live solo with the added freedom that brings – and some have said they prefer this – it would be great to be able to tour with the musicians I have rehearsed so much with to make this album. We are currently looking into possibilities for this, so watch this space!

MB: How did you first discover Brook Guitars? Was your (first?) Brook 'off the peg' or a custom build – and what were you looking for/do you look for in an instrument?

MC: For about three years I occasionally visited Ivor Mairants in London getting to know Brook Guitars, because I wanted a change from my Martin. Then I found myself in Hubli, India, where there is a rosewood timberyard. There they provided wood for Martin guitars and others. I bought everything necessary for a guitar, apart from the soundboard and fretboard, and tipped up at the factory in Easterbrook. There, Andy and Simon made a wonderful Taw for me.

I was looking for a change of sound – more delicacy of tone and brightness.

This I received in spades. Because I was so used to the Martin, I had to allow the new guitar itself to show me the way. Habits had to be discarded and a new approach found to make it sing. It has been a great success... I hope the evidence is there in the recordings.

MB: How widely travelled are you and your Brook? How, for instance, has it survived the rigours of the journey to and from and the climate over in India?

MC: Outside of Europe I have only been to India with this guitar. There were some teething problems with humidity and these have been addressed occasionally by Brook. They have also shown me how to deal with basic issues. The soundboard is sufficiently strong to deal with the climatic changes and I am careful not to expose it to direct sunlight wherever I am, but especially in India. It copes well in a demanding environment, however I do not spend large amounts of time in Mumbai, for example, where the humidity is intense, preferring to be nearby in Pune or Gadag, N.Karnataka, which are both drier places.

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Andy Petherick with Marcus and his custom Taw at our Easterbrook workshop.

East meets West

वेदर

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techniques – a fun way to get your technique moving forward and adding more to your repertoire at the same time. There will be a variety of styles and levels, so there is something for everyone in there – notation and tab included. There'll be a CD to go with the book as well – exciting! The debut album may have a couple of arrangements, but mostly original tunes at this point.

MB: Now, on to your relationship with Brook Guitars – how did you discover Brook?

DP: My friend and mentor Stuart Ryan introduced to delights of Brook Guitars some 10 years ago I think. I used to speak to Stuart via e-mails before Facebook days. Many years ago, one of his recordings really left me scratching my head as to how he was getting that sound and chiming tone. I sent him a message, and he explained how simple the recording process was...and that the guitar was a Brook. After that, I took to looking for all things Brook on the internet, but had to wait many years before I got one myself!

MB: Was your Brook guitar 'off the peg' or a custom build?



Dev with Si and Andy during a recent visit to the Brook Guitars workshop.



DP: It was off the peg. I was in England to see a friend, but that was only half true. I really wanted to get my hands on that Brook at Ivor Mairants! After landing, I went straight to Oxford Street, spent so many hours playing that *Torridge* and I bought it! I couldn't believe it really. That evening, my friend and I went back to his house in Chichester and I spent the entire evening playing my newly-acquired *Torridge*. The excitement was unbelievable!

MB: What do you look for in an instrument?

DP: Definitely something that leads me. Every once in a while you come across an instrument that inspires you to write music. My Brook is definitely one of those. The bell like tone is something I love very much as well. Playability is another thing I look for. I just love those OO size acoustic guitars.

MB: How widely travelled are you and your Brook? And how does it cope with the climate over in India? Do you take any special precautions?

DP: The Brook has been to many cities in India, recently to see its makers in England, and now back home! I use Planet Waves' Two-Way Humidification system. The winters are very dry in Ahmedabad, so it's no problem because Brook guitars are made in a similar environment. But those humidipaks are great for summers and monsoons here– they keep my guitar in top shape. Last summer, the temperature went up to 50 degrees Celsius!

MB: Has it ever suffered any mishaps in transit, or needed any extensive restoration work as a result of all this globe-trotting?

DP: No, I've always been lucky to be able to carry it on board with me every time I fly. And once, I even carried TWO guitars onto a plane!

MB: Is it your 'go to'/first choice/only instrument, or do you have others to choose from?

DP: For all acoustic recordings/gigs, yes, it's definitely my 'go to' guitar, and I tend to use it for everything, recordings and teaching alike. I also have a Fender American Strat, and an Ibanez AS73, which are my gigging guitars.

MB: How do you amplify your guitars 'live'?

DP: My *Torridge* is equipped with the LR Baggs Anthem SL System. It goes through Headway EDB-1 Preamp into a Strymon blueSky and, finally, the PA. Sometimes, I'll plug into a Fishman amp before the PA, if the backline guy has one. My electric guitar goes into a bunch of pedals (all in front) into a Dr. Z Maz 38.

MB: General thoughts about Brook guitars – build quality, sound etc?

MB: I love Brook guitars. Everyone who's ever played my Brook loves it. They're great guitars with a unique 'Brook' sound. Very easy to play and love the chiming tone. There is something very 'olde worlde' and almost mediaeval about these guitars! I find the craftsmanship inspiring. Also the way of life and love for guitar making reflects in their work. I love these small OO sized acoustics. Great for intricate

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East meets West

There is something very 'olde worlde' and almost mediaeval about these guitars...they have this calming quality...



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fingerpicked stuff. The guitars have this calming quality about them, if that makes sense. It pulls you in!

MB: What sort of a working relationship do you have with the guys at Easterbrook? Have you visited there often?

DP: I visited the workshop in September last year for the first time. I love it! It's a magical place. Andy and Simon gave my Torridge a quick set-up, and I had a great time playing some of the other guitars in the workshop. Simon is one of the kindest people I've met and I look forward to visiting again. Okehampton has a great folky vibe and I love Dartmoor.

MB: Do you have any other acoustic guitars (Brooks or otherwise?), or are you in a fairly monogamous relationship with your Brook?

DP: I love my Brook, and I also have a nylon-string at home. The other guitar close to my heart is a Yamaha Pacifica – my first electric guitar – which I've kept.

MB: Do you have any plans for another Brook at any point?

DP: I'd love to get another Brook if I manage to save enough, maybe a few years down the line! I played Simon's *Weaver* while I was visiting, and I love that guitar. So, if I win the lottery, I'd like a *Weaver*.

MB: Lastly, Dev, what are your musical plans and ambitions for the future?

DP: Get better at what I do and to keep pushing myself. There's plenty of inspiration out there. I'm really grateful to be able to play music everyday!

Dev has generously provided his DADGAD arrangement of the traditional Irish air 'The Bright Black Rose' for 'Babbling Brook' readers to play. You can find the music on pages 47/48.

www.youtube.com/channel/UComMj0ytQwBNDo9rgvbKq5A

When Nitin picked up my Taw for the first time, I can still hear him say softly: 'They make things well in your country, don't they..'



Marcus

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MB: Is your Brook Taw your 'go to'/first choice/only instrument, or do you have others to choose from?

MC: It is my first choice instrument. I have a Levin gathering dust somewhere, but I have concentrated wholly on adapting to the Brook.

MB: Do you amplify your guitar 'live'? if so, how?

MC: I use an AER Compact 60 and a Fishman Blend mic system on the guitar, but I would like to improve on this and love it when I run into a live engineer who has a Pendulum pre-amp at their disposal.

MB: Any general thoughts about Brook guitars – build quality, sound etc?

MC: When Nitin (Gaikwad) picked up my Taw and felt it for the first time I can still hear him say softly: 'They make things well in your country, don't they.' That says it all really...only content when the finishing is finished.

MB: What sort of a working relationship do you have with the guys at Easterbrook? Do you get down there often?

MC: More than fine. Exemplary is too cold a word. It is always a pleasure to be at the home of such artists and craftsmen. I do visit if possible whenever I'm in the area.

MB: Do you have any plans for another Brook at some point? Maybe a 'Shakti'-style cross between a guitar and a sitar, with sympathetic strings at a jaunty angle!

MC: Wouldn't it be great to have the flexibility and need for such a luxury? Unfortunately, not at the moment...

MB: Finally, Marcus, what are your plans for the future?

MC: There are some more recordings I would like to finish and there is an album already 70% recorded. There is also a Kickstarter fund to get going in order to help the Arts Council give a helping hand toward a tour next year...

www.marcuscorbett.com

As a founding member of Genesis, guitarist **Anthony Phillips** has a unique place in rock history – even though he missed out on the band's subsequent global stardom. But in the years since leaving the group, he's steadily built a solo career, encompassing TV, film and library music, songwriting collaborations and his own acoustic-based albums. Here, he talks to *Martin Bell* about instruments, composing, stageflight – and the Brook guitar that inspired the track sharing the title of this magazine...

“

I've become more of a composer than a player – partly through having to earn my living – so when I come back to the guitar now, I struggle..!

”

Having a *Field Day*...

MB: Going back to your early days, how did you first begin to play music and what were your influences back then?

AP: I started because there was a school group – a couple of guys getting together doing 'My Old Man's A Dustman' – and they wanted a singer, and I vaguely sang. So, we did an impromptu concert in the school hall a gig and... well, I forgot the lyrics, so I thought, maybe take up the guitar instead!

There was a guy at school called Roger Farrell who was quite good but I thought, it's rather fun this –

maybe I could be better than him! I started just before The Beatles, so The Shadows were my first influence. I remember doing, at the school concert, a version of 'Foot Tapper' with this guy Roger, and I was doing this 'dom ba dom ba dom ba dom ba dom' on the classical guitar...

I had this legendary guitar teacher – I think it's always your first one, however good or bad they are, that probably sticks in your mind – but there was something magic about him. My teacher's name was David Channon – we used to call him Del Shannon, because there was a singer back then called Del

Shannon – and he had this sort of thin, aquiline face. Mum would send me down The Beatles sheet music, which cost 2/6d at the time. It was in piano score, but it would have the name of the chord above it with the finger positions on the frets, and it was miraculous, because what Mr Channon would do was to play tune AND chord on the guitar at the same time, taking the bass note from the bass clef as well. And I just sat there in amazement at how this guy could play both. To me, he was the best guitarist I'd ever heard in my life.

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He wanted to get me to do classical, but I was seduced by The Beatles, and I just wanted to play the chords. So we formed a school group. We had one guitarist who played D7 through every single song, and a drummer who was way ahead of his time; he didn't play any regular kind of beat, and would occasionally just get up and attack the drums! He was sort of pretty Sex Pistols, really, but yeah, it was mainly Beatles songs, Beatles sheet music, learning to play. So I was sort of a song man/chords first, but with a little bit of lead influence from The Shadows.

Later on, coming to Charterhouse and forming The Anon – which was I suppose what you would call a covers band – which was Rob Tyrell on drums, who was great; Rivers Job; Mike Rutherford was the rhythm guitarist; and Richard MacPhail, who later became involved with Genesis, was the singer. We did all the covers, by The Animals, Kinks, all that lot, and it was great fun. And it also got you out of that dreadful thing at parties – ‘Will I be left up a corner when all the other guys pair off?’ – because you were the moody guy in the band, pretending you didn't care!

And then things moved fast; the blues scene came along, and I'd been able to copy most of what I'd heard up 'til then reasonably well. But suddenly, hang on, we're in a different ball park here – *WHAT* is Eric Clapton doing? You know, and I tried to keep going with it, but for a while then I began to think, well I can't do this terribly well, and I started to begin to write.

Mike Rutherford – who'd sort of gone off the rails a bit and formed his own group – and I came back together again, and then we sort of hit on this two 12-string guitars thing completely by luck. It really was total luck – a friend was playing a 12-string in a field during the summer – all very hippy and very cosmic – and I thought man, that sounds really cool, and so I got one, and then Mike got one too, and we'd do this thing where we'd say: ‘Okay, you play D, and I'll play E minor...1,2,3,4...go!’ And of course, if you analyse what's going on there you've got, you know, not that complicated a chord, but because of all the octaves and things, if you try to play that on the piano it's a pretty amazing mixture of big leaps and really close notes. It was just an incredible sound, so we got into this whole two-timbre thing with that...

With the 12-strings, we felt that we'd stumbled onto something that was quite original – I mean, nothing's ever *completely* original – but it was kind of exciting, because you thought you were going down a road that was different, there was no roadmap, you know, we weren't trying to copy anybody. Of course, there were little influences from people like the guy in Family (John 'Charlie' Whitney), who was doing certain things on 12-string, and that was the model



(Left) In the beginning: A 1967 publicity picture of the fledgling Genesis by Philip Gotlop. From left to right: Ant Phillips, Mike Rutherford, Tony Banks, Peter Gabriel and Chris Stewart.

(Below) 'From Genesis To Revelation' and 'Trespass' – the two albums Ant played on before leaving the band.

Mike Rutherford and I sort of hit on this two 12-string guitars thing completely by luck...it was just an incredible sound...this two-timbre thing...

for rhythmic stuff. But in exploring chords and arpeggios and stuff, I was not aware of any conscious influence for that...

So, we were still bashing away with our sort of sub-standard blues stuff, but then we were doing some demos and asked Tony Banks along to play keyboards, and he said I'll come along if I can bring Peter Gabriel, a singer. They were in my school house, but they were older than me. I didn't really know them very well, but they were nice guys to play with. So Pete came, and it was their song that got picked up by Jonathan King (singer-songwriter, music entrepreneur, broadcaster former Charterhouse pupil who discovered The Anon, re-named them Genesis and produced their first album, 'From Genesis to Revelation').

But just on the guitar front, that was where I began to find my own voice, that was the first time I was doing something original. I'd written songs before that but they were sub-Beatles, sub-Rolling Stones. That was where I suppose I started finding my own voice, and it spread out from there, really. And that – no pun intended – was the genesis of it.

MB: What about early instruments? Any memories of the first few guitars you had?

AP: Yes, the first guitar was called a *Top 30* or

something, an electric guitar. It had two flick switches on it, and if you hit the guitar or strummed down too quickly, it would knock them out, and there was silence – John Cage! – so that wasn't very clever. But actually, my mum was fantastic, and she knew I was taking this very seriously, but – and I can't believe she did this for me, looking back on it...



I'm a bit embarrassed – I was the proud owner of a red Stratocaster at the age of 13! It cost £70, which was a lot of money in those days, but it was a passion, it was my passion and I was going to take it very seriously. There's no way she would have done

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Having a *Field Day*...

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it, my father must thought 'What the hell are you doing? Crazy...' but we did sort of take Charterhouse by storm really; the concert where the curtains went back and the Headmaster had his hands over his ears was absolutely legendary! Then there was another one where Richard MacPhail made this announcement, and a very classical, dyed-in-the-wool chap stopped it because you didn't make an announcement in the middle of a classical concert – and there was almost a rebellion, people throwing things and almost setting fire to stuff...

