

## **The development of the Electric Jazz Guitar in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – by Pebber Brown**

One of the areas that is historically very important but sorely missing from any music texts, is that of the history of the jazz guitar and its players. In this essay, I will explore some of its early origins as an instrument and briefly look at some of the significant early guitar players of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century who had an impact on later developments in jazz guitar. Moving into the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I will also explore some of the influential non-classical guitarists who influenced the acceptance of the guitar as a viable jazz instrument, and lastly I will explore the importance of the invention of the electric guitar and look at some of the less well known but very important jazz guitarists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Some insight into the origins of the guitar**

The guitar was invented many centuries ago in Spain as a predecessor of older Middle-Eastern stringed



instruments such as the Zither, and the Lyre. The first guitars had less strings on them and were called "Chitarra." These instruments were played up until the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the more modern "Guitarra" was invented in Spain. The Guitarra later became the "Guitar," and it made its way to Northern Europe and in England and the Netherlands they created their own version of it called the Lute. Lutes are most called "Baroque" lutes



pertaining to the music played on them during the Baroque period. The word

"*guitarra*" and "*chitarra*" are thought to have been originally been derived

from the word "kithara," which is the name of an ancient Greek stringed

instrument. A member of the lute family, the *guitar* has been known to have existed in Renaissance

Europe. Many stringed instruments with similar names already existed over 400 years earlier, and

there exist some references in medieval French literature to the "gitere." In 14th century English

literature an instrument called the "gitarer" is mentioned. Early

instruments that resemble (or are similar in concept to) the guitar may have existed in ancient Mesopotamia, Anatolia and Egypt and also in Central Asia at the beginning of the Christian era.



According to pbs.org, "As early as the 1600s, Spanish settlers had brought to the New World a European style guitar with five sets of double strings. By 1800 the six string instrument known today had evolved in southern Europe and was brought over from places like Italy and France. The instrument was popular enough by 1816 that the first

instruction book was published. Most of these guitars were smaller than modern models and were strung with gut strings and plucked with the fingers. Though they were seldom known in the mountains or with the white working class of the South, a study of ex-slave narratives reveals a number of memories of guitar-playing by blacks in pre-Civil War times, almost all of them located in the Mississippi River delta. There is little documentation as to how these guitars were played, but the location is significant: it would later be the center for the creation of classic delta blues and the birthplace of Jazz. If American vernacular music has an archetypal instrument it is certainly the guitar. Though figures like Benjamin Franklin played a guitar-like instrument, and genteel ladies like Andrew Jackson's wife Rachel played a gut-strung "parlor guitar," the instrument didn't really achieve widespread use in the country until the twentieth century."

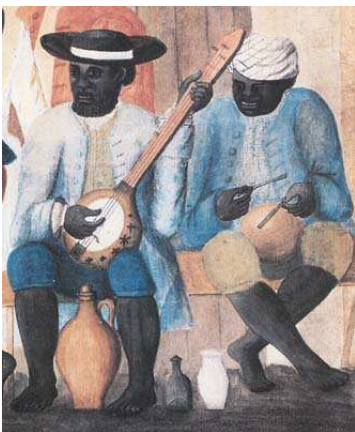
([http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs\\_arm\\_ii\\_guitar.html](http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs_arm_ii_guitar.html))

### Some of early non-traditional guitar players in the 18th and 19th century

The 18th century (1700s) witnessed an overwhelming (too many to list) amount of important classical and flamenco guitar players, however in traditional terms it really did not produce any famous or important non-classical (i.e. jazz or blues) guitar players, as the non-classical guitar was mostly seen as a "parlor instrument" and was only played by amateur hobbyists and the curious.

In the American south the steel string guitar managed to become a semi-popular instrument with slaves and they strummed folk and blues songs on them alongside the banjo players of the day. Many guitars were also brought over by immigrants from Europe during the peak immigration time period of 1776-1850. This was also documented as the main time period when America was flourishing and received the most amount of European immigrants in its history.

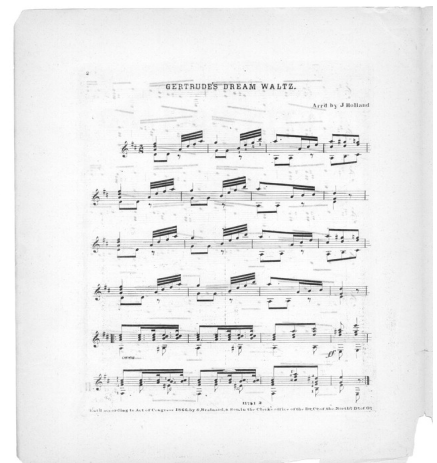
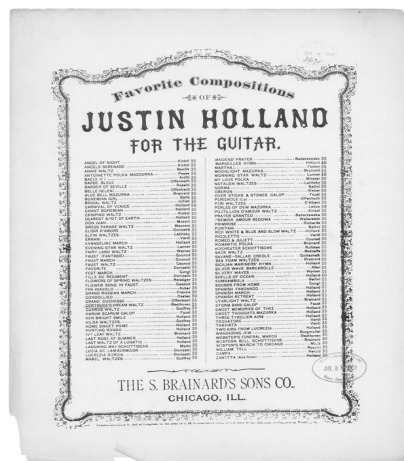
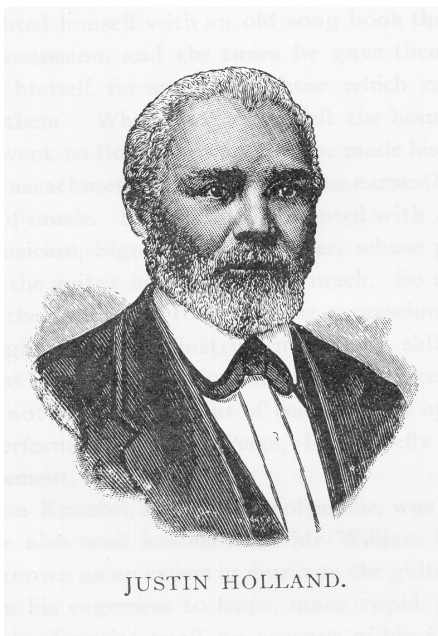
According to Wikipedia, "The **banjo** is a [stringed instrument](#) developed by [enslaved Africans](#) in the [United States](#), adapted from several African instruments.<sup>[1]</sup> The name *banjo* commonly is thought to be derived from the [Kimbundu](#) term *mbanza*. Some etymologists derive it from a dialectal pronunciation of "[bandore](#)", though recent research suggests that it may come from a [Senegambian](#) term for the [bamboo](#) stick used for the instrument's neck ." (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banjo>)



The Banjo was popular with black slaves because it actually originated in Africa and it was brought over by the slaves early on and has since been updated and modified from its original animal skin construction method. Banjo players intermingled with players of the guitar and in early jazz and blues recordings you can hear both being played simultaneously as rhythm instruments.

The 19th century (1800's) produced a remarkable black man who was a guitar player named Justin Holland (1819-1886). Holland was a black musical composer and arranger and excellent performer on the guitar, flute and piano. Holland entered Oberlin College in 1841 and went on to become a music teacher in Cleveland, Ohio in 1845. Holland was the first African-American to make an important contribution to the guitar. "Holland's Method," was published in 1876, and it still to this day stands as one of the finest examples of guitar instruction to appear in America from the 19th century. There are many published guitar music pieces either written or arranged by Holland.

The success and acceptance of Justin Holland intrigued many



young African-American men who had an interest in becoming

musicians but what was most important was that he single-handedly

brought validation of the guitar to the public. Holland inspired countless men of all races to take up the guitar, and by the turn of the century, Sears Roebuck and company had guitars listed in their huge mail order catalog which found its way in to most homes in North America, resulting in many guitars being purchased and played by amateurs and hobbyists and the curios. In Europe however, the guitar remained as a “proper” classical instrument and was not regarded as something to take up as a hobby, but had a much more serious traditional classical and flamenco history to its development and did not become a “popular” household instrument like it did in America.

### Some important non-traditional guitar players in the early 20th century:

As the guitar became more popular to have around the house for many families during the 1800s, many people started playing the instrument and early folk singers emerged out of rural areas in places in North America including the South and Appalachia, giving birth to a long and rich heritage of American folk music. As the guitar became more widespread in North America, many people had access to one including many poor blacks and former slaves. By the turn of the century, guitar manufacturers like the C.F. Martin Company (founded 1833) and the Gibson Guitar Company (founded 1894) had studied and improved guitar-making techniques which allowed the use of much louder steel strings instead of the traditional "gut" strings. Steel string guitars became the rage in America and these were about as loud as the piano. When steel string guitars were played with picks, this created a much louder and twangy sound and allowed the guitar to keep up with the other instruments in a string band, small group or as a solo instrument in its own right.

