ROCK LEAD GUITAR

UNIT FOUR

PICKING TECHNIQUE

The picking method discussed in this unit has been developed to be the most economical in terms of muscle use and most accurate at any speed. It can be used in any style of music and on any guitar.

What are you getting yourself into? Good question. Be prepared to put aside oodles of practice time if you plan to make any great strides in your picking technique. Everyone comes from a different background, so there's no set scale to determine exactly how long it takes to become proficient at this method. But to put it in a "ballpark figure", most people impress themselves in about 2 to 3 months of consistent 2 hour per day practice sessions. Remember, determination is the key. Don't give up, stay disciplined - you will get there.

I. HAND PLACEMENT:

How you hold your pick, how you position your hand, and how you attack the note all add up to how efficient your picking technique is. The key to speed and accuracy is relaxation. Try holding your pick between your thumb and first finger. Hold your guitar as you would be playing and plop your hand down onto the strings. That's it. That's how you should hold your hand.

A word about muting - for clarity sake, the majority of single note runs are muted. Therefore, keep your picking hand anchored on the bridge for easy muting access. More on this later.

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I. HAND PLACEMENT: Continued...

How you attack a note may be the single most important aspect of your picking technique. There are many ways to attack a note. Some are more efficient than others. Keeping speed and accuracy in mind, using the wrist (of the picking hand) to trigger the attack of the note is the most efficient, clean, and consistent of all ways. This means that the only thing moving on your entire arm is your wrist. It's like your pick is a key and you're turning it in a lock.

All this talk explains little about real application. So, here's a 5-step explanation to take you through the pick attack motion.

STEP 1: Ready to attack a note on the 3rd string, the pick is positioned a few millimeters directly above the 4th string.

STEP 2: The pick makes contact with the 3rd string at a 45 degree angle.

STEP 3: The pick has attacked the 3rd string and is resting on the 2nd string.

STEP 4: The pick comes back through the 3rd string at the same angle.

STEP 5: The pick is ready for the next attack (same as Step #1).

As you become familiar with the pick attack motion, take notice of the wrist movement. It's very possible that you've already been playing like this since it's a very natural movement. If so, go straight to the exercises. If not, go through the steps over and over... Take it very slow. Trying to go fast now big waste of time. One more thing to keep in mind is to never tense your forearm.

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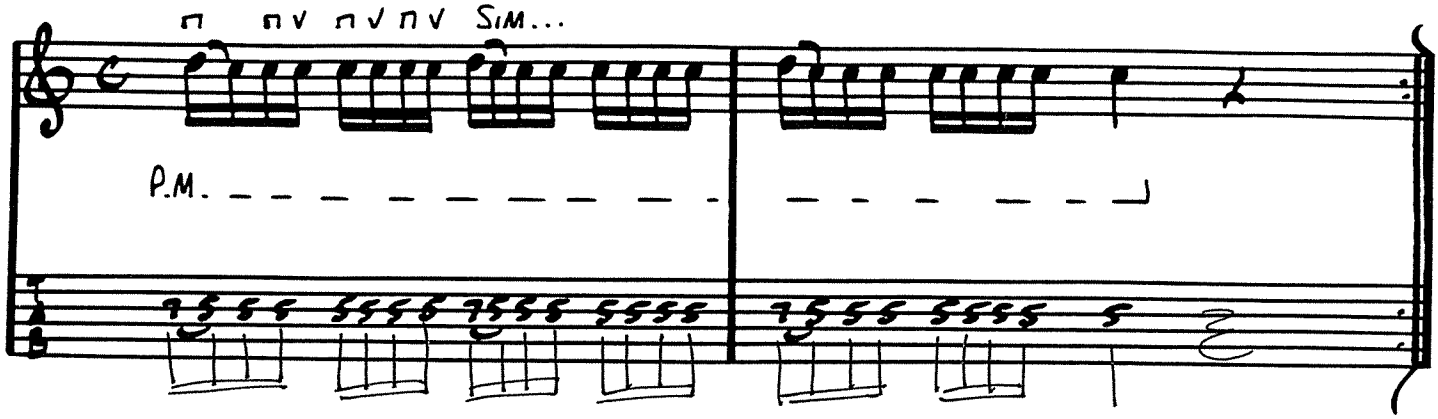
After becoming comfortable with the new pick attack, try playing the following single string exercises.

