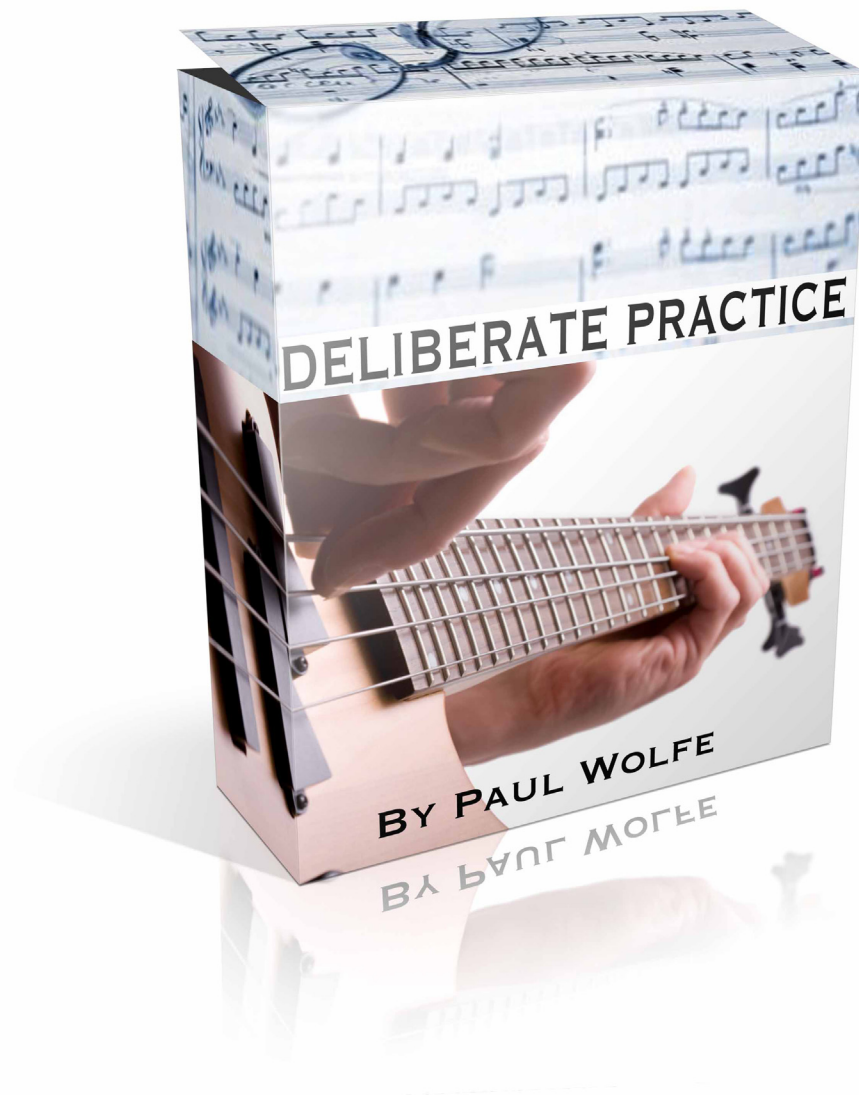


DELIBERATE PRACTICE TUTORIAL
HOW TO MASTER A SONG FRAGMENT



PRACTICAL TUTORIAL: USING DELIBERATE PRACTICE TO MASTER A PORTION OF A SONG

This week I got an email from one of my Membership Ezine Subscribers who was having a problem with playing a particular section from one of the songs I'd transcribed for my Ezine.

The song in question is STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU by Stealer's Wheel. And he as having a problem with one particular section.

So here was a great opportunity to (a) help him get through his problem and (b) show you all a system that you can use to help you play lines that seem too hard for you - whether these are fills in a song, or a line to a specific part, or even a complete song.

The power of this approach comes in the very deliberate and focused way you can take the notes from a line apart and then put it back together. And nope, I didn't invent this approach. I 'borrowed' it from Classical Music. And it's called Slow Practice.

Let's get started.

Step 1

Firstly the problem bars are the 5th and 6th bars of the verse. Here's a 4 bar fragment from the transcription I did (bars 5-8 from the verse):

5 5 0 2 3 0 | 5 5 0 5 5 2 3 | 5 5 0 2 0 2 5 | 5 5 3 0 2 0 2 2

(Note - whether YOU find this passage of music easy or difficult is irrelevant for the purpose of this tutorial. But it gives a real world implementation of this particular technique).

