

technique: **acoustic master**

THE LYRICS

I caught you knockin'
at my cellar door
"I love you, baby, can I
have some more?"
Ooh, ooh, the damage's done

I hit the city and I
lost my band
I watched the needle
take another man
Gone, gone, the damage's done

I sing the song because
I love the man
I know that some of you
don't understand
Milk-blood to keep
from running out

I've seen the needle
and the damage done
A little part of it in everyone
But every junkie's
like a settin' sun

The Needle And The Damage Done

NEIL YOUNG

ROD SINCLAIR puts on the check shirt, flicks back the hair, gets on the back of a Crazy Horse and rides this classic Neil Young track from 1972.

NEIL Young's guitar style is so laid back that you might almost call him a 'sloppy' player, but each note is played with such conviction that he can't fail to get his musical point across – the solo to *Cinnamon Girl*, for example, is only two notes!

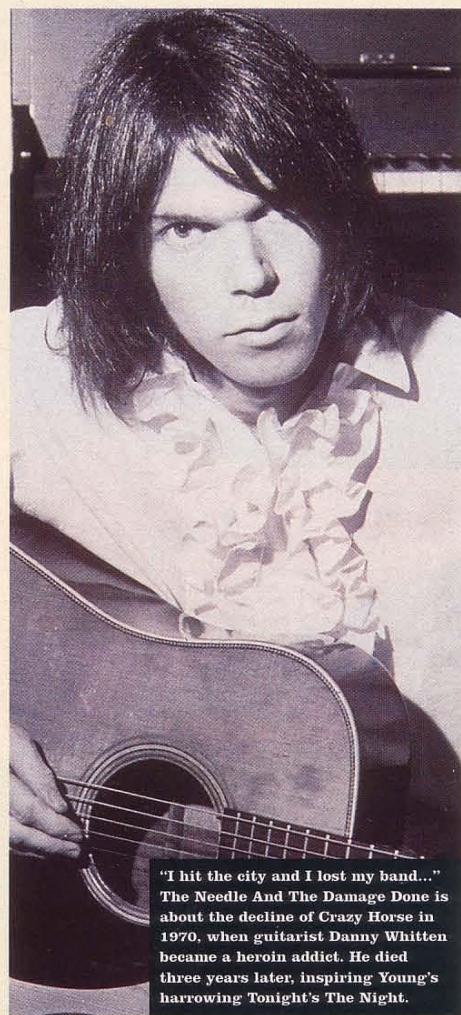
The Needle And The Damage Done is one of many songs that demonstrate his strong rhythm style; it was first released on the *Harvest* album in 1972 and was re-recorded on the more recent *Unplugged* album. The song's simple structure is made up from a two eight-bar sequences – the first (instrumental) version forms the intro, bridge and part of the coda, and the second sequence, which is always played twice, forms the accompaniment for the vocal lines.

CHORD SEQUENCE

In the intro of the song, Neil plays an oft-used descending sequence in D (Lennon's *Dear Prudence* is very similar, for example) – I've shown all the chord shapes you'll need in the fretboxes. The picking hand technique requires a relaxed strumming and fingerpicking pattern, with the plectrum jumping between bass notes, chords and the syncopated melody.

As the song develops, the picking gradually becomes more intense. I've notated the bridge section which occurs at bar 25. This is similar to the intro but is played more loosely and with greater attack – on the record you can even hear the right hand slapping on the guitar body. **TG**

Next month I'll be transcribing the classic fingerstyle party piece *Anji*, as played by Bert Jansch, Paul Simon, and (some say) nicked by George Harrison for *While My Guitar Gently Weeps*.



"I hit the city and I lost my band..." The *Needle And The Damage Done* is about the decline of Crazy Horse in 1970, when guitarist Danny Whitten became a heroin addict. He died three years later, inspiring Young's harrowing *Tonight's The Night*.

MICHAEL OGIS ARCHIVE/REDFERNS

On the CD

TRACK 41

The Needle And The Damage Done, played once through in full as it appears on Neil Young's 1972 *Harvest* album – the structure is shown in the chord sheet. Note how I'm using the notation as a template rather than a definitive note-for-note performance – it's far more important to get the relaxed picking/strumming feel right than to copy the exact picking from Young's version.

Guitar: Rod Sinclair

NEIL YOUNG FACTS

BORN:

12th Nov 1945, Toronto

BEST ALBUMS:

Harvest, *Rust Never Sleeps*, *After The Gold Rush* & *Ragged Glory*

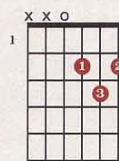
HIS BANDS:

Buffalo Springfield, Crazy Horse, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young

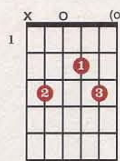
AN INFLUENCE?:

Called the Godfather of Grunge – he's worked with Sonic Youth and Pearl Jam. A gruesome tribute came from Kurt Cobain who quoted his track *Out Of The Blue...* on his suicide note

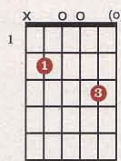
FRETBOXES



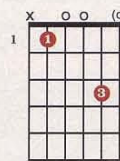
D



D/C



G/B



Gm/Bb

These are the four shapes you'll need to play the descending D pattern on which the song is based. The bracketed open note is the ringing E that is occasionally added to these shapes during the picked sections.



acoustic master: technique

NEIL YOUNG: The Needle And The Damage Done (intro and verse)

CD TRACK 41 →

let ring throughout
play freely

D **D/C** **G/B** **Gm/B \flat**

C **F** **Esus4** **E**

D **D/C** **G/B**

(1st time only)

Gm/B \flat **C** **F**

Esus4 **E**

The intro and verse – as the song develops the basic pattern remains the same but is played more freely.

THE NEEDLE AND THE DAMAGE DONE (NEIL YOUNG) – © BROKEN FIDDLE MUSIC, WAINWICK/CHAPPELL MUSIC LTD, LONDON W1Y 3JA. REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL MUSIC PUBLISHERS LTD.



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» NEIL YOUNG: The Needle And The Damage Done (bridge section)

CD TRACK 41

The bridge section at bar 25 - this is pretty much the same as the intro but with more attack and some additional notes.

NEIL YOUNG: The Needle And The Damage Done (coda)

CD TRACK 41

The four-bar coda section - the last chord is allowed to ring on (strictly speaking, the chord name is Gm6/Bb due to the open E at the top of the chord).

NEIL YOUNG: The Needle And The Damage Done (chord sheet)

Intro & Bridge

||: D | D/C | G/B | Gm/Bb | C | F | Esus4 | E ||

Verse

D | D/C | G/B | Gm/Bb | C | F | Esus4 | E ||

D | D/C | G/B | Gm/Bb | C | F | Esus4 | E :||

⊕ Coda

D | D/C | G/B | Gm/Bb | /: ||

The song structure in full - I've marked where the various sections begin. Make the picking more relaxed as the song develops.