

GT159

Country Essentials 6

Putting All Together

In the last part of his country column Dario Cortese puts together two country pieces to test your chicken picking.

Welcome to the 6th and last part of Country Essential. In the past 5 months we've learnt many different techniques (hybrid picking, chicken picking, banjo rolls, etc), we've learnt a good number of licks in the style of famous country guitarists (Danny Gatton, Johnny Hiland, Jerry Donahue, etc) and we've also learnt how to emulate the other typical country instruments (pedal steel, fiddle, piano, etc).

This month we're gonna put all this together in action on two short tunes that I've composed especially for this article. Since I've received many emails questions from the readers asking about the picking hand I've included the picking directions that I've used on every single note I played this month. Please keep in mind that these are only suggestions and I change them quite often myself!

Song 1

This tune is built on a modern Country groove and features three different solos in the style of three great country guitarists: Albert Lee, Brad Paisley and Brent Mason. I picked up these three guitarists because they proved to be the most influential and sought after in country guitar.

Each solo includes some of the trademarks of the specific guitarist pictured and this can be a particular phrase, a guitar tone, the use of a specific technique or the general approach to the construction of the solo. Each solo is in a different key starting from E for Albert Lee, going through G for Brad Paisley and finishing in A for Brent Mason. This represent the guitarist's favorite (or more distinctive) key and should give you a good vocabulary in different keys. Please notice that I've included some of the licks we have seen in the past 5 months even if they might be in a different key, or in a different part of the fretboard or sometimes even been edited (half or a fragment of the original lick).

Song 2

This little tune is built on a more traditional Western Swing groove and features a short melody and a solo in the style of Brent Mason. I choose Brent because he's

like an encyclopedia of Western Swing guitarists, phrases and approaches (a little bit like SRV for blues guitarists). In fact this solo includes lines that can be easily associated with the style of Hank Garland, Johnny Gimble, Roy Nichols and many more. This piece is in the key of G – which seems to be the common key for Western Swing - and it's played in cut common (2/2).

When you're studying these solos it'll be worth trying to understand how the licks have been incorporated and how the solos have been built. Be able to play the solos can be quite fun (if you like them!) but the final goal is to compose your own solos or even improvise a solo on the spot.

I would like to thank the magazine for this opportunity and all the readers for the appreciation shown regarding this monthly column. I hope you enjoyed this as much as I did. Have fun!

Albert Lee Solo Style

Although I played it using hybrid picking, Albert would probably use alternate picking mainly incorporating one or two fingers only for the double stops or a particular passage

00:05 - Albert Lee Style Solo

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Brad Paisley Solo Style

This solo requires quite an intense work for both hands. The picking hand is busy hybrid picking everything while the fretting hand needs to keep up with the speed. I wrote the picking directions for the whole thing. These are not essential and should be consider only as guidelines. This solo has also quite a few fast bendings so it's highly recommended to use light gauge strings.

00:15 - Brad Paisley Style Solo

♩ = 180

16 2 3 2 1 2 (2) 0 2 0 0 2 0 3 2 0 2 0 3 0 3 2 0 2 0 3 0

m m m m m r m m r m m m r m m r

5 D C G

3 2 0 0 2 8 7 9 7 10 9 7 9 7 5 5 5 7 6 5 7 3 0 3 (3) 5 2

m V m m m m m m m m m r m m

8 D C G Ab A

0 0 0 0 15 18 10 8 10 8 9 8 12 0 10 11 12 0 9 8 0 9 7 (7)

r m m r m m m m r m m m r m m

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Brent Mason Solo Style

Although this solo doesn't reach the crazy speed of Brad's part, it's actually more intense for the fretting hand because of all the double stops. You'll find the suggested fingerings for the hardest passages but experiment with a few different ones before you start speeding things up.

[Bar 10] The last bar of this solo is actually played by three different guitars (it should be obvious listening to the audio). For the last chord each guitar plays something slightly different: Albert Lee plays the indicated E 6/9 chord, Brent plays an E5 power chord on the top 3 strings (9th on the G, 12th on the B and E strings) while Brad plays an E note (7th fret on the 5th string).

