

# SWEET CHILD O' MINE

## sweet child o' mine

### Open-chord Arpeggiation

THROUGHOUT "Sweet Child O' Mine," Guns N' Roses guitarists Slash and Izzy Stradlin employ an effective accompaniment technique known as *open-chord arpeggiation*, picking the notes of open chords individually and allowing them to ring together. This type of playing provides a full-sounding harmonic backdrop behind the vocal and solo guitar melodies and also adds more rhythmic and subtle melodic interest to the song than would otherwise be accomplished by just strumming the chords.

FIGURE 1 illustrates the arpeggiated electric guitar accompaniment that enters during the song's first verse, at measure 33. As you play through this passage, notice how "extra" notes (non chord tones) are added to the basic D, Cadd9 and G chord shapes to create further melodic interest and help the song develop. Also notice the flowing contour of notes and preponderance of wide interval skips.

Another fine example of open-chord

arpeggiation can be found behind the first guitar solo, beginning at measure 79 (see FIGURE 2). As you play this passage and listen to the recording, notice how well the arpeggiated 1st-position B7 chord blends with the 2nd-position B5 power chord (played by guitars 2 and 3). Also notice how the two-note fill at the end of the four-bar phrase (G, F#) helps smoothen the transition from Am back to Em.

Arpeggiating chords—especially open chords—is a great device for spicing up a chord progression. As these examples from "Sweet Child O' Mine" demonstrate, this technique can help form a seamless flow from one chord to the next while creating a more animated accompaniment. It also helps make a dirty electric guitar tone sound cleaner for certain softer parts of a song.

—Jimmy Brown

#### BASS NOTES

GN'R bassist Duff McKagan does a few unusual things on this tune: first, he plays

with a pick and gets a very thin tone that's treated with a chorus effect. Second, he begins the tune with what is essentially a bass solo. In bars 9-16, Duff plays a very melodic solo that functions as an "intro melody." He uses his guitar chops to play a solo that is primarily based on the D Mixolydian mode (D E F# G A B C). Over the C chord, however, he forgoes the use of F#, and instead plays F natural. Though this note conflicts a bit with the high F# played in the main lick by Slash, Duff chose it because F is the fourth of C, and alludes briefly to an implied chordal shift of a C major chord to Csus4.

For the body of the tune, Duff accentuates the eighth-note drive of the song by using a combination of eighth notes and quarter notes, with a few ties and eighth-note rests thrown in to add a syncopated bounce to the overall feel. In this respect, his playing is reminiscent of former Rolling Stones bassist Bill Wyman and R&B bass legend James Jamerson. Study this bass line closely for a good lesson on pure, solid, rock and roll bass playing.

—Andy Aledort

FIG. 1

FIG. 1 shows the guitar and bass parts for measures 33-40. The guitar part is in 4/4 time and features arpeggiated chords: D (measures 33-34), Cadd9 (measures 35-36), G (measures 37-38), D (measures 39-40), Dsus4 (measure 39), and Dsus2 (measure 40). The bass part includes fretting diagrams and a "let ring" instruction.

FIG. 2

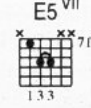
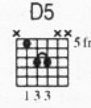
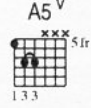
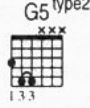
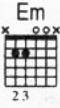
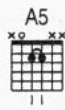
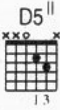
FIG. 2 shows the guitar and bass parts for measures 79-82. The guitar part is in 4/4 time and features arpeggiated chords: Em (measures 79-80), C (measures 81-82), B7 (measures 79-80), and Am (measures 81-82). The bass part includes fretting diagrams and a "let ring throughout" instruction.

# SWEET CHILD O' MINE Guns N' Roses

Words and Music by W. AXL ROSE, SLASH, IZZY STRADLIN',  
DUFF "ROSE" MCKAGAN and STEVE ADLER

Guitar Transcription by Andy Aledort

From Guns N' Roses' Geffen recording APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION



\* All gtrs. down 1/2 step (low to high: E $\flat$  A $\flat$  D $\flat$  G $\flat$  B $\flat$  E $\flat$ )

**A** Intro  
Moderate Rock  $\text{♩} = 120$

(Band tacet)

N.C.

Riff A

1

Gr. 1 (dist. elec.)

