

## Hello and welcome to *Rock Guitar Secrets*.

**Rock guitar secrets** ... is there really such a thing? The cult that has always been built around every important rock guitarist seems to lend them a mystical quality. Of course, any thing unknown always has an aura of mystery about it until one takes a closer look at it. And that's exactly what I intend with this book; to finally lift the veil from around the so-called "secrets" of rock guitar playing, if such things really exist. In the course of this book you'll find that most of these so-called secrets are relatively simple concepts or tricks which can easily be learned by anyone. Combining them skilfully and developing a sensible, individually-gearred practice plan while working with this book will work the real "magic".

As is my first book "**Masters of Rock Guitar**", "**Rock Guitar Secrets**" is put together modularly, meaning that you can pick out sections at will. If you've "always wanted to learn something about two-hand tapping or the melodic minor scale", no problem! As it's not necessary to follow a set order of modules, each chapter is complete in itself, you can jump in spontaneously wherever you wish. You don't have to have read the chapter on pentatonic scales in order to be ready to work with the section on the use of the vibrato arm.

Of course you can also work through **Rock Guitar Secrets** from beginning to end, using it as a rock guitar "method".

The real idea behind the modular design, though, is to help you to develop your own practice program. You'll find suggestions on how to put one together in chapter 18: "Effective learning - practice planning".

Compared to the rock music world of ten or fifteen years ago, demands on guitar players' abilities are much greater today. Modern guitarists such as **Steve Vai** and his cohorts have infused the music with new concepts (eg. playing with **arpeggios**, **3-note-per-string scales**, and **string skipping**, to name just a few). Since I myself, a "working" guitarist, ardent researcher and student of the instrument, have yet to come across a book that deals with such innovative ideas, I felt it was time to write one that describes these concepts in a thorough and easily understandable manner.

To me, **Rock Guitar Secrets**, also means peering beyond the harmonic limitations of the music to see how demanding (actually jazz-derived) improvisational concepts, used today by guitarists like **Satriani**, **Vai** or **Kee Marcello**, can be employed in rock. In order to put them directly into practice, you'll find on the accompanying CD not only over eighty licks and **exercises**, but more than twenty **jam tracks** as well, playbacks without melodies, solos and licks, with which you can practice and apply the licks yourself.

If you look at the table of contents you will see that, beside all the standard **playing techniques**, easy to intermediate **improvisational concepts** are also included, so that **Rock Guitar Secrets** can also function as a comprehensive textbook for the modern guitar soloist.

At this point I would like to thank a number of people who have made my life and the writing of this book much easier: **Birgit Fischer**, **Olaf Krüger**, the Musicians Institute, Hollywood (especially **Dan Gilbert** and **Carl Schroeder**), as well as **Frank Haunschmid**.

For inspiration of all sorts I thank **Peter Paradise**, **Mick Goodrick**, **Steve Vai**, **Paul Gilbert**, **Albert Collins** and **Steve Lukather**, as well as all my guitar students.

**LOVE, PEACE** and the **UNIVERSE**  
**PETER FISCHER**

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LIST OF SYMBOLS



A good point of entry into the world of guitar secrets is a short but effective warm-up program. In my opinion, it's very important to continually re-discover the instrument and to warm yourself up before getting into your own thing like licks or exercises played at the speed of light. One of my "secrets" is to try to practice a number of different things with one exercise. Let's get away from separating technique and warm-ups and theory and so on, and get into an integrated style of practice that's much more effective and **time-saving**. With this in mind, let's look at the first exercise.

## NOTE LOCATION – THE MAGIC TRIANGLE

Let's be honest now: Do you know all the notes on the fingerboard? Or are there parts of your guitar neck that are still "fuzzy zones" for you? Here is my radical cure for this problem: On these two diagrams of the fingerboard the notes on the E string and the A string are written. This order of the notes must be learned by heart; with the help of the two triangles you'll be able to locate every note on the neck with ease.

For example, an F note:

I simply put in position the two triangles starting from the F notes which lie on the E or A strings.

If there's one technique that's typical for electric guitar, it's **string bending** for sure. So string bending and vibrato are the first playing techniques I'd like to cover in this book.

# STRING BENDING

## Starting notes and target notes

What's most important in string bending is to make a clean bend to the target note. Notes bent too high or not high enough sound pretty awful, to be honest. This means that you have to know which note you want to bend to (the target note).

