

Simon Goulding

The Bassists Guide To Reading Standard Notation

FREE

eBook

Course

www.simongoulding.com

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Introduction



Should I learn to read?.....



In short.....That's completely up to you however, seeing that you're reading this eBook then you must have an interest in learning to do so.....It took me a long time to learn how to read music because, like most musicians, I could already play when I started to learn. This felt like a step backwards to me and was very frustrating. Sat in my room with a book of music trying to play through it.....My mind would wonder and eventually I would stray from the sheet music and end up playing lines, patterns and tunes I knew. Needless to say my reading wasn't improving. That was

until I really started to focus on it and realised that if I wanted to be a professional bassist functioning in as many situations as possible I had to read and read well. This improved my playing and musicianship 1000 fold. Opening up music, styles and more importantly work opportunities that non reader couldn't do.

Another great way to learn is by getting involved with a band that forces you to read every session. There are many rehearsal Big Bands out there (this helped me a lot). Go down and sit next to the

bass player. Follow their parts while they're playing. Get used to reading the geography. First and second time bars, repeated sections, multiple bars rests, Sign and Coda marks. Then try to follow the notes as they're playing visualising them on your bass. If you can borrow the pad. Take it home and work on a few of the charts then ask if you can play them with the band. This is great because you're actually developing your reading in context. Plus, if the band is a rehearsal band then it's more than likely made up of amateur or ex pro players who will be far more accommodating than a professional band. Get involved in as many bands as possible that involves reading music. You'll be surprised at how quickly your sight reading improves. Along with private practise of course.

This eBook course is an introduction to reading standard notation on the bass. You can use it as a stepping stone to my other books:

- **Bass Workshop Vol 1.**
- **Bass Workshop Vol 2.**
- **Developing Songo Bass.**
- **Latin Influences.**

All of these eBook courses contain standard notation and NO TAB.

By reading music your playing will soar, Your musicianship will soar. Used in conjunction with other aspects of bass playing you will be able to function in any situation. You will be a far more employable bassist. Should I learn to read?.....For the serious musician this is a no brainer.

In this eBook course we will cover:

- *Notes of the bass clef.*
 - *Note values.*
 - *Rests & rest values.*
 - *Rhythm.*
 - *Time Signatures.*
 - *Key Signatures.*
 - *Chart Geography.*
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Notes & Rests






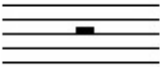

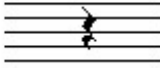

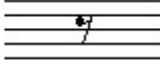
Notes & Rests

In this first section we will look at the various notes on the bass clef, their names, where they are on the bass. We will also look at the corresponding rests.

Aspects covered:

- *Bass Clef.*
- *Lines & Spaces of the stave.*
- *Note names.*
- *Where the notes are on the bass.*
- *Note Values.*
- *Rests & rest values.*
- *Time Signatures.*

Note Names

Name	Note	Name	Rest	Beats
Whole Note		Whole Rest		4 beats
Half Note		Half Rest		2 beats
Quarter Note		Quarter Rest		1 beat
Eight Note		Eight Rest		1/2 beat

MUSICAL NOTATION

ALL BASS MUSIC IS WRITTEN IN THE BASS CLEF

This can also be known as the F clef because if you notice the scroll at the top of the clef, it starts on the F line of the staff.

The image displays two musical staves in bass clef. The first staff shows the notes B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, and F, each placed on a specific line or space of the staff. A downward arrow points to the B note on the first line. The second staff shows the notes G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, and D, also placed on specific lines or spaces. A small number '4' is written to the left of the first note (G).

Each line & space of the staff represents a different note.

These notes are all known as NATURAL notes. However, when the note is made sharp the natural note moves up a semitone. When the natural note is made flat it moves down a semitone.

Now we will look at the notes of the open strings of the bass

7 **4 STRING BASS**

A musical staff in bass clef showing the notes of the four open strings of a 4-string bass: E (on the 4th line), A (on the 3rd space), D (on the 2nd space), and G (on the 1st space).

