

STRING BASS *styles*

by

"SLAM" STEWART



DAVID GORNSTON
STRING BASS

EDWIN H. MORRIS and COMPANY, Inc.
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STRING BASS STYLES

By "Slam" Stewart

FOREWORD

The name "Slam" Stewart stands out prominently in the realm of modern bass playing. His tremendous bass work with The Art Tatum Trio and his recordings will live wherever modern music is enjoyed.

Because "Slam's" sensational originality and technique are so admired by bass players, we are presenting his conceptions and rhythms in book form.

This book deals with vital aspects of modern bass playing and therefore assumes that the player:

1. Knows the names of the notes throughout the keyboard;
2. Can read the bass part in an ordinary stock arrangement;
3. Can play all scales correctly;
4. Can read all simple rhythms.

The book is designed to show the modern bass man how he can develop himself as:

1. A better rhythm and orchestra player;
2. A better soloist;
3. A better all-round musician.

In order to derive the greatest possible benefit from this book, one should:

1. Master each point before proceeding to the next;
2. As much as possible write out bass parts and ideas for improvisation;
3. Study fundamental bow and finger technique regularly;
4. Memorize as much as possible, and transpose wherever practicable.

The Publishers

RHYTHM IS THE THING

Rhythmic ideas applied to a bass part are always effective, and as a matter of fact, serve as a foundation for more involved improvisation.

In the following illustrations, observe that no new notes have been added to the original bass part and that the various figures are produced solely and entirely through the use of different rhythm patterns. It is strongly suggested that no additional notes be added by a player until finesse has been acquired in rhythmic conceptions. It must be remembered at all times that the rhythm pattern, as well as the phrasing, must fit the style and tempo of the number being played.

Whenever possible at rehearsals, experiment with ideas that help to establish style and polish. Study phonograph records which exemplify the best in bass playing and copy whatever is good. The gradual absorption of various phrases and patterns will eventually add up to what will be an individual style, which of course, will be based on one's natural talents and "ear".

As written

As played No. 1

No. 2.

No. 3.

No. 4.

No. 5.

No. 6.

MAJOR CHORDS

Memorize the following chords and practice them throughout the entire range of the instrument, as indicated. Note that a major chord consists of three tones, with a major third (two whole steps between the first note of the chord, the root, and the second note of the chord, the third), and a minor third (a whole step and a half step between the third of the chord and the fifth of the chord, which is the third note of the chord).

Major Chords (memorize)

Chords shown: C, G, D, A, E, B, F# or Gb, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, Gb or F#.

Labels: root, 3rd, 5th.

When a chord appears in its root position, the root is on the bottom followed by the 3rd, 5th, etc. When these chord tones appear in different positions, the chord is said to be inverted. When a chord is in its first inversion the 3rd is on top. When it is in its second inversion the 3rd is on top. In 7th, 9th, etc. chords, a third inversion occurs when the 7th is on top. Study all chords in all inversions.

Chords shown in inversions: C, G, D, A, E, B, F#, Gb, Db, Ab, Eb, Bb, F.

Labels: root position, 1st inversion, 2nd inversion.

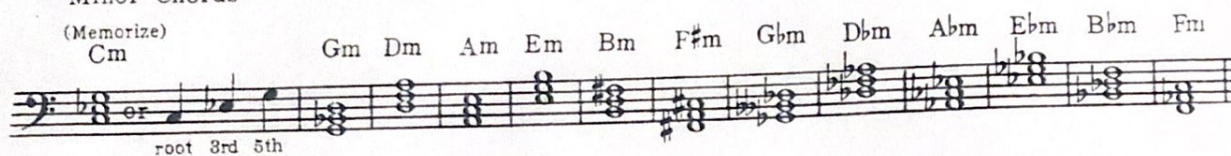
MINOR CHORDS

Memorize the following minor chords and practice them as indicated:

For additional study, play all major chord examples with a "flatted" third. Note that by "flattening" the third of a major chord, the minor chord results. In a minor chord the distance between the root and the third is a minor third and the distance between the third and the fifth is a major third, which is just the reverse in the construction of major chords.

