

Guitar Jazz Preparation Pack



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**Congratulations on your successful audition to study Jazz at Leeds Conservatoire.
We are very much looking forward to welcoming you to our community!**

This booklet has been designed to give you some advice as to the sort of things you might want to spend some time looking at between now and the onset of your course. The idea is to make sure that we 'hit the ground running' in September, by giving you a bit of notice as to the sort of topic areas that may be covered.

It's important to clarify that you will be assigned to a 1-to-1 tutor upon enrolment, and the content of the lessons you receive will be determined by them once they have met you and got a sense of what you would benefit from the most. Naturally, your own interests and aspirations will come into it as well – we don't deliver 'one size fits all' lessons. Having said that, though, there are certain fundamentals that every Jazz musician needs to deal with in one way or other, and the purpose of this booklet is to give you a bit of a head start in these areas.

The idea of this pack is to give you some resources to use and practice so that you have some fundamental concepts and ideas in place for when you begin the course here at Leeds Conservatoire in September.

The idea is to work through these ideas slowly making sure you have internalised the material presented and that you are able to play/demonstrate these when needed.

No-one expects you to have fully mastered all of this before you start, but any progress you can make towards that goal will be time very well spent!

Scale / Arpeggio Knowledge

This is a big topic and obviously something you will be working with your guitar teacher during your time at Leeds Conservatoire. Nevertheless, you can certainly be making a start in the meantime and, the more you can do before you enrol, the better.

The ultimate goal of all our fret-board work should be that we can find **Everything, Everywhere, Instantly**. Of course, we're all still working towards that in one way or other; this is the perennial challenge our instrument presents.

Another way of looking at it is that, if we can't find the things we need wherever we are on the neck, and have to go looking for them, then the guitar is playing us instead of us playing the guitar! To reiterate, no-one expects you to have all of this together before you arrive but, equally, there's no point waiting until then to get started.

To give you an example, on the following pages, fingerings have been given for **all 12 major scales**, as far as they extend between the **5th and the 9th frets**. An associated **major 7th arpeggio** fingering has been given for each one as well.

Eventually we will need to be able to see every mode and parent scale, (along with their related arpeggios) in the same fashion, but to be on the way to having it sorted on the major scale before beginning in September would represent a fantastic step towards that!

Major scales / Δ7 arpeggios 12 keys, between frets 5 - 9

A major

The A major scale is shown in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The scale runs from A4 to A5. Below the staff, the guitar tablature shows the fret numbers for the scale and arpeggios. The scale is played in a single octave across six strings. The arpeggios are shown in two directions: ascending and descending.

AΔ7 **Bb major**

The AΔ7 arpeggio is shown in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps. The Bb major scale is shown in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). The scale runs from Bb4 to Bb5. The guitar tablature shows the fret numbers for both the arpeggio and the scale.

BbΔ7

The BbΔ7 arpeggio is shown in treble clef with a key signature of two flats. The guitar tablature shows the fret numbers for the arpeggio.

B major

The B major scale is shown in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F#, C#). The scale runs from B4 to B5. The guitar tablature shows the fret numbers for the scale and arpeggios.

BΔ7

The BΔ7 arpeggio is shown in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps. The guitar tablature shows the fret numbers for the arpeggio.

C major

Musical notation for C major. The treble clef staff shows a melodic line starting with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a quarter rest. The guitar tablature staff shows fret numbers: 7-6-7 on the first measure, 8-5-7-8 on the second, 5-7-9-5-7-5-6-8-5-7-8-7 on the third, and 5-8-6-5-7-5-9-7 on the fourth.

CΔ7

Musical notation for CΔ7. The treble clef staff shows a melodic line starting with eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a quarter rest. The guitar tablature staff shows fret numbers: 5-8-7-5-8-7-5-7 on the first measure, 8-7-5-9-5-8-7-8-5-5-9-5-7 on the second, and 8-7-8 on the third.

