

Now add this slippery E Major scale (E F# G# A B C# D#) legato fill to the chords in the previous example.

Example 5g

T
A
B

F#m7 G#m7#5 C#m7 Badd11

T
A
B

F#m7 G#m7#5 A/B B13b9 Emaj7

T
A
B

Example 5h is reminiscent of the first Neo-Soul guitar part Simon ever heard. He was instantly hooked on the complex, modern sounding chord shapes and melodic fills, and we're sure you will be too!

This example is in the key of E Minor and uses partial chord fragments that are predominantly based around the top four strings. This is a common strategy in Neo-Soul and jazz as it leaves space for a bassline.

Example 5h

The image shows two sets of guitar tabs. The top set consists of four measures. The first measure is labeled **Em11** and features a bass note followed by a chord. The second measure is labeled **Em9** and shows a complex chord with multiple notes. The third measure is labeled **G⁶/₉** and the fourth is labeled **D⁶/₉**. The bottom set consists of three measures. The first measure is labeled **Am9** and shows a bass note followed by a chord. The second measure is labeled **B7#5#9** and shows a bass note followed by a chord. The third measure is labeled **B7#5#9** and shows a bass note followed by a chord.

Here is a Gospel-style chord progression that includes slash chords and ends with a smooth D Major scale (D E F# G A B C#) run. If you would like more information on slash chords check out Simon's lesson in the link below.

<https://www.fundamental-changes.com/Major-slash-chords-video-guitar-lesson/>

Example 5i

The image shows a set of guitar tabs for a progression of chords. The chords are labeled as follows: **Em7 D/F#**, **Em/G**, **G#dim7**, **D/A**, **Bbdim**, and **Bm7**. The tabs include fingerings and picking patterns.

Em7 D/E G/A A13 \flat 9 Dmaj7

The musical notation shows a progression of chords: Em7, D/E, G/A, A13 \flat 9, and Dmaj7. The guitar tablature below shows the strings T (Top), A, and B. Fingerings are indicated above the strings: 8, 7, 3; 2, 3, 5; 7, 6, 5; (7), (6), (5); and 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 11, 9, 7, 9.

Quartal voicings (chords built entirely from 4ths) are very popular in Neo-Soul. The G#m11 chord at the start of bar one and the E6/9 shape at the start of bar two are the most common quartal chord shapes used in this genre. This gives you a voicing to use from the A string root and the D string root.

Example 5j

G#m11 C#m9 E6/9 D#m7 \sharp 5 Emaj7

The musical notation shows a progression of chords: G#m11, C#m9, E6/9, D#m7 \sharp 5, and Emaj7. The guitar tablature shows the strings T, A, and B. Fingerings are indicated: 12, 14, 11, 14, 11; 9, 11, 10, 9, 12; 7, 6, 6; 7, 6, 9, 8, 9; and 7, 6, 9, 8, 9.

Example 5k demonstrates some gorgeous chord voicings based predominantly around a Dmaj7 vamp. The addition of the diminished chords in bar six is another popular chordal trick used in Neo-Soul, as they add a sense of dissonance, but also act as passing chords between the Dmaj7 and the Bm7.

Example 5k

Dmaj7 E6/9 D6/9 Dmaj9 Dmaj7

The musical notation shows a progression of chords: Dmaj7, E6/9, D6/9, Dmaj9, and Dmaj7. The guitar tablature shows the strings T, A, and B. Fingerings are indicated: 5, 7, 9; 10, 12, 10, 7, 9; 5, 7, 9; 5, 7, 9; and 5, 7, 9.

D⁶/₉ Aadd9 Dmaj7 Dmaj7 Gdim A_bdim

T A B T A B T A B

Bm9 Em9 A13

T A B T A B T A B

Example 5l includes one of our favourite chord tricks in this whole book. The slide using the Cmaj9 chord in bar one is a technique we include frequently in our compositions. Make sure you steal this one! This chord sequence is in the key of C Major and has an RnB vibe reminiscent of Kerry “2 Smooth” Marshall, Spanky Alford and Isaiah Sharkey.

Example 5l

Fmaj7 Cmaj9 Dm7 Cmaj7

T A B T A B T A B T A B

Simon first heard these Gospel style chord voicings with a high E pedal note played by incredible acoustic guitarist Tommy Emmanuel. In Example 5m, try to let the high E note ring out as clearly as possible as you change through each shape.

Example 5m

Musical score for Example 5m showing four bars of guitar tablature. The chords are E6, B, G#7, C#m9, Amaj7, G#m7, F#m7, and Eadd9. The tablature shows fingerings and picking patterns.

This example is in the key of B Minor and packs many of the techniques shown in this book into four bars, including common Neo-Soul chord voicings, legato techniques and double-stops. The more grooves like this you learn by heart the better. Pick your favourites and spend extra time committing them to memory.

Practise each chord change in Example 5n individually and build this example up slowly, especially if these chord shapes are new to you.

Example 5n

Musical score for Example 5n showing four bars of guitar tablature. The chords are Dmaj7, E6/9, D6/9, Dmaj9, Em7, D#dim7, A#dim7b13, and Bm11. The tablature shows fingerings and picking patterns.

When practising Example 5o, play the legato lines separately to the chords before joining them together. Aim to achieve a “flowing” sound when playing this example. Imagine creating the sound of a cascading waterfall when completing the E Major scale (E F# G# A B C# D#) hammer-ons and pull-offs.

Example 5o

The musical score shows a guitar part with three chords: Emaj7, Amaj7, and Caug. The guitar tab below the staff indicates fingerings and picking patterns. The chords are played in a repeating sequence.

The groove in Example 5p was taken from an Instagram video Simon performed.

<http://bit.ly/2yewpLi>

This longer groove is in the key of G Minor and centres around the three-chord progression of Ebmaj9, Bbmaj9 and Gm11. The G Minor Pentatonic scale (G Bb C D F) provides the main notes for the single-note and double-stop licks you see throughout, but there are some occasional passing notes for extra colour.

Example 5p

The musical score shows a guitar part with three chords: Ebmaj9, Bbmaj9, and Gm11. It includes a 'P.M.' (Post-Measure) section indicated by a dashed line. The guitar tab below the staff indicates fingerings and picking patterns. The chords are played in a repeating sequence.

The continuation of the musical score shows the same three chords: Ebmaj9, Bbmaj9, and Gm11. It includes another 'P.M.' (Post-Measure) section indicated by a dashed line. The guitar tab below the staff indicates fingerings and picking patterns. The chords are played in a repeating sequence.

E♭maj9 B♭maj9 Gm11

T 5-7 7-5 3 | 6 1 (1) 3-6 8 8 10 13-15
A 5 3 (3) 3-6 8 8 11 13-15
B 6 5 (3)

E♭maj9 B♭maj9 Gm7(#5)

T 5-7 5 3 | 6 11 (10) 10 11 10 7-5 3 5 3 5-3 1 3-1
A 5 (10) 13 (10) 10 13 10 7-5 3 5 3 5-3 1 3-1
B 6 5 (10) 10 13 10 13 10 13 10 13 10 13 10 13 10 13

P.M. -----

Often a Neo-Soul chordal part will include a melodic phrase which is generally played on the B and high E strings. Check out how this is achieved in the key of Eb Major in Example 5q.

With this example you may find it easier to learn the chord shapes first, then the melody lines on the B and E strings separately. Only add them together when you are comfortable with both parts.

