

Country Guitar Heroes:

# 100 COUNTRY LICKS FOR GUITAR

Master 100 Country Guitar Licks In The Style of The World's 20 Greatest Players



Learn The True Language of the Masters

Over 140 Authentic Notated Examples

Convert Licks To Work Over Any Chord

Master Two Complete Solo Studies

Includes Tab, Notation & Audio



By Levi Clay

FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES

# **Country Guitar Heroes - 100 Country Licks for Guitar**

Master 100 Country Guitar Licks In The Style of The World's 20 Greatest  
Players

BY LEVI CLAY

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# Introduction

Music is many things to many people. It's an escape, it's art, it's a passion, it's work, it's frustration, it's culture, and many more things too.

There are also many facets to learning music and as players, it's easy to get caught up in the technical aspect. While technique is hugely important to your development as a player, it only *prepares* you for playing music, but isn't actually music in itself. Playing a chromatic scale up and down the neck isn't music, but there are several technical benefits to doing it. There are many great books out there that cover the technical side of playing guitar. That's not what this book is about, but developing technique will be an important part of mastering the content here.

Many players get caught up in the theoretical aspect of playing music. Depending on your goals as a player, it may be useful to memorise scales, keys, chords, arpeggios, etc. But you're still not talking about real music, just the building blocks. Knowing arpeggio substitution options on dominant 7 chords isn't music, but may result in a more informed note choice when soloing.

I like to think of music as a language. You can't learn to speak a language if you've never heard it spoken. You may be a great picker and you may know the right scale to play over a song in G – but that's not enough to pass as a country player! You can't just invent words or ignore things like sentence structure.

Playing music is about understanding the language. There are only twelve notes in music, but every genre treats those notes differently.

This book presents you with an authentic vocabulary as performed by 20 of the greatest country players the genre has seen. It's about learning how real country players use the techniques and theory you may already know (ideally from my best-selling book: *Country Guitar for Beginners!*). It's about making you sound like a real country player.

On the other hand, I've seen many books that just throw licks at you like that's the answer to making you a good player. I didn't want to do that here. I want this to be more than a book of 100 licks that you learn and never use.

The solution is to understand where these licks come from and how you can use them in any key and any setting. Before learning the licks, I'm going to teach you how to memorise this vocabulary the way I do. Then, when you've got all these licks under your fingers, learn some solos that adapt them into new and fresh sounds. 100 licks may seem like a lot, but

once you start connecting licks and mutating them to your desires, you'll find them almost infinite.

Playing music isn't just about playing licks. As I sit here and write this sentence, I'm not just using combinations of words that I know work. I'm expressing my thoughts freely because I understand the language. The more you develop as a player, the less you'll rely on things you've learned. You'll be free to play what's in your head, but you'll look back and appreciate how great your phrasing is because you learned the language from the masters.

There are twenty players showcased here, with five licks given in the style of each. That's not a lot to tell you about a player, but every single one of these musicians has a wealth of recorded music that's essential to check out. After all, that's how I developed all these licks!

If you're familiar with a few names on the list, then take the chance to check out some of the others. You never know... you might find 100 more licks you want to learn! The artists have been presented alphabetically as there's no clear ramp in difficulty, some artists play things that are incredibly simple and then play something that could rip your head from your shoulders – so dig in where your interest takes you.

The final piece of advice I'll give you is to internalise the sounds of these licks. It's not just about playing the notes on the page to sound like the recording. Listen to the recording 50 times till you know the lick inside out. Try singing it before playing it. As you learn the idea, focus on the notes you're expecting to hear before you play them.

This is a subject that feels a little esoteric as it's quite challenging to demonstrate. Developing the ear is always our number one goal. When that ear is well developed, you'll be able to put on any guitar solo, hear a lick, sing it... and then play it! I know that goal seems a million miles away but a journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step!

Keep at it, and you'll reach your goals in time.

Good luck!

## A Note on Guitar Tone

Rather than spending hours creating unique tones for each artist, my intention was to have one basic sound that's attainable by anyone. This way, you get an idea of how you can bring the sound of each artist to your own rig and make it your own.

Aside from the Jerry Reed examples which were recorded on my Godin Multiac Nylon String, every example was recorded using a relatively cheap Mexican Fender Road-Worn Telecaster (with Joe Barden's Danny Gatton pickup set).

Amp-wise, I used a profile of a Dr Z MAZ 18NR on my Kemper Power Rack. While that's not a cheap piece of kit, the idea was to replicate a really great clean-sounding amp that would drive just a little bit when hit hard. Any Vox-style amp will get you in the ballpark. However, if you want my exact tone, it's available on the official Dr website. Recording the audio for this book wasn't about having a million-dollar tone, it was about creating something that could be accessible to anyone.

I've recorded the slower examples at the intended speed. Anything a little pacier is played slowly before being repeated at full speed.

# Get the Audio

The audio files for this book are available to download for free from [www.fundamental-changes.com](http://www.fundamental-changes.com), and the link is in the top right corner. Simply select this book title from the drop-down menu and follow the instructions to get the audio.

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# Chapter One: How to Learn These Licks

As mentioned in the introduction, the most important aspect of learning licks to make sure you can play them whenever you need them.

The problem with the guitar is that it's easy just to put your fingers where the tab tells you to and be done with it. This approach is great if you want to play covers songs as you get results quickly. If you want to take things you learn to the next level, you need to understand the *context* of these licks and how you can call upon them at will.

The following lick is something you'll quickly be able to get under your fingers. The question is, how fast could you play it in Bb? Or Eb?

## Example 1a:

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a dynamic marking 'mf'. The bottom staff is a standard six-string guitar fretboard diagram. Fingerings are indicated above the strings: 11-12-10-13-12-10 on the first two strings, 13-11-12-12-10 on the next two strings, and 12-11-10-12-8-9 on the last two strings. The fretboard diagram shows the strings from A (top) to E (bottom). The first two strings have black dots at the 11th and 12th frets. The next two strings have black dots at the 13th and 11th frets. The last two strings have black dots at the 12th and 10th frets, and grey dots at the 8th and 9th frets.

This may seem like a daunting task, but once you know how, it's actually incredibly easy to do.

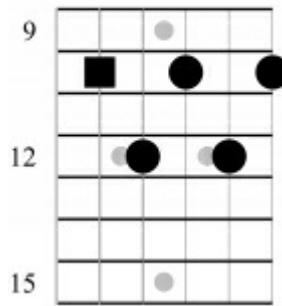
For me, the fastest way to achieve this is a solid understanding of the CAGED system. There are many great resources to learn this in detail, but you'll learn what you need to know here.

My system is very simple, Root note > Chord > Arpeggio > Scale > Vocabulary.

Meaning, if I can see a root note, I can see a chord. If I can see a chord, I can see an arpeggio. If I can see an arpeggio, I can see a scale. If I can see that scale... well... I can play anything.

The lick you learned previously fits in the 'A shape' of the system, meaning it's around the following chord.

G7 (A shape)



This shape is an open A chord (A7 in this case) moved up the neck to the 10th fret with a barre added.

I can find this chord in any key because I know the root note is right there on the A string. So, if I need a C7 chord, I move it down to the 3rd fret (as the 3rd fret of the A string is the note C). If I need to play an E7, I move to the 7th fret (as the 7th fret A string is the note E).

This is how you can learn to play this lick anywhere. The lick begins by approaching the note on the B string (the 3rd of the chord) from a semitone below.

Here's the same lick, but before playing it I've played the chord as a reference point of where this lick sits in relation to a shape I can easily keep track of.

### Example 1b:

G7

mf

T 10 12 13 12 10 13 11 12 12 10

A 10 12 12 10

B 10 12 12 11 10 8 9 10 8

Here's the same thing, but transposed down to a C7 chord.

### Example 1c:

C7

mf

T 3 5 4 5 3 6 5 3 6 4 5 5 5 3

A 3 5 5 3

B 3 5 4 3 5 1 2 3 1

Here's the same lick, but transposed down to be played on an E7 chord.

### Example 1d:

E7

mf

T 7 9 8 9 7 10 9 7 10 8 9 9 9 7

A 9 9 9 9

B 7 9 8 7 9 5 6 7 5

Here's another lick around that chord form, now over the G7 chord.

### Example 1e:

G7

And here's that same lick, but transposed down to fit a D7 chord.

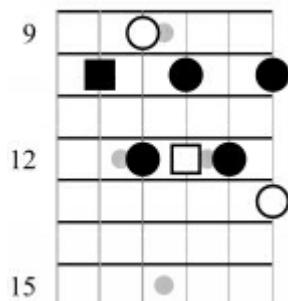
### Example 1f:

D7

Now, you may be looking at this lick and thinking, 'but this starts on a note not in, or next to, a note in the chord!', and this is where arpeggios and scale visualisation comes in.

An arpeggio is the notes of a chord, played melodically. The notes of a G7 chord are G, B, D, and F, and these can be played in order around this chord form, they look like this.

G7 (A shape)



Here's the same idea played as a musical example, preceded by the chord form it's based around.

### Example 1g:

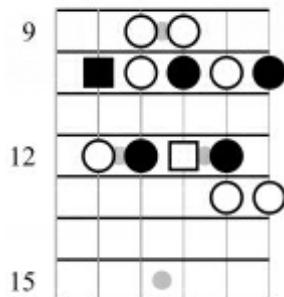
G7

The arpeggio is the melodic sound of the chord in its most direct form. It's possible to play melodies that will sound great over the chord using just

these notes.

A scale takes other notes and adds them in between these arpeggio notes, so G7 (G, B, D, F) becomes G Mixolydian (G, A, B, C, D, E, F). Here's that scale shown as a diagram.

G7 Mixolydian



Here's the same thing played as a musical example, preceded by the chord form it's based around.

### Example 1h:

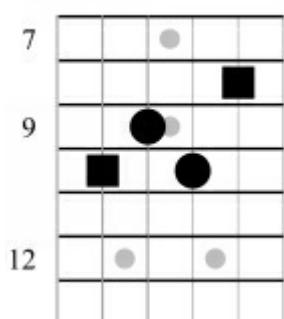
A musical example for the G7 chord. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), a common time (4/4), and a dynamic marking of *mf*. Above the staff, the chord symbol "G7" is shown. The staff consists of three horizontal lines representing the strings T (top), A (middle), and B (bottom). The notes are indicated by vertical stems and horizontal dashes. Below the staff, the fingerings for the notes are written: 10-12-13-12-10, 9-10-12, 13-12-10, 12-10-9, 12-10, and 12-10.

From here, it's up to you to decide how you'd visualise the lick shown before. You could see it as starting on the 9th degree of the scale, or a tone below the 3rd.

Spend some time getting to grips with this chord, arpeggio and scale relationship, and then add some licks before moving on to the next stage. From here it's about learning the five other positions of the CAGED system.

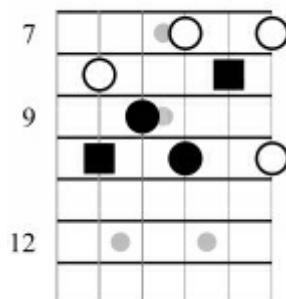
Here's a G7 chord you may have played before. It's based on the C shape. The root note is on the A string (as with the previous shape) but played with the third finger.

G7 (C shape)



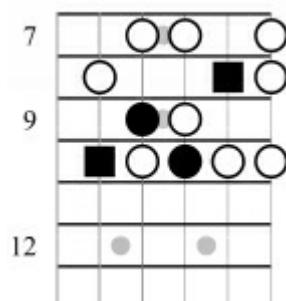
Once you're comfortable playing that chord, learn the arpeggio below.

G7 (C shape)



And here's the scale that fits around that same area of the neck

G7 Mixolydian



Finally, here's a lick you might play in that area of the neck.

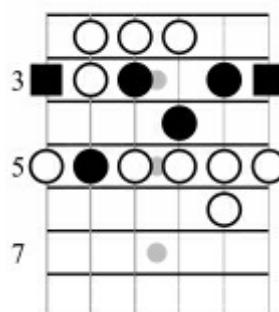
**Example 1i:**

Here's that same lick, but played over a Bb7 chord

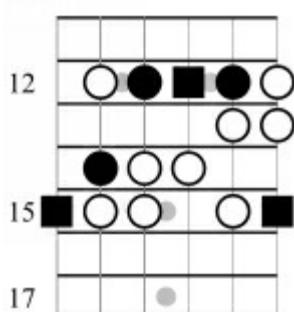
**Example 1j:**

Given below are the chord diagrams for the D, E, and G shapes. These are your primary forms for visualisation. If you want to dig deeper into this concept, my Country Guitar for Beginners is a great place to go as you'll learn this and a whole lot more.

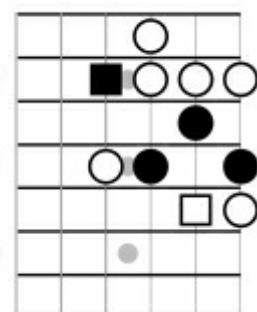
G7 (E shape)



G7 (G shape)



G7 (D shape)



## Chapter Two: Albert Lee

Considered to be one of the fathers of modern country guitar playing, Albert Lee's influence cannot be overstated. His style is part of the DNA of almost every hot picker that's come since, which is all the more amusing when you consider one of the biggest influencers to modern country playing wasn't born to a life of rodeos and ten-gallon hats, he was actually from Herefordshire, England!

Born in 1943, Lee grew up in a time when rock and roll was all the rage among the youth. Any country fan will tell you that you just need to look at the players who were influential during this time and you'll find some of the top names in country guitar. Just looking at guitarists Elvis worked with, you'll see Scotty Moore, and two other guitarists covered in this book, James Burton and Jerry Reed. All of them were major influences on the young Albert Lee.

After some success in the UK, he moved to LA where he worked as a session musician until he was asked to join Emmylou Harris' band as the replacement for none other than James Burton. From here, his career went from strength to strength, with a five-year stint working in Eric Clapton's band, almost two decades with the Everly Brothers, and many, many more. As a solo artist, Albert has 15 studio albums to his name, with numerous live albums, and instructional videos. It's very easy to dig in and become familiar with his ferocious style, but 1982's self-titled album is a great place to start.

Unlike most country players, Albert's signature sound has become more associated with the 'quacky' Strat pickup configuration of the bridge and middle pickup position on his signature Music Man guitar. His playing is full of blistering, alternate picking runs that cover the entire neck, hybrid picked banjo rolls, and slick open string licks.

There is no better introduction to playing country guitar than Albert Lee! The first lick works over an E or E7 chord. The theory books will tell you that the scale of choice for this chord should be E Mixolydian (E, F#, G#, A, B, C#, D). A seasoned country player will add both the b5 (Bb) as a passing note between the 5th and 4th, along with the b3 (G) as an approach note to the 3rd (G#).

Bar one of this lick sits around the A shape at the 7th fret and transitions down the neck to the C shape in bar two. It ends in the open position in bar three.

**Example 2a:**

The second lick uses the same note choices over the E chord as the previous lick.

Beginning with a bend from the 2nd (F#) to the 3rd (G#) in the C shape, the lick then moves over to the high E string and plays chromatically from A to B before moving back down to the G (b3) and sliding to the G# (3). This minor to major third move is an integral part of the country sound. Bar three shifts up to the A shape around the 7th fret. The position shift from the 5th to the 8th fret isn't easy at speed, so aim to hit the 5th fret B with the first finger, then slide from the 8th to the 9th fret with the third. The lick then ends on the root note (E) on the 12th fret, meaning this short four-bar lick has covered the neck from the 3rd to the 12th fret. This sort of coverage is an integral part of Albert's style.

### Example 2b:

The third Albert Lee lick begins by using notes of the 'Country scale' (E, F#, G, G#, B, C#) which may be familiar to you as the C# Blues scale.

Bar one starts on the root (E), with a run of 1/8th notes before using some sliding 3rds to move from the G shape, down to the A shape, and then straight down to the C shape.

The lick ends with the biggest country cliché in the book; a pedal steel-inspired bend where the note on the B string is bent, while the note on the high E stays static.

### Example 2c:

Lick four feels like it's drawn from the E Blues scale (E, G, A, Bb, B, D) for the first three bars, though it doesn't actually play that crucial G note, so the notes also fit in the E Mixolydian framework.

The final bar showcases Albert's seamlessly integrated double-stop technique. Use the pick to strike the note on the D string, then with the second and fourth fingers simultaneously pluck the G and B strings.

Double-stops are a staple of good country guitar playing, so spend some time getting comfortable with this technique.

#### Example 2d:

The musical example consists of two staves. The top staff is a standard musical notation with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (E major), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a series of eighth-note chords and single notes. The bottom staff is a tablature for a six-string guitar, showing the strings T (top), A, and B. It indicates fingerings such as 'full' (a full roll), 'P' (pick), and 'H' (hammer-on), along with position markers like 12 and 14. The tablature shows the player moving between different positions on the guitar neck.

The final lick moves to the key of G to allow the use of the open G string in the middle of these descending banjo rolls.

Albert's ability to play these reverse rolls at speed is really incredible (especially when you consider that he uses the fourth finger to pluck the high note!). I would encourage you to pluck the B string with the third finger, the G string with the second, the D string with the pick, and then repeat.

From here it's about familiarising yourself with the position shifts as you're going to be moving pretty quickly between them. Take it slow and build up speed over time.

#### Example 2e:

This example continues the theme of reverse rolls. The top staff shows a sequence of eighth-note chords and single notes with various slurs (st) and dynamic markings (sl, H, st). The bottom staff is a tablature for a six-string guitar, showing the strings T, A, and B. It includes position markers and specific fingerings like 8, 9, 0, 5, 3, 4, 0, 7, 5, 4, 5, 0, 5, 3, 0, 5, 0, 2, 0, 3, which correspond to the fingerings indicated in the musical notation above.

# Chapter Three: Brad Paisley

It's almost impossible to ignore the meteoric rise of Brad Paisley. Since releasing his first album in 1999, he's gone on to become one of the key figures in modern country music, with the full package of song writing skills, good looks, beautiful voice, and outrageous guitar picking skills! Born in West Virginia in 1972, Brad picked up the guitar early in life after being inspired by his guitar-playing grandfather. His influences were exactly what you'd expect from a young country picker, though he's always been particularly vocal about Buck Owens, Don Rich, and Redd Volkaert.

It was Brad's voice that brought him attention from the music industry, but it quickly became apparent that he had a talent for writing songs, and before he knew it he had scored a publishing deal with EMI.

When *Who Needs Pictures* was released in 1999, it showcased his trademark ability to write a combination of touching, and funny songs, punctuated with a fiery modern take on country guitar. Brad sounds like someone who had just as much love for Eddie Van Halen and the Eagles, as he did for Buck Owens and Hank Williams.

To date, Brad has released 12 studio albums, and every one of them is worth a spin. As the years have passed, he's embraced more modern pop elements compared to the country and western sounds of earlier records. 2005's *Time Well Wasted* is widely considered to be the perfect middle ground and is worth a listen. If you want to focus on his playing, 2008's largely instrumental *Play* is also worth a listen.

Brad's sound is 99% Telecaster into various Dr Z amps, with his axes of choice being Crook Custom Guitars in a variety of finishes with McVay G bender systems installed (a huge part of his playing style). He's also extremely fond of his 1968 pink paisley-finished Tele, aptly named 'Old Pink', which is fitted with a Lindy Fralin pickup, and the G bender he can't live without. It's warming to know Brad isn't afraid to play (and modify) a guitar with that level of historical significance.

The first lick showcases some of Brad's melodic pedal steel inspired bends. This sort of thing can be hard work on the fingers, so try to avoid this on guitars with strings heavier than 10s (9s are ideal).

Begin by taking the b7 (F) and 3rd (B) of G (in the A shape) and bend the b7 up to the root (G). It's important to keep that note on the B string where it is, though. With the G string held, the notes are then repicked three times with a gradual release on the final time.

From here, the lick is relatively straight forward; just make sure you're

holding those bent notes up at their intended pitch as it's important that everything is in tune.

