

# Extreme Voice Leading

## Advanced Harmonic Applications on the Fretboard

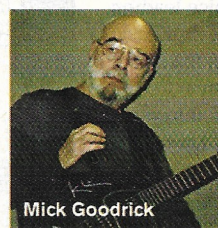
By Mick Goodrick With Chris Buono

**V**oice leading: switching from one chord to another with a minimum of fuss, using common tones, stepwise movement, and small leaps. It's what makes the simplest of ideas sound brilliant. Legendary guitarist and Berklee College of Music professor Mick Goodrick is an expert on the subject. The author of the groundbreaking book *The Advancing Guitarist*, Goodrick has also mapped out an exhaustive collection of voice-leading sequences in his *Almanac of Guitar Voice Leading* method books, starting with *Volume I: Name that Chord* and continuing with the equally in-depth *Volume II: Do Not Name That Chord* and a yet-to-be-published third volume. This exclusive lesson from the sage himself offers a handy overview of the almanacs. In order to better understand the concepts in this lesson, it would be a good idea to brush up on triad (three-part chords) and tetrad (four-part chords) theory, as well as common scale formulas like major, melodic minor, and harmonic minor. Goodrick suggests you play all the figures fingerstyle, both for clarity and to accommodate the chords that contain string skips. But most important, he hopes that these fresh sounds will provide you with new compositional ideas.

A great way to study voice leading while at the same time expanding your harmonic vocabulary is to play chord-scales in *cycles*—ascending or descending diatonic interval sequences. In Fig. 1, the C major scale (C–D–E–F–G–A–B) is harmonized in close-voiced triads set to the interval of a 2nd between each chord's root—let's call this “Cycle 2.” This sequence is most commonly played in an ascending order with the voices moving in a linear (constant) motion (C–E–G, D–F–A, etc.), but here the movement is disjunct (C–D–E, A–D–F, etc.); this creates more colorful changes.

Since cycles are based on intervals, basic intervallic principles like the concept of inversions also apply here—2nds become 7ths, 3rds become 6ths, and 4ths become 5ths. In Fig. 2A you've got a descending C melodic minor (C–D–E♭–F–G–A–B) chord-scale in Cycle 3; its inverse—an ascending pattern in Cycle 6—appears in Fig. 2B.

As you play through both cycles, look for logical patterns in the voice leading, such as the two common tones found in each movement from one chord to another in Cycle



Mick Goodrick



