

Acoustic Fingerstyle

TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS

Acclaimed virtuoso Tommy Emmanuel joins GT for one issue to demonstrate why he's possibly the world's greatest acoustic guitarist. Masterclass transcribed, recorded and presented by Eric Roche

ON THE CD

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TOMMY EMMANUEL

Masterclass

"FLY YOUR KITE!"

GT RATING

MODERATE/
ADVANCED

Each example in the lesson gets progressively more difficult



Helps improve your:

- Fingerpicking
- Lick vocabulary
- Speed and finesse

"Without technique you can't express yourself."

Tommy Emmanuel

YOUR GT TUTOR

■ ERIC ROCHE
See p16 for more info on all the GT tutors



FINGERPICKING GOOD!

RECOMMENDED LISTENING



ANY TOMMY EMMANUEL ALBUM is worth listening to simply for the man's natural abilities on the guitar. Acoustic purists should try 'Only' (2001), his first all-acoustic album, though also recommended are the fusion-y 'Can't Get Enough' (1997, also issued as 'Midnight Drive'), The Journey (1993) or the Grammy-nominated duets album with the late Chet Atkins, 'The Day Finger Pickers Took Over The World'.

TOP PICK

- Chet Atkins & Tommy Emmanuel
'The Day Finger Pickers Took Over The World'

The UK fingerstyle scene has never been healthier, with many of the world's top players touring here regularly, and homegrown talent continuing to evolve. Yet, in the past few months there's been a name on the tip of everyone's tongue – Tommy Emmanuel. Just a few years ago, one could have mentioned Tommy and depending on who you asked you'd either get the response: "The world's greatest guitarist!" or "Who?" In his native Australia, Tommy is literally a household name. He has won every

major music award, appeared on numerous television shows, and sold shiploads of records. In the US he was awarded the prestigious CGP (certified guitar player) award by the late Chet Atkins himself. Yet, until he moved to the UK a few years ago, he was a relative unknown on these shores and only recently – thanks to a number of back-to-back grassroots tours – has his playing got the attention it deserves. Yours truly caught up with Tommy backstage at one of his recent solo shows to get this exclusive fingerstyle lesson for GT...

"FLY YOUR KITE..."

"Technique lets you fly your kite!" says Tommy. He's aware that it's sometimes in vogue to put down highly-technical players yet argues that "without technique you can't express yourself". Indeed, he's emphatic that technique is something that's acquired and perfected through practice (surprise, surprise!) and allows you to control the flow of the music through your instrument. I asked him to demonstrate some particular right-hand patterns to illustrate his point. Fingers at the ready...! **GT**

SOUND ADVICE

TOMMY'S TONES

FOR THE RECORDING TOMMY used his faithful and well-worn Maton guitar. These Australian-made acoustics are fitted with a microphone and onboard EQ control. The pickup has been adjusted at Tommy's request to provide in his own words "extreme EQ" which allows some seriously low and high frequencies to be amplified. We recorded it direct to a Fostex hard disk recorder.

TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS CHORD CHART FOR EXAMPLE 9

Em9/B	E9/B \flat	Am9 (acting as Dm13 no3rd)	A \flat maj13 (no 11)	Gmaj13 (no 11)
T 2 1 3 3 3 5 R b3 b7 9 5	T 2 1 3 3 3 5 R 3 b7 9 5	V 1 1 1 1 3 5 R 11 b7 9 13	2 1 1 1 3 1 R 3 6 9 5 7	2 1 1 1 3 1 R 3 6 9 5 7

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TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS EXAMPLE 1

EXAMPLE 1 is a simple chord progression played exclusively with the right-hand thumb. You should concentrate on achieving a strong steady attack in this example. Tommy says: "I'll vary between using a thumbpick or my fingers for this, depending on the tune and the tone it requires." For this example he uses a thumbpick.

RH Thumb throughout BI-----, BIII-----, *gliss*

GT TAB

E	0	0	2	2	4	4	0	7	7	6	6	5	5	5	0
B	2	2	3	3	5	5	3	6	6	5	5	4	4	4	0
G	3	3	1	3	3	3	3	7	7	5	0	5	5	5	3
D															0
A															0
E															2

1 C F G C E7 A7 D7 G

TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS EXAMPLE 2

EXAMPLE 2 is based on the theme from 'Caravan' (which appeared on numerous Chet Atkins albums) and is a development of the technique used in Example 1. "Here the thumb plays the bass line pattern (BARS 1-2) and the other fingers play the melody (BAR 3 onwards)."

$\frac{1}{2}$ BV-----

GT TAB

E	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
B	0	5	5	0	5	5	0	5	5	0	5	5	0	5	5	0
G																
D																
A																
E																

1 p p p p p p p p etc A7>9

E	6	5	5	8	5	8	5	8	5	8	5	8	5	8	5	8
B	6	5	5	0	5	5	0	5	5	0	5	5	0	5	5	0
G																
D																
A																
E																

4

E	6	5	5	8	5	8	5	8	5	8	5	8	5	8	5	8
B	6	5	5	0	5	5	0	5	5	0	5	5	0	5	5	0
G																
D																
A																
E																

7 A7 Dm



TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS EXAMPLE 2... CONTINUED

0
5 7 7 7 5 7 7 5 7 5 7 5 5

10 p p i P

TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS EXAMPLE 3

We discussed the music of both Chet Atkins and Merle Travis, both hugely influential on Tommy. He offered **EXAMPLE 3** as typical of the Travis style.

