## Fourth Exercise for 6ths





CAN STREET

# ESTERDAYS

Words by Otto Harbach Music by Jerome Kern

"Yesterdays" is a perennial favorite in the mainstream jazz repertory. Another popular show tune written by composer Jerome Kern, it truly deserves the appellation of standard. The tune is a minor-mode composition with an unusual B section that largely moves through a cycle of fourths with altered dominant chords. Both aspects make it an ideal vehicle for elaboration by jazz artists. Though originally composed in a larger form with a different ending, "Yesterdays" is usually played in a jazz context as a repeated 32-bar ABAB structure. The piece inspired three strikingly different arrangements, marking the diverse approaches of Johnny Smith, Tal Farlow, and Wes Montgomery.

## Johnny Smith

Fig. 16 — Intro, Head, Solo, and Outro

Few guitarists convey the blend of taste and virtuosity that is Johnny Smith's sonic calling card. His music has an easy, accessible quality which belies its inherent technical demands and sophisticated harmonic aspects-which is one reason "Moonlight in Vermont" was a breakthrough hit record with the general public. Since then he has remained an internationally-acclaimed instrumentalist and one of jazz guitar's most unusual exponents. Johnny Smith was born in Birmingham, Alabama, and is a self-taught player who cites Andres Segovia and Django Rheinhardt as his major influences. He gained his first professional experience with a hillbilly group called the Fenton Brothers. After WWII, Smith joined the N.B.C. staff in New York City where he played trumpet and guitar with various types of combos and orchestras. In the early 1950s he formed a quintet with tenor saxophonist Stan Getz. Their 1952 hit "Moonlight In Vermont" put the Johnny Smith Quintet on the map and resulted in recognition and accolades by the jazz world. From 1953 to 1960, Smith led a number of stellar jazz groups on the East Coast, including the well-knit lineup that produced Jazz At N.B.C. and its standout rendition of "Yesterdays."

Smith is renowned for his remarkable prowess on the guitar. He has been called, by his peers, a "scientist" and a perfectionist, because of his fine technique and studied approach. However, his music can also be described as extremely beautiful and moving, as in the case of "Yesterday," which stands as a tribute to Smith's artistry and the clarity of his playing, as well as his arranging abilities and expressiveness.

> Quintet. Johnny Smith, guitar; Paul Quinchette, saxophone; Personnel:

Sanford Gold, piano; Eddie Safranski, bass; Don Lamond,

drums.

August, 1953, in New York City. Recorded:

Smith plays "Yesterdays" in the original key of D minor as a slow Arrangement:

ballad with a rubato feel. His arrangement is brief but colorful. It begins with a two-bar solo piano intro. Smith states the 16-bar head [A] in chord-melody style and then comps lightly behind the sax solo. He takes a six-bar guitar solo in single notes at B, and rejoins the head in chord-melody style for a recap c and a final

cadence in free time.

"Yesterdays" is distinguished by Smith's highly identifiable block-Signatures:

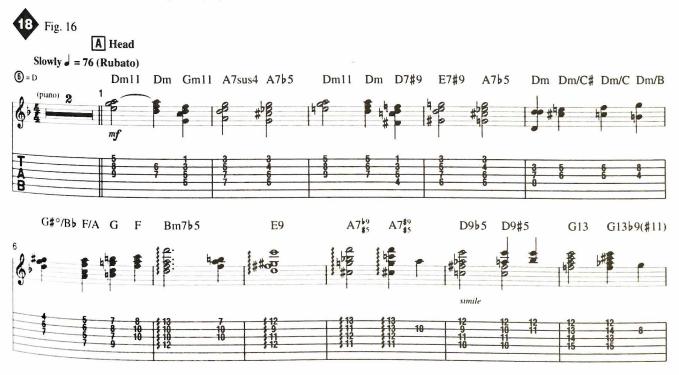
chord style. He plays the melody largely in clusters-closevoiced block chords—using a number of altered chords to harmonize the line. This lends a lush impressionistic tinge to the head. The cadence progression in measures 15–16 and in the recap is a prime example of Smith's reharmonization approach. Note the high A maintained as a common tone through the chord changes. Smith's solo is elegant and typical of his understated virtuosity and strong sense of melodic construction. He begins with a brooding minor-mode phrase laced with chromaticism (a paraphrase of "It Ain't Necessarily So") in measures 32–34 and produces a powerful climax with a sweeping sequential run in 16th-note sextuplets in measure 37.

