

LEARNING MADE EASY



3rd Edition

Bass Guitar

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand



Develop solid rhythm
and timing

Build scales and modes
into great bass lines

Play a ton of grooves
in a variety of styles

Patrick Pfeiffer

Professional bassist and bass coach



Bass Guitar

3rd Edition

by Patrick Pfeiffer

FOREWORD by Will Lee

Bassist, Late Show with David Letterman

**for
dummies**
A Wiley Brand

Bass Guitar For Dummies® , 3rd Edition

Published by: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2020 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc., and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

<p>LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE</p>
--

CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit www.wiley.com/techsupport.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this

material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020939433

ISBN 978-1-119-69557-8 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-119-69559-2 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-119-69562-2 (ebk)

Bass Guitar For Dummies®

To view this book's Cheat Sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and search for “Bass Guitar For Dummies Cheat Sheet” in the Search box.

Table of Contents

[Cover](#)

[Foreword](#)

[Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[Icons Used in This Book](#)

[Beyond the Book](#)

[Where to Go from Here](#)

[Part 1: Getting Started with the Bass Guitar](#)

[Chapter 1: The Very Basics of Bass](#)

[Discovering the Differences between the Bass and Its High-Strung Cousins](#)

[Understanding the Bass Player’s Function in a Band](#)

[Dissecting the Anatomy of a Bass Guitar](#)

[On a Need-to-Know “Basses”: Gearing Up to Play Bass](#)

[Playing Grooves, Solos, and Fills](#)

[Experimenting with Different Musical Genres](#)

[Stocking Up on Some Bass Gear](#)

[Giving Your Bass Some Good Ol’ TLC](#)

Chapter 2: Gaining the Tools and Skills to Play

[Getting a Handle on Your Bass](#)

[Holding Your Bass](#)

[Placing Your Hands in the Proper Position](#)

[Reading a Fingerboard Diagram](#)

[Tuning Your Bass Guitar](#)

[Playing a Song on Your Bass Guitar](#)

Chapter 3: Warming Up: Getting Your Hands in Shape to Play

[Understanding the Sound Your Bass Makes](#)

[Performing Right-Hand Warm-Ups](#)

[Coordinating Your Left Hand with Your Right Hand](#)

Part 2: The Bass-ics of Playing

Chapter 4: Reading, 'Riting, and Rhythm

[Reading Notation: No Pain, Much Gain](#)

[Finding Any Note in Any Octave](#)

[Using the Metronome: You Know, That Tick-Tock Thing](#)

[Dividing Music into Phrases, Measures, and Beats](#)

[Discovering How to Read Music](#)

[Playing Your First Song While Reading Music](#)

Chapter 5: Understanding Major and Minor Structures

[Building Major and Minor Scales](#)

[Building Chords: One Note at a Time, Please](#)

[Inversions: Down Is Up, and Up Is Down](#)

[Spicing Up Your Sound: The Seven Main Modes \(Scales\)](#)

[Using Chromatic Tones: All the Other Notes](#)

[Bringing a Groove to Life with Dead Notes \(Weird but True\)](#)

[Sampling Accompaniments](#)

Part 3: Making the Moves, Creating the Grooves

Chapter 6: Creating the Groove

[Anatomy of a Groove: Putting Together the Necessary Elements](#)

[Creating Your Own Groove](#)

[Grooving with a Drummer](#)

[Jammin' with Other Musicians](#)

[Getting Creative with Existing Grooves](#)

Chapter 7: Going Solo: Playing Solos and Fills

[Soloing: Your Moment to Shine](#)

[Creating Fills without Any Help from Your Dentist](#)

Part 4: Using the Correct Accompaniment for Each Genre

Chapter 8: Rock On! Getting Down with the Rock Styles

[Rock 'n' Roll: It's The Attitude!](#)

[Hard Rock: Going at It Fast and Furious](#)

[Pop Rock: Supporting the Vocals](#)

[Blues Rock: Doin' What "Duck" Does and Playing a Countermelody](#)

[Country Rock: Where Vocals Are King, and You Take a Back Seat](#)

[One Rock Fits All: Applying a Standard Rock Groove to Any Rock Song](#)

Chapter 9: Swing It! Playing Styles That Rely on the Triplet Feel

[Swing: Grooving Up-Tempo with Attitude](#)

[Jazz: Going for a Walk](#)

[Blues Shuffle: Walking Like Donald Duck \(Dunn, That Is\)](#)

[Funk Shuffle: Combining Funk, Blues, and Jazz](#)

Chapter 10: Making It Funky: Playing Hardcore Bass Grooves

[R & B: Movin' to Rhythm and Blues](#)

[The Motown Sound: Grooving with the Music of the Funk Brothers](#)

[Fusion: Blending Two Styles into One](#)

[Funk: Light Fingers, Heavy Attitude](#)

