

track info

tracks 22-24

Guthrie looks at the art of playing notes outside of a given key...

22. Introduction

23. Full track

24. Backing track

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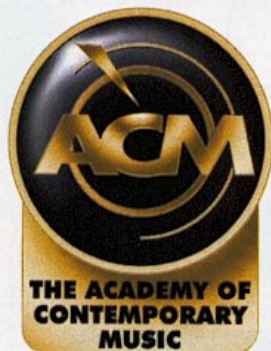
rating info

beginner easy moderate hard



rating: moderate to hard

This feature is all about how to put 'wrong notes' into your improvisation without sounding like you've made a mistake. It's best not to dabble in this sort of skulduggery until you can comfortably find all the right notes!



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meet your **gt** tutor:
guthrie govan

■ Guthrie spends much of his time teaching at the ACM in Guildford as well as working with his own band. They can be found providing live funk every Thursday night at The Bassment round the back of Chelmsford train station. He is an endorsee of Cornford amplification and you can hear his playing on the new Asia album. **gt**



robert knight/redferns



making 'wrong' notes work

SOLOING WITH CHROMATICS

Steve Morse

in association with



Guthrie Govan explains how to incorporate 'wrong' notes into your soloing – and get away with it!

You might remember a feature from a couple of years back where I looked at playing 'outside' – the art of deliberately playing in the wrong key to create tension. It's a technique usually associated with jazz fusion players and, in particular, greats such as John Scofield, Mike Stern and Scott Henderson. This kind of improvising can sound great in the right context, but if used insensitively it will sound highly inappropriate – in particular, pulling it off requires the ability to return smoothly to the right key just at that point where the tension you've created is on the brink of sounding like a horrible mistake.

This month's offering is aimed at the player who seeks to expand on the conventional **diatonic** note choices, but doesn't necessarily want to sound like a frustrated jazzier – guitarists as diverse as Joe Walsh, Steve Lukather and Danny Gatton have all been known to use chromatic licks, so there's probably a way to sneak a couple into your chosen playing style without offending anybody...

First up, we should iron out any confusion regarding terminology. As you'll have seen in the jargon buster, a diatonic note is basically any note which belongs to the correct scale for the chord you're playing over, and anything else is a chromatic note. If you pool the diatonic and chromatic notes together you end up with all 12 notes, and this handsome array is known as the chromatic scale. Any lick containing chromatic notes could be described as a 'chromatic lick' (seems reasonable), but you would only describe it as 'outside' playing if the wrong notes were more prominent than the right ones – and we're not going to be doing that this month. Here, the idea is to squeeze in some chromatic notes and to sound like you're playing in the right key the whole time. How? Ironically, the secret is to remain supremely aware of the diatonic notes, even whilst using the wrong ones. When you can visualise a group of 'good' notes on the fretboard, you can lead up to them using chromatics, and so long as each short phrase ends with a diatonic note the listener will assume that you know what you're doing!

For instance, you could take an arpeggio and approach each note from a semitone below, so each note is transformed into a pair of notes. An ascending A minor arpeggio would normally be A, C, E, A, C, E... (and so on, until you run out of frets) but if you precede each note with the chromatic below it, you get G#, A, B, C, D#, E... which sounds interesting without sounding wrong; you'll hear a lot of this stuff in Django Reinhardt's playing. You can do the same thing with a descending arpeggio as long as you remember that the right note has to come after

sound advice

guthrie's gtCD gear

The demo solo on the **gtCD** was played on my green Tokai Goldstar Sound, which was set to position 4 (the middle and bridge pick-ups, as manufactured by the good people at Kinman). The signal was run into a moderately overdriven Cornford Harlequin, miked up and fed into a TLA valve EQ for a little extra warmth. The clean rhythm parts were recorded using the same setup, but with the overdrive backed right down.

the wrong one – for example D#, E, B, C, G#, A... and if you trill each pair of notes you get a Randy Rhoads lick, as heard in his solo on (Ozzy Osbourne's) 'Mr Crowley'.

