

Acoustic LEGENDS

Styles and Techniques of the
great acoustic songwriters

By Stuart Ryan



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great acoustic songwriters

By Stuart Ryan

Published by Stuart Ryan
www.stuartryanmusic.com

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All design and layout by Music Book Production Services
www.musicbookproductionservices.com

Front cover photography by Stuart Ryan
Interior photography by Mick Taylor
Back cover photography by Mick Taylor

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ISBN 13: 978-0-9576796-2-7

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CRO4YY

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Notation Legend

Legato

Hammer-Ons/Pull Offs: only the first note is struck. The second is played with another finger.

Slides: play the first note, then slide the finger to the second note.

Grace Note Slide: Pick the first note then slide to the second note immediately.

Other Techniques

Muted Notes: Mute strings marked with an 'x' with the fretting hand fingers.

Broken/Rolled Chords: strum all the strings in the direction shown by the line.

Fretting Hand Barres: barre at the fret indicated with the index finger.

Picking Downstroke: strum strings in a downwards direction

Picking Upstroke: strum strings in an upwards direction

Accent Markings: emphasise the notes with accents written over them

Repeats: the double line and double dot bar-lines indicate that the music between these bar-lines should be repeated. If the music is to be repeated more than once, a written indication will be given i.e. 'play 3x'.

1st & 2nd Time Endings: these are used for sections that are repeated, but which have different endings. The first ending is used the first time, the second is used on the repeat. The first ending is ignored on the repeat, only the second is used.

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Introduction

by Stuart Ryan

In my previous two books, 'The Tradition' and 'The Heritage', I created solo fingerstyle guitar arrangements that were all designed to stand alone. For 'Acoustic Legends' I decided to travel a different route and take a look at the styles and techniques of the great singer-songwriters. It struck me that as acoustic and fingerstyle guitarists we spend a lot of our time playing unaccompanied and whilst this is a great skill to develop it can lead to problems along the way. Firstly we can develop our own sense of 'internal time' that can actually stray far more than we realise. Whilst researching the artists contained within this book I was repeatedly struck by how great they were at keeping time within a band unit with other musicians. Indeed, some like Paul Simon are adept at keeping the timing rock solid whilst just accompanying one other musician. Indeed, when it came to recording these pieces I was reminded at how much I need to work on strengthening my own timing when playing to a fixed rhythm!

There is also much that can be learned from great singer-songwriters – their parts are often creative and complimentary to their vocal and melody lines and sit within a band context perfectly. Certainly, as acoustic guitarists we will often find ourselves leaving the realm of solo performance and playing with other musicians and so knowing 'what' to play and 'when' to play it are crucial skills to develop. Whilst the pieces in this book may not be as complex as those found in 'The Tradition' and 'The Heritage' there are still inherent challenges - not least trying to capture the personality and, in some instances, idiosyncrasies of these players.

Finally, delving into the styles of these players will pay dividends for your own playing, accompanying and arrangement. From the flowing intros of James Taylor to the percussive, driving style of Mark Knopfler you are certain to find new ideas that will filter into your own guitar style – I certainly did myself!

I hope you enjoy learning and playing these pieces and as ever if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me at stuart@stuartryanmusic.com.

Stuart Ryan
Bath, UK, October 2016

I chose to study a diverse range of players for this book – all are drawn from the pop/rock world but have something different to offer. I've suggested essential pieces to learn alongside each track and examine the style and track of each artist in detail in the relevant chapters but here is a general overview of what to expect from each artist and how to approach their style.

I've designed these pieces to be approached in a number of different ways –

- Learn and re-create the parts as a way of working on your own timing, clarity and accuracy
- Adapt the written parts to introduce some of your own style alongside that of the original artist
- Use the backing tracks to entirely come up with your own parts either in the style of the original artists or using your own approach

Paul Simon

A master accompanist he has in effect had two careers starting in duo format with Art Garfunkel and then a long solo career which has taken in everything from American traditional folk to the sounds of Africa and Brazil. Simon's style is derived from the 1960's Greenwich Village approach (via the London Soho café scene of the same era). For this study I've looked at the classic early Paul Simon accompaniment pattern of alternating the bassline whilst picking an open chord shape. This is an integral skill for any songwriter or accompanist to learn and instantly yields that classic 1950s/60s acoustic folk sound though it does of course have origins further back in the traditional blues styles!

Mark Knopfler

Whilst he came to prominence as the Strat and Les Paul wielding front man on Dire Straits the acoustic guitar and fingerstyle have always been prominent in his playing and writing. Indeed, even when playing electric he eschews the pick in favour of the fingers and that is one of the elements that yields his incredible electric guitar sound. Over the course of his solo career the acoustic seems to have taken over as the front instrument in his playing and writing. His distinctive style features a powerful attack and, on some pieces, a combined 'pick and flick' approach that gives his playing a driving, percussive quality as found in the study in this book.

George Harrison

Whilst often regarded as 'The Quiet Beatle' for me George was the most creative guitarist within the group. His writing was always melodic and the guitar drove his pieces with remarkable fluidity. However, examine his

solo work after the break up of The Beatles and you'll discover a whole other level to his playing and writing that includes unpredictable chords and rich, textured acoustic guitar work. Although it's tempting to focus on tracks like "Here Comes The Sun" and "Whilst My Guitar Gently Weeps" check out everything from his solo album 'All Things Must Pass' and beyond and you'll hear another side to his style.

Tracy Chapman

Whilst her guitar parts are not complex, Tracy Chapman is a great example of how the acoustic guitar can fit into a pop/rock context as both the driving force of the track and also as a rhythmic tool. There are some great contrasts within her playing – she will move from open position fingerpicked chords using some embellishments for added colour to 'thinner' melodic parts higher up the fretboard which bring to mind Paul McCartney's ideas in "Blackbird". Moving from delicate fingerpicking to driving strumming is an essential skill for any acoustic player. In the recording studio you would most likely record fingerpicked parts separately to strumming but a useful skill to learn is to keep the pick tucked in the fingers whilst fingerpicking and then quickly release it so it's available for strumming sections. Of course you can strum with the picking hand fingers but the pick hold/release technique is great as it will usually give you a more consistent strummed part.

Neil Young

Over the course of a long and varied career Neil Young has veered from pastoral Americana to face melting feedback driven electric guitar. For the study in this book I've focused on the gentle, melodic strumming style he was using during the 'Harvest Moon' period. Young is a fan of alternate tunings and for this piece I opted for drop D tuning. This is of particular benefit when working in the key of D as the lower pitch on string 6 tends to give the guitar a 'bigger' sound overall and strummed parts can really create a lot of space and depth within a track. At other times Young uses a heavily percussive strummed style but here it is all about a gentle, even approach to keep the chords consistent and allow everything to ring out as much as possible so the guitar fills the track out.

Bruce Springsteen

Like Mark Knopfler, 'The Boss' is another artist who probably conjures up an image of an electric guitar toting troubadour for most people. Indeed, whilst his famous butterscotch Fender Telecaster drove many of his biggest hits the acoustic guitar has been at the heart of his style from day one. Early albums like 'Nebraska' reveal an artist who uses the acoustic guitar as the tool of choice when it comes to songwriting. Over the years the steel string has really come to prominence in his writing and performing and some albums contain far more acoustic

than electric. As with Neil Young, Springsteen is a fan of alternate tunings and crafts his distinctively Americana inspired parts using a variety of dropped tunings. For this study we are in 'Double Dropped D' which gives the guitar a big, meaty sound perfectly suited to Springsteen's percussive strumming style.

Noel Gallagher

Although not generally revered as a guitarist Gallagher is a great example of how the acoustic guitar can underpin a track allowing the melody and vocals to take centre stage. However, whilst Gallagher writes within the conventional song-form structures it's the colour he adds to standard progressions that make his parts of interest. Indeed, his use of minor 7 and add 9 chords make his strumming parts instantly memorable and that bit more sophisticated when compared to many of his peers. This study is not challenging but provides a great opportunity to work on dynamic, rhythmic playing within a rock context.

James Taylor

Taylor famously uses some unorthodox fingerings for his guitar parts that can make them notoriously difficult to learn, especially if you are aiming to replicate what he does exactly! Luckily you don't need to take that approach for this study (although you are of course welcome to!). His flowing, arpeggiated parts are so perfectly woven into everything he does that they both take centre stage whilst providing the perfect backdrop for his wonderful voice. Taylor is also the master of the melodic intro, a short unaccompanied figure that serves to open the piece before the band enters. It's worth learning all of these parts on their own to get a sense of how melodic he actually is.

John Mayer

Another huge star that is commonly seen with an electric guitar (usually a Strat though increasingly anything else he can get his hands on), John Mayer has been crafting his art with the acoustic guitar from day one. His first EP, 'Inside Wants Out', was dominated by acoustic guitar and early tracks like "Neon" feature his virtuoso fingerstyle playing that would stand on its own even without his vocal lines. Over recent years the acoustic has come back to the fore on his album releases and the last few releases have seen him tipping his hat to the classic Country/Americana sounds of Crosby, Stills and Nash, Bob Dylan and Neil Young. For this study we see how he takes these influences and stamps his own distinctive approach on to them.

