



# "HELTER SKELTER" The Beatles

As heard on the Beatles' *White Album* (CAPITOL)

Words and Music by **John Lennon and Paul McCartney** • Transcribed by **Jeff Perrin**

When I get to the bottom I go back to the top of the slide  
Where I stop and I turn and I go for a ride  
Til I get to the bottom and I see you again, yeah, yeah, yeah

Well do you, don't you want me to love you  
I'm coming down fast but I'm miles above you  
Tell me, tell me, tell me, come on, tell me the answer  
Well, you may be a lover but you ain't no dancer

*Helter skelter, helter skelter, helter skelter, yeah*

Will you, won't you want me to make you  
I'm coming down fast but don't let me break you  
Tell me, tell me, tell me the answer  
You may be a lover but you ain't no dancer, look out

*Helter skelter, helter skelter, helter skelter, ooh*  
*Look out 'cause here she comes*

When I get to the bottom I go back to the top of the slide  
And I stop and I turn and I go for a ride  
And I get to the bottom and I see you again, yeah, yeah, yeah

Well do you, don't you want me to make you  
I'm coming down fast but don't let me break you  
Tell me, tell me, tell me your answer  
You may be a lover but you ain't no dancer, look out

*Helter skelter, helter skelter, helter skelter*

Well look out, helter skelter  
She's coming down fast  
Yes she is, yes she is (w/ad lib vocal until end)



**A** (0:00)

**B** Intro (0:03, 1:47)

Moderately ♩ = 84

When I get to the bottom...

Chords: (E7) (E7) (E6no3) (C)

Tracked guitar notation for Gtr. 1 (elec. w/dist.) showing fret numbers and rhythmic patterns. Includes annotations: \* repeat previous chord, \*\* repeat previous beat. Bass line: Bass plays Bass Fill 2 second time (see below).

**C** Verse (0:18, 0:58, 2:01)

1. Well do you don't you...
- (2.) Will you won't you...
3. Well do you don't you...

Chords: G5 E E

Tracked guitar notation for Gtr. 1 and Bass w/pick. Includes annotation: play simile on repeats.

8 Gtr. 2 plays Fill 1 third time.

Tracked guitar notation for Gtr. 2 showing rhythmic patterns.

**Bass Fill 2 (1:47)**

Chords: (E7) (E6no3) (C)

Tracked bass line notation with fret numbers and rhythmic patterns.

# "HELTER SKELTER"

11 skip this measure 2nd and 3rd times

skip this measure 2nd and 3rd times

Gtr. 1

Gtr. 2 (elec. w/dist.)

**D Chorus** (0:41, 1:18, 2:21) (3rd time) skip ahead to outro **F**

Helter skelter...

A E A

Gtr. 2 (doubled)  
light P.M.  $\gamma$  light P.M.  $\gamma$  light P.M.  $\gamma$

Gtr. 1  
Rhy. Fig. 1

Bass

18 E grad. bend (full)  $1\frac{1}{2}$

end Rhy. Fig. 1

\* Note is played first time only.

\*\* Notes are played second time only.

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 1 second time (see below)

**Bass Fill 1** (1:29)  
(E)

**Fill 1** (2:04)  
Gtr. 2 (E) full

TAB 4/4

# "HELTER SKELTER"

## E Guitar Solo (1:35)

A  
Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (see meas. 15)

Gtr. 2

Bass  $\frac{1}{4}$

go back to intro **B** **F** Outro (2:30)

When I We'll look out Helter Skelter...

A  
Gtr. 2

Gtr. 1

Bass

27 (w/clean tone)

Rhy. Fig. 2a

Rhy. Fig. 2 (repeat previous measure)

Bass Fig. 2

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 twice simile (see meas. 28)

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 2a twice (see meas. 28)

Gtr. 3 (elec. w/light dist.)

w/slide

Bass plays Bass Fig. 2 four times simile (see meas. 29)

34 Gtr.

**Bass**

- In-dep and pr top ba pop an
- Exclus and co the ba in bas
- Note-song t from cutting
- Hard- and to amps effect

STEVE HARRIS

SHINY SHARON

REVIEWED!

Free Time (2:56)

34 Gtr. 2

Gtr. 3

Gtr. 1

Bass

pitch: E

w/liner effect

Resume Tempo (♩ = 84)

Gtr. 1

Bass

pitch: E

(vol. swell)

pitch: E

N.H.

pitch: D

pitch: A

(3:12)

E7

Gtr. 1

38 Rhy. Fig. 3

Gtr. 1

Bass

Gtr. 1 repeats Rhy. Fig. 3 (see meas. 38)

40 Bass

Bass



# "HELTER SKELTER"

Gtr. 1 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 seven times (see meas. 38)

42 Bass

Bass substitutes Bass Fill 3 fifth, sixth and seventh times (see below)

\* Entire mix is gradually faded to silence by fourth time, then faded back in on fifth time.

(4:03)

44 Gtr. 1

Bass

46

Free Time (4:18)

I got blisters on my fingers

49

Bass Fill 3 (3:46)

Bass (E7)

hand palm mute to help keep the notes from ringing and insure against inadvertent string noise or errant notes. Practice these sweep arpeggios slowly at first so you can hear for certain whether you are performing them cleanly. —Jeff Perrin

### No Doubt "It's My Life"

Recalling the band's early ska upbringing, No Doubt guitarist Tom Dumont performs chords for this song's verse and pre-chorus sections solely on the top strings of the guitar. While ska-style chord voicings usually consist of a simple triad on the top three strings, Dumont doubles the top note of each chord an octave lower on the D string, producing a fuller sound. These types of chord voicings sound thinner and tighter than full barre chords and are also easier to fret, as you needn't employ a full index-finger barre. Use only the fingers necessary, as illustrated by the chord frames at the beginning of the transcription.

