

Robservations

Newsletter from indyguitar

Monthly guitar talk from a Voice of Teaching Experience in Indianapolis.

Swaynie One of Areas' Best Axemen

By: Chuck Workman, W.T.P.I. (107.9 F.M.) Sunday Morning Jazz Show Host, NUVO Jazz Critic (1998)

Indy has been fortunate to have produced a line of outstanding guitarists. Some of these players have gone on to become guitar icons, such as Wes Montgomery. And then there are guys like Rob Swaynie who has been quietly performing and teaching the guitar for 34 years in this city.

Swaynie runs his own guitar shop/studio, Indigo Music. He also teaches a continuing studies class in blues guitar at IUPUI. He has been a mainstay at the New Orleans House Restaurant on Friday and Saturday nights, playing solo guitar for dining clientele.

Swaynie has just released his first CD and appropriately titled it *Big&Tall* for his 6 foot 8 inch, 250 pound frame. For a guy who looks like he should be playing tight end with the Colts, Swaynie is very quiet and sensitive, almost self effacing; but he has a lot to say musically on this album that reveals his musical character.

Our interview with him reveals a very serious, pragmatic musician who has a quiet tenacity coupled with a wry sense of humor.

NUVO: How do you see the music or jazz scene for the working musicians such as yourself here in Indy?

SWAYNIE: There are so many people crawling all over each other (to play), that it kind of makes it tough for the ones who are trying to make a living at it. Music is not just music; there is an element of entertainment to it as well. So I think when you go to Broad Ripple or someplace like that you see a lot of people. That's obviously more entertainment than musical quality, but who's to define that, it's not my place. We are being pushed out by people who know three chords, but every generation has thought that.


NUVO: What is your advice to young guitar players that seem to be coming out by the hundreds that seriously want to pursue a career on this instrument?

SWAYNIE: As crazy as it seems I would give them the same advice I got as a kid. Get something whether it be engineering or whatever, to do because you can always play the guitar too! Probably the people who are the most successful at music are the ones that made up their mind that they couldn't do anything else anyway, so they go straight towards music. That's what I did and it's kind of rough, but teaching is what has gotten me through.

Swaynies' album "*Big&Tall*" is as rangy as his stature. What is especially notable are Swaynies' original compositions, from the buoyant title cut to the harp like sound of "*My Angels*" for his (then) wife and daughter. He is backed up with emphatic support by bassist Chris McMahan, drummer Michael Gilbert and percussionist Tim Hoose. From Miles Davis to Acoustic Alchemy to Erik Satie, Swaynie shows that he can serve up with good taste an appealing musical palette. Dining with the sounds of Rob Swaynies' guitar at the New Orleans House Restaurant is an exceptional culinary and musical delight.

Am7


The diagram shows the Am7 chord and its arpeggio on a guitar fretboard. The top staff shows the chord shape with dots on the 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 7th frets. The bottom staff shows the arpeggio sequence with fret numbers 7, 5, 5, and 8.




Last month the arpeggio lesson was so popular that this month I am showing the arpeggios going through the changes of Autumn Leaves, one of the most common standards. This song has all the seven possibilities of seventh chords in the key of E minor including making the V chord a dom7 forcing a D# that is normally D in E natural minor making E harmonic minor (B phrygian major). Also playing the D and D# during B7 makes a bebop scale (8 tone) known as the Spanish Phrygian.

D7

The diagram shows the D7 chord and its arpeggio on a guitar fretboard. The top staff shows the chord shape with dots on the 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 7th frets. The bottom staff shows the arpeggio sequence with fret numbers 7, 7, 5, and 8.




GMaj7

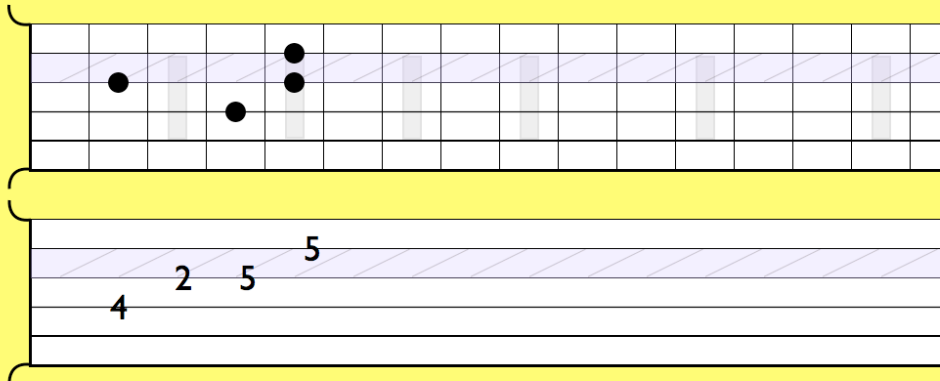


Say the name of the arpeggio you're playing out loud at the time you're playing it, then try different positions, fingerings etc.


