

Voice-Switching

Ted Greene Lesson with Mark Levy
July 20, 1992 (mp3 #19) - Excerpt



- Mark:** I'm talking about--I want to get the terminology right: "voice-switching"?
- Ted:** Yeah. A voice-switch is when you actually switch the parts. Like a 3rd becoming a 5th, and maybe a 5th becoming a 3rd.
- Mark:** Okay.
- Ted:** I don't know what else to call it. I once saw it in a book called "swapping the parts." That's what Spud Murphy called it. I was already into it and called it a "switch," so I didn't change my term.
- Mark:** Now, there are some techniques that for guitar, because of the physics of the guitar, that I have to know, and...
- Ted:** It just happens automatically. Like...
- Mark:** It's during the switching.
- Ted:** Yeah, exactly. You know, so like when we had those notes and I said, "reposition them."
- Mark:** Right.
- Ted:** It wasn't re-voice them.
- Mark:** No.

Ted: And it wasn't re-finger them. I would have said, "Stay there and re-finger what you got."

Mark: Uh-huh.

Ted: But I literally had said, "reposition." That means to change strings on at least one of the notes, maybe both if we were playing more than two notes.

Mark: Okay. And the assignment was to take major 7th chords and swap...

Ted: The 3 and the 5. Let's start with that. Just switch 3 and 5. That means 3 becomes

Both: ...5, and 5 becomes 3.

Ted: Let's take any major 7's you like. Now, you're going to see these run into each other and it won't work.

Mark: Right.

Ted: Because they end up with the same thing, but it's all fingered screwy. Now you'll luckily get an open string 3rd up there, and the 5th will be way up on fret 7. It's interesting, actually, because the tone is in a different place. It's [?] in this chord. It's not worth the effort in any other key just about.

Mark: So what do you do then?

Ted: It's not cool for that one. When I say when it doesn't work, try 5 and 7.

Mark: "When it doesn't work swap 5 and 7." So, 7 would go down to the 5...

Ted: Does it go down to 5? Yes, you said it right. Sorry.

Mark: It should be open.

Ted: Oh yes, this is going to work.

Mark: It would be open?

Ted: Now, if you put it into closed form, no open strings....no, right there; right where you were.

Mark: Okay.

Ted: That same voicing. Play that voicing, the way you had it; beautiful sound. Take the D open and finger it as a stopped note. Now you got a form you can use in other keys too.

Mark: And that's...isn't that...

Ted: Voicing Group number?

Mark: V-5.

Ted: Thank you, sir. So, V-4 became V-5. Two of your friends. One becomes the other just by swapping two parts with each other, switching two parts.

Mark: I see.

Ted: A little voice-switch. Now, if you made them go through a passing tone. Instead of [he plays D up to F#, and F# down to D] Like which tones---show me on each string what would happen.

Mark: [Mark plays Gmaj7 1,7,3,5 with 5 to 6, to 7.]

Ted: and the other one.

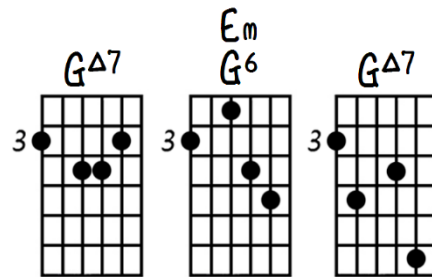
Mark: [Mark plays Gmaj7 1,7,3,5 with 7 to 6 to 5.]

Ted: Okay, now play the resulting stuff.

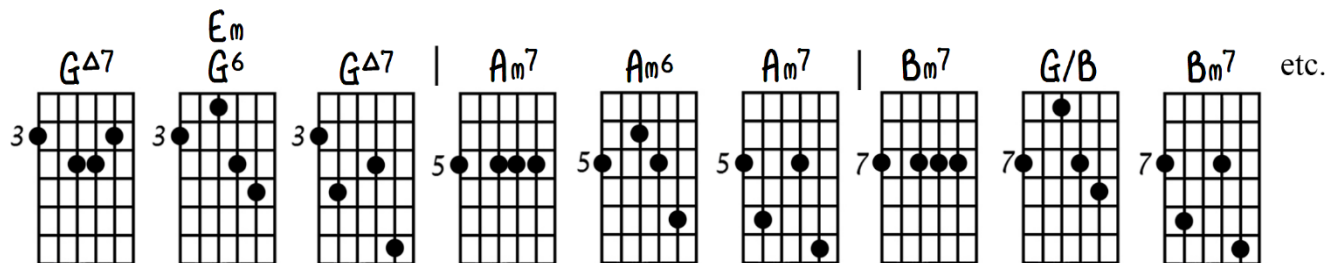
Mark: Oh, this is going to be bitchin' I think.