The song's chorus (section E) is full of legato chord slides involving a strum on one two-note power chord followed by a quick slide up or down to the next. To best perform these slides, use a lighter fretboard grip than you might ordinarily use in order to allow your fingers to slide freely up and down the strings with as little resistance or friction as possible. Too tight a grip will make for tougher chord slides and undoubtedly lead to choppy-sounding rhythms. As you practice bringing the chord progression up to speed, focus your attention toward the note on the bottom string of each power chord, letting your ring finger "go along for the ride." When sliding a chord over longer distances (such as from Eb5 to Ab5 at the end of measure 27), you can cut down your chances of over- or undershooting the slide by looking for your "target chord" or fret position ahead of time. (This is comparable to the way accomplished sightreaders learn to "read ahead" a beat or two in order to prepare for what's coming up.) Ultimately, mastering such a fast moving chord riff comes down to memorizing and repeatedly practicing the riff until it becomes second nature. —Jeff Perrin

### Ten Years After "I'd Love to Change the World"

When playing this song's classic four-bar acoustic intro (labeled *Rhy. Fig. 1*), be sure to let the notes of each arpeggiated chord ring together. The smoothest way to pick the part is to use downstrokes for everything except

the highest note of each chord, which is best played with an upstroke. You'll find that using an upstroke every time you descend like this will make the part easier to pick.

Alvin Lee's electric lead guitar (Gtr. 4) enters during the song's first chorus (section C) and is heard through the rest of the song. Lee utilizes a heavily overdriven, echo-drenched, neck-pickup tone, creating a psychedelic vibe. Initially, Lee plays melodically around his vocals, using the E minor pentatonic scale (E G A B D) in the seventh, 10th and 12th positions. Note the guitarist's extensive use of soulful *pre-bends*, also known as "ghost bends"—bending a string up to a desired pitch before picking it—and finger vibrato throughout the song.

During the subsequent verses and chorus (sections D, E and F), Lee's lead lines build in intensity until the solo (section G), when the guitarist cuts loose with some long, fluid lines. Check out bars 60–67 for some of the lightning-fast runs he was known for. Lee bases most of his licks on the E minor blues scale (E G A Bb B D) and relies on finger slides and rapid-fire pull-offs to navigate shifts between the 12th and 15th positions. Notice how, during the song's final verse (section H), he punctuates his vocal lines with stinging, sustained unison bends on the top two strings. —Vincent DeMasi

### The Beatles "Helter Skelter"

To help create the buildup of "tension" heard in the first four bars of "Helter Skelter," be sure to use downstrokes exclusively. As the mounting storm of energy dissipates in measure 5 with the move to open chords, employ alternate (down-up) strumming for all 16th-note rhythms. When strumming through the song's chords in general, be sure to hit all quarter notes and eighth notes with downstrokes and any 16th-note upbeats (the first or third 16th note of a beat) with upstrokes while maintaining a steady strumming motion throughout. This strumming approach is sometimes referred to as *16th-note pendulum strumming*.

When playing through the song's guitar solo (section E), keep your fret hand in the 12th position. What this means is your index finger plays any notes at the 12th fret, while the middle finger covers the 13th fret, and so on. Position playing can help eliminate unnecessary hand movement, often resulting in licks with cleaner, more natural-sounding rhythms. Note, however, that when playing this solo this way, you will come across a couple of string bends that

will need to be performed with the middle or index finger (see the last note of measure 22 and beat three of bar 23). Bending strings with these fingers—as opposed to the more common technique of bending with the ring finger, supported by the middle finger—may seem a bit awkward or "weak" at first, but give it a try. The convenience and fluidity of playing the solo in a single position should outweigh the short-lived struggles of these unsupported bends. —Jeff Perrin

### Pink Floyd "Money"

This classic rock opus showcases guitarist David Gilmour's impeccable string bending technique, not only in his guitar solo but also in his rhythm parts.

Gilmour employs subtle quarter-step bends in the song's main riff (see bar 4, labeled *Riff A*). As the bends in this single-note line are performed on the low E and A strings, they're pull bends as opposed to the more typical push bends. Each is performed by fretting the string with the pinkie and pulling it slightly inward, toward the palm.

In bar 11 (Gtr. 3 part), the guitarist effects a quarter-step bend within a two-note chord. This bend is best performed by barring the G and B strings with the index finger and pulling the G string downward while allowing the B string to slip under the finger and remain unbent. The key to doing this is to try to apply more pressure against the G string than the B.

Most of the bends Gilmour plays in his extended guitar solo (sections D–F) are standard whole-step ("full") push bends, performed with the index finger and reinforced with the middle finger, with the thumb hooked over the top side of the fretboard for leverage as the fingers push the string away from the palm. For dramatic effect, the guitarist occasionally plays a two-step "overbend" on the B string, as in bars 84, 90 and 116. (The B string is the easiest to bend.)

Gilmour's soulful finger vibrato is the icing on the musical cake. In bar 33, the guitarist masterfully shakes a whole-step bend by partially releasing and rebending it. This technique takes some practice to perfect. You'll need to listen carefully to the speed and width of the vibrato and try to make it sound as smooth and even as possible. Let your ears and brain train the muscles in your hands to consistently perform the delicate and highly coordinated movements required of this technique. —Jimmy Brown