

## The Nashville Number System (Part 2)

"It's 1465!" shouted the bass player as the bandleader counted off the tune. I did my best to keep up and play the guitar part as we began the tune. On that bandstand many years ago was my crash course in the Nashville Number System. Since that time I've seen, used, and written this notation numerous times.

The Nashville Number System is a musical shorthand developed in the studios in Nashville, Tennessee, in the 50s and 60s and made famous by legendary studio musicians like Harold Bradley and Chet Atkins. The Nashville number system is a way of notating music using numbers associated with the function of a chord within a given key. It allows a large quantity of musical information to be notated using a few shorthand concepts.

This lesson teaches the how meter and basic rhythm are notated in Nashville numbers. Please refer to The Nashville Number System Part 1 video for an explanation of basic Nashville number concepts.

### Meter and Page Layout

In Nashville numbers, a song is assumed to be in 4/4 with four beats in each measure unless otherwise notated. On the chart, if the chord numbers occur right after each other, then each chord is good for an entire measure. For example, the two chords in the intro of "One Day" would get one measure each.

If more than one chord occurs within a measure, then a line is drawn under all of the chords in a particular measure as in the second measure of the verse of "One Day." Each chord would get equal number of beats within the measure unless otherwise notated.

If the chords are not equal in their duration within a measure, then small slash marks are written over the chords to indicate how many beats each chord should receive. For example, the fourth measure of the verse would have the 1 chord for three beats and the 3 chord for one beat.

The Nashville number chart for the song "One Day" is on the following page.

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### Steve Krenz

*As an educator, Steve is best known for the top-selling guitar instruction course, **Gibson's Learn & Master Guitar** that received the 2011 Acoustic Guitar Magazine Player's Choice Award for Best Instructional Material. As a professional guitarist in Nashville, Steve's broad playing experience includes playing guitar with a symphony orchestra, to jazz big bands, to performing with numerous Grammy-winning artists like Donna Summer, Michael W. Smith, Bryan White, The Fifth Dimension, Israel Houghton, and Tommy Sims.*

"One Day"

One Day Key: D

Intro: | 1 4<sup>27</sup>

V: 5 4/1 1 5 1 3 6-5 4/3  
 5 sus S

C: 1 1 | 4<sup>6</sup> 4-#3 5 sus 1 5  
1 1 4<sup>6</sup> | 4<sub>m</sub> 1/3 5 sus 1 6<sup>-</sup>  
 5 1/3 | 4 | 1  
 1 1 1 1  
 2 2 2 2

Inter: | 1 | 4<sup>27</sup>

V: 5/7 4/1 1 5 1 3 6-5 4/3  
 5 sus 2<sup>7</sup>/6 S 2<sup>7</sup> S

C:

B: 1 1<sup>27</sup> | 4<sup>27</sup> | 1 1<sup>27</sup> | 4<sup>27</sup> :||

C: 2x

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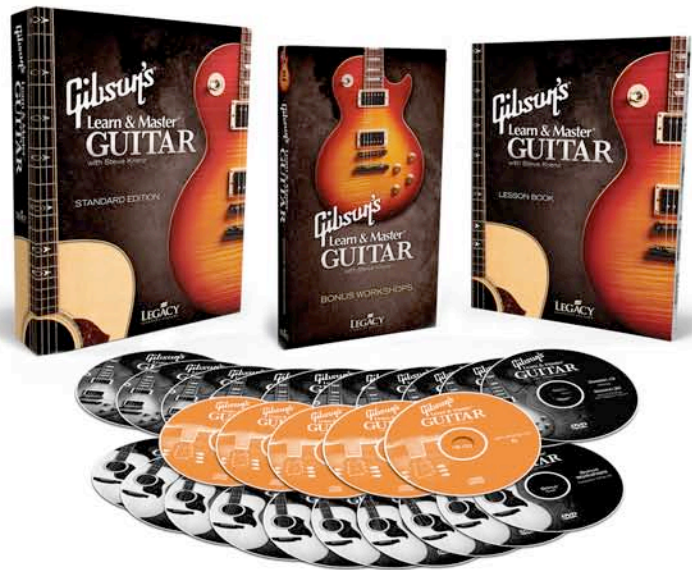
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