rockschool®

BASS DEBUT

BASS

12 TRACKS FOR DEBUT



THE QUEEN'S AWARDS FOR ENTERPRISE 2018

SONGS FROM

DUA LIPA
BB KING
ED SHEERAN
RAY CHARLES
BILL WITHERS
BOOKER T. & THE MGs
+6 rockschool® ORIGINALS

rockschool®

Debut Bass

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

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Acknowledgements

Published by Rockschool Ltd. © 2012 & 2018
Catalogue Number: RSK200051

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Welcome to Rockschool Debut Bass

Welcome to Debut Bass

Welcome to the **Rockschool 2018 Bass syllabus**. This book and the accompanying downloadable audio contain everything you need to play bass at this grade. In the book you will find the exam scores in both standard bass notation and TAB, as well as Fact Files and Walkthroughs for each song.

The downloadable audio includes:

- full stereo mixes of 6 Rockschool compositions and 6 arrangements of classic and contemporary hits
- backing tracks (minus the assessed bass part)
- all necessary audio for the complete range of supporting tests

Bass Exams

For 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 tests. You 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: a Sight Reading test (10%), a pair of instrument specific Ear Tests (10%) and finally you will be asked five General Musicianship Questions (5%). The pass mark is 60%.

- **Performance Certificate:** in a Performance Certificate you play five pieces. Up to three of these can be Free Choice Pieces. Each song is marked out of 20 and the pass mark is 60%.

Book Contents

The book is divided into a number of sections:

- **Exam Pieces:** in this book you will find six specially commissioned pieces of Debut standard. Each of these is preceded by a ***Fact File***, and each single Fact File contains a summary of the song, its style, tempo, key and technical features, along with a list of the musicians who played on it. The song itself is printed on one page and immediately after each song is a ***Walkthrough***. This covers the whole song from a performance perspective, focusing on the technical issues you will encounter along the way. Each song comes with a full mix version and a backing track. Both versions have spoken count-ins at the beginning. Please note that any solos played on the full mix versions are indicative only.

- **Technical Exercises:** you should prepare the exercises set in this grade as indicated. There is also a Riff test that should be practised and played to the backing track.

- **Supporting Tests and General Musicianship Questions:** in Debut Bass there are two supporting tests – Sight Reading and Ear Tests, and a set of General Musicianship Questions (GMQs) asked at the end of each exam. Examples of the types of tests likely to appear in the exam are printed in this book. Additional examples of both types of test and the GMQs can be found in the Rockschool *Bass Companion Guide*.

- **Additional Information:** finally, you will find information on exam procedures, marking schemes, and the full notation and backing track of a piece from the next grade as a taster.

Audio

Audio is provided in the form of backing tracks (minus bass) and examples (including bass) for the pieces and the supporting tests where applicable. Audio files are supplied in MP3 format to enable playback on a wide range of compatible devices. Digital versions of the book include audio files in the download. Download audio for hardcopy books from RSL directly at *www.rslawards.com/downloads* — you will need to input this code when prompted: **D2KLB348PT**

Syllabus Guide

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

Errata

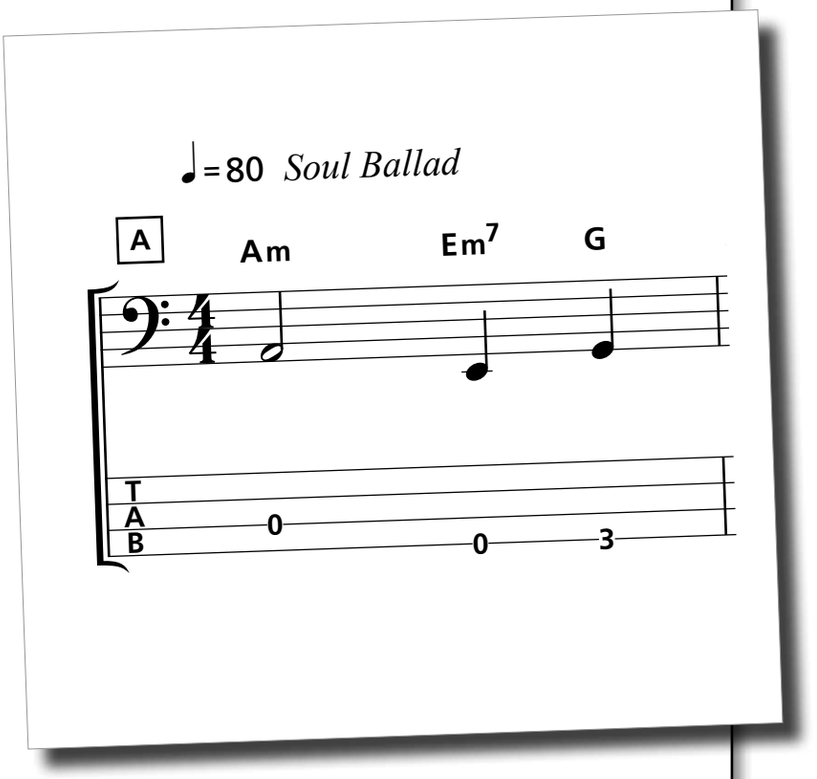
Updates and changes to Rockschool books are documented online. Candidates should check for errata periodically while studying for any examination. Further details can be found on the RSL website: *www.rslawards.com/errata*

Bill Withers

SONG TITLE: AIN'T NO SUNSHINE
ALBUM: JUST AS I AM
LABEL: SUSSEX
GENRE: SOUL/R&B

WRITTEN BY: BILL WITHERS
PRODUCED BY: BOOKER T. JONES

UK CHART PEAK: 40



BACKGROUND INFO

'Ain't No Sunshine' is regarded by many as a songwriting masterpiece. It was released in 1971 and quickly became a classic all over the world. It reached the number 3 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 and has been covered by many artists since.

Withers wrote the song after watching the movie *The Days of Wine and Roses*. The lyrics are a metaphor for weakness and strength and are vaguely biographical. He was 31 years old when the song was released and at the time he was working in the assembly line of a factory making toilet seats for Boeing 747s. It is said that the record company presented Withers with a golden toilet seat when the record went gold, it was the first of his three gold records in the US. 'Ain't No Sunshine' was the B side to a single called 'Harlem' but DJs played 'Ain't No Sunshine' instead. The record was produced by Booker T. Jones and he used his band, the MG's, to back Withers. The band was by then a seasoned outfit that had played on countless records on the Stax label – amongst them was '(Sittin' On) The Dock The Bay' by Otis Redding.
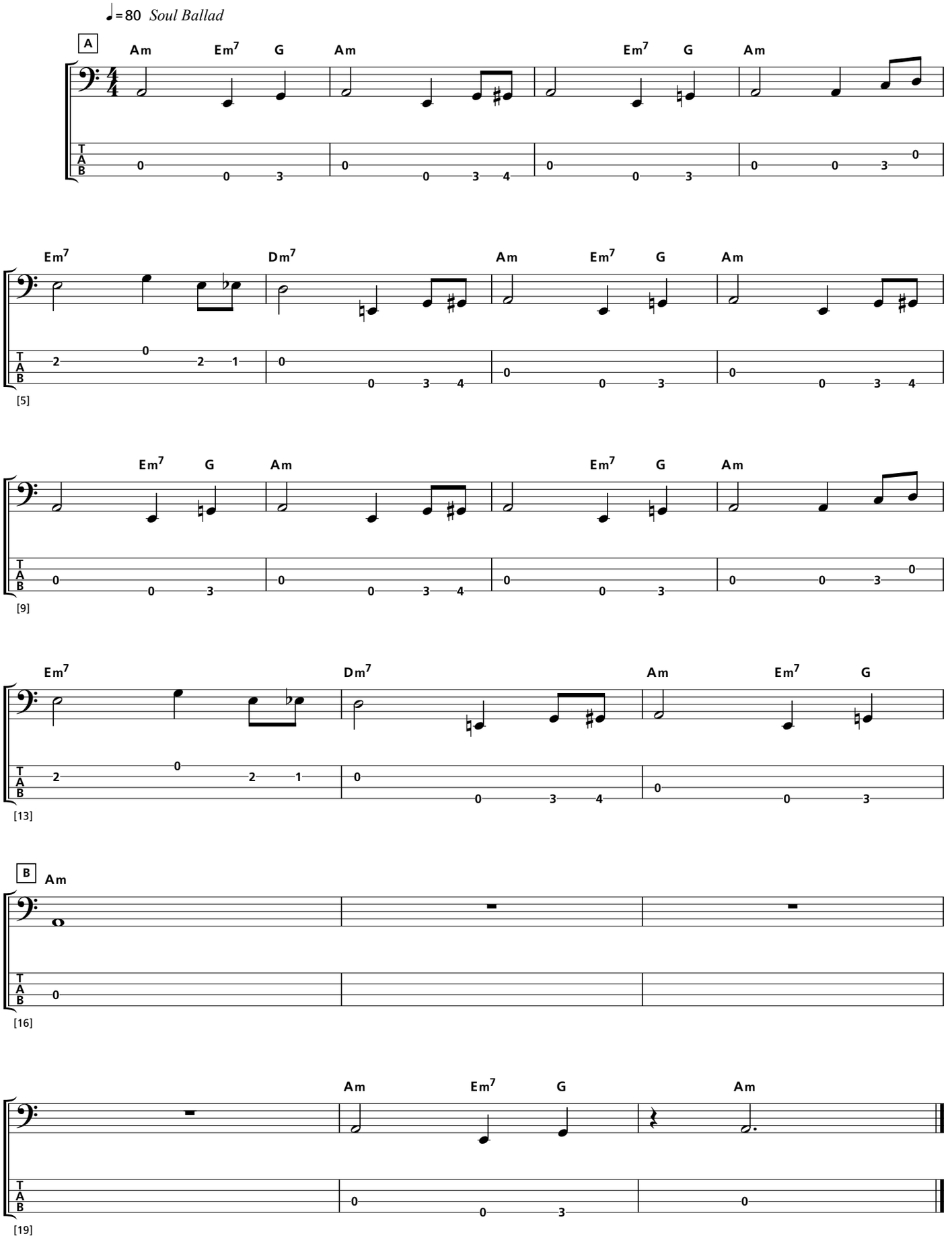
'Ain't No Sunshine' won a Grammy Award at the 14th annual ceremony in 1972. Withers followed its success with the massive hits 'Lean On Me' and 'Use Me'.

In 1975, after signing with Columbia Records and returning to recording after a hiatus produced by contractual complications, he recorded three successful albums. *Menagerie*, from 1977, contained the now classic 'A Lovely Day'. Further contractual complications followed but Withers managed to continue collaborating with other musicians and recorded the classic 'Just The Two Of Us' with saxophonist Grover Washington Jr., included on the best-selling *Winelight*, and 'In The Name Of Love' with percussionist Ralph MacDonald. He also penned the successful 'Grandma's Hands'.

The myriad legal complications he faced as a result of his record contracts led Withers to decide he was going to retire form the music industry, including live performance, in the mid 1980s. Although his music continues to gain attention in various forms, he has expressed comfort with his decision and says his relatively late arrival in the business equipped him to deal with it with no regrets.

Ain't No Sunshine

Bill Withers
Words & Music by Bill Withers



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Walkthrough

A Section (Bars 1–15)

The bass enters after the melody anacrusis (pick up) that opens the tune. The bassline is essentially made of root notes that anchor the tune throughout. This is a tried and tested approach that provides simple and unobtrusive harmonic support and musical gravitas. Root notes play a crucial role because they provide a clear tonal centre and give chords their basic name. The chord progression is primarily diatonic (within the key) and for the most part is made of a two-bar pattern.

Bars 1–4 | *Basic pattern*

This basic pattern will require you to implement two things at the same time, namely counting and controlling open strings. The drum pattern will help with feeling the pulse and making sure the bass notes on beats 1 and 3 of every bar connect smoothly with the bass drum. To mute the open strings, so they don't ring for more than they should or over other string or notes being played, place your fretting hand gently over them. Note length and evenness of sound are very important in this context. The basic rhythmic figure in bar 1 will recur throughout the arrangement with the addition of eighth-notes on beat 4 from bar 2.

Bars 2–15 | *Eighth notes and chromaticism*

The addition of eighth-notes in beat 4 of bar 2 and onwards provides a good musical lead into the tonic (I), dominant (V) and subdominant (IV) chords. The use of chromaticism (notes outside the key) in faster subdivisions than the main pattern provides an effective connecting device often utilised on bass to add a smooth link between chords and avoid big interval leaps. Note how the chromatic notes utilised are either a tone or semitone above or below the target note. It is important to play these notes evenly and without rushing. This is a common tendency when faster subdivisions appear in a line.

Bar 13 | *Descending chromaticism*

In bar 13 the chromatic passage on beat 4 leads descendingly onto the target note D, on beat 1 of bar 14. This establishes a difference with all the other bars on which this device is used ascendingly. Either way musical interest and greater 'connectivity' is achieved.

B Section (Bars 16–21)

Bar 16–19 | *Counting and listening*

An effective way to negotiate this section, consisting of a whole-note on bar 16 and three bars of silence on 17,18 and 19, is to listen to the guitar melody as a guide and count beats in every bar. Either or both might work. This will help make your re-entry in bar 20 smooth and accurate.

Overall approach

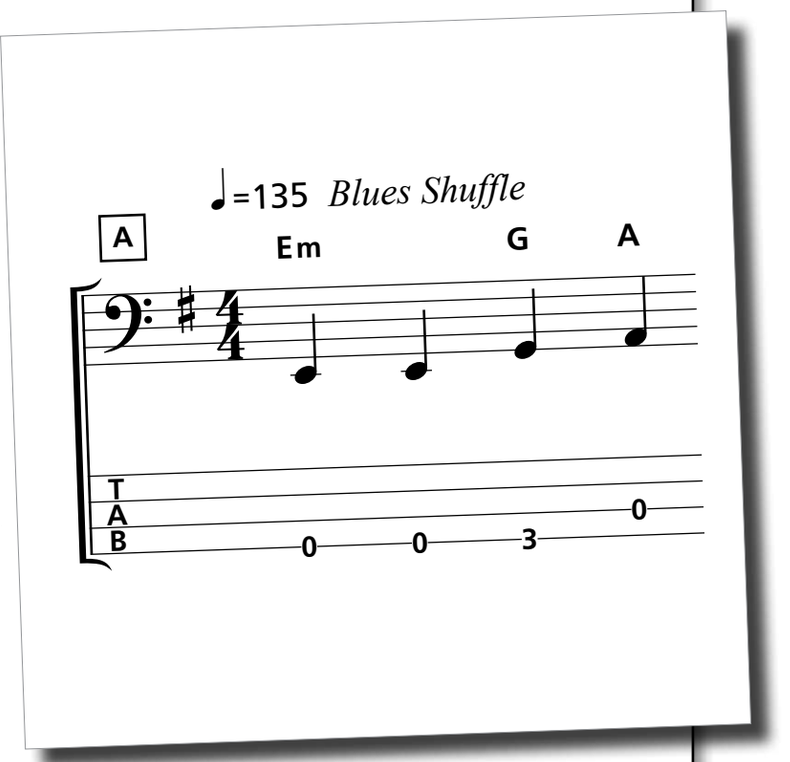
Once you have experimented with all of the bassline's intricacies separately it would be useful to practice delivering it with the overall musical arc in mind. Try performing it evenly and subtly in order to provide support for the harmony and expressive melody.

Booker T and the MGs

SONG TITLE: GREEN ONIONS
ALBUM: UPTOWN SPECIAL
LABEL: STAX
GENRE: INSTRUMENTAL ROCK-SOUL

WRITTEN BY: BOOKER T JONES, STEVE CROPPER, LEWIS STEINBERG AND AL JACKSON JR.
PRODUCED BY: BOOKER T JONES, STEVE CROPPER, LEWIS STEINBERG AND AL JACKSON JR.

UK CHART PEAK: 7 (1980)



BACKGROUND INFO

'Green Onions' is one of the most popular instrumental songs of all time. It was released on Vault Records, a subsidiary of Stax, in 1962 and gained immediate attention with its rippling Hammond Organ line and its relentless groove.

The tune is a basic 12 bar Blues but the originality of its melody and arrangement make it stand out. 'Green Onions' peaked at the number 3 spot on the Billboard Hot 100 and reached the number 1 spot on the R&B charts. The single gained popularity in the UK after entering the charts as part of the soundtrack to *Quadrophenia*, in December 1979.

Booker T. and The MG's are a seminal R&B group. They shaped the sound of Southern Soul and Memphis Soul as the house band for Stax records. They played on hundreds of recordings by a variety of artists including Wilson Pickett, Sam and Dave, Carla Thomas, Rufus Thomas, Johnnie Taylor and Albert King. They also backed Otis Redding on many recordings, including '(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay', and were the studio backing band for Bill Withers on his debut record.

The band was led by Booker T. Jones on keyboards and featured Steve Cropper on guitar, Lewis Steinberg on bass (replaced by Donald 'Duck' Dunn in 1965), and Al Jackson Jr. on drums, who was murdered in 1975. He was subsequently replaced by various drummers, including Steve Jordan. The band were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1992. The band featured two black members (Jones and Jackson) and two white members (Steinberg – later Dunn – and Cropper). This was highly unusual at the time and made them one of the first racially integrated rock groups.
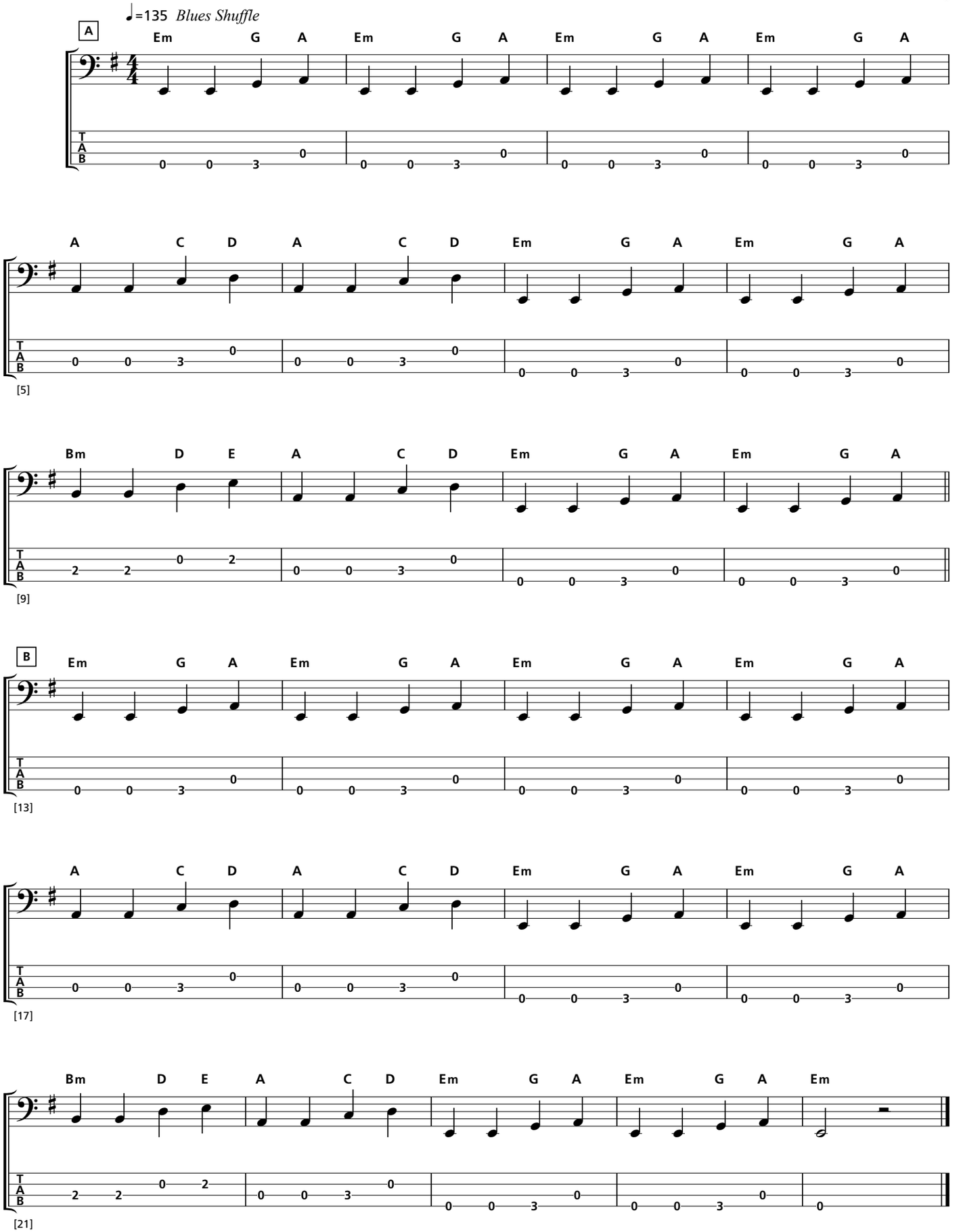
'Green Onions' was covered by many artists. The Surfaris recorded the song and included it on their 1963 release *Wipe Out*. Harry James recorded it in 1965, Dick Hyman in 1969, Mike Bloomfield and Al Kooper recorded it in 1968 live at The Fillmore West in San Francisco. Maxi Priest and Shaggy sampled it for their 1996 recording of 'That Girl'.

