



Electric Hawaiian guitar

Date

1949 ca.

Primary Maker

Gibson, Inc.

Description

The BR-9 electric lap steel guitar was introduced in 1947 for beginners. The fingerboard was numbered for ease of learning positions, and it sold, in 1949, for \$52.50 (guitar alone) or \$99.50 for a complete outfit with case and amplifier, as opposed to \$250 for the professional-grade Console Grand mounted on steel legs. Gibson introduced a similar student model, the Skylark (EH-500), in 1956, and by 1959 it was apparent that Gibson did not need two student-grade electric lap steels. The BR-9 was discontinued in that year, while the Skylark held on until 1968. The electric lap steel, first sold in the mid-1930s,

declined in popularity in the '50s and '60s, while the star of the pedal steel guitar, which had gained great popularity in the hands of professionals like Speedy West, rose. The electric lap steel has recently experienced a revival, however, and it is once again being produced by numerous companies, including Gretsch, which calls its Electromatic lap steel "a smooth, yet sonic blast from the past."