

16th Annual!
Montana Fiddle Camp
 June 5-10 & June 12-17, 2011

Week One Fiddle Instructors: Erynn Marshall, Paul & Claudia Anastasio, Bethany Dick, Kelly Wells.

Week Two Fiddle Instructors: Katie Glassman, Hank Bradley, Cathie Whitesides, Natalie Padilla, James Schlender.

Guitar: Mike Dowling, Taylor Buckley, Britt Smith.

Mandolin: Evan Marshall. Clawhammer banjo: David Reed. Bluegrass banjo: Warrie Means.

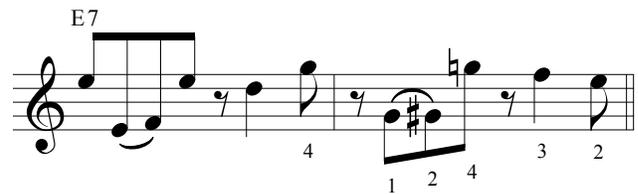
www.montanafiddlers.org

For up-to-date information, please visit our website or call Fred Buckley at (406) 323-1198 or email buckley@midrivers.com



If you recall from my first column, to give your phrases over the A minor chord a jazzier sound, you play the G sharp note instead of a G natural. This particular solo starts right off with the G sharp note, instantly setting up tension and drawing the listener in. Of course there are many different ways to achieve this, but it is extremely important to grab a listener's attention right off the bat. The second half of this phrase includes a series of double stops that weave around the D minor. One way to practice incorporating double stops into your solos is to take a phrase you like, make that your top note of the double stop, then add a third below each of those notes. Also, practice your basic scales in thirds and sixths in order to get those double stops under your fingers.

Example #2 – Lick 2 (numbers refer to optional 3rd position fingerings)



Notice how the next two bars (example #2 above) contain a rhythmic motif, which as I indicated in previous columns is an extremely important concept for building interesting and fluid solos. You can practice motifs by taking a rhythmic pattern that you like and playing it through your scales and arpeggios. Also, try to overdo them a bit at first when you are practicing so they become second nature down the line.

As for the harmonic content of this phrase, recall from my previous column that you can play an F diminished arpeggio over the E7 (example #3). The F note and G# from Lick 2 come straight out of the F Diminished arpeggio. Practice mixing around the notes of the diminished arpeggio to create your own set of diminished licks. This is a very important sound to incorporate into your jazz playing, especially when you are playing a Gypsy jazz song like "Minor Swing."

Example #3 – F Diminished Arpeggio:



Getting Started with Gypsy Jazz

By Jason Anick

Welcome to the third installment of my occasional column dedicated to playing in the swing violin style known as "Gypsy jazz." The last two columns (Summer 2009 and Fall 2009) provided tips and tricks for improvising over A minor and E7 chords. But how does one tie it all together to construct an improvised solo over the entire form of a song that is both fluid and musical? For me, the best method has always been to do an in-depth study of how other musicians improvise over a song like "Minor Swing." In doing so, you see how other learned musicians implement all the scales, arpeggios, and licks they learned to form a unique and fluid improvisation. For this column we will dissect parts of the solo I improvised over "Minor Swing," which is the last track of my recent solo album, *Sleepless*.

Let's take a look at the first chorus of my violin break. To simplify it a bit I altered the last two bars. Before we look at the entire first chorus, we need to dissect it by breaking it down into smaller pieces or phrases. Here is the first phrase of the solo (example #1).

Example 1 – Lick 1:



Example #4 – Lick 3:

This phrase exemplifies the use of a motif that continues over the bar lines and the chord changes. Also, notice how the notes in the arpeggio are embellished with the surrounding notes; for example the F-E-Eb-E in the first bar and the E-D-C#-D in the third bar. When you practice your arpeggios, try approaching each note in the arpeggio with the note directly above and below it.

If done right, chromaticism can be a great way of achieving a jazzier sound, as seen in the phrase below. It is particularly hard

to play chromatic runs on non-fretted instruments like the violin, so it should be well practiced before attempting. Along with the chromatic scale (all half-steps), I recommend coming up with some chromatic licks that you can vary depending on what note you're approaching. Oftentimes chromaticism is used to approach a note within the arpeggio. Also notice the F# note in the last bar over the A minor chord. From my first column you should recall that the F# over the A minor is the natural six and is an important color tone when playing Gypsy jazz.

Example #5 – Lick 4:

All right, Let's piece it all together and take a look at the entire first chorus of the solo! (Example #6)

Example #6 – Minor Swing Improvisation:

Once you have all the rhythms and notes down, try playing through the entire solo with a swing feel. If you have friends that play guitar, have them play chords behind you and listen to how the phrases flow over the chords. Once you feel comfortable playing this solo, start working on improvising your own licks and phrases.

Being able to improvise well will not come overnight, but the more you practice the various tools outlined throughout these columns the more fluid and musical your solos will become. The

best advice I can give is to learn as many solos and licks from the great Gypsy jazz violinists like Stéphane Grappelli and Florin Niculescu because you can't beat learning from the best!

[Boston based jazz fiddler Jason Anick plays Gypsy jazz and new acoustic music with the John Jorgenson Quintet (www.johnjorgenson.com). Jason has led jazz violin workshops at Django in June and Djangofest Northwest and teaches private lessons while on and off tour. His debut solo album "Sleepless" is currently available through his website (www.jasonanick.com).]