

# Unveiling Robert Johnson's Iconic Signature Licks: A Comprehensive Guide to the Master's Guitar Techniques

Robert Johnson, the enigmatic blues musician who roamed the Mississippi Delta in the early 20th century, left an indelible mark on the world of music. His haunting vocals, raw emotions, and virtuosic guitar playing continue to captivate and inspire musicians and fans alike. Among Johnson's many contributions to the blues genre, his signature guitar licks stand out as a testament to his unparalleled skill and creativity.



## Robert Johnson - Signature Licks (Guitar Signature Licks) by Dave Rubin

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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In this comprehensive guide, we will explore the world of Robert Johnson's signature licks. We will delve into the techniques he employed, the influences that shaped his playing, and the historical significance of these legendary musical phrases. Whether you're a seasoned blues guitarist looking to enhance your repertoire or a music enthusiast eager to gain insights into one of the greatest bluesmen of all time, this article will provide valuable knowledge and inspiration.

## **The Techniques Behind Johnson's Licks**

Robert Johnson's guitar licks are characterized by their distinctive combination of technical proficiency and emotional depth. He employed a variety of techniques to achieve his expressive and captivating sound, including:

### **Slide Guitar**

Slide guitar is a technique where a slide is used to fret the strings, creating a smooth and fluid sound. Johnson was a master of slide guitar, using it to produce haunting melodies and wailing solos.

### **Crossroads Tuning**

Crossroads tuning, also known as "open G" tuning, is an alternate tuning where the strings are tuned to G-D-G-B-D-G. This tuning allowed Johnson to play complex chords and melodies with ease, giving his music a unique and recognizable sound.

### **Repeated Patterns**

Many of Johnson's licks feature the use of repeated patterns, such as hammer-ons, pull-offs, and double-stops. These patterns create a mesmerizing and rhythmic effect, adding depth and complexity to his playing.

### **Influences on Johnson's Playing**

Robert Johnson's musical influences were as diverse as his own playing. He drew inspiration from traditional Delta blues musicians, such as Son House and Charley Patton, as well as ragtime and popular music of the time.

## **Son House**

Son House was a prominent Delta blues guitarist and singer who significantly influenced Johnson's style. Johnson learned many of his signature licks from House, including the "Walking Blues" riff and the "Cross Road Blues" slide guitar solo.

## **Charley Patton**

Charley Patton was another legendary Delta blues musician who played a role in shaping Johnson's sound. Patton's powerful vocals and rhythmic guitar playing left an imprint on Johnson's music, particularly in his use of repetitive patterns and syncopated rhythms.

## **Ragtime and Popular Music**

In addition to Delta blues, Johnson was also influenced by ragtime and popular music of the early 20th century. Ragtime's syncopated rhythms and intricate melodies can be heard in some of his licks, while popular music of the time provided inspiration for his bluesy harmonies and chord progressions.

## **Historical Significance of Johnson's Licks**

Robert Johnson's signature licks played a pivotal role in the development of blues guitar playing. His innovative techniques and unique sound became a foundation for future blues guitarists, including Eric Clapton, Muddy Waters, and B.B. King.

## **Birth of Modern Blues Guitar**

Johnson's licks helped shape the sound of modern blues guitar. His use of slide guitar, crossroads tuning, and repeated patterns established a new

standard for blues playing, influencing generations of musicians to come.

## **Influence on Rock and Roll**

Through the influence of blues guitarists who were inspired by Johnson, his signature licks found their way into the burgeoning rock and roll scene of the 1950s and 1960s. Many rock guitarists, such as Keith Richards and Jimmy Page, incorporated aspects of Johnson's playing into their own styles.

## **Enduring Legacy**

Robert Johnson's signature licks have become an enduring part of the blues and rock music lexicon. They are a testament to his genius and continue to be emulated and celebrated by musicians worldwide.

The signature licks of Robert Johnson stand as a testament to his exceptional talent and the enduring power of the blues. Through his innovative techniques, diverse influences, and historical significance, Johnson's licks have profoundly influenced the development of blues and rock guitar playing.

Studying and appreciating these iconic licks provides a deeper understanding of the roots of blues music and the remarkable artistry of one of its greatest masters. Whether you're a guitarist seeking to expand your repertoire or a music enthusiast seeking to delve into the world of blues, Robert Johnson's signature licks offer a rich and rewarding musical journey.

Embrace the haunting melodies, raw emotions, and technical brilliance that make Robert Johnson's guitar licks some of the most influential and

enduring in the history of music. Let these legendary phrases inspire your own creativity and deepen your appreciation for the timeless genius of the Mississippi Delta blues master.



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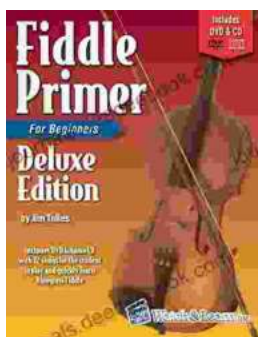
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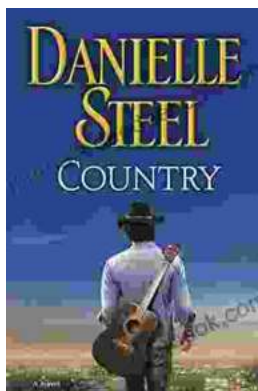
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