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LESSON 2: THE FAN STROKE

VIDEO The *fan stroke* is one of many special strums made famous by George Formby in many films. It is a type of triple strum that also creates a visual effect for your audience. The best way to learn it is to break it down into three steps.



STEP 1

Start with your hand in a normal strumming position, ready to do a downstroke on all four strings. Your fingers should be curled in slightly, as they normally would be. The first part of the fan stroke could be done with the pinky (as Formby did), or the ring finger, which makes a more consistent sound. We will use the ring finger here.

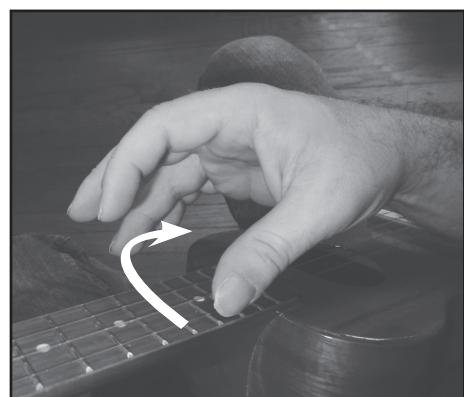
Use your ring finger (labeled in music as “*a*”) to make a downstroke across the strings, somewhere over the fretboard. As you make the downstroke, allow your fingers to fan out in a circular motion. If your uke was a clock, and the neck was at 12 o’clock, the path of your ring finger would be roughly 10:00 to 2:00. As you make the stroke, let your thumb stick out—you’ll need it next.



Step 1: Ring-finger downstroke.

STEP 2

Follow the ring-finger downstroke with a downstroke of the thumb (*T*). Follow the same path of 10:00 to 2:00 as in Step 1, allowing the thumb motion to push the rest of your hand farther around the circle. Your fingers will naturally curl back into your palm.



Step 2: Thumb downstroke.

STEP 3

Finish the fan stroke with an upstroke of your index finger (*i*), following a path of 4:00 to 7:00 around your imaginary clock. This part of the stroke is hard to see from the front and helps create the illusion that you are making magical sounds happen just by whirling your hand around the strings in a circle.

The fan stroke can be used like a triple strum to make various rhythms, or it can be done in a solid stream of fast triplets for a tremolo or rolling effect. Try practicing the fan stroke in slow quarter notes, then in triplets. Make sure each part of the strum is a distinct rhythmic sound.



Step 3: Index-finger upstroke.

VIDEO 7

a T i a T i a T i a T i a T i a T i a T i

LESSON 4: CROSS-STRING RAG

Now, we'll play a ragtime piece, "Cross-String Rag," which utilizes cross-string fingering techniques as demonstrated with the C Major scale on page 45. Make sure to hold down notes whenever possible so that they keep sustaining as you're playing consecutive notes.



CROSS-STRING RAG

Musical score for a guitar solo. The top staff shows a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and two measures of a G7 chord (B, D, G, B) followed by a C6 chord (C, E, G, B, D). The bottom staff shows the corresponding fret positions on a six-string guitar neck, with the strings labeled T (Top), A, and B (Bottom). The tablature shows a repeating pattern of notes and rests across the six strings.

5

G7

C

P

P H H

T A B

1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 3 0 0 0 0 0 2 0 2 0 2 3 0 0

0 0 3 | 0 3 | 0 3 | 0 3 | 0 3 | 0 3 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 0 2 0 2 3 0 0

Musical score for G7 and C6 chords. The top staff shows a treble clef, a '9' at the beginning, and two measures of music. The first measure is labeled 'G7' and the second is labeled 'C6'. The bottom staff shows a bass clef, a 'T' at the beginning, and a six-string guitar tablature. The tablature shows the strings from low E (B) to high E (A). The first measure has notes on the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd strings. The second measure has notes on the 2nd, 1st, 3rd, and 4th strings. The third measure has notes on the 0th, 0th, 0th, and 0th strings. The fourth measure has notes on the 0th, 0th, 0th, and 0th strings.

13 F C G7 C

P H

T A B G D A
1 0 1 0 0 3 3 7 3 0 1 0 2 1 0 2 0 0 3
0 0 4 4 7 7 4 0 0 2 0 2 0 0 0 3

CHAPTER 8

Jazz Improvisation

LESSON 1: IMPROVISING OVER DOMINANT 7TH CHORDS

Incorporating chord tones into your improvisation is a great way to make your solos sound more interesting. We'll practice this concept with "Has Anybody Seen My Uke?" using the arpeggios we covered in Chapter 5. Except for the I chord, F, for which we'll use an Fmaj6 arpeggio, we'll use dominant 7th arpeggios to improvise over the rest of the chords. Here's a sample solo over an eight-bar section of the song. After you play this, try coming up with your own solos over the full progression using these arpeggios.

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VIDEO EXAMPLE

The musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is for the ukulele, showing a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 4/4 time signature. It features six measures of a solo. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fingerings for each note. The first measure starts with an F chord. The second measure starts with an A7 chord. The third measure starts with a D7 chord. The fourth measure starts with a G7 chord. The fifth measure starts with a C7 chord. The sixth measure starts with an F chord. The notation includes various note heads (solid, hollow, and stems) and rests.

F A7 D7

G7 C7 F

T 0-3-0 1-(1) 0 0-4-0 0-(0)-3 2-5-3-0-3-0
A 2-0-2-2-(2)
B 0 3 0 1 0 0 4 0 0 3 1 4 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 1 2

T 3-1-2-3-(3)-1 0-3-0 0-(0) 1 1-1-2-0-1-1-2-0 1-2-0-1-(1)
A 0 3 0 0 1 3 1 1 2 0 1 1 2 0 1 2 0 1
B 3 1 2 3 1 0 3 0 0 1 3 1 1 2 0 1 1 2 0 1 2 0 1

Looking deeper into these arpeggios, we discover some interesting possibilities for melodic movement. Here are the notes contained within each chord:

A7 (A-C#-E-G)
D7 (D-F#-A-C)
G7 (G-B-D-F)
C7 (C-E-G-Bb)
F6 (F-A-C-D)

Notice that C#, the 3rd of the A7 chord, moves down a half step to C, the 7th degree of the D7 chord. This movement continues through the progression, alternating 3rds and 7ths. The C in the D7 chord moves down a half step to B, the 3rd of the G7 chord. The B moves down a half step to Bb, the 7th of the C7 chord. Finally, the Bb moves down a half step to A, the 3rd of the F chord. Now look at the 7th of the A7 chord, the G moves down a half step to F#, the 3rd of the D7 chord. The F# moves down a half step to F, the 7th of the G7 chord. F moves down a half step to E, the 3rd of the C7 chord. Finally, E moves down a whole step to D, the 6th of the F6 chord. Pretty fascinating!