

Acoustic

STEVIE WONDER HIGHER GROUND

ON THE CD

TRACK 13



13. Full track

A rocking solo acoustic version of the Stevie hit, as heard on Eric Roche's new studio album

STEVIE WONDER

HIGHER GROUND

GT RATING

MODERATE



Helps improve your:

- Right-hand fingerstyle technique
- Percussive techniques
- Arrangement skills

YOUR GT TUTOR

■ ERIC ROCHE

See p9 for more info on all the GT tutors



TRACK RECORD

STEVIE AND ERIC RECOMMENDATIONS

STEVELAND MORRIS (AKA STEVIE WONDER) moved from the safe Motown stable of artists in the 1960s to become one of the greatest singer songwriters of all time. Blind from an early age, Stevie overcame this disability to become a multi-instrumentalist. His distinctive voice, harmonica playing and songwriting style have earned him numerous awards and distinctions in his long career. Albums worth investigating are *Innervisions*, from which *Higher Ground* is culled, and *Songs In The Key Of Life*. If you would like to hear more by Eric Roche, his arrangement of *Higher Ground* is taken from his third album, *With These Hands*, produced by fellow GT tutor Martin Taylor. For further information visit www.ericroche.com.



As many of the regular readers will know, I am always on the search for a good cover tune for my live shows and GT column. Ever since I was gently deterred at the age of 11 from working out an arrangement of Paul Simon's *Bridge Over Troubled Water* ("Too difficult," my teacher said, "It's in the key of Z". "Oh," I thought. "When can we look at that scale...?"), I have seen every piece of music as potential guitar repertoire. Whether it is a Bach concerto, a Frank Zappa song, a Beatles tune, a nursery rhyme, or a TV theme, it is all fair game in my book!

This month I am offering up my version of Stevie Wonder's *Higher Ground*, from one of my favourite albums of all time, *Innervisions*. The arrangement originated during a rare private lesson with a student from Australia. He was interested in looking at ways of combining a bassline with a melody and chords. I chose *Higher Ground* and we worked through it together for the lesson, showing him my

process of creating a guitar arrangement. At the end of the lesson, I had an arrangement I was proud of. I wanted to include it in my live shows, and re-built the standard tuning arrangement into DADGAD tuning, with a capo at the second fret. I enjoyed playing it so much that I decided to include it on my current album.

PERFORMANCE TIPS

The backbone of the arrangement is the bassline. The cooking version of this tune by the Red Hot Chili Peppers was quite inspiring here. I suggest that you practise the first four bars until the groove of the bassline feels right.

It is an infectious boogie-style blues rock bassline, so have fun with

it. With the absence of a vocal performance, I am always keen to develop the texture of my arrangement.

In bar five I added some right- and left-hand percussion. The percussive hits fit snugly in and around the bassline. Remember the bass line is integral to the overall feel and impact of the arrangement - try not to leave any obvious holes in it.

On beat two, the right-hand heel comes down firmly on the soundboard just above the soundhole and on beat four the left hand leaves the fretboard for a moment and slaps the lower shoulder of the guitar body. Again I would suggest that you isolate this bar and practise it in loop fashion for a while until the technique begins to feel natural.

From bar nine I include the vocal line with some nice altered dominant harmony. The song moves through some simple chord changes, all the time underpinned by the bassline. The chorus section has some strong down beat stabs with the left hand, which I tend to overplay in concert. As there are only two sections in the song I alternate through them and finish off where I began - with a bassline and some simple, but very effective, percussion.

I will be out of action for a while. I am taking a short break and I look forward to returning to GT in the very near future. In the meantime, keep picking!

GT

SOUND ADVICE

REACH THE HIGHER SOUND

THIS SOUND on this recording was achieved using two Neumann U87s

in a cross position, various DI lines from the Lowden guitar and a selection of rifle microphones and ambient microphones. Seven signals were used in the final mix.



"Practise the first four bars until the groove of the bassline feels right"



PRO TIP

Practise the first four bars until the groove sounds right. Then you can learn the rest of this great tune!

Stevie Wonder:
songwriting genius
and talented
multi-instrumentalist

X

Acoustic

STEVIE WONDER HIGHER GROUND

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STEVIE WONDER HIGHER GROUND

swing $\text{♩} = \text{♩}^3$ **E Blues**

CAPO II

DADGAD tuning

0 12 12 12 12

0 0 3 5 0 3 5 0 3 5

p i p i m p i p i m

Tam 1 Tam 2

0 0 3 5 0 3 5 0 3 5

3 p i p i m p i p i m 0 X 0 3 X

LH RH

Tam 1 Tam 2 Tam 1 Tam 2 Tam 1 Tam 2

0 0 3 5 0 3 5 0 3 5

6 0 X 0 3 X 0 X 0 3 X 0 X 0 3 X

LH RH LH RH LH RH

Tam 1 - slap shoulder of guitar below the neck with left hand
Tam 2 - bring heel of right hand down heavily on soundboard above sound hole

E7alt **G A** **E Blues**

0 3 3 3 4 4 0 3 5 0 3 5 0 3 5

9 0 0 3 5 0 0 3 5 0 0 3 5

E7alt **G A**

0 3 3 3 4 4 0 3 5 0 3 5 0 3 5

12 0 0 3 5 0 0 3 5 0 0 3 5

E Blues

E Blues

A7

27

0 3 0 0 5 5 5 3 0 3 0 3 0 0 0 3 4 0 5 5 5 V V

Acoustic

STEVIE WONDER HIGHER GROUND

STEVIE WONDER HIGHER GROUND ...CONTINUED

30

A7

F#7

BU

33

B7

al CODA

E Blues

36

D.S. al CODA

(no repeats)

38

CODA

E Blues

41



STEVE WONDER HIGHER GROUND ...CONTINUED

E Blues

44 0 0 3 3 5 0 0 5 0 X 0 3 X

47 0 X 0 3 X 0 X 0 3 X 0 X 0 3 X

50 0 X 0 3 X 0 X 0 3 X 0 X 0 3 X

53 0 X 0 3 5 0 0 0

With RH thumb knuckle