

Letters from Ted

After studying privately with Ted for about a year, I moved to Minnesota. I then wrote him to see if I could receive instruction via the mail. Attached are the first two letters he wrote me. After these I continued to take lessons by mail, but he would simply send me his teaching pages without personal comments, etc. (It was pretty time-consuming for him.)

The first lesson (dated January, 1987) is pretty straightforward. The “huge project” he refers to is his lessons on 7#9 chord moves—a series he entitled, “Learning to Use Altered Dominants on One Degree at a Time.” He sent me the first page which focused on the dominant 7(#9) chord in a major key.

The second letter (March 18, 1987) is in four sections:

In section I of this letter Ted responded to my request for suggestions on how to improve my arrangement of “Darn That Dream.” Since much of his comments are related to specific points in that arrangement, I’m attaching a copy of it to this posting. I do so reluctantly, mainly because this site is all about Ted and his music, not my stuff, so please don’t get the impression that I’m promoting my work in any way. As you can see it has some nice flaws that Ted pointed out. (I used a red pen to mark my page of his points to improve.)

I was always impressed at how gentle Ted could be with offering advice or “criticism.” He never made one feel inferior or stupid in any way, and he’d often say, “Well, that’s just the way I see it, but others may have a different opinion...” or something like that. You can get a real sense of this by listening to Mark Levy’s lesson tapes.

In section II, Ted’s comments are directed to my previous letter in which I stated that I had recently checked out a 7-string guitar, but wasn’t attracted to it for various reasons.

Section III is Ted’s answer to my request for additional page of his 7#9 chord moves. This is posted on this website in the “Harmony and Theory” section:

[Learning to Use Altered Dominants, part 2, 1986-05-28.pdf](#)

Section IV is Ted’s comments about my “homework” assignment from page 1 of the 7#9 chord moves lesson. Basically, I ended up writing a few pages of various V7#9 to I chord moves which I then sent to him to review. I used a lot of different voicings and in all inversions. It was a pretty scientific exercise for me and I discovered a few nice things, but I failed to focus on making them more melodic and useable. That’s exactly what Ted pointed out.

Below is the text of both letters, which may be a little difficult to read for some. I hope these lesson notes have been even a little helpful and insightful to Ted’s music and thinking. And I hope that other Ted students will come forward and share some of their notes, lesson sheets, or recordings.

~Paul

Hi Paul,

1-87

It's nice to hear from you again. I also enjoyed our visits and remember the nice progress you made. Speaking of which, the pages you sent along were very pleasant to play through...everything made sense and a few of the ideas were new to my ears in the exact spots you put them (but in an agreeable way).

As for lessons by mail - I'm swamped with work but not too swamped to do it. Since I charge \$18 an hr. in person, I've been charging \$10 thru the mail, hoping that this is fair.

I'm sending along an arrangement of the old Irish song "Londonderrere" (bad spelling) which also goes by the name "Danny Boy." I hope you've heard this tune. This arrangement is pretty difficult in spots, but what the heck, we have to do something to keep out of trouble. Also we once collaborated on "Prelude to a Kiss" (I think you did most of the work) so I'm sending along an arrangement I finally committed to paper. Hope these please you or give you some new ideas.

And also am enclosing the first page of a huge subject that I've been trying to get myself to write down (it's just that figuring out a reasonably attractive presentation and examples takes so much time...you understand). Let me know if you want the next page on this next time.

I'm usually a bit behind with my mail correspondence, so please forgive me. If you want another lesson, just send along the \$10 for this one + \$10 for another (checks, money orders, whatever), O.K.?

Wishing you the best of everything, Paul.

Ted G.

3-18-87

- I. It is a very delicate Paul, the suggesting of “improvements” you requested (“Darn That Dream”).... At the stage of guitar you seem to be at, I must (?) assume that you like everything reasonably well that you committed to paper or you wouldn’t have taken the time and put your name on it. I like it very much. Many of your choices, some others not so much...but it’s musical, well-thought out & maybe what I would prefer wouldn’t fall as nicely on your ears.

[Side note:] By the way, it seems I recall you playing this for me, possibly in a different form.... Certain moves...not important...just rekindled some brain cells....

Anyway, all the above notwithstanding, I’ll take the risk of mentioning a few spots:

- 1) Do you really want the Dmaj7 at the end of line 2?
- 2) Abm6 in line 4...(whoa...)
- 3) The F#9 in line 5 makes “sense” but sounds a little “monster-movie-ish” (these comments are certainly not meant to offend...again, my ears are not sacred....). Sometimes I abandon a line if the vertical results just don’t work out.... I love the line coming down initially, and it does cleverly make its way to E9...anyway, try using F9#11 then E9...it’ll smooth out the F#9 to E9 which is where “The Mummy” appeared....
- 4) The modulation is nice...but only “B7”?....
Yes! to the key of Eb...very rich.

Overall the arrangement is excellent...the above are just my fussy ways.

- II. I’ve had a similar reaction to the 7-string.... Mine sits in the corner, (but I do use it for my experiments with certain tunings I’m playing with).
- III. I’ll send more 7#9 material.... I’ve just begun this series...if enough students seem to get value from it, I’ll continue...if not....
- IV. I see your mind at work on the 7#9 pages you sent. Good thinking. Again, I want to hear certain things (especially certain MELODIES) that aren’t there.
but....

