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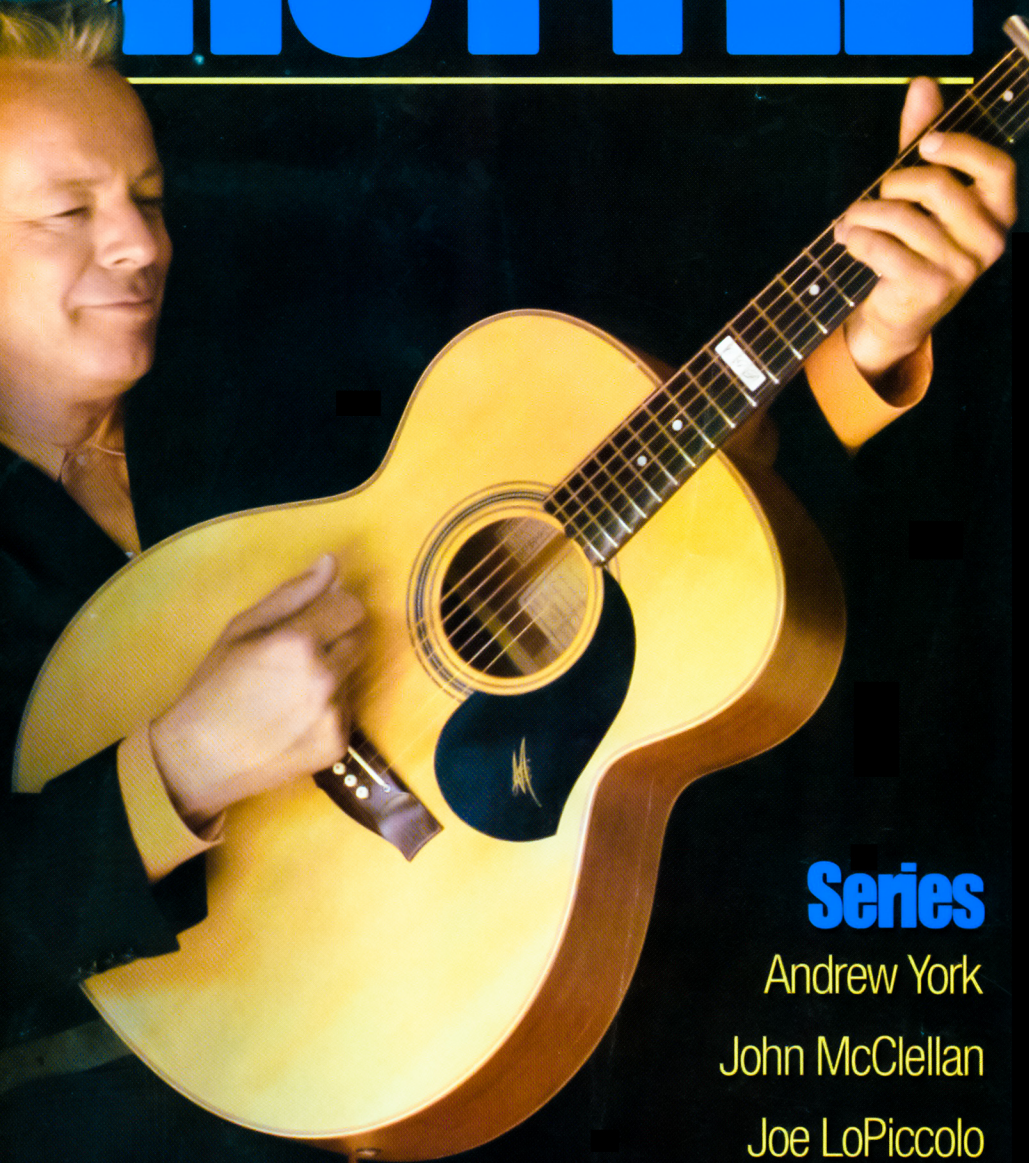
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BRAZILIAN ACCOMPANIMENT (Comping)

JOE LOPICCOLO

Hello and welcome to the first column of *The Global Guitarist*! My intent is to introduce a wide spectrum of world music styles and how they can be applied to fingerstyle guitar.

"World Music" as it is now referred to has intrigued performers and composers for many years. Guitarists as diverse as John Williams, Steve Tibbetts, George Harrison, John McLaughlin and Ry Cooder have all explored music from foreign cultures with often stunning results. Today more than ever, an awareness of different World Music styles is fast becoming part of a musician's requisite knowledge. The rhythms, techniques, harmonic and melodic vocabulary you will learn can expand your horizons - regardless of your chosen genre.

"Brazilian Guitar" is a huge category with classical repertoire and many regional folk styles and variants. Guitar (*violao* as it is known in Brazil) is so popular it's practically a national instrument. From the complex compositions of Heitor Villa-Lobos and Egberto Gismonti to the popular songs of Gilberto Gil and Milton Nascimento, it is indisputable the Brazilians have done something truly tremendous and unique with the guitar.

