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BASS GRADE 2

BASS

GRADE 2

9 Tracks for GRADE 2

The Original ROCKSCHOOL ~ EST. 1991 ~



R&I

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Songs from

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rockschool®

BASS

Grade 2

Performance pieces, technical exercises, supporting tests
and guidance for Rockschool contemporary music examinations

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RSL Awarding the Contemporary Arts

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Welcome to Rockschool Bass Grade 2

Welcome to the Rockschool Bass Syllabus 2024. This syllabus is designed to support musicians 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 musician.

All candidates should read the accompanying syllabus guide when using this grade book. This can be downloaded from the RSL website: ***www.rslawards.com***

Rockschool Exams

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

- **Grade Exam**

  A grade exam is made up of the following components:

Grade Exam Overview		Available Marks
Performance Pieces	*Piece 1*	20
	Piece 2	20
	Piece 3	20
Technical Exercises	*Scales*, *Arpeggios (guitar and bass)*, *Rudiments (drums)* and *Technical Studies*	15
Supporting Tests	**(Debut)** *Sight Reading* **only** **(Grades 1–5)** Choice of *Sight Reading* **or** *Improvisation & Interpretation* **(Grades 6–8)** *Quick Study Piece* **only**	10
	(All grades) *Ear Tests*	10
	(All grades) *General Musicianship Questions* (5 questions)	5
	TOTAL	**100**

- **Performance Certificate**

  For a Performance Certificate you are required to perform five performance pieces only.

Performance Certificate Overview		Available Marks
Performance Pieces	*Piece 1*	20
	Piece 2	20
	Piece 3	20
	Piece 4	20
	Piece 5	20
	TOTAL	**100**

There are various face to face and digital exam options available. Please visit ***www.rslawards.com/graded-music-exams*** for further information.

Book Contents

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

Performance Pieces

Nine specially commissioned pieces, arranged and benchmarked for each grade:

- Three new Rockschool pieces ('Rockschool Originals') composed exclusively for the syllabus, and written to explore the stylistic features and techniques that encompass a variety of contemporary music styles.
- Six 'Hit Tune' arrangements of songs in popular music styles, arranged for the grade. Each of these is preceded by a Fact File, containing a short biography and photo of the artist, along with recommended listening information.

Technical Exercises

Exercises should be prepared within the indicated parameters and tempo (or tempo range). Pay careful attention to text in this section, some exercise options are chosen by the candidate, others are chosen by the examiner.

Supporting Tests

There are three types of supporting tests in the exam, listed below. For these tests, you will be required to show a variety of musical skills in response to a previously unseen example shown to you by the examiner. Examples of each type of test are given in the book.

- *Sight Reading* (Debut)
  Sight Reading **or** *Improvisation & Interpretation* (Grades 1–5)
  Quick Study Piece (Grades 6–8)
  These tests focus on candidates following a score or lead sheet presented by the examiner. At Grades 1–5, you may choose either a Sight Reading test or an Improvisation & Interpretation test. At Grades 4 and 5 the Sight Reading tests contain a small degree of improvisation, and the Improvisation & Interpretation tests contain a small degree of sight reading. At Grades 6–8 you must perform a mandatory Quick Study Piece which contains a combination of sight reading and improvisation and interpretation skills.

- *Ear Tests*
  These tests focus on candidates being able to recall rhythmic and melodic examples, and (at certain grades) identify an example from a score.

- *General Musicianship Questions*
  In this last section you will be asked five questions by the examiner, relating to your choice of piece performed in the exam. Details of these questions can be found in this grade book.

General Information

You will find information on exam procedures, including online examination entry, marking schemes, information on Free Choice Pieces and guidance around interpretation and improvisation.

All candidates should read the accompanying syllabus guide when using this grade book. This can be downloaded from the RSL website: ***www.rslawards.com***

Audio

In hardcopy books, all accompanying audio can be downloaded using the unique download code and URL found on the title page (page 1) of the book. In digital editions the audio is included in the download.

Shared Repertoire

RSL's Shared Repertoire are songs featured across each grade level in our guitar, bass, and drums syllabuses. They provide candidates with the opportunity to play our music with other musicians of a similar level in a live band setting, using our benchmarked repertoire to make music together.

Look for the  symbol at the top of the page to see which songs are Shared Repertoire.

Fingering/Sticking Annotation

Any fingering (guitar and bass) or sticking (drums) annotation is given as a guide only, and will not be assessed.

Interpretation

The assumed starting point in an exam is that notation will be performed as written. However, it is fine to alter the written notation, personalising the content by way of interpretation. In this event, it is important to ensure that such adaptation is technically of equivalent demand and stylistically appropriate. It is important to ensure the interpreted bars do not amount to (or run the risk of appearing to be) a simplification of the written part. Any simplification will be reflected in the marks.

Notes:

- If interpreting, ensure this is not so wide-ranging that the performance loses the basis of the original. Up to 50% would be considered the maximum permitted amount.
- Where pieces contain performance indications to, e.g., solo, *ad lib.*, improvise, develop, etc., these are stipulated opportunities to also develop personalised content. Candidates are strongly recommended to take advantage of these opportunities.
- Interpretation can include a small degree of physical adaptation to suit the candidate. For example, where hand stretches do not facilitate the required notated parts.
- For the avoidance of doubt in the exam, we recommend candidates inform the examiner at the beginning of the exam where, and to what extent, any parts have been interpreted.
- If in doubt you can submit any adaptation enquiries to ***info@rslawards.com***

E-book Upgrade

Upgrade your learning experience! The interactive e-book gives you the ability to jam along with, slow down and loop tricky passages of your favourite pieces, whilst receiving automated instantaneous feedback* so you can achieve your goals with confidence. Visit ***www.rslawards.com/downloads*** for further details.

** Instantaneous feedback currently available for guitar and bass only.*

Inspiring sounds from Rockschool and IK Multimedia

Rockschool has partnered with IK Multimedia to bring you a range of guitar and bass tones, that match perfectly with your book. In fact, we have created tones that match every song, across all nine graded books in this edition of the Guitar and Bass syllabus. The tones are available for the AmpliTube software, ToneX pedals and iRig interfaces. This means you can take great sounds with you wherever you go. You can even access them with your smartphone or tablet.

The best bit...? All the presets are free to download. You can even use the free version of AmpliTube to access the tones.

Visit ***www.rslawards.com/ikmultimedia*** to get started or scan the QR code below.

Flowers

Artist: Miley Cyrus
Source: *Endless Summer Vacation* (Album, 2023)
Genre: Dance-Pop/Disco

The lead single from her eighth studio album, disco-infused hit 'Flowers' quickly rose to become Miley's most successful song to date, surpassing her previous number 1 'Wrecking Ball' released nearly a decade earlier. It broke multiple records, including the fastest song to reach 1 billion streams on Spotify and remained at number 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 for eight non-consecutive weeks.

Daughter of American country singer Billy Ray Cyrus, Miley Cyrus' first claim to fame was as the main character in the Disney sitcom *Hannah Montana*, where her talent as both an actor and singer were on full display. Throughout her teens she continued to release music as Hannah Montana, but also as a soloist. Released under her own name, hit singles 'Party in the USA' and 'The Climb' signalled a move away from her alter ego for good. Her 2010 album *Bangerz* marked a notable change in style, both musically and aesthetically, incorporating elements of R&B and more adult themes, in stark contrast to her child-friendly output as Montana. Alongside her critical and commercial success as a musician, Cyrus continues to act, starring in various films and series, including *Bolt, Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*, and *Black Mirror*.



Kevin Mazur / Getty Images Entertainment *via Getty Images*

Recommended Listening



Dua Lipa *Future Nostalgia* (2020)
As the name implies, Dua Lipa has tried to create a "nostalgic" pop sound on this album with the influence from the dance music, disco and synth-pop of the'80s clear to see.
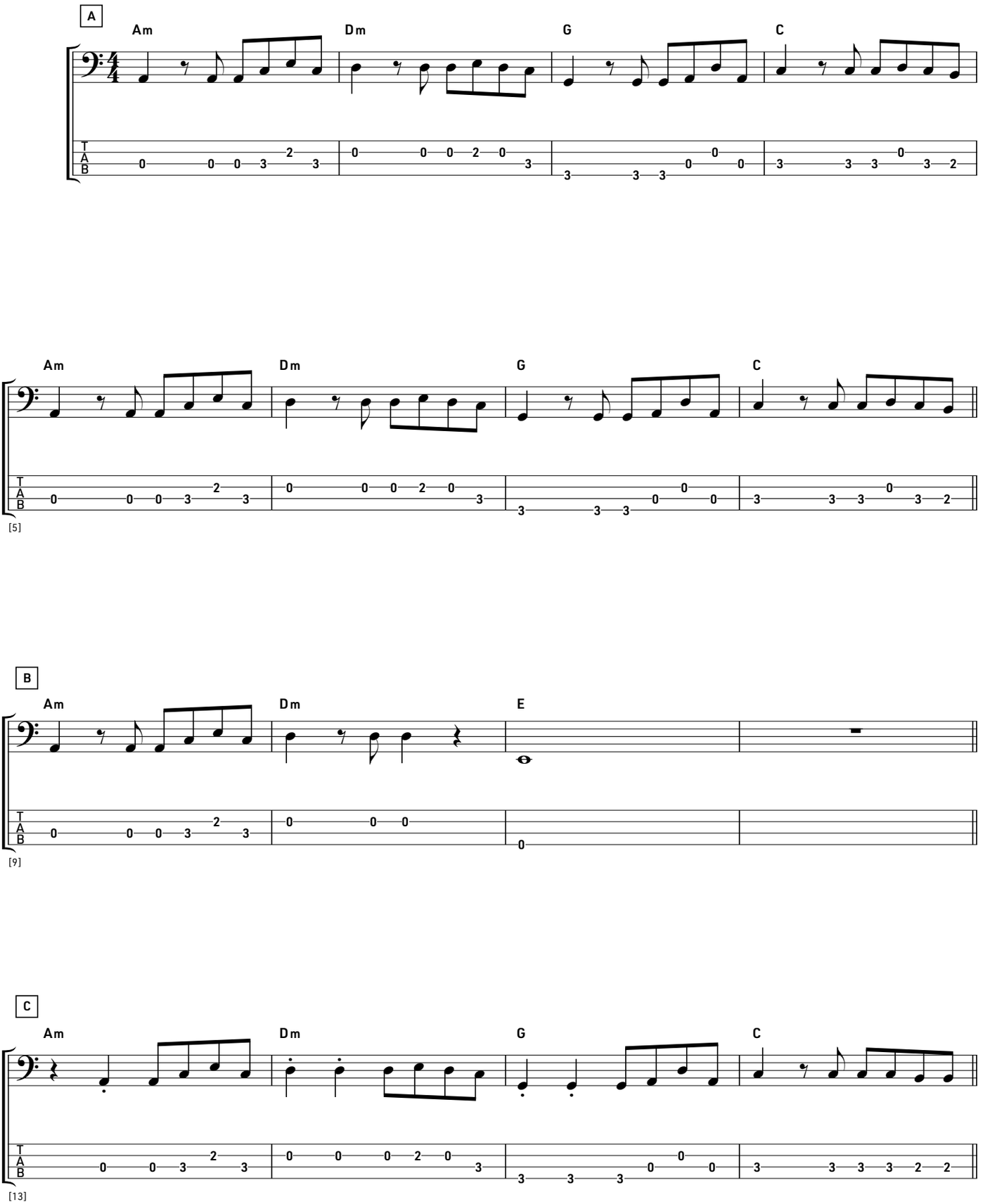


Britney Spears *In the Zone* (2003)
Like Miley, Britney Spears was cast into the public eye as a child star on the Disney Channel, before moving over to a career as a pop star. *In the Zone* was released during the commercial peak in Spears's career, with hit 'Toxic' still getting regular rotation.

Flowers

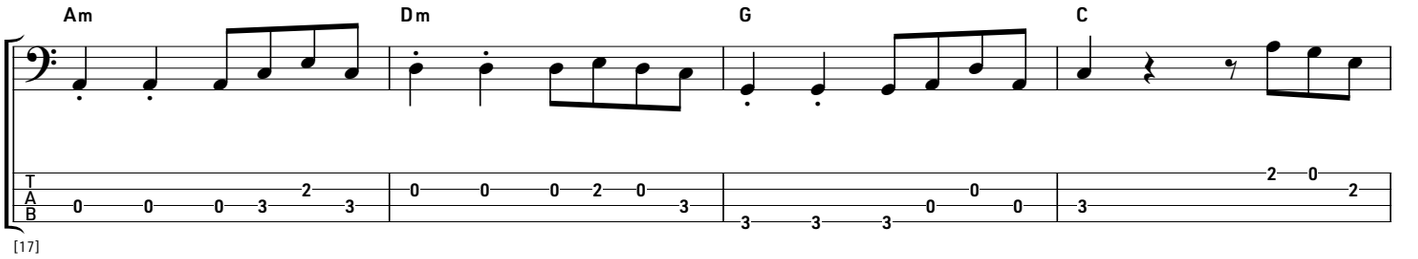
Words and Music by Miley Cyrus, Gregory Hein
and Michael Pollack

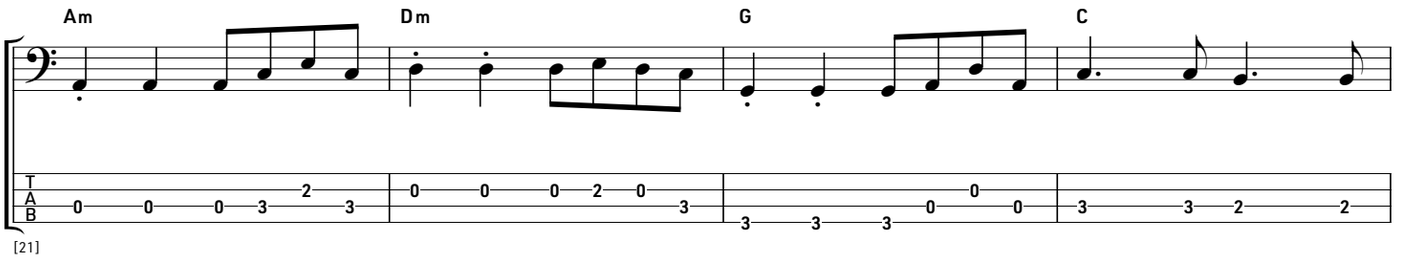
Miley Cyrus

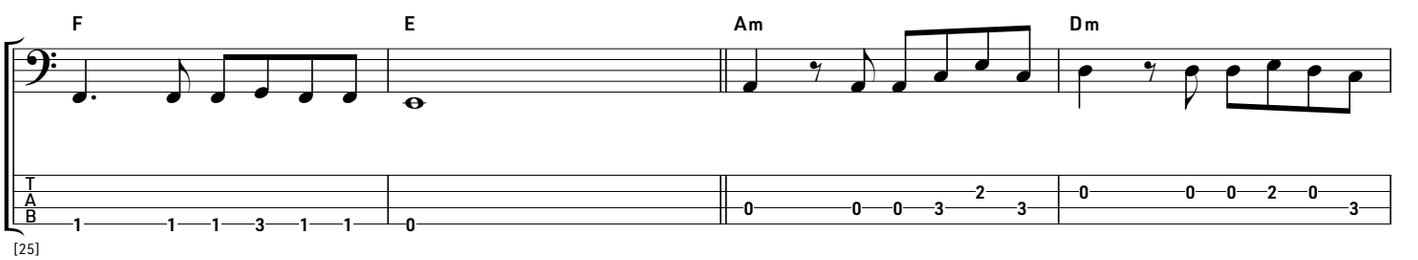
♩=118 *Dance-Pop/Disco*

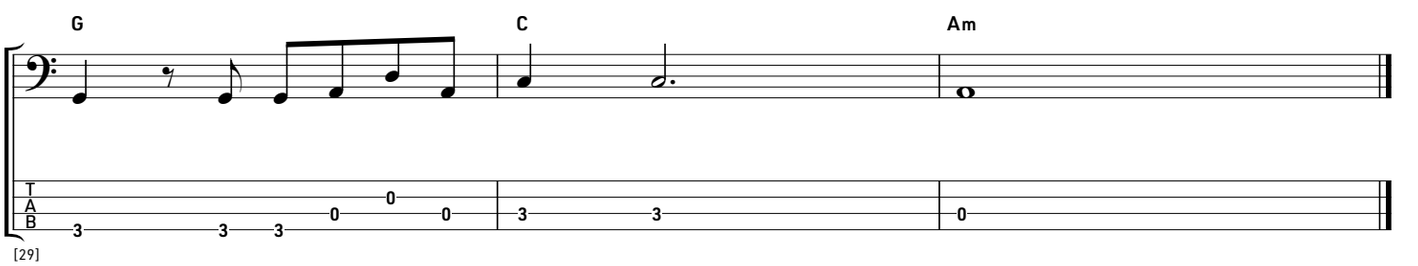


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Am
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Am
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[21]


F
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Dm
[25]


G
C
Am
[29]

Keep on Running

Artist: The Spencer Davis Group
Source: *Keep on Running* (Single, 1965)
Genre: British R&B / Soul

Jamaican reggae artist Jackie Edwards wrote and recorded 'Keep on Running' to feature on his 1965 album *Come on Home*. The song was released by Island Record label owner Chris Blackwell, who also managed The Spencer Davis Group at the time. When The Spencer Davis Group released their version of the song, it became a number 1 hit in the UK.

