

RALPH TOWNER

Improvisation and
Performance Techniques
for Classical and
Acoustic Guitar

By RALPH TOWNER

NOT FOR RESALE

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INTRODUCTION

Musical Techniques For Improvisation and Performance For Classical and Acoustic Guitar

The intention of this book is to provide you with musical instruction and material to assist you in learning improvisation, along with fundamental tone production and performance techniques. It is my hope that the content is accessible to a wide range of player skills, including those with minimal experience on the classical or acoustic guitar. To invite and include the near beginner, I've begun with the standard symbols for the fingers on both hands but refrained from a first position scale chart and rhythm value chart, so some basic music reading skills will be necessary.

The music exercises and studies will proceed in stages, each one successively revealing different aspects to be achieved in your playing awareness. The chord forms will be presented at the outset with very little harmonic analysis. Many of the techniques here stress a minimum of left-hand movement with a maximum of right-hand plucking variations. However, as you progress through the book, you will be using and accumulating chord voicings that I find appealing and versatile in both their vertical and melodic utility.

Since improvisers take on the added responsibility of the compositional content of the music to varying degrees, often the dynamics, articulation, and tone production (the strong domain of the classical player) can suffer some neglect. In this book, I have attempted to present these techniques of performance as an integral part of the total musical experience. It is my firm belief that from the beginning, musical training can include all the expressive elements of performance technique, along with the playing of correct pitches.

RALPH TOWNER

Ralph Towner has been playing and recording professionally for well over fifteen years, earning him the stature of world-class musician. As a composer, he is a master of small and large forms, from solo guitar music to orchestral pieces. His music transcends the dualities of jazz/classical and composed/improvised music. Ralph plays a variety of instruments, including a Ramirez Spanish guitar, Guild 12-string guitars, piano, Prophet 5,1 synthesizer, trumpet, Yamaha cornet, Couesnon flugelhorn, French horn, and assorted percussion. The majority of Ralph's work involves improvised music, both recorded and performed.

Currently a resident of Seattle, Washington, Ralph was born in 1940 in Washington and grew up in Oregon. He was introduced to music, specifically the piano, at an early age. He, recalls, "My mother was a piano teacher, so there was always a piano in the house. I was imitating classical things when I was three years old, I guess. I just found out about that recently, and it made me feel a little bit precocious, at least, since I started playing the guitar when I was twenty-three."

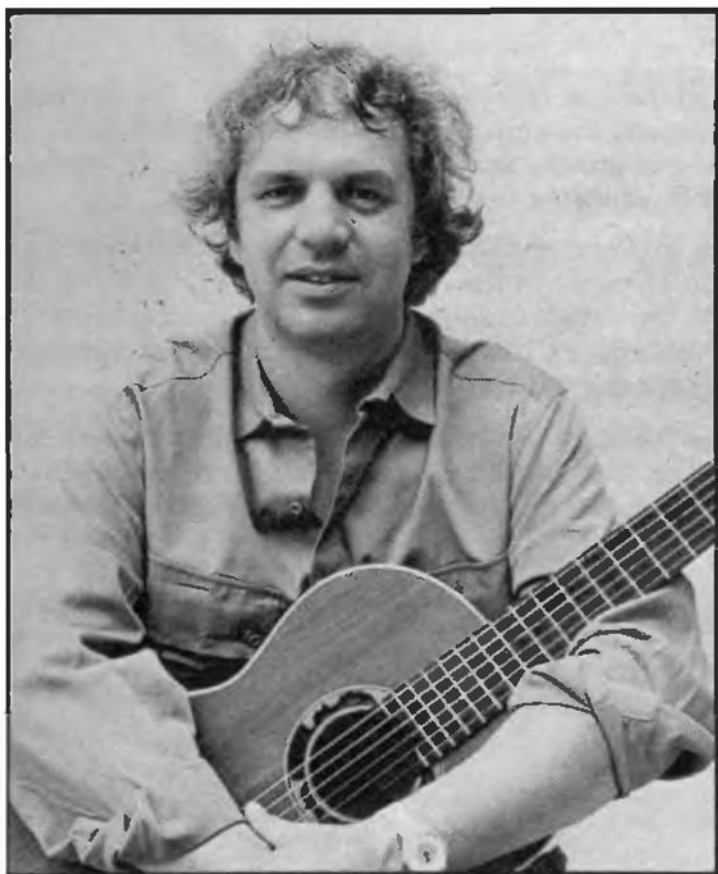
Ralph studied cornet and trumpet until he was seventeen, when he enrolled at the (University of Oregon as a composition major. During his time at college, he began playing the guitar and found that he preferred it to the trumpet. After graduation, he went to Vienna to study classical guitar at the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts. After returning from Vienna, he worked for a masters at the (University of Oregon and then came to New York in 1968 to begin his professional career.

Since 1970, he has recorded over thirty albums. He has collaborated with Keith Jarrett, Weather Report, John Abercrombie, Egberto Gismonti, Oregon, and the Paul Winter Consort (to name a few), both in concert and in the recording studio, and has also developed a remarkable solo career. In 1979, Ralph was commissioned to compose an orchestral piece for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra in Minnesota. He has also composed a symphonic piece for eighty instruments, commissioned by the Cabrillo Music Festival.

He is an internationally-acclaimed musician who performs throughout the (United States, Canada, and Europe, both on solo tours and with long-time partners (i.e., the group Oregon). He has composed over one hundred recorded pieces and has recorded exclusively for ECM Records (a division of Warner Brothers) as a solo artist since 1972. In the early 1970's, as a member of the Paul Winter Consort, he recorded two albums for A & M and one for Epic Records. The group Oregon, of which Ralph is a member, recorded for Vanguard Records from 1972 to 1978. In 1978, the group was signed by Elektra/Asylum Records, and in 1983, they made their first album for ECM Records as a group.

Ralph has composed and performed works for several dance groups, including the prestigious dance company Pilobolus, and has done live performance collaborations with New York City based choreographers. He also composed the film score for *Cruisin'*. The group Oregon composed and performed two previous film scores for the National Parks Service at Harper's Ferry, including the 1981 film *Pahayokee*, for the Everglades Visitor Center, and the 1982 film *Denali Wilderness*, for Denali National Park Reserve.

Ralph Towner's compositions are inspired by his sensitivity to the universe and natural world around him. The Apollo astronauts carried his music on cassette tapes with them to the moon and named one of its craters after his renowned piece "Icarus." Many of his compositions and their titles demonstrate his affinity for the environment around him and reflect the affirmation of privacy and awe he so beautifully expresses.



Ralph Towner

as a leader

DIARY-ECM 1032
BATIK-ECM 1121
OLD FRIENDS, NEW FRIENDS-ECM 1153
SOLO CONCERT-ECM 1173
BLUE SUN-ECM 1250

with John Abernombie

SARGASSO SEA-ECM 1080
FIVE YEARS LATER-ECM 1207

with Solstice

SOLSTICE-ECM 1060
SOUND AND SHADOWS-ECM 1095

with Glen Moore

TRIOS/SOLOS-ECM 1025

with Gary Burton

MATCHBOOK-ECM 1056

with Oregon

DISTANT HILLS-Vanguard VSD 79341
WINTER LIGHT-Vanguard VSD 79350
IN CONCERT-Vanguard VSD 79358
OUT OF THE WOODS-Elektra 6E-154
ROOTS IN THE SKY-Elektra 6E-224

with Weather Report

I SING THE BODY ELECTRIC-Columbia PC 31352

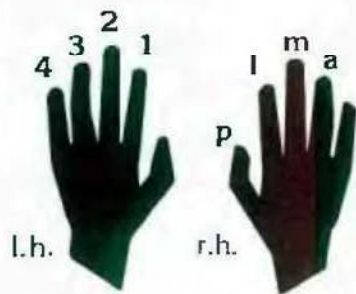
EXPECTATION IN MUSIC

The potential for variation is established in the first few events of your music. The liveness of tone, the dynamic flexibility, the tone colors, the control of the duration of the notes, the use and variation of vibrato, the variety of attack, and the sense of breath and its relationship to phrasing are all perceived within your first few gestures.

The listener (including yourself) is logging and computing information at an extraordinary rate in order to experience your projection of music in the most complete way possible. If any of these musical aspects seem absent, the expectation for their eventual occurrence will gradually diminish. It's as if a conservationist exists in each listener's nervous system to turn off any energy source not required for the musical experience.

The usefulness of expanding these musical qualities or techniques is analogous to the development of an extended vocabulary. The function of the vocabulary is not necessarily to increase the amount of verbiage to be used, but to extend the range of choices available from your expressive palette.

TABLE OF SYMBOLS



Uncircled numbers — left-hand fingers (1 — forefinger)
(2 — middle finger)
(3 — ring finger)
(4 — little finger)

Letters — right-hand fingers (p — thumb)
(l — forefinger)
(m — middle finger)
(a — ring finger)

② Circled numbers — strings

VI (Sixth Position) Roman numerals indicate the position, or the fret that your first finger is on.

Am7(9) Fixed chord in left hand

Metronome: ↓ ↓ Where the metronome pulse occurs.

The rhythmic application of right-hand fingers on each string (note) of the fixed chord.

