

Important questions to ask yourself:

① What do you want to do with music? (musically speaking that is — not "Do you want to become rich + famous through music?"). Do you want to play in a group? Do you want to play with another harmonic instrument or do you enjoy carrying the harmonic weight? Or both? Do you want to be able to be self-contained, musically — that is, to play songs, pieces, etc. all by yourself? Do you want to be able to do this as much as you want to play with others? Do you want to be able to accompany singers, or your own voice, all by yourself? Or maybe you enjoy working in other types of duos (like 2 guitars, guitar + flute, etc.)? Or e) all of the above? Or maybe, the only honest answer you can up with for now is that you're not sure, but you want to just get a general good knowledge of the guitar and then see what happens? How about studio playing? Or teaching? Or...?

② What should you study or work on in order to accomplish your goals?
I guess this is where I come in, meaning, this is one of the main things you are paying me for — the responsibility to decide what you should be doing to get from point A to point B (or point Z?). So just relax about this and leave it up to me (although I will listen with an open mind to any suggestions you might have).

③ Do you want to specialize in any certain musical style(s)? Do some types of sounds appeal to you more than others? Have your tastes in music ever changed, up to this point in your life? If so, do you think this was due to exposure to new (to you) kinds of music or, to becoming bored with the kind of music you had been previously listening to? Or both? (The only honest answer to the "exposure" question must surely be yes, if you think about it; and the only reason for these thoughts on the matter is to point out that there are many wonderful sounds or styles that you may not have heard yet, and it would seem like you'd want to keep your ears open, to keep exposing yourself to more and more types of sounds before you become too gung-ho about one style only. Also, some tastes in life are of the acquired type, so there is that to consider as well.

However, after having exposed your ears quite a bit, don't feel guilty if you want to specialize in one or two styles — many people do and are happy and successful).

④ Which of the following general areas are you interested in (in whichever style(s) you choose to work in)? Improvising (single-note + harmonic)? Composing? Re-composing + Arranging? Performing? Interpretation? Other? } These are not all mutually exclusive

Many schools of thought divide music into 3 main areas: ① HARMONY, ② MELODY, and ③ RHYTHM. The most involved, demanding, and (to my way of thinking) important, is harmony (you may wish to challenge this — fine... let's discuss it). Harmony, as referred to here, means the science of combining notes or tones. Why should you study this subject? Basically, because it is the backbone of almost all styles of music, but let's see what some of the benefits are:

- ① Knowledge of available sounds (which you might not have even known existed and were waiting for you).
- ② The ability to expand almost any idea (that is, the ability to make variations on any chord progression, song, riff, etc.
- ③ True understanding of what makes music tick, which speeds up your learning process enormously.
- ④ The ability to quickly figure out what other musicians are doing on records, radio, etc.
- ⑤ The ability to improve your (or others') musical ideas through:

- 1) CHORD ENRICHMENT (adding 9ths, 11ths, etc. to given chords).
- 2) CHORD ADDITION (using "back-cycling" embellishing chords, etc.)
- 3) CHORD SUBSTITUTION + REHARMONIZATION (replacing given chords with interesting substitutes).
- 4) THE ADDITION OF MOVING VOICES.
- 5) MELodic EMBELLISHMENT, DECORATION and VARIATION (melody is part of harmony).
- 6) INTERESTING MODULATIONS (changes of key).
- 7) THE APPLICATION OF THE MANY BEAUTIFUL, DIFFERENT TYPES OF TONALITIES, + IDIOMS.
- 8) BEING ABLE TO EXPRESS MANY DIFFERENT MOODS, FEELINGS, COLORS.
- 9) THE USE OF DIFFERENT TEXTURES.

As you might gather, much of what I teach and am interested in personally, falls into the domain of harmony. As you become more & more acquainted with this fine subject, I think you will find it to be thoroughly fascinating.

Musical Priorities

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4. Which of the following general areas are you interested in (in whichever style(s) you choose to work in?):
 - Improvising (single-note & harmonic)? |
 - Composing? |
 - Recomposing & Arranging? |
 - Performing? |
 - Interpretation? |
 - Other? |

Many schools of thought divide music into 3 main areas: 1. **HARMONY**, 2. **MELODY** and 3. **RHYTHM**.

The most involved, demanding, and (to my way of thinking) important, is harmony (you may wish to challenge this—fine...let’s discuss it). Harmony, as referred to here, means the science of combining notes or tones. Why should you study this subject? Basically, because it is the backbone of almost all styles of music, but let’s see what some of the benefits are:

1. Knowledge of available sounds (which you might not have even known existed and were waiting for you).
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3. True understanding of what makes music tick, which speeds up your learning process enormously.
4. The ability to quickly figure out what other musicians are doing on records, radio, etc.
5. The ability to improve your (or others’) musical ideas through:
 - a. Chord enrichment (adding 9ths, 11ths, etc., to given chords).
 - b. Chord addition (using “back-cycling”, embellishing chords, etc.).
 - c. Chord substitution and reharmonization (replacing given chords with interesting substitutes).
 - d. The addition of moving voices.
 - e. Melodic embellishment, decoration and variation (melody is part of harmony).
 - f. Interesting modulations (changes of key).
 - g. The application of the many beautiful different types of tonalities, and idioms.
 - h. Being able to express many different moods, feelings, colors.
 - i. The use of different textures.

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