

# GUITARS

History  
Behind The  
Legendary  
***Les Paul***  
Guitar

And... The  
People Who  
Help Make It  
A Timeless  
Classic

Facemelter Of The  
Month



# Table Of Contents

Les Paul:

The Man Behind  
The Legend

10

How To Properly  
String your Les Paul

23

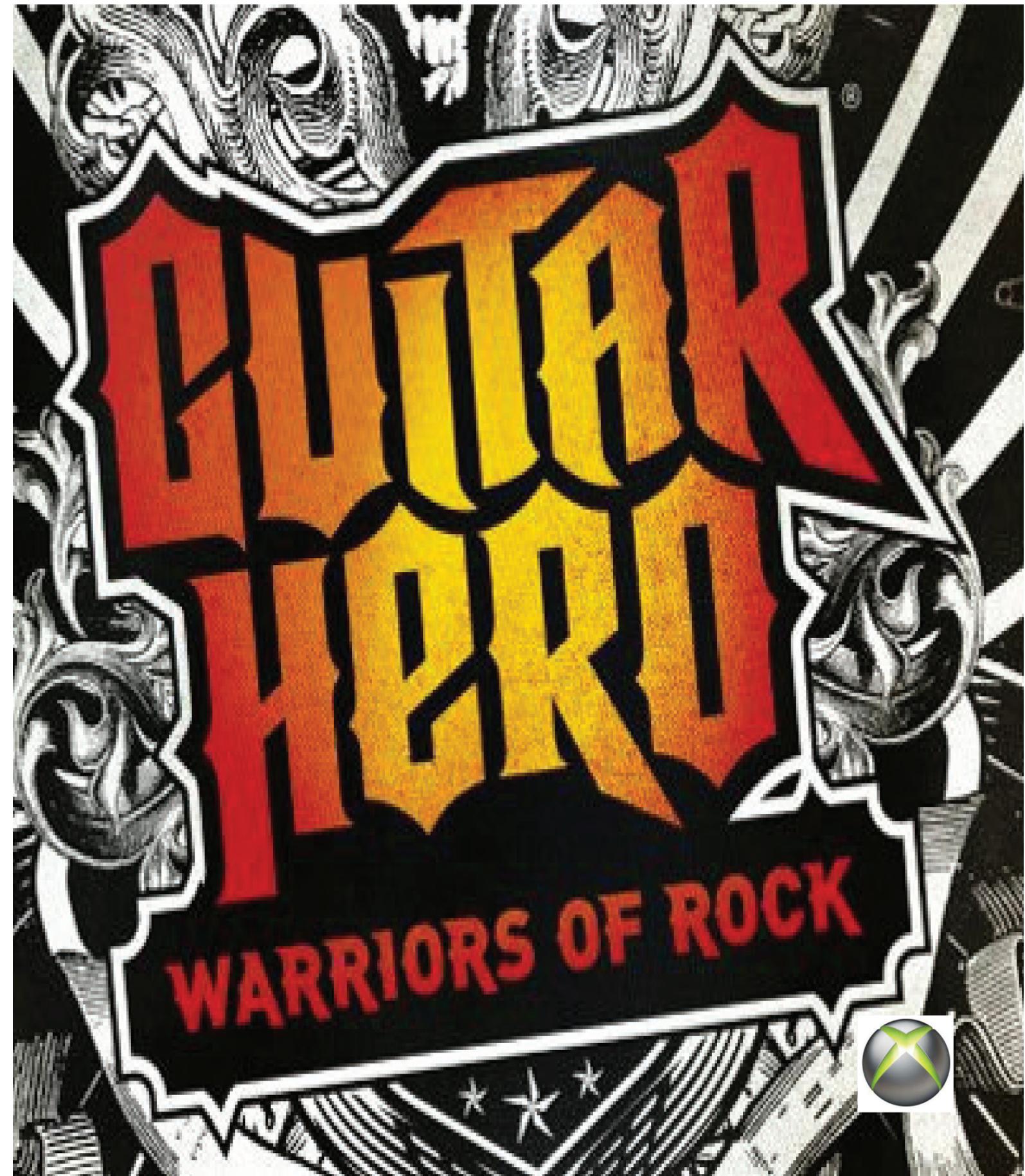
Care And Other  
Maintenance For  
Your Giutar

