

Licks and Tricks Episode #1

B Mixolydian Lick à la John Mayer

The Lick

Hey guys! For the first installment of “Licks and Tricks” I want to use a lick I heard John Mayer use at the O2 in London on 11th of May 2017. I heard him play this beautiful line at the beginning of his solo for “Queen of California and had to get it under my fingers! Here’s the link to the performance (starting at 4:02)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kJNENQ3RJc>

Standard tuning
♩ = 80

Breakdown

(Optional - only if you want to know about the theory behind the lick)

Scale, note choice and harmony

This is a B Mixolydian line (B C# D# E F# G# A) which also uses the Flat5 or blues note (F) and one passing chromatic note towards the end (A#).

Rhythm

We've got a very consistent rhythm, hardly ever deviating away from 16th notes.

Bar by bar

Bar 1: We begin with a double stop which ties over into bar 2.

Bar 2: Here we can get our teeth stuck into the meat and potatoes of the line. We'll want to use an alternate picking technique to execute this lick. It can be a good idea to accent (pick harder) the notes that fall on the first 16th note of each beat. So:

ONE two three four
TWO two three four
THREE two three four
FOUR two three four

Bar 3: Here we implement our Flat 5/Blue Note (10th Fret/G String) and our chromatic note (8th Fret/D String).

Bar 4: We finish up this lick with a great choice of notes (A and G#)

Thoughts for improvising

If you are familiar with this major scale position:

Standard tuning
♩ = 60

e.l. guit.

T
A
B

9 11-12 9 11-12 9 11 8 9 11 9 10 12 9 11 12

then you can implement this sound easily into your playing.

If you make a loop in B Major/Dominant and then play this scale starting from C# you will have this sound immediately at your disposal. This is a quick way of implementing but will

take some playing and refining to get it sounding convincing.
I will touch on this more in a future lesson.

Hope you enjoyed the lesson and happy playing!