Cmaj7 C major seventh chord

Cmaj7(-9) The number in parentheses is an added scale interval to the basic 1, 3, 5 or 1, 3, 5, 7 chord construction.

C7(+9) The plus — a sharped interval; the minus — a flatted interval in the basic chord scale.

Amaj(9)/C# Chord above the slash (/); single bass note below.

Amaj(9)/C#

The accidentals (sharps or flats) in the parentheses indicate the scale notes that are altered from natural in single note melodic improvisation.

DAMPING TECHNIQUE

One of the critical techniques of the classical guitar is the use of the right-hand fingers to damp or stop the vibration of sustaining strings. This is mechanically comparable to the dampers on a piano and has much to do with the musical similarities of the two instruments. The tone is stopped without the noticeable change of pitch that occurs when you release a closed or fingered string by letting up with the left hand. The latter should be an alternative damping technique rather than the only one.

Prepared Arpeggio Exercises

The following exercise enlists this damping technique, but it has even greater technical benefits. It develops volume control, tone, and independence of the individual right-hand fingers, which are crucial to the music techniques that follow.

The *p*, *i*, *m*, and *a* fingers begin at rest on the fifth, third, second, and first strings respectively. Pluck each string beginning with the fifth through the first ***without lifting the fingers that remain on the strings until their turn comes***. When you finish plucking the *a* or ring finger, your hand will be suspended above the strings, not touching them as they vibrate. Complete the descending part of the arpeggio by plucking the second string with *m* and the third string with *i*, but from the suspended position (no fingers resting at this stage). When the *p*, or thumb, returns to strike the fifth string, simultaneously place the *i*, *m*, and *a* fingers on the third, second, and first strings and allow the fifth string to ring alone for the third and fourth metronome beats, then repeat.

EXERCISE 1

Metronome: (|) (|) (|) (|) (|) (|) (|) (|)

The tendency for a player unfamiliar with this technique is to keep the hand suspended above the strings after the initial arpeggio and to continue to play without the preparation of the 1, m, and a fingers. On a piano, this is like playing with the sustain pedal pressed down. This is a musical option, but for now the benefits of the exercise depend upon the preparation of the *i*, *m*, and *a* fingers. Each finger is isolated to produce the tone without excessive movement of the hand.

Approach this exercise the same way, but try to keep the bass note E (played with the thumb) at the same volume level as the upper notes in the chord to distinguish it from the bass note A.

EXERCISE 2

Am7(9)

Metronome: | | | | | | | |

Right Hand: $\frac{4}{4}$ | p i m a m i p i m a m i p i m a m i p i m a m i

String: ⑤ ③ ② ① ② ③ ④ ③ ② ① ② ③ ④ ③ ② ① ② ③

This graphic indicates each string that the right-hand fingers pluck. The left-hand chord remains stationary, so the individual right-hand fingers always pluck the same adjacent group of strings throughout the exercise. The letters representing the right hand always correspond to the same particular note, making it possible to play them in the rhythmic sequence notated.

To make the exercise a little more interesting and give it a specific duration, take the same chord formation and move it (except for the bass note A) up one fret (half step) every two measures. A partner can play the second guitar part, or you can tape it and practice the first part with it. After playing the Amaj7 chord (X position), reverse direction and continue back down to the original Am7 chord (I position).

EXERCISE 3

Am7(9) *p i m a m³ i p i m a m³ i simile*

1st Guitar

2nd Guitar

(Chord form up one fret)

p i m a m i p i m a m i

(Chord form up one fret)

p i m a m i p i m a m i

(Chord form up one fret)

Continue arpeggio pattern

p i m a m i p i m a m i

p i m a m i p i m a m i

(Continue two measure arpeggio pattern on each chord form)

Amaj7

Reverse direction and continue back down, repeating the arpeggio pattern to the I position Am7(9)

Am7(9)

POLYMETRICAL RHYTHMIC GROUPINGS

Now take the same chord form and group the notes into four sixteenth notes per beat. Set the metronome to sound on each quarter note at a comfortable tempo. Remember to prepare the fingers as you did previously.

EXERCISE 4

Metronome: ↓

You are now playing a triple right-hand pattern in a duple meter context.

This is the first example of an important principle that carries on throughout this book. Your right hand must become independent enough to play melodic/rhythmic groupings that are asymmetrical to the time signature and its symmetrical groupings of four, three, or six sixteenth notes to the beat. I'll call this *polymetrical* playing: the implication of two (or more) time signatures occurring simultaneously.

If you are finding this awkward at first, it is because your attention is placed too strongly on the melodic pattern instead of the 4/4 rhythm of the metronome and the important reiteration, or "landing," of the bass note A at the first downbeat of the measure.

This division of attention, and the control of it, also play an important part in how you perceive and shape the music you're playing. Try stratifying what you're listening to and place the first beat of the fundamental time signature as the most dominant element in your perception. Try not to be seduced into hearing the rhythmic complexities your right hand produces as foremost in your attention, or you will often lose your focus.

Now use the sixteenth-note pattern with the previous exercise (two measures per chord).

Further Prepared Arpeggio Exercises

Before proceeding to more examples of polymetrical rhythmic groupings, practice the two rhythmic versions of the prepared arpeggio on the following chord sequences. They involve moving your right hand to a new set of adjacent strings on the third chord of each sequence. (Play the sequence without stopping on the repeat.)

EXERCISE 5

Am7(9) Am6(11) Em7(9) Fmaj+4(6)

(p i m a m i p i m a m i)
 (0 4 3 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 3 4)

EXERCISE 6

Em⁽¹¹⁾₉ Cmaj7+4(6) Am⁽¹¹⁾₉ Fmaj7+4(6)

Further Polymetrical Rhythmic Groupings

The next series of right-hand patterns are to be played *without* the fingers resting in preparation on the strings to be plucked. Try to minimize the use of the whole hand to pluck the string. The bouncing of the hand that occurs usually results using the whole hand to bat or brush at the strings instead of massaging the strings with the fingertips. Again, I'll stress the importance of the first exercises for developing the strength and quickness of the individual fingers to make a bigger and more controlled sound.

EXERCISE 9

Four-note pattern

1. Metronome: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Am(11₉) Fmaj7(+4) *p a m i p a m i p a m i p a m i p a m i simile*

2. *p a m i p a m i p a m i p a m p a m i p a m i simile*

Further Right-hand patterns:

3. 4/4 ||: ||: *p a m i p a m i p a m i p a*
 ⑤ ①②③④①②③④ etc.

4. 4/4 ||: ||: *p m i p a m i p a m i p a m i p*
 ⑤②③④①②③④ etc. ①②③④

EXERCISE 10

Here is the same four-note pattern distributed within a triple meter. (12/8)

Metr: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

p a m i p a m i p a m i p a m i p a m i p a m i

Metr: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

(implied $\frac{2}{4}$)

Variation 1

p a m i p a m i p a m p a m i p a m i p a m

Variation 2

p a m i p a m i p a p a m i

Variation 3

a m i p a m i p a m i p a m i p a m i p a m i p

You can move the fourth finger up a fret to a C# (Db) to form an Amaj⁽¹¹⁾₉ to Db7(-9)/F chord progression on the previous exercises and their variations.

Amaj⁽¹¹⁾₉ Db7(-9)/F

EXERCISE 11

Metronome: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

a
p p i p m p i p a p i p m p i p p p i p m p i p simile

⑤ ④ ③ ④ ② ④ ③ ④ ① ④ ③ ④ ② ④ ③ ④ ⑤

Variation 1

Metronome: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

a
p p i p m p i p a p i p m p i p

m
p p i p a p i p m p i p

(implied 2/4)

a
p p i p m p i p a p i p m p i p a p i p m p i p

p
p

① ④ ③ ② ② ①

EXERCISE 12

Three-note pattern within a duple meter

Metronome: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

Am (11)
p a p i m p i m p i m p i p a p i

⑤ ① ④ ③ ② ④ ③ ② ④ ③ ② ④ ③ ② ④ ③ ⑤

Practice accenting each metronome beat with the right-hand finger that occurs with it.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

p a p i m p i m p i m a i m p i

⑤ ① ④ ③ ② ④ ③ ② ④ ③ ② ④ ③ ② ④ ③

Variation: Reverse the *m* and *i* fingers.

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

p a p m i p m i p m i p m

⑤ ① ④ ② ③ ④ ② ③ ④ ② ③ ④ ② ③ ④ ②

EXERCISE 13

Five-note pattern within a duple meter

Learn the following five-note group slowly and evenly, then practice it in the 4/4 context below.

Remember to listen more closely to the metronome pulse than to the polyrhythms you are creating. When you are able to play the sixteenth notes evenly and with the same tone and volume for each finger, try them with a single note accented as before.

Before continuing with more practice patterns, I'll mention again that these are *exercises*. They are intended to expand your versatility of selection and variation when you improvise. When you become proficient at playing any combination of fingers, sounding each sixteenth note of the rhythmic subdivisions, then you can begin using this capability as musical source material. Don't consider the sounding of every sixteenth note as necessary to a musical part.

