

Freddie Green Comping Style

By Mike Dana

- Count Basie's Band... "All-American Rhythm Section" with Basie on piano, Jo Jones on drums, Walter Page on bass.
- Guitar is the glue between the drums (esp. hihat!) and bass (quarter notes.) Great foundation for piano, rest of the band.
- Sound: acoustic arch top
- Setup: heavy strings, high(-er) action
- How to get close to that sound (without an arch top!)
 - A little heavier string really makes a difference
 - Use front pickup only
 - Turn volume down, strum a little harder
 - You should almost be "sensed", not heard. Almost. 😊
 - If you're serious about jazz guitar, try to pick up a decent arch top some day.
- Style: Straight-ahead jazz (Basie, Nestico, swing from 30s – 50s)
 - Quarter notes
 - Short (let LH push back)
 - Slight accent on 2 & 4 (w/ hihat)
 - Sometimes long – short (used more for dance styles)
 - At faster tempos, or for more dense sections, you can use 2 note chords...or even one note (often on 4th string, the 3 or 7 of the chord. Works as a harmony (or a "tenor") part to the bass.
- My \$.02...I reserve this approach for straight-ahead swing charts that feel (to me at least) like they are coming from this Basie tradition. For more contemporary styles, I comp much as a pianist would.
- Four basic structures
 - **Major** (uses R 3 7 or 6)
 - Sometimes 5th in the bass (nice to alternate R and 5 in bass over long major chords.)
 - 7 b7 6 is a nice passing line
 - Inversions of the basic triad (3 or 5 in the bass) are useful. See Part II.
 - **Minor** (uses R b3 b7)
 - Sometimes 5th in the bass
 - If NOT a ii - V try 6 instead of b7
 - For mi7 (b7), you can use these voicings—no 5 to worry about 😊
 - Inversions of the basic triad (b3 or 5 in the bass) are useful. See Part II.
 - **Dominant** (uses R 3 b7. Don't have to worry about alterations 😊)

- **Diminished** (normally a 4 note chord, R b3 b5 6 (bb7.) Here, use R plus 2 of the remaining notes)
 - Remember that any note in a diminished chord can be considered the root. So there are really only 3 different diminished chords total. They repeat every minor 3rd (every 3 frets for us.) Good to know!!
- Augmented (not as common. R 3 #5)
- Fingerings (for all)
 - Use logical fingerings.
 - Keep your finger on the same string when possible.

Some cool tricks over common progressions:

Over extended major chords, try I #i⁰ ii #ii⁰ iii (passing diminished)

C
| / / / / | / / / / | becomes C6 C#⁰ Dm7 Eb⁰ Em7
| / / / / | / / / / | / / / /

Over extended dominant chords, alternate with the ii (see the V, think of the ii - V)

D7
| / / / / | / / / / | becomes D7 Am7 D7
| / / / / | / / / / |

Tritone substitutions are cool (and create interesting downward half-step resolutions)

Em7 A7 D7 G7 C becomes Em7 Bb7 A7 Eb7 D7 Ab7 G7 Db7 C
| / / / / | / / / / | / / / / | / / / / | / / / / | / / / / | / /

- What to practice
 - Blues
 - All keys, as many variations as you can
 - Rhythm changes
 - Again, not just in Bb. ☺ And, work on all the variations/substitutions you can.
 - Standards
 - For me, this is SO rewarding!
 - Think Great American Songbook, Ellington/Strayhorn etc. Can't go wrong here.
 - Duets are lots of fun. Be aware of the use of space. I often save my super cool/extra busy comping for long notes/rests in the melody, or when the soloist leaves some space (hopefully they do that sometimes) ☺
- Lots more info at <http://www.freddiegreen.org>

Freddie Green Style 3 Note Voicings pt. I

by Mike Dana

Major on 6

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | 6 | | | |
| R | | | | |
| | 7 | 3 | | |

Major on 5

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | 3 | 6 | | |
| R | | | | |
| | | 7 | | |

Minor on 6

| | | | | |
|---|----|----|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | 6 | | | |
| R | b7 | b3 | | |
| | | | | |

Minor on 5

| | | | | |
|---|----|---|--|--|
| | b3 | | | |
| | | 6 | | |
| R | b7 | | | |
| | | | | |

Dom. on 6

| | | | | |
|---|----|---|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| R | b7 | | | |
| | | 3 | | |

Dom. on 5

| | | | | |
|---|----|--|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | 3 | | | |
| R | b7 | | | |
| | | | | |

Dim. on 6

| | | | | |
|---|----|--|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | 6 | | | |
| R | b3 | | | |
| | | | | |

Dim. on 5

| | | | | |
|---|----|---|--|--|
| | b3 | | | |
| | | 6 | | |
| R | | | | |
| | | | | |

Dim. On 5

| | | | | |
|---|----|---|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | | 6 | | |
| R | | | | |
| | b5 | | | |

Aug. on 6

| | | | | |
|---|----|---|--|--|
| R | | | | |
| | | 3 | | |
| | | | | |
| | #5 | | | |

Aug. on 5

| | | | | |
|---|--|----|--|--|
| | | #5 | | |
| | | 3 | | |
| R | | | | |
| | | | | |

Mi7(b5) . on 5

| | | | | |
|---|----|--|--|--|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| R | b7 | | | |
| | b5 | | | |