

# Ray Gomez style



This month **Gianluca Corona** investigates the style of one of the most highly regarded fusion guitarists of all: the session guitarist and solo artist Ray Gomez...



Ray Gomez:  
veritable six-  
string master

notable musicians. His West Side Boogie, originally from the album Volume (1979), was also featured on Lane's Powers Of Ten (1992) project. Such respect from a player as awesome as Lane was an indication of just how good Gomez truly is.

Born in Casablanca (Morocco) in 1953, Gomez grew up listening to a R&B artists like Ray Charles and the intriguing textures of North African rhythms. Attracted to music from a young age, he started playing drums and then bass before finally settling on the guitar, performing in front of crowds when he was only ten. After his family moved to Spain in 1965, Ray soon became known as a prodigious talent and played with some of the best Spanish bands, enjoying success with the single Mamy Blue (1971) with The Pop Tops, which reached number one in Spain and Israel, selling three million copies worldwide.

After an invitation from George Harrison in 1973, Ray decided to move to England, where he stayed for a year, hanging out with top prog rock guys such as Keith Emerson (ELP), Bill Bruford and Jon


Anderson (Yes) and Carmine Appice (Vanilla Fudge and Beck, Bogert and Appice).

Moving on in 1974 he left England to live in New York, where he became one of the top session and fusion players. He joined bass legend Stanley Clarke's band, which allowed him to express his fiery playing to great effect. He played on many of Clarke's albums including School Days (1976), I Wanna Play For You (1977), Modern Man (1978), Time Exposure (1984), This Is Jazz (1998) and Portrait

Of Stanley Clarke (2000).

But Ray's talents extend far beyond fusion and you'll hear his six string work on albums by the likes of Chaka Khan, Deodato, Jack Bruce, Norman Connors, Tori Amos and Aretha Franklin, to name a few.

But it was his fabulous playing on his own album Volume (1979) that earned Ray his formidable reputation and inspired Shawn Lane to pay his homage. Sadly, Volume has long been out of circulation but you'll find one or two of the tracks up on YouTube. Check them out!

Although you'll often hear Gomez playing minor and major pentatonics and blues scales, he often adds more harmonic and melodic tension. His torrential jazz-rock lines and subtle lyricism have become legendary in 'muso' circles, but he also has a bluesy feel that also keeps everything down to earth and 'listenable'. He is a skillful improviser and a total master of the Fender Stratocaster. If you haven't heard this amazing player then you should check him out now! 

“After an invitation from George Harrison, Gomez moved to England, where he stayed for a year”

## ABILITY RATING

● ● ● ● ● Advanced

INFO	WILL IMPROVE YOUR
<b>KEY:</b> Various	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jazz-rock vocabulary
<b>TEMPO:</b> Various	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alternate picking
<b>CD:</b> TRACKS 38-45	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bending and vibrato

NOT MANY GUITARISTS have had their tunes covered by that late monster of the electric guitar, Shawn Lane. But Ray Gomez is one such player, just going to show the esteem in which Gomez is held by other

## GET THE TONE



To get really close to Ray's sound you really need a Strat or Strat-like guitar. The single-coil pickup is the secret to getting the clarity that only a Strat (or a Tele) can deliver. A valve amp or good emulation is also mandatory. A light string set (.009s) would help for all of the bending vibrato and fast runs, but it really would be best to go to a heavier gauge as soon as you can manage.



**TRACK RECORD** If you can somehow get a copy of Ray's legendary album Volume (1979), you really should! Failing that you can check him out on Lenny White's Venusian Summer; Stanley Clarke's Schooldays (1975) and I Wanna Play For You (1977). Also see if you can find Shawn Lane's cover of West Side Boogie on his Powers Of Ten (1992) album.