

BALANCE OF POWER

STRATEGIES AND INSIGHTS
FOR GUITAR



THE LAST GUITAR BOOK YOU'LL EVER NEED

MARC BONILLA

intermediate to advanced

BALANCE OF POWER

STRATEGIES AND INSIGHTS FOR GUITAR

FIRST EDITION

MARC BONILLA

EDITED BY MICHAEL PRESCOTT

Artsake Publications 2019

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction	Pg. 1
2.	Chapter 1 Intervals	Pg. 2
3.	Chapter 2 Major Scale Formula & Dominant Chord	Pg. 4
4.	Chapter 3 Triadic Chords	Pg. 7
5.	Chapter 4 Harmonizing a Major Scale - Tonal Centering	Pg. 10
6.	Chapter 5 Relative Major - Relative Minor	Pg. 16
7.	Chapter 6 Major Scale Formations	Pg. 18
8.	Chapter 7 Secondary Dominants (II-V-I Progression)	Pg. 20
9.	Chapter 8 Altered Dominant Chords	Pg. 23
10.	Chapter 9 The Harmonic Minor Scale	Pg. 25
11.	Chapter 10 The Diminished Scale	Pg. 27
12.	Chapter 11 The Whole Tone Scale	Pg. 29
13.	Chapter 12 The Melodic Minor Scale	Pg. 30
14.	Chapter 13 Triadic Stacking	Pg. 31
15.	Chapter 14 Power Tones and Power Beats	Pg. 36
16.	Chapter 15 Triad Stacking for Rhythm Guitar	Pg. 38
17.	Chapter 16 Chords	Pg. 40
18.	Chapter 17 Chord Voicing	Pg. 45
19.	Chapter 18 The Blues Progression	Pg. 46
20.	Chapter 19 Blues Scale Application	Pg. 52
21.	Chapter 20 Picking Technique and Headlighting	Pg. 54
22.	Chapter 21 Tools of Expression	Pg. 59
23.	Chapter 22 Melody-Rhythm-Dynamics	Pg. 64
24.	Chapter 23 Channeling vs. Technique	Pg. 66
25.	Chapter 24 Practicing and Progress	Pg. 68
26.	Chapter 25 The Band Situation	Pg. 70
27.	Chapter 26 Final Thoughts	Pg. 72
28.	Chapter 27 Suggested Listening	Pg. 74
29.	Appendix I Major Chords	Pg. 81
30.	Appendix I Minor Chords	Pg. 84

CONTENTS

31.	Appendix III	Dominant Chords	Pg. 87
32.	Appendix IV	Altered Dominant Chords	Pg. 89
33.	Appendix V	Major Scale Formations - Root Position	Pg. 92
34.	Appendix VI	Major Scale Formations - 1st Inversion	Pg. 96
35.	Appendix VII	Major Scale Formations - 2nd Inversion	Pg. 100
36.	Appendix VIII	Picking Exercises 1-16	Pg. 104
37.	Appendix IX	Tenth Chords	Pg. 118
38.	Glossary Of Terms		Pg. 125
39.	Biography		Pg. 128
40.	Discography		Pg. 129
41.	Acknowledgments		Pg. 130

INTRODUCTION

The idea had been percolating in my mind for several years to write a definitive book on the staple knowledge of guitar playing. And as this knowledge can vary with every seasoned player, no one approach or observation is more important or more relevant than another. These are just my personal discoveries on the journey I've been on for the past fifty years. Ultimately you find out that when you graduate from an institute of learning (like a music college) you are about as seasoned of a player as you were a driver on the first day you got your driver's license... little to no street knowledge.

There are as many elements and styles to music as there are grains of sand on the beach. Because we can't expand a 24-hour day, these time constraints often disallow complete knowledge of our craft. We are, therefore, always attempting to cut the fat from the fillet by deciding which roads are dead ends and which ones lead to the freeway. This book is an attempt to do just that - to eliminate the extracurricular activity that occurs in our brains during a performance and prevents us from functioning at maximum efficiency. Besides, your hands take orders from your brain, not the other way around. If our brains are too busy trying to assess, determine and categorize a constant blitzkrieg of theories and approaches whilst performing this can, and usually does, lead to a musical pileup of sorts.

