

---

## Foreword

At my concerts and workshops I have often been asked whether I could not write an instructional book, explaining my personal approach to playing the guitar. The result is this guitar tutorial, which is specifically designed to help you play instrumentals from the very first exercise onwards to sophisticated fingerstyle. The pieces are arranged so that from the beginning they make full use of the wonderful sound of the guitar. You can start playing right away and will be practising your first tune within hours. As you work through the book, you will find that you gradually come to understand more about what you are doing and the system behind it. I have avoided the indirect route of dealing with accompaniment (chords and picking patterns), as there is plenty of existing literature on this subject.

The primary purpose of this guitar tutorial is to convey fundamental fingerpicking techniques, where melodies are mainly played using the middle and index fingers of the right hand, accompanied by the alternating bass part, played by the thumb. I refer to this essential striking technique employed by the right hand as alternating bass / alternating picking.

There is also another idea behind the choice and running order of these exercises and compositions: without much additional effort, they allow me to introduce you to the principles of harmony. I have taken particular care to present the theoretical aspects in a way which reflects the needs of guitarists. Each new theoretical insight can be directly experienced through the corresponding exercise. New chords and scales are only introduced when they are needed for the next piece. Most of the exercises are notated in a way that they can be played as a repeating figure, which you can end as you wish.

From chapter three onwards, it is advisable to concentrate on acquiring a precise playing technique. I would therefore recommend that you cast a glance at chapter eight from time to time.

The exercises there can be used as a daily warm-up.

At the end of the book you will find a number of photos illustrating accurate fretting and picking techniques, so if you are uncertain in this respect, you can always refer to them.

The tablature system is explained in the appendix. All the elements of the tablature will become clear as you work through the different chapters, but in case you need to remind yourself of individual aspects of the system, you will find an overview of the whole thing there.

When you have worked through all the playing techniques and theoretical background in chapters 1 - 6, you are ready to take a look at three of my concert pieces. Take your time though. Even when you have understood the structure of the pieces and know which techniques are used in them, it takes a while until the fingers can implement everything. At first it is important to proceed slowly, one bar at a time. After a while you can try making loops of two bar, and later 4 bar segments. As soon as these sit right, you can start joining them together to create ever larger sections. This will probably take weeks or months. Even a professional player needs to work for a long time before a new piece is ready to perform. I often practice new compositions for months, broken down into individual parts. When the time comes to fit them all together, this usually means that I know the piece by heart.

One last point regarding thumb picks. I have been accustomed to using one for decades now, and did so while recording the videos. Whether or not to use a thumb pick is a matter of personal taste. I find that it allows me to damp the bass strings more easily. However, all the exercises and pieces found here can be played equally well without using one.

I hope you enjoy it and wish you every success!

*Ulli Bögershausen*

(Translation: Steve Baker)