

# Fingerstyle 101 Printable E-Book (2)



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## Section 3

### Improvisation with Fingerstyle Guitar

To compose something decent, you not only need the goodwill of the muse but also at least some insight into harmony and compositional techniques. As improvising is 'instant composing' you will definitely need all these tools. During this series of lessons on improvisation I will always start with a short practical example, analyse it and then give some examples of what we can do with this idea.

So let's start with this one:

Concept - Arpeggiation With Rhythmic Diversity

Here the right hand fingers hold the chord form (Em7) while the Left Hand fingers play a picking pattern. For now, since this is meant to be a simple exercise, the bass note (the open low E) is played on the first beat of each measure to have a marking point. As we get more skill and confidence we will add more bass movement.

The fingers of the left hand are, in essence, fooling around in the chord form, which leads to more independence and certainty (well, after some experimenting). The finger indications (p - thumb, i - index, m - middle and a - ring) are only suggestions. You should feel free to execute them differently.

#### Advantage

You are always sure the notes will fit into the harmony of the piece as the improvised melody is derived totally

from the chord notes.

## Some Chord Theory

After a while, only playing over Em7 chords would become quite boring. That's why we will use Chord Extensions, notes past the 7th degree, namely the 9th, 11th or 13th, which could also be thought as 2nd, 4th and 6th. Adding these extensions, which are built by stacking triads on top of the original Em triad, is a standard practice of jazz musicians and is quite essential to developing the skills to improvise. Diatonic scale of Em:

	E	F#	G	A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#
Degrees	1	2	b3	4	5	6	b7	8	9	b10	11	12	13

Em7 consists of 1, b3, 5, b7 -- E, G, B, D.

Chord extensions of Em7 might be:

Em9:	1	b3	5	b7	9	E	G	B	D	F#					
Em11:	1	b3	5	b7	9	11	E	G	B	D	F#	A			
Em13:	1	b3	5	b7	9	11	E	13	E	G	B	D	F#	A	C#
Em7/11:	1	b3	5	b7	11	E	G	B	D	A					
Em (9/11):	1	b3	5	9	11	E	G	B	F#	A					

It would be impossible to execute all the notes from an Em13 chord

on the guitar, since it only has six strings and the chord has seven notes. As the 1, 3 and 7 are essential notes to determine the chord family, you might omit the 5, 6 or 9 position.

Now, let's experiment on a two-chord progression, the chords being Em7 and Cmaj7.

Chord extensions of Cmaj7 might be:

Cmaj9:	C	E	G	B	D	
Cadd9:	C	E	G	D		
C6/9:	C	E	G	A	D	
Cmaj7/6:	C	E	G	A	B	
Cmaj13:	C	E	G	B	D	A

Both chords and some of their extended forms are played all over the neck, but are still played off of the chord shapes. I specifically picked these chord shapes for this exercise because of their simplicity as well as their fresh, lush sound. Open and fretted notes are mixed which can lead to some beautiful colourful results. So, let's try this, shall we?

♩ = 80

Em7 Cmaj7

T 3 0 0 3 0 0 3 2 0 0

A 2 0 0 3 2 0 0

B 0

P P M I M A A P I M A

Here we've added improvisation to the Em7 1st position form using the Cmaj7 1st position form.

Here's a more realistic version of the basic Em7 without improvising any changes:

Em7 Gtr I

T 3 0 0 3 0 0 3 2 0 0

A 2 0 0 3 2 0 0

B 0

P P M I M A A P I M A

Here's a more realistic version of the Em7 - Cmaj7 from further above:

Em7 Cmaj7

T 3 0 0 3 0 0 3 2 0 0

A 2 0 0 3 2 0 0

B 0

P P M I M A A P I M A



**Video Reference:** Much more material is covered in our Fingerstyle 101 DVD. Please refer to Chapter 3 "Improvisation" on the DVD for additional information.

## Advanced Songs

### "Big Love" by Lindsey Buckingham

Warning: This is a hard one and I can't even play it 100% correctly, but it's a great challenge and should help you really speed up your fingerstyle guitar playing.

Ok. Here's the deal. This one is mega hard if you try to play it 100% correctly. However, I love the song and

have been working on it for years, and still don't quite have it down yet. In other words, I'm not expecting you to be able to play this perfectly. I still can't. Learning extra challenging songs like this will help you tremendously though. I have included the Intro/Basic Verse Theme, the Chorus, and the Solo. The solo is slowed down considerably because it's tough. I just want to show you the easiest way to play this song.

You'll need a capo on the 4th fret, but the song is in standard tuning.

Notes:

\* Pay attention the use of constant eighth notes on the low melody (bass notes) in the passages.

## Intro/Verse

In the video, there are a few slowed down picking versions and an 'easier' version that really strums the passage using accent notes for the actual picked out parts.

**Moderately** ♩ = 144

A5 A5/G A5/F

4.

A5/E

## Revisiting "Fire and Rain" (Intro) by James Taylor

As promised, we'll be revisiting a few passages that I have provided previously. The intro is much more difficult than you might imagine if you want to play it correctly.

This part is a continuation from our "Basic Songs" category.

## Intro Tablature

(We're still playing with a capo on the 3rd fret.)

It will help tremendously if you just look at the overall chord shapes being played.

[illegible]

Gmaj7sus2

T  
A (0) 0 0 3 2 2 3 0 0 3 0  
B 3 3 3 3 3 3 (3)

### PIMA Legend:

Capo on 3rd  $\text{♩} = 77$

A<sup>v</sup> G/D D A E

Gr I

T 5 5 3 3 4 0

A 4 6 6 6 4 0

B 0 0 0 0 0 0

sl sl H H P P P P

Gmaj7sus2

T 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

A (0) 0 0 0 0 0 0

B 3 P 3 3 3 3 3

P P P P P P P

## "Musette" by Johann Sebastian Bach

This one is a hard one to play! I've included the PIMA legend as it is a MUST USE to play correctly.

T 10 8 7 10 8 7 9 7

A 0 0 0 0 0 0 4 5 7 5 4 2 7 4 0

B 0 0 P P 0 0 P P 4 5 7 5 4 2 7 4 0

P P P P P P P

T 10 8 7 10 8 7 9 7

A 0 0 0 0 0 0 4 5 7 5 4 2 7 0

B 0 0 P P 0 0 P P 4 5 7 5 4 2 7 0

P P P P P P P

## PIMA Legend

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system consists of a treble clef staff with a melody and a bass line. The melody is written in G major (one sharp) and features a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bass line is written in G major and features a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second system consists of a treble clef staff with a melody and a bass line. The melody is written in G major and features a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The bass line is written in G major and features a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score includes fingerings (T, A, B) and tablature (P, M, I, 0, 4, 5, 7, 2, 7, 4, 0) for both systems.



**Video Reference:** Much more material is covered in our Fingerstyle 101 DVD. Please refer to Chapter 3 "Advanced Songs" on the DVD for additional information.