

"Little Wing"- A Hendrix Classic

Well, she's walking through the clouds,
With a circus mind that's running wild,
Butterflies and zebras,
And moonbeams and fairy tales.
That's all she ever thinks about
Running with the wind.

When I'm sad, she comes to me,
With a thousand smiles she gives to
me free.
It's alright, she says it's all right,
Take anything you want from me,
Anything.
Fly on, Little Wing.

Besides being one of Hendrix's best lyrics, "Little Wing" (*Axis: Bold as Love*) stands as one of his most beautiful musical efforts as well. Musicians speak in awe of the song's wonderful chord structure and the way that Jimi brings it alive with his special way of playing chords.

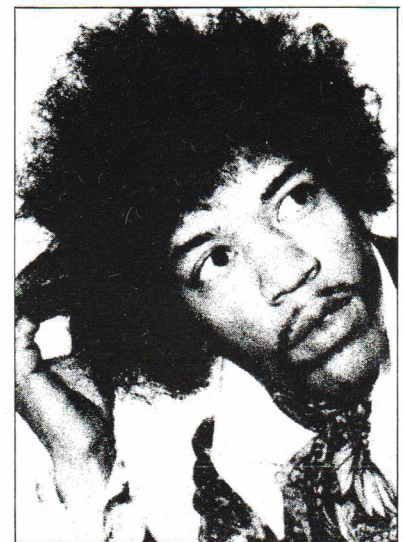
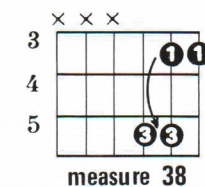
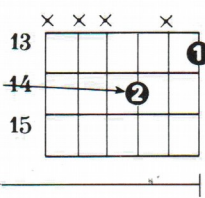
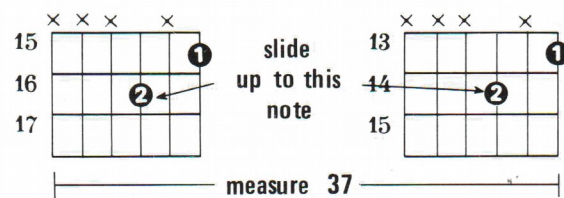
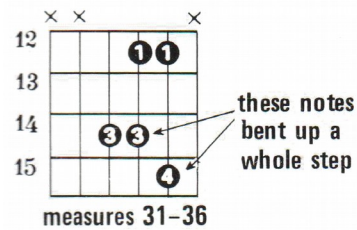
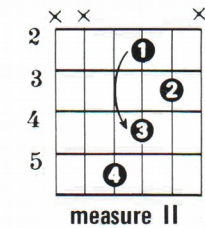
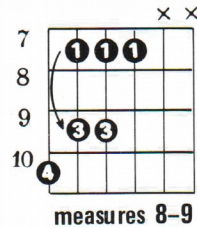
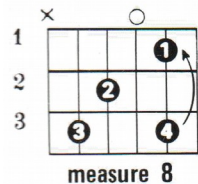
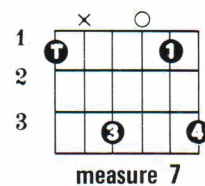
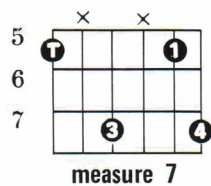
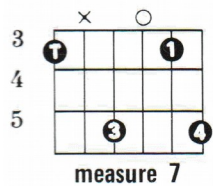
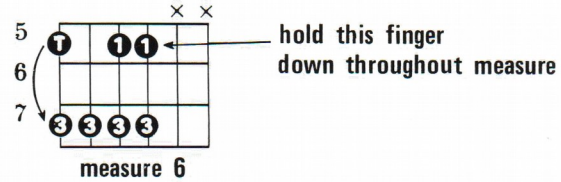
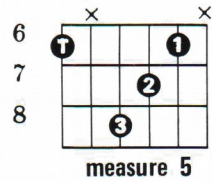
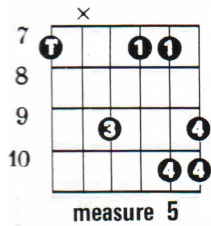
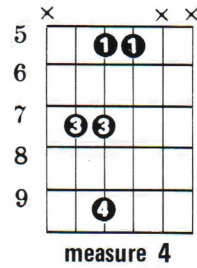
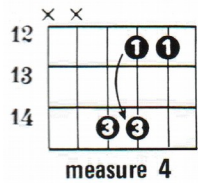
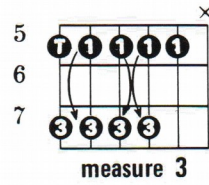
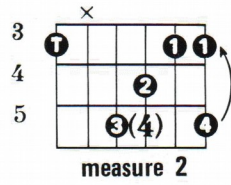
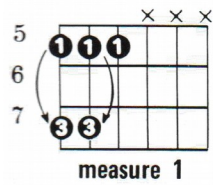
I believe that Jimi had his guitar tuned down a half step when he recorded "Little Wing." For this reason, I've written it out in the key of E minor, instead of in Eb minor where the actual sound of the notes lie. If you're going to play with the record, I'd advise tuning your guitar down a half step. The following progression is the basis of the tune:

