



***THE
RHYTHMIC
CONCEPTS***
OF John Patitucci

COURSE BOOK

SCOTTSBASSLESSONS.COM

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THE RHYTHMIC CONCEPTS OF John Patitucci

Introduction

One of the key skills in becoming a great rhythm section bassist is understanding the rhythmic language of a particular song or style. And there's no better classroom in which to learn these core skills than in this course with bass genius John Patitucci.

In this course, John takes you through some of the key techniques and resources to help you deepen your own rhythmic skill set. You'll learn how to craft the perfect groove, how to apply different rhythmic patterns, how to support the basic pulse and time-feel of a song, and most importantly - how to develop the creative skills necessary to make your bass lines not just complementary, but 'in the pocket' as well.

Meet John Patitucci



A mainstay on the New York session scene, John Patitucci has worked with a huge array of artists in every genre imaginable. At the same time, he's renowned for having one of the most unique voices on both upright and electric bass. As a performer, John has played with jazz luminaries Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter and Dizzy Gillespie, icons of popular music including John Mayer, Joni Mitchell, Sting and Paul Simon, pioneers of Brazilian music Milton Nascimento, Joao Gilberto, Airtó Moriera and Flora Purim, and as a soloist with the LA Philharmonic and the London Symphony Orchestra.

In 2002, John began teaching at The City College of New York and was a Professor of Jazz Studies there for ten years. He has also been involved with the Betty Carter Jazz Ahead program in Washington, D.C. and The Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. In 2010, John began his involvement with the Berklee College of Music's Global Jazz Institute, spearheaded by pianist Danilo Pérez.

Lesson 01

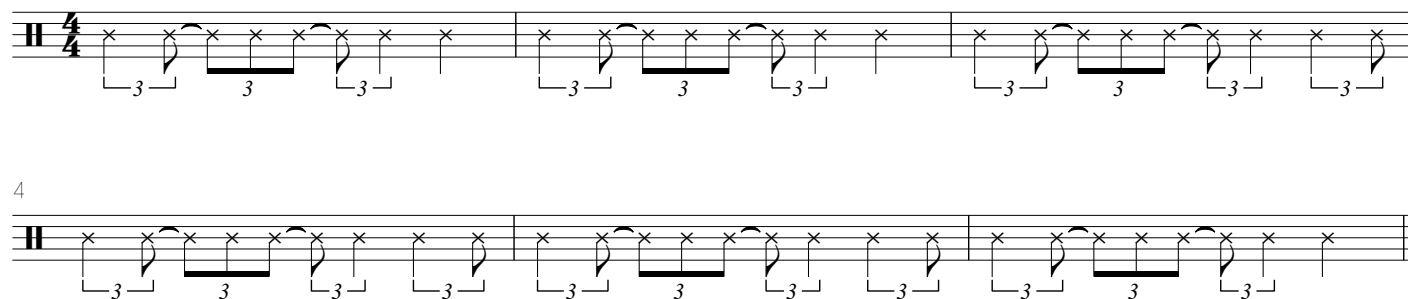
What is Swing?

In lesson 01, we explore the development and performance of walking bass lines in jazz, letting you build your own rhythmic skill set as you follow each example. A walking bass line is based on a 4/4 swing rhythm: a straight quarter-note beat with an underlying triplet feel.

The *Abakuá* is a polyrhythmic pattern that derives from Cuba. It has strong polyrhythmic elements similar to the African 6/8 bembé rhythm. The percussionist Chano Pozo was one of the first to mix it with jazz.

Example 01 Abakuá

Video - 01:22



LESSON 1 (continued)

Example 02 Walking Bass Lines

In example 02, John demonstrates a blues walking bass line to illustrate the underlying triplet feel. If you want to learn how to really swing, you have to get this feeling in your fingers. Begin by focussing on scale and chord tones, before starting to move more chromatically.

