

# Shred like Cheney

by Adrian Whyte

Standard tuning

♩ = 90

E-Gt

Ex 1

Ex 2

*mf*

Ex 3

Ex 4

Ex 5

TAB

## **AG101**

### **Shred Like Cheney**

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I spent many early teenage years locked in my room learning how to play solos by ear, and the Living End got absolutely flogged. I am like an evil alien race, going from world to world and taking what I want before moving on, only I do with it Guitarists and their licks and ideas. Needless to say it was a good few years before I moved on from Chris Cheney's handiwork, and it's only fair to acknowledge that his playing was a huge influence on me.

For the next two columns I'm going to pretend that you are the student who has come to me saying 'I want to play like Chris Cheney'. It happens from time to time, and it's always a blast. This issue, let's look at some of the lead ideas that will get you on the right track!

All exercises are included on the cd, at 80bpm at normal and double time tempos.

#### **A note on approaching these exercises.**

The first thing you should know, is the majority of Cheney's faster licks are fairly simple ideas. The skill is in being able to execute them at break neck speed. There is no magic trick to this, other than breaking it down slow and ensuring that each lick flows at a slow speed before you attempt to play it fast. I've included pick strokes - it's up to you to follow them but take note of the logic behind them. Alternate picking is very important or you may consider economy picking ideas.

#### **Ex 1**

I refer to these as sets of four in semi quavers. I would recommend breaking them down into each beat (4 notes) and adding the next beat once you're comfortable. This lick is pure A minor pentatonic. We can now tick off the blues part of Blues and Beyond!

#### **Ex 2**

This lick is heard a lot on the first album, sets of three in triplets, again A minor pentatonic. These are really fun to play super fast and if you get them into your muscle memory they have an awesome flow to them! Reminiscent perhaps of early Deep Purple style shredding.

### **Ex 3**

Exactly the same idea as exercise 2, but we are using an A minor scale. Take the time to break this down, and you can apply the theory to any scale. You'll catch Cheney using this live in some songs where he may not have on record, as well as a few discographical examples. Hmm, spell check didn't correct 'discographical' and it sounds clever! Win!

### **Ex4**

This is an ascending version of exercise two, with flat picking. Chris Cheney has some solid flat picking skills up his sleeve, and occasionally really tears it up in this fashion both live and on record. Don't ever think that he just woke up playing guitar like this- some serious work has gone into his skill sets as a musician.

### **Ex 5**

This lick here is not so much about technique as it is about a clever melodic device. Here is a little bit of Chris Cheney's jazz learning creeping in, or maybe he just poached it from Setzer - either way he uses it to great effect! This is a diminished run, setting up the resolution to the A. We'll look more at this in next issue in relation to chords and how to place it.

## **Summary**

Chris Cheney holds an interesting place in the world of guitar players. There are many players now and in history that have taken this style of guitar playing to greater limits, but his ability to put his playing around a good song (not the other way around) has elevated him to be the go to guy for rock guitarists that also like to dabble in different styles and play beyond a few chords. I've heard people wonder why he plays less on the later albums, but the reality is if he didn't do what felt right for him, we would never have got to hear such explosive playing on the original albums and EPs. Stay tuned for a look at his chordal work in the next issue Australian Guitar.