

DELIBERATE PRACTICE FOR BASS - VERSION 2.0

PRINCIPLE 6

Last week we started looking at a topic that is a core part of deliberate practice in my opinion - but you won't see much written about this. That topic is the topic of sequential learning.

We're going to dive into this topic in more detail over the next two or three columns. And maybe beyond. As I noted in last week's column, today we're going to look at the first ever deliberate attempt I made to create a learning sequence.

Now that first attempt is (to my horror and chagrin!) still on my website! And what we're going to do in this column is examine it - find out what's good and find out what's not. And then next week I'm going to redo this learning sequence from the ground up.

Let's get to it.

How To Play Bass In 50 Songs

When I first started How To Play Bass Dot Com, this was one of the first web pages I wrote. As I said, this was the first learning sequence that I ever consciously attempted to create.

Now although How To Play Bass in 50 Songs sequence is still on my website, I'm going to reproduce it here because soon it won't be!

So here it is - along with my original annotation:

- 1) **YELLOW** by Coldplay. Here's a nice simple line to get started with.
- 2) **WITH OR WITHOUT YOU** by U2. One of my favourite U2 songs – simple bass line too, four chords, root notes in a steady 8th note pulse.
- 3) **EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE** by The Police. The first of three Sting basslines. This one's mainly root notes, mainly 8th notes.
- 4) **ROXANNE** by The Police. A nice example of the Police's early mix of reggae and rock (see also 'So Lonely').
- 5) **MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE** by The Police. Another great Sting line, he's not a virtuoso but he plays memorable bass lines.
- 6) **ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST** by Queen. One of the most recognisable basslines in bassdom, played by one of its most underrated players – John Deacon (crap claim to fame: I went to the same school as John Deacon!).
- 7) **ADDICTED TO LOVE** by Robert Palmer Interesting 80s rock bassline – learn to rock without the root note on the downbeat. Oh and great video too! (if a bit sexist)
- 8) **DAYTRIPPER** by The Beatles The Beatles wrote great tunes, Paul McCartney played great basslines. this riff based tune can be played much heavier than the Beatles original.
- 9) **NEW YEARS DAY** by U2 A simple Adam Clayton line, 8th notes all the way.
- 10) **LIGHT MY FIRE** by The Doors. Nice 8th note bassline with lots of major and minor triads.
- 11) **MONEY FOR NOTHING** by Dire Straits. I've got a feeling Sting might have played the bassline on this, it's a nice 8th note riff kind of song.
- 12) **SATISFACTION** by The Rolling Stones Simple yet effective Bill

Wyman 8th note line on classic 60s rock track.

13) KEEP ON RUNNING by Spencer Davies Group. A great track featuring Muff Winwood's iconic driving bassline, the whole tune was reportedly written in less than 10 minutes once he'd come up with the bassline.

14) YOU CAN DRIVE MY CAR by The Beatles More McCartney 8th notes from his transitional mid sixties period.

15) LIVING ON A PRAYER by Bon Jovi 80s stadium rock, Bon Jovi style so big hair and lots of 8th notes!

16) YOU REALLY GOT ME by The Kinks Another typical 60s style rock line

17) SUNSHINE OF YOUR LOVE by Cream. Learn an iconic bass riff and the blues scale in a single two bar measure! Jack Bruce with Cream, 'nuff said!

18) BROWN SUGAR by The Rolling Stones Another Stones classic, another Bill Wyman bass line – simple but effective.

19) BET THAT YOU LOOK GOOD ON THE DANCEFLOOR by Arctic Monkeys Great contemporary tune, a good one for the rock jam repertoire.

20) I BELIEVE IN A THING CALLED LOVE by The Darkness Straightforward riff based rock tune.

21) YOU GIVE LOVE A BAD NAME by Bon Jovi More Bon Jovi, more 8th note rock.

22) COME AS YOU ARE by Nirvana Some Seattle grunge – 8th note style!

23) I SAW HER STANDING THERE by The Beatles Another McCartney line, this one's a good right hand workout, lots of 8th notes at a brisk tempo (approx 160 BPM).

24) ARE YOU GONNA GO MY WAY by Lenny Kravitz I always enjoy gigging this tune, it's got a cool basic groove plus some rhythmic

embellishments and a guitar solo sections that's great for drums and bass to play (especially if the drummer's got a double bass pedal!).

25) CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED LOVE by Queen. Another John Deacon bassline to another Queen classic – this one introduces the shuffle feel.

26) SWEET HOME CHICAGO by Blues Brother. Not strictly a rock tune but a 12 bar blues featuring Duck Dunn swinging his butt off (the extended film soundtrack version has got some nice upper register work too!).

27) ALL MY LOVING by The Beatles. Another McCartney line, this time a lesson in how to walk through a pop tune. See also 29 below.

28) SPIRIT IN THE SKY by Norm Greenbaum A popular tune, nice shuffle bassline.

29) EIGHT DAYS A WEEK by The Beatles. See 27 above!

30) METAL GURU by T Rex An underrated band whose time was tragically cut short, this tune is a great example of a mid tempo rock shuffle.

31) TOWN CALLED MALICE by The Jam If you've subscribed to my Ezine you'll already know I love this tune as it's one of the tunes analysed and given away as a freebie! (if you haven't subscribed, what are you waiting for? The sign up box is in the top right hand corner of this page!)

32) RUNNING FREE by IRON MAIDEN. A heavy shuffle this time, one of the first Maiden classics.

33) MY GENERATION by The Who A classic bassline from The OX (Jon Entwistle). Features include his great bass solo plus playing straight 8ths over the shuffle rhythm.

34) HEY JOE by Jimi Hendrix. Hey Joe is a rock jam standard – Noel Redding's bass line introduces students to playing 16th notes at a reasonable tempo!

35) TIME IS RUNNING OUT by Muse The first of three basslines by Chris Wolstenhome (and my favourite Muse track).

36) PURPLE HAZE by Jimi Hendrix Another jamming standard, great tune, great line.

37) SUNDAY BLOODY SUNDAY by U2 I've got a soft spot for this one, it's one of the first tunes I gigged regularly back in the day ("Le Pub" in the ski resort of Meribel with a french guitarist/vocalist called Christophe Magnon) – it's not particularly complex but is another good intro to 16th notes.

38) PINBALL WIZARD by The Who Another great tune by the Who, another great performance by The Ox.

39) CALIFORNICATION by The Red Hot Chilli Peppers – First of three bass lines from Flea, the cool line to Californication features some melodic upper register playing as well as some more typical lower register rocking 16th notes. A personal fave!

40) HARD TO HANDLE by The Black Crowes The original (Otis Redding) was a great track, this version is OK but is a nice feature for a rocking 16th note bass line.

41) YOU OUGHTA KNOW by Alanis Morissette You wait 40 odd songs for a Flea bass line to come along and then like buses here come's another. Great song, great bass line, loads of 16th notes, ghost notes and tasty fills to feast on.

42) SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT by Nirvana Some more Seattle style grunge

43) CROSSROADS by Cream. My favourite Jack Bruce track with Cream (his favourite is Politician which shows you how much I know!) A masterclass in the blues, rock style.

44) AEROPLANE by The Red Hot Chilli Peppers And here's another barrage from Flea's furious fingers!

45) SMOOTH CRIMINAL by Alien Ant Farm I had to gig this a few times about five years ago – great version of a classic MJ song, great bassline, great exercise in 16th notes.

46) ANTHEM by Rush Geddy Lee was probably more responsible than anyone for me picking up a bass guitar in the first place. By Rush standards this is a fairly conventional tune, but you gotta love what Geddy plays under the guitar solo. Class with a capital C!

47) HIT ME WITH YOUR RHYTHM STICK by Ian Drury and the Blockheads This is an unusual song choice – it's not a rock tune in the classic sense, but it's got a restless punky energy to it – and a killer bassline!

48) NUMBER OF THE BEAST by Iron Maiden Another one from Steve Harris – another bass player highly underrated IMO. This song's got everything you'd expect in a Maiden song – high register intro work, tons of 16th note moshes and gallops, some tricky unison lines and even some odd time signature! Great workout.

49) HYSTERIA by Muse The song that started an empire (erm, well, actually a web page). One of Chris Wolstenholme's finest, another great workout.

