

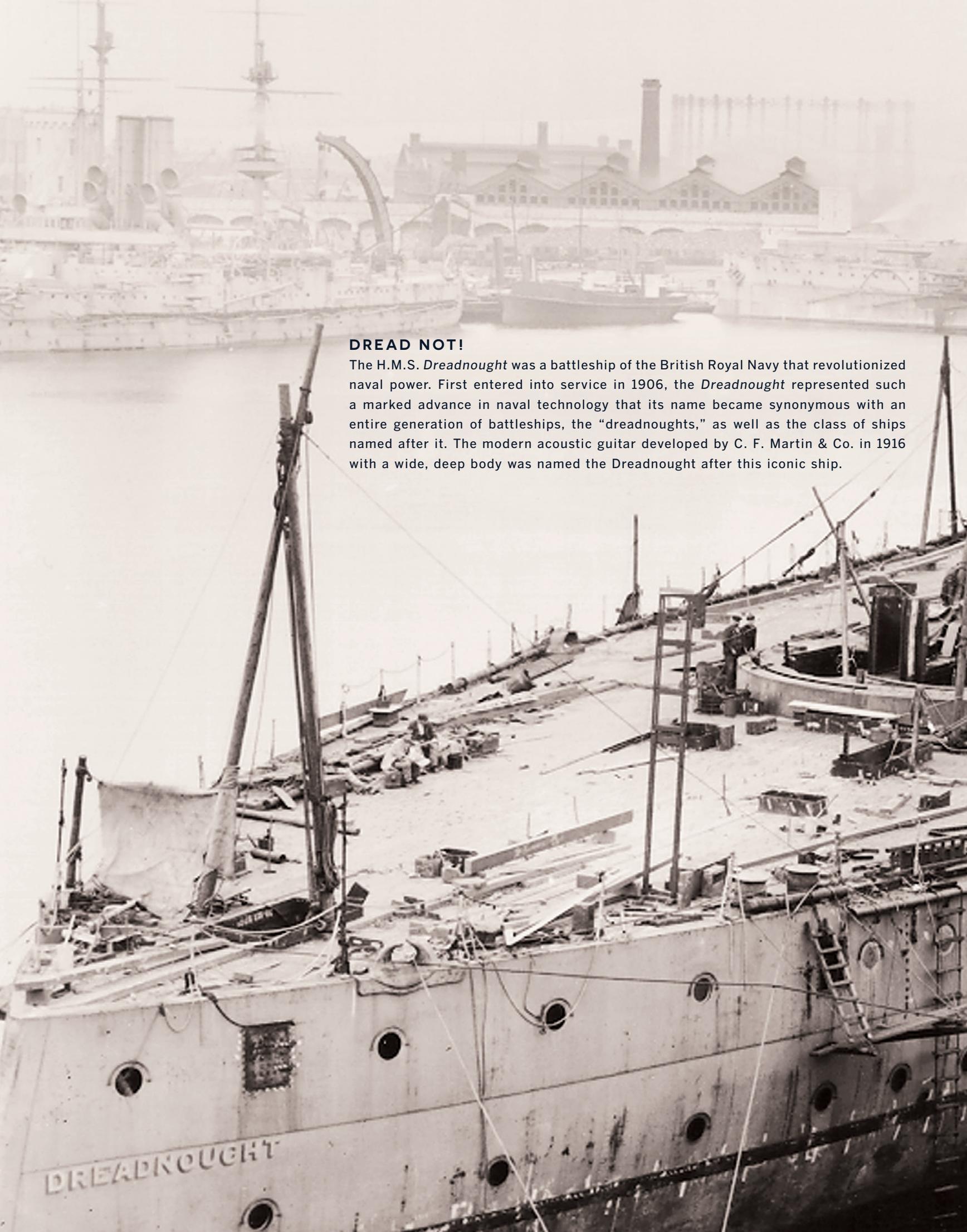
MARTIN®

THE JOURNAL OF ACOUSTIC GUITARS

A MUSICAL ICON TURNS 100
CELEBRATING THE MARTIN DREADNOUGHT GUITAR

DREADNOUGHT

VOLUME 5 | 2016



DREAD NOT!

The H.M.S. *Dreadnought* was a battleship of the British Royal Navy that revolutionized naval power. First entered into service in 1906, the *Dreadnought* represented such a marked advance in naval technology that its name became synonymous with an entire generation of battleships, the "dreadnoughts," as well as the class of ships named after it. The modern acoustic guitar developed by C. F. Martin & Co. in 1916 with a wide, deep body was named the Dreadnought after this iconic ship.





MARTIN D-45

THE CHARACTER

OF

American



POP MUSIC

OWES MUCH

TO THE

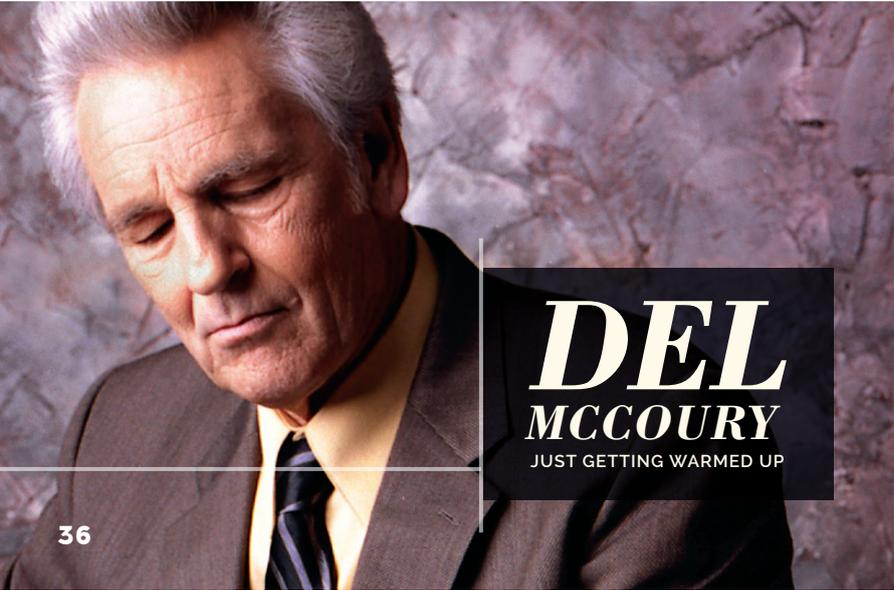
Dreadnought

THE
Dreadnought
Martin & Co.
EST. 1833
CENTENNIAL



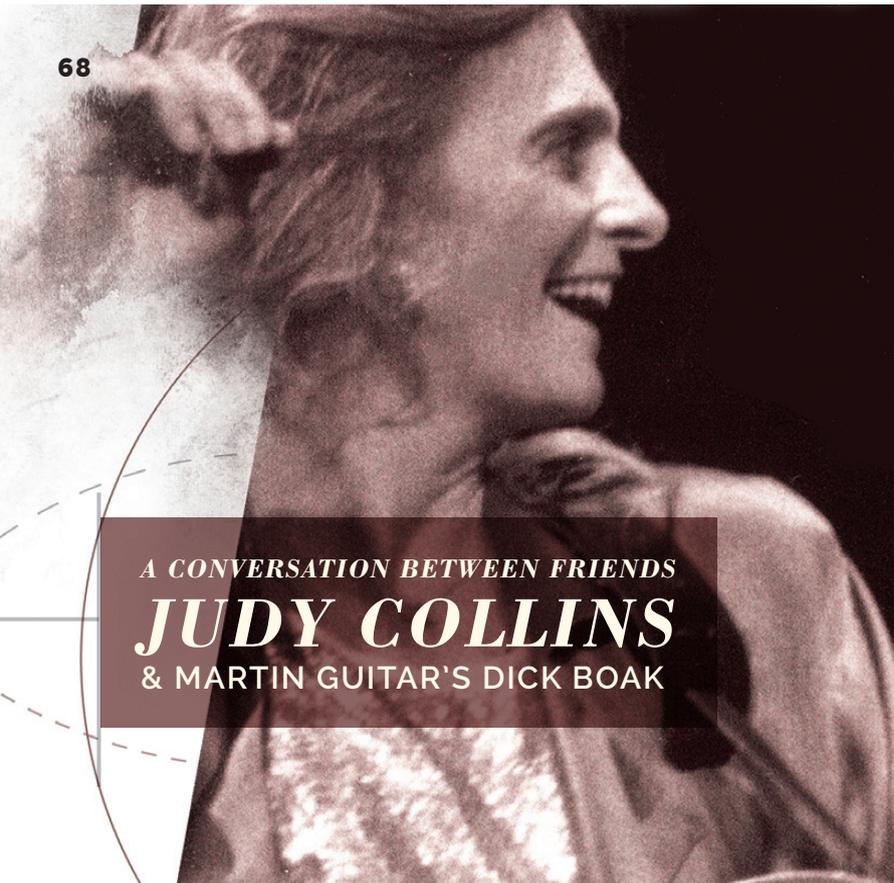
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SIMPSON**
COUNTRY SOUL

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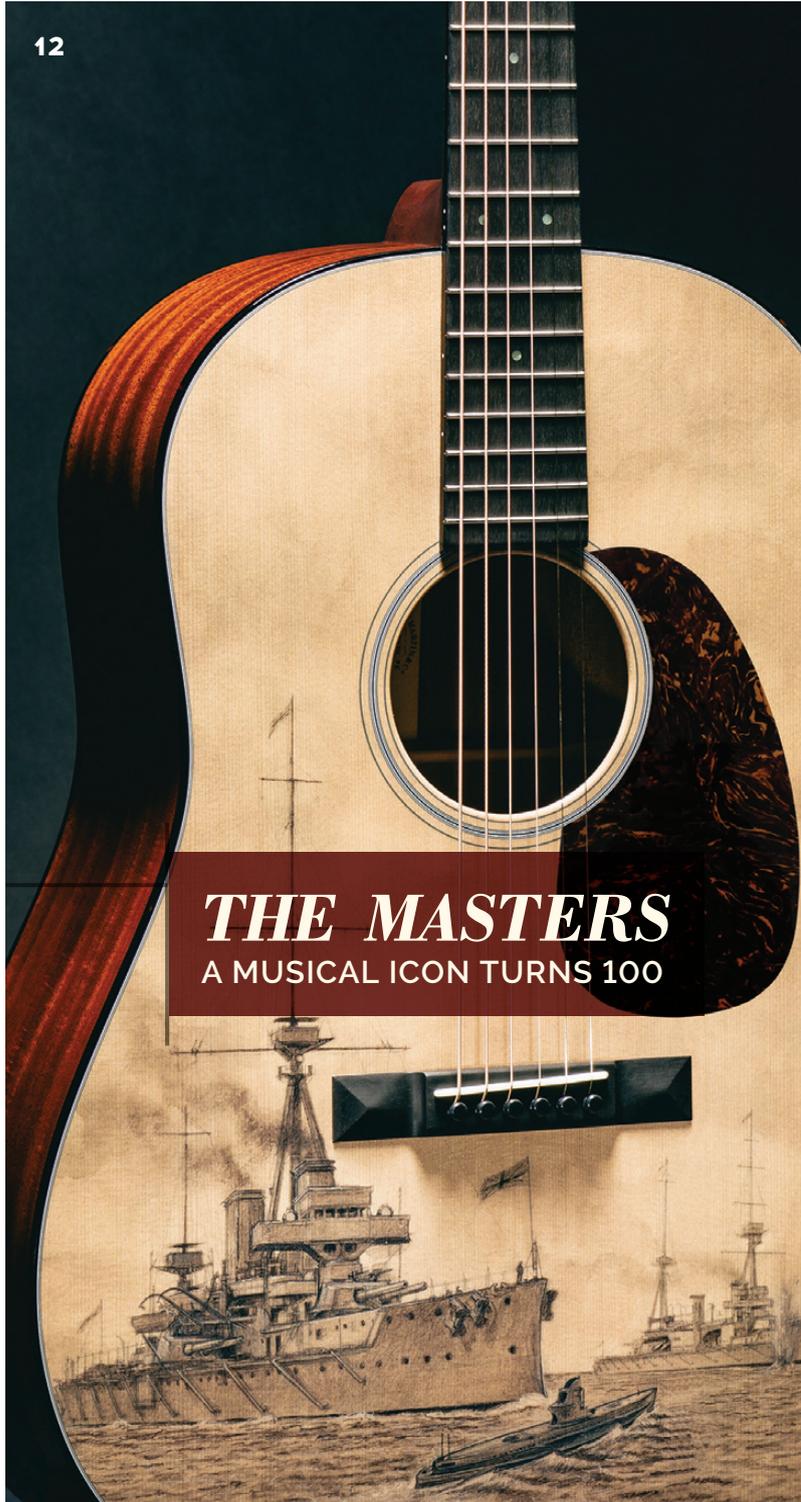
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**"I'VE ALWAYS SEEN
A MARTIN DREADNOUGHT AS THE
QUINTESSENTIAL ACOUSTIC GUITAR;
THE BLUE-COLLAR GUITAR,
UNDERSTATED AND SOLID
IN THE HANDS OF JIM CROCE
OR DOC WATSON
OR RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT.
I'VE ALWAYS LEANED TOWARD
THE WARMTH AND STRENGTH
OF THE D-35.
I GOT MY FIRST ONE, A 1977 MODEL,
ABOUT 12 YEARS AGO,
AND I'VE BEEN WEARING THEM OUT,
RE-FRETTING THEM AND
WEARING THEM OUT
AGAIN EVER SINCE."**



**SETH AVETT
OF THE AVETT BROTHERS**

"My new Koa Dreadnought custom is the most beautiful guitar I have ever seen." | **Bob Shane of the Kingston Trio**

"I bought my D-28 years ago because so many of my heroes played Martins, and I would never have thought that I'd be working with Martin one day to design my own signature model. Their guitars have been played by the best musicians of all time and cross all music genres, so it's still pretty unreal that they asked me to collaborate on a custom model... definitely something I can check off my bucket list!" | **Dierks Bentley**

"I play my Martin every day. The most reliable, fun, and beautiful sounding guitar I've ever had!" | **@StayTimeless**

"Just got my first Martin guitar and I love it!!! Thanks for making such a great product." | **@MG_Fransico1**

**"I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS ABOUT 15, I HAD MANAGED TO
SCORE AN OLD WASHBURN PARLOUR GUITAR IN A FLEA
MARKET FOR NEXT TO NOTHING, TINY LITTLE THING. I WAS
SO PROUD OF IT; THEN ONE DAY I BUMPED INTO A GUY
WHO HAD A MARTIN DREADNOUGHT. HE OPENED THE CASE,
AND MY LIFE CHANGED. THE FIRST I NOTICED WAS THAT THE
MACHINE HEADS WERE ALL MADE OF METAL, NOT THE
USUAL PLASTIC BUTTONS, AND THEN THE SOUND! TAKE IT
FROM ME, IT WAS A CATHARTIC MOMENT."**



ERIC CLAPTON

"The construction quality, the quality of wood used and the craftsmanship are superior, and the sound is the best you'll ever find."

Mike M. | Nebraska

**"I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A
DREADNOUGHT GUY,
AND MARTIN
CONTINUES
TO MAKE THE BEST.
WITH A DREADNOUGHT,
ESPECIALLY
A GREAT MARTIN,
I CAN COMFORTABLY
WRAP MYSELF AROUND
THE INSTRUMENT
AND FEEL IT
RESONATE, AND
THE DREADNOUGHT
SEEMS TO BE
THE MOST SONICALLY
VERSATILE
OF ALL BODY SHAPES."**



JASON ISBELL

"Because the moment you hear its sound, all worries are gone." **Chris V. | South Africa**

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TAKE IT FROM THE TOP

A WORD FROM CHRIS



dreadnought (dred-nawt): noun

1. A type of battleship introduced in the early 20th century, larger and faster than its predecessors and equipped entirely with large-caliber guns.
2. A type of acoustic guitar with a larger body and louder sound than all previous guitars.

The Martin Dreadnought guitar celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2016. It was named after the British battleship *Dreadnought*, which also celebrates its 110th anniversary in 2016.

I remember asking my grandfather where the name Dreadnought came from. He said his father, Frank Henry Martin, was a history buff and that he named our biggest guitar after the biggest British battleship ever made.

In anticipation of the 100th anniversary of the Martin Dreadnought, I decided to do a little research. I must admit I didn't know much about World War I.

The first thing I learned was that the war was fought more on land than at sea. Years of ugly, bloody fighting took place in muddy trenches along the borders of Germany, Belgium, France and Russia.

Prior to the war, the British determined that a new class of battleship was necessary to remind the world that the sun never set on the British Empire, even though other nations were vying for power.

The H.M.S. *Dreadnought* was commissioned in 1905 and put to sea in record time. It incorporated the latest and greatest thinking in naval ship design.

Not since the *Warrior*, the Royal Navy's first ironclad warship, had anyone seen anything like it. The *Dreadnought* was so modern that it made obsolete all other previous battleships, including those in the British fleet!

The H.M.S. *Dreadnought* was the first turbine-powered cruiser. The turbine was powerful, efficient and could be run at speeds greater than reciprocating engines. It had ten 12-inch guns fitted in pairs in turrets. They were powerful, accurate and had an extended range. It was the first “all big guns” ship.

The only significant naval battle of World War I was the Battle of Jutland. The Germans hoped to sneak out of port and wreak havoc, but the British codebreakers intercepted their communications, and the British fleet responded. To this day, both sides dispute the outcome of the battle. The H.M.S. *Dreadnought* was in dry dock, being upgraded to “super-*Dreadnought*” specifications.

The only battle the original *Dreadnought* saw was when *U-29*, an infamous German submarine, fired a torpedo at a sister ship off the coast of Scotland in March of 1915 and the *Dreadnought* responded by slicing the U-boat in half.

The British *Dreadnought* was the most powerful battleship in the world when it was launched. It became the new standard for design and construction. Navies around the world copied its design.

I’m very proud that my ancestors designed a guitar with similar qualities.

