

Top Gun Anthem

STEVE STEVENS

This monster solo from the 1986 film covers every technique from novice to expert. **JOE BENNETT** profiles the pyrotechnic pilot while **RICHARD BARRETT** targets the transcription.

THERE'S something special about a really experienced session player. Contrary to what some guitarists might say, their mastery of technique enables them to play with more, rather than less, 'feel', and they can add musicality to the simplest of single-note lines.

One such player is Steve Stevens. Given no more than five notes in Harold Faltermeyer's theme, he turns in a moving guitar part with all the interpretative skill of a singer, whilst maintaining the obligatory rock widdle-fest (hey, it was 1986!).

Faltermeyer, you may recall, was also responsible for the equally simple-but-effective *Axel F* theme from *Beverly Hills Cop*.

TECHNIQUE

To begin with, the theme is played in the key of C, starting at the fifth fret position – playing the first theme entirely on unwound strings gives a brighter tone and makes the whammy bar vibrato more subtle. Consequently, when the theme changes key (to the musically distant F# major) Steve moves the whole phrase up six frets, so the tone is retained in the new key. We've notated the main themes as they appear the first time around – subtle variations in vibrato and fretting are used each time they reappear. You'll also notice we haven't included chords above the notation, because they change on the first and second time repeats.

THE SOLO

It's outrageous isn't it? Every rock technique in the book, played with laser accuracy and a great guitar sound to boot (Hamer SS through 100W Marshalls). It begins with whammy bar dives using pinched harmonics, moves into alternate muted sweep picking for while, and finishes with tapping – note the tricky left- and right-hand taps and slides in the final bar. The whole solo is played over the chords C, Bb, F, Dm and G, with a final chord of G (G11) over the tapping outro.

Steve worked closely with Faltermeyer on the *Top Gun Anthem*, although he sometimes finds other people's material frustrating: "When you go into a studio and they say 'OK, the bass, drum, keyboard and melody are there...' it doesn't allow you to affect the other things around you. I try to work on projects with other artists... maybe I can learn something." **TG**



The ever-humble Steve Stevens – "maybe I can learn something."



Your cut-out-and-keep pin-up of Tom Cruise, courtesy of the TG girls.

On the CD

TRACK 41

Top Gun Anthem, as it appears on the soundtrack album. The guitar was a 1976 Strat, through a Digitech GSP2101 in 'Saturated Tube' mode

TRACK 42

Top Gun Anthem – backing track including rhythm guitar

Guitars: Richard Barrett



STEVE STEVENS Top Gun Anthem (first theme in C)

CD TRACK 41 >>

The first time the theme occurs, it's played in the key of C, as smoothly as possible, using hammer-ons, pull-offs, single-finger slides and bar vibrato.

technique: movie theme

» STEVE STEVENS Top Gun Anthem (first theme in F#)

CD TRACK 41 »

...and here's the theme in F# major. Play the 'scoop' by depressing the bar, picking the string then releasing the bar as the note sounds.

» STEVE STEVENS Top Gun Anthem (variation theme in C)

CD TRACK 41 »

This time round, there's a slight change in the melody towards the end of the phrase, where it resolves to C, before going into the keyboard section.

» STEVE STEVENS Top Gun Anthem (variation theme in F#)

CD TRACK 41 »

When the third F# major theme enters, it features triplets at the end, and more severe bar vibrato. The bend at the end it played with fingers.

» STEVE STEVENS Top Gun Anthem (additional variation theme in C)

CD TRACK 41 »

technique: movie theme

» STEVE STEVENS Top Gun Anthem (additional variation theme in C)

CD TRACK 41 »

2.

doop

doop

S

3 5 3

BU

3(5)

0

5 3 2 3 2 5

5 3 (3)

Here, we're back in C major, but the theme gets more manic - the pinched harmonic is bent up briefly, followed by a short bar dive 'doop'.

» STEVE STEVENS Top Gun Anthem (solo)

CD TRACK 41 »

pick slide

doop

Scoop

w/bar

3

5 5 5

3

5

Scoop

w/bar

Scoop

P

3 2 3 3 2 3

Scoop

Scoop

NH

PM

BUBD

3(5)(3) 12 12 12

8

12 10 10 9 10 12 9 13 12 13 14 15 12

12 13 S 10 11 13 12 10 10 13 10 BU

doop

BU

BD

P

BU

BD

P

BU

PM

7 (8) (7) 5 7 (8) (7) 5 7 (8)

5 7 3 5 2 3 5 2 3 5 3 S

PM

PB 4

RP

RP

RP

1 2 3 1 1 2 3 1 1 2 3 1 1 2 3 1

4 5 5 3 (5) 5 3 (5) 5 3 (5) 5 3 (5) 5 3

technique: movie theme

» STEVE STEVENS Top Gun Anthem (solo)

CD TRACK 41

Pinched Harm.

BU BU BU BU

6(8) 6 4 6(8) 6 4 6(8) 6 4 6(8) 6 4

12 13 10 11 12 13 10 11 12 13 10 11 5 12 13 10 11 12 13 10 11 12 13 10 12(13)

BD P

(12) 10 12 13 10 12 13 10 10 0 12 7 4 0 4 7 12 7 4 0 4 7 12 7 4 0 4 7 12 7 4 0 2 5

P H H P H H P H H P H H P H H P H H P H H P H H

10 0 2 5 10 0 2 5 10 0 2 5 10 0 2 5 10 0 2 5 10 0 2 5 10 0 2 5 10 0 2 5

P H H P H H P H H P H H P H H P H H P H H P H H

12 0 4 7 12 0 4 7 12 0 4 7 12 0 4 7 14 0 4 7 14 0 4 7 14 0 4 7 14 0 4 7

P H H P H H P H H P H H

16 0 4 7 16 0 4 7 16 0 4 7 16 0 4 7 12 7 10 7 12 7