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History And Use Of The Bass Guitar

By Sandra Stammberger

The bass guitar has been derived from the double bass, which was used in the late 1950's. Having 4 strings, these instruments add the lower tones to a musical performance. Experimentation with the bass had started as early as the 1920's. It wasn't until the 50's however, that a proper bass instrument was formed.

In the mid 20th century jazz became popular. As double bass's were used those days, they were often not heard due to the lack of amplification. The drums, banjos and other instruments in the band drowned out the sound of the bass. Until the 1950 when the first electric bass came into existence with modern amplification techniques.

The bass guitar is played like all guitars with the player holding it close to his body in a horizontal position. The strings are plucked with hand or with the plectrum. In the 1970's, the slapping technique became popular.

Today, the bass guitar ranges from 4 strings up to 11 strings. The 5, 6 and 7 strings providing the mid range while the 11 string starts from a lower than human hearing going up to a very high active. Electric bass guitar players use various configurations. These changes are made by using preamplifiers and speaker sets. Signal processors are also varied to provide new soundscapes.

In night clubs, combo amplifiers are used. These amplifiers are fixed with single loud speakers to make them portable and effective.

The body of the instrument can be of wood or graphite. A wide range of finishing is applied to make it look good. IT can be colored or simply clear white. The work done on the body is fine engineering and delicate balances have to be maintained.

A hot debate rages on what to call this instrument. For non musicians, the term bass guitar is common, while hard core players like to call it electric bass or simple electric bass. Slowly but surely however, this instrument has gathered a large following which likes to use its own jargon.

History And Use Of The Bass Guitar

The electric bass is a part of modern country music, post 1970 jazz and funk. Used mainly to provide backing, it adds a depth to the music. This instrument has added a whole new color to our musical pleasure. In sole music particularly, the bass guitar is effective.

Are sound effects used? Well, yes and no. As the bass guitar sets the tone for the rest of the band, sound effects are not often used, unlike electric guitars. Modern bands however have started experimenting with distortion units to add a new flavor to the bass and low key that they provide behind the music.

As we go into a new century, electric bass's become more and more popular. All bands use it today to add a subtle background. Many groups like U2 even use it to give a haunted feeling increasing emotional attachment with the music. Newer techniques have made this instrument a crucial part of any musical group today.

Sandra Stammberger is the editor of The Bass Guitar. Get detailed information on playing guitar along with comprehensive resources on the best guitar online shops and guitar supply.

<http://www.thebassguitar.info>

Your Free Acoustic Guitar Lesson

By Anna Rowe

Here is a free acoustic guitar lesson to help you improve your guitar playing skills quickly.

This guitar learning technique will teach you how to fingerpick folk-style, but in a Latin rhythm in the key of A. This Latin rhythm has eight quick beats to the measure, and is accented on the first, the fourth, and the seventh beats.

This guitar lesson will focus on using your right hand, and your thumb will play the accented beats. Your fingers will follow. Finger number one, the index finger, is to pluck the third string on beats two, five, and eight, and fingers two and three will pluck the second and first strings together on beats three and six.

In the following acoustic guitar lesson, you will chord an A for the first sample. To keep it simple, let's take the beats one at a time...

Acoustic Guitar Lesson – 7 Steps to Chord an A:

- 1) First, the thumb plucks the open A string for a bass note.
- 2) Next, finger one plucks the third string, which is sounding an A.
- 3) Then fingers two and three pluck strings two and one together. These two notes will be a C-sharp

and the open top E string.

4) Now the thumb immediately plucks string four, which is an E and works as an alternate bass string. That's beat 4.

5) Now beat five is just like beat two, with finger one plucking string three.

6) Beat six is just like beat three, with fingers two and three plucking the top two strings.

7) On beat seven, use the thumb to pluck the third string, then finish up with fingers two and three plucking the top two strings again.

When you've practiced the acoustic guitar lesson above a few times, it will become second nature to you to pluck this Latin rhythm.

Your next part of this acoustic guitar lesson is to try the same finger picking pattern using an E chord. Since the open sixth string is your bass note, you'll pluck it on beat one. Follow through with the rest of the measure in the same pattern, except your thumb plucks the fifth string on beat four and the fourth string on beat seven. When you've mastered the E chord the acoustic guitar lesson moves on to the D chord. With D, you can just use the fourth string for your thumb-plucked bass note each time.

Acoustic Guitar Lesson Tip:

Here's a fast acoustic guitar lesson secret for making the above finger-picking style of guitar playing a little fancier. Chord an A. Here's how...

When you pluck the fourth beat of the measure lift your chording finger – it's the ring finger on your left hand. Lift it and then press it while plucking. You'll get a little slur at the start of the note. This sounds great when you build speed up. Try the same little trick when playing the key of E, too. It will be finger two that you will be lifting.

Finally in this free acoustic guitar lesson for you, put everything together in a chord sequence. Play A for two measures, then D for two measures. Play E for two measures, then back to D for two measures, then A to finish up.

Article by Anna Rowe. Visit her

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site to get guitar playing tips and

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