The Spencer Davis Group were primarily active during what was commonly known as the British Invasion, when artists from the UK would dominate charts both at home and overseas. During the '60s, the group released multiple chart-topping singles that took cues from rock and R&B music, including 'Gimme Some Lovin'' and 'I'm a Man'. Former member and prolific songwriter Steve Winwood left the band in 1967 to form Traffic, resulting in the band's first disbandment. The group would later produce albums in the '70s with an alternative lineup and reunited for a tour in 2006. Founding guitarist Spencer Davis died in 2020, marking the loss of the last founding member. Over the years the band have seen their songs covered by multiple acts, such as Chicago, and The Allman Brothers Band.



Ivan Keeman / Redferns *via Getty Images*

Recommended Listening



The Animals *The Animals* (1964)
The Animals' signature rendition of traditional folk song 'The House of the Rising Sun' was a number 1 hit in the US, UK and Canada during the "British Invasion" era of the '60s, catering to musical tastes on both sides of the Atlantic.
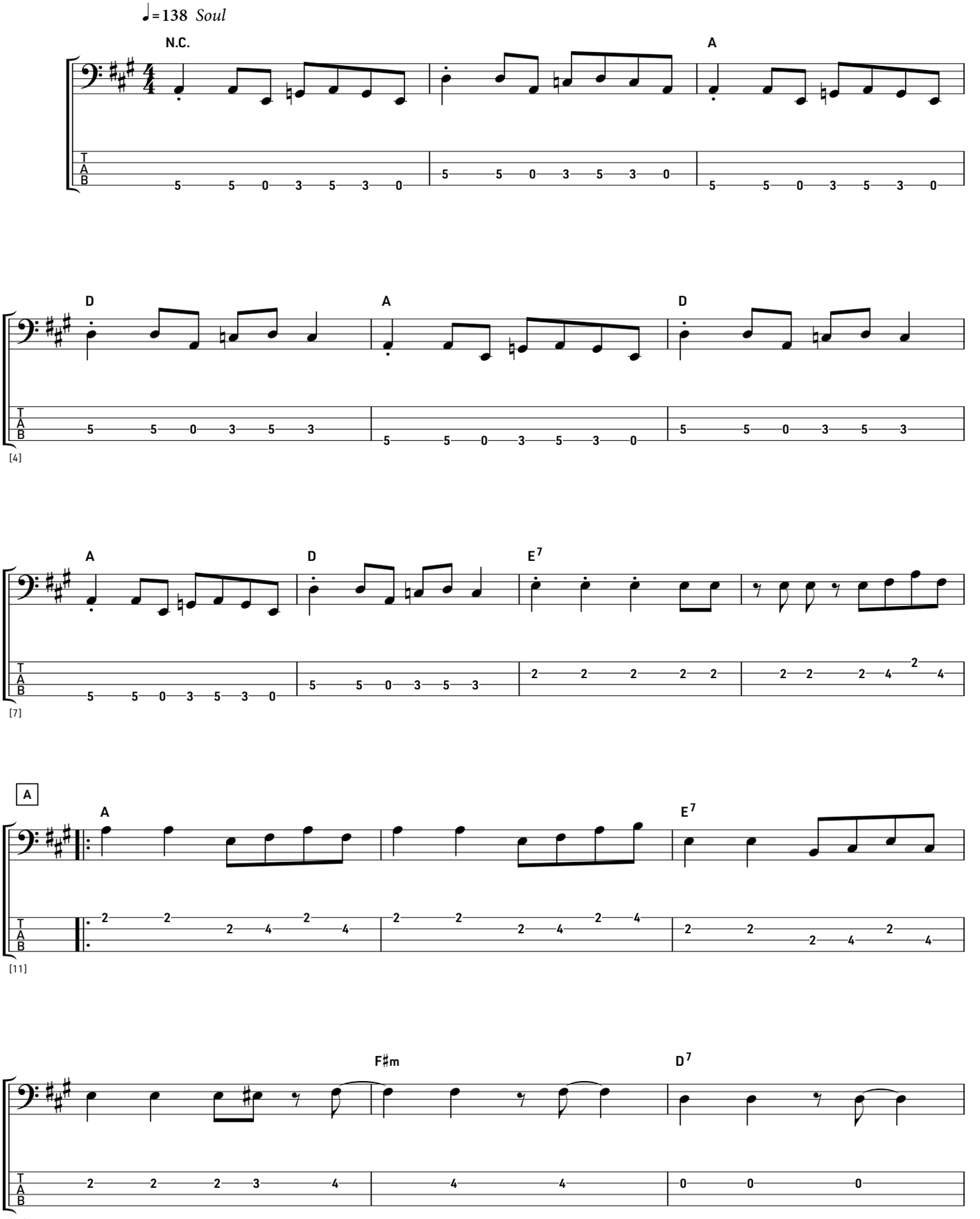


The Yardbirds *Having a Rave Up with the Yardbirds* (1965)
The '60s was a peak time for the bluesy rock stylings of The Yardbirds, showcasing the beginnings of their explorations into psychedelic music. It includes charting hits such as 'The Train Kept a-Rollin'', with each side of the album displaying lead guitar mastery from Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck.

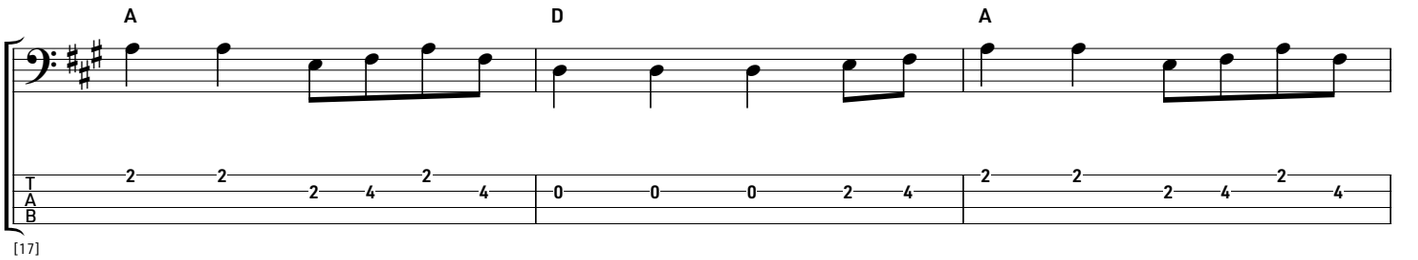
Keep on Running

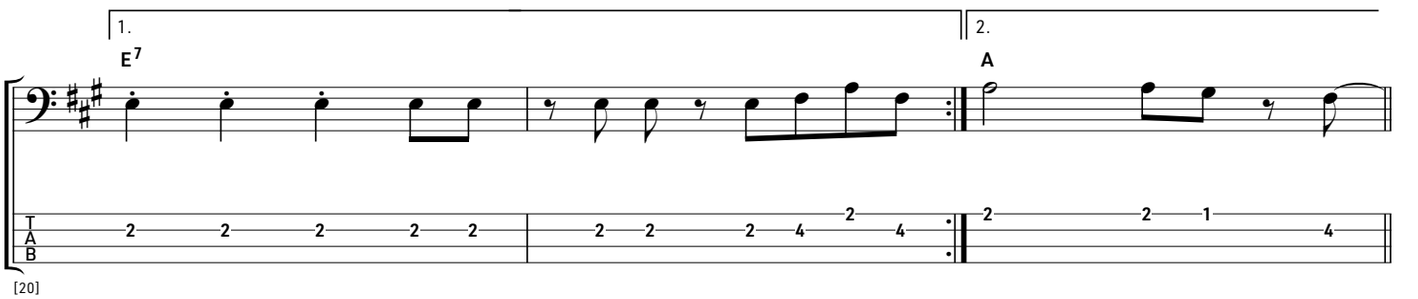
Words and Music by Jackie Edwards

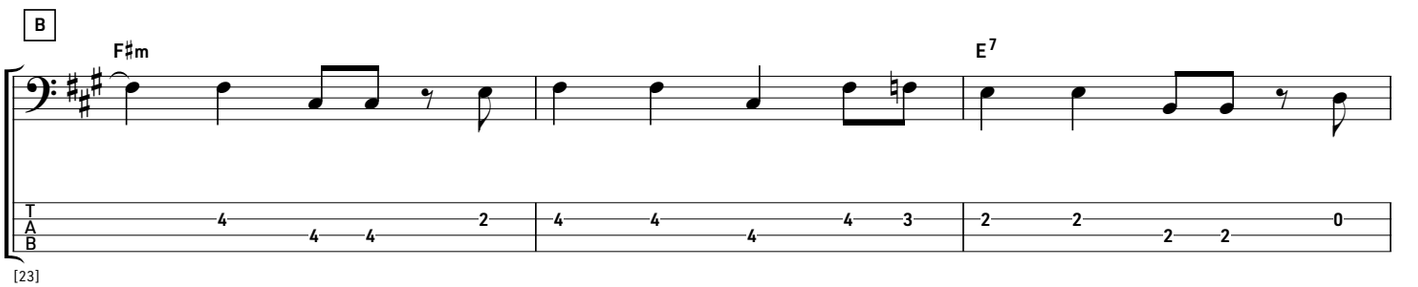
The Spencer Davis Group

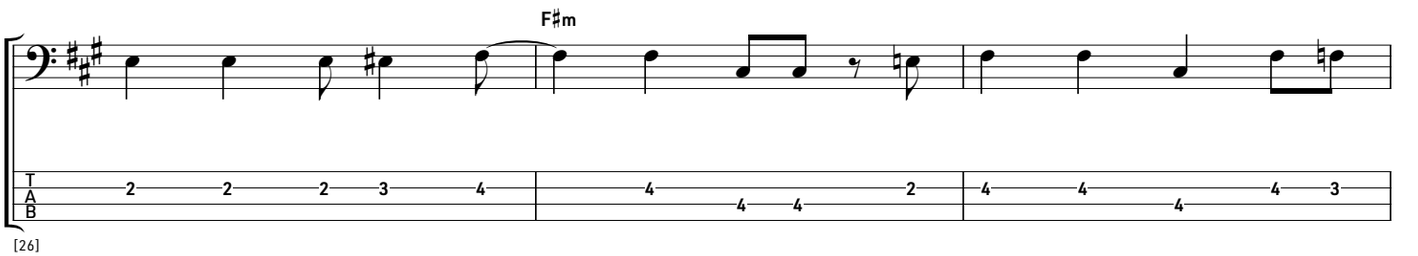


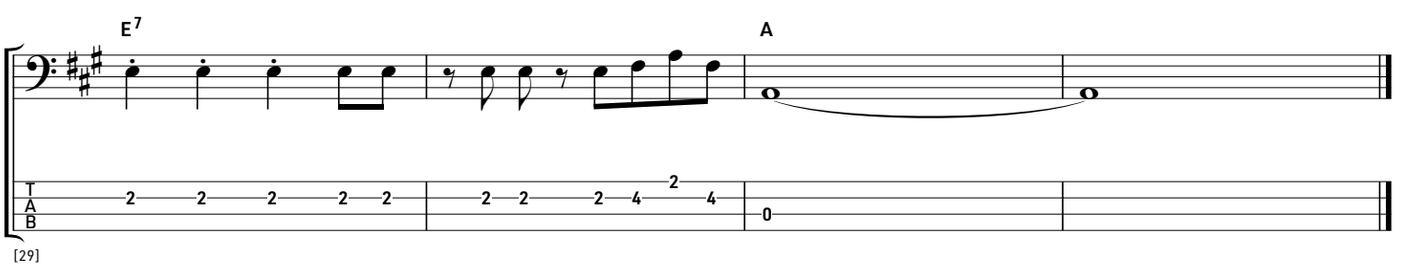
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B
F♯m
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F♯m
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E7
A
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Since U Been Gone

Artist: Kelly Clarkson
Source: *Breakaway* (Album, 2004)
Genre: Pop Rock

'Since U Been Gone' was written by acclaimed pop songwriters Max Martin and Lukasz Gottwald, who had by that time already amassed a large portfolio of hit songs in pop and rock. They took their inspiration from 'Maps' by the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, wanting to write a pop song in a similar vein, but with a more bombastic chorus. The song was originally given to P!nk, then Hilary Duff, but eventually found its way to Kelly Clarkson and formed part of her second album *Breakaway*. It went on to become one of Clarkson's signature songs, winning her a Grammy and peaking at number 2 on the Billboard Hot 100.

Kelly Clarkson was launched to global stardom when she won the first series of *American Idol* in 2002. Her first single 'A Moment Like This' shot to number 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. For her second album *Breakaway*, looking to step away from the somewhat cliché, mass-market approach of her previous output, she adopted a more rock-orientated sound and aesthetic. The consistent mainstream chart success she saw throughout the '00s waned in the years that followed. Nevertheless, she remains in the public eye thanks to regularly hosting talk shows and appearing as a judge on several reality TV series. Notable awards include three Grammys and a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.