Sincerely hoping what I’m sending will be pleasant &/or helpful, Paul.

Keep up the good work,
Ted G.

P.S. I won’t always be able to give you this much feedback Paul.... I’ve been sitting here for an hour and 1/2 and I won’t always have the time. I’m not asking for more money, rather just saying I may have to deal more w/the printed papers just a little. I hope this makes sense to you.

1-87

Hi Paul,

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Wishing you the Best of Everything Paul, Ted G.

7-18-87

I

It is a very delicate thing Paul, the suggesting of "improvements" you requested ('Dern that Jr.')..... At the stage of guitar you seem to be at, I must (?) assume that you like everything reasonably well that you committed to paper or you wouldn't have taken the time and put your name on it. I like it very much many of your choices, some others not so much.... but it's musical, well-thought-out & maybe what I would prefer wouldn't fall as nicely on your ears. Anyway, all the above notwithstanding, I'll take the risk of mentioning a few spots:

BY THE WAY IT SEEMS I RECALL YOU PLAYING THIS FOR ME, POSSIBLY IN A DIFFERENT FORM.... CERTAIN MOVES... NOT IMPORTANT... JUST FEASIBLES SOME GRAM CELLS...

- ① Do you really want the $\text{J}^{\#}7$ at end of line 2?
- ② $\text{A}^{\#}6$ in line 4 ? (whoa...)
- ③ The $\text{F}^{\#}9$ in line 5 makes 'sense' but sounds a little 'monster-provicial' (these comments are certainly not meant to offend.... again, my ears are not sacred....). Sometimes I abandon a line if the vertical results just don't work out.... I love the line coming down INITIALLY and it does cleverly make its way to $\text{E}9$ ^{NOT WINDY} by using $\text{F}9^{\#}11$ then $\text{E}9$... it'll smooth out the $\text{F}^{\#}9$ to $\text{E}9$ which is where 'The Mummy' appeared....

④ The modulation is nice.... but only 'B7' ?....
^{YES! to the Key of E... very rich.}

Overall the arr. is excellent... the above are just my fussy ways.

II. I've had a similar reaction to the 7-STRING... mine sits in the corner, (but I do use it for my experiments with certain tunings I'm playing with).

III. I'll send more $\text{J}^{\#}9$ material.... I've just begun this series... if enough students seem to get value from it, I'll continue... if not....

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but....

Sincerely hoping what I'm sending will be pleasant & or helpful, Paul.

Keep up the good work,

Jed Y.

P.S. I won't always be able to give you this much feedback Paul ... I've been sitting here for an hr + 1/2 and I won't always have the time. I'm not asking for more money, rather just saying I may have to deal more w/ the printed papers just a little. I hope this makes sense to you

DARN THAT DREAM

SOLO GUITAR
1984 P. VACON

A ||

G G^Δ/F[♯] B[♭]m¹¹ E[♭]7 Am⁷/D Am/c B7(b5) B9 Em7 Em¹³/D

A^Δ/C[♯] Cm^(Δ)/E[♭] B[♭]7 Bm¹¹(b5)_{NO 3} E7(b9)_{OPEN} A9sus Am¹¹/G F¹¹ F¹³/E[♭] D^Δ7

Bm7 E[♭]9/B[♭] B[♭]m¹¹ Am¹¹ D⁷/C Bm7 B[♭]7 A7sus A[♭]13

G⁶ G/B B[♭]m¹¹ E[♭]7 F[♯]7 G⁶/9 A[♭]m6 B7

Em9 Em(9) A⁶ Cm^(Δ) B[♭]7 F[♯]9 E9 Am9 Bm7/A Cm7/A

F/A Bm¹¹ Bm¹¹ B[♭]m7 E[♭]7 Am¹¹ D13 G⁶/9 Fm7 B[♭]7(b9)

E[♭]A7 E[♭]6/D Cm¹¹ Cm(9) Fm¹¹ Fm(9) B[♭]7/A[♭] D7 Gm¹¹ C¹³(b9)

F[♯]m¹¹ Fm¹¹ B13 B[♭]7 E[♭](9) Cm7 C¹¹/B[♭] A[♭]7

Gm Gm(Δ9) Gm7 E7(♯5)_(b9) A¹¹_{OPEN} D9 E[♭]9 B7+5

MODULATE TO KEY OF E[♭]

(M D M G F D13)

[A] ||

MODULATE TO E_b IF DESIRED **YES!**

DARN THAT DREAM - VAN HEUSEN

G6 / Bb7 Eb7 A-7 B7 E- E7/A7/C# C6 B7 b5 E7

A-7 F7 B-7 Eb7/Bb | 1. A-7 D7 B7 E7 A-7 D7

2. A-7 D7 G6 -- Bb7 Eb6 C7 - F-7 Bb7

G-7 C7/Bb F-7 Bb7 Eb6 C7 G-6

A-7 D7 Eb7 D7 G- Bb7 Eb7 A-7 B7

E- E7/A7/C# C6 B-7 b5 E7 A-7 F7 B-7 Eb7/Bb

A-7 D7 G6