

Metal Rules have never asked me to rank my favourite shred guitarists, so I decided to take things into my own hands. After a few minutes of pondering, I have come up with 4 levels of shred guitar albums and over two decades, I have been thinking about shred in one way or another. Usually such thoughts are fairly simple, such as 'I like that!' Will the following be any use for you? Probably not, BUT if you are interested in getting into one of the most disliked genres of music OF ALL TIME you are in luck with this monologue. You'll learn who are the best artists and the artists just play fast and that's pretty much it. Surely no guitarist would ever play fast and completely ignore any kind of melody? Well to that I say, listen to the guitar solo of O.F.R. by Nitro. Can you imagine a whole album of such soloing? If so, you know why this music often has a bad reputation, now. The letters stand for 'Out (expletive) Rageous' and it's true the music IS outrageous, but yeah, not musical in the traditional sense.

Level 4: Technically impressive music, but with unadventurous songwriting and soloing.

In this level we have Rusty Cooley and the famous Michal Angelo Batio, the latter of which can play two guitars at the same time! Great to look at, but would you know if he was doing that in the CD? Nope. And even if it was proven he was playing two guitars at the same time in the recording, it wouldn't matter anyway as the sound is the same. MAB's 'No Boundaries' is a good song, but the rest of the album? Just ok. Very fast though. If you listen to the album, Michael will 'give you the keys to the Lamborghini!' That's the kind of stuff he says, anyway. As I've said before. Rusty cooly's playing certainly isn't rusty and I'm sure he's cooly, his music just is pretty average.

Level 3: Some creativity in songwriting and soloing but pretty standard stuff.

In this level we have Joe Stump. I pointed out how he plays exactly like Yngwie, he dresses the same and his logo is in the same font, NOW he plays in Alcatrazz, Yngwie's old band. He has some good music, but I mean... at least TRY to be different. I have three of his albums and they've had a good few listens, but yeah how about being influenced by ONE other person? Because that's all you have to do.

Rob Johnson's music is pretty good, he has an album called Shredworx, and it's a sound that works. Unless he's invented the word 'worx', it doesn't mean 'works' as I thought, and he's being creative. Good for him, creativity is what he needs. :)

Level 2.5. Like level 3, but a little bit better. Not as good as level 2, though.

You know what, my few minutes of pondering about shred wasn't enough, I think there should be a level in between 3 and 2...

Gus G's music is pretty good. Nothing groundbreaking, but yeah compared to Joe Stump he's basically invented something big, maybe the internet. You may know Gus as the guitarist of Ozzy Osbourne, Firewind and others, I know him mainly from his average to above average shred.

Darren Housholder is notable for bringing a sense of depression and misery to the genre. No other shredder I know has done that, so thank you Darren and your reasonably creative music. Allmusic.com gave one of your albums 2 stars and another 1.5 stars, but you know what? Lots of shred albums get such scores. Silly site.

We also have Della Vega here, ah the guy who can play 50 notes a second. You'd expect his music to be somewhat weird and even unlistenable, actually it's not that bad.

Level 2: Very creative soloing and super strong songwriting, but the artists don't truly stand out from the crowd.

In this more than respectable section, we have Guthrie Govan! He is considered one of the best if not the very best rock guitarist of all time. Fair enough, but what about his music? Well, it's not the greatest rock music of all time. Pretty good, maybe even very good at times, but I guess this is what happens when you practice 12 hours a day or whatever, sometimes doing things that are kind of pointless, like playing as fast as possible, you neglect more important things. I've never heard Guthrie offering people the keys to Lamborghini, but that could just be because Michael Angelo said it first. As Guthrie can play so fast, I bet he's DYING to offer the keys to the Lamborghini. And you know what? I'd accept them.

In a slightly better position, we have Paul Gilbert! Ever wondered what a robot playing guitar would sound like? It would sound like him, now there's no point building such a robot, for the last time we have the guy right here!!! Fine have robots that build cars or houses, no one cares, but stay away from art! Blogging is an art form too (isn't it?), you can see where we're getting at now.

In a slightly better position still, we have Vinnie Moore! He used to play for Alice Cooper, and AC could have got anyone he wanted, right? That proves Vinnie is very good. Not Joe Stump, he'd just be like 'I appreciate your musical vision Mr. Cooper, but how about making your sound... a bit more Yngwie? No I have a better idea, become a Yngwie Covers band! :D'

I love Tony Macalpine's 'Maximum Security' album very, very much, he has lots of other great albums as well, but his guitar soloing isn't particularly interesting in the grand scheme of things. Very good, but could be better. He's an amazing keyboardist as well. He once said playing piano is harder than playing electric guitar. That's interesting, because he's a better keyboardist. I'm not calling him mentally ill, but there does seem to be some confusion, there.

Level 1: Expert soloing and highly intelligent songwriting with guitar playing that is instantly recognisable.

There are only two shred guitarists that fit into this category. (Unless of course I've forgot one). First up is Joe Satriani, the excellent melody writer, excellent songwriter and super shredder. Oh if only he had a more impressive technique, had a slightly more recognisable style and wrote more intelligent music, then he'd be as good as shred guitar winner...Steve Vai!! I don't mean to suck up to him, but he's perfect in

every way and is simply a better person than you or me. Even though his surname is a swear word in a foreign language. But he can't help that and it is most certainly not a personality flaw. All in all, well done, Steve.

To conclude, the list doesn't feature all the shred guitarists of all time, don't be confused, just the guitarists on my mind at the time. Do you want the monologue to be ten times longer? Because that sounds annoying to me. And on the wise note... bye!