

EAST-WEST SOLO TAB.

TAB for the opening bars of Michael Bloomfield's main solo of East West

Tabbed by David Beardsell, January 2008.

I have had a number of requests for more detailed TABS of East West since being kindly permitted to put my preliminary analysis of East West on the Michael Bloomfield website in 2006. This is the first of hopefully more detailed East West TABs. The attached TAB represents the entire eastern sounding section of the studio version which lasts from 2m 50s to 7m 7s. I have listened to the 1996 release of three disappointing live versions of East West, and the much better 1966 live performance at the Fillmore, and while they show that it was an extended jam session based on a number of basic patterns, the studio version is the most complex and is the only one that I regularly play. It is so complex and so unrestrained that I wonder if Michael was in a euphoric state during the studio session. I would like to hear any outtakes from this session if they exist. In 2006, I suggested that Michael might have been influenced by the well known Hindustani raga Bhairavi which has flattened 2nd and sixth notes which are used in parts of East West, however he does not follow the rigid pattern of an ascending and descending raga scale. In this section, Michael also uses short chromatic progressions and occasionally reverts to a D pentatonic scale, but with E added. We can only assume that this solo is a result of his creative brain and much experimentation. As the attached TAB shows, there are plenty of musical surprises in the eastern sounding section in the studio version of East West, even for blues and jazz improvisers! Many blues fans dismiss East West as a gimmick, but for nearly 40 years I have regarded it as a challenging and serious piece of improvised music. It is a mystery to me how Michael managed to improvise and interweave such diverse scales without getting any wrong sounding notes.

Michael Bloomfield was one of the fastest blues guitar players of his era, thus I tabbed the eastern sounding solo of East West using Audacity® wave analysis software which enabled me to reduce the speed by 75% which lowered the pitch by exactly 2 octaves. I then matched the tones note by note by ear after retuning my classical guitar to A below bottom E tuning. This was a very time consuming process not unlike manually sequencing DNA, and took nearly two years free time to complete and recheck. While the value of writing a TAB for an improvised piece can be questioned, I enjoyed the challenge.

I have presented this TAB in dropped D tuning that Michael used for this piece. The digital recording presents the piece about 10 cents flat of D, and Michael's guitar has either minor intonation or tuning problems which made it difficult to interpret some notes played higher up on the fretboard.

While Audacity software incorporates a beat finder, interpretation of timing for East West was difficult as Michael's solo parts are very fluid, and thus I have not put in bar locations in this version. Where long notes occur I have spaced them with additional dashes as is sometimes done in TABS. I have also inserted timings alongside key parts as markers in the solo.

Around the time of this recording Michael generally played Gibson Les Paul model guitars. However the studio recording definitely sounds like it was made with a guitar with single coil pick ups, but not a Fender which only had 21 frets in this era. The amplifier was set on reverb because of the reverb splutters which can occasionally be heard.

The main scale Michael uses in this section is D, E flat, F#, G, A, B flat as I have described earlier. In later sections of this solo, E, C, C#, F and even B natural make strategic/improvised appearances! For example, soon after the first part of his solo, Michael plays a section with D, E, G, F natural and C natural which provides great contrast to the previous section with its D, E flat, F#, A, B flat scale. However my favourite part of the solo is Michael's sensational precision bend from E to F natural and then unbending through E and then sliding down to D natural and then to C # before returning to D in the section from 3m 37sec to 3m 50 sec!

I have double checked all of this TAB, however there are likely to be errors especially in the later parts of the section where it is difficult to judge B flat and E flat notes against the D and G drone notes played by Elvin Bishop. Any revisions would be gratefully accepted and would be incorporated with acknowledgment.

h= hammer, p= pull off, / upward slide, \ downward slide, () = note barely played, b= bend, u= unbend.

E-10h11-10h11-10--10h11-10--10h11-10--11-11-10h11p10--10-----
B-----11--11p10-11p10-7-10\ (7)-7-8p7
G-----
D-----
A-----
D-----
2:50

E-----10h11/14-14-11-11p10--10-----
B--7--7- (7)-7p6h7h8p7-7h8-10h11-----11--11-11p10-7-10-7h8-7-7
G-8--8-----
D-----
A-----
D-----

E-----
B-----10--10--10--10-----
G-8-7h8p7--7--7h8-7h8--7--7--7h8--8p7-7-8p7-8p7-7-----**END OF FIRST SECTION**
D-----8-----0-0--0-----8--7-7h8-7-----
A-----
D-----
3:08

E-----10-12-12--15-13-12---12-----12-13-15
B-----7-8- (10)-10-10-10-10h11-----13-----13---13-10-----10-13-----
G----7-8-----10-10-10-10-----
D-7-8-----
A-----
D-----
3:13

E-13p12---13-9h10-10h11-14-15-17-17-15p14-----
B-----13-----15h16-p15-16p15\10h11p10-11p10-7-10-----
G-----8p7---8p7-7---7h8-7-7h8b
D-----7-----7-----
A-----
D-----

E-----
B-----7h8--10--8--7---8p7-7-----10-11-11-11-10h11p10-7-10-11p10-11p10
G-8p7-8p7-7b--u7--7--7--7--7-7h8-----8-8p7-8p7-7-----
D-----7-----
A-----
D-----
3:24

E-----
B-7-10-11p10-11p10-7-10-11bu-11p10-7-10-7h8p7-8-7-7-----
G-----8-8p7-8p7-6-7-----6h7h8p7-8p7
D-----7-7h8-7h8-7h8-7-7h8-----
A-----
D-----