EX. 1



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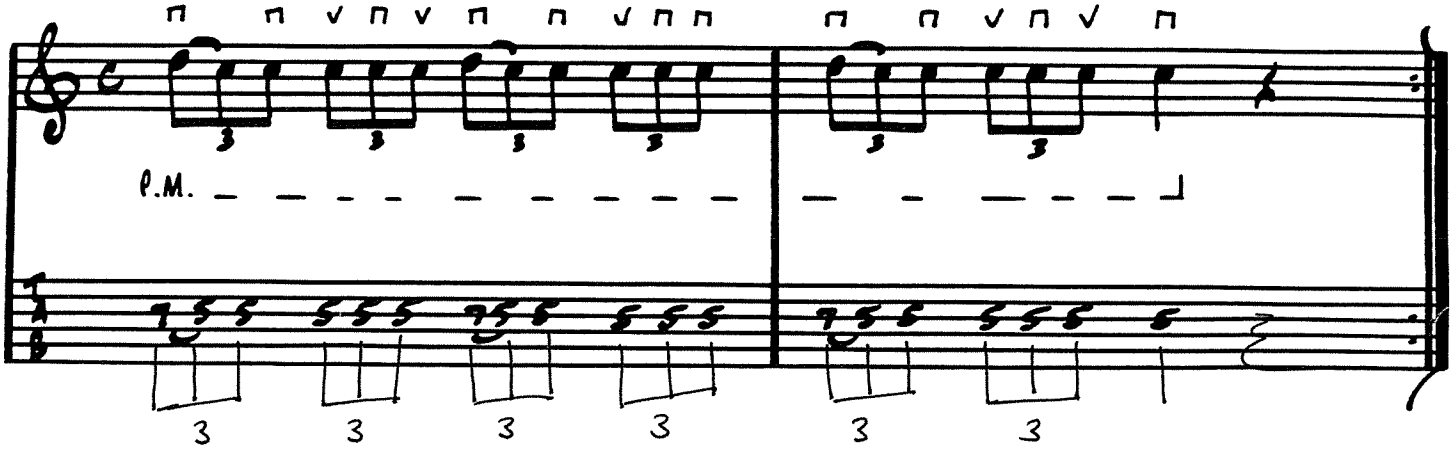

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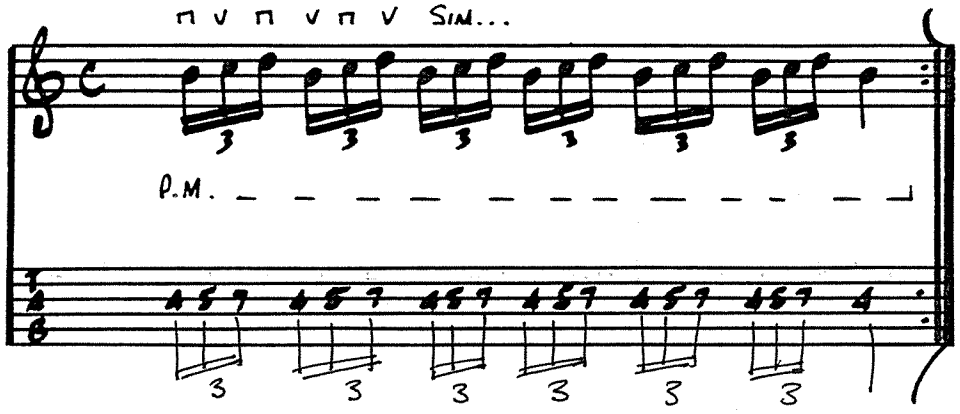
EXAMPLE 6:



The next few examples deal with applying your newly found chops. Remember don't tense that forearm!!

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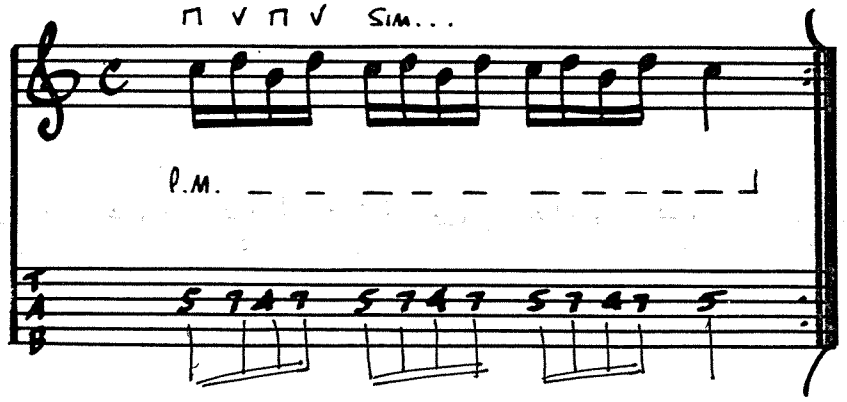

