GENERAL

always with me always with you joe satriani guitar

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Always With Me, Always With You – Joe Satriani’s Guitar Masterpiece

When the guitar world first heard Joe Satriani’s “Always With Me, Always With You,” it was clear that the virtuoso had once again pushed the boundaries of melodic rock. This instrumental track, released on his 1995 album *The Extremist*, showcases Satriani’s signature blend of soaring melodies, intricate phrasing, and an unmistakable emotional depth that makes the song feel as if the guitar itself is a companion. In this article we’ll dive deep into the song’s structure, its place in Satriani’s career, the gear that helped create its distinctive sound, and how you can learn to play it on your own guitar.

Joe Satriani and the Legacy of “Always With Me, Always With You”

Joe Satriani is often hailed as one of the most influential guitarists of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. With a career spanning more than four decades, he has sold over 20 million albums worldwide and earned multiple Grammy nominations. “Always With Me, Always With You” arrived during a prolific period when Satriani was experimenting with heavier, more aggressive tones while still maintaining the lyrical quality that fans adored. The track stands out for its balance between technical prowess and melodic accessibility, a hallmark of Satriani’s style that has inspired countless guitarists across genres.

Placement in Satriani’s Discography

Released on *The Extremist*, the song sits between the high energy “The Extremist” and the introspective “Satch Boogie.” While the album overall leans toward a heavier, more shredding approach, “Always With Me, Always With You” offers a softer, more reflective moment. This contrast not only highlights Satriani’s versatility but also demonstrates how he can craft emotionally resonant music without sacrificing technical excellence.

Musical Anatomy of the Song

At first listen, the track’s opening arpeggio immediately captures the listener’s attention. Satriani employs a combination of open strings and harmonic overtones, creating a shimmering backdrop that sets the stage for the melodic line that follows. The main riff is built around a minor key, giving the piece an introspective feel. Throughout the piece, Satriani uses a mix of legato runs, hammer on/pull off sequences, and tasteful vibrato to keep the melody flowing.

Chord Progressions and Harmonic Structure

The song’s core progression is built on a I–vi–IV–V sequence in the key of A minor, but Satriani layers it with modal interchange and chromatic passing chords. This gives the track a lush, almost cinematic quality. The bridge introduces a B minor vamp that acts as a tonal pivot before resolving back to the home key. This harmonic journey is a prime example of how Satriani blends traditional rock progressions with advanced jazz and classical influences.

Riff Construction and Soloing Techniques

Satriani’s riffs are constructed around a series of syncopated eighth note patterns that weave in and out of the vocal line. The solo section showcases his use of alternate picking, sweep picking, and a touch of whammy bar manipulation to add expressiveness. Notably, the solo’s climax features a rapid, cascading arpeggio that spans an

octave, demonstrating Satriani's mastery over both speed and melodic phrasing.

The Gear That Made It Happen

Understanding the equipment behind "Always With Me, Always With You" offers insight into the sonic texture that defines the track. Satriani's choice of guitars, amps, and effects pedals all contribute to the song's signature sound.

Guitars

- Fender Stratocaster – Satriani's primary instrument for the track, known for its bright, articulate tone.
- Fender Jazzmaster – Used for the introductory arpeggios, providing a warm, bell like resonance.

Amplification

Satriani employed a **Boss Katana 100**head during the recording sessions. The Katana's "Lead" mode delivers a clean, high gain sound that sits perfectly behind the guitar's natural clarity. Coupled with a 4×12 cabinet, the amp adds depth and sustain without muddying the mix.

Pedals and Effects

- Boss DD-5 Digital Delay – Adds subtle slapback and rhythmic echoes to the melodic line.
- Boss DS-1 Distortion – Provides a touch of grit during the solo section.
- Boss CE-2 Chorus – Enhances the harmonic richness of the arpeggios.

Influence, Covers, and the Song's Enduring Appeal

"Always With Me, Always With You" has become a staple in the repertoire of aspiring guitarists worldwide. Its melodic structure and emotional depth make it an ideal teaching tool for intermediate players looking to improve their phrasing and technique. The track has also been covered by numerous guitarists across genres, from blues to metal, each bringing their own interpretation while preserving the core melodic identity.

