Guitar Ensemble Method

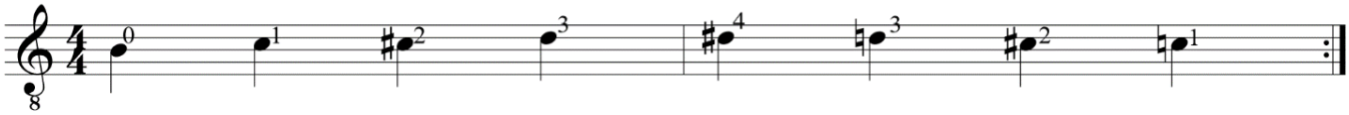
- 6th edition -

Lead Guitar

Chromatic Scale

A chromatic scale is a series of notes that moves up or down in half steps, or, on the guitar, one fret at a time without skipping any frets. When played on a single string on the guitar, it is as if your fingers are walking. Before practicing the chromatic scale below, set up your LH as explained on page 7.

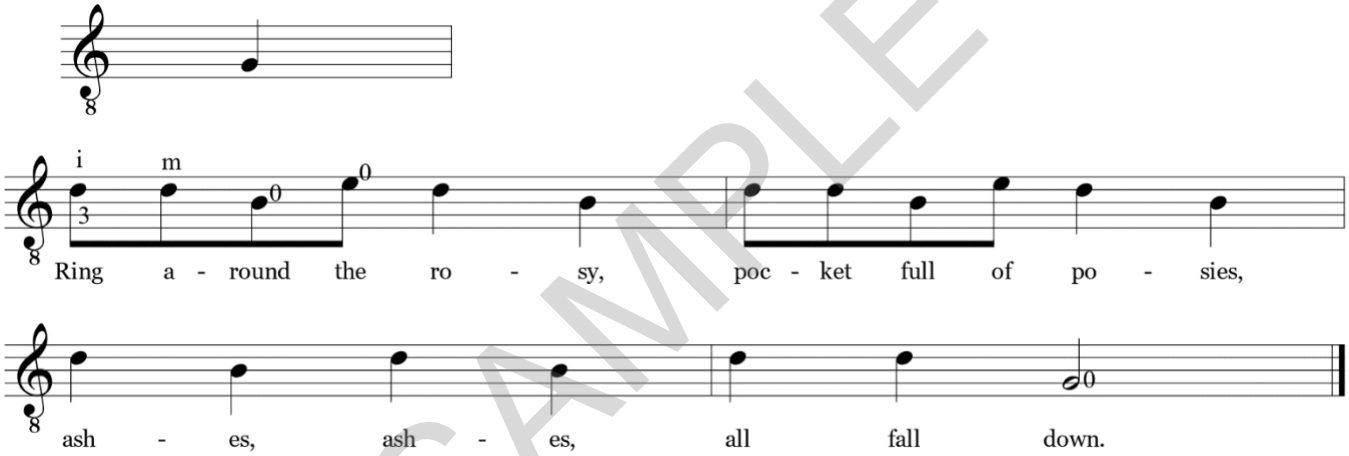
You don't need to be able to read the new notes in this scale. First you play the open B string, then your first finger plays the first fret, your second finger plays the second fret, third finger, third fret, fourth finger, fourth fret, and then back down again. Focus on keeping your fingers curved and pressing down on the string with your fingertips.



Ring around the Rosy

Ring around the Rosy has one new note:

G is the 3rd string played open.



SAMPLE

Improvisation I

Improvisation is the spontaneous creation of music from one's imagination. While there are no rules for improvising, using some structure and applying the notes, sounds and techniques we can execute with confidence helps us learn to connect our imagination to our instrument.

In this improvisation exercise, each student describes an accompaniment they imagine for their improvisation using descriptors like emotions, speed, intensity and density of notes, which their teacher can interpret into an accompaniment style and choice of chord (either G Major or E minor).

Students then improvise a short solo melody over their accompaniment using only these elements:

1. Notes: G, B, D and E
2. Any of the percussion sounds introduced in Fire Dance

There are no restrictions on rhythm. This exercise works well as an extension activity over the course of several class periods with 4 to 5 students taking a turn each session.

