I Want You Back
by The Jackson 5
bass by Wilton Felder
This month's song tutorial is the great bass line to I Want You Back by the Jackson 5. This bass line was played by a guy called Welton Felder - who played on a lot of tunes for the producers who dealt with The Jackson 5 and Michael Jackson.

Felder is actually better known as the sax player from the fusion band The Crusaders - that great solo on Street Life was one of his finest hours on sax!

We're going to chunk the song into its constituent parts and go through them one by one as discussed in the intro.

Here's the first part of the tune - it's the intro:

From the intro there's a 4 bar section prior to the first verse - which looks like this:
And then there's the Verse itself.

Now the Verse figure is pretty close to the Intro - if you take the second 4 bars of the intro pattern and repeat them twice then you’ve got the verse. For completeness sake, here's what it looks like:

That naturally takes us to the chorus. The chorus is a variation of the 4 bar section that split the intro and the first verse:
This leads to another verse - Verse 2 is identical to Verse 1 so you can repeat the verse that we featured on the previous page. And Verse 2 leads us to the second chorus.

The second chorus has got a couple of slight variations - there's a nice use of the octave on the Db and the pattern you’ve learned at the end of the chorus stops abruptly as it leads to the ‘bridge’ of the tune.
This leads to the bridge section.

Here’s where it gets interesting...I’ve put a line over the first five bars of the notation and tab above. That’s because if you listen really carefully - my advice is import the original track into software like Anytune, re-pitch the entire song an octave and then apply a bass enhancing filter - you’ll hear that the bass DOESN’T start playing until the sixth bar of the bridge, and plays for just three bars before the chorus comes back in.

But if you compare and contrast with the version on the Michael Jackson album called “The Stripped Mixes” then you’ll hear ALL the notes that are included in the section above. As this is the most interesting section to play, I’m going to play all the notes as written in the tab.
After the bridge we're onto the final section of the tune - which is the fade chorus. Here's the pattern that you need to play:
On the original Wilton throws in the variation up the 5th and octave of Db in the first beat of the second bar...if you want to do that you can. But those are the main sections you need to play through the song.

**How To Program The Sections In Band In A Box**

There’s a bass less backing track to practice along with on the I Want You Back page - but if you want to program and isolate the sections in Band In A Box (and play with the tempos) here’s what to do:

1. Set key to Ab.
2. Aim for performance tempo to be around 95-98 BPM
3. Choose a style for practice. I would choose the 70s Soul Style Full Band as I got towards performance tempo. But I use the Chordal Metronome for slower playalongs.
4. Mute the bass

Here are the chords for the first part of the intro - this progression also doubles for the verse:

Here's the chords for the 4 bars before the verse:
Here’s the progression you need to program for Chorus 1 - quick note, when incorporating 2:4 bars I often ‘cheat’ and displace the downbeats of subsequent bars, it’s much quicker to program like this:

Chorus 2 is slightly shorter:

Here’s the bridge chords when programmed:
And finally here's what you would program for one play through of the Fade Chorus: