

How To Create Your Own Solo Pieces

As you learned from the video lesson, you only really need 2 'elements' to create a solo piece on bass. They were the melody, and some kind of accompaniment – being bass players, that usually means playing bass notes.

Having just these 2 things will give you a full sense of the song and make it easy to create your own solo pieces for a ton of different tunes.

The first step though is learning how to play each part – the melody and bass notes.

Check out the melody for “What A Wonderful World” in the key of C major:

Melody

The image displays the melody for "What A Wonderful World" in C major. It consists of two systems of musical notation. Each system includes a guitar fretboard diagram and a corresponding bass staff. The first system shows the first four measures of the melody, with fret numbers 10, 10, 12, 14, 14, 14, 12, 10, 10, 10, and 9 indicated above the strings. The second system shows the next four measures, with fret numbers 7, 7, 7, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 5, 4, 5, 7, and 5 indicated above the strings. The bass staff is in 4/8 time and features a simple accompaniment pattern of quarter notes.

Pretty simple, right? Now that you've had a look at the melody, let's check out the bass notes that go along with this melody. Right now, we'll just play them 4-to-a-bar to keep things simple:

Bass Notes

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a guitar tablature with two lines, labeled 'T' (Treble) and 'B' (Bass). The notes are: 3 3 0 0 | 13 13 12 12 | 10 10 8 8 | 7 7 5 5. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: G2, F2, E2, D2 | C2, B1, A1, G1 | F1, E1, D1, C1 | B1, A1, G1, F1.

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a guitar tablature with two lines, labeled 'T' (Treble) and 'B' (Bass). The notes are: 4 4 4 4 | 3 3 3 3 | 8. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: G2, F2, E2, D2 | C2, B1, A1, G1 | F1.

Again, it's pretty simple when you play it by itself. The point though, is to play them together! To get started, you can simply play the exact melody with the exact bass notes. This will give you a full sense of the song. Check it out:

Melody PLUS Bass Notes

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a guitar tablature with two lines, labeled 'T' (Treble) and 'B' (Bass). The notes are: 10 10 | 10 10 12 | 14 14 14 12 | 10 10 10 9. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: G2, F2, E2, D2 | C2, B1, A1, G1 | F1, E1, D1, C1 | B1, A1, G1, F1.

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff is a guitar tablature with two lines, labeled 'T' (Treble) and 'B' (Bass). The notes are: 7 7 7 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 4 5 7 | 5. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: G2, F2, E2, D2 | C2, B1, A1, G1 | F1, E1, D1, C1 | B1, A1, G1, F1.

A few things to notice:

#1 – There are a few ‘tricky’ rhythms that you’ll have to negotiate. In the 6th bar there are 3 notes in the melody played against 2 notes in the bass part. If you’re not familiar this kind of rhythm, it can take a while to get used to.

Another few that can be tricky are the places where the melody and bass notes are played at slightly different times. For example in the 2nd bar where the melody jumps up to the 12th fret on the G-string, the bass note comes in right after it. It can be tempting to play these notes at the same time. The same thing goes for the next bar where you get the F (E-string 13th fret) on the beat, but the melody coming just after.

#2 – It’s not super complicated! It’s just the melody and the bass notes, but with just these 2 things happening, you get the whole song! If you played this for someone, they’d be able to tell you what song it was (as long as they actually knew it).

Having just the melody and the bass notes is enough, but you can do more to make your solo pieces really shine, and one of the easiest ways is to add chords to the mix.

Chords will essentially ‘fill in the gaps’ between the melody and the bass notes and give you a fuller, richer sound.

Melody, Bass Notes plus Chords

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff shows guitar fretboard diagrams for the A and B strings. The A string has frets 10, 10, 12, 12, 12, 14, 14, 14, 14, 12, 12. The B string has frets 10, 12, 14, 12, 8, 10, 12, 12, 10, 13, 15, 13, 12, 14, 16, 16, 14. The bottom staff is a bass line with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a melody of eighth and quarter notes with stems pointing up. Chords are indicated above the staff: C, Em(add9), F(add9), and Em(add9).

