BEGINNER GUITAR

With Jenny Lester

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Practical Music Theory for Folk Music

Musical Alphabet
(ALL SEMITONES) Chromatic Scale (1 fret move)

G  G#  A  A#  B  C  C#  D  D#  E  F  F#  G
    A♭   B♭   D♭   E♭

The MAJOR SCALE
WHOLE TONE = 2 semitones = 2 frets
The scale is where you find the melody & harmony notes.

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Three Elements of Music
Tuning Timing & Tone
A simple major chord uses the root (1), third (3) & fifth (5) of the chord’s scale.

But can also use other intervals and are named accordingly.

For Example:  C = C E G  
C7 = C E G + the flatted 7th = Bflat
Chord Progression
The sequence in measures.

To choose which chords are in the key take the major scale and make each note the root of a chord.

1 = key 1, 4, 5 are Major  2, 3 are major or minor  6 is minor  7 is diminished or b7
C = key  C, F, G  D or dm, E or em  am  B°  B♭

Key is the sense of resolution.
Key is chosen by the lead singer so that the song’s melody fits best into their range. Every singer has a best key for each different song. Some keys are easier than others for musicians.

Common chords are the MAJOR chords:
1 4 5
C F G
G C D
D G A
A D E

A measure is the number of beats in the rhythmic count.

4/4 = ♩♩♩♩  4 beats per measure / ♩ gets a beat
3/4 = ♩♩♩  3 beats per measure / ♩ gets a beat
6/8 = ♪♫♫♫♫♫  6 beats per measure / ♪ gets a beat

Examples of a chord progression and CHORD CHARTS…

4/4
Part A
G  G
C  G
1A  D :||
2 A-D  G  ||
Part B
C  C  G  G
D  D  G  G-G♭
C  C  G  G
D  D  G  G  ||

Time: 3/4  Key: D

V & C & Solos:

1 ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩  1 4 4

1 1 5 5

1 1 4 4

1 5 1 1
Basic Guitar Chords

Basic must know chords

- A major
- A7
- A minor
- B7
- C major
- C7
- D Major
- D Minor
- D7
- E Major
- E7
- E minor
- F major
- G major
- G7

prepared by J Lester for 2014 Workshop
Rock of Ages
Gillian Welch

This version is based on using one chord, the A minor, and letting the melody create tension against it.

SCALE NOTES: A  B  C  D  E  F#  G

Am

Round, round wanna go round, wanna see the rock of ages
When my body gives out, gonna read the final pages

Oh my mother is gone she told me I should meet her
Some day streets of gold gonna guide me on and greet her

Solo once over form

Once my father sat down and told me of the prophets
Mathew, Mark, Luke and John they’re gone but not forgotten

Chorus (change final to gospel pages)

Moses heard a voice it called him up the mountain
40 days had set when Moses come a shouting

Chorus
Solo once over form X 2
Chorus (gospel pages)
Chorus (final pages)
Jambalaya

G     D
Goodbye Joe, me gotta go, me oh my oh

G
Me gotta go pole the pirogue down the bayou

D
My Yvonne the sweetest one, me oh my oh

G
Son of a gun, we'll have big fun on the bayou

Chorus:

Jambalaya and a crawfish pie and a fillet gumbo

Cause tonight I'm gonna see my cher a mi-o

Pick guitar, fill fruit jar and be gay-o

Son of a gun, we'll have big fun on the bayou

The Thibodauxs, the Fontaineauxs the place is buzzin'
Kin-folk come to see Yvonne by the dozen
Dress in style and go hog wild, me oh my oh
Son of a gun, we'll have big fun on the bayou

Jambalaya and a crawfish pie and fillet gumbo
Cause tonight, I'm a-gonna see my my-my chez a mi-o
Pick guitar, fill fruit jar and be gay-o
Son of a gun, we'll have big fun on the bayou

Number System: uses the major scale to show which chords fall in the key, and 1 is the key.

