VAI'S MUSICAL CLIMAX FROM THE MOVIE "CROSSROADS"

### CROSSROADS SUITE

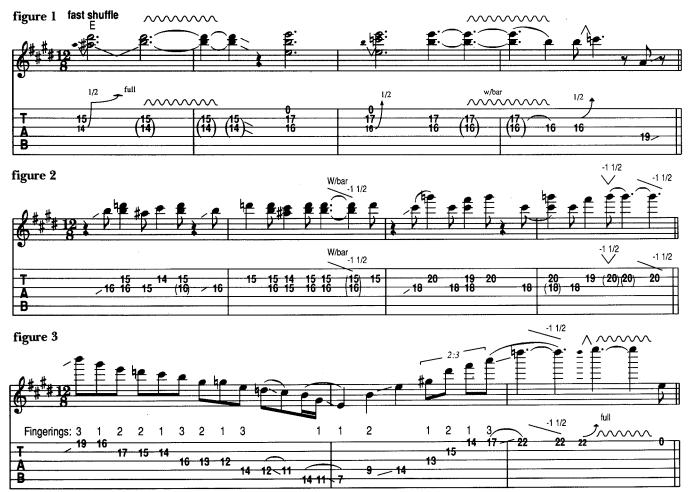
"Butler's Bag" – Soloing Off Chords
"Headcuttin' Duel" – A trading licks duel
between Vai and Cooder
"Eugene's Trick Bag" – Steve's Arpeggio Treat

Although the musical climax to "Crossroads" was omitted from the soundtrack album, it still became a favorite of students and probably the most frequently requested work to be transcribed. So, here it is in its entirety, except for the segment where Jack Butler (played by Steve Vai) tries in vain to recreate the classical licks from "Eugene's Trick Bag".

The first section, "Butler's Bag", is a 12 bar blues in E that exemplifies Vai's approach to soloing off chords.

The first four measures at letter A consist of diads derived from the E7 chord (E G# B D) commencing with a bend to B and D (Fig. 1). This idea also occurs in the B section, at the same point in the progression, and is followed by C# and G from the A7 chord (A C# E G#) (Fig. 2). The brief cadenza of the last 3 measures features an E11 arpeggio (E G# B D F# A) in combination with the E "blues scale" (E G A Bb B D) (Fig. 3).

Steve's deftness with the vibrato bar is evident through-



out, especially in measure 16 where he does a "pseudobend" by pulling up on the bar, raising D a whole tone to E, and in measure 23 as he imitates a slide guitar by lowering the pitch of a note preceding a slur (Fig. 4).

Note that we've included suggested fingerings for tricky passages with several changes in hand position by virtue of his penchant for phrasing with legato slides.

Figure 4

pull up with bar

full

T 15 14 15 (15) (15) 14 14 15

A 16 15 16 (16) 15 15 16

B

In "Headcuttin' Duel" our cinematic hero, Eugene Martone (played by Ralph Macchio), engages in a shootout with the Devil's guitar-slinger, Jack Butler. Ry Cooder did all Eugene's slide guitar parts in open D (D A D F# D A), while Steve tuned his sixth string down to D.

There's more whammy bar antics from Vai in the first round, this time in conjunction with natural harmonics (Fig. 5). Cooder replies with his own rendition of the opener, using a bottleneck for slide, and the interplay continues up till letter D (Fig..6). At that point all hell breaks loose as Jack switches guitars (this time in normal tuning) and does a furious sixteenth note run based on the D dorian mode (D E F G A B C) (Fig. 7). A 12 bar blues follows at the letter E, that features some subtle semitone bends from the sixth to the seventh degree in measures 2-4 and 12 (Fig. 8). In measure 7 he imitates a slide guitar again as in "Butler's Bag" (Fig. 9).



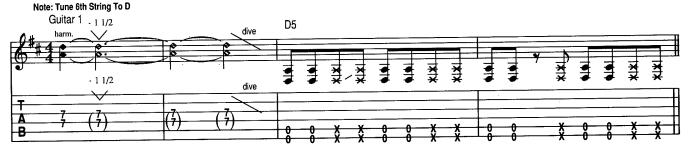
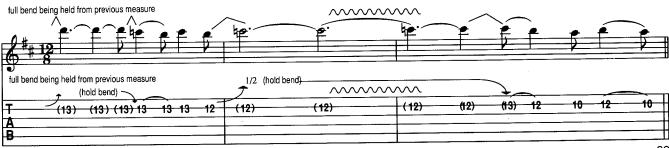


figure 6



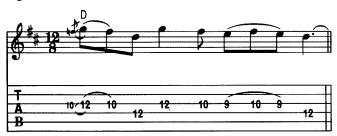


figure 8



### STEVE VAI • "CROSSROADS" SUITE

figure 9



Eugene is then joined by Willie Brown (played by Joe Seneca) on the harmonica for a duet. Since the harmony is in parallel thirds both parts can be played easily in the open D tuning as demonstrated in fig. 10. Jack

figure 10



throws in a third part during the next chorus and then goes back into solo flight. In the last two measures of this lead break Vai goes "outside" and combines the C major pentatonic (C D E G A) with the D blues pentatonic (D F G A) (Fig. 11). At the letter H, Eugene

figure 11



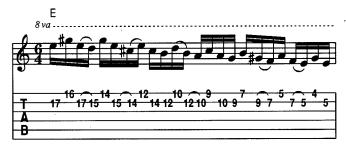
responds, concluding with some Mississippi Delta style blues licks containing double stops.

The piece modulates to E at letter I and the battle continues, this time the clincher is wide interval bending (see measures 8-9), plus extended fingerings in measures 1 and 8 of the E "blues scale" PP. Eugene makes another admirable attempt to bring the champion to his knees, but Jack pulls out all the stops commencing with a digital delay generated "round" (also called a circle or perpetual canon) in G that consists of descending the G dorian (G A Bb C D E F) and then ascending the G lydian mode (G A B C# D E F#) right up to the cadenza in E at letter L. For the first 8 measures of the cadenza he burns up the "blues scale", then goes to the E mixolydian or "seventh scale" (E F# G# A B C# D). The vibrato bar receives an especially "Vai"lent treatment in measures 14-15 and we wouldn't recommend imitating Jack Butler (i.e. shaking the guitar by the bar) at this point in the duel, unless you're prepared to deal with the possible consequential damage to said unit (Fig. 12).

Things look pretty grim for Eugene and Willie, but "Lightning Boy" gets his mojo workin' and treats us to "Eugene's Trick Bag". After getting everyone's attention with an uninterrupted slur he falls back on his classical training and goes into a series of arpeggios: Am - E7 - A7 - Dm - G#dim7 - Am. This and the next section are Steve Vai's rendition of a composition by classical guitarist William Kanengiser that Eugene played (actually William played and arranged all the classical guitar parts) earlier in the movie.

