

— TONE POEMS II —

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|--|---|
| 1. SWANEE 4:22
(George Gershwin) | 11. OVER THE RAINBOW 4:18
(Harold Arlen/E. Y. Harburg) |
| 2. TEASIN' THE FRETS 1:53
(Nick Lucas) | 12. MUSETTE FOR A MAGPIE 3:16
(Martin Taylor) |
| 3. IT HAD TO BE YOU 3:15
(Gus Kahn/Isham Jones) | 13. MAIRZY DOATS 2:16
(Milton Drake/Al Hoffman/Jerry Livingston) |
| 4. PLEASE 3:14
(Leo Robin/Ralph Rainger) | 14. BESAME MUCHO 4:41
(Consuelo Velazquez) |
| 5. MOOD INDIGO 3:09
(Duke Ellington/Irving Mills/Albany Bigard) | 15. UNFORGETTABLE 3:07
(Irving Gordon) |
| 6. ANYTHING GOES 2:06
(Cole Porter) | 16. HERE'S THAT RAINY DAY 3:26
(Johnny Burke/James Van Heusen) |
| 7. BLUE MOON 4:24
(Richard Rodgers/Lorenz Hart) | 17. MY ROMANCE 4:02
(Richard Rodgers/Lorenz Hart) |
| 8. LULU'S BACK IN TOWN 2:59
(Al Dubin/Harry Warren) | 18. OUT OF NOWHERE 3:44
(Edward Heyman/Johnny Green) |
| 9. TEARS 3:10
(Django Reinhardt) | 19. CRYSTAL SILENCE 3:38
(Chick Corea) |
| 10. JEEPERS CREEPERS 2:57
(Johnny Mercer/Harry Warren) | |
| | TOTAL TIME 64:24 |

David Grisman – mandolins, mandolas, mandocellos, tenor guitar, guitar
Martin Taylor – guitars

Produced by David Grisman for Dawg Productions

Production co-ordinator – Craig Miller • Recorded at Dawg Studios, 1/95 by David Dennison
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Additional photography – Ira Landgarten, Steve Szilagyi, David Yawnick • Strings by D'Addario



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Vintage Voices of the Jazz Age

In America, the turn of the 20th century left an auspicious bookmark in the evolution of fretted stringed instruments. Orville Gibson's mandolins, mandolas, mandocellos, and yes, even mandobasses, marketed by a small group of enterprising businessmen from Kalamazoo, Michigan, captured the hearts and fancy of the listening (and playing) citizenry.

In that simpler time, the Gibson company launched a pyramid-like network of teacher/agents who organized their local music enthusiasts into mandolin orchestras and simultaneously sold them lessons and Gibson instruments. Other companies like Lyon & Healy and Martin followed suit, and by the time we entered World War I, the mandolin was the most popular instrument in America – but not for long.

When Johnny came marching home again from the war in Europe, the beat had changed. "When You and I Were Young, Maggie" and "Silver Threads Among the Gold" were giving way to the modern syncopations of "Oh, Johnny; Oh" and the lilting melodies of contemporary composers like George Gershwin ("Swanee"). The Jazz Age was upon us, and with it, the most horn-like timbered of all stringed instruments, the banjo. Newly modified from its classic five-string configuration to several four-string varieties (tenor and plectrum), this indigenous American combination of calfskin, wood and metal was displacing the mandolin.

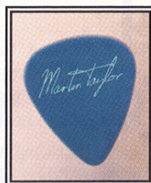
After several years of commercially unsuccessful attempts to capture the banjo market, the Gibson brain trust decided to retaliate, and achieved a new pinnacle of design for the mandolin, mandola and mandocello called "Master Models." Designed and supervised by musician/engineer Lloyd Loar, these instruments were both too late (to save the mandolin's decline) and too early (for its resurrection in bluegrass music). However, there was one Master Model that was just in the nick of time – the L-5, the first true "jazz guitar." For the past 70 years or so, this instrument has been an integral part of the history of American music, one of the foundations upon which the idiom of jazz has rested and flourished.

Tone Poems II focuses on these jazz instruments, much as *Tone Poems I* did with the flat-top guitars that were utilized in folk and bluegrass music. The plectral hybrid mandola, mandocello and tenor guitar are also featured in addition to more mandolins. We recorded the tunes in the chronological order they were written, which coincides closely with the time the instruments were built. We tried to approach each song with stylistic regard for its own period.

Playing this music on these instruments was a special treat for us; we hope you enjoy the results.

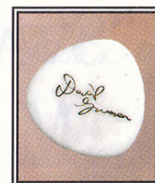
MARTIN TAYLOR

Jazz guitarist Martin Taylor, from Ayrshire, Scotland, has been playing for as long as he can remember, ever since his dad, a professional bassist and band leader, gave four-year-old Martin his first instrument. As an 11-year-old playing with jazz and dance bands, his professional career was launched – so to speak –



onboard the Queen Elizabeth II, where on one occasion he fulfilled his dream to play with The Count Basie Orchestra. In 1979, the acclaimed jazz guitarist Ike Isaacs introduced him to Stephane Grappelli – the beginning of a long and celebrated association. For the next decade Taylor played with Grappelli throughout the world. They recorded many albums together, including a recent duo collaboration, *Reunion*. In 1980 Martin met David Grisman and the two became fast friends touring in the company of the great violin maestro. Martin also played on two Grisman recording projects, *Dawg Grass/Dawg Jazz* and *Acoustic Christmas*. Since that time, Taylor has honed his celebrated solo guitar style on numerous recordings of his own. In 1994 he returned to ensemble playing with his group, Spirit of Django. He is now regarded as one of the finest jazz guitarists in the world, as his performances on this recording clearly demonstrate.

DAVID GRISMAN

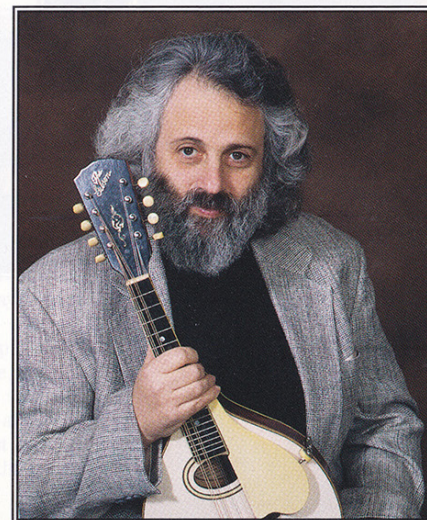


One of the world's leading mandolinists, David "Dawg" Grisman has been an acoustic activist for the past 35 years. He has performed all over the globe with his quintet and has produced and/or played on hundreds of recordings. In 1990 he founded Acoustic Disc and has produced all of its releases. Martin Taylor is David's favorite jazz guitarist, and he was thrilled to be able to record this project with him.

