

Modern Theory

with Reg Barber

This issue we continue to look at a mash-up of two different fretboard mapping concepts – the CAGED system and the ‘three note per string’ scale system. Both methods work very well at giving us a clear map of the fretboard but both systems have some drawbacks. Combined together they provide us with a very clear framework. The CAGED system works by mapping out different voicings of the same chord. You start on an open C chord, then play an open A chord shape as a barre chord with a C root, then an open G chord shape with a C root etc. If that doesn’t make sense there is an overwhelming amount of information on the Internet about the CAGED system, which is definitely worth checking out. However, while the CAGED system is a great concept, it has one drawback in that each of the scale patterns that fall under each of the five CAGED voicings have an uneven number of notes per string. The ‘three note per string’ scale patterns are much better suited to improvising fast scale runs and linear patterns.

The following exercises borrow from both soloing concepts and when combined will hopefully give you a useful map of the fretboard without requiring too much memorisation of different patterns. Advantages of this combination of concepts are you can also move easily between chords with very smooth voice leading, as notes are moving by a tone or semitone between chords and some chord tones are not moving at all. Arpeggios for each chord are easy to visualise and you end up with a much more musical result when using scale runs between chords.

To make the most of this concept it helps to have an understanding of music theory, a good ear, and a developed muscle memory through repetition of technical exercises. Find yourself a good guitar teacher (www.regsguitar.com) and learn music theory. A system of self-evaluation is also important if you want to improve quickly, so being able to record yourself and then listen back to what you have done is invaluable. The more you get your head around all of these different aspects of musicianship, the better you will become at improvising and creating solos that are musical, not just a bunch of technical exercises and scale passages.

EXERCISE 1

Exercise 1 maps out the Ionian (major scale) and Locrian modes of C major. Ascending through Locrian and descending through Ionian, any and all 3 note per string sequencing patterns can be applied to these scales. The idea here is to know these patterns back to front so you can apply scale runs between chords.

EXERCISE 2

Exercise two outlines a I – iii – IV – V – IV – iii – ii progression in C major. All of these chord shapes are derived from the CAGED system and fall within the 3 note-per-string patterns outlined in Exercise 1. Play through it to familiarize yourself with the progression, you could even try recording the progression and play the scale patterns from exercise one over the top to work out some scale runs that compliment what you are doing.

EXERCISE 3

Exercise three shows the combination of the CAGED chords and 'three note per string' scales in action. You can easily decorate any diatonic chord progression with scale runs and see where each chord arpeggio is. This concept works well all over the neck and can be applied to other three note per string modal patterns, more on that next issue.

♩ = 120

B Locrian

C Ionian (C major scale)

E-Gt

1 *mf* 2

T 8-10-12 8 10-12-13-12-10 13-12-10

A 7-9-10 7-9-10 12-10-9 12-10-9

B 7-8-10 7-8-10 12-10

Loop patterns

3

T 7-9-10 7-9-10

A 7-8-10 7-8-10

B 8 12 10-8-7-8-10

♩ = 120

E-Gt

Chords: C, Em, F, G, F, Em, Dm

Tempo: ♩ = 120

Dynamics: *mf*

String	C	Em	F	G	F	Em	Dm
T	8	7	8	7	8	7	10
A	8	8	10	8	10	8	10
B	9	9	10	7	10	9	10
4	10	9	10	9	10	10	10
3	10	7	8	10	8	7	12
2	8	7	10	10	7	10	10

♩ = 120

E-Gt

mf

10 12 10 8 8 9 10 9 10 10 10 10 12

3 4

8 7 10 8 10 10 9 10 10 10 12 10 12 13