Michael Tran / FilmMagic *via Getty Images*

Recommended Listening



Avril Lavigne *Let Go* (2002)
Avril Lavigne's best-selling debut is brimming with songs containing a strong rock and pop-punk flavour, with smash hits such as 'Sk8r Boi' and 'Complicated' being prime examples of the '00s pop-rock sound.
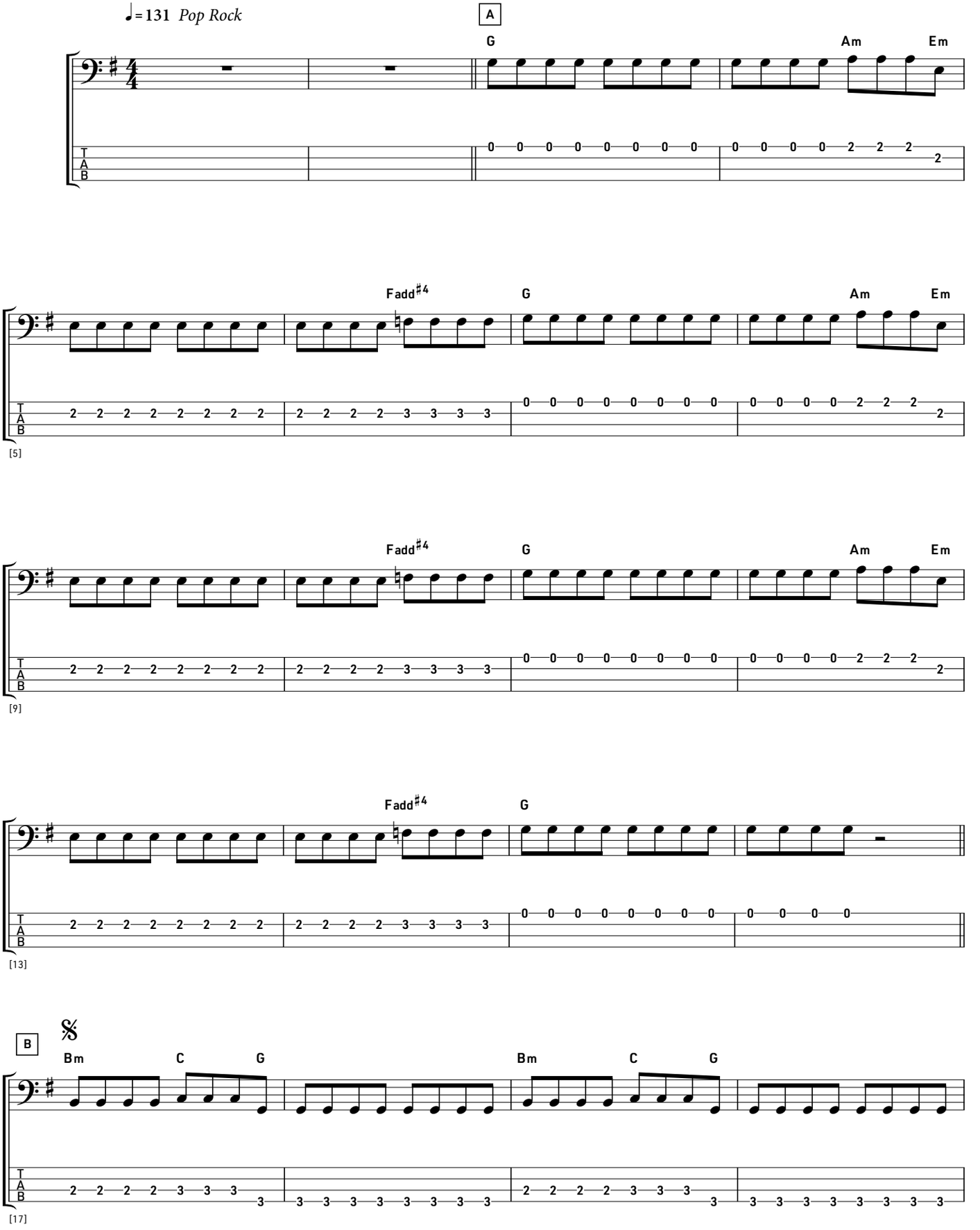


P!nk *I'm Not Dead* (2006)
Both P!nk and Clarkson scored a string of hits throughout the '00s and even collaborated on numerous occasions. Both artists also moved towards a rockier sound in their music midway through the decade, with P!nk's 'Who Knew' baring a striking sonic resemblance to 'Since U Been Gone'.

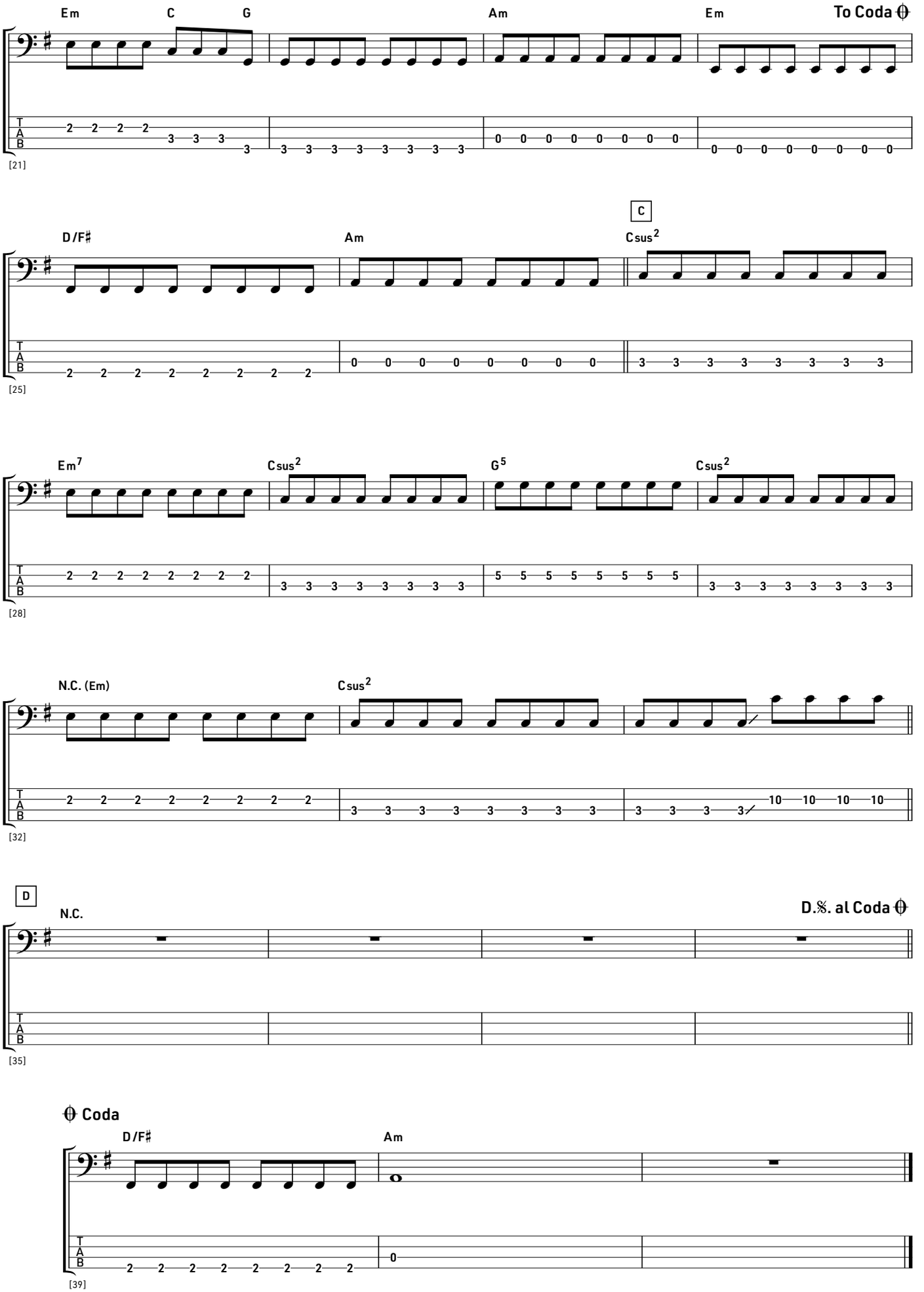
Since U Been Gone

Words and Music by Max Martin and Lukasz Gottwald

Kelly Clarkson



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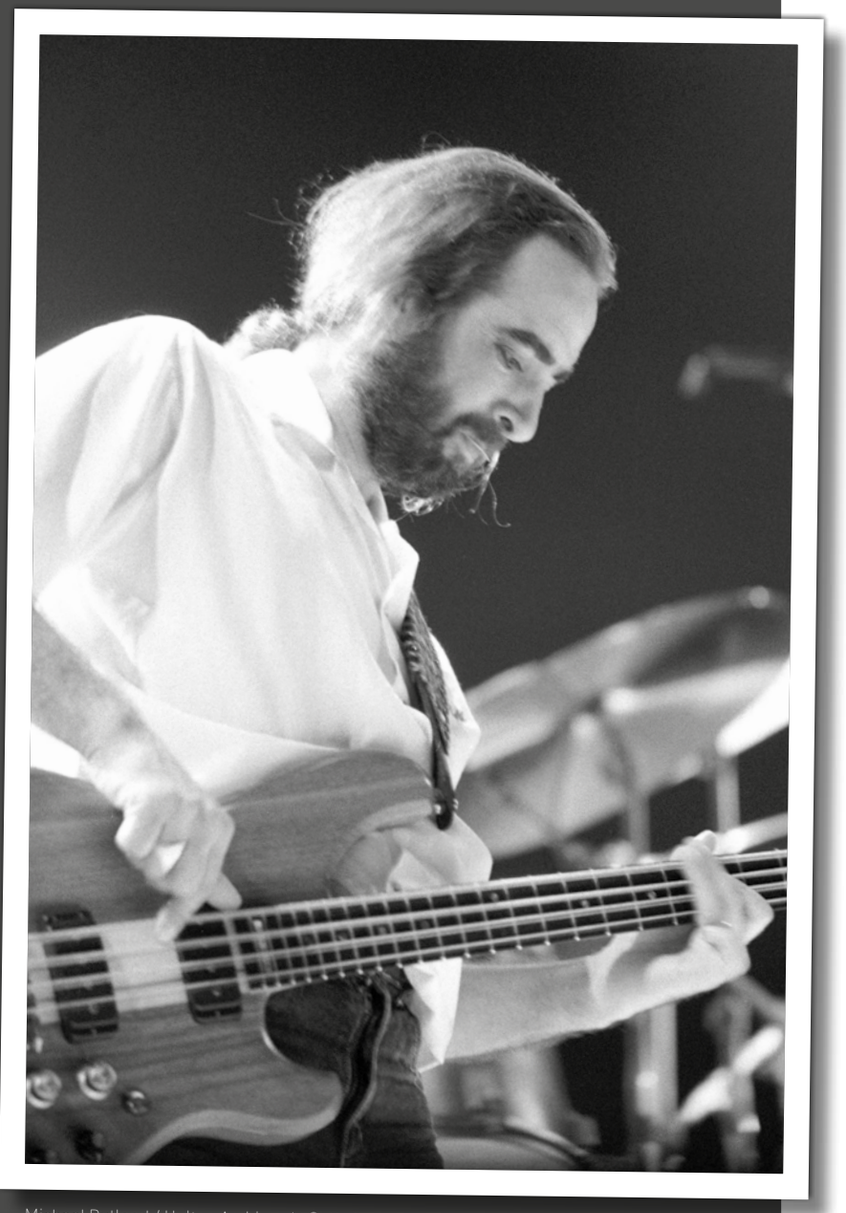

Em
C
G
Am
Em
To Coda
[21]
D/F♯
Am
C
Csus2
[25]
Em7
Csus2
G5
Csus2
[28]
N.C. (Em)
Csus2
[32]
D
N.C.
D.𝄋. al Coda
[35]
Coda
D/F♯
Am
[39]

Go Your Own Way

Artist: Fleetwood Mac
Source: *Go Your Own Way* (Single, 1976) / *Rumours* (Album, 1977)
Genre: Soft Rock

The turbulent relationship of Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham was the catalyst for developing the sound and lyrics that would eventually become the hit single 'Go Your Own Way'. The song details their conflict and eventual breakup. 'Go Your Own Way' went on to become one of Fleetwood Mac's most recognisable songs and became their first top 10 hit in the US. Its popularity led to it being covered by multiple artists, including Irish alt-rockers The Cranberries.

Fleetwood Mac formed in London in 1967. Primarily a blues group to begin with, they got their first UK number one in 1968 with the atmospheric 'Albatross'. The band's sound changed greatly with the addition of Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham in the mid '70s, who helped steer the band more towards a pop rock approach. Soon after, they went on to have multiple charting hits in the US. Released in 1977, the iconic *Rumours* became their most successful work to date and became one of the best-selling albums of all time, with sales of over 40 million worldwide to date. As recognition for their outstanding contribution to music, they were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1998.

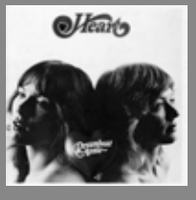


Michael Putland / Hulton Archive *via Getty Images*

Recommended Listening



Eagles *Hotel California* (1976)
The rock epic 'Hotel California' had heavy radio play upon release and has been a mainstay in pop cultural references decades later. The album contains multiple songs typical of American pop rock in the '70s, not least the track after which the album is named.
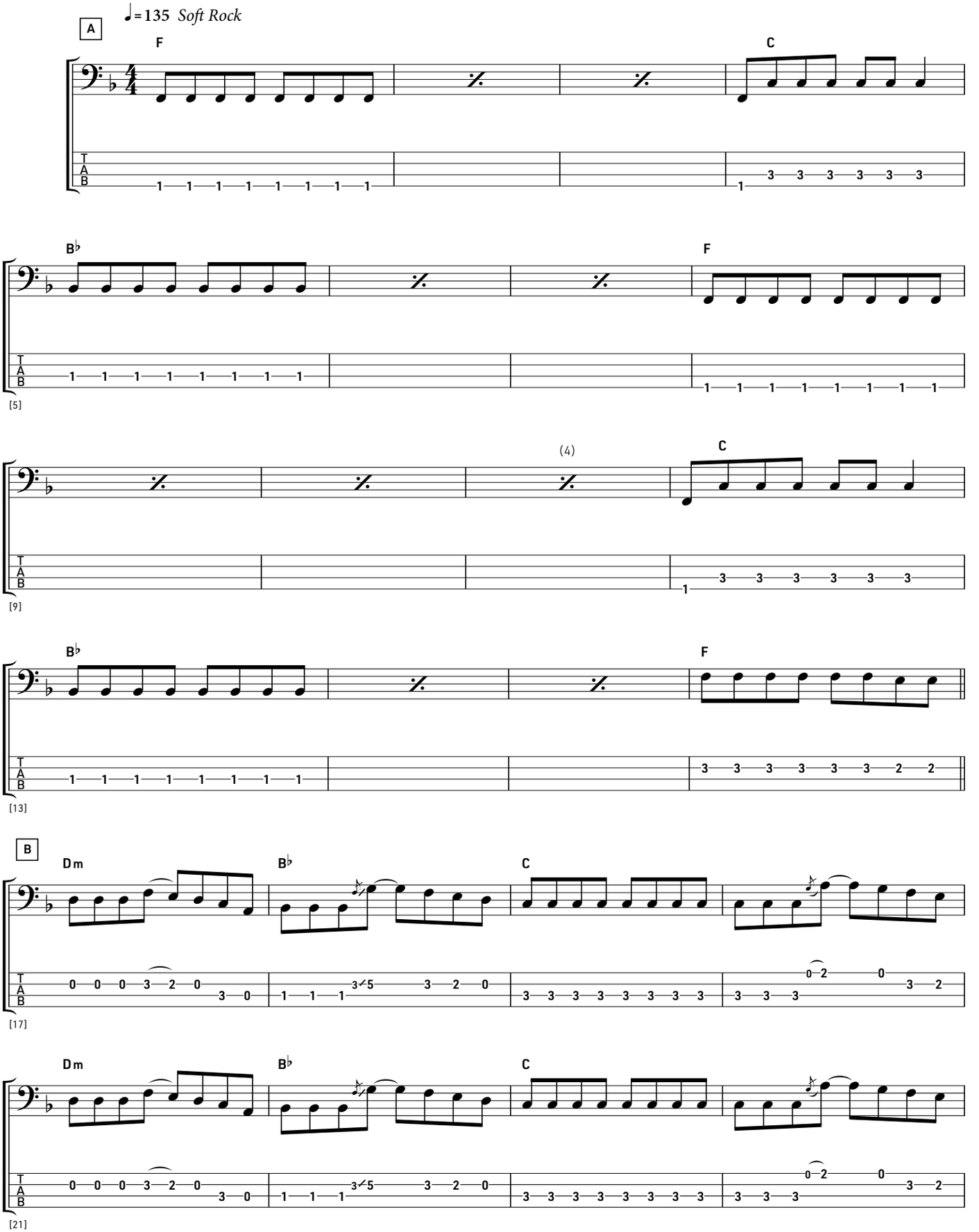


