

Learning to be a good improviser involves "connecting the dots,"

[ in other words, using chord shapes/arpeggios, " running the changes."]

It's essential for players to work out ways to navigate the changes, especially for tunes and parts of tunes that you find tricky in performance. This will help you to "think on your feet." Learning the arpeggios or chord shapes is essential to playing jazz, especially Gypsy Jazz. A listener hearing you solo on the changes by yourself, should be able to hear the changes to the song as you play.

[Many Gypsy players in Europe learn the chords and chord shapes for improvisation by rote, without learning music theory ]. Chord shapes, [arpeggios], are essential for GJ.

[See Stephane Wrembel's "Getting into Gypsy Jazz" published by Mel Bay for more detail.]

"All of Me," with it's cycle of Dominant seventh chords is a Gypsy Jazz favorite.<sup>1</sup>

The melody, with it's use of flat 9's, passing tones, suspensions, etc., gives the melodic line an interesting, and at times dissonant sound, tailor made for Gypsy Jazz.

The chord progression can be a bit of a challenge, especially at fast tempos. What I set out to do here was to find some interesting ways to navigate the changes, [connect the dots.] I used a variety of styles in the solo and tried to incorporate aspects of Django's style, along with more modern Gypsy Jazz and Bop ideas. Working this study out was very helpful to me. I strongly suggest that you work out your own Etude on the song. Working out and writing down your ideas will also help with to develop your phrasing, especially in getting a feel for when to start and end phrases. [Singers and horn players tend to have an easier time with this than guitarists for obvious reasons]!

Some notes on the changes:

I used the chords that are commonly played by Gypsy Jazzers.

Most players use a D9 or Dmi7 in bar 29. The original change is a Dmi7b5 or fmi6, which fits the original melody. [It has an Ab, rather than an A natural]. For bar 26 Fmi or F#dim are typically used, [the D natural in the melody fits either chord]. It isn't unusual to hear a player use the fmi shape in their solo over the F#dim, or the other way around, especially at a faster tempo. Bar 28 can be Emi, [ iv], or C maj, [tonic]. Gypsy picking rules apply , [ generally starting with a down stroke, use a down pick when changing strings].<sup>2</sup>

You should experiment with picking and left hand fingering. The goal is to make it swing and pop, so do what comes naturally.

Analysis;

Basic change running in bars 1-2, [Cma7 starting on the B natural, [Ma7, or leading tone], ending on an "A" natural in bar 2, [6th of Cmaj], to set up the 3rd of E7th, [g#] in bar 3. [Basically the same move that Django uses, slightly disguised here]. Bars 3-4 "Gypsy Dominant" E7b9 riff, using an enclosure riff in bar four to end the phrase. That sets up a Stochelo inspired A7-Dmi riff in bars 5-8.

I utilized a Tchavolo Schmitt style riff in bars 9-12. The triplet on the 2nd beat of bar 9 gives the riff a sense of forward motion. More enclosure along the way, and then a typical GJ phrase ending. Bars 13-15 are Bop flavored with a common GJ ending on the G7, [V7].

The beginning of the 2nd half of the solo uses some "side-stepping" [trying to evoke a little Clifford Brown here]! In bar 18, I used Bmi7b5 to set up the - E7, [something that you might hear Howard Alden play.] I kept the Bop flavor by using a b5, [Bb], to the root [E], of the E7 chord.

More ii-V sounds implied in bar 22, [Emi7b5-A7], with a Django inspired enclosure idea to end on the Dmi. More horn style change running in bars 25-29, ending with a Django style 1/2 step bend in the turnaround.

I would of course suggest learning Django's solo, and also listening to Lester Young's take on the piece, transcribing his solo or a similar player's solo. Also, [as obvious as this sounds] take the time to

---

<sup>1</sup> Copyright 1931, Seymour Simons & Gerald Marks

<sup>2</sup> See "Gypsy Picking" by Michael Horowitz, Published by Djangobooks

memorize the melody and chords, [sing or hum the melody over the chords]. You'll find that the melody and harmony together have active and static, [rest] points, [as all songs do.] Getting a feel for the active and static aspects of the piece will can help you to develop good phrasing and musicianship, and will help you to avoid sounding like you are "playing from your fingers."<sup>3</sup> [Thanks to violinist Matt Glaser for the term]! I am always a bit bewildered the dependence on charts at jam sessions and even at some gigs[!] This music has to be played "by heart." You either know the song or you don't. [That's the end of my 'Tough Love' Lecture! Have some fun with the Etude.

Barry performs with the Hot Club of Philadelphia. [www.HotClubPhilly.com](http://www.HotClubPhilly.com)  
Their new CD is called "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams."  
Featuring guest appearances by Howard Alden, Denise King & Phyllis Chapell vocals.  
Questions and comments on the study send an email to [Barwarren@aol.com](mailto:Barwarren@aol.com)

---

<sup>3</sup> Have you heard this one? 'What's the difference between a rock guitarist and a jazz guitarist?'  
Answer; "the rock guitarist plays three chords for an audience of thousands,  
While the jazz guitarist plays thousands of notes for three people!"