

In this example, the melody notes have been syncopated by shifting them to offbeats.

Syncopated

G C D G

Count: | & 2 & 3 & 4 & etc.

T 0 0 (0) 0 | 1 1 (1) 1 | 3 3 (3) 3 | 3 3 (3) 3

A 0 0 0 0 | 3 3 3 3 | 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0

B 3 0 0 0 | 3 0 0 3 | 0 3 0 3 | 3 4 0 4 | 3 4 0

Notice that some of the notes have been played after the beat and some have been shifted before the beat.

Picking Patterns

Here are two right-hand picking patterns commonly used to develop arrangements. Practice these patterns slowly so that the left hand can play them effortlessly.

PICKING PATTERN NO. 1: *pm-p-i-p-m-p*

Pattern #1

G C Amin D

Count: | & 2 & 3 & 4 & etc.

T 0 0 (0) 0 | 1 0 (0) 1 | 1 2 (2) 1 | 3 2 (2) 3

A 0 0 0 0 | 3 2 0 (0) 2 | 0 2 2 (2) 2 | 0 2 (2) 0

B 3 0 0 2 | 3 2 0 3 | 0 2 3 0 | 3 0 1 0 | 3 0

PICKING PATTERN NO. 2: *p-m-p-i-p-m-p-i*

Pattern #2

G C Amin D

Count: | & 2 & 3 & 4 & etc.

T 0 0 (0) 0 | 1 0 (0) 1 0 | 1 2 (2) 1 2 | 2 3 (3) 2 3

A 0 0 0 0 | 3 2 0 (0) 2 0 | 0 2 2 (2) 2 2 | 0 2 3 (3) 2 3

B 3 0 0 0 | 3 1 2 0 | 0 1 2 3 | 0 2 1 3 | 0 2 1 3

By adjusting the right-hand picking pattern and the left-hand chord shapes, these patterns can be used as the accompaniment in a fingerstyle arrangement. The right hand may have to alter the string or time of the pattern to accommodate the melody and the left hand may have to alter the chord shape to accommodate melody notes outside of the chord.

Glory Glory (Since I've Laid My Burden Down)

Syncopated Melody

Traditonal

System 1: Measures 1-3. Chord: G.

System 2: Measures 4-6. Chords: G, C, G.

System 3: Measures 7-9. Chord: G.

System 4: Measures 10-12. Chords: G, D7, G.

Conclusion

For more information on syncopation, be sure to check out the Licks and Tricks column in this newsletter, as well as the beginner acoustic lessons “Syncopated Strumming” and “Boom-Chick, Syncopated Strums in the Style of Bob Dylan,” taught by Pat Johnson and Susan Mazer. And don’t forget—you can also order Johnson’s book, *Beginning Fingerstyle Arranging and Technique for Guitar*, available at www.ordermusictoday.com.

To see how syncopation relates to other styles, watch “Strumming Syncopation” in beginner rock taught by Paul Howard and Alex Nolan, “Syncopation” in advanced rock taught by Tobias Hurwitz and Dave Martone, “Rhythms and Grooves” in Chop Shop taught by Matt Smith and the “Introducing Syncopation” and “Travis Pattern with a More Complex Melody” lessons taught by Susan Mazer in intermediate fingerstyle.

Not a guitarist? Wait! We’ve got something we’d like you to see. Keyboard players should check out the Adult Refresher lesson “I Got Rhythm: Rhythmic Patterns and Syncopation,” taught by Leo Marchildon and Andrea Amos, David Pearl’s Toolbox lesson “Merengue,” or the Absolute Beginner lessons “Trickier Rhythms” and “Syncopation” taught by Cathy Schane-Lydon.

Bass players will like to see the beginner and intermediate rock bass lessons “Sixteenth-Note Chord Tone Groove,” “Ties with Sixteenth Notes” and “Sixteenth-Note Rests” taught by Tracy Walton. Drummers and percussionists will dig Kalani’s “Traditional Salsa Patterns” and Pete Sweeney’s “More Advanced Eighth-Note Beats” lessons.

Take your time with these ideas, be creative, and most importantly have fun!