The second system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff shows guitar fretboard diagrams for the A and B strings. The A string has frets 10, 14, 10, 10, 10, 9, 12, 9, 12. The B string has frets 10, 12, 14, 12, 8, 10, 12, 12, 10, 6, 7, 6, 7, 7, 5, 5, 5, 5. The bottom staff is a bass line with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a melody of eighth and quarter notes with stems pointing up. Chords are indicated above the staff: Dm(add9), C(add9), B^o7, and Am.

The third system of musical notation consists of two staves. The top staff shows guitar fretboard diagrams for the A and B strings. The A string has frets 5, 5, 5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 4, 5, 7, 5. The B string has frets 6, 6, 6, 6, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 2, 3. The bottom staff is a bass line with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a melody of eighth and quarter notes with stems pointing up. Chords are indicated above the staff: Ab, G(sus4), G7, and C.

These chords give you so much more color and depth to the solo piece, and they actually fit nicely under your hands once you get your fingers around the shapes.

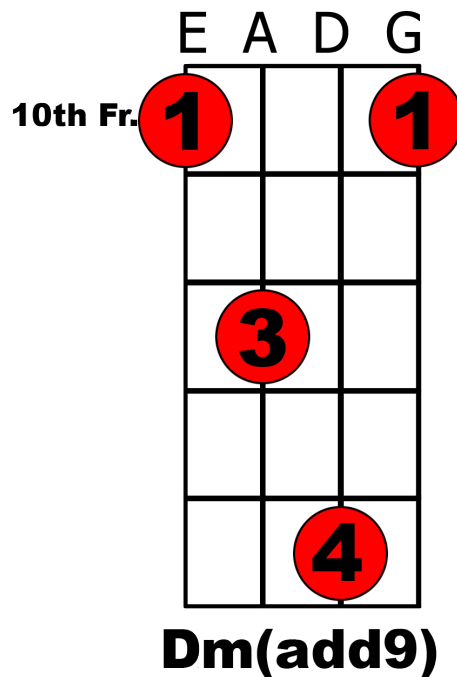
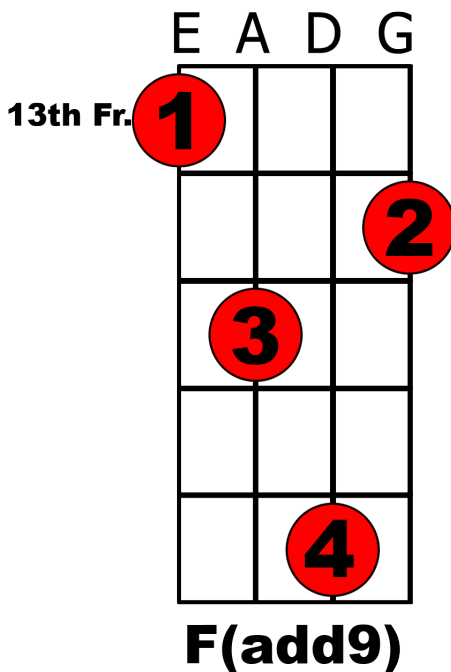
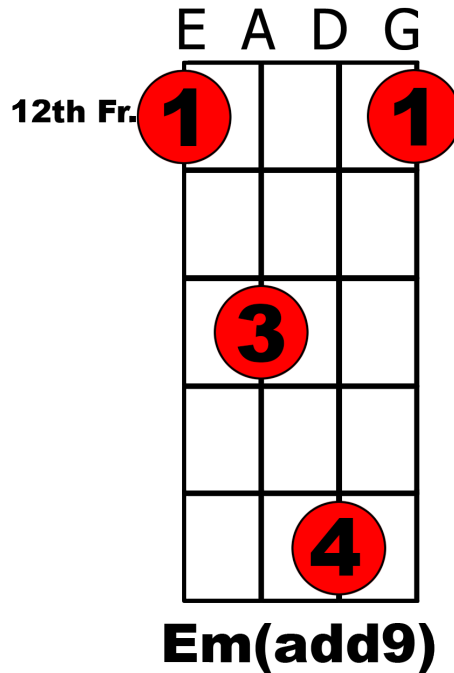
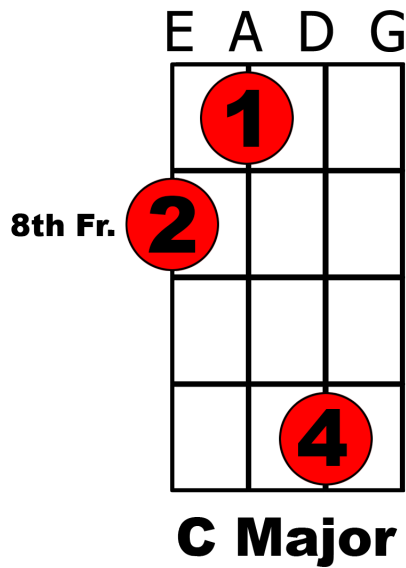
They're incredibly helpful in making solo pieces as well as a ton of fun to play around with. If you'd like to learn more about chords and how you can use them to create solo pieces of your own, head to:

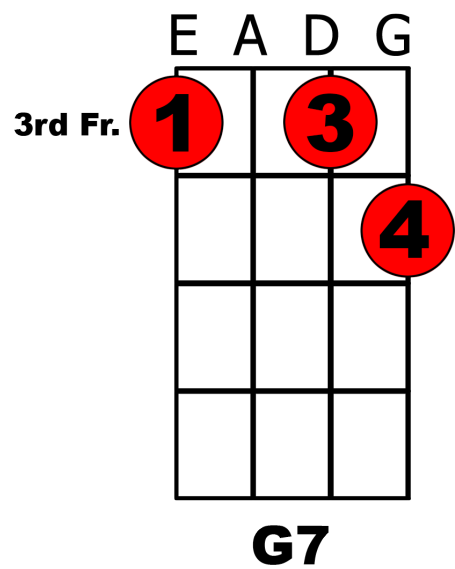
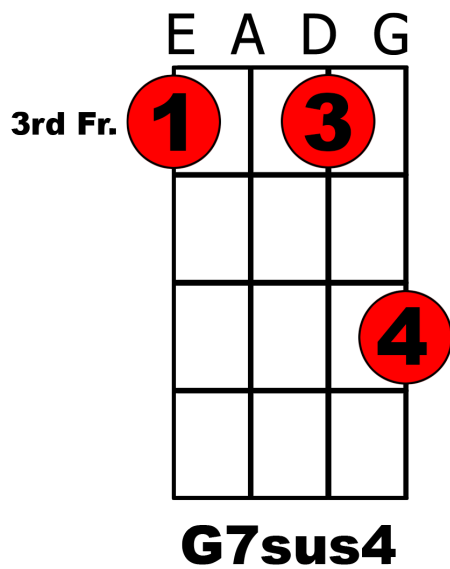
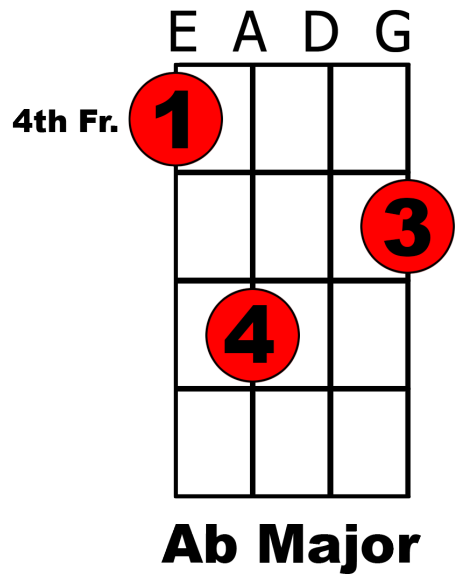
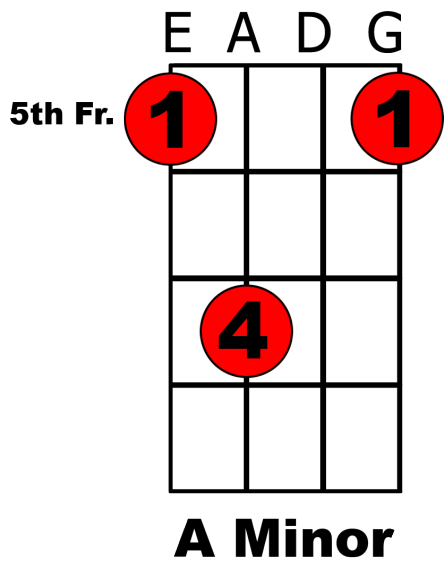
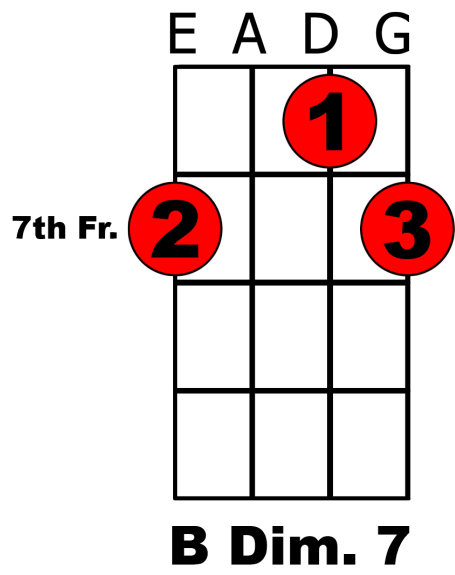
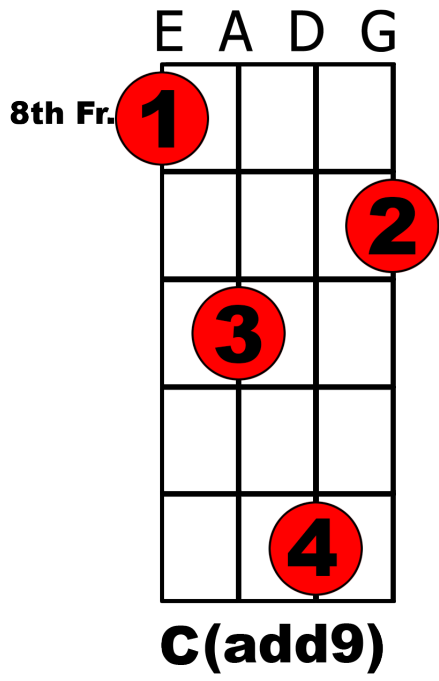
<http://becomeabassist.com/bass-chord-pro>

And sign up for the free 8 part mini-course all about bass chords. You'll learn how to construct them and how to make sure they sound

crystal clear on your bass. Each lesson comes with a PDF chart of all of the chords you'd ever need to play. I even show you some songs where bass players have used them.

Just fill out the form on the page and the lessons will be sent to your email address. But just in case you'd like the chords from this lesson, here they are:





What Next?

It's one thing to try to play a solo arrangement that someone else has figured out, but it's another thing entirely to create something on your own – and that's exactly what I'd encourage you to do! Here are some ideas for solo pieces that you could get started with today.

- Every Breath You Take – The Police
- With Or Without You – U2
- My Cherie Amour – Stevie Wonder
- Autumn Leaves – Jazz Standard
- While My Guitar Gently Weeps – The Beatles
- Crazy – Gnarl's Barkley

Not every song is going to translate well to being a solo piece, or you might have to change certain things like the key so it lays on the bass a little bit easier.

Play around with these and have some fun! If you create something that you're proud of, please let me know about it and send me a link! I'd love to see what you can come up with – even if it's simple. You can reach me by filling out the contact form here:

<http://becomeabassist.com/contact>

Good luck with making your solo pieces – have a good time with it and I'll talk to you soon.

Cheers,

LUKE

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— a —
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