

FIRST STRINGERS

Jesse Malin FROM THE HEARTLAND

GUITAR WORLD
Acoustic

THERE'S LITTLE EVIDENCE on Jesse Malin's third solo release, *Glitter In the Gutter* (Adeline/EastWest), to suggest that 10 years ago he was the leader of the snotty NYC punk rockers D Generation. The new CD is filled with widescreen story-songs about ordinary people and their big dreams, driven home by Malin's ragged vocal harmonies and ringing guitar hooks. It's the kind of sound that used to be called "heartland rock"—think Springsteen, Mellencamp, or anyone else who ever posed, clad in frayed denim, for a publicity shot on an old dirt road.

For the record, it should be noted that Malin doesn't completely agree with this characterization. "I was never a big Mellencamp fan," he says, "and I never listened much to the BoDeans or the Long Ryders."

But the Springsteen comparison is tougher for Malin to dodge; after all, the Boss himself makes a cameo appearance on *Glitter In the Gutter*, singing a verse on the moving piano ballad "Broken Radio." (Consider it Bruce's thank-you for the top-notch cover of "Hungry Heart" Malin recorded for the 2003 Springsteen tribute album, *Light of Day*.)

Malin does acknowledge that *Glitter* is a departure from his two previous solo releases, 2003's *The Fine Art of Self-Destruction* and 2004's *The Heat*, which he describes as "cry-in-your-beer heartbreak albums. I wanted this one to look a bit further north than that. It's a fighting record, with more of a spirit of hopeful defiance."

Helping him attain that spirit are his Gibson Hummingbird and LG-3 acoustic guitars, which provide the essential rhythmic underpinning for catchy tracks like "Beautiful Day" and "Lucinda." Malin says he loves playing acoustic on his harder-rocking songs because "it feels almost like a shaker or a hi-hat in the mix. Especially the way I beat on it—I'm pretty tough on guitars. But then again, I also like to strip things down, and on the quiet songs there's a way the acoustic guitar leaves space for the vocal that's just great. You need that balance, and I like both." —Mac Randall

GUITARS 1962
Gibson Hummingbird,
1947 Gibson LG-3
PICKUPS Fishman
Acoustic Matrix
STRINGS D'Addario

