

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Forward	6
Chapter 1	7
Your Instrument	7
Purchasing Your First Bass	9
Set-Up	11
Parts Of The Bass	12
Your Bow	14
Sitting vs. Standing	16
Chapter 2	18
Pizzicato	18
Arco	20
Open Strings	21
Tempo Markings	24
Etudes	25
Chapter 3	28
Fingerings - Hand Position	28
Interval Exercises	30
Major Scale Fingerings	32
Major Scale Etudes	33
Minor Scale	36
Minor Scale Etudes	37
Bowling Patterns	39
Chapter 4	40
The 5th	40
Jazz Blues	40
Cycle	42
Etudes	44
Chapter 5	48
Shifting	48
Scales	49
Arpeggios	50
Etudes	52
Conclusion	55
About The Author	56

Set-Up

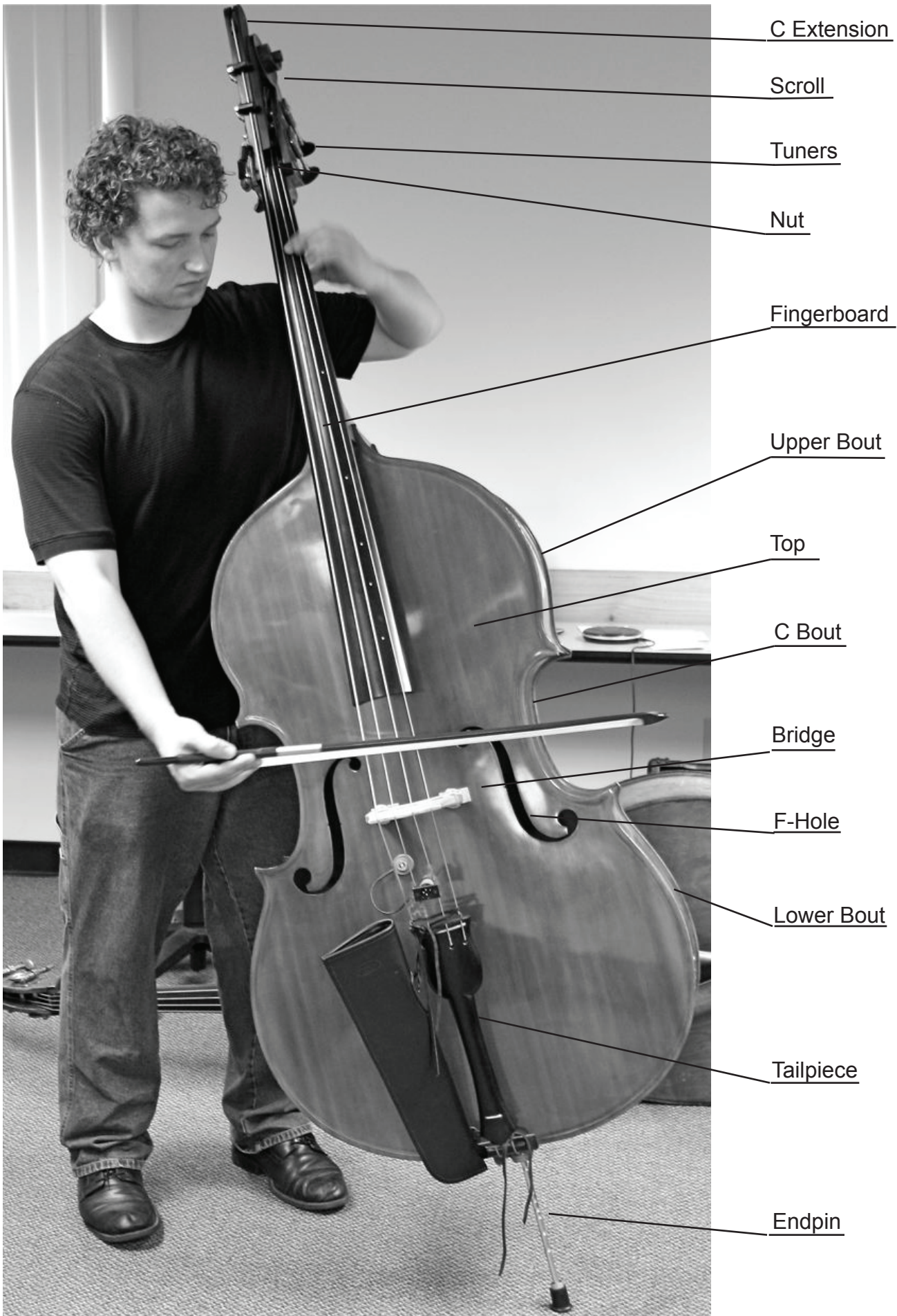
Most cheaper basses, when purchased, still need to be set up properly. Harnett was very insistent on that. He made the guy dress the fingerboard, put adjusters in the bridge, and trim the sound post. If you buy your bass in the typical music store, they will NOT be able to do any decent set-up. Take your new or new used bass to a real bass guy. In the beginning, adjust the strings low enough so you can play with a little bit of ease. It will take practice and time for you to become comfortable and build stamina. I have had many students who walk into their first lesson with a bass that is so difficult to play that it is totally understandable why they did not like to practice.