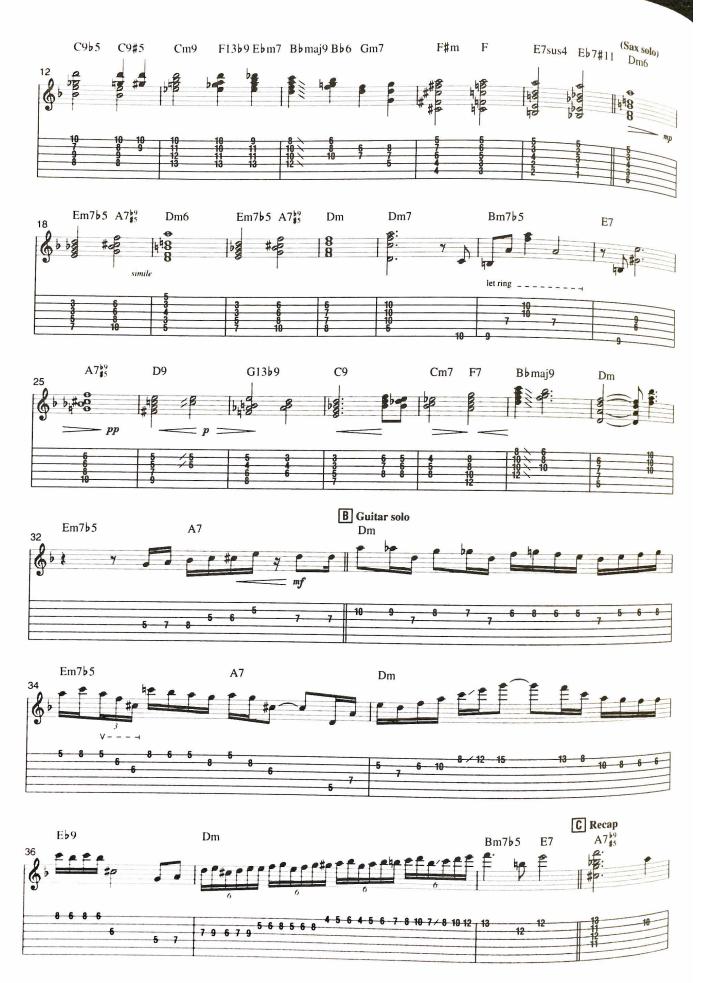
### performance notes:

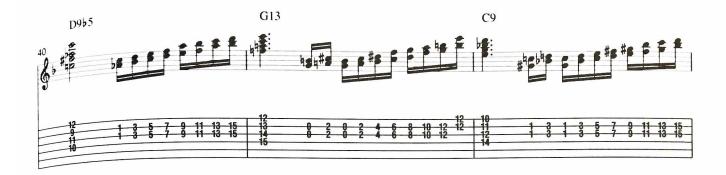
Smith tuned his sixth string down one whole step to D in "Yesterdays." Though prevalent in classical, folk, and blues styles, the practice of alternate tuning is not common in jazzbut then, Johnny Smith is an uncommon jazz guitarist. Smith's cluster block chords generally require a far greater stretch than conventional guitar forms. Typically close-voiced, piano-style, these chords are largely comprised of consecutive thirds, or thirds with added seconds. Smith plays these challenging chord forms with remarkable smoothness using a legato approach and maintaining notes to their fullest rhythmic duration. To this end, he often employs shared fingerings to sustain common tones while changing chords, as in measures 2-4, 9-13, and 15-16. Smith was one of the earliest linear players in jazz guitar. The position shifting in measure 35 is a superb example of the type of phrase to receive his linear style. The entire tune is delivered with a genuine rubato rhythm feel. Endemic to jazz ballad playing, this involves a subtle accelerating and decelerating of the basic time, and an elasticity in the overall rhythm.