Minor Chords

(Memorize)
Cm



Play
Cm



Dm

Am



Em

Bm



F#m

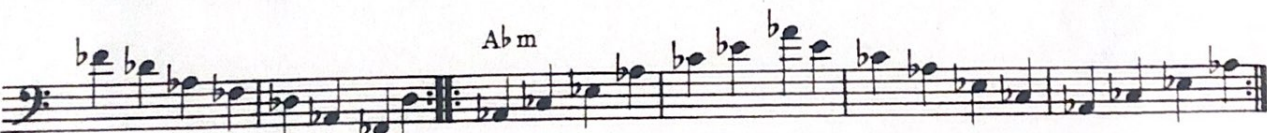


Gbm

Dbm



Abm



Ebm

Bbm



Fm



MAJOR SIXTH CHORDS

Memorize the following chords and practice them throughout the entire range of the instrument, as indicated. The sixth is frequently added to the major, minor and dominant seventh chords in improvisation. However, in dance music the major sixth chords have taken their place as part of the harmony and are frequently indicated in chord progressions.

In the following illustrations the sixth appears along with the other chord tones as "additional notes".

Major Sixths

(Memorize)

Chords shown: C6, G6, D6, A6, E6, B6, F#6, Gb6, Db6, Ab6, Eb6, Bb6, F6.

As written

C6

As played

6th

3rd

6th

Chords shown: C Major 6, F Major 6, Bb Major 6, C Minor 6, F Minor 6, B Minor 6.

Eb Major 6

G Major 6

Eb Minor 6

G Minor 6

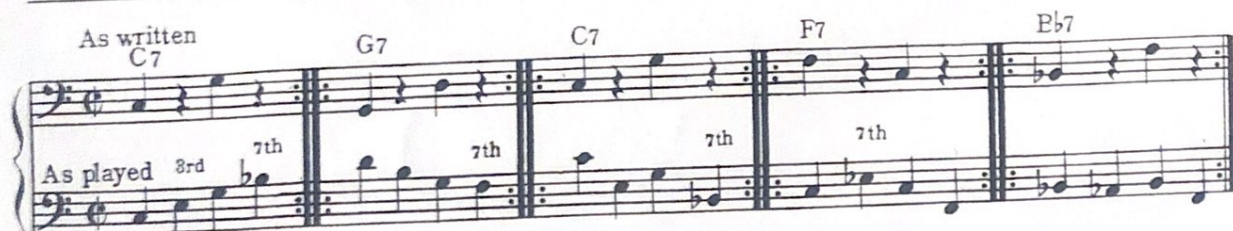
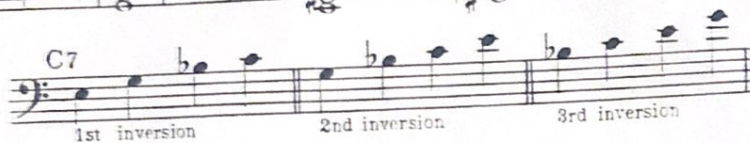
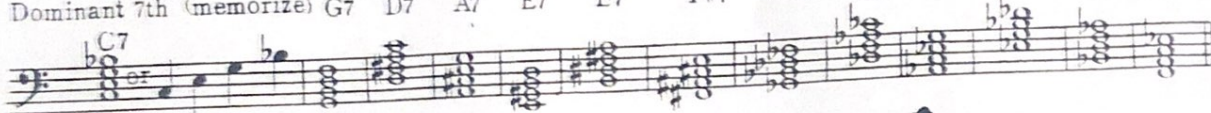
Chords shown: Eb Major 6, G Major 6, Eb Minor 6, G Minor 6.

DOMINANT SEVENTH CHORDS

Memorize the following dominant seventh chords and practice them as indicated.

The dominant seventh chord is constructed on the fifth note of the scale, and in its construction has a minor third added to a major triad.

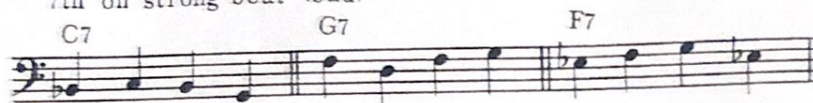
Dominant 7th (memorize) G7 D7 A7 E7 F7 F#7 Gb7 Db7 Ab7 Eb7 Bb7 F7



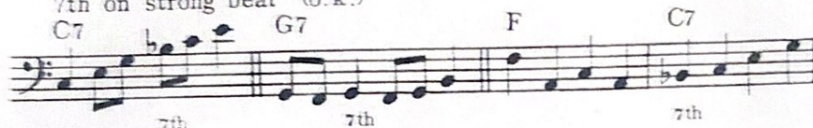
in bass parts it must be remembered that the most important tones of the chord are the root and the fifth, and it is for this reason that they appear on the strong beats of a measure: The only time, as far as fundamental bass is concerned, that the chord tones do not alternate root, fifth; root, fifth, occurs when such a pattern would cause a tone to be repeated over a bar line or "through" a chord change.

