

Diary Of A Madman - A Classical Guitar Influence

By David Schramm

Dedicated in memory of the Ultimate Randy Rhoads fan, Tim Van Horne.

It would be impossible to discuss the history of rock guitar without the name of Randy Rhoads. I was attending Hoover High School in Fresno, California when Blizzard of Ozz and Diary of a Madman were released. The demonic imagery found on the covers of the record jackets along with eerie musical content were very provocative. Like many of my fellow classmates, we would hide the LP's from parental view. After all, we didn't want to give them a heart attack!

What caught the attention of many was the guitar wizardry of Rhoads. His mixture of classical, blues and hard rock styles took guitar to a different level. A sound not commonly heard at that time. Like most teenagers who took up the guitar in the late 1970s and early 1980s Eddie Van Halen and Rhoads were among our biggest influence. It was a rite of passage if you learned to play Eruption, Spanish Fly, Dee, or the guitar solos in Crazy Train, Mr. Crowley or Flying High Again.

When I started to learn more about Rhoads I was impressed by his fascination with classical music and more specifically the classical guitar. I had read that he would take classical guitar lesson while on tour. So I started learning classical guitar and applying the technical principles to my electric playing. Around that same time, early 1980s, a guy named James Gleason, through his company Rock Performance Music in the San Francisco Bay area, had for sale his "Note-for-Note" cassette tapes containing nearly all of Rhoads' work with Ozzy. That summer, I confined myself to house arrest and devoured those tapes. I learned all of Rhoads' solos. I later went on to college to get my B.M. and M.A. in classical guitar performance. I can blame it on those recordings of Rhoads.

It was during my classical guitar studies at California State University, Northridge that I made an interesting discovery about some of Rhoads' compositions. There were parts of the classical guitar repertoire that Rhoads borrowed from to create some of his music that he recorded with Ozzy. The three classical guitar pieces that I found to be most influential in the Ozzy recordings were J.S. Bach's "Bouree in E minor," Francisco Tarrega's "Recuerdos de la Alhambra," and Leo Brouwer's "Etude VI." Although I can not prove this to be absolute fact, it is my strong opinion that these works of the classical guitar repertoire had some influence on Rhoads as well. We will explore this in this article.

Let's start with the opening contrapuntal notes of J.S. Bach's *Bouree in E minor*. Here we have the ascending notes E, F# and G in the upper voice while in the lower voice we have three descending notes G, F# and E. Rhoads takes this same group of notes to link the B7 arpeggio found in measure 15 to the E minor arpeggio in measure 17 of his acoustic solo Dee.

Bouree (Opening measures)	Dee (Measures 15-17)
------------------------------	-------------------------

The image displays musical notation for two pieces: 'Bouree (Opening measures)' and 'Dee (Measures 15-17)'. Each piece is shown with a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The Bouree section features an ascending line of notes (E, F#, G) in the upper voice and a descending line (G, F#, E) in the lower voice. The Dee section features a descending line of notes (G, F#, E) in the upper voice and an ascending line (E, F#, G) in the lower voice. The tablature for Bouree shows fingerings like 0 2, 3 2 0, 4 0 2. The tablature for Dee shows fingerings like 2 2 0 2, 0 2 3, 1 2 0 0, 2 2 0 0 2, 2 3 2 0.

Now lets take a look at what I consider to be Rhoads' masterpiece of blending his classical guitar influence with his rock and roll. The opening to "Diary of a Madman", from the album of the same title, starts out with an eerie sounding clean electric guitar. I first heard this song as a teenager. When it debuted, I thought, "Man, that is too cool and frightening! Where does this guy come up with that stuff?!" Well, I was about to make some exciting discoveries.

During my study of classical guitar in college, reading through Leo Brouwer's Simple Etudes, a set of twenty short studies of various elements of classical guitar technique, I came across an arpeggio study, *Etude VI*, which sounded vaguely familiar. I thought, "Hmm this sounds just like...DIARY OF A MADMAN!!!" I was thoroughly convinced that Rhoads must have studied this arpeggio etude and used some of it in his intro to "Diary of a Madman!" Ever since that day I've been hooked on the amalgamation of metal and classical guitar.

Let's take a look at the similarities. The two are not exactly the same but the similarities are striking. The opening seven measures of "Diary of a Madman" share the same chords with only slight variation. The Brouwer etude starts out in 3/4 time using a continuous flow of descending sixteenth notes. In comparison to what Rhoads did, Diary starts out in 4/4 time with even eighth notes that ascend and descend in each measure. On occasion Rhoads added a note to the harmony but the similarities are strikingly similar. Play through the Brouwer first then through Rhoads "Diary of a Madman" introduction. Play and compare.

Diary Of A Madman

A Classical Guitar Influence

Leo Brouwer Etude VI

	Aadd#4	A7add#4
Brouwer Etude VI		
	Classical Guitar	
Rhoads		
	Electric Guitar (clean tone)	

Adim7 Dm6/A

Brouwer

Rhoads

Aadd2 Am(add2) Am(add2)/G

Brouwer

Rhoads

8 Fmaj13 Eadd2 E7

Brouwer

Rhoads

So what do you think? Pretty similar? Do you think it was an accident that the two sound so similar? I think it was by design. Since Rhoads had spent the previous tour on the road and seeking out classical guitar teachers, I have no doubt that he had to of stumbled upon Brouwer's Simple Etudes. But wait! This is only the beginning. What? There is more? You bet there is and I find this next bit even more exciting.

The comparison with Brouwer's *Etude VI* is where most Rhoads aficionados stop with the classical guitar comparison and influence in "Diary of a Madman."

After the above section we just studied, there is a two measure section that is repeated of 9/8 and 8/8. You are probably wondering what is the classical guitar connection here? Before I get to that let me share how I came about my discovery.

The discovery came to me while working on Francisco Tarrega's famous tremolo piece, *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*. If you are not familiar with classical guitar tremolo technique it works like this, the right hand thumb "p" plays a bass line or arpeggio followed by the "a" (ring finger), "m" (middle finger) and "i" (index finger) playing on a single melodic note in rapid succession. The standard tremolo technique sequence is p-a-m-i. (See Ex.1 below)

So while practicing this tremolo study I decided to work on the right hand thumb and leave the tremolo part out. I got as far as the first two measure when another revelation hit me. (See Ex.2 below) Do you hear where I'm going with this?

Diary Of A Madman

A Classical Guitar Influence Part 2

Recuerdos de la Alhambra-Francisco Tarrega

Ex.1
Tarrega
RDLA

T
A
B

Ex.2
RDLA
Bass Line

T
A
B

After I played the first two measures, I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I thought I was channeling Rhoads. How cool was that?! The bass line in *Recuerdos de la Alhambra* is like the 9/8 and 8/8 measures in "Diary of a Madman." (See Ex.3) Sure there are some slight modifications but the resemblance is remarkable.

Compare example 2 (*Recuerdos de la Alhambra*) and example 4 (*Diary of a Madman*). Coincidence? I don't think so. Someday I hope to discover that Rhoads had studied Francisco Tarrega's *Recuerdos de la Alhambra*, but for now I have to assume that due to the evidence discovered aurally in this article that he must have had been influenced by it somehow or introduced to it by one of his classical guitar teachers on the road.