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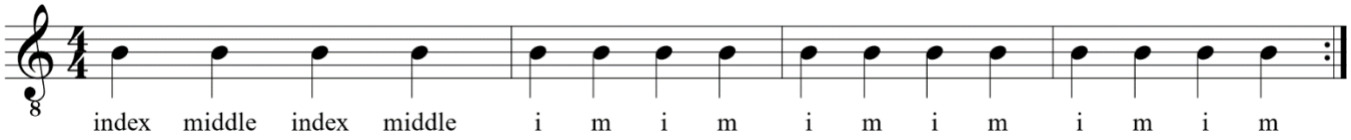
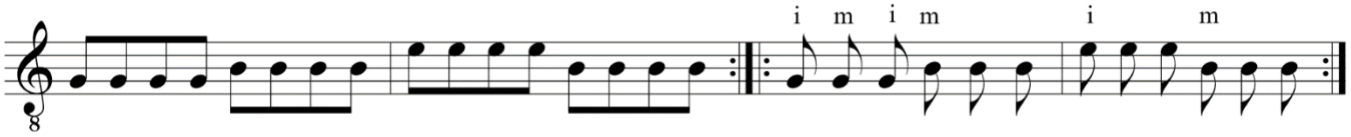
Daily Warm-up Routine II

Right Hand

1. Walking on the B String



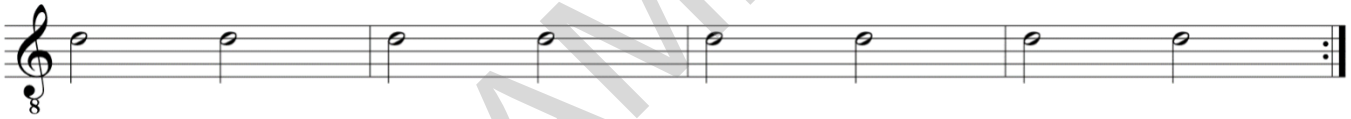
2. String Crossing



Watch out for the right-hand finger alternating in the second part of this exercise as you play each note three times. Because each string is played three times, you will have to change your starting finger each time you change strings. Keep your eyes and your focus on your right hand during this part of your warm-up.

Left Hand

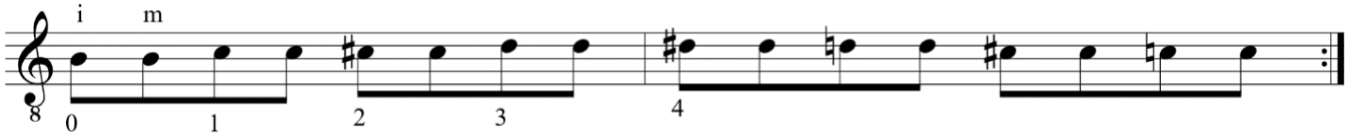
3. LH 3rd Finger - No RH



This is the most important left-hand exercise in the book. It allows you to focus only on your LH and each of the details that make for relaxed, accurate fingers. Curve your finger, land on its tip just behind the fret, keep your thumb behind the neck, flat, relaxed and pointed up. While you are focused on your left hand alone, hold your right hand in playing position with your "m" finger resting on the B string and your thumb anchored on the low E. Keep your eyes and your focus on your left hand during this part of your warm-up.

Combining the Hands

4. Chromatic Scale



We start with playing each note twice to reinforce our RH finger alternating - each note is played with an index then a middle finger before moving to the next note. Later, you can substitute this scale with the extended chromatic scales on pages 25 and 33 and continue to use this warm-up routine until you reach Warm-up III.

SAMPLE

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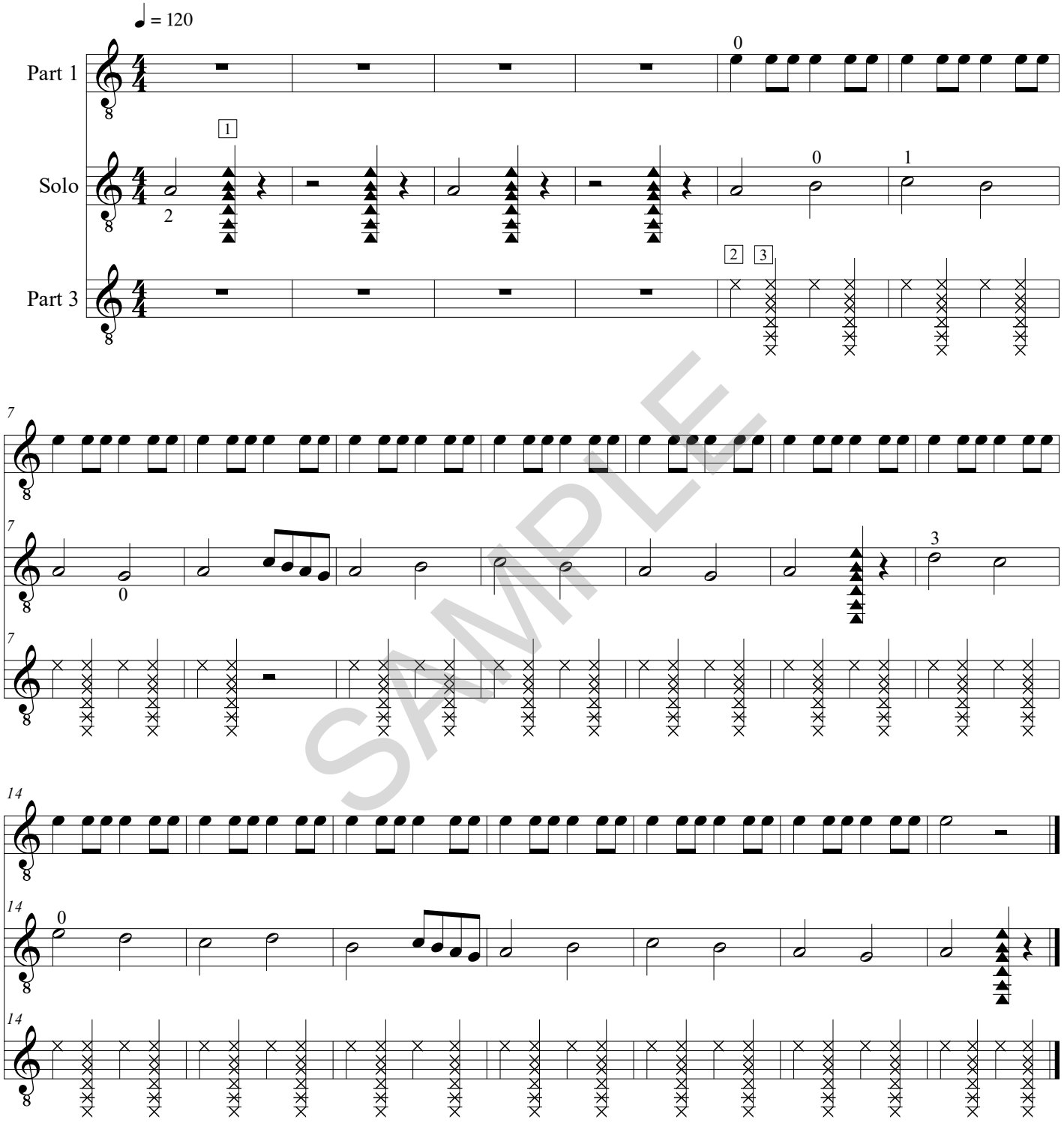
Chant

