

# Ted Greene's Guitar Accompaniment Pointers

## Anatomy

- You have to, for any guitar practice, get blood to the hands (shake them out) and eat the right kinds of food (like grains for lasting energy). Some chords you might have to use may only be do-able when really warmed up.
- With fingerings over chords, a lot of it is trial and error for preference.
  - Know where the notes are on the guitar. That way it can have you think “What is the smoothest/best phrased way to play something?”
    - You have to decide fingerings based on where the music goes/position you play
    - Knowing all kinds of fingerings is helpful (such as 3rd finger barreing or the pinky barreing upper notes). Even Van-eps played a chord with his nose!
  - Some fingerings come from process. If you had a root on top and wanted the closest notes to shape the chord you have to figure out through the lower strings what you want
    - Ex: D-6 (X-X-F-A-B-D) which has close fingerings from the root location and strings. Therefore, the formula for wanting a close minor 6th chord with root on top is b3-5-6-R. Use this example to think of other ways to voice with other intervals on the bottom (think as science guys not art guys)
  - With some chords, you will have to use one finger for two notes on different frets. The Van-eps principle is a more common example but tip barreing (playing two lower notes with the flesh/tip of your finger) is still commonly used.
    - Tip barreing will take some time for your finger flesh to shape to. The width will change.
  - Being able to ‘roll’ your fingertips over strings to grab notes is a great technique for smoother lines and to better sound like a horn. The exact tip of the finger should be on the lower string while the middle of the tip is more on the string below that. (the technique works great on 4ths.)
- Be sure to know your hands. Some hands will screw up the ‘correct fingerings’ thus you need to find alternate ways for your hands.

## Chord Structure and Movement

- Always be sure to voice lead. You'll notice new ideas with tunes and what's really going on with it.
  - Harmonic counterpoint is the best thing from Western music. Things make sense horizontally while chords are still understood with melodies on top.
  - You realize most progressions actually move down rather than up.
  - You can start to add chord subs and systematic inversions and chords secondary dominants (with extensions).
    - IE: When on a ii-V, your ii can be played using systematic inversions and the V7(b9)/ii. The V7b9/ii could also be a replacement of vi.
- With many standards there is a cycle of fourths (of fifths) progression. To stay within the original key center composers alter the cycle and add an augmented fourth (dim 5th) and then continue in P4ths. This alteration occurs normally heading into the ii of the key.
- You need to learn chord tones. If you can those chord tones on the lower two strings (which takes a long time of studying) you'll realize there are 2 sets of 4 pairs for any chord
  - Those give you bass note target notes. You could grab them from a half step below or by scalewise (the goal is get the target note with groove).
    - This gives activity
- Practice double stops, it'll help build up chord speed. This is when you play 2 notes with the tip of the finger. This is especially important in upper register playing or being in the process of transmuting notes.
  - Double stops can be done with the tip of your finger (it will take practice). The goal is that your finger is arched so it's your full tip. It's not flattening the finger over the two notes.
- You can group chords to specific shape groups based off of the top or bottom note. You can then enrich chords (adding extensions) and change chord families (quality chord change)
- Changing family in most cases (especially in Jazz) mean having a chord quality become dominant.
  - Not the same as companion minors.
- There are multi-named chords on the guitar. A great practice is to take a guitar shape (especially one you know that has more than one name) and...
  - (with one root in mind) move the shape
    - Ex: E-7b5 (X-X-E-Bb-D-X). Move the shape up a major third and get the unaltered dominant. Thinking with this root can also have similar shapes (X-X-E-Bb-D-A) or (X-X-E-Bb-D-F#) and these also can move up a major third and all be heard as an E chord. If you then move another minor 3rd (or a 5th all together) you get the 11b9 (X-X-B-F-A-E). Up a 2nd from there (A major 6th) with that same

shape as prior you have melodic minor and then another half step gives you the altered dominant. ALL are E chords!