'Green Onions' remains an immensely popular song and has been used in many film soundtracks and advertising campaigns.

Green Onions

Booker T and the MGs

Music by Steve Cropper, Booker T. Jones,
Al Jackson & Lewis Steinberg



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Walkthrough

Section A (Bars 1–12)

Bars 1–12 | *Playing even quarter notes and controlling open strings*
This bassline consists of a harmonic and rhythmic pattern moving through chords I, IV and V of the key (in this case, E minor). It is a 12 bar blues – a fundamental structure in contemporary music. It is very important to ensure the line is delivered evenly, giving each quarter note its full value and equal tonal quality. This will lend the line the necessary gravitas to make it drive the track.

Controlling the open strings to avoid unwanted noise is also important. This is particularly relevant when moving from the last quarter-note of each bar to the first quarter-note of the next bar, except for bar 9, in which the movement is from a fretted E to an open A. The fretting hand can be used to stop the string from ringing if necessary, you just need to place it gently over the string. You can also try placing your plucking hand on the E string when playing the A string. This will require a quick movement.

Bars 1–4 | *Chord I*
The tonic chord Em is outlined by playing E, G and A. Two out of three notes will be open strings. Pay attention to controlling the open strings, as previously mentioned. Note how the last note of this pattern, A, is the first note of the following pattern.

Bars 5–8 | *Chords IV and I*
The subdominant chord A is outlined by playing A, C and D. Again, two out of three notes will be open strings, so this will require your attention. The last two bars of this section are a return to chord I.

Bars 9–12 | *Chords V, IV and I*
The pace of change is quicker in these four bars, typically named the turnaround. Note how in bar 9 the dominant chord Bm contains two fretted notes, namely B and E, and features one open string, D. The subdominant A follows for one bar and the tonic chord Em for the last two.

Section B (Bars 13–25)

Bars 13–25 | *Knowing the form and counting bars*
The twelve bar pattern previously highlighted will repeat in full in this section and will require you to play without the aid of the melody played by the organ. In a band situation everyone will know the form well but will be listening out for the bass to signpost the sections clearly and confidently.

Practice overview

The twelve bars form can be divided into sections of four bars and this can make it easier to feel the structure. This is essential to be able to play confidently and independently which in turn will allow you to focus more clearly on the feel of the line.

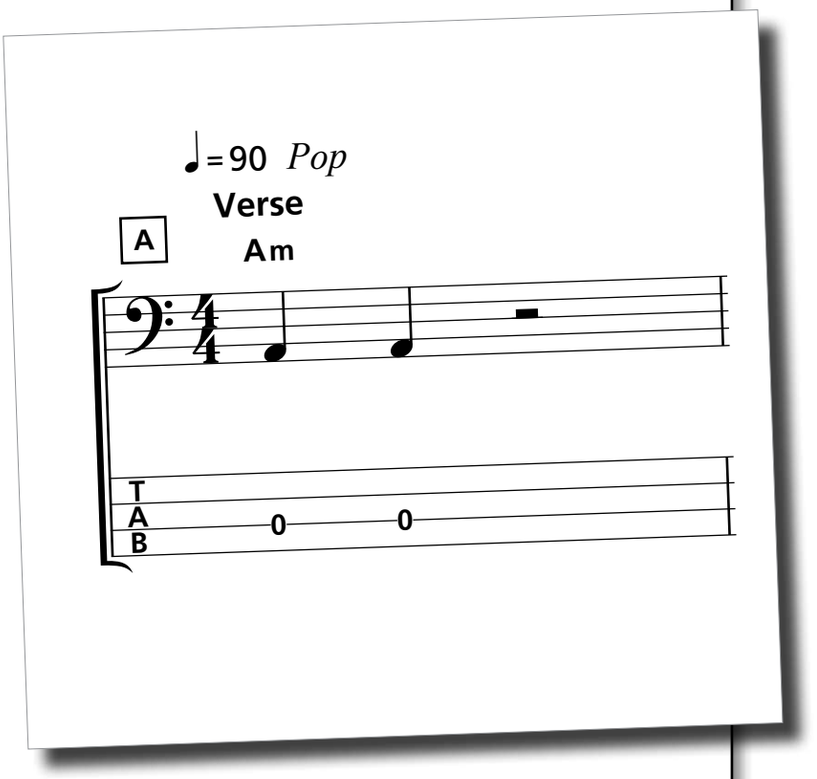
Once the pattern for each chord is clearly organised in terms of fingerings they can be practiced in sections of four bars. Notice how the last four bars of the A section (bars 9–12) and the last four bars of the B Section (bars 21–24) feature a faster harmonic rhythm – that is quicker chord changes moving from chord V to IV and then to I. The tonic chord plays for the last two bars of the sequence leading to the ending on the first beat of bar 25. Practicing with and without the backing track will be beneficial to embed the sequence into your musical memory.

Dua Lipa

SONG TITLE: NEW RULES
ALBUM: DUA LIPA
LABEL: WARNER BROS.
GENRE: GARAGE/EDM/ ELECTRO-POP

WRITTEN BY: CAROLINE AILIN, EMILY WARREN AND IAN KIRKPATRICK
PRODUCED BY: IAN KIRKPATRICK

UK CHART PEAK: 1



BACKGROUND INFO

Dua Lipa stormed to the top of the charts with the release of 'New Rules', a massive worldwide hit. The song's lyrics are about female empowerment through a break-up. Dua Lipa postponed the release of her eponymous debut album to feature the song on it. 'New Rules' was written during a writing camp by a team comprised of Caroline Ailin, Emily Warren and Ian Kirkpatrick, with whom Dua Lipa had been working. Upon hearing the song, Lipa connected with it immediately and made it her own, although neither the music or lyrics are of her authorship (unlike the rest of her debut album's material).

The lyrics talk about setting new rules to keep distance from an ex-boyfriend who has hurt you.

Dua Lipa is now a global star. She tours worldwide and is working on her next record. She released a single in collaboration with Calvin Harris called 'One Kiss', the song reached number 3 in the UK Singles chart and number 1 in the UK Dance charts.
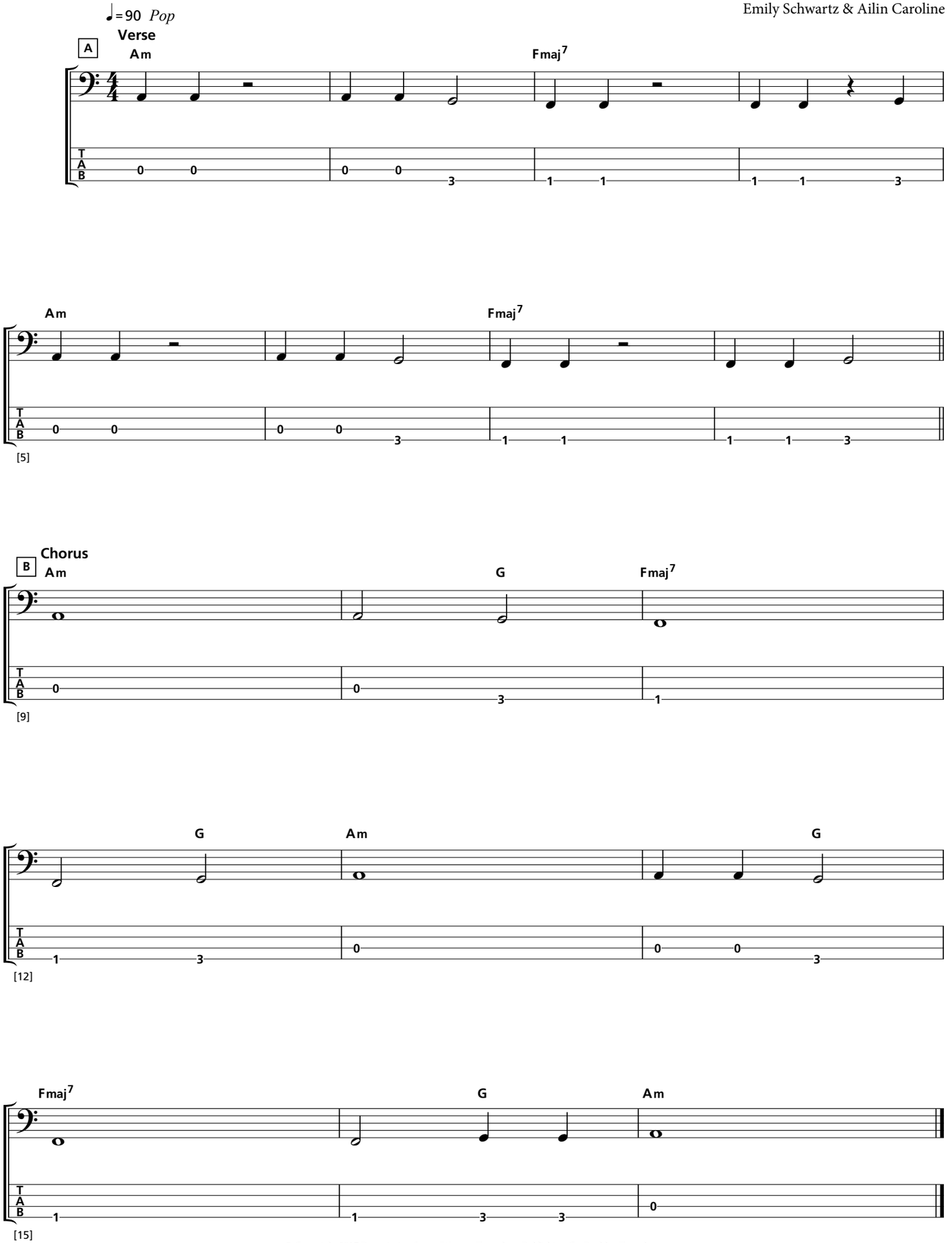
Dua Lipa created the Sunny Hill Foundation together with her father in order to donate to the citizens of Kosovo, where her parents are from. They emigrated to the UK in the early 90s at the time of the crisis resulting from the war in former Yugoslavia.

She is one of a number of young female pop figureheads who are inspiring a new generation of artists with a heady mix of pop and various strands of EDM.

New Rules

Dua Lipa

Words & Music by Ian Kirkpatrick,
Emily Schwartz & Ailin Caroline



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Walkthrough

A Section (Bars 1–8)

The A minor feel is established from the opening bar using the root note, and descending down to the F which is the sixth note of the A minor scale

Bar 1 | *Half-note rest*
There are two quarter notes on beat 1 and 2 of the first bar played on the open A string, followed by a half-note rest on beats 3 and 4. Try not to let the open A string ring through the half-note rest by using a light touch to dampen the strings in the fretting hand.

Bar 2 | *Quarter and half notes*
The A minor chord is highlighted again with two quarter notes on the root note. There is a half note on beat 3 of the bar played on a G on the third fret of the E string. This device is often described as a 'passing note' to create a sense of movement to the chord that follows.

Bar 3 | *Repeated rhythm*
The rhythm of bar 1 is repeated but this time on the first fret of the E string. An F is played here and helps establish the change in chord tone.

Bar 4 | *Quarter-note rest*
There are two quarter notes followed by a quarter-note rest, and then one more quarter note on beat 4. Try to give the rest its value by lifting the finger away from the fingerboard after beat 2. Using fingers 1 and 3 will help keep a smooth movement. Watch out for the 'passing note' on beat 4!

Bars 5–7 | *Repeated phrases*
The notes and rhythm in bars 1–3 are repeated here. Aim for consistency in tone and volume by using fingers 1 and 3, this will minimize the amount the hand needs to move.

B Section (Bars 9–17)

Although the chordal movement is almost the same as in bars 1–8, using whole notes helps to define a change in section to the chorus.

Bar 9 | *Whole note*
A whole note is played on the open A string on beat 1. Make sure to stop the string from ringing into the following bar.

Bar 10 | *Half notes*
There are two half notes on beats 1 and 3 of this bar. Try not to let the open A string ring into the fretted G on beat 3 by using the fretting hand to dampen the note. Using the third finger on the G will help to keep the full value of the note here before moving to the next bar.

Bars 11–12 | *Repeated rhythms*
The same note values appear as in bars 9–10. This time a whole note is played on the first fret to give strength to the change in chord tone again. Use the first finger here as the third finger was used previously. The first finger is used again on beat 1 of bar 12, moving to the third fret on beat 3 with the third finger in the fretting hand.

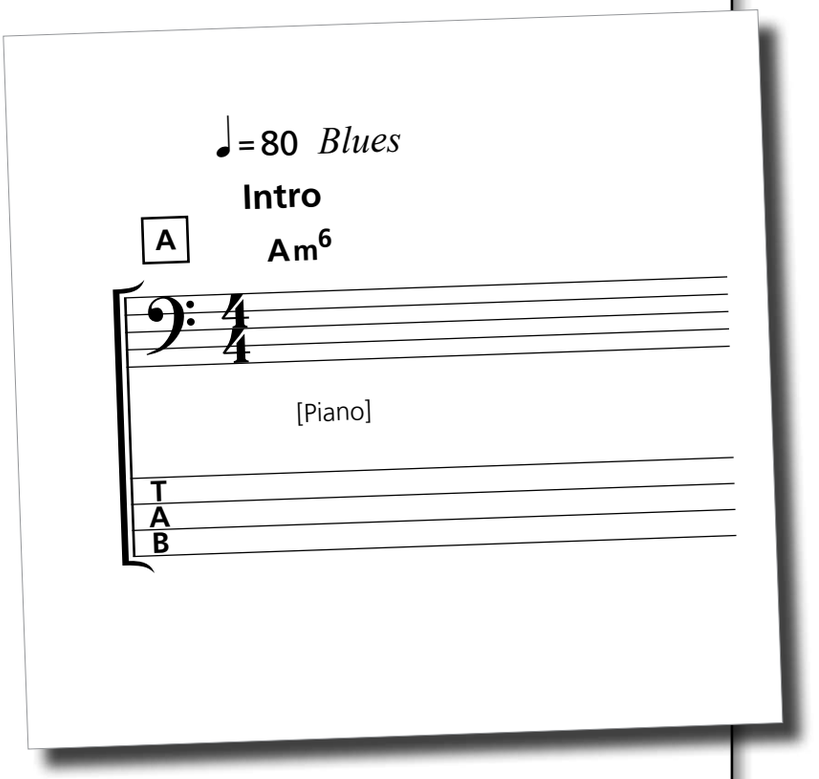
Bars 13–17 | *Repeated rhythms*
These bars feature combinations of rhythms and movements already seen previously in the piece. Try to give the longer notes their full value, but also make sure they aren't cut short to help changes in note movement.

Ray Charles

SONG TITLE: HIT THE ROAD JACK
ALBUM: GREATEST HITS
LABEL: ABC PARAMOUNT
GENRE: RHYTHM AND BLUES

WRITTEN BY: PERCY MAYFIELD
PRODUCED BY: N/A

UK CHART PEAK: 6



BACKGROUND INFO

'Hit The Road Jack' was written by Rhythm and Blues singer Percy Mayfield and made famous by Ray Charles who recorded it with vocalist Margie Hendrix in 1961. The song has since been aired millions of times on radio and TV and included on countless compilations.

Ray Charles is regarded by many as the father of Soul Music. Often referred to as 'The Genius', amongst friends and fellow musicians, Charles preferred being called 'Brother Ray'. He was blind from the age of seven. Ray Charles cited Nat King Cole as one of his main influences but Jazz, Blues and Country music in general are key to his style. He was great friends with Quincy Jones. Frank Sinatra called him 'the only true genius in music business'.

His style has been a massive influence to a number of highly successful artists such as Elvis Presley, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder, Van Morrison and Billy Joel to name a few. The poignancy and musicality of his vocal style are unique and acknowledged as one of the most recognisable in American music. He was a vocal and significant figure during the Civil Rights Movement.

'Hit The Road Jack' is amongst his most revered recordings. The list also includes 'I Got A Woman', 'What'd I Say', 'Georgia On My Mind' and 'Unchain My Heart'. All of these songs have, in turn, been covered by many different artists both live and in the studio. Joe Cocker had a very successful single with his version of 'Unchain My Heart' in 1987.

