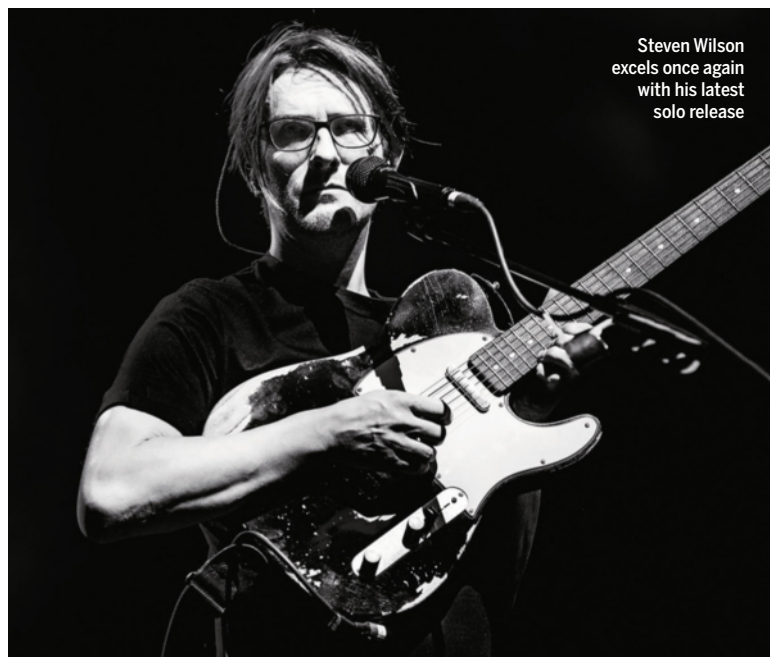




# Albums

**The month's best guitar music** – a hand-picked selection of the finest fretwork on wax



Steven Wilson  
excels once again  
with his latest  
solo release

## Steven Wilson The Future Bites

Caroline

10/10



**Neo-progmeister embraces electronica while documenting a digital dystopia**

If you're hiding behind the sofa because of the headline to this review then we'll coax you out by saying that, never fear, *The Future Bites* is every bit as groundbreaking and original as anything Steven Wilson has produced previously. True to say that synthesisers dominate the album's soundsphere more than before, but where would progressive rock be without the sound of a fat old voltage-controlled oscillator or two shaking you to the very core?

The first time we listened to the album was courtesy of a very nice pair of Sony HD headphones and the experience was practically otherworldly. Wilson's production is seriously deep pile and lush with so much going on that it takes several listens before you can fully take it all in. But what about the music itself? The overall theme is how our online life has, in some cases, gone bad. *Personal Shopper* relates how excess is just a click away and *Follower* details the downside of being a social-media sensation. But it's tracks such as *King Ghost* and *Count Of Unease* that visit that plaintive prog at which SW excels. It's the power of the songwriting that makes *The Future Bites* such a mature, epic album. Play on repeat. **[DM]**

**Standout track:** *King Ghost*

**For fans of:** Peter Dinklage, Porcupine Tree

## Joanna Connor

4801 South Indiana Avenue

KTBA Records

9/10



**Bonamassa-produced slideshow from exciting artist**

Chicago-based Joanna Connor is a vibrant slide guitarist and singer, and this, her 14th studio album, has been released under Joe Bonamassa's new blues label, Keeping The Blues Alive (KTBA). Produced by Joe and Josh Smith, much of this 10-track record is blazing and screaming slide guitar with similarly delivered vocals on songs that drip with old-school blues authenticity. Recorded in Nashville, the amalgamation of the three Js' guitars is quite something. Opener, *Destination*, rocks with a burning slide intro, splashy drums and a rousing groove. *Come Back Home* has an infectious shuffle rhythm, great piano comping and seriously greasy slide soloing, while *Bad News* is a Luther Allison-penned song, slow burning with plenty of room for her vocals and singing slide licks. If you hanker for authentic blues from a 'newer' artist, then check this out. **[JS]**

**Standout track:** *Come Back Home*

**For fans of:** Joe Bonamassa, Joanne Shaw Taylor

## Roberto Restuccia

With Every Turn

Trippin N Rhythm Records

8/10



**Silk-smooth jazz-blues to soothe**

A former student of Guthrie Govan, Roberto Restuccia has since turned his considerable talents as a player to the mellow hinterland between jazz and blues that Robben Ford, George Benson and Larry Carlton inhabit. Engaging the services of veteran producer Oli Silk for his debut on the Trippin N Rhythm label, Roberto displays real class in his playing – witness the beautifully phrased jazz-funk of *That's It For Tonight*, connecting each unhurried phrase with the changes beautifully. Likewise, the tender after-hours blues balladry of *On Mulberry* displays real elegance and taste. While we can't help feeling some of the 10 beautifully produced instrumental numbers are crying out for a vocal to give them staying power in the imagination, it adds up to a soulful and effortlessly melodic listen that feels made for warm summer nights to come. **[JD]**

**Standout track:** *On Mulberry*

**For fans of:** George Benson, Larry Carlton, Steely Dan

## The Lineup

PHOTO BY ALLISON MORGAN



Joanna Connor  
blazes her way  
through the blues

### Devin Townsend

Order Of Magnitude  
(Empath Live) Volume 1

InsideOutMusic

10/10



#### Live package from renowned left-fielder

This two-CD album was recorded in December 2019 in London with a band that includes guitarists Mike Keneally (Zappa, Vai, Satriani) and Markus Reuter (Stick Men) plus keyboardist Diego Tejeida (Haken). There's no backing to enhance the band's playing, so it's stunning to hear Devin's music played completely live with such able musicians. With 16 tracks coming from Townsend's more mellow/prog music, there's still plenty for most fans: the outro to *Evermore*, sections of *Gato* and the whole of *Kingdom* are intense. Opener, *Borderlands*, blends a major key subdued reggae lilt, rousing legato licks, ambient Lydian passages and slamming drum grooves. *War* has a 12/8 feel with detuned guitars for an infectious listening experience. **[JS]**

**Standout track:** *Kingdom*

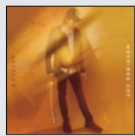
**For fans of:** Steve Vai, Vola

## START ME UP

Joe Robinson Borders

Joe's Garage

8/10



#### A versatile musician with songwriting that shines

Australian-born guitar virtuoso and educator Joe Robinson has been on our radar at *Guitarist* for some time now, and it's hard to understand why he isn't better known. He's a multifaceted musician – give him an acoustic guitar and he nimbly accesses the realm of his former mentor Tommy Emmanuel with sensitive covers and exciting originals. Put an electric guitar in his hands and he can pick like quicksilver. But here, on his fifth album, it's his songwriting that draws everything together in a neat bundle: shades of The Bros Landreth with more than a dash of John Mayer thrown in for good measure and a voice that's up there with the best. Check out the tones on the intro to *Sorry* and you'll be convinced. We were. **[DM]**

**Standout track:** *The One*

**For fans of:** The Bros Landreth, Ariel Posen

IT DOESN'T  
HAVE TO  
BE RED  
TO BE  
SPECIAL



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