Sincerely,



C. F. Martin IV
Chairman & CEO
C. F. Martin & Co., Inc.

LE-HMSD 2015



LINER NOTES

FROM THE COMMUNITY

**"I FEEL SAFE
WITH A
MARTIN
D-35."**



JOHNNY CASH

"I was at Kurosawa Music in Tokyo looking at something completely different when I asked if they had a vintage section. I browsed it for a moment before setting my eyes on a 1975 D-45 in pristine condition. I sat with it, and as soon as I started strumming it, something completely different than I usually play came out. The thing about me is that I don't play any set thing on the guitar when I first pick it up, ever. I try not to have any habits that way. I go where the guitar tells me to go, and this guitar took me up the California coast. I was suddenly discovering these percussive, complex chord and rhythm patterns that I had never played before. And the whole thing shook in the right way. I always say that a great guitar would feel just as great to play even if you had earplugs in. A lot of the satisfaction of playing a great guitar comes via the resonance through your chest and arms. This thing was so MELLOW and somehow through the years had developed this beautiful high end. Just the nicest high end, like this throaty, harmonic treble without the tin. I bonded with it instantly, and it's been my travel companion ever since. You'll be seeing a lot of it. I call her 'Umi,' which is the Japanese word for 'beach.' I went from Tokyo to Santa Barbara in one strum of the guitar that day." | **John Mayer**

**"MY D-35
MARTIN
GUITAR IS
HOLDING
UP LIKE A
MASTERPIECE.
I WILL
NEVER
GO
BACK."**



NANCY WILSON
OF HEART

"A major portion of my self-taught musical education comes from a deep appreciation for traditional bluegrass and country music, both in which the Martin Dreadnought sound plays a historical and paramount role. Its sound is as recognizable as a freight train, and in most traditional circles, it's an unspoken requirement." | **Sturgill Simpson**

"I own a Martin D-28, and it has the most important quality any guitar can have: Every time I see it, it makes me want to pick it up and play something."

Colin P. | Massachusetts

"MY D-28
IS LIKE
AN OLD
FRIEND
I HAVE
KNOWN
SINCE
1973."



WALT S. ♦ OHIO

"FOR OVER 180 YEARS,
MARTIN GUITAR HAS BEEN
THE GOLD STANDARD OF ALL
ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS."



VINCE GILL

"Most guitars bought are not with them forever, but my Martin Dreadnought is a friend for life."

Robin Z. | Illinois

"Just got an 000-15M, and I love it. Feels, plays, looks great. Thanks for making an awesome guitar."

@MattGolsen

"If Martin Guitar has a flagship model, it must be the D-28. It is a true classic in every respect, from its size, shape, wood and tonal qualities. The D-28 has an authority and presence that is unmatched and often imitated, but seldom duplicated." | **John Oates**

"THIS
THING
IS A
F•*#∞!
BELL,
MAN!"



DAVID CROSBY
(CROSBY, STILLS AND NASH) UPON
RECEIVING HIS D-18 SIGNATURE MODEL.

THE MASTERS

A MUSICAL ICON TURNS 100

BY **JERRY ZOLTEN**

Construction paper
is a general acknowledgment of the
importance of the
theater. It is a symbol of the
theater's role in the
community. It is a
symbol of the theater's
role in the community.
It is a symbol of the
theater's role in the
community. It is a
symbol of the theater's
role in the community.





"I AM VERY PROUD OF THE FACT THAT THE MARTIN DREADNOUGHT IS PROBABLY THE MOST COPIED SHAPE OF GUITAR ON EARTH!"

CHRIS MARTIN IV

Like old-world ballad songs, the Martin tradition of guitar making crossed an ocean, took root on American shores, and adapted as it grew to the clime of survival in a new land. The journey was about freedom from restriction. In 19th century Germany, local violinmaker guilds attempted to restrain craftsmen who were not members of their guild, such as Christian Frederick Martin Sr., from making guitars, dismissing Martin's own guild as mere "cabinet-makers." More likely it was the competition they feared.

At a 1933 event in Nazareth, Pennsylvania, marking the centennial of Martin Guitar in America, Frank Henry Martin, third in the family to lead the company and grandson of founder Christian Frederick Sr., offered his assessment of his grandfather's motivation. "One hundred years ago in the fall of 1833, Christian Frederick Martin landed in New York City with his wife, one son Christian Frederick Jr., and an infant daughter. What moved him to leave his home in Germany we can only gather from records of what transpired there.... It is a fair assumption that he, in common with many others of his time, felt dissatisfied with Old World surroundings and longed for the freedom of a new country." (*Nazareth Item*, April 20, 1933)



**“INDEED, THERE IS NO OTHER BRANDED
SPECIFIC ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENT DESIGN...
THAT HAS HAD SUCH A FAR-REACHING IMPACT**

Born of that newfound freedom came the business acumen and innovation that peaked in the development of the archetypal American acoustic guitar, the Martin Dreadnought, now celebrating its own 100 years of existence. To call the Martin Dreadnought iconic is neither cliché nor hyperbole. The cachet of Martin’s grand guitar—designated the “D” model—accrued over decades and not coincidentally in parallel with the very evolution of American popular music from hill country ballads, string bands, and country and western to blues, folk rock, and full tilt rock ‘n’ roll.

The Martin Dreadnought remains a central player in worldwide music and more lately in Americana, a relatively recent genre that draws deeply from the well of American roots music. Americana artist Seth Avett of the Avett Brothers calls the Martin Dreadnought “the quintessential acoustic guitar; the blue-collar guitar, understated and solid in the hands.”

Singer/songwriter Dom Flemons, formerly of the Carolina Chocolate Drops, likes how when he uses his Dreadnought on stage he can jump from old timey to blues to reimagined rock ‘n’ roll. “It has ‘boom’ when you hit the strings, yet it is delicate to play softly as well.” (*Dom Flemons* email April 27, 2015)

Vintage pre-war Martin Dreadnoughts are the stuff of many a guitar player’s dreams and can be stunningly valuable. Marty Stuart is cut and dry: “I value my vintage Martin Dreadnought simply because it’s the finest acoustic guitar I’ve ever played...Old wood sounds better.” Bill Amatneek, *Acoustic Stories* author and storyteller, poetically extols vintage Martin Dreadnoughts as both tactile and utilitarian. “Beyond the beauty of handworked hardwoods, and mother-of-pearl inlay, the checking on its finish—beyond all these, is utility. Here, decades old, is a graceful piece of handcraft—full hips, modest waist, Brazil-tanned shoulders—that resonates more richly than ever, feels at home in your hands, and serves reliably as a working instrument. That’s all you can ask.” (*Bill Amatneek* email, May 15, 2015)

Greg Reish, Director of the Center for Popular Music at Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, proffers the pragmatic historic sweep. “The Martin Dreadnought has remained one of the primary tools of musicians across a staggeringly wide range of styles and decades, a ubiquitous sound that has inspired brilliant artistry and musical innovation for a hundred years. Indeed, there is no other branded specific acoustic instrument design...that has had such a far-reaching impact on the development of popular musical expression in America—and by extension, the world.” (*Greg Reish* email, April 27, 2015)



ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF POPULAR MUSICAL EXPRESSION IN AMERICA —AND BY EXTENSION, THE WORLD.”

GREG REISH

Manufactured by C. F. Martin & Co.

No question the Martin Dreadnought is iconic, but was the guitar an immediate success when it was introduced in 1916? “It was not!” says Chris Martin IV, Martin Guitar’s Chairman and CEO. Prior to the Dreadnought, “People were used to guitars that could be cradled and did not project, but had a very balanced sound, the bass, the mid-range, and treble in proportion.” In fact, he says, “The first Dreadnoughts were called ‘bass’ guitar because of their predominant bass sound.” Dick Boak, Director of Museum, Archives, and Special Projects, describes the early fan-braced Dreadnoughts as “very obscure instruments that for a long while did not sell very well at all.”

So, what was the place of the guitar in America before the Dreadnought? In 1916 when the Dreadnought was introduced, C. F. Martin & Company had already been in business for more than 80 years. Clearly they were doing something right. That “something” was a combination of knowing the market and providing uncompromisingly fine craftsmanship, always quality over quantity. Martin did not sell directly to musicians but only through select Distributors and Dealers. The guitars they crafted were small-bodied with gut strings and 12-fret necks. Model sizes evolved with the changing market. “Martin guitar sizes progressed,” says Dick Boak, “from the tiny size 5 to sizes 4, 3, 2½, 2 and 1. The smaller the number, the larger the size. They ran out of numbers and used ‘0’ or ‘ought’ (as the Germans would say), then the slightly larger double-ought (00) and the largest size—triple-ought (000).”

Contrary to perceived wisdom, guitars in that era were not common in Appalachia or among the rural working class. They were rarely seen in vaudeville or in budding jazz simply because they could not be heard from the stage or in the mix with other instruments. Guitars did have a sporadic presence in isolated regional pockets where self-made music was the only entertainment or in aggregates along with fiddles and banjos playing for barn dances and social events or, given their portability, taken along on the ride west by settlers. Ex-slave narratives speak of guitar playing among slaves who lived along the Mississippi Delta between Memphis and New Orleans. (<http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic>) Guitars played in these contexts, though, were not fine instruments. They were usually purchased through mail order catalogs, make-do, cheap and, accordingly, poorly made.

In the years leading up to and in the early decades of the 20th century, the guitar was played primarily by women in high society, the well-to-do living in East Coast cities or in Chicago or Los Angeles. Called “parlor” guitars, they were played where they could be heard, in the intimate surroundings of sitting rooms where guests gathered to be entertained. President Andrew Jackson’s wife, Rachel, (1767-1828) famously played the guitar in the White House.



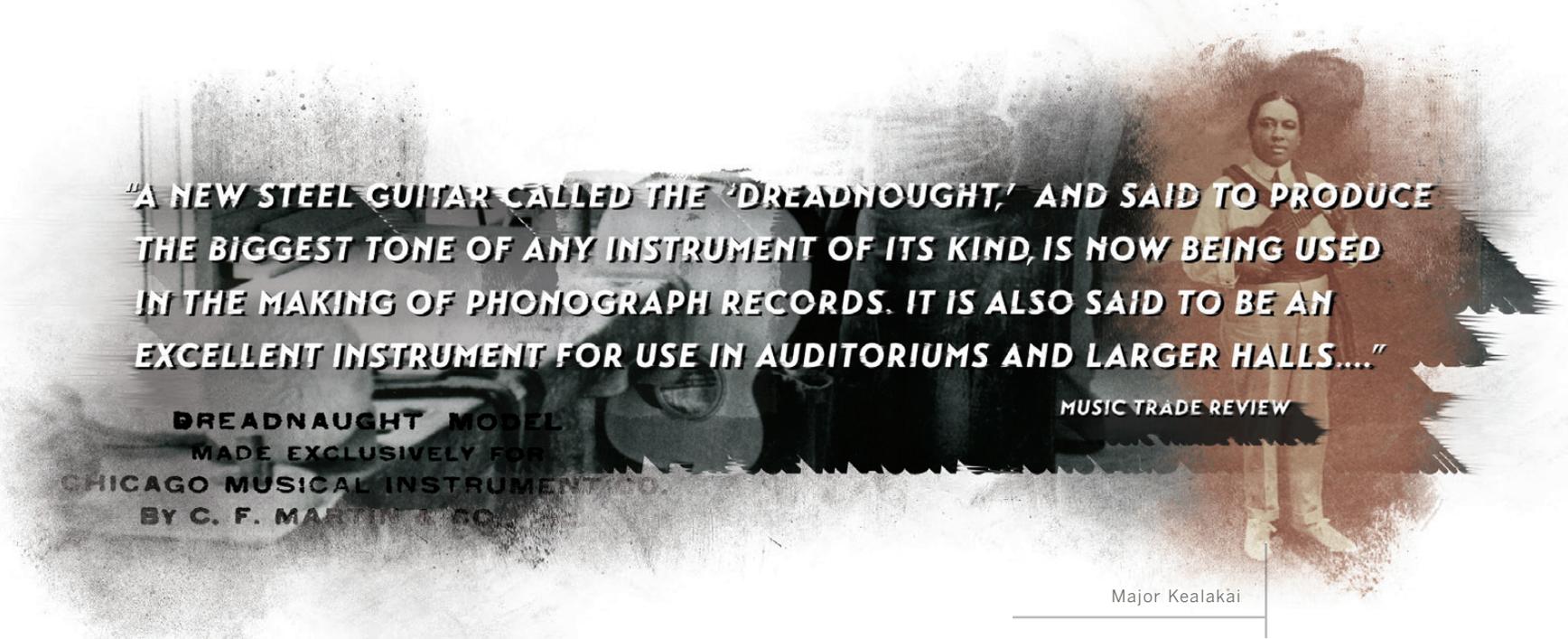
Kealakai Dreadnought
Courtesy of Greig Hutton

Europe and especially Paris were looked to as arbiters of refined taste. Stylized images of guitars appeared in paintings by Modigliani and later Picasso. Spanish finger-style classicists such as Andrés Segovia performed in recital halls.

In the United States, guitarist Vahdah Olcott-Bickford was the rage among the fashion set. Born Ethel Olcott in Ohio in 1885, the exotic name “Vahdah” was given her by a prominent astrologist for whom she worked as an assistant. Her true métier, though, was as a guitar artiste. Olcott-Bickford was a trendsetter, archivist, and promoter of all things guitar. When she died in 1980, her Los Angeles home overflowed with sheet music, correspondence, and “stacks of journals standing five feet high in some rooms.” The Vahdah Olcott-Bickford Collection now forms the core of the International Guitar Research Archives at California State University, Northridge. (<http://articles.latimes.com/1998/sep/21/news/ss-25409>)

Against that backdrop emerged the first Martin Dreadnoughts. The impetus was rooted in, of all things, the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. The highlight of the exposition was an exhibit from Hawaii featuring a cast of native musicians in full island dress performing on traditional stringed instruments. Visitors to the exhibit thrilled at seeing and hearing for the first time the ukulele and its precursor, a double-stringed uke that came to Hawaii from Portugal, the taropatch, literally translated, “rice field fiddle.”

Exposition visitors also heard guitar played in a way that was both new and exciting. European sailors had introduced the instrument to Hawaii, and over decades native musicians had evolved the playing style so familiar today but back then rarely heard off-island. They played on strings of steel tuned down or “slackened” to allow for a variety of open chord tunings. The guitar was held horizontally and fingerpicked, chords and notes voiced by sliding a metal bar on the strings. The Hawaiians called it Ki ho’alu, the slack key steel-string guitar.



"A NEW STEEL GUITAR CALLED THE 'DREADNOUGHT,' AND SAID TO PRODUCE THE BIGGEST TONE OF ANY INSTRUMENT OF ITS KIND, IS NOW BEING USED IN THE MAKING OF PHONOGRAPH RECORDS. IT IS ALSO SAID TO BE AN EXCELLENT INSTRUMENT FOR USE IN AUDITORIUMS AND LARGER HALLS...."

**DREADNAUGHT MODEL
MADE EXCLUSIVELY FOR
CHICAGO MUSICAL INSTRUMENT CO.
BY C. F. MARTIN & CO.**

MUSIC TRADE REVIEW

Major Kealakai

The Hawaiian craze spread virally nationwide. "There was a groundswell," says Dick Boak. "Lots of Hawaiian bands with ukulele, slide and regular guitar, and this steel-string phenomenon had an impact on Martin. People began requesting steel-string guitars. Martin was accommodating but not really getting it at first." Then there was an epiphany. The five-string banjo had switched from gut to steel strings and, gaining in popularity, was considerably louder than the common gut-string parlor guitar. They were simply drowned out. Then fate stepped in...

Slack key guitarist Major Kealakai, a sensation at the Pan-Pacific Hawaiian exhibit, was now based in Chicago and touring the American vaudeville circuit with his troupe, the Royale Hawaiian Sextette. These were the days before microphones and sound systems, and Major Kealakai wanted a guitar that could naturally project a richer sound from the stage. He contacted Martin Guitar and ordered a stock "000," at slightly more than 20 inches in length, the largest model offered by Martin at the time. The "000" did not cut it, and so Kealakai ordered a second custom built guitar that, says Boak, "would use the basic '000' shape but was proportionately larger." Developed that winter of 1916, the Martin Kealakai Dreadnought was 21 inches in length with fan bracing, a 4-inch diameter soundhole, and a 20-fret neck with steel strings positioned high over the fingerboard to accommodate slide playing. On March 16, 1916, Martin shipped the "extra large" newly designated Style 17 guitar, serial number 12210, to Major Kealakai in Chicago.

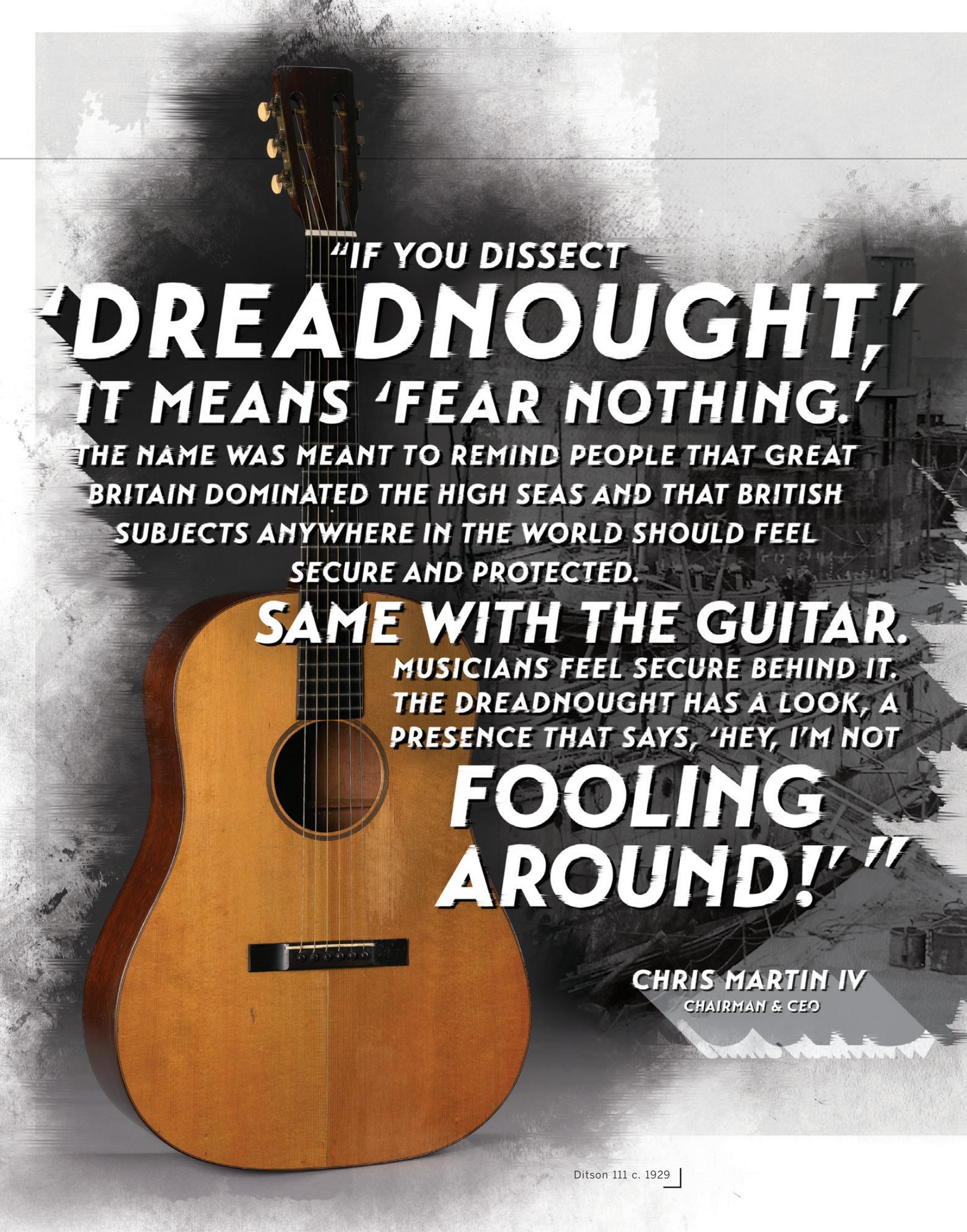
Martin collaborated on a stock Dreadnought with the Oliver Ditson Company, a prestigious music publisher and instrument purveyor, originally located in Boston and later with branches in New York and Philadelphia. Frank Henry Martin, then at the helm of the company, was "open-minded to any avenue of business that made sense," says Boak. "Because business was tough at that time, he tried things his father or grandfather would not have tried, including collaborations with different companies to produce special lines of guitars."