Joni Mitchell

In addition to her genius as a songwriter Joni Mitchell stands out as one of the most creative acoustic guitarists of her generation. Her love of altered tunings means that her guitar parts features chords and harmonies

that would usually be found in the specialised world of acoustic instrumental guitarists like Michael Hedges. If you are new to altered tunings then I would recommend spending some time on the Bruce Springsteen and Neil Young studies first but when you are used to the process of re-tuning a guitar and re-orienting yourself on the fretboard you'll find her pieces are an absolute delight to play even if they not accompanied by her vocal lines.

Audio Production Notes

All audio produced, engineered and mastered by Stuart Ryan. I used a Gibson J35 Collector's edition for all tracks except the John Mayer style track for which I used my wonderful Circa 000 built by gifted luthier John Slobod. The microphones were a Brauner Phanterra and Telefunken M260, mic preamps were a Chandler TG500, Heritage Audio 73 'Jr and Buzz Audio Elixir. Most tracks featured guitars recorded in stereo with a combination of mic placements – normally the Brauner at the 12th fret and the Telefunken in the 'over the shoulder' position or the Telefunken pointing at the 12th fret and the Brauner pointing towards the bridge positioned above the upper bout and pointing downwards.

Audio was recorded into Logic X using Apogee converters. I used a number of plug-ins but some standouts are the Maag EQ4, Fab Filter Eq and Kush Audio Clariphonic.

Thanks to

My beautiful wife Cori for always encouraging me and supporting me in these projects. Teddy the Labrador for not knocking over any microphones on the few occasions I allowed him in to be 'Studio dog' and for keeping the barking to a minimum during critical recording sessions. Mum and Dad for starting the guitar journey almost thirty years ago. Neville Marten and Jason Sidwell and Guitar Techniques magazine, David Mead and Jamie Dickson at Guitarist magazine. Stuart Clayton for design and layout, James Uings for all the audio advice, Noel Sheehan and Nick Campling at G7th capos. To my guitar friends Jon Gomm, Thomas Leeb, Declan Zapala and John Wheatcroft.

Stuart Ryan, Bath, UK, March 2017

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“ Born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1949, Mark Knopfler’s early influences were actually boogie woogie piano players. However, as a child seeing Hank Marvin and that famous red Fender Stratocaster strengthened his burgeoning interest in guitar. His early guitar influences came from several musical backgrounds – the country of Chet Atkins and Scotty Moore, the blues of BB King and the Gypsy Jazz of Django Reinhardt. Indeed, you can hear elements of these disparate influences in much of his playing with a particularly strong pull to the country side of things (remember those famous “Sultans of Swing” solos).

Although synonymous with iconic electric guitar riffs such as “Money for Nothing” and blistering solos like “Sultans of Swing”, the acoustic guitar and fingerpicking have always been a huge part of Mark Knopfler’s guitar style so much so that his electric guitar playing is actually driven by his fingerstyle technique. A masterful fingerpicker, Knopfler’s unique style is partly characterized by the interplay between picking hand thumb and index finger and his picking hand groove will form the subject of this lesson. What’s more, you don’t record an album with Chet Atkins (‘Neck and Neck’) unless your fingerstyle chops are up to par!

The acoustic was always a feature of Dire Straits’ music (remember the famous fingerpicked Dobro lines in “Romeo and Juliet” for example) but it’s in his solo career that the acoustic has really come to the fore. Although you will often see him using a standard fingerpicking approach for arpeggiating chords he also frequently utilizes an altogether different technique for building pulsing, percussive acoustic guitar parts. His approach in this scenario involves a technique that is closer to banjo ‘frailing’ – in essence this involves picking a note with the thumb and then follow this with a note that is ‘flicked’ with the index or middle finger nail. In order to get the impact of this on the string you need to curl the finger into the palm of the hand (I favour the picking hand middle finger) and then flick it onto the string with one fast, fluid motion. If you get enough impact you’ll get the required percussive sound on the string and the finger will bounce back off the string. Sometimes the flicked note is then rapidly followed by another note, which is sounded by an upstroke with the index finger.”

Listen and Learn – “The Man’s Too Strong”, “Redbud Tree”, “Sailing To Philadelphia”.

General Overview

At first glance it may appear that you should approach this piece with a plectrum but there are two reasons for not doing so – firstly it is necessary to incorporate some of Knopfler's technique into your playing in order to give this part its percussive, driving sound. Secondly you will need to use your picking hand fingers for the arpeggiated parts which appear later on in the piece.

Bar 1 – This simple E minor chord won't pose any challenges for the fretting hand leaving you to work on the necessary picking hand technique. In order to achieve the powerful 'thwack' first pick the bass note, the open 'E' with the picking hand thumb and then flick the nail of the middle finger down onto strings 4, 3, and 2. This wants to be done with a rapid motion resulting in the nail of this finger bouncing off strings 4, 3 and 2. You can also flick downwards with the nail side of the index, middle and ring fingers that will give percussive sound if you flick hard and fast enough. Resist the temptation to pluck these three strings with those fingers however as this will soften the sound down dramatically.

Bar 2 – The picking hand pattern becomes a bit more complex here. Start with the picking hand thumb followed by the middle finger as covered in Bar 1. On beat three use a downstroke with the thumb followed by the hammer on. The real challenge comes on beat four where you flick the chord using the back of the middle finger nail as discussed before and then to sound the last chord in this bar quickly flick the index finger upwards over the strings in order to sound the chord. Getting the balance of timing and volume on all that is a challenge so to begin with I would loop this two bar sequence very slowly until it all sounds smooth and even. The down and up strokes are indicated beneath the picking hand fingering.

Bar 15 – This sequence is effectively a fill that takes us back to the start of the piece. Getting it right depends on using the correct sequence of picking hand fingers as I have outlined – we are still using downstrokes on the thumb, the nail flick on the middle finger and the upstroke

on the index finger but there is more going on now. Build this sequence very slowly using the fingerings I have indicated and remember to keep the middle finger and index finger flick rapid and strong.

Bar 18 – These picking hand techniques work all over the neck and now we are using the same ideas just on the A Major chord and all that follows.

Bar 34 – The part changes now to a more traditional fingerpicked approach – you can approach this using the standard 'PIMA' picking hand patterns though if you want to practise the 'thumb and flick approach' then keep it going here – use the thumb to pluck the note on beat one and then sound the chord on beat two either with a downward flick from the middle finger or a downward flick using the index, middle and ring fingers together.

Bar 36 – The easiest way to sound this sequence is to use the thumb to pluck the bass notes on beats one and three and a downward flick on the chords using relaxed index, middle and ring fingers together.

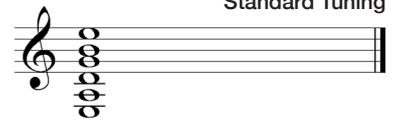
Bar 58 – This bluesy outro lick is a great opportunity to practise picking lead lines with the fingers. Try using my suggested picking hand fingering and remember to make the legato (hammer-ons and pull-offs) strong and smooth so all notes sound evenly and in time.

Shopping List

Knopfler has a guitar collection to turn any gear nut weak at the knees with many priceless, vintage pieces to drool over. There have been several Martin Mark Knopfler signature models over the years from a OOO (smaller body) to an HD40 (dreadnought). He has also been seen with old Gibsons amongst others. Anything goes for this style but something with a lively response will help bring out the percussive elements more.

Mark Knopfler

Standard Tuning



♩ = 202

Em

0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2

p *a m i* *p* *a m i* *p* *m* *i* *V*

4

0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2

7

Em

0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2

Em

9

Musical notation for measures 9-11. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with six strings. The music consists of chords and single notes, with some notes beamed together. The TAB shows fret numbers 0 and 2.

12

Musical notation for measures 12-14. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with six strings. The music consists of chords and single notes, with some notes beamed together. The TAB shows fret numbers 0 and 2.

15

Musical notation for measures 15-17. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with six strings. The music includes triplets and dynamic markings. The TAB shows fret numbers 0, 2, and 3. Dynamic markings include *p*, *m*, and *i*.

A

18

Musical notation for measures 18-20. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff is a guitar TAB with six strings. The music includes a 4/2 time signature and triplets. The TAB shows fret numbers 0, 2, and 3. Dynamic markings include *p* and *m*.