[Hip-Hop: Featuring Heavy Funk with Heavy Attitude](#)

[Knowing What to Do When You Just Want to Funkify a Tune](#)

Chapter 11: Sampling International Flavors: Bass Styles from Around the World

[Bossa Nova: Baskin' in a Brazilian Beat](#)

[Samba: Speeding Up with Bossa's Fast Cousin](#)

[Afro-Cuban: Ordering Up Some Salsa \(Hold the Chips, Please\)](#)

[Reggae: Relaxing with Offbeat "Riddims"](#)

[Calypso Party Sounds: Dancing through the Groove](#)

[Combining Reggae and Rock: The Distinct Sound of Ska](#)

[African Grooves: Experimenting with Exotic Downbeat Grooves](#)

[Music without Borders: Grooving to the World Beat](#)

Chapter 12: Playing in Odd Meters: Not Strange, Just Not the Norm

[An Odd-Meter Oldie but Goodie: The Waltz](#)

[Beyond the Waltz: Navigating Beats in Odd Meter](#)

[Complex Simplicity: Syncopation and Subdivision](#)

Chapter 13: Groovin' in a Genre: It's All About Style!

[Playing Grooves in Each Genre: One Simple Song, Many Genres Strong](#)

[To Blend or Not to Blend: Knowing How to Fit In](#)

Chapter 14: Eight Degrees of Separation: The Beatles' Solution

[Playing Your Rhythm Straight or Syncopated](#)

[Making Harmonic Choices](#)

Part 5: Buying and Caring for Your Bass

Chapter 15: Love of a Lifetime or One-Night Stand? Buying the Right Bass

[Assessing Your Needs Before You Buy](#)

[Needs Are One Thing ... Budget Is Quite Another](#)

[A Trip to the Bass-Mint: Where to Shop for Your Bass Guitar](#)

[When Money Is No Object: Getting a Custom-Made Bass](#)

Chapter 16: Getting the Right Gear for Your Bass Guitar

[Making Yourself Heard: A Primer on Amplifiers and Speakers](#)

[Needs, Wants, and Nonessentials: Rounding Out Your Equipment](#)

Chapter 17: Changing the Strings on Your Bass Guitar

[Knowing When It's Time to Say Goodbye](#)

[Off with the Old: Removing Bass Strings](#)

[On with the New: Restringing Your Bass](#)

[Ensuring a Long Life for Your Strings](#)

Chapter 18: Keeping Your Bass in Shape: Maintenance and Light Repair

[Cleaning Your Bass, Part by Part](#)

[Making Minor Repairs to Your Bass](#)

[Adjusting the Bass Guitar](#)

[Assembling a Cleaning and Repair Tool Bag](#)

[Storing Your Bass](#)

Part 6: The Part of Tens

Chapter 19: Ten Innovative Bassists You Should Know

[Stanley Clarke](#)

[John Entwistle](#)

[James Jamerson](#)

[Carol Kaye](#)

[Will Lee](#)

[Paul McCartney](#)
[Marcus Miller](#)
[Jaco Pastorius](#)
[Victor Wooten](#)
[X \(Fill in Your Own\)](#)

Chapter 20: Ten Great Rhythm Sections (Bassists and Drummers)

[Bootsy Collins and Jab’o Starks](#)
[Donald “Duck” Dunn and Al Jackson Jr.](#)
[James Jamerson and Benny Benjamin](#)
[John Paul Jones and John Bonham](#)
[Joe Osborn and Hal Blaine](#)
[Jaco Pastorius and Peter Erskine](#)
[George Porter Jr. and Zig Modeliste](#)
[Francis Rocco Prestia and David Garibaldi](#)
[Chuck Rainey and Bernard Purdie](#)
[Robbie Shakespeare and Sly Dunbar](#)

Appendix: Audio Tracks and Video Clips

[What’s on the Audio Tracks](#)
[What’s on the Video Clips](#)
[Customer Care](#)

Index

About the Author

Advertisement Page

Connect with Dummies

End User License Agreement

List of Tables

Chapter 3

[TABLE 3-1 Left-Hand Permutations](#)

Chapter 5

[TABLE 5-1 The Main 7th Chord Structures](#)

[TABLE 5-2 The Mode Families](#)

Appendix

[TABLE A-1 Bass Guitar Audio Tracks](#)

[TABLE A-2 Bass Guitar Video Clips](#)

List of Illustrations

Chapter 1

[FIGURE 1-1: The bass guitar in all its glory.](#)

Chapter 2

[FIGURE 2-1: Fretting a note.](#)

[FIGURE 2-2: Standing with your bass.](#)

[FIGURE 2-3: Sitting with your bass.](#)

[FIGURE 2-4: Position of the left hand.](#)

[FIGURE 2-5: Right hand in the proper finger-style position.](#)

