

The Chromatic Guitar Method

Joseph Nicholas Burke

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTERS OF ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN MUSIC

YORK UNIVERSITY

TORONTO, ONTARIO

MAY 2015

© JOSEPH BURKE 2015

Abstract

The Chromatic Guitar Method was written to help beginning guitar students better understand music theory and music notation.

In my 17 years of experience teaching guitar I have found common pitfalls associated with the standard guitar method books used in most institutions.

There is a need for a new pedagogical method for guitar as the standard methods which take a diatonic approach to instruction create confusion and are simply out of date. These methods are no longer relevant to the modern guitar student

In establishing a context for my pedagogical method, the philosophical foundations of using a chromatic approach will be examined as well as the challenges faced by musical educators using alternative pedagogical methods.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Bill Thomas, and my second reader Michael Coghlan for all their guidance and input during this past year. I would also like to express my gratitude to all of the staff at York University for their support over the past 6 years that I have been a student.

Tere Tilban-Rios has provided me with a lot of advice and assistance throughout the year and deserves special mention.

Thanks to Tommy Kho for designing the cover of my book, and heartfelt thanks are extended to my cousin Matthew Antonocci for generously offering his time to reformat and illustrate the content within *The Chromatic Guitar Method*.

Finally, I would like to thank my mother Loredana for the push she gave me to return to university after a 10-year hiatus. Without her none of this would have been possible.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Table of contents	iv
List of Figures	vi
Introduction	1
Issues in Current Methods.....	4
Conceptual Challenges	7
Notational Challenges	10
Repertoire Challenges.....	16
Educational Influences.....	18
My Method.....	23
Chromatic Approach.....	27
Pitch Identification	29
Rhythm.....	31
Tonality.....	33
Chords	36
Etudes.....	39
Conclusion	50
Bibliography.....	52
Appendix	54

List of Figures

Figure 1	Guitar Layout and Tuning	7
Figure 2	Guitar Fretboard Layout in 5ths.....	9
Figure 3	Example of Guitar Score	10
Figure 4	Example of Guitar Tablature	13
Figure 5	Fretboard Chart Example 1	14
Figure 6	Fretboard Chart Example 2	15
Figure 7	Ode to Joy.....	25
Figure 8	Exercises 1 and 2 of The Chromatic Guitar Method.....	28
Figure 9	Exercises 1-9 of The Chromatic Guitar Method.....	30
Figure 10	Exercise with Rhythmic Notation	30
Figure 11	Examples 1-3 of Hal Leonard's Guitar Method	31
Figure 12	The Major Triad in Root Position.....	37
Figure 13	The Elders of Lore	40
Figure 14	The Black Hen Jig.....	42
Figure 15	The Cobbler's Ditty	43
Figure 16	The Clumsy Squire	44
Figure 17	Speedy's Double Time Blues	45
Figure 18	The Battle Song	46
Figure 19	A Song for Michael	47
Figure 20	Bill's Blues	48
Figure 21	Lavien.....	48

Figure 22	Catch a Wave.....	49
Figure 23	Little Brother.....	49

Introduction and Motivation

I have been a guitar instructor for over 15 years. In this time, I have noticed common challenges which face most students I have taught. One of these challenges is not limited to beginner guitar students, and that is the ability to read music notation. While I have studied the guitar for over twenty years, even I still cringe when asked to read a piece of sheet music especially when the key signature displays several sharps and flats. My "guitar instructor" experience includes the teaching of literally hundreds of students and I can confidently state that notational literacy is the one area of music education where guitarists struggle most.

There is an old joke that has become well known amongst many musicians who play popular and jazz genres - "how do you get a guitar player to stop playing?" The punch line "you place a piece of sheet music in front of them" says much about the nature of guitar players as musicians and also offers a somewhat negative but commonly held perception of the "guitar playing culture" in general. There are numerous similar jokes about various instrumentalists and vocalists but this particular "guitarist" joke, like any good joke, has an element of truth to it. Most guitar players, no matter their training or musical preferences, are not competent when it comes to sight reading music scores. Although sight reading skills vary greatly across all instruments, and depend to a large extent on the individual performer, it is simply a fact of life that guitar players are especially poor readers.

In my opinion, the cause of this are the teaching materials used by many guitar instructors. There are several standardized publications common to learning guitar used by numerous musical institutions. Two of the most common publications offer an approach that is presented in the books: Mel Bay's *The Modern Guitar Method* and Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method*. Arguably, this approach is the most flawed. These two methods are essentially identical and, in my opinion, are major factors in beginners losing interest and, ultimately, quitting guitar lessons. It should be noted that the first of these two books was published in 1948 and little has changed in the content contained in both books since this original publication date. Many new techniques such as travis picking, string skipping, hammer-ons, pinch harmonics, economy picking, chanking, string bending, palm muting and tapping, methods such as hum and strum and the Suzuki method, and approaches such as Edwin Gordon's teachings on the process of developing the ability to audiate, have been developed in music education since 1948 and the guitar itself has evolved in numerous ways through the development of microphonic guitar pickups and effects units have aided the guitar to be now quite commonly found as an ensemble instrument.

In 1950, a radio repairman named Leo Fender invented the first mass produced electric guitar, "The Fender Broadcaster". Up to this point electric guitars were expensive instruments to produce. Fender's innovative bolt on neck design was immediately adopted by other guitar manufacturers leading to a market flooded with economical electric guitars. Developments in amplification technology

allowed the guitar to be heard at larger venues thus being exposed to more people. In the 1960's manufacturers began experimenting with devices that manipulated the guitar's audio signal path producing new sonic possibilities for the instrument. Several devices (referred to as effects pedals) were paramount to the creation of new genres of guitar centric music. International music distribution during the past 60 years has revealed many new genres of music dominated by the guitar's versatility. It is my firm belief that the above mentioned method books have become obsolete and are not viable for teaching the guitar students of today.

In response to an obvious need I have taken it upon myself to develop a new pedagogical method for guitar which is sensitive to some of the common pitfalls in guitar education and incorporates techniques developed for music education such as incorporating keyboard literacy, which are not currently present in guitar specific learning systems. This paper will examine the conceptual, notational and repertoire challenges that learning guitarist face and will show how these challenges were addressed in the conception of my pedagogical method.

Issues in Current Methods

As mentioned previously: The most widely used and highest selling guitar method book currently on the market is Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method*. An explanation of the flawed approach of this method book, and any other using a similar approach, is best demonstrated by sharing an analogy. Imagine you have been given the task to teach an intelligent alien life form about our number system. Your objective is to teach the digits 1 through 9 and what each digit represents. Instead of starting from the number 1 and progressing through each number in order you must instead start from the number 7. Once you teach the concept of what 7 represents you can move on to 8 followed by 9. The next sequence of numbers you must teach are 4, 5 and 6. Finally, you would teach what the numbers 1, 2 and 3 represent. I think anyone would agree that this would be a very illogical approach to teaching our alien student about our number system, but sadly, this is the exact approach the above mentioned method books use to teach the concept of the western musical notation system.

Instead of designating numbers to notes in music we designate letters of the alphabet from A to G. The first three notes these methods teach are E, F, and G. This is followed by B, C and D. Which is followed by G and A. This is very confusing for non musicians as it is taking something familiar such as the alphabet and scrambling it up with a 3 steps forward and 6 steps backwards pattern. Would it not make more sense to simply start at A and learn the notes in order A,B,C,D,E,F,G? It appears that

the only reason these books take this approach is so the student can quickly learn to read and play simple pieces such as: "Old MacDonald", "Mary Had a Little Lamb", "Down In The Valley", and "The Red River Valley". Also, these systems do not utilize each finger of the left hand equally which leads to certain fingers developing more strength than others. This creates issues in a players ability to play passages smoothly and consistently that require all 4 fingers to be used. Why would anyone use these archaic method books with out-dated songs when there have been so many developments in music education over the past 65 years? I speculate the reason for this is to save on publishing costs, as perhaps no one owns the copyright on the above-mentioned songs.

The other increasingly popular approach being used today is to abandon standard music notation in favour of a more aural approach. Teachers use a numerical system known as tablature to show students where to press their fingers on the guitar to learn whatever song the teacher thinks the student can manage. This approach does not set clear long term goals for the student to work towards. It is the same as learning a language by memorizing the sounds of words phonetically and without context opposed to learning to read words and decipher their meanings. It really leads nowhere, has no structure and, to be quite frank, doesn't even require a teacher as anyone with internet access can obtain this information using this free resource.

“Hum and strum” is another popular technique used to teach guitar and this is a common approach in many elementary school programs. Programs of this type are usually designed for students who will study guitar for only one year. The typical objectives of the hum-and-strum class are to enable the student to accompany folk, or popular songs, with basic first-position chords (Bartle, 1990). In addition, students may be encouraged to develop some harmonic and rhythmic concepts. The hum-and-strum approach gives students skills that have ongoing utility in leisure-time music making. Although the objectives of the hum-and-strum program are valid, in his article *Guitar Class: A Multifaceted Approach*, Bartle argues that they often fall short of attaining many common goals of music education such as developing a comprehensive knowledge of music through performance, creation, and description. The skill most commonly neglected in this method is reading notation. This, in addition to a neglect of melodic skill and of concept development, inhibits the students' achievement of their potential levels of musicianship (ibid.).

Conceptual Challenges

As guitarists attempt to learn to play notes on the fretboard, they can easily encounter a communication issue which Eli Harrison describes in his article *Challenges Facing Guitar Education* as "directional reversals." Figure 1 illustrates a guitar in standard tuning. The string positioned at the vertical top of the guitar produces the lowest pitches. The string at the bottom produces the higher pitches. When instructed to move up a string (up being used to describe the raising of pitch) students will often misunderstand this to mean move up in "direction" resulting in the playing of a lower pitched string. The frets of the guitar neck create a similar misdirection phenomenon. Guitarists must physically descend the fret board from the head of the guitar down towards the body to raise the pitch of a string. Asking a beginner guitarist to move two frets higher may result in them playing a note a whole tone lower. See Figure 1.

Figure 1



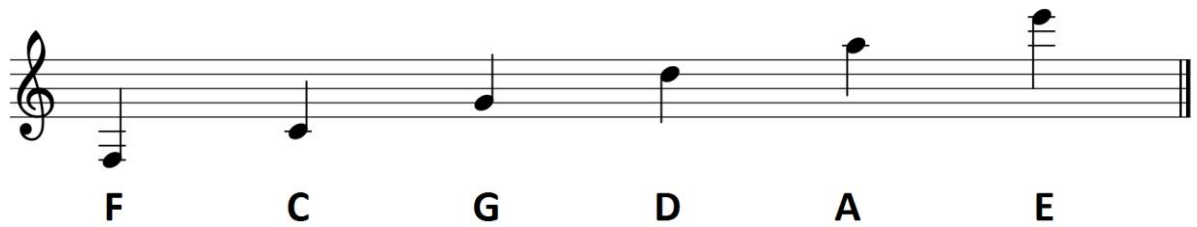
Learning simple diatonic melodies can be difficult on guitar for several reasons. First, beginning guitarists must immediately interpret the differences between tones and semi-tones to play diatonic melodies, unlike beginning pianists, who can play consecutive white keys to produce melodies in the key of C major (Harris, 2010). Second, the large pitch range of each string of the guitar creates a condition where the same note can be played on several different strings. Concert middle C, which is in the middle register of the guitar, can be played on 5 different strings spanning 19 frets in range. The average note on the guitar has 2.8 locations (Goodrick, 1987).

To further complicate matters, the intervals between the strings are not identical. Most strings are spaced by a perfect fourth, but the interval between the G and B strings is a major third. The guitar is tuned in this manner to facilitate easier fingerings patterns to execute chords. Students who approach the fretboard by visualizing patterns across all six strings at once need to account for a missing half step when moving between the G and B string. Figure 2 illustrates a series of perfect fifths starting from F. Notice that the distance between the D and A are an additional fret apart in distance.

Unfortunately, there is no solution to solve these conceptual challenges short of renaming the parts of the guitar and changing the manner in which it is tuned. Neither of these solutions are practical. Instead, an instructor must be sensitive to

these conceptual challenges and must be diligent in correcting their students when these conceptual errors are made.

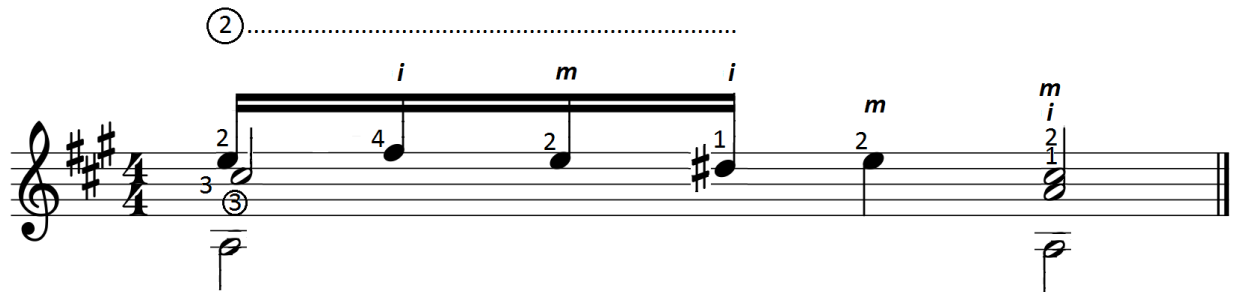
Figure 2



Notational Challenges

Staff notation is an indispensable method of communicating music. Unfortunately, the range of possible fingerings gives less experienced guitarists an extra sight-reading puzzle. Although string and brass families share similar fingering concerns; their long- standing role in orchestral music has brought them into a comprehensive tradition of staff-reading. Also, they are less frequently expected to produce chords or harmony in a solo setting, often a prominent role of the guitar. Guitarists have developed additional forms of music notation to approach the fretboard. Fingerstyle guitarists often use staff notation with expanded markings. Figure 3 is an example of such a score.

Figure 3



In this example, numbers by each notehead indicate which finger to use. A number or letter with a circle tells which string will voice the given pitch. Italicized letters by each notehead show which finger will strum the string: p for the thumb, i for the index finger, m for the middle finger, and a for the ring finger. Stems pointing down also indicate a thumb stroke. Even with adaptations, staff notation poses several challenges. Guitar typically uses only the treble clef, occasionally requiring

extended passages of upper or lower ledger lines for the extreme low and high ranges of the guitar. Some chords may even span across both lower and upper ledger lines. Furthermore, adapted staff notation still emphasizes pitch over fretboard clarity; a guitarist must translate the given pitch and fingering to a precise location on the fretboard.

In his book *Learning Sequences in Music: A Contemporary Learning Theory*, Edwin Gordon argues that rhythm notation, as it was intended historically, assists musicians in recalling music they have already learned. Gordon (2007) believes that “because rhythm notation is necessarily imprecise- the ebb and flow of music being impossible to notate- rhythm is truly understood through body movement”(p. 77). This example is especially evident in guitar performance as the right hands swinging motion to sound the strings must have a fluid motion to play in the instrument at a steady tempo. Being such a populist instrument, people have been exposed to all levels of guitar performance and have become accustomed to rhythmic variance in guitar performance.

There are many musicians today who avoid learning to read music because they feel it will stunt their creativity (Shwartz, 1993). Popular contemporary guitarists such as Kurt Cobain have reinforced this concept. In a 1993 interview with Edgar Klüsener Cobain states:

I have no concept of knowing how to be a musician at all, whatsoever. I mean, I don't know the names of chords to play. I don't know how to do major and minor chords on a

guitar at all. I couldn't even pass Guitar 101. Folk Guitar 101. Everyone knows more than I do. I never learned how to read the music. If you go by a text you're pretty limited, you know...

I'm a songwriter. I have no desire to become any better of a guitar player. I'm not into musicianship at all. I don't have any respect for it, I just hate it. To learn how to read music or to understand arpeggios and Dorian modes. It's just a waste of time. It gets in the way of originality. (Cobain, 1994)

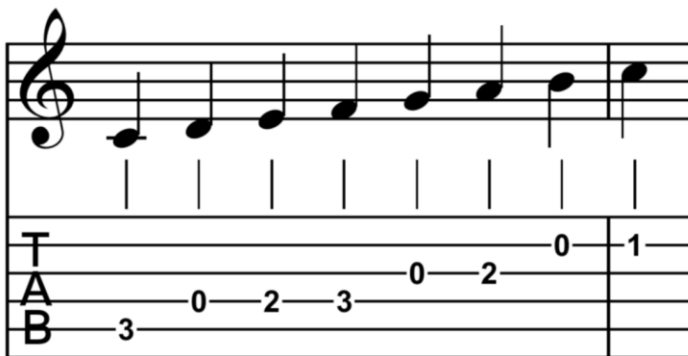
It can be argued that Cobain's views on notation and music theory have no academic merit, but it is often difficult to dissuade a student from forming a similar opinion. Especially when the student idolizes and aspires to emulate the guitarist making such claims.

Although many guitar teachers use written music to instruct, many still rely heavily upon demonstration as their main instructional mode. Perhaps a part of this concept derives from a sort of "romanticised primitivism" since teachers and students feel it is more 'real' to learn from a live demonstration than from a printed text, but part of it also comes, according to Shwartz, from the teacher's desire for self-preservation. He points out that if students become too proficient at reading written scores, they will no longer rely on their instructor for information.

Guitarists across several styles use tablature notation. Tablature directly illustrates which combination of frets and strings to play. It resembles staff notation, but has six lines symbolizing the six strings on the guitar. Most modern tablature is written with the highest-pitched string at the top line and the lowest-pitched string at the bottom. Instead of noteheads, numbers show which frets to press. A guitarist

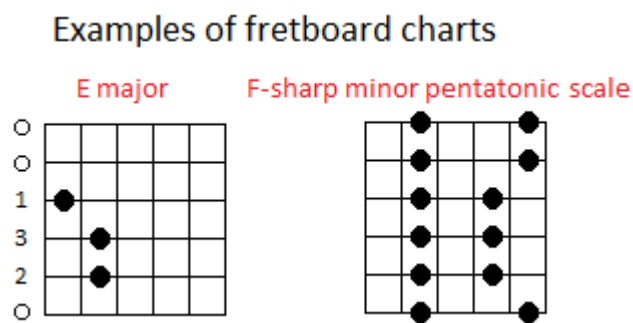
need not understand staff notation to learn a song from tablature. Figure 4 shows the C major scale with staff and tablature notation. Tablature has disadvantages. It does not show the melody as an absolute series of pitches, nor does it use the letter names of notes. Tablature does not clearly indicate rhythms unless it is accompanied by another form of notation. It also does not give a visual representation of pitch range as a number on a string will be in the same vertical position.

Figure 4



A fretboard chart, illustrated in Figure 5, is yet another common form of guitar notation. Fretboard charts usually depict single chords independent of time and rhythm. They can also show extended patterns, like arpeggios and pentatonic scales in a fretboard chart. A grid represents each string and a cross section of frets. Dots indicate where to put one's fingers. Numbers on the side tell which finger to use, the letter O stands for an open string, and an X means to mute or skip the string. If the chord belongs anywhere other than the first frets, the chart will include a fret number as a reference point.

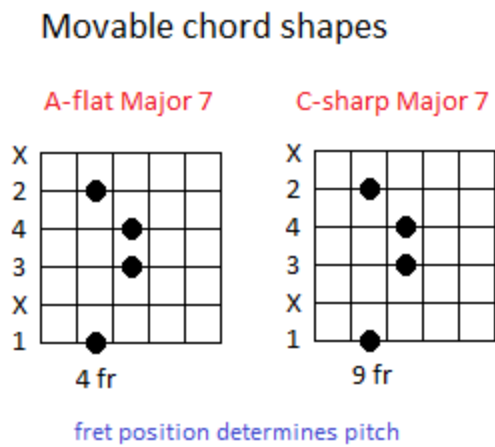
Figure 5



Fretboard charts introduce the idea of movable chord shapes. Figure 6 shows the comparison of an A-flat major seventh chord and a C-sharp major seventh chord. The strings and fingerings are exactly the same; the difference is the starting fret. A guitarist who understands movable chord shapes can easily transpose many songs and chord progressions. The drawbacks of fretboard charts are similar to those of tablature: the absolute pitches are not explicitly given, and rhythmic information is completely absent. Also, fretboard charts must be fairly large to be legible. They also

assume the guitarist is right-handed; left-handed guitarists must make a mirror image. Fretboard charts are more useful as a reference guide than as a performance notation.

Figure 6



Repertoire Challenges

Most guitar instruction is conducted on a one-to-one basis by uncertified, independent teachers. Although there is a Royal Conservatory of Music curriculum for classical guitar, most beginning guitar students are more interested in learning contemporary guitar repertoire and there is currently no curriculum in place which categorizes contemporary guitar pieces into a graded system based on difficulty comparable to the Royal Conservatory of Music system. Most contemporary guitar lessons are conducted face-to-face, and are based on the student's imitation of the teacher's example. (Shwartz, 1993). Popular music education is largely an oral tradition, thus meeting the usual criteria of folk cultures. However, the texts of popular music are available to everyone in their authoritative recorded formats: vinyl records, tapes, CDs, YouTube, etc. The folk process of local oral transmission works differently here; performance technique, the physical motion of playing an instrument, is passed from person to person, mutating in this handing-down as it does in folk culture, but the text, the music itself, does not change. It remains fixed, canonical. The popular music recording serves as an even stricter model than the classical music score (ibid.). The recording is a simulation, a copy for which there is no original score. What the musician who copies a record does is to make the simulation real, to construct a physical, real-time performance where none previously existed (ibid.). Even the musician who performed on a recording, when playing live, is in this position of 'realising' the simulation. Jacques Attali (1985) thoroughly describes this situation in *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*: "today

the performance is only successful as a simulacrum of the recording” (p. 85). In other words, the best a performer can hope to achieve is executing an as close as possible representation of what is recorded. Many transcriptions of guitar performances include music, which is accurate, but unplayable. This 'impossible music', as Bennett (1983) calls it, takes three forms: mistakes, overdubs, and extreme technique (ibid. p. 231). Overdubs and extreme technique refer to recording tricks that are impossible to recreate in real time. Mistakes refer to notes that were probably unintentionally played but have become, by their presence on recordings and in transcriptions, part of the canonical versions of these works. There are numerous cases where guitarist strike an open string while changing position. For example, Jimi Hendrix can be heard striking open strings when switching chords in the recording “Voodoo Chile (slight return)”. Should the student attempt to duplicate what were most likely accidents? (Shwartz, 1993). Hendrix himself is known to have said that he has been imitated so well that he has heard people copy his mistakes (although a citation for this quote can not be found and may just be part of the Hendrix folklore).

