

# 1 Introduction

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Look closely at any list of the “greatest guitarists of all time,” and you will get a good indication of the existing values and mythologies that surround the instrument. To take two examples—a 2015 list of “100 Greatest Guitarists” compiled by *Rolling Stone* magazine, and a 2020 list of “100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time” put together by *Guitar World* magazine—several features stand out.<sup>1</sup> These lists are overwhelmingly composed of male musicians. While there is a certain amount of racial diversity, especially with regard to African American guitarists, on the whole, both lists are predominantly white. Very few musicians on either list come from places other than the United States or the United Kingdom. Although there is some representation of players from multiple genres—blues, jazz, country, and funk—the vast majority of “great guitarists” on these lists are associated with rock or rock-oriented genres such as metal and, perhaps surprisingly, punk.<sup>2</sup> Following from this, and most germane for our purposes, nearly all of the musicians on both the *Rolling Stone* and *Guitar World* lists are known principally as *electric* guitarists. This last detail is so much the case that the *Guitar World* list even includes a separate subcategory of the “best acoustic guitarists of all time” that only features four musicians. Where the canonization of guitar-based musicianship is concerned, the electric guitar has effectively become *the* guitar, at least in the sphere of popular music—the instrument that connotes the most valorized and visible forms of virtuosity in recent musical culture.

In *The Cambridge Companion to the Electric Guitar*, we seek to examine this most fabled of instruments from multiple angles that will contribute to a richer understanding of how it assumed such a position of influence. We will survey the electric guitar’s history and legacy while also striving to present a range of new perspectives that address its interlocking roles in association with music technology, musical practice, social relations, and the transmission of cultural meaning across time and space. The collection is truly interdisciplinary, bringing together scholars from musicology, ethnomusicology, media studies, ethnic studies, cultural geography, popular music studies, and organology. It takes as its starting point the fact that recent years have seen gradual but steady growth in the range of published scholarly commentary on the electric guitar’s history and cultural significance, starting with coeditor Steve Waksman’s *Instruments of Desire: The*

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*Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience*, published in 1999. Building on this gathering momentum in what might be termed an emerging field of guitar studies, *The Cambridge Companion to the Electric Guitar* aims to present a state-of-the-field guide that also serves as an accessible primer on the many ways in which the electric guitar has come to matter.

The standard history of the electric guitar is available through scores of journalistic accounts and nonacademic titles, as well as a small number of scholarly books. Although there remains some ambiguity as to what should count as the “first” electric guitar, the instrument’s history is usually understood to start with the 1932 production of the “Frying Pan,” a distinctively shaped steel guitar that was issued by the Ro-Pat-In Guitar Company, later to become Rickenbacker. During that first decade of the 1930s, pioneering instrumentalists such as country steel guitarist Bob Dunn, blues guitarist T-Bone Walker, and jazz guitarist Charlie Christian demonstrated the capabilities of the new amplified guitar as a solo instrument in a diverse array of musical settings. The amplification of the guitar arose through a range of intersecting changes: technological developments wherein microphones became an increasingly common aspect of professional musical life; changes in media linked to radio and sound recording, which placed new pressures on the audibility of various instruments including the guitar; and the evolving character of popular music as the “big band” era emerged, which made it harder for unamplified instruments to be heard without new forms of technological mediation. Over time, musicians became more attentive to the different sounds of the electric guitar rather than only its practical value. Timbre became increasingly subject to experimentation, at times leading to early experiments with distortion as heard in the efforts of blues artists such as Muddy Waters and Guitar Slim, and at other times inspiring efforts toward further refinement in pursuit of a clean or “pure” tone, most associated with the guitarist and inventor Les Paul.