EXERCISE 14

Syncopated 3/4 pattern within a duple (4/4) meter

The last group of four sixteenth notes* are used to flip the syncopated 3/4 figure back onto "one" of the 4/4 meter. You could continue with the syncopated 3/4 figure (*a,i,m*) ad infinitum, or at least through several cycles of two measures of 4/4 time. The longer you continue the syncopation without flipping it back to "one," the more the musical pressure is built up. This pressure is similar to that which occurs when a long note is being held by a wind instrument or singer. The drama increases with the expectation of the eventual need to take a breath. If it becomes apparent that the wind player is not going to stop the tone to take a breath (using circular-breathing technique), the drama and expectation decrease after this point. As a musician, you are constantly dealing with the manipulation of *expectation* in all aspects of music.

EXERCISE 15

Metr.: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ *

a i m a i m a i m a i m a i a m i

p

Almost all the exercises can be started (after sounding the first bass note) on any sixteenth note of the measure. Your fingers shouldn't be limited to memorizing the patterns as peculiar to a specific starting point.

EXERCISE 16

a i m a i m a i m p

SIMULTANEOUS FINGER COMBINATIONS

Playing with any simultaneous combination of fingers should also be possible. It is a matter of which sixteenth beats you choose to sound with which combination of right-hand fingers.

EXERCISE 17

Emaj(9) Em7(9) Emaj(9) Em7(9)

a a a

p p i m p i p m p i p i p p i m p i p m p i p m p i p i

EXERCISE 18 /

A "thinned-out" version of the same pattern

p p i m i m i p i p p i m i m i p i

Metr.:

Try to maintain the steadiness of sixteenth-note subdivisions so that the syncopated beats (the second and fourth beat in a group of four sixteenths) stay in time. The sixteenth beats can always be felt as a steady undercurrent to the larger quarter-note beats.

EXERCISE 20

A Latin style pattern

Em⁽¹¹⁾₉ Metronome: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

i a
p m

i a a a a
p m i p m p i p m p i (p m p m) Same pattern with 'C' bass note.

②
④
③
⑤
⑥

⑥

②
④
⑤
②
⑤
④
⑤
②
⑤
④
⑤
②
⑤
③

⑥ ③ ③ ③ ③

EXERCISE 21

Here are some of the lines, or parts, implied by appropriate accents. A guitar part can be orchestrated for ensembles quite effectively. Also, since these pitches are taken by the guitar, the ensemble parts could be harmonized on other pitches.

EXERCISE 22

Take this next series of chords and apply *all the right-hand patterns* to them. Stay with one pattern for the entire progression and use it as an etude or study. Review the *prepared arpeggio patterns* particularly.

Use $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{3}{8}$ or $\frac{12}{8}$ meter.

$Bm7(\overset{13}{-6})$ $Bm7(\overset{13}{-6})/A$ $G\sharp7(\overset{-13}{-5})$ $G\sharp7(\overset{-13}{+9})$ $C\sharp m7(9)$ $D7sus4$ $Gmaj7+5$ $Em7(11)$

$Cmaj7(9)$ $C\sharp7(\overset{-9}{-5})$ $C\sharp m7-5/F\sharp$ $F\sharp7-9$ $Bmaj(\overset{11}{-6})$ $Gmaj(\overset{11}{-6})/A$ $G\sharp m(\overset{11}{9})$ $Gmaj(\overset{9}{+4})$

$Emaj/F\sharp$ $Em/F\sharp$ $Emaj/F\sharp$ $Em/F\sharp$ $Bmaj(\overset{11}{-6})$

CHORDAL PLUCKING

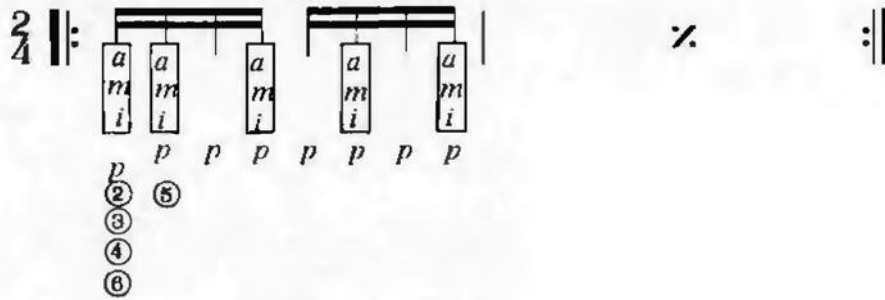
This next technique involves the thumb plucking each sixteenth beat while the *a*, *m*, and 1 fingers extract a chord on every other beat. As in the previous exercises, the bass note is marked only on the first beat of the two-measure phrase, and the thumb then moves up into the interior part of the chord with the rest of the fingers. The evenness in volume of each note of the chord is important to achieve. The prepared arpeggio exercise develops this facility.

EXERCISE 23

The exercise is written in 2/4 time and consists of two parts. The first part is a two-measure phrase starting with a chordal plucking exercise. The notation shows a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The first measure contains a chord labeled *Em7(9)* with a bass note marked '1' on the first line. The second measure contains a plucking exercise with a thumb plucking every sixteenth beat and fingers *a*, *m*, and *i* plucking every other sixteenth beat. The notes are marked with *p* (piano) and circled finger numbers 5 and 6. The second part is a prepared arpeggio exercise, also in 2/4 time, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It shows a two-measure phrase with a thumb plucking every sixteenth beat and fingers *a*, *m*, and *i* plucking every other sixteenth beat. The notes are marked with *p* and circled finger numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5. The exercise ends with a repeat sign.

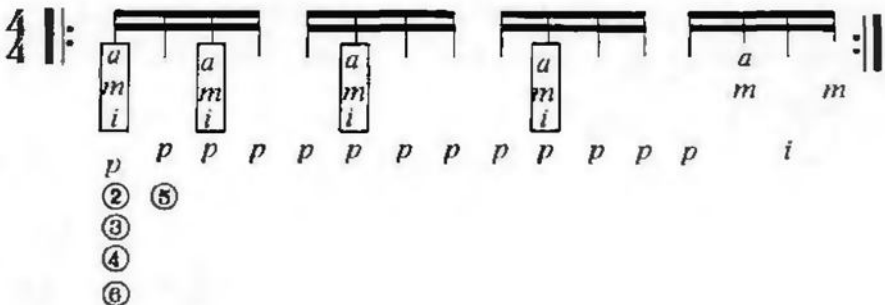
EXERCISE 24

To syncopate this figure, you need only to move the chord onto the second and fourth beats of the sixteenth notes. This technique is fundamental to much of Brazilian music.



EXERCISE 25

This phrase uses both "on" and "off" beats and borrows the final four sixteenth notes from an earlier exercise to refresh or prepare the downbeat at the beginning of the measure.



EXERCISE 26

The damping technique comes into play on the following exercise. Practice the first measure with the chords ringing with as imperceptible a break between them as possible (i.e., legato). Then in the second measure, damp them as quickly as possible to make a crisp staccato. Play continuously, alternating the two techniques, listening carefully to make the contrast as great as possible.

legato *a* *m* *i* *staccato*
p *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *pp* *p* *p* *p*
 ② ⑤ ⑤
 ③
 ④
 ⑥

EXERCISE 27

The next technique is similar. It involves the continuous regeneration of an interior note in the chord by alternating *p* and *i* on the same string.

a *a* *a* *a* *a* *a* *a*
m *m* *m* *m* *m* *m* *m*
i *p* *i* *p* *i* *p* *i* *p* *i* *p* *i* *p* *i* *p* *i* *p* *i* *p*
p *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p*
 ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑤
 ②
 ③
 ④
 ⑤

EXERCISE 30

Up to this point, the left hand has remained stationary, holding the same chord notes throughout the measure(s). The following exercises deal with the releasing and replanting of the left-hand fingers, allowing a few open strings to interact in the chord and create more melodic variations. The right-hand fingers still pluck the same set of adjacent strings throughout.

Em(¹¹₉) Cmaj7+4(6) *p a p m i p a p m i p i p i m simile*

(release 1st finger and place immediately on)

4/4 ||: *p a p m i p a p m i p i p i m*
6 2 5 3 4 5 2 5 3 4 5 4 5 4 3

EXERCISE 31

Am(¹¹₉) Am(¹¹₉)/F *p a p i m p i m p i p m p m p i simile*

(release 1, place immediately on A(4))

4/4 ||: *p a p i m p i m p i p m p m p i*
5 1 4 3 2 4 3 2 4 3 4 2 4 2 4 3

EXERCISE 32

This exercise involves the barring of the first five strings with the first finger of the left hand, leaving the sixth string open. The right-hand arpeggio sounds particularly "pianistic." Try to use a minimum of squeezing pressure with your left thumb. The resistance to the pressure your hand is applying on the neck can be taken by the shoulder of the guitar as it presses your chest. Listen closely to keep the chords ringing and make the position changes as quickly as possible to avoid interrupting the flow of sound. Be kind to yourself and avoid any onsetting cramps in your left hand by stopping before any damage is done.

(Guitar I)

open pos. I II III

Proceed chromatically up to VII pos., then reverse and chromatically return to I pos.

Guitar I

a m i m a m i m a m i m
i p p p i p p p p p p p

Guitar II

a m i p i m a m i p i m

I II etc.

VII VIII etc.

VI pos. VII

(Guitar II)

up to XIII pos. down to VI pos.

