

"Hybrid Style"

by George Arvola
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Some guitar player seems to have coined the term "hybrid" style to describe a pick and finger style method of striking the strings. I'll use this term throughout this book.

Here are a few examples of musical situations where this might be the best if not the only method for a pick style player. It will be better if you have slightly longer nails on the right hand fingers. File them to follow the contour of the finger tip and let them peek out slightly above the flesh of the finger.

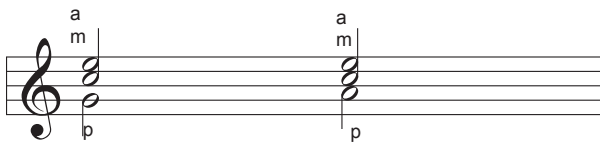
p = pick m = middle finger a = ring finger (I decided to use the "classical" method where "a" comes from the word "anularis" referring to the ring finger.)



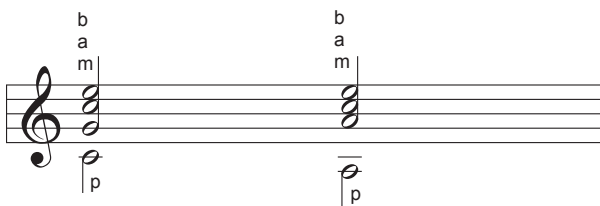
Here the bass and melody notes are separated by such a large interval that the best option is to strike the bass note with the pick and the melody note with either "m" or "a".



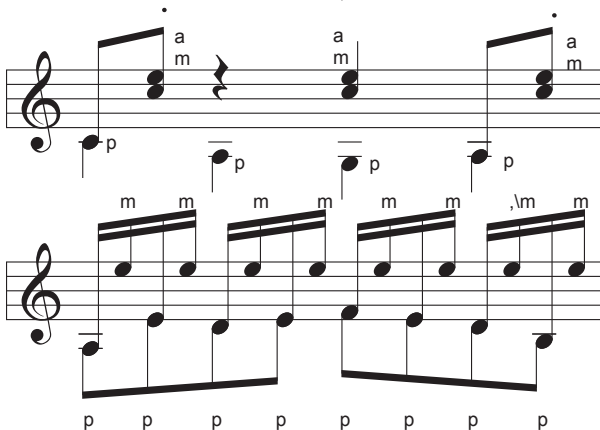
This is a similar situation where the two note chord is separated from the bass note by a good sized gap.



There is nothing wrong with even using the hybrid style when the notes are on adjacent strings. This will give you a chord sound with no "strummed" quality. Jazz players often use this technique to emulate the sound of an electric piano.



Apparently some guitar players are so gifted that they can incorporate the use of the "baby" finger. (b = baby finger) I have to admit that I have never developed particularly good control over the baby finger in my right hand. The consequence is that I tend to reduce my hybrid style to a maximum of three strings struck simultaneously. It seems to usually work for me.



Here, an independent bass line is played with the pick and the "a" and "m" fingers are used to strike the two note chords. It is also reasonably easy to control the staccato by muting the chord with the same two fingers which were used to strike the strings.

Although this type of passage would be feasible with the pick, it would be much easier with a hybrid style.

The next few pages contain a number of short studies aimed at helping the uninitiated players to cope with "hybrid" situations. Don't be afraid of incorporating these techniques into your own creations.

RIGHT HAND POSITION: Generally when I play pick style, I touch the face of the guitar or the pick guard with my right hand baby finger or even with all three fingers which are not used for holding the pick. This is abandoned when I play in a hybrid style. You have to make enough room between the strings and the right hand finger tips to accomplish a clean attack. The consequence is that the right hand wrist has to be elevated considerably from the strings, a bit like a classical guitar approach. The striking motion of the "m" and "a" fingers comes mostly from the middle joint of the finger. Avoid hooking the string by curling the finger tips into a clenched fist. It takes some patience to develop this technique.