Educational Influences

Over the course of my research for developing my method I was inspired by the writings of Edwin Gordon and a concept he describes as audiation. Audiation is a matter of concentrating on one set of musical sounds while at the same time attending to or performing one or more other musical sounds. It is impossible to describe all the ways and combinations of ways musicians audiate. Although music is not a language, the process is the same for audiating and giving meaning to music as for thinking and giving meaning to speech. When you are listening to speech, you are giving meaning to what was just said by recalling and making connections with what you have heard on earlier occasions. At the same time, you are anticipating or predicting what you will be hearing next, based on your experience and understanding. Similarly, when you are listening to music, you are giving meaning to what you just heard by recalling what you have heard on earlier occasions. At the same time, you are anticipating or predicting what you are hearing next, based on your musical experience. In other words, when you are audiating as you are listening to music, you are summarizing and generalizing from the specific music patterns you have just heard as a way to anticipate or predict what will follow. Every action becomes an interaction. What you are audiating depends on what you have already audiated. As audiation develops, the broader and deeper it becomes and thus the more it is able to reflect on itself. Members of an audience who are not audiating usually do not know when a piece of unfamiliar, or even familiar, music is nearing its end. They may applaud at any time, or not at all, unless they receive clues

from others in the audience who are audiating. Through the process of audiation, we sing and move in our minds, without ever having to sing and move physically (Gordon, 2007).

In his paper, *The Pedagogy of Choral Intonation: Efficient Pedagogy to Approach an Old Problem* James M. Jordan states that no other concept is as important to intonation or to musicianship in general as audiation. Jordan stresses the difference between musical memory and audiation. As a choir performs a piece of music it is hoped that they recall the music through the process of audiation as opposed to reproducing what has been acquired through memorization (Jordan, 1987). Jordan believes that confusion between audiation and memorization is to blame for the intonation problems that many choirs face. Ideally, as musicians attempt to read music in rehearsals they should be recalling audiated sounds from the notation they read. Jordan calls this notational audiation. Through the process of notational audiation a musician brings meaning to the notation they read opposed to the notation giving meaning to the notes on the page. Jordan states that there is no easy answer as to how to teach audiation but insists that research over the past 20 years clearly tells us that as music educators we must teach audiation. Choral music education has stressed notational literacy for over 30 years without paying attention to the particulars of efficient musical training. Jordan (1987) believes that choral music students have been forced to “suck” meaning out of music notation thus diminishing its value as a learning tool (p.9).

In his paper *Sound before Sight Strategies for Teaching Music Reading* Charles E Hicks states that teaching music reading is complicated because what takes place in the mind when certain musical tasks are performed has still not been clearly established. Music cognition research builds upon musicology, psychology and neuroscience. Each discipline can be regarded as having made some contribution to the subject, although often in ways that cannot be easily applied or communicated outside that discipline's boundary (Desain et al., 1998). Furthermore, it has not been established that individuals experience the same perceptual process when learning to read music notation.

Hicks believes that before a student is introduced to musical notation they should first be exposed to musical sounds and be able to categorize them into elemental concepts such as melody, harmony, tone colour, rhythm and dynamics. Only once these concepts have been established should notational symbols be introduced. Hicks believes when teachers focus on the principles of notation opposed to the system of notation; the true pedagogical implication of his method become obvious. The first concept Hicks introduces to his students is rhythm. Rhythm is taught through exercises that involve movements such as walking, marching, clapping or tapping to become familiar with pulse and tempo changes. The next concept Hicks focuses on is melody. The student imitates simple melodic lines performed by the teacher. The melodic exercise become more complicated over time to include larger intervallic leaps for the student to familiarize themselves with. Once a teacher is confident in their students ability to perform at a basic level

on their instrument notation can then be gradually introduced. Hicks teaches staff notation in stages. First, note identification on the staff is introduced. Students learn to read simple melodies and are encouraged to perform the melody with varying tempos and rhythms. Sound before sight pedagogy stresses that direct notational symbols should be used before indirect symbols. During this stage of development the student is taught to associate slash marks with note values. A whole note is represented by a single slash within a bar where as half note would be represented by 2 slashes, a quarter note 4 slashes etc. This system allows the student to view a note value as a unit of space within a time line. The slash system is a far more accurate visual representation of rhythm than traditional note values. Once a student develops an adequate grasp of pitch notation note values can be introduced. Hicks suggests teaching students quarter note values initially. He then ties quarter notes to introduce the concept of half notes. Once the student recognizes a half note as 2 tied quarter notes the same method is used to introduce whole notes by tying 2 half notes. The final notational concepts Hicks focuses on are timbre and dynamics.

The writings of Hicks, Jordan and Gordon reinforce that a music instructor's central goal for a student is aiding them in developing the ability to audiate. Although there is no standard method to accomplish this many approaches such as sound before sight and music and movement can be used to give students a solid foundation to develop this ability upon. Although music notation is not a viable tool to teach the ability to audiate directly, it can still be incorporated into the process gradually. I believe that it is necessary for a student to develop the ability to read

notation to become a well rounded musician. The ability to read notation in paramount to a student's ability to analyze music and develop a language to describe theoretical concepts. Hicks' step by step approach to teaching notation had a major influence on my method, and I adopted several of his strategies such as separating rhythm from pitch in the conception of my book.

My Method

No single source can teach a person to play guitar. There are many areas that must be developed to become a well rounded musician with the ability to audiate. Like Hicks, my approach to developing well rounded musicians is to initially separate developing the ability to audiate from the process of learning musical notation. I made a conscious effort to include only original compositions in my method book. This allows the book to be both a tool for developing reading skills as well as a tool for developing the ability to audiate and both of these skills can be worked on at the instructor's discretion.

The first advantage of having no familiar music in my method is: the student is unable to “cheat” and play the examples in the book from auditory memory. In my experience using method books such as the Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* and similar books that use the same approach, I find that students rely less on utilizing their developing reading skills when they attempt to sight read familiar music examples. Students often rely on their inner ear to recall how the music sounds and learn the piece by finding the notes on the guitar opposed to reading the notated score.

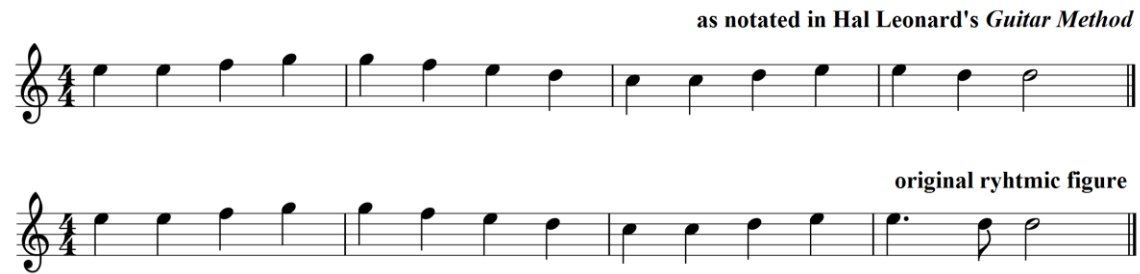
One particular example of this is the tune “Greensleeves”. “Greensleeves” is a familiar tune that has been interpreted in the melodic minor, dorian, and natural minor scales. People are generally familiar with a particular version of this piece of music. Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* presents the piece in the key of D dorian. I

speculate that Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* avoids teaching the melodic minor interpretation of this piece to avoid an accidental. Because there is no mode which is both minor and includes a raised seventh it would be impossible to present a melodic minor version of this piece without having to include an accidental. Often I will observe students substituting notes to create a melodic minor or natural minor tonality to suit the version of "Greensleeves" they are most familiar with. This phenomenon of playing what is familiar opposed to what is written is even more prevalent in rhythmic reading.

An excellent example of students neglecting rhythmic notation is demonstrated in Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method*. In this arrangement of *Ode To Joy* the last bar of each system replaces the original rhythmic figure with a simplified interpretation consisting of 2 quarter notes followed by a half note (Figure 7). The majority of students that I have taught using this book play the last bar of every system with the familiar original rhythmic figure. I feel this is a clear indication that beginner students neglect rhythmic notation when reading a familiar piece of music. As much as learning music by ear is an excellent skill to be developing and utilizing, it is my opinion that an instructor should be in control of what skills are being developed at what time. By having no familiar examples in my method book the instructor can control when they want to develop sight reading skills by introducing a new unfamiliar example to the student.

Figure 7

Ode to Joy



The examples in this book can also be used to develop the ability to audiate as such. I have made a concerted effort to make each example as musical as possible in fact, I treated each example as a short composition. I was conscious in my attempt to end each example with a cadence whenever possible to give the feeling of resolution. Once a particular example in my method book becomes too familiar to a student through repetition the instructor can encourage the student to reinterpret the piece of music by altering the tempo, swinging the rhythmic feel and adding dynamics. Because there is no original reference for the example being interpreted the student is free to be creative and employ any interpretations they choose with no inhibitions in regards to straying from the “expected” presentation of the piece. The instructor can also use the musical examples to demonstrate a particular technique such as fingerstyle, alternate picking and legato. I have experienced emotions as strong as hostility from my students for trying to demonstrate a technique on a familiar song whose original presentation they view as sacred. Many students are unwilling to attempt interpreting a piece of music in any other way

than the original reference. My book avoids all these complications by featuring unfamiliar music thus giving the instructor greater control on what skill they want to focus on during a lesson.

Chromatic Approach

Every music method book that I have encountered takes a diatonic approach to teaching musical notation. As mentioned above this is to enable the student to perform as quickly as possible. This approach works well with most instruments, but creates a problem when learning the guitar. When teaching notation diatonically on guitar, the accidental frets are skipped over. It is difficult to explain to a student why they are not learning what the notes are on these mystery frets without explaining the concept of accidentals or avoiding the question altogether. Explaining the concept of accidentals at the behest of the student is a distraction for the instructor and disrupts accomplishing the goals of the planned lesson.

Because this issue is perceptually unavoidable for a new student, and the question is bound to arise, I decided to explain the mechanics of the guitar and its chromatic nature from the first lesson. By familiarizing the student with the keyboard before they are introduced to the mechanics of a guitar I am able to demonstrate that some notes have accidentals in between them while others, such as E and F as well as B and C, do not.

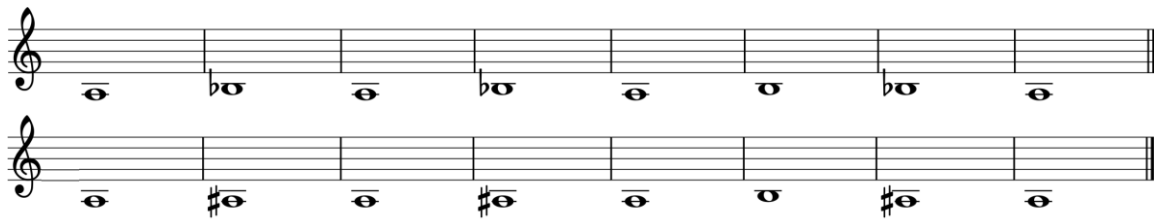
A perceptual advantage to exposing beginners to accidentals early in their development is that they are unable to develop a fear of them. A mechanical advantage of the chromatic approach is: examples can be created that exercise every finger on the left hand equally. This would be impossible to accomplish diatonically,

because there are frets that are skipped when playing diatonically and proper guitar technique dictates that each fret should have a corresponding finger.

A particular challenge with this approach was to keep the examples musical by shifting the key centers of each given example and this presents yet another advantage: students are able to play examples that expose them to the tonal qualities of various keys where as in diatonic methods examples are most often limited to the keys of C major and G major due to the tuning of the guitar and preference to teach students to play in first position.

I alternate between notating pitches with sharps and flats to give each enharmonic equivalent equal attention and representation. Figure 8 demonstrates 2 examples from my method book which are identical in pitch but notated enharmonically of one another.

Figure 8



Pitch Identification

In my experience students focus more on identifying a pitch when sight reading than on the rhythm that is notated. In Mel Bay's *The Modern Guitar Method*, Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method*, Belwin's *21st Century Guitar Method* et al., rhythmic notation and pitch notation are introduced at the same time. Instructors are forced to be relaxed in enforcing rhythmic accuracy with beginner students because they lack the motor skills to execute these passages correctly. Instructors instead focus on students identifying and fretting pitches. Why introduce a concept that the instructor must be forced to ignore?

My solution to this problem is to focus solely on pitch identification in the beginning of my method book. The first set of examples in my book (Figure 9) are to be performed in free time. Once the student has displayed some proficiency with pitch identification and technique the instructor can then proceed to the next section of the book and introduce the students to the concept of rhythmic notation. The instructor then has the ability to reinforce the rhythmic notation more strictly in the following examples throughout the book.

Figure 9

Ex 1



Ex 2



Ex 3



Ex 4



Ex 5



Later on in the book the same notes are used but with rhythms included as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10



Rhythm

Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* introduces multiple note values at once but refrains from using them in combination to create rhythms. Instead the book uses examples that utilize one note value exclusively per bar. Figure 11 is a transcription of the first examples in Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method*. In my experience, students tend to play examples at the fastest tempo they can physically manage in order to curb boredom. This results in note values representing a pulse opposed to a component of a rhythmic figure. For example: a student may attempt example 1 in Figure 10 at 200 BPM, example 2 at 100 BPM and example 3 at 50 BPM resulting in a consistent pulse.

Figure 11

Examples in Hal Leonard's Guitar Method



My method also introduces whole notes, half notes and quarter notes at the same time but my method uses multiple note values example to create rhythmic diversity. If an instructor chooses to focus solely on maintaining a steady pulse earlier examples in the book can be used. The method eventually introduces the concept of subdividing a beat into halves (using eighth and sixteenth notes) and later on into triplets. This approach was inspired by Charles E Hicks technique of teaching rhythm as demonstrated in his article *Sound before Sight Strategies for Teaching Music Reading*. First, note identification on the staff is introduced. Students learn to read simple melodies and are encouraged to perform the melody with varying tempos and rhythms. Once the student is comfortable with pitch identification and playing simple rhythms he introduces rhythmic notation.

Tonality

As previously stated: I made a concerted effort to make all examples as musical as possible and made sure they had a tonal center, but the concept of tonality is not introduced until every chromatic note is learned in the guitar's first position. In Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* the concept of key signatures is not approached until pages 26 and 27. The book first introduces the concept of whole and half steps and then proceeds to introduce F sharp.

On the next page an explanation of key signatures is given as follows:

“Instead of writing a sharp sign before every F in a song, one sharp is placed at the beginning of the line. This is called a **key signature** and indicates that every F in the song should be played as F sharp...” (Schmid & Koch, 2002)

This statement does not properly explain what a key signature is. It also fails to illustrate the concept of a scale being a pattern of tones and semitones represented by the key signature. This is the only mention of key signatures anywhere in the book.

I speculate that the only reason key signatures are even mentioned in Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* is out of a necessity for material to include in the book. Due to the standard tuning of the guitar, G major and E minor are the most common keys for music played in first position. Since the keys of G major and E minor have the

accidental F sharp I believe to include more diatonic material in first position Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* included a lesson brief lesson on the F sharp accidental. If the guitar was tuned to C major/A minor, I doubt there would have been any mention of key signatures in Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* as there would be no shortage of musical examples that could be created in those keys without the need of using accidentals.

As previously stated: my method introduces the topic of tonality after every chromatic note in first position is covered. I then explain how the notes are assembled to create a major scale. I reinforce the concept of the major scale by including solfege in my method book. I find that most people submersed in western culture are familiar with the solfege syllables (do, re mi, fa etc.) and have an understanding of major tonality.

The book then introduces each key in order throughout the circle of fifths. The book does not present the circle of fifths in a conventional manner that relies on mnemonic devices to memorize key signatures. Instead, the book guides the student in constructing major scales based on the Tone-Tone-Semitone- Tone-Tone-Tone-Semitone formula starting from C major and moving through the cycle of fifths. The pattern of how fifths are related is not revealed until a few moves through the cycle and it is up to the student to make the connection how they see fit in the early stages of this exercise. This gives more opportunity for the student to audiate than if they were to memorize key signatures taking the standard approach. The method then

progresses through the circle of fourths in the same manner covering all the keys
with flat key signatures

Chords

In the Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* chords are introduced based on the primary triads of the key of C major and are taught through chord charts. There is no explanation of what a chord is or how a chord is constructed. Amongst the first three chords introduced is a G7. Explaining the concept of a seventh chord to an inquisitive student proves to be quite challenging when they have no idea what a scale degree is let alone what the major scale is. Again, the recurring theme throughout the Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* seems to be the raising of unanswered questions. This method, and any other taking a similar approach, gives students a peak of concepts that they have no intention of ever explaining. This puts the instructor in the position where they must either ignore their student's questions or make a futile attempt to explain complex ideas to someone with no theoretical fundamentals. Awkward discussions such as the example above involving seventh chords often discourage students and overwhelm them. I have had many students say to me that "music sounds way too complicated" with a sigh of defeat as I desperately try to do damage control on a concept addressed far too soon in Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method*.

Chords are easily taught as a product of scales, so my method book waits until the student has a grasp of scales and key signatures before introducing the topic of chords. The Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* may reward the student with the ability to explore the harmonic qualities of the guitar sooner than my method but

my method teaches the student to voice the major triad in a movable voicing which allows them to apply the voicing to any root (Figure 12). This gives the student the ability to play 12 chords with one voicing opposed the Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* which gives the student the ability to only play one chord. My method book then goes on to explain how a major triad is altered to produce minor, diminished and augmented triads. With this information the student can quickly apply these voicings to interpret songs of their choosing. The method book includes a list of suggested strumming and picking patterns to give the student rhythmic ideas.

Figure 12

Major Triad in Root Position

Diagram of a guitar fretboard showing major triads in root position from the 1st to the 5th fret. The strings are numbered 6 to 1 at the top. Frets are labeled on the left. Notes are written on the strings in red. For example, at the 1st fret, the notes are F, A#, D#, G#, B, E. At the 5th fret, the notes are A, D, G, C, E, A.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand pressing down on the strings of a guitar at the 5th fret.

Diagram of a guitar fretboard showing major triads in root position from the 1st to the 12th fret. The frets are labeled on the left. Notes are written on the strings in red. For example, at the 1st fret, the notes are A, D, G. At the 12th fret, the notes are G, B, D.

Often guitarists rely on nothing more than chord charts to interpret a musical score. It was my intention to prepare the student for this common scenario. The book then goes on to explain first and second inversions of the above mentioned triads. This is a far more thorough and productive method of teaching chords than the Mel Bay's *The Modern Guitar Method's*, approach of teaching first position chords in order of their popularity. My approach gives students choices in how they voice a chord because they have 3 voicing options that span the length of the neck where as in Mel Bay's *The Modern Guitar Method* the student is limited to only one root position option per chord. The student using my method is free to discover the relationship between different voicing across the guitar neck and develop a preference for what they feel sounds best to their ear.

Etudes

I felt it was important to include etudes in my method book to give students some practical goals to work towards such as the opportunity to perform, the ability to interpret pieces using dynamics, consolidating multiple concepts and skills introduced within the book, and an opportunity to attempt larger pieces. Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* as well as other books, which take a similar approach, often include pieces at the end of each chapter that are public domain. The issue with this (as previously stated) is that students may rely more on their ear to play these pieces opposed to utilizing their reading skills. For this reason I decided to write my own compositions as they would be unfamiliar to the student and would require them to rely on their reading skills. I took special attention to relate each piece to a specific exercise within the same chapter.

The first etude, “The Elders of Lore” (Figure13), does not appear until page 32 (nearly a third of the way into the entire method). The student is required to work through 83 exercises before attempting to perform a piece. I felt it was necessary to have students learn all the notes in the range of one octave before applying their developing skills to a performance situation. Up to this point the student has learned whole notes, half notes, quarter notes eighth notes, and the repeat sign. This gave me enough variety to compose a piece that had interesting rhythmic elements. I felt that it was important for the student to have a broad range of notational vocabulary before focusing on performance. “The Elders of Lore” was

directly related to exercise 81. Notice that the first bars of both compositions are identical.

Figure 13

Ex 81



The Elders of Lore

Joseph Burke



The second etude, “The Black Hen Jig” (Figure 14) is a composition with a 6/8 time signature. It appears on page 36 of the method book. Between “The Elders of Lore” and the “The Black Hen Jig” the student learns the notes on the second string as well as the 6/8 time signature. Note that the first line of “The Black Hen Jig” is identical to exercise 89. I made an effort to utilize the repeat sign as much as possible in the piece so reinforce my earlier lesson on the function of the repeat sign. In my experience, many of my students ignore repeat signs and I felt it was necessary to include a piece that relies heavily upon them.

Figure 14

Ex 89



The Black Hen Jig

Joseph Burke



The third etude, “The Cobbler’s Ditty” (Figure 15) appears on page 38 of the method book. You will notice that the etudes appear in quick succession of one another as they are designed to keep the students interest and help them to apply each new musical idea presented after the fundamentals featured in the first 89 exercises are learned. “The Cobbler’s Ditty” was designed to have students play arpeggios as well as reinforce the use of the natural sign through chromatic motifs. Note that the first bar of exercise 104 and “The Cobbler’s Ditty” are identical.

Exercise 89 is one of the more challenging exercises in the book and I felt that it was important to have as much repetition as possible to have the student practice the arpeggios contained in both the exercise and etude.