50) STOCKHOLM SYNDROME by Muse Same as HYSTERIA. When you've finished the course and learnt all of these tunes you'll have a thorough grounding in the rock idiom and be on the cusp of progressing from a beginner to an intermediate level bass player!

Ok - make sure you re-read that and then we'll start to dissect it.

So What's Good With This Learning Sequence?

Looking back on this with hindsight, the first thing that's good is that I actually attempted to create a learning sequence by ordering songs in a notional level of difficulty. At the time I originally conceived this approach - and used it to guide my friend's son in learning - around the fall of 2007 - there was nothing like this in bass literature. And there still really isn't - most 'beginners' courses have songs in a random order, and those songs are almost bonuses to the 'serious' learning of scales and arpeggios!

The second thing that's good is that there is a recognizable progression in ability from the 1st song to the last. And that progression starts out with 8th notes and moves onto swing 8th notes and from there goes to 16th notes.

And that's it. (Ouch.)

Let's look at the not so good.

What's Not So Good With This Learning Sequence?

Ok there are four main areas where this sequence falls down. Let's take them one by one.

1. Assumes Too Much Prior Knowledge

Although this sequence was specifically designed for a particular person, it was then posted on the website as if it were for everybody. And the sequence starts from a position that assumes prior knowledge on the part of the student....that prior knowledge would be basic left and right hand technique, some fretboard knowledge, some basic rhythmic theory and so on.

Plus the sequence also assumes that the student will be aware of the rhythmic differences when they move from 8th note to swing 8th note, or when they move from swing 8th notes to 16th notes.

2. The Sequential Progression Is Uneven

The whole point of a sequential progression is that it guides you consistently to move out of your comfort zone into the learning zone, practice and expand the comfort zone and then push you forward again into the learning zone with the next part of the sequence.

This sequence does this OK at some points - but at other points the difference between one song and the next in terms of gaining ability is either negligible. Or it's too big a jump.

For example You Oughta Know (which is a beast of a bass line) is sandwiched between Smells Like Teen Spirit and the Black Crows' reading of Hard To Handle. Looking at that now I'm kind of wincing.

Now it's true that I've got several years of teaching and working on elements like this since I first wrote this list...but this is an area where the sequence falls down.

3. No Audit Points

I've mentioned before the importance of practicing slowly and perfectly and that if you learn something with mistakes it often takes 2 to 4 times the amount of time to fix those mistakes than it would have to learn it correctly in the first place.

Well there's no mention of mistakes in this list - or how to find them, or what to look for. For that you need clear and unambiguous Audit Points.

Now I only conceptualized audit points relatively recently (in the last 12 months). Even so, it's a failing in the original sequence.

4. The Sequence Is Too Ambitious

The next flaw in the sequence is that it's just too ambitious. Very few students would be able to start out at song 1 and learn a song a week over the course of a year. The only students who might be able to manage it

are those who can practice three to four hours a day several hours a week over the course of that year. The majority of students at H2PB and FB&B are professionals with jobs and families and just don't have that amount of time to practice.

In hindsight I tried to compress 2 to 3 years of learning into a 1 year sequence (at a song a week). And tied in with the previous note on audit points, some of the songs might take less than a week, whilst some might take MORE than a week. There's no overt guidance on this - and so you might get some students 'panicking' and proceeding onto the next song because a week has gone by and they feel they have to keep up - when in fact they're not ready to move on.

5. Playing To The Crowd

...with song choice. Song should be chosen for content, not popularity - and looking back with the benefit of hindsight (always a wonderful thing!) I think I've picked some songs because of what they are and not to serve the learning sequence.

So there's a lot to think about....but next week we're going to pick this topic up and make a less ambitious list and rebuild that list from scratch!

Summary

In today's column we're looking at Sequential Learning in more depth. And I've posted the first ever learning sequence that I wrote and then I've dissected it a little and picked out the areas where it's either lacking in material or is just executed very poorly.

Sometimes when you want to learn a topic, learning what NOT to do is an effective way of teaching that topic! By highlighting some of the errors I made, hopefully that will help guide you if you ever have to create a learning sequence.

Questions

As always I welcome questions along the way....either via email, on the facebook group or via comments on the Issue pages.

And please ask as many questions on this as you like - my mantra is that there's no such thing as a dumb question, only teaching that doesn't teach effectively (hence the need to ask a question)!

DELIBERATE PRACTICE LEARNING SEQUENCE 6 (cont)

In last week's column we looked at the first ever learning sequence that I created - which is currently still on the main How To Play Bass website - and I made some observations about what was good about it and what was wrong with it. And unsurprisingly given that it was my first ever attempt the list of things that were wrong surpassed the list of things that were right!

There was some interesting feedback in the Private Facebook group from FB&B subscriber Nigel Walden. Here's what Nigel wrote:



Nigel Walden

July 17 at 8:41pm

Hi Paul I enjoyed the topic on sequential learning in FBAB 301 and would like to pick up on a point you make regarding prior knowledge. In this case you refer to your 50 songs sequence, but I can best recall this issue when I took your sight reading from the ground up course. I was able to learn in the steps the course took, so knew where the notes were on the staff, but struggled with the etudes because at the time my technique was not good enough. Another guy asked the question here recently about playing without looking at the fret board, well I had never tried to be honest or even realized it was required. I very much agree with you about the folly of learning scales by rote but there is a case for arpeggios I think. Another idea I have floated before is a sort of road map for bass learning. It would be great to have a clearly mapped out path to playing, which would combine you beginners course and the 50 songs approach. Also some general lessons on the main genres. You have extensive knowledge of different types but how many beginners really know the difference from a bass perspective of Blues, Reggae , Jazz, Rock etc. I was asked recently to do a "bossa" I had no idea what was required, without scuttling off to ask Mr Google. I unfortunately (probably not alone) started with dodgy tabs from the net and a cheap bass with an action so high my fingers bled. Obviously I have had to correct all sorts of faults since finding your site, some successfully 😊 This is such a massive subject and I am sure all your subscribers are grateful that you provide such a great service, and care about training correctly,.... so just some random thoughts 😊

Apart from shuddering at the thought of a bass that made his fingers bleed, there's some really good thoughts and ideas in there that meshed with what I had been thinking.

So here's what we're going to do with this dive into sequential learning:

1. We're going to create a new 'How To Play Bass In 50 Songs' sequential series step by step. And I'll annotate and comment on each step so you can see how I've done it.
2. Learning the basslines to songs isn't enough though...there are some theory sections that will be required to go with this - and I'll incorporate these into the sequence that 's being created so what we'll end up with is a 'roadmap' of how a beginner can go from being a beginner to the early stages of being an intermediate bass player.
3. Making the sequence in such a way that someone can come in who may be 'half way' down the sequence in some respects but can go back and ensure the rest of his bass playing meets this level.

So let's dive in.

Step 1 - Define The Scope Of The Learning Sequence

The first step in creating any learning sequence is knowing both what you're trying to achieve and where you're starting from. So, here are my defined start points and end points - and you'll note that the end point is defined first!

End Point Of The Learning Sequence

At the end point of the learning sequence, players who've gone through it should have a thorough understanding of 8th notes, have reasonable left and right hand techniques and be able to play busy 8th note bass lines like I Saw Her Standing There (The Beatles) and Shake A Tailfeather (Blues Brothers).

Start Point Of The Learning Sequence

The start point of the learning sequence is someone who has just picked up the bass, they have a bass, they've fiddled around with their bass - probably watched some lessons on YouTube, and can tune it - and that's about it.

Step 2 - Clarify The Goal Of The Learning Sequence

The goal of this learning sequence is to give a bass beginner a structured, sequential learning path to take them from messing around with the instrument to being able to play bass lines like I Saw Her Standing There and Shake A Tailfeather. And more importantly, build a solid foundation in terms of technique and understanding of the basics of the bass that they can build on this going forward.

Step 3 - Overview Of How The Sequence Works

The whole point of a learning sequence is that it progresses sequentially! And looking at previous learning sequences like this that I've created - even the very first one that we looked at in the previous column - there is a 'musical' way to chunk down the sequence. And that's to chunk it down via rhythm.

We saw that the sequence is going to end with fast and constant 8th notes - I Saw Her Standing There and Shake A Tailfeather - so we can start the sequence with simple rhythms, say whole notes and half notes.

