INVISIBLE ARCHITECTURE SYSTEM

Understanding the Invisible Architecture of American Music for the working bassist

If you're a working bassist, you already know: **the players who get the most and best gigs are the ones who understand the music beneath the notes**. Not just what to play - **why it works**. This method is designed to **give you that edge**; I call it *The Invisible Architecture System*.

Instead of memorizing one tune at a time, you'll learn to **recognize, hear, and communicate the underlying structures** -rhythms, note relationships, harmonic movement, stylistic language - that drive every form of American popular music, and how to **apply them to your bass playing**. Once you understand this, **learning tunes becomes easy**, every bandstand becomes **more comfortable**, and **every musical situation becomes one you can excel in**.

Designed by **professional bassist and Berklee professor Greg Loughman**, this program focuses on **analysis, ear training, and real-world application** - not artificial method books, passive video lessons, or expensive (and often irrelevant) college-level academics. The results **quickly and directly** translate to **better playing and better gigs**.

How It Works

- **Embodied Rhythm -** Learn how rhythm is organized in time, how musicians communicate about it, and how to **feel it in your body**. Learn the rhythmic vocabulary that **makes bassists indispensable**. Understand how **time feels**, how **grooves lock**, and **how drummers think**, so you can **capture the essence of what makes a bassline (and a song) dance.**

- **Notes -** Understand **how notes relate to each other within basslines and melodies** so you can **understand why basslines and solos work** and can easily **come up with your own on the spot.**

- **Chords -** Learn how chords move and relate, how they interact with melodies, and how bass lines outline them. This is where you discover how to **learn tunes fast, by ear or by charts**, and **play them in any key**, so you can show up on the gig and **knock it out of the park, every song, every time.**

- **Putting It All Together -** Apply all the elements—**rhythm, melody, harmony** - to classic American popular songs, grooves, and chord progressions. Build a **mental database** of forms, cadences, and progressions, so that **new songs feel instantly familiar** and you can **instantly be both solid and creative**.

- **Styles & Analysis -** Learn what makes different bassists and bass playing styles sound the way they do: genres, grooves, instruments and amps, feel, effects, and historical context. **"Steal" ideas from great players to instantly upgrade your sound and versatility** so you can **become the bassist who can walk into any situation and immediately know what's appropriate.**

Embodied Rhythm (3 elements)

Learn how rhythm is organized in time, how musicians communicate about it, and how to **feel it in your body**. Learn the rhythmic vocabulary that **makes bassists indispensable**. Understand how **time feels**, how **grooves lock**, and **how drummers think**, so you can **capture the essence of what makes a bassline (and a song) dance.**

Harmonic Time (as pioneered by Jerry Leake and demonstrated in this video) (link)

In the practice room: For medium tempo 4/4, 2/4, 12/8, or 6/8 patterns, step on beats 1 & 3, clap on beats 1 & 4, and sing the part you're working on performing on bass. For 3/4 time step on beat 1, for 6/4 time step on beats 1 & 4. At slower tempos and/or with 16th note subdivisions, you may step on all 4 beats. At very fast tempos you can step on downbeats only.

In performance: Step in time (as desired depending on tempo) to keep your basslines and solos grounded in time

Umbrella Time (as explained by Danilo Perez)
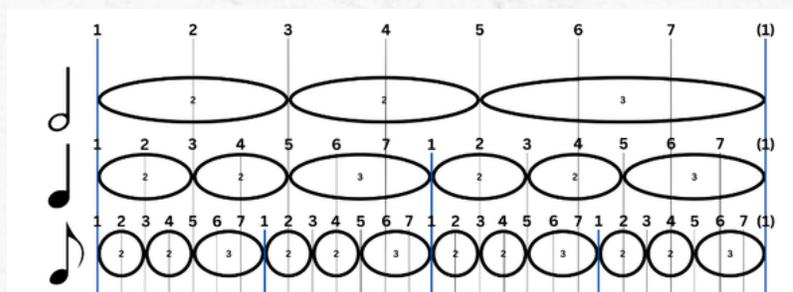
In the practice room: Step the larger beat subdivisions and clap the smaller beat subdivisions to feel them both at the same time.

In performance: Step the larger beats to free up your phrasing.

Balkan Time (using the traditional Balkan dance rhythms to explore odd meters) (link)

This method is especially useful for larger odd number subdivisions (11/8, 13/8, etc.)

In the practice room: Determine the "long" (three 8th note grouping) and "short" (2 8th note grouping) being employed in the piece (sometimes called the "clave", borrowing the term from Latin American music). For example, $\frac{7}{8}$ is often divided 2-2-3 (short-short-long) or 3-2-2 (long-short-short). Then step to the pattern of short and long while playing your part.

In performance: step to the clave while playing your part to keep the essence of the pattern as you play against it.

Notes

Understand how **notes relate to each other within basslines and melodies** so you can **understand why basslines and solos work** and can **easily come up with your own on the spot.**

Use websites like musictheory.net (link) to learn interval names as needed

First simple, then compound intervals

Explore how they are used in basslines and solos to create various musical effects

(this is explored at length in the Invisible Architecture Society online lesson group)

Use websites like iwasdoingallright.com (link) to learn to hear intervals

You can use the sample exercises on the page or create your own specific, targeted exercises.

