

Ornithology

Charlie Parker

Arranged By Ray Riendeau
As Recorded On *Arrhythmia*
Transcribed By Cliff Engel

GMaj7 Gm7

S↓ H S↑ P S↓ S↑ P S↓ S↑ P S↓ S↓ S↑

C7 FMaj7

S↓ S↑ H S↓ S↑ H S P S H S P

Fm7 Bb7 Eb7

P S↓ S↑ P S S P S↓ S↑ S↓ S↑ S↓ S↑ P S↓ S↑

D7 Gm7 Cm7b5 D7

H S↓ S↑ S↓ H S↑ S↓ H S↓ S↑ H S↓ P S↓ S↑ P S↓ S↑ P S↓ S↑ P

13

Bm7 E7 Am7

S P S↓ S↑ P S↓ S↑ P S↓ S↑ P S↓ S↑ P S↓ S↑ P H S↓ S↑

16

D7

S↓ S↑ P S↓ S↑ H S↓ S↑

Bass Notation Legend

S = Slap

S↓ = Slap Downstroke

S↑ = Slap Upstroke

P = Pluck

H = Hammer-On

Double slapping is a contemporary slap bass technique often utilized by electric bassists such as Victor Wooten and Alain Caron. It involves using a slap-through technique with your thumb in a fashion similar to how a guitar player uses a pick. With the slap-through approach of double slapping, you strike the string near the end of the fingerboard with the side of your thumb in a downward motion and then allow your thumb to stop on the string below. For example, if you slap the E-string with your thumb, you would then play through the E-string, using the same basic range of motion that a guitarist would make when using a pick, and stop on the A-string. This places your thumb in the perfect position to come back across the string with your thumbnail.

One of the best ways that I've discovered to practice double slapping techniques is through the utilization of bebop tunes. To demonstrate this advanced linear approach of slap bass playing, I'd like to show you how I arranged "Ornithology," an uptempo, classic jazz standard composed by alto saxophonist Charlie Parker, using double slapping and plucking techniques. This contemporary rendition of "Ornithology" can be heard on my Groove Theory Records release, *Arrhythmia*.

If you were to apply the traditional bouncing thumb slap bass technique to "Ornithology" where your thumb immediately rebounds away from the string after striking it, you would completely eliminate the possibility of double slapping and incorporating an upstroke into your line. Not only would you be required to expend twice as much energy but the lines wouldn't sound very smooth if you attempted to slap the entire melody using only the bouncing thumb technique. In general, melodies will sound much more fluid when played with the slap-through approach. Both the traditional bouncing thumb technique and the slap-through approach will prove to be useful in different applications, but you'll find that double slapping techniques offer greater economy of motion and much more potential due to having the option of generating additional notes or percussive effects with minimal motion or effort.

As the articulations reveal in the transcription, I employed multiple techniques including double slapping, traditional slapping, plucking, and hammer-ons in this arrangement. After a brief introduction, the slapped melody begins at 13 seconds into the recording. When practicing pieces such as "Ornithology," start really slow in order to make sure you are using the proper range of motion. Again, keep in mind the movement a guitarist makes when using a pick and then apply that to the double slapping concept. Always try to remain constantly aware of muting considerations when slapping. Since your slapping hand is no longer in a position to really mute effectively like it normally would be when using standard fingerstyle bass technique to play grooves, I'd recommend using the inner part of your forearm to mute the E and A strings as much as possible. I've found this muting technique to work particularly well with this arrangement because practically all of the melody notes are played on the D and G strings. By using your forearm, your fretting hand can focus on other technical aspects required of this piece such as shifting and fretting the notes cleanly. Also, be sure to take note of the dynamics. Even though striking the string with the side of your thumb in a downward motion will sound different than using your thumbnail on the upstroke, the volume of the downstrokes and upstrokes should remain consistent. In other words, the notes produced with a downstroke of the thumb should sound at about the same volume level as the notes played with an upstroke. Strive to play the entire arrangement with a high degree of accuracy, string-to-string consistency, and in a clean fashion from start to finish.

Once you have spent some time with this lesson and feel comfortable with double slapping "Ornithology" on bass, try to expand upon this concept by incorporating these techniques in arrangements of other jazz standards that are comprised of linear melodies such as "Donna Lee."