[FIGURE 2-6: Hand reaching for the high string.](#)

[FIGURE 2-7: Hand reaching for the low string.](#)

[FIGURE 2-8: Holding the pick in a closed-hand position.](#)

[FIGURE 2-9: A pick in the open-hand style.](#)

[FIGURE 2-10: Thumb striking the string \(left\), and index finger snapping the st...](#)

[FIGURE 2-11: Description of the parts of two different grids.](#)

[FIGURE 2-12: Grids showing a major scale \(left\) and a minor scale \(right\).](#)

[FIGURE 2-13: Grids showing open-string scales.](#)

[FIGURE 2-14: Grid showing C on the A string.](#)

[FIGURE 2-15: Grid showing C on an E string.](#)

[FIGURE 2-16: Grids showing intervals.](#)

[FIGURE 2-17: Piano keys that match the open strings on the bass.](#)

[FIGURE 2-18: Guitar strings that match the open strings on the bass.](#)

[FIGURE 2-19: The 5th-fret tuning method.](#)

[FIGURE 2-20: Tuning with the 7th-fret tuning method.](#)

[FIGURE 2-21: The main harmonics.](#)

[FIGURE 2-22: The relationships between the harmonics.](#)

[FIGURE 2-23: Song played on open strings.](#)

[FIGURE 2-24: Song using closed strings.](#)

Chapter 3

[FIGURE 3-1: Angle of attack for right-hand strike.](#)

[FIGURE 3-2: Sequence of fingers striking the string.](#)

[FIGURE 3-3: Right-hand accents.](#)

[FIGURE 3-4: First combination \(1 2 3 4\) of left-hand permutations.](#)

[FIGURE 3-5: Left hand playing low G while muting the other strings.](#)

[FIGURE 3-6: Practice exercise for combining the right and left hands.](#)

Chapter 4

[FIGURE 4-1: Measure of E minor from a chord chart in chord notation.](#)

[FIGURE 4-2: Measure of E minor in music notation with a description of the staf...](#)

[FIGURE 4-3: Tab for G on the fingerboard.](#)

[FIGURE 4-4: The notes on the neck of the bass and on the staff.](#)

[FIGURE 4-5: The octave, or two-strings/two-frets, method.](#)

[FIGURE 4-6: The handspan-plus-two-frets method.](#)

[FIGURE 4-7: Phrases, measures, and beats.](#)

[FIGURE 4-8: Rhythmic notes.](#)

[FIGURE 4-9: The most common dotted notes.](#)

[FIGURE 4-10: Common ties between notes.](#)

[FIGURE 4-11: The values of notes and rests and their typical application.](#)

[FIGURE 4-12: Seeing beats as chunks of notes.](#)

[FIGURE 4-13: Beats and rests as chunks of notes.](#)

[FIGURE 4-14: The most common intervals.](#)

[FIGURE 4-15: The major scales notated.](#)

[FIGURE 4-16: The chromatic scale notated.](#)

[FIGURE 4-17: Notation for “Two Too Tight Shoes Blues” using four notational sys...](#)

Chapter 5

[FIGURE 5-1: Notation of a scale.](#)

[FIGURE 5-2: The structure of the major scale on a grid.](#)

[FIGURE 5-3: The structure of the natural minor scale.](#)

[FIGURE 5-4: Structure and sequence of the major triad.](#)

[FIGURE 5-5: Accompaniments using the major triad.](#)

[FIGURE 5-6: Structure and sequence of the minor triad.](#)

[FIGURE 5-7: Accompaniments using the minor triad.](#)

[FIGURE 5-8: Notation for a song with triad accompaniment.](#)

[FIGURE 5-9: Scales of the major, minor, dominant, and half-diminished chords.](#)

[FIGURE 5-10: Boogie bass line pattern and boogie chart.](#)

[FIGURE 5-11: C major chord in root position \(with the root in the bass\). Track ...](#)

[FIGURE 5-12: 1st inversion C major chord \(with the 3rd in the bass\). Track 21, ...](#)

[FIGURE 5-13: 2nd inversion C major chord \(with the 5th in the bass\). Track 21, ...](#)

[FIGURE 5-14: C minor chord in root position \(with the root in the bass\). Track ...](#)

[FIGURE 5-15: 1st inversion C minor chord \(with the 3rd in the bass\). Track 21, ...](#)

[FIGURE 5-16: 2nd inversion C minor chord \(with the 5th in the bass\). Track 21, ...](#)

[FIGURE 5-17: The scale/chord combinations.](#)

[FIGURE 5-18: Using a chromatic tone in a major bass line.](#)

[FIGURE 5-19: Using a chromatic tone in a minor bass line.](#)

[FIGURE 5-20: Using a chromatic tone outside the box in a major bass line.](#)

[FIGURE 5-21: Using a chromatic tone outside the box in a minor bass line.](#)