It was a pretty interesting time to be around. I wasn't a bad lead guitarist at that time; there was a great Yardbirds B-side called 'Mister, You're A Better Man Than I' – and I sort of had Jeff Beck's solo nailed – it wasn't that difficult, although Jeff Beck played it a lot better than me, and we did that, and I was pretty reasonable, but then once the blues boom hit not...

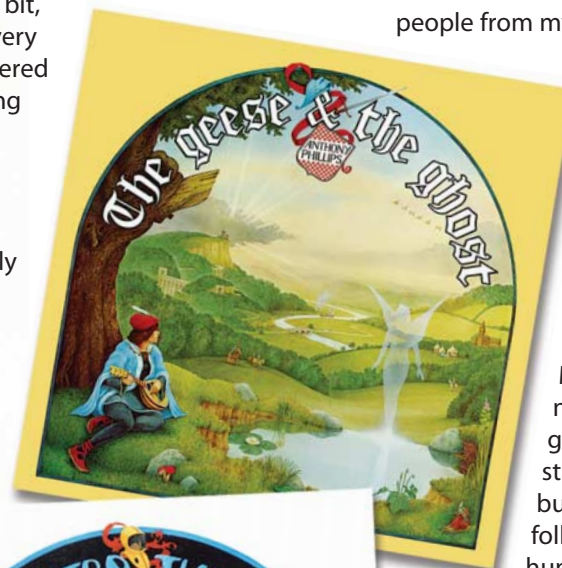
So, the first 12-string was an Eko Ranger, then I moved on to a Hagstrom – which was known as 'The Hag' – and The Hag came on the road with me. Mike (Rutherford) then bought a Zemaitis, which was wonderful. Not all Zemaitises were great, but some of them were phenomenal, and I had that for a year 'cause he didn't want the Zemaitis on the road. We did a swap, which was great for a while because I had his Zemaitis for about six months! But the trouble

was that the Hagstrom came back virtually beaten up. Mike got his Zemaitis back and I was left with an old crock. So, it wasn't actually that great a swap, in fact.

But then it did get complicated; our dear friend Rivers Job from school – who'd sadly gone off the rails – he'd left school early and joined the Savoy Brown Blues Band. He was well ahead of us, but overdid some kind of drugs. He was very other-worldly – a lovely guy but kind of lost the plot a bit, but he was sweet-natured guy and very inventive. Mum was always remembered him as having his head in the washing machine, trying to figure out how it worked! Anyway, he started making guitars, but wasn't trained, so they started off sounding great, but then things would go wrong. It was a really sad story, actually, because Mike commissioned him to make a guitar, then saw one of the others go wrong, so he let the hundred quid commission go, which in those days was a lot of money.

But the reason I'm telling you the story is that he made a 12-string for me, which is the one I used throughout all the post-'Hag' days and on 'The Geese and The Ghost' (TGATG), and by the time it came to 'Wise After The Event' (WATE), it was so out of tune; the tuning was going left, right and centre – just inaccuracies. So, I bought an Alvarez, which was bright, nice, not a great deal of depth, but those, then, were my first four 12-strings.

During the 1980s, when I first moved here, and times weren't particularly good – the whole history of things is too much to go into now, but we'd had Punk, the whole era of New Romantics, and all the



people from my neck of the woods – unless you were seriously established – were being blown out of the water by the press and ridiculed, and it was not a good time to be around.

My album career was never really going to go anywhere at that stage – it couldn't do – but I had a cult following, so I sort of hunkered down, trying to do all sorts of other things – writing songs with people, wanting to do library music and bits of commissioned stuff. I did a few things for Channel 4, but money wasn't king, and in the '80s I bought very few new instruments – certainly didn't buy another 12-string until, I think, the '90s really.

My red Strat was stolen, but I managed to replace it with a Strat from a similar era, because I had the money from the insurance

company, so that was really lucky! But I did buy a couple of other nice instruments at the end of the 70s, when I had a little bit of brief album success – I bought a lovely eight-string classical then, and I also had an Ovation six-string – but then everyone had an Ovation six back then! – which recorded very well.



Ant (rear) with 'The Hag' and Mike Rutherford.

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They didn't have a lot of depth, but they cut through nicely. I also had my 70 quid Yairi classical, which I did my classical guitar teacher's exams on. So that was my armoury, really, throughout all the first three/four albums.

I took a teacher's diploma in classical guitar and qualified – so I'm now a Licentious of the Guildhall School of Mucus..!



Of course, there's almost the most important instrument that I've left out, which was my Rickenbacker electric 12-string, which I got when I was doing 'TGATG' promo tour in the States. It's a funny one, because no-one can seem to find out much about the model, but it still sounds absolutely fantastic – a great guitar! – a little bit thin for my fat fingers, because I overlap, and re-stringing it is a pig. But it's never knowingly been in a standard tuning; in fact, the opening chords of 'WATE', which was in a very odd tuning, got sampled by a rapper called Franco! Unfortunately, they didn't use it in the end – it wasn't quite right for their requirements, and lots of things got jettisoned along the road as he tried to re-invent the glories of his first album. Nevertheless, I got a thanks on the album cover. Bearing in mind what my name is, can you think of the group that came after me? Anthony...A...what begins with B? Beatles! I'm one above the Beatles in the 'thanks' (*laughs*), so that obviously must have had something, because he thought it was a great-sounding guitar! Perhaps I'm doing down the chords, but it really was a brilliant guitar, which I put

through a Dynacomp pedal, I think, and one of those old green Boss chorus ensemblers, stereo, just a huge wall of sound...

MB: You mentioned your classical guitar training; I don't know how accurate your Wikipedia page is, but it mentions that once you'd left 'the G word' you studied classical music, and in particular classical guitar...

AP: Well, first of all, in the Genesis days, we'd had a bad experience with an arranger; no disrespect to him, but money wasn't available for full strings and stuff, so on 'From Genesis to Revelation' we'd had the backing track pushed into mono, because Jonathan King thought it needed something else. We had these high-wheeling strings and horns and stuff, which we were not quite happy with at all, and I thought, 'I want to have this skill one day so that I can control this', but I then I didn't think about it much more until after leaving the group.

Then I heard the 'Karelia Suite' by Sibelius, and it was my 'road to Damascus' really – I suddenly thought, 'I need, I want to be able to control that and to learn how to do that!' So I went to the Guildhall (School of Music & Drama) and did part-time: orchestration, harmony counter-point, some of which was lovely. The orchestration bit was really interesting; when you've been in a band, you're 19-20, you're writing songs, it was difficult, because you have to learn rules which you're actually rebelling against. A lot of it, was fantastic, and I'm so glad I did it. On the form front, that got tedious, because I'd felt with

Genesis that we were creating some of our own forms, and although I could see the sense of these forms – things like sonata form and all the rest of it – you don't go waffling on into the future... but then it was my mother, I think, who said, 'well, why don't you try classical guitar?'

I played classical, but my technique was that I used two fingers, and I could do quite a lot – I mean, Django was pretty good with two fingers on THIS (*left*) hand – but Mike used to play with all four fingers, no nails, and got a very round sound. So, I went along to a guitar teacher and I said I'm learning to sight-read on the piano, and I'd found a lovely piano teacher who was very patient with me because trying to sight-read was – the later you leave it, it's just so difficult – but I said I just wanted to learn to do some of it, because I didn't want to sight-read. But he was very clever: he played the Bach Chaconne – Segovia version – and I was absolutely hooked!

This was the only way to access it; my ears were okay, but I didn't read, so I got into that. I started teaching, which was great, because it meant that I was doing the teacher's diploma, and 40% in the exam came from teaching; the fact that I was teaching meant that I had a head start, because I wasn't just talking academically – I could say, 'well, from my experience...' a little bit! So I qualified – I'm a Licentious of the Guildhall School of Mucus! – did that, orchestration up to a reasonable standard, the nuts and bolts, you know, so I was able to orchestrate on 'Regrets' on 'WATE' – not perfect, but it has its moments – so aspects of it were difficult, because part of me had gone down a very intuitive kind of track and there are all these different opinions, so many different aphorisms. One of them was 'learning kills instinct' – which I think was Berlioz – then somebody else said: 'Technique is being able to

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Having a *Field Day*...



(Above) Ant at work in his home studio with his Brook Tavy 12-string.

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play what you want when you want'. So you still get caught in between these. I was worried that by doing the conventional stuff I lost some of the intuitive. Mike Rutherford's completely intuitive; he had guitar lessons very early on, like me, and I gained lots, but I was worried I lost bits too. It's tricky...

MB: Does all that formal study inform the way that you compose music?

AP: It's difficult to know! There are more strings to my bow, so there are tracks I can definitely put my hand to heart and say that I couldn't have written that, given the old style, old technique, obviously, some of the faster piano stuff, no way, because my piano was so idiot-syncretic – three fingers on my right hand plodding like this...da da da der da...and they'd play tunes, with the octaves across the other side. Pretty weird, eh? Actually, a lot of people still like some of the old stuff because it was a bit different, but then the later stuff, where I'm flying around a lot more, well there's no way I could have done things like that, so...obviously in some cases, I

had to have the technique to do that.

MB: So, how do you compose/ Do you compose with a guitar on your lap? At the keyboard? Away from it all, writing it down on paper? Is there any sort of 'modus operandi'?

AP: Normally, on buses, and I write the lyrics down on the back of a bus ticket. That was old cliché, wasn't it? Loads of different ways, really. Probably like, I think, most people I respond to sound. A lot of people do work from tunes in their head; that occasionally happens to me. People who are very strong lyrically often work from a line that comes along. But I think the majority of us just pick up an instrument and love a sound, a chord, or a chord pattern, and it just mushrooms out from that.

The guitarist thing is that you often gravitate to well-worn/familiar chords or positions, isn't it? That's perhaps a tendency when you pick an instrument up... I've always used the excuse that 'a new instrument will elicit new ideas, dear'...

I think that 'The Book-Keeper' – as my friend James

calls his wife – has got to be told that, particularly when it comes to getting a new 'virtual' instrument, 'there are some special sounds, that I need for my new...' It's true, though, that a new instrument definitely does give you a different slant, takes you down a different path, particularly if it's an odd one which is tuned differently.

And that brings us to another point, which is the tunings. A lot of the most interesting or most original stuff I've done, if I can say that, is in odd tunings, because it does the contrary to what you're expecting. It's so easy to pick up a guitar and just go down, moving out from things in A/E minor from D, and you do find that there's an infinite amount of tunes and an infinite amount of chord sequences, it'll go on for ever. But you can end up sounding a bit samey – whereas in a tuning you have a feeling that you could be going down a road that no-one's gone down before. I've got a book of about 100 tunings, and a lot of them, where it's a course, a 'pairings' instrument, tuning some of the strings in fifths and fourths and so on, you can end up with a nine-note chord on a 12-string, for instance, which is just lovely. Modulation is tricky, obviously, and you have to be very careful with chromatic movement, given the nature of that. The whole of the album '12' – 12-string pieces, one for each month of the year – is in an odd tuning and I had to be terribly careful with the chromaticism there, because that was in a lot of fourths and fifths. It was difficult...

MB: Apart from the book of tunings, do you ever write the melodies/compositions down at all? Do you have a way of keeping track of them all?

AP: Not now. I used to write all of them down, not so much the songs, but quite a lot of my instrumentals. I actually had a set of guitar pieces published by Weinberger's in the late 70s. But generally speaking, the 12-string ones are a bit of a bitch to write down, if you think about it. If you write them down literally, with the octaves, to get a full picture of what's actually happening, it's really tricky, and you probably wouldn't do that. But I don't tend to write things down now; I have mini recorders in three or four rooms of the house when I write – there's one over there on the piano – so that as soon as I get an idea, I can capture it. I often go back to it a bit later, and think 'arggh, how did I do that?', particularly if I haven't enunciated the tuning. And I'm one of the worst people at thinking, 'I'll remember it, yes, it won't be a problem'. But then, I move onto something else, come back weeks later, and think 'oh no!' It's not quite 'the Enigma Code', but it's still difficult sometimes...

MB: How was the book of pieces received? Any

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plans to re-print or any further books?

AP: I'd love to, to be honest. The book went down alright, but it's difficult to sell that stuff. I remember I had a meeting with Recordi and they said 'what we've got to look at here is the base of the pyramid...' and I thought 'Base of the pyramid?' What he was saying was that, unfortunately, not many people are going to buy your sheet music if it's difficult, at 'the top of the pyramid'. They wanted stuff for kids, at the bottom. And I was a bit headstrong, I was 25/26, and I just thought, 'well, I don't really want to do that'. I've always wanted to get a couple of my classical guitar pieces to some of the greats, but I don't really have the contacts, to be honest...

MB: Builders aside, what does a typical Ant Phillips day consist of? For instance, do you wait until the Muse strikes, or can you compose '9 to 5'? Is it as regimented as that?

AP: Hmm...good question. Well. I started off by being much more inspirational, but when you need to earn money, you suddenly start hunkering down and just have to do it, much more in accordance with deadlines and what you have to produce. When I did 'unpressured' albums, like 'Field Day' I just had a lot of guitar pieces and I would do fairly regimented hours, making sure I had longish breaks as well, because I've found that as I've got older – and particularly with the physical demands of the 12-string stuff – I can't handle too much of it. So I'd start at 9 or 10 and then after three-quarters of an hour, stop, have a break...come back, apply the old spray and all the rest of it, and then carry on.

Obviously when you're doing library music, you're doing keyboard-based stuff, you can do much longer hours, because you haven't got the physical intensity of the playing and you can just do the one hand. With a lot of it, you're just investigating

I quite like the evenings to write; the lights go down low, the world comes to a bit of a halt, and most distractions quieten down...



sounds, so your library music day could be longer. Some days, I do 'admin stuff' in the morning, meetings, lunch, and then start in the afternoon. I'm not one of the archetypal nocturnal people; I wasn't the sort of 4 or 5 in the morning types – that gets a bit impractical as you get older, for all sorts of reasons.

But now, telephone and email 'traffic' in the day is very heavy for me, so I quite like the evenings to write; because the lights go down low, the world comes to a bit of a halt, most distractions quieten down and it's more like dream time. I have lovely low lighting in here, which is particularly good for synth stuff in the evening. I'm quite a sucker for the clime here in London, and I do quite like working. So, I have different types of day...

MB: A lot of your music, the themes in your music, is very pastoral, which is almost at odds with living in the suburbs of London. Is there any sort of 'creative escapism' going on there? Is it about re-creating a mood outside the world of the studio?

AP: I think it's just a case of the music that one likes; I think I'd probably do it wherever I was, really. It's more to do with one's style than the environment; I'm responding to my environment. When Genesis wrote all the pastoral 12-stringy stuff, we weren't out in the country either. But at the same time, I do have an affinity – I'm not a complete nature-head or anything – but I do love beautiful things; I love the wild seas, all the really stimulating things in nature, a lot of pictorial, Impressionist paintings – those kind of things do inspire me, more than writing a symphony based on an iron foundry in a factory, which some guy did...

