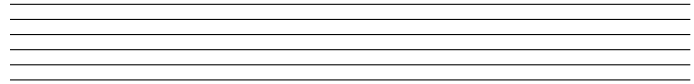
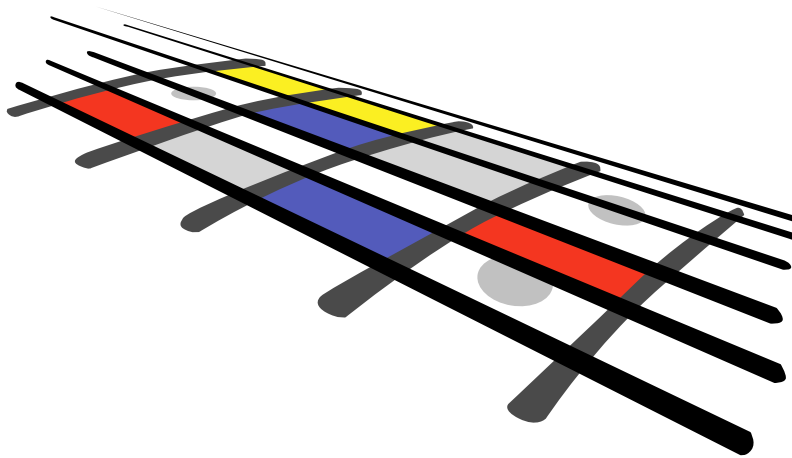


THE EFFICIENT GUITARIST: VOLUME I



THE SECOND EDITION
THE PREVIEW



MARC E. SCHONBRUN

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This book would not have been possible without the generous help and support of Jeff Rosenbluth, who provided the custom scale diagram coding used throughout the book, and spent countless hours assisting in every aspect of the process.

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This book is brought to you by the number 13 and the letter Z.

www.latex-project.org

www.lilypond.org

www.sibelius.com

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Introduction

This is where I tell you how cool this book is and how it's going to make you a better player. Yeah, it really will. No, really: this introduction contains all the basic ingredients that are going to make this book what it is. It's here to educate you, pump you up, make you want to grab your guitar and learn. So what are you waiting for? Get your guitar, and let's see what we can get ourselves into.

Welcome

You're probably wondering what this book is all about. You may have already glanced through some of the chapters and seen a bunch of scales and chords. Nothing new, you say? Well, there is a lot more in this book than just scales and chords. What you have here is everything. Everything? Yup, everything. Well, pretty much everything that I've figured out about playing the guitar.

The guitar is amazingly well laid out. It's so orderly and systematic that it's almost perfect. However, it's probably the worst-taught instrument in the world; an unfortunate side effect of its massive popularity. Lots of people teach lots of different approaches. They teach shapes, they teach licks, they teach all sorts of stuff, but you never end up learning the guitar, and how it works. You are limited by what you've been shown and you never find out how to do it yourself. There is an old adage that I love: *I can give you a fish, and you'll eat for a day, or I can teach you to fish, and you'll eat for a lifetime.* I want to teach you to fish.

Who is This Book For?

This book is for anyone who wants to play better without taking shortcuts. This book is also for someone who would like to not waste any time. Simply put, you're going to learn how the guitar is put together. We're going to start with chords and simple scales that you can use in every musical situation imaginable. We begin with the vertical approach to the guitar – neat, compact shapes across the strings. The vertical will get us only so far. The real fun happens when you start again, looking at the guitar from end to end.

When you look at the guitar horizontally you see a perfect model: a single string. A single string is a really beautiful thing. Each fret is exactly a half step, and a single string is superb for showing intervals, scales, and seeing relationships between notes. You will never understand the guitar unless you understand music on a single string. The minute you go vertical and play only three to four notes on a string, you miss out on the straight line thing.

Straight Line Shapes

After you look at those single strings a bit more, you start to see something very cool: vertical patterns. Now didn't we just say that vertical patterns would only take you so far, and that horizontal was the answer? Yes, we did, but we have to contradict ourselves. Horizontal is the way you'll learn the theory, and truly understand how the guitar is laid out; the result of which is a huge jumble of notes across all six strings. If you actually want to play the guitar (rather than just understand it) you can't ignore the vertical.