A major watershed came with the advent of rock and roll in the 1950s. The electric guitar is seen to have done much to lay the groundwork for the sound and ethos of rock and roll and, at the same time, became significantly more prominent as it became associated with the new music. Early rock and roll guitarists such as Chuck Berry, Scotty Moore, Bo Diddley, and Paul Burlison set a template for a hybrid style of virtuosity that drew upon blues, jazz, and country styles in roughly equal measure. Just as importantly, the decade of the 1950s saw the creation of arguably the two most influential electric guitar models in the instrument’s history, the Gibson Les Paul (1952) and the Fender Stratocaster (1954). By the time “rock and roll” was becoming reclassified as “rock” in the mid 1960s, the

electric guitar's leading practitioners were becoming canonized as a new sort of cultural icon, the "guitar hero." Meanwhile, continued technological innovations allowed for the sheer volume of the amplified guitar to reach hitherto unknown proportions as the output of guitar amps grew dramatically, and also gave guitarists more control over fine details of timbre with the advent of a range of effects pedals or "stompboxes" pertaining to distortion, overdrive, reverb, echo, chorus and flanging, and other variations. This wave of innovation at the level of both musicianship and technology endured through the 1980s, when digital technology brought a range of new devices to the electric guitar market, and genres such as heavy metal and indie rock generated a new wave of star players. By the 1990s, however, the electric guitar began to recede in cultural impact as rock was challenged by hip hop and electronic dance music for dominance of the youth-oriented popular music market. While the instrument retains a wide player base, it is no longer perceived as a cutting-edge technology but is more likely to be valued as a bearer of tradition, with vintage instruments from the heyday period of the 1950s and 1960s now commanding prices that only members of a moneyed leisure class can afford.

*The Cambridge Companion to the Electric Guitar* is designed to intervene in this established narrative along multiple fronts. Chapters on electric guitar history stretch the chronology of the instrument backward in time and broaden our understanding of what should be included in that history. A section on technology and timbre treats the sound of the electric guitar as something that demands dedicated analysis, and features authors who apply the methods and theoretical questions of sound studies to the analysis of timbre. Contributors addressing musical style and technique investigate the cultural value of virtuosity while also providing a material analysis of electric guitar technique and its evolution. Chapters focused on the social significance of the electric guitar draw attention to the ways in which gender and race have shaped and been shaped by the instrument, seeking to redress the general exclusion or marginalization of women and artists of color from available histories. Other chapters on social significance examine the ecology of electric guitar manufacturing—a long-neglected topic now receiving needed attention—and the participation of electric guitarists in online communities. A final section of the *Companion* considers the electric guitar's global circulation, building on recent ethnomusicological research and expanding beyond the usual US/UK axis that has dominated writing on the instrument. This section includes chapters dedicated to Africa, the Afro-Caribbean, and Southeast Asia, notable regions that have been understudied, and we hope this will inspire further research into the electric guitar's entry into diverse national and local settings.

## Guitar Studies

Introducing the *Cambridge Companion to the Guitar* some twenty years ago, Victor Coelho observed that the study of rock guitar was established as “a bona fide academic industry” in light of recent publications on the topic by Waksman and Robert Walser.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the spate of academic guitar-related publications at the turn of the twenty-first century—not limited in focus to either rock or the electric guitar—suggested a coming wave of scholarly activity.<sup>4</sup> However, that wave has not yet fully materialized. Much excellent work has been done, but until recently, the pace has been sporadic and selective in its focus. A good indication of the halting progress, and more recent surge, that has characterized research on the guitar, and the electric guitar in particular, comes from tracking conferences dedicated to the instrument. Back in 1996, the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History in Washington, DC, hosted a groundbreaking day-long symposium dedicated to the history of the electric guitar, “Electrified, Amplified, and Deified: The Electric Guitar, Its Makers, and Its Players.” To the best of our knowledge, no comparable gathering was held again until 2015, when Bowling Green State University in Ohio hosted the two-day “Electric Guitar in Popular Culture” conference. Subsequent conferences held at the Philharmonie de Paris in France (2016) and at Texas Tech University in the USA (2018 and 2022) demonstrated a growing commitment to deepen electric guitar scholarship that continues to the present day.