MB: When you're composing, do you draw a distinction between library and film music, and

solo albums? For example, you could get halfway through a piece of music and think 'this is a solo album piece' or 'this is library music'.

AP: Well, it's a very interesting point. I think it can often get very confusing. What I tend to do is to find myself writing in a bit of a vacuum, with no particular project coming up; so I just write and I write...and throw mud, and it's probably the best way really, and then I go back and go through it all – whether it's on the computer, keyboard stuff, or whether it's put onto the portable recorders in the house – and cherry-pick. And some things then work for library and some things work for TV, some things work for and then you think 'no, that's definitely an album track', that's how it used to happen.

There are times when people ask you to do something specific, and clearly then you write for them, in the mode to which they've asked, but 'free composition' is often the best way I think. I quite often just get the latest group of virtual synths and work in a kind of odd way, which is...I've got about five keyboards there, and I'll have new sounds on all the keyboards, and what I will do is that I'll improvise using different sounds on all of the keyboards, and just respond to the first thing that comes into my head. It's a bit like picking up a guitar in a very odd tuning. You just respond to the first thing, you put your fingers down, you just go with it – and sometimes, the first thing you come up with is the best. That's why, when I'm going through a list of sample sounds, rather than working one track to a finish, with a load of sounds, I just go through groups of different ones and write embryonic ideas – the first initial, intuitive response to a sound... there's no intellectual thing going on. It's just pure emotional, intuitive response. Most of it's rubbish, but occasionally you find little nuggets!



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Having a *Field Day*...

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MB: Do you practise? Playing music all day, every day, the work must serve as the practise?

AP: Well, I have to say I'm a lazy practiser these days. I've become more of a composer than a player, partly through having to earn my living, the majority of which has really been keyboard-based library music. So when I come back to guitar, I struggle. As we get older, you tend to forget that – just as you can't run or play football like you used to – your upper body, wrists, fingers etc is suffering in the same way. So when I'm doing a guitar project, I do have to ease my way into it and practise up. Because I don't do live work, I don't have a repertoire either, but I'm one of these people who want it both ways; so I'll go and hear a great player and I think: 'Oh, gosh, my playing's terrible' and then for two or three days I practise away. But ultimately, what turns me on is writing and creating, and if you've been doing two hours of scales and arpeggios on the piano it definitely, without doubt – well, for me anyway – dulls my senses of composition. I'm sure John Lennon didn't sit and practise scales and stuff; I'm sure he just went to an instrument and was completely intuitive. So, sometimes too much practising can be, for me at least, at odds with the freshness of composition.

MB: When you do practise the guitar, do you have a regimen, any set exercises, anything in particular that you find helps?

AP: I do, yes. There's something about the purity of the guitar, so when I do have some time – watching TV late at night, when I've come in from being out or in the studio doing keyboard stuff – one of the things I do tend to do is, I'll take all the right hand group, I and M, then M and A, and so on, rest stroke and free strokes, and then take the three fingers and I'll do them in patterns of three, so you're changing on every odd one. Then I'll do left hand slurs in different patterns as well, to try and get the left hand strong. Things like that...

MB: You mentioned that you don't do live work. Do you ever play in public – at parties, for example, do you ever get asked to get a guitar out?

AP: Christmas carols...at parties; people don't tend to say, 'come on, give us a tune' – well, not at the sort of parties where I turn up, people don't really want to hear me play anyway...

The thought of playing live terrifies me now more than it did then – the very idea of it makes my blood run cold, actually...



MB: Would you ever have any plans to play live now?

AP: Probably not, no. The thought of it terrifies me now more than it did then – the very idea of it makes my blood run cold actually.

MB: Are you able to put a finger on what it is that make you feel that way?

AP: Very easily; I got at the time what I thought was crazy, but which I've since discovered is very standard with actors, which is that you can suddenly feel as though you don't know what you're doing, and you're looking in, observing it from the outside. It was amazing, years after what happened to me, I heard (actor) Derek Jacobi describing being in the wings, just about to go on and deliver the lines 'To be or not to be...' and his brain suddenly went blank. He just thought 'I don't know this. I don't know it'. Then he went and found himself out there doing it, but not knowing how he was doing it. And I had the same experience, doing a song with Peter Gabriel, where suddenly I was looking at my fingers and I thought 'I haven't any idea what's coming next' – and yet my fingers were moving and doing it for me. Really, I cannot describe to you what that was like.

Apparently, this is so common with actors. In the case of Derek Jacobi, he was able to get all the right advice and got through. But I was just 17/18. I didn't know what had hit me and I was completely terrified. It didn't happen every night, but it would happen more and more and more, to the point where I couldn't talk to the others about it. Unfortunately, it got really embedded and fried me really, to the point that, if ever I had to play in public I'd always get the same thing: my hands, my fingers,

get very cold, you start sweating and then your fingers go weak and, I mean, there's no chance of being able to play with the right hand – useless. Plectrum, possible... But it's terrible, and a lot of people give up because they can't handle it – it's much more of a common phenomenon than I knew actually.

MB: Do you listen to much music beyond your own work?

AP: To be honest, I listen, to some strange stuff. Mainly, things that friends or fans send me. I listen to a lot of it in the car, and, erm, then kind of try and help. I don't tend to sit and actually specifically listen to music. Also, when I'm not here working I do tend to go out. I rarely have an evening in. When I describe watching the TV that would be sort of late at night, after finishing in here, 10-10.30pm or coming in and doing a bit of guitar then, so I don't really sit and listen to music. I do listen to odd albums, mainly in the car. All sorts of things, from Vaughan Williams, to Holst – who I love – some John Renbourn, PJ Harvey... a friend of mine manages BJ Cole, so a lot of BJ Cole, too – that's different! – quite a wide range of stuff.

But the thing that really turns me on, where I feel the greatest freedom for musicians is, is in film music. All this cross-over stuff is often looked at askance; pop musicians trying to do something which is 'a combination', rock musicians trying to do classical and all that kind of stuff, became very unfashionable. And vice-versa, too; Nigel Kennedy gets stick from some people – the snooty ones – for trying to do things outside the classical realm. Now, in film music you can go in one moment from a really beautiful

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sort of piece, high-flown strings, to a demon car chase, and no-one's saying 'look, mate, now he's crossed over'. And I think that's enormously liberating. But it also means that composers have to be incredibly versatile, so they can show off all their skills. There's a lot of incredibly good people out there. There's the odd film where I sit back and think 'Hmm, well maybe I could have done this...' but then there are also a lot of them where I find myself just thinking 'Ah...'

I'm not a machine – I can't switch off from the film and just listen to the music, but sometimes I just don't notice the music. But say it's a film where there's not much dialogue, there's a lot of scene-setting; take the opening of 'Chariots of Fire' as a good example. You've got a load of men running on a beach, who could have looked very silly with the wrong music. But that music exalted them, to a height of nobility, didn't it? Deific, almost. Those are the kind of things where you do notice music in those kinds of situations, because it's what's making the difference. So, I absolutely love it, and there are so many good people...

MB: Have you ever had the pressure of having to work to time codes on videos, stuff like that, when you're doing the film and TV scores?

AP: I have! I don't do commission work now, and nearly all my work is library music, not to picture, but I remember time codes and all that kind of stuff, and the problems of being a millisecond out! In the early days, it was a very inexact science, but it's a lot more sophisticated now...

MB: What's your opinion of today's music scene? Good or bad?

AP: Mixed, really – I hear certain

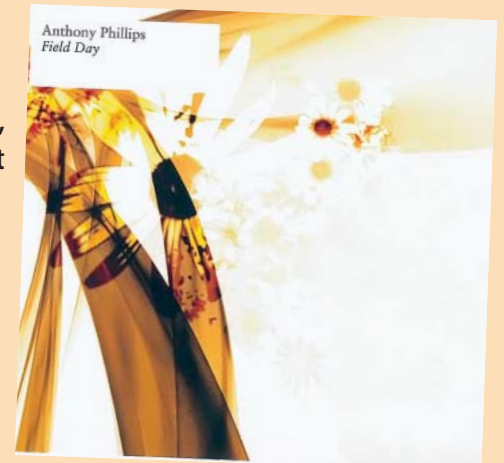
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A babbling, 'shimmering' 12-string



Brook guitars – a six-string *Taw* and a 12-string *Tavy* – feature on no fewer than 10 tracks on disc 2 of Ant's 2005 all-acoustic double album, 'Field Day' (Blueprint BP362CD)

– and it was the *Tavy* which, coincidentally, created the track that shares its name with this very magazine...



MB: How did you first discover Brook Guitars?

AP: Well, I came across the six-string – my lovely *Taw* – first at Ivor Mairants, possibly around 2000/2001. And I took that on a world tour. No, actually it went on a river tour, we did a tour on rivers. Yes, I got that first, and then I can't quite remember when I got the parlour (*Creedy*) – probably not long afterwards – and that's lovely, too, although that didn't feature on 'Field Day'. I later got the Brook 12-string (*Tavy*), which I also love...

MB: The track 'Babbling Brook' (on 'Field Day') was recorded on the 12-string, wasn't it?

AP: Yes, I hadn't realised I'd bought it that far back! But I think maybe I didn't have it early on, because that album went on for quite a few years; there were a couple of failed attempts, and I kept adding new material as I got bored with the old tracks. So I think that was probably bought in 2003/2004...

MB: Owning such an array of instruments (Ant's conservative estimate is around 100!), what qualities did you find in the Brooks?

AP: Well, the six-string's easy. The six-string they (Mairants) didn't want to let go. There was a very good classical guitarist at Mairants, called Tim, and the Brook had such a lovely, warm quality – it was the sort of classical guitar end of the six-string steel string pantheon, not the deepest guitar, but it's just got a gorgeous, very natural sound – very pure, really warm, expressive. Lovely.

The parlour is just a sweetie. It's a very sort of...I can't think of the right word really...some parlours are a little bit 'loose' and 'flappy', but it's a very, very sedate – if that's the right word? – guitar, very nice.

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A babbling, 'shimmering' 12-string

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I mean, 12-strings are difficult, aren't they, to enumerate in terms of quality really. There are slightly brighter ones, which don't have so much bass, and all the rest of it, but all I would say about the Brook is that it's pretty-well rounded; it's got a nice balance between top and bottom, and I've used it for a couple of things where I've needed a mysterious, sort of shimmering quality and it's been really good for that. *Really* good.

MB: And your Brooks have been used on two or three CDs..?

AP: Yes, I also used it (the 12-string) on a library track called 'Under The Infinite Sky', which we then put out on a commercial CD. And the beauty of it is that it doesn't particularly sound like a library track. If you can do that...it's got to be usable for TV, but hopefully you want it to sound good outside of that, too, and I think, hopefully, we've got that. And yes, it was great on that track, really loved it, and I also used it on another library track which, I remember now, was in a very, very odd tuning. Two of the strings were tuned in a major second, which is quite unusual, down below as well, so that was quite risky, but it was really good on that, too. Yeah, big fan of the Brook.

MB: How do you arrive at those tunings?

AP: Luck! Well, actually, no, often, nearly always, when re-stringing, because when you're on your way up, you don't want to go too quickly, and break strings, so you have a 'stopping off' point and you think, 'Hmmm, I quite like that, let's try it'. The trouble is, I never get any guitar back up to normal tuning, they never make it back up again! And this house is famous for people who thought they knew how to play guitar coming in, and you watch their faces as they pick up a guitar and try to play an E chord, and suddenly it's 'What!?' And then they try a D, and you can see their confidence disappearing, because they don't realise it's in a weird tuning!

MB: So, did all the Brooks come from Mairants?

AP: Er, no...er, the answer could be yes. Would I have got the Brooks from somewhere else? For some reason, I can't remember getting the parlour from there. Pretty sure the Brook 12-string would have come from there, though – and *definitely* the Taw...

Below: Ant's 2001 spruce and walnut Tavy 12-string.
Bottom (left to right): 2005 cedar and mahogany Creedy;
2000 spruce and walnut Taw.



Having a *Field Day*...

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things which I like very much. I hear a lot of current Radio One type-stuff through various god-children, nephews and nieces etc – and it's all very well-produced, the singing is very good, but I don't hear much that sounds distinctive. It all seems to sound a bit samey; it's always 'uppy'. There've been a few people who've grabbed my attention; there was a very moody track by Lana Del Ray ('Video Games') which was excellent, and there are a few other artists who you hear odd tracks by, which sort of stop you in your tracks. I'm sure there's a lot of wonderful stuff out there that I'm just not hearing because I don't make the time to. And nearly always, I think that somebody else's stuff is too good, so I don't want to listen to it!

MB: Is there anybody living, dead or current you would like or have liked to play with at all or produce some music with?

AP: Infinite, really. Almost everybody I admired in the Sixties, but I don't think I would be good enough to play with them. Mike Rutherford was the one I enjoyed writing with the most, because we were very sympatico. But there's all sorts of people if I had the chance to work with...Sting or Kate Bush, or...there's just so many really brilliant people out there.

MB: Do you still keep in touch with Mike at all?

AP: Yeah, I'm godfather to Mike's daughter, but our paths tend to take us in slightly different directions really, so I don't see him very much, sadly, not enough.

MB: Do the guitars come out at all on the occasions you do see each other?

AP: Oh, no – when we get together it's nearly always only a social thing, some event or other. I got together with him on his memoirs and stuff like that, but we don't tend to get together on a musical footing.

MB: As far as current projects go, what have you got on the go at the moment? Is the re-issues series going well?

AP: Yes, the re-issues thing is kind of dominating things at the moment, really, because quite a lot of background work has to go into that. We've been trying to make sure that if people are buying stuff

again, then they've got a reason to buy it again, so we're finding proper extra tracks from the time and not just any old dodgy demo – bonus tracks as opposed to bogus tracks, as Steve Hackett calls them. I'm very lucky that we have this fabulous guy called Jonathan Dann; he used to work for the BBC and he's got that sort of sleuth mentality and finds the stuff out; that and the 5.1 experience has been fantastic. So that's really been the main thrust of the year, along with a certain amount of library music.

The other thing I've done is a deal with Universal Publishing; we've been going through all the back-catalogue, listening to it all and trying to work out what could be used for 'sync', which is the big buzzword now. People are making so little from their records now, as a result of people not buying as many of their albums and also as a result of monstrosities such as Spotify. So if you can sync your music and get it used in some major advert or a film, it has a two-fold effect: one is, you make money, but also – ironically – it helps sell the CD or gets your name about so that your own work will sell better. The trouble is that every publisher, every record company, everyone is trying to get a synchronisation or sync, to the point where there are now even dedicated sync houses...as opposed to sink estates! Sorry! (*laughs*).

