

teNayO

ZIGGY

12-String Tap-Guitars

**Introduction
into playing the
12-string Tap-Guitar**

text & photos: Michael Koch



**Suitable to the
tuning in 5ths and 4ths
Crossed & Uncrossed**

MUSIC

M A R K E T I N G



BiusK feat AF, European Bassday 2010

EDITORIAL

Dear all you musicians with heart and mind,

in first line this short introduction into the topic 12-String Tap-Guitar shall support YOU. And it shall clarify you that it doesn't need to be super brilliant or outstanding intelligent to play this kind of guitar. Furthermore it's definitely not harder than playing another kind of instrument. Anyone who likes to be better, faster and greater than her/his idols has to **practise, practise and practise again**. There are even maniacs who fly across the fingerboard of a ukulele - like Steve Vai on his guitar. But all musicians who are approachable to a wider array and rendition possibilities will find their own universe of amazing and fresh sounds inside the world of the Tap-Guitar. No matter if you play Pop, Rock, Hip-Hop, Funk, Progressive Rock, Metal, Jazz and so on - the instrument is an enrichment to all styles of music.

**"Just take your time and play the music
you like the most!!!"**

If this is to your appreciation there will be some people more who like it. This current introduction into playing the Tap-Guitar is to suggest you the playing technique, most significant chords and harmony patterns. It's possible to listen to the associated **tone examples** by hearing the bass and melody strings at the same time (stereo) or divided. Both signals had been recorded separately. So it's achievable to hear just the bass (for example) on one side of your headphones by adjusting the balance knob of your stereo equipment. Furthermore I like to give you some tips for the sound design at the end of the whole topic.

By then I'd like to wish you a lot of fun with the Ziggy Tapper, the info and tutorials!!!

With kind regards

BiusK alias Michael Koch



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As good as it could be: the new Ziggy Tapper!!!

Beside our favourable novice models, we produce a Custom-Shop Tappers at **Mensinger** in Poland - since the end of 2011. All hardware components are Made in Germany.

Except the especially for the **Ziggy** designed **ETS-Bridge**, the instruments are equipped with high quality **Schaller** Locking Machine Heads, Security Locks and pickups. It's also possible to choose Humbuckers from **Harry Häussel**. Even the ETS-Bridge can be set up with Midi-Saddles completely or just halfway - by paying an extra charge.

Every **Colour** you like - nearly any **Finish** is possible

To satisfy your individual desires most of all paintings you know are available. No matter if transparent or well covering.

Many different wood-tops...

All instruments with a transparent Burst-Finish can be laminated with various wood-tops. There's a choice of birds-eye maple and poplar, flamed and spalted maple. The instrument bodies are made of a high quality European alder. So it's even up to the highest demands for a very fine & clear sound.

Technical details

- Body: alder / fingerboard: rosewood or maple
- Scale: 820 mm
- Overall length: 1050 mm
- Fingerboard width: 100 mm (nut)/112 mm (12th fret)
- Two adjustable Trussrods
- Neck diameter: 20 to 25 mm
- Schaller Locking Machine Heads (black, nickel or chrome)
- Schaller Security Locks (black, nickel or chrome)
- Schaller Poti-Knobs (black, nickel or chrome)
- Pickups: Schaller Hot Stuff & Super N or Häussel
- Output jack: 6,3 mm, stereo/mono switchable
- Weight: ca. 3,8 to 4 kg
- Finish: transparent, high glossy or matt satin
- Tuning: Crossed or Uncrossed in C#, F#, B, e, a, d (melody strings) and b, e, A, D, G, C (on the bass side)



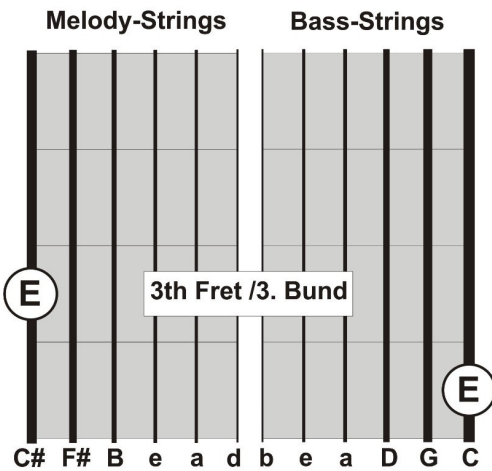
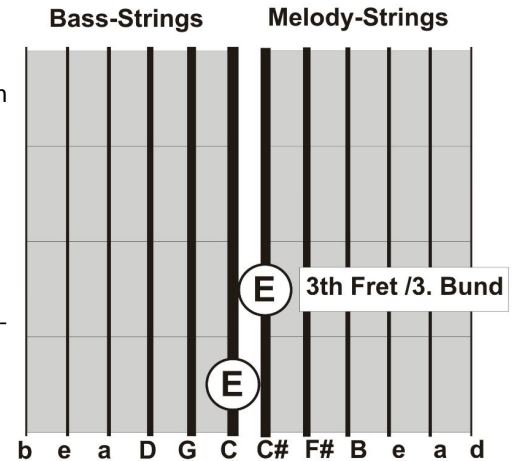
How to tune the instrument? Different Tunings

The Tenayo Ziggy is tuned in inverted 5ths and ascending 4ths. Crossed or Uncrossed. Or you can tune the Ziggy in perfect 4ths. Factory-set the instrument will be shipped with the tuning you prefer. If you like to change the tuning later please ask someone professional. No matter which kind of tuning you use it's recommended to tune the instrument by tapping the strings at the 12th fret. Furthermore the Tap-Guitar has to be tuned up from the 12th string down to the 1st. Out from your point of view the 12th string is at the upside. Because of the symmetric array of the machine heads its 6 times tuning into direction of the headstocks tips and 6 times backwards until you reach the 1st string. Since the human ear is not perfect, concerning the tonal frequencies, a good tuner is recommended. Take care because not every tuner is able to realize the lower "C".

The classic **CROSSED** Tuning in inverted 5ths and ascending 4ths. (diagram at the right)

Because of this very popular tuning the bass strings are placed upside the fingerboard - below the 6 melody strings. This was the idea of the inventor of the Chapman-Stick® Emmett Chapman. The advantage of this tuning is a good support while playing and the possibility to overlap with the right hand - playing the bass strings with the thumb of the right hand while tapping the melody strings with the rest of the fingers. Up from the lowest string the 6 bass strings have to be tuned in **b, e, a, D, G, C (6 bass strings)**. So the lowest tone, by playing the open string, is a "C". Furthermore and out from your point of view the 6 melody strings have to be tuned in **C#, F#, B, e, a, d (6 melody strings)**. So you got to play crossed. The left hand has to overlap to reach the bass while the right has to do the same to reach the melody strings. Sometimes this can lead into complications if one hand tries to pass the other.

The lowest bass- (C) and the lowest melody string (C#) is placed in the middle of the fingerboard!



The **UNCROSSED** Tuning in inverted 5ths and ascending 4ths (diagram at the left)

Because of this symmetric tuning both hands are able to slide along each side of the fingerboard. This idea came from the Japanese Tap-Guitar constructor **Yoshitaka Koyabu** and is one of the most ergonomically solutions. The elbows don't have to be bend too much, shoulders and hands are freer to move. Out from your point of view the lowest melody string (C#) is at the upside of the fingerboard. Accordingly the instrument has to be tuned in **C#, F#, B, e, a, d (6 melody strings)** and **b, e, a, D, G, C (6 bass strings)**.

