

'DIGGING IN' by Phil Miller
(middle 4/4 E major section)

I have taken as the subject for discussion this month a section from the title piece from my most recent CD 'Digging In' Virgin Japan VJCP 28089 (bar 1 starts at 7.32). It has a number of areas that illustrate my style of composition and was one of the pieces played by my band IN CAHOOTS when we toured Japan in December 91.

Digging In has three sections, the first and last sections are dense and robust; the piece in question comes as the contrasting quiet and more spacious middle section.

The seed of the idea germinated using the sostenuto on my Roland GR 50 midi guitar. I assigned the sostenuto to the FC switch (unlatched). The mode setting in the GR 50 was set on Velocity Switch. The higher velocities triggering a D 50 type voice/choir sound and the lower velocities triggering a quieter string pad. The Mode sensitivity was set on 4. With this set-up I was of course able to sustain one sound and experiment with other chords over the top. I found I liked the clashes between the sustained pad and the moving chords. As each idea became crystalised I played them via midi into my C Lab Notator/Creator. After playing around for a while I came up with a triad of C# F# & B underpinning a see-sawing 4 bar chord sequence. In its most basic form this can be seen as E major7 to A dominant7 x 10 (bars 1-21), or you could think of it as E Lydian to E Melodic Minor; this is reinforced by the bass pedalling the E in the opening few bars.

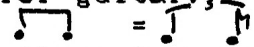
These 2 apparently simple chords gave me the chance to get in some pleasing close voicings involving the use of the open G and E (1 st) strings which added an unusual touch. The rest of the section develops the same type of idea i.e. see-sawing chords over a sustained string pad which changes at a much slower rate and only when it has to. The chords are D major7 to A minor major7, bars 21-29, (think D Lydian to D Lydian dominant 7) and B minor to C7 bars 39-53.

There are some fairly dense chords contained here and I made the decision, because of the sustained string pad underneath everything, to use them sparingly, especially towards the end (bars 39-50) where I wanted the feeling of gradually coming to rest. It often worked out that various triads gave the best results so that when the larger chords were used their contrasting effect was magnified.

The melody was written at the same time as the chord progression unfolded rather than afterwards when the progression had been fixed. I find when composing that it sometimes helps to keep my options open for as long as possible letting the harmony and melody influence each other rather than one bending to the will of the other. Although the melody was written on midi guitar with a flute sound in mind, it works well when played with a clean guitar sound.

None of it is particularly difficult to play and it all fits well under the fingers. The chords were played finger-style and in one or two places may present some quite hard stretches. I have given the fingering and picking I used but these may not be the best way round for everybody so it may be best to figure out an alternative.

After the flute tune the chord sequence is repeated, this time with Fred Baker the astounding fretless bass player playing a solo. It is, of course, not possible to play the sustains and the changes 'live'. Bars 33 and 34 contain a cluster chord that is obviously not playable on guitar. In bar 35 the tab and score depart from each other due to the unplayable nature of the chord. I have put what is the best option for guitar;

The rhythmic nature of the section is jazz quavers () All parts with exception of the bass part are written up the octave as for guitar.

DIGGING IN (Phil Miller)

♩ = 91

flute

1 2 3 4 5

tab

T A B

strings

chior

bass

E[♯]7/6/9 XX1121 11

A6/7 XX2010 14

E[♯]7/6/9 XX1121 12

A6/7/9 XX3410 8

E[♯]7/6/9 XX1121 11

flute

6 7 8 9 10

tab

T A B

strings

chior

bass

A6/7 XX3010 14

E[♯]7/6/9 XX1121 11

A6/7/9 XX3410 8

E[♯]7/6/9 XX1121 11

A6/7 XX3010 14

Digging Ms.

flute

11 12 13 14 15

tab

strings

chior

bass

E 7/9/6/9
XX1121 11

A 7/9/6
XX3410 3

E 7/9/6/9
XX1121 11

A 6/7
XX3010 14

E 7/9/6/9
XX1121 11

flute

17 18 19 20

tab

strings

chior

bass

A 7/9/6
XX3410 8

E 7/9/6/9
XX1121 11

A 6/7
XX3010 14

E 7/9/6/9
XX1121 11

A 7/9/6
XX3410 8

Digging In.

flute 21 22 23 24 25

tab

Gliss

strings

chorus

bass

D maj7 XX342X 10

A maj7 XX211X 7

D maj7 XX342X 10

A maj7 6 XX3421 7

D maj7 XX342X 10

flute 27 28

tab

gliss

strings

chorus

bass

A maj7 XX211X 7

D6 XX211X 7

D6 maj7 XX412X 6

D6 XX311X 7

G#7 11/B XX3421

C# 7#9 XX123X 3

G maj7 6/9 XX1121 2

Digging In

flute 38

tab

T 7 6 7 5 7 7 6 5 5 8 7 9

A

B

strings

choir

bass

F# 7(9)
X 3 4 2 X 10

B 7
XXX211 10

B 7(9)
XXX 1 4 3 7

C 7(9)/11
XX211X

flute 41

tab

T 7 9 7 6 7 7 9 8 6 5 7 5 7 7 5 6 7

A

B

strings

choir

bass

B 7(9)
XX 4 3 X 9

B 7(9)
XX 4 1 X 7

C 7(11)
XX231X 7

B 7(9)/11
XX 3 2 X 5

Digging In

flute 44 45 46 47

tab

T 4
A 4
B 4

strings

chior

bass

C 7/9
XX2 13X

B 7 7/9/11
X12232

C 7 11/9
XX 3421

B 7 11/9
XX 3421

flute 48 49 50 51 52

tab

T 4
A 4
B 4

strings

chior

bass

C 7
XX12X3

B 7 7/9/11
XX0230

C 7 9/11
XX4231

D# 7 9
XX123K

D# 7-9
XX 12K