

\$6.00



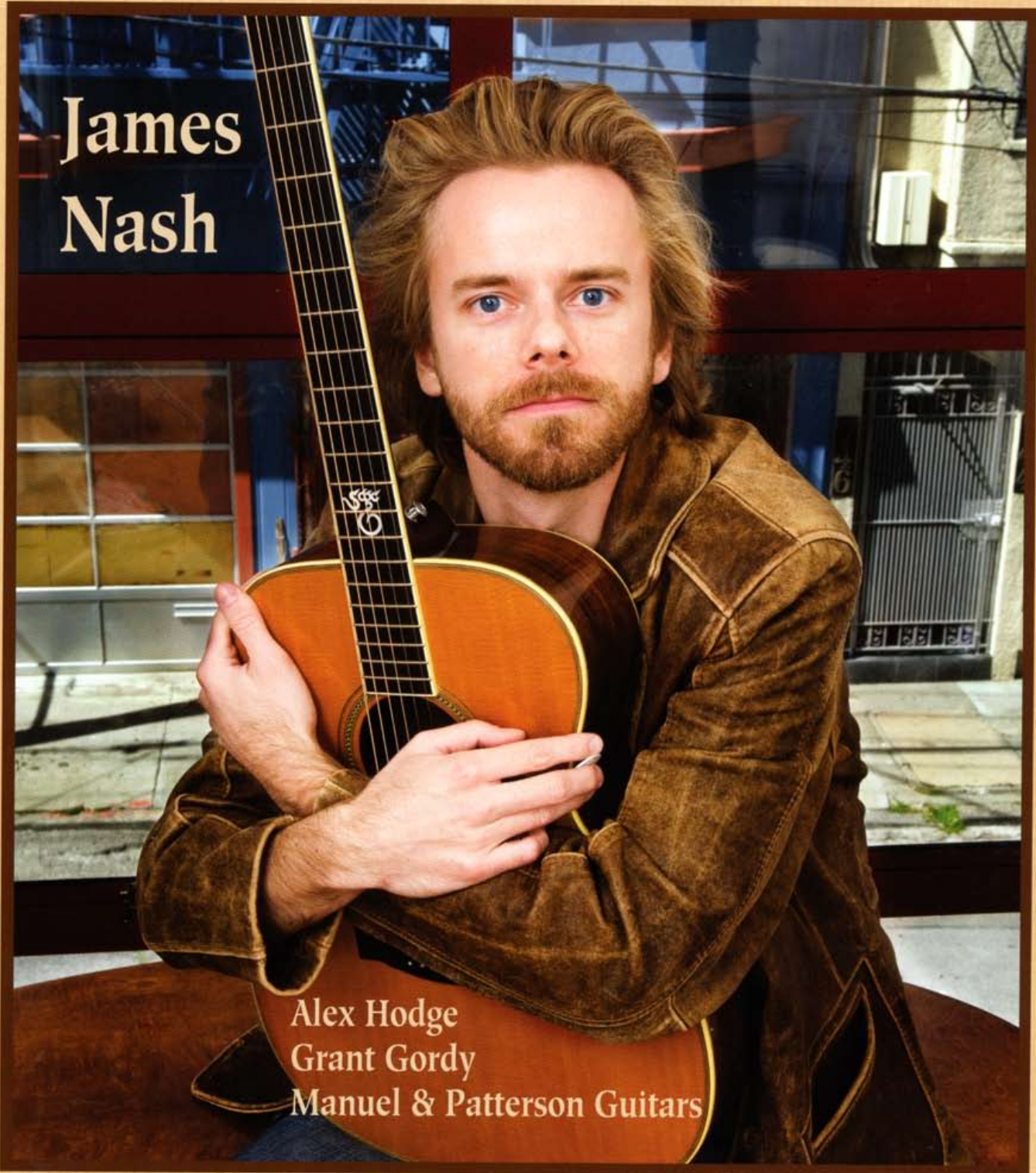
Flatpicking Guitar

Magazine

Volume 12, Number 5 July/August 2008

**James
Nash**

Alex Hodge
Grant Gordy
Manuel & Patterson Guitars



Guitar Review:

Saga's Cigano Gypsy Jazz Guitar



Reviewed by Dan Miller

Guitar players are always looking to expand their repertoire and tackle progressively more advanced technical challenges. As a result, many flatpickers, who start out playing bluegrass and fiddle tunes, eventually start becoming interested in the Gypsy jazz of Django Reinhardt. Django's style has the same fire and drive as bluegrass, but his technique, Chord changes, and rhythms can be challenging for those players who are accustomed to three chord songs and open strings. Moving from fiddle tunes to Gypsy jazz is fun, challenging, and exciting.

Unfortunately, it is not easy to get that "Gypsy sound" or use the Django techniques on a Dreadnought style guitar. One thing that held flatpickers back from exploring the Gypsy style in the past was that it was just too expensive to buy a new guitar in order to explore a different style of playing. Six or seven years ago the Saga Musical Instrument Company helped solve that problem by introducing the Gitane line of Gypsy style guitars. The list price for these guitars fell under the \$1000 mark and the street price was around the \$750 mark. The Gitane guitar filled the void by providing a quality introductory level Gypsy style guitar without breaking the bank.

Saga, a company known for its work in providing quality instruments at affordable prices, did not rest on the success of their Gitane line. To make it even easier for players to begin the exciting musical journey that is Gypsy jazz, Saga has introduced the new Cigano line of Student Gypsy Jazz guitars for a suggested retail price that is about half of the already affordable Gitane line. So now for under \$500 you can own a playable Gypsy jazz style guitar!

I have owned several Gitane guitars over the years and I found that the Cigano's tone and playability was every bit as good as the Gitane models. While the wood, hardware, and appointments of the Cigano are not as high in quality as the Gitane guitars, I did not find that the tone, volume, or playability suffered. It is a very fun guitar to play and as a player who only occasionally explores the Gypsy style, I like the fact that I didn't have to put out a lot of money to have a guitar that I thoroughly enjoy. There is a great price-to-fun ratio in the Cigano line!

Some of the features of the Cigano guitars include:

- Solid Sitka spruce top
- Asian rosewood back and sides
- Traditional soundhole rosette
- Nato neck with rosewood fingerboard
- Deep horizontal cutaway
- Black plastic body binding
- Traditional "zero" fret, with bone string guide
- Mahogany peghead overlay with Cigano logo
- Ebony moustache bridge with movable center
- Traditional brass tailpiece with plastic insert
- Accurate gold-plated tuners with 14:1 ratio
- Shop-adjusted

If you are looking to delve into the Gypsy jazz style of acoustic guitar playing, I highly recommend the Cigano guitars.