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Blinded By The Light Tab

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The Enduring Appeal of the Blinded By The Light Tab: A Guitarist's Guide

Few songs in rock history have sparked as much debate, confusion, and sheer joy as Manfred Mann's Earth Band's 1976 hit, "Blinded by the Light." From its famously misunderstood lyrics to its intricate instrumental layers, the track remains a staple of classic rock radio. For guitarists, however, the song represents a unique challenge. Locked within the track is a complex arrangement of arpeggios, palm-muted rhythms, and soaring melodic lines that demand both precision and feel. This article is your comprehensive guide to understanding, mastering, and truly enjoying the **Blinded By The Light tab**. Whether you are a beginner looking for your first riff or an experienced player aiming to nail the studio version, we will break down every essential element of this timeless piece.

Understanding the Song: More Than Just a Misheard Lyric

Before diving into the fretboard, it is crucial to understand the context of the song. Originally written and recorded by Bruce Springsteen for his 1973 debut album, *Greetings from Asbury Park, N.J.*, the song was a dense, wordy folk-rock number. When Manfred Mann's Earth Band covered it, they transformed it into a progressive rock powerhouse. The tempo was increased, a driving rhythm section was added, and, critically, the guitar work became a central feature of the arrangement.

The most famous element of the track—the phrase "wrapped up like a deuce"—is often misheard, but the guitar work is unmistakable. The **Blinded By The Light tab** that most guitarists seek is based on the Manfred Mann version, not the original Springsteen recording. This version features two distinct guitar parts: a rhythm guitar that provides the chugging, syncopated backbone, and a lead guitar that delivers the iconic arpeggiated riff and the soaring solo.

The Core Riff: Breaking Down the Intro Tab

The intro to "Blinded by the Light" is arguably the most recognizable part of the song. It is a rapid-fire, pentatonic-based riff that sits perfectly in the pocket. When you look at the **Blinded By The Light tab** for the intro, you will notice it relies heavily on the A minor pentatonic scale, though it is played against a D major chord, creating a classic rock tension.

Tuning and Position

The song is played in standard tuning (E-A-D-G-B-E). The main riff is anchored around the 5th fret of the A string (D note) and the 5th fret of the low E string (A note). This gives the riff a heavy, low-end punch that cuts through the mix.

Right-Hand Technique: The Secret Sauce

Many beginners struggle with the intro because they focus solely on the fretting hand. The secret to a clean

Performance Tips in tab

Blinded By The Light tab

Blinded By The Light tab palm muting. You must rest the side of your picking hand lightly on the strings near the bridge. This creates a percussive, "chuggy" sound that defines the rhythm. The tab requires a mix of muted downstrokes and open string strums. A common mistake is to let the strings ring out fully, which makes the riff sound sloppy. Practice the intro slowly, focusing on muting the strings immediately after each pick stroke.

Navigating the Verse: Syncopation and Groove

Once you move past the intro, the verse section presents a different challenge. The rhythm guitar shifts from the open, palm-muted riff to a more syncopated, chord-based pattern. The **Blinded By The Light tab** for the verse typically involves a progression of D, G, and A chords, but they are not played as simple open chords. Instead, the guitarist uses partial barre chords and single-note runs to fill the space left by the vocals.

Chord Voicings

To achieve the authentic sound, consider using these voicings:

- D5 Power Chord: Root on the 5th fret of the A string.
- G5 Power Chord: Root on the 5th fret of the E string, or the 10th fret of the A string.
- A5 Power Chord: Root on the 5th fret of the E string (or 7th fret of the D string).

These power chords, when played with a heavy palm mute on the off-beats, create the driving rhythm that propels the verse. Pay close attention to the rests in the tab. The silence between the chords is just as important as the chords themselves.

The Iconic Arpeggiated Section

Perhaps the most beautiful part of the **Blinded By The Light tab** is the clean arpeggio section that appears during the bridge and the breakdown. This section sounds complex, but it is surprisingly accessible once you understand the pattern.

Fingerpicking vs. Pick

While you can use a pick for this section, many advanced guitarists prefer fingerpicking to achieve the dynamic range required. The pattern involves picking the bass note (usually the root of the chord) with your thumb, followed by the treble strings (G, B, high E) with your index, middle, and ring fingers.