In bass playing, it is not desirable to have the seventh of a chord appear on the strong beats, and consequently it is only in rapid or scale passages that it is allowable.

7th on strong beat (bad)



7th on strong beat (o.k.)

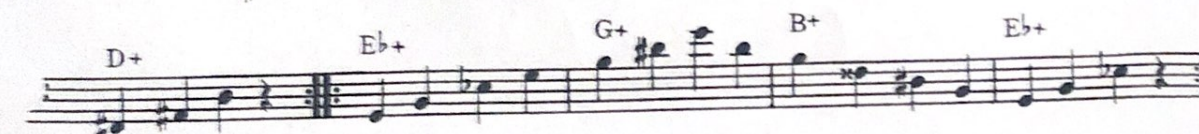
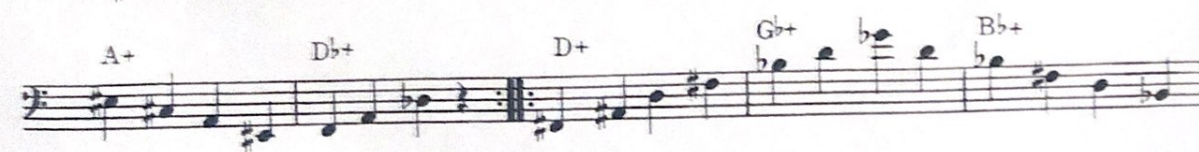
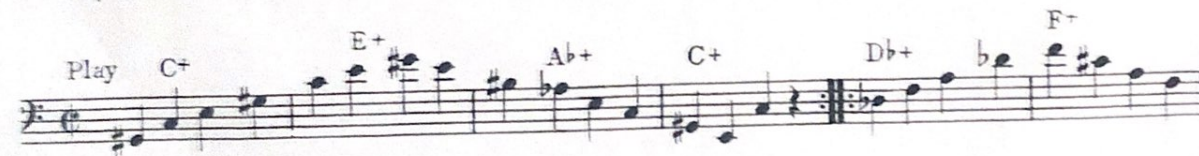
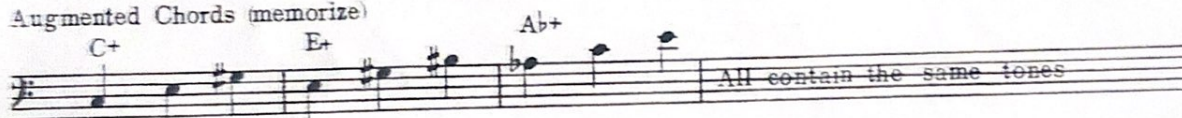


AUGMENTED CHORDS

Augmented chords contain two major thirds and for this reason they all fall into one of four groups. Memorize and practice as indicated.

An augmented chord is formed by raising the fifth of the major chord one half step.

Augmented Chords (memorize)



5

The following illustrations demonstrate the use of passing tones, and here it is to be observed once again that notes that do not belong to a chord are not to be used on the beat unless they are short and are part of a "moving passage", which in its essence gives the "sound" of the basic harmony.

Diatonic Passing Tones

The musical notation shows two staves. The first staff is in C major (one sharp, F#) and the second staff is in C minor (three flats, Bb, Eb, Ab). Both staves show the diatonic passing tones for the first four intervals: C to D (RT), D to E (RT), E to F (RT), and F to G (RT). The notation includes notes, rests, and accidentals (sharps and flats) to indicate the correct pitches for each passing tone.

Chromatic Passing Tones

C7 F7 C RT RT RT RT C RT F

As written F G7 Gb7 F7 C7 etc.

Added Chord Tones etc.

Added P.T. etc.

B $\flat$ F7 B $\flat$ Gm Gm7 G7 C7 F7 B $\flat$ E $\flat$ 7 B $\flat$ B $\flat$

F9 9th

PT PT PT 6th PT PT m6th PT PT 9th PT

Note: Frequently, the third of a chord is flatted to produce what is known as a "blue effect"

FINGER AND BOW TECHNIQUE ILLUSTRATED



Fig. 1. The position of the hand on the strings as the "slap" is executed, for the effect known as SLAP BASS.
Note the manner in which the hand touches all of the strings.



