



PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
THE EPIPHONE STORY

Επιφώνη

Establishing his first instrument factory in 1890, Anastasios Stathopoulos' earliest creations included lutes, violins and traditional Greek lioutos



From 1907 to 1912 the Stathopoulos family lived and worked at 121 West 28th Street in Manhattan

IN THE BEGINNING

The Epiphone story does not follow a straight line. For more than a century, it has twisted and turned through triumph, setback and comeback; hitting both dizzying highs and crushing lows as it winds its way through the ages. The latest chapter, in 2006, finds Epiphone as one of the most successful and respected instrument manufacturers on the planet. The opening chapter begins some 130 years before that, in the workshop of Anastasios Stathopoulos.

The son of a Greek timber merchant, Anastasios would not follow his father into the family trade, although his chosen profession would use the same materials. He began crafting lutes, violins and traditional Greek lioutos in 1873. A few years thereafter, Anastasios sailed across the Aegean Sea with his family to start a new life in Turkey. By 1890, his talent and reputation had allowed him to open an instrument factory and start a family. First to arrive in 1893 was a son, Epaminondas, followed later that decade by Alex, Minnie and Orpheus.

By 1903, the persecution of Greek immigrants by the native Turks had forced the Stathopoulos family to move again; this time to a residence in the lower Manhattan neighbourhood of New York. With Anastasios crafting and selling his instruments on the ground floor, and the family living directly above, the line between work and home life became increasingly blurred. Epaminondas (known as 'Epi') and Orpheus ('Orphie') were soon helping out in the shop and learning the business from the ground up.

And business was good. It was Anastasios' good fortune to arrive in New York at the height of the mandolin craze, and this dovetailed with the popularity of his traditional Greek instruments amongst the city's bustling expat community. Thanks to the success of their father's instruments (now labelled 'A. Stathopoulos,

manufacturer-repairer of all kinds of musical instruments', and built in a warehouse on 247 West 42nd Street), the Stathopoulos children enjoyed a privileged upbringing and a good education. But all that changed in July 1915, when Anastasios died at the age of 52 from carcinoma of the breast.

EPI TAKES CHARGE

Epi was just 22 when he took charge of the family business. He inherited many of his father's strengths – including a keen business sense and fierce pride in his work – but combined this with an awareness of the changing times that would prove vital in the years to come. Crucially, Epi was not just a luthier or a businessman. He was also a keen musician and socialite.



Epaminondas Stathopoulos (known as 'Epi') took charge of the family business aged just 22, and led it to great heights until his death during WWII

Epi respected the tradition of his father's instruments, but recognised the importance of moving with the times. By 1917, he had changed the company's name to the 'House Of Stathopoulos' and began adapting the product line. Mandolins were falling out of favour. In the post-war era, banjos had started to boom along with jazz, and Epi, with his ear to the ground, recognised this early and armed his company to deal with it. Not only did Epi introduce a line of banjos, but he also developed the instrument's design, patenting his own tone ring and rim construction. It was a sign of things to come.

And so, while the market shift caused some companies to flounder, the House Of Stathopoulos flourished. The firm's structure was re-organised in 1923 as its success snowballed (Epi made himself president and general manager) and even its name was revised to reflect its changing identity. This was the age of possibility, and Epi needed a brand to match. He eventually settled on an amalgamation of his own nickname and a derivation of the Greek word for 'sound'. It was the birth of Epiphone.

In 1924, Epiphone released the Recording Series of banjos to universal acclaim. Indeed, the Deluxe, Concert, Bandmaster and Artist models (plus the budget Wonder model) were so popular that by the following year, Epi had expanded production and bought out the Favoran



Epi Stathopoulos anticipated the US banjo boom, and in 1924 he introduced the Epiphone Recording Series to widespread acclaim.

banjo firm to cope with demand. Thanks to models like the Emperor, and the endorsement of players like Carl Kress, this side of the business continued to grow along with Epiphone's reputation, to the



point where the company's name was changed once again in 1928. For now, it would be known as the Epiphone Banjo Company.

THE FIRST GUITARS

The stock market crash of 1929 drew a line under the age of prosperity. Combined with the sudden slump in the banjo's popularity, it sounded the death knell for many instrument manufacturers. Once again, Epi was ready for the change. At the height of the banjo boom in 1928, he had introduced the Recording series of guitars, each one identified only by a letter ('A' through to 'E') and notable for their unusual body shape. The Recording guitars were a combination of spruce and laminated maple, with either an arched or flat top, depending on the price.