(this is also explored at length in the Invisible Architecture Society online lesson group)

As your start to understand and hear intervals, use these skills to transcribe basslines and solos YOURSELF. The act of transcribing existing solos and basslines, paired with an understanding of notes and chords, will have a much, much greater impact on your musicianship than simply learning a solo or bassline transcribed by someone else.

(this is also explored at length in the Invisible Architecture Society online lesson group)

Jazz soloists to transcribe (to start with):

Lester Young
Louis Armstrong
Miles Davis
Billie Holiday
Ella Fitzgerald

Jazz bassists to transcribe (to start with):

Ray Brown
Milt Hinton
Slam Stewart
Oscar Pettiford
George Duvivier

Or your personal favorite!

Also, you don't have to always transcribe every note of a song, just grab the part you like.

If you transcribe stuff you like from many different sources, the combination will be A) informed by the tradition and B) uniquely *yours*, based on *your taste*!

Chords

Learn how chords move and relate, how they interact with melodies, and how bass lines outline them. This is where you discover how to **learn tunes fast**, by ear or by charts, and **play them in any key**, so you can show up on the gig and **knock it out of the park, every song, every time.**

Roman Numeral Analysis (diatonic in major and minor)

Common non-diatoinc harmony in American popular music:

Most of the non-diatonic harmonic structures of American Popular Music fall into these types of chords:

Secondary Dominants & Tritone Substitution: a dominant 7th chord resolving to a chord other than tonic. These dominant chords can have a "related II chord" attached to them.

Modal Interchange: borrowing from a parallel modal source (e.g. - borrowing chords from D minor in a D major situation)

Blues inspired harmonic language: I7 and IV7 chords, and other non-resolving dominant chords

Modulation (temporarily or permanently moving to a related key): (e.g. - a song in C major moving to E major on the bridge, or a song moving up a step as it progresses)

Diminshed Chords: (ascending, descending, and auxillary)

TO DO:

Pick a song you know well, find and label all the diatonic chords, then find and label all the non-diatonic chords according to the above categories

Putting It All Together

Apply all the elements—**rhythm, melody, harmony** - to classic American popular songs, grooves, and chord progressions. Build a **mental database** of forms, cadences, and progressions, so that **new songs feel instantly familiar and you can instantly be both solid and creative**.

TO DO

Take all of the elements discussed and explore them in songs you know and/or are in the process of learning. Start to recognize common patterns and 'cliches', so that each song you learn can be thought of in the context of every other song you know. This process will lead you to be able to learn songs quickly and play them in any key, and to be able to create ideas for basslines and solos that you can apply to any song you are playing.

(this is explored at length in the Invisible Architecture Society online lesson group)

Styles & Analysis

Learn what makes different bassists and bass playing styles sound the way they do: genres, grooves, instruments and amps, feel, effects, and historical context. **"Steal" ideas from great players to instantly upgrade your sound and versatility** so you can **become the bassist who can walk into any situation and immediately know what's appropriate.**

TO DO

Listen to your favorite music and your favorite bassists in the context of stylistic choices, including tone, phrasing, note choice, etc. Analyze the key elements of each player, and analyze the aspects of a style of music that give that style of music its unique characteristics. By building this depth of knowledge, you are training your instincts to react in a stylistically appropriate way in real time on gigs, recording sessions, etc.

(this is also explored at length in the Invisible Architecture Society online lesson group)

Walking Bassline One-Sheet

apply these steps in this order to walk a bassline on any song instantly

For any song you are learning, walk a bassline through the changes in this order:

Chord Tones (play in any order, play the roots on the beat when the chord changes or eveny two measures if the chord progression is static):

1. roots only
2. roots and octaves
3. roots, octaves, and 5ths
4. roots, octaves, 5ths, and 3rds (major and minor, as appropriate to each chord)
5. roots, octaves, 5ths, 3rds, and 7ths (again, as appropriate to each chord)

Non-Chord Tones (see definitions below):

1. any of the above plus approach tones (1)
2. any of the above plus scale tones (2)
3. any of the above plus chromatic passing tones (3)

Rhythmic material (use sparingly for best effect): 8th note skips & muted skips, triplets, anticipations, pull-offs, and slurs.

General Guidelines:

1. play the root of the chord on the downbeat (unless you have a very good melodic reason not to do so)
2. move to the nearest root when the chord changes, incorporating step-wise motion and approach notes)
3. remember that you are playing "on" the current chord, but "towards' the next chord, use the notes of the current chord to move you to the next root. It is important to know which specific octave of the root of the next chord you are aiming for (as in; if you are moving to an E-7, are you moving towards the open low E string, the E on the D string, or the E on the G string?)

Definitions:

1. **approach tones:** a note or series of notes leading to a chord tone (usually the root of the next chord
2. **scale tones:** a note or series of notes that, while not present in the chord, is drawn from the scale that corresponds to the chord.
3. **chromatic passing tone**: a note between two scale and/or chord tones a major second apart

Soloing One-Sheet

apply these steps in this order to solo on any song instantly
Melody and Riff-based material (don't skip this!)

