

• WALKING BASS

A moving bass line with notes usually of the same value. It often moves by step, but not always so. Features heavily in jazz/swing.

A. Listening to Walking Bass Lines

Extract 1 - Listen to a short musical example of a **WALKING BASS LINE** which will be played **FOUR** times.

Try to focus mainly on the **BASS LINE** and answer the questions below:

1. What instrument is playing the **BASS LINE**?

2. How is this instrument being played? (*can you name the specific playing technique using an Italian musical term?*)

3. How would you describe the type, genre, and style of this extract of music?

Extract 2 - In the Mood – this is an example of **SWING** music

- Listen to the music and fill in concepts for each category in the grid below:

Melody/ Harmony	Rhythm/ Tempo	Texture/ Structure	Timbre (Instruments/ techniques)	Style	Dynamics

B. Creating Walking Bass Lines from Chords

Look at the **WALKING BASS LINE** shown right in the **BASS CLEF**. It's written in the key of **C MAJOR** and is created on the notes of **CHORD I** in **C MAJOR**.



- What 3 notes make up **CHORD I** in **C MAJOR** (root, third and fifth)?
- Mark and identify these notes from **CHORD I** each time they occur in the **WALKING BASS LINE** above.
- There are some 'extra' notes **NOT** used in **CHORD I** in **C MAJOR** in the **WALKING BASS LINE** above, these are called **PASSING NOTES**: notes which are not 'chord notes' but help give the **WALKING BASS LINE** a smooth 'walking' feel, preventing too many large leaps/gaps between notes. Mark and identify these.
- Perform this **WALKING BASS LINE** pattern on a keyboard (choose a suitable voice/tone/timbre), piano, your own instrument or a **BASS GUITAR**, keeping a steady tempo and repeating it several times.

Create a **WALKING BASS LINE** pattern using **CHORD IV** in **C MAJOR**, following the steps below:

- What 3 notes make up **CHORD IV** in **C MAJOR** (root, third and fifth)?
- Work out the following notes using **F** as the **ROOT** of **CHORD IV** in **C MAJOR**, writing the notes onto the stave using **BASS CLEF NOTATION**. Mark the **PASSING NOTES** (non-chord notes) clearly.



Root of CHORD IV	Third of CHORD IV	Fifth of CHORD IV	6 notes above the root	7 notes above the root (flat!)	6 notes above the root	Fifth of CHORD IV	Third of CHORD IV
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- Perform this **WALKING BASS LINE** pattern on a keyboard (choose a suitable voice/tone/timbre), piano, your own instrument or a **BASS GUITAR**, keeping a steady tempo and repeating it several times.
- Move between the **WALKING BASS LINE** pattern on **CHORD I** in **C MAJOR** and **CHORD IV** in **C MAJOR** so that you can perform each of the smoothly.
- Using the same pattern given above, see if you can construct a **WALKING BASS LINE** on **CHORD V** in **C MAJOR** (Hint: the note for '7 notes above the root' can be used a natural/white note).





ROCK AND ROLL AROUND

"Rock and Roll Around" is a Rock and Roll song that uses both a **WALKING BASS LINE** and **BASS LINE RIFFS**.

1. Learn to perform the **WALKING BASS LINE** to "Rock and Roll Around". It's based on a **TWELVE-BAR BLUES CHORD SEQUENCE** using **CHORD I**, **CHORD IV**, and **CHORD V** in **C MAJOR**. Where the bass line pattern goes over 2 bars (shown by long arrows, **CHORD I** and **CHORD IV**), the root, third and fifth of the chord have been used, along with some 'extra' **PASSING NOTES**. The shorter bars (bottom line, **CHORD V** and **CHORD IV**) just use the root, third and fifth. Use a Bass Guitar or Keyboard but remember to select an appropriate tone/timbre/voice/sound for an effective **WALKING BASS LINE** pattern.

2. Now add and/or sing a **BASS LINE RIFF** to the **WALKING BASS LINE** pattern. The rhythm may look a little tricky, but if you say the words "Shake! Rattle and Roll.", this should help you. First, work out which notes the **BASS LINE RIFF 1** uses: like the **WALKING BASS LINE**, it's given in **BASS CLEF NOTATION**. Then learn to play these, separately first and then add them to the **WALKING BASS LINE**.