So what I've striven for here is to impart the practical, usable, understandable and essential experiences I've had in this world of music with respect to the guitar. I'm sure once this is published I will most likely come across sixteen other ideas I should have included (but that's for a subsequent printing!). Granted there's a lot more to learn about music than what's included in this book, however, treat this as your musical "go bag". In case there's a fire or an earthquake, this is the practical knowledge you'll need to survive. And to be quite honest, this is all the information I've ever needed to do just that. Too many instructors and books are like hoarders of information - a lot of it, but not all essential to the real world. It's like finding unworn clothes in your closet saying, "Wow, I forgot about this shirt. I never wear it, anymore, I'll just get rid of it." When we economize we relieve ourselves of the stuff we don't use and now we can see everything we have without fanning through non-essential garments. And it's easier to access those things that are pertinent. Experience is the great practicality filter.

I've tried my utmost to keep things in a sequential order with regard to a proper learning curve. Some of you will have already come with a basis of music theory and varying degrees of discovery and application. That's fine as there is no way any one book can ever personally address each individual's progress like private lessons do. But, in lieu of that, I've arranged this book in a manner that will build a solid foundation on which to build your dream house. These are not shortcuts, but rather straight lines to get to the heart of the issues.

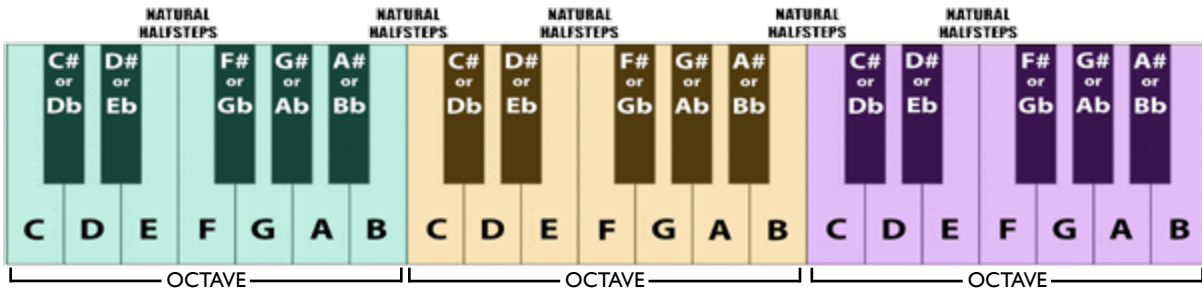
Ultimately the brain must incorporate the information like pouring concrete. You only need the wooden forms (knowledge/technique) to set the concrete, but once the concrete dries, you throw the forms away. I encourage you to take in this information at a slow deliberate pace. Otherwise like a hard rain, the information will oversaturate the ground (being your brain) and end up running down the gutters. Digest it slowly, chew your food and make sure to get all the cracks out of your foundation so your house doesn't collapse during the first windstorm.

Throughout the book you will see words italicized and in *green*. These words can be located in the Glossary (on Page 125) for their definitions if you should need them.

I've also included in *Chapter 26* some of the observations I've made over the past several years that you most likely won't find in a guitar book or video. These unwritten practices have kept me in good standing with my constituents and have aided me in climbing this mountain we call music.

CHAPTER 1: INTERVALS

An *interval* is the musical distance between any two notes. This functions like a ruler, only instead of inches or millimeters, it measures the distances between pitch (the highness or lowness of a sound). The best way to visualize these musical distances is to look at a piano keyboard. (Fig. 1)