36

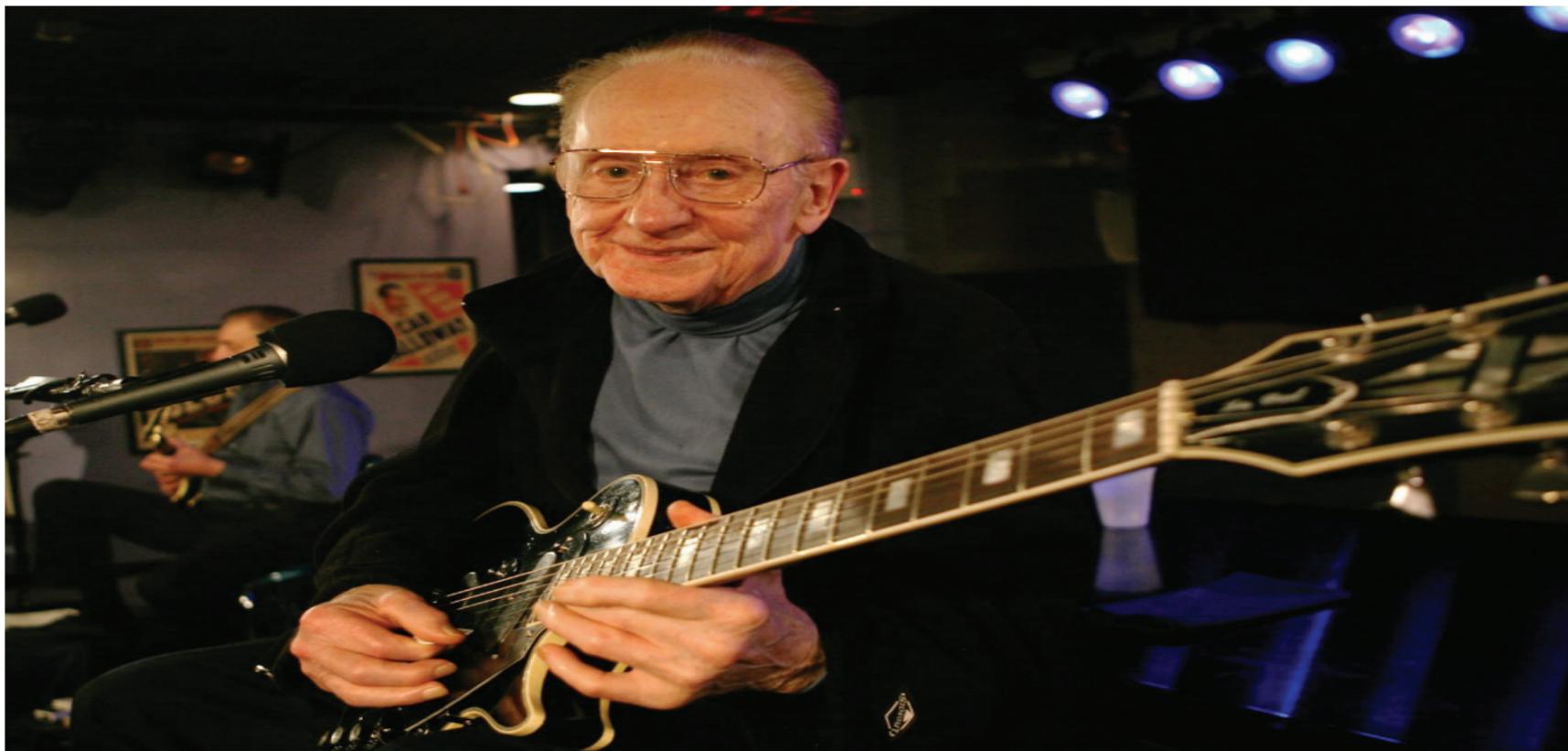
20 Some Of The Best  
With A Lengend

30 Which Rock Star Are You  
Most LIke? Take The Quiz

36 Facemelter Of the  
Month



# Les Paul: The Man Behind The Legend



WHILE LES PAUL IS COMMONLY CITED AS THE "FATHER OF the solidbody electric guitar," that oversimplifies what was actually a multifaceted evolution. Paul's contributions were undeniably significant, but other brilliant innovators were also involved. As early as the 1920s, guitarists were contemplating how to amplify a guitar's sound using the primitive technology employed in popular microphones and public address systems. These initial attempts to electrify the guitar met with little success, so when Gibson's Lloyd Loar experimented with a pressure-contact pickup around 1924, the company didn't go for it.

Meanwhile, an inventive boy named Lester Polsfuss was growing up in Waukesha, Wisconsin. The future Les Paul started playing guitar in 1929, was quite an inquisitive tinkerer, and he also felt the need for a louder guitar with a clearer tonality. Young Lester jammed the needle from his mom's Victrola into the top of his Sears guitar top to be heard at the local drive-in, and he also began experimenting with a piece of railroad track - a truly solid body - and various transducers.

Soon, a small but growing revolution began.

