



Progressive Music And Beyond

A discussion with Ivan Bertolla

It is very encouraging to be asked to write a monthly column for Mixdown. Most importantly in an era saturated with DJs, static progressions and power chord mentalities it is long overdue that some media outlet dedicates a full page to progressive music discussion. The time has come in my opinion for the guitar and technically accomplished musicians on any instrument to return to the spotlight. In the coming months I will discuss philosophically about guitar and progressive music generally. I will include exercises for both beginner and advanced guitarists. In addition I will discuss compositional ideas. I want feedback from musicians out there. If you are a progressive musician on any instrument I want to hear from you and discuss your playing, musical ideas, techniques and compositions on this page. Love to hear from orchestral musicians as well. Fire it at me! Its time the focus shifts back to musicians who dedicate hours of time on their instruments. Agreed?

The Changes in Guitar and Musicianship Generally in Australia

The guitar is still around despite the fact that the media ignores it. There is and will always be a hunger for guitar. There is a hidden market out there passionate about it. It is no revelation that electric guitar playing is very different to what it was in the early 80s. Sure, most of what came out in the early 80s as far as shred guitar was a joke. What I would call "guitar aerobics" over static chord progressions. But the technical abilities of guitarists in that era must be admired like one would appreciate a violin player who becomes a virtuoso and masters his instrument. This is what happened in the 80s with guitar. And everyone knew their theory.... So why has guitar playing changed? Would it be fair to say that society has become lazier? Everyone wants to be a pop star and without any hard work. Guitarists in Australia are less technically accomplished than

in places like Germany and Finland. And why is that? Is the media responsible? This attitude has changed the way guitars are manufactured and what shops stock. For example, the thin neck guitars have taken a back seat for modern guitars, which are less flexible for soloing. And what about the classical guitar? Could we assume that the classical guitar will not be played much in one hundred years? Less and less people want to play it let alone do formal examinations. And the icing on the cake is Tertiary institutions. Universities are shutting down music departments. There would be an outcry in places like Germany and Austria if this happened. No wonder we have fallen behind in guitar playing standards in Australia. Lets be honest in general terms the average guitar player in Europe and USA is way ahead of the average guitar player in Australia. Any stringed instrument is demanding. But I have noticed many students these days do not want to put in practice time to become accomplished. They are no longer

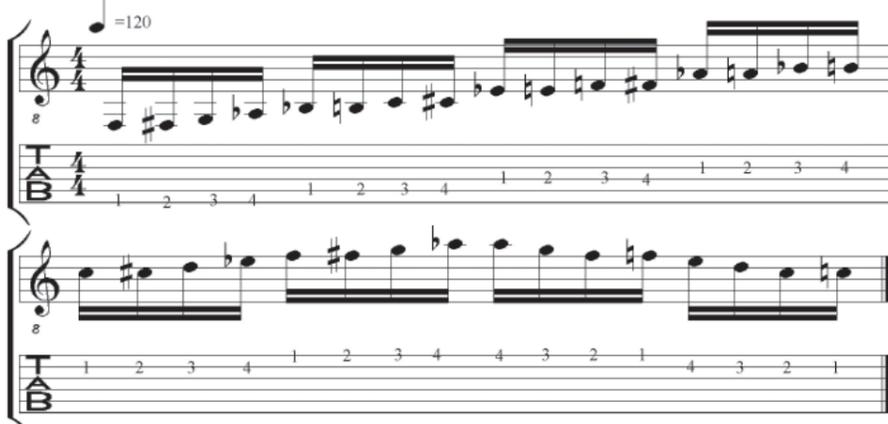
exposed to virtuoso guitar players. Dropped D and C tunings are fashionable and arpeggios aren't. It has been like that for a decade ...But have a guess what I always notice? When my students are exposed to the 80s guitar music they all forget very quickly about the music they are listening to and playing. Interesting that don't you think? It is all about media and what people are exposed to. In future columns I will give readers many ideas on techniques and how to start becoming articulate and serious about your instrument. I will also introduce ways on how to take your music into different keys via diatonic harmony and pivot chords. Get away from I IV V.

In this months edition I would like to give both the advanced player and beginner something to work on.

I will put the audio of these exercises on my website so you can hear how they should sound. www.bertolla.com/columns.htm

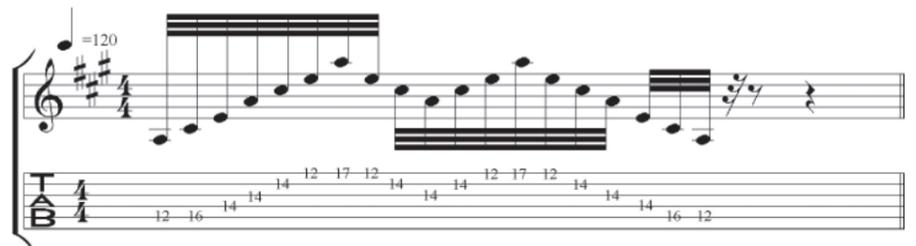
Beginner Exercises

Exercise 1



If you are just starting out in guitar here is the 1st exercise I do when warming up. Based on the chromatic (semitone) scale. If you are unable to play an exercise like this cleanly, in time and with articulation then your chords are most probably not happening either. Some tips... Left hand - Arch fingers, elbow straight, space out fingers, imagine you are holding a tennis ball in your hand, play with tips of fingers. Right hand - Pick should be straight and digging into your notes, alternate picking on every note. When you have that happening play in time. Nothing worse than hearing someone playing fast and sloppy and out of time.

