

Two Note Rhythm

There is a general theory among top players that “Less is more” and this month’s article will help get you into the less is more approach. Beginner and intermediate level players tend to stick around bar type chords for many reasons, but bar chords tend to sound very ordinary at best and tie up all your fingers making it difficult to play fills and other cool add ons. Power chords are also great two note chords, but not the centre of this lesson.

You won’t need a lot of technique to play this lesson, but it would pay to know something of the theoretical side. If you look at the first bar of music you can see there are two notes (F & B) which are going over a G7 chord. If you play your E shape G7 bar chord at the third fret and strip away your fingers one by one until you have only have your fingers on the 3rd & 4th strings you will see that they are the two notes on the music staff coming from your bar chord. It is important to see this connection before carrying on as these two notes are from the root chord. By seeing this connection will allow you to play this rhythm part in all keys.

Those two notes you have your fingers on are called the “Tritone” (two notes a flattened 5th apart), and are the 3rd and 7th notes of the chord. They are also the two most important notes you need to play of any chord. You don’t need to play the other two notes which make up the G7 chord, being the root and the 5th. This same theory also works for the C7 and D7 chords. The bass player tends to play (or emphasize) the root so you don’t want to get in their road or double up on what they are doing and the 5th of any chord can be left out at any time.

Now if you go to the 2nd bar of music, the two notes there come from the open C7 chord shape and the D7 notes in the 9th bar come from the same shape chord two frets higher. As you can see the notes in the three chords are only one fret apart from each other making it effortless to play.

The musical notation consists of two systems of six bars each. The first system has chords G7, C7, G7, G7, C7, and C7. The second system has chords G7, D7, C7, G7, G7, and D7. Fingerings are indicated for the top (T), middle (A), and bottom (B) strings in each bar.

System	Bar	Chord	T	A	B
System 1	1	G7	4	4	4
	2	C7	3	3	3
	3	G7	4	4	4
	4	G7	4	4	4
	5	C7	3	3	3
	6	C7	3	3	3
System 2	7	G7	4	4	4
	8	D7	5	5	5
	9	C7	3	3	3
	10	G7	4	4	4
	11	G7	4	4	4
	12	D7	5	5	5

When playing this rhythm part you can use any two of your fretting fingers and any strumming style. Make sure to mute adjacent strings so they don't ring unintentionally. When you can play it in this key easily then transfer it to all keys.

Playing cut down chords like this are not only fun, they sound much better than their bulky counterparts, and they allow us to concentrate on the song we are playing. This type of backup will sound great in all styles of music and originate from the Hammond B3 organ players like Jimmy Smith.

To hear the music for this lesson visit <http://www.guitar.co.nz/two-note-rhythm/>

Happy Practising
Kevin.

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