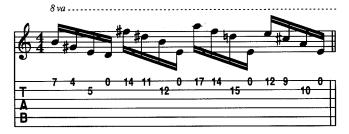
Following a sequence of sliding thirds derived from the E mixolydian (Fig. 13) our hero then plays a series

figure 13



of major arpeggios with a repeated tonic pedal point via the open first string starting at letter E. The best method for smoothly connecting the enormous leaps required here is to shift your eyes to the next position while completing the preceding group of sixteenth notes. The final arpeggiated sequence is based on a G# diminished seventh chord (G# B D F) (Fig. 14). An

figure 14



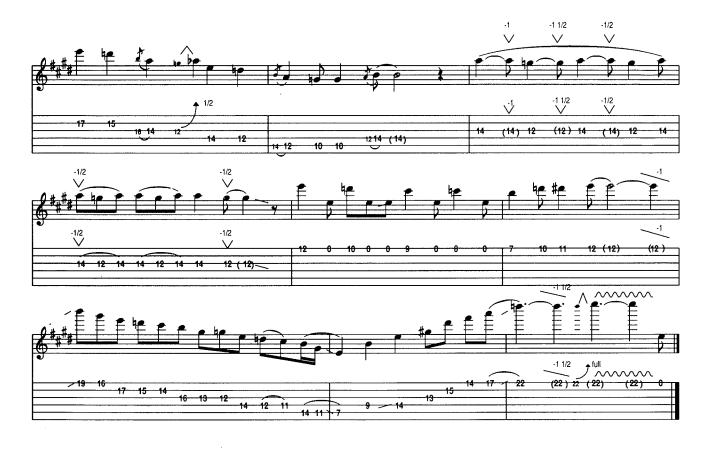
unusual feature of this chord is that it is symmetrical as its structure is composed of minor thirds stacked upon each other. The final run of this piece is a rapid ascension of the A harmonic minor scale (A B C D E F G#), the only common scale containing this chord when harmonized and is found on seventh degree or leading tone. The final high A note is the result of actually "fretting" the first string against the neck pickup.

### **BUTLER'S BAG**

Music by STEVE VAI



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### **HEADCUTTIN' DUEL**

Music by STEVE VAI and RY COODER



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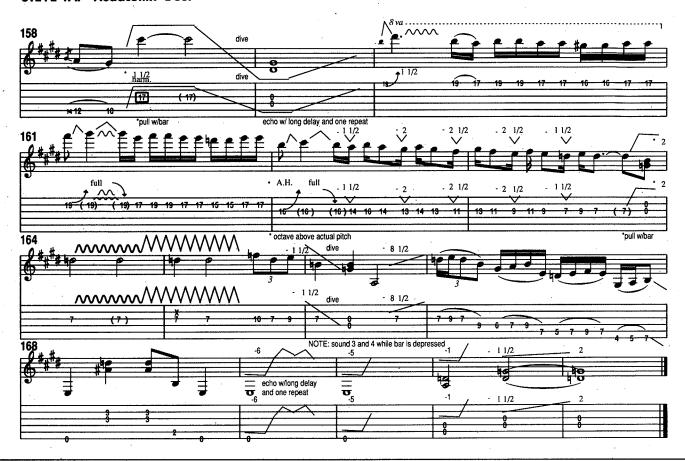








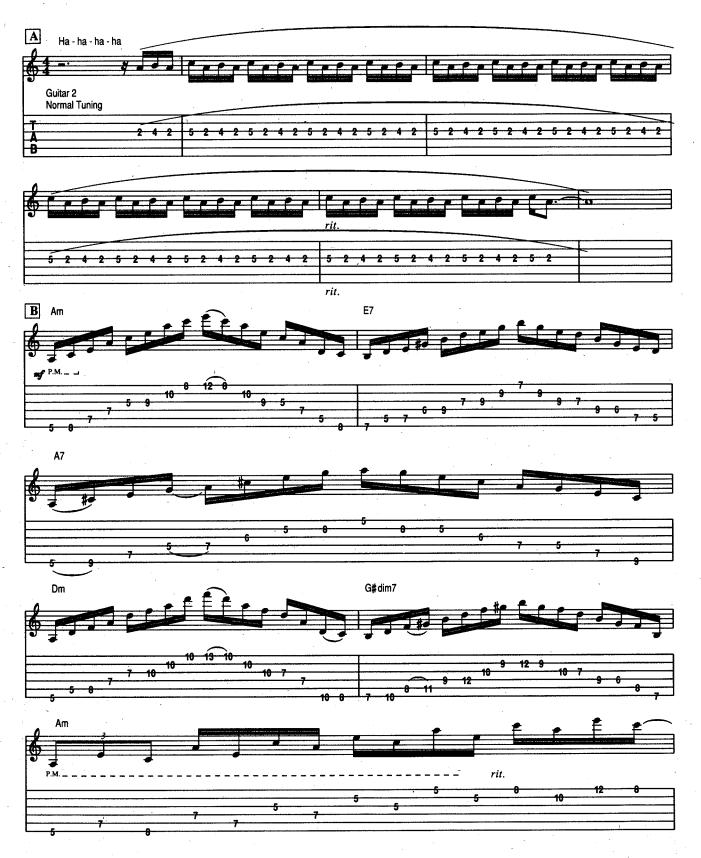




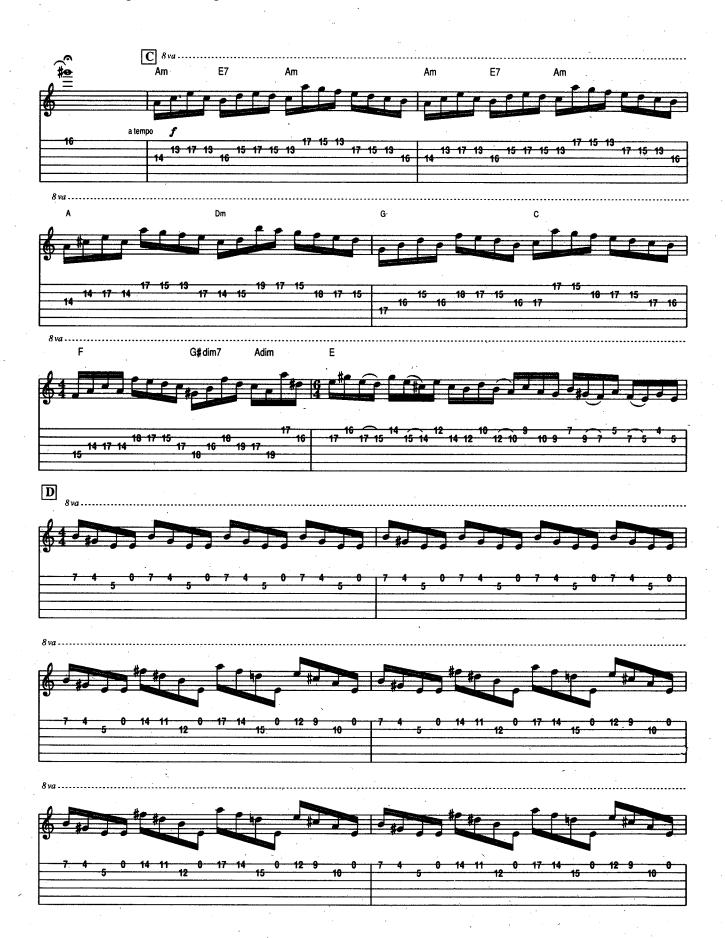


### **EUGENE'S TRICK BAG**

By STEVE VAI



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**STEVE VAI** 

## BIG TROUBLE

Vai's funk rhythm chord comping and finger tapping excursion!

