

RUBINA

Music by Joe Satriani

"Rubina" is Joe's wife—undoubtedly the inspiration for this beautiful piece of music. This song is one of the few Satch tunes which revolves around a strictly major tonality—G major (G–A–B–C–D–E–F♯), in this case. On a later album, *Surfing with the Alien* (1987), Joe also achieves a powerful melodic statement by staying within the parameters of a garden-variety major scale in "Always with Me, Always with You."

Figure 1 – Guitar Solo

The solo for "Rubina," aside from being an all-time favorite solo ever for hordes of guitar nuts across the globe, is also a personal favorite of Satch's former pupil, Steve Vai. When Satriani first sat down to blow over this song's basic tracks, he couldn't seem to shake the two-note theme—G (fifth fret, fourth string) to A (seventh fret, fourth string)—that appears in measures 1–2. Needless to say, all Joe needed was a great starting point (which these notes clearly were) and he was off to the races, improvising the remainder of this 24-measure masterpiece!

Throughout this solo Joe demonstrates an aspect of his improvisational brilliance that separates him from the proverbial "pack"—his intuitive knack for creating unpredictable *syncopations* (deliberate disruptions of the normal pulse). The subtle rhythmic quirks that Satch naturally gravitates towards—breaking up the industry-standard sixteenth-note subdivision into breathing musical phrases (measures 3–8, 11–12, 16–17, etc.)—helps render one of the most tasteful solos ever to ooze from the fingertips of any instrumentalist.

Don't let the above paragraph fool you; amidst all of his masterfully-crafted melodies, Joe crams in some serious legato licks. He just puts them in the perfect places! In measures 9–10, Joe flaps his fingers across the fretboard, pulling-off notes from B minor pentatonic (B–D–E–F♯–A) at the seventh position. Opting for B minor pentatonic over the implied chord progression (G–Em) at this point creates an interesting arrangement of notes. This brings out unexpected scale tones (most notably, F♯) that a traditional pentatonic approach would usually bypass [note: a more-traditional pentatonic approach would probably call for G major pentatonic (G–A–B–D–E) or E minor pentatonic (same notes, constructed from E: E–G–A–B–D)].

Joe persists with his pentatonic patterns in measure 16 with an angular organization of pitches rooted in E minor pentatonic. Here Joe breaks the scale up into 4th and 5th interval shapes and slithers down, via fret-hand slides, to lower string sets. This same approach towards manipulating pitches within the parameters of a pentatonic scale is also explored in the song "Circles" (Fig. 2, measures 27–28), from *Surfing with the Alien*.

In measure 18, Joe pulls out all the technical stops with a descending spiral of notes covering nearly two octaves on strings 1–4. Notice how the position shifts between each group of pull-offs (roughly every three notes) gives him an extra shot at squeezing more notes out of a string. It also allows him to cover more territory *along* the fretboard as opposed to *across* it.

Fig. 1
Guitar Solo 2:00
Moderately Slow ♩ = 80
N.C.(G)

7
Featured Guitar:
Gtr. 1 (panned hard L.)

8
Slow Demo:
Gtr. 1 (center of mix)

5 (G) (Em)

P.M. - - - -

8 (G) (15ma)

P.H.

pitch: A

10 (Em)

P.H. - - - -

pitch: B

12 (G) 8va

14 8va

16 *Sva.* (Cmaj7)

(1.5ma) *(1.5ma)* *loco*

P.H. P.H.

18

19 (Bm7)

P.M. P.M. P.M.

full

21 (Cmaj7)

1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2 1/2

23 (Bm7) *Sva.* N.C.

full