### Huddie Leadbetter (a.k.a Leadbelly)



During this early period of time the popular African-American blues singer **Lead Belly** (Huddie Leadbetter) started playing a Stella 12-string guitar with steel strings which made it as loud as a piano. Leadbelly recorded several 78rpm records during this time that became one of the first accessible ethnomusicological references available for early American Blues music. During the early 1900s through the 1920's, many popular big catalog "mail-order" type stores

like Sears-Roebuck had some inexpensive guitars as offerings in their catalogs. According to pbs.org, "Sears' models ranged from \$2.70 to \$10.30, and one inventory in 1900 reported that over 78,000 guitars had been manufactured that year."

([http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs\\_arm\\_ii\\_guitar.html](http://www.pbs.org/americanrootsmusic/pbs_arm_ii_guitar.html))

Throughout the 1920s, American musicians set about inventing new ways to tune and note these instruments. It was these same former African-American slaves who picked up guitars were the ones responsible for the creation of Blues and Jazz Music in North America. Some of the prominent or early blues guitar players include, Leadbelly, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Blind Blake, Big Bill (Broonzy), Willie Brown, Sam Collins, Elizabeth Cotton, Arthur Crudup, Rev Gary Davis, Blind Boy Fuller, John Lee Hooker, Sam "Lightnin'" Hopkins, Son House, Peg Leg Howell, Howling Wolf, Mississippi John Hurt, Blind Willie Johnson, Robert Johnson, Mississippi Fred McDowell and many others. source:([http://www.earlyblues.com/blues\\_singers.htm](http://www.earlyblues.com/blues_singers.htm))

### **Robert Johnson:**

Blues Guitar being the half-brother of Jazz guitar it is important to name a few vital players of the instrument. Almost all blues and jazz guitarists worldwide are familiar with Robert Johnson. His story is so mysterious that there have been several documentaries and even a Hollywood version of his story called "Crossroads."

Robert Johnson supposedly was a decent blues player like everyone else around him in those early days but somehow he wanted to be better than everyone else. The story goes that one day he went down to a remote location called the Crossroads where he sold his soul to the Devil in exchange for worldly



success and better skill on the guitar. Shortly thereafter, he became the most successful blues musician of his time and succeeded in writing 30 blues songs, of which only 29 were recorded. The movie "Crossroads" is about two modern day blues musicians traveling through the South in search of Johnson's mysterious missing 30th song.

According to Wikipedia "Robert Leroy Johnson (May 8, 1911 – August 16, 1938) is among the most famous of Delta blues musicians. His landmark recordings from 1936–1937 display a remarkable combination of singing, guitar skills, and songwriting talent that have influenced generations of musicians. Johnson's shadowy, poorly documented life and death at age 27 have given rise to much legend. Considered by some to be the "Grandfather of Rock 'n' Roll", his vocal phrasing, original songs, and guitar style have influenced a broad range of musicians, including Muddy Waters, Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, Jeff Beck, Jack White and Eric Clapton, who called Johnson "the most important blues musician who ever lived". He was also ranked fifth in Rolling Stone's list of 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert\\_Johnson\\_\(musician\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Johnson_(musician))

### **Early Jazz Guitarists**

There are so many great Jazz guitarists throughout the entire history of Jazz music, that it is impossible to document all of them here in a project of this size so I will mention perhaps the most important ones in their genres or styles of music. Early Jazz and Ragtime music didn't produce much on the way of guitar until the introduction of the electric guitar and amplifier, and with it a whole new dimension of Jazz guitarists who could now take solos and were able to keep up with the louder instruments such as the Saxophones and Trumpets, which were very popular during this time and for many decades afterward. Early Jazz guitarists had a primarily rhythmic role; with guitarists percussively strumming chords with choppy hard down strokes to keep time with a washboard or other basic percussive instrumentation such as a snare drum trap kit. Later in the century the guitar became a viable solo instrument in Jazz and some of the players became quite proficient and some even legendary in their abilities and solo skills. I will try to cover some of the most important jazz guitarists here.



## **Charlie Christian**

The first guitarist who took solos you could hear was electric jazz player Charlie Christian (1916-1942)

Before his untimely death at age 26, he was a member of the Benny Goodman Orchestra. His playing skills were exemplary and his soloing was as impressive as any of the

popular jazz horn players of the day. Many young musicians of this time period (including many later Jazz Guitar greats) heard Charlie

Christian and decided to take up the guitar. Christian influenced

dozens of future musicians. Christian's soloing on much of the band's material simply because he was so good. Goodman also received a lot



of controversy from existing record company executives for maintaining a band that included black musicians in it, as they did not considered to be appropriate to have black musicians in bands that played to a predominantly white audience. Goodman remained committed to the music over racial issues and was inflexible in regards to making any changes to personnel even under extreme pressure from music industry moguls. Goodman was so widely popular with the American Public that the record executives succumbed to the almighty dollar instead of racial tensions. Through Goodman's Band, Charlie Christian received widespread public exposure all over the world.

As an insert I would also like to add that Charlie Christian's original Gibson LC-5 Guitar is now owned by rock guitarist Andy Summers (The Police) and he has it in his personal guitar collection. (See photo-→).



According to Horace Porter, " Christian paved the way for the modern electric guitar sound that was followed by other

pioneers, including T-Bone Walker, Les Paul, Grant Green, Kenny Burrell, Wes Montgomery,



B.B. King and Jimi Hendrix. For this reason Christian was inducted in 1990 into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame as an "Early Influence." Christian's exposure was so great in the brief period he played with Goodman that he influenced not only guitarists, but other musicians as well. The influence he had on "Dizzy" Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Thelonious Monk and Don Byas can be heard on their early "bop" recordings "Blue'n Boogie" and "Salt Peanuts." Other musicians, such as trumpeter Miles Davis, cite Christian as an early influence. Indeed, Christian's "new" sound influenced jazz as a whole. He reigned supreme in the jazz guitar polls up to two years after his death." (Porter)

### **Freddie Green**

When a band leader wants a guitarist to play in a simple, percussive rhythmic style they always shout "Freddie Green" at you from across the room, and any guitarist who knows any stylistic genres is expected to automatically know exactly what this means. Freddie Green was mostly a rhythm guitarist and he worked with the Count Basie orchestra for many years. He wasn't really ever a featured soloist, but his rhythm guitar playing was legendary. To this day, many players over the



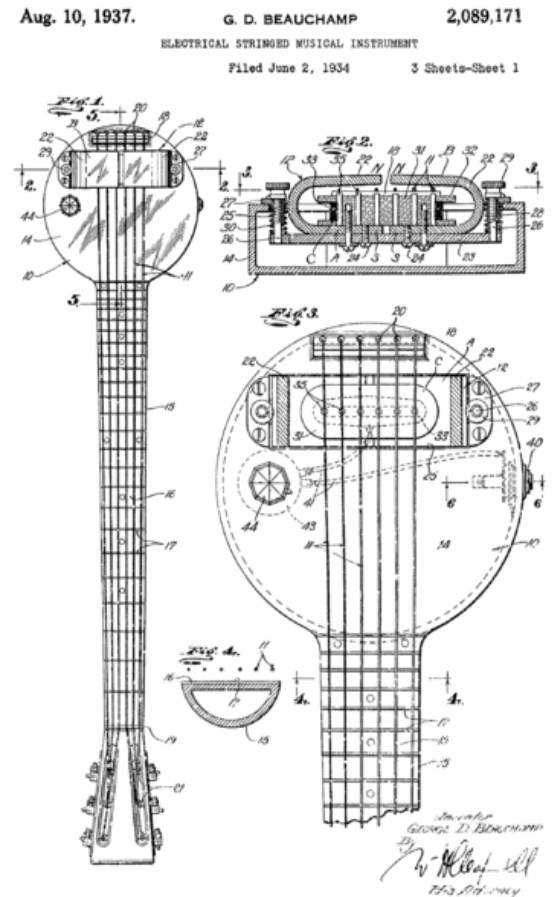
years have successfully adapted his playing style into their own. A little article on Green's website states "For over fifty years, Freddie Green was keeper of the quarter note for Count Basie's band. Like Basie, Freddie simplified his style over the years, playing only what was necessary and essential. Both musicians were paragons of economy and good taste. By the time Basie re-formed his big band in the mid-50's, Freddie's style had been distilled to perfection."

