rockschool®

Acoustic Guitar
Grade 3

Performance pieces, technical exercises, supporting tests and in-depth guidance for Rockschool examinations

All accompanying and supporting audio can be downloaded from: *www.rslawards.com/downloads*

Input the following code when prompted: **KA754SRGXU**

For more information, turn to page 5

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CONTACTING ROCKSCHOOL
www.rslawards.com
Telephone: +44 (0)345 460 4747
Email: *info@rslawards.com*

SYLLABUS
Syllabus designed and written by Jono Harrison
Syllabus Director: Tim Bennett-Hart
Syllabus Consultants: Tristan Seume and Tommy Loose
Syllabus Advisors: Tim Bennett-Hart, Ashley Hards, Eva Brandt, Brian Ashworth, Stuart Slater, Peter Huntington, Bruce Darlington and Simon Troup
2019 Hit Tune arrangements by Giorgio Serci, Tristan Seume, Nat Martin, Tommy Loose, Ashley Hards, Jono Harrison and Calum Harrison
2016 Hit Tune arrangements by Andy G Jones, James Betteridge and Carl Orr.
Supporting Tests written by Jono Harrison, Nat Martin and Giorgio Serci.

PUBLISHING
Proof reading of arrangements by Calum Harrison, Simon Troup and Jono Harrison, plus all arrangers.
Music engraving and book layout by Simon and Jennie Troup of Digital Music Art
Fact files written and edited by Abbie Thomas
Technical Guidance written by Bruce Darlington
Proof reading and copy editing by Calum Harrison, Laura Hall and Jono Harrison
Cover design by Philip Millard of Rather Nice Design
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AUDIO
Produced by Jono Harrison
Engineered by Jono Harrison, Sam Harper, Pete Riley, Rory Harvey and Andy Robertson
Additional production and mixing by Ash Preston
Assisted by Chloe Kraemer @ Livingston Studios
Recorded at Livingston Studios, London
Mixed by Patrick Phillips
Mastered by Francis Gorini
Supporting Tests recorded by Jono Harrison, Nat Martin, Giorgio Serci and Andy G Jones.

MUSICIANS
Acoustic Guitar: Giorgio Serci, Nat Martin, Tommy Loose, Max Helyer (You Me At Six), Jono Harrison and Calum Harrison.
2016 content performed by Andy G Jones, Carl Orr and James Betteridge.
Piano and Keyboards: Jono Harrison and Rory Harvey
Drums & Percussion: Pete Riley
Bass: Andy Robertson
Guitars: Rory Harvey
Lead and Backing Vocals: Glen Harvey & Katie Hector
Additional Programming: Jono Harrison & Rory Harvey

DISTRIBUTION
Exclusive Distributors: Hal Leonard

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
John Simpson, Norton York

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Welcome to Rockschool Acoustic Guitar Grade 3

Welcome to Rockschool's Acoustic Guitar syllabus 2019. This syllabus is designed to support acoustic guitarists in their progression from Debut to Grade 8, through an engaging and rigorous pathway covering all the genres, stylistic elements, techniques and musical skills required for success as a contemporary acoustic guitarist.

Acoustic Exams
At each grade you have the option of taking one of two different types of examination:

- **Grade Exam**
  A Grade Exam is a mixture of music performances, technical work and supporting tests. You are required to prepare three pieces (two of which may be Free Choice Pieces) and the contents of the Technical Exercise section. This accounts for 75% of the exam marks. The other 25% consists of: either a Sight Reading or an Improvisation & Interpretation test (10%), two Ear Tests (10%), and finally you will be asked five General Musicianship Questions (5%). The pass mark is 60%.

- **Performance Certificate**
  A Performance Certificate is equivalent to a Grade Exam, but in a Performance Certificate you are required to perform five pieces. A maximum of three of these can be Free Choice Pieces. Each song is marked out of 20 and the pass mark is 60%.

All elements required to participate in a Rockschool exam can be found in the grade book. These are as follows:

- **Exam Pieces**
  The 2019 syllabus comprises six 'hit tune' arrangements, benchmarked and devised so as to equip contemporary acoustic guitarists with industry-relevant skills in any performance environment. These fall into two categories:

  Session Style
  These arrangements cover the skills required of contemporary acoustic guitarists in ensemble environments, be they on the stage or in the studio. The backing tracks feature vocalists, and the assessed guitar parts are reflective of what session guitarists would perform live or on mainstream commercial recordings

  Acoustic Specialist
  At Grade 3, 'acoustic specialist' pieces combine elements of melody and accompaniment. These arrangements are complimented by a 'duet' part for ensemble playing, which is also supplied in the audio downloads for performance in the exam. *Please note, candidates will only be assessed on the 'candidate' part.*

  Each 'hit tune' arrangement is preceded by a Fact File, giving surrounding context to the piece and the original performers/recording artists.

  Furthermore, at the end of each arrangement you will find performance notes giving additional supportive context to get the most out of the pieces.

- **Technical Exercises**
  There are either three or four groups of technical exercise, depending on the grade:

Debut – Grade 2	**Grade 3 – Grade 5**	**Grade 6 – Grade 8**
Group A: Scales	Group A: Scales	Group A: Scales
Group B: Chords	Group B: Arpeggios	Group B: Arpeggios
Group C: Acoustic Riff	Group C: Chords	Group C: Chords
	Group D: Acoustic Riff	Group D: Stylistic Study

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- **Supporting Tests**
  There are three types of previously unseen supporting tests in the exam:

  1. Sight Reading *or* Improvisation & Interpretation tests

     At *Debut – Grade 5*, the first type can be one of two options (this is the candidate's choice):
     Either:
     Sight Reading tests, developing the musician's ability to read and perform previously unseen material;
     or:
     Improvisation & Interpretation tests, developing the musician's ability to develop previously unseen material in a stylistic way and perform improvised passages of melody. The book contains examples of both types of test – equivalent 'unseen' examples will be provided for the examination

     At *Grades 6–8* candidates must perform a previously unseen 'Quick Study Piece', which combines elements of both improvisation and sight reading.

  2. Ear Tests
     Debut – Grade 3: Melodic and Rhythmic Recall
     Grade 4 – Grade 8: Melodic and Harmonic Recall

  3. General Musicianship Questions (GMQs), which you will be asked by the examiner at the end of each exam

General Information

You will find information on exam procedures, including online examination entry, marking schemes, information on Free Choice Pieces and improvisation requirements for each grade.

Audio

In addition to the grade book, we have also provided audio in the form of backing tracks (minus assessed guitar part) and full tracks (including assessed guitar part) for all 'hit tune' arrangements, technical exercises and supporting tests (where applicable). We have provided professional performance recordings of all solo/duet guitar pieces in the syllabus. This audio can be downloaded from RSL directly at *www.rslawards.com/downloads*

You will need to input this code when prompted: **KA754SRGXU**

The audio files are supplied in MP3 format. Once downloaded you will be able to play them on any compatible device.

Further Information

You can find further details about Rockschool's Acoustic syllabus by downloading the syllabus guide from our website: *www.rslawards.com*

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Performance & Technical Guidance

Repertoire
Notation should be performed as written, except where there are performance indications to ad lib., improvise, develop, etc. In these instances, the candidate will be marked on their ability to interpret the music in a stylistically appropriate way, commensurate with the grade level. Similarly, a degree of personal articulation and expression (i.e. 'shaping' of the notes) is encouraged and will be awarded marks from Grade 1 upwards

Adaptation
A small degree of adaptation is allowed where, for example, hand stretches do not facilitate the required notated parts. Marks may be deducted if adaptation results in over-simplification of the notation. If in doubt you can submit any adaptation enquiries to *info@rslawards.com*

Articulation & Dynamics
Where articulation and dynamics are marked on the notation, they should be followed. Otherwise the candidate is free to take their own approach, remaining cognisant of technical and stylistic considerations.

Techniques
Pieces and technical exercises may be performed fingerstyle, with plectrum or hybrid techniques as desired. The repertoire pieces have been arranged specifically to accommodate this. Any indications on the score are intended for guidance only, unless otherwise stipulated. Candidates will be awarded marks for physical techniques, and as such they should aim for a clear, balanced tonal projection with their chosen technique. At higher grades, the assessment embraces stylistic elements and these should be brought into consideration with general technical approaches.

Rockschool use the terms 'picking hand' and 'fretting hand' in preference to 'right hand' and 'left hand' in order to avoid confusion in relation handedness.

Acoustic Instruments & Tuning
Candidates may perform on steel or nylon-strung guitars in the exam. Care should be taken if performing pieces with alternative tunings that the instrument is suitable for this adjustment. An additional guitar is permitted if required.

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'Take On The World' | You Me At Six

'Take on the World' features on English rock band You Me At Six' fifth studio album, *Night People*. Released as a single in March 2017 'Take on the World' failed to chart in the UK, however, the album performed well peaking at number 3 in the UK and charting in Australia, Belgium and New Zealand.

After an 18 month tour of their fourth studio album *Cavalier Youth* the band took a short break from performing in 2015. In the autumn of that year they spent time at drummer Dan Flint's home, writing new material for what would soon become *Night People*. Having recorded demos with Ross Orton in late 2015, the band reconvened in early 2016 and began talks with several producers. After some uncertainty of which avenue to go down the band were approached by accomplished producer Jacquire King (Kings of Leon, Norah Jones, James Bay) and accepted an offer they couldn't refuse. They subsequently travelled to Nashville, Tennessee to record under King's guidance and expertise. With recording finished in June of 2016, the band took to the road again with a UK tour in October of that year which preceded the January 2017 release of their album. Although the album tracks struggled on the mainstream UK chart, eight out of ten of them appeared on the UK Rock & Metal Singles Chart (including 'Take on the World').

Frontman Josh Franceschi wrote 'Take on the World' with chart topping songwriter Iain Archer (Snow Patrol, Jake Bugg and James Bay). Stating that the songwriting pair knew it had to be anthemic, Franceschi recalls his songwriting session as somewhat similar to a "weird therapy session". Having never co-written before the frontman was a little sceptical, but four hours after meeting and sitting down with Archer they had a completed demo. The You Me At Six lead singer defines his composition as *Night People*'s big ballad, describing it as a sensitive song which talks of the difficult days a loving relationship can face. Although he doesn't directly reference Coldplay's smash hit *Fix You* as an influence, he has been known to mention it when asked about this song and talks of his admiration for the worldwide hit.

You Me At Six was founded in 2004 and consisted of Franceschi (vocals), guitarists Max Helyer and Chris Miller, Matt Barnes (bass) and Joe Phillips (drums). After releasing their first EP *We Know What It Means to be Alone* in 2006, drummer Phillips left the band and was later replaced by Dan Flint. In 2008 the band were signed to independent record label Slam Dunk Records, with whom they released their debut studio album *Take Off Your Colours*. They were nominated for Best British Band at the Kerrang! Awards that same year and in 2019, losing out both times to Bullet for My Valentine.

In 2010 they released their first major label album *Hold Me Down* with Virgin records, which peaked at number 5 on the UK album chart. Since then they have released a further four top ten UK albums and continue to tour their latest album *VI* as we speak.

Song Info

Song Title:	Take on the World
Album:	*Night People*
Released:	2017
Label:	Infectious
Genre:	Pop Rock
Written By:	You Me At Six/Iain Archer
Produced by:	Jacquire King

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Take On The World

Session Style

You Me At Six

Arranged by Nat Martin

Max Helyer performance transcribed by Jono Harrison

♩=103 *Alternative Rock / Pop Rock*

Bm A G

Just say the word, we'll take on the world.

mf Play with pick

† mute A string under fretting hand 1st finger

D A Bm G

I can

mp Play fingerstyle

[5]

A

Verse

D A Bm

see see the pain in your eyes

[9]

G D A

Oh be - lieve, be - lieve me and I have tried

[12]

Words and Music by Iain Archer, Matthew Barnes, Daniel Flint, Josh Franceschi, Max Helyer and Christopher Miller
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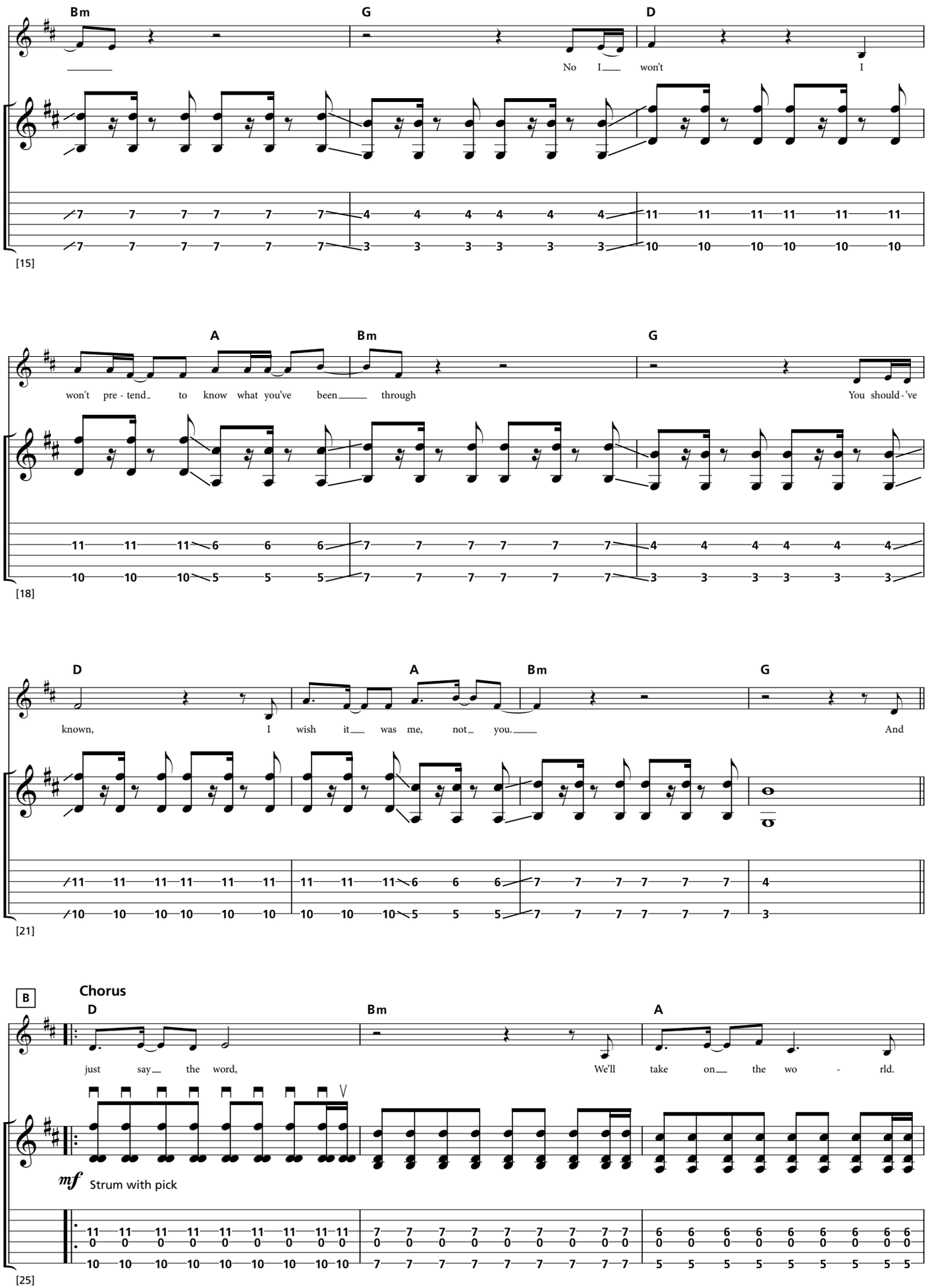

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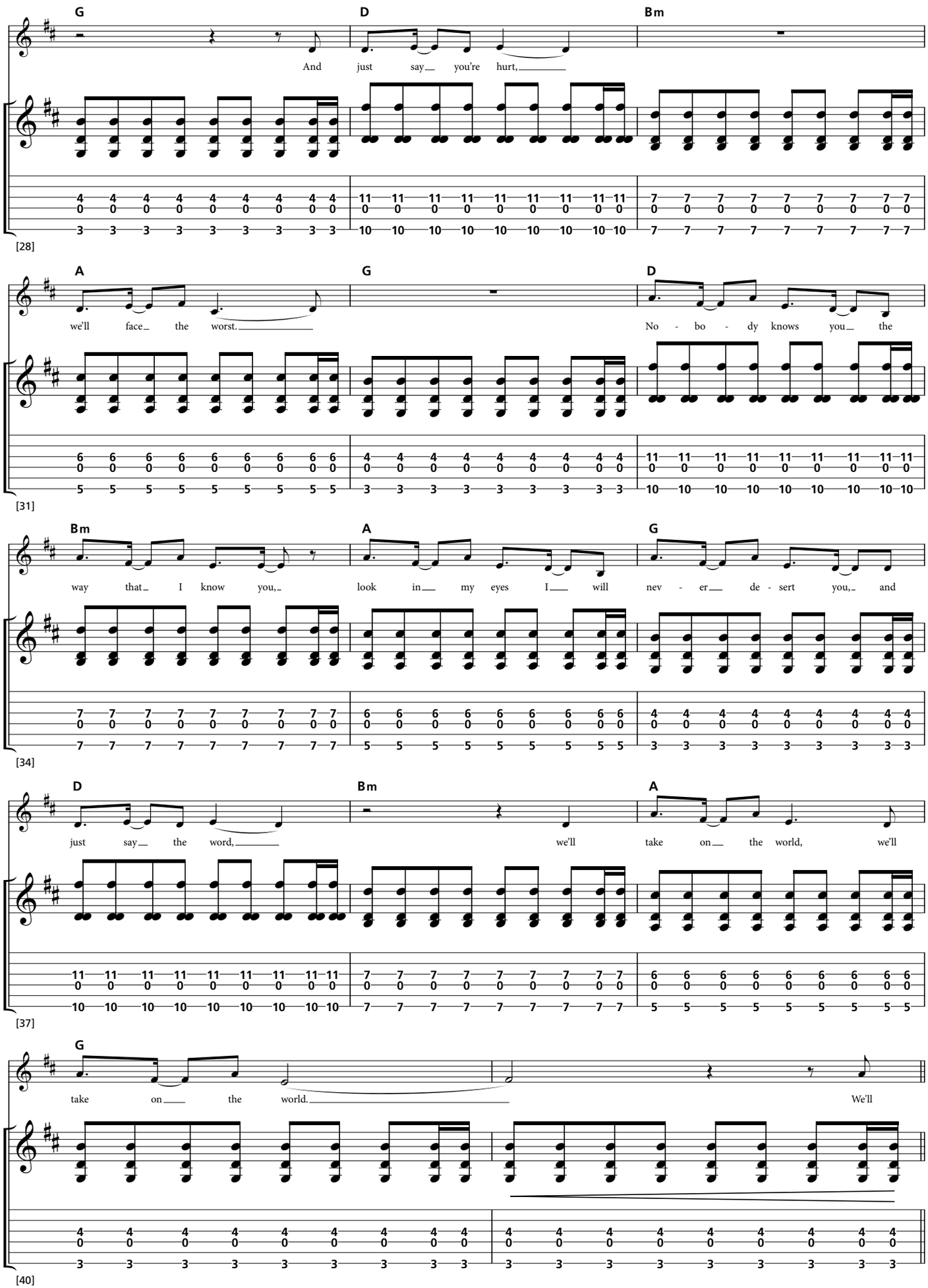

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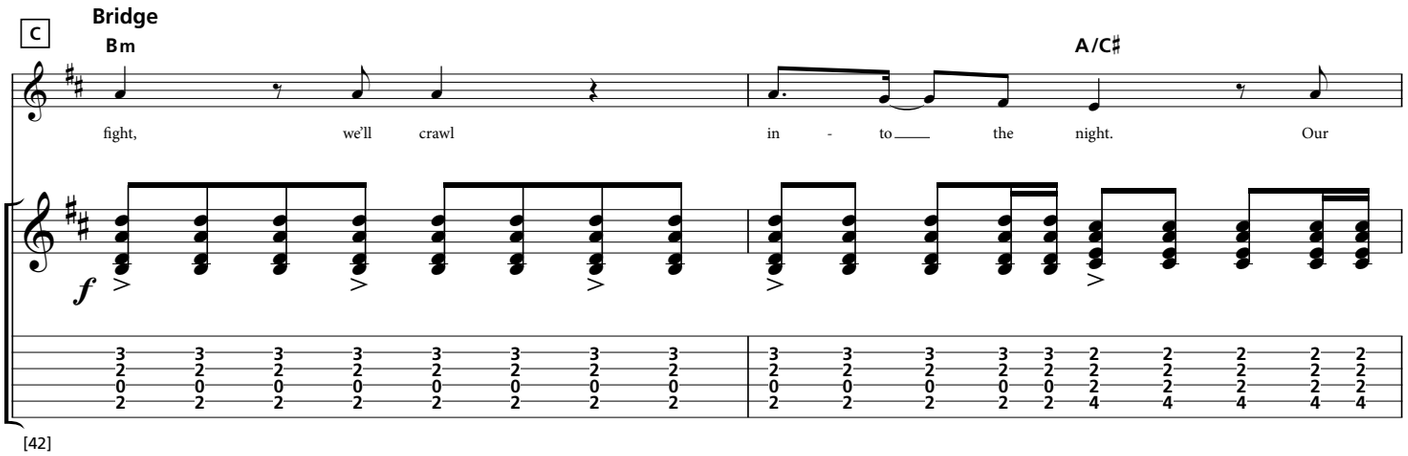

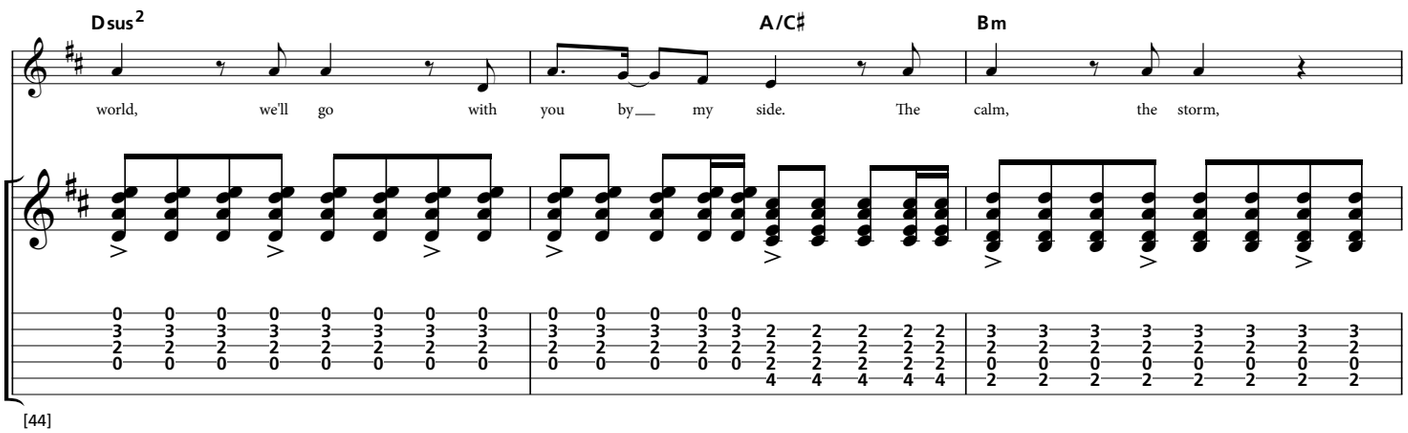

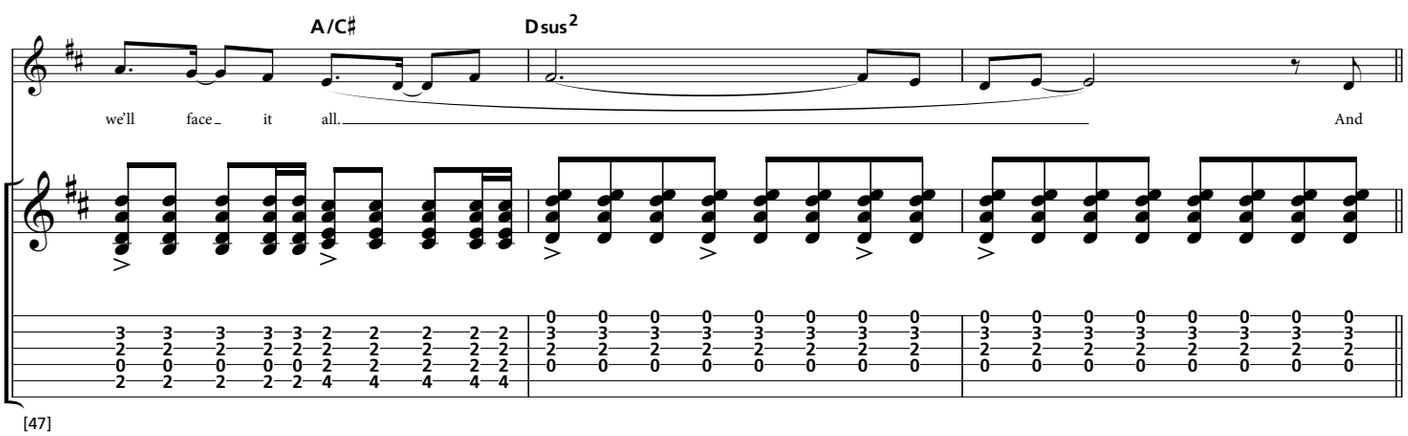

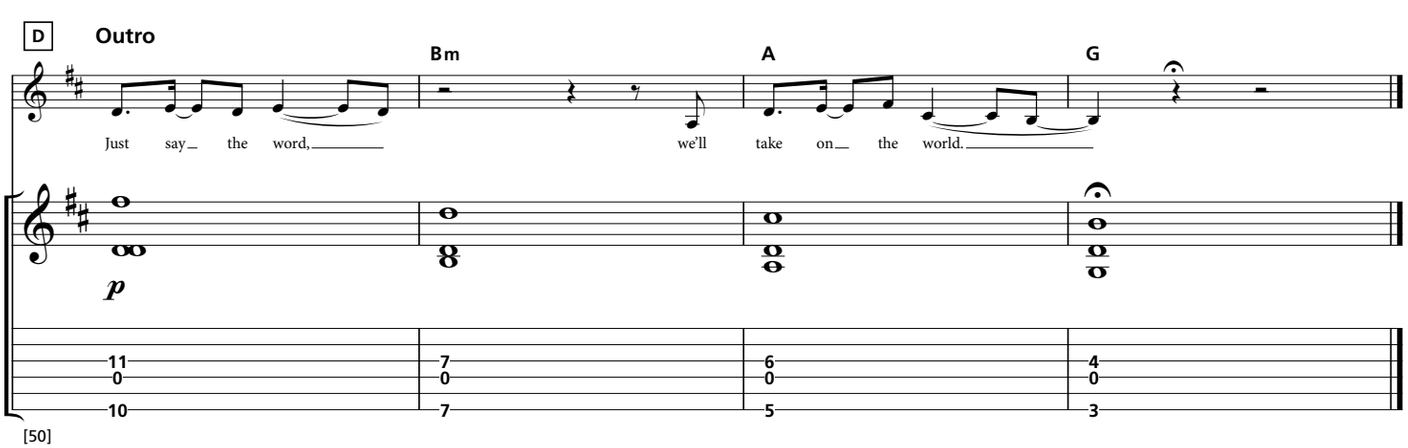

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Take On The World | Technical Guidance

This Grade 3 piece uses three distinct dynamic feels (***mp***, ***mf*** & ***f***), all of which need to come through in your performance. Practicing changing between these three with a simple part or chord progression can really help to get a feel for them before adding the complexity of the full score.

