

Recommendations for Music Study

This recommendation list and student profile information has been compiled to help you find the book that is right for you and your interests. The questions used have been culled from the innumerable e-mails I receive from aspiring musicians from all over the world.

There are many ways to use this file. The Table of Contents will give you an over all idea of where specific information is located by broad categories. The profiles found on pages 2 through 4 will describe individuals like yourself with similar problems and the recommended books for these problems. You may also search by book title on page 5. If you don't find the information you need, please e-mail me at FAQ@muse-EEK.com.

Thanks,

Bruce Arnold

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Profile Page

Guitar Study

Type: Beginning Student

- Page 6. I am a beginning guitar player. I own "1st Steps for a beginning Guitarist" and would like some other books to work with in tandem with it.
- Page 7. I'm just "beginning again" after a layoff of 20 years. What are the right books to begin with?
- Page 11. I am a beginner regarding actual guitar instruction, but have played for 2 years. Anyway, I was wondering if you could place your books in order of "importance for beginners" or "best way to learn."
- Page 14. I just started taking guitar lessons (I'm 35 years old, but hey, better late than never!) and I'm having a lot of trouble understanding how to read the music and find the notes on the guitar.

Type: Intermediate Student

- Page 12-13. I have played guitar for 10 years but have never become what I would call an accomplished guitar player. I've also taken a number of theory courses and I've never really been able to retain the theory. I've always played by ear.

Type: Advanced Student

- Page 15. I am a graduate of Berklee College of Music. I majored in guitar and was wondering if any of your guitar method books would be good for me. I feel I know the notes on the instrument, understand music theory and scale application.

Ear Training Study

Type: Beginning Student

- Page 16. Your website lists a number of ear training workbooks. If one were to start at the beginning and work to the end, what would the appropriate order be?
- Page 17. I am a guitarist, and have been playing for 3 years. I am reasonably good, but what is holding me back is my musical ear.
- Page 18. What is your recommendation for combining the Ear Training and "Fanatic's Guide" aural exercises?

Ear Training Study Continued

Page 18. My goal is to learn to sing harmony and improve my ability to transcribe music (especially chords) from records.

Type: Intermediate Student

Page 19. I need to decide between the Intermediate and Advanced Levels. I have already done some work with tonality-based ear training methods, and I am wondering what level of skill is required for the Advanced Level.

Type: Advanced Student

Page 20. This month I graduated from college with degree in Composition... Over the next year or so I will be applying to conservatories for grad school, so in the meantime I want to keep my ears in shape through private study.

Music Theory and Chord Study

Page 24. Do you have a book for developing solo guitar playing like bass and chords at the same time?

Page 21. I've played rock/blues guitar for 20 years and I play pretty well, but I have almost no understanding of theory or composition. Could you recommend which workbooks and also the sequence to study them in which would make the most sense?

Page 22-23. I was looking at Amazon for additional books to supplement my learning,

Page 22-23. Can you tell me if a beginner will find it easy to grasp scales and how to perform them by purchasing your Music Theory for Guitar Vol. 2.

Page 24. Do you have to know how to read music to use this book?

Sight Reading and Rhythm Studies

Page 25. I am a jazz guitarist and have just completed my first two semesters at the New School. Being able to sight read has always plagued me. I just can't seem to get it together.

Guitar Technique

Page 26. I'm having a lot of trouble with the wrist on my right hand. When I play for a couple of hours it gets very tight and it hurts to bend it. Do you think your "Right Hand Technique for Guitar" Book would help me?

Page 26. I've been playing guitar for quite a few years and have a decent technique, pretty fast but with some seemingly insurmountable flaws at top speed. Would you recommend some guitar technique books for me.

Recommended Guitars for a Beginning Student

Page 26. Can you suggest a good working guitar (or setup), make and model in the \$300 - \$400 range, for a beginner.

Recommended Books for Entering College for Music

Page 27. I really want to know what books are good for me (because I'm really serious about Berklee College of Music.)

Page 28. I'm strongly considering applying to Berklee. Do you have any tips?

Recommended Books for Bass Players

Page 29. I have a friend that plays bass. I told him you recommended some books to me and he was wondering if you have written some bass books. So, do you have bass books?

Miscellaneous Recommendations

Page 6. Is there a store that you know sells these books?

Page 7. Practice schedule for a beginning student

Page 7. Do you also recommend any teaching aids from other sources?

Page 9. I am caught between buying your Theory Workbooks and one other course "Fretboard Logic." Have you any idea of the "Fretboard Logic" series compared to the info your course contains.

Searching by Book Title

TITLE	PAGE
1st Steps for a Beginning Guitarist Volume One	6,7
Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume One	6,7,11,12,15,21,22,27
Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume Two	15,22
Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One	6,7,8,11,12,14,21,22,24,27,28
Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One	7,8,21,22,24
Ear Training One Note Beginning	6,7,8,10,11,16,17,21,28,29
Ear Training One Note Intermediate	16,28,29
Ear Training One Note Advanced	15,18,19,20,24,29
Key Note Recognition	15,16,18,19
Fanatic's Guide to Sight Singing and Ear Training	10,11,16,17,18,19,20,28
Lines: Sight Singing and Sight Reading Exercises	16,18,20,22,23,24,27,28
Ear Training Two Note Series	15,16,19
Single String Studies for Guitar Volume One	14,16,23,25,27,29
Single String Studies for Bass Guitar Volume One	29
Single String Studies for Guitar Volume Two	
Single String Studies for Bass Guitar Volume Two	29
Rhythm Primer	23,27,28
Rhythms Volume One	15,25,27,28,29
Rhythms Volume Two	15,25,28,29
Rhythms Volume Three	15,25,28,29
Odd Meters	15,25,28,29
Contemporary Rhythms Volume One	15
Contemporary Rhythms Volume Two	15
Independence	28
Big Metronome	22,24
Doing Time with the Blues Volume One	15,29
Doing Time with the Blues Volume Two	15,29
Doing Time with 32 Bars Volume One	15,29
Doing Time with 32 Bars Volume Two	15,29
Comping Styles for Guitar Volume Two FUNK	15
Comping Styles for Bass Guitar Volume Two FUNK	29
Guitar Clinic	6,20
Right Hand Technique	26
Guitar Technique (e-book)	26
Guitar Accompaniment (e-book)	24

Recommended Books for A Beginning Guitarist

I am a beginning guitar player and I'm interested in your book "1st Steps for a beginning Guitarist." I have two questions:

1. What books would you recommend to go along with this book or to study right after this one? I just want to learn. I'm not specifically interested in one genre of playing. From the descriptions I thought "Guitar Clinic" and "Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume One" sounded logical. What would you recommend?