When coeditor Steve Waksman gave a keynote address at the 2015 Bowling Green conference, he asked whether there was sufficient scholarly work on the guitar to warrant the recognition of a distinct field of “guitar studies” akin to such parallel designations as metal music studies (which now has its own *Cambridge Companion*, compiled by this volume’s other coeditor, Jan-Peter Herbst),<sup>5</sup> popular music studies, or sound studies. At the time it seemed premature to make such a declaration, and it still seems so today. Unlike these other named fields of study, there is no scholarly journal dedicated to the study of the guitar—electric or otherwise—and no professional organization that allows those conducting research on the instrument to convene regularly.<sup>6</sup> What does exist is an expanding body of literature on the electric guitar that provides a backdrop for current and future work, and informs the essays collected here. Guitar studies may not have come to fruition, at least not yet, but its foundation is being laid.

Of course, it would be a mistake to conflate guitar studies with *academic* guitar studies. A sort of literature on the electric guitar can be traced back to the columns of influential American music publications of the 1930s, such as *DownBeat* and *Metronome*, where early practitioners such as Jack

Miller advocated on behalf of the newly developed instrument and offered some of the first accounts—albeit incomplete—of its nascent history.<sup>7</sup> The founding of *Guitar Player* magazine in 1967 established a regular outlet for guitar-related articles, interviews, and product profiles, and the writing in that magazine laid the groundwork for much of the historical work that followed. A breakthrough publication was *Guitar Player* editor Tom Wheeler's *American Guitars* (1982; revised and updated 1992), which offered a wide-ranging survey of major US guitar manufacturers such as Gibson and Fender, as well as many smaller companies and their instruments. Wheeler's compendium remains in many ways unmatched in the literature on the guitar, but it has been joined by a number of significant studies of specific guitar companies and models, with Gibson, Fender, and Rickenbacker having generated especially rich efforts to document their respective histories.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, it is fair to say that it has been left to guitar journalists, collectors, and other non-academic historians to reconstruct the broad contours of the electric guitar's evolution, and fill in essential information about how the instrument was first conceived and then reconceived at key moments in time.

Among the questions that have preoccupied electric guitar academics and journalists alike are those concerning origins, inventions, and continued technological developments that have shaped the instrument since its inception. When one can say that the electric guitar was “invented” remains contested to a degree, and new research by Matthew Hill has helped to expand the range of inquiry back into the late nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Beyond that fundamental issue, the electric guitar matters in part due to its connection to the larger history of music and audio technology. Certain milestones in the instrument's technical evolution have preoccupied electric guitar historians for decades, perhaps none more so than the conception and production of the solid-body electric guitar.<sup>10</sup> However, to fully consider the technological facets of the electric guitar requires more than tracing the ongoing large and small adjustments that have been made to the instrument over time, important as they are. It also necessitates contemplating how the instrument relates to the spread of amplifying devices during the early and middle decades of the twentieth century, to the growing impact of microphones, loudspeakers, and public address systems on live performance and recording studio practice alike. From a different angle, the electric guitar *as* music technology is tied to a wide range of interrelated devices and practices that have been used to shape and manipulate musical sound, or timbre, from electric pianos and synthesizers to stompboxes and smartphone audio applications.