3. Here's another **BASS LINE RIFF** to add to the song, along with the **WALKING BASS LINE** and **BASS LINE RIFF 1** on the previous page. This can be played or sung: the words are 'nonsense syllables' and example of *scat singing*, popular in Rock and Roll and Jazz and Blues music. The chords have been given below.

Shoo dun goo gar, wop, bam, boom! Chord I

Shoo dun goo gar, wop, bam, boom! Chord I

Shoo dun goo gar, wop, bam, boom! Chord IV

Shoo dun goo gar, wop, bam, boom! Chord I

Shoo dun goo gar, ba-by wop, bam, boom! Chord V

Shoo dun goo gar, Yeah! Chord IV

Chord I

4. Finally, add the song melody: either played or sung. It's given here in **TREBLE CLEF NOTATION**. Note that this starts with an **UPBEAT** (an **ANACRUSIS** start) on the words 'We'll be' before the other parts begin.

We'll be ro-ckin' and a rol-lin' 'til the Chord I

co-min' of the mor-nin', we'll be ro-ckin' and a rol-lin' 'til the Chord I

break of day. We'll be ro-ckin' and a rol-lin' 'til we be Chord IV

gi-vin' you the war-nin', we'll be rock-in' and a rol-lin' ba-by Chord I

come what may, we're gon-na rock 'n' roll a-way. Chord V Chord IV Chord I

Put together a performance of "Rock and Roll Around", starting with the **WALKING BASS LINE** (keep repeating), then add **BASS LINE RIFFS 1** and **2** and finally the **SONG MELODY**. Add a suitable rhythm backing track, suitable to the Rock and Roll genre and think carefully about the sounds you choose from your keyboards.

"Rock and Roll Around" – Performance Plan and Full Score

		SONG MELODY
	BASS LINE RIFF 2	
	BASS LINE RIFF 1	
RHYTHMS/DRUMS/PERCUSSION		
WALKING BASS LINE		

Song Melody

We'll be rockin' and a rollin' 'til the break of day. We'll be rockin' and a rollin' I'll be shoo dun goo gar, wop, bam, boom! shake! flat-tie and roll.

Bass Line Riff 2

Bass Line Riff 1

Walking Bass Line

Song Melody

rockin' and a rollin' 'til the break of day. We'll be rockin' and a rollin' I'll be shoo dun goo gar, wop, bam, boom! shoo dun goo gar, wop, bam, boom! shake! flat-tie and roll. shake! flat-tie and roll.

Bass Line Riff 2

Bass Line Riff 1

Walking Bass Line

Song Melody

gi-vin' you the war-min', we'll be rock-in' and a roll-in' ba-by come what may, we're goin'

Bass Line Riff 2

wop, bam, boom!

Bass Line Riff 1

Shoo dan goo gar, wop, bam, boom!

Shake! Rattle and roll.

Walking Bass Line

Song Melody

rock n' roll a-way.

Bass Line Riff 2

Shoo dan goo gar, ba-by wop, bam, boom! Shoo dus goo gw, Yeah!

Bass Line Riff 1

Shake! Rattle and roll, oh ba-by, Shake! Rattle and roll.

Walking Bass Line

• OSTINATO (*Rhythmic & Melodic*)

An OSTINATO is a short musical pattern repeated many times.

It can be purely **rhythmic** e.g. Ravel's Bolero , Holst – Mars, Pirates of the Caribbean



or it can be **melodic**.

e.g. Carillon – Bizet – Here the 3 note ostinato represents the pealing of bells



e.g. Carol of the Bells



• RIFF

A Riff is a repeated phrase usually found in jazz and popular music. It is similar to an ostinato.

e.g. Smoke on the Water – Deep Purple



e.g. Listen to Black Sabbath's "The Iron Man"



e.g.. Listen to Day tripper – The Beatles



BASS CLEF RAP RIFFS TO PERFORM



Rap music is often based on repeated patterns or **RIFFS** – the 'catchy bit' of the song. Below are four famous **RIFFS** from famous rap songs. Learn to perform each one on a keyboard where the focus of the riff is in the **BASS LINE PART** given in the **BASS CLEF**. The treble clef part here are sequences of repeated chords – the main interest lies in the **BASS LINE** – make this the loudest and most important LAYER! Choose a suitable voice/tone/timbre on which to perform the riffs. If you're able to use the "Split Voice" function you may be able to use different voices for the treble and bass clef parts, or otherwise use two different keyboards set to different **TIMBRES** and **SONORITIES**.