The switch between fingerstyle and plectrum playing needs to be observed during the transitions between sections, as it will have a significant impact on the feel of the performance as well as the intensity of attack available to you. Section A and B could be played using a pick and fingers, but it would be much more difficult to balance the voices evenly then if just using fingerstyle.

When sliding large intervals over several frets (bar 7 to 8 for example), it is best practice to keep both pitches sounding as much as possible, as this demonstrates secure fretting hand technique.

Bars 1–4 and 25–41 feature a chordal approach which is common in pop/rock parts, where open voicings combine with a pedal tone open string in order to create a striking and powerful progression. This helps give a sense of unity to the part and the pedal tone brings an extra colouration to each chord in turn. It is important to ensure that the fretting technique accommodates the open and fretted strings, but also mutes the unwanted A string to avoid unnecessarily muddying the sound.

Staccato rhythm markings and 16th note rests make the rhythm part challenging, and need to be crisp and clear to get towards an effective performance and top marks in the exam.

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'The Man Who Sold The World' | David Bowie

'The Man Who Sold The World' was the title track for David Bowie's third studio album and was released in the US in 1970, and in the UK the following year. Although Bowie's original version surprisingly failed to chart in the UK, the song did achieve UK chart success in 1974 with Lulu's famous cover which peaked at number 3. Between the years of 1995 and 1997 Bowie famously reworked his live version of the song, introducing atmospheric synthesisers, techno style drums and a new bassline, before returning to the original version in the 2000s.

Although the album of the same name was the third to be released by the global superstar, it was thought of by many reviewers as truly the first in his incredible journey. The album saw a shift from the writer's previously acoustic focussed music to a hard rock sound and introduced the "rather hysterical" Bowie that the world came to know and love. Despite overwhelmingly positive reviews, the album failed to chart in the UK or the US on its initial release. However, on its re-release in 1972 word of Bowie's genius had begun to spread and it peaked at number 23 on the UK Album chart. With several artists having claimed the album as having had a huge influence on their own work, including The Cure, Gary Numan and Nirvana, the record has left behind a legacy. Not only this but the album is hailed by many as the launch of Glam Rock, along with the appearance of Marc Bolan on Top of the Pops in December 1970 – performing his first UK hit 'Ride a White Swan' in a glittery top.

David Bowie's career spanned six decades and could be considered equal to none other. Known for his individuality, alter egos and musical entrepreneurship, the artist was loved across the globe and his list of accolades is endless. Not only a hugely talented songwriter and musician, Bowie was also an award-winning actor with some of his most memorable roles including Thomas Jerome in 'The Man Who Fell to Earth' (which won him Best Actor at the Saturn Awards) and Jareth in the 1986 hit 'Labyrinth'. With a staggering 19 Grammy Nominations throughout his career, of which he won 5, four BRIT awards (including the Outstanding Contribution to Music award in 1996) and countless other recognitions it would be very difficult to try and summarise his success and influence. In 2000, Bowie was to be honoured with a CBE and knighthood, both of which he turned down, a perfect example of the humbleness that epitomised this incredible artist.

In 2016, Bowie released his 25th studio album *Blackstar* on his 69th birthday. Sadly, the artist lost his quiet battle with liver cancer two days after and left his fans in mourning. With many looking back at the last album as a goodbye, his writing is hailed as moving and phenomenal. It can only be assumed that he will continue to influence and inspire for many years to come.

Song Info

Song Title:	The Man Who Sold The World
Album:	*The Man Who Sold The World*
Released:	1970/1971
Label:	Mercury Records
Genre:	Psychedelic Rock / Folk Rock
Written By:	David Bowie
Produced by:	Tony Visconti

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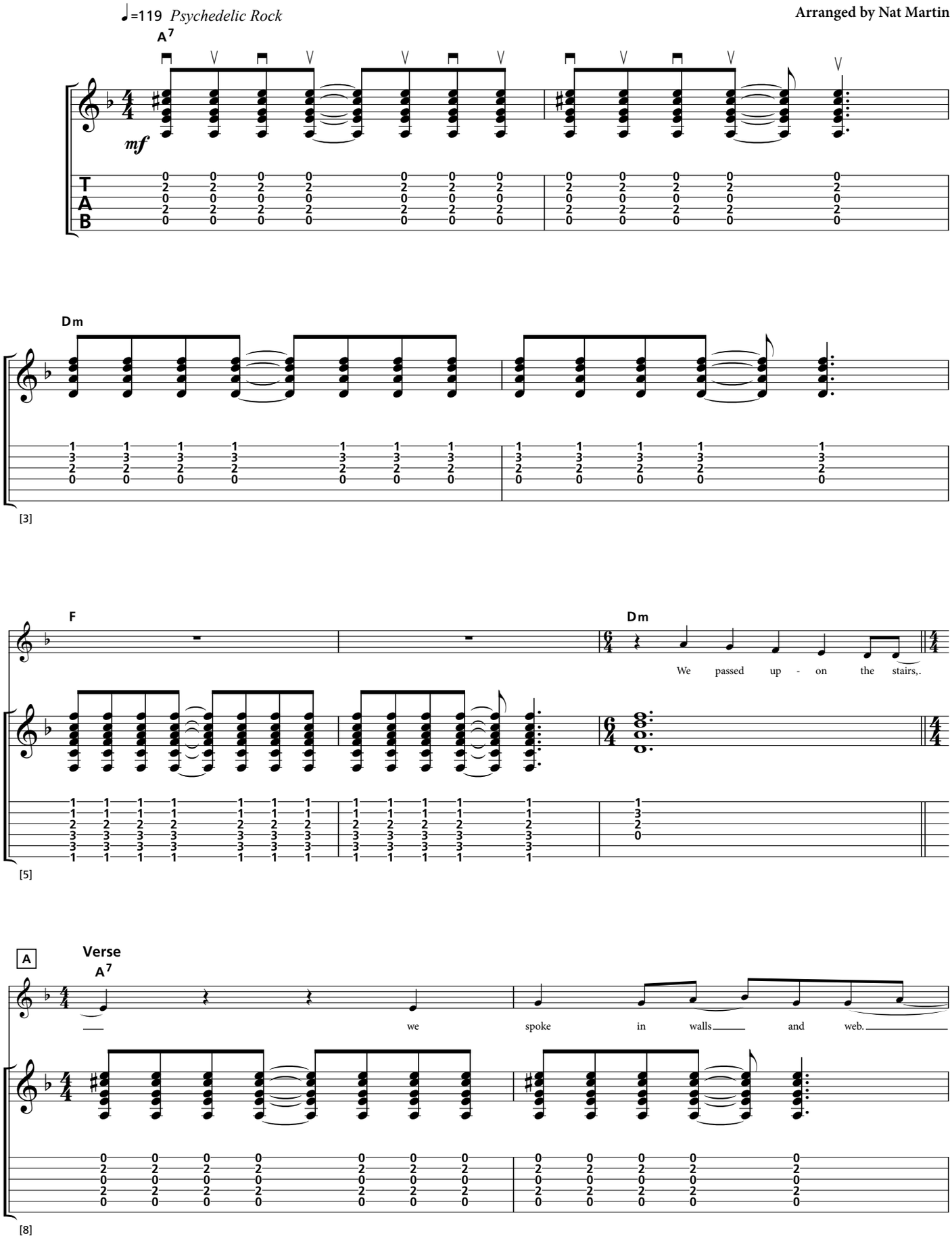
The Man Who Sold The World

David Bowie

Arranged by Nat Martin



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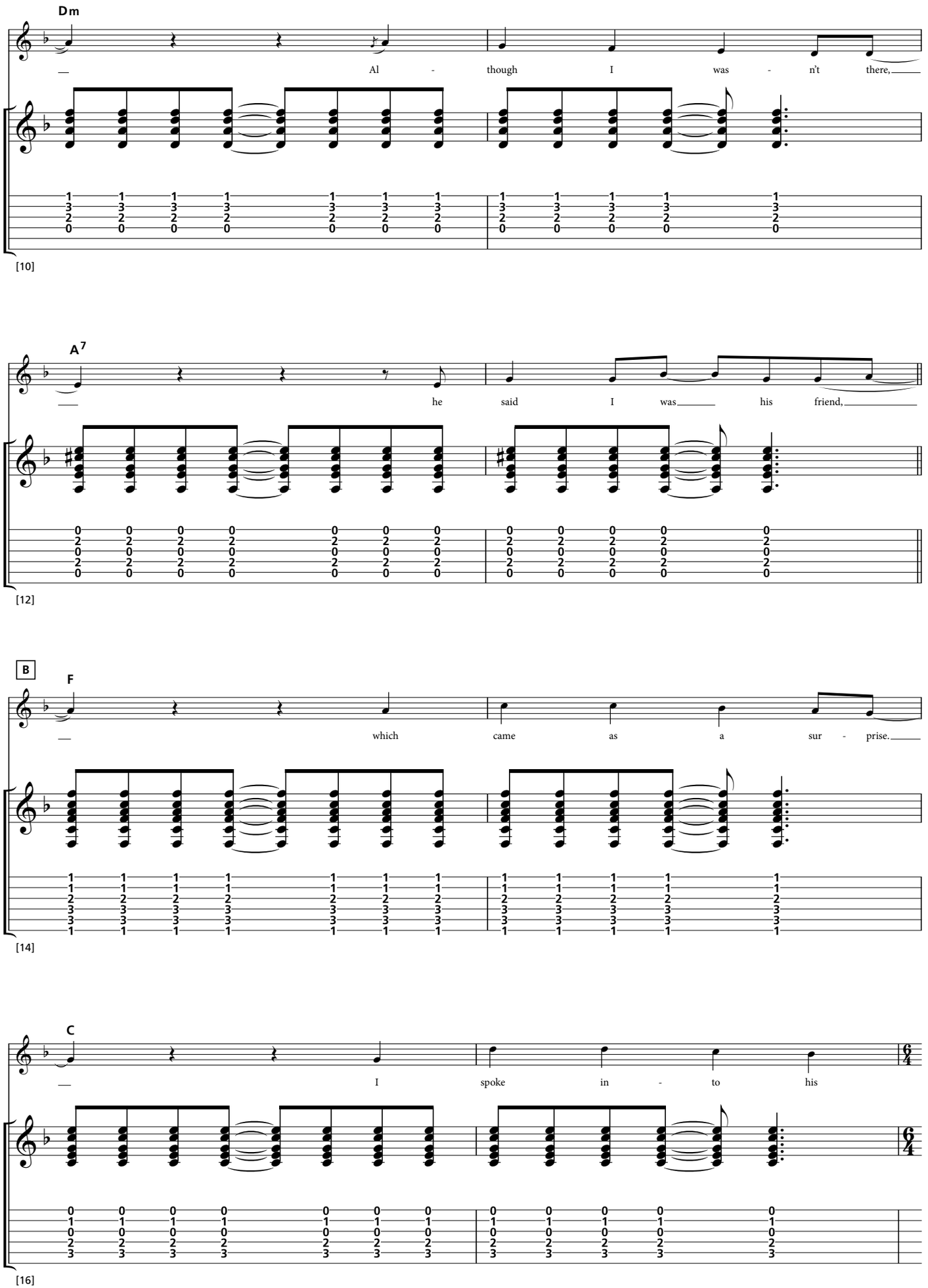

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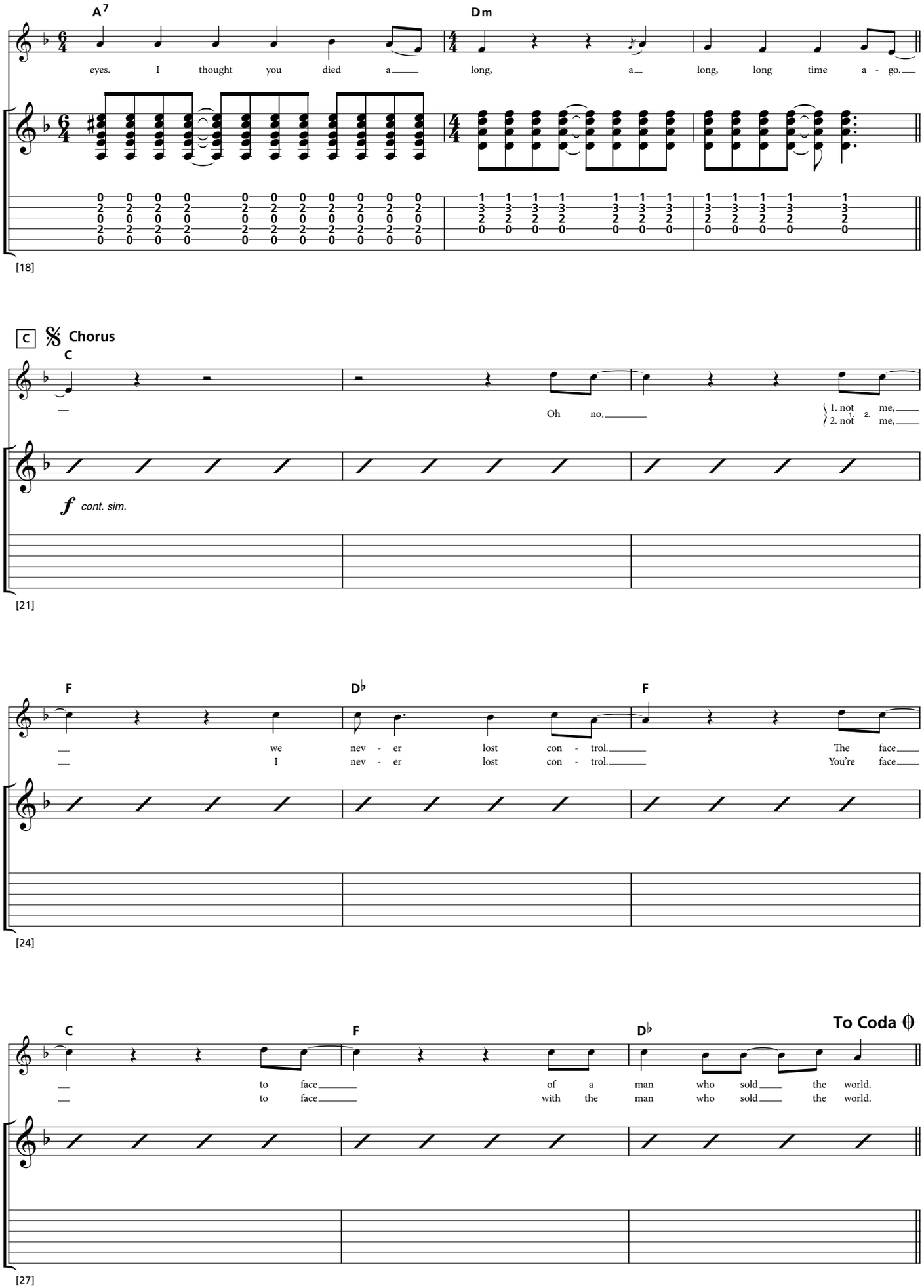

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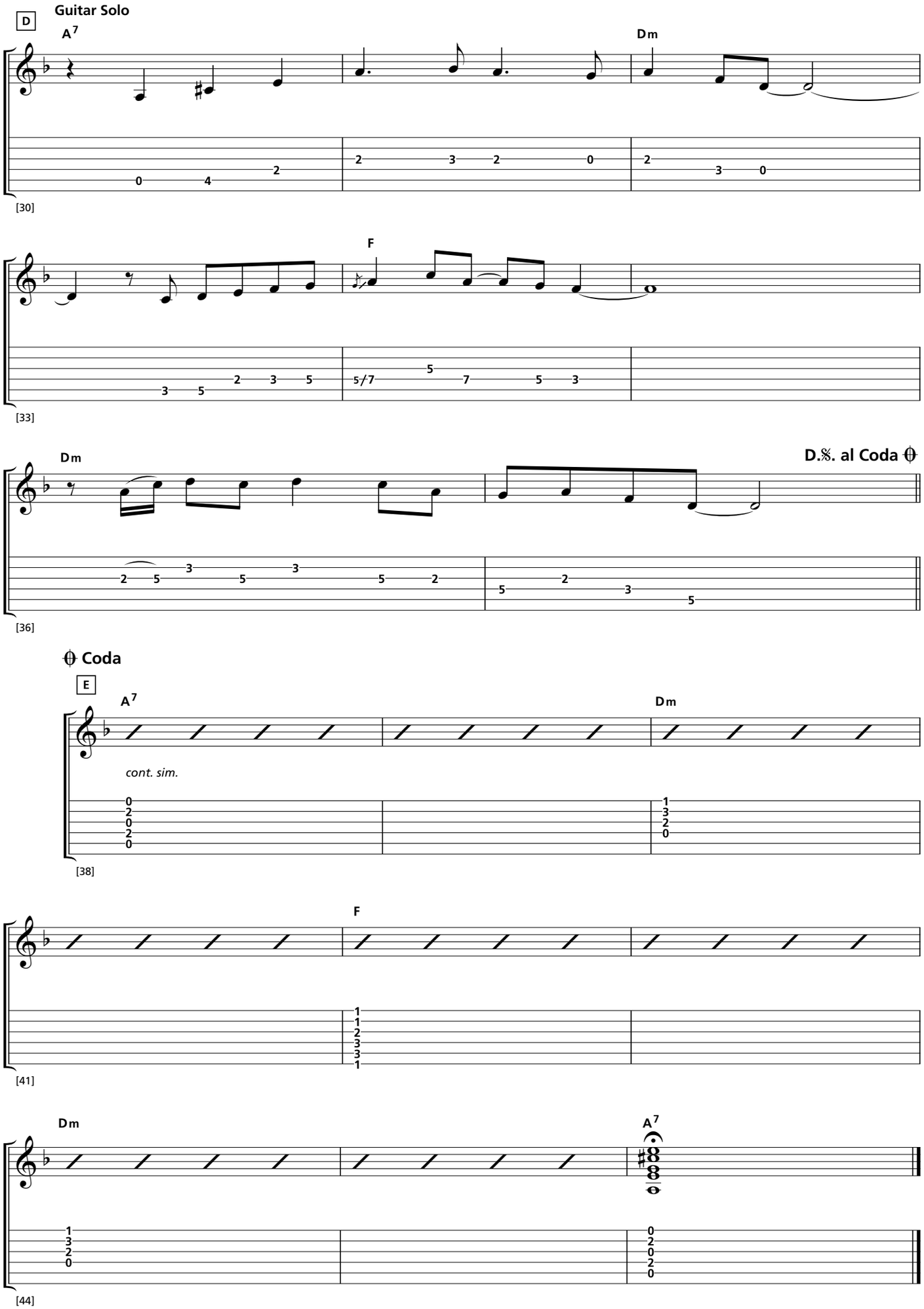

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The Man Who Sold The World | Technical Guidance

In terms of musicality and technical control, this Grade 3 piece combines already familiar ideas with new elements to create a challenging performance that reflects the transition from Grade 2 to Grade 3.

The change from $\frac{4}{4}$ to $\frac{6}{4}$ and back (bar 7) is a good starting point in studying this song and should not be underestimated. Playing it 'by ear' or 'feel' can work well, but being able to count the different time signatures fluently will lead to a really confident performance.

The real challenge with the chords is to ensure that all notes ring out and that larger barre chords are kept even. Whilst it is important to isolate small sections during the practise, it can also prove beneficial to practice larger sections (the entirety of the A and B section) as a way to highlight technical issues that need addressing. With barre chords in particular, common issues regarding endurance/hand strength are often derived from technical efficiency in the fretting hand.

The guitar solo maintains a similar harmonic theme to the rest of the piece. A useful aspect to observe is the note choice and how it outlines the chord changes. This is done by performing notes from within the chords, on the strong beats of the bars. An example being in bar 30 and 31, where the solo performs notes from an A dominant ^{7} arpeggio. The only departure from this is the B♭ in bar 31. However, this resolves back to an A note on beat 3 of the bar.

There are also *'cont. sim.'* indications in this arrangement, which means the part should be continued with small adaptations whilst following the chord symbols. This will add interest to the part without detracting from its overall effect.

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'Weather With You' | Crowded House

'Weather with You' was the third single to be released from the album *Woodface* by Crowded House. The song became the most successful single release from the album, reaching the top 50 in ten countries the top ten in the UK. 'Weather with You' also featured on the band's greatest hits album, *Recurring Dream*, which they released in 1996 – the same year in which the group disbanded. As the leading track on their greatest hits, Weather with You has made its place as one of the band's most popular songs.

Crowded House formed in Melbourne Australia in 1985, with the original line up consisting of Neil Finn (vocals & guitar), Paul Hester (drums) and Nick Seymour (bass). Shortly after forming the founding members welcomed Tim Finn (Nick's brother), Mark Hart and Matt Sherrod into the band, becoming the Crowded House that the mass market came to know. The band released four studio albums and one greatest hits album before going their separate ways in 1996, of which one topped the UK album charts and a further two peaked in the top ten. In 2007, after 11 years apart, the band reunited (sadly without Hester, who passed away in 2005), and released their fifth studio album Time on Earth, which it would seem the listeners had been waiting for as it peaked an impressive third position in the UK. With their return going well, Crowded House went on to release *Intriguer* and *The Very Best of* in 2010, of which the former performed better in the album charts.

The rock band were well respected in their native country and received numerous nominations and awards. From a staggering 26 nominations, Crowded House have won 11 ARIA Awards (Australian Recording Industry Association Music) including the highly coveted 'Best New Talent' award in 1987. On top of this, the band successfully won eight out of eleven APRA (Australian Performing Rights Association) awards. With such high regard it is no surprise that they were inducted into the ARIA Hall of Fame in 2016.

Not only performing well in their home country, Crowded House also received several awards and nominations in the UK, including the BRIT Award for 'International Group of the Year' in 1994. Although they are yet to top the UK Singles chart, they have certainly made their mark on the British market with 12 UK top 40 hits and 4 top ten albums. The band last toured in 2016, before announcing a hiatus. Since then, lead singer Neil Finn has joined Fleetwood Mac on their worldwide tour in the wake of founding member Lindsay Buckingham's departure.