Db major

Musical notation for Db major. The treble clef staff shows a melodic line starting with eighth notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4, and a quarter rest. The guitar tablature staff shows fret numbers: 9-6-8-9-6-8-5-6-8-6-7-9-6-8-9-8-6-9-7-6-8-6-5-8-6-9-8-6-9-8-6-8 on the first measure, and 6-9-8-6-9-8-6-8 on the second.

DbΔ7

D major

Musical notation for DbΔ7 and D major. The treble clef staff shows a melodic line starting with eighth notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4, and a quarter rest. The guitar tablature staff shows fret numbers: 9-8-6-5-6-6-9-8-9-8-9-6-6-5-6-8-9-8-9-9-8-9-9-5-7-9-5-7-9-6-7 on the first measure, and 5-7-9-5-7-9-6-7 on the second.

DΔ7

Musical notation for DΔ7. The treble clef staff shows a melodic line starting with eighth notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, and a quarter rest. The guitar tablature staff shows fret numbers: 9-7-8-5-7-9-7-5-8-7-9-7-6-9-7-5-9-7-5-9-7-5-7-9-5-9-7-6-7-5-9 on the first measure, and 5-9-7-6-7-7-5-9 on the second.

Eb major

Musical notation for Eb major. The treble clef staff shows a melodic line starting with eighth notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, Ab4, G4, and a quarter rest. The guitar tablature staff shows fret numbers: 5-7-7-6-7-9-5-9-5-9-5-6-8-5-6-8-5-7-8-6-8-9-6-8-6-9-8-6-8-9-8 on the first measure, and 6-8-5-6-8-5-7-8-6-8-9-6-8-6-9-8 on the second.

EbΔ7

Musical notation for EbΔ7 chord progression. The top staff shows a melodic line in Eb major (two flats) with a key signature change to E major (three sharps) at the end. The bottom staff shows a guitar TAB with fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

TAB: 6 8-7-5 8-6-5 8 6 5 8 6 8 5 6 5 8 7-8 8 8-7 8-5 6-5 5-6 6

E major

EΔ7

Musical notation for E major and EΔ7 chord progression. The top staff shows a melodic line in E major (three sharps). The bottom staff shows a guitar TAB with fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

TAB: 7-9 6-7-9 6-8-9 7-9 5-7-9 7-5 9 7 9 8-6 9-7-6 9 7-6 9-7-9 6-7-6

F major

Musical notation for F major chord progression. The top staff shows a melodic line in F major (one flat) with a key signature change to E major (three sharps) at the end. The bottom staff shows a guitar TAB with fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

TAB: 9 8-9 9 7-9 9-8 9-6 7-6 6-7 8 5-7-8 5-7 5-6 8 5 6 8 6-5 8-6 7

FΔ7

Musical notation for FΔ7 chord progression. The top staff shows a melodic line in F major (one flat). The bottom staff shows a guitar TAB with fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

TAB: 5 7-5 8-7-5 8-7 5 8-6-5-6-8 5-7 8 7 5 5-6 5-8-5 6-5 5 7 8-7 8-5

F# major

Musical notation for F# major chord progression. The top staff shows a melodic line in F# major (three sharps). The bottom staff shows a guitar TAB with fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

TAB: 8 7-8 9 6-8-9 6-8 9 6-7-9 7-6 9-7 6 8-6 9-8-6 9-8

F#Δ7

TAB: 6 9-7-6-7-9 6-8 9 8 6 6-7 6-9-6 7-6 6 8 9 8 9-6 9 8-9

G major

TAB: 5-7-9 5-7-9 7-8 5-7-8-7-5 8-7 9 7-5 9-7-5 9-7-5 8-7-5-7-8 5-7-9

GA7 Ab major

TAB: 5-9 7 7-8 7-8-7 7 9-5 9-5 5-9 5 6-8 5-6-8 6-8-9

TAB: 6-8-9-8-6 9-8-6 8-6-5 8-6-5 8-6 9-8-6-8-9 6-8-5

AbΔ7

TAB: 6 5-8 8-9 8-9-8 8-5 6-5 6 8 6-5 6

Chord Awareness

Again, this is a big topic that we will be working through during our time together, but you might as well make a start now.

