

## A TOUCH OF CLASS SARAH JORY ON STEEL GUITAR



'I have now been playing the pedal steel guitar in bands for many years. It is an instrument that has always fascinated me even though it is pretty complicated to get your head around (especially when you are first learning).

I was pretty unorthodox in the way I learnt as I do not read music. Also, when I first started on the Hawaiian steel at the age of five there weren't many teachers around!

My very first guitar was a Guyatone Hawaiian Lap steel that was tuned to A6 and had 6 strings and I used a Wem 40 amp. I think the whole thing cost my Dad around £40 from the local music shop as it was second hand.

I then went on to an 8-string Hawaiian Steel that is actually now a collector's item as it was originally used in Felix Mendelssohn's Hawaiian Serenaders. It is made out of Oak with mother of pearl tuning heads and a huge Concord pick up. With this I moved on to a Fender twin Reverb Amp.

I used this set up for many shows and TV appearances. As you can imagine the fact that I played the steel caused quite a lot of interest.

When I was nine I moved on to my first pedal steel. It was made in Southampton and was an A E S. It had 3 foot pedals and 4 knee levers, and was what they called a lazy deck because it had an arm rest just behind the neck which you could lean on.

The tuning of this was E9th, and I play the unusual way of my pedal set up going from right to left being, **Pedal A** being B-C# **Pedal B** being G#-A **Pedal C** being Top E to F# and top B to C#.

My knee levers are set up as follows :

**Left Knee Left..** E- Eb, **Left Knee Right...**E-F, **Right Knee Left...**F# - G, **Right Knee Right...** D#-D-C#, **Right knee Up...**B- Bb.

This is the same set up that I still use today.

I was still using a Fender Twin Reverb for my amp and I used this set up for about a year. I then borrowed some money from my Mum and Dad who by this time knew I was serious about this. We took the train to Denmark street in London where I was able to purchase my first real professional pedal steel.

It was a Sho Bud LDG, named after one of my steel guitar heroes, Lloyd Green, and also bought a Peavey Session 500 Amp, which I still use on the road today. For those of you who use the London underground will know what a job we had getting all that gear in to a taxi and then the tube and then the train all the way home to Exeter, but it was all worth it as very soon after that joined my very first gigging band.

I was nine and the band was called Colorado Country, which later changed its name to Sarah and Colorado Country. We regularly played shows and were out three to four nights every week, so it was a busy time, because my schooling was also very important to me. I am fortunate these days to be on the road with my own six piece band, the nucleus of which has been together over 10 years.

I have had a sponsorship with Peavey and Takemine for quite a few years... I am playing my new Magnum Pro Select D 10 Pedal Steel Guitar. The steel is amazing and has the most awesome sustain and tone, and when you combine it with the new range of Peavey Nashville amps I am using, it's a winning combination. I use a Boss Digital Delay Pedal on my steel and had the reverb taken off the amp and that gives me a much cleaner response - that's the only effects I use on the steel. I use Jagwire Strings and Goodrich Volume Pedals.

I use a Peavey Cropper Classic Guitar for my Slide, as well as a new Peavey Eddie Van Halen Wolfgang Guitar that I have adapted to play slide on, a line six pod effects system for some gigs and sessions and a Boss overdrive pedal for other shows and sessions. I usually DI the slide straight in to the PA system and have it back through monitors, I play a limited edition Millennium 2000 Takemine Acoustic Guitar, a Peavey Generation EXP lead/acoustic guitar, a Samick Electric Banjo and a Guild Mandolin and I use all these through my Sennheiser Transmitter system.

I now use Elixir Strings on all my instruments (apart from my pedal steel) as I find that the tone of these guitars is naturally so good that I don't need a lot of extra effects and gadgets to make them sound better - the instruments do that all by themselves.

Both the slide and the steel continue to be a big part of who I am and will always play a big part in my stage show. Even though so much has happened to me so far, I have no intentions of putting away my picks and plectrums just yet!

***This article is taken from Sarah's own web site. She is at the moment on tour with Van Morrison. For those of you who have never heard her play steel, even if you are not a country fan, she is certainly worth a listen.***