Example 5q

Gm9 B♭⁶/₉ Gm11 F⁶/₉ Gm9 Dm11 E♭maj7

T 15-17 15 | 13-15 13 | 11-13 10 13 8-10 8 | 3-5 3 | 6-8 5 | 3-5 3 3-3 6
A 15 15 | 13 12 | 10 10 | 8 7 | 3 3 | 5 5 | 3 5 3 3
B 15 15 | 13 12 | 10 10 | 8 7 | 3 3 | 5 5 | 3 5 3 3

There are some beautiful voicings included in Example 5r. The Major 7 voicings in bars two and three, and the 13b9 voicing at the end of bar five are well worth adding to your chord arsenal.

Example 5r

Emaj9

Bmaj7

Emaj7

C#m11

E/F#

F#13b9

This example is one of our favourite grooves in this chapter. It is based around the key of B Minor and for most of the groove uses the B Minor Pentatonic scale (B D E F# A). In bar two, the groove briefly moves into A Minor, where the A Blues scale (A C D Eb E G) is used for a popular descending Neo-Soul Pattern. The lick ends in bar four with an F# Altered scale (F# G A Bb C D E) run. This lick is ultra-hip and modern sounding and will definitely impress your friends!

We recommend that you play this example using hybrid-picking (pick and fingers).

Example 5s

Bm11

F⁶/9

Am9

Gmaj7 Cadd9 F#7#9

When we were studying and preparing the content for this book, we spent time digging deep into jazz chord voicings as well as traditional Neo-Soul artists. This idea came from Barry Galbraith, who is arguably one of the greatest jazz guitarists who ever lived, yet quite unknown by the majority of guitarists. We highly recommend you check out his book, *Guitar Comping*, but bear in mind that it is notation only and has no tab.

Example 5t is in the key of E Major and uses a complex set of altered dominant chords which provide a lot of tension in the first two bars, before resolving to the Emaj9 in bar three. Make sure you fully fret the barre chord shape seen in bar four and hold it down as you complete the legato patterns.

Example 5t

G#7#5#9 B13b9 B7#5#9 D13b9

Emaj9

Sometimes, the chord shapes used in Neo-Soul sound great using an arpeggio pattern, as demonstrated in Example 5u, but don't work so well when played with a strumming pattern. When you are writing your own Neo-Soul grooves, experiment with both arpeggios and strumming (or a combination of both) and see which sounds best. This groove is in the key of G# Minor.

Example 5u

The music consists of three staves of guitar sheet music. The top staff starts with a G[#]m9 chord, followed by an Emaj9 chord, and then an F[#]sus4 chord. The middle staff starts with an F[#] chord, followed by an Amaj13 chord, and then a G[#]m9 chord. The bottom staff starts with a C[#]m11 chord, followed by a D[#]m7 chord. Each staff includes a tablature below it with fingerings.

Example 5v is in the key of D Minor and illustrates the technique of palm muting barre chords. In other genres such as rock it is quite common to palm mute single notes, but Neo-Soul takes that a stage further and applies it to multi-string chords. Experiment with this example first, but then go back over the grooves featured in this chapter and see if adding in palm mutes brings a different flavour to them.

Example 5v

The music consists of one staff of guitar sheet music. It shows four chords: A7, Dm7, Gdim7, and B_b/C. The tablature below shows palm muting (P.M.) indicated by a dashed line and arrows pointing up the strings.

A7 Dm7 Gdim7 B_b/C

P.M. -----

T A B

By now it should be apparent that the combination of chords and fills is a large part of the Neo-Soul sound. One thing to bear in mind is that the fills you use between the chords should never detract from the underlying groove. To build your discipline in this area, make sure you work with a metronome to play all the examples in this book, and pay close attention to getting the changes tight and “in the pocket”.

Example 5w is in the key of E Major and was inspired by watching several Todd Pritchard videos. As well as using the examples featured in this book we recommend following the artists we have mentioned on Instagram and absorbing as many ideas as you can from them.

Example 5w

Emaj7 G#7#5b9 C#m7 F#m11

F#m7 F7#9 F#m7 Cdimb13 C#m7 A/B

T A B

Quartet guitar playing (a sub-genre of Gospel music) is so closely linked to Neo-Soul that we wanted to include a longer groove in this style. This piece is in the key of E and uses slash chords with a descending bassline pattern. Watch Simon play it on the video link below.

<https://www.fundamental-changes.com/neo-soul-videos/>

Example 5x – Better In Fours

1

V
0
(0)

3

7
9
7
7
5
4-3
6
5-4
6
5-4
9

5

9
8
7
6
5-4
2
4
2-1
2
(0)
1
0
2
9

V
0
(0)

7

9
8
7
6
5-4
2
4
4-2
0
2
0-1
2
2

9

12
12
12
12
12
12
12
12
14
14
12
13
9

12
14
12
14
14
12
13
9

V₂

11

T
A
B

9 8 7 6 5 4
11 10 9 7 6 5
6 5 4
6 5 5 4
6 5 5 4
6 5 5 4

12

14 12
14 14 12 13
14 14

$\frac{1}{2}$

13

T
A
B

8 9 X X
6 7 X X
5 6 X X X X
5

14 12
14 14 12 13

$\frac{1}{2}$

15

T
A
B

9 9 8 9
9 9 8 9
10 9 9
11 12

16

14 12
14 14 12 13
14 14

$\frac{1}{2}$

17

T
A
B

10 8 9 8 7 10 7 8 9 7
9 8 7 9
6 7 6 9 5 6 9 (9)

18

Chapter Six – Extended Techniques

Artist Spotlight: Justus West

So far we've covered many of the different techniques that contribute to the Neo-Soul sound, but this chapter will take your playing to a whole new level! The extended techniques in this chapter include a more in-depth look at the “chord quake”, hammer-ons from nowhere, chromatic approach notes, tapping, natural harmonics, artificial harmonics and much more. Don't worry, each technique is demonstrated in a video, as well as notated below. Make sure you watch each video as you progress through the techniques. (<https://www.fundamental-changes.com/neo-soul-videos/>)

Before you dive in, watch this Justus West Instagram video below. We guarantee you will be blown away by some of the playing featured here.

<http://bit.ly/2QNdj5x>

Example 6a shows the famous chord quake first mentioned in Chapter Five. The speedy slides are to be executed while holding down the chord shapes written above the music. Play the first chord tone, then slide down one fret and back up to the chord tone. Play the next chord tone, allowing the first string you played to continue to ring, and so on. You should hear a gentle cascading effect. Make sure to play this as cleanly as possible before you speed up. If this technique is new to you, we recommend you spend some time practising each bar individually before combining them into this four-bar example.

Example 6a

Cmaj9

Fmaj9

let ring

T A B

3-2-3 2-1-2 4-3-4 8-7-8 7-6-7 9-8-9 8

G9

Cmaj7

let ring

T A B

10-9-10 9-8-9 10-9-10 10-9-10 9-8-9 8-7-8 7

Until now, we have demonstrated the chord quake technique by picking the individual notes of a larger chord voicing. Example 6b demonstrates how to apply it using double stops around the E Major Scale (E F# G# A B C# D#). This example will work particularly well over an Emaj7 or Emaj9 chord.

Example 6b

The musical notation shows a guitar lick in Emaj7. The first measure consists of three eighth-note chords. The second measure features a 'let ring' instruction above a sixteenth-note chord. The third measure shows a sixteenth-note chord followed by a melodic line. The bass line below is labeled T-A-B.

Now let's put the chord quake into a more musical context by adding it into a longer line based around the C Major scale (C D E F G A B). Make sure you hold down the Cmaj7 shape in bar two when completing the chord quake.

