

Why Buy A Guitar?



Last issue's Gear Of The Year round-up got me thinking about buying another guitar again (it's a bit of an occupational hazard, that) and, while mulling possible choices, I started reflecting on the whole tangle of emotions, musical requirements, gut feelings and carefully reasoned motives that goes into the average guitar purchase. In a purely rational world, we'd choose guitars solely for their musical utility – but thankfully people are more complex than that and it's amazing how a particular guitar can creep into our dreams even if we don't have a sensible use for it.

Guitars are always, in some measure, about the heart as much as the head. The flip side of that, however, is that it's healthy to remember that many of the greatest musicians in the world began their careers with makeshift or basic instruments – but despite that they didn't agonise about finding the perfect guitar before getting started on making hits. Songwriting legend Yusuf/Cat Stevens, whom we interviewed for this issue on page 68, recalls the decent but unremarkable Hagström 12-string that propelled him to early fame, and his experience is by no means unique. As Kurt Vile observed a couple of issues back, at the end of the day "it's the wizard, not the wand". I doubt that will stop me (or any of us) wanting just *one more* guitar, though. Enjoy the issue and see you next time – hopefully there might even be a gig or two this year..

Jamie Dickson **Editor-in-chief**

Editor's Highlights



Steve Gunn
The American indie songsmith takes us inside the sounds of his album *The Unseen In Between* on **p34**



Epiphone Rebooted
A trio of new Epiphone solidbody electric reissues seriously impressed us – at a great price, too. Read the full review on **p80**



Martin Barre
He was the guitar wizard behind Tull's prog hits, and the affable Mr Barre has some great guitar-buying stories, too, on **p114**

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