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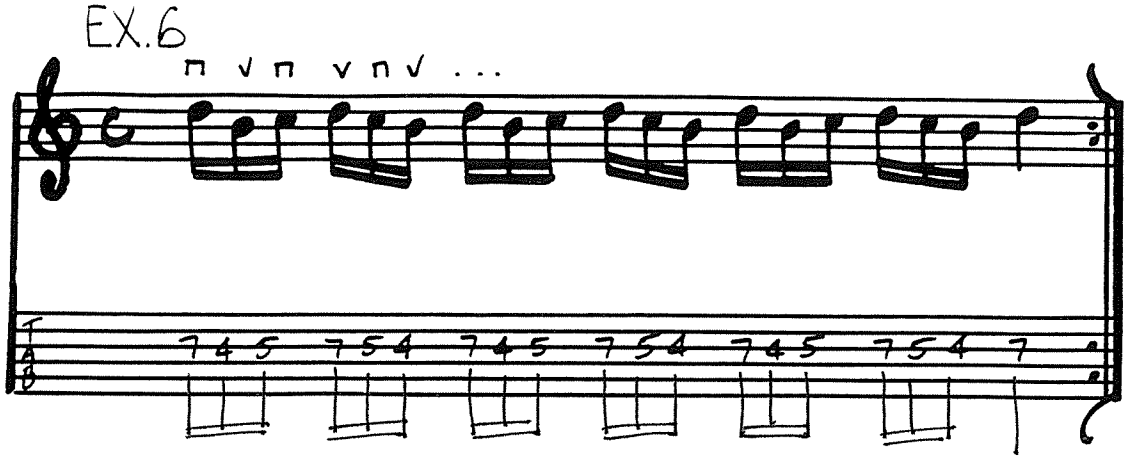
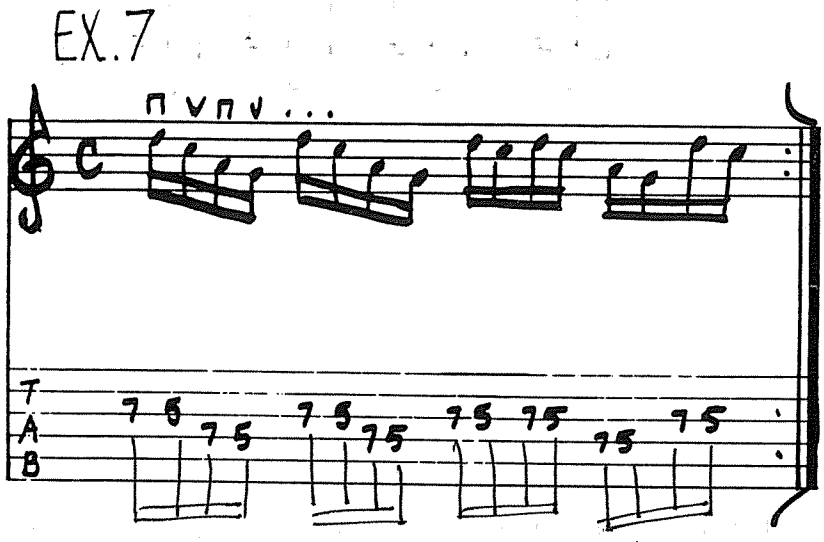
III. HAND SYNCHRONIZATION: Continued...



The next few exercises deal with applying your newly found chops. Remember, don't tense that forearm!!