One of the most widely used and accessible objects of music technology created during the twentieth century, the electric guitar also stands at the

intersection of technological innovation and commercial instrument production and consumption. To be blunt, the electric guitar has been a highly successful commodity. Guitar corporations such as Fender and Gibson have not drawn the scholarly attention devoted to major record companies such as RCA, Columbia, or EMI, but they exist as significant commercial forces in their own right and have been subject to the same processes of corporate consolidation and horizontal integration that have characterized the music industry at large. Fender's purchase by entertainment conglomerate CBS in 1965 is often held up as a milestone in the history of the electric guitar industry—and charged with having prompted a decades-long decline in the quality of the company's output that was only recently reversed—but finds its parallels elsewhere. Consider the history of the Gibson company, which has undergone several ownership changes from the 1944 acquisition by Chicago Musical Instruments to the 1970s takeover by Norlin, the 1986 purchase by private investors David Berryman and Henry Juszkiewicz, and the 2018 “rescue” from the brink of bankruptcy by hedge fund company KKR.<sup>11</sup> These evolving corporate structures have significant implications for thinking about the kinds of research and development that manufacturers conduct to keep up with changing market trends and shape the ongoing interrelationship between the value of the electric guitar as an icon of craftsmanship, virtuosity, tradition, and innovation, and its value as a financial instrument.

Similar tensions exist on the consumer side of the electric guitar's circulation. The booming vintage guitar market, where the most desirable models (late 1950s Sunburst Les Pauls, pre-CBS Stratocasters) routinely fetch tens if not hundreds of thousands of dollars, indicates how inextricably linked aesthetic and commercial values have become. Even the more modest realms of electric guitar consumption are characterized by the regular pursuit of “gear acquisition syndrome” (GAS), wherein the purchase of new guitar-related equipment—whether stompboxes, amplifiers, or guitars themselves—often seems to be an end in itself.<sup>12</sup> When one factors in the scores of guitar-related recordings and publications that dedicated electric guitar consumers have supported, it becomes clear that the electric guitar industry extends well beyond the manufacture of the instrument itself. Yet this ongoing wave of consumption has an impact that goes far beyond the drive for profit, on the one hand, or the desire to die with the most guitar “toys” on the other. Like other cultural commodities, the electric guitar's commercial life has been accompanied by the formation of powerful social bonds around and through the instrument based on taste (“Do you like single-coils or humbuckers?”), attraction to craft (“Look at that finish!”), dedication to musicianship (“That's some serious shredding!”), and fascination with sonic exploration (“What pedals did

you use to get that effect?”). The world of electric guitar consumption has always been strongly participatory, maybe all the more so in the era of digital media, where message boards and YouTube channels are filled with guitarists exchanging opinions, methods, and information with one another.

This is not to say that everyone has been equally welcomed into the social world of the electric guitar. The biases evident in the “greatest guitarists” lists cited above have proven stubborn. For much of its history, the instrument has been attached to a distinctly demonstrative sort of masculinity captured in Waksman’s term, the “technophallus.”<sup>13</sup> While women have been a part of the electric guitar’s history since the beginning, they have often struggled to gain acceptance or visibility in the face of assumptions that a female electric guitarist is an anomaly, attitudes that have been challenged by the recent rise of women-centered guitar publications such as *She Shreds* and *Guitar Girl*. With regard to race, the social dimensions of the electric guitar have been less exclusionary but no less complicated. Black guitarists such as Charlie Christian, Chuck Berry, and Jimi Hendrix have long been recognized as among the instrument’s greatest innovators. Over time, however, their significance has assumed the status of “influences” rooted in the past, while the current public profile of the instrument has been progressively whitened. Even during his own career, Hendrix’s prominence as a Black rock virtuoso was treated as exceptional and sometimes even freakish, and successors such as Prince and Vernon Reid have faced continued pushback.<sup>14</sup> Electric guitar scholars continue to come to terms with the patterns that have shaped the instrument’s reception, and to offer counter-narratives that draw attention to oft-overlooked artists.<sup>15</sup>

