

On the Road Again

Words and music by Willie Nelson



While the rigors of the road are often hard on musicians, Willie Nelson's hit "On the Road Again" is hardly a cautionary tale. Originally written for the film *Honeysuckle Rose*, which features Nelson as a country and western musician whose experiences threaten to destroy both his personal and professional lives, "On the Road Again" leaves the travails behind, celebrating the finer points of touring through a rollicking country march. Nelson's recorded rendition was nominated for Best Original Song at the 1980 Academy Awards and also won the year's Grammy for Best Country Song.

The recording is decidedly bass-heavy, so solo guitarists may want to mind the low strings on each downbeat, similar to the "intro riff" transcribed below. As the verse's opening tonic chord (E) moves to the III7 (G#7)—a classic country convention—the

bass ascends from F# to G# with a cool chromatic movement that translates very well to the acoustic guitar. At the chorus, try strumming the A chords on upbeats while picking back and forth between the open fifth and sixth strings on each downbeat to recreate the bass's I-V movement.

If you can find a friend to cover the strumming duties, feel free to experiment with the arpeggiated leads as played on the record. I've included two samples below, riffs played on the second verse.

Another great way to add some punch to the tune is to leave a one-beat break in your strum, just after the final "our way" in each chorus, picking back up on the E chord once the vocals get to the word "road."

—DAN APCZYNSKI

Intro Riff **Verse Leads**

Chords

E: 023100
 G#7: 131211 4 fr.
 F#m: 134111
 A: x01230
 B7: x21304

1. On the road again

G#7

I just can't get wait to get on the road again

F#m

The life I love is makin' music with my friends

A B7 E

And I can't wait to get on the road again

2. On the road again,

G#7

Going places that I've never been

F#m

Seein' things that I may never see again

A B7 E

And I can't wait to get on the road again

Chorus

A

On the road again,

E

Like a band of gypsies we go down the highway

A

We're the best of friends

E

Insisting that the world keep turnin' our way

B7

And our way

3. On the road again

G#7

I just can't get wait to get on the road again

F#m

The life I love is makin' music with my friends

A B7 E

And I can't wait to get on the road again

Guitar solo

Repeat chorus and third verse

A

And I can't wait to get

B7 E A B7 E

On the road again

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