### Example 3a:

The next lick shows Brad's wild use of open strings, which is done with almost reckless abandon. Licks like this are often played fast, meaning it's possible to get away with notes that might not work at slower speeds, in fact, it's one of Brad's trademarks.

Bar one feels a lot like a shape 1 A Minor Pentatonic/Blues scale, but with pull offs to the open B, G, and D strings. The Eb really shouldn't work, but it adds some spice to the lick. The lick descends down the neck to the 3rd position and the perspective changes a little with a shift to hybrid picked rolls using notes of the G Minor Pentatonic scale (G, Bb, C, D, F), again the Bb here creates a pleasing clash with the open B string.

You'll hear ideas like this all over Brad's more up-tempo numbers, like Mr Policeman from 5th Gear.

### Example 3b:

The next lick adopts a Van Halen-like approach to chromatic playing on a D chord, beginning with a classic lick using the D Major Pentatonic scale (D, E, F#, A, B) before taking the notes on the G and D strings with an open string pull-off and moving it down the neck chromatically to get to the open position.

The use of triplets helps to create a chaotic tumbling feel, but that just makes the resolution to the D note all the more rewarding.

The final chord is another pedal steel idea that Brad might execute with the G bender but it's more than possible to do it without. Take the notes indicated, and while holding the third and fourth fingers still, pull down and bend with the first finger to shift the note from an E to an F#, creating a beautiful D triad.

### Example 3c:

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a standard five-line staff with a treble clef, indicating pitch. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with three horizontal lines representing the strings (T, A, B) from left to right. The tab shows various note positions and dynamics. Arrows labeled "full" point to specific notes on the tab, likely indicating where a full bend or release is used.

This next lick moves the descending chromatic concept away from the rock influence and towards jazz.

Beginning in what looks like E Minor Pentatonic, you quickly descend an Am triad (A, C, E) and then move down chromatically to an Abm (Ab, Cb, Eb) and then G. This gives you a melody line on top that moves E, Eb, D, which ties the idea nicely together.

Once resolved, there's more chromatic playing around the (A shape) G Mixolydian scale, which then moves down to a lovely G triad in the C shape.

There are a lot of notes to consider here, but you should pay close attention to how they sound over the underlying G chord.

### Example 3d:

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a standard five-line staff with a treble clef, indicating pitch. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with three horizontal lines representing the strings (T, A, B) from left to right. The tab shows various note positions and dynamics. Arrows labeled "full" point to specific notes on the tab, likely indicating where a full bend or release is used.

The final lick is virtually impossible to play without the right kit, but I can't talk about Brad and not include a G bender lick.

A bender system is a mechanical device whereby pulling on the strap operates a series of levers that pulls a string up a tone. It's definitely more common to see this on the B string, and production models have been released with this modification, and the G bender is a much rarer beast.

The Gibson Music City Jr (which I use on the recording) comes fitted with a Joe Glaser-designed bender that can be switched from a B to a G, but another option is retrofitting a Hipshot palm bender.

Begin by sliding from the 2nd to the 3rd fret, then play the G string and use your bender to pull the G up to the 3rd of F (A). It's also possible to achieve this with a behind-the-nut bend, but more on that in the Jerry Donahue chapter.

With the note held, play the notes on the B and E string before releasing

the bent note.

The second half of the lick uses the bender on double-stops. These can be played without a bender, but the bender adds a unique, mechanical, pedal steel sound.

**Example 3e:**

Musical score for Example 3e. The top staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. The first measure starts with a grace note followed by eighth-note pairs. The second measure begins with a sixteenth note followed by eighth-note pairs. The third measure consists of eighth-note pairs. The fourth measure features double-stops with a bender, indicated by a bracket and a downward arrow. The fifth measure shows eighth-note pairs. The sixth measure contains double-stops with a bender. The seventh measure ends with eighth-note pairs. Measure numbers 1 through 5 are above the staff, and a 8 is at the end. The bottom staff is a tablature for a guitar, with strings T, A, and B labeled. It shows fingerings and string bypasses (e.g., 2-3, 0-3, 0-(0)). Arrows labeled "full" indicate bending techniques for specific notes.

# Chapter Four: Brent Mason

Considered as one of the pinnacles of class in country guitar, Brent Mason is also one of the world's most successful session musicians to boot, having won numerous Country Music Awards (CMAs) and Grammys. Born in Ohio in 1959, Brent relocated to Nashville as soon he could to pursue a career in music. He would gain a following as the guitarist in the Don Kelley Band (a proving ground for many up-and-coming players over the years, including Guthrie Trapp and Daniel Donato), Brent ended up catching the attention of Chet Atkins and recording on his 1985 album Stay Tuned.

Over the years, Brent has gone on to be *the* guy to call for session guitar work in Nashville. His voice as a player has helped to shape the sound of country guitar, having worked with legends such as Alan Jackson, Shania Twain, Waylon Jennings, Dolly Parton, Olivia Newton-John, Toby Keith, Willie Nelson, and many more.

As a featured artist, Brent's recordings are limited to Hot Wired (1997), The Players (1999), and Smokin' Section (2006). Each of these is a great listen and will result in you picking out Brent's style on many other recordings, from albums to the big screen.

As a session player, Brent's job requires him to be versatile and to wear many hats, but his use of a thumb pick (like his hero Jerry Reed) is a big part of his personal style, allowing him to dig in and get that snappy hybrid-picked sound. His grey 1968 Fender Telecaster (three pickups, fitted with a Joe Glaser B Bender) is almost as iconic as his playing, despite having a signature model with PRS it's hard to get Brent to put down that Telecaster. After all, there's very little that says country quite like a Telecaster bridge pickup played through a clean amp.

The first lick brings up shades of Albert Lee (a common theme in Brent's faster licks), using notes of the A Mixolydian scale (A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G), again, with that added b3 (C) and b5 (Eb).

This particular lick uses an open E to aid in the position shift from the 5th fret (E shape) down to the open position (A shape).

Once in that open position, open stings are heavily utilised before moving back up the neck to the E shape. This use of the Mixolydian scale with added b3 and b5 is an integral part of any hot country player's vocabulary. It's all about using the notes in an authentic way.

**Example 4a:**

The next lick uses pull-offs to open strings and triads to descend the neck. Play the first note with the pick, then hybrid pick the double-stop and pull off to the open G. The fretted notes consist of an A triad (A, C#, E), this pattern then moves down a tone to G (G, B, D), and then to an open A chord.

Bar two begins with an A5 chord where the lower note (E) walks down chromatically to Eb then D, then ascends with one of Brent's trademark triplet patterns.

The final bar quickly moves up the neck, playing an open A, then up to the E shape (5th fret) then the C shape (9th fret).

#### **Example 4b:**

The next lick would probably be played with a B bender (it certainly makes it easier), but I've recorded it without.

Begin up in the C shape by bending the B up to C#, reach over to the high E string to play the F# (with the fourth finger) then re-pick the bent note before playing the 12th fret high E, picking and releasing the bent note. This then shifts down to the D shape, bending the b7th (G) up to the root (A) and then playing the 3rd (C#) on the E string.

The second part of the lick features another ascending triplet and some double-stops to move from the C shape, down to the E. As with the last lick, you may notice Brent plays the A triad and then moves the idea down one tone to G (in the second half of bar three) before resolving down to A again in the lower position (E).

#### **Example 4c:**

The next lick demonstrates how much mileage you can get from playing the same idea in different octaves. Begin by playing a classic Brent idea in the D shape, approach the 3rd from below, then descend down using the b5th (Eb) for that country flavour. This same idea is then repeated, but an octave lower in the E shape.

The second part of the lick sits around the G shape and uses the open G string to help transition back up the neck to the E shape.

These ideas rely heavily on being able to move up and down the neck, so mastery of those basic CAGED positions is essential for your future development. Both Brent and Albert Lee have demonstrated this idea on their instructional videos, and while they never expressly use the term ‘CAGED’, their method of seeing licks as tied to chord positions is undeniable.

#### **Example 4d:**

The final lick explores more of Brent’s great bending ideas, this time on the B and G strings. The aim with a lick like this is to have it sound as mechanical as possible (like a pedal steel guitar) so each time you bend a string, do it quickly, and accurately.

The lick begins by bending the b7 up to the root, then playing the 3rd and 2nd on the high E string. After descending down the neck to the E shape, a similar bending lick is played in the G shape. Bend the 2nd (B) up to the 3rd (C#) then play the 5th fret B and 3rd fret high E. This creates an A7 chord, so it’s important you keep that bend in tune.

#### **Example 4e:**

A musical score for guitar in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps. The top staff shows a melodic line with various slurs and grace notes. The bottom staff is a tablature showing the fingerings for each note. The tablature is labeled with letters T, A, and B at the left end. Fingerings include: 1, 2, 3, 4, full, full, full, p, H, p, H, full, full, full, 2, 0. Arrows indicate specific finger movements between frets.

# Chapter Five: Buck Owens/Don Rich

Buck Owens was born in Texas in 1929 and would become one of the true pioneers of country music and the Bakersfield sound with his group, the Buckaroos. Buck Owens met Don Rich in 1958 and they played together in Tacoma before Buck moved to Bakersfield the following year. In 1960 Don dropped out of college to become the guitarist in the Buckaroos.

As a guitar player, Buck could hold his own, but he would often sit back and let Don take the spotlight. This allowed him to let his personality shine through.

Developing as a rejection to the slick productions and string-heavy arrangements coming out of Nashville at the time, the Bakersfield sound took things back to country roots. Many consider Budd Hobbs' 1954 recording, Louisiana Swing, to be the first song in this new style (which featured Buck on lead guitar), but it wasn't until Buck and Merle Haggard brought the sound to the masses in the '60s, that it really took off.

Buck's music had a sound that was more at home in honky-tonk bars, than what was coming out of Nashville. There was a something a bit rock and roll to the sound, with the harsh twangy electric guitars and sweet vocal harmonies.

As players, Don and Buck took a lot of influence from depression-era country musicians and western swing pickers. Their playing was about melody rather than flash. Getting their sound is about turning your Telecaster bridge pickup loud, and playing things you'd want to sing. Sadly, Don Rich was killed in a motorcycle accident in 1974, robbing the world of his potential, but Buck kept recording albums right up to 1991, with 39 albums to his name.

A great place to start to get into this iconic guitar duo is the 1966 live album, Carnegie Hall Concert.

This first example showcases Buck's picking prowess with a run of fast alternate-picked 1/16th notes.

You don't need to worry about crossing strings here, so just make sure you're playing the fretted notes in the first two bars with downstrokes. Over the E major chord you're simply using notes of the E Major scale.

**Example 5a:**

The music is divided into two sections, labeled E and A, separated by a vertical bar.

**Staff E:**

- Time signature: 4/4
- Key signature: Two sharps
- Notes: The notes are represented by vertical stems with horizontal dashes indicating pitch. The first section (measures 1-12) starts with a note at pitch 7, followed by a series of eighth-note pairs: 0-0, 9-0, 0-0, 11-0, 0-0, 12-0, 0-0. The second section (measures 13-18) starts with a note at pitch 11, followed by a series of eighth-note pairs: 0-0, 0-9, 0-0, 0-0, 7-5, 5-5, 5-5.

**Staff A:**

- Time signature: 4/4
- Key signature: Two sharps
- Notes: The notes are represented by vertical stems with horizontal dashes. The section starts with a note at pitch 7, followed by a series of eighth-note pairs: 5-5, 5-5, 9-5, 5-5, 7-5, 5-5, 5-5, 9-5, 5-5, 5-5. The section ends with a note at pitch 7, followed by a series of eighth-note pairs: 5-5, 5-5, 9-5, 5-5, 5-5, 7-4.

The following example is a lower register lead guitar idea over an A chord, using the notes of the A Major Pentatonic scale.

The key here is getting a swinging feel and hitting the syncopated notes with good rhythm. Keep a constant picking motion with the picking hand to keep you on track.

**Example 5b:**

Musical notation for Example 5b. The top staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The first measure starts with a grace note followed by eighth-note pairs (A, C#), (B, D#), (A, C#), (B, D#). Measure 2 begins with a sixteenth note (G) followed by eighth-note pairs (A, C#), (B, D#), (A, C#), (B, D#). Measures 3 and 4 show eighth-note pairs (A, C#), (B, D#), (A, C#), (B, D#). Measure 5 starts with a sixteenth note (G) followed by eighth-note pairs (A, C#), (B, D#), (A, C#), (B, D#). The bottom staff shows a guitar neck diagram with strings A and B. Fret numbers 0, 2, 4, and 0 are indicated along the neck. Brackets below the neck show fingerings: 0-0-2-0, 3-4-2-0, 2-0, (0), 2-4-2-0, 0-0-2-4, 2-4-2, 2.

The next example is a faster Don Rich type lick over a D and G chord. You'll notice the same phrase in the C shape is played over the D chord, and then moved up the neck to outline the G chord. It's a simple, yet effective method of outlining the chord change.

Use alternate picking for the 1/16th notes, and downstrokes for the rest.

### Example 5c:

The musical score consists of two staves of guitar tablature in D major (two sharps). The top staff starts with a measure labeled 'D' and ends with a measure labeled 'G'. The bottom staff continues from the end of the top staff. Both staves have a 4/4 time signature.

**Staff 1 (Top):**

- Measure 1 (D): Starts with a rest, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern:  $\text{B} \text{ A} \text{ B} \text{ C} \text{ B} \text{ A}$ . Fingerings: 1, 2, 3, 5, 2, 3, 2.
- Measure 2 (G): Starts with a rest, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern:  $\text{B} \text{ A} \text{ B} \text{ C} \text{ B} \text{ A}$ . Fingerings: 2, 5, 3.

**Staff 2 (Bottom):**

- Measure 1 (Continuation): Starts with a rest, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern:  $\text{B} \text{ A} \text{ B} \text{ C} \text{ B} \text{ A}$ . Fingerings: 2, 4, 3, 5, 2, 3, 2.
- Measure 2 (Continuation): Starts with a rest, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern:  $\text{B} \text{ A} \text{ B} \text{ C} \text{ B} \text{ A}$ . Fingerings: 7, 9, 8, 10, 7, 8, 7.
- Measure 3 (Continuation): Starts with a rest, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern:  $\text{B} \text{ A} \text{ B} \text{ C} \text{ B} \text{ A}$ . Fingerings: 10, 8.

**Staff 3 (Bottom):**

- Measure 1 (Continuation): Starts with a rest, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern:  $\text{B} \text{ A} \text{ B} \text{ C} \text{ B} \text{ A}$ . Fingerings: 2, 4, 3, 5, 2, 3, 2.
- Measure 2 (Continuation): Starts with a rest, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern:  $\text{B} \text{ A} \text{ B} \text{ C} \text{ B} \text{ A}$ . Fingerings: 5, 3.
- Measure 3 (Continuation): Starts with a rest, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern:  $\text{B} \text{ A} \text{ B} \text{ C} \text{ B} \text{ A}$ . Fingerings: full (up), 5, 3.
- Measure 4 (Continuation): Starts with a rest, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern:  $\text{B} \text{ A} \text{ B} \text{ C} \text{ B} \text{ A}$ . Fingerings: full (down), 5, 3.
- Measure 5 (Continuation): Starts with a rest, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern:  $\text{B} \text{ A} \text{ B} \text{ C} \text{ B} \text{ A}$ . Fingerings: 0.

Here's a slippery little lick that fits primarily around the C shape with some small position shifts.

Don is drawing largely from the G Major Pentatonic scale (G, A, B, D, E) here. There's also the added b3 (Bb) for some spice, giving it the G Country scale vibe.

Ideas like this are less rock or blues in nature, they don't fit in tidy little shapes, the hand moves where it needs to in order to play the melody the ear wants to hear.

#### Example 5d:

The musical notation shows a guitar lick in G major pentatonic scale (G, A, B, D, E). The lick consists of four measures. Measure 1 starts with a G chord (bar 1) followed by a melodic line. Measure 2 begins with a D chord (bar 2) and continues the melodic line. Measure 3 starts with a G chord (bar 3) and ends with a D chord (bar 4). Measure 4 concludes with a G chord. The lick features slurs (sl.) and grace notes (P). The guitar tab below shows the fingerings: T 8-7-10-7-10-12-10, A 12-10-12-10-11-10-8-8, B 8-9-7-8-9-7-8-15. A bracket labeled '3' indicates a position shift between the first and second measures.

The final lick moves between a G and D chord.

Over the G chord the lick appears very much like a G Major Pentatonic idea in the A shape, and when the chord changes to the D, the melody moves down to the D Major Pentatonic scale, but moves quickly back to the G Major Pentatonic scale in the final bar.

The tricky part here is hitting that position shift, but seeing the G and D chord in barre forms is a great way to not get lost.

#### Example 5e:

The musical notation shows a guitar lick transitioning between G and D chords. The lick consists of five measures. Measures 1-3 are over a G chord (labeled 'G') and measure 4 is over a D chord (labeled 'D'). Measure 5 concludes with a G chord. The lick features slurs (sl.) and grace notes (P). The guitar tab below shows the fingerings: T 5-8, A 7-10-12-10-10-12-10, B 10-12-10-(10)-8-5-7-5-5-(5)-(5)-3-4. The lick includes position shifts indicated by brackets labeled '1/2'.

# Chapter Six: Chet Atkins

Often referred to as ‘Mister Guitar’, there are few who have done as much for the instrument, or indeed country music, as Chet Atkins.

Born in Tennessee in 1924, Chet played the fiddle and ukulele before picking up the guitar at the tender age of nine. It was around the age of fifteen that Chet first heard the great Merle Travis and began to work out how to play Merle’s trademark thumb picking style.

Over the next fifty years, Chet would build a rich legacy in the music industry, eventually making his way up to the position of A&R Director of Country Music at RCA. This put him in the position of finding new talent and helping to produce their records, a role he held for many years while simultaneously releasing his own recordings.

At the time of his death in 2001, Chet had recorded an astonishing 87 studio albums as a solo artist, and collaborated or guested on countless other. He had also helped launch the careers of many household names, including Brent Mason and Jerry Reed, worked with everyone in the business from Dolly Parton, to Elvis, and won no fewer than 14 Grammy awards.

To this day, fans the world over gather every year for the Chet Atkins Appreciation Society (CAAS) convention, it’s the premier place to go to see the cutting edge of fingerstyle players, from country to jazz.

His style on the guitar was broad, taking influence from country, classical, jazz, blues, and rock n’ roll players. Though probably best known for his Travis Picking style (as covered in my Country Fingerstyle book), he was quite the soloist, and even classical guitarist. Other than Merle Travis, his influences included Django Reinhardt, Les Paul, and even Jerry Reed.

Due to the wide range of his recordings, it’s difficult to recommend one, but 1959’s Mister Guitar is a good starting point, or the 1970 collaborative effort with Jerry Reed; Me & Jerry.

As mentioned previously, Chet’s sound is dominated by his use of the thumb pick which enables fluid fingerpicking ideas. Guitar-wise he had signature models with both Gibson and Gretsch so imitating his sound is simply a case of using any decent semi-hollowbody instrument, perhaps with a Bigsby tremolo arm and some slapback delay.

The first lick is a classic open-string lick outlining the G Major scale.

The idea is very simple. Start on the G root note and move down the scale using the open strings where possible. You’ll also note that the scale has been fingered in a way that allows as many of the notes as possible to ring out.

It's possible to do this for any scale that contains a combination of open strings and fretted notes, although C, D, G, A, and E are probably the most common.

### Example 6a:

The musical notation consists of two parts. The top part is a staff with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melody line with various note heads and stems. The bottom part is a guitar tablature with four horizontal lines representing the strings (T, A, B, E from top to bottom). Fret numbers are indicated above the strings. The tablature includes instructions: 'let ring' with a dashed line, 'P' (palm mute), and 'sl.' (slide).

This next example features small chord strums to create a big sound. Hold down the chord (A major in the C shape) and palm mute the lower part. Next, strum the A, D, and G strings and stop them from ringing out. Then, move over to the G, B, and E strings and repeat. This is all then punctuated with a melody on the B and E string using thirds. As the chord changes to D, the picking stays the same while the left hand changes. Now you're holding down a D chord in the E shape.