Broadening the common image of the electric guitar, its players, and its audiences entails an acknowledgment of this instrument’s wide global reach. Some anthologies of guitar writing, such as Kevin Dawe and Andy Bennett’s *Guitar Cultures* and the earlier *Cambridge Companion to the Guitar*, have drawn attention to the global circulation of the instrument, and Dawe’s valuable study of the “new guitarscape” provides a compelling framework for thinking about the guitar as a medium of cross-cultural activity and influence.<sup>16</sup> Despite these efforts, the guitar—and perhaps especially the electric guitar—maintains an overwhelming association with the US and the UK that renders other territories as background. There are few studies that illuminate the circuits of commerce and manufacturing that have allowed the electric guitar to take root in Latin America, Asia, or various corners of the African continent, and even less work that has shed light on the degree to which electric guitar production has itself become indigenized in these different settings. Recent studies of electric

guitar ecology, stressing the environmental impact of instrument manufacturing and the commercial exchange of natural resources that drive guitar building, offer a promising new way to think about the instrument's global dimensions while also questioning many of the traditional processes through which electric guitars are made.<sup>17</sup>

Tying together these various strands of inquiry is the musicianship associated with the electric guitar. The difference that the electric guitar made was never simply reducible to the allowance of greater volume. From the early days of the instrument's history, musicians recognized that the sound of the electric guitar could be used to aesthetic advantage, whether to enhance the sustain and attack of the steel guitar in Hawaiian music or Western Swing, or to allow the guitarist to "play like a horn" in the growing swing bands of the 1930s. This fundamental impulse to play with sound continued to grow with enhanced amplification technologies and the widening availability of a range of electronic effects, from distortion to reverb to chorus and wah, which made electric guitar timbre a strikingly mutable thing. Meanwhile, guitarists integrated the instrument into an expanding array of genres, each giving rise to its own characteristic techniques: the rhythmic comping of jazz, the finger vibrato of blues, the chicken-picking of country, the tremolo bar permutations of psychedelic rock, and the two-handed tapping of heavy metal, to name just a few. Studying electric guitar musicianship requires attending to this stylistic range in both its specificity and its diversity, to grasp how versatile and customizable the instrument has been in the hands of its players, and to understand the difference that the amplification of the guitar's sound has made and continues to make.

### **Overview of the *Cambridge Companion to the Electric Guitar***

Matthew W. Hill opens Part I, History, by uncovering the hidden history of the electric guitar and placing its development in the context of musical instrument electrification. Hill sheds light on the electric guitar's misunderstood (pre-)history, tracing the instrument back to eighteenth-century Europe, with notable stops in Hawaii, Germany, Atlantic City, and the US Naval Academy. Hill also addresses widespread misconceptions about the key figures involved in the electric guitar's invention, events, and timeline during the twentieth century, examining the context and driving forces behind the instrument's technological advancements and growing popularity. Steve Waksman picks up where Hill's (pre-)history left off, investigating the electric guitar's "Golden Age" between 1951 and 1954. Waksman traces the roots of this high point back to the mid 1930s when

“Hawaiian” and “Spanish” electric models competed for dominance. This early moment of conflict set the stage for the advent of the solid-body Spanish electric and the broader expansion of the electric guitar business that would follow. Waksman contends that low-budget instruments played a notable part in the burgeoning guitar culture of this era, and proposes an alternative history that challenges the mythology around Gibson’s and Fender’s “classic” instruments by emphasizing the significance of various developments that are too often downplayed in available histories, such as continued innovations in the design of hollow-body electrics and advances in electric guitar retail. Whereas Waksman focuses on the advancements in electric guitar design from the 1930s to the 1950s, John Covach delves into the emergence of guitar heroes from the mid 1960s to the early 1990s, with primary emphasis on the years 1970–1985. Covach examines the influence of the “hippie aesthetic” on musicians’ ambitions, elevating technical virtuosity. Surveying *Guitar Player* magazine reader polls, Covach uncovers the preferences of aspiring guitarists, which often diverged from mainstream popularity. Today’s guitar hero polls reveal that 1970s icons maintain their status, with new faces joining while some older ones fade away.

