

Bootsy on the one baby!

William Collin's, aka Bootsy, is probably better known on a wider scale for his funky star glasses and crazy get-ups, than for his solid funkified basslines. At only 18, Bootsy held down the bottom end for the one and only James Brown, before joining George Clintons Parliament/Funkadelic. Bootsy went on to form Bootsy's Rubber Band before recording a number of solo albums, which saw him take on a number of bizarre personas, which is probably responsible for the generation of the "character" that we know as Bootsy. He has worked with, and collaborated with a wide variety of artists as diverse as Snoop Dog and Madonna to Samuel L. Jackson! Bootsy is a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame member with a huge number of recordings to his name.

Bootsy is not only famous for his out there character, but also his unusual sound, which is primarily conceived through the use of an envelope filter and flanger. One could consider Bootsy a little of a gear hoar, having used a wide variety of pedals over the years from the Mu-tron, to his range of signature pedals and effects. He currently plays his custom space bass, which is along the lines of the Warwick offering, string with his signature DR Bootzillas.

Bootsy prescribes his basic funk formula as *on the one*. That is, hitting beat 1 of the bar with a root note on the downbeat, and doing whatever else you want with it. A pretty vague formula-here's an example below (Ex.1). Go for around 70bpm with this one. It also helps to have a nice straight, simple drumbeat to back you up.

Ex.2 looks at an excerpt from the James's Brown classic *Sex Machine*. Apparently Bootsy talks about interpreting this bassline from James Browns body language as he sang the raw lyrics for the tune. I've seen many a bassist become unstuck playing this tune, thinking that Victor Wootening the hell out of it will make it funkier. Stay strong-stick to the pattern and let the band lay it down. If it was good enough for Bootsy to stick in the background and play a similar pattern for 10 minutes it is good enough for you!

Ex.3 is from the 1976 Parliament classic *Give Up The Funk (Tear the roof of the sucker)*. In this tune the bass emulates the vocal line in the chorus. Hunt down the track and listen to how Bootsy places the notes. The way the shorter notes accents the funkiness of the line. Whilst Bootsy elaborates on this line with double stops and the like listen to the tastefulness of them, and how they lead into a heavier downbeat on beat 1. Now go and play baby.

Ex. 1

Ex. 1 is a musical exercise for guitar in bass clef, 4/4 time. The notation is presented in two staves. The upper staff shows the melodic line, and the lower staff shows the fretboard diagram. The exercise consists of two measures. The first measure contains a quarter note G2, followed by three eighth notes (A2, B2, C3) with eighth rests, and another quarter note G2. The second measure contains a quarter note G2, followed by three eighth notes (A2, B2, C3) with eighth rests, and a quarter note G2 that is beamed to a quarter note A2 in the final eighth of the measure. The fretboard diagram shows the following fingerings: Measure 1: 0 (G2), 7 (A2), 7 (B2), 7 (C3). Measure 2: 0 (G2), 7 (A2), 7 (B2), 7 (C3), 5 (D3), 7 (E3).

Ex. 2

The image shows a musical score for a guitar exercise. It consists of two staves. The top staff is a bass clef staff in 4/4 time, with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody is as follows:   
Measure 1: G2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), B2 (quarter), C3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), F3 (quarter), G3 (quarter).   
Measure 2: G3 (quarter), F3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), C3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter).   
Measure 3: G2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), B2 (quarter), C3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), F3 (quarter), G3 (quarter).   
Measure 4: G3 (quarter), F3 (quarter), E3 (quarter), D3 (quarter), C3 (quarter), B2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), G2 (quarter).   
The bottom staff is a guitar tablature with two lines, A (top) and B (bottom). The fret numbers are:   
Measure 1: 6 5 6 8 6 6   
Measure 2: 6 5 6 6 5 1 3 1 3   
The exercise ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Ex. 3

The image shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time on a bass clef staff. The melody consists of the following notes: G<sub>2</sub> (half note), A<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), B<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), G<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), G<sub>2</sub> (quarter rest), A<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), B<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), C<sub>3</sub> (quarter note), B<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), A<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), G<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), G<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), G<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), G<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), G<sub>2</sub> (quarter note), G<sub>2</sub> (quarter note). The guitar diagram below is organized into two measures corresponding to the first and second measures of the melody. The first measure contains fret numbers 7, 5, 4, and 5 for the strings from top to bottom. The second measure contains fret numbers 0, 7, 5, 4, 5, and 0 for the strings from top to bottom.