Brad Richter 2020



1 'i' finger nail scraping down through the strings just behind the bridge where the strings are tied

2 Open Left Hand striking the side of the guitar under the neck

3 Open Right Hand striking the strings over the sound hole

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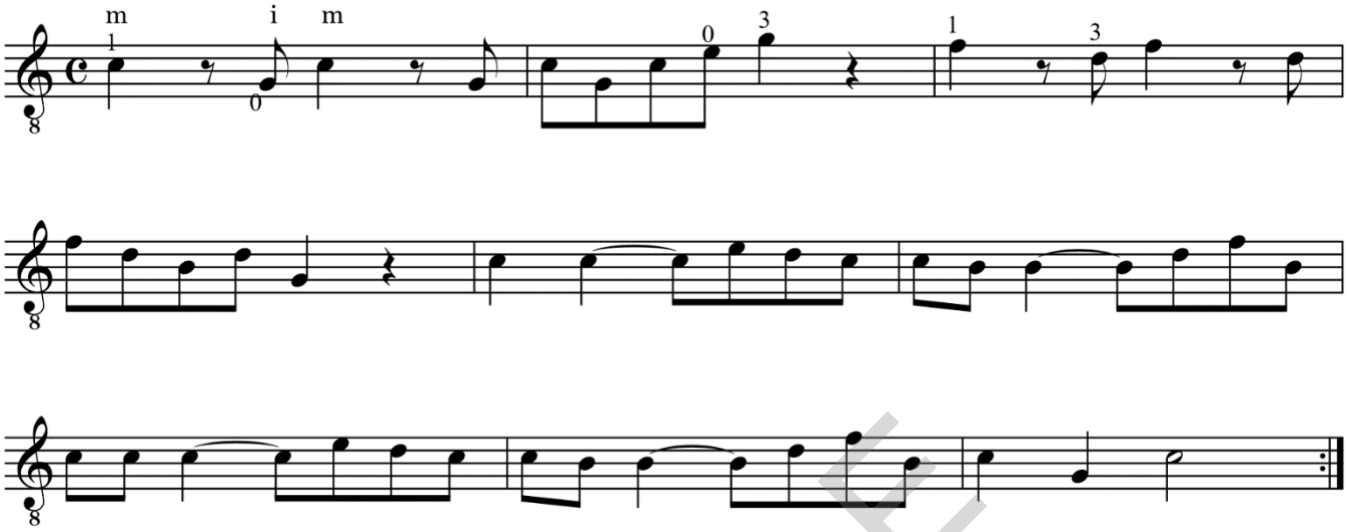
Eine Kleine Nachtmusik

W.A. Mozart



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Classical period composer and virtuoso musician **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791**) was born in Salzburg, Austria. When he was just five years old he played concerts throughout Europe and wrote his own music. He could play both keyboard and violin amazingly well for a child and was considered a child genius. His father, Leopold Mozart, was his music teacher during his early years, forcing him to practice, compose and perform for many hours each day. At age seventeen, Mozart accepted a position as court musician in Salzburg then later moved to Vienna, Austria where he wrote many of his most important works. Mozart was a funny and quirky individual. He often composed while playing billiards or other games, he loved playing practical jokes and even bought a pet bird which he taught to sing his music. Mozart composed over 600 pieces of music during his short life time. He died when he was thirty-five.

