

# BASS NOTATION LEGEND

Bass music can be notated two different ways: on a *musical staff*, and in *tablature*.

**THE MUSICAL STAFF** shows pitches and rhythms and is divided by bar lines into measures. Pitches are named after the first seven letters of the alphabet.

**TABLATURE** graphically represents the bass fingerboard. Each horizontal line represents a string, and each number represents a fret.

Notes:  
A  
F  
D  
B  
G  
E  
C  
A

Strings:  
high G  
D  
A  
E  
low

3rd string, open      2nd string, 2nd fret      1st & 2nd strings open, played together

**HAMMER-ON:** Strike the first (lower) note with one finger, then sound the higher note (on the same string) with another finger by fretting it without picking.

**PULL-OFF:** Place both fingers on the notes to be sounded. Strike the first note and without picking, pull the finger off to sound the second (lower) note.

**LEGATO SLIDE:** Strike the first note and then slide the same fret-hand finger up or down to the second note. The second note is not struck.

**SHIFT SLIDE:** Same as legato slide, except the second note is struck.

**TRILL:** Very rapidly alternate between the notes indicated by continuously hammering on and pulling off.

**TREMOLO PICKING:** The note is picked as rapidly and continuously as possible.

**VIBRATO:** The string is vibrated by rapidly bending and releasing the note with the fretting hand.

**SHAKE:** Using one finger, rapidly alternate between two notes on one string by sliding either a half-step above or below.

**NATURAL HARMONIC:** Strike the note while the fret hand lightly touches the string directly over the fret indicated.

**MUFFLED STRINGS:** A percussive sound is produced by laying the fret hand across the string(s) without depressing them and striking them with the pick hand.

**BEND:** Strike the note and bend up the interval shown.

**BEND AND RELEASE:** Strike the note and bend up as indicated, then release back to the original note. Only the first note is struck.

**RIGHT-HAND TAP:** Hammer ("tap") the fret indicated with the "pick-hand" index or middle finger and pull off to the note fretted by the fret hand.

**LEFT-HAND TAP:** Hammer ("tap") the fret indicated with the "fret-hand" index or middle finger.

**SLAP:** Strike ("slap") string with right-hand thumb.

**POP:** Snap ("pop") string with right-hand index or middle finger.

## Additional Musical Definitions



(*accent*) • Accentuate note (play it louder).



(*accent*) • Accentuate note with great intensity.



(*staccato*) • Play the note short.



• Downstroke



• Upstroke

*D.S. al Coda*

• Go back to the sign (C), then play until the measure marked "To Coda," then skip to the section labelled "Coda."

*D.C. al Fine*

• Go back to the beginning of the song and play until the measure marked "Fine" (end).

**Bass Fig.**

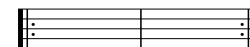
• Label used to recall a recurring pattern.

**Fill**

• Label used to identify a brief melodic figure which is to be inserted into the arrangement.

tacet

• Instrument is silent (drops out).



• Repeat measures between signs.



• When a repeated section has different endings, play the first ending only the first time and the second ending only the second time.

**NOTE:** Tablature numbers in parentheses mean:

1. The note is being sustained over a system (note in standard notation is tied), or
2. The note is sustained, but a new articulation (such as a hammer-on, pull-off, slide or vibrato) begins.