

Developing a Strong Foundation for Your Band

~ start with the bass player

stevholleymusic@gmail.com

SteveHolleyMusic.com

The bass player is the foundation of any band. The relationship between bass and drums not only establishes the groove, but sets the tone for the band as a whole. If you have a solid rhythm section the possibilities are endless! The bass player's *primary role* is to lock with the drummer, provide tonality to the kick drum, and provide a solid foundation for the rest of the band.

There is a wealth of available information on how to play the bass in print, online, via private lessons, etc. so we won't go into great detail here. With that in mind, here are a few tips to help inform you as a coach in setting your bassist on the right path to develop good habits, good technique, and a strong pocket.

- Make sure the strap is set at a comfortable height - the bass should be at the same height when sitting or standing
- For left hand technique, the bassist's thumb shouldn't be visible to you. It should rest behind the 1st or 2nd finger, depending on physiology. The bass neck is not a baseball bat!
- On the left hand, most bassists will gravitate towards a 4 finger (one finger per fret) or 3 finger system (upright fingering). For bassists with smaller hands, the 3 finger system might prove to be easier
- For the right hand, the forearm should rest on the upper bout of the bass with the right thumb resting on the front pickup
- Have your bass player stand where they can see the kick pedal. This will help with visual cues
- If your bass player has trouble hearing themselves check to make sure their tone isn't too muddy, have them stand away from the amp, or have them sit directly on the amp
- Develop a musical vocabulary via listening and transcribing
- Don't overplay – enjoy the groove!

R&B/soul/funk/rock/pop bass players to listen to:

(this list is not exhaustive in any way, shape, or form!)

James Jamerson

Duck Dunn

Willie Weeks

George Porter, Jr.

Pino Palladino

Chuck Rainey

Bob Babbitt

Bootsy Collins

Verdine White

John Paul Jones

David Hood

Tommy Cogbill

Nathan Watts

Carol Kaye

Paul McCartney

Playing *with* the kick examples

WHAT 'CHA GONNA DO FOR ME? - CHAKA KHAN

Musical notation for the bass line and kick drum of "What 'Cha Gonna Do For Me?" by Chaka Khan. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The bass line features a steady eighth-note pattern, while the kick drum provides a consistent backbeat.

SHINING STAR - EWF

Musical notation for the bass line and kick drum of "Shining Star" by EWF. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The bass line includes triplets and a melodic run in the final measure, while the kick drum maintains a steady eighth-note pattern.

DOO WOP - LAURYN HILL

Musical notation for the bass line and kick drum of "Doo Wop" by Lauryn Hill. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The bass line features a syncopated eighth-note pattern, and the kick drum provides a steady backbeat.

IMMIGRANT SONG - LED ZEPPELIN

Musical notation for the bass line and kick drum of "Immigrant Song" by Led Zeppelin. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass line features a driving eighth-note pattern, and the kick drum provides a steady backbeat.

THE SEED (2.0) - THE ROOTS

Musical notation for the bass line and kick drum of "The Seed (2.0)" by The Roots. The piece is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The bass line features a steady eighth-note pattern, and the kick drum provides a consistent backbeat.

Playing *against* the kick examples

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE - THE POLICE

Musical notation for 'Message in a Bottle' by The Police. The score is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 7/8 time signature. The bass line features a melodic sequence of eighth notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The guitar part consists of a steady eighth-note pattern: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The bass line is marked with accents (>) and the guitar part with 'x' marks.

NO PROMISES - DEMI LOVATO

Musical notation for 'No Promises' by Demi Lovato. The score is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass line features a melodic sequence of eighth notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The guitar part consists of a steady eighth-note pattern: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The bass line is marked with accents (>) and the guitar part with 'x' marks.

IT'S LOVE - JILL SCOTT

Musical notation for 'It's Love' by Jill Scott. The score is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 7/8 time signature. The bass line features a melodic sequence of eighth notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The guitar part consists of a steady eighth-note pattern: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The bass line is marked with accents (>) and the guitar part with 'x' marks.

SABOTAGE - BEASTIE BOYS

Musical notation for 'Sabotage' by Beastie Boys. The score is in bass clef with a key signature of three flats (Bbb) and a 4/4 time signature. The bass line features a melodic sequence of eighth notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The guitar part consists of a steady eighth-note pattern: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5. The bass line is marked with accents (>) and the guitar part with 'x' marks. A 'SVA' (Sustained Valve) marking is present above the first measure of the guitar part.

Playing *around* the kick examples

I WISH - STEVIE WONDER

Musical score for 'I Wish' by Stevie Wonder. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. It features a melodic line in the upper staff, a rhythmic line with 'x' marks in the middle staff, and a bass line in the lower staff.

SEPTEMBER - ENF

Musical score for 'September' by ENF. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It features a melodic line in the upper staff, a rhythmic line with 'x' marks in the middle staff, and a bass line in the lower staff.

SOUL MAN - SAM AND DAVE

Musical score for 'Soul Man' by Sam and Dave. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It features a melodic line in the upper staff, a rhythmic line with 'x' marks in the middle staff, and a bass line in the lower staff.

RAPPER'S DELIGHT - THE SUGARHILL GANG

Musical score for 'Rapper's Delight' by The Sugarhill Gang. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It features a melodic line in the upper staff, a rhythmic line with 'x' marks in the middle staff, and a bass line in the lower staff.

LOOK-KA PY PY - THE METERS

Musical score for 'Look-Ka Py Py' by The Meters. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It features a melodic line in the upper staff, a rhythmic line with 'x' marks in the middle staff, and a bass line in the lower staff.