You should consider:

- Awareness of triads (major, minor, diminished, augmented) in their different inversions.
- Awareness of common 7th chords such as:

Major 7th, Minor 7th, Dominant 7th, Minor7thb5, Diminished 7th,

Minor 6th

The most common ways to realize these on the guitar are by using

- Drop 2 voicings
- Drop 3 voicings
- 'Shell' voicings (usually a fragment of a Drop 2 or Drop 3 chord)

The term 'Drop 2' just means that the second voice from the top of the closed position chord has been dropped by an octave. A 'closed position' chord is one where all the notes are as close together on the staff as they can be. These are often quite difficult to play on the guitar, which is why the common shapes are usually Drop 2 or Drop 3 formations. If you don't understand this, it doesn't matter for the moment!

The pages that follow give some fingerings to get you started.

Drop 2 voicings

Am⁷ (close position, root on top) Am⁷ ('Drop 2', root on top)

T	5					5					
A	8					5					
B	9					5					
B	10					5					

Am⁷ A⁷ Amaj⁷ Am⁷(b⁵)

T	5	8	12	3	5	9	12	3	5	9	12	4	5	8	11	3
A	5	8	10	1	5	8	10	2	5	9	10	2	5	8	10	1
B	5	9	12	2	6	9	12	2	6	9	13	2	5	8	12	2
B	5	7	10	2	5	7	11	2	4	7	11	2	5	7	10	1

Am⁶ A^{7(b9)} A⁹

T 5 8 12 2 6 9 12 3 7 9 12 3

A 5 7 10 1 5 8 11 2 5 8 12 2

B 4 7 10 2 5 8 11 2 5 9 11 2

Three pathways through **II^m7 - V^{7b9} - I^{maj}**. Notice the smooth voice leading:

Am⁷ D^{7(b9)} G^{maj7} Am⁷ D^{7(b9)} G^{maj7} Am⁷ D^{7(b9)} G^{maj7} Am⁷ D^{7(b9)} G⁶

T 8 8 7 12 11 10 3 2 2 5 5 3

A 8 7 7 10 10 8 1 1 0 5 4 3

B 9 8 7 12 11 11 2 2 0 5 5 4

B 7 7 5 10 10 9 2 1 0 5 4 2

Four pathways through **II^m7 - V⁹ - I^{maj}**. Notice how the **D⁹** shapes could also be **Am⁶** or **F^{#m}7b5** if necessary:

Am⁷ D⁹ G^{maj7} Am⁷ D⁹ G⁶ Am⁷ D⁹ G^{maj7} Am⁷ D⁹ G^{maj7}

T 8 8 7 5 5 3 3 2 2 12 12 10

A 8 7 7 5 5 3 1 1 0 10 10 8

B 9 9 7 5 5 4 2 2 0 12 11 11

B 7 7 5 5 4 2 2 2 0 10 10 9

Four pathways through **II^m7b5 - V^{7b9} - I^m6**. Notice how the **G^m6** shapes could also be **C⁹** or **E^m7b5** if necessary:

Am^{7(b5)} D^{7(b9)} G^{m6} Am^{7(b5)} D^{7(b9)} G^{m6} Am^{7(b5)} D^{7(b9)} G^{m6} Am^{7(b5)} D^{7(b9)} G^{m6}

T 8 8 6 5 5 3 15 14 12 11 11 10

A 8 7 5 4 4 3 13 13 11 10 10 8

B 8 8 7 5 5 3 14 14 11 12 11 9

B 7 7 5 5 4 2 13 13 12 10 10 8

Smooth comping over "Autumn Leaves" using drop 2 voicings on top 4 strings. Harmonically simple, for sure, but we should be aiming for this kind of voice leading in all our chord work:

Chords: Cm7, F7(b9), Bbmaj7, Ebmaj7, Am7(b5), D7(b9), Gm6, G7(b9)

T	11	11	10	10	8	8	6
A	11	10	10	8	8	7	5
B	12	11	10	8	8	5	3
B	10	10	8	8	7	5	3

Chords: Cm7, F7(b9), Bb6, Ebmaj7, Am7(b5), D7(b9), Gm6

T	8	8	6	6	5	5	3
A	8	7	6	4	4	4	3
B	8	8	7	7	5	5	3
B	8	7	5	5	4	2	2

Chords: Am7(b5), D7(b9), Gm6, G7(b9), Cm7, F7(b9), Bbmaj7, Ebmaj7

T	5	5	6	7	8	8	10
A	4	4	5	6	8	7	10
B	5	5	7	7	8	8	10
B	5	4	5	6	8	7	8

Chords: Am7(b5), D7(b9), Gm7, C7(b9), Fm7, Bb7(b9), Ebmaj7, Am7(b5), D7(b9), Gm6, G7(b9), Cm7

T	11	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	5	3	4	3
A	10	10	8	8	6	6	4	4	4	3	3	1
B	12	11	10	9	8	7	7	5	5	3	4	3
B	10	10	8	8	6	6	5	5	4	2	3	1

Drop 3 voicings

By taking whatever note we have on the top string and putting it down on the bottom string, we can easily convert 'Drop 2' voicings into 'Drop 3' voicings:

Am⁷

And so, by this simple process, our 'Drop 2' **IIm7 - V7b9 - Imaj7** pathways, thus...

...are easily converted into 'Drop 3' pathways, which give a completely different sound:

Am⁷ D^{7(b9)} Gmaj⁷ Am⁷/C D^{7(b9)}/C Gmaj⁷/B

Comping on the entire song, using only 3rd and 4th strings. Notice how you can still hear the harmony with just two notes. In the company of a bass player and/or a pianist, this might be all we need to do:

1. 2.

Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷ E^bmaj⁷ Am^{7(b5)} D⁷ Gm⁶ G⁷ Gm⁶

Am^{7(b5)} D⁷ Gm⁶ G⁷ Cm⁷ F⁷ B^bmaj⁷ E^bmaj⁷

Am⁷(b5) D⁷ Gm⁷ C⁷ Fm⁷ B^b⁷ E^bmaj⁷ Am⁷(b5) D⁷ Gm⁶

T
A 12 11 10 9 8 7 7 5 5 5 3 3
B 10 10 8 8 6 6 5 5 4 2 2

Notation Reading

We do understand that this is often an area of weakness; guitarists sometimes haven't had much opportunity to read in ensembles compared to other instrumentalists, and it is true that guitar can be a difficult instrument to read music on. Nevertheless, it is something that will be regularly asked of you during your time at Leeds Conservatoire, and afterwards, so you will need to address it as soon as possible if you haven't already.

Also, whilst the peculiarities of guitars (and some guitar-related music) can make life difficult, there really isn't any excuse for not being able to read basic melodic lines on the treble clef. After all, this isn't any harder to do on the guitar than on other instruments.

The best way to get started with your reading skills is to focus your efforts in the most useful area of the fret-board. As the example below shows, it's possible to get almost two and a half octaves, including the entire treble clef, around the **seventh position**. Notice too, how similar this range is to that of the tenor saxophone, which is probably our nearest neighbour in the jazz world:

Guitar written range in strict 7th position (sounds 8ve lower)

Guitar written range in 7th position, plus 2 frets each way

Normal written range of tenor saxophone (sounds 9th lower)

4/4

T
A 4/4
B 7 10 12 13

If we're going to start developing a reading 'comfort zone' then, it makes sense for it be around this seventh position area. Unless the line goes down low, we won't need to make any sudden leaps around the neck, and we can start developing a connection between what we see on the staff and specific physical locations.

