

38 C F5 G5 C (0:56) G/B C

43 G7/C C G/B C G7/C

48 C Fadd9 C Fadd9 C

53 G/B C G7/C C (1:18) C G/B

58 Asus2 C G/B Asus2 C G/B

62 Asus2 Asus2b6 Asus2 Asus2b6 Asus2 F5 G5

66 C F5 G5 C F5 G5 C

71 F5 G5 Asus2 Asus2b6 Asus2

76 Cadd4 C/F Cadd2 Cadd4 G6 Cadd2 G6 C

mf *poco rit.*

How to Play this Month's Songs

The Mars Volta "The Widow"

As indicated at the beginning of the transcription, the acoustic guitar part (Gtr. 1) in this song's verse sections is performed fingerstyle. While the chords used are fairly simple and the tempo rather laid back, there are two approaches to fingerpicking the strings throughout the chord progression that work well. One approach is to sound the first pair of notes in bar 1, the A (open fifth string) and C (second string, first fret), with your thumb and ring finger, and then assign your ring, middle and index fingers to the second, third and fourth strings and your thumb to the fifth string. In measure 2, you can similarly assign these four digits to the bottom four strings to pick the notes that comprise the E chord shape. If you don't feel comfortable using your ring finger, another option is to begin bar 1 with your thumb and middle finger. The index finger could then pick the notes on both the third and fourth strings. Experiment with both approaches and decide which works best for you. Developing a specific picking plan will help you play through the entire progression comfortably and with clean, natural-sounding rhythms.

When playing the slide guitar melodies heard throughout each of the song's verse sections, position the slide directly over the fret indicated in the tab, not behind it, as you would when fretting a note without a slide. It's also very important that you try to mute all the strings except the one(s) you're playing at any given moment, as this will help eliminate or at least minimize unwanted noise and overtones caused by sympathetic string vibrations. I suggest wearing the slide on your ring finger and lightly laying your fretting hand's index and middle fingers across the strings behind the slide. Some pick-hand muting will also help to quell any unwanted notes. Finally, be aware that slide guitar is best performed on guitars with higher action (string height) at the bridge and nut. With low action, it's all too easy for the slide to "clack" against the

fretboard, resulting in excessive string buzz. While raising the height of your strings at both ends of the neck will provide more string pressure "headroom" for the slide, guitarists who play slide often prefer to have a separate ax specifically set up for slide playing, as a good slide setup is not ideal for conventional playing. —Jeff Perrin

Led Zeppelin "Bron-Yr-Aur"

Jimmy Page performs this solo-acoustic gem fingerstyle, using a "forward roll" pattern—thumb-index-middle-ring—for most of the tune and briefly interrupting and reversing the pattern during every other bar of the main theme (beginning with bars 9 and 41). The trickiest parts to play are the "broken" (arpeggiated) G/B, G7/C and Fadd9 chords, which first appear in bars 9, 11 and 17, respectively. When fingerpicking these chords, assign a different pick-hand finger to each of the top four strings, with the pinkie picking the notes on the high E string and the thumb sounding any bass notes on the bottom two strings. If you have difficulty controlling your pinkie, an alternative way to fingerpick these chords is to momentarily reassign the index, middle and ring fingers to the top three strings and the thumb to strings five and four for the first four notes, reverting back to the thumb-index-middle-ring roll pattern for the next four notes in each of these measures.

As you learn and practice fingerpicking "Bron-Yr-Aur," experiment with different pick-hand "postures" to find the one that feels the most comfortable and best enables you to control your fingerpicking technique. You may find that lightly resting your palm on the guitar's bridge helps stabilize your picking hand and give your fingers a close tactile reference point. "Anchoring" the picking hand like this also allows you to lightly palm mute the bass strings, which can help give the bass notes more clarity and definition. Another approach is to not anchor the picking hand and instead keep your wrist "floating" a couple of inches above the strings. This is a matter of personal preference.

When forming the song's non-barred chord shapes, try to fret each string from directly above, with the finger at a roughly 90-degree angle to the fretboard. This will keep the finger clear of adjacent strings, so as to not inadvertently mute any open-string notes.

For those who don't object to the notion of tampering with a masterpiece, I have an alternative way of fingerpicking "Bron-Yr-Aur" that I find easier to perform and equally flowing and pleasing to the ear, albeit with a slightly different feel. Instead of adhering to the thumb-index-middle-ring roll pattern, which is similar to what Page also used on "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You," I substitute a common quasi-Travis-picking pattern in certain measures, wherein the

FIGURE 1 alternative fingerpicking patterns for "Bron-Yr-Aur"

tuning (low to high): C A C G C E

bars 1-4 *p* = thumb *i* = index finger *m* = middle finger *a* = ring finger

fingerpicking: C i p m p i p m p i p m p i p p i p a p i p

bar 17 Fadd9 p i p m p i p a

thumb plays an alternating bass line. It's similar to the pattern Page uses on "Going to California" and those featured on other acoustic rock classics, like Kansas' "Dust in the Wind" and Fleetwood Mac's "Landslide." **FIGURE 1** shows my alternative fingerpicking patterns applied to specific measures in "Bron-Yr-Aur." You'll notice that, with the C chord, the order of the second and third 16th notes of each beat has been reversed, a subtle alteration of the line's contour that is hardly noticeable when performing the piece at tempo. Finally, as the pinkie is not employed with this pattern, it may be anchored to the guitar's body for added stability. —Jimmy Brown

Queen "Stone Cold Crazy"

When performing this classic song's main riff (introduced in bars 6–9), use eighth-note pendulum picking/strumming (downstrokes on the downbeats, upstrokes on the eighth-note upbeats). Maintaining a flowing down-up motion with the picking hand throughout the riff, even during slurs (hammer-ons and pull-offs) and rests will produce more comfortable, natural rhythms and help you play through the part smoothly at tempo. In spots where there should be no pick attack, such as during the hammer-on at beat one of bar 6, simply allow the pick to pass silently over the string with a "ghost" upstroke. In bar 9, the constant picking motion described above results in silent downstrokes on the downbeat rests while the eighth-note upbeats all receive upstrokes.