Through his foundations, and personally, Ray Charles donated significant amounts of money to institutions associated with the research of hearing disorders. He explained that giving to this cause rather than to the research of visual impairment was due to music saving his life and being certain he wouldn't know what to do if he could not experience it.
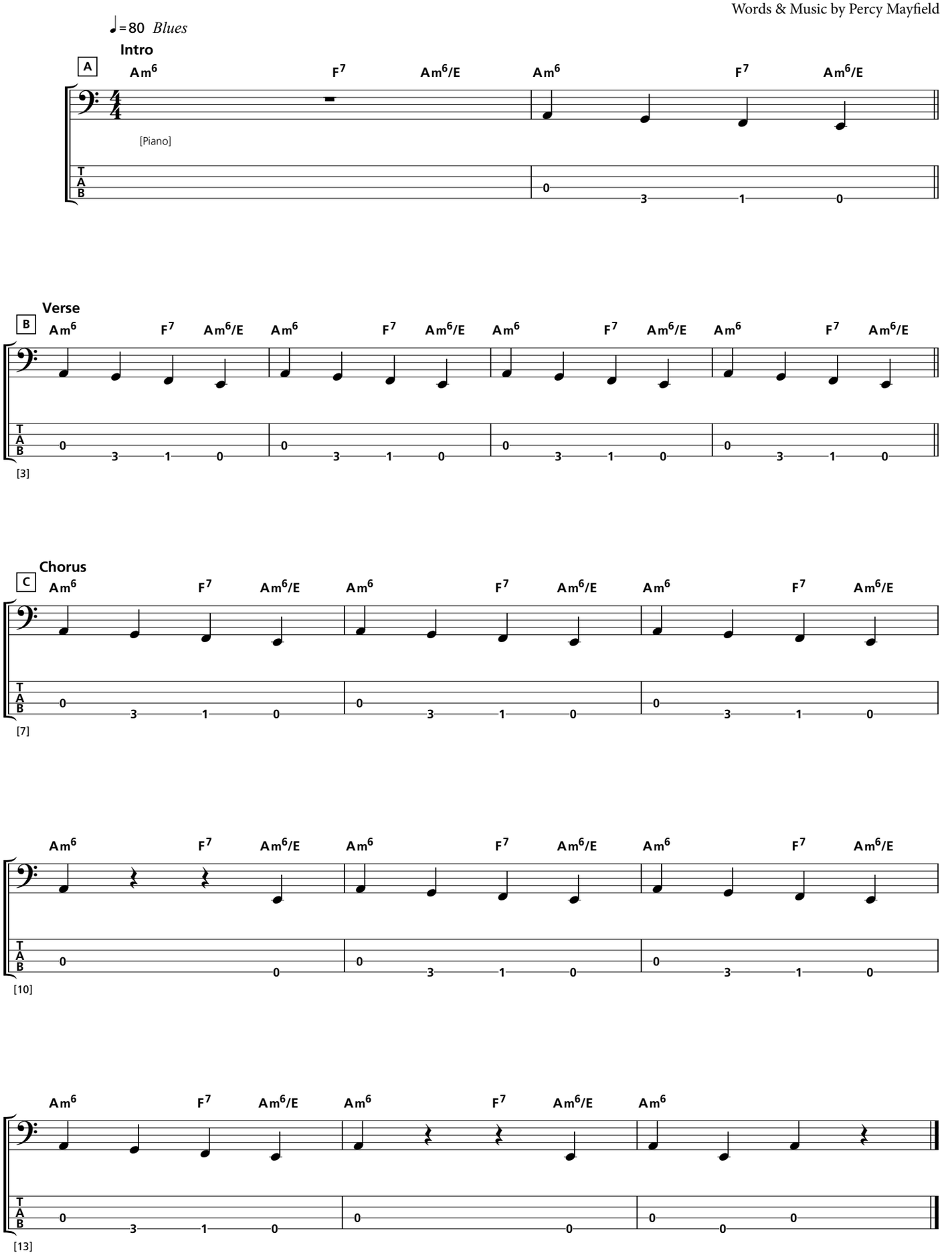
Ray Charles received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1991. He was one of the first inductees to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame at its inaugural ceremony in 1986.

He died in 2013, at the age of 73. His influence remains undiminished.

Hit The Road Jack

Ray Charles

Words & Music by Percy Mayfield



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Walkthrough

A Section (Bars 1–2)

The second bar establishes the main riff that runs throughout the piece. The bassline uses notes from the A minor scale, starting on the root note of the chord in each bar.

Bar 1 | *Rests*
In the first bar the piano establishes the main riff with a full bar of rest before the bass joins.

Bar 2 | *Open strings*
The bass joins in at bar 2 with a quarter note descending pattern that's featured throughout the piece. There are two open strings in the pattern so be careful not to let the open strings run over into the fretted notes on fret 3 and fret 1. A light fretting hand technique will help to dampen the strings.

B Section (Bars 3–6)

The quarter note descending pattern in bar 2 is continued through bars 3–6. Try to keep the quarter notes even and consistent through this section by making use of the third and first fingers in the fretting hand. Paying attention to the off beat piano chords will help to lock with the backing.

C Section (Bars 7–15)

Bars 7–9 | *Consistent bass line*
The same bass line continues in bars 7–9.

Bar 10 | *Rests*
There is a quarter note on beat 1 followed by two quarter-note rests on beat 2 and beat 3. Using the fretting hand to stop the open A string from ringing through these rest values will help. The open E string is played on beat 4 of the bar to help re-establish the bass line in the final section.

Bars 11–13 | *Bass line*
The bass line in bars 3–6 is repeated in bars 11–13. Aim for keeping the consistency and tonal balance in the quarter notes here.

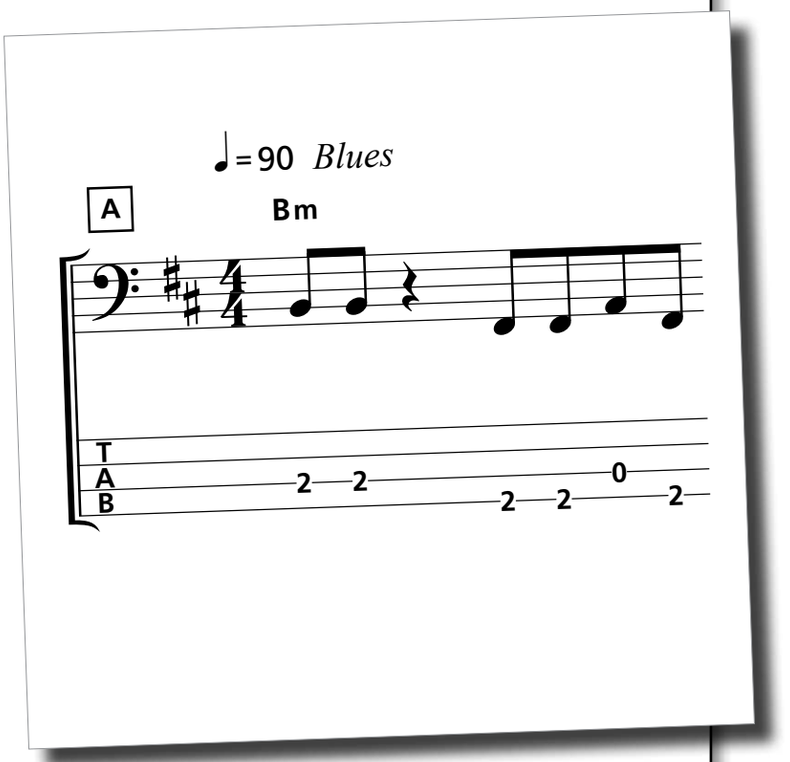
Bars 14–15 | *Rests*
There are two quarter-note rests in bar 14 on beats 2 and 3. This bar should sound exactly the same as bar 10, with the open A and E notes played on beat 1 and 4 of this bar. The final bar features a common 'root, fifth, root' pattern to give a strong ending to the piece. There is a final quarter-note rest on beat 4 of bar 15, so make sure to mute the open A string with the fretting hand after beat 3 of the bar.

B B King

SONG TITLE: THE THRILL IS GONE
ALBUM: COMPLETELY WELL
LABEL: BLUESWAY / ABC RECORDS
GENRE: BLUES/R&B

WRITTEN BY: RICK DARNELL
AND ROY HAWKINS
PRODUCED BY: BILL SZYMCZYK

UK CHART PEAK: 1



BACKGROUND INFO

'The Thrill Is Gone' is one of B.B. King's signature songs. He recorded it for his *Completely Well* album in 1969 and upon release the song became a major hit, reaching number 15 in the Billboard Hot 100 chart and number 3 in the R&B charts. 'The Thrill Is Gone' earned B.B. King a Grammy Award for Best Male R&B Vocal Performance.

'The Thrill Is Gone' is a slow tempo blues in B minor and King's delivery brings much poignancy and urgency to it. The instrumentation is a departure from King's previous recordings. In *Completely Well* he included strings and richer instrumentation, all in the context of a more polished production style. His subtle and immediately recognisable guitar playing sit on the tracks just as well.

'The Thrill Is Gone' was written by Rick Darnell and Roy Hawkins in 1951. They were both well-known West Coast Blues musicians and their original release reached number 6 on the Billboard R&B charts in the same year. Many other versions of the song have been released by various artists, including Aretha Franklin, Stan Webb, Jerry Garcia and David Grisman, Diamanda Galas, Willie Nelson, Marshall Tucker Band and Pappo. M.C. Hammer sampled King's version. B.B. King also released a number of live versions of the song, featured on different live albums, in 1971, 1976 and 1991.

B.B. King's legendary singing and playing styles earned him the nickname 'The King Of Blues'. He is regarded as one of the most influential blues guitarists and, together with Albert King and Freddie King, he was labelled one of the 'Three Kings of The Blues Guitar'.

B.B. King introduced a highly sophisticated yet subtle soloing style that included a fluid use of string bending and vibrato, a distinctive tone and cunning use of space. He collaborated with many artists in his long and productive career. His live performance and touring schedules were relentless. He performed an average of 200 shows a year and in 1956 he reportedly played 342.
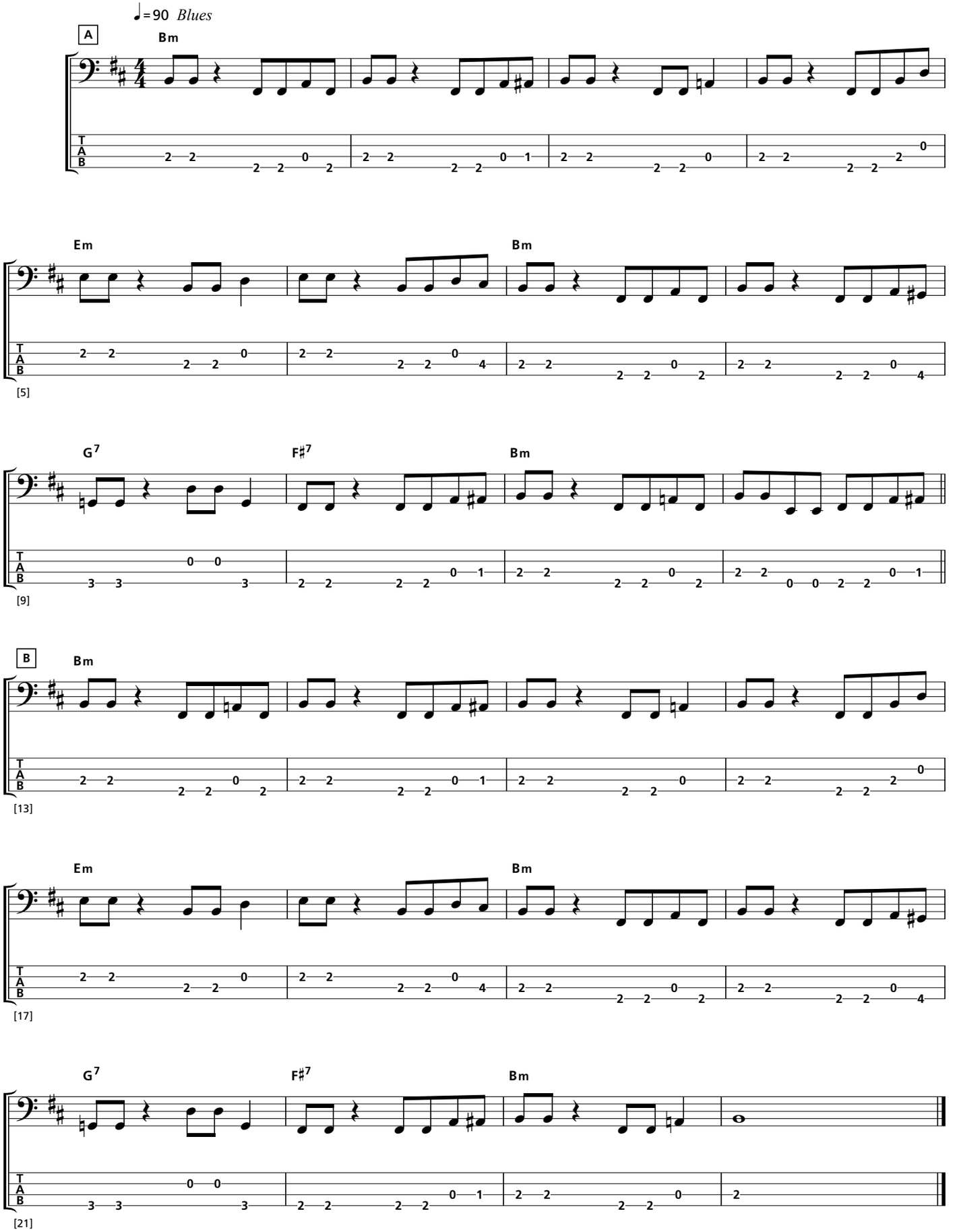
B.B. King's legacy is regarded as significant the world over. His contribution to American culture is beyond dispute and his philanthropy and campaigning on issues of race of equality, the rehabilitation of jailed inmates and tackling poverty are well known.

King died aged 89 and was buried at the already existing B.B. King museum.

The Thrill Is Gone

B B King

Words & Music by Roy Hawkins & Rick Darnell



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Walkthrough

Section A (Bars 1–12)

Bars 1–12 | *Playing the blues*

This section is a basic 12 bar minor blues form.

Bars 1–4 are played in the tonic chord of Bm. You'll be hitting two eighth-notes on beat 1 of every bar. Make sure these are even and authoritative yet relaxed. Notice how beats 3 and 4 of every bar have variations leading to the one of the next bar. Make sure open strings are controlled. Be mindful of the non-diatonic A♯ in bar 2. Coherent fingering patterns are very important to deliver the line smoothly.

Bars 5–8 play a similar pattern, this time on the subdominant chord of Em in bars 5 and 6. Again, control the open strings in volume and duration to make your line smooth. Bar 8 contains a non-diatonic G♯ descending to G. Organise your fingering effectively to deliver this smoothly.

Bars 9–12 are a basic yet effective turnaround. Bar 9 contains an open D 3rd string followed by a G on the 4th string. If this is cumbersome, because of string crossing, you might want to try playing the D on the 5th fret of the A string with your fourth finger. Bar 10 hits the dominant chord of $F\sharp^7$ on the first beat of the bar and has the same ascending run as bar 2 on beats 3 and 4. Bar 11 is the same as bar 1, in the tonic chord of Bm. Bar 12 has the busiest subdivision in the arrangement, make sure all eighth-notes are even in length and volume. This bar provides a good sense of closure to the 12 bar sequence.

Section B (Bars 13–24)

Bars 13–24 | *Playing more blues*

This 12 bar section is a repeat of the previous 12 but the context is different because the guitar is soloing. In essence, knowing the sequence is a must for all musicians so they can play independently. The bass is a constant in the background so make sure your delivery is smooth and clear. Listening to the drums and counting eighth-notes in your head will help you deliver the line with good time and feel.
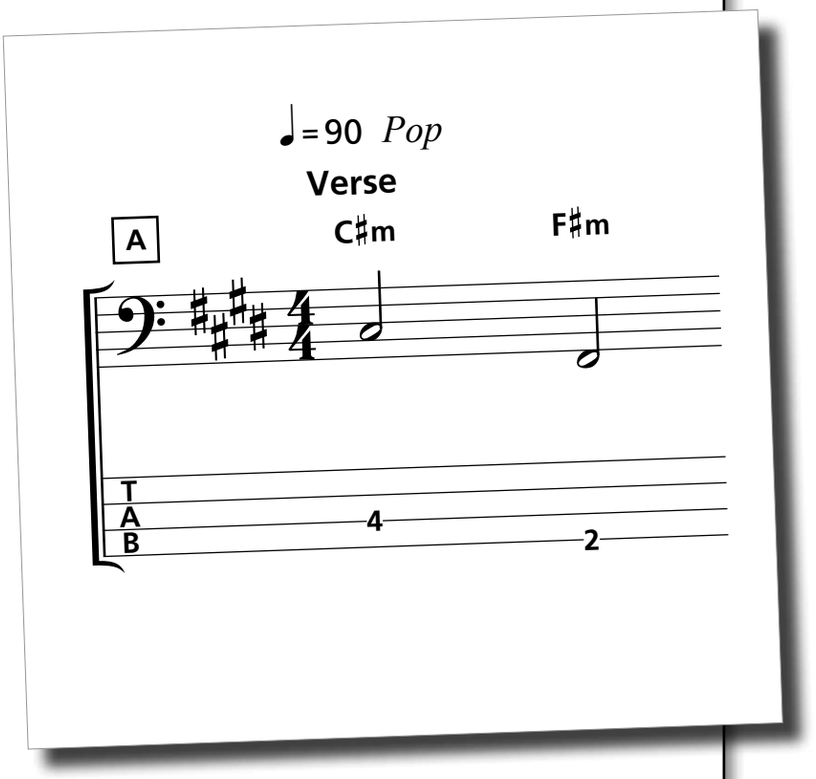
Practicing the 12 bar blues sequence in four bar segments will help you develop the links between sections. Once you have the line under your fingers concentrate on the delivery, and on keeping the form running smoothly, so the band can rely on it.

Ed Sheeran

SONG TITLE: SHAPE OF YOU
ALBUM:
LABEL: ASYLUM/ATLANTIC
GENRE: POP/DANCEHALL/
TROPICAL HOUSE

WRITTEN BY: ED SHEERAN, STEVE MAC, JOHNNY MCDAID, KANDI BURRUSS, TAMEKA COTTLE AND KEVIN BRIGGS
PRODUCED BY: ED SHEERAN AND STEVE MAC

UK CHART PEAK: 1



BACKGROUND INFO

Ed Sheeran is one of today's truly global pop stars.

Despite his astonishing achievements, Sheeran rose even further with the release of 'Shape of You', achieving outstanding commercial success. It was the best-selling song of 2017 in many countries including the UK, and it was streamed over 1.3 billion times on Spotify alone. 'Shape of You' also won an award for Best Pop Solo Performance at the 60th Grammy Awards.

The smartly constructed composition is underpinned and driven by a tropical house beat which, at the time of its release, was becoming ubiquitous the world over. Sheeran composed the song in collaboration with Steve Mac and Johnny Daid, and it was originally intended for a duet and between Rihanna and Rudimental. However, upon singing the lyrics, Sheeran and company began to think Rihanna would not sing it, so they decided to keep it for Sheeran and include it on his forthcoming album. The lyrics are about infatuation and lust, but they did not originally contain the title phrase in the chorus – this was only added after revising their content.

The song had strong similarities with TLC's 'No Scrubs' and for that reason Kandi Burruss, Tameka Cottle and Kevin Briggs are credited as writers.

Ed Sheeran's meteoric rise to fame has been the result of a highly productive work ethic. As a solo acoustic artist, he performs relentlessly to thousands of fans worldwide. His 2017 release had, at one time, a record 10 singles in the UK Singles Chart.

