

## GEAR IBANEZ MTM1 MICK THOMSON



# IBANEZ MTM1 MICK THOMSON

IN THE WORDS OF SLIPKNOT: MATE, FEED, KILL, REPEAT. OH, AND HAVE A GO ON THIS AWESOME GUITAR... WORDS: SIMON BRADLEY

### > THE SIZZLE

If you don't 'get' the phenomenon that is Slipknot, you probably can't see past the scary masks, obligatory rotting crow's carcass in a glass jar thing and the 'tantrum' vocals. The more enlightened of us, however, appreciate that Slipknot's music, while tantamount to a kick in the conkers at times, is powered by two of the best metal players of recent years: Jim Root (aka #4) and Mick Thomson (aka #7).

As far as gear goes, Mick Thomson, a long-time BC Rich endorsee, recently teamed up with Japanese guitar company Ibanez to perfect his new signature guitar. The ultra-cool red and black electric guitar you see before you is the result of that partnership. We reckon it's the most malevolent looking beast currently lurking in the Ibanez catalogue, but is this guitar's evil presence all it has to offer? Can the MTM1 kick TG's ass or, in the words of Slipknot, will it = shit? Let's find out...

### WHAT'S IT GOT?

The MTM1 features a solid mahogany body with a thru-neck laminated from five pieces of mahogany and maple. The rosewood fingerboard is inlaid with the legend 'Seven', just in case you forget who designed this guitar. The neck on the MTM1 runs uninterrupted all the way from the headstock to the strap pin. This allows the pickups and the bridge to be mounted directly to the neck wood, providing sustain that even Nigel Tufnel of Spinal Tap would go crazy for. As for the actual body of the MTM1, two mahogany 'wings' are glued to either side of the neck to create the classic

Ibanez shape. Figure in the familiar Ibanez headstock profile, this time reversed, black hardware and gallons of blood red paint, and this guitar has as much stage presence as the man himself.

You would expect Mick Thomson's guitar to be packing some serious heat in the pickup department, and the scary behemoth hasn't disappointed with a pair of active EMG humbuckers: a super-hot EMG-81 in the bridge and a EMG-60 in the neck position. There's also a three-way pickup selector switch and a single volume to keep things in check. That's right, there's no tone control

– this is a metal guitar! In case you don't know what active pickups are, allow us to explain. Active units feature an internal preamp powered by a nine-volt battery. One of the benefits of active pickups is an increased level of gain. That means they are louder, and offer a significant reduction in background noise, which is good news when you're whacking a guitar through some serious distortion. By the way, don't worry about the battery running out and letting you down when blasting through a great solo, EMG tell us that, with normal use, a standard nine-volt battery can power an

### WHO'S IT FOR?

Slipknot fans, doh! And anyone whose name happens to be 'Seven'

### INFORMATION

**ORIGIN:** Korea  
**BODY:** Mahogany  
**NECK:** Mahogany and maple, thru-neck  
**FINGERBOARD:** Rosewood with 'seven' inlay  
**PICKUPS:** EMG-81 (bridge) & EMG-60 (neck) humbuckers  
**HARDWARE:** Fixed Edge bridge with fine tuners; locking nut; enclosed machineheads  
**FRETS:** 24 jumbo  
**CONTROLS:** 1 x volume, three-position pickup selector switch  
**COLOURS:** Blood red only  
**LEFTHANDERS:** No  
**CASE:** Hard-shell Ibanez case  
**CONTACT:** Headstock 0121 508 6666  
**WEB:** www.ibanez.com

### ALTERNATIVELY

Ibanez K7 - £1,299  
Dean Razorback - £995  
ESP LTD MH-400 - £599



Mick's axe is based on the classic 80s Ibanez RG550



Black hardware really sets off the blood red paintjob on this axe

## SEVEN HEAVEN!

MICK THOMSON TALKS ABOUT HIS KILLER NEW AXE...

WORDS: GREG PRATO

The Ibanez MTM1 is more than a great set of pickups and a lick of paint. As Mick Thomson explains to TG, this guitar is the culmination of years of searching for the perfect instrument. "I've always had a specific approach towards guitar construction," says Mick, "and I've spent years experimenting with different woods and types of construction – neck-thru, bolt-on, set-neck. I've tried different bridges, tunings and string gauges, to arrive at a six-string guitar that can be tuned down to drop B and still remain stable. You can't take a normal guitar, drop the tuning and expect it to sound good."