*mf* *sim.*

15	14	15	14	15	14	15	14	15	14
12	14	12	14	14	12	14	12	14	14

\* All pitches sound 1/2 step lower than written.

Gr. 2 (elec.)

D5 II

*p* *mf*

end Riff A

5

15	14	15	14	15	14	15	14	15	14
12	14	12	14	14	12	14	12	14	14

(Band in)

Gr. 1 plays Riff A

D

Cadd9

9

Gr. 3 (acous.)

Rhy. Fig. 1

Gr. 2

*mf*

let ring - - -

2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	0	0	3	0	3	1	0	1	0	0
3	3	3	0	3	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

G

D

13 end Rhy. Fig. 1

*mp* P.M. ----- 1 ----- *mf*

D

Gtr. 1 plays Riff A (1st 6 bars only)  
Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1  
Rhy. Fig. 2

C

17

Gtr. 3

G

D  
Gtr. 1 plays Fill 1

Dsus4 D  
end Rhy. Fig. 2

21

Fill 1

Gtr. 1

T  
A  
B

# SWEET CHILD O' MINE Guns N' Roses

## B 1st & 2nd Verses

1. She's got a smile that it seems to me reminds me of childhood memories where  
 2. She's got eyes of the bluest skies as if they thought of rain I'd

25

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1

D C

Gtr. 4 (elec.)

everything was as fresh as the bright blue sky and see an ounce of pain Her  
 hate to look into those eyes and

29

G D

\* echo repeats

Now and then when I see her face she takes me away to that special place And if I  
 hair reminds me of a warm safe place where as a child I'd hide and

33

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 (1st 7 bars only)

Cadd9

let ring

stared to long I'd probably break down and cry  
 pray for the thunder and the rain to quietly pass me by

37

G D Dsus4 D Dsus2 D

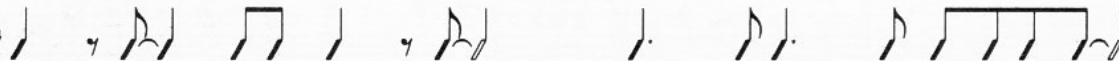
Gtr. 2

**C** 1st and 2nd Choruses

Whoa (1st time only) (Whoa) whoa sweet child of mine

A5 B5 C5 D Dsus4 D Dsus2 D

Gtrs. 2, 3 & 4



41

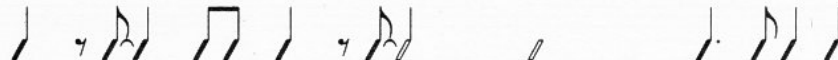
Gtr. 1

**D**

Whoa oh oh oh sweet love of mine

A5 B5 C5 D

Gtr. 2 plays Rhy. Fig. 1 simile  
Gtr. 3 plays Rhy. Fig. 2 simile



45

Gtr. 1

51

1.

C G D

\* notes are tied 2nd time only

57

2.

G D



1. sweet love of mine 2. mine

74 C5 D D#5

*mf mp mf*

Gtrs. 1 - 4

**F** 1st Guitar Solo

Em C B5 Am

Rhy. Fig. 3A end Rhy. Fig. 3A

\*Gtrs. 2 & 3

Rva

79

*f* full

17 (17) 15 14 15 14 17 15 14 15 14 17 16 17 14 15 (15) 12 14 (14) 12 11 12 11

Rhy. Fig. 3 end Rhy. Fig. 3

Gtr. 4 let ring throughout

*mf*

0 0 0 0 2 0 2 0 1 3 1 0 2 0 1 2 0 2 0 2 1 2 0 2 2 0 1 2 3 2

\* Two gtrs. arr. for one gtr.

Gtrs. 2 & 3 play Rhy. Fig. 3A two times simile

Gtr. 4 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 two times simile

83 Em C B5 Am

*mf* full

14 14 11 12 14 12 13 12 10 13 13 12 12 12 12 (12) 14 15 (15) 7

87 Em C B5 Am

*mf* 1/2

(7) 9 9 7 (7) 9 9 8 8 11 11 (11) 9 9 7 9

# SWEET CHILD O' MINE Guns N' Roses

Gtrs. 2 & 3 play Rhy. Fig. 3A (first 3 bars only)

Gtr. 4 plays Rhy. Fig. 3 (first 3 bars only)

Em

C

Gtr. 5 plays Fill 3

B5

Gtr. 4 plays Rhy. Fill 1

A5

G F#  
⑥ ⑥  
3fr 2tr

91

slow, wide vib.

