Quick Notes: La Grange – ZZ Top Tempo: about 162 bpm (shuffle)

What makes this song a bit challenging isn't so much HOW it's played. Instead, it's more about the options presented within the overall riff theme itself. I've labeled all the parts (as I would call them) and will include some tips on putting the pieces together. Since you have access to the PDF of the full score, you could be a little particular if you wanted, but I find no real need.





• Figure Reference 1: Riff 1 – I'm calling this "The Setup" because it kicks off the song, but it's also the overall basis and CAN be played throughout UNTIL you reach the "solo" part (the 8-x-5-5). Here's why:



What you see to the left ULTIMATELY results (if played as a full unit) in an Am7. (A, C, E, and G)

Look below for the next figure reference, which is "Riff 2, Verse Option 1 and "Riff 3, Version Option 2""

Figure Reference 2, Verse Option 1 and Figure Reference 3, Verse Option 2: - I've plotted the notes that are used in both of these riff runs.



- Notice that it's mostly the same as a full unit. The only real difference is the swapping of the G and D notes. The G note was used above, but the D note is used here. You still basically have an Am, but that slight addition of D (found in the Am scale) gives a bit of "umph" to the overall passage. Thus, riff 1 (the setup) as well as riff 2 (verse option 1) and riff 3 (verse option 2) all technically work if you wanted to keep it super simple.
- Figure Reference 4: Over Solo While pretty self-explanatory as to when it's played (the backing track will help you here) this one IS a bit different and would need to be played as shown. The reasoning is shown in the diagram below:



- As with before, if we considered ALL the notes played, as a full unit (though they aren't) the result here is actually a C5 power chord (C, G) with a run added of D# F. This C5 becomes a Cm the moment the D# gets added (C, G, D#) and then once the F note is reached, the overall tone heard would be a Csus4 (or Fsus2 same thing)
- Since the C5 is neither Major nor minor (there's no 3 or b3) at FIRST, I would likely consider this a Cm Csus4 "run," but only if you were intent on naming it.

Long story short – the solo part needs to be played as it is seen.

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 Figure Reference 5: The Breakdown – I labeled this "the breakdown" because it's confusing. Just kidding – the song, in my mind, literally "breaks down" here. As with before, we can take a quick look at what is really being played here using the diagram below. I'm skipping down to the next page to make viewing easier.



- The first part is 5 (D string) and then 5 (high E) resulting in a G and A note. There's "no chord" (N.C.) available there.
- The second part is 4 (D string) and then 5 (high E) resulting in an F# and A note. Same deal there. It's a N.C.
- The third part is 3 (D string) and then 5 (high E) resulting in a C and A note. Same deal, which results in a N.C.

Finally, there's a riff of 0-0-3-4 on the A string (A - C - C#) followed up by an A note on the 2nd fret G string. This looks like a bunch of stuff, but really it's just a combination of G, F#, F and a tonal hint of A. The C – C# legato slide is followed up with an A note, getting us back to the overall range of the "A" realm from everything mentioned before.

Food-For-Thought: LISTEN CLOSELY to the backing track. It's there for a very good reason. After **FOUR** clicks <u>you</u> begin – and you're all on your own at first. Then the crazy spoon/rim knocks/gallop beat comes in. It's tricky but fun!

Consider all the options here, but I highly recommend messing around with any of the main riffs (except the solo and breakdown part) based on the vocals you hear. It's all part of the game. Getting acquainted with how vocals, bass, and drums come in and out of a given song is paramount to your further studies. This particular song is a great way to do just that – and so much more.

Incidentally, the <u>overall</u> key of this song is Am, with the main riffs being A minor Pentatonic and the outro solo being C minor Pentatonic. Makes sense, right? That's what we've been "investigating" using only a few snippets.

Have fun, and feel free to practice the full score.