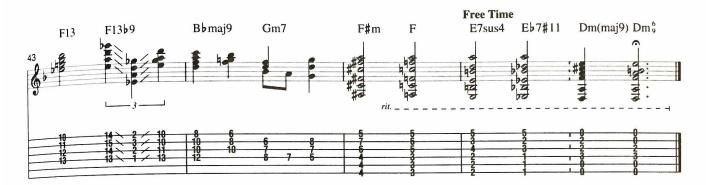
#### Sound:

In this period Smith played a custom-made D'Angelico New Yorker archtop acoustic with a scaled-down 16-inch body. It was fitted with a floating Loutone pickup. He most likely plugged it into a unique Ampeg "fountain of sound" amplifier, which he designed, played, and endorsed in the 1950s.









### Tal Farlow

### Fig. 17 — Head and Solo

Tal Farlow was the reigning proto-bop guitarist of the 1950s. His sound and style bridged the gap between the pioneering guitar work of Charlie Christian in the swing era and the hard bop of Wes Montgomery and Joe Pass to follow. Though speed and physical prowess were hallmarks of his approach, he was graced with a keen harmonic sense and an unerring swing feel. Born and bred in Greensboro, North Carolina, Farlow came to prominence in the extraordinary Red Norvo Trio. While performing at the Haig in Los Angeles with the trio, he was heard by Norman Granz, who signed him for his Verve Records label on the spot. Of the more than thirty albums Farlow recorded in his life, nearly a third were made between 1952 and 1960 for Verve. These are generally considered to be his most innovative artistically and most influential historically. Farlow mastered playing fast tempos with the Norvo Trio. This is what Granz, as producer, preferred from him, and this is what we get in "Yesterdays." A showcase for his fast technique and quick wits, his performance epitomizes the art of up-tempo improvisation and underscores the significance of Farlow's musical impact.

Wes Montgomery said, "Tal came out poppin' and burnin'," and he may as well have been talking about this track. Recorded at the height of his powers in the mid-1950s when Farlow was the player on the cutting edge of jazz guitar, "Yesterdays" finds him at his burning best in the favored setting of guitar-piano-bass and is a definitive document of his groundbreaking proto-bop style.

Personnel: Trio. Tal Farlow, guitar; Eddie Costa, piano; Vinnie Burke, bass.

Recorded: June 5, 1956, at Fine Sound, New York City.

Arrangement: Farlow also plays "Yesterdays" in D minor. There the similarities

to Smith's version end. Farlow's version receives a blistering uptempo treatment, which differs substantially from Smith's subtle, chord-melody ballad approach. His arrangement is simpler, and

his performance is almost entirely in single notes. The intro  $\[ A \]$  and A sections of the head  $\[ B \]$  (measures 3–6 and 19–23) are dominated by a repetitive figure that becomes the tune's ostinato. Farlow plays a rhythmically animated form of the melody in the B sections. In  $\[ C \]$  —  $\[ E \]$ , he takes three masterful, blowing choruses over the 32-bar form.

### Signatures:

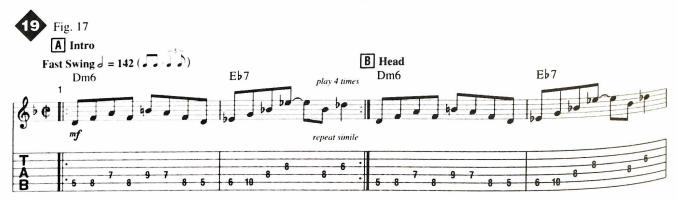
The virtuosic nature of the guitar playing marks the tune with an unmistakable Farlow brand. In the opening ostinato, he outlines the head vamp (Dm6-E-7) with quick single-note arpeggios. The repeated-note approach to the melody in measures 7-8 and 23-24 is another identifier of Farlow's style. Though he comes out of the post-Christian swing school, Farlow has a penchant for horn-like bebop vocabulary and phrasing in his solos. This is most evident in the melodic content and rhythmic delivery of long eighth-note streams in measures 41-47, 62-66, 78-82, and 105-112. The chromatic motion of the passage in 91-94 is depictive of Farlow's advanced harmonic sense. He outlines characteristic bop dissonances (A7#9-Ab7#9-G7#9-Gb7#9) with arpeggios superimposed over the cycle-of-fourths progression. These arpeggios are based on a favorite Farlow 7#9 motive, which in this solo is also heard in measures 75, 105-106, and 109. Farlow establishes a pattern early in the solo by starting each chorus with a groove riff before proceeding to more ornate passagework in the bulk of the improvisation. This strikes a nice balance between the swing and bebop sides of his musical persona.