5 0

This song is Steve Vai's favorite from "Eat 'Em And Smile" and was in fact the first original he presented to David Lee Roth. Since on the Spanish version of the aforementioned lp "Big Trouble" doesn't fade out, we referred to it instead for this transcription.

If you examine this funky ditty closely it becomes evident that Jimi Hendrix was a major influence on Steve in his formative years. The use of octaves ala "Third Stone From The Sun" in the intro; the distinctive chord voicings such as C#m7 with open strings, as Jimi did in "Spanish Castle Magic", in the main riff and F#m7add4 ala "House Burning Down" in the bridge and even the choice of key all have Hendrixian overtones, but the comparisons cease at letter G because the solo is totally Steve Vai.

Commencing with the pickup notes, he shows his remarkable

flair for using the vibrato bar in a musical sense. Note that following the bend to C#, the tonic, Steve lowers the pitch precisely with the bar so that he ends up with E to C# (Fig. 1). In measures 3, 5 and 7-8 of the solo he uses it in conjunction with slurs in a manner called "scooping", similar to the slide guitar effect found in "Headcuttin' Duel"(Fig. 2). The more commonplace "dives" occur only at the conclusion of measures 6 and 12, thus dividing the lead break into two equal parts (Fig. 3).

One aspect of Steve's style that is unique to the rock genre is his creative use of wide intervallic skips. A prime example of how he employs this device melodically is in measure 2 of the solo. Note that the line

figure 1





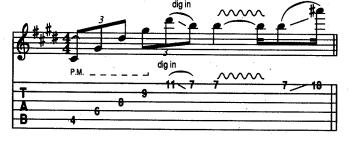


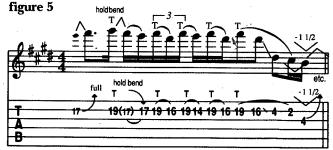
figure 2



T 1017 17 16 14 17 16 14 17 16 14

figure 4



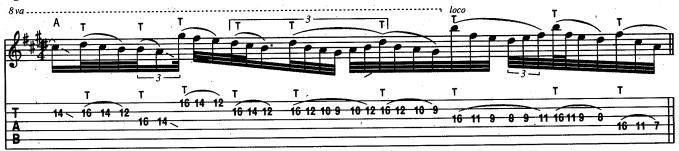


ascends 2 perfect fifths (C# - G# - D#), a fourth (D# - G#) and then another fifth (G# - D#) (Fig 4). This series of notes may be analyzed as a C#sus2 arpeggio. From there he slides down a major third to B and then up a major seventh to A#. The A# isn't in the key signature, but the C# dorian (C# D# E F# G# A# B) is the minor mode used here instead of the pure minor. It works well since he's playing against C#m7 (C# E G# B) instead of a chord from the harmonized scale containing the A natural of the key. For only the last 4 measures does A fit into the scheme of things as it is the root of the accompanying chord.

Steve's "bag" also includes two-hand tapping or bidextral slurs and this solo has plenty of those. The first example occurs in measure 5 on beat 1, there he bends E up a whole step to F#, holds the bend while tapping out G# with the right hand, releases the bend and then pulls off. The tapping continues during the next beats in the guise of pedal point. Going into the next mea-

sure he again uses tapping in conjunction with a bend, but this time he displays his penchant for large melodic skips and goes an octave above the bend (Fig 5). From measure 9 to the solo's conclusion Steve is "going crazy" with the tapping technique and covers almost the entire range of the instrument. The most difficult part for the novice will be the changes in hand position throughout. If you start out learning the last measure first then you will quickly become used to switching strings due to the symmetry of the pattern therein. Then, when you're ready to attack the rest of this section, read through it, see where you must change hand positions and note the manner in which it is done. For instance, in measure 9 he begins in the 16th position and the shift occurs on beat 2 in the form of a legato slide with the middle finger of the fretting hand going from the 17th to the 16th fret. By then pulling off to the index finger behind it at the 14th fret the shift is complete (Fig 6).

figure 6

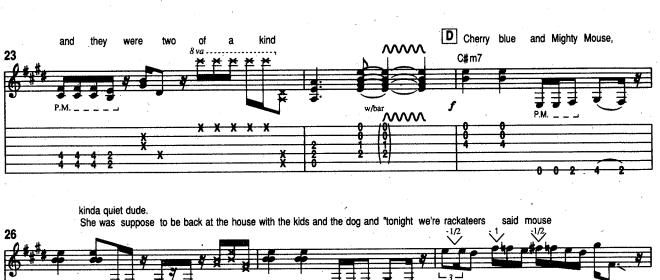


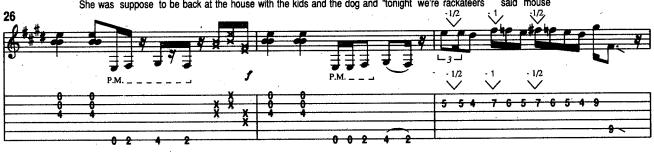
### **BIG TROUBLE**

Words and Music by DAVID LEE ROTH and STEVE VAI

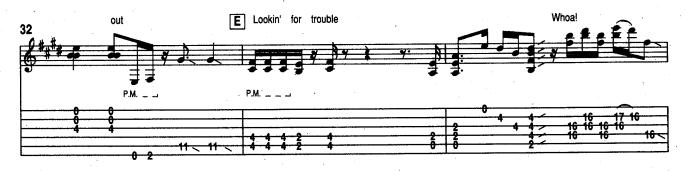


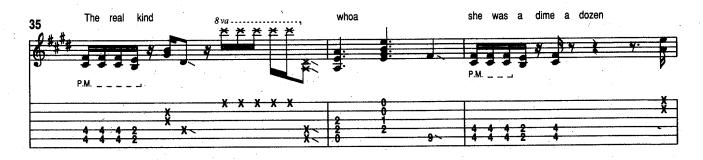




















### **JIMI HENDRIX**

# ROLLING STONE

Hendrix' unique chordal style exposed! Creating new possibilities.

Jimi Hendrix recognized Bob Dylan's lyrical genius and was deeply affected by his use of imagery, especially in the context of a sociopolitical commentary. So it was an apropos move when Jimi covered "Like A Rolling Stone" with the Experience at their first American engagement, the Monterey Pop festival in June of 1967. His complete show is documented on the Alan Douglas produced lp, "Jimi Plays Monterey."

In this song you'll get a chance to examine some of the facets of Hendrix' unique, almost pianistic, chordal style. To free up his other fingers to play melodies within a given chord he often fretted bass notes with his thumb, an approach analogous to the function of a keyboardist's left hand. The first example here of this unorthodox technique is when he plays an F major chord (FAC) in measure 3 and frets the root on the 6th string with his thumb. The G major (GBD) that follows

is played the same way, thus making it possible for it to be sustained as the final E note is hammered on (Fig. 1).

