

# "The Sky Is Crying" Stevie Ray Vaughan



By Dave Rubin

It would be even more heartbreaking to comprehend the title of the posthumously released "The Sky Is Crying" if not for the explosive abandon of Stevie Ray Vaughan's playing on the track. Recorded

during 1981's *Soul to Soul* sessions but not released until 1991 (the same year former Texas governor Ann Richards declared his birthday, October 3, "Stevie Ray Vaughan Day"), the tune was yet another tribute to Albert King, SRV's main slow-blues mentor. Elmore James wrote the original, and in 1959 he played bottleneck on song with his Broom-dusters. King, however, served up a bent and heavily vibratoed version in 1968 that Vaughan emulated with uncanny accuracy.

## THE "ALBERT KING BOX"

Like most blues guitar cats, Albert King made merry in the root position of the minor pentatonic scale. Yet, by the time he moved to Memphis and Stax Records in the mid-'60s, he had also found a new home in the extended position of the scale. Now known affectionately as the "Albert King box" [Fig. 1], the extension's compact arrangement contains (low to high) the 5th, b7th, root, b3rd and 4th notes from the scale (in the key of C: G, Bb, C, Eb and F). Vaughan traverses the box in both the verses and solo, torturing his strings with wide bends and continuous fret-grinding vibrato.

ute to A.K. Use your middle finger on string 3 and your index and ring fingers, respectively, on strings 2 and 1. Back up the bends on the 1st string with the middle and index fingers; this way, you'll have maximum leverage for the multi-step bends that Vaughan plays in measure 7 of verses 1 and 2. A quick hand-position shift allows you to nail the root note on either string 2 (ring finger) or string 1 (index finger).

Though he only recorded slide on "Boot Hill," Vaughan idolized Elmore James. Measures 1 and 2 of the first verse feature his take [Fig. 3] on the licks at the beginning of Elmo's "The Sky Is Crying."

## THE SOLO

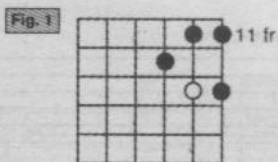
Vaughan squeezes every ounce of emotion out of his Strat over two choruses. Note that he begins each one by digging into the "box" for several measures before arcing down to the root position. Measure 9 (G) of the first chorus is particularly packed; this is the perfect spot to build tension in a 12-bar blues, as it usually marks the first appearance of the V chord and heralds the descent down to the IV chord and the turnaround.

## ON THE CD-ROM

This issue's disc contains the key licks of "The Sky Is Crying"—delineated in the transcription as Figs. 1–5—at both full and half speeds. Fig. 1 (track 83), an Albert King staple and the tune's signature lick, is restated varying throughout. Fig. 2 features a nifty turnaround. Figs. 3 and 4 represent the solo's most noteworthy moments, and Fig. 5 is the ending phrase.

## TONE ZONE

GUITAR 1: Solidbody  
PICKUP/POSITION:  
Single-coil/Neck  
GAIN: B  
EQ: Bass/Mid/Treble: 5/5/7



# THE SKY IS CRYING

As Recorded by Stevie Ray Vaughan  
(From the Epic Recording THE SKY IS CRYING)

Words and Music by Elmore James



FIGS. 1-5 » TRACKS 83-87\*  
ON THE CD

## Lyrics

### Verse 1

The sky is cryin',  
Can't you see the tears roll down the street?  
The sky is cryin',  
Can't you see the tears roll down the street?  
I've been looking for my baby, yeah!  
And I wonder where can she be? \*

### Verse 2

I saw my baby early one mornin',  
She was walkin' on down the street.  
I saw my baby early this mornin',  
She was walkin' on down the street.  
You know it hurt me, hurt me so bad,  
Made my poor heart skip a beat.

### Verse 3

I've got a real, real, real, real bad feelin'  
That my baby, she don't love me no more.  
I've got a real, real bad feelin'  
That my baby don't love me no more.  
You know the sky, the sky's been cryin', yeah!  
Can you see the tears rollin' down my nose?

Tune down 1/2 step:  
(low to high) E $\flat$ -A $\flat$ -D $\flat$ -G $\flat$ -B $\flat$ -E $\flat$

### Verse 1

Slow Blues  $\text{♩} = 55$



C7

Gtr. 1 (slight dist.)

8va

loco

F9

f

1

13

13-11

13

11-8

10

8

T

A

B

C7

8va

F9

loco

1

13

11

13

11

13

12

11

11

1

13

13

11

13

11-8

10

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The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon and Garfunkel. It includes two staves: a guitar staff (top) and a bass staff (bottom). The guitar staff begins with a "loco" instruction and a wavy line indicating a tremolo effect. The bass staff features a complex sequence of notes and rests, with a "loco" instruction and a wavy line. Chord symbols are placed above the staves: F9, C7, F9, F#7, C7, Ab9, and G9. The score is written in standard musical notation, including treble and bass clefs, notes, rests, and various musical symbols like accidentals and dynamics.

**FIG.3 ▶ TRACK 85**

### Guitar Solo

C7 Gb9

8va

1 13 (13) 11 11 13 1 1/2

13 13 11-13 11 13 13 13-13 11

F9  
8va

2:3

1 (13) 13 11

13 13 11 13 13 11 13 13 13 13

# The Sky Is Crying

**C7** **Ab9**

*8va* *loco*

*grad. release*

**FIG. 4 » TRACK 86**

**G9**

**F9** **C7** **F9**

*8va*

**C7** **G7#9** **C7**

*8va*

**F9** **C7**

*8va*

[illegible]

**C7** **Ab9**

8va - - - - -

12 10 8 8 10 8 10 1 8 8 11 13 13 11 13 11 12 13 13 11 12

1 1 1/2 1/2

[illegible]

Musical score for "The Last Days of Pompeii" by Giuseppe Verdi. The score is in 2/4 time and features a melody in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef. The melody is marked with various ornaments and dynamics, including *loco* and *let ring*. The bass line includes fingerings and a "let ring" instruction. The score is divided into measures by bar lines.



### Verse 3

C7

The second system of the musical score for 'The Sound of Silence' by Simon & Garfunkel. It features a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written on a single staff, with a C7 chord indicated above the first measure and an F9 chord above the second measure. The melody consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, with a final measure marked '8va' indicating an octave shift. Below the staff, there are two lines of guitar tablature. The first line shows a sequence of notes: 10, 8, 11, 8, 11, 8, 11, 13, 13, 11, 13. The second line shows a sequence of notes: 11, 8, 11, 8, 11, 13, 13, 11, 13. The tablature is written in a style that suggests a specific fingering or technique, with some notes marked with a '1' and a '3'.

The second system of the musical score for 'The Sound of Silence' continues the melody in the treble clef. It begins with a half note G4 (labeled '8va' with a dashed line), followed by a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. This is followed by a quarter rest, a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, and a quarter note F5. A wavy line indicates a tremolo on the F5 note. The system concludes with a whole note F5 chord, labeled 'F9'. The bass line consists of a whole note F2, a whole note C3, and a whole note F2. The final measure of the system contains a whole note F2 chord, labeled 'F9'.

C7

A69

**FIG.5 >> TRACK 87**[illegible]

The musical score for guitar consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. Above the treble staff, the chords C7, D9, and C9 are indicated. The bottom staff contains fret numbers (8, 10, 4, 3, 2, 3, 3, 3) and a section labeled 'w/ bar' with a wavy line above it. The score ends with a double bar line.