Step 4 - Plotting The Sequence Rhythmically

So currently we have this:

Start Point - bass lines with half note rhythms

End Point - bass lines with fast 8th note rhythms

So we need to work out how to get from the start to the end - in terms of rhythms.

Here's how I would plot it - first I've split this into 10 steps, and each step will represent approximately 5 songs in our sequence of 50 songs. And I can fill in the first and last steps:

1. *Half notes (and whole notes)*

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8

9.

10. *Fast, constant 8th notes*

Then I would try and work forward and backwards simultaneously!
(And song titles in brackets are there as guides, not definites!)

So:

1. Half notes (and whole notes)

2. *Quarter Note Bass Lines (e.g. Beatles Love Me Do)*

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8

9. *Rocky 8th notes (e.g. Bon Jovi, New Years Day, Message In Bottle chorus)*

10. *Fast, constant 8th notes - I Saw Her Standing There, Tailfeather*

OK, time to add in the next steps...

1. Half notes (and whole notes)
2. Quarter Note Bass Lines (e.g. Beatles Love Me Do)
3. *Faster Quarter Note Bass Lines (e.g. Rock And Roll, Elvis)*
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
8. *Constant 8th Notes (e.g. Every Breath, With Or Without You)*
9. Rocky 8th notes (e.g. Bon Jovi, New Years Day, Message In Bottle chorus)
10. Fast, constant 8th notes - I Saw Her Standing There, Tailfeather

Note: You'll see that I'm planning to have THREE sections at the end using a constant 8th note rhythm - it's such a critical component of music AND necessary for developing technique that I feel it needs to be dealt with at length.

You'll also see that I now have FOUR sections to connect faster quarter note lines to the constant 8th note style lines. I'm going to do this with different 8th note style rhythms. Here's the first two

1. Half notes (and whole notes)
2. Quarter Note Bass Lines (e.g. Beatles Love Me Do)
3. Faster Quarter Note Bass Lines (e.g. Rock And Roll, Elvis)
4. *Simple 8th note rhythms - rhythm 1 (e.g. My Girl)*
- 5.
- 6.
7. *Syncopated 8th note rhythms (e.g. Sunshine Of Your Love, Knock On Wood)*
8. Constant 8th Notes (e.g. Every Breath, With Or Without You)
9. Rocky 8th notes (e.g. Bon Jovi, New Years Day, Message In Bottle chorus)
10. Fast, constant 8th notes - I Saw Her Standing There, Tailfeather

Finally I can now fill in the middle two sections:

1. Half notes (and whole notes)
2. Quarter Note Bass Lines (e.g. Beatles Love Me Do)
3. Faster Quarter Note Bass Lines (e.g. Rock And Roll, Elvis)
4. Simple 8th note rhythms - rhythm 1 (e.g. My Girl)
5. *Simple 8th note rhythms - rhythm 2 (e.g. Duck Dunn lines)*
6. *Simple 8th note rhythms - rhythm 3 (quarter note plus two 8th notes)*
7. Syncopated 8th note rhythms (e.g. Sunshine Of Your Love, Knock On Wood)
8. Constant 8th Notes (e.g. Every Breath, With Or Without You)
9. Rocky 8th notes (e.g. Bon Jovi, New Years Day, Message In Bottle chorus)
10. Fast, constant 8th notes - I Saw Her Standing There, Tailfeather

Step 5 - Auditing The Sequence

When you create a learning sequence you always have to audit it and check that it moves sequentially and logically and there's not too big a jump between steps. Now even though this is an overview of the sequence and there will be sub-steps in each of these sections we can still run our eye over it to check that the jump between sections is not too great.

So for example, going from Step 1 to Step 2 we're moving from basslines that are based on the simplest rhythmic units - half notes and whole notes - to bass lines that are based on quarter notes. So that's a logical step forward that's not too big.

Step 2 to Step 3 is going from quarter note based bass lines to quarter note based bass lines that are played at faster tempos. So again, that's a reasonably logical step.

Step 3 to Step 4 is going from those faster quarter note based bass lines to simple 8th note based lines. This will need careful management - by using simple 8th note lines we're making the step not too big. But I've made a note that when we start filling in the songs to check this out.

And you go through each step of the sequence making sure that the difference between steps seems reasonably manageable. Having audited this, I'm reasonably happy at the moment.

Step 6 - Turning This Overview Into A Detailed System

As I said, I'm reasonably happy with the current breakdown and I'm happy to divide this course into 10 'Modules.'

We're going to start building the detail on the modules in the next column and to give you a preview, here's the level of detail we're going to build in:

1. The songs that will form the spine of this learning program
2. Any theory that's necessary for each module. For example in Module 1 there will need to be rhythmic theory on whole notes and half notes. And probably an overview of rhythmic theory.
3. Technique lessons needed for the module. Introduce left and right hand technique lessons as and when appropriate.
4. Audit Points. This is intended to be a self guided study course - so it's just as important to teach where to look for mistakes as it is to teach what to actually play and do!
5. End of Module 'Quiz.' I've never done this before...but I like the idea of some kind of quiz or test that the student has to go through at the end of the module to ensure he has learned the preceding sections thoroughly before moving onto the next module.

Summary

In this column we've started the process of constructing a learning sequence. The important elements to note are:

1. What is the overall goal of the learning sequence?
2. What are the start and end points of the learning sequence?

3. Finding the element that you're going to build the sequence around - e.g. in this case it was rhythms. But it could be faster songs if you're learning a specific technique.
4. Plotting out the sequence
5. Auditing the sequence once it's done

As we dive deeper into this sequence I'm starting to visualize a comprehensive program for bass beginners that I wish had existed when I was starting out! I'll definitely be creating this program - I haven't yet decided whether it will be in First Bass And Beyond or separately. Is this something you'd like to see in FB&B? Let me know by emailing or commenting in the Facebook Group!

DELIBERATE PRACTICE LEARNING SEQUENCE 6 (cont)

In last week's column we started the process of creating a new learning sequence for 'how to play bass in 50 songs.'

Now last week we picked our start points and our end points of the 50 song sequence, and then we simultaneously went backwards and forwards from first and last 'signposts' until we had 10 different sections to form the spine of this new sequence.

And what we ended up with was very much built around the rhythmic pulse of the bass line that we're teaching. And there were some examples built in to make things clear.

Here's what we ended up with:

1. Half notes (and whole notes)
2. Quarter Note Bass Lines (e.g. Beatles Love Me Do)
3. Faster Quarter Note Bass Lines (e.g. Rock And Roll, Elvis)
4. Simple 8th note rhythms - rhythm 1 (e.g. My Girl)
5. *Simple 8th note rhythms - rhythm 2 (e.g. Duck Dunn lines)*
6. *Simple 8th note rhythms - rhythm 3 (quarter note plus two 8th notes)*
7. Syncopated 8th note rhythms (e.g. Sunshine Of Your Love, Knock On Wood)
8. Constant 8th Notes (e.g. Every Breath, With Or Without You)
9. Rocky 8th notes (e.g. Bon Jovi, New Years Day, Message In Bottle chorus)
10. Fast, constant 8th notes - I Saw Her Standing There, Tailfeather

Additionally as we map out the detail, I said that we were going to build in the following details:

1. The songs that will form the spine of this learning program
2. Any theory that's necessary for each module. For example in Module 1 there will need to be rhythmic theory on whole notes and half notes. And probably an overview of rhythmic theory.

3. Technique lessons needed for the module. Introduce left and right hand technique lessons as and when appropriate.
4. Audit Points. This is intended to be a self guided study course - so it's just as important to teach where to look for mistakes as it is to teach what to actually play and do!
5. End of Module 'Quiz.' I've never done this before...but I like the idea of some kind of quiz or test that the student has to go through at the end of the module to ensure he has learned the preceding sections thoroughly before moving onto the next module.

So I've never created a sequence in quite this detail before, so this is going to be just as interesting for me as hopefully it is for you!

Before we start working on the sequence today, I just want to point out something that you should pick up as we go along anyway - but if I tell you know you'll really be looking for it and learning from it.

And that's the fact that each of these 10 'modules' that we're dividing the 'How To Play Bass In 50 Songs' sequence into, is like a little mini sequence on its own. It will have a start point. And it will have an end point - and each mini-sequence will have a job just as the main sequence has the job of taking a novice bass player to being able to play reasonably fast 8th note bass lines like I Saw Her Standing There and Shake A Tailfeather.