Advanced Exercises



There are always new ideas to be used when it comes to sweep picking. For those of you who are advanced here is something that you can try. Great way to finish a solo. This is an A Major arpeggio using sweep picking. The passage is placed fast as 32 nd notes. With the right hand try and strum the pattern and palm mute and separate with the left hand. "Up pick" the 1st note "A" then strum down from the note "C" onwards for the rest. Then come back the other way. Check out the audio on my page to hear how it sounds. It should sound furious fast clean and articulate!! Have fun till next time. Stay progressive!

Ivan Bertolla is a Melbourne based composer/producer/guitar instructor who has released his debut CD worldwide of cinematic metal "Beyond The Skies Eternity". He runs Mastermind Productions and Macleod Guitar School and can be contacted at his web site www.bertolla.com

Select

Punk Hardcore Emo Ska news by Robert Molnar

PUNK IN BRIEF

Cable network Channel [V] have just announced that they will be bringing back their punk show! All the punk action will start on July 4th between 7pm-8pm and then be repeated on Fridays. Emo fans will be looking forward to the release of the new **Dashboard Confessional** album next month called "A Mark, A Mission, A Brand, A Scar". You may have heard the single "Hands Down" on the radio, but in the meantime, if you have a NOKIA phone, SMS 1808 to 0421 260 487 for a free D/C logo for your phone (it's the one that looks like AC/DC's) and check out the re-issued debut album "The Swiss Army Romance". Expect a new album from **Rancid** next month, although it will be released through the major label **Warner Bros Records**, confirms a representative from their previous home **Epitaph Records**. **The Hives** are planning to return to the studio to start recording the follow-up to last year's 'Your new Favourite Band'. Singer Howlin' Pelle Almqvist has said that the band have a "hundred songs" and that fans could expect a new album from **The Hives** before the end of the year. Believe it, or not, punk veterans **The Sex Pistols** are to tour later this year. The legendary outfit have confirmed two shows for August in North America, and are expected to announce more dates in the coming weeks. Whether they venture as far as Australia is not yet known. One of the hardest working bands around **Sick Of It All** have announced two releases in the next two months. The first, an EP called 'Relentless', will be out on **Bridge 9 Records** on July 29th, whilst a full length, 'Life On The Ropes', will follow on **Fat Wreck Chords** on September 9th.

Feature Interview:

FOR AMUSEMENT ONLY

Melbourne pop-punk lads **FAO** have just returned from their first national tour, hot on the heels of the release of their 2nd EP "One For The Team". **SELECT** caught up with the band to find out how it all went, and the story behind the new release. How was the recording of the new ep? I understand you used some drum sampling in one song? Recording the new ep was a shit load of fun. We all began to lose the plot though after late nights and many takes. This is when Kal our producer began seeing and hearing things and before we knew it we had a drum sampler in one of our songs. How was working with your producer? He has worked on some great albums in the past. He is a lovely man with great ideas and a really nice body. Tell us about your first headline national tour. Was it a fun experience? We definitely had more fun then a herd of cows would have if they were eating magic mushrooms. All the shows were great and we were as happy as a monkey who had been given a magic banana at the turn out of all the shows. Especially the underage Sydney show as it was sold out at doors. Novo your singer/guitarist got sick recently and couldn't come on tour. Was it hard to find a replacement, and is Novo ok? Mikey, Marks cousin is filling in for us he is an amazing man and doing an amazing job. Have definitely missed Novo on this tour but he is doing okay.

Your EP went to #1 on JJJ's Net Fifty. Is becoming a mainstream success a high priority for the band? Playing the songs we love and getting them out there to be heard is our priority. Radio play helps to do this and so we are stoked with their support. Especially triple J as they support Australian bands trying to get their music out there. What has been on the FAO stereo lately? I understand Ben is a big fan of The Used. Fao does not own there own stereo, but I have my own, and on that is definitely The Used, and I can't go past my NFG and my Goldfinger. "One For The Team" is out now through **Below Par Records/Inertia**.

Album Of The Month

DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL
The Swiss Army Romance (Vagrant/FMR)
This re-issue of **Dashboard Confessional's** debut record is timely in that their new album is only weeks away, and this is the perfect introduction to **Christopher Ender Carrabba** and band. The acoustic guitars and Carrabba's voice become one to create an emotionally intense and memorable album, with the lyrics as thought-provoking as ever. Feel the emotion and drift off to tales of bittersweet love and loneliness.



EP of the Month

FOR AMUSEMENT ONLY
One For The Team (Below Par/Inertia)
This is the follow up to "Where Did Go Wrong", and the song writing just gets better, the melodies even more catchy, and if you listen closely you'll here a few lines sung in French, some drum sampling and heartfelt screams. Standout tune is "So Goes Life" and it's poignant catchcry: "So, this is life after all".

NEW RELEASES

RUFIO
MCMLXXXV (Nitro/Shock)
Rufio released an awesome 3 track EP not long ago, and their new album definitely takes that same energy into the full 12 tracks found here. This one's been jammed on my stereo for weeks now, and its power and catchiness are totally addictive. Find your favourite new band in Rufio.

ANATOMY OF A GHOST
Evanescence (Fearless/Shock)
AOAG are a dynamic and diverse signing to **Fearless**, and undefinable in their style. In some parts the screamo/hard-edge sound soars out to the fore, but at other times the melodies shine through, which brings a unique blend of genres and styles to the album.

GOOD RIDDANCE
Bound By The Ties Of Blood And Affection (Fat Wreck Chords/Shock)
Well-established Fat band once again combine their hard-edged punk with precise guitar melodies. Always carrying well thought out lyrical content with powerful meaning, **Good Riddance** remain one of favourites of the punk scene.

Send Punk News, Releases, Tour Dates to **SELECT C/- Mixdown**, 3 Newton Street, Richmond, Vic, 3121 or email robmolnar@hotmail.com.