Heart *Dreamboat Annie* (1975)
Fronted by the legendary Wilson sisters, Heart's debut album is full of melodic and stirring '70s rock songs, characterised by ethereal vocals combined with layered and elaborate guitar lines.
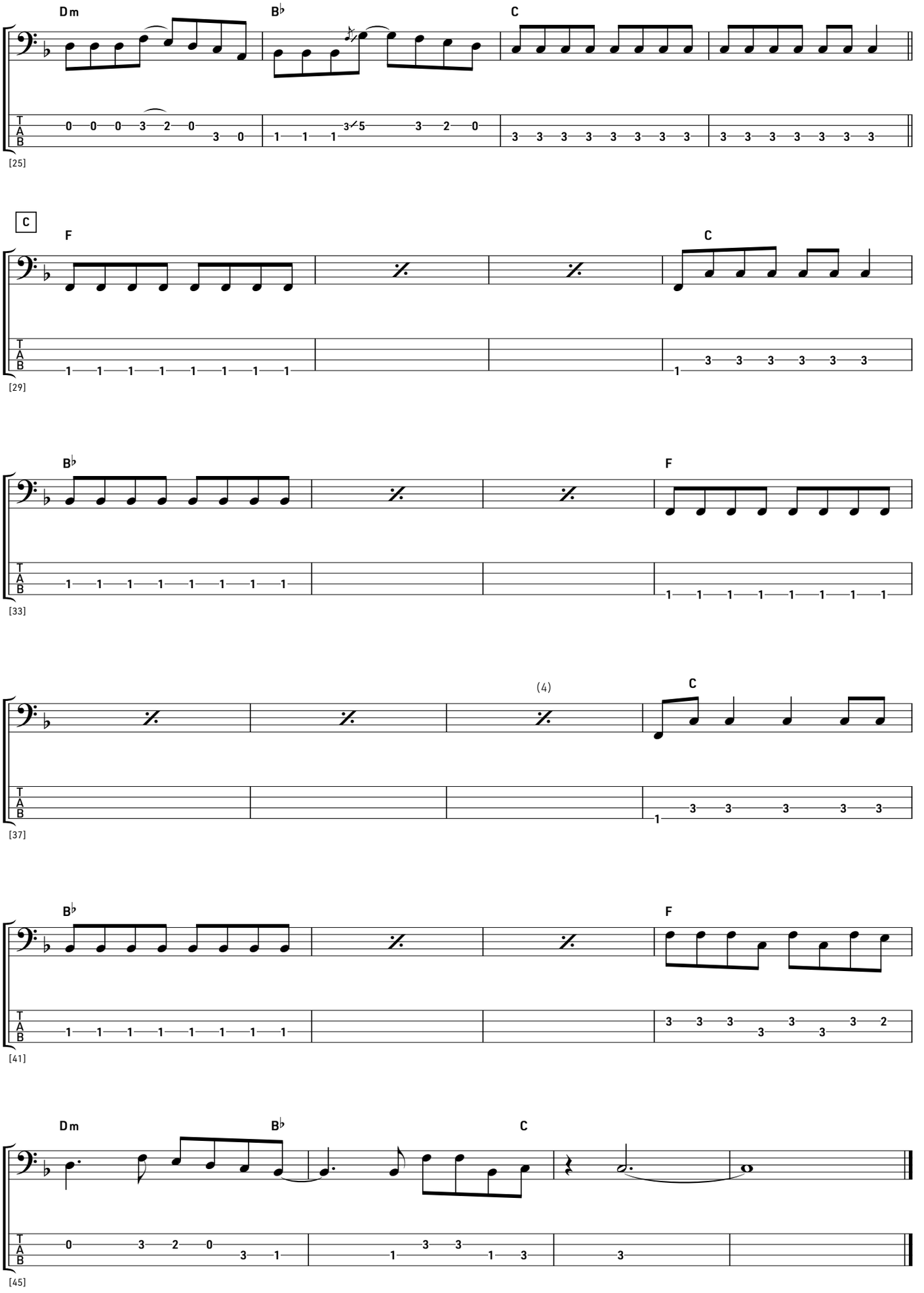
Go Your Own Way

Words and Music by Lindsey Buckingham

Fleetwood Mac



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Dm
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(4)
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Dm
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C
[45]

Come Together

Artist: The Beatles
Source: *Abbey Road* (Album, 1969)
Genre: Pop Rock / Blues Rock

Recorded over the course of 6 days, Chuck Berry influenced 'Come Together' tops the track listing of The Beatles' penultimate studio album *Abbey Road*. The song's title is derived from a slogan John Lennon was asked to repurpose into a song for use in an American political campaign: "Come together – Join the Party!". The main bassline hook is widely considered to be one of the most iconic ever written.

The extent of The Beatles' effect on music and pop culture at large cannot be overstated. Having started as a Merseybeat band in the early '60s, they refined and transformed their sound several times over a short 10-year career, before disbanding in 1970. Known for pushing musical boundaries and a willingness to experiment with the latest technology of the day, their catalogue is one of the most varied and substantial of any band in history. Despite breaking up over 50 years ago, the "Fab Four" are as culturally relevant today as ever, with "Beatlemania" still alive and well. With approximately half a billion record sales, they are officially the most successful music act of all time.



Universal History Archive / Universal Images Group *via Getty Images*

Recommended Listening



The Rolling Stones *Out of Our Heads* (1965)
The Rolling Stones were a major player in '60s British blues rock and later became rock legends in their own right. *Out of Our Heads* had two separate versions; one for the UK and one for the US, with the latter containing their popular single '(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction'.
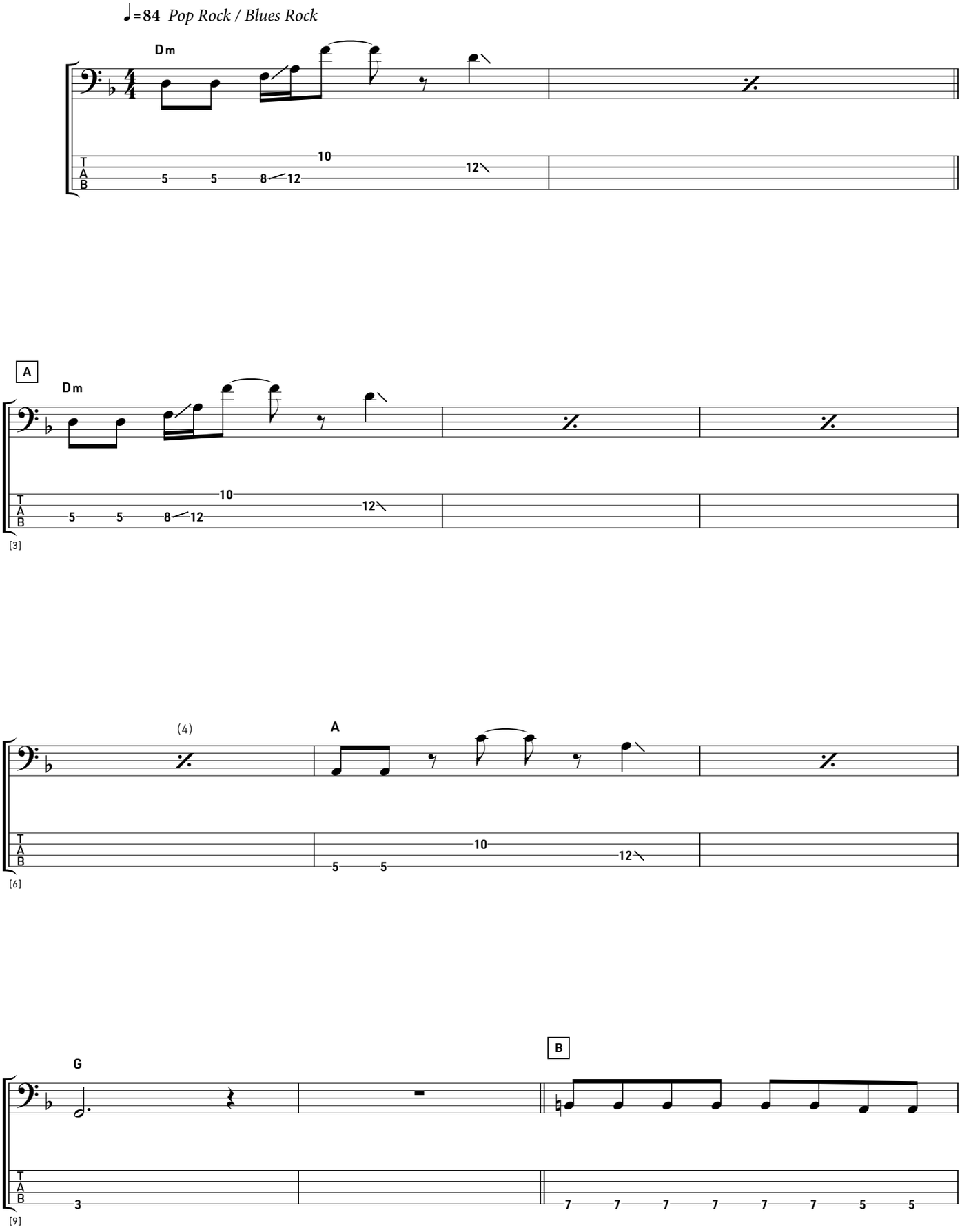


The Beach Boys *Pet Sounds* (1966)
In parallel to The Beatles, The Beach Boys helped expand the potential of pop and rock music albums. *Pet Sounds* takes their sunny surf-rock/doo-wop sound and enhances it with elaborate orchestral sounds and vocal harmonies, as heard on 'Wouldn't It Be Nice' and 'God Only Knows'.

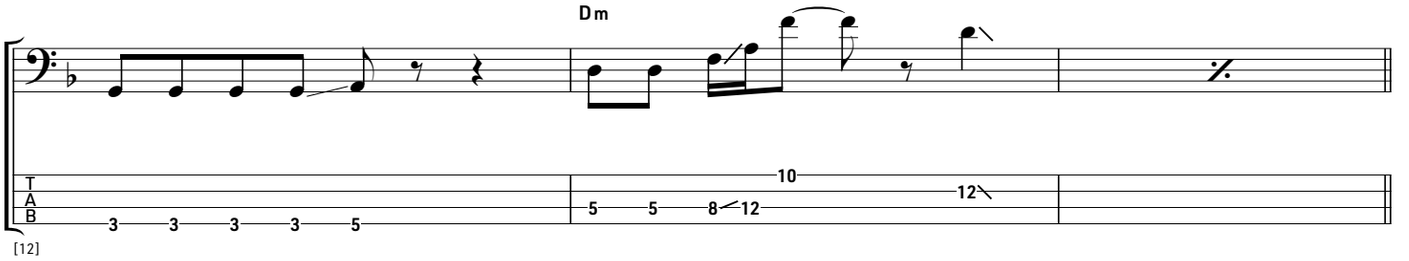
Come Together

Words and Music by John Lennon and Paul McCartney

The Beatles
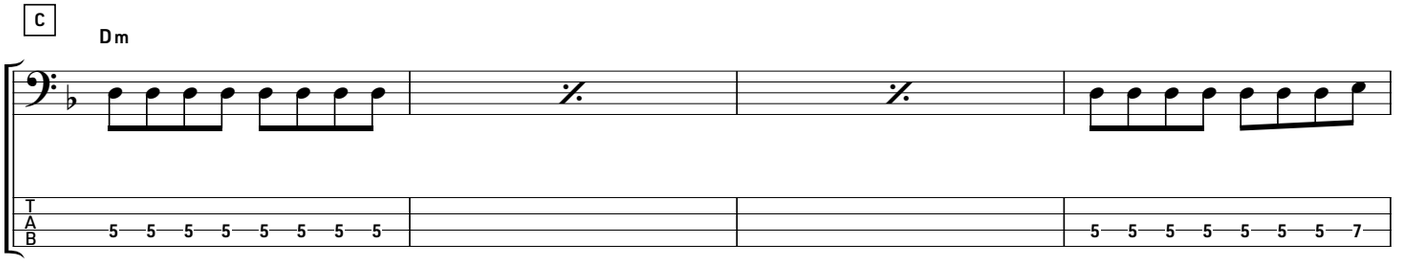


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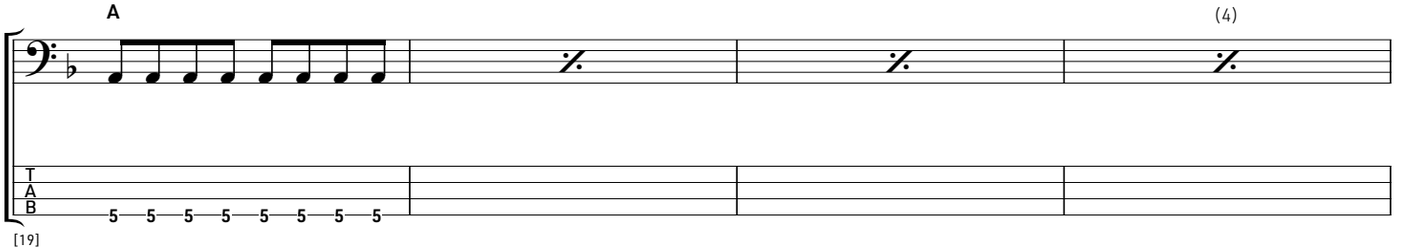

Dm
3 3 3 3 5
5 5 8 12
10
12

[12]

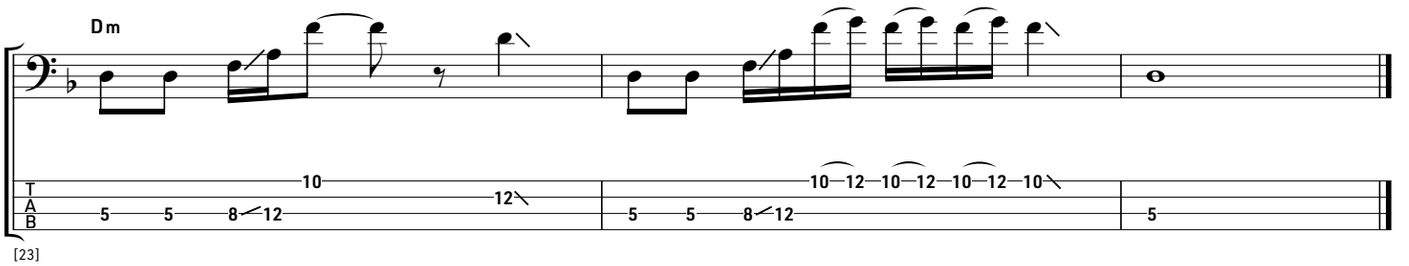
C


Dm
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5 5 5 5 5 5 5 7

[15]


A
5 5 5 5 5 5 5 5
(4)

[19]


Dm
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5 5 8 12
10 12 10 12 10 12 10
5

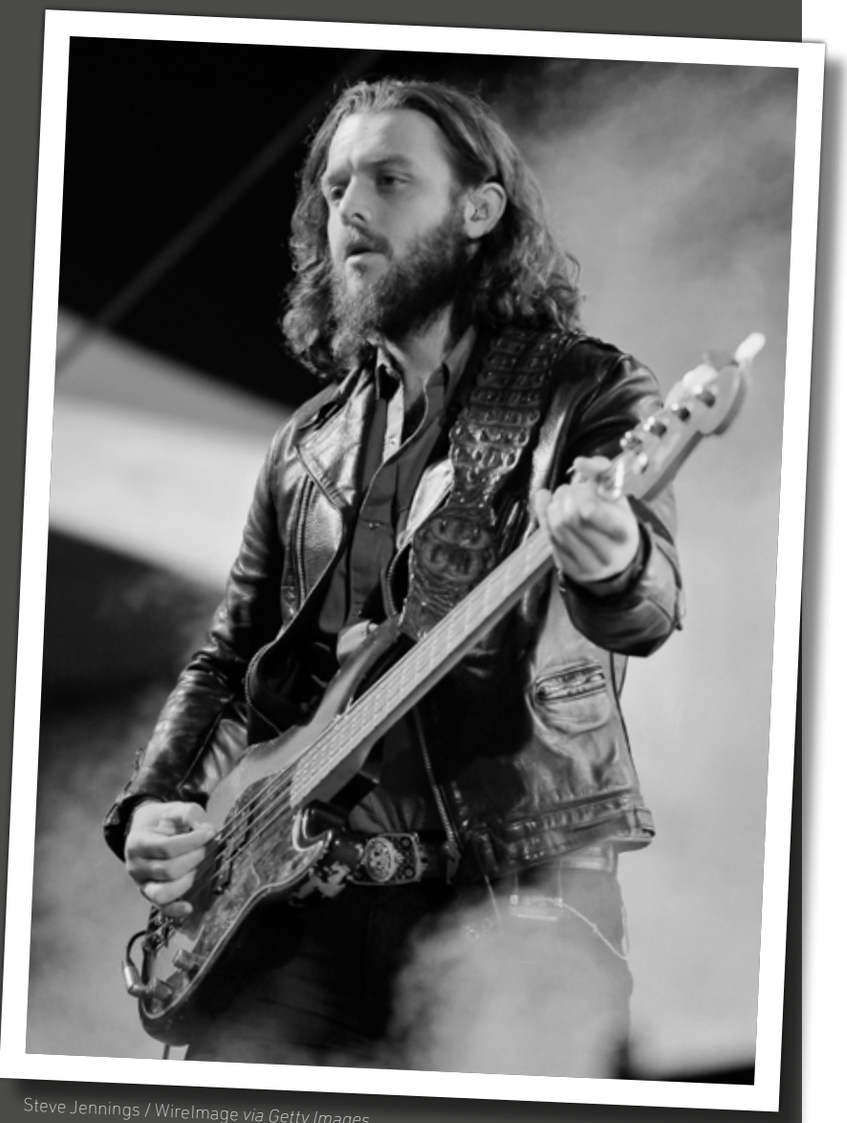
[23]

Do I Wanna Know?