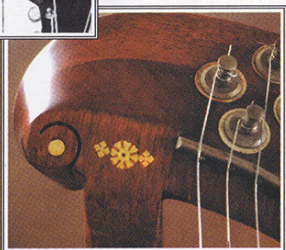
ABOUT THIS RECORDING

This project, like Tone Poems I, was recorded direct to 2-track analog (Fostex E-22 at 30 ips) without noise reduction. Some tracks, having more than two instruments, were recorded to multi-track analog (3M M-23 at 30 ips) and then mixed to 2-track through an MCI JH 416 console utilizing MDM-4 near-field monitors. Microphone selection and placement (close miking) remained constant throughout. Guitars were recorded with Neumann KM-85 (lower end) and U-89 (upper end) condenser microphones; mandolins were recorded with two Neumann KM-84 microphones. Although spatial enhancement was utilized (Lexicon), no equalization or compression was employed in the recording, mixing or mastering processes.

– David Dennison



GIBSON STYLE U HARP GUITAR
(1918)



Track 1

"SWANEE"

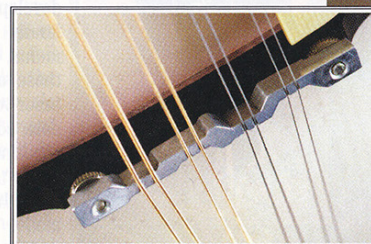
When George Gershwin composed "Swanee" in 1919, the colossal Style U Harp Guitar, one of Orville Gibson's creations, was the largest and most expensive instrument in the Gibson line.

Four different models (R and R-1 with six sub-bass strings, and U and U-1 with 12 sub-bass strings) were introduced in the 1902 catalog, but by 1906, only the Style U (with 10 sub-bass strings) remained. These musical monoliths were intended to replace the "inferior" six-string guitar,

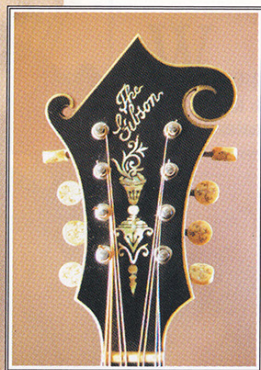
which Gibson's spin doctors predicted would soon become an antiquated thing of the past. They were used for accompaniment in the popular mandolin orchestras of the day, and surfaced occasionally on the vaudeville circuits, but for the most part, Orville's Style U has gone the way of the musical dinosaur, mostly seen in collections or museums and rarely heard. The last Gibson harp guitars were probably made in 1924, although they remained a catalog item until 1939.

Making its debut in the 1902 Gibson catalog was the modestly priced pear-shaped A-3 mandolin. This simple instrument was usually finished natural, although several black-top versions have been seen. In 1918, a new version was introduced with a distinctive white ivory-finish top and matching ivoroid pickguard. Aside from the black-faced instruments that Gibson had been marketing from its beginning, the white-faced A-3 was probably the first "custom color" American instrument, something quite prevalent in today's electric guitar market. This example from late 1920 also came equipped with the first adjustable ("patent applied for") bridge, complete with a unique aluminum saddle, producing a loud banjo-like sound. The aluminum bridge saddle was replaced by an ebony one in late 1921, although at least one player, the great vaudevillian Dave Apollon, must have liked the sound because he is often pictured playing the later F-5 model mandolins with an aluminum saddle.

GIBSON A-3
MANDOLIN
(1920)



GIBSON H-4 MANDOLA
(1915)



Gibson's supremacy in the mandolin market was underscored by its willingness to develop and cultivate an entire family of mandolin-like instruments, patterned closely after those of the violin family. The tenor-voiced larger-bodied mandola, corresponding to the viola, was introduced in 1902 with three "A-style" models (H, H-1, H-2). In 1912 the first "artist" model mandola style H-4 was

premiered, patterned closely after the top of the line F-4 mandolin, but tuned a fifth lower (C-G-D-A). These deep-sounding, throaty instruments became popular with the many mandolin ensembles and orchestras which had been developing all across the country since the turn of the century. Gibson produced quite a few mandolas prior to 1930, but few were made after that. This early example has a beautiful one-piece curly maple back and has belonged to David Grisman for over 30 years. It can be heard on many recordings of his and other artists.

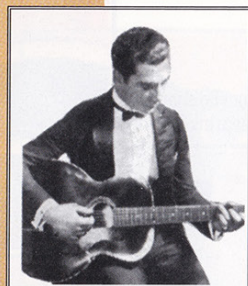
"SWANEE" *continued*

Mastodon of mandolins, the mandocello shares a similar history to the mandola, also appearing for the first time in the 1902 catalog with three corresponding "A-style" models (K, K-1, K-2). This guitar-sized instrument is tuned a full octave below the mandola, the same relationship between viola and cello. Similarly, the "artist" model K-4 was introduced in 1912, with large scroll and points, patterned after the F-4 mandolin. Rudy Cippola (pictured), now 95, was one of the first professional musicians to take up the mandocello, which he did in the early 1930s. In 1968 David Grisman amplified his 1925 K-4 and played it with the folk-rock band, Earth Opera. Since that time, David has used mandocello on many recordings, including those of James Taylor, Bonnie Raitt and his own. Mandocellos (and mandolas) are still in use today by many eclectic musicians and groups like the Modern Mandolin Quartet and the Nashville Mandolin Ensemble. This example is an early model similar to the H-4, with which it is heard.

GIBSON K-4 MANDOCELLO
(1915)



GIBSON L-4 GUITAR
(1924)

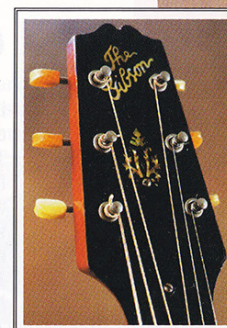


Track 2

"TEASIN' THE FRETS"

Orville Gibson's guitars (like his mandolins) were revolutionary from their inception, and he can easily be credited as the "father of the archtop guitar." His experiments, before the turn of the century, which applied violin construction techniques to fretted instruments, paved the way for what is now considered the modern jazz guitar. Carved tops and backs, compensated saddles for more accurate intonation, steel strings and elevated pickguards were all important developments which can be credited to Gibson's pioneering efforts. In 1912, the L-4 was introduced as a new top-of-the-line model, with appointments similar to those of the F-4, H-4 and K-4 mandolin family instruments. It was this 16" model, with its large oval sound hole, that first attracted the attention of a new generation of guitarists, the first to be called "jazz," which included Eddie Lang and Nick Lucas (pictured). By 1924, when this example was made, new features included the adjustable truss-rod, "snakehead" style headstock and adjustable bridge. Variations of the L-4 continued through 1956, however most of them had "f"-holes after 1934 (track 10).

Nick Lucas, from Newark, New Jersey, made the first solo jazz guitar record for Pathé in 1922, featuring his original compositions, "Pickin' the Guitar" and "Teasin' the Frets." In all probability these historic sides were recorded with a Gibson L-3 or L-4, with which he was often pictured. The L-3 was introduced in the 1902 catalog and was initially available in three sizes: standard, concert and grand concert. By 1908 the size had stabilized at a 13 1/2" wide body, and by 1911 appointments included a red mahogany finish and floral design in the peghead. This model was available with the option of a white ivory finish in 1918, which matched the A-3 mandolin of that year (track 1). The example pictured and heard here is an unusual transitional model made in early 1923. Apparently Gibson had leftover headstock veneers with the earlier floral designs, which they chose to drill through to accommodate the newly introduced truss rod. This version, like the larger L-4, also features the "snakehead" style headstock and the adjustable bridge. Several other variants of the L-3 appeared in the late 1920s until the model was finally discontinued in 1933.



