Jixis™ *Graphical Music Systems*

Quick Start Guide for Unfretted Fingerboards

      The Jixis system is not a progressive music course. Only the most basic music concepts have been described here in order to better explain the method and use of the Jixis system for learning how to graphically correlate written music to fingering positions on your instrument. A professional teacher, or a self-instruction music course will be required to teach you how to properly play your instrument. Numerous online sites can also assist you in learning various playing techniques for your instrument.

      This Quick Start Guide to the use of the Jixis system for unfretted fingerboards assumes that you are already familiar with basic music notational concepts, e.g. sharps and flats, musical note time values, etc. The Guide also assumes that you are already familiar with basic stringed instrument parts, e.g. the pegbox, nut, strings, fingerboard, neck, etc. If this is not the case, or if you are confused by what you are reading here, then please download and review the PDF titled, *Unfretted Fingerboard Instruction Manual*.

      The only objective of this Quick Start Guide is to explain to you how to use the *coded staff guide* and *coded labels* on the *Label Set sheets* for your specific instrument to locate the written notes of your music on your fingerboard. This will be done *without* applying the label set to your instrument.

      There is no immediate need for you to obtain any written music in order to learn how to use the Jixis system as a means of reading music. For the most part, early use of the system is limited to a self-contained consideration of the instruction material. When you feel confident that you understand how to use the Jixis system, written sheet music for your specific instrument may be easily obtained at various music stores, or from your local library, or from the many online sites that offer both music for sale and free public domain sheet music.
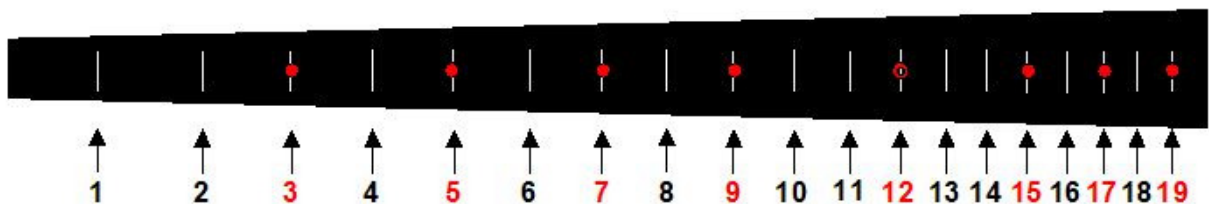
      Jixis coded label sets have been prepared for each specific instrument in terms of the way in which music is typically written (by conventional notation) for that instrument. Thus, you may find that your instrument is required to be tuned to different octaves relative to the label codings for the notes. This should not present problems. However, if you find that the label set for your particular stringed instrument is inconsistent with the music you actually want to read and play, you may easily devise an appropriate label set with higher or lower octave tone codings for your instrument by following the directions in the PDF download titled, *Making Your Own Jixis Label Set Sheet.* And you may also easily devise your own note name letter chart using the PDF download titled, *The Note Letter Name Strip.*

Jixis is only a *temporary* learning aid, and is not intended to be used with your instrument any longer than it take for you to learn the basics of reading and playing out written music *by note names*. To hasten this process, it is helpful to develop the habit of *saying each note name aloud, or in your mind* as you use the graphical labels to play out the written note fingering positions on your fingerboard.

Irrespective of the chosen tuning of the strings, the sequential tone progression for each of the strings occurs on a fingerboard at the same unmarked, crosswise lines perpendicular to the strings. Rather than referring to the typical terminology of "positions," for easy reference in this guide, these invisible transverse lines will be referred to as *pitch lines*. There are on average over 20 pitch lines on most unfretted stringed instruments.