MB: Have the re-issues brought you new listeners?

AP: They've sold quite well, at a time when things aren't selling. I'm hoping that we've got some old fans back – those who perhaps drifted off – and maybe some new people as well...



MB: Bringing things almost up to date, was the Prog award (the Storm Thorgerson Grand Design Award for Ant's Esoteric reissue series) a surprise?

AP: Well, I don't really understand to this day which of the categories are voted for by vox pop and which are the panel, but I was amazed to win it, ahead of Gabriel, Banks, Hackett, Crimson... I mean, I think the boys did a phenomenal job across the board. Pete's artwork was great, Phil Lloyd-Smee's adaptation of the artwork was superb, what Jon did with all the extra material and bibliographical stuff was pretty impressive actually, if you're an aficionado and you want something extra, which is what this is all about.

MB: And finally, after all this time, is 'prog' a label that you're happy with?

AP: The funny thing is, it was never called that when we were doing it - it's a sort of retrospective term, isn't it? I suppose broadly speaking, you have to be something. So, I suppose in the broad brush, I can't be 'light classical/filmic/acoustic' can I? I've probably got to be 'prog', even if I don't completely feel prog – I mean, I like aspects of prog, but the sort of histrionics side of prog – where it suddenly goes from a quiet section to a raucous 7/8 – I find some of that a little hammy now, personally, and too many groups still sound like Yes and Genesis. There are some that don't, but overall...yeah, people experimented with longer forms, trying to do interesting stuff. And why not, actually? Better than just anodine 'verse-chorus', which all sounds the same!

So, there could be worse categories to be in, couldn't there..?

● Recent and forthcoming releases from Ant's back catalogue issued by Esoteric are available from Cherry Red:

www.cherryred.co.uk/artist/anthony-phillips/
www.anthonyphillips.co.uk



String-driven things...

THE wide range of instruments on permanent display in our showroom is a constant talking point and source of fascination for visitors to Easterbrook. More often than not, their own guitar – whether brand new or repaired/restored – is usually nestling comfortably in amongst the others as it awaits collection. So, we thought that it was about time we gave you a brief guided tour of the rare, weird, wonderful and even cheap 'n' cheerful treasures in the *Brookseum of Stringed Instruments*...



THE bulk of the showroom collection is "mainly odds and sods of things that I've gradually picked up from here, there and everywhere over the years," according to Simon.

(Pictured left, from left to right) Framus 'Camping'; Resophonic guitar – make unknown; Michigan nylon (behind); Regal – 1940s; Grimshaw – 1950s (behind); Ozark reso banjo (back); Harmony – 1940s; Brook distressed resophonic (behind); Hofner tenor archtop – 1960 (behind); Mustang bass (behind); Ibanez Artist (back); Framus – 1957 (behind); Framus Zenith – 1950s; Harmony Sovereign – 1960 (back); Gretsch tenor archtop – 1940s; Harmony Monterey archtop – 1950s (behind); Hofner Committee archtop – 1960 (behind); Hoyer dreadnought – 1960s (back); Hofner Senator archtop – 1957; Abbott – 1940s (behind); Levin – 1965 (behind).



"There are a couple of friends' guitars here, things that people have just left behind, and other pieces that folk have 'donated' to us after visiting...a whole mixed bag of stuff, really.

"There are also things on the wall that just weren't worth doing anything to, but are still there for curiosity value.

"We like to have the collection here because it creates a real bit of interest, and even when customers have dropped by to pick up a brand new instrument of their own they'll still spend an hour or two (or even longer!) trying out some of the more playable things..."

(From left) Martin tenor guitar – 1950s; tambura (African stringed instrument); 1/2 size classical – 1880s; large body banjolin – 1920s; Victorian parlour guitar – 1880s; machete (Chinese three-stringed lute); Kevin Aram cigar box guitar; Weissenborn style lap guitar; Brook tenor ukulele; unknown African instrument; Martin soprano ukulele.

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String-driven things...

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Above (from left): Brook reso-ukulele; phono viol; English mandolin – 1906; various machetes; charango; various Italian mandolins; Flamingo & Columbine plastic ukes; tiple; African banjo; Rickenbacker lap – 1957; two English lap steel guitars; sitar; Paramount guitar banjo; Portuguese guitar.

Above, left: toy guitars including: series of Chad Valley guitars; Japanese Deluxe; Elvis Presley guitar; various other plastic guitars.

Left (from left): Portuguese guitar; cittern; bouzouki; Kalamazoo – 1930s; African instrument; American five-string folk banjo; banjolele.

Tony Hazzard pictured at Easterbrook with his Brook (model name needed) ukulele and his trusty Taw.

In the last issue of 'Babbling Brook', we featured the first part of an extensive interview with **Tony Hazzard**, who has penned hits for countless pop and rock 'names' during a career covering six decades. To conclude his story, Tony tells **Martin Bell** about how he resumed writing and recording after a break of several years... and the part Brook instruments play in his music...

www.brookguitars.com page 39



You may not necessarily recognize the name **Tony Hazzard** – but the odds are you will definitely have heard his work. During a career spanning an amazing 50+ decades, Tony has written hit songs for a veritable 'Who's Who' of popular music, as well as working personally with many of pop and rock's 'truly' in the firm of a wide-ranging two-part interview, Tony talks to **Martin Bell** about his life, career and music. Oh, and to our great wondering... Tony also plays Brook!

A Hazzardous profession

“Once I'd had a hit, it put the idea in my head that I was a songwriter and should therefore continue to write songs. I just wrote whatever I wanted, although subconsciously there was always the sense that the underlying basis was being commercial and the hope that I would write another hit...”

MB: The obligatory 'opening question' first, Tony! What were your earliest musical experiences? (The obligatory 'opening question' first, Tony! What were your earliest musical experiences?)

TH: Well, to begin with, I was born in a little place outside Liverpool called Southport, which is now part of Merseyside. In 1943, in the early days, I was The Light Programme (BBC Radio) in the late 40s/early 50s. Children's favourite with 'Uncle' (the name of a well-up programme, which later had to have a back-slash under the handle to stop it taking back because the spring had gone).

Children's favourites included songs such as: 'The Runaway Train', 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff', 'Big Rock Candy Mountain', 'You Lugged Friend', 'I was a Big Boy', 'Raggy Rag', 'Lore', 'I would be Family Favourite', and songs like 'Sweet Home in the Sky', 'The Moon and the Sun', 'Yellow Rose of Texas' and 'The Double-Barrel Shotgun', by performers like Alvin Caper, Gene Day, Rosemary, I Skippy, Guy Mitchell, Edmundo Ros, and Texaco and his bandmates. Oh! The played on the gramophone included Sid Phillips, Sam Bond, Bud Harty, Billie, The King, Tony Stone, 'You Can't Rock Out', 'The Moon and the Sun', 'Mogul Moments'...

Then, in my early teens, I was The Evelyn Brothers, Buddy Holly, Lonnie Donegan, Cliff Richard, if remember listening with my ear to the Southport

...of our old-fashioned wooden wireless, to Radio Luxembourg and 'That's the Day' by The Crickets – very exciting! The mention of Buddy Holly, at school, some bands were into specific music styles, like Little Richard and early Billie Jean King's, or Marling Jack Elton, Big Bill Broonzy, Jimmy Fisher, Blind Guy Stone, etc, and I had to go on those.

MB: How and when did you first learn to play an instrument (guitar/ukulele)? Are you self-taught, or did you have lessons?

TH: Well, I taught myself a little bit on trumpet which was advertised as 'not a step a real musical instrument' in a comic, but my father wouldn't buy it. Then I saw a photo (possibly looking like the Colonel (Larkin)) in a local shop window, in what was a record and record store. I remember I got to Christmas when I was eight and still have it.

I learned to play it off from the tape book, 'The Showstopper and Complete Book'. I was taught myself the first song from 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' (I think that was the first) because it was the first chord. I taught myself using the book. Then, when I was 12 I bought a second-hand guitar from a friend. I didn't know how to tune it, but worked out myself

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“I think the years away from songwriting refreshed me creatively, like letting a field go fallow...”

The Brooks of Hazzard

MB: What revived your interest in songwriting/ your songwriting career – and what is 'the business' like today, compared with before your 'gap years'?

TH: I left the day job in '97. A new chief executive had taken over and he wasn't really my cup of tea. Also, in that job it's not good to stick around for too

long. He later got the sack, so I felt justified in my feelings. I then threw myself into the acting etc, and started thinking about recording again. I still had many songs which hadn't seen the light of day, apart from playing them locally. I taught myself the new techniques of recording on computer and bought some good microphones, and then – out of the blue

– I was asked by my old employers to manage a department. It was only temporary, to help them out – but it lasted four years!

I found I couldn't focus on recording and writing

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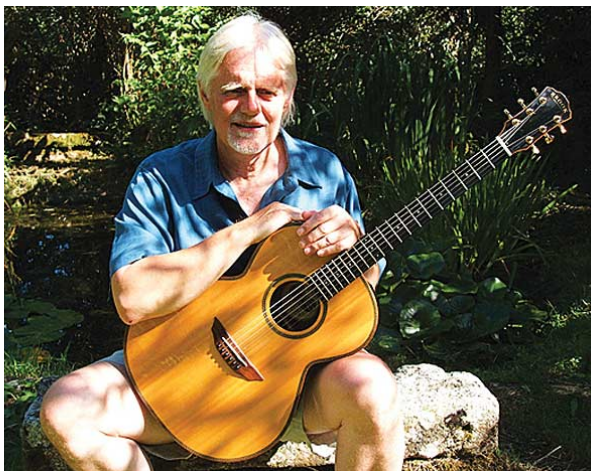
The Brooks of Hazzard

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while doing the day job until a bout of ill-health interrupted proceedings and I had to leave. A blow in one sense, but a blessing in another, because it meant I could return to writing and recording. I think the years away from songwriting refreshed me creatively, like letting a field go fallow.

The business has changed beyond all recognition and I don't fit comfortably in it, if I'm honest. The received wisdom is that it's now much more democratic without necessarily needing the filter of the big record companies, but that's not the complete picture.

As I see it, it divides – like Gaul – into three parts; at the bottom you've got the world and his wife writing songs and making records. That's why I dislike the phrase 'singer/songwriter': it seems everyone is these days. In the middle, you have people like me, with a track record, but who are no longer fashionable, along with very competent bands/performers who gig and tour a lot, selling CDs on the way and using recording as a means of promotion. Then, at the top, you have artists backed by manager/agent/record company/publisher/PR company/songpluggers, in whom vast amounts of money are invested and who are guaranteed national radio plays.



The outlook for songwriters is very poor. Young people expect music to be free and companies like Spotify are ripping writers and artists off. People will pay a lot for their iPhones, either in purchase price or rental, and then expect free music, albeit on a crap sound system. The abundance of free/dirt cheap music means it's no longer valued: like so many chip papers, easily disposable. The market is flooded by hopefuls and often the talent gets lost in a lot of 'emperor's new clothes' stuff. I was listening to Dave Wood's 'May The Kindness' the other day and

Tony's Taw and uke along with a selection of his other 'tools of the trade.'



The outlook for songwriters is very poor...young people expect music to be free...and often talent gets lost in a lot of 'emperor's new clothes' stuff...

thinking that such good songwriting will fly way over the heads of kids who like 'The Voice' and adore Beyonce, and that's sad.

MB: Turning to guitars and guitar-playing, how would you describe yourself as a player/ musician?

TH: That's a tricky one! I used to think I was a better guitarist when I was in my late teens, when I taught myself to sight-read and played classical guitar for a while, but recently a guitarist friend told me he thought I was playing better than ever. The thing is, I don't really consider myself a guitarist; I sort of stopped progressing years ago because I use the guitar as a means to accompany the songs I write. Someone else said how well I played and I replied that, given that I'd been playing for nearly 60 years, I really ought to be far better! I think I'm a fairly good musician, insofar as I understand music theory and can put it into practice – meaning I can write the dots for an arrangement if I need to, including for full orchestra, but, more importantly, I also instinctively hear harmonies and arrangements in my head and can usually accompany someone quite sensitively with little or no rehearsal. In addition, I can usually get a tune out of anything with strings, but am utterly useless with brass and reeds!

MB: Do you write songs mainly with/on the guitar?

TH: Yes, because it's all I have. I wish I'd learned the

piano, because many of my songs are really piano songs. Often songs start in my head and then are made physical on the guitar.

MB: Living in the West Country, this may be a fairly obvious question, but... how/when did you first discover Brook Guitars?

TH: A guitarist friend, Roger Moss, who now lives in France, had had repairs done there and gave me good reports. I have a '66 Martin 00-18 which needed repairing and, prior to discovering Brook, had taken it to an official Martin repairer, stupidly saying that there was no rush. I didn't see it again for many years! It eventually came back okay, but with a few details which needed sorting out, so I took it to Brook and they worked their magic.

MB: What was your first Brook guitar? Was it a custom instrument or 'off the shelf'?

TH: It was when I was visiting Brook with the Martin that I saw all those lovely guitars – it was like a guitar junkie's opium den! I played a few and really liked them. One was a Taw which Simon had built for himself. He'd been thinking of refurbishing it and selling it. I couldn't see anything wrong with it, so I decided to buy it. Simon and Andy are great salesmen because they never try to sell you anything; they just allow yourself to be seduced by the instrument!

MB: You must have owned many fine instruments over the years; where do you rate your Brook in amongst them? Is it your main/favourite guitar?

TH: Again, that's a hard one. I can't rate them in order of preference, since it's all about 'horses for courses'. In terms of sheer tone and sustain, the Taw

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The Brooks of Hazzard

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is hard to beat and records well. I have a soft spot for the Martin because I always wanted one (cf. Lonnie Donegan) and it has a history; it was won in a poker game in Italy by an American actor I knew who couldn't play it, and he sold it to me for £100! It's lovely to play and has a sweet tone. My classical guitar was built in '69 by a luthier called R. Spain and it has aged well; my Dad bought me my 12-string for my 21st birthday, so I can't part with that; I also have a couple of basses and a '74 Telecaster on permanent loan.

When I play live, I sometimes play one of two electric/nylon-strung 'silent' guitars. I'm leaning more towards nylon-strung at the moment...

MB: Do you have any other Brooks/plans for further Brooks?

TH: I started to covet Simon's tenor ukulele on my early visits to Brook and used to sit and play it. I tried to persuade him to sell it, but he wouldn't because it was the first one he'd made. He offered me another Brook uke but it wasn't the same: *I'd fallen in love!*



The Uke of Hazzard – Tony with his cherished tenor ukulele, once owned by Si.

Tony in concert with American musician Matt Harding in Bilbao, November 2015.