Begin by getting familiar with how C major looks and feels in the seventh position:

C major
1st string: 2nd string: 3rd string: 4th string: 5th string: 6th string:

Next, start adding in the accidentals. Here, in blue, we see the ones that can be reached strictly in 7th position. They're written as sharps, but they could obviously be flats as well. The missing ones can easily be obtained by reaching back to the 6th fret, or up to the 11th fret. The black notes here are the original C major pitches as shown above.

'In position'
accidentals
added

1st string: 2nd string: 3rd string: 4th string: 5th string: 6th string:

Now that we've got an idea of where the treble clef falls in this position, we need some music to read. The simpler, the better; especially as we haven't really dealt with rhythm yet.

Classical music for any treble clef single line instrument will do (e.g. flute, clarinet, violin), but it may be necessary to put ego to one side and start with some **beginner/early grade** material. If you don't really sight-read yet, then you're looking for music in simple keys like C major, F major, G major etc. which doesn't involve any rhythmic complexity and doesn't often fall below middle C.

Not that **rhythm** isn't important – it's vital – but it can be a good strategy to **deal with that as a separate study**, whilst we're still getting used to the layout of pitches. Later on, the two can be brought together.

An excellent book purchase here would be *Modern Reading Text in 4/4* by Louis Bellson and Gil Breines. This text consists entirely of rhythms (no pitch material) which start very simple and get progressively more difficult.

It might also be worth looking into things like **Kodaly** method and **Konnakol** as a means of assisting with this subject. Both these methods involve vocalizing rhythmic shapes.

You may have already encountered different ways of learning to read. In classical guitar, for instance, things tend to be done differently to suit the needs of that music. Anything else you've done will probably be helpful in due course, but the idea here is to fast-track a practical reading 'comfort zone' to be expanded later on.

The solution to the common complaint about the same pitch appearing in multiple fret-board locations is to pretend that it doesn't, at least in the short term. **Try to connect every note in the staff to a specific physical action**, until you gain some fluency with simple song-type melodies. No-one's saying reading is easy, but it really doesn't take long to get that far at least!

Listening

However well we may know our instruments, **it is impossible to play jazz unless we are listening to it intently**, on a regular basis. This is easier than ever nowadays, thanks to the internet, but convenience has its downside as well. It can mean that we scratch the surface of lots of things but never become familiar with any of it. It can also mean that we hear music that is a pale imitation of something else, without ever becoming aware of what was being referenced or copied.

Today there are many, many kinds of player who could broadly be described as jazz guitarists. You don't necessarily need to be able to imitate Django Reinhardt or Charlie Christian to get on in the 21st century. However, we can't afford to be ignorant of the standard set by the greats of the past, or how that challenge is being met, and even extended, by the best players today.

The web is a great resource for learning about all this, but we can't just rely on the various algorithms controlling our YouTube feed or Spotify recommendations. These platforms are choked with sponsored clickbait nowadays, and the nuggets of gold are getting harder to spot, unless you know where to look. Often, we only find what someone wants us to find!

The players on the next page (very roughly in chronological order) are all well worth checking out, and by all means use YouTube, Spotify etc. initially. However, whenever you hear something you like, then it's time for a bit more **research**. Virtually all celebrated jazz musicians will have a homepage, or a Wikipedia page, which will in turn include a **discography**. Try to find specific albums the artist has recorded, and make a note of who played with them on these. Also look to see if they are considered to have been part of any especially iconic bands e.g. John McLaughlin with *Mahavishnu Orchestra*, Adam Rogers with Chris Potter's *Underground Quartet*, Bill Frisell with *Joe Lovano and Paul Motian*.

Some of the albums may well be available through streaming platforms but don't hesitate to part with a little bit more money to download the audio or buy a CD/LP as well. Even the most famous jazz musicians need our support in a way that more mainstream music does not.