[FIGURE 5-22: Using dead notes in a groove.](#)

[FIGURE 5-23: Dead note groove and exercise.](#)

[FIGURE 5-24: Bass groove using the chord.](#)

[FIGURE 5-25: Bass groove using the 7th chord.](#)

[FIGURE 5-26: Bass groove using the Mixolydian mode.](#)

[FIGURE 5-27: Bass groove using chromatic tones.](#)

[FIGURE 5-28: Bass groove using dead notes.](#)

[FIGURE 5-29: Mixolydian and Dorian modes, side by side.](#)

[FIGURE 5-30: Harmonically ambiguous grooves.](#)

Chapter 6

[FIGURE 6-1: Six grooves with different groove skeletons.](#)

[FIGURE 6-2: Song played using only the groove skeleton.](#)

[FIGURE 6-3: Common scales used for grooves \(Ionian, Dorian, and Mixolydian\).](#)

[FIGURE 6-4: Creating a groove for D7 \(D dominant\).](#)

[FIGURE 6-5: A simple groove and a complex groove for D7.](#)

[FIGURE 6-6: Creating a groove for D minor.](#)

[FIGURE 6-7: A simple and a complex groove for D minor.](#)

[FIGURE 6-8: Creating a groove for D major.](#)

[FIGURE 6-9: A simple and a complex groove for D major.](#)

[FIGURE 6-10: Creating a groove tail.](#)

[FIGURE 6-11: A chord chart.](#)

[FIGURE 6-12: Mobile groove using constant structure.](#)

[FIGURE 6-13: Mobile groove using chord tones.](#)

[FIGURE 6-14: Groove with upper groove apex.](#)

[FIGURE 6-15: Upper groove apex exercise.](#)

[FIGURE 6-16: Groove with lower groove apex.](#)

[FIGURE 6-17: Lower groove apex exercise.](#)

[FIGURE 6-18: Grooving with the bass drum.](#)

[FIGURE 6-19: Bass grooving with the snare drum and the bass drum.](#)

[FIGURE 6-20: Grooving with the hi-hat, the snare drum, and the bass drum.](#)

[FIGURE 6-21: Finding the root in a two-note relationship.](#)

[FIGURE 6-22: The best choices for pivoting a note and the resulting chords.](#)

[FIGURE 6-23: Different variations of “Come Together.”](#)

[FIGURE 6-24: Different pared down variations of “Come Together.”](#)

Chapter 7

[FIGURE 7-1: Structure of the one-octave blues scale.](#)

[FIGURE 7-2: Blues-scale licks.](#)

[FIGURE 7-3: The one-octave minor pentatonic scale.](#)

[FIGURE 7-4: Minor pentatonic scale licks.](#)

[FIGURE 7-5: One octave of the major pentatonic scale.](#)

[FIGURE 7-6: Major pentatonic scale licks.](#)

[FIGURE 7-7: Chord chart for soloing.](#)

[FIGURE 7-8A: Groove with an eighth-note fill.](#)

[FIGURE 7-8B: Groove with a triplet fill.](#)

[FIGURE 7-8C: Groove with a sixteenth-note fill.](#)

Chapter 8

[FIGURE 8-1: Rock ‘n’ roll groove using only the root.](#)

[FIGURE 8-2: Rock ‘n’ roll groove using notes from the chord.](#)

[FIGURE 8-3: Rock ‘n’ roll groove in minor using notes from the chord.](#)

[FIGURE 8-4: Rock ‘n’ roll groove using notes from the chord and mode.](#)

[FIGURE 8-5: Thought process from mode and chord to groove.](#)

[FIGURE 8-6: Rock ‘n’ roll box groove.](#)

[FIGURE 8-7: Rock ‘n’ roll groove in a minor tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 8-8: Rock ‘n’ roll groove in a major 7th tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 8-9: Rock ‘n’ roll groove with a 6.](#)

[FIGURE 8-10: Hard rock groove using only the root.](#)

[FIGURE 8-11: Hard rock groove using a minor chord.](#)

[FIGURE 8-12: Hard rock groove using notes from the minor chord and mode.](#)

[FIGURE 8-13: Hard rock box groove in a minor tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 8-14: Pop rock groove using only the root.](#)

[FIGURE 8-15: Pop rock groove using a major tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 8-16: Pop rock groove using notes in the dominant tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 8-17: Pop rock box groove in dominant tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 8-18: Blues rock groove using only the root.](#)

[FIGURE 8-19: Blues rock groove using notes from the chord.](#)

[FIGURE 8-20: Blues rock groove using notes from the chord and mode.](#)

[FIGURE 8-21: Blues rock box groove.](#)

[FIGURE 8-22: Country rock groove using only the root.](#)

[FIGURE 8-23: Country rock groove using notes from the chord.](#)

[FIGURE 8-24: Country rock groove using the mode.](#)

