



guitar cool

with Kevin Downing



Bubble Parts

Many guitar players seem to be unaware of bubble parts within songs they listen to. Indeed they can often be difficult to hear on recordings as they sit just under the vocal or instrumental melody.

A bubble part is normally a simple single note line that is palm-muted, but can also be very complex and involve numerous single notes with added double or triple stops. I will only deal with easy type parts here.

Bubble parts are great for when there is a pianist, multiple guitar players on a jam session, or in a band setting. If everyone plays similar chords the sound gets very muddy, so one player could play a back up single note line part. They are also great if you get lost at your jam session – you can sit on the root note until you find your way back in. You might think you won't get lost but it happens to everyone at some stage, so having a back-up plan is a good strategy.

There are numerous examples of bubble parts, in fact, hardly any modern recording hasn't got some type of bubble part on it. They are exclusive to the guitar and can be played by any other instrument. Many recordings have multiple bubble parts so just keep your ears open.

To get started have a look at Exercise 1. It is the trusty minor pentatonic scale we all love to play, and many bubble parts come from within that scale. Exercises 2 and 3 are using the root note (A), only with a different rhythm separating them. Exercises 4 and 5 is a two note bubble part which uses the root note (A) with the b7 (G). Exercises 6, 7 and 8 add the mi3rd to the root, and b7, to add a bit of variety. Exercise 9 uses a leap; the first three notes are similar to Ex 4, but then leap to the 5th (E), and b7 (G) played an octave higher. When playing the E note you could easily slide into it to create a variation of your bubble part.

Once you have got these bubble parts well down, then it's a good idea to put them into practice by playing them with a backing track, or rhythm part, like in Exercise 10. All the bubble parts that you have just practised will fit over this progression, so it would be a good idea to record yourself playing this two chord progression, or play along with it on my website (address below).

Now you know what bubble parts are it'd be good to come with a few

parts of your own, using the pentatonic scale in Ex 1. You could come up with many different parts just using this scale, in fact, what you can come up with is endless.

To hear what this arrangement sounds like and to play along with the backing track visit <http://www.guitar.co.nz/category/resources/freellessons/>

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