21

T
A
B

0 2 2 0 0 0 2 2 2 2 0 2 0 3 0 3

Em

24

T
A
B

0 2 2 0 2 2 0 2 2 2 0 2 2 2 0 2 2

27

T
A
B

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 2 2 0 2 2 2 0 2 0 0 2 0 3

30

T
A
B

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 2 2 0 2 2 2 0 2 2

33 Em C C/G C C/G

TAB: 0 0 2 | 1 0 2 | 1 0 2 | 1 0 2 | 0 1 2

Dynamics: *p* *m*/*p* *p* *m* *p* *m*/*p* *p* *a* *p* *m* *p*

36 G G/B C C/G

TAB: 3 3 0 | 3 3 0 | 3 3 0 | 3 3 0 | 1 0 2 | 1 0 2

Dynamics: *p* *a*/*m*/*i* *p* *a*/*m*/*i* *p* *p* *p*

39 G

TAB: 1 0 3 | 1 0 2 | 3 0 3 | 3 0 3 | 3 0 3 | 3 0 3

Dynamics: *m*/*p* *p* *m* *p* *i* *p* *p* *p* *p* *p*

42 C C/G G G/B

TAB: 1 0 3 | 1 0 2 | 1 0 3 | 1 0 2 | 3 0 3 | 3 0 3

45

C C/G

T
A
B

47

G G/B G

T
A
B

50

Em

T
A
B

p *p*

53

T
A
B

Em

56

Musical notation for measures 56-58. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff is guitar tablature with strings labeled T, A, B. Measure 56: Treble clef has a half note chord (F#2, A2, C3), a quarter note (F#2), a half note chord (A2, C3), and a quarter note (F#2). Tablature has a half note chord (0, 2), a quarter note (2), a half note chord (0, 2), and a quarter note (2). Measure 57: Treble clef has a whole note chord (F#2, A2, C3). Tablature has a whole note chord (0, 0, 2). Measure 58: Treble clef has a quarter note (F#2), a quarter note (A2), a quarter note (C3), and a quarter note (F#2). Tablature has a quarter note (3), a quarter note (0), a quarter note (3), a quarter note (0), a quarter note (3), a quarter note (2), a quarter note (0), and a quarter note (2). Dynamics *m*, *i*, *p*, *p* are indicated below the tablature.

59

Musical notation for measure 59. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff is guitar tablature with strings labeled T, A, B. Measure 59: Treble clef has a quarter note (F#2), a quarter note (A2), a quarter note (C3), and a quarter note (F#2). Tablature has a quarter note (0), a quarter note (0), a quarter note (3), and a quarter note (0). A 1/4 note rest is indicated above the third string. Dynamics *m*, *i*, *p*, *p* are indicated below the tablature.

“ Born in New Jersey on September 23rd, 1949 Bruce Springsteen first developed an interest in music from hearing the superstars of the day – Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra and The Beatles. As his playing and writing progressed, however, the true Americana sound came to the fore of his acoustic playing with echoes of Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan to be found within his style. In the early days he used the acoustic in the traditional way – as chordal accompaniment to his vocals. Seminal tracks like “Atlantic City” showcase simple open chord accompaniment but as his writing developed and progressed through the years his acoustic parts also became more sophisticated to include an array of altered tunings and fingerpicked parts that serve to make his guitars parts far more than just the “three chord trick” of so many renowned acoustic guitarist/songwriters

The open tunings lead to chord voicings that go beyond the standard Major and minor ideas you find in regular tuning so you will find sus4, sus2, add9 and add11 chord voicings within his playing. Combine this with his chunky, percussive rhythmic style and you have a powerful approach to acoustic guitar accompaniment that serves to drive a track along as much as a percussive element as melodic. This approach to rhythm means the strings take one heck of a beating, much like that other great, Neil Young! It can take some work to get the rhythmic ‘thwack’ in place – as you go to strike the bass strings with the pick you must quickly apply a picking hand palm mute at the same time. The downward strike with the pick and the damping effect of the palm mute give you that great big rhythm thump.

To get the Springsteen sound into your own playing try using Dropped D (string 6 down a tone) and Double Dropped D tunings (strings 6 and 1 down a tone). This will inevitably pull your writing to the key of D but this is no bad thing as there are some great chord shapes contained within this key and don’t forget that a capo will always take you elsewhere! ”

Listen and Learn – “Devils and Dust”, “Atlantic City”, “The Ghost of Tom Joad”, “Old Dan Tucker”.

General Overview

At first it may seem tempting to think that the key to getting Bruce Springsteen's powerful rhythm style right involves brute force and speed. However, thankfully this is not the case – rather you need to develop a relaxed, snap of the wrist in conjunction with a well timed palm mute which will bring out the chunky low end of strings 6 and 5. To practise this just take the first chord in this study and work on bringing the palm down in the strum so it quickly bounces off the strings at the bridge at the same moment as the pick strikes the strings. It's a tricky balance to get right but when you do you will suddenly hear the chords almost exploding out of the guitar! I've included some suggested strumming patterns to help you get up and running with this one – they are not essential but try following my suggestions to begin with.

Bar 1 – Firstly make sure you re-tune for this one – we are using Double Drop D, one of Bruce's favourites! I've written accents above the first few bars and this is to tell you which chords need the 'palm mute/strum' approach as outlined in the overview. There are several things to bear in mind though – firstly don't worry too much about hitting the exact notes in the chords that I have written, to begin with it's more important to focus on the strumming technique and the on/off accent pattern. Secondly there are some challenges with the rhythms here as they shift from bar to bar so I'd suggest looping short sections until the accents and the rhythms start to become second nature.

Bar 6 – This is a particularly good tuning for this key as it means we can use the low open D (string 6) and the high open D (string 1) on the G chords as well – D is the fifth degree of a G Major chord so we can use it as the bass note for a heavier sound.

Bar 7 – Another common Springsteen voicing, see how this G Major 7 chord sounds different to the G Major in the preceding bar.

Bar 10 – Using those open D strings against an A Major chord also reveals some of the 'A' chord shapes that Springsteen likes to use.

Bar 15 – This chord can be a handful but is another common shape in Springsteen's arsenal and it sounds great when preceded by a G.

Bar 27 – Using the open strings really serves to thicken up the sound of these A chords and also allows you to move some of the inner voices (in this case the fifth fret on string 4 moving to the fourth fret on the same string) – a very common device in Springsteen's acoustic guitar parts.

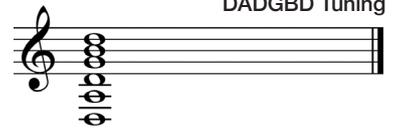
Bar 31 – This D add4 chord is a great one to commit to memory for any time you are working in this tuning, it is a great alternative to the standard D Major shapes and sounds and works particularly well as an intro or ending chord.

Shopping List

Bruce Springsteen usually records with an incredible early 1950s Gibson J45 but given the rigours of the road and his aggressive playing style on stage you will usually see him playing various Takamine 6 and 12 strings.

Bruce Springsteen

DADGBD Tuning



♩ = 101

D⁵ D⁵

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

3

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

D⁵ Dmaj9/C# G/D D⁵ A⁹(sus4)

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0

Gmaj7

A7(sus4)

A9(sus4) D5

7

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	5	5	5								0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

D5

D

D5 A7(sus4)/D

9

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

D5

D

D5 A7(sus4)/D

11

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Gmaj7

A9(sus4)

13

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

D/F#

A7(sus4)/D Bm

A9(sus4)

15

T	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
B	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0
	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0									

Gmaj7

A9(sus4) A7(sus4)

17

T	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5									

D5

19

T	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
A	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

D(add4)

A9(sus4) G/D

21

T	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

23

D⁵ D(sus4) D⁵ D(sus4)

T	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
A	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

25

D⁵ D(sus4) D⁵ D(sus4)

T	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
A	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

27

A⁷(sus4) A¹³(sus4)

T	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
B	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

□ □ ∨ □ □ □ □ □ □

29

A⁷(sus4) D(add4)

T	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
B	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	4
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

□ □ ∨ □ □ □ □ ∨ □

A⁷(sus4)

D(add4)

31

T
A
B

0	0	0	0	0	
3	3	3	3	3	
0	0	0	0	0	
2	2	2	2	4	
0	0	0	0	0	



“ James Taylor was born in Boston, USA, on March 12th 1948. He took up the cello as a child but turned to guitar when he was twelve years old. His early listening and influences consisted mostly of hymns and the guitar playing of Woody Guthrie. Fingerpicking was an early discovery for the young Taylor and he viewed the technique as something that could give him the independence and freedom of a piano player with the view that the thumb served the role of the pianist's left hand. Indeed, you can certainly hear this in his playing where bass lines inter-weave with melodic lines and arpeggiated chordal accompaniment. As he entered his teenage years he discovered blues and folk and by age fourteen he was writing his own material.

Taylor moved to New York in the mid-1960s and signed a deal with a small, independent record label. During this time he developed a serious drug habit which escalated to heroin addiction – thankfully he decided that he needed to quit the New York scene and moved to London in 1967. His break came via his friend Danny Kortchmar who used one of his connections to get Taylor's demo tape to the fledgling Apple Records and the ears of Paul McCartney and George Harrison. They were hooked by the early versions of “Carolina In My Mind” and “Something In The Way She Moves”. However, it wasn't an instant route to success as he succumbed to heroin addiction again and committed to himself to a psychiatric hospital back in the USA to overcome his issues. Success really came after his eventual recovery and the release of his second album, “Sweet Baby James”, in 1970 and the rest is history.