Video - 03:17

(♩ = $\overset{\frown}{\text{♩}} \overset{\frown}{\text{♩}} \overset{\frown}{\text{♩}}$)

F7 B♭7 F7

5 B♭7 F7 D7

9 Gm7 C7 F7 D7 G7 C7

continued →

LESSON 1 (Ex. 2 continued)

13 F7 Bb7 F7

TAB 1 3 4 0 1 3 3 1 3 2 0 1 3 2/3 2 3

17 **Bb7** **F7** **D7**

T
A
B

1 2 3 2 | 1 2 3 2 | 3 2 0 1 2 | 0 3 0 2

[illegible]

25 F7 Bb7 F7

TAB 1 x 3 1 2 3 0 2 0 | 1 3 3 3 1 3 0 | 3 0 0 4 | 3 0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3 2

29 Bb7 F7 D7

TAB: 1 3 1 0 3 X 0 | 1 3 4 2 | 3 5 3 0 1 | 2 3 1 2 4 0 3

continued $\rightarrow$

LESSON 1 (Ex. 2 continued)

33 Gm7 C7 F7 D7 G7 C7

T
A
B

37 F7 Bb7 F7

T
A
B

41 Bb7 F7 D7

T
A
B

45 Gm7 C7 F7 D7 G7 C7 F7

T
A
B

LESSON 1 (continued)

Example 03 How to Swing

In example 03, John's bass line becomes more rhythmically interactive as he introduces inflections, slides and ghost notes to further imply the triplet-based swing feel. You should be able to feel the pulse and its subdivisions throughout. Listen to the swing feel of other musicians. Feel their time, both stated and implied.

Video - 06:26

(♩ = $\overset{\frown}{\text{♩}} \overset{\frown}{\text{♩}} \overset{\frown}{\text{♩}}$)

First System:

Chords: F7, Bb7, F7

Second System:

Chords: Bb7, F7, D7

Third System:

Chords: Gm7, C7, F7, D7, G7, C7

The bass line is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notation includes triplet markings (3) and various inflections (slides and ghost notes) to create a swing feel. The fretboard diagrams below the staff show the fingerings for the bass line, with T (thumb), A (index), and B (middle) fingers indicated.

continued →

LESSON 1 (Ex. 3 continued)

13 F7 Bb7 F7

Measures 13-16: Bass line in B-flat major. Measure 13: F4, A-flat4, B-flat4, C5. Measure 14: B-flat4, A-flat4, G4, F4. Measure 15: E4, D4, C4, B-flat3. Measure 16: A-flat3, G3, F3, E3. Fingering: 3 5 1 0 3 0 | 1 4 3 2 | 1 3 1 0 3 | 2 7 9 7 0 9 0 7 0.

17 Bb7 F7 D7

Measures 17-20: Bass line in B-flat major. Measure 17: D-flat4, C4, B-flat3, A-flat3. Measure 18: G3, F3, E3, D3. Measure 19: C3, B-flat2, A-flat2, G2. Measure 20: F2, E2, D2, C2. Fingering: 8 10 6 0 5 4 | 3 1 0 4 | 3 3 0 2 3 1 | 2 0 1 2 0 X 2 0.

21 Gm7 C7

Measures 21-22: Bass line in B-flat major. Measure 21: B-flat4, A-flat4, G4, F4. Measure 22: E4, D4, C4, B-flat3. Fingering: 3 5 5 3 5 7 5 6 8 8 7 9 9 | X 8 6 7 0 3 2.

23 F7 D7 G7 C7 F7

Measures 23-24: Bass line in B-flat major. Measure 23: F4, A-flat4, B-flat4, C5. Measure 24: B-flat4, A-flat4, G4, F4. Fingering: 3 0 0 0 | 1 3 0 1 | 1.

Lesson 02

Brazilian Rhythms

In Lesson 02, we examine the rhythmic components of both the Samba and the Bossa Nova and explore the interplay between the drums, the bass line and the harmony. The overall feel of Brazilian music has an uneven roll or lilt that comprises different dynamics, nuance and character. Most styles use relatively simple chord progressions, putting a far greater emphasis on rhythm.

Example 01 Samba

The Samba is made up of a repetitive pattern of a dotted 8th note followed by a 16th note. These bass line patterns typically mirror the Surdo drum in the Samba band and most commonly move between the root and the 5th of the chord. Anticipation is another key ingredient of the groove. Study the examples in example 01 to get the right feel when playing this music.

continued →

LESSON 2 (Ex. 1 continued)

Video - 03:30

D

T
A
B

5

T
A
B

9

G C F B $\flat$ E A D

T
A
B

13

G C F B $\flat$ E A D

T
A
B

LESSON 2 (continued)

Example 02 Bossa Nova

The Bossa Nova is essentially a slower variation of the Samba. A good rule of thumb is to keep things simple. Just like the quarter-note rhythm in a walking bass line, the dotted-quarter note and eighth-note pattern is an essential part of good Bossa Nova bass playing. In example 02, John outlines the key elements of the basic groove.

