

# NOT OF THIS EARTH

Music by Joe Satriani

This song is a great example of creatively implementing a compositional approach called the *pitch axis theory*—a procedure for manipulating harmonic information that Joe picked up from his high school music teacher, Bill Wescott. A “pitch axis” is a central tone or pitch that functions as a pedal point in which parallel modes are then sounded over. (Say what!?) Try to imagine a bass player thumping on the low E string, creating the illusion that he or she is playing in some kind of E key (E major or E minor). The chords performed by another instrument (like a guitar) over this droning E note (pedal point) will *imply* different kinds of E major or minor keys (i.e., different modes), depending on what types of chords the guitarist plays.

In “Not of This Earth,” Joe uses his melodic lines to imply different modalities over a four-measure chord sequence played by Gtr. 1 (Rhy. Fig. 1). This accompaniment figure, which consists of the chords Emaj7/6, Em7b6, and E7sus4, cleverly dodges many of the mode-defining tones like the #4 and, in cases like E7sus4, the major 3rd. This creates an ambiguous harmonic situation. Joe (Gtr. 3) blows through these chord changes using three different modes: E Lydian (E–F#–G#–A#–B–C#–D#) over Emaj7/6, E Aeolian (E–F#–G–A–B–C–D) over Em7b6, and E Mixolydian (E–F#–G#–A–B–C#–D) over E7sus4. He is using the note E as the pitch axis in this case, relating three different modalities to one central pitch or “axis.” Throughout “Not of This Earth,” Joe exploits this type of “modal freedom” in the way he constructs his primary theme and in the solo sections. Other songs that utilize Satch’s pitch axis concept include “Satch Boogie” (tapped interlude) and “Always with Me, Always with You.”

## Figure 1 – Primary Theme

Here’s the psychotic legato theme Joe juggles over the various modalities discussed earlier—E Lydian, E Aeolian, and E Mixolydian. This lightning-fast legato-fest is a perfect example of Joe’s command over an abundance of shredding techniques. Keep in mind all the technical elements that were studied in the previous *Legato Licks* section and start gettin’ your fingers flappin’!

Rhy. Fig. 1 (Gtr. 1) outlines the majority of this song’s harmonic content and is repeated throughout this section over an E pedal. At the very end of this excerpt (measure 16), Joe blazes through a descending cascade of notes derived from an F#m7 arpeggio (F#–A–C#–E). This lick resurfaces almost note-for-note (only in different keys) in a couple of other tunes we’ll study at a later point in this book—“Memories” (measures 17–18), and “Crushing Day” (measures 31 and 35), among others.

Fig. 1

1:09

**Moderate Rock** ♩ = 112

Gtrs. 1 & 2: w/ Rhy. Figs. 1 & 2. 4 times (see p. 11)

Emaj7/6

Em7b6

Gtr. 3

**5**

**Featured Guitars:**

Gtr. 1 (hard R.)

Gtr. 2 (center)

Gtr. 3 (hard L.)

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**6**

**Slow Demo:**

Gtr. 3 (center)

Emaj7/6 E7sus4

3

X 9 11 13 9 11 13 (13) 11 9 13 11 9 6 7 9 6 7 9 7 6 7 9 7 9 10 9 7 9 10 12 9 10 12 10 9 10 16 (16) (16)

Emaj7/6 Em7b6

5

7 9 11 7 9 11(11) 9 7 11 9 7 8 10 7 8 10 8 7 8 7 6 7 8 7 5 8 7 5 7 6 7 6 4 5 7 6 4 7 6 4

Emaj7/6 E7sus4

7

9 11 13 9 11 13 13 11 9 9 11 12 12 11 9 7 11 7 9 11 7 9 7 11 7 9 11 9 7 11 7 9 11 7 9 11 9 7 11 9 7

Rhy. Fig. 1  
Gtr. 1 (clean)

Emaj7/6 Em7b6 Emaj7/6 E7sus4

*mp*  
w/ chorus & compression

TAB

Rhy. Fig. 2  
Gtr. 2 (dist.)

Emaj7/6 Em7b6 Emaj7/6 E7sus4

*mf*  
P.M.

TAB

Emaj7/6 Em7b6

9 18 19 18 0 16 (16) 18 16 0 12 14 12 0 11 12 11 0 15 17 15 0 14 (14) 15 14 0 10 12 10 0 8 10 8 0 7 (7) 8 7 0 12 14 12 0

Emaj7/6 E7sus4

11 11 12 11 0 6 (6) 7 6 0 4 6 4 0 9 11 9 0 7 (7) 9 7 0 6 7 6 0 9 10 9 0 7 (7) 9 7 0 5 7 5 0 4 5 4 0 3 (3) 5 3 2

Emaj7/6 Em7b6

13 9 11 13 9 11 13 (13) 11 9 13 11 9 10 12 9 10 12 14 12 10 14 10 12 14 10 12 14 12 10 12 (12) (12)

Emaj7/6 E7sus4

15 7 6 7 6 8 9 6 8 9 6 8 9 11 9 9 11 9 11 12 10 12 14 12 10 14 10 12 14 12 10 9 12 9 10 11 9 6 7 9 5 4 (4)