

Steve Lukather

Lukather live: in the '80s, all rock stars dressed like this.



One of the most versatile guitarists of the '80s, Steve Lukather is famed for his superb session work and recordings with Toto. GT probed him for some star playing tips...

Cool Hand Luke

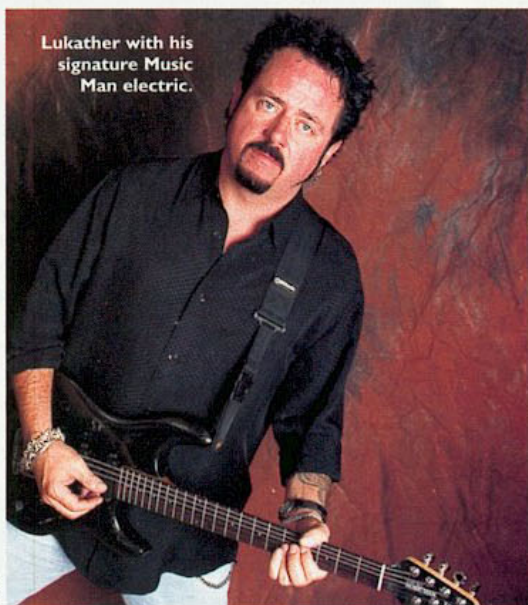
Steve Lukather was the archetypal '80s session man, playing guitar and producing on literally hundreds of records – Eric Clapton, Joni Mitchell and, erm, Spinal Tap have all employed his talents, while Michael Jackson's 'Beat It', Don Henley's 'Dirty Laundry' and Lionel Richie's 'Running With The Night' are just three '80s smashes to feature his sizzling guitar work. In parallel, Lukather's enjoyed a career as part of Toto, the band of super-musos he helped form in the mid-'70s.

Lukather's playing is still revered by guitarists all over the world, and it's two of his finest solos, from Toto's 'Rosanna', that you can learn in this edition of GT. Now in their 25th year, Toto are currently touring to promote 'Through The Looking Glass', their new album of covers. GT caught up with Lukather in the middle of the recent dates to quiz him about recording 'Rosanna', and life as an '80s session ace...

GT: Tell us a bit about how 'Rosanna' was written...

Steve Lukather: "Dave (Paich, keyboards and vocals) wrote it, pretty much came to us with the tune all finished. We don't rehearse, so when we do a record we just go in, dig the tune, someone writes out a quick chord chart and then we do it. 'Rosanna' was basically live."

GT: One of the most remarked upon aspects of 'Rosanna' is the rhythm – if you buy a drum machine these days, they'll have recreated that 'Rosanna' drum groove as a program...



Lukather with his signature Music Man electric.

SL: "That's pretty funny. You know where that came from? Jeff (Porcaro, drums) and us were really into Led Zeppelin, and Jeff morphed 'Fool In The Rain' (from Zeppelin's 'In Through The Out Door') and a Bernard Purdie drum groove (from Steely Dan's 'Home At Last') and came up with that 'Rosanna' groove. So we went from there – by the end of that afternoon, we had done the basic rhythm track and I'd overdubbed some of the solo.

"Bang! The end vamp was never supposed to happen, we just started jamming and that's exactly what you hear. We still record that way..."

GT: For 'Rosanna's first solo, you've got a very unique bending technique – you bend a tone with your third finger and then fret that bend with your fourth finger for an additional note. Other players would choose the more 'country' approach of splitting those notes over two strings. What influenced that technique?

SL: "I don't know, that's just the way I feel it. I like strange bends. When I was young, I loved Larry Carlton in that (Steely Dan) 'Kid Charlemagne'/'Royal Scam' era – all the bending, sleazing in between, finding the great note that goes into the change. I was greatly influenced by Larry, who's a good friend of mine now. He's one of my heroes – and I came more from a hard rock background and he's more a bebop-er, and we sort of switched where he played jazz with a bit more rock and I came from the other end. We both understand where we're going. His concept of harmony is fantastic..."