As you learn this piece you'll become aware of numerous melodic and harmonic possibilities within these two chords that would other wise be unavailable to you if they were played with the traditional first finger barre. Besides giving you the option to fret additional notes there is also immediate access to any open strings. For example, Jimi often replaces F major with Fsus2 in this progression. By fretting with the thumb this substitution just requires the removal of the middle finger from the 3rd string. In the first verse he uses the sus2 form again on beat 3 of measure 8, but this time it's a Gsus2 (Fig. 2). It is played by transposing all the notes of the Fsus2 up a major second or two frets, which necessitates playing in the 2nd position. This shift is accomplished by fretting D, the fifth of the chord, on the 3rd fret of the 2nd

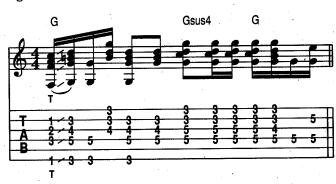
string with the middle finger and the A note, the suspended second, can then be played on the 2nd fret of the 3rd string with the index finger. By fretting B, the third of the chord, on the 4th fret of the 3rd string with the ring finger the suspension is resolved. G, the root, was already fretted by the thumb on the 6th string between beats 2 and 3. In the two measures preceding the first verse and in measures 5-6 of the first chorus he uses an additional form of the sus2 in the upper register (Fig. 3).

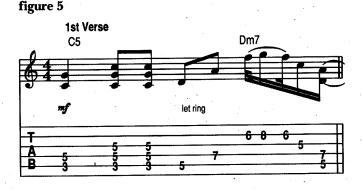
Another common suspension also appears in measure 8 known as a sus4 (Fig. 4). Whereas the sus2 replaces the third of a chord with the note directly below it, that

is the second degree of its related mode or scale, the exact opposite is true with the sus4. In this case, the chord in question is a Gsus4 and the third is temporarily replaced by the note above it, the fourth degree of its related mode. In measure 1 of the first verse you'll note that Jimi commences using the sus4 idea in conjunction with a Dm7 (Fig. 5).

It should be obvious that with some formal training in music theory one can go a step beyond just imitating Jimi and begin to understand his music a little better. If the idea of nonharmonic tones is new to you, then for your first homework assignment look for other examples of sus2 and sus4 chords in your favorite songs.

figure 4





### LIKE A ROLLING STONE

Words and Music by BOB DYLAN



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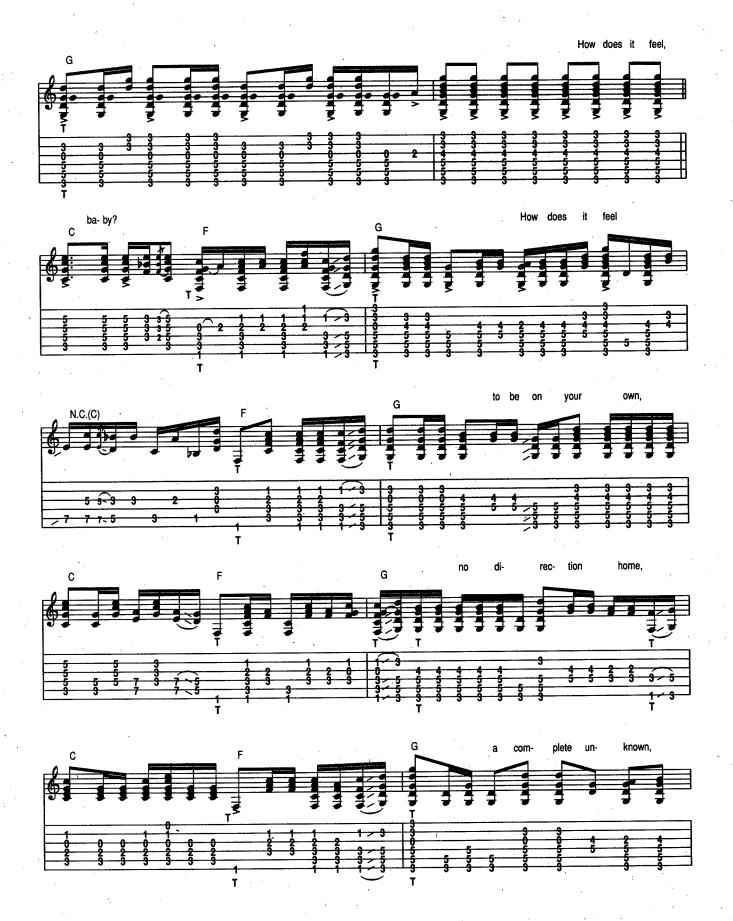








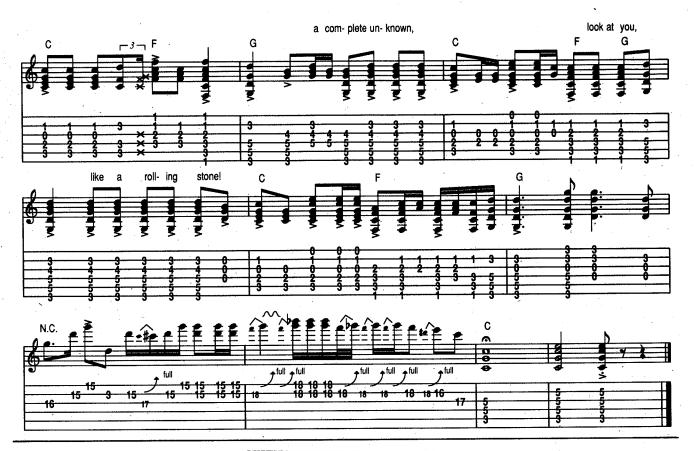














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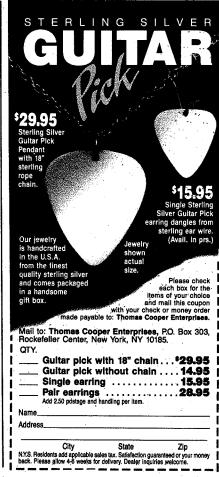
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#### **EDWARD VAN HALEN**

# IM THE ONE

## Van Halen's pattern playing—playing off intervals instead of chords

This pedal-to-the-metal boogie from Van Halen's debut album is practically a textbook from the "Edward Van Halen School of Rock and Roll Guitar". After learning this song you'll be well prepared for the final exam and ready to tackle just about any of his other material.

The novel lick in the first ending of the intro employs a technique known as cross-picking. What this involves, basically, is going beyond the confines of traditional position playing and using open strings when in upper positions. Your first attempts at this technique may be rather awkward as you'll be unaccustomed to going from a relatively high note on a low string to a lower note on a high string. Note that during beat 4 of measure 6 that he plays a C, G and A note with cross-picking occurring between the second and third notes of the

figure 1



figure 2



triplet figure (Fig. 1). Proceeding to the next two measures you'll

that he continues this approach sequentially (Fig. 2). Another example of cross-picking can be found in measures 1-3 of the second solo (Fig. 3). See fig.4 for an illustration of how to use cross-picking when playing a descending G major scale (Fig. 4).

figure 4

0



The second ending is just natural harmonics, but the major difference between Edward and other players is that he goes for unusual angular melodies. In this case he is in reality arpeggiating an A7sus4 chord (A D E G) (Fig. 5).

