

Play That Guitar. Pt 5

A beginners guide by Brian Powell

By now you should have worked those fingers to the bone and be ready to get out busking on the streets of Brighton !

I hope that last month's songwriting tips were useful. Any hit songs emanating from the advice in the article will carry my 15% fee on any future royalties please...!

Remember those golden words Practice, Practice and...Practice. Try to play for 10 or 15 minutes a day rather than a 1 hour marathon once a week and the slower tempo you practice the quicker you will learn.

Don't forget that Nashville (or Rome) wasn't built in a day. Keep at it and make playing the guitar a part of your life.

Top Tip.

Learn to listen to all the instruments playing in a piece of music. Try to get an appreciation of how the musicians are working together.

This month we look at the CAGED chord system and 'The Blues in Jazz'.

CAGED Chords...

The CAGED chord system is a way of visualising the 5 principle major chord SHAPES i.e. C, A, G, E and D over the guitar fingerboard. It just happens to spell the word caged.

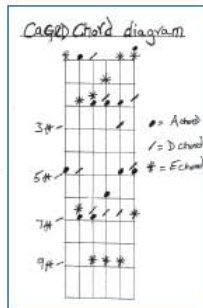
It is the same principle for minor chord shapes too.

FIG 1. CAGED Chord Diagram

Take time to absorb fig 1. Think about how it is a template for chords in other keys too.

Take the E major chord and recreate that SHAPE with a 1st finger barre on the 5th fret and we make a chord of A. You will have to use your 2nd, 3rd and 4th fingers to create this shape. Slide that shape up 2 frets and it is a B major or down 2 frets and it will make a G major.

Similarly take an open position A chord and recreate that SHAPE on the 5th fret using your 1st finger as a barre and fingers 2, 3 and 4 to make the chord shape. This makes a D. Up two frets it makes an E.



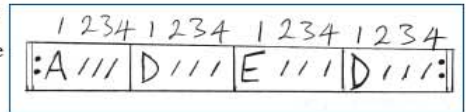
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You see, we are finding a network of major chords in different positions over the fingerboard using familiar SHAPES.

FIG 2. Chord Sequence

Try playing the sequence A-D-E-D using open position chords. Now



play the same sequence

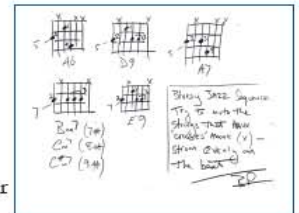
using a 5th fret E shape for the A, a 5th fret A shape for the D and a 7th fret A shape for the E ! It sounds more complicated than it is. Try finding new and interesting chords by moving the open position CAGED chord shapes up and down the fingerboard.

The Blues in Jazz

Let's look at some 'grown up' chords farther up the fingerboard. 'Blues For Ike' has a standard Blues/Jazz chord progression charted here in the key of A. Pay careful attention to how you position your left hand fingers on the fingerboard. Try to only 'voice' the strings that you are holding down. These 'Jazz' chords require you to Arch and Flatten your fingers at the same time! Quite a task to begin with as you are asking your fingers to do things that they haven't done before. Don't despair; with practice they will do it.

Fig 3. Jazz Chord Shapes

Just strum 4 to the bar with a simple Downstroke. Not too fast. Remember to try to avoid the 'X'd strings in the diagrams. Find a way of muting them with your left hand.

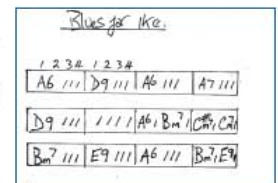


Any problems give me a call and I'll show you how to do it !

These 4 chord shapes are a good starting point to making the transition from a 6 string chord strummer to a Cool Jazz player. Triad chords have minimalism built into their structure so as not to clutter song arrangements. These 3 and 4 note chord voicings have a stronger and sharper feel on the Jazz guitar. Persevere and explore.

NB. The astute student will note that my 9th shapes are rootless! You can 'root' them on the 5th string (5th fret/D9 and 7th fret/E9) instead of the diagrammed 6th. Both versions sound good.

Fig 4. 'Blues For Ike'



Next month is the last in this 6 part guide. I hope you have enjoyed them. We will have a bit of a re-cap on some of the main areas to concentrate on and also look at a few tunes. Something by Hank Williams and maybe 'The Hendrix Chord'. In the meantime keep playing that guitar. Check out Wes Montgomery and listen to Django Reinhardt, Jimi Hendrix and of course.....Hank Williams.

I have designed these 6 lessons to build the students ability a month at a time. Keep these articles and refer back to previous lessons. This page and all other 'Play That Guitar' lessons are posted at www.fivewaysdirectory.co.uk

Brian Powell is an RGT registered guitar teacher and teaches in the Fiveways area.

More information available at www.brianguitar.co.uk and Tel 01273 565600.

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