

AUTHENTIC GUITAR TAB EDITION

THE  
**doors**  
guitar tab anthology



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# foreword

In the more than 40 years that have passed since the untimely death of Jim Morrison in 1971, the enduring legacy of The Doors has proven to be one of rock and popular music's most unique and influential. The band's body of work, chiefly embodying their six studio albums that were released before Morrison's passing, is characterized by high-quality collaborative songwriting; tasteful musicianship; a special synergy, or chemistry, among the band's four individual members when it came to arranging and improvising jamming; and their collective artistic embrace of the late '60s counterculture aesthetic. In addition to Morrison's highly poetic and, at times, subversive, lyrics; distinctive, pleasing baritone voice; and charismatic and often strikingly dramatic singing style and volatile stage persona, The Doors featured a brilliantly sensitive rhythm section comprised of three very talented and creative musicians, with classically-trained keyboardist Ray Manzarek providing a colorful harmonic foundation for many of their songs while managing to supply consistently solid left-hand keyboard bass lines at the same time in live performances. (The band did employ freelance bass guitarists for many of their studio recordings but preferred to stick with their more intimate three-piece "organ trio" lineup onstage.) John Densmore's nimble, dynamically responsive, jazz-influenced drumming and Robby Krieger's supportive rhythm guitar playing, standout riffs, and inventive, expressive lead lines and counter melodies propelled their arrangements perfectly.

Krieger is among a handful of legendary rock guitarists that could never be criticized for overplaying or injecting gratuitous licks into a song that exceeded what the moment called for. It is indeed this sensibility, musicality, and team-player attitude that make him great. Like Jeff Beck, Robby would generally forego the use of a plectrum and opt most of the time to pick and strum the strings with his bare thumb and fingers, in the age-old tradition of classical, flamenco, folk, and Delta blues guitarists. And, like his bandmates, the guitarist had eclectic musical tastes and drew from a wide range of influences—cool-jazz phrasing à la early-'60s Miles Davis (most famously in Robby's "Light My Fire" solo), John Coltrane-inspired dissonance ("When the Music's Over"), Spanish flamenco music ("Spanish Caravan"), Indian sitarist Ravi Shankar ("The End"), and the blues ("Back Door Man," "Five to One," "Love Me Two Times," "Roadhouse Blues," "Soul Kitchen" and others), to name a few—to create the varied musical colors and textures that characterize Robby's signature guitar style.

When the Doors first formed in 1965, Krieger had only recently switched from playing flamenco guitar on a nylon-string acoustic to playing a steel-string electric through an amp. He told *Guitar World* magazine in March 1994, "I have a bastardized style where I use my thumb for whatever I can, and then primarily the first two fingers on the top two strings. Or I'll use my thumb [for down-strokes] and my index finger [for up-strokes] together. You can get a little bit of speed up that way." He continues, "I always liked the sound of the fingers; I figured you could get more nuances out of the note. It just seems like you have more control over the instrument. Nowadays, I use a pick about 70 percent of the time." The guitarist adds, "I read an interview with Wes Montgomery [the jazz guitar legend renowned for using his thumb], in which he said that if he had to do it all over again, he would use a pick, so I figured that was a good enough reason to develop a plectrum technique."

Krieger's rhythm guitar style with The Doors can be characterized by four basic approaches: strumming full barre chords, arpeggiating chord shapes (playing the notes of a chord one at a time and letting them ring together), signature riffs, and upper-string "chicks" (percussive accents that often coincide with the snare drum hits). The classic and highly covered "Light My Fire," Robby's debut effort at songwriting with The Doors, is a great example of the guitarist employing just about all of the above approaches in a single song to achieve a variety of musical textures. His solo in the song, with its cohesive, story-like phrasing schemes and use of notes from various scales, such as the Dorian and Aeolian modes and the blues scale, displays an intuitive musical sophistication, maturity, and worldliness that is quite remarkable for someone who at the time had only been playing guitar for a few short years! Krieger's subsequent songwriting efforts contributed greatly to some of The Doors' most celebrated tracks, such as "Touch Me" and the guitar-driven classics "Love Me Two Times" and "Love Her Madly."

A big challenge for any guitarist in a trio setting is to fill space, and most rock players strive to do so by using distortion and the "fattest" possible sound (hence the term "power trio"). Since Manzarek's organ could supply harmony and melody, Krieger was liberated from carrying all of the weight himself, and he consciously avoided the British blues-rock style of players

like Eric Clapton. And unlike many of his rock contemporaries, Krieger rarely played root-5th power chords in his band's songs, opting instead to *not* fill up the sonic space, as if to let the arrangements "breathe" more, so to speak. "I didn't use power chords," Krieger acknowledges. "But I would often hit just one low note, like the low E, and let it ring with a lot of fuzztone."

As mentioned earlier, "The End," inspired musically by Shankar, with whom Krieger had briefly studied in Los Angeles, features some of The Doors guitarist's most inventive and celebrated playing. Robby translated the sitar's droning, dream-like quality to his own instrument by detuning his 1st and 6th strings to D, forming what is commonly referred to as double drop-D tuning, which gave him three open D notes that he masterfully used as ringing drones while playing fretted notes, creating a rich bed of sound and a hypnotic effect.

Krieger's main go-to guitars with The Doors were Gibson SGs. As he told *Premier Guitar* in January 2010, "It's the most comfortable guitar for me. It always does what I need it to do, and always has." He used a 1964 SG Special on the first two albums and for most of the group's live shows from 1966–70. The guitar was equipped with P-90 pickups, and Krieger later had a Vibrola tremolo bar installed. He also used a 1967 SG Special, and, for bottleneck slide work, a 1968 SG Standard, a 1958 National Town & Country model guitar (most notably on "Break on Through"), and a 1954 Gibson Les Paul Custom, commonly referred to as the "Black Beauty." The guitarist later used, during post-Morrison Doors tours, a black SG Standard equipped with humbuckers and a long Vibrola tailpiece.

For amplifiers, Krieger started out using a Magnatone with two 12" speakers. He then switched to an Acoustic 260 model briefly before settling on a Fender Twin Reverb, equipped with JBL speakers. For distortion, he used a Maestro fuzz box, and, for strings, preferred light gauges during The Doors era, specifically a .009–.036 set.

The note-for-note transcriptions featured in this collection of classic Doors songs will no doubt provide a wealth of highly entertaining and gratifying guitar lessons from one of rock's most distinctive and tasteful players. Enjoy!

—Jimmy Brown  
Senior Music Editor, *Guitar World* magazine



# BREAK ON THROUGH

(To the Other Side)

Words and Music by  
THE DOORS

Bright ♩ = 182

*Intro:*

\*Em D Em D

Drums 2

Keybd.

Elec. Gtr. (w/light dist.)

*mf*

w/thumb & fingers

TAB

12

\*Chords are implied.

5 Em D Em D Em D Em D

Keybd. cont. simile

You know the

TAB

0 2 0 2 2 2 2 0 12 0 2 0 2 2 2 2 0 12

*Verse 1:*

9 Em D Em D Em D Em D

day des - troys the night, night di - vides the day.

TAB

0 2 0 2 2 2 2 0 12 0 2 0 2 2 2 2 0 2

# STRANGE DAYS

Words and Music by  
THE DOORS

Moderately ♩ = 124

Intro:

\* Em



Organ

15<sup>ma</sup>-----8<sup>va</sup>-----

\*Chord frames are for reference.

Band enters

Verse:



\*Elec. Gtr. simile on repeat.