He is an outspoken artist, not afraid of making his political and social views known, and he remains an accessible and down to earth character. He has also had cameos in Game of Thrones, Home and Away and The Simpsons.
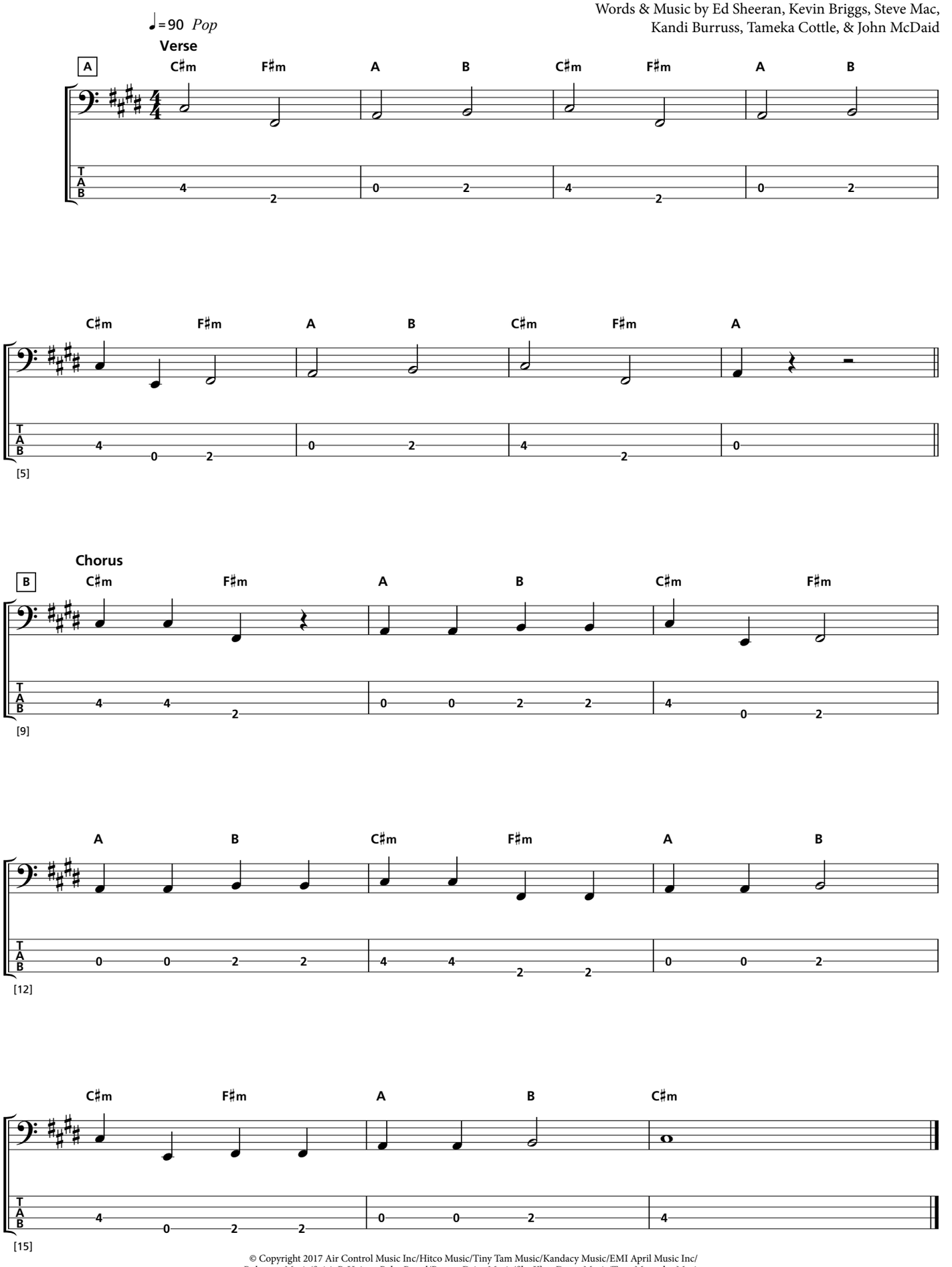
With only three records to his name to date, Ed Sheeran has already had an immensely successful career.

'Shape of You' has sold in excess of 10 million copies worldwide.

Shape Of You

Ed Sheeran

Words & Music by Ed Sheeran, Kevin Briggs, Steve Mac,
Kandi Burruss, Tameka Cottle, & John McDaid



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Walkthrough

A Section (Bars 1–8)

This first section uses predominantly half note values but also features some quarter notes and combinations of rests.

Bar 1 | *Half notes*
The opening bar comprises two half note values, the first played on the root note and the second descending to the fourth note in the scale. Because of the movement across the strings it can be easy to hold the first while playing the second note, resulting in some unwanted noise. Lifting the finger away from the fretboard after beat 2 will help.

Bar 2 | *Open strings*
The open A string is played on beat 1 of the bar for two beats, moving to a B on the second fret of the A string for beats 3 and 4.

Bars 3–4 | *Repeated phrases*
Bars 1 and 2 are repeated here. Try to aim for consistency in sound through these bars.

Bars 5 | *Quarter and half notes*
This bar features a combination of two quarter notes followed by a half note. The open E string is played on beat 2 of the bar. The C♯ minor chord tone is really highlighted here by playing the third degree of the scale one octave lower.

Bars 6–7 | *Half notes*
These two bars will be familiar as the pattern has been played previously in bars 2 and 3. Remember to give these half notes their full value and try not to cut them short.

Bar 8 | *Quarter note and rests*
The final bar of this section features a quarter note on the open A string on beat 1, followed by three full beats of rest. Make sure to dampen the open string with the fretting hand so it doesn't ring after beat 1.

B Section (Bars 9–17)

The chord movement will be familiar in this section as it is the same as in the A section. More quarter notes in the bass line give a sense of movement at the chorus and help define a change in section.

Bar 9 | *Quarter notes & rests*
The section begins with three quarter notes followed by a quarter-note rest, with the root notes played at the chord changes. Use the fretting hand to dampen the string after beat 3 so the rest is given full value.

Bar 10 | *Quarter notes*
A full bar of quarter notes with the chord changes defined again here. Try to keep consistency in the volume and timing when playing these notes by using a relaxed picking technique. Using alternative fingers in the picking hand will help.

Bar 11 | *Quarter and half notes*
This bar features the same movement as in bar 5. The C♯ minor chord tone is highlighted again using the third degree of the scale on beat 2 of the bar.

Bar 12 | *Quarter notes*
This bar is played exactly the same as bar 10. Aim for a consistent tone again here.

Bar 13 | *Quarter notes*
There are four quarter notes in this bar, giving weight to the C♯ minor and F♯ minor chord changes. Try using the third finger on the C♯ for the first and second notes, and the first finger on the F♯ for the third and fourth notes.

Bar 14 | *Quarter and half notes*
A combination of two quarter notes and one half note in this bar. Make sure the F♯ from the previous bar isn't held down when playing the open A string in this bar.

Bar 15 | *Quarter notes*
This bar is similar to bar 13 with the only difference being the second note in the bar. The minor third is used again to help define the C♯ minor chord

Bar 16 | *Repeated phrases*
This bar is played the same as bar 14.

Bar 17 | *Final bar*
The piece ends with a whole note on C♯.
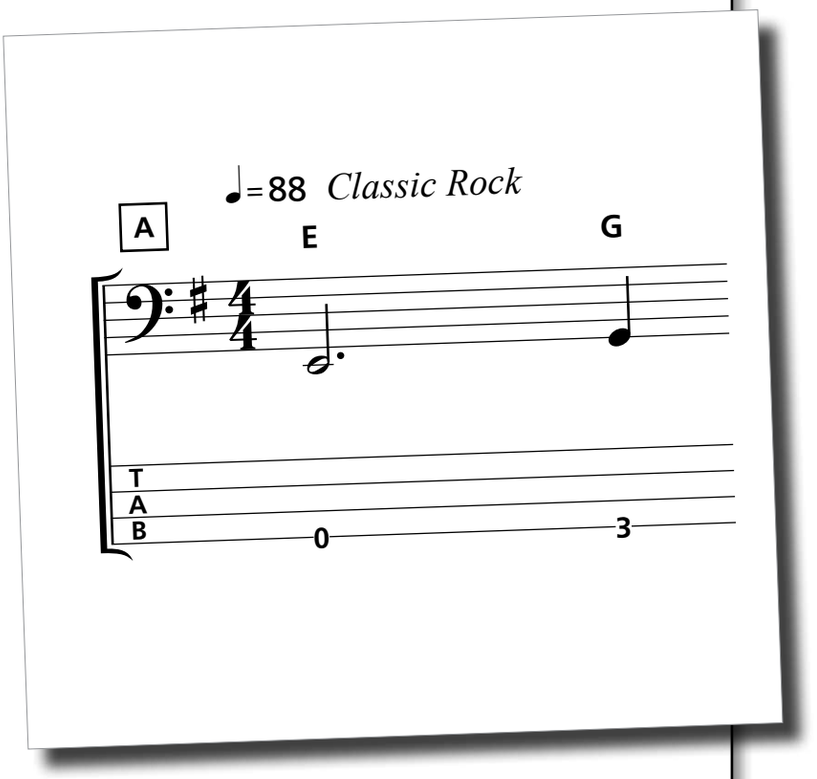
The New Black

SONG TITLE: THE NEW BLACK
GENRE: CLASSIC ROCK
TEMPO: 88 BPM
KEY: E MINOR

TECH FEATURES: HALF & QUARTER NOTES
TIMING
RESTS

COMPOSER: JOE BENNETT

PERSONNEL: STUART RYAN (GTR)
HENRY THOMAS (BASS)
NOAM LEDERMAN (DRUMS)



OVERVIEW

Classic rock has a rich pedigree of bands to inspire your first steps into playing bass. 'The New Black' takes its lead from classic rock heavyweights such as AC/DC, Deep Purple and Thin Lizzy. The bassline is a simple but effective root note-based line (see the Walkthrough on page 7, which closely follows the chord progression). There are two main sections to this song followed by a three-bar turnaround that leads back into a repeat of the opening riff.

STYLE FOCUS

Classic rock has a bombastic quality that can be heard in this piece. Typically, the bassist will play simple root-based lines that lock in tightly with the drummer and support the guitar and vocals. Soaring lead guitar melodies and simple riffs are common in this genre, and it is the job of the rhythm section to support similar parts with a strong foundation.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

This particular branch of classic rock became common in the 1970s when bands like The Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin and Queen began playing large football stadiums to accommodate their legions of fans. Naturally, a larger venue meant more elaborate shows, so the use of pyrotechnics, stage sets and complex lighting rigs were all used to bring the epic classic rock sound to life. These huge stages also afforded musicians the chance to develop their showmanship, enabling them to elevate their live performances beyond that of an ordinary gig.
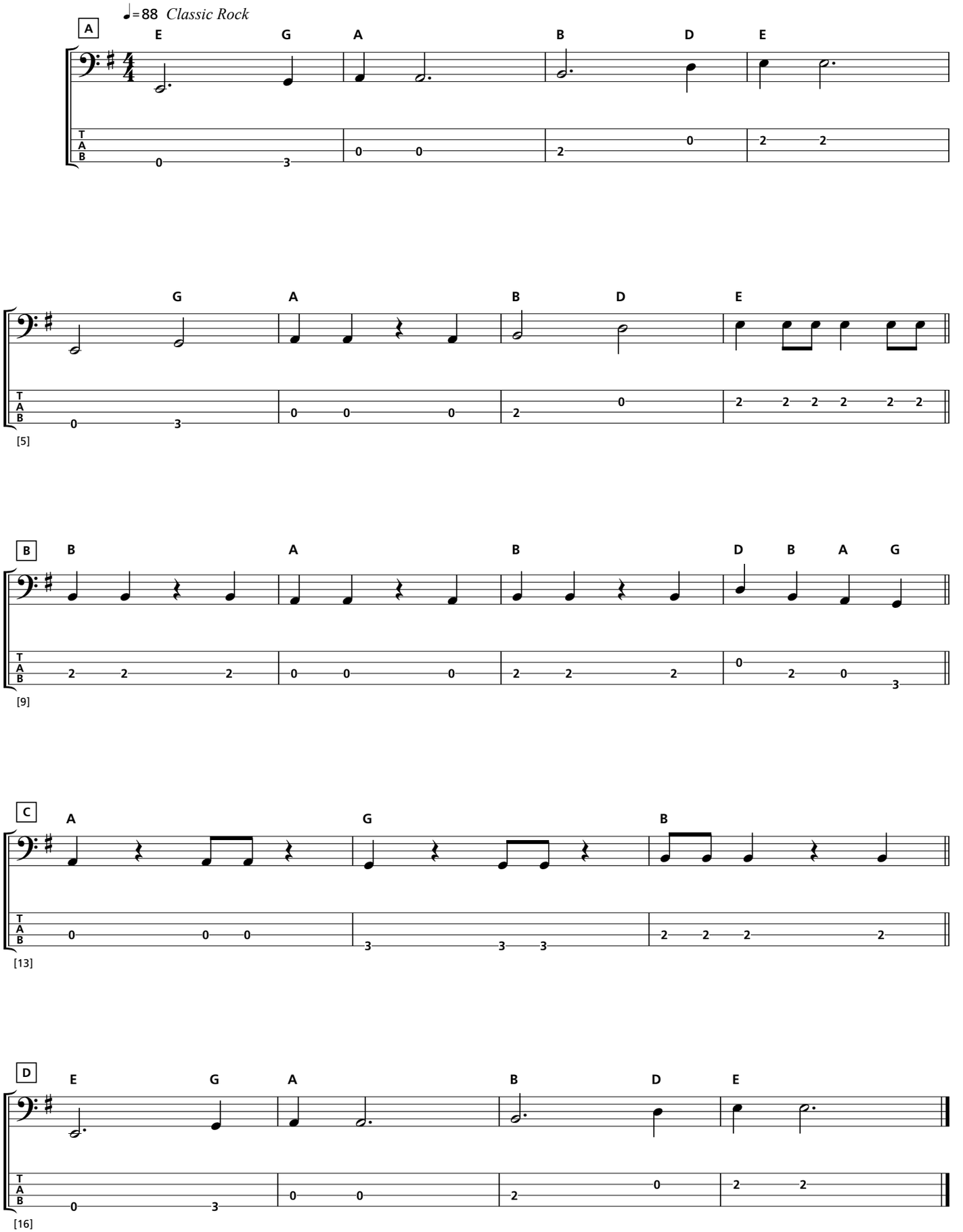
AC/DC, KISS, The Rolling Stones, Aerosmith and newly reformed Deep Purple are all examples of stadium rock acts that are still touring and filling stadiums around the world.

RECOMMENDED LISTENING

The classic rock vault is bursting with material for budding bass players, and AC/DC's 'Back In Black', 'Highway To Hell' and 'You Shook Me All Night Long' will kick-start your education. Early KISS classics 'Rock And Roll All Nite' and 'Shout It Out Loud' are great fun too, as are Aerosmith's 'Same Old Song And Dance' and 'Sweet Emotion'. Each of these songs has a strong focus on the guitar riffs, while the bass and drums provide simple but solid support. If you want a taste of classic rock bass played live, try *Alive!* by KISS (1975), Led Zeppelin's *The Song Remains The Same* (1976) and AC/DC's *Live* (1992).

The New Black

Joe Bennett



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A Section (Bars 1–8)

The opening eight bars of this classic rock flavoured song 'The New Black' feature an ascending chord progression anchored by root notes on the bass. Root notes are the most important note in a chord and provide its basic name, regardless of whether it is major or minor. The progression here is played twice, with some different rhythms used the second time through.

Bars 1–2 | *Muting*
In the first two bars you will play several open strings. Open strings need to be controlled so that they don't ring for any longer than necessary. You can mute open strings by gently bringing your fretting hand's fingers to rest on them.

Bars 1–2 | *'Flipped' rhythms*
Be careful of the note values used here – the rhythm switches between a dotted half note (three beats) plus a quarter note (one beat) in the first bar, to a quarter note plus a dotted half note in the second. This 'flipped' rhythm is used again in the following two bars.

Bar 4 | *Locking in with the drums*
Note that the rhythm used in the fourth bar (Fig. 1) means you should play the second note on beat 2 at the same time as the snare drum. Make sure that you play this note at exactly the same time as the snare to give the bar its required powerful feel.

Bar 5 | *New rhythms*
A new rhythm is introduced here that comprises two half notes, each of which lasts for two beats. The main thing to remember here is to allow your notes to ring for the correct number of beats.

Bar 8 | *Eighth notes*
The final bar in this initial section is a 'build' into the next part of the track. Here you should play quarter notes on beats 1 and 3, and eighth notes on beats 2 and 4. When playing eighth notes, be sure to play two evenly spaced notes per beat. You can get a feel for this particular rhythm by counting "1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &".

B Section (Bars 9–12)

The next four bars are a new section of the song. Like the previous section, it is built on root notes. It also introduces some new rhythms.

Bar 9 | *Rests*
The third beat of this bar has a quarter-note rest, meaning that nothing is played on this beat. After playing the note on beat 2, be sure to mute it on beat 3 so that it does not ring longer than it is supposed to.

Bar 12 | *Playing evenly*
In the final bar, the chords change on every beat. Play these notes evenly with the same attack and volume (Fig. 2).

C Section (Bars 13–15)

This three-bar linking section is used to create a sense of expectancy before the final section of the song.

Bars 13–15 | *More rests*
These bars feature quarter notes and eighth notes, as well as quarter-note rests – all of which have been used previously in the piece. As before, be sure to play the rests as written without allowing any notes to ring over them.

Bars 13–14 | *Counting*
These bars feature quarter note rhythms and rests, as well as eighth notes. When playing both of these bars you should play on beat 1, rest on beat 2 and play two evenly spaced notes on beat 3 before resting again on beat 4.

D Section (Bars 16–19)

This final section is a repeat of the opening four bars of the song. As you have played this part once before, hopefully you should have no problem repeating it. Remember to count each rhythm as you play and concentrate on locking in with the drum part as discussed above.

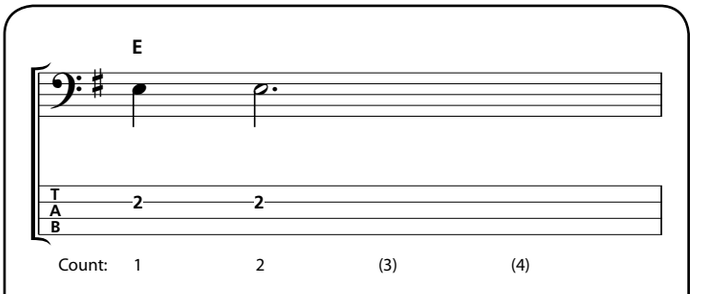


Fig. 1: Locking in with the drums

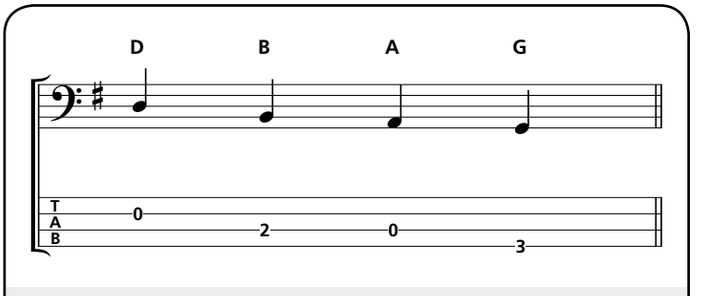


Fig. 2: Playing evenly

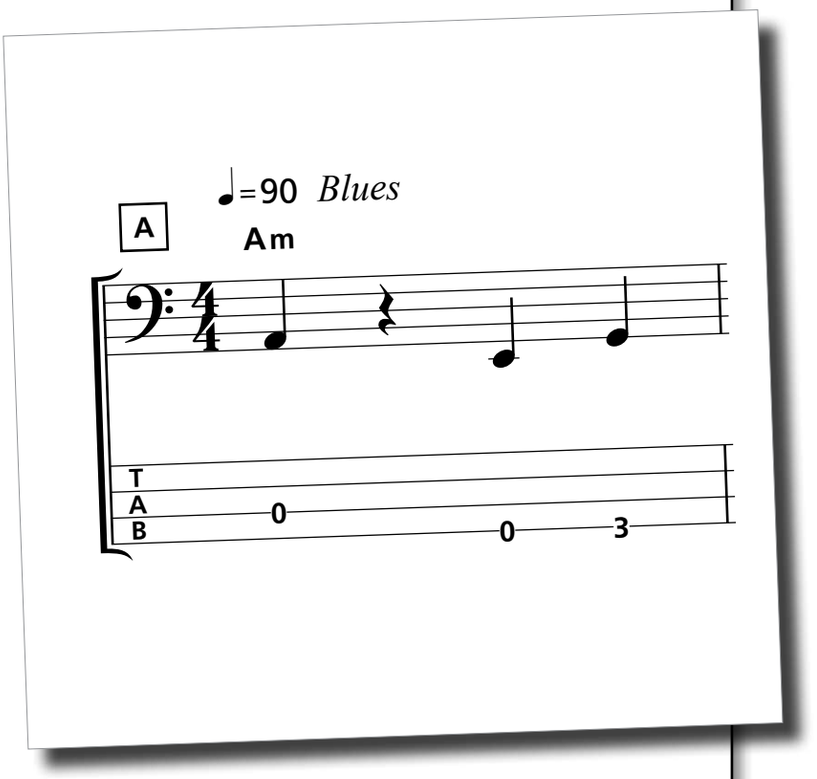
Eat Your Greens

SONG TITLE: EAT YOUR GREENS
GENRE: BLUES
TEMPO: 90 BPM
KEY: A MINOR

TECH FEATURES: QUARTER NOTES
HALF NOTES
CROSSING STRINGS

COMPOSER: DEIRDRE CARTWRIGHT

PERSONNEL: STUART RYAN (GTR)
HENRY THOMAS (BASS)
NOAM LEDERMAN (DRUMS)
ROSS STANLEY (KEYS)



OVERVIEW

Throughout the mid to late 1960s, blues bands were gathering prowess and dominating the music scenes on both sides of the Atlantic. Fleetwood Mac, Taste and the ever-evolving, star studded cast of John Mayall & The Bluesbreakers were big news, so we have created 'Eat Your Greens' with a similar blues theme in mind. The bassline for this piece predominently uses the root notes of the chords (see the Walkthrough), with a focus on crossing and muting strings. While you may know that blues songs are often 12 bars in length, this is not a strict rule. In fact, 'Eat Your Greens' is a 16-bar blues.