In 1931, National's George Beauchamp and Paul Barth experimented with a Brunswick transducer on

a 2x4 wooden plank, and then wound copper coils around six polepieces on the kitchen table using a sewing machine. They discovered that fitting two opposing horseshoe magnets around the strings increased the magnetic field, and that the strummed string would disturb the magnetic field, creating voltage. They now had a signal to amplify, and National foreman Harry Watson made a Spanish guitar with a small, round body to hold the pickup. The "Frying Pan" was introduced in August 1932 as a solidbody, cast-aluminum Hawaiian guitar. In 1933, Volu-Tone produced a solidbody steel guitar with electrically charged strings, and, in 1935, Stella also built a solidbody steel guitar.

Gibson finally saw the "electronic" light, and Walt Fuller developed a bar-magnet pickup to be used on the company's EHG and EH- 150 steel guitars in November 1935. Epiphone jumped on the bandwagon that year with its Electraphone and Electar electrics, and Paul Tutmarc produced his solidbody Model 736 Electronic Bass Fiddle (predating the Fender Precision by more than 15 years). Slingerland's Electro Model 401 became the first commercially available solidbody-electric Spanish guitar (at \$ 135, a high price for 1936), and Rickenbacher (as it was originally spelled) introduced its Bakelite Spanish and BD-6 steel models in 1935, which many consider to be solidbodies.

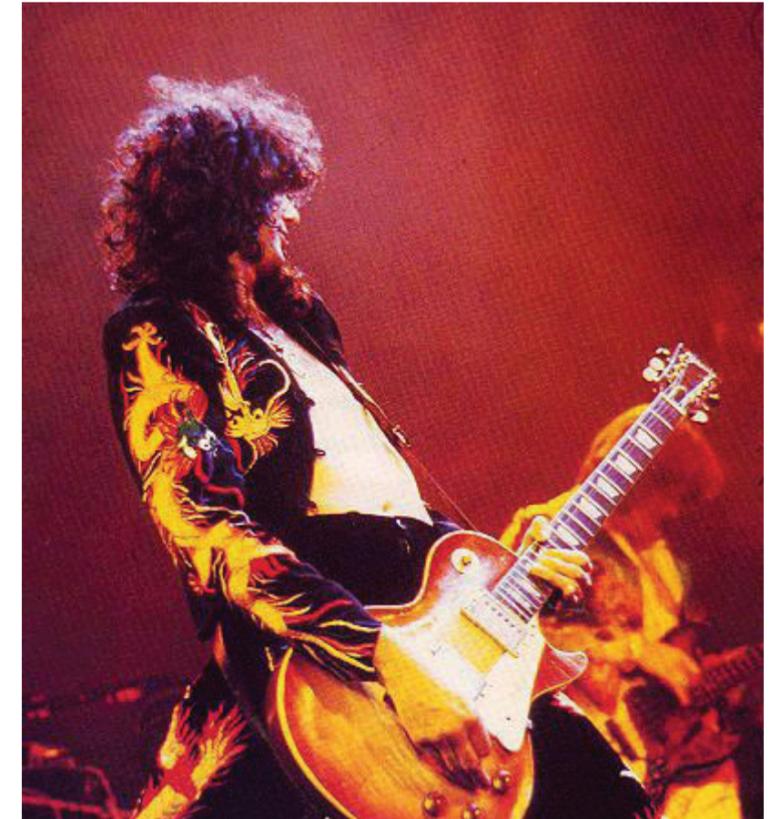
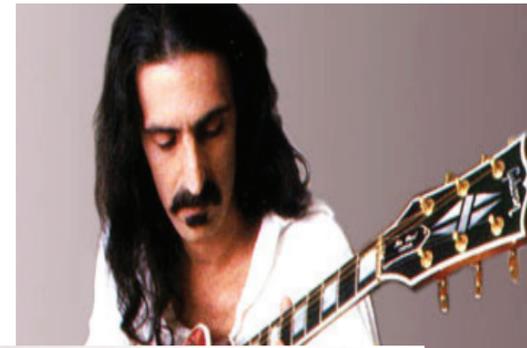
Our hero. Les Paul, was far from idle during this time. He famously put an Epiphone neck on a 4x4 chunk of wood, and spent Sundays refining the project at the Epiphone factory on 14th Street in Manhattan. After performing with his "broomstick with pickups on it," he added the wings of an Epiphone archtop to make it easier to hold and more cosmetically appealing. The famous "Log" - the first two-pickup electric guitar - was born in 1941. Paul tried to get Epiphone to manufacture it, and they tossed him out. Gibson wasn't too accommodating, either.