- That 11b9 shape is a common voice grab on Naima (almost like a “spanish dominant or something”)
  - Take a chord shape and name all of the roots it has (Ones that audibly make sense).
- With many chord progressions you can add chords a half step up from the target chord. If not a whole chord itself, the key to this concept is targeting the chord with chromatics (normally done in the bass to get to the new root). You could play a half step above or below a chord. That is all up to preference.
  - The best way to use the half step approach is if the half step chord used to target is a dominant 7th chord. With some the same quality chord also can work, but when you do that it can get boring. A great way to fix that is to give contrary motion in the soprano line or inner part.
    - Technically half-step chord can be voiced as a major 7th, major 6th, or dominant 7th
- Any Dominant 7th chord has a strong affinity to a Minor 7th chord whose root is a fifth away (And vice versa) (Ex: Bb7 and F-7). This is also called the companion minor concept (or 5th approach). We used it all the time.
- The half step approach or 5th approach can be used to target chords when comping. You can use both or
- There are chord substitutions whose root is a b5 higher. This can get you out of the same static progressions with more chromatic movement
  - Ex: a Minor 7th can be replaced with a Dom 7th a flat 5 higher (EX: A-7 becomes Eb7)
  - Ex: a Dominant 7th chord can be replaced with a Dom 7th a flat 5 higher (G7 becomes Db7)
- Some chords you grab may not have the root in there. Always be sure on knowing where it is!

## Comping VS Rhythm Accompaniment

- Comping is feeling the full beats but punctuated by accenting a few notes within each measure (not playing every beat). Comping comes from the word accompaniment.
- With comping, be able to hear and feel the bass.
- To do syncopations with solo guitar (which is seen through comping) you have the bass stay on beat while accenting the upper notes on fewer, weaker beats. The bass will sound like a driving force.
  - Another great way to incorporate syncopation is quarter note triplets. Adding that into other accompaniment styles can open up a lot of techniques to mix into playing progressions.
- When comping and doing a bassline you can think like a big band. The bass walks as your upper notes act like horns with hits. (the key is the groove)
  - Think of piano or horn figures
  - There are only three kinds of hits with beats.
    - On the beat
    - After the beat
    - Before the beat (trickier of the three)
- To comp in a Jazz waltz, you could play three in bass while playing groups of two in upper chord (anticipation). You could also play the rhythm having the notes being played on the 1st and 3rd triplet of 1, the 3rd triplet of 2, and the 1st triplet of 3.
  - When building this feel you will be able to find other ways to rhythmically play it.
  - (Another way) Besides strumming on beats 2 and 3, you can arpeggiate the chords starting on the end of 1 and using eighth notes.
- When walking chords, besides just playing a chord on each beat the same duration (more ballad-time) you can get liveliness from keeping that bass but mixing prolongations/syncopating the upper chords. Some comping may have a chord be played a whole measure (while bass motion occurs)
  - To have walking chords be usable in doubletime, play the walking chords as quarters at 'ballad tempo' then add isolated bass notes in between (on the ballads eights). While the overall time hasn't changed, the added bass have the chords sound like they are in double time.
- If you want to add fills with your comping you could do single note lines, octave lines, or 3rd lines.
- To lay down the rhythm, NOT COMPING, you strum the quarter notes while putting more drive into beats 2 and 4. The drive is not simply accenting but rather adding ghost notes for added motion.
  - The higher notes being played should be louder than the lower strings. The drive should really be clear on higher notes.
  - To get accents while playing rhythm, you strike the strings the strings with the end of your hand (bottom part of palm) and your pick at the same time.

