

BASS LINE TO SIGNED SEALED DELIVERED by Stevie Wonder



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HOW TO PLAY BASS TO SIGNED SEALED DELIVERED

BY STEVIE WONDER

Welcome to the second Video/PDF tutorial as part of the opt-in sequence for the free How To Play Bass Ezine. In this video and PDF we're going to look at Bob Babbitt's bass line for Signed Sealed Delivered by Stevie Wonder.

I'm going to do something different with this lesson though - I'm not going to teach the original bass line note for note (although the transcription is here, so if you want to learn the original bass line - and it is an excellent piece of bass playing - then you can).

Instead what I'm going to do is give you some guidelines on how you could go about learning something like this for use in a band scenario.

For example - and this happened to me 10 days ago - imagine you get called for a gig at short notice and are given a bunch of tunes to prepare for the gig by the band leader. Now let's further assume that you don't have a great deal of time to sit and learn these tunes, so you can't sit and learn them all note by note.

So what do you do?

Well that's what I'm going to talk about in this lesson in general, and then we're going to examine it practically using Signed Sealed Delivered.

So before we get started on the lesson let's get the bass line in notation and tab out of the way for this tune. Also we need to reference different sections of the tune - which I've done with the use of Letters throughout the tune and clearly marked on the Score. So Letter A and Letter B etc.

So here's how the tune lays out using this Letter system:

Section A: - Intro - 0.00

Section B - Verse 1 - 0.09

Section C - Verse 2 - 0.28

Section D - "Here I Am Baby" - 0.45

Section E - Verse 3 - 1.11

Section F - Verse 4 - 1.29

Section G - "Here I Am Baby" - 1.46

Section H - Verse 4/Outro - 2.16

And here's the score in notation and tab...

Bass to Signed Sealed Delivered

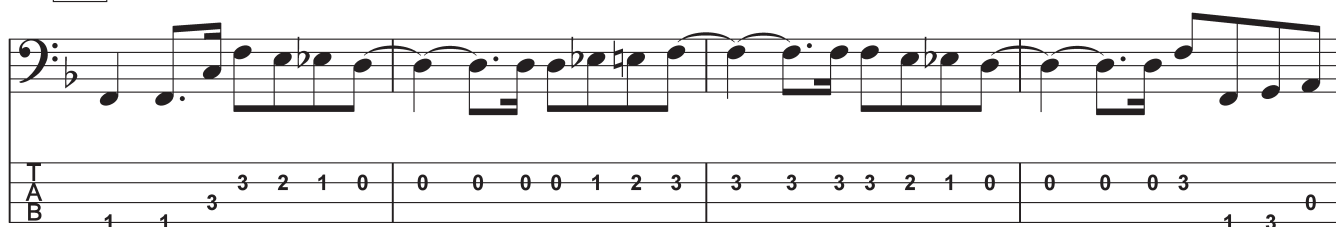
By Bob Babbitt

A

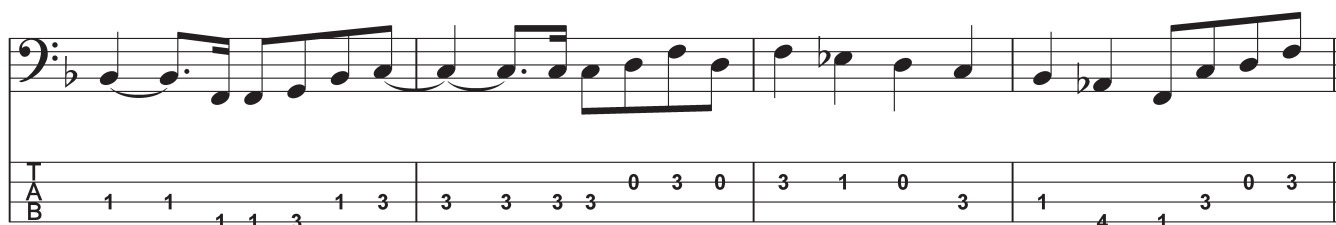


Section A musical notation. The top staff is a bass clef in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The bottom staff shows fret numbers for the left hand (T) and right hand (B). The right hand has a 4-finger pull-off in the second measure.