This went on for a few years, then one day he changed his mind when I really couldn't afford it. In the end, he offered it to me at a price I couldn't refuse and was very generous in waiting for the payment. When I expressed surprise and gratitude he said it pleased him to know that it was cherished and would be played. I used it on the last album and at gigs. Oddly, I don't strum it: I play fingerstyle and often use reverb and chorus (but don't tell Simon!).

I have the usual guitarist's 'insufficient guitars syndrome'. I'd really like a custom Brook, with inlays and the works. Nylon strung, with a not-too-narrow fingerboard. It's a bit daft at my age, already having a choice of guitars and not knowing how long I'll keep playing/living, but I may give in to it if my resistance gets low enough!

MB: Any other thoughts about Brook guitars/your relationship with the company?

TH: Just that it's a lovely place to visit, that they're lovely people, and that I can't speak highly enough of them, despite the fact that Simon doesn't like reverb on ukes. They've treated me very well and I don't forget things like that. And, of course, the

craftsmanship is second to none. I'm always surprised that people who win money spend it on things like cars and big houses when you could commission your ideal Brook and pay to have a work of art created, and support consummate craftsmanship at the same time.

MB: Has your Brook inspired/played a part in the creation of any of your more recent songs?

TH: When I'm working on a song (and I'm in no way prolific these days) I try it on several instruments. The uke is a favourite go-to instrument and I was fiddling around with the Taw the other day, using an open D tuning and slide. A lot of writing goes on in my head before I sit down with guitar/uke. Sometimes, I'll try stuff on the uke which I've previously been playing live on guitar.

MB: What's happening in your musical life now? What are you currently working on – and do you have any particular projects in the pipeline?

TH: I'm trying to record another album on my own. I've recorded two tracks but I'm unsure about them. The trouble is, I hear arrangements in my head and try to transcribe them onto record. Sometimes, the arrangements become quite complex and, since I play all the instruments myself, it becomes a long, involved process. I'm contemplating recording much more simply, if I can achieve that!

I have a good friend in San Sebastian, an American called Matt Harding. He has a great voice, writes good songs, and is a very good guitarist. Apart from becoming friends, we hit it off musically immediately, and play well together. He came over to Cornwall and stayed for a week recently. We ended up recording *'The Hallicombe Sessions'* at my house,

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The Brooks of Hazzard

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with me performing and Matt producing.

I've had great experiences playing live in Northern Spain and seem to go down well, despite the language difference.

One gig which was amazing was at The Convent, near Stroud, where I met Peter Knight, a founding member of Steeleye Span, and now with his own band, Gigspanner. Peter and I hit it off immediately and spent most



Tony performing at The Convent and (below) enjoying a joke backstage with Steeleye Span founder member, Peter Knight.



of the time laughing uncontrollably!

Apart from recording, I made a decision in 2015 that I would try to play live as much as I could, while I still could. I used to play every week in the old days, but months and months were going by before I would get to play live again. That meant that I was never 'match fit', which in turn meant that I had to practise a lot and try to remember what keys I was playing in!

If you're playing all the time, it becomes a natural process, so you can relax into it more, experience fewer nerves, and thus enjoy it more, as does the audience. A large part of my live performance was relaying anecdotes of my 50 years in the business, interspersed with Q&As, and audiences seemed to like that...

So, I played some gigs in 2015, but not as many as I would have liked. I had an agent briefly, but gigs were still hard to come by, there didn't seem to be much interest and it was apparent to me that very few people were bothered about coming to see me play live. As a result, I came to the reluctant conclusion that it was time to withdraw, so I decided to go with the flow and abandon the gigs.

<https://tonyhazzard.wordpress.com>
'Why I gave up playing live gigs!'

Regarding my recorded music, I discovered a long-lost tape and used tracks from it to form a downloadable-only EP, **'Old Wave - The Lost Round House Tapes'**.

<http://wp.me/p2FiEc-e>

As to the future: I have a chance to buy several of my multi-track tapes from the Sixties, including my first album and unreleased demos. If I don't, they'll be chucked into a tip, so I might 'curate' them, ie. remix and remaster, etc. I also have some demos of new songs to record, simply as a project...

MB: Finally, do you have any advice for anyone thinking of making a living



writing songs today?

TH: After my previous thoughts on

this, my initial advice now would be to train as a plumber! In the olden days, creative people ran record and publishing companies, then the accountants took over, then the lawyers took over, and then big business took over and bought and sold publishing and record companies until no one knew what they owned in terms of copyrights any more.

The honest answer is that I wouldn't know what to advise someone who wants to earn money from songwriting, apart from to check out *Music Week*, both the website and the magazine (if it still exists). The magazine used to report on who was taking up new posts in publishing and record companies. Such people would be interested in finding new talent. The next step would be to phone for an appointment to play some material, but not too much: two or three songs at most. Never send in CDs, tapes, or email MP3s – they'll be ignored.

The other way is to play new material live and build up a following. Then, as I said before, you can sell CDs at gigs. But please bear in mind that it's notoriously difficult to get national radio plays these days without employing a song-plugger.

If you just want to write songs, listen to good songs from good writers and remember the golden rule: find your own songwriting voice/style and stick to it without being distracted by what's fashionable. *And write from the heart...*

tonyhazzard.com

Getting the lowdown...

Back in issue 3 of *'Babbling Brook'* we included a feature (below, left) on London session musician/bassist Paul Downing and his Brook *'Otter'* acoustic bass. Robbie Jessep – who wrote the article – invited Paul to play bass on his *'Road To Easterbrook'* album...and he explains here how the experience led to the creation of a new model down at 'the bottom end' of the Brook range...



“
THIS is loud – VERY loud – easy to play, it sounds great... and is the most fun I've had on any instrument in a long, long time...
 ”



HAVING Paul record four bass tracks for *'Road to Easterbrook'* got me to thinking, and – well, you know how it is – a serious case of GAS (or perhaps that should be BBAS – Brook Bass Acquisition Syndrome) set in!

I loved the sound Paul got from his bass, very similar to a double bass. I don't play double bass – I have tried, and they are a beast to play. I have, however, played electric bass before. But, the dilemma is, most of the music that I write is acoustic, as are the musicians I play with.

I play with a mandolin ensemble called *Mando Chutney* up here near Bath, and I have always fancied playing bass on some of our arrangements. I also wanted to develop some of my solo recordings by adding bass parts. I think coming on stage with everyone playing tiny little acoustic mandolins and me with a huge, ugly Fender Precision would have looked plain silly! I've tried those little ukulele basses as well, which work surprisingly well. However, I still had in mind the marvellous sound Paul got from his Brook *Otter*.

So, in about 2015 I bit the bullet (after much prompting from a friend) and ordered a Brook acoustic bass. Si told

me that they had just had a mould made in the shape of a Gibson J200, so this seemed as good a body size as any to work with. I remember that when I wrote the



Paul Downing article Si thought the *Okement* was a little too unwieldy for a bass, but the J200 shape was a good compromise. At the time it had no name – I still don't think that shape does – but after much thought, I suggested we codename the bass *'The Lowman'* – a nice pun, and – in line with Brook's instrument-naming convention – also a river in Cornwall/the West Country.

Originally, the bass was going to be fretless, but I kept prevaricating, and never did make up my mind when the build started, so it stayed as a fretted. I actually love the sound of this fretted. It has a growl like a Fender Jazz, or even a Musicman, with marvellous clarity and balance across the entire neck. I have stuck with phosphor bronze strings. *The Lowman* actually sounds nothing like a double bass, which I'm glad about. It sounds like what it is – a bass acoustic guitar. In many ways, it's reminiscent of one of those lovely, deep, rich baroque lutes!

My initial intention was to use it in *Mando Chutney*, which I do, but I have also started developing a solo repertoire for it, and am having a great time doing so. It's just a great, really inspiring instrument!

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Getting the **lowdown...**

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One of my worries in ordering a bass is what I do about my nails. It is possible to play this with nails, and it still sound very good. However, as a compromise, I have my nails very short, with just the tiniest bit of nail overhanging my fingertip. This seems to give exactly the tone I am after. My other concern was where to rest my right-hand thumb, not having a pickup on which to rest it, like most electric bass players. Well, I use a slightly-adapted acoustic guitar technique, including using my thumb exactly as I would on an ordinary acoustic.

I love *The Lowman*, and am already thinking ahead to my 50th birthday in a couple of years' time, and thinking that I now need a fretless! I know acoustic basses aren't for everybody – do an internet search and you will be constantly told that they don't work, they're too quiet, so that you

have to plug them in anyway, and don't sound like a double bass etc etc.

Well, Brook have shown time and again that well-made acoustic basses CAN work. This is loud. VERY loud. I don't need to amplify when playing with five other mandolinists. It is easy to play, it sounds great – *and it's the most fun I've had on any instrument in a long, long time...*



Bass desires: Robbie's spec sheet

Top: Engelmann spruce, with some truly beautiful book-matched 'bear claw' markings. One of the nicest tops I have ever seen on a guitar!

Back and sides: Bubinga – it worked on my 12-fret *Tavy*, so I wanted to see how it would work with a bass...

Neck: Walnut with bubinga centre strip.

Scale length: 34 inches.

Neck width: Same as a Fender Precision.

Tuners: Originally Schaller da Vincis (*below, left*), but swapped for Hipshot Ultralites.

Pickup: Headway.

Trim: Beautiful red and black trim for binding and rosette.

Strings: Having tried Elixir, La Bella and DR strings, I finally settled on D'Addario EXP PPB170s. Will probably try black tapewounds as well, at some point in the future.



The (*almost*) bottom line...

WE'VE made quite a few acoustic basses, both fretted and fretless, so there were no particular technical challenges in making Robbie's bass.

Most acoustic basses are overbuilt, with far too heavy strutting, and are, therefore, fairly dull-sounding. The tension of a set of bass strings is actually much closer to the tension of a standard steel-strung six-string, than even a 12-string guitar. We generally brace our basses as we would a 12-string.

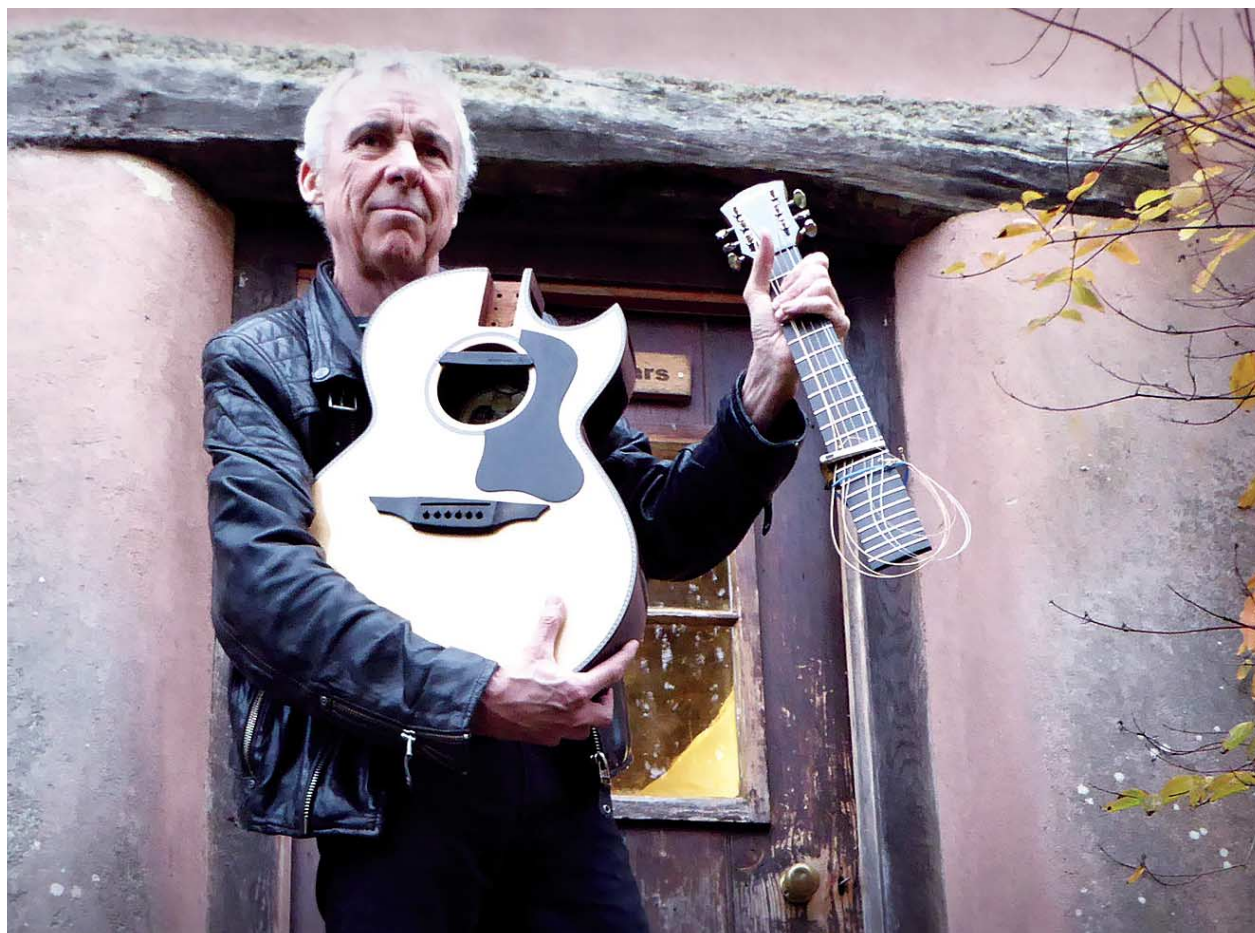
We liked the theme throughout of the bubinga with red purfling and the black-stained bone nut and saddle, and were very pleased with the way *The Lowman* turned out, both visually and sound-wise.

It's a joy to hear Robbie play his Celtic fingerstyle as solo bass pieces!

Si & Andy

● Watch and listen to Robbie's acoustic bass in action:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYv670bcGu0

ISSUE 4's cover story featured the battle-scarred but much-loved (and repaired!) *Taw* belonging to **Tim Smith a.k.a TV Smith**. Even as we prepared the article, the guitar suffered yet another drastic breakage, at the hands of easyJet baggage handlers. We took that as the cue to build TV a new instrument, incorporating the best features of his treasured *Taw*...but with one particular modification to help 'airline-proof' it. So now, the neck of his guitar only comes off when Tim decides he wants it to...



Great note separation... Tim 'TV' Smith with his 're-imagined' Brook *Taw*.