[FIGURE 8-25: Country rock box groove.](#)

[FIGURE 8-26: Generic rock groove and song.](#)

Chapter 9

[FIGURE 9-1: Swing groove using a major pentatonic scale.](#)

[FIGURE 9-2: Swing groove using a Mixolydian mode.](#)

[FIGURE 9-3: The locations of the chromatic, diatonic, and dominant leading tone...](#)

[FIGURE 9-4: Jazz progression for walking bass.](#)

[FIGURE 9-5: Walking bass using the root and 5 plus a leading tone.](#)

[FIGURE 9-6: Walking bass using chord tones plus a leading tone.](#)

[FIGURE 9-7: Walking bass using scale tones plus a leading tone.](#)

[FIGURE 9-8: Jazz blues walking pattern starting on the E string.](#)

[FIGURE 9-9: Jazz blues walking pattern starting on the A string.](#)

[FIGURE 9-10: Blues shuffle groove using only the root.](#)

[FIGURE 9-11: Blues shuffle groove using a major chord.](#)

[FIGURE 9-12: Blues shuffle groove using a Mixolydian mode.](#)

[FIGURE 9-13: Blues shuffle groove using a minor mode.](#)

[FIGURE 9-14: Blues shuffle groove using a Mixolydian mode with a chromatic tone...](#)

[FIGURE 9-15: Blues shuffle groove in a minor tonality using a chromatic tone.](#)

[FIGURE 9-16: Funk shuffle groove using only the root.](#)

[FIGURE 9-17: Funk shuffle groove for dominant and minor chords.](#)

[FIGURE 9-18: Funk shuffle groove using notes from the dominant or minor modes.](#)

[FIGURE 9-19: Generic shuffle song.](#)

Chapter 10

[FIGURE 10-1: R & B groove using a major \(Ionian\) mode.](#)

[FIGURE 10-2: R & B groove using a dominant \(Mixolydian\) mode.](#)

[FIGURE 10-3: R & B groove using a minor \(Dorian or Aeolian\) mode.](#)

[FIGURE 10-4: R & B grooves in major \(a\), dominant \(b\), and minor \(c\) tonalities...](#)

[FIGURE 10-5: Motown groove using constant structure for major and dominant tona...](#)

[FIGURE 10-6: Motown groove using constant structure for dominant and minor tona...](#)

[FIGURE 10-7: Fusion groove for a major or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 10-8: Fusion groove for a dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 10-9: Fusion groove covering four strings on a dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 10-10: Funk groove played in slap-style.](#)

[FIGURE 10-11: Funk groove for a dominant or minor tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 10-12: Funk groove using a major tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 10-13: Heavy funk groove using a minor tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 10-14: Heavy funk groove for a major or dominant tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 10-15: Finger-style funk for a minor or dominant tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 10-16: Finger-style funk groove using a major tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 10-17: Hip-hop groove.](#)

[FIGURE 10-18: Hip-hop groove for a minor or dominant tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 10-19: Hip-hop groove for a major or dominant tonality.](#)

[FIGURE 10-20: Generic funk groove and song.](#)

Chapter 11

[FIGURE 11-1: Bossa nova groove for a major, minor, or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-2: Bossa nova groove for a half-diminished chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-3: Samba groove.](#)

[FIGURE 11-4: Samba groove with anticipation.](#)

[FIGURE 11-5: Afro-Cuban groove for a major, minor, or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-6: Afro-Cuban groove for a half-diminished chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-7: Afro-Cuban groove with syncopation for a major, minor, or dominant...](#)

[FIGURE 11-8: Afro-Cuban groove with syncopation for a half-diminished chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-9: Reggae groove for a minor chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-10: Reggae groove for a major or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-11: Reggae groove for a major, minor, or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-12: Drop-one reggae groove.](#)

[FIGURE 11-13: Calypso groove implying a chord progression.](#)

[FIGURE 11-14: Calypso groove for a major, minor, or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-15: Ska groove for a major, minor, or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-16: Ska groove for a major or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-17: Ska groove for a minor chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-18: South African groove for a major or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-19: South African groove for a major, dominant, or minor chord.](#)

[FIGURE 11-20: Makossa groove.](#)

[FIGURE 11-21: Makossa groove using complex rhythms.](#)

[FIGURE 11-22: Bolobo groove.](#)

[FIGURE 11-23: Bolobo groove with complex rhythm.](#)

[FIGURE 11-24: Bikutsi groove.](#)

[FIGURE 11-25: Bikutsi groove with complex rhythm.](#)

[FIGURE 11-26: World beat song using a typical chord progression.](#)

Chapter 12

[FIGURE 12-1: Waltz accompaniment for a major, minor, or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 12-2: Waltz accompaniment using two notes for a major, minor, or dominant...](#)

