

LAYLA

Words and Music by Eric Clapton and Jim Gordon

Figure 14 – Intro, Verse, and Chorus

Eric introduced “Layla” with the challenge, “Let’s see if you can spot this one.” His “jazzier” arrangement, with its slow shuffle groove and acoustic setting, might have confounded a few for a short time, but judging from the audience response to the opening measures, you can’t hide a riff and a song as strong and memorable as “Layla” for long—no matter how it’s disguised. On the track, Clapton plays his flat-top steel-string acoustic with a pick while Andy Fairweather Low lays down a solid rhythm part on a gorgeous old Gibson Super-400 arch-top acoustic.

The intro to the new “Layla” is begun as a solo by Eric and embodies the song’s familiar progression in the changes of Dm–Bb–C. You could call this an “acousticized” version of the original classic chord riff. It is also heard in measures 21–28 as the central rhythmic figure of the chorus. Clapton plays a tasty single-note intro solo in measures 6–12, which is unmistakable with its sensitive blues-rock phrasing, characteristic finger vibrato, and D minor pentatonic (D–F–G–A–C) melody lines. Note the inclusion of the ninth (E) which produces a six-note “hexatonic” scale (D–E–F–G–A–C) throughout his improvisations—another trademark Slowhand trait.

The verse is contrastingly fluid and modulatory. It moves to the unrelated key of C# minor and proceeds through a series of chords that never quite seem to fully resolve. Clapton approaches this section with a different strummed articulation which latches on to the background groove and contributes to a more propulsive rhythmic feel.

Fig. 14

Intro
Moderate Shuffle ♩ = 96 (♩ = ♩³)

Chord diagrams:
 A5: x0xx00
 Dm: x02321
 C: x32310
 Bb: x21333

Gtr. 1 (acous.)

Chords: D5, Bb5, Bb, C, D5, Dm, Bb5, Bb

Gtr. 1

Chords: C, C5, D5, Dm, Bb5, C5, D5

Gtr. 2 (acous.)

mf

28

Featured Guitars:
Gtr. 1 meas. 1-28

29

Slow Demos:
Gtr. 1 meas. 1-4;
6-12; 13-16;
17-20

16 E E7 E F#m B E A

side. You've been run-nin' hid-in' much too long,

Chords: E, E7, E, F#m, B, E, A. Includes triplets and a '3' marking.

19 F#m B E A5 Chorus Dm C Bb

you know it's just your fool-ish pride. Lay - la,

Gtr. 2 Gtr. 1

(Gtr. 2 cont. in slash) let ring - - - - -

Rhy. Fig. 1

Chords: F#m, B, E, A5, Chorus (Dm, C, Bb). Includes 'Gtr. 2' and 'Gtr. 1' markings.

22 C Dm End Rhy. Fig. 1 C Bb C Dm

got me on my knees. Lay - la, beg-gin' dar-lin', please. Lay - la,

End Rhy. Fig. 1

Chords: C, Dm, End Rhy. Fig. 1, C, Bb, C, Dm. Includes 'End Rhy. Fig. 1' markings.

Figure 15 – Guitar Solo

Eric's guitar solo is also played with a flat pick, and contains many of the signature melodic and rhythmic elements of his style. It strikes a perfect balance between outright blues improvisation and song conscious rock and pop, mixed with just a subtle hint of swing jazz—implied largely in the rhythmic placement of licks and their triplet-based

feel. He immediately develops a nice pace in the solo, digging in solidly with bent double-stop blues riffs in the first measure. Slurred double stops are exploited in measures 3 and 4. Clapton relaxes a bit with a loping, single-note D minor (hexatonic) melody in measure 5.

Check out the amalgam of ideas in the solo's climax in measures 9-12. Eric begins an aggressive bent lick on beat two, then imitates it two measures later—a familiar swing jazz device combined with a timeless blues guitar mannerism. He closes the solo with D minor pentatonic and blues lines that combines single-notes with chords and double-stop textures.

30

Featured Guitars:
Gtr. 1 meas. 1-16

31

Slow Demos:
Gtr. 1 meas. 1-8;
9-16

Fig. 15
Guitar Solo

Gtr. 2: w/ Rhy. Fig. 1, 8 times

Chord changes: C Bb C Dm C Bb C Dm C Bb C Dm C Bb C Dm

Measure 13 includes: let ring