Words to Play By:

"Don't give up trying to do what you really want to do. Where there is love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong."

- Ella Fitzgerald

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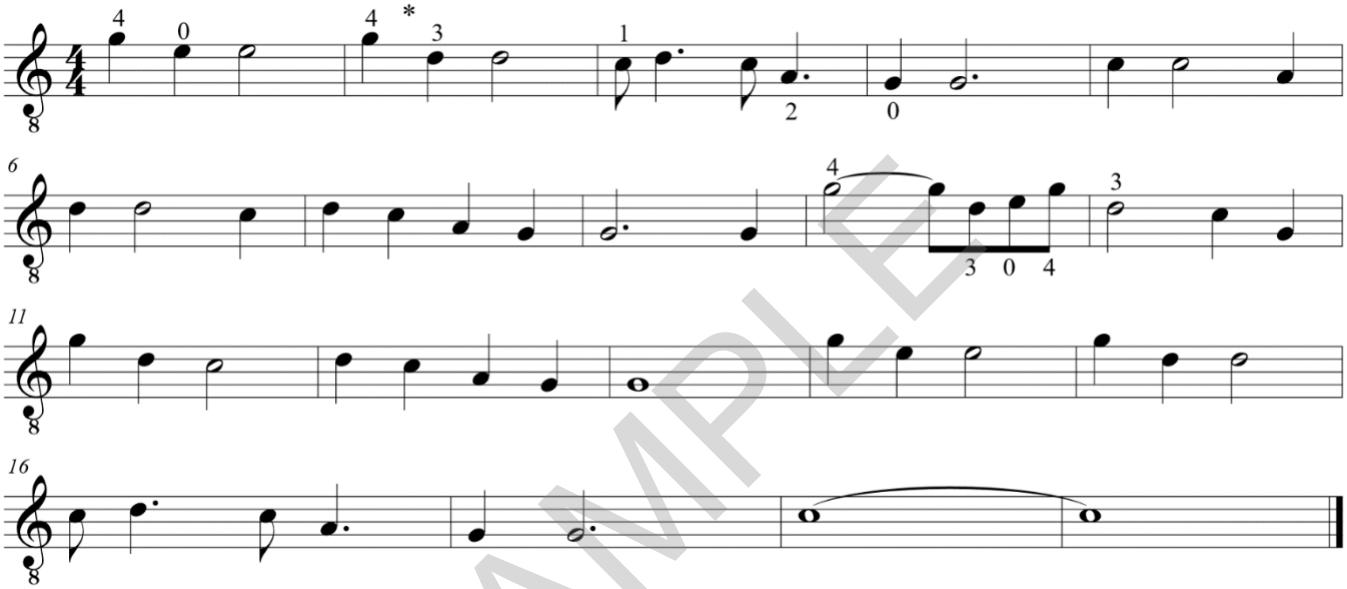
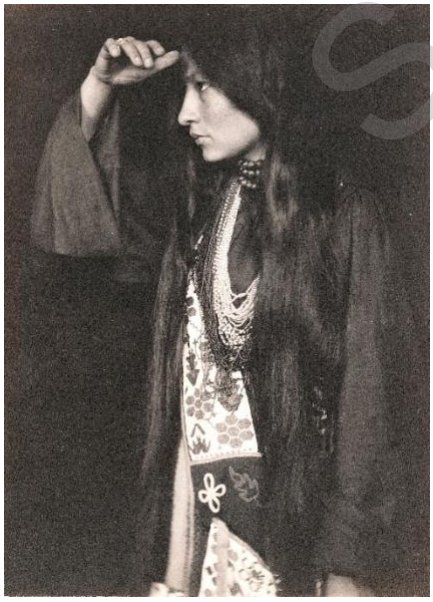
Left-Hand Contractions A left-hand contraction happens when two different LH fingers are used to play notes on adjacent strings in the same fret, forcing the fingers to contract together in order to line up in the same fret. In the case of Sun Dance Opera, we do this in order to avoid using the same LH finger twice in a row for different notes on adjacent strings. As with the right hand, it's best to avoid using the same LH finger twice in a row whenever possible. The contraction in Sun Dance Opera happens between the first note (G) and the second note (D) of measure four.

