

Hey Joe

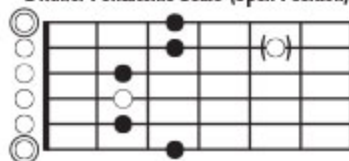
From *Are You Experienced* (American release), 1967

“Hey Joe,” released by the Jimi Hendrix Experience as the band’s debut single on December 16, 1966 (backed with “Stone Free”), was originally composed by West Coast musician Billy Roberts and had by then been released by a number of different artists, including the Byrds, the Leaves, and Tim Hardin. Jimi had been playing the song in NYC clubs for a while by the time his soon-to-be manager Chas Chandler discovered him at the Café Wha? and offered him a management deal. “Hey Joe” was to become Jimi’s first hit record and remained a staple of his live act throughout his career. For reference, the song transcription begins on page 21.

Intro

The signature single-note lick that Hendrix plays for the intro is based on the E minor pentatonic scale as played in *open position*, meaning that it is played low on the fretboard and includes many open strings.

E Minor Pentatonic Scale (Open Position)



The tune is kicked off with a very distinct-sounding lick that is executed with a slide from D to E on the B string, played simultaneously with the open high E string. It can be a little challenging to perform the slide and keep the high E string ringing clearly, so play Example 1 repeatedly with close attention paid to sounding both strings loud and clear. (You can also use just a hammer-on from D to E instead of a slide for a slightly different sound.) The phrase ends with deft slides, pull-offs, and hammer-ons that should be executed cleanly as well.



Hey Joe
Example 1

NC.(E)

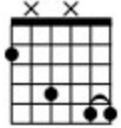
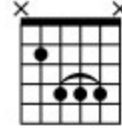
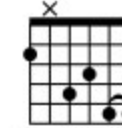

Verse

“Hey Joe” is a simple song in that it basically consists of a four-bar form that is repeated through the entirety of the track. The first two bars of the progression are similar in that both are built from a pair of chords—one played on beats 1 and 2 and the other played on beats 3 and 4; bar 1 features C to G, and bar 2 features D to A. The last two bars of the four-bar form consist of a repeated E chord that is embellished with subtle single-note phrases.

Foxy Lady

From *Are You Experienced*, 1967

This essential *Are You Experienced* track begins with a fade-in on a sustained high F# note, but an incidental A note blooms into feedback before Jimi's aggressive slide down the D string triggers the band's entrance into the intro section proper. The intro rhythm figure, shown in the accompanying example, is based on repeated eighth-note F# root notes played on beats 1 and 3 on the sixth and fourth strings, respectively. On beats 2 and 4, Jimi strikes the top two strings fretted at the fifth fret to sound F#m7, which can also be analyzed as F#7#9(no 3rd). The accompanying chord diagrams illustrate the F#m7 chord as well as the subsequent B chord that is interspersed during the verse section. During the chorus, he moves between the F7#9, E, and B chord voicing shown.

F#m7	B	F7#9	E
			
T 3 44	1333	T 3244	231

The verse rhythm part is written out below, wherein the F# root notes (one octave apart) are played in alternating fashion against the two notes barred on the top two strings. Notice the inclusion of the B chord in bar 2, as well as the ascent through the F# blues scale (F#-A-B-C#-E) across beats 3 and 4 of bar 4.



Foxy Lady Riff

Verse
♩ = 100



*T = Thumb on 6th string.

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STYLISTIC DNA

All of the greatest instrumentalists have a sound that is distinctly their own. In this section, we'll look at that aspect of Jimi Hendrix's approach and sound on the guitar.

Combining Minor and Major Pentatonic

Combining the sound of minor and major scales is a technique utilized by virtually all blues guitar players to some degree. The minor scales used most often are minor pentatonic and the blues scale, while the major scales used are major pentatonic and the Mixolydian mode. Jimi was a big fan of blues guitarists B.B. King, Albert King, Freddie King, and T-Bone Walker (among many others) and studied every lick they played. All of these guitar players created improvised lines that moved freely through these different scales.

A great example of Jimi's use of this concept can be heard on the intro to the studio version of "Red House," approximated in Example 1. On beat 1, the phrase is based on B minor pentatonic (B–D–E–F♯–A), but on beat 2, he brings the major 6th (G♯) into play. On beat 3, he switches to the B blues scale (B–D–E–F–F♯–A), and he wraps up the phrase by sliding up one half step from D (minor 3rd) to D♯ (major 3rd), making reference to the B Mixolydian mode (B–C♯–D♯–E–F♯–G♯–A). In bars 2 and 3, he switches to B major pentatonic (B–C♯–D♯–F♯–G♯) with subtle incorporation of chromaticism via the inclusion of G natural.



DNA
Example 1

B7

Legato One-String Riffs

One of Jimi's many trail-blazing techniques was the incorporation of legato (smooth, connected) phrases executed by moving up and down a given string using only hammer-ons, pull-offs, and slides to sound the notes. A perfect example is his incredible solo to "May This Be Love," executed in its entirety on the B string. Example 2 is played in this style. Using the index finger to fret most of the notes, this solo moves freely through the notes of E hexatonic (E–F♯–G♯–A–B–C♯). In bar 6, the middle finger is used to execute the quick hammer/pulls on the B string. While playing this phrase, strive for note clarity as well as accurate rhythmic syncopation.