Each - the lowest melody string (C#) and the lowest bass string (C) are placed at the edge of the fingerboard.

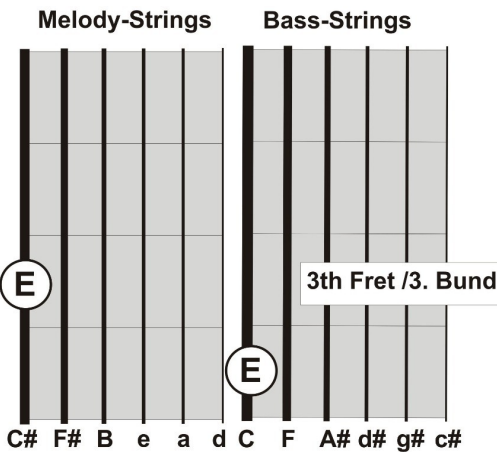
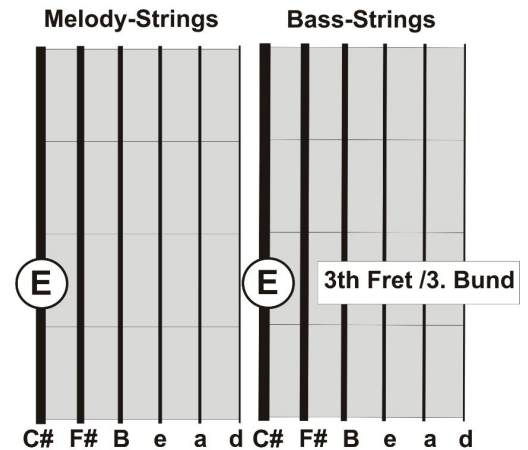
Basically both tunings in 5ths and 4ths do extend the range of your sound while playing. And they are well recommended to players who like the exemplary Tony Levin Sound. Even to the ones who are willing to walk contemporary musical ways. Levin is well known as the bass- and Stick®-player of Peter Gabriel and King Crimson. From the practical point of view it's easily possible to play simple 9th chords with the left (bass) hand by tapping a barre chord across three strings with the forefinger. Furthermore the 5th is always directly above the 1st note of the chord - on each string. What is an great advantage if typical bass lines (in 4ths, 8ths and borrowed divisions) have to be played.

The overall tuning in perfect 4ths

Of course there are some musicians who prefer to play pieces on a Tap-Guitar, which can be played with more genuine sound on a guitar or a bass. This species can be found among local guitar teachers, Jazz and Blues purists. Most of the time they tend to play pentatonic scales - a musical scale which has less notes than it is normal... - and *Walking-Bass* lines. (;- Although the tuning in perfect 4ths is surely suitable to these musical styles. Theoretically and practically it's possible to tune all strings a half or a whole tone higher as shown in the charts underneath.

Alternative 1 (diagram at the right)

Out from your point of view and up from the lowest melody string (C#) we will have the following standard tuning: **C#, F#, B, e, a, d (6 melody strings)** und **C#, F#, B, e, a, d (6 bass strings)**. According to this kind of tuning you can find any note of the melody and bass strings at the same fret - dependent to the respective string. For example: the E of the lowest bass string can be found at the 3rd fret. It's the same with the E at the lowest melody string - which can be found at the 3rd fret as well.



Alternative II (diagram at the left)

But after all it's a bit easier for the player to tune the bass strings a bit lower. A half tone lower seems to be perfect if you hold the instrument in an upright position. This results into the following tuning: **C#, F#, B, e, a, d (6 melody strings)** und **C, F, A#, d#, g#, c# (6 bass strings)**.

Because of both tunings in perfect 4ths the lowest melody string can be found at the upper edge while the lowest bass string is placed in the middle of the finger-board.

The lesson is clear: All modernists are now sure that this tuning in perfect 4ths doesn't make very much sense. (;- Finally we like to enter unknown territory. And we like to explore new grounds to enrich the sound of our Rock-, Pop-, Crossover-, Metal-, Hip- or Trip-Hop-Band. But all incurable Blues and Jazz noses are allowed to tune their instrument in pure 4ths to indulge in nostalgia. I am very sorry to say that this introduction into playing the Tap-Guitar will not elaborate on more chords of this tuning. Because how to play these chords (or for example Walking-Bass) is much better explained in many standard text books. In case of emergency please choose the charts I did for the melody strings...



Getting started to the both hand tapping technique

Please take care of your upright posture while playing! And: spread your weight steady to both of your feet. The instrument has to be kept in an upright position. Please check the two photos underneath. Thereby the nut of the instrument is located in height of your left shoulder. Optimal is both forearms are bent to a 90 degree angle...

Generally it can be determined that the basic playing technique is more similar to playing a piano than to plucking a guitar or bass. I will explain this better on the following page. Often this is the main reason which is frustrating to many guitarists and bass players. The Tap-Guitar has not to be plucked like a bass or guitar - except for the occasional one. Rethinking is required. But it's not too difficult to learn the both hand tapping technique.

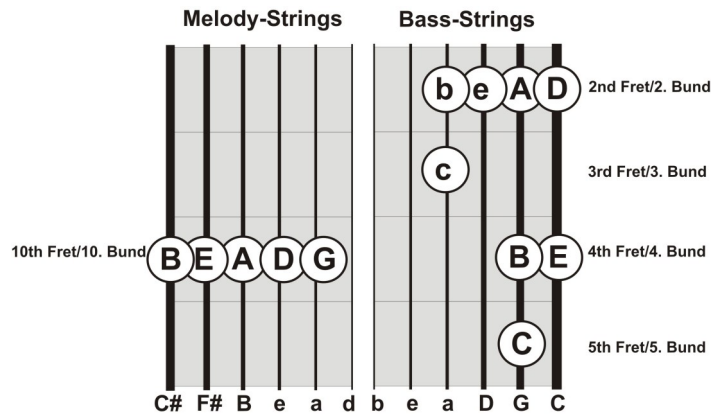
Another important tip:

All of the following diagrams can be used for both kind of tunings - Uncrossed and Crossed. It's just that I've tried to make it a bit easier. This is why I decided to show you the charts for both in order. The 6 melody strings have to be played by the right and the 6 bass strings by the left hand. Because of the **Uncrossed Tuning** both hands are sliding along each side of the fingerboard. Please check the 1st photo underneath (that's me). Because of the **Crossed Tuning** the left hand has to overlap to reach the bass strings. That's the same with the right hand to tap the melody strings. Please check the 2nd photo underneath (that's Ron Baggerman).

