

Guitar Theory, Guitar Chord Progressions and Playing By Numbers

The theory behind learning guitar chord progressions and playing music by numbers on the fretboard.

Understanding chord progressions is essential to learning guitar music theory and developing into a good player. Recognizing chord movement and playing by numbers can help guitarists:

- â€¢ Chart, learn and remember songs better
- â€¢ Apply scales correctly
- â€¢ Play by ear
- â€¢ Compose and improvise music
- â€¢ Understand guitar theory and apply it to the fretboard

Major Scale Chord Triads

Guitar players who are already familiar with major scale patterns and basic guitar theory can begin to learn guitar chord progressions. The major scale has seven notes and each one can be played as a chord. To build guitar chords, each note is combined with notes three and five degrees ahead in the scale. For this reason, these intervals are called root, third and fifth (or 1 3 5). Combined, the three chord tones are called a "triad".

Root, Third and Fifth Intervals (1 3 5)

When this chord building concept is applied to the entire major scale, not all chords end up the same. For example, some chords have major thirds (two whole-steps or four frets above the root) while others have minor thirds (one and a half-steps or three frets above the root). This occurs because the distance between major scale tones varies (some notes are a whole-step apart while others are a half-step apart). Coincidentally, the fifth intervals are all the same with the only exception being the chord built on the very last scale tone.

"Nashville Number System"

This order of major and minor creates the following chord sequence: 1. major 2. minor 3. minor 4. major 5. major 6. minor 7. minor (flat 5). Sometimes referred to as the "Nashville Number System," this sequence is the foundation of music theory and is often represented by Roman numerals. Major chords are written in upper case and minor chords are written in lower case as follows: I ii iii IV V vi vii

Chord Patterns and Keys

Different keys have different chords, built from different notes, determined by different key signatures (sharps and flats). What makes the chord number system so useful, and a must for any serious guitar theory student, is that it remains the same regardless of key. For example, the first three chords in G major are G, Am and Bm, the first three chords in A major are A, Bm and C#m, the first three chords in C major are C, Dm and Em, but in all

keys the first chord is major, the second is minor and so is the third. The number system can be visualized on the guitar as a chord pattern so that guitar players needn't be concerned with key signatures and notes. When this pattern is moved around the neck, guitarists can instantly see all the chords for each key. Guitar players have a music theory advantage because of this ability to shift patterns on the fret board.

Learning and Remembering New Songs

Playing chord progressions and playing by numbers go hand in hand and the concept is easier on the guitar than most other instruments. Players just have to know the right way to map things out on the guitar neck. It's surprising to realize that many songs that appear to be quite different because of their position on the neck and chords used, are actually the same progression in terms of numbers and theory. No more minds cluttered with endless amounts of chord information because everything can be simplified with numbers. This really benefits guitar players especially with learning and remembering new songs.

Learning Guitar Music Theory

Charting chord progressions has more benefits than just playing songs. Progressions play a role in understanding guitar music theory including applying pentatonic and major scale patterns correctly, identifying modes and modal scales, using intervals and adding chord extensions.

Playing By Ear

How do some players know what's coming next the first time through a song? Easy, knowing where to look is half the battle! When a player can see clearly all the chords of a key, it's easier to guess the change or even anticipate the movement before it happens. Since many songs are based on typical progressions, you'll become very familiar with common changes. Many musicians call out numbers on the bandstand. Many guitarists want to be able to sit around and talk theory with real musicians without feeling like an idiot.

Improvising and Composing

Establishing keys, determining chord movement, applying scales and playing by ear are all necessary for jamming and song-writing. Guitar players shouldn't leave spontaneity to chance. When technical details are worked out first, improvising and composing becomes much easier.

Play Until Yer Fingers Bleed!

<http://www.Guitar-Music-Theory.com>