

Revised Edition

Basic Electric Bass

Volume 1: An Introduction to the Finger Board of the Bass Guitar

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Preface

In the early 1970s, the five volumes of Basic Electric Bass were among the first publications for the instrument. At that time, many electric bassists (bass guitarists) used similar fingers to the double bass (upright bass). In this revised edition of Volume I, many fingerings of the original publication have been deleted or revised.

Fingering on the bass guitar is flexible, but one must have an organized approach to read music and develop technically. This volume introduces the entire finger board, fret by fret, in a “traditional” manner.

Fingers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are used - one finger per fret, each a half-step apart. Each fret is numbered chronologically by a Roman numeral. In this book, the placement of the first finger on the fret identifies the “position” (i.e. I - first finger the first fret; II - first finger on the second fret; III - first finger on the third fret, etc.)

Also, this basic approach to fingering should be augmented by extensions, shifting, fretting (barring), and cross fingering. At the appropriate time, your teacher will introduce many other fingerings, techniques, styles, effects, improvisatory skills, and more.

Exploring the entire fingerboard and learning to read music should be your goals. It is hoped that this book will be helpful in that endeavor.

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FRET CHART

THE BASIC POSITIONS

Strings (Nut) (Fret)

I II III IV V VI VII VIII IX

"G"

"D"

"A"

"E"

Detailed description: This chart shows the first nine frets (I-IX) for the four bass strings: G, D, A, and E. A vertical line marks the Nut (0th fret). Each fret is represented by a horizontal line across the four strings, with dots indicating the notes. For example, at fret I, the notes are G2, D2, A1, and E1. At fret IX, the notes are G3, D3, A2, and E2.

THE UPPER POSITIONS

X XI XII XIII XIV XV XVI XVII XVIII XIX XX

"G"

"D"

"A"

"E"

Detailed description: This chart shows frets X through XX for the four bass strings. The notes continue from the previous chart. For example, at fret X, the notes are G2, D2, A2, and E2. At fret XX, the notes are G3, D3, A3, and E3.

MUSIC NOTATION

The names or spelling of notes in the Bass Clef (# = sharp, ♮ = natural, ♭ = flat)

E F F# G G# A A# B C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B C C# D D# E

E Eb D Db C B Bb A Ab G Gb F E Eb D Db C B Bb A Ab G Gb F E

Detailed description: Two musical staves in bass clef. The first staff shows the natural sequence of notes from E2 to E3 with their respective sharps. The second staff shows the same sequence with flats, from E2 down to E1.

A different name or spelling of the same note (enharmonic)

C♯ = B♯ C♯ = D♭ D♯ = E♭ E♮ = F♭ F♮ = E♯ F♯ = G♭ G♯ = A♭ A♯ = B♭ B♮ = C♭

Detailed description: A musical staff in bass clef showing pairs of enharmonic notes. Each pair is written as a sharp followed by a flat, such as C# and B#.

Note and Rest values (indicating duration)

Whole note Whole rest Half note Half rest Quarter note Quarter rest

Eighth note Eighth rest Sixteenth note Sixteenth rest Thirty-second note Thirty-second rest

Detailed description: Two musical staves in bass clef. The first staff shows whole, half, and quarter notes and rests. The second staff shows eighth, sixteenth, and thirty-second notes and rests.