During the design process of the MTM1, Mick discovered that his preference for

slim guitar necks had to be addressed. "I'm not a really big fan of thick guitar necks," continues Mick, "but in the studio a thick neck tends to sound a lot better than a thin one does. My signature guitar has a mahogany and maple laminate five-piece neck. It's very strong and the maple adds a little bit of brightness and the mahogany adds a warmth that I like."

Mick also has some good news for those on a tight budget – a more affordable Mick Thomson signature is on its way. "We're working on a bolt-on version that should be out hopefully by the end of the year," says Mick. "I've been working with Ibanez to get that spec'd up for under \$1,000."

EMG-81 humbucker for up to 3,000 hours. That sounds pretty damn good to us...

Before we put this beast through its paces we should mention the bridge. The MTM1 has fine tuners and a locking top nut, so you'd be forgiven for assuming that it was fitted with a whammy. But the MTM1 actually comes loaded with the Ibanez Fixed Edge bridge, basically an Edge trem that's fixed to the body with a pair of hefty screws. And that's not all that's different here. The MTM1 comes with Mick's preferred string gauge and tuning, drop C# with a low B (low to high: B F# B E G# C#). In practical terms this means you will have to rethink your fingering, but the brutal sounding results you get will make the effort worthwhile. You could, of course, restring the guitar with a standard set of strings and tune it up as normal, but what's the point of that?

### BUILT TO LAST?

If we had to design a guitar that was going to get the hell beaten out of it onstage, night after night, then we would copy the construction of the MTM1. The mahogany body will take anything that a bunch of masked up crazies can throw at it. The

laminated mahogany/maple construction of the neck gives it extra strength that not only helps keep the tuning stable but also ensures the neck stays attached to the rest of the guitar, which is always a good thing.

### HANDS ON

Dialling up a seriously filthy tone on our amp, we found that the combination of the MTM1's lowered tuning, thru-neck construction, mahogany body and EMG pickups came together beautifully and made us sound, well, like Slipknot, funnily enough. The rhythm crunch tone is as big as

*"This guitar is specifically designed to make eardrums bleed. If that's how you like to roll, then Mick Thomson's MTM1 signature guitar is your new weapon of choice"*

an elephant and, if you have the ability to pull them off, Thomson's trademark speed of light licks will sound perfectly authentic on this guitar.

You don't actually have to think too much about the tuning once you get into the groove. Simply fretting the three fattest strings with one finger at the same fret

sounds fucking awesome! Of course, you could play the MTM1 through your clean channel (it does actually sound quite nice) but thrashing out ultra-aggressive metal is what makes this guitar happy. So, for best results, keep it dirty.

### THE BOTTOM LINE

As some of you may know, the MTM1 has been around for a good few months. We would have reviewed this guitar well before now if we could've got our hands on one. Headstock, the official distributor of Ibanez in the UK, kept selling out of Mick's new guitar before we could get our mitts on one. Great business for them, pain in the arse for TG. Truth is, whether we like this guitar or not, it's always going to sell well. Mick Thomson may have terrible dress sense (dirty overalls aren't really our bag, baby) but the big lug sure knows how to put together an awesome guitar.

The MTM1 does its job to perfection and while the mother of pearl 'Seven' on the fingerboard pretty much limits the appeal of this guitar to a specific section of the axe-wielding public, that's usually the case with signature guitars anyway. Likewise the dropped tuning: drop C# with a low B was never going to appeal to jazzers and country players, but the MTM1 isn't for those guys. This guitar is specifically designed to make eardrums bleed. If that's how you like to roll, then Mick's MTM1 guitar is your new weapon of choice. Do we think you should go the whole hog and slip into a pair of grubby overalls and a daft Halloween mask? Hey, that's totally between you and your bedroom mirror. Please! Don't send us any photos...

**FOR:** Awesome metal tone; the killer neck  
**AGAINST:** The 'Seven' inlay and tuning might put some people off

TG RATING:



Mick's guitar comes down-tuned and ready to rock

