

# XIV. Some Simple Techniques For Harmonizing Melodies

Note: Some fingerstyle technique or pick + fingers will be required for many of the following examples.

## A. Melody + Bass Note

This is perhaps the most intuitive and also the most useful way to get started with chord melody arranging on the guitar. It's a simple idea really. Find a fingering to play the melody and the Root of the chord at the same time and see if there are any chord forms for the chord that you are already familiar with within the reach of your fretting hand.

1. If you are working from a Concert lead sheet play the melody in the octave it actually sounds. Remember that Concert Middle C equals the 3rd spaced C on a part written specifically for guitar. If you see Middle C on a Concert lead sheet it is the C that is fingered on the 2nd string - 1st fret or the 3rd string - 5th fret, etc.
2. Play the Root in the lowest possible location that your hand will allow so that the chord sounds as full as possible. We are trying here to develop the ability to perform solo so in general the fuller it sounds the better.
3. If there is a series of melody notes all on the same chord then try to find a fingering that will allow you to sustain the Root in the bass while you execute the melody notes, at first. There will, however, be many situations where you will want to re-strike the Root, perhaps even on a different string and/or in a different octave.
4. See if there are any chord forms (aka "grips") that are already familiar to you that lie within your fretting hand's reach.

If you were presented with the following lead sheet:

D<sup>+</sup>    G    Em7    E<sup>b</sup>7    D7    B<sup>b</sup>7    Am7    D7    G6    A<sup>b</sup>7

Dm7    G+7    CMaj7    Am7<sup>b</sup>5    GMaj7    E<sup>b</sup>7    D7    G6

You might start out like this:

Guitar    D<sup>+</sup>    G    Em7    E<sup>b</sup>7    D7    B<sup>b</sup>7    Am7    D7    G6    A<sup>b</sup>7

Dm7    G+7    CMaj7    Am7<sup>b</sup>5    GMaj7    E<sup>b</sup>7    D7    G6