#### Performance notes:

Farlow's unique fingering approach and physical dexterity personalize his lines from the opening phrase. The Dm6–E♭7 ostinato figure of the intro and head is a "finger buster," involving five-fret stretches, rapid shifting, seamless bent-knuckle barring, and synchronized alternate and economy picking. Similar wide finger stretches and position shifts typical of "the octopus" abound. The long bop phrase of measures 41-48 is exemplary in its quick shifts and stretches (seven frets in measure 46!) and linear range. In addition to the uncanny fingering changes in his long eighth-note lines, Farlow uses alternate fingerings of the same note—unisons—to produce interesting repeated-note effects in measures 56 and 95–96.

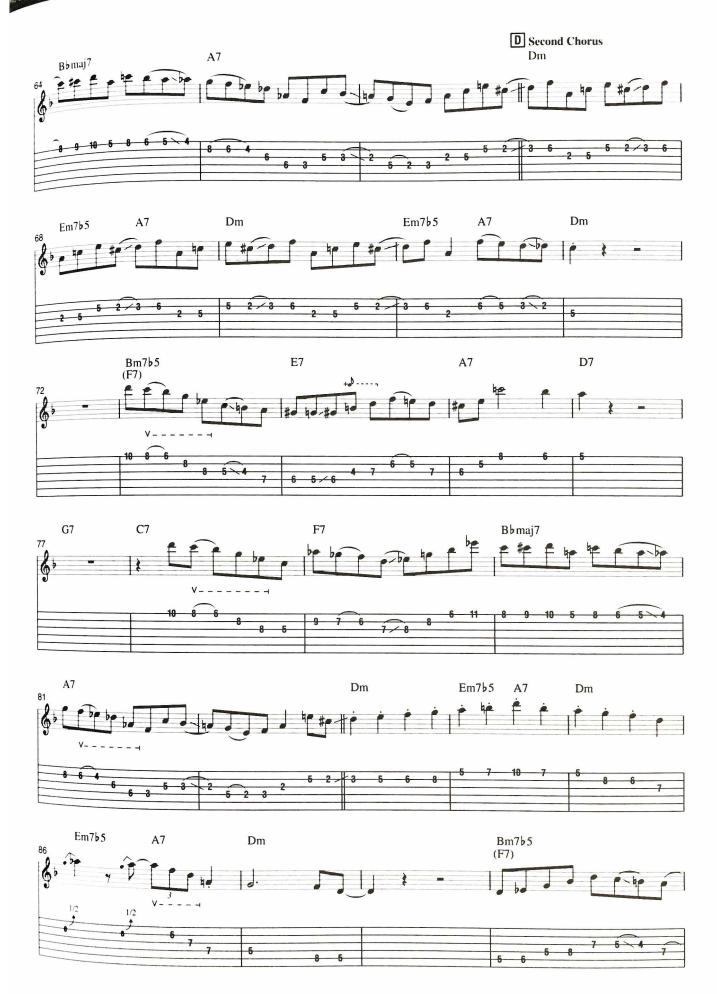
#### Sound:

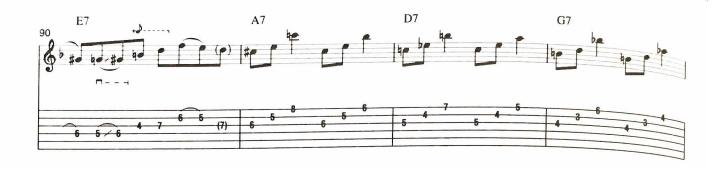
Farlow's trademark guitar in the mid-1950s was a Gibson ES-350 (nicknamed "the Tal Farlow model") with a Charlie Christian bar pickup in the neck position and a P-90 in the bridge position. He used various 1950s Gibson GA-type combo amps.