9 **5 STRING BASS**

A musical staff in bass clef showing the notes of the five open strings of a 5-string bass: E (on the 4th line), A (on the 3rd space), D (on the 2nd space), G (on the 1st space), and B (on the 5th line).

12 **6 STRING BASS**

A musical staff in bass clef showing the notes of the six open strings of a 6-string bass: E (on the 4th line), A (on the 3rd space), D (on the 2nd space), G (on the 1st space), B (on the 5th line), and E (on the 6th line).

We will now look at the notes on each string of the bass, up to the 12th fret. (after this the notes are repeated). Presuming that most of you will have 4 string basses, these are the notes for the 4 strings only.

E F F# G G# A Bb B C C# D Eb E

5 A Bb B C C# D Eb E F F# G Ab A

9 D Eb E F F# G G# A Bb B C C# D

13 G Ab A Bb B C C# D Eb E F F# G

NOTE. The 1st note being the open string and the last note the 12th fret.

MUSICAL RHYTHM & NOTE GROUPING

Within a bar of written music there are various values and types of note that can be used to achieve a bar corresponding to the **TIME SIGNATURE**

A Time Signature

**4
4**

This important musical symbol is explained like this.....
The top number means "**HOW MANY**" notes in a bar.
The bottom number means "**WHAT KIND**" of notes they are.

So we have 1 bar of 4/4 time as the time signature instructs. **4/4** ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ **:**

Another way of playing a bar of 4/4 time is to mix together other note values. *See following page for examples.*

Look at these examples of writing a bar of 4/4 time, Try to come up with some of your own. (Check out the count above each exercise).

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

5 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

8 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

11 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

There are also different **REST** values as well as different note values.

WHOLE NOTE REST -

HALF NOTE REST -

QUARTER NOTE REST }

EIGHTH NOTE REST 7

SIXTEENTH NOTE REST 7

It is simple math to divide these rest values into a bar of 4/4. You can also combine them with the various note values that we have discussed.

Note Types, Rhythm Grouping & Reading

Here we will look at the various ways notes can be grouped in a bar of 4/4. All the examples are in the key of C. We will take the C Major Scale as a playing example. Using whole, half, quarter, eighth & sixteenth notes. Notice the beat count written above each bar. Give the notes their full value

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

5 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

9 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

13 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

15 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

17 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Combining different note values

19 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

23 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Let's add some rests

27 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4




A single bass clef staff containing four measures. The first measure has a whole rest. The second measure has a quarter rest followed by quarter notes G2, A2, B2. The third measure has a whole rest. The fourth measure has quarter notes C3, D3, E3, followed by a quarter rest, then quarter notes F3, G3.

31 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



A single bass clef staff containing four measures. The first measure has a whole note G2. The second measure has a whole rest. The third measure has an eighth rest followed by eighth notes A2, B2, C3, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note D3. The fourth measure has a quarter rest followed by quarter notes E3, F3, followed by a whole rest.

35 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



A single bass clef staff containing four measures. The first measure has eighth notes G2, A2, B2, C3, followed by an eighth rest, then a quarter note D3. The second measure has eighth notes E3, F3, G3, A3, followed by an eighth rest, then a quarter note B3. The third measure has eighth notes C4, D4, E4, F4, followed by eighth rests, then eighth notes G4, A4, B4, followed by a quarter rest. The fourth measure has a whole note C5.

39 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4



A single bass clef staff containing four measures. The first measure has eighth notes G2, A2, followed by eighth rests, then eighth notes B2, C3, followed by a quarter rest. The second measure has eighth notes D3, E3, F3, G3, followed by eighth rests, then eighth notes A3, B3, followed by a quarter note C4. The third measure has quarter notes D4, E4, followed by eighth rests, then eighth notes F4, G4, followed by a whole rest. The fourth measure has a whole rest followed by eighth rests, then eighth notes A4, B4, followed by a quarter note C5.