Fig. 2. Here the fingers are shown in position for pizzicato.
Note that for ordinary pizzicato, the tips of the fingers are used.



Fig. 3. Position of hand for the execution of pizzicato which produces a bigger, broader tone.

Note for this execution that the side of the first finger down to the second knuckle touches the string.

In the walking bass chorus on "Christopher Columbus", some of the notes are to be played with the broad, full tone that is produced through the use of the "side finger" technique, and they are so indicated. All other notes are to be picked as indicated in Fig. 2.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

This illustration should be studied in the same fashion as the one on "After You've Gone".
Note, that Slam's bass in contrast to the orchestration bass depends upon its effectiveness for long scale passages.

The musical score is divided into five systems, each featuring two staves: 'Slam's Bass' (top) and 'Orchestration Bass' (bottom). The key signature has one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4.

- System 1:** Slam's Bass starts with a scale-like passage. A bracket labeled with an asterisk and 'Side' covers measures 3 and 4. Orchestration Bass chords: F Fdim, C7, F Fdim, C7, F Fdim.
- System 2:** Orchestration Bass chords: C7, F Fdim, F C7 F, A7.
- System 3:** Orchestration Bass chords: D9, G7, C7, Bb.
- System 4:** Orchestration Bass chords: Am, Eb9, Db9, C9, F Fdim, C7, F Fdim.
- System 5:** Orchestration Bass chords: C7, F Fdim, C7, F Fdim, C7, F.

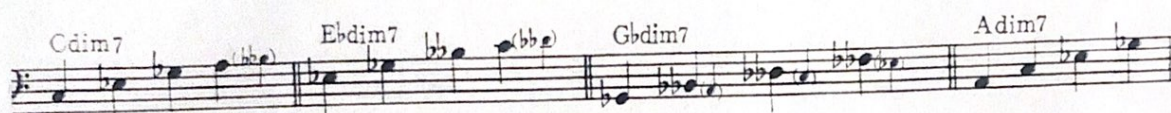
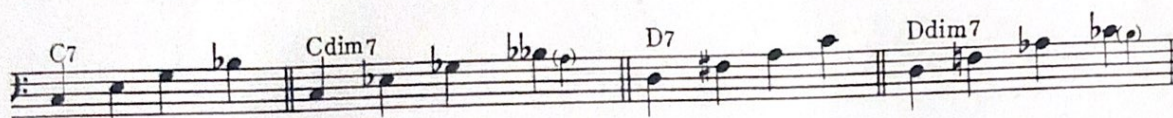
In moving scale passages, neighboring and chromatic tones may appear as short notes, and in the case of all "runs" care must be exercised to begin and end the passage with a chord tone.

* These notes to be played with the side of the finger as illustrated on page 10.

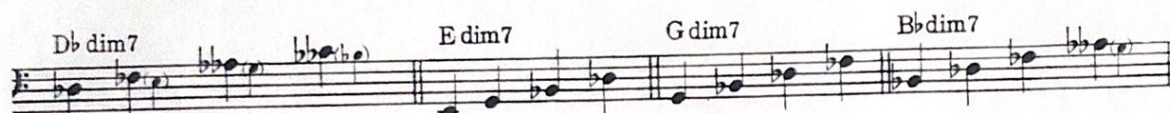
DIMINISHED SEVENTH CHORDS

Memorize the following diminished seventh chords and observe that because there is a minor third between each note, all diminished seventh chords fall into one of three groups. Practice them as indicated.

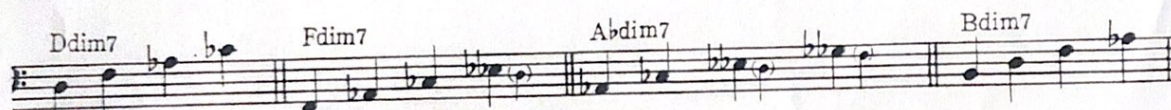
The diminished seventh chord is formed by lowering the third, fifth and seventh notes of the dominant seventh chord one half tone.



The above four chords all contain the same notes.

