

Django Camp Level Guide

Lead Guitar and Improvisation

Level 1: You either consider yourself a total newbie to improvisation, or choose to start afresh. You have few, if any, melodies under your belt, and the same could be said of arpeggios, licks and other tools of the trade. Shall we begin?

Level 2: You're not be a total newbie, but you do not yet have a strong foundation in improvisation. If you are looking for a rule of thumb, try this one: can you play smoothly through the chord progression of our Tier 1 Core Repertoire, at performance tempo, using only arpeggios of the chords themselves? If not, here's a good place to firm up that foundation.

Level 3: At this level we will assume that you can play a coherent solo based primarily on arpeggios of the chords in a typical progression. You are comfortable in a typical GJ jam with amateur enthusiasts and can play at performance tempo on all but the fastest tunes. Each teacher will have his/her own approach to helping you take the next steps as a soloist, but that will be their starting point.

Level 4: Here, the teachers will assume you have a lot of experience as an improviser. You can dive right into playing lead comfortably and competently in a GJ jam, even on faster tunes, and you probably perform and/or teach at the local or regional level. You are always on the lookout for new ideas, approaches and opportunities to stretch out. Our teachers will give you some.

Rhythm Guitar

Level 1: At this level we will assume two things. (1) You want a sound introduction to playing rhythm in this style, including both chord voicings and strumming technique. (2) You don't want to be rushed.

Level 2: This level will work best for those who have already had a good intro to the style and don't want to start from scratch, but who still need to work on fundamentals to get the sound and feel right. It may also work well for experienced players of other jazz styles who think they can pick up the basics fairly quickly.

Level 3: You have a strong foundation in the style, but want to work on whatever our teachers regard as more advanced skills: faster tempos, rhythmic fills, chord substitutions, relaxation/endurance, etc.

Level 4: Let's say one of our teachers was going to be passing through your town and needed a rhythm guitarist for a serious gig with other pros. You'd be the person to get the call. Are you ready?

Picking Technique ("Gypsy Picking" -- guitar only)

Intro Level: For people who are still quite new to Django-style right hand technique. Expect a focus on fundamentals, with very little emphasis on speed.

Intermediate Level: Intended for players who've had a good intro to the technique and been at it for a while, but who are still not entirely comfortable with it. The focus will be on drills, exercises and licks you can use to help you get over the hump.