



Smithsonian
National Museum of American History
Kenneth E. Behring Center

Guide to the Electric Guitar Video Documentation

NMAH.AC.0610

Alison L. Oswald

1998

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Biographical / Historical.....	2
Arrangement.....	3
Scope and Contents.....	2
Names and Subjects	4
Container Listing	5
Series 1: Oral Histories, 1996 - 1996.....	5
Series 2: Symposium and Programs, 1996 - 1996.....	8
Series 3: Innovative Lives Presentation and Electronic Fieldtrip, 1996 - 1996.....	9
Series 4: Miscellaneous, 1996, undated.....	10

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Electric Guitar Video Documentation
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0610
Date:	1996 November 11-16
Extent:	7.5 Cubic feet (15 boxes)
Creator:	Jerome and Dorothy Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation.
Language:	English .
Summary:	This week-long event explored the intersection of technology and music in the 20th century; it included oral and video histories, exhibitions, concerts, and a symposium discussing the cultural significance of the electric guitar as instrument, technology, and symbol.

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

This collection was created by the Lemelson Center and NMAH staff from the Division of Music, Sports and Entertainment in November of 1996.

Provenance

Created by the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation and National Museum of American History staff from the Division of Cultural History (formerly the Division of Culture and the Arts, now Division of Cultural and Community Life) in November of 1996.

Processing Information

Processed by Alison L. Oswald, March 1998, revised April 1999, 2006; revised Erin Molloy (volunteer) and Alison Oswald (archivist), 2012.

Preferred Citation

Electric Guitar Video Documentation, 1996 November, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution.

Restrictions

Collection is open for research but the original videos are stored off-site and special arrangements must be made to work with it. Series 1, Oral Histories, the Les Paul oral history interviews are restricted Contact the Archives Center for information at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270.

Conditions Governing Use

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning intellectual property rights. Archives Center cost-recovery and use fees may apply when requesting reproductions.

Biographical / Historical

Just the words "electric guitar" can conjure up images in our minds. Jimi Hendrix playing "The Star-Spangled Banner." The neighbor's kid whose band practices in the garage. Leather jackets, motorcycles, and slicked-back hair. A Fender Stratocaster. Or a Gibson Flying V or Les Paul. Music that is, depending on your generation, either too loud or not quite loud enough. Rock and roll. Jazz. Blues. Country. The sound of an electric guitar is familiar to most of us. How did that happen? Why has the work of the people who invented, designed, and popularized this instrument become so much a part of everyday life?

These questions and others were raised during *Electrified, Amplified, and Deified: The Electric Guitar, Its Makers, and Its Players*, the second in the Lemelson Center's annual series on *New Perspectives on Invention and Innovation*. From November 9-16, 1996, the Center, in cooperation with the National Museum of American History Division of Cultural History, sponsored concerts, movies, interviews, makers' displays, an exhibit, and a symposium, all spotlighting those inventors and players who plugged in and forever changed the sound of American music.

Scope and Contents

The collection contains original, master, and reference videos in several formats: BetaCam SP, 3/4" U-matic, 1/2" VHS, digital audio tape (DAT), and compact disks (CD). The collection documents *Electrified, Amplified, and Deified: The Electric Guitar, Its Makers, and Its Players*, as part of the Lemelson Center's series of *New Perspectives*. Through a series of public events, the Lemelson Center explored the intersection of technology and music in the 20th century. The week-long event included oral and video histories, exhibitions, concerts, and a symposium discussing the cultural significance of the electric guitar as instrument, technology, and symbol and an electronic fieldtrip for school age children.

The collection is arranged into four series: Series 1, *Oral Histories, 1996*; Series 2, *Symposium and Other Programs, 1996*; Series 3, *Innovative Lives and Electronic Fieldtrip Presentation, 1996*; and Series 4, *Miscellaneous, 1996, undated*. Each series is further divided into subseries arranged by format—BetaCam SP, digital audio tape (DAT), 3/4" U-Matic, and 1/2" VHS. The symposium footage has multiple camera angles resulting in Camera A and Camera B.

The oral histories contain interviews with some of the best known electric guitar manufacturers, luthiers, and accessory makers discussing major twentieth-century technological and cultural trends. The interviews were conducted by Reuben Jackson, Marge Oustrushko, Robert Santelli and Matt Watson. The interviewees include: Junior Brown; John Ingram; Duke Kramer; Ted McCarty; Pat Metheny; Les Paul; G.E. Smith; Paul Reed Smith; Joe Louis Walker; and Tom Wheeler.