Song Info

Song Title:	Weather With You
Album:	*Woodface*
Released:	1992
Label:	Capitol
Genre:	Soft Rock
Written By:	Neil Finn & Tim Finn
Produced by:	Mitchell Froom/Neil Finn
UK Chart Peak:	7

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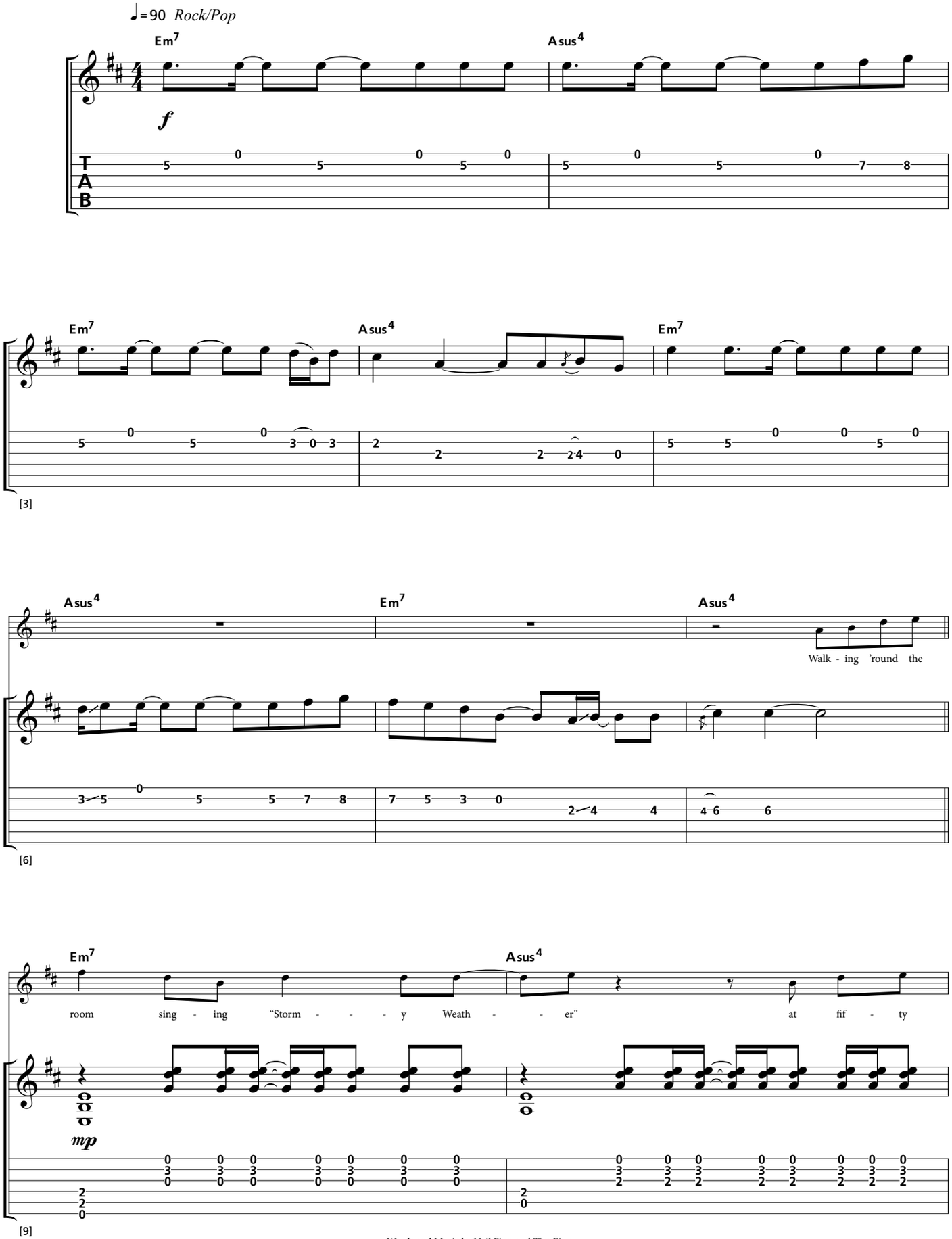
Weather With You

Session Style

Crowded House

Arranged by Ashley Hards



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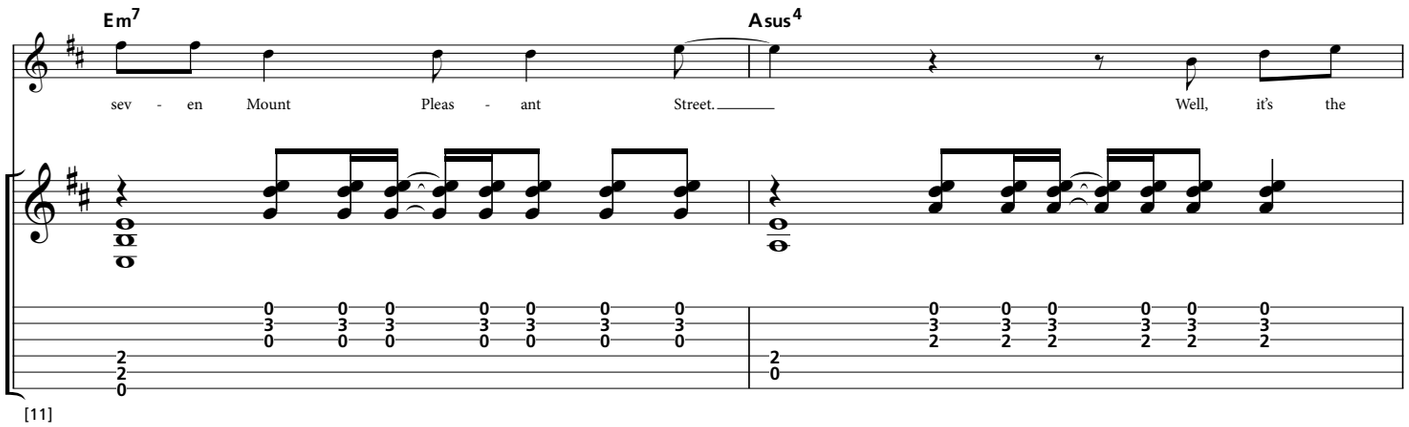

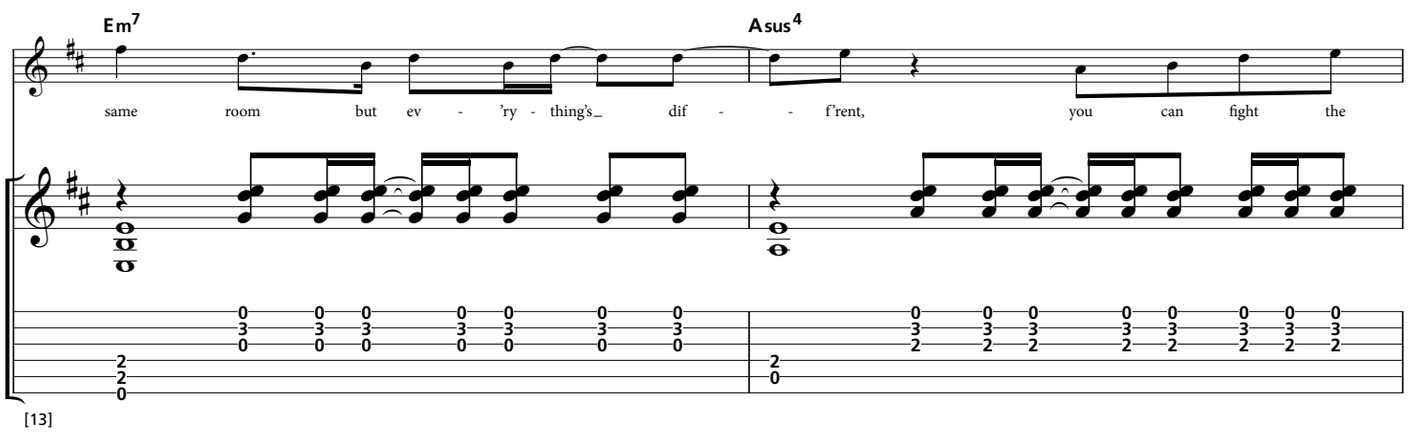

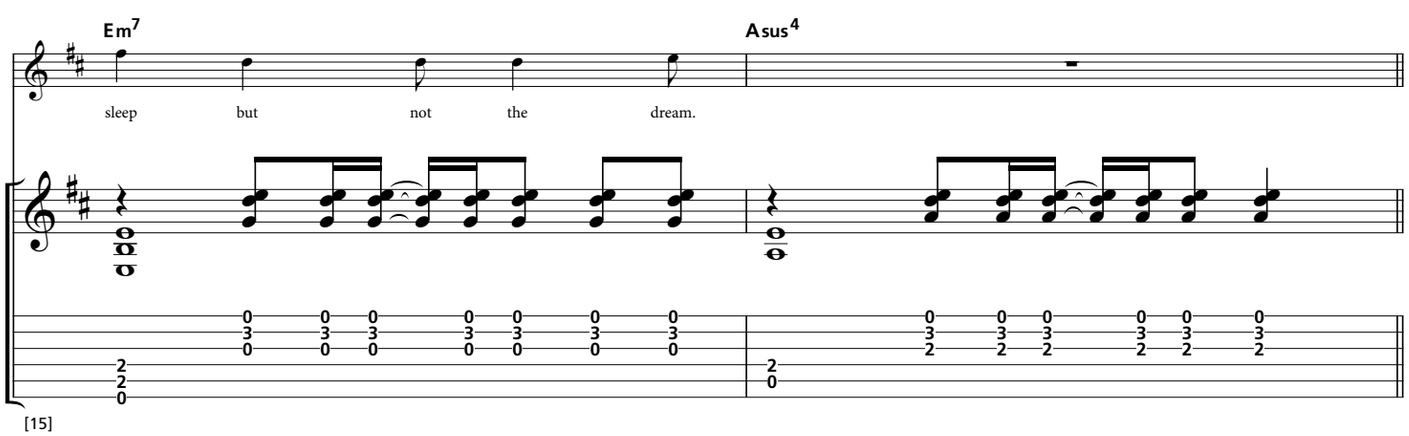

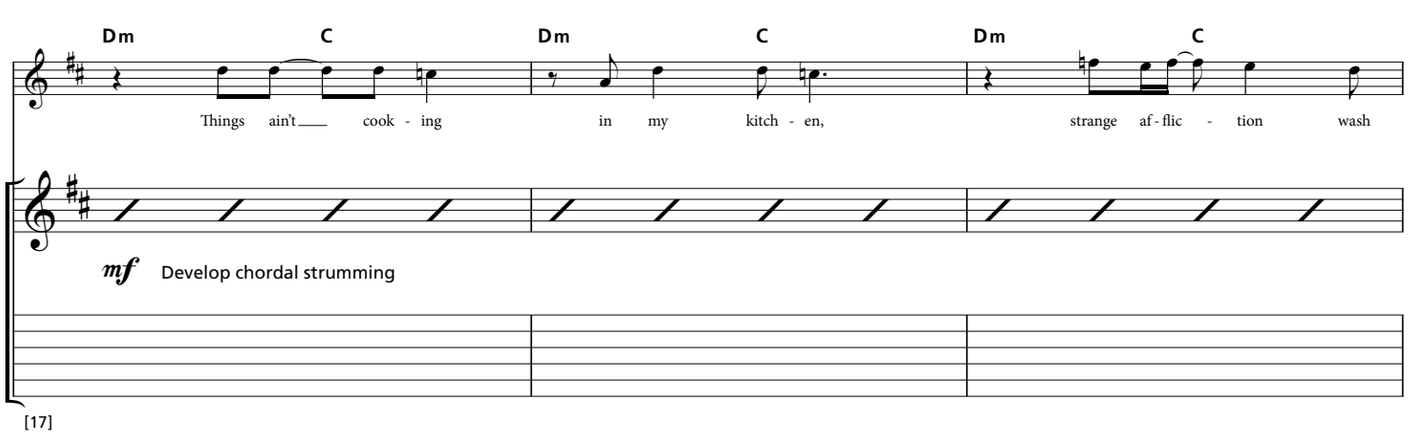

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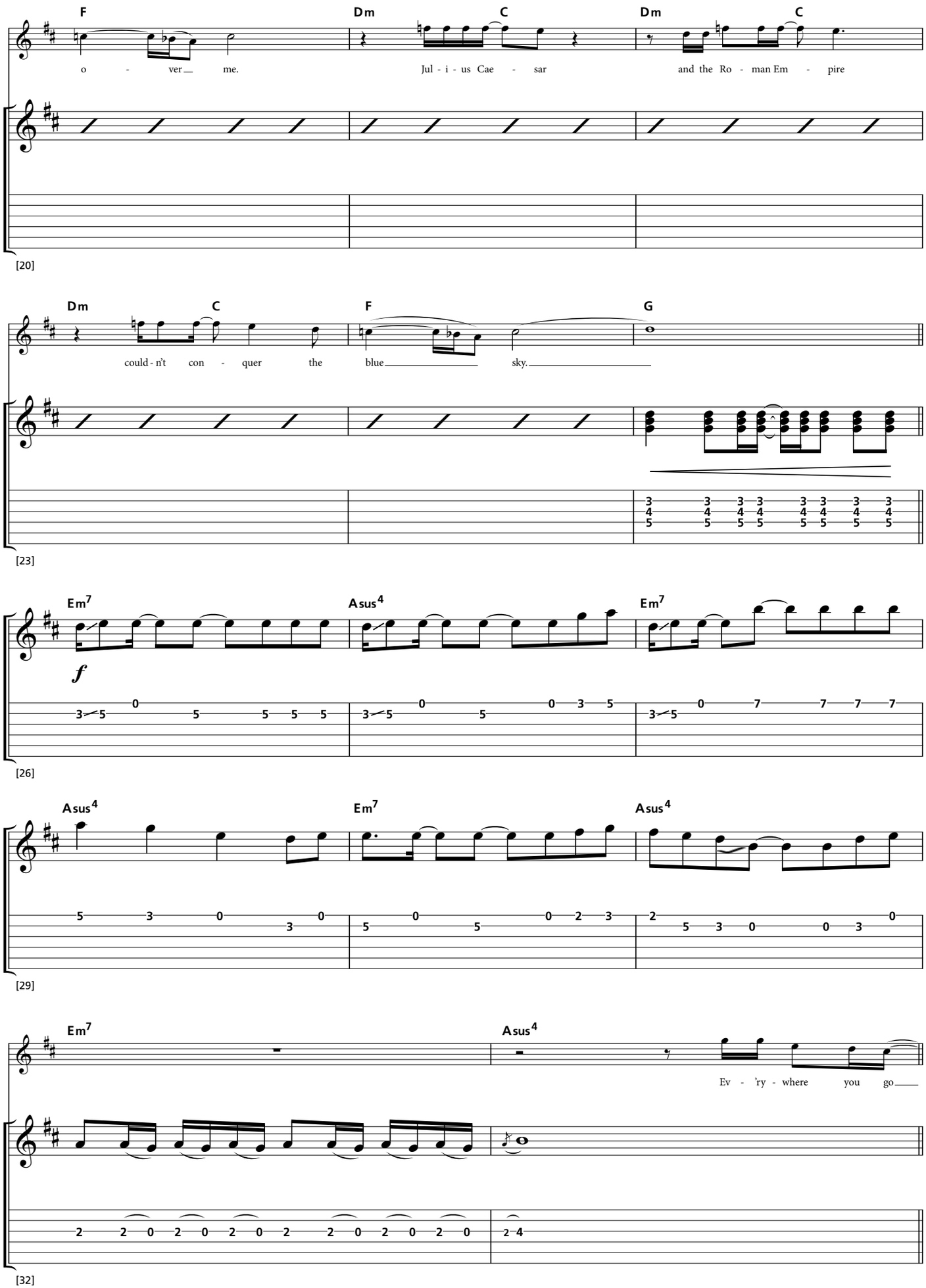

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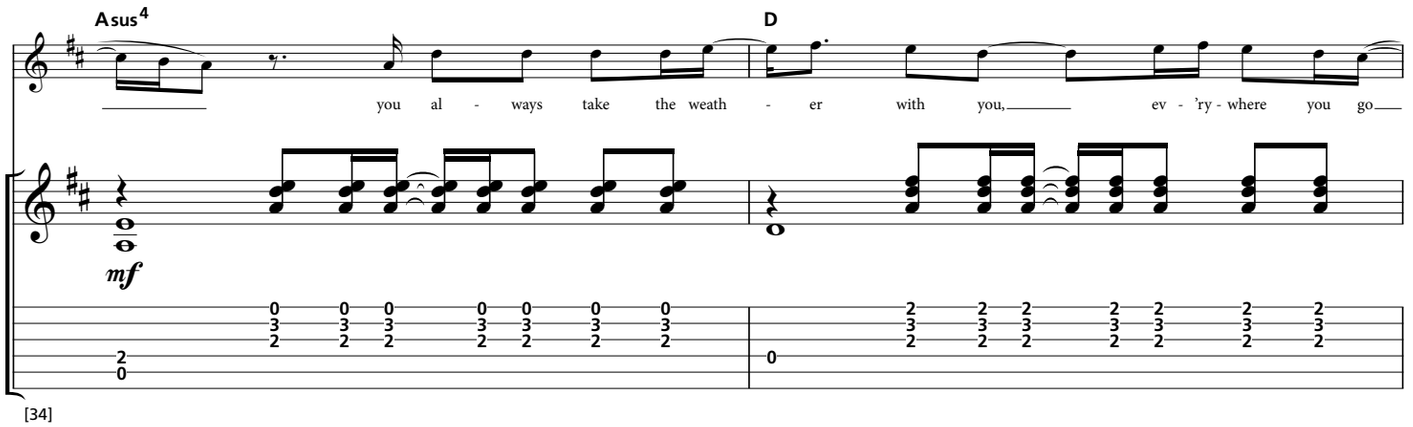

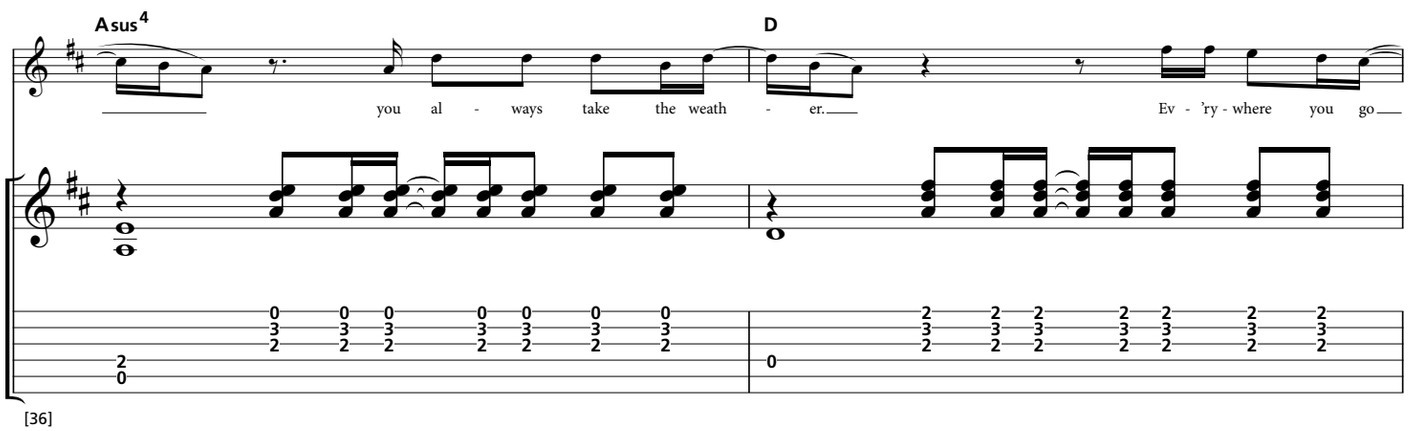

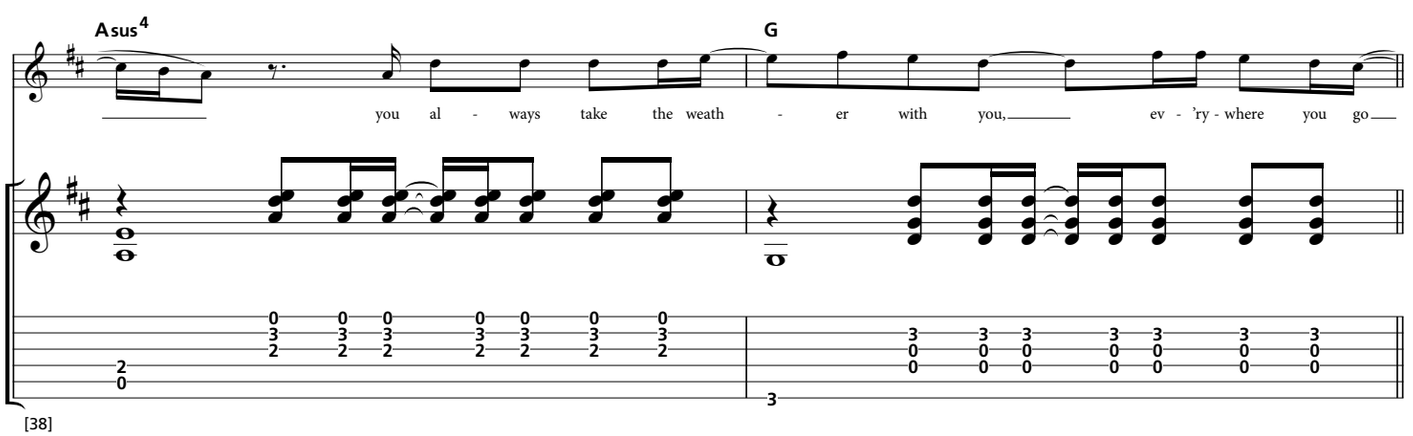

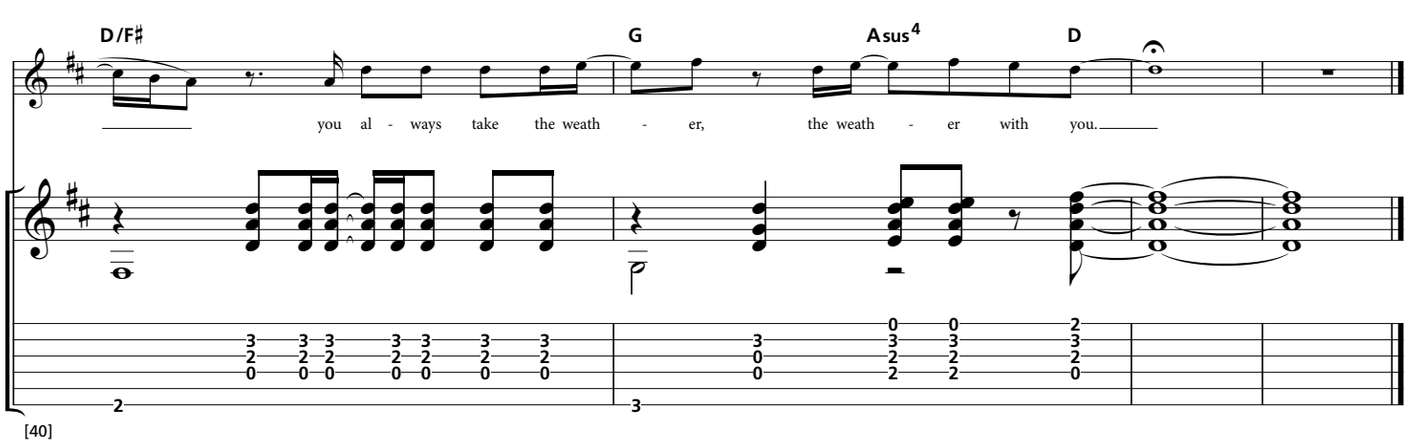

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Weather With You | Technical Guidance

The opening melody has quite a strong attack here which means that the slurs and grace notes (bars 3–4 for example) need extra attention and control to ensure a consistent dynamic is maintained. The same is true of bars 26–32, with bar 32 being particularly challenging in this regard. A well played melody interspersed with weaker sounding notes following pull-offs or hammer-ons will sound much less accomplished.

The chordal parts and rhythms can initially appear more challenging than they actually are. Looking at bar 13 for example, despite the separate rhythms for bass and treble parts, it is clear from a play through that there is one chord shape being held throughout. The focus is on not just your ability to hold clear chord voicings, but to control which strings are being played in different parts of the bar. This will require careful initial practice to ensure good technique is maintained.

