

Document 13.2 Helen's Response to Your E-mail Asking for Clarification

Boss—

Answers to your questions below:

I've got a few technical questions for you:

1. I'm wondering why Table 1 doesn't use a scoring system, whereas Table 2 does. And if you conclude in Table 1 that you don't want to consider the Epiphone or the Gibson further, why is it included in Table 2?

I wanted to start out with just some general information to give you a feel for the different guitars, then save the numbers for the second table. Why Epiphone? The Ep is made by Gibson, and it has a long history. McCartney and Lennon each have a signature acoustic with Ep. Why Gibson? Because it's Gibson.

2. I'm having a little trouble understanding the grading system for some of the criteria. In Table 1, for instance, how do you come up with a yes or no on Ease of Use? On the next column, are sound quality and playability the same thing, or do the two things go together? Can't you have good playability (low action) but poor sound quality (fret buzz, etc.)?

Well, these things are kind of subjective. I had the three other guitar instructors give me their reactions. Then, I just took what they told me, marinated it in my own thoughts, and cooked it.

3. I don't know anything about MIDI compatibility. Isn't that a yes/no thing, or are some guitars "more MIDI compatible" than others?

Yeah, in one sense it's yes/no in that some guitars are not at all MIDI compatible. But in another sense, if you line up all the MIDI compatible guitars, some are a lot easier to use, some offer greater versatility, etc.

4. Why consider the Epiphone in the first place? At \$400, it's quite a bit cheaper than either of the others. Are we mixing apples and oranges here?

I really like the Eps, and I just wanted to see how it would come out head-to-head against the other brands, which are better known. And I think you're getting maybe 90 percent of the guitar for about 40 percent of the price of the Les Paul.

5. In Table 2, I'm not sure how you came up with the numbers for each cell in the table? Can you provide some details?

I averaged the scores that I got from the other guitar instructors. It's kind of a guesstimate, though, because some grade harder than others, and not every guitar was tested by the same instructors. This ain't exactly a science. ;-)