Example 6c

The musical notation shows a guitar lick starting with a eighth-note chord. The second measure features a sixteenth-note chord followed by a 'let ring' instruction. The third measure shows a sixteenth-note chord followed by a melodic line. The bass line below is labeled T-A-B.

Example 6d demonstrates a slide-style vibrato that was made famous by the rock fusion master Greg Howe. He isn't known for playing Neo-Soul, but is heavily associated with this type of vibrato and the technique is often used by Neo-Soul guitar players. The goal is to slide the fingers of the fretting hand outside of the fret (usually up) then return to pitch. Don't move the fingers around within a fret to create the vibrato, instead slide up, out of the fret, and back down to pitch. Do this quickly, multiple times, to create a heavier vibrato. To see this technique in action, watch the video below.

Example 6d illustrates this technique with a lick built around the A Blues scale (A C D Eb E G). This lick will work well over an Am7 or Am9 chord.

<https://www.fundamental-changes.com/neo-soul-videos/>

Example 6d

Musical notation for Example 6d. The top staff shows a melodic line with slurs and grace notes. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fingerings: T (thumb), A (index), and B (middle). The fingerings indicate a sequence of notes: 10, 8, 10, 8-10, 10-12, 8(9), 10, 9, 8, 10, 7(8), 5.

We can take the Greg Howe vibrato idea one step further and use it with double-stops. Example 6e is a G# Minor Pentatonic scale (G# B C# D# F#) phrase built entirely out of double-stops. It uses hammer-ons, slides and the Greg Howe vibrato to give it the Neo-Soul sound. This lick works well over a Gm7 or Gm9 chord.

Listen to the audio of the next example, but feel free to experiment with the length and width of your own vibrato. It sounds different when you slide between the 4th and 5th fret once (subtle vibrato), compared to sliding between the 4th and 6th fret multiple times (heavy vibrato). You can slide even further, if that's the sound you prefer!

Example 6e

Musical notation for Example 6e. The top staff shows a melodic line with double-stops and vibrato markings. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fingerings: T (thumb), A (index), and B (middle). The fingerings indicate a sequence of notes: 4, 6, 4, 6, 4, 6, 6, 4, 4, 6, 6, 4, 6, 9, 8, 6(8), 4, 4, 4.

Example 6f is a fun chord progression in D Major that incorporates the use of an augmented chord in bar one. This adds to the tension before resolving to the Bm9 chord in bar two. In this example, the chord quake technique is applied to the full chord shape of a C#dim7 (at the end of bar two).

Example 6f

The musical notation shows four chords: Dmaj7, F#aug, F#7, and Bm9, followed by a C#dim7 chord with a trill. The guitar tab below shows the fretting and picking for each chord. A note 'let ring' is indicated above the first measure.

The next technique we'll look at is a more advanced take on Chapter Two's RnB chord tricks. It is a common Neo-Soul approach to run down a chord shape. Example 6g demonstrates this approach around a Cmaj7 chord voicing. Aim to pick each note clearly and use alternate picking to play this exercise.

Example 6g

The musical notation shows a Cmaj7 chord with a hammer-on from nowhere. The guitar tab below shows the fretting and picking for the lick, with a note 'let ring' indicated above the first measure.

Example 6h is predominantly based around the C Major Pentatonic scale (C D E G A) and introduces the popular legato technique of hammer-ons from nowhere.

Hammer-ons and pull-offs will help you achieve greater speed, especially "hammer-ons from nowhere" which will make your licks sound very fluent. The fretting hand does almost all of the work in this example. When changing strings, hammer your finger down without picking and aim to make all the notes the same volume. End the lick with a chord quake using the Cmaj9 chord. Play this lick freely, because fluency is key here.

Example 6h

Guitar tablature for Example 6h in C major 9 chord. The top staff shows a melodic line with grace notes and slurs. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fretting hand positions on the guitar neck. The tab includes fingerings (e.g., 3, T) and dynamic markings like 'let ring'.

Example 6i demonstrates a chord progression in the key of D Major that relies heavily on the use of fretting hand legato patterns to create its fluid sound. Although it may look daunting at first, bar two will feel familiar as you have already learnt the pattern in Example 6g, though now it is played in D Major instead of C Major.

Example 6i

Guitar tablature for Example 6i showing three chords: Asus4, A/B, and Esus4. The top staff shows the chords with dots indicating string selection. The bottom staff shows the fretting hand positions with fingerings like 17, 14, etc., and a 'let ring' instruction.

Guitar tablature for Example 6j showing a Dmaj7 chord. The top staff shows the chord with dots indicating string selection. The bottom staff shows the fretting hand positions with fingerings like 9, 7, 10, etc., and a 'let ring' instruction.

Example 6j shows a cool legato line based around the C Major Scale. The first half of bar one demonstrates a legato sequence based on an Em11 chord. The second half of the bar ascends with a mixture of an Fmaj7 arpeggio (F A C E) and Cmaj7 arpeggio (C E G B) before resolving to the Cmaj7 voicing on the top four strings.

Example 6j

Em11

Cmaj7

let ring

TAB notation below:

T	7	8	10	8	9	7	9	7	10	7	8	12	9	12	13	12	15	19	19
A	7	7	7	7	9	7	10	7	10	7	8	12	10	9	12	13	12	15	17
B	7	7	7	7	7	7	10	7	7	8	12	10	9	12	10	9	12	10	17

The following two examples use chromatic approach notes with double-stop lines. Start a semitone below the chord tones, slide into them and re-pick the notes. Palm mute these passages to control the volume of the approach notes and let the last notes ring out to reinforce the key. If you are new to playing this style of double-stop, we recommend using all downstrokes.

Example 6k

E

P.M.

TAB notation below:

T	8	9	8	9	8	9	10	11	11	12	12	12	14	15	15	16	16	17
A	10	11	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	12	12	14	15	15	16	16	17
B																		

Example 6l shows a palm muted double-stop pattern on multiple strings. Although the end of the bar resolves beautifully to D Major, the rest of the bar also fits well over an E Major or E7 chord.

Example 6l

D

P.M.

TAB notation below:

T	7	8	9	7	8	9	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11			
A	5	6	7	9	10	11	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11			
B																	

Although tapping is a technique not closely associated with Neo-Soul, it can create some very interesting sounds and enables us to include notes in our lines that would otherwise be out of reach. Example 6m holds down an E Major barre chord using the CAGED E shape at the 12th fret, while executing a tap across all strings on the 16th fret. All of the sound is created by the picking hand, while the fretting hand holds the chord. Below is a link to a video giving a detailed description of this tapping technique.

<https://www.fundamental-changes.com/neo-soul-videos/>

Example 6m

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, has a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. It shows a CAGED E shape at the 12th fret with a barre. Tapping is indicated by 'T' above the notes and '3' below them, indicating a three-note tap. The bottom staff is in bass clef and has 'T' and 'A' labels. Fret numbers 16, 14, 13, and 12 are marked along the strings. The notation continues for several measures.

The next lick uses more than one finger of the picking hand. For most people it will be easiest to use the middle and ring fingers, especially if you are holding a pick, but test out other finger combinations (index and middle, index and ring, middle and pinky) to see what works best for you. The idea of the lick remains the same. Hold down an E Major barre chord on the 12th fret while tapping with the picking hand, but now tap two strings simultaneously.

Example 6n

The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of E major (no sharps or flats) and a time signature of 4/4. It features sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of E major and a time signature of 4/4. It shows sixteenth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes, corresponding to the top staff.