Taylor's wonderful, flowing guitar style emphasizes melodic self-accompaniment and features deftly woven melodic intros which give way to detailed arpeggiated chord lines. In addition Taylor employs many chords that you won't find in the standard singer-songwriter repertoire so expect add and sus chords in his playing, all of which give his writing a unique colour. Given his pianistic approach he also features moving basslines against his chord parts and these can be a challenge to replicate – this along with his heavily embellished chords is partly down to his unorthodox fingerings for simple open chords that you would otherwise take for granted. It's not essential to take on board Taylor's fretting hand fingerings in order to play his pieces or in this style but it's well worth watching some footage of him perform to see what he does to the standard A and D chord shapes! ”

Listen and Learn – “Carolina In My Mind”, “Fire & Rain”, “You Can Close Your Eyes”.

General Overview

James Taylor's flowing, heavily embellished fingerpicking style makes him a difficult artist to emulate and this is one of the harder studies within the book. Taylor's music often involves detailed guitar parts, unexpected harmonic twists and turns and melodic guitar intros and breaks. His timing is impeccable although sometimes he plays with a relaxed, behind the beat feel which can be hard to emulate. This piece is also demanding for the fretting hand as there will be some new shapes in here for you in addition to a great deal of finger movement within the chords thanks to his expert embellishments. I'd suggest starting slowly and learning small sections and when you have this piece under your fingers try using it as a framework for creating your own parts and chord embellishments. For the picking hand you will be able to use the standard 'pima' approach where the thumb takes care of strings 6, 5 and 4 and the index, middle and ring (a) fingers take care of strings 3, 2 and 1 respectively. I've given some suggested fingerings for those sections where this approach may not be applicable.

Bar 1 – This free flowing intro is typical of Taylor's writing and showcases his arpeggiated, embellished chords. It's important to remember that if you were opening a track in a live band context you'd be playing unaccompanied so your timing needs to be perfect!

Bar 2 – Taylor will use more interesting chords than standard major and minor shapes and this Em9 is often found in his playing. Adding the 9th (an F#) to the E minor chord results in something called 'chord enrichment' and yields a far more interesting sound than the standard E minor.

Bar 3 – Moving out of the open position yields more interesting melodic ideas and movement. In this case we are using D and C major triad shapes that are favourites of Taylor's when it comes to creating his freestanding intros.

Bar 4 – Having a good knowledge of triad inversions is also key to this style – see how the D major to C major idea is carried on here but with different inversions of the chords to take us back down the fretboard.

Bar 5 – Here is the first example of how Taylor uses descending basslines in his writing – in this case from the G (fret three, string 6) to an F# (fret two, string 6).

Bar 16 – The embellishment on the A chord is quite tricky here, remember that Taylor uses an unconventional fingering for his A chord which actually makes things a little easier for him but it is all still accessible with standard fingering.

Bar 17 – Check out the use of the A# diminished 7th chord at the end of this bar, this is a 'passing chord' used to take use from the A7 to the B minor in the next bar and is there to facilitate the use of an ascending bassline on string five (from the open string to frets one for the A# diminished 7th and fret two for the B minor).

Bar 23 – The C to G chord movement is again smoothed out by bass note movement – the root of the C descends by a semi-tone to the third of the G (B).

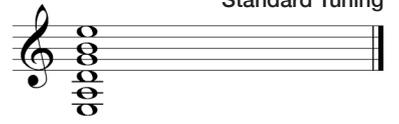
Bar 27 – 28 – Here is another example of how Taylor will create smooth moving chord progressions by utilizing moving bass notes – in this case we go from a G Major to a G minor simply by moving from the Major third of the chord in the bass (B) to the minor third in the bass (Bb).

Shopping List

James Taylor has played many acoustics over the years and recorded his early classics on a Gibson J50. Today he is famous for his James Olsen signature model, a small jumbo sized instrument. However, you'll need to be feeling very flush if you're going for one as they cost tens of thousands of dollars depending on spec!

James Taylor

Standard Tuning



♩ = 69

D(add9) G Em⁹ A

m i i m

D C/D D C/D

i p a i a i p i

D(add9) Em⁷ A

i m

7

D(add9) G⁵ Em⁷ A(sus4) A

TAB

0 2 3 3 0 3 | 0 0 3 0 0 3

0 2 3 3 0 3 | 0 0 3 0 0 3

a m a m *p p p*

9

D(sus2) C(sus2) G/B D(sus2) C(sus2)

TAB

0 2 3 0 3 3 | 0 2 3 0 3 3

0 2 3 0 3 3 | 0 2 3 0 3 3

a m i p

11

D C/D G D⁵ C G

TAB

9 11 11 11 9 9 | 5 7 7 7 7 0 | 4 5 5 5 4 4

0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0

p p p

14

D⁵ Em⁹ A⁷(sus4) Em⁹ A A(sus2)

TAB

3 2 0 | 3 0 0 0 0 3 | 3 0 0 0 0 0

0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0

p p p

17

Em⁹ A⁷ A^{#o7} Bm E

T
A
B

0 2 4 3 0 0 4 0 0 2 0 2 | 2 4 4 3 4 4 4 0 0 1

p i m a

19

A^{7(sus4)} A/D G/B D D(sus₄)

T
A
B

3 0 3 0 0 3 2 0 2 0 2 | 3 5 3 2 0 4 6 4 2 0 0

21

A/D G/B D A/D G/B D D(sus₂)

T
A
B

3 5 3 2 | 5 3 3 2 0 0 2

a

23

A/D G/B D(add₉) C(add₉) G/B D(add₉)

T
A
B

5 3 3 0 2 | 3 2 0 3 0 3 0 2 3 0 2 3 2 0

p i m a

C(add9) G/B D(add9) Cmaj7 G/B D(add9)

25

T
A
B

C(add9) G/B Gm/Bb A7(sus4) A7

27

T
A
B

D(sus2) G A7(sus4) Em9 A7(sus4)

29

T
A
B

D(sus2) G C(sus2) D

31

T
A
B

“ Born in Liverpool on February 25, 1943, George Harrison’s formative influences were the rock and roll legends of his time – principally Buddy Holly and Little Richard. However, like most guitarists he was also drawn to the more ‘technical’ players of the era and so developed an interest in rockabilly legend Carl Perkins, gypsy jazz genius Django Reinhardt and bluesman Big Bill Broonzy. With such a diverse palette of influences it’s no surprise that he became the predominantly ‘lead’ guitarist in The Beatles. However, even through his solo career you can hear elements of all these players, not least in his unexpected chord progressions where jazz influenced diminished seventh chords could suddenly appear when least expected.

Arguably the most guitar focused musician of The Beatles, George’s acoustic playing is full of character and in this study we’ll see how unexpected chords can really bring a piece to life. In this study you’ll encounter some unusual chord moves that will serve as a great exercise for the fretting hand. The picking hand will focus on tight, rhythmic strumming and clean arpeggiated chords. If the diminished seventh chords are new to you then try playing these on their own to begin with as both the sound and fingering of them may sound a little alien. These tense, dissonant chords don’t often find their way into pop/rock writing but George’s genius was in using them as transition points between the more obvious Major and minor chord progressions. You’ll also come across a variety of ‘sus’ chords in here as well as a common, though challenging, way of playing an F Major 7 where the fretting hand thumb is employed over the top of the neck – a very common device for guitar players in the 1950s, 60s and beyond.”

Listen and Learn – “Isn’t It a Pity”, “Whilst My Guitar Gently Weeps”, “The Ballad of Sir Frankie Crisp”, “Here Comes The Sun”.

General Overview

George's vocabulary makes him an interesting and sophisticated study – although we are focusing on a mostly strummed/acoustic rhythm guitar part in this track it's the variety of chord voicings within the progression and the bass note/chord strumming pattern which helps the acoustic part add some 'glue' to the track. Although you could lightly strum and pick this with the picking hand fingers I'd use a plectrum, something medium-light so you can get the required attack without having the acoustic dominate the track. Timing shouldn't be too much of an issue with this track so the biggest challenge is probably for the fretting hand to get used to the diminished seventh chord shapes and the general chordal movement around the fretboard.

Bar 1 – Although not exclusive to George Harrison's guitar style this bass/chord strumming approach is a great thing to have in your technique arsenal – in effect it mimics the bass/chord or left/right hand patterns of piano players. Downstrokes can be used all the way here to keep a driving, even rhythm in place.

Bar 3 – Our first 'unexpected' chord is this C# diminished seventh that really adds some colour to the sound and gets you out of the standard, predictable chord progressions so common to pop music of this era.

Bar 7 – Another diminished seventh chord to catch the ear. Note that this shape moves up in minor thirds but always

contains the same notes so an E diminished seventh chord is also a C# diminished seventh, G diminished seventh and Bflat diminished seventh. You can see the effect of moving this chord up in bar 12.

Bar 16 – A very Beatles-esque pause on this D9 (no 3rd) chord!

Bar 18 – Guitarists from the 1950s and 1960s eras would play this FMaj7 voicing by hooking the fretting hand thumb over the top of the neck to fret the first fret of string 6. It's a great way of keeping the open first string clear so you get that FMaj7 sound. Indeed you'll hear it in players from other genres too and Chet Atkins used this shape a lot.