(<http://freddiegreen.com/technique/pettersen.html>)

## The Invention of a new jazz solo instrument - the Electric Guitar

Jazz music was forever changed with the invention of the Electric guitar. It allowed guitar players to be finally heard in equal volume to the horns, piano and drums. The electric guitar being introduced into jazz, blues and popular music caused many thousands of musicians to become Guitar players due to its loudness, full dynamic range and horn-like sustain capabilities much more than the acoustic guitar. There are many different and opposing controversial viewpoints on who actually invented the Electric guitar but as one independent guitar researcher states, "Surprisingly, no one knows who really invented the first electric guitar. Electric guitar manufacturing companies would obviously love to claim that they were in fact the creators of the first electric guitar (and they have), but there are three competing companies, Fender, Gibson, and Rickenbacker that have all contributed to the development of the electric guitar. The founders of these companies could be considered the “fathers” of the electric guitar: Leo Fender (Fender), Les Paul (Gibson), and Adolph Rickenbacker (Rickenbacker). All come from modest backgrounds without university degrees and with few resources to work with. Their boundless imaginations were all that was needed to create a great American product that would revolutionize the music world. These are three different answers from three reasonably reliable sources. Which one is right?"

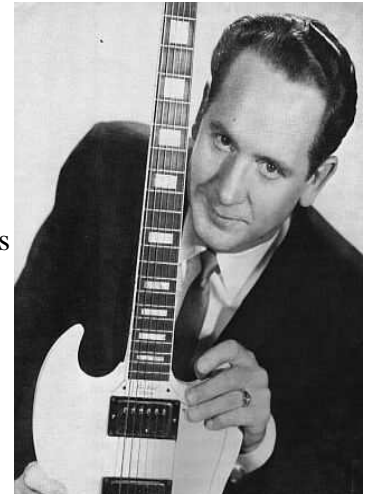
(<http://traumwerk.stanford.edu:3455/MichaelShanks/2710>)



Although many credit Rickenbacker with inventing the first electric guitar due to his original 1937 drawing and subsequent US Patent 2,089,171 it was in fact being simultaneously developed and refined by guitarist and inventor Les Paul. Leo Fender came along a few years later and came up with some of his own original designs, so the chronology would logically follow as Adolph Rickenbacker, Les Paul, and then Leo Fender.

### **Les Paul**

Although of course some say Rickenbacker is the one who invented the electric guitar, many feel that he actual inventor was Les Paul and Rickenbacker just managed to go ahead and patent it before it crossed Les Paul's mind as he was kind of a "mad scientist" inventor type of guy, and he really didn't spend much time doing important things like driving down to the US Patent office to register a patent. Instead he was more content to invent and experiment in his garage and leave the business aspect of things to others. In addition to being a formidable Jazz Guitarist, Les Paul was also an amazing 20<sup>th</sup> century inventor and developed many different musically related products including the Echo device and the guitar pickup. Many people do not realize that Les Paul's most important and widely



acclimated invention which was also actually the invention that made him wealthy, came from a device that he invented that is used widely in hospitals throughout the world called the "Electro cardiogram (EKG or ECG)." The EKG is actually a logical extension of the guitar pickup but its use in medicine is of legendary proportion. We can all thank Les Paul for that one. Les Paul was also an amazing Jazz and country guitar player and he played in bands for years until he teamed up with singer Mary Ford and

released several albums which were widely received. Two of the most important inventions of Les Paul are the solid body electric guitar (Rickenbacker's did not have a solid body) and the Echo device or tape echo unit and also he invented Multi-Track recording technology. The modern day recording studio owes it all to Les Paul. His invention of the solid body electric guitar and echo unit spawned literally thousands of new guitar players all over the world and gave birth to new musical forms such as Rock N Roll, Rockabilly, Western Swing and Electric Blues. Rockabilly guitar uses the echo device in a short "slap back" type of quick one time echo giving it that special trademark sound. Rock and Roll music owes much of it's heritage to Les Paul's invention of the solid body electric guitar, which could be played at a much higher stage volume due to the physical solid body canceling out any aberrant squeals or acoustic feedback. This in turn allowed for much louder bands that people could really feel when they danced, creating generations of new loud dance music that affected 20th century culture world wide. Les Paul is in his nineties now and he still maintains a weekly Monday night gig in a New York nightclub with many friends and special guests always sitting in and playing with him.



### **Django Reinhardt**

As jazz guitar developed in America, there simultaneously existed a remarkable European guitar player



named Django Reinhardt who dazzled and baffled crowds with his blistering fast solos and unbelievable melodic playing and he quickly became the most inspiring jazz soloist in Europe. Word of his awe inspiring playing quickly spread across the world. He was simply the

best jazz guitarist that anyone had ever seen or heard and his playing continues to inspire many legions of guitarists to this day. Django came from a Gypsy family, traveling around the flatlands of Europe and playing their version of Jazz (now aptly called “Gypsy Jazz”) with his brothers on rhythm guitars and upright bass. When he met jazz violinist Stephane Grappelli, they formed a quintet called “Le Quintet Du Hot Club of France.” Django was one of the most amazing and influential Jazz guitar players of all time, even considering that he had a very bad handicap of only having two working fingers on his left hand. His 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> fingers were badly burned in an accident when he was a teenager and somehow through his sheer talent and determination, he worked through this injury and developed new techniques on his own.



According to Joseph Dinkins, “Django Reinhardt has astounded and thrilled numerous generations of guitar players and jazz lovers with his amazing command of the guitar. However, on November 2nd, 1928 an event took place that would forever change Django's life. At one o'clock in the morning the 18 year old Django returned from a night of playing music at a new club "La Java" to the caravan that was now the home of himself and his new wife. The caravan was filled with celluloid flowers his wife had made to sell at the market on the following day. Django upon hearing what he thought was a mouse among the flowers bent down with a candle to look. The wick from the candle fell into the highly flammable celluloid flowers and the caravan was almost instantly transformed into a raging inferno. Django wrapped himself in a blanket to shield him from the flames. Somehow he and his wife made it across the blazing room to safety outside, but his left hand, and his right side from knee to waist were badly burned. Initially doctors wanted to amputate his leg but Django refused. He was moved to a nursing home where the care was so good his leg was saved. Django was bedridden for

eighteen months. During this time he was given a guitar, and with great determination Django created a whole new fingering system built around the two fingers on his left hand that had full mobility. His fourth and fifth digits of the left hand were permanently curled towards the palm due to the tendons shrinking from the heat of the fire. He could use them on the first two strings of the guitar for chords and octaves but complete extension of these fingers was impossible. His soloing was all done with the index and middle fingers! Film clips of Django show his technique to be graceful and precise, almost defying belief.” source: (<http://www.redhotjazz.com/django.html>)

### **Tal Farlow**

With the increasing popularity of Jazz and the eminence of Charlie Parker, there emerged onto the New York Jazz scene a young sign painter named Tal Farlow, who played Jazz guitar solos on a par with Charlie Parker and became one of the fiercest contenders for being considered as the best jazz guitarist of his time. His work with Vibist Red Norvo was legendary and he had developed a new guitar technique of plucking octave harmonics with his right hand while simultaneously playing the notes with his left hand, creating a bright, bell like chime effect that blended well with Vibes. Tal Farlow has been mentioned as an important influence by every popular Jazz Guitarist who has been interviewed during the last 40 years. Even such contemporary greats like John McLaughlin have publicly dedicated pieces to him on albums. Farlow continued to play in clubs until the late 1980's when he semi-retired and then went on to do a few instructional videos.

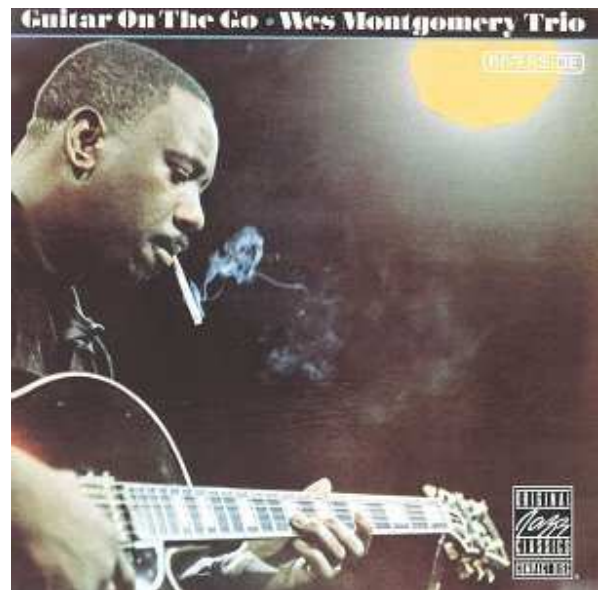




## **Wes Montgomery**

Wes came to fame in the 1960's during the time of John Coltrane. Wes' famous guitar technique was primarily using his thumb to pluck the string and that was his trademark legendary sound. Another famous trademark of his was in playing melodies and solos using Octaves on the guitar. He had quite a few live recordings and then later in his career he became heavily promoted by the record companies and they attempted to bring him closer to the pop music world by having him play instrumental elevator versions of pop tunes and adding strings.