When the use of both hands on the fretboard is comfortable for you, move on to Example 6o to apply this technique in a more musical context. This example has a slightly swung groove and is in the key of E Major, so each mini-lick can be played over an Emaj7 or an Emaj9 chord. Note the use of the 6/4 time signature too. Listen to how Kristof plays this example on the audio track to get the feel of the 6/4 time before you play it.

Example 6o

The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of E major and a time signature of 6/4. It features eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of E major and a time signature of 6/4. It shows eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes, corresponding to the top staff. A 'let ring' instruction is present above the top staff.

The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of E major and a time signature of 6/4. It features eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of E major and a time signature of 6/4. It shows eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes, corresponding to the top staff. A 'let ring' instruction is present above the top staff.

The notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of E major and a time signature of 6/4. It features eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of E major and a time signature of 6/4. It shows eighth-note patterns with slurs and grace notes, corresponding to the top staff. A 'let ring' instruction is present above the top staff.

Natural harmonics are available all over the fretboard. Example 6p illustrates some ideas of how to use them with a chord progression in the key of G Major.

For more information on natural harmonics check out Rob Thorpe's fantastic article on harmonics below.

<https://www.fundamental-changes.com/natural-harmonics-part-2/>

The last beat of bar three is a “behind the nut bend”. To complete this bend, push down on the string behind the nut to raise the harmonic by a semitone.

Example 6p

Natural harmonics are beautiful, but their use can be a little limited. The answer to this limitation is provided by artificial harmonics. Make sure you watch the video for a detailed explanation of how to create artificial harmonics, as there is more than one way to do so.

The easiest way for pick users to execute artificial harmonics is to hold the pick between the thumb and middle finger. Fingerpickers should use the nail of the thumb of the picking hand.

Point to twelve frets above the fretted note with the index finger of the picking hand and lightly touch the string while you pluck it with the pick or thumb. For example, fret the 7th fret on the G string and lightly touch the 19th fret of the same string with the index finger of the picking hand, as you point to the metal of the fret. Now pick or pluck behind the index finger. The result should be a sound similar to a natural harmonic.

Work on picking the artificial harmonic cleanly before continuing with Example 6q. This example introduces these sweet sounding harmonics with a progression using the E Major scale. Pay extra attention to the last bar, as the harmonics are played seven frets above the fretted notes this time, to create a different interval.

Example 6q

Musical score for Example 6q. The score consists of two staves. The top staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of four sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. It features three chords: Emaj7, E6, and Amaj7. The bottom staff shows a bass clef, a key signature of four sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. It features a bass line with notes labeled AH (Artificial Harmonic) at various positions. The tablature below the staff shows fingerings and string numbers (T, A, B) for each note.

Example 6r demonstrates a different execution of artificial harmonics. The “slap tap” means that you have to slap or hit the fret twelve frets above the fretted note (or notes in this example). This is also explained in detail in the included video.

This example is in the key of E Major and Kristof recorded it at 70 beats per minute. You can experiment with different tempos with all the licks in this book as you become comfortable playing them.

Example 6r

Musical score for Example 6r. The score consists of two staves. The top staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of four sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. It features five chords: E, G#m7, A6, A/B, and B7b9. The bottom staff shows a bass clef, a key signature of four sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. It features a bass line with notes labeled AH (Artificial Harmonic) at various positions. The tablature below the staff shows fingerings and string numbers (T, A, B) for each note.

The next five examples combine the above techniques with some interesting chord voicings. Example 6s is in the key of G Major and uses the G Major Pentatonic scale (G A B D E) with some chromaticism to create a modern sounding Neo-Soul phrase. We recommend practising the chord shapes shown in this example on their own before playing through the full example.

Example 6s

Gsus2

let ring

T A B

3 0 3
3 5 7 5 5 7 9 7 8

D/F **E♭dim7** **B7sus4**

let ring

T A B

(8) 7 7 8 7 9 8 7 7 7 5 7 7 8 9 7

Em7

let ring

T A B

7 7 9 7 8 7 .

Example 6t is a mixture of tapping and chord voicings that revolve around the key of D Major. Use two fingers of the fretting hand to tap frets seventeen and nineteen on the high E string. You can also slide from the seventeenth to nineteenth fret and back if you prefer that sound. The fluidity that these extended techniques can create is a large part of the complex Neo-Soul sound. To see this technique in action check out the video below.

<http://bit.ly/2Om5K9I>

Example 6t

D

Dadd11 Bm11 A7 Gm

Dadd⁹/11

There are two main ways to play fast on the guitar: playing in a rigid, rhythmic pattern as fast as you can, or cramming as many notes as possible into a bar and making sure you land on a specific beat. Example 6u demonstrates the second way of playing fast by cramming a lot of notes into a beat and a half. Make sure you land on beat three when completing this example.

This example uses the C Major Scale (C D E F G A B) and works well over a CMaj7 or a CMaj9 chord.

Example 6u

Example 6v combines legato, hammer-ons from nowhere, triple-stops and harmonics in the key of C Major (C D E F G A B C). As with a lot of Neo-Soul licks and phrases, bar three is meant to be played loosely, so don't worry about being completely on top of the click when performing this example.

Example 6v

The last example of this chapter is the most advanced. It seeks to combine many of the different techniques we've explored without sacrificing musicality. This lick is based around F Major and uses the F Major scale (F G A Bb C D E) in bars one and two, with some added chromatic passing notes. Bar three combines a Bbmaj7 (Bb D F A) and Bbm (Bb Db F) arpeggio to create the IVmaj to IVm cadence. The example ends with a gorgeous ascending F Major double-stop pattern.

Make sure you listen to the audio example, as the second time it is played in free time. Experiment with this and make each note sound as clean as possible.

Example 6w

Fmaj7

TAB

8 10 12 13 12 10 13 10 12 10 12 10 12 14 13 15 13

B♭maj7

TAB

(13) 12 13 14 12 (12) 11 10 12 11 10 12 10 8 10 8 6 7 6

B♭m

TAB

(6) (7) 6 5 8 7 8 6 6 6 8 9 8 6 8

let ring ----- 4

Fadd9

TAB

(8) 6 9 6 8 6 8 6 7 8 7 5 8

let ring ----- 4

AH ----- 4

Fadd9

T 5
A 8
B 5
7
8

3

8 12

10 12

10 9

11

P.M.

F

T 10
A 9
B 12

P.M.

9 10 10 9 10 11 12 13 14 13

Chapter Seven – Mark Lettieri’s “Coastin”

It's an honour to be able to include a chapter about one of our personal guitar heroes. Mark Lettieri is one of the most innovative, musical, and technical players around and included in this book are two original pieces written by Mark for you to learn.

Coastin' is in the key of D Major (D E F# G A B C#) and has a relaxed funk groove. It consists of jazz chord voicings, legato fills, and signature Lettieri techniques such as the use of the whammy bar. Read the following tips before tackling this piece and be sure to watch the full video below.

<https://www.fundamental-changes.com/neo-soul-videos/>

The track starts out with Major 7 and Minor 7 chords with a syncopated groove in the key of D.

Mark uses the whammy bar a lot at the beginning of *Coastin'*. For example in bar three, play the Bm7add9 chord and slide the shape up a tone to play C#m7add9. When you have completed the slide, press the whammy bar down a full tone before releasing it to return to pitch. Mark uses this idea often and it's a fun technique to add to your Neo-Soul playing.

Chord voicings that use only the top three or four strings are used frequently in Neo-Soul, as demonstrated in this track. Practise these with palm mutes and also with the notes ringing out.

The use of open strings is very popular in gospel-style music. Bars fourteen and seventeen have chord shapes that include the open B and high E strings.

