

# Introduction

Before we go on, let's immediately "nip some things in the bud." This book, like any other book on this subject, is not the definitive method to improvising or arranging. Such a book is impossible, and if it were possible, it would be impossibly large. No one has the monopoly on how to arrange or improvise and perhaps also how to teach these subjects. Guitar Fundamentals Book 6 only scratches the surface in the improvisation department. The materials contained aim at a musical situation where the player would have some kind of accompaniment. Creating an unaccompanied solo is not discussed.

One thing that I have learned over the course of more than 40 years of teaching guitar is that it is impossible to teach "imagination." If you think that you have no imagination, you might be mistaken because often imagination is stifled by too much "book learning." Imagination can sometimes also be stifled by too much time spent on "lifting other player's solos." Certainly listening to other performers is a great idea and if you are a guitarist, don't only listen to other guitar players but listen to great singers, horn players and keyboard artists. Listen to all kinds of music even if your penchant might be jazz. I have heard many country and rock musicians who play some pretty astounding stuff.

From 1976 to around 1980, I studied guitar and guitar arranging with a renowned teacher, Tony Bradan. (Toronto, Ontario) By sheer luck, I had heard his name through a musical grapevine and after the first few lessons, it became evident that I was very lucky to meet this man. Tony and I became the best of friends and eventually started collaborating on documenting his methodology for teaching the guitar. Prior to his passing away in the late 90's, Tony suggested that I should continue an effort to publish the system that he was teaching and the Guitar Fundamentals series of books is the result. Failing health prevented Tony from documenting his ideas on creating solos and guitar arrangements. This book will contain some of those ideas along with things that I have garnished from other sources.

This book is not a step by step method although it begins with the very basic element which of course is rhythm. The solos vary in technical difficulty. Some solos are more elaborate and may stray a bit farther afield but mostly, I have kept things rather close to the original tune. A solo which bears little resemblance to the original song seems in my mind to be at least somewhat pointless. Yes, even some great players take you on a musical mystery tour and then "kick you out of the bus, leaving you stranded." The really great ones generally deliver you back home, safe and sound.

As mentioned above, some of the ideas in this book were garnished from my lessons with Tony Bradan and others were a result of studying well written books. A particularly good series of music theory and arranging books were written by Gordon Delamont who happened to be a good friend of Tony Bradan. Both of these Canadian musical greats have passed away but will be remembered by many who had the pleasure of their company.

Book 6 of Guitar Fundamentals begins with an example of what I was writing about 30 years ago. Keep in mind that there was a bit of a limit to the parameters with which I was working when I created my solo on the tune, "Prisoner of Love."

Tony taught the subject of arranging and improvisation by suggesting that you try to use the material that is already in the song. Some might say that this is just embellishing the original melody and of course, this is absolutely true. Many guitar books on this subject of improvisation start by suggesting what scales one can play over the chord changes and that often produces solos which sound exactly like that, scales. Keep in mind that many songs have more or less the same chord progressions so using the "scale to chord mentality and methodology" can produce a solo which could very well be applied to a variety of songs. If you see no problem with that, go ahead and develop some "universal solos and by all means, add a flurry of pentatonic rambling." I'll try to present the materials in a slightly different perspective.

The order of presentation could be questioned. I have made at least a feeble attempt at some logic in this department but I won't hold a grudge if some readers decide on a different sequence of events.

The concepts in this book are not my original ideas and they were perhaps not original ideas developed by Tony Bradan or for that matter anyone in the last few centuries. Most musical concepts have a much more ancient history. Even Bach and the boys from earlier times used the same stuff that we still use today.

Let's begin and have some fun. Maybe worth noting is that if you just learn to play the solos in this volume, without attempting to apply the concepts to other material, you will only know how to kick the pants off "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star."

George Arvola