

# The Hinge Bar

By Ronn McFarlane

Remember the hinge bar, and also the reverse hinge bar. Neither one is difficult to execute, but they are under-used by most players. Maybe we just forget that they exist when we work out our fingering strategies.

The hinge bar is created by laying the side of the left hand index finger against the 1st string. (See photos #1 and #2.) Unlike the full bar, a hinge bar is placed at an angle to the fingerboard, so that the bass strings remain free to ring. It is sometimes used for the 2nd course as well, and it often precedes a full bar.

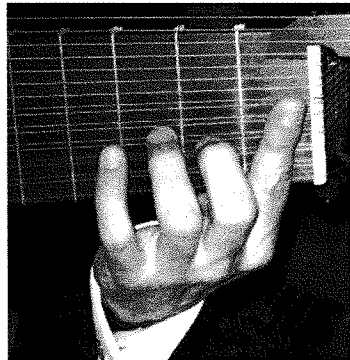


Photo #1 - front view

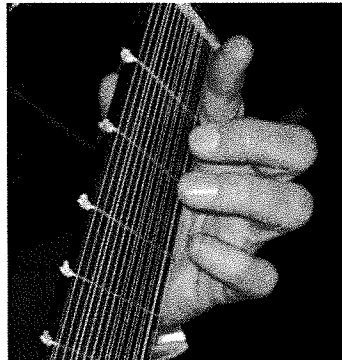
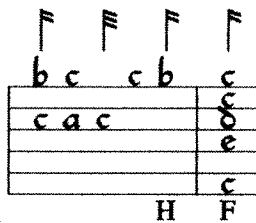


Photo #2 - player's view

Use the hinge bar whenever it makes the execution of a passage easier than using the 1st finger on the tip. This is often the case, when the index finger is used on the chantarelle immediately before it is needed in the bass.



Example #1: Fantasie by Gregorio Huwet ( m. 16-17)

H = hinge bar  
F = full bar

In Huwet's Fantasie the hinge bar is an elegant solution to an otherwise awkward fingering. The hand slides easily from a hinge bar on the 1st fret to a full bar on the 2nd fret. (Pictured in photos #2 and #3.)

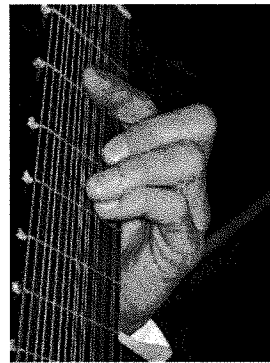
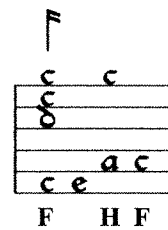
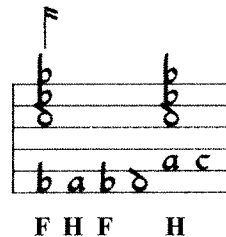


Photo #3 - full bar



Example #2: Il est bel et Bon intabulated by Marco dall'Aquila ( m. 4)

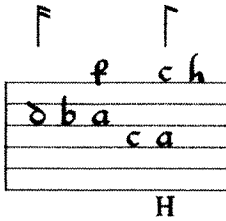
This example begins with a full bar on the 2nd fret. The hinge bar is created at the third bass note of the measure: The tip of the index finger lifts off the fret, to allow the open bass note to ring, while the treble remains firmly stopped by the bar. On the last note of the measure, the full bar returns to stop the bass note at the 2nd fret.



Example #3: La Traditora by Marco dall'Aquila ( m. 6)

This is similar to example #2. Beginning with a full bar on the 1st fret, the fingertip end of the bar is twice lifted to allow open bass notes to ring, while the first and second courses must be clearly stopped by the bar throughout the measure. For this hinge bar, in order to keep firm contact with the 1st and 2nd courses, do not lift the fingertip any higher than necessary for the open bass notes to sound.





Example #4: Fantasia #38 by  
Francesco da Milano (m. 11)

In this case, the hinge bar is a good solution because the index finger is needed on the 4th course/ 2nd fret; then, it is needed immediately on the first string/second fret. By using the fingertip on the 4th course, then laying down a hinge bar for the first string, a smooth fingering transition is made possible.

In the reverse hinge, the tip joint of the left hand index finger is flattened against one or more bass strings, while keeping the rest of the finger raised so that the treble strings are untouched:

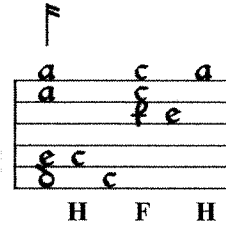


Photo #4 - reverse hinge bar



Example #5 (reverse hinge bar):  
Pavana La Malcontenta by  
Pietro Paolo Borrono (m. 22)

If one begins this measure with a reverse hinge on the 2nd fret, a full bar will be poised to drop onto the 2nd fret when it is needed on the 3rd note of the measure. This will allow the bass note to ring throughout the measure and make the 5th fret easier to reach.



Example #6 (reverse hinge bar):  
Queen Elizabeth's Galliard by  
John Dowland (m. 7)

In the case of Queen Elizabeth's Galliard (m. 7), be sure that the flattened tip of your reverse-hinge clearly covers both the 5th and 6th courses at the second fret. The reverse-hinge then lowers into a full bar chord, to stop notes on the first and second courses. Finally, on the last note of the measure, the reverse hinge bar returns, to allow the open first string to sound while continuing to hold the bass.



## Two Bicinia by Orlando di Lasso

Arrangement and commentary by Daniel Heiman

During the late Renaissance many composers wrote collections of bicinia, simple and fairly short two-part pieces that were probably intended for didactic purposes rather than for performance. Often, but not always, the pieces were texted. Here are transcriptions of two such Bicinia by Orlando di Lasso, transposed so that they lie relatively comfortably on a six-course lute in Renaissance tuning. Both are settings of the text, "Esurientes implevit bonis" (He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty) from the Magnificat, usually sung as part of the Vespers service.

While it is only two-part writing, and the pitch has been adjusted to avoid high positions on the neck, there are still some small challenges to the pieces. Each contains a couple of measures with fast-moving notes in both parts simultaneously. In practicing these sections, I suggest working on each of the lines separately to

get a feel for the flow of the part. Then combine them and try to achieve the same sort of smoothness and expression that you can easily obtain on each one as a solo line. Also, in a few places the fingering will be a little tricky to work out, and some quick one-fret hand shifts will be necessary.