GIBSON L-3 GUITAR
(1923)



GIBSON "LLOYD LOAR"
L-5 GUITAR
(1924)

Track 3

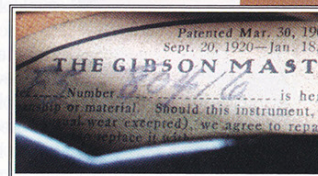
"IT HAD TO BE YOU"



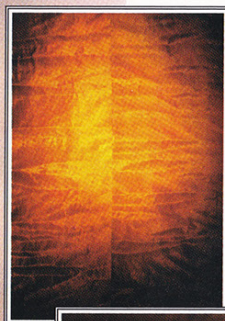
A little over a year ago, Gibson introduced the Master Mandolin and established a new standard of comparison. The Master Mandola and Mandocello followed. So instant and unprecedented was their success that the Master Guitar was inevitable. It has come." Thus, Gibson announced the arrival of the L-5 guitar in 1924. This latecomer to the Master Model line is now considered to be a milestone in the history of guitar construction. Created under the supervision of engineer/musician Lloyd Loar, the L-5, with its carved top and back, floating extended fretboard and "f"-holes, was the first real jazz guitar. This revolutionary design created a richer, more powerful sound, and the newly patented adjustable truss rod and bridge facilitated greater ease of playing. Guitarists of the day were instantly smitten with its lush tone and cutting power, and within a few years this style of guitar would completely replace the banjo in popular music and the jazz bands of the time. This example has a birch back and Virzi tone producer (pictured), an oval-shaped spruce disc with "f"-holes suspended from the top inside the instrument, a standard feature.

The name Lloyd Loar is known to mandolin players all over the world. His dated signature appears on an extra label inserted in every F-5 mandolin (and H-5 mandola, K-5 mandocello and L-5 guitar) made between 1922 and 1924. Mr. Loar, a concert mandolinist and acoustical theorist, spearheaded the Gibson R&D department from 1919 until his departure from the company in December 1924. He is credited with all of the major innovations of the Master Model line, and was probably blamed for their failure to re-invigorate the public's waning interest in mandolins. At least 20 years would pass before the F-5 Master Model would find its true acceptance as the premier bluegrass mandolin, due to Bill Monroe's use of a Loar-signed F-5 (July 9, 1923) on his recordings and stage appearances. Many subtle variations in appointments ("fern" or "flowerpot" peghead inlay, silver or gold plated hardware, "tobacco" or "cremona" sunburst finish, Virzi or non-Virzi) appear on different F-5 mandolins, but they all have "f"-holes, elevated fingerboards and longer necks. This non-Virzi example is unique in the fact that its Master Model label bears the highest serial number (#80416) known to be found on a Loar-signed instrument, making it quite possibly the "last" Loar.

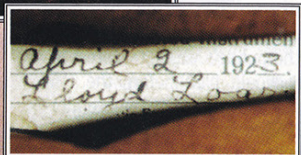
GIBSON "LLOYD LOAR"
F-5 MANDOLIN
(1924)



GIBSON "LLOYD LOAR"
H-5 MANDOLA
(1923)



Introduced in 1923 as part of the new Master Model line of instruments, the H-5 mandola was closely patterned after the F-5 mandolin, and set a new standard – at least in price (\$260) – for Gibson mandolas. Despite a vigorous publicity campaign, the H-5 never took off, even among committed mandola players, who probably preferred the deep-toned, oval-holed H-4 (track 1) which had been in production for a decade.



Compared to most H-4s, the tone of the H-5 is thin, almost like a lower-pitched mandolin. Most of these unique instruments were built in 1924 and have gold plated hardware, "fern" headstock inlay patterns and Virzi tone producers. This extremely early example (dated April 2, 1923) features the "flowerpot" peghead inlay pattern, silver plated hardware and no Virzi. When they were new, Gibson mandolas were more expensive than their mandolins. In today's market, the H-4 is usually valued higher than the F-4, while the H-5 commands considerably less than its noble relative, the F-5.

"IT HAD TO BE YOU" *continued*

Unlike the K-4 mandocello (track 1) which retained the shape of the F-4 mandolin in giant size, the K-5 Master mandocello had a guitar-shaped (L-5) body. Like the H-5 mandolas, very few K-5s were made; there just weren't enough wealthy mandocello players! This example has the Virzi tone producer, purported to increase amplitude and improve tonal quality. Apparently Loar believed in their worth, making them a standard option in the Master line of 1924. This particular K-5 is very unusual; its "f"-holes are smaller and wider than those found on standard L-5s or K-5s, and the contour of the headstock is unique. The instrument was discovered with L-5-style guitar tuners, bridge and tailpiece; however, a K-5 mandolin-style tailpiece cover was found in its case, and four plugged holes were observed in the headstock. This may well be a prototype that was tested as both a mandocello and a guitar. To further complicate (or clarify) this mystery, a drawing of this exact instrument appears as a guitar in a small Gibson Guitar brochure from the period. This instrument was restored to its presumed original mandocello state by the renowned Australian luthier, Steve Gilchrist (track 18).



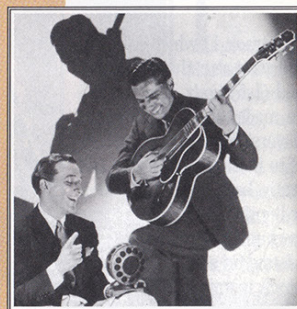
GIBSON "LLOYD LOAR"
K-5 MANDOCELLO
(1924)



GIBSON L-5 GUITAR
(1929)

Track 4

“PLEASE”



By the late 1920s, changes had begun to take place in the Gibson Master line. “Master Model” labels were replaced by larger “Guarantee” labels, the varnish finish was replaced with lacquer, silver hardware had turned to gold, and the simple dot fingerboard inlays were replaced with block inlays of pearloid. This hideous material adorned the fingerboards of the top (and bottom) of Gibson’s extravagant line of tenor and plectrum banjos. Despite these changes, the L-5 remained unchallenged as the premier archtop, gaining widespread acceptance by the leading players of the day, from Maybelle Carter, of the famous Carter family, to Eddie Lang, guitarist for the “King of Jazz,” Paul Whiteman. By 1931, in his new role as accompanist for superstar Bing Crosby, Lang played “Please” on his L-5 with Bing in the film *The Big Broadcast*, and the Gibson L-5 became the most desired guitar in depression-laden America.