STYLE FOCUS

More often than not the principle thrust of blues has a relaxed feel; however, the passion transferred to the listener through either the vocals, the lead guitar lines, or both, makes it equally electrifying. Blues is often focused on the lead guitar, so this means that the job of the bass player is to provide support by locking in tight with the drummer to create a relaxed but solid groove. The blues is an example of how playing the simplest pieces can often have a powerful impact and serve to create instantly memorable songs.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

This style of guitar based blues was enormously popular in Britain during the 1960s, and many of the great rock bands of the 1970s learnt their craft as blues groups during this time. Cream, The Yardbirds and Fleetwood Mac thrived during this golden era, and many musicians from each band came from John Mayall & The Bluesbreakers. Eric Clapton and Peter Green were both early Bluesbreakers (Clapton was replaced by Green after he left to form Cream), and there was a rivalry between Clapton and Green fans. A spate of graffiti even sprang up around London proclaiming: 'Clapton is God'.
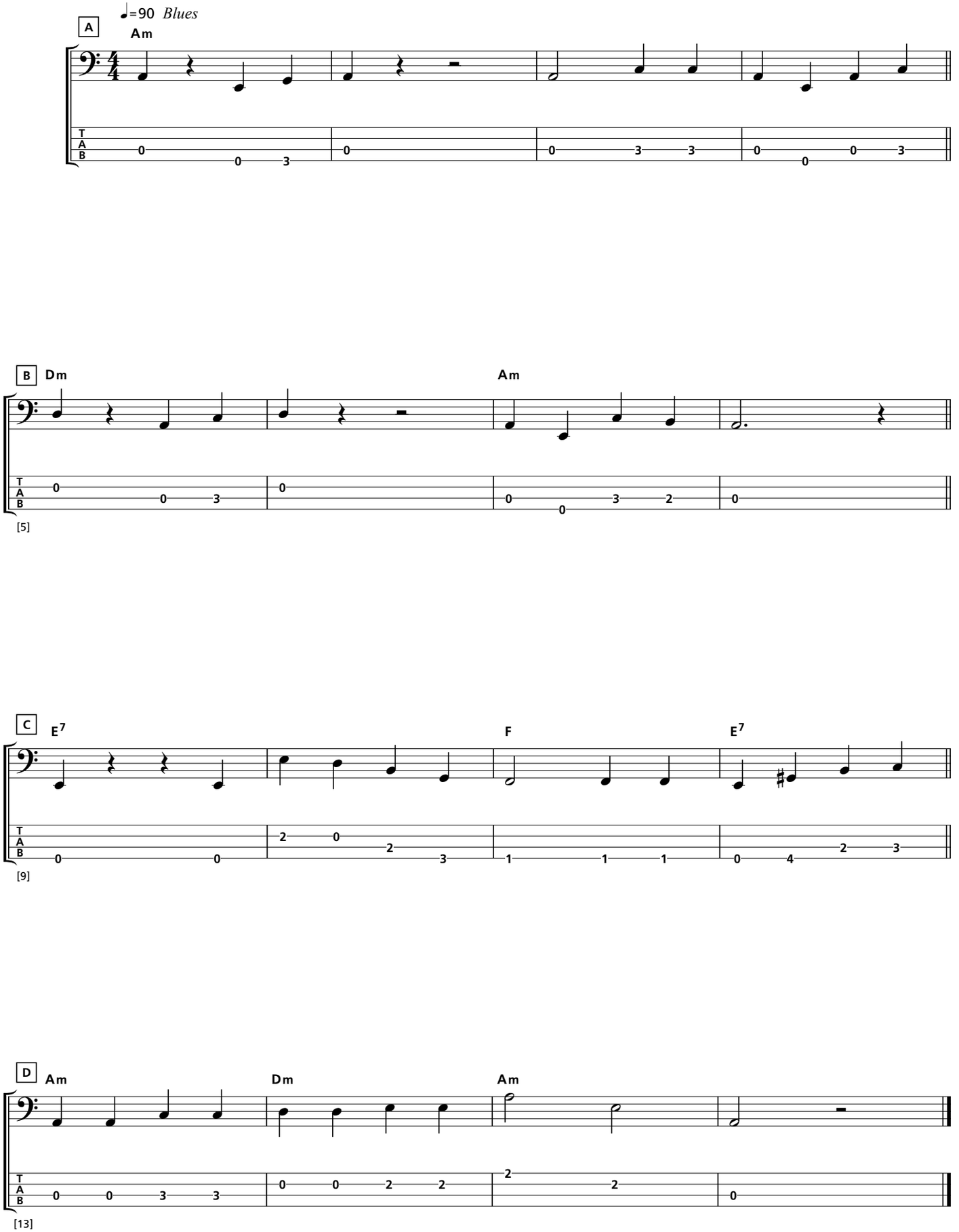
Many renowned bass players have come from this style of blues too – particularly Jack Bruce (Cream), Andy Fraser (Free) and John McVie (Fleetwood Mac).

RECOMMENDED LISTENING

Early Fleetwood Mac tracks 'Black Magic Woman', 'I Loved Another Woman' and 'My Heart Beats Like A Hammer' will whet your appetite for this style of blues. You will also be able to hear Bruce's inventive playing with Cream in action on 'Strange Brew', 'Sunshine of Your Love' and 'Crossroads'.

Eat Your Greens

Deirdre Cartwright



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A Section (Bars 1–4)

The opening four bars are based on a single A minor chord. The bassline uses root notes, which provide the basic part of the chord name. In this case, the A of A minor.

Bar 1 | *Muting*
In the first bar you will play two open strings. These need to be controlled so that they don't ring for any longer than necessary. You can mute open strings by gently bringing your fretting hand fingers to rest on them.

Bar 2 | *Rests*
The second bar has just one note that is played on the first beat. Because this is another quarter note, the remainder of the bar needs to be silent. This is indicated by a quarter-note rest followed by a half-note rest. Make sure that the note you play on the first beat of the bar stops at the second beat.

Bar 3 | *Quarter notes and half notes*
Two different note values are used here. The first note is a half note and lasts for two beats, or half of a bar. The second two notes are quarter notes that last for one beat each, or a quarter of a bar. Count slowly and play the first note on beat 1, the next on beat 3 and the final note on beat 4.

Bar 4 | *More quarter notes*
You'll be playing four quarter notes in this bar, three of which are open strings so you will need to think carefully about muting. Ensure that each note is played with an even volume. The last note of the bar, a C, creates a nice transition to the next chord, D minor (Fig. 1).

B Section (Bars 5–8)

The next four bars start with two bars of a D minor chord. Rests play a large part in this section.

Bar 5 | *The open D string*
As the chord has changed to D minor the root note changes to an open D string. This is then followed by an open A string, so remember to mute the D string with your fretting hand as you change strings. Muting strings in this way is an important part of good fretting hand technique.

Bar 7 | *Playing evenly*
This bar contains four quarter notes. As you count to the music, each of these notes should last for one beat only. Again, there are two open strings used here, so be careful to mute where needed and play all notes at an even volume.

C Section (Bars 9–12)

These four bars could be considered the chorus. Two new chords are introduced, so prepare for some more bass notes.

Bar 9 | *Quarter-note rests*
This bar features quarter-note rests on beats 2 and 3. On beats 1 and 4 play the open E string, remembering to mute it afterwards (Fig. 2).

Bar 10 | *String crossing*
This bar contains string crossing. This means that two notes are played on the D string followed by a note on the A string and a note on the E string. All of these are quarter notes. When crossing strings it is important to mute the strings which are not meant to be played. You can achieve this muting with your picking hand. When playing the D string, ensure that your thumb is resting on the string below it (i.e. the A string). This will mute the A string and also provide an anchor point. As you cross strings your thumb should move as well.

D Section (Bars 13–16)

The final section of this piece is a closing section that brings a sense of finality to the song.

Bars 13–14 | *Quarter notes*
These two bars each contain four quarter notes, meaning that eight are played in succession. The key to making these bars sound good is to listen closely to the drums and try to match up your notes exactly and to play with an even volume throughout.

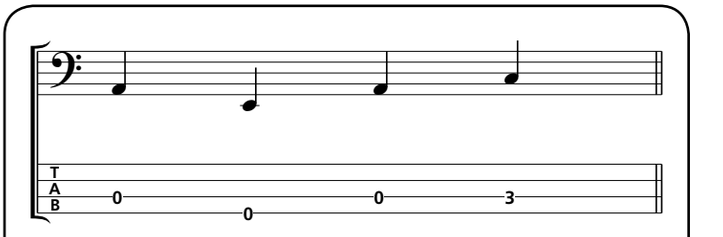


Fig. 1: More quarter notes

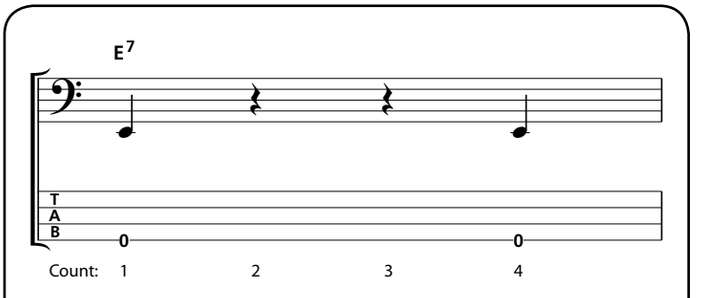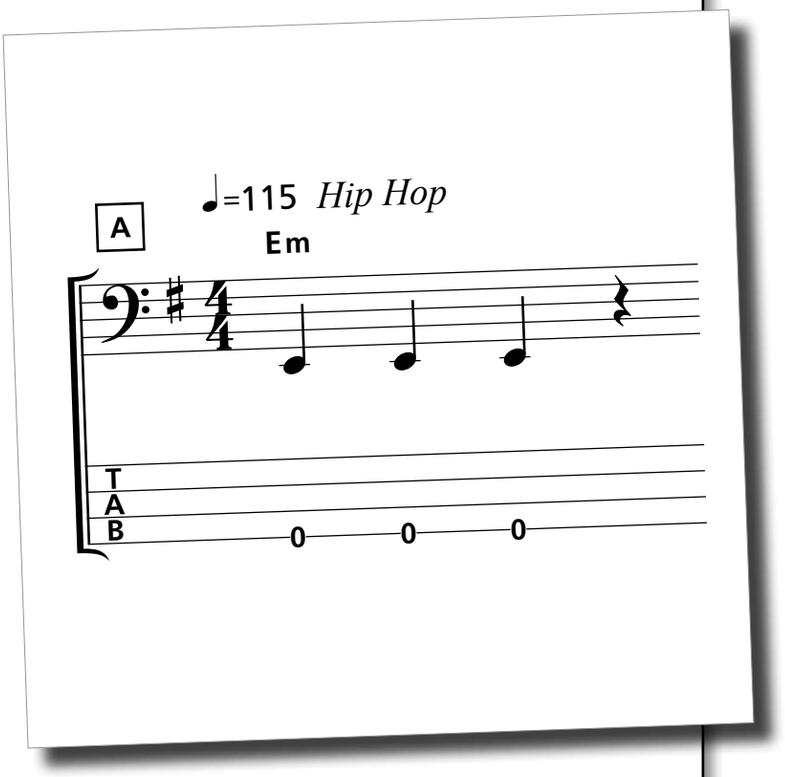


Fig. 2: Quarter-note rests

SONG TITLE: Z
GENRE: HIP HOP
TEMPO: 115 BPM
KEY: E MINOR

TECH FEATURES: QUARTER NOTES
RESTS
TIMING

COMPOSER: NEEL DHORAJIWALA

PERSONNEL: NEEL DHORAJIWALA (PROD)



OVERVIEW

'Z' contains flavours of West Coast hip hop in the vein of Xzibit and Dr. Dre. The bassline is an important element of the hip hop groove and although a bassline is often simple, it requires a certain control over volume and consistency. As with most hip hop tracks, this is a groove over one basic chord that usually runs throughout the entire track.

STYLE FOCUS

A solid connection between bass and drums is vital on hip hop songs. Many tracks are built on looped sections of music that are typically one, two or four bars in length. The West Coast sound is based on a solid quarter-note feel and often coupled with rhythmic pianos and strings. Beats two and four (the backbeat) are core to the groove with the snares being layered with hand-claps. The straight-feel drum grooves layered with electronic drums result in a tight sound that is the very essence of the hip hop groove.

THE BIGGER PICTURE
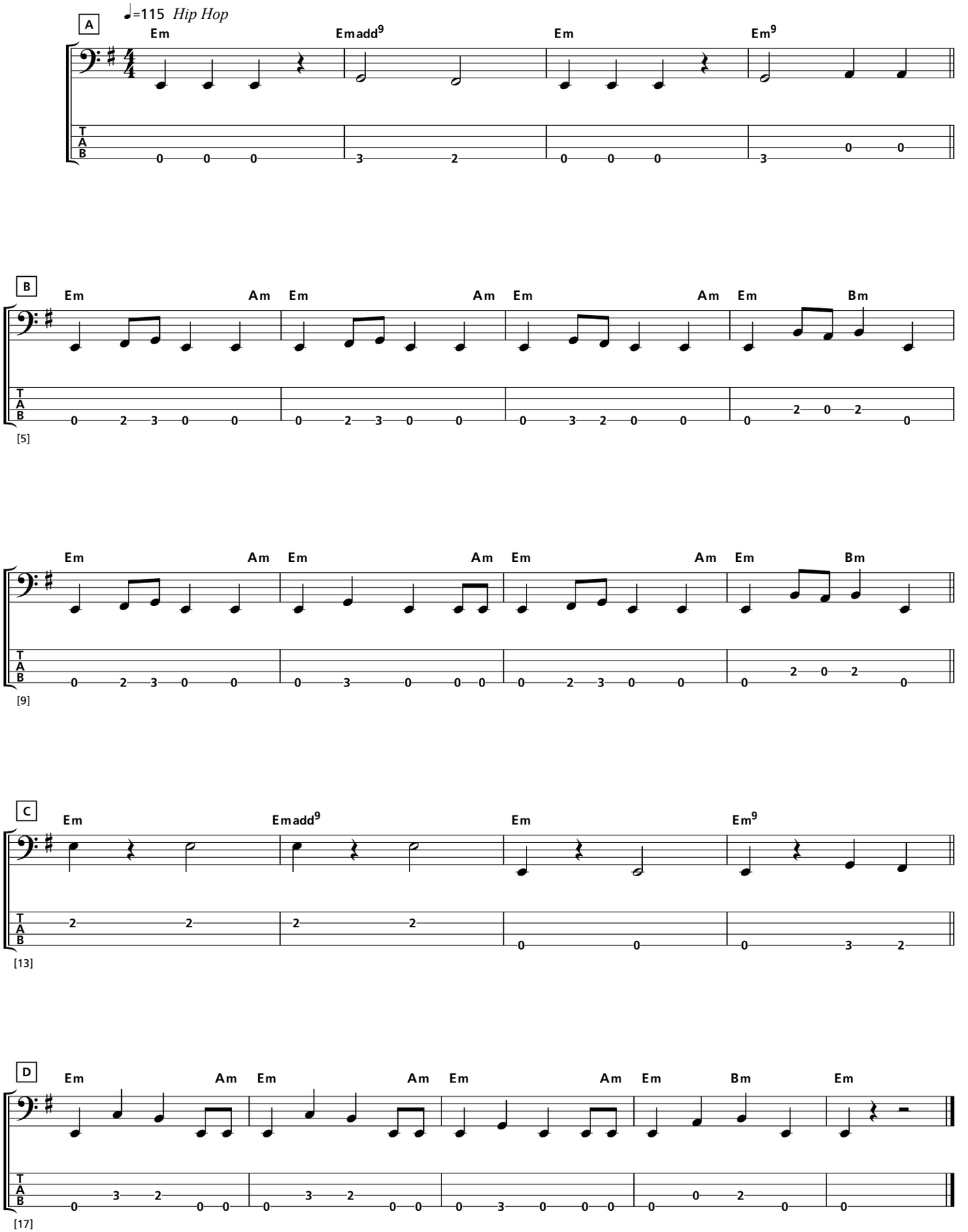
Hip hop first emerged in New York in the 1970s. The traditional elements of the genre include rapping, turntable techniques such as cutting and scratching, and later, sampling. West Coast hip hop began in California and rose to prominence in the 1990s thanks to the success of Snoop Doggy Dogg, Dr. Dre and the artists signed to Aftermath Entertainment (Dre's label). It typically features heavy, funky bass grooves, unlike hip hop produced on America's East Coast, which focuses more on sampled loops and beats. While sampling and the use of drum machines were pivotal in the early days of hip hop, contemporary artists make use of live musicians. Dre and Eminem use live bands onstage and in the studio, for example. Similarly, live instrumentation is employed by Hip Hop band The Roots in order to produce much of their sound.

RECOMMENDED LISTENING

The Sugarhill Gang's 'Rapper's Delight' and Grandmaster Flash's 'The Message' will open the doors to classic hip hop. Public Enemy, Beastie Boys, A Tribe Called Quest, Jay Z, The Roots and Dr. Dre cover most spectrums of the genre. Dre's *2001* and The Roots' *Do You Want More?!!!??!* are especially noteworthy because they feature some great bass playing from Mike Elizondo (Dr. Dre) and Leonard 'Hub' Hubbard (The Roots). For West Coast hip hop listen to 50 Cent's *Get Rich Or Die Tryin'*, The Game's *The Documentary* and Eminem's album *Relapse*.

