

He's got a point: Two Stratocasters are always better than just one. But where do you draw the line here, because three are better than two, four better than three, . . . Some people live their life with just one Strat though - look at Rory Gallagher - and others own more than 100 of those "fendery" works of art. Everybody needs to decide that on their own. Personally I tend to a healthy mean (more ES-335 are better than less).

There is a difference related to the number of notes in blues other than the number of guitars. Less notes are mostly better than too many and there are musicians who only use one note and still get a straight statement.

You don't earn that ability over night because it all comes with (life-) experience, feeling, soul, heart and wisdom.

The "new" Blues Guitar Player, who we are going to talk about in this article, rather uses one less note than three too many. Don't you think we are talking about an experienced and talented musician.

He is not so famous in Europe but he sure is on the right track to win every Blues- and Guitar-Fan's hearts.

Vinny Roth was born in Queens, NY and started playing piano at the age of 8. But that was mostly unwilling because he didn't like the instrument neither the piano lessons. One day he watched an old Elvis movie in which The King played his guitar and he thought: "Man, that's Rock & Roll . . ."

So he went to get an acoustic guitar and started taking lessons. Soon after that he heard the song "Walk This Way" by Aerosmith, which inspired him to buy himself an electric guitar.

His first teacher was an old Hippie named Rick, who always urged Vinny to improvise, to jam and to listen to the Allman Brothers and Grateful Dead - a good advice from an obviously wise man!

After nine long years of taking lessons Vinny was already 18 and moved to Fairfax, VA with his family where he first studied music at Northern Virginia Community College and later on at George Mason University. "I graduated in Fine Arts Music", Vinny says. "Everybody I know got a computer-degree and makes buckets full of money - but hey, at least I love my job . . ."

After graduation he started touring with bands like Four Foot Flat, The Shine Hines Band, Simon Phillips, Spur, Clones of Funk, Eric Weinberg (!!!!!) and played the opening act for Molly Hatchet, Otis Night, Leon Russell, Pat Travers, Bachman Turner, Overdrive and Blue Oyster Cult. Vinny was also one of the winners from the "Guitarmageddon Solo Contest", a talent show arranged by the American chain "Guitar Center".

Next to some contract work for a couple TV-channels, Vinny worked mostly on his own music. His last CD, called "2 Stratz Are Better Than 1", proves his variety.

Besides Blues and Swing you'll find Country, Funk and rock-jazz in the style of the Allman Brothers (Vinny obviously listened to his old guitar teacher Rick).

Every song sounds elegant, melodious and played with heart. His theme song "2 Stratz Are Better Than 1" (Swing/Blues) raises his spirit and he shows his best side, especially with his phrasing. That is why I printed to interrelated runs instead of single licks of his solo. Notice the little breaks in between that gives it time it time to really breathe.

You hear a warm and slightly overdriven sound à la Robben Ford. MIDI - files can also be found on www.gitarrebass.de.

As the title of the CD says, Vinny is using two Fender Strats. He named the first one, which is an American standard from 1980, Dolly May. Nothing has been changed on this guitar, it was perfectly made just the way it came from the store: "That is a typical Wednesday-Guitar.", joked Roth. "It was made on a Wednesday. I'm pretty sure. Without this Monday Blues, where everybody is still tired and without the Friday Carelessness where everybody already thinks about the weekend and just wants to get their job done."

His second Strat is a Strat Plus, which he bought in the 90s. This guitar has a Pearly-Gates Humbucker from Seymore Duncan and a Texas Special in the middle and the neck on it's bridge.

Vinny uses his second Strat every time he needs a heavy tone like a Humbucker-Sound. For the slide-play he has a GibsonES-335 and to play a warm Dobro-Sound he likes to use a Jay Turser Resolectric.

Most of his guitar sounds, as heard on the CD, are recorded with a Fender Cyber Twin. He also used a Traynor Yorkville with Celestion-80 speakers. The Yorkville shows a tendency towards the Fender Twin Reverb but is a lot easier and more authentic than the old twin according to Roth.

When it comes to effect, Roth calls himself a dinosaur. His little arsenal contains an Ibanez Tubescreamer TS-808, MXR Distortion 3, Boss Chorus & Digital Delay and a Crybaby-WahWah. Pretty simple and manageable. As they say "5 effects are better than 10". Less effects mean less stress and you can focus on the important things - the sound!

But around this time of year you can put those little and colorful effect boxes on your wishing list. Christmas is right around the corner.

But for all One-Start-Owners it seems that the best Christmas present this year would be a second one.

Having said this I wish everybody a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2011!