Mandolins, like dollars, were a scarce – and becoming scarcer – commodity in 1929. The top-of-the-line master F-5, like its companion L-5 guitar, had already lost some of its earlier refinements, but not the beauty of even more delicate “fern” and “The Gibson” headstock inlays. Perhaps more apparent to players were increasingly thicker tops, producing a more brilliant, but less rich sonority. Although the career of mandolin virtuoso Dave Apollon (who was often pictured with a Gibson “fern” F-5) was just beginning to take off in vaudeville and films, his reputation was more as a funny guy with a thick Russian accent than as an amazing mandolin player. Apollon recorded only four sides between 1920 and 1940. The popularity of the mandolin had fizzled, but Gibson and several other manufacturers continued to build them anyway.



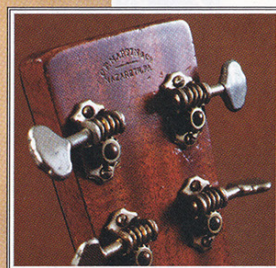
GIBSON F-5
MANDOLIN
(1929)



MARTIN C-2 GUITAR
(1932)

Track 5

“MOOD INDIGO”



Due to the incredible impact of the L-5, and Gibson’s expanding line of less expensive archtops (models L-10 and later L-12 and L-7), other guitar manufacturers began to take notice. Martin, the nation’s leading builder of flat-top guitars, decided to build a line of carved-top guitars, the “C” series. Style C-2, which first appeared in 1931, had a Brazilian rosewood body corresponding to their regular “28” style models. The first C-2s had round soundholes, but after 1932 they were made with “F”-holes. Martin never achieved the same acclaim or sales with their carved-top line as they did with their flat-tops. This is attributable to the fact that they failed to assimilate the most important features of the new-style guitars and were not innovative in any way. Without slim necks with adjustable truss rods (Gibson held the patent), elevated fingerboards and carved backs, these hybrid archtops lacked the power to cut through a big band. Their clear, rather delicate tone was suitable for small ensemble and solo playing, but by 1941 Martin had left the jazz guitar market for good.

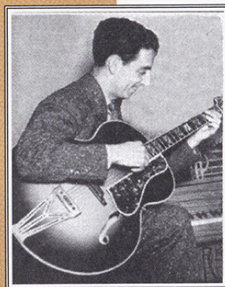
Martin entered the mandolin market in 1895 with a line of four bowl-back instruments (G series). In 1898 the series was expanded to include seven models (numbered 1 through 7). In 1914 a line of flat-back mandolins was introduced (styles A through E), but it wasn’t until 1929 that Martin jumped rather belatedly onto the carved-top bandwagon that had worked so well for Gibson. Two models were introduced, style 15 and style 20, both with carved spruce tops and an oval sound hole. The style 20 had two points, much like the Lyon & Healy styles A and B, and highly flamed curly maple back and sides. In 1936 styles 15 and 20 were replaced by the styles 2-15, 2-20 and 2-30, all of which had “f-scrolls,” as Martin called them. The Style 20 was perhaps the most successful in capturing a full sound, and was taken up by Bill Bolick (pictured) of the famous country brother duo, the Blue Sky Boys. All of the carved models were extremely well made, but lacked the cutting power and depth of the Gibsons. Although the 2-15 remained in production until 1964, Martin never made any substantial impression on the mandolin-playing (and buying) public.



MARTIN STYLE 20
MANDOLIN
(1930)



GIBSON SUPER L-5/
SUPER 400 GUITAR
(1934)



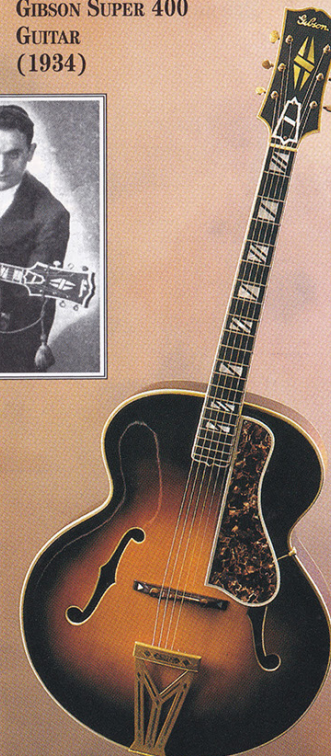
Despite the economic effects of the great depression, Gibson pulled out all the stops and introduced in 1934 its largest (18" wide), fanciest, and by far most expensive (\$400) guitar to date, the Super 400. This unique example belonged to Tony Romano (pictured) who toured with Bob Hope's band during the war. Romano also played and recorded with jazz violin pioneer Joe Venuti, whom he met in New York. As Tony recalled, "In 1934, I was stopped on the street by a man who looked like a Mafioso and had a voice to match. He saw the large guitar case of my new Super 400. He opened it up and started playing a C chord and an F chord. Thinking this was a terrible musician (and probably dangerous) I closed my guitar case and left for a radio date." This instrument could be an original prototype, quite possibly the first one ever produced. Though clearly an 18" Super 400, the engraved truss rod cover reads "Super L-5," while the guarantee label inside reads "Deluxe L-5." The gold-plated, engraved tailpiece is identical to those used on other Super 400s of the time, with the exception that "Super 400" is not engraved as it is on most examples.

Track 6

"ANYTHING GOES"

This pristine Super 400 was also built in 1934, several hundred serial numbers later than the "Super L-5." These early models, with their elegant profiles and small upper bouts (12 5/8") are extremely rare, with only 92 examples made between 1934 and 1936. Standard equipment included multiple bindings, bound "f"-holes, elaborate inlays, heavily engraved gold-plated hardware, and a beautiful leather case with cover. In 1937 the upper bout width was increased to 13 5/8". Throughout the thirties, many of the leading big band guitarists took up this titanic instrument. Even a young Les Paul (pictured), known professionally as "Rhubarb Red," played a Super 400 – the last bastion of acoustic volume. This model has experienced many subtle changes over the years but remains Gibson's ultimate jazz guitar and, except for a brief period during World War II (due to materials shortages), this model has never been out of the Gibson lineup. The Super 400 has had such an impact on jazz and popular music that an entire book has been written about it — Tom Van Hoose's *The Gibson Super 400 – Art of the Fine Guitar*.

GIBSON SUPER 400
GUITAR
(1934)



EPIPHONE DELUXE GUITAR
(1935)

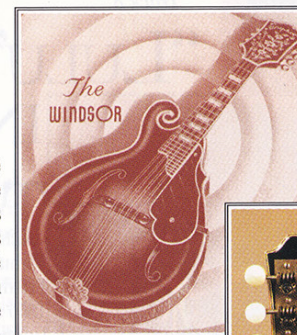


The House of Stathapoulo presented the first serious challenge to Gibson's dominance in the jazz guitar market. Established in 1873 by Anastasios Stathapoulo, a Greek luthier, the company incorporated in 1923 as the Epiphone (named for Anastasios's son Epi) Banjo Corp. In 1932, Epiphone launched the Masterbilt series, an impressive line of 10 different archtop guitars. The top of the line was the Deluxe, Epiphone's answer to the Gibson L-5. It was slightly larger (16 3/8") and fancier (triple bound top with "rope pattern" purfling, bound peghead with fancy floral inlay) than its Gibson counterpart, but priced the same (\$275). Epiphone guitars were comparable tonally and structurally, but weren't quite as refined as Gibsons. The strategy of seemingly offering more value for the dollar drew the interest of many leading guitarists of the time, and probably spurred Gibson on to develop more models and features. Ultimately, Epiphone lost the battle and the war, which continued until 1957, when it was absorbed by the Chicago Musical Instrument Company, which also owned Gibson. Epiphone survives today as a budget line for Gibson.

