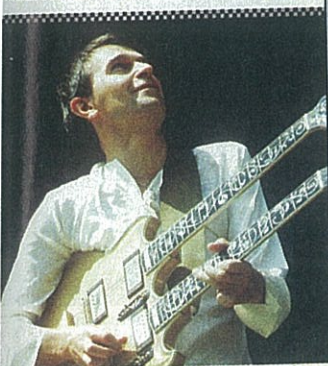


## YNGWIE MALMSTEEN

SIGNATURE SONG  
"Far Beyond the Sun"  
Rising Force



When Yngwie Malmsteen released his debut solo album, *Rising Force*, in 1984, he unleashed the fookin' fury of guitarists, who were already having enough trouble keeping up with Eddie Van Halen. Malmsteen's all-encompassing mastery of speed techniques like sweep-picked arpeggios, remolo picking, legato, string skipping, tapping and more inspired guitarists to either woodshed or use their guitars as firewood. Although countless imitators have challenged Yngwie's speed-king crown, none can match the impeccable precision with which he plays each note and how he makes absolutely every one count from a melodic perspective. Even more frustrating is how easy he makes everything look when he plays onstage, performing kung fu kicks and acrobatically flinging his guitar without ever missing a note. Bastard.



## JOHN McLAUGHLIN

SIGNATURE SONG  
"Birds of Fire"  
Birds of Fire  
(MAHAVISHNU ORCHESTRA)



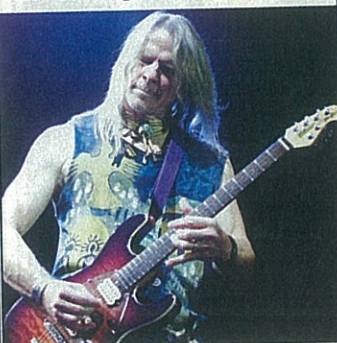
Mahavishnu Orchestra guitarist John McLaughlin was the first guitarist to play jazz riffs with all the fierce intensity and brute volume of rock guitar. The world has never been the same since. McLaughlin's Seventies recordings with Mahavishnu pioneered the jazz fusion genre and rocketed electric guitar instrumental music into the Hot 100. His later acoustic work with Shakti was equally influential in forging the world fusion genre. The clarity, precision, profound conviction and blinding speed of McLaughlin's guitar work has always reflected the emotional depth of his lifelong spiritual devotion and the arduous discipline involved in serious spiritual practice. His dense note clusters

propel us toward realms of bliss far beyond this mundane existence.

STEVE MORSE  
SIGNATURE SONG  
"Cruise Control"  
Free Fall (DIXIE DREGS)



People laughed back in the Seventies when Steve Morse first sought to combine fusion and southern boogie with his band, the Dixie Dregs. Fans of the two



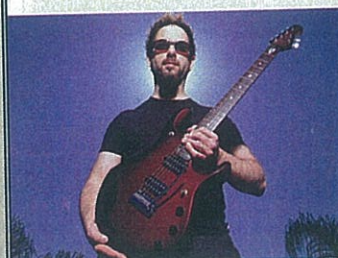
respective genres were hardly on speaking terms back then, but the last laugh belongs to Morse, who is still going strong today. He has plied his lightning licks and tenacious technique in the service of numerous genres and bands, including latter-day lineups of Deep Purple and Kansas.

## JOHN PETRUCCI

SIGNATURE SONG  
"Pull Me Under"  
Images and Words (DREAM THEATER)



There are those who swear that prog-metal pioneer John Petrucci has a few extra fingers on both hands that he craftily keeps hidden during photo shoots. How else can one explain the man's ability to make six- and seven-string electric guitars generate quantum-shifted note clusters exceeding the speed of light? Maybe it's the six daily hours of practice he put in during his formative years, and his rigorous studies at Berklee, where he mastered the intricacies of sweep and alternate picking. Petrucci's guitar work with Dream Theater, Liquid Tension Experiment and as a solo artist exemplify the present-day ideal of extreme guitar discipline.



# Blinded by Science

WHO'S THE FASTEST OF THEM ALL? THE NPS CLOCKING PROJECT HAS THE ANSWER.

**UNTIL GUITAR PLAYING** is designated as an Olympic event, we may never know who is truly the fastest guitar player in the world.

However, Willie Jordan, who goes by the name Willjay on the Michael Angelo Batio forum ([angelo.com](http://angelo.com)), has made an attempt to scientifically determine who is the fastest player with what he calls the NPS Clocking Project (with NPS meaning Notes Per Second, not Nerdy Pointless Shredding). Using one-second audio clips and painstakingly counting each note, Jordan came up with his own list of the 50 fastest players and posted them on the MAB forum in 2006, although he focused only on alternate picking and not other speed techniques like sweep picking or tapping.

So who is the fastest? According to Willjay it's Shawn Lane, who he clocked at 18 notes per second. But if you want to count what Willjay calls "Spasmodic Arm Vibration" (which he criticizes as a sloppy technique), it's some random dude from Barcelona named Odraçir, who posted a clip on the MAB forum of himself playing at 28 notes per second. The NPS Clocking Project is not all about speed for the sake of speed, however; Willjay also judges players by the same criteria that Eliot Spitzer uses to evaluate hookers: cleanliness, accuracy and fluency in advanced positions.

Unfortunately, the discussion quickly shifted away from known players you'd actually want to listen to as the thread overflowed with requests from kids who asked Willjay to clock them (isn't that still illegal in the Bible Belt?). Even so, the NPS Clocking Project is an admirable attempt to provide a scientific answer to a burning question. —CHRIS GILL

## NPS CLOCKING PROJECT SCORES (notes per second)

Shawn Lane .....	18	John Sykes .....	15
Danny Joe Carter .....	17	Mario Parga .....	15
Todd Duane .....	17-16.5	Paco de Lucia .....	15-14
Marcus Paus .....	17-16	Kee Marcello .....	14
Rusty Cooley .....	16	Milan Polak .....	14
Michael Angelo Batio .....	16	Bob Zabek .....	14
John McLaughlin .....	16	Matthew Mills .....	14
Joel Rivard .....	16	Nuno Bettencourt .....	14
Tony MacAlpine .....	16	George Bellas .....	14
Guthrie Govan .....	16	Stephan Forte .....	14
Rick Graham .....	16	Toshi Iseda .....	14
Theodore Ziras .....	16	Mark Tremonti .....	14
Chris Impelliteri .....	16	German Schauss .....	14
John Petrucci .....	15	Steve Vai .....	14-13
Conrad Simon .....	15	Buckethead .....	13.5
Yngwie Malmsteen .....	15	Jeff Loomis .....	13.5
Paul Gilbert .....	15	Randy Rhoads .....	13
Al di Meola .....	15	Tony Smotherman .....	13
Jorge Strunz .....	15	Neil Zaza .....	13
Jason Becker .....	15	Joe Stump .....	13
Vinnie Moore .....	15	Greg Howe .....	13
John Norum .....	15	Steve Morse .....	13
Michael Romeo .....	15	Zakk Wylde .....	13
Ron Thal .....	15	The Great Kat .....	13
Jeremy Barnes .....	15	Joey Taffola .....	12