

Example 1

♩ = 100 2 4 1 2

1

5

Example 2

♩ = 100 2 4 1 2

1

5

Example 3

♩ = 100 2 1 2 4

1

5

Example 4

♩ = 100 2 1 2 4

1

5

Example 5

♩ = 100 2 1 2 4

1

5

Example 6

♩ = 100 2 4 1 4

1

D

5

Example 7

♩ = 100 2 4 1

1

D

5

Example 8

♩ = 100 2 1 2 4 1

1

D

5

I teach a very specific way of thinking when learning to shift. I call it, "Replace a finger with a finger." Let's assume we are playing one finger per fret and maintaining good hand posture. Example 33 starts with the first finger on the note E. Our third finger will be positioned over F#, and our fourth finger is over the G. When we get to measure 7, we shift to the second finger for the E note. We are replacing our first finger with our second finger. Or, you can say that we are putting our second finger where the first finger was, on E. Then we continue this measure, playing D# with finger one and C with finger three. We end the phrase with finger two playing the B note in measure 8. Now when we shift to start measure 9, we are replacing finger two (the fret where our second finger is being held) with finger one. Yes, this first note is an E, and our previous note was a B. While they are different notes, they are the same fret.

Example 33

It is important to learn to shift without looking at your fingerboard. As soon as you take your eyes off the page, it is easy to lose your place. Practice the shifts by isolating them and repeat the motion over and over until you can do it with your eyes closed.

Example 34

• = 124 1

1 A

5

9 S 1

13 2

17 2

21 2

25

29 4 A

You will notice the “s” in measure 11. S = stretch. This high up the fingerboard, the stretch is quite easy to reach. Do not reposition your thumb as you would in a shift. Just stretch your finger back.

Example 38

Small Steps

Bossa

$\text{♩} = 96$

1

6

10

14

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Chapter Two

Shifting

Shifting is the most difficult part of reading music. The challenge is one of physics. We have to break our physical contact with the fingerboard so we can move to a new position. While shifting, we cannot allow ourselves to look away from the page and direct our hand movement with our eyes. So often we look away from the page to see where to shift our hand, and when we look back at the music, too late, we have lost our place.

The good news is that when we practice specific shifts over and over and over, they become easy. How do you think that a great basketball player increases his percentage of making three-point shots? Repetition. It is NOT a process of him running down the court thinking, “Ok, I am thirty feet from the basket. I will need X amount of pressure in my release. I must achieve X amount of arch on my shot. I must jump X amount of height off the floor, ...” No, a great player shoots thousands and thousands of shots attempting to recreate the correct posture and correct feeling each time. It is the same process with any physical endeavour. Creating the correct action and then repeating this motion is the process that results in turning a difficult task into an easy and graceful activity. Piece of cake!

Here is another positive aspect of learning good shifting up the fingerboard. The good news and the bad news are the same. There is no magic or talent involved, just practice. When I learned this, I was greatly relieved. At one time many years ago I wanted to learn to read music well. I learned a valuable lesson that has been with me ever since. If you work on a weakness, it becomes a strength. The famous golfer, Jack Nicklaus, once said, “All my life people have said that I have a natural golf swing. I have always been amazed that more I practice, the more natural my swing becomes.”

While shifting from any note on the bass to any other note on the bass is possible, in the normal reading of music there are shifts that are far more common than others. Let's work on the shifts that you will often use.

Example 47

♩ = 72

2 2

1

A

5

4

Example 48

♩ = 72

2 4

1

G

5

1 2

Example 49

♩ = 72

1 2

1

D

5

1 1 3

Example 50

♩ = 72

1

5

Example 57

Example 57 is a short piece in 4/4 time, marked quarter note = 90. It consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins at measure 1 and contains a melodic line with eighth and quarter notes, including a sharp sign (#) and a flat sign (b). The second staff begins at measure 5 and continues the melodic line. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "STINNETT" is overlaid across the middle of the page.

Gotta love all these ledger lines in the next one. Well, maybe we don't have to love 'em, but we do need to become comfortable reading them.

Example 58

Example 58 is a piece in 4/4 time, marked quarter note = 86. It consists of four staves of music, all in bass clef. The first staff begins at measure 1 and contains a series of quarter notes, some of which are written on ledger lines above the staff. The second staff begins at measure 5, the third at measure 9, and the fourth at measure 13. A large, semi-transparent watermark reading "MUSIC" is overlaid across the middle of the page.