

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT AUXILIARY TONES: When harmonizing a tune, you may have a strong desire to add some "internal" auxiliary tones to the chords to gain some harmonic interest. At this point in time, there has been no discussion on "chord function". (Chord Function=how does the chord in question relate to the over-all key? Is the chord in the actual key of the composition? etc.) Here is a hypothetical example: The original key of the song is Bb Major. The chord is Eb in Root position harmonizing the note Bb. (5th of Eb) Now you want to add an "internal upper auxiliary" note to replace the note G in the Eb chord. Do you add the note Ab which would be in the key of Eb or do you add the note A natural which would be the note in the original key of the song? Minor, Diminished and Augmented chords may pose other complex musical problems which you may not yet be able to answer from a theoretical standpoint. Easy solution! Use your ear! If it sounds right within the musical context, it most likely is correct. If it sounds like you have wandered into some kind of musical mine field, your solution most likely is wrong. These problems will be addressed in the following volumes of Guitar Fundamentals.

CLOSING ARGUMENT

Congratulations are in order when you have completed Book 2. Rather than immediately advancing to Book 3, it is important to spend a month or so in digesting what you have learned and trying to put that knowledge to some practical use. Remember that the guitar is a transposing instrument which is tuned an octave lower than it is written. Spend lots of time in learning to play standard melodies 8va. You will see the importance of this when you begin to play with some more "dense" accompaniment. If your rhythm section consists of a keyboard, bass and drums, there is enough sound behind you to drown out your best efforts if you are playing in too low an octave. Incidentally, a busy keyboard player can totally bury your playing regardless of the octave that you are playing in. Sometimes, brute volume is all you can do! This is generally not a good solution because when you play too loudly, everyone else will similarly bring up their sound level. A vicious circle is the result.

Another important skill is the craft of creating chord solos. Eventually you should be able to do this at sight. Yes, there are all kinds of good players who have never developed this skill. Similarly, there are all kinds of good players who never learned how to read music.

It may seem that we have abandoned the idea of rhythm guitar. Not so! While three part chords are often too thin for that endeavour, they can be of some use to you in an ensemble setting. With a friendly bass player in tow, you may be surprised with what you can create with three part chords.

Book 3 continues the study of the fingerboard by introducing the notes on the fourth string. The craft of harmonizing tunes is further refined. Unison chords will enhance the playability of chord solos because some of the dramatic hand position shifting will be alleviated.

Listening to your favourite guitar idols is a good thing. It may be equally good to listen to other musicians such as horn and keyboard players. Listen to how singers phrase their music. Work at lifting solos and riffs but don't make that a life's work. Spend some time on developing your own licks.

Continue reviewing both books 1 and 2 when you move on to Book 3. Allowing the old material to become a thing of the past is a big mistake. Always keep in mind the the learning process is cumulative.

George Arvola