The market was certainly ripe, but the Recording guitars were not a success. One problem was a lack of celebrity endorsement. The other was a lack of volume. The Recording guitars were too small and arguably too ornate, particularly in comparison to the mighty size and volume of the Gibson L-5. At least Epi was taking notes. It wasn't hard to see the L-5's influence on the new Epiphone

The stock market crash of 1929 marked a slump in the banjo's popularity. With his ear to the ground, Epi responded with the Recording Series of guitars – identified by a single letter ('A' through to 'E') and their distinctive body shape.



Inspired by the Gibson Master Model range, Epi launched the Masterbilt line of f-hole archtops in 1931 (of which the De Luxe, pictured here, was the most expensive). These guitars consolidated Epiphone's reputation, but sparked vicious competition with Gibson.

archtops that followed in 1931, with the Masterbilt Series sharing similar f-holes, pegheads, and even a similar name to the Gibson Master Model range (though the individual model names would be more interesting than Gibson's serial number system, including the De Luxe, Broadway, Windsor and Tudor). Despite taking inspiration from Gibson, however, the Masterbilts had their own identities. Their intention was not to emulate the Master Model range, but to destroy it.

EPIPHONE VERSUS GIBSON

Throughout the 1930s, the rivalry between Epiphone and Gibson would veer from friendly sparring to all-out warfare. Slighted by the introduction of the Masterbilts, and having emerged from its commercial slump at the start of the decade, Gibson returned fire in 1934 by increasing the body width of its existing models and introducing the king-size Super 400 (named after its \$400 price tag). Not to be outdone, Epi replied the following year with the top-of-the-line Emperor, which raised the stakes with a slightly wider body and a provocative advertising campaign featuring a semi-naked woman. In 1936, Epiphone struck again, increasing the size



Size matters! In 1935, Epiphone launched the Emperor, a top-of-the-range f-hole archtop whose 18 3/8" body width was clearly motivated by a desire to list a bigger guitar than Gibson. This provocative ad campaign showed off the model's curves...

of its De Luxe, Broadway and Triumph models by an inch (making them 3/8" wider than the Gibsons).

By this point, Epiphone guitars were considered to be amongst the best in the world, and Epi himself was enjoying the patronage of some of the most respected players on the scene. The Epiphone showroom – now returned to its early location on West Street, Manhattan – was both the company's HQ and a hangout for famous musicians. On Saturday



Announced in 1935, Epiphone's Electar range of electrics proved the company's flair for innovation. The 'Master Pickup' used on these axes was advanced for the time, with individually adjustable polepieces.

afternoons, Epi would simply open the display cases and allow legends-in-waiting like Al Caiola and Harry Volpe to jam for the benefit of the people watching on the pavement outside. Perhaps this wasn't just an act of benevolence: both players would later go on to endorse Epiphone instruments, along with many others including Les Paul.

Epiphone wasn't just gunning for Gibson. Growing aware of the success of Rickenbacker's electric models since 1932, Epi made his move on this new market with the introduction of the Electar Series (originally known as Electraphone) in 1935. The design was strong, with individually adjustable polepieces on the

'Master Pickup' giving optimum output, and while Gibson had evidently been thinking the same thing (by the following year they had introduced an electric Hawaiian guitar), the Electar line landed a serious blow on Epiphone's rivals, while consolidating their own reputation as innovators. By the summer of 1937, Epi reported that sales had doubled.

As the decade played itself out, the rivalry between Epiphone and Gibson showed little sign of abating. In 1939, the two firms introduced similar 'pitch-changing' Hawaiian guitar designs. That same year, Gibson introduced a line of violins, while Epiphone struck back with a series of upright basses. It took the outbreak of the World War II, and the shutdown of US guitar production, to ring the bell on the bloodiest luthier boxing match of the age.

HARD TIMES

The war changed everything. Before the bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941, Epiphone had been riding on the crest of a wave. When the last of the fighting ended in 1945, the company found itself without its greatest asset. Tragically, Epi had died of leukemia during the war, meaning that Epiphone was handed down to younger brothers Orphie and Frixo, who would respectively be responsible for the financial and mechanical running of the operation.