When developing the chord rhythms from bar 17–24 you need to create a part that not only fits what has gone before, but also brings some new ideas, without straying too far from the feel and style of the original.

The *crescendo* in bar 25 should feel like a fairly natural part of the song, but it is always worth making sure that you are increasing volume consistently across the chord and that you don't overshoot the intended destination dynamic, in this case ***f***.

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'Landslide' | Dixie Chicks

'Landslide' features on Fleetwood Mac's self-titled tenth studio album, released in 1975, and was written by lead vocalist Stevie Nicks. Not originally released as a single, the track proved extremely popular and a live version was eventually released in 1998 due to popular demand. The live version was certified Gold in the US with over 1 million sales.

Singer Stevie Nicks wrote the song when she felt at a loss in her life. After the duo album *Buckingham Nicks* was dropped by Polydor, the star was uncertain how to continue with her career. She wrote the melancholy piece while visiting Aspen, Colorado and recalls debating whether to continue with music or to return to study. Unaware of the song's future popularity when she wrote it, Landslide is now one of the band's most performed songs, with Nicks having performed it at every tour show she has played with Fleetwood Mac as well as every solo tour since 2005.

Fleetwood Mac are a British-American Rock band who formed in London in 1967. Originally consisting of Peter Green (guitar), Mick Fleetwood (drums), Jeremy Spencer (guitar) and John McVie (bass), the band began their journey with a bluesy-rock sound. Soon joined by Danny Kirwan as a 3rd guitarist and Christine Perfect on keys, the group had hits with 'Albatross', 'Oh Well' and 'Black Magic Woman'. After several disputes many of the band members left, including all three guitarists. By 1974 the band found themselves without a lead guitarist or lead singer and while scouting studios in Los Angeles they were introduced to folk-rock duo Buckingham Nicks. Fleetwood Mac asked singer and guitarist Lindsay Buckingham to join them as lead guitarist almost immediately and he agreed, on the condition that Stevie Nicks join them as lead singer.

This saw the launch of the folk-rock band as we now know them, with enormous hits such as 'The Chain', 'Dreams' and 'Everywhere' it was clear that Fleetwood Mac had finally found the right collaboration. In 1975 the newly formed group released their self-titled album *Fleetwood Mac*, which featured Nicks' pensive track 'Landslide'. The album topped the US chart and left listeners wanting more. In 1977 they released the global success that was *Rumours*, which topped the charts in 8 countries worldwide. With four top ten US singles, *Rumours* was met by huge demand and, with more than 40 million copies sold across the globe, it went on to become the eighth best selling album in history. The line-up created in 1974 remained in tact for a further 3 studio albums after *Rumours*, but by the late 1980s things began to fall apart with several members leaving the band, and by 1987 the line-up was no more. After several reunions and fallouts, the original line-up began touring together again in 2014, until Buckingham was fired in 2018. The remaining members continue to tour with Crowded House lead singer Neil Finn.

Rockschool's arrangement draws closely upon the country group Dixie Chicks' version, released on their 2002 album Home. Their rendition has surpassed the success of the original, having reached the Top 10 on both the *Billboard* Hot 100 and the Hot Country Songs chart, as well as becoming the Dixie Chicks' only number-one single (to date) on the Adult Contemporary chart.

Song Info

Song Title:	'Landslide'
Album:	*Fleetwood Mac*
Released:	1975
Label:	Reprise
Genre:	Folk Rock
Written By:	Stevie Nicks
Produced by:	Fleetwood Mac / Keith Olsen

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Candidate Part (assessed)

Dixie Chicks

Arranged by Giorgio Serci

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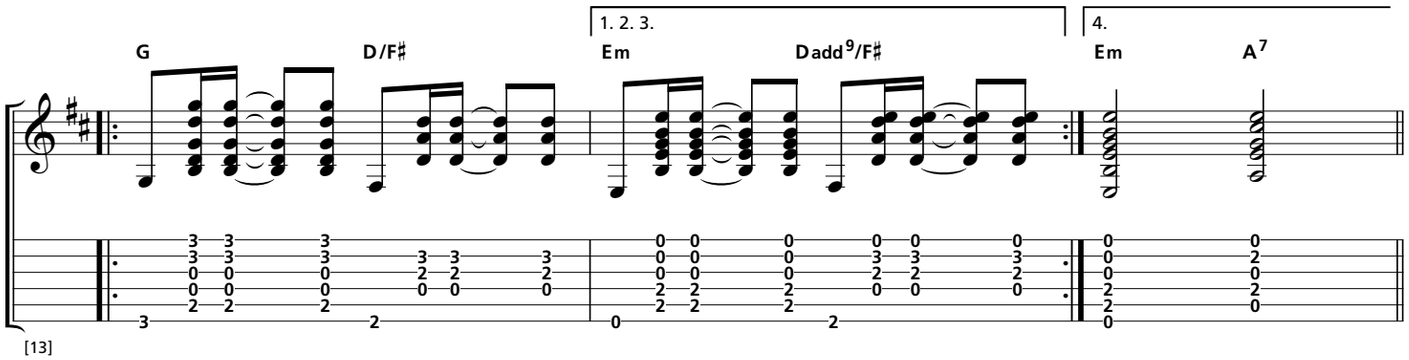

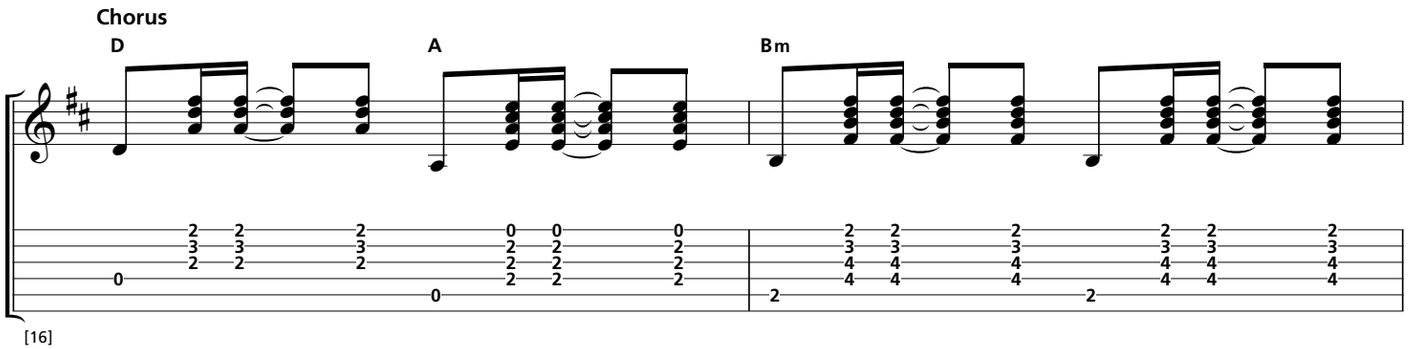

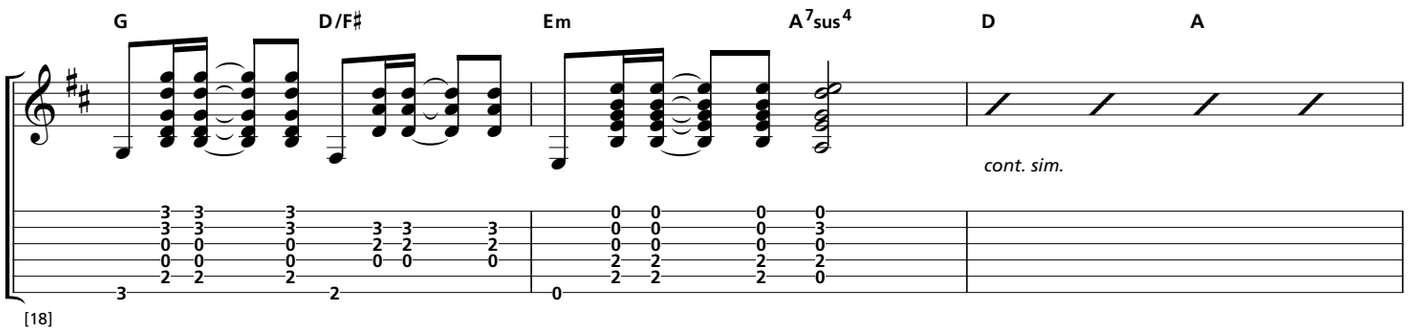

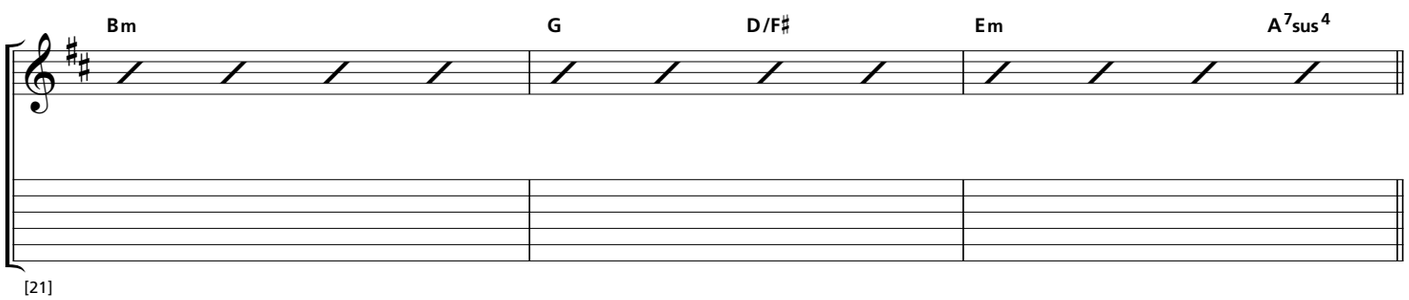

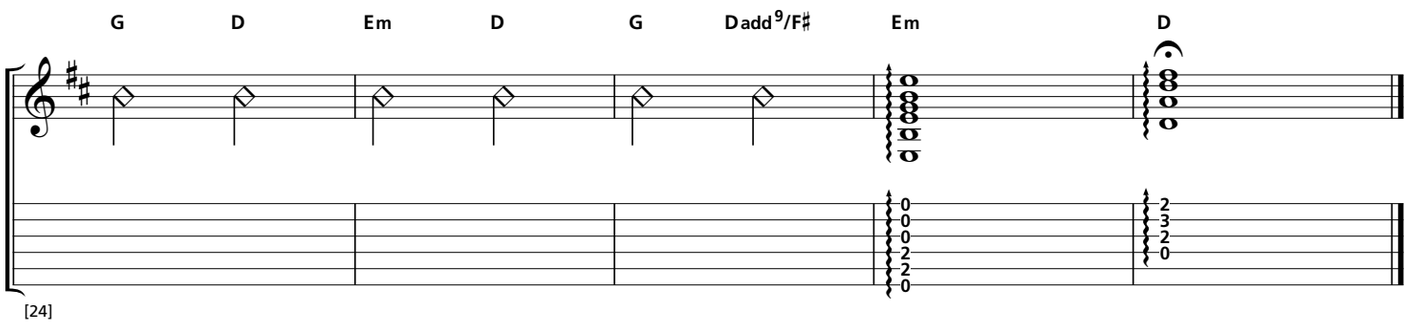

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Landslide

Duet Part (non-assessed)

Dixie Chicks

Arranged by Giorgio Serci

♩=70 *Country*

Intro

G/D D Em D G/D D Em D

Verse

G D/F♯ Em D/F♯ G D/F♯

[5]

Em D/F♯ G D/F♯ Em7 D/F♯

[8]

G D/F♯ Em Em D

[11]

Em D Em D Em D

[14]

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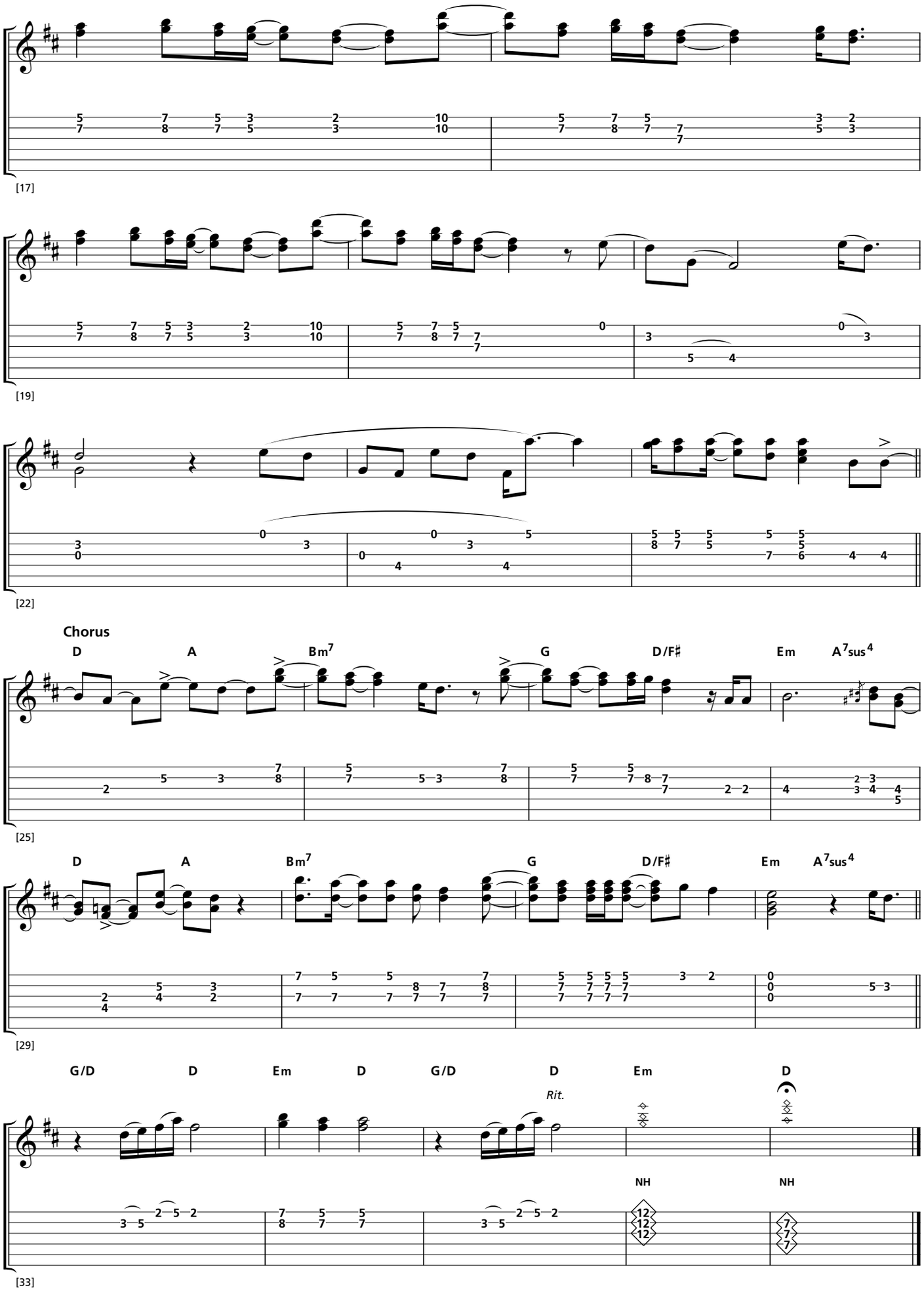

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Landslide | Technical Guidance

This arrangement places some emphasis on left hand *legato* technique for a fluent execution of the verse. Keeping picked and slurred notes at an even volume as well as controlling some of the more complicated rhythmic phrasing will require both slow practice to focus on timing and technique, and playing with the backing to execute the parts at tempo.

There are spread chords written into the score (bar 7 and bar 9 for example). These should be played with a smooth picking hand motion that not only allows all of the notes to sound in quick succession, but also keeps note volumes as even as possible, so that no particular voices within the chords stand out too much.

When navigating the score, pay attention to the variations in the repeat markings. If no number of repeats is written then the part is played twice, otherwise you need as many repetitions as are written (bar 14 for example states 'play three times'). This means that bar 13 to 14 is to played a total of three times before moving to the next section. It is easy to become confused and lose your place in the performance, so work on following these with the full track playing before moving onto trying the parts yourself.

If you pay attention to the dynamic markings, play the final rit, and observe the *fermata* (which extends the notes slightly beyond the written value), you should be well on the way to a professional and musical sounding performance.

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'Wild Wood' | Paul Weller

Paul Weller's 'Wild Wood' is featured on the album of the same name, released in 1993. It is Weller's second solo release. The song is a classic Weller ballad, featuring a soulful vocal and haunting instrumentation.

Paul Weller was born John William Paul Weller Jr. in 1958 and became known as Paul to his parents from a very young age, hence the stage name. Music became a huge part of his life almost immediately and by the age of eleven he was playing guitar and listening to the likes of The Beatles, The Who and Small Faces – all of whom went on to influence his work.

Paul Weller's writing is deeply rooted in British culture and he is often mentioned as a significant influence to the Britpop generation. Indisputably, Weller played a huge role in the 1970s and 1980s mod revival and became known as 'The Modfather' to many of his peers.

He formed The Jam in the early 70's and the band became a significant exponent of the New Wave sound of the late 70's. The Band's popularity increased and by the early 1980's they were a British household name. Their success meant that Weller's decision to disband The Jam and launch soul outfit, The Style Council, in 1983 came as a shock to both band members and fans alike. Despite their popularity, Weller's desire to explore different sounds meant that his time with The Jam must come to an end.

Paul Weller started a successful solo career in 1990 and has released 12 albums to date. He is considered a significant figure in British songwriting.

His achievements include a 2006 Brit Award for Outstanding Contribution to Music, a recognition backed up by Sir Peter Blake's decision to select him as one of the artists to be involved in his *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* cover album – which celebrated the British cultural figures of Blake's life.

Song Info

Song Title:	Wild Wood
Album:	*Wild Wood* (1993)
Label:	Go! Discs
Genre:	Rock
Written By:	Paul Weller
Guitar:	Paul Weller
Producer:	Paul Weller and Brendan Lynch
UK Peak Chart:	14

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Wild Wood

Acoustic Specialist (Duet)

Candidate Part (assessed)

Paul Weller

Arranged by Tristan Sueme

♩= 152 *Acoustic Rock* ♫ = ♩ ♪

Capo 2nd fret †

Intro

(Bm) Am

(F♯m/B) Em/A

† *Capo notation in this syllabus is optimised for each arrangement – the following conventions have been used in this arrangement:*

- Music notation and chord symbols have been transposed to match the *virtual* chord shapes used in the tablature.
- The tablature numbers represent the distance from the capo. (e.g. tabbed 3rd fret is 3 frets above the capo).
- Chords in parentheses represent concert pitch

(Em^{7}) Dm^{7}

(Em$^{7\flat5}$) Dm$^{7\flat5}$

(Bm) Am

[5]

Verse

(Bm) Am

(F♯m/B) Em/A

[9]

(Em^{7}) Dm^{7}

(Em$^{7\flat5}$) Dm$^{7\flat5}$

(Bm) Am

(F♯m/B) Em/A

[13]

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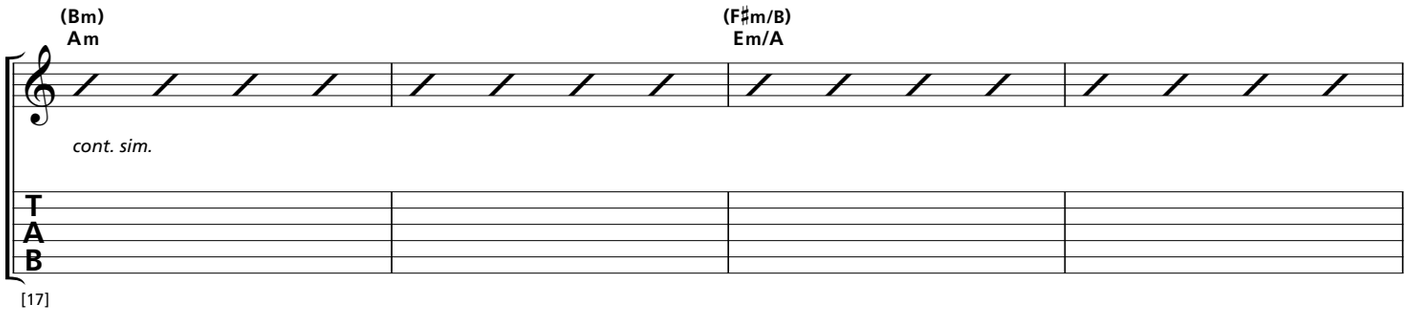

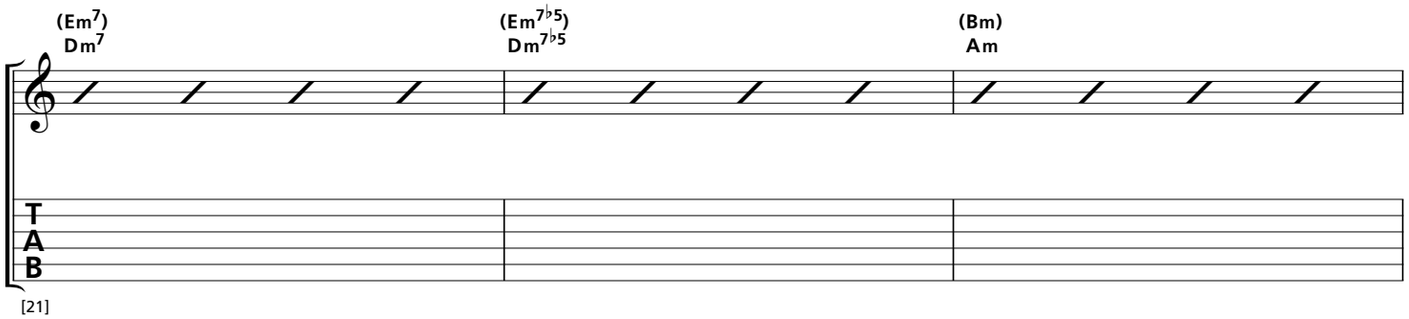

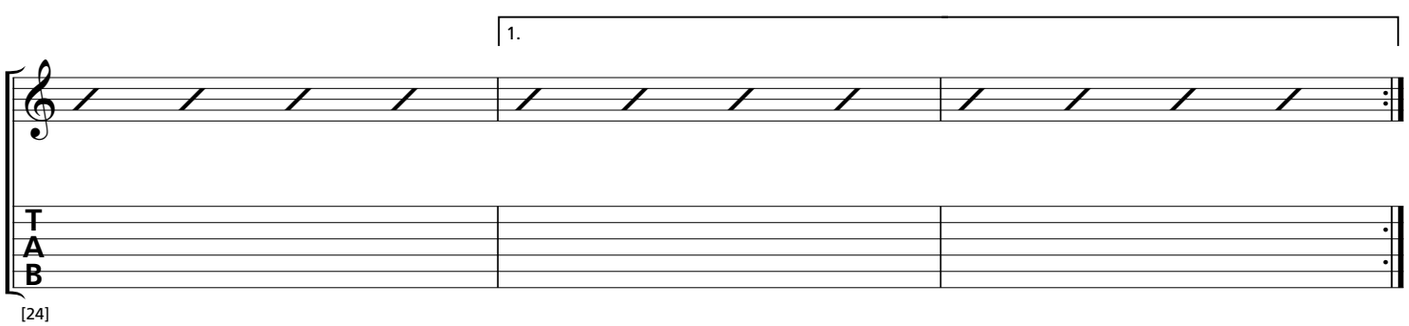

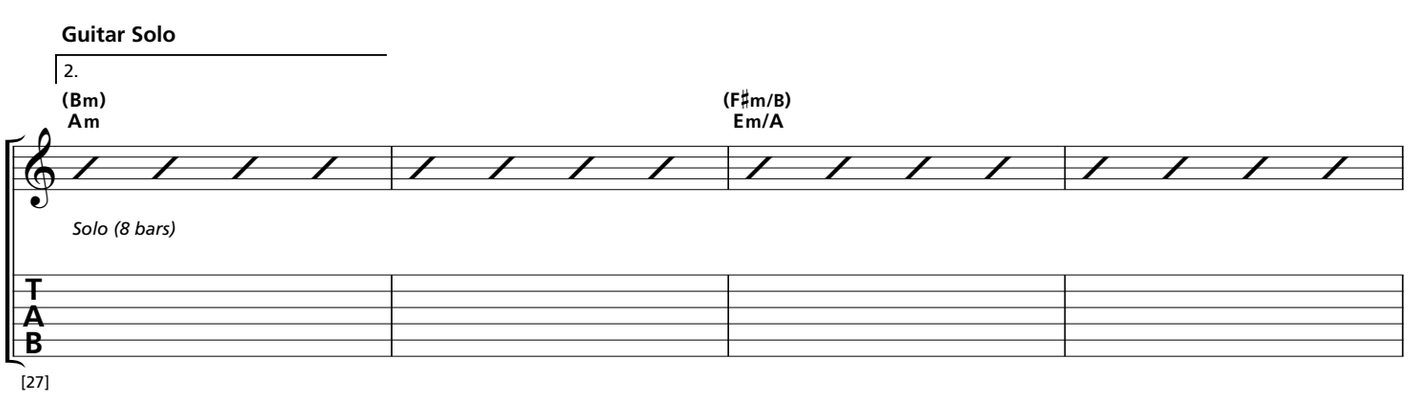

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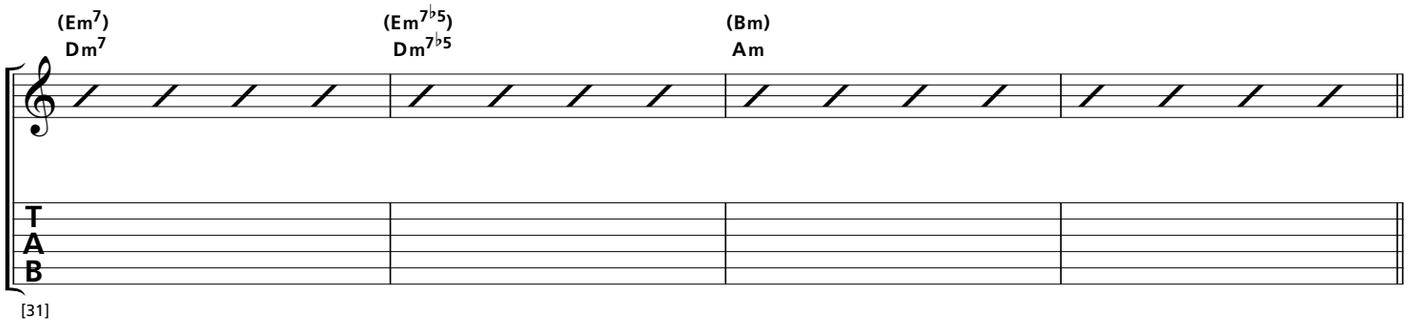