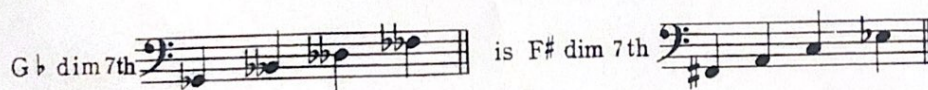


The above four chords all contain the same notes.



The above four chords all contain the same notes.

Note:—Enharmonic is the term applied to the note which sounds the same but is written differently, for example, C# is Db — Fb is E — B# is C, etc.



Note that a 7th chord becomes diminished when the root is raised a half tone — so:



NINTH CHORDS

The 9th can be readily named by thinking of it as the tone above the root an octave higher, so the major 9th in a C chord is D, and in a G chord is A, etc. To make a 9th minor, lower it one-half tone. To make a 9th augmented, raise it one-half tone. When a C-major chord is used with a 9th, it is indicated so: C major 9 or C add 9. Dominant 9ths are indicated merely as C 9, G 9, etc. Memorize the 9th chords and play them throughout the range of the instrument.

Major Ninths (memorize)

C9 G9 D9 A9 E9 B9 F#9 Gb9 Db9 Ab9 Eb9 Bb9 F9

Dominant Ninths (memorize)

C9 G9 D9 A9 E9 B9 F#9 Gb9 Db9 Ab9 Eb9 Bb9 F9

The 7th and 9th of a chord, generally speaking, should appear only on the weak beats of a measure or as short tones between beats. It is only the experienced musician who can use these with any great regularity on the strong beats, for instance, a scale or chord passage may carry a 7th or a 9th through the strong beats.

Cadd9 (bad) (good) (bad) (good)

9th 9th

G7 C9 (good) C9 (good) G9 (good) etc.

Note.—The 9th resolves down to the root unless it appears in an ascending or descending scale passage.

As written Cadd9 Fadd9

As played 9th 9th 6th

The added 6th and 9th are interesting.

As written C

Added 6ths and 9ths.

9th 6th 9th P.T. P.T.

6th 9th 6th 9th 6th

ELEVEN IDEAS

In the following riffs and breaks, the neighboring tones, passing tones and 6ths are indicated. Play them in all keys both bowed and pizzicato.

With a Lift

Staff 1: E^b , A^b , B^b , E^b . PT, PT, 6th PT, PT, NT, NT, 6th PT.

Staff 2: C. 6th, PT, NT, NT, PT, 6th, NT, NT, NT.

Staff 3: E^b , B^b7 , E^b . 6th, 6th, PT, PT, 6th.

Staff 4: C, $G7$, C, $C7$, C. PT, 6th, PT, 6th, NT, NT, NT, NT, NT, NT.

Staff 5: B^b , E^b , $F7$, B^b . NT, 6th, 6th, 6th, 6th, 9th, PT.

Staff 6: G, C, $C^{\#dim}$, D, G. 6th, 9th, NT, NT, PT, NT, 6th.

3rd bar—D is the 9th to "C". The 2nd and 3rd D's are neighbors to "E". 4th bar—C is a passing tone between D and B. B^b is a neighbor to $B^{\#}$.

Staff 7: C, $G7$, C, $G7$, $C7$. 6th, NT, 6th, NT, 6th, PT, NT, 6th, PT.

Staff 8: F, Gm , $C7$. NT, NT, NT, NT, PT, 6th, PT, PT, $D7$, NT, NT.

Staff 9: C, Am, $C+7$, $G7$. PT, PT, NT, 6th, 6th, NT.

Staff 10: $C7$, $Cdim7$, $C7$. PT, 6th, PT.

BOOGIE-WOOGIE

The Boogie-Woogie style is exemplified, of course, by the characteristic "eight-to-the-bar" and the repetition of a bass pattern. The following illustrations demonstrate the manner in which a regular bass part becomes a Boogie-Woogie bass. It will be observed that Boogie-Woogie requires considerable technique and practice. At rapid tempos the first and third beat may be played as quarter notes, while two notes are played on the second and fourth beats.

The musical notation illustrates various Boogie-Woogie bass patterns in bass clef, 4/4 time. The patterns are shown in groups, often with alternative versions indicated by "or".