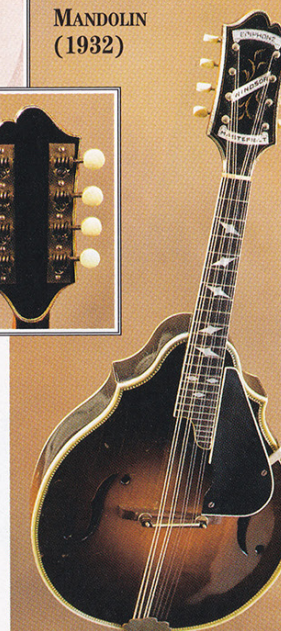
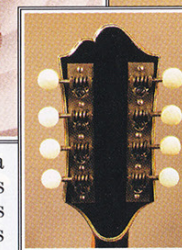
Track 7

"BLUE MOON"

Mysteries exist in the lore surrounding vintage instruments, and one that has plagued mandolin collectors for a long time is that of the Epiphone Windsor. Billed in Epiphone catalogs of the early thirties as their top-of-the-line mandolin, the Windsor model was depicted as a fancy scroll model instrument, quite similar to Gibson's F-5. Also pictured on the same page was a simpler, less expensive version called the Artist model. What makes this so mysterious is that no dealer, player or collector has ever seen or heard of either mandolin! (If you have, call me! – DG) Finally an Epiphone mandolin bearing the name Windsor (inlaid in its asymmetrical peghead) did surface, although it was a two-point model very similar to the lesser Strand models (*Tone Poems I*, track 13), which were made from 1932-55. Epiphone was definitely out to capture their share of the dwindling mandolin market, and catalogs from this period feature five different models, including the two that have never been found. These short-necked mandolins (the neck joins the body at the 11th fret) were similar to Gibsons in finish and appointments, but early versions, like this singular example, had exceptionally deep bodies.



EPIPHONE WINDSOR
MANDOLIN
(1932)

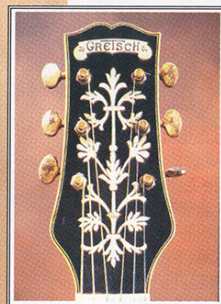


GRETSCH 100 GUITAR
(1935)



Track 8

“LULU’S BACK IN TOWN”

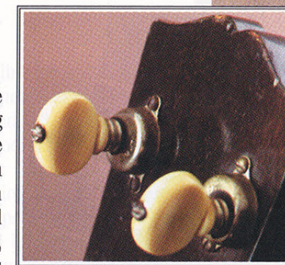


The origins of the Fred Gretsch Manufacturing Co. go back to Friedrich Gretsch, who was born in 1856 and migrated to the U.S. from Germany in 1872. By 1883, he had opened a shop in Brooklyn, N.Y., making banjos, tambourines and drums. After his death in 1895, Friedrich's son, Fred Gretsch, Sr., took over the company and the focus became fretted instruments. In 1932, Gretsch entered the archtop guitar field with models that ranged in price from \$25 to \$250. The professional line included the Model 100 used here. These were well-made instruments, patterned closely after the classic L-5, with comparable if not fancier appointments. Though not as productive as Gibson and Epiphone, Gretsch did establish itself as a quality builder and paved the way for the introduction of their highly popular “Synchronatic” series, which was introduced in 1939 (track 12).

Track 9

“TEARS”

Banjo playing was all the rage throughout the Roaring Twenties. Nearly every dance band and jazz orchestra in America had a tenor or plectrum banjo player, often recruited from the ranks of mandolinists, who tuned their instruments similarly. By the late twenties, with the advent of the archtop guitars and improved microphone technology, many banjo players were being asked by their employers, “Can you play guitar?” In 1927, both Gibson and Martin introduced flat-top “tenor” and “plectrum” guitars having four strings and tuned like banjos. By the mid-thirties, both Gibson and Epiphone were building archtop tenor guitars that were becoming increasingly popular with artists like the Mills Brothers, Eddie Condon and Tiny Grimes. This TG-50 Gibson was a relatively inexpensive instrument (\$50), with a 16" body and an elevated fingerboard like the classic Loar L-5, but with a flat back and banjo tuners. Although they never gained widespread mainstream acceptance, tenor guitars were still being produced until the late 1950s.



GIBSON TG-50
TENOR GUITAR
(1937)

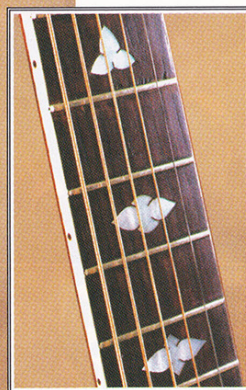


GIBSON L-4 GUITAR
(1936)



Track 10

“JEEPERS CREEPERS”



By the early thirties the demand for archtop guitars was such that Gibson came out with three new 16" models, all less expensive than the L-5. The L-10, introduced in 1931, was a simple instrument with a completely black finish, and the L-12, introduced in 1932, was a fancy model with “picture frame” inlays, gold hardware, and a red sunburst finish. The L-7, which first appeared in 1933, was the least expensive, but still rather ornate with a sunburst finish, “propeller” style fingerboard inlays and a pearl fleur-de-lis in the bound headstock. By 1936 this exact guitar was renamed the L-4, previously a round hole model (track 2), as the L-5, -7, -10 and -12 models had all been redesigned to the new “advanced” size of 17". Within two years all archtop round-hole guitars had been dropped from the line, but some guitarists still wanted the playing comfort of a 16" body. This model, successor to the original L-5, filled the bill quite well.

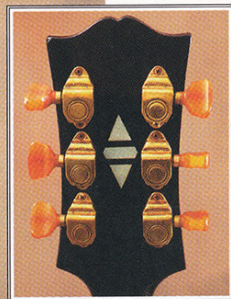
As the Gibson archtop guitar line expanded in the thirties, so did their mandolin line, with new models complementing the new guitars. The F-7, -10 and -12, all introduced in 1934, were all moderately-priced “F”-hole models, with similar appointments to the corresponding guitar models. These new mandolins, patterned closely after the master F-5, did lack one important element, the longer neck. The shorter neck length of the F-4, as applied to the “F”-hole body, placed the bridge far below the center, which neither looked nor sounded as good. Though the F-10 and F-12 (*Tone Poems I*) were both stylish, they failed to make a big enough dent in the declining mandolin market and were discontinued by 1937 (a redesigned long-necked F-12 appeared again in 1949). The lower-priced F-7, with its clear voice, was more popular and remained in the catalog until 1940. It was this model that Bill Monroe (pictured) used on his first recordings with his brother Charlie as the Monroe Brothers, and with his new group, the Bluegrass Boys, which made its debut at the Grand Ole Opry in 1939. This example, with its “propeller” and fleur-de-lis inlays, is the perfect match to the 1936 L-4 heard on this track.