1 2 3 4 5 6m 7 8
C  d e F G am b C
G  a b C D em f# G
D  e f# G A bm c# D
A  b c# D E f#m ge A

Chord Progression

Time: 4/4 Key: G

Intro Turnaround
5 5 1 1
V & C & Solos:
1 1 5 5
5 5 1 1
1 1 5 5
5 5 1 1

Form

Intro
Verse 1
Chorus
Solo (split)
Verse 2
Chorus
Solo (split)
Chorus
Out on last word
The River, Mother Nature & Me

C
There’s a place in the north where you still see the moons
F C
When the morning sun is high
It’s a place Mother Nature takes all her children
F G C
And none are more willing than I

Chorus:
F C
Sitting on rocks down by the river
G
Feeling the powers that be
F C
You can howl at the moon, wade the deep water
F C
There’s no place that I’d rather be
F G C
Just the river, Mother Nature and me

If you listen at nighttime you’ll hear her heart beating
It’s a rhythm that lulls me to sleep
If I awake in the city I’ll dream of the river
It’s a feeling that I long to keep

Chorus

If your heart needs healing go down to the river
And quietly sit on the shore
You’ll feel her run through you to mend and renew you
You’ll feel life like never before

Chorus

Composer: Jenny Lester 1994

Chord Progression
Time: 3/4 Key: C

Intro & Turnarounds
4 5 1 1

Verse:
1 1 1 1
4 4 1 1
1 1 1 1
4 5 1 1

Chorus:
4 4 1 1
1 5 5
4 4 1 6m 6m
4 4 1 1
4 5 1 1

Arrangement
Intro
V1 Chorus
Turnaround
V2 Chorus
Turnaround
V3 Chorus
Repeat chorus acapella
Three Little Birds
Bob Marley

4/4 KEYS OF A

A
Don’t worry about a thing
D A
Cause every little thing gonna be alright

Singing don’t worry about a thing
D A
Cause every little thing gonna be alright

A E
Rise up this morning smile with the rising sun
A D
Three little birds sits by my doorstep
A E
Singing sweet songs of melodies pure and true
D A
Sayin this my message to you

Part 1:

A A A A
D D A A
A A A A
D D A A

Part 2:

A A E E
A A D D
A A E E
D D A A
The Lion Sleeps Tonight
Soloman Linda (Zulu song Mbube)

Start slow with shakers and animal noises, nighttime in the jungle
Drone a note
Add droning harmony notes
Begin softly one ukulele strumming the rhythm and chord progression
Some go from drone notes to strumming building rhythm section
Start with wimowehs

Wimoweh or wimba way 2x through form  \[\underline{\|: C F G G :\|}\]

In the jungle the mighty jungle the lion sleeps tonight
Wimoweh or wimba way

Near the Village the peaceful village the lion sleeps tonight
Wimoweh or wimba way

Hush my darlin don’t cry my darlin the lion sleeps tonight
Hush my darlin don’t fear my darlin the lion sleeps tonight
Wimoweh or wimba way

\[4/4\]

\[\underline{\|: C F G G :\|}\]

\[\underline{\|: 1 4 1 5 :\|}\]

Number System: uses the major scale to show which chords and notes fall in the key.
1 is the key.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
C d e F G a b C
G a b C D e f# G
D e f# G A b c# D
A b c# D E f# g# A

Prepared by J Lester for 2014 Workshop
Waltz Across Texas

1
When we danced together my worlds in disguise
5
It’s a fairyland tale that’s come true
1
And when you look at me with those stars in your eyes
5
I could waltz across Texas with you

1      5
Waltz across Texas with you in my arms
5
Waltz across Texas with you
1
Like a story book ending I’m lost in your charms
5
I could waltz across Texas with you

My heart aches and troubles are just up and gone
The moment that you come in view
And with your hand in mine dear I could dance on and on
I could waltz across Texas with you

Chorus

3/4

||: 1 1 5 5
    5 5 1 1 :||

Number System: uses the major scale to show which chords and notes fall in the key. 1 is the key.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
C  d  e  F  G  a  b  C
G  a  b  C  D  e  f#  G
D  e  f#  G  A  b  c#  D
A  b  c#  D  E  f#  g#  A
You Ain’t Goin’ Nowhere  
Composed by: Bob Dylan

Clouds so swift rain won’t lift  
Gate won’t close railings froze  
Get your mind off wintertime  
You ain’t goin’ nowhere  

**Whoo-ee Ride me high**  
**Tomorrow’s the day**  
**My bride’s gonna come**  
**Oh, oh, are we gonna fly**  
**Down in the easy chair!**

I don’t care how many letters they sent  
Morning came and morning went  
Pick up your money and pack up your tent  
You ain’t goin’ nowhere  

Buy me a flute and a gun that shoots  
Tailgates and substitutes  
Strap yourself to the tree with roots  
You ain’t goin’ nowhere  

Genghis Khan he could not keep  
All his kings supplied with sleep  
We’ll climb that hill no matter how steep  
When we get up to it