Experiment with composing your own exercise patterns and sequences. Give special attention to any combinations that seem weak. Too often it is tempting to confine yourself to exercises and musical passages that you play well and delude your ears by ignoring the weaker aspects of your playing. Consistent practice with a metronome and an intense, honest listening of everything you play will allow you shorter but more beneficial practice sessions. Little is gained by long but diffused and inconsistent practice sessions. Your ears are what you are pleasing, and they will demand fine judgements and tolerances of your physical skills.

Melodic Playing

When playing a single line melody, the alternation of two fingers in plucking consecutive notes is an especially important technique. It functions much as tonguing does for a wind player. When a tone is played by the *i* finger, the *m* finger is not only in position to pluck the next note, but it can determine the duration of the note sounded by the *i* finger. The extremes of a note's duration are the shortest possible (staccato) and its fullest written value (when the succeeding note is plucked with the slightest perceptible interruption between it and the first note).

The control of these extremes and all the gradation in between can have a powerful impact on the music. You can imply the sense of breathing in the music and give more life, drama, and variation to even the simplest of phrases.

By combining the variety of duration with the varieties of volume, tone color (the distance you pluck the string from the guitar bridge), slurs, grace notes (in the guitar's case, the hammering or plucking with the left hand), and thumb pizzicato without using the nail, to name several, the potential means for musical expression are infinite.

EXERCISE 33A



EXERCISE 33B



EXERCISE 33C



EXERCISE 33D



Free Stroke and Rest Stroke

The rest stroke and free stroke are the two major methods of plucking with the right hand. For example, when the plucking finger strikes the first string and follows through to land at rest on the second string, it is called, appropriately, the rest stroke. When the plucking finger avoids contact with any string other than the one it has plucked, remaining suspended, it is called the free stroke.

You will find the rest stroke produces the loudest and fullest sound of the two, especially if you are just beginning the guitar. In order to make a comparable sound with the free stroke, you must avoid pulling upward and outward on the strings, or making a slight claw with your plucking fingers. You can take a tip from the rest stroke to cure this.

One of the reasons the rest stroke has the fuller sound of the two at first is that when you pluck through the first string at the appropriate angle to land on the second string, you push the first string down toward the sound hole of the guitar, giving more velocity to the plucked string, much like a bow-and-arrow effect. A similar massaging action on the free stroke will shorten the distance the stroke travels, still avoid hitting the adjacent string, sound fuller, and eliminate a scuffy-sounding batting action or tinny-sounding clawing action.

The free stroke is the most frequently used stroke, as it doesn't prevent the adjacent string from ringing. And because of the shorter distance the fingers travel, you are more inclined to use the alternate damping and coloristic techniques available.

You can try a small test to approximate the sensation of the free stroke: Place your righthand finger tips on your cheek and firmly rub the alternating i and m fingers as though you were plucking a string. You obviously don't want to scratch or maim yourself with your fingernails with a digging or gouging motion, and the resultant alternative is very similar to the percussive act of plucking the string.

Learn the following two scales, one in a lower position on the neck and the other in a higher position. Use the alternating right-hand finger technique. (See the free stroke and rest stroke section in appendix.) There is only one accidental or altered note in the scale (F changed to F#). Otherwise, all the notes are natural.

EXERCISE 34A

EXERCISE 34B

The scale notes in Exercise 34A are all accessible from the Em7(9) chord and the Am(9) chord in Exercise 35A. The scale notes from Exercise 34B are accessible from the higher position voicings of the Em⁽¹¹⁾₍₉₎ and Am⁽¹¹⁾₍₉₎ chords in Exercise 35B.

EXERCISE 35A


EXERCISE 35B


EXERCISES 36

Before combining the bass, chord material, and the melody sources (scale notes) into a three part musical network, you should experiment with some melodies accompanied by the bass notes only, striking the bass note only once at the beginning of each measure to give a marker to relate your melodic phrases to.

EXERCISE 37

The melody shapes can be drawn from the same sixteenth-note group as the chordal accompaniment. With the metronome sounding on each of the measures' four beats, you should develop a sense of this constant undercurrent of subdivisions. As was done with the arpeggio patterns, the emphasis of the second and fourth of each sixteenth-note group as starting notes or strong notes of your melodic lines will syncopate them, and the first and third beats will ground them to the basic metronome pulse. Again, melodies can be in -polymetric groupings as was the case with the arpeggio patterns.

Metronome: 



(Play quietly allowing dotted half note to maintain importance.)

The former example of a melody left a window in the last three quarter-note beats. I placed the D to E to gather motion to begin the repeat of the phrase. A chord pattern could also have provided the same function in that space. Or I could just as easily have left it open to allow the E to ring until the repeat. Your private sense of aesthetics will always be the determinant of the amount and purpose of the notes you choose to play.

Remain consistent with the metronome. Fluctuations in the tempo of your melodies at a stage when you can't relate them to a steady subconscious rhythmic pulse will only deflate their intensity and purposefulness. Even rubato playing is related to time and timing to maintain its proportions.

Further Two-Chords Combinations

Am7 Fmaj7(+4) (9) = add 9th
 -6 = b 6th

No scale accidentals

Cmaj7⁺⁵₊₄ Fmaj7⁺⁵₊₄ Cmaj7⁺⁵₊₄ Fmaj7⁺⁵₊₄

Scale accidentals Scale accidental

Bm7⁽¹³⁾₍₋₆₎ Ab7⁽⁻⁹⁾₍₋₅₎ Bm7⁽¹³⁾₍₋₆₎ Ab7⁽⁻⁹⁾₍₋₅₎

Scale accidentals Scale accidentals

Am7 Fmaj7+4 Cmaj7+5 (Release to open B string) Fmaj7+5

Emaj(9) Emaj sus4⁽⁹⁾₍₋₆₎ Dm⁽¹¹⁾₍₉₎ A7⁽⁻⁹⁾₍₋₆₎

Cm7(9) Fmaj9/Eb Eb maj7+4 G7(13)/A

(No accidentals)

SOLO GUITAR PLAYING

A piece of music has a lifespan subject to rules that are similar to a book or play. From the moment it begins, it reveals more and more of itself to the listener, who develops and forms a continuously expanding impression and opinion of and about its parts as well as the whole. In a play, the characters evolve and develop further with the amount of exposure time the author allots to them. To develop several characters simultaneously requires hopping from one to another, utilizing various compositional devices.

This approach can be used in music as well. Your concern is with the individual development of several musical areas or parts while simultaneously keeping an overview of the total proceedings and the overall impact.

For example: Take three small objects, such as dominoes, and place them on a table, one above the other. Then, moving only one domino at a time, advance all three across the table to the other side. You could choose to move each one the complete distance in three moves, but the sense of a unified group of three elements moving together would be lost. By moving each object a short distance with several moves, you will get them all across the table without losing their identity as a threesome. To apply this to music-making, consider the top domino to symbolize the melody voice; the center domino, the chord content; and the lower, the bass voice.

As a soloist, you are responsible for all three conceptual functions simultaneously: i melody voice, chords and their variations, and a bass voice. The role of an accompanist to a melody instrument is less of a juggling problem, since you can occupy yourself mainly with performing the latter two functions.

Play the following exercise as you did the melody-with-bass note exercise at the end of the first section of the book. But now insert some of the chord variations in a manner that illuminates the harmony. Continue to play the bass note only on the first beat of the measure to provide a solid reference point with which to relate your phrasing. Attend to the melody and the chord variations one at a time, **but take care to maintain the character and logic of each by picking up your ideas where you left off.**

Be purposeful with your melodic statements. It can be helpful to aim for a specific pitch with which to form a conclusion to the melodic fragment you are playing. Try limiting yourself to playing within specific registers, using fewer pitches, and expand the range as you progress through the development of the improvisation.

Accompaniment usually occupies one of three realms of activity: constant, decreasing, or a gathering or increasing of activity. This activity is generally related to the amount of attention you want attracted to, or drawn away from, the accompaniment in order to serve the illumination of your melody or bass line.

EXERCISE 1A

Scale accidental for both chords

Em7(9) Am7(9)

Limit yourself melodically to the available notes in this area of the neck.

① ————— ② ————— ③ ————— ④ ————— ⑤ —————

Em7(9) Am7(9)

Repeat ad infinitum

EXERCISE 1B

Use the same 2 measure pattern.

Em⁽¹¹⁾ Am7(9)

(VII)

① ————— ② ————— ③ ————— ④ —————

EXERCISE 2

Now combine Exercises 1A and 1B and mix the two-chord positions to extend your melodic range. Continue to use this two-chord seesaw format with other two-chord sequences. It is an especially helpful practice technique when encountering two chords with different scale accidentals. Often the greater the scale difference between the two chord changes, the more difficult it becomes to maintain melodic continuity.

The next example is a transcription of some improvisation on the two-chord sequence in Exercises 1A and 1B. The three functions are dealt with solitarily, but often overlap (intentionally). The melody is generally played at a louder volume than the chords to distinguish it from the accompaniment role. When the melody, or what is designated to be in the foreground, descends into the same pitch range as the accompaniment, its identity is dependent upon all the qualities associated with it (i.e., volume, tone colors, articulation, etc.) that were established at the very outset of the piece.

