

Chapter 10 - Bass lines analysis and particular phrases

In this chapter we are going to analyze (and play!) Some of (in my opinion) phrases, lines, lines and so on of our myth! Let's start with what I have called Melodic Lines, a very very distinctive feature of John!

Melodic Lines

Don't Stop Me Now (Video N.15)

This is a bass line that if I heard it being played by 10 thousand bass players, one after the other, I would almost certainly understand which of these is John. His touch is unique. In the intro of this great piece written by Freddie, he performs this very melodic phrasing, which fits perfectly with the melody line,

Standard tuning
About ♩ = 94
Intro

The musical notation shows the bass line for the intro of 'Don't Stop Me Now'. It is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The bass clef is on the left, with 'Fender P' written vertically. The notation includes a treble clef for the first five measures, a 4-measure rest, and then continues in the bass clef. A dotted line labeled '8va' indicates an octave shift. The notes are: F2 (measure 1), F2 (measure 2), F2 (measure 3), G2 (measure 4), F2 (measure 5), G2 (measure 6), F2 (measure 7), G2 (measure 8), F2 (measure 9), G2 (measure 10). The fretboard diagram below shows the fingerings: 1, 4, 5, 7, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15, 12, 13, 14, 14, 15, 15, 14, 12.

Chords: C, F, F7, Bb, Gm7

Time: 0:12

Father to Son (Live) (Video N.16)

The musical notation shows the bass line for 'Father to Son (Live)'. It is in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bass clef is on the left, with 'Fender P' written vertically. The notation includes a treble clef for the first three measures, a 7-measure rest, and then continues in the bass clef. A dotted line labeled '8va' indicates an octave shift. The notes are: D3 (measure 30), E3 (measure 31), F#3 (measure 32), G3 (measure 33), A3 (measure 34), B3 (measure 35), C4 (measure 36), D4 (measure 37), E4 (measure 38), F#4 (measure 39), G4 (measure 40), A4 (measure 41), B4 (measure 42), C5 (measure 43), D5 (measure 44), E5 (measure 45), F#5 (measure 46), G5 (measure 47), A5 (measure 48), B5 (measure 49), C6 (measure 50), D6 (measure 51), E6 (measure 52), F#6 (measure 53), G6 (measure 54), A6 (measure 55), B6 (measure 56), C7 (measure 57), D7 (measure 58), E7 (measure 59), F#7 (measure 60), G7 (measure 61), A7 (measure 62), B7 (measure 63), C8 (measure 64), D8 (measure 65), E8 (measure 66), F#8 (measure 67), G8 (measure 68), A8 (measure 69), B8 (measure 70), C9 (measure 71), D9 (measure 72), E9 (measure 73), F#9 (measure 74), G9 (measure 75), A9 (measure 76), B9 (measure 77), C10 (measure 78), D10 (measure 79), E10 (measure 80), F#10 (measure 81), G10 (measure 82), A10 (measure 83), B10 (measure 84), C11 (measure 85), D11 (measure 86), E11 (measure 87), F#11 (measure 88), G11 (measure 89), A11 (measure 90), B11 (measure 91), C12 (measure 92), D12 (measure 93), E12 (measure 94), F#12 (measure 95), G12 (measure 96), A12 (measure 97), B12 (measure 98), C13 (measure 99), D13 (measure 100).

Chords: D7, G, F6, Eb, D

Time: 1:37

Chapter 9 - Bass solos!

We have said several times that John was never a particularly virtuoso musician, and he was probably not even a great lover, let's say, of being in the spotlight! Throughout his discography, the Bass solos are quite rare, but each of them has something special, magical, how could it be otherwise ?! In this chapter, therefore, we will go to examine them one by one, you will find a video for each solo, the transcription and where possible the backing track or original song without bass!

Liar (Video N.9)

The very first bass solo of the entire Queen discography, in a very very particular song, a mixture of Hard Rock, Metal and so on !.

The solo begins with a Dmaj scale (starting from E) on the last beat of the second bar John plays a D# (sensible to E). From the third bar we find this "pattern" which is repeated for 6 measures. And it is composed of the notes (in eighths) E - F # - G. As you can see the harmony moves (we pass from D to C and finally B), so we can hear the "color" of the Lydian, since on the C major John, continuing with E - F # - G he plays respectively major third, augmented fourth and fifth of C. From the ninth bar of the solo, (bar n.144), John plays a E natural minor descending scale in quarters, the notes are E - D - C - B, then A - G - F # - E, then D - C - B - A, and finally B - A - G - F #.

