

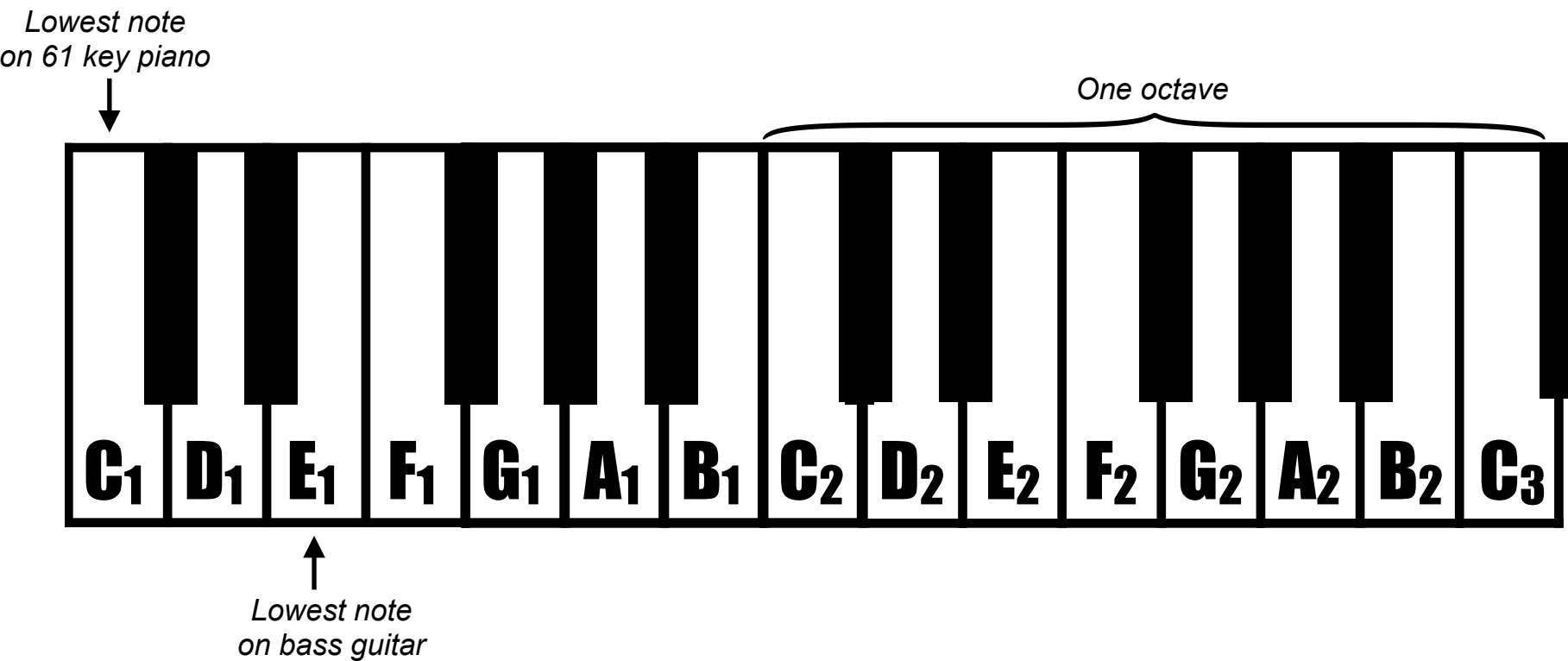
Music Technology

Bass Lines: Note Choice Part 1

Bass lines that are in the correct range, use the roots of the chords, have octave jumps, and include leading tones create the harmonic foundation for the chords and melody of a song.

Range

The range that the bass often plays is between C1-C3 on the piano.



Roots

The strongest note in a chord for the bass to play is the root. A chord's root is the same pitch as the first letter of the chord symbol.



Octaves

An octave is the distance between two notes that are separated by an eight note scale. A note that is an octave above a starting pitch (target tone) shares the same letter name and sounds twice as high as the original pitch (principal tone). The numbers on the keyboard refer to which octave range notes are in: C2 is an octave above C1, F1 is an octave below F2. One way to give movement to a bass line is to play the root an octave up or down.

Leading Tones

A note above or below a pitch is called a leading tone. They can be added before a root to create movement in a bass line. It is best if leading tones are used toward the end of a measure.