2. Is there a store that you know sells these books?

I usually recommend the following books for beginners:

Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One
1st Steps for a Beginning Guitarist
Ear Training: One Note Beginning

The "Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One" is a good book for learning music theory. It will ingrain this knowledge both into your head and your hands.

"1st Steps for a Beginning Guitarist" will get you started on the right path for playing chords and using the proper technique. Make sure to study the guitar technique information closely--it is deceptively simple, but really important. The main reason guitarists have slow development is usually caused by poor technique. Let me know if you have any questions, too.

Finally, "Ear Training: One Note Beginning" will help you develop your ear. By beginning your ear training right away you will find your development to be much quicker and a lot more rewarding. I feel very strongly that the development of your ear is the most important thing you can do as an aspiring musician.

Some students can move fairly quickly through "1st Steps for a Beginning Guitarist." If you find this to be the case the next chord book you would want to purchase would be the "Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume One." This will get you into much harder chords and chord progressions.

Make sure to join the "member's area" because there is a lot of free information there to help you in your musical progress. If you have any questions along the way let me know.

I don't know of any particular bookstores in your area that carry these books. But you can definitely get them through amazon.com, or you can go directly to the Muse-Eek website, and order there. (www.muse-eek.com) If you really want to order through a local book store just give them the ISBN number for the book and they can easily look up the title and order the book for you. The ISBN numbers are found on the website and the back of any Muse-Eek book contains a listing of all books and their ISBN numbers.

I'm just "beginning again" after a layoff of 20 years. I played a bit in college by learning a few chords from my friends. I never took lessons then, but would like to learn more now. I like many styles of music. I've been reading many reviews of teaching aids and books and read good remarks about several of your books. Thus, I ordered your "First Steps for a Beginning Guitarist Volume One" and "Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume One" from Amazon. My question is this - Are these the right books to begin with? Is there a logical progression you recommend to your books? Do you also recommend any teaching aids from other sources? (In particular I read good comments about "Fretboard Logic." Do you recommend this along with your books?)

Usually for someone who is just starting guitar or coming back to it after many years I recommend the following:

1st Step for Beginning Guitarist
Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One or Two
Ear Training One Note Beginning

The fact that you got the "Chord Workbook" is OK too. I would just work out of the "1st Steps for a Beginning Guitarist" first. You should get through "1st Steps for a Beginning Guitarist" in a month or two practicing 1 to 2 hours a day. The next book for chords would be the "Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume One" so, you will be ready to learn more difficult chords and chord progressions.

As far as the other books, I recommend the "Music Theory Workbooks" because they help you to learn the building blocks of music. They also give you a lot of exercises to help ingrain the music theory knowledge in your hands and in your head.

The ear training book will help you develop your ear so you can pick stuff off of records and in general be more connected with music because you can understand it from an aural perspective.

As far as having time to work out of three books I usually recommend a beginning student spend 15-20 minutes a day doing the Music Theory work. The ear training is a CD that you listen to every day. I recommend doing that while walking (use a discman), driving, taking a train, waiting in a the dentist office or anywhere where you have some time to burn. I recommend listening to this ear training CD 4 to 5 times a day in 5 to 15 minute segments. You should work out of "1st steps for a Beginning Guitarist" 30 minutes to an hour a day. By using all the help files on the muse-EEK.com website you should find yourself progressing quickly. You don't have to use the help files on the internet but many of my students find it is a lot more fun when they do, because it's like having a friend play along with you who never makes a mistake, gets tired or pissed off. One thing I would recommend is that you check out in depth all the technical information on how to play the guitar. Examine closely the pictures in the book and the videos on the website. If you start with the proper technique on the guitar you will find your progress to be much faster. The Music Theory and Ear Training are not easy but if you can get into a habit of doing a little each day you will be amazed at what happens over the next year.

As far as other sources of music education I would recommend you download the major scales from the music workshop at www.arnoldjazz.com. Start learning the C scale from every position. (There are 7) I would learn one position a week. After you get two or three positions together e-mail me and I give you some suggestions for implementing the scale through improvisation.

In order to develop a working knowledge of music theory you are going to first need to learn the foundation, or building blocks. "Fretboard Logic" spends a few pages on this information but it takes more than just telling you the information to make it useful in your musical life. You need exercises that make you apply the music theory you learn to the point where it becomes a second language. Music schools commonly teach you the basics of music theory and then spend a couple of years giving you assignments which require you to use it so you know how all this information applies to real life playing, composing, and performance situations.

The "Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One" gives you exercises to improve your knowledge of music theory. Specifically it helps you develop an ability to know what notes are contained in any chord. This is done through a series of exercises which have you write out what the notes would be for each chord using both the music staff and a guitar neck diagram.

The "Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One" also gives you information in the theory section about how chord progressions are commonly put together but this is not the major direction of the book. This book's goal is to give you a working knowledge of the notes contained in chords so you will then be able to move on to understanding more complicated subjects in music such as why one chord moves to another or why a certain scale works over a chord. "Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume Two" does the same thing but with scales. You learn 22 different scales in 12 keys across and up and down the neck by writing them out using staff notation and on a guitar neck. Both Music Theory Workbooks give you the answers to all the exercises in the back of the book. Therefore you don't need a teacher to correct your answers.

I tell my students that working through this book is like learning the alphabet. You need to know that information before you can start to write words and then sentences. If you feel you would have a problem telling me straight away what the 5th of Gb would be or the flat 6th of Db then this book would be for you. It contains 100 pages of exercises. It is not particularly fun to do, but with study, the rewards are immeasurable.

I think that as far as having a command of music theory that you can use to help yourself with understanding the more complicated aspects of music, this book is where you should start.

While a working knowledge of music theory through the "Music Theory Workbooks" will definitely help you understand how music is put together it will not help you "hear" music. I would highly recommend you also purchase "Ear Training One Note Beginning" so you can begin developing your ear. While theory is very important to understanding the inner workings of music, ear training is very important because it gives you the ability to understand music through listening. When both work together you will find the magic of making music.

I am caught between buying your course of study (“Chord/Theory Workbooks”) and one other course “Fretboard Logic” by Bill Edwards that has gotten a lot of attention. I would ask if you have any idea of the fretboard logic series compared to the info your course contains.

Bill Edwards book “Fretboard Logic SE Special Edition Volumes 1 and 2 combined” ISBN 09624770 is pretty much a completely different approach to learning guitar and music for that matter than the Music Theory Workbooks.

Deciding on the educational path you want to take with guitar is probably the most important decision you will make in your musical career so you should think about a few things:

1. Your goals with music
2. Your internal ability to hear/process/understand music
3. Your attitude towards learning music.
4. What you want from music.

Take a few moments and think about these four things. Maybe even write down 3 or 4 answers per question.