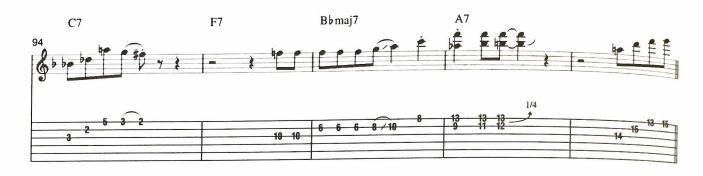


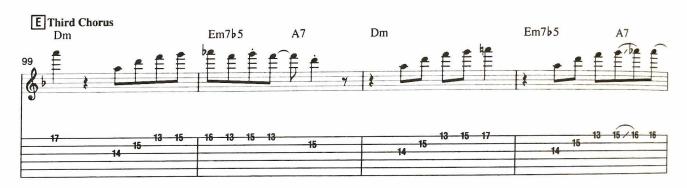


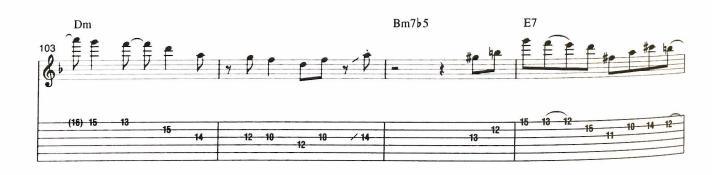




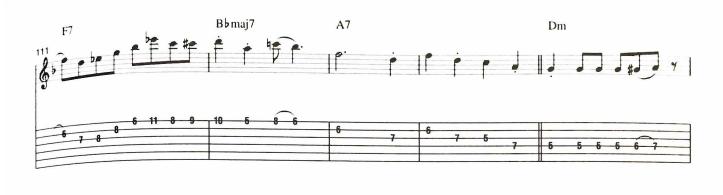


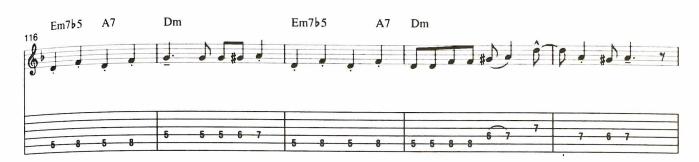


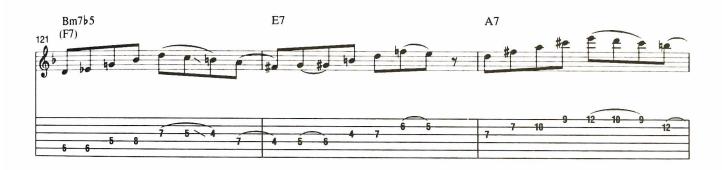