### Example 6b:

The musical notation consists of two parts. The top part is a staff with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (B and F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It shows a sequence of chords: A, D, A, D, A, D. The bottom part is a guitar tablature with four horizontal lines representing the strings (T, A, B, E from top to bottom). Fret numbers are indicated above the strings. The tablature includes 'P.M.' (palm muted) markings under each bar.

This lick is a classic country string-skipping lick using sixths. The idea is that you play a diatonic sixth on the G and E strings (for example, the 16th fret G and 16th fret E), and move into the lower note chromatically from a tone below.

This idea then moves down the neck, keeping the basic sixths diatonic to the E Mixolydian scale.

To execute this lick, alternate between the pick, first finger, pick, and second finger. This may take a while to get used to, but it's essential for playing quickly with a thumb pick.

### Example 6c:

The musical notation consists of two parts. The top part is a staff with a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (G, D, and A), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a sixteenth-note run starting on E. The bottom part is a guitar tablature with four horizontal lines representing the strings (T, A, B, E from top to bottom). Fret numbers are indicated above the strings. The tablature includes 'P' (palm mute), 'H' (hammer-on), 'P' (palm mute), and 'sl.' (slide) markings.

The next lick sees Chet hold down four-note chords and sweep through them to create exciting melodic ideas.

The secret to mastering the sweep-picking technique relies on the rest stroke. You don't pluck the D string, instead you push the pick through the string so it comes to rest on the G string. Now you're ready to push through the G string and land on the B, etc.

Try not to let the strings ring into each other, and keep the rhythm defined.

### Example 6d:

The musical score consists of two staves of guitar tablature. The top staff is in common time (indicated by 'C') and the bottom staff is in 12/8 time (indicated by 'T'). Both staves have a treble clef.

**Staff 1 (Top):** This staff shows a continuous eighth-note pattern on the A string (6th string). The first six measures are in C major (no sharps or flats), indicated by 'C' above the staff. The next six measures are in C minor (one flat), indicated by 'Cm' above the staff. Measure numbers 1 through 12 are present above the staff. The tablature shows the string number (A) and the fret number (e.g., 8, 9, 10) for each note. Measures 1-6 are grouped by a vertical bar line, and measures 7-12 are grouped by another vertical bar line.

**Staff 2 (Bottom):** This staff shows a continuous eighth-note pattern on the D string (5th string). The first six measures are in C major (no sharps or flats), indicated by 'C' above the staff. The next six measures are in C minor (one flat), indicated by 'Cm' above the staff. Measure numbers 1 through 12 are present above the staff. The tablature shows the string number (D) and the fret number (e.g., 8, 9, 10) for each note. Measures 1-6 are grouped by a vertical bar line, and measures 7-12 are grouped by another vertical bar line.

**Measure 3 (Top Staff):** The first measure of the third system starts with a dynamic 'sf.' (sforzando). The second measure starts with a dynamic 'p' (piano). The third measure starts with a dynamic 'full' (full volume).

**Measure 1 (Bottom Staff):** The first measure of the third system starts with a dynamic 'sf.' (sforzando). The second measure starts with a dynamic 'p' (piano). The third measure starts with a dynamic 'full' (full volume).

The final lick (often referred to as the ‘super lick’) demonstrates just how far ahead of the curve Chet was.

Sweep-picked arpeggios are often claimed by metal players as their technique, but in a post-YouTube world it’s become easier for us to see and hear things from years before. One of the more popular videos in the last few years is a classic appearance of Chet and Jerry Reed where Chet plays some incredible 5-string ascending and descending sweep-picked arpeggios... almost a decade before players like Yngwie Malmsteen or Frank Gambale would hit the scene.

As with the previous example it’s essential that you use the same picking technique when descending. The best way to do this is turn the pick so it’s angled the opposite way to when playing the ascending idea.

**Example 6e:**

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is for a 5-string guitar in E major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It features sixteenth-note patterns with Hammer-ons (H) and Pull-offs (P). The bottom staff is for a bass in E major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. It features eighth-note patterns with Hammer-ons (H) and Vertical strokes (V). Both staves have sixteenth-note patterns below them. The tablature shows the strings from top to bottom: E, A, D, G, B. Fingerings are indicated above the strings, such as '9' for the 9th fret and '7-11-9' for a three-fret interval.

# Chapter Seven: Danny Gatton

Born in Washington D.C. in 1945, Danny Gatton would build a cult following on the underground music scene as one of the greatest unknown guitar players. Danny's skill on the instrument was so legendary that he earned himself the nickname of 'The Humbler'.

Danny may seem an odd choice for a book like this, as he wasn't really a country player at all. He's often assumed to be by people who are less familiar with his playing (probably due to the fact he played a beat-up Telecaster!), but the truth is Danny's playing falls much more in line with the rockabilly and jazz genre than straight ahead country.

Having said that, he's clearly come from that country sensibility, with incredible hybrid picking technique at his disposal for playing banjo rolls at speed. He's also no slouch at Travis picking, though he would execute that technique with a flat pick and fingers.

Danny committed suicide in 1994. At that time he had nine albums available and, since his passing, eleven more records have seen an official release. As his recordings are so diverse, every album has a slightly different vibe, his 1991 major label debut, 88 Elmira St, or the 1993 follow-up, Cruisin' Deuces, are good places to start.

My personal favourite is his 1978 record, Redneck Jazz, or the two Redneck Jazz Explosion live albums which feature Danny playing with Buddy Emmons on pedal steel.

1994's Relentless is another highlight, seeing Danny really open up over nine tracks with Joey DeFrancesco handling organ duties.

As mentioned previously, most of Danny's career was dominated by his use of the Telecaster (in particular, his 1953 Fender Telecaster), and a signature model was released for him. He also used a Les Paul with home-built effects mounted to the body of the guitar (the dingus box), but he stopped using this when he started getting the nickname of 'Danny Gadget'. Getting Danny's sound is all about being confident with the high end on a Telecaster bridge pickup, especially as Danny used a signature set of Joe Barden pickups that are well known for their 'ice-pick' qualities. The first lick showcases Danny's use of hybrid picking to execute banjo rolls.

Pick the first note and hammer on to the second. This process then repeated before plucking the high E string with the second finger. Next, use the pick, second, and fourth finger to execute a forward roll on the G, B, and E strings.

Danny would also often pluck the E string as he hammered on the G, but

that's really next level stuff and I'll leave that to The Humbler!

**Example 7a:**

The sheet music shows a sixteenth-note hybrid picking pattern. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps and a time signature of 4/4. The bottom staff is a standard guitar neck diagram with strings A, D, G, B, E labeled from top to bottom. Fingerings are indicated above the notes: 'H' for hammer-ons, 'P' for picks, and 'sl.' for slurs. The tablature shows various string crossings and note positions.

Here's another example of Danny's hybrid picking, this time used to execute the kind of idea that Chet Atkins would sweep.

Pluck the note on the D string, then forward roll with the second and fourth fingers on the G and B string. Then come over and pluck the E string with the pick.

Doing it this way is definitely harder and requires a high level of dexterity in the picking hand fingers. The reason Danny would do it this way is for the more percussive snappy sound. You're able to really dig in with the pick on the high E string to get a sharp chicken pickin' sound.

**Example 7b:**

The sheet music shows a hybrid picking pattern. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps and a time signature of 4/4. The bottom staff is a standard guitar neck diagram with strings A, D, G, B, E labeled from top to bottom. Fingerings include '3' for third finger, 'full' for full pull-offs, and '1/4' for a quarter note. The tablature shows various string crossings and note positions.

This lick moves down to the open position for a more rockabilly inspired sound, not too distant from something Albert Lee might play.

The tricky part here is making sure you put the pull-offs in the right places, as they help to give the lick that snappy sound.

The second part of the lick moves from the open position up to the C shape. By this stage you should be getting pretty comfortable with these CAGED patterns.

**Example 7c:**

The sheet music shows a hybrid picking pattern. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of three sharps and a time signature of 4/4. The bottom staff is a standard guitar neck diagram with strings A, D, G, B, E labeled from top to bottom. Fingerings include 'p' for picks, 'H' for hammer-ons, 'sl.' for slurs, and 'full' for full pull-offs. The tablature shows various string crossings and note positions.

The fourth lick demonstrates Danny's amazing double-stop licks, mainly

around the C shape A chord. To play these I'd suggest a combination of the pick and second finger, rather than trying to strum them.

Begin by moving chromatically into the root and 3rd. From here, the first bar is full of notes that really sound more like a D chord, though the notes are still from the A Mixolydian scale (A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G).

The second bar requires you to hold down an A7 chord (fingered as an A/G), and play through it two notes at a time.

#### Example 7d:

The final lick features more double-stops, but this time they are played with the pick.

Use the first finger for the double-stop on the 12th fret, the fourth finger for the 17th fret, and the second finger for the 14th fret. Take this one slowly and make sure the hammer-on is in time as things can quickly fall apart at speed.

The second part of the lick slides into the 12th fret and moves down chromatically, pedalling against the open E. Ideas like this are supposed to sound wild, and were a big part of Danny's style and were similar to other names on the scene, like Roy Buchanan.

**Example 7e:**

E

H P

H P

H P

H P

T A B

12 17 14 14 17 12 17 14 14 17 14 12 17 14 14 17 14 12 17 14 14 17 14

12 17 14 14 17 12 17 14 14 17 14 12 17 14 14 17 14 12 17 14 14 17 14

3

H P

H P

H P

H P

T A B

12 0 0 11 0 0 10 0 0 9 0 0 7 13 12 12 11 13 12 12 11

# Chapter Eight: Eldon Shamblin

Born in Oklahoma in 1916, Eldon Shamblin would go on to be one of the biggest names in the western swing movement.

Eldon learned to play in a time before rock n' roll or tab, and his learning experience was more formal in nature. He developed the ability read and arrange music, taking his cues from jazz players like Eddie Lang. He was definitely a jazz player who was thrown into a country setting, and this helped to define the western swing sound.

Eldon spent his days working in radio as this was the popular media of the time. Eventually he would begin working with Bob Wills as part of the Texas Playboys, and from 1938 to 1954 he made over 300 recordings with the band. It's sometimes hard to distinguish which parts he's playing, so you need to listen out for Bob calling Eldon's name to be sure.

He would also play on many recordings with the outlaw Merle Haggard, which saw him gain an even bigger cult following.

Like his hometown peer Charlie Christian, Eldon was also ahead of the curve. He became well known for adopting the electric guitar long before his peers moved away from the archtop guitars synonymous with the genre. In 1954, Eldon was presented with one of the first Fender Stratocasters ever made (in a beautiful custom gold colour), and it became his main guitar for many years, helping to define his sound.

As you might predict, Eldon's style is more rooted in the jazz genre than country, but playing his licks and ideas in country can bring a very sophisticated edge to your music. He was also a pioneer of the twin guitar harmony, often alongside a pedal steel guitar.

The first lick fits over an Emaj7 chord. The obvious scale choice to solo on an Emaj7 chord is the E Major scale.

This lick fits nicely over the chord by sticking to the G shape.

## Example 8a:

The musical example shows a sixteenth-note run starting on the G string. Above the staff, the chord "Emaj7" is indicated. The staff consists of two measures of music. The first measure starts with a sixteenth-note G, followed by a sixteenth-note A, then a sixteenth-note B, and finally a sixteenth-note C. This pattern repeats three times. The second measure starts with a sixteenth-note D, followed by a sixteenth-note E, then a sixteenth-note F, and finally a sixteenth-note G. The notes are connected by vertical stems. Below the staff is a guitar neck diagram with three horizontal frets. The top fret has a "T" above it, the middle fret has an "A" below it, and the bottom fret has a "B" below it. The neck shows fingerings: the first measure has "11-9-8-9-11-9-11-9" across the strings; the second measure has "9-10-12" on the top three strings, "9" on the fourth string, "12-10-9" on the bottom three strings, and "11" on the fifth string. The "B" fret is also labeled "8-9-9-12" across the strings.

Example 8b fits into the same setting, but this time comes from a more arpeggio-based perspective.

The musical part here is the three-note ascending E major idea with a G# on the G string, the B on the B string, and then a note that changes on the

high E each time.

Alternate picking here will help with the timing.

### Example 8b:

E<sup>maj</sup>7

12-12-12-11 14-11-12-13 11-16-12-16 12-16-14-12 13-12-13-13 12-12-11-11

The next two licks take place over the ending or turnaround of a song. The use of non-diatonic chords (like the C6) help give it a jazzy sound, and require careful attention when soloing.

The first bar is treated as being an E7, so the E Mixolydian scale works well, in this case using the A shape. Over the A/C#, I've played an A triad before landing on the C of the C6 chord.

The final two bars contain chords from the key of E, so notes of the E Major scale are used again.

### Example 8c:

10-9-7 10-9-7 9 9-10-9-13-10 12-12-10-9-7 9-7 9-9-7-6

The second lick over this progression takes almost the same path as the last, using the E Major Pentatonic scale in bar one and playing notes of the C Major Pentatonic scale over the C6 chord.

The final two bars target the B chord by approaching the triad from a semitone below; these little chromatic neighbour tones are a big part of that country-jazz influence.

### Example 8d:

sl. sl. sl. sl. sl. sl. sl.

11-13 12-13 12-13 11-13-9 11-9 9-11 9-12-10-13 10 12-10-8-9 8-7 9-8 9-6 7-5-6

The final lick showcases a simplified version of Eldon's amazing rhythm playing.

It's hard to miss the connection to gypsy jazz here, it's very close to the 'le

pompe' sound, with small strokes on beat 1 and 3 and heavy accents on beats 2 and 4. For the sake of reading, I've written the chords as complete voicings, so listen to the recording to hear how it should be played.

The secret here is the application of inversions to create melodic interest in the rhythm playing. Playing the same A chord voicing for two bars could be considered boring.

The first chord is an A chord in the E shape, this walks up to an A/C# in the second bar, then up to A/E.

When the chord moves to D, the D triad is held on the D, G, and B strings, while the bass note moves between the D, A, and F# notes.

**Example 8e:**

A

D

A

E7

# Chapter Nine: Glen Campbell

Born in Arkansas in 1936, Glen Campbell was one of the ‘full package’ country musicians since his career began in 1956, right up until his death in 2017.

Very much like Brent Mason and Brad Paisley, Glen left his home to make a career in music using his skills as a session player, and song writer. He would very quickly find real success in these areas, playing a key part of The Wrecking Crew (A group of LA session musicians who were in high demand during the ‘60s and ‘70s). Glen would do session work for countless names that included Ricky Nelson, Nat King Cole, The Monkees, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, and many more.

As a player, Glen always displayed phenomenal technical ability on the instrument, playing fast alternate-picked runs at speeds his contemporaries couldn’t touch, though his career was much deeper than just his playing. Glen was an amazing on-camera personality and made lots of comedy appearances on TV shows alongside people like Jerry Reed. He also had a decent run of success in Hollywood, appearing in cult classics like True Grit (alongside western icon John Wayne).

As a composer, Glen’s work is timeless, with songs like Gentle on my Mind and Wichita Lineman being masterpieces. That’s before considering the signature touch he brought to the compositions of other people, such as Rhinestone Cowboy and Southern Nights.

Glen was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease in 2011, and in 2014 was the subject of the documentary I’ll Be Me, which saw him on tour in the throes of the disease. It’s amazing to see someone unable to recognize his daughter each day, but then be able to get up every night and sing all of his hits and play some amazing guitar still, all while not really knowing where he is from moment to moment. Sadly, Glen passed away between the writing and publishing of this book.

Glen’s sound is all about the notes he chooses rather than the instruments he uses as he’s played everything over the years. Probably seen most with a Strat in later years, he’s just as likely to be seen with his Ovation acoustic where his picking is just as scary!

The first lick shows off some of Glen’s picking skills with this great line over an A7 – Dm chord change.

Minor keys are definitely less common than major in country music, but it’s still important to get to grips with them as they do come up.

While the notes could be seen as coming from the D Harmonic Minor scale (D, E, F, G, A, Bb, C#), I find it easier to see it as an embellishment

of an A7 arpeggio, adding the b6 (F) on the B string, and the b9 (Bb) on the high E string. This tells me that it implies an A7b9 chord.

### Example 9a:

The second lick fits over a C major chord, using the G shape.

There are some great chromatic notes used here, including the Eb at the start (approaching the 3rd of the chord). This suggests the C Country scale (C, D, Eb, E, F, G, A, B) meaning the Bb and F# are just chromatic passing tones to help connect notes. This is common in Glen's faster playing and has the added benefit of adding a jazzier edge to his soloing.

### Example 9b:

This next lick is more country/blues/rock in nature, and a tricky one to play at speed!

Outlining a D chord in the G shape, the notes hint at the D Major Pentatonic scale, but there's more going on here.

The first two bars require you to keep the D note on the high E string while the B string walks chromatically up from the 3rd (F#) to the 5th (B), and down again hitting the b3rd to 3rd before ending on the octave.

The final bar uses the D Country scale with a classic country/pop cliché.

### Example 9c:

The next idea warms you up to some of Glen's faster alternate picking, outlining a D chord with lots of chromatic passing tones.

The idea still fits loosely around the G shape D Major Pentatonic scale

from the previous lick. Take this slow as you learn the fingering and build up speed over time.

The last bar should all be played with the first finger, shifting down the neck.

#### Example 9d:

The final lick is played in the style of Paul Gilbert and Al Di Meola... but nearly ten years before they would become associated with this sound.

The secret to playing this one fast is making sure you hit the last note on the B string with a down, and the note on the E with an up. This is often described as ‘outside picking’ as the pick stays on the outside of the strings (try playing up on the B and down on the E to see what inside picking sounds like).

The ending is a classic open position country lick in E to bring it back from the chaos of this shred-like alternate picking.

#### Example 9e:

# Chapter Ten: Hank Garland

Born in South Carolina in 1930, Walter Louis ‘Hank’ Garland is one of the great sophisticated players of the genre.

Hank began at an early age, inspired by the guitar playing he would hear on local radio stations, and worked hard learning to play. At just 15 he scored a gig with the Cotton Pickers after a chance encounter in a guitar store. He moved to Nashville at the tender age of 16 to pursue a career in music as a session player and artist. Two years later he would sell over a million copies of the single Sugarfoot Rag, securing his demand on the session scene.

Well known as one of Elvis’s session guitarists from 1958 to 1961, Hank also appeared on recordings by Patsy Cline, Roy Orbison, and many more. His ability, and willingness to play different sounds kept him in demand as rock and roll took hold in the ‘50s.

He was also a respected jazz player, playing with legends like Charlie Parker and influencing the design of the Gibson Byrdland.

In 1961, Hank was involved in a serious car accident which left him in a coma for a week. Due to some of the treatments at the time (like electroconvulsive therapy), it’s speculated that Hank suffered additional damage to his brain, effectively ending his music career.

Hank’s playing is a treasure trove of ideas, especially in a country setting, as his voice as a player was so influenced by the swing jazz he grew up on. These outside influences add a twist on the genre not heard from many of his peers. Hank’s playing has influenced many people, but none have been more vocal than Chet Atkins, who regularly cited Hank as the greatest guitarist he ever heard.

Getting Hank’s sound is really about a good neck humbucker and a punchy clean tone, I access that with the neck pickup on my Gibson Howard Roberts Fusion, with the tone rolled back to about 7.

The first Hank lick can be split into two sections, the first two bars, and the last.

Taking place over an A chord, an idea like this works great on a country blues jam. Beginning in the G shape, the A root note is played on the G and high E string, with an ascending chromatic scale being played on the B string. Note the repeated use of the b5 (Eb), which adds a bluesy edge to the lick.

The second part sits around the E shape, using a wide stretch on the high E string to reach from the root (A) to the 4th (D), and then sliding down a semitone to the 3rd. It would be possible to see this entire lick as being A

Mixolydian but with that added b5 for that blues sound.