Gtrs. 2 & 3

P.M.

*mf* *cresc.*

*cresc.*

7 8 7 9 8 1/2 8 11 9 9

## G 2nd Guitar Solo

Em

E

F#

G5

A5

C5

D5<sup>II</sup>

G5

⑥ open  
⑤ 2tr

Rhy. Fig. 4

end Rhy. Fig. 4

\*Gtrs. 2, 3 & 4

96

Gtr. 5 w/wah

full full full full full full full full full 1/2 full 1 1/2 full full

15 15 15 (15) 12 14 15 15 15 (15) 12 14 17 17 17 full 1/2 17 17 17 17 (17) 15

\* Three gtrs. arr. for one gtr.

Fill 3

Gtr. 5 w/wah

TAB

8 9 8 7 9 7 10/12 13 12 11 12 13 11 12/14 11 12 14 15 12 14 15 14 12 15 14 12 14 12 15 12 15 15 (15)

Rhy. Fill 1

Gtr. 4

TAB

0 1 2 2 2 0 1 2 0 2 2 2 0 2 2 2 3 2



Gtrs. 2, 3 & 4 play Rhy. Fig. 4 three times

Em

E

F#

G5

A5

open

2fr

⑥

⑥

100

15 17 15 12 15 12 14 (14) 12 14 12 14 12 14 12 14 15 14 12 14

C5

D5 II

G5

Em

E

F#

open

2fr

⑥

⑥

103

15 15 14 15 14 15 (14) 12 14 14 12 14 12 14 12 14 12 14

105

G5

A5

12 14 12 14 12 14 12 14 12 14 12 14 12 14 15 15 12 14

C5

D5

G5

Em

E

F#

open

2fr

⑥

⑥

107

12 12 15 12 15 15 12 15 14 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 15 12

# SWEET CHILD O' MINE [Guns N' Roses]

109

G5 A5

## H Breakdown

(Gtrs. 3 & 4 out)

Where do we go

Where do we go

now Where do we

go

C5

D5<sup>II</sup>

G5

E

G5 type2

G

A5<sup>V</sup>

A

⑥  
open

④  
5fr

④  
7fr

Gtr. 2

Gtr. 5 steady gliss.  
w/wah

*mf*

111

Where do we go

Where do we go

now

Where do we go

C5

D

G5

E5

E

G5 type2

G

A5<sup>V</sup>

A

C5

D

G5

⑤  
7fr

④  
5fr

⑦  
7fr

115

N.H. 8va

N.H. 8va

N.H. 8va

N.H.

Where do we go

sweet child

Where do we go now

E5

E

E5

E

E5

E

G5

D

G5

D

G5

A5

C5

D

G5

⑥  
open

⑥  
open

⑥  
open

⑤  
5fr

④  
open

120

P.M.

E5 G5 E A5 C5 D G5

Where do we go now now oh

slight P.M. sim. 8va hold bend

124

I Outro

Where do we go Ah Where do we go now

E5 F# G5 E A5 C5 D G5

Rhy. Fig. 5 end Rhy. Fig. 5

Gtrs. 2 & 4

128

Gtr. 5

Where do we go Where do we go now

Gtrs. 2 & 4 play Rhy. Fig. 5

E5 F# G5 E A5

132

8va

grad. bend full

## Where do we go

C5

D

G5

Gtrs. 2 & 3 play Rhy. Fig. 5 (first 3 bars only)  
E5

F#  
⑥  
2tr

G5

E  
⑥  
open

135

\* play slightly behind the beat

Where do we go now

No No No No No No

No

Sweet child

Sweet

A5

Gtr. 4 plays Fill 4

E D B Bb A G  
⑤ ⑤ ⑥ ⑥ ⑥ ⑥  
7fr 5fr 7fr 6tr 5fr 3tr

E5

F#  
⑥  
2tr

G5

138

## Free Time

child

of mine

A5

C5

D5

E5<sup>VII</sup>

142

Fill 4

Gtr. 4

TAB

5 7 9 8 7 5