1. "Still D.R.E." – Dr. Dre feat. Snoop Dog

2. "What's The Difference" – Dr. Dre feat. Eminem & X-Zibit

3. "The Next Episode" – Dr. Dre feat. Snoop Dogg, Kurupt, Nate Dogg

4. "California Love" – 2Pac

ALL ABOUT THE BASS

Exploring Bass Clef Reading and Notation and Bass Line Musical Patterns



A. Bass Clef & Bass Clef Notation

STAFF is the name given to the five lines where musical notes are written.

The position of notes on the stave or staff shows their **PITCH** (how high or low a note is).

The **BASS CLEF** is a symbol used to show low-pitched notes on the stave and is *usually* used for the left hand on a piano or keyboard to play the **BASS LINE** and also used by low pitched instruments (see B.)



The stave or staff is made up of 5 **LINEs** and 4 **SPACES**.

Notes on the **LINEs** of the **BASS CLEF**: **G, B, D, F, A**

Green Buses Drive Fast Always

G B D F A

Notes in the **SPACES** of the **BASS CLEF**: **A, C, E, G**

All Cows Eat Grass

A C E G

Bass Clef **STAFF NOTATION**:

E F G A B C D E F G A B C

B. Musical Instruments that use the Bass Clef

C. Bass Line Patterns

BASS RIFFS – Short, repeated, 'catchy' and memorable Bass Line Patterns used in Rock, Rap, Hip Hop, R'n'B, and Pop songs often performed on Bass Guitar. Bass Riffs 'fit' with the notes in the chord, but also use other 'EXTRA' notes (**PASSING NOTES**) to make them more memorable.

WALKING BASS – used in Jazz, Blues, Rhythm and Blues, and Rock'n'roll, and featuring a **note on every beat**. Using the **ROOT, THIRD** and **FIFTH** of the chord, and 'EXTRA' notes (called **PASSING NOTES**) to create a smooth bass line often moving mainly by step (**CONJUNCT**).

ALBERTI BASS – a type of **ACCOMPANIMENT PATTERN** in the **BASS LINE** using the **ROOT, THIRD** and **FIFTH** notes of a **CHORD** played in a **specific order**:

ROOT	FIFTH	THIRD	FIFTH
Lowest	Highest	Middle	Highest

The pattern repeats, but notes change as chord changes and a melody is added 'on top' of the Alberti Bass. Used by Classical composers such as Mozart, especially in solo piano music, as well as modern composers.

ARPEGGIO: Playing the notes of a chord separately and **in order** root, third, fifth, root, third, fifth etc, can be ascending (going up) or descending (going down).

BROKEN CHORD – Playing the notes of a chord separately but **not necessarily in strict order** (e.g., like an **Alberti Bass**), often creating a repeated musical pattern, can be ascending (going up) or descending (going down).

(BASS) PEDAL (POINT/NOTE) – either **SUSTAINED** notes of **LONG DURATION**, or **REPEATED LONG NOTES**, often in **BASS LINE PART**, using the **ROOT** (a **TONIC PEDAL**) or the **FIFTH** (a **DOMINANT PEDAL**). Changing chords, harmonies, and a melody line 'fit over the top' of a **PEDAL** note.

Concepts checklist

Write what each of these terms mean

Tempo	
Dynamics	
Articulation	
Staccato	
Legato	
Passing notes	
Alberti bass	
Pedal	
Inverted pedal	
Ground bass	
Walking bass	
Ostinato	
Riff	
Tonic pedal	
Alberti bass	
Passing notes	

CHORDS CHECK – write the notes in
the following chords

C	
F	
G	
Am	
Em	
D	

REVISION QUIZZES

1. Bass lines
2. Styles 1 and Styles 2
3. Ostinato and Riff
4. Extra revision