Part II, *Technology and Timbre*, begins with Matt Brounley’s study of electric guitar design since 1950, exploring the tension between historical reverence and innovation. As Brounley points out, modern electric guitars often mimic mid twentieth-century classics such as the Fender Stratocaster and Gibson Les Paul. Successful examples like Fender’s Custom Shop series pay homage to the past, while failures such as Gibson’s “G-Force” tuner push innovation beyond consumer acceptance. Brounley argues that the electric guitar remains alive, continually reinventing itself by balancing tradition and progress, contrary to claims of its demise. Kyle Devine then explores the development of electric guitar amplification, emphasizing its social and political context over pure loudness progression, and linking amplification history to contemporary scholarly concerns such as signal and supply chains. Through his analysis, Devine concludes that the true power of amplifiers extends beyond volume, encompassing broader dimensions of guitar and musical culture. Following Devine’s exploration of amplifiers and amplification, Erik Broess examines the significance of electric guitar effect pedals as sites for tone experimentation in the 1960s and beyond, outlining a thriving, genre-agnostic guitar community passionate about tone-shaping devices. Broess presents a concise history of guitar pedals, focusing on fuzz, modulation, and delay technologies, and analyzes iconic recordings by artists such as The Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, and U2, who popularized these effects. Examining the influence of the “stomp box” format, Broess concludes that guitar pedals not only

produce musical sounds but also generate knowledge about musical sounds, highlighting nonhuman contributions to popular music development.

Part III, *Musical Style and Technique*, opens with Philippe Gonin's analysis of instrumental gesture from classical music to rock and from rock to contemporary art music. Taking the "classical" gesture as a starting point, Gonin examines how some of the best-known rock guitar virtuosos, from Jimi Hendrix to Eddie Van Halen, broke with this gesture in their pursuit of new forms of expression and virtuosity. This experimentation with playing gesture and tone, according to Gonin, had a lasting influence not only on guitarists in pure rock genres but also on composers of contemporary repertoire, whose conscious use of technique has advanced the hybridization of genres. The next chapter by Brian F. Wright takes a different look at the electric guitar by considering the electric bass in popular music as a parallel development to the electric guitar. Wright outlines five overlapping key performance strategies: basic accompaniments, rhythmic- and groove-oriented approaches, melodic-oriented approaches, slap and pop styles, and the use of alternative instruments and techniques. These strategies, Wright argues, offer listeners a simplified framework to appreciate how the electric bass guitar shapes a song's sound and feel, highlighting the profound role bass guitarists have played in popular music history. In the following chapter, Alexander Paul Vallejo and Jan-Peter Herbst examine innovations in guitar technique in the new millennium, particularly in progressive rock- and metal-related guitar cultures occurring online and in social media. The authors explore three areas of creative advancement of melodic techniques: percussive techniques, tapping, and using the thumb. These adaptations, influenced by techniques from the electric bass, encompass thumping, multi-finger and multi-role tapping, and under-strumming, among others. Vallejo and Herbst show that these techniques are increasingly important and expected in progressive rock and metal where virtuosity is the norm, prompting guitarists to explore unique approaches to stand out in a skilled field. The last chapter in Part III by Kate Lewis addresses an understudied area of electric guitar scholarship—rhythm playing—by reviewing existing literature and discussing the division between rhythm and lead playing. By examining various rhythm approaches in jazz, blues, R&B, funk, and disco recordings, Lewis suggests a rhythm-lead guitar spectrum rather than a rigid binary opposition, as supported by her case studies.