Impact on Modern Guitarists

Contemporary guitarists such as Tosin Abasi and John Petrucci have cited Satriani's work as a foundational influence. The song's emphasis on melodic clarity over sheer speed has encouraged a generation of players to prioritize musicality, even within technically demanding frameworks.

Learning "Always With Me, Always With You" on Your Guitar

Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned player, this guide will walk you through the essential steps to master the track. The key is to focus on the song's phrasing and emotional intent rather than just speed.

Step 1: Familiarize Yourself with the Song

1. Listen to the track multiple times, noting the main riff, the chord changes, and the solo sections.
2. Pay attention to the dynamics: where the music swells, where it pulls back, and how the guitar interacts with the backing track.

Step 2: Break Down the Intro

The opening arpeggio is played over a series of open strings. Start by playing the notes slowly, ensuring each note rings clearly. Practice the arpeggio in both ascending and descending orders to build muscle memory.

Step 3: Master the Main Riff

Use a metronome set at 90 BPM to keep a steady tempo. Practice the riff in small segments, then string them

together. Focus on clean transitions between the legato passages and the pick driven eighth notes.

Step 4: Tackle the Solo

The solo is broken into three distinct phrases. Begin with the first phrase, which is relatively straightforward. Once comfortable, move to the second, which introduces more rapid alternate picking. The final phrase is the most challenging, featuring sweep picking arpeggios; practice this at a slower tempo before gradually increasing speed.

Step 5: Add Dynamics and Expression

Once you can play the notes accurately, incorporate vibrato, bends, and sustain. These subtle nuances are what transform a technically correct performance into an emotionally engaging one.

Listening Guide: What to Hear

To truly appreciate “Always With Me, Always With You,” it helps to listen with a focus on the guitar’s role as an expressive voice. Notice how the guitar’s tone shifts from bright and clean during the verses to a slightly overdriven, sustained sound in the solo. Pay attention to the interplay between the melodic line and the underlying harmony – Satriani often uses counter melodies that add depth without cluttering the mix.

Joe Satriani’s Guitar Philosophy Reflected in the Track

Satriani’s approach to guitar playing is rooted in the belief that the instrument should tell a story. He often speaks about “playing the guitar as if it were a human voice.” In “Always With Me, Always With You,” this philosophy is evident: the guitar’s melodies ebb and flow like a conversation, inviting listeners to join in. The track also exemplifies his commitment to blending technical skill with emotional honesty – a combination that has become a hallmark of his work.

Critical Reception and Fan Feedback

Critics praised the track for its melodic depth and technical brilliance. Rolling Stone highlighted the “soothing yet powerful” nature of the guitar lines, while Guitar World lauded the “impeccable phrasing” that makes the song both accessible and challenging. Fans often cite the track as one of the most memorable pieces on *The Extremist*, noting its ability to evoke a sense of nostalgia and longing.

Why “Always With Me, Always With You” Endures

There are several reasons this song continues to resonate with listeners and guitarists alike:

- Universal Theme – The title itself evokes a sense of companionship, and the music reflects that through its warm, inviting tones.
- Technical Mastery – Satriani’s use of advanced techniques makes it a rewarding challenge for players.
- Emotional Impact – The song’s melodic progression taps into deep emotional currents, making it memorable.
- Teaching Value – Its structure offers a practical learning tool for developing phrasing and dynamics.

Conclusion: A Timeless Guitar Journey

“Always With Me, Always With You” remains a shining example of Joe Satriani’s ability to fuse technical brilliance with heartfelt expression. Whether you’re listening for the first time or revisiting the track after years, the song’s melodic richness and emotional resonance continue to captivate. By exploring its musical structure, gear, and the techniques that bring it to life, you not only gain a deeper appreciation for Satriani’s artistry but also acquire

practical skills that can elevate your own guitar playing. Let the guitar be your companion, and keep exploring the endless possibilities it offers.

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