Wes didn't really mind and made a few records of pop sounding arrangements as well as his hard hitting nightclub gig solo albums. One thing that amazed a lot of people was the fact that Wes had a day job almost during his entire career even when he started becoming popular. The long hours and smoke filled nightlife eventually took its toll on him as he died at the age of 43. According to Wikipedia, "Montgomery

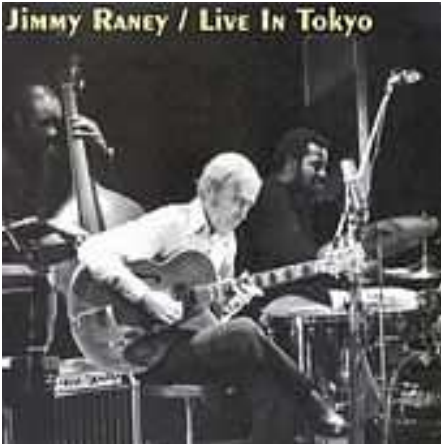


is often considered the greatest of modern jazz guitarists. Following the early work of swing/pre-bop guitarist Charlie Christian and gypsy-jazz guitarist Django Reinhardt, Wes arguably put guitar on the map as a bebop or post-bop instrument. Although Johnny Smith was the guitarist in the original New York Bebop scene, and both Tal Farlow and Jimmy Raney made significant contributions in the 1950's to bebop guitar, each of these men curtailed their own output in the 1960s, creating a vacuum that Montgomery naturally filled with virtuosic playing. While many Jazz players are regarded as virtuosos, Montgomery was unique in his wide influence on other virtuosos who followed him, and in the respect he earned from his contemporaries. To many, Montgomery's playing defines jazz guitar and the sound that many try to emulate." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wes\\_Montgomery](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wes_Montgomery))



## **Jimmy Raney**

Jimmy Raney was an exceptionally smooth and precise Jazz soloist. He had an innate ability to play chorus after chorus of creative, finely articulated solos. His lines have been the subject of serious



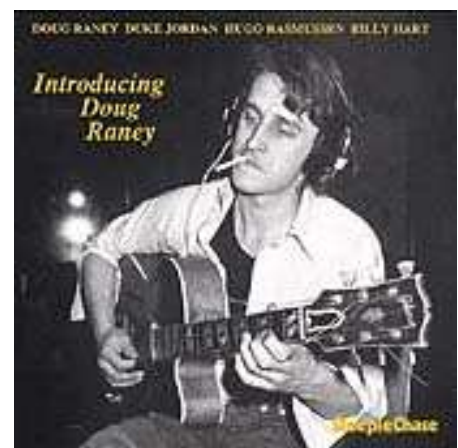
improvisation study for many jazz guitar students world wide.

Raney was able to blend his style, technique and sound into almost any venue, while distinguishing himself as an individual artist and soloist. He worked with Artie Shaw Orchestra in 1949 at the age of 22. Artie Shaw's orchestra often featured him as a premiere soloist. Later on in 1951 Jimmy Raney became a member of the Stan Getz Quintet and many critics feel that this

was some of his best work as a soloist. The best examples of the collaboration of Raney and Getz were called "the live Storyville recordings." Jimmy Raney had a long association with horn players like Stan Getz and later Buddy De Franco. He has played and recorded since the 1940's and continued on into the 1980's. Some of his most studied guitar solos were made during the later 1970's and 80's as a testament to his talent and longevity as an artist.

## **Doug Raney**

In discussion Jimmy Raney, one cannot miss the opportunity to talk about his son, Doug Raney, who is also now a very powerful Jazz guitarist. Doug Raney has been heavily influenced and even has a similar style to his father but a little more aggressive sounding. He is an incredibly impressive



soloist, and his techniques include his use of crisp clear sounding notes, fluid chord voicings. He has recorded early on with his father and later with Al Haig in the mid-'70s, then did duo dates with Jimmy Rahney in the late '70s and recorded with Chet Baker, Bernt Rosengren, Horace Parlan's for

Steeplechase and Criss Cross records in the '70s and '80s. He remains as one of the best traditional straight ahead Jazz Guitarists today. He has a version of Coltrane's famous tune "Mr PC" that remains one of my favorites to this day.

### **Barney Kessel**

I first got to see Barney Kessel when I was 12 years old. My mother and father had recently separated and my mother remarried and my new step dad wanted me to like him so he tried to make some sort of impression on me. He had heard that I was into guitar so he told me that he was going to take me to a guitar concert. Since I was too young to get into most rock concerts, he took me to a concert that actually allowed 12 year olds which was at McCabes Guitar Shop in Santa Monica California back in 1971. It was the Barney Kessel trio. I watched in awe as Kessel ripped up and down the fingerboard and played all these wild looking chords. At that age I had no idea what he was doing and of course that night made a lasting impression on me forever. After the show I was hanging around the stage looking at the guitars and amps and Kessel himself actually came up to me and introduced himself and asked me if I played guitar too! I was nervous and shocked and told him I was sort of learning the guitar. He told me something that has forever stuck with me. He said "If you want to be a good guitar player, you have to practice a lot." Being age 12 and having Barney Kessel tell me that right to my face made a lasting impression on me! According to Wikipedia, "Barney Kessel is known for his innovative work in the guitar trio setting. In the 1950s, he made a series of albums called "The Poll Winners" with Ray Brown on bass and Shelly Manne on drums. He was also responsible for the prominent guitar on Julie London's definitive recording of "Cry Me a River". Also from the 50s, his three "Kessel Plays Standards" volumes contain some of his most



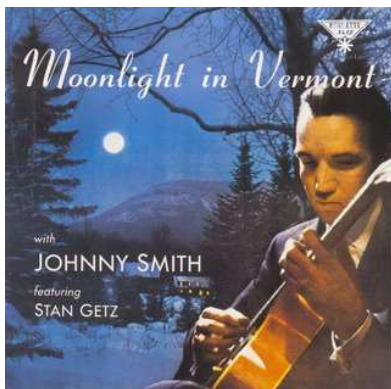
BARNEY KESSEL

PHOTO: WILLIAM GUILLETTE

polished work. Kessel was also a member of the Oscar Peterson Trio with Ray Brown in the early 1950s. The guitar chair was called the hardest gig in show business since Peterson often liked to play at breakneck tempos. Herb Ellis took over from Kessel after a year or so. He also went on to play with Sonny Rollins in the late 50s and can be heard on Sonny Rollins' recordings of songs like "How High the Moon" (on the Freelance Years box set)." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barney\\_Kessel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barney_Kessel))

### **Johnny Smith**

Johnny Smith was technically one of the best Jazz guitarists to emerge out of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was very well rounded in Jazz and Classical Guitar. He could both improvise and sight read complex scores. Smith was one of the most versatile guitarists of the 1950s. His playing is characterized by closed-position chord voicings and rapidly ascending lines. His most well known recording was



"Moonlight in Vermont" (one of Down Beat Magazine's top 10, featuring Stan Getz and Zoot Sims). Johnny Smith retired in the 1960s, moved to Colorado and opened a music store after the death of his second wife. Guild, Gibson, and Heritage have all made "Johnny Smith Model" full-bodied archtop guitars with a top carved from solid spruce and a back and sides made of solid maple designed and

endorsed by Johnny Smith. In each case, the guitars were all completely designed by Smith. The Heritage Johnny Smith model was introduced in 1989. Gibson continued to manufacture their version of the Johnny Smith design with a new name: the Gibson LeGrand

### **George Van Eps**

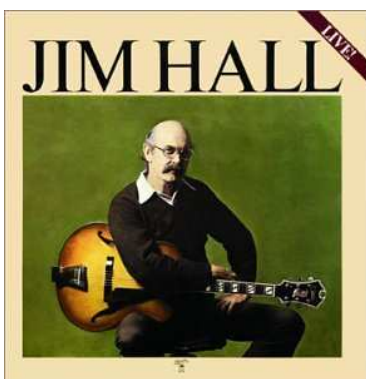
I first came across George Van Eps (1913 - 1998) through his extensive series of guitar fingerboard harmony books called "Harmonic Mechanisms for Guitar." Van Eps played with the Benny Goodman

band and he also made hundreds of recordings as sideman, but only a handful under his own name. George Van Eps has been revered by every guitar player to come after him. Van Eps created a whole new chordal way to play jazz guitar that brought a complexity and depth to the Jazz guitar that it didn't have before. George Van Eps recorded with dozens of artists like Frank Sinatra. In the late 1950's and early 1960's he made a series of solo recordings for Columbia and Capitol that featured the unique guitar style of George Van Eps. The first of these recordings was "Mellow Guitar," followed by "My Guitar," "Seven String Guitar" and "Soliloquy." In the 1990's he also made a series of recordings for Concord Records with Howard Alden. George Van Eps was a master of the 7 String guitar (as is contemporary Ron Eschete) and used the lower strings for bass notes in larger piano type voicings on the guitar.



