

## **AG126**

### **Blues and Beyond**

In the last issue I put together a version of Johnny Cash's Folsom Prison in a Chet Atkins inspired manner. Given that it was challenging I may have sidelined a few readers who are still getting their fingers around finger picking, so today I wanted to do a simple yet effective little tune that will push your technique a little more gently!

All exercises recorded at 120bpm

#### **Ex1**

If you're attempting this piece, I'm hoping you have a grasp of the the E, A and B7 chords listed. That would be a good starting point, so with that suggested, lets get our fingers dirty.

Holding an E chord using the correct second, third and first finger method, for exercise one we don't require any more input from the left hand. First we will develop our right hand pattern ability. Now technically the styles namesake Merle Travis used to use more stringent bass patterns, but we are going to

roll with a slightly more complex bass pattern. In the first Bar of the exercise we simply pinch the first string as we play each bass note on each beat of the bar. You can use your third finger on your right hand to pluck the first string while your thumb plays the notes at the bottom. Think of these as "pinches".

In the second bar, we will be playing on the beat with the thumb and off the beat with the finger. I like to think "Thumb" on the beat, and the off beat as "pluck" - light finger plucks of the higher string after the thumb plays the lower string on the beat. So I think "Thumb - pluck - thumb - pluck".

In bar 3, we combine the ideas - "Pinch - Thumb - pluck- thumb - Pinch". If that doesn't make sense, work through it slowly and listen to the track so you can hear the rhythmic placement of the "pinch" "thumb" and "pluck".

Try and play the whole 4 bars fluently without stopping once you've nailed each one individually.

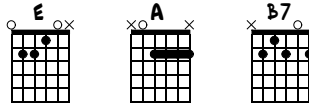
## **Ex 2**

So admittedly, I am dropping you in the deep end again, but I promise it's not as difficult as last issues piece, so bare with me!

You'll notice straight away in the tab that there's more going on here! Rhythmically you won't be facing any new challenges and technically it's not too complicated if you take your time. What we are doing here is using the left hand to hold a chord and to play a little melody. It's still "pinches" "thumbs" and "plucks", only now we are incorporating various strings and adding the spare fretting finger to create that melody. Take it one beat at a time and don't try and play the bass line and add the melody, rather construct it all together. Also, I use my third finger to pluck the first string, second finger on the second string and first finger on the third string religiously for this piece of music. Stick to those guidelines and you'll find it doesn't take too much energy to play this piece. For example, in bar one and similarly in bar three, the right hand pattern is "pinch - pinch - pinch" on the required strings, followed by a "thumb" and a "pluck"! Easy! Also, use your pinky to play the second fret on the second string in each example, and lift it where it's not needed. The only other particular challenge here is the B7. We need to alternate the bass line, so play this chord with the following fingers in ascending order on the strings (from low A to high E): Second, first, third, open on the second string and pinky on the first. This allows us to alternate the second finger to the sixth string on beat three of the bars containing B7. Returning to the E with a pinch and a repeat of the initial pattern will close the piece.

If you are really determined to get this style of music playing down, take this piece one bar at a time, one note at a time and just spend a little bit of time a day on a little bit of music, listen to the track and I am positive you can achieve your finger style goal!

# TRAVIS PICKING BLUES



STANDARD TUNING

♩ = 120

**Ex 1**  
E

E-GT

mf

1 2 3 4

TAB

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

0 2 2 2 0 2 2 2 0 2 2 2

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

**Ex 2**  
E

5 6 7 8

0 2 0 0 (0) 2 0 0 2 0 0 (0) 2 0

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

0 2 2 2 0 2 2 2 0 2 2 2

0 0 0 0 (0) 2 0 3 2 3 2 0

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 1 1 1 1

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

0 2 0 0 (0) 2 0

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

0 2 2 2 0 2 2 2

**E**

9 10 11 12

0 2 0 0 (0) 2 0 3 2 3 2 0

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 1 1 1 1

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

**E**

13 14

0 2 0 0 (0) 2 0

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

0 2 2 2 0 2 2 2