Les Paul was interviewed as part of the Lemelson Center's series *Portraits of Invention*. Legendary guitarist and innovator Les Paul discusses his work with Marc Pachter, Counselor to the Secretary of the Smithsonian. Additionally, Les Paul discusses his work with Matt Watson.

The Acoustic Guitar Concert held at NMAH's Hall of Musical Instruments on November 14, 1996, included a performance by Howard Aldin, guitarist. Martha Morris, Deputy Director, NMAH; Art Molella, Director, Lemelson Center; and James Weaver, Curator, NMAH provided opening remarks.

The symposium, New Sounds, and other programs explored events surrounding the invention of the electric guitar, past and present technological innovations, and contributions made by early pioneers of guitar making. Two evening concerts included performances by some of the country's finest electric guitarists—Howard Aldin, Jim Hall, Junior Brown, Joe Louis Walker, and The Ventures.

New Sounds explores the intersection of technology and music in the 20th century, focusing on the invention and diffusion of the electric guitar. The symposium brings together inventors, historians, and musicians for a day of conversation and inquiry.

The morning sessions addressed Inventing and Popularizing the Electric Guitar with National Museum of American (NMAH) Curator, Charles McGovern, and Innovators and Entrepreneurs Panel Discussion with participants Ted McCarty, Duke Kramer, John Hall, Richard R. Smith, and moderator Tom Wheeler.

The afternoon sessions addressed The Electric Guitar in Context with an introduction by NMAH archivist, Reuben Jackson, and historians, Susan Horning, James Kraft, and Rebecca McSwain discussing relationships among invention, economics, labor, race, and technological enthusiasm. After the session the panelists fielded audience questions.

The Innovative Lives Presentation and Electronic Fieldtrip were presented in cooperation with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, OH. Robert Santelli, Director of Education at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, along with Paul Reed Smith and G.E. Smith, described the invention of the electric guitar, demonstrated the different types of music played on a variety of guitars, and answered student questions about musical innovation and the electric guitar. Student's participation included: Kenmore Middle School (Arlington, VA); Robert Frost Middle School (Rockville, MD); Paul Junior High School (Washington, D.C.); Elkhart Community Schools (Indiana); and Cleveland, OH area middle schools.

The Jerome and Dorothy Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation was founded in 1995 at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History through a generous gift from the Lemelson Foundation. The Center's mission is: to document, interpret, and disseminate information about invention and innovation; to encourage inventive creativity in young people; and to foster an appreciation for the central role invention and innovation play in the history of the United States. The Innovative Lives series brings together Museum visitors and especially, school age children, and American inventors to discuss inventions and the creative process and to experiment and play with hands-on activities related to each inventor's product. This collection was recorded by the Jerome and Dorothy Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into four series.

Series 1, Oral Histories, 1996

Subseries 1, BetaCam SP, 1969 (originals) Subseries 2, BetaCam SP, 1996 (masters) Subseries 3, Digital Audio Tape (DAT), 1996 (originals) Subseries 4, 1/2" VHS, 1996 (reference copies) Subseries 5, CD-ROMs, 1996 (reference copies)

Series 2, Symposium and Other Programs, 1996

Subseries 1, BetaCam SP, 1996 (originals)

Subseries 2, BetaCam SP, 1996 (masters)

Subseries 3, 3/4" U-matic SP, 1996 (masters)

Subseries 4, 1/2" VHS, 1996 (reference copies)

Series 3, Innovative Lives and Electronic Fieldtrip Presentation, 1996

Subseries 1, BetaCam SP, 1996 (original)

Subseries 2, BetaCam SP, 1996 (masters)

Subseries 3, 1/2" VHS, 1996 (reference copies)

Series 4, Miscellaneous, 1996, undated

Subseries 1, BetaCam SP, undated (originals)

Subseries 2, BetaCam SP, undated (masters)

Subseries 3, Digital Audio Tape (DAT), 1996 (originals)

Subseries 4, 1/2" VHS, undated

Subseries 5, CD-ROM (reference copy), 1996

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements

Researchers must use reference copies of audio-visual materials. When no reference copy exists, the Archives Center staff will produce reference copies on an "as needed" basis, as resources allow. Originals located at off-site storage area.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Electric Guitar -- 1920-2000
- Guitar -- 20th century
- Music -- 20th century
- Musical instruments -- 20th century
- Musical instruments industry -- 20th century
- Musicians

Types of Materials:

- Videotapes -- 1990-2000

Container Listing

Series 1: Oral Histories, 1996 - 1996

Subseries 1.1: BetaCam SP (originals), 1996 - 1996

Box 1, Video OV 610.10-12	OV 610.10-12, Brown, Junior, 1996 November 15
Box 6, Video OV 610.49	OV 610.4, Ingram, John, undated
Box 1, Video OV 610.8-9	OV 610.8-9, Kramer, Duke, 1996 November 15
Box 1, Video OV 610.5-7	OV 610.5-7, McCarty, Ted, 1996 November 15
Box 1, Video OV 610.1-4	OV 610.1-4, Paul, Les (Restricted), 1996 November 13
Box 6, Video OV 610.47-48	OV 610.47-48, Reed Smith, Paul, undated

Subseries 1.2: BetaCam SP (masters), 1996 - 1996

Box 8, Video MV 610.5-6	MV 610.5-6, Brown, Junior, 1996 November 15
Box 8, Video MV 610.5	MV 610.5, Kramer, Duke, 1996 November 15
Box 8, Video MV 610.3-4	MV 610.3-4, McCarty, Ted, 1996 November 15
Box 8, Video MV 610.1-2	MV 610.1-2, Paul, Les (Restricted), 1996 November 13

Subseries 1.3: Digital Audio Tape (DAT) (originals), 1996 - 1996

Box 7, Item DAT 610.1	DAT 610.1, Brown, Junior, 1996 November 15 Total Running Time: 1:32:16
Box 7, Item DAT 610.2	DAT 610.2, McCarty, Ted, 1996 November 15 Total Running Time: 1:12:14

Box 7, Item DAT 610.3	DAT 610.3, Metheny, Pat, 1996 November 15 Total Running Time: 18:25
Box 7, Item DAT 610.4	DAT 610.4, Parker, Ken and Fishman, Larry, 1996 November 15 Total Running Time: 1:35:10
Box 7, Item DAT 610.5	DAT 610.5, Walker, Joe Louis, 1996 November 14 Total Running Time: 43:56
Box 7, Item DAT 610.6	DAT 610.6, Wheeler, Tom, 1996 November 14 Total Running Time: 40:22

Subseries 1.4: 1/2" VHS, 1996 - 1996

Box 12, Video RV 610.5	RV 610.5, Brown, Junior, 1996 November 15 Time code burn in, Total Running Time: 1:00:20
Box 12, Video RV 610.6	RV 610.6, Brown, Junior, 1996 November 15 Time code burn in, Total Running Time: 52:04
Box 12, Video RV 610.9	RV 610.9, Ingram, John, undated Time code burn in, Total Running Time: 10:18
Box 12, Video RV 610.4	RV 610.4, Kramer, Duke, 1996 November 15 Time code burn in, Total Running Time: 36:47
Box 12, Video RV 610.5	RV 610.5, Kramer, Duke, 1996 November 15
Box 12, Video RV 610.6	RV 610.6, Kramer, Duke, 1996 November 15 Time code burn in, Total Running time: 52:04
Box 12, Video RV 610.3	RV 610.3, McCarty, Ted, 1996 November 15 Time code burn in, Total Running Time: 1:02:19
Box 12, Video RV 610.4	RV 610.4, McCarty, Ted, 1996 November 15 Time code burn in, Total Running Time: 36:47
Box 12, Video RV 610.1	RV 610.1, Paul, Les (Restricted), 1996 November 13 Time code burn in, Total Running Time: 56:34
Box 12, Video RV 610.2	RV 610.2, Paul, Les (Restricted), 1996 November 13 Time code burn in, Total Running Time: 1:00:43

Subseries 1.5: CD-ROMs (reference copies) , 1996 - 1996

Box 15, Disk RCD 610.1	RCD 610.1, Brown, Junior, 1996 November 15 Total Running Time: 1:09:48
Box 15, Disk RCD 610.2	RCD 610.2, Brown, Junior, 1996 November 15 Total Running Time: 22:55
Box 15, Disk RCD 610.3	RCD 610.3, McCarty, Ted, 1996 November 15 Total Running Time: 1:12:14
Box 15, Disk RCD 610.4	RCD 610.4, Metheny, Pat, 1996 November 15 Total Running Time: 17:35
Box 15, Disk RCD 610.5	RCD 610.5, Parker, Ken and Fishman, Larry, 1996 November 15 Total Running Time: 1:19:58
Box 15, Disk RCD 610.6	RCD 610.6, Parker, Ken and Fishman, 1996 November 15 Larry, Total Running Time: 16:29
Box 15, Disk RCD 610.7	RCD 610.7, Walker, Joe Louis, 1996 November 14 Total Running Time: 43:17
Box 15, Disk RCD 610.8	RCD 610.8, Wheeler, Tom, 1996 November 14 Total Running Time: 40:42

