

Contemporary Tapping Techniques

The Blues

By Cliff Engel

18va

G7 C7 G7 G7

5 C7 C7 G7 Bm7 E7

Tapping positions: 16, 15, 16, 16, 15, 15, 15, 14, 16, 15, 19, 19, 19, 18, 3, 3, 3, 4, 5, 3, 5, 7, 7

9 Am7 D7 G7 E7 Am7 D7

Chord progression: Am7, D7, G7, E7, Am7, D7.

Measure 9: Am7 (Bass: A2, C3, E3; Guitar: 5, 7)

Measure 10: D7 (Bass: D2, F#2, A2; Guitar: 5, 5)

Measure 11: G7 (Bass: G2, B2, D3; Guitar: 3, 7)

Measure 12: E7 (Bass: E2, G#2, B2; Guitar: 5, 5)

13

Measure 13: Am7 (Bass: A2, C3, E3; Guitar: 3, 2, 5, 4)

Measure 14: D7 (Bass: D2, F#2, A2; Guitar: 3, 6, 5, 4)

Measure 15: G7 (Bass: G2, B2, D3; Guitar: 3, 5, 2, 3)

Measure 16: E7 (Bass: E2, G#2, B2; Guitar: 5, 4, 3, 2)

17

Musical score for measures 17-20. The score is written for guitar and includes a bass line, a guitar line, and a tablature line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The guitar line features chords and single notes with accidentals. The tablature line shows fret numbers for the left hand.

Measure	17	18	19	20
Tablature	15 14	15 14	15 14 16 15	16 15 16 19 19 18
Fingering	3 3 5 1	3 0 1 2	3 2 5 3	7 6 7 6

21

Musical score for measures 21-24. The score is written for guitar and includes a bass line, a guitar line, and a tablature line. The key signature changes to two sharps (D major) starting at measure 21. The guitar line features chords and single notes with accidentals. The tablature line shows fret numbers for the left hand.

Measure	21	22	23	24
Tablature	17 17	17 16	16 15 19 18	17 17 16
Fingering	5 7 8 7	5 3 2 5	3 5 7 6	5 3 5 2

25

Musical score for measures 25-28. The score is written for guitar and includes a bass line, a treble line, and a tablature line. The bass line features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes. The treble line contains a melodic line with various intervals and accidentals. The tablature line shows fret numbers and picking directions (T for thumb, A for alternate, B for bass). The bottom line of the system shows the fretboard positions for the bass line.

29

Musical score for measures 29-32. The score is written for guitar and includes a bass line, a treble line, and a tablature line. The bass line continues the rhythmic pattern from the previous system. The treble line features a melodic line with various intervals and accidentals. The tablature line shows fret numbers and picking directions (T for thumb, A for alternate, B for bass). The bottom line of the system shows the fretboard positions for the bass line.

The musical score consists of four measures. The top staff is in bass clef and shows chordal accompaniment with notes on the D and G strings. The middle staff is in bass clef and shows a walking bass line with notes on the E and A strings. The bottom staff shows tablature for the same walking bass line, with fret numbers and fingerings indicated. The tablature includes fret numbers (17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 5) and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

I'd like to take a closer look at two-handed tapping techniques on electric bass and offer some suggestions on how you can begin to effectively incorporate these techniques into your own compositions and performances. Within this lesson, you will find three chorus' of a very common jazz-based blues progression. Using two-handed tapping techniques, this blues progression can be easily performed on a 4-string electric bass in standard tuning. The concept here is really quite simple. Located in the top staff, you will see the chordal accompaniment composed of chord tones which will be tapped with the right hand on the D and G-strings. (Note that the top staff is to be played one octave above where it is notated.) In the bottom staff, I have notated one of the many possible walking lines a jazz bassist could utilize which will be tapped with the left hand on the E and A-strings. I have also included tablature along with the standard notation so you can see the exact positions of the fingerboard that I am using. The tablature has been included to serve only as a source of reference for those fingerings. In some instances, the walking lines could be played in a position other than the one that is indicated in the tablature.

By tapping the blues in this fashion with both hands, you are essentially performing the duties of a bassist and a pianist or guitar player simultaneously. In the first twelve measures, the right hand is outlining the changes with simple chord tones while the left hand plays in "the two feel." During the second chorus, the right hand begins to comp chords similar to the way in which a pianist or guitar player would provide chordal accompaniment while the left hand walks through the changes using arpeggiated, scalar, and chromatic-based walking bass lines. In the final twelve measures, the right hand continues in a similar fashion with more syncopated chordal comping as the left hand smoothly connects the chord changes. Note that on beat three in the final measure I am activating a set of natural harmonics at the fifth fret of the D and G-strings. Although the actual tones that sound are notated as a D and G in standard notation, the tablature demonstrates where the notes are physically located on the fingerboard.