Because so many guitarists start out wanting to play rock guitar, most guitar book authors first and foremost figure that you really just want to get to play the guitar as fast as possible. Guitarists more than any other instrumentalist are very concerned about speed. Many types of books have been created to accommodate this rather large group of students who think they don’t need ear training, music theory, note names etc. Usually the rationale students give behind these beliefs is that “so and so” from this “famous rock band” doesn’t know any music theory or maybe even the notes on the guitar, so why should I have to know these things. There are a couple of points that these students don’t realize.

1. Many of these musicians have exceptionally good ears but very little musical knowledge. But an exceptional ear is very rare. The ability to hear what you want to play or write can go a long way towards sidestepping the handicaps created by lack of formal musical knowledge, but most students are not gifted in this way and need to develop better aural skills.

2. There is also the category of musicians that are for instance, singer songwriters who just use the guitar as a vehicle to express their lyrics and basic song forms, and therefore need only a limited amount of information usually just chord voicings. Then they use their “ear” to guide them.

As a result of these demographic most guitar and music books rather than spending time helping a student develop their aural comprehension just give students a visual reference to music through tablature and diagrams. (Note: Teaching with diagrams is not within itself a bad thing. You just have to have excellent ears and the ability to internalize, or audiate the sounds you see on a page or on the guitar fretboard.)

So the problem is that 99.9 percent of every student I have taught has had very weak ears. When I taught at Berklee College of Music they would say “That student can’t even hear a door slam.” This is really the main problem I have with a lot of the books that are available for guitarists. They make no mention of developing your ear, which is a key component of musicianship; particularly if you are going to rely only on tablature and diagrams to play your instrument.

To make matters worse most ear training books teach you the wrong concepts for learning how to hear. Therefore even if you realize you have an “ear” problem, you will be directed toward learning intervals, and that will not get you to the point you want to be at.

Many students commonly tell me that they have this friend who: never practices, can play anything they hear really quickly and when they play, it just sounds so good. The student also feels because of this that there is something wrong with them because they don’t play as well even though they practice a lot more. Again, 99.9 percent of the time it’s the student’s aural comprehension that is holding them back. If this all makes sense to you and you feel like you should give some attention to developing your aural comprehension check out the “Ear Training: One Note Method” and the “Fanatic’s Guide to Sight Singing and Ear Training.”

To Sum up: It must be kept in mind that everyone has different priorities and tastes, therefore a student may get much more from “Fretboard Logic” than from the Music Theory Workbooks or even the ear training books. When Mr. Edwards states on page ix of his book that “Fretboard Logic SE Part 1 will teach you a great deal about just one thing: how the tuning works out on the fretboard in terms of patterns,” he is summing up the first half of his book very well. It basically comes down to a student realizing through time and experience which system of education best fits their needs and goals.

I am a beginner of actual guitar instruction, but have played for 2 years. Anyway, I was wondering if you were to place your books in order of "importance for beginners" or "best way to learn" and if the student had ample time and money to focus his/her time and energy into the books what order would you recommend them? I have already bought your, "Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume 1" and already (in only a week in fact) have learned tons about what makes chords, why certain chords go together etc., but is there a book of yours that would be more beneficial in the long run to study before this one? I realize that all students have different wants/desires out of the guitar but could you please give me a kind of "road map?"

Regarding a regimen of study with my books, I recommend starting with "Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume 1" and "Theory Workbook for Guitar" Volume 1 or Volume 2 (you don't have to complete Volume One before going to Volume 2) Along with this I recommend getting started with Ear Training. You should at least work with "Ear Training: One Note Beginning" and at some point not too far in the future you should start working with "A Fanatic's Guide to Sight Singing and Ear Training."

You should download the proper way to play scales, which is located on the www.arnoldjazz.com music workshop site. This will give you a good base to start from. Also you should get yourself a tape recorder so you can record some chords/vamps to play over.

Keep in mind that there are 5 basic areas that you should be working on to develop properly:

1. Music Theory
2. Chord Work
3. Ear Training
4. Scale work
4. Improvisation (playing over chord progressions)-- basically being creative! This is where you apply the chords, scales, theory you've been working so hard to learn. This will also develop your ear and your musical connection to real music.

You should also register for the "members area" on the main book page of muse-eek.com

Over the next year muse-eek will be adding extra text and audio files, videos and other educational information which is free for you, being an owner of one of my books.

I have played guitar for 10 years but have never become what I would call an accomplished guitar player. I've also taken a number of theory courses in High School, at UT Austin, and at MIT. None of them applied to guitar and I've never really been able to retain the theory. I've always played by ear and so have never gained any knowledge of the theory with respect to guitar. So you can assume I don't know the scales or chord names etc... Now in August I will be leaving to travel for leisure around the world for 1 year. We will be backpacking and I will be taking a Martin Backpacker guitar. I would like to use some of this time to get back into playing. What I would like you to help me with is to locate the right materials for me to meet my goals and/or to have some insight from you on how my goals may need to change. Basically, I'd like to learn more guitar theory; enough so that I can also spend some time learning to play Jazz. So, I am trying to figure out the right guitar theory book/s and Jazz book/s to take with me. I am considering your books but would like your opinion on what would be reasonable and appropriate to take, keeping in mind that I cannot carry more than a few books.

For your trip I would recommend either “Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One” or “Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume Two” and “Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume One.” The Theory Workbook will give you the same theory you learned in your classes but it is completely geared to the guitar fretboard. The Chord Workbook will teach you chord voicings (many of them you might already know) and have you apply them to 36 chord progressions found in the back of the book. When learning theory or chord usage, application is the only way I have found to memorize and ingrain this knowledge so that it becomes a natural part of one's musical ability. Let me also say a few things about each book.

1. The “Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One” teaches you how to build chords from simple triads to highly complex chords. You have to write the notes found in each chord on a staff and also write out where these notes would be on the guitar. This directly applies music theory to your guitar and makes all the difference as far as actually using this information when playing the guitar.

2. The” Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume Two” teaches you how to build scales. You have to write on a staff where the notes are found in each scale, and also write out where these scale degrees would be on the guitar. Once again this directly applies music theory to your guitar and makes all the difference as far as actually using this knowledge when playing the guitar.

3. The ” Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume Two” will teach you chord voicings but not every chord voicing under the sun, only the voicings professional guitarists generally use. The voicings found in Volume One always have the root in the bottom voice. Volume Two gives you the upper four string voicings. This book also teaches you how to reharmonize a chord progression. The 36 chord progressions in the back of the book show you how to apply the reharmonization techniques. The chord progressions are presented in two formats.