A measure-by-measure representation of the three functions and their occurrence in Exercise 3

The dotted lines represent a sustained note. The solid lines represent full activity or focus in a part.

So this is a stark example of focusing on only a single part at one time while maintaining the thread of all three. This is not to say that two or even three equally active parts can't be played simultaneously, but rather that it is not aesthetically necessary in order to carry out a multiple-part solo performance.

The designated categories of melody, accompaniment, and bass are a strict formalization to help organize your mind. The actual roles and functions of musical material can constantly shift in importance and emphasis and become somewhat slippery to categorize into three distinct parts. But I find this categorization an excellent method with which to achieve multi-dimensional music extemporaneously with less mental confusion.

Try to avoid making the shifts from one category to the next too uniformly. (Using the same lengths and order becomes too "blockish" and too predictable. Take a category and extend it frequently through the bar lines so that the measures don't become symmetrical corrals for the musical events.

As is often the case with a system, the more attention it draws to its presence, the more limited the musical experience can be.

The division of attention and focus of perception principles common to most beings become allies and techniques, especially when applied to solo playing. When I perceive music, my attention is much like a spotlight panning from one area of interest to another. In a jazz piano trio, for example, I might dwell on the pianist's right hand and the dynamics and melodic strength of the line he is playing. I am still aware of the harmonies in his left hand as well as the bassist's and drummer's involvement, but I am less conscious of the details of what they are playing. I am rapidly expanding or contracting my field of attention in order to make specific detailed checks on as many comprehensible aspects of the music as possible. (This is all quite normal activity. Chewing gum or walking can be seemingly impossible feats when subjected to analysis.)

Much of what is actually happening between checks or focuses of my aural spotlight is filled in by musical assumption and projection based on the information that the musical element established when my full attention was on it. These checks are often determined by the music and how it is being performed, rather than on my whim.

When listening to a good player, my attention is usually guided to an aspect of the music by the player himself, who is intentionally highlighting the feature he wants to take precedence from moment to moment. Similarly, a painter or a playwright is concerned with the viewer's or audience's direction and intensity of focus.

The different parts, when they become silent, linger in the listener's and player's memories. When you overlap two parts, the attention swing to the new part is occupied momentarily by the old part. When the actual silence takes place in the old part, it is not as consciously abrupt this way. For example, if the accompaniment has a specifically motor like personality, it can be implied to continue unabated if you maintain the same qualities upon returning to it.

The greater the audible range and stratification of your various musical techniques of dynamics, tone color, vibrato, and articulation, the greater the variation and scope of personalities you can affect on each part and the whole. I once heard an extraordinary violinist who played a simple, rapid five-note diatonic run ranging from pianissimo to double forte and back, with a different note duration and tone color for each note, all in a split second. It was an emotional experience that I only bothered to analyse much later.

EXERCISE 3

Met.: | | | |

The musical score consists of six staves of music in 4/4 time, written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various rhythmic values, fingerings (e.g., 2, 3, 4, 5), dynamics (p, m, a), and articulation marks (down-bow, accents). Fingerings are often indicated by circled numbers. The score concludes with the instruction "(Release 2 & 3)" and "(continues)".

*Stop previous notes by lightly touching strings 3, 4, 5, 6 with L.H. 1st finger.

**L.H. 3rd finger damp.

The following tune can be learned as a solo or in duet with a melody instrument. (Transpose the melody down an octave.) The melody can be quite flexible and doesn't require you to always place it rhythmically as written. But at first, as usual, try to play it as written. The scale accidentals and two positions of each chord proceed it. If you have difficulty keeping four complete beats to each measure, tape record the bass note at the beginning of each measure along with the metronome and practice with the tape.

EXERCISE 4
 ("Innocenti")

Em9
 Higher pos. Lower Scale accidental

Cmaj7+4

Am9
 Higher Lower

Fmaj7+4
 High Low No accidental

A7/C#
 High Low

Optional

INNOCENTI

Ralph Towner/Gary Burton

Intro Em9 Cmaj7+4 Em9 Cmaj7+4

Em9 Cmaj7+4 Am9

Fmaj7+4 Em9 Cmaj7+4

Accomp. Solo

A7/C# Cmaj7+4 Em9

②

① ② ① ③ ② ④ ③

②

Cmaj7+4 Em9 Cmaj7+4

Repeat for solos

Repeat this phrase twice, for the final ending only.

EXERCISE 6

Exercise 6 is an extension of the vamp. Its function is to gradually clear the density established in the vamp to allow room for beginning and extending your improvisation. You can take a lengthy amount of time with this process. Density and intensity are not the same thing. The sparsity of notes, and again the coloring, can maintain and even increase the drama. Experiment with your own variations.

Here are some melodic suggestions:

EXERCISE 7

Exercise 7 is an important example of a technique that takes chordal material and presents it in a linear fashion. It is accomplished by lifting the left-hand finger from each note the moment the successive note is sounded. Even though the notes often outline a triad, they will be perceived as melodic material since they are not sustaining simultaneously. Practice these two measures in an unbroken repeat as an exercise. They also include the use of open strings in a handy way.

Single Position Pentatonic Scales

Experiment with any position over the pedal point for degree of dissonance sought.

The simple pentatonic scale can be moved around with great success to imply many tonalities without bumping into an unwanted cadence.

Atonal Improvisation

Strict linear improvisation, either as a soloist or with a group, can be organized by memorizing all the intervals, particularly the major sevenths and minor ninths on the neck (for example, Eb 5, D 3, C# 1). (using the technique in Exercise 6 keeps the notes more easily at your disposal in groups of threes, leaving your mind clearer to make musical decisions. Improvising without implying triadic tonality can be as difficult as playing within a tonal framework. Sense of space, timing, and variety are important in imparting a sense of motion to the music. Bursts of notes, tentative unveiling of notes over a longer period of time, repetition, and broken rhythms are descriptive properties common to all music. The context and character of a piece are established after the first few events, and maintaining the musical syntax throughout the piece is a challenge.



Serenade

"Serenade" can be played as a solo piece or with a melody instrument. It will be useful to construct an exercise from the scale and chord voicing material in which you play the chord and sustain it as you play the scales in an ascending/descending pattern.

The alternate chord voicings give you a wider pitch range from which to build your melodies, while keeping the full chord voicings accessible.

Distant Hills

"Distant Hills" is for duet (or possible ensemble, as are the other tunes in the book) with melody instrument.

It is a good example of the shortcomings of chord symbols in providing the necessary scale information for melodic improvising. (The inclusion of some of the unaccounted scale notes in the chord voicing would be disruptive to the voice leading in this particular piece.)

The scales can be built from a root note of your choosing, using the principle of orbiting, about a key note in your melodic playing (as I mentioned earlier in the book). Refer to the chord/scale chart in the back of the book.

SERENADE

Ralph Towner

Moderately and freely

IV-----II-----

simile

rit.

Solo Chord Changes

G#m+7	Amaj7+4/C#	Dmaj+4/F#	Gmaj+4/B	Cmaj+4/E
F#7(-6)	Bm(-6)	Cmaj7+4(9)	Bm(-6)	Cmaj7+4(9)

Serenade (Solo Chord Changes and Scales)

G#m7 **Amaj7+4/C#**
 IV----- IV-----

Dmaj+4/F# **Gmaj+4/B**
 II----- II-----

Cmaj+4/E **F#7(-6)**

Bm(-6) **Cmaj7+4(9)** **Bm(-6)** **Cmaj7+4(9)**

Alternate Chord Voicings in Higher Positions

G#m7 **Amaj+4/C#** **Dmaj+4/F#** **Gmaj+4/B** **Cmaj+4/E**
 Harm. XII IX IX VII VII

F#7(-6) **Bm(-6)** **Cmaj7+4(9)** **Bm(-6)** **Cmaj7+4(9)**

DISTANT HILLS

RALPH TOWNER

Slowly, methodically

⑥ = E \flat E \flat maj+9

Guitar

i m a m i m i

p p

E \flat maj7+4 E \flat maj7+9

(continue arpeggio pattern)

Bmaj7+4/E \flat Dmaj/E \flat Bmaj7+4/E \flat

a m i m i

p p p

E \flat maj7+4 G/E \flat E \flat maj/E \flat

C♯maj/Eb Dmaj/Eb Bmaj7+4/Eb Gmaj

II- - -

pattern

D.C. al Fine

Fine

Distant Hills (Corresponding Scales for Improvising)

E♭maj7+9 E♭maj7+4

5 bars 1 bar

E♭maj7+9 Bmaj7+4/Eb Dmaj/Eb

3 bars 1 bar 1 bar

Bmaj7+4/Eb E♭maj7+4 Gmaj/Eb

2 bars 1 bar 1 bar

E♭maj/Eb (B major scale) C♯maj/Eb (A♭ major scale) Dmaj/Eb

1 bar 1 bar 1 bar

Bmaj7+4/Eb Gmaj7 E♭maj7+9

1 bar 4 bars 2 bars

LEFT-HAND EXERCISES

There is often a tendency to reduce the pressure of the left hand on the strings when playing quiet passages. This results in a loss of intensity and a lack of clarity, duration, and liveliness to the tone. Play these exercises at a consistent volume level from beginning to end of each run-through. Try each exercise at different volume levels and pay particular attention to maintaining the force of the left hand independently from the force of the plucking hand.

