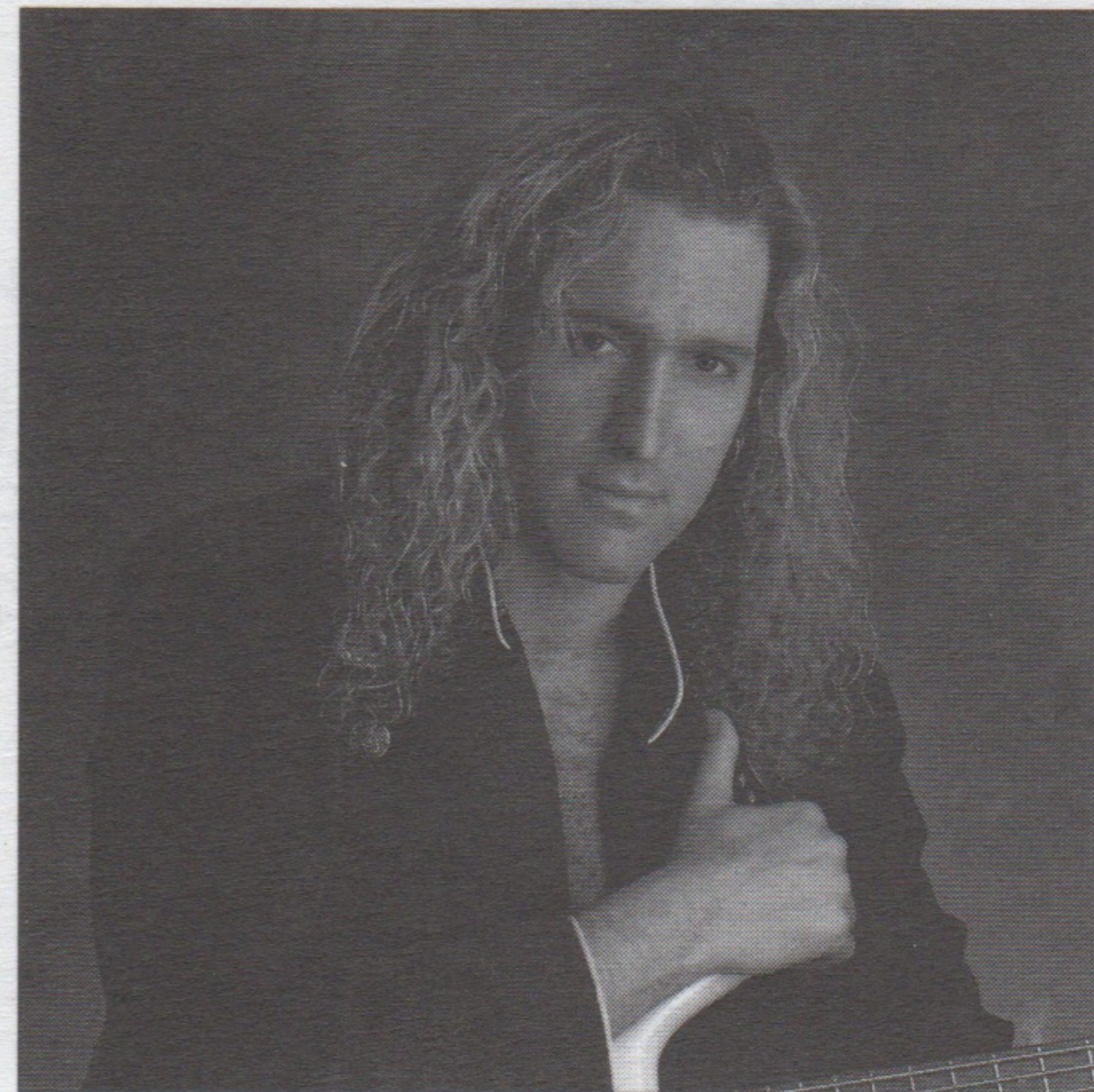


musical self-help

by David C. Gross



I have been receiving excellent response to this column from the smaller publishing companies, as well as the larger ones. There are a number of credible writers who have written some very interesting books that will be reviewed here. I would like to stress that any writer who has a small publishing concern send their information to the magazine so we can feature some of it here.