- a. Chord symbols with a fret number to guide you to the right voicing
- b. Chord voicings (just the notes) which forces you to figure out chords based on the notes only. FYI, at Berklee College of Music and many other Universities, not to mention in the professional world, you are required to read music where only chord voicings are given. This is extremely hard if you haven't put in the time to learn to read in this fashion.

I should point out that though even a beginning guitarist could use any of these books, they are designed to prepare a guitarist for a professional career in music. Whenever possible these books approach music from the perspective of how you, the player, will encounter music in the "real world."

Consequently these books are not "fun" and I must emphasize to you that they are very hard work. But if you stick with it, your musical ability will escalate like crazy; I've seen it countless times. I usually give the analogy that learning music theory is like learning a foreign language. You need to learn the nuts and bolts of how a language is put together before you can make sense of it and begin to use it to express yourself. You also need to realize that you can't just jump into these books 4 hours a day, either. You will need to build up slowly or you will burn out. Think of it like being a runner-- you wouldn't go out and run a marathon your first time out, right? You would work up to it. In particular I think the theory books would be really good for you. Many of my students work on these books when they are traveling. Keep in mind that mental practicing is even better than physical practicing, so working through these theory book exercises even without a guitar is great. Note: you can check how well mental practicing works by finding a short excerpt of music and learning it entirely in your head. Work out how you would pick it, where the notes would be on the instrument, what the rhythm would be. Then slowly try to build up speed in your mind. Do this for a week and you will find that when you first play this excerpt it will probably be the best, fastest thing you know how to play. I'm always practicing in my head. But, keep in mind that this kind of practicing is extremely taxing, and you will tire quickly.

If you do decide to get the "Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One" you should go to the "members section" of the www.muse-ek.com website and download the "alternate answers for the first pages. This will greatly help you get started with the book because it contains alternate answers to each exercise. Many students wonder why these alternate answers weren't in the book to start with. Well if they were, the book would have been around 1800 pages long. This would have been very expensive, not to mention a drag to carry around. But it does point out one of the main problems that guitarist have to deal with when learning their instrument: Each note can be found in many places and that is one of the reasons the guitar is one of the most difficult instruments to master.

I just checked out your web site and I thought you might be able to help me ... I just started taking guitar lessons (I'm 35 years old, but hey, better late than never!) and I'm having a lot of trouble understanding how to read the music and find the notes on the guitar. It doesn't make any sense to me ... I took piano for 7 years as a kid so I do know how to read music even though I'm rusty. When I look at the music, I keep seeing a keyboard in my head ... I look at the guitar and I'm having a lot of trouble figuring out where the note is on the guitar. I know this is a strange question, but I thought you may have come across someone else with a similar problem. What I'm trying to understand is where the open strings are on a keyboard... I thought that might help me understand the whole & half steps using the frets ... thought you might have another suggestion as well. I've only had 2 lessons and I know I should probably be more patient, but I'm one of those people who has to understand 'the big picture' if you know what I mean ... I'm not sure if I made myself clear, but I'd appreciate any insight or suggestions you might have ... my goal is to be able to look at a piece of music and to be able to play it on the guitar and at least recognize the tune ... that shouldn't be too much to expect, is it?

You aren't alone. Many students have problems figuring out where the notes are on the guitar. Unfortunately it's much more complicated than the piano so memorizing all the notes on the fretboard is an inescapable but necessary hurdle.

As far as where the open strings of the guitar are on the piano keyboard the "Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One" will tell you where the open strings are in comparison to the piano keyboard and will also talk about the guitar as a transposing instrument (the guitar sounds an octave below where written)

You will find reading music on the guitar to be much more challenging initially than on the piano. The guitar has many repeated notes. (For example it has 5 middle C's) This makes it quite difficult to decide where to play a given melody on the guitar. I suggest that you get the "Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One" because it will help you to learn to notes on the guitar along with learning music theory. Although your piano background may have already given you an understanding of some of the theory presented in this book, the fact that all the exercises are geared to the guitar will reorient you to your new instrument and how it works.

Also if you really want to torture yourself you could get the book "Single String Studies for Guitar Volume One" This book forces you to read notes on only one string which really helps you learn where all the notes are. Neither of these books are particularly fun but they do the job and if you are serious about learning the guitar they will be a great help.

I am a graduate of the Berklee College of Music. I majored in guitar and was wondering if any of your guitar method books would be good for me. I feel I know the notes on the instrument, understand music theory and scale application.

I would recommend “Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume One and Two.” These two books will discuss and clarify many questions I know I had after graduating from Berklee. Each volume of the Chord Workbooks presents a different chord reharmonization technique and then gives you 36 progressions to help you understand and hear how to apply this information to a real music situation. You might also be interested in “Comping Styles for Guitar Volume Two FUNK” which gives you these same 36 progressions but in a FUNK style. This is great stuff for developing your sixteenth note feel and for playing contemporary solo guitar. “Single String Studies for Guitar” is also a very challenging book for continuing your mastery of the guitar fretboard and continuing to improve your sight reading skills. The “Rhythm” Series includes:

Rhythms Volume One
Rhythms Volume Two
Rhythms Volume Three
Odd Meters
Contemporary Rhythms Volume One
Contemporary Rhythms Volume Two

Are all extremely challenging books for any level player. These books will not only improve your rhythmic feel but greatly enhance your reading ability.

Finally the “Time” Series which includes:

The Big Metronome
Doing Time with the Blues Volume One
Doing Time with the Blues Volume Two
Doing Time with 32 bars Volume One
Doing Time with 32 bars Volume Two

It’s an excellent collection of books to really improve your internal sense of time and prepare you for a career in contemporary improvised music.

Last I think you should examine your aural perception abilities. Get a copy of “Ear Training: One Note Advanced. “ See if you are able to get 90 percent of the answers right. If you can, then move on to “Key Note Recognition.” From there you should move into “Ear Training: Two Note Series” which is a good workout for most students.

Recommended Books for Ear Training

Your website lists a number of ear training workbooks. If one were to start at the beginning and work to the end, what would the appropriate order be?

The order of books is a little tricky because each person is different. If you are unsure you should contact me at FAQ@muse-EEK.com and give me a history of your music education and what your goals are with ear training and music in general. I can then recommend a course of study so you don't buy any books that are either too hard or too easy.

Below is the common way that students work through the ear training series.

Most beginning students start with:

“Ear Training: One Note Beginning” in combination with “Fanatic's Guide to Sight Singing and Ear Training.”

When they are able to get approximately 80% right answers with the “Ear Training: One Note Beginning” they move to:

Ear Training: One Note Intermediate

When they are able to get approximately 80% right answers with the “Ear Training: One Note Intermediate” they move to:

Ear Training: One Note Advanced

Or they purchase “Ear Training: One Note Complete” which contains all the information and CDs found in “Ear Training: One Note Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced.”