Video - 06:51

The musical notation for Example 02 Bossa Nova is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 4, and the second system covers measures 5 through 8. The notation includes a bass staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. Chords are indicated above the staff: Dm, Bb, A7, Dm, Gm, F#m7b5, B7, Em7b5, A7, Dm, Gm, Dm, Gm, Dm, A7, Dm. Fretboard diagrams are provided below the staff, showing fingerings for the left hand (T, A, B strings) and right hand (X, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100). The notation includes a dotted-quarter note and eighth-note pattern, which is a key element of the Bossa Nova groove.

Lesson 03

Funk Essentials

Funk music was coined by James Brown in the late 1950s and is typically characterised by a strong, syncopated bass line. The drums are also crucial in funk because they drive the rhythm in tandem with the bass. In this lesson, we learn some of the techniques and stylistic elements of some of the most influential funk bass players, including Francis 'Rocco' Prestia and Paul Jackson.

Example 01 Tower of Power

Alongside drummer David Garibaldi, Francis 'Rocco' Prestia established himself as an all-time funk institution with Oakland R&B outfit, Tower of Power. In example 01, John looks at some of the variables available for you to compliment a Tower of Power-style drum groove.

continued →

LESSON 3 (Ex. 1 continued)

Video - 01:37

Bass staff notation for measures 1-3. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and accidentals (sharps and naturals). Fingering numbers (1-5) and 'X' marks are placed above the notes.

T																					
A																					
B	X	3	3	4	4	5	5	X	5	X	7	X	X	X	3	3	4	4	5	5	X

3

Bass staff notation for measures 4-6. Continuation of the exercise with similar rhythmic patterns and fingering.

T																				
A																				
B	3	3	4	4	5	5	X	5	X	7	X	X	X	3	3	4	4	5	5	X

5

Bass staff notation for measures 7-9. Continuation of the exercise with similar rhythmic patterns and fingering.

T																		
A																		
B	5	5	X	3	5	X	5	5	5	3	4	5	5	3	5	5	5	X

9

Bass staff notation for measures 10-12. Continuation of the exercise with similar rhythmic patterns and fingering.

T																		
A																		
B	5	5	3	4	5	5	3	5	X	5	5	3	4	3	5	X	5	5

LESSON 3 (continued)

Example 02 Paul Jackson

In example 02, John introduces the influence of Paul Jackson, whose edgy, vibrato-inspired bass lines with Herbie Hancock's Headhunters also served as a seminal influence. When funk, which normally uses straight sixteenth notes, is combined with the triplet feel of blues and jazz, the result is a combination of long and short notes, which can allow you to really open things up rhythmically.

Video - 03:06

Measure 1:

Tablature (T, A, B lines):

T: 0 0 | 3 3 4 4 5 5 | X 5 6 X 7 | X X 3 | X 5 | X 10 12 10 12 | X X

3

Measure 2:

Tablature (T, A, B lines):

T: 3 3 4 4 5 5 | X 5 6 X 7 | X X 3 | X 5 | 0 0

5

Measure 3:

Tablature (T, A, B lines):

T: 3 3 4 4 5 5 | X 5 6 X 7 | X X 3 | X 5 | X 10 12 10 11 10 12 | 0

7

Measure 4:

Tablature (T, A, B lines):

T: 3 3 4 4 5 5 | X 5 6 X 7 | X X 3 | X 5

LESSON 3 (continued)

Example 03 Adding Space

This next example is all about using simple motifs to build and develop the groove instead of playing a continuous stream of 16th notes. It's all about groove: the more you repeat it, the more you'll get a feel for it.

Video - 04:28

Measures 1-4 of Example 03. The staff shows a bass line in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes are: M1: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4; M2: rest; M3: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4; M4: rest. The fretboard diagram shows: T: 0 7 0 7; A: 3; B: 0 7 0 7, X 3 4 5.