Representing Ditson was Harry Hunt, store manager and guitar specialist. Also involved in the collaboration was a young but talented Martin factory worker, John Deichman, who Boak describes as a "skilled woodworker somewhat obsessive about instruments and having caught the luthier bug, ready to dive in. Deichman," says Boak, "most likely played a role in helping to prototype the 12-fret Ditson Dreadnought."

Deichman, who died in 1981, talked to guitarist John Pearse about his involvement with the Dreadnought project. As Pearse relayed it, "One day when John was working at his bench, Harry Hunt...came by with Frank Martin. Spying the [Dreadnought-sized] guitar Deichman was working on, Ditson took an immediate interest. He asked Martin to make him some with the same body shape—but set up for standard Spanish style playing rather than Hawaiian." (Pearse, *Frets Magazine*, May 1988, p. 48)

Martin factory records show the very first Ditson Dreadnought model shipped on August 8, 1916, and six more Dreadnoughts, numbered 172 through 177, shipped to Ditson and Co. on December 30, 1916. The arrival of the Dreadnought was understatedly announced in the August 1916 issue of *Music Trade Review*.

"A new steel guitar called the 'Dreadnought,' and said to produce the biggest tone of any instrument of its kind, is now being used in the making of phonograph records. It is also said to be an excellent instrument for use in auditoriums and larger halls...." (*Music Trade Review*, August 19, 1916, p. 47)



"IF YOU DISSECT

**'DREADNOUGHT,'
IT MEANS 'FEAR NOTHING.'**

**THE NAME WAS MEANT TO REMIND PEOPLE THAT GREAT
BRITAIN DOMINATED THE HIGH SEAS AND THAT BRITISH
SUBJECTS ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD SHOULD FEEL
SECURE AND PROTECTED.**

SAME WITH THE GUITAR.

**MUSICIANS FEEL SECURE BEHIND IT.
THE DREADNOUGHT HAS A LOOK, A
PRESENCE THAT SAYS, 'HEY, I'M NOT**

**FOOLING
AROUND!'" "**

CHRIS MARTIN IV
CHAIRMAN & CEO

The idea to call the new model “Dreadnought,” as far as Chris Martin is concerned, originated with his great-grandfather, Frank Henry Martin. Chris glowingly remembers talking about it with his grandfather, C. Frederick Martin III, Frank Henry’s son. “Until someone says otherwise, I credit Frank Henry for choosing the name ‘Dreadnought.’ That pear-shaped design was collaborative, but I remember my grandfather telling me that it was his father who, rather than giving it the usual number, thought to name it ‘Dreadnought.’ For simplification in our records and on the guitar’s inside block, we used the designation ‘D.’ And,” he emphatically adds, “it was not just a matter of coming up with a word that started with the letter ‘D.’ Frank Martin was a history buff.” He was fascinated with the H.M.S. *Dreadnought*, the game-changing British warship commissioned in 1906, state-of-the-art showpiece, its only action in battle cutting a German submarine in half by running across its midsection.

Chris Martin is also caught up in the H.M.S. *Dreadnought* mystique. “If you dissect ‘Dreadnought,’ it means ‘fear nothing.’ The name was meant to remind people that Great Britain dominated the high seas and that British subjects anywhere in the world should feel secure and protected. Same with the guitar. Musicians feel secure behind it. The Dreadnought has a look, a presence that says, ‘Hey, I’m not fooling around!’”

Chris Martin is ebullient talking about the symbolic parallels between the warship and the guitar. “Could go faster than any ship. Could go farther than any ship. Had the largest available 12-inch guns mounted on

deck where everybody could see. The guitar metaphor is obvious,” he says. “Like the warship, anything prior is now obsolete, and anything post that does not embrace these new innovations will ultimately become obsolete. So, in 2016, not only do we celebrate the centennial of the Dreadnought guitar, but also the 110th anniversary of the H.M.S. *Dreadnought*.”

The Martin Dreadnought guitar, visionary though it was, did not catch on immediately. Rather, that other Hawaiian instrument, the ukulele, the voh-doh-de-oh-voh rage of the Roaring ‘20s, sustained and even led to a factory expansion for Martin & Company during that slow period for the guitar. “While 1,361 guitars were made in 1920,” said C. F. Martin III in 1997, “about twice that number of ukuleles was produced.” (S.M. Parkhill, *The Morning Call*, November 20, 1997) Ukuleles, though, eventually receded from fashion, and as the 1930s rolled in, the guitar began gradually to come back into its own.

The Ditson Company, awash in the Depression and due to changes within, was by 1931 out of the picture. Martin Guitar, however, owned the Dreadnought forms and patterns and had the wherewithal. “Frank Henry Martin,” says Boak, “decided to give it a shot. So, what we refer to now as the Martin D-18S and the D-28S were prototyped as the 12-fret D-1 and D-2 models. The D-1 was built of mahogany and spruce, the D-2 with rosewood and spruce. The now standard 14-fret neck versions would be introduced in 1934 as the D-18 and D-28, and voilà—the modern guitar was born.”

The game changer for the Martin Dreadnought was the whirl of technological innovation that led to the birth of commercial country music in the early 1930s. Radio broadcasts and 78 RPM phonograph records were spreading sounds around like never before, making stars of rural performers such as the Carter Family, whose story songs poignantly tugged at the heartstrings, or Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers, laying down hillbilly string band rhythms that got people up and dancing. Also in the media mix was the *Grand Ole Opry* out of Nashville, Tennessee, at that time 10 years into popularizing country music nationwide through far-reaching weekly radio broadcasts.

Finding favor at the heart of it all was the acoustic Martin Dreadnought steel-string guitar, its playability and deep projecting sound the ideal rhythmic anchor for solo vocalists or backing bands. “It was about performers standing around and needing to project into a microphone that led to the Dreadnought guitar taking off,” says Dick Boak. “Martin’s ‘000’ 12-fret design morphed into the 14-fret ‘OM’ Orchestra Model, and that 14-fret neck gradually found its way onto the Dreadnought. That 14-fret option was important!” To accommodate 14 clear frets, the Dreadnought body was shortened, the soundhole and pickguard moved closer to the bridge. The result was a more versatile guitar that had a broader appeal because it could play a higher range of notes. “But most of all,” says Boak, “it just had incredibly powerful tone!”

**"I HAVE USED SEVERAL
GUITARS IN VAUDEVILLE,
RADIO, AND OTHER ENTERTAINING,
AND I PREFER A MARTIN TO ANY OF THEM."**

Gene Autry



Also paramount to the Martin Dreadnought's desirability were the first country music superstars, high-profile, highly visible performers such as Jimmie Rodgers (1897-1933) and Gene Autry (1907-1998). Jimmie Rodgers of Meridian, Mississippi, the "Singing Brakeman," the "Father of Country Music," traveled to Tennessee in 1927 to record for Ralph Peer at the now famous "Bristol Sessions," which launched country music as a big business enterprise. Rodgers played a Martin 00-18 on his first recordings, but, with enormous success as a professional touring artist, wanted a guitar that matched his newfound status. Rodgers ordered a custom Martin 000-45 with his name in square letters inlaid in pearl on the neck and the upside down word "Thanks" on the guitar's back for audiences to see when he flipped the guitar around at the close of his show.

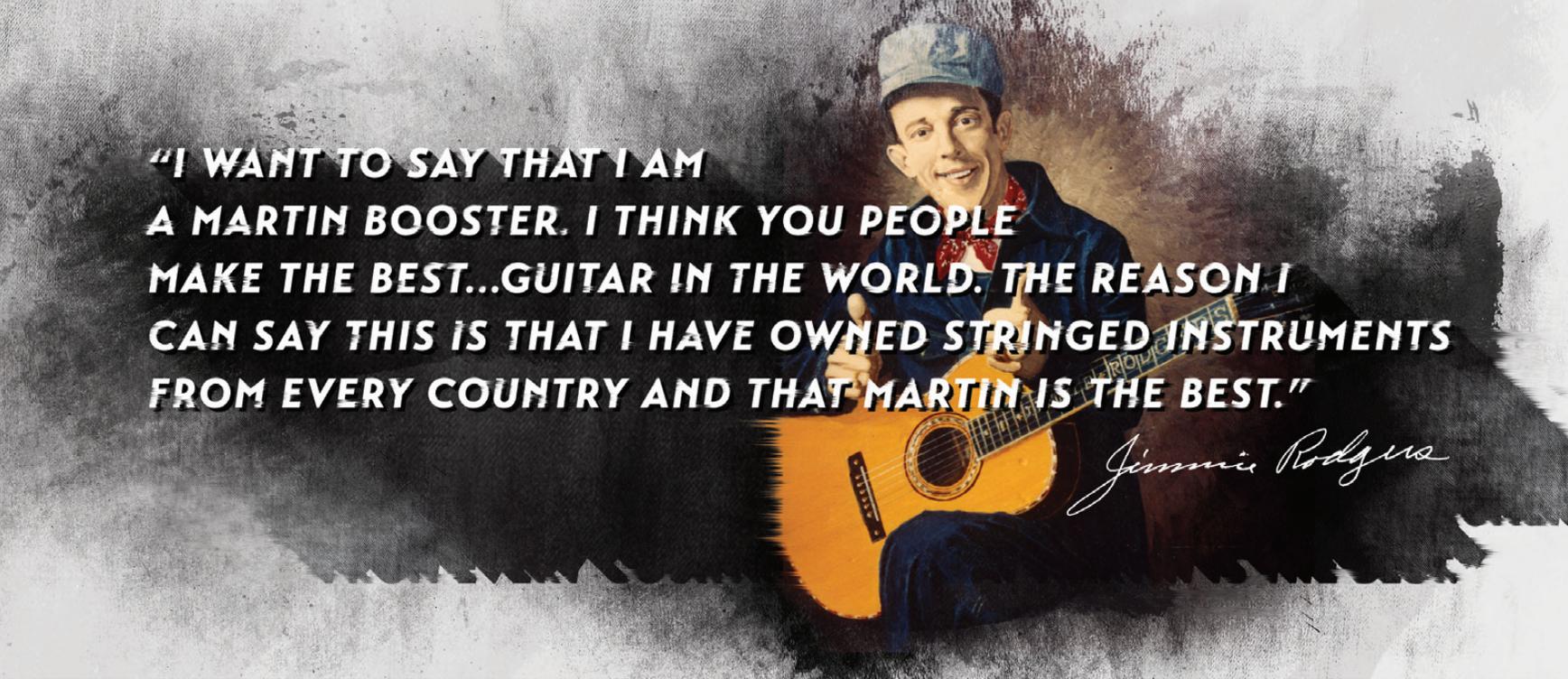
In a 1927 note to C. F. Martin & Company inquiring about the cost of "three or four hundred ukuleles" to sell at fair concessions in conjunction with his appearances, Jimmie Rodgers added this postscript: "I want to say that I am a Martin booster. I think you people make the best...guitar in the world. The reason I can say this is that I have owned stringed instruments from every country and that Martin is the best." (From the Martin Archives, September 12, 1927)

Idolizing Jimmie Rodgers, Gene Autry followed brilliantly in his footsteps. As a recording and touring artist, radio broadcaster, and Hollywood's top "singing cowboy" movie star, Autry's public profile was prodigious. In his day, Autry transcended musical stardom and became a bona fide, bar none American show biz icon.

Like Rodgers, Autry, sold on Martin guitars, wrote several times to the company. In 1929, he sent a note from his home in Oklahoma. "I have used several guitars in vaudeville, radio, and other entertaining, and I prefer a Martin to any of them." (From the Martin Archives, September 12, 1929) His career then took him to Chicago, the hub for Midwestern radio broadcasting. From there Autry sent an autographed photo along with a little self-plugging. "I am doing a lot of theatrical work around here. Now I also am on radio three times a day. Try and hear me sometime WLS 9:20 AM, on WJJD at 7 AM and 7:30 PM for International Heating Company." (From the Martin Archives, undated circa 1929)

In 1933 just as he was about to enter films, Autry ordered a custom-made Martin Dreadnought. Given the guitar's historic significance, the order form from the Chicago Musical Instrument Company was starkly unassuming: "one Gtr D-45 with special inlaid fingerboard" and "extra for pearl head and bridge inlay." The Gene Autry Dreadnought with his name in scroll pearl inlay on the 12-fret neck was the first D-45. One of the most valuable of American acoustic guitars, it is currently on permanent display at the Autry National Center in Los Angeles.

No question the Martin "D" models had a quality, look, and sound that were their own best advertising. To play one was to want to own one. What would become foundational to a true earned legacy, however, required the sincere unsolicited choices of transformative artists to conspicuously perform with a range of standard and customized Martin Dreadnoughts. Jimmie Rodgers and Gene Autry, with high visibility, were the cornerstones later built upon by giants from Hank Williams and Kitty Wells to the Dreadnought sound featured in bands fronted by Roy Acuff or Bill Monroe, the "Father of Bluegrass," who kept a Martin D-28 on hand in case his current guitar player didn't own one.



**"I WANT TO SAY THAT I AM
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FROM EVERY COUNTRY AND THAT MARTIN IS THE BEST."**

Jimmie Rodgers

The Dreadnought had from the start an imposing stage presence. Imagine looking up at the stage, the eyes instinctively drawn to that grand guitar, pearl inlay rippling in the spotlight. "There's an attitude with a Dreadnought," says Fred Greene, Martin Guitar's VP of Domestic Manufacturing. "When I see someone come out with a D-28, I'm thinking, this guy's coming to kick some butt with a guitar!" The guitar formidably large, front and center lashed across the chest, both weapon and protective shield. "I feel safe with a Martin D-35," Johnny Cash once said.

Then there was the publicity machine prolifically cranking out umpteen 8"x 11" glossy publicity photos, songbooks and souvenirs, artist portrayed with guitar proudly in hand, the plain, squared-off headstock instantly identifiable as a Martin. Gene Autry on the larger-than-life silver screen astride his horse Champion playing his Martin D-45. The visual imagery, however, was not limited to superstar legends. It also trickled down tellingly to myriad regional country-style performers across the land whose own publicity photos strategically displayed the instruments they played. A Martin Dreadnought in the picture was intended to telegraph instant prestige.

From the 1930s well into the 1960s, thousands in each successive generation of guitar players and wannabe stars set their sights on owning a Martin Dreadnought. "Deep down every guitar player harbors a fantasy of owning a Martin Dreadnought," says Fred Greene. And so in 1954, Elvis Presley turned Bill Monroe's "Blue Moon of Kentucky" into rock 'n' roll and then bought himself a step-up series of Martin guitars from a "000" to a D-18 to his famously encased in embossed leather D-28.

That dynamic still holds true on the centennial of the Dreadnought. "I bought my D-28 years ago," says country singer Dierks Bentley, "because so many of my heroes...the best musicians of all time and cross all music genres...played Martins."

The rise of the Martin Dreadnought has not been without bumps in the road, including shifts in musical trends and, early on, structural issues. In the Dreadnought's first decades, for instance, it became clear that scalloped bracing did not hold up in Dreadnought-sized guitars. Chris Martin points out that back then guitarists wanting to enhance sound beyond the size of the body started using heavier gauge strings. "Put them on, play some rhythm, and you are going to wail. Bottom line, though, heavy gauge strings and scalloped bracing just did not mix."

"Pre-war Dreadnoughts," says Fred Greene, "were lightly built, to use a guitar player's term, on the edge of blowing up. They were built for speed like a race car, tuned right on the edge, and what made them so fast, so good, also made them temperamental."

"The fix," says Chris Martin, "was to stop scalloping the bracing and beef up the top with stronger X-bracing." The switch was phased in starting around 1945. "The placement of the bracing was made heavier," says Fred Greene, "and the X-bracing was shifted backwards to stabilize the center of the guitar." The remedy stopped pull-ups and bubbling in front of the bridge, but also changed the character of the sound, some contend only differently and others, detrimentally.