Artist: Arctic Monkeys
Source: *AM* (Album, 2013)
Genre: Indie Rock / Blues Rock

With its instantly recognisable guitar riff, 'Do I Wanna Know' has become one of Arctic Monkeys' most popular songs, accumulating over 2 billion streams on Spotify. Despite the band being a household name in the UK during the late '00s, initially this popularity was not matched in the USA. It wasn't until their 2013 album *AM* that they began to amass a significant fanbase in America, with the record peaking at number 6 on the Billboard Album Charts. *AM* marked a departure from the fast-paced indie rock they were known for towards a slower, more bluesy sound, first glimpsed in their third album *Humbug*. This was partly thanks to the advice of American rock musician and producer Josh Homme (notably known as the frontman from Queens of the Stone Age).

Sheffield-based Arctic Monkeys formed in the early '00s and exploded onto the UK music scene with their debut album that spawned the chart-topping hits 'I Bet That You Look Good on the Dancefloor' and 'When the Sun Goes Down'. The band continued to diversify and change styles throughout their career, from the bluesy music of *AM* to the more piano-heavy songs of *Tranquility Base Hotel & Casino*.



Steve Jennings / Wirelmage *via Getty Images*

Recommended Listening



Arctic Monkeys *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not* (2004)
The album that launched Arctic Monkeys' career was, at the time, the fastest-selling debut album in British history. Stemming from the grittier garage rock sound popular in the '00s, it stands apart from others of that genre thanks to virtuosic playing and pop infused melodies.

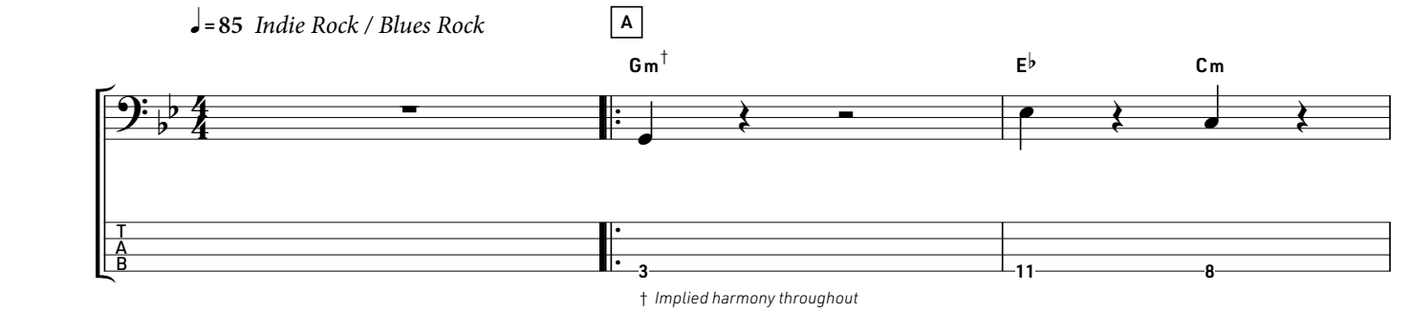


The Black Keys *Brothers* (2010)
In the early 2010s, the Arctic Monkeys were a supporting act for the North American leg of a worldwide tour. *Brothers* is a compendium of blues rock songs, with fuzzy riffs and pulsing drums topped with bluesy vocals in a modern rock package.

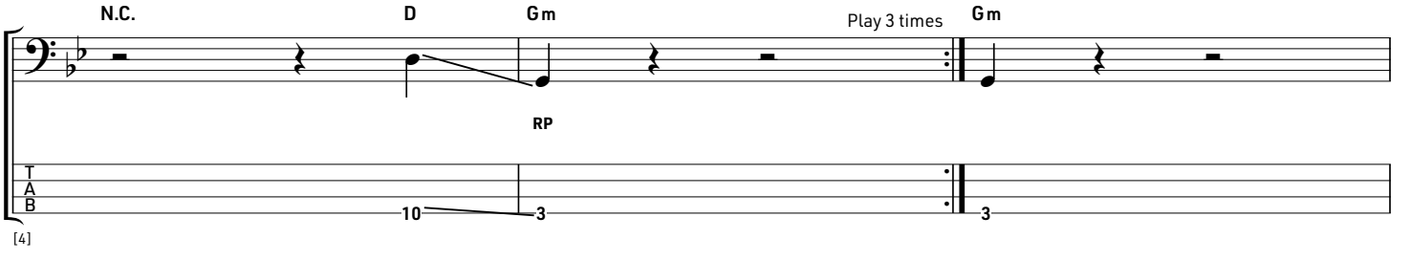
Do I Wanna Know?

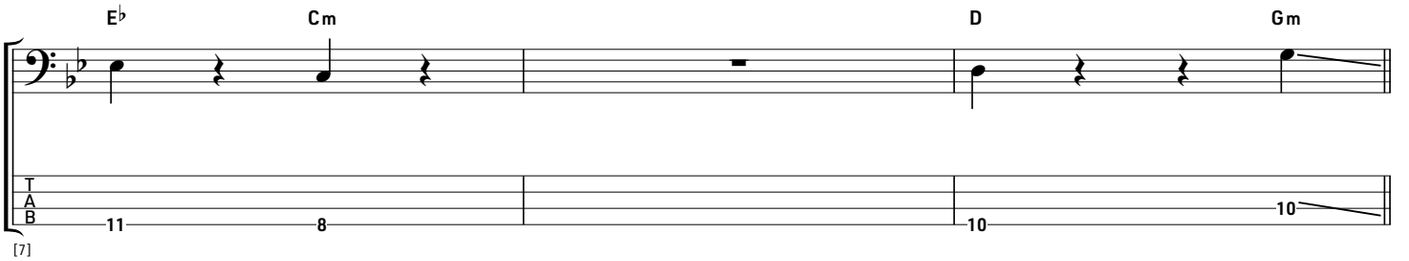
Words and Music by Alex Turner

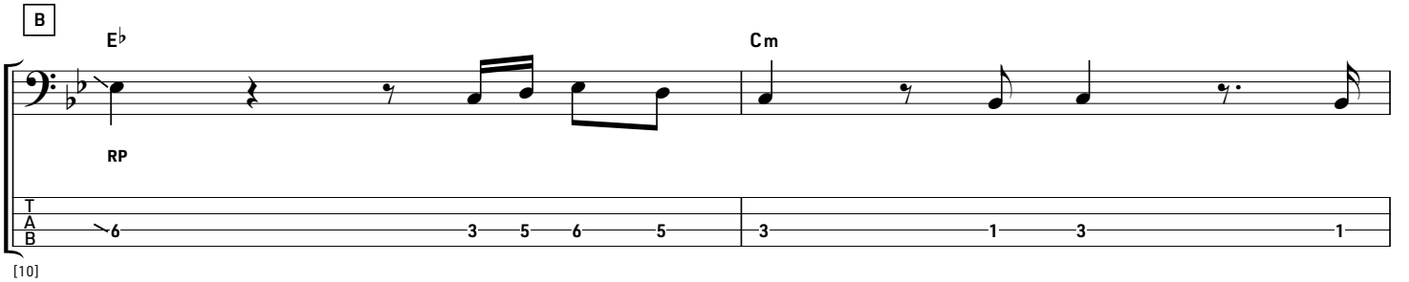
Arctic Monkeys



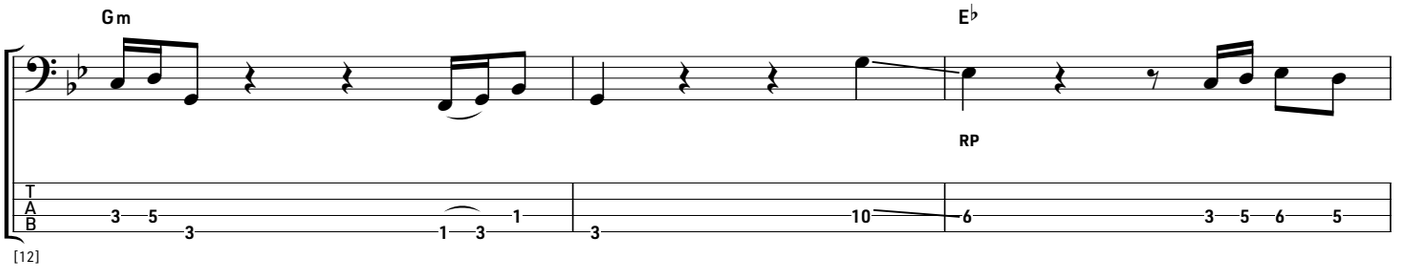
† *Implied harmony throughout*

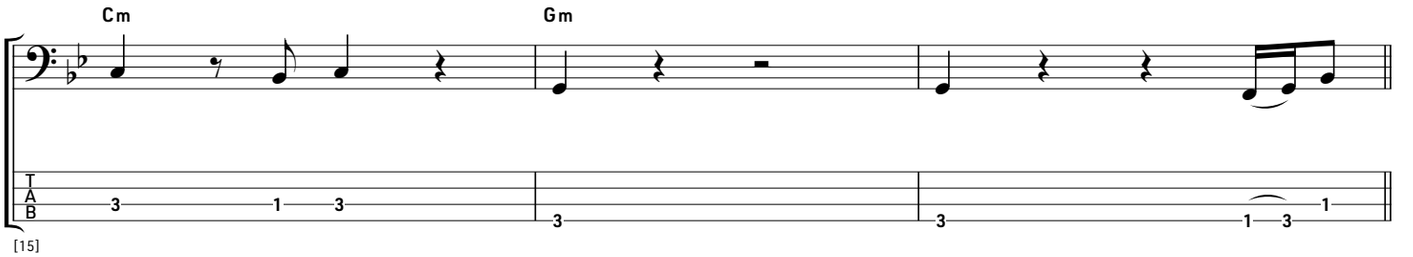


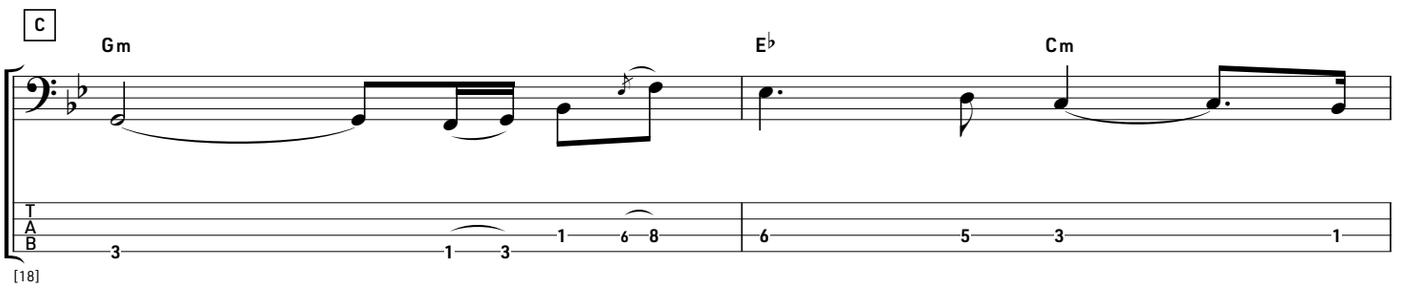


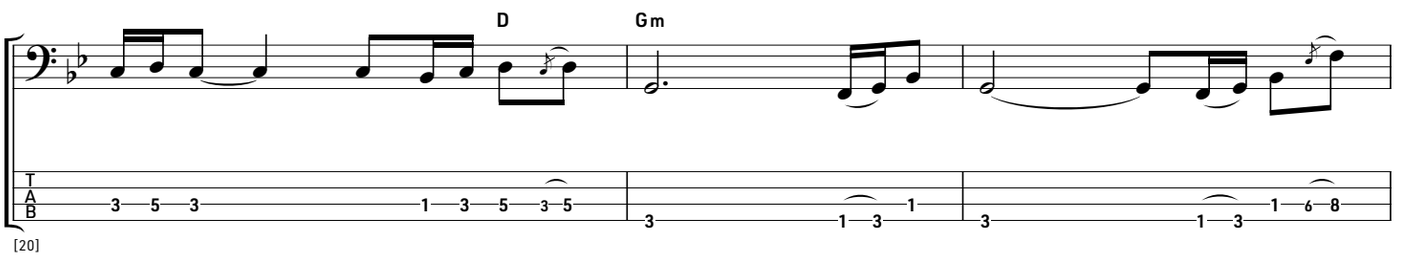


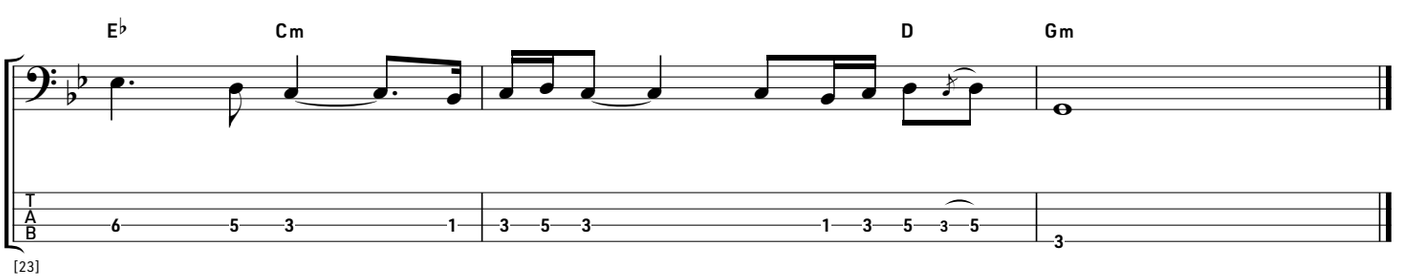
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Gm
E♭
RP
[12]


Cm
Gm
[15]


C
Gm
E♭
Cm
[18]


D
Gm
[20]


E♭
Cm
D
Gm
[23]

rockschool® *Originals*

From the very beginning in 1991, Rockschool has been commissioning world-leading professionals to compose original pieces for our contemporary music grade exams. *Rockschool Originals* provide musicians with a diverse, innovative, and engaging selection of repertoire for use in their exams. These carefully benchmarked works explore a wide variety of genres, and introduce players to stylistic elements and techniques that are typical of that genre.

Headline Act

The 2000s saw a surge in popularity of the indie/alt-rock genre, with bands like Foo Fighters, Kaiser Chiefs and Coldplay playing to huge crowds in stadium venues, leading to their music being aptly dubbed "stadium rock". A popular musical device often used was the 8/8 time feel (3+3+2), usually coupled with crunchy guitar chords and emphatic drum beats, both of which can be heard in 'Headline Act'.



Recommended Listening **Kings of Leon** *Only by the Night* (2008)
Continuing the success of their previous albums, *Only by the Night* saw a further ramp-up in the band's popularity with a slew of anthemic '00s style indie/alt rock songs that are still regularly played and streamed, including the indie ballad 'Use Somebody' and 'Sex on Fire'.