GIBSON F-7
MANDOLIN
(1936)



GIBSON SUPER 400P
GUITAR (1939)



Track 11

“OVER THE RAINBOW”

Two more Gibson firsts!” proclaimed the advertisement for the two new Premier models introduced in 1939. Both top-of-the-line models Super 400 and L-5 were now available with a rounded “cutaway” on the upper right-hand bout, allowing guitarists easy access to the highest reaches of the fretboard. As the guitar stepped out of its “four-to-the-bar” rhythm role and into the solo spotlight, these Premier models were ready to accommodate it. Gibson also replaced the X-bracing pattern with two parallel tone bars on all of its larger archtops of this period. These 1939 models are recognizable because the fingerboards on them are not elevated. In addition to the cut-away, other features included the “varitone” adjustable tailpiece, purported to “make a whole new range of tonal effects possible,” gold plated enclosed Kluson “seal-fast” machine heads with amber tuning buttons, and the unique pickguard, available in either brown or white pearloid. The example heard here in its new solo role is extremely rare, one of only six Super 400Ps that were shipped in 1939.

Like the Super 400P, the newly designed 1939 L-5P also had a rounded cut-away, “varitone” tailpiece, parallel tone bars, and a fingerboard that was not elevated (1939 only). Both models (regular and cut-away versions) were offered for the first time in a new optional natural finish. These blonde guitars usually had spectacular woods on the back and sides and were given the designation “N” after the model number. According to Gibson factory records, only 40 L-5 Premier models were shipped in 1939. During World War II production of both the L-5 and Super 400s ceased, not resuming until 1946. The postwar cut-aways were designated L-5C and Super 400C, and several less expensive models were also introduced: L-12P, L-7C and L-4C. Most of these models remained in the Gibson catalog through the early 1980s. In the early 1990s both the L-5 and Super 400 Premiers were reintroduced as part of the Gibson “Historic Collection” series, which continues to the present.



GIBSON L-5PN
GUITAR (1939)



GIBSON F-5 MANDOLIN
(1941)



Track 12

“RAINBOW” *continued*

With the interest in archtop guitars at an all-time high, and a nation on the brink of entering World War II, demand for mandolins had reached a low point. Gibson's short-necked “F”-hole line (F-7, F-10, F-12) was discontinued, and mandolin production was limited to only a few A-style models (A-50, A-1, A-00), a less ornate F-4, and the F-5, described in the 1940 catalog as the “Queen of all mandolins.” These F-5s are not as refined in their carving and appointments as the models built in the twenties. The headstock inlay was simplified, with just “Gibson” inlaid in thicker pearl script, and a simpler flowerpot or fleur-de-lis, borrowed from the earlier A models. Although the fingerboard had pearl block inlays, the thicker tops with heavier lacquer finish produced a brighter, less warm tone which evidently inspired fewer customers. When Bill Monroe found his Loar F-5 sitting in a barber shop window in 1941 with a price tag of \$150, he no doubt felt that he had found something far better than a new F-5. Although these F-5s are much scarcer than older ones, they are not valued as highly. Sam Bush and Barry Mitterhoff both play F-5s of this vintage and make them sound just great.

“MUSSETTE FOR A MAGPIE”

In 1937 Gibson made what was perhaps a last-ditch effort to revitalize interest in their mandolin line by introducing a new, enlarged body shape to their A-model line. Both the A-50 and the A-1 now had larger bodies (11 1/4" wide with a 14 1/2" scale), larger “F”-holes and fancier appointments. This idea, perhaps inspired by the Super 400 guitar, was also utilized in the creation of at least one F-5, pictured here and made in 1941. This unusual instrument, similar in size to the enlarged A models, has many unique features, including a natural finish and three-piece curly maple neck with a longer scale which joined its rather grotesque body at the 11th fret. Although this mandolin has no label inside and no serial number, the designation F-5M is written in pencil on the inside of the back, as well as the number 41. We can only assume that this was either an experimental prototype or a custom-ordered instrument, as it never was depicted in any catalog or Gibson literature from this or any period.



GIBSON F-5 “M”
MANDOLIN
(1941)



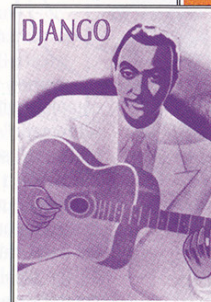
SELMER GUITAR
(1945)



“MUSETTE FOR A MAGPIE” *continued*

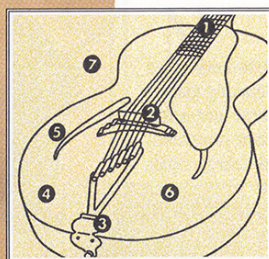
No history of jazz guitars would be complete without a chapter on the unique instruments designed by Mario Maccaferri for the Selmer Company of Paris, and the player who made them legendary, Django Reinhardt. Maccaferri, born in Italy in 1899, was both a concert guitarist and gifted luthier who developed a new guitar design in the late 1920s which had many radical features, including a cutaway, large D-shaped hole, sealed gears and an internal resonator. In 1932 he made an agreement with Selmer to build his guitars, but left barely two years later over a contract dispute with only about 300 guitars built, mostly tenors. Selmer continued to make similar jazz guitars with smaller sound holes and no internal resonators. These are the models most associated with Django Reinhardt, the incredible gypsy guitarist. This 1945 model belonged to Diz Disley from England (pictured) who played for years with Reinhardt's ex-partner, jazz violin great Stephane Grappelli. The guitar, with a larger sound hole and mahogany back and sides, was probably re-topped during the 1950s by Marco Rocco, a fine luthier working in London. 🍷

SELMER-FAVINO GUITAR
(1960)



Selmer built Django Reinhardt-style oval-holed guitars until 1952, when they stopped making guitars altogether. The remaining cache of parts and a few uncompleted instruments were sold to a prominent Paris luthier, Jean Beuscher. In the early 1960s Beuscher commissioned Jacques Favino, a guitar builder who specialized in Selmer copies, to complete some unfinished guitars with original Selmer parts. Favino assembled approximately a dozen of these instruments, of which this example is one. The beautiful three-piece rosewood neck, with the Selmer logo engraved into the headstock, and the stamped tailpiece are certainly original, but in all probability the spruce top and laminated rosewood back and sides were built by Favino. This guitar has a smoother sound and greater sustain than most conventional Selmers. Jacques Favino is retired, but his son Jean-Pierre still builds guitars in a shop near Toulouse. The Selmer design continues to be utilized by many contemporary manufacturers, most notably Maurice Dupont of Cognac. 🍷

GRETSCH SYNCHROMATIC
GUITAR (1946)