Sun Dance Opera





Zitkala Sa (1876–1938), which means “Red Bird” in Lakota, was a Yankton Dakota Sioux writer, editor, translator, musician, educator, and political activist. She wrote books and articles that told of the struggles she had with cultural identity. Zitkala Sa studied violin at the New England Conservatory of Music and eventually became the first Native American to co-author an opera. Her opera, “The Sun Dance Opera,” was based on a sacred Sioux ritual and was first performed in 1913. She was also a political activist who worked to preserve the Native American way of life while pushing for rights and full American citizenship for Native Americans. She continued to advocate for civil rights and women’s rights until her death in 1938.

SAMPLE

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Time Signatures I

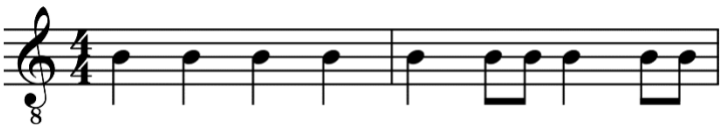
Time signatures appear at the beginning of a song to indicate how many beats are in each measure, and the value of each of those beats. Until now, all of the songs in this book have been in 4/4 time:

4 — The top number indicates the number of beats in each measure.

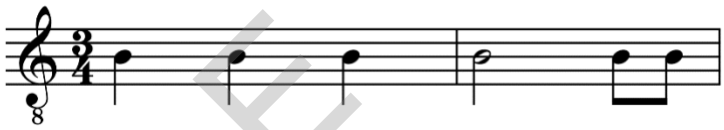
4 — The bottom number indicates the time value of each beat (2 = half note, 4 = quarter note, 8 = eighth note).

Further examples:

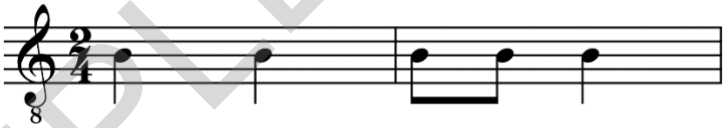
4/4 = four quarter note beats per measure



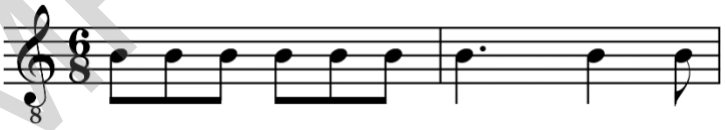
3/4 = three quarter note beats per measure



2/4 = two quarter note beats per measure



6/8 = six eighth note beats per measure



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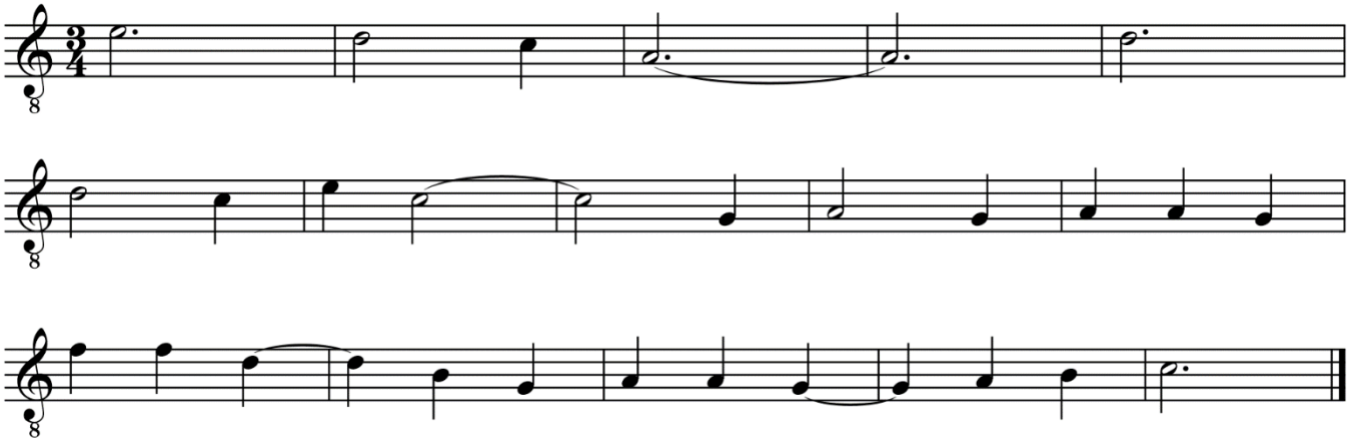
Cielito Lindo

Count and clap Cielito Lindo several times before playing it on the guitar.