Most jazz method books jump straight into talking about scales; this leads to solos that sound like scales, aka bad solos! Do this first:

1. **Learn the melody**
2. **Play the melody with rhythmic and melodic variations** (listen to this recording of Slam Stewart's arco solo on the Song "Sometimes I'm Happy" for an exellent example of drawing from the melody in a solo) (link)
3. **Create riff-based melodies** based on the **pentatonic scale** of the key center and incorporating **blues melodic language**

Once you've done this and can play a melodic solo on that song, stick close to the key center, referencing the melody, and incorporating riffs and blues language, only then should you start to interact with the chords.

Chordal material

We're still not thinking about scales, except the diatonic scale that the piece of music is in (this can shift sometimes in the song, as in the case of modulation)

1. **Identify any diatonic chords:** you can generally play the pentatonic scale based off the tonic chord on any diatonic chord except V7 or maybe III-7
2. **Identify any non-diatonic chords:** on any non-diatonic chord continue to play from the key of the song, but try to aim for and incorporate the non-diatonic note in that chord. For example, if you are in the key of C, and you have an E7 chord, aim for the non-diatonic note in that chord (G#), but keep the other notes from the C major scale (C,D,E,F,A,B)
3. **Play from the KEY CENTER**, incorporating non-diatonic notes when they appear.
4. **Arpeggiate each chord from 1-7** (if a Cmaj7 CEGB) **and from 3-9** (if a Cmaj7, EGBD). Explore these arpeggios upwards and downwards.
5. **Play through the chord progression on piano with just roots, 3rds, and 7ths (aka guide tones)**, so that you understand the fundamental voice-leading, then **incorporate these guide tones into your lines**

Once you've done all of this, maybe you can start to think about scales, but you probably won't need to do so very much.

https://mentorloop.com/blog/growth-mindset-vs-fixed-mindset-what-do-they-really-mean/
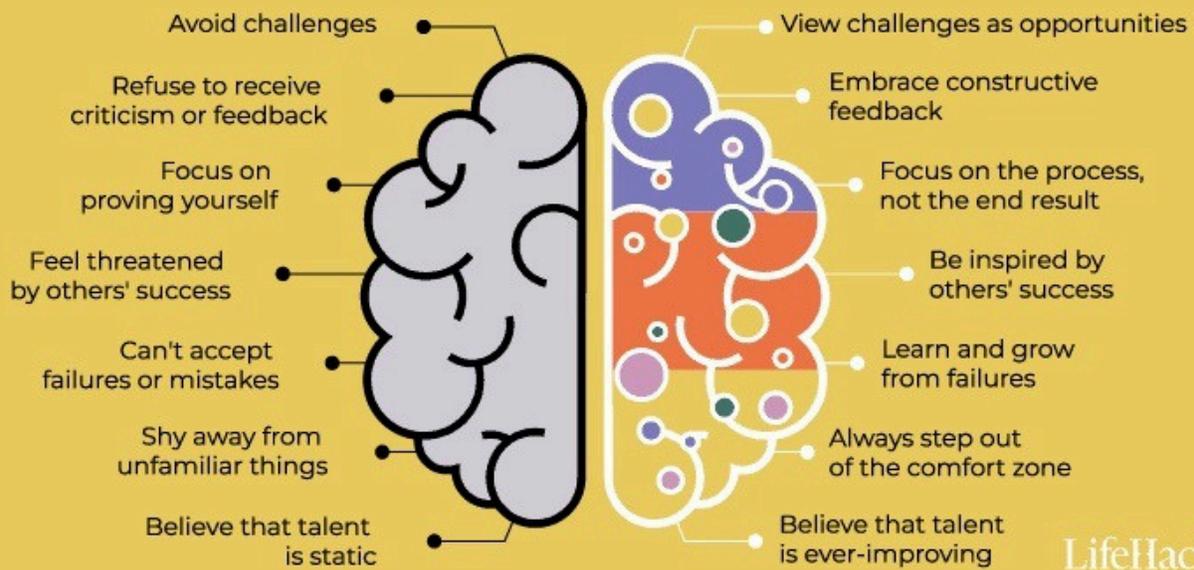
INVISIBLE ARCHITECTURE SOCIETY

Imagine a mastermind-style program built **exclusively for adult working bass players** who want to take their playing - and their gig opportunities - to the **next level** by truly understanding how American popular music works and how bass works within it.

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Led by **professional bassist** and **Berklee professor Greg Loughman**, with occasional appearances by top-tier professional collaborators, this program focuses on **analysis, ear training, and real-world application** not passive video lessons, confusing or irrelevant textbooks, or one-size-fits-all approaches. It's designed to feel like **hanging with peers**, but with **results that quickly and directly translate to better playing and better gigs.**

Community -
- A **supportive community** of bassists to **collaborate and grow** with
- **Two 1-hour weekly collaboration / masterclass video calls**