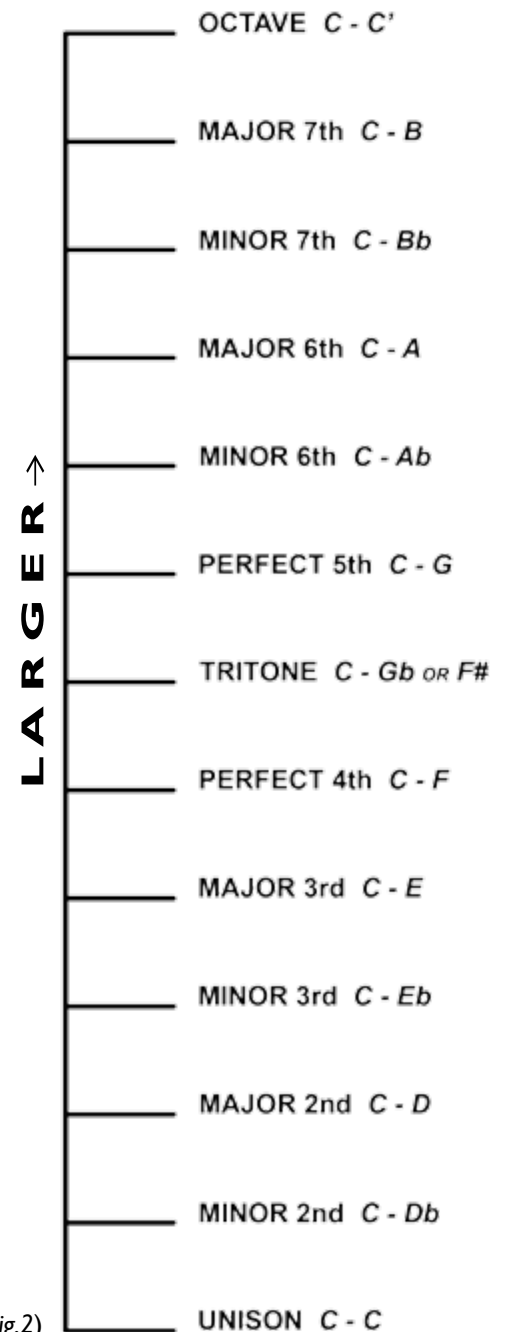
(Fig. 1)

On a keyboard, there are white keys sprinkled with black keys in alternating groups of twos and threes. There is a reason for the gaps between the black keys: if those gaps were filled in with a black key, you couldn't tell where you were on the keyboard. So Bach, in his infinite wisdom, took out two black keys every octave so we could tell when the next octave came around.

Each note on the keyboard is a half-step away from the next note (in either direction). A *half-step* simply means the very next note (on a guitar it's the distance between adjacent frets). In terms of intervals, a half-step is called a "minor 2nd". The reason for this is because we are spanning two letters in the musical alphabet. For example, the white key to the immediate left of the first black duo will always be the note C. Now if we play the very next note up from C (which will be the first of the pair of black notes) that will be Db. So we've spanned two letters in the alphabet: C and D, hence the term "second".

However, there are two types of "second" intervals. We call C-Db a minor 2nd because if we raise that Db up another half-step (this time to the white note directly adjacent to the C note on the right) that becomes C-D. That also involves the same two letters in the alphabet, but it is a half-step larger than C-Db. (Fig. 2) So to differentiate the two we call the smaller interval (C-Db) a minor 2nd and the larger interval (C-D) a major 2nd. Another name for a major 2nd is a *whole step* (or the distance between any two given notes on a guitar if you skip a fret).

If we continue from that same C note (white key to the left of the black pair of notes) and go up progressively in half-steps, we now come to the next interval: C-Eb. Because this spans three letters in the alphabet (C-D-E) it is called a minor 3rd. If we continue to increase the distance by half-steps, our next stop is C-E, also spanning three letters, but again, a half-step greater than C-Eb and, therefore, is called a major 3rd. See the pattern?



(Fig. 2)

Now an interesting thing happens in the key of C: there are two white notes next to each other with no black note separating them. Normally two white notes next to each other would be considered a whole step, but in this case, because there is no black note separating them, that phantom black note is transferred over to the next white note key. This is called a *natural half-step*. They only occur between two sets of notes in music: E-F and B-C. So, actually, F can be considered “E#” and E can be considered “Fb”. Same with B-C... C is B# and B is Cb. But we rarely call them by those names and simply use the simpler E, F, B, and C.

Just as a side note about sharps and flats: when you raise a note by a half-step you add a “#” symbol to it. If you lower a note by a half-step you add a “b” symbol to it. These sharps and flats are called *accidentals* and there are always two names for the same accidental, depending on which direction you are heading - F# is the same as Gb, A# is the same as Bb, etc. These are said to be *enharmonic equivalents* (two names for the same note).

Now back to the natural half-step between E and F. The interval between C and F now spans four letters (C-D-E-F) but, we are not going to call this a minor 4th as the previous pattern would suggest. Instead, we call this a perfect 4th. Reasons for this involve consonance and dissonance, but are presently not that important with regard to knowing intervals. The next half-step up is the infamous tritone - the “Devil’s Interval” as it’s historically known. This is the most dissonant interval in music. No one in the movies ever got stabbed to death without this interval being used in the soundtrack.