The problems weren't obvious to start with. Epiphone continued to clash with Gibson via the introduction of cutaway versions of the Emperor and De Luxe, and raised the bar considerably with the arrival of the electric cutaway De Luxe. Pickups continued to be refined, and famous players continued to appear onstage armed with Epiphone guitars. From the outside, it seemed to be business as usual.

But cracks soon appeared, both on the production line and in the boardroom. The Stathopoulos brothers were not getting along, and in 1948, Frixo offloaded his

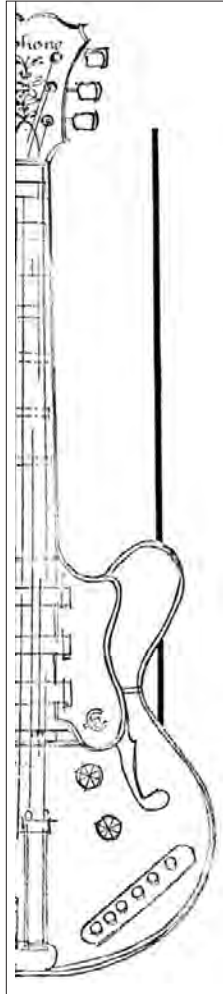
share to Orphie. Worse, the company was losing the reputation for craftsmanship and innovation built up during Epi's reign, and the pressures for unionisation compounded the problems. To sidestep this last issue, the Epiphone factory moved from Manhattan to Philadelphia in 1953, but the fact that many of the firm's craftsmen refused to leave New York resulted in a drop in quality and the very real danger of bankruptcy.

THE UNION OF EPIPHONE AND GIBSON

While Epiphone's problems got worse as the 1950s progressed, Gibson was going from strength to strength. Its main competition now came from the California-based Fender Company, creator of the Telecaster and Stratocaster models that had been released earlier that same decade. If Gibson had a weakness, it was that their upright bass production had stopped before the war and never started again. So when Gibson's general manager, Ted McCarty, received a call from Orphie asking whether he'd be interested in buying out the Epiphone bass business (still a hugely respected division of the company, despite its troubles), he didn't need asking



Even during the post-war slump, Epiphone enjoyed an unparalleled reputation for its upright basses. Models such as the B-4 prompted Gibson to buy the company for its bass operation in 1957.



EPIPHONE, inc.
OF KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

announces

the acquisition of the business of Epiphone, Inc., of New York

In Kalamazoo and under new management, Epiphone will continue to manufacture and distribute its famous line of guitars, string basses and amplifiers. Some models of string basses are available for immediate delivery, and certain models in the guitar line are expected to be ready in the Fall. The complete Epiphone line, including some new solid body electric guitars and amplifiers, will be announced for shipment early in 1958.

The same fine craftsmanship and high quality which has always characterized the Epiphone products will be continued.

All present Epiphone dealers will be given priority for deliveries and franchises, and it is expected that production will permit franchising an additional group of select dealers.

For information, write to

EPIPHONE, INC.
224 Eleanor Street
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Epiphone's troubles in the 1950s led to the 1957 buy-out by Gibson (for \$20,000) and the partnership between the two companies that continues to this day

twice. McCarty paid the \$20,000 asking price and Gibson took control of Epiphone in May 1957.

Gibson's original intention was to harness the reputation of the Epiphone bass line. By 1957, this plan had been scrapped. Instead, McCarty wrote in a memo that year, the Epiphone brand would be revived and a new line of instruments created. These Gibson-made Epiphones would then be offered to dealers who were keen to win a Gibson contract, but still earning their stripes (the right to sell Gibson models was hotly contested between dealerships at this time). It was the perfect solution. Dealers would get a Gibson-quality product, without treading on the toes of the traders who already sold the real thing. The Epiphone operation

was relocated to Kalamazoo (the same city as Gibson HQ) and work began.

A NEW BEGINNING

Epiphone wouldn't stay in the shadow of Gibson for long. When the new line started filtering through in 1958, it became clear that the brand now had three separate identities. On one hand, Epiphone now listed budget-conscious versions of existing Gibson models. Alongside this, however, there were also recreations of classic Epiphone designs (such as the Emperor, Deluxe and Triumph) and a selection of new models that had never been seen before. These included electrics like the semi-hollow Sheraton and the solid-bodied Moderne Black (alongside a double-cutaway model inspired by the



Released as part of the new line in 1958, the Sheraton was a daring model with shades of the Gibson ES-335, and revealed that the takeover would not spell the end of Epiphone's creativity.



