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Jon Chappell

*Award-winning guitarist and co-author of
Guitar For Dummies*

*foreword by Carl Verheyen, multimedia guitar
instructor and lead guitarist for Supertramp*

A Reference for the Rest of Us!™

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by Jon Chappell

Foreword by Carl Verheyen



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About the Author

Jon Chappell is an author, writer, and award-winning guitarist. He began his serious musical life as a multi-style guitarist, transcriber, and arranger, attending Carnegie-Mellon University where he studied with guitarist Carlos Barbosa-Lima, and then earning his master's degree in music composition from DePaul University.

Jon has served as editor-in-chief of *Guitar Magazine* and *Guitar Online*, technical editor of *Guitar Shop Magazine*, and musicologist for *Guitarra*, a classical magazine. He has played and recorded with Pat Benatar, Judy Collins, Graham Nash, and Robert Cray, and has contributed numerous musical pieces to film and TV. Some of these include *Northern Exposure*; *Walker, Texas Ranger*; *All My Children*; and the feature film *Bleeding Hearts*, directed by actor-dancer Gregory Hines.

In 1991, Jon became associate music director of Cherry Lane Music, where he transcribed, edited, and arranged the music of Metallica, Joe Satriani, Steve Morse, Steve Vai, Bonnie Raitt, and Eddie Van Halen, among others. He has 20 method books to his name, which have sold in excess of 500,000 copies, and is the author of *Guitar For Dummies*, *Blues Rock Riffs for Guitar*, and *The Recording Guitarist—A Guide for Home and Studio*. He has published pieces in the *New York Times*, *Rolling Stone*, *Spin*, *MacWorld*, and many other publications. Jon is currently online publisher of the Music Player Network,

and lives in New York with his wife and four rock-and-roll children.

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Dedication

To Mary —

My north, my south, my east, my west;

My working week, my Sunday best.

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We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register

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Foreword

By the end of 1971 my high school band was pretty hip. We played most of the Hendrix and Cream staples, and we were very successful at the local dances. My bass player, drummer, and I had devoured *Wheels of Fire* and we were still wading through *Electric Ladyland* when Jimi died. We had even gone to see Led Zeppelin on their first U.S. tour, after which I proudly proclaimed, “Yeah, I’m as good as Jimmy Page!”

But that was the year they released “Stairway to Heaven,” and using a fake sore throat as an excuse, I stayed home from school to figure it out. My naive, schoolyard boasting quickly withered away as I realized that rock guitar had changed on that record. There were layers of carefully crafted acoustic and electric parts woven together in a tapestry of power and mystery. And it rocked. The blues-based illegitimate child of Chuck Berry had turned a corner; from now on anything was possible.

These were the early years, and sitting in my room with my guitar and record player, I never would have guessed that someday all this would spawn detailed transcriptions in books, magazines, videos, CD-ROMs, and all over the Internet. But then I couldn’t foresee some of the brilliant rock guitarists to come, like Larry Carlton, Joe Walsh, Steve Morse, Eddie Van Halen, Steve Vai, David Gilmour, and Eric Johnson. The required listening and essential repertoire is as deep as the

classical guitarist's, and is constantly expanding. A book such as *Rock Guitar For Dummies* could never have been possible 30 years ago. We are so lucky to have this history we can now draw from.

The *Dummies* format is perfect for presenting the many facets of rock guitar — its history, personalities, and techniques. *Rock Guitar For Dummies* takes you into the passionate world of the most creative musicians ever to strap on a six-string, and presents everything you need to get the music under your hands. Jon Chappell understands the legacy and the mission, and guides you through the essentials of the music, its chords and riffs, and the different rock styles. I know of few authors/musicians as qualified or uniquely suited to bring together all these varied aspects of rock guitar. As the editor of *Guitar Magazine*, and as a performer, teacher, and writer on all things music, Jon has surely heard it all and seen it all. And as a player, his well-rounded abilities are matched only by his deep love of the instrument and all its amazing potential. Enjoy this book and enjoy playing the guitar!

Carl Verheyen

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Introduction

Face it, being a rock and roll guitar player is just about the coolest thing you can be — next to a secret agent with a black belt in karate. But even if you were a butt-kicking international person of mystery, playing rock and roll would still be cooler because it involves art, passion, power, poetry, and the ability to move an audience of listeners. Whether “moving your listeners” means mowing down crowd surfers with your stun-gun power chords or making the audience cry with your achingly wrought melodies, no other art form allows you to wreak such devastation and look so sensitive doing it. And playing the guitar is also a heck of a lot safer than hanging upside down from the helicopter of your nemesis as he tries to drop you into a shark tank.

Whatever rocks your world, *Rock Guitar For Dummies* will help you to bring the message out through your fingers, onto the electric guitar you’ve got slung so insolently around your neck, and piped through that turbo-charged amp you’ve got cranked up over in the corner. All you have to do now is learn how to play. And for that, you need only your eyes to read the text, your ears to hear the CD, a set of willing digits (that would be your fingers), and a little time and patience. *Rock Guitar For Dummies* will handle the rest.

