

Springfield. And your guess is as good as mine as to what will happen into '86; I haven't got a clue as I'm too busy working on new songs and the next tour to stop and worry.

My last little tirade before I sign off: everyone lives in a big glass bubble. The bubble's lowest point rests on a mark on the center of a long line. That mark on the line signifies the status quo in today's world. If people inside the bubble make a concerted effort to move the glass bubble, it will. The lowest point of the bubble now rests on a new mark. I'll leave the rest for everyone else to figure out. Again, thanks to MRR and to everyone else out there who finds something of value in what we do, and please don't write us off yet. We're not that old; as a matter of fact, I think we're getting younger at heart. Just let us do what we've always done, get up and tell our stories to people. We hope you enjoy the new album. Take care, Bob Mould/Husker Du.



Hello MRR readers. And welcome to the second edition of this column. So far, it's too early to have received any mail, but don't be shy! Send those technical questions in, please. For the meantime, I'm going to discuss something that applies to guitar and bass players: intonation.

If your guitar or bass sounds in tune at the low end of the neck, but sounds a little off or out-of-tune as you play up higher, then you need to adjust your intonation. Basically, a guitar is properly intonated when the length of the string, from nut to bridge saddle, exactly

corresponds to the length of the fretboard underneath the strings. In other words, the exact center of the string should be above the 12th fret of the fretboard (usually marked with two dots when other frets have one dot).

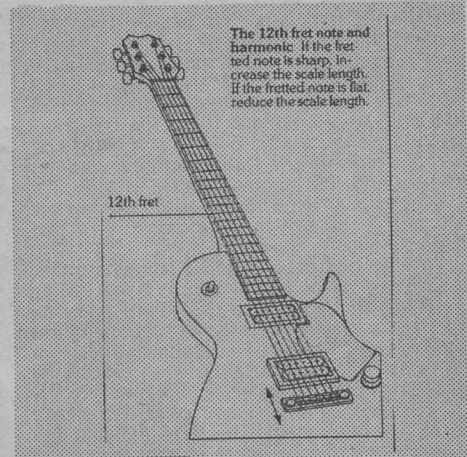
Most bridges on guitars and basses are adjustable. They can be adjusted for height (adjusting the "action") and for length-adjusting intonation. If you have an instrument without an adjustable bridge, and you just can't get it to sound in tune, then I suggest you discard that instrument and get something a little better, because you will never get it to sound good.

One note right here—if your strings are very old (over one year if you play regularly) then you will have a very hard time tuning, and you should toss those away and buy some new strings. Also, adjusting intonation is lots easier if you have an electronic tuner. These are very handy for tuning in general, and can be bought for as little as \$30. I recommend getting one if you don't already own one.

OK! Let's adjust your intonation. Start with the low E string. Tune the string using the 12th fret harmonic (lightly tap the string at the 12th fret without pressing down on the string as you pick it—you should hear a clear, ringing note that sustains for several seconds)—I find it easier to tune to an electronic tuner using harmonics. Once the harmonic (and hence the string) is in tune, fret the string at the 12th fret and play that note. This will be the octave of the open string, in this case an E. If the string is properly intonated, then this fretted note should also be in tune. If, however, the fretted note is sharp or flat, then you need to adjust the length of the string, using the adjustment on the bridge.

If the fretted note is sharp, this means that the string length between the 12th fret and the bridge is too short. Adjust the saddle so that it moves away from the 12th fret. Adjust a little, then re-tune the string, then re-check the fretted note.

If the fretted note is flat, this means that the string length is too long. Adjust the saddle so that it moves towards the 12th fret. Again, adjust a little, then re-tune and re-check.



Once you have it so that the fretted note is exactly in tune with the harmonic, then that string is properly intonated! This will be hard to determine just by listening, and once again I suggest using an electronic tuner. Oh yes, go ahead and do the rest of your strings. Now when you play a barre chord way up the neck, all notes should be in tune and sounding good. Wasn't that easy?

By the way, if you are in a band, make sure all guitars and basses (and keyboards) are in tune with each other, preferably with an electronic tuner. It makes a big difference in how everything will sound. It's worth the extra trouble, believe me.

If you have any specific questions, I'll do my best to answer them. My address is 1377 K St NW #108/ Washington DC 20005. If you include a SASE, I'll answer you personally and you won't have to wait 2 months to see your name in print. Until next time, this is Mitch Parker, writing to you from the White House press room.

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