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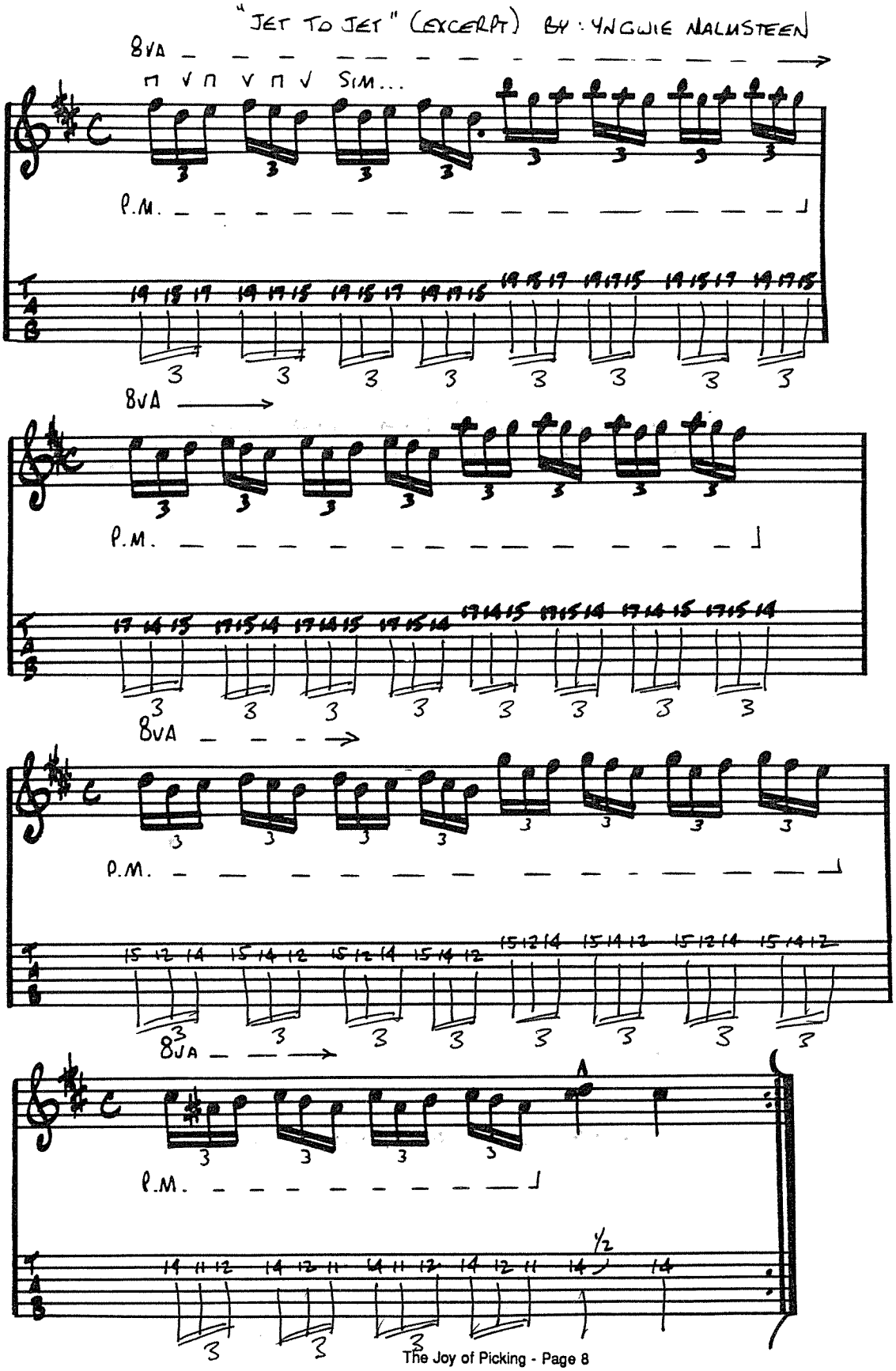
EXAMPLE 8:



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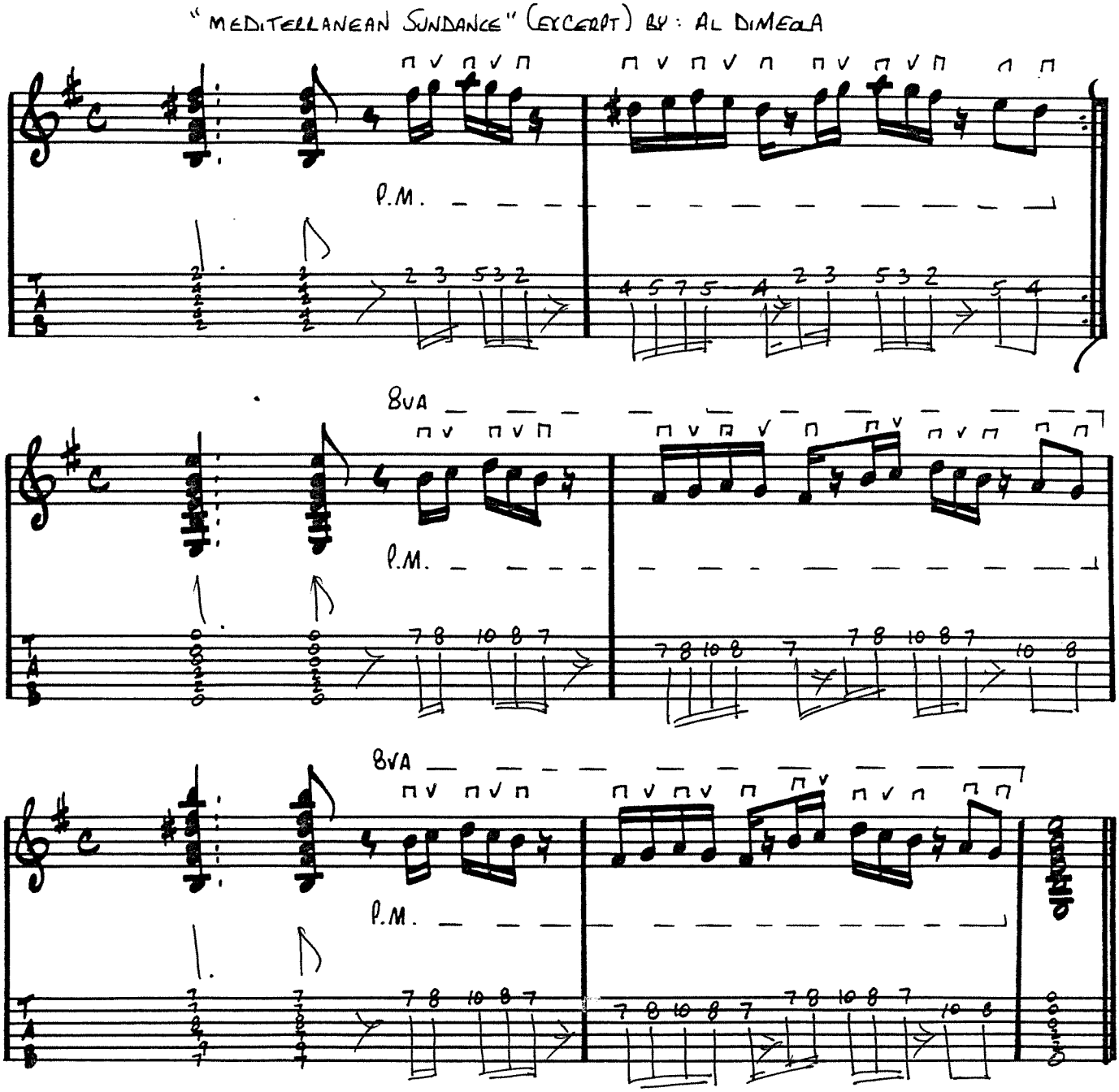

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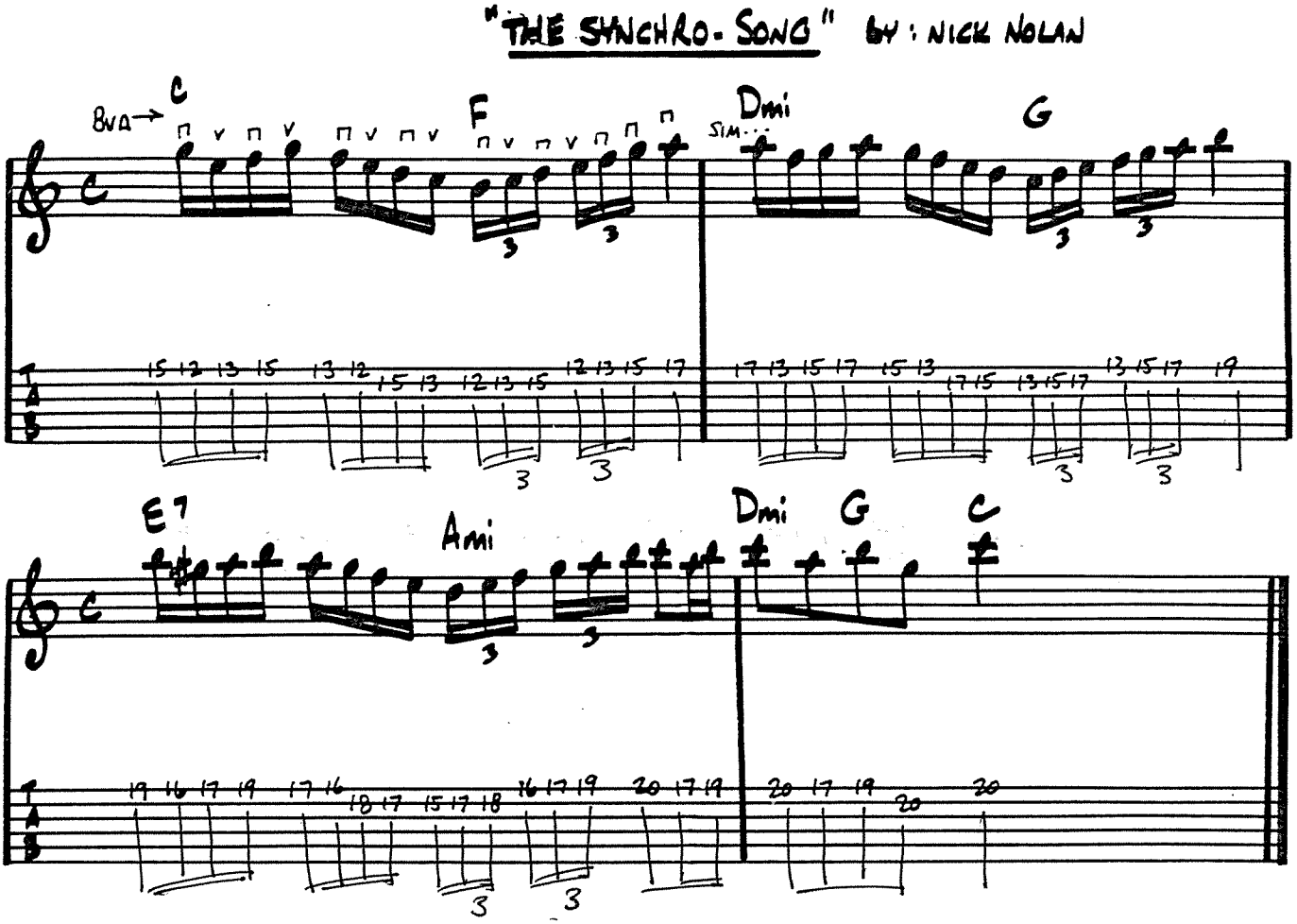