'I can really tell them apart'



“
I reckon that over the last 20 years since they built my original guitar they've simply got even better at it...
 ”

COUNTLESS working musicians – many, sadly, with the benefit of hindsight – will confirm proof of the age-old 'mathematical theory' (as once quoted by the late, great John Renbourn): '*Guitars into airlines do not go...*'

So, when TV Smith's beloved *Taw* suffered a broken neck (not, by any means, its first!) courtesy of rough handling by airline baggage crew, we decided to do what we could to minimise further risks to the tool of his trade.

"I suggested to Tim that we might be able to make him something that he could take apart and, with any luck, cut down the likelihood of future accidents," said Simon.

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"We basically built him a thin-line model *Taw* with a detachable neck, so that Tim can remove it and fly with the guitar as hand luggage, rather than risking it in the hold of the plane.

"The detachable neck didn't pose any design issues for us, or compromise the internal construction of the instrument in any way; all we had to do was to make up a block so that we could set the neck in a slightly different manner to how we normally do it.

"We also put a couple of hardwood dowels down through the neck heel to strengthen it. We kept it all very simple – Fender-style, with a brass plate to allow for adjusting the neck angle if required..."

Otherwise, TV's new *Taw* was of a similar spec to his 'old faithful'; spruce top, rosewood back and sides, mahogany neck, ebony fingerboard and bridge.

The depth of the body – shallower than Brook's 'standard' model and, again, just the same as Tim's original *Taw* – was simply a case of making the guitar easier to handle on stage and carry around, rather than any considerations around reducing feedback when amplified for live work.



A tale of two Taws...the new and the old.

Finally, a *Fishman Rare Earth* soundhole pickup was installed, similar to that on TV's other guitar. *Job done!*

Simon and Andy took me through the process of taking the guitar apart a number of times...

And after road-testing the 'TV *Taw* Mk 2', what was Tim's verdict..?

TS: I'm delighted with it! The plan was to have a guitar that I could take apart if necessary and put in an aircraft hold in a 'pre-broken' state, ready for reassembly at the other end. After two neck breaks over the last few years, I felt this would take a lot of stress out of my touring life.

Simon and Andy took me through the process of taking the guitar apart a number of times in the workshop and it couldn't be simpler: loosen the strings, undo four bolts with an Allen key, and



(Above and below) The new guitar's detachable neck begins to take shape...



*A delighted Tim with his new 'road-proofed' *Taw*.*

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2.5 million...and counting!

THAT'S the number of people that professional session musician **Pete Walton** (*right*) estimates have already heard him playing his Brook *Torridge* during his tenure as guitarist for *'Matilda The Musical'* in London's West End – making it surely our most listened-to instrument ever! Here, Pete talks to *Martin Bell* about his wide-ranging career as a 'hired gun', and offers tips for anyone thinking of following a similar path...

“

It's very important, whether you're a beginner or playing guitar every day for a living, to open the guitar case and want to play a guitar just because a guitar looks so wonderful – and the Torridge does...

”

MB: The usual 'opening question', Pete...a bit about yourself, your playing, musical influences etc!

PW: I started playing guitar at 12. One of my first teachers had been an excellent professional guitarist in his day and had a huge library of transcribed solos by Charlie Christian, Wes Montgomery, Django Reinhardt and other classic jazz guitarists. I was still learning to read music, but I slowly worked my way through classic solos by these guys. This was before the internet and YouTube! So, finding someone who had this stuff, had studied it and knew what was going on, was very influential on me as a teenager. I can remember learning Django's *'Love's Melody'* and Charlie Christian *'Gone With 'What' Wind'*. As a result, when I went to Leeds College of Music I was very much a jazz player.

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2.5 million...and counting!

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MB: What took you to Leeds College of Music, and what sort of a career did you have in mind?

PW: In those days, the only choices for a music college that was doing anything other than straight classical was either Leeds or Berklee College in America. Socially and financially, I wasn't prepared to study abroad, so Leeds it was. But the brilliant thing about that was that, because it was the only choice in this country at the time, everyone who wanted to study jazz or popular music was there, so I had some wonderful contemporaries – many of whom are still active in the music business – and some inspirational teachers.

In my first year at Leeds I studied classical guitar with Graham Wade, and that has been such a useful thing to have; I would encourage anyone who's thinking of becoming a professional guitarist to study classical guitar. Then, three years on the jazz course and I suppose that's when I thought that maybe I could make a career out of playing the guitar. Most of the time I was at college I was gigging and making contacts, so when I left, I continued with those gigs. I'm not sure I ever really seriously thought about what kind of career I'd like – I just loved music and playing the guitar. Looking back now, I suppose I was youthfully naïve and confident that a career might work out!

MB: Post-college, how quickly did your musical career take off – and how?

PW: Soon after college, I moved to London and started the task of making contacts there. I basically did anything that paid money! Cabaret gigs, dance bands, jazz gigs, shows, functions, solo guitar, anyone who'd have me! I got a few breaks covering for people in West End shows and through that became more established on the London scene. I think it's a lot harder these days for people coming out of college because there isn't the same amount of opportunities as there was when I started.

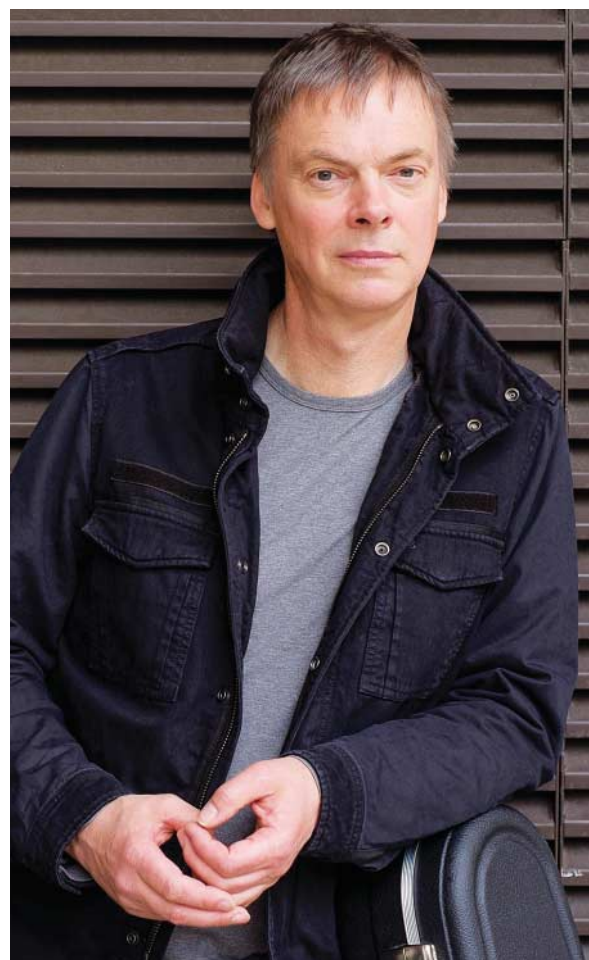
MB: Tell us a bit about the variety of music/projects you've been involved in.

PW: Well, I'm based in London, which I think is still the place to be if you want to have a career as a musician in this country. Obviously, if you play an orchestral instrument, there are opportunities in various brilliant orchestras throughout the country, but for guitarists, I think you need to be close to London. I've been lucky to work in some interesting

venues with some brilliant musicians. I've worked at Ronnie Scott's with a band called *Echoes of Ellington*; played mandolin at the Royal Opera House in Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and banjo in Berg's *Lulu*; I've done sessions in all the top studios in London, playing not only guitar but all the other add-ons that guitarists are required to play: banjo, mandolin, ukulele, Irish bouzouki! I played with a jazz quartet in Buckingham Palace; on live TV for *Strictly Come Dancing*; and I played *Cavatina* solo in a packed Royal Albert Hall – 110% concentration required for that one! I've also played with singers Hayley Westenra and Michael Ball, a brilliant musical/comedy duo called Igudesman and Joo – check them out on YouTube, they're incredible! – the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra in *Friday Night Is Music Night* and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

MB: What about recordings? Can you run through a list of some of the people you've worked with?

PW: The ones that spring to mind are mainly associated with the West End shows that I've been involved with: *Joseph and his Technicolor Dreamcoat* with Jason Donovan; *Oliver!* from 1994 with all those classic Lionel Bart songs; Andrew Lloyd Webber's



Pete's current 'office' in London's West End.

2006 *Evita* recording (you can hear me at the beginning of *Another Suitcase, Another Hall*). I also played all the guitars for the 2014 film *Pride*. That's just a few I can remember!

As well as people, I've always found it inspiring to play in iconic venues. I remember the first time I played in Abbey Road Number 2 studio – the studio that The Beatles did a lot of their classic recordings – I did look around and think, *Wow!* So many great recordings are associated with that studio and at that time it hadn't really changed from when The Beatles were using it regularly.

MB: Speaking of The Beatles, what does a typical 'Day in the Life' consist of? Do you have a regular practise routine, for example, or is work enough to keep your musical chops in shape?

PW: I practice every day that I'm going to play, which at that moment is usually six days a week. I still feel like I'm learning! There are so many different styles of playing, on acoustic guitar alone, for instance, that I feel like I just have to keep working at it. I don't practice for hours on end like maybe I would have done at college; practice now will probably be as little as 30 to 60 minutes, but within that I try to stay very focused, so that I'm listening to every note I play. I try to work on what I think are weaker aspects of my playing. The temptation is to practice what you're already good at!

MB: How did the 'Matilda The Musical' work come about? How much longer will you be doing that work?

PW: *Matilda* came about through the happy coincidence of knowing and having worked

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2.5 million...and counting!

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previously with a few of the people involved in choosing the band – which, to be honest, is how it works in the side of the music business I'm involved in. You do some work, people get to know that you do a good job and, by doing the same things that might get you a hired in any other business – being on time, being well prepared, being a good person to have around – hopefully, people will remember you again when they need a guitarist in the future.

I have music students contacting me saying they'd like to work in the West End and probably hoping that I could give them work. But how it works is you have to get known, build a reputation and build your contacts and a list of people who trust you. It's a nice thought that you come straight out of college and walk into the best work, but usually it takes a while. Maybe in orchestras that happens, but less frequently in the side of the business I'm involved in.

So, going back to your question, it's been five and a half years since the happy coincidence of 'Matilda' came about for me and it looks like it will run for a few more years still.

MB: Are you able/do you fit in other work in and around this commitment?

PW: The way a West End show works for musicians is that you are allowed to take time off to do other gigs, subject to the approval of the orchestral fixer and the rules that apply. The main rule is that not all of us can be off at the same time. There's usually not a problem taking time off 'Matilda' so yes, I do other gigs, have my own band, *Acoustic Earth*, and I compose as well.

MB: From your comments on the Brook website, your *Torrige* is probably the most widely-heard guitar we've ever built, then – over two million people...and counting..?

PW: Well, if that's true, it's wonderful! I think the theatre holds 1,200 people, eight shows a week, which is 416 shows a year...times five and a half years... about two and a half million people, if my maths is correct!

MB: How do you amplify your Brook for your live theatre work?

In 'Matilda' there's a microphone for the acoustic instruments - I play the Brook and a classical guitar – and that goes out through the front of house system. That's my preferred way with an acoustic, it means I

I've had the guitar for over 10 years now, and it's a huge testament to the build quality that it's been almost maintenance-free...



*Pete with his 'off the peg' spruce and English yew *Torrige*.*

can work the microphone like a singer would do, sometimes leaning in for quiet bits, sometimes a bit further away for louder, strummy sections.

MB: How did you first hear about Brook Guitars/ acquire your *Torrige*?

PW: A friend of mine, Huw Davies, was using a Brook – maybe a *Lyn*? – in a show called 'Guys and Dolls'. I went in to deputise for him and loved that guitar. The neck seemed so easy to play, the parlour size was very comfortable and the sound projected well. I did a bit of research and realised that Ivor Mairants in London had a range of Brooks in stock, so I went in, played lots of different guitars – including two Brooks – and ended up with my *Torrige*.

It's straight 'off the peg', with a spruce top and English yew back and sides. It looks stunning with the yew wood. I think it's very important, whether you're a beginner or playing guitar every day for a living, to open the guitar case and want to play a guitar just because it looks so wonderful, and the *Torrige* does. And although it's a small guitar, I always feel the projects really well. In 'Matilda', for instance, it just seems to sit in the mix brilliantly.

MB: What do you look for in a fingerstyle instrument – and does your Brook tick the right boxes?

PW: Good question! To be honest, I've never really thought about it that much. I never usually start looking for an instrument thinking, 'it must have this, it definitely must have that' – I like to keep an open

mind to what might work for me. I suppose a good balanced tone and sound all over the instrument and something that responds well to how you play, whether you're really digging in and hitting the strings hard or just playing very gently. I love the size of the *Torrige* too. It might sound strange, but I find larger-bodied guitars very tiring for my right arm if I'm playing them constantly, whereas the Brook is very easy to play for long sessions.

MB: What are your overall thoughts about Brook guitars/your *Torrige* – build quality, sound etc?

PW: Well, I've had the guitar for over 10 years now and it's hardly required any maintenance. My repairman, Bill Puplett, installed a Baggs M1 pickup on it for when I have to use it through an amp or direct into a PA. He's also made a few minor tweaks over the years, but it's pretty much as the day I bought it from Mairants all those years ago. So, considering it's played eight shows a week for the last five and a half years, with about 10 different guitarists playing it, it's a huge testament to the build quality of the guitar that it's been almost maintenance-free.

MB: What about personal musical ambitions – is there anyone that you'd particularly like to play or record with?

PW: I've always thought it would be cool to be in the studio with Quincy Jones. Just to hang out with someone who's done just about every job in the music business would be a wonderful experience.

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2.5 million...and counting!

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MB: What music do you enjoy listening to outside of work?

PW: My music collection is so eclectic you'd laugh! It depends on what I'm working on at that moment. If I'm writing for Acoustic Earth, I may be listening to older artistes like Joni Mitchell, Paul Simon, or newer people like Angus and Julia Stone and James Bay; if I've got a jazz gig coming up, I might listen to Wes Montgomery or Pat Metheny; if I'm writing classical music, I might be listening to John Adams, Thomas Adés or Benjamin Britten. But I might also be listening to Led Zep, AC/DC, Beyoncé, Bon Iver, Stevie Wonder or Julian Bream! Even I smile at some of the tracks that come back to back when my playlists are on shuffle!

MB: What advice would you give to anyone considering a career path similar to your own?

PW: Learn to read music; study the classical guitar, as well as electric guitar; listen to all genres of music and be familiar with different guitar styles and players. And be nice to those of us who are already doing it!

If you're being considered for a professional job, it's presumed that you have the necessary gear and can play your instrument to a very high standard. No-one's going to ask you if you've got Grade 8 Rockscool, for instance; if you're being considered, then you must be good. So, the choice often comes down to, who fits in best musically and socially – just like lots of other jobs. If you're on tour with people or in sessions for long hours at a time, you want people around you who are good to have around, are professional and get the job done.