As we get going, this will become clear. To give you a sneak peak: the guitar is a puzzle, with only a few pieces. The good news is that once you learn how the shapes snap together in one key, you master every key because each key snaps together the same way. The bottom line is that we need to understand both the vertical and horizontal approaches. Shall I go on?

Not a Reference

I don't think that scale reference books are the best way to learn the guitar. (Yes, I'm well aware that I've written a scale reference book in the past...) In scale reference books, you get a page for C major and a different page for D major. Sorry bud, they are the same thing. They take place on different frets, but the concept, structure and fundamentals behind them are the same. All you have to do is shift the entire scale shape to the correct fret and you can make that C scale into all twelve possible major scales. No need for twelve pages of scales when one will do. This book is designed to show you all the shapes and where to put them. Combine these very simple bits of information and you can play in any key with ease. That's the goal here, and that's what's going to make this book *efficient*.

What You're Going To Learn

I'm going to show you every major, minor and pentatonic scale, and major and minor arpeggios all over the neck. I'm going to do it really

simply. It's all about taking a very simple shape, learning what fret to start it on and making music. We will start with simple shapes on the 6th and 5th strings. After that, we'll break into Performance Positions, a revolutionary concept that shows you *everything* you can do in the space of a few frets. After that, we'll look at how these scales combine into five simple forms to span the entire neck. With this book, you'll know how to play in every key, across the *entire* neck in about 100 pages. And the best part? You'll actually know what you're doing.

Each page shows you a visual scale of dots and fingerings, and you'll see the written music that corresponds to the scale shapes. In addition, intervals and theory formulas will reinforce your understanding of what's going on because you'll understand the function of every note you play in the overall key; for example, you'll know where the 3rd of each scale is because you'll see not just fingerings, you'll also see intervals. Intervals are the key to understanding. Hitting a great note is a treat. Hitting a great note, knowing it's a 5th and using 5th's in your solos because you like them is exactly what we're talking about.

What You Won't Learn and Won't Need

You won't learn: licks. Sorry, I'm not really interested in those. I don't think you need them. If you learn the material in this book correctly (which you will because it's very easy to do, and virtually impossible to mess up) then every lick you've ever heard in your life will simply jump out at you. You'll have the musical equivalent of a full set of craftsman's tools. And the best part is that you'll do it naturally. Even the clichés will happen by themselves; no need to learn them. You'll have control over the sound of your guitar. You'll be in charge, and it will do what you want it to do. Your ears will finally do the talking. No more finger dictatorship here....

The information in this first volume will take you a short time to learn but will provide you with the groundwork for a lifetime's worth of creativity and fun. The guitar is so logical; let me show you how it works.

What You Won't Learn but Do Need

Nothing else. Let's start by learning the visual nature of this book and how to decipher and fully understand the diagrams.

Last Words From Me

I thought that I should step out of author mode for a second and tell you what I think this book is. It's not a method. It's not a reference guide. It's a way to help you get better, faster. There is no application to music in this book. No licks, no ideas about what to do with this material, and this is completely on purpose.

This book gives you all the tools you'll ever need – but I don't give it all away. I need to leave some of this up to you. You wouldn't be learning anything if you didn't have to seek out some information. Play the scales and see what you think. Your ear will tell you where to play them. To make this book work for you, you have to have a sense of adventure and discovery. I urge you read through this book as often as you can because you will miss things. Each time you use it, you will learn something new.

I am not lying to you when I say that any guitarist who masters these 100+ pages will be at the very top of his or her game. Take the time to master this and you'll enjoy a life of playing beyond your wildest imagination. I never thought the guitar would be like this when I started, but the instrument simply presented itself to me this way and I, in turn, am presenting it to you the way that I see it.

Are you excited? Me, too. Let's do it.

