

Advanced Blues Reharmonizations and Melodic Ideas for Guitar: A Comprehensive Guide

Blues, a genre deeply rooted in American music, has captivated audiences for centuries with its soulful melodies and intricate harmonies. Guitarists, in particular, have a profound fascination with blues music, and for good reason. The blues guitar offers a rich tapestry of techniques and musical possibilities, allowing guitarists to explore their creativity and expressive range. One aspect of blues guitar that sets it apart from other genres is the use of advanced reharmonizations and melodic ideas. These techniques can elevate a blues progression beyond its basic structure, adding depth and complexity to the music. In this article, we will delve into the world of advanced blues reharmonizations and melodic ideas for guitar, providing you with the knowledge and techniques to take your blues playing to new heights.

Reharmonizing Blues Progressions

Reharmonization refers to altering the chords used in a progression while maintaining the underlying melodic structure. This technique allows guitarists to create fresh harmonic landscapes and add interest to familiar blues progressions. One common approach to reharmonizing blues is to substitute dominant seventh chords for major or minor seventh chords. For example, in the classic 12-bar blues progression (I-IV-V), you could replace the IV chord (usually a major seventh chord) with a dominant seventh chord (IV7). This simple substitution adds tension and movement to the

progression, creating a sense of anticipation before the resolution on the V chord.



Modern Blues: Advanced Blues Reharmonizations and Melodic Ideas for Guitar by Bruce Saunders

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Another effective reharmonization technique involves using extended chords, such as ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords. These chords add richer and more complex harmonies to the progression. For instance, you could replace the I chord in the 12-bar blues with an I9 chord, which includes the added ninth and seventh intervals. This extended chord provides a lush and resonant foundation for the progression.

Suspensions are another powerful tool for reharmonizing blues progressions. Suspensions occur when a chord tone is delayed or "suspended" before it resolves to its expected note. This technique creates a sense of tension and anticipation, which can be effectively employed in blues solos and improvisations. For example, you could delay the third of a minor seventh chord (sus4) or the fifth of a dominant seventh chord (sus2), creating a dissonant but intriguing sound.

Melodic Ideas for Blues Guitar

Beyond reharmonizations, incorporating advanced melodic ideas into your blues playing can further enhance its expressive potential. Here are some techniques to consider:

- **Bending and Vibrato:** Bending and vibrato are essential techniques for adding emotion and expression to your blues melodies. Bending involves slightly adjusting the pitch of a string by pushing or pulling it sideways, while vibrato involves rapidly oscillating the string back and forth. These techniques can create soulful and evocative phrases that convey a wide range of emotions.
- **Slide Guitar:** Slide guitar is a technique that involves using a slide (typically a metal or glass tube) to fret the strings. This technique creates a unique, ethereal sound that is often associated with blues music. Slide guitar can be used to create expressive melodies, especially when combined with bending and vibrato.
- **Double Stops:** Double stops involve playing two or more notes simultaneously on the guitar. This technique can add harmonic depth to your melodies and create a fuller sound. Double stops are commonly used in blues solos, particularly during improvisational sections.
- **Trills:** Trills are rapid, alternating repetitions of two adjacent notes on the guitar neck. This technique adds a sense of excitement and virtuosity to your playing. Trills can be incorporated into blues solos and are often used to emphasize certain melodic passages.

Combining Reharmonizations and Melodic Ideas

The true power of advanced blues reharmonizations and melodic ideas lies in their combination. By blending these techniques together, you can create

solos that are both harmonically sophisticated and melodically expressive. Here's how you can combine them:

- **Start with a Simple Blues Progression:** Begin with a basic 12-bar blues progression or a variation thereof. This will provide you with a solid foundation to build upon.
- **Apply Reharmonizations:** Experiment with different reharmonization techniques, such as dominant seventh substitutions, extended chords, and suspensions. See how these alterations affect the harmonic landscape of the progression.
- **Incorporate Melodic Ideas:** Once you have reharmonized the progression, start incorporating melodic ideas into your playing. Use bending, vibrato, slide guitar, double stops, and trills to create expressive and engaging melodies.
- **Balance Harmony and Melody:** Strike a balance between harmonic complexity and melodic flow. Avoid overwhelming the progression with too many reharmonizations or using melodic ideas that are too disjointed. Aim for a harmonious blend of both elements.

Practice and Improvisation

Mastering advanced blues reharmonizations and melodic ideas requires regular practice and experimentation. Dedicate time to practicing these techniques individually and in combination. The more you practice, the more comfortable you will become with them and the better you will be able to incorporate them into your improvisations. Experiment with different voicings, fingerings, and combinations of techniques to find what works best for you.

Advanced blues reharmonizations and melodic ideas are powerful tools that can elevate your blues guitar playing to new heights. By understanding these techniques and practicing them regularly, you can create solos that are both harmonically sophisticated and melodically expressive. Remember to start with a simple blues progression, experiment with reharmonizations, incorporate melodic ideas, and strike a balance between harmony and melody. With dedication and practice, you will master these techniques and unlock a world of musical possibilities in your blues guitar playing.



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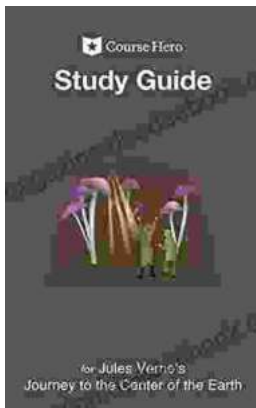
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