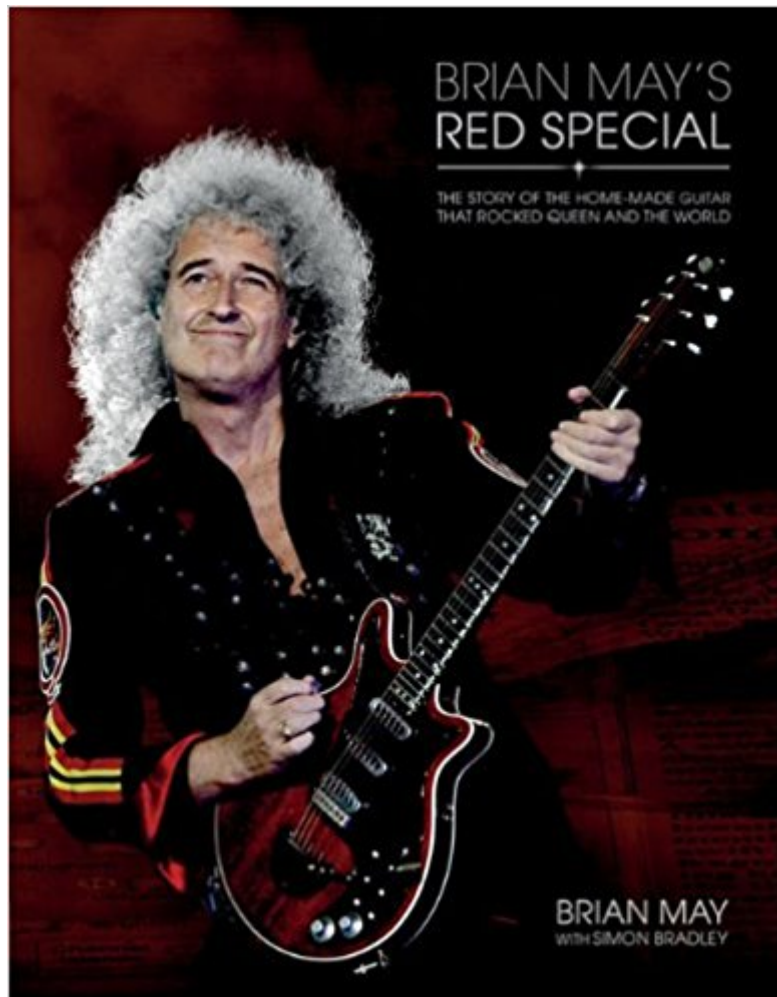


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# Brian May's Red Special: The Story Of The Home-made Guitar That Rocked Queen And The World



## Synopsis

My dad and I decided to make an electric guitar. I designed an instrument from scratch, with the intention that it would have a capability beyond anything that was out there, more tunable, with a greater range of pitches and sounds, with a better tremolo, and with a capability of feeding back through the air in a 'good' way'. Brian May and his father Harold started to hand-build an electric guitar in 1963. Brian dreamed of a guitar that would outperform any of the existing commercially made electric guitars; his father had the technical knowledge and skills to help make the dream come true. Brian played his guitar on every Queen album and in all of Queen's live shows around the world. In this book you will discover everything you ever wished to know about Brian's unique instrument. Brian talks about every aspect of the Red Special, from its birth to playing on the roof of Buckingham Palace, from Live Aid to the closing ceremony of the London 2012 Olympics and beyond. All of this is accompanied with original diagrams, sketches and notes dating from the building of the guitar, as well as a great selection of photographs including Brian on stage with his guitar, close-ups and x-rays.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Astounding. Truly. Brian May is such a consummate guitarist. And as most of us fans who happen to be guitarists know, that with the help of his father, Brian designed and made a killer guitar. This book digs in and shows us how, and that is an amazing story of creativity, practicality, love, perfectionism, dedication, patience and freaking brilliance. In over 50 years, the truss rod has NEVER needed adjustment! What? And the frets? Never replaced!! Damn. If you're a guitarist, you

know how unheard of that is. Plus, if you're not a guitarist, but you are a Queen fan...the book is a fantastic insight into Brian, as well. It touches on the relationship he had with his Dad, especially for the two years it took to make the guitar. Using hand tools and mostly parts that were lying around in Harold's shed in case they could be used for something someday, a priceless guitar was created. Brian's description of what it felt like to play on top of Buckingham Palace on the Queen's Jubilee Anniversary concert is worth the price alone. If you're a guitar geek like me, the fact that Brian let them take the Red Special APART in 2013 (except the tremolo block---wisely leaving that alone) to photograph all its insides...man, it sent ME into spasms of gear terror. Enough said. I find it hard to express how much I love this book, this story, this music, this guitar, this man. What a true genius.

Like many fans, I have been waiting for this book for some time. I can't think of any other guitarist that is so associated with ONE guitar. As of the time of this review I have not finished the book, but I couldn't wait to talk about it. The detail in the writing is excellent, but it's the pictures that make this a story. The Guitar Gearheads will love the tech info, but the average Queen fan who has seen and heard this guitar for decades will also enjoy this tale because of the presentation. The text and the pictures transport you to the guitars story.

An amazing story about the guitar that Brian May uses to rock the world. Just the idea that he and his father had the time together to craft this incredible musical instrument is only part of the story. It's a read read and the pictures are really fascinating.

Let me preface this by stating up front: I am a rabid Queen fan, and an equally rabid fan of Brian May himself. That said, this book blew my mind in the very best way. At one point during the first read-through I looked up and said "The Red Special... is made of MATH". And it is, along with the various bits and bobs from Bri's father Harold's workshop and of course the infamous wood that was once part of a fireplace. The insight into how Bri's mind works is unprecedented and fascinating; his intelligence is staggering. The glimpses of his personal life from his teenage years til now are a humanization of this 'Guitar God, the Guv'nor', reminding us that behind the glamour and glitz of Queen's massive fame he has his own pitfalls of insecurity, doubt, failure, heartbreak and regret marking his trajectory of success. He shares triumphant and joyful moments in equal measure, and by the end of the book you come away with a far greater understanding of how the music was (and is) made. The tech specs of the Special, including photos taken during a 'renovation', will intrigue anyone with an interest in electric guitars or electronics; only by reading this book can you truly

understand how Bri created his signature sound, and why no other guitar or effects pedal can ever fully replicate it. Brian May and the Red Special are one being, perhaps moreso than any guitar player in history, and it is fitting that the story of the guitar is inextricably intertwined with the story of the man himself. An astrophysicist who turned to music but never lost sight of the stars.

This is a fascinating insight in to the making of an extraordinary guitar made by extraordinary men. If people truly understood what a killer all-purpose utility guitar this was(and still is), every guitarist would have one. Every guitar player should have one. It's up there with any Fender or Gibson imho. As a Queen fan, you'll love this. Guitar players and under the hood geeks, you'll love this even more. I love it, so I guess that's all that matters.

Great book, love the style it is written in, the story of the guitar has been told over the years, but this is the best one! It is perfect for the coffee table and sure to start some discussion.

I already knew the basic Red Special story since I love all things Brian May, but this book added some interesting insights and some great photos that I didn't already have. It also makes a great "coffee table" book!

This is by far the most entertaining, full, deep, aesthetic and exquisite of my books on guitars . A real gem that I never get tire of reading and rereading. The only problem is that ... I am now desperate to acquire a BM guitar!

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