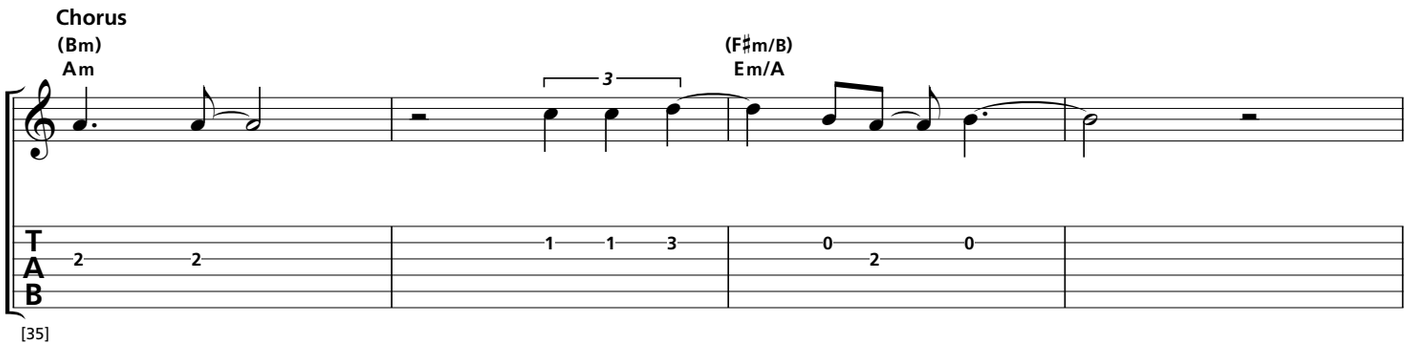

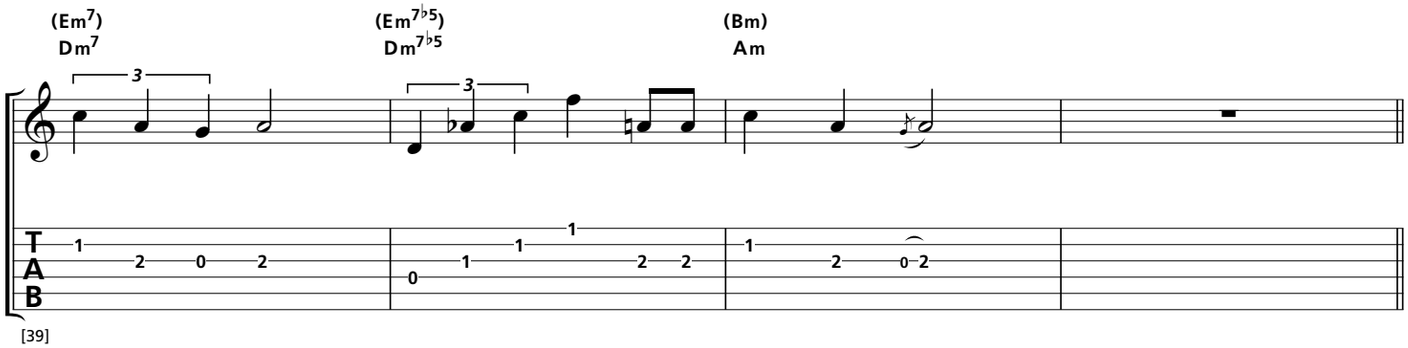

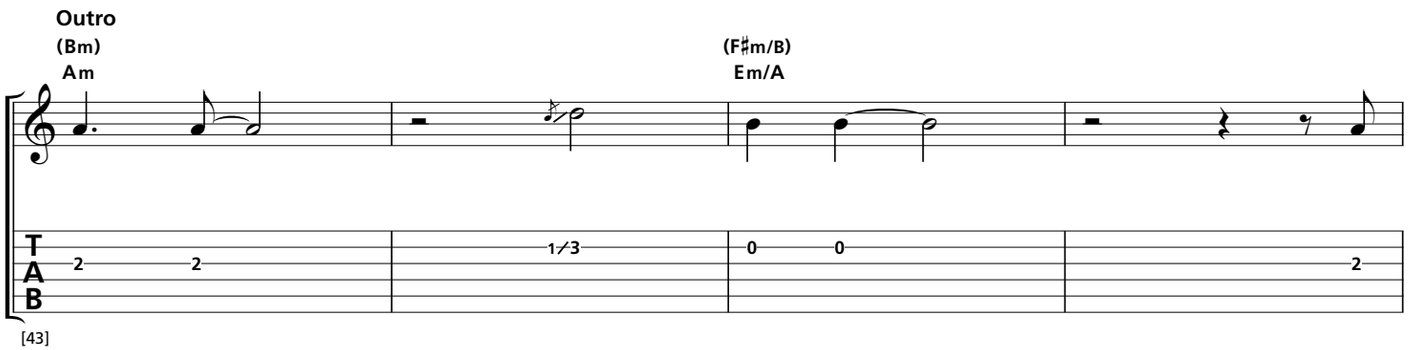

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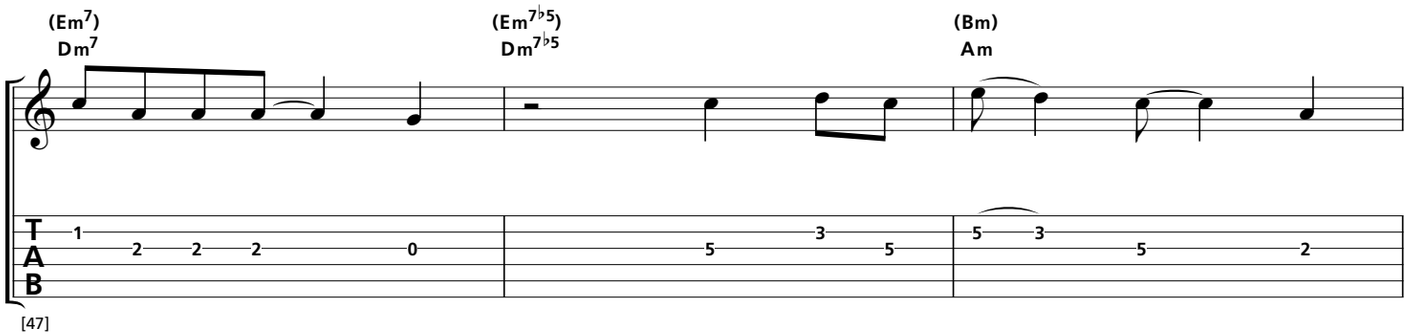

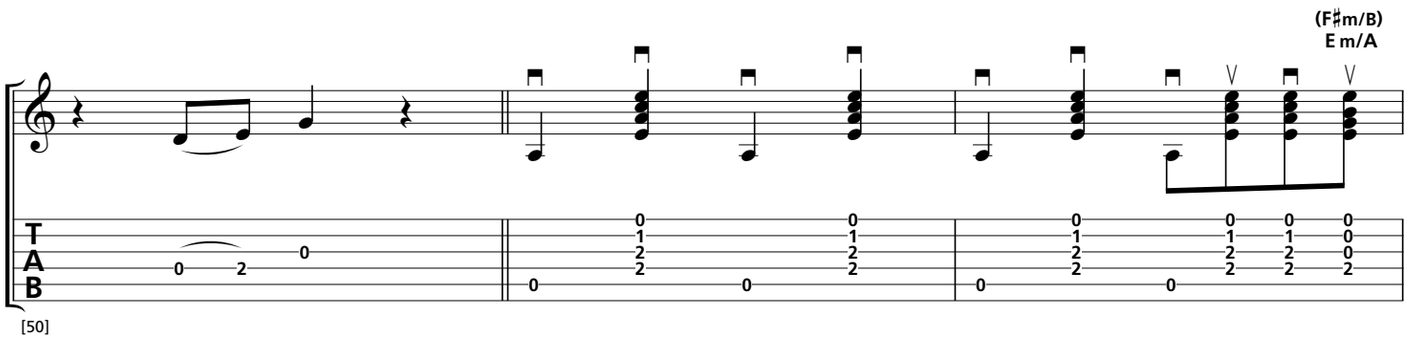

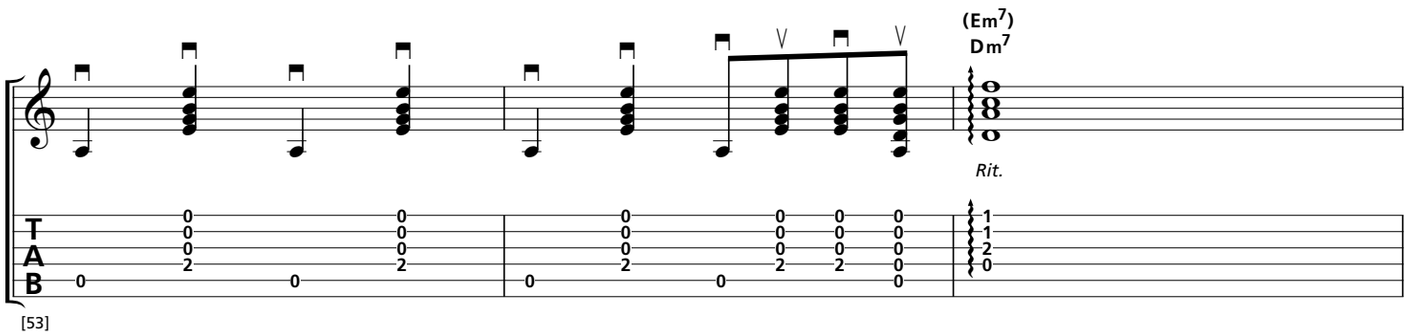

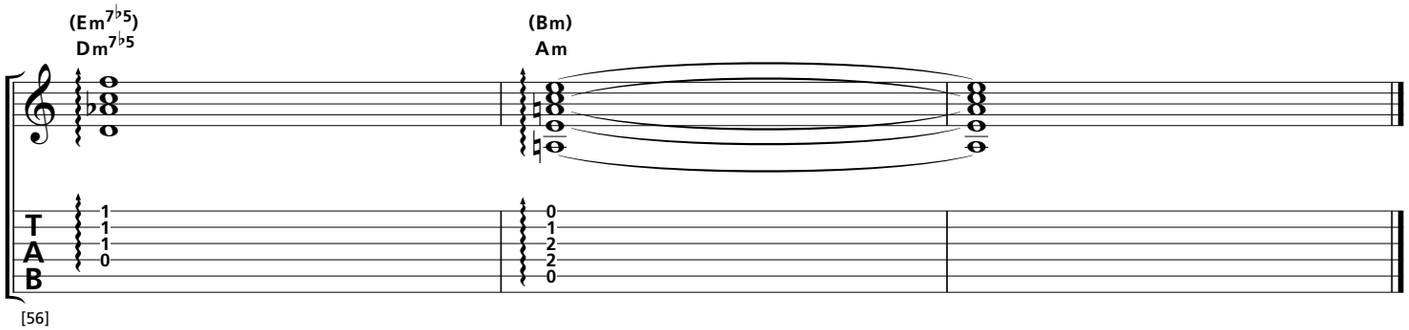

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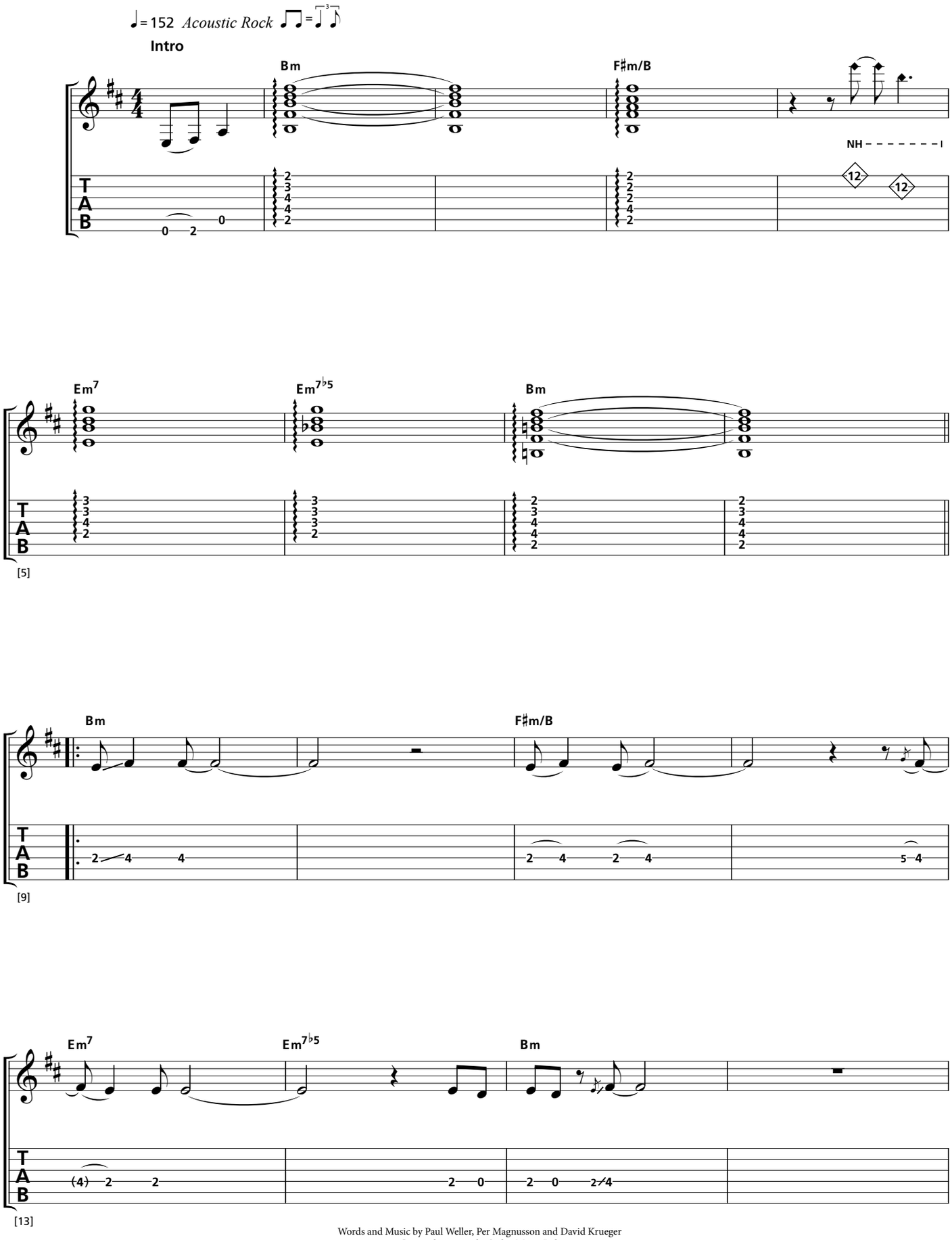
Wild Wood

Acoustic Specialist (Duet)

Duet Part (non-assessed)

Paul Weller

Arranged by Tristan Sueme



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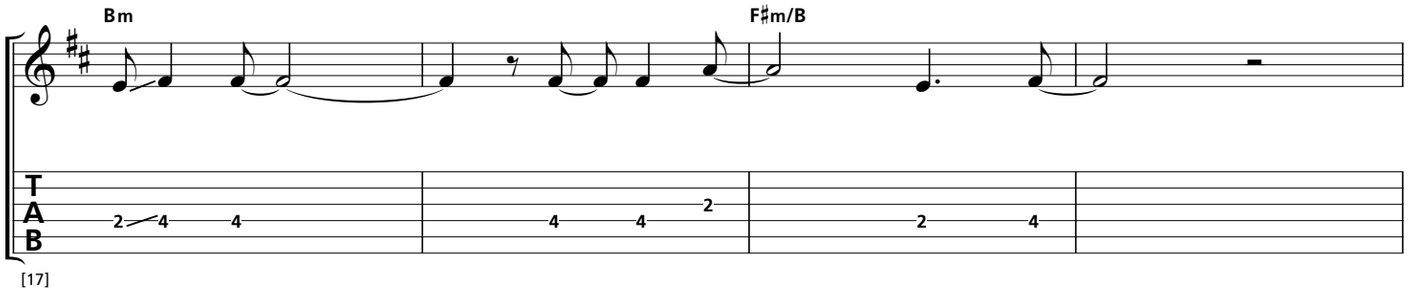

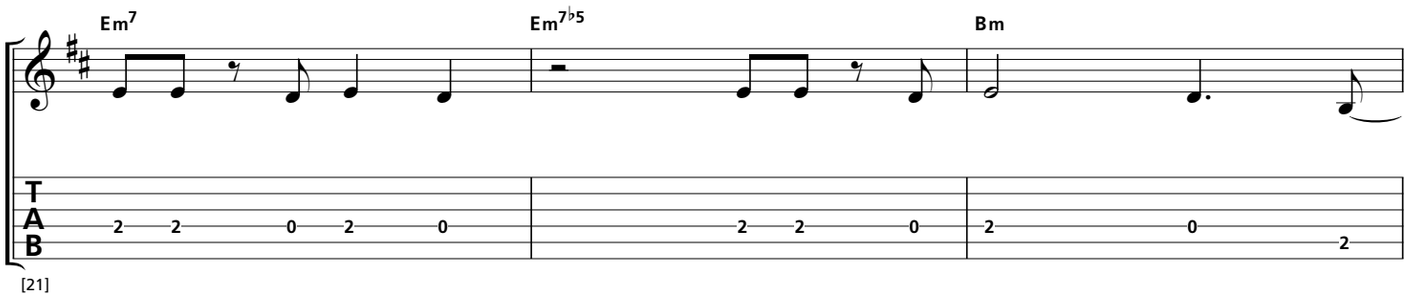

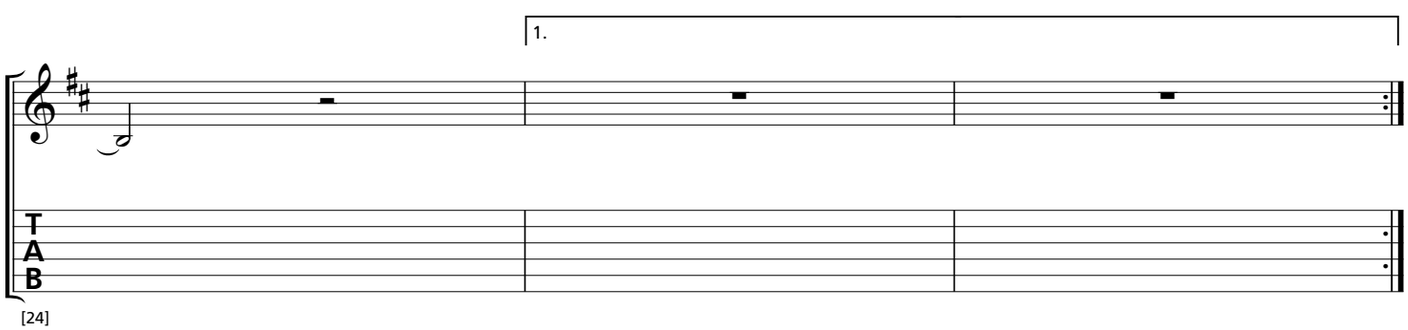

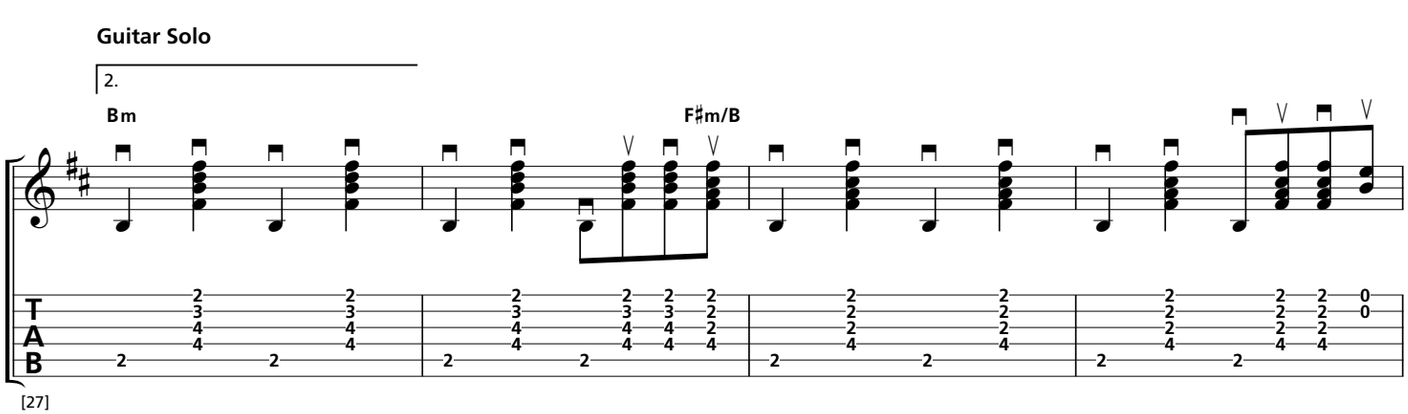

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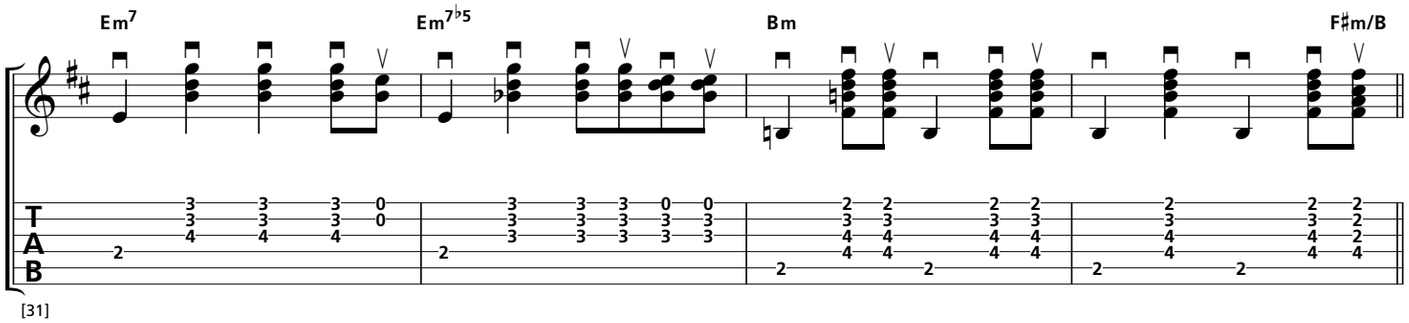

