

"Good Times Bad Times" Led Zeppelin



By Douglas Baldwin

Good Times Bad Times" was the first cut on Led Zeppelin's first album, an opening salvo that in many ways defined the group's strategy for world domination. Here is a classic case of clever songwriting, the assimilation and morphing of prevailing styles, and great instrumental chops all coming together in one brilliant recording.

THE FINGERINGS

As ubiquitous as the power chord has become (thanks in no small

part to Jimmy Page's extensive use of this two-note voicing), "Good Times Bad Times" opens instead with a full major chord. Play it with your 3rd finger barred across the 9th fret, and be sure that the G# (9th fret, 2nd string) rings clearly. At the same time, don't just flop your 3rd finger onto the 1st string, or you'll add an unwanted 6th (C#) to the chord. The double stab of this chord could have been the signal for a classic Yardbirds-style double-time rave-up (Led Zeppelin, of course, rose from the ashes of that

seminal band), but drummer John Bonham puts the song firmly in a half-time groove—a rhythmic feel that was just emerging in 1968.

Following these rhythmic cues, the arpeggiated chord of the second measure is absolutely unpredictable—and absolutely brilliant. The challenge here is to articulate the arpeggio clearly, so that no note ringing into another. It's best, then, to employ a "detached" technique in your fret hand fingering: fret each note with a hammering motion while simultaneously picking it. Then, as you release the note, articulate the next one in the same way. This rapid fret-and-release action can generate some occasional grace notes, as shown in Fig. 1. Also, note the fingering: the opening D (5th string, 5th fret) is first played with the 1st finger, then, halfway through the third beat, that note is played with the 2nd finger, to accommodate the major arpeggio that follows. And dig the chromatic rise at the end of the first bar, which is fingered entirely with the 1st finger in order to set up the next two stabs of the E chord.

TAKING IT HIGHER

"Good Times Bad Times" has an

unusual structure. The intro, first verse, and chorus all favor E as the tonal center, but rather than return to E for a second verse, Zeppelin takes it to the bridge in F#, then returns to the chorus a whole step higher than before. This rising key center generates a sense of surprise and tension that few bands or songwriters of any style ever attain.

HAMMER OF THE GODS

If his creative riffing didn't strike fear in the hearts of lesser guitarists, Page's solo certainly wet

a few pants. It's entirely in E minor pentatonic (E-G-A-B-D) and is filled with hammer-ons, pull-offs, and bends executed with rapid rhythmic precision. The first two-measure phrase covers the classic 12th-position box; then, in the third bar,

the tension rises as a bend of a major 3rd (from G to B) opens some work in 17th position. Yet while the solo itself is powerful, it's Page's interplay with vocalist Robert Plant in the outro that is of particular interest. A textbook version of the outro's first phrase might look something like Fig. 2, but Page's approach is filled with doubled notes, unpredictable breaks in the pattern and, perhaps most important, pauses that give the vocalist some room. ♪

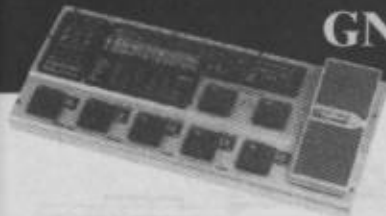


Fig. 1

Fig. 2

TONE ZONE

GUITARS 1&2: Solidbody
PICKUP/POSITION: Humbucker/Bridge
GAIN: 4
EQ: Bass/Mid/Treble: 5/6/5
GUITAR 3: Solidbody
PICKUP/POSITION: Humbucker/Bridge
GAIN: 7
EQ: Bass/Mid/Treble: 5/8/6
FX: Hammond Leslie cabinet or Dunlop Uni-Vibe



GOOD TIMES BAD TIMES

As Recorded by Led Zeppelin
(From the Atlantic Recording LED ZEPPELIN)



Transcribed by Adam Perlmutter

By Jimmy Page, Robert Plant,
John Jones and John Bonham

Lyrics

Verse

In the days of my youth,
I was told what it means to be a man.
Now I've reached that age,
I've tried to do all those things the best I can.
No matter how I try,
I find my way into the same old jam.

Chorus 1-3

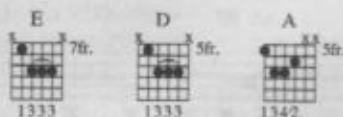
Good times, bad times,
You know I had my share.
When my woman left home
For a brown eyed man,
Well, I still don't seem to care.

Bridge

Sixteen, I fell in love
With a girl as sweet as could be.
It only took a couple of days
Till she was rid of me.
She swore that she would be all mine
And love me till the end,
But when I whispered in her ear
I lost another friend, oh.

Outro

I know what it means to be alone,
I sure do wish I was at home.
I don't care what the neighbors say,
I'm gonna love you each and every day.
You can feel the beat within my heart.
Realize, sweet babe, we ain't ever gonna part.



Intro

Moderate Rock ♩ = 92

Gr. 1 & 2 (dist.) **E** *play 4 times*

f 1. In the

1:12

Verse

E **D** *play 6 times*
Riff A *End Riff A*

days of my youth, I was told what it means to be a man...

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Good Times Bad Times

0:44

Chorus 1

Gr. 1 A G D A G D

Good times, bad times, You know I've had my share. When my

Gr. 2 Rhy. Fig. 1

woman left home for a brown eyed man, you know I still don't seem to care.

B A E A5 B5 A5 B5

woman left home for a brown eyed man, you know I still don't seem to care.

End Rhy. Fig. 1

0:57

Bridge

Gtrs. 1 & 2 F#5 *play 4 times*

Sixteen, I fell in love with a girl as sweet as could be...

Good Times Bad Times

1:17

Chorus 2

B A E B A E

Good times, bad times, you know I had my share. When my

C# B F# C#

woman left home for a brown eyed man, well, I still don't seem to care.

1:30

Guitar Solo

Gr. 1: w/ Rhy. Fill 1 (8 times)

E Rhy. Fig. 2

D

A

End Rhy. Fig. 2

Gr. 2

Gr. 3 (dist.)

Gr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 2 (7 times)

E

D

A

E

D

A

Rhy. Fill 1
Gr. 1

Good Times Bad Times

E D A E D A

E D A E D A

Chorus 3
Gtr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1
Gtr. 3 tacet

E D A G D A G D

Good times, bad times, you know I had my share. When my

B A E B5

woman left home for a brown eyed man, well, I still don't seem to care.

2:02
Outro-Guitar Solo

Gtrs. 1 & 2: w/ Riff A (till end)

E D

Good Times Bad Times

E D E D

delta loco

10 15 15 15 15 15 15 15 15 15 19 20 20 20

E D E

delta loco

17 17 20 19 20 19 20 19 20 19 20 19 20 19 19 0 19 X X X

Begin Fade

D E D

delta

13 X X X 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 X

E D

delta

15 14 12 0 0 14 12 14 12 14 12 14 12 14 12 10 12 10 12 10 6 6 6 6 5 5 5

E D E

delta

17 17 15 17 15 17 15 17 15 15 16 16

Fade Out