## **Jim Hall**

Jim Hall is one of the most sophisticated legends of Jazz Guitar. He has worked with Sonny Rollins and Art Farmer, Bill Evans, Paul Desmond, Ron Carter, Chico Hamilton Quintet, (1955-1956), Jimmy Giuffre Trio (1956-1959), Ella Fitzgerald (1960-1961), Ben Webster, Hampton Hawes, Bob



Brookmeyer, John Lewis, Zoot Sims, Paul Desmond, Lee Konitz and Bill Evans. Jim Hall won the New York Jazz Critics Circle Award for Best Jazz Composer/Arranger in 1997. He has also written many pieces for brass, and vocal ensembles which can be heard on his "Textures" and "By Arrangement" recordings. His original composition, "Quartet Plus Four," a piece for jazz quartet augmented by the Zapolski string

quartet, was debuted in Denmark during the concert and ceremony where he was awarded the coveted

Jazzpar Prize, and later released on CD. He was awarded an NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship award in January 2004.

### **Jimmy Wyble**

I took lessons from Jimmy Wyble back in the late 1970's and he had me working on his "two line improvisation" concept that he had in book format, which I still have. I studied with him on and off (he



wasn't always available) for about a year and I can see his influence in modern guitarists like Allan Holdsworth. According to Wikipedia, "Jimmy Wyble (1922) was playing western swing music in 1942 with guitarist Cameron Hill when Bob Wills hired both of them for his Texas Playboys. Wills called their sound "twin guitars". The results of this unique paring can be heard on Wills' Roly Poly. Wyble continued his

association with western swing bands well into the 1950's when he released his first jazz album as leader, The Jimmy Wyble Quintet (1953). This recording had the unusual instrumentation of accordion, clarinet, guitar, bass and drums. That same year he recorded four sides with the Barney Kessel Quartet which are on the Swing Guitars album. During the late 1950's and early 1960's he toured with Benny Goodman and recorded with Red Norvo. His association with Red Norvo produced two outstanding albums of straight ahead jazz: Naturally and HiFive. Jimmy Wyble enjoyed a long career as a studio musician in Los Angeles and he was also a member of Tony Rizzi's Five Guitars."

(<http://www.wikipedia.com/jimmywyble>)

### **Kenny Burell**

Kenny Burell is one of the gigantic greats of Jazz Guitar in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He has been a longtime jazz performer for over 40 years, who more recently began a second career as the founder and director

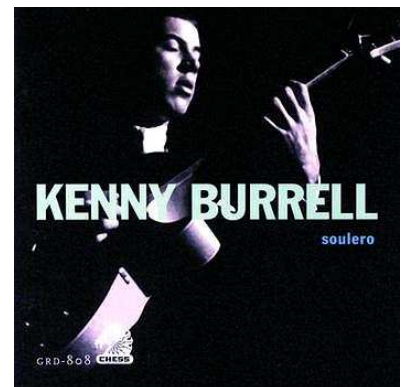
of the Jazz Studies Program at UCLA where he is a professor of music and ethnomusicology. He has



worked with Dizzy Gillespie, John Coltrane, Milt Jackson, Percy Heath, Tommy Flanagan, Yusef Lateef, Pepper Adams, Billie Holiday, Thad Jones, Kenny Dorham, Paul Chambers, Jimmy Smith, Gene Ammons, Oscar Peterson, Elvin Jones and known for his perfection in phrasing, clear tone, musical integrity and taste. He was also said to have been Duke Ellington's favorite guitar player. Kenny Burrell also teaches a course at UCLA called "Ellingtonia," which is a Jazz History college course on Duke Ellington.

Kenny Burrell also the founder and President Emeritus, of the Jazz Heritage Foundation, and works to promote recognition of jazz as a classical art form. Kenny Burrell is also a composer and his compositions have been recorded by many artists such as Ray Brown, Jimmy Smith, Grover

Washington Jr., John Coltrane, June Christy, Frank Wes and Stevie Ray Vaughn. Burrell credits Charlie Christian, Oscar Moore, and Django Reinhardt as influences, as well as such bluesmen as T-Bone Walker and Muddy Waters. It also deserves mentioning here that Kenny Burrell has also received a Doctorate of Human Letters, and the 1997 Ellington Fellowship awarded by Yale University. He was

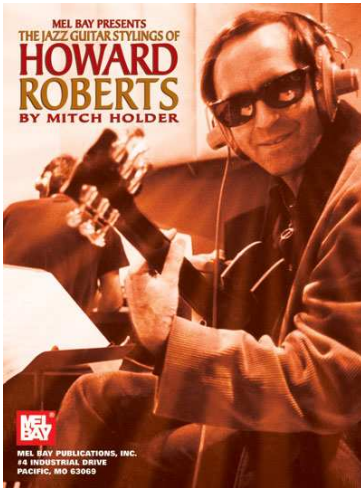


also was inducted into the KJZZ Jazz Hall of Fame and voted "favorite Jazz Musician" by listeners of KJZZ Jazz Station in Los Angeles in 1996 and. Additionally, he also served on the awards panel for the National Endowment for the Arts and was the National Chairperson for guitars for the National Association of Jazz Educators. source: (<http://www.vervemusicgroup.com/kennyburrell>)



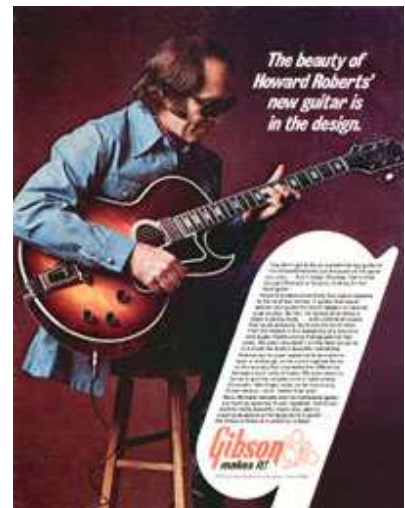
## Howard Roberts

I took lessons from Howard Roberts back when I was 16 and 17 years old. He opened my eyes up to scales and theory. I still find myself working on his guitar exercises that he showed me and have come



up with many variations of my own over the years which have sort of formed the backbone of my entire teaching curriculum. Howard Roberts was fantastic Jazz guitarist but even more so he was an incredible educator and LA studio session guitarist. He could sight read anything. He is also perhaps one of the most recorded guitarists of all time and has appeared on thousands of movie soundtracks, TV shows, commercials and many records. He was the subject of the feature cover article in the

June, 1979 Guitar Player magazine, Roberts was then labeled as a "renaissance man -- sideman, soloist, educator, innovator." He moved to LA in the 1950's and got very busy doing session work. He was also the Director of Guitar Curriculum at Westlake College of Music (the first accredited vocational music school in the U.S. – About a year before Berklee. He is the author of many books of guitar instruction as well as a monthly column of advice in Guitar Player magazine. Howard is a member of the prestigious Gibson Hall of Fame. Gibson has a couple of “Howard Roberts Model” Jazz Guitars, the H.R. Custom, with is arch top and oval hole combining classic-acoustic and electric guitars, and the newer H.R. Fusion model. Howard was the creator



and founder of the Guitar Institute of Technology, in Hollywood, which he founded with Pat Hicks in 1977. I studied with him a couple of years before that and he was always talking about creating the school and tried to recruit me many times. I opted for Berklee instead because it was for me, way out of town (in Boston) and I was very annoyed with my parents always getting on my case all the time, so I wanted to get far away from my parents for a while and experience living in a real dorm at a “real”



college. GIT was sort of haphazardly created at first and they didn't have an organized regular curriculum or combo classes – just a bunch of guitar players twiddling as fast as they can and no one could read. When I got back from Berklee I ran into Howard again and of course he tried to get me to sign up for GIT. I came very close and almost would have had I not been introduced to Dick Grove. I opted for Grove over GIT because he had real combos, real big bands and many theory classes and people played many instrument other than guitar. Howard became too busy to take me on again as a private student due to his commitments with GIT. He was one of the best of the best.

