

## **Blackstar merge with Gordon Smith and Auden**

In ten short years, Blackstar Amplification has established itself as a leading brand in the global guitar amplifier market. Now the company is excited to announce the merger with two great British brands: Gordon Smith and Auden. All three brands are based in Northamptonshire, UK and share the same passion for music, products and innovation.

Founded in 1974 in Manchester, Gordon Smith is Britain's longest running electric guitar brand. In the last 43 years they have built a reputation for high quality, no-nonsense, hand built guitars. Used by artists such as the Smiths, the Stone Roses, Manic Street Preachers, Iggy Pop band and The Buzzcocks the guitars are now being discovered by a new generation of guitarists. This merger will see a continued commitment to UK manufacturing with further investment in equipment and premises.

Auden are makers of the highest quality, handcrafted bench-grade acoustic instruments made from the finest hand-selected tonewoods. Since their start in 2013 they have quickly established themselves as accessible guitars of unparalleled quality and tone. Each guitar is hand-finished in their UK workshop to ensure every instrument is set-up for ultimate playability. They already have artists such as Steve Hackett (Genesis), Marillion, the Alarm and Tom Chaplin (Keane).

Doug Sparkes (Director) said: "It's exciting to be working with such a well-respected brand as Blackstar. Their values for innovation and quality are also at the core of what Gordon Smith and Auden stand for. I am committed to continuing to grow our production facilities in the UK and take our great instruments to a global audience."

Ian Robinson (co-Founder, Managing Director) said: "I've been a fan of Gordon Smith since visiting the factory back in the 90's. We are all musicians and serious gear-heads and we relish the opportunity to take all the brands to a global market and get them the recognition they deserve,"

Paul Hayhoe (co-Founder, Sales & Marketing Director) said: "This is a great opportunity for us all to continue to grow three fantastic British brands and give musicians the ultimate tools for self-expression."