

Guitar Accompaniment and Chord Reading Studies

(supplement to Guitar Fundamentals Books 1 to 4)

by George Arvola (2011)

This book contains three sections. The first segment is a short introduction to "hybrid" style picking. The second segment contains a good number of guitar duets with the emphasis being on the accompaniment role. The third section of the book focuses on reading mostly three note chords as they would be used in a harmonized melody.

The majority of the concepts are re-caps of the material that has been presented in the first four volumes of Guitar Fundamentals. Worth noting is that the music in this book is not aimed at a beginner player. Good reading skills are needed from the first page onward. Players with no reading skills will find this book extremely challenging if not impossible.

1. Hybrid Style

In many musical situations and in particular, chord playing, the hybrid (pick and finger) style method is a better if not the only way to go. This section contains a variety of demonstrations which then can be used throughout the rest of the book. In most cases, this will be left up to the discretion of the player.

2. Guitar Accompaniment Studies

The accompaniment studies are depictions of what a player might do when the guitar is the only back-up instrument. If there is no bass player in the ensemble, it seems appropriate for the guitarist to supply some bass rudiments. Some of the studies are typical "rhythm guitar" parts while others involve more than just slapping a back beat. These studies can be used in any order as a supplement to other teaching materials. I placed the duets in alphabetical order but categorized them into three groups. The difficulty levels are indicators regarding the accompaniment parts but not necessarily the melody lines.

"Easy" refers to rhythm parts containing basic campfire type chord fingerings.

"Challenging" refers to rhythm parts with slightly more advanced chord fingerings.

"Difficult" refers to rhythm parts involving advanced chord fingerings and complex rhythmic motifs.

3. Chord Reading Studies

While all parts of this book require chord reading skills, the third section is dedicated to reading chordal notation when applied to a harmonized melody. This tends to be a weakness for even advanced players who can read single line notation. Stacks of notes put the eyes, brain and fingers into overdrive. Perhaps the best piece of advice is to always read the chord from the lowest note upward. The chord will tend to fall into your hand more readily when you follow this rule.

The first 10 Chord Reading Studies are in relative order of difficulty but the harmonized songs which follow are mostly in the order in which I developed them. Most of the songs are the melodies presented in the Accompaniment Studies but now in a harmonized style. Astute observers will be able to make a judgement on the technical level just by glancing at the pitch range which is required. A good teacher might be able to help in deciding on the order of study.

The Chord Reading Studies and harmonized tunes use mostly three part voicings. My belief is that if you have trouble reading a three note chord, you will have even more problems with four note forms. The other reason for three part chords might be that if you have a back-up player, three note chords is about all you will need. In fact, four note chords can quite easily create a musical din. The harmonized tunes are not self contained and unaccompanied solos. Reserve that for another time and place.

The text in this book is at least as important as the musical notation. Some slightly theoretical hints are relayed as they become relevant.

Have fun with these fundamentals.

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