Mark was kind enough to also bounce out a backing track version of this piece, so you can play along to exactly the same thing he recorded the track to!

As well as the pieces featured in this book, make sure you check out Mark's album *Spark and Echo* for some of the grooviest and tastiest guitar playing around.

Enjoy!

Coastin' - Full Piece

Gmaj7 F#m7 **Dmaj7 C#m7** **Emaj7 D#m7** **Dmaj7** **Bm7add11**

mf

TAB:

T	12	10	9	7	5	9	7	6	5	5	7	5	5	7	6	7	9	6	7	9	6	7
A	11	9	6	4	8	6	9	8	7	6	5	7	5	7	6	7	9	6	7	9	6	7
B	12	11	7	6	5	4	9	8	7	6	5	7	5	7	6	7	9	6	7	9	6	7

wave *wave* *wave* *wave* *wave* *let ring* -----

C#m7add11 **Bb(#5#9)**

w/bar

let ring -----

TAB:

T	5	5	(5)	7	5	7	6	7	5	7	9	6	7	8	9	10
A	(5)	(5)	(7)	9	(9)	11	6	7	6	7	7	6	7	8	9	10
B	(9)	(9)	(11)													

wave *wave* *wave* *wave* *wave* *wave*

Bb7#5 **Em9** **A7#5**

TAB:

T	6	7	7	6	7	9	5	7	5	6	6	5	6	6	5	6	6	5	6	6	5
A	7	7	6	6	7	9	5	7	5	6	6	5	6	6	5	6	6	5	6	6	5
B	6	6	5	5	6	7	5	7	5	6	6	5	6	6	5	6	6	5	6	6	5

wave *wave* *wave* *wave* *wave* *wave*

A/C# w/bar **Cdim7**

let ring -----

TAB:

T	5	1	2	3	4	2	4	7	5	2	4	7	5	2	4	7	5	2	4	7	5
A	4			3	4	2	(2)	5	(4)	3	6	4	5	3	6	4	5	3	6	4	5
B																					

wave *wave* *wave* *wave* *wave* *wave*

C#m7 **B** **Amaj7** **G#(#5#9)**

T 9 11 9 7 9 7 4 4 5 7 5 | { 7 5 | 7 5 | 4 5 4 4 4 | 6 4 6 4 6 | 4 4 4 4 6 | 4 4 4 4 6 |

C#m/E **\~~~~~**

T 6 6 11 11 11 9 11 9 | 0 7 8 9 0 7 7 7 8 9 7 7 4 4 4 4 | 7 7 9 8 9 8 7 7 4 4 4 4 | 7 7 9 8 9 8 7 7 4 4 4 4 |

Badd11 **w/bar**

C#m **\~~~~~**

T 5 6 4 6 4 4 6 4 2 4 2 | 14 0 0 2 2 0 0 4 4 0 0 | 0 0 2 2 0 0 4 4 0 0 | 0 0 2 2 0 0 4 4 0 0 |

F#m7add11

G#m7#5

G#m

T 6 6 6 0 4 4 1 2 4 6 4 5 4 2 2 | 16 4 4 6 4 5 4 2 2 | 4 4 6 4 5 4 2 2 | 4 4 6 4 5 4 2 2 |

D7(add11 /₁₃)

F#m9

B7#5

Em9

E♭m7

A♭m7

let ring -----4

let ring -----4

E♭m

E♭m

E♭m

27

TAB

5—6 6 6 6
6—7 7 7 7
7—8 8 8 8 13 9 9 11 9
5—6 6 6 6
6—7 7 7 7
7—8 8 8 8 9 11 9 9 9
9 11 11 11 11

28

29

TAB

5—6 6 6 6
6—7 7 7 7
7—8 8 8 8 13 9 9 11 9
5—6 6 6 6
6—7 7 7 7
7—8 8 8 8 10 10 10
9 11 11 9 9
11 11 11 11

30

31

TAB

5—6 6 6 6
6—7 7 7 7
7—8 8 8 8 13 9 9 11 9
5—6 6 6 6
6—7 7 7 7
7—8 8 8 8 10 10 10
9 11 11 9 9
11 11 11 11

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Chapter Eight – Kristof Neyens’s “Fat Rat”

Fat Rat uses the B Major scale (B C# D# E F# G# A#) and includes some interesting chord voicings, single note legato lines, double-stops, artificial harmonics, and many other techniques featured in this book. The piece was written to highlight the feel of the “push and pull” of the beat that is so prominent in Neo-Soul. *Fat Rat* shows that tightness isn’t always necessary to capture the Neo-Soul vibe. Make sure you watch the full video to get the feel and vibe right.

<https://www.fundamental-changes.com/neo-soul-videos/>

Before playing *Fat Rat*, read the tips below:

Bar two features the combination of a single note line, outlining a Bmaj9 (B D# F# A# C#) arpeggio, with a double-stop line. Aim to play this lick as smoothly and cleanly as possible before you build up speed. Smoothness is key throughout this entire piece.

Have a look at the verse of this piece. The harmonic functions are I^{maj}7 (Bmaj7), bVII^{maj}7 (Amaj7), V^{Im}7 (G#m7), V7sus (F#7sus) and V7 (F#7). On the Amaj7 there is a single note line that ends with the Greg Howe-style vibrato we touched upon in Chapter Six.

The chorus moves from E to D#7 to G#m7. The last lick includes artificial harmonics. The harmonics are played with the pick and index finger of the picking hand, while the ring finger of the picking hand plucks the first of the fretted notes. This is followed by a pull-off by the fretting hand.

If you have worked consecutively through this book you will find the full pieces much easier to master!

To see more of Kristof’s playing be sure to check out his hugely popular Instagram account below.

<https://www.instagram.com/kristofneyensguitar/?hl=en>

Fat Rat - Full Piece

Free time

Bmaj7

let ring

T A B

7 8 8
8 7

2

T A B

6 7 11 9 8 11 8 9 11 13 11 12 14 11 13 11 14 13 11

3

T A B

13 14 13 16 13 13 15 13 13 11 11 13 11 11 9

A

Am

E/G#

C#m/E

F#7

T A B

9 11 12 9 10 12 9 11 (11) 9 6 8 6 4 4 6 2 3

(=)

Bmaj7 Amaj7 G#m7 F#7sus F#7

T
A
B

2 4 2
3 1
2
2 4 2 4 6 2 3 ~ 2 3
0 1 2
0
4 4 4 4 3 4 2 4 3
4 4 4 4 2 4 2 4
2 2 2 2

Bmaj7 Amaj7 G#m7 F#7sus F#7

T
A
B

2 4 2
3 1
2
2 4 2 4 6 2 3 ~ 2 3
0 1 2
0
4 4 4 4 3 4 2 4 3
4 4 4 4 2 4 2 4
2 2 2 2

Bmaj7 Amaj7 G#m7 F#7sus F#7

T
A
B

2 4 1 2
3 1
2
2 4 2 4 6 2 3 ~ 2 3
0 1 2
0
4 4 4 4 3 4 2 4 3
4 4 4 4 2 4 2 4
2 2 2 2

Bmaj7 Amaj7 G#m7 F#7 F7

T
A
B

2 4 2
3 1
2
2 4 2 4 6 2 3 ~ 2 3
0 1 2
0
4 4 4 4 3 4 2 4 3
4 4 4 4 2 4 2 4
2 2 2 2

E D[#]7 G[#]m7

let ring ----- | AH----- AH

T A B 4 6 4 6 5 6 3 4 7 6 4 6 | 4 4 4 4 4 4 6 5 4 5 4

E D[#]7 G[#]m7 G[#]7

let ring ----- |

T A B 4 6 4 6 5 6 3 4 7 6 4 6 | 4 4 4 4 5 4 5 4 5 4

C[#]m7 Cmaj7 Bm7 B_bmaj7

T A B 4 5 4 4 5 4 5 3 | 3 2 4 3 2 3 3 2 3

Amaj7 A/B B_bmaj7(add11)

AH----- |

T A B 2 1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 4 6 7 6 8 7 5 | 6 8 7 3

Chapter Nine – Simon Pratt’s “Get Hip”

Get Hip is in the key of Eb Minor and relies heavily on the use of the Eb Minor Pentatonic scale (Eb Gb Ab Bb Db). Simon created this song to highlight the techniques of single notes, double-stops and legato chord fills. Although there are lots of embellishments in this piece, the focus always comes back to the central three chord groove of Abm11, Bbm11 and Ebm7.