Elevator Shoes

'Elevator Shoes' takes inspiration from the blues-rock/soul style, made popular by the likes of Eric Clapton, Peter Frampton and Steely Dan, to name a few. This music is centred around the lead guitar and many of the most iconic guitar solos come from this genre. It utilises more complex harmonies than traditional blues, borrowing extended chord voicings more commonly found in soul and jazz.



Recommended Listening **B.B. King** *Completely Well* (1969)
The soul blues sounds of B.B. King in the '60s and '70s were highly regarded and part of what made him so influential, with his emotive singing and expressive guitar phrasing. *Completely Well* includes 'The Thrill Is Gone', a blues standard that was made a hit thanks to B.B. King's popular rendition.

Surfer Ticket
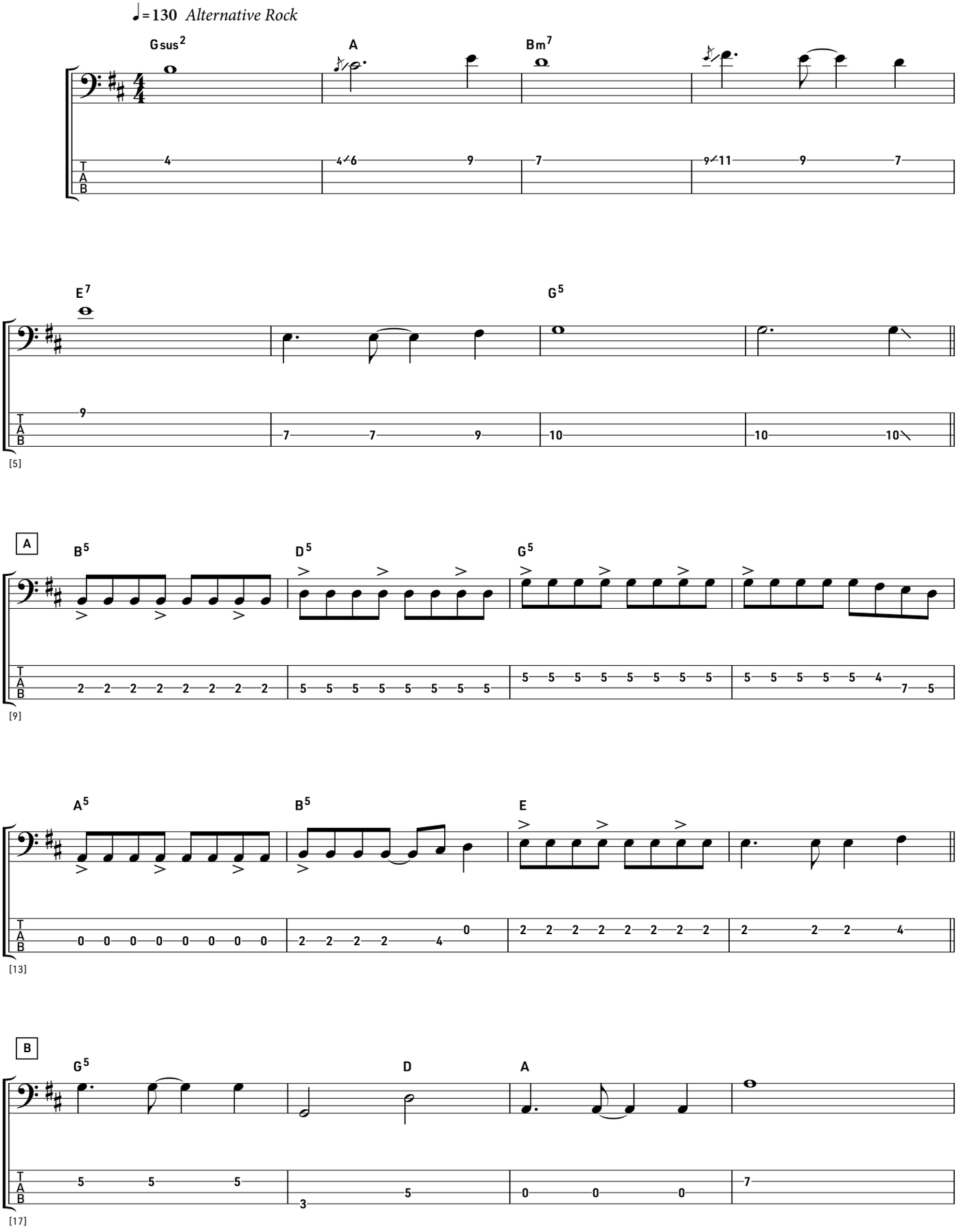
A genre that evolved out of the ska and rocksteady movements of the 1950s, reggae became the defining sound of Jamaica, becoming immediately recognisable by the accented "stabs" on beats 2 and 4. Artists such as Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff helped its popularity spread across the world. 'Surfer Ticket' evokes their signature laid-back sound and utilises several well-established stylistic features in all three instruments.



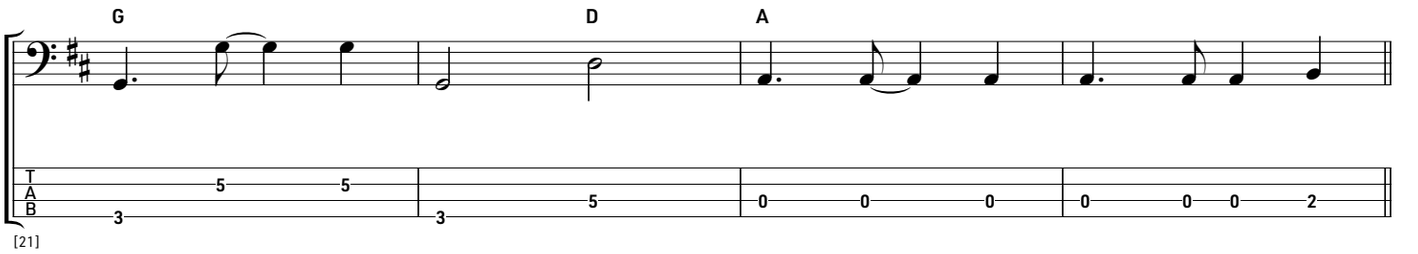
Recommended Listening **Bob Marley and the Wailers**
Legend: The Best of Bob Marley and the Wailers (1984)
Look no further than this compilation for a concise chronology of highlight songs from reggae legend Bob Marley's career as part of The Wailers. Includes 'Redemption', 'I Shot the Sheriff', 'Three Little Birds' and many more!

Headline Act

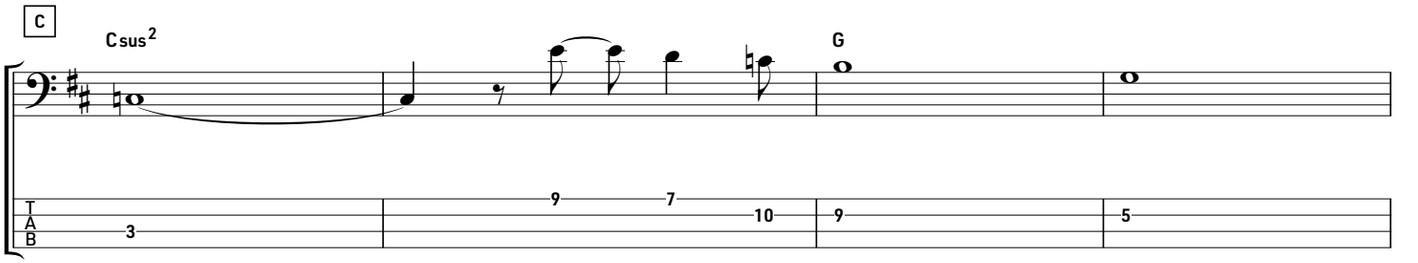
Rockschool Original



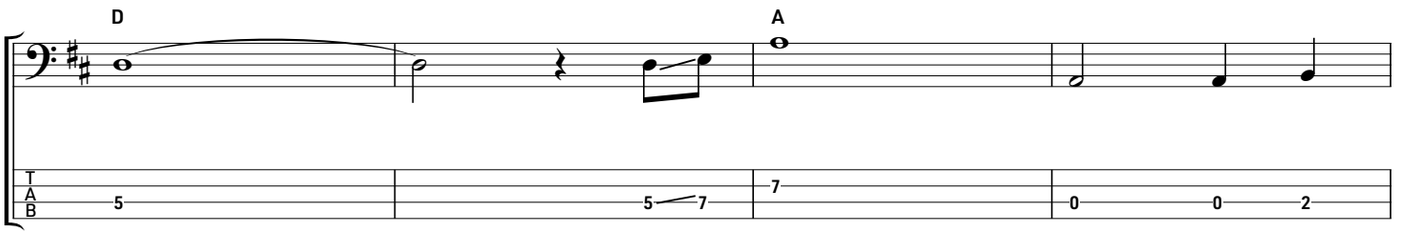
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G
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T
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3 5
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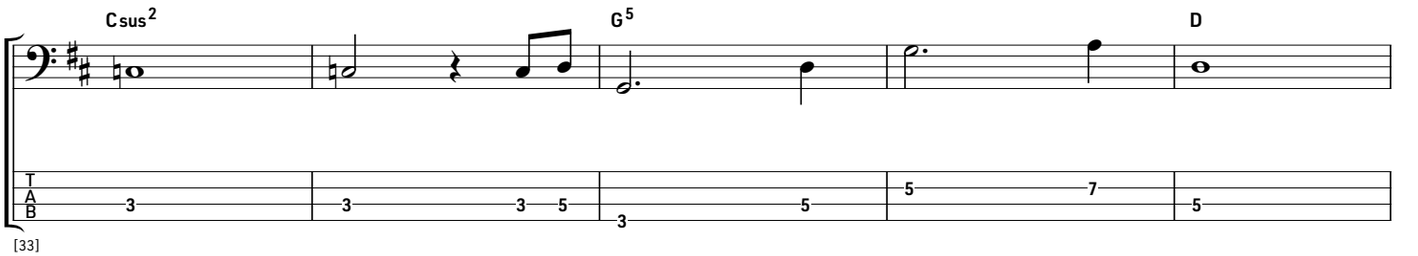
[21]


C
Csus2
G
T
A
B
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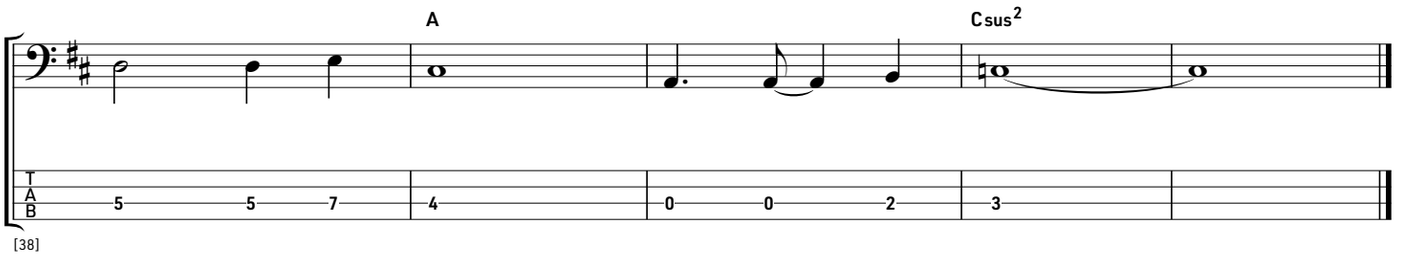
[25]


D
A
T
A
B
5 5 7 7 0 0 2

[29]
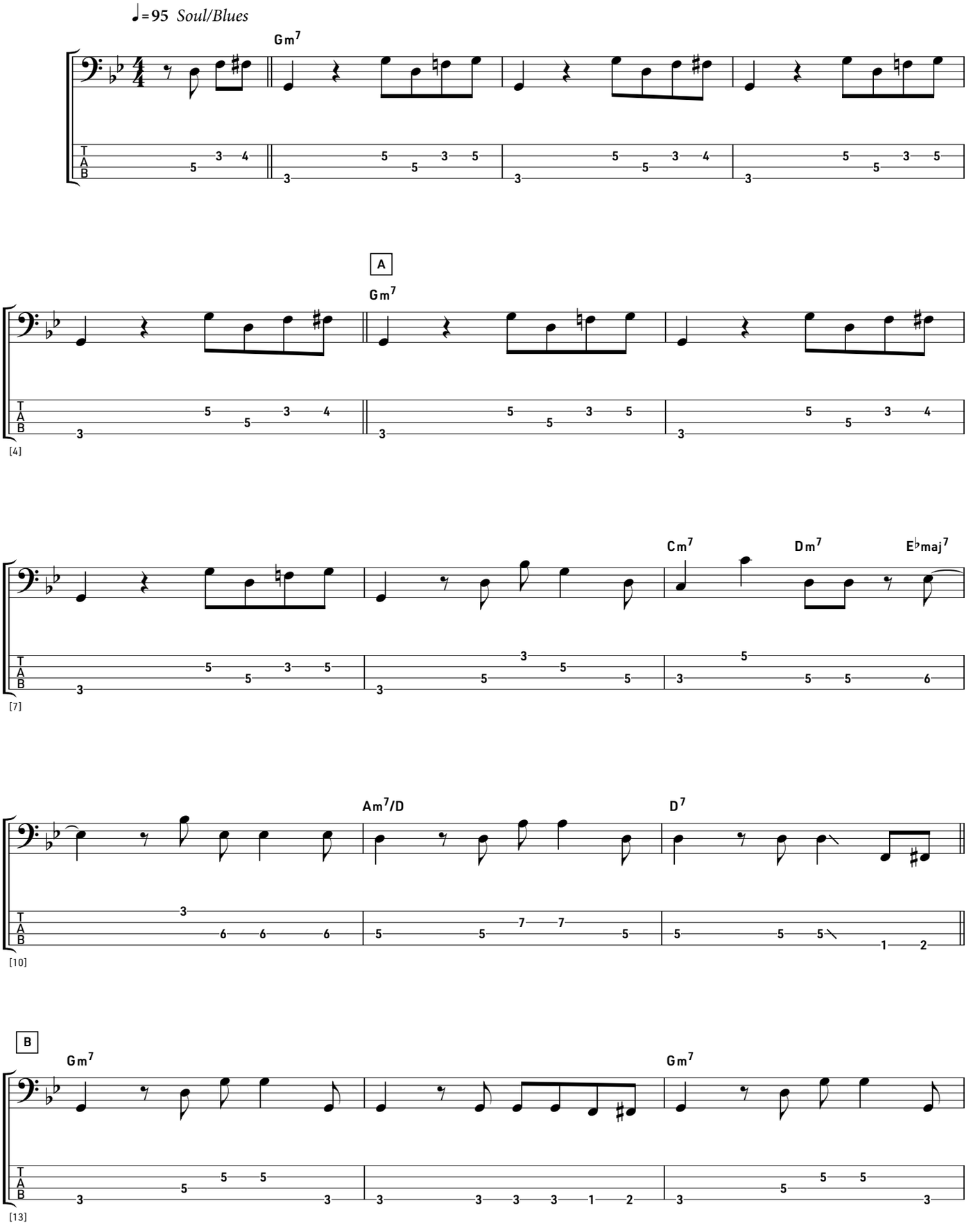

Csus2
G5
D
T
A
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3 3 3 5 3 5 5 7 5