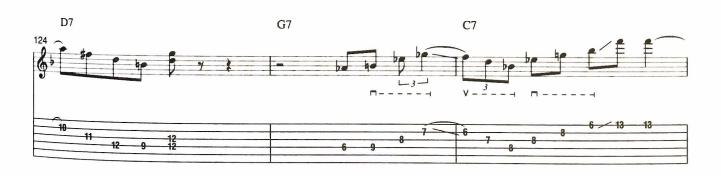




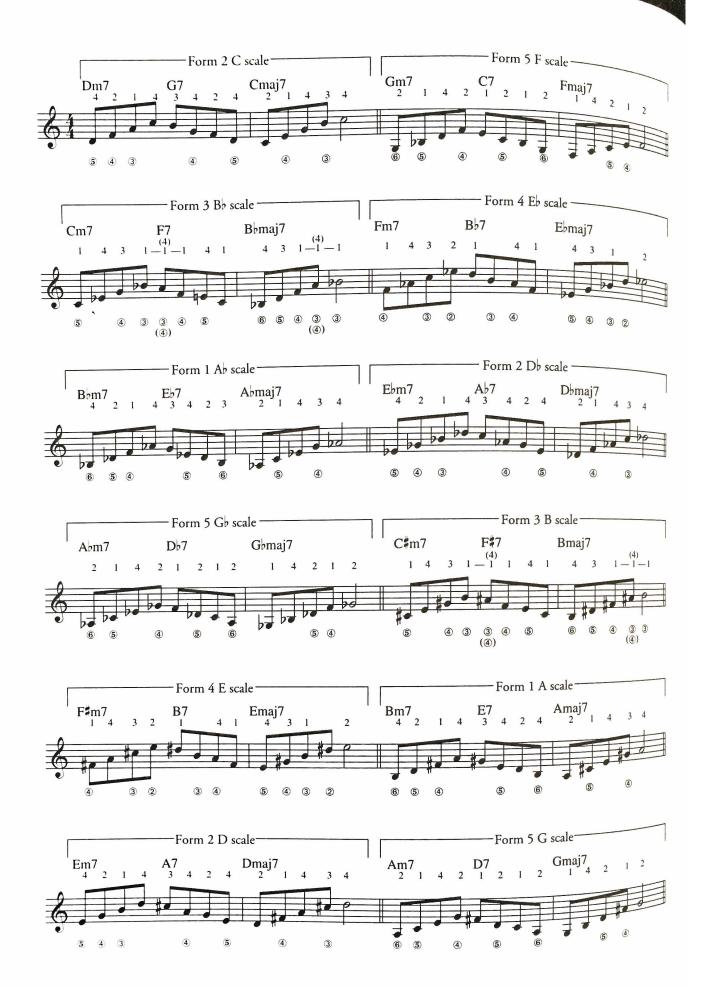




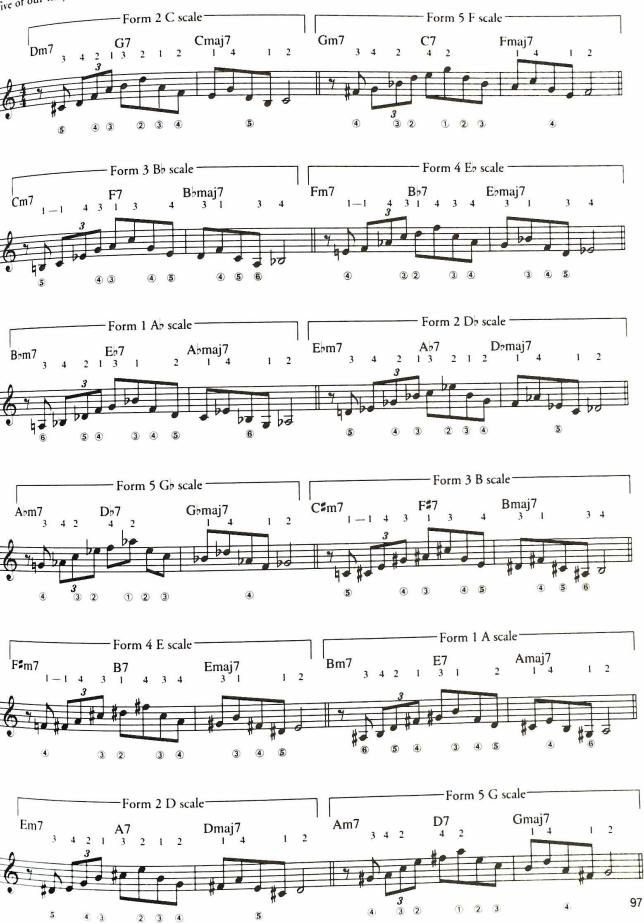






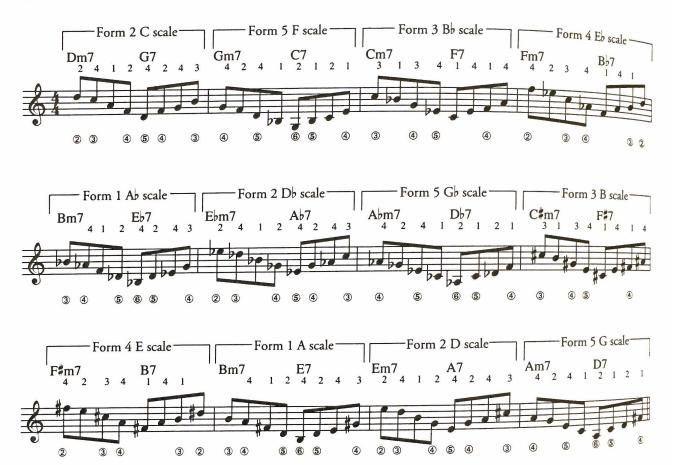


The following pattern is a bit more jazz-oriented and, again, is played through all five of our major scale forms.



