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About the Author

Philadelphia-born Susan Mazer now lives and works in Connecticut. She received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Hartt School of Music. Susan is on the faculty at The Hartford Conservatory, where she teaches theory and ear training. Since 1989, she has taught fingerstyle guitar at the National Guitar Summer Workshop. Susan has been performing for the last fifteen years with an acoustic duo. She is the author of the popular instructional books *Guitar for the Absolute Beginner Books 1 and 2*, which are great companions to this book. She is also the host of the video, *Guitar for the Absolute Beginner*, which parallels the books.



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Dedication

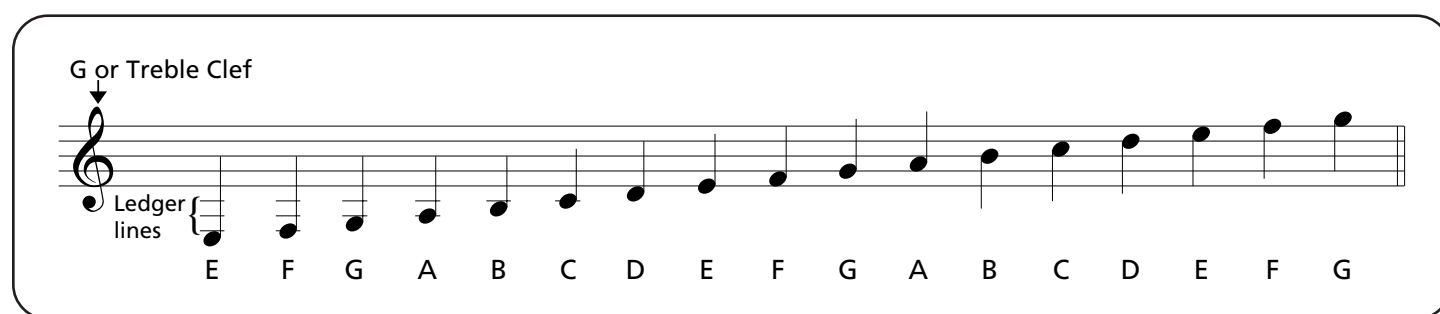
The love that my father felt for life is the same love that I feel for music. He is in my thoughts every day, and every time I reach for my guitar.

Reading Standard Music Notation

Pitch

Music has a seven-letter alphabet: A, B, C, D, E, F and G. Every *note* or *pitch* (musical sound) has one of these letter names. As you progress forward through the alphabet, the notes sound higher. After G, the alphabet repeats itself. The A that comes after G is one octave (twelve frets) higher than the first A. It is the same pitch, but higher.

Music is written on a staff consisting of five lines and four spaces. The location of a note on the staff tells you which pitch to play. You will find a G clef, or treble clef, at the beginning of every song. The tail of the G clef wraps around the G line to help you know the name the notes on the staff. When notes are too low or too high to be written on the staff, ledger lines are used.



Note and Rest Values

The appearance of the note—the type of note head or stem that it has—tells you its duration. Each note value has an equivalent rest.

Whole note  Whole rest  = 4 beats

Half note  Half rest  = 2 beats

Quarter note  Quarter rest  = 1 beat

Eighth note  Eighth rest  = ½ beat

1 & = 1 &

Flags of consecutive eighth notes are usually beamed together.

Dotted Notes

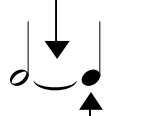
A dot next to a note adds half the value of the note to the existing value. For instance, a half note equals two beats (2). Half of that value is one beat (1). So, a dotted half note equals three beats (2+1=3).

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{Half note} + \text{dot} = \text{Dotted half note} \\ 2 + 1 = 3 \end{array}$$

Ties

When two notes are tied together, play the first note and let it ring out for the value of both without striking the second note.

Tie



Do not sing a new note.

Embellishment Warm-Ups

Here are a few examples of embellishments using hammer-ons and pull-offs for you to practice. Think of them as vocabulary words. To get comfortable with them, you must immediately plug them into your musical vocabulary. Remember that when adding an embellishment to a chord, your right hand pattern does not change. Once you are familiar with these patterns, gradually work them into the songs that you play.

The first four patterns use the bass-down-down strumming pattern. Try using them in *Amazing Grace* on page 20. Replace the measures using A or E with the appropriate examples below.

track 17

Four examples of embellishments for A and E chords. Each example shows a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature, a bass line staff, and a guitar fretboard diagram. The first two examples are for the A chord, and the last two are for the E chord. Each example shows a hammer-on (H) or pull-off (P) technique. The fretboard diagrams show the fingerings for each note.

The next four examples of embellishments for the C and G chords use the bass-down-bass-down strum. These embellishments can be used in any tune you know that uses the C and G chords. Simply insert the hammer-on or pull-off into the right-hand pattern that goes with the song.

track 18

Four examples of embellishments for C and G chords. Each example shows a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature, a bass line staff, and a guitar fretboard diagram. The first two examples are for the C chord, and the last two are for the G chord. Each example shows a hammer-on (H) or pull-off (P) technique. The fretboard diagrams show the fingerings for each note.