

GUITARS

the best of them.
"The B-side of 'Co-Co'
book number but

group. We had to change
the style of the group after
the hit record

ANDY SCOTT: 'Townshend is the supreme guitar showman'

tarist. I can play in a
variety of styles, and I
think I can rock it up with

FRETTED - instrument craftsman Tony Zemaitis specialises in made-to-measure guitars, modelled to the personal requirements of his customers, who range from wealthy stars to keen amateurs spending their entire savings on an instrument.

The size of the body, width of the fingerboard, string length, type of action and other features are designed to suit the guitarist's physique, stretch, style of music and playing ability,

The man who'll make a guitar to measure

with the principle that every instrument is made to last, play properly and sound good.

His unique flair is doubtless derived from his grandfather, a skilled luttier, and



TONY ZEMAITIS: 12-string specialist

his father, a furrier by trade, but a talented multi-instrumentalist in his spare time. Their resourcefulness was inherited by Tony, who took up woodworking and developed it into a specialised art, chiefly out of necessity, because he wanted a guitar, but couldn't afford to buy one!

Playing around the clubs in the skiffle days, he met some of the leading entertainers, who bought his guitars, although they were largely in the experimental stage at the time. His first customers included Davy Graham, Spencer Davis and Long John Baldry.

His speciality was the 12-string guitar, which was then virtually unobtainable in Britain. Right from the start he has been a trend-setter, experimenting with body shapes, sound-holes, struts and woods to achieve different sounds and volumes.

An example of his ingenuity was a 24-string guitar, which was basically a 12-string model with 12 resonating strings inside the body. Another winner was an acoustic fretless bass guitar quickly seized by Ronnie Wood and Ronnie Lane, of the Faces, who are his oldest customers and greatest admirers.

He has made six instruments for Ronnie Lane, including a six-string cutaway with a floating resonator for the purpose of playing slide guitar on recordings. For

Eric Clapton he built a giant 12-string guitar with a 26-second sustain and a staggering appearance, all silver-mounted and inlaid with silver and amaranthe.

Mary Hopkin chose a small steel acoustic guitar with a scalloped sound-hole resembling an eight-leaved clover. Tony McPhee and Marc Bolan have bought six-string 24-fret twin pick-up electric guitars, provided with engraved alloy fronts, because metal is a good earth shield to prevent feedback.

Tony Zemaitis has adapted the cellar of his Edwardian semi-detached house in Balham as a workshop, where he spends from 40 to 80 hours a week using about 250 different tools, most of which he designed and made himself.

For guitar fronts he uses mostly spruce, but sometimes cedar. Back and sides are rosewood, maple, mahogany, cyprus, walnut and cherry. His inlays have up to 10,000 pieces. Wood is getting extremely difficult to obtain, especially rosewood, which comes from the rain forests of India and South America.

Tony met his vivacious wife, Ann, who now acts as his secretary, while playing at the fretted instrument haunt, the Gyre and Gymbol, a cafe in Villiers Street, Strand. They have a young son whose autograph book is the envy of his friends. — CHRIS HAYES.

How T. Rex

get it

on

WHAT equipment is used by T. Rex? — T. Harvest, Denham, Bucks.

■ Marc Bolan: Several guitars, including Gibson Les Paul original 1948, Gibson Flying Arrow, Fender Stratocaster and Telecaster, Hayman, Epiphone and a special six-string electric with engraved alloy front and a pre-amp, hand made by Tony Zemaitis. Chiefly uses a Vamp 100-watt amp with a giant custom-built cabinet containing 16 12 inch speakers, but also has

tw
inc
to
sn
se

d
b
h
e
n
a
t
e
c

our kind
WAY.

acoustic
did Greg
In The
's album
sheet
part

Moody