

# Howard Morgen's CONCEPTS: Arranging for Fingerstyle Guitar

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- 12 I'M WALKIN'
- 14 THE CRAWDAD SONG
- 16 JUST FRIENDS
- 20 THE FORTUNE COOKIE
- 22 ZOOM
- 24 FREIGHT TRAIN
- 26 SUR LE PONT D'AVIGNON
- 29 BELL BOTTOM TROUSERS
- 30 WHISPERING
- 32 LAMB STEW
- 32 C-JAM BLUES
- 34 FIVE FOOT TWO, EYES OF BLUE  
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- 44 SWEET GINGERBREAD MAN
- 48 WHAT ARE YOU DOING THE REST  
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# Independence between the Thumb and Fingers

Many of the finger style concepts and techniques you will be learning in this book are dependent upon the ability of the thumb to move independently of the fingers. This independence enables you to provide a strong, steady rhythm in the bass throughout an arrangement, regardless of what is going on in the melody part. The contrast between a steady bass beat and a rhythmically free and independent melody is one of the most appealing characteristics of the finger style sound. The feeling of playing two independent parts simultaneously is something that has to be experienced to be fully appreciated.

You can develop independence between the thumb and the fingers of the hand that sounds the strings by regular practice of syncopation in the melody part (played with *i, m, a*) against a steady bass part (played with *p*).

**Syncopation:** the shift of a rhythmic accent from the *beat* to the *off beat*.



In the third and fourth measures of the following example, the note that would fall on the third beat of the measure is *anticipated* by the use of the tie on the last half of the second beat. When a tie is used in this manner, a shift in accent or **Syncopation** occurs.

## SYNCOPATION WITH THE TIE



## EXERCISES WITH SYNCOPATION TO DEVELOP INDEPENDENCE BETWEEN THE THUMB AND FINGERS

The right hand finger and thumb designations *p, i, m, a*, when viewed along with the count 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &, indicate both the fingers that pluck the strings and on which beat the strings are to be plucked. Count out loud as you play and repeat each exercise many times before going to the next.

*Play all syncopations with a jazz or swing feeling, so that all consecutive eighth notes, notated , are felt *



## Adapting Chord Melodies for "Instant" Finger Style Arrangements

The techniques used in folk guitar for automatically plucking out melody and bass parts from simple pre-set chord formations (p. 25) can now be used for adapting more complex chord-melody solos designed for pick style into "instant" finger style arrangements. This is accomplished (with some occasional adjustments for chord voicing) by applying certain right hand finger and thumb combinations in a steady rhythm to the pre-set chord formations of the original chord-melody solo.

In these examples the rhythmic device consists of repeating either the chord itself, or the lowest tone (in this case the root) of the chord on each beat.

This

Becomes this

### BLUE MOON *(excerpt)* Lorenz Hart and Richard Rodgers

The completed arrangement is on page 111.

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Remember, the basic concept of the rhythmic device is to keep a *constant rhythmic pulse* in the bass and chord accompaniment parts, regardless of what is being played in the melody. And, as mentioned earlier, the actual notes of the bass are less important than the fact that each note occupies a beat (see page 18).

**Important:** The following exercises and arrangements using rhythmic device concepts ("BLUE MOON," "DON'T BLAME ME," "BONFIRE") should be played with both a *muffled bass* and a *muffled, slightly scratchy, drum/brush-like sound in the chord accompaniment part*. This effect can be obtained by placing your hand in the position for damping the strings (see the photo on page 18), with your fingers held almost parallel to the strings. You then scratch the strings with the left side of your *i* or your *m* fingernails as you slide your fingers inward toward your palm. Special care must be taken to allow the melody to ring out clearly.

On the next page are some examples of possibilities for right hand finger and thumb combinations that could be applied to a given set of chord formations. Play each exercise ten or twenty times.