

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .....	iii
General Introduction.....	iv
Considerations.....	vii
A Brief History of the Guitar.....	viii
Quick Reference.....	xi
Book I: Developing A Musical Vocabulary On The Guitar .....	1
Chapter 1 – Positioning .....	2
Chapter 2 – Creating Chords.....	10
Chapter 3 – Subtleties and Attack .....	25
Chapter 4 – Tambora.....	50
Chapter 5 – Muting .....	55
Chapter 6 – Artificial Harmonics .....	59
Afterthoughts.....	76
About the Composer/Author .....	77
Making a Difference .....	78
Glossary of Terms .....	79

# About the *Discover Your Own Method on Guitar Series...*

## INTRODUCTION

Over the centuries, guitarists have discovered new ways of altering sound by adjusting their fingers to form unique shapes, by striking strings in a variety of positions, by moving their hands in a way that just *feels right*, or by doing something as simple as playing a chord loudly followed by a quiet passage. Beginning with the first guitarists who wrote songs, travelled and performed, there has been a tradition of guitarists documenting their discoveries in the form of a book, locking their musical expressions in time and passing their findings on for the next generation to build upon.

This book has grown out of a process of discovery and hopes to add to that tradition. All of the techniques, exercises, ideas and excerpts presented here are the result of hours of playing in my bedroom, jamming in friends' basements, waiting for sound checks, sitting-in with musicians who greatly exceeded my abilities, practicing at airport terminals, rehearsing on the road, watching beginner students play a chord in a way I had never considered, or making a so-called mistake but then finding a new sound or new way of playing a passage that I have since included in my performance or developed into a song.

Whether or not you are a nine-year-old beginner, a sixty-year-old retiree who finally has the time to live out your teenage dream, a university or college music student who is trying to find your own sound, a busker who has never read a note in your life, the guy who brings his guitar out at parties and sings his heart out, or a veteran professional, the goal of this series is simple: we want to provide an approach to the guitar that focuses on *the ways we touch the guitar, the ways we form shapes on the guitar with our hands, and the ways we move our hands* as the most important factors that teach us how to learn to play, develop new techniques, or revisit what we have already learned in a fresh way. We will refer to this guitar method as the *Touch, Shape, Move Guitar Method*. First and foremost, this method includes *being aware* of the variables we have at our disposal and uses the imitation of a variety of instruments as a way of opening up new approaches to the guitar.

Included throughout this series are pictures, sketches and diagrams that present the names and shapes of chords, the names of notes on the fret board, a list of all keys, and a list of time signatures and rhythmic note values, which all act as a *Quick Reference*.

However, the goal of this series is not to dictate technique. Nor is this series interested in forcing you to learn theory or rigorously follow the forms of well-established musical traditions. The level of importance of music theory or a particular style of music in your life is yours to decide.

The *Hidden Sounds* series exists between genres and traditions as a philosophy of playing and can be used as a supplement to any standard guitar method book. In fact, I encourage this. Whether or not we use a pick or our fingers, whether we play an electric or acoustic guitar, the exercises in this book can be used to develop our own musical vocabulary, our own musical language, our own guitar method and style. While there are guidelines that we can follow to enhance our performance, this series places the process of discovery in the driver seat. I expect that we will find some sounds that we like better than others. In all cases, *keep what you like and what works for you*. We are building our own musical alphabet where we know how to change things up at a moment's notice.

This series poses a challenge for the guitarist: I challenge you to use this series as your starting point for discovering the infinite *hidden sounds* that are waiting to be unlocked and played by you. The imagination is vast and I hope the techniques presented in this series will inspire the guitarist to discover new sounds beyond these pages, develop a new musical vocabulary, open up age-old techniques for new contexts, and inspire you to create your own guitar methodology.

Importantly, this series has a World Music focus. All four books in the series draw on the tonalities and rhythms across world music traditions, including South American Andean music, Thai folk music, North

Indian classical music, Zimbabwean folk music, Italian folk music, West African music, reggae, hip hop, contemporary DJ club music, as well as familiar pop, rock, jazz and Western classical music.