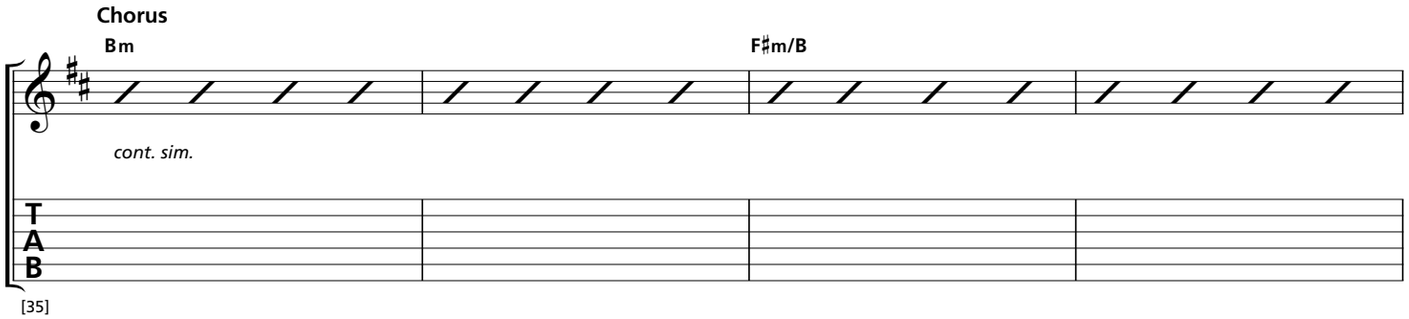

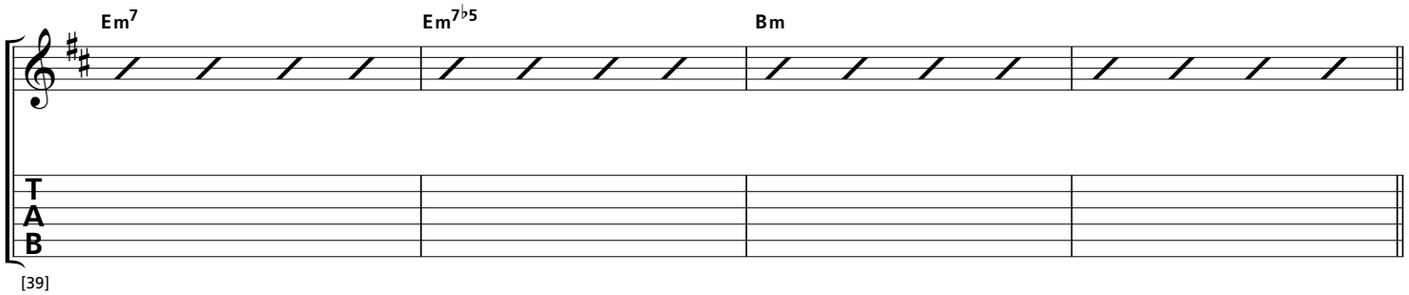

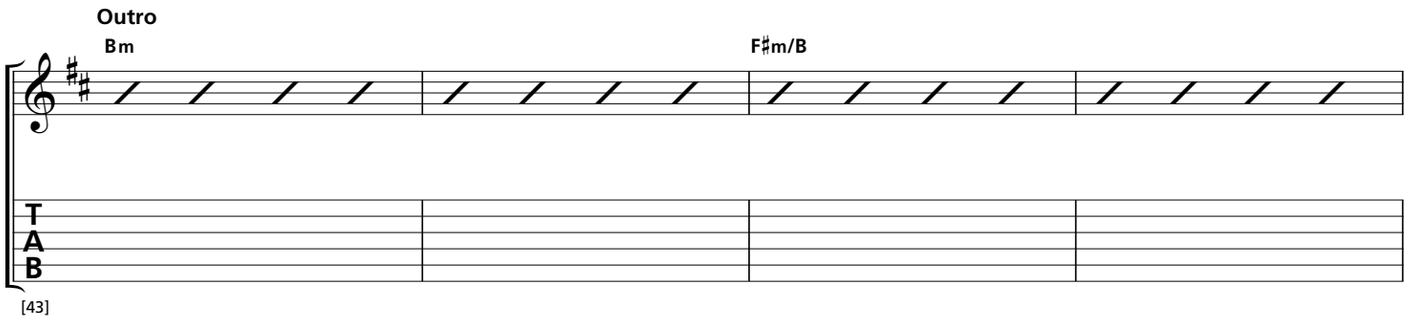

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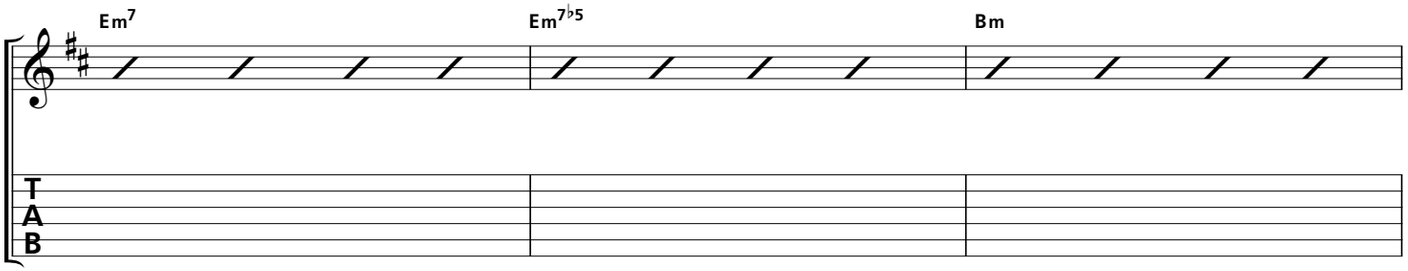

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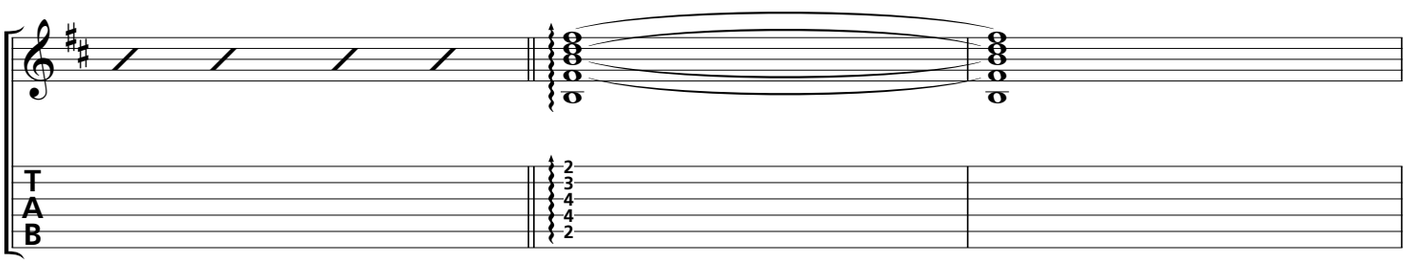

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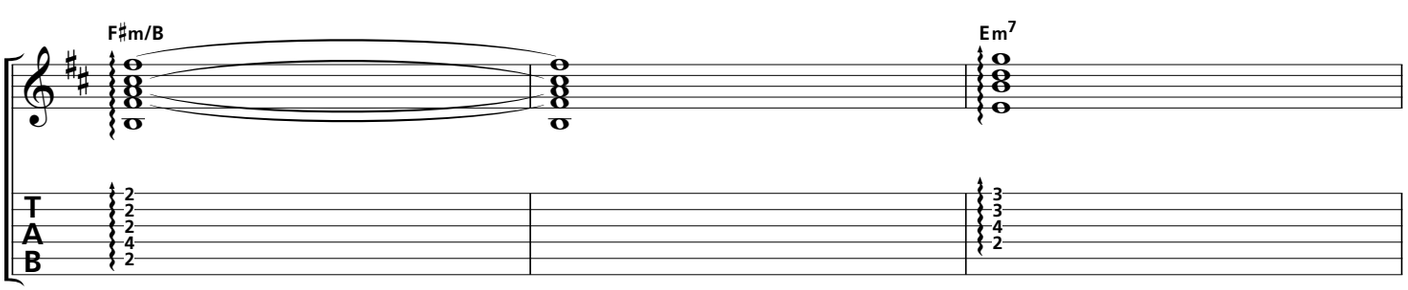

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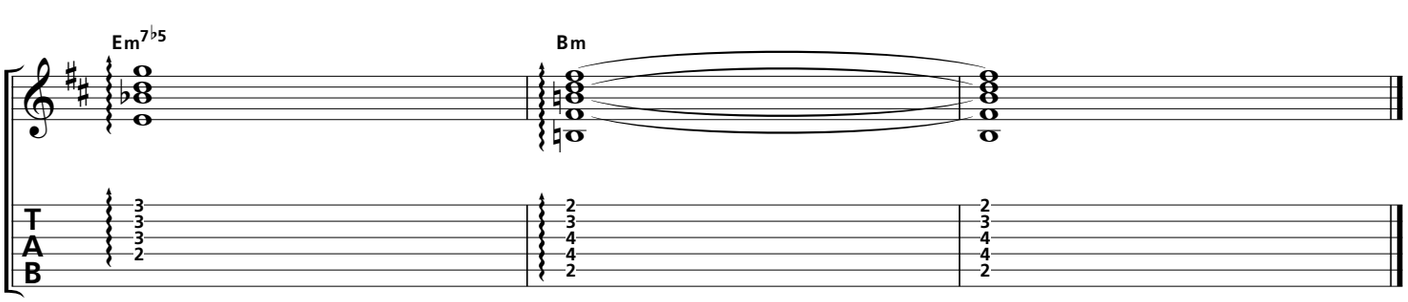

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Wild Wood | Technical Guidance

To perform the candidate part in this arrangement, you will need a capo placed at the 2nd fret. This facilitates the chord voicings and changes at this level, and allows you to still perform a solo in Bm using your scale knowledge acquired from the technical section.

This arrangement of Wild Wood entails quite a high BPM and the indicated triplet feel, which combine to make a convincing performance more challenging than the score may initially appear to present. The picking indications are also important to follow, as pick attack varies between up picks and down picks and can significantly alter the sound of a passage.

The $Em^{7\flat5}$ chord (†) is a more advanced sound, and care should be taken to ensure that all of the written pitches are audible. The same is also true of the F♯m/B (†), where the quick change from B minor can cause some notes to be lost. Experimenting with different chord fingerings will help towards efficient chord changes throughout the Intro and Verse.

For the *cont. sim.* section (beginning at bar 17), the previous rhythmic ideas should be developed without moving too far from the original. Maintaining the desired feel whilst building some creative and original patterns requires special attention when practicing this song.

For the solo at bar 27, it is helpful to see how notes and phrases sound over different chords. B natural minor and B minor pentatonic will generate different ideas that give alternate feels to this section. Particular attention should be paid to the $Em^{7\flat5}$ chord, where some notes will sound much better than others. Using your ears and musical taste should help you decide which notes to emphasise and which to avoid. Care should be taken when soloing with a capo so as not to destabilise the intonation. If soloing nearer the capo, it can be helpful to think in open A minor (just as you do with the chord shapes), as it can be confusing to compensate for the fret numbers. However, if you solo higher up the neck, you may find it easier to use the position markers on the guitar as normal, with reference to your B minor, minor pentatonic and blues scale shapes.

Rhythmically the inclusion of quarter note triplets adds an element of difficulty to the performance. These have a very specific sound and if they are not synced to the track and played with conviction they can negatively affect the sound produced. Linking dotted quarter notes to tied notes is also worth special attention to ensure phrases remain accurate and fully in sync.

The *ritardando* (slowing down) at the end of the song needs work to make the timing flow properly. It also links with the spread chord indication to create a very specific feel which needs to be mastered for top marks in the exam. The picking hand techniques employed in these spread chords can take time to become familiar with, but the effect is evident when performed correctly.

† $Em^{7\flat5}$ and F♯m/B shown on the candidate part as $Dm^{7\flat5}$ and Em/A respectively.

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'High Horse' | Kacey Musgraves

'High Horse' was the third single to be released from Kacey Musgraves' fourth studio album *Golden Hour*. Although the track didn't chart in the UK, or on the US Billboard Hot 100, it has certainly proved popular online and has over 4 million views on YouTube. Musgraves wrote the track with Tommy Schleiter and fellow country artist Trent Dabbs, a songwriter who has made his mark on the industry with eleven studio album releases.

Golden Hour was released in March 2018 and was well received within the Country Music community, topping both the UK Country Album chart and the US Top Country Albums chart. Musgraves was nominated for four Grammy awards at the 2019 ceremony thanks to this album release and went on to win all of them, including Best Country Album and Album of the Year. As well as performing well at the Grammys, *Golden Hour* saw Musgrave receive Album of the Year at the CMA Awards, the Apple Awards and the ACM Awards in 2018/2019. Although 'High Horse' didn't take any awards from these much-coveted ceremonies, Musgraves' singles 'Space Cowboy' and 'Butterflies' both performed well, with the former taking Best Country Song at the Grammys.

Kacey Musgraves is an American singer-songwriter who was born in Texas in 1988, to parents Craig and Karen Musgraves. Supported by an equally creative mother, the young enthusiast wrote her first song at the incredibly young age of eight years old. Starting her instrumental journey on mandolin, Musgraves soon took up the guitar at just 12 years old – a decision wish she describes as one of the most important in her life. At 18 years old Musgraves moved to Austin, Texas in search of a professional music career and just two short years later she was discovered by producer Monte Robison. The singer soon signed to Robison's independent label Triple Pop and recorded covers of the hits 'Apologize' (One Republic) and 'See You Again' (Miley Cyrus). Musgraves' acoustic version of the former saw her reach the mass market in 2012 as it peaked at number 23 on the Billboard Hot Singles chart.

Musgraves' Triple Pop releases saw doors opening for her and she was soon invited to join Lady Antebellum on the European leg of their Own the Night Tour in 2012. Later that same year, the country artist was signed to Mercury Nashville and released her solo debut single 'Merry Go Round'. Her debut album *Same Trailer Different Park*, released in March 2013, performed well and saw the singer nominated for four Grammy Awards and four Academy of Country Music Awards, tying with the likes of Taylor Swift at that year's Grammy Awards ceremony for the most nominations for a solo female artist.

Since her debut launch Musgraves has released four studio albums. She is highly regarded as a live performer and over the years has been asked to support on several stadium tours, including Katy Perry's 2014 Prismatic World. She continues to write music true to her roots, with her pop songs always paying homage to her original country sound.

Song Info

Song Title:	'High Horse'
Album:	*Golden Hour*
Released:	2018
Label:	MCA Nashville
Genre:	Country Pop
Written By:	Kacey Musgraves / Tommy Schleiter / Trent Dabbs
Produced by:	Ian Fitchuk / Daniel Tashian / Kacey Musgraves

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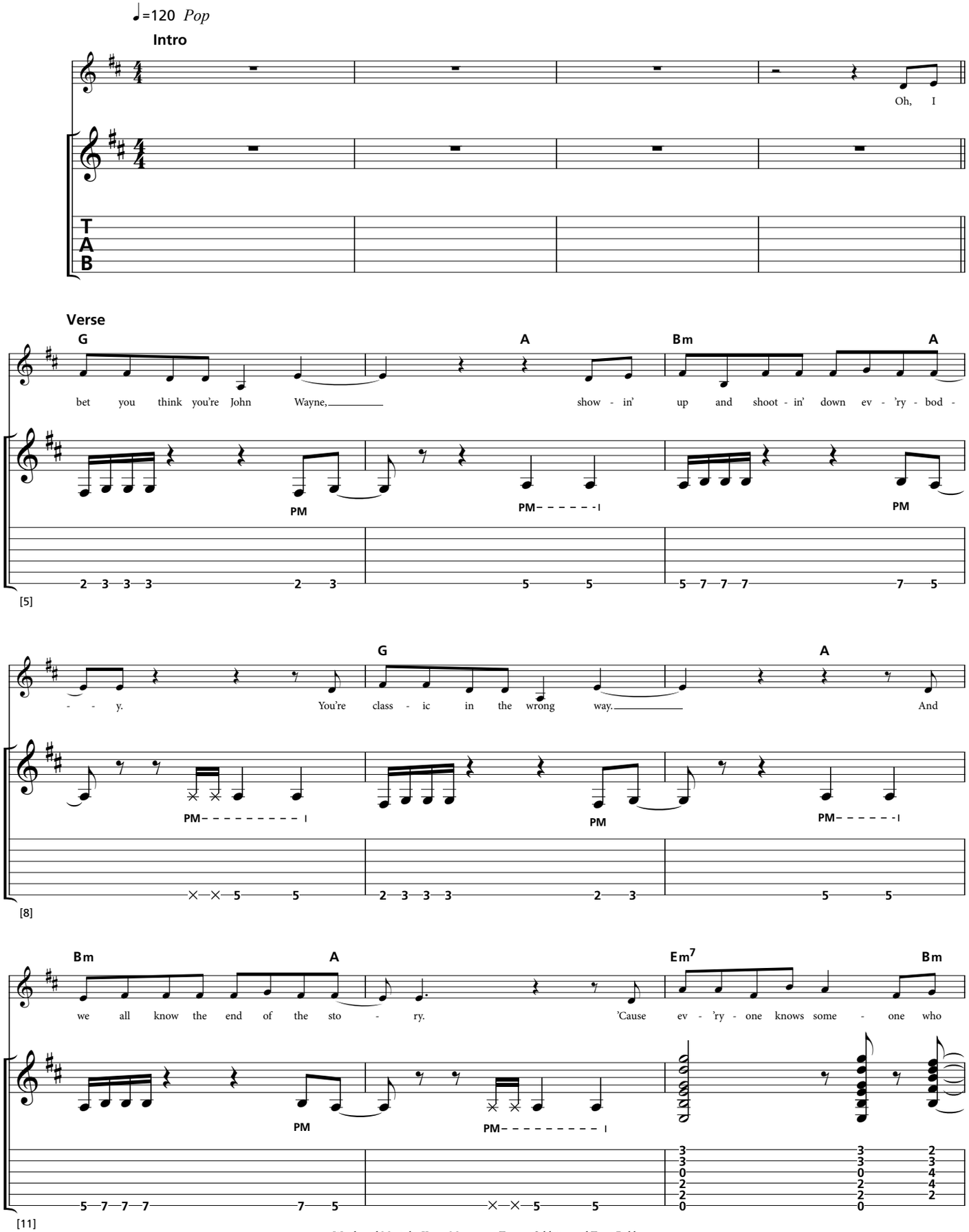
High Horse

Session Style

Kacey Musgraves

Arranged by Tristan Sueme



Words and Music by Kacey Musgraves, Tommy Schleiter and Trent Dabbs
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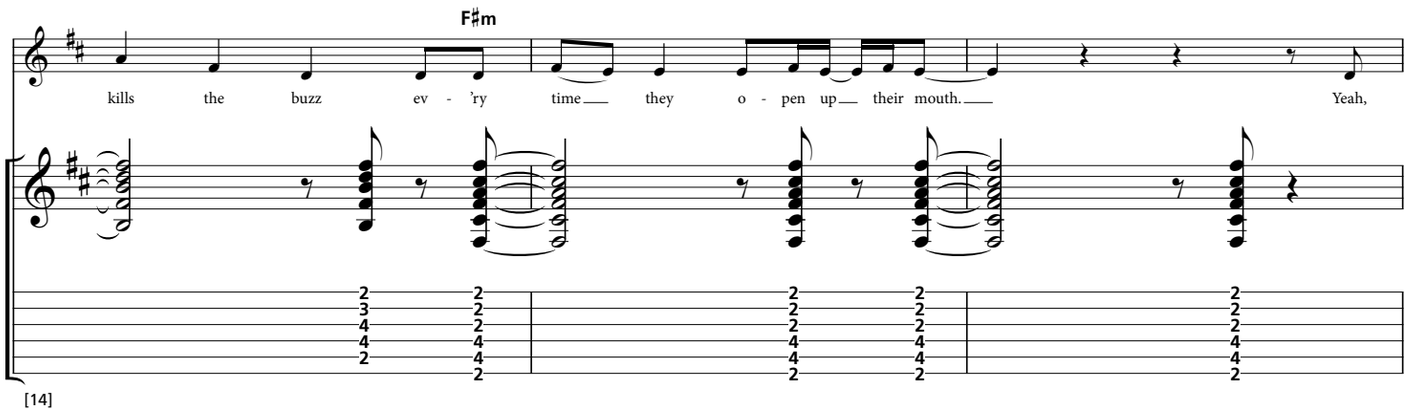