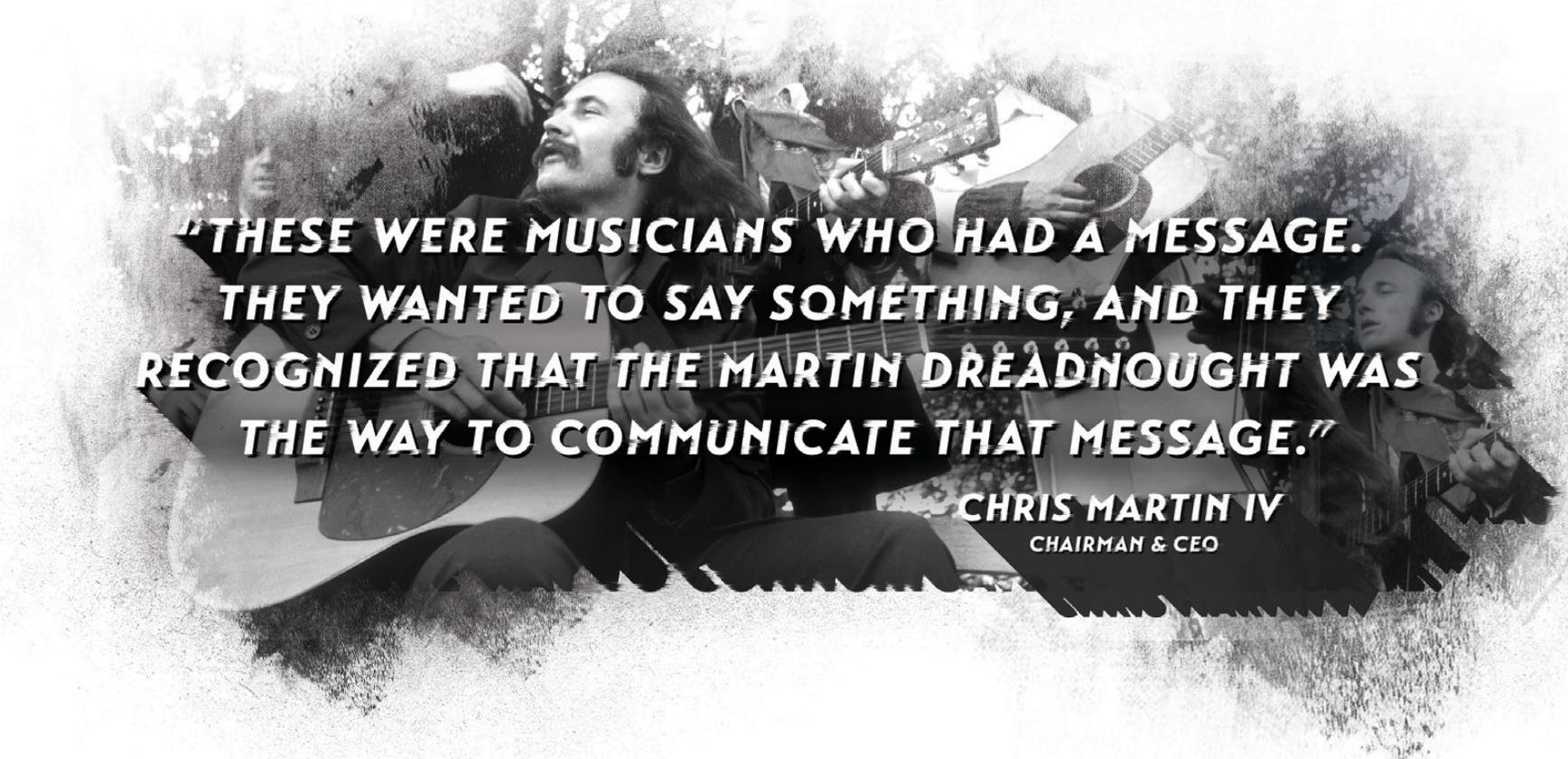
2016 D-222 100th Anniversary

In recent years, though, mindful of the ongoing desire for that vintage Dreadnought sound, Chris Martin, like his forebears, was open to possibilities. When Fred Greene joined Martin in 2004, there was talk within the company about preserving the old guitar making techniques. From that arose the “Authentic Project,” basically, says Greene, “where we’d make it totally like an old guitar. Hand-carved neck, hide glue, all the techniques we’d gotten away from over the years.” Then came the Martin Custom Shop. “The goal was to take the elements over time that made a pre-War guitar sound great—warts and all—and do it all over again.” The inaugural project was the regeneration of a 1937 D-18. “We X-rayed the models, got all the specifications, and recreated everything in that guitar.”

There was, though, one prime ingredient beyond mere arithmetic specification that made for the classic vintage Martin Dreadnought sound—the aged spruce top. “Wood dries out over time,” says Greene, “and that makes it denser and better as a medium for conducting sound waves.” The Custom Shop can now incorporate that elusive element through a measured process of heating raw wood called “torrefaction.” “The idea,” says Greene, “is to replicate what goes on gradually in the aging process. Heating the wood evaporates the moisture from within the cells and that leads to a rich look and sound. In the process, the spruce top actually becomes more stable.”

The fortunes of Martin Guitar, along with the Dreadnought, have always been subject to cycles of popularity, the interest in acoustic guitar sometimes barely simmering only to be again set boiling by one musical trend or another.

The “folk boom” of the 1950s and early '60s generated enormous interest in acoustic guitar playing. Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Leadbelly, the Weavers, and others opened the way for the Kingston Trio; Peter, Paul, and Mary; Jack Elliott; Joan Baez; Phil Ochs; Bob Dylan; and many more. True traditionalists such as Doc Watson, Elizabeth Cotten, and Mississippi John Hurt put the guitar front and center on record albums and worldwide festival and concert stages. Featured on *The Andy Griffith Show* and *The Beverly Hillbillies*, hit TV shows of the day, was bluegrass from Clarence and Roland White and Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs.



“THESE WERE MUSICIANS WHO HAD A MESSAGE. THEY WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING, AND THEY RECOGNIZED THAT THE MARTIN DREADNOUGHT WAS THE WAY TO COMMUNICATE THAT MESSAGE.”

CHRIS MARTIN IV
CHAIRMAN & CEO

The primacy of the Martin Dreadnought was especially reinforced by the emergence of “folk rock” in the 1960s. “These were musicians,” says Chris Martin, “who had a message. They wanted to say something, and they recognized that the Martin Dreadnought was the way to communicate that message.” Crosby, Stills, and Nash. The Byrds. The Eagles. Jackson Browne. Linda Ronstadt. Joni Mitchell. Bonnie Raitt. Neil Young. “‘Heart of Gold,’” says Fred Greene, “wouldn’t sound like it does without a Martin Dreadnought.” Seeing the possibilities, mainstream rock ‘n’ rollers from the Beach Boys and the Beatles to the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin began incorporating the acoustic Dreadnought into their otherwise amped sound. Even the dormant “King of Rock ‘n’ Roll,” Elvis Presley, chose to come back to life in an “unplugged” performance in his widely viewed 1968 television *Comeback Special*.

Inevitably, though, the tide turned. The acoustic guitar as a popular instrument “fell off a cliff at the end of the folk rock era in the late 1970s that lasted well into the 1980s,” reflects Chris Martin. He attributes the crash to both economic turmoil and the rise of electronic disco and digital sampling keyboards. “Some people back then were saying this is the beginning of the end of the acoustic guitar. Fortunately, they were wrong!”

The turnaround was sparked in part by the release in 2000 of the film *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* Set in the 1930s, the film introduced a young generation to traditional American roots music through an engaging cast of characters—many of them acoustic guitar players—and a soundtrack album that sold over seven million. In the decade and a half since, the Martin Dreadnought has remained indelibly at the heart of pop music making. Fred Greene couches it in “a desire to get back to something organic and natural, not wanting something fancy. Acoustic guitars that have a Depression-era feel to them,” but also in keeping with the more contemporary spirit of, say, John Lennon’s “Working Class Hero” or Bruce Springsteen’s “Jack of All Trades.”

“Looking back on a hundred years,” says Greene, “think how different American pop music would sound without the Martin Dreadnought guitar. It just wouldn’t be what it is. I don’t think anybody knew when it started what it would become. The character of American pop music owes much to the Dreadnought.”

Martin’s world-renowned Custom Shop, which Fred Greene oversees, has stayed true to the company’s traditionally open-minded business model by being responsive to what guitar players want. Martin Guitar continues to craft Dreadnoughts that honor legacy artists such as Jimmie Rodgers, Gene Autry, Hank Williams, Kitty Wells, Ernest Tubb, Porter Wagoner, and Johnny Cash. The Custom Shop also offers “signature” Dreadnought variations designed by or in tribute to artists from across the American pop music spectrum including Woody Guthrie, Arlo Guthrie, and Joan Baez; folk rockers Stephen Stills, David Crosby, and Jim McGuinn; blues artists Buddy Guy, Keb’ Mo’, Rory Block, and John Mayer; country stars Willie Nelson, Jimmy Buffett, and Travis Tritt; Americana artists Rosanne Carter Cash, Steve Earle, Seth Avett of the Avett Brothers, Jason Isbell, and Sturgill Simpson; rockers Eric Clapton, Sting, Jeff Tweedy, Beck, and Trey Anastasio.

Chris Martin understands the deep resonance of his family legacy and its crown jewel, the Martin Dreadnought guitar. “I am very proud of the fact that the Martin Dreadnought is probably the most copied shape of guitar on earth! I’m okay with that,” he says kicking back with a laugh of satisfaction. “The Dreadnought, I don’t think, will ever go away. My grandfather called it when he said, ‘that’s our bread and butter.’ It has such a deep and rich history. Is the term ‘iconic’ overused?”

Replica model of the
British Royal Navy's H.M.S. *Dreadnought*







Photo courtesy of Crackerfarm



**STURGILL
SIMPSON**

**COUNTRY
SOUL**

“I think you and I both know that if I shopped this around they would’ve looked at me like I was crazy,” Sturgill Simpson says about his most recent album, sleeper hit *Metamodern Sounds in Country Music*. It’s sold over 110,000 copies, earned a Grammy nomination, and led to television appearances with the likes of David Letterman and Conan O’Brien—but it’s true. It is a record that touches on the inevitability of death, lauds inner peace over drinking, critiques the media at every turn, and in some ways sounds more at home in 1975 than 2015. Although it has more in common with what many of us think of when we think of country music—Hank Williams, Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings, the Foggy Mountain Boys—*Metamodern* doesn’t sound like what’s topping the country charts today.

Part of the reason, says Simpson, is that the term “country” “sort of got hijacked by pop, and it’s guilty by association at this point. So when people say, ‘What kind of music do you play?’—it happens all the time, you meet strangers at airports who see a guitar—I feel this sort of speed bump coming when I get to the c-word, because you see it on their faces. They’re like, ‘Oh, I don’t really listen to that.’ And you don’t want to sit there and try to explain, ‘Well no, it’s alt-country and der-der-der. Just shoot me in the face with a BB gun, man.’”

**BY
JONATHAN
R.
WALSH**

Sturgill Simpson
Martin D-28



**“DAVE [COBB]
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It's hard to pinpoint exactly when country music became a four-letter word, but for a lot of people growing up in the '80s and '90s, the common phrase “I listen to anything but rap or country” was shorthand for “I like anything that isn't terrible.” It might have started when Billy Ray Cyrus's “Achy Breaky Heart”—currently on not one but two lists of the worst songs of all-time—topped the country charts for five weeks in 1992 (not coincidentally, the same year that Kris Kross's “Jump” topped the Billboard Hot 100 for eight weeks, despite lyrics like *I'll make ya rump rump wiggle and shake your rump*. Or maybe it started six months earlier, when Nirvana's “Smells Like Teen Spirit” became the number one rock song in the U.S. and introduced a generation of music listeners to the promise of alternative music, and later to independent labels. Whenever it happened, at some point country music seemed to drop its outlaw heritage completely—from the man in black to Waylon and Willie—in favor of tracks like “Red Solo Cup” and “Honky Tonk Badonkadonk,” autotune, and teeth whitener.

While major labels continued to produce the world's biggest records, independent labels endeavored to produce some of the best, by artists willing to spend years touring, recording, and releasing music for little to no money. And in the 23 years since “Achy Breaky” stuck to everyone's radio like a barnacle, that independent ecosystem has thrived. The Coachella Music Festival, once a bastion for indie bands, is in danger of becoming the establishment with sponsors like American Express and Samsung; in 2011, the Grammy Award for Album of the Year went to an independent record (*The Suburbs*, by Arcade Fire, was released on North Carolina independent label Merge Records).

It may not come as a surprise, then, that two of last year's most talked-about records among critics and fans were independent releases. What is surprising is that they weren't indie rock records, but hip-hop and country: *Run the Jewels 2*, from duo Run the Jewels on indie Mass Appeal Records, and *Metamodern*, which Simpson released through his own label, High Top Mountain. The same group of kids who said they liked "anything but rap or country" back in 1992 is rediscovering just that.

"Oh man, I love the Run the Jewels record, are you kidding me?" Sturgill Simpson says when we speak on the phone this past spring. "I think a lot of people on the [tour] bus are kind of burnt out on that—I kind of wore it out the first couple weeks." It's late April, and Simpson is in Virginia for the last show of roughly a year and a half of nonstop touring, before taking a month off to spend time with his family in Nashville. He'll be back on the road in June for another four months of concerts that will take him across seven countries, as he continues to ride the unexpected wave of success brought about by the release of *Metamodern*. But for now, one of today's most exciting country artists is very much into some of hip-hop's most exciting producers. "I think it's genius. The production's really incredible—it really feels like he's got his finger on the pulse of *right now*," says Simpson of Run the Jewels' El-P. To have a country record like his considered alongside some of the year's most lauded hip-hop, Simpson says, "makes me feel like, 'mission accomplished.' I mean, that was always the goal—Dave [Cobb] and I really wanted to make a real, unapologetic country record

for people who don't even know they like country music, or had never heard it."

An unapologetic country record is just what *Metamodern* is. Produced by Cobb (who has produced records by Jason Isbell and Shooter Jennings, and with whom Simpson worked on his previous record, *High Top Mountain*) in Nashville, *Metamodern* drips with analog warmth, rich slides, a funk-ed-up rhythm section, and Telecaster twang, all built around Simpson's two most powerful instruments: his voice and his Martin Dreadnought. Across eight tracks, he creates a sound that is at once familiar and hard to place. There are plenty of nods to the outlaw country of the '60s and '70s—"Life of Sin" and a rendition of Buford Abner's "Long White Line," especially—but like many of the best albums, all of the tracks on *Metamodern* feel like classics while sounding entirely new.

While *Metamodern* shares some of the same DNA as its outlaw predecessors, it's a matter of using key ingredients—that funky rhythm section, a Southern perspective, a few great chicken-pickin' leads, and a lot of disregard for authority—to come up with a completely new recipe. "A Little Light Within," for instance, sounds like classic gospel with a dose of modern metaphysical grit thrown in from Simpson and the band to create something that feels a little like the Carter Family on uppers. The next track, "Just Let Go," could be equal parts Otis Redding and Willie Nelson, and perhaps a touch of U2's best, with some sitar-like droning and tape trickery that harkens back to either late-era Beatles or the Beastie Boys, depending on your frame of reference.

That tape trickery is allowed to run wide open on the penultimate track, "It Ain't All Flowers": snare drums start running backwards, feedback snaps from the left channel to the right, and space and time are squashed together by a tube compressor and hard-worked mixing board. "It's all outdated techniques," says Simpson, "but we had a lot of fun trying to emulate something like dubstep." This is the type of adventurousness that would've made record executives look at Simpson cockeyed if he'd tried to have it released on a major label rather than putting it out himself, and it's the growing ecosystem of independent music that's helped it become such a big success. But, says Simpson, "Nobody's running to the penthouse suite just yet."

"I feel like we basically clawed our way to the beginning," Simpson says. "Perception's funny, you know. You get some press in magazines and stuff and—especially people back home or people from high school you haven't heard from in 15 years—all of a sudden they still have your phone number somehow, and they all think you made it. But your life hasn't changed all that much; it's just now there's people at the shows, and they know the words, and they're singing along, and they're buying albums, and that allows you to continue to do it without living like a pauper."



Photo courtesy of Crackerfarm

Simpson was born in Jackson, Kentucky, near the center of the state's Eastern Coal Field, and raised in nearby Versailles. There, he says, music wasn't so much a vocation as simply a way of life; his grandfathers first taught him to play bluegrass when he was a boy. After school, he served three years in the U.S. Navy before eventually moving to Utah to take a job working for the railroad: "A good job," as he puts it, "good pay, worked outside."

Simpson played music throughout his life, but his career first started to build momentum around 2011, when his band, bluegrass outfit Sunday Valley—a favorite in the underground country scene—joined the independent landscape and released their 2011 album, *To the Wind and On to Heaven*, themselves. After eight years of building a reputation as one of Kentucky's most exciting artists, Simpson put his reputation with Sunday Valley on the line to strike out on his own with the release of his first solo record, *High Top Mountain*.

"It was received well critically, on a very small level, and by people on social media who shared the work," says Simpson of that first record. For those who heard it, *High Top* was a favorite, but after the enormous amount of effort that went into promoting it, and the relative lack of mainstream popularity that followed, he thought his follow-up record would be his last. "When I put *Metamodern* out, we were making some money from the road, so I was able to hire a publicist for the record release, but I honestly thought that would be the last record I made," he says. "Just because, with a child coming, and being older, it's time to start looking at things a little more practically. So we went in to make [*Metamodern*] with me fully expecting it to be the last one, which, in a lot of ways, maybe is the reason we made the record we did—because we felt like we didn't have anything to lose. I certainly didn't feel like I had a career to lose."

Letting go of career hang-ups, Simpson says, was "a very freeing feeling," and allowed him to follow his eclectic musical instincts unabashedly. That freedom was reflected in *Metamodern's* recording process, which was as spontaneous and inspired as the record itself: "We just came off the road and had the week off; Dave had that week open, and so we just sort of jumped in there. I had like three or four songs written—things we'd been playing on the road that were already tested and arranged—and ended up writing the other three or four songs during the week we were in the studio," says Simpson. "But the band was good; we just came off tour, so it was easy. Most of this stuff was second, third, fourth take."



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If the electric sound of a road-tested band coming together on tape sounds a little closer to Stax Records in Memphis than it does to Nashville, the comparison is apt: “I honestly consider myself a soul musician,” says Simpson. But, raised on bluegrass and country in the rugged heart of Appalachia, he simply has country music in his blood. “When I sit down to write, that’s just what comes out,” he says, “so, I don’t know, country-soul maybe.”

Country-soul is a good description for Simpson’s rhythm section: bass player Kevin Black (who also played in Sunday Valley) and drummer Miles Miller, who make country danceable in a way it hasn’t been since Waylon Jennings covered J.J. Cale’s “Clyde” back in 1980. And it might be that infectious rhythm that’s responsible for most of the references to outlaw artists like Waylon that critics like to reach for. Like the stars of the past, Simpson’s influences span not only decades but genres, just as the outlaw stars of the late 1970s were doing as country’s rise crossed paths with the apexes of funk and disco. “Everything was about the clubs and dancing,” Simpson says about that era. “Even the Stones put the disco beat on stuff. I was born in ’78, so the first four or five years of my life in my mom’s car on the radio, of course it was just bombarded on me. I mean, Michael Jackson—I was obsessed with Michael Jackson’s *Off the Wall* and *Thriller* when I was a little kid. I love a lot of funk and old soul music—I just like funky music [in general], so I guess that is a lot of where the Waylon thing comes from,” he says. “You put that four-four disco beat on a country tune, of course it’s gonna sound like Waylon—he was the boss.”