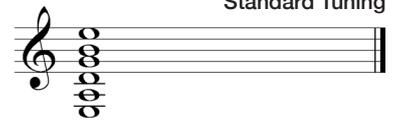
Bar 23 – Another songwriting trick used by George but certainly not exclusive to him – the IV Major chord (C) briefly changing to a dominant (C7) before reverting to the I chord (G).

Shopping List

You'll generally see footage of George with a Gibson J160E or Gibson SJ200 acoustic both during his time with The Beatles and the subsequent solo years.

George Harrison

Standard Tuning



♩ = 76

G Em C#^{o7}

TAB

3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

□ □ □

G A⁷(sus4)

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

E^{o7} G

TAB

0	0	0	0	3	3
8	8	8	8	3	3
6	6	6	6	0	0
8	8	8	8	2	2
7	7	7	7	3	3

9 G D(add4)/F# Em A⁷(sus4) A⁷

T
A
B

12 C#^o7 E^o7 G Gmaj7

T
A
B

15 D⁷ D⁹(omit3) G

T
A
B

18 Fmaj7 C G

T
A
B

21 Fmaj7

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

C C7 G

23

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2
										3

Em A7

25

TAB

		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2
		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2

C G

27

TAB

		0	0	0	3	3	3
		1	1	1	3	3	3
		0	0	0	0	0	0
		2	2	2	0	0	0
3	2	0	2	0	2	0	0
					3	3	3

29

G A

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

31

C#° G

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

“ Born in Toronto on November 12, 1945 Neil Young’s formative musical influences came from the worlds of rock and roll, rockabilly, country, doo-wop and rhythm and blues. His childhood idol was Elvis Presley but he was also drawn to the sounds of Hank Marvin, Link Wray, Roy Orbison and many others. At the heart of his playing is that classic American sound – a wistful, country-folk sound that conjures up evocative pastoral images. He is, however, a wildly diverse player and can be found in several different contexts from fuzz driven electric guitar grunge to the country-folk tinged sound of albums like ‘After The Goldrush’ and ‘Harvest’. Both a fingerpicker and a strummer like Bruce Springsteen you’ll hear him use altered tunings and a heavy, percussive downstroke with strumming to get those big, chunky rhythm parts in place.

This study focuses on Young’s chordal rhythm playing as heard on the ‘Harvest’ album. His lovely, relaxed timing is an essential element to master so aim for a lazy, swing feel throughout here. Also important is the dynamic range on his strumming hand from light to heavy so make sure you explore the widest possible scope when strumming through this one. His playing also provides a great lesson in how using open strings can act as a hinge that keeps a chord sequence together and in this lesson we’ll focus on the open first string as such a cohesive device. The softer chord sounds are in part derived from using chords like Major 6ths that help give that rich, gentle pastoral sound. A bit less obvious than simple Major chords they are well worth studying and getting into your playing and writing. Notice also how we are moving shapes up and down strings 1, 2 and 3 but keeping the 6th, 5th and 4th strings open to provide some real low end weight. ”

Listen and Learn – “Harvest Moon”, “Needle And The Damage Done”, “The Old Laughing Lady”.

General Overview

Neil Young is both a fingerpicker and strummer but in this study we will look at his relaxed, slightly swung strumming style. You can strum this with just the fingers or a pick, if going with the latter I'd recommend a pick on the thin-medium end of things so you can keep the sound and volume balanced overall. The chordal element of Young's guitar playing is also an essential element of what makes it unique. Whether by accident or design he has a masterful ear when it comes to voicing chords on the acoustic guitar always choosing those that sound rich and colourful. In many ways his use of major sixths and sevenths helps characterize the calm pastoral nature of his acoustic country/folk playing. I've indicated suggested down and upstrokes for the strumming patterns, these are not essential to follow but you may find they help as ending a bar with a quaver and an upstroke puts you in place for a strong downstroke at the start of the next bar.

Bar 1 – Two key elements before we get going, firstly the Dropped D tuning (string 6 down a tone) and secondly the light swing feel. Make sure you have these in place before progressing! The swing feel can be tricky to execute but listen to the track and you'll get the idea.

Bar 3 – Remember to think 'Dynamics' all the way; the opening note (the open 6th string) can be played with a strong downstroke and preferably with some palm muting as with the Bruce Springsteen study. Try following this with a lighter touch on the next chord, the D6/9.

Bar 6 – By now you should have heard some of the inner voices (notes) moving within these chords, a classic hallmark of Young's acoustic guitar writing and this creates a more interesting sound than just using a single chord for each part of the progression.

Bar 8 – Often Young uses big sounding open strings with just two or three fretted notes that create a contrast of the big low end with melodic content up on strings 3, 2 and 1.

Bar 17 – Moving the inner voices (the fretted notes) higher up the neck creates even more of a contrast between the low end provided by the open 6th, 5th and 4th strings and the higher notes on strings 3, 2, and 1. In fact it almost creates the illusion of two guitars playing at once and allows for interesting harmonic movement.

Bar 34 – The contrast between big, open chords and just the low open bass strings (6 and 5) is a great device – try moving both around within the bar and also try the open bass strings with and without the palm muting approach.

Shopping List

Neil Young is a big fan of the Martin D-18 and generally for this style a larger, dreadnought style guitar is preferable as it will give you the big low-end thump you are looking for.

22

D⁹ D^{major}9 D(sus2) D^{major}9 D⁹ D^{major}9

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

25

A^{7(sus4)} A⁶ A^{7(sus4)}

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

28

A⁷ A^{7(sus4)} A⁶

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	7	7	7	7	7	7
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	6	6	6
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	7	7	7	7	7	7
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

31

A^{7(sus4)} A⁷ D⁹ D^{major}9

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	4	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

34

Dmaj9 D6 D6/9 Dmaj9

TAB

0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0
5	5	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
6	6	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

36

Dmaj9 D6 D6/9 Dmaj9

TAB

0	0	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0
5	5	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2
6	6	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

38

Dmaj9 D6 D6/9 Dmaj9 D6/9

TAB

0	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	5	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	12	12	12	10
6	6	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	2	11	11	11	11
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

“ Born on March 30th, 1964 in Cleveland, Ohio, Chapman started her musical life at age three when her Mother bought her a ukulele. Five years later she took up guitar and also started writing her first songs. As she became older Chapman became highly politicized and socially aware, not least thanks to the juxtapositions in her own life from growing up in a poor neighbourhood to winning a scholarship to an exclusive boarding school. Although she is often labeled as a ‘folk-singer’ or ‘protest singer’ Chapman prefers to draw from the bigger musical picture as opposed to falling back on the influence of the classic protest singers like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez. Her early influences came from the Country genre and included artists like Charley Pride, Dolly Parton, Glen Campbell and legendary Country guitarist Buck Owens. Alongside that she also grew up on Soul, Gospel and Jazz but, interestingly, not folk! However, singing within the family was probably her biggest musical expression and she was singing from a very young age.

As with many performers of her generation she started out performing on the coffee house circuit and busking whilst at university. She got her big break via a fellow student whose Father worked in music publishing – after an introduction and audition he helped her broker a deal with Elektra Records that led to her debut album, ‘Tracy Chapman’, being released in 1988. This album contains the tracks that made her a star – “Fast Car” and “Talkin’ ‘Bout A Revolution” amongst them. The opportunity to perform ‘Fast Car’ at the Nelson Mandela Birthday Tribute concert on June 11, 1988 gave her a sudden exposure to a worldwide audience and this was followed by ‘Fast Car’ reaching the Top 10 of the American Billboard 100.

Chapman’s guitar style is not difficult but she is another great example of how an acoustic guitar part can fit into a track from several perspectives – she uses simple fingerpicking parts from the typical folk style to bolster the vocals to basic strumming patterns to fill out the rhythm section. However, she also uses ‘thin’ parts to create more melodic movement – listen to “Fast Car” and you will hear her using intervals of 10ths that create a more melodic part than simply arpeggiating a chord. One of the most famous examples of this type of writing is Paul McCartney’s “Blackbird” and it’s possible that this influenced Chapman when writing “Fast Car.” Although there are no major challenges in this study as ever focus on getting your timing tight and the parts accurate and clean throughout. ”

Listen and Learn – “Fast Car”, “Talkin’ ‘Bout A Revolution”, “Baby Can I Hold You Tonight”.

General Overview

This study is a good exercise in both rhythmic, clean fingerpicking and strumming. The main 'verse' contains some melodic movement within the chords so will require all the picking hand fingers to sound the notes with an even dynamic – ensure that the low bass notes aren't louder than the top melody line as this is the hook that will draw a listener in. A standard 'pima' picking hand approach will work well for the fingerpicked sections.

Bar 1 – This study can be played entirely with the fingers or with a combination of pick and fingers – this can be achieved either by using the picking hand fingers in conjunction with the pick (hybrid picking) or by tucking the pick within the fingers or the palm and taking it out when you get to the strumming sections. This first bar shows how Chapman will take a standard chord shape and employ some melodic movement within it to create more of a memorable hook based part.

Bar 2 – Using 'thin' chords is another typical Chapman device and is the same approach as that found within Paul McCartney's "Blackbird". This also makes it easier to create a cohesive sense of movement – the G chord only features the third (B) on the bass and fifth (D) on the top and moves smoothly to the bass root of the C chord (C) and the third of that chord (E).