Z

Neel Dhorajiwala



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A Section (Bars 1–4)

The opening four bars of this West Coast style hip hop track feature a simple bass guitar part that uses alternating bars of quarter note and predominantly half note figures as the main basis of the groove. To perform this groove successfully it is essential that you observe the rests because these are critical to the feel of the part.

Bar 1 | *Quarter notes and rests*
The first bar consists of three quarter notes played on the open E string. The fourth beat is a rest; therefore, make sure that you mute the third note so it does not ring on to the fourth beat.

Bar 2 | *Half notes*
The second bar is a contrast to the short quarter notes used in the first bar and consists of two half notes: a G and an F♯. Remember that half notes last for two beats each. These should ring for the full two beats, allowing the second bar to act as a response to the first.

Bars 1–4 | *Locking in with the drums*
When playing hip hop, tight interaction with the drums is crucial to the groove. Listen closely to the rhythm track and try to match your part to it as accurately as possible. When you get this right, the part should feel comfortable and exciting to play despite being quite simple.

B Section (Bars 5–12)

A one-bar rhythmic idea is used for the verse section here. This is repeated four times with different notes employed for the eighth-note rhythm on beat 2 of each bar.

Bars 5–13 | *Eighth notes*
While most of bars 5 and 6 consist of quarter note Es, the second beat of each features two eighth notes (Fig. 1). Two eighth notes can be played on each beat and should be played evenly (i.e. with each one being the same length). The notes used in bar 5 are F♯ and G, played with the first and second fingers of your fretting hand respectively.

Bar 7 | *Flipped eighth-notes*
Bar 7 is identical rhythmically to the previous two bars, and two eighth notes are once again played on the second beat. This time, however, the notes are 'flipped' so that the G is played first, followed by the F♯.

Bar 8 | *Extra notes*
The eighth bar again features the same rhythmic idea, although this time two new notes are introduced. On the second beat the eighth notes are B and A. The A is played on the open A string and the B should be played at the 2nd fret of the same string with the first finger of your fretting hand.

C Section (Bars 13–16)

This section of the song is slightly different and is comprised of more rests in the bassline.

Bar 13 | *Quarter-note rests*
In this bar, a quarter note is played on beat 1. There is a rest on beat 2 followed by a half note on beat 3 (Fig. 2). Make this note last for the full two beats as a contrast to the shorter note at the beginning of the bar.

Bar 16 | *More quarter notes*
This bar consists of quarter notes with the only exception being the rest on beat 2. This quarter-note rhythm should be easy to play and count at the same time.

D Section (Bars 17–21)

The final section of 'Z' features more movement in the bassline which helps to bring the song to a close.

Bars 17–20 | *Continuous quarter notes*
This section is a continuous run of quarter notes interspersed with eighth notes on the fourth beat of each bar. Having progressed this far, you should have no trouble counting these rhythms. However, remember to keep the notes short and try to match your line accurately to the drum groove. Also, remember to count through the bars in order to keep the notes in the right place.

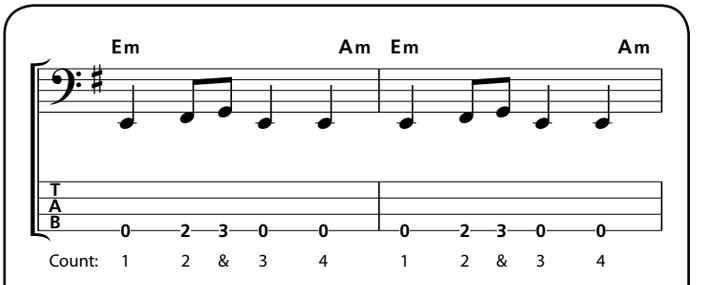


Fig. 1: Eighth notes

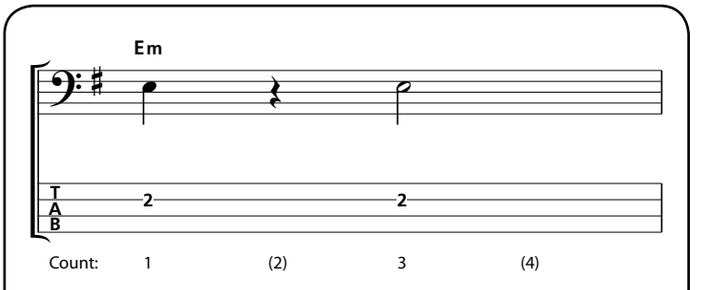


Fig. 2: Quarter-note rests

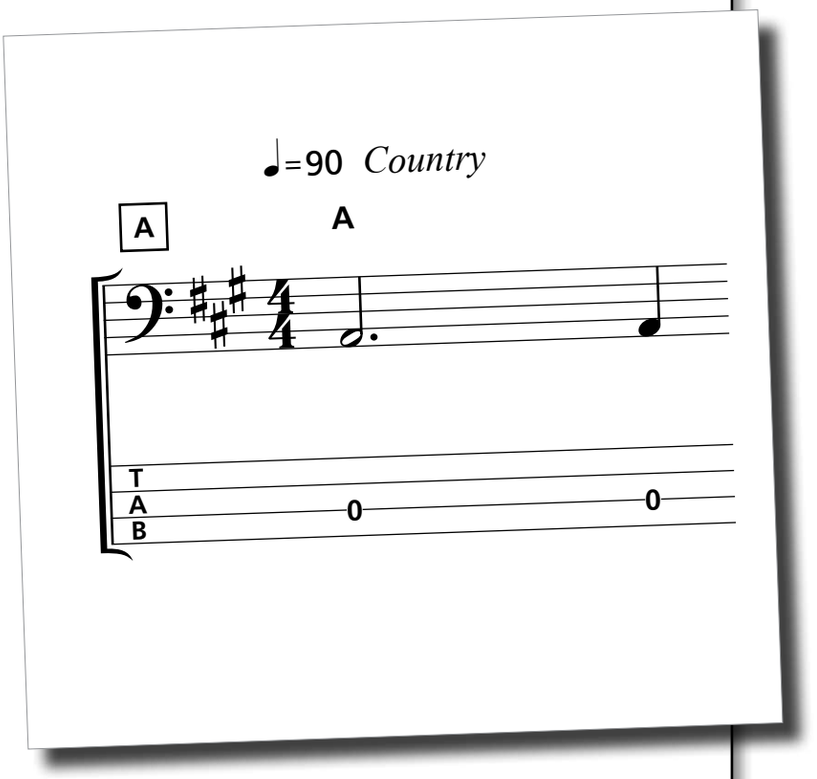
The Drifter

SONG TITLE: THE DRIFTER
GENRE: COUNTRY
TEMPO: 90 BPM
KEY: A

TECH FEATURES: DOTTED HALF NOTES
PLAYING EVENLY
EIGHTH NOTES

COMPOSER: ALISON RAYNER

PERSONNEL: STUART RYAN (GTR)
HENRY THOMAS (BASS)
NOAM LEDERMAN (DRUMS)



OVERVIEW

'Summer Drifter' is a light, breezy country pop song that is similar in style to songs by Taylor Swift and Alison Krauss. Country music usually features simple basslines that use the root notes of the chords – this piece is no exception. There are three sections to this piece, and the challenges here are to play the part evenly and to support the song.

STYLE FOCUS

Country music is typified by a relaxed feel, simple chord structures, strummed acoustic guitars and simple but supportive basslines. Although this piece has a very relaxed vibe, locking in with the drummer is as important as ever. Country songs are almost always built around the lyrics, and it is the job of the musicians to support the story they tell in an unobtrusive way.

THE BIGGER PICTURE
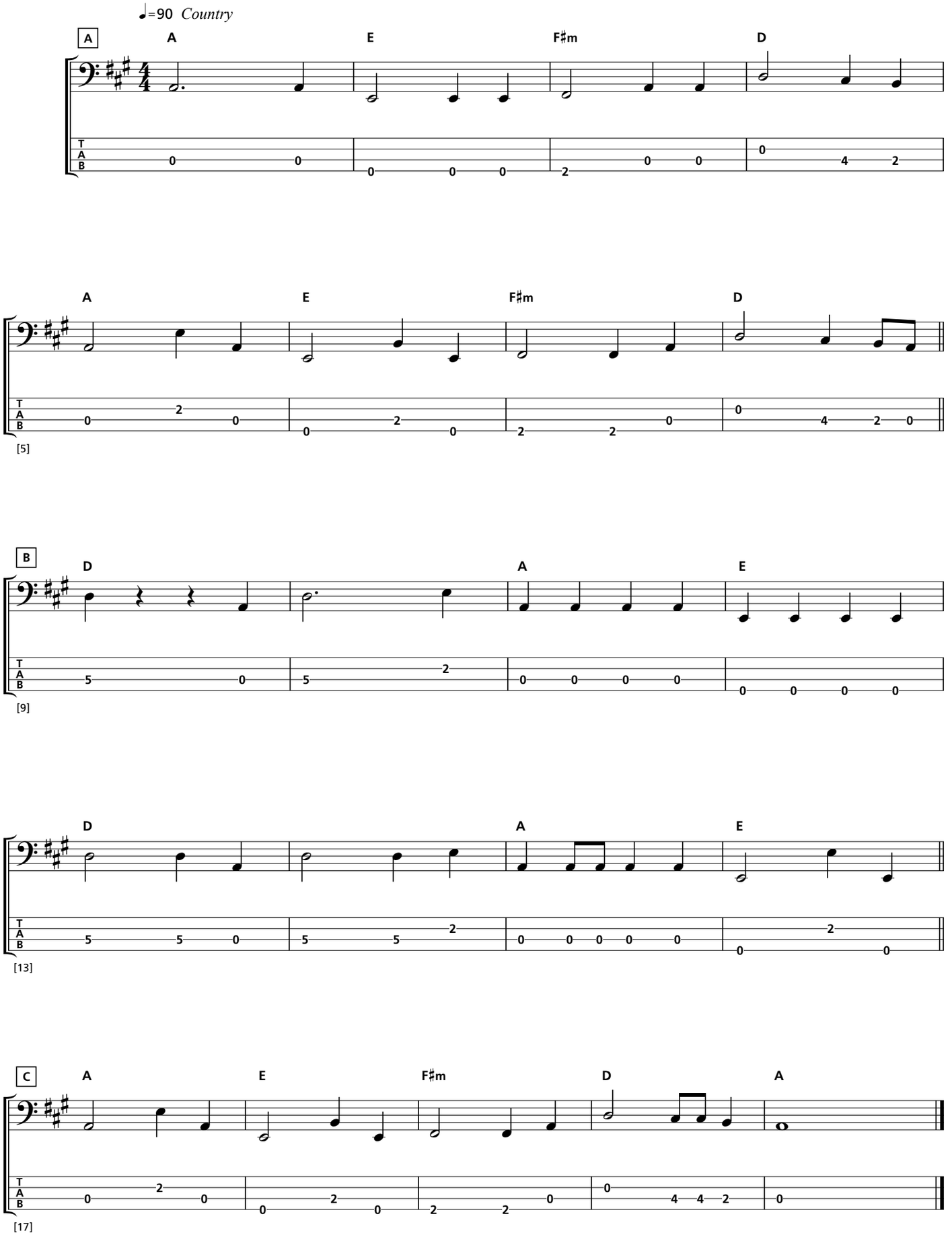
Country music developed as different cultures and traditions merged together in the Southern USA in the 19th Century. Each brought with it their own traditional songs and instruments, with the resulting sound becoming the basis for what we know today as Country music. Country was initially a form of local entertainment, and was the basis for barn dances and village fetes, although its popularity grew quickly. Throughout the 20th Century many recording artists developed the style further, formed sub-genres and experimented with the basic instrumentation. Well-known artists such as Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Dolly Parton and Garth Brooks all had huge hits with Country music from the 1960s onwards. The style continues to be enormously popular to this day, particularly in the United States, although it enjoys a worldwide following as well. Many mainstream Country/Pop artists such as Taylor Swift, Alison Krauss, Carrie Underwood and Lady Antebellum have experienced enormous mainstream popularity.

RECOMMENDED LISTENING

Legendary Country artists such as Johnny Cash, Garth Brooks and Willie Nelson will all provide an excellent insight into the spirit of country music. Tracks such as 'On the Road Again' by Willie Nelson and 'I Walk the Line' by Johnny Cash are recommended. Modern Country music songs such as 'Love Story' by Taylor Swift, 'Gone Gone Gone (Done Moved On) by Robert Plant and Alison Krauss, and 'Just a Kiss' by Lady Antebellum are all great examples of modern country pop music.

The Drifter

Alison Rayner



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A Section (Bars 1–8)

The first eight bar section of 'The Drifter' features a simple yet effective bassline. This piece is relatively straightforward and the bass part supports the song perfectly.

Bar 1 | *Dotted half notes*
The first bar of this song features a dotted half note and a quarter-note rhythm. Dotted half notes last for three beats, while a quarter note lasts for one. Count slowly through the first bar, playing an A on the first beat and letting it ring for three beats. Another A is then played on the fourth beat.

Bars 1–2 | *Playing open strings*
Many of the notes in this first section are played as open strings. Open strings are simple to play on the bass but they can be difficult to stop ringing when you move to the next note. You can do this by bringing the fingers of your fretting hand to rest on the string, thus muting it.

Bar 8 | *Eighth notes*
The final bar of this section has two eighth notes on the fourth beat (Fig. 1). To understand how eighth notes sound, instead of counting "1 2 3 4" through the bar, count "1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &". This gives you two notes per beat. In this bar the D is played for two beats, the C♯ is played for one and the B and A are played on the fourth beat. Make sure these notes are the same length.

B Section (Bars 9–16)

The next four bars act as the verse of the song. In this section they start on a different note: D. Some new rhythms are introduced here too.

Bars 11–12 | *More open strings*
In these bars you are required to switch between the open A and E strings. When you move to a new string the last thing you want is for the previous string to still be ringing, so be sure to mute it with your fretting hand. This will become second nature to you with practice.

Bars 9–16 | *Playing evenly*
Some strings, such as the low E string, naturally sound a little louder than others. When playing this section, which contains a lot of open strings, try to maintain an even volume throughout all of the notes. Consistency is extremely important to making lines such as this one sit comfortably with the rest of the instruments.

Bar 16 | *Octaves*
There are two different notes in bar 16 but both are E notes. The second note, played at the 2nd fret of the D string, is an octave above the first note and is played on the open E string. Octaves are a popular device for bass players to use, so it is worth taking your time with this section and really digesting what is on offer.

C Section (Bars 17–21)

This final section is the outro, which reuses the same chord progression as the chorus. However, there are some notes and rhythms that differ somewhat in the bassline.

Bars 17–19 | *Half notes and quarter notes*
The first three bars of this section feature the same rhythm: a half note that lasts for two beats, followed by two quarter notes that last for a beat each.

Bar 20 | *Melodic movement*
This bar features a descending bassline that takes the song from D to the final A chord. You will notice how the bass begins on a D that lasts for two beats. On the third beat, two C♯ notes are played as eighth notes; remember that two of these make up one beat. A B note is played on the fourth beat and leads perfectly to the A in the final bar, providing the ideal ending to this song (Fig. 2).

Bar 21 | *Note lengths*
When a song ends it can be tempting to let the final note ring on for longer than notated. Stop it after two beats.

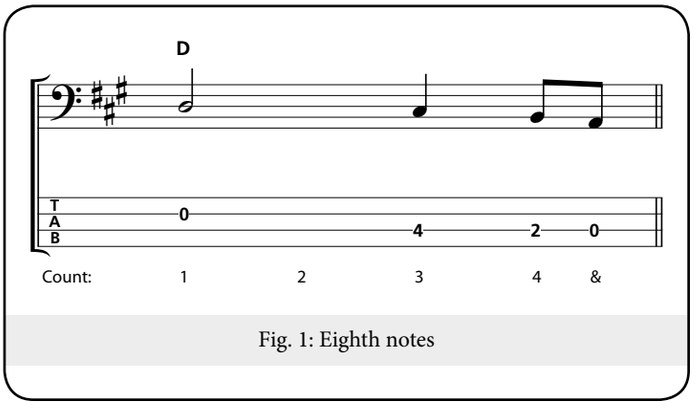


Fig. 1: Eighth notes

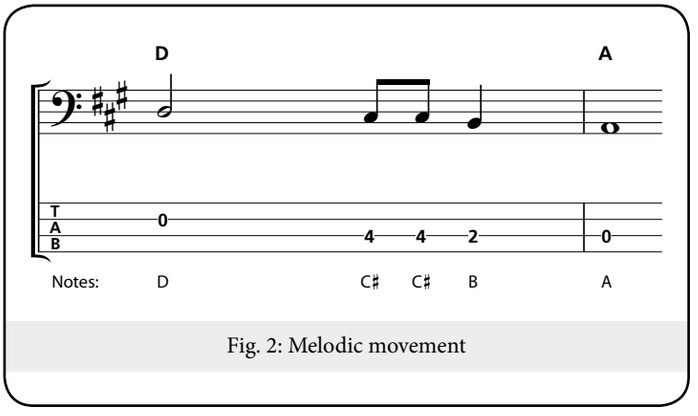


Fig. 2: Melodic movement

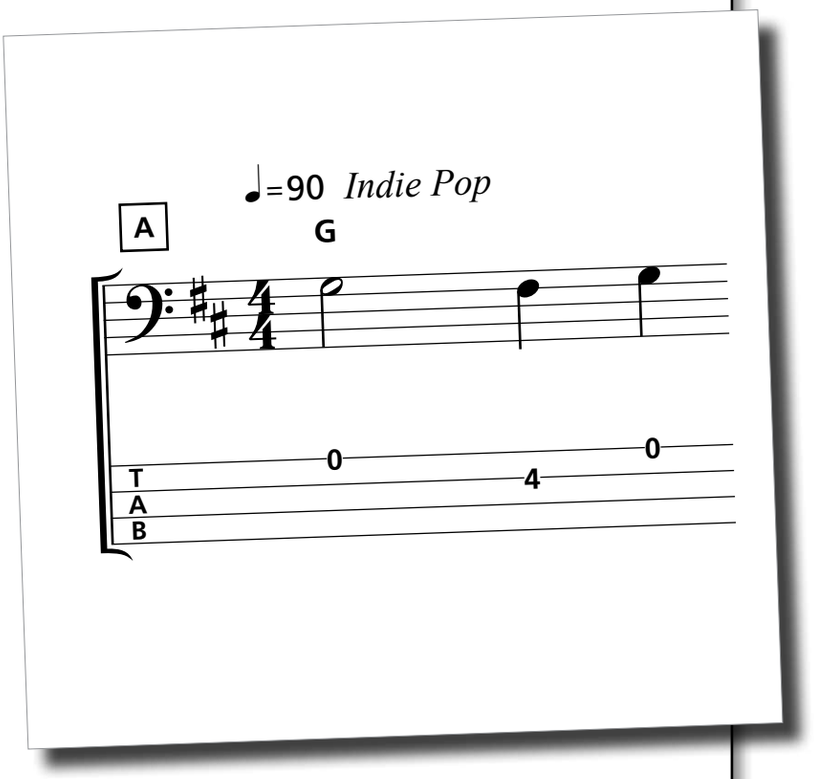
Coraline

SONG TITLE: CORALINE
GENRE: INDIE POP
TEMPO: 90 BPM
KEY: D

TECH FEATURES: CONSISTENCY
MELODIC LINES
CROSSING STRINGS

COMPOSER: DAVE MARKS

PERSONNEL: STUART RYAN (GTR)
HENRY THOMAS (BASS)
NOAM LEDERMAN (DRUMS)



OVERVIEW

'Coraline' is a piece written in an indie pop style that was championed by Oasis and Blur in the 1990s, and later pursued by Kaiser Chiefs and Arctic Monkeys. The bassline in 'Coraline' closely follows the chords played by the guitar, except it features some melodic lines (see the Walkthrough) that make it a fun part to play. One of the key things to focus on in this piece is to play with a consistent tone throughout in order to create a solid foundation.

