



with Kevin Downing



Twin Guitar Solos

Plenty of guitar players are fascinated by the twin guitar solos heard on such recordings as Thin Lizzy's *The Boys are Back in Town*, Steely Dan's *Bodhisattva*, Fleetwood Mac's *Albatross*, Allman Brothers' *Jessica*, and ABBA's *Knowing Me, Knowing You* – to name a few. Many rock bands have included twin guitar solos in their songs because it adds something unique to the music when used well, and some like the Allman Brothers and Queen have made it a distinctive trademark of their sound. A well thought out and placed harmonised guitar solo can really make your band stand out from the crowd.

Twin guitar solos are also known as 'harmonised solos' and 'doubled solos'. You can buy harmoniser pedals that can achieve similar sounds as those I am covering here, or you can record yourself playing one part while you play along with the other part. However, it is much more fun when two guitarists play harmonised parts together in a live situation. If you are not used to doubled parts, this style of playing could take a bit of getting used to, but it's well worth the effort.

To understand how harmony playing works you need to understand some basic music

theory, which isn't difficult. The following solo I have written out is in the key of F major which has the notes F, G, A, Bb, C, D, E, F. Most twin guitar solos harmonise their parts with thirds and sometimes add a fourth. A third from F is A, or G is Bb, etc – you count F as 1, G as 2, A as 3, Bb as 4, or if counting from G - G is 1, A is 2, Bb is 3 and C is 4. When harmonizing melodies you can go either way, up or down to achieve your desired effect.

If you take a look at Exercise 1, you can see I have a little melody that goes along the second string. Ex. 2 is the harmonised notes of Ex. 1 on the first string. If you count up three from every note you will discover they are all thirds apart. For those who know a bit more theory – some are major and some are minor thirds.

You don't have to play this little solo on separate strings like this, but I did it for a reason. One person can easily play the both parts together, but it doesn't sound as good as two people playing it with separated parts. Try it. Play both parts together by yourself, then play each individual part separately by getting a friend to play one while you play the other, or by yourself by recording yourself playing one part and playing along with the recording.

Ex. 3 is another simple melody, which is harmonised in Ex. 4. There are a couple of fourth intervals in this line (F-Bb) just to give a bit of different colour.

You most probably heard instantly that the separated parts sound so much better than the one you played all by yourself. Why is this? There are a lot of reasons but the main one is that two guitarists playing separated parts have different playing techniques, strings, guitars, pedals, amplifiers and the like to make things sound so much different.

Not every situation you are in has the luxury to two guitar players, so when you do come across another player it is a great idea to work out some doubled solos. One tip – they work best if there are a lot of long notes and the music isn't going too fast.

To hear the mp3 for this lesson go to <http://www.guitar.co.nz/category/resources/freelessons/>

Kevin Downing is a professional guitarist, teacher and author based in Palmerston North. His contact details, along with many freebies, are on his website at www.guitar.co.nz

The image contains four examples of guitar exercises, each with a standard musical staff and a guitar tablature staff.
Ex 1: Musical staff in 4/4 time, key of F major. Tablature shows notes on the second string: 6, 6-8, 10, 11, 11-13, 11, 10, 6.
Ex 2: Musical staff in 4/4 time, key of F major. Tablature shows notes on the first string: 5, 5, 6, 8, 10, 10, 12, 10, 8, 5.
Ex 3: Musical staff in 7/8 time, key of F major. Tablature shows notes on the second string: 6, 6, 6, 6, 5, 6, 6, 6, 6, 5, 5.
Ex 4: Musical staff in 11/8 time, key of F major. Tablature shows notes on the second string: 5, 5, 6, 5, 3, 5, 5, 5, 6, 3, 1.