Book I, *Developing A Musical Vocabulary On The Guitar*, is concerned with familiarizing the guitarist with the power of choice that lies at his/her fingertips with respect to the role of positioning, attack strategies, and *fingering hand* and *strumming hand* techniques that work to create a library of sound. Chapter 1 deals with positioning. Some of these exercises may seem self-evident but by thinking about the variety of ways a single note can be played and the positions where it can be sounded we will become aware of the many options we have when playing a single note or chord. In Chapter 2, we think about building chords in terms of string combinations. Chapter 3 examines numerous ways to alter sounds on the guitar by presenting an overview of *fingering hand* and *strumming hand* techniques. Chapter 4 deals with the *strumming hand* technique known as *tambora*. Chapter 5 reveals new sonic possibilities that are created by using muting techniques. Chapter 6 reveals practical ways to incorporate artificial harmonics into your playing.

Book II, *The Power Of Imitation: Interpreting Instruments And Effects Pedals On The Guitar*, uses a variety of the techniques introduced in Book I and advances them through a process of imitation. We show that by attempting to imitate the tones or sounds of other instruments we discover new sonic possibilities on the guitar and new ways to physically play the guitar. In order to create these sounds we must *think* these sounds. In the process of imitating other instruments, the guitarist will identify and stumble upon unexpected sounds that he/she can then include in their sound bank. *Remember* these sounds. Play them over and over again so you know how to produce these tones where you see fit in your performance and compositions. Chapter 1 uses the tremolo technique to imitate the mandolin. Chapter 2 uses a variation of the tremolo technique over the fret board to imitate the charango, a South American instrument. Chapter 3 uses muting techniques to imitate the banjo in the Dixieland music tradition. Chapter 4 reveals techniques that can be used to imitate the DJ record scratch. Chapter 5 examines techniques that can be used to imitate the mbira, a Zimbabwean instrument, the sitar in North Indian classical music (also known as Hindustani music), the synthesizer keyboard, and the West African kora and balafon. Chapter 6 reveals the techniques required to imitate effects pedals, including the volume pedal, the tremolo pedal and the delay pedal.

Book III, *Exploring Percussion On The Guitar*, expands on the techniques, exercises and excerpts in Book I and Book II and requires the guitarist to think of the guitar as a percussive instrument. Chapter 1 familiarizes us with a range of note and rest values, time signatures and rhythmic patterns that prepare us to take the next step and *explore* percussion on the guitar. Chapter 2 examines the *percussive zones* of the guitar and presents ways to use these *percussive voices* in performance. Chapter 3 focuses on a variety of ways to utilize the *percussive voices* of the strings in band settings and during solo performance. Chapter 4 investigates methods for sounding harmonics using percussive techniques. Chapter 5 reveals percussive techniques that can be used in various world music traditions, including reggae, rock and Thai folk music. Chapter 6 reveals the power of silence and space while presenting interesting ways of using silence to our advantage as guitarists and as a way to enhance our compositions.

Within the first three books in the *Hidden Sounds* series, each chapter includes a brief history of the technique in question, an explanation of how to perform the technique, a series of examples and excerpts from original pop, rock, jazz, folk and world music compositions that demonstrate the practical use of techniques and, finally, a challenge for the guitarist to expand these exercises and *make them their own*.

Book IV, *Reference Book*, serves as a starting point for further investigation into a range of topics focused on the guitar and music performance in general. The *Reference Book* provides all readers with the opportunity to discover important books, texts, articles, magazines, and online resources that focus on diverse aspects of the guitar and music in a variety of historical time periods and global contexts. The *Reference Book* contains all the sources used in the writing of the *Hidden Sounds* series.