Pay attention to the dynamics of this solo, John plays with a really strong touch!

L Bass Solo
5:06 (Em) 5:10 (Em) D

8va

8va

M 5:30 Em C A/C# A5

Chapter 8 - "Brilliant" Bass Lines

In this chapter we are going to examine in depth what I have called John's "genius bass lines", that is, those phrases, those riffs, those grooves that have contributed to making Queen's songs worldwide hits. As already mentioned, John has never been a virtuoso bassist, far from it, and has always been particularly dedicated to creating a solid rhythmic / harmonic base, which fits perfectly with the style of Queen's songs, and which fits perfectly with battery. But in many songs we also find very articulated bass lines, others very melodic, and still others simply brilliant! We will take small "sections" of some of the songs that for me "bassistically" speaking, are milestones of the light music of the '900.

A Kind of Magic (Video n.4)

A major tonality

IV
D

I
A

87 88 89 90 91

D - B - A = Root, 6maj, 5

A - F# - E = Root, 6maj, 5

I chose this song, written in 86 by Freddie Mercury for the album of the same name, since, in my opinion, the few bars I have examined fully embody the concept of a brilliant bass line. A few precise notes, which simultaneously create a harmonic reinforcement (the root is always present) and a solid rhythmic groove with the drums. The key is A major, and this part the harmonic succession is IV - I. John's pattern is composed of the root, sixth and fifth of the relative chord both on the D and on the A. This bass line once entered in the head, it stays there for life! And remember, when a bass groove is easily sung, it is a brilliant composition!

Another One Bites The Dust (Video n.5)

Em Am Em Am

C G C G C G Am B

Chapter 5 - Sound and Setup (see video N.2)

It can certainly be stated that John has created his own sound (I would recognize him among millions !!) but at the same time he was a genius in adjusting the sound and the way of playing to the musical context, the genre, depending on whatever he wished to achieve. If you listen to the first Live, you will notice a very different sound from his last performances. Still he remains a very neat bass player, loyal to Precision, as he has never tried (especially with regard to various pedals, effects or whatever) to distort the sound, instead He just "modeled" so that it perfectly fit in with what he was playing. Many colleagues have asked me to tell them how I succeed in sounding very similar to him. On the one hand, I'd really love to thank you for such a remarkable compliment. On the other hand, all I can tell you is that I have never purposely meant to mirror his sound performance, which I would deem impossible as a result to deliver. I simply have two Precision with which I have played and earned so much practice with over the years. I eventually realized that, while the amplifier and the strings themselves do not play such a key role in changing the sound, what really makes the difference is the implementation of different Pickups, through the technique we use for the right hand (classic finger, palm muting, slap etc. etc.) and, above all, the touch. It follows that the same bass in the hands of two different bass players will never end up sounding identical. I mean, surely it will be endowed with its own timbre, this is out of the question, however the rest just relies on our touch. I currently have Rotosound Swing 66 strings (105 -45), Fender Vintage pickups on both Precision and hardly ever use amps When it comes to recording, I just directly use the mixer with a very simple sound card. Back to John's topic, I've been asked several times what kind of setup he had. The truth is that I haven't got a clue! However, I warmly suggest you should look into it further, by checking on his isolated bass track directly on the web, so that you can find out, or at least, have a try.

I have always been convinced that, on Precision, he held an action medium, that he had a very firm touch and used rough Rotosound strings, or, at least, I don't think they were very thick. I recall what I've previously said: that his sound has remarkably changed over the years.

If only you tried to listen (better with headphones, if you have the chance) to the live in Houston '77, focusing on the bass, and then you repeated the whole process with the Freddie Mercury Tribute, wouldn't you notice any difference? A feature not to be underestimated was the increasingly widespread use of the pick, perfect for more rock-prone songs (see Tie Your Mother Down, One Vision, Now I'm Here etc. etc.). Even with the pick he had a rather particular technique. We will get into the details later!