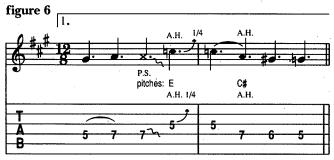
figure 5



Going on to the first ending of the B section we find some more harmonics, this time it's the edge-of-the-pick variety ala Roy Buchanan. Note that the harmonics are a two octaves and a major third above the fretted notes



instead of the usual two octaves. It's important to remember that with these type of artificial harmonics you simultaneously touch the string at the proper node (point in the the strings length where the harmonic exists) with the thumb of the picking hand while attacking the fretted note (Fig. 6).

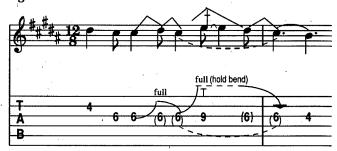


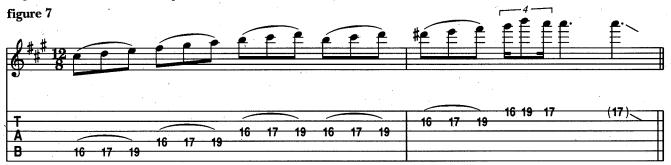
The second ending is a symmetrical pattern Van Halen uses quite frequently that is outside the realm of traditional scales. If we take all the notes of this lick and arrange them in scalar fashion the result is: A B C C# D D# E F# G G#. This is no scale known to scholars of conventional music theory and breaks many of "the rules", but it has its place in this school because it follows Edward's primary tenet: "If it sounds good play it" (Fig. 7). Note that the same pattern also occurs in mea-

His renowned two-hand tapping surfaces in measures 4-5 of the first solo as he plays a familiar chromatic figure based on a blues turnaround. Check out the solo to "You Really Got Me" and the conclusion of "Eruption" for other examples of this same idea (Fig. 9). The tapped-on bend in the next measure is a device usually associated with Billy Gibbons of Z Z Top (listen closely to measure 10 of the first solo to "Beerdrinkers and Hellraisers"). In fact "homeboy" Billy Sheehan evolved his tapping technique after seeing the "Reverend Willie G" do this move in a live show (Fig. 10).

Well, now it's time to, in the words of Willie Brown, "....take the music past where you found it". Class dismissed.

figure 10





sures 3-4 of the first chorus (Fig. 8).

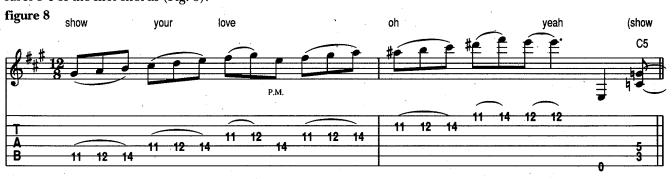


figure 9

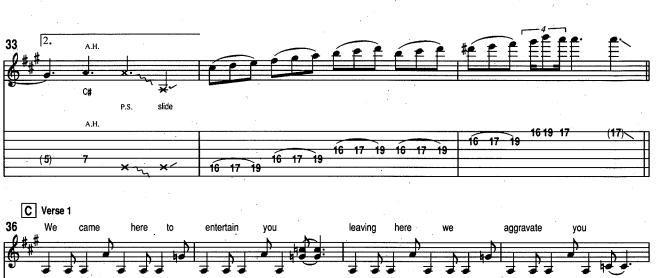


#### I'M THE ONE

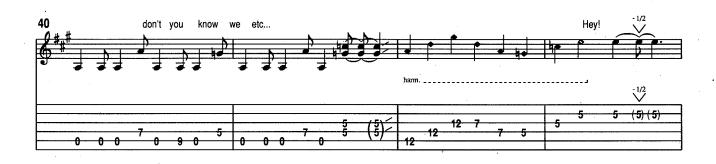
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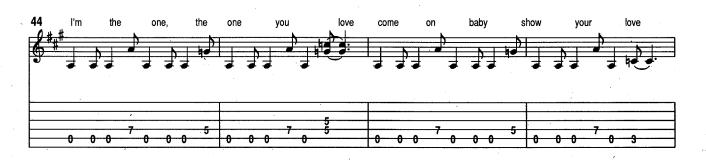


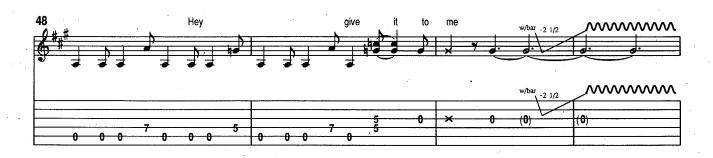
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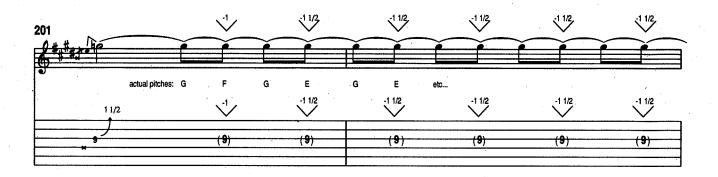


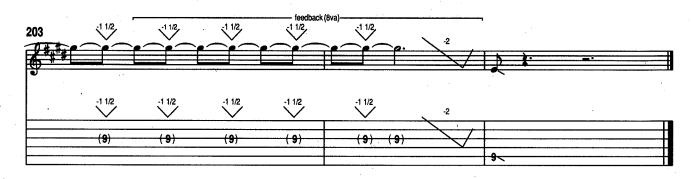


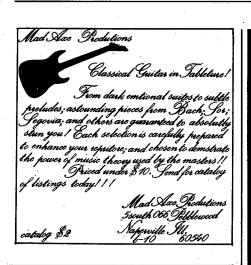














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#### The Ultimate Guitar Soloing Method by Guitar Institute of Technology Graduate - Darin Scott

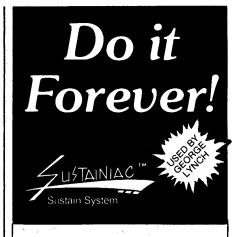
Darin graduated from G.I.T. with a vocational diploma with honors in Rock, Fusion, Jazz, Blues and Country. While at G.I.T. and in Hollywood Darin got to learn from such giants as Steve Val, Paul Gilbert, Tim Pierce, Larry Carlton, Steve Lukather, Paul Hanson, Tommy Tedesco, Keith Wyatt, Les Wise, and many others. Was featured in auditions section of July '87, Downbeat. His teaching methods have worked for hundreds of others, let them work for youl

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#### JIMMY PAGE

# HEARTBREAKER

In the solo, Jimmy goes for broke... The ultimate lesson in bending techniques!

When a young Long Island teen named Steve Vai heard Jimmy Page's guitar solo on this cut from "Led Zeppelin II" he was amazed that anybody could play that fast. In an interview with Bill Milkowski (see the March 1987 issue of Guitar World) Steve recalled, "Both the technique and emotion involved in that particular solo really grabbed me. And even today I still love it."