A problem with many guitarists outside of Brazil is that they are only peripherally aware of authentic Brazilian guitar styles. (How many awful versions of "Girl from Ipanema" have we all heard?) The good news is as fingerstyle guitarists, we have the right hand facility to play Brazilian comping patterns with all of their wonderful syncopation and "*ginga*" (slang for a Brazilian type of graceful motion or swing). If you are a jazz guitarist, the left hand voicings will be very accessible. Studying a few key concepts can dramatically improve your playing on Brazilian standards and move you from the Vegas lounge category more towards the real thing.

One of the first things you can do to sound more authentic is to check your chord voicings. Just as in jazz, Brazilian guitarists love to add color with extensions beyond the primary tones of the chord. For example, a basic 7th chord is almost always played with an added 6th or 9th or both. **Examples 1-6** (the first measure of each system) show basic chords without any extensions. These are valid voicings you can use at

EXAMPLES 1-6

Examples 1-6 illustrate basic guitar chord voicings and their corresponding musical notation. Each example includes a chord diagram and a musical staff showing the chord's sound.

- Ex. 1:** CMA7 (Chord diagram: X02333, 3 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major with an added major 7th.
- Ex. 1 A:** C⁶ (Chord diagram: X02333, 7 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major with a 6th.
- Ex. 2:** CMA7 (Chord diagram: X02333, 3 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major with an added major 7th.
- Ex. 2 A:** C⁶ (Chord diagram: X02333, 7 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major with a 6th.
- Ex. 3:** C7 (Chord diagram: X02333, 3 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major 7th.
- Ex. 3 A:** C⁹ (Chord diagram: X02333, 5 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major 9th.
- Ex. 4:** C7 (Chord diagram: X02333, 3 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major 7th.
- Ex. 4 A:** C⁹ (Chord diagram: X02333, 5 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major 9th.
- Ex. 5:** CM7 (Chord diagram: X02333, 3 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major 7th.
- Ex. 5 A:** CM11 (Chord diagram: X02333, 6 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major 11th.
- Ex. 6:** CM7 (Chord diagram: X02333, 3 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major 7th.
- Ex. 6 A:** CM9 (Chord diagram: X02333, 3 fret). Musical notation: Treble clef, C major 9th.

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THE GLOBAL GUITARIST

EXAMPLE 7A

EXAMPLE 7B

EXAMPLE 8A

EXAMPLE 8B

Continued from page 68

times, but now play the chords in the “A” examples (the second measure of each system). Adding the 6th (13th), 9th or 11th immediately evokes the Brazilian chordal palette. *Note: Brazilian guitarists frequently exploit open strings when possible, but in this example I have presented all closed, root position voicings for easy transposition.

Now let’s get into it with Samba. Samba is essentially dance music that emerged in the early 1900s in Rio, Sao Paulo and Bahia. Samba rhythms are highly syncopated with African influences and are a lot of fun to play. Samba predates bossa nova, which is basically a “cool jazz” samba that became popular with the famous Stan Getz, Antonio Carlos (Tom) Jobim and Joao Gilberto recordings of the ’60s. Brazilians think of sambas and bossa novas in 2/4 with the bass on 1 and 2 and with 8th and 16th note rhythms. It is common, however, to see them written in 4/4 in publications such as *The Real Book* and others.

Example 7a shows Brazilian comping that is a generic and incorrect coverall used by many guitarists who frankly don’t know better and are recycling what they have heard other non-Brazilian artists play.

Both the rhythmic and harmonic vocabulary of **Example 7a** are OK, but really not anything you would actually hear played by a Brazilian guitarist.

Example 7b is much better in several aspects. The root 5th bass pattern is much more stylistically authentic as it plays the 5th below the root as opposed to above. Harmonically I incorporated open string voicings using the 6 (F#) and 9th (B) degrees of the scale. I also utilized two different groupings of 3 adjacent strings (G, B and E and D, G and B) to create a shifting register in the upper notes of the voicings. Lastly, the inner voice change in measure two is anticipated on the-and-of-four in measure one. This kind of anticipation is very common even when the harmony is changing to a completely different chord quality and can occur in the bass as well.

Damping and muting with both the right and left hands are very common techniques in Brazilian guitar. **Example 8a** shows a pattern that sustains all the bass and chord articulations.

Example 8b incorporates mutes to create a more interesting and diverse accompaniment pattern.

Example 9 applies many of the concepts we just covered. The progression is from an original composition of mine, “Carefree.”

The previous examples introduced these key concepts:

- Chord voicings with extensions and open strings
- Correct bass pattern (5th below the root or not at all)
- Anticipation of chords and bass
- Left and right hand muting and damping.

EXAMPLE 9

Ex4 AM9 A9 C#m7(b9) F#b13

BM9 E7b9 AMa7 Bb13 AM9

Incorporating all of these elements into your Brazilian comping will improve your playing immensely. Lastly, let me state how important it is to listen this music played by Brazilians themselves. Intellectual understanding through lessons such as the ones we just learned is important; but it is vital to ingrain these elements subconsciously through intensive listening to the masters. Toninho Horta's *Durango Kid 1* and *2* are a must-have for any serious fan of Brazilian guitar and are a great place to start. Other artists you should listen to for samba are Baden Powell, Joao Bosco, Joao Gilberto, Luiz Bonfá and Romero Lubambo to name just a few. For further studies, *The Brazilian Guitar Book* by Nelson Faria is the book to own. *Vai (go)!*

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