

The New Electronic Guitarist

by Marty Cutler | \$29.99; halleonardbooks.com

Yes, guitars and computers can play well together

For decades, adventurous guitarists have been striving to achieve the same level of control over synthesizers using strings as keyboardists have with keys, wheels, and pedals. Yet, the idiomatic techniques guitarists use—such as hammer-ons, pull-offs, and bending several notes at once in differing amounts—are notoriously challenging to track accurately. And while recent advances in technology have greatly improved the gestural control guitar players can expect over synthesizers, using the latest innovations requires a basic level of knowledge that is not intuitive to most musicians.

In his new book, *The New Electronic Guitarist*, author Marty Cutler not only shows guitarists how to harness digital technology but how to get the most out of it.

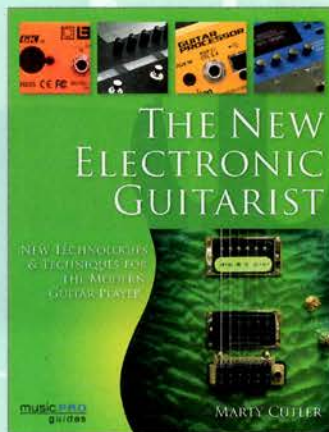
Cutler has met the challenges of music technology head-on for decades—as a musician; as a writer and former editor for *EM*, and author of *MIDI for Guitarists*; and through his work with developers creating sample libraries, virtual instruments, and MIDI controllers. The culmination of this expertise, combined with an extensive historical perspective, helps Cutler explain in plain language what it takes to gain expressive control over electronics.

After a brief introduction to sound and acoustics, the book dives straight into the concepts behind the MIDI standard and the basics of synthesis as they pertain to the needs of guitarists. From there, he covers guitar-centric topics ranging from MIDI

controllers and converters to physical modeling and signal processing.

Further in, Cutler provides an overview of guitar-related aspects of popular DAWs, software instruments, and plugins that lend themselves to string-based control, and notational and tablature products for performance and education. In the final chapters, he ties it all together with tips on setting up your computer system to favor guitar input and preparing to go onstage with all this tech. The price of the book includes online access to audio files that demonstrate the sounds and techniques covered.

Best of all, Cutler keeps the text entertaining and easy to understand, throughout, making *The New Electronic Guitarist* suitable for guitarists of any skill level who are apprehensive about integrating computer technology into their rig.



Save Your Stuff! Beginner's Archiving for Musicians

by Jessica Thompson and Kelley Vaughn-Kauffman
(\$4 donation to cover printing/shipping; jessicathompsonaudio.com)

This handy 'zine may just save your assets.

Just as you can't judge a book by its cover, you shouldn't judge its importance by the page count. Although author Jessica Thompson refers to *Save Your Stuff!* as a zine, it's got a lot to offer: Her goal within these 16 pages is to teach you to "organize, describe, and back up your music" adequately. The text is fun to read and gets right to the point, making it one of my favorite DIY books for musicians and indie labels.

As a Grammy-nominated audio-restoration and mastering engineer, Thompson has seen first-hand how disorganized artists (and even labels) can be when it comes to their recorded assets—masters, mixes, and individual tracks, as well as documentation and cover art. And as an

audio archivist, she understands that musicians are often too busy to deal with the sophisticated level of cataloging she's used to. So, she's published an easy-to-follow set of guidelines, decorated by Kelley Vaughn-Kauffman's hip-and-handly illustrations to give it a friendly vibe.

Thompson begins by helping you figure out *what* you'll want to save and *why*, before providing routines for describing and organizing a project from the start, and for tracking vital information (such as ISRC codes). She also provides strategies for successfully backing everything up. (She suggests doing it on a Friday afternoon, with this motivational suggestion: "Have a beer while you do



it—you deserve it!")

At first glance, you might think this stuff is obvious. But as you scan through the pages of *Save Your Stuff!*, you'll begin remembering the horrible feeling of misplacing files and losing entire projects in hard-drive crashes. That's when you'll want to re-read this little zine from cover to cover, and with beginner's mind. By following

Thompson's recommendations, you'll always be able to locate that money track the next time an opportunity comes along.

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