Sidebar Now I can plot out this course in the level of detail I envisage, I think it stands a chance at becoming the most comprehensive bass guitar course for beginners out there. Like, in the world. I've been surfing the Interwebz all week looking at what other people are offering - and this is truly unique. There's absolutely nothing like this. Anywhere. (Which is crazy, because sometimes this just makes so much sense!)

So at some stage in the early Autumn I'll have to start building this course. And there are things I have to finish first. And there's the revamp of Cracking The Detroit Code to do. So I've no idea (yet) how I'm going to find the time to do all this.

Anyway, there's no time to stand around complaining, let's start building our sequence out. And that leads to our first creative decision:

Do We Build Forwards Or Backwards?

Most people naturally work forwards - i.e. they start at the beginning and continue working until they reach the end. But if you know the end point, some times it can make more sense to start at the END and work backwards.

Each step you take backwards can be done by asking this question: what step would naturally occur before the step that I'm currently on.

I use both methods - and whichever method I use I tend to flip it around when I finish and check it the other way as an Audit. And you'll see that in action.

For this 'Play Bass in 50 Songs' challenge I'm going to build the sequence forwards.

And we're going to start at the very beginning - and let's call the lessons that cover the first 5 songs of the sequence Module 1.

Starting With Module 1

So as with the overall sequence, we're going to apply similar criteria to this mini-sequence (and all the nine mini-sequences that follow)

1. What is the scope of this mini sequence? (start points and end points)
2. What is learning goal of this mini-sequence?
3. Overview of how the sequence works?
4. Plotting the sequence
5. Auditing the sequence
6. Turning it into a detailed system - in this case by adding the theory that needs to support it.

OK, let's work through these in turn.

Module 1 Scope:

The **start point** of this sequence is a bass student who has recently picked up the bass, probably knows what the different parts are called, knows how to tune it, and has plucked a few notes out. And that's about it.

The **end point** of this sequence is a bass student who is starting to work on his left and right hand technique as well as employing his improving technique on bass lines to 5 songs whose rhythmic pulse is whole notes and half notes. (Plus he understands what half notes and whole notes are - and can count them!)

This sequence is about preparing him to move from the novice level that he's at where he can play these simple bass lines to a point where he can envisage playing the lines in the next module - which are quarter note based.

Module 1 - Learning Goal

The learning goal of this sequence is about preparing our bass student to move from the novice level that he's at, to playing these simple bass lines, to a point where he can envisage playing the lines in the next module - which are quarter note based bass lines.

Module 1 - Overview Of How The Mini-Sequence In Module 1 Works

The mini sequence in Module 1 works by starting the student with basic bass lines - and the technique lessons will support this and help with the theoretical understanding that's necessary. And each song will build on the learning from the first day with this HTBP in 50 Songs program.

That's absolutely got to be build in to the entire program - constant and consistent progress!

Module 1 - Plotting The Sequence

Ok, here's where the rubber meets the road as they say! We've got to

come up with a sequence of 5 songs that starts out easily and that we can use to start building the bass player's skills.

So far there are 4 songs that I came up with that we can use:

1. Imagine
2. Yesterday
3. Whiter Shade Of Pale
4. Wonderful Tonight

Now, as I'm writing these songs down I'm thinking that there are some quarter notes in some of these songs too. So when I come to build this out, I'll take the further decision THEN to either simplify the songs slightly for teaching purposes. OR I'll add in the occasional quarter note as that will push the student's learning a little bit. I'm leaning towards the latter, but as I'll use this column as a guide when I actually build out the system I'll reserve having to make this decision until then.

There are also songs that have fragments that use the rhythmic units that we're currently working on - the song Chasing Cars has sections with just whole notes. And there must be some country style songs that use half notes - so now that I'm working on this sequence I'll be on the lookout for more songs that fit what I'm looking for and I think that learning fragments of songs at specific points in the program is fine provided that the rest of the song is learned later on.

So rather than get bogged down whilst I search for those songs, I'm going to move on.

Module 1 - Auditing the Sequence

Auditing in this case involves looking through the transcriptions and checking that these appear in the right sequence for the student. Each song should be just a little bit harder than the song before. What we're looking to cut out is a sudden jump from say song 2 to song 3, and then finding that song 4 is effectively a slight step back.

There are going to be three different audit points build into the creation

of this sequence. First, there's auditing the songs almost immediately after they have been created. Which is now!

This involves looking through the songs and the notation/tab and playing through them if necessary and ensuring that the progression in difficulty is constant and managed.

The second time I'll audit the sequence of songs is when I actually create the program. Although I've taught many of the songs that are going to feature in this program before, everything is going to be filmed afresh. So it's new and takes into account all that I've learned about teaching and the technological solutions I use to implement that learning.

The third time I'll audit the sequence of songs will be when the first batch of students actually go through the program! I'll make sure that there will be a limited beta run and that those students go into some kind of support group with me - maybe a private facebook group - so that I can ensure that the kind of progress I want to see is made.

Obviously this is still a work in progress - and I'm starting to think that even though I get a '50 song spine' written down that's designed to be the skeleton to build the rest of the course on I'm going to be tweaking it right up until I commit to film!

The process is already interesting though. Just writing this specific column has led me to strike out two songs that I thought were written in stone to be included - and I wasn't planning to use song fragments. But the bottom line is that if they give real world application of the specific step that is being taught, then they should be used!

Module 1 - Turning It Into A Detailed System

Module 1 in many ways is the hardest module to set up in terms of adding the detailed supporting lessons to the course.

By the time that the students have completed Module 1 every one should be 'on the same page' and going forward will be much easier.

So as well as the song tutorials I've got to add tutorials that cover these topics:

1. Basic left hand technique
2. Basic right hand technique
3. Basic rhythmic theory
4. Applying this all to the bass.

Plus additionally I think it would probably be wise to create some optional foundation videos so that someone picking up the bass for the first time could use to get themselves familiar with the bass.

So here's what I've come up - in the likely order it should appear to the student:

Optional Lesson 1 - Tour Of The Bass - name the parts, talk about what each part does and how it contributes to the function of the bass. From tuning pegs to bridge.

Optional Lesson 2 - How To Hold The Bass - Left And Right Arm Positions. Getting ready to play.

Optional Lesson 3 - Tuning The Bass And Getting Read To Play

Now we're ready to start the program.

Module 1.

- 1.1 - Right Hand Plucking 1 - Two Finger Rest Stroke
- 1.2 - Rhythm Theory 1 Overview
- 1.3 - Rhythm Theory 2 - Whole Notes And Half Notes
- 1.4 - Right Hand Plucking 2 - Whole Notes And Half Notes
- 1.5 - Left Hand 1 - The 'One Finger Per Fret' System
- 1.6 - Playing In The Real World 1 - Imagine (complete song)
- 1.7 - Playing In The Real World 2 - Yesterday (complete song)
- 1.8 - Rhythm Theory 3 - Half Notes And Quarter Notes
- 1.9 - Playing In The Real World 3 - Whiter Shade Of Pale
- 1.10 - Practice Thoughts 1 - Timers And Diaries

- 1.11 - Right Hand Plucking 3 - Half Notes And Quarter Notes (cont.)
- 1.12 - Playing In The Real World 4 - Wonderful Tonight
- 1.13 - Playing In The Real World 5 - 12 Bar Blues in A
- 1.14 - Playing In The Real World 6 - Song Fragments
- 1.15 - Your First Virtual 'Gig'
- 1.16 - Auditing 1 - Filming Yourself/Recording Yourself From Day 1
- 1.17 - Summary Of Module 1

And at the end of Module 1 there will be a quiz of some description that the student will have to take before they can progress to the next level. (The software that I have in mind to build this program out with has the facility to include quizzes.)

And in a nutshell...that's it!

Summary

Now although we've only covered ONE module in this column - and it's not even actually complete! - I'm hoping you can see that we've covered a lot of learning ground here.

I've never myself plotted a learning sequence in quite this level of detail - partly because I've not been in the position I currently am in terms of knowledge and partly because I've never stepped back from the process of doing this and considered it in so much detail. (What you're not seeing is the two and a half hours I spent poring through my library of music books and my library of transcriptions and the like looking at bass lines!).