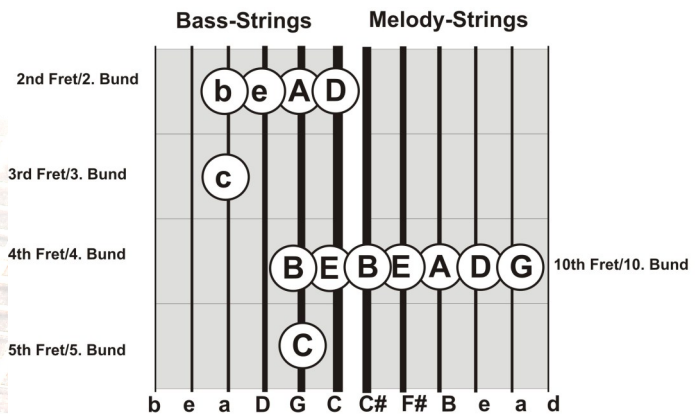
Step 1: A short guide to the fingerboard

Even tappers like referring to an E and an A. Another popular reference point is the G (at the 7th fret, tapped on the lowest bass string). The following diagrams shall introduce you to the most popular notes on the fingerboard of a Tap-Guitar.

Keynotes of the **Uncrossed Tuning**



Keynotes of the **Crossed Tuning**





Step 2: How to producing a tone?

Because it's much harder it's recommended to start with the thicker bass string even in the beginning. Basically the thinner strings are much easier to handle. So if you are able to handle the thicker strings you should be able to tap on the thinner ones as well. It's important to tap the desired note shortly to the complying fret. Most of the time it's rattling, if the finger has been set too much to the middle in between two frets. The higher you walk across your fingerboard into direction of the 12th fret, the more difficult it will get to play the notes very clear and without side tones. But if you practise a bit the faster you will succeed.

Step 3: The rather tapping technique

To understand tapping for better just think about the little hammers which hit the piano strings underneath the top of a piano. With the small difference that the hammers do consist of your own fingers. If one is tapping the desired tone short to the fret with a light touch - the result will be a warm and sustainable tone.

Additionally there's a percussive note which can be heard in the back. This is surely increasing the fun while tapping. And if you practise a lot you can replace your percussion player in the band as well. (-; The Velcro® tape (damper) at the first fret of each Tap-Guitar is to reinforce the real tone and to diminish the percussive effect a bit. Furthermore it's a difficult to lower the strings while tapping with both hands - compared to playing a guitar. So that's the damper is provided for.

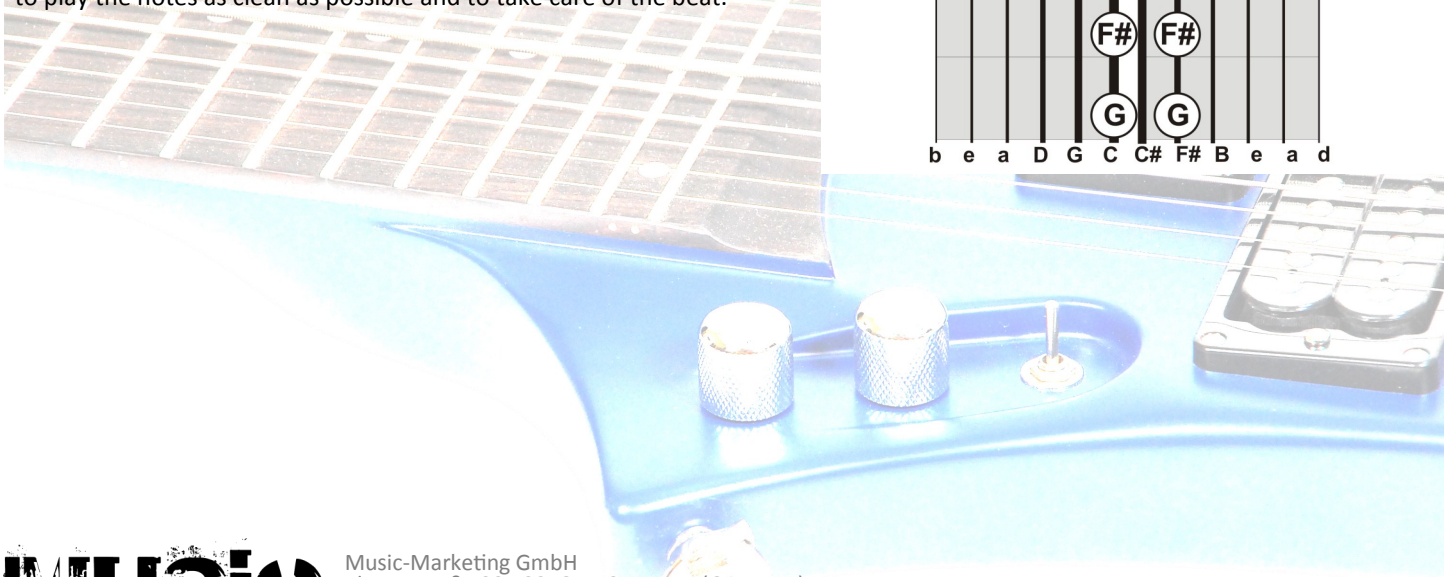
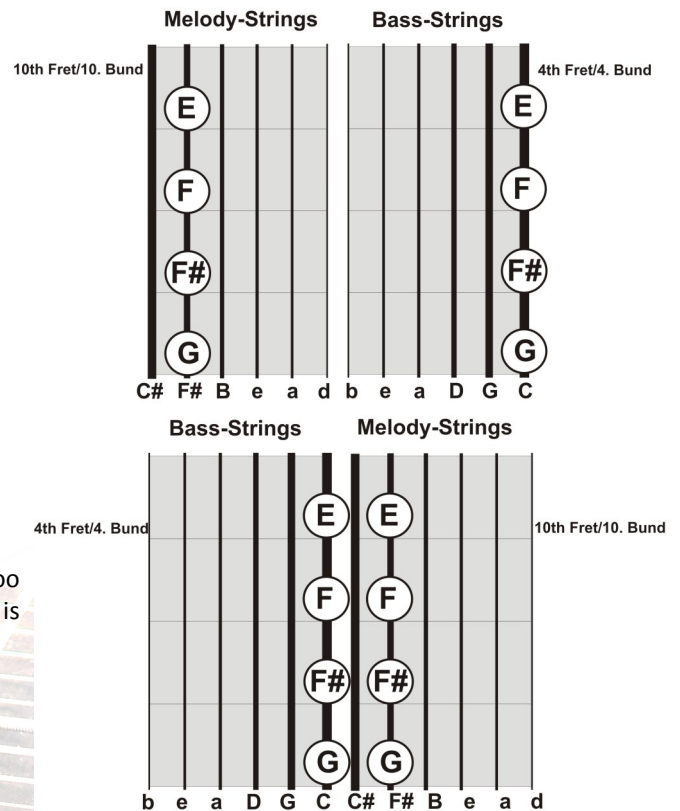
Take care: Single notes (for example an "E", which has to be played in fourths, eights or semiquavers) are easily to tap responsively by three (in order: forefinger, middle finger and ring finger) or two fingers (forefinger and middle finger) on one fret. Even here it's a must to hit the notes short to the appropriate fret. Thereby please keep your wrist and the shoulders slack. Also your fingers should be moved fluently.

Step 4: The coordination of your hands

One who likes to get into the both hand tapping technique got to take care of some coordination tutorials which drummers take care of as well. A very simple practise is to tap a rhythm with both hands on the table. Always in turns of both hands. Left, right, left, right and so on (or the opposite direction). Basically the use of a metronome (or a drum computer) is recommended.

