

'A SIMPLE MAN' BY PHIL MILLER

I am a guitar player. I started to play guitar at the age of 15. I compose on guitar, all my music is playable on guitar and the instrument I play is a GK2/GR50 strat type midi guitar.

As a guitarist I like to explore harmonic progressions and their related scales. In the piece I am using here there are some examples of how I use this in my writing. The score given here is the written tune and a chord sequence for soloing on.

'A Simple Man' is basically a blues in feel but has a bit of Spain in there somewhere. As a guitarist I am fascinated by both the blues and flamenco. They share a common ground, a similarity of mood. That the two are not mutually exclusive is most brilliantly exemplified by Miles Davis' playing on 'Sketches of Spain'.

In 'A Simple Man' the Spanish sound comes from the use of the G harmonic minor scale G A B^b C D E^b G^b over Am7-5 and B^bm7+5 chords in bars 14 and 15. The flattened 6th is one of the characteristic steps of the scale which gives it that Spanish sound.

In bar 17 (beats 1 and 2) over Am7-5 once again (only this time in a different harmonic context) I use the scale A B C D E^bG^bA. This maintains the mood.

On beats 3 and 4, bar 17 I use the F Symmetrical scale / Double Diminished F G^b A^b A B C D E^b F. With both major and minor 3rds, it's raised 11th and flattened 9th, it seems both bluesy and Spanish.

See also the use of the D Double Diminished scale in bar 10 and the E^b Melodic minor scale in bar 11. This last scale is one of my favourites and I use it a lot in my compositions.

The rhythm of the melody with its liberal use of semiquaver triplets is swung.

There are two harmonic schemes. The first, the intro (bars 2 to 9) and the second (bars 10 to 21). The first is a 4 bar repeated rising chord sequence employing these scales: C Dorian, C Aeolian, C Mixolydian and C Locrian over a C pedal point. When soloing, it's often best to leave out the major 3rd in the C13 chord (bars 4 & 8) making it B^b/C no 3rd. This gives you the choice of making your solo either major or minor at this point.

In the second harmonic scheme the chord progression rises to bar 17 and then falls to bar 21. The bass contributes a slow crotchet line connecting the chords.

Note the contrast of the bass pedal point returning to C in the first scheme, with the moving bass line of the second.

My guitar chords very often do not contain the bass note. I always like to create space for the bass and keep the guitar out of its way so that it can move more freely. Hence the chords won't make absolute sense alone, the complete meaning will unfold only when the chords and bass part are played together.

The chord symbols are for soloing only and are a generalisation of the harmonic scheme. In bar 16 the chord for soloing on differs somewhat from the harmony underpinning the written melody.

Please note: melody, chords and bass are written up an octave as for guitar and bass. All chords are playable on guitar, even C13 in bars 4 and 8 (10th fret)

'A Simple Man' was recorded by IN CAHOOTS: Phil Miller, Hugh Hopper, Elton Dean, Pete Lemer and Pip Pyle in 1986 on 'Cutting Both Ways'

Handwritten musical score for 'A Simple Man' (page 2), measures 5-6. The score includes a treble clef staff with notes and fingerings, a guitar TAB staff with fret numbers, a bass clef staff with notes and chords, and a bass guitar TAB staff with fret numbers. Chords shown are Gb/C and Cm7(9)11.

Handwritten musical score for 'A Simple Man' (page 2), measures 7-8. The score includes a treble clef staff with notes and fingerings, a guitar TAB staff with fret numbers, a bass clef staff with notes and chords, and a bass guitar TAB staff with fret numbers. Chords shown are Cm9(b6) and C13.

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Musical notation for measures 9-10. Includes treble clef, guitar tablature (T, A, B), and bass clef. Chords: G^b/C, F7^b9+11.

Musical notation for measures 11-12. Includes treble clef, guitar tablature (T, A, B), and bass clef. Chords: G^b7+5, Gm7.