We recommend watching how Simon plays this track in the accompanying video and reading the tips below before attempting this piece.

<https://www.fundamental-changes.com/neo-soul-videos/>

Bar one: if the notes of the double-stops are ringing out too much, add a slight palm mute.

Bars two and three: the Abm11, Bbm and Ebm7 chords featured in these bars act as the main groove for the whole piece. Make sure this pattern feels comfortable before continuing.

Bar five: pay close attention to the “let ring” and “palm muted” symbols featured in this bar.

Bar nine: learn the longer line featured in bar 9 a few notes at a time, at a tempo of around 50 bpm before speeding up.

Bars nineteen and twenty: to learn the longer single note and double-stop lick in these bars, break it down into four-note chunks and build it up bit by bit.

To see more of Simon’s ideas check out his Instagram account below.

<https://www.instagram.com/simeygoesfunky/>

Get Hip - Full Piece

A♭m11 B♭m11

E♭m7 B/D♭

A♭m11 B♭m11 E♭m7

P.M. -----4

let ring

A♭m11 B♭m11

let ring -----4

P.M. -----4

C♭maj7 B♭m11

A♭m11

Ddim7 Fdim7 E♭m7

C_bmaj7

TAB Fingering: (7) 6 9 6 7 (6) 6 11 13 12 11 14 11 13 15 13 11 13 11 13 11 9 11 13 4 X-X 2

let ring ----- 2 4 4 6 3 4 4 4 4

B_bm7(b13) **C_bmaj7** **C_bmaj7**

TAB Fingering: 11 7 9 7 4 6 6 8 6 4 6 8 6 4 1 2 2 3 4 2 4 2 4 5 4 2 4 2 3 4 2 4 6 4 4 4 4

let ring ----- 4 2 4 4 6 3 4 4 4 4

C_bmaj7/G_b **E_b7sus4** **D_b7sus4** **C_bmaj7/G_b** **C_b/D_b D_b7b9(no root)**

TAB Fingering: 13 12 14 11 14 16 18 14 16 11 14 7 6 4 7 4 7 5 4 5 4 5 4 9

let ring ----- 4 7 4 7 5 4 5 4 5 4 9

E_bm7(b13) **Fm7(b13)** **A_bm7** **B_bm7**

TAB Fingering: 15 6 9 6 7 9 8 X-X 9 11 9 7 8 4 8 10 6 6 6 6 7 6 8 6

let ring ----- 4 8 10 6 6 6 6 7 6 8 6

E♭m7(♭13) **Fm7(♭13)** **A♭m7** **B♭m7**

let ring ----- 4

T 6 9 6 9
A 8 11 8 11
B 11 13 11 13

14 16 14 16
13 11 13 11
18 14 16 14
13 12 13 12

let ring ----- 4

T 11 13 11 13
A 15 15 15 15
B 13 13 13 13

P.M. ----- 4

14 16 14 13
14 15~13~11
13 14 11 13
14 6 7 8 9 10

14 10 8 6 8~6~4
11 10~8~6~8~6~4
13 8 6 4 6~8~6~4

P.M. ----- 4

T 8 10 8 6 8~6~4
A 11 10~8~6~8~6~4
B 6 4 6~8~6~4

6 8 6 4 6 4

C♭maj7 **Ddim7** **Fdim7** **E♭m7** **Fdim7** **A♭dim7**

let ring ----- 4

T 2 4 3 2 4
A 5 6 4 6
B 8 9 7 9

22 7 9 6 9 6
P.M. ----- 4

T 6 7 9 6 7 9
A 8 9 7 9
B 11 12 10 12

let ring ----- 4

T 7 6 8 6 8
A 7 6 8 7
B 13 11

P.M. ----- 4

G♭maj7 **F7(♭13)** **E♭m7**

let ring ----- 4

T 9 11 9 11
A 10 8 9 X 7
B 11 8 X 8

24 7 6 8 6 8
P.M. ----- 4

T 7 6 8 7
A 7 6 7 11
B 13 11

G_bmaj7 **F7(♭13)** **E_bm7**

F7sus4 E_b7sus4 G_bmaj7/D_b

let ring ----- 4

T A B

9	11	9	11	9	8
10					
11		8		X	7
8	11		X	8	6
9					6

P.M. ----- 4

T A B

7	6	8	6	8	6
18	16	15	13	15	13
16	14	13	11	13	11
13					

D_bsus2/B_b G_b/A_b G_bmaj7

B_bm7

T A B

9	6	4	6	4	4
8	6	6	4	6	4
8	6	4	4	4	4

F7sus4 E_b7sus4 G_bmaj7/D_b

T A B

2		1	2	18	16
1		3	1	16	14
3		1	1	15	13
1				15	13
					11

D_bsus2/B_b G_b/A_b G_bmaj7

E_bm⁶/9

T A B

9	6	4	6	4	4
8	6	6	4	6	4
8	6	4	4	4	4

let ring ----- 4

T A B

6	4	5	6	5	4
6	4	5	6	5	4
6	4	5	6	5	6

Chapter Ten – Mark Lettieri’s “Sunday Brunch”

Sunday Brunch is Mark’s second piece for this book. It predominantly uses the D Major scale (D E F# G A B C#), but borrows chords from related keys. As you can see in the video link below, this piece is fingerpicked.

<https://www.fundamental-changes.com/neo-soul-videos/>

The following tips will assist you in tackling this piece:

The piece starts with triple-stops (three notes played at the same time) where the top notes of the voicings outline a D Mixolydian scale (D E F# G A B C). Play these chords short to keep them as tight as possible. Tightness is key throughout this entire track.

Diminished chord ideas are used frequently in Neo-Soul. These chords can be useful to link progressions together, as Mark demonstrates several times in this piece (bars six, eight, eleven, thirteen, fourteen, sixteen and so on).

Look at the way chromatic approach notes and chords are used on the E7 groove, starting at bar twenty-six. There’s often a movement from Eb7 to E7. Play this tight and staccato.

To check out more of Mark’s incredible work, check out the links below.