If Simpson’s rhythm section has managed to bring groove back to country, his lead guitar player, Laur Joamets—an Estonian expat known in country circles as Lil’ Joe—has helped add some much-needed heart and grit. “Joe’s a classically trained musician. He was a cellist, so he hears music in textures and melody, and everything’s a build,” says Simpson. “It’s really been fascinating, because he never played country until about a year ago—he’s incorporating all these ideas into something he’s really just kind of wrapping his head around and running away with.” What drew Simpson to Joamets seems to be a part of what sets his own music apart from much of what’s on the radio. “His playing is very melodic and well thought out,” he says, “I think that’s why I love him so much. There are so many hot pickers in Nashville, but they just throw like four thousand notes at you in an 18-bar solo and you don’t even know what the hell just happened. You’re like, ‘I’m impressed, I get it, but what did you really just say?’ You should be able to hum a good guitar solo.”

It's good advice, and something Simpson learned from experience. His electric guitar playing turned more than a few heads when he was in Sunday Valley, and certainly still could today. But he's opted to focus on his singing and flat-top playing because, as he puts it: "Moving to Nashville, I just realized I wasn't a guitar player, and that I was never going to be a guitar player because I didn't feel like I was actually saying anything with it. Once I started focusing on writing, and, more importantly, singing, I felt like that was a much more powerful instrument for me to really express myself than playing a Telecaster was ever going to be."

His acoustic of choice for roughly the past 15 years has been an HD-28VR (known today simply as an HD-28V). "I bought my D-28 at Gruhn in Nashville," says Simpson. "I traded two electrics and an amp and some other stuff, and then still put some money down to get that thing, but it was...I don't know, it was the One. It wasn't fancy or old or anything, it just sounded really balanced in the store when I bought it." He even carved his name into it to ensure he'd never let it go, and has held onto it ever since. "It just has a really cool thing going on right now, so I like to use it in every studio and at home—it's about to wear another hole through below the pickguard. And now," he says, since becoming a Martin Ambassador and getting a new custom guitar, "I've got the Two, I guess. But the Two is quickly becoming the One."

The Two is a Ditson-style Dreadnought inspired by the original Martins built in the late 1920s, with a mahogany back and sides and a souped-up slab of Vintage Tone System (VTS) Adirondack spruce for the top. "I like a lot of bottom end, because I'm primarily a rhythm player and a singer," says Simpson.

"I picked up a couple 12-fret older model Dreadnoughts in the stores, and they just felt like more resonant, louder guitars. And then I saw the Ditson in the Martin Museum when I toured the factory and just kind of fell in love with the simplicity of the aesthetic of it. No bells or whistles, just a workhorse. This one's really alive already, I can tell, and I'm excited to hear it in a couple of years. I really would like to meet the luthiers who made it, 'cause it's just an absolute tank. It sounds like a cannon."

Because his new guitar is a slot head, restringing has had a bit of a learning curve. But still, he says, "I find it very relaxing, changing strings." Without a guitar tech, it's a ritual he repeats every few days. His set of choice is Martin phosphor bronze 13s, and he's a fan of Martin's new treatment technique: "They gave me these new SP Lifespans®; they're great. They usually last a couple shows, and then, because I have stainless steel frets on the guitar, I usually swap them out after a second show—three, if I'm really feeling brave. I tend to not break them, so it's more superstition at this point."

In the annals of music history, Nirvana is often considered the opening salvo in independent music's battle for mainstream acceptance. Their first full-length, *Bleach*, was released on Seattle indie Sub Pop Records. But their follow-up, *Nevermind*, as Simpson points out, "was on your FM station; it was top 40, and it was a major label release. And now the chances of something like that kind of have to be a much more finite shot." While independent music is larger than it has ever been, it's still just a fraction of the overall market—especially when it comes to country. Though artists like

Simpson and fellow Martin Ambassador Jason Isbell (who releases music under his own Southeastern Records label) are gaining traction, competing for listeners against a major label's massive budget means that one of the biggest challenges is simply being heard. "I just don't have a million dollars to go ask the radio to play my song," Simpson says. But, he adds, "If there's a way to get enough of that stuff to the masses—because sometimes it's hard to find, and a lot of music lovers are pretty dedicated in terms of the hunt—I think some of the bigger labels are going to see a reaction to what's been going on, and they're going to have to do something, to realize that maybe they can survive and make money selling honest and real music," says Simpson. "And people are starving for it."

That may not be far off: In January 2015, he was picked up by Atlantic Records, and soon his particular brand of thinking-man's country will be crossing airwaves and wireless connections to a much larger audience. So has the fairly meteoric rise of the past 12 months shaken him? "No, because I am older, and grounded, and have my head on straight, and I'm kind of just enjoying it, and having fun," he says. "I love all the guys in the band, my wife's very supportive, and it's providing for my family. I could use a few more days at home, especially with a newborn baby—sometimes that gets tough. But I just feel very fortunate and lucky. We're just happy to be showing up to play shows; and not only are there people in the seats, but they actually know the words to the songs, and you can see that it makes them happy. It makes it a lot easier to be away from home so much."

On *Metamodern's* third track, "Living the Dream," Simpson sings: *Son if you ain't having fun just wait a little while / Momma's gonna wash it all away / And she thinks Mercy's overrated* (a line that he says "was me kind of nodding my hat to one of my favorite lyricists, [Tool's] Maynard James Keenan"), and it's a good metaphor for life as an independent artist. Without a label's bottom line to worry about, there's nothing for a songwriter to do but whatever he or she chooses, and the result is music that is creative, honest, and often some of the most lasting. It's a sentiment that underpins all the songs on *Metamodern*: to stay true to ourselves, before our time is up. Professionally, it's also a risky one—it's always safer to hedge our bets. In Simpson's case, his instincts are paying off, but it's easy to wonder if becoming a major-label artist will mean cleaning up his act. There's little reason to worry, though; Simpson's made a living out of doing it his own way for years. *I don't need to change my strings*, he sings elsewhere on the song, *The dirt don't hurt the way I sing*.



Sturgill Simpson's album *Metamodern Sounds in Country Music* is currently available everywhere. SturgillSimpson.com



Sturgill's choice:
SP Lifespan 7200
Phosphor Bronze

**“AND THEN
I SAW
THE DITSON
IN THE
MARTIN MUSEUM
WHEN I
TOURED
THE FACTORY
AND JUST
KIND OF
FELL IN LOVE
WITH THE
SIMPLICITY
OF THE
AESTHETIC
OF IT.
NO BELLS
OR WHISTLES,
JUST A
WORKHORSE.”**

MEET THE FAMILY



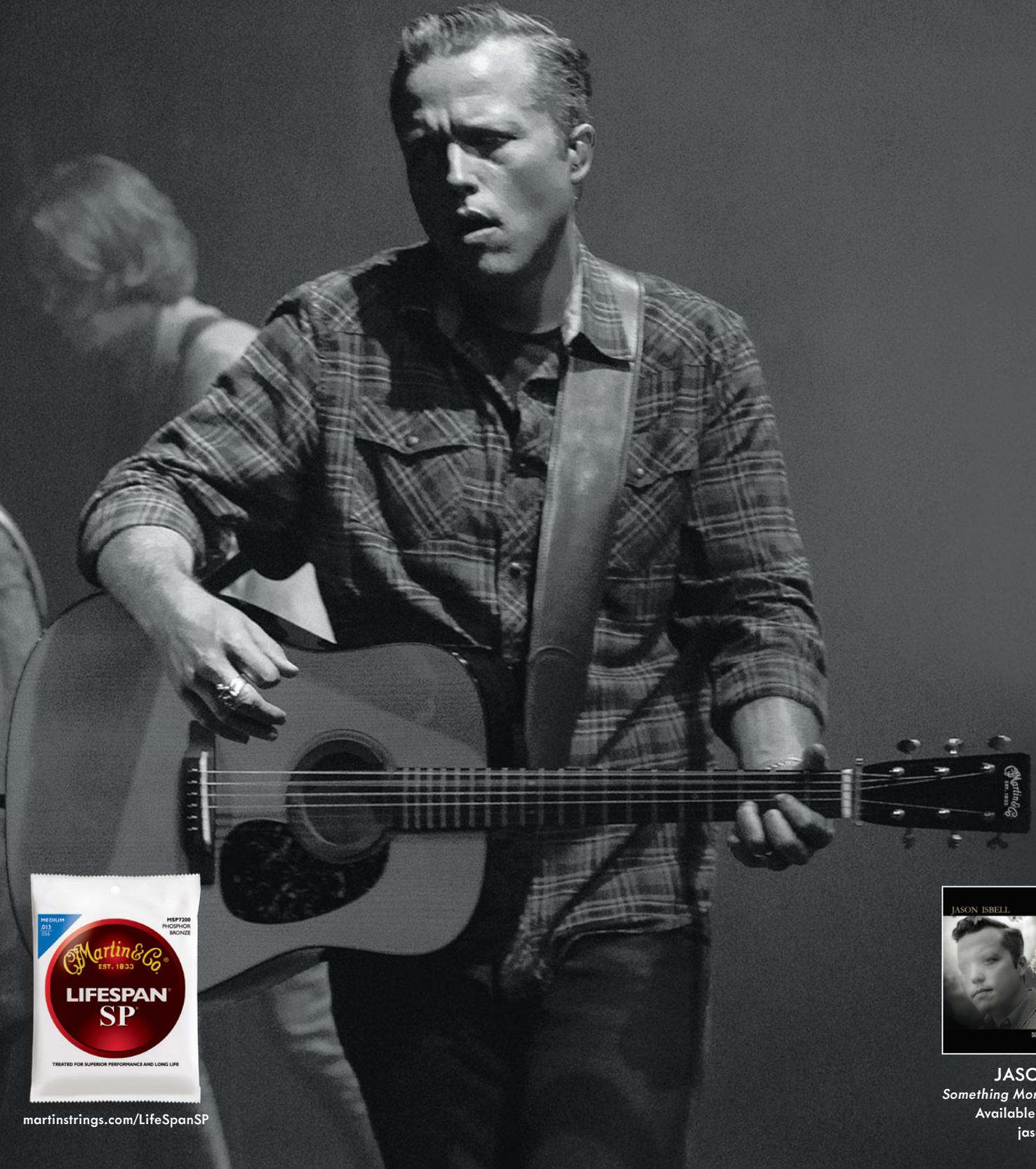
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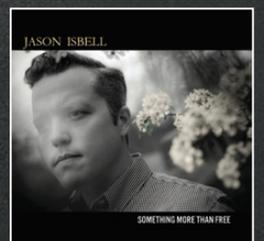


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DEL MCCOURY: JUST GETTING WARMED UP

BY DAVID SCHNEIDER

Ask Del McCoury a question about himself, and there's a good chance you'll hear a story about someone else. This tendency reveals much about him; he's a man whose lengthy road to success was paved with comity and cooperation, and pure passion for bluegrass music. Despite the number of famous names whose paths have crossed his—Bill Monroe, Doc Watson, Alan Lomax, Ralph Rinzler, and many others—there's never a hint of immodesty or shrewdness in McCoury's storytelling. He's not trying to cement a legacy or steer you towards a certain impression; he's got no records to set straight or points of contention to clarify—he's just telling you how one thing led to another over the course of a 50-year career that isn't showing any signs of slowing down, and that may well still be cresting at its peak.

Del McCoury
Martin D-28

As the namesake and bandleader of the Del McCoury Band, McCoury is both figuratively and literally a father figure in the world of bluegrass. Not only is the band comprised of two generations of McCourys—his sons, Ronnie and Rob, have been full-time members since the '80s—but McCoury's connection to bluegrass traces directly back to the undisputed "Father of Bluegrass": Bill Monroe. With his thick head of silver hair, dulcet chuckle and avuncular manner, this paternal role is one that seems to fit McCoury well, but he's not some old-timer who worries too much about the way things used to be. Though bluegrass is a comparatively traditional style of music compared to some—and the Del McCoury Band plays it straight with the five crisply-suited band members often gathered around a single microphone—he seems more interested in looking forward than looking back. But while McCoury experienced some success early, he didn't truly hit his stride until the early '90s, after two decades spent working in the logging and timber industries by day and gigging on nights and weekends. However, McCoury's story isn't one of struggle and perseverance, but rather one of playing and living, living and playing. He recalls, "I remember playing music and not getting back in until daylight and then going straight to work"; but if you ask him if the long hours were a burden, he quickly replies, "No, it really wasn't." For McCoury, there haven't been decidedly good times and distinctly bad times—it's all been good.

That outlook has helped draw a range of people to the Del McCoury Band—not just

fans (or "Del-Heads") but also artists from a wide spectrum of genres: Phish, Steve Earle, and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, to name just a few. At 76, Del McCoury is undeniably a living legend, "living"—vital, awake, alive—being the operative word, with a full schedule of performances, festival appearances, recording sessions, and collaborations underway. The Del McCoury Band's most recent album, 2013's *The Streets of Baltimore*, took home a Grammy for Best Bluegrass Album, and the 2015 DelFest, a music festival he founded in Cumberland County, Maryland, which is now in its eighth year, was a huge success, featuring top-tier talent and international audiences. I caught up with McCoury on an uncharacteristically quiet Sunday afternoon during a break between touring jaunts, and over the course of two hours, we talked about the key people and events that led him where he is today. Naturally, it all began at home with his family.

"They were mountain people—my dad and my mom both were from Mitchell County, North Carolina, and for those mountain people, it seemed like music was just always a part of their lives. My dad always told me that all his people ever had done was foxhunt and play music." Interestingly, though, McCoury's father never played music, but everyone else did—his mother, older brother, uncles, and cousins—so there was ample supply of willing teachers on hand at any given time. "I learned to play guitar from my older brother when I was about nine. He wanted me to learn some chords so I

could play with him, so I learned mostly from my brother Grover Cleveland II—he was named after my dad, and we called him G.C. for short." McCoury liked picking up the basics on guitar, but says his relationship to music changed the day that G.C. brought home a Flatt and Scruggs album: "I had heard the old-time banjo players, and that didn't really impress me, but the three-finger style that Earl was doing—I was just a certain age and it hit me like a ton of bricks." He promptly abandoned the guitar in favor of the banjo, which he practiced tirelessly in pursuit of that Earl Scruggs sound. After honing his chops, it wasn't long before McCoury was asked to play banjo for Keith Daniels of Keith Daniels and the Blue Ridge Ramblers, which marked the start of a long and winding journey in bluegrass.

"That was the first time I ever played outside the little area where I lived," McCoury says about his time with Daniels. Through him, McCoury met a host of fellow musicians, and eventually found himself helping out Bill Monroe on banjo for a gig in New York City. Afterward, Monroe approached McCoury and offered him a spot in the band, but not as banjo player—which McCoury had been playing exclusively for the last 10 years, and also the only instrument Monroe had ever seen him play—but rather as a guitar player and vocalist. "He was just that kind of guy. He'd tell you, 'Now I want you to do this,' and you'd try to do it for him." There was one major incentive that

helped ease the transition—a 1939 Martin D-28. “I went from playing some really cheap guitars at home to playing one of the best guitars in the whole country. He [Bill Monroe] bought that guitar brand new. From what I understand, everybody played it, including him. Everybody who came along—Lester Flatt, Jimmy Martin, all of his great lead singers from that point on played that guitar. When I came into the band, it had been played hard. But it had such a great sound, that thing did.”

For most, a spot in Bill Monroe’s band would be the last gig they ever needed, but not so for McCoury. “I’ll tell you what happened—I got married. I had been working for Bill Monroe for about exactly a year. I happened to mention to the fiddle player, Billy Baker, that I had been offered a job as a Golden State Boy out in California,” he says, referring to the early 1960s West Coast bluegrass band. “So Billy said, ‘Let’s quit Bill and go out there to California.’ Well, I had been wanting to go out there, but I told him, ‘I’ll quit and I’ll go, but I’m going to get married first.’ I had been dating my wife for several years, but I thought with me roaming all over the country I’m likely to lose her. So I told her, ‘If you still want me, I’d like to get married.’ So we did, and the next thing we did was go out to California. Within a week, I quit Bill Monroe, got married, and drove out to California.”

“I WENT FROM PLAYING SOME REALLY CHEAP GUITARS AT HOME TO PLAYING ONE OF THE BEST GUITARS IN THE WHOLE COUNTRY. HE [BILL MONROE] BOUGHT THAT GUITAR BRAND NEW. FROM WHAT I UNDERSTAND, EVERYBODY PLAYED IT, INCLUDING HIM. EVERYBODY WHO CAME ALONG—LESTER FLATT, JIMMY MARTIN, ALL OF HIS GREAT LEAD SINGERS FROM THAT POINT ON PLAYED THAT GUITAR. WHEN I CAME INTO THE BAND, IT HAD BEEN PLAYED HARD. BUT IT HAD SUCH A GREAT SOUND, THAT THING DID.”

DEL MCCOURY

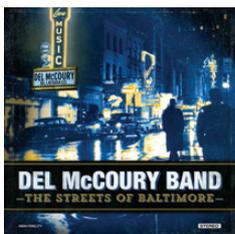
“I WOULD SAY, BUY A MARTIN GUITAR. I’LL PUT IT THIS WAY: IF A MUSICIAN EVER GETS TO PLAY A GOOD MARTIN GUITAR, AND HE DOESN’T OWN ONE, HE’LL BEG, STEAL OR BORROW TO GET ONE.”

McCoury enjoyed his time out West, but after a little homesickness set in, the young couple moved back to York, Pennsylvania, in 1964. McCoury began working for his father-in-law in the logging business, and for the next 25 years worked, raised a family, and played as many gigs as he could fit into his schedule—usually two or three nights a week. Then, in 1967, Chris Strachwitz, founder of California roots label Arhoolie Records, called out of the blue and told McCoury he’d been wanting to do a record ever since hearing him sing with Bill Monroe at a festival in Berkeley, California, in 1963. “So I told him, ‘Sure, I’d love to do a record. When do you want to do it?’ He said, ‘Tomorrow!’ I thought he was in California, but he was right there in Pa. So that was my first record, and that was kind of a break for me.”

After years spent paying his dues, McCoury now had a record under his belt and was able to start leading his own band, the Dixie Pals. Though the band’s lineup saw a lot of churn throughout the 1970s, things solidified when McCoury’s son Ronnie joined in 1981, followed by his younger brother, Rob, in 1986. With a solid lineup and an expanding schedule of festival dates, McCoury was finally able to quit his day job in the late 1980s. By 1992, the family decided to take the plunge and move to Nashville, where McCoury met manager Stan Strickland, and the rest, as they say, is history.

