

George Benson

BREEZIN'


He is undoubtedly one of the finest Jazz guitarists of all time, yet Benson remains one of the most misunderstood and underrated artists. **KIT MORGAN** investigates...



Born in 1943 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, George started playing guitar at eight. Comparisons with Wes Montgomery, several solo albums and work with various jazz giants like Herbie Hancock and Miles Davis saw Benson make substantial waves as a formidable guitarist and musician. In 1976, the album, *Breezin'* went on to become the biggest-selling jazz album of all time. As the award-winning title track, *Breezin'* is a smooth jazz instrumental with an extended pop song format and great melodies.

With this popular Benson classic, we have provided audio to listen and play along to and a song structure shown opposite. Sadly, we are unable to print tab for the Head (the term used for the chorus/focal point of a jazz tune), diad melody and 2nd melody sections due to copyright restrictions.

However, we can provide trademark licks and techniques that Benson uses in his improvising within the framework of *Breezin'*.

His distinctive guitar sound relies heavily on the combination of his Ibanez Signature series guitars (with flat wound strings) and Polytone amps. When it comes to technique he uses either pick, pick and fingers or just thumb, depending on the situation. For left hand work, he tends to avoid using his pinky, being happy to fly up and down the fingerboard (à la Django) rather than work across the strings in one position. Alongside his use of chord 'fragments' to create arpeggio runs, much of his style uses octaves. Wes Montgomery was a primary influence, but Benson has developed it further with dazzling speed and the addition of notes like 4ths, 5ths and 6ths within the octaves. 

On the CD

TRACK 53

Breezin' - complete version

TRACK 54

Breezin' - backing track

Guitars: Kit Morgan

Fretboxes

Dmaj9	Bm7
Em9	A11
D6/9	A11

These are the chords to *Breezin'*. The first four chords feature in the Groove, Diad Melody, Head, and 2nd melody. The last two chords feature in solo 1 and solo 2.

Song Structure

Intro (7 bars):

Dmaj9 - Fmaj9 - Amaj9 - Fmaj9 - Dmaj9

'Groove' (4 bars):

Dmaj9 - Bm7 - Em9 - A11 x2

Diad Melody (12 bars):

Dmaj9 - Bm7 - Em7 - A11

Head (8 bars):

Dmaj9 - Bm7 - Em7 - A11

2nd Melody (8 bars):

D6/9 - A11

Head (8 bars):

Dmaj9 - Bm7 - Em7 - A11

Solo 1 (30 bars):

D6/9 - A11

2nd Melody (4 bars):

D6/9 - A11

Head (8 bars):

Dmaj9 - Bm7 - Em7 - A11

2nd Melody (4 bars):

D6/9 - A11

Solo 2 (12 bars to fade):

D6/9 - A11



GEORGE BENSON: Breezin' - solo 1 (Benson style)

CD TRACK 53

(A11) D6/9 A11

2:39

D6/9 A11

D6/9 A11

D6/9 A11

D6/9 A11

3:02

GEORGE BENSON: Breezin' - solo 1 (Benson style) (cont'd...)

CD TRACK 53

A11

D6/9

A11

D6/9

A11

8th

D6/9

A11

3:26

GEORGE BENSON: Breezin' - solo 1 (Benson style) (cont'd...)

CD TRACK 53

D6/9 **A11**

D6/9 **A11**

D6/9 **A11**

D6/9 **A11**

D6/9 **A11**



GEORGE BENSON: Breezin' - solo 1 (Benson style) (cont'd...)

CD TRACK 53

There are many 'Bensonisms' here: slides and hammer ons for lyrical melody phrasing, use of D minor pentatonic for a bluesy effect over the A11 chord (he's

'thinking' G7 - check bars 8 and 10), and lots of arpeggio shapes (bar 12, 16, 22, 26 and 27), and fast-picked licks (bars 15, 16, 22 and 28).

GEORGE BENSON: Breezin' - solo 2 (Benson style)

CD TRACK 53

GEORGE BENSON: Breezin' - solo 2 (Benson style) (cont'd...)

CD TRACK 53

A11 8^{va} D6/9

8 9 10 10 10 13 14 14 14 16 17 16 17 17 16 17 17 16 17 17 15 14 15 15 14 15 15 15 14 15 15 17 13 14 14 15 14 14 15 15 13 14 15 14 14

9 10 11 12 12 12 14 15 15 15 14 15 14 15 14 15 15 15 14 15 15 15 14 15 15 15 13 14 15 14 14

10 11 12 12 12 15 16 16 16 13 14 13 14 14 13 14 14 13 14 14 12 11 12 14 10 11 14 14

A11 D6/9

15 15 14 14 12 12 14 9 9 9 10 7 10 11 10 8 7 9

14 12 12 14 11 11 9 9 11 6 6 6 7 4 7 7 9

12 12 12 12

A11

7 8 7 10 7 8 9 7 9 8 7 8 9 7 9 9 7 9 10 7 8 9 10 8 6 6 6 5 8 7 5

S rake

D6/9 Fade

4 7 7 4 7 3 4 5 5 7 5 7 5

S

Time to really 'George Out' now! It starts with similar octave shapes as in the 2nd melody, then a bluesy lick in bar 5. The fast, almost-chromatic lick

starting at the end of bar 5 is an example of how Benson turns up the heat when linking phrases, making for a finger-twisting performance!