

Jay's Jams Volume 1

Eighties Power Rock & Metal

This is the original volume in my series of play-along recordings. You'll hear twelve tracks in six different keys, with each key appearing in faster and slower versions with different music. All the tracks are fully produced with drums, bass, rhythm guitar, and keyboards. Each is about three and a half to four minutes long, with a two-measure count at the top to get you ready to play.

The styles here are classic hard rock and metal from the eighties. When you listen, many of the tracks may remind you of songs you've heard in the past. This is partly because all of these tracks were written in **natural minor keys** (also called the **Aeolian mode**), which is typical of this style of music. Many pro musicians work with the same basic ideas and key structures, and knowing these well will help make you a much better player and songwriter.

The key to using these tracks is **learning what to listen for**. If you can hear and understand a riff, you can figure out how to play it; if you can't, all the technique and cool gear in the world won't help. So, listen closely; like most songs, these tracks are arranged in four- and eight-measure sections. Count the measures as you play. **You always need to know where you are in a song**. Listen for cues like cymbal crashes and drum fills to help you stay on top of what's happening next.

The chord charts on the following pages will guide you easily through each track. All the tracks are in 4/4 time, and tempos are shown at the top. The structure varies: sometimes you'll see two sections, each with **repeat signs**. Other tracks use **first** and **second endings**, and so on. Each track's chart shows a simple "road map" of its complete pattern, one time through. This pattern is repeated for the duration of the track.

The chord names above the measures are accompanied by Roman numerals, which are used to indicate which scale note the chord is based on. That is, the **I chord** is built from the first note of the scale. It's also called the **tonic chord**, and it names the key. Some players use the term **tonal center**, and that works, too. The same few Roman numerals pop up in nearly every track. It's another way to see how similar chord patterns can be used over and over to produce different, yet familiar, sounds.

Don't let **slash chords** like **D/E** scare you. Read this as "D major with E in the bass", or "D over E". In this style they are often used to show that the bass line stays on the same note while the guitar and keyboard chords change above it. Compare this effect to how it sounds when everyone changes chords together.

There are plenty of good-sounding scale possibilities here. Start with blues and natural minor scales. These will fit easily right away, and you'll soon be playing piles of licks you've heard before. There are also places to try harmonic minor, the Mixolydian and Dorian modes, and even more chromatic, "outside," sounds. Try these mainly while listening to the I chord. The other chords in the key can be covered more smoothly with blues and natural minor. Remember that anything you like the sound of is a good choice! Listening always matters more than theory and analysis. Those things are important, but mainly as tools to "explain" what your ear is already telling you.

You'll listen harder if you memorize the chord changes for the jams you like best. Staring at a familiar chord chart while you play will distract you and make you lazy. Get the chord changes in your head. Also, don't forget that there's much more to any song than a great solo. Study and learn the rhythm guitar parts and play along to improve your timekeeping. Okay, time to crank it up and go!