E----- (5)/10-10-10-10
B-----/7-8/10-10-10-10-11-11-10h11-10-10-11-11-14-15/17\15-14\ (12)-12\ (10)-10h11-10-6-----
G--6-6-6h7-----
D-8-----
A-----
D-----
3:37 3:45

E-10b (11) b12-12-12-12-12b13-13---u12\10-9-10--10-10-10h11-14h15/17-17-17-17h18b-17-17\15-14-15p14-10-14-10-10
B-----
G-----
D-----
A-----
D-----
3:53

E-11-10--10-11p10h11p10-10-10-10\5-----
B-----10-----11-10-7-10-7-6-6-----7h8-8b-8p7-8p7-7---8p7-8p7-13h15-15\13
G-----7- (6) h7-6h7-----
D-----
A-----
D-----
3:57

E-----15-15\13-13-12-12-15-13-12-12h15-13-12---12-13-15-13-12-----
B-13\12-12-----13-----13-----14-15-14-12-13p12-10-13-12
G-----
D-----
A-----
D-----

4:02

E-----7h8-----
B-11-10-7-----7h8---8-8-8-8-8-8p7---7h8-10---(13)-12\9
G-----8p7-8p7-8p7-7h8-----7h8-----
D-----7-----
A-----
D-----

4:10

E-----
B-10p9-----
G-----9-10-10p9---9-----
D-----11-11---10p9-9h10/12/15p14-14p13-10-12-7h8-7h8
A-----
D-----

E-----
B-----
G-----7h8-7-7-----
D-7-7-7-7-8-7-8-7-7-8/10-10\8-7-7h8-7-7h8-7-7h8-7h8-7h8-----8-7h8-7
A-----
D-----

E-----10-12-13-13-13-13-13-13-13-13-13/15-15-15/17-17-17-17/20-20
B-----7-8-10-11-----
G-7-7-7-7-7-7-7h8-7-----
D-----
A-----
D-----

4:26

4:29

E-19-19-19-19-17-19-17\ (15)-15-17b19u17-15-17---17b19u17-17-15-17b19u17-15-17b19u17
B-----
G-----
D-----
A-----
D-----

E-17b19-17---15-17--17b19-19-17-15h17-17-15-17p15p12-17p15p12-17p15p12-17p15p12-17p15p12
B-----
G-----
D-----
A-----
D-----

4:42 (5 repeats)

E-17p15p-14-15p14-10-14-10-11-11-10p11-10--11-11p10-11p10
B-----
G-----
D-----
A-----
D-----

E---10-10-10-10/12-12-12\10-10---22-22-22b23-23-23-23-23u22-22-21-21-21
B-12-----
G-----
D-----
A-----
D-----

4:51 (these are bent notes on the upper
limit of the guitar and were hard to TAB)

E-21-22b23b24-24p23-22-22-22-20-20-20-20-20-18-18-18-18-18-19p18-13-18-18--19p18
B-----
G-----
D-----
A-----
D-----

E-19p18-19p18-19p18-13-18-13p12-10-10-11p10---10-11p10-11p10-11p10--10-11p10-11p10-11p10---10-11p10-11p10-11p10-10
B-----11-----11-----11-----
G-----
D-----
A-----
D-----

E-18\17-14-15p14-10-11p10-11p10-11p10-----
B-----11-10-11p10-11p10\7-8p7-----
G-----7-7h8p7-7-----
D-----
A-----
D-----

E-----
B-----7-7h8p7/10\8-7h8-7h8-7h8-10h11-13\11-11p10-7-6h7-----
G--7---7h8p7-7h8p7-----8p7-7h8p7--7-7h8-7h8p7-7
D-----
A-----
D-----

5:12 (2nd guitar open D)

E-----
B-----
G-7h8p7-7h8p7-8p7-7-7h8p7-7h8p7-7h8p7-7h8p7-7----- (7-7-7-7-7-7-7)
D-----
A-----5h6p5-6p5-5h6-6p5-5h6-6p5-0---0---0---0-----
D-----
5:24 (2nd guitar)

E-----
B-----8/10--10/12--12/13--13\12--12/13--13/15--15\13--13/15
G-7h8p7-7h8/11-11-11/12--12/14--14\12-----
D-----
A-----
D-----

E-----
B-(13)--15/17--17/19-19--17\15--15/17--15\13--13\12--13/15--15--13\12-13/15--15--13\12--12\10
G-----
D-----
A-----
E-----

E-----
B-----
G-14/16--13\11--11/13--13\11--11\9--9/11-11\9--9\7--7h8
D-----
A-----
D-----

E-----
B-----
G-7h8p7---7h8/12-12-11h12-8p7-7-7h8-7h8-7h8/12-12-11h12-12-7-8-7---7--7---7---7h8--7-7h8
D-----8-----
A-----
D-----

E-----
B-----
G-11-12-11h12-8p7-7h8-11h12-14-12-11h12-11-8-7h8-7-7---7---7h8---7---7-7h8--7
D-----
A-----
D-----

E-----
B-----
G-7-7h8-12-12-12h13-12-10-9h10p9-10\9-7-7h8-7-7h8-7h8-7h8p7-7h8p7-7h8p7-9h10p9
D-----
A-----
D-----

2 guitar open G string from here or harmonica?

