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# TO THE TEACHER

This is a method for sight reading music on the guitar. The two main components of playing which we will be dealing with are sound and time. In the section on sound we will locate pitches on paper and on the guitar. Basic definitions, derivations of scales, and position playing will all be covered here. The section on time will include definitions of beat, pulse, and rhythm. Note values will be carefully derived, and time signatures will be explained without the vague “common time” concept.

All basic concepts will be taught through SINGLE LINE PLAYING. Other methods demand that the student become fluent at chord reading before being exposed to difficult rhythmic figures. The ominous appearance of block chords often discourages the student from progressing rhythmically. He fumbles with the chords and confuses the rhythm. Soon the simplest solo line has become an incredible challenge. It is for this reason that we have placed block chord reading at the end of this learning program.

This book is sequentially programmed. New notes or rhythms are introduced individually and drilled on. Each exercise is the logical antecedent of the previous one. The student may progress at his own speed. Every effort has been made to anticipate the questions that a beginning music student might have. We have tried to make the book complete enough to be used as a self instruction method. The exercises have been designed to challenge a student who is adept at ‘playing by ear.’ There are special sections on tuning and music symbols.

# TO THE STUDENT

## WHERE WE ARE COMING FROM . . .

Although the guitar is one of today’s most popular instruments, formal development of a consistent teaching method, which includes reading, has lagged way behind other instruments of the band and orchestra.

One reason is the origin of the guitar. As a popular “folk” instrument, it received little attention from “classically” trained musicians until recently. In addition the guitar has gone through so many changes both in the technology of its sound and in new styles of music, that the methods for learning have barely begun to catch up with the music being innovated today.

Now, because of its overwhelming popularity and today’s music, the guitar has been forced to catch up with the rest of the instruments. There were always people who by unique talent and hard work were able to create, read, and teach very advanced music on the guitar. But the number was very small. The popular demand of today’s guitarist, both amateur, and professional, is such that you just can’t play three chords and please anybody anymore, not even yourself! In the old days (20 years ago?) reading music was learned on the guitar by sheer repetition, if help was available. Harmony, theory and technique were picked up wherever they could be found. There was no order, logic, or method; it was all experience. In any event the guitar was usually shoved into the rhythm section to help keep time – not a demanding job compared to today’s work.

The demand for good reading guitarists has increased because of the integration of the jazz, pop, classical, rock, and country styles of music. You need only go to any recording studio to see how important the ability to read music is. One session may have a classical player, a country picker, and a hard rocker on the same date with strings, brass and a rhythm section. The producer could hardly shout “Blues in F.”

If you are creating original music, notating it correctly is important if you wish to communicate it to other musicians. If you can read, no style or type of music can remain a mystery to you. The more you read and explore, the better your playing will become.

## WHAT WE HOPE TO DO

The object of this book is to teach students of the guitar how to read music. We want you to be able to read new material with such ease that you can concentrate on giving meaning to the written page, rather than just playing ‘the right notes.’ We have included concepts of basic harmony with the reading because it is easier to understand and REMEMBER them both when they are learned together. The more you remember, the quicker you’ll be able to apply it. In the studio time is money, more than anything else. Playing in the studio requires mental agility in the art of understanding, as well as guitar technique. You must be able to understand someone else’s music (or communicate your own) quickly and precisely whether it’s on paper, in words, or by playing with the other musicians.

And if you’re required to make up a solo on the spot, you better hope you know where the chords and melody are going, or you’ll never cut it.

## HOW WE HOPE TO DO IT

Reading is simply a mechanical process like walking. It is the coordination of a little knowledge, your hands, and your eye. That’s all!! So to help you learn to read, we are going to supply the knowledge, explain the short cuts, and help you get started. The rest is up to you.

To read quickly you must have a firm understanding of harmony and rhythm.

Fifty percent of this book is information organized for easy memory so that you may learn it and IMMEDIATELY apply it. This includes music theory, harmony, rhythm, keys and scales, and how they all fit together.

The following five areas are where our goals lie –

1. You will realize the importance of reading music to see what others have to say.
2. You will learn the vocabulary of music.
3. You will learn the correct notation of music on paper.
4. You will hope you gain enough control over your muscles (technique) to be able to play whatever you might find on the paper.
5. You will be able to find your way around the guitar without looking at it – or, while looking at something else (like the music?)

This method has its roots in a common sense view of your hand, head, and guitar. We have tried to be LOGICAL, and ORDERLY. There are no gimmicks, and there is no magic. You must invest time and energy if you wish to be successful. Many people who have a guitar, play AT it. There is nothing wrong with this. But if you have the desire to experience new music and improve your playing, then you must spend some time STUDYING WITH the guitar. This means working at your own speed, in areas that excite you most, and ENJOYING the whole process. If you feel inadequate in your playing, or unhappy with the guitar, it will always show up in your playing.