The *Reference Book* contains 12 sections followed by Appendices. Section I provides a list of books that detail the historical development of the acoustic/classical guitar, the electric guitar and the steel guitar. Section II lists books concerned with the guitar's role in diverse genres of music, from African and Brazilian music traditions to flamenco and jazz. Section III features autobiographies and biographies on notable guitarists throughout the ages in diverse global music traditions. Section IV provides music theory books in musical traditions as varied as Arab music to Thai music. Section V presents books concerned with the

philosophy of musical performance. Section VI contains books centred on methods for teaching music in a range of genres and global contexts. Section VII lists general and specialized music dictionaries, encyclopedias and readers that cover diverse world music traditions from Omani music to Hindustani music. Section VIII provides a list of guitar method books in a variety of musical traditions from classical to reggae. Section IX lists books concerned with the instruments mentioned in the *Hidden Sounds* series, including the banjo, charango and mandolin. Section X lists valuable online resources that can be accessed in order to find further information on the guitar and musical topics. Section XI lists popular guitar magazines that can be accessed online or purchased in hard copy. Section XII lists notable guitar players and bands from diverse musical traditions. Appendix I: "A Brief History of the Guitar" examines the historical development of the guitar from its origins to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Appendix II: "Glossary of Terms Used in the *Hidden Sounds* Series" contains general music terms and guitar terms that frequently expand on traditional definitions based on the *Touch, Shape, Move Guitar Method* informing the *Hidden Sounds* series.

Over the course of Books I, II, III and IV in the *Hidden Sounds* series, we are gradually building an experience-based approach that can be used in our guitar performance and perhaps in other facets of life as we learn to weave our own sound in and out of various genres.

Please note that the audio files for every exercise and excerpt in the *Hidden Sounds* series can be downloaded from the following website: [www.jeffgunn.ca](http://www.jeffgunn.ca).

All questions and comments regarding the *Hidden Sounds* series can be directed to [hidensoundsguitarmethod@gmail.com](mailto:hidensoundsguitarmethod@gmail.com).

May your musical journey be enriched as you discover the hidden sounds of the guitar...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Gunn", written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

# 8. Major and Minor Chords

Name	Formula	Notes & Tabs	Chart	Picture
C Major				
C minor				
D Major				
D minor				
E Major				
E minor				
F Major				

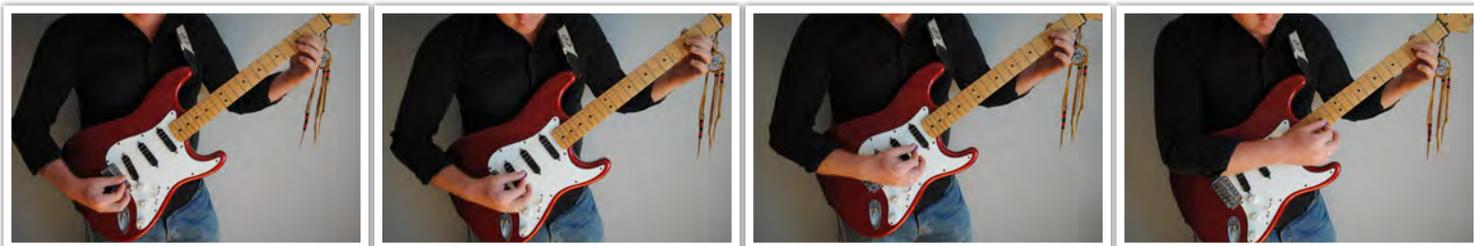


Fig.1 reveals four distinct *strumming hand regions* that can create a range of tones for a single note. The *four tonal reference points* are: near the bridge, midway between the bridge and the sound hole, directly over the sound hole, and the 15th fret over the fret board. On electric guitar: near the bridge, between the pickups (between the 1st and 2nd pickup or between the 2nd and 3rd pickup depending on the guitar), between the fret board and the nearest pickup (or between the closest set of pickups towards the fret board if the distance between the nearest pickup and the fretboard is short), and over the 15th fret.

