

Like everyone, I like rocking out on electric guitars. But what if you don't have impressive grade 8 skills, like I have? Read on... (I'm so sorry, but I found writing this monologue quite difficult, so I MIGHT have plagiarised rather well known, if not fundamental concepts, just a little. I don't want to come across as a fraud, I was just desperate... Again, in desperation I kind of came up with one or two ideas that weren't 100% legal. It wouldn't have been too bad, but they weren't funny, either. Just threatening. I'm keeping them to show the dangers of rushed writing. Actually I'm keeping them as they were the best I could come up with at the time. Writer's block, soz). :S

So! If you REALLY don't have G8 skills and only know one guitar lick - perhaps the Chuck Berry one, where you bend the G string then play the B and E strings together - don't worry... It sounds cool and you can get quite a lot out of it by transposing it. I find going down fifths (e.g. from A minor to D minor to G minor) sounds very satisfying. I like to call it 'the cycle of fifths'. Or the 'Wiedemann Method'. The ideas and names just came to me one day. (Now THAT'S plagiarism). I probably wouldn't recommend playing through all the 12 keys, but if you're keen to end on the same key/chord you started with (a great idea - now you're a REAL musician), playing the Am, Dm, Em, Am versions could certainly work.

However, be warned: That only works if you're noodling without any backing OR you're playing along to a band who are in the same key. That really is essential, I can't stress that enough. You don't want to ignore your band mates unless you're going for some kind of bitonal jazz fusion sound. And do you know why you've never heard of bitonal jazz fusion (at least on Kiss FM?) It's because it sounds like death. Actually, it sounds like what you probably imagine Hell to sound like. It's not pretty. If you play in A minor over Bb minor for example... Well, people have been assassinated for less. No joke, there are a lot of unreasonable people out there. I think some people have actually been killed for being nice. There are certainly unreasonable fictitious people out there. As in 'hide your sausages, the SRK is on the loose again!!' (A bit of self-plagiarising, there. Obviously not as serious as the regular kind, but a bit lazy. Sue me. Well not really don't do that. Here's a better phrase: 'Please keep reading').

If you know one more lick (perhaps the one that goes 'A, C, A, G' over and over again) that's even better. You won't write the most original solo in the world with the two ideas, but I promise you: It won't COMPLETELY suck. Be warned though: There is a very common lick out there that beginners seem to love - the one that goes 'C, B, A' repeatedly. Unless you can play it at least 50 notes a second, it will bore the hell out of everyone. At that speed, you won't be able to hear it probably, and that's the point. Sure it's a fun feeling when you're starting to coordinate a good three fingers, but the audience won't appreciate your sense of achievement at slower speeds, and whilst there will be no poison darts/ninja swords that come out of nowhere in this case, you will get something thrown at you. Perhaps a brick.

You know/want to know three licks? So... You're finally turning pro. At least you could perform with a punk band. However, don't think you can be sloppy because it's 'anarchic and cool', your audience probably won't feel the same. Actually it's not cool if you make mistakes, it just sounds wrong. Ok, ok, many people would be too drunk (or high 'on life') to notice, but there are some punks who are more sophisticated and

appreciate 4/4 time signatures, diatonic harmonies and extreme uses of bichords. (Sounds technical right? Ohhh, you've been tricked by flowery language. Actually, it's as basic as all hell. Sorry if you thought otherwise, but sophisticated punk music is actually an impossible concept. The world COULD end if there was a technical version of the Sex Pistols. It would be like proving  $1+1=3$ . Nothing would be real anymore. However, I do admit it was paranoid, when I worried I could end the world by making my contestants win twice, but it made sense at the time. It's hard to explain the reasonings of someone who's delusional. If it was easy, therapy would be effective. As in 'You thought THAT could end the world?? What the flip are you on about??' A mentally ill person has never said 'Good point' to such a response. In many cases, he'd just reply with gibberish or go on a rant - Like I am now!! :D) Oh yeah, here's the third lick: C, A, E. Simple but effective.

You plan on learning four licks?? Time to go on a prog rock odyssey. You know a really cool pattern? Play the notes 'A, G, E, D' on the top E string, then on the B string, the B string again and finally the G string, respectively. It's easy to play that very fast (if using hammer ons and pull offs), so don't worry. You can thank me later. The hard part is tricking John Petrucci into visiting your house so you can show him and wow him. Apparently he's really into barbecuing, so maybe promise the best barbecue ever?? Worth a try. Sure give him a burger and a hotdog, just enough food to get your amp set up in time. Then it's the time for some serious shred. Hearing the word 'Yes!!!' from a guitar hero would be so worth the effort. On the other hand, he may just be annoyed with you for messing with his very busy schedule. He may even phone the police, especially if you aren't a particularly good cook. I know I could be accused of attempted food poisoning in the right (or wrong) situation.

You want to master five licks? I didn't know Steve Vai visited my site. Huh. So... What's my advice to you? Well, I don't know. You're actually my favourite guitarist of all time, I'm so honoured! Do you know the one where you keep tapping on the 12th fret with your right hand, and get your left hand to go up and down the fretboard? Be warned, though; Joe Satriani likes that idea, too. (This is the illegal bit I warned you about:) I don't know how to silence him. (Huh??) I guess he likes aliens... Maybe you could say, 'Hey Joe, come round my house, E.T. is chilling out with me. He wants to surf with you!' However, what you really do is get someone to DRESS UP as an alien surfer and get him on his board with the rock star. Joe wouldn't be in the real world, but at least he would be happy and spend the rest of his retirement doing what he said (well implied) he always wanted to. In reality, I'm sure he'll get tired after an hour or so, but hey. A bit of a whacky idea, that one, but Joe is a whacky guy. (Well, I guess that wasn't SUPER illegal. Definitely abnormal behaviour, that psychiatrists look out for, though).

Now let's talk about riffs!

Hmm... I'm not so into riffs. I do like chugging the A string over and over again and playing a small selection of pedal chords over the top of it, though. Very 80s, and with the vibrato? Pretty killer. But why not spice such riffs up with a lick every now and then? For example A, A pedal chord, etc., then, A, D, G, E, A, D, G, E, A, A, A, A? Now we're getting there. Add another lick and you're a speed metal God. Then it's time to contact Racer X's Paul Gilbert. BUT... how do we capture him?? Maybe it's unusual for me to be fixated on such a subject. I dunno,

maybe not. I guess in this period of lockdown I've just been lonely. Anyway, how to capture him: Unfortunately I have no idea what any of his hobbies could possibly be, so manipulating him would be difficult. My only option is to hit him on the head and imprison him. (That IS illegal). I'm not sure what my goals after that would be. I guess some compliments from the guy would be great, but I doubt he'd mean them.

Power chord riffs are pretty easy to play, especially in drop D tuning where you only need one finger. Don't get too excited though, as they're often boring. And try coming up with an original one, when heavy metal has been around for 50 years. Making things worse, there have been loads of metal groups. This is a very precise number but apparently there are 'approximately 12,634,735 heavy metal bands' according to theguardian.com. Precise and approximately are words that don't usually go together, but forget that. Try coming up with a new power chord riff, that's what I'm saying.

Ok! That's all I have to say on rocking out. Hopefully I've been informative and inspiring, and not too weird. We don't want that, do we. Luckily the musicians discussed are too far away from me to hold prisoner, so it seems unlikely I'll have any unwanted impulses or anything like that. Phew! Lastly, I'm not sure why I warned people so much in this monologue. Hopefully I didn't come across as aggressive. Bye!