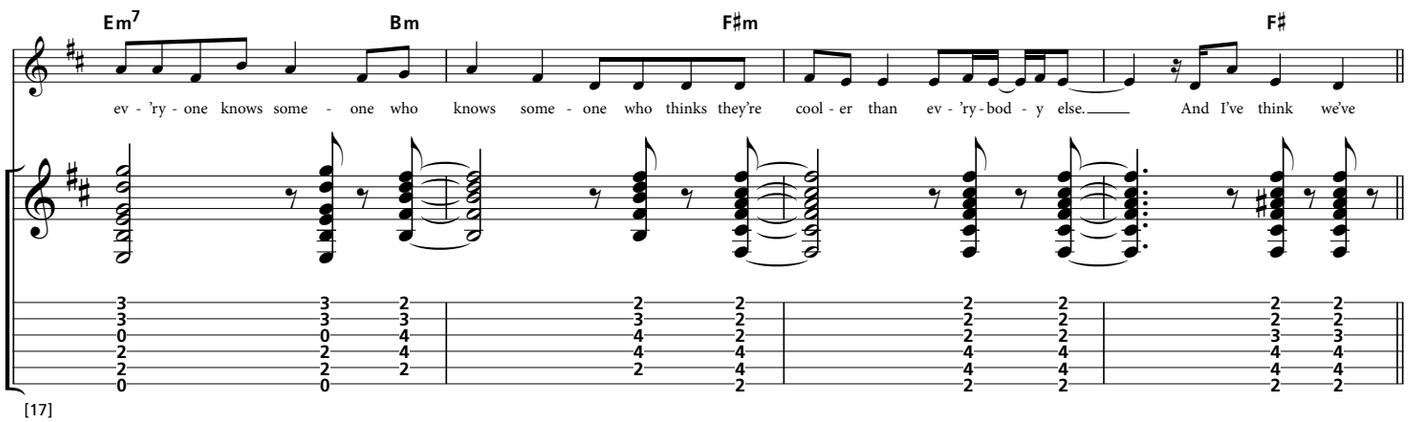

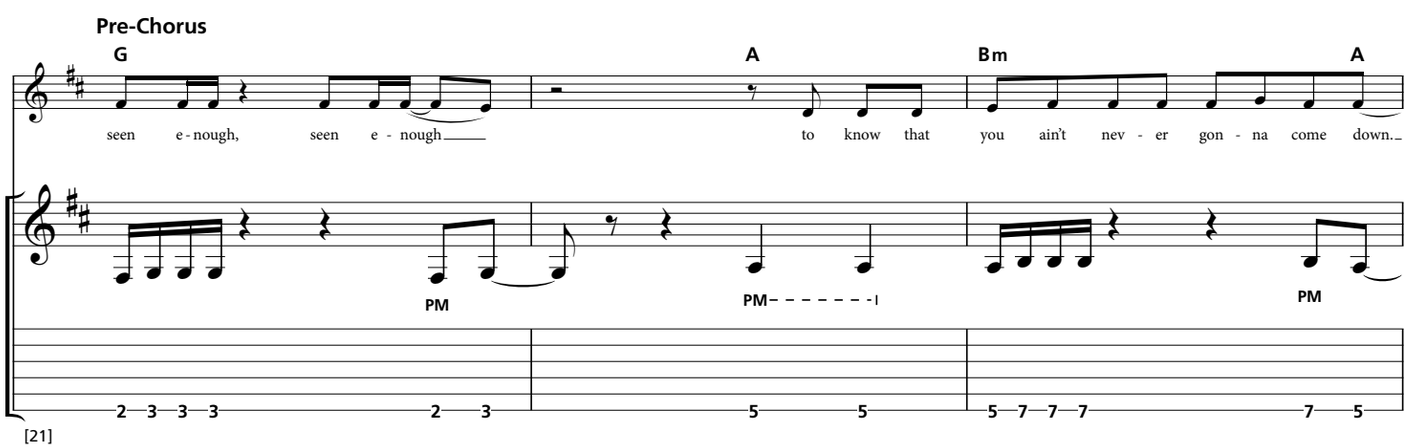

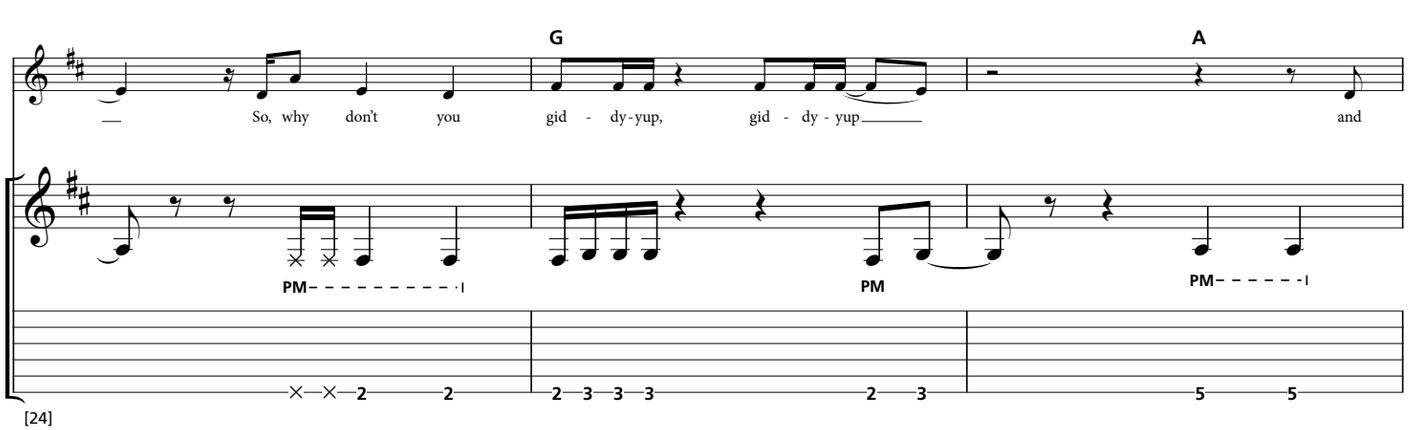

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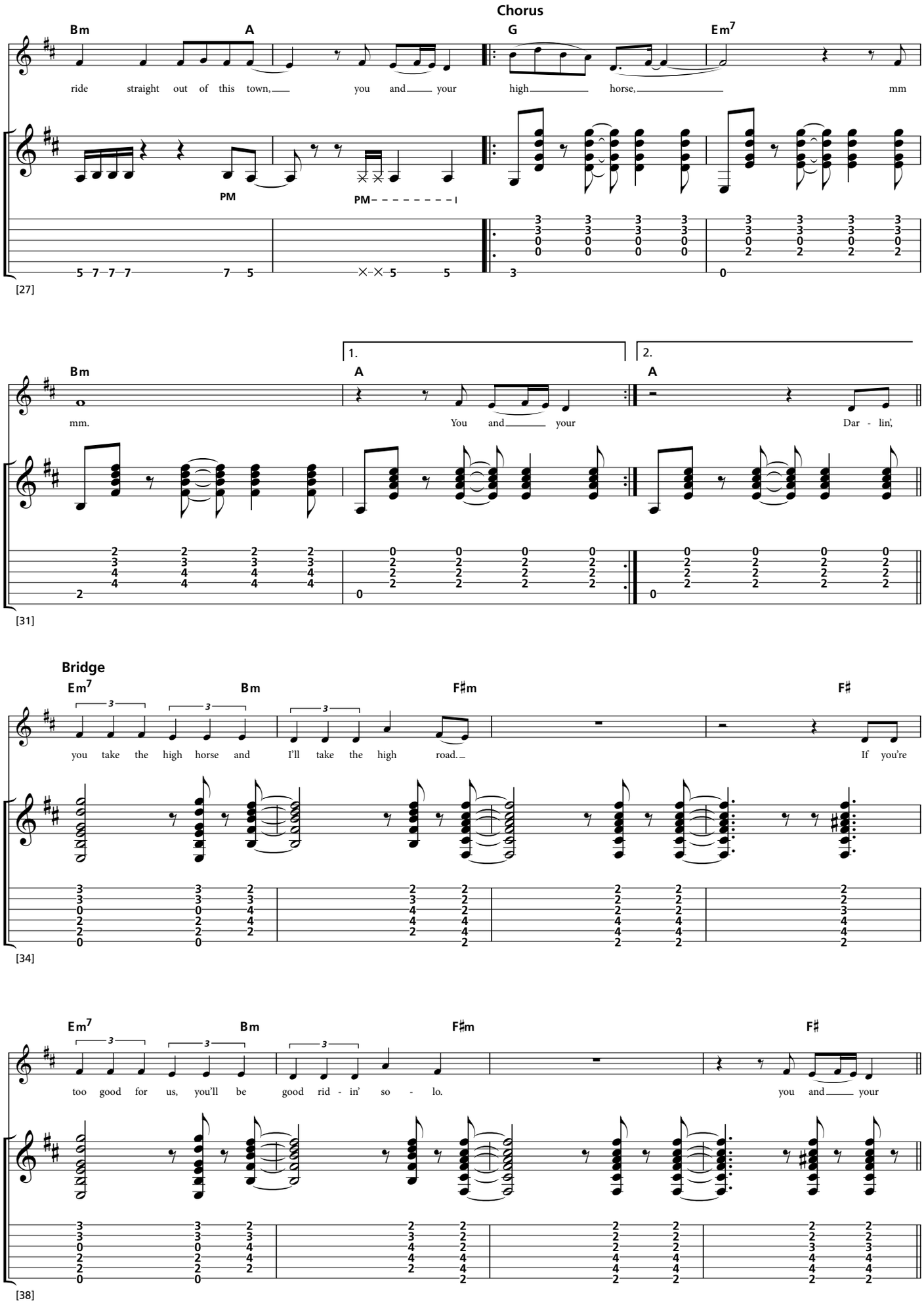

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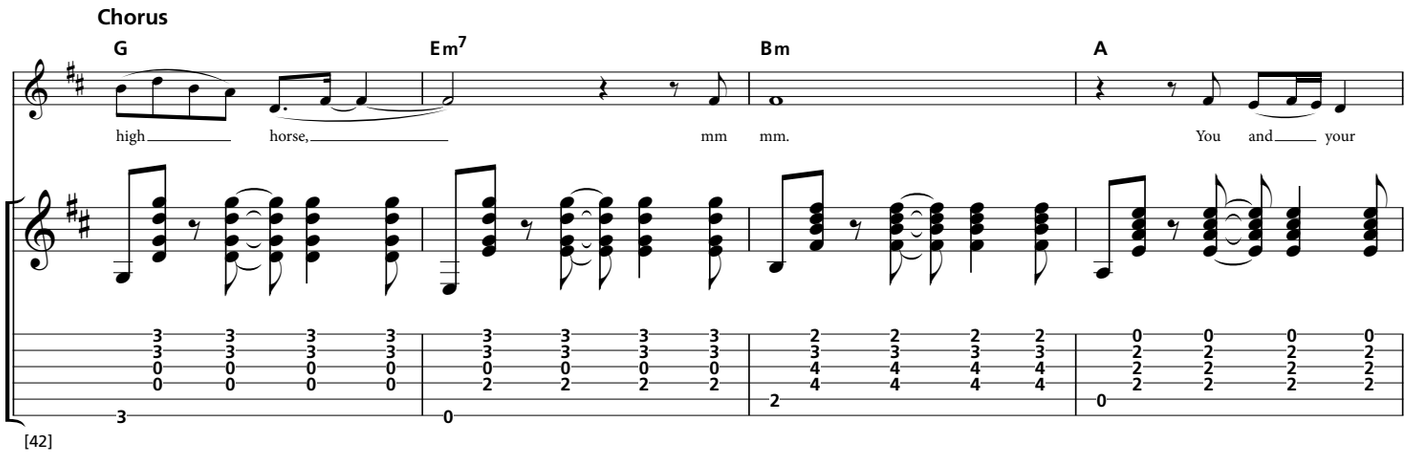

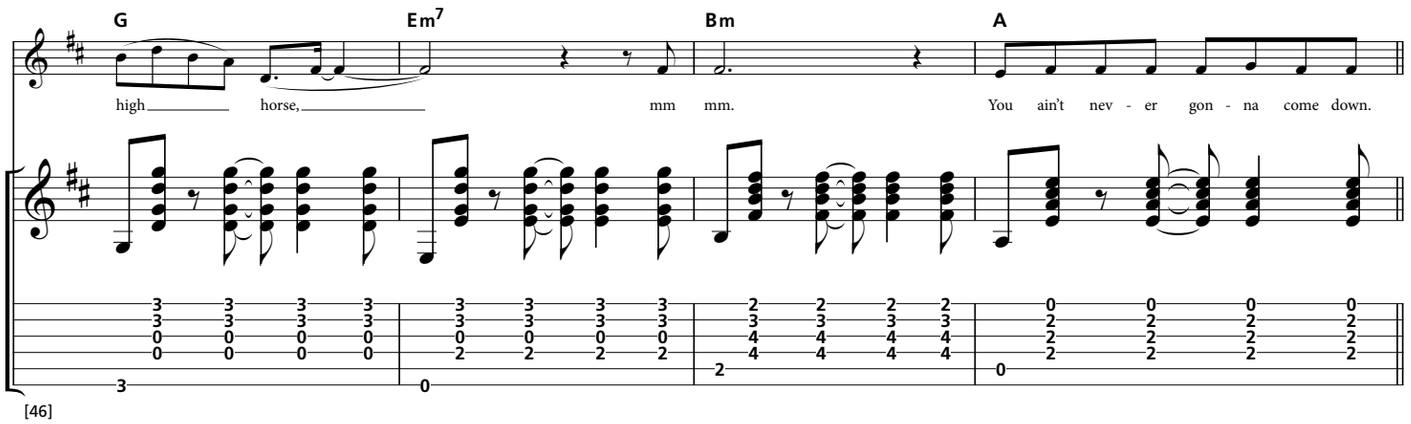

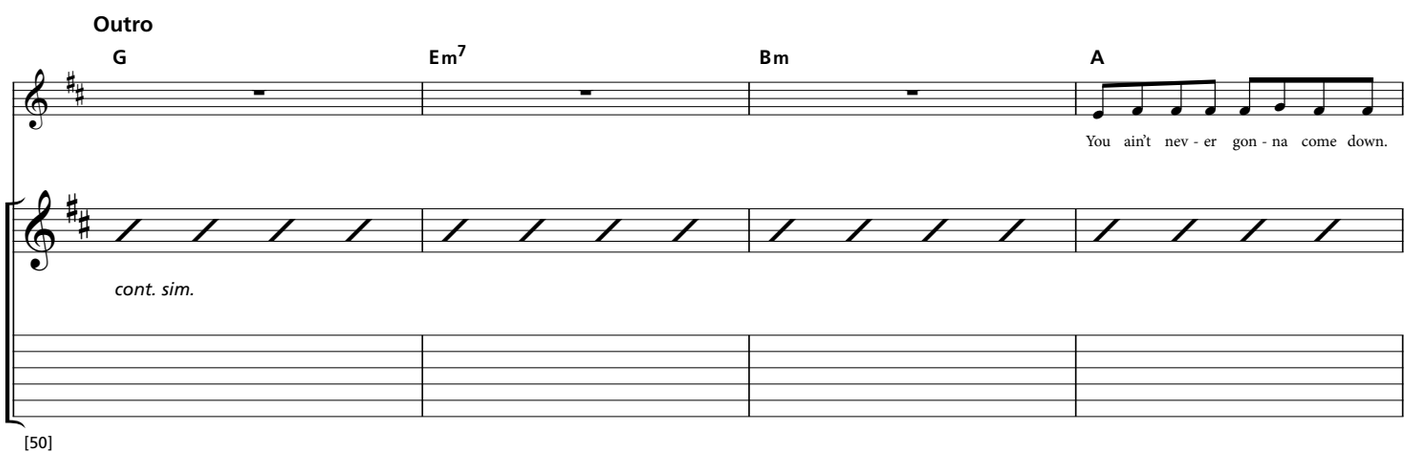

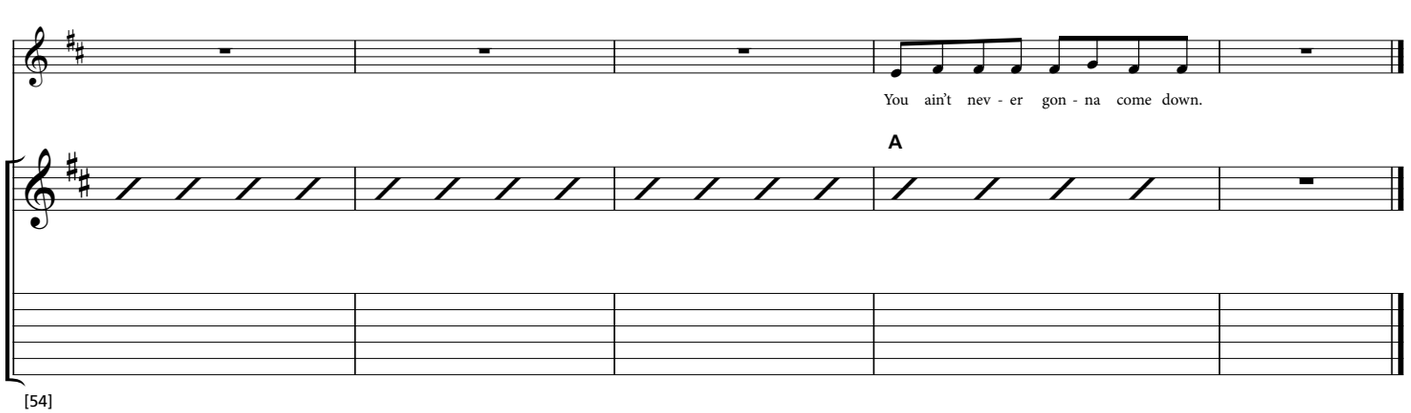

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High Horse | Technical Guidance

After carefully counting the 4-bar intro to make sure you enter at the right time, the verse riff presents some interesting technical challenges to master. Firstly, the 16th notes (in bar 9 for example) require not just accurate picking, but controlled fretting to avoid the F♯ becoming lost in the phrase. The same is true of the palm-muted F♯ to un-muted G that follows it, and the later B to A phrase in bar 7.

When playing the muted (××) notes you need to control any possibility of accidental harmonics as well. The **PM** should help with this, but there is still the chance for unwanted notes to occur, so try using several fretting hand fingers to deaden the string, as this will give a much stronger feel overall. Hand coordination is paramount for a confident performance of this section.

When the chords enter in bar 13, there are some relatively quick changes combined with short rests that need to flow smoothly and remain distinct in order for the feel to develop properly. If the upbeat chords come in early or late then synchronisation to the backing track can start to sound insecure, so work on this repetitive phrase slowly until confident.

In the *cont. sim.* section (bar 50 to bar 57), try keep the momentum going with small adaptations where you feel it suits the part. It is tempting to relax a little here, but creative considerations must be balanced with maintaining the stylistic feel that has gone before. This will obviously need to reflect the rest-based pattern already played, whilst bringing some of your own musical judgement and taste.

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Technical Exercises

In this section the examiner will ask you to play a selection of exercises drawn from each of the four groups shown below.

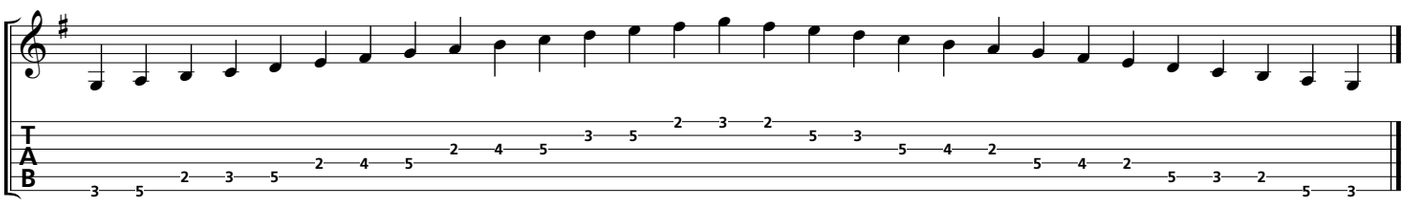
Groups A, B and C contain examples of the scales, arpeggios and chords you can use when playing the pieces.

In Group D you will be asked to prepare the riff exercise and play it to the backing track in the exam. You do not need to memorise the exercises (and can use the book in the exam) but the examiner will be looking for the speed of your response. The examiner will also give credit for the level of your musicality.

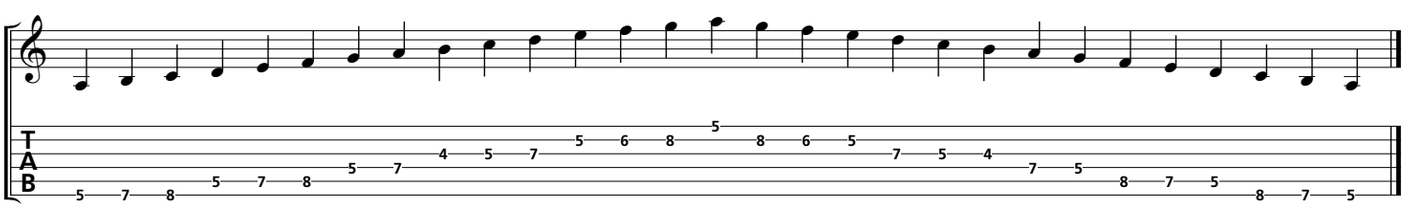
Groups A and B should be prepared from the starting notes of G, A and B. Groups A and B are played to a click, Group C is played as directed by the examiner and Group D is played to the backing track.

Group A: Scales
The tempo for this group is ♩= 90 bpm.

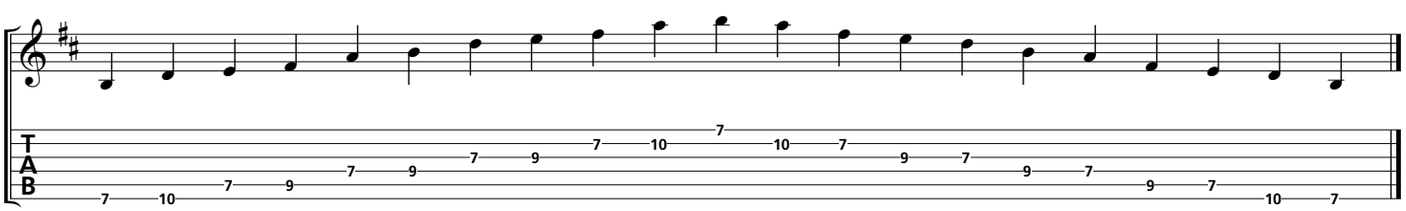
1. Major scale (G major shown)



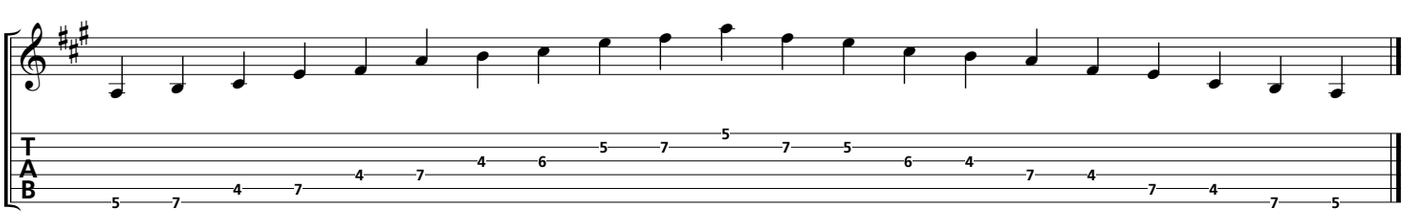
2. Natural minor scale (A natural minor shown)



3. Minor pentatonic scale (B minor pentatonic shown)



4. Major pentatonic (A major pentatonic shown)



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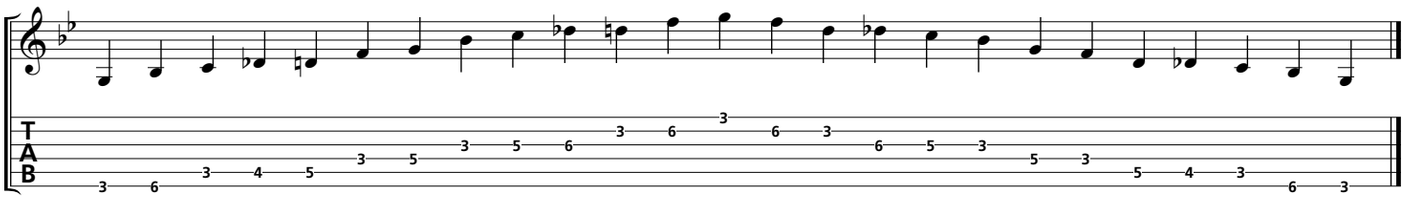
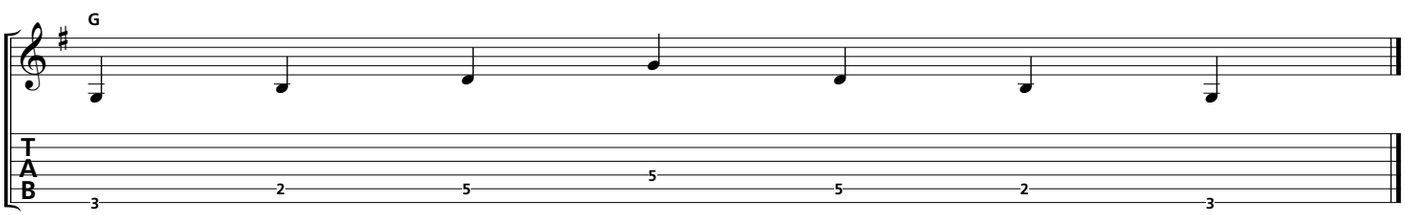
5. Blues scale (G blues scale shown)



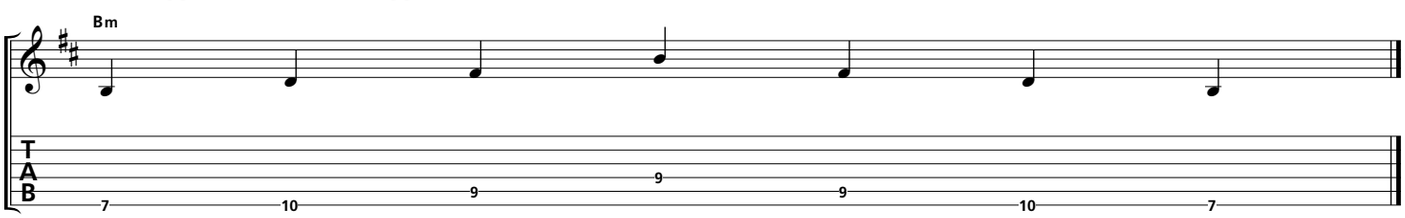
Group B: Arpeggios

The tempo for this group is ♩ = 90 bpm.