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Musical notation for the first system, including a treble clef staff with notes and accidentals, and a guitar-style TAB staff below it. TAB notes: 3 4 6 4, 5 3 4 3 6 3, 5 4 5 7 8 7 5 4 5 3 5. Fingering and dynamics markings (p, v) are present above the notes.

Musical notation for the second system, including a treble clef staff with chords and a guitar-style TAB staff. Chords: Ab4769, Am7b5.

Musical notation for the third system, including a bass clef staff with notes and a guitar-style TAB staff. Chords: Ab4769, Am7b5.

Musical notation for the fourth system, including a treble clef staff with notes and accidentals, and a guitar-style TAB staff. TAB notes: 7 8 7 7 10 11, 8 11 8 11 10 11, 10, 8 10. Fingering and dynamics markings are present.

Musical notation for the fifth system, including a treble clef staff with chords and a guitar-style TAB staff. Chords: Bb47+5, Cm7.

Musical notation for the sixth system, including a bass clef staff with notes and a guitar-style TAB staff. Chords: Bb47+5, Cm7.

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Handwritten musical notation for the first system, measures 1-4. Includes treble clef, bass clef, and guitar tablature.

Measure 1: Treble clef has notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Bass clef has notes G2, B1, D2. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1. Tablature: 11, 8, 7, 8, 10, 7, 8, 9, 10, 10, 7, 8, 9, 8, 10.

Measure 2: Treble clef has notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Bass clef has notes G2, B1, D2. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1. Tablature: 7, 10, 7, 8, 10, 6, 5.

Measure 3: Treble clef has notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Bass clef has notes G2, B1, D2. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1. Tablature: 4, 4, 5, 4.

Measure 4: Treble clef has notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Bass clef has notes G2, B1, D2. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1. Tablature: 3, 3, 3, 7, 5, 6, 5, 5.

Chord symbols: Am7b5, D7b9+11, Bb7b6, F/A.

Handwritten musical notation for the second system, measures 5-8. Includes treble clef, bass clef, and guitar tablature.

Measure 5: Treble clef has notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Bass clef has notes G2, B1, D2. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1. Tablature: 8, 5, 6, 8, 6, 7, 9, 6, 8, 10, 6, 8, 6, 8.

Measure 6: Treble clef has notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Bass clef has notes G2, B1, D2. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1. Tablature: 8, 6, 7, 8, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Measure 7: Treble clef has notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Bass clef has notes G2, B1, D2. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1. Tablature: 6, 7, 6, 6, 8, 9, 8, 8.

Measure 8: Treble clef has notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Bass clef has notes G2, B1, D2. Fingering: 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1. Tablature: 10, 11, 10, 10, 8, 8, 10, 10.

Chord symbols: Ab7911, Fm7,11, Eb7b69, Dm7911.

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The image shows a handwritten musical score for the piece "A Simple Man". It consists of four staves:

- Staff 1 (Treble Clef):** Contains the main melody. It starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (Bb), and a 2/4 time signature. The first measure has a quarter note Bb. The second measure has a quarter rest. The third measure has a quarter note G, followed by a triplet of eighth notes (F, E, D). The fourth measure has a quarter note Bb, followed by a slur over a quarter note G and a quarter note F. The fifth measure has a quarter note E. The sixth measure has a quarter note D, followed by a triplet of eighth notes (C, B, A). The seventh measure has a quarter note G. The eighth measure has a quarter note F. The piece ends with a double bar line.
- Staff 2 (Guitar TAB):** Shows fret numbers for the guitar. The notes correspond to the melody: 6, 8, 6, 9, 5, 3.
- Staff 3 (Bass Clef):** Shows chord voicings. The first measure has a chord voicing for Ab7 (Bb, D, F, Ab). The second measure has a chord voicing for G7 (B, D, F, G).
- Staff 4 (Bass Line):** Shows the bass line. The first measure has a quarter note Bb. The second measure has a quarter rest. The third measure has a quarter note G. The fourth measure has a quarter note Bb. The fifth measure has a quarter note E. The sixth measure has a quarter note D. The seventh measure has a quarter note C. The eighth measure has a quarter note B.