CONTENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR 4

INTRODUCTION 5

CHAPTER 1—GETTING STARTED

The Open Strings 6
Roman Numerals 6
It Was Tuned When I Bought It! 7
Fingerboard Blackout and How to Prevent It 8
Music Notation 11

CHAPTER 2—TECHNIQUE

Playing Position 17
The Left Hand 19
The Right Hand 20

CHAPTER 3—BASIC FINGERSTYLE PATTERNS

Pattern #1 22
Pattern #2 23
Pattern #3 24
Pattern #4 25

CHAPTER 4—PLAYING TWO LINES

Open Position Exercises 26
Open String Blues 27
Combining Open and Fretted Notes 28

CHAPTER 5—BASIC THEORY

Or, Why Did the Chicken Cross the Road? 33
The Major Scale 33
A Minor Diversion: The Natural Minor Scale 35
Meeting the Relatives: The Relative Minor 35
Numerical Formulas: Parallel Relationships 36
Key Signatures 37

CHAPTER 6—BASIC CHORDS

How Many Chords Are There, Anyway? 38
Basic Chord Theory 39
Diatonic Harmony 40
Playing Open Chords 41

CHAPTER 7—MORE FINGERSTYLE PATTERNS

Pattern #5 43
Pattern #6 44
Pattern #7 45

CHAPTER 8—ALTERNATING BASS

Basic Alternating Bass Patterns 46
Slash Chords 48
Boxing 48
Picking on Travis 49
The Backwards Roll 50
Alternating Bass Etude #1 51
Alternating Bass Etude #2 52
Alternating Bass Etude #3 53

CHAPTER 9—SOME MORE FINGERSTYLE PATTERNS

Pattern #8 54
Pattern #9 55
Pattern #10 56
Pattern #11 57

CHAPTER 10—OTHER FINGERSTYLE BASICS

Melody in the Bass 58
Syncopation 60
Syncopated Etude 61
Walking Bass Lines 62
Harmonizing Melodies with Intervals 64
Interval Etude in G 66
Interval Etude in A 67

CHAPTER 11—SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

Hammer-ons and Pull-offs 68
Slur Etude 69
Harp-Style Playing 70
Harp-Style Etude 73
Natural Harmonics 74
Harmonics Etude 75

CHAPTER 12—ALTERNATE TUNINGS

Drop D Tuning 76
Drop D Blues 77
Open G Tuning 78
Open G Blues 80
Open Minded 81

CHAPTER 13—FINGERSTYLE PIECES

Tips for Playing the Pieces 82
Three Plus Three Plus Two 84
Surfin' in the Sand 85
Coffee Time Rag 86
Blues in G 88
Boogie in E 89
Sounds Like Lightning 90
Garden Song 91
Lucy's Waltz 92
The Light Through the Leaves 93

AFTERWORDS

On Practicing 94
Express Yourself 94
Listening 95

CHAPTER 4

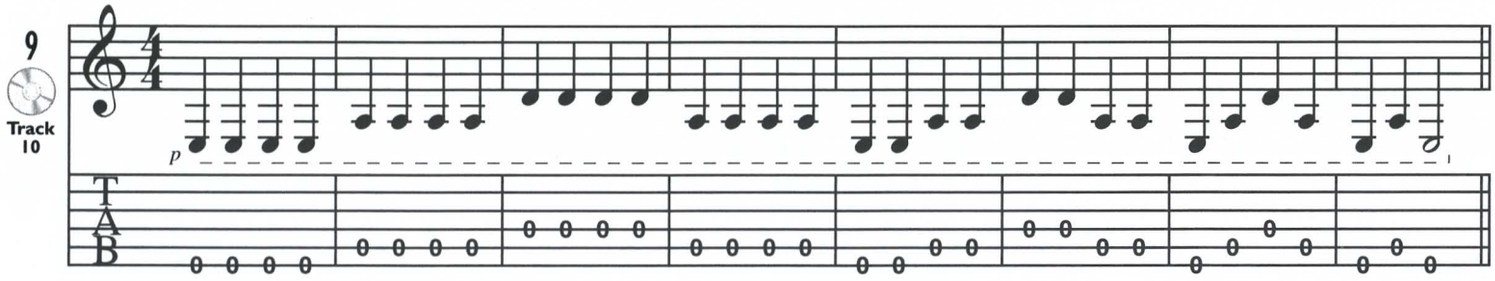
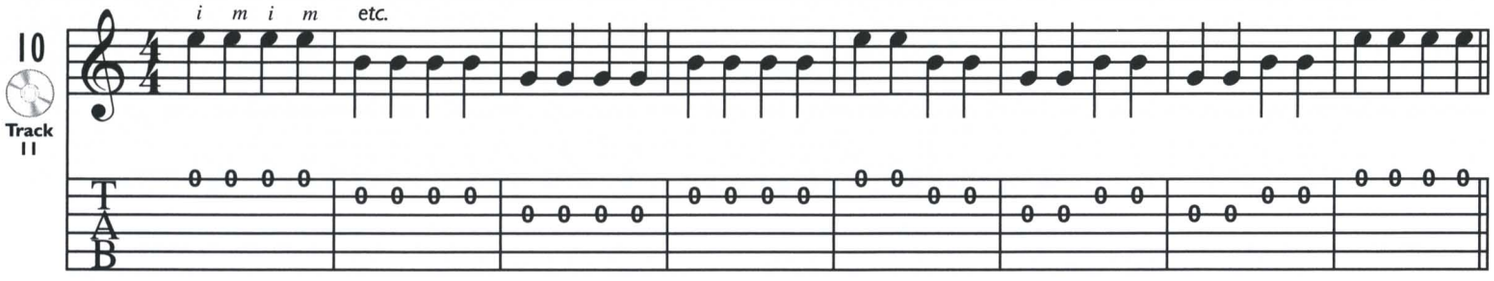
Playing Two Lines

Before beginning this chapter, you should review the material on pages 20 and 21 concerning right hand technique. As you go through this material, pay close attention to the position of your right hand and how the fingers are working.

OPEN POSITION EXERCISES

To be a good fingerstyle player, you will need to have good control with your right hand fingers. The following open string exercises will enable you to concentrate on getting a good sound without worrying about fretting notes on the strings. Listen to your sound and try to get the best *tone* possible. Tone refers to the quality of your sound. It should be strong (but not forced), warm (but not muddy) and clear.

In Example 9 you'll only be using the thumb (*p*) on the lower three strings.



Example 10 is on the first three strings and requires you to alternate between your index (*i*) and middle (*m*) fingers. This is a common approach to playing melodies on the upper three strings.