**Example 10a:**

The musical notation for Example 10a shows a guitar lick in A major. The top staff is for the treble clef, and the bottom staff is for the bass clef. The key signature is one sharp, and the time signature is 4/4. The lick consists of four bars. Bar 1 starts with an A chord (A, C#, E) followed by an arpeggiated G triad (G, B, D). Bar 2 continues the arpeggiated G triad. Bar 3 begins with an A chord followed by an arpeggiated G triad. Bar 4 concludes with an arpeggiated G triad. Various slurs and grace notes are used throughout. Fingerings are indicated below the strings: bar 1 (T: 5-2, A: 2), bar 2 (T: 3-5, A: 4), bar 3 (T: 5-7, A: 10), bar 4 (T: 5-8, A: 5). Harmonic positions (H) and picking directions (P) are also marked.

The next lick uses triads over an A chord to create melodic interest.

Bar one consists of an A triad (A, C#, E) over the A chord in the C shape, this then moves down a tone giving a G triad (G, B, D). This technique is called an ‘arpeggio substitution’ - playing one arpeggio over another note to create a different sound. Over a G chord, G, B, and D, are the root, 3rd, and 5th. In the context of that A chord, G is the b7, B is the 9th, and D is the 11th. These notes aren’t as strong over the A chord, but they help to create some jazzy colours before resolving back to the A triad in the next bar.

Arpeggio substitutions can be written as slash chords, or as their implied harmony. G/A tells you that it’s a G triad, over an A bass note. A11sus tells you it’s a dominant 11 chord without the 3rd. While either works, G/A is a little more specific.

**Example 10b:**

The musical notation for Example 10b shows a guitar lick in A major. The top staff is for the treble clef, and the bottom staff is for the bass clef. The key signature is one sharp, and the time signature is 4/4. The lick consists of four bars. Bar 1 starts with an A chord (A, C#, E) followed by double-stops (9-10, 12-9, 10-10). Bar 2 continues with double-stops (8-7, 10-7, 8-7). Bar 3 begins with an A chord followed by double-stops (9-10, 12-9, 10-10). Bar 4 concludes with double-stops (8-9, 10-9, 10-10). Fingerings are indicated below the strings: bar 1 (T: 9-10, A: 10-10), bar 2 (T: 8-7, A: 7-7), bar 3 (T: 9-10, A: 10-10), bar 4 (T: 8-9, A: 10-10).

The next lick combines double-stops with alternate picked single note ideas.

As the lick takes place over an A chord, the double-stop notes are the 3rd, and 5th (C#, and E), and are approached from a semitone below.

The melody in bar two actually looks a little more like the A Dorian scale (A, B, C, D, E, F#, G), not the cleanest choice over an A chord as the C in the scale clashes with the C# in the chord.

The second half of the lick repeats the first bar, then moves down to the G shape and picks notes out of the A Major Pentatonic scale.

**Example 10c:**

The musical example consists of two staves. The top staff is a standard musical notation with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with slurs and grace notes. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature (TAB) showing the high E string (5th string). The TAB includes fingerings: bar 1 (A, B, C, D); bar 2 (E, F, G, A); bar 3 (B, C, D, E); and bar 4 (F, G, A, B). The TAB also indicates fret positions (e.g., 5, 6, 7) and string numbers (e.g., 5, 6, 7).

The fourth lick begins in the lower register and uses notes of the A Major Pentatonic scale in the open position (G shape).

The second part of the lick features another wider stretch as you're playing four notes spanning five frets on the high E string. By now, the movement should make sense, you're adding a chromatic passing tone between the 2nd (B) and 3rd (C#).

The last note requires that you slide up the neck to the 17th fret to play the root note (A). This can feel difficult at first, but generally this is because you're looking at where your hand *is*, rather than where it's *going*. The solution is to be looking at the 17th fret as early as possible, I look at it while I play hammer-on and pull-off in bar three.

#### Example 10d:

The musical example consists of two staves. The top staff is a standard musical notation with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with hammer-ons (H) and pull-offs (P). The bottom staff is a guitar tablature (TAB) showing the high E string (5th string). The TAB includes fingerings: bar 1 (A, B, C, D); bar 2 (E, F, G, A); bar 3 (B, C, D, E); and bar 4 (F, G, A, B). The TAB also indicates fret positions (e.g., 5, 7, 9, 17) and string numbers (e.g., 5, 7).

The final lick uses the A Major scale (A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#) on the high E string, moving down with some fast hammer-ons and pull-offs.

Pick the first two notes with a down and up stroke, and then repick the first note before hammering and pulling to the second. This process is repeated on each note of the scale as you descend the neck. Use the first and second fingers for notes that are a fret apart, and the first and third for two fret gaps.

The beauty of this type of lick is that it can be adapted to fit any scale in any key, as long as you know the notes of the scale.

#### Example 10e:

**8va**

17-19 17-19 17-16-17-16-17-16-14-16 14-16-14-12-14-12-14-12-10-12 10-12-10-9-10-9-10-9-7-9 7-9-7-5-7-5

T  
A  
B

# Chapter Eleven: James Burton

Born in Louisiana in 1939, James Burton would become one of the key names in the development of electric guitar in country music, inspiring millions with his iconic flat-picked chicken pickin' licks.

Primarily self-taught, James took influence from guitarists on the radio, Chuck Berry, Elmore James, Lightnin' Hopkins, and (of course), Chet Atkins. Listening to these players and spending endless hours trying to imitate their playing was a quick method to gain proficiency, resulting in James playing professional gigs as early as age 14.

James would quickly develop a reputation on the session scene, his unique pedal steel inspired lead work was in demand in the '50s, playing with Bob Luman, Ricky Nelson, and the Dale Hawkins band. James would often replace electric strings with lighter banjo strings to help him bend further. Standard 9 gauge strings give a .009, .011, .016, and .024, James was known to use .009, .010, .012, and .024, giving a lot more room for bending the B and G.

James also had success playing dobro guitar, working with Glen Campbell, and Johnny Cash. This would lead him to hit the session stratosphere, sometimes recording as many as six sessions a day! The tragic part of this is that much of the work at the time was undocumented, so it's a case of listening and guessing which records he might have been on.

In 1969 James took the gig with Elvis (a gig he'd turned down in '68), and this would result in super stardom levels for James and his playing. He held this gig until Elvis died in 1977.

During this period, he would record two solo albums, 1969's *Corn Pickin'* and *Slick Slidin'* and 1971's *The Guitar Sounds of James Burton*. Both are fascinating listens as you get the rare chance to hear James come to the fore.

In terms of sound, James' voice comes from his combination of a Telecaster and the snappy attack from the flat pick and first finger (on which he usually used a finger pick). James also took the Paisley Telecaster and made it cool. The originals were released in 1968 but didn't do well, people often ended up buying them cheap and repainting them. When James started using one with Elvis, everybody wanted one, and those original '68-'69 Paisley Telecasters are now extremely sought after. The first lick fits nicely over the last four bars of a 12-bar blues in E, and showcases James' choppy staccato chicken pickin' sound. The concept behind this sound is that it imitates the 'clucky' sound of a chicken. Pluck the G string and bend, then use the pick to pluck the B string, then

re-pluck the B string with the second finger of the picking hand. When doing this, place the pick and fingers on the strings as soon as the notes are played to keep them as short as possible.

Bar two contains a pre-bent note which is repeatedly picked as the bend is released. As before, alternate between the pick and finger to keep the note short and choppy.

The final bars move down to the open position, descending down the E Blues scale (E, G, A, Bb, B, D).

### Example 11a:

The musical score consists of two staves of guitar tablature. The top staff is labeled 'B' and the bottom staff is labeled 'A'. Both staves are in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps.

**Staff A:** Features a 'gradually release bend' indicated by a bracket over a series of bends. Fingerings include 'full' for several bends and specific fingerings like 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 8. A 'P' (pizzicato) is marked above a note at the end of the staff.

**Staff B:** Features slurs (sl.) and grace notes. Fingerings include 9, 7-7, 9, 7-7, 9, 7-7, 9, 7-7, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 8. A 'H' (harmonic) is marked above a note at the end of the staff.

**Staff E:** Shows a transition section with slurs and grace notes. Fingerings include 0, 0, 2, 0, 3-2-0, -2-2-2-0, 0-0, 2-2-2-1-0, 3, 0. A 'P' (pizzicato) is marked above a note at the end of the staff.

**Staff H:** Shows a harmonic section with fingerings 0, 0, 0, 1, 2, 0. A 'H' (harmonic) is marked above a note at the end of the staff.

The second lick outlines an A chord with a classic country idea, similar to one covered in the Chet Atkins chapter. The 6ths played on the D and B strings imply an A, G, and D chord, and each is approached chromatically from a tone below.

As with the last example, alternate between the pick and the first finger to keep these notes as plucky as possible.

The final two bars demonstrate James' pedal steel influence; bending notes on the G while keeping double-stops on the A, and D string. The first double-stop implies a D, then a Bm, and ending on a classic voicing for A.

### Example 11b:

The next lick continues with the chicken pickin' theme, this time descending down the B string while outlining an A major chord.

When learning licks like this, it's important to understand what note you're beginning on, and what note you're bending to. This makes the lick easier to understand conceptually. As an example, the first note is the 4th bending up to the 5th, the second is the 2nd bending up to the 3rd, then the root up to the 2nd. This is what gives licks like this context.

The ending of the lick outlines a D chord with some pedal steel bends using the D Major Pentatonic scale in the G shape.

### Example 11c:

This lick shows how James might have played on a rock n' roll session, using his country pedal steel influences.

Bar one begins with notes from the E shape A Minor Pentatonic scale (A, C, D, E, G), then moves down to the G shape A Major Pentatonic scale (A, B, C#, E, F#) with a bend from the 2nd to the 3rd of the scale on the G string. The lick then moves back up to the E shape at the 5th fret.

The use of the same shape three frets apart, is a big part of many great country guitarists' vocabulary as lots of music can be found in each one.

**Example 11d:**

The musical example consists of two staves. The top staff is a standard musical notation staff with a treble clef, a key signature of A major (two sharps), and a 4/4 time signature. It features a single melodic line with various note heads, stems, and slurs. The bottom staff is a tablature staff for a six-string guitar, labeled 'T' (top string) and 'B' (bottom string). The tablature shows the fret positions for each note in the musical line above. Several arrows and labels are overlaid on the tablature to indicate specific techniques: 'full' is written above arrows pointing up at frets 5 and 2; '(4)' is placed above a horizontal bar at fret 4; 'st.' is placed above a horizontal bar at fret 3; and '1/4' is placed above an arrow pointing up at fret 7. The tablature also shows standard guitar notation like '7', '5', and '4' for open strings.

The final lick continues in the rock n' roll vein with a repeating two-bar idea on an E note played on the G and B strings. As with previous examples, careful use of staccato helps to bring these licks alive.

The second half of the bar uses notes of the A Minor Pentatonic, A Blues, and A Mixolydian scale, in fact, the same group of notes covered back in the Albert Lee chapter (A, B, C, C#, D, Eb, E, F#, G). That's a scale that contains nine notes, and it is easy to collapse into a chromatic mess if you're not careful. It's all about how you use these note, so pay attention to the details of the lick.

### Example 11e:

A

T  
A  
B

1 sl. sl. sl. 2 sl. sl. sl.

5 5 5 5 5 5

3 p 4 p sl. 5

(9) 5 8 7 5 7 7 5 | 7 5 7 6 5 7 3 4 | 5

# Chapter Twelve: Jerry Donahue

Bending strings to imitate other instruments, such as the pedal steel, is nothing new in country guitar but there can be only one king of the string bend, and that'll probably always be Jerry Donahue.

Born in Manhattan in 1946, Jerry's family were big on the arts, and Jerry was encouraged to take guitar lessons (albeit classical) as a child. He would quickly be drawn to electric guitar, taking influence from Chet Atkins, Amos Garrett, and Duane Eddy.

Jerry moved to England early in his career and developed a reputation on the British folk-rock scene. During the late '60s and early '70s he would work with a few notable bands, including Fotheringay and Fairpoint Convention. Between 1969, and 1975, Jerry would appear on almost 25 records, as a player, singer, arranger, mixer, and more.

That's not to suggest that his career quietened down from then, in fact it went from strength to strength with a list of over 330 credits from the Beach Boys to the Proclaimers meaning that yes, he played on the Scottish anthem, I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles).

As a solo artist, Jerry has several albums to his name, and more with his country guitar trio supergroup, the Hellecasters (alongside Will Ray, and John Jorgenson), with 1994's Escape from Hollywood being a great place to start.

As a player, Jerry's style is dominated by his mind-numbing bending prowess, both behind the nut and fretted. He's a big user of multi-voice contrary and oblique motion, bending the strings in ways no one else has tried.

Gear-wise, Jerry has had numerous signature models over the years with Fender, Peavey, Fret King, and Vintage, although each guitar has been from the Telecaster family (aside from an old Fender Hellecaster Strat that is hard to come by), so a good Telecaster on the bridge pickup will get close to his tone.

The first lick here showcases some of Jerry's traditional country chicken pickin' ideas over a D chord

Where 'x' is used in the tab, just relax the fretting hand finger to dampen the string and create a clucky sound. It's not overly important which notes are muted, this is done freely while phrasing.

While bar one looks very much like the D Minor Pentatonic scale, the idea quickly shoots up the neck to the (G shape) D Major Pentatonic scale, then up to the E shape at the 10th fret for some double-stops and blues-rock phrasing.

### Example 12a:

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a standard five-line staff with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It contains two measures of sixteenth-note patterns. The first measure starts with a note labeled 'D' and includes slurs and grace notes. The second measure starts with a note labeled 'H'. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature staff with two horizontal lines representing the neck. It shows the same two measures. Fret numbers are indicated below the strings: 0, X, 0, 3, 5, X, 0, 5, 0, 3, (3), 5, X, 0, 7, 9, 7, 9, 7, X, 10, 12, 12, 12, 10-(10), 12. Arrows point from the 'H' in the first measure to the 5th fret on the B string, and from the '12' in the second measure to the 12th fret on the A string.

The second lick shows Jerry's wonderful hybrid pick-roll technique, and use of open strings to aid in position shifts.

Begin by picking the second fret with the pick, then pluck the A string with the second finger, then the D with the third finger. This basic forward roll over three strings is the base mechanic required to play the first bar, so take that technique and move it across the strings as required.

The second part of the lick requires you to move up the neck by plucking a note on the high E, pulling off to the open E string, then plucking a note on the B string before moving to the next position and ending on the 20th fret for a blues rock bend with an added open string.

### Example 12b:

D

T  
A  
B

2 0 0 3 2 0 2 5 3 0 7 5 0 10 7 0 12 8 0 13 10 0

A

T  
B

15 12 0 17 14 0 19 15 0 20 17 0 0 20 full

This next lick uses the same hybrid picked-roll technique and position shifts to outline an A chord in the open position. The real introduction is the use of behind-the-nut bends.

Behind-the-nut bends require a guitar with enough room behind the nut to push the strings down and raise their pitch. This works great on Telecasters, but is almost impossible on Les Pauls as the distance from the string to truss rod cover is so small.

At the end of the lick you need to play the open D and G strings, then bend both strings up a tone to create an A5 chord. This is extremely difficult (and taxing on the fingers), so it's a case of learning how much pressure to apply, and then doing that automatically.

### Example 12c:

The musical notation consists of two parts: a staff above and a guitar neck below. The staff has a treble clef, a key signature of four sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar neck shows the T (Treble) and B (Bass) strings. The first bar starts with a hybrid pick-roll pattern. The second bar begins with a fretted bend on the B string (from 5 to 3) followed by notes on the E string (0, 0). The third bar shows a position shift with a hybrid pick-roll. The fourth bar features a behind-the-nut bend on the B string (from 0 to 1/2) followed by a C shape lick for a D chord. The fifth bar concludes with a hybrid pick-roll. The final bar ends with a bend on the G string (from 0 to full) and a release back to the open G string.

The next lick begins with traditional fretted bends with notes bent on the B string, and notes played against it on the E string. The first bar can be seen as the b7 to the root with the 3rd and 2nd on the high E string. The next bar can be seen as a C shape lick for a D chord.

The third bar becomes more challenging, pulling off to the open B string then bending the open string up one tone with a behind-the-nut bend. This isn't too different from the previous bar but this time using behind-the-nut bends.

The final bar introduces a behind-the-nut bend featuring contrary motion. Contrary motion is where two voices go in different directions. The G string is pre-bent behind the nut, then gradually released, while the B string is bent up a tone behind the nut. Ideas like this are very hard to do well, but they're unlike anything you'll hear elsewhere.

### Example 12d:

The musical notation consists of two parts: a staff above and a guitar neck below. The staff has a treble clef, a key signature of four sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The guitar neck shows the T (Treble) and B (Bass) strings. The first bar starts with a hybrid pick-roll pattern. The second bar begins with a bend on the B string (from 8 to 9) followed by notes on the E string (7, 8). The third bar shows a position shift with a hybrid pick-roll. The fourth bar features a behind-the-nut bend on the B string (from 5 to full) followed by a release back to the open B string. The fifth bar concludes with a hybrid pick-roll. The final bar ends with a bend on the G string (from 5 to full) and a release back to the open G string.



The final lick takes the previous idea to the extreme for what is probably the hardest lick in the entire book!

Beginning with a simple descending E Major scale using open strings (very much like one of the Chet Atkins licks), this lick really becomes difficult in the second bar as the open E string is played. You must hammer from F# to G# then bend this note up a semitone to A. It's important to bend this note upwards, towards the ceiling.

With those two notes ringing, pick the B note on the G string and bend it up a tone to C# by pulling the note down towards the floor. At this stage, all three notes should be ringing clearly.

With the first finger, catch the unbent B string in the same spot the G string is held. Now release the bends on the D and G strings, while pushing the B string up a semitone from D# to E. This is probably the hardest bending lick I've ever come across, so don't feel defeated and stick with it. From here, play the 12th fret harmonics on the G, B, and E strings, and bend the G string harmonic up to G# with a behind the nut bend.

### Example 12e:

# Chapter Thirteen: Jerry Reed

Born in Georgia in 1937, The Alabama Wildman, Jerry Reed Hubbard, would take the world by storm as a guitar player, composer, singer, and film star during his 50-year career. His influence is one of legend, and on a personal note, he is one of my all-time favourite guitarists.

After a rough start in life (spending almost 7 years in foster homes and orphanages), Jerry was reunited with his family in 1944. He would get a guitar around the age of 8, and quickly fall in love with the picking style of Merle Travis and banjo legend Earl Scruggs' claw hammer style.

Jerry showed promise as a player, singer, and composer, so much so that he was signed to a record label in 1954. This period in Jerry's career is an interesting one, as it's one he would completely disavow later in life.

While he had hundreds of sessions and outings as a solo artist (check out Hully Gully Guitars), it wasn't until his 1967 RCA debut, *The Unbelievable Guitar and Voice of Jerry Reed*, that Jerry considered he'd officially launched.

This debut featured a wonderful display of guitar picking, singing, and writing. His style was so unique that when Elvis recorded Reed's *Guitar Man*, the only way to get it sounding the way it should was to fly Jerry in to play on it. The album also featured songs like *If I Promise* (which would be a hit for Tom Jones), and classics like *Tupelo Mississippi Flash*, *U.S. Male*, and instrumental tour de force, *The Claw*.

Jerry's style was dominated by his use of the thumb pick and complex multi-voice parts. He often refused to call himself a guitar player, instead opting for the title of 'guitar thinker' as he just thought the stuff up, recorded it (or even gave it to people like Chet to record), then never played it again.

Another important part of Jerry's sound was the use of nylon string guitars and the warmer sound they resulted in.

Jerry would go on to record nearly 50 albums before his death in 2008. Highlights include *Me & Chet* (with long-time collaborator and friend, Chet Atkins), *Nashville Underground*, and *Alabama Wildman*.

The first lick showcases Jerry's amazing double-stop style and chordal awareness.

When playing double-stops, it's important to not lose track of the underlying chord. It's not about just playing two random notes from the scale and hoping for the best.

