

Steve's Approach To Lead Soloing



When soloing on the guitar I like to keep things as clear and simple for myself as possible. For this reason I prefer a 'pattern & shape' approach to playing the guitar. I also believe that this approach is more straight forward for students as well.

Basically, this is my approach to playing lead solos on the guitar:-

1/ Have a 'home base' scale pattern

Generally this will be Pattern One Pentatonic Scale although it may be another pattern depending on what the music requires. If I get lost or go off key I can quickly return to the safety of my 'home base'.

2/ See what can be attached to the 'home base'

For Pattern One Pentatonic Scale you can always attach a semitone step below finger one on string three regardless of the mode that the music is in.

3/ Extend the 'home base' over more fretboard

Usually this will be Extended Pattern One Pentatonic Scale.

4/ Consider the use of passing notes

Use passing notes (chromatic elements) within the boundaries of the scale patterns mentioned so far. This needs to be done carefully as these notes are usually off key. The interesting thing though is that they don't sound off key so long as you end up on a note diatonic (on key) to the scale and don't labour these passing notes. Different styles of music allow for greater use of passing notes; any blues based style for example. The advantage to passing notes is that they provide you with more notes per square centimeter, so to speak, and therefore make busier flurries of notes easier to play.

5/ Branch out and connect to other scale patterns

Both of the Pentatonic and Diatonic Major Scale variety. Look for convenient positions in your patterns to swap over to another scale type.

6/ Use the Single String Technique

Link your patterns on any desired string using the Single String Technique.

7/ Play from your heart as melodically as you can

I have found that melody equates to accessibility for the listener. Shredding and other fast playing is great but it can leave the listener cold if it isn't melodic. Remember that music is a language and you should have something in your heart to say as you play. For those that do it can be said, "that person made their guitar talk".