



Deke Dickerson and Scotty Moore, Nashville, August, 2008

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PHOTOGRAPH BY RICK MALKIN

IF YOU HAD told me years ago, when I first started playing guitar, that I would someday get to play and be friends with Scotty Moore, I never would have believed it. Just go listen to the solo on Elvis Presley’s “Heartbreak Hotel,” one of the scariest, most chill-bump-inducing solos of all time, and it is hard to believe that those magical, ethereal notes were made by a mere human being — one that still walks this Earth!

There was some kind of cosmic force at work that simultaneously brought together Elvis Presley, Scotty Moore, the Gibson P-90 pickup and the Ray Butts EchoSonic amplifier. Whether it was the thumb-picking on “Mystery Train,” the raunchy single-note blues of “Hound Dog” or the blinding fury of “Jailhouse Rock,” Moore produced guitar licks and tones that

nobody had ever dreamt of before. There will never be a plug-in or simulator that makes that sound; it only exists when Scotty Moore puts his hands on one of his trusty Gibsons and fires up the EchoSonic.

Most of us can play those Scotty Moore licks, but it will not sound like Scotty Moore. Only Scotty can do it — there’s a human element lost on today’s computer-happy guitarists. Originality like Scotty’s only comes along once in a lifetime, and there will never be another Scotty Moore.

Scotty sold me his #2 EchoSonic amplifier on the day this picture was taken in his Nashville studio. As you can imagine, it was as if Moses had called me and handed off the Ten Commandments: “Here, son, it’s your turn now.” That comes with a hell of a lot of responsibility. I hope I never let Scotty down. 