Recently a student brought his bass in, and the strings were a mile high off the fingerboard. He told me this was because if he adjusted the bridge to make the strings any lower they would buzz. He was right! The fingerboard was dipped badly. The bridge was warped and bent almost like a pretzel. The strings were very stiff, and the endpin rattled something fierce when you played the open A string. Of course, his wife had gotten “a deal” from a friend who new a guy who had a brother whose father was a cello repairman. Yea... r i g h t. And this repairman had endorsed this bass. Yikes! My new student’s bass needs the fingerboard planed, a new bridge, softer strings, and hopefully only a better quality endpin to stop the rattling. Oh yeah, the nut needed to be cut down also. If you just walk in off the street and say to the local bass guy, “I want my bass set up to play easily,” I suspect it will cost between \$200 - \$1000, depending on the work needed.

Here are a few areas to look at when deciding to get your current bass set up properly.

1. string height at the nut
2. string height at the upper end of fingerboard
3. dip in the fingerboard
4. sound post adjustment
5. width of strings on the bridge
6. curvature of the top of the bridge
7. endpin stability
8. what kind of strings will work best on your particular bass
9. removing buzzes from the fingerboard
10. checking for open seams
11. tuning pegs rattling

No matter how good or bad the quality of your bass, it must play easily and accurately or you will not be able to develop correct technique.



Shane Alessio - photo by Sarah Stinnett

Etudes Chapter 1

No. 6 - Open String Etude

Lento

1

1

5

5

9

9

13

13

17

17

21

21

Items to remember in reference to the left hand.

1. thumb behind the middle finger
2. even pressure with all fingers
3. fingers used are 1, 2, and 4 - these are half-steps
4. maintain hand posture while playing each note
5. each finger supports, holds down the string, while the other fingers are playing higher pitches
6. economy of motion, place fingers in position to play all notes on one string without additional movement
7. press notes down before playing
8. maintain good spacing (1/2 step) between 1st and 2nd fingers, and 2nd and 4th fingers

For this type of practice, work slowly and deliberately. Focus on getting the physical motions and hand positions correct. Only with repeated practice will this become comfortable. It takes time to build the strength that will allow you to relax. Over time these principles will become second nature in your playing. Working on the fundamentals of good technique is a practice that all good musicians do, forever.

Major Scale: We all know the sound of a major scale. Play the following exercises with a full bow per note. Do not use the metronome.

No. 7 - Bb Major Scale - fingering

1 4 0 1 4 0 2 4

The F major scale uses the exact same fingerings and hand position as the Bb major scale, starting on a lower string. As you learn the fundamentals of good posture, fingering, and shifting, you will find that these principals apply all over the instrument. While the fingers for a specific scale may change, good posture and finger spacing will insure good intonation.

No. 8 - F Major Scale - fingering

1 4 0 1 4 0 2 4

Bowing Patterns

No. 39 - Bowings - Learn the bowing patterns below and apply them to all your scale practice.

♩ = 60

1
1

2
3

3
5

4
7

5
9

6
11

7
13

8
15

Chapter 4

The Fifth

The most important notes for a good bass player to learn are the root and the 5th. This pair of notes defines our tonality. These two notes are used constantly in all styles of music. The interval between these two notes is the building block of most of our music. Let's look at some good ways to practice playing our roots and 5ths in tune.

Jazz Blues: The jazz bassist is constantly playing roots and fifths in his bass lines. Developing a solid sound and perfect intonation while playing roots and 5ths is the jazz player's foundation. Let's use a jazz blues to work on hand position and intonation with our roots and 5ths. Below are the chord changes to a blues in F.

Play quarter-notes. Alternate playing the root and the 5th of each chord - R 5 R 5. Begin on the root when each chord appears. For the measures that have one chord, you will play your root-5th pattern twice. For the measures with two chords, you will only have time to play the root-5th pattern once for each chord. Measure six is a repeat of measure five. When a measure has no chord symbol, it is assumed to be a continuation of the last written chord.

No. 40 - Jazz Blues Chord Changes in the key of F

F ⁷	B ^b 7	F ⁷	C ⁻⁷	F ⁷
1				
B ^b 7	F ⁷	A ⁻⁷	D ⁷	
5				
G ⁻⁷	C ⁷	F ⁷	D ⁷	G ⁻⁷ C ⁷
9				

No. 69 - Andante in A major

Andante

Musical notation for No. 69 - Andante in A major. The piece is in bass clef, 4/4 time, and A major. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff starts with a measure number '1' and contains four measures. The second staff starts with a measure number '5' and contains four measures. The melody is simple and features eighth and quarter notes.

No. 70 - Adagietto in A minor

Adagietto

Musical notation for No. 70 - Adagietto in A minor. The piece is in bass clef, 4/4 time, and A minor. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff starts with a measure number '1' and contains four measures. The second staff starts with a measure number '5' and contains four measures. The melody is slow and features eighth notes with slurs and accents.

No. 71 - Andante Moderato in D minor

Andante Moderato

Musical notation for No. 71 - Andante Moderato in D minor. The piece is in bass clef, 4/4 time, and D minor. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff starts with a measure number '1' and contains four measures. The second staff starts with a measure number '5' and contains four measures. The melody is moderate and features eighth notes with slurs and accents.