

SHREDDED METAL

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Hi folks and welcome to this special edition of Shredded Metal. I've been writing this column for five years now and during that time I have covered countless aspects of shred/metal guitar playing. Given that this is the big 100th issue of Australian Guitar, I thought it would be a good opportunity to look back at some of these concepts and how to combine them all together to create a solo.

To do this I have written a short study/etude in the neoclassical style. In the key of E minor, this 12 bar solo incorporates numerous techniques from previous columns. These include sweep-tapped arpeggios (AG#69), sweep picking (AG#79), alternate picking (AG#78), legato playing (AG#87), right-hand tapping (AG#76), three and four note-per-string groupings (AG#77, AG#80), string skipping (AG#85), and octave jumps (AG#93). Also used are major/minor arpeggio shapes, diminished 7th arpeggios, and the natural/harmonic minor scales. It's definitely a workout, so I've broken it up into six two-bar exercises to make it more manageable.

EXERCISE 1

The solo starts with a series of five-string sweep-tapped arpeggios (where you sweep and tap the top note) over chords Im, Vm and VII. These are followed by a regular sweep picked arpeggio over chord VI. You can hear this exercise (and all the others) on the cover CD recorded at 100bpm and 60bpm.

EXERCISE 2

The tonality shifts from natural to harmonic minor for the next section. Here, three-string sweep arpeggios in triplets are employed, with diminished 7th arpeggios used as a substitution over the B7 chord. It finishes with an E minor arpeggio shape played high on the neck.

Em B7 Em

V - - - - - | V - - - - - | V - - - - - | V - - - - - | V - - - - - | V - - - - - | V - - - - - | V - - - - - | V - - - - - | V - - - - -

EXERCISE 3

This is a long, alternate picked 'shred' style lick using three notes per string. Although the overall tempo of this study is a moderate 120bpm, 32nd notes are used here so it is still pretty fast. Make sure to use strict alternate picking throughout (this means that every other string will start on an upstroke).

Em Bm D C

V V V V V V *sim.*

EXERCISE 4

This section focuses on legato playing (hammer-ons/pull-offs) with an ascending run up the E natural minor/Aeolian scale that includes a position shift. Right hand tapping is then employed in bar 6 using E harmonic minor/B Phrygian dominant.

Am C B7

T T T T

EXERCISE 5

This part of the solo focuses on string skipping and four note-per-string groupings. Beats one and two feature string skipping through an E minor arpeggio and this is followed by a four note-per-string scale run. This bar is then moved down a tone diatonically over the D and C chords.

Em Bm D C

19 17 16 16 14 14 16 14 19 17 15 14 17 15 13 15 17 14 15 16 17 14 14 15 12 12 14 12 17 15 14 12 15 13 12 13 15 12 14 15

□ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V □ V *sim.*

EXERCISE 6

The solo finishes with some horizontal octave jumps. The E minor arpeggio shape is played up high in the 15th position before immediately jumping down an octave and playing the same shape in the 3rd position. This is followed by a diminished 7th arpeggio at the 2nd fret that slides up to a B7 arpeggio at the 11th fret. The solo concludes like it began with a sweep-tapped E minor arpeggio.

Em B7 Em

19 15 17 16 17 15 7 3 5 4 5 3 5 2 4 4 2 14 11 12 12 11 12 17 17 15 19 24 19 15 17 16 17 19

V ----- □ ----- V ----- □ ----- V ----- □ ----- V ----- □ ----- V ----- □ ----- V ----- □ ----- V ----- □ -----

EXERCISE 7

The final exercise will be to put all these sections together. You can hear this on the cover CD recorded at the full speed of 120bpm with a backing track (I've included the backing track as well).

This solo is definitely a tough one, so go slow and take your time. Since it is quite tricky, as a special feature for this 100th issue, on the cover CD you can access these exercises in Riff Accelerator format. Riff Accelerator is a cool program that will allow you to increase the speed of these licks by increments of 1bpm – starting at 50bpm and up to the full speed of 120bpm. It's a great learning tool. So give it a try and until next time, keep shredding!