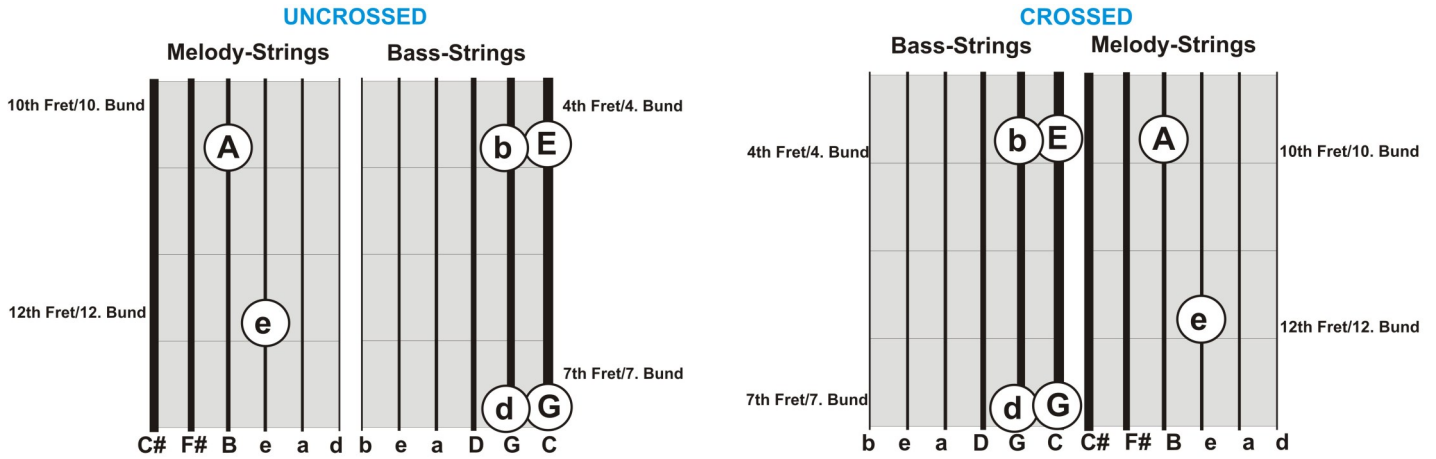
Step 5: The coordination of your fingers (tone example 1)

Now let's get to the individual fingers. For a first tutorial it's ok to begin with a low E (4th fret on the bass strings) and a low E on the melody strings (10th fret, 11th string). In order the fingers (forefinger, middle finger, ring finger and little finger) of both hands (in turns) have to tap the notes of the diagrams at the right. The fingers of the left hand have to tap the 1, 2, 3, 4 (to the metronomes beat) while the fingers of the right hand got to tap the eighths in between. It's better to do this not too fast. 80 beats per minute are enough in the beginning. More important is to play the notes as clean as possible and to take care of the beat.



Another tutorial to improve your sense of rhythm (tone example 2)

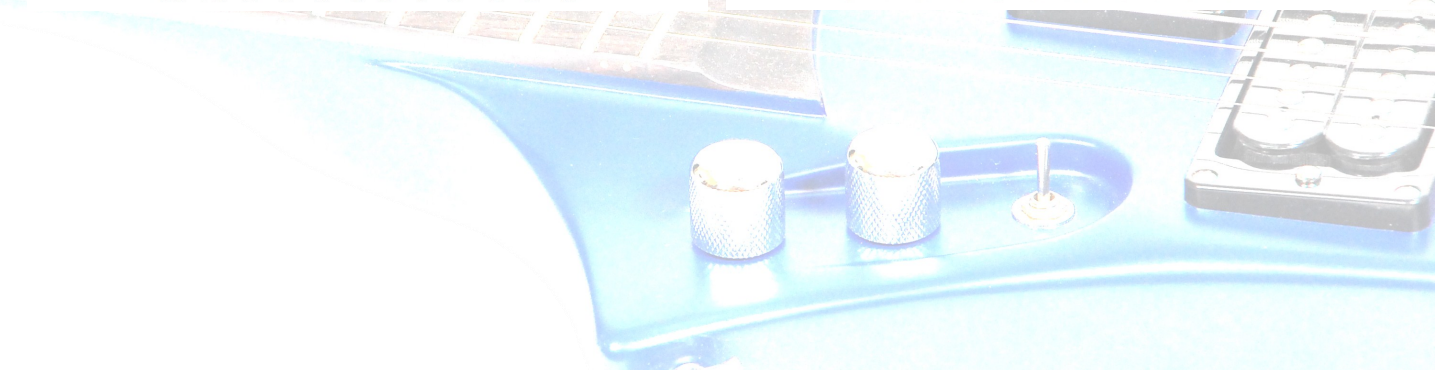
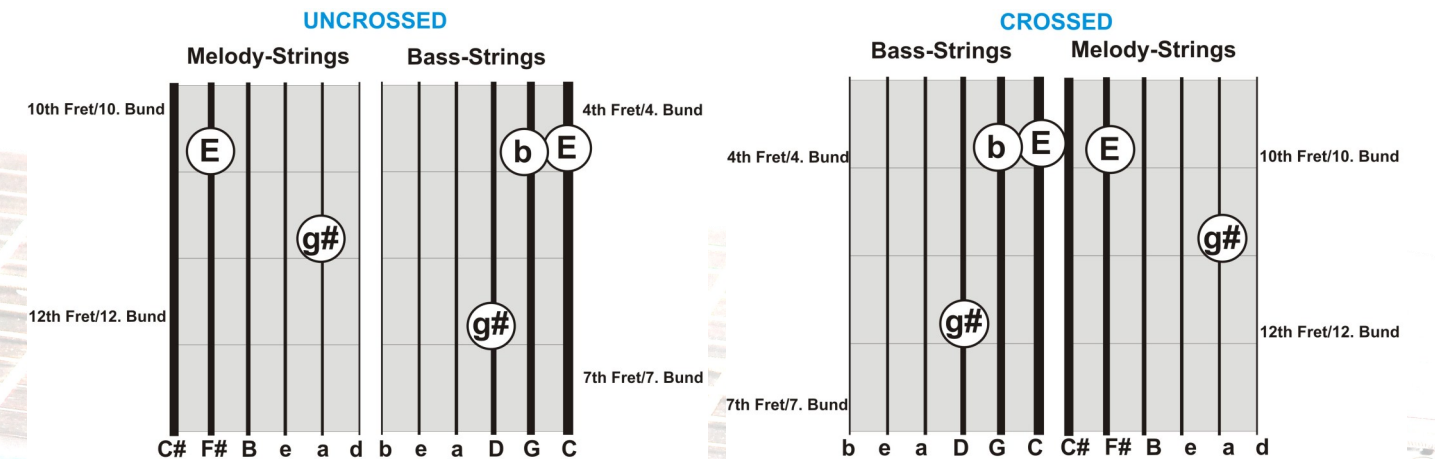
Take a medium-fast 4/4 time beat and tap the E and the b with your fore and middle finger of the left hand on the bass strings. In turns please tap the G and the d as well. Coincident tap the A and e (as eighths) with your fore- and ring finger of the right hand on the melody strings. Every time in between the E/b and B/d notes of the bass hand. This will result into two different beats. 4/4 - just played by the left hand and 6/8 - played by the right. It's surely possible to extend this rhythm construction by different harmonies. The metre can be varied as well. And it's no further problem to transfer this lesson into 5/4, 7/4, 9/4 or 11/4. This does not change anything to the 6/8 rhythm which is added to the original line by the right hand.