<https://www.instagram.com/mjlettieri/>

<http://bit.ly/2EhMTaZ>

<https://www.marklettieri.com/>

Sunday Brunch - Full Piece

($\frac{1}{16}$ = $\frac{1}{8}$)

G⁶/9

D **Cmaj7** **Am/C** **G**

Em7 **F#m7** **Bbdim7** **Bm9** **E9**

Em7 **D/F#** **Em/G** **Abdim7** **D/A** **Gdim** **Bm7**

G/B Bm7 Gmaj7 D/F#

D Cmaj7 Am/C D#dim7

Em7 F#m7 Bbdim7 Bm9 E9

Em7 D/F# Em/G Abdim7 D/A Gdim Bm7

G/B Bm7 Gmaj7 D/F#

Gmaj9

20

T A B
9-11 11 11 11 11-12-11-9 11 X 10

Gmaj9

21

T A B
9-11 11 11 11 11-12-11-9 11 10

A/C#

22

T A B
11-12 10 8 8-7-5 5 5 5

A♭7♯9

23

T A B
(5) 7 5 7 (5) 7 6 7 X 5 7 6 7 12 11 10 11 10

Gmaj9

24

T A B
9-11 11 11 11 11-12-11-9 11 10

F♯m7

25

T A B
9 9 9 9 9-10-9-7 9 11

E7

26

T A B
6-7 5-6 6-7 10-11 9-11 11-12 10-11 6 7-7 6-6 10-11 9-11 9-8-7 9-8-7 6 5 X 7

E9

27

E9

28

T A B
7 7 6 6 10-11 9-11 11-12 10-11 6 7 7 6 6 10-11 9-11 7 9 7 9 7 8 9 10

E9

29

D Cmaj7 Am/C G

30

T A B

10 7 10-9 7 9-7 X 6-7 (5) 5 5 10 7-9 7-9 7-9 X

31

Em7 F#m7 Bbdim7 Bm9 E9

32

T A B

8 7 10 9 9 8 6 9 7-9 (9) 7 7 6-7 6-7 7-9 9-7 7

33

Em7 D/F# Em/G AbDim7 D/A Gdim Bm7

34

T A B

8 7 7 9 9 10 11 10 11 8 6-7 6-7 10-9 7 9 7

35

Gmaj7 D/F#

36

T A B

8 10 14 10 11 12 11 X 5 5-7 7-9 (7) 7 7 7 7 7-9

37

Chapter Eleven – Get the Tone

The Player

The single most important aspect of tone production is the person playing the guitar. Most professional guitarists can make any instrument or amp sound great. You are the source of tone! The first thing to do is make sure that every note you play has meaning and purpose. Jeff Beck, who has recorded some of the best guitar playing on the planet, said, “Better to play one note well, than a thousand notes badly.”

The Guitar

There is no specific guitar that suits playing Neo-Soul more than another, although there are some classics you could consider:

Fender Stratocaster

Fender Telecaster

Gibson ES-335

Paul Reed Smith

These guitars and many more are all perfect for the job. Find the guitar that works best for you.

Get to know your instrument! Every instrument has subtle nuances that make it unique. Get to know how your volume, tone and pickup selector controls can subtly shape your sound.

The pickup selector gives you control over the tone your guitar produces. The pickup nearest the bridge will have the brightest, harshest tone, and is often used for solos. The pickups produce a progressively warmer, smoother sound as you move towards the neck pickup. Often, people only use two of the five possible pickup selector positions (on a Strat, for instance), preferring the warm neck pickup for rhythm and the bridge pickup for solos and riffs. However, you should experiment with all the pickup selection options you have available. Don’t be afraid to break convention.

There are two main types of pickups: single-coil and humbucker. Single-coil pickups have a classic, clear tone. They are highly dynamic and favour clean tones that cut through a mix. Humbucking pickups are warmer and fatter sounding.

One misconception is that spending a lot of money will guarantee you an amazing instrument. Our advice is to buy the best possible instrument you can afford and learn it inside out. Often, buying a second-hand guitar allows you to get twice the guitar for half the money. Look online and ask your friends to see what’s available. Read reviews and be sure to search out the types of guitars used in the music you like.

The Amp

Like the guitar, there is no specific amp that is definitive when it comes to the Neo-Soul sound – although amps able to produce a crystal clean tone are a good starting point. Some of our favourites include:

Fender Princeton

Fender Deluxe Reverb

Brunetti Singleman

Supro Statesman

PRS Sonzera

These days there is an enormous range of amplifiers available, so choosing one comes down to individual taste and preference.

The amplifier controls that sculpt your sound are the gain and equalisation controls. Although adjusting the gain control will influence the overall volume, think of it as a tone control, not a volume control. Adjusting the gain increases or decreases the amount of distortion heard in the amplifier. Tone creation is very personal and subjective, so listen to many different guitarists and decide what *you* want to hear, then shape the sound to your own preference.

The bass, middle and treble EQ controls on the amplifier are the main tone sculptors and allow you to mould the guitar sound to your desired tone. If you are in doubt, set your amplifier's EQ to six, five, six (bass, middle and treble respectively). This is generally a good starting point to build from and normally works when testing out a new amplifier.

For more information on amplifier controls check out:

<http://bit.ly/2CH1gUE>

Pedals

There aren't too many pedals needed to create the Neo-Soul sound, but investing in a good quality compressor, envelope filter and reverb would be an excellent place to start. Some of our personal favourites include:

Wampler Ego Compressor

Keeley 4 Knob Compressor

Carl Martin Classic Opto-Compressor

Electro-Harmonix Q-Tron+

Strymon Flint

Walrus Audio Fathom

Strings

The most important thing to do before any recording or live session is to re-string your guitar. We like to have had the strings on for about a day to let them settle in. Brand new strings make an incredible difference to the overall tone of the guitar. It is always amazing to see how lifeless and dull strings can get, even after a week's playing.

The lighter the strings, the easier they are to play. Heavier strings have a fatter, warmer tone, but techniques such as bending can be more challenging. Try different string gauges and manufacturers until you find a set that works for you. For the recordings in this book, Simon used Ernie Ball Super Slinky strings with a gauge of 9-42. Kristof is fond of heavier strings and used D'Addario EXL116 11-52 for his recordings.

Another important factor in tone production is how you hit the strings. The thickness of your pick/plectrum will impact your tone. The thicker the pick, the bolder and fuller the sound, whereas thinner picks will usually produce a thinner, sparkly clear tone. Simon prefers Jim Dunlop Jazz 3 plectrums – one area of his playing that has not changed over the years. He finds that the control he gets from these picks, especially when alternate picking, boosts confidence and control tremendously.

“Picks are for fairies!” is another quote from tone-master Jeff Beck! He is referring to the fact that you can get incredible control and touch by playing every note with fingers only. Most people associate finger-picking with rhythm and chord work, but finger-picked lead guitar can produce some of the most emotive and creative sounds. Put down your plectrum and play your favourite lead lines with your fingers. It is also possible to use hybrid-picking, which enables you to use both finger-picking and a pick at the same time. Kristof mostly uses hybrid-picking to achieve his sound and his current favourite pick is a Mathas Guitars Jazztor 2.0mm with beveled edges, because these picks sound great in combination with fingers.

Our Gear

Simon

Guitar: Taylor T5

Amp: Kemper using a Michael Britt Fender Tweed Profile

Recording: Logic Pro

I used my Taylor T5 (thank you Taylor), straight into my Kemper with a Michael Britt Fender Tweed Profile loaded in. I recorded each track fairly clean and dry, then added some light compression and plate reverb with Logic's Space Designer plugin.

Kristof

Guitar: Maybach Teleman T54 Vintage Cream

Effects: Carl Martin Classic Opto-Compressor; Strymon Timeline; Walrus Audio Design Monument; Strymon Flint.

Amp: Brunetti Singleman 16W combo

Recording: Sennheiser e609; Scarlett Focusrite 2i2.

I set up a fairly compressed clean sound with a little bit of plate reverb and mic'd up my amp for the examples. For *Fat Rat* I used less compression, included the Strymon Timeline for some delay, and engaged the Harmonic Tremolo of the Walrus Audio Design Monument to create a beautiful but subtle modulation.