- Staff 1:** Starts with a C chord. The first pattern is a regular bass line. The second pattern, labeled "becomes", is a more active eighth-note pattern. The third pattern, labeled "or", is another variation. The fourth pattern, also labeled "or", is a descending eighth-note pattern.
- Staff 2:** Starts with a G6 chord. The first pattern is a regular bass line. The second pattern, labeled "becomes (repeat)", is a more active eighth-note pattern. The third pattern, labeled "descending (repeat)", is a descending eighth-note pattern.
- Staff 3:** Starts with a C chord. The first pattern is a regular bass line. The second pattern, labeled "or", is a more active eighth-note pattern.
- Staff 4:** Starts with a C7 chord. The first pattern is a regular bass line. The second pattern, labeled "or", is a more active eighth-note pattern.
- Staff 5:** Starts with a C7 chord. The first pattern is a regular bass line. The second pattern, labeled "or", is a more active eighth-note pattern.
- Staff 6:** Starts with a C chord. The first pattern is a regular bass line. The second pattern, labeled "becomes", is a more active eighth-note pattern. The third pattern, labeled "or", is another variation.
- Staff 7:** Starts with a C chord. The first pattern is a regular bass line. The second pattern, labeled "becomes", is a more active eighth-note pattern. The third pattern, labeled "or", is another variation.
- Staff 8:** Shows a comparison between "As written" and "As played" for four measures with chords C, F, C7, and G7. The "As written" version is a simple bass line. The "As played" version is a more active eighth-note pattern. The "or" version is another variation.



BLUES

The standard blues form follows a twelve bar construction and a chord progression, which uses the tonic chord, a dominant 7th built on the keynote of the scale, the sub-dominant, the tonic, the dominant 7th and the tonic. Transpose and analyze the following "blues" basses.

Chord progression for the blues bass line:

- Bar 1: G (6th)
- Bar 2: C7 (P.T.)
- Bar 3: C (6th)
- Bar 4: G
- Bar 5: D7
- Bar 6: G
- Bar 7: F (6th)
- Bar 8: F7 (P.T.)
- Bar 9: B $\flat$
- Bar 10: F
- Bar 11: C7
- Bar 12: C7 (b)
- Bar 13: F
- Bar 14: C
- Bar 15: G7
- Bar 16: C
- Bar 17: E $\flat$
- Bar 18: E $\flat$ 7
- Bar 19: A $\flat$
- Bar 20: E $\flat$
- Bar 21: B $\flat$ 7
- Bar 22: E $\flat$ (P.T.)
- Bar 23: B $\flat$
- Bar 24: B $\flat$ 7 (P.T.)
- Bar 25: B $\flat$ 7
- Bar 26: E $\flat$
- Bar 27: B $\flat$
- Bar 28: F7 (9th)
- Bar 29: B $\flat$ (6th)

KEEPIN' OUT OF MISCHIEF NOW

In this one, observe carefully that the first four bars are played pizzicato with an even, solid, "walking" effect. Get the accents and dynamics of course. Push bars five and seven. In bars 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16, play each note broad (sustenuato) with a good solid tone. The last beat

in the 16th bar serves as a pick-up into the last four bars which must rock. The dotted eighths and sixteenths in the next to the last bar, must be played so that the correct mathematical count is given each note, that is to say, the dotted eighth must be three times the sixteenth.

Slam's Bass
Not too fast

9th N.T. PT. RTPT. PT. 6th

Stock Bass
Dm G7 Gb7 G7 C G+ C Cdim G7 Dm G7

Gm A7 Dm Dm7 G7 Dm G7 Gb7 G7 C C G+ C C7 F Fm

chromatic in Chord

C C7 F Fm C Gdim Dm C7 Gm A7 D7 Dm G7 C

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AFTER YOU'VE GONE

Here in pizzicato style you will find Slam's walking bass on the third line. For study purposes, the original melody as well as the original bass in the dance orchestration is included. You will note that Slam's bass employs more passing tones than the orchestration bass and introduces a few "tricks". Note the repetition of the rhythm pattern in the ninth and tenth bars (four bars from the end). The last two bars take the chorus "out" and in this way differ from the last bars of the orchestration.

Slam's Bass
Moderato

Stock Bass
F Fm C A7 D7 G7

C F Fm C A7 Dm A7

Dm Fm C C7 Am D7 C G7 C

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I WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR YOU

Here is a picked solo demonstrating why Slam's playing is famous. In some instances, the fingering is indicated by numerals above the notes and letters in circles below the notes indicating the string to be used.