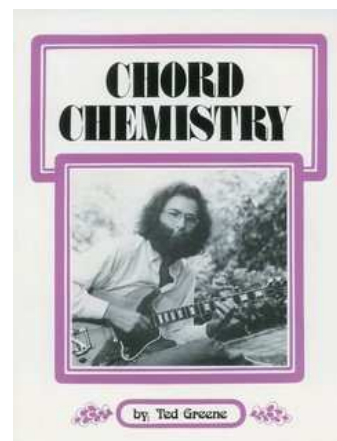
### **Joe Diorio**

After I went to Berklee I came back to LA and during my studies at the Dick Grove school I studied privately with Jazz Guitarist and composer Joe Diorio. Joe had all these amazing quartal harmonies and quartal pentatonic ideas that he tied chromatically and developed some very interesting lesson materials. I have integrated his whole approach into my playing and teaching as well. I studied with him from 1979 to about 1981. He was one of the very few players who actually had a sense about playing more horn-like legato phrasing instead of that tradition “percolator” poppy sounding percussive jazz guitar soloing approach. His lines flowed and he attributed his phrasing ideas mostly to listening and transcribing Sonny Rollins. Dioro always told me to listen to horn players and piano players, not guitar players. Joe Diorio is one of the unsung, unknown heroes of jazz guitar and he has worked with Sonny Stitt, Eddie Harris, Ira Sullivan, Stan Getz, Horace Silver, and Freddie Hubbard. Joe is currently on hiatus from his teaching position at USC due to health issues. Joe was also good friends with Howard Roberts and was one of the very first three founding instructors for GIT.

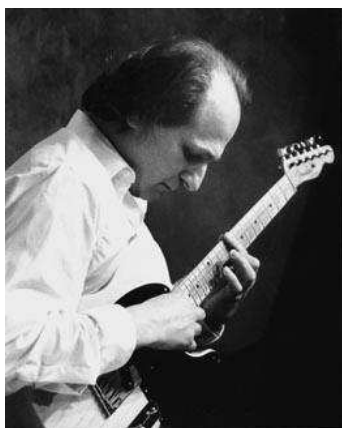


## Ted Greene

The late Ted Greene had this amazing book called "Chord Chemistry" which I think every serious student of guitar eventually had a copy of. His main thing was chord melody and advanced chordal playing. His single note playing was a little bland, but his chordal playing was top of the line. He had accumulated in his brain literally thousands of complex chord voicings for thousands of jazz chords. He dumbfounded and mystified us all and made us feel like we were all just fools to think



that we knew anything. It was like studying math all your life and getting pretty good at it and starting to think that you were a good mathematician and then one day you meet Spock from Vulcan. Ted Greene had that Vulcan knowledge. He scared people with it. Greene often applied many keyboard

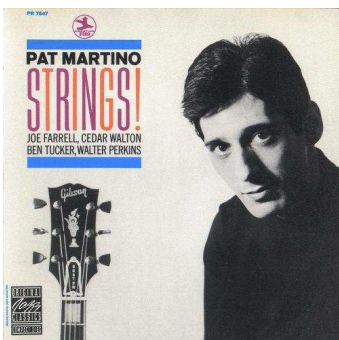


concepts to the guitar. He re-wrote many examples of the Chorals of J.S. for guitar, along with his detailed analysis of it. Ted was mostly a teacher, but he did do occasional gigs in night clubs, and sometimes worked as an accompanist behind vocalists. He was of course an excellent session player, but he made most of his career teaching and four books on guitar chords: Chord Chemistry, Modern Chord Progressions: Jazz and Classical

Voicings for Guitar, and the two-volume Jazz Guitar: Single Note Soloing. His playing style included harp-like harmonic arpeggios, playing songs with a "walking bass" line with simultaneous melodies. He used counterpoint in his improvisations and an enormous amount of difficult chord voicings, creating the effect of two simultaneous players. Ted Greene recorded only one album, "Solo Guitar" originally released in 1977 on PMP Records and is all single take solo guitar with absolutely no overdubs. We were all shocked and saddened when we got the news that Ted had died. He was only 58. At his memorial, there were over 600 people there.

## **Pat Martino**

The most influential Guitarist that I ever learned from was Pat Martino. When I was at Berklee Pat would teach a 5 or 6 student “seminar” type of group lesson usually the day after he played a gig and I was lucky enough to participate in some of those. His teaching forever changed my perception of the guitar. Pat Martino is one of the true giants of Jazz Guitar. Over the years he has worked with Willis Jackson, Eric Kloss, also worked with many jazz organists, such as Charles Earland, Jack McDuff, Trudy Pitts, Jimmy Smith, Don Patterson, and Richard Groove Holmes. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Martino made many recordings as a sideman and also under his own name. Martino is widely been recognized as one of the most virtuosic guitarists in jazz. He has a distinctive, fat sound and ripping, cascading sequential 32nd note improvisations that are both melodic and simultaneously harmonically complex. Pat was



signed as a leader for Prestige Records when he was only 20. His popular albums from this period include classics like Strings!, Desperado, El Hombre and Baiyina (The Clear Evidence), one of jazz's first successful ventures into psychedelia. Pat began playing professionally in 1961 and has worked with Sonny Stitt, Gene Ammons, Richard Groove Holmes,

John Handy, Bobby Hutcherson, Chick Corea, Jack McDuff, Don Patterson, Stanley Clark, Eric Kloss, Trudy Pitts, Willis Jackson, Lloyd Price, Woody Herman, Chuck Israels, Charles Earland, Barry Miles and Joe Pesci. Since 1967, Pat has been touring as a leader. He has been a Recording Artist for Vanguard, Prestige, Warner Brothers, Muse, Columbia, King, Paddlewheel, Evidence, Sony, 32 Jazz, High Note, Milestone, Polydor, Concord, Fantasy, House of Blues, Mythos, Mainstream, Cobblestone, Atlantic and, most currently, Blue Note Records. According to Wikipedia, “In 1980, Martino had suffered a severe brain aneurysm and underwent brain surgery. The surgery left him with amnesia, leaving him, among other things, without any memory of the guitar and his musical career. When the

anesthesia wore off, Pat Martino looked up hazily at his parents and his doctors. and tried to piece together any memory of his life. After his operations he could remember almost nothing. He barely recognized his parents and had no memory of his guitar or his career. He remembers feeling as if he had been "dropped cold, empty, neutral, cleansed...naked." In the following months. Martino made a remarkable recovery. Through intensive study of his own historic recordings, and with the help of computer technology, Pat managed to reverse his memory loss and return to form on his instrument. His past recordings eventually became "an old friend, a spiritual experience which remained beautiful and honest school friend. With the help of friends, computers, and his old recordings, Martino made a recovery, and learned to play the guitar again. After his surgery and recovery, he resumed his career when he appeared in 1987 in New York, a gig that was released on a CD with an appropriate name, "The Return". He then took another hiatus when both of his parents became ill, and he didn't record again until 1994, when he recorded "Interchange" and then "The Maker." His improvisation method, "Conversion to Minor", is based upon using exclusively minor scales for soloing. Pat has given

Guitar and Music Therapy Seminars, Clinics and Master Classes throughout the world, including North Texas State University, G.I.T., Berklee College (Boston and Perugia, Italy), Duquesne University, Teatro Rasi (Ravenna, Italy), LeCentre Culturel (D'Athis Mons, France), University of Washington



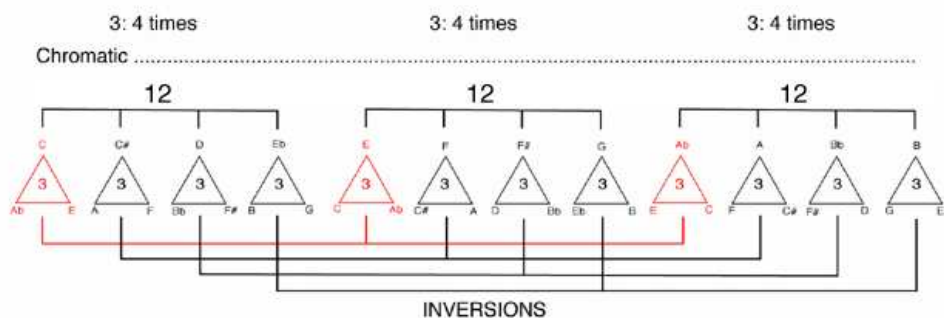
School of Music, Skidmore College, Musicians Institute, National Guitar Workshop, New York University, Pennsylvania University, Stanford University, The University of Missouri, Roosevelt University (Chicago), Patti Summers Jazz Club (Seattle), Music Tech College (St. Paul), The New School (New York City), Southern Illinois University, The Conservatory of Amsterdam (The Netherlands), Cork Festival (Cork, Ireland), Washington University (St. Louis, MO), Wisconsin Conservatory of Music, Musictech College (St. Paul, MN), Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy at NYU (New York, NY), Greater Hartford