Measures 5-8 of Example 03. The staff shows a bass line in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes are: M5: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4; M6: rest; M7: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4; M8: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4. The fretboard diagram shows: T: 0 7 0 7; A: X 3 5; B: 0 7 0 7, X 4 5 6, X.

Measures 9-12 of Example 03. The staff shows a bass line in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes are: M9: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4; M10: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4; M11: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4; M12: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4. The fretboard diagram shows: T: 5 5 7 0 3 4 4 2; A: X; B: 3 5 5 7 3 5 5 3 5 5.

Measures 13-16 of Example 03. The staff shows a bass line in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The notes are: M13: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4; M14: rest; M15: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4; M16: F#4, A4, F#4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C#4. The fretboard diagram shows: T: 0 7 0 7; A: 0 7 0 7; B: X 3 4 5 5 0.

continued →

LESSON 3 (Ex. 3 continued)

14

T
A
B

5 5 3 5 0 7 0 7 9 10 11 7 8 9 0

17

T
A
B

7 7 3 4 3 5 X 7 7 5 5 0 3 4 5

20

T
A
B

4 5 6 X 5 0 7 5 7 0 7 7 5 5 X 3 5 X 5

23

T
A
B

0 7 0 7 0 5 6 0 7 X 2 2 X 3 3 4 4 5 5 3 5 X X 5 6 X 7 X 3 3

26

T
A
B

5 5 3 5 3 4 5 5 3 5 3 4 5 5 3 5 0

continued →

LESSON 3 (Ex. 3 continued)

23

TAB 0 7 0 7 0 5/6 0 7 X 2 2 X 3 3 4 4 5 5 3 5 X X 5/6 X 7 X 3 3

26

The musical notation for measure 26 is written on a bass staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The measure contains a sequence of notes and rests, including a triplet of eighth notes (F#, E, D) and a triplet of eighth notes (C#, B, A). The 12-string guitar tablature below the staff shows the fret numbers for each string. The first four strings (1-4) are played in a sequence of 5, 5, 3, 5, and the next two strings (5-6) are played in a sequence of 3, 4. The seventh and eighth strings (7-8) are played in a sequence of 5, 5, 3, 5, and the next two strings (9-10) are played in a sequence of 3, 4. The eleventh and twelfth strings (11-12) are played in a sequence of 5, 5, 3, 5, and the next two strings (13-14) are played in a sequence of 3, 4. The final two strings (15-16) are played in a sequence of 5, 5, 3, 5, and the next two strings (17-18) are played in a sequence of 3, 4.

TAB

5 5 3 5 3 4 5 5 3 5 3 4 5 5 3 5 3 4 5 5 3 5 0

29

LESSON 3 (continued)

Example 04 Bernard Purdie

In example 04, John uses a muted thumb technique to lock into a drum groove played by the great Bernard Purdie. This type of bass line is pretty challenging to play, but some useful tricks of the trade can help make it a lot easier.

Video - 06:50

w/ thumb
 P.M. -----

T																			
A																			
B	3	5	5	3	5	5	X	3	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	X	3	5	3

5

 P.M. -----

T																									
A																									
B	5	5	3	5	5	X	3	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	X	3	5	X	5	7	5	3	4	3	3

9

 P.M. ----- w/ fingers

T																									
A																									
B	5	5	3	5	5	X	3	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	X	5	6	7	X	5	7	5	3	4	3

13

 w/ thumb
 P.M. -----

T																											
A																											
B	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	0	3	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	0	5	7	5	6	5	3	5	3

continued →

LESSON 3 (Ex. 4 continued)

17

P.M. -----

T																							
A																							
B	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	0	3	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	5	7	X	3	5	0

21

P.M. -----

T																							
A																							
B	3	5			3	5	5		3	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5					0	3

25

P.M. -----

T																							
A																							
B	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	0	3	5	5					3

29

P.M. -----|

T																							
A																							
B	5	5	3	5	5	0	3	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5								

LESSON 3 (continued)

Example 05 Beat Placement

In example 05, John looks at ways to play behind the beat rather than on top or ahead of it. Having control of your internal clock will enable you to create bass lines that have a more unique feel. Use your ears and try to identify when you hear something that requires a more laid back feel.