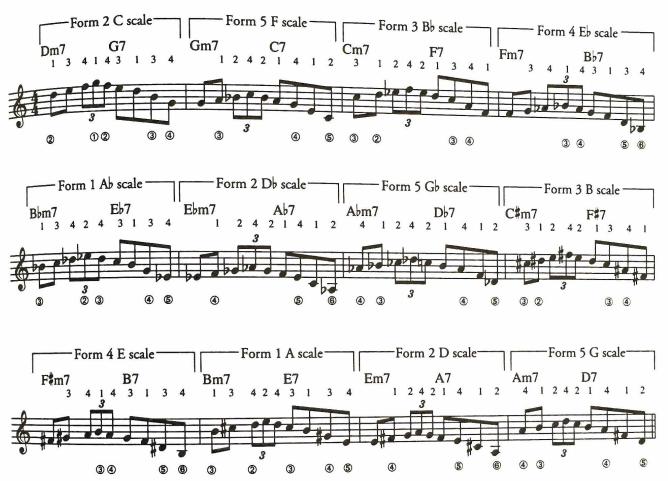
It should be obvious at this point that the above patterns could be played comfortably with just two or three different scale forms, rather than all five. Many great jazz guitarists have spent their whole careers using only two or three scale forms. However, the more scale forms you know, the more control of the fingerboard you will have. Don't settle for less.

Here is another pattern based on the II-V progression, played through all the scale forms.



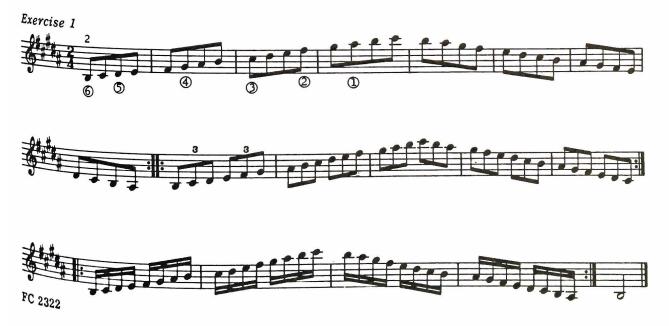
At this point you might have been trying the above patterns using other scale forms than those given. For example, in the first measure of the above pattern, play the patterns using the Form 1 C scale beginning at the eighth fret. That will put you in a whole new area of the fingerboard.

Here again is the II-V progression in a more jazzy-sounding pattern. Note that sometimes the patterns jumps up an octave to allow all the notes to be played.



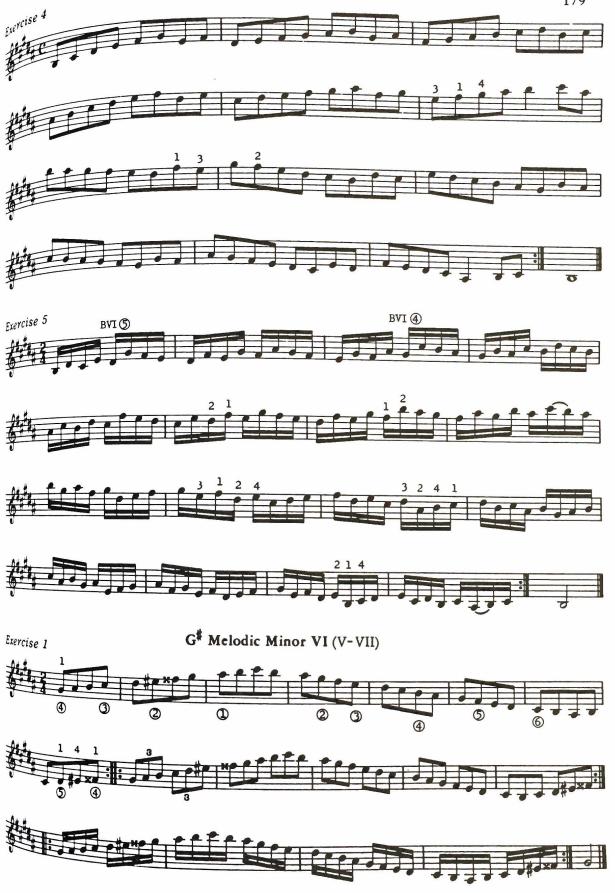


B Major VI









THE PRINCE