After the “Ear Training One Note” books you move to “Key Note Recognition.” When you are getting approximately 90% right answers you should move into the “Ear Training: Two Note Beginning Series.”

“Fanatic's Guide” is a book people use for years. But I do use supplemental singing books like “LINES” and “Single String Studies.” To receive assignments in these books either read the FAQ's for each book or contact me at FAQ@muse-EEK.com

Once you purchase a book(s) you should join the "member's area." There are free downloadable articles and files to further help you in the ear training process.

I am a guitarist, and have been playing for 3 years. I am reasonably good, but what is holding me back is my musical ear. Improvisation, and working out songs off a CD is extremely difficult for me. I do not think I am tone-deaf, but my musical ear is very restricted. If I was tone deaf, would your course still help, or is it a lost cause? I am seriously considering buying your course books for ear training. What books of yours should I use with them? How will I know if the course is working? And is it difficult to follow? I hope the course is simple to understand and use. What state of relative pitch can your courses make me achieve? Is it possible to get amazing relative pitch from your courses? Or does it just enable me to get average relative pitch. Also, is it possible to develop perfect pitch? If so, do you have any courses dealing with that, or know any good courses you can recommend for me.

First, I applaud you for your realization that you should do something about your weakness in aural perception. Many players don't even address this aspect of their musicianship. I have been teaching for 21 years and have never met anyone who is tone-deaf. Literally if you were tone deaf you wouldn't be able to distinguish music for any other sound. It would all sound mono chromatic with no variance in pitch. What has most likely happened to you is your mind has never latched on to a system for identifying pitches so it doesn't know how to process the sound when it hears it.

So the next step is to teach your mind how to recognize sound in a way that will allow you to hear what others are playing in person or on record. You also want to develop the ability to know what you hear inside your head so you can compose and improvise. This is a long process and doesn't have a quick fix. By using a combination of the books I've written along with dedication and perseverance, you can conquer this problem. It's also going to be very frustrating when you start working in these books because you are not going to get the answers correct for a while, so you will have to be patient and believe in yourself and that you can accomplish your goal.

I would start with buying two books, "Ear Training: One Note Beginning" and "Fanatic's Guide to Ear Training and Sight Singing." Read and reread the intros to these books. I can't stress how important it is for you to work on the ear training the correct way. It is very easy to try and find short cuts with the process that will only screw you up in the long run. Also, after you've purchased a book, join the "member's area" on the muse-EEK.com website and read the article I've posted there on ear training. If you have further questions on how to organize your practice, write back and I'll give you a practice regimen tailored to your needs.

Could you advise me whether I should begin with 'A Fanatic's Guide to Sight Singing and Ear Training' or "Lines: Sight Reading and Sight Singing Exercises Volume One?" My goal is to learn to sing harmony and improve my ability to transcribe music (especially chords) from records. (Unfortunately, I don't plan on spending any time on the bandstand in the near future, since I am neither a music student or a professional musician.)

I have done some ear training. I found your 'Ear Training One Note: Advanced Level' quite easy, although the 'Ear Training Two Note: Vol 1 (5ths)' was much more challenging, and I suspect I will need to practice this for awhile. I am also transcribing the voice leading exercises from the tapes which accompany Paul Harder's two volume 'Harmonic Materials for Tonal Music.' (Out of print, I believe.) Finally, I've been trying to teach myself to sing harmony by plunking out a melody on my guitar and attempting to sing the harmony part.

Thanks for your advice. Thank you also for the "Ear Training: Two Note Series." I don't have the time (or ability) to improve my ear by jamming with other musicians; thus, I'm grateful for this stepping stone between transcribing melodies and transcribing entire chords, especially since I haven't found any other comparable teaching aid.

It is very difficult to give you precise directions; for that I would need to actually test you myself, but let me lay out a possible course of action for you. Work with the "Fanatic's Guide," especially the exercises on page 6, then proceed to singing the 2-6 note exercises until you feel you can pretty much sing any exercise in the book. At the same time you could do the "LINES" book. I would skip the 1st four pages of each key and move directly into playing one voice (or use the midifiles on the muse-ek.com website) and singing the other. This will help you learn to understand and sing harmony.

For the listening part of ear training you might also check out the "Key Note Recognition" book. This usually helps people especially if they are having problems "modulating" with the "Ear Training Two Note Series."

When you feel like you have control of the "Fanatic's Guide" and "LINES" write back and I'll recommend the next exercise/book for singing.

What is your recommendation for combining the Ear Training and Fanatic's aural exercises? Do you alternate lessons from each book daily or do you have another method that will maximize results? Thanks for your time and I am looking forward to hearing better.

I'm glad you have both the "Fanatic's Guide" and an "Ear Training One Note" book (I assume it's a one note book.) Working on both singing and listening is very important to fast progress. One of the key ingredients to improving at the fastest pace with this method is to practice several times throughout the day, as opposed to one long session. 15-20 twenty minute intervals would be ideal. During this practice time you should work in both books by listening to the CD for the One Note Book and then doing some of the singing exercises out of the "Fanatic's Guide." Make sure you always use the "Fanatic's Guide" CD with any exercise you sing. It is important to always hear your voice in relation to a key center. Another main ingredient is your understanding of what you are trying to do inside your head with this ear training and how you deal with your own preconceptions and old habits. These questions are usually dealt with by me in a private lesson over a period of time. In this case we don't have that luxury. To deal with this problem I have written a 10 page article that is free for you because you own a muse-EEK book. You can find this article in the "member's area" of the muse-EEK.com website. This article will give you much more information on how to approach each book and the hows and whys of organizing your practice time. I think you would greatly benefit from reading this information before you start into this ear training method. It may also create some more specific questions relating to your take on the process. Remember you are trying to reprogram the way you hear music. If you start to think about that, it's a pretty massive task. Luckily this method will do this for you BUT you need to be fully involved in monitoring and analyzing your practice habits and your perception of sound. It is important that you read the FAQs under all the ear training books on the muse-EEK.com website. In theory this ear training method is simple, yet once your mind starts to process sound and you are in the middle of practicing you'd be surprised how many different right and wrong perceptions students have of what is the "right thing to do." Let me know if you have any more questions and I wish you good luck with your progress.

I need to decide between the Intermediate and Advanced Levels. I have already done some work with tonality-based ear training methods, and I am wondering what level of skill is required for the Advanced Level. Also, is the CD the same for both volumes? The series looks very intriguing, and I hope to hear from you soon.