MB: Finally, Pete...what's next for you, 2017 and beyond?

PW: Mainly, I'll be writing songs for Acoustic Earth and a new classical piece. Playing wise, who knows! That's the brilliant thing doing what I do, the phone rings and suddenly you're off on a new project, I love that aspect of the job. Which is why I always try to keep listening and working at the guitar, as you never know what you might be working on next.

Check out Pete's solo acoustic playing and website:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2jif-wMmfc
petewalton.com

'I can really tell them apart'

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hey presto, off slips the neck!

The real delight about the new Taw is that, although it's ostensibly the same design as the original, it sounds much better – and before taking delivery of it I never thought I would be able to say that, because the old one sounded so good.

The difference is particularly noticeable in the amplified sound on stage – loads more sustain and a richer quality to the tone, which makes me able to play with a lot more dynamics than before. The general consensus of the audience is that it sounds 'fatter'. Simon and Andy reckon that it can only be down to the new electrics, but I beg to differ: I reckon that over the last 20 years since they built my original guitar they've simply got even better at it.



The good news is that the old guitar is far from being retired...it may well get brought out to gigs for a bit of nostalgia..!

And it's not just about the build – the action is better, nut and bridge and machine heads better, a discrete straplock mechanism...even the mother of pearl logo is better! It's all those little details that really count. At the risk of repeating myself, I never thought I'd say that, because I was completely happy with the old guitar before I got this one.

The good news is that the old guitar is far from being retired. Despite its battered appearance it has developed a pleasingly resonant woody tone over the years of service, and is going to make a very useful addition to the new one for recording.

I can imagine that the two guitars double-tracked will make a very full sound. Plus, I still love to play my old *Taw*, and it will continue to be my basic 'home' guitar for writing and generally playing around on. It may well even get brought out to gigs occasionally for a bit of nostalgia..!





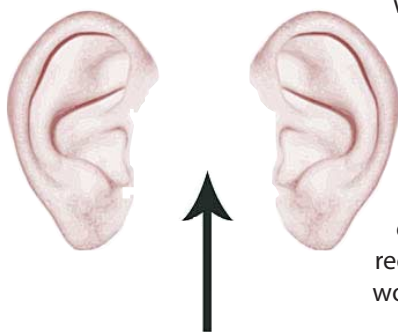
IN the second of our series of articles on home recording, **Robbie Jessep** (*above*) talks through some alternative methods of capturing the best of your acoustic (*hopefully Brook!*) guitar's sound in glorious, living stereo...



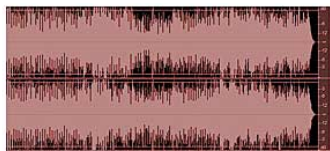
HELLO, fellow Brookies and recordists – and I hope you found last issue's article on some inexpensive equipment to get you recording useful!

In this piece, I intend to look into a couple of ways you can record your acoustic guitars, with the emphasis on capturing a good quality stereo recording.

First of all, *what is stereo?* Well, we have two ears! Having two enables us to pinpoint where sounds are coming from in a soundstage (very important if you



were a caveman wanting to avoid being eaten by a sabre-toothed tiger!) Of course, in the early days of recording, sound would have been captured by one microphone to be played back through one speaker. Most of us now listen to



music (and TV) in stereo. Even radios tend to be stereo. I mention radio in particular because many of the great broadcasting companies pioneered stereo mic'ing techniques which are still in use today.

I'm not going to go into the science of stereophonic sound (*'Phew! I can hear you all say*), but suffice to say music generally tends to sound nicer in true stereo (as opposed to what people thought of as stereo back in the '60s. I remember when the Beatles' back-catalogue first came out on CD; have a closer listen to albums such *Revolver* where – due to the limitations of multi-tracking technology – a 'stereo' track often had vocals coming entirely out of one speaker, while the rest of the band was heard out of the other).

To be able to record your acoustic guitar in stereo you will, of course, need two microphones. Generally – though not always – they should be the same type of microphone and, indeed, you can even purchase 'matched' stereo sets of microphones, where a pair is chosen according to the similarities of their response characteristics. By contrast, one particular stereo method (*'middle and side' recording*) you use two entirely different microphones.

Now, let's have a look at these recording methods, and how they differ...

Space omnis

This means setting up a pair of omni-directional microphones a certain distance apart (*see below*), aimed at your sound stage (ie your guitar).



An omni-directional microphone picks up sound in any direction, which means that it picks up sound from behind the microphone as well. Such microphones are usually always condenser microphones, meaning that:

- they will require phantom power (usually 48 volts, which most audio interfaces and mixers can supply these days);
- they are more expensive than your typical Shure SM58-style dynamic microphones;

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- the frequency response is extremely good, making them ideal for quiet acoustic instruments such as guitars.

Now, think about what I said: *they pick up sound from everywhere!* This can be a blessing or a curse, depending on what you are recording and where. For instance, if you are recording with other musicians at the same time, the microphones will pick up everyone, and each musician will be more difficult to separate in the mix. But, they will also pick up the ambience of the room nicely (if, that is, you're recording in a nice room, such as a church or hall, but probably less desirable in your living room!)

This technique is simple to use and gives a great result if you are recording, say, a live concert, but bear in mind that it will pick up lots of audience noise too.

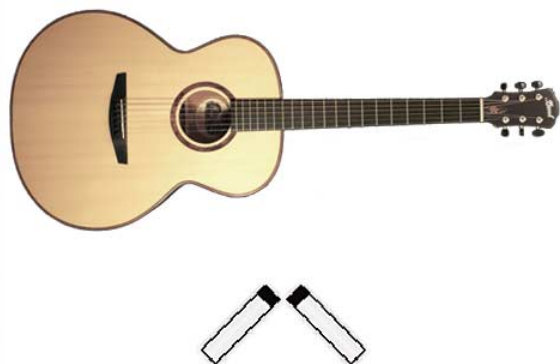
Omni-directional microphones also suffer less from what we call the *proximity effect*: that is, most microphones will get more bassy the nearer you move them to the sound source; not so with omnis.

Coincident pair (XY)

This is the use of two microphones that are closely matched and exhibit cardioid (or uni-directional) response characteristics. The vast majority of dynamic and condenser microphones are cardioid pattern microphones. The pair are arranged so that the capsules are as close together as possible and form a 90-degree angle to each other (*see below*).

Why is it vital that the capsules are close together? Well, this is because of one of the major drawbacks of stereo recording: it's easy to get *phase cancellation* if you're not careful. Imagine the sound from that lovely Brook guitar hitting two microphones, but at slightly different times. You may be lucky and no

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Just for the record

from page 40

audio side-effects will be heard, but more often than not, you will get phase cancellation, whereby certain frequencies are cancelled out because of the time differences of the signal path reaching the microphones and hence being recorded to your device. You can see phase cancellation very easily if you look at the waveform in the audio editor. Although the two signal waveforms look very similar, they actually start at different times.

Having the capsules coincident, at exactly the same point in space, avoids phase cancellation. However, keep this in mind, because phase cancellation still becomes an issue if you combine a stereo mic'ing technique with another signal from the sound source, such as a pickup.

A very useful piece of equipment to help with coincident pair technique is a good stereo bar, such as the one made by Rode



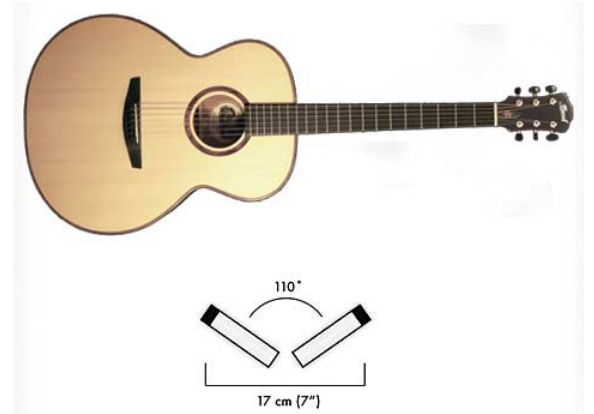
(right). Not only does this have built-in spacers to make getting your capsules coincident as easily as possible, but it also has useful markings for some of the other stereo techniques, such as ORTF (see below). Notice in the picture, a spacer is used on one of the microphones. I then position them so that the capsules are almost (but not quite) touching and at 90 degrees to each other.

The thing to remember about this technique is that when you send your signals to your interface, you need to make sure you get the left and right signals the right way. Because the mics cross, I send the one that is pointing to the left of the sound stage to input 1 on my interface (my left signal) and the one pointing to the right to input 2.

ORTF

The ORTF technique is named after the French television and radio commission who invented it (*Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française*). This is similar in many ways to using a coincident pair of mics, in that you use two matched condenser microphones, the difference is the microphones have their capsules slightly apart and pointing in the opposite direction. I have to say, this is a right royal faff to set up, even with the help of the Rode stereo

bar. You see, the microphones have to be set up with a 110-degree angle between them (*below*), and the capsules 17cms apart. I've used this technique a couple of times, but have yet to hear any advantage over coincident pair.



Some engineers make themselves a little cardboard template to make setting this up even easier. It isn't difficult to make – a ruler and protractor should be all you need!

Middle and side

Are you ready for this one? If you thought the ORTF method was a faff, wait until you hear what you have to do with this one! Again, this was pioneered by a broadcasting company, and the great thing about it (well, at the time anyway) is that, although stereo, it is also mono-compatible. Remember that it was not many years ago when most of our radio listening was on mono radios (*'the wireless'*, as my mum used to call it). The problem with every other stereo technique is that when it ends up in mono it can sound very strange! This is probably of no concern to us these days (unless, of course, your music ends up on vinyl, being played on one of those record players with mono speakers that you seem to be able to buy everywhere these days – funny how things come around...).

So, what you need for this is two entirely different microphones: an omni directional, and a bi-directional microphone. Bi-directional mics (or *'figure of eight'*, as they are sometimes called) are quite rare, and tend to be found on mics with switchable pickup patterns. However, you can now buy quite cheap ribbon microphones, which have a natural bi-directional characteristic.

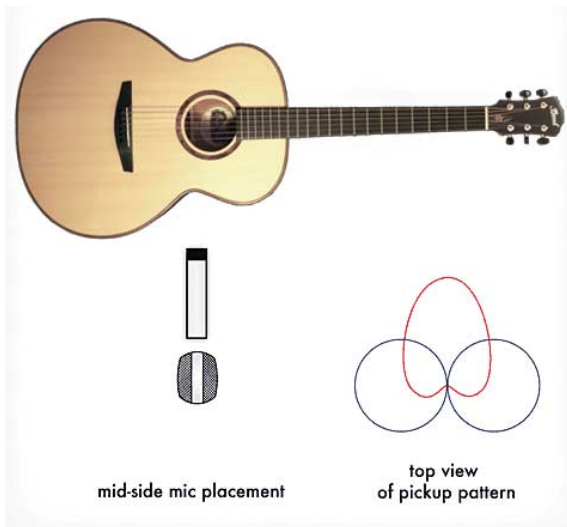
So, you point your omni at the sound source, and then move your 'figure of eight' as close to it as

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possible, but rotated so that the two sides of the microphone are at 90 degrees to the omni (a bit like your ears, really). The theory is that the omni captures the middle of the sound stage and the figure of eight the sides.

Now, ideally, you then have to mix it like this: the omni goes to its own channel, but the figure of eight is split and duplicated, so that you get two signals from this one microphone.



The important thing is to reverse the phase of one of these figure of eight signals – something that most mixers can do with a simple switch. However, help is at hand in the modern digital recording age because, if you simply record these two signals to a stereo track in your software, Logic Pro X has a plugin that you can place on this track which does all the decoding for you. You simply click the 'm/s' button and hey presto – glorious-sounding stereo! And the clever thing is, you can actually control the width of your sound stage. Go easy, though – you don't want it to sound like you're playing a 12-foot-wide guitar (although I have every faith that Si and Andy could build one if you so wanted!).

Adding other signals

Some of my favourite recordings sessions with my Brooks have been using one of these stereo techniques (usually a coincident pair) and adding another signal or two to the mix. For instance, in this recording of '*Ye Banks And Braes*' – <https://robbiej1.bandcamp.com/track/ye-banks-and-braes> – my main signal was a coincident pair.



You don't want it to sound like you're playing a 12-foot-wide guitar...although Si and Andy could probably build one if you wanted!

However, I had access to eight inputs on a nice microphone preamp, so I was able to record the pickup signal (*K&K* via a *Headway EDB-2*, below, left) and a clip-on *DPA 4099G* microphone (right).



I had these last two signals quite low in the mix, and I remember having to experiment with changing the phase of one or more of the tracks. Again, this is easy to do in Logic X using the Gain plugin. Bring in each additional signal into the mix one at a time and keep comparing the phase reversed signal. It will be immediately obvious which sounds nicer. One setting will give you a much beefier signal.

As always, when recording make sure you know exactly what your instrument sounds like naturally – get someone else to play it if necessary, and *really listen*. Also, make sure you listen on headphones and move the microphones around if necessary until you get the sound you want. This may involve moving the mics back, or towards your guitar. Aim to have the gain of each microphone set exactly the same

for the techniques that require matched pairs (not so much the middle and side technique). This is easy to do with most digital preamps, mixers and interfaces as you can see an actual numerical value for the gain. Don't have the gain set too high. I doubt if most of you are recording in-your-face acoustic heavy metal where it seems getting your signal to be as close to 0dB is the ultimate aim!

We are gentle folk and a gain peaking anywhere in the -12 to -6 dB region is fine, especially if you are



and it will be very difficult to get rid of the room characteristics after recording.

As I said last time, if you have a space that you occasionally record in and are unable to consider any permanent acoustic treatment, consider getting some very cheap duvets from Asda (I would have said BHS, but times change!) and mount them onto some wooden beams or rods, then you can simply hang them from heavy duty picture hooks on the wall when needed.

recording at 24-bit quality. Lastly, remember that some of these techniques sound especially good in very good acoustics. This means that they will sound especially bad in poor acoustics,

WITH the help and advice of our resident 'home recording guru' **Robbie Jessep**, solo acoustic guitarist **Phil Taylor** (right) recorded his debut CD at home in Uppermill, Saddleworth. The fine end result, *'One Year On'* – featuring Phil's Brook guitars – was released earlier this year, and here Phil shares the experience of setting up a home recording facility from scratch on a strict budget...along with the frustrations of getting 'a good take'...

“
Recording at home
in a residential
location can be
a nightmare –
garage doors
opening, cars,
builders and trains,
birds on the roof...
I've had them ALL..!”



Making tracks...