Figure 15

Ex 104



The Cobbler's Ditty

Joseph Burke



The fourth etude, “The Clumsy Squire” (Figure 16) does not appear until page 45 of the method book. Between “The Cobbler’s Ditty” and “The Clumsy Squire” the student is introduced to sixteenth notes as well as the notes on the first string. I felt it was important for the student to have a lot of practice with sixteenth notes before being introduced to a new piece. There are 27 exercises between “The Cobbler’s Ditty” and “The Clumsy Squire” for the student to work on to prepare for the challenges faced in

“The Clumsy Squire”. I made an effort to not only reinforce new lessons in each etude but to also make each etude increasingly more difficult.

Figure 16

The Clumsy Squire

Joseph Burke

The musical score for "The Clumsy Squire" is presented in five staves. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is written in 4/4 time. The first staff contains two measures of music. The second staff begins with a triplet marking over the first three notes. The third staff contains two measures of music. The fourth staff begins with a triplet marking over the first three notes. The fifth staff contains two measures of music and ends with a double bar line.

The fifth etude, “Speedy’s Double Time Blues” (Figure 17) was designed as a conceptual challenge for the student and appears on page 49 of the method book. Between “The Clumsy Squire” and “Speedy’s Double Time Blues” the student is introduced to dotted notes as well as triplets. A blues passage usually consists of swung eighth notes and triplets. Up to this point the concept of swinging has not been introduced to the student. I opted to use sixteenth notes and dotted sixteenth notes to create the swing feel. This way when swing is introduced later in the method book the student already has experience with the swing feel. I also wanted to introduce the feel of quarter note triplets.

Quarter note triplets are never mentioned in the method book, but the student will develop a foundation to understand how to play quarter note triplets by performing this etude.

Figure 17

Speedy's Double Time Blues

Joseph Burke



The sixth etude, "The Battle Song" (Figure 18) appears on page 112 of the book. Between "Speedy's Double Time Blues" and "The Battle Song" the student focuses on learning about key signatures and chords. I believe that by this point the student has enough knowledge to seek out their own resources in the form of musical scores to apply all the skills have learned. "The Battle Song" simply acts as a final challenge for the student.

Figure 18

The Battle Song

Joseph Burke



Up to this point in the method book, the guitar has been approached mainly as a melodic instrument. I felt that it was important to introduce the harmonic aspects of the guitar to the student before ending the book. I also felt it was important to give the student an introduction to how to interpret musical scores. The final five etudes are preceded with an explanation of dynamics and tempo markings. The final five etudes also include fingerings as these are quite commonly found in classical music scores. The first two etudes of the final set of five, “A Song For Michael” (Figure 19) and “Bill’s Blues” (Figure 20) focus on the

E minor chord in first position. The student plays a melodic line followed by a chordal response. The third and fourth etudes “Lavien” (Figure 21) and “Catch A Wave” (Figure 22) focus on the A minor chord in first position. The final etude “Little Brother” (Figure 23) focuses on alternating between the E minor and A minor chord in first position.

Figure 19

A Song For Michael

Joseph Burke

$\text{♩} = 100$

p

gradually slow down

Figure 20

Bill's Blues

Joseph Burke

Figure 20 displays the musical score for "Bill's Blues" by Joseph Burke. The score is written for three staves in 4/4 time, featuring a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first staff begins with a *mf* dynamic, followed by a *f* dynamic, and then returns to *mf*. The second staff starts with *mf*, followed by *f*, and then *mf*. The third staff begins with *f*, followed by *mf*, and then *f*. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and chords, with dynamic markings (*mf* and *f*) indicating the volume. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Figure 21

Lavien

Joseph Burke

Figure 21 displays the musical score for "Lavien" by Joseph Burke. The score is written for four staves in 3/4 time, featuring a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as "gently and soulful" with a quarter note equal to 100 (♩ = 100). The dynamic marking is *p* (piano). The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and chords, with dynamic markings (*p*) indicating the volume. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Figure 22

Catch A Wave

Joseph Burke

$\text{♩} = 120$

mf

Figure 23

Little Brother

Joseph Burke

$\text{♩} = 120$

mf

Conclusion

When I began teaching 17 years ago, I relied heavily upon Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* to teach my students. Although I was unaware of the term at the time, I realized early in my teaching career that books of this nature do not teach a student to audiate. I did however, continue to use Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* to teach students how to read music. I encountered many of the issues Eli Harrison mentioned in his article *Challenges Facing Guitar Education* when using Hal Leonard's *Guitar Method* and eventually abandoned the book altogether in favour of developing my own method to teach musical literacy. After years of trial and error I developed an approach that I felt was worthy of a book.

Much of my research reinforced the teaching strategies I instinctually developed and presented in my first draft of the book. *The Chromatic Guitar Method* is the culmination countless rewrites and was largely influenced by Hick's approach to teaching notation.

Another objective of this book was to cover the fundamentals of music theory in a rational order. No concept was ever introduced for the purpose of creating less challenging parameters to generate musical examples for my book. Initially, my intention was to develop a book that served as a stand alone tool to teach students to play guitar. After reading Gordon's *Learning Sequences in Music: A Contemporary Learning Theory* I realized that a book alone can not teach a student to audiate.

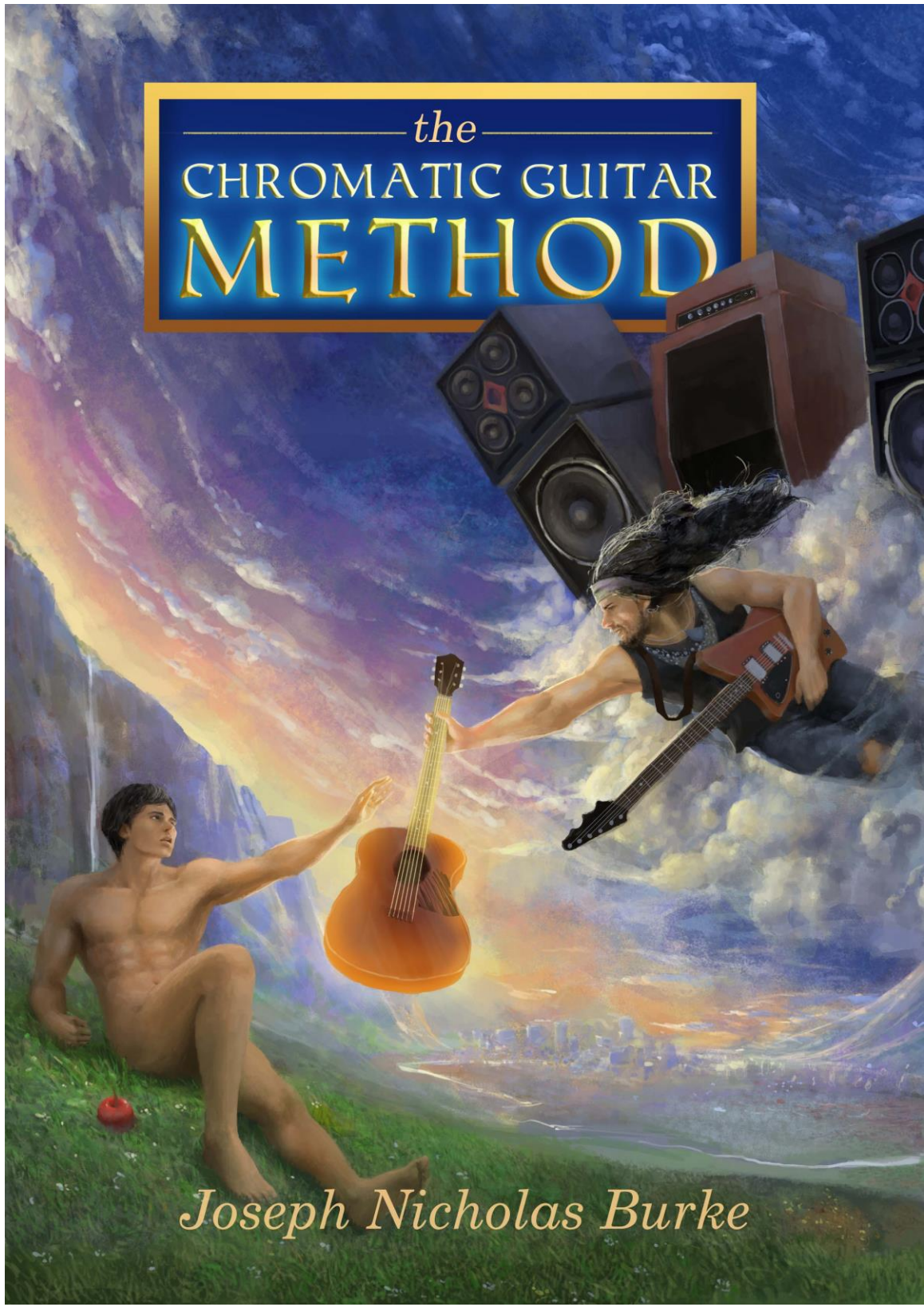
I arrived at the conclusion that *The Chromatic Guitar Method* should not serve as a stand alone “how to” method, but is an excellent tool for guitar instructors to use at their discretion. Due to the amount of planning and the logical flow of how the information is presented; there are numerous applications for this book. For example, the book itself only explains music notation in the guitar’s first position, but there is no reason why the book can not be recycled to develop notational reading skills in every position. Although *The Chromatic Guitar Method* can not teach one to audiate per se; it would make for an excellent tool in aiding an instructor in guiding a student to develop the ability to audiate.

Bibliography

- Bartel, Lee R. "Guitar Class: A Multifaceted Approach." *Music Educators Journal* 77, no. 2 (1990): 40-45.
<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/stable/3397816> (accessed December 27, 2013).
- Bennett, H. S. "Notation and identity in contemporary popular music." *Popular Music*, 3, (1983): 215-341. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S026114300000163X> (accessed January 10, 2014).
- Desain, Peter, Honing, Henjan, Vanthienen, Huub and Windsor, Luke.
"Computational Modeling of Music Cognition: Problem or Solution?" *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 16, no. 1 (1998): 151-166
DOI: 10.2307/40285783 (accessed February 11, 2014).
- Eco, Umberto. *Travels in Hyperreality: Essays*, trans. William Weaver. New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1986.
- Goodrick, Mick. *The Advancing Guitarist: Applying Guitar Concepts and Techniques*. Milwaukee: Third Earth, 1987.
- Gordon, Edwin. *Learning Sequences in Music: A Contemporary Learning Theory*. Chicago: GIA, 2007.
- Harrison, Eli. "Challenges Facing Guitar Education." *Music Educators Journal* 97, no. 1 (2010): 50-55.
<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/stable/40960178> (accessed January 10, 2014).
- Hicks, Charles. "Sound before Sight Strategies for Teaching Music Reading." *Music Educators Journal* 66, no. 8 (1980): 53-67
<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/stable/3395858> (accessed February 10, 2014).
- Jordan, James. "The Pedagogy of Choral Intonation: Efficient Pedagogy to Approach an Old Problem." *The Choral Journal* 27, no. 9 (1987): 9-16
<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/stable/23547288> (accessed March 15, 2015).
- Mr Jim 1972, "Kurt Cobain - Nirvana Rare Full Interview Seattle, 1993". Online video clip. *YouTube*. YouTube, 11 Dec. 2013. Web 31 Mar. 2015
Cobain, Kurt interview by Edgar Klüsener
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rhotCKLwcQ>

Schmid, Will, and Greg Koch. *Hal Leonard's Guitar Method*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 2002.

Schwartz, Jeff. "Jimi: Rock Guitar Pedagogy as Postmodern Folkloric Practice."
Popular Music 12, no.3 (1993): 281-288
<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/stable/931236> (accessed
January 4, 2015).



Introduction

A **Note** is a representation of a pitch.

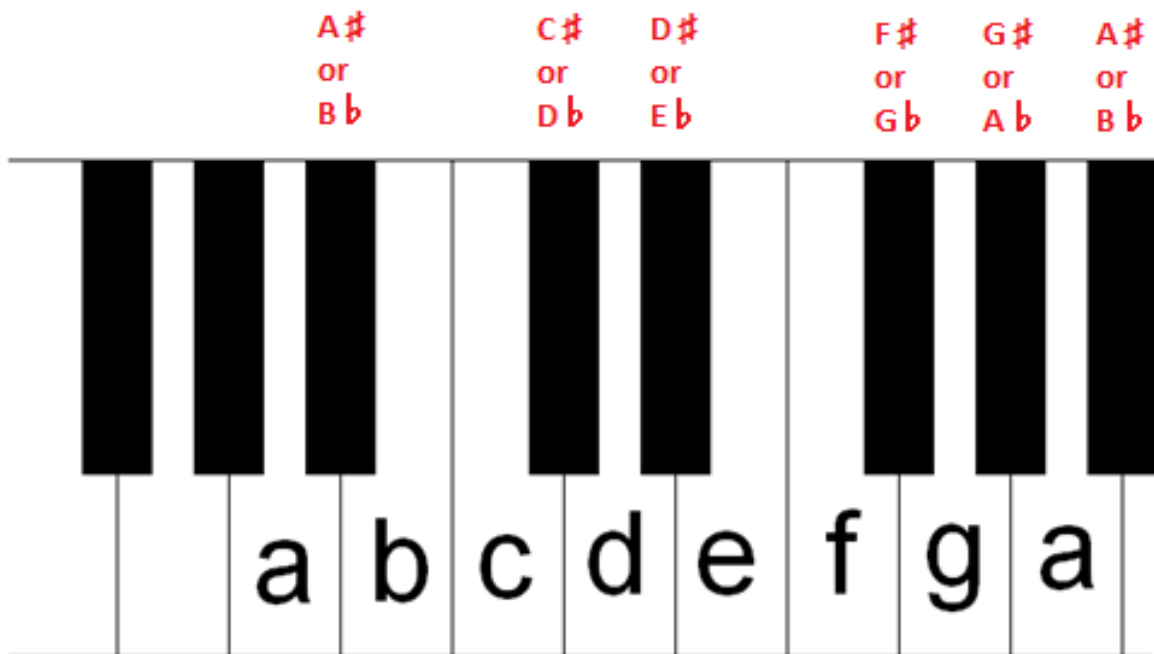
There are 12 notes in western music.

7 notes are called **Natural** notes and are named after letters from the alphabet they are:

A, B, C, D, E, F, and G.

The other 5 notes are called **Accidentals**.

On a keyboard Accidentals are the black keys in between the white keys which are Naturals.



Accidentals are named based on their location on the keyboard.

Each Accidental has two names and can be identified as follows:

The note is said to be SHARP (#) of the note to its left and FLAT (♭) of the note to its right.

Notice that there are no Accidentals between “B” and “C” or “E” and “F”.

The two names of the accidentals are known as **Enharmonic Equivalents**

e.g. A# is the enharmonic equivalent of B ♭ .

SEMI-TONE

A term to identify the relationship between two notes. A **Semi-Tone** is a note's closest neighbor.

TONE

A term used to identify the relationship between two notes. A **Tone** is two semitones in distance.

Examples

C $\sharp$ / D $\flat$ is a semitone higher than C.

B is a semitone lower than C.

D is a tone higher than C.

A $\sharp$ /B $\flat$ is a tone lower than C.

Complete the chart below :

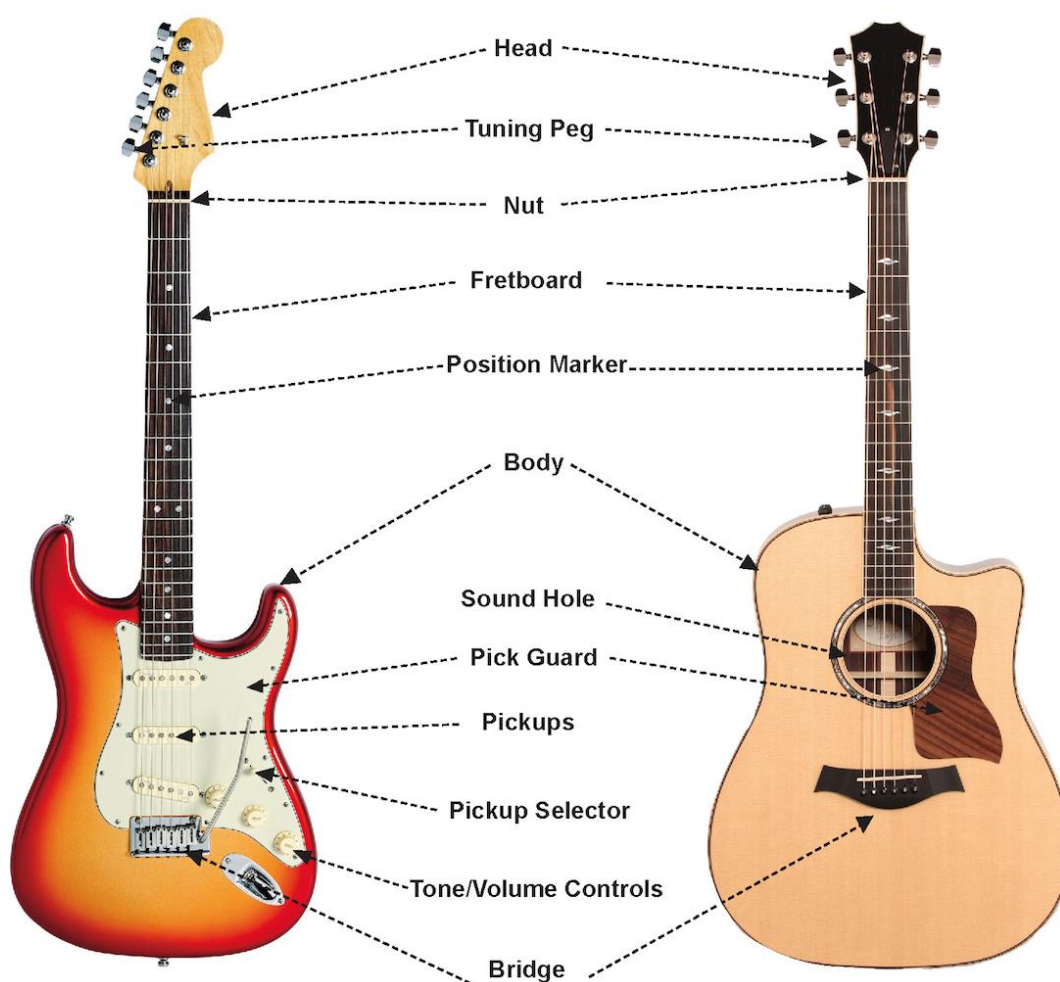
Be sure to include both Accidental names.

You may use the keyboard on the previous page as a reference.

Note	Semitone Higher	Semitone Lower	Tone Higher	Tone Lower
A				
A# / Bb				
B				
C	C# / D b	B	D	A# / B b
C# / D b				
D				
D# / E b				
E				
F				
F# / G b				
G				
G# / A b				

The Guitar

Take a moment to become familiar with the names of the parts of the guitar.



Holding a Pick



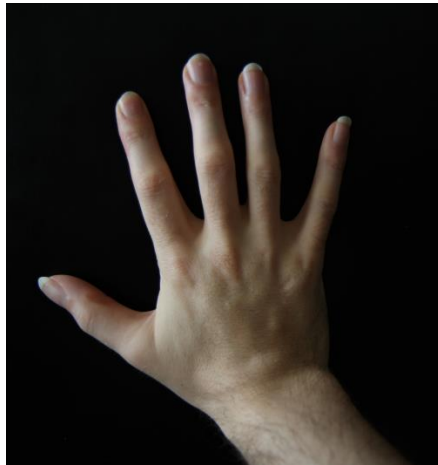
Bend your pointer finger and curl it tightly. Place the pick parallel to the flat portion of your finger and grip the pick with your thumb.

Approximately 3 mm of the tip of the pick should be visible.

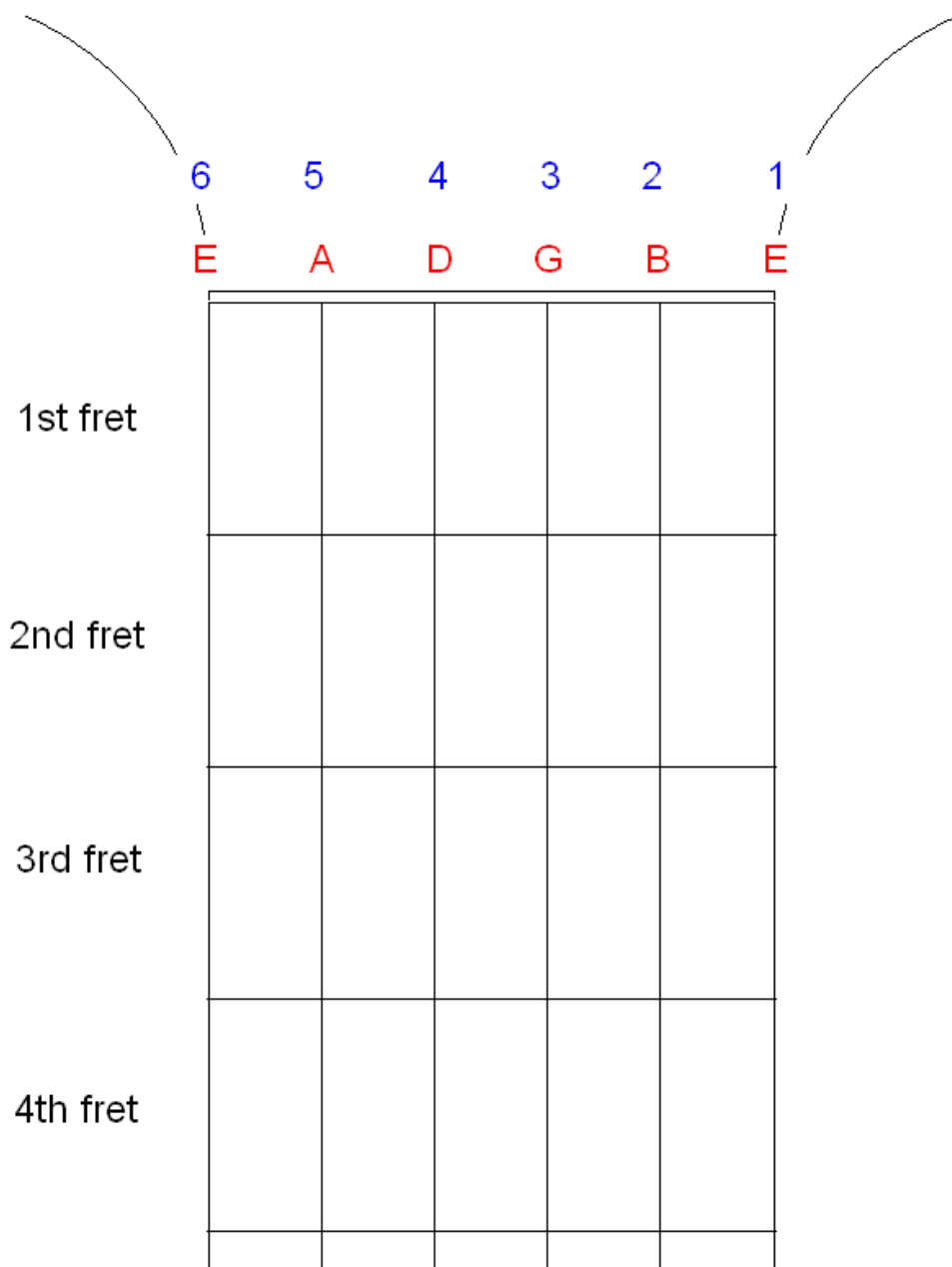
Always alternate your picking with up and down strokes.