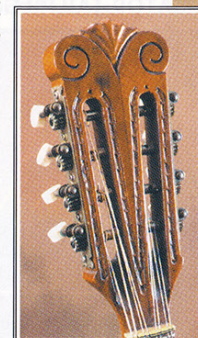
Track 13

“MAIRZY DOATS”

Going directly for a share in the ever expanding jazz guitar market, Gretsch introduced the all-new “Synchronomatic” line with its “Seven Points of Supremacy” (pictured) in 1939. There were five Synchronomatic models (100, 160, 200, 300, 400) with prices corresponding to their names. Their modern sleek design, complete with a staircase “synchrononic” bridge, “chromatic” harp-shaped tailpiece, and striking “cat’s-eye” sound holes, were all an attempt to put Gretsch in the avant-garde of guitar manufacturers. Another unusual Synchronomatic feature is the contour of the “non-pressure” asymmetrical neck, thicker on the bass side and narrower on the treble, which was intended to facilitate greater ease of playing. The 1946 model 200 used here has a 17” body, in contrast to the 16” model 100 and the 18” model 400. Though Gibson and Epiphone continued to dominate the marketplace, Gretsch certainly made a big impression with guitarists like Harry Volpe, Nicky Roberts, and Dick Garcia of the George Shearing Quintet using and endorsing this new line. 🍷

Luthiers have been borrowing construction techniques and design elements from each other for hundreds of years. It’s not surprising to notice similarities between different instruments, particularly when they occur in different countries, where patent and copyright infringement laws are much harder to enforce. The Hofner Company of Germany, probably best known throughout the world as the manufacturer of Paul McCartney’s “Beatle” bass, began as a builder of violins in the last century. As the cutaway archtop guitar craze was gaining momentum in the USA, Hofner began focusing a lot of attention on building guitars based on the Gibson and Epiphone designs. In the mid-1950s they introduced a few carved mandolin models, all borrowing the unique “cat’s-eye” sound holes from the Gretsch Synchronomatic series. This example from the early sixties, built entirely of mahogany, is a combination of ornate (fancy carved slotted headstock) and inexpensive (plastic pickguard screwed into top) features. Although it lacks volume, the tone is quite pleasing, and of course the look makes it the perfect companion piece to the model 200 Gretsch. 🍷

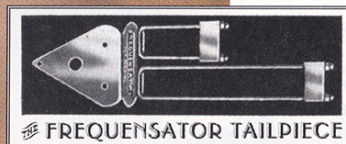
HOFNER MODEL 545
MANDOLIN (1963)



EPIPHONE EMPEROR
GUITAR (1946)

Track 14

“BESAME MUCHO”



With the advent of Gibson's Super 400, Epiphone felt the need to match or surpass this top-of-the-line archtop. Salesman/inventor Herb Sunshine, who went to work for Epiphone in the 1930s, invented the “frequensator” (frequency compensator) tailpiece, and was pivotal in designing and naming the new 18” narrow-waisted beauty “Emperor” in 1936. As he recounted, “The Duke of Windsor became the King of England, but renounced the throne to marry an American commoner. It was romantic and everybody ate it up. I came up with this idea: the Emperor and the Maid. We photographed a nude model posing with the Emperor guitar in front of her, and we brought the display to New York for a trade show. It was the hit of the show and we stuck with that name.” This example, with natural finish, has the frequensator, gold-plated enclosed gears, multiple bindings and fancy inlays. In 1950 Epiphone introduced a cutaway version which was produced until 1957. A reissue 1939 Emperor, made in Japan, was introduced in 1993.

Although never a major contender in the marketplace, Epiphone continued to manufacture mandolins before, during, and after World War II. The lower-priced models, Rivoli and Adelphi, were both patterned after the Gibson A style mandolins of the thirties, whereas the more expensive Strand had two symmetrical body points, parallelogram fingerboard inlays, and an engraved tailpiece. Until the early 1950s all Epiphone mandolins had “f”-holes, but in 1954 they appeared for the first time with oval sound holes, which added more depth to their tone. This relatively rare example, with its customary walnut back and sides, was found in a pawn shop in Oakland, California several years ago. After Epiphone was acquired by Gibson, several mandolin models, such as the Venetian (similar to the Gibson A-50), were manufactured in Japan and sold as a budget line. As such they are still in production.

EPIPHONE STRAND
MANDOLIN
(1954)



D'ANGELICO EXCEL
GUITAR (1947)

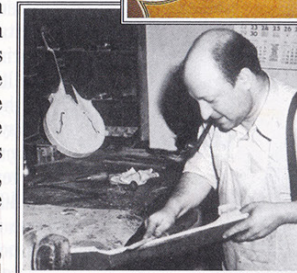
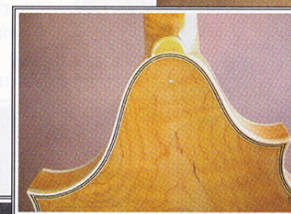
Track 15

“UNFORGETTABLE”



The name John D'Angelico has come to signify all that is great in a jazz guitar, and his reputation is legendary. Born in Manhattan in 1905, he began working with stringed instruments at the age of nine, as an apprentice in his grand-uncle Ciani's shop. By 1932 he had set up his own workshop where he worked independently, despite lucrative offers for supervisory positions in factory production. D'Angelico had also studied violin making with Mario Frosali, which provided an excellent background for building and developing jazz guitars, which he did, running neck and neck with Gibson and others from the early 1930s to the mid-1960s. D'Angelico built a total of 1,164 guitars. His most sought-after models, the 17” Excel and the 18” New Yorker, were highly regarded by many prominent jazz guitarists and are extremely collectible today. This blonde Excel was custom made in 1947 for Irving Ashby (pictured), guitarist with the Nat “King” Cole Trio and was the second cutaway D'Angelico made. Its block inlays are worn through to the fretboard, a testimony to its years of serious use.

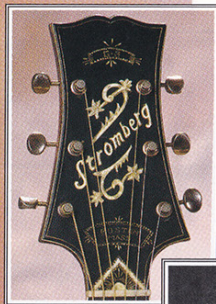
D'Angelico built his first mandolin, a bowl-back instrument, in 1929. Throughout his career he built perhaps as many as 300 mandolins, although they are quite rare today. We can only assume that he switched to making carved-top instruments in the early thirties, as none are logged in his record books until 1940. D'Angelico mandolins were of basically two types: a simple A-style (“plain”) and a fancier two-point model (“scroll”), patterned after the Lyon & Healy style A with violin scroll headstock. Both models had rather short necks which joined the body at the 11th fret, and were available with either an oval sound hole or “f”-holes. By the time this example was made in 1942, D'Angelico had redesigned the headstock to a shape quite similar to that used on his guitars, complete with the ornamental cupola or button screwed into the top. According to D'Angelico's ledgers, he built his last mandolin in 1954, ten years before his untimely death.



