

Solo Guitar Strategies and Concepts

A Collection of Miscellaneous Notes from Ted Greene's Personal Study Papers

Solo Guitar Strategies When Working Out Arrangements

Ted Greene 9-21-1992

- 1) I try to *see* (and hear) the *melody* on the board. [fingerboard]
- 2) I *think* of the chord names and add (to the melody):
 - a) the low roots first
 - b) inner voice(s)
 - c) inverted basses too, if desired
 - i) with the roots (i.e. in succession)
 - ii) just the inversions
- 3) I also think of the *texture*: where (in which parts) should the motion be.

Solo Guitar Tips

Ted Greene, undated

- 1) Tone
- 2) Let chords, chord tones RING under the melody
- 3) PHRASE like the singers you admire...nuances of inflection too.
- 4) Use varied REGISTER to add excitement and fight boredom.
- 5) Use varied BASS chord tone when walking. Remember: walking bass is optional.
- 6) Use IMITATION for intros, interludes.

Chord Melody Concepts

Ted Greene, 11-26-1980

- 1) Play melody with some general melodic contour but from different degree for whole chorus or just as teaser for one verse.
Example: "Lady Be Good" in C → Cmaj9\DCB F#9+ \D F13sus\D {or just think in another key.
- 2) Establish some melodic and/or rhythmic figure in the intro, and keep using variations on it in the fills, interludes, and such.
Example: Moving tenths in 3-note diatonic ascending from iii7 all the way up to iv7, bVII7, ii7, V7 for "When I Fall in Love." This tune needs help in all the pauses. This will give life to it at these places.
For 2nd chorus: Segue into a subtle waltz to a finger-picking 3/4.
- 3) Try every tune with 1/2 time melody against very up-tempo 4/4 or 3/4 double-time walking bass.

For Solo Guitar — Teaching Concepts

Ted Greene, 8-4-1990

- 1) Transpose...find the favorable keys and wonderful juxtapositions.
- 2) Larger and/or more powerful voicings
- 3) Rubato with active, increased amount of chords
- 4) Long-meter cool medium tempo from *very* slow ballad tempo
- 5) Chime chords
- 6) Harp-harmonics
- 7) Moving *any* voice in *any* chord
- 8) **EMBELLISHING** *any* (or *all*) voice(s) from 1/2 step (or?)
- 9) Build progression from **BASS** lines: (start from *any* degree)
 - Ascending, descending, mixed
 - Diatonic, chromatic, or mixed
 - Low, medium, or even start a “bass” line on the 3rd or 2nd string
- 10) **TEXTURES**: *Lots* of variety here, including especially conversations or dialogues, “delays” & “entrances”
- 11) Harmonic Rhythm

Conceptions for Solo Guitar

Ted Greene 8-6-1981

Improvisation on Harmonic Structure

- a) 2 voice counterpoint:
 - i) 4th and 5th strings (mainly) (some 6th and 3rd strings)
 - ii) Free Question & Answer with sustains, using whole instrument – with or without other sustained voices above or below.
- b) 2 voice “blocks” (intervals): one of about 4 or 5 densities (or mixed densities)
- c) Bass solos in up tempo tunes
- d) Free single-line solo
- e) Bass solo with other voices basically frozen
- f) Walking chords and other chord solos
- g) Walking bass with chordal punctuations on sustains
- h) Pick-style driving full style – with or without a steady 4 feel of chords (with or without polyrhythm of 3; or $\overline{\text{P}} \text{P} \overline{\text{P}}$ and with or without a walking bass line).
 Harmonics Rubato; in time; “pinch”-Rubato; Pinch-in time;

Improvisation on Melody

- a) Ascending diatonic and/or chromatic (or semi-chromatic) bass in any one of many *Tonality Types*.
- b) Parallel Movement (ascending, descending or broken) in *any* structure, chromatic, semi-chromatic, diatonic in any tonality type or other.