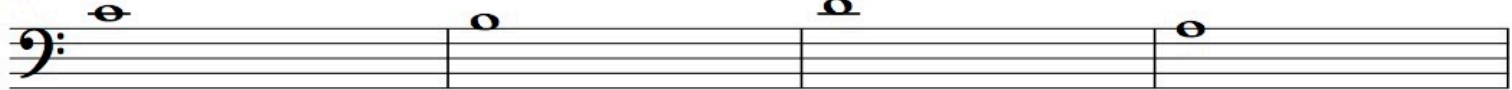
Reading Exercises

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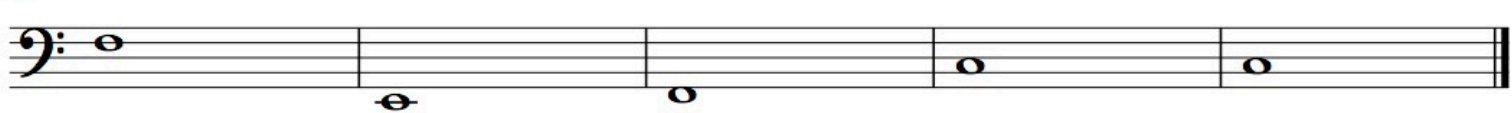
Whole Notes



5



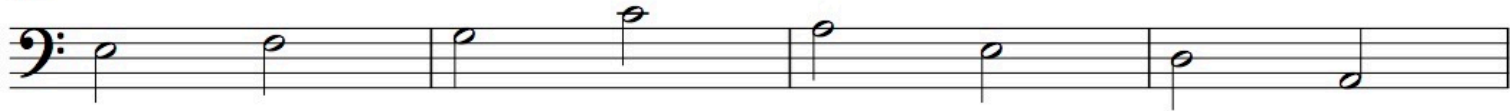
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Half Notes

14



18



22



Play Ex3 round & round using the easiest fingering possible. Build up speed when you are confident reading the notes. Take notice of the 1/4 note rests in Ex4. Play the full value of the notes & rests. Starting slowly and gradually building up speed.

3 Quarter Notes



4 Quarter Notes & Quarter Note Rests



3

Time Signatures & Rhythm

A grid of time signatures and rhythmic values. The grid is organized into three columns and four rows. The first column contains the values 2, 2, 4, 2, 8. The second column contains the values 3, 2, 3, 4, 3, 8. The third column contains the values 4, 2, 4, 4, 4, 8.

2	3	4
2	2	2
2	3	4
4	4	4
2	3	4
8	8	8

Here we will look at some of the more popular time signatures you will encounter. Of course there are many more but these are simply the “popular” ones.

The formula for understanding a time signature is very simple. Look at each number separately.

- **TOP NUMBER** - *How many beats in a bar.*
- **BOTTOM NUMBER** - *The kind of beat they are.*

This is the simplest way of looking at them. However any combination of note values can be used to achieve a bar corresponding to the written time signature. With this eBook course being a rudimentary guide to reading I will not go into great depth regarding rhythm and note grouping. If you want to really get into this then get my other eBook courses '*Bass Workshop Volume 1*' and '*Bass Workshop Volume 2*'.

4 - *How Many*

4 - *What Kind*

Let's look at some different time signatures with their corresponding notes. The count is also written over the notes.....

Time Signatures (An Overview)

1 2 1 2 3

A musical staff in bass clef with a 2/4 time signature. It contains five quarter notes on the first line of the staff. Above the notes are red numbers indicating fingerings: 1, 2, 1, 2, 3.

3 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 5

A musical staff in bass clef with a 4/4 time signature. It contains ten quarter notes on the first line of the staff. Above the notes are red numbers indicating fingerings: 3, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

5 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

A musical staff in bass clef with a 6/4 time signature. It contains seven half notes on the first line of the staff. Above the notes are red numbers indicating fingerings: 5, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

7 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 5

A musical staff in bass clef with a 3/8 time signature. It contains five eighth notes on the first line of the staff. Above the notes are red numbers indicating fingerings: 7, 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

9 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

A musical staff in bass clef with a 6/8 time signature. It contains seven eighth notes on the first line of the staff. Above the notes are red numbers indicating fingerings: 9, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