GT: As 'Rosanna's solo is so melodic, was it pre-planned?

SL: "No, I had just started playing and it was one-take. What I did do was after I had played, the guys said I should double it. So I went back and learnt it and then doubled it. But the end solo is not doubled..."

GT: And that was a one-take too?

SL: "Yeah, you get lucky sometimes with stuff like that. In those days it used to be I'd get the track and everybody would say 'do the solo now', and everybody would be partying in the studio. You'd have the whole vibe of people and friends hanging out, just great. Nowadays, it's more technical than it used to be. Now everything is so different, so I'm glad I had the experience I did back then. We were in the last era of session guys, as it doesn't exist in the same way anymore..."

GT: On that outro solo, you've got big two-tone bends. Had you been

"I just started playing and 'Rosanna' was a one-take solo. I went back and then doubled it."

"I like to play a bit every day and I still actually give a shit... even though it's not cool to be really good these days."

listening to a lot of Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck the night before?

SL: "Yes, of course! The first time I felt up a girl, I was listening to Led Zeppelin! Pagey has been really nice to me too since, as we've met up for different things. He said: 'Don't let anyone give you shit, Steve. I used to be a session guy too, as was John (Paul Jones). Don't let anyone tell you you don't rock because of that.'"

GT: The outro solo displays your very able picking-hand technique...

SL: "I use everything; down-up-picking, down-picking, I use fingers. I don't ever think about what I'm playing now. But what I did do when I was a kid, which is the most important thing to remember so you don't hurt yourself, was stiffening up when I was trying to play fast. You have to learn to relax your forearm and wrist."

"If you start practising and it begins to hurt, then stop practising. Otherwise, you'll get tendonitis, and you won't be able to play the guitar for a year, and you won't be able to accomplish what you want."

GT: You were at your height as a session player in the '80s – was there a typical kind of session?

SL: "Between 1976 and 1986, it was pretty much the peak of the session scene in LA – it was before the

machines took over the world! Guitar-wise, I'd be playing with Ray Parker, Jay Graydon or Lee Ritenour – there'd always be two guitarists, and most of the records were just rhythm charts so you had to listen to what everyone else was doing."

GT: Did you try to get a sound sorted within 15 or 30 minutes?

SL: "You didn't have anywhere near that time, you'd better have your shit together when you plugged in. It was a 335, Strat or Les Paul – 'what is the other guy using, what should I go for?' I was the token rock guy on most of that stuff, so I'd take a Les Paul and a Marshall stack. Someone like Ray Parker would be the funk guy. And if Jay (Graydon) and I played together, one of us would do the clean shit and the other one would do the other parts. Sometimes, a producer would request me to do the solo or whatever..."

GT: For the majority of sessions, were you just called in to do an eight- or 16-bar solo?

SL: "A lot. At the time, it was the era of a guitar solo being on everything, even on cheesy songs like (Olivia Newton John's) 'Let's Get Physical'. I got hired and didn't even know who the artist was, hence me appearing on such weird

records. You'd turn up and go 'gosh, we're playing for Shirley Bassey.'"

GT: Was there a studio protocol, a pecking order, about who sat where, like Tommy Tedesco in seat 1 and Larry Carlton in seat 2...

SL: "Oh sure! If there were two guitars, I'd be guitar 2... until I became the older cat and the younger guy had guitar 2. There were a couple of times when the guitar 2 part was a lot harder than the guitar 1 part. I showed up for a session late once, and it was a full orchestra date. Lee Ritenour was the other guitar part and he can read anything. I showed up late as my car had f**ked up, so there was no time for me to get my shit together and, at 19 years old, I was panicking. After trying to apologise profusely, I looked at Rit's guitar 1 part and then at my guitar 2 part... My part was like a f**king piano part, no chord symbols anywhere! His part was full of tacets (*empty bars*), just little fills to do. So he just grabbed my part and put his part in front of me. I said to him, 'if I was gay, I'd suck your cock right now!' He saved me and he didn't have to. He saved my ass then for sure..."

