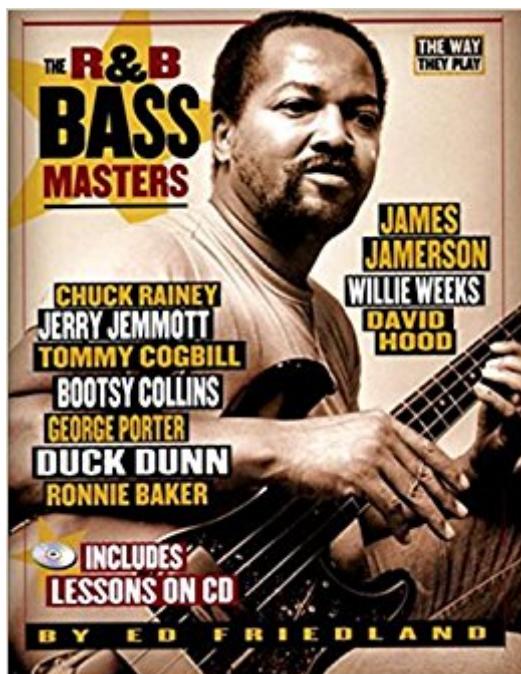


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# R&B Bass Masters: The Way They Play



## Synopsis

The R&B Masters: The Way They Play explores the lives and works of the bassists whose tracks propelled R&B's greatest period. The book includes lessons in the styles Motown genius James Jamerson, Memphis master Duck Dunn, New York ace Chuck Rainey, Muscle Shoals stalwart David Hood, and many others. The chapters detail each bassist's career, gear, and unique approach to the groove, and the CD provides audio tracks for all of the book's written examples.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bassist and educator Ed Friedland has become known as one of the world's foremost authors of bass instructional materials. As a columnist and Contributing Editor for Bass Player Magazine, Ed has written scores of articles that have helped bassists achieve their goals and develop the skills needed to be well rounded musicians

I buy a lot of these types of bass books, and I like this author's books. This one is good; it's a nice review and tribute to the major bass players within the R&B genre during its heyday. It provides some basic background information about each bassist., and a few measures of signature sample grooves. I like that it has some suggested tracks to listen to for each bassist. The author has done this with some of his other books, and I appreciate it. It helps me build a music library based on

bass players and genres. There isn't a lot to engage you and your bass in this book, so it's different from the usual bass work books, which isn't a bad thing. As a book about bass players, styles, and the genre, it is worth the purchase. However, as a bass workbook, maybe not so much. However, I'm glad it's in my library.

It's written by Ed Friedland, what more do I need to say, really? He is the master of bass instruction books, and this is one of his better books. While it doesn't give you as much theory or charting as most of his other books, it does give you a decent glimpse into the careers and lives of some of the greatest bass players who ever lived, and explains how they got their signature sounds, making it easier to emulate their style when covering their tunes.

First, my background: I am a performer (bass trombone and electric bass) and an instructor. I am also a composer and arranger. My undergraduate degree is in Music Education (Masters in Music Composition); and the majority of my Air Force career was spent in the field of Education and Training. I "collect" bass guitar method books, always searching for that "perfect" book for the beginning, intermediate, or advanced bassist. "The R&B Bass Masters: The Way They Play" is written by Ed Friedland who, once again demonstrates that he is truly a master at authoring bass method books that are well-organized and easy to understand, yet extremely comprehensive and informative. (I dare say that, if Ed Friedland is the author, then the book is worth purchasing without any further research required!) Aside from the obligatory introduction, author's biography, acknowledgments and CD track list, "R&B Masters" is divided into 10 chapters, each featuring a different R&B bass legend. Each chapter contains a brief biography of the featured bassist as well as sections on his gear and setup, style and technique, and a lesson with examples from his repertoire (included on the accompanying CD). The lesson examples are explained and analyzed; and written in both standard music notation and tablature. I firmly believe that every bassist (i.e., "musician") should develop at least a rudimentary ability to read music and not rely on tablature. However, this is the precise circumstance where tablature is an invaluable tool to gaining insight as to "how" the R&B master played a particular bass line. What makes this book so great is that the drum part is also included with the music notation and tablature. In addition (and this is the "icing on the cake"), each chapter includes a selected discography (with recommended "cuts") and a detailed "checklist" which covers each bassist's equipment (type of bass, fingerboard, condition [stock or custom], setup, strings, pickups, and amp), as well as the bassist's tone, attack, signature traits, influences and overall approach. As an example of how this all fits together, the chapter on Ronnie

Baker (one of Philadelphia's top session bassists in the late '60s-mid '70s) states that he used an Ampeg B-15 amp (as a monitor in the studio; but a direct box fed his sound to the mixing board) and a stock, pre-CBS Fender Precision bass with stock Fender Precision split-coil pickups, a rosewood fingerboard, and heavy-gauge flatwound strings (that had "possibly" been marinated in butter!). It goes on to state that his tone was dark with a very dead sound (strings muted at the bridge with masking tape or paper towels) with a very punchy, yet rounded sound. He kept solid time, and his bass lines were unassuming with occasional bursts of flair. He was influenced by Duck Dunn and James Jamerson, and his overall approach to playing the bass was with melodic, laid-back grooves with a behind-the-beat feel. Further insight into Baker's style and technique is provided by comments from his session-soulmate, drummer Earl Young, who states that Baker made sure he knew what was going on by watching the drummer and his kick-drum pedal. "Baker would watch my feet, explained Young. "He sat on my left side and he'd copy whatever my foot was doing." All in all, a "must have" book for anyone interested in a bassist's perspective of R&B: both its history and bass playing style.

Yeah, this is a pretty good book, fairly informative. I found it to be entertaining reading. It lead me to a movie about bass players that was very good. Haven't listened to the CD, yet, that goes with the book.

I've had this book for about ten days now and am very happy with it. The biographical backgrounds on the players is enjoyable to read and it's interesting to see what gear these guys were using -- this information really rounds out this book in a way that makes it stand out from other books I've used. The recording that comes with the book is also very good. The bass is very loud and the author does a good job of nailing each bassist's tone and feel. Also, the rhythms stand up, too, which is key. What's cool is that the bass is in one speaker and the drums are in the other so, if you want, you can turn the balance on your stereo and play with the drums alone, without the bass track getting in your way. I think some people are turned off by this book because the entire bass line for each song isn't written out. Personally, I prefer it this way. I just want to get a taste for what these particular players were doing and don't feel like learning entire songs.

Very good book; I recommend having a private bass instructor to help with book.

Every bass player should own this book.

I am very happy and pleased with this book. Very educational for everybody.

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