### EXERCISE 3A

Now that we have identified our *four tonal reference points* with respect to the *strumming hand*, let's *discover the tones or personalities* in between these points. Starting at the bridge, strike the A note using eighth notes while gradually moving towards the fret board. This produces a *shifting tonal process* as the *strumming hand* illustrates the variety of *personalities* that are possible for a single note.

II (bridge) -----> (over fretboard)

T 4  
A 4  
B

### EXERCISE 3B

Apply the same *shifting tonal process* in the reverse order moving from the 15th fret over the fret board towards the bridge.

II (over fretboard) -----> (bridge)

T 4  
A 4  
B

## SLAPPING

### EXERCISE 5C

In Exercise 5C, slap each G note using the *side of the thumb p* at the joint.

Pick guitarists, use the *base of the pick* and strike down on the string. Notice the *bass-like tone* that is created, particularly when sounding the low G note on the 6th string.



III V X XV III VIII XII XVII XV XX

T 4 4  
A 4 4  
B 3

## UNDERPICKING

### EXERCISE 5D

In Exercise 5D, pick the G Major scale using the thumb *p*, *under* the strings. Pick guitarists, strike the strings from underneath, *lifting up* each string with less force than a *pull*. Similarly, alternate between *i m* and *i a* (and all other finger variations you can think of) in the *strumming hand*, while lifting up on the string gently. Notice the drastic difference in sound when using *underpicking* rather than *free strokes* and *rest strokes*.



III

T 4 4  
A 4 4  
B 3 5 2 3 5 2 4 5 2 4 5 3 5 2 3 2

T 5 3 5 4 2 5 4 2 5 3 2 5 3  
A  
B

# BENDING

**BENDING:** The act of lifting a string(s) and moving from one note (or group of notes) to another without changing fret locations.

One of the most popular ways to alter a note is to *bend* it. There is a multitude of books and articles both online and on bookshelves that address this subject so we will only consider a few examples here.

## EXERCISE 13A

In Exercise 13A, play the G note and play a *half bend* (or *semitone bend*). The G note will sound the same as the G# note one fret higher on the same string on the fret board. Next, try a *full bend* (*whole tone bend*). The G note will sound the same as the A note two frets higher on the same string on the fret board.

Musical notation for Exercise 13A in G major, 4/4 time. The first measure shows a G note on the 8th fret with an upward arrow and 'VIII' above it, indicating a half bend. The second measure shows a G note on the 12th fret with an upward arrow and 'XII' above it, indicating a full bend. Below the staff is a tablature with strings T, A, and B, showing frets 8 and 12.



## EXERCISE 13B

In Exercise 13B, play the G note using a *reverse bend* (sometimes known as *ghost bend*) starting with a *reverse half bend*. The G# note will be lowered back to a G note. Next, try a *reverse full bend*. The A note will be lowered back to a G note. Notice the difference in sound that is created by *lifting* the string up as compared with *pulling* the string down.

Musical notation for Exercise 13B in G major, 4/4 time. The first measure shows a G note on the 8th fret with a downward arrow and 'VIII' above it, indicating a reverse half bend. The second measure shows a G note on the 12th fret with a downward arrow and 'XII' above it, indicating a reverse full bend. Below the staff is a tablature with strings T, A, and B, showing frets 8 and 12.



## EXERCISE 13C

In Exercise 13C, apply a *unison bend*. In measure 1, we have the A note that remains stationary while the G note is bent until the G note gradually becomes an A note.

Musical notation for Exercise 13C in G major, 4/4 time. The first measure shows an A note on the 10th fret and a G note on the 12th fret with an upward arrow and 'X' above it, indicating a unison bend. The second measure shows an A note on the 10th fret and a G note on the 12th fret. Below the staff is a tablature with strings T, A, and B, showing frets 10 and 12.