STYLE FOCUS

Indie pop is typified by jangly rhythm guitars, simple chord progressions and a strong overall focus on songwriting. For bass players the key is to be supportive and play the right part for the song. Indie basslines are not always as simple as they first appear. They can also be melodic, sometimes making them more important to the song than many listeners would first realise.

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Indie pop takes its name from the small independent record labels that arose in the 1980s, challenging the dominance of the major labels. The Smiths, The Jesus And Mary Chain and others may have dominated the indie scene back in the 1980s, but the likes of Oasis and Blur were the heroes of the 1990s. Indie pop has continued to thrive well into the 2000s too, with groups like Kaiser Chiefs and Arctic Monkeys leading the way.
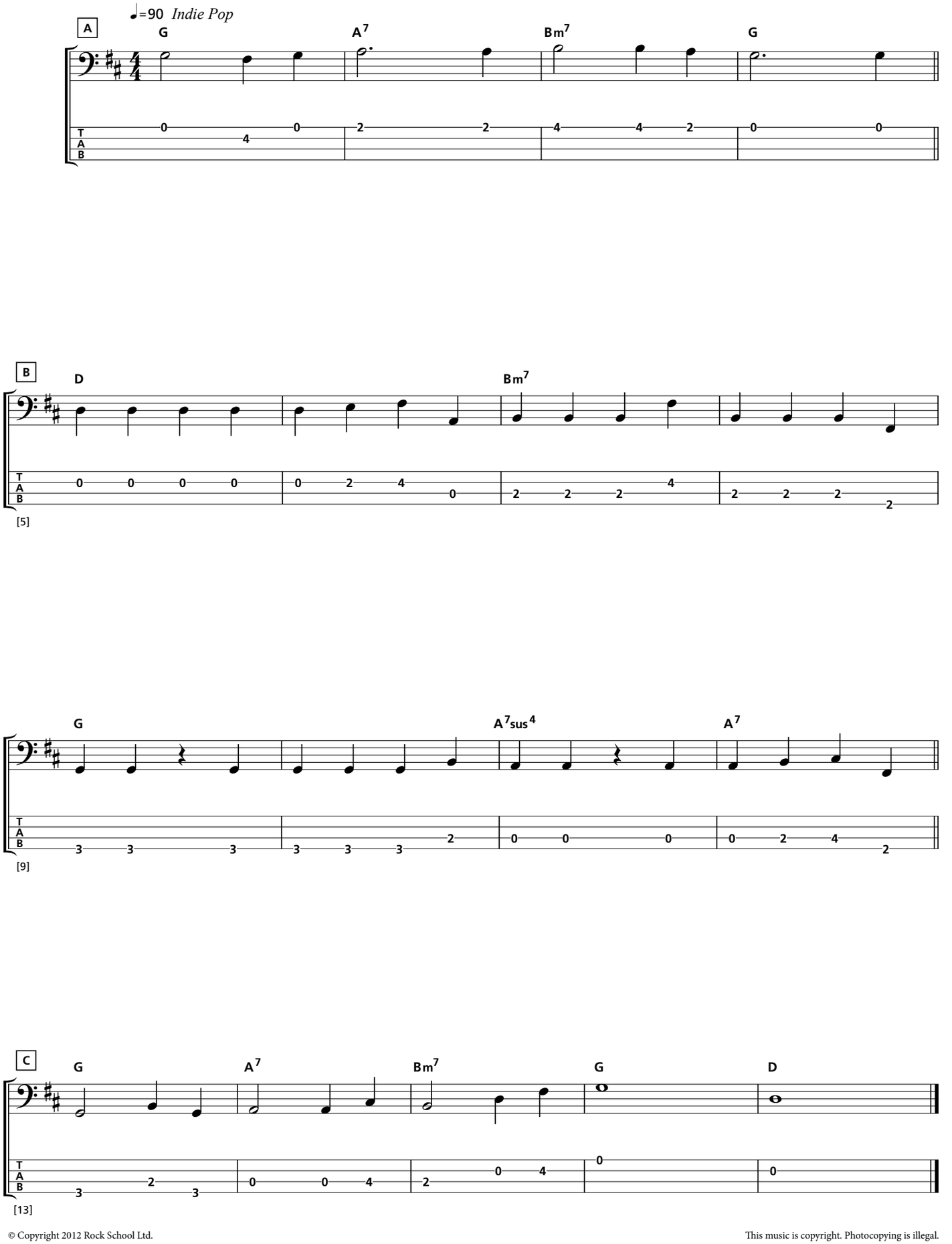
Although the guitar and vocals are usually the focal point of most indie pop songs, as mentioned previously, the bass can be integral to the song. Paul McGuigan (Oasis), Andy Rourke (The Smiths), Alex James (Blur) and Simon Rix (Kaiser Chiefs) have all contributed great basslines to the indie pop arsenal.

RECOMMENDED LISTENING

The first two Oasis albums, *Definitely Maybe* (1994) and *(What's the Story) Morning Glory* (1995), are essential listening for any budding bass guitarist. Both 'Live Forever' and 'Wonderwall' boast tasteful but effective playing. Similarly, Blur's two biggest albums, *Parklife* (1994) and *The Great Escape* (1995), contain some great lines, most notably on 'Charmless Man' and the bouncing 'Girls & Boys'. Infectious indie pop basslines from this decade can be heard on Kaiser Chiefs' 'Oh My God' and 'I Predict a Riot', both of which entered the top 10 of the British singles chart.

Coraline

Dave Marks



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A Section (Bars 1–4)

The opening four bars of 'Coraline' will take you through a simple but popular chord progression. The chords change slowly in this style of music, leaving room for the vocals to take centre stage. The bassline used here is simple but effective – the line is strongly based around root notes (the note a chord gets its name from), but with some extra notes used to make the transition between the chords nice and smooth.

Bar 1 | *Muting*
In the first bar, two different notes are played: G and F♯ (Fig. 1). As the G is played on the open G string you will need to take care to mute this string when you play the F♯ on the D string. These two notes are close to each other in pitch and they will clash if heard together. You can mute the G string by simply resting your fretting hand fingers on it to stop it from ringing.

Bar 2 | *Dotted half notes*
In the second bar a dotted half note is played. This note lasts for three beats, with the next note played on beat 4. Count through this bar slowly, playing the first note on beat 1 and allowing it to ring as you count to three. Play the second note on the fourth beat.

Bars 1–4 | *Fretting accuracy*
A combination of open strings and fretted notes is used in the first four bars of this piece. It is important that all of the notes sound even and last for their full duration. When playing fretted notes, be sure to place your left hand finger in the centre of the fret to get a clean note. If your finger is too close to the metal fretwire you are likely to create fretbuzz.

B Section (Bars 5–12)

The next four bars are a new section and you could consider them to be the verse of the song. Throughout most of this section, the bass plays a consistent quarter-note line.

Bars 5–12 | *Consistency*
This continuous quarter-note bassline should be played consistently. Therefore, use the same attack for each note because this will ensure that the volume remains at the same level. You should also allow each note to ring for its full duration. Do not cut any notes short because this would leave an obvious hole in the bassline.

Bar 6 | *Melodic movement*
After playing four consecutive open D string notes in bar 5, there is more movement in bar 6. The first note is another open D, and this is followed by an E and an F♯ played at the second and fourth frets respectively (Fig. 2). The final note is an open A string. All of these notes fit nicely with the D major chord played by the guitar and create a sense of movement in the bassline. Again, you should aim to play these as consistently as you can.

C Section (Bars 13–17)

The final section of this piece contains the same chords as you learned in the first. The bass guitar plays a similar line here but in a lower register.

Bars 13–15 | *Half notes and quarter notes*
The first three bars of this section have the same rhythm, which is a half note followed by two quarter notes. Count this line carefully and make your first note last for two beats, followed by two notes that last for a beat each.

Bars 13–17 | *String crossing*
This final section requires you to move slowly across all four strings. Muting is important when crossing strings because it will help you to cut out any unwanted noise in your playing. As you move across the neck, you can either mute strings with your fretting hand fingers or you can move your picking hand thumb into a position so where it rests on the string beneath the one you are playing.

Bar 17 | *Note lengths*
When a song ends it can be tempting to let the final note ring on for longer than notated. Stop it after two beats.

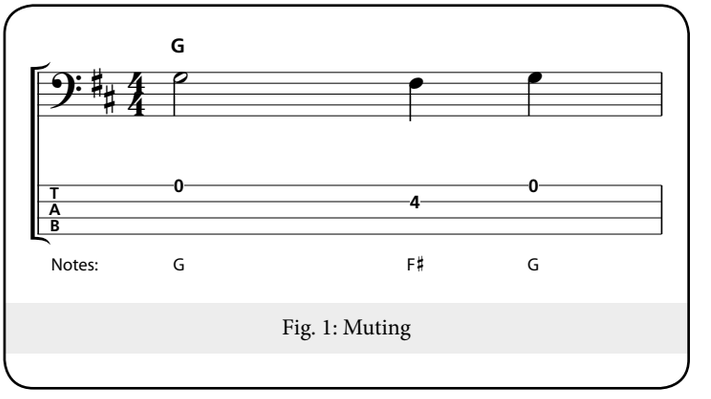


Fig. 1: Muting

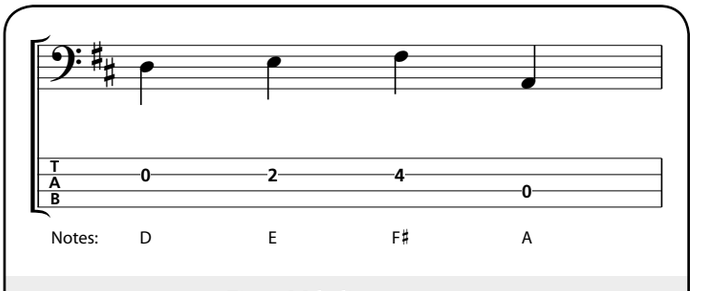


Fig. 2: Melodic movement
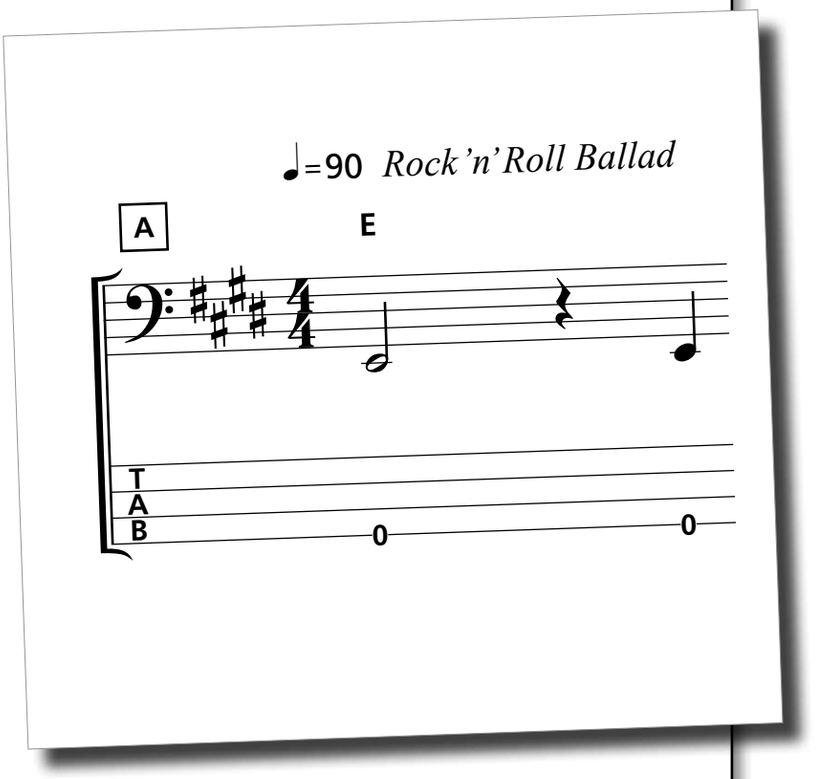
Talking In My Sleep

SONG TITLE: TALKING IN MY SLEEP
GENRE: ROCK 'N' ROLL BALLAD
TEMPO: 90 BPM
KEY: E

TECH FEATURES: QUARTER NOTES
HALF NOTES
PLAYING EVENLY

COMPOSER: SIMON TROUP

PERSONNEL: STUART RYAN (GTR)
HENRY THOMAS (BASS)
NOAM LEDERMAN (DRUMS)
ROSS STANLEY (KEYS)



OVERVIEW

'Talking In My Sleep' is a rock 'n' roll ballad with a rockabilly twist written in the style of artists such as Brian Setzer, The Stray Cats and The Everly Brothers. The bassline featured here is based predominantly around quarter notes, and some of the lines used are classic walking basslines that can be heard on many rock 'n' roll and blues songs.

STYLE FOCUS

Rock 'n' roll ballads typically have a relaxed feel and are most often focused on the vocals. The bass player will usually play a simple but supportive line based on notes from the chords. These will be root notes mostly but others can be used as well. Simple walking bass figures are often employed as a transition from one chord to the next, and there are great examples of this technique found within 'Talking In My Sleep'. The most important thing here is to provide solid support for the melody line.

THE BIGGER PICTURE
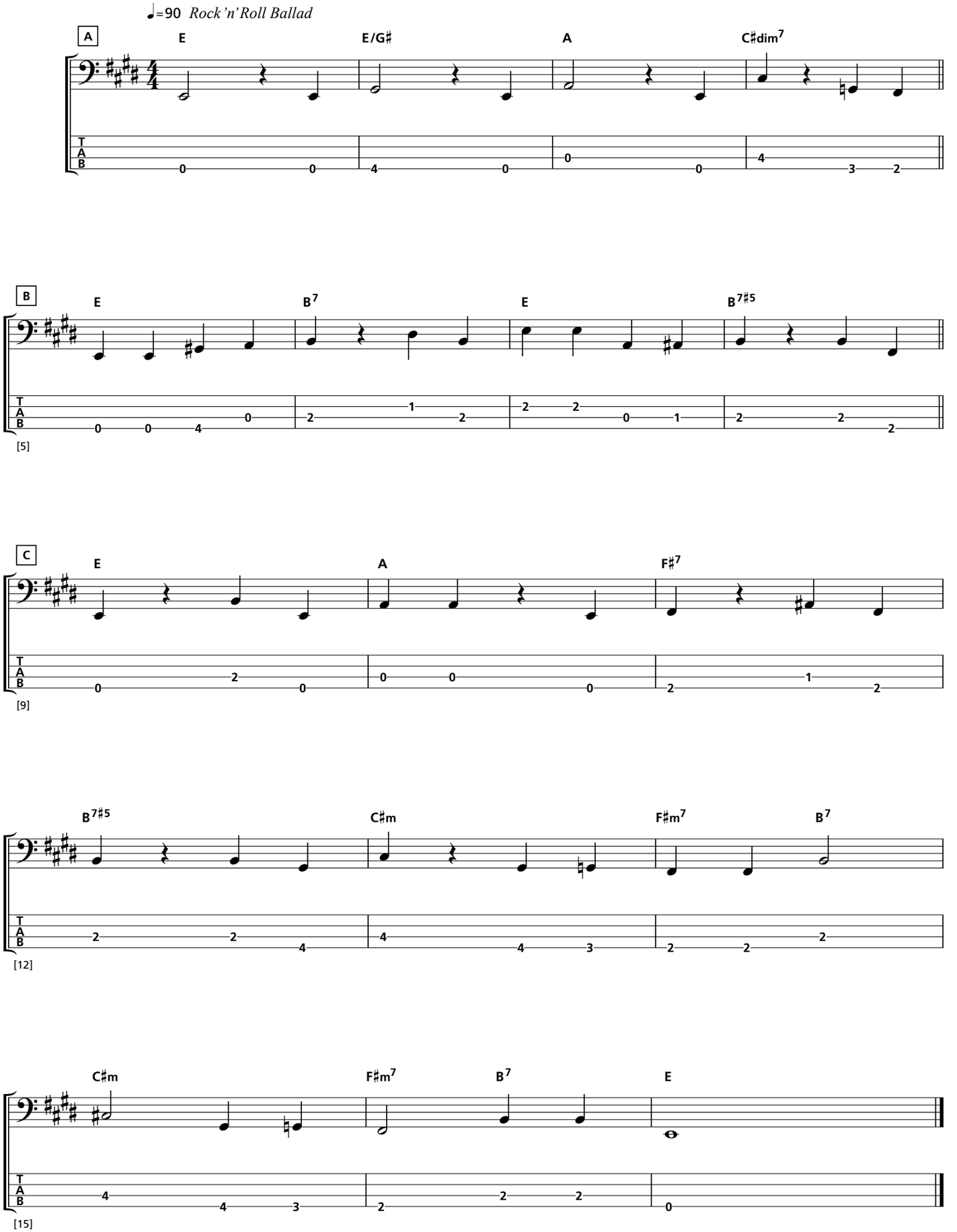
Rock 'n' roll is a hugely popular genre of music that evolved as a combination of musical styles in America during the 1950s. It is commonly used as a term to describe several sub-genres of music, one of which is rockabilly. Elements of rockabilly can be found within 'Talking In My Sleep'. Notable rock 'n' roll artists include Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis and Elvis Presley (who mastered many genres, including country), while artists such as Buddy Holly and Brian Setzer are known for recording rockabilly. Ballads were not common in rock 'n' roll because, by its very nature, it is an up-tempo genre. Nonetheless, they were popular during dances as they provided a much needed respite from the more energetic numbers that occupied a larger portion of a band's set. They were also an opportunity for couples to dance together.

RECOMMENDED LISTENING

'Johnny B. Goode' by Chuck Berry, 'Rock Around The Clock' by Bill Haley & His Comets and 'Great Balls of Fire' by Jerry Lee Lewis are all excellent singles from rock 'n' roll's classic period. Brian Setzer has done much to keep rockabilly alive, and his back catalogue offers many gems for you to investigate, including The Brian Setzer Orchestra's 'The Dirty Boogie' and 'Rock This Town', while 'Sleepwalk' by Santo & Johnny (also covered by Setzer) and 'All I Have To Do Is Dream' by The Everly Brothers are further examples of rock 'n' roll ballads.

Talking In My Sleep

Simon Troup



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A Section (Bars 1–4)

The first four bars of this piece use a rhythmic idea that features a rest on the third beat of the bar, allowing the fourth beat to 'push' into the next bar.

Bars 1–17 | *Fretting accuracy*
A combination of open strings and fretted notes is used throughout this piece. It is important that all of the notes sound even and last for their full duration. When playing fretted notes be careful with your finger placement – if your finger is too close to the fretwire you are likely to create fretbuzz.

Bars 1–3 | *Half notes and quarter-note rests*
The first three bars use the same rhythm, which is a half note played on beats 1 and 2, a rest on beat 3, and a quarter note on beat 4 (Fig. 1). In order for this bar to be effective, all notes must ring for the correct duration and you should ensure that the rest on beat 3 is played as a rest. As you count through the bar, be sure to stop the first note ringing at the third beat.