1. Major arpeggios (G major arpeggio shown)

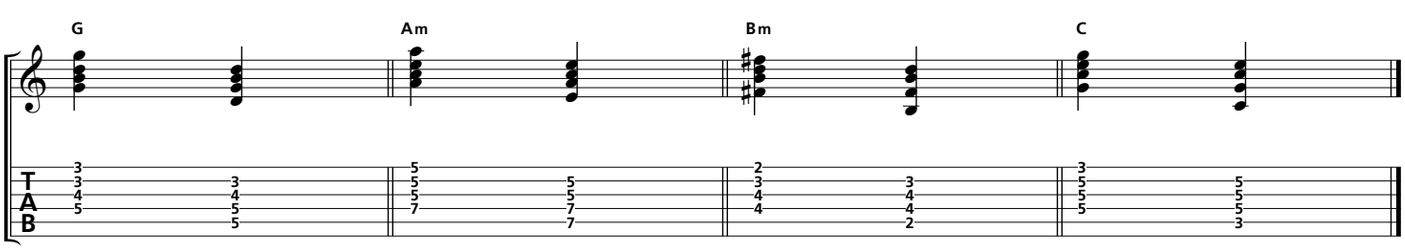


2. Minor arpeggios (B minor arpeggio shown)

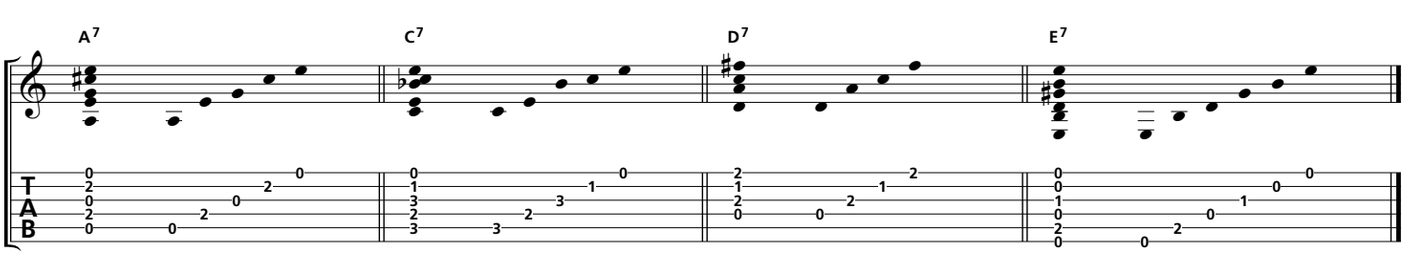


Group C: Chords

1. Partial 'barre' chords: G, Am, Bm & C – played as directed by examiner.



2. Dominant ^{7} chords: individual chords will be strummed once and then picked (arpeggiated)



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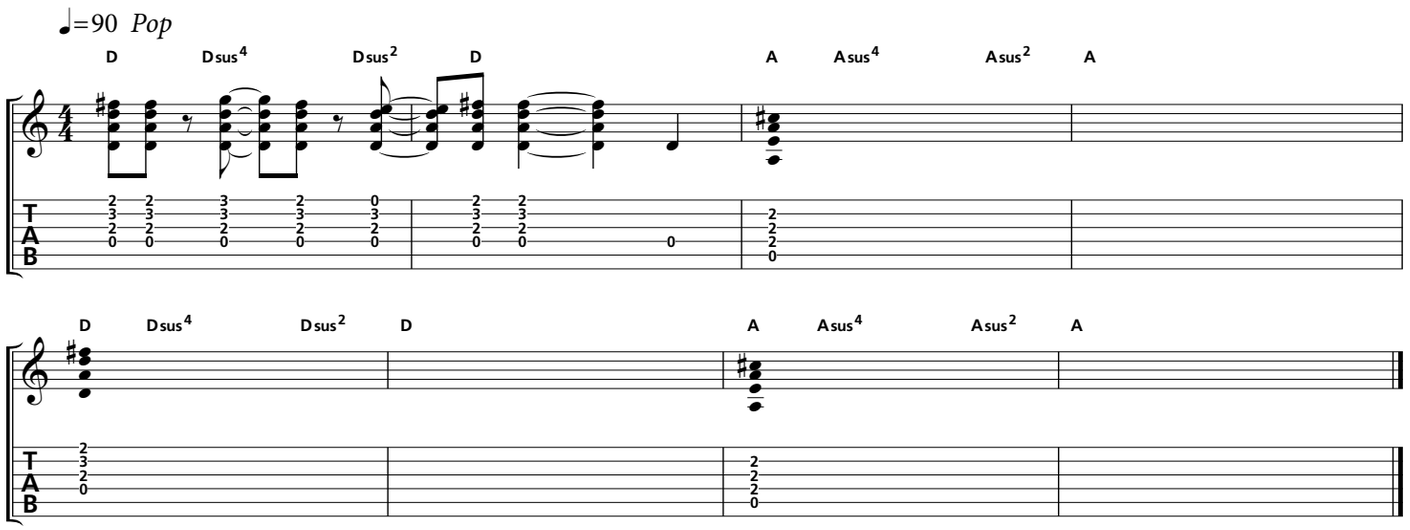
Group D: Acoustic Riff

In the exam you will be asked to play the following acoustic riff to a backing track. The riff shown in bar 1 & 2 should be transposed and played from the given root chord in the following bars. Each time it changes, the root chord is shown at the beginning of the bar. The tempo is ♩=90 bpm.



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Sight Reading

In the exam, you have a choice between either a Sight Reading test or an Improvisation & Interpretation test. The examiner will ask you which one you wish to choose before commencing. Once you have decided you cannot change your mind.

In the sight reading test, the examiner will give you a 4-bar melody. You will first be given 90 seconds to practise, after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is for you to practise and the second time is for you to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. The tempo is ♩= 80.

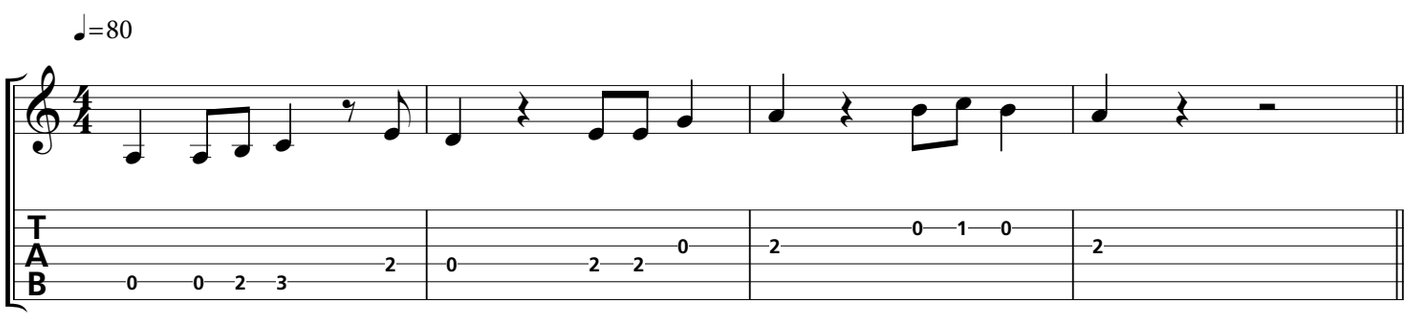
During the practice time, you will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

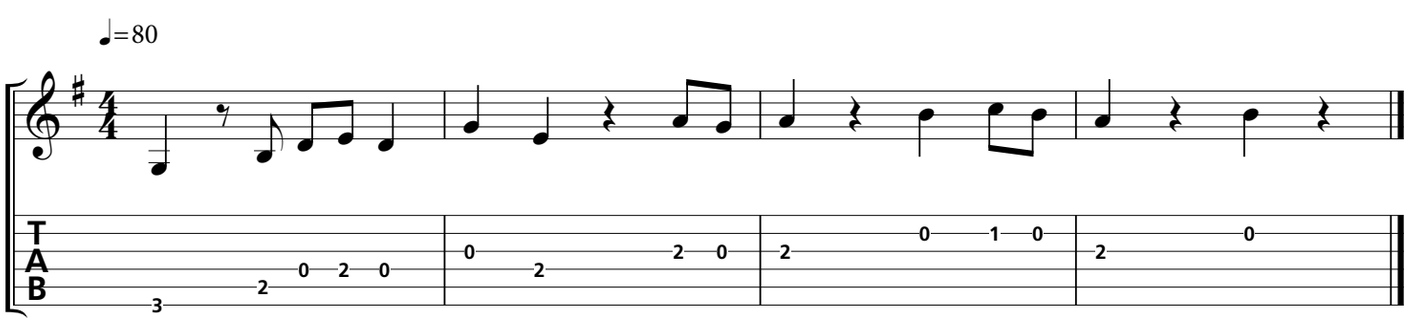
Tempo:	♩= 80
Duration:	4 Bars
Rhythms:	Quarter notes, eighth notes, ties and rests
Key:	G major or A natural minor – diatonic notes only
Compass:	Open/First/Second position

Please note: exercises may be performed ***either*** fingerstyle ***or*** with a plectrum.

Example 1



Example 2



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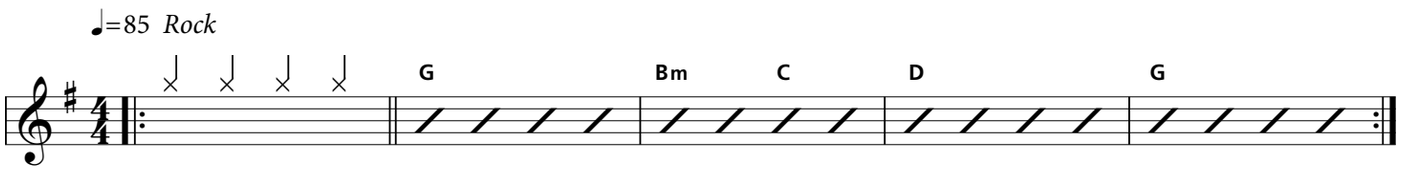
Improvisation & Interpretation

In the improvisation & interpretation test, the examiner will give you a 4–6 bar chord progression in the key of G major or A minor. You may choose to play either rhythmic chords or a melodic lead line – the audio includes a version for each choice. You have 90 seconds to prepare and then you will be allowed to practise during the first playing of the backing track before playing it to the examiner on the second playing of the backing track. This test is continuous with a one bar count-in at the beginning and after the practice session. The tempo is ♩= 80–90.

During the practice time, you will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.



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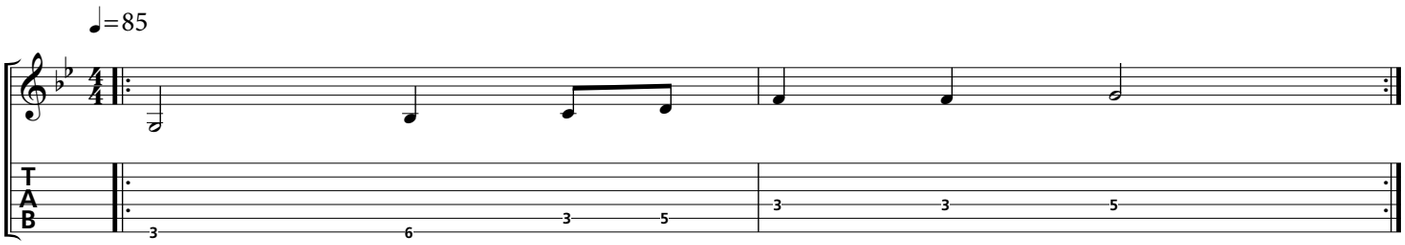
Ear Tests

There are two Ear Tests in this grade. The examiner will play each test to you twice. You will find one example of each type of test printed below.

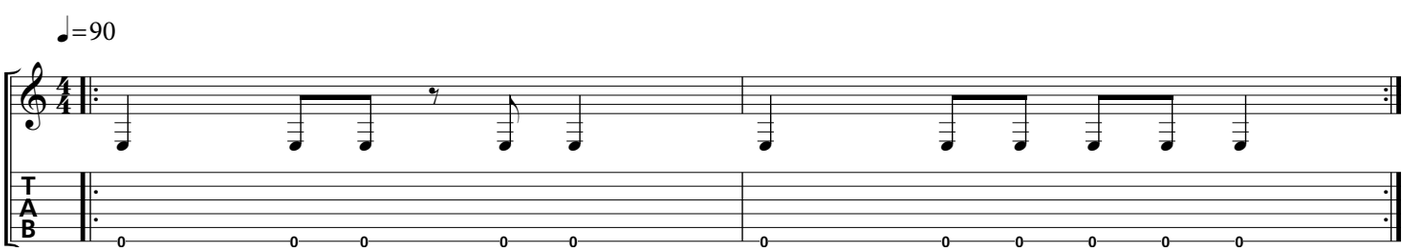
Test 1: Melodic Recall
The examiner will play you a two bar melody with a drum backing using the G minor pentatonic scale. The first note of the melody will be the root note and the first interval will be ascending. You will play the melody back on your instrument. You will hear the test twice.

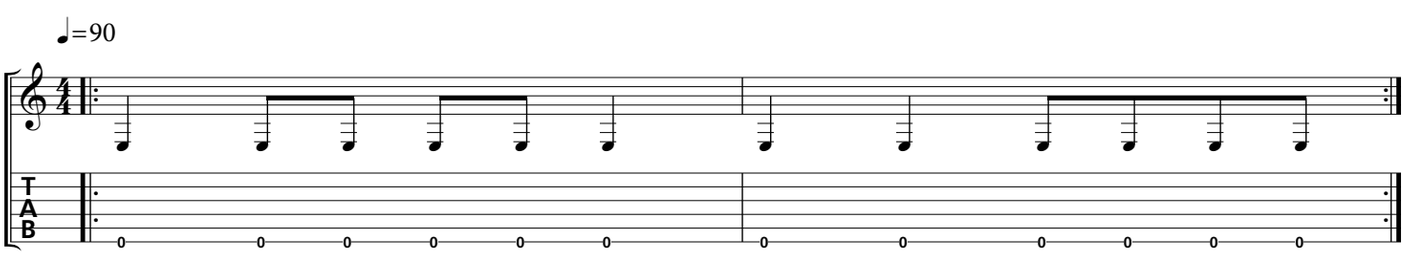
Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. Next you will hear a *vocal* count-in and you will then play the melody to the drum backing. The tempo is ♩=85.



Test 2: Rhythmic Recall
The examiner will play you a two bar rhythm played to a drum backing on the lowest-sounding E string. You will hear the test twice. You will be asked to play the rhythm back. You will then be asked to identify the rhythm from two printed examples shown to you.

Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a *vocal* count-in and you will then play the rhythm to the drum backing. The tempo is ♩=90.





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General Musicianship Questions

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions. Four of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question asked will be about instrumental & technical knowledge.

Music Knowledge
The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions based on a piece of music that you have played in the exam. You will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked.

In Grade 3 you will be asked:

- Names of pitches
- The meaning of the time signature marking
- Whole, half, quarter, eighth note, triplet eighth-notes and 16th-note values
- Rest values
- The construction of a dominant ^{7} chord

Instrument Knowledge
The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Grade 3 you will be asked to identify:

- Three of the following parts of your guitar: neck, fretboard, body, tuning-pegs, nut, soundhole, or bridge
- Two kinds of legato fretting hand technique
- Names of all open strings

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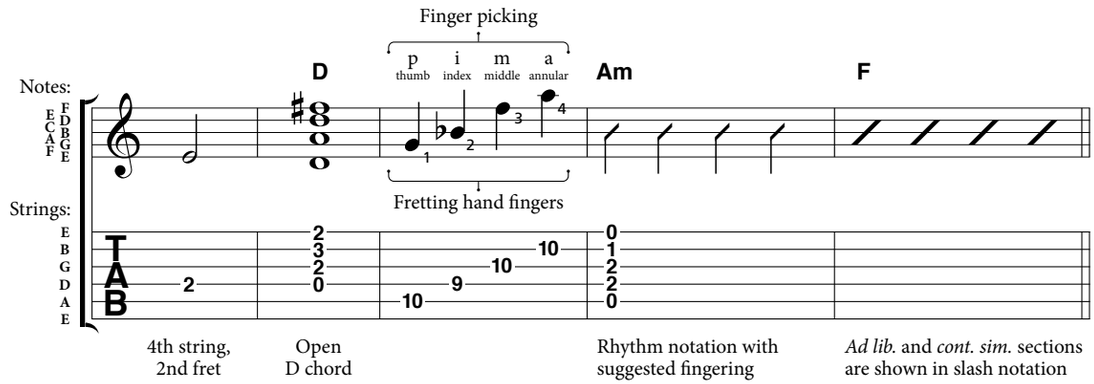
Acoustic Guitar Notation Explained

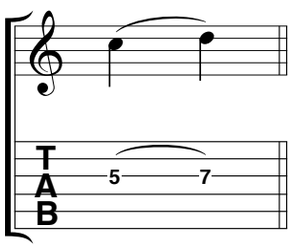
THE MUSICAL STAVE shows pitches and rhythms and is divided by lines into bars. Pitches are named after the first seven letters of the alphabet.

TABLATURE graphically represents the guitar fingerboard. Each horizontal line represents a string, and each number represents a fret.

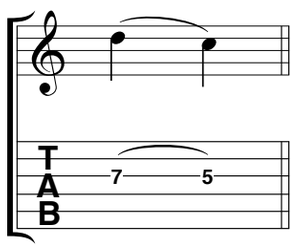


Definitions For Special Guitar Notation

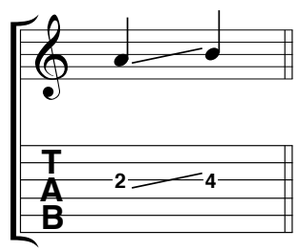
HAMMER ON: Pick the lower note, then sound the higher note by fretting it without picking.



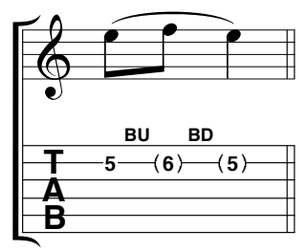
PULL OFF: Pick the higher note then sound the lower note by lifting the finger without picking.



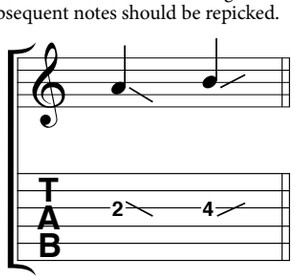
SLIDE: Pick the first note, then slide to the next with the same finger.



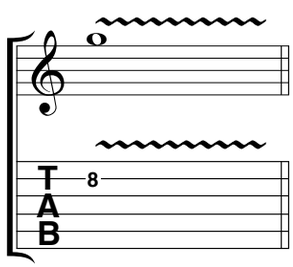
STRING BENDS: Pick the first note then bend (or release the bend) to the pitch indicated in brackets.



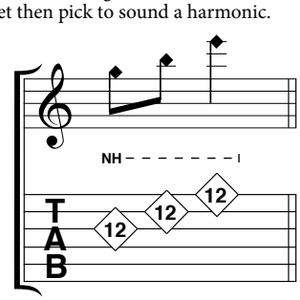
GLISSANDO: A small slide off of a note toward the end of its rhythmic duration. Do not slide 'into' the following note – subsequent notes should be repicked.



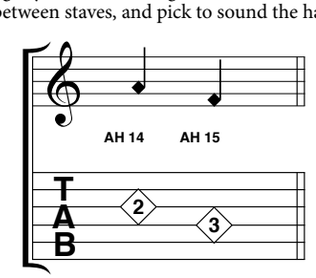
VIBRATO: Vibrate the note by bending and releasing the string smoothly and continuously.



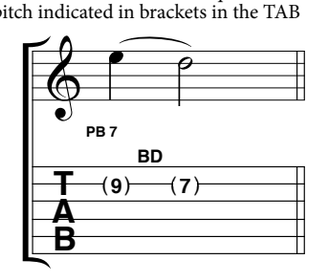
NATURAL HARMONICS: Lightly touch the string above the indicated fret then pick to sound a harmonic.



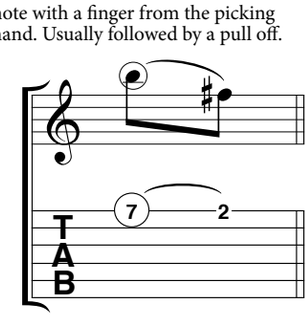
ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS: Fret the note indicated in the TAB, then (with picking hand) lightly touch the string above fret indicated between staves, and pick to sound the harmonic.



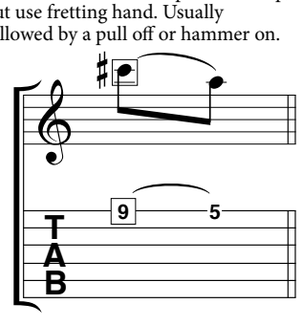
PRE-BENDS: Before picking the note, bend the string from the fret indicated between the staves, to the equivalent pitch indicated in brackets in the TAB



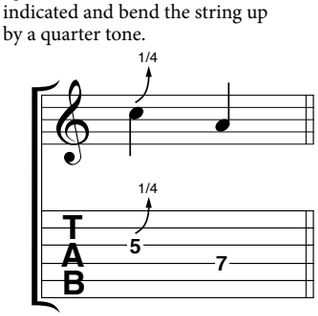
PICK HAND TAP: Strike the indicated note with a finger from the picking hand. Usually followed by a pull off.



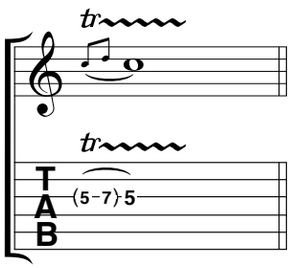
FRET HAND TAP: As pick hand tap, but use fretting hand. Usually followed by a pull off or hammer on.



QUARTER TONE BEND: Pick the note indicated and bend the string up by a quarter tone.



TRILL: Rapidly alternate between the two bracketed notes by hammering on and pulling off.



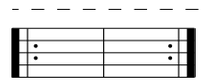
PICKING/STRUMMING: Upstrokes, downstrokes and strumming direction are indicated by the following symbols in the score:

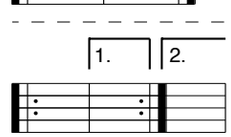
Downstroke *or* **Downward strum** *(low notes to high)*

Upstroke *or* **Upward strum** *(high notes to low)*

D.𝄋. al Coda
- Go back to the sign (𝄋), then play until the bar marked ***To Coda*** ⊕ then skip to the section marked ⊕ ***Coda***.

D.C. al Fine
- Go back to the beginning of the song and play until the bar marked ***Fine*** (end).


- Repeat bars between signs.



- When a repeated section has different endings, play the first ending only the first time and the second ending only the second time.

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Grade Exams | Debut to Grade 5 *

ELEMENT	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
Performance Piece 1	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 2	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 3	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Technical Exercises	9–10 out of 15	11–12 out of 15	13+ out of 15
Sight Reading *or* Improvisation & Interpretation	6 out of 10	7–8 out of 10	9+ out of 10
Ear Tests	6 out of 10	7–8 out of 10	9+ out of 10
General Musicianship Questions	3 out of 5	4 out of 5	5 out of 5
TOTAL MARKS	**60%+**	**74%+**	**90%+**

Grade Exams | Grades 6–8

ELEMENT	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
Performance Piece 1	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 2	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 3	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Technical Exercises	9–10 out of 15	11–12 out of 15	13+ out of 15
Quick Study Piece	6 out of 10	7–8 out of 10	9+ out of 10
Ear Tests	6 out of 10	7–8 out of 10	9+ out of 10
General Musicianship Questions	3 out of 5	4 out of 5	5 out of 5
TOTAL MARKS	**60%+**	**74%+**	**90%+**

Performance Certificates | Debut to Grade 8 *

ELEMENT	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
Performance Piece 1	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 2	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 3	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 4	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 5	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
TOTAL MARKS	**60%+**	**75%+**	**90%+**

* Note that there are no Debut Vocal exams.

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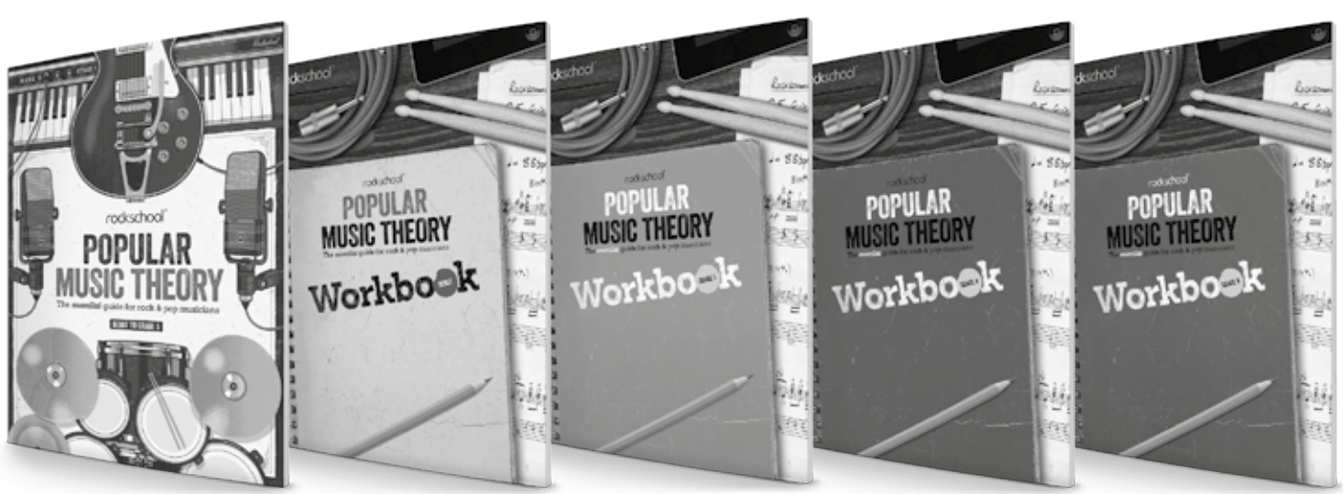

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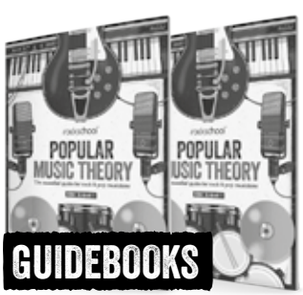

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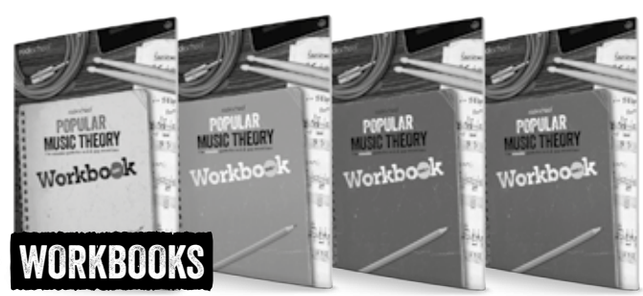

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