

THE INTERMEDIATE GUITAR GUIDE



LEARN EMBELLISHMENTS, EAR TRAINING,
THE ULTIMATE GUITAR WARM-UP
AND MUCH MORE,...

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Chapter 8: Use embellishments to wow your audience

Every now and then you probably see a guitarist who does something just that little bit special. He or she stands up there on the stage playing what appears to be a standard chord, yet he plays these extra little notes by adding, moving or taking a finger off the fretboard.

He makes it look effortless, but when you have tried, you couldn't get anything like the awesome cool sound he got.

This is a technique called embellishing. Jimi Hendrix, John Frusciante (Red Hot Chilli Peppers) and many more are famed for using them.

They can be played with any chords from open position chords such as C, D, G, etc, to more difficult barre chords.

It doesn't matter what the chord is, embellishments are a tool that every guitarist should know. They sound great, as you are essentially playing rhythm and lead guitar in one.

Now, that's impressive.

It's not actually that hard a concept.

You will need to be confident of playing chords and using your all four fingers to add notes by hammering on, pulling off or sliding.

If you can't yet hammer-on, pull off and slide comfortably with each finger you may struggle with this technique so spend time practicing these specific techniques.

Likewise, if you struggle to play in time with basic strumming patterns you may not be able to lock in to the groove to create the interesting rhythmic flow that usually happens during the most interesting embellishments.

Hendrix was an absolute master of embellishments and frequently varied each chord embellishment each time the passage came back around.

This is because his rhythm skills were second to none. To be great at this technique you will also need superb rhythm skills.

If you are not comfortable with advanced rhythm, hammering on, pulling off and sliding, then practice these techniques individually alongside these embellishments pieces.

Add this technique to your playing; and your listeners will be very impressed.

Here we have 4 examples in the style of some legendary artists.

Ex 1. John Frusciante style embellishment:

Moderate ♩ = 82

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system contains four measures, and the second system contains three measures. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of 'Moderate' with a quarter note equal to 82. The guitar part is written in standard notation with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The bass part is written in standard notation with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The score includes various guitar techniques such as hammer-ons, pull-offs, and slides, as well as muted hits indicated by 'X' marks on the strings. The first system has four measures. The second system has three measures. The first system starts with a first ending bracket. The second system ends with a double bar line.

Click [here](#) to listen.

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The Red Hot Chili Pepper`s guitarist is synonymous with using embellishment techniques to spice up his chord playing.

This is another piece that I wrote a while back which is inspired by John`s sublime playing.

If you imagine the funky verses to the band`s huge hit `Under the Bridge` but played in a minor key, it might sound a little bit like this.

There are hammer-ons, pull-offs and slides in here, so you will get playing a wide variety of chord embellishments with this piece.

I also added some muted hits in there to give it some extra funk-like groove but you do not need to add these in.

I wrote this piece originally for a solo acoustic performance so I wanted to fill in for the snare. Hitting muted strings on the beat where the snare would usually go is a great way to this.

Ex 3. Radiohead style embellishment:

Moderately Fast ♩ = 117

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system (measures 1-4) is in 4/4 time. The second system (measures 5-8) starts with a 7/8 time signature, then changes to 4/4. The third system (measures 9-10) is in 5/4 time. The tablature includes various techniques such as triplets and bends.

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Radiohead's guitarists Jonny Greenwood, Ed `O` Brien and Thom Yorke are all well known as original, inspiring and unique guitarists that create brilliant other worldly soundscapes as well as take something that has been done before and put a completely new spin on it.

Whether, you're a fan of the band or not, most guitarists striving for originality can look to this band and it's guitarists for inspiration.

This example uses a few different techniques the band have written with over the years, such as taking a major chord and turning it minor.

This is actually an old technique that was used as far back as Bing Crosby's `White Christmas` and used to great effect on their breakthrough track, `Creep`.

The track actually starts off as a `sus4`, it then goes major, and then it goes minor.

The `sus4` is a great, flexible chord that can be used to substitute for both minor and major

chords. Here it does both.

Another prominent Radiohead technique used here is the use of odd time signatures.

Inspired by the track, `Pyramid Song` as well as others, our example, plays about with 4/4, 7/8 and 5/4 time signatures to create a different groove than the listener expects.

Take your time with it as it's an intricate piece and really try to lock into the groove.

Once you do, it all becomes a lot easier to play.

blues idea. Page, Angus Young and the rest of the godfathers of rock really just took the blues and adapted it to make it bigger and more aggressive.

You will therefore hear a huge blues influence on this track and on a lot of their playing.

When playing this piece, crank up some 70`s style Marshall overdrive with your pickups selected to the bridge or the bridge and middle combined and don`t be afraid to be aggressive with it.

This track is begging for you to play it hard and fast.

Have fun with these embellishments and then have a go at writing your own.

Summary

Well, that`s it. A free chapter on chord embellishments.

Listen and learn them all. It`s essential to hear them in action, so go back over each example, listen and learn them.

Use the ideas taught in this free chapter and create your own chord embellishments.

Good luck and keep having fun with your playing! You can and will be an awesome guitarist!

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