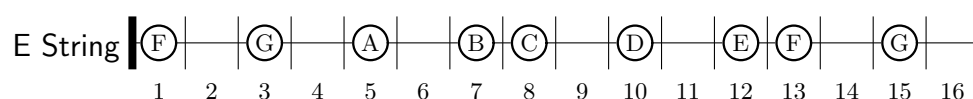
How To Read The Visual Diagrams

This book uses a fairly unique system of visual diagrams (not TAB) to convey information about chords, scales, and arpeggios. Before we can jump into the meat of the book, let's take a second to go over all the different visual elements of the book.

Please don't skip over this section. I know you'll want to work on the chords and scales, but without this primer, they won't mean much to you.

The Fret Charts

The first thing you have to know about are the string/fret charts. All the chords and scales in this book have a root. A root is defined as the tone that names the chord or scale. In this book, a root specifically tells you where to move the scales and chords so that you play them in any key. Here is the 6th string on the guitar, the low E string, as we're going to display it throughout the book:

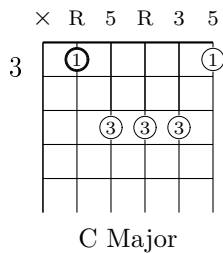


This chart shows you the locations of most of the notes across the 6th string. The fret numbers are provided below the circles. Now, we said most of the notes – so why not all of them? The missing frets are the notes that contain *sharp* and *flat* in their name. Sharps and flats are very easy to figure out. Flats, which are shown by the symbol \flat , tell you to move one fret to the left from any note. So if you wanted a G flat ($G\flat$), you'd move one fret to the left of G, and you'd end up at the 2nd fret. Sharps, which are shown by this symbol \sharp , tell you to move up one fret to the right from any note. For example, if you wanted to play a G sharp ($G\sharp$), find G and move one fret to the right, to the 4th fret, and you'd have it. I purposely don't give you every note on a string because it clutters up the diagrams. If you know where all the natural notes are, then applying a \sharp or \flat is easy. String diagrams can show any string, but they all work the same.

In case you don't know already, you can tell from the string diagram above that there's no sharp for B or for E. Likewise, there's no flat for C or F.

Chord Grids

The chord grids are not unique to this book; you've probably seen them elsewhere. In any case, I show a bit of extra detail, so here is an example to look at:



The strings are shown as vertical lines with the lowest (6th) string on the left side of the diagram and the highest (1st) string on the right side of the diagram. The frets are horizontal, and each diagram shows you five frets. Which five frets you see is determined by a number (or lack of one) to the left of the nut (the piece of bone or plastic where the strings rest). Without a number, you are looking at the first five frets. If there is a number present, that fret and the five frets higher are shown. On this grid we place circles that tell you what notes to play and what fingers to play them with. Inside of the circles are the fingers for your fretting hand to use. *If the circle is in bold, it denotes that it's the root of the chord.* If you see an X, that means that you don't play that string.

All the chords in this book are moveable, so you'd just move the entire chord, placing its root on whatever note you needed to make *any* chord you needed. (You'd of course need the string chart for that, but any page that contains chords will have a string chart as well.)

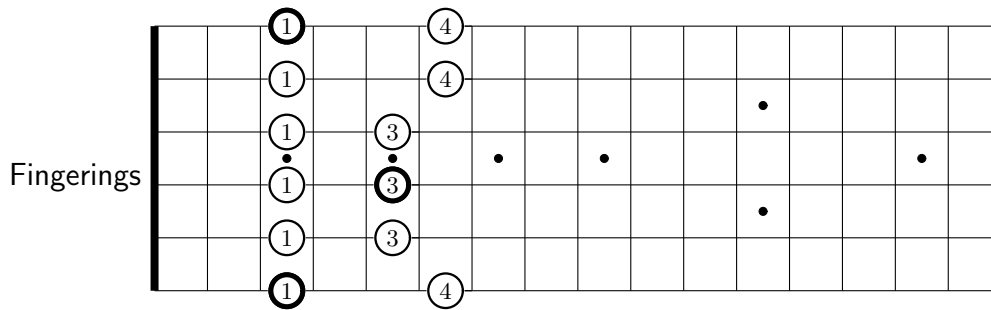
Above the diagram is a row of letters and numbers as well. In this diagram it's R5R35. Those numbers denote the construction of the chord; it shows you what intervals each of the notes you are playing are relative to the root (which is represented by an R). These come in handy as your knowledge of theory starts to grow.