# CHAPTER 6: ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS

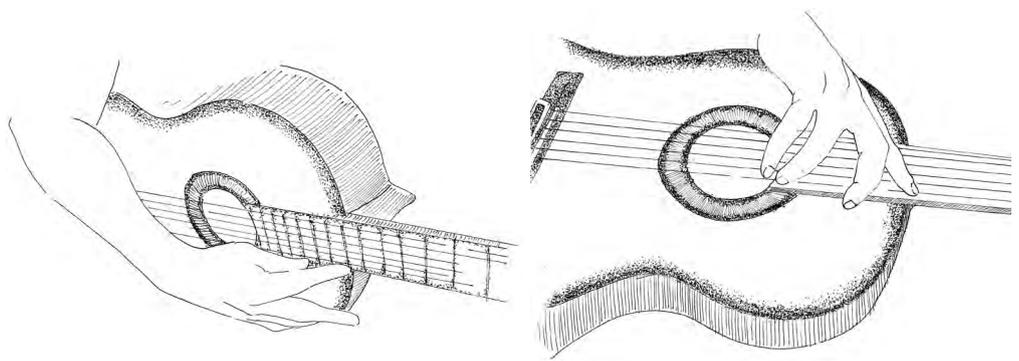
*Artificial harmonics* can add an elusive, even celestial tonal quality to our guitar playing and compositions. Defined as ‘tones produced on a string, the vibrating length of which has been temporarily changed by stopping’ (*Virginia Tech Multimedia Music Dictionary*), *artificial harmonics* offer a huge range of sonic possibilities in both light and dark musical contexts. *Artificial harmonics* differ from *natural harmonics* because when we sound *artificial harmonics* our finger(s) are on the fret board forming a note or chord whereas *natural harmonics* are played using open strings. In short, we are *artificially* creating *harmonics*! Throughout the following chapter, we will cover various ways to sound *artificial harmonics* and incorporate them into our performance.

## A BRIEF HISTORY...

Guitarists have decorated their music with the colourful tones of *artificial harmonics* for centuries. *Artificial harmonics* surface across musical genres - from 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century composer Agustin Barrios Mangore to country great Chet Atkins, from the recordings of jazz legend Lenny Breau to Joe Satriani. Key pieces that use artificial harmonics include Agustin Barrios Mangore’s “Julia Florida”, E. Granados’s “Melodico”, Miguel Llobet’s arrangement of “El Testament d’Ameilia”, Lenny Breau’s “Beautiful Love”, and Chet Atkins’s “Chinatown, My Chinatown”.

## THE TECHNIQUE...

*Artificial harmonics* are sounded by following what we will call the *12 fret rule*. Rest one or several fingers in our *strumming hand* directly over the metal bar (the fret) 12 frets higher than the note or notes played with the *fingering hand*. It is important to rest your finger gently over the fret bar (the metal bar) and not to push down on it; otherwise the *artificial harmonic* will not be



sounded. Once the correct fret bar has been located, the *artificial harmonic* is both fingered and plucked using fingers from the *strumming hand*. The most common finger combination in the *strumming hand* that is used for playing *artificial harmonics* will be fingering with *i* and plucking with *p* or fingering with *i* and plucking with *a*. Specifically, we must place our thumb *p* behind *i* and perform a *downstroke*. A second method is to place our ring finger *a* behind *i* and perform an *upstroke*. The following exercises will present an easy way to incorporate *artificial harmonics* into our guitar performance and compositions.

*Artificial harmonics* are also produced by following the *7 fret rule* and *5 fret rule*. We apply the same *fingering hand* and *strumming hand* techniques we used following the *12 fret rule* but always maintain a 7 fret or 5 fret difference respectively.

Remembering these 3 rules will allow us to combine *artificial harmonics* in various locations over the fret board and beyond, creating a range of tones along the way. In order to sound chords and lead lines, we will use combinations of *artificial harmonics*, *natural harmonics* and *regular tones* often using the same *strumming hand* technique to produce *artificial harmonics* and *natural harmonics*. The following exercises use the *12 fret rule* and the *7 fret rule*. You are encouraged to try the same exercises using the *5 fret rule* once the techniques have been learned.