GT: What's your practice regime like these days?

SL: "I always practice, but on acoustic guitar, because there's greater resistance when you pick the strings. I like to play a bit every day and I still actually give a shit... even though it's not cool to be really good these days."

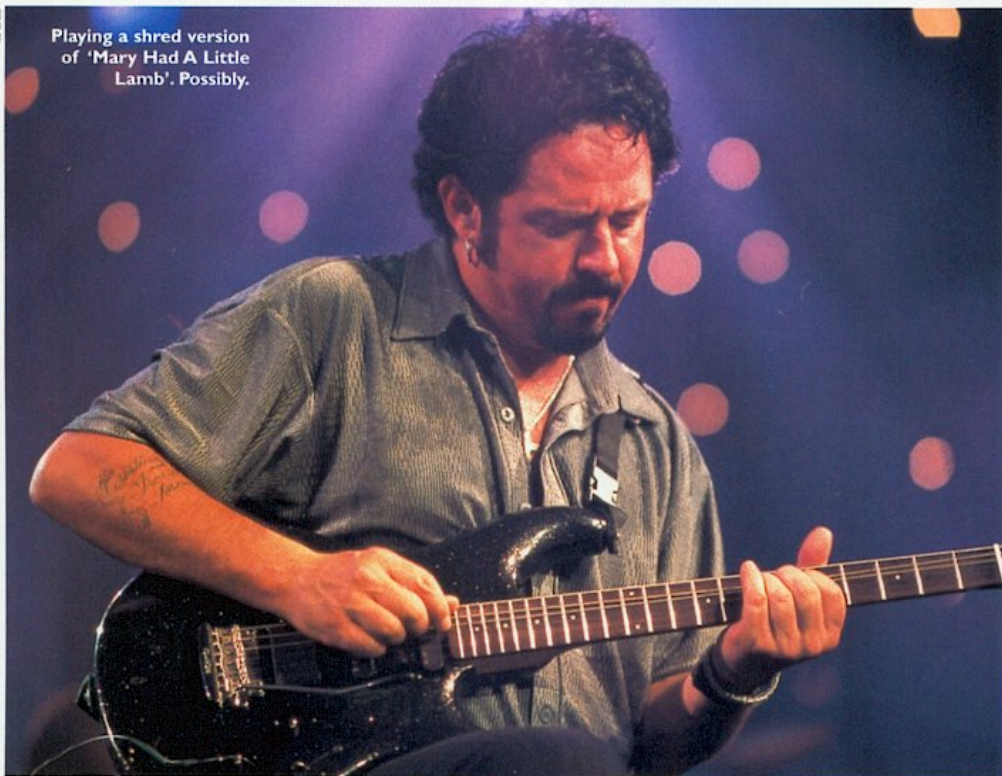
GT: What stuff do you do?

SL: "I'm studying some chord melody stuff, keyboard and horn stuff. Just dipping more into bebop as there's not much on the radio that's challenging these days."

GT: What do you say to readers who might say: 'I can't read but neither did Hendrix and SRV'?

SL: "If you can play your ass off like Stevie Ray Vaughan could, don't learn how to read! I didn't until I was 15, so going back and learning how to read 'Mary Had A Little Lamb' was very frustrating. But I forced myself to do it even though I hated it; now I find it really helpful. To read music means you can communicate with any musician and that can only be a good thing!" **GT**

Interview by Jason Sidwell



Playing a shred version of 'Mary Had A Little Lamb'. Possibly.

Phil Hilborne shows you how to play Steve Lukather's famous solos from Toto's '80s AOR smash hit...