As far as what level to start with, all three levels of "Ear Training One Note" have the same type of exercises on the CD; it is the speed in which you are required to answer that gets shorter and shorter as you move through the 3 levels. If you have had some previous music training you might try "Ear Training: One Note Advanced." This is a good place for a person to start because you will have to have your answers up to 80% or 90% correct in this book before you could move on to "Ear Training Two Note" or the "Key Note Recognition" books. If you find that "Advanced" goes by too quickly for you then get either the Intermediate or Beginning level. I would also highly recommend you work with some sight singing along with the listening. "A Fanatic's Guide to Ear Training and Sight Singing" is an excellent companion book to this series.

This month I graduated from college with a degree in Composition... Over the next year or so I will be applying to conservatories for grad school, so in the meantime I want to keep my ears in shape through private study... Based on a good recommendation I ordered "A Fanatic's Guide..." from Fatbrain.com, and am very excited for its arrival... But I'm also curious about the "Ear Training: One Note" (and "two note") series... here are my questions:

1. Does the "Fanatic's Guide" cover the material in the one/two note series? What are the benefits of using both? If I order the one/two note series, what level should I begin at? I completed the N.Y.U. aural comp. progression, but I've never used this particular method... Do I want to start at the beginning level since the method is new to me, or should I start at intermediate or advanced since I already have college-level ear-training experience?

"Fanatic's Guide" should be used in conjunction with the Ear Training one/two note books. You should start off with "Ear Training One Note Advanced" because of your background. Do a combination of listening to the "Ear Training One Note Advanced" CD and singing exercises out of the "Fanatic's Guide," When you feel you are getting around 80% to 90% right on the Ear Training One Note Advanced CD you should get "Key Note Recognition" which will prepare you for the two note ear training series. By combining listening and singing together each day you will find your progress will be greatly enhanced. Depending on your progress in the "Fanatic's Guide" you might want to start on "LINES: Sight Singing and Sight Reading Exercises." Contact me after you have been working for a while and give me an update on your progress. If you need help organizing your practice time let me know ASAP. You should also join the "member's area" of the www.muse-ek.com website where there are free downloadable articles and exercises to help you.

Recommendations for Music Theory

I've played rock/blues guitar for 20 years and I play pretty well, but I have almost no understanding of theory or composition. Could you recommend which workbooks and also the sequence to study them in which would make the most sense? I would like to evolve to solo instrumental playing and composition with more of a jazz or traditional feel.

Learning music theory will give you the tools you need to completely express yourself, but learning and applying it is a serious undertaking. You need to first learn the nuts and bolts of how music is put together and then you need to apply it over and over until you have a working knowledge of it, so you can use it in real musical situations. (The process of applying it is the tricky part!)

Most theory books will have you envision music theory based on a piano keyboard. This will teach you music theory but will still leave you searching when you try to apply it on the guitar.

Another hurdle is applying the basic theory information over and over until you memorize it. This is usually done in the class room with multiple assignments over 4 semesters of a music theory course. The music theory books I have written for guitar take care of these two problems by giving you about 100 pages of exercises that require you write out the music theory information on a musical staff and more importantly, on the guitar fret board. These books are not particularly fun, but they do the job and will really bring your music theory knowledge up to performance level. And you may even start to enjoy yourself, as you observe your progress--the learning can be its own reward.

I have two music theory books, one for building chords ("Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One") and one for building scales "Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume Two"). I recommend you start with Volume One to get an understanding of the basics by reading the music theory section and starting in on the exercises. Many students also buy Volume Two and after they get going on Volume One (let's say 10 pages of exercises or so) they start learning and applying the scales in Volume Two. This may seem like a lot but really if you can spend about an hour a day doing this Theory book work and then spend half an hour applying the scales found in the "Music Theory Volume Two" it's a nice combination. Another way people go about studying is to work on "Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One" and also work in "Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume One." This allows them to learn and apply the chords they are learning in the music theory book. Either method works and it all really depends on how much time you have to practice.

I should mention that the other aspect of music you should get started on right away is ear training. All the music theory knowledge in the world isn't going to mean squat unless you can also "hear" it. For you I would recommend getting the "Ear Training: One Note Beginning" book. Read about the concept and listen to the accompanying CD as much as you can.

Thank you for the books you have put together. I am new to music theory and newly learning the acoustic guitar. I have taken one semester of guitar at a University and I am presently enrolled in Fingerstyle Guitar 2 and Guitar Chord Theory.

I was looking at Amazon for additional books to supplement my learning, and I found your books. I have purchased the first and second volumes of the Chord Workbooks. The information contained within those two volumes about chords is impressive, and I'm sure as I grow in my development I will find it all indispensable. However, I was wondering if you have written a book that describes scales in detail?

My Guitar Chord Theory class just started and there is quite a mix of beginners to advanced guitarists. I'm feeling a little overwhelmed by their knowledge of guitar/music theory and my almost complete lack of it in comparison. I'd like to learn how to build scales, the best way to study them, and I'd like to play them with ease.

I do have a workbook provided by the University that is helpful, but it seems written more for the student who has more knowledge than I. It doesn't explain which finger goes where when you start at the second position, or what does it mean to be at the second position, etc... It assumes that I will understand this already. I didn't skip any prerequisites for the class, so I feel I must need additional instruction.

Can you tell me if a beginner will find it easy to grasp scales and how to perform them by purchasing your "Music Theory for Guitar Vol. 2." I realize that I should probably purchase both Vol. 1 and 2, but I'm a little tight for spending money after buying all my books for 19 credits. I'd like to just get the one that will help me right now, and I'd get the others later.

Also, "A Big Metronome," is it helpful for sight reading guitar sheet music and understanding the timing between notes? I'd love to have some more practice with that as well. Thank you very much for your time, and I'll be looking forward to your response.

I think the 2nd volume of the "Chord Workbook for Guitar" may be a little over your head to start with. But you should find that once you get comfortable with the chords in "Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume One" the chords in Volume Two will be particularly helpful when you start playing with ensembles. The chords in Volume One are more commonly used in solo and duet playing. The chords in Volume Two are more useful when playing with an ensemble because in those situations one doesn't generally play any notes on the two lowest strings on the guitar. That's because the two low strings can interfere with the bass player's range and cause a muddy sound. Using chords based on the upper four strings keeps your sound more separate and discreet and can also help you work better with a piano player.

As far as scales go I would highly recommend getting the 2nd volume of the “Music Theory Workbook for Guitar.” This book gives you information on how to build 22 scales and also gives you exercises to help you memorize each scale. Also the muse-eeek website gives you a bunch of audio examples so you can start applying these scales.

If you need help on how to practice scales go to www.arnoldjazz.com and go to the music workshop. If you look under the scale section you will find 19 scales that you can download for free and these will give you the fingerings and how to play them all over the guitar neck.

You definitely should not get “The Big Metronome.” This book is for intermediate to advanced musicians looking to improve their internal concept of time. Obviously it would help you but I think for now you need to work on the basic mechanics of music.