Bar 2 | *Crossing strings*
As you move from the second bar to the third, you will play an open E string followed by an open A string. Open strings should be muted with your left hand to stop them from ringing. As you play the open A with your right hand, be mindful and remember that your left hand needs to rest on the E string to mute it.

Bar 4 | *More quarter notes*
The fourth bar is the final bar of the intro and has a slightly different rhythm. This time there is a quarter-note rest on beat 2, and quarter notes on beats 1, 3 and 4. Count this bar carefully because it can easily take you by surprise after playing the first three bars.

B Section (Bars 5–8)

Here is a slightly more active bassline with some bars featuring four quarter notes. The notes have been carefully written to move the bassline smoothly through the song.

Bars 5–6 | *Playing evenly*
Bar 5 consists of four quarter notes, three of which are open strings (Fig. 2). The following bar is similar but it has a rest on the second beat. Each of the notes must be played to the same length and at the same volume. When playing simple, supportive lines such as this, it is vital to play the line evenly.

Bars 7–8 | *Fingering*
A big part of playing smoothly and evenly is using the most appropriate fretting hand fingering. You will find bar 7 easier if you play the first two notes with your second finger and the last note with your first finger. In bar 8, the first and third notes are the same and can be played with your second finger. The last note can be played with your first.

C Section (Bars 9–17)

This section of the song features a quarter-note bassline with occasional rests and half notes used to break up the line.

Bar 10 | *Open strings*
In this bar you will play the open A string followed by the open E string. As before, you are meant to play these evenly. Use your fretting hand to mute the A at the end of the second beat so that the third beat can be a rest.

Bar 13 | *Chromatic passing note*
This bar features two notes that belong to the chord of C♯m: C♯ and G♯. The G on the fourth beat is a passing note used to move smoothly from the C♯m chord to the F♯m^7 chord.

Bar 17 | *Whole note*
The final bar of 'Talking In My Sleep' features a whole note (a note that lasts for four beats). Whole notes are often used at the end of songs to give the piece a sense of finality. When a song ends it can be tempting to let the final note ring on for longer than notated. Be sure to stop the final note after four full beats.

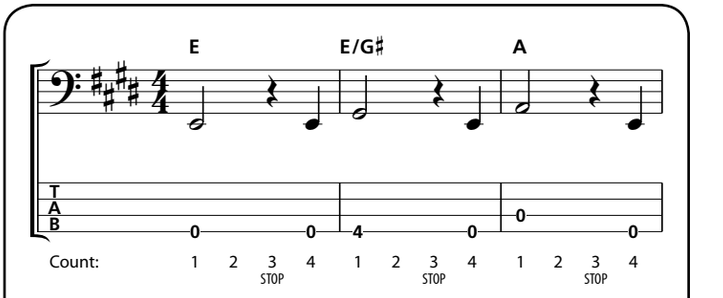


Fig. 1: Half notes and quarter-note rests

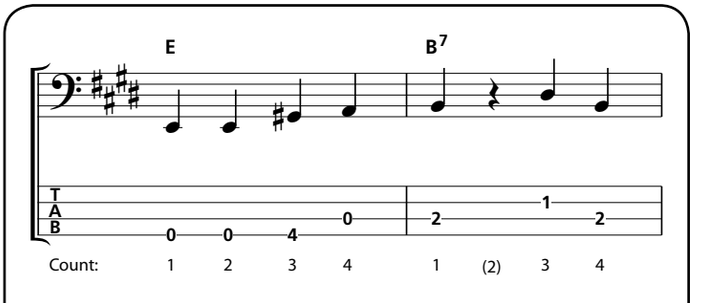


Fig. 2: Playing evenly

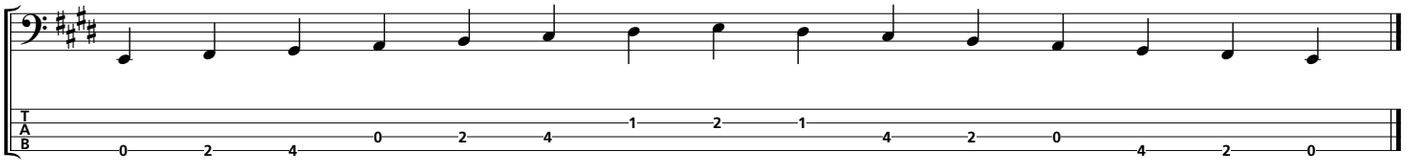
Technical Exercises

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.

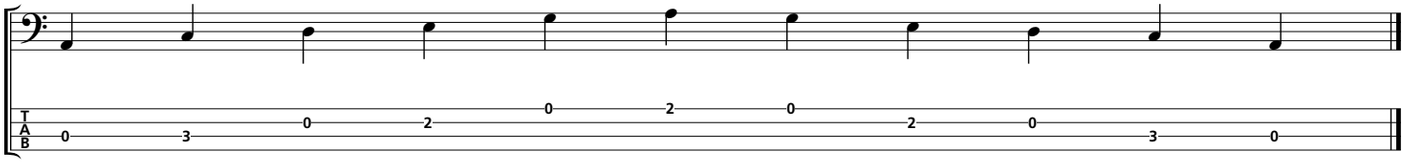
Groups A and B should be prepared on the starting notes of E and A. You will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test. The tempo is ♩= 70.

Group A: Scales

1. Major scale (E major scale shown)



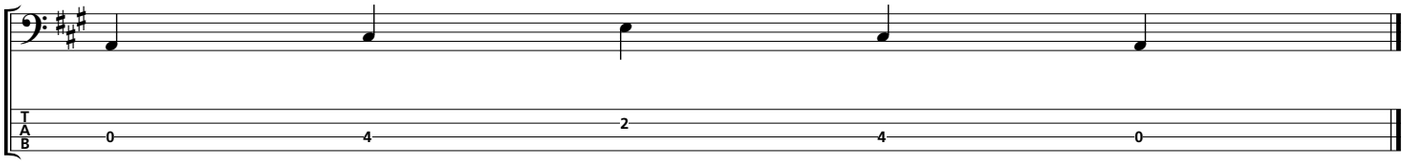
2. Minor pentatonic scale (A minor pentatonic scale shown)



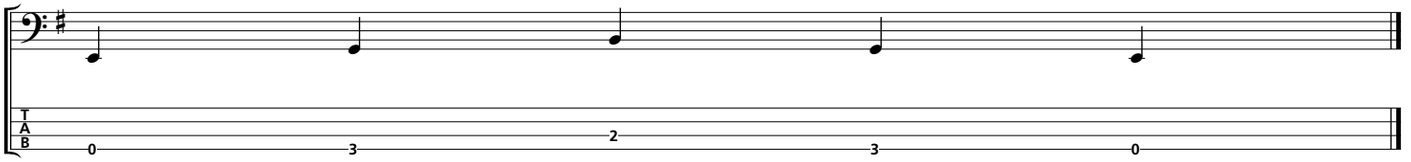
Group B: Arpeggios

The arpeggios consist of root note, 3rd and 5th and should be played both ascending and descending.

1. Major arpeggio (A major arpeggio shown)

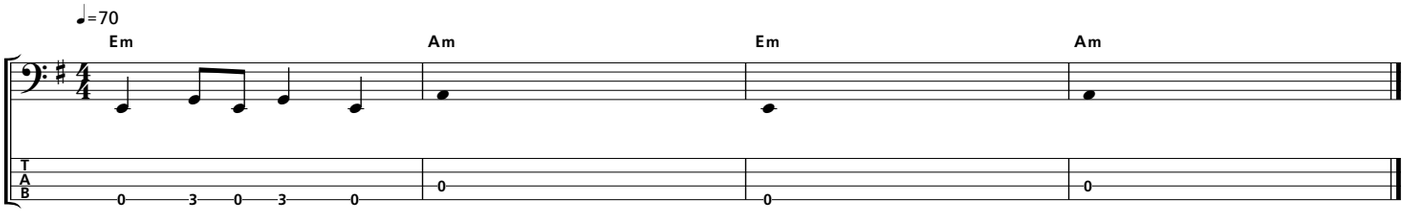


2. Minor arpeggio (E minor arpeggio shown)



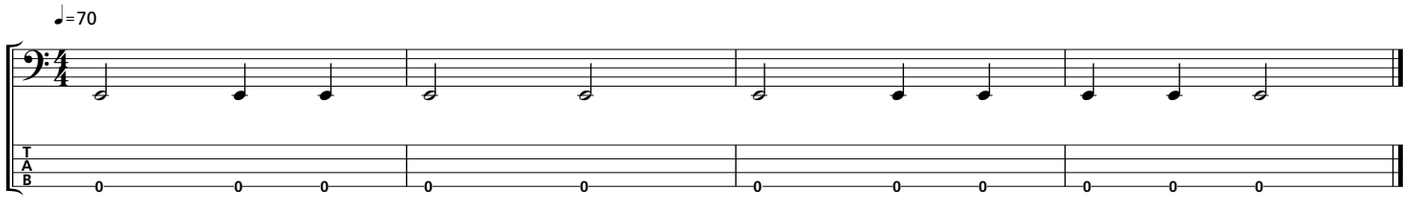
Group C: Riff

In the exam you will be asked to play the following riff to a backing track. The riff shown in bar 1 should be played in the same shape in bars 2–4. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent three bars. The tempo is ♩= 70.



Sight Reading

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 rhythm on the E string. The examiner will allow you 90 seconds to prepare it and will set the tempo for you. The tempo is ♩=70.

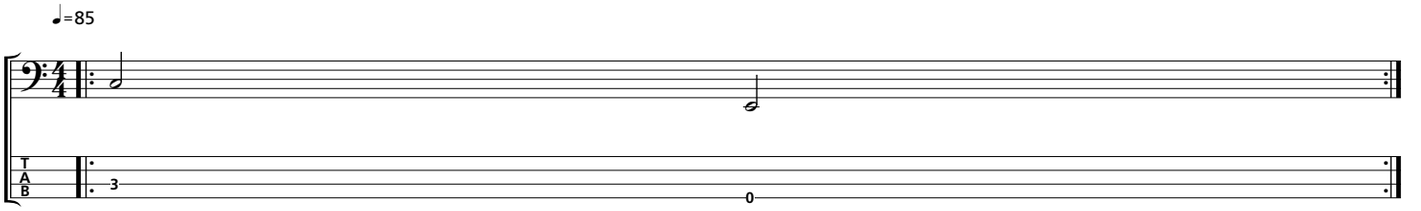


Ear Tests

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.

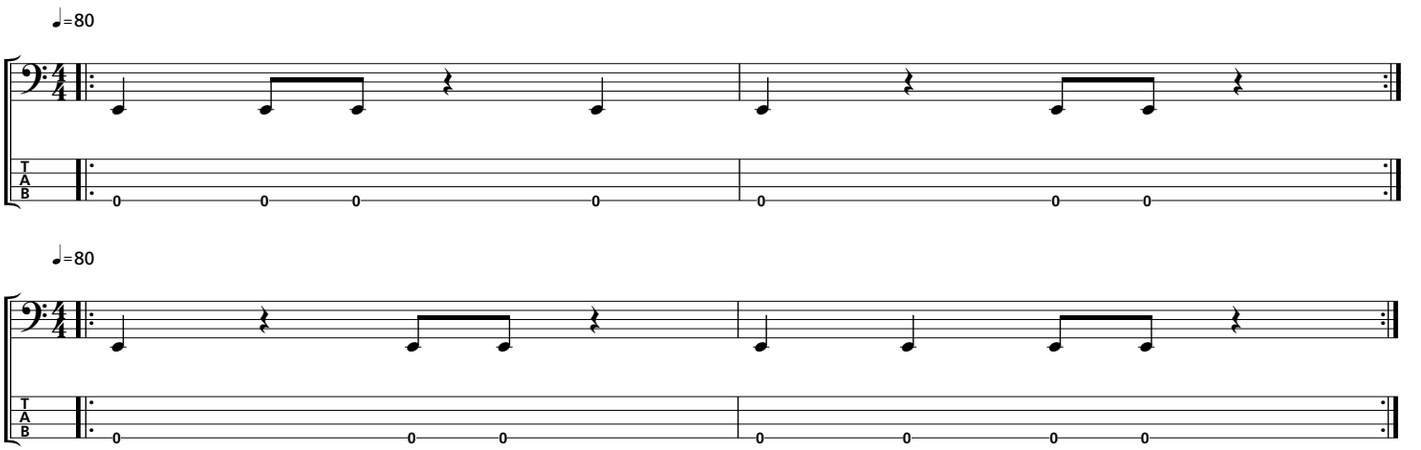
Test 1: Melodic Recall
The examiner will play you two half notes one after the other. You will tell the examiner whether the second note is higher or lower in pitch than the first note. You will hear the test twice.

Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar vocal count-in. 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 ♩= 80.



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 Debut you will be asked to identify:

- The music stave and the TAB
- The bass clef
- Half and quarter note values

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

In Debut you will be asked to identify:

- One of the following parts of your bass – neck, body, tuning-pegs and bridge

Further Information
Tips on how to approach this part of this exam can be found in the *Syllabus Guide* for bass, the *Rockschool Bass Companion* guide and on the Rockschool website: *www.rslawards.com*

Entering Rockschool Exams

Entering a Rockschool exam is easy, just go online and follow our simple six step process. All details for entering online, dates, fees, regulations and Free Choice pieces can be found at *www.rslawards.com*

- 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.

Marking Schemes

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 *

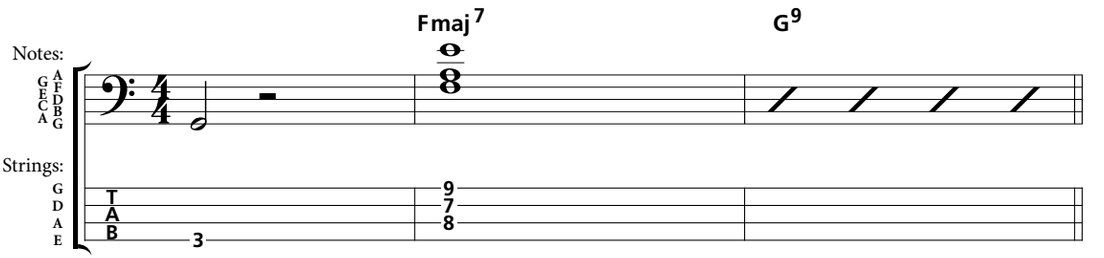
ELEMENT	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
Performance Piece 1	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 2	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 3	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 4	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance 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.

Bass Guitar Notation Explained

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

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



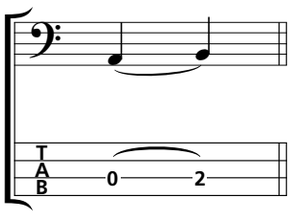
Fourth string, 3rd fret

Fmaj7 chord in the 7th position

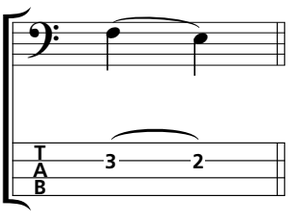
Solos and *Cont. sim.* sections are shown in slash notation

Definitions For Special Bass Guitar Notation

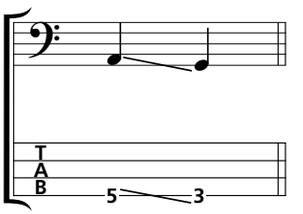
HAMMER-ON: Pick the lower note then sound the higher note by fretting it without picking.



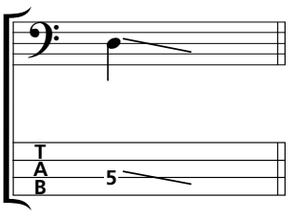
PULL-OFF: Pick the higher note then sound the lower note by lifting your finger without picking.



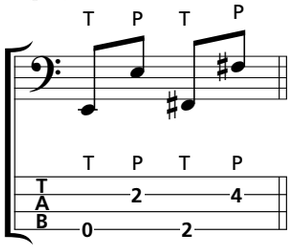
SLIDE: Pick the first note and slide to the next. If the line connects (as below) the second note is ***not*** repicked.



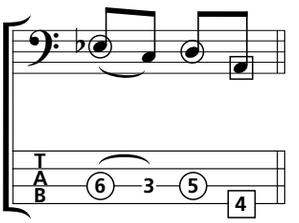
GLISSANDO: Slide off of a note at the end of its rhythmic value. The note that follows ***is*** repicked.



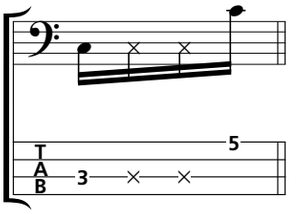
SLAP STYLE: Slap bass technique is indicated through the letters T (thumb) and P (pull).



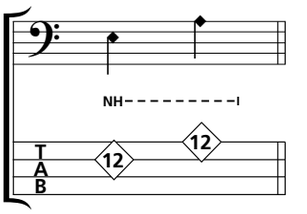
TAPPING: Sound note by tapping the string – circles denote a picking hand tap, squares a fretting hand tap.



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.



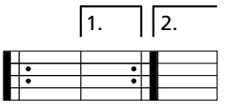
▪ Fermata (Pause)

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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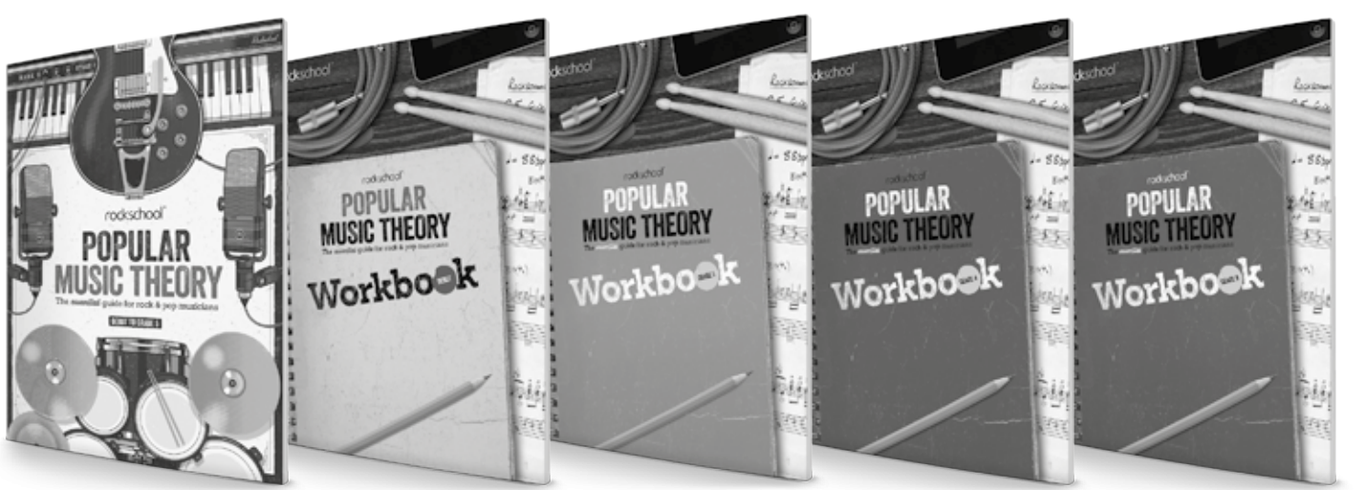
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ISBN 978-1-912352-87-6
9 781912 352876

Catalogue Number: RSK200051
ISBN: 978-1-912352-87-6