Over the E chord the 5th and root are played with the 5th moving down a semitone to the b5 (11th fret B), then over to an A and C# on the G and B

strings before sliding back into a G# and B (which sound like the underlying E chord).

The second part of the lick shifts down to the A shape, again using the b5 (Bb) to add some bluesy tensions to proceedings.

### Example 13a:

The next lick implies a G7 sound with a series of melodic double-stops and position shifts.

Beginning up at the C shape, the lick moves down the neck with some 6ths before resolving in the E shape.

Note-wise, there are some ear twisters, but they should all make sense. There's the Bb to B (b3 to 3) in bar one, and the C#/Db (b5) in bar two. Mixolydian with added b3 and b5 has been covered many times in the book so far.

### Example 13b:

The next idea shows off Jerry's reverse roll technique, and how it's applied using open strings to create fast cascading ideas.

To play three-string descending patterns Jerry would use the third and second fingers and thumb, but don't be afraid to use the second and first fingers and thumb if it's easier. The pick directions show you where the thumb notes are played, the rest should easily fall into place.

Be careful with the position shift from the 7th fret area to the open position. Timing is everything, so don't rush!

### Example 13c:

This next idea is a prime example of the ‘guitar thinker’ side of Jerry’s playing. When listening to the audio, it just makes *sense* to the ear.

Everything is pleasing and heads in a direction that sounds great.

When you look at the tab and try to play it though, problems quickly arise as it’s much harder to play than hear!

Try learning the first two bars as a little lick for an E chord in the open position, then the lick in bar three, then bars four and five. Each function as their own individual ideas, and the descending nature of things ties them together nicely.

**Example 13d:**

Musical score for Example 13d, featuring two staves of music for a guitar-like instrument. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a key signature of four sharps and a time signature of 4/4. It includes dynamic markings such as *sl.*, *p*, and *H*. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of one sharp and a time signature of 4/4. Both staves show fingerings and string indications (T, A, B) above the notes. The music consists of two measures, separated by a vertical bar line.

Measure 1 (Treble Clef):

- 1st measure: *sl.* (slur), 3rd note has a dynamic *p*.
- 2nd measure: 1st note has a dynamic *H*.

Measure 2 (Treble Clef):

- 1st note has a dynamic *p*.
- 2nd note has a dynamic *H*.

Measure 1 (Bass Clef):

- 1st measure: Fingerings: 2-6, 4-6; String: T (Top), A, B.
- 2nd measure: Fingerings: 3-6, 4-3, 5-2, 0-1; String: T, A, B.

Measure 2 (Bass Clef):

- 1st measure: Fingerings: 4-5, 3-4, 2-1; String: T, A, B.
- 2nd measure: Fingerings: 2-1; String: T, A, B.

Measure 3 (Treble Clef):

- 1st measure: Fingerings: 0-2, 2-3, 2-4, 3-2, 2-2; String: T, A, B.
- 2nd measure: Fingerings: 0-1, 2-2, 4-5, 5-6; String: T, A, B.

Measure 4 (Bass Clef):

- 1st measure: Fingerings: 5-6, 4-5; String: T, A, B.
- 2nd measure: Fingerings: 0-1; String: T, A, B.

The last idea looks at Jerry's jazzier influence. He really could play whatever he heard in his head!

Using the C Country scale over the Am and C, a phrase using notes from the Fdim7 arpeggio (F, Ab, B, D) is used over the E7 to imply an E7b9 sound. A great little arpeggio substitution.

The lick ends with notes of the A Blues scale to keep it cool.

### Example 13e:

The musical score consists of two staves of guitar tablature. The top staff is in Am (A minor) and the bottom staff is in E7alt (E dominant 7th). The notation includes various chords (Am, C, G/B, H) and specific fingerings (e.g., 8-7-5, 8-5, 6-7, 7-8-6, 9, 10, 11, 10, 8, 10, 10, 10). The first staff ends with a fermata over the last note.

Am

C

G/B

H

E7alt

Am

C

T A B

T A B

# Chapter Fourteen: Jimmy Bryant

Born in Georgia in 1925, Jimmy Bryant took guitar playing to a whole new level in the ‘50s with his incredibly fast alternate picking and sweet twin-guitar harmonies.

Bryant began taking his guitar playing seriously in the mid-1940s, inspired by the gypsy jazz picking of Django Reinhardt. So much dedication to the style would inevitably add a heavy jazz influence to his note choice, and the aggressive picking of the genre translated well to electric guitar.

After moving to LA, Jimmy met pedal steel pioneer, Speedy West. The two would play together for many years, both as a featured duo and as part of the Capitol Records backing band. He’s appeared as a guitar player, composer, arranger, bass player, vocalist, and even fiddle player over the years, but it was his solo guitar work that kept him on the map.

Jimmy’s 1954 debut, *Two Guitar Country Style*, is a wonderful introduction to both Jimmy’s exciting style and to the wonders of the pedal steel guitar, which features heavily on the album.

As mentioned, Jimmy appears on many albums and they’re all worth a look. Speedy West’s album *Steel Guitar*, Tennessee Ernie Ford’s *Sixteen Tons*, and the duo album *Country Cabin Jazz* were all released in 1960!

Jimmy’s sound was dominated by the Telecaster, an instrument that’s more versatile than many think. Providing the harsh top-end twang when using the bridge pickup, switching to the neck gives a surprisingly warm, jazzy tone that Jimmy was no stranger to. Fender did release a Jimmy Bryant signature Telecaster (complete with leather scratch plate!), but these are pretty hard to come by. Featuring an ash body, nitro finish, and custom Nocaster style vintage pickups, this tone is something that can be achieved with any vintage-style Telecaster

The first lick takes influence from the blues with a jazzy motif that’s adapted to fit the chords.

Over the G7 chord (E shape) the 3rd (B) is approached from below, but when the chord changes to C7, the chord is the A shape, and the top note is changed to the b7th (Bb) of the chord.

The second half of the lick repeats the G lick, but ends with a position shift up to the 8th fret, ending on the 3rd (B) of the underlying G chord.

The last two bars form a II-V in G, playing an A7 arpeggio with the added b9 (Bb) over the A, and a classic country jazz phrase over the D9.

### Example 14a:

Musical score for Example 14a, featuring two staves of guitar tablature with corresponding musical notation above.

The top staff shows measures 1 through 4. Measure 1 starts with a G chord (B, D, F#) indicated by a G above the staff. Measures 2 and 3 show a C7 chord (G, B, D, F#). Measure 4 shows a D9 chord (D, F#, A, C, E). The bottom staff shows the corresponding fingerings for the guitar strings (T, A, B) across the four measures.

The bottom staff shows measures 5 through 8. Measure 5 starts with a G chord. Measures 6 and 7 show an A7 chord (E, G, B, D). Measure 8 shows a D9 chord. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fingerings for the guitar strings (T, A, B) across the four measures.

The next lick could be used in numerous settings, either static, or over chord changes. When looking at the actual arpeggios being played, the first four notes are a Bb triad (Bb, D, F), then an implied Bbdim7 (Bb, Db, E, G), followed by a Gm idea with chromaticism for the rest of the lick. Licks like this are extremely hard to play at speed as there's lots of cross picking (the name given to lots of string crossing with single notes on each). As with any idea like this, the answer is good alternate picking, so keep that pick moving down and up!

### Example 14b:

It would be impossible to talk about Jimmy without mentioning his incredible two-guitar arrangements.

For this lick, I've written a melody and then played the harmony immediately after so you can play both.

The idea fits loosely around a D chord, beginning on the root (in the A shape) with the 7th and 2nd around it, the second bar sees you move up to the E shape playing around the 3rd (F#).

The harmony isn't something theoretically solid, it simply sounds good, and remember; if something sounds good, it is good. As with the previous part, this part begins in the A shape, but plays the 3rd, the note a semitone below (this time a chromatic note) and the note a scale tone above (G).

This then moves up to the E shape, taking a chord tone on the B string (the 5th), and playing a semitone below.

These kinds of harmonies (that don't adhere to a strict theoretical form) always sound more organic and musical to my ear.

### Example 14c:

D

sl.

H P

7 6 7 7 9 7 9 7 6 7

12 11 10 11 17 15

7 6 7 7 7 8 7 6 7

10 10 9 10 15 14

7 6 7 7 7 8 7 6 7

10 10 9 10 15 14

1/2 H P

full

The next lick is a longer harmony idea that I'll present in two parts. Taking place over an Am – E7 chord change, the idea feels more in line with the gypsy approach to playing: connecting notes of the chord with scale tones, and using chromatic notes a semitone below chord tones for colour.

The real tricky part here is the speed at which Jimmy played ideas like this. Stick to strict alternate picking, and build up speed over time.

**Example 14d:**

Musical score for Example 14d, featuring two staves of guitar tablature. The top staff is in Am (A major) and the bottom staff is in E7 (E dominant seventh). Both staves are in common time (indicated by '4'). The first measure (Am) consists of a single note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The second measure (Am) shows a descending scale-like pattern. The third measure (Am) features a sixteenth-note run. The fourth measure (E7) shows a sixteenth-note pattern. The fifth measure (E7) shows another sixteenth-note pattern. The sixth measure (Am) concludes with a single note.

Am

E7

Am

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

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

The harmony to this part just attempts to follow the contour of the lower part. So, while the lower harmony begins on the root (A), the harmony begins on the 3rd (C) as it's the next chord tone.

As with the previous idea, you'll note that any chord tone (A, C, E) can be approached by a note a semitone below.

The phrase over the E7 is particularly difficult to play at speed, but that's the nature of harmonising something that might have fit easily under the fingers in a lower inversion. The longer you spend with these types of harmony ideas, the faster your ear will tune in and hear the harmonies before you play them.

### Example 14e:

# Chapter Fifteen: Johnny Hiland

Born in Maine in 1975, Johnny Hiland is one of the newer faces flying the high-tech country guitar flag.

Although his first widely available release didn't come out until 2004, Johnny began playing at an extremely young age, playing publicly in talent contests as young as five. He devoted a lot of time to music, being legally blind (suffering from nystagmus from birth) made it difficult to run around in parks with friends, but playing music was a great alternative.

In terms of sound and influence, Johnny grew up in a post Van Halen world, so a lot of the music he was captured by was actually classic rock, hair metal, and shred guitar players like Eddie Van Halen, and Joe Satriani. Growing up playing music with his family also meant that he was exposed to a lot of country music, too, and he's been very vocal about Jimmy Bryant, Albert Lee, Chet Atkins, and Danny Gatton.

This mix of influences sees Johnny slips between western swing, hot country, and high-tech rock from track to track (and sometimes on the same track). This means you need a good command of techniques associated with both country guitar (like alternate picking, hybrid picking, double-stops, and pedal steel bends), and also the shred style techniques (such as fast legato, and two-handed tapping). This makes Johnny's style one of the most technically demanding you'll ever learn.

Johnny moved to Nashville in 1996 to pursue a career in session guitar, quickly picking up a spot in the Don Kelley band. His manager eventually got Johnny a record deal on Steve Vai's Favoured Nations label... by playing his music into Steve's answerphone! His self-titled debut came in 2004, it features some incredible playing and is a must-own.

Guitar-wise, Johnny has worked with many companies, most notably Fender (being their first unsigned artist), PRS (his signature model was their first bolt on), and now Ernie Ball Music Man. He's a big fan of the Axis Sport model, but a good Telecaster is going to get you close to the sound on Johnny's first album. His old Fender was inspired by both Don Rich and Danny Gatton, and featured three Joe Barden pickups Fender had lying around for Gatton signature models.

This first lick mixes pedal steel bends, position shifts, and double-stops for a classic Albert Lee-esque hot country lick over E.

Beginning with a C shape bend, 2nd to 3rd on the B with the 5th on the high E (as played a few times in previous chapters), the lick moves down to the D shape in bar two with a first finger slide from E down to D.

The last few bars are in the open position and use notes of the E

Mixolydian scale with added b3 and b5. The lick ends on an open A, as the progression changes to an A chord.

### Example 15a:

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a guitar. The top staff is for the left hand (picking) and the bottom staff is for the right hand (fretting). The notation includes various markings such as 'full', 'p' (piano dynamic), 'sl' (slur), 'H' (harmonic), and 'A' (arpeggio). The left hand staff has a treble clef, a key signature of four sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The right hand staff has a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. Fingerings are indicated above the notes on the left hand staff, and string numbers (T, A, B) are indicated below the notes on the right hand staff.

**Left Hand (Picking) Staff:**

- Measure 1: Upstroke at 7, downstroke at 5, upstroke at 7 (labeled 'full').
- Measure 2: Downstroke at 5 (labeled 'p').
- Measure 3: Upstroke at 3, downstroke at 4 (labeled 'sl').
- Measure 4: Downstroke at 4 (labeled 'sl').

**Right Hand (Fretting) Staff:**

- Measure 1: Fret 7 (T), 7 (A), 5 (B).
- Measure 2: Fret 7 (T), 5 (A), 3 (B).
- Measure 3: Fret 4 (T), 3 (A), 4 (B).
- Measure 4: Fret 4 (T), 3 (A), 4 (B).

**Left Hand (Picking) Staff:**

- Measure 5: Upstroke at 3, downstroke at 1 (labeled 'p').
- Measure 6: Upstroke at 4 (labeled 'H').
- Measure 7: Upstroke at 5 (labeled 'p').
- Measure 8: Upstroke at 5 (labeled 'H').

**Right Hand (Fretting) Staff:**

- Measure 5: Fret 2 (T), 0 (A), 2 (B).
- Measure 6: Fret 2 (T), 0 (A), 1 (B).
- Measure 7: Fret 2 (T), 1 (A), 0 (B).
- Measure 8: Fret 3 (T), 0 (A), 3 (B).

**Arpeggios:**

- Measure 5: Arpeggio starting at 5 (labeled 'A').
- Measure 6: Arpeggio starting at 4 (labeled 'H').
- Measure 7: Arpeggio starting at 5 (labeled 'p').
- Measure 8: Arpeggio starting at 5 (labeled 'H').

The next lick showcases some of Johnny's western swing influences, characterised by lots of interesting notes. A theory book might tell you they're 'wrong', but in reality they sound great... so they are great! Starting over an A7 chord in the A shape, there's a b3 (C) to 3 (C#) movement, before using a triplet to transition down into the C shape. The second bar features an A, G#, G, and F on the B string, that G# in particular (7th) clashes directly with the G in the A7 chord. When the chord changes to D, the perspective changes to the D Major Pentatonic scale in the G shape (first half of bar three), sliding up to an ascending D7 arpeggio. The fourth bar uses notes of the D Mixolydian scale in the D shape, moving down to end on the 3rd of G (B).

### Example 15b:

Musical score for Example 15b, featuring two staves of guitar tablature with musical notation above.

The top staff begins with an A7 chord (sl) and continues with a series of eighth-note patterns. The notation includes slurs and dynamic markings (p, sf, H). The tablature below shows fingerings (e.g., 12-13-14, 12-14-12-10-12-12) and string numbers (T, A, B).

The bottom staff begins with a D7 chord (p), followed by a series of eighth-note patterns. The notation includes slurs and dynamic markings (p, sf, H). The tablature below shows fingerings (e.g., 9-8-7, 9-12, 11-10-13, 12-15-13-14, 15-14-13-14, 11-12) and string numbers (T, A, B).

The next lick has a bit of Danny Gatton flavour to it, a common theme in Johnny's playing.

Beginning around an A shape the concept here is to play a melody around a repeating E, D#, E on the D string. That D# gives it a pedal steel, or even Jimmy Bryant sound. Remember that playing notes a semitone below a chord tone is always fair game in country music!

The second half of the lick features some higher notes that fit around the G shape. That position has been under-utilised thus far in this book, so pay attention because it's important to have as much vocabulary as you can in each part of the neck.

### Example 15c:

Musical score for Example 15c, featuring two staves of music. The top staff is for the left hand (piano) and the bottom staff is for the right hand (violin). The key signature is A major (no sharps or flats), and the time signature is common time (indicated by '4').

The score consists of two measures. Measure 1 starts with a forte dynamic (f) on the piano. The piano part has two pairs of eighth-note chords: (A, C#) and (D, F#). The violin part has two pairs of eighth-note chords: (E, G) and (B, D). Measure 2 starts with a forte dynamic (f) on the piano. The piano part has two pairs of eighth-note chords: (A, C#) and (D, F#). The violin part has two pairs of eighth-note chords: (E, G) and (B, D).

Fingerings and dynamic markings are indicated above the piano staff:

- Measure 1: Fingerings P (piano) and H (violin) over the first pair of notes.
- Measure 2: Fingerings P (piano) and H (violin) over the first pair of notes.

Fingerings and dynamic markings are indicated below the violin staff:

- Measure 1: Fingerings 14, 14, 13, 14 over the first pair of notes; 12 over the second pair of notes.
- Measure 2: Fingerings 14, 14, 13, 14 over the first pair of notes; 17 over the second pair of notes.

Measure numbers 1 and 2 are placed above the piano staff.

Here's a lick featuring some trickier pedal steel-type bends.

The first two bars look a lot more like a D chord, rather than the A chord being played, but this D/A is a common chord substitution. When thinking of it as D, it fits pretty neatly around the G shape D Major Pentatonic scale, though the pattern also fits well as the D shape A Minor Pentatonic. The second part of the lick features triads (played as double-stops on the G, and B, followed by the D) moving down with bends added for colour on the G string. Very much like in the Brent Mason examples, you're playing an A major, G major, A major movement over the static A chord.

### Example 15d:

A

T  
A  
B

10 9 8 9 10 9 7 7 7

3 5 6 5 6 7 3 4 2 5 2 2 0 4 2 3 4 0

full full full

p p sl.

½ full

The final lick takes inspiration from rock players, but fits great in a country setting (and is not too dissimilar to licks that Keith Urban plays), conjuring up vibes of the Eagles.

Essentially it's just an A triad played around the E shape, and all about the E and A notes, with B, C#, and D used on top for colour.

**Example 15e:**

The image shows two staves of musical notation for a right-hand technique, likely piano or harp. The top staff is labeled 'A' and the bottom staff is labeled 'B'. Both staves are in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps. The notation consists of vertical stems with horizontal dashes indicating the direction of movement. Fingerings are indicated by numbers above the stems: '9' and '5' for the first measure, '10' and '5' for the second, '10' and '5' for the third, and '10' and '5' for the fourth. Measure 2 has a '2' above the stems. Measures 3 and 4 have a '3' above the stems. Measures 4 and 5 have a '4' above the stems. Measures 5 and 6 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 6 and 7 have a '7' above the stems. Measures 7 and 8 have a '9' above the stems. Measures 8 and 9 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 9 and 10 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 10 and 11 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 11 and 12 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 12 and 13 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 13 and 14 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 14 and 15 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 15 and 16 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 16 and 17 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 17 and 18 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 18 and 19 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 19 and 20 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 20 and 21 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 21 and 22 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 22 and 23 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 23 and 24 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 24 and 25 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 25 and 26 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 26 and 27 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 27 and 28 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 28 and 29 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 29 and 30 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 30 and 31 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 31 and 32 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 32 and 33 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 33 and 34 have a '5' above the stems. Measures 34 and 35 have a '10' above the stems. Measures 35 and 36 have a '5' above the stems.

# Chapter Sixteen: Keith Urban

Keith Urban is another player who shows that you don't need to be from the Southern States to be an icon of country music. Born in 1967, Urban is actually Australian, but that hasn't hurt his career; to date winning four Grammy awards and having twenty-two hit singles.

As far as iconic country guitar players go, Keith was a hard sell for this book, but it would be a shame to ignore one of the top faces of modern country music. There's definitely a country edge to his playing but he doesn't hide the fact that his heroes growing up were Mark Knopfler and Lindsey Buckingham.

As a composer and singer, Keith's early material made waves on the country scene, resulting a self-titled debut album with EMI in Australia in 1991. Understanding that the home of country music would never be in Australia, Keith relocated to Nashville in 1992 and forged a reputation as an up and coming singer and composer by writing several songs for other artists, and carrying out session guitar work around town.

