Sam Pearson

Acoustic guitar, electric guitar and stool

REFLECTION STATEMENT

For my 2020 Industrial Technology Major Work I wanted to challenge myself to create something that was unique and functional, combining two great passions: craftmanship and music. I also wanted to keep it for the rest of my life. So, with a love of playing the guitar, it seemed only fitting for me to build a guitar for my major work, and the decision to make two contributed to the challenge, with each instrument creating uniquely different sounds and playability. And of course, every guitarist needs a stool, so I threw that in the mix too. For me, guitar building was a completely different planet of woodworking, with little experience to lean on from the school, so research from the outset was critical to ensure that I was confident to actually do this before committing to constructing the guitars. In my search for the appropriate timber to build guitars, focusing initially on the acoustic, I stumbled across Wheeler Custom Lutherie and I purchased Trevor Gore and Gerard Gilet's *Contemporary Acoustic Guitar Design and Build* set volumes 1 and 2. Reading these books really exposed the amount of detail that goes into guitar building and gave me a great understanding of how to go about this major work. Having access to the workshop and mentoring from the author, I was convinced I could pull it off, so I set out to design, construct, and produce essentially two functional works of musical art: guitars with details covered down to the final millimetre on the inlays and the reflection of the finishing.

Through the duration of approximately 350 hours to the major work, I aspired to finish the project maintaining a high quality throughout its entirety. I spent a large majority of my available spare time during the week in the school workshop and an average of 10 hours every Saturday working from the external lutherie in Botany. Although this was extremely time consuming and hard work, I saw it as a necessary precaution to take, as I was determined to complete my major work.

The sound produced by the acoustic guitar relies purely on the craftmanship of the wood in the body and neck of the guitar, with variables of size, shape, radius and depth all causing major changes in sound projection and quality. I loved learning the techniques which ultimately taught me to be extremely careful and patient with every

component in construction, and as a result the acoustic today produces the exact sound qualities and definitions I was desiring.

Alternatively, the sound produced by the electric guitar is not only dependent on the craftsmanship of the wood, but also the measuring, placement and incorporation of the electrical components, i.e. wiring, pickups, tone and volume dials, etc. Building the electric allowed me to be more fluid and playful with the design and construction of the electric guitar, using a variety of contrasting wood patterns and inlays throughout the build.

Ultimately, I am very proud to have finished the major work to the highest quality, with the main achievement being the guitars actually playing and playing well. I cannot think of a day that has passed since the guitars were returned that I have not played them. I couldn't be happier with the outcome of my project, and I feel proud that despite the overly ambitious idea at the beginning, I achieved the objectives and will hopefully be playing my guitars to my grandchildren one day as I reflect back on my time as a student of Riverview and the amazing opportunities afforded to me.

SAM PEARSON

ACOUSTIC GUITAR, ELECTRIC GUITAR AND STOOL