[33]
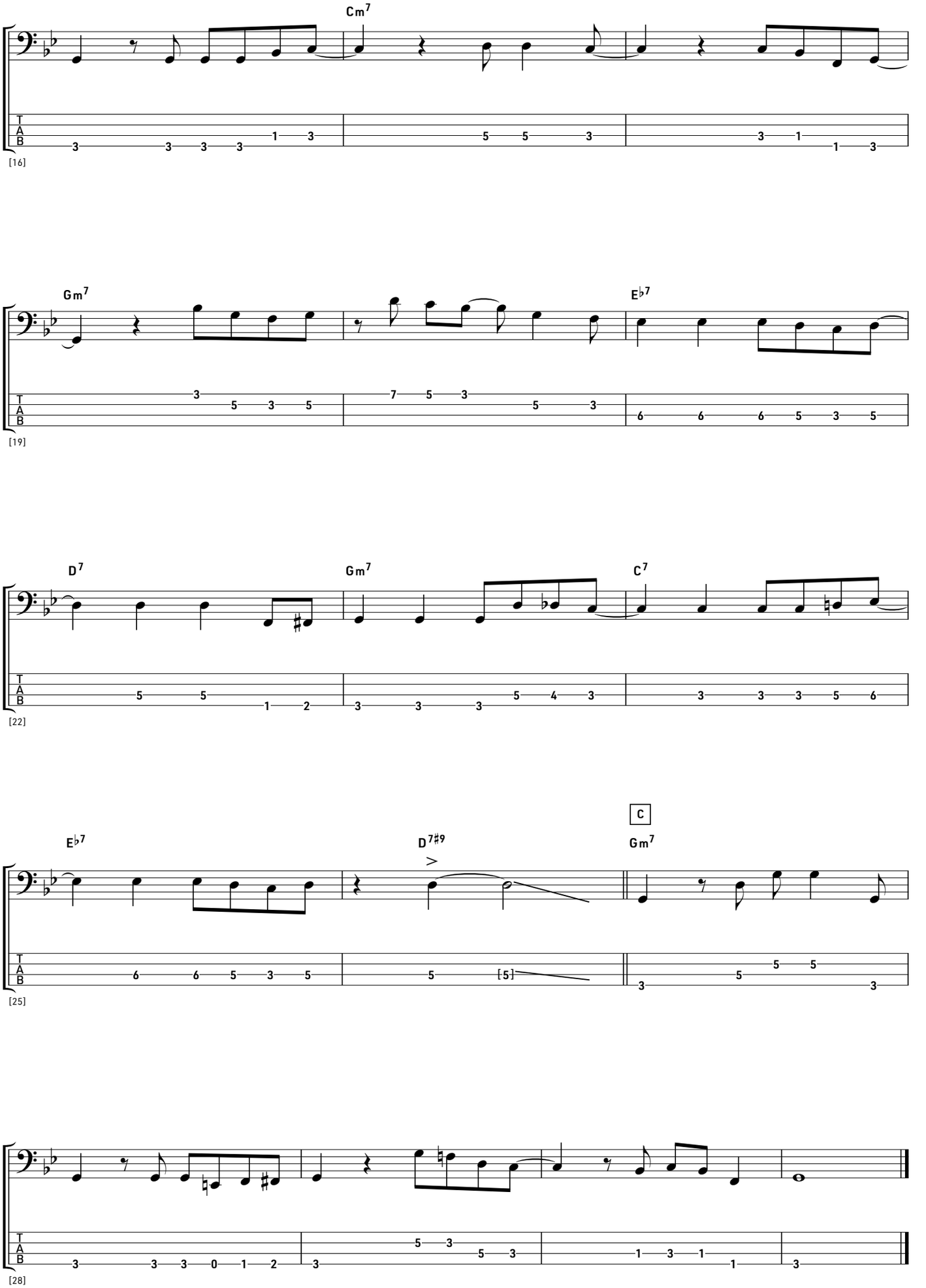

A
Csus2
T
A
B
5 5 7 4 0 0 2 3

[38]

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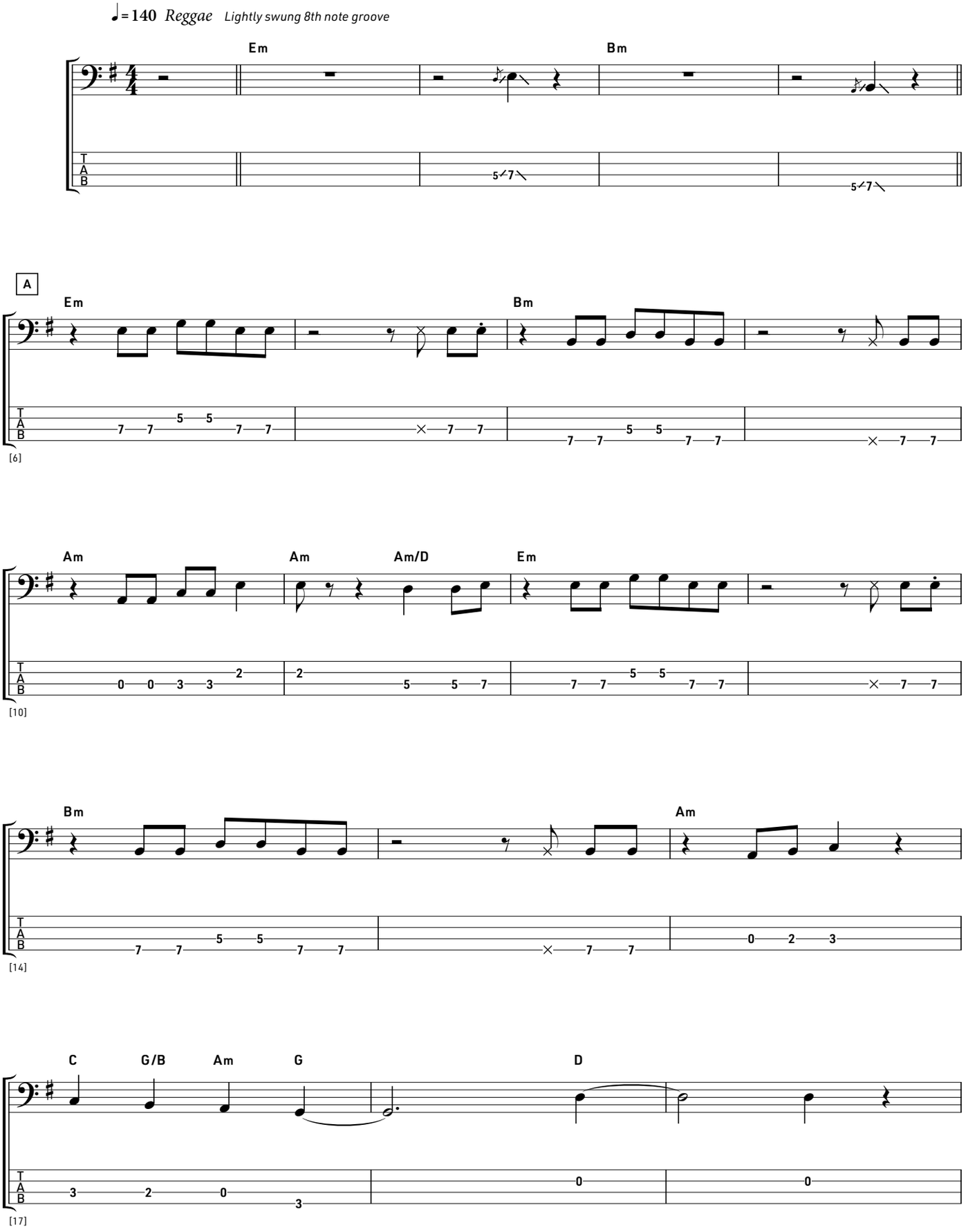


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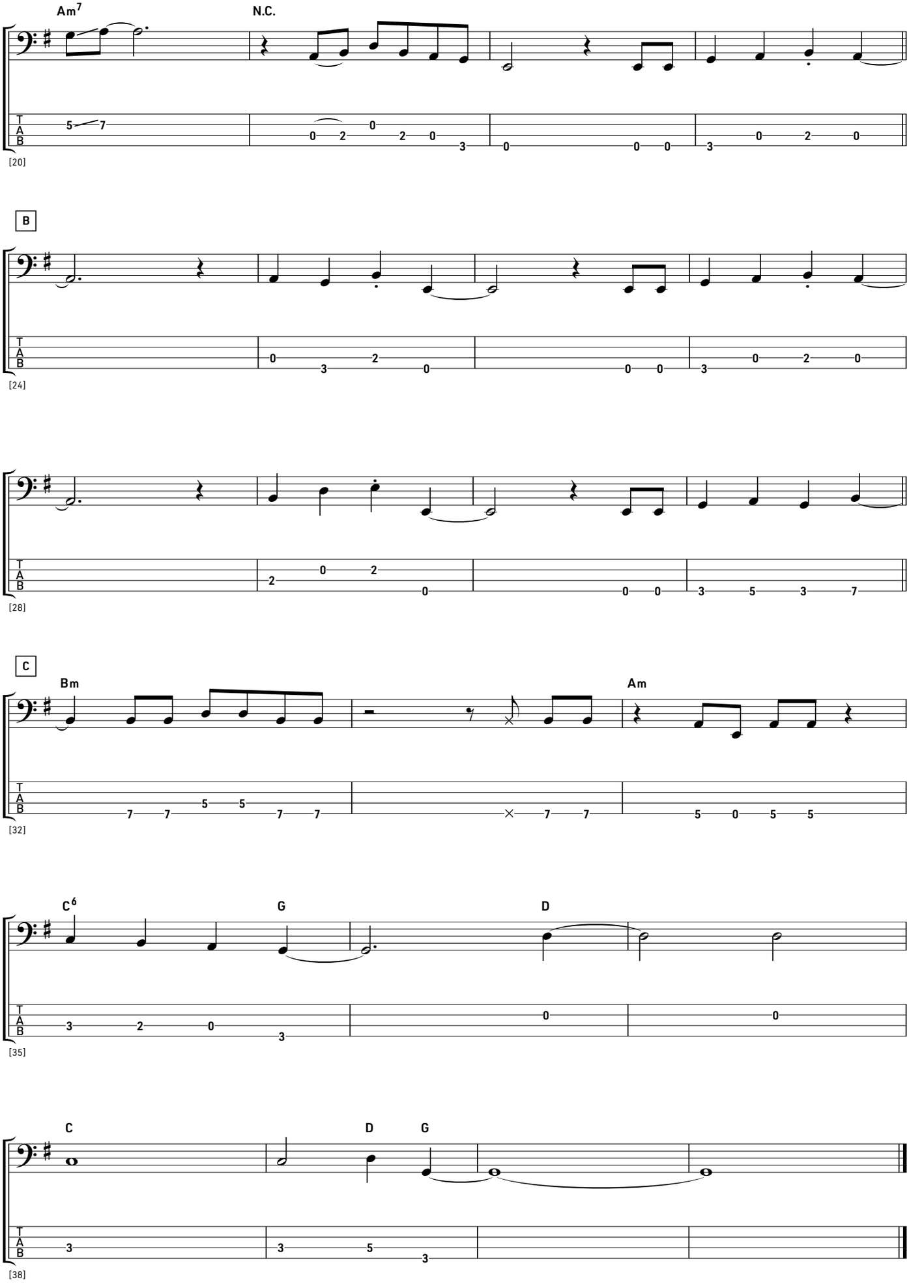

Cm7
[16]
Gm7
E♭7
[19]
D7
Gm7
C7
[22]
E♭7
D7♯9
C
Gm7
[25]
[28]

Surfer Ticket

Rockschool Original



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Am7
N.C.
[20]
B
[24]
[28]
C
Bm
Am
[32]
C6
G
D
[35]
C
D
G
[38]

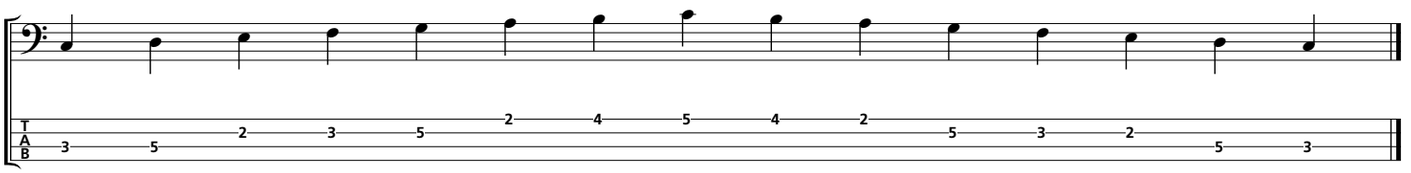
Technical Exercises

In this section the examiner will ask you to play a selection of exercises drawn from each of the three groups shown below. Groups A and B contain examples of the scales and arpeggios you can use when playing the pieces. In Group C you will be asked to prepare the bassline 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.

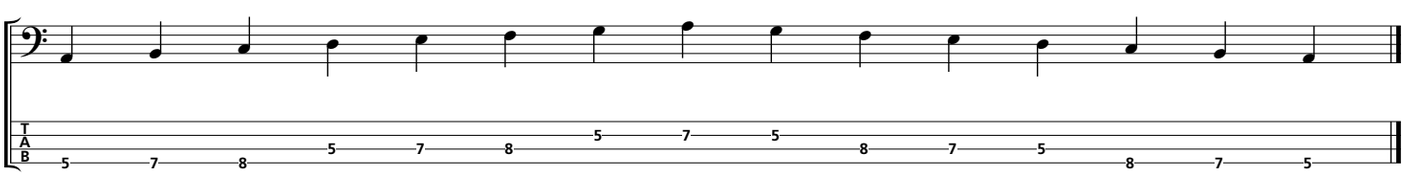
Groups A and B should be prepared on the starting notes of A, G and C. Before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test. The tempo is ♩ = 80.

Group A: Scales

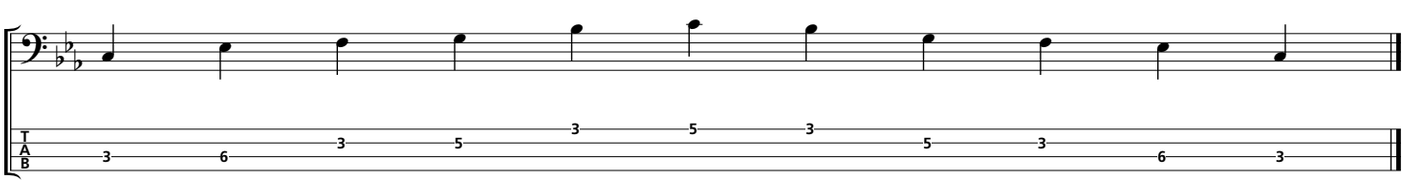
1. Major scale (C major scale shown)



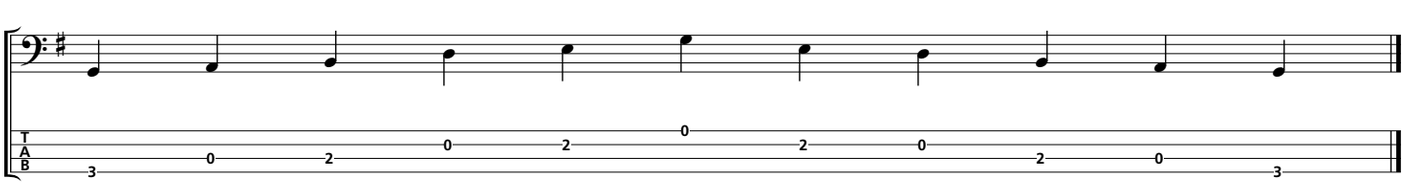
2. Natural minor scale (A natural minor scale shown)



3. Minor pentatonic scale (C minor pentatonic scale shown)



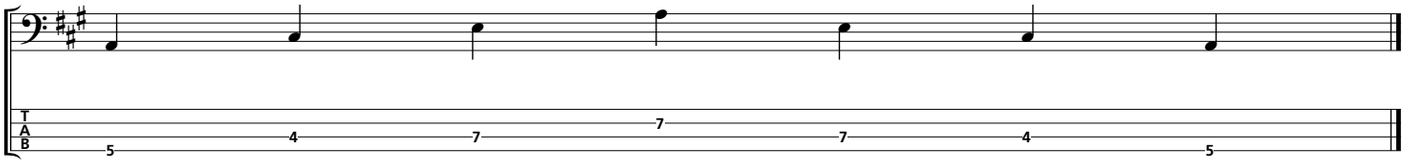
4. Major pentatonic scale (G major pentatonic scale shown)