B



Section B musical notation. The top staff continues the bass line. The bottom staff shows fret numbers. The right hand has a 3-finger pull-off in the first measure.

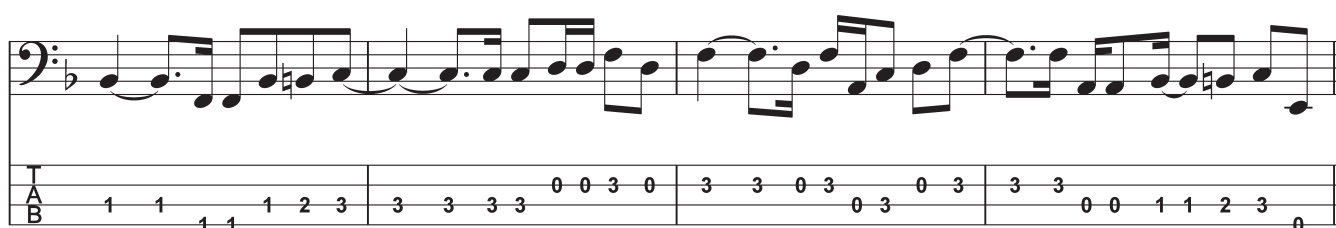


Continuation of Section B musical notation. The top staff continues the bass line. The bottom staff shows fret numbers. The right hand has a 4-finger pull-off in the fourth measure.

C

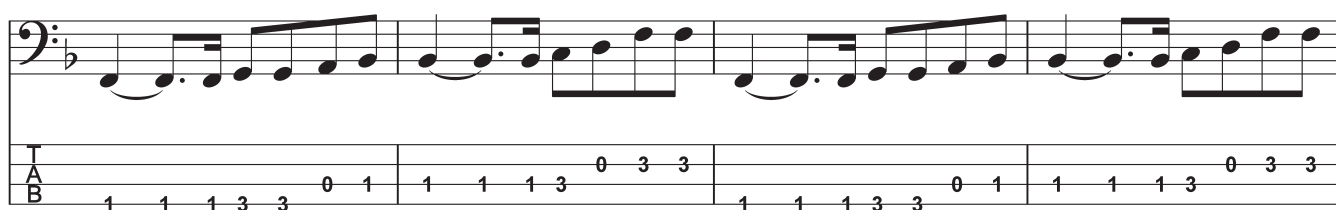


Section C musical notation. The top staff continues the bass line. The bottom staff shows fret numbers. The right hand has a 3-finger pull-off in the first measure.



Continuation of Section C musical notation. The top staff continues the bass line. The bottom staff shows fret numbers. The right hand has a 4-finger pull-off in the second measure.

D



Section D musical notation. The top staff continues the bass line. The bottom staff shows fret numbers. The right hand has a 3-finger pull-off in the first measure.

First system of music. The bass staff shows a melodic line in B-flat major. The fretboard diagram below it shows fingerings for the first four measures: 1 1 1 1 3 3 0 1, 1 1 1 3 0 3 3, 1 1 1 3 3 0 1, and 1 1 1 3 0 3 0.

Second system of music. The bass staff continues the melodic line. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the next four measures: 3 1 0 3 1, 1 1 4 1 3 3 3, 3 1 0 3 1, and 1 1 4 1 3 0 3.

E

Third system of music. The bass staff continues the melodic line. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the next four measures: 1 1 3 3 2 1 0, 0 0 0 0 1 2 3, 3 3 3 3 2 1 0, and 0 0 0 3 1 3 0.

Fourth system of music. The bass staff continues the melodic line. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the next four measures: 1 1 1 1 2 3, 3 3 3 3 3 0 3, 3 1 0 3, and 1 4 1 3 0 3.