Bar 6 – As with bar 2 here is another example of how using the wide intervals creates more of a hook as opposed to moving large, full note chords around.

Bar 9 – Another classic device is simply to change the bass note of a chord or sequence and this gives you a new tonality so here instead of a C Major sound we get A minor by just changing the bass note. The top line (or riff idea) stays the same but the effect is wholly different now.

Bar 17 – We now change to the strumming section, if you are just fingerpicking then brush up and down the strings with the nails of your 'ima' fingers. If you have a pick tucked in the palm or between the fingers then now is the time to use it! Notice how the 'G' on the top of the C chord remains in place when we move to the G chord in the next bar, this device is known as a 'common tone' as it belongs to both chords and gives a smooth sense of movement from the C to G. Look out for the shifting rhythms in this whole section.

Bar 19 – Add9 chords like the Cadd9 used here are great alternatives to standard Major chords. The 9th refers to the note a tone plus an octave above the root note C so in this case we are adding a D to this chord.

Bar 33 – Here is a more detailed example of the wide interval approach in Chapman's playing. Note how this effectively creates a melody with a bassline underneath and the open 3rd string (G) acts as a hinge between each part of this section.

Shopping List

Chapman is in love with her 1967 Martin D35 but given the age and fragility of that instrument on the road she often travels and performs with a Martin Backpacker and a Taylor Baby, both small bodied travel guitars. She also uses a parlour sized acoustic built by Canadian luthier Judy Threet and a Santa Cruz P.

10 C(sus2) G⁵ Em⁷(#5) C(sus2) D Em⁷ Am¹¹ Em

TAB

3	3	3	3	1	0	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	0	3	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3		3		0		3		0		0		0		0		2

14 C(sus2) G⁵ Em⁷(#5) C(sus2) D D(sus4) G

TAB

3	3	3	3	1	0	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3		3		0		3		0	0	2		3		3		3

17 C G D D(sus4)

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

19 C(add9) Am⁷(sus4) G D D⁹(sus4)

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

21

C G D D(sus4)

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3							

23

Em Em¹¹ D D^{6/9}(sus4)

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2										
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3							

25

C Am⁹(sus4) G D D(sus4)

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	2	2	2							
									3	3	3							

27

C(add9) Am⁷(sus4) G D D^{6/9}(sus4)

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	2	2	2							
									3	3	3							

29

C Am⁹(sus4) G D D(sus4)

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	3
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	3						

31

Em Em¹¹ D Em G D(add4) C

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2								
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3								
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	12	0	7	0	5	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0								
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0								
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	10			5	3		

35

Em G D(add4) C Em G D(add4) C Em G

TAB

8	0	12	0	7	0	5	0	8	0	12	0	7	0	5	0	8	0	12	0

40

G/B C G(add4) D D(sus4) Em⁷ Cmaj⁹ G⁵ D G

TAB

3	0	5	3	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	3	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	2	3

“ John Mayer was born on October 16th, 1977 in Bridgeport, Connecticut. His earliest and biggest influences were electric bluesmen Stevie Ray Vaughan, Buddy Guy and the three Kings – BB, Freddie and Albert amongst others. A songwriter from the age of 17 it was inevitable that the acoustic guitar would come calling and during his brief tenure at the Berklee College of Music in Boston during 1997 he became a regular fixture performing at the city’s many coffee shops. His debut EP, “Inside Wants Out” features some spectacular acoustic playing influenced in large part by San Francisco fingerstyle jazz genius Charlie Hunter – Mayer’s track “Neon” is a tip of the hat to Hunter’s indomitable self-accompaniment style.

Mayer’s acoustic writing is complex – he has a huge chord vocabulary that he uses to add great colour to his writing and his fingerstyle technique is formidable. His early releases like “Room For Squares” and “Heavier Things” showcase some superb pop/rock acoustic guitar writing but latterly his acoustic sound has become more influenced by the classic Americana/Country sounds – Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, James Taylor, Crosby Stills and Nash, Bob Dylan and Jorma Kaukonen loom large in his style now.

Mayer’s parts on his recent albums like “Born And Raised” and “Paradise Valley” are great – fantastic groove, melodic ideas and that consistent timing that is always in evidence with his right hand. In addition he is a master at embellishing simple chord progressions so they become so much more. This is in evidence in his electric playing via the Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan influence but on acoustic he approaches it from the Americana/Country perspective so you’ll find open chords with melodic embellishments and extensions that just flow through a track so perfectly.”

Listen and Learn – “Neon”, “Queen of California”, “Stop This Train”.

General Overview

Fingerstyle guitar has always been at the forefront of John Mayer's playing and writing and in his early days he used a very complex bass accompaniment style that was heavily influenced by jazz guitarist Charlie Hunter. Over recent years his fingerstyle playing has simplified a little and currently he seems to spend more time examining the styles and techniques of the classic acoustic folk/Americana players from the 1950s and 1960s. Although you could perform this piece with the standard 'pima' picking hand patterns I've also suggested some alternate fingerings which remove the 'a' finger from the equation – try these and you may feel things flow more naturally for the picking hand in this context.

Bar 1 – Mayer often uses a capo when accompanying his voice so I've used a Capo on fret 4 here to put me in the key of B. You can play this without the capo in which case you'll be in the key of G but to play along with my backing track you'll need a capo. Notice how the capo 'sweetens' and brightens up the sound of parts like this that can sound a little muddy if played in the open position without a capo. The bass note at the start of beat one should be plucked with the picking hand thumb. The chord immediately after it can be plucked with the 'ima' fingers but you can also brush down the strings with the nails on the same fingers.

Bar 2 – Watch out for the fleet run at the end of this bar, this bluegrass tinged lick hints at the classic American folk sound that has found its way into Mayer's playing over the years! Try using my suggested picking hand fingerings for this piece as it is rather more detailed than some of the others in this book.

Bar 9 – Why play Major when you can play sus4...Mayer has a great knowledge of chord voicings and how to use them. Indeed, alongside his technique it's part of what gives him his signature sound and you can learn a great deal from his approach to voicing and using chords.

Bar 13 – This type of phrase can strike terror into some players because Mayer is a thumb over the top guy! You can play these types of chords with conventional fingerings but learning how to hook the fretting hand thumb over the top of the neck on to string 6 will make these things a lot easier – this is indicated by a 'T' underneath the notation.

Bar 17 – And another thumb over the top idea – again, not essential but it makes these things smoother and also sometimes frees up the fingers for embellishments on the top strings. It also means that you can play the open D and E strings as part of this chord.

Bar 26 – Another Mayer-esque chord at the end of this bar, a Csus2 that is more subtle than the obvious C Major.

Shopping List

John Mayer has an enviable guitar collection to say the least. He has traditionally been seen with Martins of all shapes and sizes but latterly has been playing smaller bodied models, primarily his signature OM and 00-42SC (Stage Coach) guitars. If you are feeling really flush then hunt out one the of 25 limited edition 00-45SC models that Martin made. However, you'll probably need to pay in excess of their original \$14,000 price tag!

7 G G⁶ G G¹³

T
A
B

9 C(sus4) C¹¹ C(sus4) C¹³

T
A
B

11 G⁵ G¹³(#5) G⁵ G(add4)

T
A
B

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

13 D/F# C C¹³

T
A
B

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

15 G G7(sus4) G G7(sus4)

TAB

3 0 0 1 1 0 0 0 1 1 0 3 3 3 3 3 3

p *m/p*

17 G G⁶ F⁶ Fmaj13

TAB

3 3 0 3 1 1 0 1 0 0 0 2 2 0 0 1 0 0

m/p *p* *m* *p* *a* *p* *m* *p* *i* *p* *p*

19 C(sus4) C¹¹ G

TAB

1 1 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 3 3 3

p *i* *m* *p* *p* *i*

21 G G⁶ F⁶ Fmaj13

TAB

3 3 0 3 1 1 0 1 0 0 0 2 2 0 0 1 0 0

p *i* *m* *p* *p* *i*

23 C(sus4) C11 G D/F#

TAB: 1 1 0 0 1 0 0 0 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 3 3 3 2 3 2 3 2 0

26 Em C(sus2) G G7(sus4)

TAB: 0 0 0 1 1 0 0 0 0 1 0 1 0 0 0 0 3 0 3 0 3 0

28 G G7(sus4) D/F#

TAB: 0 0 0 1 1 0 2 3 3 3 2 3 2 0 0 0 2 0 2 2 2 2

30 Em C(sus2) G G7(sus4) G

TAB: 0 0 0 1 1 0 0 0 0 1 0 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 3 0 0 0 0 3

“ Born in Burnage, Manchester on the 29th May 1967, Noel Gallagher was inspired to pick up guitar by the jangly guitar of The Smiths’ Jonny Marr. Gallagher’s guitar style is by far the most basic when compared to the other artists in this book but he is a great example of the singer-songwriter who uses the guitar as a rhythmic foundation within a track. Some players will decry Gallagher’s lack of chops or musical education but it’s important to remember that for many songwriters the guitar is a tool used in service of the song. Gallagher’s masterstroke was to give his standard chord progressions something of a twist by incorporating some subtle changes and additions to the shapes he plays. By keeping notes common to all the chords he plays he creates a unified sound throughout the well-worn pop/rock chord progressions and this serves to give them a fresh twist.

