

Ear Training for Guitarists

Dynamic Methods for Integrating Ear-Voice-Guitar

Richard Boukas

www.boukas.com

© 2014

boukasr@newschool.edu

The main objective of all this work is to radically broaden your ear and voice connection to the guitar and prepare you to respond creatively in playing situations where perceptions and reactions must be made on the fly in fractions of a second. Also to unite your creative/intuitive core with the guitar.

Primary Goals

- master musical elements in the EAR by integrating VOICE and GUITAR in a dynamic environment
- leverage all guitar fingerboard knowledge, theory and practice routines to improve ear and voice
- restore balance of skill levels among EAR, VOICE and GUITAR (**EVG**) for optimal musical growth
- establish efficient and comprehensive **EVG** practicing routines (solo, duo)

Basic Considerations

- always **sing in the same octave** as you are playing
- **Voice-Guitar Sync**: delayed voice, exact sync, anticipated voice
- use **metronome** click or light to maintain practicing flow and efficiency

SOLO ROUTINES FOR FUNDAMENTAL MUSICAL ELEMENTS

- INTERVALS (melodic): omission, symmetrical transposition arrays, pedal exercises (asc. & desc.)
- INTERVALS (harmonic): omission, diatonic parallelism/strict parallelism (above and below Guitar)

• MODES & SCALES: IONIAN gradient (all melodic directions, minimum octave range);
play seventh voicing while singing each scale; apply to MELODIC MINOR modes, (asc. & desc.)
Alternate notes S & P (S 1-3-5-7 /P 2-4-6-8, P 1-3-5-7 /S 2-4-6-8; continuous scale or patterned.
Sing diatonic parallelisms (all 2nds, 3rds, 4ths, 5ths, 6ths, 7ths) with a given mode.

• TRIADS (arpeggios and chords): omission, gradient, inversion series, scale-tone series, cycle 5ths
all **inversions**: closed arpeggios and open (R-5-3, 3-R-5, 5-3-R) for all the above exercises
FINGER VOICING/SING into GUITAR SOUNDHOLE

• SEVENTHS (closed arpeggios and chords): omission (PLAY 3/SING 1), gradient, scale-tone series,
symmetrical transposition, cycle of fifths (all same inversion or with voiceleading)
apply all above to DROP 2 and DROP 3 voicings
SING/PLAY (S/P) all possible permutations of arpeggio/voicing): P/S unison, P chord/S all possible
permutations using all above routine types.

• VOICELEADING CHANNELS: II-V-I, turnarounds & variants, cycle of fifths (diatonic, non-diatonic),
voiceleading reductions of tunes (ex. All the Things You Are)
SING one voice channel through progression, repeat for other 3 VOICE CHANNELS (P 4 /S 1 x4 vcs)
Name the chord factor as you sing each channel: (ex: "5th > Root > 5th)
Channel omission (P 3/ S 1 x 4) using all seventh inversion pairs (R-2, 2-R, 1-3, 3-1).
Use Drop 2, Drop 3 voicings; closed voicings with one chord factor missing:
(ex: PLAY R-5-7, S missing 3rd in middle and continue; PLAY R-3-5, S missing 7 on top and continue)

P each chord as an arpeggio and S in unison (24 permutations); P each chord and S arpeggio.
Work all melodic directions including alternate (asc-desc) or (desc-asc.), and 24 permutations
Apply all voiceleading principles to EXTENSION VOICINGS derived from parent seventh chord forms

• CONTEXTUAL ACTIVITIES (use metronome when applicable)
S/P unison improvised lines over a given set of changes or progression.

- COMP changes and SCAT solo; PLAY walking bassline and scat solo (adapt bassline to other styles)
 - REFINING VOCAL AGILITY: scat solo with recording, matching all pitch, articulation and phrasing nuances
 - S/P unison transcribed solo with and without recording: or S first, then P or P/S
 - BACH CHORALE: S one voice, P another (all permutations)
- More advanced voice/guitar independence: S/P duets (classical, such as Bach Inventions)

DUO ROUTINES

- **CALL AND RESPONSE (C>R):** Apply to all above musical elements, contextual activities and routines

C/R Models: (GTR > GTR), (GTR > VOC), (VOC > GTR), (VOC > VOC/GTR unison or staggered V then G)
One VOICING, progression of voicings, omission of one voice channel (S or P missing note).

In GTR > VOC model, the responder can sing a voicing (or series of voicings) as arpeggios in any permutation (direct asc or desc. Is easiest). Try with voiceleading reductions of standards and formulaic progressions.

In GTR > GTR model for voicings identification, responder should aim to play all voicing notes together rather than broken. Bottom or top reference pitch can be given in advance, but better not to.

For more variety, make full use of voicings with combine open and fretted strings, or use detuned low E and other strings.

- Random series of notes or intervals (no clear pattern)
- Additive retention drill: build a melodic line one note at a time until responder retention is broken.
- Try all C/R models.

- **PARTITIONING:** Dividing one musical phrase or item between two musicians' voices in various ways.
Note: Some of these exercises can be done *with* or *without* guitar as reference instrument.

Modes & Scales, 7th arpeggios, extension arpeggios: Alternate notes, reverse note assignments

- S a given line in parallelism with G: diatonic (ex. parallel 3rds, ma or mi depending on location in scale)
- Strict parallelism: by fixed interval: standards, pop tunes, etc.
whole tone scale parallelisms (ma2, ma3, TT, mi6, mi7) or diminished scale (mi3, TT, ma6)
- **OMISSION:** P voicing with one note missing. State specific chord symbol including all extension content, responder P or S missing note, then whole voicing. Use voicings with or without bass note.
- **BACH CHORALE:** Each musician P/S two of the four possible voices simultaneously for complete renditions. Try all permutations and voice assignments, using falsetto to sing upper parts at concert pitch.

Examples Used: #156: Seelenbräutigam, Jesu, Gottes Lamm; #157 Sei gegrüßet, Jesu gütig

ACCURACY MONITORING

The best accuracy monitoring is self-monitoring, although for more difficult exercises, vocal intonation discrepancies can easily go unnoticed in either a SOLO or DUO context.

It's best to **record your sessions and listen with fresh ears sometime shortly after the session.**

Even better, if there is a guitarist (or other musician) whose ears you think are sharper than yours, play it for them and ask them to point out intonation issues and other errors.