

Michael Angelo Batio

Perpetual Economy of Motion



MICHAEL ANGELO BATIO IS A MONSTER. THIS MAGAZINE voted him the #1 shredder of all time in April 2003, and he's routinely referred to as the world's fastest guitarist. But what really sets his playing apart is his flawless articulation and clarity at speed. In short, Batio has perfected economy of motion in both hands, which means that his fret hand is always in sync with his pick hand. If you watch him play, you'll be amazed at how little his hands and fingers seem to move. So as you try the following examples of his remarkable technique, make every motion as small and as effortless (no tensing up) as possible.

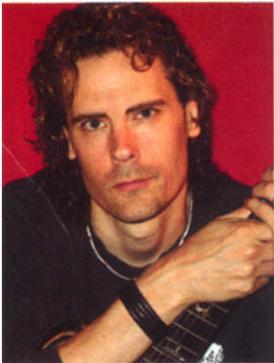


Fig. 1 shows a typical single-string neo-classical pattern in E harmonic minor (F#--G--A--B--C--D#). After you've got a handle on that, check out the lick in Fig. 2, which is similar to what Batio plays near the end of his instrumental cover of Aerosmith's "Dream On," from his latest CD, *Hands Without Shadows*. It begins much like Fig. 1, then moves to string 2 in the second

beat. Take note of how Batio's fret hand covers up to six frets in one position. With a standard four-fret positional scale shape, you'd need to pivot back to a higher string at certain points to play a line like this. Batio's wider fret-hand stretch, however, results in a simpler picking pattern, which allows him to descend smoothly through the line.

Fig. 3 draws from Batio's version of the Deep Purple classic "Bum" (also on *Hands Without Shadows*). A blistering G harmonic minor run opens on the 3rd string with a series of ascending three-note patterns played in 32nd notes. You need to time the position shifts here perfectly to maintain a smooth sound—you might even try "squeezing" your fret-hand fingers together slightly at moments of transition. For example, at the beginning of the run, when your 4th finger is still down at the 14th fret, your 1st finger should already be heading toward the 12th; the result is a slightly "condensed" position at the point of transition.

The arpeggios start in measure 2. Batio uses strict alternate picking everywhere except during the triplet sweeps. The descending portion that closes the figure is a

Fig. 1

Track 56

♩ = 120
Sva -

Fret-hand fingering: 1 4 2 4 1 4 2 4 1 4 3 4 1 4 2 4 1 4 3 4 1 4 2 4 1 4 3 4 1 4 2 4

Fig. 2

Track 57

♩ = 78
Sva -

Fret-hand fingering: 4 4 2 4 1 4 1 4 2 4 1 4 1 4 1 4 3 4 1 4 1 4 2 4 1 4 1 4 3 4 1 4 1

Fig. 3

Track 58

♩ = 110
Sva -

Fret-hand fingering: 1 2 4 1 3 4 1 2 4 1 2 4 1 3 4 3 1 4 2 1 4 2 1 4 3 4 1 4 1

perfect opportunity to put your economy of motion to the test—to get this kind of speed with alternate picking over a one note-per-string sequenced arpeggio, you can't afford any wasted movement. For an up-close look at Batio's technique, check out his two instructional DVDs, *Speed Kills* and *Speed Lives*. (Both are available at

his Web site, angelo.com). On them, you'll see Batio pull out a V-shaped double-neck and switch fluidly from right-handed to left-handed playing—at top speed, without missing a 32nd note—and then jump seamlessly into fretting on both necks simultaneously, doing legato runs in harmony! Maybe we'll leave that trick to Michael....