Important basic chords und chord combinations for both hand tapping

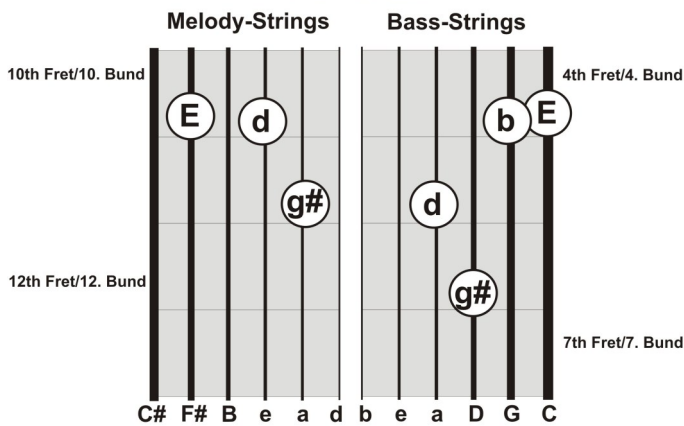
It's clear that even tappers have to control some basic chords. Finally one can learn and play most of the well known popular music pieces by the help of these chords very fast. We still keep the E (no matter if minor or major) as a fundamental key note. The following chords can be transcribed to other key notes by shifting them to lower or higher areas on your fingerboard with your fingers. All chord patterns can be played as arpeggios (all single notes have to be tapped in order) even in higher areas as a complete chord (all single notes have to be tapped at the same time).

E major (tone example 3): This lesson has to be tapped by the fore-, middle and ring finger of the left hand (bass) and the fore- and middle finger of the right (melody strings).

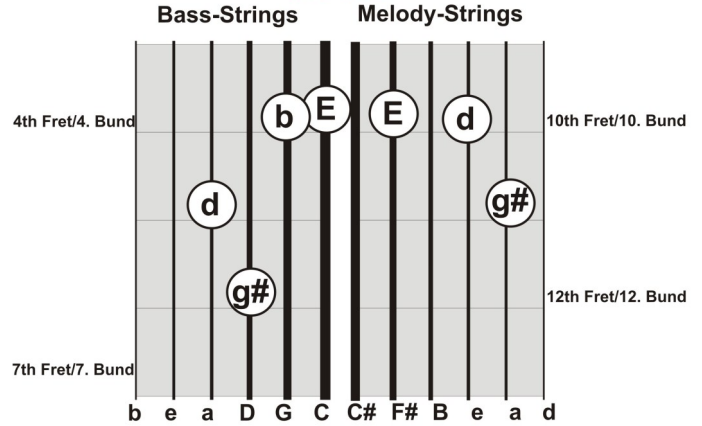


E7 (tone example 4): Fore-, middle and ring finger of the right hand are tapping E, d and g#. The fore-, middle, ring and little finger of the left hand are tapping E, b, g# and d. That's not too easy and a bit practise is needed. If it's too hard just drop the d which have to be tapped by the bass hand. Because the same key note is tapped by the right hand on the melody strings as well.

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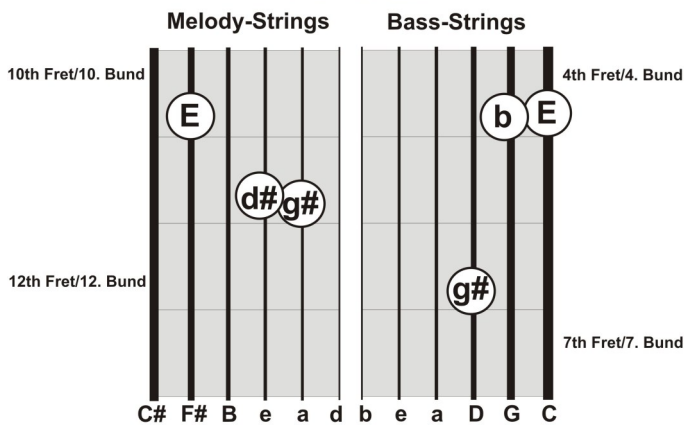


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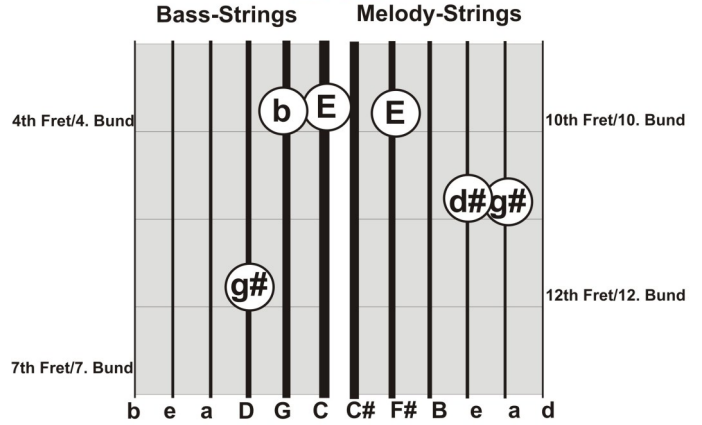


Emaj7 (tone example 5): The fingering for the bass stays the same - without the d. The fore- and the middle finger of the right hand are tapping E, d# and g#. The middle finger has to tap both (d# and g#) - by laid flat upon the strings.

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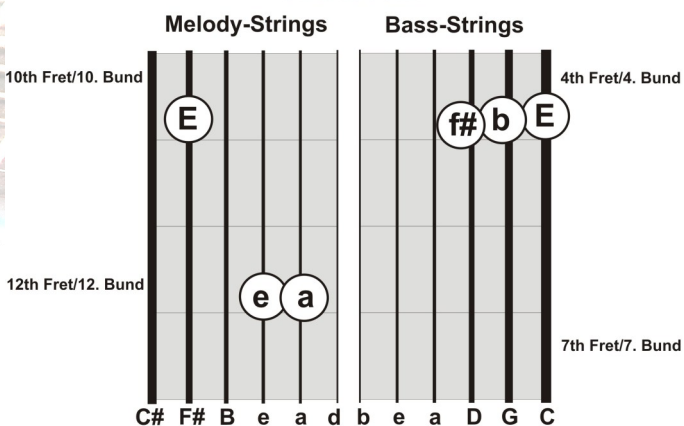


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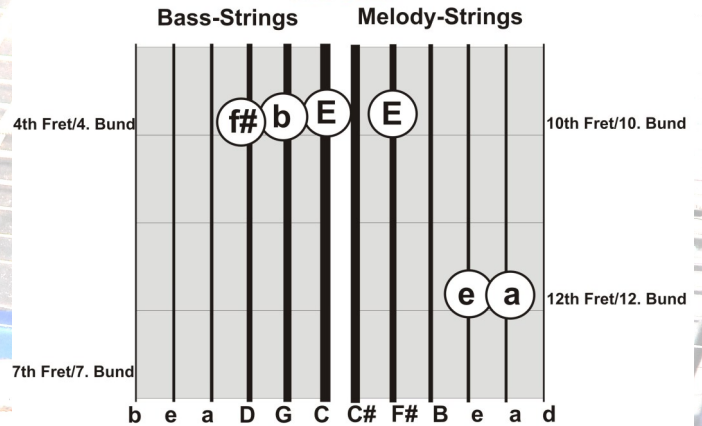


E9 on the bass and Esus4 on the melody strings (tone example 6): The fore-, middle and ring finger of the left hand are tapping E, b and f# on the bass. The forefinger of the right hand is tapping the E while the e and a has to be tapped by your ring finger. This one has to be laid flat upon the strings to capture both notes.