Before rushing into the lead break warm up with the main riff, based on the A "blues scale" (A C D D# E G), and see how it is used again in the bridge (Fig. 1). The

lick consisting of bending D, the fourth degree, up a whole tone to

E, the fifth. The last segment is based primarily on an extended version of the A "blues scale" that includes the second, third and sixth degrees of the major scale: A B C C# D D# E F# G. Jimmy leaves us in suspense at the very conclusion as a result of the gradual ritard (deliberate slowing of tempo) during the A7 arpeggio (A C# E G) and the delayed resolution of the final descending sixths figure related to the dominant ninth chord. (Fig. 2).

The tonic is returned to by the rhythm guitar in the

figure 1



verse really only consists of brief accented chords (A and D) while John Paul Jones plays a series of distorted fifths in the upper register of the bass.

As the unaccompanied segment of the lead break is played freely we've written it out sans barlines. In this format an accidental only affects the note it immediately precedes.

The solo starts at letter F. The most notable feature of this solo, as far as technique goes, is the behind-the-nut bends Page does with his right hand as he plays a repeated slur with the index and ring fingers of the left hand. It is imperative that you push up the third string with the fretting hand while pulling down on it behind the nut. Otherwise, you'll experience some difficulty in achieving the required wide interval bends.

The first part of the next phrase is an oft heard blues



double-time section of the lead break. In both chord sequences the third string is muted by the middle finger of the fretting hand as it frets the fourth string (Fig. 3).

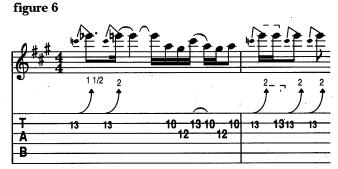


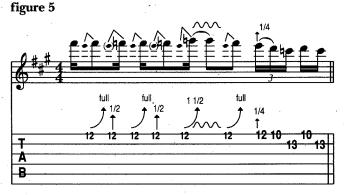
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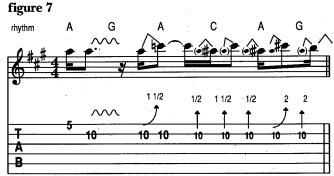
figure 4 1 1/2 hold bend\_ \_\_ \_ \_ <del>10 10 10</del>

The next solo has almost every conceivable bend found in rock and blues. The less common ones include bending the tonic up to the minor third in measure 3 (Fig. 4), the fifth up to the flatted seventh in measure 4 (Fig. 5) and the minor third up to the augmented fourth and then to the fifth in measures 7-8 (Fig. 6) and the tonic up to the major third in measures 10-11 (Fig. 7).

We can't think of a better solo to learn for improving your bending technique and increasing your awareness. of the possibilities available to you in the area of single string bends.

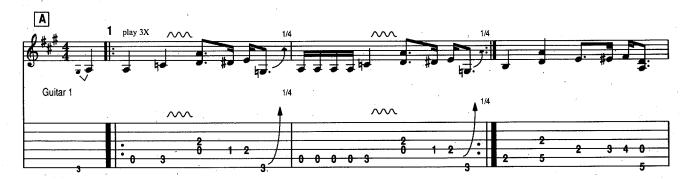




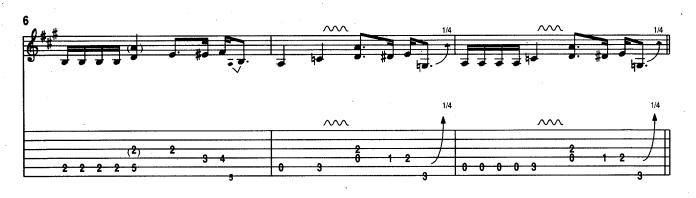


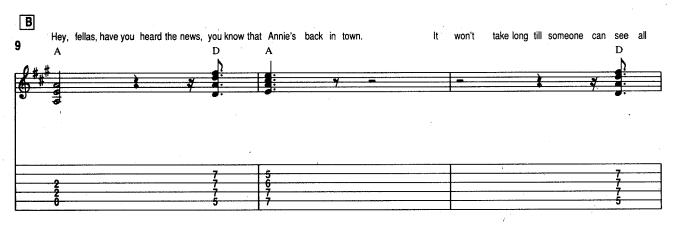
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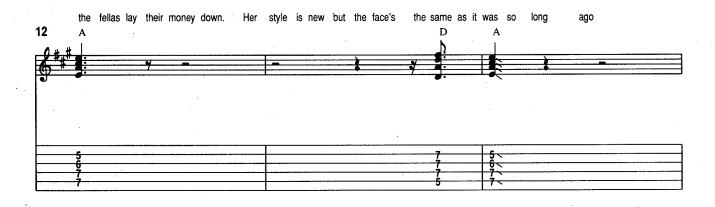
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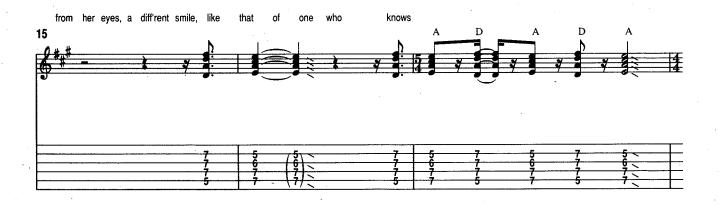