Ted: Good concentration now.

Mark: [he plays G,F#,B,D → G,E,B,E → G,D,B,F#] That's way cool. I love it.



Ted: Now, do it on every degree of the scale. [Ted demonstrates:]



Mark: That's what I want. I like that.

Ted: That's 5 to 7. You know who does a lot of this? George Van Eps likes it.

Mark: Really?

Ted: When I went to see him, he was doing that, and I didn't want to tell him that I had already "wiggled on to it" from Bach.

Mark: Right.

Ted: Because he was so thrilled to show me. I didn't have the passing ones yet, I was still... In fact, I know what it was: I was doing the "stormy" ones. I got on to these [he demonstrates] and I was doing all those from Beethoven. He [George] had these great diatonic ones. These are actually in his books. But for some reason I decided, "Well, look man, he's swapping 5 and 7. You can swap anything, in theory."

Mark: Yeah, sure.

Ted: So let's swap 1 and 3.

Mark: 1 and 3 would be...

Ted: Look at that little baby. It's going to turn into something you know, Mark. Watch out now. You got to keep everything else in there.

Mark: Okay. Well, these stay [7 and 5, or F# and D]. These are frozen.

Ted: Agreed.

Mark: This [the G, or 1] goes up to 3.

Ted: What does the 3 do?

Mark: 3 goes down to the 1.

Ted: You got it. Let's avoid open strings so you can get moveable stuff for other keys.

Mark: Love it. Okay, so I got to switch that baby... Where do I switch that baby?

Ted: Can't. But you can switch something else. When you can't switch one thing, switch something else. I don't mean "switch," I mean "reposition." Re-locate one of those other notes.

Mark: Sure. The D I can. Well, no. Not---.

Ted: Play the stuff that isn't troublesome, without the troublesome notes. In the new chord. Get rid of the one note that for, temporarily, that's farther away than the others. Play the remaining three. Hold it as if there is no nut. Put a finger down that...yes. Hold it. Uh. Hold it. That's good. Now, where was the note that we got rid of way down on the 7th fret bass string? Can you reposition that note on another string?

Mark: Sure.

Ted: Do we have a form you've ever seen?

Mark: Yes.

Ted: In which voicing group?

Mark: That's V-2.

Ted: Yes, so V-4 became V-2. Now let's pass through the passing tones. Find the passing tones on each voice.

Mark: Oh boy! I can see this---this is going to be---.

Ted: You see why it's a long project?

Mark: It's great, but it's going to be time consuming, man.

Ted: It does take time. But you get little moves that you can use maybe.

Mark: I can write these down. Better write them down because I'll forget them.

Ted: I made a deal with myself that I wouldn't write these down because I saw how staggering it was, and I said, "I'm just going to memorize my favorites – a few favorites at first. And then if I love it, I'll go back to it."

Mark: Do you find that some of them are that much different? that some you really love...

Ted: Oh, it's like everything, man. You're just going to---. You're a human being, you're going to love some stuff much more than others. I'm crazy about this chord [he demonstrates] I dig the way it sounds. I use it more than I use [he demonstrates]. Because when that happens I want "sauce" in there. I just go for a full major 9, if it's going to be that. But that bass note in this cluster [he demonstrates]

Mark: That's great.

Ted: You don't need that 9th or anything, it just says a lot already.

Mark: Okay.

Ted: So, you're going to have your favorites in everything.

Mark: Yep. Okay.

Ted: So let's take that one and find the passing tones. Show me the two lines that we move.

Mark: Okay. We were talking....

Ted: You're such a candidate for this, man, because you like logic and systems and order. You're just the perfect candidate...

Mark: Well, especially if the fruits are there.

Ted: Yeah, if it yields something that's musical.

Mark: That's going to be beauty as the end result, I'll do the---I'll put the time into it. Root goes to 3rd, and the---. Was that right? The 3rd goes down to the root? We're switching 1 and 3?