To best perform Brian May's soulful string bends and vibratos in bars 43, 44, 80 and 81, push the string with the ring finger in each case while using your middle finger to reinforce the bend. The added strength and control provided by the supportive second finger will help prevent the string from slipping out from under the ring finger while making it easier to bend the string and control your intonation (pitch) and vibrato speed and depth when applying the vibrato to the bent notes in bars 44 and 81.

Eight bars into his second guitar solo (bar 80), May engages an Echoplex tape delay unit to create the aural illusion of two dueling lead guitars. If you have a delay pedal, you can simulate this effect by setting its delay time to approximately 550 milliseconds and dialing in a 50/50 dry-to-wet ratio.

The dizzying ascension of notes heard in the second solo's climactic finale (bars 89–93) may seem a bit intimidating on first

listen. However, upon close examination, you'll find that the lick is merely a three-note motif with a pull-off (the first three notes of bar 89) moved chromatically (fret by fret) up the neck. The trick to playing this run at tempo lies in shifting the fretting hand and maintaining the same fingering for the three-note "module" as you ascend the neck. Try using a 3-1-2 or 4-1-3 fingering sequence. —Jeff Perrin

Mastodon "Blood and Thunder"

Use consecutive downstrokes to play this song's catchy, syncopated intro/verse riff (see bars 1–4). As aggressive as this part sounds and feels, it is best performed with a fairly light fret-hand touch, as applying a tight grip to the sliding power chords will only slow your fretting hand and make the riff more difficult to play.

The same advice also applies to the song's chorus riff, which features a succession of long power chord slides up and down the bottom two strings.

The bridge riff (section E) also features quickly shifting power chords, in this case on the A and D strings with a more syncopated rhythm. Practice this part slowly while tapping your foot on each downbeat to internalize the unusual phrasing of this riff.

You'll notice that the song's harmony lead guitar interlude (section D) alternates between bars of 5/8 and 6/8 meter. You'll need to switch gears here, in terms of the underlying pulse—eighth notes instead of quarter notes—and double-up on the foot tapping (eighth notes), as tapping quarter notes will not work against these shifting meters. —Jimmy Brown

Green Day "Holiday"

Guitarist Billie Joe Armstrong used a capo at the first fret when he recorded his guitar tracks for "Holiday." However, as the capo has very little effect on the performance of the song as a whole, other than an occasional stray "open-string" note, we decided that an arrangement without capo would provide a more practical and reader-friendly transcription of the song. Moreover, recent video footage reveals that Armstrong forgoes the use of the capo when performing the song live.

When playing the Guitar 1 part in the song's intro, use your index and ring fingers to fret the notes for each 10th-interval *diad* (two-note chord), lightly resting the fleshy underside of your index finger on the unused D and G strings to mute them as you

strum the middle four strings. Muting two strings like this is a little trickier than muting one string, as when playing strummed octaves on the A and G strings. For added "muting insurance," you may want to also used the tip of your fretting hand's ring finger to "check" the G string, lightly touching it without fretting it.

Note that all eighth-note rhythms throughout "Holiday" should be played with a "shuffle" or "swing-eighths" feel, as indicated at the beginning of the transcription. The equivalent of an eighth-note triplet with its first two notes tied, the swing-eighth rhythm is best learned and internalized by simply listening to examples of it and keeping the underlying triplet rhythm flowing in the back of your mind as you tap your foot and play. —Jeff Perrin

Nirvana "Come As You Are"

This song shows punk icon Kurt Cobain using decidedly non-punk chord grips (anything other than power chords), such as the three *suspended fourth* (sus4) chords shown at the beginning of our transcription. To play the first two—F#sus4 and Bsus4—you'll need to barre all six strings with your index finger, and as if that's not uncomfortable enough, barre the A, D and G strings two frets higher with your pinkie while managing to mute any of the remaining strings.

Here are a few tips to make these two chords a bit easier to negotiate. First, relax—the grip used for both chords is easier to fret due to the reduced string tension of the detuned strings (down a whole step). Second, use your middle finger to reinforce the index-finger barre; just place it right on top of the index finger. Your thumb should be firmly planted on the back of the neck for leverage. Now for the fun part: barre the A, D and G strings with only the first section of your pinkie (the part between the tip and first knuckle). You don't need to be double-jointed to do this, but you *will* have to shift your wrist to raise the rest of the pinkie so that it clears the B and high E strings.

The last chord of the song, F#sus4(type2), has you using the thumb to fret the bottom note, freeing up the pinkie to mute the G string and allowing the open B string to ring out. All three of these sus4 grips may seem awkward at first, but they'll become second nature when practiced repeatedly on their own, and then in the context of the song. —Matt Scharfglass