#### JIMMY PAGE • Heartbreaker



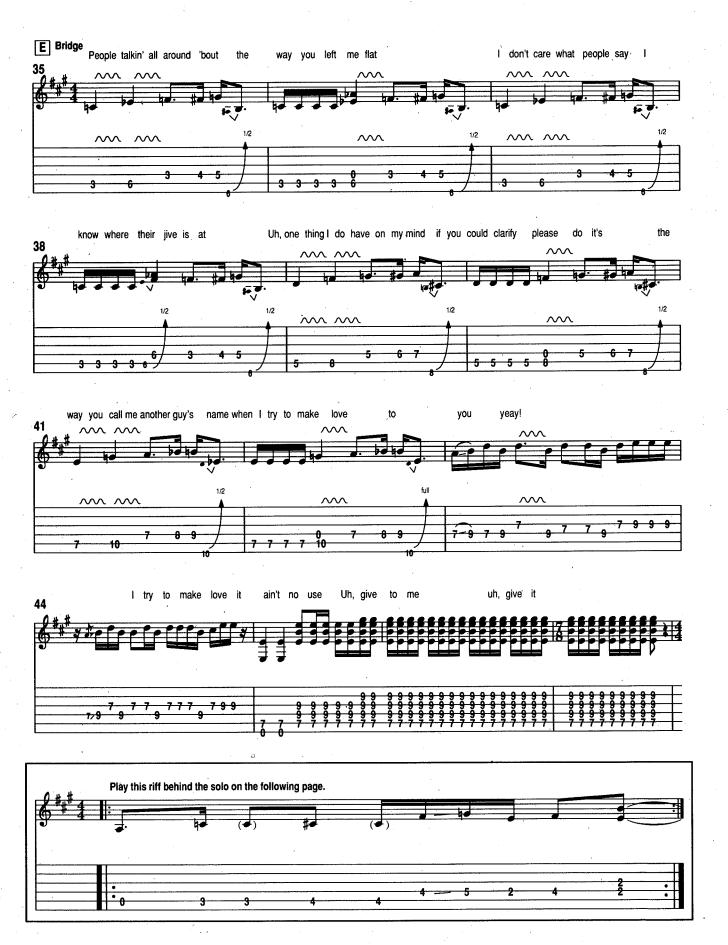


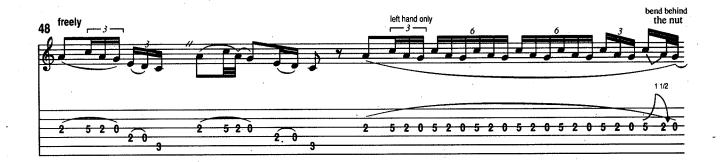


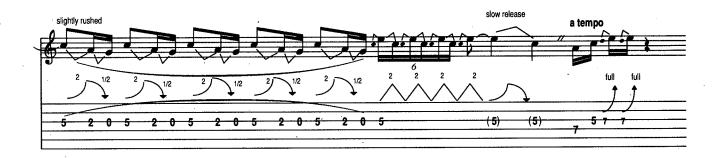


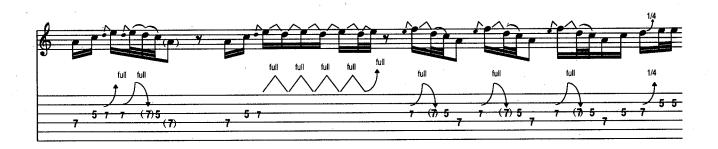


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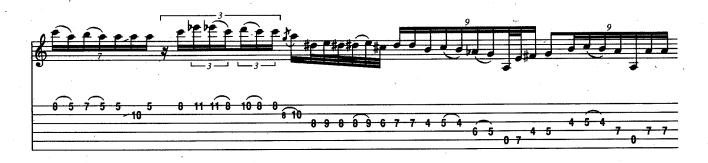


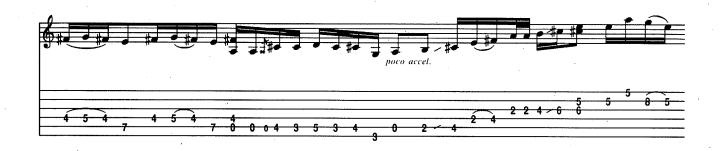


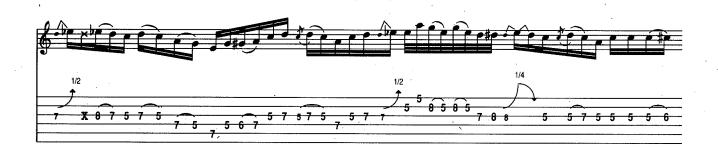




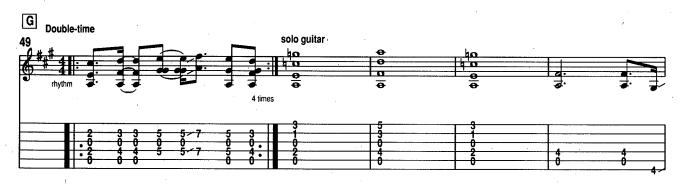


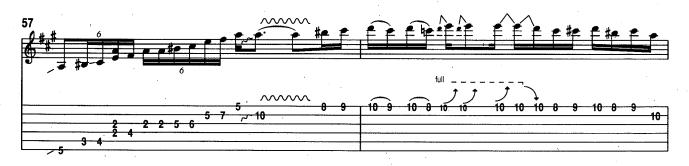






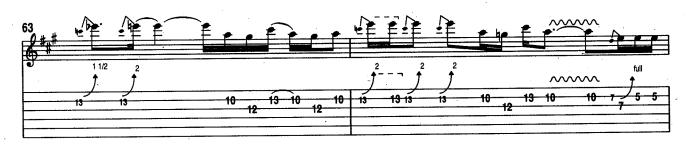


















#### JIMMY PAGE

# BRON-YR-AUR

## Page's unusual tuning— A purposeful utility to facilitate ease in playing

This beautiful unaccompanied acoustic guitar solo of Jimmy Page's from "Physical Graffiti" is played in a unique alternate tuning: C A C G C E (from low to high). The easiest method of retuning your guitar from standard tuning, besides with a chromatic electronic tuner, is to tune your B or second string up a semitone to C, using the fifth fret of the third string if need be. Then lower the fourth string to C while sounding the open second string, which is now C an octave above the fourth string, for reference. The same procedure is repeated when you lower the sixth string except now you'll use the fourth string for reference.

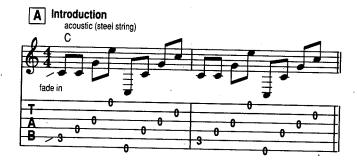
From the standpoint of technique, Page uses hybrid picking (the pick in conjunction with the fingers), but if you're already into classical or any other kind of fingerstyle guitar then by all means use a format already familiar to you. If you opt for the hybrid picking approach then look through the entire piece for any points where there are two notes played on strings not directly adjacent to each other. For example, the G/B following the introduction has the fifth and second strings played on beat 1. It will necessary to play the lower note with the pick and the upper one with the middle finger of the picking hand (Fig. 1).

#### figure 1



For some of the ascending arpeggios, especially the opening figure, it's best to play the first three notes with one continuous downstroke and play the final higher note with the middle finger (Fig. 2).

#### figure 2



This approach was used by Jimmy Page on "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You" from "Led Zeppelin 1". After learning this piece you may feel inclined to pursue alternate tunings even further. We recommend picking up recordings by some other artists heavily into this area such as Michael Hedges, Bert Jansch, Joni Mitchell and Pierre Bensusan. You may even want to try doing some of your own composing in alternate tunings, so here's a little secret for overcoming writer's block and the inherent complexities of any new tuning. Just be adventurous and try some conventional chord shapes or even go as far as play portions of songs already in your repertoire. Examine the final measures of "Bron-yr-aur" and it will become evident that Page does some experimenting with this approach (Fig. 3).

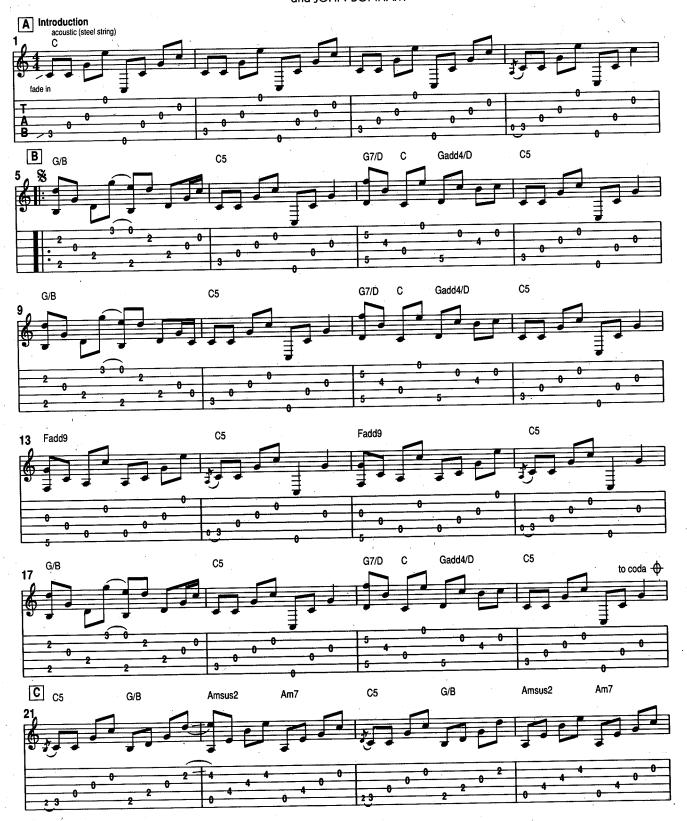




Note: Doubled by second acoustic recorded "backwards"

#### **BRON-YR-AUR**

Words and Music by JIMMY PAGE, ROBERT PLANT and JOHN BONHAM









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# GOING TO WORK OUT FINE

Cooder's slide master tricks...
A guitar trio!

