



Lesson 6 - Respecting the Melody

- Now, let's address a crucial pain point found in chord melody playing. Playing the melody, so in fact the theme of the song, properly, all the while creating exciting chord melody stuff around and under it. This is extremely difficult and probably the reason, now, why you're watching this video, right? Not so clear? Alright, let me put it very bluntly. Chord melody beginners suck at it! Because they can't... We can't hear the distinction between the melody and the chords when they play. Chord melody beginners sound like they're playing a bunch of chords, chord after chord after chord after chord, and here's why: The route we take as guitarists is to play a melody then harmonize it with chord shapes under. Because we want to be clever, we often add lots and lots of chord shapes to accompany the melody, right? So often we use substitutions and things we learn from books or websites, worse. And the danger in that is to wind up playing just a bunch of chord shapes one after another. This happens because we don't respect the melody, so to speak. So the melody of the song must have its own life, its own phrasing, independent of what's happening in the chords that, right?

So here's the ideal situation: You have to learn to separate the melody and the chords when performing in chord melody style. So think left hand and right hand of the piano player. On the piano, it's easy; the right hand phrases the melody, while the left hand plays chords to accompany it. Listen to any good jazz piano player and you'll get it right away. The melody is in the spotlight, right? And the chord on the other hand just supports it with chords, and it's not the other way around at all. It's not like the spotlight is put on the chords and the melody is just secondary. It's not that. And why is this so important, do you think? Well, because melody is what keeps the listener and your band mates and everyone engaged. Think about it: What do people sing in the shower? A bunch of cool chord substitutions and perfect voice leading with altered chords and flat nine stuff? Or rather, is that people in the shower will just sing a timeless melody? I think I just made my point. The

melody has to be played awesomely. I used the word "awesomely" first time, I think. It has to be awesomely played, whether you play chord melody or just a melody on its own. Whether the song is fast or slow or has a lot of chords added or very few chords, all of the other items are secondary. We have to respect the melody, then everything falls nicely into place.

So make it a promise to yourself, and maybe to your teacher, that the melody leads the way, not the chords. And make a commitment to yourself to be able to play great performance of the melody on its own. And albeit rote, please memorize Misty now, if you didn't do so already. Before you even attempt to harmonize it with chord, have great performance of it. Think of it like you're playing trumpet or saxophone or singing the melody. Phrase the melody beautifully, always, as your first step to creating nice chord melody. Make sense right? So in the following section, you'll be hearing and learning a basic chord melody on Misty. Make it a habit to have the melody, as you learnt in the previous section, stand out as much as possible and have the chords simply support that melodic statement of yours. That's what chord melody is, once again, right? Who knows? You might even start to apply this permanent chord melody style of playing in your own improvisations soon enough. So play a few melodic line, add a little chord, et cetera., all right? So I'll see you in the next few videos.