

## Giant Steppes

*Giant Steps* is a “hornado,” if you will, a true cyclonic inversion on the bandstand, and before you can develop the lines you need at the speed agreed, as they say, you’ve got to start with baby steps. Four of them to take right off the bat: 1) lift ideas for walking-bass lines from guitar solos; 2) incorporate the bass’s open strings into the lines as a crutch; 3) learn the tune one position at a time, beginning with the low register first; and 4) tune the fourth string down to D (the rationale behind this last idea is outlined in our for-sale text, *A Brief Guide*).

When compiling a playbook of lines and solo ideas, one rich source of material are guitar solos. For example, guitarist Joe Diorio’s book *Giant Steps: An In-Depth Study* contains numerous solos and exercises, and we’ve cannibalized ideas from the very first, *Solo One*. It begins the book and features a just-getting-started level of complexity, but — like all the material in the book — manages to be both guitaristic and packed with horn patterns characteristic of Coltrane. So, at the same time you’re able to transfer a lot of the guitar fingerings directly to the bass, as well as make use of percussive and other guitar-like effects available from, or suggested by, those fingerings, you’re also producing modern, horn-like phrases — the best of both worlds and one step, as it were, towards forging an individual style.

Notice that for *Solo One* and other solos with strings of running eighth and sixteenth notes, you can cherry-pick the best intervals and most interesting/satisfying moves since, at four notes per measure, you only need to steal half of the notes in the solo for your lines, and conceivably have enough content for *two* walking choruses. In other words, one horn or guitar solo measure = two walking-bass measures! (In principle.)

# 1 Open season on open strings

*Giant Steps* is a horn chauvinist's delight and the *Grand Hotel* of jazz tunes. For the intermediate-level bassist, if you're mining the guitar repertoire for lines, it's not a sin to utilize the bass's open strings, as in this example:

The image shows a musical score for bass in 4/4 time, consisting of three staves. The first staff contains measures 1 through 8. The second staff contains measures 9 through 15. The third staff contains measure 16. The score includes various chords and utilizes open strings in the bass.

Chords for measures 1-8: BMaj7 D7 G Bb7 Eb A-7 D7 G Bb7 Eb F#7 BMaj7 F-7 Bb7

Chords for measures 9-15: Eb A-7 D7 G C#-7 F#7 BMaj7 F-7 Bb7 Eb

Chords for measure 16: C#-7 F#7

## 2 Get down and stay down

We're partial to learning *Giant Steps* one position at a time, beginning with the lower end. See where tuning the fourth string down to D comes in handy? Another way to be different!

The first system of musical notation consists of three staves in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff contains measures 1 through 7. The second staff, starting at measure 8, continues the sequence. The third staff, starting at measure 15, concludes the system with a double bar line. The notes are primarily eighth and quarter notes, with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) indicating chromatic movement.

The second system of musical notation consists of three staves in bass clef, 4/4 time. The first staff contains measures 1 through 8. The second staff, starting at measure 9, continues the sequence. The third staff, starting at measure 16, concludes the system with a double bar line. The notes are primarily eighth and quarter notes, with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) indicating chromatic movement.