The first chorus of the song is played as an introduction by Jimi, unaccompanied except for some bell-chimes. In this intro almost all of the material that will be played during the vocal choruses is set out. There is some great chord work here, and you might want to review the chapter on Hendrix chords because Jimi uses all his favorite ballad devices. I've charted this intro out measure by measure because of the large number of hammer-ons and pull-offs, but as you get into it you'll notice how consistent Jimi's style is, and you'll start to pick up on what he's doing. Of course, working along with the recording is a tremendous help.

Check out the use of open strings, especially in the F to G measures (7, 16, and 26). Also, you'll really benefit as a guitarist if you carefully compare what Jimi plays with the chord symbol that he is working from. As for that massive slide that begins and ends his solo at the end of the tune, well, if you can figure out how he does it, please let me know. There are many effects that only Jimi knows how to play!

The solo itself is one of Jimi's most effective. Not that many notes are used, I've diagrammed the position you can use. The bends are the main item here. Again, notice how Jimi's note choice within a typical blues pattern works with the chords.

With the record, two notation systems, and the diagrams that follow the music you should be able to work this great piece out. After the first chorus, some sort of phasing has been added to Jimi's guitar, so if you have a phase-shifter you might want to use it.



Little Wing

Music by Jimi Hendrix

Intro

This system contains the first four measures of the piece. The guitar part starts with a double bar line, a key signature change to E minor (indicated by a natural sign over the E), and a time signature change to 4/4. It features a slide (SL) on the 12th fret (XII) and a triplet of eighth notes. The bass part follows with a 7th fret (7) and a triplet of eighth notes. Chord symbols include Em, V, and G III. A 'P' (palm mute) is indicated above the guitar staff in the fourth measure.

This system contains measures 5 through 8. The guitar part continues with a triplet of eighth notes and a slide (SL) on the 12th fret (XII). The bass part has a triplet of eighth notes and a slide (SL) on the 4th fret. Chord symbols include Am V, Em XII, and V. A 'P' (palm mute) is indicated above the guitar staff in the eighth measure.

This system contains measures 9 through 12. The guitar part features a triplet of eighth notes and a slide (SL) on the 7th fret. The bass part has a triplet of eighth notes and a slide (SL) on the 5th fret. Chord symbols include Bm VII, Bb VI, and Am V.

This system contains measures 13 through 16. The guitar part features a triplet of eighth notes and a slide (SL) on the 10th fret. The bass part has a triplet of eighth notes and a slide (SL) on the 10th fret. Chord symbols include Gadd9 (no 3rd) III, Fadd9 (no 3rd) III, C I, D V, and VII. A 'P' (palm mute) is indicated above the guitar staff in the 14th measure.

Vocal

Em G

10 11 12

Am Em Bb

13 14 15

Am Fadd9 C D

16 17 18

XII Em G

19 20 21 22

Am Em Bb

23 24 25

Am Gadd9 Fadd9 C D

26 27 28

Solo XII BU Em G

29 30 31 32

Am Em Bm

33 34 35

Am XV G F

36 37

C D (fade)

38 39 40