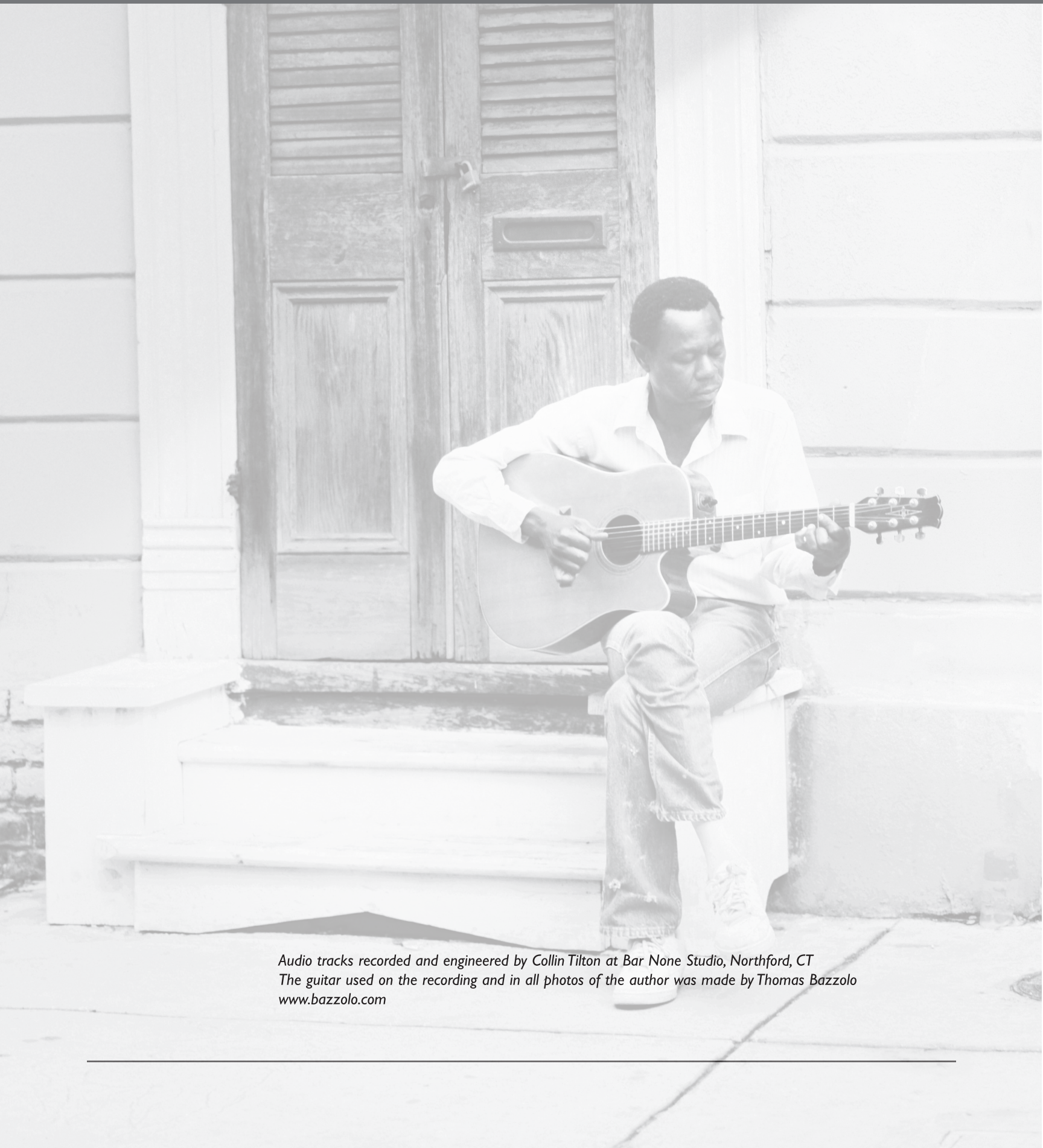


BEGINNING

ACOUSTIC

BLUES GUITAR



*Audio tracks recorded and engineered by Collin Tilton at Bar None Studio, Northford, CT
The guitar used on the recording and in all photos of the author was made by Thomas Bazzolo
www.bazzolo.com*

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Track 1

An MP3 CD is included with this book to make learning easier and more enjoyable. The symbol shown at bottom left appears next to every example in the book that features an MP3 track. Use the MP3s to ensure you’re capturing the feel of the examples and interpreting the rhythms correctly. The track number below the symbol corresponds directly to the example you want to hear (example numbers are above the icon). All the track numbers are unique to each “book” within this volume, meaning every book has its own Track 1, Track 2, and so on. (For example, *Beginning Acoustic Blues Guitar* starts with Track 1, as does *Intermediate Acoustic Blues Guitar* and *Mastering Acoustic Blues Guitar*.) Track 1 for each book will help you tune to the CD.

The disc is playable on any CD player equipped to play MP3 CDs. To access the MP3s on your computer, place the CD in your CD-ROM drive. In Windows, double-click on My Computer, then right-click on the CD icon labeled “MP3 Files” and select Explore to view the files and copy them to your hard drive. For Mac, double-click on the CD icon on your desktop labeled “MP3 Files” to view the files and copy them to your hard drive.

CHAPTER 1

Getting Started

CHOOSING STRINGS

Walk into any well stocked music store and you will see the inevitable “Wall of Strings.” Choosing a set of strings for your guitar can be confusing for a beginner.

How often you need to change your strings depends on how much you play and your personal taste. Newer strings will always sound brighter than older ones. Older strings lose their tone, do not stay in tune as well and may even start to rust. Don’t let your strings get to that point. You should change them when they start to lose their brilliance.

