

Lesson Seven : 4 (fa) and 7 (ti)

In the beginning of the book, we learned that guzheng is tuned in pentatonic scale where each octave has five notes, **1 2 3 5 6** or **do re mi sol la**. What about the missing two notes? The **4** and the **7**. Do we not play them at all? Yes, we do play the missing two notes by bending the strings on the left side of the bridges.

We make the **3** string into a **4** sound by pressing down the string to raise the tension to produce a higher pitch. The distance between a **3 (mi)** and a **4 (fa)** is a minor second or half a note. So we use left hand to press down the left side of the bridge of the **3** string slight down to produce a **4 (fa)** sound.

Just like doing the vibrato, we use our index, middle and ring fingers to bend. Close the fingers together and bend the string downward to raise the pitch. The best position to bend is about one hand (6-7 inches) to the left of the bridge. Unlike doing the vibrato, when doing the bending, do not just use your wrist power. Keep your wrist straight and add arm force. When bending the lower bass strings, add shoulder force as necessary. Do not lower your wrist as the force won't be able to pass through from your arm to your fingers.

Play this exercise. Use a tuner to check out the **4 (fa)** pitch. When playing in **D** major, the **4** should be exact at **G**. If it's flat, add more power, if the tuner shows too sharp, release some power. Try to get an accurate pitch. Pluck **3(mi)**, rest on the string, bend down to the **4(fa)** position, then pluck **4(fa)**. Or pluck and bend at the same time. Do not release your fingers right after bending. Hold the fingers there. The timing is really important. Any residual slur sounding is not desired.

3̣ 4̣ | 3 4 | 3̣ 4̣ | 3̣ 4̣ | 3̣ 4̣ | 3̣ 4̣ |

Now try to bend the **6 (la)** into a **7 (ti)**. **6** and **7** is a major second or a whole step apart. A heavier bending is required to get the accurate pitch. The force needed is approximately twice as strong as bending **3** into a **4**. (Remember **3** and **4** is only a half step apart.)

Bend 6 into a 7. Check the pitch using a tuner. In D major, 7 is C#.

\ 6̣ 7̣ | 6 7 | 6̣ 7̣ | 6̣ 7̣ | 6̣ 7̣ | 6̣ 7̣ |

Drill 19

\ 1̣ 2̣ 3̣ 4̣ | 5 6 7 1̣ | 1̣ 7 6 5 | 4 3 2 1 | 1̣ 2̣ 3̣ 4̣ | 5 6 7 1̣ |

1̣ 7 6 5 | 4 3 2 1̣ | 1̣ 2̣ 3̣ 4̣ | 5 6 7 1̣ | 1̣ 7 6 5 | 4 3 2 1̣ |

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

1=D 4/4
♩ = 88

French Folk Song

\ 1̣ 1̣ 5̣ 5̣ | 6̣ 6̣ 5̣ - | 4̣ 4̣ 3̣ 3̣ | 2̣ 2̣ 1̣ - |

5̣ 5̣ 4̣ 4̣ | 3̣ 3̣ 2̣ - | 5̣ 5̣ 4̣ 4̣ | 3̣ 3̣ 2̣ - |

\ 1̣ 1̣ 5̣ 5̣ | 6̣ 6̣ 5̣ - | 4̣ 4̣ 3̣ 3̣ | 2̣ 2̣ 1̣ - ||

Deck the Halls

1=D 4/4
♩ = 80

New Year Carol

5̣. 4̣ 3̣ 2̣ | 1̣ 2̣ 3̣ 1̣ | 2̣3̣ 4̣2̣ 3̣. 2̣ | 1̣ 7̣ 1̣ - |

5̣. 4̣ 3̣ 2̣ | 1̣ 2̣ 3̣ 1̣ | 2̣3̣ 4̣2̣ 3̣. 2̣ | 1̣ 7̣ 1̣ - |

2̣ 3̣ 4̣ 2̣ | 3̣ 4̣ 5̣ 3̣ | 3̣[#]4̣ 5̣ 6̣7̣ 1̣ | 7̣ 6̣ 5̣ - |

5̣. 4̣ 3̣ 2̣ | 1̣ 2̣ 3̣ 1̣ | 6̣6̣ 6̣6̣ 5̣. 4̣ | 3̣ 2̣ 1̣ - ||

There is a #4 on line 3. Bend the 3(mi) string a major second to produce a #4 tone. It's like bending 6 into a 7.

$\left[\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c} \backslash \underline{65} & \backslash \underline{42} & | & \backslash & - & \nearrow & \underline{33} & \underline{3} & | & \underline{33} & \underline{3} & | & \backslash \underline{35} & \backslash \underline{12} & | & \hat{3} & \underline{3} & | \end{array} \right]$

$\left[\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c} \underline{44} & \underline{4} & | & \underline{43} & \underline{3} & | & \backslash \underline{32} & \backslash \underline{23} & | & \backslash & \underline{2} & \underline{5} & \nearrow & \underline{33} & \underline{3} & | & \underline{33} & \underline{3} & | \end{array} \right]$

$\left[\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c|c} \backslash \underline{35} & \backslash \underline{12} & | & \hat{3} & \underline{3} & | & \underline{44} & \underline{4} & | & \underline{43} & \underline{3} & | & \backslash \underline{55} & \backslash \underline{42} & | & \underline{1} & | & - & | \\ \hline \underline{0} & \underline{0} & | & \underline{0} & \underline{0} & | & \underline{0} & \underline{0} & | & \underline{0} & \underline{0} & | & \underline{0} & \underline{0} & | & \underline{1} & | & - & | \end{array} \right]$

Challenge:

Now we know that you can bend down a string to raise the string to a higher pitch. Therefore, literally guzheng can play out any notes. It is not limited to the 5 pentatonic notes. Let's play the chromatic scale.

1 1[#] 2 2[#] 3 4 4[#] 5 5[#] 6 6[#] 7

Between **1** and **2**, there is a **1[#]**. It is a half note higher than a **1**.
Bend down string **1** to make a **1[#]**. (This is like how you bend **3** to a **4**.)

Between **2** and **3**, there is a **2[#]**. It is a half note higher than a **2**.
Bend down string **2** to make a **2[#]**. (This is like how you bend **3** to a **4**.)

Between **3** and **5**, there are a **4** and a **4[#]**. We already learned how to bend **4** earlier.
4[#] is a whole note higher than **3**.
Bend down string **3** to a **4[#]**. (This is like how you bend **6** to a **7**.)

Between **5** and **6**, there is a **5[#]**. It is a half note higher than a **5**.
Bend down string **5** to make a **5[#]**. (This is like how you bend **3** to a **4**.)

Between **6** and **7**, there are a **6[#]** and a **7**. We already learned how to bend **7** earlier.
6[#] is a half note higher than a **6**.
Bend down string **6** to a **6[#]**. (This is like how you bend **3** to a **4**.)