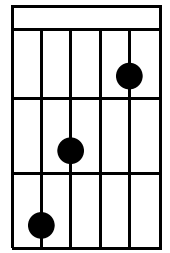


John Knowles

FingerStyle

QUARTERLY



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all the tunes
plus practice tips

"...a chance to steal from the best." — Chet Atkins, CGP

On the Boulevard

When I begin writing a new tune, I count on inspiration. Sometimes, a title will get me going. Or, I stumble across a lick during 'noodle time.' Maybe daydreaming will lead me to a memory or an image. At its best, inspiration is all of the above.

I remember thumb-picking a C-chord and playing a few notes that were outside the C-scale. I ended up with the opening phrase of *Boulevard*. (measures 1-4) The feel of that phrase reminded me of going for a walk on Music Row with Chet Atkins. I

considered calling the tune *Strollin' the Row*. That title has great attitude but *Boulevard* is more about elegance and style.

So at this point I had a phrase, a title and an image. Any more inspiration would have just confused me. Time to work out the rest of the tune.



I depend on writing tools I've developed over the years. For example, I know that repetition hooks

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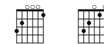
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QUARTERLY

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"We're all mighty grateful for the privilege of having you and your guitar music in our lives. You can count on the fact that you have a friend who stops every now and then to think about you." E. T.

"I am writing to thank you for the most beautiful arrangement (and flawless playing) of *Vincent* I've ever heard. Wanna-be players like myself owe so much to people like you. I think you touch people's lives more than you know." W. S.

On the Boulevard

continued from page 1

a listener's attention. But I also know that repetition leads to boredom... so I season it with surprise. Of course, too much surprise leads to chaos. It's a balancing act. I finally settled on a second four-bar phrase (measures 5-8) that has the original melody but ends up on a different harmony. (A9)

In measures 9-16, I add variety by changing the lengths of phrases. I begin with a pair of two-bar phrases and follow them with a four-bar phrase. This short-short-long pattern is a classic that's been used by great composers like Johann Sebastian Bach and Jerry Reed.

When I started *Boulevard*, I could have written anything at all. But now that I'm halfway through, I have fewer options. It's the old "dance with the one who brought you" principle. I'll leave it to you to examine the second half of the tune to see how I balanced repetition with variation... surprise with expectation.



When I write a tune this way, I usually create a spot or two where my fingers have trouble playing the music in my imagination. I had to work on measures 21-24 since there is a shift going into measure 22 that could break the flow of the melody.



I hope these ideas will help you learn and enjoy my tune. Or maybe give you the itch to start one of your own. See you on the Boulevard.



"After 13 issues you've sent me and four or five years of playing your music, I still really enjoy the heck out of your songs. I have no doubt that I've really expanded and improved my technique of playing by working through your songs." T. V.

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"One of the things I like best about the QUARTERLY is that there is something different in each issue. I've been playing this stuff for more than twenty years and still get a thrill from learning a new piece." WB

Chop Talk: Taking Chances

Not long after I moved to Nashville, Chet observed that I was playing my arrangements the same each time. So he asked me what I did if I made a mistake... or had a different idea while I was playing. Good question.

He went on to say that he was more comfortable not knowing exactly how he was going to play a tune on a given night. Having it all worked out seemed dangerous to him.

Have you considered that the best way to avoid mistakes might be to rely less on memory and more on your understanding of the tune? Maybe taking chances is the safest way to go.



Of course, if you're going to take chances, you'd better know more than one way to get through a tune. It's like driving home from work. You know several routes and you choose one depending on your schedule, the scenery, the traffic, etc.

You don't need to take your life in your hands. Just play a chord in a different position. Or, substitute an ending from a different tune.



I remember Lenny Breau stopping in the middle of *My Funny Valentine*, putting his guitar down, and ordering a cup of coffee. When I asked him what was wrong, he replied, "I had to quit. I was about to disappear."

Now, that's taking chances.



Boulevard

continued... continued... continued... continued... continued... continued... continued... continued...

Musical notation system 1 (measures 21-25). Chords: A7, A7, Dm7, F. Includes a $\frac{1}{2}$ II fret shift and a III fret shift. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 on the staff and 0-5 on the fretboard.

Musical notation system 2 (measures 26-30). Chords: Bb7, C, A7, Dm7, Dm9/Ab, G7(b9). Includes a III fret shift and a "To Coda" instruction. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 on the staff and 0-5 on the fretboard.

Musical notation system 3 (measures 31-35). Chords: C6, G7, C. Includes a $\frac{1}{3}$ fret shift. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 on the staff and 0-5 on the fretboard.

Musical notation system 4 (measures 36-40). Chord: A7. Includes a $\frac{1}{2}$ II fret shift. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 on the staff and 0-5 on the fretboard.

Boulevard

continued... continued... continued... continued... continued... continued... continued... continued...

Musical notation for measures 41-45. Chords: Dm7, Dm9/A♭, G7, CM9, C6/9/G, Am, D7.

Musical notation for measures 46-48. Chords: Dm9/A♭, G13sus4, G7. Includes 'D.S. al Coda' instruction.

Musical notation for the Coda section. Chord: C6. Includes lyrics: i p m i p m i p m i m i p.

Boulevard Chords

 x 3 2 0 0 0	 0 0 4 1 1 x	 x 2 1 3 4 1	 2 x 1 3 4 x	 1 x 1 2 1 x	 x 2 1 4 3 x	 2 x 1 1 3 x	 x 0 3 4 1 x
 x 3 2 4 1 x	 2 x 1 3 4 x	 1 x 1 2 1 x	 x 3 2 0 0 0	 0 0 4 1 1 x	 0 0 2 3 4 1	 x 2 1 3 x 4	 x x 1 3 x 4
 x 1 x 2 x 3	 x 1 x 0 x 0	 x 0 x 0 1 4	 x 2 1 3 4 0	 2 x 1 3 4 x	 3 x 4 1 0 x	 4 x 2 3 1 x	 3 x 4 0 0 x

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#1 (1.1) *Smoky Mountain Lullaby* (Atkins) *Beautiful Dreamer* (arr. Knowles) *Coastin'* (Knowles) *Deck the Halls* (arr. Knowles) *O Little Town of Bethlehem* (arr. Knowles) *Away in a Manger* (arr. Knowles)

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#3 (1.3) *Nelly Bly* (arr. Atkins) *Subtle Blossom* (Knowles) *Grits-n-Biscuits* (Knowles) *Lately* (Knowles) *Estudio* (Aguado)

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