

Ornamentation

Django created a great sense of style by using different techniques to enhance the notes he played. These are generally known in music speak as 'Ornaments'.

The first, and I think the most characteristic ornament, is the 'Django vibrato'. Vibrato is widely used in guitar playing to sustain a particular note. Classical or rock and blues players all use this technique, just think of 'B B King' or 'Jimmy Page', their distinctive sound is often based around the use of vibrato. Django's vibrato was distinctive and certainly identified his sound. It had an almost proud intensity and gypsy passion.

You should listen to as much as Django's music and try and copy his vibrato sound but meanwhile try this example:

The image shows a musical score for guitar. At the top left is a G7 chord diagram with an 'x' on the 6th string and 'xx' on the 5th and 4th strings. Below it is a melodic line for 'Gtr I' in 4/4 time, featuring a sequence of notes with vibrato marks (wavy lines) above them. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (half). Below the melodic line is a bass line for 'Gtr II' with fret numbers: 3, 4, 5, 3, 4, 5. The bass line is written on a three-line staff with a treble clef, and the notes are indicated by dots on the lines.

Vibrato is mostly used at the end of a phrase or run of notes. This will help establish what you play. As a point of practise you should practise your scales and arpeggios by inserting vibrato at certain points in the sequence. Also, have a go at playing all the exercises in this manual and include vibrato.