Fingerstyle Technique

Practice all of the exercises in this book using a pick as well as using fingerstyle technique. Alternate between your index and middle finger when plucking strings. Also practice alternating between your middle and ring finger.

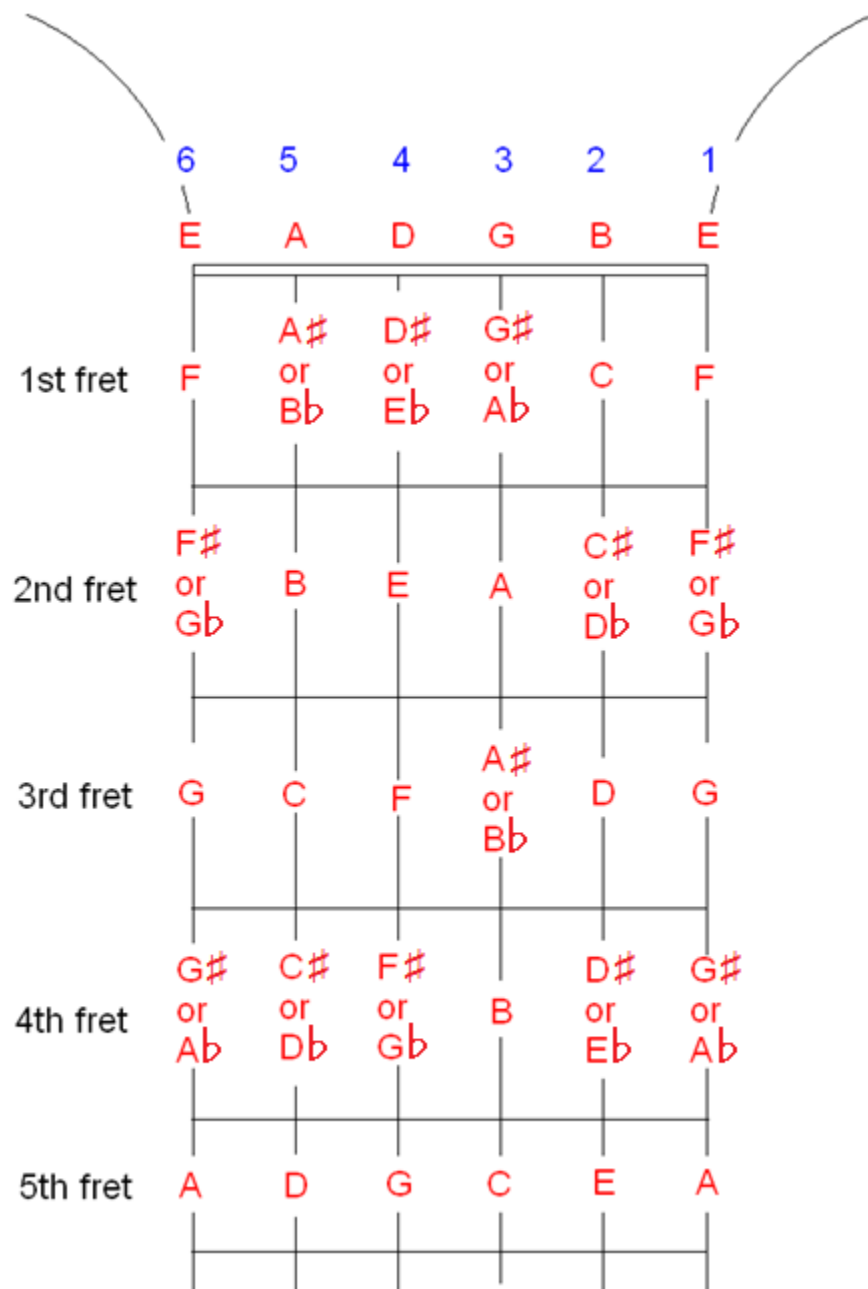


The strings of the guitar are tuned as follows:



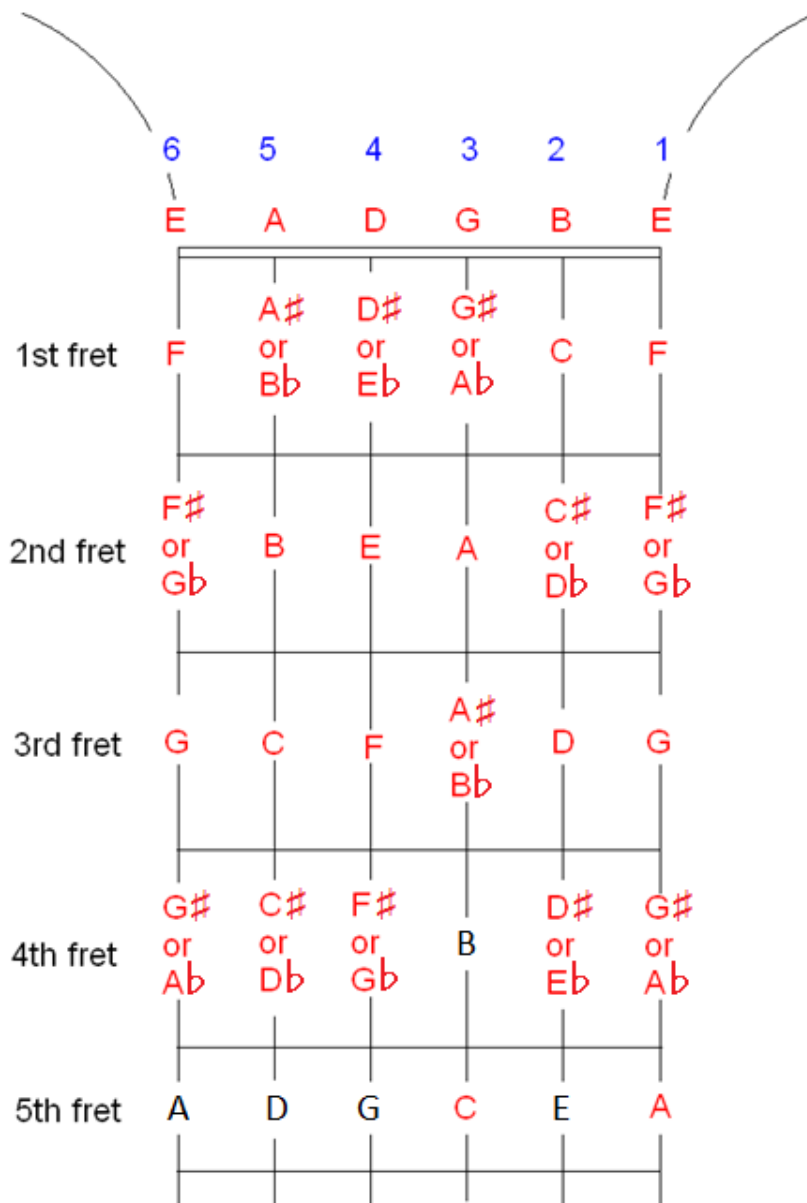
Each fret is a semi- tone in distance apart.

Here are all the notes on the guitar for the first 5 frets:



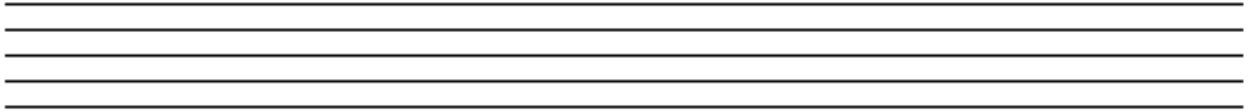
Since we can play the same note on different strings we can use the sixth string to tune the fifth string, the fifth string to tune the fourth string, the fourth string to tune the third string, the third string to tune the second string, and the second string to tune the first string.

This method of tuning is called Relative Tuning.

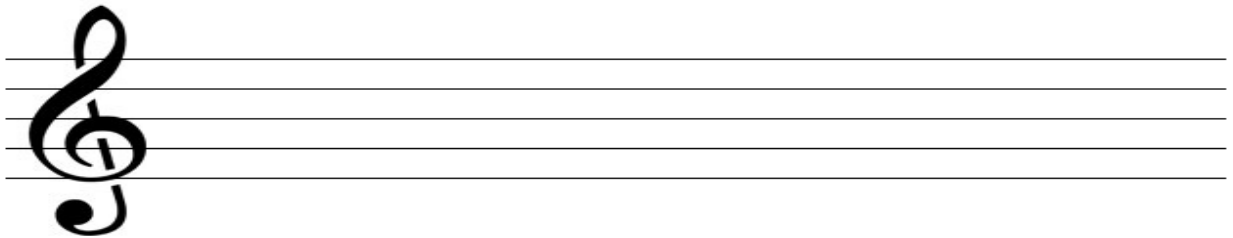


The Staff

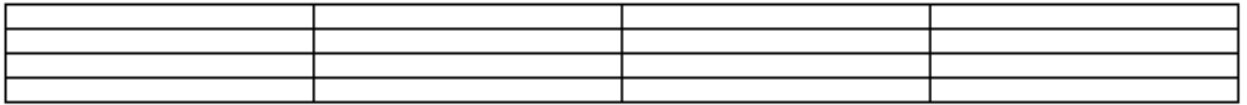
Music is notated on five lines known as the staff.



A clef is placed on one of the lines at the beginning of the staff to indicate the name and pitch of the notes on that line. We use the treble clef for the guitar.

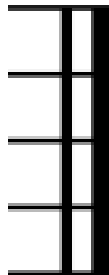


The staff is divided into sections called bars or measures.

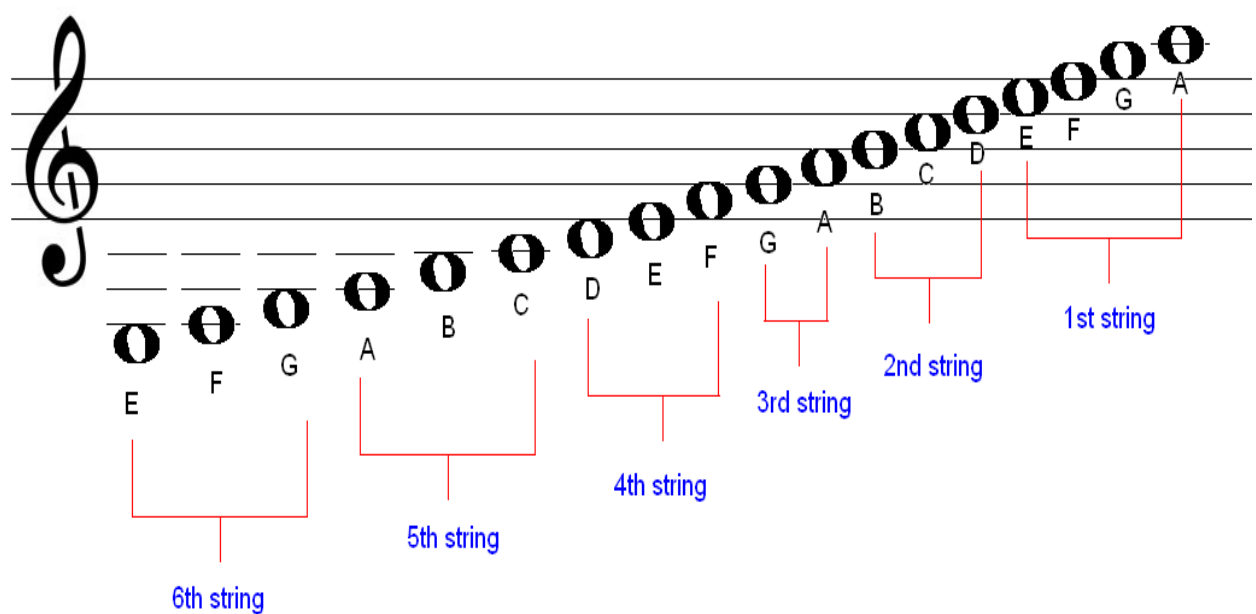


bar lines

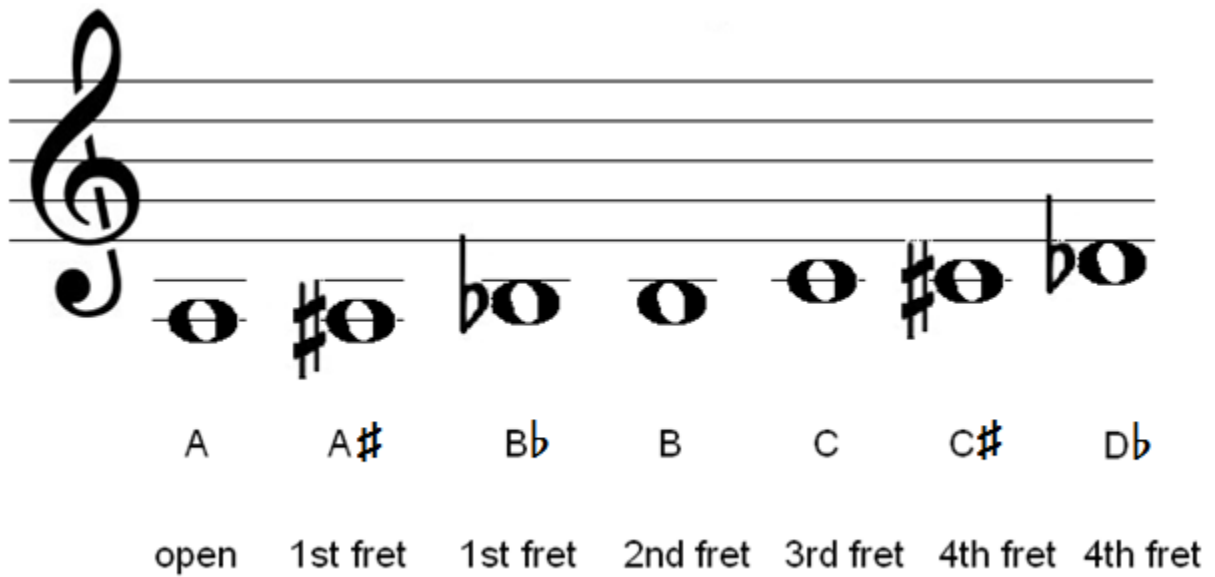
A double bar line with the second line being thicker than the first indicates the end of a piece of music.



We need to extend the treble clef to include the notes on the 6th 5th and 1st strings of the guitar.



Notes on the 5th String



A musical staff in treble clef showing the notes on the 5th string. The notes are: A (open), A# (1st fret), Bb (1st fret), B (2nd fret), C (3rd fret), C# (4th fret), and Db (4th fret). Below the staff, the notes are labeled with their letter names and accidentals, and the fret number is indicated for each note.

Note	Fret
A	open
A#	1st fret
Bb	1st fret
B	2nd fret
C	3rd fret
C#	4th fret
Db	4th fret

Ex 1



A musical staff in treble clef showing a sequence of notes on the 5th string: A (open), A# (1st fret), A (open), A# (1st fret), A (open), B (2nd fret), A# (1st fret), and A (open).

Ex 2



A musical staff in treble clef showing a sequence of notes on the 5th string: A (open), Bb (1st fret), A (open), Bb (1st fret), A (open), B (2nd fret), Bb (1st fret), and A (open).

Ex 3



A musical staff in treble clef showing a sequence of notes on the 5th string: A (open), A (open), A (open), A (open), A (open), A (open), Bb (1st fret), and A (open).

Ex 4



Ex 5



Ex 6



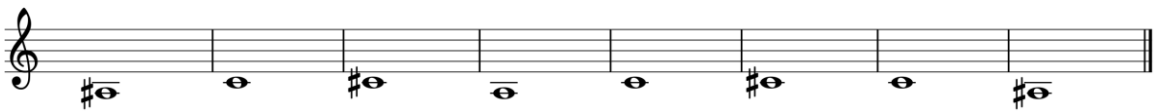
Ex 7



Ex 8



Ex 9



Ex 10



Ex 11



Note Values

Notes on the staff identify not only the pitch to be played but also the duration of time the note is played for.



This is a Whole Note.



This is a Half Note. It is held one half as long as a whole note.



This is a Quarter Note. It is held one quarter as long as a whole note and $\frac{1}{2}$ as long as a half note.

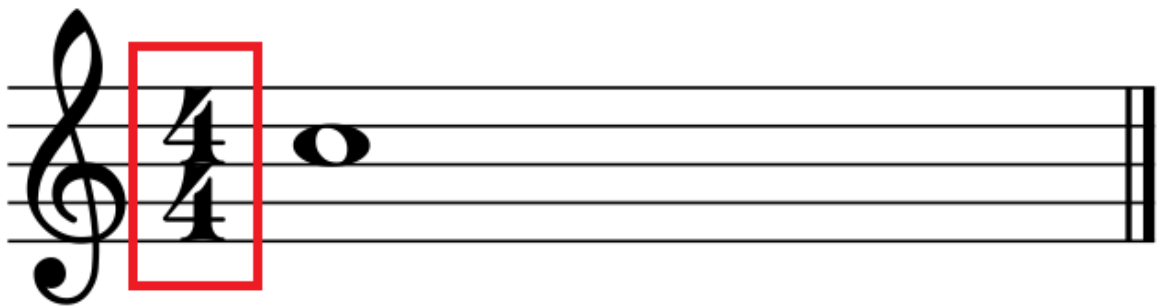
Time Signatures

The **beat** is the basic time unit of music. It indicates the pulse of a piece of music.

The **tempo** indicates the speed of the pulse. It is expressed in Beats per minute or bpm.

A clock for example ticks at 60 beats per minute.

The **time signature** indicates the number of beats per bar as well as which note is designated a beat.



The top number indicates the number of beats per bar.

The bottom number indicates which note is designated a beat. Think of the bottom number as a fraction.

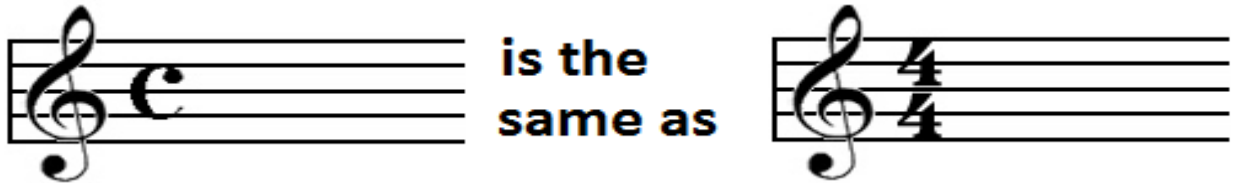
1/1 whole note gets a beat.

1/2 half note gets a beat.

1/4 quarter note gets a beat.

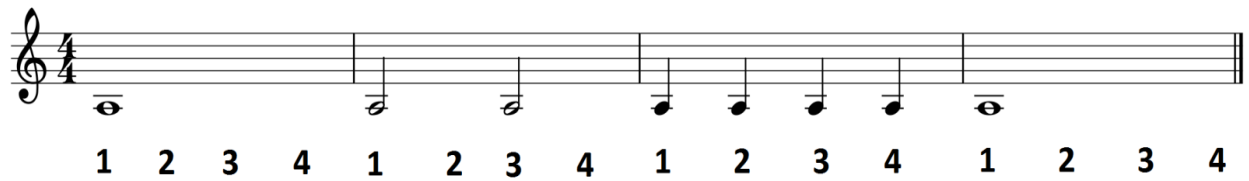
The most common time signature is 4/4. It is also known as **Common Time**.

You may see it written with a **C** instead of 4/4.