Next up is another perfect interval - the perfect 5th (C - G, five letters). Now we’re back on the old Chisholm Trail. C-Ab is a minor sixth. Up another half-step to C-A is a major 6th. The next interval is (you guessed it) a minor 7th (C-Bb), the next larger interval is a major 7th (B-C) which, by the way, is the second natural half-step in music. And finally C-C: the octave. And that’s all twelve notes in music.

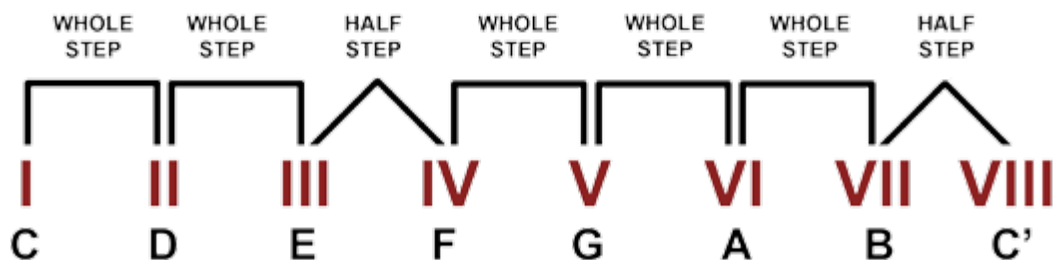
CHAPTER 2: THE MAJOR SCALE FORMULA / THE DOMINANT CHORD

A “scale degree” refers to a note’s position on a scale. For example, in a major scale (do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do) there are 7 notes residing on successive steps (like a staircase) called *scale degrees*. The 8th note is the same as the 1st note, just up one *octave* - which means the same note in another *register*.

The name of any key is derived from the tone based off the 1st scale degree. For example, the C major scale is named after the first note, which is C.

When it comes to soloing, I don’t think in terms of modes; there are too many scales to keep track of. It’s more expedient to think of one scale which applies to all circumstances and then season special chords with a few other scales when you feel like customizing your sound. This method is called *tonal centering*. To do this, you must familiarize yourself with only one scale - the MAJOR SCALE. After this, you harmonize that scale (which I will explain in *Chapter 6*) and then apply that scale to your chord progression. This will allow you to solo *through* the chords as opposed to soloing *to* the chords. This makes for a more fluent and effortless flow.

To build a major scale we use the Major Scale Formula. (*Fig. 3*) Let’s use C as our first major scale to construct using the formula. We designate scale degrees with Roman numerals I - VIII. We start with C on scale degree I. Then we go up a whole-step (major 2nd interval) to II (D). Then up another whole-step to III (E). Then up a half-step (minor 2nd interval) to IV (F). Up a whole-step to V (G). Up another whole-step to VI (A). Up a whole-step to VII (B). And then finish up a half-step to VIII, which is C up an octave.