Players to investigate further

Django Reinhardt	Grant Green	Allan Holdsworth	Kurt Rosenwinkel
Charlie Christian	Wes Montgomery	Pat Metheny	Adam Rogers
Oscar Moore	George Benson	Emily Remler	Brad Shepik
George Van Eps	Pat Martino	Mark Whitfield	Mimi Fox
Barney Kessel	Joe Diorio	John Scofield	Jonathan Kreisberg
Mundell Lowe	Louis Stewart	Bill Frisell	Gilad Hekselman
Herb Ellis	John McLaughlin	Rodney Jones	Rez Abbasi
Jimmy Raney	Derek Bailey	Ed Cherry	Sheryl Bailey
Tal Farlow	James "Blood" Ulmer	Mike Stern	Julian Lage
Jim Hall	John Abercrombie	John Stowell	Lage Lund
Kenny Burrell	Ralph Towner	Scott Henderson	Pasquale Grossi
Joe Pass	Terje Rypdal	Peter Bernstein	Mary Halvorson

Another thing to bear in mind is that some of these artists (e.g. Jim Hall, Pat Metheny, John Abercrombie) have created a huge range of music across many different styles, so the first thing you hear won't necessarily represent their entire output.

Finally, some great albums to get you started:

Recommended listening			
Midnight Blue Kenny Burrell	Boss Guitar Wes Montgomery	East To Wes Emily Remler	Signs of Life Peter Bernstein
The Poll Winners series Barney Kessel	Virtuoso series Joe Pass	Question & Answer Pat Metheny	Intuit Kurt Rosenwinkel
Idle Moments Grant Green	Live Jim Hall	Still Life (Talking) Pat Metheny Group	Splitlife Gilad Hekselman
The Swinging Guitar of Tal Farlow Tal Farlow	Consciousness Pat Martino	Live Bill Frisell	
	The Marksman Mark Whitfield	En Route John Scofield	

Technique and Equipment

Technique is quite a personal thing, and there are certainly different approaches to it. Having said this, you would be well advised at this stage to start **developing your plectrum technique**. There are a few guitarists (Wes Montgomery being the most obvious) who have succeeded with other methods, but it is almost inconceivable that you will be able to play everything asked of you at Leeds Conservatoire without using a pick at least some of the time.

Many people find that the best plectrums to use are usually fairly thick (e.g. around 2mm) and not too small. Judge a plectrum by the feel and the sound it makes. If you're consistently mis-picking notes, you may need to alter your grip, or use something larger.

It's also a good idea to practise playing written music to develop your technique. This might be a transcribed solo, a bebop head, or a classical study.

It is strongly recommended that your guitar (or part of it, if it has extra strings) should be in **standard tuning** E, A, D, G, B, E bottom to top. Now is probably not the time to discard this in favour of something else. There will plenty of time to explore other options later, when you have a better perspective on the issues involved. Keep in mind that all the alternative options create at least as many problems as they solve. There are some very good reasons why guitar tuning evolved to be what it is!

You need to own a metronome. A phone app will do, but don't be distracted by all the complexities these can offer. All you need is a click that can speed up or slow down. Practising with playalongs/drum loops etc. is not the same thing as metronome practise.

It is a myth that you need a very expensive archtop guitar to play jazz. **You can use any kind of electric guitar** really. What's more important is that the instrument is in **good working order**, e.g. good set-up, clean strings, accurate intonation, level frets etc. It's usually a good idea to avoid very light strings; an 11 gauge top E string is probably as light as you should go.

You won't usually need an amp when you're in the conservatoire, because we have lots of them for you to use. You will need an amp to gig and practise with, however. Again, most amps can produce an appropriate jazz sound with a bit of adjustment. If it's a valve amp, you may need to balance the 'volume/gain' and 'master' controls to achieve a clean sound.

The conservatoire does also have a supply of guitars you can borrow when you're on site, but this is something you should only do when it's impossible to use your own. **You need to bond with your own instrument!**

If you like to use effects when you play, then it would be worth organizing these onto some kind of compact/portable pedalboard for use in ensemble situations. This is one thing that you definitely can't borrow from the Facilities department

If you have any questions about your offer,
please don't hesitate to contact our Admissions
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