[FIGURE 12-3: Beats in groupings of three-two and two-three in 5/4 meter.](#)

[FIGURE 12-4: Groove in 5/4 meter for a minor or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 12-5: Groove in 5/4 using a three-two grouping.](#)

[FIGURE 12-6: Groove in 5/4 using a two-three grouping.](#)

[FIGURE 12-7: Groove in 5/4 using sixteenth notes.](#)

[FIGURE 12-8: Groove in 4/4 \(a\) with the addition of one beat consisting of two ...](#)

[FIGURE 12-9: Beats in groupings of three-two-two, two-three-two, and two-two-th...](#)

[FIGURE 12-10: Groove in 7/4 meter for a minor or dominant chord.](#)

[FIGURE 12-11: Groove in 7/4 meter using a three-two-two grouping.](#)

[FIGURE 12-12: Groove in 7/4 meter using a two-three-two grouping.](#)

[FIGURE 12-13: Groove in 7/4 meter using a two-two-three grouping.](#)

[FIGURE 12-14: Groove in 7/4 using sixteenth notes.](#)

[FIGURE 12-15: Groove in 5/4 using syncopation.](#)

[FIGURE 12-16: Eighth-note combinations.](#)

[FIGURE 12-17: Groove in 11/8.](#)

[FIGURE 12-18: Grooves in 6/4 and 7/4 in the style of Rush.](#)

[FIGURE 12-19: Generic song in odd meter.](#)

Chapter 13

[FIGURE 13-1: Song notation with standard progression.](#)

[FIGURE 13-2: A bass part in the pop genre.](#)

[FIGURE 13-3: Rock bass part with a quarter-note groove skeleton.](#)

[FIGURE 13-4: Rock bass part with a groove skeleton that uses two eighth notes.](#)

[FIGURE 13-5: R & B/Soul bass part with a groove skeleton that uses two eighth n...](#)

[FIGURE 13-6: R & B/Soul bass part with a groove skeleton that uses a dotted eig...](#)

[FIGURE 13-7: Funk bass part with a groove skeleton that uses two sixteenth note...](#)

[FIGURE 13-8: Latin bass groove.](#)

[FIGURE 13-9: Shuffle bass part.](#)

[FIGURE 13-10: A blending groove.](#)

[FIGURE 13-11: A bold groove.](#)

[FIGURE 13-12: Sign-offs, or turnarounds, for a groove.](#)

Chapter 14

[FIGURE 14-1: A song using pumping eighth notes.](#)

[FIGURE 14-2: A song using syncopation.](#)

[FIGURE 14-3: A song using roots and 5ths.](#)

[FIGURE 14-4: A song using a walking bass line.](#)

[FIGURE 14-5: A song using a groove.](#)

[FIGURE 14-6: A song using unison accompaniment.](#)

[FIGURE 14-7: A song using a countermelody.](#)

[FIGURE 14-8: A song using inversions.](#)

Chapter 15

[FIGURE 15-1: From left to right: A fretted six-string bass, a fretless six-stri...](#)

[FIGURE 15-2: Evenly spaced strings on a fingerboard.](#)

Chapter 16

[FIGURE 16-1: A combo amp \(left\) and a separate amp and speaker \(right\).](#)

[FIGURE 16-2: The control panel of a bass amplifier.](#)

[FIGURE 16-3: Contents of a bass bag.](#)

[FIGURE 16-4: A chorus unit and a volume pedal.](#)

[FIGURE 16-5: A bass stand, a stool, and a music stand.](#)

[FIGURE 16-6: A professional headphone practice amp.](#)

Chapter 17

[FIGURE 17-1: Cutting the string and pulling the coiled part from the tuning pos...](#)

[FIGURE 17-2: Pulling the string through the bridge.](#)

[FIGURE 17-3: Coiled string with envelopes.](#)

[FIGURE 17-4: Pulling the string through the bridge.](#)

[FIGURE 17-5: Cutting the string to size.](#)

[FIGURE 17-6: Inserting the string into the tuning post.](#)

[FIGURE 17-7: Windings of a string at the tuning post.](#)

[FIGURE 17-8: The strings at the saddle.](#)

Chapter 18

[FIGURE 18-1: Cleaning the strings.](#)

[FIGURE 18-2: Adjusting the truss rod.](#)

[FIGURE 18-3: Adjusting the height of the saddles.](#)

[FIGURE 18-4: Adjusting the intonation.](#)

[FIGURE 18-5: Contents of a bass tool bag.](#)

Chapter 20

[FIGURE 20-1: Bass line in the style of Bootsy Collins. Track 117, 0:00.](#)

[FIGURE 20-2: Bass line in the style of Donald “Duck” Dunn. Track 117, 0:15.](#)

[FIGURE 20-3: Bass line in the style of James Jamerson. Track 117, 0:26.](#)