Video - 11:05

w/ thumb
 P.M. throughout

T											
A											
B	3	5		X	3	5		3	5		

4

T											
A											
B			3	5	3		3	5		0	3

7

T											
A											
B	5		0	3	5		0	5	5	0	4

10

T											
A											
B			X	10	12	10	11		3	5	

continued →

LESSON 3 (Ex. 5 continued)

13

T
A
B

3 5 X 5 5 7 7 3 5 5 5 3 5

16

T
A
B

5 7 7 3 5 5 5 7 7 3 5 5 5 7 7 3 5

19

T
A
B

5 7 7 3 5 5 0 3 3 5 5 7 7 3 5 5 5

22

T
A
B

7 7 3 5 5 5 7 7 3 5 5 5 7 7 3 5 5 5 7 7 5 7 7 3 5 5 5 0 3 3 5

25

T
A
B

5 3 5 3 5 5 3

continued →

LESSON 3 (Ex. 5 continued)

32

T
A
B

5 5 5 7 3 5 5 3 5 5 X 5 7 5 3 0 5

35

T
A
B

3 5 5 5 X 5 7 0 5 7 5 3 3 5 5 3

41

T
A
B

3 5 5 10 12 12 5 7 7 0 5 7 5 6 5 3 5 0 3 5 X 5

44

T
A
B

5 5 3 5 5 3 4 3 4 3 4 3 5 3 5 5 10 12 12 3 5 5 3 5

Lesson 04

The Sound of New Orleans

Known as the birthplace of jazz, rhythm is an essential part of the language of New Orleans. It's a city that's synonymous with music and has been influential in the development of gospel, rock 'n' roll, funk and R&B.

Driven by the bass playing of George Porter Jr, *The Meters* epitomised the simplicity of an authentic New Orleans rhythm. Instead of repeating the same pattern in every measure, they would shift emphasis from bar to bar, leaving space while improvising around a push-pull rhythm, but always resolving precisely on time.

In this lesson, we explore some of the most prominent drum and bass combinations associated with New Orleans funk, and how the tresillo, or the first half of the clave, shaped the stylistic framework of the style.

LESSON 4 (continued)

Example 01 New Orleans Funk

In example 01, John calls upon a drum groove in the style of American jazz drummer, Johnny Vidacovich. Foremost is the challenge of capturing the right feel, which is somewhere between triplets and straight eighths. The bass line then settles into a repeating pattern that emphasises the one and also incorporates a call-and-response technique that holds the entire rhythmic structure together.

Video - 00:59

continued →

LESSON 4 (continued)

13

T
A
B

7 7 7 8 7 9 7 0 X | /4 5 7 4 7 X | 7 7 7 0 9 11 7 0 X

16

T
A
B

4 4 5 5 7 3 5 X 3 4 | 5 3 3 X 3 X 3 4 | 5 3 3 3 X 3 X 3 4

19

T
A
B

5 3 3 3 X 3 X 3 4 | 5 3 0 2 5 3 4 | 5 3 X 3 X 3 3 4

22

T
A
B

5 3 X 3 X 3 X 3 4 | 5 3 X X X 3 X | /4 4 5 5 7 6 9 7

Course Summary

Rhythm is one of the most foundational elements of music. It provides a structure for both the harmony and the melody, as well as the main pulse for the entire band or ensemble to lock into. No matter how perfect your phrasing or intonation, if you're not in time, then everything falls apart. Such is the primacy of rhythm.

This course has been designed to leverage your technical ability as a bass player, while also develop your overall proficiency in different rhythms.

We've covered topics like :

- The importance of syncopation and groove.
- How to think more rhythmically than harmonically.
- Techniques to help you internalise different rhythms.
- Your ability to feel the basic pulse (and subdivide it) across different genres of music.
- How rhythmic 'hooks' can add originality to your bass lines.
- How to combine different rhythms.
- And how you can develop your own rhythmic vocabulary.

The end goal is to be able perform the bass lines that we've encountered throughout this course with both confidence and rhythmic accuracy.

If you are truly internalising the beat of the music, you will naturally move your body to the pulse as you play. You could sway, tap your foot, clap your hands, nod your head, or find any other movement that you're comfortable with. The feel inherent in each style serves a different purpose, but they all work toward the general goal of improving your overall perception of time.

