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CHAPTER 1

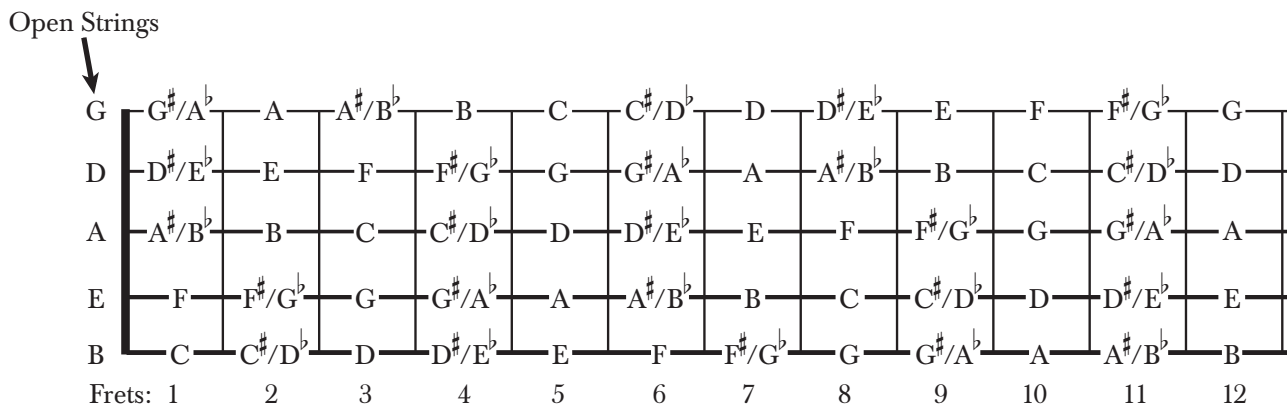
GETTING STARTED

HALF STEPS AND WHOLE STEPS

A *half step* is the smallest *interval* (distance between two pitches) in music. On the bass, a half step is the distance from one fret to the next. Two half steps are equal to a *whole step*, or the distance of two frets on the bass.

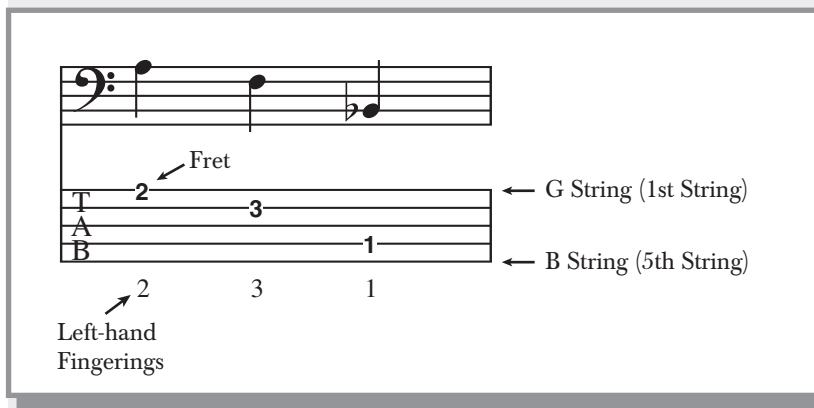
NOTES ON THE FRETBOARD

The *chromatic scale* consists of 12 different notes, each a half step above the previous note. Seven of these are *natural notes* spelled with a letter name (A–B–C–D–E–F–G). The other five notes are spelled using *accidentals* (*sharps* # or *flats* ♭). These five notes can be spelled A#–C#–D#–F#–G# or B♭–D♭–E♭–G♭–A♭, depending on the context. Notes with the same pitch but different names, such as G♭ and F#, are called *enharmonic equivalents*. Once you get through the 12 notes of the chromatic scale, it starts over again on A one *octave* (12 half steps) higher.



READING BASS TABLATURE

Tablature, or *TAB*, is used to indicate the positions of notes on the bass fretboard. The five lines represent the five strings of the bass—the top line is the 1st string (G), and the numbers on the lines tell you which fret to play. The numbers underneath the TAB tell you which left-hand finger to use (the left-hand fingers are numbered 1–4 starting with the index finger). In this book, the TAB is directly under the standard notation staff. For example:



In the diagram above, the number 2 is on the top line, so the note is located on the 2nd fret of the 1st string. The number 3 is on the second line, so this note is played on the 3rd fret of the 2nd string. The number 1 is located on the third line, so this note is played on the 1st fret of the 3rd string.