The 'square-shouldered' body shape was traditionally a design used by the Martin Company. In 1958, Gibson swallowed its pride and used it as the inspiration for the Epiphone Frontier flat top.



Proof that Epiphone was not secondary to Gibson came in the form of the 1963 Excellente – a deluxe flat top that actually cost \$100 more than Gibson's esteemed J-200.



They loved them, yeah, yeah, yeah. When John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison each bought an Epiphone Casino in 1964, it underlined the quality of both the instrument and the brand.

Telecaster), and flat-top acoustics like the Frontier, whose square-shouldered body style was a first for Gibson (it was traditionally a Martin design). Combined with the introduction of amplifiers, it was becoming clear that Epiphone instruments would be far more than the 'sort of almost Gibsons' many had predicted.

The grand unveiling of the Epiphone line took place at the NAMM trade show in July 1958, with an electric Emperor as the flagship model. The show itself would generate orders of 226 guitars and 63 amps (a modest return), but over the next few years Epiphone would get into a swagger, shifting 3,798 units in 1961, and accounting for 20% of the total units shipped out of Kalamazoo by 1965. Even more impressive was the prestige of the guitars themselves. In the early 1960s, the Epiphone Emperor cost significantly more than the top-of-the-range Gibson



Byrdland, while 1963's deluxe flat top Excellente was \$100 more than the J-200, and made of rarer tonewoods.

The early 1960s brought the explosion of folk music, and Epiphone was ready to cater for it. The firm reintroduced its Seville classical guitar (with and without pickups) in 1961, and complemented this with the Madrid, Espana and Entrada models. In 1962, Epiphone also started listing a twelve-string guitar called the Bard, a smaller version known as the Serenader, and (in 1963) a series of steel-string flat-topped folk guitars including the Troubadour. The strength of the acoustic range was matched by a number of electric classics, like the double-cutaway Casino, and by the time the Beatles appeared with three of these models (one each for John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison), it seemed like the rubber stamp on Epiphone's recovery. The company now listed fourteen electric archtops, six solid-bodied electrics, three basses, seven steel-string flat tops, six classicals, four acoustic archtops, three banjos and a mandolin.

TURNING JAPANESE

The early to mid-1960s were boom time for Epiphone, with unit sales increasing fivefold between 1961 and 1965. But the good times couldn't last forever. The rise of foreign-made guitars had caught the US industry napping, and by 1969, these cheap models (often based on existing American designs) had stolen some 40% of the Epiphone/Gibson market share and closed many companies down entirely.

There were other problems. Gibson manager Ted McCarty had stepped down, the quality of the product was thought to have slipped, and union problems were simmering again. In its weakened state, Gibson's parent company CMI was bought in 1969 by the Ecuadorian ECL corporation (whose experience was not in guitars, but beer) and Epiphone found itself in a



Early Japanese Epiphones had been poor, but the operation's growing momentum was demonstrated in 1976 by a number of new models, including a series of scroll-bodied electrics

Early Japanese Epiphones had been poor, but the operation's growing momentum was demonstrated in 1976 by the Presentation Series 765 (a rosewood dreadnought featuring the 'vine of life' peghead inlay).

predicament – perceived to be secondary to Gibson, but too expensive to compete with the foreign imports.

The idea of moving Epiphone production to Japan had actually been floated before the ECL takeover. By 1970, it was a reality, with American production grinding to an abrupt halt and a new line of Epiphones being exported from the Japanese town of Matsumoto. But these were not Epiphones as the world knew them. On the contrary, they were just rebadged versions of models that were already being produced by the Matsumoku Company – with little imagination or respect for the company's pedigree.

Things had improved by 1976, when the Epiphone line was bolstered by the appearance of models like the Monticello, a series of scroll-body electrics, and the new Presentation range of flat tops. There was also the Nova series of flat tops and three new solidbodies named Genesis. By 1979, the Epiphone product list was gathering speed, with over 20 steel-string flat tops, and plenty more besides.