“Sometimes musicians don’t have too good of a business head—a good example of that was Bill Monroe. He wouldn’t work with anybody because he was too stubborn,” says McCoury. “Now, he could play bluegrass music because he invented it, but he couldn’t do anything else. I would not be this far if it had not been for Stan.” He quickly credits his son Ronnie and his wife, Jean, for their business acumen and invaluable advice; but Strickland was instrumental in establishing McCoury Music, the record label through which Grammy-winning albums *The Company We Keep* and *The Streets of Baltimore* have been released, and DelFest, which continues to introduce McCoury to new generations of music fans. This allows Del to focus on what he does best: playing guitar and singing. When it comes to leading a band, McCoury does pause to reflect and note that, “I’ve never tried to tell a musician what to play. Everybody has got a style, and you’ve got to let that style come out. I’ve always been a firm believer in that.”

Naturally, though, he does have one bit of parting advice for aspiring players: “I would say, buy a Martin guitar. I’ll put it this way: If a musician ever gets to play a good Martin guitar, and he doesn’t own one, he’ll beg, steal or borrow to get one. He knows how important it’s going to be to him learning because of that sound. They project well, they have a good tone, and as good sounding as they are, they are still a tough guitar—they go through a lot. If you take an instrument on the road day in and day out, and you play it hard, which usually you do—they’re taking a beating. But that beating doesn’t change them at all. You can play them hard, and they still have that beautiful tone.”



The Del McCoury Band’s *The Streets of Baltimore* is available everywhere. Catch the Del McCoury Band on tour. DelMcCouryBand.com

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FUNNY HOW MUCH DEL MCCOURY

AND HIS STRINGS HAVE IN COMMON.



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NEW RELEASES



D-222 100TH ANNIVERSARY

The very first Dreadnought guitars were designed and crafted by C. F. Martin & Co. in 1916, but marketed in Boston and New York exclusively under the Oliver Ditson brand. Originally made for Hawaiian slide playing style, the very first Dreadnought made was a Model 222 shipped to Ditson in August of 1916. After Ditson went out of business in the early 1930s, Martin introduced the D-1 and D-2 Dreadnoughts for standard playing style that would soon become Martin's iconic D-18 and D-28 models. Over the past 100 years, the Martin Dreadnought has defined what an acoustic guitar can and should be, and subsequently, it has become the most popular acoustic guitar design in the world. In celebration of the birth of the Dreadnought, Martin is proud to introduce the D-222 100th Anniversary Dreadnought Edition. Limited to no more than 100 special instruments, the D-222 is a 12-fret slotted-head commemoration of the 1916 original, crafted with a Vintage Tone System (VTS*) Sitka spruce top, scalloped Martin X-bracing, premium genuine mahogany back and sides, grained ivoroid bindings, a Ditson-style single ring rosette, and a genuine black ebony fingerboard and bridge. Restrained in its appointments like the original, there is no restraint in tone. The combination of the 12-fret Dreadnought's sheer size with the clarity and brilliance of mahogany yields a remarkably lightweight instrument with exquisite tone and power. Learn more about Martin's Vintage Tone System (VTS) at www.martinguitar.com/VTS. www.martinguitar.com/new

*This model boasts Martin's Vintage Tone System (VTS) Sitka spruce top and braces to replicate the aged appearance and tonality of the original. The new Martin Vintage Tone System (VTS) uses a unique recipe that is based on the historic torrefaction system. The VTS acts much like a time machine in which Martin can target certain time periods and age the top/braces to that era.



D-28 JOHN LENNON 75TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

John Lennon acquired his first Martin D-28 acoustic guitar in 1967 around the time that the video for the Beatles' new song "Hello Goodbye" was filmed. From that point on, the D-28 (he owned several over the ensuing years) played an integral role in Lennon's songwriting and performances—from the Beatles' prolific trip to India, through the *White Album* and the final *Let It Be* era of the fab foursome, through the lush and diverse creativity of Lennon's *Plastic Ono Band*, and, of course, his *Imagine* solo years.

Commemorating John Lennon's incredible legacy and lasting contribution to music, and celebrating the 75th anniversary of his birthday (he would have turned 75 on Friday, October 9, 2015), C. F. Martin & Co. is honored to introduce the D-28 John Lennon 75th Anniversary Edition.

Limited to no more than 75 instruments, this special guitar is a 14-fret Dreadnought crafted with a Vintage Tone System (VTS*) Adirondack spruce top. Non-scalloped 5/16" Martin X-bracing, indicative of the 1960s time period, supports the soundboard. The sides and back are bookmatched from solid Madagascar rosewood for a strong and powerful bass resonance—the back being inlaid with HD-28 style "zigzag" peace sign marquetry. Genuine black ebony is selected for the fingerboard and belly bridge.

The Madagascar rosewood headplate is adorned with John Lennon's famous self-portrait illustration, which rests beneath the Martin's script logo, both inlaid in colorful shell. The guitar's remaining inlay theme is inspired by several of Lennon's song lyrics: "the moon and the stars and the sun" (from "Instant Karma"), the number "9" ("Revolution 9," "#9 Dream," etc.), Lennon's round eyeglasses, and his signature, inlaid in mother-of-pearl between the 19th and 20th frets. The pickguard bears a large sun inlay ("Sun King," "Here Comes the Sun," etc.) in mother-of-pearl with rays that emanate toward the rosette that is circumscribed with nearly two dozen mother-of-pearl peace signs against a black background.

A white interior label bears each instrument's numerical sequence in the edition. Lennon's famous self-portrait illustration from the headstock also appears on the label. Learn more about Martin's Vintage Tone System (VTS) at www.martinguitar.com/VTS. | www.martinguitar.com/new

*This model boasts Martin's Vintage Tone System (VTS) Adirondack spruce top and braces to replicate the aged appearance and tonality of the original. The new Martin Vintage Tone System (VTS) uses a unique recipe that is based on the historic torrefaction system. The VTS acts much like a time machine in which Martin can target certain time periods and age the top/braces to that era.

"THIS GUITAR CELEBRATES JOHN'S LIFE AND SONGWRITING. MAY IT INSPIRE ALL WHO PLAY IT TO CARRY THE TORCH OF PEACE AND LIGHT THAT JOHN EMBRACED THROUGH HIS OWN LIFE AND MUSIC." — YOKO ONO

Photo courtesy of Paul Saltzman
(Contact Press Image)



CUSTOM SHOP



CS-OM TRUE NORTH-16

The Martin Custom Shop likes to challenge the boundaries of precision artistry and craftsmanship with an annual Custom Shop limited edition. This year's 2016 Custom Shop contribution to Martin's new product offering is the CS-OM True North-16. Limited to no more than 50 exquisite guitars of the highest order, the CS-OM True North-16 is a 14-fret 000 Auditorium model with an Adirondack spruce soundboard and 1/4" Adirondack scalloped bracing for incredible tonal complexity and power. For the comfort of the player, the neck is carved to a modified low oval contour with the sleek and quick Performing Artist taper. Back and side tonewoods are bookmatched from beautiful, highly figured Hawaiian koa with an intricate "compass star" inlay down the centerline of the back. This dramatic inlay is executed with a combined color palette of flamed jarrah, flamed claro walnut and delicate paua shell concave diamonds against a circular ringed backdrop of "waterfall" bubinga.

The concave paua diamonds and waterfall bubinga background appear again as the design motif for the decorative rosette. The compass star design as well is reduced and replicated in white and black mother-of-pearl against a figured koa backdrop, carefully cut to look like a scroll of weathered parchment, which is, in turn, re-inlaid into a black ebony headplate. The fingerboard, bridge and perimeter bindings are also crafted from selected black ebony. This model's elegance is completed with Style 42 paua shell inlay around the perimeter of the top and concave paua diamond inlays to mark the 5th, 7th, 9th, 12th and 15th positions on the fingerboard. What more can we possibly say?!

www.martinguitar.com/new



000-42 AUTHENTIC 1939

The 000-42 Authentic 1939 draws its inspiration and exacting specifications from the 1939 000-42 (Serial #73741) from the Martin Museum Collection. This special Auditorium-sized 000 was previously owned by blues musician Kenny Sultan and is identical in construction to Eric Clapton's famous 000-42 (Serial #73234), also made in 1939, and used on Clapton's groundbreaking and award-winning *MTV Unplugged* live performance on January 16, 1992.

With the exception that Madagascar rosewood is substituted for the Brazilian rosewood back, sides and headplate used on the original 1939 models, all of the remaining tonewoods, specifications and processes faithfully replicate this legendary guitar. Meticulously crafted with hide glue construction throughout, Authentic features include a hand-fit compound dovetail neck joint, solid Adirondack spruce top hand-sculpted with Vintage Tone System (www.martinguitar.com/VTS) and tucked scalloped X-bracing. Premium black ebony is selected for the fingerboard and bridge. Each 000-42 Authentic 1939 is strung with light gauge SP Lifespan® 7100 to ensure clear, powerful, long-lasting and balanced tone. | www.martinguitar.com/new



OO-18 AUTHENTIC 1931

Based on the 1931 OO-18 (Serial #49310) from the vintage instrument collection of Fred Oster, this austere yet beautiful small-bodied guitar replicates the rare traditional 12-fret pre-1935 Style 18 Grand Concert size. Light in weight with a breathy, crystalline resonance, each OO-18 Authentic 1931 is constructed with premium grade, genuine mahogany back and sides, combined with a torrefied VTS (Vintage Tone System)* Adirondack spruce top, to produce both an aged appearance and tonality. Delicate 1/4" Martin scalloped X-bracing is also hand-sculpted from VTS torrefied bracing stock. The only non-Authentic trim details on this instrument are the use of Madagascar rosewood (in place of the more restricted Brazilian rosewood) for the wooden top and back bindings, headplate, endpiece and heelcap. Like the 1931 original, the fingerboard and bridge are crafted of genuine black ebony, and the neck-to-body juncture employs Martin's hand-fit dovetail joint for excellent transference of tone. As a final touch, the OO-18 Authentic 1931 utilizes an extremely thin vintage gloss finish, indicative of the period, that further contributes to the remarkable openness of tone from this faithful post-parlor recreation.

www.martinguitar.com/new

*This model boasts Martin's Vintage Tone System (VTS) Adirondack spruce top and braces to replicate the aged appearance and tonality of the original. The new Martin Vintage Tone System (VTS) uses a unique recipe that is based on the historic torrefaction system. The VTS acts much like a time machine in which Martin can target certain time periods and age the top/braces to that era. Learn more about Martin's Vintage Tone System (VTS) at www.martinguitar.com/VTS.



DC-28E | OMC-28E | GPC-28E

Since its inception, the Martin 14-fret D-28 has been (and continues to be) the workhorse and the standard for acoustic guitars worldwide. Music legends like Hank Williams, Elvis Presley, Paul McCartney and Neil Young have made musical history with their D-28 Martin guitars.

For players seeking the classic design elements of the D-28 in the format of a full access acoustic-electric cutaway, Martin introduces three distinct new Style 28 body sizes: the full-bodied Dreadnought (DC-28E), the comfortable medium-sized Grand Performance (GPC-28E) and the well-balanced Orchestra Model (OMC-28E). The Style 28's traditional black pickguard matches the solid black ebony bridge and fingerboard. All three models are stage and studio ready with Fishman's new, state-of-the-art Aura® VT Enhance™ acoustic amplification system with Acoustic Imaging (martinguitar.com/VTEnhance) that captures and blends undersaddle piezo technology with an extra bridgeplate transducer that enhances the body's natural tonal resonance. Martin SP Lifespan® Phosphor Bronze strings ensure clear, powerful, long-lasting and balanced tone. www.martinguitar.com/new



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- Battery box integrated into endpin jack for **easy access**

Learn more at martinguitar.com/VTEnhance

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OMC-35E | GPC-35E | DC-35E

Following the 2015 50th anniversary of the D-35, Martin is pleased to introduce three new acoustic-electric cutaway models that are based on the distinctive D-35 with its contrasting three-piece back. Offered in the full Dreadnought size (DC-35E), as well as the medium-sized Grand Performance (GPC-35E) model and the smaller-bodied, tonally-balanced Orchestra Model (OMC-35E), these models share identical tonewoods and appointments. A solid Sitka spruce soundboard with high performance X-bracing is paired with solid East Indian rosewood sides and three-piece back. A traditional black pickguard matches the solid ebony of the bridge and bound fingerboard.

All three models are stage and studio ready with Fishman's new, state-of-the-art Aura[®] VT Enhance™ acoustic amplification system with Acoustic Imaging (martinguitar.com/VTEnhance) that captures and blends undersaddle piezo technology with an extra bridgeplate transducer that enhances the body's natural tonal resonance. Martin SP Lifespan[®] Phosphor Bronze strings ensure clear, powerful, long-lasting and balanced tone. | www.martinguitar.com/new



OMC-35E

GPC-35E

DC-35E

STANDARD SERIES



DC-18E

GPC-18E

OMC-18E

DC-18E | GPC-18E | OMC-18E

Martin new Style 18 guitars, constructed with solid genuine mahogany back and sides, exhibit a remarkable breathiness, lightness of weight and tonal strength that is difficult to fathom. Like their rosewood counterpart, the D-28, the 14-fret D-18s have been prized by players since their introduction in 1934. In particular, the mahogany sound is favored on stage and in studios for the clear, unencumbered tone that brings a recording to life.

For players seeking the classic design elements of the D-18 in the format of a full access acoustic-electric cutaway, Martin introduces three distinct Style 18 body sizes: the large-bodied Dreadnought (DC-18E), the comfortable medium-sized Grand Performance (GPC-18E) and the smaller but extremely well-balanced Orchestra Model (OMC-18E). These three models preserve vintage styling, matching the ebony with a traditional black pickguard. All three models are stage and studio ready with Fishman's new, state-of-the-art Aura® VT Enhance™ acoustic amplification system with Acoustic Imaging (martinguitar.com/VTEnhance) that captures and blends undersaddle piezo technology with an extra bridgeplate transducer that enhances the body's natural tonal resonance. Martin SP Lifespan® Phosphor Bronze strings ensure clear, powerful, long-lasting and balanced tone. www.martinguitar.com/new

DC-15ME | OMC-15ME

Inspired by the very simply appointed new Style 15 Martin guitars of the pre-World War II era, these two modern acoustic-electric cutaway models provide players with a professional yet affordable solid wood instrument. Constructed with solid mahogany on the top, sides, back and neck, these models are offered in two distinct sizes: the full-bodied 14-fret Dreadnought cutaway (DC-15ME) and the smaller-bodied but well-balanced Orchestra Model cutaway (OMC-15ME). East Indian rosewood is selected for the bridge and for the fingerboard, which is inlaid with vintage style diamonds and square position markers. Both models are equipped with Fishman's simplified Matrix VT Enhance™ acoustic amplification system (martinguitar.com/VTEnhance) that captures and blends undersaddle piezo technology with an extra bridgeplate transducer that enhances the body's natural tonal resonance. Martin SP Lifespan® Phosphor Bronze strings ensure clear, powerful, long-lasting and balanced tone. | www.martinguitar.com/new



DC-15ME



OMC-15ME

17 SERIES



00-17S
BLACK SMOKE

00L-17
WHISKEY
SUNSET

000-17
BLACK SMOKE

NEW 17 SERIES

During difficult economic times, Martin has typically addressed the challenges facing musicians by introducing austere appointed models, devoid of fanciness, but certainly not lacking in craftsmanship or excellent tone. One year after the financial crash that preceded the Great Depression, Martin offered the 00-17 and the 000-17 models, originally with 12 frets, but subsequently with the option of 14 frets. Because both versions remain extremely viable today for their lightness of weight and their crisp, glassine tonality, Martin is pleased to introduce six new Style 17 guitars with the following configurations:

00-17S BLACK SMOKE | 12-FRET

With tonewoods, appointments and black finish that match the 000-17 Black Smoke, the 00-17S Black Smoke is a traditional 12-fret 00 Grand Concert body shape with the shorter 24.9" scale and a solid headstock. The finish, applied thinly for excellent tone, is black satin, hence the name Black Smoke.

www.martinguitar.com/new

Also available: 00-17S Whiskey Sunset (12-fret)

00L-17 WHISKEY SUNSET | 14-FRET

This model features a gorgeous sunset burst finish on a solid Sitka spruce top. Mahogany back and sides bound in grained ivoroid, a modern straightline Guatemalan rosewood bridge and a modified low oval neck with Performing Artist taper are all combined to make this a guitar that is not only fast and easy to play but also something you will be proud to own for years to come.

www.martinguitar.com/new

Also available: 00L-17 Black Smoke (14-fret)

000-17 BLACK SMOKE | 14-FRET

Constructed with a solid Sitka spruce top and solid mahogany back and sides, the 000-17 Black Smoke is a 14-fret 000 Auditorium-sized acoustic guitar with the shorter 24.9" scale and a solid headstock. The finish, applied thinly for excellent tone, is black satin, hence the name Black Smoke. | www.martinguitar.com/new

Also available: 000-17 Whiskey Sunset (14-fret)



SS-OMVINE-16

Limited to only 50 gorgeous instruments, this NAMM Show Special guitar is a beautiful addition to any collection. Crafted from figured English walnut and inlaid with aluminum in a stunning vine motif. Absent from this model is a standard pickguard; it has been replaced by an elegant aluminum inlay of the engraved vine design. The guitar also features a black ebony headplate, fingerboard and bridge.

www.martinguitar.com/new



SSC-GPC-16

This Grand Performance model is the third in a series of models created specifically for the Canadian marketplace. This NAMM Show Special has an Adirondack spruce top paired with cherry sides and wings and a Pacific big leaf flamed maple wedge. The SSC-GPC-16 also features an ebony bridge, fingerboard with abalone pearl snowflakes, and headplate adorned with a Canadian nickel.
www.martinguitar.com/new



Photo courtesy of Guitar Center



COLBIE CAILLAT

A TRUE CUSTOM ARTIST

BY MARY BARBOUR

Colbie Caillat is not your typical California musician. Sure, she's got that beachy surfer style, a daily post-yoga glow, and a smile that shines like a Malibu sunrise, but there's plenty that sets this 30-year-old guitarist and singer/songwriter apart from the crowd. Not only does Caillat have a strong commitment to preserving her own, authentic voice, but she is also dedicated to helping encourage the same in others—and it's this consistent message of authenticity and self-empowerment that makes this star an anomaly in today's pop music world.

Caillat didn't always know that she wanted to make music her life. She recalls the first time the realization hit her. "I was 11 and heard Lauryn Hill's 'Killing Me Softly' for the first time. Her voice was so soulful and inspired," says Caillat. "I wanted to sound just like her." And so her career in music began with soul—she wanted to feel the music the way Hill did, and she knew that the best way to do that was to sing.