11 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

A musical staff in bass clef with a 9/8 time signature. It contains twelve eighth notes on the first line of the staff. Above the notes are red numbers indicating fingerings: 11, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

Explanation:

- $2/4$ - 2 quarter notes (crotchets) or equivalent in a bar.
 - $3/4$ - 3 quarter notes or equivalent.
 - $4/4$ - 4 quarter notes.....
 - $5/4$ - 5 quarter notes.....
 - $6/4$ - 6 quarter notes.....
 - $7/4$ - 7 quarter notes.....
-
- $3/8$ - 3 eighth notes (quavers) or equivalent in a bar.
 - $5/8$ - 5 eighth notes.....
 - $6/8$ - 6 eighth notes.....
 - $7/8$ - 7 eighth notes.....
 - $9/8$ - 9 eighth notes.....
 - $12/8$ - 12 eighth notes.....

It is all a matter of mathematics to add and combine various note values that make up a bar in these various time signatures.

Next we will look at a series of simple note value combinations in a bar of $4/4$. This can be translated into any time signature. I'm using $4/4$ or **COMMON TIME** for the sake of simplicity.....

Rhythm Groupings (An Overview)

1 2 + 1 + 2 3 +

3 1 + 2 + 3 4 1 2 3 + 4 5 +

5 1 2 3 E + A 4 5 + 6 1 E + A 2 3 + 4 + 5 6 7 E + A

7 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 5

9 1 2 3 4 5 6 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

You will notice that in the previous example that there are different note values used to make up a bar corresponding to the time signature. In order to count these you will have to **SUBDIVIDE** the beat.

- **Whole Note** (*Semibreve*) = 2 minims / 4 crotchets / 8 quavers / 16 semiquavers.
- **Half Note** (*Minim*) = 2 crotchets / 4 quavers / 8 semiquavers.
- **Quarter Note** (*Crotchet*) = 2 quavers / 4 semiquavers.
- **Eighth Note** (*Quaver*) = 2 semiquavers.

You will also notice that there is a DOT marked after a quarter note in bars 11 & 12. This means that you ADD half the value to the note to the dotted note.

For an in depth look at note values, grouping, different time signatures check out '**Bass Workshop Volumes 1 & 2**'.

"I hope this short eBook course has wetted your appetite regarding learning to read and find more resources in order to develop this essential skill. The aim of this free course is to give you an introduction to reading standard notation. Of course there is MUCH more to learn. The information here is aimed at players that want a rudimentary introduction to it.