Despite having a band (The Ranch) release an album in 1997, it was his 1999 solo album (also self-titled for added confusion!) that saw him really break out on the American market. This would lead to several more albums, each going platinum (some multiple times). 2004's Be Here, is a great starting place and mixes those country influences with pop.

As an instrumentalist, one really has to look no further than the Rollercoaster to hear that Keith is no slouch on the guitar, though that does take a backseat to his award-winning voice a lot of the time. Because of this, Keith's sound is more in the production than the gear, and he's seen playing everything from Telecasters to Les Pauls, SGs to Explorers.

Having said that, I can't help but think of Keith holding a Strat.

The first lick here uses notes of the E Major Pentatonic scale (in the G shape), using classic double-stop vocabulary.

The second half of the lick is an idea Keith uses frequently, playing a melody on one string (the B), and keeping another string open (the high E). In this case, the melody is a descending E Major scale. Dig in on this one and don't be afraid to let the notes ring out.

**Example 16a:**

Musical score for Example 16a, featuring two staves of guitar tablature. The top staff is in E major (4/4 time) and the bottom staff is in A major (4/4 time). The score includes performance markings such as 'full' (with arrows), 'P' (piano dynamic), 'H' (harmonics), and 'sl.' (slurs).

**Top Staff (E major):**

- Measure 1: Fingerings 12-12, dynamic P.
- Measure 2: Fingerings 12-11, 11-9, dynamic H.
- Measure 3: Fingerings 12-11, 11-9, dynamic H.
- Measure 4: Fingerings 12-11, 11-9, dynamic H.
- Measure 5: Fingerings 0-0, 17-17.

**Bottom Staff (A major):**

- Measure 1: Fingerings 0-0, 17-16, 16-16, 16-14, 14-14, 14-12, 12-12, 12-12, 10-10, 10-10.
- Measure 2: Fingerings 0-0, 9-9, 9-9, 7-7, 7-7, 7-7, 4-4, 4-4, 5.

The second lick shows off more of Keith's pedal steel-type licks, beginning by sliding into the E shape, then shifting down for a great sounding bend on the G. Take the B note and bend it up to the C#, then play the D note on the high E string and let them ring into each other. This C# against a D causes a real clash to the ears which wouldn't work well with overdrive, but on a clean Strat, it's a winner.

### Example 16b:

The image contains two parts of musical notation. The top part is a musical score in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps. It features a treble clef, a staff with vertical bar lines, and a bass staff below it. The first measure starts with a note labeled 'E'. The second measure begins with a grace note labeled 'sl.' followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. The third measure starts with a note labeled '2' and continues with a sixteenth-note pattern. The fourth measure starts with a note labeled '3' and continues with a sixteenth-note pattern. The bottom part is a guitar tablature for an electric guitar. It shows six horizontal strings (T, A, B, E, D, G) with vertical fret markers. The tab includes various bends and pitch markings like 'full' and 'P' (partial). The first measure shows a bend from 11 to 13 on the B string. The second measure shows a bend from 12 to 10 on the G string. The third measure shows a bend from 10 to 12 on the E string. The fourth measure shows a bend from 12 to 11 on the B string. The fifth measure shows a bend from 12 to 11 on the B string. The sixth measure shows a bend from 12 to 9 on the B string.

The next idea showcases some traditional country vocabulary outlining basic chord changes. Beginning in the E Major Pentatonic scale in the open position, when the chord changes to A, your perspective needs to change. This all makes sense as an 'A shape' A chord, with the b3 to 3 movement (C – C#) for that country edge.

The third bar outlines a B major and A major chord, beginning by outlining a B/D# triad in the G shape (D#, F#, B), then an A major idea in the E shape. The idea ends over the E chord with some simple great sounding bends, but when analysed you'll notice that the notes played/bent to are the B, E, and G# (notes of the E chord)

### Example 16c:

Musical score for Example 16c, featuring two staves of music with tablatures below them.

**Staff 1 (Top):** Treble clef, 4/4 time, key signature of three sharps. The first measure shows a sustained note followed by a sixteenth-note pattern. Measures 2 and 3 show eighth-note patterns labeled "full" with arrows indicating specific notes. Measure 4 starts with a grace note "H" followed by "A sl." and a sixteenth-note pattern. Measures 5 and 6 show eighth-note patterns labeled "sl." with arrows indicating specific notes.

**Tablature 1 (Bottom Left):** Two staves labeled T and A. The T staff has a "full" arrow pointing to the second note of the first measure. The A staff has a "full" arrow pointing to the second note of the second measure. Measures 3 through 6 show standard notation with tablature numbers below the strings.

**Staff 2 (Middle):** Treble clef, 3/4 time, key signature of three sharps. Measures 1 and 2 show eighth-note patterns labeled "H" and "A sl." respectively. Measure 3 starts with a grace note "H" followed by "E sl." and a sixteenth-note pattern.

**Tablature 2 (Bottom Middle):** Two staves labeled T and A. Measures 1 and 2 show standard notation with tablature numbers below the strings. Measure 3 starts with a grace note "H" followed by "E sl." and a sixteenth-note pattern.

**Staff 3 (Bottom):** Treble clef, 4/4 time, key signature of three sharps. Measures 1 and 2 show eighth-note patterns labeled "H" and "A sl." respectively. Measures 3 and 4 show eighth-note patterns labeled "sl." with arrows indicating specific notes. Measures 5 and 6 show eighth-note patterns labeled "full" with arrows indicating specific notes.

**Tablature 3 (Bottom Right):** Two staves labeled T and A. Measures 1 and 2 show standard notation with tablature numbers below the strings. Measures 3 and 4 show eighth-note patterns labeled "sl." with arrows indicating specific notes. Measures 5 and 6 show eighth-note patterns labeled "full" with arrows indicating specific notes. Measure 6 ends with a fermata over the (14) position.

This lick is a flashier country idea covering different positions of an E major chord.

Beginning around a C shape E triad at the 4th fret, and using classic pedal steel-type bends on the B and E string, the lick shifts up to the G shape to help the melody continue up the neck.

While this has been written and recorded as 1/16th notes, ideas like this work just as well played at half the speed as 1/8th notes, so don't be overwhelmed.

### Example 16d:

The musical notation for Example 16d consists of two staves. The top staff is for the treble clef (G) and the bottom staff is for the bass clef (F). Both staves are in 4/4 time. The key signature is two sharps. The notation includes sixteenth-note patterns and bend markings. The tablature below shows the fretboard with fingerings and bend markings corresponding to the notes above.

This final lick takes influence from some of Keith's rockier tracks, using fast pull-offs around an E major chord up at the 12th fret.

The notes come from the E Major scale and are played using a combination of picked notes and pull-offs.

In all honesty, if I were to record something like this in a session, I'd be inclined to put a capo on the 12th fret, to allow the use of pull-offs to 'open' notes. This sort of studio trick is a staple of an experienced session player like Keith.

### Example 16e:

The musical notation for Example 16e consists of two staves. The top staff is for the treble clef (G) and the bottom staff is for the bass clef (F). Both staves are in 4/4 time. The key signature is two sharps. The notation includes sixteenth-note patterns and bend markings. The tablature below shows the fretboard with fingerings and bend markings corresponding to the notes above.

# Chapter Seventeen: Redd Volkaert

Born in Vancouver in 1958, Redd Volkaert picked up the guitar around the age of 10 and kept with it after falling in love with Merle Haggard, Buck Owens, Led Zeppelin, Albert King, and Johnny Winter.

Redd moved to the US in the late '80s, making it to Nashville in November 1990. At 32, Redd certainly wasn't the youngest cat on the block, but he had enough experience trying to make it in new towns, and would soon land a spot in Don Kelley's band (a name you should be pretty familiar with now!).

In 1997 it became clear that the key to success wasn't just what you knew, but who you knew. Redd was recommended to Merle Haggard by five of his band members. This resulted in one of the biggest gigs in the genre, and a position he held for well over a decade.

Redd is probably the cult hero on this list, having kept a lot of his underground status for all these years by putting less effort into internet marketing, and more time into gigging, which he does regularly in his home of Austin, Texas.

He's released multiple albums since 1998, with every one being worth a listen. Start with his debut, *Telewacker*, and take it from there as you're bound to find some authentic and inspiring picking. 95% of his tone is the bridge pickup of a Telecaster going into a clean amp... you can't get much more country than that!

This first lick uses open strings allowing up to four notes to ring into one at any given time.

In the first bar, use the third finger to play the A note on the D string, pluck the B string with the middle finger, then fret the C# with the second finger and hammer-on to the D note with the fourth finger before plucking the open E with the middle finger again. The same idea is then repeated, but with a C instead of a C#, to create an A minor chord.

The final bar uses notes of the A Mixolydian scale with added b5 and open strings to create a cascading effect. As with the previous bars, allow notes to ring out for that country spice.

### Example 17a:

Musical score for Example 17a, featuring two staves of guitar tablature. The top staff shows a six-string guitar with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff shows a six-string guitar with a bass clef. The score consists of two measures. Measure 1 starts with a sixteenth-note pattern labeled 'A' above the staff, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern labeled 'H' and 'P'. Measure 2 begins with a sixteenth-note pattern labeled 'Am' above the staff, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern labeled 'H' and 'P'. The tablature below the staff shows fingerings: 'T' (thumb), 'A' (index), and 'B' (middle). Measure 1 has fingerings: 0-6-7-7-6-0. Measure 2 has fingerings: 0-5-7-7-5-0. Measure 3 starts with a sixteenth-note pattern labeled 'A' above the staff, followed by a sixteenth-note pattern labeled 'H' and 'P'. Measure 4 begins with a sixteenth-note pattern labeled 'H' and 'P', followed by a sixteenth-note pattern labeled 'sl.' (staccato) and 'p' (pizzicato). Measure 5 begins with a sixteenth-note pattern labeled 'p' (pizzicato), followed by a sixteenth-note pattern labeled 'sl.' (staccato). The tablature below the staff shows fingerings: 0-6-7-7-6-0, 5-8-0-4-3-0, 5-6-7-6-0, and 3-4-0.

The next lick showcases how Redd might outline an E chord in the open position. As expected, you're using notes of the E Mixolydian scale with added b3, and b5, this combination of Mixolydian and approach notes is easy to solo with when you understand how the b3 and b5 are used. Use the second and third fingers to hybrid pick the double-stops, alternating against the notes on the D string with the pick.

### Example 17b:

This lick shows how Redd might apply double-stops and behind the nut bends to outline an A chord.

As with the previous lick, the second and third fingers are used to hybrid pick the double-stops, while the pick is used to play the notes on the D string.

As with the Jerry Donahue licks, the behind-the-nut bend should be executed with two fingers if possible. Pluck the open E, then the B and using the first and second fingers, press down on the string behind the nut to bend the open B up to a C#. This same idea is then repeated, but pre-bending the open G up to an A and releasing.

### Example 17c:

Here's a lick with some pedal steel-type bends on the G string. These are much harder to execute than the more common B string bends, but they have a distinct voice that cries guitar.

It's important to keep track of the CAGED positions you're using so these licks can be transposed. The first two beats fit around an A shape, bending the b7 to the root with the 3rd on the B. Beats 3 and 4 transition down to the E shape, before resolving to the G shape in the second bar. The lick then ends with a double-stop in the C shape.

### Example 17d:

The final lick takes more of a western swing edge. Notice the use of both a G# (the 7th) and G (b7) in bar one which really twists the ear as you move from the A shape down to the C.

As the chord changes to D, 6ths are employed on the G and high E string, connected by chromatic passing notes on the G. Play the notes on the G string with the pick, and notes in the high E with the second finger of the picking hand.

The lick resolves to a G chord by playing the 3rd, and root of a G chord in the E shape.

**Example 17e:**

**A**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

**B**

12 14 13 12 13 10 12 10 12 12 10 9 10

**D**

10 8 7 5 3

**G**

11 10 9 8 7 6 5 5 3 4

# Chapter Eighteen: Roy Nichols

Born in Arizona in 1932, Roy Nichols is one of the true elder statesmen of country guitar, influencing millions along with Merle Haggard, who he played with for 22 years. He was instrumental in the spread of the Bakersfield sound, along with peers like Buck Owens and Don Rich. Nichols began playing professionally around the age of 16, garnering quite the reputation on the scene for his fluid finger picking, and pedal steel influenced bends. A few recordings exist from this period, most notably his work with the Maddox Brothers & Rose, but from 1965 his main gig was alongside Merle Haggard. He was credited on over 40 releases, including publishing 19 of his own songs, and seeing Street Singer get recorded by Merle and be nominated for a Grammy.

Roy was never a band leader with his own albums, which is a great shame, but he does have some iconic solos with Merle where he was often allowed to cut loose and showcase his influential style.

Roy's style certainly isn't one that's going to give you technical challenges compared to the likes of Brent Mason, but it's one that came decades before the hot pickers of today began their careers. Because of this, Roy's melody-based style with great bends and interesting notes is an easy one to take influence from, but a hard one to master.

Each of these licks takes place over a G chord, and as such notes of the G Mixolydian scale (G, A, B, C, D, E, F) are added around a G Major Pentatonic framework (G, A, B, D, E), with added chromatic passing and approach notes.

The first note begins with a repeating ascending G Major Pentatonic scale idea around the E shape. This should be executed with alternate picking on 1/8th notes to allow the idea to be executed at faster speeds.

The second half of the lick remains in the E shape, using a Bb as an approach note to the B on the G string, then descending down a jazzy sounding pattern featuring both the b7 (F) and the 6th (E).

## Example 18a:

Here's an idea that begins in a similar way, but takes it in another direction as the lick develops. This time playing the b5th (Db) and b3 (Bb) in bar 2 implies a blusier G Blues scale sound.

Bar three features a big part of Roy's approach to these jazzier notes, playing chromatic approach notes and sliding them up a semitone. In this instance, Db sliding up to a D (b5 to 5).

The final bar also features a chromatic approach note of F#, played between the F (b7) and G (root).

### Example 18b:

The third lick begins with a similar melodic fragment, but an octave higher, in the A shape. This time adding the b9 (Ab) as a sliding approach note to the 9th (A).

The second bar features more slides into notes, first an F# (a non-scale tone) and then an E (a scale tone), it's the continuity of these slides on strong beats that helps tie the lick together.

The second part of the lick looks a lot more like the D Blues scale, but over G the Ab gives you the gritty b9 sound, one that indicates real confidence with jazz vocabulary.

### Example 18c:

This next lick features more uses of the Bb (b3) and Ab (b9) in the first bar around the E shape, before moving between the 6th (E) and b6th (Eb) with sharp staccato notes to grab attention.

The next bar continues with melodic 1/8th notes around the G Major Pentatonic scale, along with the b3 to 3 movement covered numerous times before.

The final bar ascends up a G7 arpeggio and ends on the 6th (E). The aspect to focus on in a lick like this is the characteristic sound of the 6th (E), as found in the Major Pentatonic scale, and the darker sounding b7 (F) as found in the dominant 7 chord/Mixolydian scale.

### Example 18d:

A musical score for a guitar lick in G major. The top staff shows a sixteenth-note pattern starting with a grace note bend on the 4th string. The bottom staff is a tablature with three strings labeled T, A, and B. Fingering is indicated above the notes: 1 (bend), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 5, 4, 5, 4, 3, 4, 5, 2, 3, 4, 5, (5), 4, 3, 6, 5. Dynamic markings include 'G' at the beginning, 'H' above the 4th string, 'sl.' above the 5th string, and 'p' above the 3rd string.

The final lick also takes place around the E shape, and uses the same outside notes found in the previous examples.

What sets this lick apart is the use of more syncopated rhythms in the second and third bars. In this particular setting I've outlined how Roy might have used the Blues scale to fit in around his rockier contemporaries, using 1/4 tone bends and gracenote hammer-ons.

#### Example 18e:

A musical score for a guitar lick in G major. The top staff shows a sixteenth-note pattern starting with a grace note bend on the 4th string. The bottom staff is a tablature with three strings labeled T, A, and B. Fingering is indicated above the notes: 1 (bend), 2, 3, 3, 6, 5, 5, 3, (3), 5, 3, 5, (5). Dynamic markings include 'G' at the beginning, 'H' above the 4th string, 'sl.' above the 5th string, and a '1/4' symbol above the 3rd string.

# Chapter Nineteen: Steve Wariner

Born in Indiana, in 1954, Steve Wariner is one of just four players bestowed with the title of CGP (Certified Guitar Player), by the one and only Chet Atkins (The others being Jerry Reed, John Knowles, and Tommy Emmanuel). So, he's certainly not someone to underestimate! As a youth, Steve took influence from George Jones, Chet Atkins, and later, Glen Campbell. After playing and touring professionally in many bands, he got his big break when Chet Atkins had him sign with RCA Records, in 1976.

Releasing his self-titled debut album in 1982, he began to find success with the release of the single, All Roads Lead to You, which reached the number 1 spot. There was an undeniable influence from Glen Campbell and the Nashville sound that Merle Haggard and Buck Owens had grown weary of all those years ago. While there's plenty of guitar playing, the songs are well produced and feature heavy string arrangements.

In 1991, Steve's tenth album, I Am Ready, would be his first to reach the gold certification of 500,000 sales. This album sounds a world apart from his debut, focusing more on the guitar and using crunchy rhythm parts (and no strings!).

From a guitar playing perspective, 1996's instrumental offering, No More Mr. Nice Guy is a great place to dig into Steve's playing. It showcases him to be a hot-picking machine, with a distinct voice on the instrument led by a largely Albert Lee-style 'Stratty' tone over the more traditional Telecaster vibes heard from his peers. Using the bridge and middle pick-up combined with enough compression and drive to add a little hair to the tone without losing that clean chime will get you close.

The first lick features faster 1/16th notes over an A chord, using notes of the A Mixolydian scale with the added b3 (C) as an approach to the 3rd. You may also notice the use of an Em7 arpeggio (E, G, B, D) in the final beat of the first bar, this use of arpeggio substitution shows a sophisticated, smooth jazz influence.

Position-wise, the idea fits around the E shape for the most part, with a brief visit to the D shape towards the end of the first bar, and then ending up around the C shape.

**Example 19a:**

A

T  
A  
B

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

The second lick is played over a G chord, but looks very much like Em Minor Pentatonic in the E shape, this shares the notes of the G Major Pentatonic in the G shape.

As with the previous lick, this idea uses 1/16th notes to maintain a fast sound at a slower speed. Things really kick up a notch in the second bar, using pull-offs with 1/32nd notes to add some excitement.

Just as in previous examples, use the middle and ring fingers to pluck the double-stops, while using the pick to play the notes on the D string. This hybrid picking style is a standard technique among country players.

### Example 19b:

G

T  
A  
B

full 12-15 12-15-14-12 15-12-15-12 14-12-14-12 14-14 12-12-14-12-14-12 12-12-14-12-14-12 14-14-12-10-12

Here's another idea using the Major Pentatonic scale, but this time in E with the addition of the b3 (G).

The difference between this idea and the last is that this idea moves down the neck, one position at a time. It's a masterclass in position shifting, beginning in the G shape, moving down to the A in beat 3, and then the E shape (open position) towards the end of the second bar.

There's a definite Albert Lee sound to this one, especially with the tone, but as previously mentioned, Albert is a hard influence to avoid in this genre.

### Example 19c:

E

T  
A  
B

full 9-11 12-9 12-11-9-11 9-7-9-8 7-7-7-5-7-5 7-3-4-0 2

Example 19d fits around the G Major Pentatonic scale from the second lick, but this time adding the 4th (C) on the B string. As with many of Steve's licks, this idea is played at speed, so aim for consistent alternate picking, using down strokes on the 1st and 3rd 1/16th notes in groupings of four, and upstrokes on the 2nd and 4th.

The second half of the lick moves down the neck using repeating bends, bending from B to C# on the G string, then picking C# on the B string twice. This then moves down the G Major scale before resolving to a D chord using a pedal steel-type bend in the G shape.