Play a simple open Em7 chord and watch your listeners’ eyes light up as they think you are about to fire into that ultimate pub sing-along, “Wonderwall”! When you delve into Gallagher’s playing you discover that he has discovered a simple style that gives him a musical voice – typically a song will be composed of a standard chord progression (sometimes with a jaunty, swing feel redolent of early Brit-rock icons like The Kinks) that is hinged together by ‘common tones’ – notes that appear in all the chords within the progression. “Wonderwall” is a case in point with the top two strings being sustained at the third fret throughout. Firstly, this surprisingly simple device yields some interesting chord voicings – try playing “Wonderwall” with standard open Major and minor chords and see how much of the track’s appeal disappears for example. Secondly it allows Gallagher to keep fingers in place on the frets and use them as anchors as he plays through a chord sequence. Another by product of this approach to playing and writing is that you end up using chords that aren’t so common in popular progressions – things like 7sus4 chords and various add9 voicings.

Finally it’s important to always remember the value of keeping a strong, straightforward rhythm going when playing accompaniment parts or parts that need to sit in a track and not intrude into the space of other instruments. Playing with a relaxed, slightly swung feel can be something of a challenge when strumming so make sure you really lock in with the track when playing along with this study. ”

Listen and Learn – “Wonderwall”, “Talk Tonight”, “If I Had A Gun”.

General Overview

It's all about solid rhythm and timing here along with even dynamics and accuracy when changing chords. If you are new to playing along to a rhythm section then this study will be a great place to start as the chord changes are not too hard meaning you can focus on your strumming hand and time-keeping. Remember there is a light swing feel to the piece so you are not strumming with a 'straight' rhythm – keep the strumming hand loose and relaxed and aim for an even dynamic range so no chords jump out over the others.

Bar 1 – We are following a simple strumming pattern here, easy on the surface of it but try this as an exercise in timekeeping, dynamics and accuracy. The Em11 chord at the end of this bar is not evidence of Noel's secret jazz side but the natural effect of using all the open strings as a 'bridge' to give him time to get his fingers ready for the following chord. You'll see a similar effect at the end of the next bar.

Bar 9 – Add9 and sus4 chords are quintessential elements of Noel's style – much of this stems from the fact that it's easier to move chords around if the notes on the second and first strings (fret 3) are fretted all the way through – plus these chords sound great!

Bar 10 – Here's the aforementioned movement in action, instead of playing a simple C – A – E progression Noel will keep those notes on the top two strings fretted down which leads to a more interesting progression and he uses this a great deal in his playing and writing.

Bar 15 – Another common feature is the descending bassline as featured here. The D/F# chord name makes it look more scary than it actually is, again this is a by product of keeping those two strings fretted throughout and the descending bassline from a G to an F# simply means that we have a D Major chord with a major third (F#) in the bass.

Bar 23/4 – Noel doesn't just stick to standard chord progressions; occasionally he will play sequences like these that take the ear on an unexpected journey.

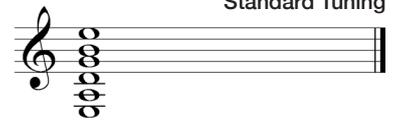
Bar 25 – The A7sus4 chord at the end of this bar is just another example of how transitioning from one chord to another whilst keeping fingers in place can yield some new voicings.

Shopping List

Early on in his career with Oasis Noel Gallagher can be seen playing Epiphone EJ 200 and Takamine acoustics though these days you will most commonly see him with a Martin D28.

Noel Gallagher

Standard Tuning



♩ = $\overset{3}{\text{tr}} \text{tr}$
♩ = 116

Em Em¹¹ D(sus4)/A A⁹(sus4)

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	0
2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	0
2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

□ □ □ V □ V

Am⁷ A⁹(sus4) C(add9) Em¹¹

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
1	1	1	1	1	0	3	3	3	3	3	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	0

Em Em¹¹ C⁷ B¹¹

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2	2	2	2
2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	0	3	3	2	2	2	2

□ □ □ □

7 Em Em¹¹

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

9 C(add9) A⁷(sus4) A⁷(sus4)

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

11 Em⁷ Em¹¹

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

13 Am⁷ Am⁹(sus4) C(add9) A⁷(sus4)

TAB

3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
1	1	1	1	1	1	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	0

15

G D(add4)/F# Em⁷

TAB

17

Em Em¹¹

TAB

19

C/G Em¹¹ A

TAB

21

A(sus2) Em¹¹ Em Em¹¹

TAB

23 C/G Em¹¹ A Em¹¹

TAB

25 C(add9) D(sus4)/A A⁷(sus4) G Em¹¹

TAB

27 C(add9) D(sus4)/A A⁷(sus4) G Em¹¹ C(add9) D(sus4)/A A⁷(sus4)

TAB

30 G Em¹¹ C(add9) D(sus4)/A A⁷(sus4) G

TAB

“ Born on October 13th, 1941 in Newark New Jersey Simon’s early musical influences were the star harmony vocalists of the day, The Everly Brothers, and the folk legends of the time – Leadbelly and Woody Guthrie. Listen to the latter two and you can hear how Simon developed his driving, fingerpicked accompaniment style, especially with the alternating bassline patterns so prevalent in folk guitar styles. However it is also worth noting that Simon took influence from the more ‘complex’ guitar players of the day including the UK’s Davey Graham and Martin Carthy. Spending time in the UK and in particular the ‘Café Scene’ of 1960’s Soho meant that Simon was around many of the great British folk players of the day and this certainly infused his playing when he returned to the USA.

Performing in a duo setting with Art Garfunkel meant that Simon’s early acoustic guitar work was often at the fore of everything they did but he always performed with clarity in his fingerpicking work, tight rhythm playing and a great command of dynamics which meant that his playing always supported their vocal harmonies perfectly. Famous guitar parts like those found in “The Boxer” show how Simon took on board the blues/folk styles of the time complete with alternating bass-lines and deftly fingerpicked chords. As he developed his solo career Simon began to create guitar parts with more advanced harmony that borrowed from the jazz and gospel worlds – check out the chord sequences to tracks like “Still Crazy After All These Years” and “50 Ways To Leave Your Lover” and you’ll hear a different harmony to that found in the Simon and Garfunkel years. However, to really get a grip on his style you want to start with this earlier approach as it offers some great lessons in solid timing, stamina to play through deft fingerpicking passages and the importance of the alternating bassline to add some interest when performing in a stripped back setting such as a guitar/vocal duo.”

Listen and Learn – “The Boxer”, “50 Ways To Leave Your Lover”, “Me and Julio Down By The Schoolyard”.

General Overview

In this study we are going to take a look at Paul Simon's driving open chord playing. This was key to tracks like "The Boxer" and "Homeward Bound". There are several elements to work on here – firstly the picking hand needs to develop the stamina and speed to keep the repetitive cross-picking patterns in place. Notice that for the most part the picking hand pattern stays the same and the chord changes work around this. Keeping the timing tight when playing this style can be surprisingly difficult though – you may find a tendency to rush ahead through the picking patterns or find yourself lagging behind the backing track if fatigue begins to kick in. To get ready for this one I'd try playing it at a variety of tempos from slow to faster than the backing track so you can build that strength and fluency in the picking hand.

Bar 1 – For this piece you can adhere to a traditional 'pima' picking hand pattern using the picking hand thumb (p) to pick strings 6, 5 and 4 and the index (i), middle (m) and ring (a) fingers for strings 3, 2 and 1 respectively (although there are no notes on the first string in this one so the 'a' finger gets a rest!). Just make sure you get the picking pattern in place slowly first as this will remain the same for much of the piece.

Bar 3 – A classic Gospel influenced approach is to play a Major chord with the 5th in the bass and this is what we have here in the C/G chord. This is a common approach in Simon's guitar style and just means that instead of playing the root note (C) as the bass note you play the 5th, in this case G, as the bass for a slightly different effect.

Bar 5 – Another common device with guitar players of Simon's era was to play the 3rd of the chord as the lowest bass note – in this case we are playing a D chord so use the F#, the 3rd, as the bass note on the second fret of string 6. This also makes for a smooth descending bassline from the G in the previous bar (the third fret of string 6) and the subsequent movement to the open 6th string for the E minor chord.

Bar 8 – This pattern is probably the absolute embodiment of Simon's early guitar style – the alternating bassline from the root of the C chord to the 5th (G) that creates the illusion of a separate instrument providing some accompaniment. Though a simple device in the context of a duo it's amazing how this adds some movement and fills out the sound.

Bar 12 – This almost riff based idea is another facet of Simon's playing and you'll hear this approach in his playing on everything from "Homeward Bound" to his challenging version of Davey Graham's "Anji". Here the focus shifts to the fretting hand and strong, accurate hammer-ons.

