

# Crazy Train

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**Crazy Train** "Crazier Train" by Ozzy Osbourne is a classic heavy metal song released in 1980 on his debut solo album, *Blizzard of Ozz*. The song was written by Osbourne, Randy Rhoads, and Bob Daisley, and it features Rhoads' iconic guitar riff, which has become one of the most recognizable in rock history.

## Key Details:

- Album: *Blizzard of Ozz* (1980)
- Songwriters: Ozzy Osbourne, Randy Rhoads, Bob Daisley
- Genre: Heavy Metal
- Length: 4:50 (album version)

## Lyrics & Themes:

- The song's lyrics reflect Cold War-era anxieties, mental instability, and societal chaos. The opening lines—"All aboard! Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!"—set a dark, manic tone.
- Legacy: One of Ozzy's signature songs.
- Randy Rhoads' guitar solo is legendary.
- Frequently used in pop culture (movies, TV, sports).
- Ranked among the greatest metal songs of all time.

## Cold War Angst (1980 Context):

- Lines like "Millions of people living as foes" and "Maybe it's not too late / To learn how to love and forget how to hate" reference global tensions (US vs. USSR, nuclear fears).
- The "crazy train" symbolizes humanity's self-destructive path.

## Ozzy's Personal Struggles:

- The manic laughter ("Ha ha ha ha!") captures his chaotic mental state.

## Mental Health Themes:

- The song's energy mirrors the feeling of spiraling out of control. The Riff:
- Played in E minor, it mixes chromatic descents and power chords for a sinister yet catchy sound.

## The Solo:

- A masterclass in melodic shredding—bluesy bends, neoclassical runs (inspired by Rhoads' love for Bach).
- The harmonic minor scale gives it a dark, exotic edge.

## Legacy:

- Often ranked among the greatest solos ever (e.g., *Guitar World's* Top 100).
- Modern players like Tom Morello and Synyster Gates cite it as an influence.

## Cultural Impact & Legacy

- In Pop Culture: Featured in *Rock Band*, *Guitar Hero*, and countless movies (Billy Madison, *Tropic Thunder*).
- Sports anthem (played at NFL, NBA, and WWE events).

## Radio & Streaming:

- Over 500 million streams on Spotify.
- Still a staple on rock radio.

### **Ozzy's Career:**

- Cemented his solo success after Black Sabbath.
- Live versions (e.g., Tribute album) keep it alive in concerts.

### **Crazy Facts & Trivia**

- Original Demo Title: "Wally" (a nickname for Randy Rhoads).
- Bass Controversy: Bob Daisley wrote most lyrics, but Ozzy's wife Sharon Osbourne later had Daisley's bass parts re-recorded without credit.
- Grammy Hall of Fame: Inducted in 2021.

### **Covers & Tributes**

- Famous Covers: Pat Boone (lounge-style, 1997) – hilariously bizarre.
- Richard Cheese (swing version).
- Ten Masked Men (death metal cover).

### **Live Tributes:**

- Zakk Wylde often extends the solo in Ozzy's later tours.
- The Studio Secrets: How "Crazy Train" Was Born
- Recording the Riff: Randy Rhoads used a modified 1974 Les Paul Custom (his "Polka Dot" guitar) through a Marshall Super Lead amp.
- Producer Max Norman close-miked the amp and added slight reverb for that "arena" feel.
- The iconic pick scrape before the solo was accidental—Rhoads hit the strings wrong, but Ozzy loved it and kept it.

### **Ozzy's Vocal Takes:**

- He recorded the vocals lying on the studio floor to hit the high notes in the chorus.

### **Bass Drama:**

- Original bassist Bob Daisley wrote most lyrics, but in later reissues, his playing was erased and replaced by Robert Trujillo (Metallica) due to legal battles with Sharon Osbourne.

### **The Music Theory Breakdown**

- The Riff's DNA: Key: E minor (but with a bluesy, chromatic twist).
- Main riff uses E minor pentatonic + chromatic passing notes (the "evil" sound comes from sliding into notes like G# to G natural).
- The pre-chorus chord progression (Am - G - D - Em) gives it a haunting, medieval vibe (Rhoads loved classical music).

### **The Solo's Sorcery:**

- Starts with bluesy bends, then shifts into harmonic minor (Aeolian mode) for a neoclassical feel.
- The tapping section (though subtle) was groundbreaking for 1980—Eddie Van Halen had just popularized it, and Rhoads put his own spin on it.

### **Live Performances: The Song Evolves**

- Randy Rhoads Era (1980-1982): Rhoads would often extend the solo live, adding even wilder arpeggios.
- Watch the 1981 "Tribute" live version—his energy was unreal.

### **Post-Rhoads Era:**

- Zakk Wylde made it his own with pinch harmonics and shreddy solos (sometimes 10+ minutes long!).
- Ozzy's 2000s performances sometimes included a flamethrower bass drum during the song.

### **Funniest Live Moment:**

- At Ozzfest 2005, Ozzy forgot the lyrics and just barked like a dog into the mic. The crowd loved it.

### **The "Crazy Train" in Movies, TV & Memes**

#### **Movies:**

- Billy Madison (1995) – Played during the dodgeball scene.
- Tropic Thunder (2008) – Robert Downey Jr.'s character references it.
- Deadpool (2016) – Almost used in the opening credits (they went with "Angel of the Morning" instead).

#### **TV & Games:**

- South Park – Cartman sings it in a hellish choir.
- Guitar Hero II – The song was so hard on expert that players called it "Blizzard of Blisters."

#### **Memes & TikTok:**

- The riff is used in "Oh no, cringe" compilations.
- TikTok trend: People play it when something chaotic happens.

### **The Ultimate "Crazy Train" Challenge**

- Think you know everything? Test yourself:
- What was Randy Rhoads' guitar tuned to? (Answer: Standard tuning, no drop D!)
- What's the BPM of "Crazy Train"? (Answer: ~136 BPM)
- The Lost Lyrics & Cut Verses

#### **Original Demo Had Different Words:**

- Early versions referenced "psycho trains" and "nuclear veins"—way darker than the final take.

#### **A scrapped verse:**

- "Children of the damned are crying out in pain / While politicians bargain with their brains"
- Ozzy thought it was "too preachy" and told Daisley to simplify it.
- The "All Aboard" Laugh Was a Jab at Black Sabbath:
- Ozzy later admitted the manic laughter was partly about "escaping Sabbath's shadow"—like he was boarding his own chaotic solo career.

### **Randy Rhoads' Guitar: The Hidden Details**

- He Almost Used a Different Guitar :Rhoads tested a Flying V for the riff but switched to his Les Paul last minute for better sustain.
- The pickup selector was in the middle position (neck + bridge) for a fatter tone.

#### **The Solo's Secret Classical Quote:**

- At 3:24, Rhoads sneaks in a modified Bach phrase from Bourrée in E minor—the same riff he'd later expand in Dee.

#### **The "Mistake" That Stayed:**

- In the final solo, Rhoads bent a note sharp (3:42) but kept it because Ozzy loved the "deranged" sound.
- The Drums: Lee Kerslake's Forgotten Genius

#### **That Iconic Hi-Hat Pattern:**

- Kerslake played open hi-hats on the off-beats in the verses (rare for metal then), giving it a swing feel.
- The drum fill before the solo was one take, no clicks—modern producers would've quantized it.

### **The "Phantom Cowbell" Myth:**

- Fans swear there’s a cowbell buried in the mix during the chorus. Engineer Max Norman denies it—it’s just Kerslake hitting the bell of his ride cymbal.
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