In Part IV, *The Electric Guitar in Society*, Sue Foley's chapter pays tribute to women in electric guitar history and culture. Drawing from her own experience as a professional guitarist and from interviews with fellow women guitar players conducted since 2001, Foley provides a summary of

her interviewees' perspectives on their time in the music industry and their encounters with the guitar. Foley observes a significant shift in the number and status of female guitarists. Whereas there were few women in guitar media and culture in the past, today various platforms showcase women of all ages, backgrounds, musical genres, and cultures excelling on the guitar. As Foley suggests, these changes owe much to the women who "blazed the trails," many of whom she has interviewed. The subsequent chapter by Mashadi Matabane explores the intersection of race, gender, and genre in the experiences of Black women electric guitarists. It highlights how genre norms in the music industry often prioritize gender and race over musicianship, affecting the visibility and value of Black women musicians. According to Matabane, white men often dominate the guitar scene across various genres such as blues, jazz, rock, and heavy metal, leaving Black women underrepresented. As Matabane suggests, gospel could be the crucial genre in which Black women electric guitarists carve a visible and valued presence, shedding light on critical issues of representation in the music world. The following chapter by Chris Gibson and Andrew Warren deals with another societal issue that guitarists usually (and willingly) tend to overlook: the ecological effects of electric guitar manufacturing. Considering the material, cultural, and political aspects of production, Gibson and Warren examine the guitar's composite materials and impact on the environment. They discuss related issues such as species endangerment and climate change, and particularly emerging sustainability efforts in response to resource insecurity and climate change, including timber diversification and urban tree planting, to finally address guitarists' responsibility for the instrument's ecological challenges. In the last chapter of Part IV, Daniel Lee investigates virtual guitar communities to recognize the impact of the internet on electric guitar culture. Lee undertakes an auto-ethnographic exploration of virtual guitar communities on a local, glocal, and global scale, examining how these communities have evolved, their various activities, and their overarching purpose. The chapter considers the enduring cultural implications of online communities, including the possibility of Western music dominance, while exploring the paradoxical effect of increased global exposure for lesser-known microcultures that embrace the electric guitar.

The *Companion's* final section, Part V, The Global Instrument, begins with Nathaniel Braddock's exploration of the history of electric guitar music in Sub-Saharan Africa through the lens of "new organology," looking at the interplay of materiality and social dynamics in music. As Braddock argues, local and transnational networks, including musician movements, instrument circulation, and musical knowledge exchange, shape the work of guitarists. These networks span physical infrastructure such as electrical

grids and digital platforms. Through ethnographic interviews with Ghanaian and Congolese guitarists, Braddock illustrates how these networks shape the instrument's materiality to offer fresh perspectives on African guitar music and its diasporic influence. The following chapter by Mike Alleyne then examines the secondary role of the electric guitar in Anglo-Caribbean popular music, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s when reggae gained global prominence. Drawing on first-hand interviews, Alleyne highlights early guitarists such as Ernest Ranglin and Lynn Taitt, analyzing the instrument's role in reggae recordings by The Wailers, Bob Marley, and Peter Tosh, with input from lead guitarist Donald Kinsey. He also explores the twenty-first-century fusion of rock and reggae in the Trinidad-based metal band Orange Sky. In the final chapter of the *Cambridge Companion*, Rebekah Moore shifts the focus to the electric guitar in Southeast Asia to explore how the instrument's multifaceted history is influenced by cultural, political, technological, and economic factors. Drawing on existing research and over a decade of ethnographic work in Indonesia, Moore traces the guitar's seventy-five-year journey in the region through sound recordings, films, media, and user-uploaded performances. As Moore shows, the electric guitar has spurred innovation in rock, metal, jazz, and regional genres such as Cambodian psychedelic rock and Indonesian dangdut. Beyond documenting the guitar's rich history in Southeast Asia, this chapter contributes to the decolonization of music and sound studies by highlighting the instrument's role in anti-colonial movements, nation-building, censorship, and resistance amid ideological clashes.