Amplifiers, head cabinet and speakers:

In the studio it seems that John went straight into the mixing desk without using amplifiers. So let's see which ones he used on his tours:

Queen I and Queen II tour

Orange AD-200B amplifier head
PCC 412 cabinet.
Volume Shaller pedal

Tour Sheer Heart Attack

2 HiWatt heads
2 Sound City 4 "x 12 speakers

A Night at The Opera Tour, A Day at The Races Tour, News of The World Tour, Jazz Tour (and Live Killers)

5 Acoustic 371 heads
3 Acoustic speakers and 2 4 "x 12" speakers by Gauss

Crazy Tour (November / December 1979)

5 Acoustic 371 heads
3 Acoustic Speakers, 2 Gauss 4 "x 12" Speakers, 2 Sunn 4 "x 12" Speakers, 3 Sunn 2 "x 16" Speakers

Tour The Game, Tour Hot Space Tour of The Works and Tour of A Kind of Magic

Alembic F-2B pre-amp
Peavy head
Sunn 215-BH case, Sunn 412-L case
Dix 160 compressor / limiter
Peterson Strobe tuner
Klark Teknik graphic equalizer
First uses of Martin Blue Heavy picks

Basses used on various tours:

Queen I tour

Rickenbacker 4001

Queen II tour

Fender Precision 1965 (Fender 1)

Chapter 4 - Equipment:

Bass:

John with his beloved Fender Precision has created a unique sound, perfect for all occasions, both Live and in the studio, so it goes without saying that he has been the main bass of his entire career, but he has owned and played others as well. Let's go in order.

His first ever bass was an old Eko, according to him held for a long time. He said in an interview that he had a very thin handle. You can see a photo at this link:

<https://www.queenconcerts.com/live/john-deacon/early.html>

Later he experimented (being a big fan of Chris Squire) the use of a Rickenbacker (model 4001), but he used it very little as he had problems especially in studio recordings!

Link: <https://images.app.goo.gl/mdzZRVYTdMATWqWp7>

Fender Bass

And here we are with his beloved Precision. In '72 he came into possession of a '65 Fender Precision Sunburst. And at the end of '74 he had another very similar one, of '68 both with rosewood fretboard. On an aesthetic level, the only difference can be seen on the Fender logo on the headstock, in one it has the long, black Precision writing, which follows the curvature of the headstock itself, (we will call it Fender 1), in another it has the very Precision writing. fine, light gray (we'll call it Fender 2).

Link Fender 1: <https://images.app.goo.gl/r47oZcwvrjqLTqVz6>

Link Fender 2: <https://images.app.goo.gl/91dPWfo3gf1Uja1o6>

A few years later (in the summer of '75 the Fender 2, in '76 the Fender 1), both basses were stripped.

The first becomes like this: Link: <https://images.app.goo.gl/ttFjoGmS2NytAAMT7>

The second becomes like this: Link: <https://images.app.goo.gl/QheiKLuymCrctwwS7>

The first bass will become the most used bass ever, and in 1986, at the beginning of the A Kind of Magic tour, he will change his look again. It comes painted black, gold Shaller tuners, gold Shaller bridge, gold potentiometer knobs, and the finger thumb is removed (that plastic object screwed onto the body, usually near the end of the neck, below. :

Link: <https://images.app.goo.gl/ssubgWuxjPMcSrh3A>

Index

- Preface - pag.4
- Chapter 1: My short biography - pag.5
- Chapter 2: John's Biography - pag.6
- Chapter 3: Discography - pag.8
- Chapter 4: Complete equipment - pag.10
- Chapter 5: The sound - pag.17
- Chapter 6: Technique - pag.18
- Chapter 7: Hints of theory and harmony - pag.32
- Chapter 8: Historical bass lines - pag.57
- Chapter 9: Bass solos analysis - pag.65
- Chapter 10: Analysis of bass lines, fills and phrases - pag.71
- Chapter 11: Analysis of John's compositions - pag.83
- Chapter 12: Playing his songs - pag.91
- Thanks and contacts - pag.92

IGOR SARDI

JOHN DEACON

**COMPLETE STUDY OF ONE OF THE MOST
UNDERRATED BASS PLAYERS IN HISTORY**



- Biography
- Complete and detailed equipment
- The sound (and how to get it)
- His techniques
- Analysis and deepening of his bass lines and solos
- Analysis and deepening of his compositions
- Play his songs (with lots of backing tracks without bass)
- Curiosity
- ...and so on!