

The Gypsy Guitar's Little Helper

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About the Author

The Singer and Songwriter Alexander Harnisch alias John Scrivo, born in São Paulo, Brazil, enjoyed the feeling of Bossa Nova and the soccer euphoria at the beach of the Copacabana as a child.

For family reasons he grew up with two mother languages, Portuguese and English. After he had been given an electric guitar, he doggedly practiced the solos of his favourite Band "The Fab Four" - The Beatles.

An interesting musical mixture was born now. As his Austrian stepfather was a connoisseur of the Jazz Music, he heard the jazz tunes constantly at home. He was fascinated by the Big Bands, the Vocal Groups and last not least by Gypsy Jazz.

About the Book

This book gives a good entry for guitar players into the Gypsy Jazz music. With a lot of personal experience I composed performable samples edited with notations, chord symbols and tablatures.

The shown licks and arpeggios help you to become acquainted with that Gypsy Jazz style. Basic knowledge of Jazz harmonies and theory will simplify the understanding of the various exercises. I have omitted the fingerings of the gripping hand, because every guitarist has his own way of playing and I did not want to impose my style.

I've grouped my compendium into three sections. The **first section** of my compendium tries to give a brief theoretical explanation to this topic. But it is quite clear that the best way to get into the rhythm is by listening to good Gypsy Jazz guitar players.

The **second section** deals with arpeggios, scales that I have named "patterns". There are many different types and ways of playing arpeggios including the choice of the used fingerings. If you want to get a deeper insight into this topic I would recommend you to gather further information in the various music portals.

The **third section** contains "melody patterns". Short melody sequences, interludes, and turnarounds that can be played to your own solo arrangement.

If you are new to Gypsy Jazz, definitely the best way to get into this style is to take lessons, because the teacher's feedback prevents false habits that sometimes are not easy to correct. To get the real swing feeling watch the great guitar players in this genre, read and thoroughly practise the typical rhythm and picking techniques and try them out with other musicians.

The **audio files** are located at **www.john-scrivo.de/books.htm** and can be downloaded directly to your desktop.

Practise all the exercises in this book slowly and accurately before speeding up. Most of the exercises can and should also be played on different fret positions.

But above all maintain patience!

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The Gypsy Jazz Rhythm

The Term „La Pompe" refers in the gypsy jazz circles to the typically standard played percussive swing guitar rhythm. La Pompe is not only a rhythm pattern but a simulation of a rhythm section containing drums with a bass player.

The quality and sound of a Gypsy Jazz band totally depends on the rhythm section. The chord voicings normally are played with the low strings that give a full bass dense volume sound. The voicings themselves are not very complex, mostly major or minor triads simple dominant 7th chords and occasionally colored by augmented 5ths or dominant 9ths.

There is a variety of ways playing "La Pompe" depending on the title or your own music arrangement.

The most basic "La Pompe" pattern, is a four staccato downstroke per measure, with a slight emphasis on beats 2 and 4. To let your chord sound good, tense first and then release your gripping hand immediately before the next chord.

Be aware if you lose the emphasis on the second and fourth beat your swing is lost and will sound jolty.

The image shows a musical score for the "La Pompe" rhythm in 4/4 time. It consists of three measures, each with a specific chord voicing and a rhythmic pattern of four staccato downstrokes. Above each measure is a guitar chord diagram: G6 (first measure), G#dim7 (second measure), and Am7 (third measure). The first measure starts with a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The rhythmic pattern is indicated by vertical arrows below the staff: a solid arrow for the first beat, a dotted arrow labeled (2) for the second beat, a solid arrow for the third beat, and a dotted arrow labeled (4) for the fourth beat. Each note in the rhythmic pattern has a staccato mark (v) above it.

You can enhance your rhythm by playing a quick upstroke before beats one and three!

(♩ ♪ = ♩ ♪ ♪)
 G6
 G#dim7
 Am7
 mf

The Gypsy Jazz Picking

The gypsy jazz picking is based on three fundamental "picking-methods" that should be mastered when soloing with a gypsy jazz guitar. The downstroke, reststroke and the sweep picking. Although it takes some time to acquire this technique, the benefit especially for "acoustic-guitar-players" whatever style is unbeatable.

Downstroke-Picking

"Downstrokes" dominate in gypsy jazz guitar playing, because they create a fat sound i.e. volume. The formula for downstroke-picking is actually simple but requires practicing and patience. Always play a downstroke when starting a melody and when changing strings in any direction.

You alternate only when playing multiple notes on the same string. There is an exception to every rule. Sometimes it's convenient to start with an upstroke. See sample below.

- The symbol \square indicates a **downstroke**
- The symbol ∇ indicates an **upstroke**

mf

Reststroke-Picking

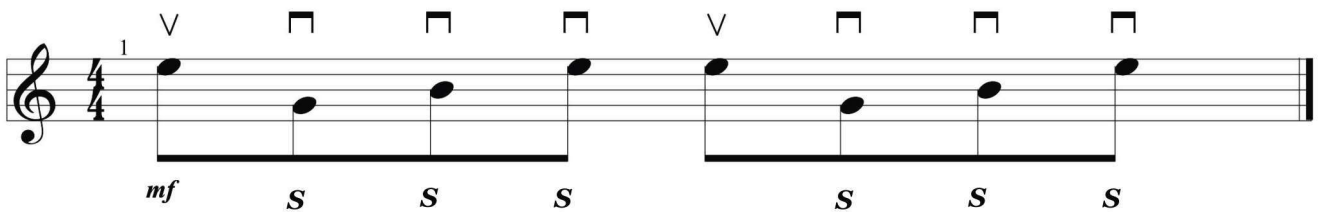
The "reststroke" is the most important typically Gypsy picking way of playing. This technique happens when plucking one string downwards and the pick rests its run on the next lower string.

The advantage of this technique is that power is created through the combination of the rotation of the wrist initiated by the thumb plus gained volume.

Sweep-Picking

"Sweep-picking" (**S**) is where a series of upstrokes or downstrokes (in Gypsy-Jazz mainly downstrokes) are used to play notes on adjacent strings.

Upstrokes are used when descending through the strings (from the 1st string to the 6th) and downstrokes are used when ascending. Normally, only one note on each string is played to achieve a swift arpeggio.



La Pompe (1)