For many this book may be the first experience in working with regularity at their playing. It is our hope that you will keep an open mind, be encouraged to experiment, and above all enjoy your effort with music. Please remember that we have included a lot of very basic information. We’ve done this to try and fill in all the various gaps student guitarists could have. Read everything, and mark any information that’s new to you.

# CHAPTER 1

## FUNDAMENTALS

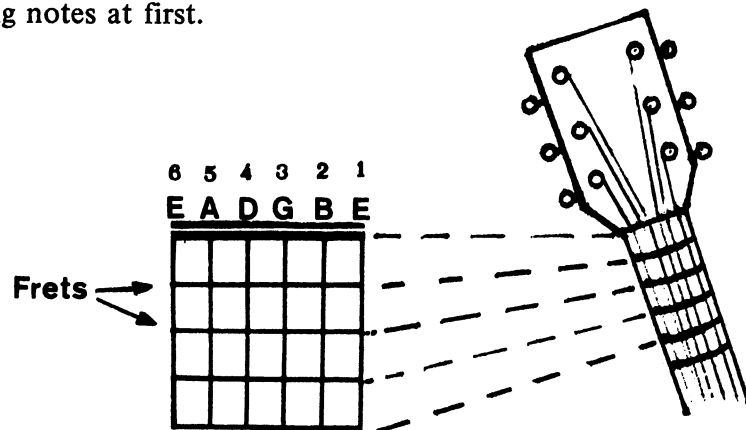
### HOW TO APPROACH YOUR GUITAR

(always from behind so you've got the jump on it if it tries to get away)

This section should get you sat down, strapped, adjusted, tuned, and thinking about your practice time. (Nothing to play yet.)

As you hold the guitar, the 'first string' is closest to the floor. All the strings are numbered, one through six, with the sixth string closest to the ceiling. This numbering is universally accepted in all guitar diagrams and some tablature systems.

Below is a diagram of the guitar fretboard. This diagram is common to guitar methods, and will be useful in locating notes at first.



After you have looked at this diagram, learn which strings are which!! The B string is the second, the G is the third, the D is the fourth, the A is the fifth, and the low E is the sixth. The first string is the high E.

## TUNING THE GUITAR

(for reference only)

Remember – tuning is one of the hardest things to do. Varying weather conditions, the condition of the guitar, the original quality and the age and condition of the strings, will all fight you to keep the guitar out of tune.

Poor tuning spoils everything you play, so work at it all the time.

**Open:** Used to describe a string that is not being touched by the left hand, when plucked by the right hand.

**Fretted:** When the left hand is pushing the string against the neck.

The numbers used with the diagram are there only to help clarify this diagram when learning to “tune up” your guitar. They are NOT standard notation, and the notes are not normally called by this number name.

# CHAPTER 5

## HEAD WORK

This chapter contains the “meat and potatoes” of our whole musical system, and how it works on the guitar.

Before you continue on, you should read the section hidden at the back of the book called, “Appendix on the Derivation of Scales.” There is a great amount of useful background information there that should fill in the gaps of most players at this stage of their learning. It has Romance! Adventure! Science! and History! Not to mention an all star cast including Miriam the wonder goose! Actually, it contains information on our scales, notes, how they were developed in the ancient world, and how science, musicians, and time evolved all of this into what we play today. Please at least glance through it before continuing on to this chapter.

### SCALES

If you have not yet read the appendix on the derivation of our musical scales, you should do so now before continuing. A brief summary shows that –

1. Our ancestors created groups of notes in certain patterns.
2. These groups most commonly had eight notes in them.
3. These notes were organized in a specific order, with each note being a predetermined distance from its neighbor notes.
4. These groups correspond to what we call scales.

What is a scale?

### SCALE:

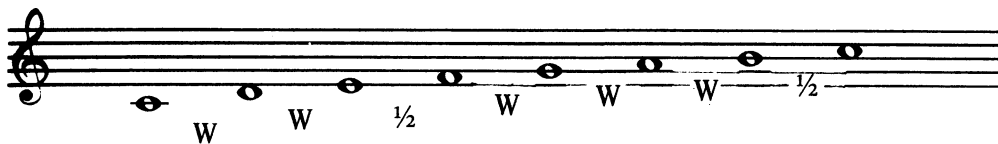
A succession of pitches in a fixed order. There may be any number in any order of descension or ascension. (This means that you can have scales in which the notes are above and below the note you start on, rather than progressing upwards only or downwards only.) For example –



Above is a group of notes in a fixed order (because we find them there) – a scale. It is a random pattern, and of no practical use, but it does qualify as a scale.

### DIATONIC:

The name of a scale with eight notes, arranged in a particular whole step, half step order (shown below). This is the only grouping known as “DIATONIC.”



DIATONIC SCALE      W = Whole Step      3–4      7–8 are half steps