As more food for thought, think about man's best friend, the minor pentatonic scale. If you look at each string in turn you'll see a pair of notes either a tone or a tone-and-a-half apart. If you 'fill in the gaps', you end up with a chromatic chain of either three or four notes (depending on which string you picked!) and these sound pleasing to the ear because they start and end with diatonic notes. This puts you squarely in Steve Morse territory, which isn't a bad place to find yourself (see the Further Listening box).

the gtCD demo

What we have here is an eight-bar chord progression: four bars of Bbm7, one bar of Gbmaj7, one bar of Ebm9 and two more bars of Bbm7 (repeat as necessary). In terms of phrasing, I've gone for a slightly clinical-sounding sixteenth-note vibe, but of course you can be as bluesy and expressive as you like over this track so long as the more prominent notes in each phrase are the good ones!

The obvious scale choice here is the Bb natural minor, or Bb Aeolian:

1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7
Bb	C	Db	Eb	F	Gb	Ab

The Bb minor pentatonic can be derived from this by simply losing the 2 and the b6. If you want to put more emphasis on chord tones, the relevant arpeggios are Bbm7...

1	b3	5	b7
Bb	Db	F	Ab

...Gbmaj7

1	3	5	7
Gb	Bb	Db	F

...and Ebm9

1	b3	5	b7	9
Eb	Gb	Bb	Db	F

If you look through the transcription, you'll find that many of the licks are based on the ideas discussed above. Note how the chromatic notes always lead up to scale or chord tones, so however jazz-flavoured the licks may be the overall impression is hopefully that of someone playing in the right key! **gt**

jargon buster



■ diatonic

This term describes a melody or chord progression where all the notes used come from a single scale – generally the seven-note major scale or a mode thereof.



■ REMEMBER terms and signs are fully explained on page 94

gt info

further listening

If you want to make a listening foray into the world of chromatic licks but jazz-fusion makes you come out in a nasty rash, you should check out Steve Morse's playing. The man is currently on guitar duty with Deep Purple, but you'll find more extreme examples of chromatic playing in his solo work, or on any Dixie Dregs album. Also be sure to rummage through your back issues for Phil's 'Greatest Riffs' transcriptions, which feature many a chromatic note!



step by step soloing with chromatics

making 'wrong' notes work soloing with chromatics

GT TAB

1 **B \flat m7**

BSS 9 PO 9 8 7 6 PO 9 8 7 6 PO 6 8 5 6 8 (8) 8 CO

3

PO CO PO CO PO PO PO PO S

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

5 **G \flat ma \flat 7** **E \flat m9**

S PO PO PO S H H S

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

7 **B \flat m7**

MU SCO PO PO PO PO H

8 6 (8) 9 10 11 10 9 8 9 10 9 8 10 11 9 9 10 11 12

9

S S S CO

13 9 10 11 10 (10) 10 11 12 13 12 12 15 16 11 (12) 11 16 15 14

in association with



making 'wrong' notes work soloing with chromatics... continued

11

CO CO PO S PO S PO

(14) 13 12 11 13 12 13 11 12 13 11 13 14 13 16 14 16 15 14 12 13 14 15 13 16 15 14 13

gliss gliss

13

PO PO H PO PO

14 13 15 13 16 15 16 15 14 18 14 18 17 16 15 15 14 16 14 (14) 16 13 15

vib vib vib

15

S CO S PO CO PO PO PO H

16 15 13 (13) 14 12 13 (13) 13 15 13 15 14 13 (13) 11 13 13 12 11 10 11 12 10 11 13 14

gliss vib gliss

17

CO PO PO

15 13 15 12 14 11 10 11 13 12 11 10 11 11 10 13 10 11 10 12 10 12 11 12 13 12 13 12

19

S CO CO CO S PO

11 10 9 10 8 9 10 11 8 9 10 11 9 10 11 12 10 11 12 13 12 11 10 9 11 9 10

gliss gliss



step by step

soloing with chromatics



in association with

making 'wrong' notes work soloing with chromatics... continued

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