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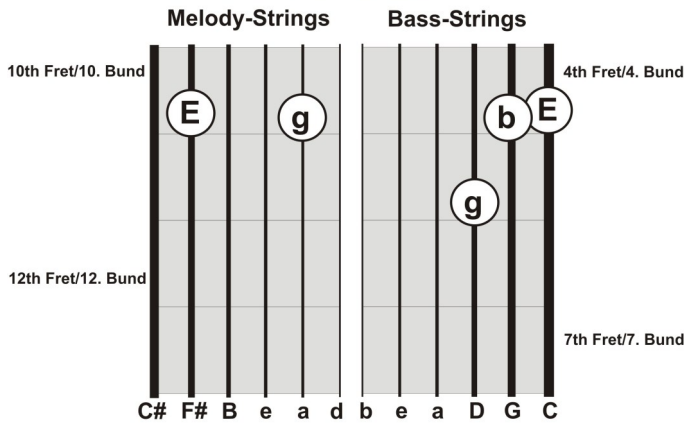


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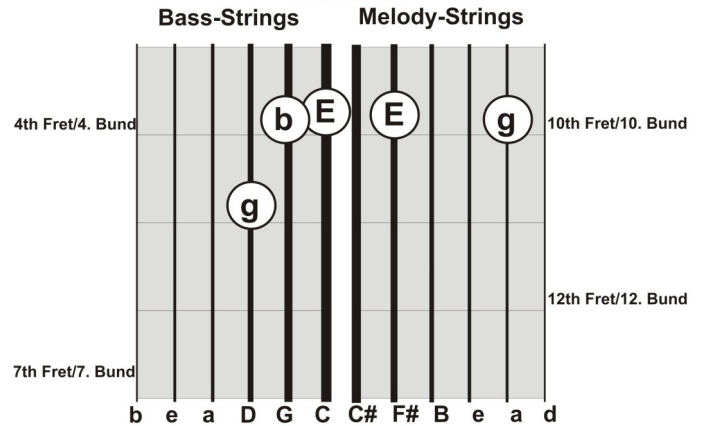


Em (tone example 7): The bass hand is tapping (in order) with its fore-, middle and ring finger E, b and g. The right hand got to add E and g with its fore- and middle finger.

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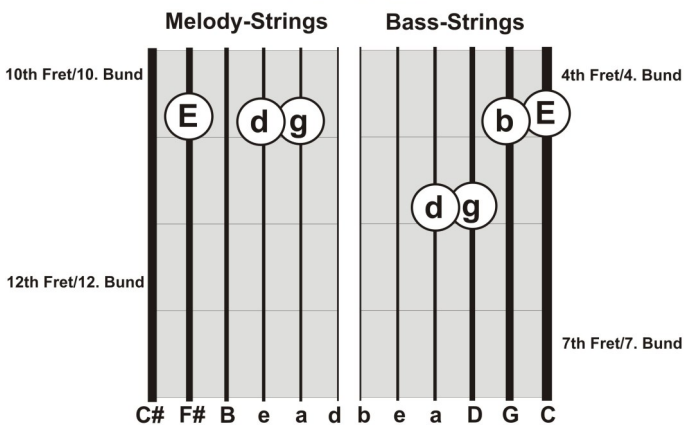


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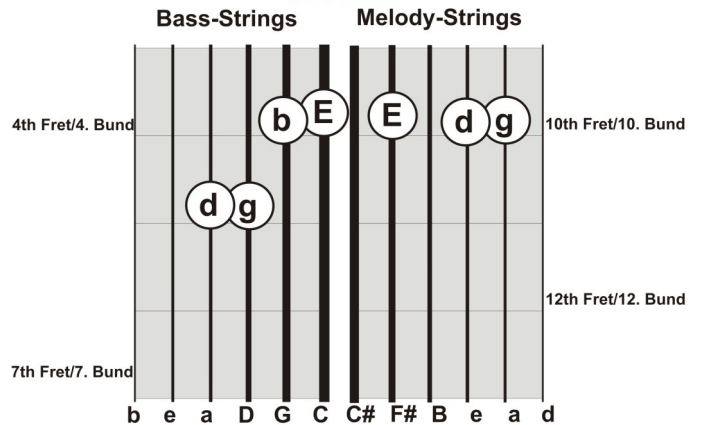


Em7 (tone example 8): Fore-, middle, ring and little finger of the bass hand are tapping E, b, g, d (in order). The right hand is tapping the E with the forefinger and d, g with the middle finger - which has to be laid flat upon the strings.

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About logical harmony sequences

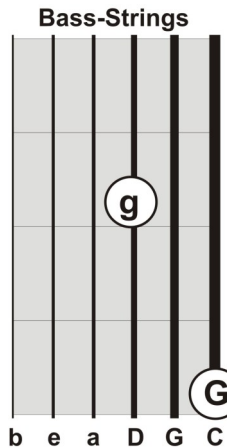
To play a typical "1, 4, 5" – "1, 5, 4" – "5, 4, 1" combination it's enough to learn the basic chords which have been explained before. So the most of all popular musical pieces do consist of three chords in different combinations. The numbers of the chords (for example "1, 4, 5") are in reference to the root position chord (1 = tonic), the subdominant chord (4) and the dominant chord (5). If you play a 12 string Tap-guitar this is very special because you're able to combine just one chord (played on the bass for example) with many different chords - played on the melody strings. As long as you use chords which are suitable to the appropriate scale or harmony sequence.

Tonbeispiel 9:

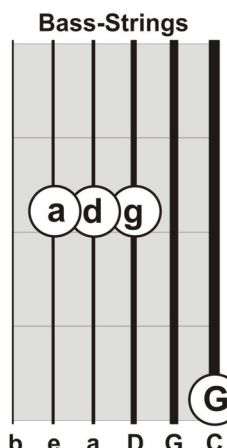
I still keep playing an Em as an arpeggio on the bass strings. To this I add Em, Esus4, F#m, F#sus4, G and Gsus4 with the right hand tapping the melody strings. Played upwards in order and backwards again. Or instead of this (to keep a logical harmony sequence) Em, Am, Bm and Am. Even here I am returning to the main chord again. The diagrams of these chords have been introduced to you the pages before. Please check them out again if you need some help.

The Tap-Guitar – a perfect instrument to stoic rhythmists and other curious bass players

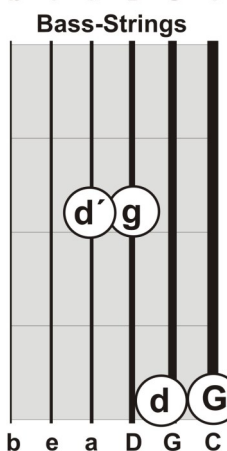
Just drop the melody strings for now and take care of the bass strings which are tuned in inverted fifths and fourths. These inverted fifths and fourths do influence the sound of your instrument at a high rate. Totally different to the sound of a standard e-bass. Theoretically and practically it's possible to play the bass strings with two or three fingers. With a bit practise in way that even veteran bass players get dizzy about that. The whole thing sounds a bit like slapping. With the difference that one can play not just the octave with the forefinger of the left hand but rather the 5th and the ninth. The diagrams below, outgoing from the key note "G", should illustrate that very well.