THE MOVE TO KOREA

Just as Epiphone's Far Eastern operation seemed to be finding its feet, three bombshells dropped in quick succession. The first was the rise of the electronic keyboard. The second was the rising cost of Japanese production, which led to Epiphone's relocation to Korea in 1983, and collaboration with the Samick Company. The third took place in the Gibson boardroom at the start of 1986, with three Harvard MBAs (Henry Juszkiewicz, David Berryman and Gary Zebrowski) taking the company off the hands of ECL/Norlin. Reviving Gibson was the priority for the new owners, and with Epiphone making less than \$1 million revenue in 1985, there seemed a danger it would be swept under the carpet and forgotten.

But Epiphone was still buzzing with potential. Soon enough, Juskiewicz had identified it as a sleeping giant, and made the trip to Korea to decide how it could be pushed to match the success of other Asian brands like Charvel and Kramer. As he absorbed Epiphone's pedigree, Juskiewicz started getting results, and soon sales were growing again.

Sales weren't the only thing on the move. By 1988, the Epiphone product line was evolving. Epiphone now listed a new PR Series of square-shouldered acoustics, along with an interpretation of Gibson's J-180, several classical guitars, a banjo and a mandolin. There was also a solid selection of Gibson-derived instruments (from flagship models like the Les Paul and SG to new archtops like the Howard Roberts Fusion) and a tip of the hat to Epiphone's past in the form of the Sheraton II.

TAKING ON THE WORLD

It was a start. But as the 1990s rolled around, Epiphone still had work to do. The line was more than comprehensive – offering 43 different models across a range of styles and budgets – but the lack of historic Epiphone products needed to be addressed. The legendary instruments from Epiphone's past should have been leading the company's charge into the future. Without them, Epiphone was still



Hot rocker Lenny Kravitz modeling the latest fashion, an Epi Riviera.

seen by some as a faceless import; a fact reflected by its modest global sales.

Taking charge of Epiphone around this time, David Berryman identified the other problem that was stopping the firm from taking on the world. It still didn't have its own dedicated office or workforce. Moving fast, Berryman instigated the acquisition of an office in Seoul, appointed Jim Rosenberg as product manager and set about addressing the misconception that Epiphone was secondary to Gibson.

The Seoul office was a major turning point. Instead of the long-distance relationship that the firm had previously had with its product, Epiphone was now able to roll up its sleeves and muck in with the dedicated quality control staff at the factory. During the long days and sleepless nights that followed, the Epiphone product changed beyond all recognition. Factory processes were assessed and refined. Manufacturers were visited and briefed on the components that would make these instruments special, with Epiphone taking a hands-on role in the development of everything – from pickups, bridges, toggle switches and fret inlays to unique features like the metal E logo and frequensator tailpiece. Financially and emotionally, Epiphone invested everything it had in these new models.

It paid off. One of the first fruits of Epiphone's labours was a limited-edition run of electric-acoustics, and the success of these confirmed how far the company had come. By the time of the 1993 NAMM show, there were more thin-bodied electric-acoustics and a new range of PRs. It all hammered home the impression that Epiphone was a leader rather than a follower.

But Epiphone was looking to the past as well as the future. In 1993, a limited run of Riviera and Sheratons were produced in Gibson's Nashville factory, with the company's Montana plant also building

250 Excellente, Texan and Frontier flat tops. These Epiphones were only intended as a special event (it was impractical to move production to the US permanently) but the public reaction prompted Rosenberg to reissue many classic designs via the Korean range. Those who attended the 1994 NAMM witnessed the re-introduction of legends including the Casino, Riviera, Sorrento and Rivoli bass. In the months that followed, word spread, and guitar luminaries including Chet Atkins and Noel Gallagher signed up to the Epiphone cause – confirmation that these were instruments to be played through choice, not necessity.



Perhaps the most iconic design of the 1990s, Noel Gallagher's signature model was almost as popular as Oasis themselves, and one of the decade's many highlights for Epiphone.



Crafted in Japan with choice tonewoods and US pickups, the launch of the Elitist Series in 2002 – including the Sheraton shown here – was conclusive proof that Epiphone is far more than Gibson's entry-level line.

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

Epiphone was arguably just as successful in the late-90s as at any point in its history. With confidence booming, this era saw the launch of the Advanced Jumbo Series and the release of several important signature models. The John Lee Hooker Sheratons from the USA Collection were tasteful, toneful and utterly authentic. The Noel Gallagher Supernovas had attitude and edge, and became some of the most iconic designs of the time. Then there were the John Lennon 1965 and Revolution Casinos. With their US birthright, unbeatable authenticity and sense of

aspiration, these models reunited Epi with the greatest artist of all time, and underlined the company's own re-emergence as a rock legend.

