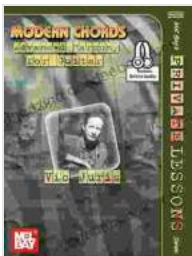


Modern Chords: Advanced Harmony for Guitar

In the realm of guitar playing, exploring beyond traditional chords opens up boundless possibilities for sonic experimentation and musical expression. This article delves into the captivating world of modern chords and advanced harmony, empowering guitarists to expand their harmonic vocabulary and craft sophisticated and expressive music.



Modern Chords: Advanced Harmony for Guitar by Jim Ryan

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

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Laying the Foundation: Understanding Chord Theory

Before embarking on our journey into modern chords, it's essential to grasp the fundamentals of chord theory. A chord is formed when three or more notes are played simultaneously. The arrangement of these notes, known as the chord structure, determines the unique character and sound of a chord.

The root, third, and fifth intervals form the core of most chords. The root is the foundational note, giving the chord its name (e.g., C or G). The third interval adds depth and character, differentiating between major and minor

chords (e.g., major third in C major, minor third in C minor). The fifth interval provides stability and fullness to the chord.

Beyond Triads: Exploring Extended Chords

Traditional chords, known as triads, consist of the root, third, and fifth intervals. However, modern guitarists have ventured beyond these boundaries, incorporating additional intervals to create extended chords that possess a wider range of sonic possibilities.

Seventh Chords

Adding a seventh interval to a triad results in a seventh chord. Seventh chords introduce dissonance and tension, which can add depth and intrigue to chord progressions. Major seventh chords (maj7) have a warm and resonant sound, while minor seventh chords (min7) exude a more somber and melancholic character.

Ninth Chords

Incorporating a ninth interval creates a ninth chord. Ninth chords possess a dissonant yet lyrical quality, adding a touch of complexity and interest to chord voicings. Dominant ninth chords (dom9) are particularly effective for building tension and resolving to tonic chords.

Eleventh Chords

Eleventh chords, with their added eleventh interval, offer a rich and extended harmonic landscape. Major eleventh chords (maj11) exhibit a shimmering and ethereal quality, while minor eleventh chords (min11) evoke a more contemplative and introspective mood.

Thirteenth Chords

Thirteenth chords are elaborate constructs that incorporate the thirteenth interval. These chords possess a highly dissonant and dense sound, suitable for creating tension and dramatic effects. Dominant thirteenth chords (dom13) are commonly used in jazz and fusion contexts.

Inversions and Substitutions: Expanding Chord Vocabulary

Beyond extended chords, guitarists can also explore inversions and substitutions to further expand their harmonic vocabulary.

Inversions

Inverting a chord involves reordering the notes within the chord structure. For example, instead of playing a C major chord in root position (C-E-G), you could play it in first inversion (E-G-C) or second inversion (G-C-E). Inversions add variety and interest to chord progressions while maintaining the overall harmonic structure.

Substitutions

Substituting one chord for another with a similar harmonic function can create unexpected and intriguing progressions. For instance, you could substitute a C major chord with a Cmaj7 chord or a C6 chord, maintaining the tonic function while adding a different harmonic flavor.

Voicings and Fingerings: Crafting Unique Harmonic Textures

The voicing and fingering of chords significantly impact their sound and expressiveness.

Chord Voicings

Chord voicings refer to the arrangement of notes within a chord on the guitar neck. Different voicings can highlight specific intervals or create unique harmonic textures. Close voicings position the notes adjacent to each other, resulting in a compact and concentrated sound. Open voicings, on the other hand, spread the notes apart, creating a more airy and spacious sound.

Fingerings

The specific fingerings used to play a chord influence its comfort, playability, and overall sound. Experimenting with different fingerings allows guitarists to explore alternative voicings and discover the most suitable ones for their playing style.

Modern Chord Progressions: Exploring Harmonic Possibilities

Armed with an expanded harmonic vocabulary, guitarists can venture beyond conventional chord progressions and create sophisticated and expressive musical landscapes.

Parallel Harmony

Parallel harmony involves moving chords in parallel motion, maintaining the same intervallic relationships between them. This technique creates a sense of progression and continuity while allowing for harmonic experimentation.

Modal Interchange

Modal interchange incorporates chords from different modes (e.g., major, minor, Dorian) to create unexpected harmonic shifts. This technique adds

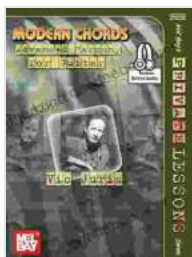
depth and intrigue to chord progressions, blurring the boundaries between different musical keys.

Chromatic Medulations

Chromatic mediations involve introducing chromatic chords (chords containing notes outside the current key) to create a sense of motion and harmonic surprise. These chords can provide smooth transitions between distant keys or add a touch of tension and instability to a progression.

Modern chords and advanced harmony offer guitarists a vast playground for sonic exploration and musical expression. By understanding chord theory, exploring extended chords, utilizing inversions and substitutions, crafting unique voicings and fingerings, and experimenting with modern chord progressions, guitarists can expand their harmonic vocabulary and create sophisticated and expressive music that captivates and inspires.

Remember, the journey into advanced harmony is an ongoing one, requiring patience, practice, and a willingness to experiment. As you delve deeper into this harmonic wonderland, you will unlock a boundless realm of musical possibilities and transform your guitar playing into a truly expressive and fulfilling experience.



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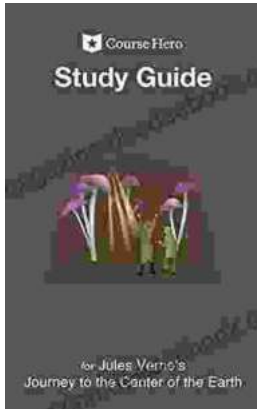
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