F

Fifth system of music. The bass staff continues the melodic line. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the next four measures: 1 1 3 3 2 1 0, 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 2, 3 3 3 3 2 1 0, and 0 0 0 3 1 3 0.

Sixth system of music. The bass staff continues the melodic line. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the next four measures: 1 1 1 1 2 3, 3 3 3 3 3 0 3, 3 3 3 3 0 3 0 3, and 3 3 0 0 1 1 0 2 3 0.

G

Seventh system of music. The bass staff continues the melodic line. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings for the next four measures: 1 1 1 3 3 0 1, 1 1 1 3 0 3 3, 1 1 1 1 3 3 0 1, and 1 1 1 3 0 3 3.

When you are faced with learning a tune like this - which has got lots of subtleties built into the bass line - and have limited time, you need to approach each tune in a logical manner so that when you play the song in a live environment (a gig or a rehearsal) what you play will reflect the original without involving hours of learning all the subtleties.

(NOTE - Obviously your current ability level will determine how much time you'd have to spend on learning a tune like this. Also how 'authentic' the band you are playing with has an effect too.)

Step 1

The first thing you do is you go through the tune and have a listen - and map out any parts of the bass line that form melodic hooks or sub-hooks and have to be played absolutely spot on.

Examples of bass lines you HAVE to nail are the main riff of Another One Bites The Dust by Queen. Or the main line to Good Times has got to be pretty accurate. Or Come Together by The Beatles. Or the main verse part of You Can't Hurry Love.

A rule of thumb is: if any part of the bass line is a 'humable' part of the tune then you need to play it pretty much verbatim.

With Signed Sealed Delivered the main section where it does this is the Intro section, the main riff. Now what's also interesting to note is that through the tune Babbitt plays some variations of this intro riff. But there are 4 notes that are absolutely critical to this riff - I've bracketed them together in the notation here:

The musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is presented in two systems. The first system contains the first two measures of the melody, and the second system contains the next two measures. The melody is written in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are: G2 (quarter), F2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter), C2 (half), B1 (quarter), A1 (quarter), G1 (half). The lyrics 'The Rose Tree' are written below the notes. The first system has a repeat sign at the end, and the second system has a repeat sign at the end.

So if when playing the tune you wanted to throw in some variations to add some spice to your line you can - but I would always make sure I'm

hitting those 4 notes.

Step 2

The next step is to look at the tune and work out the 'format' of the tune. This will help us identify how many sections we've got to work out and learn.

Having a listen through - whilst following along with the tab - here's the four different sections of the tune you need to learn.

Intro/Melodic Hook (which we looked at in Step 1)

Verse 1 figure (this is a verse which 'resolves' to another verse)

Verse 2 figure (this is a verse which resolves to the bridge)

Bridge (this is the section that has the lyric ' Here I Am Baby...')

So at this stage it appears we have 4 different sections to learn and remember. However as we'll see in a moment Verse 2 is like Verse 1 - only the last two bars are different...

The next steps are to look at each section in turn.

Step 3

For the Intro I'd go with the 2 bar pattern that we established in Step 1 - and every time we need to plug in the 'Intro' pattern those are the 2 bars I'd use.

So next up is the Verse 1 pattern. The Verse 1 pattern is used in Verse 1 and Verse 3 - it's a verse that resolves immediately to another verse. And notice that it's effectively a 6 bar pattern followed by the 2 bar intro pattern.

So the first 6 bars of Verse 1 in the original bass line are as good a representation of this as any in the tune, so I've used them and then I've added the two bar Intro pattern that we've already learned.

It looks like this:

Step 4 musical notation and tablature. The first system consists of 4 measures of music and corresponding tablature. The second system also consists of 4 measures of music and corresponding tablature. The tablature uses numbers 0-3 and includes fret numbers 1, 3, 4, and 1.

Step 4

Ok next up is the Verse 2 figure - this is a verse that resolves to the bridge. And if you have a look at the original transcription it's pretty much the same as Verse 1, only with a different two bar 'turnaround' to lead to the bridge.

