

WAIT (*Pride*, 1987)

Analysis by Jeffrey Adams

By Vito Bratta and Mike Tramp

Fig. 1—Guitar Solo

“Wait” has everything a great eighties power ballad should: a quiet, longing intro segueing into a raucous riff; a passionate vocal delivery; and a soulful guitar solo atop a chord progression with overflowing tension. Penned by singer Mike Tramp and guitarist Vito Bratta, this song is full of surprises: Case in point is the solo’s tapping tour de force.

While the lead lines are breathtaking in and of themselves, the looping chord progression, A–A7–D/F#–Dm/F (I–I7–IV–iv), deserves consideration of its brilliance as well. Being plotted as one per measure, each chord resolves to the next in its own way: The A7 serves as the V of D, and Dm and A share a common tone (A) while the rest of the notes are off by only a half step (**Dm**: D–F–A; **A**: A–C#–E. **Half steps**: D–C# and F–E). These inversions are composed with a descending whole–half–half–half-step scheme (A–G–F#–F) to build dynamic tension. Rhythmic anticipation is used by Gtr. 2 (not shown) by accenting the “and” of 2, “and” of 1, beat 2, and the “and” of 4 with each bass note.

Over this complex harmonic framework, Bratta delivers a stunning tap-fiesta by outlining chord tones with smooth legato, melodic phrasing, touch harmonics, and tapped bends that would give even Eddie Van Halen a run for his money. He begins with a tap-slide maneuver from the 14th to 21st fret after a vibratoed A note at fret 2. He continues with an A11 arpeggio, with clever use of the open G string and moves directly to tapped whole- and half-step bends for the D and Dm chords, respectively. He completes his initial thoughts by permutating an A note into different octaves with picked, bent, and harmonic articulations. Measure 7 hosts a sequence of 3rds, down the A major scale, over a D pedal tone. Note the interesting use of G# over the Dm chord (measure 7, “and” of 4), creating a diminished flavor to the line (G# is the same as Ab, the b5th of Dm). A trill-like move from the 3rd to the root sets up the solo’s remaining eight measures of frenetic energy.

In measures 9–10, rapid tapping, smooth position shifting, and half-step bends adorn the A and A7 chords, but Vito harmonically eschews the chord tones in favor of a sequential question-and-answer phrase. The “question” is “answered” in measures 11–12 with a tapped D major arpeggio in fifth position. After a gradual ascent to the D note at fret 15, via taps and a half-step bend, a rapid-fire legato sequence ensues with harmonic simplicity and rhythmic intensity. While fretting the notes C#–B–A, he anticipates each measure by tapping D and E notes at the 15th and 17th frets, respectively, to outline Aadd2 and A arpeggios. This rhythmic anticipation is climaxed on the D chord where he taps A–D–A (namely, D5/A arpeggio) in 16th-note-rhythm, creating a 3-against-4 (*hemiola*) pattern. A slide to the 19th fret and a half-step bend to D caps this mini-opus of compositional mastery.

Performance Tip: After the initial attack on beat 1, it may be a good idea to dump your pick, or at least tuck it in your middle finger until the A note bend in measure 5. Always be focused on where your tapping finger is *going*, not where it is. For instance, on the tap-slide in measure 1, while you’re bending, focus on the 21st fret—*not* the bend. Use your ears for the bend’s intonation and your eyes for the next move. This will come in handy in measures 7–8, 11, and 14–15 where things get a little more hectic.