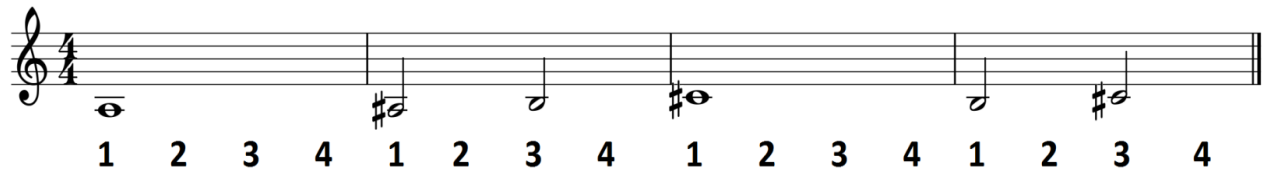


Examples on 5th string in common time

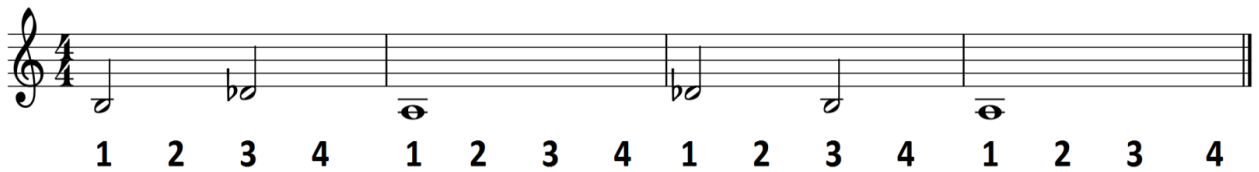
Ex 12



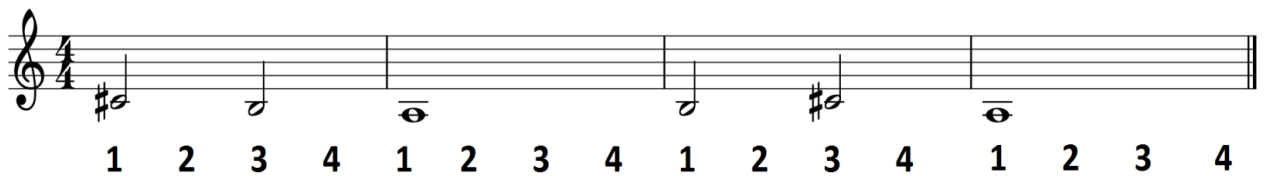
Ex 13



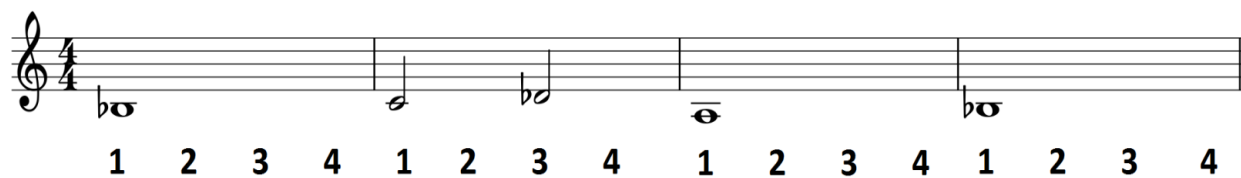
Ex 14



Ex 15



Ex 16



Ex 17



Ex 18



Ex 19



Ex 20



Ex 21



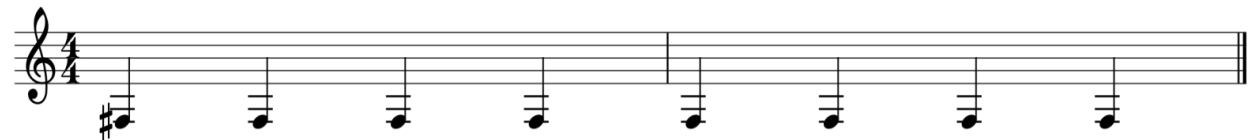
Ex 22



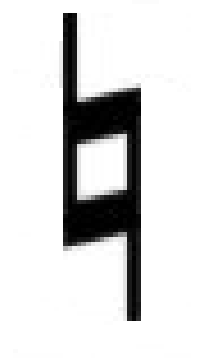
Ex 23



A note that is marked sharp or flat is considered to continue to be sharp or flat for the rest of the bar. There is no need to re-indicate the note as sharp or flat for the duration of the bar. In the example below every note in the first bar is F#. In the second bar F returns to being natural.



The Natural symbol



If a note is marked with the Natural symbol it is considered to return to being natural for the duration of the bar unless indicated otherwise with an accidental. In the example below the first note is G ♭ the second and third note are G Natural, and the fourth note is G ♭ .



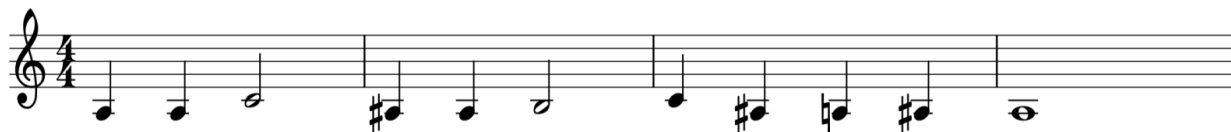
Ex 24



Ex 25



Ex 26



Ex 27



Ex 28



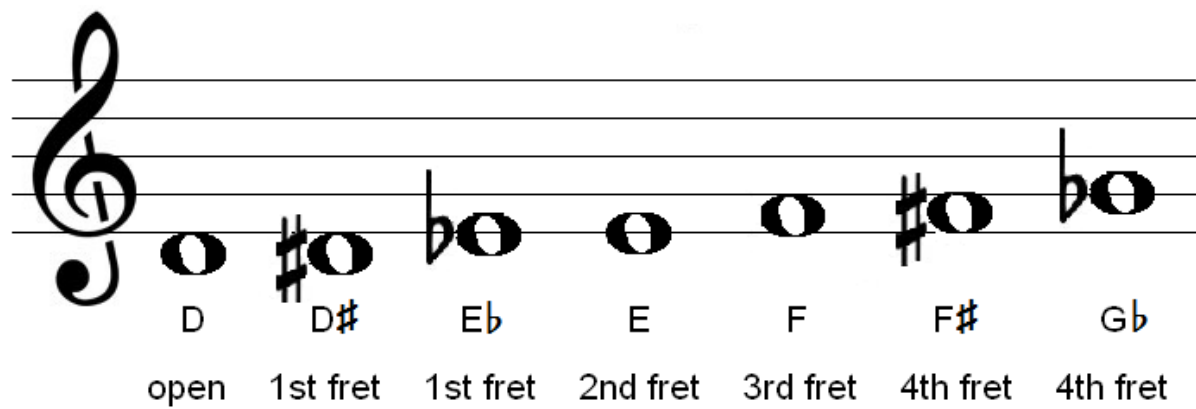
Ex 29



Ex 30



Notes on the 4th string



Ex 31



Ex 32



Ex 33



Ex 34



Ex 35



Ex 36



Ex 37



Ex 38



Ex 39



Ex 40



Ex 41



Ex 42



A Tie

A tie is a curved line connecting the heads of two notes of the same pitch. It indicates that the two notes are to be played as a single note with a duration equal to the length of the two notes added together.



The note in the first bar is 6 beats long and the note in the third bar is 5 beats long.

Exercises on the 5th and 4th string

Ex 43



Ex 44



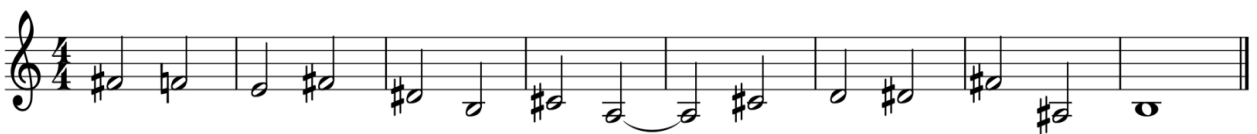
Ex 45



Ex 46



Ex 47



Ex 48



Ex 49



Ex 50



Ex 51



Ex 52



Ex 53



Ex 54

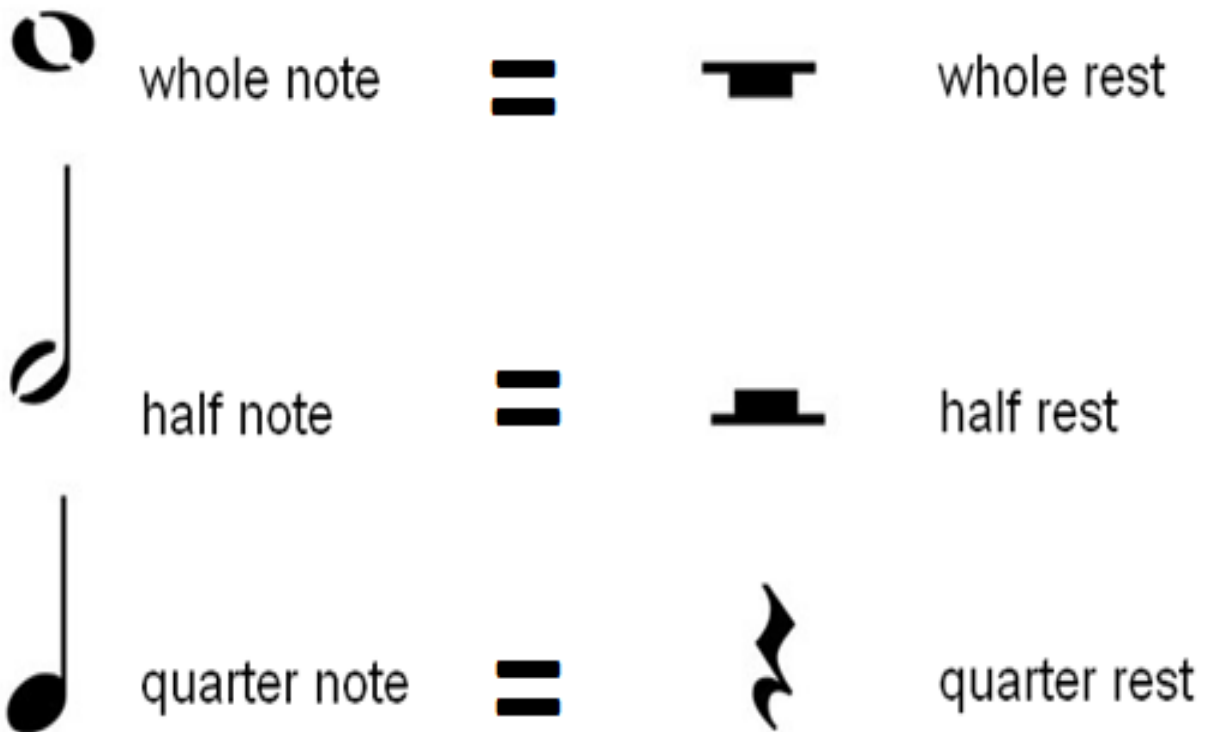


Rests

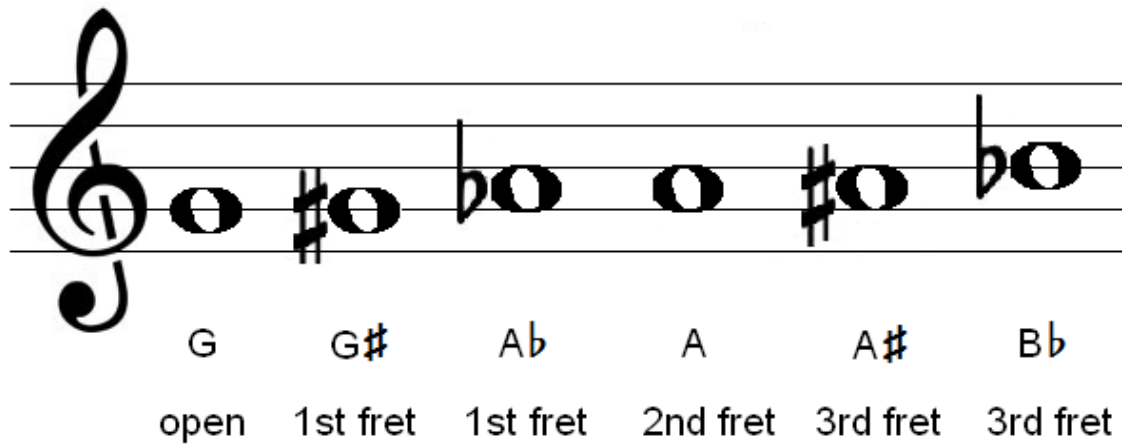
A rest indicates an interval of silence. When you see a rest you must stop the previous note from ringing until it is time to play the next note.

You can do this by releasing pressure from your fretting hand or by muting the strings with the palm of your picking hand.

Think of a rest as a note you do not play.



Notes on the 3rd String



Ex 55



Ex 56



Ex 57



Ex 58



Ex 59



Exercises on 3rd and 4th String

Ex 60



Ex 61



Ex 62



Ex 63



Ex 64



Ex 65



Ex 66



Exercises on 3rd 4th and 5th String

Ex 67



Ex 68



Ex 69



Ex 70



Ex 71

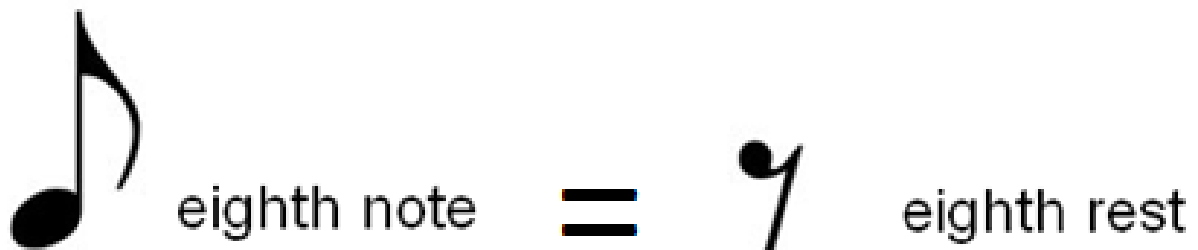


Ex 72



Eighth Notes and Rests

Eighth Notes and **Eight Rests** are worth $\frac{1}{8}$ the value of a whole note.



When an eighth note is followed by other eighth notes in a piece of music they are connected with a beam. Eighth notes can be beamed in pairs, groups of three, or groups of four.

Below is an example of the different ways eighth notes are beamed.



When reading music with eighth notes in 4/4 time, we must subdivide our count to incorporate twice as many pulses. We do this by saying “AND” between each number we count. It would be a good habit to always count in this manner from this point onward.



Exercises using 8th notes

Ex 73



Ex 74



Ex 75



Ex 76



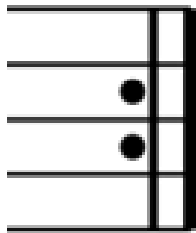
Ex 77



Ex 78



The Repeat Sign



When you see a repeat sign, it means that you repeat the song from the very beginning and end the second time through, at the repeat sign. If you are required to repeat a section multiple times it will be indicated below the repeat sign.

Some pieces of music require you to repeat a section in the middle of the piece. If this is the case there will be a repeat sign at the beginning of the section to be repeated as well as the end. Refer to the example below.



We would play the piece above from the beginning through the first repeat sign (located at bar three) until we arrive at bar six (where the second repeat sign is located). We would then play starting from bar three (where the first repeat sign is located) through to the end of the piece.

If we were required to repeat this section more than once it would be written under the second repeat sign (located at bar six).

Ex 79



Ex 80



Ex 81 This exercise will prepare you for the piece *Elders of Lore*



Ex 82



Ex 83

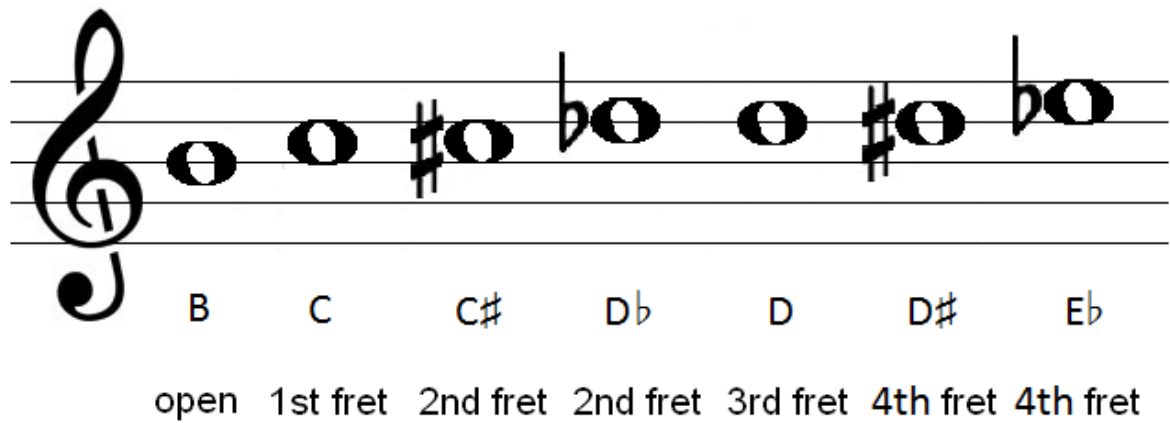


The Elders of Lore

Joseph Burke



Notes on the 2nd String



Ex 84



Ex 85



Ex 86



Ex 87



Ex 88



6/8 Time Signature



There are six beats per bar and eighth notes are worth one beat.

Exercises on 2nd and 3rd String in 6/8 Time

Ex 89 This exercise will prepare you for the piece *Black Hen Jig*



Ex 90



Ex 91



Ex 92



Ex 93



Ex 94



Ex 95



Ex 96



Ex 97



Ex 98



Ex 99



Ex 100



The Black Hen Jig

Joseph Burke



Exercises on 2nd 3rd and 4th String

Ex 101



Ex 102



Ex 103



Ex 104 This exercise will prepare you for the piece *The Cobbler's Ditty*



Ex 105



Ex 106



The Cobbler's Ditty

Joseph Burke



16th Notes and Rests



=



sixteenth note

sixteenth rest

Sixteenth Notes and **Sixteenth Rests** are worth 1/16th of a whole note

Like an eighth note, when a sixteenth note is followed by other sixteenth notes they are connected with a double beam. When a sixteenth note is followed by an eighth note it is joined with a single beam.

1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and

Ex 109



Ex 110



Ex 111



Ex 112



Ex 113



Counting 16th Notes and Rests in 4/4 Time

Since a sixteenth note or rest is worth $\frac{1}{4}$ of a beat in 4/4 time we must subdivide the beat into 4.

We do this by counting as follows:

1 e and a 2 e and a 3 e and a 4 e and a



1 e and a 2 e and a 3 e and a 4 e and a



Ex 114



Ex 115



Ex 116



Ex 117



Ex 118



Ex 119



Ex 120



Ex 121



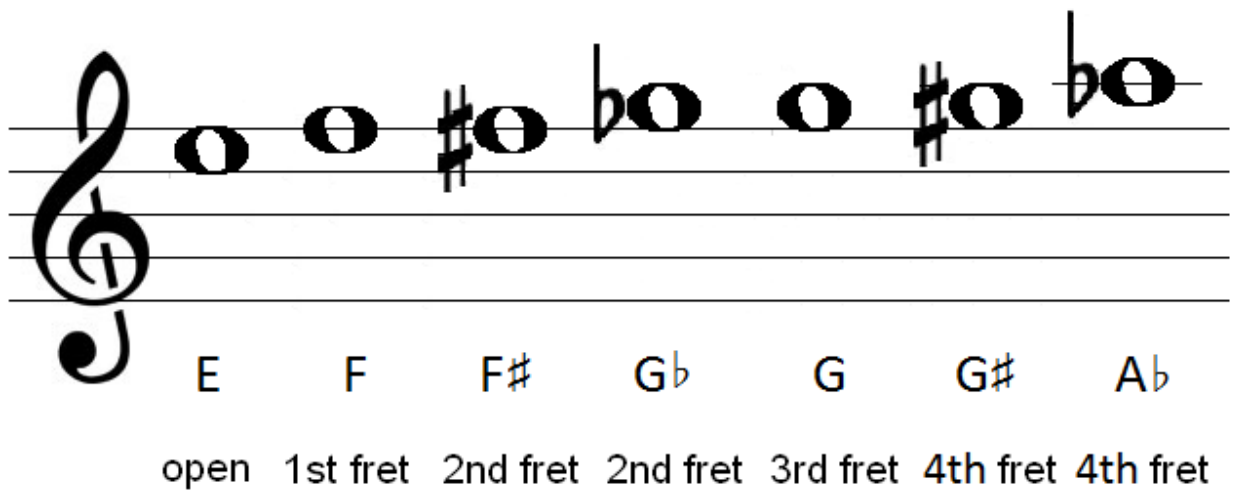
Ex 122



Ex 123 This exercise will prepare you for the piece *The Clumsy Squire*



Notes on the 1st String



Ex 124



Ex 125



Ex 126



Ex 127



Ex 128



Exercises on 1st and 2nd String

Ex 129



Ex 130



Ex 131



Ex 132



Ex 134



Ex 135



Ex 136



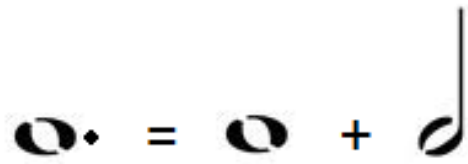
The Clumsy Squire

Joseph Burke



Dotted Notes

When a note has a dot next to it the duration you hold the note is increased by half or 50%. This also applies to dotted rests as well.



3/4 Time Signature

The 3/4 time signature indicates that there are three beats per bar and quarter notes are worth one beat. The waltz is a popular dance written in this time signature.

Ex 137



Ex 138



Exercises on 1st 2nd and 3rd String

Ex 139



Ex 140



Ex 141



Ex 142



Ex 143



Exercises on the 1st 2nd 3rd and 4th String

Ex 144



Ex 145



Ex 146



Ex 147



Ex 148



Exercises on the 1st 2nd 3rd 4th and 5th String

Ex 149



Ex 150



Ex 151 This exercise will prepare you for the piece *Speedy's Double Time Blues*.



