

the **brian may special** user information

Brian May
BRIAN MAY GUITARS

pickups

The three Tri-Sonic® single-coil pickups are wired in series for increased output and a fuller signal, with more presence than would have been possible using parallel wiring. This means that when more than one pickup is active the resultant tone has more bass and less treble... the output of each individual pickup is also added together when wired in series, meaning that with all three pickups active the output is effectively tripled.

pickup switches

Each pickup has its own dedicated on/off switch... down is ON, up is OFF. Another trick to maximize the incredible versatility of the Brian May Special, this switching system allows for the additional pickup combinations of "all 3 on" and "neck + bridge on", combinations not available on other, more conventional three pickup instruments.

phase switches

Each pickup has a phase switch which reverses the polarity of each pickup individually, reversing the phase of the signal from the pickup.... Down is IN PHASE, up is OUT OF PHASE. This means that when more than one pickup is active and one has the phase reversed, the resultant tone is rich in mid to high frequencies with the low frequencies reduced, giving the sound a characteristic "thin" quality.

tone

volume

bridge

middle

neck

and now the fun really begins

The unique nature of its pickups and wiring scheme provide the Brian May Special with an awesome arsenal of tonal possibilities and the real fun of this instrument is exploring the different configurations for yourself but, just to give you a brief, introductory "tone tour"...

Plugged in, with a clean amp tone, the bridge pickup alone is pleasantly thin and quite Strat-like. The middle pickup is louder and fatter with a good crisp attack, with the neck pickup comparable in volume to the middle, but with a fuller low end and a softer attack.

As you combine pickups, in phase, the overall volume increases. Adding the middle to the bridge adds power and knocks off some top end, while neck plus bridge equals a warmer, more powerful Strat-type mix. Middle and neck create a thick, semi-solid jazz style voice. Activating the phase reverse switch typically lends a thinner tone to a dual pickup mix but with three pickups on you can experiment with different phase combinations to sometimes subtle and often rather dramatic effect. For example, all three pickups on produces that thick creamy tone that has been used for the cello sections of Brian May's guitar orchestrations. However, reverse the phase of the middle pickup and the bottom drops out, leaving you with an aggressive, snorting Telecaster or Gretsch-like twang.

Cranked up, the guitar is very resonant and the out of phase tones really begin to make sense in such an environment, adding a cutting harmonic edge, while Brian's most used tone - bridge and middle pickup in phase - certainly replicates a modern middle-heavy humbucker. Take a listen to the guitar solo on "Bohemian Rhapsody"...that crying guitar tone is created by having the neck and the middle pickups in series and out-of-phase ...and then driving the hell out of the amplifier!



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2-3 Tenter Ground London E1 7NH United Kingdom • Tel +44 (0)20 7377 9300 • e-mail sales@house.gb.net

www.brianmayguitars.co.uk