Quirino Mendoza y Cortes



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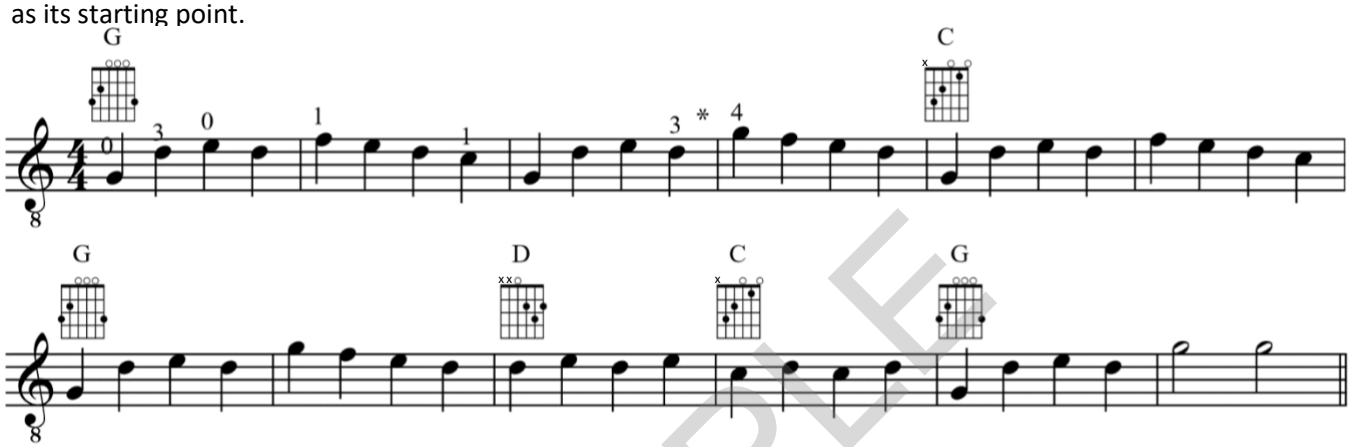
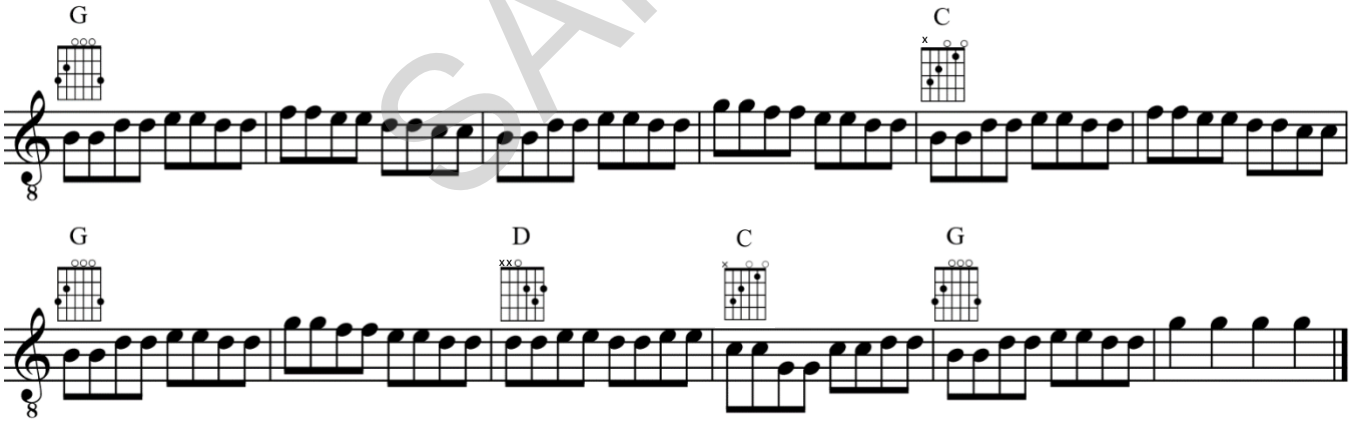
12-Bar Blues

The “12-Bar Blues” is a chord and phrase structure used to create countless blues, jazz, rock, pop and hip-hop songs over the last 150 years. It was first written down by W. C. Handy in the early 20th century but the form and genre had long-since been perfected by other, less prominent African-American musicians.

To create a typical 12-Bar Blues in the “key” of G like the one below, we use a G chord for measures 1-4, a C chord for measure 5-6, another G chord for measures 7-8, a D chord for measure 9, C for measure 10 and back to G for measure 11-12. Chord building, harmony and key changes are addressed in detail in Method Book II Level IX. For now, you should know that a 12-Bar Blues can be played in any key or using any chord as its starting point.



In the blues style, eighth notes are played with a swing feel, rather than with a straight or even feel. When you hear swinging eighth notes, you’ll notice that there is more emphasis on the first eighth note than the second in each eighth-note grouping. Try saying the words “LONG-short, LONG-short, LONG-short, LONG-short” or “DOO-bah, DOO-bah, DOO-bah, DOO-bah” to feel how they swing. The eighth-note arrangement of 12-Bar Blues below should be played with a swing feel:



SAMPLE

Robert Johnson, King of the Delta Blues - Although Robert Johnson (1911–1938) is among the most celebrated masters of the 12-Bar blues, his life was poorly documented. He did not become famous until well after his death at age 27 when the landmark recordings he had made in the 1930s were reissued and spread around the world in 1961. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in its first induction ceremony in 1986. British blues guitarist Eric Clapton called him "the most important blues singer that ever lived" and Johnson ranked fifth in Rolling Stone Magazine's "100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time".