About This Book

Rock guitar is a specific subset of the larger world of guitar playing. If you find you need some help in the real basics of guitar, irrespective of rock or any other genre, I recommend picking up my other *Dummies* book, *Guitar For Dummies*. Now before you think I'm just shamelessly plugging my wares, consider that while *Rock Guitar For Dummies* was written not as a sequel, it *is* a very specific and focused look at a single genre: rock. As such, *Rock Guitar For Dummies* assumes a slightly higher level of guitar literacy ("literacy" is a funny word to use when discussing any genre that includes the band KISS, but there you go). It doesn't mean that I launch into arcane discussions of music theory or demand you perform acrobatically advanced techniques, but I tend to condense issues such as syncopation and forming barre chords with the left hand. If you find you want more information on those issues *Guitar For Dummies* may provide the solution. Besides, the only thing better for your musical education than owning a *For Dummies* book on guitar is owning two. End of "shameless plug" section.

If anything breaks the mold of a traditional approach to learning, it's the pursuit of rock guitar. I present to you many ways to learn the material in this book, and I don't recommend any one way as superior to another. Here are some ways in which to take advantage of the different means offered:

✓ **Look at the photos:** Photographs are purely visual and require no text to explain them. Simply look at the photos of the hand positions and the shots of the gear to get a purely visual read on what's going on.

✓ **Read the tab:** In true guitar fashion, I present guitar notation in a system designed exclusively for showing music on the guitar: tablature ("tab"). Tab isn't your one-stop-shopping solution for all your notational needs, but it's really handy for seeing exactly which string to play and on what fret. Plus, it works really well when accompanied by standard music notation.

✓ **Listen to the CD:** Some old-fashioned teachers don't like you listening to the piece you're supposed to learn. Not so here. I want you to internalize the music in this book through every means possible. Also, I want you to hear the different tone and signal processing represented in the examples — and that just can't be communicated in the notation.

✓ **Read the music:** You know that expression "As a last resort, read the manual"? It's meant as a joke, because often the info you need is right there in the written documentation. And the same is true with *Rock Guitar For Dummies*. Although you don't *need* to read music to play any and all of the exercises in this book, doing so will help you understand better what's being asked of you and may speed up the learning process.

Not-So-Foolish Assumptions

You don't need to have *any ability to read music or previous experience with the guitar* to benefit from *Rock Guitar For Dummies*. All you need is an electric guitar and some sort of means to amplify it (either through a guitar amp, a small headphone amp, or even a spare input on your home stereo or boom box). If you know you want to play rock, and plan to use an electric guitar when doing it, this is the book for you.

As I state earlier in the introduction, however, rock guitar is a subset of guitar in general, so if you feel you want a more basic approach or just want to expose yourself to more styles than rock, by all means take a look at *Guitar For Dummies*. Because you've purchased a book called *Rock Guitar For Dummies*, I'm not going to make you mess around with songs like "Go Tell Aunt Rhody"; instead, I'm going to let you rock out!

Conventions Used in This Book

I know what you're thinking: rock and roll is supposed to be about rejecting conventions! So, why talk about them now? Actually, I just want to establish some of the

assorted terms and practices I use to communicate guitar issues in this book.

Right hand and left hand: I use the terms “right hand” and “left hand” to indicate the picking hand and the fretting hand, respectively. Guitar is one of the few instruments that you can “flip” and play in a reverse manner, where your right hand becomes your fretting hand. But with apologies to the left-handers out there who do flip (and therefore have to perform a translation), I stick to calling the hand that frets, the left one, and the hand that picks, the right hand.

Up and down, higher and lower: Unless otherwise noted, I use “up,” “down,” “higher,” and “lower” to indicate musical pitch, regardless of how the strings or frets are positioned. This sometimes can be confusing to a beginner because when you hold the guitar in a playing position, the lowest-pitched string (the low E) is closest to the ceiling. Also, the angle of the neck tends to make the higher-pitched frets closer to the floor as well. But most people make the transition easily and never think about these directional terms in any way other than with respect to pitch.

“Rock” vs. “Rock and Roll”: Some fussy professor-types might distinguish between the terms “rock” and “rock and roll,” but I use them interchangeably. It’s a “feel thing” (an irrefutable argument you can use to justify virtually any act or decision in rock and roll).

How This Book Is Organized

I have organized the chapters into two distinct categories: information chapters and playing chapters. Information chapters include descriptions of the parts of the guitar and amp, how to hold and tune the instrument, choosing equipment, and caring for the guitar. The playing chapters cover basic techniques, more advanced techniques that make you sound like a rock and roller, and exercises and complete pieces in different musical styles of rock.

I've divided *Rock Guitar For Dummies* into six large-scale parts and each part is further divided into chapters. A chapter is a self-contained unit, allowing you to open to virtually any one of them and start reading without worrying about what came before. At the same time, I organize the book in a linear structure, so reading the chapters in a row provides its own logical satisfaction. And you can always look up a specific issue in the table of contents or the index.