To recap, here's what you need to know:

- A number to the left of the chord grid denotes what fret the diagram begins on.
- Circles tell you which frets and strings to play.
- Numbers inside the circle indicate fretting hand fingerings.
- A bold circle denotes the lowest root of the chord.
- Across the top line, you will find the intervallic construction of each chord.
- An x on the top line indicates that a string should be muted and not played.
- Every chord in this book can be transposed to all twelve keys by shifting its shape to the correct fret.

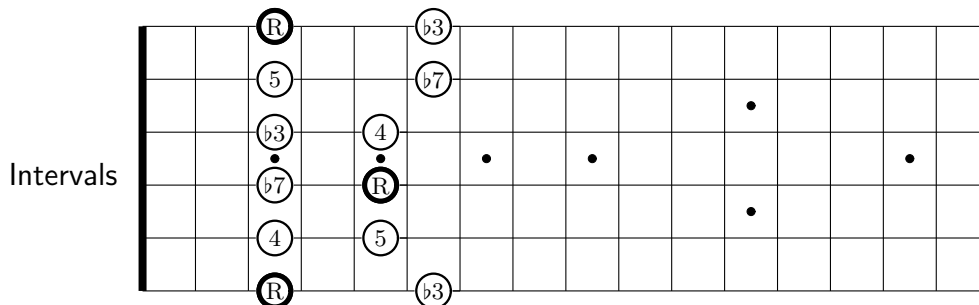
String Diagrams

The string diagrams are very similar to the chord diagrams. They show you strings and frets, but they are flipped on their side. Let's start out with a sample string chart and explain what we are seeing.



In this diagram, the strings are horizontal while the frets are vertical. The lowest string, the 6th string, is on the bottom of the diagram, and the highest string, the 1st string, is of course on the top of the diagram. A full 16-fret fingerboard is shown, complete with position markers on the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 12th and 15th frets (just like on every guitar).

The circles represent notes in the scale and the numbers inside indicate what fingers to play them with. This particular diagram is only showing the fingerings, as indicated by the label *Fingerings* to the left of the nut. On any page that we show a scale diagram, we also denote the intervals. Here's how we do it:



As you can see from the label *Intervals*, the numbers inside the circles are now showing you the intervalic number of every note in the scale with R showing the root of the scale. You'll want to study both the fingerings and the intervals. Fingerings are a very personal thing, and you may find that you have your own ideas about fingerings,

and that's fine. The fingerings provided are the basic recommended fingerings; feel free to try your own.

The bold circles indicate the root of the scales. Just like the chords grids, roots serve to not only name the scale, but also allow you to move these scales anywhere on the neck you need to, allowing you to play in *any* key. A string chart will always be provided for you to help you place these scales on the correct frets.

A sample line of music is also provided for each scale. The music shows only a single octave and is there for reference; it is not showing you the written music for the scale you are playing as the scale diagrams typically extend two octaves. It's good to have it here anyway as it reminds us that it is *really important to understand written music*.

The last thing you'll see along with the scale diagrams is a box that contains the formula for each scale, like this one:

Scale Formula: R ^b3 4 5 ^b7

The formulas are there to help you learn about theory and see the relationship of the scale notes to their roots. Even though the scale diagram can contain intervals, it's nice to have a reference on each page. You will find one of these boxes on every scale page that you study.

That's it. That's all you need to know to begin using this book right now. As we go along, I'll tell you anything else that's important to know. For now, you have enough information to start learning.

This book was written as a method and not as a reference book. It's designed to be learned in order. Even if you already know some of the information, please go through everything sequentially. You may know the fingerings to a few scales, but do you know the intervals for each note? Make sure you go through this book carefully – you'll be a better player for it.

Now we get to play!