



Fretwire

recently immortalized in cement were **Jefferson Airplane** and **Metallica**—who were honored on San Francisco's Bammies Walk of Fame. . . . **BUILDING GUILDS:**

As per an agreement reached on March 5, **Robert Benedetto** of Benedetto Guitars will lend his extensive archtop expertise to Guild. The famed luthier will help incorporate design changes on Guild's Artist Award Model and Stuart archtop guitars. In return, a line of handmade Benedetto guitars will be crafted at Guild's custom shop in Nashville, Tennessee. Read more about Guild at www.guildguitars.com, and Benedetto at www.benedetto-guitars.com.

. . . **PASSING NOTES:** Inventor **Robert C. Crooks**, 80, of BBE Sound, passed away on April 22 in his hometown of Huntington Harbor, California. Crooks founded Stadel Amps in the '50s, and in the late '70s, went to work with his friends Les Barcus and John Berry. . . . Founding **Moby Grape** guitarist **Alexander "Skip" Spence** passed away on April 16 from lung cancer at age 52. The original *drummer* for **Jefferson Airplane**, Spence will live on through the soon-to-be-released *More Oar* [Birdbrain]—a tribute



Pawnshop Prize:

Wurlitzer Stereo Guitar

Wurlitzer is hardly a household name in guitar land, but in the '60s the electric-piano manufacturer saw the writing on the wall and began distributing guitars built by a Kansas-based outfit called Holman-Woodell. The ax featured here, however, bears only a tag that reads "The Wurlitzer Company, Elkhart, Indiana." While visually wacky enough to hold court with knob-infested Teiscos, Kimberlys, Winstons, and other imported wonders of the British Invasion years, the Wurlitzer appears to have been designed by someone who actually had a clue.

Instead of arrays of dubious mystery switches,

the Wurlitzer's stereo wiring allows you to control the blend of both pickups (marked "channel A" and "channel B") with a knob on the lower horn. The two-position "jazz" and "rock" switches above each pickup provide darker or brighter textures, and, if desired, you can flick between the pickups with a small toggle switch on the upper horn. Each pickup has its own volume and tone controls, and signal is output via a stereo jack.

The Wurlitzer sports a 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ "-scale, bolt-on maple neck and an asymmetrical headstock with inline Kluson Deluxe tuners. Cosmetic touches include a bound fretboard and pearl position dots. The bridge features inonatable nylon saddles, and the heavy-duty trem system uses a simple, Bigsby-style compression-spring/rotating-shaft system to lower (or raise) pitch.

Offering excellent playability and a wide variety of sounds, the Wurlitzer is one of the better sounding and more versatile of the brand-X vintage electrics. It stays in tune and can deliver Tele-like spank, dark jazz tones, and vibey rhythm flavors. Using a stereo "Y" cord to feed a pair of amps (or amp channels) allows you to preset each pickup for any tone you wish, and then blend the textures to taste—an uncommon feature, even now. Unlike many pawnshop axes, the Wurlitzer is serious enough to hang in just about any live or studio situation. *Guitar courtesy of Terry Carleton.*

—ART THOMPSON

