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A PRIVATE LESSON
- WITH -

★ JOE ★

Bonamassa

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Joe Bonamassa

★ PRIVATE LESSON ★



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★ KIND OF ★ BLUE

He's blues-rock's man of the hour, but the first to admit that coping with jibes from 'naysayers' goes with the territory. With a new album of original songs in the bag, Joe Bonamassa has armed himself with a Tele and is ready to bite back with some of his most reckless, creative playing yet. We meet him to get a personal lesson in how to play hot blues guitar with more freedom and originality, and find out why brown Fender Deluxes are the best-kept secret in tone...

WORDS JAMIE DICKSON

PORTRAITS JOBY SESSIONS

“I’ve always been that maverick guy who’s got a very liberal view of what blues is; very open-minded,” Joe Bonamassa reflects. We’re at John Henry’s rehearsal studios in London, the day after Joe performed at Download Festival. By his own admission, it wasn’t a gig he enjoyed all that much. The hired backline was passable, tone-wise, rather than awe-inspiring – as his own custom tour rig normally is; and to add insult to injury one of the metal acts on the bill was testing its brutally loud amps backstage, very audibly, during his set.

All the same, he’s got a lot to be cheerful about. His new studio album, *Different Shades Of Blue*, is billed as his first record of original songs (not quite true, in fact, as it begins with an obscure Hendrix cover). Perhaps more importantly, though, it sees him playing with less of the stainless-steel poise that has seen him win an army of fans, but also his share of detractors. Instead,

there’s more recklessness, fire and candour, revealing Joe for what he is at heart: a damn fine player, with hellacious licks and a restless muse. Written with a team of veteran Nashville songwriters acting as lyrical sparring partners and co-writers, *Different Shades Of Blue* covers a lot of ground, in terms of guitar, too.

“That was really key to unlocking this blues album,” Joe says. “It runs from traditional blues to some things that you’d be very hard pressed to call blues. And that’s the way I’ve always played, writing some stuff that’s in the genre, some stuff that’s not in the genre and some stuff in-between that could be construed as a country song, or a pop song or whatever.”

Settling in to comfortable chairs, we chat with Joe about everything from the magic of maple-necked Strats, to why he believes many players are too reliant on drive pedals. After that, we come to the main event: a personal guitar lesson in which Joe shows us how to