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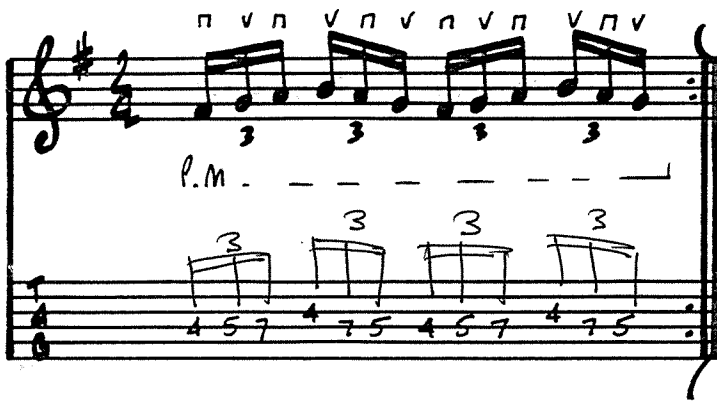

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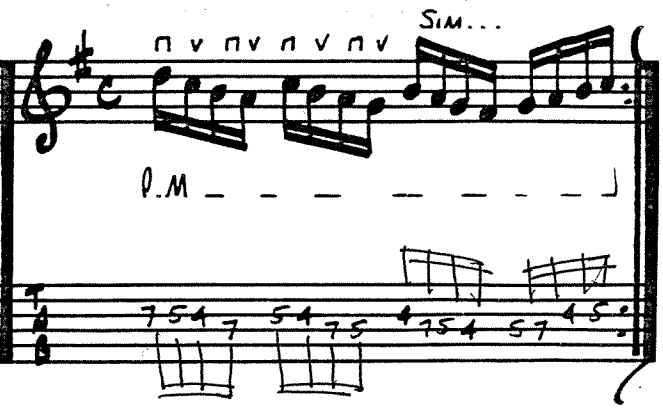

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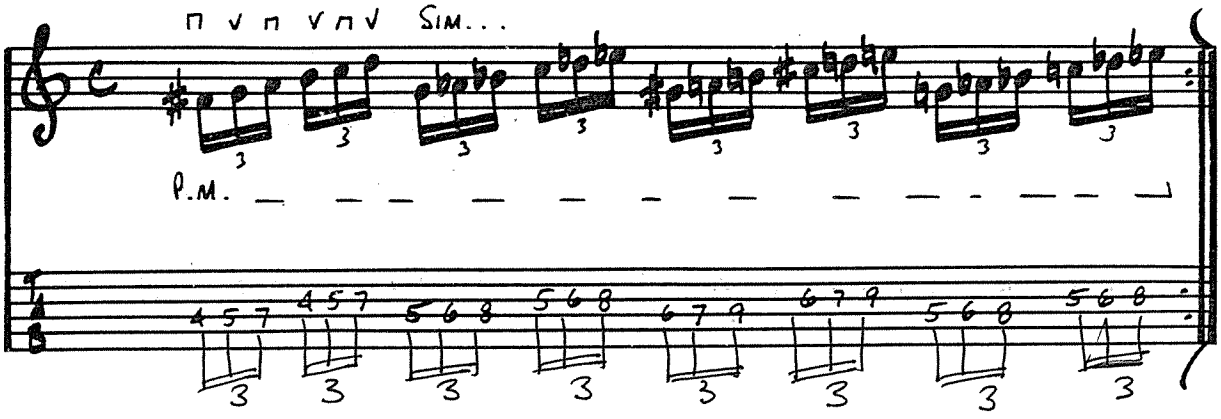