SOLO GUITAR STRATEGIES:

9-21-92

- ① I ^{try to} see (+ hear) the melody on the board when working out arr.
- ② I think of the chord names & ~~play~~ add (to the melody)
 - a) the low roots 1st
 - b) inner voice(s)
 - c) inverted basses too if desired
 - i) w/ the roots (i.e. in succession)
 - ii) just the inversions
 - d)
- ③ I ^{also} think of the TEXTURE = where ^{in which parts} should the motion be

SOLO GUITAR TIPS:

- ① Tone
 - ② hot chords, chord tones RING under the melody
 - ③ Phrase like the singers you admire... nuances of inflection too.
 - ④ Use varied REGISTER to add excitement & fight boredom.
 - ⑤ Use varied BASS tone
 - ⑥ Use IMIT. for INTROS, INTERLUDES
- EX: low close triads (2nd inv.) w/ melody on top
- Remember when walking is optional

CHORD MELODY CONCEPTS

11-26-80

- ① Play melody with same general melodic contour but from different degree
 EX: Lady Be Good in C → C49 D C B F#9 D F13505D } or just think in another key
 for whole chorus or just as teaser for one verse
- ② Establish some melodic and/or rhythmic figure in the intro, and keep using variations on it in the fills, interludes & such.
 EX: Moving tenths in 3rd diat asc from III⁷ to IV⁷ V⁷, II⁷ I⁷ for WHEN I FALL IN LOVE
 This tempo needs help in all the pauses.
 This will give life to it at these places.
 for 2nd chorus: segue into a subtle waltz to a fingerpicking 3/4
- ③ Try every time w/ 1/2 time melody against very up tempo 3/4 or 3/8 the time walking bass

8-4-90 for SOLO GUITAR TEACHING CONCERTS

- ① Transpose ... ^{found the} favorable keys & wonderful juxtaposition
- ② Larger & more powerful voicings
- ③ Rubato w/ active ^{increased amount of} chords
- ④ Long-meter cool med. tempo from VERY slow pulled tempo.
- ⑤ Chime chords
- ⑥ Harp. Harmonics
- ⑦ MOVING ANY VOICE in ANY CHORD
- ⑧ EMBELLISHING ANY VOICE ^{FRANK} from $\frac{1}{2}$ step(s)?
- ⑨ BUILD prog. from BASS LINES, ASC., DESC., MIXED ^{start from ANY degree}
DIAT., CHROM., or MIXED
LOW., MED., or even start a "baseline" on the 3rd or 2nd string!
- ⑩ TEXTURES: Lots of VARIETY here including especially 'delays' + 'entrances' CONVERSATIONS or dialogues
- ⑪ Harmonic Rhythm

CONCEPTIONS for SOLO GUITAR

8-6-81

IMPROV on HARM. STRUCTURE

- a) 2 VOICE Counterpoint : i) 4th + 5th strings ^{(Some 6th + 3rd) (MIXED)} ii) ^{free} question + answer ^{w/ SUSTAINS} ^{whole instrument} ^{w/ or w/out OTHER SUSTAINED VOICES ABOVE or BELOW}
 - b) 2 VOICE "BLOCKS" (INTERVALS) : one of about 4 or 5 devices (or mixed devices)
 - c) BASS SOLOS in UP TEMPO TUNES
 - d) FREE SINGLE-LINE SOLO
 - e) BASS SOLO w/ other voices ^{basically frozen}
 - f) WALKING CHORDS + other CHORD SOLOS
 - g) WALKING BASS with chordal punctuations or sustains
 - h) PICK-STYLE DRIVING FULL STYLE ^{w/ or w/out a steady 4 feel of chords + w/ or w/out a walking bass line}
- HARMONICS RUBATO; IN TIME; "PINCH"-RUBATO; "PINCH"-IN TIME;

IMPROV ON MELODY

- a) use diat + $\frac{1}{2}$ chrom (or semi-chrom) bass in any one of many TONALITY TYPES
- b) ^{use desc or broken} PARALLEL movement in any structure, chrom, semi, chrom, diat in any tonality ^{type or other}