This exercise is begun in IX position with the four left-hand fingers playing in the same corresponding frets across the neck. (1,2,3 and 4 on frets 9, 10, 11, and 12) The fingers should always be placed down in pairs simultaneously (3 and 1, 4 and 2) as they traverse the neck. The first eighth note is plucked by the right hand and the second is literally plucked with the left-hand finger (either 3 or 4). Actually use a rest stroke in the left-hand finger on the inner strings. That is, pluck the string with the finger and rest against the higher adjacent string. Try to match the volume and tone of the right and left hand. Stay exact with the metronome so that each note is of equal importance (no grace notes). This exercise is important for building the strength to produce a live tone and augment your articulation possibilities.

EXERCISE 1A

Metr.: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

IX pos.

(1st finger on 9th fret)

EXERCISE 1B

Variation

To V, II & I pos.

EXERCISE 1C

Left-Hand Variation

EXERCISE 2A

The crabwalk also stays in position across the neck and maintains the left hand "finger-to-a-fret." Listen carefully to make sure that each note sounds its full time value. Develop a springy quality in your left-hand touch. The force of your finger pressure should fluidly rebound each finger from one note to the next. With each step you take when you are walking, each foot and leg compresses like a shock absorber, and its rebound aids in catapulting you into your next step. It is constant, pneumatic, and fluid motion. Learn to duplicate this sensation with your fingers.

Crabwalk

The musical score for Exercise 2A is written in 4/4 time and consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains four measures of music. The first measure has a quarter note on G4 (finger 1), a quarter note on A4 (finger 3), and a quarter note on B4 (finger 4). The second measure has a quarter note on C5 (finger 2), a quarter note on B4 (finger 3), and a quarter note on A4 (finger 4). The third measure has a quarter note on G4 (finger 1), a quarter note on F#4 (finger 3), and a quarter note on E4 (finger 4). The fourth measure has a quarter note on D4 (finger 2), a quarter note on C4 (finger 3), and a quarter note on B3 (finger 4). Dynamics are marked as *p* (piano) and *m* (mezzo-forte). The second staff continues with chromatic lines, and the third staff concludes with a sequence of notes and fingerings. A diagram at the end of the third staff shows a grid of finger combinations for the strings:

②	③	④	③	②	①	①	①	①
⑥	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	④	③	②

Continue with these combinations and repeat whole sequence.

EXERCISE 2B

This variation is even more helpful. Listen carefully to the chromatic lines on each of the two strings and check that each note sounds its **full time value**. Don't allow your left-hand finger to release a note until its successor on the same string is plucked. Try to attain a singing quality in both lines. Don't be reluctant to use vibrato on this exercise to bring out the independence of the two strings. Adding flexibility and buoyancy to the individual notes can change this exercise from drudgery to music.

Variation of Crabwalk

Single String Exercise

The musical score for Exercise 2B is written in 4/4 time and consists of one staff. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first four measures show overlapping notes with fingerings (3, 1, 2, 4) and dynamics (*p*, *m*, *i*). The rest of the staff continues with chromatic lines and various fingerings. The exercise concludes with the word "etc.".

Make sure overlapping notes sound full time value.

EXERCISE 3

In the next exercise, the left hand changes positions contrary to the melodic pattern. The hammered notes should sound strongly, equally with the plucked notes. The left-hand fingers perform a piston-like action. Check the knuckles on your left hand and flex your hand in a manner that forces them to protrude less than they normally do at rest. This gives the fingers more of a vertical path to the strings when they are hammered downward. Exercise 1A aids in developing this action quite naturally and will ease the difficulty of this exercise as well.

Metronome: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

(1 stays down entire exercise.)

Remember, your ear will tell you if you are developing technically. If your attention is keen and your standard is exacting, your hands will produce the sounds of your expectations.

Bar and Scale Exercise

Metronome: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

same fingerings

Continue up through ninth (IX) position.

Sustain the bass note, keeping the 1st finger barred across the entire neck. Use combinations of R.H. alternation: *a* and *m*, *i* and *a*, etc.

Vibrato

The vibrato is accomplished with a rocking of the left hand in a direction parallel to the length of the fingerboard. The pitch change is affected by the varying pressure this action exerts as it stretches the string over the metal fret. A sideways shifting of the fingertip (or bending of the string) is often used in the 1 position of the neck, where the leverage on the length of the string is lower, but above this position it is preferable to use the former rocking motion for more control.

The vibrato doesn't have to be considered as a one-speed effect to be switched on like an electric fan. Vary it with straight tones, introducing it purposefully to imbue a suppleness and a psychological potential-for-contrast to each tone. A wind player or singer will vary the speed and occurrence of the vibrato quite naturally. Try playing a straight tone, introducing the vibrato at a midway point in its duration at a slow oscillation and increase the rate of oscillation as it is fading in volume.

The vibrato is another very personal tool in your expressive arsenal. It can often be a personal signature of your playing style. But as is the case with all effects, the predictability of automatic overuse or excessive and thoughtless variation can result in the shutting-down of the listener's senses in the same manner that occurs with the use of too little variation.

RIGHT-HAND EXERCISES

These are exercises to develop an extreme contrast between the shortest possible note duration (staccato) and a fluid, uninterrupted sounding of consecutive notes (legato). The finger quickness developed to damp the staccato note will also result in a smoother legato, as the latter requires tremendous quickness in crossing the string and regenerating the tone without hearing a gasp between the tones. (Sluggish fingers cause this.) When the extremes are accomplished, all the gradations of duration values will emerge and should be used much like a wind instrument for expressive purposes.

EXERCISE 1

1. *m i m i*
2. *m a m a*

legato *staccato*

p

Use all combinations of right-hand finger alternation: *m a, a m, m i, i m, i a, a i, p i, i p, etc*

Leave first finger down throughout exercise.

etc 4 3b 2 b

down chromatically

Bass note may be added after upper notes are comfortable.

Use free stroke on all exercises.
Don't touch adjacent string in R.H.

EXERCISE 2

Isolated Finger Exercise

a
m
i
p Rest all fingers on strings indicated and don't remove the three not involved in plucking.

Variation:

EXERCISE 3

This exercise is for finger quickness and coordination with the left hand. **Listen!!** Make the pickup note sound as quickly as possible!!! (Use all combinations in the right hand as before.)

Leave 1st finger down throughout exercise.

EXERCISE 4

Scale variation:

Musical notation for Exercise 4, Scale variation. The exercise is written on a single staff in 2/4 time. It consists of two lines of music. The first line contains five measures, each with a circled number below it: ⑤, ④, ③, ②, and ①. The second line contains five measures, each with a circled number below it: ②, ③, ④, ⑤, and ④. The notation includes various rhythmic values and accidentals. The final measure of the second line is followed by the instruction "Proceed up neck chromatically."

EXERCISE 5

Pianistic Arpeggio Exercise

Musical notation for Exercise 5, Pianistic Arpeggio Exercise. The exercise is written on a single staff in 3/4 time. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The first measure shows a chord with fingerings 0, 1, 4, 2, 0. The second measure is a repeat sign. The third measure is marked with a 3/4 time signature and has the instruction "a m a m etc." above it, with fingerings "i p i p" below. The notation shows three measures of arpeggiated chords. The final measure is marked with a 3/4 time signature and has the instruction "etc." above it, with fingerings 0, 1, 4, 2, 0 below. The instruction "Proceed chromatically up the neck." is written below the final measure.

ARPEGGIO STUDY

The arpeggio study is another example of grouping a three-finger right-hand pattern within the four sixteenth-note subdivisions. The p,i, and m fingers always pluck a different group of three separate strings on each ascending phase of the arpeggio and a different pair of strings on the descending phase. Also, in order to complete the 6/4 time cycle, the five-note chords require an alteration from the six-note chord pattern. Confine yourself to the single exercise chords at first, repeating them without a break. Start the exercise with as slow a metronome tempo as is necessary to sound each note clearly and evenly. When the right hand becomes proficient, then try the complete chord series of the study. As you improve your facility, increase the metronome tempo. The tempo should eventually be swift (quarter = 112-144), but clarity is more important.

Apply the six-note chord pattern to the first guitar part in the Pianistic Exercise as an easier alternative exercise form.

EXERCISE 1A

Metronome: ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

6-note chord arpeggio form

ascending

descending

This piece can be played as a fixed guitar solo with the arpeggio, or it can be played in duet with a melody instrument, using the optional melody. It is also a useful vehicle for improvisation. The Pianistic Exercise pattern also provides a good fixed accompaniment, but use this piece as a vehicle for variation in your accompaniment. **Listen for interesting melodic content that emerges from your right hand and experiment with its development.** Try to avoid a fixed accompaniment that ignores the melodic invention of the solo player.