Academy of the Arts (Hartford, CT), and the University of Maryland.” Source:

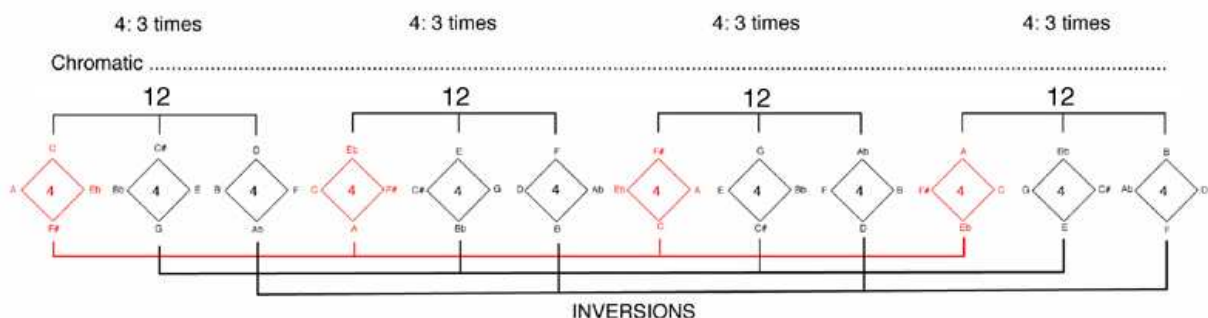
([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pat\\_Martino](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pat_Martino))

My study with Pat began as a seminar for 4 of us Berklee guitar students in his hotel room one Saturday afternoon the day after a gig the night before. He introduced us to some mind blowing concepts and I took some more private lessons with him later on when he returned to town to play various club gigs, always at his hotel room and the lessons were 50 bucks each which was a lot in 1977 economic terms for me at age 17. Pat explained and showed me his concept that the guitar is better suited for basing all music theory ideas on the Diminished chord rather than the Major chord as the Diminished chord is a symmetrical even fingering on the guitar and it repeats itself every three frets. He also divided the strings up into chordal groups for triads, 4 note and 5 note chord voicings. In the course of my lessons with him he showed me his very well designed system of guitar improvisation and the stringset groups would be as follows: for 3 note chords you could group any 3 of the guitar's 6 strings as 654, 65/3, 65/2, 65/1, 6/43, 6/4/2, 6/4/1, 6/32, 6/3/1, 6/21, 543, 54/2, 54/1, 432, 43/1, 421. Each triad inversion was mapped onto every available 3 note string set. We did the same with 4, 5 and

### The Augmented Form



### The Diminished Form

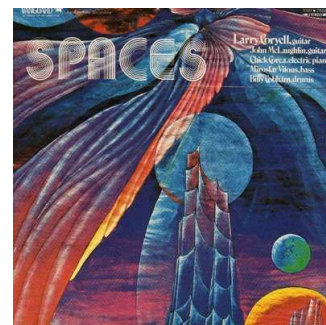




6 note chords. His diminished concept was that if you take a dim chord, such as Fdim, the notes on stringset 4321 would be 4-F, 3-B, 2-D, 1-Ab and since the shape is what he called “automatic to the guitar,” it moved up 3 frets and the notes inverted themselves to be 4-Ab, 3-D, 2-F and 1-B. Each time you move the static chord shape up or down the neck, the shape doesn’t change but the notes invert themselves. We did this on all possible 4 note stringsets in all keys. The next level of his concepts involves the geometry of building 7<sup>th</sup> chords NOT as a V7 chord but as a modification of a Diminished chord. Pats main concept was that by taking any note from a 4 note diminished chords and lowering it one half step, it becomes the root of a V7 chord. Since there are 4 notes in the diminished chord, there are 4 dom7 chords available per diminished chord. Since there is a 3 fret distance before the diminished chord inverts itself, therefore there are 4 x 3 or 12 Dom 7 chords on ONE stringset in a 3 fret span. When you multiply that by the available 4 note stringsets – 6543, 654/2, 654/1, 6/431, 643/1, 6/4/21, 6/321, 5432, 543/1, 54/21, 5/321, 4321 = 12 stringsets x 12 Dom 7 chords = 144 Dom 7 chords every 3 frets. Next, we modified the Dom7 chords by lowering the 3<sup>rd</sup> to make mi7 chords, raising the 7<sup>th</sup> to create Maj7 chords until we created all the main chord types, then the altered ones, then the inversions on all the available 4 note stringsets. This system has been the way I looked at the guitar for many years until I came across an even more advanced concept when I spent a lot of time with Allan Holdsworth many years later. Pat Martino for me was a milestone of my own personal development and I think he is one of the greatest Jazz guitarists of our time.

### **Larry Coryell**

Moving into a more fusion jazz era, Larry Coryell was one of the very first guitarists that blurred the categories of jazz and rock. He was probably the first official jazz fusion guitarist. He has done tremendous work with his group, the Eleventh House and later acoustic work with



John McLaughlin and Paco De Lucia, Phillip Catherine, Bireli Lagrene and later on Al Di Meola. He

remains as one of the founders of fusion guitar playing although he is also steeped in Jazz. According to Wikipedia, “Coryell was born in Galveston, Texas on April 2, 1943. After graduating from Richland High School in eastern Washington, he moved to Seattle to attend the University of Washington. In



1965, Coryell moved to New York City where he became part of Chico Hamilton's quintet, replacing Gabor Szabo. In 1967 and 1968, he recorded with Gary Burton and Jim Pepper. His music during the late-1960s and early-1970s combined the influences of rock, jazz and eastern music. He formed his own group, The Eleventh House, in 1973.

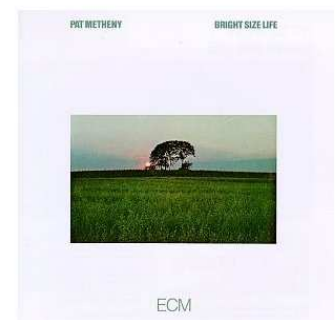
Following the break-up of this band, Coryell played mainly acoustic guitar, but returned to electric guitar later in the 1980s. In 1979, Coryell formed "The Guitar Trio" with jazz fusion guitarist John McLaughlin and flamenco guitarist Paco de Lucia. The group toured Europe briefly, eventually releasing a video recorded at Royal Albert Hall in London entitled "Meeting of Spirits". In early-1980, Coryell was replaced by Al Di Meola, due to drug addiction. With over 60 recordings under his belt, Larry continues to be a groundbreaking force in the guitar world.

### **Pat Metheny**

I first heard Pat Metheny when he was introduced to me by my deadhead/jazz friends at Pitzer College back in 1976. They had a copy of his first seminal album called “Bright Size Life,” and that was probably the very first ECM recording I ever purchased. Metheny had a tone

unlike many jazz guitarists before him. To my ears it was clear, pure and almost glassy. His mix of slight chorus, delay and reverb to enhance (not effect) his tone were what drew me to his playing.