The big takeaways I think from this column are:

1. Learning sequences can be micro as well as macro.
2. A 'large' learning sequence can consist of multiple smaller sequences
3. You should never set a learning sequence in stone until you've made contact with the enemy. (That's a paraphrase of a military dictum - Patton I think - who said that no battle plan survives first contact with the \

enemy). So when I wrote earlier - which was hours ago - that I didn't know where I would find the time to create this course, now I'm thinking of creating it in conjunction with a beta group whose progress I closely monitor so that I can create a detailed plan - but add additional lessons to it as required.

4. Something that I've not explicitly written about in this column - chunking everything down into small, easily taught units that are easily implemented. This is the secret to both keeping in the learning zone AND keeping the goal of constant and consistent progress in mind. To that end, where I've written song lessons above, they may be broken down into further 'sub modules' and there may be a sub-module putting all the learned chunks together.

Now that my thought processes are really turning over on this subject I'm sure there will be more to add in....plus as we go through the next few modules I'm sure more will come up.

What YOU Can Do To Help

I know there are several of you who are really interested in this...here's how you can help me:

1. Read the column a couple of times.
2. When you come to something you don't understand, ask me about it. Either email me, or post in the Facebook group. I'll even give rewards for great questions - that's how important they are! So get into the habit of asking them!

DELIBERATE PRACTICE LEARNING SEQUENCE 6 (cont)

In last week's column we started the process of creating a new learning sequence for 'how to play bass in 50 songs.' And we just about managed to create the first 'module' of 5 songs! (Except I was a song short!).

Before we move on and start filling out the song lists for the rest of the '5 song modules' I want to talk about two topics that are sort of a tangent... but I think are relevant both to learning in general and to this specific learning exercise that we're doing.

We touched on one of these topics last week - and I got several emails about it, hence the column - and that's the topic of quizzes. And the second topic is something that I've never talked about in my bass stuff. But I think it's worth introducing here.

Let's start with quizzes.

Why Use Quizzes

When I outlined 'Module 1' in last week's column there was an end-of-module quiz. And as I mentioned, several people emailed and asked about this.

There are

1. Serve as an auditing mechanism
2. Give a sense of progress
3. Help 'regulate' progress in a self learning environment

Quizzes Serve As An Auditing Method

The main purpose of the end of module quiz - or test - is to ensure that the student has covered the material thoroughly.

By giving answers to questions relevant to the topics covered in Module

1, the student can ensure that he has covered the material taught to a reasonable level.

Any questions that he's presented with that he can't answer tells him that there's some piece of information that he's skipped. And by cross referencing the appropriate part of the module somehow in the question, the student can be guided back to that part of the module to go over the material and ensure that he's covered it.

This is important because one of the key principles of sequential learning is that structured properly, everything builds on prior learning the way that when you build a house you put the foundations in first. And then you start extending the brickwork beyond ground floor level and can start laying the floors and so on. You wouldn't try and hang doors at this stage....that's the kind of idea I'm trying to get across here.

Sequential Learning builds over time...and the quiz helps identify possible areas where the appropriate level of learning has not been made.

Quizzes give a sense of progress

One of the hardest parts of self guided learning in any topics is keeping the motivation going forward. (We'll touch on this in a moment in the group learning section.) And trying to measure your progress.

The quiz helps that.

Because when you successfully complete the first quiz, the next module opens up in the Learning Environment and not only can you think: look at all those questions that I answered that I didn't know the answers to a week ago or a month ago; but you can physically see new learning materials in your Learning Environment.

So that helps give that sense of progress which helps keeps the motivation going.

Quizzes help 'regulate' progress in a self learning environment

Self learning environments are difficult for most students because they don't know how to regulate their progress from unit to unit in whatever they're learning.

The quiz helps do this - because until you get the required pass percentage you can't move forward. And a 'fail' on the quiz means you've not done enough ground work. So it's a clear sign that you need to go back and work on something and learn some more. Ideally the software used to control the learning environment would provide feedback to the student and give them pointers to what areas they need to work on. (Having never worked with learning environment software I don't know if that's actually possible - yet!)

So those are the main reasons why each module would have an end of module quiz.

Group Learning

Let's turn to Group Learning.

This is something that I've had hidden away for a while - and wondered when I would write about. Well, going through the planning of this course to show you a learning sequence seems like the best time.

Now I've never taught anything using this Group Learning system - but I've been in courses where this system is applied. And there are very, very, VERY few courses where this system of learning is used. In anything.

And that's a shame, because it's wonderfully effective.

So What Exactly Is Group Learning?

Group Learning is - as it sounds - a learning system that revolves around a group. Nothing revolutionary there you might think. And after all, you've probably been in many situations where you were learning and were there was a group of you simultaneously. I'm thinking definitely at school...and at university or as adult learners.

But those situations aren't true 'group learning' as I'm going to talk about it. They have one or two of the elements - but there are crucial elements missing.

So let me start by defining what the key constituent parts of group learning.

1. There's a group - but the size is limited. Ideally more than 10. But no more than around 20. You'll see why in a moment.
2. This group learning system actually works really well online - and I think actually works BETTER online than face to face.
3. The Instructor needs to be highly involved. He doesn't just 'teach' - but there is constant and continuous feedback for EVERY SINGLE ONE of the students. Every mistake needs to be fixed.
4. The students are encouraged to 'bond' - and encouraged to critique each other's assignments. This forces the students to not only wear their 'student' hat...but also to wear an Instructor's hat. Which if you've ever done any proper teaching you'll understand immediately when I see this: just about the quickest way to learn anything is to teach it.

So, that might not sound very radical, so let's dive a little deeper.

Group Learning - Why It's So Effective

Something I should have mentioned above, if you want to learn something and you have an Instructor who knows what group learning is and teaches in that manner....unless you are a 100% driven and focused individual, learning in a group like this is the most effective way forward.

Here are the reasons why group learning is so effective.

Firstly, you're getting constant, real-time feedback. Getting better at anything - especially in the 'novice' part of the journey - is just as much about discovering what mistakes you're making and eliminating them as it is about learning new things and moving forward.

And the way Group Learning is ideally done is in a private forum - and the student has to post daily (or 5 days a week, whatever the learning routine is). This post will include things like what he's done today, and for a Bass Version would include videos of playing of small assignments. Nothing necessarily major - 30 second assignments. 45 second assignments.

Ensuring that you are always in the learning zone is done by the constant feedback you are getting in helping to eliminate mistakes as you are moving forward.

And as a student you will be told when you can move forward to the next assignment.

But because there are (let's say) 19 other people in your group (for a total of 20 people in the group), part of the learning is that you get to see THEIR mistakes. So let's say there's an assignment to learn something and you make a mistake. The instructor points it out - and you learn from it.

But you can also go and see what mistakes your colleagues have made - and learn from both their mistakes and the fixes. So your learning is magnified.

Secondly, you as a student can post your assignment and then go and check out your colleagues' assignments. By constructively critiquing those assignments you have to adopt a different learning modality...and this amplifies your learning. (And I can't overstate this...this is like an exponential multiplier when it's done correctly. Not only does it amplify your own learning - but it massively increases the speed at which you can learn to audit your own playing and spot your own mistakes.)

Thirdly if the Group is created corrected by the Instructor, there will be an element of friendly competition between the students. And I don't necessarily mean: Wow, that guy posted this, I have to better it. But it's more like: I feel a bit crappy today and don't feel like practicing. But hey, that student just posted his assignment...I better post mine to keep up.

So if the group bond is created properly, then not only is the learning amplified - but the motivation to do the learning in the first place is amplified.

Fourthly, the posting of the assignments very quickly becomes a habit - if those assignments are short and easily postable - and that helps again with the motivation.

Fifth, you won't get along with all of your colleagues but if your instructor has done his job properly there will be several who are very similar to you. And you'll get on really well with them. I've been through this system several times and there are people I've never met who I regularly talk to on Skype, who send me Christmas and Birthday Cards (and I'm an 'avoiding identity theft' geek so my birthday isn't widely available online...I have a 'fake Internet' birthday for places like Facebook and so on), who if they came to the UK I would put them up for as long as they needed and vice-versa in their part of the world...and so on.

Once you've made friends like these...if they see you've missed a few postings they'll gently nudge you with an email and help keep you on track.

I could write for pages and pages and pages about group learning...but I do want to get back to the Sequence for next week, so I'll leave the summary of the advantages there.