[FIGURE 20-4: Bass line in the style of John Paul Jones. Track 117, 0:52.](#)

[FIGURE 20-5: Bass line in the style of Joe Osborn. Track 117, 1:09.](#)

[FIGURE 20-6: Bass line in the style of Jaco Pastorius. Track 117, 1:22.](#)

[FIGURE 20-7: Bass line in the style of George Porter Jr. Track 117, 1:38.](#)

[FIGURE 20-8: Bass line in the style of Francis Rocco Prestia. Track 117, 1:55.](#)

[FIGURE 20-9: Bass line in the style of Chuck Rainey. Track 117, 2:14.](#)

[FIGURE 20-10: Bass line in the style of Robbie Shakespeare. Track 117, 2:40.](#)

Foreword

For bassists or bass wannabes, *Bass Guitar For Dummies* takes you on a tour of the instrument and explores all avenues of bassdom. Of the myriad tools available for bassists, *Bass Guitar For Dummies* is at the pinnacle of them all. Never before has such a complete anthology been assembled. It's like having an unlimited ticket for all the rides at BassLand!

Patrick Pfeiffer, great communicator of bass guitar, has laid it all out for you to enjoy. *Bass Guitar For Dummies* can be read laterally, literally, or "loiterily." In other words, cover to cover, in order, or at your leisure; when you have a couple of minutes, just read a page, or a chapter. It's not too deep, not too heavy, but it's all good information and a lot of fun. So dig in, and enjoy *Bass Guitar For Dummies*!

All the Bass,

Will Lee, Grammy-award-winning bassist, *Late Show with David Letterman*

Introduction

Shake the earth with deep, sonorous vibrations. Let your melodies swoop and soar like swallows over a meadow. Be the force that relentlessly drives the music with percussive, percolating emanations from your speaker. Rumble like the ominous thunder of an approaching storm. Whisper, growl, *roar* your grooves into the universe. For you, it's not enough just to be heard; you *will* be felt. You are ... the bass player.

Imagine your favorite music without bass. It doesn't work, does it? The bass is the heartbeat of the music, the foundation for the groove, and the glue that holds together all the different instruments. You can hear the music sing as it's carried along by the bass groove. You can sense the music come to life. You can feel the vibrations of those low notes — sometimes subtle and caressing, sometimes literally earthshaking — as they propel the song. The bass is the heart of it all.

Leave center stage to the other musicians — you have more important work to do. The limelight may be cool, but bassists rule!

About This Book

You can find everything you need to master the bass in *Bass Guitar For Dummies*, 3rd Edition — from the correct way to strike a note to the way to play a funk groove in the style of Jaco Pastorius. It's all here.

Each chapter is independent of the others. You can skip the stuff you already know and go straight to the parts that interest you without feeling lost. To find the subject you're looking for, just check out the table of contents.

You also can look up specific topics in the index at the back of the book. Or you can read from front to back and build up your bass-playing skills step by step. Whatever you choose, just remember to enjoy the journey.

I structure this book so you can decide for yourself how far you want to take your skills on the instrument. As I was writing, I checked out the entrance requirements for music schools and conservatories, and I included the information that fulfills those requirements (without getting too theoretical — after all, you don't want to spend all your time theorizing ... you want to *play*). In fact, this book goes well beyond the minimum requirements and shows you how to actually *apply* all this information to real-life bass playing. I show you how to play in different styles and how to create your own grooves and solos so you don't have to copy someone else's bass line note-for-note.

No bass guitar? No problem. This book doesn't assume you have your own bass. If you don't, just head over to [Part 5](#) to find out how to choose the right bass and accessories to get started. If you already have a bass, you can start with the maintenance section in [Chapter 18](#) and find out how to set up your instrument so it's easiest to play.

You don't need to read music to figure out how to play the bass guitar. (You can unknit your eyebrows now ... it's true.) So how can you get the information you need from this book? Here's how:

- » **Look at the grids.** The grids are pictures of the notes you play on the fingerboard of the bass guitar. The grids show you where the notes are in relation to each other and which fingers you use to play them. They also provide you with an additional advantage: If you

use the grid to finger a certain pattern of notes, you can then transfer the same pattern (fingering and all) onto any other section of the fingerboard to play the note pattern in a different key. That's why reading music isn't necessary. The notes on a page of regular music notation look completely different for each new key, but if you use the grid, you'll find that, as far as note patterns go, one size fits all.

- » **Read the tablature.** *Tablature* is a shorthand notational technique that shows you which string to strike and where to hold the string down to sound a note. The short name for tablature is *tab* (just in case anyone asks).
- » **Listen to the audio tracks.** You can hear all the exercises and grooves that are shown in the figures by simply going online to www.dummies.com/go/bassguitar and listening to audio tracks for each one. You can listen to the sound of a groove, take a look at the grid and the tab, put your hand in the proper position on the fingerboard, and then reproduce the sound. While you're there, you may as well check out the video clips that show you the details for playing certain figures.