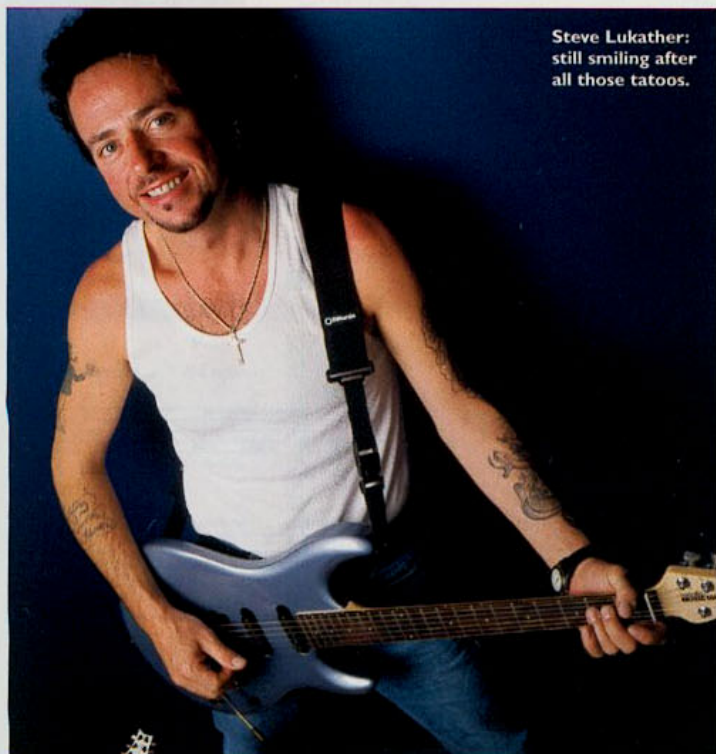
TOTO

ROSANNA

ON THE CD
TRACKS 7-11



- 7. Introduction
- 8. Solo 1 full track
- 9. Solo 1 backing track
- 10. Solo 2 full track
- 11. Solo 2 backing track



Steve Lukather: still smiling after all those tatoos.



As well as being one of the world's most sought after session musicians and a Grammy winning solo artist in his own right, Steve Lukather is also a founder member of the band Toto. The solos transcribed here are taken from one of their biggest singles, 'Rosanna', which opened their smash album 'Toto IV'. To my mind, these solos (particularly the second one) are among the best that Steve Lukather has ever recorded, bristling with melody, fire, great phrasing, great sound, technique and feel. The Bernard Purdie/John Bonham-inspired drum groove (played on the original by the late Jeff Porcaro) is one of the best rock shuffle grooves ever recorded too. You will find

these solos challenging to master, but with such a splendid groove to practice against, it should be fun!

SOLO #1

The first solo is undoubtedly worked out by Steve and as such, it fits the song perfectly. Apart from the $\flat 3$ ($A\flat$) and the $\sharp 5$ ($C\sharp$) passing notes in **BAR 3**, it can be viewed as using notes from the F mixolydian mode throughout:

F	G	A	$B\flat$	C	D	$E\flat$	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	$\flat 7$	1

Also, the run in **BAR 3** could be seen as being D blues scale played over the F chord, aka F major pentatonic with an added $\flat 3$:

F	G	$A\flat$	A	C	D	F
1	2	$\flat 3$	3	5	6	1 of F
$\flat 3$	4	$\flat 5$	5	$\flat 7$	1	$\flat 3$ of D

The opening two bars of the solo involve an ascending idea that makes good use of chord tones to outline the accompanying F chord. This is followed in bar 3 by a fast ascending phrase that uses both the $\flat 3$ and more unusually the $\flat 6$ to add some chromatic colour to the line. The final two bars feature phrases played high up the neck, during which Steve uses interesting string bending to great effect. Notice how he bends into the major 3rd of the $E\flat$ chord (G) and the 5th of the D chord (A). Also observe how the solo ends on the note F, the minor 3rd of D minor – which incidentally, is the same note as the first note of the solo only two octaves higher.

