

BASS EXPLORATIONS

with BEAVER FELTON



The Right Stuff Right Hand Technique

Years ago I attended a clinic given by drummer extraordinaire Roy Burn stressing the importance of incorporating separate left- and right-hand exercises into a daily practice routine. After some thought, I realized much of what Mr. Burn said could also be applied to the bass guitar. Too often bass players neglect the rhythmic importance of the picking hand in favor of flashy fret exercises. This workout will attempt to balance things out by concentrating on three excellent exercises directed at improving the accuracy of your picking hand.

First, set your drum machine or metronome to a relatively easy tempo (this will vary depending on your abil-

ity). Treat each click as a quarter note. Figure 1 is written in eighth notes. For those that do not read standard notation, this means you must play two notes for every click. Now, play Figure 1, making sure you alternate your picking hand's index and middle fingers. Play for 16 beats, then move to the other strings repeating the formula. When you feel comfortable with the exercise, push the tempo.

For the second variation (Fig. 2), start once again on the G string, reset the metronome, and play triplets (three notes per beat). Try accenting the first note of each triplet; this helps phrasing and control. Continue to alternate the index and middle fingers.

The final variation (Fig. 3) uses a broken 16th or "gallop"-type pattern. This exercise incorporates a 16th-note rest, making it a bit difficult to play with consistent precision at high

speeds. The finger sequence is index-rest-index-middle/index-rest-index-middle, etc.

Figure 4 is one of the patterns I teach on a hard rock/speed metal series that I recently recorded for Doug Mark's *Metal Method*. Again, I use a triplet pattern (three notes per beat). Remember, it's better to play any given passage with precision and accuracy at 180 b.p.m. than sloppily at 200 b.p.m. All notes should sound the same (unless intentionally phrased or accented) in regards to spacing, volume and tone.

About the columnist...

Beaver Felton is currently an instructor for *Hotlicks* video, Doug Mark's *Metal Method*, and has his own audio course, *Superchops 4 Bass*, available by writing P.O. Box 22953, Savannah, Georgia 31403, or by calling (912) 233-BASS.

Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4