

String Skipping and Intervals

Part One

Intervals

An interval is simply the distance between two notes.

These musical distances are given names with reference to their place in or alteration from the Major scale.

For instance from the root of C on the 1st fret of the 2nd string:

Fret	Interval	Note name	Interval
1	Unison	C	Unison
2	minor 2nd	Db	Augmented Unison
3	Major 2nd	D	Major 2nd
4	minor 3rd	Eb	Augmented 2nd
5	Major 3rd	E	Major 3rd
6	Perfect 4th	F	Perfect 4th
7	Diminished 5th	Gb	Augmented 4th
8	Perfect 5th	G	Perfect 5th
9	Minor 6th	Ab	Augmented 5th
10	Diminished 7th	Bbb	Major 6th
11	minor 7th	Bb	Augmented 6th
12	Major 7th	B	Major 7th
13	Octave	C	Octave
14	minor 9th	Db	Augmented Octave
15	Major 9th	D	Major 9th
16	minor 10th	Eb	Augmented 9th
17	Major 10th	E	Major 10th
18	Perfect 11th	F	Perfect 11th
19	Diminished 12th	Gb	Augmented 11th
20	Perfect 12th	G	Perfect 12th
21	minor 13th	Ab	Augmented 12th
22	Major 13th	A	Major 13th

A basic summary of the naming protocol is:

Major interval lowered = minor

minor interval lowered = diminished

Major interval raised = augmented

Perfect interval raised = augmented

Perfect interval lowered = diminished

As you can see enharmonically equivalent notes have different interval names e.g. F#/Gb.

I have included only one double flat being Bbb; the diminished 7th of C. This is because it's fairly common. It is however possible to create others which are more seldom seen, such as Ebb the diminished 3rd of C or even E# the augmented 10th.

However this is getting unnecessarily complicated for the purposes of this lesson!

Applying all this to the Guitar

On the guitar a position is defined as 4 frets +1 in either direction. As guitarists we have access to quite a large range of notes within any one position. Allowing for a one fret shift this means any note within two octaves and a major 3rd is accessible with a bit of a stretch (equivalent to 28 frets in a straight line!).

Nevertheless, the fact is that it's easy to ignore the larger intervals when improvising.

You can however add variety and the odd surprise to your playing quite easily just by occasionally choosing a wider interval than you normally would have done.

If you intend to include some wider intervallic ideas in your soloing/writing it's a good idea to start practising ascending and descending scales in 3rds, 4ths, 5ths and 6ths.

Finally here is a short study for practising string skipping (the art of accessing non adjacent strings) and playing wide intervals on the guitar.

I have listed the different intervals that occur in the piece and marked their location with the corresponding number and bracket.

Once you have mastered the ***Interval Study in G*** try analysing the intervals you normally play when improvising and then experiment with different ones within the scales that you use. You may find you get a lot of musical mileage out of a simple concept.

Interval Study in G

Jasper Smith

1 2 3 4 5 6

T 4-5 3 2-4 2-4 5-2 3 4 5 4-5 4-5 4-5 4-5 3 2

A 3 2 4 5 2 3 5 5-2 3 2 3 3 5 4 5 4-5 4-5 5 4

B 3 5 5-2 3 2 3 3 5 4 5 4-5 4-5 5 4

5 7 8 9 10 11

T 3 3 5 3 4 2 3 5 3 5-2 5 3 2 3 4 5 5 5

A 4 2 5 4 2 3 5 4 5-2 5 3 2 3 4 5 5 5

B 3 5 5-2 3 2 3 3 5 4 5 4-5 4-5 5 4

9 12 13 14 15 16 17

T 4-5 5 7 4 8 5 5-7 8 5 7 10 7 8

A 6 7 6 7 4 7 7-5 7 4 5 4 5-7 5 7 4 5 0

B 6 7 6 7 4 7 7-5 8 4 5 4 5 7 5 7 4 5

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|----------------|-----------|-------------|----------|--------------|-----------|
| min 2nd | 12 | Perfect 5th | 2 | min 9th | 13 |
| Maj 2nd | 14 | min 6th | 6 | Maj 9th | 3 |
| min 3rd | 16 | Maj 6th | 9 | min 10th | 15 |
| Maj 3rd | 10 | min 7th | 7 | Maj 10th | 1 |
| Perfect 4th | 11 | Maj 7th | 8 | Perfect 11th | 17 |
| Diminished 5th | 5 | Octave | 4 | | |