

It was funny reading about the Sydney Guitar Show for 2026 in all the advertising it seemed to suggest that this was the first time Sydney has held a Guitar Show. However, this is far from the truth as in the 1980's and 1990's the Australian Music Association (AMA) included promoting musical instruments and music making to the general public as well as to dealers in the Australian International Music Show which were held at Sydney's Convention Centre at Darling Harbour. These hybrid trade and public shows continued into the late 1990's and attracted crowds in excess of 15,000 people. I know as I used to go to these shows quite regularly and reported on them for The Society magazine, *The Songsmith*. They featured the latest products, mainly guitar based, with workshops, famous musicians playing, etc. After 1999 the industry's trade shows were for "trade only" and called The Australian Music Association Convention or AMAC which lasted till 2014. The SSA had stalls at a number of these shows including those at Redfern and Darling Harbour.

. Then on May 28<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> 2005 Allans Music, which was then one of Australia's biggest music retailers, hosted the "inaugural Sydney Guitar Show" which was held at the "Fox Studios Sound Stage, Moore Park" which is known now as the Entertainment Quarter, Moore Park. They had tons of "guitars, amps, accessories, print music and learning aids from all the major brands on display" (Fender, Gibson, Ibanez, Yamaha, Boss, Roland, Martin, Maton, Taylor, Marshall, Laney, Godin, Musicman, etc) as well as a vintage section and an Australian luthier's section. They even touted Jim Marshall, the founder of Marshall amps, to be at the event but he wasn't there when I attended. Other special guest performers included "Michael Fix, Stuart Fraser, Jason Waldrom, Captain Ibanez, Jeremy Barnes and Diesel". This event was a lot smaller than the previous shows and seemed to be a push for Allens to sell product. However, it was walking distance from my home, so it was a popular go to for me especially as it was only \$12.00 to get in.

The next Guitar Show in Sydney was held at UNSW, Sydney on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2007. I found this one to be even smaller but with many more interesting exhibitors, not your usual big names. I did buy a Boss Fuzz guitar effect pedal and catch up with some Society members and friends who were also visiting the exhibitions. Once again it was close to my place, and I could catch a Randwick bus to visit easy enough.

So, it's been a bit of a guitar exhibition drought for nearly the last twenty years. Although there was that Maton Exhibition of 130 of its historical guitars at the Powerhouse Museum, Pyrmont on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2020 which was brilliant!

The guitar rains finally came back to Sydney this weekend, the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of March with the Sydney Guitar Show 2026. Still run by the Australian Music Association which has had a decade of successful Guitar Shows in Melbourne. I've seen how good the Melbourne Guitar Shows have been and was interested in maybe going to Melbourne to visit them but have never got around to doing so. However, I was a bit flummoxed when Mixdown Magazine ([November issue](#)) quoted "“*We have been running a successful and popular guitar show in Melbourne for a decade and people always ask us, why not Sydney?*” shares Alex Masso, Producer of the Sydney Guitar Show and CEO of the Australian Music Association. “*We’re answering their question with a big debut at Sydney Showground.*”” What? We'd had a number of AMA shows as well as other Guitar Shows in Sydney previously. Admittedly not in Olympic Park, as that's a first. However, it seems that the past history of guitar shows have been conveniently swept under the carpet for some reason? Maybe to promote the current version?



The November Mixdown Magazine also notes that: “*Beyond the usual expo format, the Sydney Guitar Show introduces several new elements designed to broaden the appeal beyond seasoned players. The Make Music Room will host a full program of workshops and interactive sessions covering playing styles, songwriting, and technique. A dedicated Kids' Room, in partnership with Big Music, offers guitars to try and helpful advice for younger players and total beginners*” which are firsts.

In the [February](#) Mixdown Magazine Alex Masso is quoted as saying: ““*We use terms like ‘trade show’ and ‘consumer show,’*” he says. “*But I really think of it as a community show. It’s where the guitar community, the players, the artists, the manufacturers, the retailers, the content creators, the kids, the parents, they all come together,*” and “*Masso puts it simply: ‘We want people to walk away excited about making music.’*”

So, I found myself on the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2026 on a train to Lidcombe where I'd catch the Olympic Park train to the Sydney Showgrounds as the Guitar Show was in Hall 5. I'd been already up to Turrumurra for the Tucson Fair Gem & Mineral Exhibition in the morning – yes, I did pop into Turrumurra Music buying a Cold Chisel TAB book – so a day with a lot of travelling. Coming out of the Olympic Park Rail Station I did look for some guidance signage which would have been useful as the only signage for the Guitar Show was right on its doorstep so to speak.



You can book tickets at the door (\$33 a day, or \$49.50 for the weekend), but I'd done that online. I arrived just after one o'clock and headed through security. I was a bit hungry, but the only two food trucks were chockers with people lining up. That's something they need to organise in future, more food trucks. I did



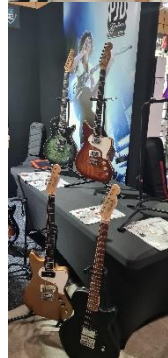
eventually have lunch after I came out about 3 pm at the Satay Brothers truck – satay chicken skewers & chips which was tasty although expensive.



There was a place to leave bags (Ticketed which was good) at the Merch Desk, which had already run out of larger sized t-shirts of the event. I do wonder about the organisers of an event when they run out of t-shirts on the first day! That's another thing they need to look at if they have further Guitar Shows.