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 2: Symposium and Programs, 1996 - 1996

Subseries 2.1: BetaCam SP (originals) , 1996 - 1996

Box 2, Video OV 610.13-18A	OV 610.13-18A, Hall of Musical Instruments/Acoustic Guitar Concert, 1996 November 14 Howard Aldin, Guitar performance
Box 3, Video OV 610.19-23;	OV 610.19-23, Symposium—New Sounds, 1996 November 16 Morning Session
Box 4, Video OV 610.32-36	
Box 3, Video OV 610.24-27;	OV 610.24-27, Symposium—Electric Guitar in Context, 1996 November 16 Afternoon Session
Box 4, Video OV 610.37-38	
Box 3, Video OV 610.28-30;	OV 610.28-30, Symposium—Innovators and Players, 1996 November 16 Innovators demonstrate state-of-the-art guitar technology, Afternoon Session
Box 4, Video OV 610. 39-41	
Box 3, Video OV 610.31	OV 610.31, Jazz Giants and Bay Blues Concert, 1996 November 16 Audience feedback about concert
Box 1, Video RV 610.7	RV 610.7, Hall of Musical Instruments/Acoustic Guitar Concert with Howard Aldin Time code burn in Total Running Time: 50:26, 1996 November 14
Box 13, Video RV 610.10-12;	RV 610.10-12, Symposium—New Sounds, 1996 November 16 Morning Session
Box 13, Video RV 610.17-19	
Box 14, Video RV 610.20;	RV 610.13, Symposium—Electric Guitar in Context, 1996 November 16 Afternoon Session
Box 13, Video RV 610.13	
Box 13, Video RV 610.15;	RV 610.15, Symposium—Innovators and Players, 1996 November 16 Innovators demonstrate state-of-the-art guitar technology. Afternoon Session
Box 14, Video RV 610.21	
Box 13, Video RV 610.16	RV 610.16, Jazz Giants and Bay Blues Concert, 1996 November 16 with audience feedback about concert

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 3: Innovative Lives Presentation and Electronic Fieldtrip, 1996 - 1996

Subseries 3.1: BetaCam SP (originals), 1996 - 1996

Box 5, Video OV OV 610.42-46, Innovative Lives Presentation and Electronic Field Trip, 1996
610.42-46 November 15

Subseries 3.2: BetaCam SP (masters), 1996 - 1996

Box 9, Video MV MV 610.22-26, Innovative Lives Presentation and Electronic Field Trip, 1996
610.22-26 November 15

Box 10, Video MV 610. MV 610. 27-29, Innovative Lives Presentation and Electronic Field Trip, 1996
27-29 November 15

Subseries 3.3: 1/2" VHS, 1996 - 1996

Box 14, Video RV RV 610.22-31, Innovative Lives Presentation and Electronic Field Trip, 1996
610.22-31 November 15

Subseries 3.4: Photographs, 1996

[Image\(s\)](#)

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

Series 4: Miscellaneous, 1996, undated

Subseries 4.1: BetaCam SP (originals), undated

Box 6, Video OV OV 610.49, Paul Reed Smith Guitar (PRS) Guitar Factory Tour, undated
610.49

Subseries 4.2: BetaCam SP (masters), undated

Box 11, Video MV MV 610.48, Close-ups of the exhibit, From Frying Pan to Flying V: The Rise of
610.48 the Electric Guitar, undated
With voice-over of Monica Smith, co-curator. Total Running Time: 20:00

Subseries 4.3: Digital Audio Tape (DAT), 1996 - 1996

Box 7, Item DAT DAT 610.7, G.E. Smith discussing of From Frying Pan to Flying V: The Rise of
610.7 the Electric Guitar, 1996 November 14
Total Running Time: 36:00

Subseries 4.4: 1/2" VHS, undated

Box 13, Video RV RV 610.8, Paul Reed Smith (PRS) Guitar Factory Tour, undated
610.8 Time code burn in, Total Running Time: 30:19

Subseries 4.5: CD-ROM (reference copy), 1996 - 1996

Box 15, Disk 7 RCD 610.9, G.E. Smith discussing of From Frying Pan to Flying V: The Rise of
the Electric Guitar, 1996 November 14
Total Running Time: 36:51

[Return to Table of Contents](#)