If you want to help your recognition of notes on the guitar via notes on a page I would recommend “Single String Studies for Guitar Volume One.” This will give you exercises on one string at a time so you can concentrate on learning where each note is on each string in relation to the notes you see on a music staff.

As far as rhythm goes I would recommend “Rhythm Primer.” This will not explain the timing between notes but it will give you simple rhythms that you can learn. If you run into a rhythm you don't understand, e-mail me or check the FAQ page where your question may have already been addressed.

It sounds like you are very dedicated to learning music the right way and I applaud you for this. You are the type of person I have written my books for and I'm glad you have found them useful. I wish you great success and don't hesitate to contact me if you have more questions.

By the way, positions on the guitar neck refer to the fret that you place your index finger on. So... If you start playing something on the 5th fret with your first finger on the 5th fret you are playing in 5th position. I too was mystified when I first started studying at Berklee, as to what they meant when they talked about position. But its really that simple---it's where you put your index finger that determines the position.

Do you have to know how to read music to use this book? I'm a beginner and I'm starting to feel like a parrot playing songs with no understanding of how or why it works. I want to learn much more. Do you have any suggestions? If this book isn't right for me, which one is?

That's pretty funny about feeling like a parrot; I like the analogy. You don't need to know how to read music to work with the "Music Theory Workbooks" because both of them teach you the basics of reading music so that you can work through the exercises.

"Music Theory Workbook Volume One" helps to develop your ability to spell chords and know what notes are in each chord type along with what tensions are available for each chord. It also teaches where the notes for each of these chords are on the guitar. "Music Theory Workbook Volume Two" teaches you 22 scales in all keys and gives you typical progressions to use to improvise with the scales. There are audio examples of each scale on the muse-EEK website. Both books also talk about the typical chords that make up chord progression and why. Of course no book can cover every chord progression and explain how it works. That's part of the reason for the info@muse-EEK.com and the faq@muse-EEK.com which is a forum where you, the student can ask specific questions. Building an understanding of the "hows and whys" of music really requires many different tools. Using the Music Theory books is like learning the alphabet of a new language. Building sentences, paragraphs and stories would be the next step. I have books that will help you with that phase when you get there. Remember that consistency and having a regimen of practice when working through these books is the key. Try to do at least a few of the exercises every day.

Would you have a book for developing solo guitar playing like bass and chords at the same time?

Yes I have two books that deal with that technique. "Guitar Clinic" gives you the basic technique while the e-book "Guitar Accompaniment" gives you an extended explanation of the technique and how to expand upon the concept.

Recommendations for learning to sight read

I am a jazz guitarist and have just completed my first two semesters at the New School. Being able to sight read has always plagued me. I just cant seem to get it together. I have "Single String Studies" but could you recommend some books for me to get my sight reading totally together.

I think the first thing we need to discuss is sight reading in general. "Single String Studies for Guitar Volume One" is a good first step but really you would need to also work with a series of different books and topics in order to become a good reader. I will give you the course of study that I have set up for students at N.Y.U so you can see the overall structure of study to bring your sight reading up to professional standards. Basically you will need a combination of things in order to improve your sight reading.

Rhythm reading

Note reading

Different manuscript exposure

For incoming freshman at N.Y.U. we do the following:

Rhythms Volume One, 3 pages a week. If you are working on your own I would read one page a day and go through the book 4 or 5 times

Rhythms Volume Two, 3 pages a week. If you are working on your own I would read one page a day and go through the book 4 or 5 times

Rhythm Primer, 3 pages a week. If you are working on your own I would read one page a day and go through the book 4 or 5 times

Lines, One key per week. If you are working on your own I would read one page a day and go through the book 4 or 5 times

Single String Studies: One page a week. I would do this on your own too.

Borrow music from your local library. Check out all kinds of different types of reading material:

Transcribed solos

Classical music for all instruments, from all musical periods

Classical guitar music

I would devote one hour per day practicing sight reading. Concentrate on each book for about 10 minutes apiece and then spend the rest of the time working from the music from the library.

Make sure that when you sight read you don't stop when you make a mistake. Try to keep going and keep your place in the music. This will build a habit into your reading so when you are in a "real" sight reading situation you will not get lost, even though there may be measures here and there that you are unable to read.

Recommended for Guitar Technique

I'm having a lot of trouble with the wrist on my right hand. When I play for a couple of hours it gets very tight and it hurts to bend it. Do you think your "Right Hand Technique for Guitar" Book would help me?

I think two books could really help you develop the proper technique to play pain free. "Right Hand Technique for Guitar" and "Guitar Technique" (e-book). The "Right Hand Technique for Guitar" book will explain the right hand method and also give you a lot of exercises to help you develop your ability. "Guitar Technique" e-book will give you pictures and videos so you can see the proper technique for both your right and left hand.

I've been playing guitar for quite a few years and have a decent technique, pretty fast but with some seemingly insurmountable flaws at top speed. Would you recommend some guitar technique books for me.

I think you should get "Right Hand Technique for Guitar" and "Guitar Technique" (e-book). Keep in mind that these books present a long term process in correcting your technique. Don't expect to see improvement in less than six months and the bad news is that the longer you have played with the wrong technique the longer it will take to change. The good news is that once you have changed over, your control, accuracy, and consistency will be great.

Recommended Guitars for a Beginning Student

Can you suggest a good working guitar (or setup), make and model in the \$300 - \$400 range, for a beginner. I have never owned a guitar nor even know how to play one but now ready to learn though the use of the various books produced by Bruce E. Arnold. (I found you through Amazon.com) Is there something available that is a merge between acoustical and electrical. At this time a feel I should begin acoustical, but would like a full sound. We have various music shops in our area including a Mars. I would appreciate your thoughts and reply on help with my purchase.

I recommend two guitars. For electric the Fender Stratocaster. Fender has a Mexican and Japanese model that are around your price range. Seagull acoustic guitars are excellent and they have an entry level guitar that is top notch. I've had many students purchase both of these guitars and all have been very happy with their sound and playability.

Recommended Books for Entering College for Music

I really want to know what books are good for me (because I'm really serious about Berklee College of Music.)

Well, you will need to work on 5 different aspects of music:

Music Theory
Chords
Scales
Sight Reading
Ear Training

For Music Theory get the “Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One.”

This book will give you basic theory information and then 100 pages of exercises to boost your ability to immediately recognize what notes are in any chord. It takes more than just knowing what notes are in any chord you have to get to the point where you can instantaneously know the names of notes in any chord and where they are located on your guitar. This book will help you bypass of a few levels of music theory when you take your entrance exam.

For Chords get the “Chord Workbook for Guitar Volume One.”