EXERCISE 1B

5-note chord arpeggio form

ascending

descending

Arpeggio Study

“Zephyr”

Am(¹¹₉) Dm+7(⁹₆)/A Em(-9)/A

Amaj(¹¹₉) Em(-9)/A \flat Emaj(⁹₆)/G \sharp Cmaj7(9)/G F \sharp m7(¹¹₅)

F \sharp m7(11) ascending 6-note arpeggio Am(⁹₆)/F

p i m p i m p i m

Db(9)/F Cmaj/E Em(¹¹₉)

Fmaj7(9)/E Em7

Em7-5 (5-note chord arpeggio) E \flat maj7+4 (5-note chord arpeggio) A7(-9)/D (6-note chord arpeggio) Dm7(9)

B♭maj7+5

B♭maj(6)

F♯7sus4(-9)/B

Bmaj(9)

Bm7-5
(5-note chord arp.)

ascending 5-note chord arpeggio

E7-9sus4

p i m p i m p i m p m i E7-9

Am(11/9)

Amaj-6(11/9)/F

Amaj(11/9)/E

Fmaj7+4/E ascending 6-note chord arpeggio

E7-6

Amaj(11/9)

Em(-9)/A

Amaj(11/9) Em(-9)/A

Release first finger

* Amaj(11/9)

*D.C. here if improvising.

For this exercise, the right-hand technique utilizes the same principle as the arpeggio study (except for 1, p, and m on the descending phase), but the left-hand fingers employ a different technique. In order to sound the three-note units as consecutive melodic notes, you must lift the left-hand fingers from each note the moment the successive note is sounded, as in Exercise 6 of the solo guitar section.

Experiment with different left-hand finger combinations, such as 4-2(bar 1) etc., 4-3(bar 1) etc., 2-3(bar 1) etc.

Melodic Broken Chord Exercise

(3 note phrased in four eights.)

IMPORTANT: In this exercise the L.H. fingers must be removed (excluding the barring 1st finger) to have notes sound consecutive and melodic.

This technique is employed frequently in "The Juggler's Etude," part of a three-piece solo guitar suite that I composed.

HARMONY, SCALES, AND CHORD VOICING

EXAMPLE 1

Triads are constructed from the first, third, and fifth degree of the particular scale they're drawn from.

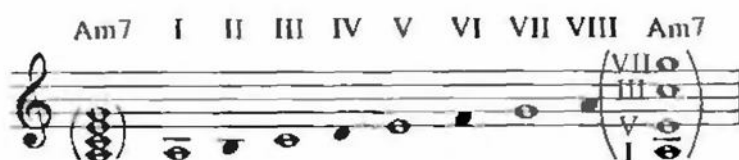


The first degree, or root, and the third degree are the strongest identifying elements of the chord. The fifth degree and the seventh degree also sway the character of the chord strongly, but the fundamental root and third are the foundation upon which the other intervals are laid.

The addition of any or all of the second, fourth, and sixth degrees to a basic seventh chord gives variation and color to the sound of the chord.

EXAMPLE 2

The chord voicing is an especially important dimension to harmony. The degrees of the scale can be presented in the chords in arrangements other than their scale order (1, 3, 5, 7). This Am7 chord sounds much different when spread out from the confines of a one-octave scale.



EXAMPLE 3

The addition of the second degree (referred to most commonly as the ninth, its position in the upper second octave of the scale) offers even a larger contrast to the quality of both A minor chords.



EXAMPLE 4

The 1, 5, 9, 3, 7 chord can be played two ways here, using an open string B or four closed strings. (The results differ in both versions, as shown with the right-hand techniques in this book.)

Often the addition of the supplemental intervals, coupled with the raising or lowering of intervals a half step, can imply the existence of more than one triad simultaneously within a chord. The use of the "slash" system of notation provides an alternative to spelling the chord with one letter symbol. For example, the Cmaj7 with a sharped fifth can be split into an E major triad over the bass note C. (The lower letter represents the bass note only, unless indicated otherwise.)



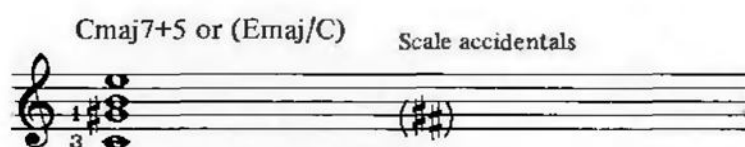
The image shows two musical staves. The first staff is labeled 'Cmaj7' and shows a chord voicing with notes C, E, G, B, and D. The second staff is labeled 'Emaj/C' and shows a chord voicing with notes C, E, G, and B. The two staves are separated by a double bar line with the word 'or' above it.

Cmaj7 = major 3rd & major 7th
C7 = major 3rd & flatted 7th
Cm7 = minor 3rd & minor 7th

EXAMPLE 5

Both methods of chord symbolization don't account for the scale intervals not included in the chord information itself. To compensate for this failing, I've found it necessary to discuss what scales are appropriate for a chord with the musicians I'm playing with. For example, I always prefer a sharped fourth degree to the scale played with the Cmaj7#5, but if I don't want the interval sounded in the chord, I must request it verbally.

There is, however, a melodic benefit that occurs with the use of the slash system. When a soloist observes a chord symbol, he is likely to play a melody that gravitates around the bass or root spelling of a single letter chord symbol. With the slash system, he will be more likely to gravitate his melody around the pitch of the upper triad symbol. For example, play the Cmaj7#5 chord and then play or sing a melodic line that begins and ends on the C, or root, of the chord. Then do the same, using the E as the launch and landing point. (use the same scale accidentals in both.)



The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef. The first part of the staff is labeled 'Cmaj7+5 or (Emaj/C)' and shows a chord voicing with notes C, E, G, B, and D. The second part of the staff is labeled 'Scale accidentals' and shows a sharp sign (#) above a double sharp sign (##).

The melody improvised around the E should sound less tethered, or earth-bound. Charlie Parker used this technique of gravitation around higher intervals of the chord systems with obvious musical success.

CHORDS & CORRESPONDING SCALES

(Courtesy of Paul McCandless)

The following tables are all built upon the bass note C for visual clarity. Experience the sound of each chord. Each one will suggest a different quality: unrest, suspension, consonance, etc. If you are composing, you will often be in search of a specific quality or personality that will maintain the direction in which you want your piece to go. The more familiar you become with a great variety of chords, the less time you'll require to find the one that fits your immediate need.

Transpose these chords to different keys and experiment with the addition of the scale intervals not included in the chord. The use of convenient open strings will often supply an unusual placement of an interval in your chord voicings.

Chords and Corresponding Scales

B \flat /C C Phrygian D/C C Lydian Cm7 E \flat /C C Dorian



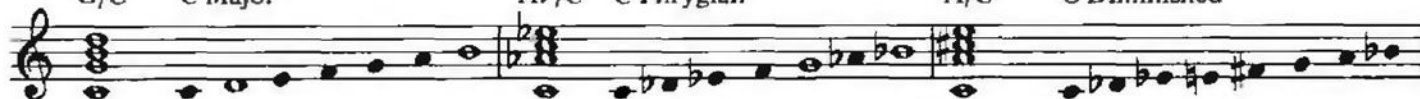
This row shows three musical examples on a single staff. The first example shows the B \flat /C chord (B \flat in the bass, G, B \flat , D) and the C Phrygian scale (C, B \flat , A, G, F, E, D). The second example shows the D/C chord (D in the bass, F, A, C) and the C Lydian scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B). The third example shows the Cm7 chord (C in the bass, B \flat , D, E, G) and the C Dorian scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B \flat).

Cmaj7+5($\overset{E}{C}$) C Lydian F/C C Major F \sharp /C C Diminished



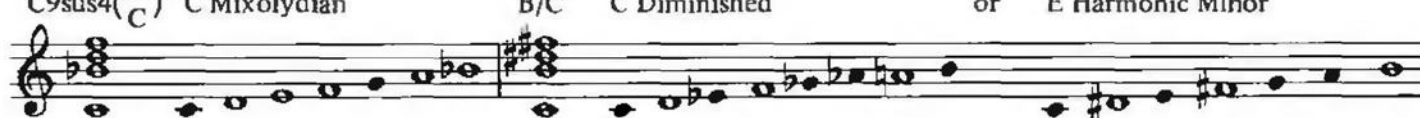
This row shows three musical examples on a single staff. The first example shows the Cmaj7+5($\overset{E}{C}$) chord (C in the bass, E, G, B, D) and the C Lydian scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B). The second example shows the F/C chord (F in the bass, A, C, E) and the C Major scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B). The third example shows the F \sharp /C chord (F \sharp in the bass, A, C, E) and the C Diminished scale (C, D \flat , E \flat , F \sharp , G \sharp , A \sharp , B).

G/C C Major A \flat /C C Phrygian A/C C Diminished



This row shows three musical examples on a single staff. The first example shows the G/C chord (G in the bass, B, D, E) and the C Major scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B). The second example shows the A \flat /C chord (A \flat in the bass, B, D, E) and the C Phrygian scale (C, B \flat , A, G, F, E, D). The third example shows the A/C chord (A in the bass, C, E, G) and the C Diminished scale (C, D \flat , E \flat , F \sharp , G \sharp , A \sharp , B).

C9sus4($\overset{B\flat}{C}$) C Mixolydian B/C C Diminished or E Harmonic Minor



This row shows three musical examples on a single staff. The first example shows the C9sus4($\overset{B\flat}{C}$) chord (C in the bass, B \flat , E, G, B \flat) and the C Mixolydian scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B \flat). The second example shows the B/C chord (B in the bass, D, F, A) and the C Diminished scale (C, D \flat , E \flat , F \sharp , G \sharp , A \sharp , B). The third example shows the E Harmonic Minor scale (E, F, G, A, B, C, D \flat).