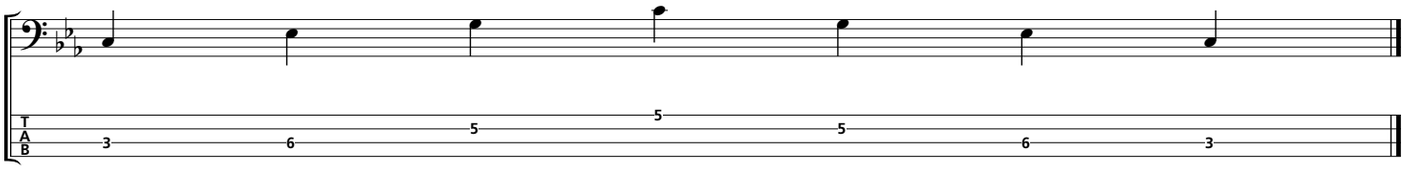
Group B: Arpeggios

One octave and should be played both ascending and descending

1. Major arpeggio (A major arpeggio shown)

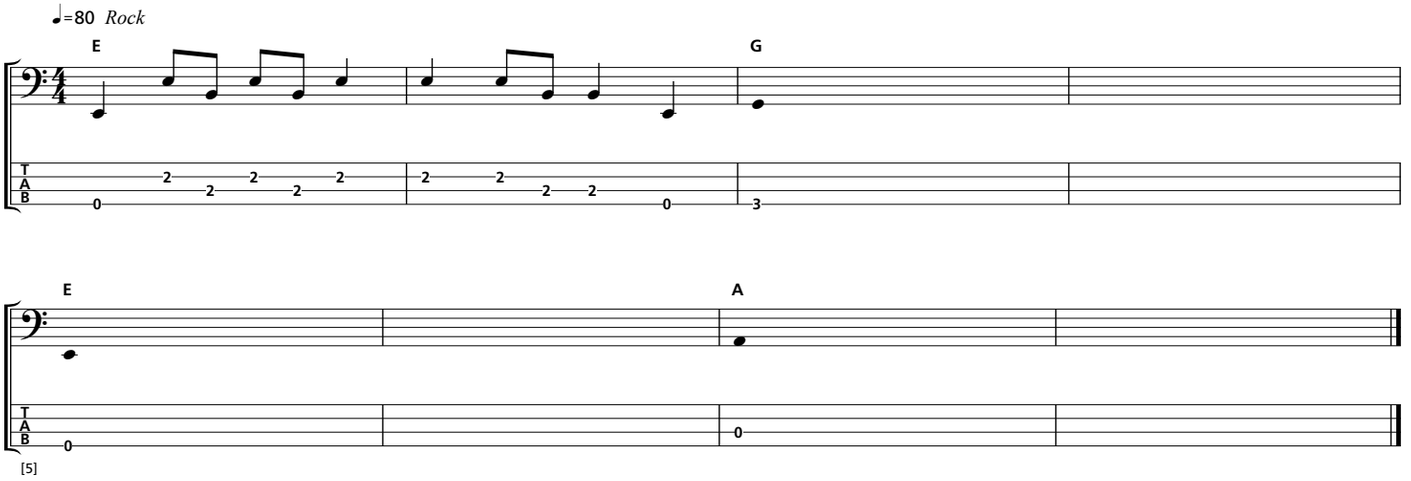


2. Minor arpeggio (C minor arpeggio shown)



Group C: Riff
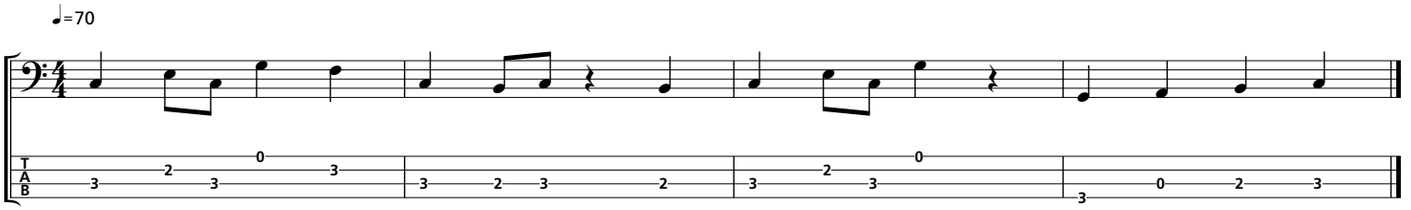
In the exam you will be asked to play the following riff to a backing track. The riff shown in bars 1 and 2 should be played in the same shape in bars 3–8. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in bars 3, 5 and 7. The tempo is ♩ = 80.



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.

You will be asked to prepare a Sight Reading test which will be given to you by the examiner. The test is a four bar melody in the key of C major or G major. The examiner will allow you 90 seconds to prepare it and will set the tempo for you. The tempo is ♩ = 70.



Improvisation & Interpretation

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.

You will be asked to play an improvised bassline to a backing track of four bars in the keys of either G major or E minor. You have 30 seconds to prepare 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.



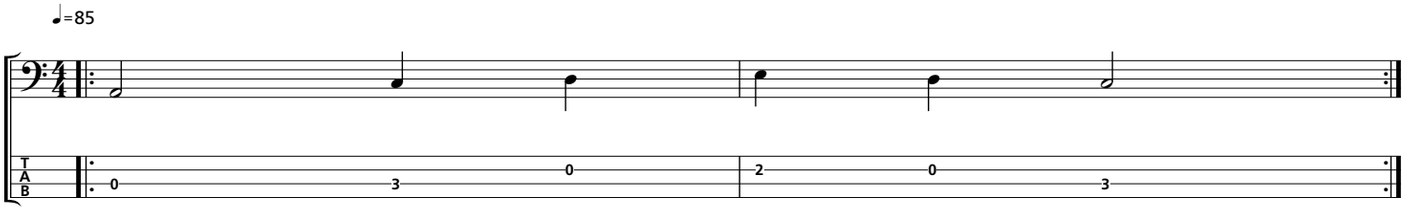
Ear Tests

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 A 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.

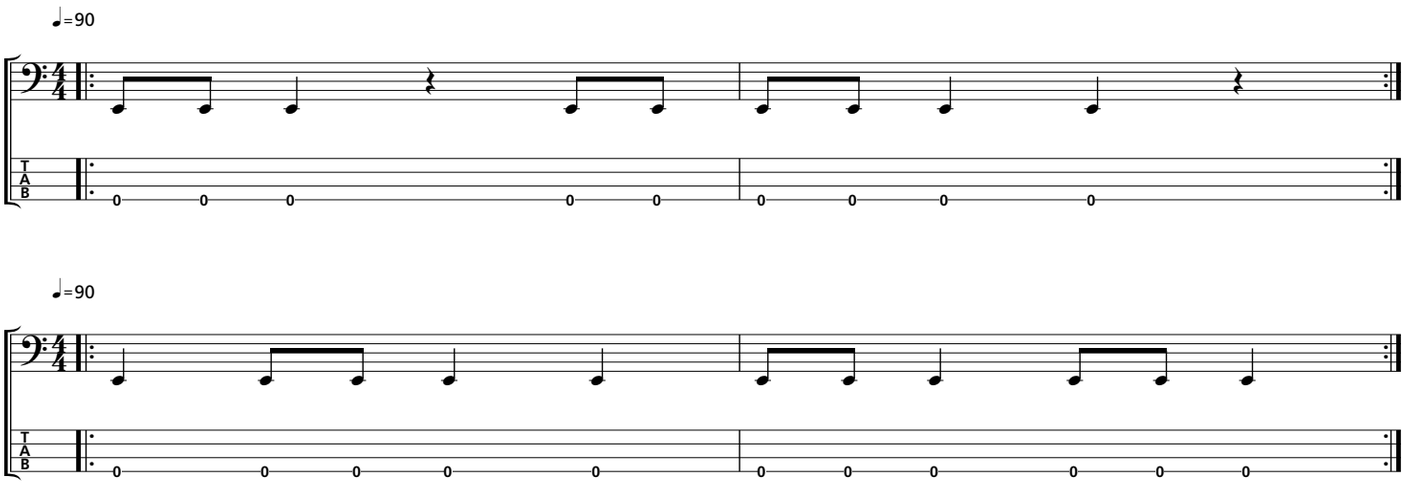
Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the melody to the drum backing. The tempo is ♩ = 85.



Test 2: Rhythmic Recall

The examiner will play you a two bar rhythm played to a drum backing on the 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.



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 your instrument.

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 2, you will be asked:

- The pitch names of notes
- The meaning of the time signature marking
- Whole, half, quarter, eighth note and 16th note values
- Rest values
- Construction of a major or minor chord

Instrument Knowledge

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

In Grade 2 you will be asked to identify:

- The following parts of your bass – neck, fretboard, body, tuning-pegs, nut, pick-ups, scratch plate, jack socket and bridge
- The location of the volume and tone controls on your bass
- Names of all open strings

Further Information

Tips on how to approach this part of this exam can be found in the *Syllabus Guide* for bass on the Rockschool website: ***www.rslawards.com***

Marking Schemes

Grade Exams | 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
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%+**

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%+**

Entering RSL Exams

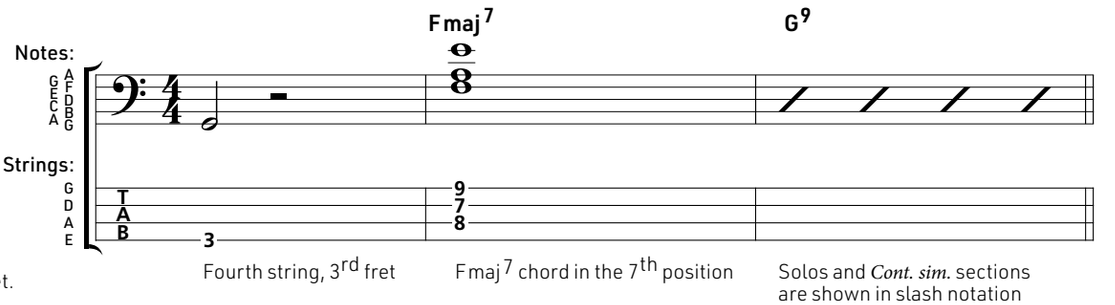
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- All candidates should ensure they bring their own grade syllabus book to the exam or have proof of digital purchase ready to show the examiner.
- All Grade 6–8 candidates must ensure that they bring valid photo ID to their exam.

Bass 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.



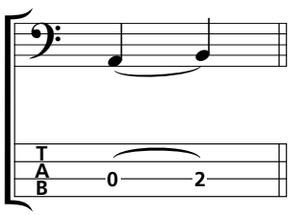
Fourth string, 3rd fret

Fmaj7 chord in the 7th position

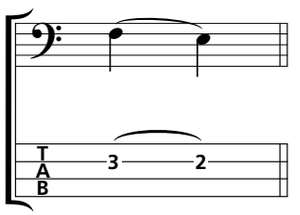
Solos and *Cont. sim.* sections are shown in slash notation

Definitions For Special Bass Guitar Notation

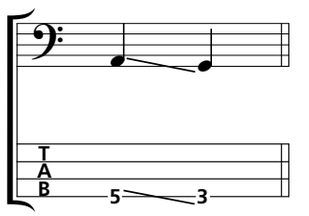
HAMMER-ON: Pick the lower note then sound the higher note by fretting it without picking.



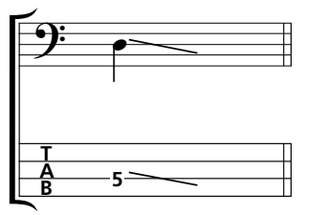
PULL-OFF: Pick the higher note then sound the lower note by lifting your finger without picking.



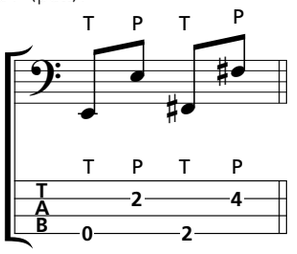
SLIDE: Pick the first note and slide to the next. If the line connects (as below) the second note is ***not*** repicked ***unless*** indicated by **RP**.



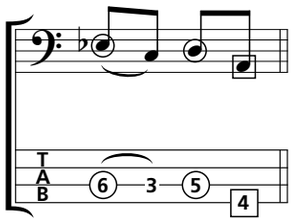
GLISSANDO: Slide off of a note at the end of its rhythmic value. The note that follows is repicked.



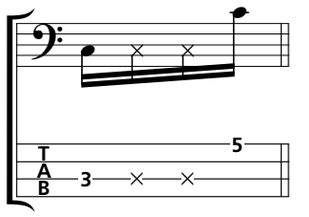
SLAP STYLE: Slap bass technique is indicated through the letters T (thumb) and P (pull).



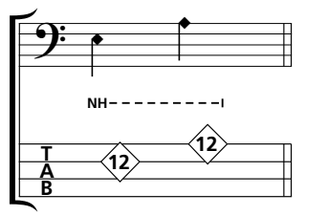
TAPPING: Sound note by tapping the string – circles denote a picking hand tap, squares a fretting hand tap.



DEAD (GHOST) NOTES: Pick the string while the note is muted by your fretting hand.



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





(accent) ▪ Accentuate note (play it louder).



(staccato) ▪ Shorten time value of note.



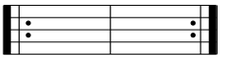
▪ Fermata (Pause)

D.𝄋. al Coda

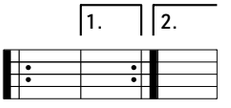
▪ Go back to the sign (𝄋), then play until the bar marked **To Coda** ⊖ then skip to the section marked ⊖ **Coda**.

D.C. al Fine

▪ Go back to the beginning of the song and play until the bar marked ***Fine*** (end).



▪ Repeat the bars between the repeat signs.



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

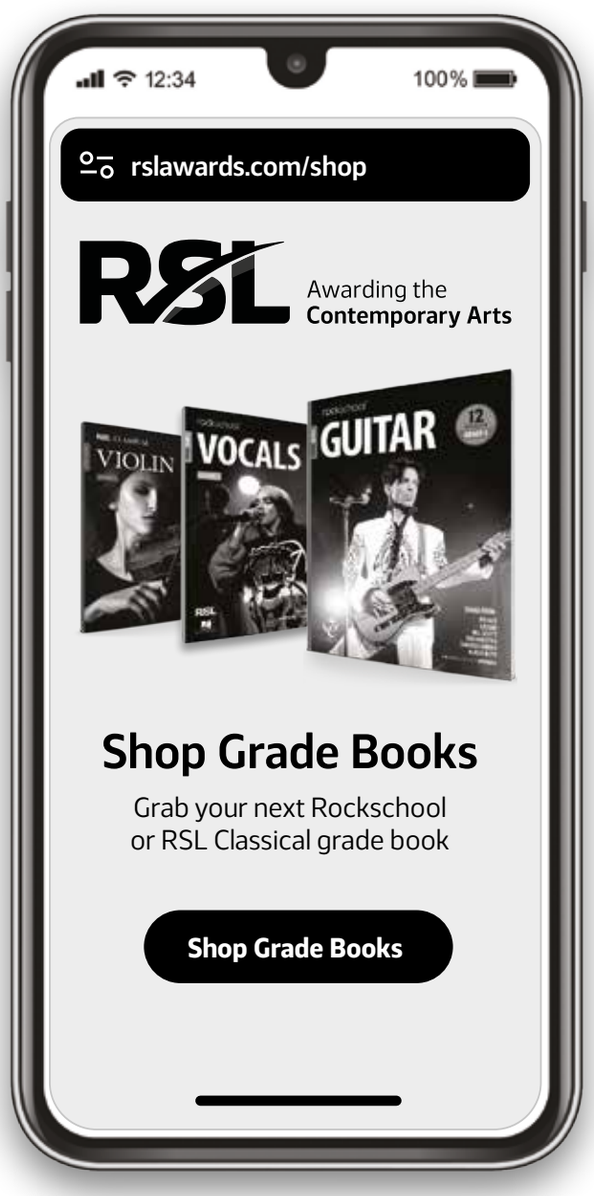


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BASS



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