Ex 152



Ex 153

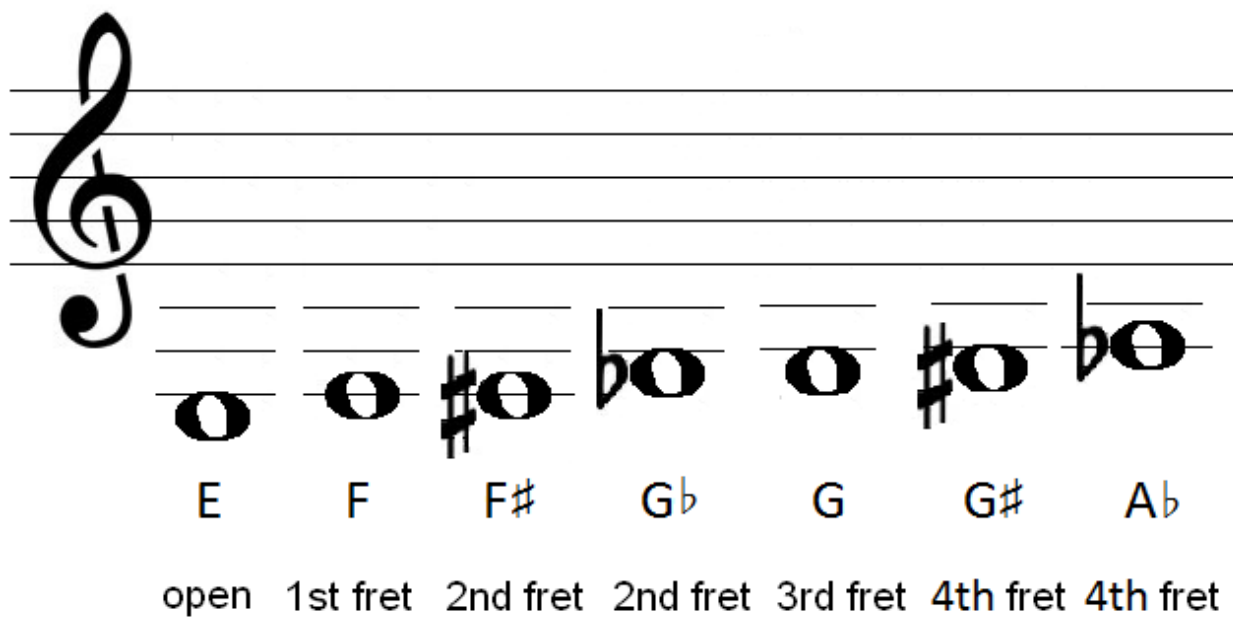


Speedy's Double Time Blues

Joseph Burke



Notes on the 6th String



A musical staff in treble clef showing the notes on the 6th string. The notes are represented by whole notes on a five-line staff. Below each note is its letter name and fret position. The notes are: E (open), F (1st fret), F# (2nd fret), Gb (2nd fret), G (3rd fret), G# (4th fret), and Ab (4th fret).

Note	Fret
E	open
F	1st fret
F#	2nd fret
Gb	2nd fret
G	3rd fret
G#	4th fret
Ab	4th fret

Ex 154



A musical staff in treble clef, 6/8 time signature. The exercise consists of a single melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, ascending and then descending.

Ex 155



A musical staff in treble clef, 6/8 time signature. The exercise consists of a single melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, featuring various accidentals (sharps and flats) and ascending and then descending.

Ex 156



A musical staff in treble clef, 6/8 time signature. The exercise consists of a single melodic line with eighth notes and quarter notes, featuring various accidentals (sharps and flats) and ascending and then descending.

Exercises on 5th and 6th String

Ex 157



Ex 158



Ex 159



Ex 160



Ex 161

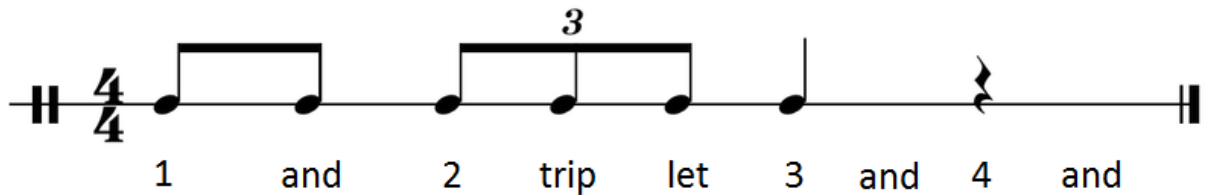


Ex 162



Triplets

A triplet is a note with a value of $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{rd}}$ of a quarter note. We subdivide the quarter note into three equal parts by saying 1-trip-let, 2-trip-let, 3-trip-let, 4-trip-let and so on. Triplets resemble three beamed eighth notes, only they have a “3” written above the beam. A series of triplets could also include triplet rests.



Ex 163



Ex 164



Ex 165



Ex 166



Exercises on 6th 5th and 4th String

Ex 167



Ex 168



Ex 169



Ex 170



Ex 171



Ex 172



Exercises on 6th 5th 4th and 3rd String

Ex 173 This exercise will prepare you for the piece *The Battle Song*



Ex 174



Ex 175



Ex 176



Ex 177



Exercises on 6th 5th 4th 3rd and 2nd String

Ex 178



Ex 179



Ex 180



Ex 181



Exercises on all 6 Strings

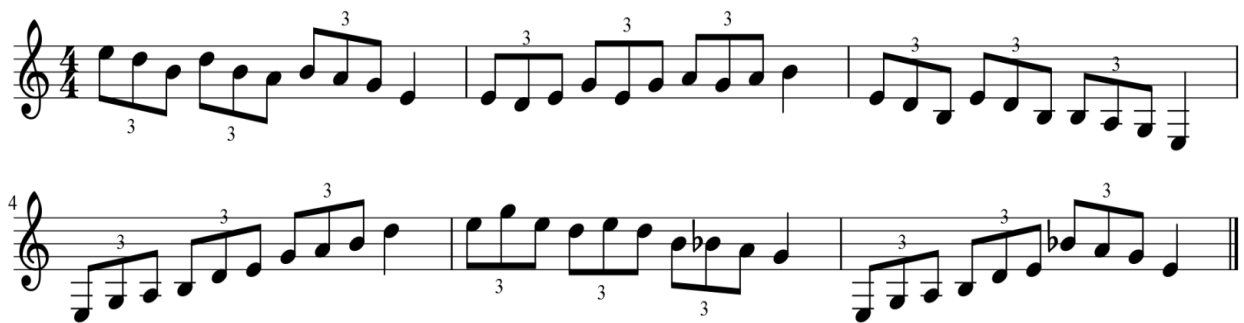
Ex 182



Ex 183



Ex 184



Ex 185



The Major Scale

The major scale is made up of seven notes plus the octave of the first, or root, note. You might recognize the major scale in the form of solfege:

Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti (Do)

There is a simple formula used to determine the notes for any given major scale. Start on your first or root note and follow use this formula:

Tone, Tone, Semi-Tone, Tone, Tone, Tone, Semi-Tone

Let's apply this formula with "C" as our root note:

A tone from "C" is "D"

A tone from "D" is "E"

A Semi-Tone from "E" is "F"

A Tone from "F" is "G"

A Tone from "G" is "A"

A Tone from "A" is "B"

And finally, a Semi-Tone from "B" brings us back to "C"

So the notes of the C major scale are:

C,D,E,F,G,A,B,(C)



When we write our major scales we do not skip any line or space on the staff. We do not repeat any note with a different accidental. This has the effect of forcing the scale to feature just sharps or just flats.

Degrees of a Scale

Each note in a scale has a name based on its position:

1 ST Note-	Tonic, Key note or Root
2 nd Note-	Supertonic
3 rd Note-	Mediant
4 th Note-	Subdominant
5 th Note-	Dominant
6 th Note-	Submediant
7 th Note-	Subtonic
8 th Note-	Tonic or Octave

A Key

When we refer to a piece of music as being in a certain key we are saying that the piece is using the notes of a particular scale.

The Key of G major

We have established C major has no sharps or flats. Let's apply our formula to figure out the notes of G major:

A tone from "G" is "A"

A tone from "A" is "B"

A Semi-Tone from "B" is "C"

A Tone from "C" is "D"

A Tone from "D" is "E"

A Tone from "E" is "F#"

And finally, a Semi-Tone from "F#" brings us back to "G"

So the notes of the G major scale are:

G,A,B,C,D,E,F#,(G)

Key Signature

The key signature is written at the beginning of a piece of music after the treble clef. Instead of notating every “F” as sharp when playing in the key of G major we can instead show that every time “F” is played it is sharp by writing an “F” sharp in the key signature. If a “F” is not sharp a natural sign will be used to indicate this.

G major one octave (without key signature)



G major one octave (with key signature)



G major two octaves (without key signature)



G major two octaves (with key signature)



Exercises in G major

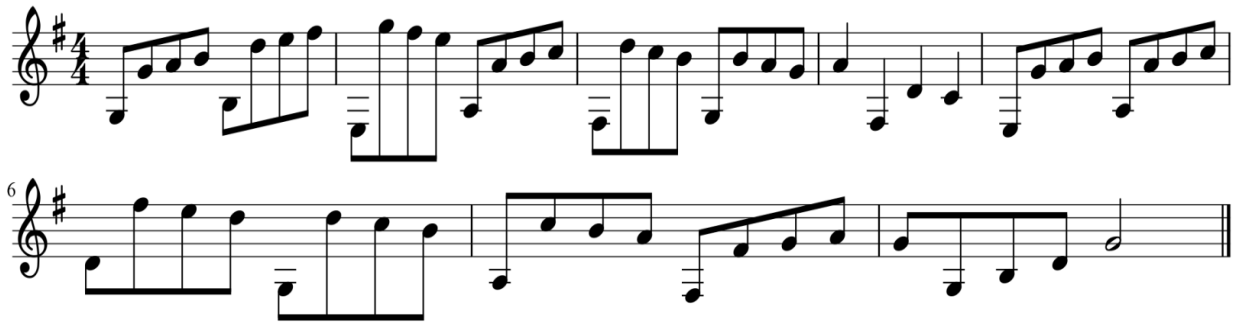
Ex 186



Ex 189



Ex 190



The Key of D major

Let's apply our formula to figure out the notes of D major:

A tone from "D" is "E"

A tone from "E" is "F#"

A Semi-Tone from "F#" is "G"

A Tone from "G" is "A"

A Tone from "A" is "B"

A Tone from "B" is "C#"

And finally, a Semi-Tone from "C#" brings us back to "D"

So the notes of the G major scale are:

D,E,F#,G,A,B,C#,(D)

D major one octave (without key signature)



D major one octave (with key signature)



Exercises in D major

Ex 191



Ex 192



Ex 193



The Key of A major

Let's apply our formula to figure out the notes of D major:

A tone from "A" is "B"

A tone from "B" is "C#"

A Semi-Tone from "C#" is "D"

A Tone from "D" is "E"

A Tone from "E" is "F#"

A Tone from "F#" is "G#"

And finally, a Semi-Tone from "G#" brings us back to "A"

So the notes of the A major scale are:

A,B,C#,D,E,F#,G#,(A)

A major one octave (without key signature)



A major one octave (with key signature)



Exercises in A major

Ex194



Ex 195



Ex 196



The Circle of 5ths

At this point you may have noticed a pattern occurring. The 5th or dominant of a key shares the same key signature with its tonic with the exception of a raised 7th or subtonic. Let's compare the keys we have worked on thus far.

The key of C major has no sharps or flats.

C,D,E,F,G,A,B, (C)

The key of G major (the 5th degree of C major) has all the same notes as C major but with a raised or sharpened 7th degree (F#).

G,A,B,C,D,E,F#, (G)

The key of D major (the 5th degree of G major) has all the same notes as G major but with a raised 7th degree (C#).

D,E,F#,G,A,B,C#, (D)

The key of A major (the 5th degree of D major) has all the same notes as D major but with a raised 7th degree (G#).

A,B,C#,D,**E**,F#,G#, (A)

If we continue this pattern the key of E major should have a F#,C#,G# and D#.

Let's see if we are correct by applying our formula to key of E major:

A tone from "E" is "F#"

A tone from "F#" is "G#"

A Semi-Tone from "G#" is "A"

A Tone from "A" is "B"

A Tone from "B" is "C#"

A Tone from "C#" is "D#"

And finally, a Semi-Tone from "D#" brings us back to "E"

So the notes of the E major scale are:

E,F#,G#,A,B,C#,D#,(E)

It appears that we are correct!

This pattern is known as The Circle of 5ths.

The Key of E major two octaves



Exercises in E major

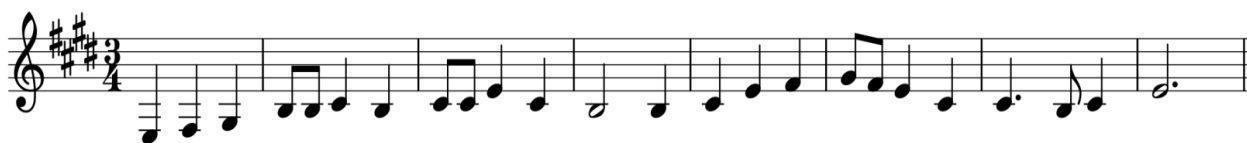
Ex 197



Ex 198



Ex 199



Ex 200



The Key of B major

B is the dominant of E major. B major has five sharps.

The same four sharps from E major (F#, C#, G#, D#,) with a raised 7th

which is A#.

B major one octave (without key signature)



B major one octave (with key signature)



Exercises in B major

Ex 201



Ex 202



Ex 203



Ex 204



Ex 205



Ex 206



The Keys of F# and C# major

F# is the dominant of E major. The key of F# has six sharps. They are same five sharps from B major (F#,C#,G#,D#, A#) with a raised 7th which is E#.

E# is the enharmonic equivalent of F, but because we cannot have two notes of the same name in a scale and every note must be accounted for we must refer to this pitch as E# instead of F.

C# is the dominant of F# major. The key of C# has seven sharps. They are same six sharps from F major (F#,C#,G#,D#, A#,E#) with a raised 7th which is B#.

B# is the enharmonic equivalent of C, but because we cannot have two notes of the same name in a scale and every note must be accounted for we must refer to this pitch as B# instead of C.

The keys of F $\sharp$ and C $\sharp$ are not very practical due to the number of accidentals contained in these keys. They do in theory exist but music written in these keys is rare. Instead, the enharmonic equivalents of G $\flat$ and D $\flat$ are used.

The Key of F major

Let's apply our formula to figure out the notes of F major:

A tone from "F" is "G"

A tone from "G" is "A"

A Semi-Tone from "A" is "B ♭"

A Tone from "B" is "C"

A Tone from "C" is "D"

A Tone from "D" is "E"

And finally, a Semi-Tone from "E" brings us back to "F"

So the notes of the F major scale are:

F, G, A, B ♭, C, D, E, (F)

F major one octave (without key signature)



F major one octave (with key signature)



F major two octaves (without key signature)



F major two octaves (without key signature)



Exercises in F major

Ex 207



Ex 208



Ex 209



Ex 210



Ex 211



The Key of B ♭ major

Let's apply our formula to figure out the notes of F major:

A tone from "B ♭ " is "C"

A tone from "C" is "D"

A Semi-Tone from "D" is "E ♭ "

A Tone from "E ♭ " is "F"

A Tone from "F" is "G"

A Tone from "G" is "A"

And finally, a Semi-Tone from "A" brings us back to "B ♭ "

So the notes of the B ♭ major scale are:

B ♭ , C, D, E ♭ , F, G, A, (B ♭)

B ♭ major one octave (without key signature)

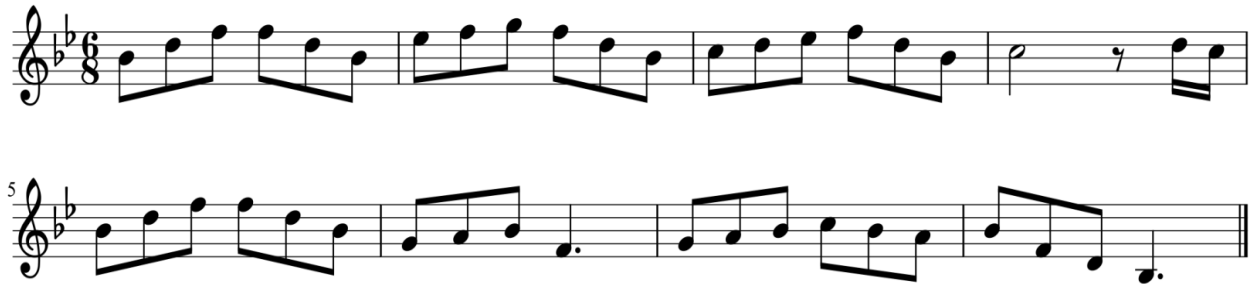


B ♭ major one octave (with key signature)

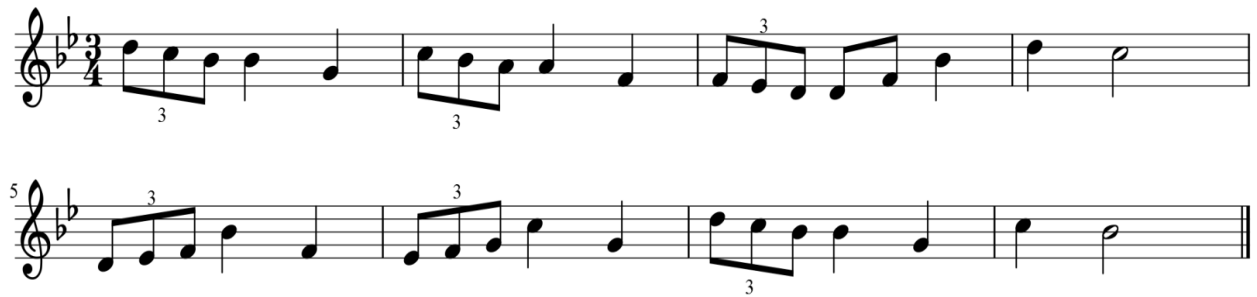


Exercises in B $\flat$ major

Ex 212



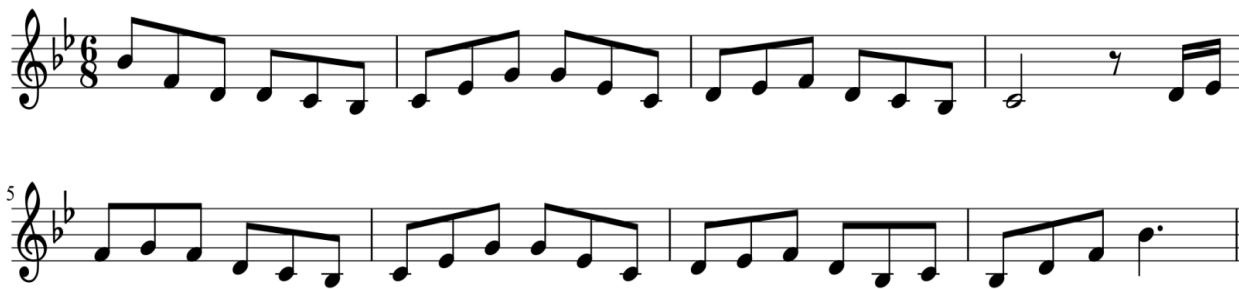
Ex 213



Ex 214



Ex 215



The Key of E ♭ major

Let's apply our formula to figure out the notes of F major:

A tone from "E ♭ " is "F"

A tone from "F" is "G"

A Semi-Tone from "G" is "A ♭ "

A Tone from "A ♭ " is "B ♭ "

A Tone from "B ♭ " is "C"

A Tone from "C" is "D"

And finally, a Semi-Tone from "D" brings us back to "E ♭ "

So the notes of the E ♭ major scale are:

E ♭ , F, G, A ♭ , B ♭ , C, D, (E ♭)

E ♭ major one octave (without key signature)



E ♭ major one octave (with key signature)



Exercises in E $\flat$ major

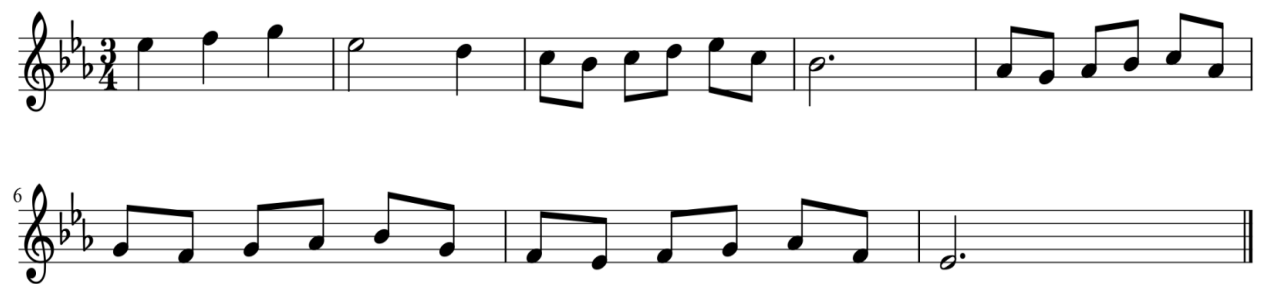
Ex 216



Ex 217



Ex 218



Ex 219



The Key of A $\flat$ major

A tone from "A $\flat$ " is "B $\flat$ "

A tone from "B $\flat$ " is "C"

A Semi-Tone from "C" is "D $\flat$ "

A Tone from "D $\flat$ " is "E $\flat$ "

A Tone from "E $\flat$ " is "F"

A Tone from "F" is "G"

And finally, a Semi-Tone from "G" brings us back to "A $\flat$ "

So the notes of the A $\flat$ major scale are:

A $\flat$, B $\flat$, C , D $\flat$, E $\flat$, F , G , (A $\flat$)

A $\flat$ major one octave (without key signature)



A $\flat$ major one octave (with key signature)



A $\flat$ major two octaves (without key signature)