If This System Is So Awesome (And It IS!) - Why Don't You Teach Like This?

This is probably what some of you are thinking right now. Along with questions like: this sounds great, why haven't you offered this? And so on.

There are three reasons:

1. It's Brutally Time Intensive For Me

Teaching in this format is very time intensive for the instructor. Let's say

there are three 45 second video assignments every week for every student. And 20 students.

That's SIXTY individual videos that HAVE to be watched and commented on. Watching them is let's say two minutes (watching them twice). Commenting on them - even with the speed I type at - is a minimum of another five to ten minutes.

That's 600 minutes (or 10 hours) dealing with the assignments first off. And that expands as people ask for clarifications. Because of the amount of time that would be involved, that leads to the second reason I've never taught in this format.

2. Cost

Bearing in mind how much time I'd have to invest in both creating the materials for any course AND in the feedback, for this to be cost effective for me I'm guessing you'd be looking at a cost of \$5500 - \$4000. And I'm not sure there would be enough people who could SEE the benefits of this type of learning AND therefore be willing to invest that kind of money in this one of a kind training.

Now I'm not saying that I'm planning to do a 'group learning' course. But it's way past time that I shared what I know about this learning system. And I can take the opportunity to ask: knowing what I've revealed above, who might be interested in taking a course on this basis? (If that's you, then drop me an email and just let me know...be intrigued to see the answers to this one.)

3. I Wasn't Ready

The whole premise of deliberate practice is keeping in the learning zone....and the thing that I think sets me apart from a lot of my bass playing competitors is that whilst they are great bass players (and would totally smoke me at a jam) I see a lot of guys teaching who aren't great teachers. And I've spent time in the last few years learning how to teach than I have on my bass playing!

And before this point, I don't think I was ready to try out group learning.

But within the right framework, I think now that I might be. It would certainly be highly challenging to me personally and as you'll read in Issue 306 I'm trying to move *First Bass And Beyond* to a point where I'm less of a contributor and more of an editor. (Don't worry about that sentence...it will be fully explained in 306!).

Summary

In today's column we've taken a detour. I needed to just quickly mention why quizzes were important to the 50 Songs Course that I'm developing to show you how the learning sequence concept works.

And that led naturally to a topic I've wanted to talk about for a year or so! And that was Group Learning. Group Learning is the most effective way I've seen to learn something and I've seen it work for very different topics. And provided certain parameters are met, there's no reason group learning wouldn't work for the bass.

But it would come with what many would consider a steep price tag. (And I'm intrigued to see if anyone would be interested at the kind of price tag I've set out...hit your email program and let me know!)

We'll be back with the learning sequence in next week's column!

DELIBERATE PRACTICE

LEARNING SEQUENCE 6 (cont)

Ok, this week we're back to creating the learning sequence for 'How To Play Bass In 50 Songs.' So far we've ended up with this guide to the overall structure:

1. Half notes (and whole notes)
2. Quarter Note Bass Lines (e.g. Beatles Love Me Do)
3. Faster Quarter Note Bass Lines (e.g. Rock And Roll, Elvis)
4. Simple 8th note rhythms - rhythm 1 (e.g. My Girl)
5. *Simple 8th note rhythms - rhythm 2 (e.g. Duck Dunn lines)*
6. *Simple 8th note rhythms - rhythm 3 (quarter note plus two 8th notes)*
7. Syncopated 8th note rhythms (e.g. Sunshine Of Your Love, Knock On Wood)
8. Constant 8th Notes (e.g. Every Breath, With Or Without You)
9. Rocky 8th notes (e.g. Bon Jovi, New Years Day, Message In Bottle chorus)
10. Fast, constant 8th notes - I Saw Her Standing There, Tailfeather

And then two weeks ago we started building out the section that encompasses the first group of five songs - I called that Module 1. And here's the outline for Module 1 that we came up with:

Module 1.

- 1.1 - Right Hand Plucking 1 - Two Finger Rest Stroke
- 1.2 - Rhythm Theory 1 Overview
- 1.3 - Rhythm Theory 2 - Whole Notes And Half Notes
- 1.4 - Right Hand Plucking 2 - Whole Notes And Half Notes
- 1.5 - Left Hand 1 - The 'One Finger Per Fret' System
- 1.6 - Playing In The Real World 1 - Imagine (complete song)
- 1.7 - Playing In The Real World 2 - Yesterday (complete song)
- 1.8 - Rhythm Theory 3 - Half Notes And Quarter Notes
- 1.9 - Playing In The Real World 3 - Whiter Shade Of Pale
- 1.10 - Practice Thoughts 1 - Timers And Diaries

- 1.11 - Right Hand Plucking 3 - Half Notes And Quarter Notes (cont.)
- 1.12 - Playing In The Real World 4 - Wonderful Tonight
- 1.13 - Playing In The Real World 5 - 12 Bar Blues in A
- 1.14 - Playing In The Real World 6 - Song Fragments
- 1.15 - Your First Virtual 'Gig'
- 1.16 - Auditing 1 - Filming Yourself/Recording Yourself From Day 1
- 1.17 - Summary Of Module 1
- 1.18 - Quiz

In this column we're going to move forward and add quarter note bass lines.

Now just a quick note, you may have picked out that when I was creating the list of songs I was a song short....and I added a 12 bar blues into the sequence. This song form and chord progression is so ubiquitous that I think I'm going to keep using it through the How To Play Bass in 50 Songs sequence because it's a great tool to introduce new rhythmic concepts in a chordal framework.

So our goal today is to add some bass lines with the quarter note as the basic pulse. And just to note, Module 2 will focus on slower bass lines based on the quarter note pulse.

Now to do this what I may have to do is simplify some songs slightly so that they fit this predominantly quarter note pulse requirement.

So the next steps are to examine some repertoire and think about the 'supporting lessons' that will help fill the spine out.

Supporting Lessons

The supporting lessons have a specific job - and that is to fill out the technique and theory required to actually play the songs. So for this module we'll need to work on the rhythm theory of quarter notes, working on plucking hand with the quarter note pulse, a quick explanation (sidebar almost) of the difference between swing and straight 8th note feels (because some of the tracks might have a quarter note bass line but have an underlying rhythmic pulse which is one of these feels),

continue working on the left hand, and start introducing some drills to work on fretboard note recognition. Also this module might be a good module to introduce rhythmic tab.

Song Possibilities

Song possibilities for this module include early Beatles tunes, early 'rock and roll tunes,' simplified versions of Green Onions and Moon-dance (both with just quarter notes), a simple blues in A with quarter notes (one of the first things I ever learned was a blues in A with quarter notes), plus early pop tunes.

What I'm going to do is list the possibilities - whether they are entirely quarter note based or whether they would need to be simplified and then I'll choose once I've got a list of possibilities in front of me. This way you'll really get to follow along with the process.

So here's the song list I've come up with so far:

1. Ring Of Fire - Johnny Cash. Quarter note based line...played mainly on the 1 and 3. So a good intro to quarter notes AND rests.
2. Folsom Prison Blues. Ditto the above.
3. Walk The Line - Ditto the above!
4. Old Time Rock And Roll - although this is a swing 8th note tune the original bass line is purely quarter notes!
5. Bad Moon Rising - as I'm going through my files I'm also pulling out tunes that might fit in Module 1. As far as I'm concerned whatever the final list is, it's ALWAYS a work in progress! This tune is primarily played with half notes....so I might edit it into Module 1.
6. Looking Out My Back Door - also by Creedence. This is predominantly quarter notes.
7. Heatwave. Again, a swing 8th note feel track with a quarter note

bass line. This might end up in Module 3.

8. Baby Love/Where Did Our Love Go. Two more Jamerson lines with predominantly quarter note pulse bass lines.

9. All My Loving. Swing 8th notes - but solid quarter note pulse.

10. Penny Lane. Not all quarter notes, but lots of quarter notes in this one.

11. I'm Still Standing. More upbeat - maybe for Module 3. But again, predominantly quarter note based.

12. You've Got To Hide Your Love Away. According to the Beatles Complete Scores there's no bass on this....this could be a good one for a 'custom' arrangement with bass in. Either quarter note or half note based.

13. Michelle. This one has got half notes and quarter notes. There are some rhythmic pick up notes, but they can be left out of a simplified arrangement.