00:26 - Brent Mason Style Solo
♩ = 180

Measures 1-10 of the solo. The score includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat and a 4/4 time signature. It features various musical notations including triplets, double stops, and fret numbers. Below the staff are guitar-specific notations for the Treble (T), Alto (A), and Bass (B) staves, including fret numbers and picking patterns (m, r, c). Chord symbols A, E, D, and A are placed above the staff. Measure 8 is marked with a 'Freely' instruction. The score ends with a double bar line and a final chord symbol E%.

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Western Swing Brent Mason Solo Style

This little tune is played using Brent Mason picking technique (pick-middle-pick-ring) but it can be played just using normal alternate picking although some passages may result incredibly difficult that way. The note's choice is heavily based on the diminished scale and arpeggio combined with traditional major/minor pentatonic vocabulary.

$\text{♩} = 120$ G^6 Gm^6

T
A
B

5 4 5 4 3 4 3 2/3 4 5 2 4 5 2 3 4 2 4 5 2 3 5 3

□ m □ □ m □ □ m r □ □ m □ r □ m □ r □ m □ r □

G^6 A^b6 A^7 D^7 G^6

T
A
B

5 4 5 4 3 4 3 2/3 4 5 2 3 5 6 4 3 5 7 5 4 8 5 5

□ m □ □ m □ □ m r □ r m □ r m □ m □ r □ □

G^6 G^7/B C $C^{\#o7}$ G/D E^7

T
A
B

5 5 3 5 3 2 3 6 5 3 4 5 7 5

□ □ m □ m r m □ r m □ m

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A⁷ D⁷ G⁶ G⁷/B C C^{#o7}

T
A
B

4 7 5 3 4 8 5 8 6 6 8

m m r m m m m m

G/D E⁷ A⁷ D⁷ G⁶ G⁶ G⁷/B

T
A
B

6 7 8 9 10 6 7 8 9 8 7 11 11 8 8 8 8

m m r m m r m m m m m r

C C^{#o7} G/D E⁷ A⁷ D⁷

T
A
B

11 10 8 9 8 8 10 8 10 9 8 7 8 7 6 5 7 3 4 5

m m m m r m m r m m m m m

G⁶ G⁷/B C C^{#o7} G/D E⁷ A⁷ D⁷ G

T
A
B

5 4 5 3 4 3 4 2 3 2/3 4 5 3 5 3 6 6 3 6 8 6 8 6 7 5 8 5

m m r m m r m r m m r m m r m m

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TONE SETTINGS

Albert Lee: Although the perfect choice would be the Music Man Albert Lee any Strat type of guitar should get you closer to the ballpark. Select position 2 (bridge and middle pickups), add a touch of compressor and short delay (100ms) and plug it in a clean valve amp. Just for the record: I've used the Music Man Albert Lee to record this guitar.

Brad Paisley/Brent Mason: Tele, compressor and delay (50-80ms) it's all you need! I've used my 69 Tele to record these two guitars.

Brent Mason Western Swing: Any hollow body guitar would do the job. I've used my old Gibson 175.

Gain: 3 o'clock (higher for the Brad Paisley style solo)

Bass, Middle, Treble: Everything flat (12 o'clock)

Reverb: 2/3 o'clock

Just for the record: I've used a Line 6 POD XT straight into the desk. I've added a Dynacomp to record Brent Mason country style solo.

RECOMMENDED LISTENING

Brad Paisley is releasing his 7th album which appears to be mainly instrumental with lots of guests from B.B. King to Brent Mason. The album will be released on November 4th (2008).

Other suggested listening include: Brent Mason 'Hot Wired' & 'Smoking Section', Albert Lee & Hogan's Heroes 'In Full Flight' & 'Like This', The Hellecasters 'The Return Of...'. For Western Swing check out The Time Jumpers' 'Jumpin' Time', and anything from Ernest Tubb & Texas Troubadours, Roy Nichols, and Johnny Gimble.