This book covers the common chords with the root in the bass that you will be expected to know for your freshman chord labs and 1st jury. There are progressions in the back of the book. Try to learn a new progression every week. Look at both the Chord Symbols and the Chord Voicings. You will be expected to read both Chord Symbols and Chord Voicing written out on a staff.

For Scales get the “Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume Two.”

This book will cover all the scales you will need to know. For your first Jury at the end of your freshman year you will be expected to play all modes of major i.e. Major, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian and Locrian in any key starting from any degree from the low E string. (Go to the music workshop section of the www.arnoldjazz.com website to download how to play these scales. There are a few different ways to finger these scales 1st learn them they way they are on the website and then let me know and I'll give you the other fingering.) For your second jury you will be expected to play the modes of Jazz Minor, the 3 symmetrical scales and two modes of Harmonic Minor. All of these scales are in the book and on the website.

For Sight Reading get the “Rhythm Primer,” and “Rhythms Volume One and Two” and” Single String Studies for Guitar Volume One.”

These three books will help you get all your rhythms together so you can play and read any rhythm. “Single String Studies” will help you locate notes quickly anywhere on the fretboard. You should also go to your local library and check out all kinds of music to sight read. You should practice sight reading from these books along with stuff you get from the library 1 hour a day. Berklee has a rating system, and if your reading isn't up to a certain level you WILL NOT get into a "real" ensemble. This is where guitarists really mess up; by not preparing their reading skills before they enter Berklee.

I really enjoy the book. I've been moving lately and have put it down but will start again soon. I have been studying West African balafon for the last few years and I was so excited to hear about the proposed exercises that I sat right down and ordered it at my next internet session. I'm strongly considering applying to Berklee. Do you have any tips?

It's hard to mention everything you might need to prepare for when entering Berklee College of Music or any college to study music. One big thing will apply at most music colleges: You will have very little time to actually play your instrument. This is because music colleges will initially try to improve your basic musicianship skills, like music theory, sight reading to develop your recognition and performance of rhythm and melody, and ear training. The colleges must bring the students up to a basic level of musicianship before anything further or more exciting is taught. So if you can get yourself up to that level BEFORE you go, you will really get a lot more out of the program, and you will get to play your instrument a lot more. I would recommend working through as many of my rhythm books as you can. i.e.

"Rhythms 1-3"

"Rhythm Primer"

"Odd Meters"

"Contemporary Rhythms 1-2"

"Independence One".

You should be able to read these books at the following tempos:

"Rhythms One" at half note equals 120 (metronome on 1 and 3 and also 2 and 4)

"Rhythms Two" at quarter equals 120 (metronome on every beat) "Rhythms Three" at quarter equals 50 (metronome on every beat)

"Rhythms Primer" whole note equals 100 (metronome one beat per measure)

"Contemporary Rhythms One" same as Rhythms One

"Contemporary Rhythms Two" same as Rhythms Two

"Independence One" various tempos depending on exercise.

For music theory I would work through "Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume One and "Music Theory Workbook for Guitar Volume Two". Even if you are not a guitar player you could work through the exercises because each problem requires that you answer it in traditional notation (guitarists are also required to place the notes on the fretboard). If you can bring your music theory up to a level where it is a language you can speak fluently you will get a lot more out of music school

For ear training I would recommend getting "Ear Training: One note" either Beginning or Intermediate level depending on your background (read more about the book at amazon or on muse-eeek's website to make your choice) I would also purchase "A Fanatic's Guide to Ear Training and Sight Singing". If you can get your ear to the point that you understand what's going on by just hearing the notes you can process music and musical concepts much faster. I know this sounds like a lot of work but this can make a major difference in your success at college and in music in general.

Recommended Books for Bass Players

I have a friend that plays bass. I told him you recommended some books to me and he was wondering if you have written some bass books. So, do you have bass books?

I've written a couple of books specifically for bass players.

Single String Studies for Bass Volume One and Two.

This book teaches you to really know your fretboard and be able to identify all the notes found on the bass clef including ledger lines.

Comping Styles for Bass Guitar Volume Two.

Shows a bassist how to play and read in a funk style. Includes a CD.

I'm currently working on a book for walking bass lines over a jazz progression. It may be a while before I finish this book.

Overall I think the best thing a bassist could do is to get some of the rhythm books so he can really get all his rhythms together.

Rhythm Primer

Rhythms Volume One

Rhythms Volume Two

Rhythms Volume Three

Odd Meters

Of course the ear training book are extremely important.

He should start with a Ear Training One Note either Beginning, Intermediate or Advanced.

Many professional New York players use the time series books as a way to build good time. These include:

Big Metronome

Doing Time with the Blues Volume One and Two

Doing Time with 32 Bars Volume One and Two

Choosing a Beginning Guitar Method Book

There are some important things to look for when buying a guitar method book for a beginner. Which book you choose will have a major impact on the way the student develops. If a book promises that “you’ll be playing in no time,” or that it is the “quick and easy” method, it is probably because it doesn’t include a lot of the important information that will help a student get the big picture regarding their instrument, playing technique, or music in general. (If these things are included, they are frequently inadequately explained and in the case of playing technique, without pictures.) It is an unfortunate fact that a student who acquires bad habits and/or an erroneous understanding of music will have difficulty developing to their full potential. Further down the road, the student will very likely feel frustrated, or that they lack musical ability, because their understanding of the techniques and proper methods to develop their talent were not fully explained from the get-go.

Look for the following in any method book you may choose

1. Pictures of how to play and hold the guitar with detailed descriptions of the techniques involved.
2. Diagrams and detailed explanations that show how to tune the guitar.
3. A chart or list of what notes are found on the guitar fretboard.
4. A music theory section. It should go into some detail; does it contain information on the following topics:
 - a. An explanation of how music notation works.
 - b. What the notes on a music staff are and how they relate to the guitar.
 - c. A detailed explanation of how chords are built, if it is a chord method book (most are.)
 - d. A detailed explanation of how scales are built and how that relates to chords.
 - e. Suggestions on resources for further study.
5. Fingering diagrams with music notation equivalents so one can see a picture of the guitar neck along with the music notation.
6. Common chords used on the guitar and more importantly, graduated chord progressions to apply these chords and make music out of them.
7. Explanations and exercises to understand rhythm. If you don’t know rhythm then you can’t strum a chord and make it sound like music.
8. Helpful hints on how to learn the more difficult chords and/or practice methods to help you memorize the chords you are learning.
9. Basic guitar maintenance guides, changing strings etc.
10. Directions for the exercises and recommended practice regimens.
11. A “where to next” section that suggests further studies upon completion of the book and suggested bibliographies to enhance study, and correct weaknesses.