**Chord Progression**  
*Time: 4/4*  
The whole song repeats the chord progression

```
1   2m   4   1  
D   Em   G   A  
G   Am  C   D  
C   Dm  F   G  
```

Number System: uses the major scale to show you which chords fall in the key, and 1 is the key.
Have You Ever Seen The Rain

Intro:

6m 4 1 5 1 1

1
Someone told me long ago
There’s a calm before the storm
5 1
I know, it’s been comin for some time
When it’s over so they say
It will rain a sunny day
5 1
I know, shining down like water

Chorus

4 5 1 1/7maj 6m 5
I wanna know have you ever seen the rain
4 5 1 1/7maj 6m 5
I wanna know have you ever seen the rain
4 5 1
Coming down on a sunny day

Yesterday and days before
Sun is cold and rain is hot
I know, been that way for all my time
Feel forever on it goes,
Through the circle fast and slow
I know, it can’t stop, I wonder

Chorus X 2

Number System: uses the major scale to show which chords fall in the key, and 1 is the key.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
C d e F G a b C
G a b C D e f G
D e f# G A b c D
Orphan Girl
© Gillian Welch

I am an orphan on God’s highway
But I’ll share my troubles if you’ll go my way
I have no mother, no father, no sister no brother
I am an orphan girl

I have had friendships pure and golden
But the ties of kinship I have not known them
I know no mother, no father, no sister no brother
I am an orphan girl

Oh When he calls me I will be able
To meet my family at God’s table
I’ll meet my mother, my father, my sister, my brother
No more an orphan girl

Blessed Savior, make me willing
Be my family till I’m with them
Be my mother, my father, my sister my brother
I am an orphan girl

Number System: uses the major scale to show which chords and notes fall in the key. 1 is the key.

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Nahlin River Song
© Jenny Lester 2010

There’s an eagle above a mountain
Floating high upon the breeze
We are rolling to the river
And the river is rolling to the sea

I have felt the raindrops
I have shed the tears
Let the rivers rise up
Wash away our fears

Chorus

Dance upon the white caps
Bathe in the sun
Look up to the morning
The day is almost done

Chorus

Now stand in the moment
Before the moments gone
You can come back through the memories
But the memories might be wrong

Chorus
Tennessee Waltz

1
I was dancing with my darling

4
To the Tennessee waltz

1
When an old friend I happened to see

5
I introduced him to my loved one

4
And while they were dancing

1
My friend stole my sweetheart from me

5
I remember that night and the Tennessee waltz

Only you know how much I have lost

4
I lost my little darling the night they were playing

1
The beautiful Tennessee waltz

Alternate Chord Progression

A part
1  1  17  4
1  6m  2  5
1  1  17  4
1  5  1  1

B Part
1  3  4  1
1  6m  2  5
1  1  17  4
1  5  1  1

Chord Progression

Time: 3/4  Key: C
Intro Turnaround
1  1  1  4
1  5  1  1
V:
1  1  1  4
1  1  5  5
1  1  1  4
1  5  1  1
Chorus:
1  5  4  1
1  1  5  5
1  1  1  4
1  5  1  1

Arrangement
Intro over Verse & Chorus
Verse
Chorus
solo over A Part
Sing B Part
Fiddle out once through A

Number System: uses the major scale to show which chords and notes fall in the key.
1 is the key.
1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8
C  d e F  G  a b C
G  a b C  D  e f# G
D  e f# G  A  b c# D
A  b c# D  E  f# g# A
Wildwood Flower

1 5 1
Oh, I'll twine with my mingles and waving black hair
5 1
With the roses so red and the lilies so fair
4 1
And the myrtle so bright with the emerald hue
5 1
The pale amaleader and eyes look like blue

Oh he taught me to love him and call his flower
That bloomed just to cheer him through life's dreary hour
When I woke from my dreaming, my idol was clay
All portion of love had all flown away

He taught me to love him and promised to love
And To cherish me over all others above
How my heart is now wond'ring no mis'ry can tell
He's left me no warning, no words of farewell

Oh I'll dance, I will sing and my laugh shall be gay
I will charm every heart, in his crown I will sway
Oh, I long just to see him regret the dark hour
He loved then neglected his pale wildwood flower

Repeat First Verse

Number System: uses the major scale to show which chords and notes fall in the key. 1 is the key.
Wildwood Flower – Carter Family

Repeat twice

After the Above is played twice play this

Prepared by J Lester for 2014 Workshop
Jay Ungar
Ashokan Farewell
www.traditionalmusic.co.uk