

rock, and alt-country—a collection of mostly sub-three-minute gems featuring lyrics liable to leave listeners grinning like mules.

The closer “Shape Of A Wheel” (“I’m a wheel no matter what shape I’m in”) offers particularly good examples of frontman Brian Henneman’s well-known talents for wordplay, but the whole album abounds with songcraft.

Opener “Monday (Every Time I Turn Around)” is a jangly ode to time’s swift passage, while “Big Fat Nuthin’” (“My idea of recreation/Is brain-dead flat-line vegetation”) merges a singalong chorus with workaday drudgery. “XOYOU” is pure-pop bliss of the Nick Lowe/Dave Edmunds ilk, while “Dog” (“I love my dog... sometimes it’s just this simple”), a toss-off in lesser hands, manages to be bouncy and moving at the same time.

Reenlisting their longtime producer Eric “Roscoe” Ambel (Joan Jett, the Del-Lords), the BRox took several months to record in their hometown of St. Louis (a first). This is certainly well-crafted as a result, but it lacks none of the immediacy or charm that have helped the Bottle Rockets retain inveterate fans and attract new ones for 24 years. — **DP**



**Mahavishnu Orchestra**  
**Birds of Fire**  
 Limited Edition 4.0 Quad  
**John McLaughlin and the 4th Dimension**  
**Black Light**

At 73, Mahavishnu John McLaughlin remains fierce. He’s a time-traveling icon that has shared his talents with jazz legends, while he himself is worthy of the same title. His illustrious past meets the present with these two releases — one old, one new.

*Birds of Fire* was Mahavishnu Orchestra’s second album, released in ’73. It was a huge deal for a fusion album, and artistically found better balance between hyper-virtuosity and composition than *Inner Mounting Flame*. It was the last album featuring the original lineup of Jan Hammer, Jerry Goodman, Rick Laird, and McLaughlin. The fidelity on this super audio, multi-layered, 4.0 limited edition is pristine and superb, while retaining it’s earthy nuances.

The brand-new *Black Light* pays homage to



## INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

Whatever were they thinking? In hindsight, it’s tough to fathom how Gibson could scrap the Les Paul Standard at the end of 1960 and replace it in ’61 with a new design, the SG, or Solid Guitar. But, as prolific guitar scribe Tony Bacon reminds us, demand for the Les Paul was dwindling and Gibson hoped to “modernize” sales.

In the years since, the SG has been eclipsed in the spotlight by the better known and beloved Les Paul Goldtop and ‘burst. It’s a similar situation to the Fender Jaguar/Jazzmaster, overshadowed by the Tele and Strat. But of course this isn’t all bad: Prices have remained sane for SGs that many diehard fans recognize as phenomenal axes.

Bacon’s new book finally gives the guitar its due. Similar to his other books in this series, it’s packed with solid history and hundreds of B&W and color archival and specially shot photos. All the many variations are included: the classic Standards, Specials, Juniors,

double-necks, Customs, TVs, as well as the lesser-known Tributes, Deluxe, Supreme, and Diablo, plus related guitars such as the Melody Maker and signature models from Robby Krieger to Jimmy Page.

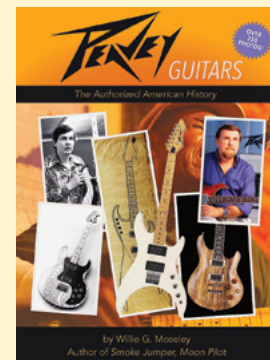


**Tony Bacon**  
**The SG Guitar Book**

Yes, this book might enlighten the rest of the vintage guitar world to SGs, but you can’t blame Bacon. The guitar’s use by fabled players from Les Paul himself to Buddy Guy, Page, Pete Townshend, Frank Zappa, Angus Young, Tony Iommi, and Derek Trucks has led the way.

VG contributor Willie G. Moseley’s history of

Hartley Peavey’s wares sheds similar light on guitars that are workhorses at gigs around the globe. Based in Meridian, Mississippi, Peavey began in the late ’60s building durable amps and sound systems — many of which are still solidly at work — before venturing into guitarmaking. He launched his first



**Willie G. Moseley**  
**Peavey Guitars**

CT-1 guitar and CT-B bass in ’77, which evolved during a lengthy, three-year development period into his T-60 and T-40, respectively. From there, a dazzling range of models ensued, often including innovative circuitry.

Authorized by Peavey and chock full of hundreds of B&W images, this is a must for Peavey aficionados. — **Michael Dregni**