Bar 29 – This passage echoes the technique of changing chords with a moving bassline found in the fifth bar. Now we use some motion on the bass to get from a C Major chord to an A minor and finally to a G Major with a short bass run.

Bar 38 – Make sure you change the picking hand fingers in this bar so you play a D/F# and not the D7/F# that features in the previous bars.

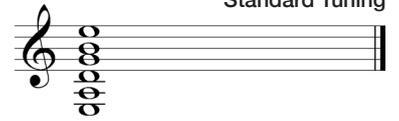
Bar 46 – The focus again shifts to the fretting hand, this time combining a hammer-on to strings 4, 3 and 2 followed by a pull-off to the open strings. Hammering and pulling off several strings at a time does require some strength in the fretting hand so if you haven't tried these ideas before build them slowly so you can maintain a dynamic with the rest of the track.

Shopping List

Paul Simon has often been seen with a Martin OM42 and D18 and Martin also produced the OM-42PS signature model. Whilst you'll often see him with Martin guitars he has also been a long time Yamaha user and has also used a Guild Songbird and an Ovation Custom Legend amongst others.

Paul Simon

Standard Tuning



♩ = 91

G C/G

3 3 3 1 2 3

T 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 1
A 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 0
B 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

m p p i p m p i

4 D⁶/F#

3 2

T 1 0 1 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0
A 2 2 2 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
B 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

7 Em C C/G

0 0 0 1 0 1 1 0 1 0 1 0

T 0 0 0 1 0 1 1 0 1 0 1 0
A 2 2 2 2 0 0 0 0 2 2 2 2
B 0 0 0 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

10

G C/E

TAB

1 0 1 0 1 0 1 0 0 1 0 1

3 2 3 2 3 2 3 2 3 0 0 0

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 0 0 0

p *mp*

13

D(add4)/F#

TAB

3 1 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 1 0

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

4 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

p *mp*

16

TAB

0 1 0 1 3 1 0 0 0 1 0 0

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

0 2 0 2 4 2 0 0 0 2 0 0

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

p *mp*

20

G C/G

TAB

0 0 0 0 1 0 1 0

0 0 0 0 2 0 2 0

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

p *mp*

D7/F#

23

TAB
1 2 3 0 1 2 0 2 1 2 0 2 1 2 0 2

Em

C

26

TAB
0 2 0 2 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2 0 1 2 0

C

G(add4)/B

Am7

G

29

TAB
1 2 0 1 0 0 1 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

C/G

G

C/G

32

TAB
1 2 0 1 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 2 0 1 2

35 G D7/F# D/F#

TAB

0	0	1	1	1	1	3	3
0	0	0	2	0	2	0	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2

39 C C/G

TAB

3	2	3	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0
0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

43 G C/E D(add4)/F#

TAB

1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	2	0	2	0	3	3	3	3	3	2	0	3	3	3	3	3	3

47

TAB

0	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	2	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3

“ Born in Fort Macleod, Canada, on November 7th 1943, Joni Mitchell began her musical career busking and performing in small clubs in Toronto. She relocated to the US in 1965 and settled in Southern California where she began to write some of her biggest hits. Her talent as a songwriter was immediately obvious with classics like “Big Yellow Taxi”, “Chelsea Morning” and “Both Sides Now” heralding the arrival of an exciting new voice on the American songwriting scene. Indeed, other folk artists quickly covered these songs and this served to spread her name and appeal even further. Her debut album ‘Song to a Seagull’ was released in 1968 and was followed by the 1971 classic ‘Blue’. During the 1970s her music took on a strong jazz influence and she began working with future jazz legends Pat Metheny, Jaco Pastorius and Michael Brecker.

As a guitarist Mitchell has a unique approach to the instrument as the vast bulk of her songs feature an altered tuning – in fact she has used over 50 altered tunings during her career. This study uses one of her favourites – CGDFCE - and it yields some fantastic, jazz influenced chords. A big part of her writing is the controlled use of dissonance along with tension and release and you will hear examples of this at several times within the piece. I’ve used a capo at fret two for this one, something Joni often does herself as whilst the low tunings sound great they can get a little muddy if you are not careful – applying the capo at the second fret just adds a touch of brightness and clarity when dealing with tunings like this one.

Mitchell developed two interesting solutions to deal with the huge amount of altered tunings she has had to use over the years – firstly, and most practically, she has been using a Roland VG midi system since 1995 that allows her to programme in all the altered tunings without actually having to re-tune the guitar. Secondly, she has a fascinating system of remembering tunings – by way of an example she would notate this piece’s tuning as C77374 where the first letter indicates the tuning of string 6 and the ensuing numbers tell her which fret she would have to fret each string at in order to find the pitch to tune the next open string. ”

Listen and Learn – “Morning Morgantown”, “Ladies of the Canyon”, “Little Green”.

General Overview

In this study we are going to take a look at how an altered tuning can really shape a piece and provide those deep, rich chord voicings that are at the heart of Mitchell's acoustic style. Indeed you will also see the effect of the open strings in this style of playing – most of the chords only need one or two strings to be fretted and yet you still get some fascinating chords. What's more there are very few stretches and, in this study at least, no full barres – study Mitchell's work however and you will find that index finger barres often do make an appearance in her playing and writing. There aren't any challenges for the picking hand in this study and you can use the standard 'pima' system of the thumb for strings 6, 5 and 4 and the i, m and a fingers for strings 3, 2 and 1. I've indicated some fretting hand fingerings but go with whatever feels comfortable for you if my fingerings don't feel right.

Bar 1 – First off make sure you have re-tuned your guitar to CGDFCE and applied the capo at fret two. This short intro already suggests some of the possibilities this tuning presents and the chord at the end of the second bar is an example of how we can use some Joni style tension before going into the main figure or verse section.

Bar 3 – This sequence is easy to play but the chords sound great thanks to the low altered tuning we are in. Often simply changing the bassline will yield great chords too and this is a common feature in Mitchell's guitar style.

Bar 8 – Unexpected chords and twists and turns in the harmony are other hallmarks of Joni Mitchell's style. This B^b(#11) does not technically 'belong' in this key but it's a brief diversion away from the conventional harmony and is another example of how she will bring unexpected tension into her guitar writing. Again the tuning is making chords like this immediately accessible without awkward fingerings or stretches.

Bar 9 – This Dm9 chord is simply an embellished version of the chord we saw in bar 4. Use the index finger to hold down the notes on strings 6 and 5 at fret two and the second finger for the note on fret three, string 4.

Bar 27 – More rich chords here thanks to the CGDFCE tuning. There is also a bit of unexpected harmony via the move from F minor to D minor, note how in bar thirty this reverts to the 'correct' harmony for this key of F Major to D minor.

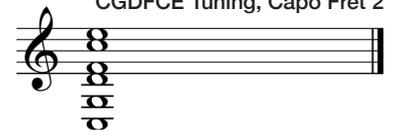
Bar 41 – More tension and release here as we progress from a chord within the key, Dm11, to one that doesn't belong, E^b6/9. This is all achieved simply by moving the bass note up a semi-tone from fret two to three and is another classic way that Joni gets movement and interest into her playing.

Shopping List

For the early acoustic years you will see Joni Mitchell playing a Martin D28; later on she went on to electric and an Ibanez George Benson model alongside a custom built acoustic by luthier Steve Klein. Most recently she has played a Martin D28, D45 and a Collings D2H.

Joni Mitchell

CGDFCE Tuning, Capo Fret 2



♩ = 106

F6(omit3) Fmaj7 Cmaj13 G13(b9) C(add4)

12 9 0 9 7 0 0 3 5 0 0 2 0 0 2 0

4 Dm⁹ C(add4) Dm⁹

2 0 0 0 0 2 0 2 0 0 2 0 2 0 0 0 2

7 C(add²add⁴) B^b(#11) Dm⁹

0 0 0 2 0 2 0 3 0 0 5 0 0 2 2 3 0 0 3 0

10 C(add4) C(add²add⁴) B \flat (#11)

13 Dm⁹ C(add4)

16 C(add²add⁴) B \flat (#11) Am(add⁴b6)

19 C(add²add⁴) B \flat (#11)

22 Am^{7(b13)} C(add²add⁴)

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	3	2	0	2	3	0	0	0	2
0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2

25 Fm(maj⁹)

TAB

12	0	9	0	9	0	0	0	0	0
12	0	10	0	7	6	0	3	5	5
12	0	10	0	7	6	0	3	5	5

28 Dm¹¹ Dm⁹ Fmaj⁹(omit3)

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	5
2	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	5

31 Dm⁹ Fmaj⁹(omit3) Dm⁹

TAB

0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	0
2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	0

34 $Bb(\#11)$ Dm^9 $C(\text{add}4)$ Dm^9

T
A
B

38 $C(\text{add}4)$ Dm^9 Dm^{11} $Eb^6/9$

T
A
B

42 Dm^{11} $Fm(\text{maj}9)$

T
A
B

45 $F6(\text{omit}3)$ $F\text{maj}7$ $C\text{maj}13$ $G^{13}(b9)$ $C(\text{add}4)$

T
A
B

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