(1) (2) (3) 4 4 3 4 3 4 3 2 3 2 1 0 1

0 2 3 4 4 3 2 0 1

G_7^{\flat} (E7/G \sharp) G^{\flat} (E \flat /G \sharp) F_7^{\sharp} (B7/F \sharp) E

TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS EXAMPLE 4

FOR THE INTERVIEW we literally let the tape run. As we talked Tommy would frequently play something completely mind boggling (the Tommy Emmanuel version of "noodling"). Many times I would have to stop him and say "WHAT was that?!"

EXAMPLE 4 was one such instance. It's an E mixolydian/blues run *par excellence*...

0 3 0 5 0 3 4 0 0 3 2 0 3 2 0 3 2 0 2 0 2 4 1 2

0 4 7 0 4 7 0 4 7 3 2 0 3 2 0 2 0 2 4 1 2

E7 E13

TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS EXAMPLE 5

TOMMY PLAYED THIS NEXT GROOVE (**EXAMPLE 5**) after we briefly talked about the style and technique of American guitarist Leo Kottke with whom Tommy has performed in the past.

1 2 2 2 1 2 2 2 1 0 2 2 1 0

0 0 0 x 0 0 0 x 0

0 1 2 0 2 0 2 0 2 0 2

A7

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TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS EXAMPLE 6

ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING techniques in Tommy's armoury is his use of artificial harmonics (**EXAMPLE 6**). "Chet Atkins was the first person to use this technique, and it first appeared on his recording of 'Chinatown, My Chinatown' in 1947," he says. Tommy plays artificial harmonics in a "harp" style, achieved by bringing over his right hand to both select and execute the harmonics.

For example, press the low E string on the 5th fret. Place the right-hand index on the same string at the 17th fret (one octave above) and pick the same string with the right-hand thumb. With practice you should achieve a harmonic. In this example Tommy plays a simple chord by placing a full barre on the fifth fret and also fretting the high E string at the seventh fret. He then plays a pattern of alternate natural notes and artificial harmonics. The normal notes are played with the right-hand middle finger. As you can hear on the GT CD, the effect is dazzling.

Tommy says "the best way to practice this technique is to record yourself playing this pattern and listen to the balance between the normal notes and the 'harp harmonics'. The tendency, initially, is to play the normal notes too loudly with the thumb. With practice and careful listening you will begin to hear the effect."

BV -----

Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah

m i m i m i m i m i m i m i

5 5 7 (5)-17 7 5 5 (5)-17 (5)-17 (17)

1 Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah

TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS EXAMPLE 7

IN A VARIATION OF THIS TECHNIQUE, try Tommy's demonstration of incorporating some left-hand pull-offs, as in **EXAMPLE 7**.

BV -----

Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah

i p m i p m i p m i p m i p m etc

(5)-17 (5)-17 (5)-17 (5)-17 (5)-17 (5)-17 (5)-17

1 Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah

TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS EXAMPLE 8

HERE, TOMMY GIVES US another variation of this technique. **EXAMPLE 8** starts with three normal notes and then continues with the alternating pattern of normal notes and artificial harmonics as before.

Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah

p m a m i p m i p m i p m i p m i

5 5 5 (5)-17 5(17) (5)-17 5 5 (5)-17 (5)-17 (5)-17

1 Am9 Ah Ah Ah Ah D13 Ah Ah Ah Ah



TOMMY EMMANUEL MASTERCLASS EXAMPLE 9

FINALLY, I ASKED TOMMY to devise a simple(!) chord progression for the GT readers. **EXAMPLE 9** demonstrates the technique in a more elaborate way. Check out Tommy's live rendition of The Beatles' 'Michelle', where he uses this technique to incredible effect. I've included the chord shapes for this example.

see chord diagrams

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The tablature includes fret numbers and fingering instructions (e.g., p, m, a, i, p, etc.).

- System 1:** Chords include Em9/B, Ah, and Eb9/Bb. Fingering includes 7, 7, 5, (7)19, (7)19, (5)17, (7)19, (5)17, (7)19, 7(19), 6, 6, 5, (6)19, (6)19, (5)17.
- System 2:** Chords include D(m)13 no3rd. Fingering includes 6, 6, (6)18, (5)17, 6, 6, 5, 5, 5, 7, 7, 5, (5)17, (5)17, (5)17, (5)17, (5)17, 5(17), 5.
- System 3:** Chords include A♭maj13(no11) and Gmaj13(no11). Fingering includes 4, 3, (4)16, (3)15, (3)15, (3)15, (3)15, (3)15, (4)15, 3, 2, (3)15, (2)14, (2)14.
- System 4:** Fingering includes 3, 3, (2)14, (2)14, (2)14, 2, 2, 2, 3, (2)14, (2)14, 2, 3, (3).

I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED the afternoon with Tommy Emmanuel – even though we've shared the stage on a number of occasions, it was the first opportunity I've had to really discuss guitar playing in such detail with him. Tommy will be my guest for the Advanced Fingerstyle course at the Bath Guitar Festival this year (5-7 August at Bath Spa University) so come along and check out the man and his music for yourself! Good luck, thanks to Tommy, and I'll see you next month...

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