When you begin to work on your bending technique, first play the note to which you want to bend to. Then play two frets lower (starting note) and bend up to the target note. The bent note should have the same pitch as the fretted target note.

**Exercise 6**



Musical notation for Exercise 6. The top staff shows a treble clef with a single note on the first line (E4) and a 'BU' (bend up) instruction above it. The bottom staff shows the guitar TAB with strings T, A, B, and E. The TAB indicates a starting note on the 10th fret of the A string, followed by a bend up to the 10th fret of the E string.

Try also to reach the same target note from different starting notes (semi-tone = 1 fret lower, minor third = 3 frets lower, major third = 4 frets lower). This will bring a lot of variety into your playing, so stick with it even though it IS pretty hard. The playing of **van Halen**, **Steve Lukather**, **George Lynch** and others shows how much life their extreme string bending techniques have given to their music.

**Exercise 7**



Musical notation for Exercise 7. The top staff shows a treble clef with a sequence of notes on the first line (E4) and 'BU' instructions above them. The bottom staff shows the guitar TAB with strings T, A, B, and E. The TAB indicates a sequence of bends starting from the 10th fret of the A string, bending up to the 9th fret of the A string, then the 10th fret of the E string, then the 8th fret of the A string, then the 10th fret of the E string, then the 7th fret of the A string, then the 10th fret of the E string, and finally the 6th fret of the A string.

OK. That's enough on licks and sequences. The following musical example is taken from "Moto Perpetuo" by Niccolò Paganini. It sounds great and is incidentally a good picking exercise. Have fun!

Exercise 16



Moto Perpetuo

Niccolò Paganini

The musical score for Exercise 16 is presented in four systems. Each system consists of a standard musical staff and a guitar tablature staff. The tablature staff is labeled with 'T', 'A', 'B', and 'E' for the strings. The notes in the tablature are: 2 0 9 10 2 10 2 0 9 12 10 12 9 10 12 9 10 9 12 10 9 12. The second system's tablature is: 9 10 9 12 10 12 9 10 12 10 9 12 11 9 12 10 9 12 10 9 12 12 10 9 12 10 9 12 12 9 12. The third system's tablature is: 10 9 12 10 9 10 12 9 10 12 10 9 10 12 9 10 12 10 9 12 9 10 12 9 10 9 12 10 9 12. The fourth system's tablature is: 9 10 9 12 10 12 9 10 12 10 9 12 11 9 10 12 10 9 12 10 9 12 12 10 9 12 10 9 12 10 10 9.



### Exercise 40

Practice on every string, with all the fingers of the right hand and with different intervals!

This technique will enable you to play super fast pedal point licks a la **Malmsteen** and **Gilbert**.

**Lick 54** **32**  
CD-INDEX

F Am

Combine this with string bending and you'll get instant van Halen-style licks

**Lick 55** **32**  
CD-INDEX

BU RB P BU T T T T T

# MELODIES WITH THE TREMOLO ARM

The next technique is often used by Steve Vai: making melodies with the tremolo arm.

Here he produces different tones by a controlled relaxation of the string with the wang. This works best with the harmonics on the G string.

As every tremolo system and every guitar responds differently to the pressure of the right hand, this technique requires a lot of sensitivity and finesse. So don't get discouraged if your first attempts sound more like yowling cats than music. If you've set up your tremolo so that it floats (so that you can raise the tone as well as lower it), experiment with getting notes by pulling up on the arm. This is, in my opinion, even easier than hitting lower notes exactly.

Here's a lick using this technique:

Lick 78

45  
CD-INDEX

Em<sup>7</sup>

A tip for recording with this technique: these melodies sound particularly good when doubled and given some echo.

## WHAMMY BAR EFFECTS

Lick 79

45  
CD-INDEX

Beside the different dive-bomb effects, there are a number of others which you can get from the wang bar. Here are my favorites:

### 1. The Horse Whinny

Anyone who's heard David Lee Roth's first solo album with Steve Vai knows what I mean. This sound is a dive bomb with a harmonic; you have to shake your right hand a bit while relaxing the strings with the tremolo arm.

Lick 79 a

### 2. The "Ruler" Sound

At one time or another, you've probably let a held-down ruler slap against a table top. This trick works similarly, just with the tremolo arm instead of a ruler. You can hear this sound on a few Steve Vai recordings, as well as on records from Night Ranger with Brad Gillis.

Lick 79 b