After you master a groove, you can pan to one side to remove the sound of the bass. Then you can play the groove in the example with just the drums and the guitar (in other words, with real musicians). Or you can create your own groove in the feel and style of the example.

- » **As you improve, try reading the music notation.** As you get better, you can look at the notation and begin to learn to read music. After you figure out how to play a few phrases, you quickly discover that reading music notation isn't as difficult as it's made

out to be. In fact, you'll realize that it makes your musical life easier.

I use the following conventions in *Bass Guitar For Dummies*, 3rd Edition, to help keep the text consistent and make it easy to follow:

- » **Right hand and left hand:** Instead of saying *striking hand* and *fretting hand*, I say *right hand* for the hand that strikes the string and *left hand* for the hand that frets the note. My apologies to left-handed players. If you're left-handed, please read *right hand* to mean *left hand* and vice versa.
- » **Up and down, higher and lower:** Moving your left hand up the neck of the bass means moving it up in *pitch* (moving your hand toward the body of the bass). Moving your left hand down the neck means moving it down in *pitch* (moving your hand away from the body). I use the same principle for the right hand. Going to the next *higher* string means playing the string that has a higher sound (the string closer to the floor). The next *lower* string is the string that has a lower sound (the string closer to the ceiling). Just think of whether the sound is higher or lower and you'll be fine.
- » **Triple music notation:** In the figures, the music for the grooves and the exercises is printed with the standard music notation on top, the tablature below, and the grid next to them. You don't have to read all of them at the same time (good heavens — that would be worse than reading piano music). Simply pick the one you feel most comfortable with, and then use the others to double-check that you're playing the groove or exercise correctly. Of course, you also can listen to the audio tracks to hear what the music is supposed to sound like.

» **The numbers:** In the text, the numbers between 1 and 8 (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8) represent notes in a chord or scale (for example, the number 3 represents the third note in a given scale). The designation 7th, on the other hand, refers to a particular chord, such as a major 7th chord. Finally, the distance between two notes (the interval) is called a 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and so on.

Foolish Assumptions

As I wrote this book, I made one assumption about you, the reader: I assume that you want to play the bass guitar. But that's it. I don't assume anything else. No matter what style you're interested in, this book covers them all. It doesn't even matter whether you want to play a four-, five-, or six-string bass. The grids featured in this book can be used for any bass guitar, and the shapes of the patterns never change. All you have to do is read this book with an open mind, and I assure you, you'll be playing bass ... and quickly. Of course, you can master the bass even more quickly if you use this book in conjunction with private lessons from an experienced bass guitar teacher who can help you tackle specific weak spots in your playing. And any experience you've had playing another instrument won't go to waste, either.

Icons Used in This Book

In the margins of *Bass Guitar For Dummies*, 3rd Edition (as in all *For Dummies* books), you find icons to help you maneuver through the text. Here's what the icons mean:



TIP

This icon points out expert advice to help you become a better bassist.



WARNING

Be careful! This icon helps you avoid doing damage to the instrument, yourself, or someone's ears.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Brace yourself for some technical facts and information that may come in handy some day. If you want, you can skip over this stuff — and still not miss a beat.



REMEMBER

Certain techniques are worth remembering. Take note of the information that's highlighted by this icon.



PLAY THIS

This icon helps you better understand what you're hearing when you listen to the audio samples and watch the videos of the different techniques.

Beyond the Book

This book provides a solid foundation for learning bass guitar, but you can find many more resources on Dummies.com:

- » There are more than 100 audio tracks that accompany the chapters of this book. I also give video demonstrations of more than 30 key lessons. You can download the audio tracks and watch the videos at www.dummies.com/go/bassguitar.
- » You can download the book's Cheat Sheet at www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/bassguitar. It's a handy resource to keep on your computer, tablet, or smartphone.
- » You can read interesting companion articles that supplement the book's content at www.dummies.com/extras/bassguitar. We've even included an extra top-ten list.

Where to Go from Here

Where do you go from here? Well, to Hollywood Bowl, of course! Maybe not right away ... but, hey, never give up your dream. If you don't have a bass guitar yet, skip to [Chapter 15](#) to see what's in store for you. ("What's in store for you" ... get it? It's the bass shopping chapter.) If you're a beginner, you have a bass guitar, and you're ready to play, skip to [Chapter 2](#) and start getting your instrument in tune (followed by getting your hands into shape). If you're already playing bass guitar, start reading [Chapter 5](#) with your bass guitar in hand, and then enjoy playing your way through the rest of this book.

No matter how well you currently play, this book can help you improve your skills. If you're picking up the bass for the first time, remember that bringing music into your life may well be the first step in a lifelong journey of musical enrichment. If you want to delve