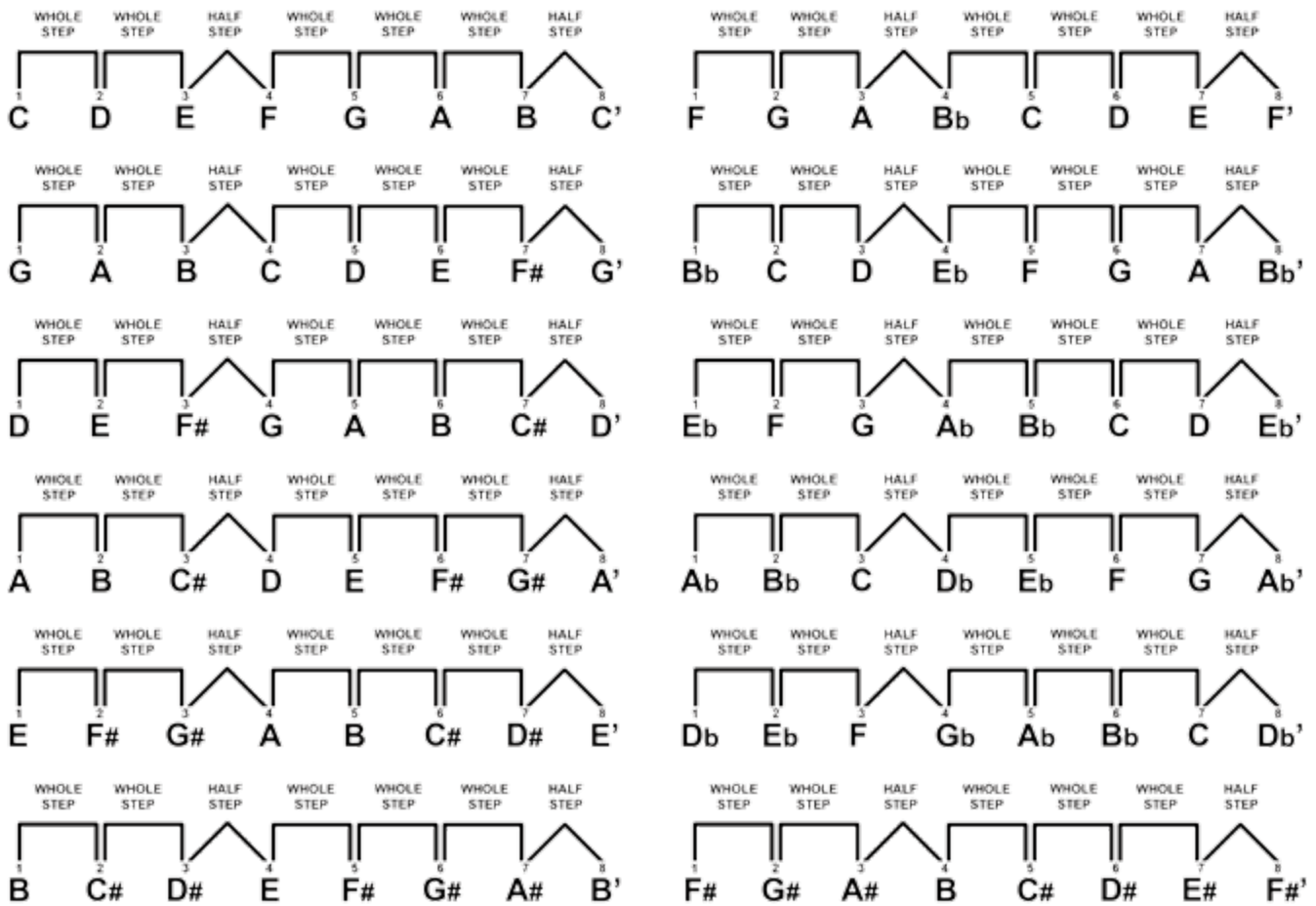


(Fig. 3)

In all twelve major scales the rules are consistent. There are seven notes in a major scale either being separated by a major 2nd (whole step or every other fret) or a minor 2nd (half-step or the very next fret). The construction pattern in all twelve keys is identical.

The majority of notes are a whole-step apart except between 3 & 4 and 7 & 8, which are only a half-step apart (remember where the natural half-steps in C major occur?). By using this formula you can construct any major scale starting with any of the twelve notes as the root of the scale. The next page displays the major scale formula for all twelve keys and you can see that although there are only twelve notes, they can re-appear on other scale degrees in different scales and thus, play different roles within each scale they reside in. (*Fig. 4*)

THE MAJOR SCALE FORMULA - TWELVE KEYS



(FIG.4)

When you are giving note names to the major scale degrees, each degree must have its own personal letter of the musical alphabet (A - G)... no repeats! And half-steps must always fall between 3 & 4 and 7 & 8 so there will be usage of either sharps or flats in order to achieve this correct pattern. Moreover, the number of sharps or flats needed to establish this pattern will be used to identify the *key signature*. So just as you have your own signature when you sign your name (which no one else has), so has each of the twelve scales. No two scales will share the same amount of sharps or flats and therefore every scale has their own “signature” which separates its identity from the other twelve keys.

THE DOMINANT CHORD

What establishes a tone (or scale degree) as the home key will be the drive from the *dominant* tone (always based off the 5th scale degree often designated by a Roman numeral V) to the 1st scale degree, also called the *root* of the scale or the *tonic* (again often designated by a Roman numeral I). Therefore the dominant chord becomes an integral part of any key and is the musical fuel which drives music forward toward a resolution. When we say the V sets up the I of the scale, it means that the V “dominates” or is the boss of the I. It’s like an M.C. saying, “Ladies and gentlemen... let’s give a big warm round of applause for the root of the scale!” Every note can function in a specific key as a dominant and every note in a specific key has a dominant. Think of it as twelve actors in twelve plays. They all switch roles depending on which play they are in and can therefore function differently in each of those successive performances. For example the note C can be the I actor in ‘Play C’ and the V actor in ‘Play F’. It all depends on what key you are in.