According to Wiki once again, “Metheny came onto the jazz scene in 1975 when he joined vibraphonist Gary Burton's band and recorded Bright Size Life with bassist Jaco Pastorius and





drummer Bob Moses. Metheny's next recording, 1977's *Watercolors*, was the first to feature pianist Lyle Mays, Metheny's most frequent collaborator. Metheny's next album formalized this partnership and began the Pat Metheny Group, featuring several songs co-written with Mays; the album was



released as the self-titled Pat Metheny Group on the ECM record label. Pat Metheny also has released notable solo, trio, quartet and duet recordings with musicians such as Jim Hall, Dave Holland, Roy Haynes, Gary Burton, Chick Corea, Pedro Aznar, Jaco Pastorius, Charlie Haden, John Scofield, Jack DeJohnette, Herbie Hancock, Bill Stewart,

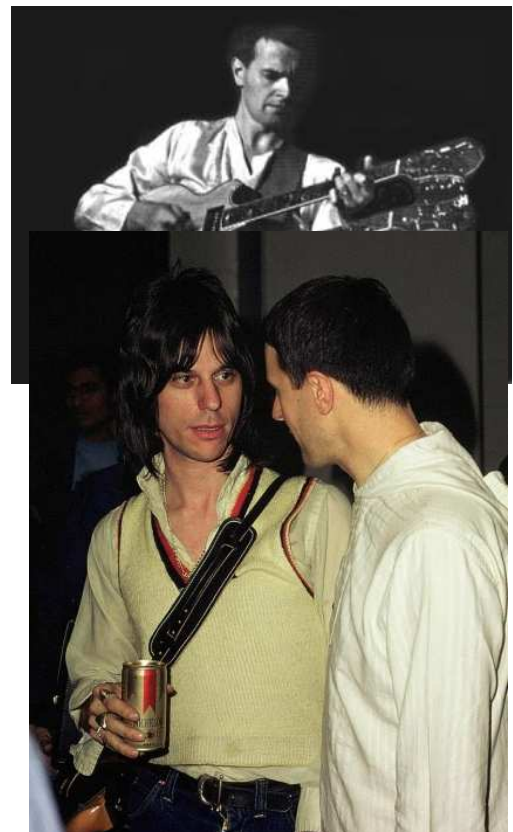
Ornette Coleman, Brad Mehldau, Joni Mitchell and many others. Source:

([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pat\\_Metheny](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pat_Metheny))

Pat is known for his endless recording and touring life. He has been professionally touring for over 30 years, averaging 120-240 concerts a year. He is also a Grammy award –winning prolific composer, and has written over a mind-boggling 400 pieces of music. I myself am working on 2 per year!

### **John McLaughlin**

I first came across the music of John McLaughlin when he was in his world famous “Mahavishnu Orchestra.” I was shopping for a record to get a friend for his 14<sup>th</sup> birthday party later that night and my mom took me down to “The Warehouse” where it was originally located long ago down Indian Hill right near Holt Blvd. I walked in to look for an album and they had “Birds of Fire” playing on the overhead



speakers. It floored me immediately. I asked what album this was had the guy held up the yellow and fuchsia Mahavishnu Orchestra Birds of Fire album. I bought it, wrapped it and took it to the party.

When he opened it, no one knew what it was and he didn't put it on until a couple of hours later. I remember when he put it on, all the girls hated it and all the guys were mesmerized by it and wanted



to know what it was! My friend has thanked me to this day for getting him that copy of Birds of Fire for his 14<sup>th</sup> birthday. I bought another copy for myself, and then with my next allowance I rode my bike all the way down Indian Hill again (Rhino was not open until 1974) and bought "Inner Mounting Flame." I listened to those records and memorized every single note on it. It wasn't until a year and a half later that we went to the Shrine Auditorium

in 1975 to see Mahavishnu Orchestra opening up for Jeff Beck. McLaughlin was the most incredible guitarist I have ever seen in my life and he just commanded the stage with sheer power, speed, elegance and beauty amidst his wails and note bends and screeches. Jan Hammer by that time had a full Moog keyboard and he was ripping and bending notes with as equal intensity as McLaughlin. Add Jerry Goodman and Billy Cobham to the mix and I was completely freaked out of my mind. It got even better as Jeff Beck played his rapid fire set and then jammed with McLaughlin at the end. Two of the most radical guitarists on the planet at the same time on the same turf just forever blowing our minds. McLaughlin almost machine gunned Beck into submission, but Beck was equally as ferocious in his own gargantuan explosive style and managed to fight McLaughlin back until he reached inward and called to God to release the spirit of the Mahavishnu and completely destroyed Beck so much that Beck just stepped out of his way. McLaughlin had cut heads with almighty Jeff Beck and had musically slain him in front of us. That was a peak emotional experience for my entire life, seeing that go down. Since then I have seen a few dozen McLaughlin concerts and have been blown away by all of them. I have actually met him several times and I continue to be a fan of his music to this day. His fusion

playing in the 1970s and 1980s gave way to a more subtle, more straight ahead jazz and flamenco influenced style in the 1990s. McLaughlin remains one of the true greats of Jazz Guitar History.

### **Allan Holdsworth**

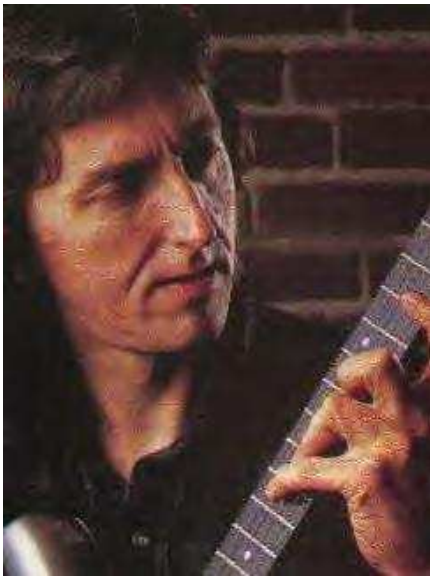
Although Allan's roots are not really in mainstream Jazz, he is a vitally important guitarist to emerge out of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His main contributions to jazz guitar improvisation include playing the guitar with a non-percussive, legato more horn-like technique, and his advanced chromatic harmonic system which he has called "the Dorian Chromatic System" as he bases most of his ideas as modifications of the Dorian mode (rather than the Lydian Mode as in

George Russell.) I managed to spend a lot of time with him over the years not so much as in formal lessons but more as in many long elaborate heartfelt discussions of scales and his harmonic system. He left it up to me to figure out my own techniques and fingerings and only physically showed me things on a few occasions. He did have me over to his house on several occasions and did



actually give me what I would consider to be actual lessons, but he would never want anyone to know that and he definitely does not think of himself as any sort of teacher in any way and does not want anyone knocking on his door asking for lessons. He made that clear. His system of scales is based on 3 octave chromatic scales with the notes numbered 1 through 36. He thinks of scales in a minimum of 5 notes and a maximum of 10 notes per scale. He then writes out all the possible combinations of 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 note scales and throws out "any scale that's got more than three half steps in a row," and has created a 6 inch thick scale book he calls "The Phone Book from Hell." His chordal concepts are similarly based and he uses 2 concepts; one to write out all the possible groups of 3, 4 5 and 6 note chords. To simplify it, in terms of a major scale he doesn't consider the 1-3-5 triad to be the holy grail

but takes the scale 1-2-3-4-5-6-7 and then would group 3 note chords as 1-2-3, 1-2-4, 1-2-6, 1-2-7, 1-3-4, 1-3-5, 1-3-6, 1-3-7, 1-4-5, 1-4-6, 1-4-7, 1-5-6, 1-5-7, 1-6-7, etc, and write out all possible inversions on all 3 note stringsets (similar to Pat Martino except Pat didn't use these types of note clusters as chords). Holdsworth also does this with 4, 5 and 6 note chords and then stacks them into



mathematical polychords as his secondary method. Third, he modifies the stacked polychords by raising and lowering chord tones to obtain different colors. It can get very involved and complex very quickly and it would probably take me a life time to work it all out. He already has and uses this method in all of his work. Anyone who starts working with him quickly realizes the true nature of his Vulcan knowledge and as forever awestruck by the fact that he has not only already worked all of this all out but he uses it and phrases everything so beautifully and melodically.

Holdsworth represents the next level of Jazz Guitar and I believe he will go down in Jazz Guitar History as one of the most important figures of all time.

According to Wikipedia, "Holdsworth's compositions vary in style from progressive fusion jazz (for example, his work with Soft Machine on their album 'Bundles'), to romantic, chordal and atmospheric guitar/synthesizer works. He utilises an instrument called the SynthAxe, examples of which can be heard on the albums 'Atavachron'; 'Sand'; the SynthAxe-dominated 'Flat Tire'; and the second CD of 'Against The Clock'. Readers of 'Guitar Player' magazine voted



Holdsworth 'Best Synth Guitarist' for several years. Holdsworth remarked in his instructional video that he 'doesn't really like the guitar', and prefers the sound of a saxophone. Holdsworth's discography includes over fourteen titles as a band leader, yet he has recorded with many other notable musicians. A partial list of artists with whom he has recorded, other than those listed above, are Gary Husband, Jimmy Johnson, Stanley Clarke, Gordon Beck, Billy Childs, Carl Verheyen, Chad Wackerman, Gary Willis, David Hines, K2, Riptyde, Derek Sherinian, Planet X, Kei Akagi and Gongzilla.”

Source: ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan\\_Holdsworth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allan_Holdsworth))

Pebber Brown

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[www.pbguitarstudio.com](http://www.pbguitarstudio.com)

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