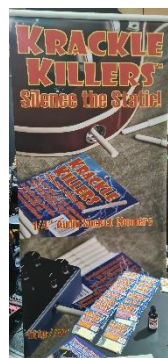
I noticed the live stage on the left as I came into the show, but I think the overall signage was poor as I had no idea that the Acoustic Hall was on the right-hand stage, nor that the Make Music Room was also there.



So, I entered the Main Hall and there were two things I really wanted to see. First, I wanted to play the new Indonesian PJD guitars. I've always wanted a PJD guitar which is a custom-made brand from the UK. I've heard many great things about them but haven't played one as they weren't available in Australia. PJD is launching the Origin series here in Australia through [Paytons](#). I've always liked the "Carey" version and tried the Origin Standard as it had the P90/Humbucker combination I like. It played well for a \$1299 guitar. However, when I played the Origin Pro I was blown away with the build, craftsmanship and playability as well as the sound. An amazing guitar for \$1699, so my idea of a custom build version has been superseded. I had a great talk about guitars with the guys at the PJD booth.



I've always liked the Reverend Guitars, which I think are highly under rated. I have a Blue Sunburst Double Agent OG which is brilliant with its P90 and Humbucker combo. The Guitar Factory Booth featured this range of guitars.



Right next to the PJD booth was a combination booth of [Krackle Killers](#) and Rip-Rac. I'd been having a few problems with my Boss Blues Driver and the Krackle Killers might fix the problem as its an old pedal, hand it could be the build-up of oxides. We'll see if the Krackle Killers help. It was great talking with David Benham the founder of the company and as to why he started the company up.

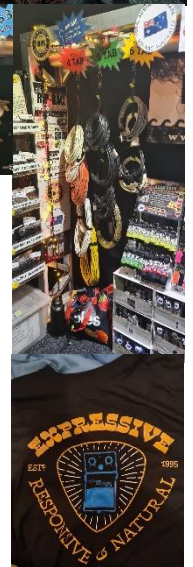


I recognised the [Rip-Rac](#) as I'd previously purchased one over twenty years ago and still use it today to manage my cords, but I need some more so brought a couple at a Guitar Show special. In fact, talking with designer and manager Paul Anderson I was able to secure a 10% deal for Society members, but that is in the Members only section of our website. Rip-Rac is an Aussie invention and anything Aussie I'm keen to support.



picked it up for \$319! I also brought a Boss Blues Driver t-shirt, and they had lots of great Boss pedal stickers. Boss had a great stand, one of the few companies that had their own booth.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> thing I had my mind on coming into the Guitar Show was to see if I could get a good price on the [Boss Rotary Ensemble](#) guitar pedal. I knew it was \$349 retail but was hoping it would be on a Guitar Show special. It was! I



So, the two main jobs done I then wandered around, especially looking for a bag as my hands were full. Someone said that [Manny's](#) had bags, so I had a look, and they said they'd run out (Not another run out!). However, as I was leaving the Manny's booth



the guy serving me called me back to say new stock had arrived for which I was grateful. However, it wasn't just a tote bag it also had a free guitar strap, jellybeans and other goodies – a great showbag so people will remember your brand!



With Manny's tote bag giving me more



freedom I checked out booths by Gretsch, D'Addario, Ovation (Yeap, they are still around), Grubisa (Had famous guitarists playing



front), The Pedal Empire (Famous online group), Conway guitars (Great Aussie custom made guitars who were on the same Pedal Party booth with the Electric Brothers (An Australian guitar effects company.



I'd heard one of the Conways play through the Nunchucks, which is a stacked drive pedal, and I liked it. I like supporting Aussie pedal makers, so I brought one at a Guitar Show special of \$299 saving over \$80), Holdfast guitar artist (No one on the booth to ask prices, but there were some amazing products. They also had stickers & picks.



Then onto Cunningham Amplifiers who had a great range of effects from New Zealand. Had a chat with the guys at PRS guitars and brought a



PRS beer glass, which came with three packs of 10-46 strings for \$59 – good value if you realise strings can cost over \$20

a pack – they were in Belfield Music who gave me a bag of goodies with beer coolers, guitar picks, guitar key ring, etc. Gladesville Guitar Factory had some hot players strutting their stuff. Eastman had some great looking guitars, but I prefer the original as I'm not a fan of relicing.



Going past Godin, etc I came across as



whole area devoted to Fender which I had a great time viewing. I started talking about how I like Meteoras, but they don't do custom jobs for them. The guy said "Yes, they do" and tried to introduce me to the Fender Master Luthier, but he'd popped out for



a bit. They are going to contact me about that.

I walked around for about two hours exploring but knew I had to get back to my place as I was going out that night. I caught a bit of Ray Beadle on the main



stage, but I was hungry so I headed to the less crowded food trucks. I had no idea until I got home and was sorting things that I'd missed a whole hall, the Acoustic one! As well, as The Studio.



I could only go on the Saturday as I had a ton of work to cover on the Sunday but the whole day could have been taken up just going to the songwriting workshops in the Make Music Room. These workshops were put on by the [I Heart Songwriting Club](#) who I've never heard





of before, but they are a global site that was started by an Australian that maybe could be good to explore. I'd liked also to have caught the Hussy Hicks set as I'm a bit of a fan.

Hopefully, next year I'll have a better idea if they have the Sydney Guitar Show again. There was a fair crowd there, so I think it has been very successful, especially with everything running out! © P.G Fitzgerald