Peter Anthony Klapka has written a challenging technique book, *30 Four-Bar Technical Finger Exercises for the Electric Bass*. These exercises are not just dry finger exercises but a series of melodic dexterity exercises that are beneficial to any bassist. Although written for the 4-string, they can be moved up or down for the 5- and 6-string bass. Contact Boston Music Cellar Pub., P. O. Box 6488, Nashua NH 03063-6488.

Emile De Cosmo's *Polytonal Rhythm Series Books*, although written in treble clef, can be of great benefit to any musician. His books are set up with various rhythmic patterns to be played and permuted so as to increase the players musical awareness of rhythm in a soloistic way. Each book deals with a particular scale or mode. *The Phrygian Mode, ii7-V7 Progression, The Diatonic Cycle, Cycle of Fifths, The Ionian Mode, The Tritone Cycle, The Harmonic Minor Scale, and The Melodic Minor Scale* are all important books. EDC Publications, 1611 Kennedy Blvd., North Bergen NJ 07047.

Want to improve your reading? *Sight Reading Funk Rhythms for Electric Bass* by Anthony Vitti is an intermediate to advanced book that will improve both your rhythmic reading and your note reading. A number of these studies are challenging and helpful. DaaDoo Music, 28 Country Meadow Rd.

Haverhill, MA 01832.

Alfred Music has put out a series of books and play-along CDs (or cassettes) that I am very impressed with. All five books are written by bassist Tom Warrington and drummer Steve Houghton. *Essential Styles Books 1 and 2* cover latin, blues, hip-hop, jazz, funk, rock, and ballads with charts and explanations. The CDs are well recorded and feature guest soloists for you to play with. *Mastertracks Fusion, Jazz, and Latin* work within the framework of each style. The *Latin* book features 12 tunes from bossa nova to salsa mambo; the *Fusion* book features odd time signatures, funk grooves and some rock based tunes; the *Jazz* book has you play along with everything from a fast bebop to a slow blues. The play-alongs are fun to work with and if you don't have people to play with, this package is extremely helpful and challenging. Alfred Music, P.O. Box 10003, 16380 Roscoe Blvd., Van Nuys CA 91410-0003.

Two books by Berklee Bass Dept. Chairman Rich Appleman are musts for any bassist wanting to improve his or her reading and familiarity with their fingerboards. *Reading Contemporary Electric Bass Rhythms* runs the gamut of walking lines to busy syncopated sixteenth note patterns in a progressive manner from easy to more complex and *Chord Studies for Electric Bass* gets this column's award for best scale book encompassing chord tones and tensions up and down the neck. This book is great for those of you evolving to either a 5- or 6-string. Hal Leonard, 7777 W. Bluemound Rd. P. O. Box 13819, Milwaukee WI 53213.

Jamey Aebersold has published a 2-CD (or cassette) ear training course that will help to open your ears to chords and intervals. *Jazz*

Ear Training is a systematic approach that will have you hearing major, minor, augmented, and diminished chords, their tensions, and chord progressions of all types. Jamey Aebersold, P. O. Box 1244, New Albany IN 47152-1244.

Speaking of ear training, I have always wondered about the David L. Burge *Perfect Pitch* and *Relative Pitch* courses. Do they work? Will I really hear the qualities of each note? The answer is yes. The real question you should ask yourself before buying either of these tape packages is "Will I devote the time necessary to practice these tapes?" The *Relative Pitch* course is the easier of the two because we have all played and/or listened to music so we have a handle on intervallic relationships. The *Perfect Pitch* course is a bit harder to pin down. Listening to each note and trying to hear a quality of sound is more subjective. Nonetheless I found I benefited from both courses and I definitely hear with a more discerning ear. American Educational Music Publications, Music Resource Building, 1106 E. Burlington, Fairfield IA 52556.

A couple of good books on the philosophy of music are *Free Play The Power of Improvisation in Life and the Arts* by Stephen Nachmanovitch (G.P. Putnam & Sons) a study of creativity endorsed by Keith Jarrett and Yehudi Menuhin, and *Thinking In Jazz—The Infinite Art of Improvisation* by Paul Berliner (University of Chicago Press), which reveals how musicians, both individually and collectively, learn how to improvise.

David C. Gross is a New York based musician who recently formed a new band "The Mystic Nights."