### Example 19d:

Notation for Example 19d shows a 16th-note pattern starting with a G note. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fingerings on the A and B strings. The lick consists of two main parts: a pentatonic run with a C note on the B string, followed by a descending G major scale with a C# bend and a final D chord bend.

This final idea takes a simple Mixolydian idea and transposes it down through three different dominant 7 chords, first a C7, then a Bb7, then an A7. While many different approaches can be used to execute this, alternate picking will yield the most consistent results.

The final bar finishes the idea with a simple ending, very common to the country style.

Licks like this can be used over these exact chord changes, though they will also work as an outside approach on a static A7 chord.

### Example 19e:

Notation for Example 19e shows a lick transitioning between C7, Bb7, and A7 chords. The top staff shows the lick with fingerings for the A and B strings. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fingerings on the A and B strings. The lick ends with a simple ending.

# Chapter Twenty: Vince Gill

Born in Oklahoma in 1957, Vince Gill is the quintessential country guitar player and singer, having been awarded twenty (!) Grammy awards throughout his illustrious 40+ year career.

Vince grew up in a family passionate about music, learning to play guitar, bass, mandolin, dobro, and fiddle, all while showing promise as an aspiring singer and songwriter. He wouldn't debut professionally until he was 22, appearing on Pure Prairie League's 1979 album, *Can't Hold Back*. In 1984, Vince released his debut album, *Turn Me Loose*, For RCA Records, but nothing charted higher than number 38. It was his third album, 1989's *When I Call Your Name*, which saw Vince achieve wider success, reaching the number 2 spot on the US Billboard Top Country Albums and eventually going twice platinum. The follow-up (*Pocket Full of Gold*) is a great place to start with Vince as it shows a man with full support of his label writing some excellent songs (like *Liza Jane*), and playing some head spinning guitar.

To date, Vince has almost 20 records to his name, including many fantastic solo albums and recordings with others like Olivia Newton-John and Nashville western swing outfit, The Time Jumpers. Their self-titled debut album is a great listen and features some great examples of Vince playing in a slightly jazzier setting.

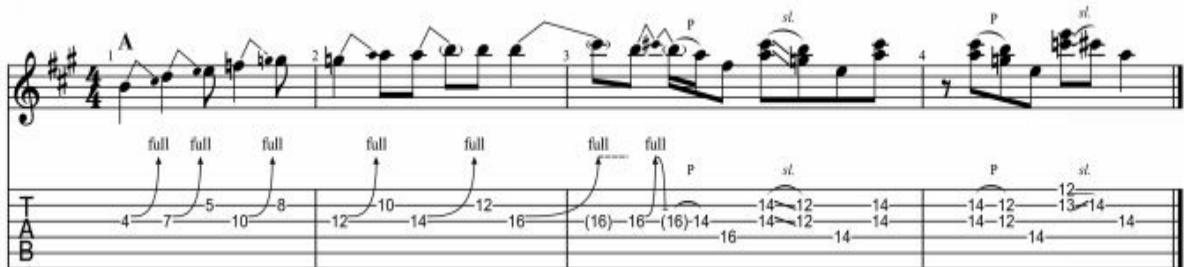
Vince's style is a far-reaching one, being as comfortable in outlaw and Bakersfield country as he is in soul and western swing. He's most famous for his '53 Fender Telecaster, which he picked up for \$450, and has been playing since 1980. One of his favourite tricks is to roll the tone off on the guitar enough to take the real high end off the sound without losing the clarity of the note, this helps dramatically when playing on the bridge pickup.

The first example showcases how Vince might move from the lower part of the neck to the higher when playing over an A chord.

Using a series of bends on the G with repeating notes on the B and shifting up from the open position to the G shape, the best way to keep track here is to focus on playing the E, G, A, and B notes on the B string, then keep the bend notes two frets higher.

The lick ends by slipping from the G shape down to the A with double-stops. As usual, these should be executed with the middle and ring fingers, while using the pick on the D string.

**Example 20a:**



The second lick also outlines an A chord, using notes of the A Major Pentatonic scale and slick pedal steel-type bends. Vince is no stranger to good pedal steel players, playing with Paul Franklin.

Beginning with a 5th to 6th fret bend against the root in the G shape, bar two quickly moves down through the C shape, D shape, and ending in the E.

As with many of the licks in this book, the thing that sets these ideas apart from uninspired ideas you might have tried learning before, is the use of notes that aren't in the scale. In this case, the D#/Eb in bar four is just a little bit cooler than the D you might expect if you were only playing notes from the A Mixolydian scale.

### Example 20b:

The image shows two staves of sheet music, labeled A and B, in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps. Staff A starts with a series of eighth-note chords. Fingerings below the staff indicate a sequence of 15, 15, 15, 15, 15, followed by 12, (12), 12, 12, 10, 12, (12), 10, 11. Dynamics include 'full' upstrokes and a 'p' dynamic at the end. Staff B continues with eighth-note chords, with fingerings 10, 8, 10, 10, (10), 8, 9, 8, 7, 8, 5, 7, 6, 7. It includes slurs, grace notes, and dynamics 'sl.', 'p', and 'H'.

This next lick sits on an E chord and moves between three distinct positions.

Beginning around the E shape with some great little double-stops, the lick moves down to the G shape in the second bar. To execute this, go for the 10th fret with the second finger, allowing you to slide up and play the note on the G string with the first.

The second half of the lick plays a classic idea moving down the E Country scale, ending with a slide down to the A shape. It's important to play the pull-offs and slides in the right place to get the correct articulation.

### Example 20c:

The musical example consists of two staves. The top staff is a sixteenth-note pattern starting on the E string at the 12th fret. The bottom staff shows the guitar neck with fingerings: 12-15-14, H, 12-13, 14-12, 14-10-11. An arrow labeled "full" points from the 10th fret to the 11th fret, indicating a slide up to the G string. The lick ends with a slide down to the A shape.

Another aspect of Vince's playing that's worth stealing is his use of pull-offs to open strings during position changes.

Taking place over a G chord, some basic chromaticism is used around the G Minor Pentatonic scale, before sliding up to the 7th fret, plucking the 5th fret G (with the second finger) and pulling off to the open G. This is then repeated, but two frets lower. This works well because while the fretted notes change, the open note stays the same and helps to keep it rooted in the key of G.

The lick ends by sliding up to the 3rd and root of G, this time in the C shape.

### Example 20d:

The musical example consists of two staves. The top staff is a sixteenth-note pattern starting on the G string at the 4th fret. The bottom staff shows the guitar neck with fingerings: 4-5-4-3, 5-3-0, sl., 5, 3, 5-0, 3-0, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 8. An arrow labeled "sl." points to the 4th fret, indicating a slide up to the 5th fret.

The final lick takes this idea to the next level, moving down the neck from the G shape, to the D. The best way to look at this idea is to ask yourself how each note relates to G. First it's the 3rd and the root, then the 2nd and b7, then the root and 6th, then the b7 and 5th, then the 6th and 4th.

Ideas like this are great, but they're pretty key specific, doing the same

thing in A is possible, but the open G string is now the darker sounding b7. Doing the same sort of thing in F# is virtually impossible, though, as the open G sounds awful, so open string ideas can be double edged swords. The lick ends with a great little ascending idea based around the G Country scale in the C shape. To keep things interesting, I've played consecutive chromatic notes on the high E string.

**Example 20e:**

The musical score consists of two parts. The top part is a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features dynamic markings such as *sforzando* (sf.), *pianissimo* (p), and *pianississimo* (pp). The bottom part is a bass tablature with two strings labeled A and B. The tab shows fingerings and string crossings. The bass tab has a different key signature, likely A major, indicated by the letter A above the staff. The tab includes the following note positions:  
String A: 10, 12, 0, 10, 0, 9, 0, 7, 0, 5, 8, 9, 7, 9, 8, 11, 7, 8, 9, 10, 6, 7, 8.  
String B: 12, 14, 12, 10, 8, 7.

# Chapter Twenty-One: Whit Smith

Originally hailing from Greenwich, Connecticut, Whit Smith gained a reputation as part of the western swing renaissance in 1998 when his band, The Hot Club of Cowtown, released their debut album, *Swingin' Stampede*.

Whit was raised by a musical family and by the time he was a teen he was out playing in rock bands inspired by his heroes, Eddie Van Halen, Jimmy Page, and Keith Richards. He took lessons with many people, the most notable being Chick Corea's one-time sideman, Bill Connors.

Eventually he would make the move to New York, and while working in a record shop he was exposed to the infectious sounds of western swing artists like Bob Wills and Milton Brown. This would lead him down a jazz path, and take the music of Django Reinhardt more seriously.

Around this period he would also meet Danny Gatton, who would help steer him in the direction of more country-flavoured jazz players. Richard Lieberson helped Whit screw down into his new passions, dissecting the music and understanding the evolution of players from 1927 to 1947.

The next step was relocating to Austin, Texas, in order to make a go at it with the Hot Club of Cowtown. It was a roaring success and to date the band have 13 albums available. Whit also has one solo album: a duo with Matt Munisteri and has also released excellent album with Bruce Forman and Rich O'Brien.

When it comes to Whit's sound, he tries to be as authentic as possible. While old swing players like Eldon Shamblin were happy to experiment with solid body electrics, Whit has a collection of pre-1930 Gibson L5s, and uses a 1946 L5 on the road. None of these originally came with pickups, but his '46 was fitted with one before he owned it. Someone even had it modified to include a cutaway!

Whereas a lot of the licks covered in this book take place over major chords, for the most part it's implied that they're dominant 7 chords.

Whit's style is more rooted in jazz though, so when he sees a major chord, he's a lot more likely to treat it as major. So instead of C Mixolydian (C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb) Whit is more likely to play the C Major Pentatonic scale (C, D, E, G, A) or the C Major scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B) That difference between B and Bb makes all the difference.

This first lick uses the C Major Pentatonic scale in the E shape, with the b3 (Eb) added as an approach note to the D in bar 2.

The lick is played in bars one and two, then repeated in bars three and four, this time with a slight variation in the ending.

### Example 21a:

The notation shows a descending arpeggio pattern on two strings. The first two beats (1 and 2) play an Em triad (E, G, B) on the 10th fret. This moves down a semitone to Ebm (Eb, Gb, Bb) on the 9th fret, and then down another semitone to Dm (D, F, A) on the 8th fret. The arpeggio then resolves to a C major in the C shape, followed by a C Major Pentatonic idea with added b3 (Eb) in the E shape.

The next lick features some descending arpeggios played on two strings. Beats 1 and 2 contain an Em triad (E, G, B), this then moves down a semitone to Ebm (Eb, Gb, Bb) and then down another semitone to Dm (D, F, A). This approach of taking a musical idea and then moving it down chromatically is a great way to add some jazzy flavours to your playing. The arpeggio idea then resolves to a C major in the C shape, then a C Major Pentatonic idea with added b3 (Eb) in the E shape.

### Example 21b:

The third lick focuses on rhythm, playing strong staccato notes in the first bar, and simple rhythms with notes taken from a C major triad (C, E, G). The final two bars feature basic triads, but with chromatic passing tones. The idea begins by playing a C major triad, that approaches the E from an Eb. Next a G major triad is played (G, B, D), but the E from the C chord, and the D in the G chord are connected with an Eb on the high E. The idea then resolves to another C major triad, a perfect end to a swingin' lick!

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### Example 21c:

The penultimate lick features interesting notes around a C6 chord sound. So, beginning by hammering from the 5th (G) to the 6th (A) and back, the note then slides down a semitone to the #4 (F#). This idea is then repeated, but on a lower string group. A chord tone is

played (E) and then hammered to the next scale tone (F). Pull off and slide down to the note a semitone below the chord tone (Eb).

Bar three contains an F#m7b5 and Em7 arpeggios that resolve back to the root of C.

### Example 21d:

The musical example consists of four bars of guitar tablature. The first bar starts with a C note, followed by a hammer-on (H) to an E note, a pull-off (P) to a D note, and a slide (sl.) to an Eb note. The second bar begins with an H to an F# note, followed by a P to a G# note, and a sl. to an A note. The third bar features an F#m7b5 arpeggio (F#-A-C-Eb) and an Em7 arpeggio (E-B-D-G). The fourth bar concludes with a C chord. Below the tablature, a six-string guitar neck shows the fretting for each bar, with numbers indicating the string and fret for each note.

The final lick implies lots of slightly different sounds over a C chord. The first bar simply contains notes of the C Major Pentatonic scale. The second bar sharpens the 5th up to a G#, creating a C augmented triad sound. The next bar then takes that G# and move it up again to the 6th (A) creating a C6 sound. This gives you an inside sound in bar one, something a little spicy in bar two, then an inside sound in bar three, all tied together with a nice ascending chromatic melody.

The final bar reaches up for a Bb (the b7) and resolves to C via the b3 to 3 movement.

### Example 21e:

The musical example consists of four bars of guitar tablature. The first bar starts with a C note. The second bar begins with a G# note. The third bar starts with a C note. The fourth bar begins with a Bb note. Below the tablature, a six-string guitar neck shows the fretting for each bar, with numbers indicating the string and fret for each note.

# Chapter Twenty-Two: Transposing Licks

Now that you've got a decent selection of licks under your fingers, it's time to start digging in to how you can use them. On the one hand, the worst part of learning licks is that you're learning the vocabulary of someone else, but on the other hand, it's important to have a sense of how the language works. The average lick book is great at teaching the first part, but often leaves you with nothing for the second part, so here's everything you need to know to make these licks work for you.

For the sake of authenticity, the one hundred licks are in the keys that the player recorded them in, but what we're going to do here is take six of those licks and transpose them (change their key) to work in the key of A. This is an extremely useful skill, as from time to time you might hear a great lick in an uncommon key. You wouldn't want to be limited to using it only in Eb (for example), especially if you're recording a great track in A where you think it might work a treat.

As explained in the first chapter, every lick in this book has been described in relation to a CAGED chord shape. This should make it extremely easy to transpose any lick into a key that's useful to you.

As a first example, here's one of the Roy Nichols licks (Example 18a).

## Example 22a:

The musical notation consists of two parts. The top part is a staff with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (G major), and a 4/4 time signature. It shows a lick starting at the 3rd fret of the 6th string, moving up to the 5th fret, then down to the 3rd fret, and ending on the 4th fret. The bottom part shows the corresponding fingering on a guitar neck diagram. The neck has six strings labeled T, A, D, G, B, E from left to right. Fret numbers 1 through 5 are marked above the strings. Fingerings are indicated below the strings: for the first measure, fingers 2 and 5 are shown on the 6th string; for the second measure, fingers 2 and 5 are shown on the 5th string; for the third measure, fingers 2 and 5 are shown on the 4th string; for the fourth measure, fingers 3 and 2 are shown on the 3rd string; and for the fifth measure, fingers 2 and 5 are shown on the 2nd string.

This idea begins around the E shape barre chord at the 3rd fret, starting on the 3rd of the chord (B).

To transpose this idea it's as simple as seeing the same E shape barre chord, and 'moving' it to become an A chord. In this case at the 5th fret. From here you should be able to 'see' the lick around the chord form in the same way you learned it before. So, move up to the 3rd (C#) and play the same fingering as before.

The notes have changed, but the pattern/shape (or more importantly, the intervals) are exactly the same!

## Example 22b:

**A**

T  
A  
B

4—7—4—7—4—7— | 4—7—4—7—4—7— | 7—5—6—7—4—5—4—7— | 4—7—7— |

Here's one of the Albert Lee licks (Example 2c) played in the original key of E.

**Example 22c:**

**E**

T  
A  
B

9—11—12—9—12—11—9—11— | 9—7—9—7—5—6— | 7—4—6—4—5—7— | full

When learning the original lick, I can see that it's played in the G shape (I see the 9th fret D, G, and B strings played with the first finger), so moving this up to the key of A is as simple as moving that triad shape up to A, at the 14th fret.

From there, the other position shifts just fall into place as they're related to the shapes you're playing in, rather than the key the lick was learned in.

**Example 22d:**

T  
A  
B

14—16—17—14—17—16—14—16— | 14—12—12—9—12—10—11— | 12—9—10—11—9—11—9—10—12— | full

This great little E Major Pentatonic lick is taken from the Steve Wariner chapter (Example 19c)

**Example 22e:**

T  
A  
B

11—9—12—9—12—11—9—11—9—7—9—8—7—7—7—5—7—5—2— | 7—3—4—0— | full

As with the previous lick, this too begins in the G shape. I track this by seeing the 12th fret of the high E played with the fourth finger, so moving this to the key of A means moving that finger up to the A at the 17th fret.

This means the bend begins on the 16th fret, rather than the 11th. In order to make this lick work in the key of A, I've made a small adjustment to the end as the original lick used an open E. Instead I played the A note on the D string.

### Example 22f:

The musical notation shows a guitar lick in A major (three sharps). The top staff is a treble clef staff with sixteenth-note patterns. The bottom staff shows the guitar strings (T, A, B) with fingerings: T (16), A (14), B (14-17-14-16-14-12-12-14-13-12-12-12-10-12-10-12-8-9). Articulations include 'p' (pizzicato), 'sl.' (slap), and 'full' (full bow).

Here's one of the Danny Gatton licks (Example 7c), played over an E chord in the open position.

### Example 22g:

The musical notation shows a guitar lick in A major (three sharps) over an open E chord. The top staff is a treble clef staff with sixteenth-note patterns. The bottom staff shows the guitar strings (T, A, B) with fingerings: T (3-2-0), A (3-2-0), B (3-2-0-1-2-0-2-1-0-3-4-2-4-2-4-6-4-6-5-6-7-5). Articulations include 'p' (pizzicato), 'H' (hammer-on), 'sl.' (slap), and 'full' (full bow).

Even though this is in the open position, it's still based around a CAGED chord, an open E! So, moving the lick to the key of A means moving up to the 5th fret.

With the 5th fret low E as your root note; the first note is now the 8th fret high E (C).

You'll note I've adjusted the articulation ever so slightly; this makes the lick a little easier to play.

### Example 22h:

The musical notation shows a guitar lick in A major (three sharps) over an open E chord. The top staff is a treble clef staff with sixteenth-note patterns. The bottom staff shows the guitar strings (T, A, B) with fingerings: T (8-7-5), A (8-7-5), B (8-7-5-6-7-5-7-6-5-8-9-7-9-7-9-11-9-11-10-11-10-12-10). Articulations include 'p' (pizzicato), 'H' (hammer-on), 'sl.' (slap), and 'full' (full bow).

Here's one of the jazzier Brad Paisley phrases (Example 3d), originally in the key of G.

### Example 22i:

Hopefully by this stage the process is becoming automatic.

The next lick takes place over a G chord and is played in the G shape. This can be tracked by the little finger on the high E string.

Now move that up to an A (17th fret) and the lick has been transposed into the key of A. It really is as simple as that.

### Example 22j:

The final example has been taken from the Jerry Donahue chapter (Example 12e), and features that mind-twisting bend in the key of E.

### Example 22k:

This lick presents some problems as the open string idea makes it much harder to just shift everything up to the key of A.

Instead, I tackle it in two sections, the later part is played in the A shape (which has the root at the 7th fret A, played with the fourth finger) so that part is moved up so that fourth finger is on an A, 12th fret A string.

For the open string lick, I've used the same approach, playing an open string A note, and descending down the scale as best I can, using open strings where possible.

You may also notice that the behind-the-nut bend is different too. This is because you're bending to notes in an open A chord, not an open E chord.

### Example 22l:

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is a standard musical notation with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a 4/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with various note heads and stems, and dynamic markings such as 'p' (piano) and 'ff' (fortissimo). The bottom staff is a tablature for a six-string guitar, showing the strings T (top), A, and B (bottom). The tablature includes fingerings (e.g., 5, 8, 3, 6, 2, 0) and string crossings, represented by arrows pointing from one string to another. Performance instructions like 'full' and '1/2' are also present.

Now take a look back at some of the other licks in the book and try transposing them. The sky is the limit, the more you do, the easier it becomes.