SOLO #2

When Toto were recording this track, they all played live in the studio, this second solo resulting from a spontaneous 'jam' at the end of the song. As such, this solo really does demonstrate how awesome a player Steve Lukather is. Throughout the solo his superb control over pitch, phrasing, vibrato and feel are well exhibited and provide models that are well worth aspiring to. This solo is based around three scale types:

The G dorian mode:

G	A	$B\flat$	C	D	E	F	G
---	---	----------	---	---	---	---	---

The G minor pentatonic scale:

G	$B\flat$	C	D	F	G
1	$\flat 3$	4	5	$\flat 7$	1

and the G blues scale:

G	$B\flat$	C	$D\flat$	D	F	G
1	$\flat 3$	4	$\flat 5$	5	$\flat 7$	1

The opening 3 phrases in **BARS 1-2, 5-6 and 7-8** are fairly straightforward blues-based ideas... look out for the D-F minor 3rd bend in bar 5 though. The following phrase in **BARS 9-10** contain some large interval string bends. ➔

GT RATING ADVANCED



Will improve your:

- Soloing confidence
- Bends
- Scale knowledge
- All-round rock licks

Steve Lukather

TOTO 'ROSANNA'



TRACK RECORD

'ROSANNA' IS FROM TOTO'S 1982 ALBUM 'IV'

TOTO'S MOST POPULAR ALBUM – and a quintessential '80s soft rock record – opened with this track and closed with their No. 1 hit 'Africa'. The album also contained Steve Lukather's 'I Won't Hold You Back', the vocal of which was the main sample in Roger

Sanchez's huge 2000 hit 'Another Chance', and another hit 'Make Believe'. The playing is exemplary throughout. Solo Lukather albums worth a listen include these: 'Candyman' ('94) and 'Luke' ('97).

As you play through this, you will need to take care to ensure that both the E and B string pitches (**BAR 9**) reach the correct 'target' notes. In both cases the bends are of a major 3rd. Look out for broken strings here too. You've been warned!

BARS 11-14 involve a descending triplet figure that uses the G dorian mode. As well as this scale, there are also a couple of passing notes used, B and A \flat in **BAR 13**.

These are a favourite and commonplace device of Steve's and they work really well in this kind of lick – introducing a little tension into the run, making it sound more colourful and 'jazzy' than a normal 'straight' scale-based idea.

CHROMATIC FUN

The line in **BARS 15-18** illustrates another example of chromaticism. Here the chromatic section is the phrase that descends from F to D on the 3rd beat of **BAR 16**. **BAR 19** features a triplet-fuelled idea that necessitates quite a large left-hand stretch. Throughout this passage you should leave your left-hand first

finger on the F (10th fret G string). Incidentally, to play the C and B \flat notes, you could use tapping instead of playing them on the B string as indicated: for the C, tap the G string, 17th fret; for the B \flat , tap the G string, 15th fret.

The phrasing for the unison bend section in **BARS 22-24** is nigh on impossible to read – Steve was just really going for it at this point, and I dare say it is one of those things that

he would never play in exactly the same way twice. So listen closely to the track, and try and get as close as you can by ear. Remember that vibe and aggression is the most important factor here.

BLUESY FINALE

The final three bars (**BARS 25-27**) feature a very fast blues scale passage, that will certainly be more fluid if you memorise it first and then build it up to speed gradually over a period of time. The accompanying chord progression as originally played by keys and brass section generally speaking, outlines a Gm7, C/G, Dm/G, C/G, Gm7 and C/G – this should be phrased in the same way as the keyboard part on the backing track. Notice also on the track how the brass extends the harmony by playing notes a 3rd above the keyboards towards the end of the track – 'tis nice!

GT

PRO TIP

DON'T BE SCARED of the mention of 'chromaticism'. This simply means that you use notes that lie in-between regular scale notes – 'in passing' – to add some extra melodic interest/colour. The notes are always connected via semi-tone steps, as they also are when played in series as a chromatic scale.