Solo

Medium Bounce

Chord symbols and fingering/lettering in circles below the notes:

- System 1: Eb, Eb7, Ab, Abm, Eb, Eb7, Ab, Abm, Eb, Cm
- System 2: F7, Bb7, Eb, Bbdim, Ab6, Bb7, Fb, Eb7, Ab, Abm
- System 3: Eb, Eb7, Ab, Abm, Eb, Cm, F7, Bb7, Eb, Ab
- System 4: Eb, Ebdim, G, Gdim, C, D7, G, D7, Bbdim
- System 5: Bb, Bbdim, Eb6, F7, Bb, F7, Bb7

PRISONER OF LOVE

A bowed bass solo by Slam which is well worth studying.

Slow Groove

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I AIN'T GOT NOBODY

In this chorus, which represents what might be called the "melodic bowed" style, the performer has an ample opportunity to display his tone, technique and musicianship. Wherever the original melody occurs as in the first four bars of the chorus, the player should use a beautiful vibrato and tone, coupled with a phrasing which is on the "pretty" side. When the improvisation occurs, as in the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth bars, the phrasing must contain plenty of "kick".

Moderato
As played

Melody

Bass

G7 Gb7 F7 E7 A7 G E7

A7 D7 G G Gb7 F7 E7

A9 A7 D7

Em G7 C E+ E7 E+ E7

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A7 D7 G7 Gb7 F7 E7 A7

G A7 D7 G

SUNDAY, MONDAY OR ALWAYS

Here is the manner in which Slam handles something which may be classified as "slow and easy". Play this with a nice tone quality and "groove" it slightly.

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 Am Dm G7 B7 C A9 C#dim Dm7 G7 C Am Dm G7 C9 F G7 G9 C Ebdim Dm7 C7 C C#dim Dm7 G7 Em7 A9 Dm7 G7 C

ROSETTA

In this chorus, you will find a beautiful illustration of Slam's take-off on a solid bowed solo. The bowing is indicated in essential spots and if you can really dig this one at a nice tempo, man, you've got something.

Solo

Bright Lift

The musical score is written for a solo section titled "Bright Lift". It consists of four systems of music, each with three staves: a top staff for the solo instrument (likely a double bass), a middle staff for the melody, and a bottom staff for the bass line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The time signature is 4/4. The score includes various chords and bowing indications (V for bowing). The first system shows the solo instrument playing a series of eighth notes, with the melody and bass line providing harmonic support. The second system continues the solo, with the melody and bass line following. The third system features a more complex solo line with triplets and bowing, while the melody and bass line provide a steady accompaniment. The fourth system concludes the solo with a final flourish. The bass line includes chords such as F, C7+, D7, G7, and C7.



First system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass staff. The bass staff includes chord labels: Bm7, E7, Am, E7, and Am. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in the final measure.



Second system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass staff. The bass staff includes chord labels: Fm6, C, C+, Dm6, and G7. The treble staff contains a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure and various articulations (accents, slurs) throughout.



Third system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass staff. The bass staff includes chord labels: F, C7+, and F. The treble staff contains a melodic line with various articulations (accents, slurs) throughout.



Fourth system of musical notation, featuring a treble and bass staff. The bass staff includes chord labels: D7, G7, C7, and F. The treble staff contains a melodic line with various articulations (accents, slurs) throughout.

I'M CRAZY 'BOUT MY BABY

Here Slam plays lightly around the original melody and nicely illustrates his good taste. The bowings are indicated in a few of the essential spots. Practice the original melody for "hep" phrasing as well as the improvisation.

Bright Fm7 Bb9 Bb+ Eb C7 Cdim Fm

Eb Cm7 Fm7 Bb7 Eb Fm7 Bb9 Bb+

Eb C7 Cdim Fm Eb Fm7 Bb7

Eb Bm6 Bbm Eb9 Ab6 Db6 Cm F9

C7 F7 Bb Fm7 Bb9 Bb+ V Eb

C7 Cdim Fm Eb Cm7 Fm7 Bb7 Eb

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BASIN STREET BLUES

Here with excellent taste we have an illustration of Slam's style in a "Blues" groove. Make the crescendos and diminuendos smoothly. Observe the phrasing and bowing carefully. Play with a lift.

Blues Tempo

Eb G7 C7 C7

mf F7 Bb7 Eb6 Ebdim Fm

E G7 C7 Db7 C7

F Bb7 Eb Bb7 Eb

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