

SPOONFUL

Performed by Cream - *Fresh Cream*, Dec. 1966 (Polydor)

Words and music by Willie Dixon

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From the book *The Best of Cream (Guitar Signature Licks)* Hal Leonard HL 00695251
by **Wolf Marshall**

AUDIO CLIP (FULL) 

AUDIO CLIP (SLOW) 

CREAM

Cream was rock's premier power trio. In an era of furious innovation and unrestrained invention, guitarist Eric Clapton, bassist Jack Bruce, and drummer Ginger Baker combined forces to explore brave new musical territory. Transcending the psychedelic experiments of the Yardbirds and harnessing the volume and power-pop edge of the Who, Cream brought hard rock to its evolutionary zenith—successfully fusing the blues, jazz, and rock 'n' roll sounds of their collective background into a powerful new amalgam.

Cream began life simply as a blues trio—initially envisioned by Clapton as “Buddy Guy with a composing bass player”—but almost immediately they grew into something else. Something else, indeed. Cream's music and its presentation brought to the fore the all-important role of the guitar hero. Their stage shows cemented into the eyes and ears of the public, and into the annals of history, the awesome sonic and visual impact of masterful players flanked and dwarfed by mammoth Marshall amp stacks—a spectacle that is now permanently imbedded in the mythos of hard rock music.

Beyond the spectacle, Cream established a new and considerably higher technical standard in the rock genre. Their group instrumental prowess and legendary improvisational skills (“chops”) endowed hard rock “jamming” with a virtuosity, legitimacy, and validity usually reserved for modern jazz—a fact that did not go by unnoticed in the major news magazines and musical journals of the era. As one noted writer put it, “They made musicianship hip.” It is unquestionable that Cream, during their brief career, set the stage and created the impetus for the futuristic blues-rock of the Jimi Hendrix Experience and the heavy metal of Led Zeppelin in the ensuing years, as well as providing inspiration for budding innovators like Eddie Van Halen, Eric Johnson, and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

SPOONFUL - Intro and Verse

Throughout Cream's trailblazing career, Eric Clapton honored his influences. Starting a pattern which would prevail for many years, Cream produced several hard-edged covers of blues standards, and, in the process, created something entirely new. Indeed, the seeds for hard rock and heavy metal were planted early on with tracks like Willie Dixon's "Spoonful" (made popular by Howlin' Wolf). Through such experiments was born the entire genre of blues-rock -- of which Cream were forefathers and masters.

Few Cream tunes argue the fact as directly and convincingly as "Spoonful." As a musical illustration, the track is particularly revealing. Its structure and format are not at all the usual 12-bar, three-chord shuffle of most Chicago fare; rather, the tune is built on a sinister, recurring riff, set in a droning, one-chord modal center -- which sounds more like a recipe for metal than traditional blues. The riff is in E minor and is consistently reinterpreted with variations throughout. It is introduced in measures 3 and 4. Check out Clapton's expert use of vibrato and slight bends to "vocalize" the figure. Also noteworthy is the traditional blues-cadence melody in measure 14 -- a characteristic triplet phrase closely associated with the Chicago blues school. the guitar-vocal interplay in measures 17-21 is another familiar blues device transplanted into Cream's modernized, power-trio setting.

Moderate Blues Shuffle ♩ = ca. 102 - 104 (♩ = ♩³ ♩)

N.C.(Em)

(Harp) *mp*

Gtr. 1 *mf* w/ dist.

TAB

5 9 7 9 8 9 8 9 8 9 7 9

Verse 0:14

1. Could fill a spoon's full of dia-monds,
N.C.(Em)

5

mp

mf

Em

8 9 8 9 8 9 7 9 7 9 7 9

could fill a spoon's full of gold. _ Just a ___ lit-tle spoon of your ___ pre-cious love ___

9

N.C.(Em)

1 1/2

1/4

(8) 9 9 (9) (9) 9 7 9 7 9 7 9

sta - is - fy_ my soul. ___ Men ___ lies ___ a - bout it; some of them

13

1/2

1/4

1/2

7 2 2 2 0 2 1 0 3 0 3 2 (0) 3 8 9 7 9 7

cries ___ a - bout it. Some of them dies ___ a - bout it. Ev -

17

1/2

1/2

9 9 7 9 7 5 7 8 9 7 9 7 7 9 7 9 7 5 7 8 9