

TECHNICAL NOTES

Guitars

I choose guitars that sound different from other guitars. I don't believe you need to spend more than £500 for a good guitar.

Gretsch G5210T Electromatic with Bigsby - an excellent guitar for the price. The P90s sound completely different to the humbucker guitars.

Ibanez AS53-TKF, a semi-acoustic 335 copy. my brother Louis gave me this as a gift so I reckon he must have got a 2-for-1 deal. Inexpensive and probably all you'll ever need in a guitar.

Yamaha Revstar RS820CR - the perfect all round guitar. Solid, amazing balance and pickups. Half the price of a les Paul.

Harley Benton ST-62DLX OW. Basically a gold hardware white strat that comes out of the box ready to go. This guitar has a delicate touch, sounds amazing and costs less than £200. You can hear it on *Asilah Medina*.

Harley Benton Slider II Vintage Series. A cheap-as-chips lap steel which I modified according to one off the reviewers. New tuners, pickup, pots and knobs. I can't fault it. You can hear it on *La Reine Selen*.

Most of the pieces are in a D tuning, some with capo and some tuned slightly sharp or flat. So... open D, DAGDAD, D minor and D with a 'd' flat on top (*Sahara Jannah*). *Asilah Medina* is played in an open C with a 'd' on top.

I play slide on the Harley Benton lap steel, the Ibanez and Gretsch because these two guitars have bridges that are easy to raise.

Amps, Cabinets, Recording, etc.

Everything was played using a Helix Line 6 floor unit. After some research I learned how to use techniques like bi-amping, combi-band and 3 and 4 band processing. I'd never heard of these techniques so now I know. Craig Anderton's online book provides templates for everything. I put together all the patches on a laptop running Helix software and recorded everything to Reaper digitally. Helix automatically creates a dry track which you can then re-amp later, again using the Helix plug-in. In the studio I used a pair of Swiss PSI Audio nearfield speakers to monitor everything and DMG Audio's *Equilibrium* software to equalise the tracks. This is another modelling software - essentially you get a few dozen of the best new and vintage hardware eqs and a load of technical features to fine tune the inner mechanics. I bought the software on the recommendation of a pro engineer.

I favoured clean amps as a starting point, for example the Fender Double Vib (Twin), Roland JC-120, Archetype and Placator Clean models along with a couple of models with a more pronounced drive, the Essex A15 (Vox AC-15), and one of the Matchless models. I chose mainly 1x12 cabinets, especially the Fullerton and Open Cream and opted for their ribbon mic models. The cabinets are powerful tone shapers - the lo- and hi- cuts are smooth with the characteristics of the different microphones clearly defined. The compressors and modulation models are of the highest quality. I used several tremolo models with combi-band processing and for the first time got to grips with phasers (or was it flangers?). Finally the reverbs are excellent if you take time to set them up properly.