

Revisit week 1 exercises and Amazing Grace from the Week 2 class

This is a good time to review everything we've done so far. I'd recommend playing through the Week 1 exercises a few more times so some of the arpeggio/roll moves become more engrained in your muscle memory. We want to remember these forever. It also wouldn't hurt to revisit "Amazing Grace." See the week 2 recording and handouts.

Hand Position – yes, I'm repeating this every week!

For everything you play on Dobro, remember that your picking hand position and how you pick the strings are important. Try for a rounded hand and relaxed fingers and have your fingers in proximity of the strings you want to play in advance, i.e. **don't 'dive bomb' at the strings from above**. We want economy of motion, and we want to train your hand and fingers to learn certain positions/shapes. A great way to train your picking hand to relax is to take any arpeggio or roll exercise and practice going incrementally from louder to quieter and back. Practicing this way will also lead to better dynamics and a more expressive style.

Here This Morning Harmony Version

If you learned the recorded version of this tune (the one I taught in Week 2), the harmony version isn't too much extra to learn. For the most part, compared to the original, we're keeping the same bass notes and same overall phrasing, but starting each phrase a chord tone higher. For example, instead of starting our first phrase on the F# (the major third of a D chord), we're starting three frets higher on the same string on the A note (the fifth of a D chord). From there, for the harmony we're mostly ending phrases on a chord tone above the original, and getting there by way of equivalent moves up or down the scale. There are a couple of exceptions – see the video for those – but this general approach will give you a good basis for finding all manner of harmony lines in other tunes.

How Great Thou Art

Today we learned a 98% accurate approximation of Rob Ickes's version of "How Great Thou Art." For our arrangement, we're not going to obsess about adhering to each arpeggio note or bass note exactly like Rob did in his recording. I can guarantee you Rob plays this and every song a little differently each time, and we can too. The goal for this tune is the same as it was for our arrangement of "Amazing Grace": to play the melody, incorporate bass notes to suggest the chords, and fill in the spaces with arpeggios. You'll notice in this song that sometimes there's room for a full arpeggio pattern, and other times, because another melody line is beginning, we only use a bit of an arpeggio in the space allotted between melody lines.

Week 4

Next week, we'll focus on playing rhythm on the Dobro, and then we'll dive into the hazardous territory of singing and playing Dobro at the same time! Check out my tune "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie" between now and then. For the recording, I'm tuned down a step, but we'll learn it in standard G tuning.