As a teenager, Caillat enjoyed spending time on the sunny beaches of Malibu, but she never really felt that she was a part of a larger musical community there. Instead, she decided to tackle music on her own, signing up for vocal lessons and beginning to dabble in songwriting. At the encouragement of her father (a successful music producer who produced work for bands like Fleetwood Mac), Caillat decided to learn the guitar. The first one she picked up at his behest happened to be a 1968 Martin—one that was used in the recording of Fleetwood Mac’s Grammy-winning record, *Rumours*. Some of that magic must have rubbed off, because Caillat’s career took off shortly after, and her rapid ascent to musical stardom had assuredly begun.

Caillat started her performing career in Malibu at small local venues, cutting her teeth on the guitar and stage. While she was playing small gigs, Caillat attempted to further her career by auditioning for *American Idol*, only to be turned down during pre-auditions. Luckily, she didn’t let that rejection sting too much and continued to dedicate time to writing songs and posting them to her MySpace page under the urgings of friends. It wasn’t long before her songs began to go viral; within a few months, “Bubbly” had more than 42 million plays, and record labels were knocking down her virtual door. Soon, Caillat was signed to Republic Records, who released her debut record, *Coco*, in 2007. The album debuted at number five on the Billboard 200 and would go on to sell three million copies worldwide. “Bubbly,” the song that failed to make a mark on *Idol*’s screeners, reached number five on the Billboard Hot 100.

Few musicians expect to receive this level of attention after such a short time in the public eye—but especially not self-professed introverts with a longstanding case of stage fright. “I’m a lot more comfortable performing now,” Caillat says, “but in the beginning it was really tough. I never wanted to be an entertainer, and I think there’s a huge difference between that kind of talent and the talent it takes to make music. But, unfortunately, they seem to go hand in hand.” You wouldn’t guess it by seeing her perform to sold-out audiences of over 15,000 people today (sharing the stage with greats like John Mayer and Christina Perri), but in the early days she had to talk herself out of canceling the show every time the curtain was about to drop. “I’m a huge hermit. I’d be thinking, How in the world are you going to be able to do this, Colbie? But once the shows got underway, I would calm down and just start having fun. When I can actually look out and see the audience and see that people are out there having fun and smiling, it brings me back to the music, and I realize that’s why we’re all there. Just to have a good time. That really helps me lighten up.”



Photo courtesy of Guitar Center

Despite her success, Caillat doesn't feel pressured to behave like a pop star. "I know myself really well, and I know what I need to be happy—simple things," she says.

"Close relationships, paddle boarding at one of the lakes in town, long walks with my dogs. A big night out is going to a family friend's house, making dinner and having a glass of wine," she laughs. "I'm not into anything crazy, but I know what I find fun and that's what I do."

Caillat credits her dad, a seasoned music industry veteran, with helping her stay true to herself and keep perspective when her career first blew up. "He knows the business, so he told me, before I even signed with a label, that life was going to get crazy and not to let it get the best of me. He said I could turn things down if I needed to, put family and friends first, and always know when it's good to take advice from the people around me and when it's good to make my own choices and follow my own instincts."

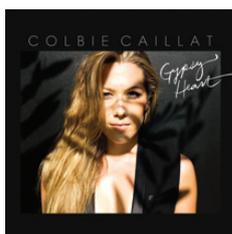
You can see her philosophy at work behind her latest hit, "Try." The song was inspired by Caillat's frustration with her experience of the music business, in which she is constantly being asked to dress more sexily or make music that has more mass appeal. She recalls a day she had a recording session scheduled with Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds when she was feeling particularly frustrated about the direction in which music executives were pushing her career. Instead of letting it squelch her instincts, however, they ended up writing a song about not having to try to be someone else. The song is directed toward women who are made to feel like just being themselves isn't good enough. "That's just not who I am—I feel weird in heels and short, tight dresses, and I hate wearing makeup. It doesn't feel like me." Caillat's lyrics ask women to be proud of their natural beauty and let go of the idea that women need to spend hours making themselves up just to be seen in public.

The self-empowering anthem has climbed up the U.S. Billboard Hot 100 chart, and the video, which features a diverse set of women ditching their makeup and wigs to go *au naturel*, went viral and has accumulated over 27 million views to date. Caillat explains, "I think it's an important message. So many people are always giving me advice or telling me what to do, what to wear, how to look. They would tell me to wear a short, tight dress on TV, and I used to be like, oh, okay, I guess I have to do that. And then I would perform badly because I didn't feel like myself," she confesses. "But writing that song and making that video, I don't know, something just clicked and I felt like I understood myself better and knew what I needed to do."

Caillat's songwriting process centers around her Martin 000-15M and D-18 guitars. She'll sit strumming a few chords—usually in her bathroom because she digs the reverb-heavy acoustics—and write down or record whatever comes to her. “Martin guitars are just incredible. I mean, I've always known that, but it wasn't until I was 19 or 20, old enough to learn about sound quality and how important the actual instrument is to the quality of your music, that I got really into them. My musicians all play Martins on my records and in our shows—I've always played them. I love working with good people and with a company that is so invested in making a positive impact on music and the world in general.” While her mahogany Martins get most of her playing time now, it may not be for long: She's currently designing a 000 custom made entirely out of sustainable wood.

With “Try” on the rise and a continuously developing reputation as a positive role model and pop music icon, what does Caillat have on tap for the future? Certainly tons of play time on her custom 000 is in order, which will help her fulfill her goal of wanting to collaborate with other artists, “maybe even doing full-on R&B or classic rock,” she adds. Other than that, Caillat explains, her future is wide open to pursue whatever feels right or natural for her.

It's no news that the music industry can change artists, and sometimes seeking the widest market with one-size-fits-all mentality can mean that change is for the worse. But for Caillat, her refusal to align with this mindset has, in turn, defined her. In all of her work, and in her collaborations with musicians and the luthiers at Martin, the resounding sentiment behind her work will always remain the same: “I want to keep on spreading positive messages and, hopefully, inspiring people and making a difference. For me, that's what making music is all about.”



Colbie's album *Gypsy Heart* is currently available everywhere. Learn more about our Martin Ambassador at ColbieCaillat.com or MartinGuitar.com/ambassadors.



Colbie's choice:
SP Lifespan 7100
Phosphor Bronze

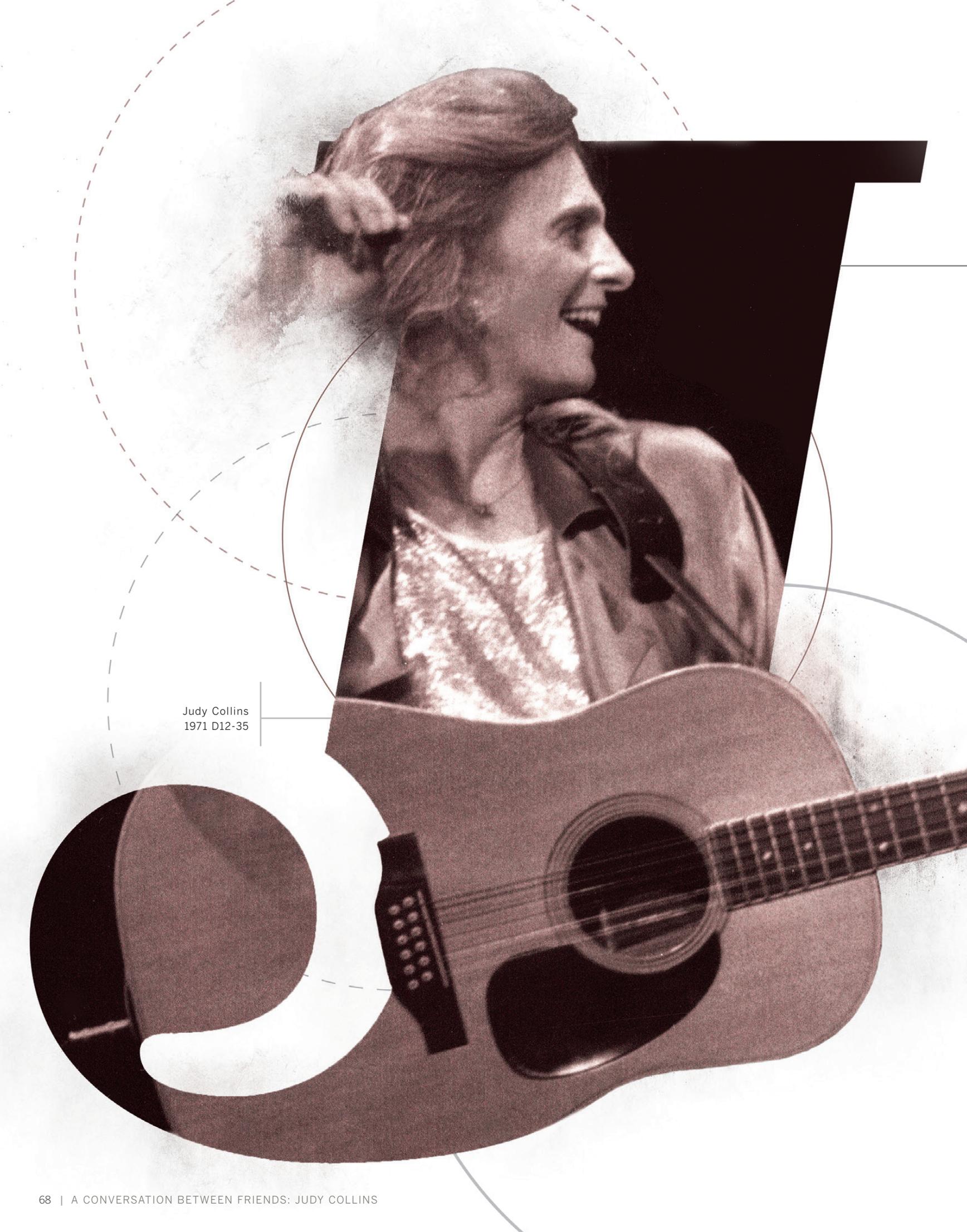


"MARTIN GUITARS

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COLBIE CAILLAT



Judy Collins
1971 D12-35

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN FRIENDS

JUDY COLLINS & MARTIN GUITAR'S DICK BOAK

BY DICK BOAK

When the brand new Sycamore Street factory opened in 1964, Martin wanted to make a big splash. An open house was planned, and Judy Collins and Tom Paxton — two of the key emerging talents in the New York folk scene — were invited out to Nazareth to perform on the back loading dock for the employees and town folk. All accounts would indicate that the afternoon was unforgettable.

Each in their own way, Tom and Judy have left their indelible mark on American musical culture. In Judy's case, she was greatly inspired by many of the young songwriters of Greenwich Village and was one of the first to introduce the songs of Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs, Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen and Randy Newman to the American public.

From the mid-'60s into the early '70s, Judy embraced a broader musical palette well outside of the folk genre with hit singles like "Both Sides Now," "Chelsea Morning" and "Send in the Clowns." Judy's *Colors of the Day* album is a collection of these works and continues to sell well more than 40 years after its release.



"I USE MY D12-35JC 12-STRING WITH MY WILDFLOWER INLAY IN EVERY SHOW, AND AS YOU HAD TOLD ME WOULD HAPPEN, IT'S GETTING BETTER AND BETTER. IT'S MORE AND MORE BEAUTIFUL, SO I'M JUST THRILLED WITH IT."



Early in 2000, Lee Walesyn, a retired Pennsylvania state policeman and avid fan of Judy's, popped his head into my office and urged me to do a Judy Collins Signature Edition. There was no question that he was right. That afternoon, I sent her a brief message expressing interest in a collaboration. It didn't take long for Judy to email me her typically warm and personal response, and we were off and running.

As luck would have it, she was on tour and was scheduled to perform at the nearby State Theatre in Easton, Pa. I made arrangements to meet her during sound check, and I found her full of energy and magnetism.

As show time drew near, Judy asked whether I had family. I showed her a photo of my young daughters, who were two and six at the time. She urged me to call them and have them come down for the concert. My wife dressed the girls in their crimson Christmas dresses, and before we knew it, we were seated directly in front of the microphone in the first row. For the first song, Judy knelt down and sang "Silver Bells" directly to them. The children were absolutely spellbound.

In October of 2006, we held the grand opening of our new Museum and Visitors Center. Of course, it was the perfect opportunity to invite Tom and Judy back to perform for another unforgettable evening.

After a lifetime on stage, Judy still writes and performs frequently. Her satin voice, personal warmth and ease onstage keep the seats at all of her shows filled. But beyond that, she is simply a beautiful person—"Suite: Judy Blue Eyes," in fact.



Judy Collins
00-40H

Dick Boak (DB) –Hi Judy. I hope it's a good time for you. Are you all relaxed?

Judy Collins (JC) –Just perfect!

DB –I just read that you have two platinum albums and four gold albums? Did you ever dream that you would have such a career?

JC –Well, I think that I certainly had the right kind of training. Let's put it that way. I had a great deal of inspiration, especially from my father. He was always doing things just to keep himself fit – reading, studying, learning to do new things. And I had this great teacher named Dr. Antonia Brico. She wanted me to be a classical musician. People like that had to practice all of their lives because some of them would be conducting into their 80s or 90s. I guess I understood that I had to work very hard to keep myself up to date. I was preparing for the long haul. It's quite amazing what a time I've had!

DB –And you continue to have! I was thinking about how it must feel to be immortalized in an iconic song like Stephen Still's "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes."

JC –Oh, well, you can't really count on those sorts of things, can you? [laughter] But I do think that it's a great honor, and I'm so very happy that Stephen wrote that song.

DB –Are you still in touch with Stephen, Graham, David, Joni and all your old friends from that time period?

JC – I'm still very good friends with Stephen, and, of course, Graham and David. I see them whenever I can. I was never really close with Joni Mitchell, but I certainly admire her work a great deal, and I'm rooting for her.



“STEPHEN GAVE ME THAT BEAUTIFUL LITTLE GUITAR IN 1969. IT WAS A BIRTHDAY PRESENT, AND HE HAD ALREADY WRITTEN THE SONG ‘SUITE: JUDY BLUE EYES.’ HE SANG THE SONG TO ME THAT DAY ON IT, AND THEN HE GAVE ME THE GUITAR. I THINK THE SONG AND THE GUITAR WERE PROBABLY MEANT TO GET ME BACK, BUT THAT DIDN’T REALLY WORK.”

Judy Collins

DB – I was listening to “Send in the Clowns” today. Someone told me that your version received an even better review than Frank Sinatra’s.

JC – Well, I had the hit, so that’s the nicest thing about it. It was the first and only top-charting Stephen Sondheim song. We were on the top ten on radio twice — in 1975 and then again in 1977. It’s a bit interesting.

DB – You’ve had such a long relationship with Martin. I was thinking about 1964 and your performance with Tom Paxton on the loading platform of our Martin factory at Sycamore Street. Do you recall how all of that came about?

JC – Someone from Martin called both Tom and me on the phone and asked if we would drive out to Pennsylvania for the grand opening of the new factory. Of course, we both used Martin guitars — in fact, everyone in the New York City folk music scene did — and so we accepted and went. We sang our hearts out, and as you know, Martin made us beautiful matching guitars with herringbone trim and pearl rosettes. You know, there is a photograph of Tom and me from that event. I have on this little dress with a slip, and the slip is showing, which I love! I mean, it’s so not ’60s, you know? Sadly, that Dreadnought guitar that was gifted to me at the event was promptly stolen out of my road manager’s station wagon, which was very upsetting to me. I’ve searched for that guitar for decades, but it’s never shown up. Regardless, it was terrific to be part of that historic event.

DB – It’s great to have photos of you and Tom from those early years. Those photos inspired us to invite you and Tom back in 2006 for the grand opening of our new Museum and Visitors Center. Marcy Marxer and Cathy Fink were both there too, plus Annie Haslam from Renaissance. What a night that was!

JC – Yes, that was a wonderful, wonderful time. And you made Tom and me matching 000-18 Martin guitars again! Everything old became new again!

DB – It has been really special for me to get to know you and to

share all these different things that we’ve done together. It got me thinking about our signature model guitar project. How are those guitars holding up for you?

JC – Oh, they are beautiful. I use my D12-35JC 12-string with my wildflower inlay in every show, and as you had told me would happen, it’s getting better and better. It’s more and more beautiful, so I’m just thrilled with it.

DB – Was there a time when you primarily played 6 strings? I’m curious about when you switched over and your reasoning behind 12 strings versus 6 strings.

JC – Well, I think I was very influenced by Pete Seeger. I got very interested in that particular lush sound. I have never been a great guitarist, but I learned to fingerpick pretty well early on. I learned how to pick on the 6-string and I did. I had the picks and all that, but I found that the 12-string orchestral sound really enhanced what I was doing because I was playing primarily by myself in those years. Eventually, I just let the 6-string go.

DB – In addition to the signature models, we have two of your original guitars here. I think you know that we bought your original 1971 D12-35 in the Christie’s auction. That’s the one that you played throughout the ’70s and ’80s.

JC – The 12-string, well, there you go, and so that would have been the main guitar that I was playing during those decades.

DB – And, of course, the little converted 00-40H 12-fret Hawaiian guitar from 1930.

JC – Oh, yes. Stephen gave me that beautiful little guitar in 1969. It was a birthday present, and he had already written the song “Suite: Judy Blue Eyes.” He sang the song to me that day on it, and then he gave me the guitar. I think the song and the guitar were probably meant to get me back, but that didn’t really work.

DB – So that’s why it’s such a sentimental piece?

“I HAVE SOME ADVICE: DON’T DO IT UNLESS YOU LOVE IT.”

JC – Yes. That’s really true. It’s very sentimental.

DB – Stephen Stills plays that song in an odd E tuning with mostly E notes with a B thrown in (EEEEBE). We have the little guitar tuned that way in our museum, and visitors love seeing it. We appreciate that you’ve loaned it to us.

JC – Oh, good.

DB – Your voice is unbelievable. It is as pure and as crystalline as it ever has been, and I don’t know what your secret is to keeping your voice young and beautiful. Do you have any secrets for us?

JC – I do have a secret of sorts. I studied voice with my teacher, Max Margulis, for 32 years. I met him in 1965 when I was having very big vocal problems. I had studied the piano, but I had never studied voice, and I just didn’t know what I was doing. Even then, I was out there on the road already playing probably 50 shows a year, and I was losing my voice all the time. I found this incredible teacher, and he was able, through years and years of study, to teach me what to do. In a way, there is no secret to it at all. It’s just about clarity and phrasing. That’s what he taught me and that’s what I learned. I have also been very lucky in terms of my health. I have had some unpleasant things happen vocally and had a lot of things to get through, but the result of being with him is that I know how to sing. So I paid the piper, but I got my pipes. It was a great payoff.