So here's Step 1. What you do is rewrite the passage of music that's causing you a problem - BUT you strip out all of the rhythm and just leave the notes. (From now on all the exercises will be illustrated with just the first two bars from above).

It should look like this:

Musical notation for Step 1: A bass clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a sequence of 13 half notes. The notes are: G2 (open), G2 (open), F#2 (open), E2 (open), D2 (open), C2 (open), B1 (open), A1 (open), G1 (open), F#1 (open), E1 (open), D1 (open), C1 (open). Below the staff is a fretboard diagram with fret numbers: 5, 5, 0, 2, 3, 0, 0, 5, 5, 0, 5, 5, 2, 3.

Then you play through this passage really slowly - out of tempo even. What you look to focus on is playing through the sequence of notes, starting to get an idea of how each note relates to the next, choosing fret locations to play the notes at etc.

When you've played through this a few times then you move onto Step 2.

Step 2

In Step 2 you add some rhythm back. But this time what you do is make each of the notes from the above example a quarter note. It should look like this:

Musical notation for Step 2: A bass clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a sequence of 13 quarter notes. The notes are: G2 (open), G2 (open), F#2 (open), E2 (open), D2 (open), C2 (open), B1 (open), A1 (open), G1 (open), F#1 (open), E1 (open), D1 (open), C1 (open). Below the staff is a fretboard diagram with fret numbers: 5, 5, 0, 2, 3, 0, 0, 5, 5, 0, 5, 5, 2, 3.

Again play through this sequence slowly (maybe set a metronome or drum beat to around 50 or 60 BPMs - certainly no faster). Play through this a bunch of times until you're very comfortable with the sequence of notes played in rhythm.

Step 3

In Step 3 we add some more rhythm back - but this time we **DOUBLE** the rhythm of the original piece. So 8th notes become quarter notes, quarter notes become half notes etc etc. And we do this for the actual notes **AND** the rests.

Step 3 looks like this:

The image shows a musical score for a bass line. It consists of a single staff with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The notation is as follows:

- Measure 1: Quarter rest, quarter note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2.
- Measure 2: Quarter note C3, quarter note D3, quarter note E3, quarter note F3.
- Measure 3: Quarter rest, quarter note G2, quarter note A2, quarter note B2.
- Measure 4: Quarter note C3, quarter note D3, quarter note E3, quarter note F3.

Below the staff is a fretboard diagram with four measures corresponding to the notes above. The fret numbers are: Measure 1: 5, 5, 0; Measure 2: 2, 3, 0, 0; Measure 3: 5, 5, 0; Measure 4: 5, 5, 2, 3.

Now what you do is set your metronome nice and slowly, say 50 BPM, and play through it. And make sure you are playing it perfectly, ie no scuffed notes, no excess finger movement etc etc. And play it through perfectly 10 times. Then take the metronome to 52BPM. And play it through 10 times perfectly again.

And then take the metronome up another 2 BPM.

And if you do that, and keep moving the metronome forward, you'll find that by the time you get close to performance tempo (which is obviously 'doubled' for this example) then you'll have this section that previously troubled you down absolutely pat.

Summary

Isolate a few bars in a piece of music that's troubling you.

Step One Strip out the rhythm. Leave just the notes in whole notes and play through in sequence, preferably out of time.

Step Two Add some rhythm back - play each of your notes in quarter notes. When you've done it a couple of times add a metronome in - but keep it nice and slow.

Step Three Give the notes AND rests double their original rhythmic value. Then play through at a slow tempo - say 50 BPM. When you've played through 10 times perfectly then increase the tempo by 2 BPM. And play another 10 perfect repetitions. Then increase the tempo another 2 BPM and do another 10.

Step Four Wash. Rinse. Repeat.

You'll find if you follow these steps that you can learn to play just about anything. Obviously HOW long it will take you will depend on your ability level and the complexity of the piece.

Usually the most common reason I find that people struggle with when learning a piece of music is that they are LEARNING it too fast. You'll make quicker progress by slowing down!

This is just one way that you can implement Deliberate Practice into your bass playing. If you want more details on Deliberate Practice then click here:

<http://www.how-to-play-bass.com/deliberate-practice.html>