



Heroes: Steve Howe

At a time when many British guitarists were drawing on Delta and Chicago blues, Steve Howe drew on everything *but*. By the time Howe joined Yes in 1970, the 23-year-old guitarist had filtered the pop of Les Paul, the country of Merle Travis and Jimmy Bryant, the fingerstyle technique of Chet Atkins, the jazz of Wes Montgomery, the classical guitar of Julian Bream, and the flamenco of Carlos Montoya—blending them all into his own signature style.

"Joining Yes fulfilled a dream of being in a group that not only had high musicianship, but also strong individuality," says Howe.

With their long-form compositions and rapid-fire meter and key changes, the five members of Yes created an orchestral sound that still rocked—and Howe used the platform to showcase his complex chord progressions, intricate counterpoint lines, and lightning-fast runs. Although he owns an eye-popping collection of instruments, he currently favors his trademark Gibson ES-175 plugged into a pair of Fender Twins. (During the Yes years, he typically played through two Fender Dual Showmans.)

Starting in 1977, Howe was voted Best Overall Guitarist in the *Guitar Player* Readers Poll for five consecutive years, becoming the first player to sweep that category and enter the Gallery of the Greats. When Yes disintegrated in the early '80s, Howe went on to enjoy commercial success with Asia, before rejoining Yes in the mid '90s. In 1999, he released the solo albums *Quantum Guitars* and *Portraits of Bob Dylan*—as well as Yes' eighteenth studio album, *The Ladder*.

Anyone curious about Howe's technique should seek out *Steve Howe Interactive* [BeyondSound], a CD-Rom guitar clinic where he discusses his career and demonstrates his signature licks.

—WHEAT WILLIAMS

"Underneath all this madness, I'm quite determined to play the guitar," said Howe in the Sept. '86 *GP*. "It's absolutely the single most important thing."