Ted: We were going to switch---. We decided 1 and 3. Yes. So, what's the 1 do? Play me the line. [Mark plays] Sure. And what's the 3 again do? [Mark plays] Great. We can hear that it wants to pass the 2.

Mark: So it goes to there.

Ted: That's where it's going to end up. Yeah, we found that out.

Mark: Okay. So... Oh man. Okay.

Ted: It taxes your concentration. You're close. You didn't quite follow your bass line.

Mark: Ah, yes.

Ted: Now, that's an interesting sound, man. What happened there is you lowered string three to A instead of kept the B. Right?

Mark: Yep.

Ted: I'm testing you.

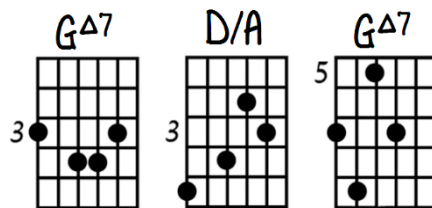
Mark: They go all at once, right?

Ted: Oh, pardon me. You lowered string---. No, it's my fault. You lowered string four to E. That's what you didn't mean to do.

Mark: Okay, okay. Gotcha. But here's the line. The line will be like this. May I should do this. This will help me.

Ted: That's what I used to do: I would take the two parts, and then bring the frozen ones back.

Mark: Okay. So. [Mark plays: G,F#,B,D → A,F#,A,D → B,F#,G,D]



Ted: That's it. Now, down there you could give your hands a break. [playing the last chord in 2nd position, using an open G.]

Mark: That's I-V-I isn't it?

Ted: It ends up being that. You could play it with the open string. [Ted plays it, then continues to the ii chord, iii chord, etc.]

Mark: Is that going to be sort of---. How is that going to turn out? I mean, is there going to... Am I going to find some crystal god-like logic in there that I'm going to go, "God! All this is like really because of this...?"

Ted: Every voice-switch and every voicing group yields its own special magic or lack of same.

Mark: Okay.

Ted: Yet, diatonic – those are the lines you're hearing – that's the one overriding thing. If somebody said, "Define it all in one word," you'd say, "Diatonic." That's the nature of the color we're hearing. If somebody said, "Yeah, but is it always like the inner chord or the passing chord is like the V of where you are?" Say, "No." Let's go back to the other...

Mark: To the ear maybe?

Ted: Let's see. Let's see if that holds up. When we did this [he plays their first example: G,F#,B,D → G,E,B,E → G,D,B,F#] I feel that the second chord is either a) the same chord we're on, or b) the vi minor of where we are.

Mark:

Okay.

Ted:

Like [he demonstrates G to Em examples] Or it's just the same [he demonstrates Gmaj7 – G6 – Gmaj7, then continues to the ii chord, iii chord, etc.] To me it feels like that's: I with friends, ii minor with friends, iii minor with friends.

Mark:

Okay.

Ted:

Whereas this one [their second example] felt like we actually (because of that bass, that bounding bottom movement) seemed to progress to a different chord. In this case it was a V.

Mark:

Okay.

Ted:

What if we had swapped--in this chord we had swapped 3 and 1. We get. [he plays]

Mark:

Okay.

Ted:

That was a I...

Mark:

I-V-I.

Ted:

Yeah. I swapped [he demonstrates] And I repositioned them and ended up here. I just did a fast-forward and tried to recompute fast. I could see I wasn't going to be able to hold that.

Mark:

This is going to teach me a lot about the guitar, isn't it? Think so?

Ted:

I think it does if you're willing to be patient. Don't worry if you get a V passing chord, that's okay.

Mark:

Just treat it all as one sound?

Ted:

Yeah. And the main thing is: find the stuff that appeals to you the most. You see, Mark, you have one danger zone here, which is the same one I face: Everything interests you.

Mark:

Right. I know.

Ted:

You were born that way, apparently.

Mark:

It blows my mind.

Ted:

Just say, "Is this interesting, or do I love it?" If it only falls into the domain of "interesting" – leave it alone for a while. Put it aside. Write it down if you're afraid you'll have to start from scratch again. To remind yourself that you did the work, write one example of it. Say---you can have a note that says, "Interesting, but..." and then dots after it, meaning that you didn't love it. Because if you don't love it, don't---you don't have time for it. There's so much to---

Mark:

No. I understand. I mean, I have a huge, huge insecurity because I love so much that I can't get to it.

