

## Learn from David Gilmour's "Time" Solo

I've spent a lot of time over the course of my career transcribing solos from some of my favorite players. Not because I wanted to copy them, but rather to learn from them. I'd listen to a solo that gave me chills, and I'd really want to know why it gave me chills. What is it about it that makes it sound a certain way? Is it note choice? Timing? Tone? Feel? Expression? I often felt that if I could get inside the head of the player, I could tap in to what they're tapping in to.

In my early years as a player, I subscribed to many guitar-related magazines, read them cover to cover and did my best to learn every lesson by the pro authors. Of course, in the pre-internet age, information like that wasn't nearly as easy to access. Guitar magazines were all I had. Many of the interviews written about the top rock players typically said things like, "I have no idea what I'm doing. I don't know anything about theory. In fact I break all the rules because I don't follow them. Learning to read music or knowing about theory will only hurt my creativity because it will bind me to a set of rules that I don't want to follow." Although it's a very romantic view that makes for a great story, I wanted to find out if that was really true. So when my musical training and notation skills were evolved enough I started transcribing, then doing informal analysis of the solos. What I found was kind of shocking at the time: The vast majority of players who claimed they "broke all the rules" in fact usually did the opposite. In many cases, their solos tended to be far more conservative than I ever imagined.

I remember the first time I heard David Gilmore's solo in the song "Time" from "Dark Side of the Moon." Pink Floyd released a full-length movie of the same name. Basically it was performance footage, interviews, candid studio scenes, and artistic cinematography. There was no real plot. It was simply the album being played with film footage. When they got to the solo section in "Time", the band was set up in the middle of Stonehenge, with a helicopter circling overhead getting shots of David Gilmore playing this solo in front of a stack of WEM cabinets. I think I was 15 or so when I saw it. My life was never the same after that. For its time (see what I did there?), it was an epic masterpiece of expression, dripping with emotion.

Here's "The Thing": If you look at what notes he "targets" over each chord, you can see that he seems to be following a fairly rigid formula of target-tones. Every time he plays the F# minor chord, he's targeting the note F#. Over the A Chord, he targets the C# (which is the 3rd of A major), and targets the B (the 5th) over the E chord.

What's surprising is that he does this every single time. The only difference is that he's playing in a higher register each time he cycles through those chords.

I didn't realize this until I did the work to transcribe the solo. Once I did, I couldn't "un-see" it.

The notation here shows the original solo. Next, you just get the target notes without the solo. You'll find it's a fun, informative and revealing exercise to learn the original solo, then practice improvising what you might imagine the alternate takes might sound like.

If I ever meet David Gilmore, I'm going to ask him about this.

# "Time" (Guitar solo by David Gilmore)

Transcribed by Jon Finn

The score is written in F#m, 4/4 time. It consists of four systems of music, each with a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The bass staff contains fret numbers for the left hand. The score includes various guitar techniques such as 'full', 'p.o.', 'sl.', and '1/2' bends, along with specific chord voicings like F#m, A, and E.

System 1 (Measures 1-4):  
Treble: F#m, full, A 1/2, full, p.o., E full, 1/2, F#m, sl.  
Bass: 4, 4(6)(5)(6), 4(6) 4 2, 4(6) 4 4, 4(5), 4 4 6 5 5 5 5 7

System 2 (Measures 5-8):  
Treble: F#m, full, p.o., A full, 1/2, E full, 1/2, F#m  
Bass: 4 4(6)(6) 4 2 4(6) 9 9 9 9(10)(10) 9 10(12) 10 9 9 9(10)(10) 9 9 11 11

System 3 (Measures 9-11):  
Treble: F#m sl., full, full, A full, 1/2, E full  
Bass: 14 16 14 14 17(19) (19) 17 17(19) (19) 17 17 16(18) (18) (18) 18(19) (19) 18 16(18) 16 16 17 17 16(18) 16 14

System 4 (Measures 12-15):  
Treble: F#m, full, F#m full, full, p.o. p.o., A full, full  
Bass: 16 14 17(19) (19) 17 17(19) 17 17 16(18) 16 14 16 14 16 (18) 17 19 (21) (21)

"Time" (Guitar solo by David Gilmore)

15

full

E

F#m

Dmaj7

A maj7

3 3

3 3

3 3

3 3

19 21 19 19 19 16 17 16 17 19

19 19 17 17 17 14 14

4 2 3 2 5 7 5 5 4 5

4 5 5 5 5 7 9

19

Dmaj7

A maj7

Dmaj7

C#m

Bm

sl. sl.

full

1 1/2

full

p.o.

3

4(6)(6)

4(7) (6) 4 2

4(6) (6) 4 2

4 2 6 4 6 4

24

E

F#m

2

0

2

## "Time" (Guitar solo by David Gilmore)

**"Time" solo Target notes:**

26	F#m	A	E	F#m
(root)	(3rd)	(5th)	(root)	
4	6	4	4	

30	F#m	A	E	F#m
(root)	(3rd)	(5th)	(root)	
4	6 9	12	11	

34	F#m	A	E	F#m
(root)	(3rd)	(5th)	(root)	
16 19	18	16	16	

38	F#m	A	E	F#m
(root)	(3rd)	(5th)	(root)	
19	18	16	16	

"Time" (Guitar solo by David Gilmore)

42 Dmaj7 A maj7 Dmaj7 A maj7

42 5 4 5 4 7 6

4

46 Dmaj7 C#m Bm E

46 7 6 4 2 0

50 F#m

50 2