# Chapter Twenty-Three: Changing Context

Now that you've got a grip on putting the licks you've learned in different keys; the last skill is being able to adapt the quality of the licks so you can make them work in any key... and any context.

So, what exactly does this mean?

While a lot of country music takes place over major chords (like C major), that doesn't mean that you won't encounter other sounds. If you have a lick in C major, it makes sense that you're able to adapt it to work in C minor, or over a C7, or a Cmaj7, or anything else that might come up. As an example, here's the start of a 12-bar blues, but played in a way a western swing player might approach it.

## Example 23a:

The musical notation shows a 12-bar blues progression in C major. The top staff is a treble clef staff with vertical bar lines and Roman numerals 1 through 12. The bottom staff is a guitar neck diagram with six strings labeled T, A, B from top to bottom. Chords indicated above the staff are C, Cmaj7, C6, Cmaj7, C, Cmaj7, and C7. The guitar tab shows fingerings and string numbers (e.g., 8, 9, 10) corresponding to the chords above.

It's possible to look at this and say the first three bars are in the key of C, while the fourth bar is actually in the key of F (C7 being the V chord in the key of F), but I find this 'key centric' approach doesn't yield effective soloing results as playing a generic lick in the key of F over the C7 doesn't sound great.

To demonstrate that idea, here's Example 5d (a Don Rich lick) but transposed to the key of F. Technically it 'fits' but it just doesn't sound right. It sounds like an F tonality because it is. It doesn't work over C7.

## Example 23b:

The musical notation shows a Don Rich lick transposed to the key of F. The top staff is a treble clef staff with vertical bar lines and Roman numerals 1 through 4. The bottom staff is a guitar neck diagram with six strings labeled T, A, B from top to bottom. Fingerings and string numbers (e.g., 5, 6, 8, 10) are shown above the strings. Slurs and grace notes are also present.

The more effective way to solo here is to have an understanding of what a C7 chord *is*, and how it differs from a C major, C6, or Cmaj7 chord. Then it becomes easy to make small adjustments to vocabulary you know to make it work where you need it.

When soloing over a C major chord, it's fair to assume that the C Major scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B) will sound good over the top. When harmonising the scale, you create a Cmaj7 chord (C, E, G, B) so C Major is the perfect scale to fit over that a Cmaj7 chord too.

The problem with a maj7 chord is that it can sound a little bit jazzy, so often a C major chord is extended to a C6 (C, E, G, A) instead. That 6th has a sweet sound without being too jazzy.

For this reason, country players often favour playing the Major Pentatonic scale over major chords. C Major Pentatonic (C, D, E, G, A) contains the root, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 6th. It sounds a lot like a C6 chord as it contains that 6th and avoids the 7th. This has the added benefit of making any lick from this scale work over both Cmaj7 and C7 settings, as it doesn't contain the B or Bb contained in either of those chords.

As an example, here's a simple lick using the C Major Pentatonic scale.

### Example 23c:

While that sounds great, it is possible to alter it slightly to fit better on a Cmaj7 chord. This example is the same as the previous idea, but you'll notice that the 7th (B) has been used in place of the 6th.

This note change doesn't happen every time, but when it does it creates some great melodic interest.

### Example 23d:

The same idea is now presented again, but instead of the 7th (B), the b7th is used (Bb). This has a much darker sound as it creates a C7 tonality.

### Example 23e:

Here's a different lick based around the C Major Pentatonic scale. This would work on a C major, C6, Cmaj7, or C7, but it sounds most like a C6 chord.

### Example 23f:

The musical notation shows a lick for a C6 chord. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature. It features a melody line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line below it. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a 4/4 time signature, showing the notes 7, 10, 9, 8, 10, 8, 10, 9, and 10. The lick consists of two measures, each ending with a half note. The first measure starts with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note pattern. The second measure starts with a half note followed by another eighth-note pattern. The lick is labeled "C6" at the top left.

Now that same idea has been adapted to include the use of the B. Suddenly it won't work over a C7 as the B in the melody conflicts with the Bb in the chord. While it will still work over a C6, it definitely sits best over a Cmaj7.

### Example 23g:

The musical notation shows a lick for a Cmaj7 chord. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature. It features a melody line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line below it. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a 4/4 time signature, showing the notes 9, 10, 9, 8, 7, 10, 8, 10, 9, and 8. The lick consists of two measures, each ending with a half note. The first measure starts with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note pattern. The second measure starts with a half note followed by another eighth-note pattern. The lick is labeled "Cmaj7" at the top left.

And now that idea has been adapted further to fit a C7. The Bb (b7) gives the lick some real character.

### Example 23h:

The musical notation shows a lick for a C7 chord. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature. It features a melody line with eighth-note patterns and a bass line below it. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a 4/4 time signature, showing the notes 8, 10, 9, 8, 11, 10, 8, 10, 9, 10, 10, and 8. The lick consists of two measures, each ending with a half note. The first measure starts with a quarter note followed by an eighth-note pattern. The second measure starts with a half note followed by another eighth-note pattern. The lick is labeled "C7" at the top left.

Finally, here's that basic idea developed to sequentially outline a C major, Cmaj7, C6, and C7, before resolving to an F7 (as it might appear in a blues).

**Example 23i:**

The musical score consists of two staves of guitar tablature. The top staff shows a melodic line with various slurs and grace notes, labeled with dynamics (sl., p., sl.) and chords (C, Cmaj7). The bottom staff shows a harmonic line with fingerings (e.g., 7, 9, 10) and chord symbols (T, A, B). The second staff continues from the first, showing a transition through C6, C7, and F7 chords.

**Top Staff (Melody):**

- Measure 1: C major (C, E, G) - Slur (3)
- Measure 2: C major (C, E, G) - Slur (3), P (4), Slur (5)
- Measure 3: C major 7 (C, E, G, B) - H (5)

**Bottom Staff (Harmony):**

- Measure 1: T (A, C, E) - 7, 9, 10
- Measure 2: A (E, G, B) - 8, 10, 10
- Measure 3: B (D, F#, A) - 8, 10, 9

**Second Staff (Continuation):**

- Measure 3: C6 (C, E, G, B, D) - Slur (3)
- Measure 4: C7 (C, E, G, B, D, F#) - H (5)
- Measure 5: F7 (F, A, C, E, G) - H (5)

Fingerings for the second staff:  
Measure 1: 7, 9, 10  
Measure 2: 8, 10, 10  
Measure 3: 8, 10, 9  
Measure 4: 11, 8, 10, 8, 9  
Measure 5: 10, 10, 8, 7, 8

It's possible to apply the same logic to other chords.

If a C7 chord contains C, E, G, and Bb, and a Cm7 chord contains a C, Eb, G, and Bb, then taking C7 licks and flattening the 3rd should result in a lick that sounds great on a Cm7.

Here's a lick over a C7 chord in the C shape.

**Example 23j:**

The musical notation shows a lick in the C shape (C major) over a C7 chord. The lick consists of four groups of four eighth-note strokes each. The first three groups are labeled 1, 2, and 3, and the fourth group is labeled 4. Below the staff, a guitar neck diagram shows the notes being played across the strings. The notes are: T-13, A-12, B-14, T-13, 14, 15, 15, 13, 13, 12-14, 13, 14, 12-13-15, 13. The neck diagram has three horizontal lines representing the strings, with fret numbers 13, 12, 14, 15, 15, 13, 13, 12-14, 13, 14, 12-13-15, 13 marked along them.

Next, the same basic idea is played, but adjusted to include Eb's instead of Es.

There's not just one way to do this, it's not maths. You may need to play around with ideas to make them work, but experimentation is what helps develop your ear.

**Example 23k:**

The musical notation shows the same lick as in Example 23j, but with a different note choice for the third string. The notes are: T-13, A-12, B-14, T-13, 14, 16, 16, 13, 13, 12-14, 13, 14, 16, 13-15, 13. The neck diagram shows the notes being played across the strings, with fret numbers 13, 12, 14, 16, 16, 13, 13, 12-14, 13, 14, 16, 13-15, 13 marked along the strings.

Using this method, the sky is the limit when learning any licks. If a lick works over C7, could you adapt it and make it a fit for a C6 chord?

This will also help with your ear training. When listening to a great player soloing, you'll be able to hear the difference between each of these subtle sounds as players are using them, and understand why a lick sounds the way it does.

# Chapter Twenty-Four: Country Rock Solo

Now that you have some country licks under your belt, I've composed some solos using vocabulary taken exclusively from this book so you can see how it's possible to develop these licks into your own style.

This first example is a country rock-type track in A.

Before looking at the solo, here's the rhythm part transcribed fully so you can get to grips with the track. I cover this type of rhythm guitar playing in my book, *Country Guitar for Beginners*, but if you have some experience with the style, it should pose no real problems.

The main riff is played over A for the first four bars, then this idea is transposed up to D for two bars, and back to A for another two.

At this stage, you may think it feels like a blues, so to mix things up I've gone back to the D for two bars then up to an E chord. The space here allows you to play a few notes and stand out when soloing.

To finish, the chord switches back to an A chord for four bars. This basic form could then be repeated while people take turns to solo.

**Example 24a:**

**A**

T  
A  
B

0 (0) 3-4 2 0 0 (0) 3-4 2 5 4 0 0 2 3-4 2 2 4 0 (0) 3-4 5 2 4 0

**D**

T  
A  
B

3 2 (0) 3-4 3 2 0 0 (0) 3-4 3 5 3 4 0 2 3-4 2 2 4 0 (0) 3-4 2 5 4 0

**A**

T  
A  
B

3 2 (0) 3-4 3 2 0 0 (0) 3-4 3 5 3 4 0 0 2 1 2 0 -2 0 4 -2 0

**E**

T  
A  
B

2 0 2 3-4 2 2 0 0 (0) 3-4 2 5 2 4 0 0 2 3-4 2 2 4 0 (0) 3-4 2 5 2 4 0

The solo begins with a Don Rich idea (Example 5d) that is transposed up a tone to work over the A chord.

**Example 24b:**

Musical score and guitar tab for Example 24b. The score shows a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps and a bass staff below it. The bass staff has three horizontal lines labeled T, A, and B from top to bottom. The score includes dynamic markings like 'sl.', 'P', and '3'. The tab below shows fingerings and string numbers for each note.

As the chord changes to D, I've used a Brent Mason lick (Example 4d) as it begins around the area that the last lick finished.

This is an important thing to consider when soloing as nothing sounds less natural than jumping around the neck playing ideas that don't flow into each other. When the chord changes back to A, I move to one of the Danny Gatton licks (Example 7d), again, transposed to fit the chord.

**Example 24c:**

Musical score and guitar tab for Example 24c. The score shows a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps and a bass staff below it. The bass staff has three horizontal lines labeled T, A, and B from top to bottom. The score includes dynamic markings like 'D II', 'A', 'H', 'P', and 'sl.'. The tab below shows fingerings and string numbers for each note.

At this point I've decided to up the excitement and develop the solo by picking an idea using 1/16th notes.

The first of these two ideas is another Danny Gatton lick (Example 7a), but transposed up to fit a D chord.

**Example 24d:**

Musical score and guitar tab for Example 24d. The score shows a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps and a bass staff below it. The bass staff has three horizontal lines labeled T, A, and B from top to bottom. The score includes dynamic markings like 'D H', 'H', 'P', 'sl.', and 'H'. The tab below shows fingerings and string numbers for each note.

From here I wanted to keep the 1/16th note feel going, but the lick I wanted to play was an Albert Lee eight note idea (Example 2c) ending on the 7th fret E. Here I just doubled up the speed of the 1/8th notes.

This kind of rhythmic variation is another way to develop a lick and put

your own stamp on it.

**Example 24e:**

Musical notation for Example 24e, featuring a guitar solo in E major. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a time signature of 11/8. The solo begins with a series of eighth-note chords and leads into a melodic line with slurs and grace notes. The tablature below shows the fingerings for the guitar strings (T-A-B), with numbers indicating the frets being played. The lick concludes with a final note at the 12th fret.

The final lick goes back to the 1/8th note feel, with a Johnny Hiland lick (Example 15a), but transposed up to fit in the key of A.

I've also added an ending to the phrase, another important aspect of using licks. Remember that they're not set in stone; they don't need to be played verbatim. You can play part of one lick, and then take it somewhere else.

**Example 24f:**

Musical notation for Example 24f, featuring a guitar solo in A major. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a time signature of 13/8. The solo consists of a series of eighth-note chords and melodic lines, with specific dynamics like 'full' and 'p' indicated. The tablature below shows the fingerings for the guitar strings (T-A-B), with numbers indicating the frets being played. The lick concludes with a final note at the 10th fret.

The backing track repeats this progression a few times so you can try this solo, but also experiment with some of the other ideas you've learned.

# Chapter Twenty-Five: Country Boogie Solo

The final chapter in this book takes everything covered to the extreme, taking licks from the hundred, and applying them over an up-tempo country boogie.

The first step in developing licks and vocabulary for soloing over the track is to learn the chord progression. The basic idea is taken from Albert Lee's Fun Ranch Boogie, but I've adapted it to work in a 32-bar form.

Here's a basic rhythm guitar part to help you learn the chord progression. As with the previous chapter, this style of rhythm guitar is covered in more detail in my first book, *Country Guitar for Beginners*.

In order to learn this correctly, tackle it eight bars at a time.

**Example 25a:**

1 E      2      3 A      4 E      5 E      6      7 F#      8 B7      9 E      10      11 A      12 E      13 E      14 B7      15 E      16      17 A      18      19 E      20      21 A      22      23 F#      24 B7      25 E      26      27 A      28 E

29 E

30 B7

31 E

32

T  
A  
B

0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 |

0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 |

1 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 1 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 1 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 2 |

2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 1 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 1 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 2 |

The first lick outlines an E and A chord. While none of the 100 licks are this specific, it's possible to easily adapt a lick to outline a chord. To do this I took one of the Albert Lee licks (Example 2a) and moved just the third bar up a string set to fit an A chord.

**Example 25b:**

The next lick begins on an E major chord, and uses one of the Danny Gatton ideas (Example 7c) but played at an 1/8th note speed to fit the track.

After two bars the chords change to F# major and B major, so I've chosen to continue with the Danny idea, but adjusted it to fit the correct chords.

**Example 25c:**

This next idea begins with some Albert Lee (Example 2b) before transitioning to Brent Mason for the third bar (Example 4b) and then Johnny Hiland (the third bar of Example 15a).

After a few years of playing country guitar, you'll soon find that fluidly combining and adapting ideas like this becomes quite simple.

**Example 25d:**

This lick ignores the B7 chord, using the bluesy colours to cover that sound. The lick is one of Redd Volkaert's ideas (Example 17b) but now played using 1/8th notes instead of the 1/16th note framework it was

originally covered in.

### Example 25e:

Musical score for Example 25e, featuring a treble clef staff and a six-string guitar tablature below. The score includes measures 13 through 16, labeled A, B, E, and H respectively. The tablature shows fingerings and picking patterns for each measure.

In the B section of the tune, I rely heavily on Brent Mason vocabulary (Examples 4a, and 4c). While I couldn't think of any examples of Brent playing over this particular set of chord changes, it's hard to not hear Hot Wired in the melody!

### Example 25f:

Musical score for Example 25f, featuring a treble clef staff and a six-string guitar tablature below. The score includes measures 17 through 20, labeled A, E, and H. The tablature shows fingerings and picking patterns for each measure.

To conclude the B section before returning to the first part, I've used a Hank Garland lick in bars one and two, (Example 10d) before adapting one of the Danny Gatton licks (the second half of Example 7a) to fit over F# major and B7.

### Example 25g:

Musical score for Example 25g, featuring a treble clef staff and a six-string guitar tablature below. The score includes measures 21 through 24, labeled A, F#, B, and H. The tablature shows fingerings and picking patterns for each measure.

When returning to the first section, I've used the ending of a James Burton lick (Example 11a) to take you from the 2nd fret D down to the open E string.

### Example 25h:

The final lick uses some more Hank Garland (Example 10e) but using notes of the E Mixolydian scale before ending on an adapted Brent Mason lick (Example 4d).

### Example 25i:

Once you have these licks down, use the backing track and play the solo in its entirety. It's not an easy one, but it shows you just how much mileage you can get out of knowing licks. It's entirely possible to turn licks into completely new ideas. We're all using a shared language here, so don't feel bad. As they say, good composers borrow... great composers steal!

# Conclusion

Now you've got a big selection of licks in your arsenal, the most important thing is going out and using them in unique settings.

It's possible that you may not be able to imagine how this is done, or even if it's something that "real" country guitarists do. What I'd encourage you to do is listen to the greats like Albert Lee and Brent Mason and you'll soon start hearing similar ideas coming up again and again.

As musicians, our ears are our most valuable tools, so it's extremely important to listen to as much music as possible to help you internalize the vocabulary.

When you've started to hear these types of licks in real music, the next step is to begin transcribing things you hear that you enjoy. Transcribing can mean many things to many people, but in reality you don't need to be doing "proper" transcription (listening to music and writing it down), all you need to do is work out the bits you like! The most valuable tool I can recommend is the software called (fittingly) Transcribe!

Getting a copy of Transcribe means you're able to loop music, slow things down, retune them, EQ them, etc. Anything that allows you to listen more closely to licks you like and work them out on the guitar is a must have. This is honestly the quickest way to develop your ears.

As a starting point, here are some album recommendations where you'll hear countless great licks that are all worth transcribing.

Alan Jackson - The Greatest Hits Collection

Albert Lee - Live at the Iridium

Brad Paisley - Time Well Wasted

Brent Mason - Hot Wired

Buck Owens - The Very Best of Buck Owens - Vol. 1

Buddy Emmons - Amazing Steel Guitar

Chet Atkins - The Essential Chet Atkins

Ernest Tubb - Texas Troubadour

Hank Williams - The Best of Hank Williams

The Hellecasters - The Return of The Hellecasters

The Hot Club Of Cowtown - What Makes Bob Holler

Jerry Reed - The Unbelievable Guitar and Voice Of Jerry Reed

Keith Urban - Days Go By

Maddie & Tae - Start Here

Merle Haggard - The Very Best of Merle Haggard

The Time Jumpers - The Time Jumpers

Good luck with your journey, I hope you've enjoyed these first steps, and I look forward to seeing you on the other side!

Levi Clay

# Other Books from Fundamental Changes

[The Complete Guide to Playing Blues Guitar Book One: Rhythm Guitar](#)

[The Complete Guide to Playing Blues Guitar Book Two: Melodic Phrasing](#)

[The Complete Guide to Playing Blues Guitar Book Three: Beyond Pentatonics](#)

[The Complete Guide to Playing Blues Guitar Compilation](#)

[The CAGED System and 100 Licks for Blues Guitar](#)

[Fundamental Changes in Jazz Guitar: The Major ii V I](#)

[Minor ii V Mastery for Jazz Guitar](#)

[Jazz Blues Soloing for Guitar](#)

[Guitar Scales in Context](#)

[Guitar Chords in Context](#)

[The First 100 Chords for Guitar](#)

[Jazz Guitar Chord Mastery](#)

[Complete Technique for Modern Guitar](#)

[Funk Guitar Mastery](#)

[The Complete Technique, Theory and Scales Compilation for Guitar](#)

[Sight Reading Mastery for Guitar](#)

[Rock Guitar Un-CAGED: The CAGED System and 100 Licks for Rock Guitar](#)

[The Practical Guide to Modern Music Theory for Guitarists](#)

[Beginner's Guitar Lessons: The Essential Guide](#)

[Chord Tone Soloing for Jazz Guitar](#)

[Heavy Metal Rhythm Guitar](#)

[Heavy Metal Lead Guitar](#)

[Progressive Metal Guitar](#)

[Heavy Metal Guitar Bible](#)

[Exotic Pentatonic Soloing for Guitar](#)

[Voice Leading Jazz Guitar](#)

[The Complete Jazz Soloing Compilation](#)

[The Jazz Guitar Chords Compilation](#)

[Fingerstyle Blues Guitar](#)

[The Complete DADGAD Guitar Method](#)

[Country Guitar for Beginners](#)

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