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Let's Create!

Now that you know how to play several chords on your guitar, you can begin composing music with chord progressions. Let's take the 12-bar blues progression we learned earlier in this level and use it to understand how chord progressions are constructed. The chords for the 12-bar blues that we learned go like this with one chord per measure:

G G G G C C G G D C G G

In Level III, we introduced key signatures and transposable scales. To more clearly understand how each of the three chords in our 12-bar blues (G, C, & D) relate to each other, we can assign each chord a number based on its position in the G scale. Since we start and end on the chord G, we can assume G is our home base, or "tonic" note, and that we are in the key of G. We can start our scale and our numbering on G with the number 1 and continue to assign a number to each note in the G major scale. Remember, in the key of G we have one sharp (F#).

G	A	B	C	D	E	F#
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

So now that we know G is the 1 chord, C is the 4 chord, and D is the 5 chord in the key of G, we could re-write the 12-bar blues progression using numbers, like this:

1 – 1 – 1 – 1 – 4 – 4 – 1 – 1 – 5 – 4 – 1 – 1

This code can be used to play the 12-bar blues in any key! Try figuring it out in the key of C. First, write out the scale starting on C (remember there are no sharps or flats in the key of C):

C	D	E	F	G	A	B
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Now plug the 1 chord (C), the 4 chord (F) and the 5 chord (G) into the 12-bar blues code:

1 – 1 – 1 – 1 – 4 – 4 – 1 – 1 – 5 – 4 – 1 – 1

C C C C F F C C G F C C

SAMPLE

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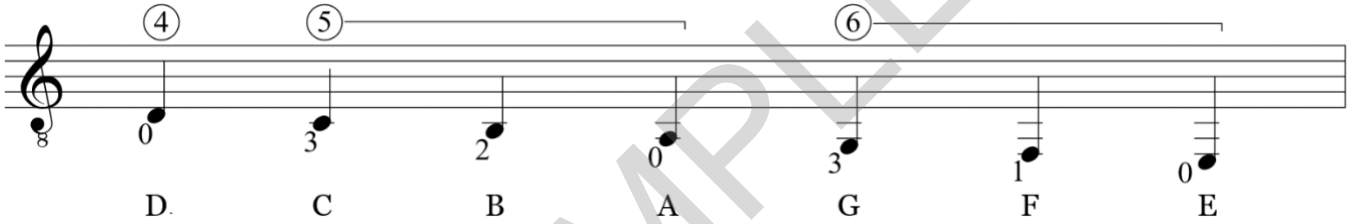
More About Reading Music: Ledger Lines

The guitar uses many notes that are written on ledger lines below the staff. You practiced playing the D (4th string), A (5th string) and E (6th string) notes in the first few exercises for thumb free strokes. Memorize their positions below the staff well and consider them marker notes: notes that are immediately familiar, that act as guide posts when you see them and help you recognize the notes on the ledger lines above and below them.

Using the open string notes as markers, see if you can find where to play the C, B, G and F notes (below) on the guitar. Here are some tips:

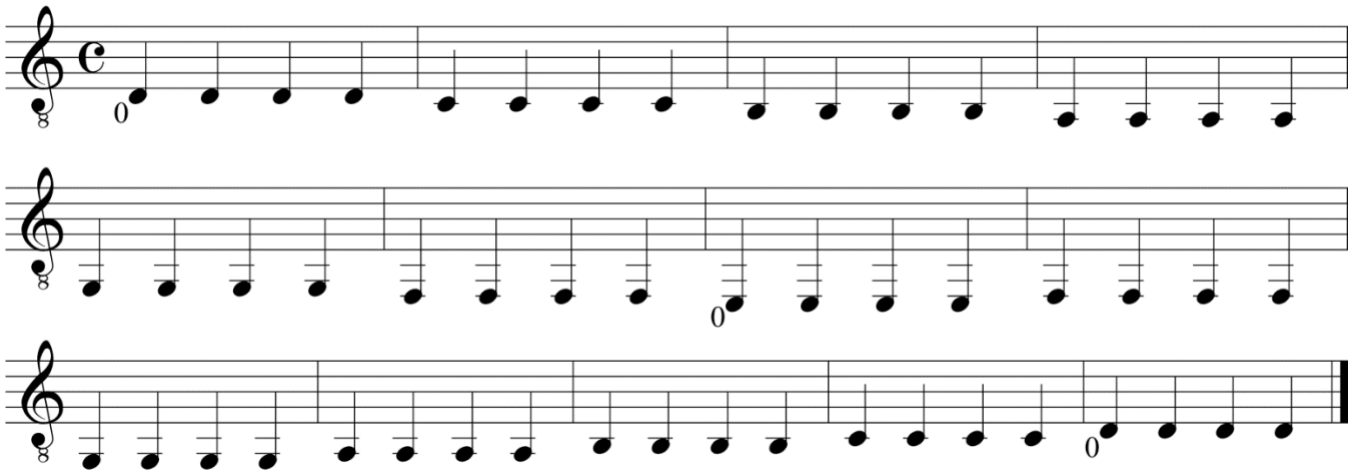
1. Use the left-hand finger numbers to help you. Since we are in first position the finger number and fret number will be the same.
2. Remember that a note that is lower on the staff will also be and sound lower in pitch.
3. If the note you are reading is just below an open string note, then it will be on the next string down.