MODES AND SCALES

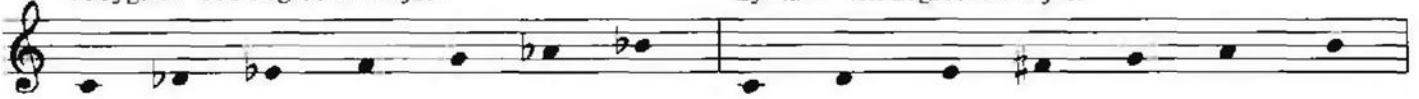
Major (Ionian):

Dorian: Built on 2nd degree of major.



Phrygian: 3rd degree of major.

Lydian: 4th degree of major.



Mixolydian: 5th degree of major.

Aeolian (Natural minor): 6th degree of major.



Lochrian: 7th degree of major.

Harmonic minor:



Melodic minor:



Some Symmetrical Scales

Diminished: Alternate half and whole steps.

8 triads of diminished scale.



Alternate minor 3rds and half steps:

6 triads.



Whole tone scale: Whole step and 2 half steps:

The first staff shows a whole tone scale starting on C4, with notes C, D, E, F#, G, A. The second staff shows a scale starting on C4 with intervals of a whole step followed by two half steps: C, D, E, F, G, A.

Pentatonics

The staff shows two pentatonic scales. The first is the C major pentatonic scale (C, D, E, G, A). The second is the C minor pentatonic scale (C, D, E♭, G, A).

Three pentatonic scales can be found in any of the modes by starting on the degrees on which major triads can be built. The most effective pentatonic of the three is usually the one in the highest or sharpest key.

C Major Pentatonic on C Pentatonic on F Pentatonic on G

The staff shows four pentatonic scales: C Major (C, D, E, F, G), Pentatonic on C (C, D, E, G, A), Pentatonic on F (F, G, A, C, D), and Pentatonic on G (G, A, B, D, E). The label "Brightest sound" is placed below the Pentatonic on G scale.

BENEATH AN EVENING SKY

"Beneath an Evening Sky" is composed for guitar and melody instrument. If the melody is played by another guitarist, it must be played an octave higher than written. Play the piece as written the first time through. The accompaniment can be played to good effect by using pizzicato technique the first time through, and during the first time around the solo chorus by the melody instrument.

To accomplish the pizzicato technique, place the outside edge of your right hand on all the strings, directly next to the guitar bridge. Pluck the strings with your extended thumb, using the flesh and avoiding the use of the thumbnail as a plectrum. The further you place the edge of your hand from the bridge, the less sustained the notes will be. Try releasing the damper (edge of your hand) immediately after the string is plucked so that selected notes will continue to ring. The pizzicato can have many variations this way and not be limited to sounding only as a short, stopped note. Experiment with the timing of the release of the stopped strings as an orchestrational device.

The scale accidentals are placed next to the chord forms. The melodies you improvise with the chord progressions don't have to be tied to the root, or bass note, of the chords. As before, there is always a scale note occupying a line or a space on the staff, and they are to be played as a natural unless their line or space is occupied by an accidental (# or b). There is an exception in this tune, however - namely, the Abmaj7 + 13 + 9 chord. There is both an A flat and an A natural in the scale source. The step-wise scale becomes an eighthnote scale in this situation. Outlining various triads starting from any point in the scale source can produce interesting melodic variations. (See Chords and Corresponding Scales section).

The chord progressions in this tune also apply as an exercise form for arpeggio variations for the first section of this book.

The written accompaniment can be departed from during the solo excursions of the melody instrument to build and extend the intensity of the development. After the melody instrument has completed a solo (several times through the form), attempt a guitar solo on the same form. Remember to give yourself some room at the outset of your solo. It isn't always necessary to begin the second solo at the same density with which the first soloist leaves off.

If you are the sole player remaining after another player has completed his solo on the form, it can sometimes be quite refreshing to a musical form to insert a more freely improvised section on some related, but different, harmonic material before returning to play on the original form. This device can have a renewing effect on the original material or deflate the whole piece, depending on your success, but it is often worth the risk.

BENEATH AN EVENING SKY

Ralph Towner

C#m7(9) Amaj+4(9) *(Tacet 1st time)*

pizz.

C#m7(9) Amaj+4(9)

C#m7(9) Amaj+4(9)

C#m7(9) Amaj+4(9)

C#m7(9) Amaj+4(9)

Em/F# Em/B Bm(11/9)

Bm(¹¹/₉)/A G#7(⁺¹³/₊₉)

Abmaj7(⁺¹³/₊₉) Am(9)/G#

C#m7(9) Amaj+4(9)

F#7sus4 Amaj7+4(9) C#m7(9)

Amaj7+4(9) C#m7(9) Amaj+4(9)

Beneath An Evening Sky

Solo Chord Changes & Scale Accidentals

C#m7(9) Scale accidentals Amaj+4(9) Scale accidentals

(E major scale)

Em/F# Em/B Bm(11/9)

Bm(11/9)/A G#7(+13 +9) Ab maj7(+13 +9)

ALONG THE WAY

"Along the Way" can be played as a solo or as duet. The rhythmic undercurrent, or subdivision, used in this piece is three eighth notes (triplets) to the beat, rather than four sixteenth notes to the quarter-note beat. Hence the alternative 9/8 time signature.

This is a similar subdivision to that used in a jazz time feeling. A notated dotted eighth with a sixteenth is played rhythmically more closely to a quarter note grouped with a sixteenth an eighth note.

This tune offers another form of polyrhythm: four complete beats played in the same elapsed time as the three metronome beats of the 3/4 measure, or four-against-three. Practice this by playing four evenly spaced notes to the measure against the three beats of the metronome and mark the first beat of each measure with an open string bass note.

ALONG THE WAY

Ralph Towner

Guitar

VI VI IV

III II

a m i m
i p p p etc.

Freely IX VII XI
a tempo

Ending only IX VII XII
a tempo

*These harmonics are played by touching the fret one octave above the note in parenthesis with the *i* finger while plucking simultaneously with the *a* finger. The greater the distance between the *i* and *a* finger, the more solidly the harmonic sounds. (The little finger can also be used to pluck the harmonics for a greater spread from the *i* finger.)

Along The Way

Solo Chord Changes & Scale Accidentals

System 1: F#^b/A, A7sus4, E7-9/A, Amaj7+4

System 2: A7/F# (fingering: 1 #), E7(13)/F# (fingering: 2 #), F#m (fingering: II)

System 3: F#maj9/A# (VI-----), Bbmaj(-9) (VI-----), Bbmaj(-9)/Eb (VI-----), Ebm, G#maj-9/C# C#m (IV-----)

System 4: Bbmaj/C# (III), same scale, A# diminished scale (II), Amaj/C# (II), Bmaj(+4)/C#

System 5: Db7(+9)(+5), Ab7(-9)(+5)

System 6: Gmaj(+4)(+9), Amaj(+1)(+9)/F#

System 7: Fmaj7(+5)(+4), Amaj(+1)(+9)/E

System 8: Fmaj7+4/E, (No accidentals)

Along The Way

Melodic Exercise

♩ = 152

Staff 1: Chords: F#^b/A, A7sus4, E7-9/A, Amaj7+4. Includes a 4-finger slur.

Staff 2: Chords: A7/F#^b, E7(13)/F#^b, F#m, F#maj9/A#^b. Includes a 4-finger slur.

Staff 3: Chords: Bbmaj(-9), Bbmaj(-9)/Eb Ebm, G#maj-9/C# C#m, Bbmaj/C#^b. Includes triplets (3).

Staff 4: Chords: Amaj/C#^b, Bmaj(+4)/C#^b, Db7(+9/+5). Includes a 4-finger slur.

Staff 5: Chords: Ab7(+9/+5), Gmaj(+9/+4), Amaj(+11)/F#^b. Includes 4-finger slurs.

Staff 6: Chords: Fmaj7(+5/+4), Amaj(+11)/E. Includes 4-finger slurs. Ends with *To Coda* and *ritard*.

Staff 7: Chord: Fmaj7+4/E. Includes *a tempo* marking.

Staff 8: Chord: D.C. al Coda.

Staff 9: Chord: Ending only.

CONCLUSION

The development of a personal and recognizable style is a concern for all creative musicians. The guitar is a particularly revealing and magnifying instrument of the individual mental, emotional, and physical space its player occupies. As you accumulate experience with harmony and melodic gesture, your own musical identity will emerge in these areas as well.

Musical systems are suggestive in nature and beget new systems. As an improviser, you can absorb these suggestions for musical organization until they are no longer consciously apparent to either yourself or the listener. It is my hope that the musical concepts and approaches in this book will encourage and foster the realization and development of your own personal methods of playing and improvising. Opt for musical intensity and concentration in your practice time. If your attention to what you are hearing wanders, take a break. Both the mind and the muscles won't retain information if you lapse into scanning the musical material. When you practice with an attention for vivid details, this vividness will find its way subconsciously into your normal playing of music.

If there is to be a goal involved throughout your musical studies, it might be to maintain and heighten the sense of fascination that drew you to music initially.