

# The Guitar

## Early History

The guitar has had a very interesting history. Although it is uncertain as to where the guitar came from exactly, one of its earliest forms was the Greek *kithra*. This instrument was made up of double chorus (two strings very close together, like the twelve string guitar of today) in the lower strings and single chorus in the higher strings.

The guitar, in today's form, was first used in Spain during the 16th century. At the time it was called the *vihuela*. It was made up of four or five choruses with a narrow neck. This guitar was much smaller than the modern form.



## Later Developments

Later, a Spanish guitarist named Antonio de Torres Jurado decided to standardize the instrument for players in Europe. To do this, he increased the size of

the instrument, specified the string length, and created the modern playing position (which is often used by classical guitarists today).

In 1930, the first electric guitar was invented. Since then, other musicians have made some more interesting discoveries for the guitar in more recent years. Famous guitarist, Les Paul, developed prototypes (test model) for the solid-bodied electric guitar around 1940. Another guitarist, named Leo Fender, developed the basic amplifier and added tone and volume controls to the guitar itself. The models of the guitars created by these two musicians are still used and favoured by many guitarists today.

## Beginning Players

The guitar is a great stringed instrument for beginning musicians to learn, however it is a very challenging instrument. There are a few physical requirements that a student needs to have in order to be successful on the instrument:

1. Students must be big enough to hold the instrument.
2. Students must have arms long enough to reach the first frets easily (especially for the bass guitar).

3. The guitar must be held with the left hand in proper playing position, where the student must be able to reach all the frets with ease.

## In Performance

The guitar can be used in many types of bands. Although today the most common use for the guitar is in rock bands, the guitar can also play many types of orchestral music. Antonio Carlos Jobim has made the guitar very popular through Latin American music. Freddie Green, Joe Pass, Les Paul, and Wes Montgomery have made the guitar very popular and useful in many types of jazz music. Blues musicians like B.B. King and Stevie Ray Vaughn have had many influences on both blues and rock guitarists. And although there are too many rock guitarists to name, some of the more virtuoso musicians would have to be Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page (of Led Zeppelin), and Eric Clapton.

