

Keeping Yourself Inspired Seven Days a Week by Joe Diorio

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From "The Right-Brain Guitarist" ...

Each day of the week choose one subject and work on it all day long. Pick your weak areas. A typical week might look something like this:

Monday: Gesture improvising, all day. Letting go, feeling your way up and down the neck, checking out the possibilities. This usually starts out being abstract and works its way into more melodic playing. Plus the bonus of creating new ideas for future use. Maybe a new melody or a new chord progression. Here the basic idea is to shut off the thinking process and let your fingers and your feeling or intuition take over. Doing this all day gives us plenty of time to really get the idea of the exercise.

Tuesday: Melodic Playing. Today we start to put two or more notes together that sound 'pretty'. Take a look at your REAL BOOK and notice how some of the great tunes are made up of simple intervals. Some of them are short scale passages. This gives us a clue that it does not take much to write or play a good melody. Approach this exercise like the gesture improvising, i.e. playing any two notes until you find something that sounds decent, then begin to add to it with other melodic sounding intervals. Write at least one tune this day, and it will help you to think melodically and will add more substance to any style.

Wednesday: New Chords. "In the beginning there were fingers, and those fingers were meant to move." This is the objective today, to take any chord you know and move one finger at a time up and down the neck as far as you can reach. This is possibly the most simple way of finding new chords. Every time you move a finger you create a new chord. Some sound great and others don't sound so great. Start with a simple G7, 7th, 3rd, 5th, i.e. G,F,B,D. (6,4,3,2, strings) in the 3rd position. Example: move D to D sharp. This is G7 with a sharp 5. Move to E natural. This is G13. Move to F. This is G7. This is the process on all strings ascending and descending. After this is completed try moving two notes. This is being creative. Experiment.

Thursday: New melodies and new chords. This day we take some of the melodies created on Tuesday and add some of the new-found chords from Wednesday and put them together. Don't judge your new pieces but keep trying until you find something you like. Remember you have all day to come up with something that makes you feel good. If you write two bars you are a big winner. Also, try to take the new chords and use them in some of the tunes you know. Or make up your own progressions with them. You are being creative this day.

Friday: Listen to music all day long, new and old CD's. Get saturated and make notes of the player's style, how they phrase, keep time, how they let space and silence become part of their solos. Can you recognize sounds and influences? Can you remember a few ideas that you can play? Are they available for a lesson? Be eclectic! Listen to rock, jazz, classical, world music, anything. Be inspired this day.

Saturday: What caught your musical fancy? Was there something this week that made you light up? This is the day to investigate further and go deeper into that subject. Try to understand what moves you. Is there a possible direction for you to take? If it caught your fancy, stick with it until it reveals itself to you. This day may change your life!

Sunday: Repose, silence and meditation. Be still this day and listen for the inner voice to guide you. Ask your guide questions and be ready for the answers. Trust and they will come. Remember, your intuition is your very best friend. Listen to it and be ready to act on it. Be still, be quiet and be ready.

Arrange your seven days your own way. Add subjects that you love. Add new directions from time to time. Go slowly, enjoy the journey and grow.

Go Forward!
Peace,
Joe Diorio