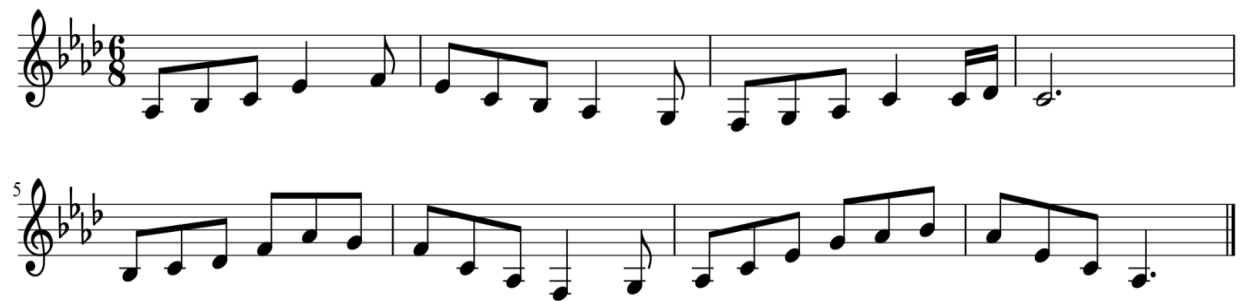


A $\flat$ major two octaves (with key signature)



Exercises in A $\flat$ major

Ex 220



Ex 221



Ex 222



Ex 223



The Key of D ♭ major

A tone from "D ♭ " is "E ♭ "

A tone from "E ♭ " is "F"

A Semi-Tone from "F" is "G ♭ "

A Tone from "G ♭ " is "A ♭ "

A Tone from "A ♭ " is "B ♭ "

A Tone from "B ♭ " is "C"

And finally, a Semi-Tone from "C" brings us back to "D ♭ "

So the notes of the D ♭ major scale are:

D ♭ , E ♭ , F, G ♭ , A ♭ , B ♭ , C, (D ♭)

D ♭ major one octave (without key signature)



D ♭ major one octave (with key signature)



Exercises in D $\flat$ major

Ex 224



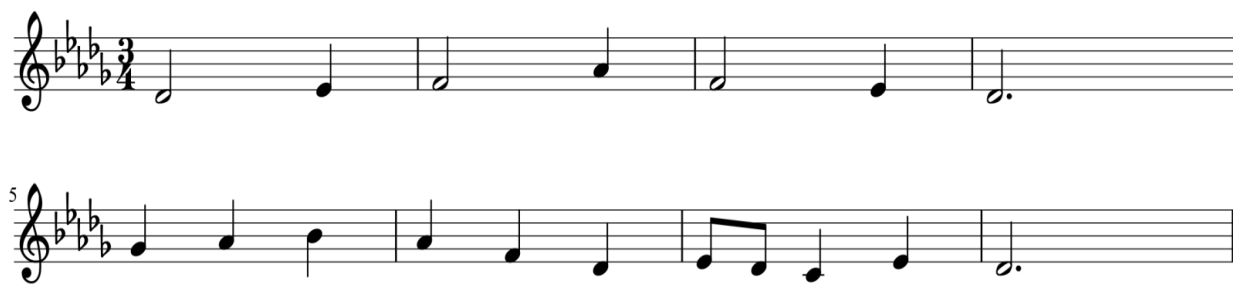
Ex 225



Ex 226



Ex 227



The Keys of G $\flat$ and C $\flat$

The final two flat keys are G $\flat$ and C $\flat$. The key of C $\flat$ is for the most part hypothetical as the enharmonic key of B major is used instead. G $\flat$ major is made up of the following notes:

G $\flat$, A $\flat$, B $\flat$, C $\flat$, D $\flat$, E $\flat$, F, (G $\flat$)

The enharmonic equivalent for the key of G $\flat$ is F $\sharp$. When playing in G $\flat$ we must address the 4th degree of the scale as C $\flat$ instead of B $\natural$.

The notes in the key of C $\flat$ are:

C $\flat$, D $\flat$, E $\flat$, F $\flat$, G $\flat$, A $\flat$, B $\flat$, (C $\flat$)

Notice that the 4th degree of C $\flat$ is addressed as F $\flat$ opposed to E $\natural$.

We will not cover exercises in the keys of G $\flat$ and C $\flat$.

Chords

A chord is created when two or more notes are played simultaneously.

The most common type of chords are made up of three notes and are known as triads.

Major Triad

A major triad is made up of the root (or tonic), 3rd and 5th of a major scale.

A C major triad (or simply a C chord) would have the notes C, E, and G



Minor Triad

A minor triad is made up of the same notes as a major chord but the 3rd is flattened by a half a step, so a C minor chord would be C, E $\flat$, and G.

An A major chord is A, C $\sharp$, E so an A minor chord would be A, C, E

A G major chord is G, B, D and so a G minor chord is G, B $\flat$, D etc.

Identify the notes of the following chords:

Major

	R	3	5
C			
G			
D			
A			
E			
B			
F			
B ♭			
E ♭			
A ♭			
D ♭			
G ♭			

Minor

	R	♭3	5

Playing a Major Triad on Guitar

In the chart below we can see the notes of the C major triad identified on the guitar fret board. The black numbers below the chart show which fingers to use to play each note.

	6	5	4	3	2	1
	E	A	D	G	B	E
1st fret	F	A# or Bb	D# or Eb	G# or Ab	C	F
2nd fret	F# or Gb	B	E	A	C# or Db	F# or Gb
3rd fret	G	C	F	A# or Bb	D	G
4th fret	G# or Ab	C# or Db	F# or Gb	B	D# or Eb	G# or Ab
5th fret	A	D	G	C	E	A
				2	3	1



Playing a Minor Triad on Guitar

In the chart below we can see the notes of the C minor triad identified on the guitar fret board. The black numbers below the chart show which fingers to use to play each note.

	6	5	4	3	2	1
	E	A	D	G	B	E
1st fret	F	A# or Bb	D# or Eb	G# or Ab	C	F
2nd fret	F# or Gb	B	E	A	C# or Db	F# or Gb
3rd fret	G	C	F	A# or Bb	D	G
4th fret	G# or Ab	C# or Db	F# or Gb	B	Eb	G# or Ab
5th fret	A	D	G	C	E	A
				3	2	1



We can move the major and minor chord shapes up and down the neck to play different chords. For these voicings, the root note is on the third string. Use the chart below to help you play chords with different roots. An A major chord for example would be third string second fret, second string second fret and the first string open.

1st fret				
		A		
3rd fret				
		B		
5th fret			C	
7th fret			D	
9th fret			E	
			F	
12th fret			G	
			A	

Chord Progressions

A chord progression is a series of chords played in a specific order.

Some songs consist of only one chord progression which is repeated for the duration of the entire song. The Blues is a good example of this.

Other songs may be made up of several different progressions.

A major chord is identified by simply indicating the root. A minor chord is indicated by a small (m) next to the root. In some cases a capital letter root indicates a major chord and a lowercase letter root indicates a minor chord, but this method is less common.

Much of guitar playing is open to interpretation. Usually when learning a song you will only be given the chord progression. It is up to the player to decide what rhythm pattern to use to strum the chords.

Slashes are used to symbolize beats in notation. The chord itself represents one beat and the slashes are used for subsequent beats.

Sometimes a bar line will be indicated by a lower case "L" or, in some cases, a space is used to separate bars.

Lets start with a simple eight bar progression in 4/4 time that is repeated four times:

two bars of C major, two bars of A minor, two bars of F major and two bars of G major.

Here is how the progression would be written:

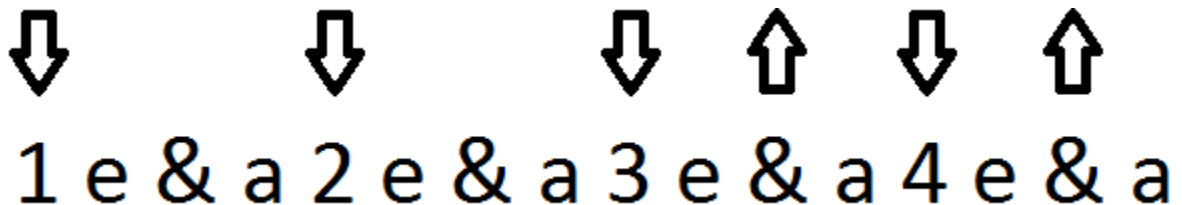
C /// | /// | Am /// | /// | F /// | /// | G /// | /// |

Repeat four times

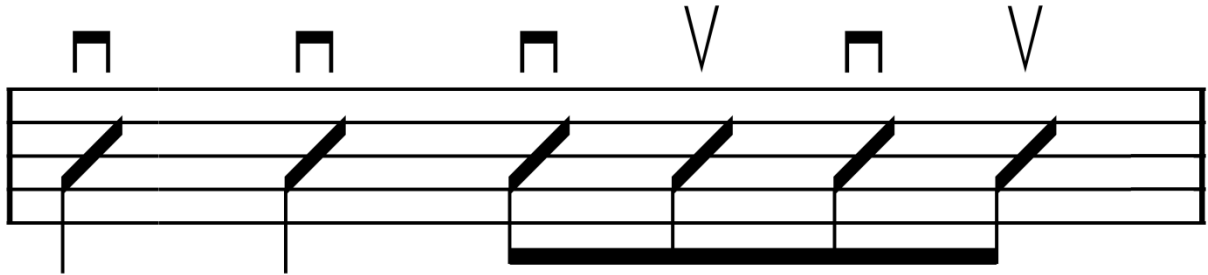
Strumming Patterns

Strumming patterns are made up of downstrokes and upstrokes. A down stroke is when you strum away from your self from the lowest strings towards the highest. An upstroke is when you strum towards yourself from the highest strings towards the lowest.

There is no standardized method of writing strumming patterns. For the most part learning how to strum is taught aurally. We will cover the two most common approaches used to write out strumming patterns.



This method and variations of it are commonly found online. The beats are written out (in this case they are subdivided into sixteenth notes) and arrows indicate which beats to strum on. Arrows pointing down indicate downstrokes and arrows pointing up indicate upstrokes.



Above we have the same strum pattern. This method of rhythmic notation is the most common and is widely used in music books. The strum pattern is written out using rhythm notes. The staple shaped symbols represent downstrokes and the V shaped symbols indicate upstrokes.

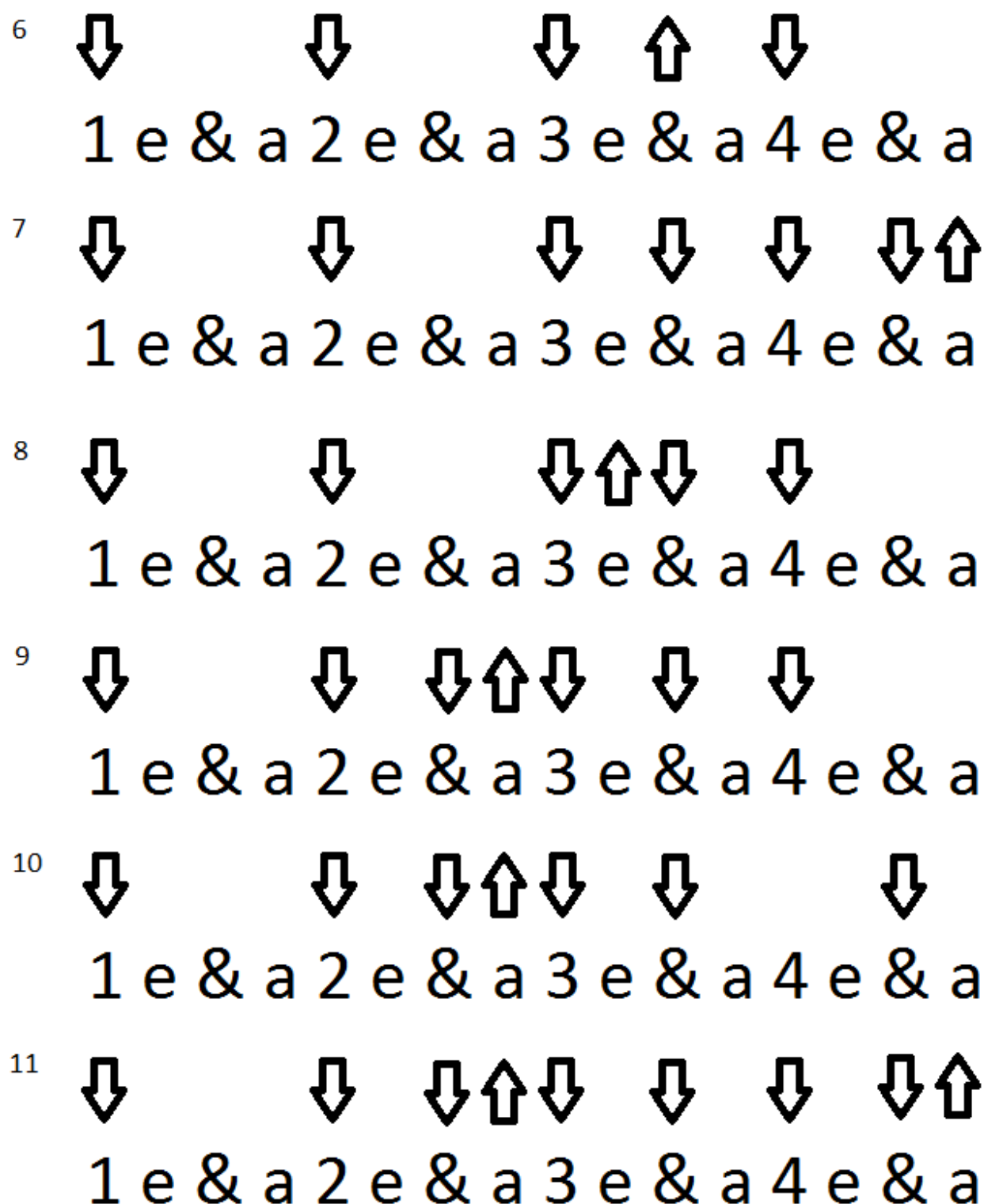
Sometimes a time signature will be included at the beginning of a strumming pattern. Sometimes the rhythms will be written out using the pitch of C as it is in the middle of the staff. Sometimes “D” and “u” will be written to indicate down and upstrokes.

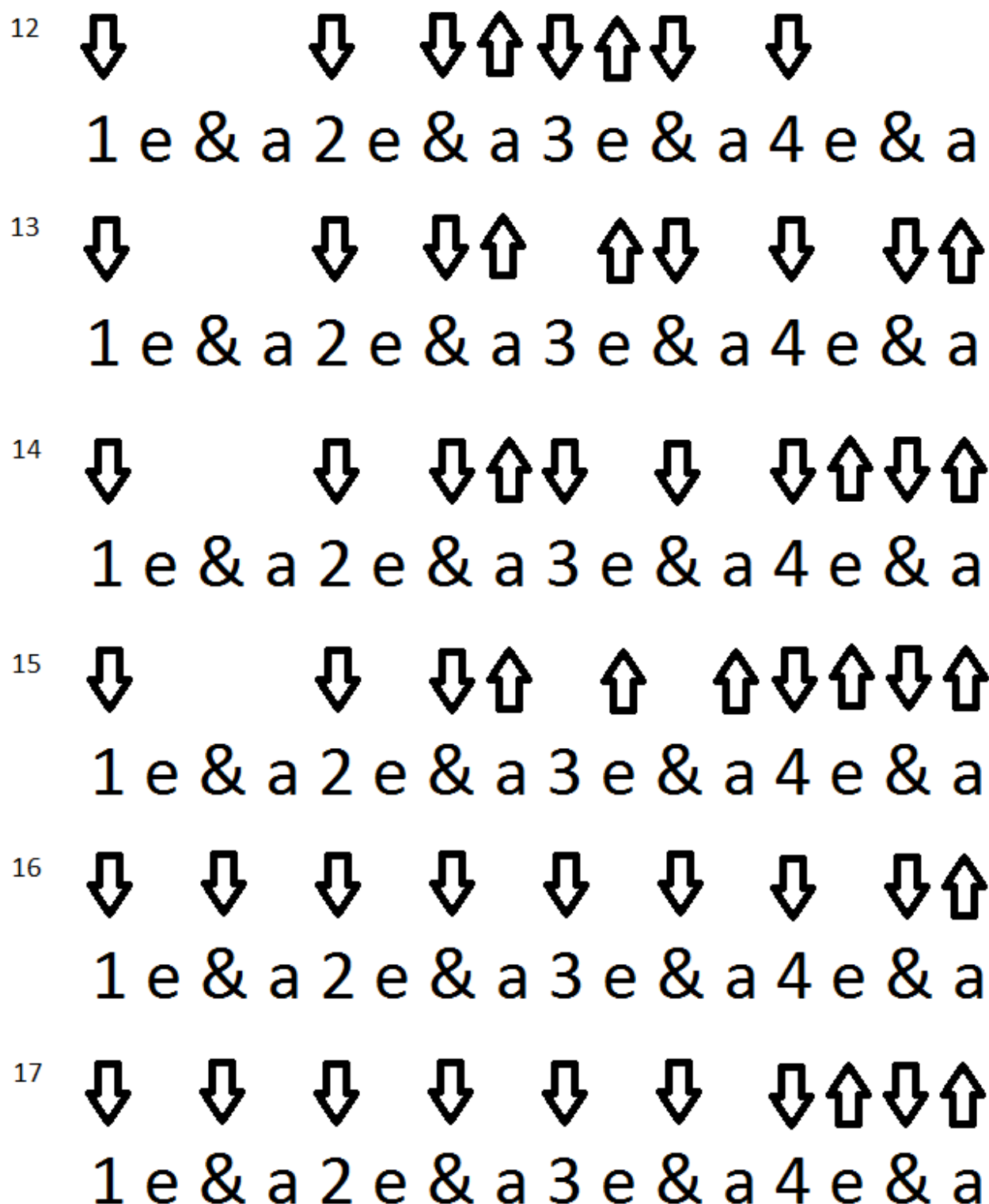
Most methods mix aspects from the two above mentioned methods of notation.

4/4 Strumming Patterns

Try playing these patterns with just one chord to start. The goal is to be able to repeat the pattern over and over again smoothly and in time.

- 1 
1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a
- 2  
1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a
- 3    
1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a
- 4        
1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a
- 5              
1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a





18 ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓
1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

19 ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓↑ ↑↓ ↓ ↓↑
1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

20 ↓↓ ↓ ↓↓ ↓↓
1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

21 ↓↓ ↓ ↓↓↑↓↑
1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

22 ↓↓ ↓↑↓↑ ↑↓↑ ↑↓↑
1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

23 ↓↓↑↓↑↓↑ ↑↓ ↓↑↓↑
1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

24 ↓ ↓↑ ↑↓ ↓ ↓ ↓↑

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

25 ↓ ↑↓ ↓↑↓ ↓ ↓

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

26 ↓↑↓↑ ↑↓ ↓ ↓

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

27 ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

28 ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓↑

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

29 ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓↑↓↑↓↑

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

24 ↓ ↓↑ ↑↓ ↓ ↓ ↓↑

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

25 ↓ ↑↓ ↓↑↓ ↓ ↓

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

26 ↓↑↓↑ ↑↓ ↓ ↓

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

27 ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

28 ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓↑

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

29 ↓↑ ↓↑ ↓↑↓↑↓↑

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

Chord Progressions in 4/4

Try playing the above strumming patterns over the following chord progressions. Repeat each progression four times.

- 1) D / / / | Bm / / / |
- 2) D / / / | G / / / |
- 3) D / / / | Em / / / |
- 4) D / / / | A / / / | D / / / | G / / / |
- 5) C / / / | Dm / / / | Em / / / | Dm / / / |
- 6) C / / / | F / / / | G / / / | F / / / |
- 7) C / / / | G / / / | F / / / | G / / / |
- 8) F / / / | Dm / / / | Gm / / / | C / / / |
- 9) F / / / | Gm / / / | C / / / | Am / / / |
- 10) Am / / / | Dm / / / | Em / / / | / / / / |
- 11) Am / / / | F / / / | G / / / | Dm / / / |

Sometimes there can be two chords in one bar. The first chord would be played on beats one and two, and the second chord would be played on beats three and four. We call this a split bar.

- 12) C / / / | / / / / | F / G / | C / / / |

13) Em / F / | Em / F / | G / / / | C / / / |

14) G / / / | Em / / / | C / / / | D / C / |

15) D / / / | Bm / / / | G / / / | Bm / A / |

Diminished Triad

A diminished triad is consists of the root, a lowered third and a lowered fifth.

A dimished chord is usually identified by the root and by “dim” written next to it (e.g. Cdim). Sometimes it may be written with the root and a small circle in the top right (e.g. C°).

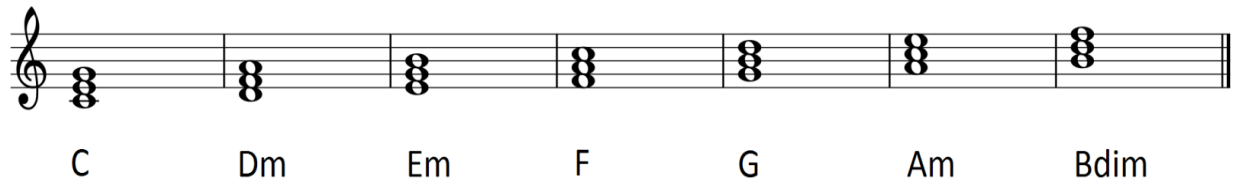
A Cdim triad would be C, E ♭ and G ♭ .

An Adim triad would be A, C, and E ♭ .

A Bdim triad would be B, D, and F.

Diatonic Triads

Diatonic triads are chords built on each degree of the major scale. If we were to take a C major scale for and stack triads on each degree of that scale using only the notes from C major it would look like this:



Most chord progressions consist of only diatonic chords. We use roman numerals to identify each diatonic triad. We use uppercase for major triads and lower case for minor triads. We use a lowercase vii followed by dim or a small circle for the diminished triad found on the seventh degree of the scale. Each degree of the scale functions in the same way regardless of the root key:

The root or I chord is always major.

The ii chord is always minor.

The iii chord is always minor.

The IV chord is always major.

The V chord is always major.

The vi chord is always minor.

The vii° chord is always diminished.

Once we have this sequence memorized we can play any progression in any key by simply identifying the progression with roman numerals.