In this learning process, you will not have to mark your fingerboard with Jixis labels, or any other numerical labels. And you will not have to use any music other than ordinary black and white music. But you will have to removably mark your fingerboard's pitch lines in order to locate specific notes using the Jixis system. The pitch lines may be removably marked either by having a professional player locate and removably mark the lines with a dot or pencil line, or by playing the notes of a tuned keyboard to determine each tone position.
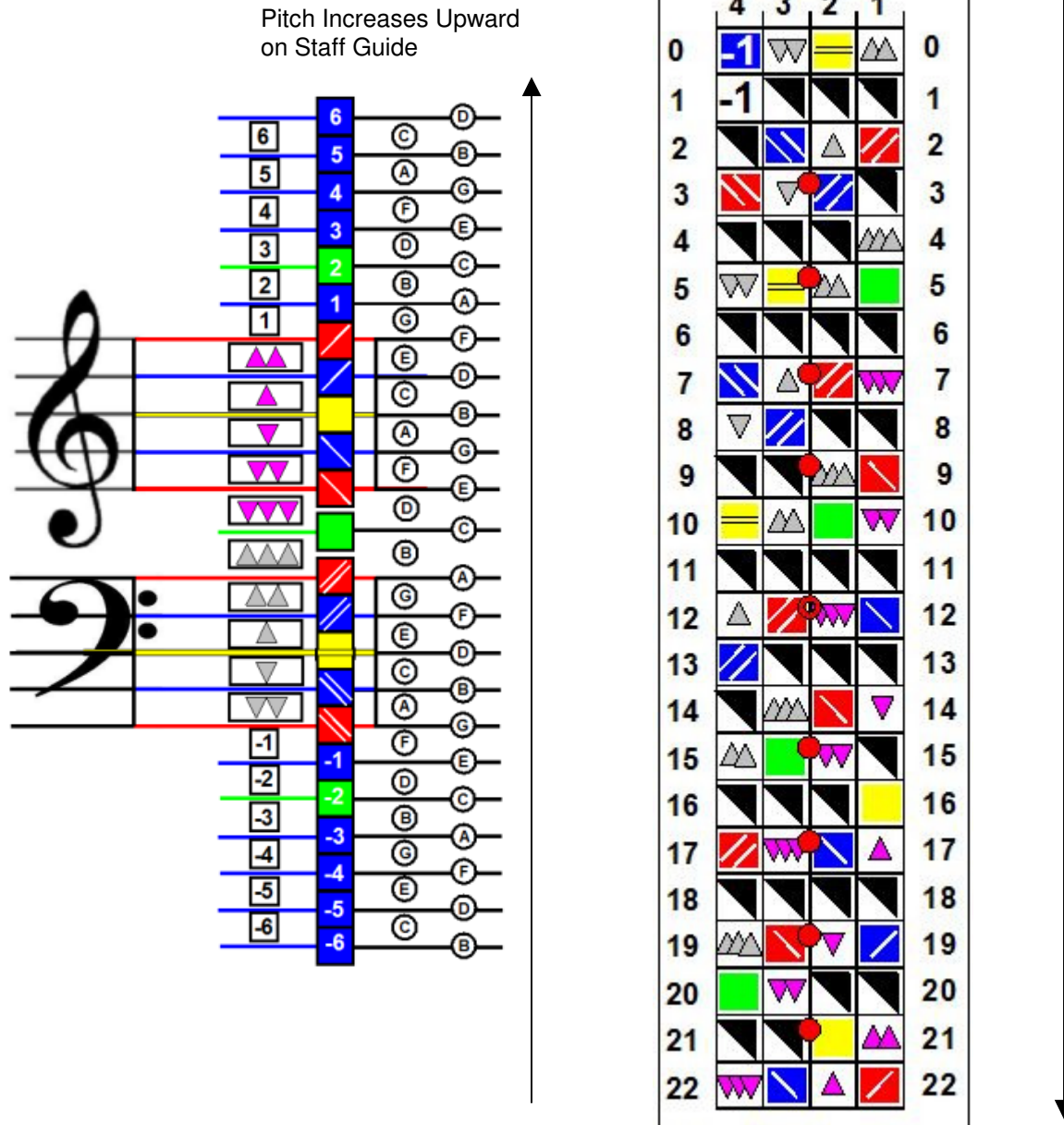
It is suggested that you utilize the marking method used for fretted instruments by simulating the inlaid markers of a fretted instrument on your unfretted fingerboard, as shown in the example below, by highlighting the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 12th, 15th, and 17th pitch lines, and using a unique marker to denote the 12th pitch line. A unique marker will help you to remember that the 12th pitch line is where the note names begin to repeat.

The inlaid markers used on fretted instruments are simulated on the unfretted fingerboard label sets using red dots, and a red ring for the 12th position. The red pitch line markers are useful for quickly locating specific pitch lines in the label rows. It is also helpful to realize that the markers marking the 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th pitch lines, also have markers marking their octaves down the fingerboard, respectively at the 15th, 17th, 19th, and 21st pitch lines.

A Review of How Jixis Operates

Pitch Increases Upward on Staff Guide

On the first Label Set sheet for your instrument there is a *staff guide* on the left, and a *label set* on the right. The second sheet shows a *Note Letter Name Chart.* The staff guide corresponds to the way in which music is written in a vertical range of the natural tone line/space note positions. To each of the lines and spaces in the staff guide, small square boxes have been added, each bearing a unique color/symbol coding that designates that particular line or space position.

The layout of the label set corresponds to the layout of your fingerboard. The label set boxes are arranged in *vertical columns* with one numbered column for each string number on your instrument. Each of the small boxes in the label

set columns displays a color/symbol coding that correlates to a line or space position (or a sharp/flat position) on the staff guide for that string.

Collectively, the vertical string column boxes of the label set display a number of horizontal boxes in *rows*. Each numbered *label row* represents one pitch line number on your fingerboard. The string columns in the label set are conventionally numbered from right to left as 1 to 4, 1 to 5, or 1 to 6, and the transverse pitch line rows are numbered from the top towards the bottom from 0 up to 22 to represent the number of pitch lines on your fingerboard.

How to Play Out Notes Using the Jixis System

To play out a written natural note then, you first determine its position on a line or space of the music. Then you view the staff guide to locate the same line or space position and the color/symbol coding that appears for that note.

When you locate that color/symbol coding (one or more) on the string columns and rows of the label set you will know the string numbers and the pitch line numbers where this note appears on your fingerboard.

If the note is sharped, the correct symbol on the label set will be the next black triangle (or color/symbol pitch line) down on the string. If the note is flatted, the correct symbol on the label set will be the next black triangle (or color/symbol pitch line) up on the string.

Thus, to locate a specific pitch line on your unfretted fingerboard, you must either already know where it is (its numerical string and pitch line), or must count out the pitch line number from the top down along your fingerboard using your removable marking system.

Conclusion

Although the primary purpose of the Jixis system is to allow you to easily graphically correlate the written notes of music to fingering positions on your instrument by making both the music and the instrument graphically correspondent to each other, the Jixis system will also allow you to identify the notes by name so that you may use alternate octaves to play out the same notes.

There are several downloadable tools on the Jixis Fingerboard web site they might help you in this process, such as *The Note Letter Name Strip* and *The Note/Symbol Correlator*. And additionally, there are numerous learning tips that you might gain by reviewing the *Unfretted Fingerboard Instruction Manual*.

Remember that your objective here is to become sufficiently familiar with the system so that you will be able to *overlook* and *override* it, and to play out written notes on an unmarked fingerboard without using any reference labels.

Once you have learned where to place your fingers to press the strings to play out the written notes, it will be much easier to begin a progressive music course with a professional teacher or on your own.