

"Creep" Radiohead



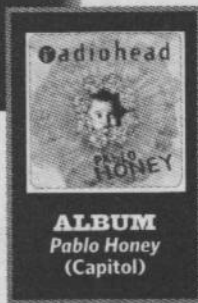
By Douglas Baldwin

If they hadn't proved so brilliant at stretching the limits of popular music, Radiohead's debut could easily have been overlooked. In the deluge of alt/grunge that defined 1993, *Pablo Honey* was just one of dozens of releases redolent of R.E.M and U2, via Nirvana's soft verse-raging chorus

template. But quirks that would become broad strokes in future work are there as well: the 12/8-11/8 rhythm of "You," the fascination with noise in "Anyone Can Play Guitar" and "Blow-out," and the guitar-friendly touches of "Creep."

THE ARPEGGIOS

When chords are played one note at a time, as they are in "Creep," they're called *arpeggios*. No single arpeggio pattern emerges during this song, and yet there is some similarity throughout. The picking for the intro and first half of the verse stays on the lower four strings, and groups of two and three adjacent strings with an occasional string skip are often chosen. A good approach to learning such "non-patterns" is to go ahead and create some repeating arpeggios, effectively summarizing the style, as shown in Fig. 1. By practicing these, you can trust your pick hand to generate random patterns that remain in the style.



THE OCTAVES

Following Nirvana's soft verse-raging chorus example, the chorus kicks in with the ultra-high-gain Gr. 2. But several details set

it apart from cookie-cutter grunge. First, the percussive muted strums that precede the chorus enter two

full measures before the chorus begins. (Most songs have a beat or two of warning at most.) Play these by muting the strings with your fret hand, focusing on strumming the lower strings with a rapid down/up stroke, and perhaps sliding your fret hand down a bit after the pair of attacks. Also check out the implied 5/8 rhythm in these attacks. Second, the chords that follow are full barre chords, not the power chords we all play in our sleep. Third, the guitar breaks off into tremolo-picked octaves at the C chord.

To play the octave fingering, use your 1st and 3rd fingers, muting the string in between with the fleshy part of your first finger. The rapid, or *tremolo*, picking is more like a focused strum, notated with three diagonal lines below the note but played as shown in Fig. 2. Try to generate a rapid, broad up/down picking motion from your wrist, as the best mandolin players will do.

THE AMBIGUITY

The chord progression in "Creep" is mildly ambiguous: it spends half its time in G major (via the G and C chords), and the other half elsewhere (thanks to the B and Cm chords). When Gr. 2 breaks out after the second ending—and as vocalist Thom Yorke wryly quotes the Hollies' "Air That I Breathe"—it tastefully honors the notes either included or implied in each chord. The resulting scale is shown in Fig. 3. ♪

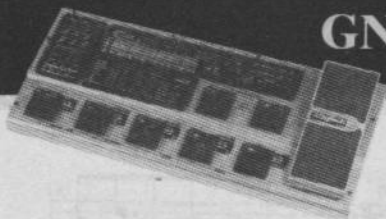
TONE ZONE

GUITAR 1: Solidbody
PICKUP/POSITION: Humbucker/Bridge and Neck
GAIN: 3
EQ: Bass/Mid/Treble: 5/5/5
GUITAR 2: Solidbody
PICKUP/POSITION: Humbucker/Neck
GAIN: 9
EQ: Bass/Mid/Treble: 9/7/5

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3



CREEP

As Recorded by Radiohead
(From the Capitol Recording PABLO HONEY)

Transcribed by Adam Perlmutter

Words and Music by Thomas Yorke, Edward O'Brien,
Colin Greenwood, Jonathan Greenwood and Philip Selway



Lyrics

Verse 1

When you were here before, couldn't look you in the eye.
You're just like an angel, your skin makes me cry.
You float like a feather
In a beautiful world. I wish I was special,
You're so fucking special.

Choruses 1 & 3

But I'm a creep, I'm a weirdo.
What the hell am I doing here?
I don't belong here.

Verse 2

I don't care if it hurts, I want to have control. I want a perfect body,
I want a perfect soul. I want you to notice when I'm not around.
You're so fucking special, I wish I was special.

Chorus 2

But I'm a creep, I'm a weirdo.
What the hell am I doing here?
I don't belong here, oh, oh.
She's running out again,
She's running out, she run, run, run, run, run.

Verse 3

Whatever makes you happy,
Whatever you want.
You're so fucking special, I wish I was special.

Intro

Moderate Rock ♩ = 92

Gtr. 1 (clean) G

mp
let ring throughout

C

Cm

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Creep

0:21 Verses 1 & 2

2nd time, Gtr. 2: w/ Fill 1

2nd time, Gtr. 2 tacet

G B

C Cm

G B

C Gtr. 2 (dist.)

Gtr. 1

Fill 1
Gtr. 2

Creep

1:02 Choruses 1 & 2

Gtr. 2

G **B**

Gtr. 1 **Rhy. Fig. 1**

C **I. Cm**

2. Cm **Gtr. 1: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1 (2 times)** **G** **B**

End Rhy. Fig. 1

Creep

C Cm G

9 12 8 17 16 12
X X X X X X
7 10 6 15 14 10

B C Cm

11 14 12 9 8 5
X X X X X
9 12 10 7 6 3

3:08 Verse 3

Gtr. 2 G Gtr. 2 tacet B

4 2

Gtr. 1

3 5 5 4 4 5 3 5 5 4 5 9 7 9 9 9 8 9 7 9 9 9 9

Gtr. 1 C Cm

8 10 10 10 9 10 10 10 10 9 10 10 8 10 10 10 10 8 10 10 10 10 8

3:28 Chorus 3

Gr. 1 G B

Gr. 2

C

Cm G5