14. Love Me Do. This has got a quarter note pulse in the bass line - with a country feel on 1 and 3.

15. Girl. This is another one that with only a few minor changes can be turned into a quarter note based song.

16. Can't Buy Me Love. This is probably for Module 3 as although it's resolutely quarter note based, it's more uptempo than a lot of the tracks in this module.

17. Altogether Now. This also is for Module 3 probably. Again, it's uptempo.

18. Let It Be. As you know I'm on vacation....the first hotel we stayed at was about 100m from the venue for an open air concert and one of the bands was a Beatles tribute band. They closed with Let It Be...and as I was trying to get sleep I thought that a simplified arrangement of this

would fit in this module quite nicely!

A Quick Note Before The Next Step

You'll see that there are lots of Beatles tunes in the above list....there's a few reasons for this:

1. Paul McCartney's bass lines cover the gamut of simple to complex in terms of rhythm and difficulty level (so you could program a 'How TO Play Bass in 50 McCartney Bass Lines!')
2. Learning these well known songs gives the student some repertoire that could be used in 'band' situations.
3. Learning these well known songs helps fuel a sense of progress. When the student says: I'm learning the bass, and his friend asks what songs he can play he can give a list of songs that most people will recognize.

Now what's interesting so far is that as I came to do this step of constructing the learning sequence I realized that I could probably find dozens and dozens of songs at this rhythmic level. And that I can't squeeze them all into this module. But what I can do over time is either create extra tutorials as 'bonus' tutorials OR create tutorials so that the student can choose to learn different songs at different stages of the process depending on what they like. So in effect they customize part of the learning experience for themselves. (Or they can be really thorough and learn everything!)

So onto the next step.

Choosing the 5 Songs For This Module And Ordering Them

The next step is to pick out the five songs that will form the spine of this module and order them in a sequence that will advance the student's proficiency.

So looking through my list I'm thinking of starting with one or more of the 'ballad' style songs, progressing via songs with quarter notes on

beats 1 and 3, and ending up with a song where the bass line is full quarter notes.

So here are the songs I've chosen for this....in the order I think they should appear.

- Michelle (custom arrangement of half notes and quarter notes)
- Love Me Do
- Ring Of Fire
- Where Did Our Love Go
- Old Time Rock And Roll

So this will be the spine of Module 2. The next step is to build up the supporting lessons around this to create the finished outline for Module 2.

Adding The Supporting Lessons

The supporting lessons for this module need to include the following topics:

Rhythmic Theory and Plucking Hand Lessons
More fretting hand development

Additionally I want to introduce learning the fretboard.

And the module would finish up with a summary and a quiz.

So let's try and map out Module 2.

Module 2

First I'll copy and paste the five songs that are the spine of this module. Then I'll layer in the supporting lessons.

Here are the 5 songs that I chose:

Michelle (custom arrangement of half notes and quarter notes)

Love Me Do

Ring Of Fire

Where Did Our Love Go

Old Time Rock And Roll

Ok, now to layer in the supporting lessons.

2.1 Rhythm Theory 2 - Quarter Notes (2 to a bar, 4 to a bar)

2.2 Playing In The Real World 7 - Michelle

2.3 Plucking Hand 4 Quarter Notes - Beats 1 and 3

2.4 Fretting Hand 2 - An Introduction To Left Hand Muting

2.5 Playing In The Real World 8 - Love Me Do

2.6 Theory Lesson - Swing 8ths Versus Straight 8ths

2.7 Fretting Hand 3 - 1-2-3-4 Variations

2.8 Fretboard Learning 1 - E and F

2.9 Playing In the Real World 9 - Ring Of Fire

2.10 Plucking Hand 4 - Quarter Notes - 4 to the Bar

2.11 Playing In The Real World 10 - Where Did Our Love Go

2.12 Practice Thoughts 2 - Warming Up And 'Slow' practicing

2.13 Rhythm Case Study - 12 Bar Blues In A (three variations)

2.14 Playing In The Real World 11 - Old Time Rock And Roll

2.15 Auditing 2

2.16 Summary Of Module 2

2.17 End Of Module Quiz

Bonus Song - I Walk the Line

Bonus Song - Baby Love

Bonus Song - Penny Lane

Thoughts On Module 2

One of the things I'm trying to do with this sequence is to intersperse the 'boring but fundamental' stuff with the 'fun stuff.' So theory topics are broken up into smaller chunks - and are alternated with applying that learning to a real world song.

And I'm also introducing advanced topics like slow practicing - because if the student learns to practice the right way straight away they will progress much quicker than if they 'race' away learning songs and playing lines - but doing it wrong. Kind of a tortoise and hare approach.

Summary

In this lesson - and in the remaining ones creating this sequence - I've really tried to detail the approach I'm taking to make a learning sequence so you can see all the steps. And then let's say that you want to create a learning sequence for yourself you'll be able to.

One thing to note - and I mentioned this before - is that 'no plan survives first contact with the enemy!' So I expect to change this as I'm going through and creating the outlines for future modules and as I'm actually creating the modules AND as students then start going through the modules! Plus I'll discover other songs that can go into earlier modules!

So for example, the original outline I created envisages just two modules focused on quarter notes. I'm now thinking of changing the outline and making that THREE modules. But I'll take a pause and have a think about that.

Hopefully though you're starting to get the idea of how to build a learning sequence....at the end of this mini-series I'll look at how to create a learning sequence for a much smaller topic so you can see how you might apply the principles to something smaller.

Questions

If you have any questions on this, please don't hesitate to email me, post in the facebook group or comment on the Issue 305 page.

DELIBERATE PRACTICE LEARNING SEQUENCE 6 (cont)

Ok, this week we're back to creating the learning sequence for 'How To Play Bass In 50 Songs.' So far we've ended up with this guide to the overall structure:

1. Half notes (and whole notes)
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6. *Simple 8th note rhythms - rhythm 3 (quarter note plus two 8th notes)*
7. Syncopated 8th note rhythms (e.g. Sunshine Of Your Love, Knock On Wood)
8. Constant 8th Notes (e.g. Every Breath, With Or Without You)
9. Rocky 8th notes (e.g. Bon Jovi, New Years Day, Message In Bottle chorus)
10. Fast, constant 8th notes - I Saw Her Standing There, Tailfeather

And we've started building out the sections for this course. So far we've come up with the outline for Module 1 and Module 2:

Module 1:

- 1.1 - Right Hand Plucking 1 - Two Finger Rest Stroke
- 1.2 - Rhythm Theory 1 Overview
- 1.3 - Rhythm Theory 2 - Whole Notes And Half Notes
- 1.4 - Right Hand Plucking 2 - Whole Notes And Half Notes
- 1.5 - Left Hand 1 - The 'One Finger Per Fret' System
- 1.6 - Playing In The Real World 1 - Imagine (complete song)
- 1.7 - Playing In The Real World 2 - Yesterday (complete song)
- 1.8 - Rhythm Theory 3 - Half Notes And Quarter Notes
- 1.9 - Playing In The Real World 3 - Whiter Shade Of Pale
- 1.10 - Practice Thoughts 1 - Timers And Diaries
- 1.11 - Right Hand Plucking 3 - Half Notes And Quarter Notes (cont.)
- 1.12 - Playing In The Real World 4 - Wonderful Tonight

- 1.13 - Playing In The Real World 5 - 12 Bar Blues in A
- 1.14 - Playing In The Real World 6 - Song Fragments
- 1.15 - Your First Virtual 'Gig'
- 1.16 - Auditing 1 - Filming Yourself/Recording Yourself From Day 1
- 1.17 - Summary Of Module 1
- 1.18 - Quiz

Module 2:

- 2.1 Rhythm Theory 2 - Quarter Notes (2 to a bar, 4 to a bar)
- 2.2 Playing In The Real World 7 - Michelle
- 2.3 Plucking Hand 4 Quarter Notes - Beats 1 and 3
- 2.4 Fretting Hand 2 - An Introduction To Left Hand Muting
- 2.5 Playing In The Real World 8 - Love Me Do
- 2.6 Theory Lesson - Swing 8ths Versus Straight 8ths
- 2.7 Fretting Hand 3 - 1-2-3-4 Variations
- 2.8 Fretboard Learning 1 - E and F
- 2.9 Playing In the Real World 9 - Ring Of Fire
- 2.10 Plucking Hand 4 - Quarter Notes - 4 to the Bar
- 2.11 Playing In The Real World 10 - Where Did Our Love Go
- 2.12 Practice Thoughts 2 - Warming Up And 'Slow' practicing
- 2.13 Rhythm Case Study - 12 Bar Blues In A (three variations)
- 2.14 Playing In The Real World 11 - Old Time Rock And Roll
- 2.15 Auditing 2
- 2.16 Summary Of Module 2
- 2.17 End Of Module Quiz

Bonus Song - I Walk the Line

Bonus Song - Baby Love

Bonus Song - Penny Lane

In this column we're going to move forward and work out Module 3 - which will be more quarter note bass lines, but at a quicker tempo.