The Progression

The arpeggios follow a chord progression that moves from G to A to Bm, and then to D. The **Blinded By The Light tab** for this part is often written with the bass note on the downbeat and the treble notes on the upbeats. This creates a cascading, waterfall effect that contrasts sharply with the aggressive rhythm of the verse. To master this, set your metronome to a slow tempo—around 60 BPM—and ensure every note rings out clearly before increasing the speed.

Mastering the Guitar Solo: Feel and Phrasing

The guitar solo in "Blinded by the Light" is a masterclass in melodic phrasing. Unlike many shredding solos of the era, this one is relatively slow and deliberate. It relies heavily on bends, vibrato, and the A minor pentatonic scale. When examining the **Blinded By The Light tab** for the solo, you will see a heavy concentration of notes at the 12th to 15th frets on the B and high E strings.

Bending to Pitch

The solo features several full-step bends (two frets) and half-step bends (one fret). The most critical bend is the one that hits the high D note. If you do not bend the string exactly to pitch, the solo will sound out of tune. Use your third finger to bend the string and support it with your first and second fingers for maximum strength.

Vibrato

A wide, slow vibrato is essential at the end of the sustained notes. The **Blinded By The Light tab** indicates long notes that should be held and then allowed to waver. Practice rotating your wrist—not just bending your finger—to achieve a smooth, vocal-like vibrato.

Common Challenges and How to Overcome Them

Learning the **Blinded By The Light tab** is not without its difficulties. Here are the most common pitfalls and how to avoid them:

1. Speed: The tempo is deceptively fast. Solution: Use a metronome. Start at 70% speed and only increase the tempo when you can play the riff perfectly three times in a row.
2. Stamina: The constant palm muting can fatigue your wrist. Solution: Take breaks every 15 minutes. Stretch your forearm and wrist to prevent tendonitis.
3. Muting: Unwanted string noise can ruin the clean, tight sound of the song. Solution: Use the fleshy part of your fretting hand's index finger to lightly touch the lower strings, stopping them from vibrating sympathetically.

Recommended Gear to Dial in the Tone

While your hands are the most important tool, the right gear can help you get closer to the recorded sound. Here are some suggestions for nailing the tone of the **Blinded By The Light tab**:

- Guitar: A Stratocaster-style guitar with single-coil pickups is ideal for the clean arpeggios, while a Les Paul with humbuckers provides the punch for the rhythm section. A guitar with a coil-split option can give you the best of both worlds.
- Amp: A classic tube amp, such as a Fender Twin Reverb or a Marshall Plexi, is the gold standard. Set the amp to a slight break-up (edge of distortion) for the rhythm parts.
- Effects: A touch of reverb and a slap-back delay (around 100-120ms) will thicken the sound. Avoid heavy distortion; the tone is gritty, not saturated.

Practice Strategy: A Step-by-Step Plan

To effectively learn the **Blinded By The Light tab**, follow this structured practice routine:

1. Week 1: Focus exclusively on the intro riff. Memorize the tab and practice the palm-muting technique. Play it for 10 minutes daily.
2. Week 2: Move to the verse and chorus sections. Focus on clean chord changes and solid rhythm. Play along with the original recording at half speed.
3. Week 3: Tackle the arpeggio section. Use a pick or fingerstyle, whichever is more comfortable. Aim for smooth transitions between chords.
4. Week 4: Learn the solo. Isolate the bends and vibrato. Do not try to play the entire solo at full speed until you have mastered the individual phrases.
5. Week 5: Play the entire song from start to finish. Focus on dynamics. The song should build from the quiet arpeggios to the explosive chorus.

Why This Tab Matters in Guitar History

The **Blinded By The Light tab** is more than just a set of instructions; it is a historical document. It represents a bridge between the folk-rock of the early 1970s and the progressive stadium rock of the late 1970s. The guitar work on this track influenced countless players, blending technical proficiency with a deep sense of groove. By learning this tab, you are not just learning a song; you are internalizing a piece of music history. You are learning how to make a guitar sing, chug, and soar, all within the same four-minute track.

Conclusion

Mastering the **Blinded By The Light tab** is a rewarding journey that will improve your timing, your muting technique, and your melodic phrasing. It is a song that demands respect for the original recording while allowing room for personal expression. Whether you are playing it around a campfire or performing it on stage, the satisfaction of nailing that iconic riff is unmatched. Remember to focus on technique first, speed second. Listen to the original recording constantly to internalize the feel. With patience and deliberate practice, you will not only play the song correctly but will also truly understand why it has remained a favorite for nearly five decades. Pick up your guitar, pull up the tab, and let the music take you there.

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