As the new millennium came and went, the momentum continued, as Epiphone introduced the Elitist range and strengthened its position in the acoustic market with the acquisition of veteran Gibson luthier Mike Voltz. Voltz's contribution to Epiphone's development cannot be overstated. While the firm had revived its electric range to great acclaim, there was still a sense that it needed to claw back its former reputation for world-beating flat tops. All that changed with the introduction of the Masterbilt range, which – along with the subsequent 2005

release of the Paul McCartney 1964 USA Texan – consolidated Epi's acoustic credentials and reacquainted the firm with two big names from its past.

By 2003, the international demand for Epiphones was such that the company had opened a new factory in China. Not only did this mark the first time that Epiphone had its own dedicated factory since the initial takeover by Gibson. Staffed by US managers and luthiers, it also armed them with the control over their own product that would let them take development to the next level, and give them a massive edge over the competition (most of whom continued to share workspaces).



Paul McCartney used a 1964 Epiphone Texan on Yesterday – and the iconic status of the original instrument prompted Epiphone to launch a US reissue in 2005



An update of an Epiphone classic, the Nick Valensi Riviera P94 is a blast from the past with a nod to the future. Much like the Strokes man himself...

In 2006, Epiphone is all things to all players. Working musicians prize the company for its Gibson replicas, offering the quality of the most famous US models at competitive prices. Collectors of vintage guitars snap up the authentic Elitist reissues of the Emperor, Casino and Excellente (and many more). Recording artists turn to the Epiphone US range for quality that rivals any guitar manufacturer in the world, while rock 'n' roll fanatics delight in the company's signature models, which in 2006 include everything from the Nick Valensi Riviera to the Zakk Wylde Les Paul Customs. Regardless of budget, ability or musical leaning, today's Epiphone line has it covered.

Perhaps even more important, Epiphone has retained the pioneering spirit that was always Epi Stathopoulos's calling card. Whether through the 2006 'Guitar of the Month' scheme (offering a different collector's model each month) or through its unending quest to challenge tradition, this is still a firm that thrives on the risk while always delivering the result. Perhaps David Berryman puts it best. "Gibson is a traditional company," the Epiphone president noted. "Epiphone is more of a renegade. It marches to the beat of a different drum. Always has." One suspects that it always will.

In 2006, Epiphone is all things to all players – offering official Gibson replicas, authentic signature models, and faithful Elitist reissues of models from its own illustrious past



Epiphone continues to work with the brightest talents in all genres of music. Black Label Society's Zakk Wylde is just one of many luminaries with an Epiphone signature model in 2006 (in fact he has three of them!)

EPIPHONE TIMELINE

- € 1863**
Anastasios Stathopoulos is born in Sparta, Greece to a local lumber merchant.
- € 1873**
Anastasios builds his first instruments (according to Epiphone literature of the 1930s).
- € 1877**
The Stathopoulos family moves to Smyrna in Asiatic Turkey.
- € 1890**
Anastasios establishes a large instrument factory in Syyrna which produces violins, mandolins, lutes and traditional Greek liutos.
- € 1893**
Epimanondas ('Epi') is born to Anastasios and his wife Marianne. His name is inspired by a military hero from ancient Greek history.
- € 1903**
Following persecution of Greek immigrants by the native Turks, the Stathopoulos family moves to New York (during the immigration process, the final 's' is dropped from the family name). The family now includes sons Alex and Orpheus ('Orphie'), and daughter Alkminie ('Minnie'). Another son (Frixo) and daughter (Elly) are born in America.
- € 1915**
Anastasios dies, leaving Epi in charge, and ushering in the new era of the Epiphone company (although this brand name is still some years away). Orphie is second-in-command, while Frixo and Minnie will later become active in the company.
- € 1917**
Epi begins labelling instruments with the House of Stathopoulos brand. The era of the tenor banjo is beginning, and Epi is granted his first patent for banjo construction.
- € 1924**
Combining his own name with the Greek word for 'sound', Epi registers the Epiphone brand name.
- € 1925**
Epi buys the Favoran banjo company in Long Island City (across the East River from Manhattan) and launches the Epiphone Recording line of banjos. Their ornate design and classic tone makes them an instant success.
- € 1928**
Buoyed by the success of the Recording banjos, Epiphone introduces a Recording line of guitars – most of them with carved tops and spruce/maple tonewoods.
- € 1931**
Epiphone introduces a full line of f-hole archtop guitars (12 models in all), with the top models (the De Luxe, Broadway and Triumph) becoming familiar Epi model names for the next 40 years.