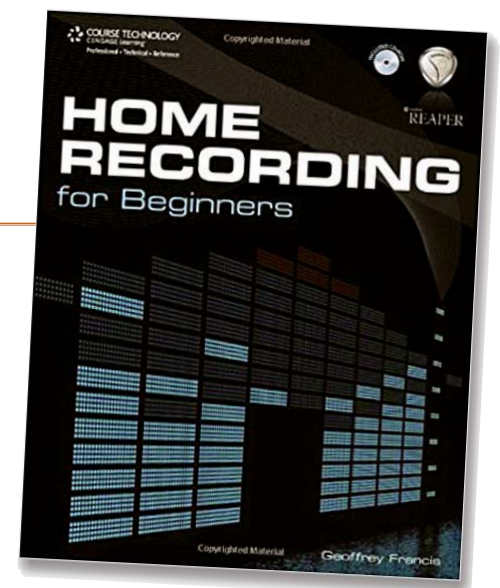
FOLLOWING an enjoyable and enlightening visit to see Robbie in Bradford on Avon, I set myself the task of buying the gear we had discussed – and with my £500 budget in mind, I began to acquire the necessary equipment.

The first item was mics and I settled on the Rode M5 matched pair (left) – a small diaphragm condenser microphone set – along with a Rode stereo array spacing bar (see page 41) to mount them on.

For the USB audio interface, we went for the Audient iD14 unit (right) with its highly regarded pre-amps. Due to the cost of powered monitors – along with the practicalities of finding a

location for them in a small house – I went with the alternative of using headphones and bought the Audio Technica ATH-M50x closed-back headphones, which seem very efficient and reasonably comfortable.

To finish, I sourced a Hercules mini boom microphone stand and Van Damme Starquad Mic three-metre leads, which are manageable in a small room.



Now on to the selection of a digital analogue workstation (DAW). This took quite a bit of time, looking at all the options Robbie had given me. Eventually, I settled on REAPER, which I had tried briefly previously and because I found a book *'Home Recording for Beginners'* (above) by Geoffrey Francis, which is written around that particular DAW.

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Making tracks...

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The book has proved to be invaluable, since it starts at the very beginning in an easy-to-understand, step-by-step process through the basics. Having previously only used relatively simple, free to obtain DAWs, such as *WavePad Sound Editor* and *Audacity*, (still used for simple tasks) at first I found REAPER very complicated.

However, after a quite a few months of use and experimenting I am satisfied that I have uncovered all the functions I need for my solo acoustic guitar recording, which includes the powerful ability to edit tracks – very useful for my standard of playing!



The REAPER digital analogue workstation (DAW).

Also, don't forget that recording at home in a residential location can be a nightmare – garage doors opening, cars, builders and trains, birds on the roof – yes, I've had them ALL, so you can imagine the frustration of finishing the very rare – for me – 'good take', only to find an unwelcome external noise in it!

With regards to final EQ/mastering, I came to realise that I don't have the 'ears' or technical know how, so I turned to the talents of sound engineer **Dave Mackie Scouler**, of **Dynamic Mastering Services** in Middlesborough to – as Robbie recently put it – 'sprinkle the magical fairy dust over the recording'.

Having now downsized my home, where to record was my next problem,

I've tried to keep every tiny sound to a minimum and adopted the phrase 'finished is better than perfect'..



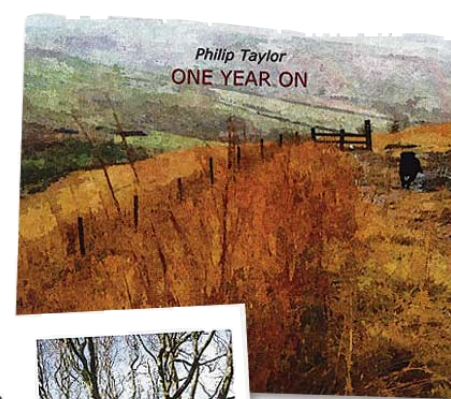
since I have not got a spare room to 'set up' and leave. After a bit of experimenting, I found the location in the room where I do my videos to be as good as anywhere. Other than opening a large mirror wardrobe door behind me, which seemed to improve the sound slightly, I have done nothing to the room.

For microphone technique, I settled on a 'stereo spaced pair' usually centrally in front of the guitar – although this position varies depending on which guitar I use. I did discover a slight problem re. laptop noise, but this was solved by just putting the laptop on the duvet to muffle the noise – all very low-tech and not good for dispersing heat from the processors, but it seems to work and it was Robbie who recommended the use of duvets in the last issue!

Recording yourself and listening back with headphones can be very enlightening, since you can hear every tiny

sound – string noise, squeaks, creaks, breathing etc. – very frustrating! I never really noticed these before on commercial recordings, but I can now hear them on many top guitar players' recordings, so I have tried very hard to keep it to a minimum and adopted the phrase 'finished is better than perfect'.

Finally, how am I finding the whole experience of home recording? Well, even for the simple recording that I am doing, it's been a big learning curve. That said, I'm enjoying the journey and it's nicely taking up a lot of my time and thoughts...



1. HOME THOUGHTS/ONE FOR TEA
2. WALTZ FOR A GOOD MAN
3. THE FIRST SUMMER
4. WHIDDON DOWN
5. NEW DAY
6. A PLACE FOR SOLITUDE
7. AFTER CLOUDS, SUNSHINE
8. JARDIN DEL ANGEL
9. TAME VALLEY
10. WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSES.....
11. ONE YEAR ON
12. FROM COVINGTON WOOD

Twelve solo acoustic guitar instrumentals inspired by times, people and places
 Rainy dawn chorus and all music recorded at home in Uppermill, UK.
 Church bells recorded at the Jardín del Ángel, Alicante, Spain.
 Guitars used: Custom Brook Lyn (tracks 2, 4, 5, 7, 10), Brook Torrige (tracks 6, 8, 12).
 Martin 000-18 (tracks 1, 3, 9, 11).
 Mastered by David Mackie Scouler at Dynamic Mastering Services.
 A Music Wall Production © P.C. Taylor 2017.

To obtain a copy of Phil's all-instrumental album, 'One Year On', you can contact him via email: lynne.phil@sky.com

OPINION may well be divided on the issue of climate change – but for guitar-makers and guitarists alike, one fact is beyond doubt: our instruments are constantly susceptible to the environment in which they're built, kept and played, whether from humidity or temperature...*and usually both...*

Climate control

IN this short article, we explain how we deal with problems of building our guitars in such a way that they remain stable – after all, we're working in a generally rather wet area of the country!

Here on the edge of Dartmoor, the environment could be a recipe for disaster when making things out of thin pieces of wood, which are very susceptible to changes in humidity.

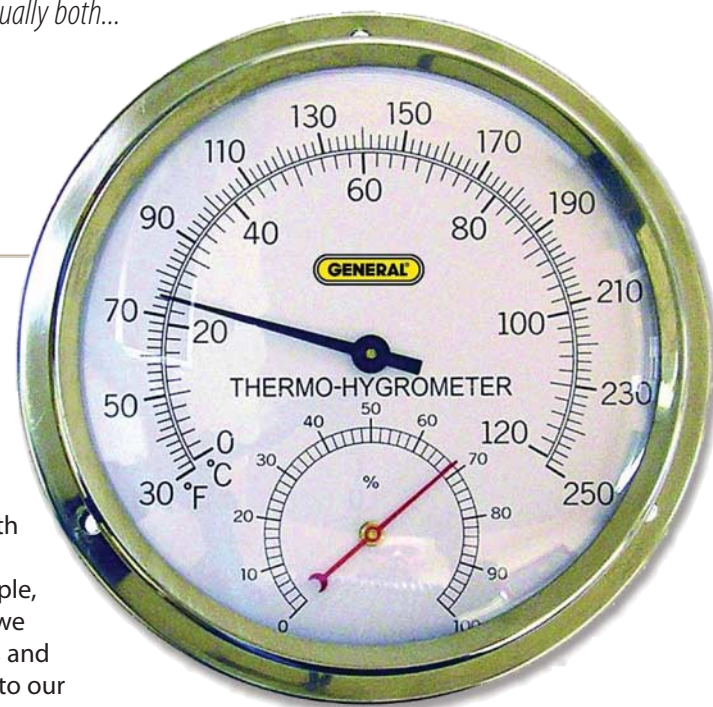
Most of us have seen some of those old American guitars with cracks along the back, front, or both! Built in damp, open factories, they've often survived many years intact before being brought into a modern centrally-heated house and in a short time dry out, the wood shrinks and develops splits lengthways along the grain.

Of course, the problem isn't just limited to factory guitars; we've had plenty of instruments on our workbench for repair which have been made by

makers who've not paid enough attention to climate control during the build. The resulting problems range from sunken tops and backs to overly-bellied bodies, which, in turn, can contribute to loose struts and other issues.

We've set up our workshop at Easterbrook with areas of controlled humidity to deal with this constant problem: the ground floor, for example, has dehumidifiers constantly running. When we source local wood, we re-saw it, wax the ends and stack it for six to 12 months before moving it to our drying room, where we have a dedicated timber dryer which, again, is running all the time.

Our drying room is probably one of the most important rooms in the place; here, all parts of our guitars – the tops, backs, sides, neck blanks, struts, fingerboards, head veneers and bridges – are acclimatised together, so that they all have the same moisture content before we start putting them together.



We've had plenty of instruments on our workbench for repair which have been made by makers who've not paid enough attention to climate control during the build...



The drying room – one of the most important rooms at the Brook workshop, where all wood components of guitars are acclimatised together before assembly, to ensure consistent moisture content.

After working on each specific component of the guitar it's returned to the drying room and its neighbouring parts. When the body is glued together, everything comes out into our main construction area; in the four months we work on it, the guitar makes its way through the lower workshops, up to the finishing room, then the setting-up room and, finally, the display area. In this way, the instrument gradually ends in a stable state in a fairly natural level of humidity.

Just to illustrate the importance of being aware of the relative humidity of the woods... a 2mm head veneer can cup a 20mm thick headstock in a day or two. It's the same principle as the *stick hygrometer* we have hanging up here: it's a 500mm ply of wood glued together, one side with the grain lengthways, the other perpendicular to it. If the room is dry, the grain shrinks on the perpendicular side, bowing the stick; if the room is damp, it takes on moisture, bowing the stick the other way.

Climate control

from page 45

Hand-made guitars are built out of solid woods to fine tolerances, intended to be more responsive than factory guitars, which are often built of ply and over-braced.

Of course, owning a hand-made guitar does mean that you have to be more aware of the dangers of extreme temperature and humidity changes. The good news for Brook owners is that, because of our attention during the build, our guitars are able to cope with a considerable range of conditions – so, unless you're keeping your instrument in a house that's exceedingly hot and dry or, conversely, excessively cold and damp, there should be no



reason to have to resort to the proprietary humidifiers or dehumidifiers that are available. We once opened a guitar case to find a dehumidifier in the pocket battling it out with a humidifier in the guitar!

The best advice is to avoid extremes, it's just common sense! Most of us have taken our guitars outside in the sun to find that the top flattens out in the heat and the action maybe even drops the strings so much that they touch the frets; or they play outside in the evening as it's getting damp and the sun is going down, the action comes up and the guitar starts sounding very dull.

Worse still, we've had guitars here to repair that people have 'accidentally left outside overnight'. I'm presuming a little too much alcohol might have been involved in cases like that, but they've woken up the next morning to find their beloved instrument no longer in one piece...

To sum up, then, be sensible with your favourite guitar; we control the humidity of your Brook during the build process so, hopefully, you shouldn't need to worry too much about it – and, of course, if you've any concerns about your Brook... *just give us a call!*

(Left) Our workshop stick hygrometer. It may be 'low-tech', but it's as accurate a guide as any as to how humidity levels affect the wood.

(Above and below) Consequences of temperature and humidity extremes: back cracks, finish crazing, split fingerboard, soundboard distortion and damage.



A short breath of Irish air

from page 2

The DADGAD tuning allows us to use the open strings along with fretted notes to arrange the melody. The result is a rich, harp-like sonority.

The real challenge with slower pieces like this is to create a full, lush arrangement without cluttering the melody or, conversely, leaving it sounding too empty.

This arrangement is a good opportunity to work on your dynamics, phrasing and tone. Let the notes 'breathe'!

I hope that you enjoy playing this arrangement, and if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at:
devkinandanpatelmusic@gmail.com

Performance notes

Bar 1 – Begin by simply stating the melody and letting the notes ring out. The tuning allows us to play cross-string passages; the result is a beautiful 'cascading' sound.

Bar 3 – The melody note on beat 1 is doubled to create a stylistic *campanella* (bell-like) effect. Try using the index finger of your picking hand to play the E at the second fret of the 4th string.

The grace note on beat 2 is an ornamentation designed to mimic the sound of bagpipes. The slide needs to be swift and controlled, and should add to the character of the piece.

Bar 8 – The short, descending 16th note melody is now moved to a different part of the fingerboard. This technique can be effective in adding variety to an arrangement.

Bar 10 – I'd suggest working on this bar in isolation, in order to get used to playing the triplet phrase. Make sure that the position shift is seamless.

Bar 12 – The melody note is played using a natural harmonic. This adds to the richness of the overall sound. Aim for clarity and let the notes 'bleed' into each other.

The Bright Black Rose

Arrangement © Devkinandan Patel

The musical score for 'The Bright Black Rose' is presented in DADGAD tuning (T: D, A, G, D, A, D) and 3/4 time. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The tablature includes fret numbers, bar lines, and performance markings such as triplets, grace notes, and natural harmonics. The piece is arranged by Devkinandan Patel.

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2016

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A short breath of Irish air

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Bar 17 – Strum the chord slowly with the thumb of your picking hand in the direction shown by the line. Experiment by playing closer to or further away from the bridge of your guitar to achieve different sounds/textures.

Bars 18 to 21 – I've written a short cascading passage to end the arrangement. Try to bring out each 'voice' in this run. Harp harmonics (as used by Lenny Breau and, more recently, Tommy Emmanuel) are a mixture of artificial harmonics and regular picked notes. Here, every other note is a harmonic.

The technique is executed as follows: rest your index finger directly over the fret indicated and pluck the note with your thumb. In this particular instance, rest your 'i' finger over the 12th fret of the 6th string and pluck it with your thumb. This is followed by plucking the open G string with your ring finger. Then continue similarly...



13

16

19

22

A.H.

Gradual Bend 1/4

Harp Harmonics

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The image shows a musical score for guitar, consisting of four systems of music. Each system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. Below each staff is a guitar tablature with six lines representing strings. System 13 shows a sequence of notes and chords. System 16 includes a 'Gradual Bend' instruction with a 1/4 note value and a 'Harp Harmonics' section. System 19 features 'A.H.' (Artificial Harmonics) and 'Harp Harmonics' sections. System 22 shows a final chord and a double bar line. The author's name and year are printed at the bottom.