Now that you have found the ledger line notes above, practice reading them in the exercises below. Do not write the finger number or note name above any of the notes. Recognize them by counting the number of ledger lines they use and by relating each to the note before.

Play slowly and continue to concentrate on your thumb free stroke technique as well.

Exercise 1:



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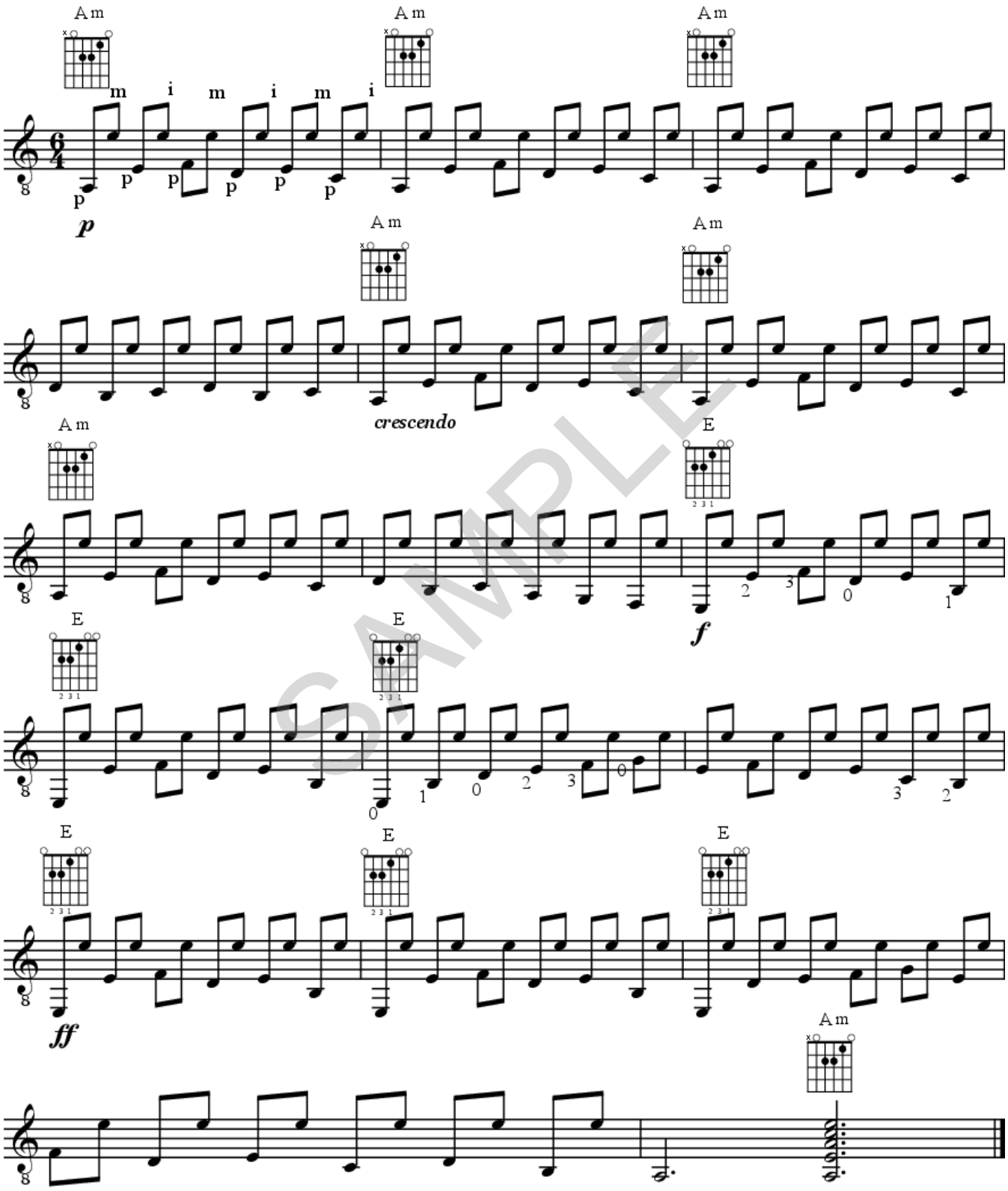
Leyenda

Isaac Albéniz



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