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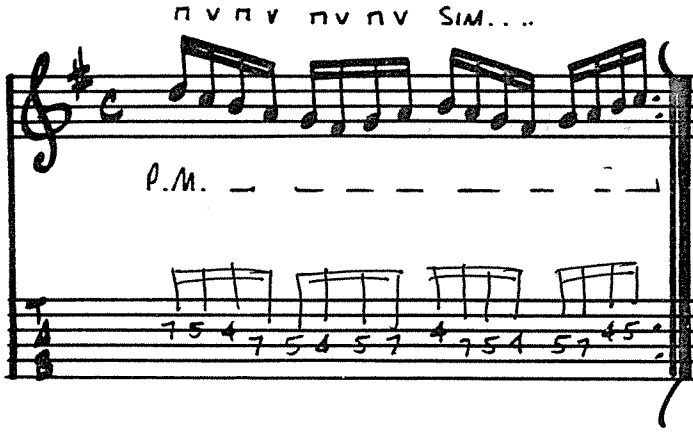

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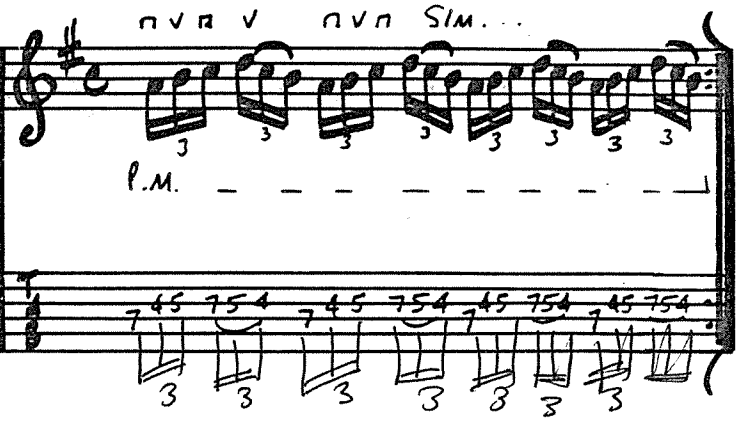

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IV. BUILDING SPEED: Continued...

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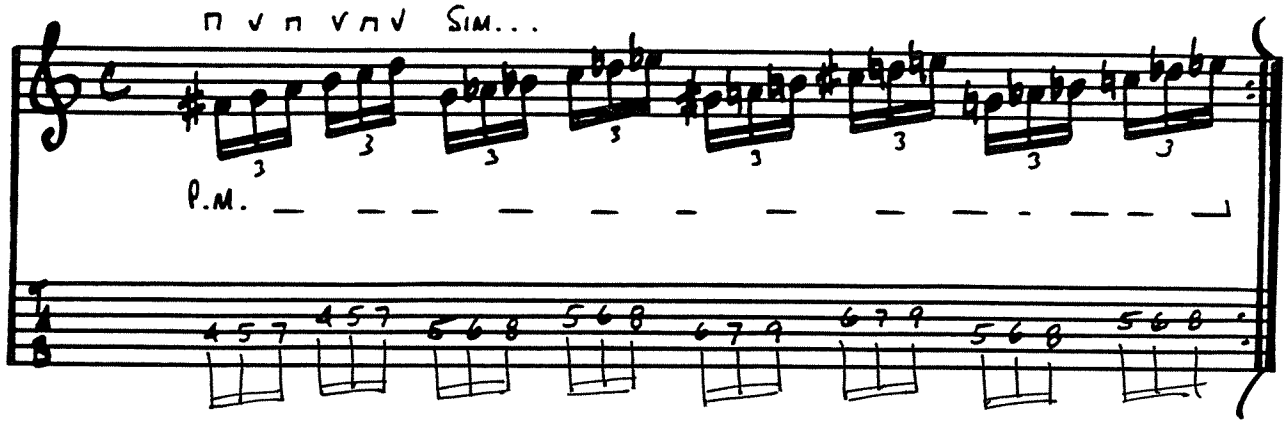