## Notes

1. "100 Greatest Guitarists," *Rolling Stone* (December 18, 2015), [www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/100-greatest-guitarists-153675](http://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/100-greatest-guitarists-153675) (accessed September 22, 2023); Jonathan Horsley, "The 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time," *Guitar World* (January 16, 2023), [www.guitarworld.com/features/the-100-greatest-guitarists-of-all-time](http://www.guitarworld.com/features/the-100-greatest-guitarists-of-all-time) (accessed September 22, 2023).
2. Historically, punk has been viewed as antithetical to the sort of virtuosity most heralded under the rubric of the "guitar hero," but in recent years some reevaluation of this opposition has taken place, which the *Guitar World* list exemplifies. For discussion of punk guitar style and the anti-virtuosic stance, see Steve Waksman, "Contesting Virtuosity: Rock Guitar Since 1976," in Victor Coelho (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Guitar* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 122–132.
3. Victor Coelho, "Picking Through Cultures: A Guitarist's Musical History," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Guitar*, p. 4. The works referred by Coelho are Robert Walser, *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music* (Wesleyan University Press, 1993), and Steve Waksman, *Instruments of Desire: The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience* (Harvard University Press, 1999).
4. Along with the works cited above, we would add Andy Bennett and Kevin Dawe (eds.), *Guitar Cultures* (Routledge, 2001), and Andre Millard (ed.), *The Electric Guitar: A History of an American Icon* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).
5. Jan-Peter Herbst, *The Cambridge Companion to Metal Music* (Cambridge University Press, 2023).

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6. Sound studies does not have its own academic organization, but there are substantial sections or interest groups dedicated to sound studies housed within the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, the Society for Ethnomusicology, and the American Studies Association.
7. See for instance, Jack Miller, "The First to Play Electric Guitar," *Down Beat* 3/5 (May 1936), p. 9.
8. A.R. Duchossoir, *Gibson Electrics: The Classic Years* (Hal Leonard Corporation, 1994); Walter Carter, *Gibson Guitars: 100 Years of an American Icon* (General Publishing Group, 1994); Richard Smith, *Fender: The Sound Heard 'Round the World* (Hal Leonard Corporation, 2009); Smith, *The Complete History of Rickenbacker Guitars* (Centerstream Guitars, 1987).
9. Matthew Hill, "George Breed and His Electrified Guitar," *Galpin Journal* 61 (April 2008), pp. 193–203.
10. For an excellent updated investigation into the invention and influence of the solid-body electric guitar, see Ian Port, *The Birth of Loud: Leo Fender, Les Paul, and the Guitar-Pioneering Rivalry That Shaped Rock 'n' Roll* (Scribner, 2019).
11. For a concise and up-to-date overview of Gibson's corporate history, see Brandon Stoner, "A Brief History of Gibson," *Guitar.com* (August 15, 2022), <https://guitar.com/features/brief-history-of-gibson> (accessed September 29, 2023).
12. Jan-Peter Herbst and Jonas Menze, *Gear Acquisition Syndrome: Consumption of Instruments and Technology in Popular Music* (University of Huddersfield Press, 2021).
13. Waksman, *Instruments of Desire*, p. 188.
14. This trend is connected to the larger trajectory of rock writ large, which has undergone a parallel process of whitening from the mid 1960s onward, a process captured well in Jack Hamilton's *Just Around Midnight: Rock and Roll and the Racial Imagination* (Harvard University Press, 2016). For more on Hendrix's implication in these dynamics, see Charles Shaar Murray, *Crosstown Traffic: Jimi Hendrix and the Rock 'n' Roll Revolution* (St. Martin's, 1989); and Greg Tate, *Midnight Lightning: Jimi Hendrix and the Black Experience* (Lawrence Hill, 2003).
15. Regarding this latter impulse, see Gayle Wald's essential *Shout, Sister, Shout! The Untold Story of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe* (Beacon, 2007), which has helped to convert Tharpe from a little-recognized figure in electric guitar history into a widely acknowledged pioneer.
16. Kevin Dawe, *The New Guitarscape in Critical Theory, Cultural Practice and Musical Performance* (Ashgate, 2010).
17. See, for instance, Chris Gibson and Andrew Warren, *The Guitar: Tracing the Grain Back to the Tree* (University of Chicago Press, 2021).