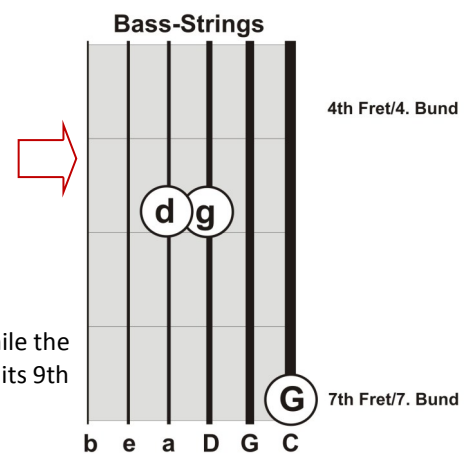
Lesson 1 (diagram on the left, tone example 10): The middle finger of the right hand is tapping 2x the G while the forefinger of the left is tapping 1x the octave „g“. *(It's up to the player who's practising to vary the lessons - concerning to different rhythms and speeds.)*



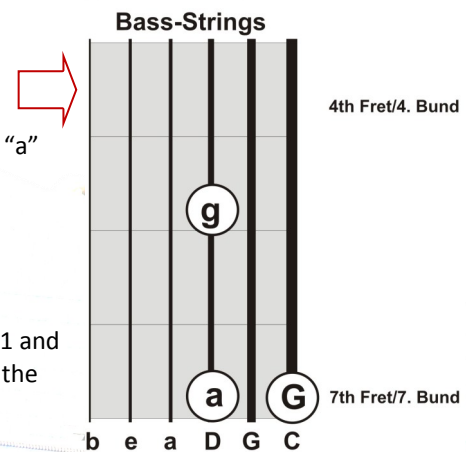
Lesson 3 (diagram on the left, tone example 12): The right hand does the same like in lesson 1 and 2 while the forefinger of the left is tapping the "g", its 5th "d" and its 9th "a" at the same time.



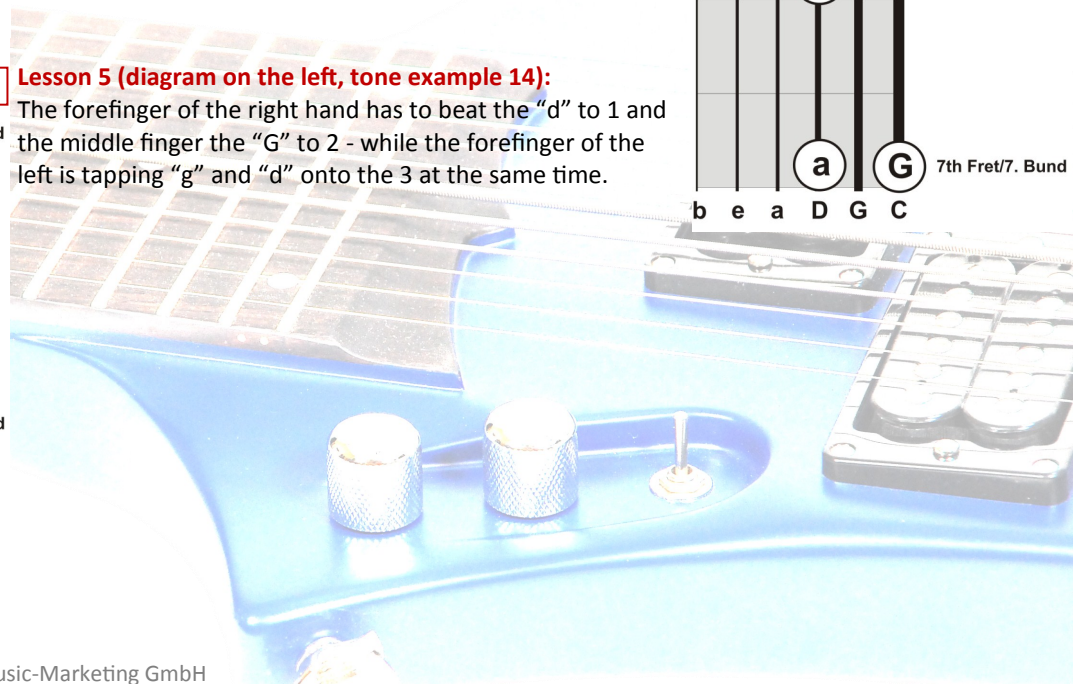
Lesson 5 (diagram on the left, tone example 14): The forefinger of the right hand has to beat the "d" to 1 and the middle finger the "G" to 2 - while the forefinger of the left is tapping "g" and "d" onto the 3 at the same time.



Lesson 2 (diagram on the right, tone example 11): The middle finger of the right hand is tapping 2x the "G" while The forefinger of the left is tapping 1x the octave "g" and the 5th "d" at the same time.



Lesson 4 (diagram on the right, tone example 13): The right hand does the same like in lesson 1, 2 and 3 while the forefinger of the left hand is tapping "g" and "a" responsively with the keynote "G".



Tips for your sound-design

Finally - after all this hard work - I don't want to withhold a bitter truth from you:
"You can practise as hard as it goes to get a real virtuoso player. The most important thing is what you're playing and how it sounds to the people. Or how it looks to the audience."

Adjust your sound-design and mind your image

Sometimes the most simple ideas are brilliant. It's much more important to play slowly - tone by tone - then to play very fast and fuzzily. Bill Bruford (the well known drummer of YES and King Crimson) said he was practising single strokes day by day before he came to his very concise snare drum sound. A sound which distinguishes him to the most of his drum-colleagues. Apart from this that Bruford is even rhythmically one of the best drummers in Rock-History. Guitarist David Gilmour is a very good example as well. What would be Pink Floyd without that succinct, spherical and crystal clear tone of this ingenious English man? Although he's not really a speedy guitar player. And perhaps there are guitarists with a much better playing technique. But his tone is really amazing. And his sound is unique. On the other hand the sound of the tap-guitar or the Chapman-Stick™ has been shaped by Tony Levin - even if I repeat myself. One can fiddle around as much as he can on his instrument: Just a few players are able to measure up to him. At least concerning the rhythmically performance on this kind of instrument.