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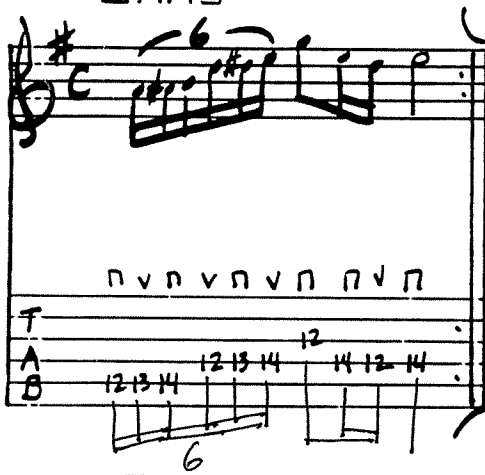

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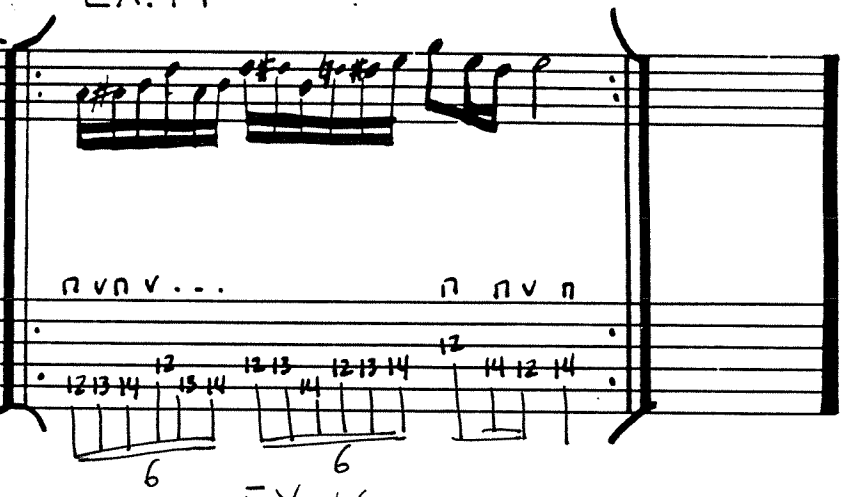

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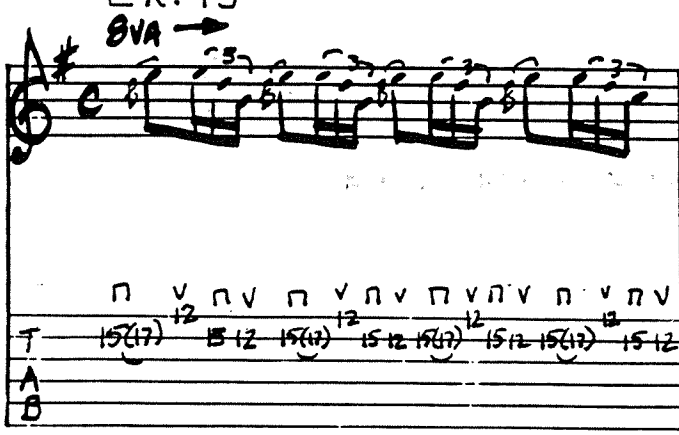

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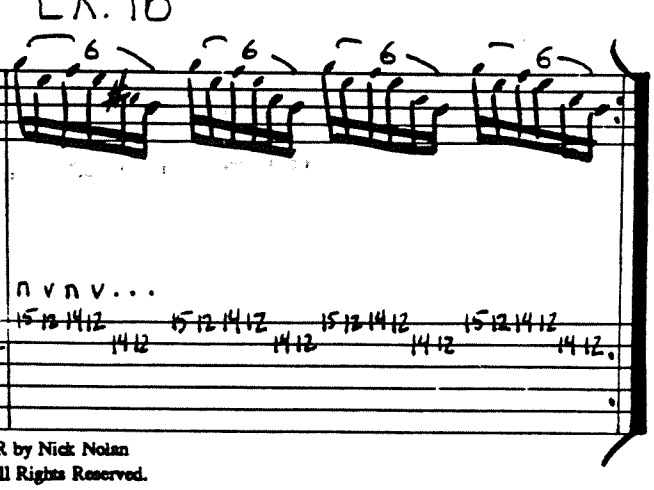

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