D'ANGELICO
MANDOLIN
(1942)



STROMBERG G-3 GUITAR
(1954)



Track 16

“HERE’S THAT RAINY DAY”

Charles Stromberg, a Swedish cabinetmaker who immigrated to Boston in 1887, worked as a supervisor for the Thompson & Odell instrument company for 18 years before establishing his own shop in 1905. There he built and repaired band instruments, banjos and a few guitars. In 1910 his son Elmer began working in the shop and later they became partners. After building banjos in the 1920s, the Strombergs shifted their attention to making 16" archtop guitars with segmented "f"-holes during the 1930s. In the 1940s they built 17" models with regular "f"-holes with the options of a cut-away and adjustable truss rod. The Stromberg line, all with an engraved plastic peghead veneer, included the Deluxe, G-1, G-3, and Master 400, with its huge 19" lower bout. This G-3 has one diagonal brace extending from the upper bass bout to the lower treble, one of several Stromberg bracing patterns. These loud instruments, known for their cutting power, were popular with big band guitarists like Freddie Green (pictured) who played with Count Basie.



Kenneth "Jethro" Burns, of the famous musical comedy team Homer and Jethro, was a true jazz mandolin pioneer. In 1959 he was presented with a custom model A-5 mandolin made especially for him by Gibson. This beautiful instrument was a fancy version of the regular A-5 two-point Florentine model that was introduced in 1956. The headstock "flowerpot" inlay design and ebony fingerboard with pearl blocks are typical F-5-style appointments of the period, although the five-ply multiple bindings and burgundy red finish are unique to this instrument. Jethro used "Red," as he called the mandolin, on most of his personal appearances and recordings throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and he is pictured with it on many album covers of this period. Jethro passed away in 1989 and today the mandolin is part of the collection at the Country Music Foundation in Nashville. As a good friend and collaborator of Jethro's, David Grisman was honored to be able to play his mandolin on this project.

GIBSON A-5
MANDOLIN
(1959)



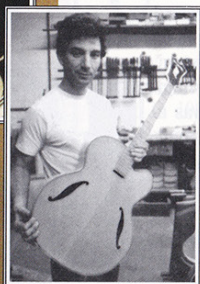
D'AQUISTO NEW YORKER
GUITAR (1989)



Track 17

“MY ROMANCE”

James D'Aquisto, successor to the D'Angelico legacy, was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1935, the son of Italian immigrants. As a youngster he loved music and building models. As a teenager he went to art school and took up guitar playing, but when he met John D'Angelico through a friend, he found his true calling. In 1953 he began a working apprenticeship with the master which continued until D'Angelico's death in 1964. After completing the last dozen or so unfinished D'Angelicos, D'Aquisto opened his own workshop. After a few years of building guitars in the D'Angelico style, he began to develop his own designs and became a great archtop craftsman in his own right. His later models had many innovative features, such as "S"-shaped holes, wood bindings, ebony tailpieces and increasingly modern contours. This 17" New Yorker was perhaps the last guitar made by D'Aquisto in the traditional D'Angelico style. Tragically, Jimmy passed away during the making of this album. His guitars are now considered to be among the finest archtops ever made.



GILCHRIST MODEL 17
GUITAR (1993)



Track 18

Warnambrool, Australia is the unlikely home of luthier Steve Gilchrist, whose mandolin family instruments (*Tone Poems I*) are highly acclaimed and sought after throughout the world. As a natural extension of his interest in carved instruments, Gilchrist began building archtop guitars in 1980. His primary influences are the Loar-designed Master Model L-5 and the larger Gibson guitars from the "golden age," the 1930s and early 1940s. This blonde cutaway Model 17 with beautifully flamed maple back, sides and neck was inspired by the classic 17" L-5PN.



The meticulously carved and tap-tuned sound board with Gilchrist's "X"-bracing pattern makes for a powerful, robust tone not normally found in the heavier jazz guitars built after the popularization of electrical pickups and amplification. Along with a handful of other contemporary luthiers, Steve is still refining the craft and raising the standards of excellence, while assuring the continuance of the great traditions established by the early vintage masters.

"OUT OF NOWHERE"

Though the Loar-signed F-5 mandolins of the early 1920s set a standard revered by both players and builders, mandolin playing has evolved and expanded dramatically since the days of the mandolin orchestra. Pioneers such as Bill Monroe in bluegrass, Jethro Burns in swing and jazz, and David Grisman in his distinctive blend of styles ("dawg" music), have blazed many trails for a new generation of players. Interest has run parallel among contemporary luthiers in accommodating these mandolin players with instruments that meet their specific needs. The Gilchrist Model 3 "Artist" mandolin is based structurally on the famous 1923 Loar A-5 (*Tone Poems I*), but with a more jazz guitar-influenced "look." The natural-finish Adirondack spruce top with parallel bracing, flamed maple back and sides, curved ebony fingerboard with pearl block inlays, ivoroid bound snakehead-style peghead and "f"-holes, are all stylish features of this sleek mandolin. Gilchrist mandolins are used by many contemporary players like Ronnie McCoury, Adam Steffey, Tom Rozum, and David Grisman.

GILCHRIST MODEL 3
"ARTIST" MANDOLIN
(1994)



MONTELEONE RADIO FLYER
GUITAR (1994)



Track 19

Innovation is the stock and trade of one of America's greatest luthiers, John Monteleone of Islip, New York. Born in 1947, the son of a mandolin-playing sculptor, John studied piano at the age of seven, and before long took an old piano apart and put it back together. He also smashed open an old Kay archtop and was intrigued by the fact that its inside was different from its outside. Working at his father's pattern-making shop, John built his first guitar, a triple-neck lap steel. By the time he finished high school, he had built a Martin D-18 copy. After studying music in college, Monteleone began repairing vintage instruments for the Mandolin Brothers, and soon built a mandolin. In 1976 he opened his own shop and built his first archtop guitar, a 17" sunburst cutaway he called the "Eclipse." In 1978 he befriended the legendary Mario Maccaferri, with whom he built 12 guitars. This association inspired John to build his own "Hot Club" model. The "Radio Flyer" model, with its futuristic ebony hardware and "dolphin" sound holes, is a "tribute to Radio and its far-reaching influence on the guitar."

"CRYSTAL SILENCE"

Monteleone built his first mandolin, an F-5 copy, in 1974. Always an individualist, John felt uncomfortable trying to duplicate the classic Gibson and in 1977 made a conscious attempt to redesign the F-5, in an effort to improve its playability and sound quality. The result was a new model with an elongated, completely hollow scroll and re-contoured cut-away point, which Monteleone called the "Grand Artist." Shortly thereafter, David Grisman visited John and was so impressed with the prototype Grand Artist (#12) that he ordered one. David had been struggling with tendinitis in his left hand and asked John to make an arched fingerboard to help increase playing comfort. This feature is now included on all Monteleone mandolins. This example (#25) is the one David ordered in 1978 and may be heard on many recordings. It was the prototype for the Kentucky "Dawg" models built in the 1980s. Monteleone mandolins, mandolas and mandocellos are used by the Modern Mandolin Quartet, Don Stiernberg, Paul Glasse and many other contemporary mandolinists.

MONTELEONE GRAND ARTIST
MANDOLIN (1981)