DB – I notice that you’ve written seven books. Are you working on any new projects?

JC – Yes, I’m working on a new book about health and the various things that I have had to do to stay healthy and to have the energy that I’m blessed with. I’m working on it now and hope to have it done sometime this century! [laughter]

DB – You are so prolific. I’m a couple of years younger than you, and I’m just trying to keep up with you!

JC – I feel very lucky to be able to do it, so it is great.

DB – Can you tell me more about the upcoming PBS television project you are working on?

JC – We are doing 22 of the songs of Stephen Sondheim, and we will be filming it in Denver, Colorado, with the full symphony for Rocky Mountain PBS. We are so excited about it. Actually, we’ve already run through about half of it with the Greeley Philharmonic Orchestra, and they are such a great orchestra. They are conducted by Maestro Glen Cortese, who is a New Yorker. He is really wonderful and has taken that orchestra to a very high level. We are very excited about recording it in February of 2016 in Denver.

PBS does so much for music in general. The Sondheim project will be the third in my trio of PBS shows during the past decade. I did the *Judy Collins Live at the Temple of Dendur* (at the Metropolitan Museum of Art) in 2012. I recall you were my guest at that show! And then the Irish *Judy Collins Live in Ireland*, which came out in 2014 on PBS.

It would certainly be sensational if everyone made a fundraising pledge to PBS during the fundraising drive next summer when they air the Sondheim show. I also want everyone to know about my new CD, *Strangers Again*, that I’ll be releasing in August, featuring some wonderful duets with many of my musical friends, including Jackson Browne, Jeff Bridges, Don McLean, Jimmy Buffett, Glen Hansard, Michael McDonald and more.

DB – What’s your tour schedule like?

JC – I do about 110 shows a year all over the country and all over the world. That’s what I do.

DB – So you don’t mind the rigors of all that traveling?

JC – That’s what you sign up for when you do this. You sign up for it, and it’s pretty much a lifetime commitment, at least it has been in my case. We get paid for doing the travel. The singing and guitar playing are free!

DB – And you are loving it?



JC –Everybody loves their work if they are making a good living out of it. I feel like I am a rancher. I have to be up at 4:00 a.m. to get to my work. Most ranchers do that too. So that's probably what I am — a musical rancher [laughter].

DB –So the music business has changed so much from the way it was at the beginning of your career to the challenges that young musicians face today. Do you have any advice for young people getting into the business of recording and CDs and iTunes and all this new technology?

JC –Yeah, I have some advice: Don't do it unless you love it. If you love it, it will be worth it. If you don't, you'll never get over it.

DB –So beyond all of this, you just keep going and tackle one new thing after another.

JC –In fact, my next project (that I've started already) will be a new Judy Collins album with all of my own songwriting. I will be tackling that as soon as I get this Sondheim project under my belt. We shall see!

DB –Good. Well, I'm proud of you, and all of us at Martin are so proud to see you playing our guitars.

JC –Oh, thank you, Dick. That's life. That's what happens. Work, work, work!

NORTH STREET ARCHIVE

MARTIN ARCHIVES



Photo by Kiko Konagamitsu.
Courtesy of the Old Town
School of Folk Music Archives.

Throughout Doc Watson's early career, he owned and performed with several Martin Dreadnought guitars. Stefan Grossman sold Doc a D-18 that we presume is the one seen in this photo, taken at Chicago's Old Town School of Folk Music in April of 1964. He eventually gifted the D-18 to Jack Lawrence. Doc also owned a 1946 D-28, but after it fell and the neck broke, guitarist and luthier Wayne Henderson replaced the Martin neck with one of his own construction. Doc played that modified D-28 for many years.



Photo courtesy of
Woody Mann—*Harlem
Street Singer*

Sheb Wooley was a character actor and singer, perhaps best known for his 1958 hit novelty song, "The Purple People Eater." He played Ben Miller, brother of Frank Miller, in the film *High Noon*, played Travis Cobb in *The Outlaw Josey Wales*, and also had a co-starring role as scout Pete Nolan in the television program *Rawhide*. He is captured here, in the mid-1960s, with his Martin D-28.

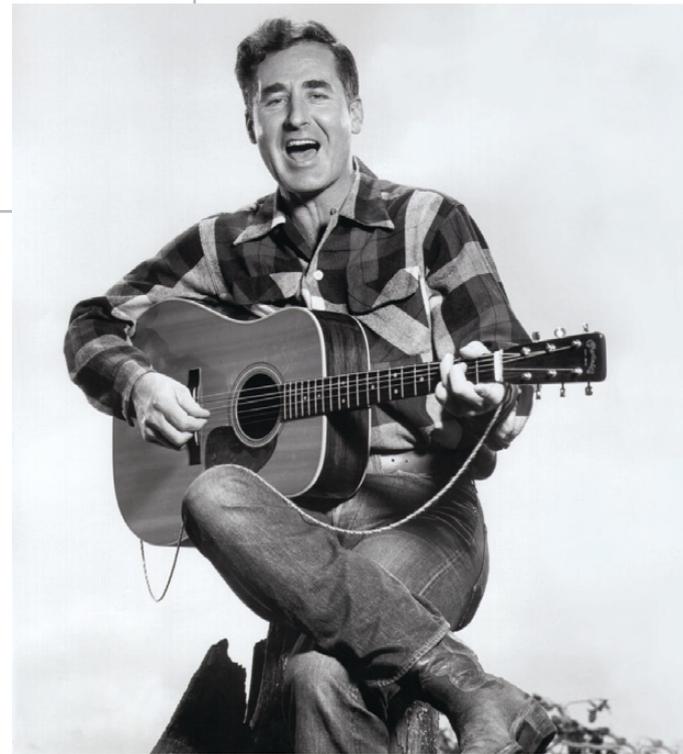


Photo courtesy of Chris Karfakis Archives

After moving to New York City in the 1940s, Reverend Gary Davis performed on the streets of Harlem and gave guitar instruction in his living room. His unique fingerstyle technique was highly influential to artists such as Bob Dylan, John Sebastian, Woody Mann, Jorma Kaukonen, Bob Weir and many more. He is shown here out on the street in the 1950s, providing accompaniment for a young dancer with his D12-20 Martin 12-string. The remarkable story of his life has been recently told in the acclaimed documentary *Harlem Street Singer*. For information about the documentary, go to: harlemstreetsinger.com.



Photo by Carl Van Vechten—Courtesy of Jerry Zoltan Archives

Josh White was an American singer, guitarist, songwriter, actor and civil rights activist, and the closest African-American friend and confidant to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1931, he moved to New York City and achieved broad fame and popularity for his diverse musical styles. In 1933, he married New York gospel singer Carol Carr. They shared a love of music, and it appears they also shared Josh's 00-21 Martin!

FROM THE WORKBENCH

WE ARE FAMILY



RICK JOHNSON

As Distribution Center Manager, Rick Johnson is responsible for ensuring that Martin guitars, strings, and 1833 Shop gear and accessories ship to customers, dealers, and distributors. Rick made a career switch 13 years ago and believes he is very fortunate to work for a company like Martin Guitar. Those who work for Rick praise him for his ability to make them smile and for his dedication and work ethic. Martin Guitar gave Rick the fresh start he was looking for.

HEATHER MILLER

Heather Miller works at the Distribution Center at Martin Guitar. Heather began her career at Martin Guitar as a temporary employee and instantly fell in love with the company. She confesses that she began to cry with happiness after accepting a full time position in Distribution Center Personnel two years ago. Heather enjoys the fast-paced environment of the Distribution Center and says her coworkers are like a family to her.





TODD HOFFNER

His coworkers know Todd Hoffner as the “string guy.” Any question you have about Martin strings, Todd is prepared to answer! He is a 22-year employee of Martin Guitar and currently works at the Distribution Center. Todd describes the atmosphere at Martin Guitar as like working with your family. He is proud to tell people about the great instruments that are produced by the company and says the experience of working at a company like Martin Guitar is like no other.

JOSUE CASTELLANO

Martin employee Josue Castellano is responsible for the handling and packing of Martin guitars before they are shipped to authorized Martin Guitar Dealers and Distributors worldwide. Josue is always the first to volunteer to help when needed, whether it is at the Martin Guitar factory or helping to pack Martin strings for shipment. Two years ago, he decided to work at Martin Guitar after hearing rave reviews from current employees. Josue enjoys telling others how passionate Martin Guitar employees are for the products they help create and deliver to music lovers.



GAYE ELDRIDGE

Gaye Eldridge began her career at Martin Guitar as a temporary employee and began working full time at the Distribution Center three years ago. Family is very important at Martin Guitar, and Gaye definitely agrees. She has a number of family members that she is lucky enough to call coworkers. Gaye is excited and proud when she tells others that she is an employee of the world-renowned Martin Guitar Company.

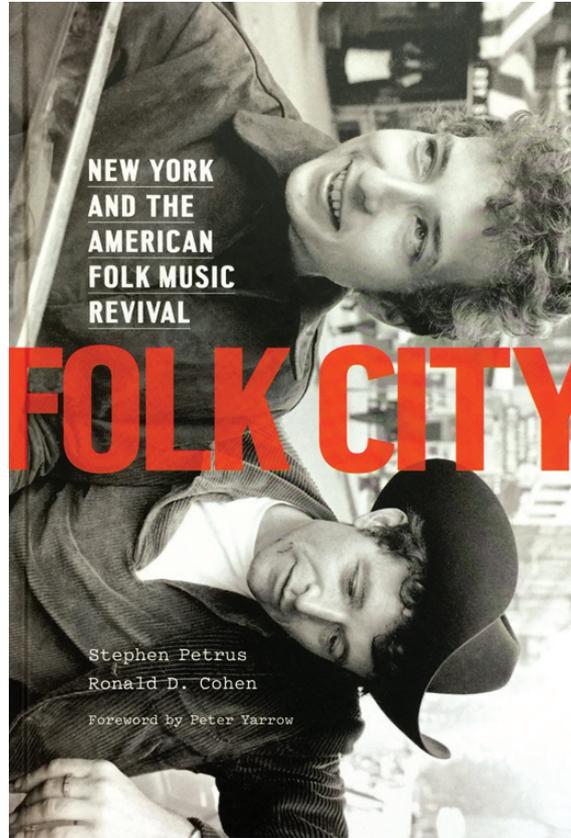
MARK SAGINARIO

Mark Saginario is a 15-year employee of Martin Guitar. Currently, he is the Assistant Distribution Center Manager. Mark chose to work at Martin Guitar due to the company’s incredible history and culture. He would like guitar enthusiasts and Martin Guitar loyalists to know that every employee at Martin Guitar has an incredible passion for what they do and takes great pride in producing and distributing the world’s finest acoustic instruments. #MartinPride



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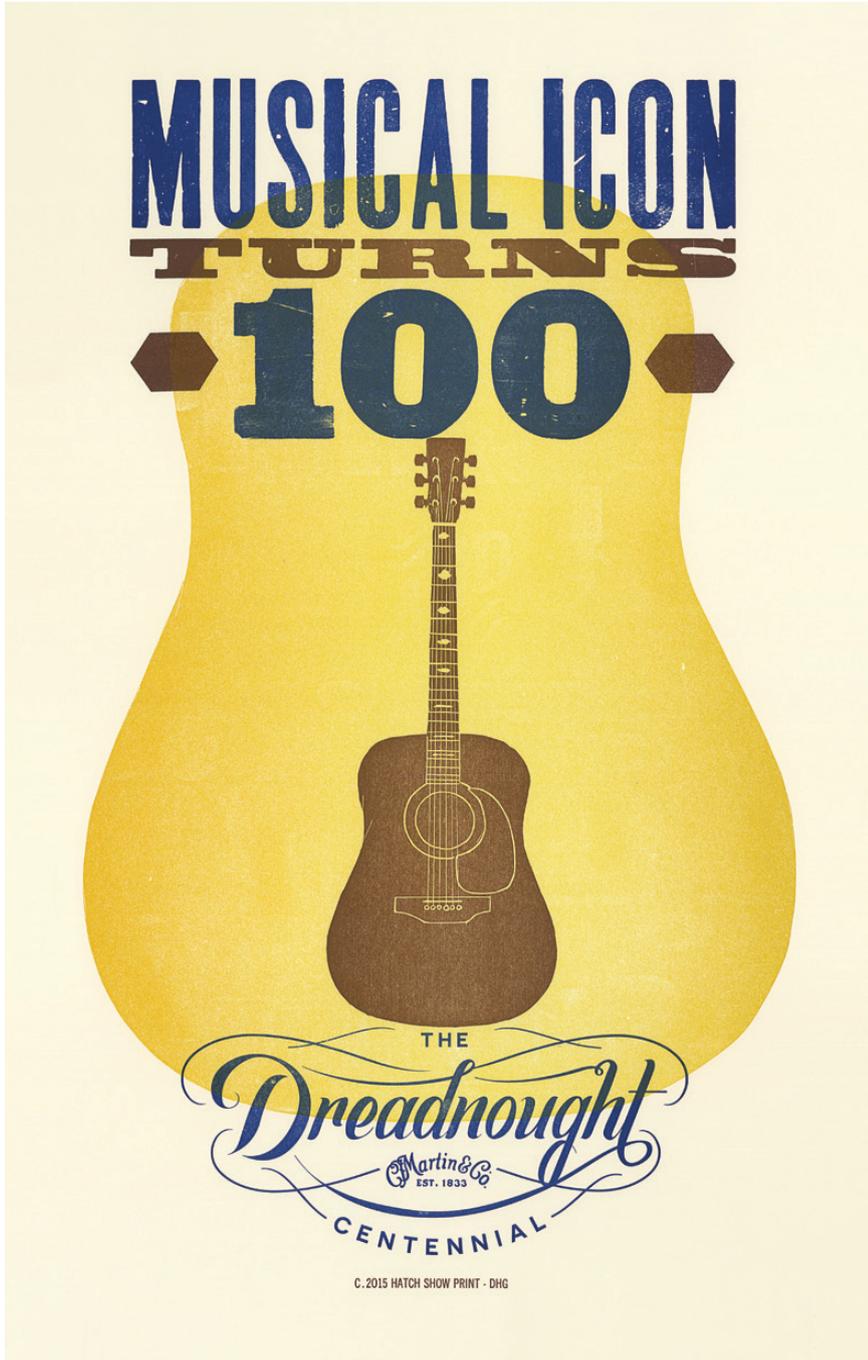
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FOLK CITY: NEW YORK AND THE AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC REVIVAL

By Stephen Petrus and Ronald D. Cohen

Folk City highlights visionary entrepreneurs who were committed to promoting folk music, including Mike Porco of Gerde's Folk City, Izzy Young of the Folklore Center, and John Hammond of Columbia Records.

"The New York folk music community created songs that stopped Americans in their tracks. Folk songs were of substance, the meat and potatoes of people's lives," said Petrus. "This music resonated with New Yorkers and many others. It not only informed them about their cultural heritage, but also broke down social barriers."



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IN MEMORIAM

THE UNFORGETTABLE



Pictured: Stefan Grossman (left) and Martin's Dick Boak (center) with John Renbourn at the London Acoustic Guitar Show, 2011

JOHN RENBOURN 1944–2015

We are saddened by the passing of guitarist, musician, scholar, and Martin signature artist John Renbourn. Renbourn's musical influences ranged from folk, blues and jazz to early music and classical.

Separately and in combination, his songs have found a place in the rich musical landscape that he created during his long career. As one of the world's most brilliant fingerstyle guitarists, Renbourn dazzled, confounded and inspired, whether solo, paired with Bert Jansch or Stefan Grossman, or as a member of Pentangle. He was 70 years old.



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SOMETHING OLD

A COWBOY AND HIS D-45

Every year in mid-January, the entire music industry heads west to Anaheim, California, for the Winter NAMM (the International Music Products Association) Show. This is where manufacturers of musical instruments and related accessories display their wares for the dealers and distributors that place their scheduled orders for the coming year. Martin likes to thank loyal dealers with an invitation to an annual dealer dinner, usually held at a pretty special restaurant or catered location.

Back in 1993, Martin held the dealer dinner at the Autry Museum of Western Heritage in the hills of Hollywood. It was very special to see this museum, especially Gene's priceless 1933 D-45 — the very first D-45 ever made complete with his name inlaid in script letters down the face of the fingerboard. This guitar appeared in countless movies and photographs as well as on many of Autry's timeless recordings.

In fact, Gene Autry appeared in 93 feature films and made 635 recordings, more than 300 of which he wrote or co-wrote. Over the decades, Gene's recordings have sold more than 60 million copies and earned more than a dozen gold records. Autry's beloved Christmas and children's records "Here Comes Santa Claus" (1947) and "Peter Cottontail" (1950) went platinum (for more than two million copies sold), while "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," recorded in 1949, remains the second best-selling single of all time, with sales totaling more than 30 million.

Chris Martin was particularly enthralled with the museum. Upstairs in the museum gift shop, there were dozens of licensed Autry products ranging from lunch boxes to toy guns in tooled leather holsters. It occurred to Chris that it would be a great project to replicate the famous Autry D-45. Such artist collaborations had not been done, at least not in the current time period. Gene Autry was still alive at the time, and Chris made inquiries about the possibility of a collaborative project. Gene was, of course, honored but asked that a charitable royalty from the sale of each guitar go in support of the nonprofit museum. Chris loved this idea, and the charitable royalty idea became the template for future Signature Artist projects.

With 50 guitars sold in the U.S. and 16 sold overseas, the D-45S Gene Autry Signature Edition was a fine success, and the numerous projects that followed certainly helped to reinforce Martin's deserved musical heritage. The millions of dollars donated in support of the artists' designated charities should not go unmentioned.

In a broader sense, Martin's direct involvement with artists infused fresh design ideas. It also helped to initiate a specific section of the Martin Archives dedicated to the collection and preservation of musician-related photography. As a legendary musician and as the owner of the very first Martin D-45 Dreadnought, Gene Autry is a perfect case in point. The

Archives has collected dozens of vintage photographs of Autry—some with Champion the Wonder Horse, some on the movie set, some taken for record company promotions—but virtually all with his priceless D-45 (or some other iconic Martin model) in hand.

Few companies will ever have the fortune or longevity that Martin has had. Fewer yet will have the foresight to preserve and invest in their valuable history. Fewer yet will be recognized for crafting a product that is considered the best and optimum example in its class. In these respects, C. F. Martin & Co. is remarkably interwoven into the fabric of American musical history and culture.

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Dreadnought Jr.



D-45



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