Our goal today is to add some bass lines with the quarter note as the basic pulse - but at slightly faster tempos than Module 2. Remember that the goal of the learning sequence is to be constantly moving forward in small steps where each successive step doesn't seem like much of a

stretch from the previous step. But by the time the student reaches Song 50 and looks back they will realize that there's a BIG step up from Song 1 to Song 50!

So we need to work out the 'supporting lessons' that will help fill the spine of the course out, and then examine and choose appropriate repertoire.

Supporting Lessons

The supporting lessons have a specific job - and that is to fill out the technique and theory required to actually play the songs.

So in Module 2 we already looked at the rhythmic theory of quarter notes so we don't need to do that. What we can do is focus on upping the tempo of our plucking hand practice with the quarter note pulse, continue working on the fretting hand and continue the fretboard note recognition drills.

Song Possibilities

Song possibilities for this module include early Beatles tunes, early 'rock and roll tunes,' simplified versions of Green Onions and Moon-dance (both with just quarter notes), a simple blues in A with quarter notes (one of the first things I ever learned was a blues in A with quarter notes), plus early pop tunes.

What I'm going to do is list the possibilities - whether they are entirely quarter note based or whether they would need to be simplified and then I'll choose once I've got a list of possibilities in front of me. This why you'll really get to follow along with the process.

So here's the song list I've come up with so far - and some of these songs came from the quarter note work we did in working out Module 2:

1. Heatwave. Again, a swing 8th note feel track with a quarter note bass line.

2. I'm Still Standing. Upbeat and predominantly quarter note based.
3. Can't Buy Me Love. More McCartney. See the notes on Module 2 in Issue 305.
4. Altogether Now. Yet more McCartney!
5. Dance The Night Away by The Mavericks. This was a big country cross over hit in the mid 90s - it has a simple bass line that is quarter note based.
6. Rock And Roll Music by Chuck Berry. There's a slew of rock and roll tunes from the mid 50s that have quarter note bass lines.
7. Blue Suede Shoes by Carl Perkins. More rock and roll and quarter notes.
8. Rock Around The Clock by Bill Haley. And ditto.
9. Shake Rattle And Roll by Billy Haley. Ditto.
10. Great Balls Of Fire by Jerry Lee Lewis. Most bands play this as a fast 8th note rocker. The original bass line - on acoustic bass - was strictly quarter notes.
11. Jumping Jive by Joe Jackson's Jumping Jive. This one - which is a cross between a jazz song and a blues song - I found in my archive of transcriptions as I used to play it in a band. Probably too fast and complex for what we're trying to achieve. Nevertheless...worth noting out.
12. Peggy Sue by Buddy Holly. This has got a quarter note pulse - and an upbeat tempo. There's quite a few tunes from the Buddy Holly canon that could be added/layered into to the earlier modules too. As I said last time out, this is a work in progress and subject to revision as I get deeper and deeper into it!
13. Long Tall Sally by Carl Perkins. More early rock and roll - more quarter notes! (Great tune btw too, that's not played much!)

14. Be Bop A Lulu - Gene Vincent

15. Good Golly Miss Molly by Little Richard

And the list could go on. Couple of things to note: the rock and roll songs (and more songs from that repertoire) are really interesting studies because in many ways they point to the roots of both pop and rock bass AND blues rock bass; I consulted with a friend of mine who played bass in the show 'Buddy' for a couple of years and his list of songs that could be played in the quarter note pulse extends to another twenty or so songs!

Also, some of these rock and roll songs were played in the early 60s by bands like the Stones and The Beatles and they were made more driving by switching from quarter note pulse to the eighth note pulse. So some of the ones that don't make the cut might turn up in a later module in a different guise!

So onto the next step.

Choosing the 5 Songs For This Module And Ordering Them

The next step is to pick out the five songs that will form the spine of this module and order them in a sequence that will advance the student's proficiency.

I'm Still Standing

Heatwave

Can't Buy Me Love

Rock And Roll Music

Blue Suede Shoes

So this will be the spine of Module 3. The next step is to build up the supporting lessons around this to create the finished outline for Module 3.

Adding The Supporting Lessons

The supporting lessons for this module need to include the following topics:

More plucking hand lessons
More fretting hand development
More learning the fretboard.
End of module summary and quiz

So let's try and map out Module 3.

Module 3

First I'll copy and paste the five songs that are the spine of this module. Then I'll layer in the supporting lessons.

Here are the 5 songs that I chose:

I'm Still Standing
Heatwave
Can't Buy Me Love
Rock And Roll Music
Blue Suede Shoes

Ok, now to layer in the supporting lessons. Here's what I've come up with:

- 3.1 Plucking Hand 5 - Quarter Notes And Tempo Practice (introduce two types of tempo practice)
- 3.2 Playing In The Real World 12 - I'm Still Standing
- 3.3 Fretting Hand 4 - 1-2-3-4 Variations Starting With The Second Finger
- 3.4 Plucking Hand 6 - Quarter Note Cross String Plucking 1
- 3.5 Playing In The Real World 13 - Heatwave
- 3.6 Rhythm Theory Lesson - Note Duration
- 3.7 Fretboard Learning 1 - F# and G
- 3.8 Playing In the Real World 14 - Can't Buy Me Love
- 3.9 Fretting Hand 5 - Theory - The Upright Bass Fingering System

- 3.10 Plucking Hand 7 - Quarter Note Cross String Plucking 2
- 3.11 Playing In The Real World 15 - Rock And Roll Music
- 3.13 The Blues In E - Quarter Note Rhythms
- 3.14 Playing In The Real World 12 - Blue Suede Shoes
- 3.15 Organizing Practice Material - The Biggest Practice Mistake Students Make And How To Avoid It
- 3.16 Summary Of Module 3
- 3.17 End Of Module Quiz

Bonus Song - Dance The Night Away

Bonus Song - Green Onions

Bonus Song - Peggy Sue

Thoughts On Module 3

One of the things I'm trying to do with this sequence is to intersperse the 'boring but fundamental' stuff with the 'fun stuff.' So theory topics are broken up into smaller chunks - and are alternated with applying that learning to a real world song.

And I'm also introducing advanced topics like slow practicing - because if the student learns to practice the right way straight away they will progress much quicker than if they 'race' away learning songs and playing lines - but doing it wrong. Kind of a tortoise and hare approach.

Summary

In this lesson - and in the remaining ones creating this sequence - I've really tried to detail the approach I'm taking to make a learning sequence so you can see all the steps. And then let's say that you want to create a learning sequence for yourself you'll be able to.

In the last installment I mentioned I might expand the number of modules with quarter note bass lines to three - I've now revised that idea and gone back to the original plan of two modules focusing on quarter notes.

I've also revised my 'conception' of the bonus songs. Before, the bonus

songs were just songs that couldn't be fitted in - now I think that bonus songs can include songs that go slightly beyond the level of the module that they are attached to. So for example Green Onions has got a swung 8th note that's integral to the tune - but it's based on a resolute quarter note pulse. And it's a great tune for the student to have under his belt... so these bonus songs will do two jobs: firstly they'll be an extra piece of repertoire to learn (and help fuel the sense of progress); secondly in the teaching of the bonus songs it will be pointed out to the student how the song goes beyond the module. So the bonus songs will help widen the 'domain knowledge' that the student has.

Hopefully though you're starting to get the idea of how to build a learning sequence....at the end of this mini-series I'll look at how to create a learning sequence for a much smaller topic so you can see how you might apply the principles to something smaller.

Questions

If you have any questions on this, please don't hesitate to email me, post in the facebook group or comment on the Issue 305 page.