For example a very popular chord progression is:

I / / / | vi / / / | IV / / / | V / / / |

In the key of C this would be:

C / / / | Am / / / | F / / / | G / / / |

In the key of G it would be:

G / / / | Em / / / | C / / / | D / / / |

In the key of F:

F / / / | Dm / / / | B ♭ / / / | C / / / |

Changing the key in which something is played is called “Transposing”.

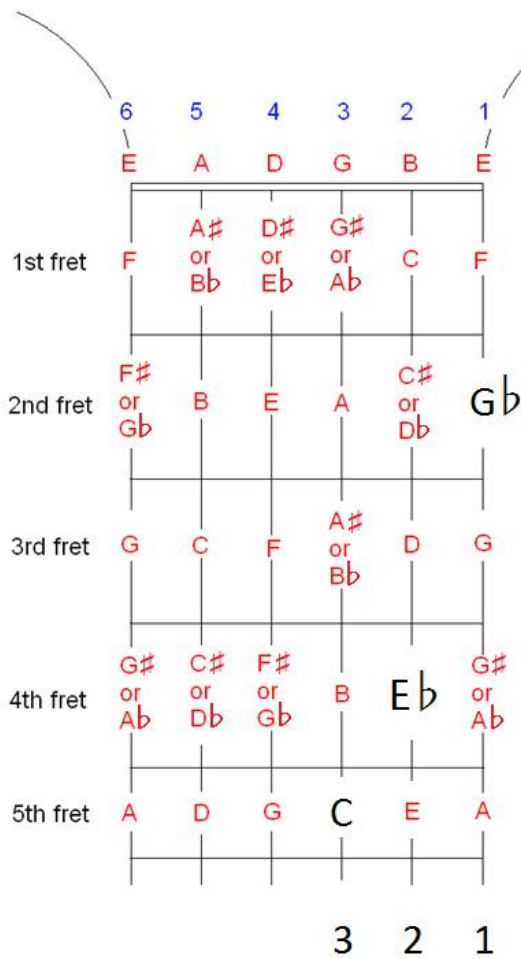
Often we must transpose a song to accommodate a singer’s vocal range.

A proficient musician should be able to play any song in any key.

Luckily, since the guitar is a linear instrument we have the luxury of playing the exact same patterns and shapes on the fretboard and need to only move our starting fret up or down to transpose.

Playing a Diminished Triad on Guitar

In the chart below we can see the notes of the C diminished triad identified on the guitar fret board. The black numbers below the chart show which fingers to use to play each note.



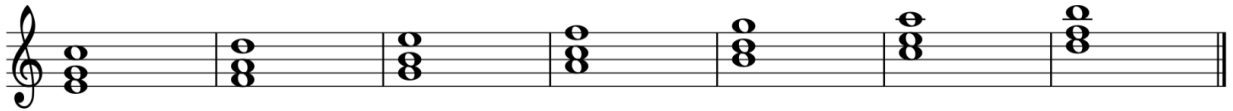
Diatonic Chord Progressions

Try playing these chord progressions using your favorite strumming patterns in as many keys as possible:

- 1) I /// | IV /// | V /// | I /// |
- 2) I /// | vi /// | IV /// | V /// |
- 3) I /// | vii° /// | vi /// | V /// |
- 4) I /// | ii /// | vii° /// | I /// |
- 5) ii /// | V /// | I /// | /// |
- 6) vi /// | ii /// | V /// | I /// |
- 7) vi /// | V /// | IV /// | I /// |
- 8) IV /// | V /// | I /// | vi /// |

Triads in 1st Inversion

So far we have been playing our triads in the root position voicing. A chord does not have to be played with the notes in sequential order. A 1st inversion triad starts from the third followed by the fifth and has the root as the highest pitch.



Above we have the C major diatonic triads in 1st inversion.

Playing a 1st Inversion Major Triad on Guitar

In the chart below we can see the notes of the C major triad in 1st inversion identified on the guitar fret board. The black numbers below the chart show which fingers to use to play each note.

	6	5	4	3	2	1
6th fret	A# or Bb	D# or Eb	G# or Ab	C# or Db	F	A# or Bb
7th fret	B	E	A	D	F# or Gb	B
8th fret	C	F	A# or Bb	D# or Eb	G	C
9th fret	C# or Db	F# or Gb	B	E	G# or Ab	C# or Db
10th fret	D	G	C	F	A	D
				2	1	1



Playing a 1st Inversion Minor Triad on Guitar

In the chart below we can see the notes of the C minor triad in 1st inversion identified on the guitar fret board. The black numbers below the chart show which fingers to use to play each note.

	6	5	4	3	2	1
6th fret	A# or Bb	D# or Eb	G# or Ab	C# or Db	F	A# or Bb
7th fret	B	E	A	D	F# or Gb	B
8th fret	C	F	A# or Bb	Eb	G	C
9th fret	C# or Db	F# or Gb	B	E	G# or Ab	C# or Db
10th fret	D	G	C	F	A	D
				1	1	1



Playing a 1st Inversion Diminished Triad on Guitar

In the chart below we can see the notes of the C diminished triad in 1st inversion identified on the guitar fret board. The black numbers below the chart show which fingers to use to play each note.

	6	5	4	3	2	1
6th fret	A# or Bb	D# or Eb	G# or Ab	C# or Db	F	A# or Bb
7th fret	B	E	A	D	Gb	B
8th fret	C	F	A# or Bb	Eb	G	C
9th fret	C# or Db	F# or Gb	B	E	G# or Ab	C# or Db
10th fret	D	G	C	F	A	D
				2	1	3



For these voicings, the root note is on the 1st string. Use the chart below to help you play chords with different roots. An E major chord for example would be 1st string open, 2nd string open and 3rd string 1st fret.

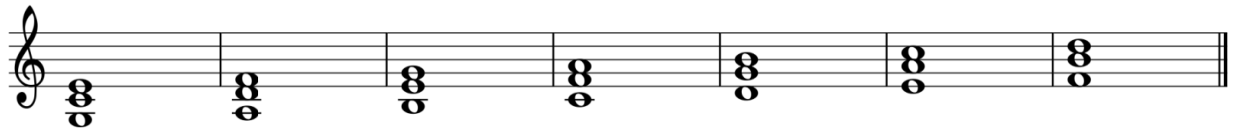
1st fret					F
3rd fret					G
5th fret					A
7th fret					B
					C
9th fret					
					D
12th fret					E
					F

Play through all the chord progressions in this book using the 1st inversion voicings. When you are comfortable and have the chord positions memorized try alternating between root position voicings and 1st inversion voicings. When playing at faster tempos it is best to play voicings that are in close proximity to one another on the fretboard.

When you are confident with your ability to alternate between root position voicings and 1st inversion voicings seamlessly proceed to the next section covering 2nd inversion voicings. This may take some time so be patient. There are plenty of resources to practice playing chords. Have fun with it and learn some of your favorite songs.

Triads in 2nd Inversion

A 2nd inversion triad starts from the fifth followed by the root and has the third as the highest pitch.



Above we have the C major diatonic triads in 2nd inversion.

Playing a 2nd Inversion Major Triad on Guitar

In the chart below we can see the notes of the C major triad in 2nd inversion identified on the guitar fret board. The black numbers below the chart show which fingers to use to play each note.

	6	5	4	3	2	1
11th fret	D# or Eb	G# or Ab	C# or Db	F# or Gb	A# or Bb	D# or Eb
12th fret	E	A	D	G	B	E
13th fret	F	A# or Bb	D# or Eb	G# or Ab	C	F
14th fret	F# or Gb	B	E	A	C# or Db	F# or Gb
15th fret	G	C	F	A# or Bb	D	G
				1	3	2



Playing a 2nd Inversion Minor Triad on Guitar

In the chart below we can see the notes of the C minor triad in 2nd inversion identified on the guitar fret board. The black numbers below the chart show which fingers to use to play each note.

	6	5	4	3	2	1
11th fret	D# or Eb	G# or Ab	C# or Db	F# or Gb	A# or Bb	E ^b
12th fret	E	A	D	G	B	E
13th fret	F	A# or Bb	D# or Eb	G# or Ab	C	F
14th fret	F# or Gb	B	E	A	C# or Db	F# or Gb
15th fret	G	C	F	A# or Bb	D	G
				2	3	1



Playing a 2nd Inversion Diminished Triad on Guitar

In the chart below we can see the notes of the C diminished triad in 2nd inversion identified on the guitar fret board. The black numbers below the chart show which fingers to use to play each note.

	6	5	4	3	2	1
11th fret	D# or Eb	G# or Ab	C# or Db	Gb	A# or Bb	Eb
12th fret	E	A	D	G	B	E
13th fret	F	A# or Bb	D# or Eb	G# or Ab	C	F
14th fret	F# or Gb	B	E	A	C# or Db	F# or Gb
15th fret	G	C	F	A# or Bb	D	G
				1	3	2



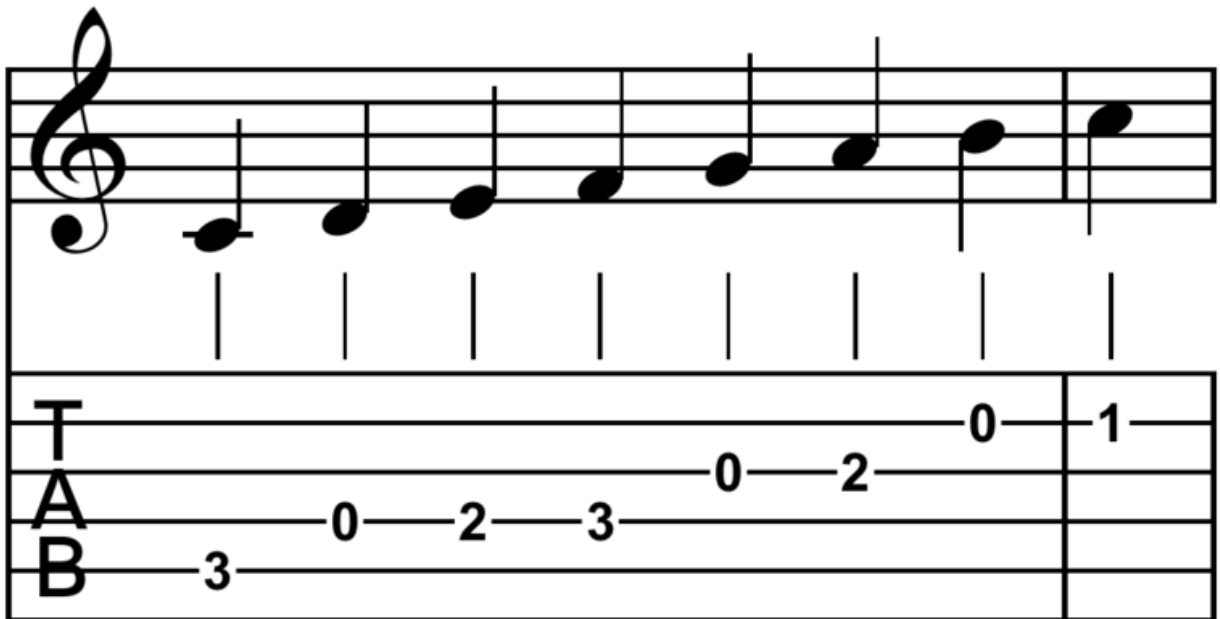
For these voicings, the root note is on the 2nd string. Use the chart below to help you play chords with different roots. A C major chord for example would be 1st string open, 2nd string 1st fret and 3rd string open

1st fret				C
3rd fret				D
5th fret				E
				F
7th fret				
				G
9th fret				
				A
12th fret				B
				C

Play through all the chord progressions in this book using the 2nd inversion voicings. When you are comfortable and have the chord positions memorized try alternating between root position, 1st inversion and 2nd inversion voicings. Remember when playing at faster tempos it is best to play voicings that are in close proximity to one another on the fretboard.

Tablature

Tablature is a method of notating music which instructs you which string and fret to place your finger on to play a note. A lot of guitar music is written in tablature form. It has both advantages as well as disadvantages.



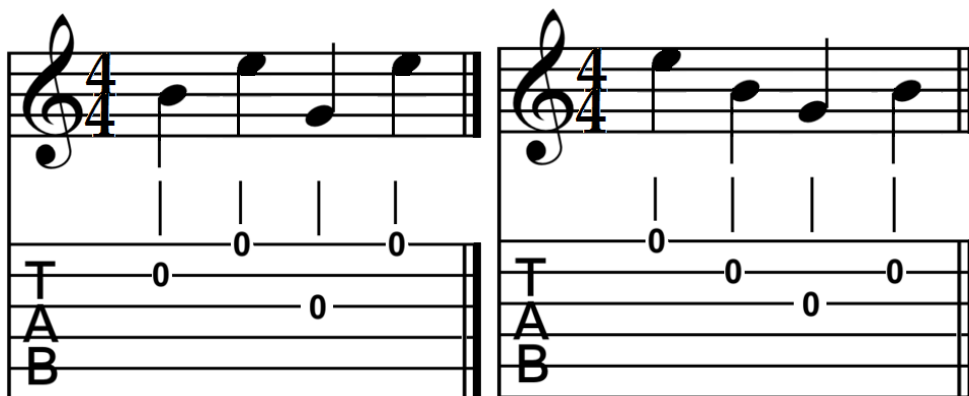
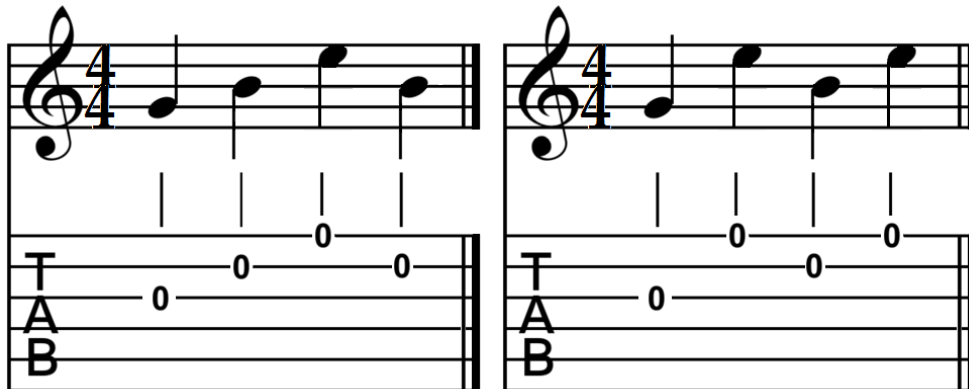
Here is the C major scale notated with tablature or TAB accompanied with staff music above it. Each line on the TAB represents a guitar string starting from the 6th string at the bottom to the 1st string on the top. Tablature typically has no staff to accompany it, so there is no indication of what is called for rhythmically. In most cases the reader is already

familiar with the music that is being attempted, so the rhythm is played from memory.

Arpeggios

The notes in a chord do not necessarily have to be played in unison. An arpeggio is a technique in which each note of the chord is played in sequence. An arpeggio can also be referred to as a broken chord.

You can finger pick arpeggios or use a pick. At first, practice the following arpeggios using only open strings to play an E minor chord. When you are comfortable with the patterns try playing some chord progressions using these patterns. Be sure to practice with both a pick and using fingerstyle technique.



The Battle Song

Joseph Burke

The musical score for "The Battle Song" is written in 4/4 time and consists of six staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, creating a rhythmic pattern. The second staff starts with a key signature change to one flat (Bb) and continues the melodic line. The third staff returns to the one sharp key signature and includes some triplet markings. The fourth staff continues the melody with a key signature change to two sharps (D major). The fifth staff maintains the D major key signature. The sixth staff concludes the piece with a final key signature change to two sharps (D major) and ends with a double bar line.

Performing a Piece

Up to this point we have been focusing only on playing notes and exercises. As you may already know, music is a lot more than just playing the correct notes. As musicians we must interpret a piece of music and put our own personality into our performance. At the same time we must not lose sight of the composer's original intention for the piece.

Often composers will write instructions throughout the piece as a guide for the performer.

Many terms such as soulfully, gently, majestically, gracefully etc. are open to interpretation and are for the most part qualitative. In time you will interpret what these terms mean to you.

More quantitative instructions such as the tempo are also often included. Sometimes composers write the beats per minute or use an Italian term which has a tempo associated with it.

In some cases a piece may speed up or slow down. A piece may also get louder and softer in different areas.

Dynamics

Dynamics refer to the volume of piece of music. There are many different dynamic indicators but we will focus on four:

p = piano (or soft)

mp = mezzo-piano (or moderately soft)

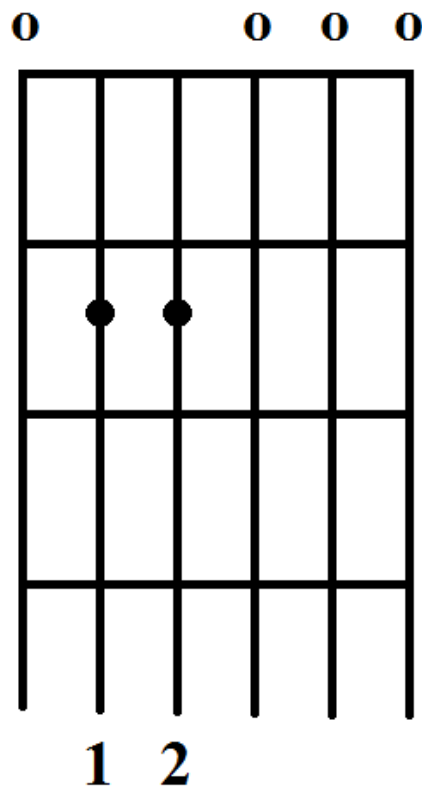
mf = mezzo-forte (or moderately loud)

f = forte (or loud)

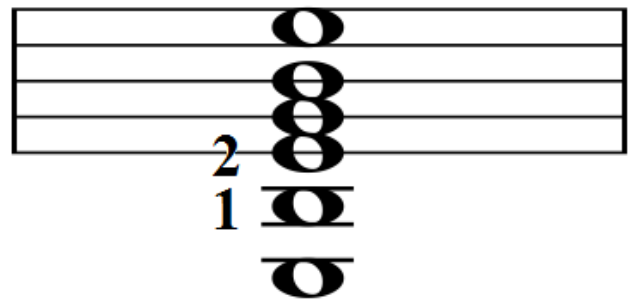
Extended Chords

It is common to use more than 3 strings to play a chord on guitar. Often this results in the doubling of notes with the root note on the lowest string.

The first extended chord we will learn is E minor



E minor



The following pieces use E minor. Pay attention to the dynamics and other indicators to help you interpret the piece. You can practice this piece at any tempo you are comfortable with, but keep in mind when

performing the piece that the tempo listed is the speed at which the composer intended the piece to be performed.

A Song For Michael

Joseph Burke

$\text{♩} = 100$

p

9

gradually slow down

17

Swing

Swing is a popular style of music and also refers to a rhythmic modification. Up to this point we have been playing eighth notes evenly. Swing is not even and feels like the music is skipping. “Swinging” is not an exact science and your sensibilities will develop as you are exposed to more music that swings. Every musician swings differently and your style of swinging will develop in time.

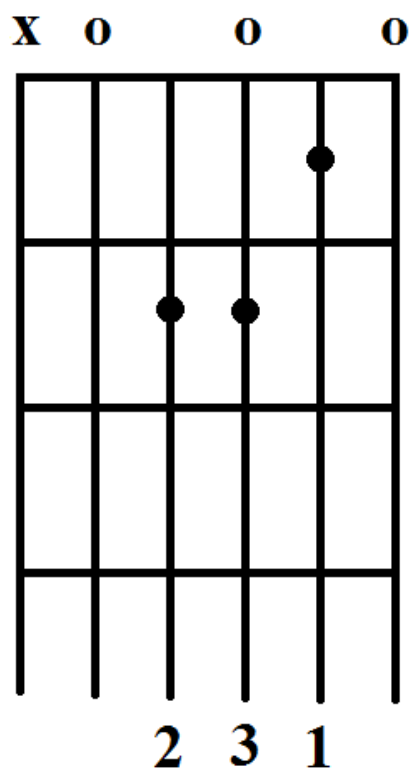
Swing may be best conceptualized as a triplet with the first two tied.

Bill's Blues

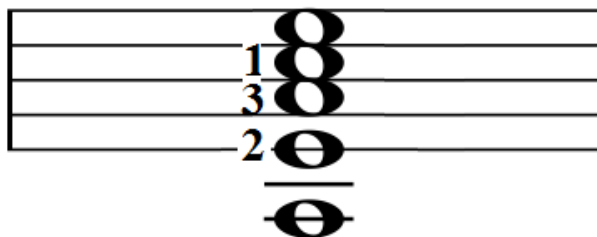
Joseph Burke

The musical score for "Bill's Blues" is written for three staves in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various dynamics such as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *f* (forte), and features triplet markings (3) over groups of notes. The first staff contains measures 1-4, the second staff contains measures 5-8, and the third staff contains measures 9-12. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

The next extended chord we will learn is A minor.



A minor



Accented Notes

Sometimes a composer intends for a particular note to be played louder than the rest. This will be indicated with an accent (>) above or below the note. The following piece has several accents. Be sure to play the accented notes slightly louder than the notes that follow.

Lavien

gently and soulful

Joseph Burke

$\text{♩} = 100$

p

5

9

13

The following pieces feature both E minor as well as A minor:

Catch A Wave

Joseph Burke

$\text{♩} = 120$

mf

5

9

Little Brother

Joseph Burke

$\text{♩} = 120$

mf

5

9

You now have the skills to let your individuality and creativity flow through the guitar. Pay attention to what sounds good to you. You will develop your own style and unique approach to playing.

Try to balance your practicing. Learn songs by ear as well as from reading sheet music. Try playing songs at different tempos with a variety of feels and techniques. Guitar playing is all about one's own personal interpretation of music. No two players play exactly the same way.

Music is a life long journey and this is just the beginning. I am honoured to have been part of your learning experience.

Please come back and revisit this book as it will continue to be a useful tool in developing your reading skills.

Best of luck,

Joe Burke.