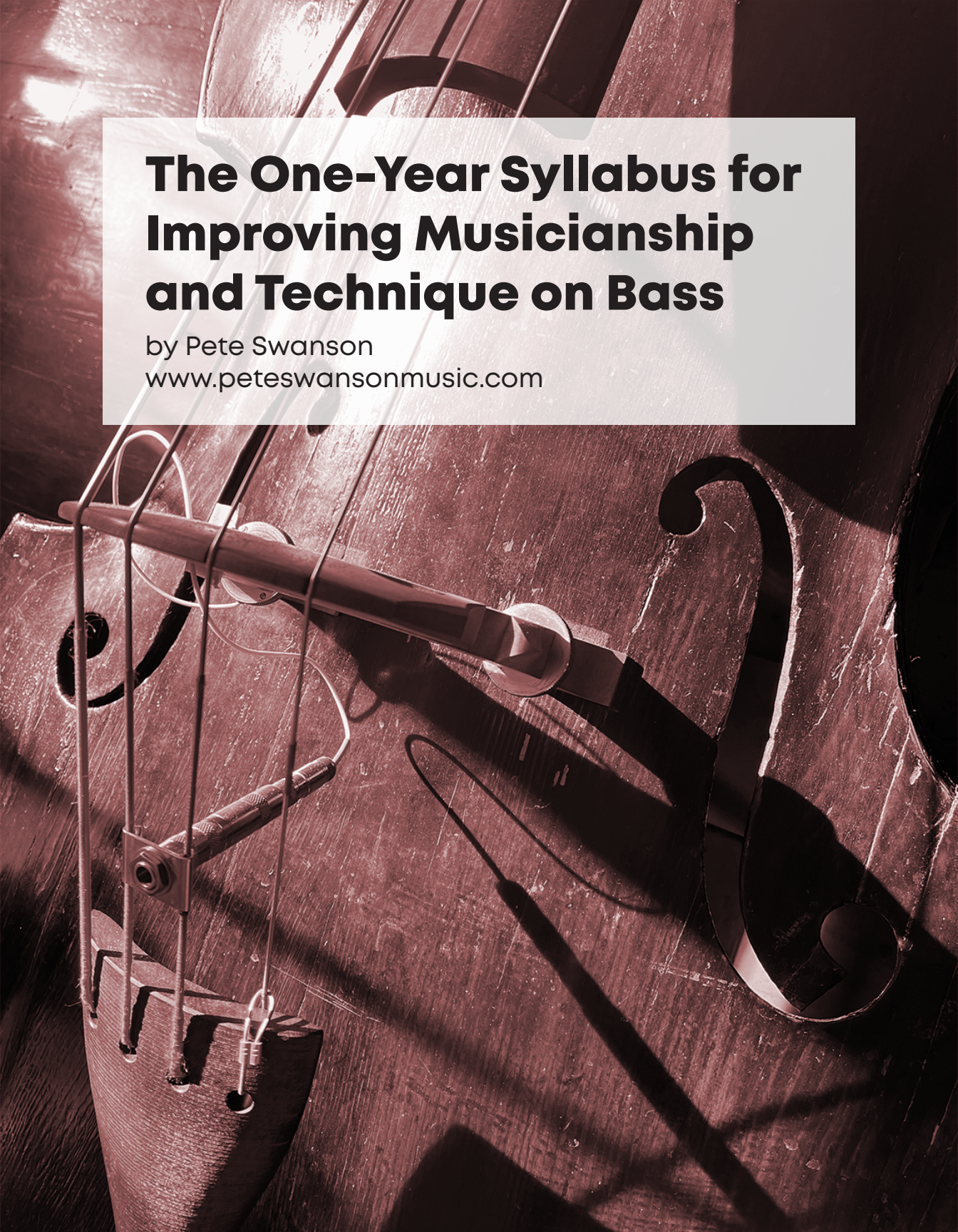

The One-Year Syllabus for Improving Musicianship and Technique on Bass

by Pete Swanson
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If you wish to take private lessons from me, I have a proven methodology for teaching that will help you gain the musical and technical skills to become the player you wish to be.

Lessons can be done on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly schedule. Weekly lessons are encouraged, as they are the most direct route to building good habits in technique and musicianship.

What you can expect in lessons:

Double Bass Technique

Each week we will work on various techniques to ease your playing. Technique should not be strenuous but be built slowly and naturally.

Technique is simply what we use to allow what we hear to come out on our instrument. There is no "tried and true" technique that works for everyone, and after meeting you I can evaluate your skills and what exercise are useful on order for you to play in a more natural way.

I use a mixture of Rabbath, Petracchi, and techniques pioneered by David Allen Moore in order for the student to understand the fingerboard and "see the bigger picture". Technique is there to help us break out of bad habits that either inhibit the natural movement of the body, or outright cause pain to the body.

Musicianship and Ear Training

Having an intellectual understanding of these key concepts takes some students longer than others, and other students understand the concepts immediately.

Understanding these concepts intellectually always takes work, and most of this work can be learned quickly, yet to truly hear them and spontaneously use them in improvisation usually takes longer for the ear to understand.

For this reason (although there are always exceptions) working with each module for a month (and sometimes longer) strengthens one's inner hearing to naturally hear the logic of tonal music. Each month the student will receive written material coupled with written exercises, and sight singing exercises made to zero in on the specifics of each module. These are meant to be done in order, as each lesson builds upon the last.

After one year the student can hear Diatonic music easily (if one does the work) and will be ready to move onto "Chromatic Tonal Music"

The following is a full year syllabus broken down by month.

YEAR 1

Month 1

- Introduction to "Hearing Tonal Music"
  - -Solfège Syllables
  - -Hearing Major Tetrachords
- Hearing Note Functions Within Major Tonality

Month 2

- Functional "Pivoting"
  - -An introduction to "pivot tones" and using "pivot tones" to change keys

Month 3

- Hearing Major Triadic Harmony

Month 4

- Hearing Minor Triadic Harmony

Month 5

- Hearing Rhythm
- Focus on "strong and weak beats" within the bar lines

Month 6

- Hearing Harmonic "Impressions"
  - -Triad, Open 4th, Closed 4th "Impressions"

Month 7

- Hearing 4 Part Major Harmony

Month 8

- Hearing 4 Part Minor Harmony

Month 9

- Hearing "Modes"

Month 10

- Major7(#11) Harmony

Month 11

- Minor7 Harmony

Month 12

- Dominant 7 Harmony