Playing with Other Musicians

So far you have learnt licks, created fun and inspiring improvisations, and developed your tone. By working with other musicians and seeing how they create music, you will develop a better idea of how to create your own tone and style. Ask the musicians you are working with to give you constructive feedback about your tone and to pass on any ideas they may have to improve it.

Music is to be played and there is no better feeling than jamming! Our top tip for jamming with other musicians is “play with people who are better than you”. Working with musicians more technically and musically advanced will inspire you. Learning to read music notation and having a good grasp of modern music theory can help you to interact with other musicians.

If you can't play with other musicians for some reason, why not invest in a looper pedal (such as the TC Electronic Ditto) to play with more of a live feel.

Backing Tracks And Drum Tracks

One thing we think is extremely important is having fun when playing! That is the thing we value most highly here at Fundamental Changes. Although it is impossible for us to recreate an actual band scenario for you, we have created Neo-Soul backing and drum tracks to get as close to it as possible.

Backing Tracks

Backing Track One: Amaj7, G#7, C#m

Backing track one is based around the key of C#m and follows the three-chord progression shown above. It has a classic Neo-Soul vibe in the style of J Dilla. The C#m Pentatonic scale (C# E F# G# B), the C# Blues scale (C# E F# G G# B) and the C# Natural Minor scale (C# D# E F# G# A B) are perfect choices to solo over this progression.

Backing Track Two: Em9, Balt

Backing track two has a distinct Tom Misch flavor to it. It alternates between an Em9 chord and a variety of B Altered chords, such as #5, but also a Bm9 chord too. This backing track is deliberately ambiguous and you can use either E Minor Pentatonic (E G A B D) or B Minor Pentatonic (B D E F# A) when soloing. Experiment and follow along with the melody line too.

Backing Track Three: Am7, Em7, Fmaj7

Backing track three is three-chord progression in the key of A Minor. The A Minor Pentatonic scale (A C D E G), the A Blues Scale (A C D Eb E G) and the A Natural Minor scale (A B C D E F G) will work well over this progression. This track is in the style of Kerry “2 Smooth” Marshall.

Backing Track Four: E, G#m7, A6, A/B, B7b9

This backing track is taken from Example 6r. The E Major scale (E F# G# A B C# D#) works perfectly when soloing over this example. For extra points, aim to include some natural harmonics.

Also included are backing tracks to the full songs featured in this book, so you can practise and record yourself playing along to each piece.

Drum Tracks

There are a ton of examples featured in this book and while using a metronome is the most fundamental form of practice you can do, it can get a bit boring. To counteract this we have created five drum tracks at a variety of speeds for you to practise the examples shown in the book and also as a creative tool to write your own Neo-Soul ideas. The drum tracks each have different feels, some with tight grooves and some with a looser feel to replicate different aspects of the Neo-Soul sound.

Conclusion

Whether you are just beginning your Neo-Soul journey or you are an experienced player, we believe everyone can benefit by developing the techniques and ideas featured in this book. Use the examples as a starting point for creating your own musical lines, phrases and complete songs. Let your ears guide you and don't rely on the finger patterns and scale shapes you know to be the "safe notes". Remember the saying, "If it sounds good it is. If it sounds bad... it probably is too!"

Practise what you don't know, not what you do! This is quite simply the best advice we can give to any musician seeking to improve.

Our passion in life is teaching people to play and express themselves through the guitar. If you have any questions, please get in touch and we will do our best to respond as quickly as possible.

You can contact us at:

simeypratt@gmail.com and,

kristof_neyens@hotmail.com

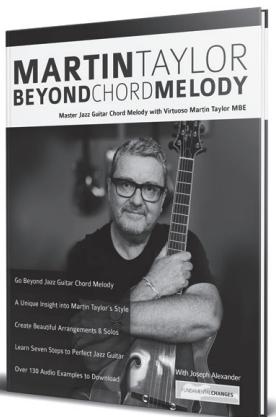
Or via the Fundamental Changes YouTube channel

Check out our Instagram Channels to see what we are up to in our own playing:

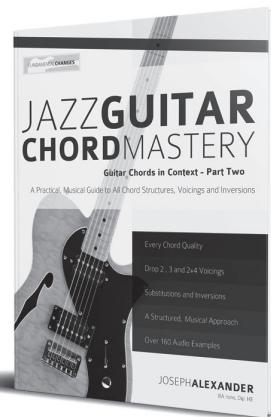
Simon : @simeygoesfunky

Kristof : @kristofneyensguitar

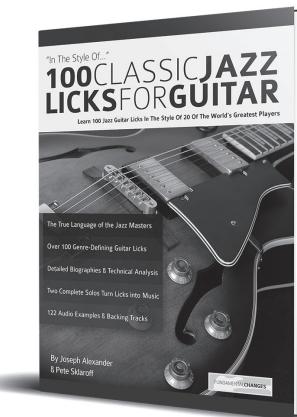
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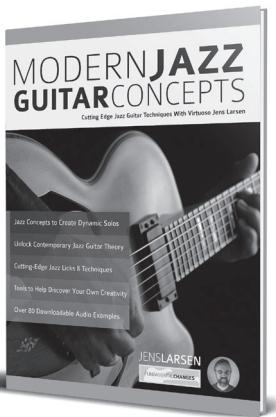
Martin Taylor
Beyond Chord Melody



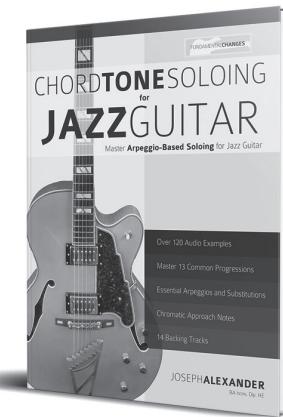
Jazz Guitar
Chord Mastery



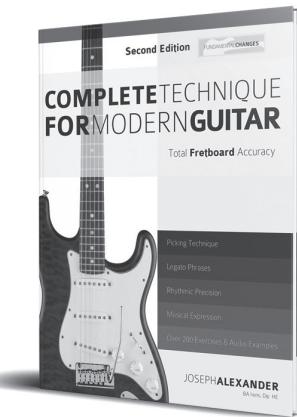
100 Classic Jazz Licks
For Guitar



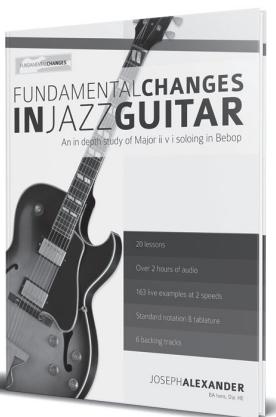
Modern Jazz
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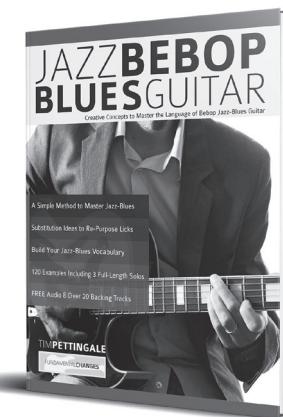
Chord Tone Soloing
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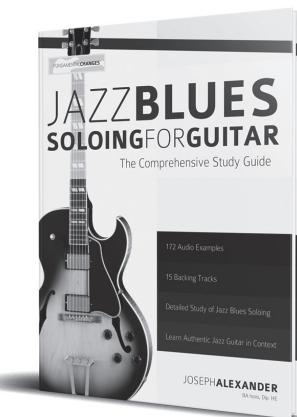
Complete Technique For
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Fundamental Changes in
Jazz Guitar



Jazz Bebop
Blues Guitar



Jazz Blues Soloing
For Guitar