Amplifiers and effects

The Tenayo Ziggy and other Tap-Guitar models do offer the possibility to play with two different amplifier systems at the same time because of the divided pickups and the stereo output. For use a high quality Y-Cable (one stereo jack to two mono jacks) is recommended. It's also possible to play over a standard mono guitar cable if you put the small on/on switch (beside the potis) into its mono position. If played mono it occurs that the higher strings are not as loud as the lower round-wound ones. This problem can be solved by adjusting the pickups height. Just lower the pickup slightly underneath the thicker strings - while raising them up a bit underneath the thinner strings. If you use a compression effect this matter can be used as well very easily. To the use of different amplifier systems I would like to suggest the following alternatives:

1. **Sound-purists** are well served with a good acoustic guitar amplifier. If possible the amp should be equipped with two different inputs which are independently adjustable. The instrument itself is reacting very sensitive and dynamically. Because of its sound character it's nearly perfect for this kind of combination.
2. **Real Rockers** would tend to play over a bass + an additional guitar amplifier. This kind of combination needs a fine adjustment among both systems. Tap-Guitars sound much better by the use of a transistor amp. So the sound is getting much clearer.
3. **Allrounder** (and people who don't like to carry equipment which is too heavy...) tend to play their instruments by the use of a modern and small PA-System. Roland® is offering with the SA-300 a very powerful and efficient system. It's consisting of a top with two smaller speakers, a 4 channel mixer (with different in- outputs) and a 12 inch cabinet which is the sub-woofer. The advantage of this kind of story is: If you use digital effects with amp simulators, there are even sufficient enough as preamplifiers to push the out coming signals. With the exception that your drummer is much louder than the whole band. The sound results are very balanced and it comes near to high fidelity. So you don't have make any compromises.



Tony Levin, Stickmen, Aschaffenburg Colossal 2010

Distorted sounds on the melody strings...



Now let's get to a very sensitive point. Nearly the most of the tappers love to work with distorted sounds. But because of the playing technique the melody strings often sound a bit like *the penetrant droning of a nerve-racking housefly*. And I am sorry - that's no joke. A good sound sounds different. The reason for this is that one is not able to produce the same pressure compared to plucking the strings with a pick. But even here there's a relief. In their early days the guitars of Metallica even sounded like the guitars of a poor school band. As mentioned before you can produce very impressive sounds with digital effects and modern amp-simulators.

1. Just choose your favourite **distortion** sound.
2. Additionally a good **compressor** effect offers you the possibility to shape your tone. Similar to pre amp with tubes. Thereby It's determining to find out the right **sustain** parameter. The sustain level should not be too low.
3. Add a **delay**. But the **feedback** delay should be not too long.
4. Just use the **speaker simulators**. This effect is decisively responsible to making your sound really fat and assertive. Desperately this means: **take the 8x 12 inch option!!!** ((-: The other guitar players in your band will be astonished if you blow them away with your small compact pa-system!!! (**tone example 15**)

Very nice sometimes: The use of guitar-synthesizer systems...

Optionally some tappers use an additional hexaphonic pickup. This one is able to pass the analogue signal to a transmitter in way that it can be changed to a full-fledged synthesizer sound. And this while one is playing different sounds with the standard pickups at the same time. Roland® is offering a good option with the GK-3 pickup system. This one has to be assembled near to the Bridge - underneath the melody strings. Piezo based systems are very good as well. ETS® is offering them for the Ziggy and other guitar models. As a transmitter it's recommended to use a Roland® guitar-synthesizer or different compatible systems. With such options it's possible to produce a whole guitar orchestra with just one instrument. And this isn't odd. Finally we live in 2012 not in the dark age. So the times - where you got to build a church to produce a nice reverb effect - have gone many years ago. In a creative phase one shouldn't have too many thinking barriers. Beside that: the well praised "Unplugged" is (to be honest) incorporated with a high technical effort, compared to the procedure above. And if anyone tends to claim the opposite he shall get a nose like Pinocchio...

Anyway: Have a lot of fun by practising, being creative and sound shaping!!!



CREDITS

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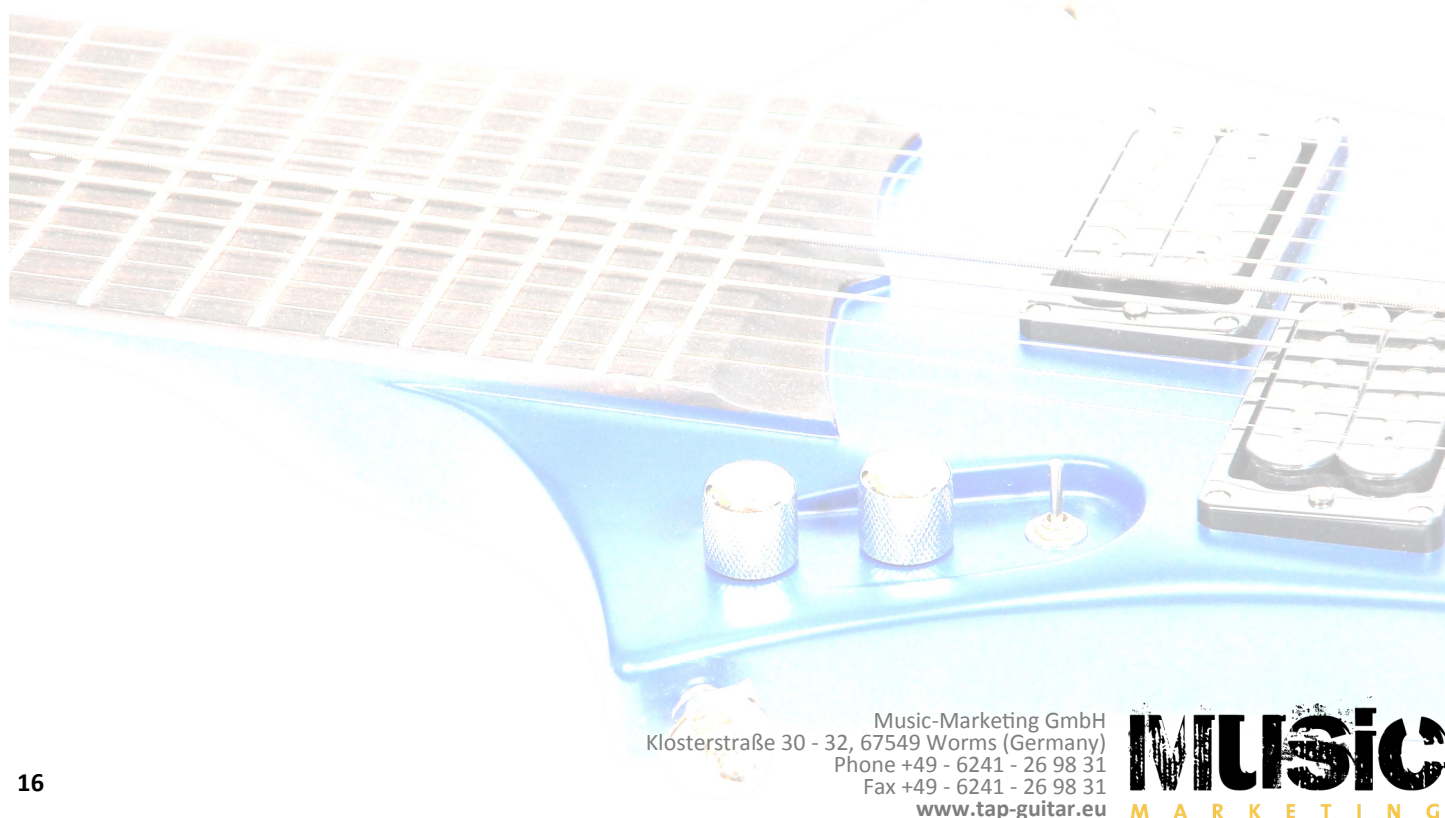
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