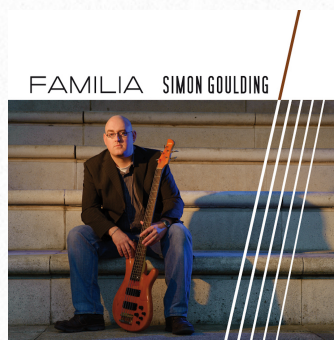
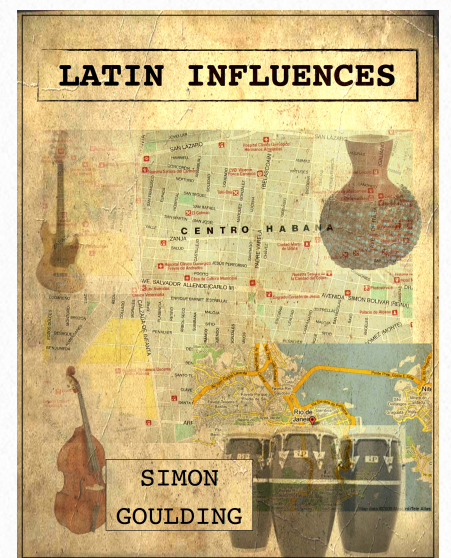
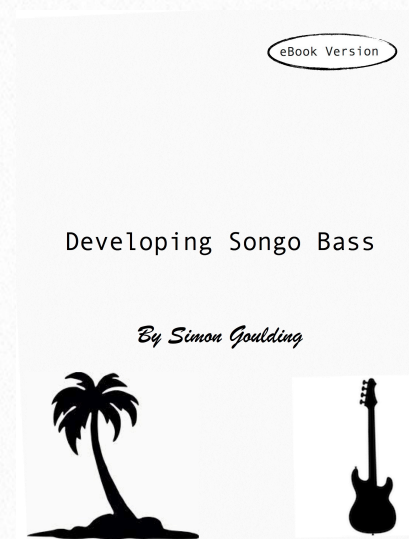
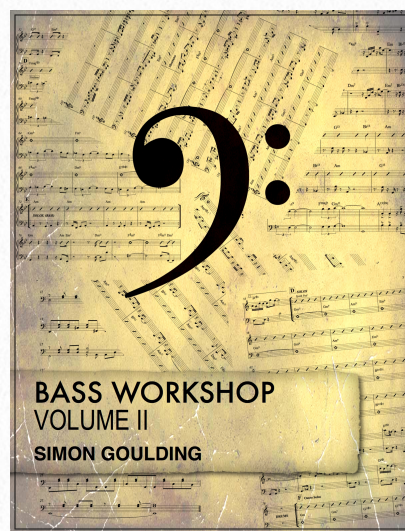
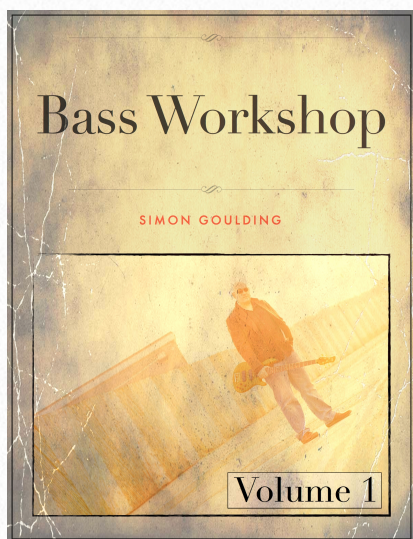
All the very best to you....."

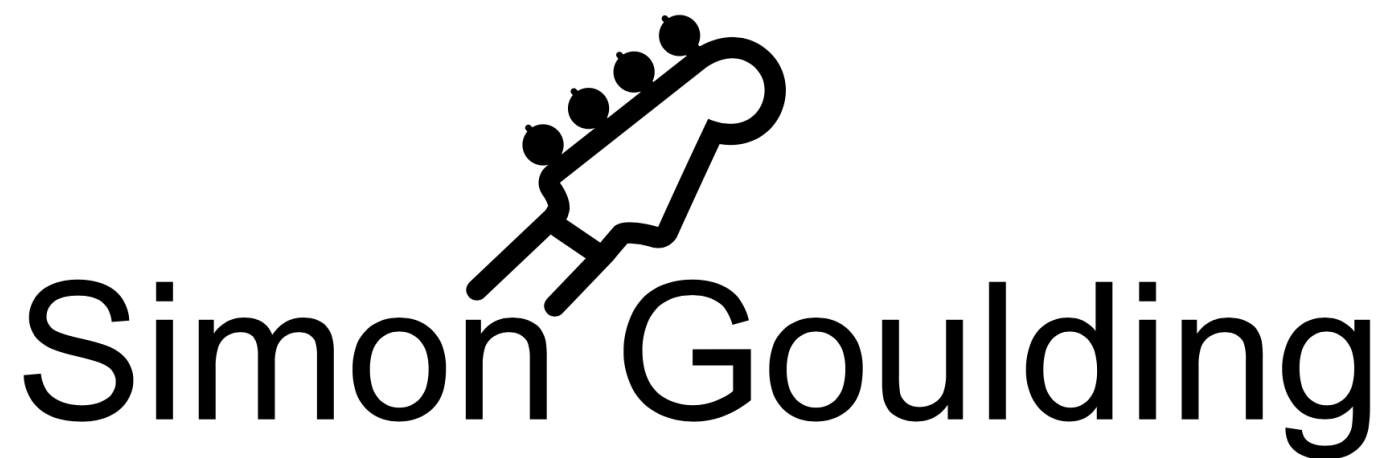
Simon

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