GENERAL

billy idol rebel yell tab

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Mastering the Iconic Sound: A Complete Guide to the Billy Idol Rebel Yell Tab

When it comes to classic 80s rock, few songs capture the rebellious energy and unmistakable guitar riff as powerfully as Billy Idol's "Rebel Yell." The track's driving rhythm, soaring vocal hooks, and memorable guitar lines have made it a staple for guitarists of all levels. Whether you're a beginner eager to learn your first rock anthem or an experienced player looking to refine your technique, this guide offers a comprehensive, step by step walkthrough of the Billy /Idol Rebel /Yell tab. We'll explore the song's history, dissect its structure, break down each riff, and provide practical tips to help you nail the performance with confidence.

Why "Rebel /Yell" Still Resonates

Released in 1983 as the title track of Billy Idol's breakthrough album, "Rebel Yell" quickly became an anthem for youth culture and a symbol of defiant freedom. The song's blend of hard rock grit, new wave flair, and charismatic vocals helped launch Idol into international stardom. Over the decades, it has appeared in countless movies, commercials, and live shows, cementing its place in rock history. The guitar part—especially the iconic opening riff—has become a rite of passage for guitarists, making the Rebel Yell tab a coveted resource for anyone looking to capture that classic 80s vibe.

Song Structure & Musical Foundations

Key & Tempo

The track is set in the key of F&o minor, with a moderate tempo of roughly 112 BPM. The chord progression follows a classic rock pattern: F&om – D&o – B&m – C&o, looping throughout the verses and chorus. Understanding this foundation wil help you anticipate chord changes and keep your timing tight.

Form Breakdown

1. Intro Riff (0:00 0:24)
2. Verse 1 (0:24 0:58)
3. Chorus 1 (0:58 1:28)
4. Verse 2 (1:28 2:02)
5. Chorus 2 (2:02 2:32)
6. Bridge/Instrumental (2:32 3:02)
7. Final Chorus & Outro (3:02 3:55)

Instrumentation Overview

While Billy Idol's voice takes center stage, the guitar work is equally vital. The track features a blend of power chords, palm muted riffs, and a soaring lead line in the bridge. The bass and drums lock into a steady groove, providing a solid backbone that allows the guitar to shine.

Step by Step Breakdown of the Rebel /Yell Tab

Below we'll provide a full tab for the main sections of the song. Feel free to print it out, copy it into your favorite notation program, or simply read along as you play.

Intro Riff (0:00 0:24)

```
e|-----------------------------------------------|
B|-----------------------------------------------|
G|-----------------------------------------------|
D|-----2--2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-|
A|-----0--0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-|
E|-----------------------------------------------|
```

This opening line is a simple, palm muted power chord pattern that sets the tone. Play it with a steady rhythm and a slight groove to emulate the original feel.

Verse Riff (0:24 0:58)

```
e|-----------------------------------------------|
B|-----------------------------------------------|
G|-----------------------------------------------|
D|-----2--2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-|
A|-----0--0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-|
E|-----------------------------------------------|
```

The verse maintains the same power chord progression but introduces a subtle rhythmic variation. Pay attention to the syncopation in the second half of the measure.

Chorus Riff (0:58 1:28)

```
e|-----------------------------------------------|
B|-----------------------------------------------|
G|-----------------------------------------------|
D|-----4--4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-|
A|-----2--2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-|
E|-----------------------------------------------|
```

The chorus lifts the energy with a higher register. The power chords shift up two frets, giving the section a brighter, anthemic feel.

Bridge & Lead Line (2:32 3:02)

```
e|---------------------------------12-12-12-12-12-12-12-|
B|--------12-12-12-12-12-12-12-12-12-12-------------------|
G|------11-11-11-11-11-11-11-11-------------------------|
D|---10-10-10-10-10-10-10-10-------------------------------|
A|---------------------------------------------------------|
```

E|---|

This section showcases a soaring lead line that uses a combination of hammer on, pull off, and slide techniques. It's essential to maintain a smooth, legato feel to capture the melodic flair of the original.

Final Chorus & Outro (3:02 3:55)

e|---|
B|---|
G|---|
D|-----4--4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-4-|
A|-----2--2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-|
E|---|

The final chorus repeats the earlier chorus riff but with added intensity. Finish the track by letting the last chord ring out, giving the song a satisfying conclusion.

Practical Tips for Mastering the Tab

1. Start Slow, Build Speed

Begin by playing the tab at a reduced tempo—perhaps 50 % of the original speed. This allows you to focus on accuracy and hand positioning. Once you're comfortable, gradually increase the speed until you reach the full tempo.

2. Use a Metronome for Timing Precision

Timing is crucial, especially in the syncopated verse sections. A metronome will help you maintain a steady pulse and ensure that your rhythmic variations land on the correct beats.

3. Focus on Palm Muting Technique

The opening riff relies heavily on palm muting. Keep the edge of your picking hand lightly resting on the strings near the bridge, and practice varying the amount of pressure to achieve a tight, percussive sound.

4. Incorporate Legato in the Lead Line

The bridge's melodic line is all about legato. Practice hammer ons and pull offs until you can execute them without clicking the strings. This will give the solo its smooth, fluid character.

5. Pay Attention to Dynamics

"Rebel Yell" isn't just about speed; it's about contrast. Play the verses with a slightly softer attack, then explode into the chorus for maximum impact.

Common Mistakes and How to Fix Them

- Over muting: Too much palm muting can kill the sustain needed in the chorus. Lighten your touch slightly on those chords.
- Rushing the Lead: The bridge's melodic line is a technical challenge. Slow down and focus on clean transitions between notes.
- Ignoring the Backbeat: The drums drive the groove. Make sure your picking aligns with the drum hits for a cohesive feel.

- Skipping the Dynamics: A flat performance feels dull. Use dynamics to mimic the original's punchy energy.

Advanced Techniques & Variations

1. Adding Distortion & Effects

To capture the authentic 80s sound, use a medium gain distortion pedal with a touch of chorus or flanger. Experiment with a slight delay on the bridge to give the lead line extra space.

2. Fingerstyle Adaptation

For guitarists who prefer fingerstyle, try mapping the power chords onto your thumb and index finger, while using the middle and ring fingers for the melodic line. This adds a unique texture while preserving the song's integrity.

3. Transposition for Different Keys

If you're playing with a vocal partner or a band, you might need to transpose the song. Use a capo on the 2nd fret to shift the song up a whole step to B&m minor, or use a capo on the 4th fret for D&m minor.

Practice Routine & Learning Resources

Below is a suggested weekly practice schedule to help you master the Rebel /Yell tab efficiently:

1. Day 1: Warm up with basic scales; practice the intro riff at a slow tempo.
2. Day 2: Focus on palm muting and rhythm accuracy in the verse.
3. Day 3: Work on the chorus, emphasizing dynamics.
4. Day 4: Drill the bridge lead line, concentrating on legato techniques.
5. Day 5: Combine all sections; play through the entire song at full speed.
6. Day 6: Record yourself and critique; adjust timing or tone as needed.
7. Day 7: Rest or play casually to keep the muscle memory fresh.

For further learning, consider the following resources:

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