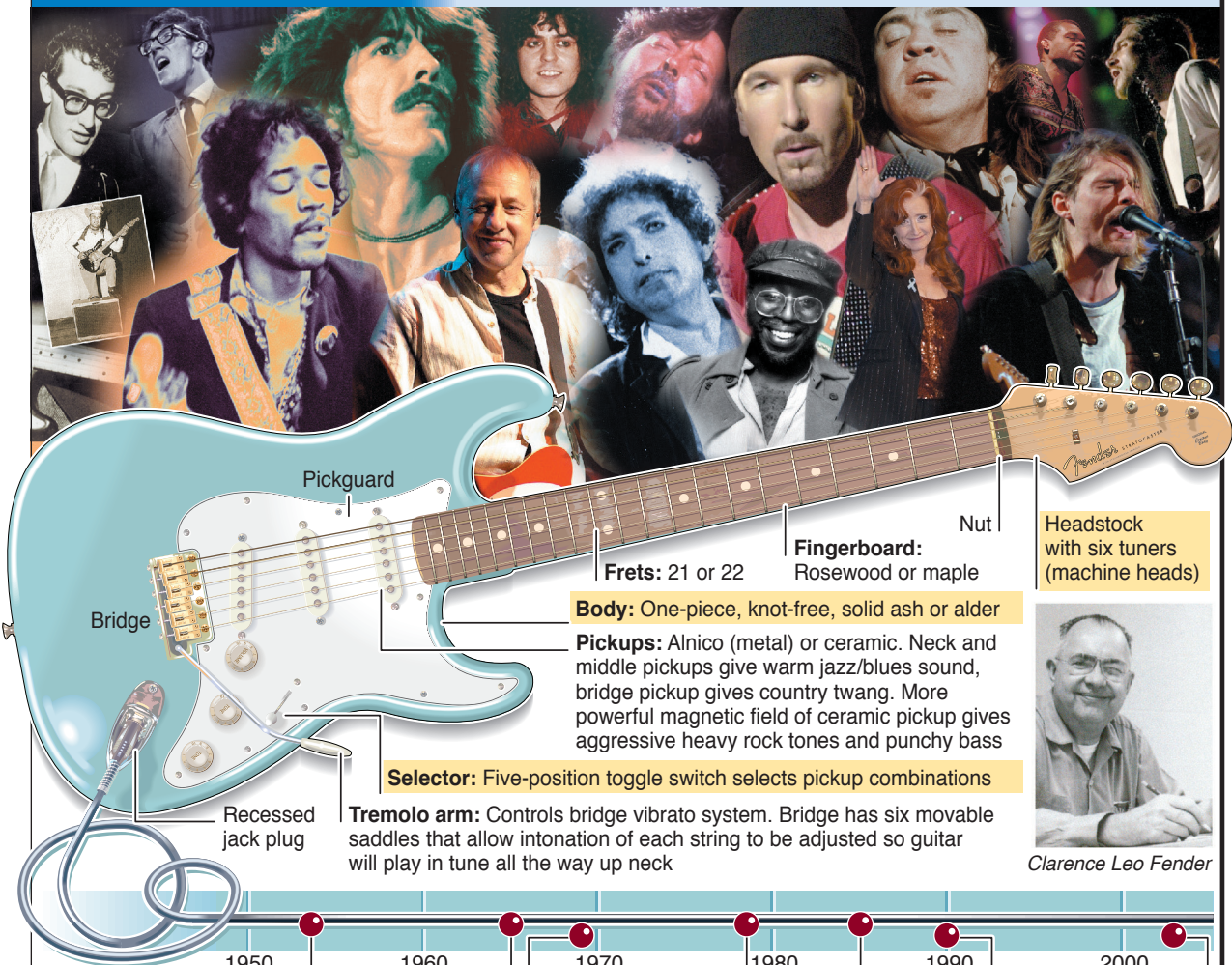


Half a century of the Stratocaster

Fifty years ago in the spring of 1954, **Leo Fender** debuted the most celebrated electric guitar ever – The Fender *Stratocaster*. Played by some of the world's greatest guitarists, the story of the Strat is intertwined with the history of jazz, blues, soul and rock 'n' roll



Clarence Leo Fender

1954: Fender Stratocaster launched at price of **\$249.50**. Early players include **Bill Carson**, **Buddy Holly** and **Hank Marvin** (aka **Brian Rankin**). **Stevie Ray Vaughan** born October 3, 1954

1965: Fender acquired by CBS (Columbia Broadcasting Services) for \$13 million. Players include **Jimi Hendrix**, **George Harrison** and **John Lennon**. **Bob Dylan** booted off stage at Newport Folk Festival for going electric and playing a Stratocaster

1969: Jimi Hendrix protests against Vietnam War, playing *The Star Spangled Banner* at Woodstock Festival

1970s: Sounds of the decade include **Eric Clapton**, **Curtis Mayfield**, **Mark Knopfler**, **Marc Bolan**, **Pink Floyd**

1985: Investment group buys Fender from CBS for \$12.5 million.

1987: **Custom Shop** established

1980s: Sounds of the decade – **Stevie Ray Vaughan**, **Robert Cray**, **The Edge**, **Bonnie Raitt**

Aug 1990: Stevie Ray Vaughan killed in helicopter crash. Sounds of the decade – **John Frusciante**, **Kurt Cobain**

2004: Limited edition 50th anniversary replica guitars include Stevie Ray Vaughan's **Number 1**