- € 1935**
As the latest blow in the long-running competition with Gibson, Epiphone launches the Emperor.
- € 1937**
Epiphone unveils its innovative adjustable-pole pickup (as part of the Electar series). By this point, the company's reputation has led to endorsement from prominent players such as Tony Mottola, Dick McDonough and George Van Eps.
- € 1943**
Epi dies of leukemia, leaving brothers Orphie and Frixo in charge. Feuding between them leads Frixo to sell his stock in 1948. The company falls on hard times in the post-war years, and by the mid-50s, Epiphone is making few instruments aside from upright basses and the Harry Volpe student guitar.
- € 1957**
Gibson's parent company, CMI, buys Epiphone for \$20,000, originally intending to harness its upright bass operation, but ultimately reviving the Epiphone name on guitars. A full line of newly designed acoustics and electrics is unveiled in 1958, and two years later Epiphone production moves into Gibson's factory in Kalamazoo, Michigan.
- € 1961**
Country superstar Ernest Tubb equips his entire Texas Troubadours band with Epiphones, while Marshall Grant plays an upright Epi bass with Johnny Cash.
- € 1963**
Longtime Epiphone endorsee Al Caiola gets his own model, and plays it on his hit records of the themes from Bonanza and The Magnificent Seven.
- € 1964**
George Harrison, John Lennon and Paul McCartney buy Casinos. Alongside All You Need Is Love (which features all three), McCartney uses his Casino for the solos on Ticket To Ride, while Harrison uses his for the famous runs on Hello Goodbye. McCartney also buys an Epiphone Texan, which he plays on Yesterday.
- € 1970**
In the face of foreign competition, Epiphone production is moved to Japan. Through the 1970s and early '80s, the Epiphone line has little continuity, although it maintains respect as a quality import brand.
- € 1983**
Epiphone production moves to Korea.
- € 1986**
Henry Juszkiewicz, David Berryman and Gary Zebrowski acquire Epiphone and Gibson. The Epi line is soon expanded to include traditional models like the Sheraton, Emperor and Howard Roberts – along with Epi versions of Gibson classics like the Les Paul, Flying V and Explorer.

- € 1992**
Jim Rosenberg arrives as product manager to head up the Epiphone line, and soon expands it to offer virtually every style of guitar to the value-conscious player. The opening of a dedicated office in Seoul allows Epiphone the 'hands-on' relationship with its product that had previously been lacking.
- € 1993**
Epiphone's reputation is further enhanced by the Nashville USA Collection – limited edition models that represent the first US-made Epiphones for over 20 years.
- € 1994**
Gibson's Montana division follows suit, offering a limited edition US run of the Excellente, Frontier and Texan Epiphone flat tops. The NAMM show of that year also witnesses the re-introduction of classic designs including the Casino, Riviera and Sorrento (all part of the new Korean range).
- € 1995**
Epiphone celebrates the 80th anniversary of Epi Stathopoulos's rise to head the family business.
- € 1996**
With Oasis at the peak of their popularity, Epiphone build lead guitarist Noel Gallagher the iconic Supernova signature model.
- € 1998**
Epiphone introduce guitar and accessory 'starter packages', while this period also sees the launch of the Advanced Jumbo Series.
- € 1999**
John Lennon Revolution and '65 Casinos are launched as part of Epiphone's USA Collection, alongside a pair of John Lee Hooker Sheratons. The sheer quality and flair of these signature models underlines Epiphone's growing status as a brand to be played through choice.
- € 2002**
The new Elitist line is released to widespread acclaim, while veteran Gibson luthier Mike Voltz is recruited by Epiphone to focus on acoustic production and marketing. Voltz will prove instrumental in establishing the new range of Masterbilt acoustics – a series that reunites Epiphone with its past and consolidates the company's position as a leader in both the electric and acoustic fields.
- € 2003**
International demand leads to the opening of a dedicated Epiphone factory in China. Staffed by US managers and luthiers, it equips the company to support the growing popularity of its instruments.
- € 2005**
Epiphone is reacquainted with a big name from its past, as the Paul McCartney 1964 USA Texan is re-introduced.
- € 2006**
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