So I've used the first 6 bars of the Verse 1 figure that we've already learned, and added a typical 2 bar tag from the original transcription. It looks like this:

Step 4 musical notation and tablature. The first system consists of 4 measures of music and corresponding tablature. The second system also consists of 4 measures of music and corresponding tablature. The tablature uses numbers 0-3 and includes fret numbers 1, 3, 4, and 1.

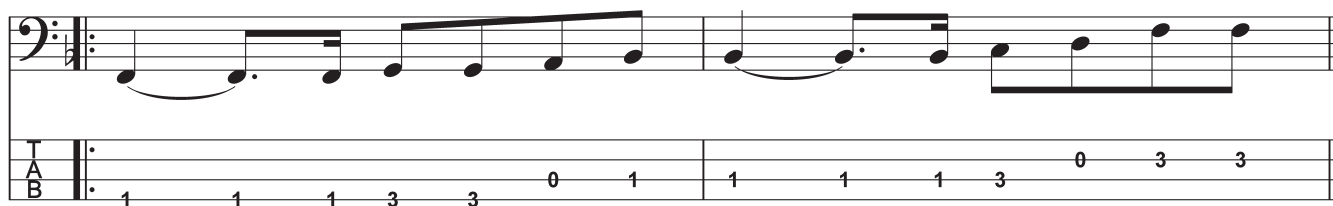
Step 5

The final section of the tune we need to add in, is the bridge (or you could consider it a chorus I suppose. However you look at it, it's the

section with the lyric: ‘Here I Am Baby, Signed Sealed Delivered I’m Yours....’)

Basically it’s two bar pattern that repeats - and goes from F to Bb. The first time through it repeats 4 times and then there’s the intro pattern again. And then this two bar pattern is used as the basis of the ‘vamp’ and fade out.

Here’s that basic two bar pattern.



Step 6

Now you’ve got the parts you need to learn - once you’ve learned them if you put them together in the correct sequence you’ll have a reasonably accurate bass line to play at your rehearsal or gig.

If you want to see this for yourself, I’ve ‘taught’ these sections note by note on the accompanying video and you can learn the parts and put them together and play along to the original recording.

Now although your end result will be slightly different than the original bass line, I can guarantee you that if you turned up a rehearsal or gig where you needed to play this and played this line we’ve developed to-day with a bit of attitude or feel the feedback you’ll get from your band-mates will be nothing but positive.

But some of you will be wondering about varying it up a bit. Although I won’t go into this in too much detail here I’ll give you a couple of guidelines.

Firstly assuming our original scenario where you have a bunch of tunes to learn, once I’d learned these sections I’d move onto the next tune(s) I

was learning. And if I decided to throw in some variations I'd pretty much keep it to rhythmic variations. For example replacing a quarter note with two 8th notes. Just simple things like that.

If you had a bit more time then you could learn a couple of the cool variations that Babbitt uses and throw them in. (My personal favourite is Bar 2 of Section F - that is a classy variation!).

But otherwise you're done, and you can move onto the next tune.

Summary

You can use this method to learn a bunch of tunes quickly but with a high degree of authenticity. Obviously you would need transcriptions of the bass line to start with - if you were transcribing from scratch I would use the step by step method to identify which sections you need to transcribe.

A good library of transcriptions is also a great asset to have in this situation. A good start would be the following books:

- (1) The Bass Tab White Pages
- (2) The RnB Bass Bible
- (3) The Pop Rock Bass Bible
- (4) The Rock Bass Bible

Remember that for most 'real world' situations you don't need to learn a tune with 100% Accuracy. If you can get the flavour of the tune, and maybe throw in some variations, your band mates in the majority of situations will be more than happy with what you have done.

OK that pretty much concludes today's lesson. I hope it gave you an insight into how to simplify the bass line to a tune whilst maintaining the integrity of the bass line.

Look out for the next lesson in the 'Opt-In' sequence - and that's a great tune for those of you who've not played that long, it's 'I Fought The Law' by The Clash.

See ya then!



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