And still more innovations were coming. On May 25, 1948, Paul Bigsby constructed the solidbody Merle Travis guitar, and after seeing the Bigsby on the bandstands, Leo Fender and George Fullerton started on their Broadcaster prototype in 1949. When the renamed Fender Telecaster became a success in 1950, Gibson's Ted McCarty brought Paul on as a consultant - the solidbody "Log" finally getting some respect. However, controversy remains over Paul's input. McCarty Claimed Gibson showed Paul an almost complete prototype, and that Paul contributed his name on the headstock (to boost sales), the trapeze tailpiece (which turned out to be a misstep as the unanchored

## In Loving Memory of Les Paul Guitarist, Inventor, Innovator 1915 - 2009

tailpiece was easily knocked out of tune), the gold color, and other cosmetic suggestions. One thing is certain, though: In May 1952, Gibson sent early samples of the new solidbody to Les Paul and Mary Ford, and they performed with the instruments immediately. The rest is truly history.

# Some Of The Best With A Legend



The list of musicians who have played a Les Paul at some point in their careers is long and varied and includes such stellar names as Clapton, Page, Beck and Slash. The Les Paul's appeal hasn't been restricted to rock legends though. It's popularity with guitarists from almost every genre testify to its versatility. From blues legends like John Lee Hooker to country stars like Brooke and Dunn and Jazz maestros like Les Paul himself, the Les Paul magic has touched them all. Here's a partial list of players who use or have used Les Pauls during their careers:

**Jimmy Page** is an English guitarist, composer and record producer. He began his career as a studio session guitarist in London and was subsequently a member of The Yardbirds, from late 1966 to 1968, before founding the English rock band Led Zeppelin. Page has been described as one of the all-time most influential, important, and versatile guitarists and songwriters in rock history. In 2003, Rolling Stone magazine ranked Page #9 in their list of the 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time.

**Slash** is an English-American guitarist best known as the former lead guitarist of Guns N' Roses and as the current lead guitarist of Velvet Revolver. Slash won the "Best Guitarist" prize in the 2005 Esky Music Awards in Esquire magazine. "Sweet Child o' Mine" placed #37 on Guitar World's list of the "100 Greatest Guitar Solos." It also came in at number three on Blender's 500 Greatest Songs Since You Were Born, and at number 196 on Rolling Stone's 500 Greatest Songs of All Time. In March 2005, Q magazine placed it at number 6 in its list of the 100 Greatest Guitar Tracks.

**Ace Frehley** is an American guitarist best known as an original member and lead guitarist for the rock band Kiss founded by Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley. He took on the persona of "Space Ace" when the band adopted costumes and theatrics. Frehley played with the group from its inception in 1973 until his departure in 1982. After leaving Kiss, Frehley embarked on a moderately successful solo career, which was put on hold when he rejoined Kiss in 1996 for a highly successful reunion tour.

**Paul McCartney** is an English singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist who first gained worldwide fame as one of the founding members of The Beatles. McCartney and John Lennon formed one of the most influential and successful songwriting partnerships and wrote some of the most popular music in rock and roll history. McCartney is listed in Guinness World Records as the most successful musician and composer in popular music history, with 60 gold discs and sales of 100 million singles.

**Pete Townshend** is an award-winning English rock guitarist, singer, songwriter, composer, and writer. Townshend made his name as the guitarist and principal songwriter for rock band The Who. His career with them spans more than 40 years, during which time the band grew to be considered one of the greatest and most influential rock bands of all time. Townshend is the primary songwriter for the group, writing over 100 songs on the band's eleven studio albums, including

the rock operas Tommy and Quadrophenia, plus dozens of additional songs that appeared as non-album singles, bonus tracks on reissues, and tracks on rarities compilations such as Odds and Sods.

**Frank Zappa** was an American musician most well known for his work with his band "The Mothers". In a career spanning more than 30 years, Zappa established himself as a prolific and highly distinctive composer, electric guitar player and band leader. He worked in various different musical genres and wrote music for rock bands, jazz ensembles, synthesizers and symphony orchestra. Zappa was posthumously inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995, and received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997.

**Zakk Wylde** is an American musician, who is best known for his roles as a guitarist for Ozzy Osbourne and founder of Black Label Society. He was lead guitarist and vocalist in Pride & Glory, who released one self-titled album in 1994 before disbanding. As a solo artist he released Book of Shadows in 1996. Zakk Wylde has his signature Gibson Les Paul model, which prominently features black concentric circles on a white background.

**Alex Lifeson** is a Canadian musician, known as the guitarist for the rock group Rush. Lifeson founded Rush in the summer of 1968, and has been an integral member of the three-piece band ever since. During live performances, Lifeson, like the other members of Rush, performs real-time triggering of sampled instruments, concurrently with his guitar playing. The bulk of Lifeson's work in music has been with Rush, although Lifeson has contributed to a body of work outside of the band as well.