SO

This beautiful instrumental from Ry Cooder's critically acclaimed 1979 release "Bop Till You Drop" was a difficult piece to transcribe. As its themes are developed the total number of overdubbed guitars increases to 8. Instead of approaching this song as an academic exercise and isolate each part we decided to arrange it for a trio of guitars or even a duo.

Before proceeding any further it will be necessary to tune your guitars to "open E" (E B E G# B E). Since it is the equivalent of the standard first position E chord in normal tuning, you could play this form to give the other guitarists reference notes. The only strings requiring retuning are the 5th, 4th and 3rd. From there decide among yourselves which part you each will take. Guitar I is played fingerstyle and the other two are played with a slide. Ry prefers to use a bottleneck for slide guitar.

The A section is to be played solo, but if none of you are yet adept at fingerstyle one of you could take the melody, written out with upstems, while someone else plays the bass line. This solo part remains faithful to the record, but there are two other guitars playing chords

and some minor counterpoint (Fig. 1).

When you get up to the B section you'll switch to accompaniment and the melody is played by a slide guitar. We've rearranged the accompaniment parts in this section to make them playable on one guitar. As a result they are some places where you will have to simulate two guitars playing contrapuntal lines. For example, in measure 52 there is a descending bass line in conjunction with a repeated figure consisting of the notes B and G# (Fig. 2). Note the fingerings below for the fretting hand, that's the easy part, it's the picking that is a bit tricky. First learn each part separately then try the alternating upstemmed figure with the 1st and 2nd fingers and attempt to play the bass line with your thumb. Take it slowly and after you get it down see if you can vary the dynamics of each line. In other words, play one line louder than the other. This will further the illusion of two guitars being played simultaneously.

At measure 53 a second slide guitar enters playing harmony (Fig. 3). Most of this part can be omitted if you opt for playing this composition in a duo format, but see if you can even include some of the notes played by the



Fingerings: 2-2 4 2

T 1/3 3 3 3 3 3 A 1 A 1/3 2 0 2 0 2 4

additional guitar. By "slant barring," holding the slide at an angle instead of parallel to the frets, it's possible to attain the odd interval not found within the confines of the open E tuning. For example, the grace notes at the start of measure 55 are on the 10th and 11th frets (Fig. 4). Hold the bar at an angle so that goes directly over the corresponding frets and then return the slide to the normal parallel position as you play the slurred slide since both guitars go to the 12th fret.

This composition has not been transcribed in its entirety, but once you hear the complete song you'll discover that the remainder consists of just two variation of the B section followed by the A section. Examine the arrangement of these parts and see how the composition develops in relation to the parts you've learned.

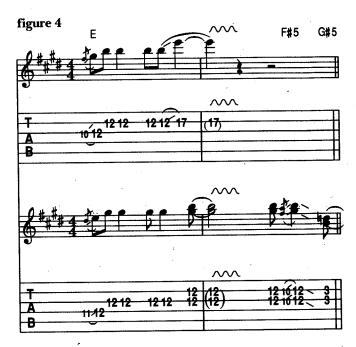


figure 3



#### I THINK IT'S GOING TO WORK OUT FINE

Music by RY COODER













#### RY COODER

continued from page 25

3358), another milestone for the eclectic plectrist. Besides being the first digitally recorded album, the songs, no matter their origin, all have the Cooder rhythmic stamp, a combination of Caribbean, r&b and country/folk grooves. Most im-portantly though, he steps forward as a soloist on this guitar-driven disc. "The Very Thing That Makes You Rich," a pop minor-key blues, has funky rhythm guitar and a short, sustained chorused slide solo that slithers like a kingsnake. This month's transcription, "I Think It's Going To Work Out Fine," an instrumental c&w number with south of the border flavorings, is a beautiful blending of lead and rhythm voices. (See Music Dept. for full lesson and complete transcription.) Crisp doublestops give way to arpeggiated chords as Cooder's "talking" slide glides over, around and through the chordal blanket, only to be joined by a second, harmony slide in the bridge for a stunning sonic effect. If it was a dessert, it would be an ice cream sundae.

"Look At Granny Run Run" has Cooder getting closer to his tone, which he calls the "big note." Although it's not yet what it will be, the slide is heavier, with more bite and bark. "Don't Mess Up A Good Thing" has a creamier slide tone and body bending funk chording.

Bop Till You Drop brought the guitar up as the prime rhythm and lead instrument. Along with Cooder's by now established practice of using open tunings almost exclusively, the promise of the early 70's guitar excursions reached a peak which he maintained through Showtime (BSK 3059), Borderline (BSK 3489), and The Slide Area (BSK 3651). This last is particularly noteworthy as it was five years before he would record the epochal Get Rhythm and it foreshadowed that album's muscular guitar playing and celestial tone. "Blue Suede Shoes," the Carl Perkins rockabilly classic, darts, digs and dives with its slashing, twisting slide break. This and "Mama Don't Treat Your Daughter Mean," a heavy, pulsating blues/funk rocker full of stabbing, grinding slide are must listening for anyone planing to put glass or metal on steel strings.

In what has to be supremely satisfy-

ing to a veteran musician, even one as self-critical as Ry Cooder, his latest solo release, 1987's Get Rhythm, is his best. The title tune succinctly describes his attitude as a player and contains all that he's about, from it's cracking double-stop intro to Flaco Jiminez's accordion, Jim Keltner's propulsive percussion, and that siren slide. The instrumental "Low-Commotion" continues the funky Cooder groove with acoustic and electric slide flip-flopping back and forth from rhythm to lead. "Going Back To Okinawa" is in that island's reggae-like style, with accordion, saxophone (rock great Steve Douglas), and slippery slide all blending into a heavenly chorus of instrumental voices. In a move reminiscent of his work, Cooder does an obscure Chuck Berry tune, "13 Question Method" as a Delta blues, accompanying his sly vocal on acoustic slide guitar. "Women Will Rule The World" brings him back to the Tex-Mex side, with Jiminez and Douglas blowing in unison as is the lead characteristic of that music. Cooder adds spicy acoustic fills and a warm, sympathetic solo.

Side two literally kicks off with what might be the greatest slide

#### RY COODER • I Think It's Going To Work Out Fine