Ted:

You may not *love* it. You may *like* it. See, try to be your best judge. Go ahead, you finish what you were going to say.

Mark:

Yeah, but there's so many things that I want to do---even, I'll tell you, and I'm sure it's like where you're at: Even if I wasn't working, even if I had all day just to play music, I would probably get the same feeling that I have today, in a lot of respects. That even though there's satisfaction, that I didn't get to everything, and sometimes I feel overwhelmed, so maybe I just dabble a little bit and get nothing done. Which is a danger.

Ted:

Mark, you must choose between that which you like, and that which you're mad about. When I discovered [he plays Baroque music] – this is voice-switch that I got into at one time – I've been waiting all my life to play that. Because I heard Bach playing this in some of his better concertos. He's use it to get these

progressions that didn't sound "normal." They just had a whole new vibe. You can hear the logic. [He continues to play]

Mark: It's crystal clear. Yeah.

Ted: Then he might start....he might take...

Mark: That's beautiful stuff.

Ted: ...that figured bass harmony...

Mark: Right

Ted: But that was born of going [he demonstrates] which I found by initially going, "Hey, let's start with maybe C major 7 and swap these two parts." Say, "Wow, it turns into B6." And then one day you do it in reverse. And then one day you're in the mood for that Baroque [?] And you don't want to stop, and you just see the parts go. (Somehow that doesn't sound like Bach on that last chord as much.) So you say, "What if I tried to start earlier than the first chord? Maybe I could bring a new chord in the front of it, instead of trying to continue it." You know where I'm coming from?

Mark: Right.

Ted: So suddenly you say, "Hmmm. This was..." [he demonstrates] "then this would have been..." Because if I tried to keep that line going more, it would have been... It would have started---in front of this would have been this.

Mark: Okay.

Ted: Which belongs to no voicing group, because it's got two 3rds, a root, and a 7th. These are *incomplete* chords, or *doubled* chords, ---this has two 3rds. This is not an invertible chord. You could try to get the two next G major 7ths by moving each note up. 3 would go up to which tone?

Mark: 5.

Ted: 7 would go up to what?

Mark: 1, Root.

Ted: Root would go up to?

Mark: 3.

Ted: And 3 would go up to?

Mark: 5.

Ted: Good. Now we'll have this. [Ted plays 5, R, 3, 5] No 7 around. It's nobody's fault, it's just that when you have doubled voicings they don't produce the exact same chords as you invert them. That's why we don't put them in a Voice Group as such. [in Ted's V-System]. But this baby [he demonstrates] sure lives near V-6, and it sure lives near V-7, so I call it a hybrid. There's going to be separate doubled groups right between them, when I publish the whole theory someday, God willing. [Referring to Ted's "The V-System"]

Mark: I hope you do.

Ted: Man, if the Creator keeps me here long enough, I really intend to do this.

Mark: Right. Lot of people will benefit from it.

Ted: Anyway, [getting back to the subject of voice-switching] there are beautiful ones. There's just going to be some that you adore. Those are the ones to work on first. The others they're just like, okay. But before you make a decision, try it on all 7 degrees of the key – major key at first – and bring some texture into bear, because sometime that'll make or break it. This was okay when I did it this way [he demonstrates]. I can hear that I love the lines, but it didn't really "gas me"

completely until I started breaking it up. When I started breaking then I said, “Wow, I really like this.” I like how this little babies just shine up in the...

Mark:

Sure.

Ted:

You can hear these big mamas down here, you know. It just thrilled me to hear that. Sensible intervals in the bottom that have power, against these little shinny guys.

Mark:

Right.

Ted:

You’re going to find your own things that you love. Could be some of the same stuff that I love, too.

Mark:

Well, right now I just want to get the concept really solid.

Ted:

So, I’ll be one of your musical pals who plays keyboards or a guitar player or harp, and you’re going to teach me this concept.

Mark:

Well.

Ted:

I’m game. I’m listening.

Mark:

“Ted, my guitar teacher, showed me a pretty hip concept right now called ‘voice-switching.’ And what you basically do is: take the voicing, and take the voices and you would switch it. We’re going to start with...” I can’t remember whether it was...

Ted:

Start with any two... This is how you can remember it – it’s so sweet this way, it’s so easy: start with numbers that are next door to each other in the formula of the chord.