- You could do more loose 8ths or loose quarters
- Play with some chords being syncopated (Esp. on 2 or 4) or anticipated.
  - Anticipations should be strummed with upstrokes.
- With Latin, you strum the rhythm in eighths but only on the ‘and’ of 1, the ‘and’ of 2, the ‘3 +’ of 3, and the ‘and’ of 4 do you hear the notes (Dampen the rest)
  - To play 2 and 4, the right hand should be almost chugging with the base of the hand (the bud of the hand) and the pick at the same time.
  - The notes being played (not dampened) can be mixed up with some different patterns too
- Comping can be done easier with fingerstyle technique. It is all based on natural grip. The thumb always gets the lowest but the other fingers grab the other notes naturally (no matter the spacing) While index and middle are most common to grab chords, some lush 5-6 note arpeggios or motives may need the ring and pinky.
  - This means the middle, ring, and pinky need to be strengthened so the whole process is easier and supportive. Try to strengthen those fingers for 5 minutes a day.
  - When playing a motif while comping, be sure to alternate between 2 fingers. This alternate finger principle could also be on arpeggios
- When you strike the strings with a pick (which you should use with rhythm) you should angle the pick a little so it gets a scraping sound. This imitates percussion. The motion from your arm should be greater too. (especially when there is no drummer)
  - With the pick angled this way, you can scuff up the side of the pick. If you want that sound be ready to file the pick side down to be smooth again.
  - The pick angled this way also gives a nice shimmer on slower tempos/bigger voiced chords.
- If there is more volume of the guitar, it can be played a little dryer (not so much of an angled pick) as well as keep the strumming near the neck pickup (not so much arm motion)
  - Backing off the volume a couple numbers on the guitar while raising the amp a hair can have the percussive pick side come out.
  - Downstairs (bridge) has more pick. Upstairs (neck) has more pickup/warmer.

## Bass Motion

- Playing solo accompaniment means you will have bass motions. When heavier bass lines occur (esp. without chords on-top) you can use your index and thumb to play the notes closer to the neck (while the chords are played more at the middle or bridge).
  - The bass doesn't have to always play different notes on each beat (nor does it have to always walk). You can repeat tones for a couple beats so it is not as strenuous on your guitar playing.
  - While you have to obviously remember the form, the groove is more important than constantly thinking of chords and bass movement. If you focus too much you lose the groove of the piece. Trust your judgement of the ears to help guide you.
    - The ability to move bass comes with internalizing chord structure for your bass lines and having it be almost automatic.
- Chords can be shaped out of the bass motion. To best do this you have to know inversions. Inversions are a “whole big study”.
  - Bass Line Progressions have chords take on new voicings while, in most cases, the bass connects these moving voices together with NCT.
    - These NCT are either passing tones from the scale or chromatic passing tones.
  - Watch out with prolonged inversions.
    - Dom. 7th chords
      - 5th in the bass is most common. You need it when playing through ii-Vs
      - 7th in the bass is okay. You can't lay on it too long. Or it sounds wonky.
      - A low 3rd in the bass can be cool, but lingering too long can be freaky for some nervous systems.
- *Active Bass*
  - When you are playing and you want the bass to be moving you have an active bass. Walking is far more crafted in comparison.
  - Rhythms could be triplets, eighths, or quarters.
  - You can get real theoretical, but you don't even have to think that hard. Active bass is simply grabbing bass tones that fall under your hand and having note choice be half-way decent.
- *Walking Bass*
  - When walking there is a lot of trial and error. After experimenting you will start to better hear if you should use chromatic targeting or scale wise.
    - Always think of direction.
  - You need the bass motion to be as legato as possible. It is easy to lose the legato sound when playing fast.
    - Playing fast with no legato bass is a March. Jazz is not a March.
  - The bass notes should be full volume and throaty. You have to watch out for being too loud. Too loud and full volume are different.
    - Too loud will not have notes resonate fully/equally. It'll sound like a March. Its needs to be full TIME volume.