SOUND ADVICE

ROMANCING ROSANNA

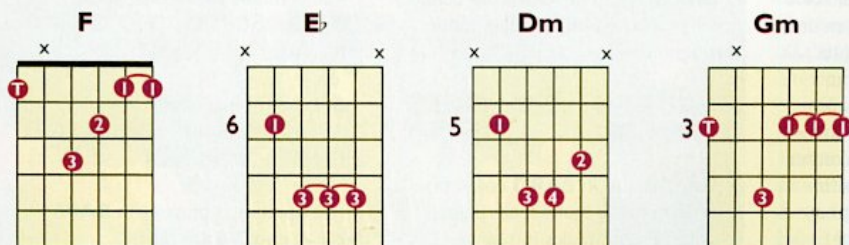
THIS TRACK WAS ORIGINALLY played on a Les Paul through a Fender Deluxe Reverb. On the GT CD version I used my Sid Poole Classic (fitted with Tom Holmes humbuckers) set to the treble pickup for both solos. This went into a Cornford MK50 head set as per the chart below. The only effects used

were a little bit of Chorus from a Yamaha REV500 and also some 'Big Studio' reverb added via a Lexicon MPX1 at the mixing stage. To replicate this using your own gear, aim for a 'fat' tone with lots of bass, plenty of midrange and not much treble – think smooth, not scratchy! Gain/distortion is probably not as dirty as you might think – on a scale of 1-10 (1 = AC/DC crunch, 10 = Metallica filth) around 5-6 should be fine.

Vol	O/d	Bass	Mid	Treb	Master Vol	Pres	Resonance
5	6	7	4	4	4	4	5

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STEVE LUKATHER 'ROSANNA' CHORD SHAPES





STEVE LUKATHER 'ROSANNA' CHORD SHAPES

Diagram showing seven guitar chord shapes for 'Rosanna':

- Gm7/D**: x 0 2 3 3 x
- C/E**: x 3 3 3 x
- Dm/F**: x 6 2 2 x
- Gm7**: x 3 3 3 x
- C/G**: x 3 3 3 x
- Dm/G**: x 3 3 4 x
- Dm/G**: x 5 2 3 x

STEVE LUKATHER 'ROSANNA' SOLO I

F
Moderate ♩ = 84 (approx)

3:14

S S BU BU RP BU BD

E B G D A E

3 3 3 3 5 5 7 7 10 10 10 10 12 12 10 12(14) 12(14) 11 12(14) 12-10

X XIII E^b XV

BU RP BU RP

E B G D A E

12-10 11-12 10-12 10-12-13 10-13-10-13-14-15 13 15 13 18-(20) (20) 18 18-(20) (20) 18 18 15 18 15

(8va) Dm XVII Gm

BU RP BU BD

E B G D A E

20-(22) (23) 20-(22) 22 (20) 18

Steve Lukather

TOTO 'ROSANNA'

STEVE LUKATHER 'ROSANNA' SOLO 2

G dorian

8va

Very fast ♩ = 168 (approx)

7

4:34 Keyboard Intro (F) G minor keyboard vamp intro G minor chord pattern throughout

BU BD

17(18) (17) 15 15 17 15 17 [17]

8va

wide

BU BU BU

19(21) 17 19(21) 17 19(22)

8va

BU BU BU BU

15 18 15 18 (19) (20) 18 (20) 18 15 18 (22) 18 15 18 15 18 (22) 18 15 17 18

8va

BU BU BD BU

15 18 [18] S 17 20 17 18 17 20 17 18 17 20 18 17 19 18 17

wide

8va

6

18 17 17 19 17 17 16 18 15 17 14 [14] 15 14 17 [17] 10 12

19 19 19 19 18

(12)



STEVE LUKATHER 'ROSANNA' SOLO 2 ... CONTINUED

(8^{va})

E
B
G
D
A
E

16

(8^{va})

E
B
G
D
A
E

19

(8^{va})

E
B
G
D
A
E

22

(8^{va}) Loco

E
B
G
D
A
E

25