Mark:

Okay.

Ted:

So for instance: 1,3,5,7 you can swap 1 and 3,

Mark:

3 and 5, 5 and 7, 7 and 1.

Ted:

That’s right. Ideally you can swap all of those without using the far-away numbers yet, like 1 and 5. That’s a big, big long thing that usually gets you into trouble. It usually doesn’t work with anything but close numbers. Does that make it easier?

Mark:

Okay. Close numbers. Got it. “1 and 3, 3 and 5, 5 and 7, 7 and 1. We’re going to swap strings, and then we’re also going to---. With the passing tones that they create – because they’ll be going down in 3rds, most likely...”

Ted:

Going down?

Mark:

“Or up, or I mean, going to their ‘brothers’ which are a 3rd away.”

Ted:

In thirds, usually.

Mark:

“There’ll be a passing chord tone automatically created.”

Ted:

So, I’m your friend and I go, “So, if I have a C7 chord, what should I start with? And what should I do?”

Mark:

“So, let’s say we go: we’re going to swap 1 and 3. We’ll take the C. The C will go to E. And the E will go down to C. There’ll be passing tones of D.”

Ted:

“How do I know where to get these passing tones?”

Mark:

“Diatonically. They’ll be diatonic tones.”

Ted:

“So what scale for C7 should I use?”

Mark:

“The C7 dominant scale.”

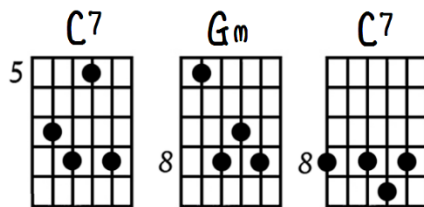
Ted:

“Wow, that makes so much sense now when you explain it that way. Can I see one example of one of those things?”

Mark:

“Okay, so you’d go---. We’re going to take---. Ted, my guitar teacher calls this V-2 voicing. Okay. I don’t know whether you’re hip, but...”

Ted: He says, “What’s V?” And then you say, “V stands for Voicing Group.”
Mark: “Hopefully you’re going to buy his book when it comes out.”
Ted: You say, “Voicing Group just means what size and chord...”
Mark: “They’re all logically grouped by size.
Ted: By size.
Mark: Intervallic size.
Ted: Different sizes is another way of saying---saying the same thing as Voicing Groups.
Mark: Right. “So, in this case we’ll take a C7, V-2 in first inversion. Okay? And the voices will go like this.” [Mark demonstrates]
Ted: “Wow, that’s interesting.”
Mark: Octave right there. Uh.
Ted: “Which two notes did you swap?”
Mark: “I swapped the 3rd and the root.”
Ted: “And what was the first chord again?”
Mark: “C7, first inversion”
Ted: “So, can we hear the results of all this?”
Mark: Okay. [He demonstrates]



Ted: Oh, you’re being smart tonight. We love it, Mark. You repositioned the fingers to make it work. You had it. I like it.

* * * * *

[The following are Mark’s “homework” pages that he wrote up a few days after this lesson with Ted.]

Diatonic Jolice switching V4 5th + 7th

7-25-92

Handwritten guitar chord diagrams on a grid. The diagrams are organized into rows and columns, with some cells containing chord names and fret numbers.

Row 1: Diagrams 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Chord names: Bb7, Cm7, Dm7, Eb7, F7, Gm7.

Row 2: Diagrams 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. Chord names: Cm7, Dm7, Eb7, F7, Gm7.

Row 3: Diagrams 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33. Chord names: Dm7, Eb7, F7, Gm7, Ab7.

Row 4: Diagrams 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43. Chord names: Eb7, F7, Gm7, Ab7, Bb7.

Row 5: Diagrams 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53. Chord names: F7, Gm7, Ab7, Bb7.

Row 6: Diagrams 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63. Chord names: Gm7, Ab7, Bb7.

Row 7: Diagrams 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73. Chord names: Ab7, Bb7.

Row 8: Diagrams 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 9: Diagrams 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 10: Diagrams 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 11: Diagrams 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 12: Diagrams 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 13: Diagrams 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 14: Diagrams 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 15: Diagrams 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 16: Diagrams 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 17: Diagrams 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 18: Diagrams 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 19: Diagrams 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193. Chord names: Bb7.

Row 20: Diagrams 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203. Chord names: Bb7.