- You want the bass notes to be punched in, not clipped in.
- Don't be afraid to have a little noise from adding punched in chords or ghosting notes. It gives the walking line some more movement.
  - You can use your index finger to hit an open string fast to get a percussive hit. Another way is to have the left hand pull off the string. That's more intense without it being as noisy
    - Don't go crazy with this.
- A ghost note is a note that is almost indiscernible. This can be used in helping move chords to new areas (by rhythmic movement). It prevents the jumpy intervals chord tones give. (AKA complimentary noise)
- Even in keys like Bb-, you can use open notes and treat them as ghost notes so they don't harmonically interfere.
- Sometimes when walking the bass you can fracture it, meaning you play on the 'and'.
- *ii-V Walking Bass with Comp. Examples*
  - Comping figures over the bass patterns
    - Comp a chord on 1 and the 'and' of 2
    - Comp on the 'and' of 1, and beat 3
    - Comp with half note triplets while the bass keeps playing quarters.
    - Use inversions and small substitutions when repeating progressions to give it subtle variety
    - Use Bigband motifs. Play small phrases when comping a chord. The phrases are just sparks. Nothing complex like bebop.
      - Try to be the big band. It can be really fun. Just be sure the sparkness isn't too short like 'tiptoe' music
  - Bass Lines (Examples in A- to D7)
    - Chromatic Targeting
      - (approach tone example) G# on beat 4 to A on Beat 1---C# on beat 4 to D on beat 1.
      - A B C C# D F# G G# A
    - Chords and Scale Tones
    - Chords and Chromatics
      - A C E Eb D F# G G# A
    - Bass Pulses
      - After a bit of walking, it's a nice contrast to use a pulse in one spot. Normally the pulse is on the root. Sometimes you can put chromatic notes in there on weaker beats.
      - It has you learn how important the rhythm is over the process itself
        - Rhythm is the most important thing in American music.

## ‘Styles’ and Scenarios

- You should study rhythm and feel. It takes practice and studying to get the rhythmic feel you want from your heart. It doesn’t just come out.
  - Rhythm is the most important part of any American style. The feel and groove are more important than note choices.
- When doing grooves, you may lose some of the cleanliness in tone (let alone technique). That’s just part of it! Don’t get too sad about it.
  - When wanting to play lighter and not be so stiff, you can break up (arpeggiate) the chord thus showcasing strong right hand individuality.
- Mix up the groove AND the key sometimes. For example, do ‘Green Dolphin Street’ in A as a latin. It makes open strings more useful and can pull out new colors. The latin feel with it is almost a natural reaction.
  - Some figures changing the groove can have you transition into new tunes with new keys. For example, the Latin ‘Green Dolphin St.’ can easily transition into ‘Watch What Happens.’
- When playing a more rock-blues, in guitar friendly keys (D, A, E especially) you can use the open strings as added color
- With Brazilian music, you have to have the right color (brighter/7thy) while also having a light touch to their rhythms (with a cut time backbone). The bass, while on 1 and 3, also had rhythmic anticipations
  - American attempts still have the cut time feel in the bass note but they put in on beats 1 and 3.
- When playing with a piano you can’t showcase so many ideas (bass+chords, various substitutions, big voices) because you are second fiddle to piano and may get some dirty looks
  - With only a bass player, you can comp more actively.
- When playing with a bass it is pivotal you don't start doing your own walking bass lines as you comp. The bassist would kill you.
  - The voices you use however can be shaped out of the bassists walking direction.
  - When playing substitutions, you can start to lead the bassists ear to a direction you wanted to go in harmonically (you might have to show the bass some of the substitutions however.
- When working with a singer, you shouldn't feel scared and stay playing in a Freddie Green Style (three note voiced, time keeping rhythm).
  - You can work with more voices and range to compliment what they are doing. Most of the time you won’t be in the way nor will they care what you play too much (just don't go overboard).
    - The added voices or rhythmic variation won’t ruin the vocalist’s tone either. Their tone is far different than what an instrument does.
  - Don’t feel bad adding more walking bass or 4 voice colors. Be full.



## References

In addition to personal observation of Ted's performances, the following were main additional/direct references from Ted.

Ted Green's 'Session With the Stars'

Ted's California Vintage Guitar Seminar on 5/18/2003

Cesar Pineda's lesson on 11/01/99

Unknown student lesson on 7/21/1993

Ted's Boulevard Music Seminar on 8-22-2004

Mark Fitchett Lesson (2004?)