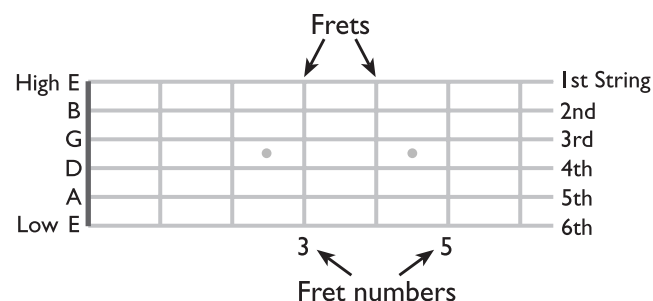
To play acoustically, you need *acoustic guitar strings*. The 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th strings are thin steel cores wound in thin bronze.

Strings come in different thicknesses or *gauges*. Most of the sets you’ll see in stores are *extra light*, *light* and *medium* gauge. Try different gauges now and then to see which you prefer for your guitar. As a rule, the thicker the string, the richer the tone. However, there is a disadvantage to using thicker strings. They are more difficult to play. The thicker the string, the more effort is needed to press the strings against the frets. Keep in mind that certain chords are much easier to play with thinner strings. Another reason to use light gauge strings is that you’ll be learning how to *bend* strings. This requires you to push or pull a string either up or down. This is easier to accomplish with lighter strings.

You can also use *custom light* gauge strings, which are somewhere between light and extra light. The sound is good and they are easy to play, which is very important if you play a lot. It is important to keep your hands in good health.

THE OPEN STRINGS

The thinnest string, the one closest to the floor, is the *1st string*. The others are numbered consecutively to the thickest string, the *6th string*, which is closest to the ceiling. It will be helpful to memorize the names of the strings (included in the chart below) as soon as possible. The sentence, “**E**rnie’s **A**nt **D**oes **G**et **B**ig **E**ventually,” can help you in this process.



INTERMEDIATE

ACOUSTIC

BLUES GUITAR



Audio tracks recorded by Jason Alborough at WorkshopLive.com, Pittsfield, MA

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CHAPTER 1

Blues Rhythm

RHYTHMIC NOTATION

Rhythm refers to patterns of long and short sounds and silences. *Rhythmic notation* is used to show these patterns when playing chords.

Rhythmic Notation Values

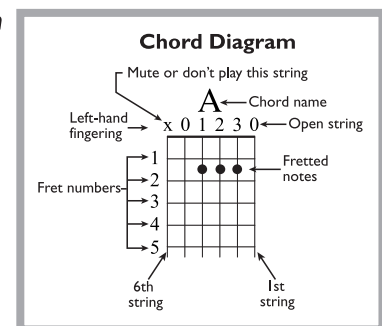
Whole note (4 beats) Half notes (2 beats each) Quarter notes (1 beat each) Eighth notes (½ beat each)

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Sometimes just the chord name is written above the staff. Sometimes a *chord diagram* (see illustration to the right) is placed above the staff.

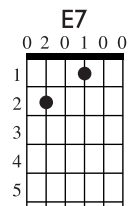
A7

or



BASIC STRUMS

Let's start with a couple basic rhythms before moving on to more involved blues strums. Count a steady "1, 2, 3, 4" and tap your foot on each beat. Now strum an E7 chord (see diagram to the right) in quarter notes—one strum per beat. This symbol indicates a *downstroke* (strum or pick downward). Notice the sharps at the beginning of the staff. This is the *key signature*, which tells you all the notes that are either sharp or flat throughout the entire piece. This example is in the key of E.



= Downstroke

1

Track 2

Key signature

E7

Count: 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

Now let's strum steady eighth notes—two strums per beat. Be sure to count the rhythm as indicated under the staff (1-&, 2-&, etc.). This symbol indicates an *upstroke* (strum or pick upward).

= Upstroke

2

Track 3

E7

Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

MASTERING

ACOUSTIC

BLUES GUITAR



Audio tracks recorded by Jason Alborough at WorkshopLive.com, Pittsfield, MA

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CHAPTER 1

Review: Learning the Fretboard

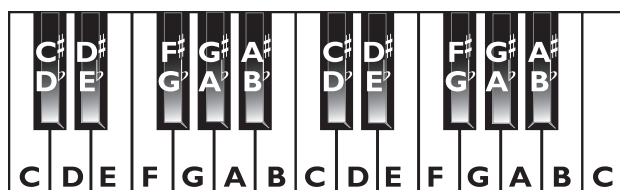
INTERVALS AND SCALES

Remember, an *interval* is the distance in pitch between two notes. Two intervals you should be very familiar with are the *half step* (the distance of one fret) and the *whole step* (the distance of two frets). An *octave* is the distance of 12 half steps between two notes with the same name. A *scale* is a series of tones arranged in a particular pattern of half steps and whole steps.

CHROMATIC SCALE

An understanding of the *chromatic scale* will help you to name the notes on the fretboard. The chromatic scale is a scale consisting of all 12 half steps in an octave. So it is made up of all the *natural* notes (A–B–C–D–E–F–G) and all the notes in between (the *altered* notes, see below). The illustration below starts and ends with C, but the chromatic scale can start on any note. The white keys on the keyboard are the natural notes and the black keys are the *altered* notes. These are notes modified by a *sharp* (which raises the pitch of a note by a half step) or *flat* (which lowers the pitch of a note by a half step).

The Chromatic Scale on the Keyboard



Notice there are no sharps or flats between E and F and B and C. Notice also that the black keys have two names (for example: C#/D^b, D#/E^b, etc.). These are *enharmonic equivalents*, which are two notes that have the same pitch (sound exactly the same) but are spelled differently.