CMaj7



F#m7^b5



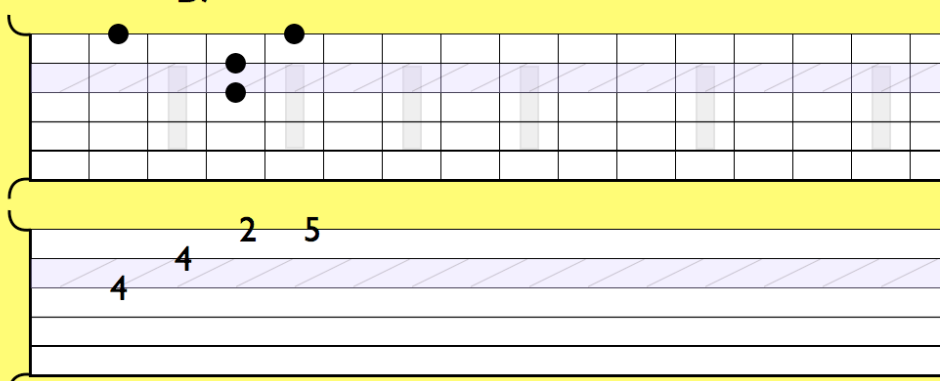
The diagram shows the F#m7^b5 chord on a guitar fretboard. The top staff shows the chord shape with dots on the 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 7th frets. The bottom staff shows the fingering: 4 on the 2nd fret, 2 on the 4th fret, 5 on the 5th fret, and 5 on the 7th fret.




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Make an accompaniment recording of you playing the chords to play along with or email me and I'll send you one. You can use a program like Band-in-a-Box and some websites have tools to create the backgrounds, or even better, get a buddy to play the chords.

B7



The diagram shows the B7 chord on a guitar fretboard. The top staff shows the chord shape with dots on the 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 7th frets. The bottom staff shows the fingering: 4 on the 2nd fret, 4 on the 4th fret, 2 on the 5th fret, and 5 on the 7th fret.



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Em

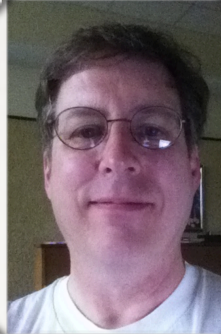
The diagram shows a guitar fretboard with a yellow background. The top staff is a six-string fretboard with a blue shaded area from the 2nd to the 5th fret. Fingering dots are placed on the 2nd fret of the 4th string, the 5th fret of the 5th string, the 4th fret of the 3rd string, and the 3rd fret of the 2nd string. The bottom staff is a five-line staff with a blue shaded area from the 2nd to the 5th fret. Fingering numbers are placed below the lines: '2' on the 2nd line, '5' on the 3rd line, '4' on the 4th line, and '3' on the 5th line. A small logo with a guitar and the text 'indy guitar' is in the bottom right corner.

Next month I'll show the modes and chord scales possible to go in Autumn Leaves. The possibilities are endless, but this is a tune where the harmony basically stays within the realm of Em until gets to the dominant chord B7. Surely somebody will argue that there are dozens of possibilities and there are but understanding these will help you not get lost in other standards that modulate all over the place.

Em

The diagram shows a guitar fretboard with a yellow background. The top staff is a six-string fretboard with a blue shaded area from the 2nd to the 5th fret. Fingering dots are placed on the 7th fret of the 4th string, the 5th fret of the 5th string, the 4th fret of the 3rd string, and the 7th fret of the 2nd string. The bottom staff is a five-line staff with a blue shaded area from the 2nd to the 5th fret. Fingering numbers are placed below the lines: '7' on the 2nd line, '5' on the 3rd line, '4' on the 4th line, and '7' on the 5th line. A small logo with a guitar and the text 'indy guitar' is in the bottom right corner.

I'm happy to include fellow master guitarist/instructor Sandy Williams to the newsletter. Sandy is a veteran first call studio guitarist and sidemen with tons of talent and experience.



Hey everybody!

I was really pleased that Rob asked me to contribute to his newsletter. I can vividly remember the first time I heard Rob play live. I couldn't believe that such a gifted guitarist lived right here in Indiana. It was inspiring and made me want to work even harder at being a good musician.

I play professionally in the Indianapolis area and am on staff at DePauw University and IUPUI. I used to play on a lot of jingle recordings that were done in Indianapolis. One year I played on both what Indianapolis Monthly Magazine voted as the best and worst jingle of the year! I'm still trying to figure that one out.

Here is a picking exercise that can also be useful for controlling your left-hand fingers. I suggest starting with metronome at quarter note=60 bpm. Be sure to keep your left-hand fingers on the fretboard until you move to the next string. You can descend down the fretboard using the same idea. Also be sure to pay attention to the pick direction. The second half is the same as the first half but displaced by one eighth-note.

PICKING EXERCISE

Musical notation for a picking exercise. It consists of two systems. The first system has a guitar staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written in eighth notes with various accidentals. Above the notes are pick direction symbols: 'v' for down-pick and 'V' for up-pick. Below the staff are two bass staves labeled 'T' and 'B' for the thumb and bass strings, with fret numbers 5, 6, 7, and 8 written below them. The second system follows the same format but is displaced by one eighth-note.

Essential Listening



Don't forget.

As well as live lessons I also teach Skype and e-mail lessons. These include audio files, video files, PDFs with both types of tablature and manuscript. Topics include blues licks, CAGED, modes, chord scales, progressions, melodic (jazz) minor, harmonic minor, symmetrical forms and two to four chord progressions to go with each. I also teach theory for guitarists and how to read rhythm. Lessons go from \$9.95 and I accept Paypal and Visa and Master Card and debits. Satisfaction Guaranteed with phone support.

Correction

February issue's cover is a picture with Allan Holdsworth playing in what I said was Paris it was in fact Rome.

Next Month: Symetrix

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